

ST. JOHN'S CHIMES

Published monthly in the interest of



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

December 2025 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. Dr. Kenneth W. Kline

Darlene Begolka

Volume 56, No. 12

Pastor

Office Manager

December 2025

FIRST SUNDAY of ADVENT, NOVEMBER 30th

Morning Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.

Special Music during the Lighting of the Advent Candle – St. John Singers

Special Music – St. John Ringers

SECOND SUNDAY of ADVENT, DECEMBER 7th

Morning Worship Service with the Sacrament of Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Special Music during the Lighting of the Advent Candle – St. John Singers

THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT, DECEMBER 14th

Morning Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.

Special Music during the Lighting of the Advent Candle – St. John Singers

FOURTH SUNDAY of ADVENT, DECEMBER 21st

Morning Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.

Special Music during the Lighting of the Advent Candle – St. John Singers

Special Music – St. John Singers and St. John Chimers

CHRISTMAS EVE, DECEMBER 24th

Candlelight Service at 11:00 p.m.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Special Music – St. John Singers, St. John Ringers, and St. John Chimers

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS, DECEMBER 28th

Morning Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.

PASTOR'S CORNER



"A LIGHT TO THE WORLD"

As Thanksgiving season becomes the Advent and Christmas seasons, St. John UCC is considering our calling and future afresh. The Angels and the Advent Wreath announce to Mary and to our church community the miracle of God:

"The angel said to her, 'Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High...'" (Luke 1:30-32).

At the conclusion of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus gives his disciples and to us His Great Commission:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Beginning and the End of the Gospel of Jesus Christ meet in this Holy Season of Advent and Christmas 2025, and St. John UCC, our members and friends remember and experience again this miracle of redemption! Mary and Joseph at the incarnation, and the Twelve Disciples receiving the Great Commission at the resurrection bring us the New Future that God intends for us even today. We will light the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love each Sunday on our way to Baby Christ's Holy Night and manger.

THE MISSION

The mission of both OUR CHURCH and the CHURCH UNIVERSAL is to work now for the restoration and

redemption of our Christian Community and family. This mission is launched annually and dramatically in the Christmas Eve Service Nativity and Birth of Jesus Christ, the very incarnation of God's Love in the Star of Bethlehem. Music and faith will join in our Candlelight Service on Christmas Eve.

Come Home to your church this Advent and Christmas Seasons! Join us on each Sunday at St. John United Church of Christ for the Birth of Jesus Christ our Lord!

Pastor Ken Kline



LET'S REMEMBER OUR HOMEBOUND

ST. CLARA'S REHAB and SENIOR CARE

1450 Castle Manor Drive, Lincoln, IL 62656

Dave Armbrust
Jerry and Mary Berglin
Edna Mara
Wayne Mara
Ruth Post
Susan Webb

CASTLE MANOR

1550 Castle Manor Drive, Lincoln, IL 62656

Bill Krepps

COPPER CREEK

203 Stahlhut Drive, Lincoln, IL 62656

Steve Aue

CEDARHURST OF SPRINGFIELD

3520 Old Jacksonville Road, Springfield, IL 62711

Helen Opperman

AT HOME

Sandy Sanders

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, October 27, 2025
7:00p.m.

Present: Silas Tockey, Randy Pech, Laura Lee, Kaye Wilmert, Carolyn Pech, Keith Birnbaum, Roger Michalsen, Bob Meinershagen, Donna Kessinger, and Darlene Begolka, Office Manager, and Pastor Ken Kline

President Silas Tockey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., Monday, October 27, 2025. Pastor Ken read 2 Corinthians 9:6 then had an opening prayer.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Two changes were made to September Minutes:
#1: Under New Business – E. Remove 1st sentence regarding communion.
#2 New Business – G. Supposed to be Railsplitter Ringers, not Railers. It was moved and seconded to accept the Secretary's Report as corrected. All voting aye the motion passed.

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL:

It was moved and seconded to approve the consent agenda with changes as submitted. All voting aye the motion passed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

F. Veteran's Celebration – Silas read a report from Jan Jeffries. The celebration is coming up on Sunday, November 9th at the American Legion. First fund raiser for 2026 will be a silent auction.

PASTOR'S' REPORT: Silas gave Pastor Ken a card with gift cards for Clergy Appreciation Month.

- Pastor Ken thanked Gary Atteberry for installing the new garage door at the parsonage.
- He made 38 pastoral contacts, including Judy Kline funeral.
- Discussed doing confirmation in the new year with Madi Meinershagen. It will be like a tutorial confirmation.

- Making plans to have a Sack Lunch Bible Study on Monday's starting on Monday, December 1 from Noon to 1:30pm (Lunch ½ hour then Bible Study for an hour) in Wilmert Lounge. Everyone bring their lunch and eat before study time. Adjustments can be made if necessary to location, depending on the # of attendees.
- Would like to start a Worship Service at St. Clara's, one time a month, but he needs to discuss with the activity director. There are several St. John members at St. Clara's.
- Working on finding housing option for single parents with children
- "Sacred Hospitality" is the theme for Stewardship Drive this year. He will be incorporating sermons with the theme. Stewardship in-gathering is Sunday, November 23rd.
- Installation Date to be decided.

