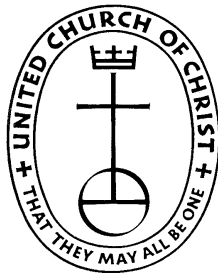


Forward in Faith

January 2012



The Newsletter for St. John's United Church of Christ

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Rev. David Alfeld-Johnson, Pastor

How many is 150?

150 people is a crowd.

150 pounds is more than I can lift over my head

150 miles is just about the distance to the Mississippi River

150 hours is a little over six days, the time it took God to create the universe

150 cups of coffee is about my average for a month

150 dollars will buy a week's groceries for some, or one meal at a fancy restaurant

150 steps from the front of the church won't even get me to Front Street

150 days is about all we get for warm weather around here

150 pennies weighs about a pound

150 years ago, in 1862, our Union was divided, and the Civil War was being fought in this country. The Battle Hymn of the Republic was first published. Construction of the first transcontinental railway had begun. The Bureau of Internal Revenue was founded (thank goodness). Henry David Thoreau was born

150 years ago, a few families that had been meeting under the guidance of missionaries organized themselves into the "German United Evangelical Saint Johannes Parish," and began a ministry of worship and service to Jesus Christ.

This year, it is a privilege for St. John's United Church of Christ to celebrate this long legacy of ministry and our opportunity and responsibility to carry it forward into the future. Throughout this year, we will have occasions to celebrate our heritage, grow our spirits, and serve our community and world. I encourage us all to make room in our busy schedules to participate in various events that recognize our 150th year.

In addition, this is a time for us to explore and wrestle with how we will minister to the next generations and how the timeless gospel message of grace and reconciliation with God can best be communicated and lived in today's culture. 150 years ago, our founders stated that we would always worship in German. Today, few of us speak or understand German. Changes in society do not change the gospel message, but will change the way we express the gospel in our personal lives and our life as a church.

I am sure that no one in that founding group 150 years ago anticipated what life in Mokena would look like today, nor could they envision the automobiles and computers and cell phones that play such a central role in our lives today. But they did believe that the grace of God and belonging to Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit were essential aspects of life, and they remain so today.

Likewise, we can't anticipate what life and ministry will look like even 25 years from today, but we can be sure that people will still long for the love and grace of God, will still need a life-changing relationship with Christ, and will still desire the fellowship of God's people. It will be our challenge and responsibility to be a place and a people whose lives have been changed by Christ and a church where people do experience the love and grace of God, so that even now we can say, "God's kingdom has come on earth, as it is in heaven."

May God bless you and St. John's in this our 150th year.

Pastor Dave

Children's Chatter

This winter, the JAM Time children will learn about Jesus: his birth, his life, and his experiences with his friends and disciples. Learning about Jesus and his ministry is the key learning experience for a young Christian. The JAM Time staff is doing a wonderful job in preparing the children for a life of walking with the Lord. Thank you to all of those who have given their time and energy to make this community wide program a success. If you are interested in assisting with JAM Time please contact Leslie.

Young Shepherd's Club did not meet for the month of December but will resume on January 8th and the 15th. If you are in 3-5th grade, please join us for a fun filled lesson. The lessons for January will continue with the life of David as he becomes King and the Wisdom of King Solomon.

The menu for January JAM

- Jan. 11th** - Cheese Quesadilla, Chicken Quesadilla, Corn, Rice Krispy Treats
Jan 18th - Tomato Soup, Grilled Cheese, Honey Glazed Carrots, Chocolate Brownies
Jan 25th - Pizza Night, Cheese/Sausage/Pepperoni, Sliced Fruit, Ice Cream



Live Gods Word At Home

Try this: Have your child write a letter to God and see what is really on their mind.

Children's Letters to God

A photograph of a child's handwritten letter to God on a piece of paper. The text is written in black ink and reads: "Dear God, Thank you for the baby brother but what I prayed for was a puppy Joyce".

Dear God,
Thank you for
the baby brother
but what I prayed
for was a puppy
Joyce



A BIG Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who came to the fundraiser luncheon on December 4th. The Junior and Senior Highs made about \$260 per group. This money will be put toward the cost of their Winter Retreats. The Senior Highs will be at Phantom Ranch January 3-6, 2012. Their retreat will focus on the various roles of Jesus (Healer, Teacher, Savior...) and who Jesus is to them. The Junior Highs are going to Phantom Ranch on January 20-22, 2012. They are attending a Junior High weekend retreat put on by the camp. A band and key note speaker will engage them in spiritual growth alongside other Jr. High Youth Groups from various churches. Again, thank you for supporting the fundraiser luncheon and helping to make these retreats possible.

