

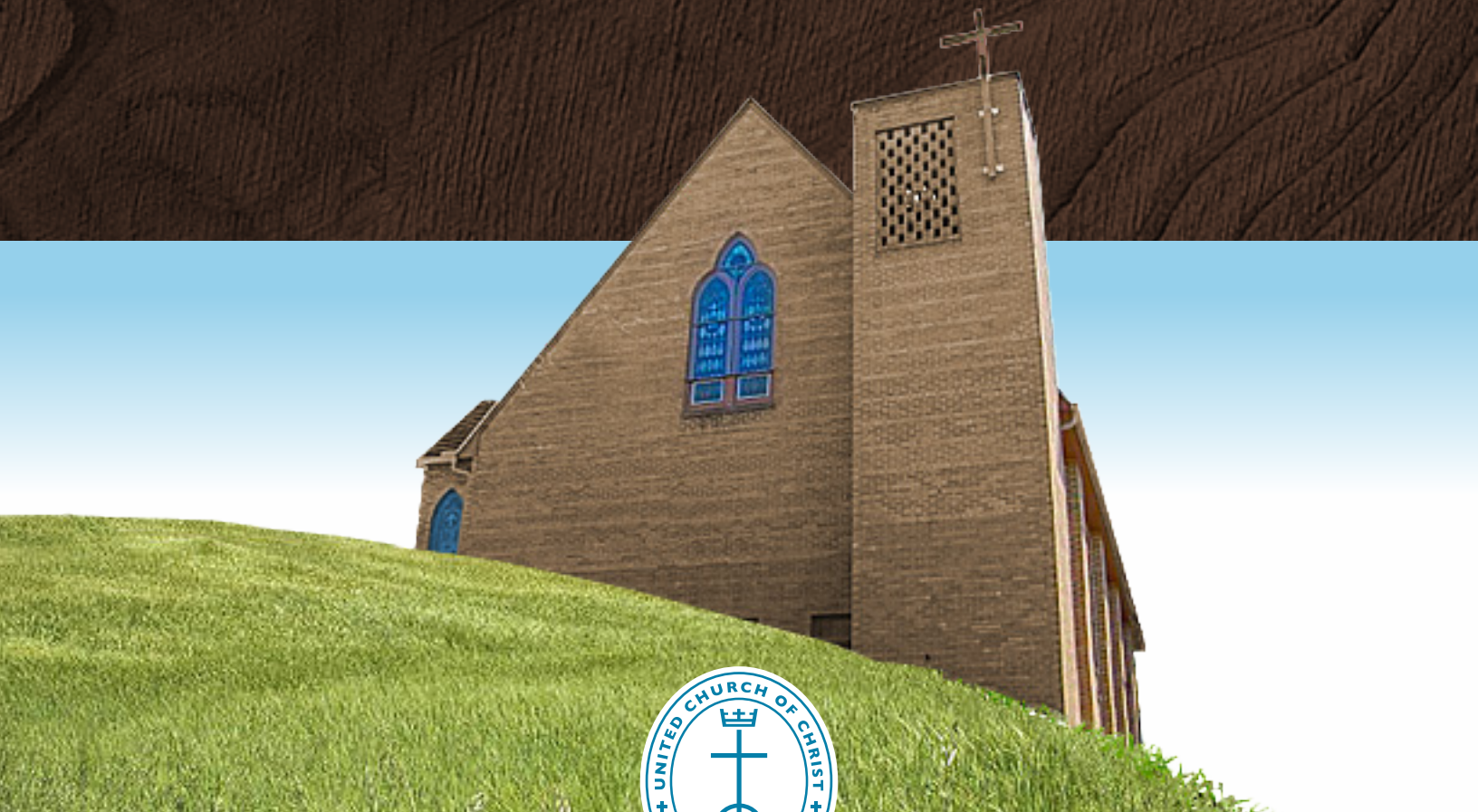


St. John's

United Church of Christ

Digital Newsletter

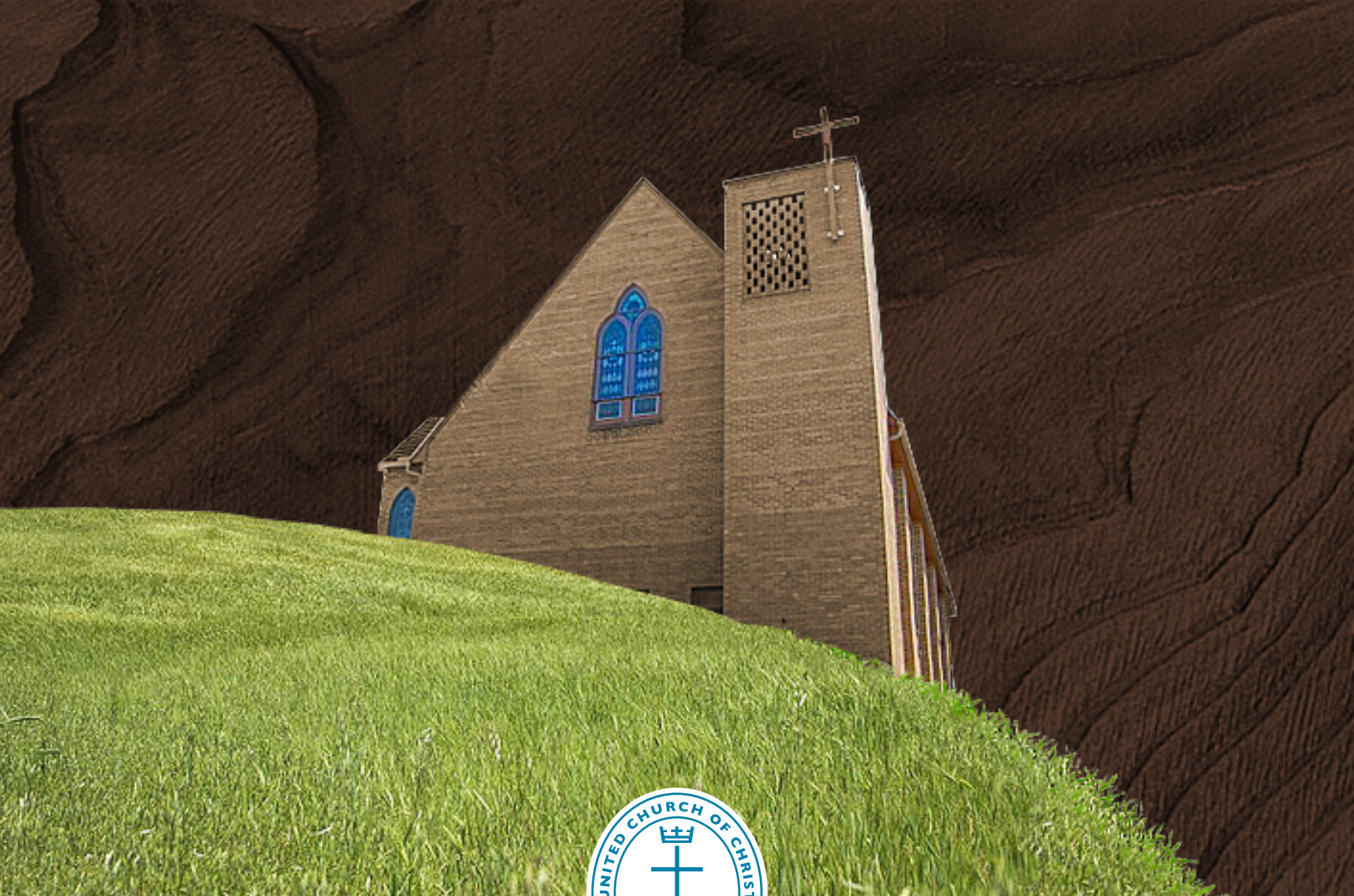
SJC Issue 1223 - December 2023



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

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Letter From The Pastor

December 2023

As December begins so does the season of Advent. Not the Christmas Season, but the Advent Season.

Now before you think I am a Grinch who hates Christmas, I love Christmas and all its trappings- shopping and giving presents, the trees, the lights, and Christmas Cookies. I love singing Christmas Carols- once the Friday after Thanksgiving comes around (please save me from the stores that start playing “Santa Claus is Coming to Town” on Halloween.)

