

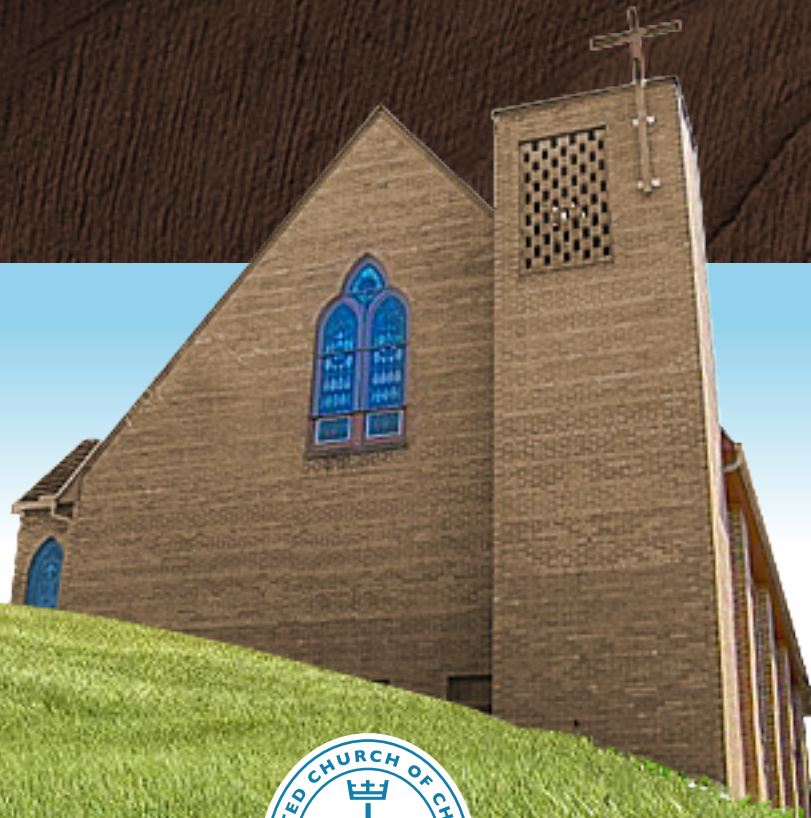


St. John's

United Church of Christ

Digital Newsletter

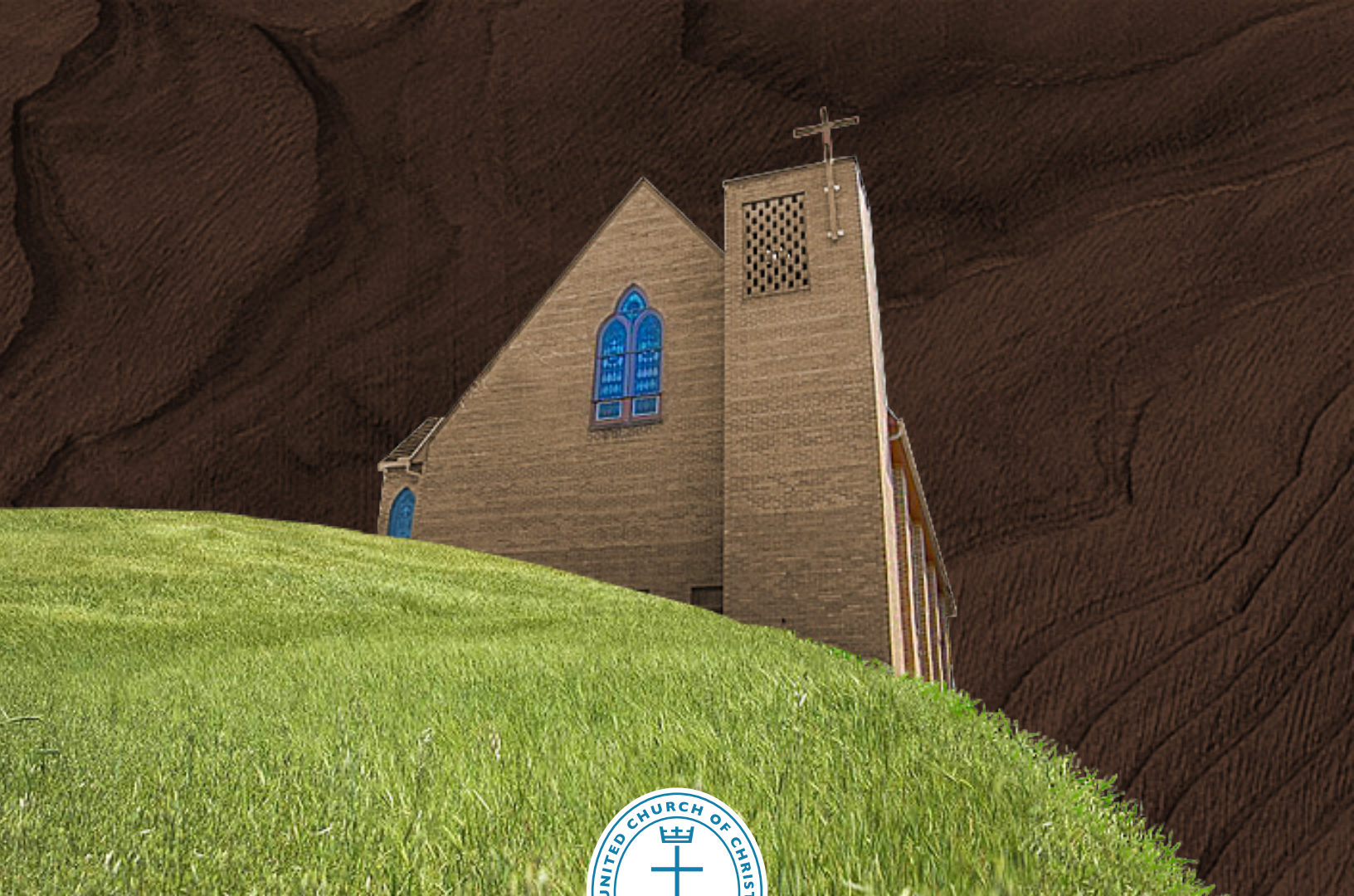
SJC Issue 1224 - December 2024



stjohnsfzwi.org

St. John's Church | PO Box 130 | 303 S Hill Street | Fountain City, WI

608.687.3277



Sunday Worship @ 8:30am

We offer two options for worship on Sundays: in person or online. Whether you prefer to worship from the safety of your home or with others, we at St. John's want to make sure you get the spiritual encouragement you need. Join us in person each Sunday at 8:30am or watch a video recording of the online service. The service is not recorded live but is uploaded after the service has ended. We look forward to worshipping with you!

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Letter From The Pastor

December 2024

If you are a Dr Who fan, you know The Doctor's infamous quote about time: "People assume that time is a strict progression of cause to effect. But actually, from a nonlinear, non-subjective viewpoint, it's more like a big ball of wibbly wobbly, timey wimey stuff." (Physicist Neil deGrasse Tyson might disagree.) For Christians, that may be no more evident than during this time of the year.

