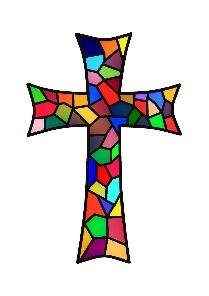
**“The Visitor”**

*The April 2022 Newsletter of*

*St. John United Church of Christ - Reading*



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**From the Pastor**

We are over half-way through our Lenten journey, and the joy of Easter and the celebration of our Risen Lord is almost upon us! How are you doing with rebuilding the walls of your faith? Have you been faithful to your Lenten promises to give up something, or add something, to your life? Are you taking a bit of time to reflect on the amazing gift that is forgiveness? The powerful promise of God to love us always? The incomprehensible joy of eternal life?

In these days with so much going on – personally and world-wide, it might seem difficult to find time to reflect, to repent, to repair your walls of faith. But this work, to strengthen our faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is truly the most important work that we can do. Because no matter what goes on in and around us, we can stand firm with strengthened walls of faith providing us the refuge and protection that our God promises to all who believe.

As we move closer to this defining point in our faith, the resurrection of God’s Son, I pray that Jesus’ loving presence be with you always, bringing you peace and chaos, comfort in fear and sadness, and strength in times of need.

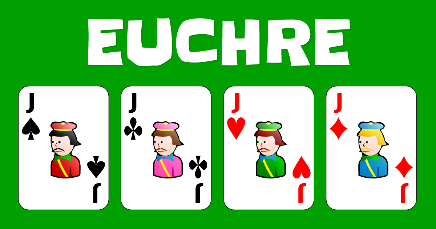
~Rev. Torie

**Board of Christian Nurture**

Join us for a free show of *The Iron Lady* at R.J. Cinema at Eastgate immediately following worship on Sunday, April 3rd. Although the movie has no cost, lunch following the movie will be out of pocket!

The Board of Christian Nurture is once again sponsoring the **Butler County Donut Trail**! This year, we have a whole year to visit the dozen or so donut shops up north! ☺ The March donut run will be on Tuesday, April 12th. Meet at the church at 8:30am and we’ll hit a few donut shops together and have a great time in the process. All are welcome!

Did you know that St. John offers two **Bible studies**? Perhaps reading scriptures more often is going to be part of your Lenten commitment – if so, please join us at 1:00pm every Tuesday at the church, at 6:30pm every Tuesday in the Mount View Terrace Common Room, or at 2:30pm on the first Wednesday of each month at Northgate Park.

Interested in playing **euchre**?? Every third Thursday, at 2:00pm, St. John will be hosting euchre games in the Fellowship Hall! Please feel free to join us!

Don’t forget to bring back your tubes for the **M&M Fundraiser**! Thank you in advance for your support!

\*\*The next Board of Christian Nurture meeting is April 20th at 5:00pm\*\*

**Board of Deacons**

The Deacons are sponsoring another **“local” mission trip** at good old St. John on April 1 and 2. Supper is at 5pm on Friday, followed by work and games. Breakfast is around 8am on Saturday, followed by some chores, some fun and lunch. Gary has a variety of things that need to be done. Come and join us for all or part of the “trip”.

On Thursday, April 28th from 1:00pm-6:30pm St. John UCC will be hosting a COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic in conjunction with Hamilton County Public Health. If you need a vaccination or a booster, check the Deacon’s Table for a flyer! Don’t forget to bring your proof of prior vaccination if applicable. They will also be handing out rapid COVID-19 tests if anyone is in need!

A picture containing outdoor

Description automatically generatedThe Deacons continue to sponsor our **weekly drive-up pantry**. No matter the weather, the Deacons and friends are there with smiling faces and warm hearts giving our bags of groceries, bread, vegetables, hats, gloves, and a variety of other donations. Rev. Torie is first to greet those who come to the pantry, she always has a warm hello and an offer to pray together. You are welcome to join us any Thursday from 4:30-5:30pm.

We appreciate your support in helping us serve our community in Christian Love.



There will be a **Missionary Sewing** meeting the first Wednesday of the month, April 6th at 10:00am! All are welcome!

**Board of Elders**

**Holy Week Schedule**

A picture containing text, cup

Description automatically generated*Thursday, April 14 –* Maundy Thursday – Worship service and light meal at 12:00pm

A picture containing whiteboard

Description automatically generated*Friday, April 15 –* Good Friday – Tenebrae service at 7:30pm

*Sunday, April 17* – Easter Sunday – Worship services held at 8:30am and 10:00am

**Let’s raise the roof when we sing on Easter Sunday!**

Do you like to think about hymn lyrics when you sing in the sanctuary? If so, you can find yourself giving voice to a meaningful message on Easter Sunday. Our opening hymn will be “Christ the Lord is Risen Today”. It is packed with power verses that turn solemn worship into jubilation.

Here are a couple of stanzas from that musical masterpiece, minus the refrain of “Alleluia!”:

Love’s redeeming work is done,

Fought the fight, the battle won,

Death in vain, forbids Him rise,

Christ has opened paradise.

Lives again our glorious King,

Where, O death, is now thy sting?

