



# ST. JOHN

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
MAEYSTOWN, ILLINOIS

***The Visitor***  
**December 2024**

## **The Advent Season is Here!**

Kathy and I are contemplating whether we should put up a Christmas tree.

This is the first year none of our adult children have lived with us. Should we put up a tree for just the two of us? True, we will have all the children over for Christmas, but does that warrant the work of putting up a tree? What does decorating provide? I know I love it when it is done, but I am not excited about dragging all of it out and putting it up. I think decorating at whatever level you choose is like getting dressed up for a big event. The bigger the event, the more you invest your time, energy, and resources. Perhaps from that perspective, decorating for Christmas takes on a new purpose for me. It was for the thrill of the kids celebrating all things Christmas. Now Kathy and I can choose to decorate to get ready for a very big event, the event of a lifetime, celebrating the event that forever changed the world. Well, it is already a few days into Advent, and we have much to do to prepare our house for the big event.

The Advent Season may be the time you decorate your house, but it also may be the time you prepare for the coming of Christ in so many ways. Sending out Christmas Cards to express your love to family and old and new friends. You might be having some gatherings to celebrate. Follow your heart this Advent Season and find new ways to show forth your gratitude for the gift of Christ and the love you wish to share. With joy in our hearts and a renewed purpose, Kathy and I will decorate the house for the coming of our Lord. We are so thankful to share the Advent Season with all of you!

Merry Christmas!  
Pastor



## Church Council Minutes – October 14, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Cheri Langsdorf. Pastor Poole opened the meeting with a prayer. Those in attendance were Susan Koesterer, Amy Rohlfing, Ron Richeson, Fay Ross, Pam Muertz, Mark Rey, and Debbie Eckart. Drew Watts was absent.

### **Review and Approval of Minutes from September 9, 2024 Council Meeting**

The minutes from the September meeting were reviewed. There being no further corrections a motion was made by Amy Rohlfing and seconded by Fay Ross 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 Cheri Langsdorf and seconded by Amy Rohlfing to accept the reports as presented. Motion carried.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Solar Power Update**

- The solar panel at the Church is operational. The remaining panels should be on-line by the end of October.

### **Insurance Non-Renewed in October**

- The Church's existing insurance was non-renewed October 1<sup>st</sup>. The council's consensus was to go with the Insurance Board, an insurance company specializing in covering churches. Shawn Polzin, Illinois Rep. from the Insurance Board, joined the meeting to discuss the new insurance. In summary, the church will have much better coverage through the Insurance Board. The insurance includes property coverage for the parsonage, school house, church and solar panels. It also includes Directors & Officers insurance, Abuse & Misconduct insurance, and crime insurance. The insurance coverage will be \$11,238 per year.

### **Parsonage Microwave & Dishwasher**

- No Update

### **Bids for Painting the Hall**

- No Update

### **Bids for Residing the Hall**

- Steve Lawrence attended the meeting and presented his bid to reside the hall. A second bid is still needed.

### **Pine Forest**

- Nine of the dead trees have been removed. More evaluation is needed to determine if any additional actions are needed.

### **Leaking Basement of Hall**

- More evaluation is needed to determine if additional action is needed.

### **Workday scheduled for November 2<sup>nd</sup> from 8:00 AM to Noon**

- Pastor will work with Freeman Borcharding to make a list of work to be completed.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **2025 Budget Review**

- The council reviewed the proposed budget.
  - Motion made by Cheri Langsdorf and seconded by Fay Ross to increase the administrative assistant hourly rate. Motion carried.
  - Motion made by Cheri Langsdorf and seconded by Amy Rohlfing to increase the Church's OCWM (our church's wider mission) contribution from \$400 to \$450 per month. Motion carried.
  - Motion made by Fay Ross and seconded by Mark Rey to increase all other staff by 5%. Motion carried.

## **PASTOR'S REPORT**

- Pastor reported that we will have 13 new members joining the church in November!

