



**ST. JOHN**

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MAEYSTOWN, ILLINOIS

**The Visitor**  
**April - 2026**

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## **Pastor's Reflection**

### **The Easter Miracle of the Risen Christ Lives Today!**

He Lives, He Lives, He Lives within my Heart! This Easter hymn rings out to me as we come into this Holy week. Easter is here! The miracle of the risen Christ lives in each of us as we come together to worship, love and support one another. He lives in our hearts when we bring his love and care to our neighbors across town, across the country and around the world, he lives indeed. He lives with our youth as they become young adults and graduate from confirmation. The following writing is from one of our confirmation graduates, Wyatt Liefer. He speaks about the importance of the church. It makes my heart sing to hear him reflect how Christ lives for him in the life of the church.

*"The topic I chose for today is about why the church needs us and why we need the church.*

*The church is a community that supports and strengthens its members. It's a place of worship where people gather together to praise God. We can also go there to learn about the word of God and to learn about ourselves. One more final thing about what a church is: It's an organization that cares for and shares with people who are in need.*

*Why does the church need us? We can help the church with our time because there are a lot of jobs that have to be done. I mean, think about jobs that need to be done to keep a church functioning. Some jobs that I can think of that help the church keep functioning are volunteering for acolyte, doing choir and assisting with anything that needs help.*

*Another reason the church needs us is because we can help the church with our attendance. It's not only important to the church, but it also supports and strengthens the people.*

*And we can help the church by donating money to pay bills, salaries, utilities and more. Our church not only helps people in need, but it also needs the help of members who contribute their time and money so the church can help the people who are in need.*

*It isn't always easy to stay with church all your life. I mean, sometimes there are other activities on Sundays, and those activities seem like more fun than coming to church. Or maybe your friends don't go to church and they might ask you why bother going? Whatever the reason, we might be pulled away from the church. We could avoid feeling pulled away by participating more, volunteering with church activities and praying more often.*

*The church helps you learn about what's best. The church teaches us about Jesus, and Jesus is a perfect example of how we are to live in harmony with God and with other people.*

*Church will help you live the best way you know how. We are encouraged in our faith when we are surrounded by other people in the church who help us to live that way.*

*Also, we need the church for support when things aren't going well for us, when we're disappointed or ashamed or sad. We all feel disappointment when we don't get things the way we want. Or we might be ashamed when we do wrong things. And everyone feels sadness or sorrow at times.*

*Because of the church, we are always here for each other in those times. We give each other strength."*

I think Wyatt nailed it! Let's all build this house of God together. Building strong individuals, families and the church!

We will feature the Confirmation class of 2026 writing in the coming Visitors. We cannot thank Sheryl enough for her dedication as their teacher. Blessings in this Season of Easter.

Pastor

## **Church Council Minutes – February 9, 2026**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by President, Jim Maurer. Pastor Poole opened the meeting with a prayer. Those in attendance were Bob Edler, Becky Matzenbacher, Amy Juelfs, Ron Richeson, Brian Edler, Debbie Eckart and Pam Muertz. Victoria Rippelmeyer was absent.

### **Review and Approval of Minutes from January 12, 2026 Church Council Meeting**

The minutes from the January Church Council Meeting were reviewed. There being no corrections, a motion was made by Brian Edler and seconded by Amy Juelfs to accept the minutes. Motion carried.

### **Review and Approval of Minutes from February 1, 2026 Annual Congregational Meeting**

The minutes from the 2026 Annual Congregational Meeting were reviewed. There being no corrections, a motion was made by Brian Edler and seconded by Amy Juelfs to accept the minutes. Motion carried.

### **Review and Approval of Minutes from February 1, 2026 Church Council Officer Election**

The minutes from the 2026 Church Council Officer Election were reviewed. There being no corrections, a motion was made by Brian Edler and seconded by Amy Juelfs to accept the minutes. Motion carried.

### **Review and Approval of Treasurer's Report, Bills, Timecard and Pastor's Expenses**

The treasurer's report, bills, timecard and Pastor's expenses were presented and reviewed. There being no changes or corrections, a motion was made by Brian Edler and seconded by Debbie Eckart to accept the reports as presented. Motion carried.

