

"This is God's Message: Attend to matters of justice. Set things right between people. Rescue victims from their exploiters. Don't take advantage of the homeless, the orphans, the widows. Stop the murdering!" (Jeremiah 22:3, MSG)

The peace we long for seems elusive, as we witness the violence in Minneapolis. We are shocked by the murder of Alex Pretti by ICE agents today in the streets of Minneapolis, a mere 17 days after the murder of Renee Nicole Good. We grieve the loss of these lives and pray for their families and loved ones during this time of grief and sorrow.

We pray for the city of Minneapolis, for its leaders and for clergy and spiritual leaders who are offering care to this city that continues to experience the violence, tyranny, and oppression in the presence and actions of ICE agents. We pray for an end to the violence and hatred unleashed on immigrant communities and pray safety for those most vulnerable, even as we pray for those who seek to care for those whose lives are threatened by the presence of these federal agents.

The United Church of Christ joins the faith community in strongly condemning the on-going actions of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as it continues to bring death and violence to the streets of Minneapolis. The use of lethal force on unarmed and non-threatening individuals continues to result in loss of life and injury. The abduction of people on the streets of major cities, the profiling of individuals, the targeting of immigrants, and the escalation of deportations are violating the human rights of millions. Added to the increased militarization of cities, communities that house some of the most vulnerable now find themselves under siege. It is time to stop the murdering. It is time to stop the violence. It is time to return peace to our nation's cities.

The deployment of masked agents in the nation's cities has escalated fear, anxiety, and tension in communities where immigrants and people of color continue to be profiled and targeted to be stopped, detained, and arrested. As people of faith, we call for the removal of ICE from Minneapolis and other cities, and for the removal of the National Guard. We call for truth telling and for accountability in these two deaths, seeking justice for the lives lost, and for those whose lives are disrupted by the actions of ICE.

Today we mourn, weeping at the injustices being meted on neighbors. We mourn the loss of freedom, dignity, and respect. We mourn the loss of these lives.

- Alex Pretti
- Renee Nicole Good

*God, we long for peace in our communities, peace that is promised, peace that is everlasting. We cry out for the loss of lives to violence in the streets of the United States. Grant us the courage to see and speak the truth. Help us to be witnesses to your presence and to the call to love our neighbors as ourselves. Restore peace to the land and to our communities. Set things right among us we pray. Amen.*

The Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, United Church of Christ General Minister and President/CEO has issued a special statement and prayer. by [Staff Reports](#) www.ucc.org, published on Jan 24, 2026



# St. John's United Church of Christ

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**WELCOME VISITORS!** Thank you for coming! Please sign a pew card to place in the offering plate.

**WORSHIP:** When reading this bulletin Leader Speaks Plain Font, Everyone Speak Bold Font

**Nursery:** There is no nursery attendant today so everyone is able to participate in Communion. Kids are welcome to quietly play in the back of the sanctuary or have their adult join them in the nursery.



## Announcements

- † **Today, after worship,** All Church Annual Meeting  
In person and on Zoom. Please look over the reports sent in your email and printed in the Narthex  
Join Zoom Meeting  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86560828256?  
pwd=JQquezAZGUdWXNlwxtLs4sEb51uHsm.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86560828256?pwd=JQquezAZGUdWXNlwxtLs4sEb51uHsm.1)  
  
Meeting ID: 865 6082 8256  
Passcode: 106479
- † **Soup or Bowl** February 8th after worship. Make your favorite soup recipe for a friendly competition and great fellowship.
- † **The Belvidere Group (AA)** meets at everyday at 7pm.
- † **Chair and Mat Yoga** with Katherine Ray is going weekly! Chair yoga at 10 AM and mat yoga at 11:30 AM. No RSVP required and classes are \$5.
- † **Sunday School for Adults and Kids** Sundays at 9am. Check out the upcoming curriculum options for more studies.
- † **Community Meal** 3rd Wednesday of each month.
- † **Rummage Sale – April 24-25**  
Bring in your donations now (except fabric or paper items) and we'll store them in the garage until spring.

Let us know if you have a large or "specialty" item for us to list on Facebook Marketplace now. It takes a while to match a special item to its new home!

We will pick up anything that will fit in a minivan.

