

COME AND CELEBRATE ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS WITH ST. JOHN UCC THIS YEAR



Come start the Advent season in the right spirit. The Coronavirus may keep us at home, but the light and hope will always bring us together! Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas, and ends on Christmas Eve. Each week will add more to the Advent waiting in music, in scripture, in story, building up our expectation for the coming of Christ's Light.

November 29 First Sunday of Advent

Come share the expectation of the season with guest musician Nancy Lehman, performing Joseph M. Martin's *An Advent Credo*. No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, God's Spirit of hope calls us into tomorrow's promise. Begin the new church year as we light the candle of Hope.

December 6 Second Sunday of Advent

Come gather at Christ's Table and start the season with Songs of the Spirit, and their Advent anthem to center our hearts in peace. We will share in Communion together, as we worship at our homes. We will hear the old stories of the Prophets, and light the candle of Peace and turn our prayers for the future.

December 13 Third Sunday of Advent

Come and ring in the season with the Bell Choir, with their offering of Michael Ryan's *On A Quiet Christmas Night*. With the shepherds, we wait, not expecting what will come. There is place for you on the hillside we continue the season, lighting the candle of Joy.

December 20 Fourth Sunday of Advent

Come hear the Good News of Christmas, presented by our Music Ministry. Through the joy of online meetings technology, our Chancel Choir will share John Rutter's *Candlelight Carol*, with guest vocalists Kristine Caswelch, Hope Carey, Kira McGirr, Peter Wright, Joel Kincannon, and Jelani Watkins. Lift your voice with us as we light the candle of Love.

December 24 Christmas Eve

Come and worship! Christ, the Light of our world is born anew in our hearts! Our **"Christmas Eve at Home"** celebration for all ages begins at 4:30 pm in our Facebook Live worship space. We will welcome in the Christmas spirit with musical offerings from our many ensembles. The Service of Lessons, Carols, and Candlelight will follow, sharing the story of Christ's birth.

Come together, and welcome Advent's light into our hopeful, needing world!

LIVING OUR FAITH OUT LOUD IN ADVENT



CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY

Inspired by a project completed by our children last Advent, St. John UCC will be collecting homemade Christmas cards to distribute to residents of local assisted living and nursing facilities. If you feel so led, please make a card or two (unlabeled) for a community member who might feel lonely during the holiday season. Our Children's Advent boxes contain some materials for this purpose, and more materials are available upon request.

Cards can be dropped off in the church mailbox or mailed to the church in a larger envelope. We are also happy to pick up cards from your home. Please make arrangements by calling Rachel Kirk the church office or emailing rachel@stjohnuccfreeport.org.



COMMUNITY MITTEN TREE

From November to December, our congregation works with Amity's Attic and Kids' Coats and Clothes, collecting mittens, hats, and gloves. Additionally, sweatshirts, sweatpants, sweaters, and heavy socks, coats, and boots are appreciated

Donations for these missions, FACC's Food Pantry, and the Bottlecap Benches program can be dropped off by calling Lisa at the church office.

LOVE

Beloved,

2020 GIVING CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Whether a first-time visitor or long-time community member, *our church changes lives* by answering God's call to love neighbor, children, and creation.

Our congregation welcomes people who've felt estranged from God and the rest of Christianity. We support each other through joys and times of loss and grief. And we serve meals to the most vulnerable people in our city, speak out against injustice, and address climate change every day. We live our faith out loud!

The work within and beyond our church can happen because of the generous financial and volunteer support of our community.

Because of you, our church shares God's love.

While there are many ways to support the congregation, our annual campaign provides a chance to think in a particular and prayerful way about the choices we make with our money in support of the church.

