



**MATTHEW  
BUSKIRK**

# St. John's **CONNECTIONS**

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

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## The Work of Christmas in the New Year

**Come Alive in 2024!**

This newsletter arrives in the hustle and bustle and fevered frenzy of the holidays. While we are in final preparations for Christmas, time with people we love and people we tolerate, we may feel the added stress of unmet expectations. The day after Christmas can be a letdown. For weeks, sometimes months in advance, we prepare for the coming of this single day. We make our Christmas lists, gather lists from others, go shopping for gifts, put up decorations, listen to seasonal music, plan elaborate meals, light candles on the Advent wreath and then the day comes and goes in 24 hours just like any other day.

Then what? All of that build-up for a brief few moments that swiftly join the stream of history leave us with a sense of both fatigue and bewilderment. What comes next?



Christian theologian and teacher, pastor and mystic, Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman, viewed the days after Christmas from a spiritual perspective. He wrote a poem, "The Work of Christmas Begins," to express his sentiments. Properly understood, our work is only just beginning after Christmas.

Followers of Christ have been commissioned to walk the path he did. To bind up the broken-hearted. To preach good news to the poor. To proclaim liberty to the captives.

Christmas brings the incarnate God, the Prince of Peace, to humanity. In this prince's kingdom mercy, justice, and love reign. As citizens of this heavenly kingdom and members of this royal household, Christ's followers serve as ambassadors of this kingdom ethic. Now the day after Christmas, our work is only just beginning.

*From The Mood of Christmas and Other Celebrations by Howard Thurman*

When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flocks, the work of Christmas begins: to find the lost,	to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among the people, to make music in the heart.
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A visitor seeking advice from the Rev. Howard Thurman one day was talking about what the world needs when Thurman interrupted him. "Don't ask what the world needs, ask what makes you come alive, and go do it,"

Thurman told him. "Because what the world needs are people who have come alive." Thurman's response went viral before the term "viral" was invented.

Cited by countless inspirational speakers, even cultural icon Oprah Winfrey, his quote has become an internet meme. But what makes those words stick is that Thurman validated them by the way he lived.

Thurman forged a connection between Mohandas Gandhi and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. that gave wings to the civil rights movement. He wrote a bombshell of a book that revolutionized the traditional portrait of Jesus. His teachings inspire leaders as diverse as civil rights icon John Lewis, the Democratic congressman from Atlanta, and Barbara Brown Taylor, a celebrated author and speaker.

He was the first pastor to co-found an intentionally multiracial and multi-faith church in the United States; the first African-American pastor to travel to India and meet Gandhi, singing a Negro spiritual with Gandhi. And he was one of the first pastors to inspire King to merge Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolent resistance with the civil rights movement. Taking to heart the teaching of Jesus, Thurman sought to inspire people and build relationships, challenging us to be fully alive and do the work of transformation. It will not be easy, however, it will change the world.

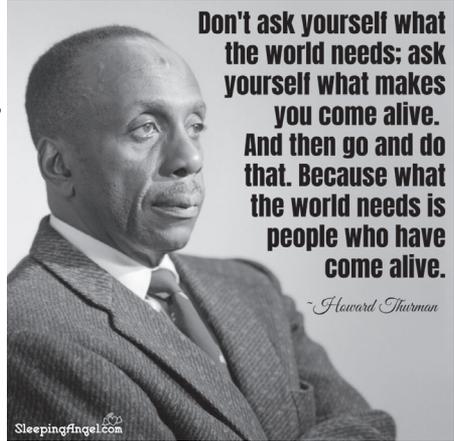
As 2024 begins, may this added epiphany from Rev. Dr. Thurman invite us to fulfill the work of Christmas every day of the year as those who "Worship, Love and Serve ~ No Matter What!"

To each of us, in 2024, may we experience God's love, trust in the grace of Jesus Christ, and live in the hope of the Holy Spirit. Happy New Year, friends!

Yours in grace and hope,



Rev. Steven Davis, Senior Pastor



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## On The Cover...



### MATTHEW BUSKIRK

My name is Matthew Buskirk and I am a 7th grader at Northampton Area Middle School. Recently, I made the Northampton Middle School basketball team. My other interests include baseball, watching sports and playing Xbox with my friends. My future goal is to make the middle school baseball team in the spring.

I was baptized at St. John's and started going to Sunday school at a very young age. My parents and my grandmother also grew up in this church. Currently, I am in the Confirmation Class. Faith is important to me because God gives us hope and loves us all.

### Convalescent & Homebound Residents

People who would welcome receiving a greeting card:

Shirley Abel	Sally Gibson	Karen Moyer
Larry & Freda Albright	Ron Glass	Marilyn Piskula
Phyllis Ambearle	Gus Geissinger	Helen Ryer
Anita Beil	Roberta Haberern	Marietta Seyfried
Clarence Biehn	Lucille Hicks	Madeline Slivka
Marion Brown	Geraldine Keim	Bert Smith
Sandra Diefender	Adrienne Kiesbar	Jolene Weaver
Shirley Downing	Emma Repp Kuczek	Nancy Weaver
Jeanne Fischl	Jean Litzenberger	Bonnie Weikel
Milton Focht	Dale Millham	

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



## Music at St. John's

*Happy New Year! As we step into this fresh and exciting year, it's time for an important announcement. Our Music Ministry is thrilled to announce open enrollment for several key positions. This is a wonderful opportunity for those passionate about music and looking to contribute their talents to our church community.*



**Available Choir Positions: Sopranos, Altos, Tenors, Basses and...  
Available openings for Handbell Ringers**

**Age Requirement:** Open to High School Students 9th Grade and Older

**Physical Qualifications:** Must be able to carry light musical notes part way across the church. Must also have sufficient vision to see director twenty feet away.