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Hoefer Memorial Tree- Tree will be planted within the week. It is a non-fruit bearing sweet gum tree.
- B. Website Update – No information
- C. Railsplitter Ringers – Insurance information -The handbells and chimes are insured under Inland Marine coverage in the Property section of insurance. They are part of the \$5,000 deductible.
- D. Water Fountain – It is here, but not installed at time of the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Installation Date – Sunday, November 16th at 4pm will be the installation date for Pastor Ken Kline. A letter of Invitation will go out as soon as possible to clergy and congregation. There is no communion and Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Kathy Lawes, will be conducting the service. A reception with sandwiches, fruit and vegetable trays, and cookies. Council members and Search committee members will host the event. Monies will come from Special Events line item.
- B. November 2nd Communion – There will be no communion in November because it was

offered the last Sunday of October and it's also Totenfest Sunday. There was a brief discussion about communion. It was moved and seconded that white grape juice be offered in the inner ring of communion trays, with wine in the rest of the rings of the trays, and communion wafers be offered instead of bread pieces, and wine and grape juice be paid for by the church. GF option is still offered. It was noted that Taylor's Port Wine has been used most recently. All voting aye, the motion carried.

- C. Annual Congregational Meeting – The Annual meeting will be on Sunday, January 25, 2026 following the church service. Committee Chairs will be reminded to get their reports in early, or they won't be included in the annual report.
- D. Nomination Committee – Keith Birnbaum and Roger Michalsen will serve as co-chairs. They will find 2 congregation members to serve on the nominating committee. Silas Tockey, Keith Birnbaum, and Roger Michalsen will be going off the council in January 2026.
- E. 165th Anniversary Misc. – Toni Reifsteck submitted a final Correspondence in regard to the Anniversary. A BIG THANK YOU to council for its support of the church's anniversary.
 - The FFF will continue through January 2026.
 - The committee requests that one location be found for all of the historical documents, pictures, books, etc. Just before council meeting, a suggestion to use the locked cabinets that previously stored the choir and council robes could be used to keep all items in central location, instead of scattered all over the church. A single room is really not available to use as a storage room. A decision will be made soon about this.
 - Also requested is to give the glass communion cups to St. Peter's UCC in Champaign, as they still use glass cups. There were still many left and not taken after the celebration. It was moved and seconded to approve of giving the glass

communion cups (minus some kept at St. John's as historical items) to St. Peter's UCC in Champaign. All voting aye the motion passed. Roger Michalsen made a suggestion that in order to preserve and protect the historical documents and items, people should wear white gloves and acid free container boxes, Folders should be used, and if stored in robe cabinets, weather stripping should be used to keep excess air out of the cabinets.

- F. 2026 Proposed Budget – Randy Pech reviewed the projected dollar amounts on the upcoming 2026 budget. One item was accidentally omitted, so the Grand Total needed to be changed. It was moved and seconded to accept the 2026 Proposed Budget with revisions, making the Grand Total \$308,461.00. All voting aye, the motion passed.
- G. Christmas Dinner – Special Events has decided that the Christmas Dinner will be held at Spirited Republic on Friday, December 19th at 5:30pm. Everyone can order what they would like from Guzzardo's Menu, and no preparation or cleanup will be necessary. More time can be spent with family and church family.
- H. Christmas Parade is Thursday, December 4th. No details were given at meeting time about St. John's participation.

CORRESPONDENCE AND EMAILS – None

ADJOURNMENT – It was moved and seconded to adjourn. All voting aye the motion carried. Pastor Ken gave a closing prayer.

Next meeting is Monday, November 17th, 2025 at 7pm in Wilmert Lounge.

Respectfully submitted by
Laura Lee, Council Secretary

MISSION NEWS

By: Verdeen Ingram and
Marlene Wilmert, Co-Chairs

SPECIAL OFFERING SUNDAYS...The

Mission Committee has designated the following Sundays:

- **Second Sunday of each month** a special offering will be taken for the **Children of Lincoln project.**
- **Third Sunday of each month** a special offering will be taken for our **Teddy Bear project.**
- **On the fourth Sunday of each month** a special offering will be taken for the **Diaper Project for Head Start at Community Action.**

Christmas Cards...Greet your fellow St. Johners again this Christmas by putting your cards on the tree in the entryway. We want to hear from everyone! The tree will be up all month, and the greetings will also be listed in the January Chimes.



The Toys for Tots Campaign is underway.

So, when you are out shopping keep in mind those children who would not But whatever new toys, games, books, etc. you bring in will be greatly appreciated by the children who may not otherwise have a Christmas.

Please have your unwrapped toys to the church by December 8th.

On Sunday, November 9, 2025 the Mission Committee met to prepare the Thanksgiving Food Drive bags to be handed out after service and to be returned by November 23, 2025. Groceries will be delivered to Lincoln Logan Food Pantry.

Upon discovering the Teddy Bear Fund had a substantial deficit, the 3rd Sunday of each month there will be a special offering for stuffed animals going to hospital.

It was decided to have the 2025 Christmas Season offering designated for the Christmas Fund and Teddy Bear Fund.

Verdeen and Marlene will be shopping soon for the Lincoln schools for socks, underwear, sweatpants out of the Children of Lincoln Fund.

November 16th was our collection for Community Action coats' accessories — 20 scarves, 87 hats and 128 pairs of gloves.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU, once again, for your love and support to make these projects in our community possible. GOD BLESS!



The 2025 Thanksgiving Food Drive totaled 36 boxes and 1 bag of groceries taken to the Lincoln Logan Food Pantry. Thank you for your support.

