



**ZACHARY  
SZOKE**

# St. John's **CONNECTIONS**

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

Volume 17 • Issue 137 • February 2024

## The Product of Relationship

Over the Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday observance weekend, I chose to spend the holiday participating in a training event with people all over the state of Pennsylvania, to intentionally confront White Christian Nationalism and use our power to build greater understanding with people who are committed to building the fabric of relationship. We shared about 15 hours in deep conversations, learning and gaining greater appreciation for our common



cause of “Building Beloved Community,” Jewish and Christian congregants, Muslim worshippers as well as leaders and organizers, pastors, rabbis and priests. We gathered to share our hopes for creating relationship that change the world!

We can change our places of worship, our communities, our commonwealth, our nation and world. “Change the world?” you ask? Do you really believe that we can change the world? Isn’t that just a dream? I would say, “No! It’s not just a dream. Yes! I believe we can change the world every single day, and I’m not the only one who believes this.” In my years of life and ministry, I’ve come to believe in the power of relationships. Relationships of understanding, grace, hope and commitment to genuinely see and know each other create an incredible power. Power through our commitment to love as God loves; power to create the woven fabric of relationship; power to build community and change the world. Power is the product of relationship. The question is, how will we cultivate and choose to use that power?

We have all experienced power in relationship which has created positive changes and power which has torn down and destroyed. Some believe there is only POWER OVER others, creating a spirit of domination and oppression. Others believe in POWER FOR others, so they stand up and use their influence to create advocacy or provide direct service for the marginalized. And when I look at the life of Jesus and the movement of people gathered with him because of his message, his life example, his transforming spirit, a small group of people chose POWER WITH Jesus and each other, to build beloved community, to create relationships of understanding and stand in solidarity with each other to CHANGE THE WORLD!

When we look at our POWER, is it rooted in organizing people, money and ideas through relationships and intentional outreach to lift up and create hope for just some?... those “like us?” ... those “who deserve” it?

OR... is our POWER, the organizing of people, money and ideas, relationships and intentional outreach... is our POWER that which creates the POWER of WE? Will we commit to building the beloved community to change the world?

The dream we all remember which the Rev. Dr. King shared at the Lincoln Memorial was just one of the dreams shared by Dr. King. In his message at the Washington National Cathedral, on March 31, 1968, just days before his assassination, Dr. King said,

*"We're going to win our freedom because both the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of the almighty God are embodied in our echoing demands. And so, however dark it is, however deep the angry feelings are, and however violent explosions are, I can still sing "We Shall Overcome." We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice. We shall overcome because Carlyle is right—"No lie can live forever." We shall overcome because William Cullen Bryant is right—"Truth, crushed to earth, will rise again." We shall overcome because James Russell Lowell is right—as we were singing earlier today, Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne. Yet that scaffold sways the future. And behind the dim unknown stands God, Within the shadow keeping watch above his own. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair the stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood."*

- Congressional Record, April 9, 1968 (Library of Congress)

With this faith, with the POWER of WE, the people of God, the beloved community, we will change the world!

As we step forward in faith to all that is before us in the chaos of this coming year... in the politics, in the world needs, in senseless gun violence, in brutal poverty and humanitarian need caused by wars, in all the many ways in which people of good will remain silent when justice calls for people to shout... in faith, WE can share the POWER of relationship with others, with a heart committed to deepening our understanding and compassion, as we "Worship, Love and Serve ~ No Matter What!" I'm so grateful for who WE are in Christ who welcomes us to be together in the POWER of love!

Yours in grace and hope,

*Steve Davis*

Rev. Steven Davis, Senior Pastor



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## On The Cover...



### ZACHARY SZOKE

My name is Zachary Szoke. I am in seventh grade at Brandywine Heights Middle School. I play three sports, during the fall I play soccer, currently I am playing basketball, and during the spring I play baseball. I enjoy hanging out and playing video games with my friends. I have a little brother and 3 pets, a dog, a cat, and a tortoise.

I was baptized at Dubbs Memorial UCC, but it closed. I started coming to St. John's in 2015. I am currently in the Confirmation Class.

### Convalescent & Homebound Residents

People who would welcome receiving a greeting card:

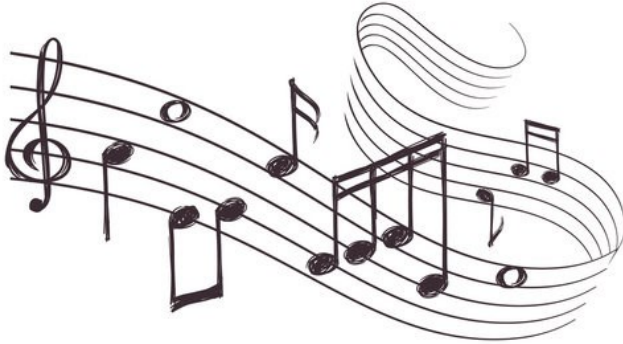
Shirley Abel  
 Larry & Freda Albright  
 Phyllis Ambearle  
 Anita Beil  
 Clarence Biehn  
 Marion Brown  
 Sandra Diefender  
 Shirley Downing  
 Jeanne Fischl  
 Milton Focht

