

ST. JOHN'S CHIMES

Published monthly in the interest of



**St. John United Church of Christ
204 Seventh Street
Lincoln, Illinois 62656**

February 2023 Newsletter

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

204 Seventh Street ~ Lincoln, Illinois 62656

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"Letting God's love shine through us to the Community we Serve"

Rev. Laurie Hill

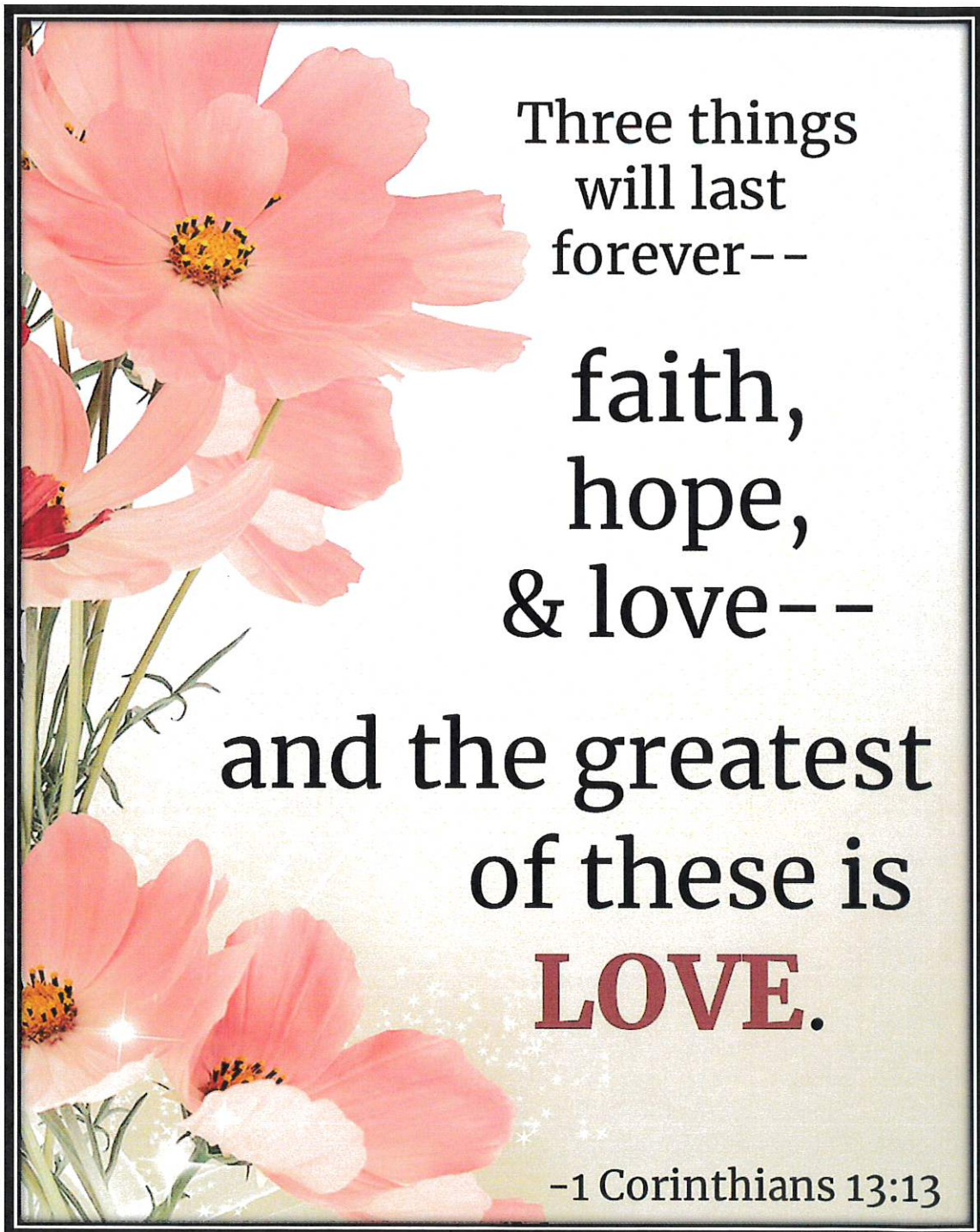
Darlene Begolka

Volume 54, No. 2

Pastor

Office Manager

February 2023



FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear Friends,

I want to thank you for your expressions of grief over my announcement of leaving in April. I have been and am incredibly humbled and blessed by your love. I will always be grateful for your love, respect, and care for me as your pastor, the church and our ministry together.

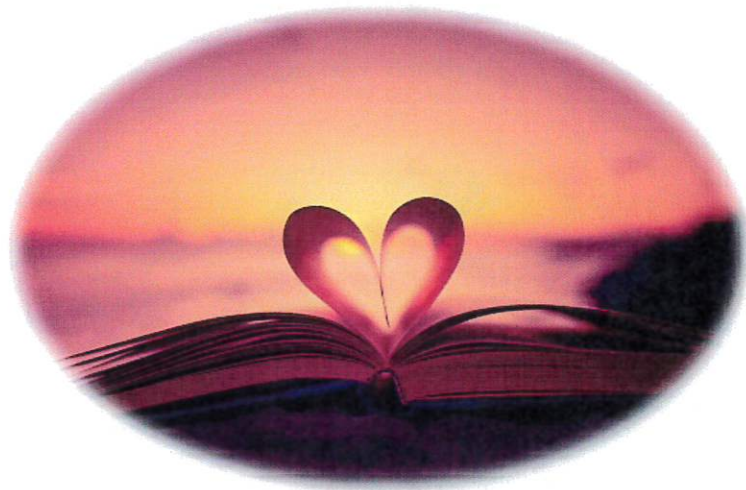
As you can imagine, I am getting ready for the move. In my life, I have moved 19 times, so I have this “down to a science” in some ways. However, that doesn’t mean I don’t have too much stuff. Also, I’m moving to a small townhouse that has very little storage. I’ve already informed my husband we will need a storage bin. But I do know I need to downsize. Again. Sigh. It’s very hard. January’s goal is to get rid of stuff I don’t want to move with me to Texas. I’ve taken many trips to my daughter’s house, to Pink Shutter, occasionally to Good Will and some things, if broken, don’t work, etc. they go in the dumpster.

