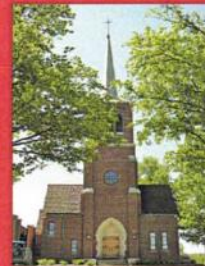


The Friendly Call

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST • MANCHESTER, MO



Worship Schedule February 2024

February 4 - Communion

9:30 am Pastor Kevin

February 11

9:30 am Pastor Kevin

February 14 - Ash

Wednesday

7:00 pm Pastor Tracey

February 18 - Lent

9:30 am Pastor Kevin

February 25

9:30 am Pastor Kevin



February 2024



Ash Wednesday

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

February 14, 2024

7:00 pm

In-Person and streamed

Communion will be
celebrated at this service.

THE LENTEN BIBLE STUDY SERIES

"I am..."



...the Good Shepherd"

'I AM' STATEMENTS OF JESUS – This series will reflect on the 'I AM' sayings in the **Gospel of John**. We will read and discuss what Jesus may have meant and how the earliest followers might have understood them. The challenge will be to relate this good news to our own faith in the 21st century. Here is the schedule:

February 6 – John 6:24-35...*Bread of Life*

February 20 – John 8:12-20...*the Light of the World*

March 5 – John 10:1-9...*the Gate*

March 19 – John 10:11-18...*the Good Shepherd*

April 2 – John 14:17-44...*the Resurrection & the Life*

April 16 – John 14:1-7...*the Way, the Truth, & the Life*

Pastor Kevin will be leading these **Tuesday** evenings, **7:00-8:00 pm**. Gatherings will be hybrid. **Come join this Lenten journey!**

The month of February is typically when the season of Lent begins. We start this sacred journey on Ash Wednesday, which falls on February 14th this year. Yes, that is also Valentine's Day, a cultural celebration of 'love.' It's interesting that these two significant events fall on the same day, and therefore, I did some research.

According to Wikipedia, the last time Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day shared the same date was back in 1945. It occurred only three times in the 20th century. This will happen again in 2029, however, that will be the last time for the 21st century. I found that to be fascinating!

When I started out in ministry, I remember a more experienced pastor saying that you should never preach on love. The word is overused in our society; people have lost the meaning of the word. But this is not a sermon; it's a newsletter article. Furthermore, how could I pass up this moment when the two events share the same date?

Of course, the biblical text that comes to mind when we think about 'love' is Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 13. We all swoon when we hear: *"Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude...It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things...Love never ends."* Those poetic words make our hearts flutter.

A thousand college students were asked, "What is love?" One of them responded, "Love is like lightning – you may not know what it is, but you do know when it hits you." That tends to be the impression or understanding in our culture. Love has been relegated to simply a feeling. Isn't that how it's defined in novels and movies? A romantic stroll on the beach, holding hands with your partner, while the wind blows through your hair.

I know that's not what the Apostle had in mind when he penned 1 Corinthians. As a matter of fact, the church community was at odds with one another, and members were ready to strangle each other. So, Paul was not talking about a romantic feeling or emotion in this text; he is getting at a way of life that is shaped by selflessness and commitment. In Christianity, we refer to this love as 'agape.' It's the highest form of love, which is sacrificial in nature, and it transcends and persists regardless of circumstances. I believe that is the difference between Christian love and our cultural love.

We witnessed sacrificial love in the life and death of Jesus Christ. As the Gospel of John states, *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son...Love one another as I have loved you... No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."* Obviously, God did not withhold God's own love from us; therefore, we are not to withhold our love from one another.

This type of love preached by Paul and modeled by Jesus is not defined by feelings but exemplified through actions. It's not a romantic love that we express on Valentine's Day, although there is nothing wrong with that, but Christ-like love is a sacrificial love that we strive for in our lives. In that sense, perhaps it's appropriate for us to start the season of Lent on Valentine's Day. We journey to the cross of Christ to understand God's abiding love for us, to be shaped by this selfless, committed love of Jesus, and to grow in true Christian love for one another. That can't be captured in a Hallmark card or a rom-com movie. Blessings on your walk with our Lord and Savior this holy season!

