



# ST. JOHN

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MAEYSTOWN, ILLINOIS

***The Visitor***

**March - 2025**

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## Pastor's Reflection

### Bring on the Light!

This Sunday is **Transfiguration Sunday!**

Jesus is up on the mountain, and suddenly, he is with Moses and Elijah, and he shines with a dazzling white light. You and I are no strangers to the light! But notice how elusive the light is. How quickly it can seem like a strange idea that escapes us. Darkness does not have to work at it. It finds its way into our lives with no effort. When I am in the dark, I don't think to myself, "I am in the dark," I am simply not in the light. To talk about the light when it is absent from me sounds like a bunch of weird religious nonsense. We justify our position; after all, there is plenty to be upset about and plenty to not be full of joy or light about. The logical thing to do is to put your head down and plow through the day. Don't look up until you get through it. We can go days, weeks, months, and sometimes years of this way of living to get through it, finding an absolute absence of joy or light. This reality of being in the darkness is not unique to us as individuals. It is a universal struggle for all humanity. Which makes your ability to find the light so essential. For to be the light, you must first find the light.

*Luke 11:34-35*

*34 Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are healthy, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are unhealthy, your body also is full of darkness.*

*35 See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness.*

These words by the apostle Luke may not bring you comfort but acknowledge the age-old battle of the internal struggle between the dark and light in our own body. Darkness will be waiting for you; it comes in the form of words that lead to ideas of hopelessness. To be clear, darkness lives not in the truth of the hardships we face but in the false narratives of the language we speak. Feelings of darkness or a direct correlation with the internal and external dialog we have with ourselves and those in our lives. A language born not of ourselves but breathed in like pollution that permeates the air we breathe. Pollution from our TV's, pollution from the conversations we have with others that outline the problems of the world we live in. Conversations about how it was once better than today. You get the picture. But we are called to not be of this world, in it, yes, but not of it.

The light, on the other hand, is like a partner that requires our attention. Once noticed and appreciated, it grows exponentially.

*John 1:5*

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

*John 8:12*

*"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

Do not hesitate to pursue the light like a partner. Think of the light like a dear friend; give to this relationship your heart. This relationship is with no other than your Lord. The Lord is in the faces of those you love; the Lord is the sun that fills the sky and the water that swells the creek. The Lord is waiting for you to call out in the morning to invite him into your day. He will not come without your heartfelt invitation. Open your heart and invite in the light and love of our Lord; look for it, feel it, and abide in it. Let nothing separate you from it! The Apostle Paul puts the battle between being in the light and love of Christ so eloquently and the darkness of the world.

*Romans 8:36- 39*

<sup>36</sup>As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." <sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Such powerful words, beautiful words that speak of the darkness but also the light that overtakes all forces. The love we abide in our Lord is beautiful; it brings us joy and a profound hope for our future that springs forth a truth that resonates with our soul. We are the light as we abide in the light. Wake up to this daily challenge and arm yourself with the love of Christ. Seek the light until it is all you see. You see it in the faces of the strangers you meet. You see it in the faces you share the breakfast table with. You see it in those in the pews on Sunday morning. You feel it in the steps you take and the air you breathe; you celebrate in the very cells of your body as each molecule is being called into the light of God's call to them. We share in the Truth that the world cannot see, but we see! It is our truth and we live it!

Blessings, Pastor

### **Church Council Minutes – January 13, 2025**

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

**Review and Approval of Minutes from December 9, 2024 Council Meeting and December 22, 2024 Congregational Meeting** - The minutes from the December meetings were reviewed. There being no further corrections a motion was made by Cheri Langsdorf and seconded by Amy Rohlfing 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 Fay Ross and seconded by Debbie Eckart to accept the reports as presented. Motion carried.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

##### **Solar Power Update**

- Pastor has a meeting with the solar power tax advisor on January 15<sup>th</sup> to setup the federal tax credit.

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

- Pam Muertz has secured additional bids. The council will review the four bids and be prepared to discuss at the next council meeting. Mark Rey is also securing a bid for seamless gutter.

##### **Pine Forest Arborist**

- Debbie Eckart is looking into an additional arborist.