**LINCOLN LOGAN FOOD PANTRY
NOVEMBER 2025**

By: Rick Releford and Norm Newhouse,
Co-Managers, LLFP.

Distribution Report.	October.	September.
Individuals served.	1439.	1245.
Children served.	485.	366.
Households served.	449.	379.

A significant increase in October compared to September as changes of the Federal government SNAP guidelines filter down to the states and our customers.

Q & A regarding Lincoln Logan food pantry:

- Q. How is the food pantry doing?
A. LLFP is maintaining...food and monetary donations support from the community has been very helpful !
- Q. I bet you've had increased customers since the government shutdown?
A. Yes, first two weeks in November, our family counts each Tuesday and Thursday have almost doubled.
- Q. What will happen now the government is open?
A. Unpredictable! SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) rules are changing--The Illinois Department of Human Services website lists the particulars:
1. Changes to work requirements for applicants.
 2. Outcome if you don't meet the work requirements.
 3. Changes to immigrant eligibility.
 4. Keep your benefit information up to date. Call 1-800-843-6154, for uncertainty about changes in your household.

LLFP and our volunteers express appreciation and gratitude to supporting our mission providing for all food insecure families and senior citizens.

Thank you,
Rick Releford and Norm Newhouse
Co-Managers, LLFP

ST. JOHN UCC VETERANS MINISTRY

By: Jan Jeffries, Chairman

Committee Members: Becky Semple, Carolyn Pech, Dan Row, Darlene Begolka, Don Begolka, Ed Jeffries, Marlene Wilmert, Hannah Michalsen Meece, Janet Johnson, Kaye Wilmert, Laura Lee, Lee Westerfield, Leland Semple, Marilyn Armbrust, Roger and Jenna Michalsen, Sandy Wilmert

Our Logan County Veterans Celebration was held on Sunday, November 9, 2025.

During our morning worship service, we honored and thanked the Veterans of St. John U.C.C. with gift cards. They are Jack Leich, Bob Meinershagen, Lee Westerfield, Jim Wilmert, and Tracy Welch.

The afternoon celebration started at 4:30PM. Mayor Tracy Welch was our MC. Council President Silas Tockey welcomed those in attendance. The invocation and benediction was given by Rev. Dr. Ken Kline. At the beginning of the program, Lynn Paulus took pictures of each military branch that was present. Each veteran in the group picture was presented with a picture of their branch at the end of the program.

Presentation of Colors by American Legion Post 263 Honor Guard.

The six branches of the military were honored: Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and The United States Space Force.

The veterans and their guests were treated to a catered meal by Nick Bay/Lincoln Land Catering. They enjoyed:

Glazed Ham	Glazed Baby Carrots with Bacon
Cheezy Cubed Potatoes	Tossed Salad
Fruit Bowl	Roll & Butter
Iced Tea/Water	

Laura Slayton provided the deserts. Each veteran and guest received a decorated cupcake, assorted candies and Ghirardelli chocolate dipped pretzels.

The Boy Scouts of Troop 1102 served the meal to the veterans at their table, so they did not have to

stand in line. Special thanks to our Boy Scout Troop and their leaders.

Entertainment was provided by (1) Rev. Dr. Ken Kline, (2) Silas Tockey, (3) Lincoln Community Theater cast members from the upcoming Christmas Extravaganza provided a couple of excerpts from their upcoming show.

Just like in the Service, the Veterans Received a mail bag. In the mail bag, information was provided concerning Hometown Heroes Military Tribute Banner, Logan County Veterans Assistance Commission, Bricks for Veterans Project and Central Illinois Veterans Commission. District 127 students wrote thank you notes and colored pictures for mail call. Each veteran in attendance was recognized and presented a gift card to Lincoln IGA from St. John Veterans Ministry.

In 2021, a veteran approached the committee requesting that we honor an individual and/or organization that has made a difference in veterans' lives and the community. In 2022, the Celebration honored our first recipient. This year Scott Turner was awarded the honor because of his dedication to the veterans, his encouragement and inspiration to lift up his fellow man in his Facebook posts, and his willingness to volunteer when help is needed.

This year, door prizes were awarded to veterans and guests attending the dinner. Wayne LaForge was the oldest veteran in attendance and received a small gift.

During the year, funds are raised so that each veteran and a guest can enjoy a night of entertainment and a catered meal at no cost to them. We are so grateful to the members of the church and the community for their support and prayers. It takes many fund raisers and sponsors to fund this event. In addition to our fund raisers, we have also received donations from private citizens. These fund raisers included a silent bake sale, Country Aire Restaurant Fund Raising, Open Mic Night and El Mazatlan. Community sponsors are an important part of our fund-raising efforts. Please

visit their businesses and thank them for their support of this event. They are:

J. M. Abbott and Associates, Ltd.
American Legion Auxiliary
The Atlanta National Bank
Gary and Judy Atteberry
Chicago Street Rentals - Perry Winebrinner and
Brandon Winebrinner
Michelle Bauer – Country Financial
Country Aire Restaurant
Chris Coyne – State Farm Insurance
Culver's of Lincoln
D & D Complete Sewer (Pete Helton)
Eaton Corporation
El Mazatlan
Lyle Fout
Graue Inc.
Harris-Hodnett Insurance Services
Hartsburg Grain Company
Heartland Bank and Trust Company
Johnson Real Estate
Lincoln Daily News
Logan County Paramedic Association, Inc.
Robert Maske
McEntire's Home Appliance
ME Realty
Open Mic on a Mission by Silas Tockey/Spirited
Republic
Tonita Reifsteck
Rohlf's Implement Company
Rustic Love Rentals
Shelter Insurance – Corey Leonard
Topflight Grain Cooperative, Inc.
Lee Westerfield

I would like to thank everyone who helped with our Veterans Ministry and Veterans Celebration. Each of you played an important part in honoring the vets in Logan County. It takes many hands to put this event together. You surrounded this event with your prayers and hard work!!