Spreading the Christmas Joy



The Junior High Youth Group went Christmas Caroling on Sunday, December 18th. We visited 10 homes of folks in need of some Christmas cheer. The teenagers

sang and delivered handmade Christmas cards to show their caring support of others. We were greeted with hugs and smiles. Many members said how much it meant to them that our young people would take the time to do such a thoughtful thing for the older folks. It was a special evening of shining Christ's Light. Way to go, Junior Highs! :)

Sunday Night Youth Meals Schedule:

- January 8 - Ciszeks - Sloppy joes
- January 22 - Stewarts - Sweet and sour meatballs, Spaghetti with butter
- January 29 - Mitchells

Call to Worship Schedule:

- January 8 - Carly Collins
- January 15 - Tim Hoblin
- January 22 - Nick Kertson
- January 29 - Sedona Cady

Food for Thought



The Junior and Senior High Youth Groups will be having a fundraiser after church on Sunday, **February 5th**. That's right....that is Super Bowl Sunday! And guess what? We will be selling "**Snacks for Super Bowl!**" Meatballs, cocktail franks, dips, and munchies...all the things you need for your Super Bowl gathering. Mark your calendar and bring your checkbook! All the money raised will go toward the cost of their Winter Youth Retreats.

Wrapping for FISH

On Sunday, November 27th, the Junior High and Senior High Youth Groups volunteered at JCPenny to wrap Christmas packages for holiday shoppers. Each teenager brought a roll of wrapping paper and worked a two hour shift wrapping packages. They collected \$75.81 in donations and this money was given to FISH. This gift enabled those in need in our community to share in the bounty of God's love for all people during the season of sharing. Thank you to our Junior and Senior Highs for being the hands and feet of Christ.

Elizabeth Hipp
Director of Youth Ministry

Childcare for January

Below is a list of the volunteers that we have lined up for January. If you are unable to be here on your day, please call someone on the list to switch with. We want to sincerely thank everyone who helps out with this much needed ministry of the church.

January 1

No Childcare on New Year's Day

January 8

Nursery: Cathy Prokop
Kid's Club: Pat Kraling

January 15

Nursery:
Kid's Club:

January 22

Nursery: Dana Boll
Kid's Club: Cindy Wright

January 29

Nursery: Pam Mead
Kid's Club: Rita Burkett

Annual Congregational Meeting



The Annual Meeting of St. John's United Church of Christ will be held on Sunday, January 29th in the sanctuary following worship. We will worship together that Sunday with one service at 9:30 a.m. so that as many as possible can attend. Childcare will be provided for children eighth grade and under. The annual meeting is our opportunity to set priorities, discuss business, and adopt a budget for the coming year. We need as many of our members present so that we can look and move forward as a church in 2012. There will be a potluck meal after the meeting for those who wish to stay for some fellowship.

Annual Report Deadline

It is that time of the year again when we are preparing the Annual Report. If you wish to submit a report for the Annual meeting, please have it turned into the office no later than January 5, 2012. Thank you.



Music Ministry

As I'm writing this, the sound of the cantata is still ringing in my ears. I continue to be amazed at the huge amount of talent St. John's Church has. From professional sound tech's who give up their off hours to come in set up, to soloist's who practice in their combines or in between Madrigal practices and finals. I would like to say a huge thank you to our choir and instrumentalists who practiced at home and listened to their CD's in their cars while commuting to work. I'm so grateful to a certain preschool director and Children's ministry leader, who picked out costumes and sets in between having all the extra responsibilities their own ministries have at this time of year, and to our children's choir leaders who practiced so diligently with the kids choir. Thank you to the farmer who brought the hay bales and to all those who helped me with set up and take down. My favorite part of the cantata was the narration. The words were so beautiful, and our narrator did such a wonderful job of setting the scene for us. As we start this new year, let's go forward with the words of the angels. "Fear Not I bring to you glad tidings of great joy for to you is born a Savior, Christ the Lord."

Kim Siegers
Director of Music Ministries

Women's Bible Study



Hey ladies! The next Bible Study will be on Monday, January 9th at 9 a.m. We will be studying the fourth commandment, "Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." Exodus 20:8. Questions to ponder.....

What are all of the things you do in a typical week?

What would it look like to spend one out of every seven days either resting or taking a break from work?

The Sabbath can "just be a day of rest." How does this view of the Sabbath differ from your previous thoughts?

What is it that keeps you from slowing down in life and with God?

Slowing down often means saying no to things. What are things in your life you should say no to in order to have more time to do the things you need to do?

Our lesson will be led by Bettylou Linke and refreshments provided by Elizabeth Hipp. Hope to see YOU there!

Elizabeth Hipp

WOMEN'S CIRCLE

We want to thank our congregation for their donations to our Annual Cookie and Candy Sale. Proceeds from the sale were \$734.50. This money will be used for projects in our church.

