**St. John United Church of Christ**

***“In Christ We Live, Celebrate, & Serve”***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| November 12, 2023 |  24th Sunday after Pentecost (A)  |
| Rev. Karla Frost, Pastor | Dave Ekstrand, Dir. Of Music |
| 9:30 Zoom & In-Person Worship | 9:30 Sunday School for Children |
| 2901 Nameoki Road | Granite City, IL 62040 |
| E-stjohnucc2901gc@yahoo.comWeb-stjohnuccgranitecity.com |  (618) 877-6060Instagram: @stjohnucc2901gc |

YouTube: gcstjohnucc Facebook: Search St. John UCC Granite City

Large print bulletins are available from the Ushers.

***Bold italic denotes congregation reads or sings.***

\*Denotes all who are able, please stand.

**WE COME TO WORSHIP GOD**

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC AND BELLS CALLING TO WORSHIP

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

\*GREETING ONE ANOTHER WITH A WAVE

\*SUNG RESPONSE ***“Majesty”*** #43

***Majesty, worship his majesty;***

***unto Jesus be all glory, honor, and praise.***

***Majesty, kingdom authority***

***flow from his throne unto his own, his anthem raise.***

***So exalt, lift up on high the name of Jesus;***

***magnify, come glorify Christ Jesus, the King.***

***Majesty, worship his majesty;***

***Jesus, who died, now glorified, King of all kings.***

MESSAGE FOR ALL GOD’S CHILDREN Joshua 24:15

“…choose this day whom you will serve…but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

PRELUDE AND CENTERING OUR HEARTS ON WORSHIP

 *God, We Praise You* Parry

CENTERING THOUGHT1

*Hope. Holy hope. Who guided you to God’s rumbling wellspring? Who needs you to point the way to God?*

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CALL TO WORSHIP AND PRAYER2 From Hymn 547

 We are God’s people, the chosen of the Lord,

 born of his Spirit, established by his Word;

 ***Our cornerstone is Christ alone,***

 ***and strong in him we stand.***

 We are God’s loved ones, the Bride of Christ our Lord. For we have known it, the love of God outpoured;

 ***Now let us learn how to return***

 ***the gift of love once given.***

Let us pray together.

 ***Holy One, we have chosen to love and serve you, and so we are ready to worship together. Send your Spirit to open our hearts and minds to celebrate life with you. Open us to the joy of sharing your love and doing ministry together. Amen.***

\*HYMN  ***“Stand Up and Bless the Lord”*** #11

\*RESPONSIVE PSALTER READING Psalm 78:1-7

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching;

***Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.***

I will open my mouth in a parable;

***I will utter dark sayings from of old,***

Things that we have heard and known,

***That our ancestors have told us.***

We will not hide them from their children;

***We will tell to the coming generation***

The glorious deeds of the Lord and his might

***And the wonders that he has done.***

He established a decree in Jacob

 ***And appointed a law in Israel,***

Which he commanded our ancestors

 ***To teach to their children,***

That the next generation might know them,

 ***The children yet unborn,***

And rise up and tell them to their children,

 ***So that they should set their hope in God,***

And not forget the works of God,

 ***But keep his commandments.***

**WE HEAR GOD’S WORD**

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HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25 pg. 205

ANTHEM *It’s All Right* Listner

 Amenz

GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 25:1-13 pg. 26

REFLECTION

**WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD**

\*HYMN ***“Happy the Home When God Is There”*** #607

PASTORAL PRAYER & UNISON LORD’S PRAYER

 ***Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in***

***heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.***

STEWARDSHIP INVITATION

OFFERTORY *Thanks to God Whose Word Was Spoken* Cutts

\*SUNG RESPONSE2 ***“Give Thanks”*** #359

***Give thanks with a grateful heart,***

***give thanks to the Holy One,***

***give thanks because he’s given Jesus Christ his Son.***

***Give thanks with a grateful heart,***

***give thanks to the Holy One,***

***give thanks because he’s given Jesus Christ his Son.***

***And now let the weak say “I am strong,”***

***let the poor say “I am rich,”***

***because of what the Lord has done for us.***

***And now let the weak say “I am strong,”***

***let the poor say “I am rich,”***

***because of what the Lord has done for us, Give thanks!***

\*UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

 ***With heart, soul, strength and mind, we praise and serve you, O God. These offerings are only one way we do so. We also offer our choices, prayers, and actions so that in every***

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***time and place we are ready for mission, in Jesus’ name. Amen.***

\*HYMN ***“Take My Life and Let It Be”*** #466

\*BENEDICTION

\*POSTLUDE  *Lord Dismiss Us with Your Blessing* Fawcett

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Welcome to St. John United Church of Christ! It is a gift to come together in worship of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The November 5 bulletins were given in celebration of Lilly Oliver’s November 7 birthday and in memory of Grandpa Dick Oliver’s November 18 birthday.

