

The Visitor

FEBRUARY 2026

TO BE HIS LIGHT THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES

Volume 109 Issue 2

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A Message from J. Martin Westermeyer

As I write this, I realize that the Lenten Season will be upon us soon. (more quickly than I had anticipated). On that note, I have information elsewhere in the Visitor about Ash Wednesday Services and Lenten Prayer Partners. Please note and share with others about these Lenten opportunities.

Hebrews 10:24:

And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds.

Every once in a while, I will run across a Facebook post where someone is asking their friends to shift the conversation from what is wrong in the world to something fun or to share what they are grateful for. Sometimes good news is posted and there is an invitation to “share” so that others might know that things aren’t all bad all the time.

These reminders usually come right on time. The heaviness of the struggle for some sanity in our lives can cause us to burn out and even lash out at those who disagree with us and those attempting to love and care for us. The losses are real. The wounds are deep. The journey is long. I’m tired mentally and emotionally. I am tired!

So during this Lenten season, I want to commit to inserting joy and laughter into my daily living wherever I may be. I want to commit to saying “thank you” more to those who are in public service or serving in the Armed Forces and those who stuff envelopes in the office or other behind the scenes tasks. I commit to saying “I am sorry” when I am in error or step on folks’ toes or am just not having a good day.

Perhaps this practice will provoke another to do the same. And another. Who knows?

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What are you committing to this Lenten Season? How will you interact with others? Will it involve sharing the Good News and not just being kind or considerate? May we be faithful in our sharing of how God has, is and continues to be important in our lives.

See you in church – Pastor Marty

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

We will begin the Season of Lent with Worship Services on **Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2026**. Two services will be offered that day: **12:00 noon and 7:00 pm**.

The 12:00 noon service will be Liturgy only and the 7:00 pm service will be a full Worship experience including hymns and special music. The Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion will be offered at both services. Please place this on your calendar and let us begin Lent together.



NEXT VISITOR DEADLINE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2026

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.”



PRAYER PARTNERS FOR LENT 2026

Praying for one another is a special way in which we become acquainted with each other. In keeping with that idea, we will exchange Prayer Partners for Lent. You will be given the name of a church member or church friend that you will pray for each day during the Lenten Season. You will ***not know*** who is praying for you!!



Partners will be exchanged on the First Sunday of Lent, February 26th and will be revealed on Easter Sunday, April 5th. This commitment is for **six weeks** and is a good way to remember one another every day

There will be a sign-up sheet available for those interested in being part of this Lenten Prayer Ministry 2026 until Sunday, February 15th. If you cannot be present to sign-up and would like to be part of this Lenten Prayer Ministry, call the church office, 859.431.1818 option 3 or email Kelli: kelli.taylor@stjohnsuccnewport.org

PRAYER MINISTRY– FEBRUARY BLESSINGS

February is a friendly reminder that love happens every day.

Remember–
All love originates from the heart of God.

We love others best when we love God most.

Start the day by handing it over to God.

Is prayer your steering wheel
or

Your spare tire?

Pray anywhere because God is everywhere.



CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

The Church Office will be closed on the following day:

Monday, February 16, 2026: President's Day



LENTEN DISCUSSION GROUP

We invite you to join in the Lenten Discussion group. This year we will be using ***"The Easter Code: A 40 Day Journey to the Cross"*** by O.S. Hawkins. The devotional guide provides daily materials from Ash Wednesday through Easter. Each day includes daily reflection, scripture, a word for the day, and prayer. Engage in a meaningful way to prepare your heart and mind for Easter. The group will meet each week to share in discussion of the weekly devotions. All are welcome, church members or not, we'll gather on **Saturdays, 10:00 – 11:00 am, February 21 through April 4.**

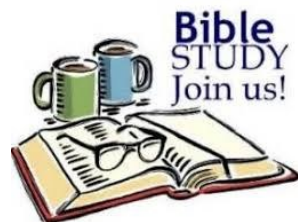
If you are interested, please sign up when you are in church on a Sunday morning, reach out to the church office (859-431-1818 option 3), or contact Laura Haas ([859-240-9807](tel:859-240-9807) or lauraclairehaas@gmail.com).

If Saturdays are not convenient for you, please sign up and indicate a better day, marking the most convenient time as morning, afternoon, or evening.

LENTEN DISCUSSION GROUP

COMING THIS SPRING! BIBLE STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, APRIL THROUGH JUNE, 2026

"One encounter with Jesus changed Matthew's life. He can change yours, too." This spring we will use **Max Lucado's *Life Lessons***, the gospel of Matthew, for a 12-week study of the gospel. This is year A of the common lectionary and the gospel of Matthew is the primary focus of the gospel readings. Each lesson includes bible readings, "intriguing questions, inspirational stories and poignant reflections". The study guide works well for small groups and individual study.



More information and encouragement to sign up coming soon.

“SOUPER” BOWL SUNDAY AT ST. JOHN’S

Join St. John’s on Sunday, February 8th as we celebrate Super Bowl Sunday with our “Souper” Bowl Event. This event will be a two-part event consisting of a food drive and luncheon following Sunday Worship.

Before worship, we will be hosting a canned food drive benefiting the St. John’s UCC Food Pantry to help individuals in need in our local area. We are asking everyone to bring in a canned food item (**items that are especially needed: canned fruit, peanut butter, jelly, pudding, maple syrup, and vegetable oil etc.**) and place it in the baskets located at either entrance of the Sanctuary.



