

The Visitor

January 2024

TO BE HIS LIGHT THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES

Volume 107 Issue 1

A publication of St. John's United Church of Christ

A Message from J. Martin Westermeyer

I wanted to thank all of you who remembered Betty and me with cards, prayers and gifts this Christmas Season. I greatly appreciate the support from all of you – more than you know!

I found the following in an old newsletter article that I had clipped:
“Many of us think of making resolutions for the New Year. Even if you are not a regular resolution maker, you may want to join in the following resolution – *‘I resolve to be the person God means me to be, to do the things God means me to do. I resolve to express Godself.’*”

That resolution is part of the fulfillment of our Baptism. It is what every Christian is to be about continually.

Your Godself is the true you, the you which grows and blossoms in the security of God's love. Your Godself is the one and only you – the unique gift of you to all of creation. You are the special creation of God, the only you there will ever be in the history of the world. You are a gift of God toward the fulfillment of God's creation.

As we move into this New Year, yes this new year of 2024, how are you using and sharing the unique gifts you have? Have you explored all that God has given you to share with the creation in which we live? How are you expressing God or Godself - to yourself, to others and to God?

As you think about those things and how you can be part of God's creation this in the New Year, here is poem by Helen Steiner Rice that addresses the New Year.

Continued on next page

“A New Year Prayer”

God, grant us the grace
as another year starts
to use all the hours
of our days.

Not for our own selfish
interests
and our own willful,
often-wrong ways –

But teach us to take time
for Praying
and to find time
For Listening To You.

So each day
is spent well and wisely
doing What You
Most Want Us To Do.

See you in church – Pastor Marty

A CHRISTMAS THANK YOU

What a wonderful evening we experienced on Sunday, December 10th as our Chancel Choir presented their annual Christmas concert. The choir, along with a wonderful orchestra from the College Conservatory of Music presented beautiful music for the Christmas season. The church was filled and everyone present was appreciative and inspired by the music.

I want to thank our choir for their dedication in rehearsing every week to bring us this annual event. Also, thanks to Dobin Park, our choral director, for his excellent leadership of both the choir and the orchestra.

We want to thank our ushers for helping us make sure our visitors had a good experience at St. John's. Also, thanks to Carol Fickenscher and her crew for the festive reception we enjoyed following the concert.

It was a wonderful evening, and one that all of us will not soon forget. If you missed the concert and would like to view it, you can find it on our website, or on our YouTube channel.



ROGER HAAS' SHORTBREAD COOKIE RECIPE

Our family is grateful for all your love and support these past few months. The loss of our dad was sudden and heartbreaking, but the love of our church family has been a gift. In return we would like to share dad's shortbread recipe. Five years ago he handed me 2 legal pad pages of "instructions" and asked me to organize and type his notes. Here they are - ENJOY!

Simple Shortbread Cookies (New Zealand)

Ingredients:

- Real Butter, 4 oz. (1 stick)
- Confectioners' Sugar, ½ cup
- Argo brand Cornstarch, 2 TBSP
- All-Purpose Flour, ¾ cup
- Salt, ¼ tsp



Procedure:

- Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
- Cream butter and sugar well. Butter should be exceptionally soft but not completely melted (microwave about 30 seconds).
- Add cornstarch and salt to creamed mixture and mix well.
- Add flour a bit at a time, mix well. And knead into a dough ball with clean, dry hands.
- On a cutting board, shape ball into a neat, even, smooth loaf 2" wide, ½" thick and 12" long (this is the hardest part, I use a tape measure).
- Place board and loaf in the refrigerator for about 1 hour.
- After dough is cold and firmed up but not hard use a sharp, non-serrated knife and cut loaf into 8 equal sections, then cut each section into 3 cookies; total of 24. (Again, I use a tape measure.) Best if all cookies are same size – about 2" long, ½" wide and ½" thick.
- Using a spatula, transfer cookies to cookie sheet (shiny, lightly greased works best).
- Bake on center shelf for 20 minutes, until slightly brown around the edges.
- Cool on a wire rack.

Side notes from the secretary:

- *Although the recipe is from New Zealand, I must point out that it has been perfected by Dad and is more his personal recipe.*
- *#2, one does not have to have medical degree to bake these even though precision and technique is required.*
- *Lastly, these cookies are also wonderful with a homemade buttercream icing, for special occasions or when a cheerful color adds to the joy that they might provide the recipient (me!)*

DELTA KINGS BARBERSHOP CHORUS

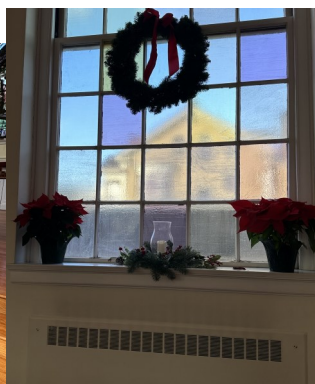
On Friday, December 15th we were treated to a Christmas Concert by the Delta Kings Barbershop Chorus from St. Bernard. The men sang many Christmas selections interspersed with their usual humor. A nice crowd was on hand to enjoy this fun holiday program.



