



The Country Church Herald

NEWSLETTER ~ APRIL, 2023

Mission Trip, 2023!

This year we have 17 members from both churches heading to Cleveland, Ohio to do God's work. The members consist of Anna Marie, Olivia, Owen & Sierra Bramstedt, Tara & Brooklyn Vandoske, Michelle & Colton Scharl, Brenda, Brianna & Rebecca Miota, Patrick, Brenda & Grace Schultz, Stacy & Hillary Hermann and Raymond Henschel. Cleveland is a resilient and diverse community that has been reconstructing itself for the past several years. We will have the opportunity to serve alongside local organizations and families, with a focus on those experiencing poverty, in Cleveland through construction and relational ministry. Our trip will run from July 16th to July 21st. We are all super excited to see how God will work through us this summer.

With a group of this size, we are actively fundraising to make our trip possible. We greatly appreciate your support. Here are a few ways you can support us:

- Friday, March 31st, we are hosting a brat fry/bake sale at Miesfeld's from 10:30am-5pm.
- At work? Don't worry - how about filling out our pre-order form with a couple coworkers. We will have it ready for pick up at your specified time.
- Contact Anna Marie Bramstedt at jaab93000@tds.net or 920.698.7656 to get a form.
- Kwik Trip Car Wash Gift Cards are for sale - \$36 each
Each is preloaded with 5 Ultimate Car Washes, \$50 value. Contact any member to purchase a card.
Great for Easter baskets, gifts or just heading into the warmer months!
- Seroogy Candy Bar Sale \$2 each
Watch for members to be selling at church or reach out to us if interested. Great Easter basket stuffers!
- Bake Sale/Coin Drop (Clean out all your loose change!)
Easter Sunday at BOTH Churches before or after 10:30am Service. Grab & Go! *Feel free to donate individually bagged goodies for this event.*
- Saturday, June 3rd, we will be hosting another brat fry/bake sale at Howards Grove Piggly Wiggly from 10am-2pm

Thank you so much for your continued support and prayers.

Have any questions at all or would like to be put on the list for next year's trip, please contact Anna Marie Bramstedt at 920.698.7656 or jaab93000@tds.net

ST. JAMES UCC
13312 Pioneer Road
Newton, WI 53063
920.693.8100

ST. MARK'S UCC
W1307 Orchard Road
Cleveland, WI 53015
920.693.8361

PASTOR:

Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz

April 2nd, Palm Sunday —
St. Mark's: 9:00am Worship
9-10:00 Sunday School
St. James: 10:30am Worship
9-10:00 Sunday School

April 5th, Maundy Thursday —
7pm Worship at St. James
with Communion

April 6th, Good Friday—
7pm Worship at St. Mark's
with Communion

April 9th, Easter!
Communion at Both Churches
St. James: 9:00am Worship
9-10:00 Sunday School
St. Mark's: 10:30am Worship
9-10:00 Sunday School

April 16th,
St. Mark's: 9:00am Worship
9-10:00 Sunday School
St. James: 10:30am Worship
9-10:00 Sunday School

April 23rd,
St. James: 9:00am Worship
9-10:00 Sunday School
St. Mark's: 10:30am Worship
9-10:00 Sunday School

April 30th,
St. James: 9:00am Worship
9-10:00 Sunday School
St. Mark's: 10:30am Worship
9-10:00 Sunday School

*Sunday bulletins, & links to prayer requests are posted under the 'Messages' link on our church website:
<https://www.stmstjucc.org/>
Weekly recorded on church YouTube*

Brief Update from the Mission & Vision Team:

The Mission/Vision team has been meeting the first Saturday of every month since November 2022. The primary goal of this team is to collaboratively develop two areas of focus and commitment and put them into meaningful words which will steer our actions. This team will focus on a mission statement and core values providing further definition of whom we are as a church, what our vision and direction are as the local church; and a missions assessment process that evaluates pastoral ministry, church ministry, and church leadership ministry.