Sally Gibson  
 Ron Glass  
 Gus Geissingner  
 Roberta Habernern  
 Lucille Hicks  
 Geraldine Keim  
 Adrienne Kiesbar  
 Emma Repp Kuczek  
 Jean Litzenberger  
 Dale Millham

Karen Moyer  
 Marilyn Piskula  
 Marietta Seyfried  
 Madeline Slivka  
 Bert Smith  
 Jolene Weaver  
 Nancy Weaver  
 Bonnie Weikel

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





St. John's UCC Fullerton Music Ministry  
is proud to welcome

# Lehigh University Choral Arts

(University Choir, Men's Glee Club, and Female Dolce Choir)

*Under the direction of Mr. Stephen Sametz*

**Sunday, March 3rd, 2024 at 2PM**

Please join us for a wonderful afternoon of music with light refreshments to follow in Fox Hall.


A free-will offering will be received with proceeds going to the Lehigh University Choral Arts Program.

**All Are Welcome And Invited To Attend!**

## Paul and Emma

Just before Christmas, Paul and Carol Raszler visited our oldest member, Emma Kuczek, at Fellowship Manor in Whitehall. With the elevator out of commission, it was impossible for Emma to attend church for several weeks. Wearing a red Rudolph nose, Paul serenaded Emma with "All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth," giving Emma a little bit of Christmas cheer and a lot of laughs. Emma celebrated her 101st birthday this past September.





# EPIPHANY & LENT WORSHIP 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

## **February 4 - Holy Communion & Annual Meeting Sunday**

*Mark 1:29-39 / "What We Came to Do"*

The congregation gathers to celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion and celebrate who we are as people who use our gifts to change the world as we follow Jesus Christ and share the love of God.

## **February 11 - Soup Bowl of Sharing Sunday**

*2 Kings 2:1-12 / Another "Now What?" We Don't Understand*

On Transfiguration Sunday, we turn to the Old Testament story of Elijah and Elisha, as God's Spirit took Elijah to heaven in a chariot of fire and changed Jesus and his disciples on a mountain top. "Now What?"

## **February 14 - Ash Wednesday / Lent Begins Lenten Message Series "He Did This for You!"**

**Sunday mornings & Wednesday evenings**

Through our Lenten journey, we will explore the power of God's



love for us, so great, that God would choose to love all. In response to God's love for us we might ask, "You did this for me?" Based on the book by Rev. Dr. Max Lucado, *He Chose the Nails*, our Lenten journey of Sunday morning worship messages and Wednesday evening dinners and devotionals will help us see the pieces of the journey of Holy Week, from the Garden of Gethsemane to the Empty Garden Tomb of Jesus.

### **Ash Wednesday "ASH & DASH" - 8-9am and 4-5pm**

For those in our community and those unable to participate in an evening service, come to the St. John's parking lot on Grape St. on your way to work or on your way home to receive the mark of ashes and begin our Lenten journey in faith, remembering the fullness of God's love for us in Christ's journey to the cross.

### **Ash Wednesday "Soup & Bread Dinner" (6pm) and Worship (7pm)**

*2 Corinthians 5:20-6:10 / "God Chose All!"*

Begin the season of Lent in fellowship with the community around the meal table with shared soup and bread in Fox Hall. Then gather for worship in the sanctuary as we receive the mark of ashes and the gifts of God's love in Holy Communion.

### **February 18 - Sunday Worship**

*James 1:17-18 / "What God Did to Win Your Heart"*

As Christ followers, because our faith calls us to remember Jesus and all his teaching and examples of his life, we are better able to rejoice, knowing that his death was not senseless, but would be used by God to share the gift of God's immeasurable love for us.

### **February 21 - Wednesday Evening Soup & Bread Dinner & Devotional (6pm)**

*Matthew 27:26-31 / "I Will Bear Your Dark Side"*

What would have happened to the Beast if the Beauty hadn't come? What is the Beauty had not cared? We know this familiar story all too well, because there's a bit of a beast within each of us. And God chose to bear our dark side in love.

## **February 25 - Sunday Worship**

*John 19:16b-25a / "I Will Give You My Robe"*

Garments can symbolize character, and like Jesus' garment, Jesus' character was seamless. Coordinated. Unified. He was like his robe. It wasn't enough for him to prepare a feast and reserve a table with your name at the place setting. He did something more.

## **February 28 - Wednesday Evening Soup & Bread Dinner & Devotional (6pm)**

*1 Peter 1:18-20 / "I Love You Enough to..."*

God chose to give up the crown of heaven for the crown of thorns by becoming one of us? Can you imagine such love? God loves us enough to become one of us.

## **March 3 - Sunday Worship with Holy Communion**

*Luke 23:13-25 / "I Invite You In"*

We want access! No one wants to be denied access to things, places, events, or even people we believe are important. We want access, yet we often encounter the barriers. And despite the risk, God chose to remove what once separated us from God's holiness.

## **March 6 - Wednesday Evening Soup & Bread Dinner & Devotional (6pm)**

*John 19:19-22 / "I Loved You Enough to..."*

In every relationship, we have to learn to "read the signs" of non-verbal communication, but sometimes we miss them. The Framer of our eternity is familiar with our darkness and has given us so many signs to share the power of love for us, even the sign on Jesus' cross.

