

Announcements

Annual Meeting Sunday, February 1st after worship at 11:30am in person and on Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86560828256?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86560828256?pwd=JQguezAZGUdWXNlwxTLs4sEb51uHsm.1)

[pwd=JQguezAZGUdWXNlwxTLs4sEb51uHsm.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86560828256?pwd=JQguezAZGUdWXNlwxTLs4sEb51uHsm.1)

Meeting ID: 865 6082 8256

Passcode: 106479

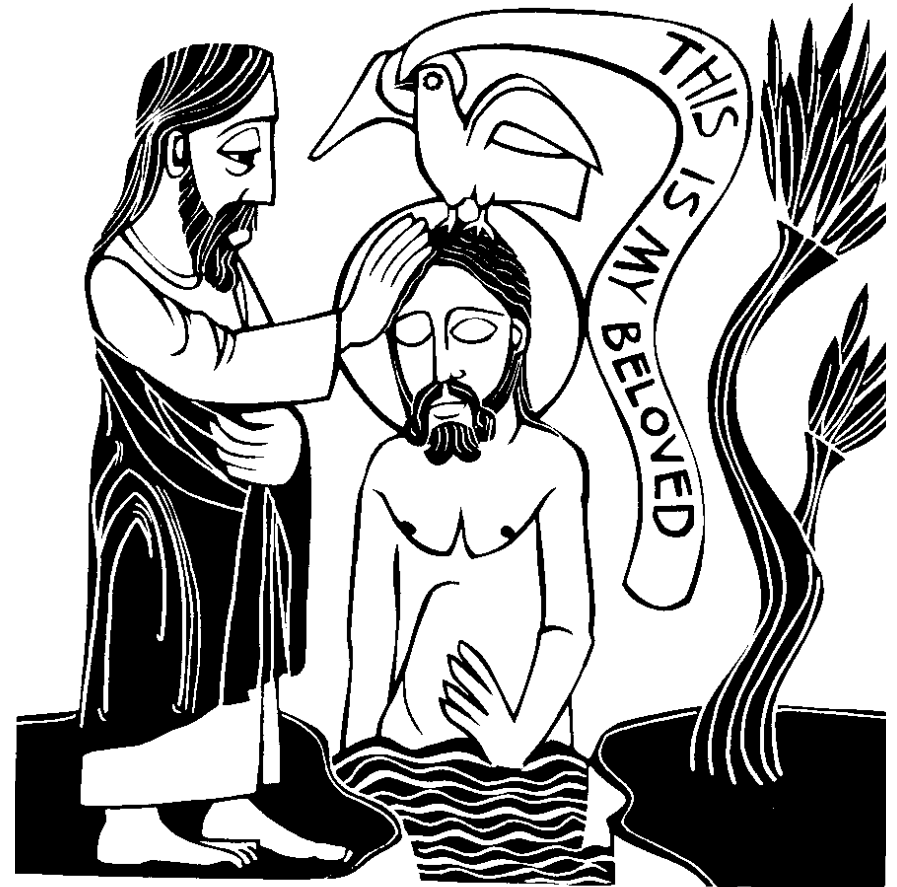
Please read the report printed in the Narthex and emailed before you come. Out of respect for Church Council, please, contact Moderator, Dawn Snow, 815-558-9440 & da76isy@gmail.com at least 48 hours ahead if you have special questions or would like time to share during the meeting.

It's time to think Spring and the Rummage Sale on April 24th and 25th!

I have volunteered to be the chairperson with Nancy Lyford as co-chair. We both love rummage sales and have a few new twists we'd like to try adding to the already-successful sale format.

First, we are accepting donations NOW. The garage has been cleaned and reorganized to store plenty of items that you'd like to get out of your house before April. (Unfortunately, NO clothing, books or other fabric or paper items right now due to possible critter visitors. Everything will be accepted as of April 1.) Drop items in the vestibule off the parking lot after church on Sunday or any time the church is open. We'll quickly whisk them away to the garage storage. Please contact us with any questions and stay tuned for more. We're looking forward to the fun!

Betsy Mollway (815-222-9323) and 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 on Wednesday, January 21 from 5-6pm.



