

DIANA BUTLER BASS



FREEING JESUS

REDISCOVERING JESUS AS
FRIEND, TEACHER, SAVIOR, LORD,
WAY, and PRESENCE

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

Enlightener

February 2023 Vol. XLIII, No. 02

Join us for our Lenten Book conversation: *Freeing Jesus*, by Diana Butler Bass

"How can you still be a Christian?" This is the most common question Diana Butler Bass is asked today. It is a question many believers ponder as they wrestle with disappointment and disillusionment in their church and its leadership. But while many Christians have left their churches, they cannot leave their faith behind.

In ***Freeing Jesus***, Bass challenges the idea that Jesus can only be understood in static, one-dimensional ways and asks us to instead consider a life where Jesus grows with us and helps us through life's challenges in several capacities: as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence."¹ The book is available at major outlets, including Amazon, which lists several inexpensive used copies.

We will meet for six consecutive Wednesday evening sessions beginning March 1 at 7:00 p.m. in-person and on Zoom. Contact Pastor Dale if you have any questions or want to register your interest at ddavis@st-johns-ucc.org.

Rev. Dale

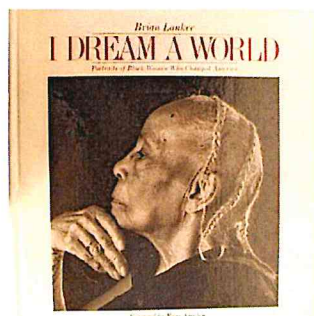
¹ Quoted from the Amazon website.



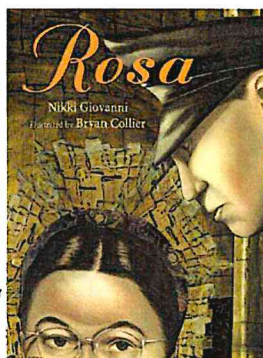
2023

Here are more of
Rev. Sue's
Favorites.

I Dream A World:
Portraits of Black
Women Who
Changed America
by Brian Lanker



Each of the subjects in *I Dream A World* overcame tremendous adversity. Their personal challenges, powerful journeys, and unwavering persistence offer inspiration for us all. While penning the foreword for the book, Maya Angelou observed, "These women regard us, understand us, gaze through each of us, into a beyond. The sameness of their gaze informs us that they will not be removed, that indeed although they are shaken, bruised, and uprooted, they are determined to remain."



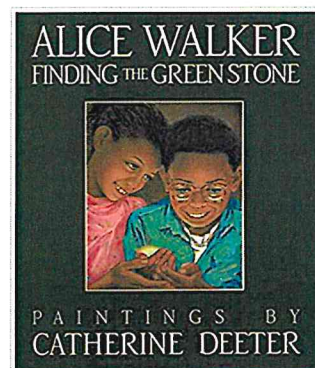
Rosa
by Nikki Giovanni

Rosa was the winner of both the Coretta Scott King award and a Caldecott Honor Book, both of which I think are

deserved. Overall, it is a lovely book that would be a great book for teaching younger children about Rosa Parks and this particular chapter in the civil rights movement.

Finding the Green Stone
by Alice Walker

Johnny lives in a town where everyone owns a shiny green stone. He has one too, until his mean-spirited behavior makes him lose it. His family and the whole town help him search, but to find it, he alone must discover the "bright green sun in his heart."



Ages 8 and up

What's Happening in Church Council?

Financial Report, Matt Carson:

We rounded out a challenging year with a generous \$54,952.03 in tithes and offerings. This December's giving was 24% higher than the 6-year average of \$44,217.96. St. John's ended the year in the negative. Our total income of \$549,025.62 fell short of our expenses by \$28,275.22.

We experienced a large savings in our budget due to reduced salaries and benefits for much of the year, which was offset by much higher operating expenses. In summary, giving was down about 2.3% and expenses were up about 2.6% from last year.

Please feel free to share your questions or concerns with Matt Carson, Treasurer.