Veterans and their families need our support 365 days a year. Many will continue to experience challenges for the rest of their lives. If you know of a Veteran or Veteran's Family who needs information or assistance, please have them contact:

Dan Benedict - Logan County Veterans Assistance
Commission
122 N. McLean Street
Lincoln, Illinois
Phone: 217-732-8388

Hope on 5th
200 Fifth Street
Lincoln, Illinois

My personal thanks to all who supported this event in any way. So many hours are spent brainstorming, researching and working events. It is a lot of hard work, but the veterans remember and look forward to it every year -- a lot of them as they are leaving the event even say: "See you next year!"

Thanks for the hard work, smiles, laughter and fellowship working on this event.

Just a reminder, we work on the invitation list literally year-round keeping it updated. If you know of any address changes, please notify me. My email address is: janhahn@hotmail.com. If possible, please attempt to get their address and phone number. It is very difficult to get addresses because of the privacy laws.

Thanks again.
Jan Jeffries
SJUCC Veterans Committee Members

CELEBRATE LIFE GROUP

By: Tonita Reifsteck



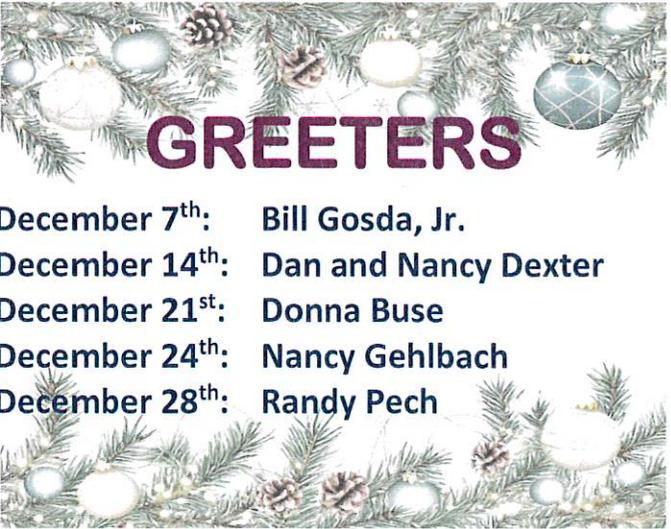
On Friday, November 14th
Marilyn Armbrust,
Karen Birnbaum, Donna
Kessinger, Laura Lee,
Alice Paulus, Carolyn Pech,
Toni Reifsteck, Dan Row,
Lynn Spellman, Carol
Webb, Marlene Wilmert,

Sandy Wilmert and Pastor Ken Kline enjoyed a Pizza party in Wilmert Lounge for the Celebrate Life Group.

Updates on church events to come were shared, Birthday, Get-Well and Thanksgiving cards were signed – which into each Thanksgiving card was placed a bookmark from the “165th/100th Anniversary”. During the time of fellowship Happy Birthday was sung to Dan Row, only November birthday present.

Karen Birnbaum, Charity Guild president opened the meeting. Sandy Wilmert, treasurer gave a report of the treasury from which our gifts from memorials and donations from services this year would come. After lengthy discussions on needs, past gifts etc. it was decided to send \$100 to each of the following: St. John UCC (Sister Church in Chicago), Pastor Charlotte Nold, HOPE on 5th, and Habitat for Humanity of Logan County. \$400 was allotted to St. John Missions for the deficit in the Teddy Bear Fund so upcoming 3rd Sunday designated week of Gifts to the Teddy Bears, will start this month. Possible additional gifts may be given. Motion made to reinstate the current officers for the next year: Karen Birnbaum – President, Marlene Wilmert – Vice President; Tonita Reifsteck – Secretary and Sandy Wilmert -- Treasurer. A reminder was noted that ALL WOMEN of the church are members and welcome to participate in any of the programs. Men are welcome to participate in the Celebrate Life program that is a part of the Guild.

December Celebrate Life will be at Cracker Barrel! This will require anyone wanting to join in the lunch and program to tell Sandy Wilmert or Tonita



GREETERS

December 7th: Bill Gosda, Jr.
December 14th: Dan and Nancy Dexter
December 21st: Donna Buse
December 24th: Nancy Gehlbach
December 28th: Randy Pech

Reifsteck – All are welcome at 11:30 a.m.
Program – each present – Favorite Christmas carol,
song or poem. Those wanting to bring a gift for the
Angel Tree at St Clara’s Manor can bring it – to be
delivered that day. Suggestions in a block
announcement in Chimes. Christmas cards for
shut-ins will be signed along with December
birthday’s being celebrated.