Delicious Fundraiser



Amazon List



T-Shirts

they come. May they ripple outward in acts of compassion, in courage where it is needed, in justice that is gentle and strong. Just as the river does not hold itself, teach us not to hold back our love. We offer what we have and who we are, with joy and trust, for the sake of your dream of flourishing. Amen.

Hymn #42 "O for a Thousand Tongues"

Benediction

Stretched Them Out: Service Prayers for The Baptism of Christ/ Epiphany 1A was written by Rev. Michael Anthony Howard who serves as Minister of Faith in Action for Living Water Association, Ohio North-East. 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.

We are God's beloved.

The Spirit that was in Christ is in us.

We are called to bring gentle justice.

We will not break the bruised reed. We will not extinguish the smoldering flame.

We will walk in compassion, courage, and joy.

This is our covenant. This is our life together.

Amen.

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 **Matthew 3:13-17**
 Acts 10:34-43

Sermon **"Around the Watering Hole"**

Moment for Mission~ Sri Lanka

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

Holy One, Source of Living Water, You have
gathered us in, washed us in grace, and remind-
ed us that we are your Beloved. As water flows
from its source
to nourish field and forest, so let our giving flow
outward— to nourish hope, to tend to healing, to
join the slow and sacred work of renewing the
world.

Bless these gifts, and bless the lives from which



General Giving

Prelude**Announcements**

Choral Introit "Surely the Presence of the Lord"
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place;
I can feel His mighty power and His grace.
I can hear the brush of angels' wings,
I see glory on each face;
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.

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 as-
pects 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 circum-
stances,**

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 chal-
lenge us to do better.

**No matter who you are or where you are on life's
journey, you are welcome here!**

Call to Worship

Come, you who are weary, you who have been
bruised by life, you whose flame has flickered in the
winds of the world.

We come, longing to be renewed.

The Holy One who stretches out the heavens is stretching us now— stretching our hearts toward courage, our hands toward compassion, our lives toward gentle justice.

We open ourselves to be stretched into new life.

A voice from heaven says to us, as it said to Jesus: You are my beloved. This Spirit rests upon us, too.

We are God's Beloved, called to bring gentle justice.

Come, let us remember who we are.

Let us worship God with joy.

Invocation

Holy One, Breath of Creation, You stretched out the heavens and set the earth dancing with life. You whispered belovedness over Jesus rising from the Jordan, and your Spirit rested upon him like a gentle dove. Rest your Spirit upon us now. Stretch our hearts where they have grown tight. Soften the places that have been hardened by fear or disappointment. Wake the embers of joy that still glow beneath the ash. Remind us that we are your Beloved, not because of what we have done, but because of who You are and the love that holds us. As we gather at the water today, let us remember who we are, and who we are becoming together— your people of compassion, courage, and gentle justice. In the name of Christ, the One who shows us how to be human, we pray. Amen.

Hymn #169 "Arise, Your Light is Come"

Affirmation of Faith #886

Children's Time

Pastoral Prayer~ The Lord's Prayer

Hymn #507 "Jesus, the very Thought" (Verses 1-3,5)

Invitation to Baptismal Renewal

Beloved of God, today we remember that we are a people formed in water and Spirit. We remember that Jesus stepped into the waters of the Jordan, not because he needed to be cleansed, but to show us what it means to be fully human— to say yes to God, yes to belovedness, yes to the work of gentle justice. Today we step into that yes again.

Acknowledging Our Need for Renewal

We have known bruising. We have known moments we wish we could live again. We have known times when our flame burned low.

We long to begin again.

The One who stretches out the heavens is still stretching us— stretching our courage, stretching our compassion, stretching our capacity to love and to be loved.

We open ourselves to be stretched into new life.

Hear the good news: Nothing is sealed. Nothing is beyond mending. The story is not over. It has only just begun.

All is forgiven. All is being made new.

Can we begin again?

Yes. By the grace of God, we will begin again.

Blessing the Water

Holy One, you moved over the waters at creation. You carried your people through the sea and into freedom. Your Spirit descended upon Jesus in the river. Bless this water now. Let it awaken memory. Let it carry mercy. Let it stir our hearts toward your dream.

Amen.

The Renewal

Affirmation of Calling

We are the Body of Christ— not alone, but together.