In sincere appreciation,

Helen Warning, Secretary





Preschool Registration

Our preschool registration for the 2012/2013 school year starts with our church members. Registration forms will be available to families of St. John's beginning Tuesday, January 3rd through Sunday, January 8th. The forms will be available in the church office or in the preschool on those days. Current students will register January 9th through the 16th and then siblings of current students. Our public registration/open house will be on Saturday, January 28th from 9:00a.m. to noon.

There are two changes for preschool registration. Parents must present the original birth certificate of the child, and we will then make a copy to put in your child's school folder. The second change is the registration fee is now \$75 for one child and \$125 for two or more children per family.

Preschool Scholarship Fund

St. John's Preschool Board has a scholarship fund in memory of long time member Peg Brower. Peg supported children's ministries in our church for many years, and this fund was established in her honor. The purpose of this fund is to assist needy families with their preschool tuition so the children can continue to attend preschool. Please consider supporting this wonderful memory to Peg as well as helping needy families in our area.

St. John's Preschool Board



Card Making

The card making group will meet on Monday, January 9th at 7:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Those who are currently attending say they are really enjoying themselves and the fellowship with others.



Bring your tape and scissors and contact Bonnie if you have any questions.

Unwanted Medication Drop Off



Do you have a medicine cabinet full of unused prescriptions or other expired medications that you are not sure what to do with? The Mokena Police Department accepts all prescription and over-the-counter medications, medicated creams, inhalers and pet medications for proper disposal (no needles please).

There is no registration required, and no questions are asked. Said items can be dropped off any time day or night via a secure drop box within the Lobby of the Mokena Police Department located at 10907 Front Street.

Pharmaceutical Recycling Programs like these help prevent unwanted medications from potentially being misused or abused and also keep improperly discarded medications from showing up in landfills or in wastewater treatment facilities.

Thank You

Dear Jr. & Sr. High Youth:

Thank you very much for donating the proceeds from yesterday's J.C. Penney's gift wrapping endeavor to Mokena-Marley Frankfort FISH. We know you worked hard to earn that \$75.81, and we truly appreciate your spirit of giving. That money will go toward helping a needy individual or family in our community – perhaps providing food, paying a utility bill or purchasing a Christmas gift for a child. Your thoughtfulness is most appreciated.

Sincerely,

Barb C., Secretary

Many thanks to friends and members of St. John's for supporting our FISH Christmas Project in 2011. As always, you were extremely generous in purchasing gifts for those on our FISH Christmas trees, adopting families for gift-giving, and making monetary donations as well. God bless you all for your continued support.

Board of Directors, Mokena-Marley-Frankfort FISH

Dear Youth Group;

Thank you for all you are doing. I saw you in the paper the church mailed me. I am so proud of you. You are the spirit of Christmas.

Dee Snyder

Thank you to Helen Warning for playing the piano for our practices and Christmas preschool programs. Thank you to John and Nancy Tallyn for helping us with the preschool Santa pictures.

St. John's Preschool

Dear Friends;

It's nice to know somebody is thinking of me. Special thanks to Jill and the Congregational Care Team for the cards.

LaVerne R.

A Note from The Stewardship Team ...

Thank you to all who were able to pledge any amount you could during our annual Pledge Campaign. Our campaign was a success in that many people responded favorably and in time to assist the Budget Committee in planning for 2012. During these financially troubling times, we thank all of you ... both those that pledged and those that continue to support St. John's even if a pledged amount is not given. All support goes to the service of our Lord and Savior.

Unfortunately, we are experiencing a shortfall in relation to our budget as 2011 comes to an end. We've kept our spending within the budget approved last January, but our giving this year has not matched our budget. This means that we will be heading into our new fiscal year with a significant deficit.

Whenever a need arises at St. John's, its members have faithfully responded to meet those needs. At this time, we ask that each of you prayerfully consider the work we are doing in our own community of faith and beyond ... and help us to continue the work set forth in our Mission Statement: " ... Our priority is a love and commitment to God and the teachings of Jesus Christ ... "

Thank you.



