



St. John's United Church Of Christ

St. John's United Church of Christ
500 West Main Street, Lansdale Pa. 19446

Enlightener

February 2021 Vol. XLI, No. 02

St. John's Members and Friends,

As I near the end of my term as President of St. John's Church Council, I want to express my deep appreciation for the support and assistance of our members. When Reverend Sue asked if I would be willing to run for Vice President, my main concern was that, as a relatively new member since 2015, I did not know that many members in our congregation, nor did I know much of St. John's history. What I have now learned is how many of you do so many different jobs, which is why we are able to function so well, even during these unprecedented times. I have gotten to know, and become friends with, so many members. It is very rewarding.

In what is a true dichotomy, my term as Council President seems to have flown by, although the year itself has crawled. Despite the pandemic, we were able to accomplish some good things, thanks to all of you. One of the biggest accomplishments was the hiring of our new Minister of Music, Andrew Paulson. Thanks to the leadership of Liz Vanderburg and the Music Ministry Search Committee members, we used a detailed, thorough process to consider the many candidates who applied to be our Minister of Music. Just as we had narrowed down our list to three candidates, along came another applicant, who was past our deadline, but applied because his wife had just accepted a residency at CHOP. The committee decided to consider him anyway, and we were simply overwhelmed. After Andrew's audition, I think the entire committee looked at each other and said that he was the one. Somehow, God sent Andrew to us. He has been a great asset as we keep St. John's alive and thriving during these trying times.

We had other successes. The basket raffle was a huge success, thanks to the leadership of the Johnstons and the many volunteers who worked to make it happen. At the same time, we celebrated the well-earned retirement of our long-time Minister of Music, David Furniss, who provided music leadership during the early months of the pandemic before Andrew's arrival.

We had a great group of St. John's gardeners volunteer to take care of our gardens—so many that each one only had to cover one week during the growing season. The Educators, led by Pastor Addie, Reverend Dr. Kim Stryjak, and Mary Billy, developed great take-home kits for VBS and the Sunday School Carryout program for our youth. We started the Creation Stewards program, which has been delayed by our absence from physical church but will continue to grow. White Gift Sunday was another success, helping churches that are far less fortunate than us. And we had a great group of volunteers led by Judy Leslie and Sue Clemens plan for Reverend Sue's 40th anniversary at St. John's. Our goal was to make it memorable—and was it ever! We did this all while staying safe.

Most importantly, St. John's did not just survive, but I believe thrived, during the worst health crisis of our lifetime. Our amazing staff of Reverend Sue, Pastor Addie, Andrew Paulson, John Hendricks, Leroy Horst, and Lisa Delp came up with creative ways to keep our members connected. The way we adapted to the physical shutdown of our church is simply wondrous. Our audio services became a staple of our Sunday mornings, often "attended" by more worshipers than on a Sunday during regular times. The Wednesday chimes concerts were a great way for members who were able to gather safely for a short period of time to get together. John Hendricks kept us in touch through his photographs and Facebook posts. And the virtual music program was phenomenal. In the end, St. John's ended the year in good financial shape despite all the challenges. Thank you to all our great staff!

I am excited about our incoming Executive Board, led by Deb Dayton, Wendy O'Connor, Bob and Sandy Taylor, and Bill Leslie. Deb, like me, is relatively new to St. John's, while Wendy and Bill are long-term members. I remember last year the excitement Reverend Sue and I felt when Deb agreed to run for Vice President. Likewise, Reverend Sue called me immediately after Bill agreed to serve, telling me she had "good news." We are in good hands.

Before Sally and I joined St. John's, we had drifted away from God. I had recently retired and I was searching for something more meaningful in my life. Needless to say, St. John's has brought us back to God, and given more meaning to my life than I ever could have imagined. A few weeks ago, Pastor Addie spoke about that tricky word "blessed" in her sermon. We are not blessed to have material possessions, a good life, or even good friends. We are blessed when we are close to God. I am truly blessed. Thank you all for the privilege you have given me.

Don Atkiss

FEBRUARY 2021

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What's Happening in Church Council?