St. Clara's Senior Care and Rehab ANGEL TREE is
available to anyone who wants to take a name of a
resident OR put a Christmas bag under The Giving
Tree OR bring a gift to CELEBRATE LIFE that will be
taken to the staff to put in bags of those needing
items. If you take a name - gift is due at St. Clara’s
Manor by December 15th. Items all like toiletries,
shampoo, shower gel, candy, cookies, snacks of ALL
kinds, puzzle books, word search and Candy!



Outreach Ministry always appreciates the
volunteers who help with COFFEE HOUR - Make
coffee and clean-up afterwards. Treats are
furnished by Outreach unless someone shares with
that on occasion. See Jack or Nancy Leich or Toni
Reifsteck with questions or sign up on sheet in
Narthex or in kitchen. Enjoyable fellowship prior to
worship every Sunday from 9:15 until 10:00 a.m.

Small Town Creations made 2 extra shirts for our
display that are now available if someone wanted
one and did not get order in. Both are X-Large and
cost is \$22 each. See Toni Reifsteck

THANK YOU NOTES

“Dear Toni & 165th Anniversary committee:

*Thank you so much for the invitation to your special
day! You all planned a great celebration, and I
enjoyed the service, the pictures, the lunch and
program. Bet wishes on your continued ministry in
the Lincoln community, and may God richly bless
you all! (signed) Love, Norma (Kramer)”*

*“Dear Toni & 165th Anniversary committee
members:*

*Thank you so much for all the work you put into
helping everyone celebrate St. John. It was so nice
to hear the memories and messages from former
pastors. Everyone was so friendly and gave us our
own name tags. The power point was fun to watch
and will be a good collection for the future. When
we got to Fellowship Hall for the luncheon,
everything was so nice, with even placemats that
had historical information.*

*I was very happy to receive the special ornament,
and I took extra bookmarks for my brothers and of
course the meal was delicious! I passed one of my
T shirts on to our daughter who is a United
Methodist pastor but who considers my dad to be a
major influence.*

*So, for all the work you did, take a bow. The
demisemiseptcentennial is only ten year away!
Your friend: Carol Richter (Pastor Warren Seyfert’s
daughter)”*

“Dear Charity Guild,

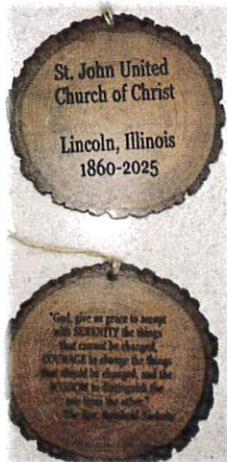
*The Mission Committee cannot thank you enough
for your generous \$400 donation to our Teddy Bear
Project. Not only is it a project close to our hearts,
but it means so much to the children receiving
them. I think the hospital gets a little panicky when
they run out of the stuffed animals when we have
been delayed in securing them.*

*Praying our 3rd Sunday donations will keep us afloat
for a long time to come. God Bless!
Marlene Wilmert, Co-chair Mission Committee”*

CORRECTIONS TO BE NOTED: In October Chimes article on the BRONZE BELLS in St. John steeple – the large bell should be recorded as weighing 1612 pounds (the smaller one - 721 pounds was noted correctly).

Article on the Anniversary Celebration in the November CHIMES had some helpers not listed that were very involved – apologies to anyone else that was moving too fast to be seen – but remembered too late were Dean Meinershagen, Jack and Nancy Leich and photographers Nancy Gehlbach and Jean Meinershagen, who’s work was so appreciated and will be shared in upcoming articles and events.

CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT 165th/100th Anniversary is available for \$15 each. These are same as the gifts given to the honored guests at the celebration and were commented on so much the committee ‘bought out the stock’ at Hallmark and that limited number have been made. \$9 of the cost will go towards the purchase and \$6 will go to the FFF (Funds for the Future) the committee had originally planned following the patten of former special celebration projects since the beginning in looking to have resource for needs or special projects in the future of the church set aside) Any questions or to purchase one of these see Tonita Reifsteck at church or call 217-855-1645. Payment will be expected before ornament is given.



Articles for the **January 2026** newsletter should be in the Church Office by **December 19th**.

THANKSGIVING SUNDAY at St. John was again a landscape of bounty and beauty. As Laura Lee thanked the team/Altar Committee that tends to



the flowers, paraments, décor each Sunday they were applauded! Again, the beautiful harvest décor Verdeen Ingram arranged, and Lynn Spellman’s Pilgrim figurines made all mindful of the meaning of the day and our blessings. They joined those who make every service meaningful and lovely each Sunday – in 2025 Altar committee

has been Donna Kessinger, Laura Lee, Alice Paulus, Becky Semple and Lynn Spellman.

Again St. John UCC shared their bounty with those who need food for their family as bags of food were brought to the altar to be taken to the Food Pantry for Thanksgiving for those families.

