

The Friendly Call

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST • MANCHESTER, MO



Worship Schedule March 2026

March 1 - Communion

9:30 am Pastor Kevin

March 8

9:30 am Pastor Kevin
Music: Sanctuary Choir

March 15

9:30 am Pastor Kevin

March 22

9:30 am Rev. Torbitzky

March 29 - Palm Sunday

9:30 am Pastor Kevin
Music: Sanctuary Choir
and Handbells



2026



PALM SUNDAY

March 29 9:30 am Worship & Communion
10:30 am Easter Egg Hunt
10:45 am Pancake Breakfast

MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 2 7:00 pm Worship & Communion

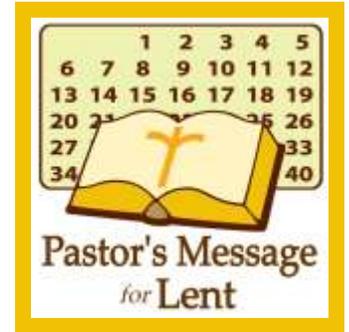
GOOD FRIDAY

April 3 7:00 pm Tenebrae Service

EASTER SUNDAY

April 5 7:00 am Sunrise Service &
Communion (Pavilion)
9:30 am Worship Service &
Communion

We are in the season of Lent. This is a time of self-examination, to prepare ourselves for God's good news in Jesus Christ. Many Christians focus on spiritual renewal through prayer (devotional life), fasting (giving up some luxury for a short time), and almsgiving (charitable donations to people in need). These practices make us feel better. We're good people.



There is one aspect of Lent that we conveniently overlook – Repentance. This is a change in direction, a Spirit-empowered turning around. Thus, repentance is the first step we make toward God. But to turn toward God means we must turn away from something else. That something else is our sins. That's another word we don't like to hear. However, Lent is more than reading our Bible and giving the Lord extra attention. This journey is about turning away from our sins and toward the Living God.

My sense, though, is that it's hard to do that when we think we have no sin. This pious attitude has become pervasive in our culture. From political leaders to rank and file citizens, we deceive ourselves into thinking we're perfect, or at least, we haven't done anything really bad that requires confession. It doesn't matter if someone has video footage or a recording of offenses on their iPhone. If we deny, deny, deny, then the sin or wrongdoing doesn't exist. We just simply need to point fingers, say that it's fake, and lie through our teeth. As long as we remain resolute and pretend we're perfect, then we have no need to repent.

As Paul wrote in Romans, *"we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). Since we are fallible human beings, we need a season dedicated to repentance and renewal. In the Gospels, we read how John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:4) and Jesus began his ministry by preaching, *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near"* (Matthew 4:17). These words of our ancestors and our Lord should not lead us to denial, deception, or despair; it should cause us to praise God for grace and forgiveness. The central theme of Lent is the idea that we need this kind of restoration and reconciliation continually throughout our lives. That is the good news: God's love and grace meets us again and again.

Lent is a time for all of us to think about the ways we have "sinned and fallen short" in faith and life. It's not meant to be harsh judgment, like flogging ourselves; instead, this journey involves a turning toward God with sincere reflection on the past and deep desire on a hopeful future.

The true purpose of this season, as Christians, is to mature and grow and become more Christ-like in our lives. Yet, God understands that we will falter at moments, so we have this gift of repentance and renewal. We don't have to deny, deceive, or despair. We have this amazing faith which allows us to be honest and authentic, which grants us the promise of new life once more. Take this opportunity of self-reflection as an invitation to experience a Spirit that empowers us anew now and forever.

Blessings,

Kevin



Notes from the February 10, 2026 Council Meeting:

The Council Vice President's position will be filled by Michael McDonald.

March Events:

A reception will be held on Sunday, March 1, immediately following the worship service to honor Cindy Boddy for all the phenomenal work she does to make our church run smoothly. Trivia Night will be held on March 7. Tickets are already on sale.