There being no further business, a motion was made by Amy Rohlfing and seconded by Fay Ross to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned. Pastor closed the meeting by leading us in the Lord's Prayer.

Susan Koesterer, Secretary

## **Women's Fellowship**

The October 3, 2024 Women's Fellowship meeting was called to order by President Sue Taylor with 13 members present and Pastor and Tim. Tim Burns opened with a prayer.

Connie Turner gave the treasurers report and we have a balance of 4109.78 as of the end of September. Nancy and Sharon approved the report as read. Motion carried. Ellen read the secretary's report. Pat and Gale made motions to approve as read. Motion carried.

Victoria reported on the Christkindlmarkt Vendor show. 26 of the 35 tables sold. Anyone is interested in a table need to get in touch with Pat Brandt or Victoria Rippelmeyer. 80% of the vendors paid with Venmo.

The Octoberfest pie stand was discussed. The price for the pies will again be 4.00/slice or 20.00 for a whole pie. The worker's sheet was passed around again and most of the slots were filled. Sue will send out a text to finish filling the slots. The hall will be open on Saturday from noon to 6:00pm if you want to bring your pies then, otherwise bring them to the stand on Sunday morning.

Hostesses are still needed for the April meeting.

It was suggested that if we had a younger lady for VP maybe we could have a younger group that could meet on 1 Wednesday night/month, when they bring their kids to confirmation. The VP could help to explain to them what the Women's Guild all does. This would help to get the younger people involved and get new ideas into the group. We will put together a committee next month to send out questionnaires via e mail.

A motion was made by Linda and Sharon to donate \$100.00 to pastor for the Halloween in Maeystown event, which will take place on Sunday October 27<sup>th</sup>.

A motion by Pat and Gale was made to reimburse Pastor 35.00 for the half sheet cake he purchased for Kenny Knobloch's 60<sup>th</sup> Ordination coffee and cake reception. Motion carried. Pastor also thanked the ladies for pulling the reception together so quickly. It was greatly appreciated by Kenny and family.

Pastor commented that the solar panels at the church are now working. There are a few small things that need to be done before the hall and parsonage panels can be started. The 3 electric bills this past summer equaled about 1200.00/month, when all the panels get started the bills should go down to about 100.00/month total.

The confirmation classes have started and there are 15 kids in class. Pastor will be taking in new members the beginning of November.

After school workers were signed up for the next month. Nancy and Ellen will bring desserts for the November.

Sharon B and Yvonne made a motion to adjourn. Motion carried. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Ellen Edler, Secretary

(3)



## Youth Fellowship

Youth Fellowship met at 7:00 PM on November 20, 2024. The meeting was called to order by President Cody with twenty members present. Pastor Poole opened with a prayer.

Reid Schilling presented our devotion time, centered on the reliability of the Bible and how the Bible helps us in our daily lives. By reading the Bible, we can know God and we can know who we are. The Bible helps us stay strong in times of uncertainty, it helps us persevere and it helps us to be grateful for what we have. Thank you, Reid, for your insightful presentation!

Minutes of the October meeting were approved on a motion by Julia, seconded by Kaylee. Motion carried.

The treasurer's report showed two expenses: \$101.50 to the Maeystown Preservation Society for the soda stand, and \$600.00 to House of Neighborly Services for their Thanksgiving boxes. The current balance is \$3,645.74. A motion to approve the report was made by Payton, seconded by Sophia. Motion carried.

Old Business: Angie Dixon presented information on the group's planned trip to The Edge in Belleville. Packages are \$25 per person for laser tag with additional options. This was the option selected. The group plans to carpool to the venue, stay for about two hours (time to be determined) and return to the church hall for lunch, time permitting. A motion was made by Sophia, seconded by Kadie to accept this report.

New Business: Charitable Christmas giving was discussed. A motion was made by Claire, seconded by Matthew to donate \$800.00 to the Hoyleton Christmas gift collection. Motion carried.