ATTENDANCE

November 2nd

42 In-Person, 50 on Facebook, 13 bulletins mailed and website = 105+

November 9th

36 In-Person, 39 on Facebook, 13 bulletins mailed and website = 88+

November 16th

41 In-Person, 35 on Facebook, 13 bulletins mailed and website = 89+

November 23rd

42 In-Person, 13 bulletins mailed and website = 55+



A BIT OF HISTORY

By: Tonita Reifsteck



"I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day..." could be the theme for Handbells around the world. For centuries Bells have rung from the towers of the cathedrals all over the world – sometimes to the discomfort to the ears of the folk of the countryside since the bells were rung by young boys 'swinging on the ropes with the melody sounding out across the area' sometimes not in right order or right bell! Thus, training began with handheld bells until the melody was learned. The Handbells, like other European art, traveled to the USA. In the early 1970's a handbell choir from Rockford rang (White Chapel Bells like England has) at a gathering at the UCC conference. A lot of those gathered 'got the bug' (yours truly included) but it was a big investment. My husband gifted me a handbell workshop in Bloomington in 1975 and at Judson College in 1976 with Lloyd Larson. In 1979 Albert Webb gifted St. John a 2-octave set of Schulmerich handbells in memory of his wife Alvina (who had played the cello at our church many times with Helen Hannah on violin and Naomi Hauffe on organ). A Handbell choir was soon organized (I was privileged to direct), and we were able to play at the Fall Association Meeting at our church and for Christmas Eve. In the spring the choir went to Judson College for a workshop and the bells have been rung and cared for every year since. In the years since more octaves have been added so in total we have 4 octaves = 49 bells! On the average each ringer has at least 3 bells so use of bells depends on number of ringers – some can 'shelly ring' (4 in hand) and we have a solo ringer - Verdeen Ingram who's technique with expression, number of bells and tone is nothing short of breathtaking. Directors from the beginning have

been Tonita Reifsteck, Marie Brooker, Alice Paulus, Laura Laughery, Eddie Vandewalker, Randy Buse, David Helm, Zac Clemens and Calob Pluhm with Alice and/or Tonita taking interim openings until new director was hired.

This year we will again be the nucleus of a community handbell choir during the Christmas LAMS concert on December 6th and 7th. The first Community Handbell Choir was in 2005 in Latham Park performing "We The People" a national observance of Declaration of Independence signing with orchestra, handbells, speech choir and chorus.

Our handbells are of a very soft brass metal that is easily damaged thus the wearing of white (or black) gloves. For those acquainted with keyboards – there is a bell for each key – black and white- so changing bells for a sharp or flat note takes finesse and practice. The clapper is in a fixed position – not like the school bell most are acquainted with and is activated with a snap of the wrist -yes it takes practice! It also takes dedication because an empty place at the table leaves a hole in the melody whereas on a keyboard you just add one more note or 2 with your fingers to the chord. It also takes teamwork in cleaning the bells and 'fine-tuning them (Bill Gehlbach was first to accept the challenge from choir but anyone can be taught) - for each ringers strength is different and 'snap of wrist' is the test.

Almost anyone can learn to ring too, able to read music helps but is not mandatory and there is nothing to compare with the joy of ringing (in editors opinion!). See Calob if you'd like to try....We'd all welcome more ringers – can't hear them from the cases locked in a closet! Let's Hear The Bells on Christmas Day – and every chance we get throughout the years.

**NEEDED...
COFFEE HOUR
HOST/HOUSTESS VOLUNTEERS**

Sign-up sheets are in Narthex and Kitchen.



OUTREACH AND PUBLICITY

By: Jim and Leslie Wilmert and
Tonita Reifsteck, Co-Chairs

Outreach met in Fellowship Hall Nov. 04 with thought; "Count Your many blessings – Name them one by one. Count your many blessings and see what GOD has done"

Pastor Dr. Ken Kline opened meeting with prayer. Present were Jack and Nancy Leich, Sandy Wilmert and Tonita Reifsteck. Prayers offered for Leslie who had hip surgery that day.

Voted to make devotionals available to anyone wanting for self or others—continue 3 Large Print and however many regular are needed from donation to our source, Immanuel Lutheran Church for a donation to be made in January.

Noted: Dan Row has welcomed visitors, obtained names and addresses and passed out popcorn then introducing them during the worship service. Notes are sent within 2 days to each and if local residents, information shared with pastor.

Registered to be in Christmas Parade – no theme "Christmas With Lights" December 4th. Will decorate bus on date that is 'warmer' prior to event. Driver: TBA

Noted that Scouts will help with decorating the church on Monday, December 1st at 7:00 p.m. Welcome anyone to come help. Trees and roping will be carried up to sanctuary after church on November 30th due to Jack having surgery.

During meeting group redecorated the lights to be strung on the bus with new tinsel. Confirmed that we have enough pencils for this year – do not have to purchase any.

There will be no meeting in December – participate in parade.

Program on new Heart Defibrillator will be on Sunday February 8th Details later.

Pastor closed the meeting with prayer.

RECYCLE UPDATE: Logan County Animal Control on Kickapoo Street will accept and WELCOME NEWSPAPERS.

SAVE THE DATE...

SUNDAY, February 8th – Following worship. Program on updated DEFIB machine and Fire Extinguishers at St. John UCC. Luncheon to follow program SIGN UP will begin in January.

RECYCLE CHANGES...

The tub for Christian Child Care has been temporarily removed. They have over supply of items for space allowed for them. Only need: fabric for crib sheets, used cards and egg cartons.

Prescription bottles: NOBODY takes prescription and/or other bottles. Remove lids for 'cap bucket' and toss bottles in own recycle bin.

Plastic Bags: Humane Society – NO newspapers (personal recycle bin).

Paper towel, toilet paper, etc. tubes – No SOURCE at present.

Catalogues, old card fronts, new cards – Logan/Mason County Rehab

Questions: see Verdeen or Member of Mission or Tonita or Member Outreach.