Three surveys have been developed which we will send to our congregations and regular attendees in staggered fashion. These are Ministry Assessment surveys to help determine the areas we excel in, and the areas we need to focus on. It also solicits your input with where you see the church and church ministries headed.

The three survey assessments are:

Church Ministry – we plan on sending this out at the beginning of April.

Pastoral Ministry – following the return of Church Ministry

Church Leadership – following the return of Pastoral Ministry.

Additionally, we plan on hosting round tables, small group meetings following worship services for any who want to talk with the team directly. This will begin sometime after Easter.

My friends, we need your input. While this is Christ's church, Christ has made each of us stewards of St. Mark's and St. James. You will be an integral part of developing the mission statement and core values which will help guide us into the future. The same core values and mission statement will also shape our ministry and missions now. Without your support and participation, we will really just be spinning our wheels!

The first survey (Church Ministry) will be sent out soon. It will be emailed or mail-chimp'd. We'll also send hard copies to those without access to the internet. We'll have some copies at each church as well. Thank you for your support, your prayers, and your input.

The Mission and Vision Team!

ST. MARK'S CONSISTORY MEETING

The meeting was called to order on March 2, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. Members present were Glenn Grunwald, Janell Davis, Larry Perronne, Judy Steinbeck, Linda Schroeder, Ben Grunwald, Julie Herrmann and Pastor Schultz. Pastor led us in prayer.

The financial report was read by Judy and reviewed by the consistory. Larry voted to accept the report and Linda seconded the motion. Motion carried.

We will notify the congregation via inserts in bulletins and email regarding the balance of the parsonage loan in hopes of getting it paid off sooner. Larry will also announce in church on 4/2/23.

A motion was made by Linda to accept the Secretary's report and the motion was seconded by Larry. Motion carried.

The Mission/Vision team continues to meet and discuss questions and give updates to the congregation. Considering senior ministry with hopes of offering upcoming activities and needing a coordinator for the activities.

The drywall is being worked on in the church office. Larry will be completing in March and discussed putting in a ceiling fan for better airflow.

Larry will check with Fasse Paint on the cost of painting the parking lot lines.

A letter will be sent out by pastor to both congregations with our decision to hold off on changing the times of church service until next year when we have another good year of stability.

Pastor will apply for a grant to help offset the cost of a bookshelf and books to start a church library.

Louise Jetzer and Sheila Hemb will take over our youth fellowship account at Cleveland State Bank. We will notify the bank of our approval of changing names on the current account via the meeting minutes per the bank's request. A motion was made by Linda Schroeder and seconded by Janell Davis to remove Kari Langenhahn's name and replace the account names with Louise Jetzer and Sheila Hemb. Motion carried.

Larry made a motion to allow as much as \$2500 to be written out with only one signature needed and any checks over \$2500 would require two signatures. Linda seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The youth group and Sunday school leaders will be asked by Linda if they would consider baking cookies with the remainder of the cookie jars that did not sell during their fundraiser and have a bake sale and the profits could be used for the mission trip.

Glenn will research options for getting the annual state elevator inspection completed.

Our next consistory meeting will be 4/13/23 at 6:30 p.m.

Larry made a motion to adjourn and Linda seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Herrmann
Consistory Secretary

ST. JAMES CONSISTORY

- The meeting was called to order by President Jackie Mueller. Members present were Jason Riesterer – Vice-President, Sheila Hemb – Treasurer, Tammy Serketich – Secretary, Jamey Binversie, Wendy Meyer, Scott Henschel, and Pastor Patrick Schultz.
- Prayer led by Pastor.
- Motion to approve the Secretary's Report made by Jamey and seconded by Wendy. Motion carried.
- Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report made by Scott and seconded by Tammy. Motion carried.
- Pastor's Report:

Mission/Vision Committee. Met on Saturday 3/4. Looking at a Senior Ministry Polka outing. Looking for someone to coordinate. Some discussion about round table conversations, fellowship and coffee etc. Pastor will send a letter to members regarding service times.