Several Major Projects are in various stages. We should have more news on the HVAC system, roof and steeple projects, parking lot, and sound system by next month. A capital campaign is being planned to help cover these costs.

The Council reviewed the **Annual Congregational Meeting**. Discussion took place regarding the online component and quorum. This will be revisited towards the end of 2026.

The **Personnel Committee** is pursuing a potential candidate for the part-time Christian Education Coordinator position.

Baseball Field Usage fees will not be prorated.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Ramin
Recording Secretary

Financial Report - January 31, 2026

<u>Actual Receipts</u>	<u>Budget Receipts</u>	<u>YTD Actual Receipts</u>	<u>YTD Budget Receipts</u>
\$49,339.23	\$43,156.00	\$49,339.23	\$43,156.00
<u>Actual Expenditures</u>	<u>Budget Expenditures</u>	<u>YTD Actual Expenditures</u>	<u>YTD Budget Expenditures</u>
\$26,980.60	\$30,693.75	\$26,980.60	\$30,693.75

Members of the Church Council of St. John United Church of Christ, Manchester, usually 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, March 10, 2026.**





Christian Education

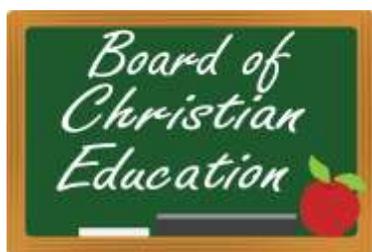
Youth Christian Education & Sunday School



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 and ELEMENTARY SCHOOL We will hear stories and lessons taught in the Old and New Testaments combined with worksheets, games, and crafts to 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.

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS The Youth Group will meet at 9:30 am in the classroom – except on the first Sunday of each month when we will attend church service with our family and friends. A mix of formal lessons and open discussion increases understanding of our faith and how it relates to our church and the world around us. We strive to get youth involved in church groups and activities, as well as community service events. Friends are always welcome!!



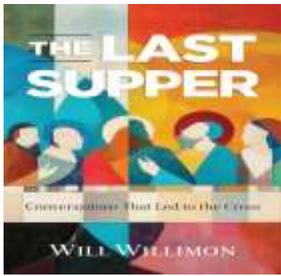
BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

BCE members meet on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:00 pm via ZOOM. The next meeting will be on **Tuesday, March 24, 2026**. We are always looking for new study ideas and help with upcoming projects with the adults and children. Contact Pam Boucher if you have any questions or would like to sign up to volunteer.

BOY SCOUT TROOP 310 FUNDRAISER

In partnership with "Savers FUNDdrive," Boy Scouts are collecting bags of clothing, boxes of household goods, and boxes of books, movies, and music. Scouts are paid per pound for items and funds received will support upcoming activities and summer camp. Bags will be available in the gathering area, with detailed information about the donations accepted. Return donations to church on Palm Sunday, March 29. If you have any questions, please contact Jean O'Neil (636) 236-8491. **Time to start your spring cleaning!**





ADULT EDUCATION - The Last Supper

The Tuesday evening adult education class continues. We are following the book *The Last Supper* by Will Willimon. This Lenten study explores the parables and stories Jesus told at tables along the way to his final meal. Participants are discussing the biblical stories about searching shepherds, welcoming hosts, prodigal sons, and rejected invitations illuminating the deeper significance of the Last Supper and Christ's sacrifice. These sessions are on the first and third

Tuesday nights of the month. Our schedule is below. Should you have questions, please speak with Pastor Kevin.