Once he died our souls to save,

Where thy victory, O grave?

Charles Wesley, an English leader of the Methodist movement, surely hit his stride when he penned those lyrics in 1739. He ultimately wrote more than 6,500 hymns before dying in 1788.

Let’s make a joyful noise unto the Lord and sing this one with full-throated vigor on Easter Sunday. The melody is sure and the words are pure, so we should have no problem really belting it out at good ol’ St. John UCC.

Our **AV Ministry** is continuing to work on providing a high-quality live and recorded worship service for the congregation, which will be especially important during these times of many choosing to remain safely at home to worship. Thank you to Steve Culver, Michele Bunke & Cyrus Newitt for their work with our AV Ministry.

We are looking for **Liturgists** to serve in 2022. If you can’t commit to the whole month, please sign up for a few weeks and share with someone else. Thank you for helping to lead worship in this most meaningful way. If you’ve not been a Liturgist before, don’t let that stop you – all are welcome, and training is provided!

**Greeters and Ushers** are also needed for 2022 – if you like to meet people, and don’t mind arriving at church at 9:30 am, please sign up to be a Greeter! Ushers are tasked with handing out the bulletin (or placing them in the pews!) and taking up the offering. Training provided, so let us know if you are willing to help.

The **Altar Flowers** are a $50 gift to the church that someone, or a team of someones, makes each month. The fresh flowers add to the beauty of our worship, and bring in a bit of God’s creation to our sanctuary. If you’d like to provide the Altar Flowers for one of the upcoming months, please let the Church Office know. It’s a lovely way to make a donation in memory or honor of someone, or simply to the glory of God!

**Rev. Torie** will be on vacation the weekend of April 24th, we are excited to welcome Rev. Dr. Daniel Meister to the pulpit in her stead.

\*\*The next Board of Elders meeting will be April 14th at 2:30pm\*\*

**Lectionary Page**

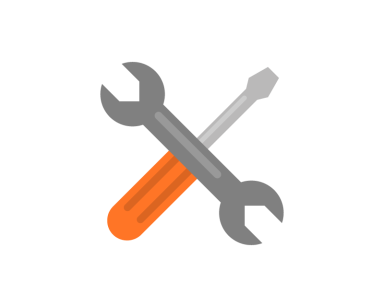
|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Scripture** | **Bible Study** | **Sermon** |
| Isaiah 43:16-21  Psalm 126  Philippians 3:4b-14  John 12:1-8 | March 29th | April 3th  ~5th Sunday in Lent~  *\*\*Communion\*\** |
| Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29  Luke 19:28-40  Isaiah 50:4-9a  Philippians 2:5-11 | April 5th | April 10th  ~6th Sunday in Lent~  *\*\*Communion\*\** |
| Acts 10:34-43  Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24  1 Corinthians 15:19-26  John 20:1-18 | April 12th | April 17th  ~Easter~  *\*\*Communion\*\** |
| Acts 5:27-32  Psalm 118:14-29  Revelations 1:4-8  John 20:19-31 | April 19th | April 24th  Guest Minister: Rev. Dr. Daniel Meister |
| Acts 9:1-6, 7-20  Psalm 30  Revelations 5:11-14  John 21:1-19 | April 26th | May 1st |

**Board of Property and Finance**

February: $2025 ☹ | Year-to-Date: $3822 ☺

Spring is quite glorious and our gardens are greening and blooming!! The Lenten Roses are blooming, along with the daffodils. The hyacinths are emerging along with the Bishop’s Weed, and the Saucer Magnolia trees are beginning to blossom. It will soon be quite colorful, aromatic and spectacular. Earlier we had some tree work completed in the gardens and we removed a declining Maple tree, trimmed a Maple and a Linden tree, and removed two stumps. With these changes we are considering planting a small pollinator/butterfly garden near the Little Library, and an evergreen tree that can be decorated for Christmas. There is also quite a bit of spring cleaning, pruning and mulching that needs to be done in the gardens on our next **Workship/Mission Trip Day**…

…which is on Friday and Saturday, April 1 & 2, (with a second Workship day on April 30th) and we will do all that garden work at that time, unless you want to jump in early and do some of it before then. We were hoping to have some volunteer help from the fraternity and sorority students from the University of Cincinnati, however that will not happen. There are still plenty of small projects that can be worked on both days such as the garden work, re-setting sunken pavers, carpet cleaning, window cleaning, and others. It will be another enjoyable event of food, fun, work and fellowship. Please come when you can and help us as we ready the church and grounds for our Easter celebration. More information will follow shortly.

A hearty thanks to **Rick Caudill** for installing new exterior aluminum window sills on our stained glass windows on both sides of the sanctuary. Many of the sills were deteriorated and needed replaced and Rick jumped in and supplied all the materials, tools and labor to complete the project. What a blessing to have such skilled and helpful members.

We have received several new **insurance proposals** and have enlisted the help of Randy Cutter to aid us in deciphering and understanding the insurance language, coverage and costs. We expect to make a decision shortly that will provide the coverage we need at a much more reasonable cost. Randy, the son of Bob and Virgie Cutter, grew up with the church and owns and runs the Cutter Insurance Agency, originally with his Dad.

