

The Crier

December 2023

servicing St. Philip's and St. John UCC

"She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."—
Matthew 1:21

Greetings St. John UCC and St. Philip's UCC!

A year ago we were all holding our breath as we took a big leap of faith into the unknown of shared ministry and video sermons... and at one of the busiest times of the year: Advent! As we prepared for the birth of Christ, we were figuring out technology and schedules and all the things.

As I was untangling a mess of Christmas lights last week, I thought about how all those "hit the ground running" things to figure out last Advent season were kind of like a jumbled up mess of Christmas lights. We worked our way through them, replaced a few bulbs, tossed a strand or two in the trash, looped and relooped and relooped again trying to untangle a few knots, and made a few emergency Target runs to get a few new strands (and more extension cords!) to add to the mix. When all was said and done, the lights glowed in a beautiful (and twinkly!) display of colors, shining brightly like the light of Christ in the world. Last year, even with a few tangles lingering, a few bulbs still out, a strand you had to wiggle every now and then to keep it lit up—it was still a beautiful display of light. Christ was born, and an ever greater and more urgent hope for peace on earth was instilled in us all.

Whatever our Advent preparations, whether for a new ministry endeavor, or untangling lights, or baking cookies, or shopping for and wrapping presents, or decking the halls, or keeping the cat away from the tree—whatever it is we do to prepare for Christmas, at the heart, what really matters, is that Christ is born. If you burn the cookies, forget a present, give up on a jumble of Christmas lights, or even have a tech glitch in worship, thank God none of that will stand in the way of the birth of Christ! None of that will overshadow the bright light of God's love shining throughout all of creation through Jesus. None of that, even if we don't create an Instagrammable picture perfect Christmas, will stop Jesus from saving the world.

Advent is a season of preparation, of watching and waiting, of anticipating and wondering. It's also often a busy season of getting ready for all things Christmas, in all the traditions and expressions we've come to experience Christmas together. As you untangle your lights this season—whatever those lights may be for you (actual Christmas tree lights, or lights tinged with grief, or lights full of anxiety, or lights that frenetically flash with busyness, or lights holding whatever feels tangled up for you this season...)—as you untangle them, may you do so with tenderness and grace, knowing that the joy of Christmas, the gift of God's love coming to earth in a tiny babe, will come whether or not you finish untangling by Christmas morning.

In God's infinite love for us all, God came to dwell among us in creation in the person of Jesus. Born in a manger, Jesus would grow up to teach us about God's great love for us, and how we can respond to

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Church Info

Rev. Laura Mignerone
Call/Text (314) 452-0785
lmignerone@gmail.com



St. John United Church of Christ
920 E. Gravois Avenue
St. Clair, MO 63077

Facebook
stjohnstclair.com

9:00am Services are Livestreamed on Facebook

Mission Statement

Pray together.
Play together.
Serve together.

St. John UCC Online Giving

https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give/1303503?widget=0

St. Philip's United Church of Christ
10708 Lavinia Drive
St. Louis, MO 63123
314-843-5100

Facebook
stphilipsucc.com

9:30am Services are Livestreamed on Facebook

Mission Statement

St. Philip's United Church of Christ is a loving Christian community believing in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit

St. Philip's Vision Statement

We are called to the body of Jesus Christ, with:

Minds to study God's word,
Mouths to proclaim the Gospel,
Eyes to see the needs of others,
Arms to welcome all,
Hearts big enough to share God's love with all God's children.

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that with love for our neighbors. The greatest story ever told, it's a story that begins with a tiny baby born in Bethlehem. Let's hear that story anew this year together, and let's wonder about the incredible gift of grace we all receive through it.

A year later, we're still untangling, but we're making progress! It'll just keep getting even more beautiful as we keep working at it! Advent blessings, friends. May your own untangling keep getting even more beautiful as you work at it too!

Merry Christmas! Christ is born! Hallelujah!

Watching and Waiting (and Untangling),
Pastor Laura



- Iveta Boyanchek
- Joyce Brand
- Bob Eillson
- Grace Heady
- Ron Hemingway
- Virginia Hladnick
- Mary Ann Krewson
- Marilyn Milne
- Jered Nagle
- Shirley Nottelmann
- Paul Shrout
- Lily Swanson
- Paula Williams

December Worship Plans!