## **March 10 - Sunday Worship**

*Romans 5:6-11 / "I Will Not Abandon You"*

To see an newborn child is a mighty force of utter helplessness, and yet there is so much love we share for this child. Jesus once asked, if we humans who are sinful have such a love, how much more does God, the sinless and selfless Parent, love us? Come in worship to listen to the story of Joe and Madeline.

### **March 13 - Wednesday Evening Soup & Bread Dinner & Devotional (6pm)**

*John 19:16-18a, 28-30 / "I Understand Your Pain"*

What did Jesus do to win our trust? Jump into the trashcan of life with us? Apparently Jesus thinks we are worth it. In the journey of faith Jesus let's us know he can be trusted, even in our experience of pain.

### **March 17 - Sunday Worship**

*Luke 23:39-43 / "I Will Let You Choose"*

In every age of history and on every page of scripture, the truth is revealed: God allows us to make our own choices. And then, God makes the ultimate choice.

### **March 20 - Wednesday Evening Soup & Bread Dinner & Devotional (6pm)**

*Luke 22:7-20 / "Eat and Drink In Remembrance of Me"*

What is the greatest gift you've ever received? Some may think of things of incredible value, priceless works, incomparable worth... yet Jesus gives the greatest of gifts in bread and wine.

### **March 24 - Palm & Passion Sunday**

*Matthew 26:14-16, 20-25 and Colossians 2:13-14 / "I Forgive You"*

Great works of art and music can inspire great depth of faith and great devotion. Yet it is the message of forgiveness and unconditional love that can open eternity to us. Would you like anyone to see your weaknesses? If you were asked to list your top flaws, what comes to mind first? What would it take to believe the list was wiped away? "This I have done for you," is Jesus message for us. How will we respond?

### **March 28 - Maundy Thursday Service of Holy Communion (7pm)**

*John 19:31-37 / "I Have Redeemed You"*

We often think we make a significant contribution to the team when perhaps all we offer is "par for the course." Yet it is God's work for us and God's work in us that actually make the difference. Jesus offers us both to keep us held close in God's love.

## **March 29 - Good Friday Service of Shadows (7pm)**

*2 Corinthians 5:18-21 / "I Will Love You Forever"*

In this moving service of scriptures, hymns and choral selections, candles and darkness, we hear the message of the cross and God's promise of eternal love, because God knew we would doubt and want proof that it could actually be true.

## **March 30 - Holy Saturday Easter Egg Hunt and Celebration (Tentative time 10:00am - Noon)**

## **March 31 - Easter Sunday Celebration of the Resurrection**

### **Inclement Weather Notices**



**If inclement weather requires  
cancellation of Sunday services,  
notices will be on Channel 69 news or  
[www.wfmz.com/weather/stormcenter](http://www.wfmz.com/weather/stormcenter)**



We currently have 48 giving units participating as automatic contributors. A few others share additional support for special occasions and when other needs are shared. We've made 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.

A new authorization form is available [on our website](#) for you to download and return to the church office to begin your recurring contributions from a bank account or credit card. If you need help signing up, please contact the church office to visit with Michelle Gutekunst, our Financial Secretary.

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.

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?

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.com

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

## Super Excitement is Building for Movie Night

The football playoffs began in January, and you can feel the excitement mounting. By the time this newsletter reaches you, you may already know what teams will be playing in Super Bowl LVIII. Our "Fun-Raising" Committee is getting ready for the big event, and you're invited!!

The activities February 3 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 about four best friends in their mid-70s and 80s who are huge New England Patriot fans and love NFL quarterback Tom Brady. When they realize their favorite NFL team made it to the 2017 Super Bowl, they decide to go to the big game together. There, they have the most outrageous and fun experience any of them has ever had. Co-starring in the movie are Rita Moreno, 90; Jane Fonda, 84; Lily Tomlin, 82; Sally Field, 75; and of course, football quarterback legend Tom Brady.

There is a sign-up sheet in the lounge area or contact the church office. 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 100 minutes. In addition, we are also asking you to wear clothing showing your favorite football team and to bring a can of soup to support the "Souper Bowl of Caring" hunger campaign.

The festivities will then continue at worship on Sunday, February 11, when it's Super Bowl LVIII gameday. Wear clothing of your favorite football team. Bring a can of soup to donate to "Souper Bowl of Caring." Members of our Confirmation Class will also have soup pots for you to place any monetary contributions. All the proceeds will go to the Whitehall Food Pantry. Afterwards, come down to Fox Hall for the Social Hour as we root for your favorite team, enjoy the refreshments, and spend a time of fellowship together.