### **Council Member Reports**

- Ryan Hesterberg will plant new trees in the pine forest when he determines the weather is appropriate.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Tree Removal**

- The Council discussed the feasibility of preserving the clubhouse structure during the planned tree removal. It was determined that while the structure is a popular play area for the children, it was not intended to be permanent and may be removed if necessary for the project.

### **Updating Bathroom in the Hall**

- The Women's Fellowship is developing a plan for updates. Following a productive discussion of various suggestions, a committee will be formed consisting of Lynn Hicks and two representatives from the Women's Fellowship. The Women's Fellowship has expressed their commitment to help fund the project.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Removal of Buildings Next to the Pine Forest**

- Kenny Renneker made an appeal to the Council to retain the outbuildings that sit next to the pine forest, just outside of his property line (Coats's property). With the church's permission, he would like to move the outhouse approximately 10-20 ft to his property and, perhaps, raise chickens in the chicken coop (or use it in whatever manner we would allow). He said they would like to preserve the buildings, and they did not realize they were not a part of the property they purchased. He mentioned he also has plans to tear down the garage on his property and replace it with a barn for historical purposes.

Jim Maurer explained to him that three months ago we had a discussion regarding these structures, and the church voted to demolish the buildings. Due to liability issues and the vote having already taken place, we had to deny a couple of church members permission to remove the buildings so that they could reuse some of the old wood. Jim explained that the planning process of the demolition had already begun. While we want to be good neighbors, we are bound by the church bylaws and are unable to honor his request.

#### **Fifth Sunday Offering**

- The Fifth Sunday offering for March will go to support the Backpack Program.

#### **Pastor's Report**

Pastor will be introducing the council members to the congregation. He wants to ensure they know who we are so they can comfortably share their comments, ideas or questions with us.

For our next meeting, Pastor would like us to bring ideas regarding what we would like the church to accomplish.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Brian Edler and seconded by Becky Matzenbacher. Meeting adjourned. Pastor closed the meeting by leading us in the Lord's Prayer.

Pam Muertz, Secretary

### **Church Financial**

February 2026

Beginning balance:\$7,294.20; income: \$17,173.91; expenses: \$18,534; ending balance \$5,933.85

#### **Visitor Report**

Beginning Balance - \$318.15

Income - \$270.00

Pearl Hirsch - \$20.00

David & Lauren Hesterberg - \$250.00

Ending Balance - \$525.15

Expenses - \$63.00

U.S. Postmaster - \$63.00

Thanks to David, Lauren & Pearl for your generous donations.

Faye Birk, Treasurer

### **Sunday School Checking Account**

Beginning Balance – \$1128.62

Income - \$30.00

Offering - \$30.00

Ending Balance - \$725.96

Expenses - \$432.66

Cokesbury – VBS - \$432.66

### **Sunday School Savings Account**

Beginning Balance - \$3746.13

Income - .94

Interest - .94

Ending Balance - \$3747.07

Expenses - \$0.00

Faye Birk, Treasurer

## **Women's Fellowship**

The March 5, 2026 Women's Fellowship was called to order by President Sue Taylor with a total of 14 members and Pastor in attendance. Barb and Nancy were hosts.

Pastor opened with a prayer.

We did not have a guest speaker but Sue suggested that everyone should check out the IL South Conference weekly news letter and read the prayer that is in it.

Sue read the treasurers report in Connie's absence. We had a balance of 5738.34 at the end of February. Faye and Barb made the motion to accept the treasurers report. Motion carried.

Ellen read the secretaries report. Linda and Barb made the motion to accept the report as read. Motion carried.

Pastor's discussion was how we manage to stand in 2 places, by living our lives and living in the Gospel at the same time.

Old Business:

Fastnacht: The sales from the Country Store were \$370.00 and raffle tickets were \$913.00.

Women's Sunday is 3/8, Faye and Sharon will read the call to worship and prayer of invocation. Brenda

will read the Old and New Testament. Brenda, Barb, Joyce and Pat will collect the offering. Women's Fellowship will be making the meal on March 18<sup>th</sup> before the Lenten service. Joyce, Nancy S, Barb, Sue and Ellen will be preparing the meal of Sloppy Joe's on slider buns, chips, slaw, and apple sauce. Desserts will be supplied by other members. The April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting will be an evening meeting at 7:00 PM. Nancy V, Patti, and Faye volunteered to come up with suggestions about changes to the bathrooms downstairs.