Since we have had to downsize many times, we have developed a ritual of letting go of “stuff” that has meant a lot to us. And like so many of you, my kids are not interested in so many things I have. My wedding china is gone, crystal glasses, bowls, beloved knickknacks, etc. that have meaning to us sometimes have to be released from our possession. And my heart breaks a bit when I have to let go of something that holds memories. Our ritual is a prayer: “Thank you, God, for putting this (____) in my care for so long. I’m so very grateful for the joy and the memories it has given me and my family over the years. And now, I release it into the hands of someone else so that it might bring joy, love and wonderful memories into another person’s life. I pray Your Spirit go with it, so that love may touch the heart of the person who receives it. Amen.” It helps me to let go of things knowing that someone else may really enjoy it. **I invite you, in your Lenten journey, to join me in releasing items and simplifying your life. You can**

choose to release 40 items (one for every day in Lent), or 4 items (one/week) or even one.

I know that I’m an odd duck when it comes to the times I’ve moved. Some of you have lived in one spot nearly all your life. After cleaning out my in-laws house when we needed 3 triple dumpsters and 2 double dumpsters, and a kazillion trips to thrift stores, etc., my ideas have changed about what I want to keep, etc. When I take trips to the Pink Shutter, etc. I have a sense of euphoria and light. I love simplifying my life. I love releasing my items for someone else’s enjoyment. Lent starts on Ash Wednesday, February 22nd. You can wait until then, or start now, but I challenge you to join me in releasing some or even at least one items into the community for others to enjoy! You may be surprised at how good you feel. That goodness is the Holy Spirit applauding your ability to share, to love, and to uplift others.

