

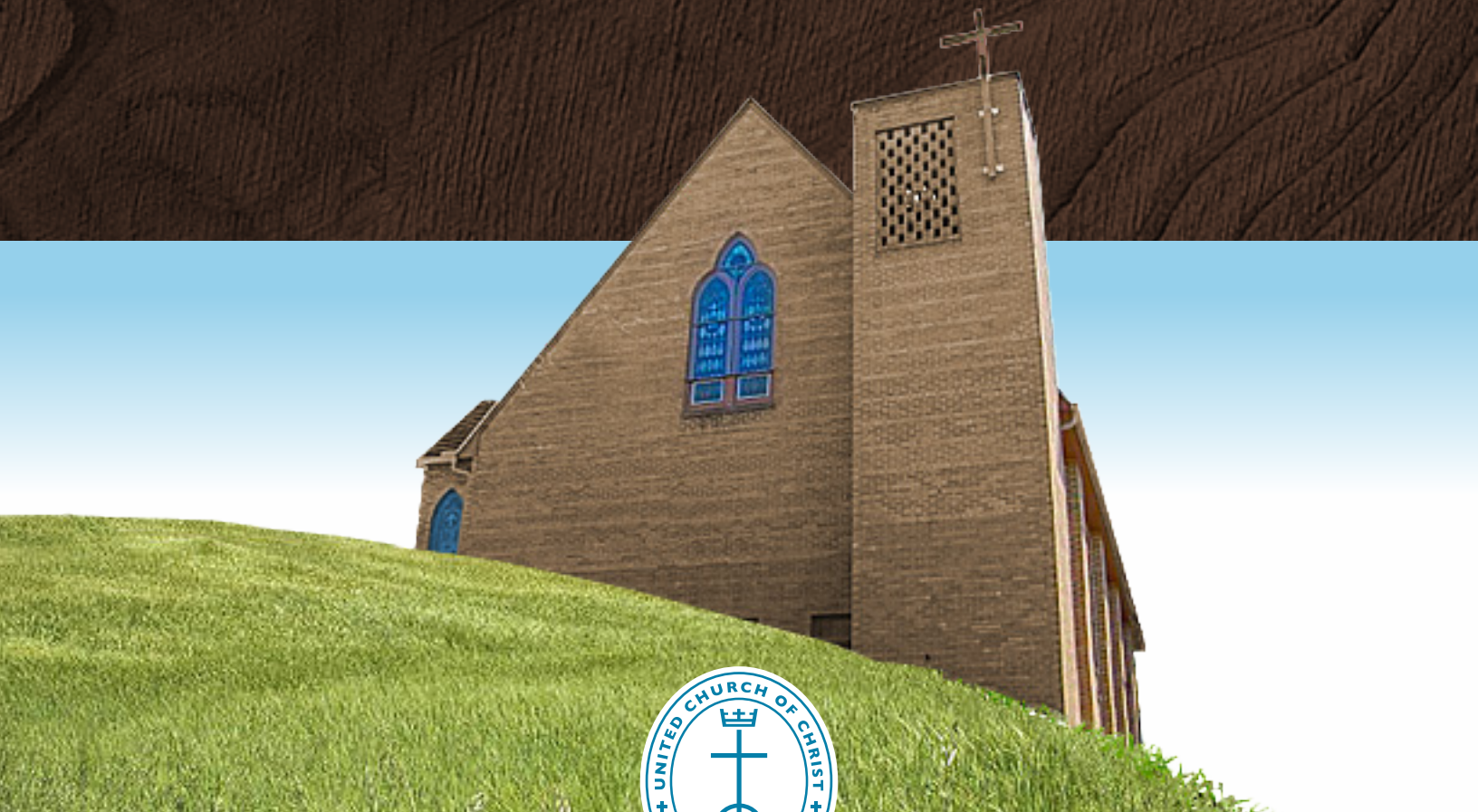


St. John's

United Church of Christ

Digital Newsletter

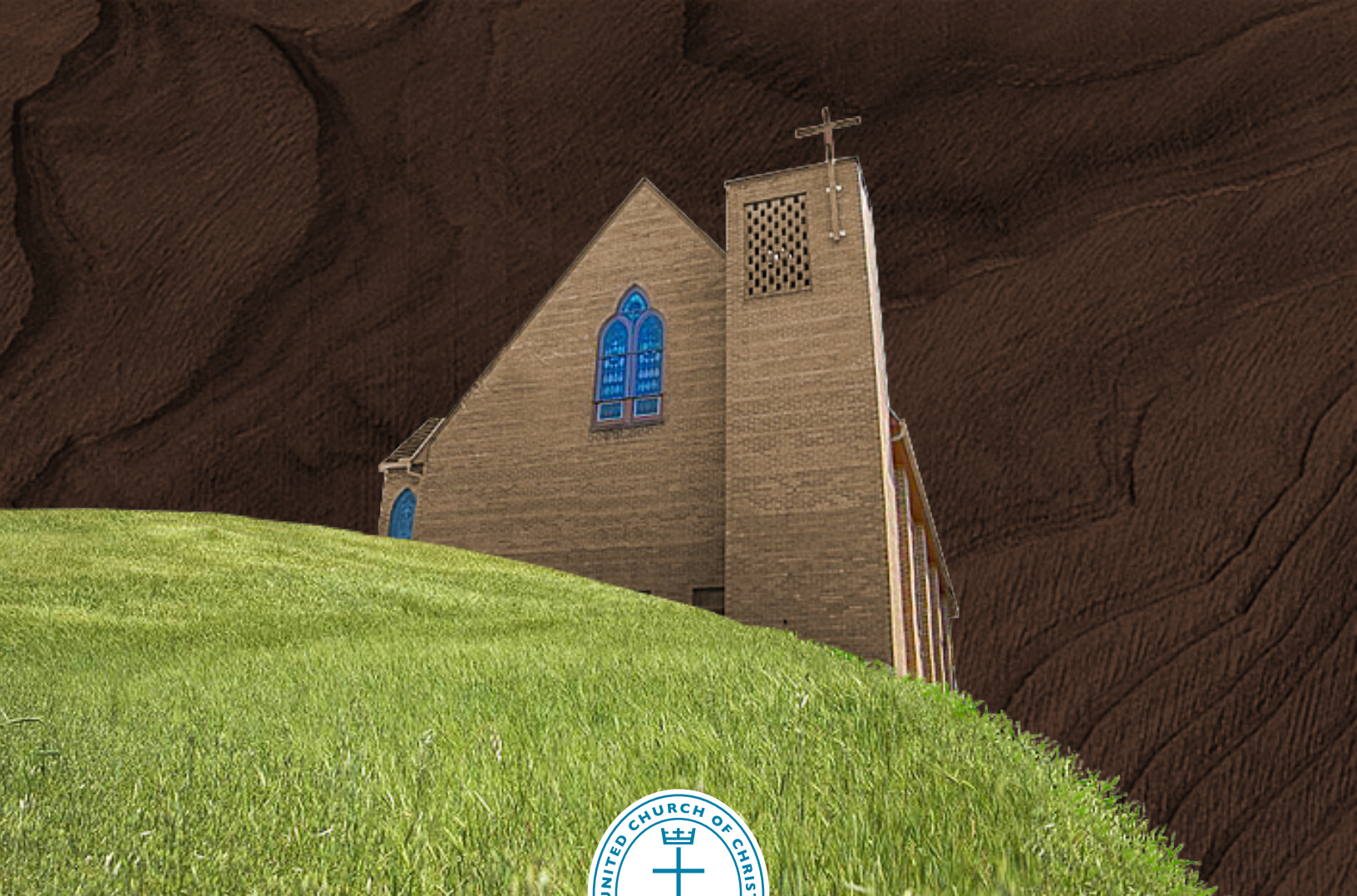
SJC Issue 0823 - August 2023



stjohnsfcwi.org

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

608.687.3277



Sunday Worship @ 10:30am

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 10:30am 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!