<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Class Theme</i>	<i>Scripture Reference</i>
March 3	“Feasting with the Found”	Luke 15:3-7 and 15:8-10
March 17	“Crumbs from the Table”	Luke 16:19-21 and 19:1-10
April 7	“Refusing the Host”	Luke 19:11-27 and 20:9-19
April 21	“The Host Who Becomes the Meal”	Luke 22:9-21 and 24:3-25

TO JOIN VIA ZOOM

Time: March 3, 2026 7:00 pm Central Time (US and Canada)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2267934041?omn=89414466626>

Meeting ID: 226 793 4041

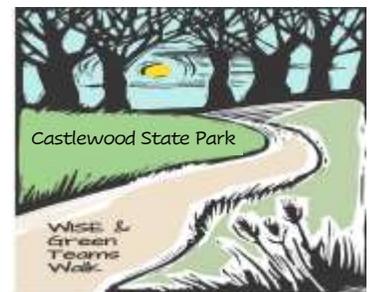
One tap mobile: +13052241968,,2267934041# US +13092053325,,2267934041# US

Instructions: [https://us02web.zoom.us/meetings/89414466626/invitations?](https://us02web.zoom.us/meetings/89414466626/invitations?signature=L TnB5xQR2ITidUoeDbJAKh8loz20fAuXm8GOFPLDOKk)

[signature=L TnB5xQR2ITidUoeDbJAKh8loz20fAuXm8GOFPLDOKk](https://us02web.zoom.us/meetings/89414466626/invitations?signature=L TnB5xQR2ITidUoeDbJAKh8loz20fAuXm8GOFPLDOKk)

WALK AT CASTLEWOOD STATE PARK

The WISE/Green Team nature walk will be on Saturday, March 14th at 10:00 am. This mental health walk will be held in Castlewood State Park (1401 Kiefer Creek Road). When you enter the park, stay to your left and follow that around to the parking lot. The trail is fairly flat and manageable, so bring a friend and nurture your spirit. If you are interested, please sign up on the sheet across from the church office. Should you have questions, feel free to talk with Carol Ruh or Pastor Kevin.



LAY LITURGIST - The Worship & Music Team is once again asking for lay liturgists for Sunday morning giving people the opportunity to be part of worship leadership. Those who participate will share the Call to Worship, Unison Prayer, and Scripture reading. We would like to encourage people to sign-up for a month. That means people would be in worship leadership for all the

Sundays. The hope is that people might feel more comfortable as we move throughout the month. Should you have to miss a Sunday because of a conflict, then please don't let that deter you from signing up. We can certainly work around that with people. A new sign-up sheet for the months of April and May is on the bulletin board across from the church office. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Pastor Kevin.

ATTENDANCE



Worship Attendance			
<i>Date</i>	<i>In Person</i>	<i>Streaming</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
February 1	116	36	152
February 8	128	67	195
February 15	89	68	157
February 18 Ash Wednesday	62	14	76
February 22	90	76	166

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

Name	Date	Years
Dean & Nedra Klohr	3/3	47
Jeff & Mira Minnis	3/6	15
Bruce & Char Heyde	3/9	30
Craig & Judy Lindquist	3/21	39
Joseph Karl & Kate Caughlan	3/22	12
Jeff & Cathy Cummings	3/24	36
Tom & Joan James	3/30	63

INCLEMENT WEATHER

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



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!

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RECEPTION FOR CINDY BODDY

On Sunday, March 1, we will host a reception in honor of Cindy Boddy to express our heartfelt appreciation for all she does for St. John. We hope you will join us in celebrating her dedication and service. A memory book is available for anyone who would like to share a personal note of gratitude. You may contribute in several ways:

- ♥ Use one of the notecards provided (available to take home),
- ♥ Write a note in any card of your choosing, or
- ♥ Email your message to Judy Lindquist at cjislind@charter.net.
- ♥ You may write directly in the book.



The book is located on the outreach counter (by the atrium) in the gathering space. Please return your message by March 8. If you have any questions, please contact Judy Lindquist.



This year's **TRIVIA NIGHT AND SILENT AUCTION**

to benefit Habitat for Humanity will take place on **Saturday, March 7, 2026.**

The cost per ticket is \$15.00 (\$120.00 for a table of 8); doors will open at 6:30 pm and play will begin promptly at 7:00 pm. Tickets are on sale now. If you would like to donate an attendance prize or help with the event, please contact a member of the Outreach Team or Mark Engelhardt at 636-227-7821. If you would like to donate an item for the Silent Auction or help with the auction, please contact Harry Gaele at 314-303-8464. Thank you!



