



**SOPHIA  
PAGAN**

# St. John's **CONNECTIONS**

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

**Volume 17 • Issue 138 • March 2024**

## Watering Down and Keeping Quiet?

### That's a Risk We Cannot Take!

The vital role of teachers in navigating the complexities of history education cannot be overstated. They tirelessly work to broaden students' perspectives, often challenging the dominant narratives that favor the victors. This effort is crucial for including the voices of the marginalized, whose experiences can significantly alter our understanding of history. For instance, the portrayal of Jesus by contemporary Roman and religious authorities likely contrasted sharply with the accounts found in the gospels, pointing to the power dynamics influencing historical narratives.



The challenge of teaching history today is underscored by recent legislative efforts across the United States aimed at limiting educational content. In 2023, numerous states proposed laws restricting teachings on America's racial history, sexual orientation, and scientific facts, reflecting a broader trend toward censorship in education. This approach, motivated by a desire to avoid discomfort, fundamentally misunderstands the purpose of education, which should involve confronting hard truths to foster understanding and growth.

The discomfort arising from learning about the injustices of slavery, segregation, and systemic racism is essential for a truthful engagement with history. The reluctance of some parents and legislators to confront these realities threatens to sanitize education, robbing students of the opportunity to learn from the past. The pushback against this trend is not only about resisting state-sanitized narratives but also about challenging the societal complacency that allows these narratives to persist.

Highlighting the importance of an inclusive historical education, Florida State Representative LaVon Bracy Davis argues that understanding the full breadth of African American experiences is vital for societal progress. By diluting or omitting these narratives, we risk perpetuating ignorance and misunderstanding. Education should equip younger generations with a comprehensive understanding of history, including the atrocities and triumphs of African Americans, to build a more equitable future.

This ongoing battle against educational suppression is not just about what is taught in schools but also about who gets to decide which stories are told. It's a call to action for educators, parents, and community members to advocate for an education that reflects the diverse and often uncomfortable truths of our shared history, ensuring that future generations can learn from the past to create a more just and inclusive society.

We currently have religious and political extremists trying to push women backward in their hard fought rights for personal autonomy and rights. The current political ideology wants to roll back advances made for persons of color, for immigrants, for LGBTQIA+ persons and many more. To water down or keep quiet about who we believe we are called to be as children of God who follow the way of love and justice modeled and taught by Jesus is to allow for the oppression and discrimination to continue unchallenged.

We cannot keep quiet. I believe if we do, "even the rocks will cry out." Be involved. Speak up. Challenge bigotry and "alternative facts" with the truth and hard lessons learned from our history, our shortcomings and our victories. Tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help us, God, as we

**"Worship, Love and Serve ~ No Matter What!"**

Yours in grace and hope,



Rev. Steven Davis, Senior Pastor



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### On The Cover...



## SOPHIA PAGAN

My name is Sophia Pagan. I am 11, in sixth grade at Whitehall Coplay middle school.

I like Pastor Steve and the members of the church.

I like the mentors.

I like praying.

I like to learn about the birth of Jesus.

I like learning about Jesus Christ.

### Convalescent & Homebound Residents

People who would welcome receiving a greeting card:

Shirley Abel  
Phyllis Ambearle  
Anita Beil  
Clarence Biehn  
Sandra Diefenderfer  
Shirley Downing  
Jeanne Fischl  
Milton Focht  
Sally Gibson  
Ron Glass

Gus Geissing  
Roberta Haberern  
Lucille Hicks  
Geraldine Keim  
Adrienne Kiesbar  
Emma Repp Kuczek  
Jean Litzenberger  
Bill Meckes  
Dale Millham  
Karen Moyer

Mary Jane Ott  
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.



## Music at St. John's

*Were we there, you and I, in the olive grove that night?  
Was there silver in my hand to betray the Son of Man?  
Did you run away and hide?  
In your fear, did you deny?  
Were we there, were we there, you and I?*

*Were we there, you and I, boldly crying, "crucify?"  
Did you mock Him with your scorn?  
Did I weave the crown of thorns?  
Did you strike Him in the face, spit on Him in His disgrace?  
Were we there, were we there, you and I?*

*Were we there, you and I, on that hill the day He died?  
Did you watch without a sound when they brought the hammer down?  
Did I turn to look away from His suffering and pain?  
Were we there? Were we there?*

*Were you there? Was I, too, on that morning at the tomb?  
When we looked into His face, did we know He took our place?  
Yes, He died for us as though we were there so long ago.  
We were there, we were there, we were there, we were there.*

Text by Pamela Martin

Holy Week is my favorite liturgical season throughout the Church Year. Growing up Catholic and participating in the services during that week, had a profound impact on both my spiritual and musical life within the church. Being able to tell the story of what each day represented through song and allowing the listener to feel the emotions through those words, made me into the story telling music director I am today.