**Wages:** Satisfaction and joy in God's service

**Fringe Benefits:** Social Security—we promise you the security of social fellowship with other members of the choir.

**Hours of Operation:** (Note: **NEW NIGHT** beginning January 4, 2024)

**Choir Rehearsal:** Thursday Evenings—7pm until 8:30pm

**Handbell Rehearsal:** Thursday Evenings—6pm until 6:40pm

**Vacation:** Missed rehearsals and church services are primarily a matter of conscience and ability to return the glares and pointed remarks of the director and other choir members.

**Retirement:** Generally determined by printed notes getting too small, notes too high, church too hot or cold, or Director of Music is unable to play the notes you sing.

**How to Apply:** Please contact Mr. Patrick Sandt either through email at [music@sjuccf.org](mailto:music@sjuccf.org) or through phone (484) 241-0250.

## Better Than Uber! Transportation Connection

Part of the “Strategic Plan” that was developed prior to COVID, not yet implemented, was to provide connections for people who are no longer able to come to worship simply because they no longer drive. Many of these same persons do not have online access at home to participate with us in worship or other online activities. Their only St. John’s Connection comes through home visits or hospital calls, cards and phone calls, or on the rare occasion where a family member or friend will bring them to worship with us. We’d like to change that!

Let’s begin 2024 by helping people connect with transportation!

If you’re interested in bringing someone to worship and taking them home

on a Sunday morning, please contact the church office. We will be coordinating “Transportation Connection” volunteers with the help of our Visitation Committee Homebound to specific people who would like to come to worship.

You’ll have the opportunity to contact the person needing transportation assistance on the Saturday afternoon before Sunday Worship to see if they’re feeling up to participating. If so, get them on Sunday morning and take them home after worship. Enjoy some conversation along the way and grow our relationship connection! Who knows, you may even want to stay for the After-Worship Social time or go have lunch together! Great possibilities await!

If you are a St. John’s person who desires a ride to worship, please let Pastor Steve, the church office, or a member of the Visitation Committee know. We would love to help you have a “Transportation Connection” to St. John’s!





# OUR NEW YEAR / EPIPHANY SCHEDULE

8:30am Adult Faith Formation - Friendship Sunday School Class

9:30am Worship / Children's Faith Formation with Sunday Social time following worship

11:00am Confirmation Class and other Youth

## **December 31 - New Year's Eve (9:30am morning worship)**

Share in a casual Sunday of worship. Wear something you received on Christmas Day or come ready to embrace and “oooooh and aaaah” over something cherished. We will sing more of our favorite Christmas carols and hear a story to remind us how important our relationships with each other are, no matter what our age, as we celebrate God’s love in our lives.

### **A Christmas Story - “A Cup of Christmas Tea”**

*by Tom Hegg (Author), Warren Hanson (Illustrator)*

This heartwarming poem brings the true meaning of Christmas joyously to life. Reluctantly, in the midst of the Christmas rush, a nephew’s decision to visit his ailing and elderly Great Aunt, brings him memories of past holidays and the realization of how the human spirit can triumph over adversity. While there, peace, love and the wonderful Christmas spirit surround the two of them as they share a cup of Christmas tea.

## January 7, 2024 - Epiphany Sunday & Holy Communion

*Matthew 2:1-12 / "Fully Alive!"*

The congregation gathers to celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion and celebrate the end of the season of Christmas and the beginning of Epiphany. Our message will focus on the experience of the Magi and the wisdom of the Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman.

## January 14 - Baptismal Renewal & Consecration of our Consistory Leadership for 2024

*Mark 1:4-11 / "With Water and the Spirit"*

Just as Jesus was acknowledged as God's Beloved Child, so we come to remember the promise of our baptism, that we belong to and are loved by God. We will celebrate God's love and our place in the beloved community of faith. Beginning Thursday, January 18-25, we observe the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in preparation for Eccumenical Sunday.

## January 21 - Eccumenical Sunday

*Mark 1:14-20 / "Fishing, Following, and More Fishing"*

Celebrating the many parts of the community of faith and our shared ministry of justice and service in the love of God. Will we choose to connect and engage with people of different life perspectives and build relationships of understanding.

## January 28

*Mark 1:21-28 / "And Then The Church Rose Up!"*

The faith community often gives voice to the social needs of our world. We speak up when the rest of the world wants us to be quiet. We stand up with the oppressed, when the forces working against hope and freedom want us to sit down. In these moments, the Church rises up!



## Pavilion Pledge Drive

Three years ago, we undertook a capital campaign—this one to develop our “Field of Dreams”. This campaign officially ends at the end of 2023, and St. John’s is grateful for the many pledges and gifts.

This was actually the second of two campaigns that saw many improvements to our church properties, including construction of a beautiful pavilion, re-paving of the original parking lot, construction of a new Fox Hall Bathroom, Field of Dreams paving with landscaping/lighting, and a loan to ourselves to upgrade our heating system. Additionally, there were significant township and engineering fees.

Total expenses for these projects amounted to \$660,000. Most of the funding came from our two Capital Campaigns with the balance obtained from a mortgage—which has a current balance of about \$83,900.

Since constructed, the pavilion has been used for many outdoor events. To fund the development of the Field of Dreams, we initiated this second, three-year capital campaign. More than 80 pledges were received, totaling \$52,000. Only 7 pledges were not fulfilled (totaling \$3035.00), as life conditions change. There also were many donations from people who did not pledge.