Your faithful servant,





Notes from the January 9, 2024 Council Meeting

Discussion took place regarding the proposed budget for 2024. After looking over the budget items, adjusted user fees for Fellowship Hall and ball field, revenue for coffee and donuts and interest from money market account. Benevolences will remain the same. Outreach will do additional Helping Hands. In addition, we are behind in pledges. After discussion the Council approved a \$23,386.34 deficit and will be presented to the congregation at the Annual Meeting on January 28, 2024. The meeting will be in-person and streamed on line. As soon as the meeting is finished, streaming will stop. Only those in attendance can vote.

Dave has been informed that all major components for the new HVAC have been ordered. There is an 18 week delivery and will not start until all components have arrived. Dave will present this information at the Annual Meeting.

Neighbors who have been parking their vehicles on our lot have been notified they will have to remove all vehicles and boat by the end of January.

Worship and Music Team met and are looking for more members to join the choir. Team also discussed Christmas services and Lenten services.

This is Angela's last meeting as President and thanked her for being on the Council for three years.

Respectfully submitted

Janice Jung
Recording Secretary

Financial Report - December 31, 2023

Table with 4 columns: Actual Receipts, Budget Receipts, YTD Actual Receipts, YTD Budget Receipts; Actual Expenditures, Budget Expenditures, YTD Actual Expenditures, YTD Budget Expenditures. Values include \$46,835.49, \$56,932.00, \$424,606.37, \$398,514.00, \$42,644.93, \$33,283.26, \$417,969.24, \$421,441.00.

Members of the Church Council of St. John United Church of Christ, Manchester, meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm in the Hospitality Room of the church (or via Zoom). The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 13, 2024.





Name	Date	Years
Steven & Amanda Door	2/9	16
Derald & Donna Forbis	2/14	26
Howard & Betty Anton	2/16	50
William & Susan Young	2/22	49

Congratulations
Howard & Betty Anton
 On your 50th
 Anniversary
 on February 16 !



SNOW SCHEDULE

If the weather is hazardous on a Sunday morning, please check the following:

Church website:
www.stjohnmanchester.org

FOX 2 Website:
<http://fox2now.com> or

KSDK 5 Website:
www.ksdk.com



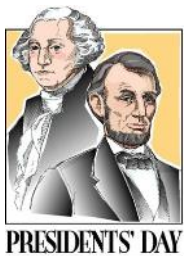
 Women's Fellowship
February 20 meeting will be a
 soup luncheon at 11:30 am in
 the Hospitality Room.
 All ladies are invited.
 Any questions see Marty
 Boucher 636-225-6129.



Worship Attendance

Date	In Person	Streaming	TOTAL
November 26	81	39	120
December 3	142	36	178
December 10	116	36	152
December 17	106	38	144
December 24	87	52	139
December 31	81	41	122
January 7	106	35	141
January 14	None-weather	All online	
January 21	78	42	120

NOTE: Streaming count is household so it could include more than one person; count is taken during LIVE streaming.



The **church office** will be closed

Monday, February 19

in observance of
Presidents' Day.

The office will reopen
 Tuesday, February 20.

Articles and information for the **March 2024** issue of the 'Friendly Call' are due on **Thursday, February 15.**

Please place a hard copy of the article in the church office mail slot or email to:
jane@stjohnmanchester.org





2024 COMMUNION SCHEDULE

Sunday, January 7th

Sunday, February 4th

Wednesday, February 14th (Ash Wednesday)

Sunday, March 3rd

Thursday, March 28th (Maundy Thursday)

Sunday, March 31st (Easter)

Sunday, April 7th

Sunday, May 5th

Sunday, June 2nd

Sunday, July 7th

Sunday, August 4th

Sunday, September 1st

Sunday, October 6th (World Communion)

