



St. John's **CONNECTIONS**

A monthly update from the people of St. John's UCC, Fullerton

Volume 19 • Issue 167 • August 2026

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On The Cover...



DOMINIC DEMILIO

My name is Dominic DeMilio, a member here at St. John's UCC Fullerton since 2015. My family and I came from Dubbs UCC following its closure. As a bit of a workaholic though, I do not get to the church often.

I currently serve in the PA Army National Guard. I returned home in July 2025 from being deployed to Djibouti. While I was there, I got to see and experience many things like running through a safari preserve and swimming in the Red Sea.

Last October, my wife Cassidy and I were married at Morgan Hill in Easton. We have been together since our senior year in high school. In our free time, we enjoy reading, playing games, and getting outdoors for hikes and new experiences.

Although I'm not able to attend services as often as I would like, I deeply appreciate the faith, care, and support of this community.



Deadline for September Newsletter

If you would like to contribute an article for the September newsletter, please email newsletter@sjuccf.org by Sunday, August 9.

If you have photos to accompany your story, please attach them to your email. Comments and suggestions are always welcome!

[Style guide can be found here](#)

The Foundation of Prayer

Have you ever noticed how quickly life can become overwhelming?

Our calendars fill before we have finished the week. Our phones rarely stop buzzing. News alerts arrive by the minute, each one inviting us to worry about something else. We rush from responsibility to responsibility, trying to keep up with work, family, church, and the countless demands that compete for our attention. We move so fast that sometimes we forget to ask the most important question of all:

What is holding me up?

When the pace of life becomes frenetic, we instinctively reach for what we know we can trust. A carpenter reaches for a favorite hammer that has served faithfully for years. A gardener depends on familiar tools that fit comfortably in the hand. Those who knit or crochet find their skein of yarn and knitting needles. A sailor trusts an anchor that has already weathered many storms. In every part of life, experience teaches us to rely on what has proven dependable.

Faith is no different. The foundation of our lives is not found in having all the answers or controlling every circumstance. It is found in returning, again and again, to the presence of God. Prayer is not simply something we do when everything else has failed. Prayer is where followers of Jesus begin. It is the place where our hearts are quieted, our fears are named, our hopes are renewed, and God's Spirit gently reminds us that we are never walking alone.

I know something about needing that kind of foundation.

About 16 years ago, after serving faithfully in another denomination for almost 30 years, I found myself facing the end of that chapter of ministry because of who I am as a gay clergy person. It was painful. The future that I had imagined disappeared, and I was left wondering what God was preparing next. Like many seasons of loss, there were more questions than answers. There were moments when I wondered whether the ministry to which God had called me had come to an end forever.

But prayer has a way of keeping us grounded when everything else feels uncertain.

It did not provide instant solutions. It did not erase disappointment overnight. Instead, it kept reminding me that God's faithfulness is greater than any one chapter of our lives. Little by little, prayer opened my heart to possibilities I could not yet see, and I learned the incredible truth that "God is still speaking!"

Then God did something beautiful. The United Church of Christ welcomed me — not simply with an opportunity to serve, but with an affirmation of who

God had created me to be. I did not have to leave parts of myself behind in order to answer or be renewed in God's call. Instead, I discovered a community where my personhood was honored, where my gifts were celebrated, where God's extravagant welcome was more than a slogan, and where ministry could flourish in ways I had never imagined.

Looking back now, I can see that God was not closing a door as much as laying a new beginning on the foundation beneath my feet. What once felt like an ending became the beginning of a deeper, richer, and more authentic ministry. Prayer carried me through the uncertainty until hope could find its voice again.

Perhaps you have known seasons like that yourself.

Maybe your uncertainty comes through a health challenge, a strained relationship, retirement, grief, changing family circumstances, or simply the feeling that the world has become too hectic and contentious, too noisy to hear God's voice. Whatever the circumstance, prayer reminds us that our security does not rest on circumstances that constantly change. Our security rests in the One who "is the same yesterday, today and forever!"

I invite you to explore with me how prayer can feel less like a religious obligation, and more like the steady practice that forms resilient disciples. If you're like me, you want to experience how prayer strengthens our trust, deepens our compassion, and teaches us to recognize God's presence in both joyful moments and difficult ones. The simple truth I've learned is that **before we do anything for God, we are first invited simply to be with God.**

My hope is that we will encourage each other to slow our pace, quiet our hearts, and rediscover the gift that has sustained God's people across every generation. The world may continue to move at a breathtaking speed, but the invitation of Christ remains beautifully simple:

"Come to me."

May we build our lives on that sure foundation. And may prayer become the place from which we live our faith together as...

**We Worship, We Love and We Serve
— No Matter What!**

Yours in grace and hope,

Steve Davis

Rev. Steven Davis, Senior Pastor



Faith Formation & Worship Celebrations!

Growing in Faith Together (G.I.F.T.) Confirmation Class



growing in faith together
celebrating every gift

It's hard to believe that we only have a few more sessions with our Confirmation Class collaboration with UCC Greenawalds and Grace UCC, Allentown. On September 20, 27, and October 4, each congregation will have a Sunday to celebrate who

these persons have become in their faith. Each congregation will share a confirmation ritual of their faith community's tradition, and all of the confirmands will attend each other's service to bear witness and celebrate their being received in faith and confirmed.

We will host the group on Sunday, September 27, to confirm Ryan Szoke. Please continue to pray for the eleven people going through our G.I.F.T. (Growing in Faith Together) Confirmation Class from the three congregations. Pray for our confirmand, Ryan Szoke, and his mentor, Bill Fink.

Adult Faith Formation Opportunities

Here's some things you can take part in to grow in faith and celebrate God's presence:

Verso-Chat Lectionary Study Wednesdays at 9am on Zoom

– will "take a break" for the month of August and reconvene on September 2. If you've been wanting to do something fresh to enhance your worship experience, this group looks at our scripture readings a few weeks in advance and shares in conversation about them. Who knows? You may find some of your comments making their way into the Pastor's messages. Contact Pastor Steve or Samara Bush in the church office to receive more information. Each week is it's own lesson, so try it out any time.

Friendship Class

– takes the summer off, but some still show up to enjoy a cup of coffee and good company. Friendship never takes a break, even when we don't see each other every week. So come gather early. Some get here at 8:15 and others drop by when they arrive before worship and share in the joy of sharing in Friendship!

Wrapped in Love, Covered in Prayer

Our Prayer Shawl Ministry offers a comforting reminder that no one journeys alone. Each prayer shawl and prayer square is lovingly handcrafted, prayed over, and blessed by the congregation before being shared with someone experiencing illness, grief, or another season of need.



