

Old Stone Church - September 2023



God
is still
speaking,

Meet Pastor Jim Benzing

Pastor James Benzing is a native of the small town of Wapakoneta, Ohio. He grew up attending church services with his family at St. John United Church of Christ, Mansfield, Ohio. His call to ordained ministry was founded in his involvement in the United Church of Christ as a child, through the nurture of his devout Christian parents, William and Greta Benzing, his Sunday School classes, the Youth Fellowship program, and Sunday Morning Worship. Outside of the Church, James was an active member of his community as a Boy Scout, Troop 131, where through hard work, selfless dedication, and many camping adventures he earned the rank of Eagle Scout. James lived a selfless life, working for others and living out Christ's teachings to be a servant for and a leader in his community; The following being one of his guiding principles in faith: "we must pray as if it all depends upon God and act as if it all depends upon us."

James' call to the Lord's teachings brought him to Heidelberg University (Tiffin, Ohio) where he studied Sociology and Religion, earning his Bachelor of Arts in 1982. James went on to continue his theological studies at Eden Theological Seminary (Webster Groves, MO), earning his Master of Divinity and was ordained as a United Church of Christ Pastor in 1987. Through his time at Eden Theological Seminary, he developed his personal ministry and understanding of what the leadership role of a Pastor is defined by. His ministry of preaching and teaching the Gospel is one of enabling and empowering people to see their unique call as ministers in God's world. He believes that the Ministry of the Church is not the function of one person, but is the calling of all who profess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and way to God. The fundamental root of his pastoral leadership is the work of pastoral care for each member of the Church. This pastoral care includes counseling, visitation, funerals, worship, and by being present at times to bring the love of God to those who he is called to provide ministry. Within this pastoral care is the great gift of the sacred stories of God's people that he is able to share and connect to the lives of the individuals in the congregations. This connection allows God's people to see that their lives are a continuation of the faith stories that have been handed down to us through the generations.

Upon graduating from Eden Theological Seminary, he immediately took up the position of Associate Pastor at St. John's United Church of Christ (Granite City, IL), where he became an integral member of both the Church and secular community. It was at St. John's where he met and fell in love with his wife of 35 years, Deborah Benzing (née Buer), a devout member of the church since childhood. Not only was James the Associate Pastor, but an active member of the Church Softball Team, Bowling League, and leader of the Church Youth Group, a role that he cherished and shined in. In 1991, he was called to lead and serve a new congregation, Christ Memorial Church (Blue Island, IL) which moved his family from Southern Illinois up to the suburbs of Chicago. He served this community from 1991-1994, and during this time of ministry he welcomed his daughter, Rachel Benzing, into the world. Since then, James has been sought after by numerous congregations to lead and provide his personal brand of pastoral care: the Congregational Church of Algonquin (1995-2000), Immanuel United Church of Christ of Bartlett (2000-2006), and the First Congregational Church of Carpentersville (2006-2014). Throughout this time he also served as an On Call Chaplain for the Advocate Healthcare Sherman Hospital (Elgin, IL), administering pastoral care and emotional support to patients in need of Christ's love in their time of poor health. James' uplifting spirit and dedication to helping those in need allowed him to be an integral part of the healthcare system at Sherman Hospital for many years.

After numerous years of service to Christ's followers, the community, and the word of God, James officially retired in 2015, but his love for service and fellowship has continued on. Since 2015 he has been an actively sought after supply preacher in the United Church of Christ ministry, and has served numerous congregations around the Chicagoland area in need of pastoral leadership. In this role he has been both a source of wisdom and guidance on Sunday mornings, and a support system to the congregation as they work to find the correct leader for their community. James also occupies his weekdays serving his local community school district as a Substitute Teacher. Empowered by God's love and teachings, he enjoys working with youth of all ages, backgrounds, and learning abilities in the classroom and brings his personable and uplifting spirit to his work. He has become a staple in the hallways of the schools and has become an important permanent fixture in the lives of many of the youth he has worked with through this capacity.

James has a tremendous passion for God's word coupled with a love for God's people, that is apparent in his work as a Pastor and in his human spirit. He has a contagious and charismatic energy that flows through every facet of his personality and ministry, and those who have known him either as Pastor or community member have been fortunate to receive his kindness and giving spirit in their lives. When not working, James enjoys baseball (Go STL Cardinals!), reading books of all genres, and spending time with his family and dogs.



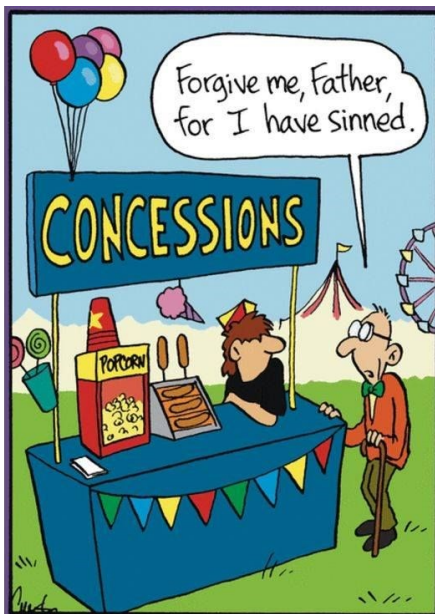
Saying Goodbye is Never Easy

For those who have not heard, Lindsey Lancaster, Office Administrator for the Old Stone Church will be leaving the church as of September 15th. We wish Lindsey the best of luck on her new adventures, and value the 5 years she spent with us here at the Old Stone Church. We are grateful for her service to the church, and wish her, and her family, well.



Saturday, September 23 at 4p.m. Studio 3 presents its annual "Pops In The Park" recital. This recital is located at Village Green Park in the Park Shelter area. The address is 100 East Chapel St. You are invited to bring a picnic dinner and enjoy contemporary tunes from 20 of Studio 3's Piano and Vocal Students. Please come support these young musicians.

Comic Corner



October is Stewardship Month

October is the time of year we dedicate to promoting stewardship with our annual fall pledge drive. And the stewardship of our beloved Old Stone Church has never been more important as we work to find a new pastor and continue to restore activities to pre-COVID levels. The results of our annual pledge drive will determine our Church's budget and ministries for the coming year.

The theme for this year's campaign, ***OUR GIFTS GOD MULTIPLIES***, was borrowed from The Sharing of Our Gifts section of a recent Sunday bulletin, and enthusiastically endorsed by congregation members during after-service coffee hour. It's a perfect fit for our annual stewardship drive, and reminds us that we are privileged to be able to join God's generosity for good works.

Watch for upcoming news and join us on Sunday, October 8th, as we officially kick-off our 2024 Stewardship Drive!



Old Stone Church

OUR GIFTS GOD MULTIPLIES

2024 STEWARDSHIP DRIVE

September

Birthdays

1st- Vickie Halom
4th- Chris Fleissner
5th- Jaci Coomer
17th- Tom Christenson
25th- Bob Plessner



September

Anniversaries



13th- Bob & Joan Plessner
21st- Mike & Lindsey Lancaster
22nd- Chris & Andrea Gantz
24th- Mitch & Chelsea Dorr



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September 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 Communion	4	5 Worship Support 7pm Boy Scouts	6 Grief Group 10:30	7 No Pantry	8	9 Wedding
10	11	12 Council 7pm	13	14 Pantry 9-11	15	16
17	18	19	20 Grief Group 10:30	21 Pantry 9-11	22	23 Pops in the Park 4pm
24	25	26	27	28 Pantry 9-11	29	30

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