Financial Report: Sandy and Bob Taylor, Cotreasurers:

December was a good month for St. John's financially (December usually is, but this year who could be sure?). Entering the month we were behind year-to-date by \$40,667, but we ended the year with "only" an \$18,864 (or 3.5%) shortfall. That is comparable to our shortfall in 2017 and less than we had in 2015. Given that it was 2020, that is quite an accomplishment. Thanks to all of you who have supported St. John's throughout this difficult time.

Our 2020 commitment to "Our Church's Wider Mission" (OCWM) was \$46,460, or about \$3,872 a month. December contributions totaled \$4,336, leaving us \$2,811 short of our commitment. Our 2021 commitment to OCWM has been kept the same as it was in 2020.

Please feel free to share your questions or concerns with our Cotreasurers, Sandy and Bob Taylor.

Staff Reports:

Rev. Dr. Sue Bertollette, Senior Pastor:

Ash Wednesday is February 17. Plans are underway for the 5-week virtual Lenten Study beginning February 24. The topic will be *Racism: What it means to be antiracist and the challenges faced as followers of Christ*. More information will follow.

[continued at right]

The UCC National Organization published a statement regarding the attack on the Capitol (see ucc.org/ucc-national-leaders-condemn-insurrection-in-racist-takeover-of-the-u-s-capitol).

Rev. Addie Stong, Associate Pastor:

All 40 Advent Sunday School bags were distributed with positive responses. No bags were distributed in January. Plans are being made for Take-Out Connection for February through May.

Andrew Paulson, Minister of Music:

Andrew thanked all the choirs who participated in the December Artist Series and the Christmas Eve program. Virtual choirs have returned. The handbell choir will return for in-person rehearsals when it is deemed safe.

Abbie Lampe, Minister of Music for Children and Youth:

Virtual children's choir rehearsals have resumed. Abbie is hoping in May 2021 to produce part of the musical that was planned for May 2020.

Lisa Delp, Office Administrator:

During the last 30 days St. John's donated \$1,089 in gift cards and rent assistance.

Board Reports:

Elders

- Barbarann Probst will be the point person for Elders. Sue Clemens will assist.

Educators

- No report at this time.

Deacons

- Scott Vanderburg will be chair for Deacons.

Trustees

- The Lansdale water company requires all customers to have a backflow preventer to keep water from a facility from being pulled back into the public water system. This device is to be tested annually. St. John's backflow preventer is unable to be tested due to age. A proposal from I. T. Landes has been requested for replacement and testing.

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Old Business:

Remote microphone purchase

The new microphone was installed at a cost of \$1,988. Funds will come from the Music Ministry Fund (balance of \$9,100). Private donations toward the microphone currently total \$1,100.

In-Person worship update

Sue stated now is not the time to resume in-person worship due to the rate of infections in our area and state. If and when it appears it is a possibility, the Covid Planning Group will meet to discuss.

New Business:

2021 Council Affirmation

Deb Dayton will be Council President and Bill Leslie accepted the position of Vice-President. Council approved by consensus to accept the Council members due to lack of Congregational Dinner this year. Elections have been affirmed.

Changes to Council committee members

Council members were asked to add one-year to their term limit. Changes are:

Judy Leslie will step down due as Bill Leslie will be Vice-President.

Scott Vanderburg will chair Deacons. Barb MacMullen will remain on Deacons.

Updates to Chair, Secretary, and Finance positions will be sent to the Council Secretary.

OCWM Donation

St. John's commitment was \$2,811 short for 2020. In the past when this has happened, funds to make up the difference have come from the GEM Fund. A motion was passed by consensus to use \$2,811 from the GEM Fund to fulfill St. John's OCWM commitment for 2020.



Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Roger Wardlow, David Schaefer, Thelma Dowiak, and Rose Clayton, who passed away recently.

Chancel Flowers



Below you will find the chancel flower donation list for February 2021. Please review this list and contact the church office if you would like to remove, add, or update any information on the list.

Reminder ~ The requested donation for the chancel flower listing is \$25. Thank you!