On these crisp December morning you drive to church through streets decked in their Christmas finest and tune into your favorite Christmas Carols. Then you walk into church and while there might be a Christmas tree, you hear the pastor say it's the season of Advent and sing Advent hymns. You watch those beloved specials about Santa and Frosty and The Drummer Boy, then read to your kids or grandkids "How the Grinch Stole Christmas." But in church the scripture readings read tell of adult Jesus warning to stay awake during times of chaos and seeming disasters. And then there is this focus over Advent on this strange bug-eating, guy out in the wilderness who cries out 'repent' and calling the people "vipers" –hardly "happy holiday."

Starting December 26th, gifts are being returned for correct sizes as wilting Christmas trees start to appear on the street with a trail of dry needles marking where they came from. But then you are told at church that this is the first or second Sunday of Christmas. And in case you aren't confused enough, you recall the pastor telling you the first Sunday in Advent that "that" day was the first day of the new year. Even as everyone else is preparing for New Year's Day on January 1, 2025.

This "wibbly wobbly timey wimey" difference between seasons outside the church and what is on our bulletin covers can be disorienting. It sometimes cause tensions between congregations and pastors when people want to sing Christmas hymns during worship and focus solely on the baby Jesus, while the pastor insists on using those out-of-season Scripture lessons and singing those "weird" Advent hymns.

