

The Visitor

November 2024

TO BE HIS LIGHT THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES

Volume 107 Issue 10

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

A Message from J. Martin Westermeyer

Many thanks to those who remembered my Birthday last month – either personally, by card, email, text or on FaceBook – all greatly appreciated.

We are entering into November and our minds turn to the holiday near the end of the month – Thanksgiving. And our minds begin to go there because the stores already are pushing us in that direction and besides, Halloween is over, right?

Well, yes and no, we are being thankful all month, but for a variety of reasons:

November 3, we will be remembering the folks who have died in the past year and give thanks for the living we shared with them at our All Saints Service.

November 10, we will be presenting and blessing the Thanksgiving Baskets being given to those folks who use St. John's Food Pantry.

November 17, Stewardship Sunday when we offer our gifts to the church in giving thanks for what God has gifted us and to support the mission and ministry of St. John's.

November 24, Thanksgiving Sunday, when we will definitely be offering our thanks to God prior to the day of Thanksgiving.

Some thoughts about being thankful and rejoicing every day, even when we are busy.

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. - Psalm 118:24 (NRSV)

How long is your “to do” list for this Saturday? What does your schedule look like? What errands do you have to do? Is Saturday the day you set aside to complete all that non-work-related work that it takes to manage a

Continued on next page

household? Or maybe you work on Saturdays, because you are scheduled to or because the work from the week has simply overflowed into your weekend.

What do you have to do today?

Now, what would you like to do with this Saturday? How is the weather outside? Who are you with? Who might you like to be in touch with? Maybe write a note or send a text? What intriguing books lie around the home waiting to be cracked open? What would make you laugh? What would you do with this day if you could do anything?

It would be easy to tell you to go out and do what brings you joy, but I live in the real world right along with you. I know that there may be people counting on you today to do the things you might prefer not to do. There might be a paycheck depending on it. There might be good reasons to work on this day, whether the work is paid or unpaid.

But there may also be some items on that “to do” list that are not essential. They may just be there because you are so used to adding to that list, that one more thing seems to be no big deal. For some of us, Saturdays have become our busiest days.

Could this be a moment to examine the way you spend your time? This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it! ENJOY IT!!

Keeping you all in prayer – see you in church!
Pastor Marty

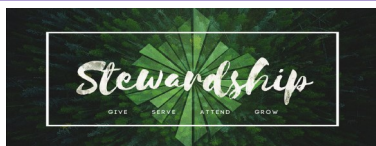
BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS CAMPAIGN FOR ST. JOHN'S

St. John's is setting a goal of raising \$25,000 to use for buildings and grounds work at the church. The church is in need of some work like cleaning the air ducts in the sanctuary and repairing the windows in the sanctuary. Members and friends can place their donations to the campaign in the offering but it is in addition to their regular offering not a replacement. The Leadership Team will put on a celebration for the church once the goal is met. Please join us in this goal and work together to strengthen our foundation.



STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

On Sunday, November 17th we will celebrate Stewardship Sunday by bringing forth our pledge cards and placing them in the offering plate. Please plan to join us for this special service.



PRAYER MINISTRY-NOVEMBER BLESSINGS

November Prayer Thoughts

Your first thought in the morning should be “thank you.”

It is not happy people who are thankful
It is thankful people who are happy.

The best feeling of happiness is when you're happy because you've made someone else happy.

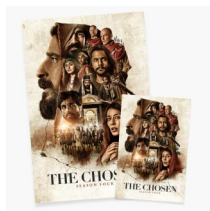
GRATITUDE helps us to see what is there instead of what isn't.

Prayer is intended to be your first priority, not your last resort.



THE CHOSEN

You are invited to join a “watch and discuss” group for Season 4 of “*The Chosen*”. We will gather on the Saturdays listed below from 9:30-11:00 in the church parlor. If you have already seen this season, nothing can be better than watching it again and discussing it with others. If you haven't seen previous seasons of *The Chosen* it will be easy for you to follow and enjoy the season. All are welcome and we welcome your family and friends too!



