



ST. JOHN

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MAEYSTOWN, ILLINOIS

The Visitor
January/February 2023

Pastor's Reflection

Deepening Our Faith

I think you will love this edition of the Visitor with all the fantastic pics over our Christmas Season. We decided to use them all to really highlight the fantastic events we had to celebrate the gift of Christ. In the afterglow of the Christmas season let us step into our new year and really take on deepening our faith as individuals, families, and a congregation.

Is it fair to say that Christian Lite has become a thing? Can we start to move the dial back in the other direction? This is not just the topic of this article but will be the focus of 2023 and the subject matter of our Lenten Services, "Deepening our Faith Together".

The first question would have to be why deepen our faith? Like most things, one gets more proficient by practice and we can always improve. Deepening your faith provides the ability to not only stay strong in times of trouble but to generate an environment that reflects your faith. You bring the peace into your household and into your workplace. In faith, when all those around you see despair, you have eyes to see what they cannot, *hope*! That is because you know there is always a way in Christ! When people speak the language of disdain, you speak the language of grace, humility, compassion; you speak the language that brings light, hope, and love.

A deep faith makes a huge impact in our daily life and that transfers to all those that are dear to us. Who do you admire, seek guidance from, look up to as an example to follow? Did they stay calm in a bad situation? Did they reflect light and love? Were they strong when they needed to be? Did they never stop loving you? Behind all these gifts was a faith developed over their lifetime.

Hopefully the 'why deepen our faith' question has been answered and is clear and compelling. The next question would have to be 'how do we deepen our faith?' That is too big of a question for this article but will be the topic of our Lenten Services through all the Wednesdays in March. It will be the question and commitment of our entire year of 2023. Christian Lite may be very accommodating to our schedules and our lifestyle but it will not provide the peace that comes from living our faith.

I invite all our members to deepen their faith, take an important step by committing to being at Sunday worship every Sunday, make your schedule and other commitments bend to your commitment to keep the sabbath holy and you will send a strong message that God comes first. That act alone will deepen your faith exponentially. Commit to Ash Wednesday, the Lenten Services, and Good Friday. For too long I have failed to stress the importance of these overlooked services. On Ash Wednesday we start the journey with Christ to the Cross, we take account of our own sinfulness, we place ashes on our forehead as a symbol of solidarity and walk with Christ, it is a solemn service essential to our faith and

understanding of Christ' sacrifice. The Lenten Services are all designed to reveal our humanness to make room for God. Good Friday is the darkest service of the year, the lights go out in the sanctuary and the Christ candle is snuffed out as we mourn the death of Christ. After all, how can we celebrate Easter if we do not mourn his death?

I can imagine this does not sound like one small step and it is not, but it is a very important step with many more to follow along the journey together. Christian Lite has become a thing for all of us to one extent or another. Let us all deepen our faith together!

Words to live by,

*these are the promises that parents, godparents, and congregation say to God
when we baptize a child.*

Will you encourage this child to renounce the power of evil and to receive the freedom of new life in Christ?

Will you teach this child that they may be led to profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?

Do you promise, by the grace of God, to follow in the way of our Savior, to resist oppression and evil, to show love and justice, and to witness to the work and word of Jesus Christ as best you are able?

So you promise, according to the grace given you, to grow with this child in the Christian faith, to help him to be a faithful member of the church of Jesus Christ, by celebrating Christ's presence by furthering Christ mission in all the world, and by offering the nurture of the Christian church so that he may affirm his baptism?

***CONGREGATIONAL ASSENT**

Jesus Christ calls us to make disciples of all nations and to offer them the gift of grace in baptism. Do you, who witness and celebrate this sacrament, promise your love, support, and care to the child about to be baptized, as he lives and grows in Christ?

We promise our love, support, and care.

It is time to call out Christian Lite for what it is. A collective failure to keep our promises to God. The distinction between being Christian and Christian Lite must be made clear for the sake of our children. There is living true to our faith which provides us such a wonderful foundation for our life and gives so much joy as we share the love Christ puts in our heart and then there is Christian Lite. We know the difference. Let us all collectively turn away from Christian Lite and move into the deep powerful faith God is calling us into.

With Love!

Pastor



*Celebrating a Beautiful Christmas Season
with the Children's Christmas Play and The Christmas Cantata*



Christkindlmarkt & Quilt Show by Joyce Kuergeleis

It was another remarkable year for St John United Church of Christ Christkindlmarkt & Quilt Show.

For those involved in coordinating this event, we start in Sept/Oct, contacting crafters/vendors and brainstorming how to make this year better than the year(s) before. And it seems every year we find ourselves thinking or even saying, "What were we thinking?" but every year it all comes together and may I say better than the previous year, if only by a smidge but better never-the-less.