December 3, 2023 (St. Philip's UCC)

First Sunday of Advent

- Hanging of the Greens and Communion @ St. Philip's
- Isaiah 64:1-9
- Mark 13:24-37

December 10, 2023 (St. John UCC)

Second Sunday of Advent

- Christmas Program, Communion and Lunch @ St. John UCC
- Isaiah 40:1-11
- Mark 1:1-8

December 17, 2023 (St. Philip's UCC)

Third Sunday of Advent

- Christmas Program @ St. Philip's UCC
- Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
- John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24, 2023 (St. John UCC)

Fourth Sunday of Advent

- 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
- Luke 1:26-38

December 31, 2023 (St. Philip's UCC-fifth Sunday)

- Isaiah 61:10-62:3
- Luke 2:22-40

December Birthdays

Happy Birthday to our St. John and St. Philip's members who will be celebrating a birthday in December.

The following words will be heard on the 1st Sunday of each month.

*"Happy Birthday to You!,
Happy Birthday to You!,
Happy Birthday Everybody!,
and God Bless you!"*

St. John

- 4 Ryan Juergens
- 4 Aliyah Wideman
- 6 Nicholas Wachter
- 7 Joe Wachter
- 10 Arlene Lampkin
- 13 Jennifer Wachter
- 15 Jennifer Girardier
- 26 Savannah Lampkin
- 27 Erma Wideman
- 29 Lily Rucker

St. Philip's

- 5 Linda Kotthoff
- 7 Kim Tangeman
- 9 Sarah Witte
- 11 Carla Moran
- 15 Robyn Mikusch
- 21 Devin Coleman
- 21 Missy Ruffino
- 24 Chloe Armistead
- 26 Karen Nickel
- 28 Katie Eason
- 30 Ashley Henson
- 30 Scott Stevenson





Joint Worship Planning Meeting
 (St. Philip's Spiritual Life Committee and St. John's Worship Team... and any other interested folks!)
Pastor Laura's home
Sunday, January 14
1:00pm

Pastor Laura Vacation
 December 25-January 1
 Pastor Laura will be taking some vacation time.
 In case of emergency pastoral care needs during this time, please reach out to your Council President:
 St. John UCC
 Linda Rucker
 St. Philip's UCC
 Sandy Stevenson

December Council Meetings
St. Philip's
 Monday, December 4 7:00pm
St. John
 Monday, December 11 6:00pm

LITURGISTS and TECH OPERATORS NEEDED!
 Thank you to all who have already signed up, continue to sign up, and agree to serve when Pastor Laura reaches out to you in slight desperation. Sign up sheets are posted at both churches for the Sundays that need liturgists (and PowerPoint operators at St. John).
 Never done it before? Pastor Laura would LOVE to acclimate you to the wonderful world of liturgist-ing and/or PowerPoint-ing! ALL are invited to participate in making worship possible each Sunday! Want to buddy up and share the liturgy with a friend? We can help you make that happen! Know someone who isn't a part of the church, but has gifts for reading liturgy? We can work with that! Have a grandchild who could run the PowerPoint in their sleep? We don't care if they're in their pajamas! (Are you sensing the rising desperation...?). Sign up and make God (or at least Pastor Laura) smile a little bigger 😊

December 24
Worship Services
9:00am Fourth Sunday of Advent at St. John UCC
9:30am Fourth Sunday of Advent at St. Philip's UCC
5:00pm Christmas Eve Worship at St. John UCC
8:00pm Christmas Eve Worship at St. Philip's UCC

Advent Wreath Readers NEEDED!
 Would you like to read the Advent Wreath liturgy and light the candles during worship on a Sunday morning OR Christmas Eve? Talk to Pastor Laura to volunteer!

St. John UCC Advent Book Study

We're having so much fun with our UMC friends this fall, that we decided to partner together for an Advent Book Study too!

Meeting **Tuesdays** at **6:00pm** at Brothers On Main, **November 28-December 19**, we'll be reading "The Wonder of Christmas: Once You Believe, Anything Is Possible" by Ed Robb and Rob Renfroe.

Books can be purchased for about \$15 on Amazon—please let Pastor Laura know if you'd like her to purchase one for you. All are invited to participate!