We include Prayer Squares in our School Supplies and Backpacks drive items, so students in our area know we are praying for them while at school, for their growth, learning and safety.

We are grateful for the caring hands of **Connie Viglione, Emilie Moyer, Nancy Weaver, Donna Held,** and our newest knitter, **Sueanne Rhegician**, whose gifts help

extend Christ's love one stitch at a time to those in hospitals and other settings near and far away.

If you know someone who would be encouraged by a Prayer Shawl, or if you'd like to join this caring ministry through knitting, crocheting, quilting, or simply learning, please contact the church office. Together, we continue to wrap our community in God's love and prayer.

EXTRA!
EXTRA!



THE TOWN SHALL
BE DELIGHTED!

LORD WHISTLEDOWN

YOUR SOURCE FOR ALL THINGS MUSIC AT ST. JOHN'S

A NEW SEASON *begins...*

Dearest friends and fellow music lovers,
The time has come to raise our voices and ring our bells
in joyful praise! St. John's Music Ministry warmly invites
you to join us as we begin another season of faith,
fellowship, and beautiful music.

All are welcome—come, be a part of the harmony!



BELLS OF ST. JOHN'S *begins*

TUESDAY,
AUGUST 18

AT 6pm
IN THE SANCTUARY



THE CHOIR *begins*

THURSDAY,
AUGUST 20

AT 6:30pm
IN THE MUSIC ROOM



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION,
please contact Lord Whistledown himself (Patrick)



Email:
Music@sjuccf.org



Phone:
(484) 241-0250

LET US MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE TO THE LORD!
PSALM 100:1

Prayer that Expresses Our Love

"I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them...

This is good and pleases God our Savior." - 1 Timothy 2:1, 3

Sharing our love for God and our love for each other doesn't only happen on Sunday mornings in worship. The Ministry Staff prays for you as well. Knitters pray as they make Prayer Shawls. Our Visitation Team prays with people in our visits, calls and cards. Our Bereavement Ministry prays for families as they grieve. Our Prayer Team receives information and together pray and share the need or joy with others who also join in praying. Prayer gives us a tangible way to express our love and God's unconditional love and grace.

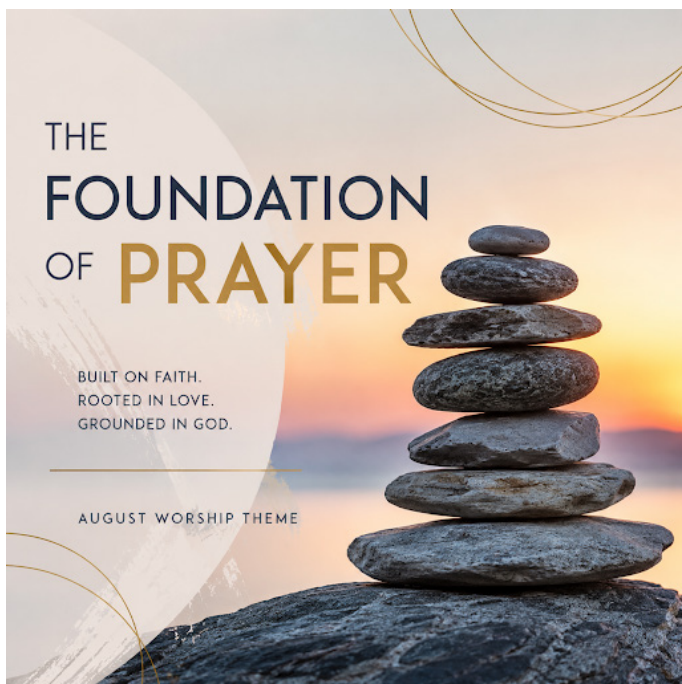
Each week in worship, there is a Prayer Basket at the Welcome Table where you can write the name of a person or situation you would like named in worship. This could be a need or a celebration. We only share first names from the pulpit since the worship is livestreamed and we want to protect each individual's privacy. If someone wants to have only the Pastor and Ministry Staff know of the need please let us know that as well so we can maintain confidentiality.

We also have a list of names in our worship bulletin which come from the congregation. We encourage you to pray for these persons throughout the week. If you would like to add someone to that list, please contact Samara Bush or Pastor Steve in the church office. Likewise, when the need for that individual or family has passed, please let us know.

Our desire to connect to God on behalf of others and to pray for needs and celebrations draws us into deeper relationship with each other as well. In August, we will ask you to update the prayer status for those we have listed by contacting the church office. In September, we want to engage in a new way to support each other with our love and prayers. More on that in next month's Connections newsletter and in worship.

The Foundation of Prayer - August Worship Theme

What holds your life together when everything else feels uncertain? When the headlines are unsettling, relationships become strained, or the path ahead seems unclear, where do you turn? We all build our lives on something — habits, accomplishments, relationships, routines — but followers of Jesus are invited to build on a foundation that cannot be shaken: a living relationship with God through prayer.



"But I don't know how to create that foundation?"

How can I have a stronger connection to God as I follow Jesus?"

Throughout the month of August, our worship theme, The Foundation of Prayer, will invite us to rediscover prayer not as a last resort, but as the steady rhythm of a faithful life. Together we will explore how prayer anchors us in God's presence, opens our hearts to God's transforming love, and equips us to face each day with courage, compassion, and hope. Whether prayer comes naturally to you or feels unfamiliar, this series will encourage us to deepen our trust in God and strengthen the foundation upon which we live our faith.

OUR AUGUST WORSHIP SCHEDULE

**AUGUST 2 - WORSHIP
WITH HOLY COMMUNION
WITH SAMANTHA KISTLER AND REV. CLIFF HERRING
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL CELEBRATION SUNDAY**

The Foundation of Prayer

Lectionary Connection:

Isaiah 55: 1-5 and Matthew 14:13-21

"Beholding God's Glory"

**Shifting our focus from the chaos of the world
to the majesty of God.**

*Focus: Adoration and praise. How to pray simply by
acknowledging who God is and giving thanks.*

Join us as the children of our St. John's VBS share their celebration of life in Egypt from Vacation Bible School. See their crafts and stories and share in the wonder of the ancient times.



AUGUST 9 - WORSHIP
WITH REV. STEVE DAVIS PREACHING

The Foundation of Prayer:

The Posture of Prayer (Humility)

Lectionary Connection: Walking on Water/Jesus' invitation

Matthew 14:22-33 and Psalm 85: 8-13

"Stepping Out in Faith"

**Exploring how humble, expectant prayer anchors us
when the storms of life feel overwhelming.**

*Focus: Surrender and trust. Praying in moments of transition and
acknowledging our daily need for God.*

AUGUST 16 - WORSHIP
WITH REV. STEVE DAVIS PREACHING

The Foundation of Prayer:

The Power of Prayer (Bold Intercession)

Lectionary Connection: The Canaanite woman's daughter is healed.

