



# ST. JOHN

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MAEYSTOWN, ILLINOIS

***The Visitor***  
**January/February**  
**2025**

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## Pastor's Reflection

In my heart, there is great joy! That joy is having this wonderful and precious gift to be the body of Christ together in this community. In the last two years, we have had a specific mission to deepen our faith. To take on Church Lite and bring a deeper commitment to our faith journey. St. John Evangelical Church of the United Church of Christ responded with a resounding yes! Parents agreed to commit to a two-year confirmation program for their youth. That alone has had a major impact on the depth of our confirmation program and a secondary effect on the Sunday worship experience and our Sunday School Program. Thank you, parents and students, for your commitment to your family's faith journey; it has also been a gift to the church. The Wednesday Warm with Student Pastor Tim was another answer to this call to deepen our faith. Now, that five-minute message on Wednesday on our Facebook page is bridging the gap for many of our members, helping to keep us in the spirit between Sundays. The Pew Sisters' impact in deepening our faith has been profound for those who attend, and their joy and strength carry over to the rest of the body. The Sunday School had already committed to changing its program to allow the students and teachers to attend church on Sunday morning, which has been a gift. They also decided to choose a curriculum that follows the same scripture we cover in church, deepening the children's understanding each Sunday. When the Women's Fellowship meets, we talk not only about the many missions they support in our church and the wider community, but we also speak deeply about the journey we are on together, appreciating the need and depth of the faith journey we are on together.

Deepening our faith journey together amid a world with little regard for attending church makes this church extraordinary. This year, we will add another layer to this journey, strengthening the bonds that bind us together. We will find new ways to walk with one another. We often experience not knowing one another in the ways and depth we would like. I do not know how we will do this, but I trust that this congregation, church council, and many other organizations will find a way to move us in this direction. We have been blessed with many young people starting their families. How can we support them in this time of great joy and life-changing stressors? We often lose touch with the parents and children until they reach the age of Sunday School. How can we support a closer walk through this most challenging time for a new family? Again, I do not have the answers, but we are blessed to have young parents who can help us find a way.

The challenge of walking with one another through the good, bad, and ugly is tough in a culture that sees the need for one another as a sign of weakness. That understanding is not biblically based, nor is it found in nature. We depend on one another, which is the design God intended. In our wealth, we have opted for the comfort of living independently from one another, but not without a significant cost. In our wonderful, loving faith community, we will find ways to strengthen the bonds by sharing our life's joys and struggles. There is indeed a great joy in my heart! What could be more important or rewarding than being a part of an ever-deepening faith community that cares so deeply for one another! I am deeply moved by all of you!

Blessings!

Pastor

## This and That.....

### Announcements:

- 2025 Offering Envelopes are available for pick up in the back of the sanctuary.
- The Congregational Annual meeting will be held directly after church on January 26<sup>th</sup>

### Special Birthdays:

- Bob Edler is turning 71 on January 4.
- New member Steve Lawrence is turning 50 on January 12.
- Lyle Schwarze turns 70 on January 14.
- Nancy Reed celebrates her 79th birthday on Jan.16.
- Faye Birk turns 71 years young on January 21.
- Joyce Kuergeleis celebrates her diamond jubilee birthday on January 25.
- Paula Hoefft turns 70 on January 26.
- Darlene Yancey turns 91 years young on January 29.
- Dorothy Mueller turns 78 on February 3.
- New member Anita Beth Graber celebrates her 73<sup>rd</sup> birthday on February 5.
- Jerry Johner turns 85 on February 6.
- Dennis Trost turns 76 on February 16.
- Allen Stafford turns 73 on February 17.
- Dave Henerfauth turns 77 on February 19.
- Freeman Borcharding turns 77 on February 23 while Anita Muertz turns 76 the same day.
- Joan Esker celebrates her 82nd birthday on March 1.
- George Green turns 73 on March 2.
- Catherine Hoffmann turns 86 on March 10.
- Jeanette McClellan turns 78 on March 11.
- Allyn Rohlfing turns 71 on March 15.