But as Christians, we are also aware that Christmas celebrates God incarnate, God as one of us born as a baby. Emmanuel-God with us, now and always.

So before Christmas there is Advent. Starting on the first Sunday before Christmas and continuing for four Sundays until ending on Christmas Day. We spend Advent in anticipation, preparation, waiting, expectation.

But anticipation of what? Part of that answer is Christ’s birth. But that’s not the whole answer. The word Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus*”, which can be translated as “coming” or “arrival”. Early Christians established the period of Advent as a time of preparation for the birth of Christ, similar to Lent as preparation for Easter. Later it also become a time of anticipation of Jesus second coming into the heart of the believer, as well as when God’s just and loving reign is over all Creation.

Advent express one of the paradoxes of Christian faith: that we live in a time of already/not yet. At Christmas we celebrate that Emmanuel is here born to us as child, but that the purpose for this child is not yet fully realized. Advent celebrates the future hopes that infant embodies.

Continued on next page...

Letter From The Pastor

December 2023

And so we light a candle each Sunday symbolizing the growing Light coming into the world. The first is for Hope, then Peace, then Joy, then Love. All qualities seen in the birth of Christ. They also are what we look forward to being fully realized in God's coming reign. Advent encourages us to seek God's grace to be the channels through which God is bringing them about in this world. Advent reminds us that we are to be living testimonies to the reality that these qualities are possible, not merely ideals that can never be obtained.

Just as I feel we diminish our experience of Easter if we try to rush our way through or skip Lent, I feel we lose something of Christmas if we ignore Advent.

For now I will wish you a blessed Advent Season. I will wait until the evening of December 24 to wish you a Merry Christmas. But I'll be on the lookout before then for some holiday cheer. (Probably singing "Jingle Bells" and "Joy to the World" as I do)

God's grace and peace.

Pastor Deb Kunkel

Church: 608.687.3277

Cell: 239.994.2528

pastorstjohnsuccfc@gmail.com

P.S. This year the fourth Sunday of Advent is also Christmas Eve. That Sunday we will worship here with Hope United Church at a special time, 9:30am, for the last Sunday of Advent, hearing "What Mary Knew" from an older Mary – sneaking in a little of Christmas Eve. Then on Christmas Eve we will begin the Christmas Season with our candlelight service at 6:00pm. Please see the rest of the newsletter and the website for more Advent and Christmas opportunities here.

Leadership Positions

Leadership Positions Are Available For 2024

St. John's Church is seeking the following Leadership Positions for the upcoming year. Please contact Dale Schmidtknecht or any Consistory Member know if you are interested!



PRESIDENT
(3 Year Term)



TREASURER
(3 Year Term)



DEACON
(2 Year Term)



INVESTMENT
(2 Year Term)



SMAT
(2 Year Term)

Volunteers Are Needed...
Contact Us Today To Volunteer For Any Open Position.

Prayer Requests

Prayer Requests For Inclusion In The Bulletin

There have been many requests for prayers requests to once again be placed in the bulletin. And so in September we will start to do so. There will be prayer request slips left out by the bulletins each Sunday that can be put in the offering plate or on Pastor Deb's desk. Please note that these will only be for those requests you wish to have put in the bulletin.

Because of HIPPA and confidentiality concerns, for inclusion in the bulletin, prayer requests must be from an immediate family member, and/ or indicate that the person the request concerns has indicated it is okay that it can be shared in the bulletin. They should also have the name of the person requesting the prayer so that there is someone to check with, if needed, if after a period of time the request is still needed. Of course, if the request is for you personally, simply let Pastor Deb know it can be included in the bulletin.

Please note that we will continue to accept all prayer requests for inclusion in the pastoral prayer during the service, and that you can also lift the request up at the time. However, Pastor Deb will need the written slip to verify spelling etc., especially if the person is not part of the congregation. If you have any questions or concerns, please see Pastor Deb.

God's grace and peace.

Pastor Deb Kunkel

303 S Hill Street

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Sunday Penny Collection

First Sunday of the Month

The Church School Students will be collecting pennies the first Sunday of every month which enables us to do donations to people or needy projects in our area. While Pastor Deb will still be on vacation, the Rev. Betsy Miller-Ruben will be filling the pulpit and presiding over Communion.