Our challenge is to continue to support reducing the mortgage even though the campaign will have officially ended. All gifts, large or small, are appreciated. There is a line on your weekly Church envelope for “Pavilion Loan”, which we hope you will consider using.

Without you, the loyal members of St. John’s, there would be no Pavilion and we would be without many other improvements. Thank you for helping to fulfill the vision of many years ago.

Tom Moyer



**THE PAVILION**  
IN WHITEHALL

## Welcome Bobby Ray

Great News! Due to the support of the CLIU Children's Special Needs Foundation, the CLIU has secured a second facility dog.

The puppy has been named Bobby Ray. "Bobby" is in honor of Robert Bold, long term CLIU Board President and Foundation Board Member. Kudos to Mr. Bold! Debby Kay, Breeder, placed a connection to the sun in all the puppies in the litter hence "Ray".

Bobby Ray arrived December 4th and will be serving our Early Intervention programs. Thank you for your continued support of the Foundation and Helping Children Learn!



## **Sunday Social Following Worship**

We've noticed the increase! We LOVE to eat and we LOVE to visit. What's needed next are people to "host" one of our Sunday Social times in January. ALL of the Sunday's are currently open for the month of January! Sign up to provide refreshments on the red display board in the foyer when you come for worship, or call the Church Office and let Alison know what Sunday you want to provide refreshments.

Get to know some new friends. Keep the fun and friendship going each Sunday and visit with Colleen Kulhammer about our kitchen area use for information and support.

Join us after worship in Fox Hall for our Sunday Social!

## **2024 Budget Approved**

At the Fall Congregational Meeting held on Sunday, Nov. 12 during the morning worship service, the congregation voted to approved the 2024 Budget. Our sincere thanks to Sue Weldner, Treasurer, and the Stewardship and Finance Committee members for the information shared and the observations about how God continues to grow our capacity post COVID. Copies of approved budget are available upon request to the Church Office.

Sue Weldner shared the following highlights for 2024 over 2023:

- 4% overall increase in income in projected
- 4% increase in weekly offerings
- 5% increase in fundraising events income (Coming back to pre-pandemic levels)
- 4% overall increase in expenses
- 2% salary increases; health insurance increase est. at 5%
- \$16k "excess" revenue is projected (While we are working toward ability to grow additional staff positions, we are not there yet.)

## **Save The Date - February 4, 11:00am**

### **Annual Meeting & Potluck Lunch**

Following the morning worship service, St. John's will gather for our Annual Meeting to share reports on our ministry and offer our support for our leadership. To prepare for this meeting, congregation members will want to read the Annual Report, which will be available for pickup at the January 21st church service.

This year, the report theme will be a familiar one – a continuation of our Stewardship theme, "Because of You, Our Church Changes Lives." Please address this theme in your committee report. How is your ministry area changing lives?

If you have any questions, please be in touch with the church office. Reminders will be shared by email, online and in worship and the report book will be available by January 28 for review. Plan now to take part in this important gathering at we look back on 2023 and step forward in 2024!

### **Deadline for Annual Report!**

The deadline for the Annual Report articles will be January 14th, 2024. Please have your reports to the church office by that date.



## Elevator Update

### Can We Give You a Extra Arm of Support?

We often don't realize how important something is to our function and support, until it is not available. We will be able to repair and restore access with our elevator to Fox Hall and the Sanctuary / Main level from the Grape Street entrance! That's the good news! The not so good news is that parts are on back order and being sought out for the needed work. Our current best estimate is to have service restored in mid-January if all goes well. Additionally, the cost of the repairs will be just over \$41,000.

The Property Committee and the Stewardship and Finance Committee and Consistory are all ready to explore options for how to meet this need. We anticipate that our property insurance will cover some of the cost of repairs. That's good news! We have some funds held in reserve for "rainy days" and "emergencies." That's good news! We have options begin raising funds to meet the challenge. That's good news! We already have one contribution designated to elevator repairs, and we welcome additional gifts toward the repair needs to help offset whatever insurance doesn't cover.

AND... with our elevator inoperable for the time being, some have not been able to come to worship on site since mid October. That's not good. So, here's how you can help!

We're seeking volunteers for Sunday mornings at our Grape Street entry to assist those needing extra support, such as carrying walkers or offering a steady arm to navigate the steps. Pastor Steve encourages anyone able to lend a hand to contact the Church Office. This effort is vital to ensure that "ALL ARE WELCOME" truly includes everyone, especially while our elevator is under repair. Your help can make a significant difference in enabling everyone to participate in worship.





***Scan, Support & Sustain***  
**BECOME AN AUTOMATIC CONTRIBUTOR!**

48 giving units participating as automatic contributors. A few others share additional support for special occasions and when other needs are shared. We want to make it easy for you to share your gifts for ministry at St. John's UCC, Fullerton, and beyond! Using the QR Code above with your smart phone is a safe and secure means of supporting and sustaining the ministry to which God calls us.

Because of YOU, our regular participants and friends, our ability to meet the needs of our church and community changes lives. It takes all of us participating to grow. We depend on the difference each one of us makes through our gifts.

To sign up to be an automatic contributor, please use the online fillable form on the contribute page of our website, or <https://bit.ly/Donate-to-StJohns> If you need help signing up, please contact the church office to visit with Michelle Gutekunst, our Financial Secretary.

As Automatic Contributors, your gifts maintain the consistent support needed to meet the expenses of ministry opportunities and to grow beyond meeting basic needs to making new ministry efforts possible. SCAN, SUPPORT & SUSTAIN St. John's when present for worship and when traveling or unable to attend. YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE! Will you become an automatic contributor for 2024?