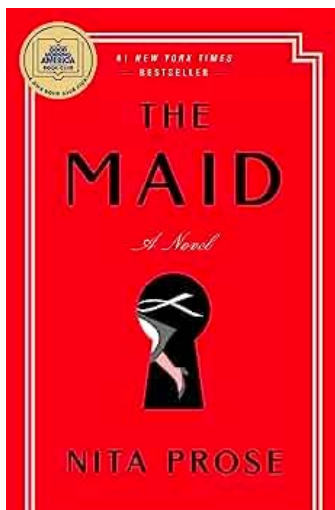


Agape House is very low on canned goods and dry goods—all donations are appreciated! Please place food donations in the barrels in the entryway. If you'd like to contribute financially, please indicate "Agape House" on your checks or envelopes. Thank you!

St. John UCC's DECEMBER SPECIAL OFFERING

Our December Special Offering is for Emmaus Homes and Every Child's Hope (formerly Evangelical Children's Home). Emmaus Homes serves adults with developmental disabilities and their families by providing group homes in local communities and supporting individuals in their every day lives. Every Child's Hope serves at risk children and youth and their families by providing resources, programming, and support. If you'd like to contribute, please indicate "Emmaus/ECH" on your checks or envelopes (all contributions will be equally divided between these two UCC affiliated organizations). Thank you for your generosity!

BOOK CLUB



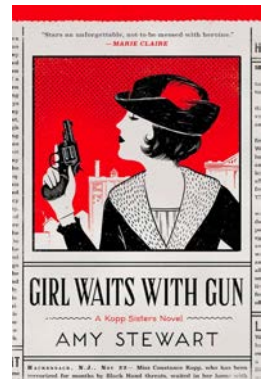
**Sunday
December 10
10:15am**

We will meet after church on Sunday, December 10 to discuss *The Maid*, and to share a potluck lunch.

Our next selection is *Girl Waits With Gun* by Amy Stewart. The Washington Post describes it as "An entertaining and enlightening story of how far one woman will go to protect her family". Books are available in kit form, and we always have a good time!

The date for the January meeting has not yet been set but will probably be January 14. Let Barbara Barnes know if you would like to have a copy of the book (314-843-4157).

Consider joining us!



January's Selection

St. John UCC

Third Thursday Open Church!

On the **THIRD THURSDAY** of the month, we are going to open the building for kids who are picked up from our parking lot after school to come inside, have a snack, and just hang out. We'll have the building open from **3:00pm to 4:00pm**, and would love to have adults to just be present and supervise.

If you're interested in volunteering to *just show up* please let Pastor Laura or Melissa Scheer know.

St. Philip's

Youth Christmas Program

Our Christmas Program will be **December 17** during worship.

Plan to stay after church with Mike Orzel for about 10-15 minutes **each Sunday through December 10 to practice our songs.**

On December 10 please plan to stay about 30-45 minutes to do a rehearsal.

If you have any questions, please contact Andrea Tukin, 314-566-8633 or andreatukin@gmail.com.



St. John UCC Christmas Program and Lunch!

On **Sunday, December 10**, worship will be at **10:00am**, during which we'll have our Christmas Program.

Immediately following, we'll have our Christmas lunch—please bring a side dish and/or dessert to share! All are invited to participate!

St. John UCC's

NEW Tri-Church

Children's Ministry!

In partnership with St. Clair UMC and Fairview UMC, we invite all kids to gather at St. Clair UMC on the **THIRD MONDAY** of the month, **thru December**, from **6:00pm-7:30pm** for a light dinner and Bible story themed programming.

We need adult volunteers to help make this happen! Please contact Pastor Laura if you'd be willing to help or donate toward this ministry for children in our churches and in the community.

THANK YOU!

The Spiritual Life Ministry Committee would like to thank Rob Harvey, Ted Rawlings and everyone on the committee and all church members for making the Blessings of the Pets and Worldwide Communion service such a success. A good time was had by all. Personally, I would like to thank Cindy and Jordan Lewis and their committee for a great turn out and making Round Up a great success.

Thanks, Tammy Knoll

St. John UCC Blue Christmas Service

On **Wednesday, December 20 at 7:00pm**, St. John UCC will host our annual Blue Christmas worship service. Amid the joy and celebration of the Christmas season, many find it can be a difficult time while also dealing with grief, loss, despair, or any kind of challenging circumstances.

We will gather in the glow of the sanctuary to hold space for the hard stuff and be reminded that God is near and God's love and grace is real. All are welcome for this meaningful time of worship together.

LOGOS

Christmas Program

Wednesday, December 13

5:30 PM

Join us for dinner, games and a short Christmas program put on by the youth and families of LOGOS. We will have dessert and a craft afterwards!

