

The Country Church Herald

...Proclaiming the Word of God

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

OCTOBER, 2023

October 1st —

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

October 8th —

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

October 15th —

MISSION FEST AT ST. JAMES_

St. James: 10:30am Worship

Churches, 9-10am
No Worship or SS at STM, Join us at STJ!

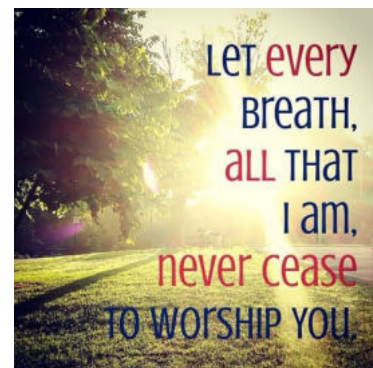
October 22nd —

St. James: 9:00am Worship
Sunday School 9-10am

St. Mark's: 10:30am Worship
Sunday School 9-10am

October 29th—

Joint Service, 10:00am, at St. James
followed by a Congregational Meeting
to discuss Pastor's Salary & Benefits for 2024
Sunday School will be held at St. James, 9-10am
No Sunday School or Worship at St Mark's



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

Worship Services are recorded weekly and uploaded to our church YouTube channel: St. Mark's & St. James UCC

Thoughts from Pastor Patrick....

Have you ever, unexpectedly, come across something from your childhood that swept you back to those days of yore? Memories ~ perhaps imagery, aromas, sounds, feelings come flooding back and it's as if you stepped across a threshold into the past. 30-40-50-60... years ago.

Earlier this week I came across a book my wife had put on one of our bookshelves. I hadn't seen it in quite some time. I had only to glimpse the tattered, raggedy spine from a distance to know the book instantly. I gently took it off the shelf and held it tenderly in my hands. In large capital letters across the front were these words: PATRICK WILL GROW. In the lower right-hand corner of that front cover was a drawing of a tow-headed little boy walking along.

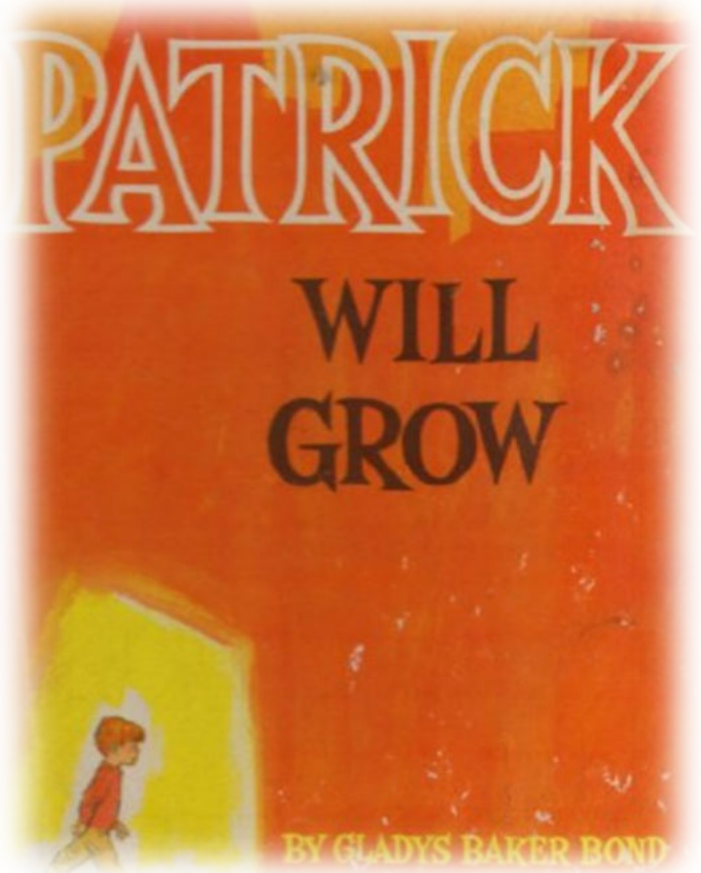
My mom got me this book as a birthday present when I was six years old. It tells the story of a little boy (also aged six!) who was woefully behind his growth spurt. Or so he thought. Throughout the story you'll see him eventually begin to grow.

He sleeps in the same bed as his brothers. On one side is Mike. On the other Tim. As he begins to grow, he pushes them out of the bed, until he needs his own bed. He's grown so big! Incidentally I have two brothers: Mike and Tim. The very last sentence in the book, as he lies in bed at night thinking to himself that one day he would be as big as daddy and as wide as grandpa, when he would be a grown up, "Then where will I go? What will I do?"