Continued...

Letter From The Pastor

December 2024

Yet this is also a time to practice the tension between living as Christian and living in the world: the two don't always align. Sometimes what Jesus calls us to do, how God intends for us to live out the command to love others seems odd among the so-called norms of the world. Jesus and his disciples found the that it can even get you labeled as a threat, treacherous, or worse.

But other times, in a glimpse of the fulfilment of God's reign of love and justice, the two align. There is something special about the quietness of Christmas Eve night, when the stores are closed, most people are home with loved ones, and the stars fill the sky (even if they are behind clouds letting snow fall.) Maybe that's why so many who are unable to come on Sundays or aren't sure why it even matters if they do try to come to Christmas Eve services. The Christmas story touches our deepest needs and desires. Our profoundest hopes. Why is it that this story cuts through with the same message that God calls every day: "Fear not!" These words from Emmanuel, God with us and among us. The One who is longing deeply that love and grace and abundant joy of life God offers to humanity reaches us, to reaches you. The God who wants this so profoundly to becomes completely vulnerable, reliant on those who will raise Jesus. A God who promises us that God is already involved, and will not allow evil, suffering, even death to have the final word.

Years ago I listened as another pastor spoke about how he lives in this "timey wimey" period when the church calendar and the rest of the world seem misaligned as a time to celebrate both the "Holy Days" and the "holiday." On Sundays during Advent, as well as his personal practices of faith, he observed the holy days of Advents looking forward both to the birth of Jesus and to a future time when God's reign is fully embracing the world in love, grace, justice, and peace (however that may happen.) He also took time to see, to look for a glimpse of times and people where that reign is already breaking through in our daily lives, then how he could become a part of that. Those times that early Advent scripture readings remind us that even when it seems like chaos, Jesus is standing with us, where God is already rendering reconciliation, joy, healing, and peace.

Continued...

Letter From The Pastor

December 2024

Then outside Sunday and his spiritual practices, he would celebrate Christmas. Christmas Trees are up and decorated both at home and in the church, Christmas luncheons and parties, and all the other trappings that can make this a joyous time of year.

I like that. I think we might even need a little more Advent. Times when we practice anticipating, expecting good and right in the world. Time when we practice living in those glimpses of God's love and reign even when others think we are foolish, impractical, or worse.

So I'll wait a little longer to wish you "Merry Christmas." I will wish you a blessed Advent, and as always, pray that you see and experience where God's reign is even now breaking into the world.

God's grace and peace.

Pastor Deb Kunkel

303 S Hill Street
Fountain City, WI
PO Box 130
Church: 608.687.3277
Cell: 239.994.2528
pastorstjohnsuccfc@gmail.com

See All Letters & Messages Online Under The Worship Tab
stjohnsfcwi.org

Consistory President Message

December 2024

We have had a very busy fall with the Bazaar behind us, the parking lot almost finished and a late Thanksgiving holiday. It is now time to look forward to the Christmas Season and the New Year. Many people are to be thanked from our Ladies who again had a very successful Bazaar to the Trustees for all they do and oversee at the Church. We cannot forget Faye and her Ducks who add so much joy and happiness to our church family.

The Deacons have prepared a budget for the coming year, which will be presented and hopefully approved at the annual meeting. A lot of work goes into this. As a church we need to remain fiscally responsible. Your generous giving makes this possible, so I encourage all to continue giving what you can.

The Consistory is going to be looking at Leadership Positions needed for next year. Please think about volunteering to fill one of these positions.

There are lots of fun things coming up for the Christmas Season so be sure to watch for the events. We will be decorating the Sanctuary, and tree. The Children have a program on December 15th and of course we will have a service on Christmas Eve.

God's grace and peace.

Karen Knospe
Interim President

See All Letters & Messages Online Under The Worship Tab
stjohnsfzwi.org

Sunday Penny Collection

First Sunday of the Month

The Church School Students have been collecting pennies the first Sunday of every month. This money enables us to do donations to people or needy projects in our area or throughout the world. This years donations when to the Cochrane-Fountain City Area Food Shelf and the Buffalo County Humane Society.