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Tuesday, March 17 - 11:30 am

We will be watching the movie, **Soul on Fire**, an inspirational true story by John O'Leary. This sensational movie is refreshing, uplifting and necessary. We consume too much negativity. **Watch and feel joy!** Bring a sandwich... beverages and dessert provided. All ladies invited. Any questions see Marty Boucher.



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. Our next meeting is scheduled for **March 19, 2026.** 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!

NAMI contact at St. John is Angela Kern, akern@sbcglobal.net.

Website: <https://www.namistl.org>



OUTREACH TEAM MEETING

The **Outreach Team** will meet on **Thursday, March 5, 2026** at 6:30 pm in the Hospitality Room. Please join us!



HELPING HANDS ENVELOPES FOR MARCH

Outreach has determined that all offerings received through the Helping Hands Envelopes for the month of March will go to **Camp MoVal**. Camp MoVal was established in 1962 and is located a few miles southwest of Union, MO. MoVal features more than 150 acres of beautiful forests, native prairie, natural streams, and a lake! Many youth and families here at St. John have had wonderful church camp experiences at Camp MoVal

throughout the years. To find out more information about Camp MoVal, please visit the conference website at: missourimidsouth.org/camp-moval. Thanks for your support!



CURRENT NEEDS: The most needed items for **Circle of Concern** currently are:

You can also order items for **Circle** online at:

- ◆ Amazon Wish List
- ◆ Walmart
- ◆ Target

and they will be delivered directly to **Circle of Concern**

OR

by buying Dierberg gift cards (denominations of \$50 or \$100) through our own Shop N Support program. See Harry Gaehle on a Sunday morning.



- ♥ Dinner Helpers
- ♥ Pasta Sauce
- ♥ Condiments
- ♥ Cereal/Oatmeal
- ♥ Body Lotion
- ♥ Size 6 diapers
- ♥ Mouthwash
- ♥ Women's incontinence briefs (L & XL)
- ♥ Razors



Thanks for your help keeping our red shopping carts full!



FONTANA FRIENDS

The Outreach Team continues monthly visits to our **Fontana Friends** in their home. Visits are on the **second Thursday of the month from about 2:00 to 3:00 pm**. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board across from the offices. We meet at church at 1:40 pm and carpool to Fontana. Our next visit will be on **Thursday, March 12, 2026**. If you need additional information, please contact Mary Ellen Berg.

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 **March 26, 2026** (note, alternate date for this month only), please see Judy Lindquist. To learn more about the men's outreach of Sunshine Ministries go to: <https://www.sunshineminstries.org/men-s-outreach>.



The **Manchester Plastic Bag Recycling Challenge** is aiming to collect 2,000 pounds of recyclable plastic by the end of 2026 to earn two new benches made from recycled materials. The **Green Team** encourages everyone to help them meet this goal. Bring the following **CLEAN** plastics to church and deposit them in the openings on the Outreach counter in the gathering area:

Grocery Bags, Bread Bags, Bubble Wrap, Dry Cleaning Bags, Newspaper Sleeves, Ice Bags, Plastic Reshipping Envelopes, Ziploc and Reclosable Storage Bags, Cereal Bags, Case Overwrap and Produce Bags. Pick up an information sheet at church to keep for a friendly reminder!