# Highlights of the November Consistory Meeting

November 14, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

Bethany UCC is still looking at churches; St. John's is now one of two; they are hoping to discern next steps around Easter.

Reminder, St. John's will have the morning worship service on Christmas Eve and ONE Christmas Eve evening service at 6:00pm.

Kim Hillegass and Tyler Shankweiler attended the Fall Meeting of congregations of the Penn NE Conference UCC, November 4, along with Pastor Steve, Becky Beckwith and Becca Stephens in their capacity. Tyler was the ONLY YOUTH out of all churches to attend.

What can we do to connect with our youth? We want to invite our past 3 years of Confirmation classes, including our current year confirmands, to some sort of youth events in 2024, for food, fun and connection on a quarterly basis, and hopefully move to monthly events. Will YOU help make this a reality for our St. John's youth?

The Home Communion visitation is still going on and is appreciated.

New Class of 2026 for Consistory

Paul Raszler accepted to be the Elder for the Class of 2026.

Kay Chryst & Kirby Hower nominated as 2 of the 3 Deacons.

Tyler Shankweiler going to replace Paul in the 2025 Class for 2 years as a full deacon.

Fortress Chryst, Youth Deacon for 2024.

HOWEVER, we are still looking for one additional Deacon for the Class of 2026. One person is discerning this 3-year commitment.

Elevator Repair – the Property Committee is waiting to hear from the elevator repairman about cost and what insurance will be able to cover. Until we get “the number” we are uncertain what will be needed to fund the repair for the elevator.

Funeral Policy has been created and approved by the Consistory.

The Personnel Committee are reviewing the personnel manual, last time it was revised was 2018.

A Financial Policy is being created.

## What's the Difference Between Super Bowl and Souper Bowl?

While we may not know at this time what teams will be in Super Bowl LVIII, we do know it's scheduled for Sunday, February 11, at 6:30pm at the Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas. It is said that tickets may start at the ridiculous price of \$6800. Imagine how that amount of money could be used elsewhere in the world.

In 1990, a simple prayer: "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those without a bowl of soup to eat" was delivered to a small youth group at a church in Columbia, SC. This gave birth to an idea. Why not harness the energy and enthusiasm of Super Bowl weekend, a time when people come together for football, food, and fun, to unite the nation in a higher good?



Since then, more than \$170 million has been generated by local churches across the country through Souper Bowl of Caring. Through this mission, people learn they can make a positive difference in the world as they collect food, raise money, serve

at hunger-relief charities, and show caring and compassion in local communities across the country.

St. John's will tackle the concerns of hunger in our community and participate in the Super Bowl of Caring the entire month of February. Your donations will go to the Whitehall Food Pantry.

We will start with our Tailgate Party and Movie Night on Saturday, February 3. Besides the festivities of a good meal at 6pm, followed by the movie "80 for Brady," you will also be asked to bring a can of soup. Be sure to come for game day kick-off on Sunday, February 11, at worship. Soup pots will be available to make monetary donations, and we encourage everyone to bring a can of soup. Let's see how many cans of soup we can collect for Souper Bowl of Caring.

LILY TOMLIN    JANE FONDA    RITA MORENO    ...SALLY FIELD    ...TOM BRADY



BEST FRIENDS GET INTO  
THE BEST KIND OF TROUBLE

# 80 FOR BRADY

ONLY IN THEATRES FEBRUARY 3

FIFTH SEASON  
#80forBrady  
@80forBrady

**Super Bowl Tailgate Party & Movie Night**  
**Fox Hall, February 3 at 6pm**

## Catch the Excitement!

What teams are going to the Super Bowl? That's the big question. The football playoffs begin in January, and you can feel the excitement already. Our "Fun-Raising" Committee is getting ready for the big event, and you're invited. A Super Bowl Tailgating Party and Movie Night will be held on Saturday, February 3, down in Fox Hall.

The activities begin with a covered-dish meal at 6:00pm. The new hit movie "80 for Brady" will be shown at 7:00pm. The movie is inspired by the true story of four best friends and New England Patriots fans who take a life-changing trip in 2017 to Super Bowl LI to see their hero Tom Brady play, and the chaos that ensues as they navigate the wilds of the biggest sporting event in the country. Co-starring in the movie are Sally Field, 75, Rita Moreno, 90, Jane Fonda, 84, Lily Tomlin, 82, and of course, football quarterback legend Tom Brady.

There will be a sign-up sheet in the lounge area or contact the church office and let us know the number attending and what covered dish you will be bringing. Popcorn will be served during the movie. We suggest you bring a lawn chair for your comfort as the movie (PG-13) runs approximately 120 minutes. In addition, we are also asking you to wear something showing your favorite football team and to bring a can of soup to support the hunger initiative Souper Bowl of Caring campaign.

The festivities will continue on Super Bowl gameday, Sunday, February 11, at worship. Bring a can of soup; wear your favorite team T-shirt or sweatshirt. Members of our Confirmation Class will have soup pots for you to place any monetary contributions in to support the Souper Bowl of Caring with all the proceeds going to the Whitehall Food Pantry.

## Look What's New...

Our Crafters have been busy once again. If you have trouble opening jars, we have the solution for you. Check out our jar openers that are on sale for just \$3.00. Please remember that our craft items are for sale all year long. All you have to do is give Carol Raszler a call at (610) 393-7572 or email her at [craszler@aol.com](mailto:craszler@aol.com).