So many connections with that book – the main character is Patrick. His brothers are Mike and Tim. Patrick is six years old. It might have been written about me. I have to admit the Bible has the same impact on me. It's a book I love to read. In it I find stories written about me. I find others familiar as brothers and sisters in those same stories. Ultimately, a question is asked and answered, "Where will I go? What will I do?" When I read these stories, emotions overwhelm me. Memories take me back to the first time I read about Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Peter, James, and John. Sampson and his stories of great strength take me back to my childhood when I ran around with my skinny boy arms held up in the typical "strongman" pose saying, "Look how strong I am! Look at my muscles!"

Or when I stood, with a hose causing a trickling stream to flow in front of me, arms raised with a long stick in one hand "parting the red sea." Or being a member of God's army fighting his enemies using sticks as swords, tin can garbage lids for shields, and dirt clumps for grenades. I have but to pick up that book and these memories and so many more come rushing back. Memories of a lifetime, flashing back in an instant. What a childhood. What an adulthood! I still find myself asking questions like, "Where will I go? What will I do?"

How can God use me? Where does God want me? What grand adventure will God lead me on next? These questions never stop, nor do they ever grow old. Our God is still speaking.



ST. MARK'S CONSISTORY MEETING

September 7, 2023

The meeting was called to order on September 7, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. Members present were Glenn Grunwald, Judy Steinbeck, Linda Schroeder, Ben Grunwald, Julie Herrmann, Pastor Schultz, Janell Davis and Larry Perronne. Pastor led us in prayer.

Judy presented the financial report and discussion was made on the importance of limiting our expenses due to the general fund having a lower than normal balance. Larry made a motion to accept the financial report as presented and Ben seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Larry made a motion to accept the Secretary's report as presented and Janell seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Pastor Schultz reviewed his vacation time for 2023 and presented a spreadsheet showing church attendance over the past five years including before the pandemic.

The roof will be repaired by Larry Perronne. Only raw materials will need to be purchased and the remaining will be completed by donations.

The parking lot lines will be repainted when the parking lot is sealed.

Safe Sanctuary policies require background checks to be done for teachers, Brenda and pastor. Larry will provide forms that need to be completed.

Glenn made a motion to go forward with the Leadership Forward campaign that was presented by Pastor Kim Henning. This is a \$6000 commitment over five years which was accepted by the congregation. Judy will give a monthly update on the amount of money received. Janell seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mission Fest is November 12th with the traditional ham dinner. Janell will go to Gordon's in Green Bay to pick up food in bulk. A sign up sheet will be placed in the back of the church for other items needed. The October newsletter will list what individuals have signed up for. The price for the adult dinner will be \$15.00 and 12 and under will be \$5.00.

It was decided to return to serving communion in the pews beginning in October.

Thank you to Sandy and Larry Perronne for doing a great job cleaning up the yard around the church and parsonage. Very much appreciated!

Will continue to discuss the occupancy agreement at the next consistory meeting.

We will contribute \$100 to the United Churchmen and Women as we have done in past years.

Pastor Schultz and Brenda will be donating books to the church library in the fellowship hall.

We completed reviewing our membership list.

Our next consistory meeting will be held on October 11th at 6:30 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Herrmann
Consistory Secretary

ST. JAMES CONSISTORY

Monday, September 11, 2023 6:30 pm

- 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.
- Absent:
- Prayer led by Jason
- Motion to approve the Secretary’s Report made by Jason and seconded by Jamey
Motion carried.
- Motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report made by Scott and seconded by Wendy
Motion carried.
- Pastor’s Report:
Mission/Vision Committee; Feedback from 9/10 mission trip presentation was well received.
Pastor/Member Visits -None; if we know of any members needing a pastor visit, please advise.
Rev. Henning, Pastor will connect regarding a presentation of Leadership Forward
- Building and Grounds:
Floors -Jamey and Cole Binversie installed new flooring in the upstairs Sunday School Room.
THANK YOU!
Church Cleaning: Randy and Cindy will do annual “deep” cleaning
Cemetery: Consistory is responsible for placing a wreath on the Armika gravestone. Wreath needs to be replaced. Tammy will purchase, Jason will contact Cemetery Committee to reimburse from Cemetery Fund.
- Committee Reports:
Vision of Hope: Approval of Minutes – Approved as requested by Tammy, seconded by Jamey, Motion Carried. Consistory will need to find a replacement for VOH committee in January.
Stewardship Committee: Met September 6, church funds are down considerably. Sheila will be mailing contribution letters; an announcement will be in the October newsletter and Stewardship Sunday will be in November. Consistory discussed funds, suggestion to have Budget/Income/Expenses/Balance chart in Newsletter each month.
Christian Board of Education: Jamey reported Sunday School will start 9/17 and will be selling candy bars as a fundraiser.
Service Committee: -Social to be held Sunday September 24
Audio Visual: -Jason will research adding two wireless microphones
Social Committee: Polka recap:-51 people attended, good time by all. Donation made will be split by St. James and St. Marks.
Cornhole – Sunday October 1 at 2:00 (men only)
Bunco: Thursday September 21 at 6:00 and Thursday, November 16. We will resume next spring.
Possible Sheepshead tournament