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Staff Reports:

Rev. Dale Davis, Interim Senior Minister:

- Rev. Dale met with members of Lansdale Borough Council to determine who needs help in the greater Lansdale area, including issues such as housing and economic equity, and how St. John's can help.
- Benevolence Outreach discussion is ongoing. Rick O'Connor is investigating ways to shift the funding for community needs to appropriate St. John's committees.
- Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22. There will be a pizza dinner and 7 PM worship service. The book discussion will be *Freeing Jesus* by Diana Butler Bass.

Rev. Addie Stong, Associate Pastor:

- The first Longest Night service was held December 20 as a space for those who experience grief during the holidays.
- The Confirmation Class of four confirmands have met twice. They will meet again in two weeks.

Andrew Paulson, Minister of Music:

- Artist Series, featuring Svyati Duo, will be Wednesday, February 1, at 7 PM.
- *Requiem for the Living* by Dan Forrest will be held on Palm Sunday, April 2, at 4 PM.
- The Midwinter Gala Fundraiser will be held on Friday, February 17, from 6 to 9 PM at PineCrest Country Club. All proceeds support the Artist Series. Last date to sign up is February 7.

Abbie Lampe, Minister of Music for Children and Youth:

- Choir will resume January 22.

Lisa Delp, Office Administrator:

- Four families were assisted with rent totaling \$1,329.

- A literature box has been installed outside the ramp door. A flyer will be inside with information on what organizations can provide help for the community. St. John's works with the organizations listed.
- The 2022 statements are printed and available Sundays beginning January 15 or during the week in the office.

Board Reports:

Deacons:

- Congregational Dinner will be held Sunday, January 29. Signups will begin on Sunday, January 15. Deacons will provide dinner and sides. Congregation will be asked to bring a shared dessert if able.

Educators:

- Educators still need two new Board members.

Elders:

- Elders will provide a pizza dinner on Ash Wednesday, February 22.
- Andrew stated views across all 3 platforms (YouTube, Private Facebook, Public Facebook) for the Christmas Day service was approximately 300.
- Elders have filled one open Board position, but still need one more member.

December Attendance

Date	8:00 AM	10:15 AM	Total
12/4		189	189
12/11	31	144	175
12/18	31	100	131
12/24	5 PM: 120	11 PM: 133	253
Average per Week=187			

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Trustees:

- Computer equipment has been replaced and line service is completed.
- Trustees have one estimate of approximately \$75,000 for renovation/restoration of the church building. Additional estimates are being sought.

New Business:

Sabbatical for Rev. Addie

Addie shared her sabbatical message:

In their guide to The Pastor's Sabbatical, The Pennsylvania Southeast Conference reminds us that "the term sabbatical has its roots in the Hebrew cultural-religious concept of Sabbath, or rest, after seven days or years. Genesis 2:1-3 notes that God rested from the work of creation after seven days. The versions of the Ten Commandments describe the Sabbath as a day of reflection on the blessings of God for creation (Exodus 20:8-11)."

I have been pondering these words with a prayerful heart as I prepare to engage in this important and sacred faith practice, to honor my need for rest, and to fulfill my call agreement by claiming a 3-month sabbatical in late summer/early fall of 2023. While I am still planning and praying about the specifics, I do know that it will be a time of healing, renewal, and continued discernment following an emotionally and professionally intense and trying season of ministry. I welcome your prayers as I ready myself and our community for this time, and I pray that St. John's will continue to provide ways to nurture health and wholeness in its leaders and members ~ a priceless gift.

Liz Rivett stated Pastor Addie is long overdue for a sabbatical. It is to be taken every 6 years and is has been at least 9 years. Rev. Dale is supportive of Addie's sabbatical. A small committee will be formed to plan, prepare and support Rev. Dale during Addie's sabbatical. A sabbatical does not come without financial support. Pastors who preach on Sundays when

Addie would preach will need to be paid. Addie will be paid for expenses incurred. Monies in the Sabbatical Fund are low. Council was asked to support Addie with the congregation.