THANK YOU TO OUR CHRISTMAS VOLUNTEERS

A big thank you to Carol Fickenscher, Mike Hanson, David and Diana Stamm, Tim Barber, Ralph Schoulthies and friends for decorating our sanctuary for the Christmas season. We appreciate all of the hard work they put into making our sanctuary beautiful for the holiday season. Be sure to give them a big thank you when you see them.

Happy Holidays to all!



CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE

This year St. John's collected gifts for Washington UCC through its "Gifts to the Manger Program" and we also included gifts for the Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission for the Newport Head Start Preschool Program and their "Christmas Giving Tree".

Our members brought in over 150 gifts to donate to this ministry. Thank you for your participation!!

Special thanks to Judy Slater for being the chairperson for this event and to Pat Goins for helping Judy deliver the gifts to Washington UCC.



Pat Goins & Judy Slater



Kelli Taylor & Judy Slater

ADVENT LABYRINTH WALK

Some members of our St. John's book club did an Advent Labyrinth Walk on Saturday, December 16th. What a beautiful December afternoon to release, receive, and return/reflect. Having a "jug of verses" to choose from to prompt our thoughts was helpful to "jar our thoughts."



FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

A big thank you to our food pantry workers who give so much of their time and effort to give to those in need. We at St. John's appreciate all that you do for the community. A big thank you to John and Elizabeth Robson for taking over the operation of the food pantry since the retirement of Wanda and Roger Quinn. Thank you to everyone!!



Pictured: Elizabeth Robson, Rose Wendling, Carol Fickenscher, Karen Schofield, Mike Hanson & John Robson



LUNCH BUNCH
Wednesday, January 10th
Noon-2:00pm
Drinks and dessert provided

JOIN US
For
LUNCH!



LUNCH BUNCH CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

The St. John's "Lunch Bunch" met on Wednesday, December 13th for their monthly gathering. They enjoyed an afternoon of good food, fellowship and fun. Carol Thompson, Julie Ollier, Pat Goins, and Bonnie Hoffman prepared a lovely holiday luncheon and the Food Pantry Workers and the church staff were invited to join in on the holiday fun. The group meets every second Wednesday in Fellowship Hall. They would love for you to join them!!



2024 LEADERSHIP TEAM

Congratulations to the 2024 Leadership Team members. They will begin their term in office effective January 1, 2024.

Your new officers are:

President: Kyle Taylor
Vice-President: David Stamm
Secretary: Pat Goins
Treasurer: Vickie Kennedy
Past President: Laura Haas

Thank you to the 2023 Leadership Team for your hard work and dedication during this past year.

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM PRESIDENT

Members & Friends of St. John's,

First, I want to thank you for instilling your trust in me to take on the role as the next President of the Leadership Team for this great church. I hope to serve in the position well and help keep moving the church forward and in a positive direction as we have been these past few years. I am grateful for the leaders that came before me and will be mindful of the lessons I have learned from them over the years and use them in this new role.

Starting this position also means that all of us have started a new year. With the fresh start of the new year comes the opportunity to start new ourselves. We may try things like reading more, traveling more, or trying to get some more exercise in, but what about trying new things at church?

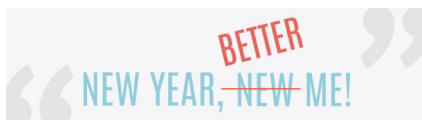
These new things that you can try include attending our Sunday worship more frequently if you are available, show an individual our online worship or invite them to Sunday Worship, or volunteer some time at church and/or join a team. I know many people groan at the thought of joining these groups at church but, they may not be as much work as some people originally thought.

All we need is help in small places like helping change the paraments for Sunday Worship, offering to be an usher or greeter for one or two Sundays, or pitching in to help do some cleanup around the church. The nice thing is that these are all small tasks that only take about 1-2 hours per month. This is not something that will take up as much time as a part time job each week.

I ask that as you move through these next couple of weeks, consider what your passions, interests, and skills are for the church. Then, consider how you can use these items to help the church and make an impact for both our current and new members. Again, any small task is extremely helpful to the church. It takes all of us to help keep this church moving forward.

I leave you with this last thought that we will be working on all year: Let us work and grow the church together as one.