New Business: April 5<sup>th</sup> Easter Breakfast, Barb and Sandy and Sue volunteered to come early to make coffee, turn the ovens on, and be there to help with people dropping off food. May 7<sup>th</sup> before our May meeting we will come at 10:00 to help clean and reorganize the kitchen. We will have a funeral luncheon for Kenneth Knobloch on 3/14. Nancy S, Joyce, Sue, Barb, and Ellen volunteered to help serve the meal. Brenda and Sharon G made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Nancy V read a face book poem about living in the faith, not just sitting in church. We closed with the Lord's Prayer. Ellen Edler Secretary

## 2026 Confirmands

Congratulations to our 2026 Confirmands!

**Guy Frederick Tyberendt**, *Son of Adam and Stefanie Tyberendt - Confirmation verse: Galatians 6:9*

**Julia Clare Muertz**, *Daughter of Christopher and Christina Muertz - Confirmation Verse: Isaiah 41:10*

**Kadence Coleen Keller**, *Daughter of Nathan and Stephanie Keller - Confirmation Verse: Psalm 17:6*

**Levi Brad Edler**, *Son of Brad and Kate Edler - Confirmation Verse: 3 John 4:1*

**Morgan Julia Schmitz**, *Daughter of Justin and Julie Schmitz - Confirmation Verse: Proverbs 3:5*

**Owen Price Kyle Evans**, *Son of Robin Evans and John Evans - Confirmation Verse: Ephesians 4:2*

**Samantha Rippelmeyer**, *Daughter of Matt and Victoria Rippelmeyer - Confirmation verse: Psalm 127:3*

**Wyatt Everett Braun**, *Son of Steve and Amanda Braun - Confirmation Verse: John 15:10*

**Wyatt Dillon Liefer**, *Son of Jon and Jessie Liefer - Confirmation Verse: Philippians 4:13*



Photo Courtesy of Christy Muertz

## LITTLE RASCALS SUMMER CAMP!!

### SAVE THE DATES!!

Our Little Rascals summer camp for children aged 6 through 12 will be held on Wednesdays in July again this year. Dates are July 1, 8, 15 and 29 from 9:00 to 11:30 AM. (No camp on July 22 so we can attend the Monroe County Fair.)



Our theme this year is “WATER”. We will be building a water park and exploring Bible stories that involve water.

We hope your children will be able to join us!

### Youth Group - YPL Eggs-travaganza at Hoyleton

Our Youth Group is truly amazing! They filled more than 500 Easter eggs, assembled 35 baskets, and prepared over 100 sandwiches to share with the children and staff at Hoyleton.

The Easter Egg Hunt and activities were a huge success. The day was filled with joy and excitement—especially when the Easter Bunny made a special appearance. Smiles and laughter were everywhere!

Thank you to our congregation for the generous donations that made this day possible. And thank you to our Youth Group for the love, care, and dedication you poured into making this event so special.



### UPCOMING EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Teen Bible Study starting April 15th, 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. in the Hall.
- Pew Sisters meeting on Monday, April 20 at 6:30 p.m. at Nancy Schilling’s house.
- VBS Save the Date May 26-29, and Sunday May 31st.
- New members' classes Dates, April 12,19, 26 join on May 3. Class will be directly after church.
- See Christian Illusionist Jared Hall at St. Paul UCC, Waterloo on April 25 (7pm) or April 26 (3pm). Tickets are \$10/each. Children 10 & under are free. Call the church office at 939-7123 or scan the QR code to the right to purchase tickets.