- Building and Grounds:
 - ◇ Parking Lot – Dave Mueller has a contact who will look at our parking lot and provide a bid this spring.
 - ◇ Sunday School Room Floor- Jackie will check with Deb if this room was included in the floor cleaning. We will review again next month.
 - ◇ Stoves – Brenda Miota wished to thank consistory and members for their help with the Chili Dinner and commented on the wonderful new stoves. Special thanks to Jamey Binversie and Jonathan Meyer for installing them. Jason and Jamey will address the backsplash
 - ◇ Entry way chairs. A member is pricing new chairs, possible discount for churches thru Ashley Furniture. If replaced, old chairs will be moved to Pastor's church office.

- Committee Reports:

Vision of Hope: Meeting was held Monday, 2/27. Request for approval of a \$1000 donation to UCC Turkey and Syria Earthquake Appeal. Motion made to approve donation by Tammy and seconded by Scott. Motion carried. Jackie will contact Dan Kleinhans. Discussion was held if President is unable to attend meeting, then another consistory member will do so.

Stewardship Committee: There is an upcoming meeting later this month.

Christian Board of Education: Jamey reported committee met on 2/26. Last day of Sunday School will be May 14. A Mother's Day presentation is being planned. There will be a special Easter activity and a possible end of year party. They will discuss next year's fundraising at the next meeting.

Service Committee: Nothing new to report

Audio Visual: A sign up calendar has been put in place. March is taken care of and Pastor will set up recording of Wednesday's lent service 3/8

****MINUTES CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE**

ST. JAMES CONSISTORY —continued from previous page...

- Old Business:

Safe Sanctuary helper – We are still in need of a second person to attend the high school youth group meetings. If anyone is interested, please contact Brenda Schultz. Discussion was held regarding background checks. Will discuss next month.

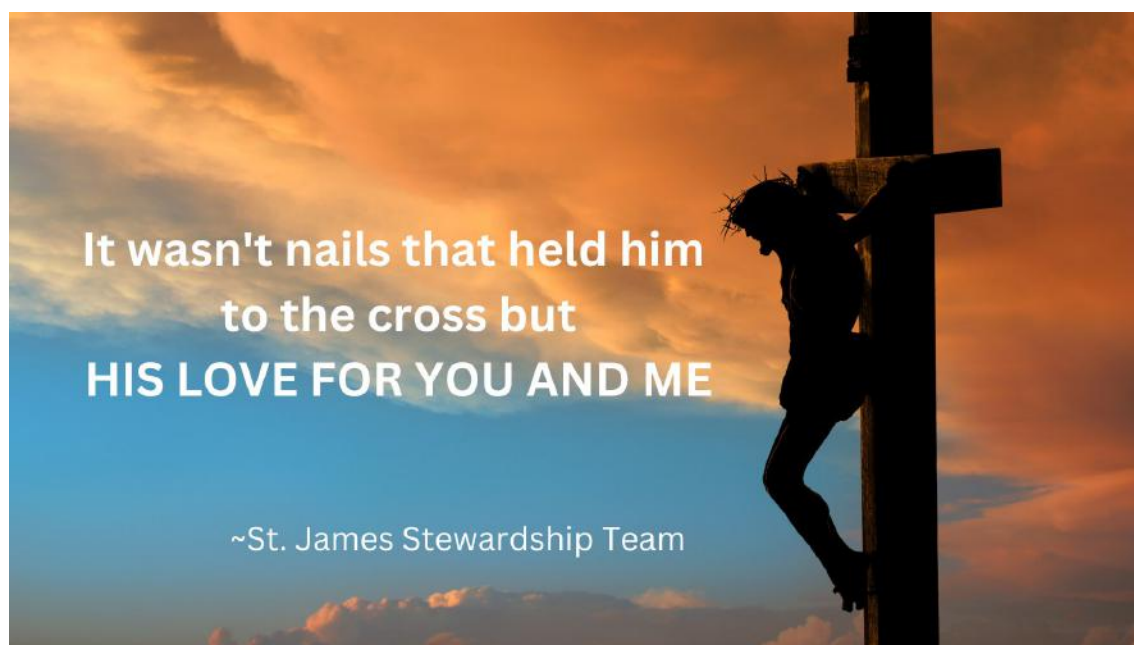
- New Business:

- ◇ Spring Clean Up will be held on Saturday, April 15th at 9:00 a.m. Rain date: April 22, 2023. Scott volunteered to grill out following cleanup.
- ◇ Youth Group Checking Account – Louise Jetzer and Sheila Hemb will be the signors for the Youth Fellowship Account. Kari Langenhahn requested to be removed. Motion was made to remove Kari from the account and add Louise Jetzer and Sheila Hemb. Motion included recommendation that all expenses be reviewed by Louise, Sheila and Brenda Schultz. Only one signature required for expenses less than \$500. Any expenses over \$1000.00 require Consistory approvals. Motion made by Tammy and seconded by Jason. Tammy will forward our recommendation to St. Mark's consistory. Special thanks to Kari for leading the Chili dinners in the past and handling this account. Thanks to Brenda Miota for taking charge of the chili dinner this year. Thanks to all members and youth who helped and all for supporting this event.
- ◇ Check Water Softener – Jamey checks regularly.
- ◇ Jackie will set up a meeting with the Koreans.

- Congregation concerns: Church temperature has been chilly. We decided to leave the thermostat setting as is. Outside light by the back kitchen door has been left on several times last month. A reminder note to turn light off when leaving will be placed by switch.
- Next meeting date: April 3, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.
- Motion to adjourn made by Scott and seconded by Jamey. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Serketich, Consistory Secretary



**ST. JAMES CHOIR
CHOIR PRACTICE:**

Wednesday, April 5: 6:30

Wednesday, April 19: 6:30

Wednesday, April 26: 6:30



**ST. MARK'S
CHOIR PRACTICE:**

Wednesday, April 5 at 7:00

**Wed., April 19 at 7:00, this
is the last practice for
the spring season**



**St. James Brat Fry Planning Meeting to be held
Thursday, April 13, 2023 at 6:00pm**

St. James UCC will host its annual "Brat Fry" on Wednesday, May 10, 2023. Serving time will be 4:00 pm until 7:00 pm. CARRY OUTS ONLY.

Tell your family and friends so we have a good turn out.

A meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 13th at 6:00 pm to finalize plans. All are invited to attend and suggestions are always welcome. There will be sign-up sheets for helpers and donations in the church narthex.

If you have any questions, please contact: Chairman, Mary Ann Vogel at 920-693-8352, or email wvogel3@yahoo.com. Co-Chairs are Wendy Henschel and Tammy Serketich.

Bridgeway (SCIO) is an organization we have supported and been involved with for some years now. I recently learned they are in need of new twin bed comforters and pillows for their 4 families with 6 children under the age of 7. They also welcome bus passes and gas card donations to help families get to work and appointments.

With spring right around the corner, it's time for spring cleaning! If you would like to help, they can use all-purpose spray cleaners, window cleaner, toilet bowl cleaner and kitchen floor cleaner.

A donation bin will be left at the entrance of both churches. If you are gifting cards or bus passes, those can be given directly to the pastor.

Thank you for your continued support, grace and generosity!

Dr. Patrick Schultz



BIG Thank You!

A VERY special Thank You to all who donated to the chili dinner, whether it was a financial donation, your time, or your participation in the chili dinner it was Greatly Appreciated! We had a very successful chili dinner making over \$1500 for our youth group activities! If you are not in need of the ice cream pails, we would generously take them off your hands. At St. James, there is a tote in the entrance for your pails and at St. Marks, the pails can be given to Pastor.