Link for Sabbatical information:

<https://psec.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/PSEC-Sabbatical-Resource.pdf>

Congregational Meeting/Dinner, January 29:

- There will be **one service at 10:15 AM.** Congregational Meeting to follow in the sanctuary.
- Topics will include:
 - 1) Pastor Addie's sabbatical
 - 2) Visioning, Church Profile, and Search related to our Sr. Pastor Search and Call
 - 3) Voting on new Council members
- Congregational Dinner will follow the meeting.

Old Business:

Transition Team Update:

The Transition Team will move to a Visioning Team. It will reflect who we are, who we want to be, and how to get there. The Profile Team will take the work of the Visioning Team to create in writing the call for the Senior Pastor. The Search Team will screen candidates for a new pastor for the congregation. A timeline of 12 to 18 months is predicted. They need to determine how St. John's can interact with the outside community and who we will be in the next decades will be addressed.

New Board Membership/Personnel Committee:

Members are still needed for a few Boards and for Personnel Committee. New Council members will be installed on Sunday, February 12, with a short meeting to be held immediately after worship.

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**ARTICLES DUE FOR MARCH ISSUE
DEADLINE FEBRUARY 12**

Leaders: Please provide an article for One Great Hour of Sharing for the next *Enlightener* issue:

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 (top bin) or emailed to erickinsey46@gmail.com. Please call Eric Kinsey at 215.513.2237 with questions.

The *Enlightener* is published monthly except for July and August by St. John's United Church of Christ, 500 West Main Street, Lansdale, Pennsylvania 19446.
Eric Kinsey, Editor: erickinsey46@gmail.com

Were You There?



Thirty Years Ago: The United Church of Christ designated the week of February 7 through 13 Women's Week, to recognize the unique contributions of women in the life of the church.

Twenty-five Years Ago: The Interfaith Dialog series continued with speakers from Presbyterian and Episcopal churches and a synagogue.

Twenty Years Ago: The UCC Wider Church Ministries, as part of Church World Service, supported an Afghanistan Education Campaign, providing 50,000 school kits to children in the Hazarajat region.

Fifteen Years Ago: The PSEC presented a series of Lenten Awakenings seminars each Saturday during Lent at Trinity UCC in Telford and Shenkel UCC in Pottstown.

Ten Years Ago: St. John's solicited cleanup kits throughout the year to assemble and be available for victims of events such as Tropical Storm Sandy.

Five Years Ago: The Lenten Study focused on Jamie Blaine's book *Midnight Jesus*, which has been described as a book "...where struggle, grace, and faith collide."

One Year Ago: The Creation Stewards alerted us to a new project, sponsored by the nonprofit Garden of Health Inc., to provide locally grown fresh produce to local food banks and individuals in Montgomery and Bucks Counties. In 2021, Garden of Health provided more than 1.2 million servings of healthy food to people in need. Garden of Health is always looking for volunteers for all aspects of their program.



Below you will find the chancel flower donation list for February 2023. Please review this list and contact the church office if you would like to remove/add/update any information on the list.

Reminder: The requested donation for the chancel flower listing is \$35. Thank you!

February 5

In memory of Albert C. Munzinger's February 6th birthday from his daughter and grandson, Kay, and Tony Fiala

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 12

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 19

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

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

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

February 26

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

In memory of Nancy Kirk from her daughter, Barbara Kirk

In memory of Charles May's March 4th birthday from his wife, Connie



Chancel Flower Ministry

Thank you for being a part of this important ministry. Many lives have been touched by your efforts.

Flowers should be delivered after the 10:15 AM church service or on Monday. Feel free to deliver the flowers to whomever you want—anyone who is celebrating a birthday or an anniversary, people who are ill, people who are in the hospital, people who need a little extra care. The people you deliver to do not need to be members of St. John's. They can be your friends, loved ones, and neighbors. The flower ministry is part of our outreach.

The flower room is through the door on the left side of the chancel—the side where the pastor preaches. All the supplies you will need are in this room: plastic vases, St. John's address directory, and cards.

