

## **Announcements**

- ‡ **Soup or Bowl** today after worship. Join us 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.

Save the dates for our **rummage sale – April 24-25**

Storage in the garage is allowing us to take your donations now (except critter-friendly fabric or paper). Drop it off and we'll get it to the garage.

I am currently posting large and “specialty” items on Facebook Marketplace and a few on eBay. Let us know what you have that would like a new home.

We can pick up.

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



# St. John's United Church of Christ

P.O. Box 794, 401 N Main Street, Belvidere, IL  
61008stjohns401.org stjohnsucc401@gmail.com

**Pastor:** Rev. Muriel Morley Jahn 815-544-2977  
murielmorley@gmail.com  
**Pastoral Associate:** Beth Carson 815-979-0473  
**Minister of Music:** Mary Albrecht 815-547-7503  
**Choir Director:** Jeanne Anderson 815-985-2652

**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

## **Announcements**

- ✦ **Nursery:** Children are welcome in all aspects of worship. The nursery provides an alternative space so kids and parents can both get what they need from worship. Children are encouraged to check in with their adult before going downstairs with the nursery attendant.
- ✦ **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** Every Sunday at 9am.
- ✦ **Community Meal** free to all every third Wednesday of the month.

May the Way, Truth and Life go with you, the Presence that unsettles what must change and steadies what must endure. Let the weight on your shoulders grow lighter, not by forgetting it, but by letting others walk beside you. Carry within you a courage that listens deeply, an imagination wide enough to rebuild ruins, and a tenderness fierce enough to unlearn every habit of harm. And as you go— into streets that need mending and neighborhoods aching for breath— may you hear the Holy murmur “Here I am” in every shared burden, in every act of mercy, in every small unraveling of the yoke. Go in boldness. Go in gentleness. Go in the sacred work of making all things whole. Amen.

***Remove the Yoke: Service Prayers for Epiphany 5A was written by Rev. Michael Anthony Howard***, who serves as the Minister of Faith in Action for the Living Water Association, Ohio NorthEast, of the Heartland Conference, United Church of Christ. Michael's work supports congregations as they weave theology, justice, and place-based ministry into faithful action that bears prophetic witness to God's dwelling among us.



Delicious Fundraiser



Amazon List



T-Shirts

**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.



General Giving

**Scripture** Isaiah 58:1-12

**Sermon** "Too Political"

**Moment for Mission~ Overnight Cafe**

**Invitation to Generosity**

**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**

Calling Voice Who Leads Us Toward Freedom, we give thanks for every gift offered today—for open hands, willing hearts, and the courage to imagine a shared life made whole. Bless what we have brought. Let it move where relief is needed, where repair can begin, where dignity can rise. Make these gifts more than generosity—make them instruments of justice, seeds of compassion, signs that your vision is taking root among us. For every burden lifted, for every neighbor tended, for every act of mercy made possible, we give you thanks. Carry us forward in this work with gratitude deep enough to shape the world we are building together.  
Amen.

**Hymn #595 "I'll Fly Away"**

**Benediction**

**Prelude****Announcements****Choral Introit "Fresh as the Morning"**

**Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,  
God always faithful, you do not change.  
Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,  
God always faithful, you do not change.**

**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**

Shout it out—no holding back!

**There is truth that needs to be spoken.**

Let the people rise and hear it.

**We are listening. We stand ready.**

Shout to the weary, the overlooked, the worn-thin:

**With courage, we gather. With voices, we speak words of life.**

Shout to the hearts carrying hidden weight,  
**The Holy One meets us here in our honesty.**  
 Shout to the systems that press people down,  
**Their power is not the final word.**

A new song is rising—

**A song that frees, A rhythm that restores, A melody of reparation.**

Shout to the builders, the dreamers, the stubbornly hopeful:

**The time has come for burdens to lift, For the grip of harm to loosen, For the rebuilding what has been broken.**

Come, Beloved Community, Come. bring your resolve, your compassion, your wide-awake faith.

**Let us worship the God who calls us to remove every yoke.**

#### Invocation

**Calling Voice That Won't Be Silenced, we come into this moment carrying the weight of our days— the strain we feel in our bodies, the struggle we witness in our neighbors, the burdens that press on our shared life. Draw near to us now. Gather our scattered breath. Steady our trembling places. Kindle in us a courage that does not look away. You are the One who refuses empty rituals and meets us instead in acts of mercy, in the work of lifting burdens, in the rebuilding of what has been harmed. Open us now— open our hearts to compassion, open our imaginations to repair, open our hands to the work of freeing one another. Let this time be honest, let this gathering be brave, and let your Spirit move among us with the power to uproot what harms and to plant what heals. We are here. Speak to us. Lead us. Remake us for your justice and joy. Amen.**

**Hymn #327 “Jesus Loves Me”**

**Affirmation of Faith #886**

**Children's Time “My Voice, Your Voice, Our Voice”**

**Pastoral Prayer~ The Lord's Prayer**

**Hymn #531 “God Speak to Me”**

**Prayer for Transformation and New Life**

**Calling Presence who knows our hidden places, we admit that we have not always chosen the path that frees. We have stayed silent when truth asked for our voice; we have protected our comfort when compassion asked for our hands; we have waited for others to do the work you entrusted to us. Loosen our resistance, lift the habits that keep us from seeing one another clearly, and break the patterns that bind us to what harms. Teach us the courage to act with mercy. Teach us the discipline of repair. Teach us the way of releasing what we cling to so that others may breathe more easily. Let this moment mark a turning— a turning toward your justice, a turning toward your tenderness, a turning toward the shared life you imagine for us. In your grace, make us new. Amen.**

**Words of Grace**

Hear the good news: The One who calls us out in truth, meets us not with shame, but with mercy that lifts what is heavy and compassion that steadies our steps. When we turn toward justice, God healing begins working in us. When we loosen what harms, God loosens the weight within us. When we offer ourselves to repair, God says to us, “Here I am.” In this promise, receive your freedom. In this grace, begin again. Amen.