



## St. Jacob and St. John's Summerfield News and Notes

Dear Church Family and Friends of St. Jacob and St. John's,

I don't spend a lot of time on social media. I will flip through my family and friends' posts on Facebook and check the photos they share to Instagram, but things like TikTok and Snapchat are far beyond what I'm willing to try and learn. Now, maybe it's because I'm a bit more of a rotund guy, but both Facebook and Instagram love inundating me with advertisements for different fad weight loss schemes... particularly one called intermittent fasting. As best as I can tell from the ads, intermittent fasting is what we used to call skipping meals, and, while I'm sure each one of the companies whose ads I see has some methodology or special gimmick, that just doesn't sound sensible to me. But this time of year those ads do get me thinking about another form of fasting that we do.

Fasting is one of the oldest spiritual practices that was used to prepare oneself to meditate on scripture and focus on deep prayer to God. Early monks who went out into the desert to focus on studying scripture and knowing God would follow the example of John the Baptist who was known for living out in the wilderness and wearing "clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey." (Matthew 3:4) Over the centuries different monastic traditions have treated fasting in different ways. Some fast from certain forms of food. Some fasting from speaking unless it was prayer, worship, or singing hymns. Others fasting from owning any worldly possessions. No matter how they chose to fast, though, part of the reason for fasting was to remove those things they felt distracted them from their focus on study and prayer.

Today our understanding of fasting has changed. Most people now associate fasting with giving something up for Lent as a small way to remind ourselves of the way Jesus gave up his life for us, but a group of Christians are looking back towards the Hebrew Scriptures for a different understanding of fasting.

Is not this the fast that I choose: to lose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am." (Isaiah 58:6-9a)

This form of fasting from Isaiah is not about giving things up, but instead it is about recommitting to do the work of God and the work that Jesus taught us to do: helping those who are oppressed and unjustly punished and sharing what we have, food, clothing, and shelter, with those that lack those resources. Rather than giving something up to find a closeness to God, it is by doing these things that we are brought close enough to hear God say "Here I am."

So, as we move towards Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent, I hope you will consider a form of fasting, whether it is the removing of a distraction in your faith and prayer life, or a recommitment to the work of God, in order to grow nearer to God this Lenten season.

**Blessings to all of you,**

**Pastor Phil**

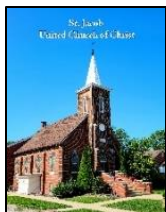


**“Hanging of the Greens”:** Members of St. Jacob UCC decorated the church in preparation for Christmas. This was the last time the old 14-foot tree will adorn the Sanctuary. A new, more manageable size tree was purchased and donated by George and Myrna Anderson – Thank you! The old tree was donated to Frieden’s UCC, Troy, IL. Thank you to all who volunteered their time to decorate our church.



**The St. Jacob Sunday School put on a Christmas program Dec. 18. The program told of the Nativity story.**

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



## ST. JACOB CHURCH DIRECTORY AVAILABLE

The current St. Jacob church directory is available for you to pick up on the table in the Narthx. Please limit one booklet per family at this time, until we see what the level of interest is - Thank you.

## ST. JACOB 2022 GIVING STATEMENTS

The 2022 Giving Statements are available on the table in the St. Jacob UCC Narthx.

## ST. JACOB 2023 ENVELOPE BOOKLETS AVAILABLE

The St. Jacob 2023 envelope booklets are available for you to pick up on the table in the Narthx.

## BLESSING BOX INSTALLED AT ST. JACOB

Dalton Mersinger installed a “Blessing Box” on the East side of St. Jacob UCC for his Eagle Scout project late last year. Anyone can donate items to the “Blessing Box,” recommended items include non-perishable food, hygiene products, and other items that could bless someone in need. Items are anonymously given and received. Please consider donating to help others in our community, and if you are in need, please feel free to stop by. A big THANK YOU to all those who have helped stock the “Blessing Box.”



## VOLUNTEER LITURGISTS AT ST. JACOB

We are looking for volunteers willing to read scripture, no long-term commitment, just one Sunday at a time. Everyone from the congregation is invited to take part in helping lead worship. There is a sign-up sheet located on the table in the Narthx.