February 7

In memory of Bud Moyer from his wife, Ruth, and family
In memory of Dick Yocum's February 9th birthday from his family

In memory of Barbara Wenner's February 10th birthday from her husband, Bill, and Shelly and Marissa Longcoy

February 14

In memory of David T. Evans's birthday from his daughter, Jeane, and Bob and Beth Fritz

In memory of Jean's Parents, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Moyer, from Jean and Tom Beggs

February 21

In memory of George W. Knipe from his grandchildren, John Skibbe III and Wendy Hunt

In memory of Corinne McNabb's birthday on February 22nd from her daughter, Linda, and Bill Siegel

In memory of Laureen S. Pesek's birthday on February 24th from her sister, Linda, and Bill Siegel

In memory of David Krail's birthday on February 26th from Debbie Krail and family

February 28

In memory of Bob Summers's February 28th birthday from Joan and Dan Gallagher and family

Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.

Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.



The upcoming Lenten Study will begin on February 24 and continue for five consecutive Wednesday evenings, concluding on March 24. The study will

take place via Zoom, from 7:30 to 8:45 each Wednesday evening, and will focus on addressing racism in our country, in our churches, and in our personal lives. We will be looking at what Scripture has to say about loving our neighbor as we love ourselves and treating others the way we want to be treated or, better yet, the way they want to be treated. Those wishing to participate are asked to contact the Church Office so they will be on the email list to receive the Zoom link and other important information pertaining to the Study. A recommended reading list will be provided.



Is Manna Still Taking Food Donations?

The answer is YES!

A growing number of our neighbors face food insecurity this winter. Manna on Main Street relies on donations to help meet grocery needs in our community. You may wish to donate in one of these ways:

- Monetary donations are the best way to support Manna. Donate online at mannaonmain.org/give-food/what-is-needed
- Donations of food and other grocery items may be dropped off at Manna. Please bring your donations to the receiving door marked "Food Drop Off" on the west side of the building. Place items on the cart inside the door. The best time to drop off a donation is Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 3 PM.
- A representative of St. John's Outreach Team will continue to receive Manna donations in the church parking lot (near the labyrinth) every Wednesday between noon and 12:30. Come on out and say "Hi." Bring your lunch, if you like, and also some food to donate to Manna.

For a complete list of items needed by Manna, go to mannaonmain.org/give-food/what-is-needed



Were You There?

Thirty Years Ago: Rev. Sue, David, The Revelations, and Genesis led the February 11 worship service at Wyncote Church Home.

Twenty-five Years Ago: The Rev. Earl Ball, Chaplain at Grand View Hospital, gave the sermon on February 5. His experiences gave us a different perspective on our shared beliefs.

Twenty Years Ago: St. John's Youth started planning for Youth Sunday by beginning the task of painting pictures on the walls of the Youth Room.

Fifteen Years Ago: Rather than giving up something for Lent, we were asked to help assemble health kits to aid in relief efforts for the recent tsunami in Asia.

Ten Years Ago: The Lenten Bible Study beginning February 24 had the theme "Lent: Letting Go, Not Giving Up."

Five Years Ago: Boy Scout Sunday was February 8, which was also the 105th Birthday of the Boy Scouts of America. The Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts were greeters for the service and hosted Social Hour that day as well.

One Year Ago: From News from the Pews: Amos noticed a quote lying on Rev. Sue's desk: "How we spend our days is... how we spend our lives. What we do with this hour, and that one, is what we are doing." These words, written by author Annie Dillard, tell us that what we make of our lives isn't primarily about one momentous event or one noticeable accomplishment, but rather about how we handle the mundane, routine "stuff" of everyday life. Do we view life as a precious gift or something to be taken for granted? Are disappointments and hardships things to be endured or opportunities for learning and growth?



Blanket Sunday February 14, 2021

Congregations around the world hold CWS Blanket offerings to live out a mission to serve God's people near and far. Your Blanket Sunday offering will help people in the United States and around the world who are struggling to survive natural disasters and political upheaval.

CWS distributes two types of blankets: heavyweight woolen and lightweight fleece. Recipients use the blankets

- *As insulated padding if they have to sleep on hard, cold surfaces*
- *As room dividers if they're staying in shelters and need a moment of privacy*
- *As bags to carry supplies if they must move from place to place*
- *As a warm and comforting cover when they sleep*

Your generous gift to CWS Blankets on February 14 will signal your love to families who are desperate for a healing embrace.

You will find your special envelope for the Blanket Sunday offering in your box of 2021 St. John's envelopes. Please place your offering in the locked mailbox next to the ramp door along with your regular Sunday offering.