Sunday, November 3rd

Sunday, December 1st

Tuesday, December 24th (Christmas Eve)



Many thanks to all who contributed to the ECH (Every Child's Hope) Hope Chest project during the Christmas season. All items have been delivered to ECH and to say they were **thrilled** and **delighted** to receive the items is a **HUGE** understatement. Because of minor water damage to the area where they house the Hope Chest Shop at ECH, they are a little behind schedule in allowing children to "shop." Our timing was perfect! Thank you for your kindness, generosity, and support throughout the year!
Your Outreach Team

FEBRUARY OUTREACH CHALLENGE

In the deep mid-winter, doesn't a bowl of **steaming hot soup** or **stew** sound **great**? In the cold month of **February**, we are collecting cans of soup and stew to help our partners at **Circle of Concern** provide warm, nutritious meals for the families they serve. So, when you do your grocery shopping, please pick up a few extra cans and help us keep the red carts full in the month of February. **Thanks so much for thinking of others, as you always do!**




Valentine Cards for Fontana Friends

Our Fontana Friends: **Nelle, Janet, Gloria & Lois** love to receive cards from their friends at St. John. If at all possible, it would be best for each of the ladies to receive cards individually. You can place your cards in the mailbox on the Outreach counter in the Gathering Area. Or if you prefer to mail the cards directly, (all cards can be mailed together in one envelope), their address is:

**c/o Fontana
1511 Fontana Drive
St. Louis, MO 63146**

Lunch at Sunshine Ministries

St. John Outreach continues to provide and share a meal each month with the men at the residence center for Sunshine Ministries. We will carpool from church at 11:15 am (lunch at noon) and return by 1:15 pm. We need one or two people to help each month. If you are interested in joining us on **February 8**, please see Judy Lindquist.

To learn more about the men's outreach of Sunshine Ministries go to: <https://www.sunshineministries.org/men-s-outreach>



HELPING HANDS ENVELOPE for February

During the month of **February**, **Outreach** has determined that all offerings received through the **Helping Hands Envelopes** will go to our mission partner **Sunshine Ministries**. Sunshine Ministries is committed to providing high-quality Christian social services to the poor and needy of St. Louis by offering healing from the past, help for the present, and hope for the future. Sunshine has been serving St. Louis Since 1903. Feel free to visit their website at www.sunshineministries.org. **Thanks for your support!**



Souper Bowl of Caring - Sunday February 11, 2024

The Middle and High School group will be collecting for the **Souper Bowl of Caring** on **Sunday, February 11**, at all exits of the church after the morning's worship service. This is a great way for our youth to collect donations for **Circle of Concern** and have some fun. **Circle of Concern** is a food pantry serving thousands of people every year in west St. Louis County. **Please support this special collection.**

Fontana Friends

The Outreach Team continues monthly visits to our Fontana Friends in their home. We visit on the **second Thursday of the month from about 3:00 to 4:00 pm**. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board across from the offices. We meet at church at 2:40 pm and carpool to Fontana.

Our March visit will be on **Thursday, February 8, 2024**. If you need additional information, please contact Mary Ellen Berg or Lynn Sabina.



OUTREACH TEAM MEETING

The **Outreach Team** will meet on Thursday, **February 1** at 6:30 pm in the Hospitality Room.

All are welcome to join us!



We have a Winner!

The winner of the Christmas Quilt Raffle drawing on December 3 was

Joy Brennecke!

Many thanks to all who participated in the raffle. The proceeds of **\$450** have been sent to **Camp Mo-Val**. **Thank you** for your generosity!

LENTEN SERMON SERIES



Beside(s) Jesus — Of course, **Lent** is all about **Jesus** going to the **cross** and how we're supposed to follow him. At the same time, we are not Jesus, and we usually stop short of going all the way to the cross. Besides Jesus, who else in these Gospel readings can we look to for discipleship during Lent — folks we should imitate or maybe not imitate? Thus, who are the characters beside Jesus in these Lenten stories?