stjohnsfcwi.org

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

stjohnsfcwi.org

Letter From The Pastor

August 2023

A friend recently introduced me to the writing of Katie Bowler. The title of Katie's book "Everything Happens for a Reason (and Other Lies I've Loved)" led me to immediately purchase the book and read in two sittings. Katie is a professor, author, researcher, and mother who at age 35 was diagnosed with Stage IV Cancer that had a life expectancy of 1 year. Experimental treatments helped turn her cancer into a currently chronic conditions that she continues to deal with each day as she parents, spouses, writes, and continues to teach at Duke University. Her writing details her journey, and more importantly, the struggle with something hard and people trying to reassure you with platitudes.

And so she writes blessings that she sends out each week: "A Blessing for the Life You Didn't Choose", "A Blessing for Waking to Summer" and "A Blessing for When You are Feeling Grouchy" are just a few. When this week's blessing came, I knew I wanted to share it with you. Whoever is struggling now, has struggled in the past, or will struggle in the future (which is all of us) I hope you find the blessing contained within this poem.

A blessing for when you realize everyone is struggling

blessed are you who have realized that life is hard. and it's hard for everyone. your awareness came at a cost. you lost something you can't get back. you were diagnosed with chronic pain or a degenerative disease. your family fell apart and things have never been the same.

blessed are you who gave up the myth that the good life is one of happiness, success, perfection. the life that looks beautiful on Facebook, but isn't real. you who realize it is okay to not be okay. To not have a shiny life, because no one does.

blessed are you who see things clearly, where struggle is everyone's normal. you walk among the fellowship of the afflicted, a club no one wants to join.

Letter From The Pastor

August 2023

and while this life isn't shiny, it does come with superpowers. superpowers of ever-widening empathy and existential courage that get you back up after another fall and a deepened awe at the beauty and love that can be found amid life's rubble.

like flowers that grow from the cracks in the sidewalk. these virtues blossom in you. and thank God for you.

blessed are all of us who struggle, for we are in good company, and we'll never walk alone.

Katie doesn't believe that hard times or tragedies are given by God so that we can learn by wrestling a blessing out of it. The blessing is not because of the situation but in spite of it. Likewise, I believe that the God who loves us doesn't bless us with struggles to learn, but blesses us within our struggles with love, presence, and companionship. For somehow, knowing that you aren't alone, that others have faced similar situations and challenges, can make us feel a little more connected, a little less adrift, and a little less alone.

Which is part of the reason we are to gather each Sunday. So that we can be with each other in times of struggles in ways that bless within the struggle, then share it with others in the community and world. Just as Jesus did, and still calls his followers to do today.

If you are struggling and would like to talk, need a listening ear, or just want companionship to sit silently with you, please reach out to me at 239-994-2528. For to paraphrase the last line of the blessing: blessed are all of us who struggle, for we are in good company, and we need never walk through it alone.

God's grace and peace.

Pastor Deb Kunkel

Sunday Penny Collection

First Sunday of the Month

The Church School Students will be collecting pennies the first Sunday of every month. We haven't done this in a long time and are anxious to start again. This money enables us to do donations to people or needy projects in our area or throughout the world.

Sunday, August 6, 2023



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.

stjohnsfcwi.org



A Baptism at Eagle Valley

Oliver Ryan Engel

On Saturday we welcomed through the sacrament of baptism Oliver Ryan Engel during the Vespers Eagle Valley Church service. Oliver's parents-Ryan and Elizabeth Engel - and his godparents - Andrew Bremer and Emily Hlavacek, Andrew Engel and Emily Schell - took the baptismal promises on Oliver's behalf, sharing in this visible sign of God's invisible grace.



Please keep Oliver, Ryan and Elizabeth in your prayers of joy and support.