Please take the flowers out of the brass vases and put them into the plastic floral containers located on the shelves in the flower room. Return the liners back into the brass vases. Please include a card for each bouquet. There will be a copy of these instructions in the flower room. If you are out of town on your assigned Sunday, please switch with someone else.

Again, many thanks for being a part of St. John's flower ministry. Please leave the plastic liners in the brass vases, they belong to the florist.

Lisa

2023

February 5	
February 12	Tracey & Mark O'Neill
February 19	Mary Billy
February 26	Sarah Hogan

Summary of November and YTD Income and Expense	Dec 2022	Jan-Dec 2022
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Counters Discrepancies	0.00	100.00
Current Tithes/Offerings	54,952.03	390,015.50
Event Income/Fundraisers	0.00	900.00
Flowers	780.00	4,392.00
Rental Income	3,150.00	30,900.00
Use of Building Income	105.00	3,520.00
Miscellaneous Unrestricted Income	316.73	1,339.96
Interest Income, Savings Accounts	17.67	35.72
Total Income	59,321.43	431,203.18
Gross Income	59,321.43	431,203.18
Expense		
Salaries and Benefits	35,990.40	407,568.67
Elders Expenses	792.52	2,242.02
Deacons Expenses	1,037.22	6,740.51
Educators Expenses	217.46	2,619.13
Trustees/Building Expenses	1,845.67	21,093.67
Building Operation Expenses	5,208.51	59,353.82
Operating Expenses	5,881.44	76,580.77
Miscellaneous Expenses	421.09	1,102.25
Total Expense	51,394.31	577,300.84
Net Ordinary Income	7,927.12	-146,097.66
Budgeted Transfers from Investments	9,818.50	-117,822.00
Net Ordinary Income Plus Transfers	17,745.62	-28,275.66
Other Income/Expense		
Other Income		
Artist Series Income—Special	2,461.75	12,232.75
Benevolence Offerings	9,237.50	65,270.40
Special Accounts	2,919.68	53,184.99
Immediate-Needs Income	0.00	15,572.05
Total Other Income	4,765.68	131,641.26
Other Expense		
Artist Series Fund Expenditures	569.00	8,659.98
Benevolence Disbursements	2,827.84	71,503.90
Special Fund Expenditures	4,859.00	86,907.90
Immediate-Needs Expense	0.00	28,544.74
Total Other Expense	8,255.84	195,616.52
Net Other Income	6,363.09	-49,356.33
Net Income	14,290.21	-195,453.99
Net Income Plus Transfers	24,108.71	-77,631.99



Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Sue Rother's mother, Anna; Sharon Rowling, wife of Charles, brother-in-law of Karen and Mark Methlie; Ruth Leslie, mother of Bill Leslie and his siblings, Laurie and Fred, mother-in-law of Judy Leslie; and Bruce Hemmerle, uncle of Sally Atkiss; who passed away recently.



Blanket Sunday—February 12, 2023

Your Blanket Sunday offering will help Church World Service to provide blankets and supplies to people in the US and around the world who are struggling to survive natural disasters and political upheaval.

An envelope for your Blanket Sunday offering may be found in your box of offering envelopes.

Young love is a flame; very pretty, often very hot and fierce, but still only light and flickering. The love of the older and disciplined heart is as coals, deep-burning, unquenchable.
~Henry Ward Beecher

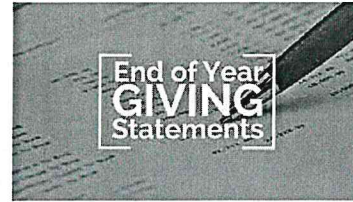


On February 17, Bill Wenner will be celebrating his 90th birthday!

You are invited to participate in a **surprise "card shower."**

You may drop off your cards at the Church Office or mail them to Bill's address:

815 Maplewood Dr., Apt. 161
Harleysville, PA 19438



2022 Contribution Statements

You may pick up your 2022 contribution statements on Sunday mornings in the Narthex and throughout the week in the Church Office.