**My idea of a  
Super Bowl  
is a toilet  
that cleans  
itself!**

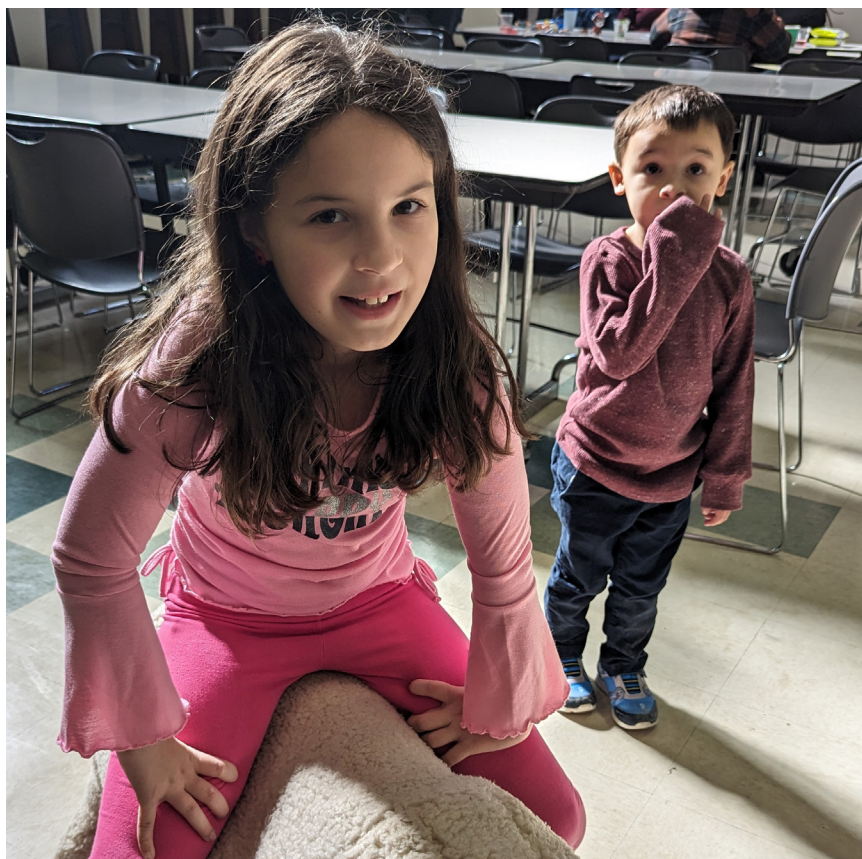


## Sunday Social Following Worship

There's a new list posted on the red display board in the sanctuary with open dates for Sunday Social Hosts. If you have enjoyed staying after worship and enjoying the food and fellowship of the Sunday Social time, please consider signing up with a friend to help share this experience of fellowship with others.

We LOVE to eat and we LOVE to visit. What's needed next are people to "host." 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 which Sunday you want to provide refreshments. Colleen Kulhammer is always happy to help orient you in the church kitchen.

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





## 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 can 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.



## 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. If you have any questions, please see Karen Stoitsits.





## Chocolate Cherry Cake By Carol Raszler

- **Cake:**
- 1 pkg. Duncan Hines dark chocolate fudge cake mix
- 21 oz. can cherry pie filling
- 1 tsp. almond extract
- 3 eggs, beaten
- **Frosting:**
- 1/2 c. granulated sugar
- 4 T. butter
- 1/4 c. milk
- 6 oz. semi-sweet chocolate chips

**Cake:** Combine cake mix, eggs, almond extract and mix. Add cherry pie filling and mix by hand until well blended. Pour into a 9"x 13" floured pan. Bake at 350° for 35-40 minutes. Take out of oven and prepare frosting.

**Frosting:** Put sugar, butter, and milk in pan. Boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and stir in chocolate chips until smooth. Pour over cake while cake is still warm.

## Deadline for March Newsletter

If you would like to contribute an article for the March 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, February 11.

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>

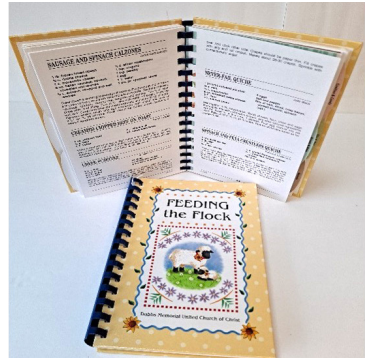
## News from Our Crafters

The Crafters Group is looking for people to knit or crochet a new design for 3"x 3" prayer squares. We have plenty of yarn available to use, and we'll supply you with the pattern.

During these cold, winter months, keep in mind we have 12-Bean Soup Mix available for sale at \$4.00. It's a real comfort food to enjoy at this time of year.

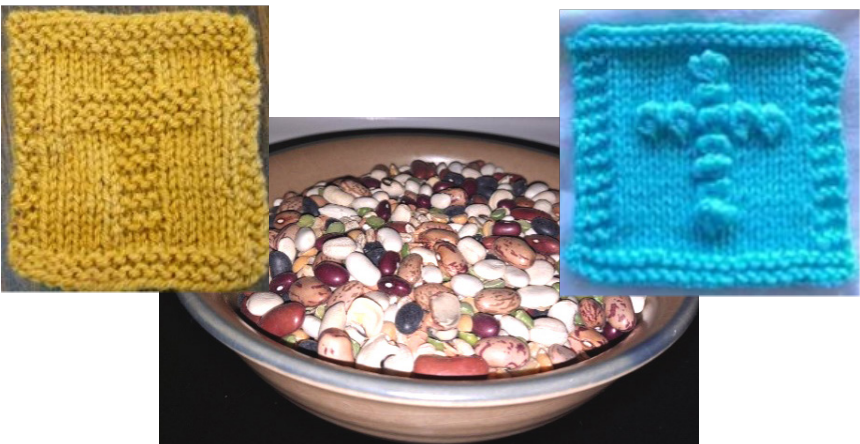
Big sale on our Women's Group Church Cookbook – now only \$5.00! It contains 350 delicious recipes for appetizers, soups, entrees, salads, sides dishes, and desserts.