### Special Anniversaries:

- Brian and Brenda Johnson celebrate 53 years of marriage on January 15.
- Don & Ellen Edler celebrate 51 years of marriage on February 2.
- Allen & Shirley Stafford celebrate 55 years of marriage on February 22.

### Prayer List:

- Ginny Borcharding is in hospital with several challenges.
- Keep John Bueschel in your prayers as he is being tested for some serious health issues.
- Keep Joyce Kuergeleis in your prayers. She began chemo treatments on January 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Chris Melliere remains hospitalized, but is improving.
- Lynn Moore as she undergoes a major heart surgery and her husband Russel.
- Darlene Yancey as she continues to recover from a broken leg.
- Jane and Pat McCarthy as they struggle with ongoing health concerns.
- Camden Hurst is recovering from home after a brain injury.
- Willie Krebel has two large masses on his left lung and needs our prayers.
- Art Chastain as he recovers from a stroke.
- For the family of Dennis Rodenberg as he went to heaven.
- Mona Mothershead is receiving treatments for her cancer.
- Dennis Knobloch as he continues to get stronger every day.
- Kaylee is getting stronger every day but still needs our prayers.
- Tim Branson in his battle with cancer.



## Quilt Show & Christkindlmarkt

Again, this year, The Women's Fellowship of St John UCC @ Maeystown stepped up their game. The free quilt show was once again inside our beautiful rock church. Upon entering the church, it is a lovely site with all those colorful quilts draped over the pews. Folks can walk around for a close look at every quilt, some old and some new, with a little summary of the quilt and its owner. There were also handmade Fancy Works on display. The quilt show is free, but there is a free-will offering available, of which 100% of that offering goes to local needs.

There was a house full of vendors on both floors and a couple of outdoor vendors at the church hall. The indoor folks had a wide variety of items, including crafts, antiques, leather goods, food items, and so much more. The outdoor vendors sold fresh donuts made to order on the spot, and the other outdoor vendor sold fresh flowers. The Vendors' fee for each spot in the hall is 100% used for local needy families.

To add to all these festivities were the strolling musicians who stopped in, The Band Room Brass, and the vocal group The Hometown Harmony Group.

This event is a year-long endeavor for the ladies who plan it. They are always looking for a new vendor or ways to add something new and fun to the event. This year, they decorated the Kids Club House, which, for the holiday, became a Gingerbread House, and folks loved it, especially the kids.

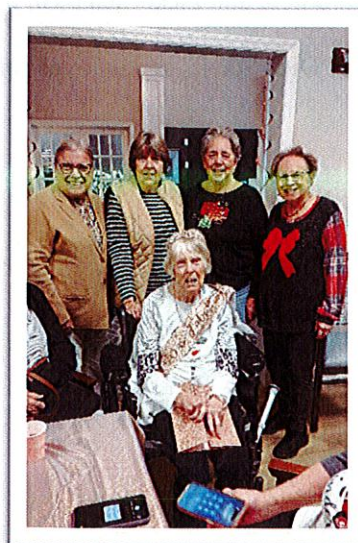
This year, there was snow on the ground, which might have kept some folks at home, but those of us who attended LOVED IT.

Thank you to the Quilt Show and the Christkindlmarkt ladies for another job well done!

(Joyce Kuergeleis)

**Happy 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Carol!** December 16, 2024, was Carol's 90th birthday!

**It was a very nice party with a magician and a balloon artist to entertain us. There was also plenty of cake and beverages to go around. Carol was thrilled with the cards she received from her fellow church members. Thank you to everyone that sent her a card. (Carol now resides at Park Place @ Winghaven in O'Fallon, MO)**



## Youth Fellowship

Youth Fellowship met at 7:00 PM on January 15, 2025. The meeting was called to order by President Cody with thirteen members present. Pastor Poole opened with a prayer.

Student Pastor Tim presented our devotion time, centered on “The Mystery of God.” In confirmation and beyond we learn some of the building blocks of faith, and we build on that as we go. God’s priority is that we keep seeking him. We will have hard questions and may have doubts, but that is all part of growing in faith. Our understanding of things changes as our faith journey continues. But, God loves you and cares for you – that is a certainty and never changes.