- Lent Sunday 1 - John the Baptist (Mark 1:9-15)
- Lent Sunday 2 - Peter (Mark 8:31-38)
- Lent Sunday 3 - Temple Vendors (John 2:13-22)
- Lent Sunday 4 - Nicodemus (John 3:14-21)
- Lent Sunday 5 - Andrew and Philip (John 12:20-33)
- Palm Sunday - The Crowds (Mark 11:1-11)
- Easter - Mary, Mary and Salome (Mark 16:1-8)



JOY (Just Older Youth)

will share the love of friendship
that comes with the month of February.

Date: **February 3, 2024**

Time: **Noon to 3 PM**

Lunch: **Soup, Salad and Dessert**

Refresh your memory with the top Love Songs
from the **50's, 60's and 70's**
as we enjoy a game of **Charades** after lunch.

Please sign-up to bring a soup, salad or dessert.
The sign-up sheet is located on the bulletin board
across from the Pastor's office.

Contact Betty Anton with questions.



GREEN TEAM NEWS

THE GREEN TEAM'S next meeting will be Thursday, **February 8 at 6:00 pm**. All are welcome!!



The Green Team held their first meeting of the new year on Thursday, January 11. Events for the first few months of 2024 were discussed.



Due to frigid temperatures on the 13th and 20th of January, **the Green Team** had to cancel our Sewing Workshop. This workshop will still happen but a date has yet to be determined. This workshop makes animal beds and toys for dogs and cats for the **Open Door Animal Sanctuary** in House Springs, Missouri. The Green Team will let you know as soon as we've rescheduled this productive event!

On **Saturday, February 24**, 9:30 am, we will be back outside tackling the honeysuckle on the church property near the pavilion. Those helping with this endeavor should bring work gloves and are reminded to wear work clothes (that you don't mind getting dirty), if you have a hand saw, please bring it with you. Please join us!

On **Saturday, March 9**, 9:30 am, **The Green Team** plans to assemble raised garden beds. More information to follow.

On **Saturday, April 20**, **the Green Team** plans to plant a tree near the playground. And when warmer weather returns in **May**, we will possibly help the Cemetery Association with cleaning tombstones.

Remember to Reduce, Recycle, Reuse!



THE GREEN TEAM continues to collect used eyeglasses to be donated to the Lion's Club. The collection box is located in the Gathering Area. Thank you for your help!

A Note from Pastor Tracey

Star Words and Lent is on the Way

I want to begin this article with a continuing word about our star words that people have chosen. We trust that God uses multiple ways to guide us and speak to us. Star words are one such lens that might provide us a way to look for God in our midst, both actively and in hindsight. In case, weather or illness left you out, see Pastor Tracey for a Star Word. You might display your star word in your home. Get creative, seek beautiful ways to add your star words to spaces around your home so that you will continue to see them and think about them throughout the year. Meet in the gathering area through February 11th to discuss our words and get off to a good start with a new practice.

Our Lenten series will begin February 18th, at 10:45 in the Hospitality Room. We are doing an Adam Hamilton Series called "Wrestling with Doubt". It will continue through the six Sundays of Lent.

A big thank you again to all who supported me during the loss of my dad, a move, and knee surgery . You are a very thoughtful loving community and I appreciate all of you!

Peace,



Missouri Mid-South Conference

Camp MoVal is located at:
2659 Camp MoVal Road
Union, MO 63119

(636) 583-2730

[Camp MoVal Summer Registration Opens – Missouri Mid-South Conference of the United Church of Christ \(missourimidsouth.org\)](https://www.missourimidsouth.org)

**CAMP MOVAL
SUMMER REGISTRATION
OPEN !**



PRAYER REQUESTS

You will find **PRAYER REQUEST** cards in the pews. A box is located on the table in the Gathering Area for completed cards to be deposited. There are times when we all need an extra prayer said for us and where better than from our friends at St John !



KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS

Willie Mertz at Garden View in Chesterfield

Landon Weber - Houston, Texas

Ruth Crocker - Brooking Park

Barb Cooper at St. Andrew's Francis Place, Eureka

AT HOME

Betty Fox

Mike Waller

Jennifer Weber



Alex Boothby, Marines, Okinawa Japan, nephew of Elaine Burns

Commander Andrew Brennecke, Coast Guard, Norfolk, VA, son of Bob & Joy Brennecke

Sgt. Codey Burnham, U.S. Marine Corps, Camp Lejeune, NC, grandson of Betty & Howard Anton

Sgt. First Class Douglas Krohn, United States Army Recruiting Command, Quincy, IL

Staff Sgt. Michael Kargauer, Eielson AFB, Alaska, grandson of Jack Martin

E Sgt. Bryan Milberg, Fort Campbell, KY, grandson of Derald & Donna Forbis

4PO Richard Livingstone, Navy, Camp Gordon, GA, grandson of Ken & Marty Boucher

Sgt. Matt Starck, Marines, Camp Pendleton, CA, son of Walter & Marcia Starck



NAMI St. Louis
1810 Craig Road, Suite 124
St. Louis, MO 63146
info@namistl.org
HelpLine: 314-962-4670

St. John UCC Manchester holds a NAMI Support group meeting the third Thursday of each month. The group meets in the Hospitality Room at 6:30 pm. Please note that you must go to the NAMI website to sign up to attend the meeting prior to arrival. Everyone is welcome to join us !



Board of Christian Education

BCE members meet on the first Thursday of the month at 6:00 pm. The **next meeting will be on Thursday, February 1, 2024.** We are always looking for new study ideas and help with upcoming projects with the adults and children. Contact Pastor Tracey if you have any questions or would like to sign up to volunteer.



ST. JOHN
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MANCHESTER, MO

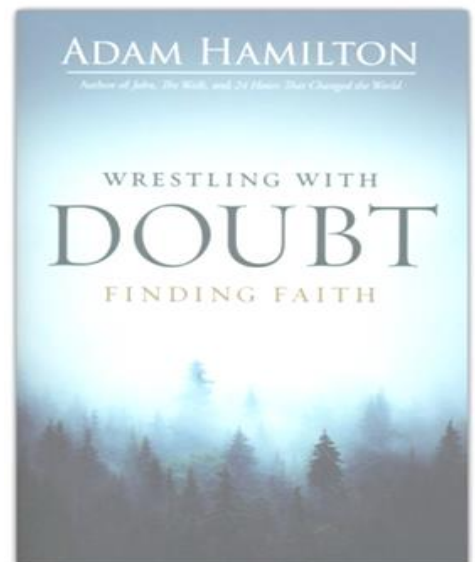
St. John UCC Manchester Christian Education



Sunday Morning Adult Study: After Worship at 10:50 am

Pastor Tracey will continue discussing **Star Words** on February 4 and 11 following worship in the gathering area. A **Star Word** or **Star Gift** is a prayer practice connected to Epiphany. Your word will guide you throughout the year. **Join her!**

For this year's Lenten series, Pastor Tracey will be using "**Wrestling with Doubt**" by **Adam Hamilton**. Mr. Hamilton wrote this book for people who have questions of faith or who wrestle with doubt. The Adult Study is held in the Hospitality Room from 10:50 - 11:30 am. **Join us!**



- † February 18 - Intro/Chapter 1 - **Is There a God?**
- † February 25 - Chapter 2 - **The Good Book? Wrestling with the Bible**
- † March 3 - Chapter 3 - **Are All Non-Christians Going to Hell?**
- † March 10 - Chapter 4 - **Is Heaven Real?**
- † March 17 - Chapter 5 - **When Prayers Go Unanswered**
- † March 24 - Chapter 6 - **Why Do the Innocent Suffer?**

Questions? Please contact Pastor Tracey.