To date, we have received *50 Faith Promises*, supporting our mission and ministry in 2021. This represents about two-thirds of our usual *80 Faith Promises* we receive every year. Interesting fact: our mission and ministry is supported by over *160 households every year!*

For those that gave but didn't pledge this year: Please prayerfully consider making a *Faith Promise* in the same amount or more for the coming year. For those that pledged in 2020 but haven't yet committed for the coming one: Please prayerfully consider renewing your *Faith Promise* in support for our ministries. For those who haven't yet felt the call to support our ministry together: Please prayerfully consider making a *Faith Promise* for the coming year.

Your generous love makes a real difference!

OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 12/03 Ray Nieman | 12/17 Carolyn Moyer |
| 12/05 Ted Wootan | 12/20 Holly Edler |
| 12/12 Jack Criddle | 12/23 Judy Barney |
| Colin Ebbers | 12/24 Ruth Olson |
| 12/16 Thompson | 12/26 Lucille Lee |
| Brandt | |

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 12/23 Marvin & Sandy | 12/29 Jeff & Sally |
| DeBoer | Wagner |

FACC SHELTER & FOOD PANTRY

In December, we will be collecting **Spaghetti**



Please call the Church office at 815-235-2824 to schedule a time to drop off donations..

OCTOBER FINANCIAL SUMMARY

| Income | Actual | Budget | Difference |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Pledges/Gifts | \$15,464 | \$22,083 | (-\$6,619) |
| Other Income | \$48,043 | \$9,067 | \$38,976 |
| Total Income | \$63,507 | \$31,150 | \$32,357 |
| Total Expenses | \$31,005 | \$33,603 | (-\$2,598) |
| Month Total | \$32,502 | (-\$2,453) | \$34,955 |
| YTD Income | \$286,756 | \$317,227 | (-\$30,471) |
| YTD Expenses | \$296,057 | \$319,803 | (-\$23,746) |
| YTD Total | (-\$9,301) | (-\$2,576) | (-\$6,725) |



A YEAR-LONG STOCKING STUFFER!

In *Listenings: A 365-Day Calendar of God Still Speaking to Our Lives*, our Pastor Emeritus, Rev. Dr. Donnley Dutcher shares his story of a pastor's spiritual emptiness and despair, his learning a new way to pray, and how to listen to God speak to him. He was gifted and moved by the Spirit to write each of these meditations at the conclusion of deep, intense prayer.

Sr. Eileen Quinn, OSF says, "*Listenings* is a book of beautiful, richly woven personal prayer experiences which offers the reader a most delightful, hope-filled glimpse of a God of awesome intimacy, unconditional faithfulness, continuous forgiveness and magnificent tenderness."

Our community celebrates with Rev. Dutcher in his publishing this first book. Go to this link to download your Kindle edition today!

www.amazon.com/dp/B08KHLG98J

CHURCH STAFF

Senior Pastor:

Rev. Henry E. "Hank" Fairman
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Pastor for Community & Mission:

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Director of Congregational Life

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Administrative & Creative Assistant

Lisa Elsner Lisa@stjohnuccfreeport.org
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Youth Ministry Assistant: Madison Riddell

Choir Director: Gina Bertram

Church Musicians: Randy Cook

Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Donnley Dutcher

Change Service Requested

Be Out
Be Proud
We Are Open and Affirming



WEAR
YOUR
MASK



WASH
YOUR



SIX
FEET
APART



STAY
AT
HOME

MAKE A CHANGE WITH CHANGE FOR CHANGE THIS ADVENT

Each year, our children collect pocket change to support agencies and programs that are not part of our regular mission giving. Throughout the year, that pocket change collection raises over \$2,500 supporting:

- Sending children and adults to Summer Camps at Pilgrim Park
- Advocate Children's Hospital Oncology
- Freeport Boys & Girls Club
- VOICES of Stephenson County
- Coats and Clothes for Kids

We hope to catch up on the months of support that we haven't been able to collect with the COVID closures. Jars are available in the church office, ready for your spare coins (or bills!). Each Caring Team has its own jar, to foster a friendly competition and see which team can gather the most funds.

Let's work with our children and youth to see what is possible when we come with a generous spirit, sharing God's love in our community!