Ending Hunger, Building Community, Transforming Lives

Manna on Main Street depends on churches like St. John's to help meet the needs of our neighbors who face food insecurity. Your donations of nutritious food and necessary household items (toiletries, paper products, cleaning supplies) are needed every week throughout the year.

Please bring your donations with you when you come to church. You may place the items on the Manna shelves in the Narthex. The Outreach Team delivers your donations to Manna every week.

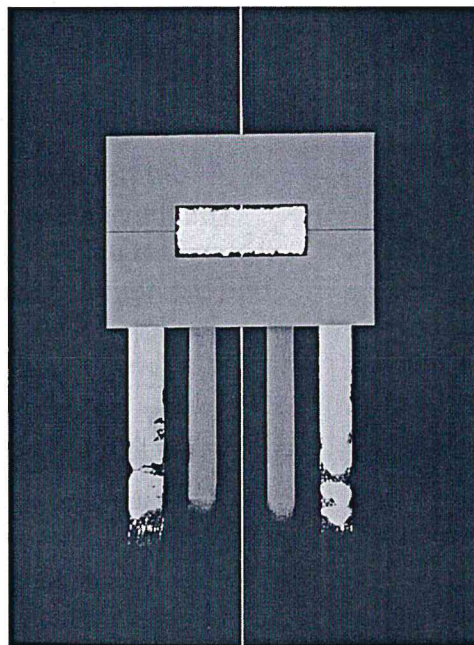
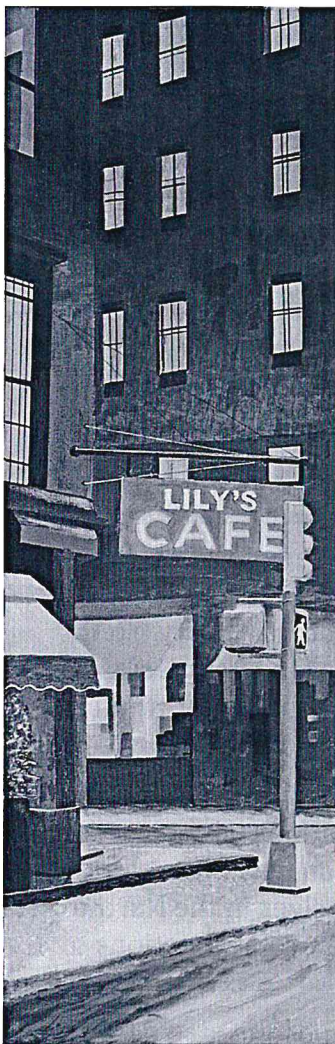
For a list of the items most needed each week, go to mannaonmain.org and click give-food/what-is-needed

Manna asks that we follow these guidelines:

- Donations of food should be healthy and nutritious.
- No extra large cans or packages.
- No clothing or linens.
- No open or partially used items.
- **No soda or candy.**



Carryout Connections take-home Sunday School bags resumes in February, with our monthly in-person gathering taking place on Sunday, February 5th, from 9-10.

