

The Visitor

December 2024

TO BE HIS LIGHT THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES

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A Message from J. Martin Westermeyer

As I write this, it is the last part of November and we haven't even celebrated Thanksgiving! The leaves are falling, and the temperature can't decide whether we need jackets or coats when we venture outside. Even so, I am thankful for many things: my family, my friends, my church family, and the omnipresence of God! I am grateful for all of you who have been supporting me through my knee surgeries and recoveries. Your outpouring of cards, texts, emails, personal contact and prayers has been welcomed.

BUT, December will soon be here and I am looking forward to being back for Worship as we begin Advent and our faith journey moves us toward the Celebration of Christmas. Each Sunday during Advent has a theme: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. For this month, I wanted to focus on the theme of Joy.

In John 15:11 (NRSV) we read: *"I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete."*

So, it was all about joy

It was for joy Jesus was born, for joy he befriended and healed, for joy he offended the powers, for joy he said to love one another and love the world even though you don't belong to it and it's never going to love you back. It was for joy he endured the terrible shame, for joy he was raised, for joy he said "peace be with you" and pardoned us everything, for joy he ascended to God's right hand, and for joy he will return, so that his joy would be in us. And that our joy would be complete.

Continued on next page

And all this time you thought it was about duty, so you've been doing it. You thought it was about making a Herculean effort, so you've been making one. You thought it was about becoming a better person and making the world a better place, so you've slogged away. You thought it was about the difference you should make, about getting the holy job done.

But it was always about joy. The joy of his company. The joy of his grace. The joy of his love for God. The joy of his justice. Even the hard joy of his suffering. It was about the joy of being branches of his vine, sheep of his flock, drinking from the living waters of his deep, deep well. And yes, it was about being just and saving work, but with him, in him, and through him, not for him, like some boss, and not to merit a star, and not until you drop from exhaustion, or disappointment, or despair.

No, it was for the joy we know when we know him. It was always about joy. It still is.

May we continue in Joy through the Advent Season to Christmas and beyond as we strive to share the Good News and minister to others on our Way.

See you in Church!!
Blessings - Pastor Marty

WORSHIP EXPERIENCES AT ST. JOHN'S UCC

Season of Advent

December 1, December 8, December 15, December 22

Each week we will light the Advent Candles remembering the themes of: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. On December 1st we will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion to celebrate the start of the season of Advent. During these four Sundays we will be singing Advent hymns and Christmas Carols. There will be special music throughout the season from our musicians and singers.

Christmas Season

The Christmas Season begins on Tuesday, December 24th when we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. Join us at 7:00 pm for our candle light Christmas Eve Service with communion.



PAUSE FOR ADVENT

Please consider joining our small group gathering. A “Pause for Advent” by Trevor Hudson will be the group’s daily resource during the Advent and Christmas seasons. During this time, we will gather in a discussion group each week for reflection and learning together. Taking time to pause for a few minutes each day can help us maintain balance in our lives, invite us to a deeper understanding of these seasons, and discover how we can open our hearts and lives more generously to God.



This discussion group will meet from 10am-11am in the church parlor on Saturday Dec 7, Dec 14, Dec 21, Dec 28, and January 4. All are welcome. You do not need to be following Hudson’s book to join us, nor do you have to participate every week. If you have questions, please contact Laura Haas (lauraclairehaas@gmail.com) or Kelli in the church office.

CALL FOR COOKIES

If you or anyone you know has a special cookie recipe you would like to showcase, we would love for you to include it in the Christmas Concert Reception. The Choir is looking for cookies for their reception after the concert on Sunday, December 15th. Cookies can be dropped off during church office hours or before the concert. Contact the church office with any questions (859) 431-1818 Option 3.



POINSETTIAS FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON!

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15 – TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24



Order your poinsettias to add beauty to our Chance! Orders must be turned in by **Sunday, December 8**. The Poinsettias will be red, in a 6" pot wrapped in green foil, \$12/each. Place this form with check, payable to St. John's UCC, or cash in an envelope.

The plants are yours to take home after December 24, Christmas Eve Service.

I would like to order _____ Poinsettias.