Today’s bulletins are given in memory of Myrna Bischoff Rich by Herb &\* Jeanie Bischoff.

If you would like to place **flowers on the altar**, and pick them up after church or on Monday, please call **Rosalie Watson** (618-741-2979). Flower Emporium offers $25 (small), $30 (medium), or $35 (large) arrangements. If you would like to sponsor the **bulletins**, please call the **church office** at (618) 877-6060.

Thank you to **Kiki Cochran** for serving as liturgist, and to Dorothy Kinney for serving as Greeter. We also thank AMENZ—George Cochran, Jack Dawson, Dave Ekstrand, and John Nitchman for special music today.

**ANNUAL MEETING**

Our Annual Meeting will be held after worship and fellowship hour next Sunday, November 19, 2023. Please plan to attend. Annual Reports are available on the entrance table. Please take one per household to review this week and to contact and ask questions of the appropriate people so they can have answers prepared before the meeting. This will help the meeting flow smoothly as we celebrate one faithful year, and anticipate another, in the life of St. John UCC and Cemetery.

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**THIS WEEK**

Today: In-person and Zoom Worship, 9:30 a.m.

 Sunday School for Children, 9:30 a.m.

 Annual Reports Booklets distributed

Youth Fellowship leaves for Rainbow Ranch Petting Zoo after worship

Monday: Al-Anon, 9:30 a.m.

 Brotherhood, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday: Quilters, 8:30 a.m.

 Hilltoppers, 12:30 p.m.

 Bible Study, 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday: TOPS, 9:00 a.m.

 Head Start in Nursery, 1:00 p.m.

 Bell Choir, 5:30 p.m.

 Chancel Choir, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday: GCC Band rehearsal, 6:15-9:45 p.m.

Next Sunday: In-person and Zoom Worship, 9:30 a.m.

 Sunday School for Children, 9:30 a.m.

 Fellowship Hour sponsored by Youth Fellowship

**NOVEMBER MISSION OF THE MONTH**

The November Mission of the Month is our literacy program working with the downtown Head Start. Volunteers will be needed for future activities as well as funds. In November for Mission of the Month, please clearly mark extra financial gifts and share time, talent and treasure with this important community organization.

**“CELEBRATE THE CARDINALS”**

Only 104 days until Cardinal spring training games start! First game is on 2/24/24~~sounds like a good omen for a successful 2024 season!  Spring training and the schedule for regular season games are shown on the 2024 calendar along with beautiful photos of this past history-making season. Orders appreciated TODAY for delivery first week of December. Please see Betty Meszaros in fellowship hall after worship TODAY. Also, check out the raffle basket. Last chance for raffle basket will be sold during fellowship hour next Sunday 11/19 with drawing before the start of the annual meeting. Call or text Betty at 618-670-5267 if questions. Proceeds to benefit special projects at our cemetery.

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**SCRIP (GIFT CARDS)**

The November scrip cards will be ordered TODAY with delivery hopefully next weekend. Start a new family tradition of giving gift cards when you gather at Thanksgiving. Request your family members do their own shopping and show you at Christmas what YOU gave THEM (wrapping is optional)!  December 10th will be the deadline to order in time for Christmas delivery. Master list of vendors and St John ”favorites“ order forms are on the table in the blue folder in the Narthex. Give order form and check payable to St. John UCC to Betty Meszaros at any time. Please and talk to Betty in fellowship hall after worship TODAY to order or if questions or call her or text at 618-670-5267.

**BROTHERHOOD SPONSORED CHRISTMAS PARTY**

The annual Brotherhood Christmas dinner/party will be on Monday, December 11 at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Everyone is invited to attend. Reservations are due by Tuesday, December 5. Cost is $15 per person payable to St. John UCC Brotherhood.