## Walking Challenge Completed for Fall

The 2023 Fall St. John's Walking Challenge finished with a total of 7,859,107 steps taken in four weeks. Congratulations to all our walkers who broke our record. That equals to 3,492.94 miles. We surely admire all of you. Look for me in the Spring of 2024 for our next challenge. I know I'm looking forward to it. After the winter, you should all be well and ready. This was our 7th Walking Challenge. Here is a recap of all 7: total steps taken 35,834,749 = 15,926.54 miles. Our congregation is getting healthier one step at a time. A HUGE THANK YOU to all who participated.

Healthcare Ministry  
Sharon Antrim

## “Fun-Raising” Events at St. John’s

**Saturday, Feb. 3 – Super Bowl Tailgate Party & Movie** – Covered dish meal at 6:00pm; Movie “80 for Brady” at 7:00pm. Everyone to also bring a can of soup for “Souper Bowl of Caring.” Contact Bill Castello.

**Friday, Mar. 15 – St. Patrick’s Gift Card Bingo** – Doors open at 6:00pm; Game begins at 7:00pm. Tickets \$20 in advance; \$25 at the door. See Tom Moyer.

**Sunday, May 26 – IronPigs Party Porch** – 6:35pm \$39. Contact Tom Moyer.

**Tuesday, Aug. 6 – IronPigs Grandstand** – 7:05pm \$13. Contact Carol Raszler.

**Nut & Fruit Sale – SOLD OUT.**

**“Burgers for a Cause”** – Applebee’s \$10 coupon is good for a gourmet burger and fries. Good at any Applebee’s at any time. See Kenda Catalini to purchase a coupon.

**Weis & Giant Gift Cards** – 5% comes back to the church with your purchase of grocery gift cards. See Tom Moyer or Carol Raszler.

**Redner’s Receipts** – 1% comes back to the church when you send your entire grocery receipt to the church. Be sure It says “Save a Tape” on the receipt. Collection basket is on the table in the lounge. See Karen Stoitsis.

### COMING SOON

The “Fun-Raising” Committee is looking into scheduling a Phantoms game, Basket Social, Bus Trip to Ocean City, NJ, Pastie Sale, and a Community Yard Sale.

#### Contacts:

Mike Borgman	(610) 502-0913	<a href="mailto:blackbear402@rcn.com">blackbear402@rcn.com</a>
Ginny Brokenshire	(610) 439-0443	<a href="mailto:ginny@posleader.com">ginny@posleader.com</a>
Bill Castello	(651) 492-1399	<a href="mailto:stars@sjuccf.org">stars@sjuccf.org</a>
Amy Fiedler	(610) 657-0654	<a href="mailto:alfiedler@yahoo.com">alfiedler@yahoo.com</a>
Brian Fisher	(610) 762-1134	<a href="mailto:brianfish2001@yahoo.com">brianfish2001@yahoo.com</a>
Tom Moyer	(610) 432-3372	<a href="mailto:tommoyer54@gmail.com">tommoyer54@gmail.com</a>
Carol Raszler	(610) 393-7572	<a href="mailto:craszler@aol.com">craszler@aol.com</a>
Brian Strauss	(610) 248-9119	<a href="mailto:strauss1975@aol.com">strauss1975@aol.com</a>

## **Bring Us Your Redner's Grocery Receipts**

Did you know that St. John's receives 1% back on your Redner's grocery receipts? It's a simple way to support St. John's fundraising efforts. The entire receipt must be submitted, and it must say "Save-A-Tape on it. If you use a charge card and do not want any numbers to show on the receipt, you can black them out. In addition, please check at customer service to make sure you are using a current customer card as some of the cards have been updated. If you are not a member of Redner's Save-A-Tape program, please join—then make sure you use your customer card as you check out. Receipts can be mailed into the church office or deposit them in a jar found on the table in the lounge area.

Thank you to Karen Stoitsits who tallies all the tapes and submits them to Redner's. We recently received a check back in the amount of \$51.24. Keep those receipts coming!

## **Giant and Weis Grocery Cards**

Everybody needs to eat, and everybody needs to make a weekly trip to the grocery store. Did you know you could purchase Giant and Weis grocery cards at St. John's? By doing so, you contribute 5% back to St. John's. It's a simple way to support the fundraising efforts of the church. They come in denominations of \$25, \$50, and \$100. The gift cards can also be used to purchase gas. To purchase your cards, look for Tom Moyer or Carol Raszler in the lounge area on Sundays or check with the church office during the week.

## **Deadline for February Newsletter**

If you would like to contribute an article for the February newsletter, please email your single-spaced submission in PDF, DOC, RTF or plain text format to: - [newsletter@sjuccf.org](mailto:newsletter@sjuccf.org) by Sunday, January 14.

Photos or graphics for your article should be sent as attachments to your emailed submission. Please do not embed them in the file.

Authors, some helpful newsletter guidelines are here:

<https://stjohnsuccfullerton.org/stylenotes>

## Men's Breakfast Group



The Men's Breakfast Group of St. John's meets on the first Saturday of the month at the Hamilton Family Restaurant located at 2027 Hamilton St. in Allentown. Our next meeting is on **January 6 at 8:30am**. We would be pleased to have you join us.

If you would like to know more about this group, please contact Bob Bold at (610) 393-6123 or email [QVRRBold@aol.com](mailto:QVRRBold@aol.com)

Applebee's Hamburger and Fries coupons are still being sold as a fundraiser for St John's. They are \$10.00 each. They do not expire, and can be used at any Applebee's in the Lehigh Valley. We still have 29 coupons left to sell. Please see Kenda Catalini. (484) 358-7453 or email [kpcatalini@aol.com](mailto:kpcatalini@aol.com)



## God Is Still Speaking...

with Verso-Chat Bible Study - Wednesdays, 9:00am

January brings the season of Christmas (the 12 Days of Christmas) to a close and welcomes the season of Epiphany, and discovering God's Still Speaking Voice in our lives today! Our weekly lectionary reading study will be moving us through the Gospel of Mark and the beginning of Jesus' public ministry.