THANK YOU for supporting our youth through the chili dinner!

Kari Langenhahn

Youth Fellowship



HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP

The youth will meet April 2 at St. Mark's, and April 16 at St. James. In addition to our regular gatherings, we will also head to Green Bay on Saturday, April 22 for some jumping fun at Get Air Trampoline Park (time to be discussed at our regular gatherings).

Thank you to our volunteers who have fed us and helped supervise us each month! We very much appreciate your involvement in the future of our churches :)

If you have any questions please contact me via email:

schultzbrenda@gmail.com



WELCOME

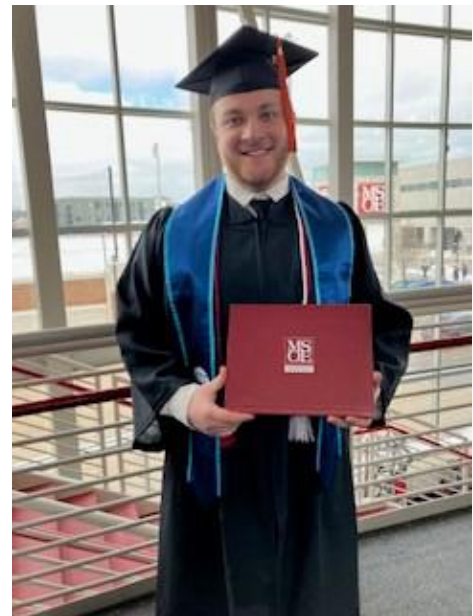
Mike & Roxi Bernhardt

new members at St. Mark's UCC
Sunday, March 26th.

We're so happy
to have you join our church family!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Nathan Roelse graduated from Milwaukee School of Engineering on Saturday, February 25 with a bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering. He has accepted an engineering position at Nordco.



The study group for The Chosen, Season 3 will begin on Monday, April 24th, 10am/5pm.

Let either Pastor or Karen know if you're interested in attending and if you want to buy your book at our first meeting.

Call: 920-693-8361 or email: stmstjoffice@gmail.com



Find out more about
this worthy cause,
**Feed My Starving
Children**, at:
<https://www.fmsc.org/>

Mission Work



On Saturday, March 11th, 120 volunteers got together to help pack food for **Feed My Starving Children** at First United Lutheran Church in Sheboygan. Together we packed 148 boxes, which each contained 36 bags, providing 31,968 meals. That comes out to 87 people being fed for one year.

Pictured below are some members from community churches (St. John's UCC, Bethlehem UCC, St. James UCC and Our Shepherd UCC) that got together for this event.



Barb
&
Kerry



Henning, left. Right,
front row: Shelly Bonde,
Marie Mueller, Nancy
Henschel, Kaye Radder.
Back rows: Kathy Bowe, Debby Henschel, Richard & Sarah Lutze and Shari Ver
Straate.



RURAL CHURCH FELLOWSHIP EVENT!

A Sheepshead Tournament was held on February 4th at Bethlehem UCC. There were a total of 41 people in attendance. It was a fun afternoon with lots of fellowship!



BRAT FRY

Wednesday May 10th

4 - 7 pm



Brats * Hamburgers * Chicken * Dessert

St James UCC

Spring Valley
13312 Pioneer Rd., Newton

ST. JAMES USHERS

APRIL

*Charles & Ruth Ann Kolb
Ashley Lutzke
Ethen Lutzke
Linda Lutzke
Dale & Doris Sprenger
David & Christine Gumm
Corra Gumm
Elliott Gumm
Everit Gumm
Dean Sprenger

MAY

*Alan Wippermann
Rick & Donna Wippermann
Tim & Noel Wippermann
Cindi Wippermann
Sara Wippermann
Lindsay Wippermann
Tom Urness
David Lorfeld
Linda Lorfeld