After the approval by the congregation for the use of the Ruth Schnier gift, we are making final decisions on the selection of a roofing contractor to do our **roof replacement**, and hope to have that project completed before the end of the year. Also, our preferred stained glass restoration company informed us that they would not be able to work on our window until the year 2024! We don’t think that we could wait that long so they have graciously recommended a couple other resources that might be able to do the work earlier. Hopefully we can make a decision soon on that work also.

Peace and blessings and a Glorious Easter to all!! He is Risen!

\*\*The next board of Property & Finance Meeting is April 12th at 5:00pm\*\*

**Men’s Group**

The Men’s Group has resumed regular monthly meetings, typically on the 1st Monday of each month, at 6:00pm. A meal is provided, and we plan fundraisers and service projects for the church and community.

Men of the church, as well as friends of the church are encouraged to participate. There is strength in numbers and we gain strength and energy from each other!

Upcoming plans include:

* **Dart Night** & **Bed Making Service Project**: targeted for early 2022

This is a great time to get involved with the Men’s Group! Please contact Steve Culver (513-262-7471) with any questions!

**Member Outreach**

At a recent Men’s Group meeting, it was agreed to offer the following services to our church members:

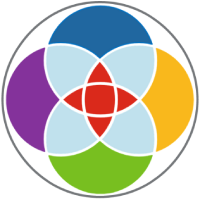
* **Handyman Services**: If you need any assistance with a handyman or clean-up type projects, please contact us. We will do our best to find a convenient time to assist.
* **Computers Looking for a Good Home**: Through a member’s resources, we have a number of gently used computers that are available for use. If you are in need of a Windows-based computer, please let us know and we can help with delivery and set-up.

Please contact: Gary Kurtz 513-446-5827 | Steve Culver 513-262-7471

\*\*The next Men’s Group Meeting is April 4th at 6:00pm\*\*



**The Heartland Conference**

Registration for **Summer Camp** at Templed Hills Camp and Retreat Center opened on January 3rd, 2022! If you are interested in registering for any of the camps this summer, visit heartlanducc.org/templed-hills/.

**Camps:**

June 12th-15th – Grands and Family (ages 4-12 w/grandparent/parent)

June 19th-25th – Music, Mime, Arts, Dance, Drama Camp (ages 7-18)

June 19th-25th – Just Camp! (ages 7-18)

June 26th-July 2nd – Sportscamp (ages 7-18)

July 6th-9th – Mini Just Camp (ages 7-13)

July 10th-16th – Choir Camp (ages 7-18)

July 13th-16th – Grands and Family (4-12 w/grandparent/parent)

**St. John United Church of Christ Regular Events**

Weekly Events:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Event** | **Day** | **Time** | **Location** |
| Handbell Choir Practice | Sunday | 9:00am | Sanctuary |
| Worship | Sunday | 10:00am | Sanctuary |
| Bible Study Afternoon | Tuesday | 1:00pm | Fellowship Hall |
| Bible Study Evening | Tuesday | 6:30pm | Mt. View Terrace |
| Chancel Choir Practice | Wednesday | 6:15pm | Choir Room |
| Feed My Sheep | Thursday | 4:30pm | Outside |
|  |  |  |  |

Monthly Events:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Event** | **Day** | **Time** | **Location** |
| Board of Christian Nurture | 3rd Wednesday | 5:00pm | Fellowship Hall |
| Board of Deacons | 1st Sunday | 11:00am | Fellowship Hall |
| Board of Elders | 2nd Thursday | 2:30pm | Fellowship Hall |
| Board of Property & Finance | 2nd Tuesday | 5:00pm | Fellowship Hall |
| Euchre | 3rd Thursday | 2:00pm | Fellowship Hall |
| Blood Pressure Sunday | Last Sunday | 11:00am | Nurse Goodheart’s office |
| Church Council | 3rd Thursday | 5:45pm | Fellowship Hall |
| Bible Study | 1st Wednesday | 2:30pm | NorthGate Park Retirement |
| Communion | 1st Sunday | 10:00am | Sanctuary |
| Missionary Sewing | 1st Wednesday | 10:00am | Fellowship Hall |
| Donut Trail | 2nd Tuesday | 8:30am | Church lobby |
| Lunch Bunch | 2nd Sunday | 11:00am | Various locations |
| Work-ship Day | Last Saturday | 8:00am | Church |
| Men’s Group | 1st Monday | 6:00pm | TBD |

**April Birthdays and Anniversaries**

**Birthdays**

Apr 2 Heidi Bothe

Apr 8 Wanda King

Apr 14 Vince Front

Apr 15 Rechelle Nicely

Apr 19 BJ Bothe

Apr 19 Ruthie Sanders

Apr. 25 Diane Forster

Apr 26 Howard Ficke

Apr 29 Mary Sue Geis

**Anniversaries**

Apr 1 Carol & Dave Hall

Apr 11 Jan & Paul Godwin

Apr 17 Bob & Virgie Cutter

Apr 29 Kathy & Steve Culver