Blessings!
Pastor Laurie



**ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
UNAPPROVED CHURCH COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

Present: Kent Paulus, Carolyn Pech, Jack Leich, Jan Hahn, Bill Gosda, Jr., Tricia Pineda, Sandy Meinershagen, Leland Semple, Dan Row, Darlene Begolka (Office Manager) and Pastor Laurie Hill

President Paulus called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. on Monday, January 16, 2023. Pastor Laurie gave the invocation.

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL

President Paulus inquired if there were any items up for discussion as it related to the Consent Agenda items. None were raised. It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda. All voting aye, motion carried.

It was moved and seconded to approve the December 19, 2022 meeting minutes. Leland Semple. All voting aye, motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Jan Hahn made a report about the St. John Diners outing coming up on January 21st at Chi Restaurant.

Jan Hahn mentioned the meal following the Annual Congregational meeting which will be discussed later on the agenda.

Jack Leich suggested that we thank the Boy Scout Troop for helping with putting up and taking down of the Christmas trees and decorations. It was decided to treat them at Culver's as their schedule allows.

PASTORS REPORT

In her usual report of past, present and future activities, she highlighted the Celebration of Life for Jerry Gehlbach. Visitation was held on January 13th and the Funeral Services on January 14th.

Pastor Laurie placed a post on Facebook for a Nursery Caregiver.

She has requested time off from January 30th to February 1st.

OLD BUSINESS

Annual Congregational Meeting – The Annual Congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, January 29, 2023 following church. It was moved and seconded to have a meal after the Annual Congregational meeting. All voting aye, motion carried.

Nominating Committee Report – Carolyn Pech reported the following nominees:

Church Council: Keith Birnbaum, Roger Michalsen, and Silas Tockey

Western Association Delegates: Donna Kessinger and Bill Gosda, Jr.

Illinois Conference Delegate: Bill Gosda, Jr.

Scholarship Board Trustee: Bob Meinershagen

Constitution and By-Laws Revisions – An error was pointed out by Leland Semple. In the By-Law section amend "Financial Secretary", the first sentence should be deleted. Then after the next deleted section, it should read, "The Financial Secretary or designee shall gather all offerings being sure that all monies with special designations are separated from the general offering".

NEW BUSINESS

Pictures – Carol Webb and Jean Webb's mother (Kim Webb) had two calendars with artistic pictures at the top. It was decided to have them framed and then hang them in the church building. Tricia Pineda volunteered to take them to Michael's for framing when there was a percentage off coupon.

Facebook Stats – Pastor Laurie gave some statistics about people viewing our church service. 63% women, 37% men and the viewers are from all over Central Illinois and some from other states.

CORRESPONDENCE and EMAILS

Pastor Laurie submitted her Letter of Resignation. April 16, 2023 will be Pastor Laurie's last Sunday as our pastor. She will return to interim ministry in

the Galveston/Houston area. Council was given director from Pastor Laurie about next steps. President Paulus would follow up on these steps in the near future.

ADJOURNMENT and BENEDICTION

With no further business to discuss the Lord's Prayer was recited. It was moved and seconded n to adjourn. All voting aye; motion caried. Meeting concluded at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Gosda, Jr., Church Council Secretary



I would like to thank everyone for the prayers and cards I received with my recent knee surgery. And all the other health issues with the surgery.

Thanks to all,
Sandy Sanders



Dear St. John UCC,

Thank you for the love offering check you sent! Once again I am overwhelmed by your kindness, generosity and love.

I pray that this will be a very good year for all at St. John and all your ministries.