**TOTENFEST**

Totenfest, when we remember loved ones who died during the past liturgical year, will be held on November 26, during our 9:30 a.m. worship service. Letters will be sent to a family member if we have an address inviting them to attend this special service. Please invite those you know and offer a ride to anyone who may need transportation.



**OUR PRAYERS**

**Hospital**

Walter Anders at Christian Hospital.

**Nursing, Assisted, & Independent Living**

Bob Braundmeier, Marcia Buenger, Ruth Buer, Myra Cook, Hilde Few, JoAnn King, Karen Luddeke, and Marjorie Schmidt.

**At Home**

Chloe Affolter, Melissa Affolter; Isabella Boyer, Bonnie Fornaszewski, Mary Franz, Luitgard Fries, Melba Grady, Lou Hasse, Chuck King, Mina McBrian, Cindy Meyer, Sandy Mueller, Cliff Robertson, Delores Roethemeyer (at Nancy Jacobs’ home), June Stille, Jim Watson, Janice Weeks, and Nancy Wilson.

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**Illinois South Conference**

Lenzburg St. Peter’s UCC, Rev. Earl (Johanna Crecelius. Maeystown St. John UCC, Rev. Patrick (Kathy) Poole. Retired Pastor Rev.Herbert & Bennie Schafale in Freeburg.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25**

Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel, and they presented themselves before God. 2And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods. 3Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many.

“Now, therefore, revere the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt and serve the Lord. 15Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living, but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

16Then the people answered, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods, 17for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went and among all the peoples through whom we passed, 18and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God.”

19But Joshua said to the people, “You cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. 20If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm and consume you, after having done you good.” 21And the people said to Joshua, “No, we will serve the Lord!” 22Then Joshua said to the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve him.” And they said, “We are witnesses.” 23He said, “Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel.” 24The people said to Joshua, “The Lord our God we will serve, and him we will obey.” 25So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.

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**Matthew 25:1-13**

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten young womentook their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.2Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. 5As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. 6But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ 7Then all those young womengot up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 9But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ 10And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet, and the door was shut. 11Later the other young womencame also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ 12But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’ 13Keep awake, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

**DECEMBER/JANUARY HERALD**

The November Herald was taken to the Post Office on Wednesday, November 8, so hopefully bulk mail will move quickly, although they delayed our bringing it to them by 1 day because of their staff changes.

Our changes in computers has proven to be challenging, but our new secretarial staff and volunteers are doing their absolute best to keep the offices running well. Therefore, we will keep the November 21 deadline for articles for the December/January edition of the Herald and share the news from St. John UCC and share the good news of great joy in Christ our Lord.

**Try our QR code! This little square will take you directly to our secure MyVanco website where you can contribute to any of our various funds. Just follow three simple steps:**

1. **Open your smart phone’s camera app**
2. **Aim the camera at the black and white square below and a link will appear on your screen.**
3. **Click the link and you’ll be directed to our donations website. From there, you can select a fund to which you’d like to make a contribution.**

**Thank you!**

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**CALL FOR INFORMATION**

Bell Choir – Kathy Morris, 618-210-6095

Cemetery -- Kathy Montgomery, 618-876-5811

Chancel Choir – John Nitchman, President, 618-288-5297

Council – Kiki Cochran, President, 618-797-2511 or Donna Brandes, Vice President, 618-802-1072

Evening Guild – Christie Roth, 618-931-6194

Financial Reports – Mike Seibold, Treasurer, 618-792-4301

 or 618-877-6060 church office

Heavenly Stars – Betty Meszaros, 618-451-1968

Karen Gaines - 618-288-0845

Herald – 618-877-6060 church office

Hilltoppers – Dee Roethemeyer, 618-876-6860

Historian – Sandy Dawson, 618-791-8246

Men’s Brotherhood – Chuck Hasse, 618-876-0936,

Dave Douglas, 618-452-3336

Quilters – Sandy Dawson 618-791-8246

Doris Peterson 618-877-1606

Sausage Dinner – Donna Brandes, 618-802-1072

Nancy Jacobs -- 618-931-0673

Scrip Orders – Melissa Lane, 314-575-7627 or Betty Meszaros 618-451-1968

Sunday School – Donna Brandes, 618-802-1072

Youth Fellowship – Sharon O’Toole, 314-420-1548

**UPCOMING COMMUNITY & CHURCH EVENTS**

Master’s Voice Christmas Concert November 30 and December 1, 7:00, at First United Presbyterian Church.