- Saturday November 09, 9:30-11:00
- Saturday November 23, 9:30-11:00
- Saturday December 14, 9:30-11:00

NEXT VISITOR DEADLINE: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 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.”



“RUNNING WITH JESUS”

Kelli, our office administrator, asked me if I would write an article about the marathon I recently competed in, so I thought I would share with you my journey as to how I got into fitness and running.

My first run takes me back in time to August 2022. At that time, I was physically and mentally exhausted. I used being a musician as an excuse for my physical inactivity. I lacked the will to exercise. I found lying on the bed or couch more comfortable than exercising outside. I always felt sorry for myself. It was not just a feeling of not loving myself, but a sense of guilt about not caring for my body.

Then I came across 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, which reminded me that my body is where God dwells, and that just as I love God, I should cherish and love myself as well. Since I regularly played soccer and had experience with running during my time in the military, I thought I could easily run 5 km (3.1 miles) like others do. However, at first, I couldn't even run more than 2 miles. So I started jumping rope after running, doing 1,000 jumps each time to build my endurance. Every morning at 7 AM, I would go to Rossford Park in Fort Thomas, rain or shine, and start running.

I cut down on fast food that included sugar and fats, restricted my meals, and quit other unhealthy habits all at once. The day I achieved my first goal of running 5 km without stopping, and later, the day when the weather was so nice that I ran 10 km (6.2 miles) without stopping, were some of the happiest days for me. I had reached my initial goals.

I couldn't keep such a great experience of running to myself. I made a lot of effort to recommend running to my friends so I could run together with them. While running alone is nice, I was happy to share this healthy hobby with others. Every morning, I would read the Bible, reflect on its words while running, and both my body and mind became healthier. I felt more confident and full of energy in my prayers and worship, and I believed that my faith was maturing as well.

While running, I participated in several races, but I want to share a few of my best experiences. My goal was always to run in the “Flying Pig” in Cincinnati. However, both the full marathon (26.2 miles) and the half marathon (13.1 miles) take place on Sunday mornings, which was challenging for me since I needed to be at church by 9 AM. The Flying Pig starts at 6:30 AM, so I calculated that if I could finish the half marathon in under two hours, I could make it to church before 9. This past May, I not only achieved my goal but exceeded it, finishing the half marathon in 1 hour and 40 minutes. I then ran an additional 2 miles to get to church on time and was able to prepare for the choir and worship service.

Last summer, when my parents visited, running together in the Firecracker 5K in Fort Thomas on Independence Day became a very happy memory for me. It was my parents' first time running, and the time we spent running and walking together became an unforgettable experience that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

My body has built the stamina to run up to 20 miles at any time, and a new goal emerged—to run a full marathon. I felt it was time to pursue this goal that once seemed like a distant dream, wondering if I could ever achieve it in my lifetime. Just as I feel my running is always growing along with my faith, I focused not only on physical training but also on prayer and meditating on scripture. Listening to scripture while running and studying brought peace to my heart. Even when I reached the point where my legs could no longer move after 20 miles, I prayed and took one step at a time. My goal was to finish the marathon and to do so in under 4 hours. So, on September 28, at the “Mill Race Marathon” in Columbus, Indiana, while listening to a sermon on 1 Corinthians, I completed the full marathon with a time of 3 hours and 25 minutes.

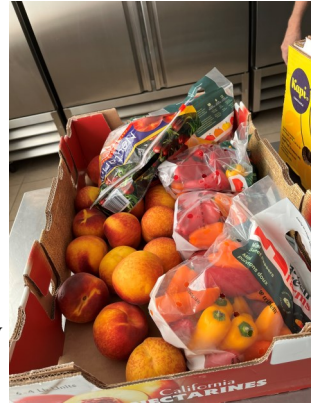
It is by God's grace that my health and faith have both been able to grow. In many ways I lacked motivation and discipline, but through consistent effort, I have been able to achieve my goals. I still have many shortcomings, but that's why, even today, I put on my running shoes, read the Bible, and head out the door to run with Jesus.