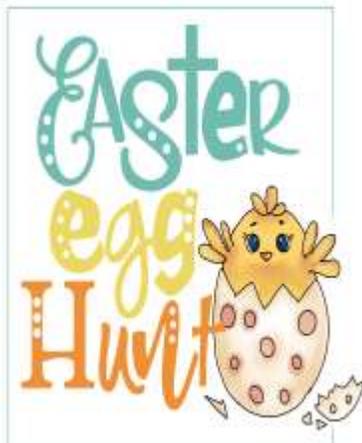
THANK YOU!! Souper Bowl of Caring

The Middle and High School youth collected for the Souper Bowl of Caring for **Shannondale** last Sunday, February 8. We are thrilled to announce that **\$800.00** was collected and has been sent to our long-time mission partner, Shannondale (as items for their Blessing Box). Thank you for your outstanding generosity and caring! This exceeds last year's contribution by **\$190.00!!**



TEA WITH FRIENDS

Enjoy coffee, tea, or your favorite beverage, as you take some time to visit with friends on Wednesdays, at the Panera at 14646 Manchester Road, Ballwin, between 3 and 5 pm to share conversations that lead to community. Kathy Hoadley or Joan James will be the host. **All generations are invited to stop in!**



Annual Easter Egg Hunt

The Annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Palm Sunday morning (March 29th) immediately following worship (approximately 10:30 am). We will begin in the Gathering Area and the egg hunts will start from there. The groups will be divided as follows:

- ✦ Toddlers (courtyard)
- ✦ Pre-Kindergarten - 2nd grade (south side of the education wing)

Please sign up for the annual Easter Egg hunt on the bulletin board as you enter the education wing from the south parking lot. We invite you to bring children, grandchildren, neighbors, and other friends for this fun event. **PLEASE** sign up so we can plan accordingly. We also need some adults to help supervise the egg hunts, so please look for that sign-up sheet as well.

Plan to join us immediately following the Egg Hunt for the Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall. **ALL are welcome!**

Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast Sunday, March 29th

We had such a great time last year, we decided to “do it again” in 2026, so please join us immediately after worship on **Sunday, March 29th** for a **“Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast!”** We’ll be serving pancakes, sausage, fruit, and beverages (juice, milk, and coffee) Join us for great food and fantastic fellowship as we kick off Holy Week! For those interested, a special visit and photo opportunity with the Easter Bunny will be available at that time as well. Mark your calendar! **Everyone is welcome!** The more the merrier! A free will offering will be collected.



GREEN TEAM NEWS



- ♥ Thank you for all who participated in our Sewing Workshop!
- ♥ On March 24, we will begin working on our garden beds and look forward to another opportunity to serve the Circle of Concern with fresh produce.
- ♥ In April, we will be celebrating Earth Day by planting trees on our church property.
- ♥ The next WISE/Green Team walk is Saturday, March 14, 10:00 am at Castlewood State Park.
- ♥ Our next Green Team meeting will be Thursday, March 12, 2026 at 7:00 pm.



to the Lohrer and Garza
families and friends of

Margaret Lohrer

who passed from this life to new
life on Wednesday, January 29, 2026.

to the family of

Donald Lee Dahlem

who passed from this life to new
life on February 21, 2026.

to Ethel (Wobus) Bloesch and family
on the loss of her husband

Dick Bloesch

who passed from this life to new life
on February 12, 2026.



In memory of **Dr. Richard Bloesch**
(husband of Ethel (Wobus) Bloesch)

Music Fund

LaVerne Schnarr

A gift to the **Cemetery Association** was
received from June Breen.



Spring Work Day

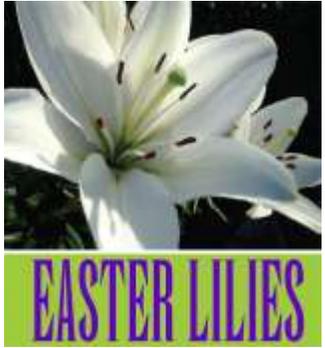
Spring will be here before we know it; for many of us it can't arrive quickly enough! Please come celebrate the change of seasons with us at St. John with a work day from 8:30 am to Noon, on **Saturday, March 28**. We'll have donuts and coffee to start your sugar and caffeine high for maximum productivity. Lunch will also be provided around noon, after we have spiffed up the inside and outside of the church. Please consider coming out to enjoy some (hopefully) sunny spring weather and some camaraderie with fellow church members. Hope to see you there.