Kyle Taylor
President, St. John's UCC



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY SPECIAL OFFERING **BENEFITING THE BRIGHTON CENTER**

On Sunday, January 14, 2024, St. John's will participate in a special offering to help the local organization The Brighton Center. In the spirit of Dr. King's work, the church wanted to take a moment to help individuals in need by performing a service to benefit them. Brighton Center is a local organization here in Newport that lives out Dr. King's message of helping individuals in need with jobs, finances, resources, and social services to name a few. You will find a special offering envelope in your bulletin on Sunday, January 7th and 14th. Please place this envelope in the offering plate on the 14th when this special offering will be collected. We appreciate your consideration for donations to this cause.



WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S KAREN LIDEN

On Sunday, December 3, 2023 we had the privilege of welcoming Karen Liden as a member of the St. John's UCC Congregation. Karen was welcomed into membership by Pastor Marty, the Leadership Team, and members of the congregation. Welcome Karen to the St. John's family!



YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU WILL MISS ON SUNDAY MORNING

On Sunday, December 17th during the Children's chat, a very special guest showed up. It was Elmo, who came to talk with the children about "Joy". What brings joy to our lives and what brings you joy? We lit the candle of Joy, and we celebrate the joy that is coming into the world through the birth of Jesus Christ our Savior. Thank you Steve Twehues for this fun moment.



THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS

The staff of St. John's would like to thank all of our members and friends who brought in gifts, Christmas treats, and cards during the Christmas season. We appreciate everyone who took the time to stop by and think of us during the holiday season. Thank you St. John's!!

Quote of the Day

The antidote for 50 enemies is one friend.

-Aristotle



JANUARY HOMEBOUND MEMBERS OF THE WEEK

We would like to celebrate and honor our homebound members of the week for the month of January. We appreciate and celebrate these individuals as our members of the week!

January 7th: Pam Maloney-Birthday January 16th

January 14th: Walt Dauzenberg-Birthday January 21st

January 21st: Judy Adams

January 28th: Marcia Schmidt

ST. JOHN'S UCC ONLINE WORSHIP SERVICE

You will be able to access the worship service by following the link below:

St. John's UCC website (This is the Sunday morning worship service-audio only)

<https://www.stjohnsuccnewport.org>



CHURCH BOOK CLUB - ALL ARE WELCOME!

Saturday January 27, 1:00 – 2:30pm, church parlor

The Hiding Place by Corrie ten Boom

Corrie ten Boom was a Dutch watchmaker who became a heroine of the Resistance, a survivor of Hitler's concentration camps, and one of the most remarkable evangelists of the twentieth century. In World War II she and her family risked their lives to help Jews and underground workers escape from the Nazis, and for their work they were tested in the infamous Nazi death camps. Only Corrie among her family survived to tell the story of how faith ultimately triumphs over evil.



Here is the riveting account of how Corrie and her family were able to save many of God's chosen people. For 35 years millions have seen that there is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still. Now *The Hiding Place*, repackaged for a new generation of readers, continues to declare that God's love will overcome, heal, and restore.

If you have any questions reach out to Laura Haas or call the church office. No sign ups required.

NEXT VISITOR DEADLINE: THURSDAY,
JANUARY 25, 2024

If you would like to submit an article or receive *The Visitor* via email please contact
StJohnsUCC@StJohnsUCCNewport.org.



You may also visit the “News” heading on our website and fill out the appropriate form.

A digital copy of *The Visitor* can be accessed at our website: StJohnsUCCNewport.org under our “News Section.”

INFORMATION REGARDING CHURCH CLOSINGS



As we get into the winter months, we wanted to let you know of our plan of communicating with you in case we need to close/delay any event due to inclement weather.



We will communicate the following ways:

Church Website—a message will be posted on the home page

Email—an email through our listserv will be sent out with information. Please sign up for our email on the church website if you are not a part of our weekly email or contact the church office.

Local News Stations—we will send updates though Channel 5 (WLWT), Channel 12 (WKRC) and Fox 19 News (WXIX).

Please contact the church office if you have any additional questions.



January Birthdays and Anniversaries

January Birthdays

January 1st: Carol Strong
January 2nd: Julie Croley
January 7th: Tim Kennedy
January 8th: Mike Witte
January 12th: Dobin Park
January 13th: Carolyn Garriott
January 15th: Darlene Knepshield
January 16th: Pam Maloney
January 20th: Cindy Bittner & Keith Daniels
January 21st: Walt Dauzenberg
January 22nd: Charles Croley & Jack Patterson
January 23rd: John Robson
January 25th: Nancy Brinkman, Don Marquette & Jenny Williams
January 28th: Robert Pettus
January 30th: Connie Haas



January Anniversaries

January 8th: Sheila & Mike Witte (24 years)
January 28th: Jim & Carol Thompson (63 years)



St. John's would like to wish a happy birthday and happy anniversary to our friends and family celebrating during the month of January!

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

The Church Office will be closed on the following days:

Monday, January 1, 2024:
New Year's Day

Monday, January 15, 2024:
Martin Luther King Jr. Day