With the quilt show, Sharon Glessner and Cathy Hoffmann are in charge, and every year it is such a great feeling to walk into our beautiful stone church and see the display of colorful quilts draped over every pew. In addition, there is also a display of what they once referred to as 'fancy work,' which is handmade doilies, embroidery, etc. The quilt show is free admittance with a free-will donation basket. This year the donations raised quite a total, which was put toward our adopted Christmas families. Thank you to all that took the time to bring their treasured quilts for display, to the folks that added funds to the free-will offering basket, and to everyone that helped in one way or another with the quilt display.

Thank you to Patti Brandt, Barb Wischmeyer, Nancy Voelker, & Joyce Kuergeleis for the many hours put into organizing the Christkindlmarkt. So many folks stepped up to help pull this all together; we just can't name everyone, but all the help is so appreciated.

Our Christkindlmarkt filled our church hall, and I do mean filled! Both floors were loaded with crafters/vendors with a wide variety of merchandise. We try to stay with a German theme since Christkindlmarkt is a German tradition. Therefore, we had various displays of German traditions throughout the hall and free Kinderpunsch for all to sample.

Thank you to our crafters/vendors for being a part of our Christkindlmarkt!

Thank you to those that helped in any way possible in getting this event to the finish line.

Thank you to the many who donated hard-earned cash to help make it a good Christmas for our adopted families.

ALL the money raised with this event goes toward purchasing gifts for needy local families we adopt at Christmas.

St. John's UCC Church Council Minutes - December 12, 2022

President Christy Muertz called the meeting to order. Those attending were Lisa Schwarze, Sharon Bergheger, Shirley Stafford, Christy Muertz, Cheri Langsdorf, Mark Rey, Sandy Tutka, Linda Schmidt and Pastor Poole. Pastor opened with a prayer.

November 14, 2022 Meeting Minutes: Lisa Schwarze made a motion to accept the minutes and Shirley Stafford seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Bills/Timecards: Pastor's Expense: Linda Schmidt made the motion to accept all reports listed, seconded by Cheri Langsdorf and it carried.

Pastor's Report: He is pleased the members are getting in the routine of attending church more regularly.

OLD BUSINESS

Sound System: We are still waiting on one last piece, a mixer, that will make the system complete. We have received several compliments on the clarity of the bell tower speakers.

Parsonage Roof: Work will begin Wednesday.

Nominating Committee: Three individuals have agreed to serve as council members and elder.

NEW BUSINESS

Paper Shredder: A small paper shredder is needed in the church office. Approval was given to spend up to \$100 on a motion made by Linda Schmidt and seconded by Sharon Bergheger. Motion carried.

Plaster Repair in Bell Tower: Cheri Langsdorf made a motion, seconded by Lisa Schwarze to have Chris Muertz repair the plaster in the bell tower which is estimated to cost \$350. Motion carried.

Confirmation going ahead to be a 2-year Program for 7th and 8th graders: A motion was made by Lisa Schwarze, seconded by Cheri Langsdorf to move to a 2-year program for Confirmation with the next class. Motion carried.

Annual Meeting: The Annual Congregational meeting will be January 29, 2023.

Cheri Langsdorf made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Lisa Schwarze seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer

Linda Schmidt, Secretary

Scholarship Committee

Scholarship Committee is accepting applications from our high school students graduating this spring. Applications are due Sunday, April 16 and can be found online or contact a committee member.

Visitor Report

Beginning Balance - \$ 300.44
Ending Balance - \$300.44

Sunday School - Savings Account

Beginning Balance - \$6730.64
Ending Balance - \$6730.64

Sunday School – Checking Account

Beginning Balance - \$1357.77
Income - \$35.00
Offering - \$35.00

Expenses - \$66.00
Children's International - \$66.00
Ending Balance - \$1326.77

Faye Birk, Treasurer

2023 Lenten Schedule - Come To the Table!

We will be serving a meal before every Lenten Service.

The theme is Come To The Table, the place where all are welcome and love is shared through the simple pleasure of sharing a meal.

Lenten Services Topic
Deepening Our Faith Together

March 1st: Why Deepen Your Faith?

March 8nd: What's Love Got to do with It?

March 15th: Why is going to church necessary?

March 22nd: Why does giving of my time, talents and treasure a thing?

March 29th: Why the Blood of Christ? (**To be held at Zion UCC 4202 Kaskaskia Rd, Waterloo, IL**)

Thank You Received from Sheryl Prange

Dear Friends,

I want to express my deepest appreciation for your love and support this past year during Merrill's illness and passing. Your prayers, phone calls, cards and visits were so important to both of us. Thanks, also, for the food that was brought, giving me more time to care for Merrill.