Dave Gaehle and Craig Lindquist



Dear St. John UCC, 2-9-26
 Thank you for the wonderful welcome and the opportunity to worship with you. We truly appreciate your kindness, from the warm greeting at the door to the lovely altar flowers and the cookie and punch reception. We felt right at home and are truly grateful. Blessings to you all.
 Ruth & choir

Time to Order Easter Lilies



Easter is coming (Sunday, April 5), 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, please fill out the form below, enclose your payment, and either place it in the offering plate or return it to the finance office. Plants may be taken home after the 9:30 am service on Easter Sunday. If you have questions, please call Cindy Boddy.

The **DEADLINE** for ordering is **Sunday, March 15th.**

Please make checks payable to **St. John UCC** and write "Lilies" in the memo field.

Number of Lilies _____ (\$11.00 each) Total Enclosed \$ _____

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

Of: _____

From: _____

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

Landon Weber - Houston, Texas
Nancee Miller - Clarendale Clayton
Carol Matthews - Brooking Park
Elaine Van Gels - Lake St. Charles Senior Center
Harry Taub - Dolan Memory Care (Lyon Manor)
Annette Owings - Garden View
Michelle Dahlem - Van Well Home
People in the Middle East
People in Ukraine

AT HOME

Ron Carr Betty Fox
Frank & Lois Leahy Laura Waller
Jennifer Weber Bruce Carvell
Gloria (Fontana Friend)



Commander Andrew Brennecke, Coast Guard, Norfolk, VA, son of Bob & Joy Brennecke
Sgt. Codey Burnham, U.S. Marine Corps, Indian Head, MD, grandson of Betty & Howard Anton
Sgt. First Class Douglas Krohn, United States Army Recruiting Command, Quincy, IL
Technical Sgt. Michael Kargauer, Eielson AFB, Alaska, son of Dawn (Martin) Dorris
E Sgt. Bryan Milberg, Fort Campbell, KY, grandson of Derald & Donna Forbis
Sgt. Matt Starck, Marines, Camp Lejeune, NC, son of Walter & Marcia Starck

St. Patrick's Day Trivia Quiz

1. Where did the first ever Saint Patrick's Day parade takes place in 1762?

- a. The United States b. Scotland c. Ireland

2. What is a bodhran?

- a. An Irish Whiskey b. A drum, shaped similarly to a tambourine
c. Irish Shellfish Dish

3. What mythological being is a part of St. Patrick's Day lore and Irish culture?

- a. Mermaids b. Fairies c. Leprechauns

4. Three-leafed shamrocks were believed to be used by Saint Patrick to explain what?

- a. Location of the Pot of Gold b. The Holy Trinity c. Heaven, Earth and Waters

5. What did St Patrick supposedly chase out of Ireland (as per legend)?

- a. All the snakes b. All the spider c. All the infidels

6. Who was the first President of the United States to attend a St. Patrick's Day parade?

- a. Harry S. Truman b. Thomas Jefferson c. James Monroe

7. It is customary for the Irish prime minister (Taoiseach) to give the U.S. President what symbolic gift on St. Patrick's Day?

- a. A pot of Gold b. A hat c. A shamrock bowl

8. If you were eating a boxty, what would this be?

- a. An Irish Seafood bowl b. A box of Potato Chips c. An Irish potato cake

9. Before the color green, there was another color previously associated with the celebration of St. Patrick's Day. Which color was this?

- a. Purple b. Blue c. Green

10. In which country was St. Patrick born?

- a. Ireland b. Scotland c. Britain

11. Some Irish old stories suggest that St. Patrick's walking stick once miraculously transformed into what object?

- a. A tree b. A snake c. A dragon

12. What is a culinary tradition of St Patrick's Day?

- a. Eating Fish and Chips b. Eating corned beef and cabbage
c. Eating Seafood



1. A
2. B
3. C

4. B
5. A
6. A

7. C
8. C
9. B

10. C
11. A
12. B