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ST. JAMES CONSISTORY, con't

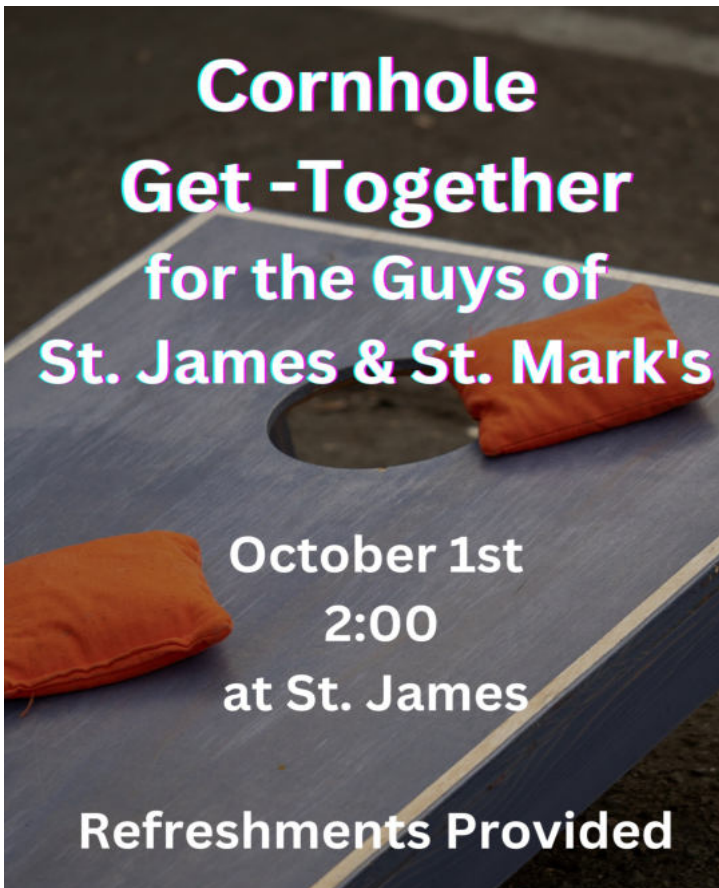
- Old Business:
Safe Sanctuary helper -Looking for volunteers to help HS youth group.
Tents – We will not be purchasing at this time.
Crop Walk – Doris is coordinating, looking for more walkers.
- Mission Fest: Sunday October 15, guest speaker is Jessica Jensema, Executive Director of Project Angel Hugs. Wendy has researched prices, \$14.00 per plate. Tammy will contact Karen to print posters and mail letters to area churches. Wendy and Tammy will meet to coordinate pick up/shopping etc.
- Church Anniversary – November 5, Tammy will contact members/form committee
- United Churchmen and Women banquet – will set up Wednesday at 6:00; will need help cleaning up after banquet
- Adopt a Hwy – Cleanup scheduled at 8:00 am, Sunday October 1.

- New Business:
Congregation concerns: None

- Next meeting date: October 2, 6:30 pm

- Motion to adjourn made by Tammy and seconded by Scott. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Tammy Serketich, Secretary



**On Sunday November 5, 2023,
St. James will be celebrating our
160th anniversary. A special service
is being planned, followed by a time
of fellowship and refreshments in
the church basement.**

FROM THE STEWARDSHIP TEAM:

Mark your calendar: St. James church books will be closing the end of December.

Our treasurer will be mailing an update on the financial status of the church and your individual contributions thus far. Your support is greatly appreciated. Remember to use the church envelopes provided in the narthex and church pews.

"In God We Trust"

Our sympathy to Richard Lutze and family on the death of his sister Janet who passed away on August 10th.



We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Ann Grunwald, along with the entire family, of St. Mark's member Wayne Grunwald who entered Eternal Life on September 12th. Wayne will be missed by our church family.

Wayne Grunwald, age 87, passed away peacefully at home on Tuesday, September 12, 2023, after he fought a courageous battle with cancer.