Sunday, December 1, 2024

Online Calendar

Visit Us Online 24/7

Please go online and visit our NEW easy to use website for current up-to-date, detailed event information. Our calendar is updated daily. Email us with any questions or comments.

stjohnsfzwi.org



The Redemption of Scrooge

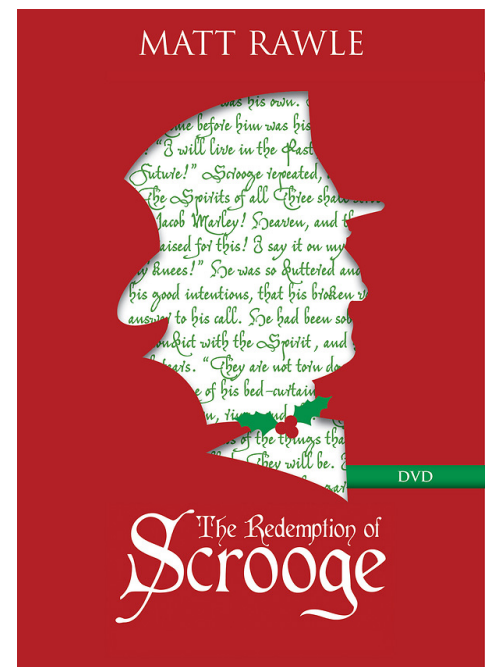
Joint Advent Book Study

Pastor Deb invites you to join her reflecting on “The Redemption of Scrooge” this Advent season. Come explore the connections between the classic story of Ebenezer Scrooge and the story of the Advent and Christmas seasons. Pastor Deb has copies of the book available for \$12.00, but the book is not required. Don’t worry if you’ve never read “A Christmas Carol” or seen its many adaptations; you can still join us.

This is joint study for St. Johns and Hope members held at Hope United Church the four Mondays of Advent at 5:30pm starting Monday, December 2. You can attend one or all four. (Pastor Deb understands it’s the most wonderful, but perhaps also the busiest time of the year.)

Mondays @ 5:30pm
Hope United Church
Cochrane, WI

- ✓ Monday, December 2, 2024
- ✓ Monday, December 8, 2024
- ✓ Monday, December 15, 2024
- ✓ Monday, December 22, 2024



Visit Our Website To Learn More About All Events And Activities.
stjohnsfcwi.org

Eagle Valley Church

Saturday, December 14, 2024

There will be an open invitation for all members of St. John's Church and Hope United Church to attend the Advent Vespers with Christmas Hymn Service on Saturday, December 14, 2024 at the Eagle Valley Church at 4:00pm. We'll share the Christmas story, sing favorite Christmas hymns and experience together this special time of the year. We hope you can join us.

The Church in Eagle Valley was historically preserved and donated to St. John's in 2003. Friends of Eagle Valley Community Church, an independent ecumenical committee, manages its use and maintains the restoration. As it is now named, this Community Church is available for any church to use for worship services, memorials, or weddings. In 2011 a pavilion with tables was added on the church grounds to accommodate gatherings of church or family.

Christmas Hymn Service Starts @ 4:00pm

- ✓ St. John's Church & Hope United Church
- ✓ Invitation
- ✓ S2664 Co Rd G
- ✓ Fountain City, WI



Poinsettia Orders

Sunday, December 15, 2024

We are taking orders for Poinsettias to adorn our channel for the Christmas Eve Service. There will be orders form in the bulletin the next three Sundays for those you would like to order a Poinsettia in honor or memory of a loved one. The cost is to be determined, but usually runs between \$10-\$20.00 per plant. You will be able to take the plants with you after the Christmas Eve Services. Deadline to turn in the order forms is December 15, 2024.

If you are unable to use the order form in the bulletin, please email the following information to the church office (stjohnsuccfc@gmail.com) by December 13 (please note difference in date) the following information: Your name and phone number, the number of Poinsettias you would like to order, then for the bulletin whether this is in memory or in honor of, how you want their names to appear, and how you want the “given by” to appear.

You will be contact after December 15 with the cost for the plant(s).

Children’s Christmas Program

Sunday, December 15, 2024

St. John’s Church will have the Children’s Christmas Program on Sunday, December 15, 2024.