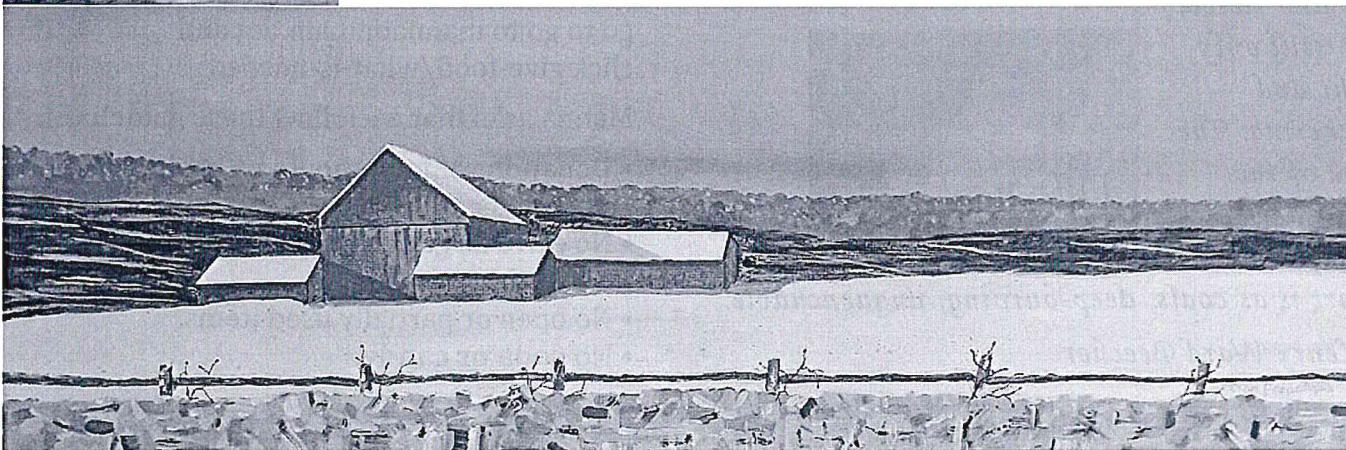


a solo exhibition by Dan Panachyda

A MOMENT IN TIME

February 3 - March 10

Opening Reception: Friday, Feb 3 6-9pm



at the
*Eclipse Center for
Creative Community*

30 Vine Street, Lansdale
(by the Lansdale Post Office)



IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE!

St. John's Artist Series Midwinter Gala

Friday, February 17, 6-9pm • PineCrest Country Club
101 Country Club Dr • Lansdale, PA • 19446

Tickets are \$100 per person and include the following:

- Appetizers and hor d'oeuvres with butler service.
- A delicious dinner with dessert and an open beer/wine/soda bar.
- The opportunity to bid on items and experiences from local businesses in a silent auction. Businesses include, Act II Playhouse, Ambler Theater, Backyard Beans, Washington House Hotel, and more!
- A special program with upcoming Artist Series season announcements.
 - A night you will never forget!

Visit www.stjohnsartistseries.org/midwinter-gala, scan the QR code below, or stop by the church office to purchase your ticket today! **Tickets must be purchased by Tuesday, February 7!**



All proceeds from the event support the St. John's Artist Series!

THANK YOU TO OUR PATRONS

Gifts of all sizes allow us to present concerts at no cost to audience members. Thank you for your support!*

\$1000+

Grace & Mark Bruen • Lillian & Dan Panachyda

\$500-\$999

Suzanne & Don Franks • Ruth Kinsey

\$250-\$499

A Friend • David Furniss • Sally & Steve Jarinko • Anne & Eric Kinsey • Bill & Judy Leslie
James, Frances, & Siobhan Morris • Scott & Liz Vanderburg

\$100-\$249

Lorene Ahrens • Sally & Don Atkiss • Sue & Bob Bertolette • Sandy & Scott Brown • Marie Carota • Sue Clemens
Chuck & Jenny Favata • Debby & Steve Hendricks • Susan & John Hendricks • Leroy & Linda Horst • Ron & Joyce Huisenga
Judy Koenig • Connie May • Tim & Janet Morton • Ruth Moyer • Rick & Wendy O'Connor • Cynthia T. Overwise & John B. Overwise Jr.
Phyllis J. Patton • Kim & Garen Paulson • Susan Popjoy • Marcia Stacy • Sandy & Robert Taylor • Joe & Carol Voicheck

Up to \$99

Thank you to our donors in this category for their generous support!

Visit www.stjohnsartistseries.org/make-a-donation or scan the QR code below to give electronically!



Prefer to give via check or cash? Mail or drop off your gift at St. John's along with the below form completed.

Donation amount: _____ Name as you would like it to appear in publications: _____

Please make checks payable to *St. John's UCC* and indicate *Artist Series Donation* in the memo line.

**Note that our giving levels have changed to reflect an average cost of approximately \$4000 for each concert.*

This cost covers the necessary expenses of advertising, fair performer payment, travel fees, and more.

To learn more about our updated donor levels and benefits, please visit www.stjohnsartistseries.org/make-a-donation.