Matthew 15: (10-20), 21-28

"Declaring the Kingdom"

**Focusing on interceding for our communities,
the Church, and the world.**

*Focus: Standing in the gap. Moving our prayer life outward and
partnering with God to bring God's will on earth.*

AUGUST 23 - WORSHIP
WITH REV. TODD FENNEL PREACHING

The Foundation of Prayer:

The Fruit of Prayer (Living Outwardly)

Lectionary Connection: Jesus asking, "Who do you say that I am?"

Matthew 16:13-20 Romans 12:1-8

"Who Do You Say?"

**Shifting prayer from a list of needs to
a dialogue of deepening relationship.**

*Focus: How our posture in prayer opens us up to receiving
divine revelation rather than human assumptions.*

AUGUST 30 - WORSHIP WITH SAMANTHA KISTLER PREACHING

The Foundation of Prayer:

The Practice of Prayer (Forgiveness & Grace)

Lectionary Connection: Live in harmony. Romans 12: 9-21

"Healing the Broken Places"

**Tackling the hardest part of prayer: aligning our hearts
to forgive others as we have been forgiven.**

*Focus: Corporate and personal reconciliation. Removing the
spiritual blockages in our prayers.*

Keep Our Ministry Moving Forward



Summer has a way of changing our routines. Weekends fill with vacations, family gatherings, and time away, and many of us miss a Sunday or two in worship. While that's a wonderful part of the season, it can also mean that our regular financial support falls behind.

As you enjoy these summer months, we invite you to remember St. John's in your giving. If you've missed a few Sundays, please consider catching up on your

offering by mailing it to the church or making your gift online. Better yet, if you haven't already done so, consider enrolling in recurring electronic giving. It's an easy, secure way to ensure your generosity continues to support our shared ministry, whether you're in the pews or on the beach.

Every gift makes a difference. Your faithful support allows us to worship, serve, care, and share Christ's love with our congregation and our community all year long. Thank you for making St. John's a priority in every season.

Samantha Kistler's Growing Ministry



We celebrated Samantha "Sam" Kistler's graduation from Moravian University, receiving her Master of Ministry degree. Since then, she has been working on her paper for ordination, and on September 19 will have her Ecclesiastical Council to vote to authorize her for ministry in the United Church of Christ, pending a ministerial call and ordination (possibly as soon as October)!

St. John's leadership and Samantha had previously agreed to expand her role in ministry with us, moving from $\frac{1}{4}$ time to $\frac{1}{2}$ time once she is authorized and ordained. "Sam" has gained valuable practical ministry experience this past year working with Pastor Steve and other clergy and the St. John's Ministry Staff and congregation.

We will be working to create a Call Agreement and bring that to the Consistory and Congregation. Wendy Fox, and our current Elders, Paul Raszler, Colleen Kulhamer and Linda Powell serving with Pastor Steve will develop the agreement with Samantha to welcome her in her next role in ministry with us as our Associate Pastor. "Sam" will have responsibilities in leading worship and preaching more often, as well as share in visitation to those in hospitals and our homebound. She will continue to support the Children and Youth Faith Formation ministry.

We have all come to greatly appreciate her spirit of collaboration and partnership in ministry. We look forward to soon being able to know her as Pastor Sam and Rev. Samantha Kistler once she is ordained.

The Keystone Connection



Keystone

CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Keystone Conference of the United Church of Christ is more than an organization — it is a community of congregations and leaders partnering in ministry across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. One of the easiest ways to stay informed and inspired is by subscribing to the KEYSTONE CONNECTION, the Conference's weekly email newsletter.

Each week you'll discover opportunities for continuing education, leadership training, congregational resources, mission and outreach initiatives, upcoming events, and stories of how God is at work through churches throughout our Conference. Whether you're looking for ways to grow in faith, strengthen your ministry, or simply stay connected with the wider church, the KEYSTONE CONNECTION is a valuable resource.

We encourage you to sign up today and see how God is moving through the ministries of the Keystone Conference. Use the link below or visit the Conference website to subscribe and begin receiving the weekly KEYSTONE CONNECTION <https://keystoneucc.org>



Use the QR code to receive the weekly email and stay informed!

Here's the link to sign up for the weekly news:

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sl/nKpYydv/TheKeystoneConnection>

Watch for excerpts from Keynote speakers and Worship preachers from the June Keystone Conference Inaugural Annual Meeting on the Keystone YouTube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/@KeystoneConferenceUCC>

Love Your Neighbor Churches Fundraiser

UNDUE MEDICAL DEBT

Community-Wide Picnic and Celebration

Sunday, August 16, 3:00-7:00pm

Have you ever felt the heavy burden of trying to pay off medical debt, especially when you receive the collection notices and calls? It can be overwhelming and leave people in a place of frustration, anxiety and distress. Many in our community have had to choose between food and shelter or paying the medical bills when there simply aren't funds available.

Through the collaboration of many of our area congregations, we are able to partner with an outstanding agency called Undue Medical Debt. We hope you will consider the following information and make a donation in the name of St. John's UCC, Fullerton or for yourself individually, and invite those in your family, neighborhood, workplace and other social circles to participate with us. The contributions we make have an exponential value. The St. John's UCC, Fullerton, Mission Committee has already authorized \$500 from our mission tithing to support this effort. That \$500 will directly eliminate \$50,000 in medical debt! Isn't that amazing?

We also want you to SAVE THE DATE of Sunday, August 16, from 3:00-7:00pm to gather for a community-wide picnic and celebration at Union UCC Grove, in Neffs. There will be many things for all of us to enjoy and celebrate together. You can also participate as a volunteer for the event, in addition to attending and making a contribution.

Please plan to attend, contribute and participate in this great time of building up our community and working together as area faith communities!

Please read and share the accompanying flyer that details volunteering and signing up for the picnic. Download and print copies to share from our website: <https://stjohnsuccfullerton.org/forms>



Love Your Neighbor Churches FUNDRAISER

for Medical Debt Relief
Now through August 16th



Every \$10 donated relieves \$1,000 of medical debt.

A group of churches are working together to raise \$20,000 which would forgive \$3 million of medical debt in Lehigh and Northampton counties through an agency called Undue Medical Debt.