##### **Furnace and AC Replacement**

- Furnace installation is scheduled to begin on January 14<sup>th</sup>.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Annual Meeting Outline**

- The council reviewed the annual meeting outline.

### **Carpet for the Parsonage**

- Pastor will place a notice in the bulletin regarding replacement of the parsonage carpet. The Maher Trust wants to pay for the replacement, estimated at \$7,000. The replacement will need to be approved by the congregation.

### **Generator at the Church Hall**

- Drew shared that the Church Hall is a designated community shelter. The fire department has a portable generator that could be used at the hall in the event of an electric outage. It would cost approximately \$300 to wire the hall for connection to the generator. A motion was made by Cheri Langsdorf and seconded by Fay Ross to authorize Drew Watts to wire the hall and spend up to \$300 in materials. Motion carried.

## **PASTOR'S REPORT**

- Pastor shared that things are going very well at the church. Three goals for 2025 are to develop a maintenance committee, media team, and a senior team.

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

Susan Koesterer, Secretary

## **Special Church Council Meeting – January 26, 2025**

The church council met after the annual meeting to determine the 2025 officers. Those in attendance were Drew Watts, Susan Koesterer, Amy Rohlfing, Ron Richeson, Fay Ross, Debbie Eckart, and Jim Maurer. Cheri Landsdorf, Mark Rey, Amy Juelfs, and Brian Edler were absent.

The following church council members have agreed to serve as officers in 2025:

Amy Rohlfing – President  
Jim Maurer – Vice President  
Susan Koesterer - Secretary

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer led by Pastor Poole.

Susan Koesterer, Secretary

## **Women's Fellowship**

January 2, 2025 Women's Fellowship meeting was called to order by President Sue Taylor. Pastor opened with a prayer. There were 13 members plus Pastor and Tim in attendance.

Sue gave the treasurer's report since Connie was not present. \$5118.49 was the December 31st balance. Barb and Gail made the motion to accept and motion carried.

Ellen read the Secretary's report from November. Sharon G. and Joyce made the motion to accept and motion carried.

Pastor's discussion was about favorite memories of coming to church when we were young. He is trying to help make everyone feel welcome and especially help the kids feel church is a safe place and to have fun and not be bullied and not have pressure put on them.

We collected \$136.00 donations from the quilt show.

The vendor show was a success again this year and thanks were given to Joyce who decorated and brightened the back part of the hall in the basement. A food truck was suggested to be added to the vendors so the vendors could get a bite to eat during the show and not have to leave their booths.

The money from the table sales at the Christkindlmarkt was enough to buy gifts for 2 families with a total of 3 kids.

The church and hall decorating were a big success with all the people who stayed to help decorate after church. Thanks to all who helped. The church and hall looked beautiful.

Sue had contacted Operation Food Search about the coat drive that we will be doing in October and November. All the coats need to be clean and repaired and put in garbage bags. All sizes are appreciated. Nancy S and Faye agreed to contact Kinder Cottage and see if they have a need for these items too and just head up the collection.

The outreach team will meet in January to come up with ideas as to how to get more ladies involved with the Women's Fellowship.

Sue passed around copies of the By-Laws and Constitution she has come up with and everyone got a copy to read and discuss next meeting.

A motion was made by Faye and Nancy S to donate \$500.00 to the church for the Camp Fund. Motion carried.

Fastnacht is March 4<sup>th</sup> and the raffle tickets need to be printed. Discussion was had as to what to raffle off. Joyce said she would donate a night at her Maeystown house and someone suggested contacting Hank and Lillies to go with it. Munie tickets, Fox tickets, and Cardinal tickets were all discussed. We will need these items finalized by the next meeting. Sharon G volunteered to print the tickets.

Happy birthday was sung for December and January birthdays. Joyce and Nancy S made the motion to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer

Ellen Edler Secretary

## **This and That.....**

### **Upcoming Events:**

- Fastnacht is Tuesday, March 4. See enclosed flyer for more information.
- Grebbling will be held on March 4 in conjunction with Fastnacht. Meet in front of the church at 5:00 p.m. in your costume.