## BEST CHOICE LABEL COLLECTION

The ELF's organization is collecting Best Choice labels/UPC portion (proof of purchase). There is a box on the table in the Narthx to place the labels.

\*\*\* **THE UPPER ROOM** (March - April) magazines are available on the table in the Narthx at St. Jacob UCC.

## CARD SHOWER

Pastor Phil would like to “shower” our members who are celebrating milestone birthdays, (90 years and up), or a milestone wedding anniversary, (50 years and up, in 5-year increments). The church currently does not have birth years for these special people, only the anniversary years. So, if you are in your late 80's and up, please let us know your birth year. We will let you know in advance when these milestone birthdays are taking place. The church will provide a basket on the Resource Table in Heritage Hall where you can place your cards and Pastor Phil will be happy to deliver them. You may also just mail your card if you prefer.

# CALENDAR

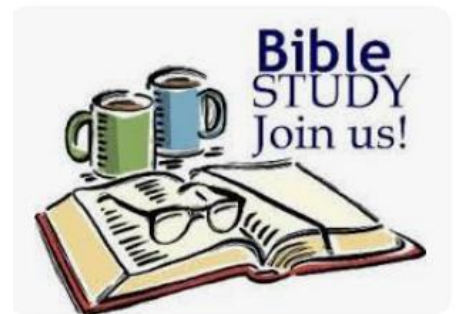
## FEBRUARY

- Feb. 5:** First Sunday of the month communion.  
**Feb. 5:** Holy Sunday fellowship, following Service, St. John's  
**Feb. 8:** Every Ladies Fellowship meeting, 10 a.m.  
**Feb. 12:** **Sweetheart Sunday**  
**Feb. 14:** **VALENTINE'S DAY**  
**Feb. 15:** St. Jacob Council meeting, 7 p.m.  
**Feb. 19:** **Transfiguration Sunday**  
**Feb. 20:** **PRESIDENTS' DAY**  
**Feb. 21:** St. John's Council meeting, 7:15 p.m.  
**Feb. 22:** **ASH WEDNESDAY**, Worship, 7 p.m.



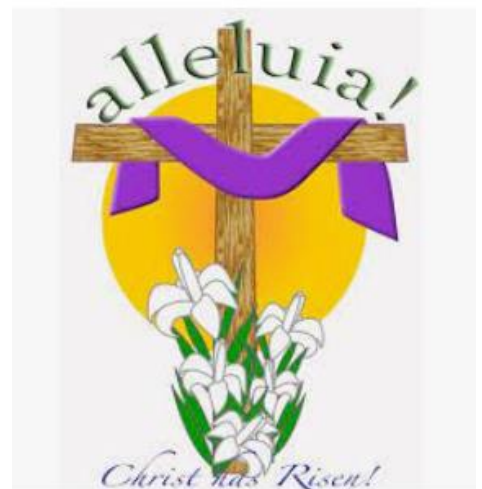
## MARCH

- March 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29:** Lenten Bible Study  
**March 5:** First Sunday of the month communion.  
**March 5:** Holy Sunday fellowship, following Service, St. John's  
**March 8:** Every Ladies Fellowship meeting, 10 a.m.  
**March 12:** **Daylight Saving Time begins (2 a.m.)**  
**March 15:** St. Jacob Council meeting, 8 p.m.  
**March 16-21:** Pastor Phil Vacation  
**March 21:** St. John's Council meeting, 7:15 p.m.



## APRIL

- April 2:** First Sunday of the month communion.  
**April 2:** Holy Sunday fellowship, following Service, St. John's  
**April 6:** **MAUNDY THURSDAY**, Worship, 7 p.m.  
**April 7:** **GOOD FRIDAY**  
**April 8:** **HOLY SATURDAY**  
**April 9:** **EASTER**, Worship 7 a.m. & 10:15 a.m.  
**April 12:** Every Ladies Fellowship meeting, 10 a.m.  
**April 18:** St. John's Council meeting, 7:15 p.m.  
**April 19:** St. Jacob Council meeting, 7 p.m.