Learn more at: unduemedicaldebt.org

How to donate:

1) Donate to one of the participating churches with a note for "Medical Debt Relief"

OR

2) Donate directly to our campaign at:
<https://unduemedicaldebt.org/campaign/love-your-neighbor-churches-friends/>



Scan
to Donate



**COMMUNITY-WIDE PICNIC & CELEBRATION
SUNDAY, AUGUST 16TH 3PM-7PM**

Union UCC Grove 5550 Route 873 Neffs, PA

Hosted by all of the churches and friends participating!

Food * Music * Playground * Gift Card Raffle

FREE ~ donations accepted for Medical Debt Relief

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FINAL AMOUNT RAISED!

PICNIC SIGN UPS:

VOLUNTEER

Sunday, August 16th

<https://bit.ly/3R5rxn3>

ATTEND Picnic

Sunday, August 16th

<https://bit.ly/4dofKaD>



We won't take attendance or turn folks away but signing helps us with planning.

Love Your Neighbor Churches:

Asbury Methodist, Allentown;

The Barn, Allentown;

Good Shepherd UCC, Slatington;

Grace Lutheran, Macungie;

Grace UCC Northampton;

Heidelberg Union, Slatington;

Jordan UCC, Allentown;

New Creation UCC, Easton,

St. John's Lutheran/Second Chance

Shoppe, Slatington;

St. John's UCC, Fullerton;

St. John's UCC Laury's Station;

Union Lutheran, Schneeksville;

Union UCC, Neffs;

AND YOU!

Welcome Samara “Sam” Bush, Office Administrator

We are pleased to welcome Samara (pronounced like Tamara) “Sam” Bush to the St. John’s UCC Ministry Staff. Many of you had the opportunity to meet “Sam” in worship on Sunday, July 12. Her first day in the church office was July 15. We are now continuing our regular hours of operation for the office, Monday-Friday, 8:30am - 3:00pm. If you come to the church during the week, please be sure to introduce yourself by name at the call box so “Sam” can let you in the building. As we do with each new staff person, please continue to introduce yourself by name until she calls you by your name first. There are many of us to get to know.

Here’s a brief introduction from “Sam:”

Dear St. John's UCC, Fullerton Members,

My name is Samara Bush and I have been hired as St. John's next Office Administrator. I very much look forward to my new role and to meeting all of you. Here’s a peek at my background. I am a native Pennsylvanian, born and raised in the West End of Monroe County. I attended college at Ursinus College and received by BA in English in 2004. My career history is mainly local government, where I've worked for the courts here in Pennsylvania, as well as Las Vegas Justice Court, and as Assistant Zoning Officer in the Borough of East Stroudsburg. I am also a veteran of the United States Navy, where I served on a destroyer based out of Norfolk, Virginia. Additionally, I received my Master's of Public Administration in 2024.

I sought the position of Office Administrator because I have wanted to work in a church environment for several years. I've wanted to work in a faith community for several reasons, including being able to use my skills in a way that benefits and supports the good work of the church and its ties to the community. I am a faithful and spiritual Christian and I am so excited that my work will be in service to St. John's UCC. I am deeply aligned with St. John's UCC open and affirming position and truly believe that all people should be accepted and loved by the church. I enjoy meeting and getting to know people different from myself, and especially enjoy learning new things from them.

Thank you and blessings,

Samara



Building for the Future

If you've noticed a few changes around St. John's lately, you're not imagining things! Together, we're investing in our church home so it can better support the ministry we share today and the welcome we hope to extend for generations to come. Thank you to all who helped following worship on July 12 to empty the sanctuary, parlor and coat room. You made a tremendous difference!

Change can sometimes feel disruptive; however, it also opens the door to new possibilities. As we prepare for the start of a new program year in September, we hope these improvements will make our church more inviting, more accessible, and better equipped for worship, special performances and services, learning, fellowship, and hospitality and welcome to our community.



Recent enhancements have already enriched our worship, including new liturgical furnishings, communion ware, a Christ Candle, matching choir chairs, and significant upgrades to our sanctuary lighting and sound systems. These improvements not only enhance our in-person worship but also provide a richer experience for those who join us online and expand opportunities for concerts, special music, and community events. We also have all new flooring on our 3rd floor.

As July ends and we go through August, you'll see additional progress taking shape:

- Elevator modernization and fire safety upgrades
- New carpeting throughout the sanctuary, offices, parlor, and hallways
- Installation of a hearing assistance loop in the sanctuary
- Lighting dimmer panel replaced with energy-efficient LED lighting and updated controls

During the elevator modernization, elevator service will be unavailable for approximately six weeks. Accessibility is a significant concern, and we will share on Facebook and email the best ways to enter the building for worship and activities. Some worship services and activities may be held in the St. John's Pavilion, weather permitting, to reduce the barrier of steps to participate. If weather conditions are not helpful, we will be in the sanctuary and online worship will continue as always for those who cannot attend due to stairs.

Beyond the building itself, we're also working to enhance the beauty of our grounds through more consistent landscape care. Our previous company did not properly remove weeds and invasive plants as needed. We remain deeply grateful for the many volunteers who faithfully tend our property, especially Wayne Lichtenwalner, who cares for our lawns and the Field of Dreams, and Bruce Pope, who maintains the gazebo gardens, along with everyone who lends a hand throughout the year from time to time as they are able.

These improvements are possible because of the generosity of the Kiesbar Estate, the vision affirmed by the congregation at our Annual Meeting, and the faithful work of our Property Committee, St. John's Technical and Artistic Resources (STARs), Music and Worship Committee, Stewardship and Finance Committee, and Consistory.

Thank you for embracing these changes with patience and hope. Every project is helping us create a church home that reflects our mission — welcoming all, removing barriers, and providing beautiful, functional spaces where people of every generation can encounter God's love.