ST. MARK'S GREETERS

APRIL

Jon Herrmann
Julie Herrmann
Carol Weiland

GREETERS-MID-WEEK

LENTEN

Steve Gabsch
Gary Kaestner
Jim & Patty Taylor

MAY

Janice Marcheske
Mike Marcheske
Deanne Schultz

HOSPITALITY

April 2nd — Sandy Perronne
April 9th — **
April 16th — Margene Reyer
April 23rd— **
April 30th— Margene Reyer

**Available to host, contact the office if you're interested.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

St. James		St. Mark's
46	Feb. 26	49
na	March 1-Wed.	35
46	March 5	68
36	March 8-Wed.	na
44	March 12	32
na	March 15-Wed.	33
49	March 19	52
31	March 22-Wed.	na
49	March 26	53



VISION OF HOPE

"Application for Funding" forms are available in the narthex, from VISION OF HOPE Committee members, or under "More" on our church website. We welcome specific requests as well as your suggestions for using our semiannual gifts from the Wagner Foundation.

STUDENTS! Use this form for tuition help (currently \$1,000)

ST JAMES APRIL CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

- 7 Karen Becker
- Dale Sprenger
- 11 Bonnie Langenhahn
- 12 Michael Stolzmann
- 13 LaVern Wippermann
- 14 Alivia Maxey
- 15 Lee Schmitz
- 16 Dorothy Mueller
- 17 Brenda Schultz
- 19 Julianne Luebke
- Terri Schmitz
- 23 Mark Stolzmann
- 24 Sarah Lutze

ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Rev. Patrick & Brenda Schultz
- 6 Jason & Jenny Riesterer
- 9 David & Christine Gumm
- 14 Dean & Emily Sprenger
- 22 Allen & Sandra Kracht-Jones



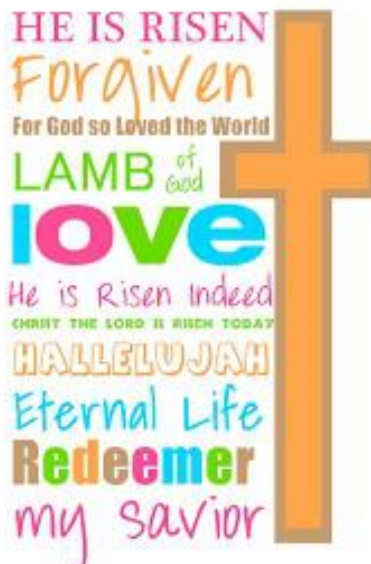
If you or a family member are in need of pastoral care, please contact Pastor Patrick at 920-693-2858 or leave a message on the church's answering machine at: 920-693-8361.

Pastor Patrick has designated Tuesdays & Fridays as his day of Sabbath and his day out of the office. During those two days each week, you may contact him in case of an emergency only at 608-352-9544.

Confidentiality laws make it difficult for pastors to obtain information about anyone in the hospital. If you or a loved one will be in the hospital, please call the church office 920-693-8361 or contact Pastor Patrick at 920-693-2858.

Please report any corrections or additions on the birthday and anniversary lists to Karen in the church office to ensure they are correct in future publications:
stmstjoffice@gmail.com

THANK YOU!



ST MARK'S APRIL CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Carol Weiland
- 2 Glenn Grunwald
- 3 Dale Dirks
- Chris Schnelle
- 5 Karen Binversie
- 12 Gene Kaestner
- Johnathan Grunwald
- 16 Jerry Jetzer
- 17 Brenda Schultz
- 18 Kathy Kaestner
- 22 Ann Grunwald
- 23 Karen Mansker
- 24 Kenneth Dirks
- Erick Heling
- 28 Abby Herrmann
- 30 Ryan Binversie

ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Rev. Patrick & Brenda Schultz
- 22 Dick & Karen Binversie
- 23 Bruce & Karen Mansker
- 28 Jack & Wendy Schnelle
- 29 Ron & Sue Vandoske
- 30 Gene & Kathy Kaestner
- Thad & Crissy Athorp



Save The Date...Click your heels 3 times and join us in the Emerald City!