## Members in Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Centers

Carol Bay  
Room 158-MC  
c/o Park Place at Winghaven  
2002 Boardwalk Pl Dr  
O'Fallon MO 63368

Elaine Hoerr  
% Oak Hill  
623 Hamacher St  
Room 712  
Waterloo, IL 62298

Ben & Darlene Yancey  
% Cedarhurst  
526 Legacy Dr  
Apt 37  
Waterloo, IL 62298

Charles Richeson  
% Oak Hill  
623 Hamacher St  
Room 708  
Waterloo, IL 62298

Catherine Hoffmann  
% Reflections at Garden Place  
710 S. Main St  
Columbia, IL 62236

### Prayer List:

- Please keep Joyce Kuergeleis in your prayers as she receives treatment for stage 1 and 2, Follicular Lymphoma, a once-a-week treatment for 4 weeks.
- Please keep Army SFC Brandon Peters (brother-in-law to Billie Jo Roberts) in your prayers as he is being deployed to the Middle East.
- Dennis Wetzler in the hospital.
- Dax Birk, 11 years old (Faye's nephew) has an inoperable brain tumor. It has affected his sight.
- Please keep Jan Reitz, Pam Muertz's sister, as she struggles with her health.
- Tim Lammert has stage 4 Hodgkin Lymphoma; they have a high success rate with this cancer, but he would appreciate our prayers.
- Please keep Rhonda Whelan in your prayers. She has received her new heart and is at heart recovering.
- Patti French has completed her radiation treatments. Please continue to keep her in your prayers.
- Kim Hicks as she receives treatments for her cancer.
- Donna Solich as she continues chemo treatments.
- Glenn Coats as he finds his footing.
- Pam Coplin as she struggles with Bell's Palsy.
- Rose Schultheis, 23 years old, who is now on the active list for a kidney transplant and continues with daily dialysis.
- Mary Ann Lutz, who needs a kidney transplant.
- Kaylee Muertz. She is getting stronger each day, but still needs our prayers.
- Tim Branson, as he battles with cancer.

### Birthday Shoutouts:

- Glenn Woodcock turns 85 on April 3.
- Dorothy Matzenbacher celebrates her 89th birthday on April 12.
- Sharon Bergheger celebrates her 71st birthday on April 14.
- Dee Ann Trost turns 81 on April 15.
- Sharon Keeney turns 66 on April 17.

- Mary Graham celebrates her 71st birthday on April 19.
- Joann Knobloch and Debbie Barnes both have birthdays on April 27. Joann will turn 79 years young, while Debbie will turn 72 years young.
- Kay Floarke turns 70 on April 28.
- Jean Rahn will celebrate her 88th birthday on April 29.
- Shirley Stafford turns 75 on May 1.
- Dave Hesterberg turns 73 on May 7.
- Terry Roberson turns 74 on May 10.
- Eva Novakov turns 81 years young on May 13.
- Lyndie Prange turns 68 on May 14.

### Special Anniversaries:

- Allyn & Trudi Rohlfig celebrate their golden wedding anniversary on April 10.
- Mark & Susan Hoffmann will celebrate their 42nd wedding anniversary on April 14.
- Dennis & Janet Trost will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary on April 17.
- Bob & Debbie Barnes will celebrate their 51st wedding anniversary on April 19.
- Randall & Connie Esker will celebrate their 47th wedding anniversary on April 21.
- Ronald & Susan Brinkmann will celebrate their 49th wedding anniversary on April 23.
- Barry & Cathy Hoffmann will celebrate their 44th wedding anniversary on April 24.
- Ross & Dorothy Mueller will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on April 30.
- Terry & Debbie Walster will celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary on May 4.
- Ronald & Larita Mohl will celebrate their 39th wedding anniversary on May 7.
- Tim & Mary Branson will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary on May 10.
- Morris & Pat Brandt will celebrate their golden wedding anniversary on May 15.