Minutes of the December meeting were approved on a motion by Payton, seconded by Wyatt B. Motion carried.

The 2024 treasurer’s report showed an ending balance of \$2,817.83. A motion to approve the report was made by Sofia, seconded by Kadie. Motion carried.

Old Business: Angie Dixon presented updated information on the group’s planned trip to The Edge in Belleville. We will meet at church at 10:00 to carpool to the event which will run from 11:00 to 2:00. Cost will include pizza, soda, arcade games, laser tag, go carts and bumper cars.

Tee shirt orders were finalized. We will get those printed as soon as possible.

We discussed our activities in 2024. In addition to our charitable Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas gifts, we all enjoyed the Hoyleton Easter party, the soda stand and making new friends with members.

A motion to approve all old business was made by Claire, seconded by Payton. Motion carried.

New Business: Pastor suggested we may want to participate in a work day at Camp DuBois. He will get more information before our next meeting.

The Hoyleton Easter party was discussed. Pastor will contact them to arrange a date. Ella and Kadie will help make a list of items for their baskets and activities.

We agreed to do a meal prior to one of the Lenten services. We will do a taco bar and desserts.

A motion to approve all new business was made by Wyatt L., seconded by Morgan. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned, and Pastor led us in the Lord’s Prayer.

We played a game of “Dice Stack” and enjoyed refreshments.

### ***HAPPY BIRTHDAY***

Bob Edler	Jan. 4	Steve Lawrence	Jan. 12
Toni Michels	Jan. 4	Lyle Schwarze	Jan. 14
Andrew Stafford	Jan. 5	Justin Rohlfing	Jan. 14
Rebecca (Becky) Coats	Jan. 8	Samantha Boman	Jan. 14
Alisha Stafford	Jan. 8	Cameron Knobloch	Jan. 14
Amanda Rusteberg	Jan. 9	Kyle Kipping	Jan. 14
Michael Scott Schultheis	Jan. 10	Abigail Graber	Jan. 14
William Michael Manning	Jan. 10	Ellis Reese Kruse	Jan. 15
Justin Sam Boman	Jan. 11	Bradley Matthew Wilson	Jan. 15
Danny Hoffmann	Jan. 12	Nancy Reed	Jan. 16
Aaron Brigance	Jan. 12		