August

2 9:30am 10th Sunday after Pentecost	3	4 9:30am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Stewardship and Finance	5 12:00pm Painting Group 6:00pm Painting Group 6:30pm Zumba 7:00pm SAA Recovery
9 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 9:30am 11th Sunday after Pentecost	10	11 9:30am Staff Meeting 1:00pm Staff Meeting 6:00pm Elders 6:45pm Iron Pigs Game Dollar Dog Night CocaCola Park 7:00pm Consistory	12 12:00pm Painting Group 6:00pm Painting Group 6:30pm Zumba 7:00pm SAA Recovery
16 9:30am 12th Sunday after Pentecost	17 6:00pm Fun-Raising	18 9:00am Newsletter collating 9:30am Staff Meeting 10:00am Community of Practice 6:00pm Elders 7:00pm Consistory	19 DINE & DRINK - Thirsty Turtle TBA 12:00pm Painting Group 6:00pm Painting Group 6:30pm Zumba 7:00pm SAA Recovery
23 9:30am 13th Sunday after Pentecost	24 9:00am Food Pantry 5:30pm Food Pantry	25 9:30am Staff Meeting 7:00pm PEEPS	26 12:00pm Painting Group 6:00pm Painting Group 6:30pm Zumba 7:00pm SAA Recovery
30 9:30am 14th Sunday after Pentecost 1:00pm Lehigh Valley Pride			

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		1	
		8:30am Men's Breakfast Hamilton Family Restaurant 9:30am Zumba	
		6	
9:30am Visitation Committee 6:30pm Choir		7	
		8	
9:30am Zumba			
		13	
6:30pm Choir		14	
		15	
9:30am Zumba			
		20	
6:30pm Choir 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal Music Room		21	
		22	
9:30am Zumba			
		27	
6:30pm Choir 6:30pm Property Committee		28	
		29	
9:30am Zumba			

Lehigh Valley Pride Celebration

Sunday, August 31 at the Steel Stacks in Bethlehem

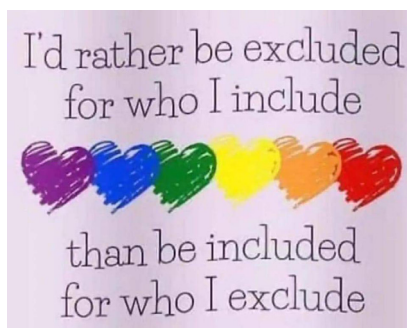
The Volunteer Sign-up for our Pride Booth for the Mountain Valley Association UCC Open and Affirming churches is now live, and we'd love your help filling our volunteer slots. Please share the sign-up link with members of your family and social circles and encourage anyone who is interested to join us for this joyful and meaningful opportunity. We wanted to give our ONA congregation members the first opportunity to sign up before sharing it with the rest of the association and conference.

Volunteer Sign-Up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F4DA5A62BA4FDC70-64723968-lvpride>

Whether someone can serve for a half hour or stay for a longer shift, every volunteer helps us extend a message of welcome, inclusion, and God's love to our community. No matter their experience, everyone is welcome to participate. We will be welcoming people, sharing fun Pride trinkets and how others can get more information about our congregations.

As part of our effort to show our welcome... during the month of August, St. John's will have some posterboards decorated and available for you to add your signature or message of love and inclusion for all who come to the booth to see. The ONA congregations want to let others see our intentional welcome to ALL!

Thank you for your enthusiasm, and commitment to making our Pride presence a welcoming and affirming witness. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.



Batter Up!

There will be 64 St. John's baseball fans going to the IronPigs game on Tuesday, August 11, at 6:45pm. The IronPigs will be playing the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders at Coca-Cola Park. Game tickets and park information have been distributed. Hot dogs will be \$1.00 all night long. Our church member Patti Skvoretz has been designated to throw out the First Pitch. Be sure to cheer for Patti and for St. John's when the church is promoted on the big screen sometime at the end of the 2nd inning or beginning of the 3rd.



Celebrating Ordination Anniversaries

We congratulate the following pastors who will celebrate the anniversaries of their ordinations in August:

Rev. Dr. Scott Brooks-Cope – 39th Anniversary Ordination – 8/30/87

Rev. Bob Stevens– 48th Anniversary Ordination – 8/11/78

St. John's Bazaar is Coming to Fox Hall!

Saturday, November 14 – 9am to 2pm



Do you have items in your home, garage, or shed you no longer use or need? Did you have a Yard Sale this summer with items that didn't sell? Are you downsizing your living space and need to get rid of things you no longer have room for? Do you like to shop at flea markets or collect specialty items? Are you looking for craft items as gifts for your family or friends or even for yourself? Are you looking for a good place to eat? If you answered yes to any of those questions, St. John's has the perfect solution.

Fox Hall will become a bustling marketplace with something for everyone. At our Bazaar you will find these departments with items to sell: St. John's crafts, jewelry, attic treasures, dishes, glassware, pots & pans, kitchenware, CDs, baked goods, candy, books, knick-knacks, working appliances, purses, seasonal décor, toys and games. If you no longer want anything that fits those categories, please bring them to the church starting August 1. All sales, except for 10% tithing for Mission, will go St. John's.

Items we are NOT collecting are: clothing, furniture, encyclopedias, magazines, records, bowling balls, computers, monitors, and printers. The kitchen will be open where you'll find a selection of food to purchase. Stay for lunch or take something home for a supper meal.

If you would like more information on this event, have a question on what we are collecting, need items to be picked up, or would like to volunteer to help, please contact our co-chairs Amy Feidler and Carol Raszler. Amy can be reached at (835) 210-5944 or alfeidler@gmail.com or Carol at (610) 393-7572 or craszler@aol.com



Convalescent & Homebound Residents

People who would welcome receiving a greeting card:

Phyllis Ambearle

Anita Beil

Sherry Castello

Frank Cszasz

Phyllis Cszasz

Shirley Downing

Milton Focht

Sally Gibson

Tracey Glass

Lucille Hicks

Geraldine Keim

Dale Millham

Karen Moyer

Mary Jane Ott

Helen Ryer

Bert Smith

Leona Snyder

Nancy Weaver

Bonnie Weikel

To protect privacy, please contact the church office for a listing with mailing addresses.

Coming Soon . . .

One of our church members, Pete Mohr, will display his woodworking skills in time for Rally Day in September. He has made palm-held wooden crosses out of the old oak pews that were removed from the sanctuary. For a donation, you can receive one of these lovely keep-sake items for your family as a memento of St. John's. More information will be in the next newsletter.



Event Returning to Boscov's - Friends Helping Friends

October 21 - 8am-11pm

Save the date! A big shopping day could be yours at Boscov's located at the Lehigh Valley Mall in Whitehall. It's for Wednesday, October 21, from 8:00am - 11:00pm.

Purchase a \$5.00 shopping pass from St. John's, and the church gets to keep the funds. This pass entitles you to 25% off the lowest sales price, in-store and online, and cannot be used in conjunction with other discounts and promotions. Present the pass at check-out and receive your discount. Also register for a chance to win a \$100 Boscov's gift card by scanning the QR code on the shopping pass with your phone.