**Special  
Announcement:  
Doughnuts are  
needed for  
Fastnacht.**



### **Birthday Shoutouts:**

- 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.
- Robert Schmidt will turn 79 on March 17.
- Melba Asselmeier will turn a fabulous 96 years young on March 18.
- Karen Prange turns 67 on March 25.
- Rodney Morwich celebrates 60 years on March 29.
- Glenn Woodcock will turn 84 on April 3.
- John Hoefft will turn 77 on April 8.
- Janet Trost will celebrate her 73rd on April 10.
- Dorothy Matzenbacher will turn 88 on April 12.
- Sharon Bergheger will celebrate her 70th birthday on April 14.
- Dee Ann Trost will have her 80th on April 15.

**Special Anniversaries:**

- Rodney & Debbie Eckart will celebrate 44 years of marriage on March 21.
- Jerry & Peg Johner will celebrate their 62nd wedding anniversary on March 25.
- Bob & Judy Edler will celebrate 46 years of marriage on March 31.
- Allyn & Trudi Rohlfing will celebrate 49 years of marriage on April 10.
- Mark & Susan Hoffmann will celebrate their 41st wedding anniversary on April 14.

**Thank You Note:**

Dear Pastor Poole and the Food Ministry Team,

We are deeply grateful for your commitment and generosity in serving our families today. Your dedication to this ministry is a true blessing, offering nourishment and love to a community that faces significant food insecurity and limited access to resources.

What you do each month is invaluable, bringing hope and support to those who need it most. On behalf of our children and families, we extend our heartfelt thanks for your kindness and service.

May God continue to bless you abundantly as you bless others.

With sincere appreciation,  
Aimee Hart, Executive Director

**Prayer List:**

- Keep Gladys and the family of Ray Thies in your prayers. Ray is with the Lord Heaven.
- Keep Ed and Mia VanZandt in your prayers as they suffer the loss of their son, Eddie.
- Please keep Alysia Esker's newborn baby in your prayers. Silas Ray; his heart surgery went well! He is now home!
- Please keep Linda Sutter in your prayers. She is in the nursing home recovering.
- Keep Ginny Borcharding as she recovers from multiple health issues.
- Keep John Bueschel in your prayers as he is being tested for some serious health issues.
- Keep Joyce Kuergeleis in your prayers as she continues her treatments.
- Chris Melliere has been released from the hospital and is now in rehab.

- Lynn Moore as she undergoes a major heart surgery and her husband Russel.
- 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.
- Mona Mothershead is receiving treatments for her cancer.
- Dennis Knobloch as he continues to get stronger every day.
- Mary Ann Lutz, Julie Birk's aunt, is needing a Kidney Transplant.
- Kaylee is getting stronger every day but still needs our prayers.
- Tim Branson in his battle with cancer.