He was born in Sheboygan on July 30, 1936 to the late Erwin and Serena (Wagner) Grunwald. He graduated from Central High School in 1954. Wayne proudly served his country in the United States Army from 1954 until 1956 and then served one year in the National Guard. On September 7, 1957, Wayne married Ann Kuhlman in Sheboygan Falls. He was a lifelong member of St. Marks UCC, where he served two terms on the consistory and also was on the cemetery board for many years. He operated the family farm for over 30 years. Wayne was also a machinist at Hayssen Manufacturing for 13 years and drove for Roehl Transport for ten.

Wayne was a jack of many trades and loved the challenge of learning something new. He was the designer and general contractor of building their earth home. He loved life, woodworking, traveling, especially road trips, dancing, card playing, attending the county fair, making firewood, but most of all his family and faith meant the world to him.

St. James UCC

13312 Pioneer Rd, Newton WI 53063

Ham Dinner

Carry outs only

Sunday, October 15, 2023

11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Please join us in worship at 10:00 am.

Guest speaker from Project Angel Hugs.

Dinner will include: Ham, German Potato Salad, Corn, Applesauce, Coleslaw, Dinner Rolls, Pumpkin or Apple Pie

Cost: \$14.00 per meal

Thank you for supporting "Our Church's Wider Mission".

The guest speaker for St. James Mission Fest is Jessica Jensema, Executive Director of Project Angel Hugs located in Plymouth Wisconsin. Project Angel Hugs has also provided us with their Wish List in case you would like to share your love with this amazing group. Orders may be brought to church and placed in the box in the entryway.

This is a link to their Amazon wishlist: <https://a.co/4ctgACE> and on the reverse side of this page is their Holiday Wishlist!

Project Angel Hugs 2023 Holiday Wish List



Most Needed Items

Minecraft
Fortnite
Pokemon
Bakugan
Dragon Ball Z
Roblox
Lego Sets (Boy and Girl - Please No Classic Sets)
Handheld Games
LOL Dolls
Blippi
Unicorn/ Mermaid
Science Activity Kits
Nail Polish
Makeup & Play Makeup
Lip Balm
Jewelry/Earrings
Hot Wheels/Matchbox Cars
Green Bay Packer and Milwaukee Brewers
Peppa Pig
Jewelry or Craft Kits
Superhero (Batman, Avengers, and Spiderman)
Crayola Watercolor Paints
\$15 Amazon Gift Cards

Other Needed Items

Bluey
Collectable Sports Cards
Hunting Items (Camo)
Teen Board Games
Outer Space
Baby Yoda
Ninjago
Scooby Doo
Card Games
Small Math Games
Sensory Toys
Teen (Girl and Boy) Lotion and Body Wash Sets
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
Model Trucks & Cars Kits
Paint by Numbers Sets
500-Piece Puzzles (Dog, Cat or Animal Themed)
Mickey and Minnie Mouse
Small Nerf Guns
Paw Patrol (Chase, Rebel, or Rocky)

-Or-

Shop Our Amazon Wish List

(Link on projectangelhugs.com)

***ITEMS MUST BE NEW AND UNUSED**

***PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT WE SHIP THESE ITEMS. TO SHIP, ITEMS MUST BE NO LARGER THAN 12"X12"**

BE AN ANGEL... TOUCH A HEART!

PROJECT ANGEL HUGS IS A 501C(3) ORGANIZATION MINISTERING TO CHILDREN TOUCHED BY CANCER AND THEIR FAMILIES BY SENDING HAPPY MAIL, HOLIDAY AND BIRTHDAY BOXES.

NEIGHBORS IN NEED, OCTOBER 1, 2023

A special offering will be taken on October 1st to fulfill our commitment to the UCC Conference for Neighbors in Need. Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. Offering envelopes will be available at both St. James and St. Mark's on October 1.

If you miss that date, we will gladly take donations any time of the year.



LEADERSHIP FORWARD CAMPAIGN

Both St James and St Mark's congregations have approved to participate in the Leadership Forward Campaign. Rev Henning presented the program at a previous church service. The Leadership Forward Campaign consists of three objectives:

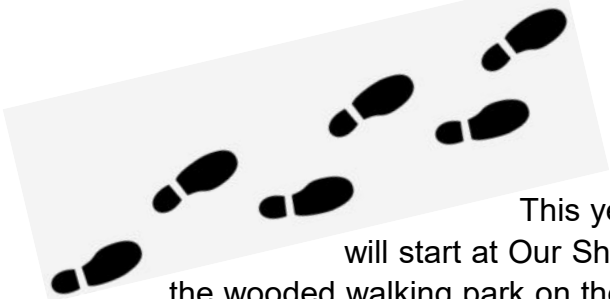
The Damascus Project which develops the next generation of lay leaders so the UCC can thrive into the future.

The Catalyst Grant Program which encourages creative new forms of ministry in our congregations and advances our social justice work.