Think about it, the holiest week of the church year, begins with the waving of palms and a celebration, a triumphant entry as you would, to an upper room where a meal was shared with the very one who would betray Him with a kiss, to the Garden and the arrest of an innocent man, to scenes of cruelty, anger, and hopelessness in His own crucifixion. And finally, the scene of unbelievable joy and hope. So many emotions within the course of seven days!

-Patrick Sandt

## Photo Directory Project 2024

We're excited to announce that we'll be creating a brand new photo directory for our church community, and we will be doing it in-house with the help of Bill Castello shooting photographs, with Amy Fiedler and Kathy Haggerty volunteering to help with signups and paperwork.

It has been several years since our last directory was published. Rather than relying on a directory company, we're taking matters into our own hands to ensure that our directory truly reflects the spirit and diversity of our congregation.

What better time to capture family memories than during the Easter season? Bill is finalizing the dates and times for our photo sessions, and we've tentatively scheduled sessions for:

**Sunday, March 24 – 11am to 2pm (Palm Sunday)**  
**Wednesday, March 27 – 10am to 3pm**  
**Sunday, March 31 – 11am to 1pm (Easter Sunday)**  
**Wednesday, April 3 – 4pm to 7pm**

We may also add some additional times and dates in May to accommodate everyone's schedules.

But wait, there's more! In addition to family photos, we'll also be taking pictures of our committees, choir members, and homebound members to ensure that everyone is represented.

Each photo session will last approximately 10 minutes, with room for 5 families per hour and breaks in between to keep things running smoothly.

As an added bonus, prints of your photos will be available for purchase. For just \$10.00, you can get an 8"x10" print, or opt for two 4"x5" prints for the same price.

We're thrilled to embark on this project together and create a beautiful and comprehensive photo directory that truly captures the essence of our church community. Stay tuned for more details and be sure to mark your calendars for your photo session!



# LENT & EASTER 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

## **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.

### **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 Become One of You"*

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 Speak your Language"*

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 23 - Saturday, 12-3pm Easter Egg Hunt and Celebration**

*(see article in this newsletter on Page 24)*

Children are welcome to come hear the story of God's love for us in Jesus and enjoy fun with new friends as we hunt for eggs!

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

*John 19:38-42 / "I Will Turn Your Tragedy into Triumph!"*

Celebrate the resurrection with us as we flower the cross and rejoice in the eternal life we have in God's love! Shout with joy, "Christ is risen! Christ is risen, indeed!"

**Bingo Night is March 15th**



Did you get your tickets yet? \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door (if available).

Seventeen games plus 3 specials, Tricky Tray table, great refreshments, fun and good times!

Tricky tray donations, worth \$20 to \$30 or so, (Baskets, gift cards, etc.)

Sponsor a game. Bring your friends!

Please let Carol Raszler or Tom Moyer know if you are able to contribute.

We are looking for donations:

- Beef hot dogs
- Hot dog and hamburger rolls
- Box of snack bags
- Crockpot of perogie casserole
- Baked goods (Individually wrapped)

*Hope to see you at Bingo, March 15th !*

## **Sunday Social Following Worship**

### **Connecting With God And Others...**

Have you noticed how many of our friends are sticking around following worship to continue conversations and share in some refreshments together? Since the start of our program year in September 2023, we have increased from 3 tables to now regularly having 6 tables of people almost every Sunday.

The list with dates open to host the Sunday Social events is posted on the red display board in the sanctuary. 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, or call the Church Office and let Alison know what 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!





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

**WE HAVE ADDED** some new Online Giving contributors in the last two months. Some of you have chosen to make a contribution online through our secure website portal. Thank you for trying it out! We hope more will make the switch to setting up recurring automatic contributions for your regular support of our ministry at St. John's UCC, Fullerton.

We currently have **51 giving units** participating as automatic contributors!

We've made it easy for you to share your gifts for ministry and 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, print, fill out and return to the church office to begin your recurring contributions from a bank account or credit card.

**Because of YOU**, our regular participants and friends, our ability to meet the needs of our church and community changes lives.

## Helping People In Need... With Discretion!

From time to time, we all find ourselves in unexpected places of urgent need. St. John's has a long history of generosity and providing resources to meet the challenges we face. Whether it is with medical equipment for rehabilitation at home, providing travel support for someone to attend a funeral, or helping people get much needed prescription medication, we have found a way to support our congregation and community needs.

The Pastor's Discretionary Fund is meant to help with these extraordinary and unexpected, urgent needs. When someone contacts the Church Office or Pastor Steve directly, he has the discretion and support of the Spiritual Council and Stewardship and Finance Committee to use these funds special contributions, restricted by donors like all of us, for such purposes. Those receiving funds may remain anonymous. Our treasurer, Sue Weldner, can issue a check and Pastor Steve provides the receipt for whatever the need might be.

This is a great way for our small and large contributions occasionally shared to make a big and transforming difference to people in need. While the fund has not been accessed for many months, Sue reports that the current fund balance is **\$622.50**. We know there are many places for you to share your generosity. If you'd like to make a one-time gift or set up a recurring small contribution to help grow this fund, you will be helping people in need of our compassion. Thank you in advance for your continuing spirit of support.