This will be our last LOGOS of 2023. We will resume in January 2024! See you then!

ST. PHILIP'S OUTREACH MINISTRY NEWS

We are again participating in Feed My People's "Adopt a Family Program", and our family members are: Linda-74 years old, Tim-26 years old, Breanna-22 years old, Kobe-3 years old, and Isaac-2 years old. We are collecting funds to pay for gift cards, \$50 for each family member and a \$50 grocery card for a Holiday Meal. LOGOS family children and parents are contributing funds to buy gifts for the little boys. The gifts and gift cards will be wrapped and delivered to Feed My People for distribution. If more funds are collected than needed to pay for the gift cards, the excess will be donated to the family to pay down utility bills. Collections for Feed my People will continue throughout Advent



Contributions can be made in the offering plate or by mail. Please write "Adopt a Family" on the Lower left side of checks or specify "Adopt a Family" on the outside of your church contribution envelope. Thanks in advance for your hospitality!

Cap and Mitten Tree: Throughout Advent we will again decorate our little "Cap, Mitten and Scarf Tree", with items going to Caroline Mission. Sandy Stevenson, a long-term volunteer at Caroline Mission mentioned that in addition to the pre-school program, Caroline Mission also has an after-school program for school age children. There is a need for toddlers and Childrens' caps, mitten and scarves. Some of the older after school participants can wear adult sizes, and all of the kids have parents or other adult caretakers. So, items of all sizes are needed. It's fun to see the tree get more heavily decorated and colorful as Advent progresses!

Thanks in advance for your generosity!

Outreach Ministry



CHRISTMAS LUNCH BUNCH

WEDNESDAY

DECEMBER 13, 2023

NOON

Join us for the annual pre-Christmas potluck lunch at Sandy's house. Bring a dish to share and prepare for a time of food, fun and fellowship.



Don't forget to bring a wrapped white elephant present for the much anticipated and highly competitive Rob Your Neighbor contest. You never know what treasure you might win!

See the GREEN signup sheet on the bulletin board to RSVP or contact Sandy Stevenson.



Hanging of the Greens

St. Philip's

Hanging of the Greens

Kids & Families

Families...please plan to stay after church on **Sunday, December 3** to help decorate the church for Christmas. There will be Christmas crafts and activities for the kids!

[RSVP HERE](#) if you know you'll be there so we can plan ahead (you're still welcome if you don't). Looking forward to getting into the Christmas spirit with you!

St. John UCC

Salvation Army Bell Ringing!

From now until Christmas YOU can sign up to ring bells with the Salvation Army kettles at Country Mart or Save A Lot to raise funds for Agape House (80% remains in St. Clair).



The St. Clair School District is organizing ringers on the district website—all are invited to sign up for a slot! Contact Pastor Laura with questions.

St. Philip's

Family Christmas Party

Saturday, December 9

5:00-7:00pm

Potluck (bring a dish to share)
Christmas games, Christmas Karaoke, Christmas Crafts and more!

Location at St. Philip's unless someone wants to host!

[RSVP HERE](#) or contact Andrea Tukin at 314-566-8633 or andreatukin@gmail.com



Christmas Poinsettias

Back again this year are beautiful poinsettia plants in your choice of red or pink, and mums in either white or yellow.

The poinsettias will decorate the sanctuary on Sunday, December 24 during the Christmas Eve service. You may take your plants home after the Christmas Eve service.

The cost is \$11.50 each plant.

Make check payable to 'Walter Knoll Florist'

Name _____

| Quantity | Color |
|----------|-----------------|
| _____ | Red Poinsettia |
| _____ | Pink Poinsettia |
| _____ | White Mum |
| _____ | Yellow Mum |

In honor of _____

In memory of _____

You can drop your order form and payment in the offering plate or give to Carol O'Shea in the church office **by Monday, December 11th**.

GO TELL IT!

Free Christmas Concert featuring Community Gospel Choir's 50 glorious voices, plus a full jazz ensemble and other special guests.



Sunday, Dec. 3, 4 p.m.
Northside SDA Church
9001 Lucas & Hunt Rd

Saturday, Dec. 9, 4 p.m.
Kirkwood United Methodist Church
201 W. Adams Ave.