To get your pass, see Ginny Brokenshire before or after worship or give her a call at (610) 439-0443 or email gabby@posleader.com

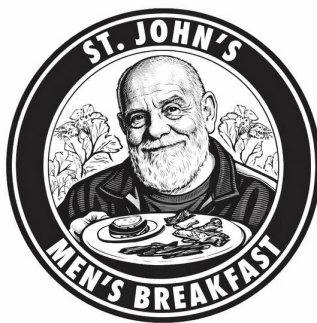




The Lady PEEPS will meet on Tuesday, August 25 at 7pm. We will gather in Fox Hall. Our guest speaker will be Rev. Dr. Becky Beckwith, so you know good discussion and lots of laughter are a sure thing. The specific topic will be revealed closer to the meeting date. Mark your calendars, PEEPS!! Contact person is Regi Mohr (610) 390-0872.



Men's Breakfast Group



The Men's Breakfast Group of St. John's normally meets on the first Saturday of the month at the Hamilton Family Restaurant located at 2027 Hamilton St. in Allentown. Our next meeting will be Saturday, August 1, at 8:30am. Rev. Dr. Becky Beckwith, our Pastor Emerita will be the guest speaker. We would be pleased to have you join us. If you would like to

know more about this group, you can contact Pastor Steve. Think of a friend you can invite to breakfast!

Everyone Does Grocery Shopping

Whether you drive to the grocery store to shop, order online, or have your groceries delivered, we all need groceries. Do you realize that by purchasing Giant and Weis gift cards and by saving Redner's register tapes you are contributing money to St. John's?

For every Giant and Weis card sold, the church receives 5% back. You also get discounts for gas at both stores. Gift cards can be purchased through the church office or by seeing Tom Moyer or Carol Raszler every Sunday morning before or after worship.

For every Redner's tape collected, the church receives 1% back from its Save-A-Tape Program. The Redner's tapes can be mailed to the church office or placed in a collection jar found on the table in the lounge area. **Please do not roll the tapes or include tapes from other stores.**

It's an easy way to give financially to the church. Think of St. John's every time you do grocery shopping or need to fill up your car.

GIANT®



Gift Cards

REDNER'S
WAREHOUSE MARKETS

Receipts

**Grocery Shopping =
Giving Back to St. John's**

**Buy Giant and Weis Gift Cards
from St. John's**

➔ You spend the full value.
The church receives a percentage.

**Save your Redner's
Tape**

➔ Redner's donates 1% of your
total back to St. John's!

Every receipt counts. Every grocery trip helps.



God Is Still Speaking!

Verso-Chat — Scripture, Conversation, and Community

What if preparing for worship began before Sunday morning?

Verso-Chat is our weekly online Lectionary Bible Study where we gather to explore the Scripture readings for upcoming Sundays. Together we listen, ask questions, share insights, and discover fresh ways God's Spirit continues to speak into our lives and our congregation.

We'll take a summer pause during August and return on Wednesday, September 2, meeting each week from 9–10am on Zoom.

Whether you've participated for years or have never opened a Bible in a group before, you'll find a welcoming conversation where curiosity is encouraged, every voice is valued, and no one is put on the spot. There are no lectures or tests — just thoughtful discussion that often enriches our worship together. In fact, some of the ideas and insights shared during Verso-Chat frequently find their way into Sunday morning's sermon.

Can't join us live? No problem. Every session is recorded so you can watch whenever it fits your schedule. Each week stands on its own, making it easy to jump in at any time. If you'd like to receive the Zoom link or learn more, contact Pastor Steve or Samara Bush in the church office. We'd love to have you join the conversation!

VERSO-CHAT

Upcoming “Fun-Raising” Events at St. John’s

Tuesday, August 11 – IronPigs vs Scranton/Wilkes Barre RailRiders at Coca Cola Park – 6:45pm. It’s “Dollar Dog Night.” Patti Skvoretz will throw out the First Pitch. See Carol.

Sunday, August 16 – Community-wide Picnic & Celebration for “Love Your Neighborhood Churches” Fundraiser– 3pm to 7pm at Union UCC Grove, 5550 Rt. 873, Neffs. Hosted by St. John’s & 13 other churches. Food, music, gift card raffle. Donations accepted for Medical Debt Relief. See article in this newsletter. Contact Pastor Steve.

Giant & Weis Gift Cards – Church gets 5% back. See Tom or Carol.

Redner’s Register Tapes – Church gets 1% back. Please do not roll the register tapes or submit receipts from other stores. See Karen.

Coming In Fall

30th Annual Road Rally – Sunday, October 4 – Meet at 1:30pm at church. Follow the route and arrive at a restaurant for supper. See Tom or Don Schneck.

Halloween Gift Card Bingo – Friday, October 16 – Doors open at 6:00pm; games begin at 7:00pm. Food available to purchase. 50/50 & Tricky Tray. \$20 In advance; \$25 at the door. Tickets available the end of summer. See Tom.

Bosco’s “Friends Helping Friends” – Wednesday, October 21– 8:00am to 11:00pm. Purchase a \$5 pass (offering 25% in sales) and the church keeps the funds. See Ginny.

St. John’s Bazaar – Saturday, November 14 – 9am to 2pm in Fox Hall. Start bringing in items now that you no longer need or want. Look for list of items we will accept in the newsletter or online. See Amy or Carol.

Committee Contacts:

Amy Feidler, Chairperson (835) 210-5944

Ginny Brokenshire	(610) 439-0443	Carol Raszler.	(610) 393-7572
Bill Castello	(651) 492-1399	Karen Stoisits	(610) 262-0746
Pastor Steve Davis	(610) 264-8421	Lori Stocker	(610) 703-2666
Brian Fisher	(610) 762-1134	Brian Strauss.	(610) 248-9119
Tom Moyer	(610) 432-3372		



August Birthdays

If you have an upcoming birthday or notice an omission, please update the church office.

8/1	Debra Altorfer Laney Headman	8/17	Matthew Buskirk Joanne Heppe Trevor Heffelfinger
8/2	Jay Gilbert	8/18	Jeremy Broгна
8/3	Matthew Young John Viglione Joshua Mill Brianna Kuhns	8/19	Patricia Stumpp
8/4	Margaret Young Adam Rarich Eric Lord	8/20	Lee Ann Lopez James Molinaro Sharon Czekner Barbara Holden
8/5	Regina Mohr	8/21	Stanley Luckenbill Thomas Heppe
8/7	Austyn Venanzi	8/23	Jim Carr Emma Rarich
8/9	Kayla Bryant	8/29	Linda Helfrich Tyler Shankweiler Jamie Santee Scott Eberhart Nancy Delp
8/11	Alexander Bryant Deadra Clewell	8/30	Shirley George Carole Flores
8/13	Michael Gravely		
8/14	Rev. Becca Stephens		
8/15	Angela Buskirk Noreen Muth		
8/16	Ethel Lavenburg Andrea Doyle		



August Wedding Anniversaries

If you have an upcoming anniversary or notice an omission, please update the church office.