Thank you again,

Blessings!
Love, Norma

The following is note from Rev. Dr. Charlotte Nold, Pastor and the congregation of St. John Church in Chicago (our sister church):

Dear members of St. John UCC,

Thank you for your wonderful donation of \$573. We truly appreciate your continued support of our church and mission work. What an incredible blessing you are to us. Thank you.

Our food pantry is growing every week and it is a blessing for us to be able to feed the families in desperate need of food so that their children do not need to go to bed hungry. We also have many people who live alone who need and receive food. One of our clients is from Ukraine and is sending several boxes of food to her family overseas or whoever needs food there.

Thank you again for the wonderful blessing of much needed financial support that you are giving to our church.



Dear Church Family,

What a beautiful place to have a visitation and a funeral! And so full of memories.

Our family will always be grateful for the love and care for us and Jerry during our hard times, culminating with the funeral, visitation and lunch.

The last time Adrian came to church here, he asked "Why is everyone being so nice to me?" I said, "Because you are part of our church family!" So your kindness didn't go unnoticed.

Thanks again for being there for us.

In Christian love,
Nancy Gehlbach



**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26
SEMINARY SUNDAY
and
CUE OFFERING**

CHICAGO UNITED EDEN

We will be celebrating SEMINARY SUNDAY this year on Sunday, February 26th during the morning worship service. Remember, we will also be taking a special offering that Sunday for CUE (Chicago Theological Seminary, United Theological Seminary and Eden Theological Seminary). Watch for more info on this special Sunday.



**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5th
8:30 a.m.
Imo's Café
All Men of the Church are WELCOME.**

ST. JOHN DINERS

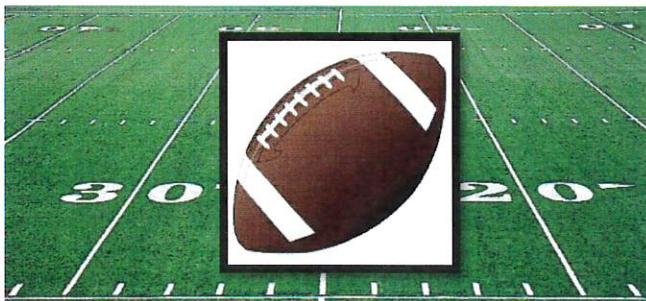
**Saturday, February 18th
Chestnut Family Restaurant
Bus will leave at 11:00 a.m.
Reservations are for 11:30 a.m.**



The Small Group Ministry has planned that the February St. John Diners outing will be to Chestnut Family Restaurant in Chestnut. The bus will leave the church parking lot at 11:00 a.m. Reservations are for 11:30 a.m. A sign-up sheet will be in the back of the sanctuary. As always you can either ride the bus or drive on your own. Just sign the sheet accordingly.

ST. JOHN GAMERS

**Sunday, February 12, 2023
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Fellowship Hall**



Come enjoy some relaxing fun and fellowship and play some games with your church family. Theme for the afternoon is Football. Bring your favorite snack to share. Drinks will be provided.

LOVE IS Patient and kind,
NOT jealous, boastful, proud, rude, self-seeking, irritable, or resentful.
LOVE does not delight in evil BUT
rejoices with Truth. Love
protects, ALWAYS TRUSTS* always hopes,
ALWAYS perseveres. LOVE NEVER fails. 1COR 13:4-8