The Ministerial Assistance Program to assure that our clergy who serve our community are cared for in every season of their pastoral careers.

There are brochures available at both churches to explain the campaign in further detail. Please contact Rev Schultz if you need a brochure.

Both churches have committed to a total of \$6,000 over the next 5-year period. If you wish to make a donation, please specify "Leadership Forward Campaign" on the "Other" line on the offering envelope or specify "Leadership Forward Campaign" in the memo area on your check.



CROP WALK, OCTOBER 8, 2023

This year's Crop Walk will be a little different than previous years. We will start at Our Shepherd UCC in Howards Grove. From there, the walk will go to the wooded walking park on the west side of Howards Grove and back to the church. You will then be invited to join us for a weenie roast, bonfire, and fellowship time.

Registration time is from 12:00 to 12:30. Walk starts at 12:30. Any checks (which should be made out to CWS/CROP) will be submitted to the conference to be used worldwide. Cash donations will be submitted evenly to local food pantries: United Ministries, Sheboygan Falls Pantry, Immanuel UCC Food Pantry, and St Peter's UCC Food Pantry in Kiel.

Donations will be taken at both St James and St Mark's every Sunday morning from Sept 17 through Oct 8. We still emphasize the need for walkers. Sounds like a good time. Come and join us!

UNITED CHURCH MEN AND WOMEN'S BANQUET
6:30, Thursday, October 19
at St. James UCC



St. Mark's and St. James are hosting this year's banquet of the United Church Men and Women. We would love to have several of our members in attendance as we recognize people pursuing a career in ministry.

See Lori Roelse or Scott Henschel for tickets.

ST. MARK'S CHOIR

St. Mark's Choir Rehearsal will begin on Wednesday Nov. 1st at 7:00pm

New singers are welcome!



ST. JAMES CHOIR

Rehearsals will be held:

Wednesday, October 4th, 6:30pm

Wednesday, October 11th, 6:30pm

Tuesday, October 17th, 6:30pm

Thursday, October 25th, 6:30pm

Bunco was held at St. James Thursday, Sept 21st. Seventeen ladies had a very nice evening 😊

Mark your calendars for our next Bunco night, Thursday, November 16th.



ST. JAMES SUNDAY SCHOOL IS SELLING SEROOGY CANDY BARS!



To purchase any of these delicious candy bars, see any of the current sunday school children. You can also email stjamesundayschool53063@gmail.com or contact Christine Gumm at 920-946-0462 with which candy bars you would like to purchase. Thank You for supporting St. James Sunday School!

October is a longer month, so our HS youth will get together at St. Mark's on October 8, at St. James on October 22, and have a little costume fun with spooky snacks at St. Mark's on October 29th! *(Although, if Saturday October 28 works better for the majority we will consider changing that!)* Invite a friend if you like to any and all of these events!

We continue to look at how the book of Proverbs can pertain to our decision making in the world today.

Please remember to bring in donations of toiletries and/or clothing items for boys or girls ages 5-9 for Operation Christmas Child during the month of October.


Looking forward to a beautiful fall as we learn more about God!



SAVE THE DATE!

First Presbyterian Church will be hosting a Christmas Concert and Sing-a-long featuring the Roncalli Singers on December 10 at 3pm. The event will be free but we will take a Free Will Offering to support the Manitowoc Warming Shelter and FREE Community Dinners. Our vision is that this can become a Lakeshore Tradition (perhaps rotating churches in the community). There will be more publicity as the time draws closer.

~The Rev. Dr. Matthew L. Sauer, Pastor Manitowoc Cooperative Ministry

| | |
|---|---|
|  | First Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) 920.682.4688 - 502 N 8 th St, Manitowoc, WI 54220 (MCM Downtown) |
| | Peace United Church of Christ (UCC) formerly St John's & First Reformed churches 920.682.6121 - 3613 Waldo Blvd, Manitowoc, WI 54220 (MCM Westside) Pastor Matt Sauer 920.860.6880 matt@mcmunited.com |