Community
Gospel
Choir of St. Louis



With the financial support of the Regional Arts Commission and the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA



Enjoy breakfast, activities, & pictures with Santa

DECEMBER

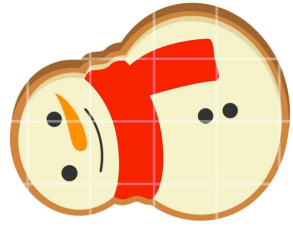
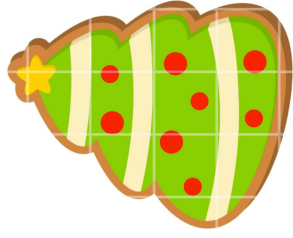
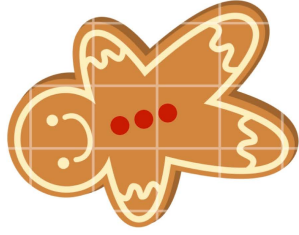
2ND

9:00 - 10:30 AM



ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:
A DELICIOUS BREAKFAST,
PHOTO WITH SANTA & GET PRINTED,
& ACTIVITIES IN SANTAS WORKSHOP

EMAIL MS. JACQUELINE
@ JFECHTER@STPHILIPSUCC.COM



Saturday, December 2, 2023

8:00am - 11:00am

Box your own cookies

\$10.00 per pound

Only cash and checks are accepted

Eden United Church of Christ

8920 Eden Avenue

Affton, MO 63123

(1 block east of Tesson Ferry and Gravois

www.edenucc.org

314-631-8930

St. Philip's

October 2023 General Fund Summary

Receipts

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Sunday Offering | 6,220.00 | |
| Interest Income | 268.21 | |
| MPR Rental | 25.00 | |
| Early Childhood Center | <u>9,500.00</u> | |
| Total | | 16,013.21 |

Expenses

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| <u>Spiritual Life Ministry</u> | 165.00 | |
| Learning Ministry | 86.00 | |
| Financial Ministry | 1,690.28 | |
| Church Property Ministry | 6,209.69 | |
| Personnel | <u>7,719.67</u> | |
| Total | | <u>15,870.64</u> |

| | | |
|--------------------|--|------------------|
| October Surplus | | 142.57 |
| Previous Balance | | <u>18,122.53</u> |
| October 31 Balance | | 18,265.10 |
| | | ===== |

October Building Fund Summary

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Beginning Balance | | 6,634.23 |
| Building Fund Offering | | 364.00 |
| Capital Improvement Fund | | <u>(417.00)</u> |
| October Ending Balance | | 6,581.23 |
| | | ===== |

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------|--|
| <h1>DECEMBER</h1> <p>SJ = St. John UCC SP = St. Philip's UCC</p> | | | | | | |
| 3 Pastor Laura @ St. Philip's 9:00 SJ Worship 9:30 SP Sunday Worship 9:45 SP Sunday School | 4 7:00 SP Church Council Meeting | 5 6:00 SJ Advent Book Study | 6 | 7 | 8 6:00-10:00 ECC MPR | 9 5:00-7:00 Family Christmas Dinner |
| 10 Pastor Laura @ St. John 9:30 SP Sunday Worship 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 SJ Christmas Program & Lunch 10:15 Book Club | 11 noon SP Poinsettia Orders Due 6:00 SJ Church Council Meeting | 12 6:00 SJ Advent Book Study | 13 noon SP Lunch Bunch @ Sandy's 5:30-7:00 SP LOGOS Christmas Pgm | 14 5:00-6:00 Rawlings Scout Mtg | 15 | 16 |
| 17 Pastor Laura @ St. Philip's 9:00 SJ Worship 9:30 SP Sunday Worship & Youth Christmas Program 9:45 SP Sunday School | 18 6:00-7:30 SJ Children's Ministry | 19 6:00 SJ Advent Book Study | 20 7:00 SJ Blue Christmas Service | 21 3:00-4:00 SJ Open Church for Kids | 22 | 23 |
| 24 Pastor Laura @ St. John 9:00 SJ Worship 9:30 SP Sunday Worship 9:45 SP Sunday School 5:00 SJ Christmas Eve Svc 8:00 SP Christmas Eve Svc | 25 Merry Christmas! | 26 | 27 | 28 6:00-9:00 SP Quilters | 29 | 30 |
| 31 9:00 SJ Worship 9:30 SP Sunday Worship 9:45 SP Sunday School | | | | | | |