Saturday, July 22, 2023

Liturgists & Others Wanted

Do you like to read during the service?

Then you will be happy to know that Pastor Deb is seeking liturgists to start this year. 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

1 Peter 4:10

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful servants of God’s grace in its various forms”. May each of us take time to reflect on our gifts and respond as good and faithful stewards.

~ Deacon John Stettler



August Worship Services

Worship Service change in Places

In August there will be two service where we do not worship at St. John’s Church.

Sunday, August 20, 2023

St. John’s members and friends will join Hope United Church in Cochrane at 10:30am for worship, followed by their Annual Social afterwards. Those who attended last year had great fun, as well as an opportunity to catch up with some people during the lunch and time afterwards.

Sunday, August 27, 2023

St. John’s members and friends will join Eagle Valley Church, followed by a quick Annual Meeting then lunch. Lunch will once again be catered by the Friends of Eagle Valley, so you only need come and enjoy this morning at this beloved historical church. Worship time will be 10:00am that Sunday only.

C-FC Area Food Shelf

Report For July 2023

Can you give a couple hours a month and volunteer at the C-FC Area Food Shelf located at St. John's Church in Fountain City, WI? Put a note in the offering plate this Sunday or reach out to Pastor Deb or Linda Clark at 715.495.5282. Thank you to our current volunteers!

Donations Most Needed:

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

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



- ✓ 447 Pounds Of Food Distributed
- ✓ Averages 25 Pounds Of Food Per Person
- ✓ 19 Total People Helped
- ✓ 00 Children
- ✓ 11 Adults
- ✓ 08 Seniors
- ✓ 14 Households (5 Came Twice)

General Synod

5 Things To Know...

General Synod in Indianapolis lived up to its theme, “Making All Things New,” with key decisions on leadership and governance, an inspiring keynote and an honest new look at the UCC’s history. Here are five keys to understanding what went happened.

A History-Making Election

The Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson became general minister and president of the United Church of Christ in a historic vote on Monday, prompting delegates to sing “Amen, Amen” when the result was announced. She also became the first African-American woman to lead the UCC. Thompson was the third woman ever nominated for general minister and president. “Today, United Church of Christ, we created a first together,” she said after the vote. “It won’t be the last first.” A native of Jamaica, Thompson served before her election as the UCC’s associate general minister for wider church ministries and co-executive for global ministries.

Farewell From John Dorhauer

Thompson replaces the Rev. John Dorhauer, who spent eight years as general minister and president. In his final State of the Church address, Dorhauer gave thanks for the many rich experiences afforded by his ministry. “You are the United Church of Christ, and you show up every day to do the work of the Holy Spirit,” Dorhauer said. “Lives are changed by it, and it has been my great pleasure to bear witness to that. And, my God, I will miss it.”

New General Synod Schedule

After a spirited exchange of views, delegates voted to change UCC bylaws so that General Synod takes place every three years rather than every two. The 2025 General Synod will go on as planned in Kansas City. The General Synod after that will be in 2028. The issue generated vigorous debate, with advocates of the new schedule arguing that a three-year cycle would save considerable money across the denomination and that the proliferation of virtual meeting platforms had made it unnecessary to meet every two years. Opponents said they feared a loss of connection to the wider church. The bylaws changes required a two-thirds majority vote from Synod delegates and passed by a single vote, with 454 voting yes and 226 voting no. There were six abstentions.

General Synod

‘God Is Not Done,’ Says Keynoter Bolz-Weber

The Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber, a Lutheran pastor, author and public theologian, struck a chord with delegates with a keynote centered on the themes of fear and anxiety, worry, regret and hope, and the ways Scripture addresses them – a talk she claimed was a “thinly veiled attempt to comfort myself.” The perspective offered by Scripture is vital in unsettling times, she said. “When all we can see and feel and think about is all the personal and political crap happening now, it’s important to remember we are part of an old, old story,” she said. “One that starts in the beginning of time and brushes the skin of the present and reaches into the promised future, and the promise that God is not done.” She added: “When we stand on the rock of this big story, with one hand reaching back to the hope of the prophets and one hand reaching forward to the promises of God, we can stand firmly in the reality of the present and not have that reality consume us.”