Sheboygan County Interfaith Organization

BULLETIN BITES

OCTOBER, 2023

- ◇ "All You Need is Love" - register now and enjoy a Sweetest Day celebration in your home, <https://www.sheboygancountyinterfaith.org/all-you-need-is-love/> We are offering meals from Parker Johns, gourmet cupcakes from Bettersweet Bakery, a beautiful seasonal bouquet from The Flower Cart, and two wine pairings from Vintage Elkhart Lake. Pickups are Friday, October 20th from 12-2pm or 4:30-6:30pm at First Congregational Church UCC in Sheboygan.
- ◇ Our new Client Advocate continues to learn about the community and the resources available to share information with outreach clients. We estimate that we have already served over 200 outreach clients and an increased number of calls are anticipated as the weather gets colder and families need shelter.
- ◇ Family Pathways continues to expand and will soon be reaching the point of a waiting list. We are rotating some toys in the visitation room and replacing some of the broken items, and also looking for craft supplies for the families to utilize. We are happy to accept craft items and toys in good condition.
- ◇ What an amazing community we have! Your support has kept our families warm and fed which gives them the resources they need to grow! This month we would like to ask for baby diapers size 2 and 5, Baby wipes, and Frozen vegetables. Again with gratitude.
- ◇ **SAVE THE DATE:** Giving Tuesday, November 28th. SCIO will be hosting an Open House with tours and refreshments so you can see our updates, learn more about our programs, and hear about plans to celebrate our 35th/25th Anniversaries of the farmers market and Bridgeway!

ST. JAMES

USHERS

OCTOBER

*Keith & Michelle Mauk
Bradley Mauk
Katelyn Sibley
Julianne Luebke
Doug Luebke
William Luebke
Jared Luebke
Kelly Luebke/Handrow
Galen & Deb LaDuke

NOVEMBER

*Jamie & Heather Henschel
Jon & Diane Luckow
Jim & Michelle Luckow
Karra Cina
Allison Luckow
Dawson Luckow
Mary Ann Vogel
Geraldine Scheffler



VISION OF HOPE-ST. JAMES

"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) each year.

ST. MARK'S

GREETERS

OCTOBER

Anna Marie Bramstedt
Jason Bramstedt
Sandy Perronne

NOVEMBER

Lori Roelse
Colton Scharl
Michelle Scharl

READERS

Oct. 1 — Sandy Perronne
Oct. 8— Scott Siekman
Oct. 5— Lori Roelse
Oct. 22—Jacob Grunwald
Oct. 29—Jacob Grunwald

HOSPITALITY

Oct. 1 — Sandy Perronne
Oct. 8 — available
Oct. 15 — Margene Reyer
Oct. 22 — available
Oct. 29—Margene Reyer

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

| <u>St. James</u> | | <u>St. Mark's</u> |
|------------------|---------|-------------------|
| 21 | Sept. 3 | 31 |
| 47 | 10 | 60 |
| 33 | 17 | 43 |
| 51 | 24 | 46 |

ST JAMES OCTOBER CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Jackie Mueller
- 3 Diane Luckow
- 7 ValJean Marcoe
- 8 William Luebke
- 9 Joanne Fessler
- 14 Brian Hemb
- 20 Joe Klapperich
- 20 Aric Jump
- 21 Chelsea Langenhahn
- 24 Donald Hemb
- 27 Wendy Henschel

ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Lee & Terri Schmitz
- 8 Mike & Kristin Zolltheis
- 8 Dan & Rachel Sohn
- 12 James & Michelle Luckow
- 13 Jim & Karen Becker
- 14 Rieck & Sandra Beiersdorf
- 16 Keri LaDuke-Rafeld & Jason Rafeld
- 16 Zachary & Sadie Koenig
- 17 Ben & Cheyenne Behnke
- 19 Cameron & Marissa Fitzgerald
- 20 Milton & LaVern Wippermann
- 26 Clarence & Heidi Belitz
- 29 Mark & Kathy Stolzmann

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.

Community UCC in Elkhart Lake
is hosting our
Fall Fish Fry Drive-thru
at Anchor Lanes
Friday, October 6th, 2023
4:00-7pm

We will be serving our famous 3-piece beer battered Cod, German potato salad, bread, tartar sauce, veggie, coleslaw, and a dessert.
All for \$15



Fish Fry

ST MARK'S OCTOBER CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Sandra Stark
- 2 Kevin Kellner
- 5 Alexander Miota
- 9 Colten Sommer
- 10 Kay Bitter
- 11 Christine Hayon
- 12 Kathy Jurk
- 14 Sandy Perronne
- 14 Wendy Schueler
- 15 Denise Heling
- 20 Todd Grunwald
- 25 Brooklyn Vandoske
- 26 Cindy Call
- 26 Bob Vandoske
- 29 Bonnie Schuette
- 30 Colton Scharl

ANNIVERSARIES

- 11 Jay & Kayla Sommer
- 12 Jon & Julie Herrmann
- 12 Andy & Hannah Roelse
- 22 William & Lori Roelse
- 23 Jim & Christine Hayon
- 24 Todd & Jody Binversie

Please report any corrections or additions on the birthday and anniversary lists to Karen in the church office.

It's Coming...