Sunday, December 3, 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.

stjohnsfzwi.org



Bible Study

Advent/Epiphany Study

Starting Tuesday, December 5, 2023, I am offering an Advent/Epiphany Study at 5:30pm here at St. John's Church. It's a little lighter than my previous offerings - it's based on the small book "The Heart that Grew Three Sizes: Finding Faith in the Story of the Grinch." Using Dr. Seuss's "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" we will explore some of the faith themes in this Christmas classic, including how exactly one's heart can grow three sizes?



Each class will be about an hour. While it is helpful to buy the book to read before each week's class it isn't required. Pastor Deb has several copies of the book in her office that you can purchase. And if you need a refresher on the Grinch, she also has a few copies on her bookshelf that she can loan out. And Hope United Church members are welcome to join.

Tuesdays Starts @ 5:30pm

- ✓ **Tuesday, December 5, 2023: When everything is wrong.**
- ✓ **Tuesday, December 12, 2023: When Christmas isn't Christmas.**
- ✓ **Tuesday, December 19, 2023: When Light Shines.**
- ✓ **Tuesday, January 2, 2024: When Joy is Our Song.**

See All Letters & Messages Online Under The Worship Tab
stjohnsfcwi.org

Eagle Valley Church

Saturday, December 16, 2023

There will be an open invitation for all members of St. John's Church and Hope United Church to attend the Advent Vespers with Christmas Hymn Service on Saturday, December 16, 2023 at the Eagle Valley Church at 4:00pm. We'll share the Christmas story, sing favorite Christmas hymns and experience together this special time of the year. We hope you can join us.

The Church in Eagle Valley was historically preserved and donated to St. John's in 2003. Friends of Eagle Valley Community Church, an independent ecumenical committee, manages its use and maintains the restoration. As it is now named, this Community Church is available for any church to use for worship services, memorials, or weddings. In 2011 a pavilion with tables was added on the church grounds to accommodate gatherings of church or family.

Christmas Hymn Service Starts @ 4:00pm

- ✓ **St. John's Church & Hope United Church**
- ✓ **Invitation**
- ✓ **S2664 Co Rd G**
- ✓ **Fountain City, WI**



Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 17, 2023

St. John's Church will be having a special Sunday School Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 17, 2023 during the 10:30am Service. We look forward to worshipping with you.

Starts @ 10:30am

Christmas Eve (Morning)

Sunday, December 24, 2023

St. John's Church will be having a special Joint Service Fourth Sunday of Advent - "What Mary Knew" on Sunday, December 24, 2023 at 9:30am. Hope United Church is invited to join us.

Starts @ 9:30am

Christmas Eve (Evening)

Sunday, December 24, 2023

St. John's Church will be having a special Candlelight Service on Sunday, December 24, 2023 at 6:00pm. We look forward to worshipping with you.

Starts @ 6:00pm

Fifth Sunday Service

Sunday, December 31, 2023

Hope United Church is invited to join Worship Services with St. John's Church on Sunday, December 31, 2023 at 10:30am in Fountain City, Wisconsin.

Starts @ 10:30am



Stewardship

Stewardship Moment from the Deacons

What If? When we greet someone instead of saying Hi, we greet them saying “Thank You”. Then they might ask, “Thank you for what”? Then we say, “Thank you for being who you are”. It would brighten their day. What if? Try it!!

~ Deacon John Stettler



Sunday School

School Education

School age children are welcome to join our Sunday School classes during Sunday morning services at 10:30am. St. John’s Church has two groups Pre-K to 2nd grade and 3rd to 6th grade. Through weekly lessons we learn about our Savior Jesus Christ. Each year the Sunday School students rehearse and perform the Children’s Christmas Service in December celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. For more information, contact Karen Knospe.

During Sunday Morning Service

- ✓ Sundays @ 10:30am
- ✓ Pre-K to 2nd Grade
- ✓ 3rd to 6th Grade

Feeding C-FC Families

First Month Updates

The first month of “Feeding CFC Families” kicked off providing food for 24 families with children from CFC School. Thank you to all the volunteers from St. John’s Church and Hope United Church that made that possible. If you would like to help any of these times in December, or at future dates, please send Pastor Deb an email at pastorstjohnsuccfc@gmail.com. And if you are considering making charitable holiday donations this year, both the Feeding C-FC Families and the Food Shelf would appreciate the financial support. Checks would be payable to St. Johns’s Church, indicating on the memo line whether for the Food Shelf or Feeding C-FC Families.