LET'S REMEMBER OUR HOMEBOUND

ST. CLARA'S REHAB and SENIOR CARE

1450 Castle Manor Drive, Lincoln, IL 62656

Leola Dowling
Evelyn Fulkerson
Bill Krepps
Susan Webb
John Wilmert

CASTLE MANOR

1550 Castle Manor Drive, Lincoln, IL 62656

Jerry and Mary Berglin

COPPER CREEK

203 Stahlhut Drive, Lincoln, IL 62656

Steve Aue

CEDARHURST OF SPRINGFIELD

3520 Old Jacksonville Road, Springfield, IL 62711

Helen Opperman

CARRIAGE CROSSING SENIOR LIVING

1402 Leslie Drive, Bloomington, IL 61704

Sandy Morgan

ASHTON PLACE

4151 Ashton Road, Sarasota, FL 34233

Patty McCann

AT HOME

Dave Armbrust
922 Decatur Street, Lincoln, IL 62656

CHARITY GUILD ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

After an unsettling experience, Sandy Wilmert and several members talked about the need for some network for our friends and members – especially those who live alone, for a 'daily contact' phone partner. Some time back some signed into 'prayer partners' and that is a plus for both needs. Several of the group already call or are called every day – therefore – we are suggesting that IF you live alone and you are not daily talking to a family member or contact friend, consider calling one of the officers of Charity Guild and let them guide you. NO ONE's information will be shared – we just want all our friends to be safe and that someone is checking on them. All of us are checking on or are being checked on daily – and it is refreshing and often fun! Conversations can be a minute (or an hour!) It's all about 'YOU'; being safe. Any questions contact one of the board members.

Karen Birnbaum, President
Marlene Wilmert, Vice-President
Sandy Wilmert, Treasurer
Tonita Reifsteck, Secretary



PRIZES NEEDED

St. John United Church of Christ is no longer doing their monthly Bingo at St. Clara's Rehab and Senior Care. But we can still help them when their activity department does Bingo. Here's how we can help. They are in need of Bingo prizes. Some ideas are SMALL stuffed animals, door or window décor, adult coloring books and colored pencils, word search books (large print might be helpful), some gently used white elephant type gifts and little knick-knacks (non-breakable) to mention a few. No jewelry, please. These items can be placed under "The Giving Tree." Thank you!!!



DECEMBER FINANCIALS

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Beginning Balance | \$17,327.52 |
| Income | \$54,800.84 |
| Expenses | \$34,073.19 |
| Ending Balance | \$38,055.17 |



Celebrate Life Birthday Group
Friday, February 10, 2023
11:30 a.m.
Chi Family Restaurant

February birthdays will be celebrated.

Let Tonita Reifsteck or Sandy Wilmert know if you are coming.

ATTENDANCE

January 1st

30 In-Person, 52 on Facebook, 16 bulletins mailed and website = 98+

January 8th

37 In-Person, 74 on Facebook, 17 bulletins mailed and website = 128+

January 15th

32 In-Person, 69 on Facebook, 17 bulletins mailed and website = 118+

January 22nd

38 In-Person, 76 on Facebook, 17 bulletins mailed and website = 131+



PROTOCOL

SERVICES WILL CONTINUE TO BE "HYBRID": (a combination of online and in-person).

MASKING: Masks are now a personal choice. We urge you to wear one if you feel even slightly sick. But it now completely up to you to wear a mask or not.

COMMUNION: Communion sets will remain in the back for you to pick up as you come in. If you wish to bring your own, of course, that's fine. Darlene has "smidget" Tupperware containers if you wish to use one for your own juice/wine.

FOOD: Food offered at events can be homemade, but we ask groups in the church to also offer a commercially prepared option for those who would prefer their food made in that way.



Articles for the **March 2022** newsletter should be in the Church Office by **February 19th**.

MISSION NEWS

By: Verdeen Ingram, Co-Chair

SPECIAL OFFERING SUNDAYS...The Mission Committee has designated the following Sundays:

- **Second Sunday of each month** a special offering will be taken following church for the **Children of Lincoln project.**
- **Fourth Sunday of each month** a special offering will be taken following church for the **Diaper Project for Head Start at Community Action.**