**ARTICLES DUE FOR MARCH ISSUE
DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 14**

Leaders: Please provide articles for these coming events for the next *Enlightener* issue:

- ◇ Artist Series
- ◇ One Great Hour of Sharing
- ◇ Palm Sunday

All submissions must include name and phone number and be typed or printed. Submissions can be placed in the *Enlightener* bin in the Church Office (bottom bin) or emailed to erickinsey46@gmail.com. Please call Eric Kinsey at 215.513.2237 with questions.

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Lansdale, Pennsylvania 19446
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Summary of Last Month And YTD Income And Expense	Dec 2020	Jan-Dec 2020
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Counters Discrepancies	0.00	6.00
Current Tithes/Offerings	52,700.00	385,324.64
Church School Current	1,120.00	1,170.00
Event Income/Fundraisers	0.00	3,938.00
Flowers	500.00	2,395.00
Investment Income	0.00	5,890.00
Rental Income	2,250.00	28,815.00
Use of Building Income	0.00	1,388.00
Miscellaneous Unrestricted Income	189.00	1,437.26
Interest Income, Savings Accounts	0.98	22.52
Total Income	56,759.98	430,386.42
Gross Income	56,759.98	430,386.42
Expense		
Salaries and Benefits	33,406.20	413,605.18
Elders Expenses	0.00	3,040.48
Deacons Expenses	684.98	3,558.57
Educators Expenses	297.29	1,692.38
Trustees/Building Expenses	574.26	12,183.89
Building Operation Expenses	3,921.44	47,808.61
Operating Expenses	3,837.65	53,716.18
Miscellaneous Expenses	50.50	1,562.76
Total Expense	42,772.32	537,168.05
Net Ordinary Income	13,987.66	-106,781.63
Budgeted Transfers from Investments	7,817.33	87,917.76
Net Ordinary Income Plus Transfers	21,804.99	-18,863.87
Other Income/Expense		
Other Income		
Artist Series Income—Special	775.00	5,195.00
Benevolence Offerings	14,335.00	70,686.02
Special Accounts	10,136.00	65,855.68
AGM, Miscellaneous	1,596.00	6,973.00
Soup Sales	0.00	1,298.00
Total Other Income	26,842.00	150,007.70
Other Expense		
Benevolence Disbursements	6,299.00	66,926.92
Special Fund Expenditures	5,829.09	35,762.50
AGM	5,576.00	5,620.47
Artist Series Fund Expenditures	629.99	1,722.74
Immediate-Needs Expense	0.00	16,895.00
Total Other Expense	18,334.08	126,927.63
Net Other Income	8,507.92	23,080.07
Net Income	22,495.58	-83,701.56
Net Income Plus Transfers	30,312.91	4,216.40



NEWS FROM THE PEWS

As slowly as time seems to move during a pandemic, there is also a sense in which time moves so quickly we lose track of it. This little church mouse was looking at the St. John's calendar for 2021 (I do enjoy all the photos of church folks, past and present!) and realized—in just a few weeks we will be celebrating Ash Wednesday and entering the season of Lent, which means the annual Lenten Study will begin on Wednesday evening, February 24, and will continue for five weeks, ending on March 24.

Since I spend a fair amount of time scurrying around in Rev. Sue's study—both at church and in her home—I know she has been reading books about addressing racism in our country, in our churches, and in our personal lives, which will be the focus of this year's Study. Once again, the study will take place via Zoom, so folks far and wide will be able to participate safely from their homes or from wherever they may be on those five Wednesday evenings. During the Fall Bible Study, one participant joined the Zoom study while in the parking lot waiting to pick up his daughter from diving practice, another participant was in Hershey as she joined us, and several people who would not have ventured out to church in the evening were able to participate safely and comfortably from home.

I am proud to say this little church mouse has gotten pretty adept at dealing with Zoom meetings and other ways of communicating virtually, especially since staying connected with our St. John's family is so important to me. I have quietly observed Chancel Choir and Children's Choir rehearsals, and, most recently, this year's Confirmation Class meeting. Our five Confirmands—Bella, Chelsea, Lexi, Mitchell, and Ray—are really fun to watch and listen to, and thanks to all the time they have spent in front of computer screens learning virtually, they have these Zoom meetings mastered!

