



ST. JOHN

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
MAEYSTOWN, ILLINOIS

The Visitor
December 2023

Let Go and Let God for Christmas!

This Sunday, December 3rd is the first Sunday of Advent. The church will be beautifully decorated for the Christmas Season! We have a fantastic month ahead.

- *Dec. 3 is Christmas in Maeystown. The holidays get kicked off with great activities all through Maeystown, including our Fellowship Hall for another amazing Christkindlmarkt & Quilt Display.*
- *Dec 10th will be our Sunday School Christmas Play with a special guest sure to arrive for the children.*
- *Dec. 17 is the Christmas Cantata,*
- *Dec 24 is the Christmas Eve Service at 11:00 p.m. There cannot be a better way to bring in Christmas than the traditional Christmas Eve service. I can picture the candlelight service as we sing Silent Night! Joy and love all around. This year give yourself the gift God has for you! **Let Go and Let God** take away all that would take away from being in the Christmas spirit.*

You know all the hustle and bustle that sometimes takes center stage. Just let it go. What gets done will get done, and all that does not get done will be alright! On a more serious note, Christmas does not give us a timeout from everything heart breaking and challenging in our lives. Loved ones can still be sick or going through challenging times. Relationships do not all fix themselves. The stresses prior to the Christmas tree going up are likely still there. So, this year give yourself the gift of powerful faith. A great theologian of the 21st century put together a prayer that has truly brought peace to so many.

The Serenity Prayer

**Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.**

Reinhold Niebuhr

Fun fact: This famous theologian can trace his roots back to our little country church as his mother was the daughter of one of our ministers and lived for a time in our wonderful community.

This powerful prayer is centered on letting go of what you have no control over. And being in action with all that you do have control over, and having clarity to know between what is in your power and what is not. Faith is letting go of what you cannot change and trusting that God has this. God is calling all things created and small into perfect order. We have the power to hear and follow and each of us have our own journey to find faith. Some of our journeys are straight and some are long and bumpy, but each of our journeys have their own set of challenges, gifts and beauty.

We can worry about a loved one or we can trust they are on their journey to find truth. We cannot choose their actions. We have to let go and trust that God is calling them to find their path. We find our serenity in trusting that God is faithful and they have the power to turn to our Lord. Ultimately, we have the power to choose our actions and have the responsibility to live to our fullest potential. Other worries can be about money, careers, what college to choose, what to do with our lives. We can worry about this important life choice or we can trust it will work out and not let it stop us from doing the good works God would have us do. The last big thing we worry about is us or a loved one being sick. This can be a tough one but the answer is the same. **Let go and let God** and make the most of each day!

Let go to God what is beyond our control and get busy living the gift of this life God has given us. We may not end world hunger in our lifetime and we may not see world peace, but if we **Let Go and Let God**, we can see so much we can do! We may not be able to feed the whole world but there is a child that we can be sure goes to bed with a full stomach! God is so powerful, and we are so blessed to be God's servants to bring his love and care!
Let the Christmas celebrations break out!

Merry Christmas!
Pastor

November Church Council Minutes - November 13, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 6:35pm by Cheri Langsdorf. Pastor Poole opened the meeting with a prayer. Those in attendance were Cheri Langsdorf, Fay Ross, Susan Koesterer, Drew Watts and Sandy Tutka. Absent was President Christy Muertz, Mark Rey, Amy Rohlring and Lisa Schwarze.

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES FROM THE OCT. 9, 2023 MEETING/SPECIAL MEETING

The minutes from the October meeting and the special meeting held Nov. 5, 2023 were reviewed. There being no changes or corrections, a motion was made by Fay Ross and seconded by Susan Koesterer to accept the minutes. Motion carried.

REVIEW/APPROVE TREASURER'S REPORT/BILLS/TIMECARD/PASTOR'S EXPENSES

The treasurer's report/bills/time card and Pastor's expenses were presented and reviewed. There being no changes or corrections, a motion was made by Cheri Langsdorf and seconded by Fay Ross to accept the reports as presented.

PASTOR'S REPORT

Pastor presented a very positive outlook for Tim Burns in his quest to pursue his study of an in-care student of theology. A Local Church Discernment Committee will need to be formed to guide along the process. Pastor will have more information on that soon. A motion made by Fay Ross, seconded Susan Koesterer to form the committee. Motion carried.

Patti Brandt and her sister would like to have permission to take some of the money from their mother's memorial to purchase a table to place the cremains on during the church service for future cremation funerals. A discussion followed and we all agreed it would be a wonderful thing to have at the church services. Pastor will let them know they can do this.

Pastor has obtained information from Corner Stone regarding the loan for the solar panels. Pastor has a call in to Eric from GRP/Wegman Company regarding some of the questions we have regarding the solar panels. He will wait for Eric's return call before proceeding.

Pastor touched on the Christmas play that the children will be presenting on December 10.