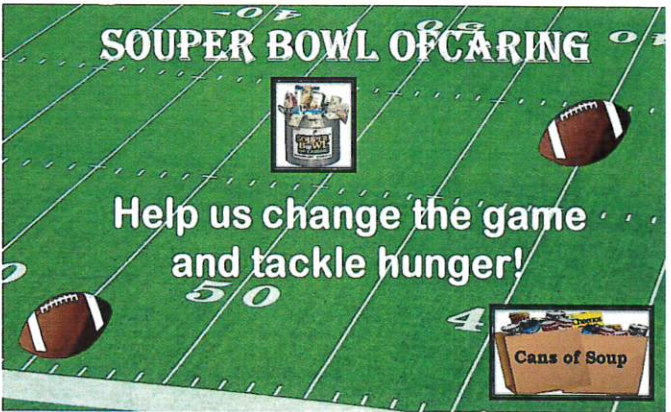
Diaper Project

Last week when I took our granddaughter to daycare her mom sent a big bag of diapers along with us. That reminded me of our diaper project at Head Start. Do our donations really make a difference? It just happened that I had a meeting at Community Action later that day so I asked the director about the need for diapers.

She assured me that our donations do make a difference!

All of the Head Start sites but especially the Early Head Start sites (birth to three years) need to have diapers on hand. Some parents cannot afford many diapers and try to get by with as few as possible. Some parents just forget.

Our government grants are very specific about how the grant money can be spent. Diapers don't seem that important to the people in Washington. So grant money cannot be spent on diapers. But these kids can't be ready to learn if they are not clean and dry. That is why St. John is so important. Thank you for supporting area children through the diaper project. Thank you for making a difference!



SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

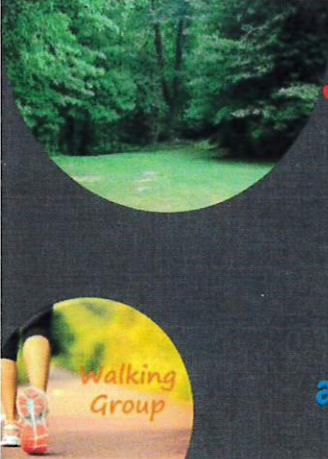
Help us change the game and tackle hunger!

Cans of Soup

This year we are combining Souper Bowl of Caring and the February Food Item. They are both cans of soup. You are invited to bring your can(s) of soup anytime during the month of February and place them by The Giving Tree. At the end of February, they will be taken to the Community Action Food Pantry. Monetary donations are welcome also. Do you think we can reach a goal of 100 cans of soup? Let's try!

BLANKET SUNDAY
Sunday, February 12
\$10 = 1 Blanket

"Blanket the World with Love"



JUBILANT FEET,
is the church's
walking group and
they meet on
Monday mornings
at 8:00 a.m.
at Kickapoo Creek Park
Everyone is welcome!

Walking Group



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 6 Avery Birnbaum
Loren Birnbaum
- 9 Morgan Fuller
Ruth Post
- 10 Kent Paulus
- 13 Wyatt Conrady
Sandy Meinershagen
- 19 **Sandra Morgan**
- 27 Jan Hahn
George Wilmert
- 28 Aidan Nemeth
Bailee Pineda

Name in **red** is a member of our church who is on the visitation list.
Let's fill their mailbox on their birthday.

OUTREACH/PUBLICITY MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Jim and Leslie Wilmert and
Tonita Reifsteck, Co-Chairs

Outreach/Publicity used their meeting time to help with the Christmas undecorating with the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts and finish annual report.

Coffee Hour still looking for host/hostesses for Sunday to make coffee. Snack is optional.

Devotional Booklets for 2023 are now available in Narthex of church/obtained through Immanuel Lutheran Church by Outreach. If more than 3 LARGE PRINT are needed see a member of Outreach. Devotional are for self or to share with a friend.

Requested copies of the St. John 100th Anniversary booklet is available in the narthex. Donations can be given to any member of Outreach or put in jar.

February meeting will be to plan Potato Bar in March.



ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Jeff and Jackie Curry
- 7 Rich and Barb Reinwald



CELEBRATE LIFE was a 'add another chair' celebration! Participants just kept coming and what fun was had by all 18 of them! HAPPY BIRTHDAY was sung to both the December and January birthday celebrants: Meredith, Marlene, Marilyn, Carolyn and Janet. Cards were signed for shut-ins and birthdays of others of our church fellowship. February Celebrate Life will be held at 11:30 on February 10th at CHI's Restaurant.

Reservations are requested to be called to Sandy Wilmert or Toni Reifsteck. Everyone is welcome.

ALTAR FLOWERS

- February 5th
- February 12th:
- February 19th:
- February 26th:

In Loving Memory



Gerald "Jerry" Gehlbach, 81, of Lincoln, Illinois passed away on Saturday, January 7, 2023, at the Vonderlieth Living Center in Mt. Pulaski, Illinois.

Jerry was born at St. John Evangelical Deaconess

Hospital on May 23, 1941, in Lincoln, Illinois, the son of Albert and Iola (Garton) Gehlbach. During his sophomore year at the University of Illinois, he met his life partner Nancy Lawrence on a blind date. Their relationship survived a failed and injurious attempt to impress Nancy on ice skates, and they married on August 11, 1962, in Hinsdale, Illinois. They had two sons: Scott Gehlbach (Maria Belodubrovskaya) and Brian Gehlbach (Krista Johnson).

Jerry was preceded in death by his parents, Albert and Iola Gehlbach.

He is survived by his wife and sons; brother Donald Gehlbach (Ann Gehlbach); grandchildren Emma Gehlbach, Jacob Gehlbach, and Adrian Gehlbach; nephew Chad Gehlbach (Michele Dupré); niece Jody Agnacian (George Agnacian); great niece Lily Agnacian; and great nephew Charlie Agnacian.

Jerry graduated from the University of Illinois with a B.S. in Agricultural Economics and an M.S. in Animal Science. At Illinois, he was a member of Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity, where he found a set of lifelong friends. Following university, he returned home to Gehlbach Pork Farms to work with his father and brother. Albert was an innovator in the industry, a tradition that Jerry continued in subsequent decades, including when the home operation divided into two, with Jerry at the helm of what became Heritage Pork Farm. When not working on the farm, Jerry was frequently found in his home office, which he shared with Nancy, and was active in the Logan

County Pork Producers and the Illinois Pork Council.

Scott and Brian were born in the late 1960s, with astronauts on the moon in the last days of Nancy's pregnancy with Brian. After a flirtation with horses, Jerry and Nancy eventually settled on boating as a hobby. Many a summer weekend was spent with Jerry piloting the boat as Nancy and the boys skied behind. Jerry and Nancy also loved to travel, even bringing their boys along on two European tours, and in their retirement years especially they saw much of the world. Sarasota, Florida was a much-loved destination for the family, with many good times spent walking on the beach, dining out, and playing miniature golf. Often Nancy's mother accompanied them on trips—just one indication of the kindness Jerry showed to his and Nancy's parents.

Jerry liked to be busy and enjoyed using the many skills he developed on the farm, whether he was serving as church council president, replacing floors at the parsonage, installing a grab bar for Nancy's mom, or helping his kids with their own home projects (including the construction of multiple raised bed gardens built to defend against any and all wildlife). He was one of the organizers of the United Church of Christ Germanfest and loved watching other people have a good time. He also had a soft spot for babies and small children; he was known by his family as the "baby whisperer."

In his last years, Jerry lived with dementia, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, which he and Nancy weathered at their rural home. He spent his final months at the H. and J. Vonderlieth Living Center. His family is grateful to the staff at Vonderlieth for their expert and gentle care during this time.

Funeral services were held on January 14, 2023 at St. John United Church of Christ with the Rev. Laurie Hill officiating; burial was in New Union Cemetery in Lincoln, Illinois.

February

Wednesday, February 1st

St. John Chimers at 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, February 2nd

Outreach and Publicity meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Friday, February 3rd

LCT Auditions at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 4th

Men's Fellowship at 8:30 a.m.