8/1	8/19
Dennis and Brenda Pascoe	Bradley and Alyssa Beckwith
8/5	8/19
Robert and Annamarie Barrall	Andrea Doyle and Joseph Guan
8/7	8/19
Gary and Beth Neitz	Craig and Stephanie Hanzl
8/8	8/20
Stephen and Christine Reck	Kathy and James Haggerty
8/11	8/20
Donald and Robin Brensinger	Bruce and Bobbi Pope
8/11	8/21
Patti and David Skvoretz	Melissa and Kyle Szoke
8/11	8/22
Lissa and Ken Wuchter	Rev. Becca and Barry Stephens
8/14	8/22
Brian and Stephanie Deutsch	John and Connie Viglione
8/15	8/23
Donald and Sharon Foellner	Sharon and Mike Borgman
8/16	8/31
Richard and Margaret Baatz	Deadra and Mark Clewell





What is Our Church's Wider Mission?

In the United Church of Christ, OCWM stands for Our Church's Wider Mission. It represents both the collective ministries of the broader denomination and the financial contributions local congregations make to fund regional, national, and global programs. Gifts to OCWM Basic Support from St. John's and the other 4500 congregations of the United Church of Christ make it possible for our Conferences and the National Ministries to strengthen local churches and leaders and to engage us in mission well beyond our community.

Most of our OCWM Basic Support dollars remain in our Conferences to help local congregations thrive. Direct support in Conferences comes through leadership initiatives, such as communities of practice, committees on ministry, and one-on-one mentoring. Conferences also share in congregational vitality work. This includes conflict transformation, resourcing leaders as they reimagine ministry, and grants to churches. The National Ministries of the UCC, a crucial partner of our Conference and each congregation, helps us put love into action, especially through ministry that no one congregation could do alone.



OCWM pools resources from individual churches to fund a wide array of initiatives, which include:

- **Basic Support:** Funds day-to-day operations for Associations, Conferences, and the national setting of the United Church of Christ. This includes resourcing local churches, leadership development, pastoral placement, and conflict resolution.

- **Special Mission Offerings:** Includes specific funds like One Great Hour of Sharing, Neighbors in Need, Strengthen the Church, and the Christmas Fund. These are used for disaster relief, refugee ministries, social justice advocacy, and supporting retired clergy.

- **Global Ministries:** Supports international partnerships that focus on health, education, and human rights.

St. John's contributions to OCWM are falling a bit behind for the first half of the year compared to our giving over the last two years. This is just a reminder that you can contribute to OCWM, marking the space on your weekly offering envelopes or by giving online or by text.

Whitehall Food Pantry

For the month of August, we are collecting **jelly, pancake syrup, and coffee**. Any other non-perishable food items are always welcome. A shopping cart can be found in the coatroom area by the sanctuary where you can place your donations. Monetary contributions are always accepted and can be forwarded to the church office or by online or text giving. If you would like to volunteer at the food pantry on the third Monday of month, please contact Gary Black at (484) 274-2405 or email gary.t.black@outlook.com. The food pantry is located at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 3900 Mechanicsville Rd. in Whitehall. Help is needed especially over the summer months when volunteers are away on vacation.



"Love Your Neighborhood Churches" Fundraiser for Medical Debt Relief

St. John's is partnering with 13 other churches to help erase medical debt in Lehigh and Northampton counties. For every \$10 donated, it relieves \$1000 in medical debt.

What a difference we can make in the lives of our neighbors! This gift of love removes debt from their credit reports helping them regain financial footing, dignity, and peace of mind. Be sure to read the article in this newsletter to learn how you can help as well as participate in the Community-wide Picnic on August 16 at Union UCC in Neffs. No contributions will be accepted here at St. John's, but you can donate directly by going to <https://unduemedicaldebt.org/campaign/love-your-neighbor-churches-friends>

Backpacks & School Supplies for Whitehall-Coplay School District

Thank you to everyone who donated backpacks, calculators, and assorted school supplies for the WCSD. The deadline to receive items is Sunday, July 26. An update of items received will be in the next newsletter.

Whitehall-Coplay Hunger Initiative

WCHI and the Faith-Based Community are providing free meals to low-income Whitehall-Coplay households on the 1st Sunday and 3rd Tuesday of each month from 4-6pm. WCHI will post the date and place on Facebook and Instagram and state if it is an inside sit-down meal, take out, or a version of both. The meal being served will also be posted. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Karen Haberern, Program Chair, at (610) 730-3184 or whitehallcoplayhungerinitiative.org

Date	Place	Address	Phone
Sunday, 8/2	St. John's Lutheran Church	835 Third St., Whitehall	(610) 533-1357
Tuesday, 8/18	Whitehall Active Community Center	2301 Pine St., Whitehall	(610) 433-0675
Sunday, 9/6	Muslim Assn. of the Lehigh Valley	1988 Schadt Ave., Whitehall	(703) 346-8698
Tuesday, 9/15	Whitehall Bible Fellowship Church	3300 Seventh St., Whitehall	(610) 434-8661

UCC Issues Emergency Appeal for Venezuela Earthquakes

On June 24 two earthquakes of magnitudes 7.2 and 7.5 struck northern Venezuela. Immediate impacts included loss of shelter, infrastructure, disruption of basic services, and psychosocial distress. Long-term impacts are expected to include prolonged displacement and loss of livelihoods. As we print this newsletter, over 3,800 people have perished, over 16,700 were injured, and an estimated 50,000 people are still missing. The UCC's Global HOPE team (Humanitarian, Opportunities, Partnerships, Empowerment) is working with its partners through ACT Alliance and Global Ministries to help those impacted by this tragedy. Efforts include providing shelter, mental health and psychosocial support services, food security, water, sanitation and hygiene as well as developing plans for long-term recovery support.

While we are not accepting any contributions here at St. John's, if you feel the need to donate for this disaster relief, please send a check payable to United Church of Christ, PO Box 71957, Cleveland, Ohio 44194. Be sure to note "Venezuela Earthquakes 2026" in the memo section of your check. You can also go online to UCC.org, click "Giving," and follow the prompts.



CROP Hunger Walk

This year’s CROP Hunger Walk is scheduled for Sunday, October 18, starting at 1:30pm at St. Timothy’s Lutheran Church located at 140 S. Ott Street in Allentown. Walkers are needed and church members can sponsor our walkers with your donations. See Cindy Reck. More details will be in the next newsletter.