## An Easy Way to Contribute to St. John's

Do you realize that by purchasing Giant and Weis gift cards and 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. For every Redner's tape collected, the church receives 1% back. Gift cards can be purchased through the church office or by seeing Tom Moyer or Carol Raszler every Sunday morning before or after worship. 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. We recently received a check from Redner's in the amount of \$51.85, presenting a total of \$5185.41 in register receipts. It's a simple way to give financially to the church. Think of St. John's every time you go grocery shopping.

## Daylight Saving Time begins March 10



*Be sure to set your clocks ahead!*

## **Additional Spiritual Growth In Lent**

St. John's not only has something twice a week to grow our spiritual lives in the Lenten season, but we also share the opportunities to connect with others around our Penn Northeast Conference UCC, as well as the other three Pennsylvania area conferences.

Four PA UCC Conference Ministers and UCC Staff Members will lead weekly prayer gatherings during Lent on Wednesdays from 12:00-12:30pm. The first prayer time is Wednesday, February 21 and will follow each Wednesday until March 20th.



The Penn West, Penn Central, Penn Northeast and Penn Southeast Conferences of the United Church of Christ cordially invite you to participate in this virtual Lenten opportunity!

Meeting each Wednesday in Lent at 7pm, this Bible Study explores the foundations of our identity as Christians and members of the UCC as we explore what the future may hold!

Each week is unique so if you cannot attend every date you can still participate in as many as you are able. If you have any questions, or you would like to participate in this study, please email [pattyr@pniec.org](mailto:pattyr@pniec.org) to receive the link. Thank you!



Weekly Lenten Prayer Gatherings

Wednesdays 12:00-12:30pm

February 21 - March 20

**February 21:**

Unity and Foundation

**February 28:**

United Church of Christ

**March 6:**

Lent in Context

**March 13:**

The Priesthood of All Believers

**March 20:**

Communion

Use the QR code  
or this URL to participate:

<https://bit.ly/3OL3PbF>



## Help America Vote in 2024

Since 2022, UCC's Our Faith Our Vote campaign has partnered with Power the Polls to address the critical shortage of poll workers across the country. This collaboration aims to ensure smooth and efficient voting processes.

Given the anticipated surge in voter turnout for the 2024 presidential election, the need for poll volunteers is more pressing than ever.

Poll workers serve as the backbone of the electoral system, playing crucial roles in keeping polling places open, facilitating a nonpartisan environment, and providing essential assistance to voters.

If you're a UCC member interested in contributing, you can sign up to be a poll worker through Power the Polls. Eligibility requirements vary by state but generally include being a resident of the state or county where the polling place is located, being a registered voter, and being at least 18 years old.

By volunteering as a poll worker, you can directly impact the democratic process, ensuring that every eligible voter has the opportunity to cast their ballot and have their voice heard.

Learn more by visiting this link:

<https://www.ucc.org/our-faith-our-vote/>



## Basket Social – Donations Needed

We need donations of baskets for our annual Basket Social in May. There are so many themes you could choose from, some of which are the following:

Books  
Sports  
Camping  
Picnic  
Crafts  
Puzzles  
Linens

Baby Items  
Baking  
Beverages  
Snacks  
Car Care  
Entertainment  
Movies

Beauty/Spa Items  
Games/Toys  
Restaurant Cards  
Gift Cards  
Pet Supplies  
Gardening/Plants



The list of ideas is endless! Monetary donations are accepted if you would like us to assemble a basket for you. Be sure to include a tag listing the items in your basket. We have room now to store the baskets, so get started and bring them into church as soon as possible. If you have any questions or plan to donate, contact our Co-Chairs: Amy Feidler, Carol Raszler, and Mike Borgman.

Reserve the dates:

**Saturday, May 4, 10am to 2pm**

**Sunday, May 5, 8am to 9:30am and 10:30am to 11:30am**

Tickets will be pulled at 12:00 noon on Sunday. Tickets are \$5 per sheet (26 tickets per sheet).

Come to Fox Hall for the event. There will also be a Bake Sale on both days for bakers who want to contribute!



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

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

**April Pastie Sale** – Assortment of 8 meat pies & 2 melts @ \$7.25 & \$8.25 plus two brand new additions @ \$8.25 & three fruit pasties @ \$4.25. Pickup on Thurs., Apr. 25 from 6pm to 8pm or Sun., Apr. 28 after worship in Fox Hall. Deadline to order is Sunday, April 7. Order forms on table in lounge or check website. See Carol.

**Saturday, May 4 & Sun. May 5 – Basket Social** – Donations of baskets needed.

Sat. 10am to 2pm & Sun. after worship. Fox Hall. See Amy, Carol, Mike.

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

**Friday, June 14 – Flag Day Gift Card Bingo** – Doors open 6pm; game begins 7pm. Tickets available closer to date. Wear red, white, blue. See Tom.