PLEASE NOTE...

Disposal of old drugs of any kind and unused prescriptions drugs are only being taken at CVS – at rear of store by pharmacy.

There is no container at the Lincoln Police Department for this service.

TRANSPORTATION...

Some have requested information on Community Action's bus service. The number to call is not the same as for the other programs.

Transportation in Lincoln can be scheduled with CAPCIL Transit Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Call to schedule 24 hours in advance. 1-217-732-1056 or 1-866-930-8212. Answering machine available after hours www.capcil.info Or SHOW BUS. Schedule request 24 hours prior to need at 1-800-525-2454.

(This info is posted on the bulletin board in entryway)

TIME and TALENT volunteers from church for some help will be noted – TBA

St. John Diners Chi Family Restaurant Saturday, December 20th 11:30 a.m.



Are you planning to attend St. John Diners in December? Sign up on the sheet in the back of the sanctuary to let us know. This way we know how many to make the reservation for. Then just meet us at Chi on December 20th at 11:30 a.m. for lunch.



Saturday, December 6th
8:30 a.m.
Imo's Café

All men of the church are Welcome

OCTOBER FINANCIALS



Beginning Balance	\$ 2,596.24
Income	\$ 9,636.58
Transfer	\$15,000.00
Expenses	\$22,366.76
Ending Balance	\$ 4,866.06



December 7th:
December 14th:
December 21st:
December 28th:

2025 TREASURER'S BOOK CLOSE



The treasurer's books for 2025 will close on Wednesday, December 31st at 12:00 noon. Any monies to be counted toward 2025 must be in the Church Office by that time. Monies received after that time will be counted for 2026.

DECEMBER

BIRTHDAYS

- 4 Dean Meinershagen
Dustin Paulus
Rich Reinwald
- 8 Peggy Goetsch
Silas Tockey
- 10 Meredith Wilmert
- 14 Marilyn Armbrust
- 17 Bill Gosda, Jr.
- 19 Roger Michalsen
Marlene Wilmert
- 20 Doug Reifsteck
- 26 Hannah Meece
- 29 Carolyn Pech
- 30 Greg Conrady
Meghan Kurtz
- 31 Angie Kurtz

SAVE THE DATES...



Monday, December 1st at 7:00 p.m.
Hanging of the Greens

Thursday, December 4th at 6:30 p.m.
Downtown Lincoln Christmas Parade

Saturday, December 6th at 8:30 a.m.
Men's Fellowship

Friday, December 12th at 11:30 a.m.
Celebrate Life Birthday Group

Friday, December 19th at 5:30 p.m.
Christmas Dinner at Spirited Republic

Saturday, December 20th at 11:30 a.m.
St. John Diners

Wednesday, December 24th
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 11:00 p.m.

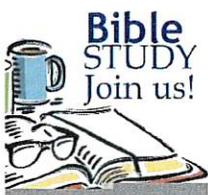
DECEMBER

ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Larry and Verdeen Ingram
- 9 Glenn and Terri Shanle
- 18 Leland and Becky Semple
- 27 Roger and Jenna Michalsen

Christmas Dinner
Friday, December 19th
5:30 p.m.
Spirited Republic
Order from Guzzardo's Menu
(Dutch Treat Meal)

Mark your calendars...



Pastor Ken is planning to start a Bible Study on Monday, December 1st at 12:00 noon till 1:30 p.m. in Wilmert Lounge. Bring a sack lunch. This Bible Study will meet every Monday.





December Calendar

Monday, December 1st

Jubilant Feet at 8:00 a.m.
Hanging of the Greens at 7:00 p.m.
Boy Scouts at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 2nd

Decorate the church bus for the parade

Thursday, December 4th

Downtown Christmas Parade

Saturday, December 6th

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

Sunday, December 7th

St. John Singers practice at 9:00 a.m.
Coffee Hour at 9:15 a.m.
Morning Worship/Communion at 10:00 a.m.
St. John Ringers practice following church
St. John Chimers practice following ringers

Monday, December 8th

Jubilant Feet at 8:00 a.m.
Boy Scouts at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 9th

Cub Scouts at 6:15 p.m.

Friday, December 12th

Celebrate Life Group at 11:30 a.m.

Sunday, December 14th

St. John Singers practice at 9:00 a.m.
Coffee Hour at 9:15 a.m.
Morning Worship at 10:00 a.m.
St. John Ringers practice following church
St. John Chimers practice following ringers

Monday, December 15th

Jubilant Feet at 8:00 a.m.
Church Council meeting at 7:00 p.m.
Boy Scouts at 7:00 p.m.

Friday, December 19th

Christmas Dinner at 5:30 p.m. at Spirited Republic

Saturday, December 20th

St. John Diners at 11:30 a.m. at Chi Restaurant

Sunday, December 21st

St. John Singers practice at 9:00 a.m.
Coffee Hour at 9:15 a.m.
Morning Worship at 10:00 a.m.
St. John Ringers practice following church
St. John Chimers practice following ringers

Monday, December 22nd

Jubilant Feet at 8:00 a.m.