Signature _____ Envelope Number: _____

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT RETURNS

Mark your calendars now! Our annual Christmas Concert will return on Sunday evening, December 15th at 7PM. Our Chancel Choir has been busy rehearsing for the concert for several weeks. The concert will be presenting Christmas selections by John Rutter and Lloyd Larson, as well as a special Christmas overture by the orchestra made up of talented students from the College Conservatory of Music. The concert will be directed by our choral director Dr. Dobin Park. Following the concert we will have a festive Christmas reception in Fellowship Hall.

So save the date and bring your friends and family! You don't want to miss this year's wonderful concert! We guarantee that it will put you in the holiday spirit like nothing else can! We look forward to seeing you there!!



ST. JOHN'S COOKBOOK

We recently found a number of copies of the Cookbook we had printed for St. John's 160th anniversary. We are offering copies for \$5.00 each with the proceeds going to the Building and Grounds Fund. The cookbook would make a wonderful gift or stocking stuffer! Copies will be available before and after church beginning Sunday, November 24th. Julie Ollier will be in the lower entry by the fountain if you are interested in purchasing copies. You may also call the church office to have copies set aside for you.

Thanks,

Carolyn Garriott



PRAYER MINISTRY-DECEMBER BLESSINGS

A Christmas Prayer

May the blessing of joy abide within you
May the blessing of peace rest upon you
May the blessing of love flow out through you
May all the blessings of the Lord be yours at Christmas and
in the next year.



The music of Christmas is laughter
The warmth of Christmas is friendship
The spirit of Christmas is love.
Merry Christmas

THANK YOU TO THE GREY FAMILY

The Memorial Committee would like to thank Flo Grey for allowing the Dan Grey Memorial Funds to be used to purchase the beautiful Nativity scene now on display on our church lawn.

The Nativity scene will be enjoyed not only by our St. John's family, but by everyone in the surrounding area. We believe it will bring a feeling of peace and hope, helping everyone keep the true spirit of Christmas on their minds and in their hearts,

Thank you Flo.



A picture of what the nativity set will look like.

THE 2024 ANNUAL VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS TOUR

Saturday, December 7th &
Sunday, December 8th, 2024
12pm - 6pm

The Annual East Row Victorian Christmas Tour is returning on the first full weekend in December in the East Row Historic District of Newport, Kentucky, for our 30th year! Once again, residents will be opening their spectacular historic homes to the public, just in time for the Christmas season. We will have 7 distinct homes scattered around the Historic District, each with a unique character sure to delight visitors. Tour hours each day will be from 12pm to 6pm this year.

After picking up your tickets for the self-guided tour, visitors may walk through the neighborhood and go through each of the homes, which reflect Queen Anne and Italianate architecture styles from the 1890's through 1910's. Interior features include original staircases, fireplace mantles, and woodwork. While garlands and greenery are hardly needed for the homes, all of which have been selected for their distinctive interiors and exteriors and historic design, the residences will be decorated in their best holiday finery. Besides holiday decor, visitors will see newly renovated kitchens, sitting rooms, dining rooms, and entranceways.



2025 LEADERSHIP TEAM

Congratulations to the 2025 Leadership Team members.
They will begin their term in office effective January 1, 2025.

Your new officers are:

President: Kyle Taylor

Vice-President: David Stamm

Secretary: Pat Goins

Treasurer: Vickie Kennedy

Past President: Laura Haas



LUNCH BUNCH

Wednesday, December 11th

12:00 p.m.-2:00p.m.

Lunch will be Provided

Drinks & Desserts Provided

**JOIN US
For
LUNCH!**



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



ALL SAINTS SUNDAY

On Sunday, November 3, 2024 St. John's honored those individuals who passed within the last year as we celebrated our All Saints Day Service. The service was filled with joyous hymns, an inspirational message from Vickie Kennedy and the lighting of candles in remembrance of those we lost. Below are the names of those individuals:

Shannon Lawrence November 4, 2023
Bruce Shay November 30, 2023
Mary Haas December 2, 2023
Roger Milner December 8, 2023
Barbara Runge December 17, 2023
Carol Marksberry December 22, 2023
Robert Westermeyer December 22, 2023
Betty Westermeyer January 31, 2024
Joseph Wendling March 31, 2024
Walter Dauzenberg April 22, 2024
Donna Hamilton April 23, 2024
Annette LaCroix May 1, 2024
Bill Seibert May 3, 2024
Judy Gadd May 21, 2024
Harold Clark May 25, 2024
Tony Charlton July 23, 2024
Henry Marksberry September 9, 2024
James Haas October 8, 2024
Peggy Westlund October 30, 2024



2025 CHURCH DIRECTORIES AND 2025 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Beginning the week of December 1st the 2025 Church Directories and 2025 Offering Envelopes will be available in the hallway by the church office. If you do not find a set of offering envelopes and would like one, please contact Kelli in the church office and she will prepare a set for you (859)-431-1818 Option 3 or kelli.taylor@stjohnsuccnewport.org.