Yes, I do look forward to being back together at St. John's when it is safe for us to gather, and that day will come! In the meantime, I will wait for my chance to get the vaccine (okay, maybe this little church mouse will have to settle for watching you get the vaccine) and keep all of you in my prayers. Even though St. John's building is emptier than usual, I never feel lonely, because I know you are all within reach, and I love my St. John's family!

AMOS



In the Christian church, a period of penitential preparation for Easter.

In Western churches it begins on Ash Wednesday, six and a half weeks before Easter, and provides for a 40-day fast (Sundays are excluded) in deference to Jesus' fasting in the wilderness before he began his public ministry. In Eastern churches Lent begins on the Monday of the seventh week before Easter and ends on the Friday that is nine days before Easter. This 40-day "Great Lent" includes Saturdays and Sundays as relaxed fast days.

A period of preparation and fasting likely has been observed before the Easter festival since apostolic times, though the practice was not formalized until the First Council of Nicaea in 325 CE. It was a time of preparation of candidates for baptism and a time of penance for grievous sinners who were excluded from Communion and were preparing for their restoration. As a sign of their penitence, they wore sackcloth and were sprinkled with ashes. This form of public penance began to die out in the 9th century, and it became customary for all the faithful to be reminded of the need for penitence by receiving an imposition of ashes on their foreheads on the first day of Lent—hence the name Ash Wednesday. In the early centuries, fasting rules were strict, as they still are in Eastern churches. One meal a day was allowed in the evening, and meat, fish, eggs, and butter were forbidden. The Eastern church also restricts the use of wine, oil, and dairy products. In the West these fasting rules have gradually been relaxed. The strict law of fasting among Roman Catholics was dispensed with during World War II, and only Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are now kept as Lenten fast days. However, the emphasis on penitential practice and almsgiving remains, and many Catholics also observe a meatless fast on Fridays during Lent. In addition, Catholics and other Christians often choose to give up specific pleasures, such as sweets, alcohol, or social media, during Lent as a way to foster simplicity and self-control; many use their cravings or desires for these items as a reminder to pray and to refocus on spiritual matters.



2020-2021: Our 33rd Season

Join us for the final concert of the season!

**St. John Passion: Readings and Responses for Choir, Organ, and Congregation
Music Arranged by John Ferguson
Featuring the St. John's Chancel Choir**

**March 28th, 2021
4pm**

Streamed Live on St. John's Public Facebook Page and YouTube

Join us from the comfort of your own home for an afternoon of dramatic and moving music presented by the St. John's Chancel Choir. The stirring sounds of the Passion reading accompanied by emotional choral responses will invite you into the sacred journey of Holy Week. The concert will be streamed live on both St. John's Public Facebook Page and YouTube, and will be accessible at any time afterwards.

While the concert series may be virtual, your support is still needed!
Please consider becoming a patron of the St. John's Artist Series at any of the following levels:
__Benefactor (\$200+) __Sponsor (\$100-199) __Donor (\$50-99) __Friend (\$25-49)

Name as you would like it to appear in Artist Series Programs _____

Patrons of the 2020-2021 St. John's Artist Series

Benefactor

A Friend, Lynne Bartholomew, Sandy and Scott Brown, Grace and Mark Bruen, Dennis and Ruth Ellman, Suzanne and Don Franks, David Furniss, Ken and Bonnie Hales, Leroy and Linda Horst, Phil and Wendy Hunt, Anne and Eric Kinsey, Bill and Judy Leslie, Mark and Karen Methlie, Rick and Wendy O'Connor, Dan and Lillian Panachyda

Sponsor

Lorene Ahrens, Sue and Bob Bertolette, Marie Carota, Amy and Andy Faga, Bob and Jean Fehnel, Debby and Steve Hendricks, Marilyn and Lynn Hurley, Kim and Garen Paulson, Marcia Stacy, Robert and Sandra Taylor, Scott and Liz Vanderburg

Donor

Don and Nicole Groff, Susan and John Hendricks, Ruth Kinsey, Mary Lynne and Ray Snyder

Friend

Ruth Moyer, Pricilla Ponist

**Looking to view past Artist Series concerts from this season?
Visit st-johns-ucc.org/artist-series/ for links to the October and December 2020 events.**