Many blessings,
Dobin



WHAT WOULD THEY SEE?

I have been struck by the sign honoring Sue Wagner and Peggy Day that hangs at the entrance to the St. John's Food Pantry. I wonder what those two remarkable women would find today were they to show up the second Thursday of each month. If they peered into the three stuffed bags each person receives would they wonder how St. John's has such a well-supplied pantry? Nutrition needs have remained pretty constant



across the years since those ladies and others invested their time and dollars to found the pantry to help folks here in Campbell County to bridge food gaps. What they may not readily recognize is the source of what we store and offer. Nearly all comes from the Freestore Foodbank. Oh, they'd know the name — its been around for 60+ years — but not the tremendous distribution center and location. Located on 3401 Rosenthal Way, close by the Ohio River in the industrial westside of Cincinnati, the distribution center is a marvel of modern automated inventory control. And it has to be. The goal for this charity serving the Tri-State is to improve lives by eliminating hunger in partnership with the community. St. John's and the Sue and Peggy Pantry is a part of that community. They want — and we want — to create a hunger-free, healthy, and thriving tri-state community. To do so — provide folks who show up, with nutritious food. One in every six residents has need for a little help to fill their pantries each month. Although staples like canned fruits and veggies, cereals, pastas, and assorted bean are always on hand and found in each bag, your food pantry also strives to go over and beyond. Frozen meats — hot dogs, breakfast sausage, hamburger — are always a part of the selection. But fresh veggies and fruits are also, if available, handed out. Recently when I went to pick up St. John's order, I was stopped by the guy doing the work. He said he had an abundance of fresh produce — “Please take all you could use.” So, I pulled off boxes of nectarines, potatoes, green peppers and even some red grapes. Thanks to our great set of refrigerators and freezers, this spur of the moment fresh nutrition will find its way to grateful folks. Ms. Sue and Ms. Peggy would be happy.



THANKSGIVING BASKETS FOR FOOD PANTRY

This year St. John's is bringing back its Thanksgiving Baskets to benefit the church's Food Pantry. The Food Pantry is generously donating canned corn, green beans, gravy, and sweet potatoes to the baskets. The congregation is being asked to help supply the following items: boxed stuffing, boxed mashed potatoes, canned jellied cranberry sauce, boxed cornbread, and boxed desserts. If you are unable to shop, you are more than welcome to contribute financially to the project. Just mark your donation "Thanksgiving Baskets," and this will help support our cause. Donations will be accepted through **Sunday, November 10, 2024**. Please contact the church office with any questions.



HURRICANE HELENE/MILTON RECOVERY APPEAL

The National Ministries of the United Church of Christ has a long history of supporting communities as they recover from disaster and their plight fades from the headlines. Your support of this appeal will ensure that communities are supported and accompanied for years as they rebuild.

You can mail a check made payable to the United Church of Christ, PO BOX 71957 Cleveland, OH 44194. Please be sure to note "Hurricane Helene/Milton" in your check's memo section. Or you can drop your donation in the offering plate and we will mail it in for you.

Thank you for your assistance in helping families and communities who are in great need in the aftermath of Helene/Milton. Your heartfelt support will make a difference.



LUNCH BUNCH
Wednesday, November 13th
12:00 p.m.-2:00p.m.
Bring Your Own Lunch
Drinks & Desserts Provide

JOIN US
For
LUNCH!



TRICK-OR-TREAT BAGS FOR TRENT MONTESSORI SCHOOL AND ST. JOHN'S LUNCH BUNCH

On Thursday, October 31st the students from Trent Montessori School enjoyed bags of Halloween treats from St. John's UCC. Each student received a trick-or-treat bag filled with candy, snacks and a small toy.

The students greatly appreciated the bag of treats which allowed each student to have a Happy Halloween.