Wednesday, December 24th

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Communion at 11:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 25th

Merry Christmas – Church Office closed

Friday, December 26th

Church Office closed

Sunday, December 28th

St. John Singers practice at 9:00 a.m.
Coffee Hour at 9:15 a.m.
Morning Worship at 10:00 a.m.
St. John Ringers practice following church
St. John Chimers practice following ringers

Wednesday, December 31st

2025 Treasurer's Book close at 12:00 noon

Note:

The YMCA After School Program

Monday – Friday

3:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Merry 
Christmas 



Prayer List

Alissa Smith
Cheryl F.
Lynn
David
Kathy Staten
Jim Walsh
Kristen
"Pete" Luckhart
Abigail
Middle East
Raymond
Stephanie Opperman
Janet Dullard
Sharlene
Jen Steele
Ellen Schweizer
Beverly
David Dennis
Louise Jeffries
Debbie
Duke
Chris
Allen
Linda Barrick
Wil Buse
Drake Miller
Bill Dennis
Patricia Southerd
Leslie Wilmert
Kevin Wilham
Kathy

Elizabeth Miller
Katie
Jackie Curry
Ron Brawdy
Dorothy
Kelli Thompson
Sandy
Dylan
DJ
Jeremy Cook
Fred
Linda Gehlbach
Nolan
Carol Mills
Ryman Miller
Lainey Miller
Lucy Miller
Kathleen Twente
Kelly Thomas
Russell Hahn, Jr.
Linda Douglas
Pat Hickey Freese
Mogan
Josh Filmore
Lee Westerfield

Illinois Conference/Western Association

FACILITIES AND HOMEBOUND:

Dave Armbrust, Steve Aue,
Jerry and Mary Berglin, Bill Krepps,
Wayne Mara, Edna Mara, Helen Opperman,
Sandy Sanders, Ruth Post, Susan Webb

Staff of St. John United Church of Christ

Members and Friends of St. John UCC

Rev. Dr. Kenneth W. Kline
Darlene Begolka
Carolyn Pech
Dana Birts
Laura Lee
Calob Pluhm
Darlene Begolka

Ministers

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

Church Council for 2025-2026



Silas Tockey, President
Randy Pech, Vice-President
Laura Lee, Secretary
Keith Birnbaum, Current Fund Treasurer
Bob Meinershagen (Elder), Special Funds Treasurer
Kaye Wilmert (Elder), Financial Secretary
Donna Kessinger
Roger Michalsen, (Elder)
Carolyn Pech

Contact us:

Email: stjohnuclincoln@yahoo.com

Website: stjohnuclincolnillinois.com

St. John United Church of Christ
204 Seventh Street
Lincoln, Illinois 62656
217-732-6957

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

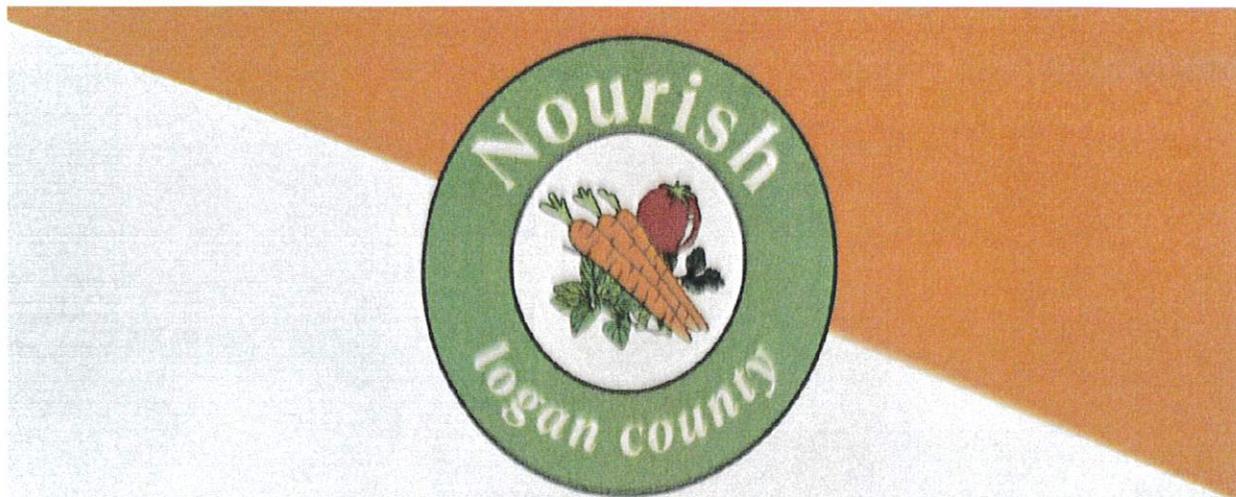


CHRISTMAS IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER...

The Worship Team met and decided that there would be a change in this year's option for Christmas giving. In the past people could donate to give a poinsettia in memory or in honor of someone. We decided to purchase artificial plants since then and have requested other giving choices over the years. The last several years we've chosen the Heifer Project but decided this year that we'd give donations to the newly organized group Nourish Logan County. The group was formed with the idea that all active churches would work together and raise monies that will be divided among all the Logan County Food Pantries. Suzanne Tockey is St. John's representative.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE...

For those who would like to participate an envelope will be available at the back of the Sanctuary. Please fill it out the bottom portion of this paper and place it the envelope with your check made payable to St. John UCC. Drop it in the offering plate on Sunday morning, or drop it off at the church office or place it in another evelope and mail it to the church office. It's that simple. We will need them returned by December 15th so a listing can be made for the December 21st bulletin.



Name _____

Gift _____

Or

In memory of _____

from _____