Join us for a magical night of all things SCIO: supporting community impact, raising awareness about our programs, sharing delicious food, and raising funds.

We are excited to build on the success of our previous Spring Luncheon by offering a more robust event. We look forward to seeing you at "There's No Place Like Home"!

WHEN: Friday, May 19, 2023
TIME: Doors open at 4:30p.m & Dinner at 6:15p.m.
WHERE: The Berkshire dba The Black Pig

You can RSVP by scanning the QR Code below or visit sheboygancountyinterfaith.org/



Farmers Market

We offer EBT and Double Your Bucks at every market through the end of April and have a variety of vendors who offer fresh produce, including Springdale Farms, Log Cabin Orchard, Terra Sol, White Rabbit Mushrooms, and Gaertner's Great Lakes Greens. We also have a variety of value-added vendors offering products such as honey, maple syrup, apple cider, canned foods and soaps. Stop by and come visit us!



The Winter Farmers Market is every first and third Saturday, November - April, 9am-12pm
First Congregational Church UCC,
310 Bluff Avenue
Sheboygan.

St. Peter Evangelical Church Town Of Rhine Chili Supper

WITH TORTE FOR DESSERT

-----One Mile West of 57 on CTY FF-----
W5375 Cty Rd FF

Tuesday April 11th

Sponsored By
St. Peter Evangelical Ladies Aid



Serving from 4-7 p.m. in the church basement
Adults \$10.00
Children 6-12 \$3.00
Under 6 Free

TAKEOUTS AVAILABLE EVERYONE WELCOME

SMOKED PORK CHOP DINNER

Thursday, April 20, 2023



Drive-thru
4:00 – 6:30 p.m.
\$13.00

Saron UCC

W3830 Cty Rd J
Sheboygan Falls

Reservations required by calling:

Joan Laack – (920) 946-4652

Judy Glander – (920) 980-0748

A Living Dramatization of
Leonardo da Vinci's
LAST SUPPER

DRAMA, MUSIC, COMMUNION, WORSHIP



**SUNDAY, APRIL 2
 6:00PM**

Join us for a one hour production of "The Last Supper" inspired by the large fresco style painting on the wall of Santa Maria delle Grazie, in Milan by Leonardo da Vinci. In this dramatization, the 12 disciples speak their minds to themselves, to each other, and to the Lord in light of the words which they have just heard Jesus speak, "One of you will betray me."

Narrator: Mason White. *Cast:* John Brown, Bob Deyo, Steve Flook, Rev. Jeremy Hysten, Mike King, Bruce Neils, Tom Ott, Richard Reineking, Keith Risse, Jeff Ritt, Jim Schwarten, Daniel Van Straten, Rev. Greg Whelton.

Directed by: Mandy Radloff. *Organist:* Lisa Flook. *Soloist:* Rev. Kristal Klemme.

on Sheboygan's
 South Side
St Paul's
 UNITED CHURCH
 OF CHRIST

2114 Wedemeyer St.
 Sheboygan
 (corner of Union Avenue
 and Wedemeyer Street)

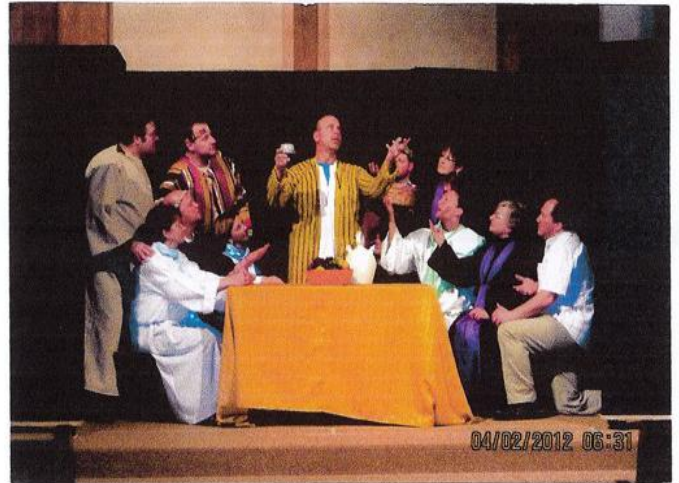
(920) 458-1611 sspucc.org



Jellybean Prayer

LIVING PICTURES

"FROM PRAISE TO PERSECUTION"



BETHLEHEM U.C.C.