LCT Auditions at 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 5th

In-Person and Live-stream Worship Service
with Communion at 10:00 am

St. John Ringers practice after church

St. John Singers practice at 11:30 a.m.

LCT Auditions at 2:00 p.m.

Monday, February 6th

Jubilant Feet at 8:00 a.m.

Boy Scouts at 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 8th

St. John Chimers at 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, February 9th

Small Group meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Friday, February 10th

Celebrate Life Birthday Group at 11:30 a.m.

Sunday, February 12th

In-Person and Live-stream Worship Service
at 10:00 am

Blanket Sunday Offering

Children of Lincoln Special Offering Sunday

St. John Ringers practice after church

St. John Singers practice at 11:30 a.m.

St. John Gamers at 2:00 p.m.

Monday, February 13th

Jubilant Feet at 8:00 a.m.

Boy Scouts at 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 15th

St. John Chimers at 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, February 16th

Veterans Ministry meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 18th

St. John Diners

Sunday, February 19th

In-Person and Live-stream Worship Service
at 10:00 am

It's Birthday Sunday

Time to celebrate the February Birthdays

St. John Ringers practice after church

St. John Singers practice at 11:30 a.m.

Monday, February 20th

Jubilant Feet at 8:00 a.m.

Church Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Boy Scouts at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 21st

Cub Scouts at 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 22nd

Ash Wednesday Service

St. John Chimers at 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 26th

In-Person and Live-stream Worship Service
at 10:00 am

Diaper Project Special Offering Sunday

Seminary Sunday

St. John Ringers practice after church

St. John Singers practice at 11:30 a.m.

Monday, February 27th

Jubilant Feet at 8:00 a.m.

Boy Scouts at 7:00 p.m.

The public is invited to Habitat for Humanity of Logan County's Home #26 house blessing at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, February 11th at 1017 Tremont Street. Following the dedication, attendees are invited to tour the home. Refreshments will be provided.





PRAYER LIST

Linda Barrow
Sherri Mester
Drake Miller
Alissa Smith
Leslie Wilmert
Harold Boyer
Jackie Curry
Martha Pagel
Judy Woodard
Bill Gosda, Jr.
Ryan Edgecombe
Barb and Don Bauer
Damar Hamlin
Larry Ingram
Andrew Tabor
Rev. Kathy Lawes
Rev. Bob Sherman
Loren Birnbaum
Rev. David Marquardt family

Illinois Conference/Western Association

FACILITIES AND HOMEBOUND:

Dave Armbrust
Steve Aue
Jerry and Mary Berglin
Leola Dowling
Evelyn Fulkerson
Bill Krepps
Patty McCann
Sandy Morgan
Helen Opperman
Susan Webb
John Wilmert

Staff of St. John United Church of Christ

Members and Friends of St. John UCC

Rev. Laurie Hill
Darlene Begolka
Carolyn Pech
Dana Denny
Steve Spaulding
Laura Lee
Darlene Begolka
Calob Pluhm

Ministers

Pastor
Office Manager
Financial Manager
Custodian
Maintenance Person
Organist
St. John Chimers Director
St. John Ringers and St. John Singers Director

Church Council for 2023-2024



Kent Paulus (Elder), President
Leland Semple, Vice President
Silas Tockey, Secretary
Jan Hahn, Current Fund Treasurer
Dan Row, Special Funds Treasurer
Bill Gosda, Jr., Financial Secretary
Keith Birnbaum
Sandy Meinershagen (Elder)
Roger Michalsen (Elder)

Contact us:

Email: stjohnucclincoln@yahoo.com

Website: stjohnucclincolnillinois.com

St. John United Church of Christ
204 Seventh Street
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217-732-6957

Pastor Laurie's cell phone number: 217- 521-7747
Pastor Laurie's email address: pastorlauriehill@gmail.com

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