Easter's early this year so we will have our annual Easter and Spring Craft Sale on Sundays, March 10 and March 17. Look for us in the lounge area before and after worship.



Thank you to everyone who purchased craft items in 2023 and, of course, a big thank you to our team of Crafters. With a profit of \$1,186.00 at the end of the year, the Mission Committee designated these funds go back to St. John's with \$593.00 going to the Furnace Fund and \$593.00 going to the Pavilion Fund.

Please contact Carol Raszler at (610) 393-7572 or email her at [craszler@aol.com](mailto:craszler@aol.com) if you are interested in any of these items.



# Lady PEEPS

POSITIVE, EXTRAORDINARY, ENCOURAGING, PRAYERFUL SISTERS

The Lady PEEPS Women's group will meet on February 20th at 6:30pm in Fox Hall.

Our guest speaker will be Pastor Emerita Reverend Dr. Becky Beckwith.



The theme is GOD MOMENTS - LET'S TALK ABOUT GOD!

God is actively showing up everywhere! God is present in our lives and in our world.

It's time for us to gather, question and share.

We will look at scripture, situations and life stories.

Should be a night to remember! Join us!

Colleen Kulhamer

## “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>

## Pastie Sale Coming Soon

Our spring Pastie Sale will kick off in March. These traditional turnovers are made by hand at the Mr. Pastie bakery in Pen Argyl and come frozen. If you don't have time to cook, just pop these pasties in the oven for a quick, delicious meal.

The sale is scheduled for pickups on Thursday, April 25, from 6:00pm to 8:00pm and on Sunday, April 28, after worship down in Fox Hall. We'll have our usual beef, chicken, sausage, and ham pasties; the veggie and spinach melts; and the fruit turnovers. The new pasties introduced last year, the cheeseburger, Mexican, and pizza pasties, will be an option again. Two new items, the Philly Cheesesteak and the Chicken Cordon Bleu pasties will be added to the selections.

Prices will vary between \$7.25 and \$8.25 for the pasties and \$4.25 for the fruit turnovers. Order forms will be available shortly. Payment must be included with all orders, payable to St. John's. Deadline to order is April 7. Contact Carol Raszler at (610) 393-7572 or [craszler@aol.com](mailto:craszler@aol.com) if you have any questions.



## 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 **February 3 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 100% sold out. Thank you for your support!



**SOLD OUT**



## God Is Still Speaking...

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

February and March will be a mixture of lectionary readings to guide and supplement our worship preparations, as well as a selection of message scriptures in Lent connected to our theme, "He Did This for You!" As we explore Jesus' final days before his resurrection, we will look at the darker side of our human experience and Jesus' determination to usher in the fullness of God's love for us, collectively and individually.

God's Still Speaking Voice continues to bring fresh truth and teaching to our lives today! 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 its' 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>

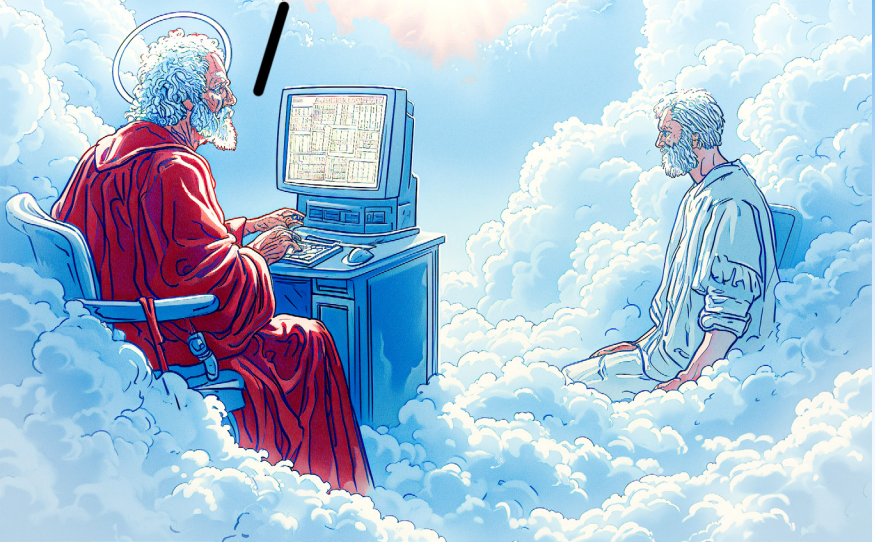




# Church Chuckle



Sorry, your  
user name and  
password  
don't match.