A sample of a church offering envelope. It has a blue header with the word "OFFERING" in white. Below the header, there are fields for "Name", "Date", and "How". Under "How", there are four checkboxes: "Tithes", "Offering", "Building Fund", and "Other". At the bottom, there is a line for "Total \$".

MILITARY MEMBER UPDATE

Nicholas Schoo Schierberg was born in Lexington and began attending St. John's at the age of four when we returned to Northern Kentucky. He was very active at St. John's during his formative years including participating in youth plays, Camp Sunshine, confirmation, mission trips, and Ichthus events. He graduated from Dixie Heights High School in 1999, attended NKU, and joined the US Coast Guard in 2003. He has served in stations on the Mississippi River, Outer Banks of North Carolina, Lake Michigan in Wisconsin and Lake Erie in Ohio, all in safety, search and rescue engineering roles. In 2017 he transferred his engineering skills to the USCG Cutter Stratton, Alameda, California, serving throughout the Indo-Pacific region, and is currently deployed on the USCG Cutter Hamilton based at North Charleston Naval Base, Atlantic region. Both the Stratton and the Hamilton are National Security Cutters focused on law enforcement and drug interdiction, plus collaboration with US allies. Nicholas has three sons, Taylor, Brody, and Oakley, two of which are nearly the age he was when he made his career choice. As his parents, we thank you for continuing to maintain the solid foundation St. John's provides and your continued prayers for Nicholas and his sons. We know his grandparents, Len and Gabbie Schoo, would also be so grateful. Bless you all, Paul and Pam Schierberg

Paul and Pam Schierberg
1624 Liscourt Dr.
Venice, FL 34292



THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE AND FOOD PANTRY

On Sunday, November 10th during worship, we blessed the food that our members collected for this year's Thanksgiving baskets. This month we provided Thanksgiving Baskets to benefit families coming to the church's Food Pantry. The Food Pantry generously donated canned corn, green beans, gravy, and sweet potatoes to the baskets. The congregation brought in other food items such as boxed mashed potatoes, boxed stuffing, boxed desserts, cornbread mix and cranberry sauce to help complete the baskets.

On Thursday, November 14th our faithful Food Pantry volunteers distributed food to needy folks in our community to insure that they have a blessed Thanksgiving holiday. In addition to the bags of food, our church also gave each family a \$50 certificate to get a turkey for their dinner. We thank our volunteers for always being ready to help with this important mission to our community.

"Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality."
Romans 12:13



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



PUZZLES FOR KIDS AND KIDS AT HEART



O HOLY NIGHT

A	D	N	H	P	W	P	J	Q	B	T	G	F	F	S	Q	V
Y	D	M	Q	M	I	A	A	S	T	A	R	R	L	G	F	R
F	X	F	A	G	R	D	O	N	K	E	Y	A	S	Q	L	J
F	S	B	U	G	S	A	V	I	O	R	M	N	F	W	U	W
H	H	E	A	X	W	I	X	H	Z	I	E	K	J	A	C	B
E	E	T	M	B	Y	J	R	S	N	M	V	I	N	Z	X	I
M	P	H	I	N	Y	R	O	A	E	H	H	N	U	G	L	B
I	H	L	B	K	Y	P	G	S	Z	B	N	C	Z	O	Q	J
W	E	E	Z	M	Z	N	I	M	E	U	Q	E	X	L	M	E
K	R	H	I	M	Z	W	F	M	E	P	S	N	P	D	N	S
Z	D	E	R	A	S	K	T	A	B	A	H	S	L	D	Y	U
G	N	M	Q	J	J	J	S	N	Y	I	A	E	S	R	V	S
V	A	N	F	Q	F	A	T	G	F	T	G	I	A	Z	T	X
N	J	C	U	R	Z	Z	X	E	U	N	O	M	N	G	L	Z
B	K	Y	M	W	I	H	F	R	A	P	E	A	C	E	G	W