Recovering the ‘Fifth Stream’

Delegates who attended the United Black Christians luncheon learned about the UCC’s “Fifth Stream” – the Afro-Christian Convention of the South – which is often overlooked when the denomination recalls its roots in the Congregational, Christian, Evangelical and Reformed traditions. Speaking to the group, Dorhauer said that “without the fifth stream, we can’t be the UCC.” He apologized for the UCC for “cutting off one of its limbs” and “for making you wait this long for this.” In her address to the gathering, the Rev. Yvonne Delk said that the Afro-Christian tradition has historically only been “recognized as a footnote to the four white streams of the United Church of Christ,” and that the UCC has lived “the flaw of seeing the Afro-Christian Convention as an object for ministry instead of a subject defining the UCC.” In 1989, Delk was the first woman ever nominated to serve as general minister and president of the UCC.

For complete coverage of General Synod, check out coverage from UCC News, or check out recordings of plenary sessions and worship.

Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ
W1000 Spring Grove Road, Ripon, WI 54971
wcucc.org

Slice Out Hunger

Suncrest Gardens Pizza Farm

Thank you to all of those that joined us for our open house and farm tour on Saturday, June 17, 2023! And a big thank you to those who purchased pizzas today as we were able to make a \$652.00 donation to the C-FC Area Food Shelf due to our commitment to Slice Out Hunger! #sliceouthunger

~ Heather Secrist, Owner | suncrestgardensfarm.com



Volunteers: August

Ushers

Donna Beck, Karen Knospe & Mary Schmitt

Greeters

08.06.23 Faye Conners

08.13.23 Mike & Heather Schmidtknecht

08.20.23 Paul & Ruth Ehmcke

08.27.23 (Eagle Valley Service)

09.03.23 Cara Lee Wiersgalla

Counters

Dale Schaffner

Communion & Flowers

Faye Strelow & Ron Novak

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
PO Box 130
303 S Hill Street
Fountain City, WI 54629
608.687.3277
stjohnsfcwi.org

Birthdays

Robin Ruble

Barbara Juszczak

Donald Beck

Reed Wiersgalla

Kim Keilholtz

Christian Repinski

Curt Fetting

Taylor Ely

Marion Heichel

Carol Risley

Xavier Wooden

Paul Juszczak

Lisa Wolfe

Aubrey Ratz

Ally Ryan

Jordan Wachowiak

Bryan Madsen

Anniversaries

Kevin & Heidi Wachowiak

Brian & Carina Semling

Fred & Cindy Ziegler

Rick & Susan Fons

Tom & Carol Risley

Larry & Joanne Muench

Gabe & Karen Pehler

Bob & Sherry Guenther

Jared & Carly Schaffner

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.