## February Birthdays

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

2/1	Connor Landis Gavin Phillips		Eleanor O'Donnell Kaylee Pagan
2/2	Aubrey Beckwith Robert Saeger	2/14	Aaron Mill
2/4	Robert Beckwith Dewey Yeatts	2/15	Richard Baatz Sr. Conner Strauss
2/5	Michelle Brobst Christopher Rowe	2/16	Gerald Yanavok
2/6	Andrew Doyle Susan Imboden	2/17	Janice Blaker Rev George Eckstein
2/7	Halie Holderman Peter Mohr	2/18	Marion DeMilio
2/8	Brian Fisher Aubree Jordan	2/19	Sandy Koch
2/10	Owen Eberhart Jr Todd Heffelfinger Bruce Pope Timothy Sommer Brian Strauss Janet Williams	2/20	Joseph Catalini Ashley Kuhns
2/11	Janet Ebert George Williams	2/21	Kelly Weiner
2/12	William Dovico	2/22	Michelle Cortright
2/13	Paul E Geissinger Jr	2/23	Emilie Dumbach Robert Scheirer
		2/24	Mary Jane Ott Elizabeth Reck Lyla Schmoyer
		2/25	Thomas Chryst
		2/26	Wayne Lichtenwalner
		2/28	Anthony DeMilio Heather Santee



## February Wedding Anniversaries

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

Edward & Cynthia Sommers  
2/10/73

Barrie & Judith Carr  
2/21/81



Worship, Love and Serve - No Matter What!



## **“Souper Bowl of Caring”**

Each year thousands of individuals and groups from all 50 states participate in the “Souper Bowl of Caring” fundraiser. In the last 33 years, over 300,000 groups have participated to support local food programs in their community.

“Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat.” That simple prayer was delivered by a pastor to a youth group at a Presbyterian church in South Carolina. It 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 and unite the nation for a higher good—collecting dollars and canned food for the needy? The senior high teens liked the idea so much they invited other area churches to join them, sending all \$5,700 they had raised to area non-profits.

That was 1990. Since then, young people have generated more than \$100 million for soup kitchens, food banks, and other charities in communities across the country. In addition, hundreds of thousands of youths have experienced for themselves the joy and satisfaction of giving and serving, inspiring people of all ages to follow their generous example.

### **Did you know that:**

- 41 million people are experiencing food insecurity in America.
- 47% of families are looking for their next meal.

- It is estimated that 111 million people watch the Super Bowl while 34 million Americans struggle with hunger.



For the entire month of February, in support of “Souper Bowl of Caring,” we will be collecting all kinds of canned soups. We particularly request everyone to bring a can of soup on Super Bowl Sunday, February 11. Our Confirmation Class will be on hand with soup pots after worship if you would like to give a monetary donation.

So, don’t sit on the sidelines. Now is not the time to punt. Score a touchdown by making a difference in the community and tackle hunger. All donations will go to the Whitehall Food Pantry.

### **General Disaster Relief Fund for Israel-Hamas War**

January 14 marked 100 days that Israel and Hamas have been at war. The war already is the longest and deadliest between Israel and Palestine since Israel’s establishment in 1948 and the deadliest for Jewish people since the Holocaust.

Israel’s bombardment and ground invasion of Gaza have pushed almost all Palestinians toward the southern city of Rafah along the Egyptian border. Palestinians seeking refuge in southern Gaza say every day has become a struggle to find food, water, medicine, and working bathrooms. All the while, they live in fear of Israeli airstrikes and the growing threat of illnesses. Homes are crammed with people, often extended families who have opened their doors to displaced relatives. West of the city, thousands of nylon tents have sprung up. Thousands more people are sleeping in the open, despite the cool and often rainy winter weather.

Food prices have soared. Gaza is facing acute food and medicine shortages and is dependent largely on aid and supplies that trickle in through two crossing in Egypt and Israel and what was grown in the recent harvest. More than half a million people in Gaza—roughly a quarter of the population—are starving, the United Nations said in late December.

The war has rippled across the entire Middle East, threatening to escalate into a broader conflict pitting a U.S.-led alliance against Iranian-backed militant groups. As the war drags on and the death toll mounts, there is no clear path for when the fighting will end or what will follow.

If you would like to make a contribution to UCC National for its work in Israel, Palestine, and Gaza, 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 "Middle East Support" in the memo section.



### **Whitehall Food Pantry**

For the month of February, we are collecting cans of soup in support of the "Souper Bowl of Caring" campaign. 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 online or by text. Looking ahead to Easter, donations of canned fruit, canned vegetables, and canned sweet potatoes are needed.

An article appeared in December’s newsletter that was entitled the “Reverse Advent Calendar.” It was a chart suggesting that for each day in Advent, December up to Christmas, one could purchase a particular food item and place it in a box. Then on Christmas Eve donate the entire contents in the box to a food bank. We commend and thank Nancy Bowman for participating in that challenge and bringing in a box full of 24 food items.

### Whitehall-Coplay Hunger Initiative

WCHI, the Faith-Based Community, and others are proud to provide free meals to low-income Whitehall-Coplay households twice a month. All are welcome to attend both meals on the 1st Sunday and the 3rd Tuesday of each month from 4:00pm to 6:00pm. WCHI will post a meal reminder on Facebook and Instagram. It will state if it is an inside sit-down meal, take out, or a version of both. The meal being served will also be posted. Listed below are the names of churches offering meals:

Date	Church	Address	Phone
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
Sunday, March 3	Muslim Assoc. of the Lehigh Valley	1988 Schadt Ave., Whitehall	(703) 346-8698
Tuesday, March 19	Whitehall Bible Fellowship Church	3300 Seventh St., Whitehall	(610) 434-8661

### Update on Other Mission Outreaches

December’s special offering for the **Christmas Fund** amounted to **\$347.00**. It is an annual UCC offering for retired and active UCC pastors and lay church workers and their families facing financial need. A check was sent to UCC National.