FINANCE

YTD FINANCIAL STATUS, November, 2011

<u>Operating, Income (1)</u>	260,485.90
(1) Amount to match YTD budget	286,939

Operating Expenditures

Worship Ministry	28,838.95
Christian Education Ministry	26,311.22
Discipleship (not incl. Missions)	6,076.80
Office Operations	43,516.22
Building Operations	65,588.43
Pastoral, Administrative	106,593.35
TOTAL	\$276,924.97

<u>Gain/(loss) – this year</u>	-16,439.07
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<u>Balance, previous year end</u>	-9,939.83
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<u>Present Operating Fund balance</u>	-26,378.90
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<u>Mission Income (2)</u>	22,718.50
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(2) Amount to match YTD Budget	25,025
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Mission Fund Expenditures

O.C.W.M. Basic Support	14,166.00
Local Mission and Direct Support	4,576.00
TOTAL	18,742.00

<u>IL Conference Capital Campaign(3)</u>	1,992.00
(3) amount to match YTD budget	0.00

<u>Building Fund/Project 150 Income</u>	18,902.00
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CCC Profit/Loss Statement – Year To Date 2011

<u>Rental Income</u>	10,923
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<u>Expense:</u>	
Custodian	1,812
Gas	4,187
Electricity	5,711
Water/Sewer	1,087
Maintenance	3,140

Total	15,937
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Net	(5,014)
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ATTENDANCE:

November 20, 2011

8:00 a.m. - 46
9:30 a.m. - 135

November 27, 2011

8:00 a.m. - 43
9:30 a.m. - 184

December 4, 2011

8:00 a.m. - 43
9:30 a.m. - 169

December 11, 2011

8:00 a.m. - 48
9:30 a.m. - 162

December 18, 2011

9:30 a.m. - 280

**ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING**

DECEMBER 13, 2011

Members Present: Terry Ciszek, Dick Cantwell, Tara McKenna, Pastor David Alfeld-Johnson, DeAnna Kertson, Kay Stanek and Chris Maluta.

Members Absent: Brian Burkett and Neil Pellmann, and Jim Madorma.

Meeting called to order at 7:08 p.m.

Devotions and prayer were led by DeAnna Kertson.

MEMORIALS:

A donation was made to the Memorial Fund in memory of John Funk, David Zuidema, Charles Manhart and Warren Linke.



OFFICER REPORTS:

Secretary's Report – There were no additions or corrections to the November 8, 2011 minutes. Motion made by Kay and seconded by Dick to accept the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Financial Secretary's Report – Brian's written report was reviewed. We broke even for the month of November. Motion made by DeAnna and seconded by Kay to accept the reports as presented. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – DeAnna's report was reviewed. Motion made by Dick and seconded by Tara to accept the report as presented. Motion carried.

CHURCH BOARD REPORTS:

Preschool Board – A written report was submitted.

Facilities Board - No report presented.

Cemetery Board – No report presented. Terry will follow-up with Brian about who is handling their records now.

Music & Worship - Had no meeting.

Membership – A written report was submitted. Judy Willis and Willa Bormet stated that they are leaving the committee.

STAFF REPORTS:

Pastor's Report – A written report was presented. Pastor received a written request from Robbie Burke to be removed from St. John's rolls. No specific reason was given. Motion made by Terry and seconded by Dick to remove Robbie Burke from the membership rolls. Motion carried. Pastor requested that the church office be closed December 26th through the 28th. Pastor will be back in his office on Wednesday the 28th. Pastor will be away January 3rd through the 6th on the senior high retreat. A discussion was held about communion for January. It was decided that the best choice for most people at St. John's is to have communion on January 8th rather than on January 1st.

CHURCH COMMITTEE REPORTS :

Stewardship – Terry asked for feedback from his moment of light. A discussion was held about having Pete Laue make quarterly reports to the congregation.

Evangelism – Had no meeting.

Mission Outreach – Had no meeting.

Technology – The office phones are working now. The back-up drive has been installed in the CCC. The CD duplicator has not been ordered yet.

150th Anniversary Committee – The anniversary calendars are being distributed to members as they pick up their 2012 offering envelopes. Pastor Dave has secured Doug Pagitt to speak on Sunday, April 29, 2012. He will discuss why churches are changing. A verbal report came from the turkey dinner committee that they have decided to contribute \$1,000.00 of their dinner proceeds to the 150th anniversary. A discussion was held and because the budget committee expected around \$5,000.00 to be contributed. A change in the allotted 150th budget had to be made. There is \$3,000.00 from a bequest in 2005 that will be used. The new allotted 150th budget will be \$4,000.00. Chris will report this to the 150th Anniversary Committee at their next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

2012 Budget – The prospective budget was presented. DeAnna reported that it was written based upon the 2011 budget with an increase of \$8,000.00 to cover Pastor's health insurance. Other insurance companies have been explored, and the current one seems to be the best one for now. No raises were given. Pledges received for next year increased by 1% over last year, however the overall amount pledged for next year is down. Motion made by Kay and seconded by Tara to accept the 2012 budget as presented. Motion carried.

Capital Campaign – A brief discussion was held, and it was decided to hold off until the January meeting when we should have a list of projects with costs to discuss. DeAnna closed the meeting with a group prayer.

Next Commons Meeting January 3, 2012.

Next Council Meeting January 10, 2012.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Maluta
Church Council Secretary