School age children are welcome to join our Sunday School classes during Sunday morning services at 8:30am. St. John’s Church has 1 group Pre-K to 6th grade. Through weekly lessons we learn about our Savior Jesus Christ. Each year the Sunday School students rehearse and perform the Children’s Christmas Service in December celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. For more information, contact Karen Knospe.

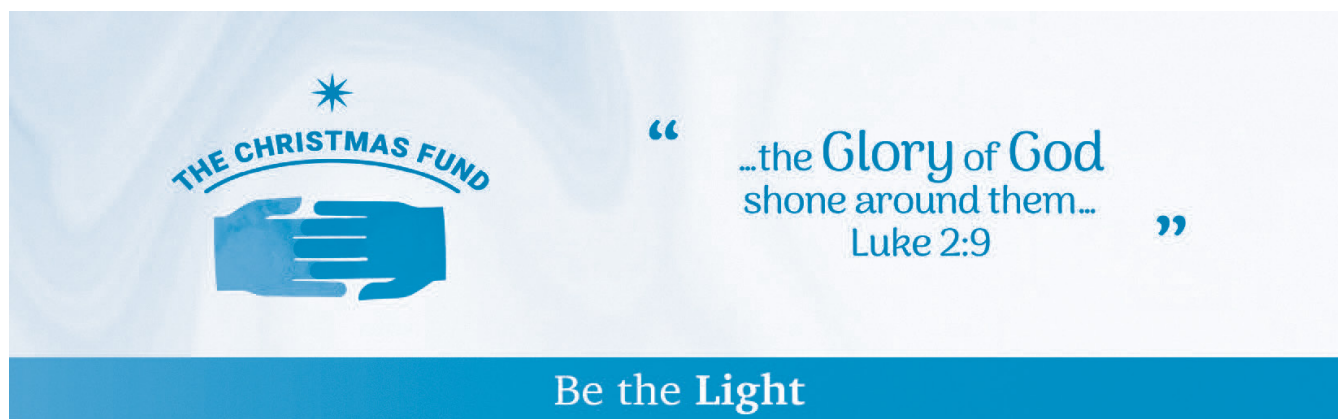
Christmas Fund Offering

Sunday, December 22, 2024

Among the many letters and notes the Pension Boards receives from recipients of gifts made possible by contributions to the Christmas Fund were these words:

As a lifelong member of the UCC, I have fond memories of the Annual Christmas Fund. I never thought we would be in a situation where we too would need assistance as medical expenses and caregiving costs increase. We are grateful that Christmas Fund is here to assist us.

Reverend Christopher Gilmore Lead Pastor Sixth Avenue –
United Church of Christ in Denver, CO



Thanks to your generosity, last year the Christmas Fund provided over \$1.9 million in pension and health benefits, emergency grants, and thank-you checks to retired church servants and their families. Every gift came from people like you. This year, please give what you can to continue supporting those who've devoted their lives to serving others.

God's grace and peace.

Pastor Deb Kunkel

Liturgists & Others Wanted

Do you like to read during the service?

Then you will be happy to know that Pastor Deb is seeking liturgists. Liturgists will lead the Call to Worship and read the first Scripture Reading. If you would like to be included in the pool of liturgists or readers, please let Pastor Deb know or look for the sign-up sheet. Or do you like the spotlight or have a little bit of “ham” in you? Pastor Deb would love to have you join her in skits or dramatic monologues used on occasion during the service. Please let her know (all ages welcome.)



Stewardship

Stewardship Moment from the Deacons

Stewardship is as important in today as it is in December.

From the Stewardship Theme last year we are reminded that stewardship is all year long.

“Because of You our Church changes lives”.

~ St John’s Church



Constitution & By-Laws

Review and Revision Continues

The Task Force reviewing our church's Constitution and By-laws continues their dedication to the task. However, the proposed revisions will not be ready in time for the congregation to have for the Annual Meeting. The current timeline is targeting a special congregational meeting this spring for members approval. There will also be several gatherings prior to that for members to ask questions, make their suggestions, and provide any other input. The primary areas of review are the areas concerning membership and governance, but all areas will be looked at. If you have suggestions or questions for the Task Force before then, please contact one of its members.