There were \$50.00 in donations for Ukraine and \$40.00 in donations for the Israel-Hamas War in December. Those donations have been forwarded to UCC National.

At the end of the year, the profit received from our Crafters’ sales amounted to \$1,186.00. The funds were divided in half and given back to St. John’s for the Furnace Fund and the Pavilion Fund.

At the end of the year, the 10% tithing from our fundraisers amounted to \$2,383.68. Those funds were divided with one-third going to Lehigh Conference of Churches and two-thirds going to Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM).

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

Recent Outreaches	Dec. 2023	YTD 2023	YTD 2022	YTD 2021
Our Church's Wider Mission	\$ 1,070.00	\$12,823.00	\$14,815.90	\$17,616.30
Christmas Fund	\$ 347.00	\$ 347.00	\$ 585.00	\$ 666.80
Whitehall Food Pantry	\$ 490.00	\$ 4,180.00	\$ 1,700.00	\$ 4,745.00
Ukraine Relief Fund	\$ 50.00	\$ 1,825.00	\$ 3,875.00	N/A
Middle East Support	\$ 40.00	\$ 40.00	N/A	N/A
Mitten Tree (VYH)	\$ 25.00	\$ 950.00	\$ 680.00	\$ 350.00
Mitten Tree (Phoebe)	\$ 40.00	\$ 765.00	\$ 620.00	\$ 320.00
Crafters (Christmas Sales)	\$ 381.83	\$ 1,403.83	\$ 1,330.18	\$ 1,721.61
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$2,443.83</b>	<b>\$26,400.83</b>	<b>\$26,340.88</b>	<b>\$27,790.43</b>

**Mission Outreach giving for December totaled \$2,443.83  
and YTD giving totaled \$26,400.83.**





## Thank You Notes

Dear St. John's UCC, Fullerton:

On behalf of World Central Kitchen, I want to thank you for choosing to donate \$550.00 in support of our response to the crisis in and around Ukraine. We are dedicated to being first at the frontlines with a fresh plate of food, wherever we are needed. WCK is truly a people-powered organization. We are able to serve food in times of need because of incredible donors, local chefs, and volunteers who show up in different ways. In our response to the crisis in Ukraine alone, we have partnered with more than 500 restaurants, food trucks, and caterers along with countless community organizations, volunteers, and supporters like you. I share our heartfelt gratitude from the entire WCK family for your belief and trust in our mission.

Sincerely,  
Erin Gore, CEO  
World Central Kitchen

Dear Friend of Project HOPE:

Thank you for St. John's UCC Fullerton's generous donation of \$100.00 to support Project HOPE's life changing work in the Ukraine. For more than 60 years, Project HOPE has transformed the health and well-being of people and communities around the globe. We respond to health crisis by rapidly deploying trained, multidisciplinary teams, and emergency supplies that reach the most affected populations. We are especially thankful to our donors, without whom our work would not be possible. Thank you for your support.

With sincere gratitude,

Rabih Torbay  
Presided & CEO  
Project HOPE

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

Income	Electronic	12/3/2023	12/10/2023	12/17/2023	12/24/2023	12/31/2023	Total
Offerings for Operating Expenses	\$6,337.97	\$2,786.00	\$2,781.20	\$3,612.00	\$5,238.00	\$2,520.00	\$23,275.17
Rental Income--Gross		\$1,225.00	\$43.00		\$10.00		\$1,278.00
Fundraising Income--Net of Exp		\$(181.44)	\$52.02	\$(250.00)		\$235.00	\$(144.42)
Endowment Interest							\$-
Flowers	\$36.00	\$110.00	\$24.00				\$170.00
Christian Education	\$10.00	\$25.00	\$60.00	\$15.00	\$5.00		\$115.00
Special Gifts				\$105.00		\$206.81	\$311.81
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,383.97</b>	<b>\$3,964.56</b>	<b>\$2,960.22</b>	<b>\$3,482.00</b>	<b>\$5,253.00</b>	<b>\$2,961.81</b>	<b>\$25,005.56</b>

Expense Summary	Actual	Budget	Difference
Pastoral Services	\$10,542.88	\$11,751.00	\$(1,208.12)
Staff Salaries & Expense	\$8,695.60	\$9,540.50	\$(844.90)
Property	\$2,454.84	\$2,918.00	\$(463.16)
Parish Programs	\$4,314.59	\$3,680.50	\$634.09
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$26,007.91</b>	<b>\$27,890.00</b>	<b>\$(1,882.09)</b>

	Month	Year
Total Income	\$25,005.56	\$306,650.16
Total Expenses	\$26,007.91	\$292,738.45
*****	Net	*****
	\$(1,002.35)	\$13,911.71

**Mission Giving, Dec 2023**

Our Churches Wider Mission	\$1,090.00
Christmas Fund	\$347.00
Ukraine	\$50.00
Middle East	\$40.00
Whitehall Food Pantry	\$490.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,017.00</b>