Some of our new members have not received a group T shirt. A list was made, and shirts will be ordered. A motion to accept was made by Hayden, seconded by Wyatt B. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned, and Pastor led us in The Lord's Prayer. We enjoyed sno-cones, brownies and ice cream to welcome our new members.

Natalie Finke, Acting Secretary

### **The Meaning of Christmas**

*Author Unknown*

Far away in Bethlehem, a baby boy was born, with neither riches, nor with fame,  
Yet wise men came from all around to bring Him their gifts, and 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 Christmas wrappings, nor not the gifts that lie within, but our gift of love to others in every way...

# News and Notes

## Upcoming Events & Announcements:

- The Fifth Sunday in December will be to support Randy Hicks. Lynn and Randy have spent many hours and days in the hospital over this past year. Randy has had and is still fighting with serious colin and lower intestine issues. Randy has been unable to work.
- The Children's Christmas Program is next Sunday. After the program, we will celebrate with a special visitor in the lower level. Please bring cookies.
- There will be a congregational meeting on December 22nd to approve the 2025 Budget and discuss replacing the furnace and A.C units in the Hall.
- Join us on Christmas Eve for our 11:00 p.m. service and on Christmas Day for our 10:00 a.m. service.

## New Arrivals:

- We welcome Monroe Lynn Brellinger, daughter of Kelli and Eric Brellinger. Monroe was born on October 25, 2024, and weighed 7lbs, 11oz. Congratulations to the family!
- We also welcome Gideon Merv Schweigert, son of Amanda and Chris Schweigert. Gideon was born on November 21, 2024 and weighed 6lbs, 14oz. Congratulations to the family!

## Special Birthdays:

- Charles Birk will celebrate a 70th birthday on Dec.3.
- Glenn Coats turns 74 on December 6.
- Ellen Edler turns 71 on December 7.
- On December 15, Yvonne Gilbert turns 86 and Brian Johnson turns 75.
- Carol Bay turns 90 years young on December 16, while Sandy Tutka turns 76 years young the same day.
- Clyde Branson will celebrate an 87th birthday on December 21.
- Dr. Jame Schmuck will turn 75 on December 26.
- Joanne Hoffmann will turn 83 on December 29.
- Bob Edler starts out the new year by turning 71 years old.
- Lyle Schwarze will celebrate his 70th birthday on January 14.

## Special Anniversaries:

- Raymond & Nancy Reed will celebrate 58 years of marriage on December 17.

- Brian & Brenda Johnson will celebrate 53 years of marriage on January 15.

## Welcome New Members:

On November 3 we received new members

- ✓ *Steve and Alaina Lawrence*  
Steve loves to hike, fish, and do everything outdoors! He has his own company and does anything and everything related to construction. Alaina also loves to hike, spend time with friends and family, and curl up with a good book. She does food management for a hospital.
- ✓ *Matthew Wiegard and Abbey Goff*  
Matt enjoys hunting and working. He is our kind of pickleball, reading, and shopping. guy! Matt works for J.F. Electric.  
Abbey is a student at Maryville University, studying interior design. She enjoys a good game
- ✓ *Nick Ley and Kaila Badger*  
This beautiful couple is soon to be married in May of this coming year! Nick is our Postmaster here in Maeystown. In his past life, he raced cross country motorcycles and played high school football. Now he is all about building his life with Kaila. Kaila works in the middle industry and loves the difference her work makes in people's lives. She is also excited about building a life with Nick.
- ✓ *Amber Vogel*  
Amber enjoys cooking, hiking, biking, and boxing! She is in accounting, but her first love is her family. She married Mark 27 years ago, and they have two hardworking, beautiful children, Taylor and Corey. This coming year, they will be welcoming their first grandchild into the world.
- ✓ *Lauren Wheeler*  
Lauren is a wonderful mother to Lydia Katherine Roy and a loving partner to Jack Roy. They are blessed to be expecting another little girl soon. Lauren enjoys baking, reading, and scrapbooking/crafts. Lauren works as a dental assistant for Beard & Holmen Dentistry. She and Jack rare well on their way to building a life together. We are thrilled to have them with us!