**Saturday, June 22 – Bus Trip to Ocean City, NJ** – For reservations, see Brian S.

**Saturday, July 13 – Block Party at Pavilion** – 3pm to 8pm. Details to follow.

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

**Saturday, Aug. 10 – Community Yard Sale** – 8am to 2pm. Details to follow. See Brian S.

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

**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 table in the lounge. See Karen.

### Committee Contacts:

|                   |                |                         |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Mike Borgman      | (610) 762-8959 | blackbear402@rcn.com    |
| Ginny Brokenshire | (610) 439-0443 | ginny@posleader.com     |
| Bill Castello     | (651) 492-1399 | bill.castello@gmail.com |
| Amy Feidler       | (610) 657-0654 | alfeidler@yahoo.com     |
| Brian Fisher      | (610) 762-1134 | Brianfish2001@yahoo.com |
| Kathy Haggerty    | (484) 358-7453 | kpcatalini@aol.com      |
| Tom Moyer         | (610) 432-3372 | tommoyer54@gmail.com    |
| Carol Raszler     | (610) 393-7572 | craszler@aol.com        |
| Karen Stoitsits   | (610) 262-0746 | littlekdr@yahoo.com     |
| Brian Strauss     | (610) 248-9119 | strauss1975@aol.com     |

## Easter & Spring Craft Sale

### March is National Craft Month

Hop to it—our Crafters have Easter items for sale. Choose from bunnies, chicks, table runners, T-towels, decorations, and baskets. Please look for our table in the lounge area on Sundays, March 10 and March 17, before and after the worship service. We will also have available among other things: bowl cozies, 12-bean soup mix, tank covers. Look for our newest item— heat resistant pot handle mitts. You'll also find a large selection of baby items and doll sweaters. Contact Carol Raszler at (610) 393-7572 or email [craszler@aol.com](mailto:craszler@aol.com) if you need any items delivered.



## Souper Bowl of Caring

There's still time left before the end of February to bring in a can of soup for "Souper Bowl of Caring." A challenge was made for the congregation to donate 100 cans for the month; however, in the very first week that amount was surpassed. So, a new challenge was made—a new goal of 250 cans of soup!

In 1990, a simple prayer was delivered by a pastor to a small youth group at a church in Columbia, SC. ("Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those without a bowl of soup to eat") This gave birth to an idea. Why not harness the energy and enthusiasm of Super Bowl, 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 the 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. Your donations will be given to the Whitehall Food Pantry.

Be Part of the Winning Team as We Tackle Hunger.



## Easter Egg Hunt - It's That Time Again

Get ready for an egg-citing adventure at St. John's UCC - Fullerton for our annual Easter Egg Hunt on March 23 at Noon until 3pm. Enjoy a colorful wonderland, with hidden treasures waiting to be discovered by eager egg hunters of all ages. From the little ones to the young at heart, everyone is invited to join in the search for hidden eggs, enjoy delightful treats, and create unforgettable memories together. Please complete the registration form on our website for each child who will be participating!

This year's Easter Egg Hunt promises to be egg-stra special, with a visit from the Easter Bunny! Come share laughter and joy as we celebrate the spirit of Easter. See you there!



Subscribe to our YouTube Channel



### 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 **March 2 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)



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)

Worship, Love and Serve - No Matter What!



**POSITIVE, EXTRAORDINARY, ENCOURAGING, PRAYERFUL SISTERS**

The Lady PEEPS Women's Group will meet on Tuesday, March 19 at 6:30pm in Fox Hall.

Our guest speakers will be Pastor Cliff Herring and Janet Ebert.

There are times in all of our lives when God puts special people on our path as we travel through the ups and downs of life. Come hear the story of how Janet met Pastor Cliff and enjoy a relaxing evening together with friends.

Refreshments will be served and please use the elevator entrance.

**Colleen Kulhamer**

### **Deadline for April Newsletter**

If you would like to contribute an article for the April 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, March 10.

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>

## Pastie Sale

It's time for our spring Pastie Sale. 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. We have two new additions this time. You can choose from the following:

| Item                     | Description  | Size   | Cost   |
|--------------------------|--|--------|--------|
| Traditional Beef         | Ground beef, potatoes, onions  | 12 oz. | \$7.25 |
| Beef (no onion)          | Ground beef, potatoes  | 12 oz. | \$7.25 |
| Traditional Chicken      | Chicken, peas, carrots, potatoes, onions, gravy                          | 12 oz. | \$7.25 |
| Italian Sausage          | Pork sausage, green peppers, potatoes, onions                            | 12 oz. | \$7.25 |
| Traditional Ham          | Naturally-smoked ham, onions, cheddar cheese, potatoes                   | 12 oz. | \$8.25 |
| Cheeseburger             | Burger, American cheese, onions, potatoes                                | 12 oz. | \$8.25 |
| Mexican                  | Beef, beans, cheddar cheese, onions, peppers, tomato, taco sauce         | 12 oz. | \$8.25 |
| Pizza                    | Pepperoni, sausage, peppers, onions, mozzarella cheese, pizza sauce      | 12 oz. | \$8.25 |
| NEW! Philly Cheese Steak | Steak, potatoes, pepper, American cheese, onions                         | 12 oz. | \$8.25 |
| NEW! Chicken Cordon Bleu | Chicken, Swiss & American cheese, ham, potatoes, onions                  | 12 oz. | \$8.25 |
| Veggie Melt Pastie       | Peas, carrots, corn, green beans, onions, broccoli, cauliflower, cheddar | 12 oz. | \$7.25 |
| Spinach Melt Pastie      | Spinach, potatoes, onions, cheddar cheese                                | 12 oz. | \$7.25 |
| Fruit Turnover Pastie    | Choose from apple, cherry, or blueberry                                  | 6 oz.  | \$4.25 |

An order form is included with this newsletter and also available on the church's website or on the table in the lounge area. Payment is due with your order with checks payable to St. John's UCC, Fullerton. You can return your order form and payment to the church office or place it in the offering plate or give it to Carol Raszler. Please be sure to specify your pick-up date on the form—either Thursday, April 25, or Sunday, April 28. **Deadline to place your order is Sunday, April 7.** If you have any questions, contact Carol Raszler at (610) 393-7572 or email at [craszler@aol.com](mailto:craszler@aol.com)



TRADITIONAL CHICKEN

## God Is Still Speaking...

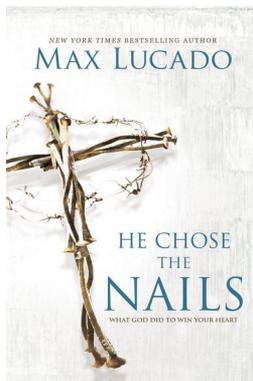
with Verso-Chat Bible Study - Wednesdays, 9:00am

We are pleased to welcome new friends to our weekly study! Recently, Richard and Margaret Baatz moved out of state, but their hearts have remained close with St. John's. Margaret has joined us for the study and YOU are welcome to participate as well!

During the season of Lent, our lectionary readings and some additional supporting scriptures will be the basis for our weekly time of study and reflection. The sermon series Pastor Steve is sharing is based on the book by Rev. Max Lucado, "He Chose the Nails." From the inspiring writing and the words of sacred scripture, we share our questions and insights together each week. All are welcome to be part of the class any Wednesday morning! 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.

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" LINK 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



*On a particularly frosty Sunday morning in the heart of winter, the church congregation huddled together in their pews, their breath forming little clouds in the chilly air. The preacher, bundled up in his thickest robe, stood at the pulpit, his sermon struggling to compete with the howling wind outside.*

*As he lamented the prolonged winter and yearned for the arrival of spring, Sister Agnes, known for her quick wit, leaned over to Brother John and whispered loud enough for the entire pew to hear, "I reckon if this winter drags on any longer, we'll have to start baptizing folks in hot chocolate just to keep 'em from freezing!"*

## March Birthdays

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

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>3/2 ..... Lois Gillette<br/>              Nicholas Santee<br/>              Lisa Weiner</p>  | <p>3/15 ..... Maura Rarich<br/>              Patricia Warmkessel</p>   |
| <p>3/5 ..... Carol Geroulo</p>  | <p>3/16 ..... Michael Jordan</p>   |
| <p>3/6 ..... Patricia Bendekovits<br/>              Fern Hozza<br/>              Jason Loch<br/>              Cynthia Reck<br/>              Marilyn Reid</p> | <p>3/18 ..... Rion McNicholas</p> <p>3/19 ..... Conrad Beck<br/>              Donald Schneck</p>   |
| <p>3/7 ..... Sandra Heffelfinger</p>  | <p>3/20 ..... Keith Kaider<br/>              Maggie Marinkovits<br/>              Melissa Mendiolina</p> |
| <p>3/8 ..... Michelle Gutekunst</p>   | <p>3/22 ..... Michael Leibensperger</p>  |
| <p>3/10 ..... Judith Carr<br/>              Mark Moll</p>   | <p>3/26 ..... Jeffrey Nailor</p> <p>3/27 ..... Halle Beck<br/>              Jeffrey Eichman</p>  |
| <p>3/11 ..... Alyssa Beckwith</p>   | <p>3/29 ..... Lucille Hicks<br/>              Donald Miller Jr</p>   |
| <p>3/12 ..... Ethan Brobst</p>  | <p>3/30 ..... Bradley Beckwith</p>   |
| <p>3/13 ..... Rev Dr Becky Beckwith<br/>              Gianni Russo</p>  | <p>3/31 ..... Shepard Rarich Lord</p>  |



## March Wedding Anniversaries

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

Robert & Nancy Dougherty  
3/3/79

Timothy & Karen Christman  
3/5/77

Matthew & Judith Sommer  
3/6/99

Dewey & DonnaLee Yeatts  
3/9/91

Gary & Janet Black  
3/9/74

Dale & Susan Brinker  
3/24/79





## Share the Light

### One Great Hour of Sharing

*"You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world."  
~ Matthew 5:14-15*

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS), now in its 75th year, is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ. It involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.



Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing, and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to

churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response and recover networks, your contribution to OGHS put you in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment, and recovery of the most vulnerable. You meet immediate needs, and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place.

Enclosed with this newsletter is an insert and special offering envelopment. Your contribution will be received in worship on Sunday, March 10, and during the entire month of March. Please place your offering in the collection plate, mail into the church, or give on-line or by text.

### Whitehall Food Pantry

For the month of March, we are collecting canned fruits, canned vegetables, and canned sweet potatoes for our Easter meal distribution. 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, placed in the offering plate, or given online or by text. If you would like to volunteer at the food pantry, we meet at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Whitehall on the 4th Monday of each month in the morning from 9am to 11am and in the evening from 5:30pm to 7:30pm. For more information, contact Gary Black at [gary.t.black@outlook.com](mailto:gary.t.black@outlook.com) or at (484) 274-2405.

### Whitehall-Coplay Hunger Initiative's Community Meals

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

| <b>Date</b>       | <b>Church</b>                            | <b>Address</b>                | <b>Phone</b>   |
|-------------------|--|-------------------------------|----------------|
| 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 |
| Sunday, April 7   | St. John's Lutheran Church               | 835 Third St., Whitehall      | (610) 533-1357 |
| Tuesday, April 16 | St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic Church | 618 Fullerton Ave., Whitehall | (610) 266-0695 |

## Update on Other Mission Outreaches

Thank you for your support of “Souper Bowl of Caring” for the month of February. The congregation was given a challenge to reach a goal and collect 250 cans of soup. There are still a few days left in February to bring in a can of soup or make a monetary donation. We’ll let you know in the next newsletter if we achieved that goal.

Donations are always accepted for Disaster Relief. Special offering envelopes can be found on the table in the lounge area or donations can be made online or by text giving. Be sure to indicate if funds are to go towards the war in Ukraine or the war in Israel & Gaza.

### How did St. John’s Family do?

| <b>Mission</b>                             | <b>Jan. 2024</b>  | <b>YTD 2024</b>   | <b>YTD 2023</b>   | <b>YTD 2022</b>   |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Our Church’s Wider Mission                 | \$1,424.00        | \$1,424.00        | \$1,082.00        | \$1,229.80        |
| Whitehall Food Pantry                      | \$ 225.00         | \$ 225.00         | \$ 790.00         | \$ 250.00         |
| Disaster Relief Fund – Ukraine             | \$ 110.00         | \$ 110.00         | \$ 185.00         | N/A               |
| Disaster Relief Fund – Middle East Support | \$ 50.00          | \$ 50.00          | N/A               | N/A               |
| Disaster Relief Fund – Unspecified         | \$ 10.00          | \$ 10.00          | N/A               | N/A               |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                              | <b>\$1,819.00</b> | <b>\$1,819.00</b> | <b>\$2,057.00</b> | <b>\$1,479.80</b> |

Mission Outreach giving for January 2024 totaled \$1,819.00.

## Dear Friends

A celebration of friendship and best wishes as the Raszlers bid farewell to church members Margaret and Richard Baatz on their move to Maryland. While the Baatz's may be far away, they will forever remain close in heart to St. John's and their St. John's Family.

Worship, Love and Serve - No Matter What!



## Thank You Notes

Dear St. John's UCC, Fullerton,

Thank you for making the Holiday Special for Our Seniors! We are grateful for the volunteers, donors, businesses, churches, and organizations who supported Phoebe's Giving Tree and Operation Santa! Through the generosity of others, every resident of Phoebe had a meaningful holiday, enjoyed festive activities, holiday meals, religious services, and received gifts personally delivered by Santa! Thank you for making a difference in the lives of our seniors with your donation of \$765 to Operation Santa.

Sincerely,  
Linda Plukett  
Phobe Ministries

Dear St. John's UCC, Fullerton:

Thank you for your charitable contribution of \$950 in support of Valley Youth House Holiday Gift Drive 2023. Your generosity makes a significant difference in our ability to provide programming to young people in desperate need of our services. Valley Youth House supports young people who are experiencing homelessness, housing insecurity, and loss of family connections to achieve healthy and independent futures. Personalized programs and services offer emergency shelter, stable housing, counseling, and life skills training. For the last 50 years, VYH has provided crisis intervention and outcome-driven programs to more than 446,000 youth and families in our community. Thank you for supporting our mission to be the catalyst for youth to achieve their desired future through genuine relationships that support families, ensure safe places, and build community connections.