Job Opportunity

Church Secretary

Rebecca (Becky) Kamrowski is currently our church secretary. We thank her for her ongoing commitment and hard work. When she took the job, her fulltime job at the bank was slated to be reduced to parttime. However, that did not happen, resulting in her working more hours that she had intended between the two positions. Becky is willing to continue. She has also approached us and let us know that she is also more than willing to also step aside if someone else who is qualified would like to take over. Do you or someone you might know be interested in applying for the position? The job is an average of 40 hours a month, though some weeks will be less than ten hours, and during holidays it may be more. Parts of the job can be done from home, but it does require time in the office also. More details are available. Please see Pastor Deb or email her at pastorstjohnsuccfc@gmail.com.

God's grace and peace.

Pastor Deb Kunkel

C-FC Area Food Shelf

Report For November 2024

As part of our Stewardship as a church please consider a monetary donation or food donation for our Food Shelf here at Church. See list below of our most needed items. We have been much busier than usual providing food to people in need in our community. If we want to continue this service we do need your assistance to continue. Please put your donation of food in the green bin at church located in the Food Shelf room across from Pastor Deb's office or your monetary donations can be placed in the offering plate or mailed to church with checks made out to C-FC Area Food Shelf - St John's Church, PO Box 130, Fountain City WI, 54629.

Donations Most Needed:

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| ✓ Toilet Paper | ✓ Crackers (Saltines) | ✓ Canned Chili |
| ✓ Canned /Ham/Salmon | ✓ Rice/Pasta Pouches | ✓ Canned Stew |
| ✓ Cake/Brownie | ✓ Vegetable Spray | ✓ Spices |
| ✓ Muffin Mixes | ✓ Brown Rice | ✓ Applesauce |
| ✓ Canned Frosting | ✓ Juice Boxes | ✓ Salad Dressing |
| ✓ Instant Oatmeal | ✓ V8/Tomato Juice | ✓ Ketchup |
| ✓ Cereal (Healthier) | ✓ Boost/Ensure | ✓ BBQ Sauce |

1st & 3rd Monday: 4:30pm - 6:30pm
2nd & 4th Wednesday: 3:00pm - 5:00pm



- ✓ 897 Pounds Of Food Distributed
- ✓ 43 Total People Helped
- ✓ Averages 21 Pounds Of Food Per Person
- ✓ 09 Children
- ✓ 23 Adults
- ✓ 11 Seniors
- ✓ 22 Households (5 Came Twice)

Food Shelf

Businesses Of The Month: Eagles Peak Processing

Cochrane-Fountain City Area Food Shelf
Eagles Peak Processing | Gilmanton, Wisconsin
Thank you very much!




St. John's
United Church of Christ

**Eagles Peak
Processing**

Food Shelf

Businesses Of The Month: St Mary's Catholic Church

Cochrane-Fountain City Area Food Shelf
St Mary's Catholic Church | Fountain City, Wisconsin
Thank you very much!



Tres Ecclesiae

Food Shelf

Businesses Of The Month: Hope United Church

Cochrane-Fountain City Area Food Shelf
Hope United Church | Cochrane, Wisconsin
Thank you very much!



Food Shelf

Businesses Of The Month: Children's Penny Collection Fund

Cochrane-Fountain City Area Food Shelf

St. John's Church | Children's Penny Collection Fund

Thank you very much!



**Children's Penny
Collection**

Construction Update

Church Parking Lot

Our parking lot on the south side of the church is under construction to replace the retaining wall and add additional parking spaces. You might have noticed the giant concrete “Lego Blocks” that are appearing, as well as the construction equipment. (Construction was delayed when the original supplier was unable to fulfill the number of blocks needed as indicated to our contractor at time of the estimate. This delayed Tom Baures Evacuating as they needed to wait until the needed blocks were made.)



Over the next few Sundays parking will be limited. Weather permitting, the target is for this to be completed in a little over two weeks. Until that time, if convenient please consider coming with a friend or relative to cut down on the number of cars that need to park. Also, please leave the space in front of the double doors clear so people can be easily dropped off and picked up. Finally please make sure that there is sufficient space when cars are parked on both sides of the road for Emergency vehicles to get through if they are responding to a call on the street.