ST. MARK'S MISSION FEST—NOVEMBER 12, 2023

Time goes by so quickly. St Mark's Mission Fest will take place on Sunday, November 12. Both in church dining and take outs will be available. Your consistory is working on the worker list. The list can be found at the church entrance. Please sign up for a task. As of the date of this newsletter, duties still available are: dessert (pie, cake, or torte), salad (pasta, jello, or lettuce), one more gallon of milk, two more pounds of butter, sell tickets, cut and serve desserts, and beverage helpers.

A function like this cannot happen without our volunteers. Thank you for those who have already signed up. We will follow up next month with a final list of volunteers and details about the program.



A LETTER FROM FRANZ RIGERT, UCC CONFERENCE MINISTER...



Dear friends,

In August, I tackled a backyard paver project, installing a flagstone patio around the deck. I had never taken on a stone project, so each step was a learn-as-you-go exercise. I began by digging out the dirt and replacing it with gravel, then compacted it with water and by hand-tamping, and topped the foundation with leveling sand. It took every flagstone -- 64 total -- and lots of spatial adjustments to complete the puzzle before sealing the in-between spaces with polymeric sand.

Projects are spiritual practices for me. They involve calculations and physical exertion, but also a freeing of the mind and a chance to rhythmically ponder the blessings and challenges of life. A wise spiritual director taught me to embrace the notion that some of us encounter God's Spirit through repetitive movements.



~continued on next page....

The truth is, I find silent meditation dreadful. But in project spaces, where anxiety meets determination and assurance confronts doubt, I experience sacred companionship. Somehow the Spirit meets me in all the sweaty "sorting out" and settles my soul into a place of deep contentment. God's grace shows up in everyday projects, so it never feels as if I must go it alone.



I've been thinking lately about the Church as an ongoing paver project, recalling the many ways those early apostles had to "figure it out" with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. So, too, in the tumultuous days of the Protestant Reformation, our spiritual ancestors debated and deliberated and were led by the grace of God to pave new paths for an ancient Church.

Five hundred years later we find ourselves with more questions than answers. So many unknowns in this puzzling future of "project" Church. If

only we had a better sense of direction, instant Google answers, or clearer guidance from the Holy One, we could set our sights and get to work. But, as author Susan Beaumont suggests in her book "How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going," this is a liminal season for the Church. In the same way some of the world's great cathedrals took hundreds of years to build, so too the full future of this rapidly changing Church may take several decades to unfold.

Meanwhile, we in the United Church of Christ remain faithful to God's unique calling upon our tradition – to welcome widely and love deeply, to be truth tellers and Gospel believers, to advocate for justice, and to respond generously to the needs of the poor and hurting. To lean forward.

These are tricky times, given the political and social tensions of our day. Yet each of us is like a solid paver in the great landscape of the Church. When we choose to make our platform all about the love of Jesus and the inclusion of the marginalized, we model a new way of living. And there are spiritual seekers out there who yearn to share this expression of faith alongside us.

So, as you prepare for a new program year, take heart and stay hopeful. In the words of the Apostle Paul: "Your labor is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58). Take a [listen to this inspiring song](#) with the same title, sung by Paul Zach and published by Porter's Gate.

Now, a few brief updates:

~continued on next page....

Maui relief: We continue to encourage your special offerings in response to the devastating fires on Maui. Checks may be sent to the Wisconsin Conference Disaster Ministry Fund, c/o Wisconsin Conference UCC, W1000 Spring Grove Road, Ripon, Wisconsin 54971. Write "Maui relief" in the memo line. Donations to the Conference fund will be routed through Church World Service to ensure quick delivery.

New general minister and president: The Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson has now assumed her role as the new general minister and president of the UCC. Karen Georgia is an advocate for justice with a heart for the local church that welcomes the full spectrum of people in a big tent vision for the United Church of Christ.

Wisconsin Conference identity initiative: We are working on a logo, tagline and marketing collateral that convey the unique identity of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ. We intend to develop the design starting this fall and eventually to make it available for your use, along with resources for inviting newcomers to your church.

Associational life: At a board and staff retreat two years ago, we began a conversation about the future of our four associations. We heard about the burden of sustaining a governance and committee structure that once served us well but now stretches fewer and fewer volunteers. We also heard about the many blessings in our associational life – supportive relationships, shared missions and collaborative ministries. This fall the board and staff will explore possible shifts that could preserve the blessing but relieve the burdens of our associational life. We anticipate wider conversations in the coming months and incremental steps toward what might be a more sustainable and life-giving middle judicatory model.