ANGEL
ANIMALS
BABY
BETHLEHEM
DONKEY
FRANKINCENSE

GIFTS
GOLD
JESUS
JOSEPH
MANGER
MARY

MYRRH
PEACE
SAVIOR
SHEPHERD
STAR
WISE MEN



December Birthdays and Anniversaries

December Birthdays

December 1st: Pam Schierberg
December 4th: Barbara Boyers
December 5th: Blakely Rice & Greyson Rice
December 7th: Patty Patterson
December 8th: Mike Scharber
December 9th: Ralph Schoulthies
December 15th: Karen Schofield & Janet Wendel
December 18th: Eric Haas
December 21st: John Westlund
December 25th: Betty Webster



December Anniversaries

December 2nd: Gary & Patty Wagner (6 years)
December 6th: Mike & Brenda Scharber (55 years)



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

DECEMBER HOMEBOUND MEMBERS OF THE WEEK

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

December 1st: Bonnie Walter
December 8th: Marcia Schmidt
December 15th: John Westlund-Birthday December 21st
December 22nd: Betty Webster-Birthday December 25th
December 29th: Robert Hasse

NEXT VISITOR DEADLINE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 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."



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

Food Pantry

In Loving Memory of Sue Wagner ~ Gary Wagner

In Loving Memory of Madge Bruce ~ Madge Bruce Book Club

Memorial Fund

In Loving Memory of James Haas ~ John & Elizabeth Robson

In Loving Memory of Phil Hamilton ~ Flo Grey

Buildings and Grounds

In Loving Memory of Rev. Henry Marksberry ~ Scott & Kelli Taylor

In Loving Memory of Peggy Westlund ~ Jan & Darlene Kneppshield

In Loving Memory of Howard Hanson ~ Dr. Michael Hanson

Music Fund

In Loving Memory of Peggy Westlund ~ John & Elizabeth Robson

In Loving Memory of Peggy Westlund ~ Karen Kiefer

In Loving Memory of Peggy Westlund ~ Dr. Michael Hanson

In Loving Memory of Peggy Westlund ~ Joan Berkemeyer

In Loving Memory of Phil Hamilton ~ Jan & Darlene Kneppshield

In Loving Memory of Phil Hamilton ~ Dr. Michael Hanson

In Loving Memory of Phil Hamilton ~ Jeri & Steve McLane

Thanksgiving Baskets

In Loving Memory of Dennis & Ruth Ann Brennan ~ Donna Hoffman

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS CAMPAIGN FOR ST. JOHN'S + UPDATE

St. John's has set a goal of raising \$25,000 to use for buildings and grounds work at the church. The church is in need of some routine maintenance and this fund will pay for the repainting of the sanctuary windows, replacement of the broken lights in the upstairs classrooms, and reseeding of the church lawn. Members and friends can place their donations to the campaign in the offering plate 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.



St. John's has had a very strong start to the beginning of this campaign. Currently the campaign is sitting at \$15,990.00. Although the work that needed to be done is complete, the church is still in need of donations to this campaign. We ask that as we journey through this holiday season, please consider the church's buildings and grounds campaign as part of your holiday giving. We thank you for your consideration during this time.

Quote of the Day

Expect nothing.
Appreciate everything.

Upcoming Church Business Meeting

Leadership Team Meeting:

No meeting for the month of December-Holiday break

Upcoming Events at St. John's

Sunday, December 1st:

10:00 a.m. Communion Sunday/First Sunday of Advent

Last Day for Gifts to the Manger for Washington UCC

Sunday, December 8th:

10:00 a.m. Second Sunday of Advent

Wednesday, December 11th:

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

Thursday, December 12th:

9a.m.-Noon Food Pantry

Sunday, December 15th:

10:00 a.m. Third Sunday of Advent

7:00 p.m. Choral Christmas Concert

Sunday, December 22nd:

10:00 a.m. Fourth Sunday of Advent

Tuesday, December 24th:

7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service

Saturday, December 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th & January 4th

10am-11am Pause for Advent Discussion Group