**The Visitor Report:**

Beginning Balance - \$763.74

Income – 25.00

Ross & Dorothy Mueller - \$25.00

Expenses - \$141.09

US. Postmaster - \$141.09

Ending Balance - \$647.65

Thank your Ross & Dorothy for your generous donation!!!! Faye Birk, Treasurer

**Sunday School – Checking Account**

Beginning Balance – 254.87

Income - \$583.00

Offering - \$63.00

Sue Taylor – Pulled Pork - \$20.00

Nancy Schilling - \$500.00

Expenses – \$244.78

Anna Massie – St. John's Day-\$192.21/Santa-\$52.57

Ending Balance - \$593.09

**Sunday School – Savings Account**

Beginning Balance - \$4941.27

Income - \$1.39

Interest - \$1.39

Expense - \$0.00

Ending Balance - \$4942.66

Faye Birk, Treasurer

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO**

Joan Esker	Mar. 1
George Green	Mar. 2
Susan Koesterer	Mar. 3
Adam Prange	Mar. 3

Emily Rusteberg	Mar. 3
Brooke Dawsyn Knobloch	Mar. 3
Elisa Marie Horn	Mar. 4
Mabel Louise Jensen	Mar. 5
Jeff Edward Roy	Mar. 6
Gracie Allen	Mar. 6
Marlee Rose Melching	Mar. 7
Charles Ray Eckerty	Mar. 9
Emily Michele Kruse	Mar. 9
Catherine Hoffmann	Mar. 10
Charles Richeson	Mar. 10
Jeanette McClellan	Mar. 11
Sheryl Prange	Mar. 11
Carrie Grueninger	Mar. 11
Alaina Lawrence	Mar. 12
Mark Hoffmann	Mar. 14
Allyn Rohlring	Mar. 15
Dan Gilbert	Mar. 15
Robert Schmidt	Mar. 17
Pastor Patrick Poole	Mar. 17
Melba Asselmeier	Mar. 18
Josie Ann Rusteberg	Mar. 18
Kamryn Barnes	Mar. 19
Juanita Roland	Mar. 20
Stephanie Tyberendt	Mar. 20
Lisa Carron	Mar. 21
Bradley Philip Horn	Mar. 21
Owen Steven Prange	Mar. 21
Katie Morwick	Mar. 22
Megan Morwick	Mar. 22
Joe Floyd Niebruegge	Mar. 22
Matthew Rippelmeyer	Mar. 22
Eva Jean Floarke	Mar. 23
Morgan Schmitz	Mar. 23
Tim Burns	Mar. 23
Cole Juelfs	Mar. 24
Karen Prange	Mar. 25
Susan Richeson	Mar. 25
Larry Henson	Mar. 27
Aaron Prange	Mar. 27
Everett Charles Kruse	Mar. 27
Kelly Hoefft	Mar. 28
Lucas Smothers	Mar. 28
Rodney Morwick	Mar. 29
Chris Voelker	Mar. 29
Becky Schaefer	Mar. 30
Michelle Burns	Mar. 30
Reagan Landen Johnson	Mar. 31
Heather Elaine Wild	Apr. 2
Glenn Woodcock	Apr. 3
Kaitlyn Andres	Apr. 3
Nikki Asselmeier	Apr. 4
Matthew Schellhardt	Apr. 4
Kathryn Remick	Apr. 4
Ashlyn Crouch	Apr. 5

Aven Emily Kennedy	Apr. 5
Abriale Lee Smith	Apr/ 6
Andrew Schaefer	Apr. 6
Abriale Lee Smith	Apr. 6
Otis Wayne Hines	Apr. 6
Carla Feldmeier	Apr. 7
John Hoefft	Apr. 8
Courtney Hoffmann	Apr. 9
Karrin Larson	Apr. 9
Morgan Daniel Hoffmann	Apr. 9
Charles (Chuck) Schaefer	Apr. 10
Janet Trost	Apr. 10
Ashley Melvin	Apr. 10
Logan Matthew Albat	Apr. 10
Rilynn Grace Heidenreich	Apr. 11
Amelia Louise Hoffmann	Apr. 11
Dorothy Matzenbacher	Apr. 12
Kelly Ann Mathews	Apr. 12
Henry Alexander Knoll	Apr. 12
Logan Schaefer	Apr. 12
Stacy Brigance	Apr. 13
Sharon Bergheger	Apr. 14
DeeAnn Trost	Apr. 15

**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO**

Lenny & Karen Schwarze	Mar. 11
Jim & Lisa Maurer	Mar. 14
Rodney & Debbie Eckart	Mar. 21
Scott & Julie Upchurch	Mar. 23
Andrew & Oli Schaefer	Mar. 23
Keith & Sarah Schmitz	Mar. 24
Jerry & Peg Johner	Mar. 25
Ryan & Megan Kempf	Mar. 25
Bob & Judy Edler	Mar. 31
Josh & Emily Reinhardt	Apr. 2
Randy & Brandy Hicks	Apr. 5
Garrett & Elise Rohlring	Apr.
Jason & Sheri Dilley	Apr. 9
Luke & Alyssa Andres	Apr. 9
Allyn & Trudi Rohlring	Apr. 10
Tom & Stacy Schilling	Apr. 10
Ron & Susan Richeson	Apr. 11
Mark & Susan Hoffmann	Apr. 14

Think Spring



**St. John United Church of Christ**  
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[pastorpoole123@gmail.com](mailto:pastorpoole123@gmail.com)

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***Thought for the day***

Happiness comes when we stop complaining about troubles we have  
and offer thanks for all the troubles we don't have.