(continued)

✓ *Abigail Graber*  
 Abigail is always a breath of fresh air! She enjoys traveling, concerts, coffee, and sporting events. She has worn many hats in the working life. She has a strong will and a mind of her own. Simply put, she is a treasure!

✓ *Anita Beth Graber*  
 Anita enjoys pottery, interior design, crafts, and most of all, spending time with her grandkids! They are thrilled to have her back in Valmeyer, and so are we! She makes everything beautiful!

✓ *Victor and Nancy Korves*  
 Victor and Nancy have been faithful worshippers with us for several years now. We are so blessed to have them and very thankful they transferred their membership to St. John. Their greatest joy is undoubtedly their family and farm life.

✓ *Brittany Huebner*  
 Brittney is the proud mother of four beautiful children: Drake, Owen, Dawsyn, and Gavin. She is a wonderful mother and person, and we are so blessed to have her worship and live her faith journey with us.

✓ *Kimberly (Kim) Soutiea*  
 Kim is a Branson from home and has been a financial supporter of our church for years now. Over the past year, she has started attending Bible study and worship regularly. Her background is in I.T. and business. She is an excellent mother to her grown son and daughter. Kim and Bill have had a long, blessed marriage. Kim enjoys playing the piano, cooking, and reading. We are thrilled to have her faith journey join ours!

**Prayer List:**

- Keep Joyce Kuergeleis in your prayers as she awaits the results of exploratory surgery.
- Chris Melliere remains hospitalized, but is improving.
- Mary Ann Lutz, Julie Birk's aunt, is needing a Kidney Transplant.
- PK is a 9-year-old little girl that had a brain stem cancerous tumor and went to heaven this past week. Please keep her family in your prayers.
- Lynn Moore as she undergoes a major heart surgery and her husband Russel.
- Eric Offermann has multiple issues/complications he is currently dealing with, including pancreatic cancer.
- 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.
- Dennis Rodenberg as he battles cancer.
- 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.
- Renesmae Brown, she is 3 yrs old, has autism and now seizures.

**The Visitor:**

Visitor Beginning Balance	- \$15.78
Income –	
Freeman & Ginny Borcharding -	\$94.52
Carla Feldmeier -	\$30.00
Florence Feldmeier -	\$30.00
Jim Bundy -	\$50.00
Jim & Judy Schmuck -	\$500.00
Anonymous -	<u>\$100.00</u>
	\$804.52
Expense	
St. John UCC, reimburse Postage -	<u>\$56.56</u>
Ending Balance -	\$763.74

Thanks to all our GINORMIS DONORS! When we are in need you always step up and I cannot thank you enough!!!

Faye Birk, Treasurer

**Sunday School - Checking Account:**

Beginning Balance -	\$300.93
Income -	\$1000.00
Transfer from Savings to Checking -	\$1000.00
St. John UCC- Reimb for Curriculum	
per Tim Burns -	\$533.12
Julie Birk--- Reimburse-Ornaments	47.65
Kindercottage Quarterly Donation	100.00
Cokesbury - Confirmation Bibles	
per Pastor Poole	<u>\$365.29</u>
Ending Balance -	\$254.87

**Sunday School – Savings:**

Beginning Balance -	\$5941.27
Income -	\$0.00
Expense -	
Transfer to Checking -	\$1000.00
Ending Balance -	\$4941.27