You're invited to participate and help influence our experience of worship through these weekly readings that are part of our worship liturgy! Join the conversation on Wednesday mornings at 9:00am and learn from the insights and ideas we share with each other. Look at scripture with us and consider the themes being shared in worship to deepen our faith.

ALL are welcome to enhance your experience by joining our weekly Verso-Chat Bible Study. Each week is it's own contained experience to discover God's "still speaking" words. You will find the "Verso Chat" below and on the website to participate. Let's study and chat about the verses of scripture together!

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81571428042>



# Lady PEEPS

POSITIVE, EXTRAORDINARY, ENCOURAGING, PRAYERFUL SISTERS

The Lady PEEPS Women's Group meeting is January 23rd at 6:30pm in Fox Hall. We start the New Year talking about round TUITs. Everyone will receive their very own round TUIT. What is this special TUIT thing about and do they make them in other shapes as well? You will have to join us to find out. So don't procrastinate! Get motivated and be inspired in the new year! The best is yet to come. Refreshments will be served and we will see you there.

Colleen Kulhamer

## Church Chuckle



*I descend from the heavens, white as a dove,  
I cloak the earth in a blanket of love.  
Silent and soft, with a touch so light,  
Vanishing swiftly with the sun's bright might.  
In my presence, children cheer with glee,  
Yet no hand can hold me, as you will soon see.  
What am I?*

Answer: Snow

## January Birthdays

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

<p>1/2 ..... Patricia Thompson    Carter Troxell</p> <p>1/3 ..... Chace Miller    Carole O'Connell    Guy Schwenk    DonnaLee Yeatts</p> <p>1/4 ..... Susan Rarich</p> <p>1/5 ..... Nathaniel Kuhns    Georgine Long    Owen McNicholas</p> <p>1/6 ..... Christina Bach    Doris Hunsicker</p> <p>1/7 ..... Milton Focht    Franklin Reichl</p> <p>1/8 ..... LeAnn Focht    David Fritzing Jr.    Karly Myers</p> <p>1/9 ..... Brenda Pascoe</p> <p>1/10 ..... Emilie Moyer</p> <p>1/13 ..... Lucas Daiello    Brian Deutsch    Cathy Kuhns</p>	<p>1/14 ..... Timothy Christman    Chase Jordan</p> <p>1/15 ..... Jacob Hannis</p> <p>1/16 ..... Kimberly Hannis</p> <p>1/18 ..... Lori Stocker</p> <p>1/19 ..... Jillian Sommer</p> <p>1/20 ..... Lorraine Hower    Joseph Trippett</p> <p>1/24 ..... Natalie Reichl</p> <p>1/25 ..... Natalie Schutts    Betty Shankweiler    Matthew Sommer</p> <p>1/26 ..... Robert Jones    Olivia Powell</p> <p>1/27 ..... Rachel Focht</p> <p>1/28 ..... Edward Pollitt    George Romberger</p> <p>1/29 ..... Larry Martin    Paul Raszler</p> <p>1/31 ..... Rev John Hoff    Ronald Patterson    Philip Robinson</p>
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## January Wedding Anniversaries

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

Philip & Michele Robinson  
1/24/2009

Carole & Dennis O'Connell  
1/24/1970



Worship, Love and Serve - No Matter What!



## **Food for Thought – Why Not Help at the Food Pantry?**

St. John's has made a commitment to help at the Whitehall Food Pantry on the 4th Monday of every month. Volunteers are needed in the morning from 9am to 11am to sort food supplies and stock shelves. Volunteers are also needed in the evening from 5:30pm to 7:30pm to distribute food to pantry clients. The Whitehall Food Pantry is located at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 3900 Mechanicsville Rd. in Whitehall. If you would like to help or learn more about the food pantry, please contact Gary Black at (484) 274-2405 or email him at [gary.t.black@outlook.com](mailto:gary.t.black@outlook.com).

Thank you to everyone who donated canned gravy, cranberry sauce, vegetables, and money for grocery gift cards for the Thanksgiving and Christmas meals at the food pantry.

For the month of January, we are collecting pancake mix, syrup, peanut butter, and jelly. 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 as well and can be forwarded to the church office, placed in the offering plate, or given by online or text giving. In February, looking ahead to football's Super Bowl, we will be collecting cans of soup for the annual Souper Bowl of Caring Drive.

## General Disaster Relief Fund for Ukraine

War doesn't stop with the holidays. Congregations across the UCC have stayed committed to their support of Ukrainian refugees throughout the Advent season and the cold winter months. More than 10,000 civilians have been killed in Ukraine since Russia's invasion almost two years ago, the United Nations says, with about half of the deaths in the past three months taking place far behind the front lines. More than 560 children have been killed, and more than 18,500 people have been injured since the start of the conflict. We are grateful to the UCC, along with their partners in Ukraine, for their commitment to continue giving humanitarian aid to the Ukrainian people. If you would like to make a contribution to UCC National for its work in the Ukraine, please mail your donation into the church office, place it in the offering plate, or contribute online or by text. You can also find General Disaster Fund envelopes on the table in the lounge area. Be sure to put "Ukraine Relief Fund" in the memo section.