✓ **Wednesday, December 6, 2023**

11:00am

Unload Food Truck

✓ **Tuesday, December 12, 2023**

1:00pm to 3:00pm

Organize & Pack Food

✓ **Tuesday, December 12, 2023**

3:00pm to 6:00pm

Food Read To Distribute

Volunteers Are Needed...

Contact us today to volunteer for any open position.

[Volunteer Now](#)

C-FC Area Food Shelf

Report For November 2023

As part of our Stewardship as a church please consider a monetary donation or food donation for our Food Shelf here at Church. See list below of our most needed items. This summer and fall we have been much busier than usual providing food to people in need in our community. If we want to continue this service we do need your assistance to continue. Please put your donation of food in the bin at church by coat rack or your monetary donations can be placed in the offering plate or mailed to church with checks made out to C-FC Area Food Shelf - St John's Church, PO Box 130, Fountain City WI, 54629.

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



- ✓ 537 Pounds Of Food Distributed
- ✓ Averages 20 Pounds Of Food Per Person
- ✓ 27 Total People Helped
- ✓ 03 Children
- ✓ 08 Adults
- ✓ 09 Seniors
- ✓ 13 Households (4 Came Twice)

Choir Practice

1st & 3rd Wednesdays Of The Month

St. John's Church will have Choir Practice on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays Of The Month starting at 6:30pm in Fountain City, WI. Do you have ideas of things the Choir could try? Please share your thoughts on new ideas for musical offerings for our congregation. Please contact us with any questions or comments.



St. John's Church Choir Practice

303 S Hill Street
Fountain City, WI
Starts @ 6:30pm



St. John's Church Choir Practice

303 S Hill Street
Fountain City, WI
Starts @ 6:30pm



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303 S Hill Street
Fountain City, WI
Starts @ 6:30pm



St. John's Church Choir Practice

303 S Hill Street
Fountain City, WI
Starts @ 6:30pm



Volunteers: December

Ushers

Dale Schaffner, Calvin Stettler & Dale Schmidtknecht

Greeters

12.03.23 Byron & Sherry Hoch
12.10.23 Weldon & Cheryl Kuhn Family
12.17.23 Vira Mae Engel
12.24.23 Steve & Sue Prussing
12.31.23 Calven Stettler

Counters

Donna Beck & Mary Schmitt

Communion & Flowers

LuAnn Schmidtknecht & Amy Hammer

Financial Report

A monthly Financial Report summarized by category is available in the office or requested by email. For detailed information regarding the financial standing of St. John's Church, contact the office to review financial documents.

St. John's Church
303 S Hill Street
Fountain City, WI 54629
608.687.3277
stjohnsfcwi.org

Birthdays

Emma Kuhn
Tina Fetting
Ryan Engel
Tessah Ely
Mary Stettler
Bella Beck-Walters
Alexis Yapp
Baylee Osborn
Dylan Wolfe
Bill Ruben
Ron Schutz
Laura Madsen
Joan Felting
Natalie Fetting
Danielle Felting
John Schowalter
John Sutter
Randy Boehm
Andrew Wolfe
Izaiah Knecht
Veronica Fetting
Richard Wicka
Tiffany Schaffner
Denise Yapp
Lucas Walth
Miles Walth
Mary Ziegler

Anniversaries

Reggie & Jeanne Franz
Chris & Kendra Ritscher
Werner & Jolene Engel

Confirmation

Confirmation Exploration Class

We offer Confirmation class for middle or high schoolers. This process which includes class meetings, service opportunities, leading worship, and other activities created to fit the needs and interests of each particular class. Our youth will be enriched by these conversations and planning so that we can welcome them into the journey of our life together.



Confirmation Exploration Class

3:30pm - 5:00pm
St. John's Church
Education



Confirmation Exploration Class

3:30pm - 5:00pm
St. John's Church
Education



Confirmation Exploration Class

NO CLASS
St. John's Church
Education



Confirmation Exploration Class

NO CLASS
St. John's Church
Education



St. John's

United Church of Christ



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.