Sincerely,  
Christina J. Schoemaker  
Senior Vice President of Advancement  
Valley Youth House

Dear St. John's UCC, Fullerton,

We write to acknowledge your generous contribution of \$865 to the Hawaii Conference of the United Church of Christ 2023 Wildfires Relief Fund. Please accept our heartfelt aloha. Please know that with your donation we are meeting critical needs caused by the fire. The remainder of the funds will be used to partner with those impacted by the fire in long-term recovery.

Mahalo,  
Rev. David Popham  
Conference Minister



**St Johns UCC Fullerton - Statement of Finances**  
**Jan 2024**

| Income                           | Electronic        | 1/7/2024        | 1/14/2024          | 1/21/2024         | 1/28/2024         | Total       |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Offerings for Operating Expenses | \$7,300.65        | \$793.00        | \$4,131.00         | \$2,334.00        | \$1,577.00        | \$16,135.65 |
| Rental Income--Gross             |                   |                 |                    | \$40.00           |                   | \$40.00     |
| Fundraising Income--Net of Exp   |                   |                 | \$290.00           |                   | \$40.00           | \$330.00    |
| Endowment Interest               |                   |                 | \$5,898.00         |                   |                   | \$5,898.00  |
| Flowers                          |                   |                 | \$75.00            | \$100.00          | \$50.00           | \$225.00    |
| Christian Education              | \$10.00           | \$5.00          | \$70.00            | \$20.00           | \$15.00           | \$120.00    |
| Special Gifts                    |                   |                 |                    |                   |                   | \$-         |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>\$7,310.65</b> | <b>\$798.00</b> | <b>\$10,464.00</b> | <b>\$2,494.00</b> | <b>\$1,682.00</b> | <b>\$-</b>  |

| Expense Summary          | Actual             | Budget             | Difference          |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Pastoral Services        | \$10,219.91        | \$10,793.00        | \$(573.09)          |
| Staff Salaries & Expense | \$8,822.66         | \$8,877.00         | \$(54.34)           |
| Property                 | \$2,460.32         | \$3,311.00         | \$(850.68)          |
| Parish Programs          | \$2,192.19         | \$2,479.50         | \$(287.31)          |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>\$23,695.08</b> | <b>\$25,460.50</b> | <b>\$(1,765.42)</b> |

|                | Month       | Year        |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total Income   | \$22,748.65 | \$22,748.65 |
| Total Expenses | \$23,695.08 | \$23,695.08 |
| Net            | \$(946.43)  | \$(946.43)  |

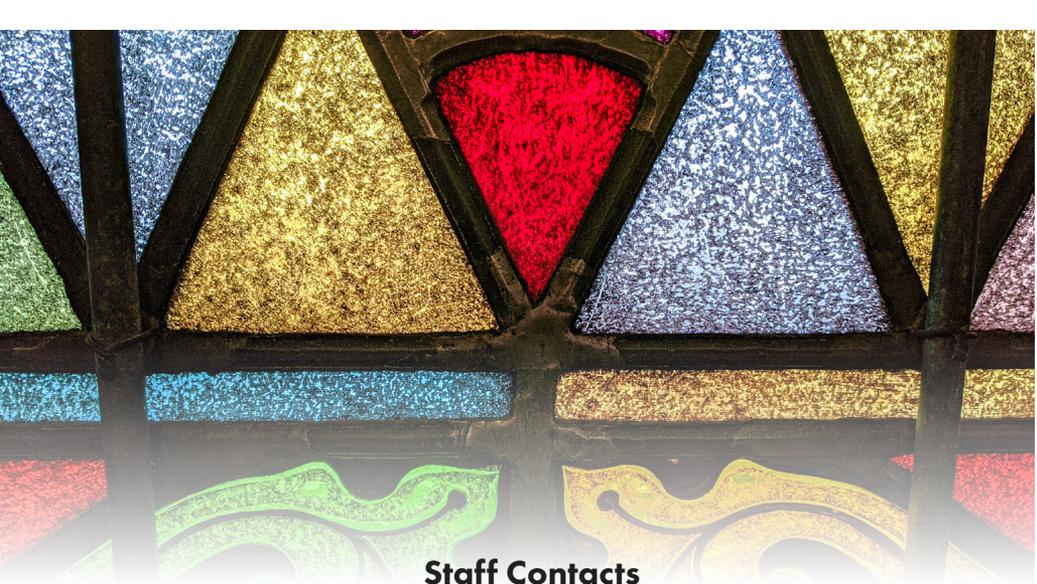
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**Mission Giving, Jan 2024**

|                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Our Churches Wider Mission | \$1,424.00        |
| Whitehall Food Pantry      | \$225.00          |
| Ukraine                    | \$110.00          |
| Middle East                | \$50.00           |
| Disaster Relief            | \$10.00           |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>\$1,819.00</b> |