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

Account	Nov-23	Dec-23	Difference
Checking Account--KNBT	\$51,319.97	\$45,010.80	\$(6,309.17)
Giant Card Funds	\$2,469.51	\$1,052.01	\$(1,417.50)
Weis Card Funds	\$1,695.00	\$1,655.00	\$(40.00)
sub-total General Fund Assets	\$55,484.48	\$47,717.81	\$(7,766.67)
IN & OUT Account--KNBT Checking	\$39,283.79	\$39,965.87	\$682.08
Restricted/Property Investments	\$75,608.00	\$75,930.00	\$322.00
sub-total Restricted Assets	\$114,891.79	\$115,895.87	\$1,004.08
Endowment Fund--Quadrant	\$455,619.00	\$474,777.00	\$19,158.00
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$625,995.27</b>	<b>\$638,390.68</b>	<b>\$12,395.41</b>
Cornerstone Pavillion Loan	\$(83,978.61)	\$(83,857.93)	\$120.68
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$(83,978.61)</b>	<b>\$(83,857.93)</b>	<b>\$120.68</b>
<b>NET FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>\$542,016.66</b>	<b>\$554,532.75</b>	<b>\$12,516.09</b>



## Staff Contacts

**Rev. Steve Davis**  
Senior Pastor

[srpastor@sjuccf.org](mailto:srpastor@sjuccf.org)

**Patrick Sandt**  
Director of Music Ministry / Organist

[music@sjuccf.org](mailto:music@sjuccf.org)

**Alison Berger Boor**  
Office Administrator

[officesecretary@sjuccf.org](mailto:officesecretary@sjuccf.org)

**Sue Weldner**  
Treasurer

[sbweldner@gmail.com](mailto:sbweldner@gmail.com)

**Michelle Gutekunst**  
Financial Secretary  
Coordinating Custodian

[financialsecretary@sjuccf.org](mailto:financialsecretary@sjuccf.org)  
[custodians@sjuccf.org](mailto:custodians@sjuccf.org)

**Bill Castello**  
Worship Tech  
Connections Newsletter Editor

[stars@sjuccf.org](mailto:stars@sjuccf.org)  
[newsletter@sjuccf.org](mailto:newsletter@sjuccf.org)

**Bob Czekner**  
Custodian

[rczekner11@aol.com](mailto:rczekner11@aol.com)

**Christine Bach**  
Custodian

[iron1@verizon.net](mailto:iron1@verizon.net)

[www.stjohnsuccfullerton.org](http://www.stjohnsuccfullerton.org)

575 Grape Street, Whitehall, PA 18052 (610) 264-8421

# February 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>4</b> 8:30am Friendship Class 9:30am Children's Faith Formation 9:30am Sunday Worship- 10:30am Social Hour 11:00am Confirmation Class/ Youth 11:00am Annual Mtg./Potluck</p>	<p><b>5</b> 6:00pm Personnel Committee</p>	<p><b>6</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Stewardship &amp; Finance</p>	<p><b>7</b> 9:00am Verso Chat with Pastor Steve 6:30pm STARS Committee Mtg 6:30pm Zumba class: Fox Hall 7:00pm SAA-Recovery Support</p>	<p><b>1</b> 6:00pm Bell Choir 7:00pm Choir</p>	<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>3</b> 8:30am Men's breakfast: Hamilton Family Restaurant 9:30am Zumba class: Fox Hall 6:00pm Supper &amp; Movie Night: Fox Hall</p>
<p><b>11</b> Newsletter Articles Due 8:30am Friendship Class 9:30am Children's Faith Formation 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Social Hour 11:00am Confirmation Class/ Youth</p>	<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>13</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting 10:00am Community of Practice 6:00pm Elders 7:00am Consistory</p>	<p><b>14</b> 8:00am Ash and Dash 9:00am Verso Chat with Pastor Steve 4:00pm Ash and Dash 6:00pm Soup Supper 7:00pm Ash Wednesday Service 7:00pm SAA-Recovery Support</p>	<p><b>15</b> 6:00pm Bell Choir 6:30pm Zumba Class 7:00pm Choir</p>	<p><b>16</b></p>	<p><b>17</b> 9:30am Zumba class: Fox Hall</p>
<p><b>18</b> 8:30am Friendship Class 9:30am Children's Faith Formation 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Social Hour 11:00am Confirmation Class/ Youth</p>	<p><b>19</b> Office closed: President's Day</p>	<p><b>20</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting 10:00am Community of Practice 6:30pm PEEPS</p>	<p><b>21</b> 9:00am Verso Chat with Pastor Steve 6:30pm Zumba class: Fox Hall 7:00pm SAA-Recovery Support</p>	<p><b>22</b> 6:00pm Bell Choir 6:30pm Property Committee 6:30pm Zumba 7:00pm Choir</p>	<p><b>23</b></p>	<p><b>24</b> 9:30am Zumba class: Fox Hall</p>
<p><b>25</b> 8:30am Friendship Class 9:30am Children's Faith Formation 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Social Hour 11:00am Confirmation Class/ Youth</p>	<p><b>26</b></p>	<p><b>27</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting</p>	<p><b>28</b> 9:00am Verso Chat with Pastor Steve 6:00pm Soup and Devotions 7:00pm SAA-Recovery Support</p>	<p><b>29</b> 6:30pm Zumba Class 7:00pm Choir</p>		