GLENN/LINDA COATS

The letter has been received by from Glenn/Linda Coats, it has been notarized and a copy sent to the Coats.

EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

Lisa Schwarze has the copy of the guideline for the emergency protocol. The committee will meet and they will discuss what steps need to be taken in an emergency.

SOLAR POWER

Pastor will get the Corner Stone application and after speaking to Eric, we will decide where to go from there. It was decided to table any final decisions until Pastor can speak to Eric.

MAPLE TREE

Todd has finished taking down the maple tree. He did a great job and we are grateful.

GREG BACKUS

Greg nor the company contacted to do the work were able to be present at the meeting. It was recommended that more council members take a look at what is being proposed. Any decision was tabled until the December meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

BUDGET:

A review of the proposed 2024 was handed out. There being no additions or corrections, a motion was made by Cheri Langsdorf and seconded by Fay Ross to accept the budget. Motion carried.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Fay Ross and seconded by Drew Watts to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 7:50p.m. Pastor closed the meeting leading us in the Lord's Prayer.

Sandy Tutka, Secretary

Women's Fellowship - October 5, 2023

October 5, 2023 Women's Fellowship was called to order by President Faye Birk with 15 members and Pastor present. Pastor opened with a prayer.

Carol Shanks from Hoyleton will be at our November meeting to discuss the changes that will be done to the facilities at Hoyleton.

Sue's treasurers report listed a balance of \$2020.35 for the end of September. Joyce and Barb made the motion to approve and the motion carried.

Ellen read the secretary's report and Sue and Cathy made the motion to approve. Motion carried.

The pie stand for the Octoberfest was finalized. A worker's sheet was passed around and filled out, Pastor made a list of tables, chairs, and pop ups needed for the stand. The price of the pies will be 4.00/slice and 20.00/whole pie like last year. The Hall will be open on Saturday from 8:00-5:00 for anyone wanting to bring their pies ahead of time.

A motion was made by Nancy V and seconded by Joyce to continue to purchase the supplies for the kitchen throughout the year and at the end of the year divide the total bills between the Women's Fellowship, Sunday School and the church. Motion carried.

The refrigerator freezer appears to be working, just needs to make sure the freezer door is closed.

Under new business a motion was made to send money to Oak Hill for their birthday parties and not volunteer to help at this time. Motion made by Sue and Pat. Motion carried.

The Odd Fellows sent a check to help with Nursing Home Birthday prizes. This will be forwarded to Oak Hill.

Pat gave a report on the Vendor Show listing many vendors they already have signed up. The date for this will December 3, 11 – 4 pm.

Cathy gave a report on the quilt show that will be the same day as the Vendor Show.

Linda Schmidt has a 94 x 108 quilt top that was given to her and wants to pay it forward by selling raffle tickets at the quilt show through Fastnacht and give the proceeds to Women's Fellowship.

Pastor reported the next Senior bible study will be held at St Joe in November. Date to be decided

Happy Birthday was sung to Anna, Nancy, and Linda.

Pat and Anna made the motion to adjourn. Motion carried. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Ellen Edler Secretary

Announcements and Other News

Announcements:

- Christmas Poinsettias will again adorn our sanctuary. Donations are being accepted through December 3. A donation of \$9.00 is required to have a poinsettia in memory of or in honor of a loved one. Forms can be found enclosed in the Visitor or at church.
- The Annual Budget Meeting will take place on Sunday, December 17, immediately following church. The 2024 Budgets were mailed out to members.
- Women's Fellowship are selling raffle tickets for a quilt. The quilt is queen-sized, was hand-stitched and was donated by a member of the church. Check out the church's Facebook page for a picture of the quilt. 100% of the proceeds from the raffle will go to Hoyleton Youth & Family Services. Tickets are \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00 and will be on sale until Fastnacht on February 13, 2024. Drawing will take place during Fastnacht. You do not need to be present to win. See a member of Women's Fellowship to buy tickets.
- If you have a life event, such as a new baby or a loss of a loved one, and would like this included in the Visitor, please email Nicole at maeystownucc@gmail.com so she can get it added to the Visitor.

Upcoming Events:

- Christkindlmarkt & Quilt Show will be held Sunday, December 3 following church.
- Sunday, December 10 will be the Annual Children's Christmas Program at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Donations of cookies are being requested for Fellowship Time afterwards. Rumor is that a jolly old visitor will be making a special appearance.
- The Christmas Cantata will be Sunday, December 17 during our 10:00 a.m. worship service.
- Join us at 8:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve and at 10:00 a.m. on Christmas Day for our Christmas services.