11608 LAX CHAPEL RD. KIEL, WI
 THURSDAY APRIL 6, 2023 7:00 P.M.

15 freeze frame pictures of events in the week prior to Jesus's death with live actors accompanied by narration.

PUBLIC WELCOME
 NO ADMISSION

-  Red is for the blood He gave
-  Green is for the grass He made
-  Yellow is for the sun so bright
-  Orange is for the edge of night
-  Black is for the sins we made
-  White is for the grace He gave
-  Purple is for the house of sorrow
-  Pink is for the new tomorrow



Dear friends in Christ,

Grace and greetings to you in these early days of springtime. The birds are singing, and green shoots are pushing through the crusty, cold ground. All creation is preparing to give birth to new life.

In anticipation of Easter we, too, are experiencing a season of renewal. I pray God's Holy Spirit is awakening your spirit during this season of Lent, even amid the troubles of the world and the challenges of these times. This morning, I heard a longtime journalist reflect on the reality that "acceptable disagreements" are hard to come by in these contentious days. All too often, it seems, our culture opts for a combative tone rather than an understanding one, forgetting that reconciliation doesn't require us to see eye to eye on every issue. Instead, we can transcend our differences and thereby see the face of Christ in each other.

The gift of springtime and the glory of Easter bring us a choice. We can cling to the age-old potentially destructive responses that come to us at times of loss, grief, bitterness and pain. Or, in faith, we can choose hope over despair, love over hate, kindness over mean-spiritedness, healing over hurt.

John Macleod Campbell Crum was an Anglican priest and hymn writer in the early 20th century who wrote the familiar lyrics to "Now the Green Blade Riseth." The last verse is particularly compelling:

When our hearts are wintry, grieving or in pain,
Jesus' touch can call us, back to life again,
Fields of our hearts, that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

Green blades are rising in the life of our Conference these days. Here are a few updates:

- The Trost Center will soon be sold and transformed into a holistic health care clinic. April 12th the Conference offices will move to the lower level of Spring Grove Lodge at Daycholah Center. The new address for the Wisconsin Conference UCC is W1000 Spring Grove Road, Ripon, WI 54971
- The Conference Staff continues to work a hybrid schedule, with some in the Daycholah office each week Tuesday through Thursday, and once-a-month in-person gatherings of the entire group. The main phone number remains the same 608-846-7880. It will ring Monday-Friday business hours to the cellphones of Susan Taylor, Nola Risse-Connolly or Tracy Hauge, who will route your call.
- This is the season of annual meetings, with each association scheduled for a Saturday gathering in late April or early May. The Conference Annual Meeting, titled *Changing Church: Following Jesus Forward*, will be held June 9-10, with dynamic education days on June 8th & 11th.
- Applications for delegates to the General Synod of the United Church of Christ, which will be held in Indianapolis this summer, Talk with Pastor if you're interested in applying.

Finally, thank you for your continued faithfulness to your local congregation. We are seeing signs of springtime and renewal in the life of the Church in this post-pandemic era. There remains a spiritual hunger in our communities, and a desire to serve. The voice of inclusion in the United Church of Christ has never been more important. Our advocacy and action on justice issues is essential. And our establishing of sacred places for worship creates a sense of belonging that traces all the way back to the Church of the apostles.

In a spirit of hope and resilience, I send blessings and best wishes to you all!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Franz".

Franz Rigert, Conference Minister