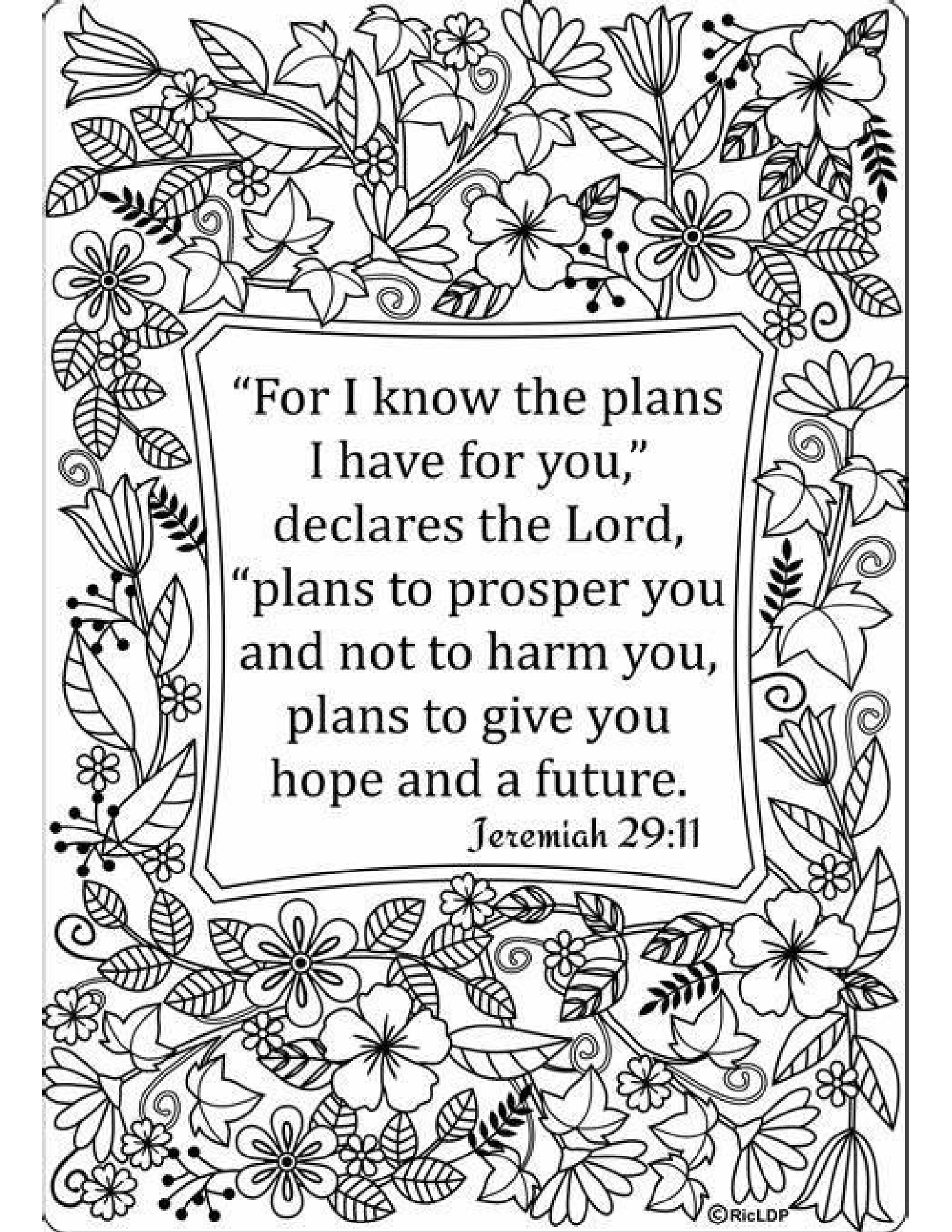
Conference office at Daycholah: The Conference staff has settled into our new digs at Daycholah Center and is enjoying our deepening partnership with the Daycholah staff. Much of the team works remotely except for monthly meetings, and the rest splits time between Daycholah and our home offices. In the coming month the Friedens bell will be delivered from the former Trost Center, and the sign (also brought from DeForest) will be hung along the road outside Spring Grove Lodge. That should complete the office transition. We welcome you for a visit!

Pension Boards transition to Fidelity Investments: This recordkeeping service transition for the UCC Pension Plan is underway and will be complete this month. It's important to note that current annuitants will not be affected by this change. Those who are still contributing will need to designate beneficiaries once the transition to Fidelity is complete. Everything else transfers automatically. Monthly statements will be available online, and if you want to receive a copy in the mail you will need to request that. You should have received the "Fidelity Recordkeeping Transition Guide," which contains details about the transition, key dates, and information on upcoming webinars that will help you get to know Fidelity and its many services. You can also [access the guide online here](#).

Blessings in Christ,

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

Franz Rigert



“For I know the plans
I have for you,”
declares the Lord,
“plans to prosper you
and not to harm you,
plans to give you
hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11