**St John's UCC Fullerton**  
**Fund Balances**  
**For Month Ending, Jan 2024**

| Account                             | Dec-23               | Jan-24               | Difference         |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Checking Account--KNBT              | \$45,010.80          | \$41,680.68          | \$(3,330.12)       |
| Giant Card Funds                    | \$1,052.01           | \$1,052.01           | \$-                |
| Weis Card Funds                     | \$1,655.00           | \$1,655.00           | \$-                |
| sub-total<br>General Fund<br>Assets | \$47,717.81          | \$44,387.69          | \$(3,330.12)       |
| IN & OUT Account--KNBT Checking     | \$39,965.87          | \$82,270.08          | \$42,304.21        |
| Restricted/Property Investments     | \$75,930.00          | \$76,085.00          | \$155.00           |
| sub-total<br>Restricted<br>Assets   | \$115,895.87         | \$158,355.08         | \$42,459.21        |
| Endowment Fund--Quadrant            | \$474,777.00         | \$472,695.00         | \$(2,082.00)       |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>                 | <b>\$638,390.68</b>  | <b>\$675,437.77</b>  | <b>\$37,047.09</b> |
| Cornerstone Pavillion Loan          | \$(83,857.93)        | \$(83,747.70)        | \$110.23           |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITES</b>             | <b>\$(83,857.93)</b> | <b>\$(83,747.70)</b> | <b>\$110.23</b>    |
| <b>NET FUND BALANCE</b>             | <b>\$554,532.75</b>  | <b>\$591,690.07</b>  | <b>\$37,157.32</b> |



## Staff Contacts

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

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

# March 2024

| Sunday   | Monday   | Tuesday   | Wednesday   | Thursday  | Friday  | Saturday   |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| <b>31</b><br>8:30am Friendship Class<br>9:30am Children's Faith Formation<br>9:30am Easter Sunday Worship<br>10:30am Social Hour   |  |   |   |   | <b>1</b><br>8:30am Men's breakfast:<br>Hamilton Family Restaurant<br>9:30am Zumba class: Fox Hall |  |
| <b>3</b><br>8:30am Friendship Class<br>9:30am Children's Faith Formation<br>9:30am Sunday Worship-<br>10:30am Social Hour<br>11:00pm Confirmation Class/<br>Youth<br>3:00pm Lehigh University Choir                      | <b>4</b>   | <b>5</b><br>9:30am Staff Meeting<br>6:30pm Stewardship & Finance  | <b>6</b><br>9:00am Verso Chat with Pastor Steve<br>6:00pm Soup and Devotions<br>6:30pm STAKS Committee Mtg<br>7:00pm SAA-Recovery Support | <b>7</b><br>6:00pm Bell Choir<br>6:30pm Mission Committee<br>7:00pm Choir | <b>8</b>  | <b>9</b><br>9:30am Zumba class: Fox Hall                             |
| <b>10</b><br>Daylight Saving Time Begins<br>Newsletter: Articles Due<br>8:30am Friendship Class<br>9:30am Children's Faith Formation<br>9:30am Sunday Worship<br>10:30am Social Hour<br>11:00am Confirmation Class/Youth | <b>11</b>  | <b>12</b><br>10:30am Visitation Committee<br>1:30pm Staff Meeting<br>6:00pm Elders<br>7:00am Consistory | <b>13</b><br>9:00am Verso Chat with Pastor Steve<br>4:00pm Ash and Dash<br>6:00pm Soup and Devotions<br>7:00pm SAA-Recovery Support       | <b>14</b><br>7:00pm Choir   | <b>15</b><br>6:00pm Gift Card Bingo   | <b>16</b><br>9:30am Zumba class: Fox Hall                            |
| <b>17</b><br>Craft Sale<br>8:30am Friendship Class<br>9:30am Children's Faith Formation<br>9:30am Sunday Worship<br>10:30am Social Hour<br>11:00am Confirmation Class/Youth  | <b>18</b><br>12:00pm New Member Class<br>7:00pm New Member Class | <b>19</b><br>9:30am Staff Meeting<br>10:00am Community of Practice<br>6:30pm PEPS                       | <b>20</b><br>9:00am Verso Chat with Pastor Steve<br>6:00pm Soup and Devotions<br>7:00pm SAA-Recovery Support                              | <b>21</b><br>6:00pm Bell Choir<br>6:30pm Zumba<br>7:00pm Choir            | <b>22</b>   | <b>23</b><br>9:30am Zumba class: Fox Hall<br>12:00pm Easter Egg Hunt |
| <b>24</b><br>8:30am Friendship Class<br>9:30am Children's Faith Formation<br>9:30am Palm Sunday Worship<br>10:30am Social Hour<br>11:00am Confirmation Class/Youth   | <b>25</b>  | <b>26</b><br>9:30am Staff Meeting<br>6:00pm Bell Choir<br>7:00pm Choir                                  | <b>27</b><br>9:00am Verso Chat with Pastor Steve<br>6:30pm Zumba - Fox Hall<br>7:00pm SAA-Recovery Support                                | <b>28</b><br>7:00pm Maundy Thursday Service                               | <b>29</b><br>7:00pm Good Friday Service   | <b>30</b>  |