How did St. John’s Family do?

Mission	June 2026	YTD 2026	YTD 2025	YTD 2024
Our Church’s Wider Mission	\$621.00	\$4,439.00	\$6,006.00	\$6,488.33
Whitehall Food Pantry	\$255.00	\$1,286.99	\$2,005.00	\$1,770.00
Mountain Valley Assoc.	\$110.00	\$ 570.00	N/A	N/A





Best Caption Runners-Up



United Pew Cushion Haulers of America — Local 1902.

Grace under pressure is still uncomfortable without a cushion.

Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people.

Hymn 342: Lift High the Cushion

Patience is a virtue, but Prudence brought a folding chair.

Hope springs eternal; Eileen just leans sideways.

Mercy is freely given; lumbar support costs extra.

Blessed are the flexible, for they shall survive the wooden pew.

Every rose has its thorn, and every church pew has one loose splinter.

Turn the other cheek—but I need a cushion under it first.

Where there's a Will, there's a Grace explaining why he cannot help.

Beauty is only skin deep; discomfort reaches the lower back.

The meek shall inherit the earth, but Jim already reserved the good seats.

Faith, Hope, and Memory Foam—and the greatest of these is Memory Foam.

Blessed are the cushioned, for they shall survive the 20-minute announcements.

And lead us not into sciatica, but deliver us from hardwood.

BUDGET UPDATE

St Johns UCC Fullerton - Statement of Finances

June 2025

Income	Electronic	6/1/2025	6/8/2025	6/15/2025	6/22/2025	6/29/2025	Total
Offerings for Operating Expenses	\$7,113.07	\$3,082.00	\$3,167.00	\$7,054.00	\$1,364.00	\$2,222.00	\$24,002.07
Rental Income--Gross	\$5,325.50						\$5,325.50
Fundraising Income--Net of Exp			\$3,132.00				\$3,132.00
Endowment Interest							\$0.00
Flowers			\$50.00	\$100.00			\$150.00
Faith Formation	\$20.00						\$20.00
Special Gifts	\$206.81						\$206.81
Total	\$12,665.38	\$3,082.00	\$6,349.00	\$7,154.00	\$1,364.00	\$2,222.00	\$32,836.38

Expense Summary	Actual	Budget	Difference
Pastoral Services	\$10,378.37	\$10,258.50	\$(119.87)
Staff Salaries & Expense	\$9,090.84	\$9,329.75	\$238.91
Building Services	\$1,945.67	\$2,462.50	\$516.83
Faith Formation	\$92.71	\$104.17	\$11.46
Parish Programs	\$2,571.30	\$1,994.25	\$(577.05)
Fundraising Tithe	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total	\$24,078.89	\$24,149.17	\$70.28

	Month	Year
Total Income	\$32,836.38	\$166,844.92
Total Expenses	\$24,078.89	\$154,759.20
***** Net INCOME (LOSS) *****	\$8,757.49	\$12,085.72

Mission Giving, Jun 2025

Our Churches Wider Mission	\$1,098.00
Strengthen the Church	\$240.00
Whitehall Food Pantry	\$155.00
Total	\$1,493.00

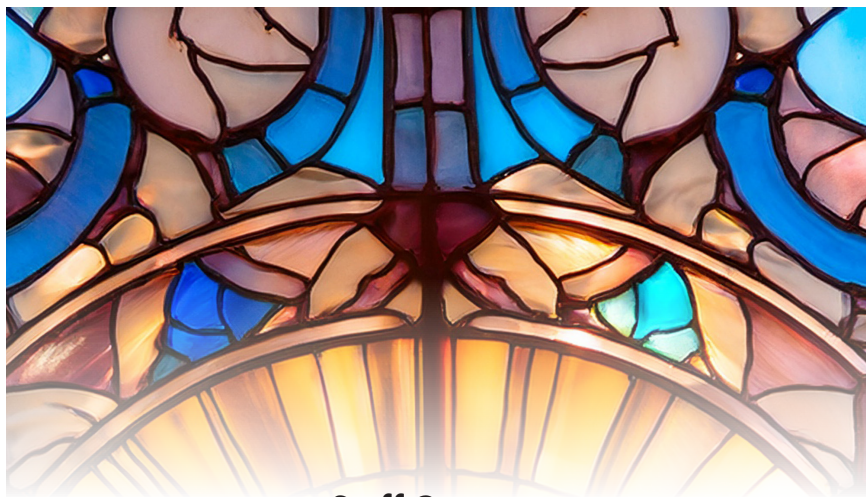
St John's UCC Fullerton

Account Balances

For Month Ending, June 2025

Account	May-25	Jun-25	Difference
Checking Account	\$57,597.57	\$67,341.87	\$9,744.30
Giant Card Funds	\$2,132.76	\$722.76	\$(1,410.00)
Weis Card Funds	\$1,163.50	\$1,813.50	\$650.00
sub-total General Fund Assets	\$52,227.91	\$69,878.13	\$8,984.30
Restricted/Property Checking	\$37,836.46	\$37,233.38	\$(603.08)
Restricted/Property Investments	\$80,367.00	\$80,632.00	\$265.00
sub-total Restricted Assets	\$118,425.28	\$117,865.38	\$(338.08)
Endowment Fund--Quadrant	\$521,382.00	\$538,567.00	\$17,185.00
TOTAL ASSETS	\$669,101.19	\$726,310.51	\$25,831.22
Cornerstone Pavillion Loan	\$(81,800.23)	\$(81,681.69)	\$118.54
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$(81,928.91)	\$(81,681.69)	\$118.54
NET FUND BALANCE	\$587,172.28	\$644,628.82	\$25,949.76





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"And the Lord added to their number..."

We always celebrate new people coming to share and grow our experience of faith with us at St. John's UCC, Fullerton. You may have noticed some new faces in worship over the last couple of months. Friends from our sister congregation, St. John's UCC, Mickleys, concluded their ministry as the church closed and was sold. Several have come to worship with us and see if we are the place to continue in ministry. Some have already transferred their membership and will be formally welcomed when we have our next "joining class" in September.

Last month, we told you about two members who reaffirmed their relationship with us as members who are homebound, Frank and Phyllis Csaszar. George Isleib has also been worshipping with us, along with other neighbors from Whitehall Manor.

Whenever we see new faces, it is our joy to welcome them with St. John's radical hospitality. When we say "You are... WELCOME HERE!" we mean it! If you're considering making St. John's UCC, Fullerton, your faith home, or would like more information about what we offer, please contact the church office or speak with Pastor Steve.