Then, following worship, join us in Fellowship Hall where we will be hosting a light luncheon of soup, salads, and desserts.

If you would like to help, sign-up sheets for food will be located at the entrances of the sanctuary of the church. **Please sign up if you would like to bring a soup, salad or dessert or just come for the luncheon.**



Reservations are also welcomed, and you will find forms in the bulletin to do so; or you may contact the church office. Forms may be placed in the offering plates on Sunday morning.

We hope you can join us as we gather for worship and fellowship while also helping our local community with this fun event. If there are any questions, please contact the church office.

LUNCH BUNCH
Wednesday, February 11th
Lunch Will Be Provided
12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.
Drinks & Desserts Provided
ALL ARE WELCOME!!!!



SENDING VALENTINE'S DAY CARDS TO CHILDREN AT CINCINNATI CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

This Valentine's Day, St. John's would like to help the children that are unable to participate in the normal festivities of Valentine's Day. Cincinnati Children's has made it possible for individuals to send Valentine Day Cards to children in the hospital so that they may feel the love of others on this special holiday.



To send a card please visit:

<https://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/patients/resources/support/ecard>

or google search Cincinnati Children's Valentine's Cards. **A link for easy access will also be located on our weekly email and Facebook page.**



We would love for members of St. John's to participate in this special activity to help those children in need. If there are any questions please contact the church office.

END OF YEAR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

The 2025 End of Year Contribution Statements were mailed out on **Thursday, January 22nd**. If you did not receive a contribution statement and feel that you should have, you can contact our financial administrator Chris Baker at: Financialadmin@stjohnsuccnewport.org or you can call the church office at (859) 431-1818 option 3 for Kelli or option 7 for Chris for more information.



THANK YOU NOTE TO OUR EAST ROW NEIGHBORS

To Our East Row Neighbors & Friends

I wanted to extend my deepest gratitude for all that the East Row has done throughout the holiday season. When I first reached out about potential mission work to help our local community, I was hoping the message would find a couple of individuals who would be willing to step in and help us with our efforts. I was humbled when several members of the community came together and donated many, many goods to both our food pantry and to the Washington UCC Giving Tree to help struggling families have a very merry holiday season.

It is times like this that I am proud that St. John's can call the East Row our home. Many times, churches are faced to support themselves and feel isolated in the neighborhood where they are located due to a lack of connection. This is not the case for the East Row because we are always so grateful for everything that you all do for us to support our mission and work, and we know it cannot be done without you.

Again, thank you for everything this community does for us. We are looking forward to another positive year and trying to expand our mission work to help even more families in need for 2026 as more difficulties arise. If anyone ever has any ideas for things, please reach out to me and I would be happy to discuss them with you.

Have a Great New Year!
Kyle Taylor
President, St. John's UCC

*Thank
you*

LIVE STREAMING NOW AVAILABLE FOR ST. JOHN'S

LIVE STREAMING. Join us Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. on our church Facebook page to join our service live as it happens. The service will be available to watch at any time on our Facebook page and will be uploaded to our YouTube page and website. We hope you can join us for worship in any format that works for you.



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

February Birthdays

February Birthdays

February 5th: Susan Dunn

February 7th: Matthew Greenert

February 9th: Garrett Cutajar

February 10th: Carol Haas & Michael Sullivan

February 15th: Sheila Witte

February 17th: Tom Fuldner & Wendy Watts

February 18th: Shirley Rice

February 19th: Kelli Taylor & JoAnn Winstel

February 20th: Jo Haas Jr. & Kelsey Taylor

February 23rd: Paul Bogen

February 24th: Julie Ollier

February 27th: Pamela Fuldner



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

FEBRUARY HOMEBOUND MEMBER OF THE WEEK

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

February 1st: Joan Berkemeyer

February 8th: Jean Morrow

February 15th: Peggy Eckert

February 22nd: Gayle McAtee

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

Food Pantry

In Loving Memory of Norma Biery ~ Judy Adams

In Loving Memory of Elizabeth Robson ~ Joan Berkemeyer

Memorial Fund

In Loving Memory of Elizabeth Robson ~ Kelli & Scott Taylor

In Loving Memory of Elizabeth Robson ~ Kimberly & Thomas Miller

General Fund

In Loving Memory of Elizabeth Robson ~ Dr. Michael Hanson

In Loving Memory of Elizabeth Robson ~ Jan & Darlene Knepshield

In Loving Memory of Elizabeth Robson ~ Jim & Carol Thompson

In Loving Memory of Elizabeth Robson ~ Julie Ollier

Valentine's Day Word Search

c g f l o w e r s i p
j s w e e t h e a r t
e f p a c u p i d a e
v h o i k a c p s r t
a o g u y h e a r t s
l o v e r r d e g o f
e k r a p t r r o w r
n r i r o s e s p x i
t o h s d r d e i r e
i s u h s p i n n h n
n r g a r e l l k t d
e o s c h o s r o s h
s w e e r t s f r i e
v c h o c o l a t e k

valentine
arrow
cupid
hearts
love

red
fourteenth
hugs
chocolate
pink

roses
friend
flowers
sweetheart
kisses