Special thanks to Pastor Poole for the visits and prayers, and for the very thoughtful funeral service, and to the Women's Fellowship for serving the lunch.

Words aren't enough to express my gratitude for everything that was done in supporting us.

Sheryl Prange

Upcoming Events

- Adult Bible Study meets Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. in the Hall.
- Women's Fellowship Meeting: February 2, 12:00 p.m.
- Men's Group Meeting: February 5, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Enjoy a meal together of BBQ ribs. Topic of the meeting will be solar power for the hall and parsonage.
- Growing Globally: February 5, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Learn how you can be a part of the solution to end world hunger. All are invited to attend an informal gathering with Region 5 churches.
- Fastnacht is February 21. Serving will be 5:00 - 7:30. Tickets can be purchased through the church's website with a credit or debit card, or in person with Cathy Hoffmann via cash or check. (See enclosed flyer for full details.)
- Ash Wednesday is February 22.
- Pew Sisters will meet on February 27 at 6:30 p.m. at Sue Taylor's house.

News and Notes

Sympathy:

- *To Nancy Schilling and Family on the passing of Marvin.*

Special Birthdays:

- Bob Edler will celebrate his 69th birthday on January 4.
- Lyle Schwarze will celebrate his 68th birthday on January 14.
- Nancy Reed celebrates her 77th birthday on January 16.
- Maxine Steingrubey turns 99 years young on January 17!
- Faye Birk will celebrate her 69th birthday on January 21.
- Joyce Kurgeleis will celebrate her 73rd birthday on January 25.
- Paula Hoefft celebrates her 68th birthday on January 26.
- Trudi Rohlffing celebrates her platinum jubilee birthday on January 28.
- Darlene Yancey turns 89 years young on January 29.
- Judy Edler celebrates her 67th birthday on January 31.
- Dorothy Mueller celebrates her 76th birthday on February 3.
- Jerry Johner turns 83 on February 6, while Gale Branson turns 66 the same day.
- Dennis Trost celebrates his 73rd birthday on February 16.
- Allen Stafford turns 71 on February 17.
- Gene Rohlffing turns 60 on February 18.
- Dave Henerfauth celebrates his 75th birthday on February 19.
- Glenn Voelker (78), Freeman Borcharding (75), and Anita Muertz (74) all celebrate birthdays on February 23.

Special Anniversaries:

- Brian and Brenda Johnson will celebrate their 51st wedding anniversary on 15.
- Allen and Shirley Stafford will celebrate 53 years of marriage on February 22.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO....

<i>Bob Edler</i>	<i>Jan. 4</i>
<i>Tina Buchanan</i>	<i>Jan. 4</i>
<i>Andrew Stafford</i>	<i>Jan. 5</i>
<i>Rebecca (Becky) Coats</i>	<i>Jan. 8</i>
<i>Alisha Stafford</i>	<i>Jan. 8</i>
<i>Amanda Rusteberg</i>	<i>Jan. 9</i>
<i>Michael Schultheis</i>	<i>Jan. 10</i>
<i>William Manning</i>	<i>Jan. 10</i>
<i>Justin Boman</i>	<i>Jan. 11</i>
<i>Danny Hoffmann</i>	<i>Jan. 12</i>
<i>Aaron Brigance</i>	<i>Jan. 12</i>
<i>Lyle Schwarze</i>	<i>Jan. 14</i>
<i>Justin Rohlffing</i>	<i>Jan. 14</i>
<i>Jennifer Faus</i>	<i>Jan. 14</i>
<i>Samantha Boman</i>	<i>Jan. 14</i>
<i>Ellis Kruse</i>	<i>Jan. 14</i>
<i>Cameron Knobloch</i>	<i>Jan. 14</i>
<i>Bradley Wilson</i>	<i>Jan. 15</i>
<i>Nancy Reed</i>	<i>Jan. 16</i>
<i>Rigby Whitlock</i>	<i>Jan. 16</i>
<i>Maxine Steingrubey</i>	<i>Jan. 17</i>
<i>Jeremy Hill</i>	<i>Jan. 17</i>
<i>Barb Stafford</i>	<i>Jan. 19</i>
<i>Reid Matzenbacher</i>	<i>Jan. 19</i>
<i>Brenda Rey</i>	<i>Jan. 20</i>
<i>Faye Birk</i>	<i>Jan. 21</i>
<i>Debbie Eckart</i>	<i>Jan. 22</i>
<i>Jessica Liefer</i>	<i>Jan. 22</i>
<i>Luke Edler</i>	<i>Jan. 22</i>
<i>Pam Roseman</i>	<i>Jan. 22</i>
<i>Hudson Brandt</i>	<i>Jan. 22</i>
<i>Randy Hicks</i>	<i>Jan. 23</i>
<i>Michael Leber</i>	<i>Jan. 24</i>
<i>Arthur Rusteberg</i>	<i>Jan. 24</i>
<i>Sarah Schmitz</i>	<i>Jan. 24</i>
<i>Elena Hurst</i>	<i>Jan..24</i>
<i>Scarlett Hurst</i>	<i>Jan. 24</i>
<i>Joyce Kuergeleis</i>	<i>Jan. 25</i>