Thank you to David and Diana Stamm for picking the toys and treats for the bags and thank you to the Lunch Bunch for assembling around 85 trick-or-treat bags for the kids.

Happy Halloween!!



Continued on next page



GIFTS TO THE MANGER COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS MINISTRY
Washington United Church of Christ
513-541-7757



Sunday, December 15, we will provide up to 100 area families with gift items and some basic necessities. We hope to give each child (about 350) an outfit, socks, underwear, gloves, hat and a few toys. Each family will receive a food box.

The Christ child was born in poverty and gifted by the magi. What better way to celebrate his birth than to do the same for these children of God!

PLEASE SEE OUR NEEDS below. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the church at 513-541-7757.

MONETARY DONATIONS ARE NEEDED AND APPRECIATED. We will do the shopping! Please send to: Christmas Ministry, Washington UCC, 2950 Sidney Ave. Cincinnati, Ohio 45225

UNDERWEAR: We need girls' sizes small to large and women's sizes small to XL. We need boys sizes 2-3, 4-5 and small and men's sizes small to XL.

SOCKS: We need girls ankle socks sizes 4-10 (colors) and 9-11 (white and colors), and boys sizes 6-9, toddlers, and men's large.

INFANTS: No need. Need toddler boys 2T to 5T.

CLOTHING: Girls: We need girls' sizes 5, 6, 10, 12, 14, 16 and Junior 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 and women small, medium, large, XL. We prefer sweatpants and tops.

CLOTHING: Boys: We need boy's outfits in sizes 5-6, 12-14, 14-16, medium and large, then men's size sweatpants/shirts in sizes M, L, XL

GLOVES/MITTENS and HATS: All sizes

TOYS: We need toys for all ages. Suggestions: art/craft/jewelry making kits, basketball, football, soccer ball, Legos, ethnic baby dolls, Barbie dolls, Barbie doll clothes, cars, trucks, action figures, Play Doh, games, hand held games, toys.

For teens: Bath and beauty, makeup kits, Xbox, Play Station Network, Roblox gift cards.

SPECIAL REQUEST: We request no violent games or toys, no wrapping of gifts.

TRUNK-OR TREAT AT ST. JOHN'S

Trunk or Treat!! Great fun was had by all on Saturday, October 19th as our church members decorated their cars and handed out candy to the children in the neighborhood. There was a great turnout. The children came fully dressed in their Halloween costumes. There were games, face paintings, and hotdogs for all to enjoy. We thank Kyle Taylor and our Leadership Team for arranging this fun afternoon for the children and their families.





Upcoming Events at St. John's

Sunday, November 3rd:

10:00 a.m. Communion Sunday/All Saints Service

Sunday, November 10th:

10:00 a.m. Blessing of the Thanksgiving Baskets

Wednesday, November 13th:

Noon-2:00p.m.-Lunch Bunch

Thursday, November 14th:

9a.m.-Noon Food Pantry

Sunday, November 17th:

10:00 a.m. Stewardship Sunday

Saturday, November 9th & 23rd:

9:30a.m.-11a.m. The Chosen



UPDATE AND THANK YOU FOR GRAYSON MANNING

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Prayer Ministry for all the prayers lifted up for twelve year old Grayson Manning. It has now been more than four months since his accident on Father's Day and arrival at Children's Hospital, New Orleans ER. He arrived with a GCS of three and his survival chance was 17%. The likelihood of him having life-altering impairments was nearly certain. But he has defied all odds. While Grayson's brain was severely damaged in the accident it is hopeful with time and therapy he may regain most of his pre-accident functioning. After seventy plus days in the hospital and 8 surgeries he walked out of the hospital on his own. He has returned to school for half days with therapy in the afternoons. He is back to doing his favorite sport "paintball" on a limited basis. Once again thanks for all the prayers and may they please continue for Grayson. He still has a long journey ahead of him.