Youth Christian Education & Sunday School



CHILDCARE FOR NURSERY and TODDLERS

is available at the 9:30 am service. Also, for your convenience, a Family Assistance Room is located at the rear of the sanctuary.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Our youngest group introduces kids to Sunday School in an age-appropriate classroom setting. We will incorporate Bible story time with games, arts and crafts, and free play. Students should come to the sanctuary for the 9:30 am service with their families and will be dismissed to their classes.

ELEMENTARY SUNDAY SCHOOL - GRADES K-5

We are using the One Room Sunday School curriculum to explore the stories and lessons taught in the Old and New Testaments. Incorporating games and worksheets, we focus on getting the children acquainted with the Bible and understanding how our families and church are part of a greater community in God's world. Students should come to the sanctuary for the 9:30 am service with their families and will be dismissed to their classes.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

This year's Confirmation Class started in September. The class meets this month on **Wednesday, February 7 and 21** beginning at 6:00 pm in the Hospitality Room. The class meets on the first and third Wednesday of the month. Questions? Please see Pastor Tracey.



MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS & FRIENDS

The Youth Group (Middle & High School Sunday School) class will meet at 9:30 am in the classroom. A mix of formal lessons and open discussion is focused on understanding our faith and how it relates to our church and God's creation around us. We strive to get youth involved in church groups and activities, as well as community service events. We invite you to tell your friends to join us. Be part of this group of young people making a difference!

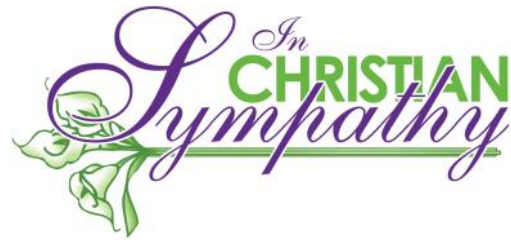
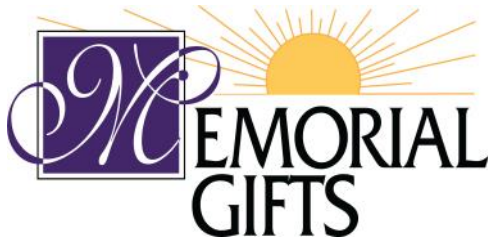
Tea with Pastor Tracey - Come In out of the Cold!

Enjoy coffee, tea, or your favorite beverage, as you take some time to visit with Pastor Tracey Harris. You can find Pastor Tracey hanging out on Wednesdays, at the Panera at 14646 Manchester Road, Ballwin, between 3 and 5 pm to share conversations that lead to community.

Questions? Call or email Pastor Tracey tharris@stjohnmanchester.org!

All generations are invited to stop in!





In memory of **James Riechman**
Archive Fund
Jeff & Lisa Karl
Green Team
Lynn Sabina
Memorial Fund
Don Gaertner
Keith Gaertner

In memory of **Terrie Hetz**
Archive Fund
Jeff & Lisa Karl
Memorial Fund
Girl Scouts of Eastern MO, District 12,
Neighborhood 2
Mark & Vicky Cowell
Karen Runk
Tommy Theiss
Chuck & Marilyn Weber

A gift in loving memory of **Harold Schnarr**
to the Memorial Fund was received from
LaVerne Schnarr.

To the family and friends of

Terrie Hetz

On her passing from this life to
God's eternal care on
January 6, 2024

and

To the family and friends of

Daisy Roberts

On her passing from this life to
God's eternal care on
January 17, 2024



EASTER LILIES

Easter is early this year, and that means it's time to order lilies to decorate our Sanctuary. To order a plant in **Honor** or in **Memory** of loved ones.

DEADLINE for ordering is **Sunday, March 10th.**

Plants may be taken home after the 9:30 am service on Easter Sunday. Please fill out the form below, enclose your payment, and either place it in the offering plate or return it to the office.

Number of Lilies _____ (\$10.00 each) Total Enclosed \$ _____

I am purchasing this/these flower(s) in **Honor** or **Memory** (please circle one)

Of: _____

From: _____