DECEMBER
SATURDAY
16

Eagle Valley Church Christmas Hymn Service

S2664 Co Rd G
Fountain City, WI
Starts @ 4:00pm

DECEMBER
SUNDAY
17

St. John's Church Christmas Pageant

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

DECEMBER
SUNDAY
24

St. John's Church Christmas Eve (Morning)

Joint Service
Fountain City, WI
Starts @ 9:30am

DECEMBER
SUNDAY
24

St. John's Church Christmas Eve (Evening)

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

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

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

Christmas Fund Offering

Sunday, January 7, 2024

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each Year to our lower-income retirees. This year we will take up the offering on Sunday, January 7, 2024. United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need, expressed in thank you messages sent to the Pension Board such as this one.

“I loved working in small churches. I remember a day in seminary when I overheard a couple of students talking, saying that the thing to do was get a small church to start and then that’s your stepping-stone to a bigger church. That’s when I decided I would always serve small churches. They deserve people with experience. But I didn’t stop to think about the tiny annuity I would have at the time I made the decision to work with small congregations. Help from donations to the Christmas Fund has been a Godsend. Thank you!”

Please prayerfully consider your support of this offering for the wider United Church of Christ.

God’s grace and peace.

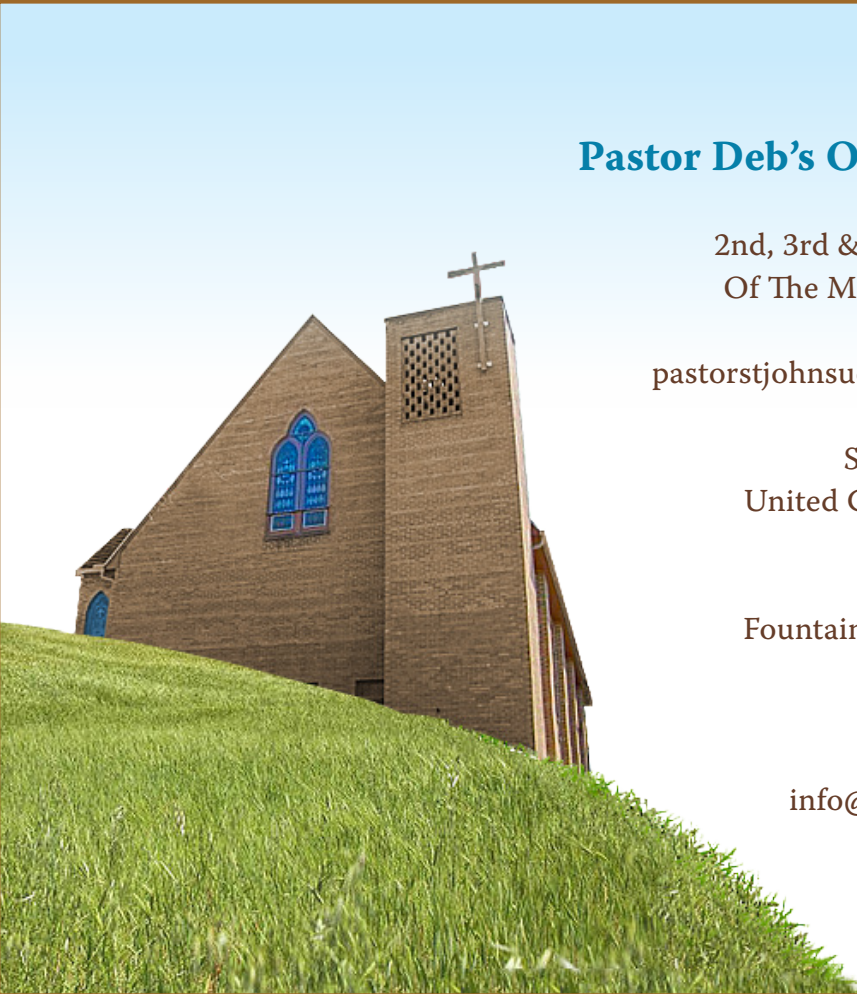
Pastor Deb Kunkel

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pastorstjohnsuccfc@gmail.com

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

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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

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