Rigby Whitlock	Jan. 16	Caroline Vera Mueller	Feb. 13
Jeremy Hill	Jan. 17	Vicki Taake	Feb. 13
Barb Stafford	Jan. 19	Amanda Schweigert	Feb. 15
Reid Eugene Matzenbacher	Jan. 19	Dennis Trost	Feb. 16
Brenda Rey	Jan. 20	Allen Stafford	Feb. 17
Abbey Goff	Jan. 20	Lauren Schellhardt	Feb. 17
Faye Birk	Jan. 21	Gene Rohlfing	Feb. 18
Debbie Eckart	Jan. 22	Sydney Hicks	Feb. 18
Jessica Liefer	Jan. 22	Sebastian Lee Albert Nilges	Feb. 18
Luke Edler	Jan. 22	Sophia Ann Marie Nilges	Feb. 18
Pam Roseman	Jan. 22	David Henerfauth	Feb. 19
Hudson Brandt	Jan. 22	Emily Marie Richeson	Feb. 19
Dalton Louis Roever	Jan. 22	Dolores Guetterman	Feb. 20
Randy Hicks	Jan. 23	Gregory Floarke	Feb. 20
Michael Leber	Jan. 24	Tim Henerfauth	Feb. 22
Arthur Rusteberg	Jan. 24	Derek Edward Knoll	Feb. 22
Sarah Schmitz	Jan. 24	Glenn Voelker	Feb. 23
Elena Hurst	Jan. 24	Freeman Borcharding	Feb. 23
Scarlett Hurst	Jan. 24	Anita Muertz	Feb. 23
Joyce Kuergeleis	Jan. 25	Paul Hill	Feb. 24
Jonathon Edward Liefer	Jan. 25	Jason W. Dilley	Feb. 24
Rylee Elizabeth Rosenkranz	Jan. 25	Jeffrey Williams	Feb. 25
Jon Matzenbacher	Jan. 26	Kate Mueller	Feb. 25
Paula Hoeffft	Jan. 26	Lucas Blackwell	Feb. 25
Amanda Braun	Jan. 26	Millie Pearl Liefer	Feb. 25
Garrett Ross Stitzel	Jan. 27	Ally Melching	Feb. 26
Trudi Rohlfing	Jan. 28	Joseph Stirnaman	Feb. 26
Darlene Yancey	Jan. 29	Melanie Lee Russo	Feb. 27
Joelle Morgan Rohlfing	Jan. 28	Zailey Levin	Feb. 27
Linda Hirsch	Jan. 29	Grace Wischmeyer	Feb. 27
Monty Jackson	Jan. 29	Brad Juelfs	Feb. 28
Kyle Andres	Jan. 29	Chris Koester	Feb. 28
Isabella Hicks	Jan. 30		
Judy Edler	Jan. 31	Joan Esker	Mar. 1
Rowan Schilling	Jan. 31	George Green	Mar. 2
		Susan Koesterer	Mar. 3
Carrie Turner	Feb. 1	Adam Prange	Mar. 3
Melissa Mothershead	Feb. 1	Emily Rusteberg	Mar. 3
Laura Ann Wilson	Feb. 2	Brooke Dawsyn Knobloch	Mar. 3
Dorothy Mueller	Feb. 3	Elisa Marie Horn	Mar. 4
Aaron Voelker	Feb. 3	Mabel Louise Jensen	Mar. 5
Darren Knobloch	Feb. 4	Jeff Edward Roy	Mar. 6
Isaac Larson	Feb. 4	Gracie Allen	Mar. 6
Theodore Klinkhardt	Feb. 4	Marlee Rose Melching	Mar. 7
Anita Beth Graber	Feb. 5	Charles Ray Eckerty	Mar. 9
Wade Goldschmidt	Feb. 6	Emily Michele Kruse	Mar. 9
Jerry Johner	Feb. 6	Catherine Hoffmann	Mar. 10
Susan (Gale) Branson	Feb. 6	Jeanette McClellan	Mar. 11
Doug Schilling	Feb. 7	Sheryl Prange	Mar. 11
Olivia Christine Hicks	Feb. 8	Carrie Grueninger	Mar. 11
Easton James Birk	Feb. 9	Alaina Lawrence	Mar. 12
Rita Hoffmann	Feb. 9	Mark Hoffmann	Mar. 14
Kimberly Sue Esker	Feb. 11	Allyn Rohlfing	Mar. 15
Ava Jane Hoffmann	Feb. 11	Dan Gilbert	Mar. 15
Crickett Johnson	Feb. 12		
Klaire Wittenbrink	Feb. 12		

***HAPPY ANNIVERSARY***

Paul & Wendy Hill	Jan. 4	Allen & Shirley Stafford	Feb. 22
Brian & Brenda Johnson	Jan. 15	Jennifer & Noah Klinkhardt	Feb. 29
Don & Ellen Edler	Feb. 2	Lenny & Karen Schwarze	Mar. 11
Gene & Amy Rohlfing	Feb. 16	Jim & Lisa Maurer	Mar. 14
Jay & Lesa Mueller	Feb. 21		

***The Winter Soul***

*The winter of the soul is a cold and lonely season  
when it doesn't understand the intention or the reason.  
The bitter winds that come, chills it to the marrow  
with each gust that blows it feels like a poison arrow.  
The freezing rain and sleet, seizes up its every tear  
they become like icicles encased with all its fear.*

*The winter soul can't take, the ills, the weight, the loss  
unless the soul is willing to keep clinging to the cross.  
For it is in this icy season, the soul can find His warmth  
and nestle in the comfort of what God will bring forth.  
So, if the battered soul is to survive this frosty time  
it must be willing to soar and over each blizzard climb.*

*Winter in the soul . . .  
is a cold and lonely season  
but it can find great peace  
knowing God has His reason.*

*(Deborah Belka)*