Carol Haas (Grayson is my sister's grandson)



Washington United Church of Christ

2950 Sidney Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45225
Phone (513) 541-7757 Fax (513) 541-7579

October 18, 2024

St. Johns United Church of Christ
415 Park Ave.
Newport, KY 41071

Dear Friends,

Thank you! We received your gift of \$355 for the socks and shoes drive, and we are grateful. We will use the money for children in our after-school tutoring program and Christmas. Only through the support of others can our outreach ministries continue.

The holiday season is starting at Washington UCC. Our Thanksgiving food box distribution will be Nov. 26. Those who come will receive a turkey and all the fixings for a traditional dinner.

This year's Gifts to the Manger on Dec. 15, will finally return to its pre-Covid format, inviting registered parents into the church to select outfits, socks, underwear, hats/gloves, and toys/gifts for their children. In recent years, volunteers have made the selections and bagged items for parent pickup. We are happy to be able to return to this parents' choice!

Homework Club, our after-school tutoring program, is in full swing. The children get a light meal on arrival, then are matched with volunteer tutors who help them complete their homework and do other academic enrichment activities. And maybe play outside for a few minutes!

We continue to serve carryout lunch on weekdays to anyone who comes, including low-income and homeless neighbors. Our lunch count continues to increase, sometimes to 80.

Camp Cupboard – where everything is free – is open two days a week for 'shoppers' to get food and donated clothes and household items.

Thank you, on behalf of all those who will benefit from your gift and our pastor,
Rev. Melissa Stephens.

Sincerely,

Laurel Humes, Church Council

November Birthdays and Anniversaries

November Birthdays

November 1st: Claire Coppage
November 2nd: James Penrod Jr.
November 4th: Jean Morrow
November 7th: Kirstie Rice
November 8th: Norma Biery
November 10th: Cathy Connley
November 14th: Kinleigh Rice
November 22nd: Jan Haas
November 23rd: Tracy Barber
November 25th: Bonnie Hoffmann
November 26th: Mickel Clark & Rose Wendling
November 27th: Karen Kiefer & Dick Straman
November 28th: Kyle Taylor
November 29th: Chuck Hawkins



November Anniversaries

November 8th: Eric & Jan Haas (44 years)



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

NOVEMBER HOMEBOUND MEMBERS OF THE WEEK

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

November 3rd: Norma Biery-Birthday November 8th
November 10th: Peggy Eckert
November 17th: Judy Adams
November 24th: Pam Maloney





*Congratulations to
Shannon Kurup and Garrison Rice on their
marriage on October 26, 2024
(son of Shirley Rice)*

ST. JOHN'S UCC ONLINE WORSHIP SERVICES

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

St. John's UCC website

<https://www.stjohnsuccnewport.org>

St John's UCC YouTube Channel

St. John's Newport UCC

St. John's UCC Facebook Page

St. John's UCC Newport



GREETERS WANTED

If you are willing and able to serve as a greeter on Sunday mornings, we could use your help in this role! One Sunday a month is all that it takes or you could be a substitute greeter if you want to help when needed. Please contact the church office by phone (859-431-1818) or by email kelli.taylor@stjohnsuccnewport.org



In Loving Memory of, and In Honor of...

Food Pantry

In Loving Memory of Sue Wagner ~ Gary Wagner

Memorial Fund

In Loving Memory of Carol & Henry Marksberry ~ Barbara Coppage

In Loving Memory of Rev. Henry Marksberry ~ Joan Berkemeyer

In Loving Memory of Jim Haas ~ John & Elizabeth Robson

Buildings and Grounds

In Loving Memory of Rev. Henry Marksberry ~ Jim & Carol Thompson

In Loving Memory of Rev. Henry Marksberry ~ Paul Bergmann

In Loving Memory of Rev. Henry Marksberry ~ Robert & Betty Hasse

General Fund In Loving Memory

In Loving Memory of Rev. Henry Marksberry ~ Royleen Seibert

Flower Fund

In Loving Memory of Jim Haas ~ Tom & Carol Haas

In Loving Memory of Jim Haas ~ Laura Haas & Jim Breyer