## “Ho-Ho-Ho” – You Made Santa Very Happy!

It was truly heartwarming how successful our “Operation Santa” Mitten Tree Project was this year. Thank you for your donations of \$765 to Phoebe Ministries and \$950 to Valley Youth House for a total of \$1715. Because of you, the youth and their families at VYH received gifts on their wish list, and the residents at Phoebe were given gift certificates to Phoebe’s gift shop and to Phoebe’s beauty salon/barber shop.

### 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 4:00pm to 6:30pm—dine-in only. The host churches are as follows:

Date	Church	Address	Phone
Sunday, January 7	St. Peter Roman Catholic Church	4 So. 5th St., Coplay	(610) 262-2417
Tuesday, January 16	Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church	4331 Main St., Whitehall	(610) 730-3184
Sunday, February 4	Muslim Assoc. of the Lehigh Valley	1988 Schadt Ave., Whitehall	(703) 346-8698
Tuesday, February 20	Whitehall Active Community Center	2301 Pine St., Whitehall	(610) 533-1357

### Update on Other Mission Outreaches

We will continue to receive donations for the Christmas Fund for the **Veterans of the Cross until December 31**. It is an annual UCC offering that expresses our thanks to retired and active UCC pastors and lay church workers and their families facing financial need; providing direct assistance to supplement pensions; help with the cost of medical insurance; a thank you gift at Christmas; and funds to meet emergency needs.

In November donations to the General Disaster Relief Fund went to **Project HOPE** for its work in providing medical supplies, medical equipment, and medical workers to Ukraine and surrounding countries. We are happy to report that \$120.00 was sent to Project HOPE (Health Opportunities for People Everywhere).

## How Did St. John's Family Do?

Recent Outreaches	Nov. 2023	YTD 2023	YTD 2022	YTD 2021
Our Church's Wider Mission	\$ 1,210.00	\$11,753.00	\$13,662.90	\$16,421.30
Neighbors in Need	\$ 30.00	\$ 175.00	\$334.00	\$ 496.00
Whitehall Food Pantry	\$ 225.00	\$3,690.00	\$ 1,420.00	\$ 3,545.00
Ukraine Relief Fund	\$ 110.00	\$ 1,775.00	\$ 3,655.00	N/A
General Disaster Relief	\$ 10.00	\$ 585.00	N/A	N/A
Mitten Tree (Phoebe)	\$ 765.00	\$ 765.00	\$ 655.00	\$ 350.00
Mitten Tree (VYH)	\$ 925.00	\$ 925.00	\$ 595.00	\$ 320.00
Crafters (Craft Fair)	\$ 372.00	\$1,022.00	\$ 392.75	\$ 1,235.25
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$3,607.00</b>	<b>\$23,957.00</b>	<b>\$22,671.25</b>	<b>\$24,282.27</b>

Mission Outreach giving for November 2023 totaled \$3,607.00 and YTD giving totaled \$23,957.00.



## Thank You Notes

To Our St. John's Family,

A big thank you goes out to the congregation for responding to my "Lunch for a Great Bunch" appeal to provide the staff a Christmas lunch. I learned that in the past, the staff would always go out together, "Dutch treat", and celebrate a Christmas meal together. I know that our staff works hard at their jobs but also works at cutting costs wherever they can and works as efficiently as possible. We are so appreciative of everything they all do. St. John's is truly blessed to have such a caring and dedicated team of individuals serve our church and its members. From your donations the staff will be able to enjoy a nice lunch at Morgan's Restaurant for the holidays.

Thank you,  
Paul Raszler, Co-Chair  
Personnel Committee

Bill Meckes and Milton Focht both enjoyed the gift bags and the visits. They were overwhelmed with all of the goodies.

Carole Oconnell





**St Johns UCC Fullerton - Statement of Finances**  
**Nov 2023**

<b>Income</b>	Electronic	11/5/2023	11/12/2023	11/19/2023	11/26/2023	<b>Total</b>
Offerings for Operating Expenses	\$6,385.71	\$3,901.24	\$2,524.00	\$4,416.00	\$3,101.50	\$20,328.45
Rental Income--Gross		\$2,450.50				\$2,450.50
Fundraising Income--Net of Exp	\$650.00	\$446.00	\$381.00	\$65.24	\$731.00	\$2,273.24
Endowment Interest						\$-
Flowers		\$50.00	\$57.00	\$234.00	\$72.00	\$413.00
Christian Education	\$10.00	\$15.00	\$70.00	\$10.00		\$105.00
Special Gifts					\$350.00	\$350.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,045.71</b>	<b>\$6,862.74</b>	<b>\$3,032.00</b>	<b>\$4,725.24</b>	<b>\$4,254.50</b>	<b>\$- \$25,920.19</b>

<b>Expense Summary</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Pastoral Services	\$10,542.88	\$11,751.00	\$(1,208.12)
Staff Salaries & Expense	\$9,122.69	\$9,656.50	\$(533.81)
Property	\$2,553.46	\$2,493.00	\$60.46
Parish Programs	\$2,414.43	\$2,455.50	\$(41.07)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$24,633.46</b>	<b>\$26,356.00</b>	<b>\$(1,722.54)</b>