Harvest Home celebrated November 19 during worship

Totenfest, November 26, 9:30 a.m., during Sunday Worship.

Hatfield Gaines Scholarship application deadline December 1.

Parsonage Open House, Sunday, December 3, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Unbroken Concert, Friday, December 8, 6:00 Concert, Dinner by reservation, $15, 4:30 p.m.

Christmas Ensemble Concert, Sunday, December 10, 1:00 p.m. featuring pianist Sun Hye Chung here at St. John UCC.

Christmas Eve, December 24, 9:30 a.m. worship a combination of 4th Sunday of Advent and Christmas closing with traditional Silent Night.

10:30 p.m. music and 11:00 p.m. service closing with traditional Silent Night.

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Our Youth Fellowship is sponsoring 2 children from Uni-Pres Kindercottage of East St. Louis.  Here are the names and information of the 2 children.  In the past, some congregation members have wanted to contribute to our mission project, so we are including the following information.

MARIANNA KALIO

Sex – F Sex - M

Age – 8 Age – 9 months

Clothes Size - 10/12 Clothes size – 9-12 months

Shoe Size – 2 Coat size – 12 months

Coat Size -,12/14 Pampers – size 4

If you choose to purchase item(s) for either Marianna or Kalio or for both of them they need to be wrapped with their name on them since we have 2 this year. Everything needs to be dropped off in the church office no later than Sunday, December 17th.

Here are additional ways to help Uni-Pres Kindercottage during Christmas with the following donations:

Cleaning Supplies - Bleach, Disinfectant, Vanish, Comet, Bathroom Tub & Tile Cleaner and Clorox Wipes

Paper Products - Paper Towels, Napkins, Bathroom Tissue and Styrofoam Plates

PPE Supplies - Masks for Adults and Children, Latex Gloves Size L and financial donations are always welcomed.

You may also send a donation to Uni-Pres Kindercottage, 564 Veronica Avenue, East St. Louis, IL 62205 and they will do your shopping for the child(s) sponsored or donation of supplies.  Just make a check payable to Uni-Pres Kindercottage and write in the memo section “Child’s Christmas Gifts or cleaning supplies, etc.” and a set of Santa’s Elves will go out shopping for you.  If you have any further questions, you may contact Sharon O’Toole at 315-420-1548.

We appreciate your help!  Thanks!

Youth Fellowship Group and Uni-Pres Kindercottage

***“Stand Up and Bless the Lord”***

**Stand up and bless the Lord,**

**you people of his choice;**

**stand up and bless the Lord your God with heart and soul and voice.**

**O for the living flame,**

**from God’s own altar brought,**

**to touch our lips, our minds inspire, and wing to heaven our thought.**

**God is our strength and song,**

**and his salvation ours;**

**then be his love in Christ proclaimed with all our ransomed powers.**

**Stand up and bless the Lord,**

**the Lord your God adore;**

**stand up and bless his glorious name, both now and evermore.!**

***“Happy the Home When God Is There”***

***Happy the home when God is there, and love fills everyone,***

***when with united work and prayer***

***the Master’s will is done.***

***Happy the home where God’s strong love***

***is starting to appear,***

***where all the children hear his fame and parents hold him dear.***

***Happy the home where prayer is heard,***

***and praise is everywhere,***

***where parents love the sacred Word, and its true wisdom share.***

***Lord, let us in our homes agree***

***this blessed peace to gain;***

***unite our hearts in love to thee,***

***and love to all will reign.***

***“Take My Life and Let It Be”***

**Take my life and let it be**

**consecrated, Lord, to thee;**

**take my hands and let them move**

**at the impulse of thy love,**

**at the impulse of thy love.**

**Take my feet and let them be**

**swift and beautiful for thee;**

**take my voice and let me sing**

**always, only, for my King,**

**always, only, for my King.**

**Take my lips and let them be**

**filled with messages for thee;**

**take my silver and my gold,**

**not a mite would I withhold,**

**not a mite would I withhold.**

**Take my love, my God, I pour**

**at thy feet its treasure store;**

**take myself and I will be**

**ever, only, all for thee,**

**ever, only, all for thee.**