Volunteers: November

Ushers

Dale Schaffner, Calvin Stettler & Dale Schmidtknecht

Greeters

12.08.24 Weldon & Cheryl Kuhn Family

12.15.24 Bryan Guenther & Rebecca

12.22.24 Steve & Sue Prussing

12.24.24 Steve & Sue Prussing

12.29.24 Fifth Sunday @ Hope United Church

Counters

Donna Beck & Mary Schmitt

Communion & Flowers

LuAnn Schmidtknecht & Amy Hammer

Financial Report

For detailed information regarding the financial standing of St. John's Church, contact the office to review financial documents.

St. John's Church
United Church of Christ
303 S Hill Street
Fountain City, WI

608.687.3277
stjohnsfcwi.org

Birthdays

Emma Kuhn

Tina Fetting

Ryan Engel

Tessah Ely

Mary Stettler

Bella Beck-Walters

Alexis Yapp

Baylee Osborn

Dylan Wolfe

Bill Ruben

Ron Schutz

Laura Madsen

Joan Felting

Natalie Fetting

Danielle Felting

John Schowalter

John Sutter

Randy Boehm

Andrew Wolfe

Izaiah Knecht

Veronica Fetting

Richard Wicka

Tiffany Schaffner

Denise Yapp

Lucas Walth

Miles Walth

Mary Ziegler

Anniversaries

Reggie & Jeanne Franz

Chris & Kendra Ritscher

Werner & Jolene Engel

Other Special Events

St. John's Church

Along with our Sunday Worship Service schedule, Pastor Deb's Office Hours, Consistory Meetings, Food Shelf Schedule and other recurring events. Below is a list of SPECIAL EVENTS located at St. John's Church and or the local area. Please contact us with any questions. Thanks again for all the support from volunteer and the community.



Consistory Meeting St. John's Church

303 S Hill Street
Fountain City, WI
Starts @ 6:00pm



Christmas Hymn Service Eagle Valley Church

S2664 Co Rd G
Fountain City, WI
Starts @ 4:00pm



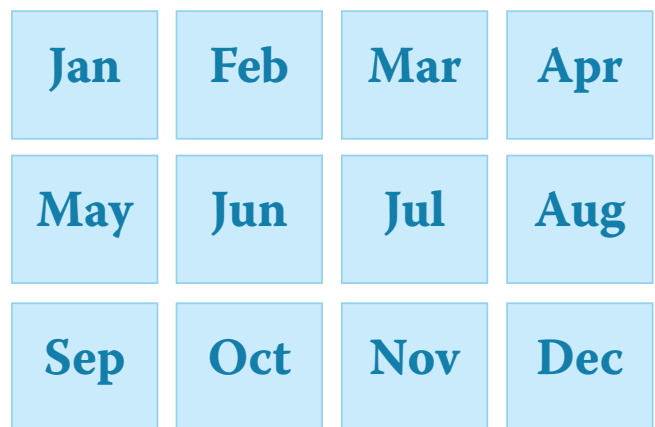
Christmas Eve (Evening) St. John's Church

303 S Hill Street
Fountain City, WI
Starts @ 6:00pm



Fifth Sunday St. John's Church

210 Michaels Street
Hope United Church
Starts @ 10:30am



Online Calendar

Please go online and visit our NEW easy to use website for current up-to-date, detailed event information. Our calendar is updated daily. Email us with any questions or comments.

stjohnsfcwi.org
info@stjohnsfcwi.org

Prayer Requests

St. John's Church - Pastor Deb Kunkel

Congregation members and non-members are encouraged to request prayers for times of need, comfort, healing, celebration and joy. If you would like a visit from Pastor Deb, please call her to set up a time today!



Pastor Deb's Office Hours:

Wednesday's 10:00am - Noon
239.994.2528
pastorstjohnsuccfc@gmail.com

St. John's Church
United Church of Christ
303 S Hill Street, PO Box 130
Fountain City, WI 54629-0130

608.687.3277
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info@stjohnsfcwi.org



St. John's

United Church of Christ

Church Office:

stjohnsuccfc@gmail.com

Newsletter:

stjohnsfcnewsletter@gmail.com

Pastor Deb's Office Hours:

Wednesday's 10:00am - Noon

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