St. John's Church Penny Collection

303 S Hill Street
Fountain City, WI
Starts @ 10:30am



St. John's Church Consistory Meeting

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



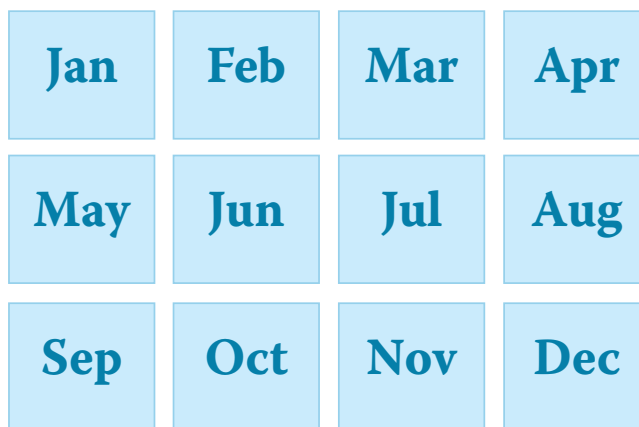
Hope United Cochrane Sunday Social

210 Michaels Street
Cochrane, WI
Starts @ 10:30am



Eagle Valley Church Worship & Potluck

S2664 Co Rd G
Fountain City, WI
Starts @ 10:00am



Online Calendar

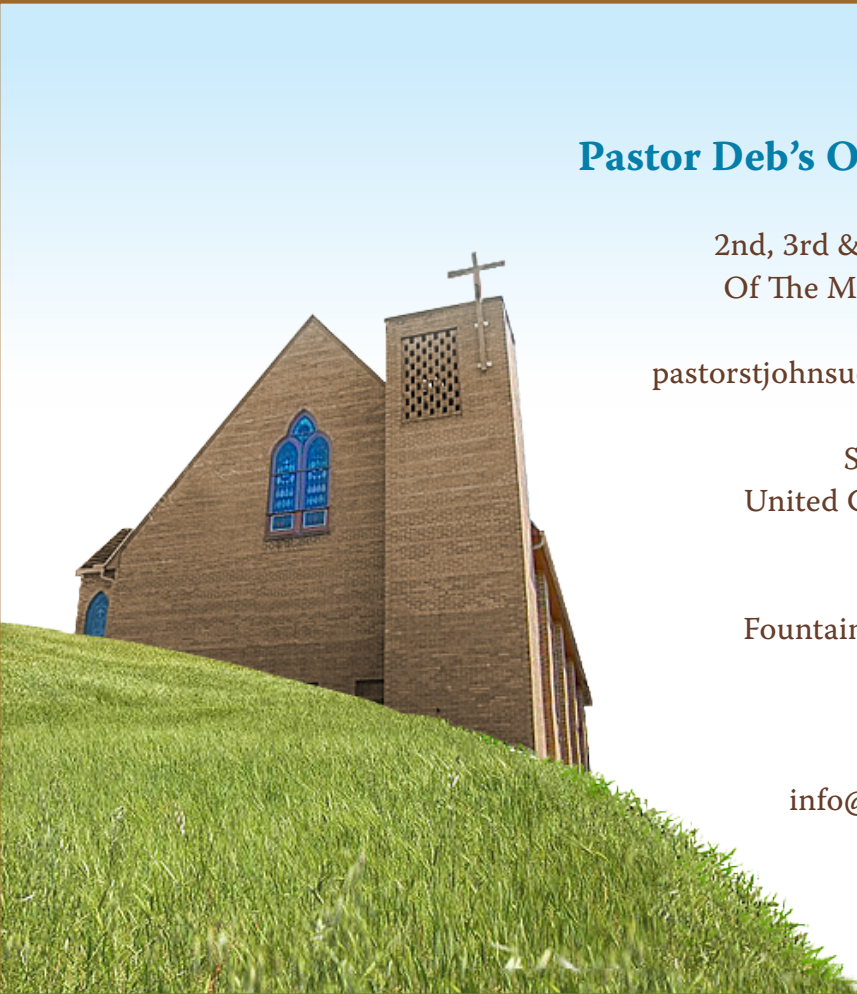
Please go online and visit our NEW easy to use website for current up-to-date, detailed event information. Our calendar is updated daily. Email us with any questions or comments.

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 you like a visit from Pastor Deb, please call her to set up a time today!



Pastor Deb's Office Hours:

2nd, 3rd & 4th Wednesday
Of The Month @ 10:00am
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

608.687.3277
stjohnsfcwi.org
info@stjohnsfcwi.org



St. John's

United Church of Christ

Church Office:

stjohnsuccfc@gmail.com

Newsletter:

stjohnsfcnewsletter@gmail.com

Pastor Deb's Office Hours:

2nd, 3rd & 4th Wednesday Of The Month @ 10:00am

239.994.2528

pastorstjohnsuccfc@gmail.com



stjohnsfcwi.org

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

608.687.3277