Jonathon Liefer	Jan. 25
Rylee Rosenkranz	Jan. 25
Jon Matzenbacher	Jan. 26
Paula Hoeffft	Jan. 26
Amanda Braun	Jan.26
Garrett Stitzel	Jan. 27
Trudi Rohlfing	Jan. 28
Darlene Yancey	Jan. 29
Linda Hirsch	Jan. 29
Monty Jackson	Jan. 29
Kyle Andres	Jan. 29
Isabella Hicks	Jan. 30
Judy Edler	Jan. 31
Rowan Schilling	Jan. 31
Carrie Turner	Feb. 1
Melissa Mothershead	Feb. 1
Laura Ann Wilson	Feb. 2
Dorothy Mueller	Feb. 3
Aaron Voelker	Feb. 3
Darren Knobloch	Feb. 4
Isaac Larson	Feb. 4
Theodore Klinkhardt	Feb. 4
Wade Goldschmidt	Feb. 6
Jerry Johner	Feb. 6
Susan (Gale) Branson	Feb. 6
Doug Schilling	Feb. 7
Olivia Hicks	Feb. 8
Rita Hoffmann	Feb. 9
Easton Birk	Feb. 9
Quinn Brigance	Feb. 10
Kimberly Esker	Feb. 11
Ava Hoffmann	Feb. 11
Crickett Johnson	Feb. 12
Klaire Wittenbrink	Feb. 12
Caroline Mueller	Feb. 13
Vicki Taake	Feb. 13
Amanda Schweigert	Feb. 15
Dennis Trost	Feb 16
Allen Stafford	Feb 17
Lauren Schellhardt	Feb 17
Gene Rohlfing	Feb 18
Sydney Hicks	Feb 18
Sebastian Nilges	Feb 18
Sophia Nilges	Feb 18
Dave Henerfauth	Feb 19
Emily Richeson	Feb 19
Delores Guetterman	Feb 20
Greg Floarke	Feb 20
Tim Henerfauth	Feb 22

Derek Knoll	Feb 22
Glenn Voelker	Feb 23
Freeman Borcharding	Feb 23
Anita Muertz	Feb 23
Paul Hill	Feb 24
Jason Dilley	Feb 24
Jeff Williams	Feb 25
Kate Mueller	Feb 25
Lucas Blackwell	Feb 25
Millie Liefer	Feb 25
Ally Melching	Feb 26
Joseph Stirnaman	Feb 26
Melanie Russo	Feb 27
Zailey Levin	Feb 27
Grace Wischmeyer	Feb 27
Brad Juelfs	Feb 28
Chris Koester	Feb 28

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO...

Paul & Wendy Hill	Jan. 4
Brian & Brenda Johnson	Jan. 15
Don & Ellen Edler	Feb. 2
Gene & Amy Rohlfing	Feb 16
Jay & Lesa Mueller	Feb 21
Allen & Shirley Stafford	Feb 22
Noah & Jenny Klinkhardt	Feb 29

Acolyte Schedule:

February

5 - Ashlyn Crouch & Landon Johnson
 12 - Owen Carron & Dallen Edler
 19 - Lilly Carron & Jackie Keller
 26 - Kylee Muertz & Drake Coats

March

5 - Rowan Schilling & Caden Huddleston
 12 - Maddie Huddleston & Chloe Carron
 19 - Evan Hill & Tanner Rosenkranz
 26 - Lucas Blackwell & Cody Schmitz

Fastnacht

Fat Tuesday – German Style



February 21, 2023

5:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.



Sausage & Pancake Supper

St. John UCC, Maeystown – Fellowship Hall

Entertainment by
**The Waterloo
German Band**
(5 p.m. - 7 p.m.)

Adults	\$12.00
Children 6-12	\$6.00
Children under 6	FREE



Go Grebbling!

Children- dress in costume and go door to door to collect donuts, then come back to win votes in the costume contest!
Starts at 5:00 in front of Church.

Advance Tickets can be purchased online via credit or debit card on the church's website at www.maeystownucc.org/store/p6/Fastnacht_Tickets.html OR in person via cash or check by contacting Cathy Hoffmann.



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Send email updates, photos & group descriptions to maestownucc@gmail.com

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Website: maestownucc.org

pastorpoole123@gmail.com

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