Baptisms:

- Lydia Katherine Roy, daughter of Jack Roy & Lauren Wheeler was baptized on November 5.
- Myla'Rae Brigance, daughter of Aaron Brigance & Tiffany Nelms was baptized on November 26

Special Birthdays:

- Charles Birk celebrates his 69th birthday Dec. 3.
- Glenn Coats celebrates his 73rd birthday Dec. 6.
- Ellen Edler turns 70 years young on December 7.
- Yvonne Gilbert turns 85 years young on December 15, while Brian Johnson celebrates his 74th birthday the same day.
- Bob Edler celebrates his 70th birthday on January 4, while Toni Michels turns 55 and Tina Buchanan 50 the same day.
- Danny Hoffmann turns 63 on January 12.
- Lyle Schwarze turns 69 on January 14.

Special Anniversaries:

- Manlee & Joann Knobloch will celebrate their 53rd wedding anniversary on December 5.
- Raymond & Nancy Reed will celebrate their 57th wedding anniversary on December 17.
- Brian & Brenda Johnson will celebrate their 52nd wedding anniversary on January 15.

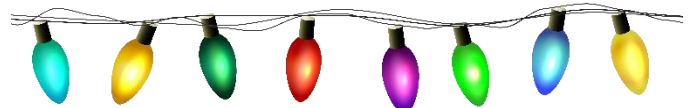
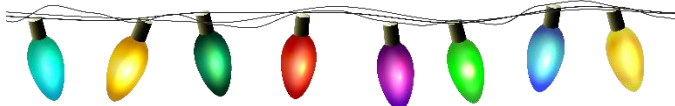
Acolyte Schedule:

December

- 3 - Andrew Stafford & Owen Carron
- 10 - Landon Johnson & Dallen Edler
- 17 - Lilly Carron & Jake Coats
- 24 - Jackie Keller &
- 31 - Drake Coats & Caden Huddleston

January

- 7 - Matthew Blackwell & Parker Brandt
- 14 - Payton Dilley & Henry Knoll
- 21 - Ella Matzenbacher & Emma Schultheis
- 28 - Claire Stafford & Matthew Blackwell



Please keep the following in your prayers

- Prayers for Sandy Baum.
- Linda Sutter is home and getting stronger after a hospital stay.
- Herman Watts is in the hospital with several challenges.
- Tina Lloyd is fighting cancer.
- Bill Tutka is experiencing more dementia.
- Annika Olson, a local girl who was at college and suffered a severe brain injury in a horse-riding accident.
- Ronald (Curly) Hoffmann in his battle with cancer.
- Carol Bay fell and has two broken arms.
- Kaylee is getting stronger every day! Thank you for all your prayers!
- Tim Branson in his battle with cancer.
- Scott Stoeckel, as he battles cancer.
- Renesmae Brown, she is 3 yrs. old, has autism and now seizures.
- Denise Farmer as she seeks answers for some neurological issues.

Visitor Report:

Beginning Balance - \$523.70
Income - \$50.00
 Jewel Trost - \$50.00
Expenses - \$117.70186.48
 U. S. Postmaster - \$58.48 – October
 U.S. Postmaster - \$59.22
Ending Balance - \$456.00

Thank you so much Jewel for your generosity.
 Merry Christmas and a Happy Healthy 2024.
 Faye Birk, Treasurer

Sunday School – Checking Account:

Beginning Balance – \$384.62
Income -
 Offering - \$64.00
Expenses –
 Michelle Vogt – Déc./Jan./Feb.
 Curriculum - \$259.14
Ending Balance - \$189.48

Sunday School – Savings Account :

Beginning Balance - \$7534.15
Income - \$0.00
Expenses - \$0.00
 Ending Balance - \$7534.15

Faye Birk, Treasurer

Church Financial Report:

Beginning Balance Oct. 1, 2023	\$26,002.12
Income	\$27,783.38
Expenses	\$22,605.66
Ending balance Oct. 31, 2023	\$31,179.84

*The Meaning of Christmas
Author Unknown*

*Far away in Bethlehem, a baby boy was born,
 Born with neither riches, nor with fame,
 Yet wise men came from all around to bring Him
 their gifts; peace was felt by all who heard His
 name.*

*Angels watched him as he slept, and gently rocked
 His bed, their voices singing softly in His ear;
 His mother and his father both gave thanks to God
 above for the greatest gift of all, their Son, so dear.*

*They knew His life upon this earth would not be
 filled with wealth, they also knew He would
 encounter strife; but most of all, they knew that
 He would be a loving Child, and teach the love of
 God throughout His life.*

*At Christmas we celebrate this birth of Jesus
 Christ,
 Let's keep in mind the truth of Christmas Day;
 for it's not the Christmas wrappings, nor not the
 gifts that lie within, But our gift of love to others
 in every way...*



Merry Christmas



St. John United Church of Christ
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Send email updates, photos & group descriptions to maestownucc@gmail.com

Church: 618-458-6940

Pastor's Cell Phone: 618-340-2372

Website: www.maestownucc.org

pastorpoole123@gmail.com

“Like” us on Facebook @ <https://www.facebook.com/maestownucc>

Thought for the day

Dear God, fix me when I'm the problem and protect me when I'm not.