### **HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO...**

HEATHER WILD	Apr 2	RILYNN HEIDENREICH	Apr 11
GLENN WOODCOCK	Apr 3	DOROTHY MATZENBACHER	Apr 12
KAITLYN ANDRES	Apr 3	KELLY MATHEWS	Apr 12
NIKKI ASSELMEIER	Apr 4	HENRY KNOLL	Apr 12
MATTHEW SCHELLHARDT	Apr 4	LOGAN SCHAEFER	Apr 12
KATHRYN REMICK	Apr 4	STACY BRIGANCE	Apr 13
ASHLYN CROUCH	Apr 5	SHARON BERGHEGER	Apr 14
AVEN KENNEDY	Apr 5	DEE ANN TROST	Apr 15
ANDREW SCHAEFER	Apr 6	SHARON KEENEY	Apr 17
OTIS HINES	Apr 6	JESSE BARNES	Apr 17
ABRIALE SMITH	Apr 6	TANNER ROSENKRANZ	Apr 17
CARLA FELDMIEIER	Apr 7	ROBIN EDLER	Apr 18
JOHN HOEFFT	Apr 8	JEREMY RIES	Apr 18
COURTNEY ASSELMEIER	Apr 9	MARY GRAHAM	Apr 19
KARRIN LARSON	Apr 9	EMMA MILLER	Apr 19
MORGAN HOFFMANN	Apr 9	SAGE KENNEDY	Apr 19
JANET TROST	Apr 10	SAMANTHA RIPPELMEYER	Apr 20
CHUCK SCHAEFER	Apr 10	DANIEL MILLER	Apr 21
ASHLEY MELVIN	Apr 10	ETHAN FLOARKE	Apr 22
LOGAN ALBAT	Apr 10	JEFF HINES	Apr 23
AMELIA HOFFMANN	Apr 11	JACK ROY	Apr 23
		LOGAN ESKER	Apr 23

ZIGGY HINES	Apr 23		
ERIC BRELLINGER	Apr 25	<b>HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO...</b>	
JOANN KNOBLOCH	Apr 27	JOSH & EMILY REINHARDT	Apr 2
DEBBIE BARNES	Apr 27	RANDY & BRANDY HICKS	Apr 5
GREG KNOBLOCH	Apr 28	GARRETT & ELISE ROHLFING	Apr 4
KAREN RODENBERG	Apr 28	JASON & SHERI DILLEY	Apr 9
KAY FLOARKE	Apr 28	LUKE & ALYSSA ANDRES	Apr 9
JEAN RAHN	Apr 29	ALLYN & TRUDI ROHLFING	Apr 10
OWEN EVANS	Apr 30	TOM & STACY SCHILLING	Apr 10
SHIRLEY STAFFORD	May 1	RON & SUSAN RICHESON	Apr 11
ELISE ROHLFING	May 3	MARK & SUSAN HOFFMANN	Apr 14
CALEB HICKS	May 3	KODY & AFTON SCHWARZE	Apr 16
SHANNON JANSEN	May 4	DENNIS & JANET TROST	Apr 17
LUCA HEIDENREICH	May 4	AARON & JENNY PRANGE	Apr 18
MEGAN VOGT	May 5	BOB & DEBBIE BARNES	Apr 19
LILLIAN CARRON	May 5	MICHAEL & BARB STAFFORD	Apr 20
JENSEN ROEVER	May 5	RANDALL & CONNIE ESKER	Apr 21
SARA SCHREDER	May 6	RONALD & SUSAN BRINKMANN	Apr 23
DAVE HESTERBERG	May 7	BARRY & CATHY HOFFMANN	Apr 24
DAWSON GOLDSCHMIDT	May 7	ADAM & ALLIE PRANGE	Apr 29
CLINTON HICKS	May 9	ROSS & DOROTHY MUELLER	Apr 30
TERRY ROBERSON	May 10	TERRY & DEBBIE WALSTER	May 4
AUSTIN GEROVAC	May 10	RONALD & LARITA MOHL	May 7
LANE MATHEWS	May 11	TIM & MARY BRANSON	May 10
KIMBERLY SOUTIEA	May 12	KYLE & KAITLYN ANDRES	May 12
COLE DILLEY	May 12	PETE & DR. JENNIFER GOESSLING	May 14
EVA NOVAKOV	May 13	ERIK & ERIN FLOARKE	May 14
LYNDIE PRANGE	May 14	AMY & JARED ROEVER	May 14
KATHY POOLE	May 15	MORRIS & PAT BRANDT	May 15
PAIGE JACKSON	May 15	BILL & KIM SOUTIEA	May 15





**St. John United Church of Christ**  
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Church: 618-458-6940

Website: [www.maestownucc.org](http://www.maestownucc.org)

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***Thought for the day***

***"Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase."***