Faye Birk, Treasurer

**Church Financial:**

2024 Beginning Balance	82,400.76
Income	23,867.66
Expenses	<u>24,309.44</u>
Ending Balance October 31, 2024	\$81,958.98

Kathy Asselmeier

Connie Matzenbacher	Dec. 22
Elizabeth Shrewsbury	Dec. 22
Austin Ryan Kempf	Dec. 24
Jessica Floarke	Dec. 25
Dr. James Schmuck	Dec. 26
Lexy Edler	Dec. 26
Brett Mueller	Dec. 27
Anthony Schultheis	Dec. 27
Brandon Kruse	Dec. 27
Andrea Blackwell	Dec. 28
Joanne Hoffmann	Dec. 29
Faith Bertram	Dec. 30
Matthew Albat	Dec. 30
Noah Klinkhardt	Dec. 30
Ute Arbor Engbring	Dec. 30
Angela Finch	Dec. 31
Katlyn Nolan	Dec. 31
Bob Edler	Jan. 4
Toni Michels	Jan. 4
Andrew Stafford	Jan. 5
Rebecca (Becky) Coats	Jan. 8
Alisha Stafford	Jan. 8
Amanda Rusteberg	Jan. 9
Michael Scott Schultheis	Jan. 10
William Michael Manning	Jan. 10
Justin Sam Boman	Jan. 11
Danny Hoffmann	Jan. 12
Aaron Brigance	Jan. 12
Steve Lawrence	Jan. 12
Lyle Schwarze	Jan. 14
Justin Rohlfing	Jan. 14
Jennifer Faus	Jan. 14
Samantha Boman	Jan. 14
Cameron Knobloch	Jan. 14
Kyle Kipping	Jan. 14
Abigail Graber	Jan. 14
Ellis Reese Kruse	Jan. 15
Bradley Matthew Wilson	Jan. 15

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL OF YOU:**

Kody Schwarze	Dec. 1
Jenny Klinkhardt	Dec. 2
Wyatt Liefer	Dec. 2
Charles Birk	Dec. 3
Alan Wischmeyer	Dec. 3
Judy Krebel	Dec. 5
Denise Faus	Dec. 5
Brad Edler	Dec. 5
Jacob Berg	Dec. 5
David Mothershead	Dec. 5
Glenn Coats	Dec. 6
Paul Nilges	Dec. 6
Julie Roy	Dec. 6
Cody Schmitz	Dec. 6
Ellen Edler	Dec. 7
Haley Faus	Dec. 7
Amanda Marie Panzau	Dec. 7
Jameson Richeson	Dec. 7
Cole Goldschmidt	Dec. 8
Amber Marie Wolf	Dec. 11
Mason Knobloch	Dec. 12
Banks Christopher Horn	Dec. 12
Corey Blackwell	Dec. 14
Yvonne Gilbert	Dec. 15
Brian Johnson	Dec. 15
Carol Bay	Dec. 16
Sandy Tutka	Dec. 16
Bill Huddleston	Dec. 16
Dr. Shannon Krebel	Dec. 17
Owen Huebner	Dec. 17
Christopher Brigance	Dec. 18
Tony Stirnaman	Dec. 18
Jill Crouch	Dec. 19
Emily Reinhardt	Dec. 19
Leslie Rush	Dec. 20
Clyde Branson	Dec. 21
Gwenivere Evans	Dec. 21

**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO.....**

Jonathan & Amber Wolf	Dec. 1
Justin & Samantha Boman	Dec. 15
Aaron & Sherri Voelker	Dec. 16
Raymond II & Nancy Reed	Dec. 17
Jay & Dawn Leber	Dec. 20
Jeffrey & Coley Hoffmann	Dec. 20
Darren & Amanda Knobloch	Dec. 20
Paul & Denise Faus	Dec. 28
Paul & Wendy Hill	Jan. 4
Brian & Brenda Johnson	Jan. 15





**St. John United Church of Christ**  
1208 Franklin Street  
PO Box 95  
Maestown, IL 62256

Non-Profit Organization  
U. S. Postage Paid  
Permit #1  
Maestown, IL 62256

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Send email updates, photos & group descriptions to [maestownucc@gmail.com](mailto:maestownucc@gmail.com)

Church: 618-458-6940

Pastor's Cell Phone: 618-340-2372

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

[pastorpoole123@gmail.com](mailto:pastorpoole123@gmail.com)

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

***Thought for the day***

**Don't wait for the blessing. Be the blessing!**