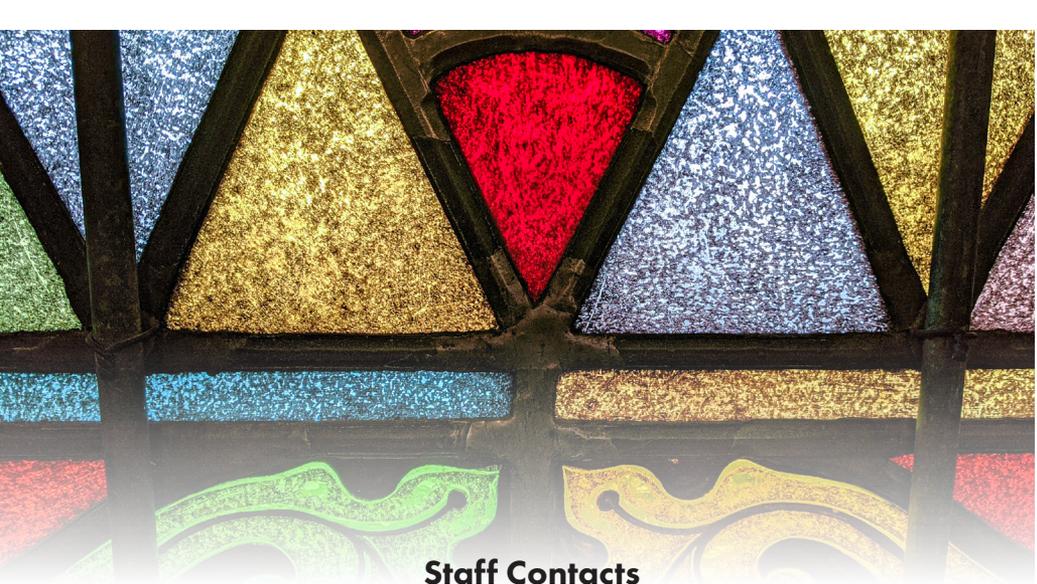
	<b>Month</b>	<b>Year</b>
Total Income	<b>\$25,920.19</b>	<b>\$281,644.60</b>
Total Expenses	<b>\$24,633.46</b>	<b>\$266,730.54</b>
*****	<b>Net</b>	<b>\$1,286.73 \$14,914.06</b>

**Mission Giving, Nov 2023**

Our Churches Wider Mission	\$1,210.00
Neighbors in Need	\$30.00
Project Hope Ukraine Relief	\$120.00
Whitehall Food Pantry	\$225.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,585.00</b>

**St John's UCC Fullerton**  
**Fund Balances**  
**For Month Ending, Nov 2023**

<b>Account</b>	<b>Oct-23</b>	<b>Nov-23</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Checking Account--KNBT	\$42,493.24	\$51,319.97	\$8,826.73
Giant Card Funds	\$719.51	\$2,469.51	\$1,750.00
Weis Card Funds	\$1,095.00	\$1,695.00	\$600.00
sub-total General Fund Assets	\$44,307.75	\$55,484.48	\$11,176.73
IN & OUT Account--KNBT Checking	\$43,998.53	\$39,283.79	\$(4,714.74)
Restricted/Property Investments	\$75,299.00	\$75,608.00	\$309.00
sub-total Restricted Assets	\$119,297.53	\$114,891.79	\$(4,405.74)
Endowment Fund--Quadrant	\$429,499.00	\$455,619.00	\$26,120.00
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$593,104.28</b>	<b>\$625,995.27</b>	<b>\$32,890.99</b>
Cornerstone Pavilion Loan	\$(84,087.92)	\$(83,978.61)	\$109.31
<b>TOTAL LIABILITES</b>	<b>\$(84,087.92)</b>	<b>\$(83,978.61)</b>	<b>\$109.31</b>
<b>NET FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>\$509,016.36</b>	<b>\$542,016.66</b>	<b>\$33,000.30</b>



## Staff Contacts

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# January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>7</b> 8:30am Friendship Class 9:30am Children's Faith Formation 9:30am Sunday Worship-Epiphany 10:30am Social Hour 11:00am Confirmation Class/ Youth	<b>8</b> 6:00pm Personnel Committee	<b>9</b> 10:30am Visitation Committee 1:30pm Staff Meeting 6:30pm Stewardship & Finance	<b>10</b> 9:00am Verso Chat with Pastor Steve 6:30pm Zumba class: Fox Hall 7:00pm SAA-Recovery Support	<b>11</b> 6:00pm Bell Choir 6:30pm Mission Committee 7:00pm Choir	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 9:30am Zumba class: Fox Hall
<b>14</b> Newletter: Articles Due Annual Report Deadline 8:30am Friendship Class 9:30am Children's Faith Formation 9:30am Installation of Consistory 10:30am Social Hour 11:00am Confirmation Class/ Youth	<b>15</b> Office closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday	<b>16</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting 10:00am Community of Practice 6:00pm Elders 7:00am Consistory	<b>17</b> 9:00am Verso Chat with Pastor Steve 6:30pm Zumba class: Fox Hall 7:00pm SAA-Recovery Support	<b>18</b> 6:00pm Bell Choir 7:00pm Choir	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 9:00am Consistory Retreat 9:30am Zumba class: Fox Hall
<b>21</b> 8:30am Friendship Class 9:30am Children's Faith Formation 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Social Hour 11:00am Confirmation Class/ Youth	<b>22</b> 6:00pm "Fun-Raising" Committee	<b>23</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting 6:30pm PEPs	<b>24</b> 9:00am Verso Chat with Pastor Steve 6:30pm Zumba class: Fox Hall 7:00pm SAA-Recovery Support	<b>25</b> 6:00pm Bell Choir 6:30pm Property Committee 7:00pm Choir	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 9:30am Zumba class: Fox Hall
<b>28</b> 8:30am Friendship Class 9:30am Children's Faith Formation 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Social Hour 11:00am Confirmation Class/ Youth	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting	<b>31</b> 9:00am Verso Chat with Pastor Steve 6:30pm Zumba class: Fox Hall 7:00pm SAA-Recovery Support			