Questions? Betsy Mollway (815-222-9323) or Nancy Lyford (815-978-3319)

**Invitation to Generosity****Moment for Mission~ Over Night Cafe****Doxology**

Praise God, through whom all blessings flow,  
 Praise God, all creatures here below,  
 Praise God, above ye heavenly host.  
 Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**Prayer of Dedication**

God may these offerings be used to get up to good trouble for the liberation of us all. Amen

**Hymn “This Little Light of Mine”**

This little light of mine; I'm gonna let it shine.  
 This little light of mine; I'm gonna let it shine.  
 This little light of mine; I'm gonna let it shine.  
 Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

Everywhere I go; I'm gonna let it shine.  
 Everywhere I go; I'm gonna let it shine.  
 Everywhere I go; I'm gonna let it shine.  
 Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

**Closing Prayer****Benediction**

**What Is Good:** Service Prayers for the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany was written by Rev. Teña T. Nock, who serves as The Associate Pastor of Digital Ministry, First United Church of Tampa, United Church of Christ. Mystic in the making.



General Giving

**Prelude****Announcements**

**Choral Introit “There’s Bread for the Journey”**  
 There’s bread for the journey and friends for the way.  
 There’s hope for tomorrow and love for today!  
 The cup of forgiveness, all blessings release,  
 to heal and renew us and bring us God’s peace.  
 O Holy Spirit, bind us together, now.  
 O Holy Spirit, bring us your peace.  
 O Holy Spirit, bind us together, now.  
 O Holy Spirit, bring us your peace.

**Responsive Welcome Statement**

At St. John's United Church of Christ, we are Living Outwardly & Valuing Everyone!

**We live and work amid God’s love!**  
 In that spirit, we extend love to all who come into our midst, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, nationality, skin color, culture, differing abilities, age or political affiliations, to participate fully in all aspects of church.  
**Our ministry is to bring the Good News of Christ’s love to all.**  
 We work in God’s name to tear down walls and build community,  
**to walk with each other through all of life’s circumstances,**  
 to provide for those in need,  
**to offer comfort to the hurting and the sick,**  
 and to uplift the brokenhearted.  
**Where we fail, we ask for God’s forgiveness.**  
 May the Holy Spirit and our siblings continue to challenge us to do better.  
**No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here!**

**Call to Worship (Micah 6: 6-8 NRSVue)**

With what shall we come before God and bow ourselves

before God on high?

**Shall we come before the Holy One with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?**

Will God be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rams of oil?

**Shall we give our firstborn for our transgression, the fruit of our bodies for the sin of our souls?**

God has told us, fellow mortals, what is good and what is required of us.

**But to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with our God.**

### Invocation

Holy One, you aren't just good, you are The Good. We welcome Your goodness in anyway that it desires to manifest throughout this time of worship. May something be preached, prayed, or sung, that changes us for good, and for good.

Amen

### Hymn #433 "In the Bulb"

### Young & Young at Heart Time

### Pastoral Prayer~ The Lord's Prayer

### Hymn "Christ, Be our Light"

Verse 1: Choir

**REFRAIN: ALL**

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.  
Shine through the darkness.  
Christ, be our light! Shine in your church  
gathered today.

Verse 2-4: ALL

- 2: Longing for peace, our world is troubled.  
Longing for hope, many despair.  
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.  
Make us your living voice. **REFRAIN**
- 3: Longing for shelter, many are homeless.  
Longing for warmth, many are cold.

**Make us your building, sheltering others,  
Walls made of living stone. **REFRAIN****

- 4: **Many the gifts, many the people,  
Many the hearst that yearn to belong.  
Let us be servants to one another,  
Signs of your kingdom come. **REFRAIN****

### Prayer for Transformation and New Life

Challenges are ever present when we do good. Sometimes, the challenges can be overwhelming and so we're tempted to retreat or stay silent. Help us to remember all that you do for our good so that we can go forth and do the same.

### Words of Grace

In a beginning, God looked at all that was created and called creation "good". In this moment of a new beginning, let us give thanks for the grace that enables us to be doers of good no matter the challenges we face.

### Gloria Patri

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son  
and to the Holy Ghost,  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall  
be, world without end. Amen.**

### Scripture Micah 6:1-8

### Sermon "What is Good"

### A Service of Communion

### Blessing and Sharing the Elements

*All are invited to participate in this Holy symbol of Communion. You are invited to eat the as a sign of your own personal faith and hold the cup to drink together as a sign of our communion faith.*

### Prayer of Thanksgiving