## ST. JOHN'S BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

### February Dates

Lynn Shirley, Feb. 1  
Barbara Baer, Feb. 2  
Ashley Ahrens, Feb. 3  
Steven Shirley, Feb. 4

### March Dates

Margie Foxworth, March 1  
Elsie Brandmeyer, March 3  
Marsha & Jason Shirley, 18 years, March 5

Patrick Thornton, March 10  
Ashley & Jerid Ahrens, 5 years, March 31

### April Dates

Kristen Hill, April 12  
Marlene Robison, April 14  
Wally Foxworthy, April 15  
Marsha Shirley, April 22  
Brice Ahrens, April 25

## ST. JACOB BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

### February Dates

Austin Becker, Feb. 8  
DiAnn Rufer, Feb. 11  
Terri Barnhart, Feb. 14  
Karen Steinkoenig, Feb. 16  
Carol Zweck, Feb. 17  
Judy Bolton, Feb. 19  
Rachel Yann Mueller, Feb. 20  
Tavey Duncan, Feb. 22  
Bruce Frank, Feb. 24  
Justin Huelsmann, Feb. 26

### March Dates

Sara King, March 2  
Gary Warren, March 8  
Sandy & Ron Rujawitz, 49 years, March 9

Lily Zobrist, March 19  
Mandy Bolton, March 27

### April Dates

Duane Zobrist, April 3  
Patti & Duane Woods, 37 years, April 5  
Steve Mersinger, April 7  
Katie Yann, April 10  
Ken Frutiger, April 11  
Kristie Daniel, April 12  
Pat May, April 16  
Gary Rufer, April 16  
Bailey Frank, April 17  
Carol Schmitt, April 19  
Cheryl Byrnes, April 21  
Gary & Marilyn Warren, 52 years, April 24

## PRAYERS REQUESTED

Each day I sit down with the prayer list and pray for the people of our churches. You could take this same list and put it by your bedside or reading table next to your Bible. Let us pray for those in need as well as our neighbors across the world on a daily basis.

### ST. JOHN'S PRAYER LIST

Ella Boggy, Wally Foxworthy, Margie Foxworthy's son Sean, and Jeffrey Thornton

### ST. JACOB PRAYER LIST

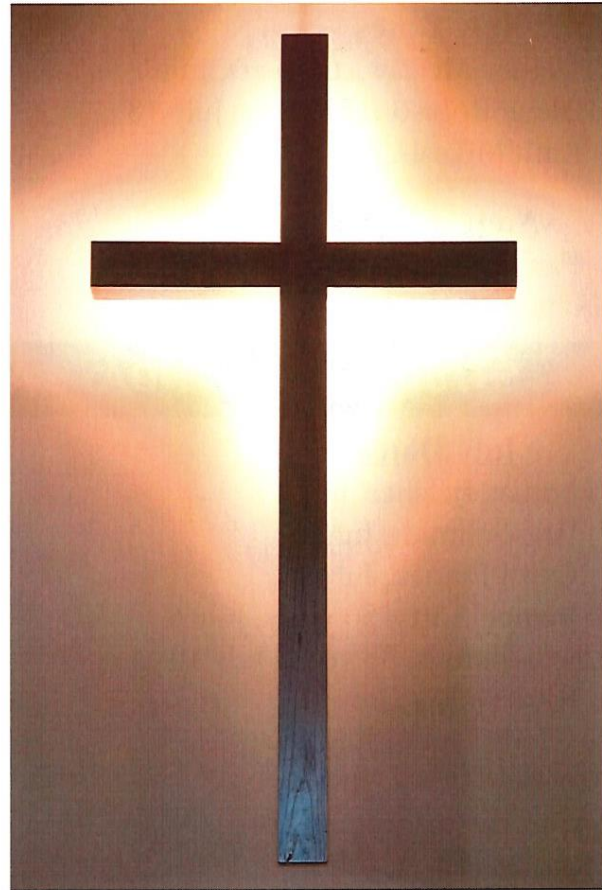
Ross Busher, Carol Casperson, Erica Kynion, Gail Miller,  
Ronald Rujawitz, Jane Schmidt, and Carol Zweck

St. Jacob United Church of Christ  
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Visit our Website:  
<https://stjacobucc.org>



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**ADDRESS SERVICE CORRECTION**

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U S POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT NUMBER 6

Mailing address line 1