



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

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

As we approach the end of the year, we often reflect upon all that has happened, and much has occurred in 2024. But this is also the time of Advent where we expectantly await the birth of Christ. So this year, as I prepare for the coming Christmas season, I wanted to pair my reflection with the themes of the four Sundays of Advent and ask, what has brought me hope, peace, joy, and love this year?

At times hope has seemed in short supply, but the wonder of hope is that it is always looking toward the future, and as I look at our churches, I see reason for hope. At St. John's we have seen a growing Sunday School, and at St. Jacob, after a short hiatus this fall to re-envision Sunday School, we will be restarting classes in January along with beginning an adult bible study. And so I find hope in knowing that both our children and adults will have the opportunity to grow in their knowledge of God's grace and love.

Like hope, peace can also seem scarce, particularly as we look around the world and see the continuing wars in Sudan, Ukraine, and Israel/Palestine. Add to that our own nation's political campaigns where candidates seem to attack and batter each other until the voters feel like they are the ones left bruised, and finding peace can be difficult. While there is much work to do to move our world toward peace, it is possible for me to find moments of personal peace. Times of prayer, long walks in the park where the only sounds are leaves underfoot and cars out on the road, and even my deep breaths right before worship starts are where I find a moment for peace.

Joy is something that is not hard for me to find. There are the common joys of the year: birthdays, anniversaries, and graduations, both in my family and for our friends' families. There have been big joys this year: good health news for family, the third anniversary of my ordination and serving as pastor, and even a new cat. While there have been times of busyness and stress, and even times of mourning where joy may have been hard to see and feel, as I reflect upon the year, I am happy to know joy has been present.

Finally, there is love. Like joy, I am lucky to know how loved I am. I am constantly surrounded by the love of my family, feeling their care and support every day. Likewise, I feel the love from my church family and friends who are quick to check in and join in our shared ministry. Most of all, I feel the love of God who sustains me when times are difficult, and I start to struggle to see the hope, peace, joy, and love in life.

So now I invite you to a time of reflection. What has brought you hope this year and what do you hope for in the coming year? In a world that often seems to lack peace, where have you found peace in your life? What has brought you joy, even in the midst of stress or mourning? And, perhaps most importantly as we lead into the Christmas season remembering God's love in sending his son to our world, where have you experienced love in your life this year?

Blessings to all of you, and may you have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Pastor Phil

ANNOUNCEMENTS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER E-MAIL OPTION

With the rising cost of postage, printing and mailing our quarterly newsletter, we encourage you to consider having it e-mailed, instead of using traditional mail to send the paper copy. If you would like to have our newsletter e-mailed, please provide us with your preferred e-mail address at: stjucc@hometel.com

Also, if you currently receive our newsletter, and are no longer interested in receiving it, please let us know, either by e-mailing us at: stjucc@hometel.com or by calling the office at: 618-644-2142, and we will remove you from our newsletter mailing list.

RETURN OF SUNDAY SCHOOL AT ST. JACOB

After a hiatus, Sunday School will return in January, and is open to all children kindergarten through 6th grade. Classes will be held before worship (9-10 a.m.) the 2nd & 4th Sundays from January through May. Additional details will be posted on the St. Jacob UCC Facebook page as they become available.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY AT ST. JACOB

A short, four-week adult Bible Study on the 10 Commandments will be offered every other Wednesday (Jan. 8 & 22, and Feb. 5 & 19). Each session will offer two options to attend, beginning at either 10 a.m. or 7 p.m. For more information call the office at 618-644-2142.

LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

This year's Lenten Bible Study will be held each Wednesday, March 5 - April 9 at 7 p.m., and we'll be using the book *Lent in Plain Sight: A Devotion through Ten Objects* by Jill Duffield. If you are interested in joining us for the study, let Pastor Phil know by Jan. 18th so we can order enough books.

ST. JACOB NEEDS COUNCIL MEMBERS

St. Jacob needs members to serve on the church council. Currently we have only nine of the 12 positions filled. Two of those nine members will finish their term at the end of this year, which will leave us with five positions vacant for 2025. Please consider volunteering, it's really a small commitment of your time, as the council meets just once a month for about an hour, and then serves as the council person for one month to assist at worship. The success of our church

ON-LINE GIVING OPTION

An on-line giving option is available on the St. Jacob UCC's web site (<https://stjacobucc.org/>). There are two ways to access the on-line giving option: the first is the "DONATE" button located on the top-right corner of the "Home Page," and the second is by clicking on "RESOURCES" and then "DONATE." If you have any issues using the on-line giving option, please contact the church office at (618) 644-2142.



SNOW SHOVELING

Winter weather will be here before you know it. Please volunteer to shovel the church sidewalks. There is a sign-up sheet on the table in the Narthex. Thank you!

CALENDAR

DECEMBER

DEC. 1: First Sunday of ADVENT/Communion Sunday

DEC. 1: Holey Sunday fellowship, following worship at St. John's

DEC. 11: Every Ladies Fellowship meeting, 10 a.m.

DEC. 15: Sunday School teacher meeting following worship at St. Jacob

DEC. 16: Strawberry Festival meeting, 6 p.m.

DEC. 16: St. Jacob Council meeting, 7 p.m.

DEC. 17: St. John's Council meeting, 7:15 p.m.

DEC. 24: **CHRISTMAS EVE** services -- 4 p.m. and 10 p.m., St. Jacob

DEC. 24: **CHRISTMAS EVE** service -- 7 p.m., St. John's

DEC. 25: **CHRISTMAS** no worship service

DEC. 31: **NEW YEAR'S EVE**



JANUARY

JAN. 1: **HAPPY NEW YEAR**

JAN. 5: Communion Sunday

JAN. 5: Holey Sunday fellowship, following worship at St. John's

JAN. 6: **EPIPHANY**

JAN. 8: Every Ladies Fellowship meeting, 10 a.m.

JAN. 19: St. John's Annual meeting, noon (tentative)

JAN. 20: St. Jacob Council meeting, 7 p.m.

JAN. 21: St. John's Council meeting, 7:15 p.m.

JAN. 26: St. Jacob Annual meeting, following worship



FEBRUARY

FEB. 2: Communion Sunday

FEB. 2: Holey Sunday fellowship, following worship at St. John's

FEB. 12: Every Ladies Fellowship meeting, 10 a.m.

FEB. 17: St. Jacob Council meeting, 7 p.m.

FEB. 18: St. John's Council meeting, 7:15 p.m.



ST. JOHN'S BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

December Dates

Roger Baer, Dec. 8
Barbara & Roger Baer, 42 years, Dec. 11
Bradley Goetter, Dec. 13

January Dates

Ryan Baer, Jan. 2
Lauren Hill, Jan. 8

Jerid Ahrens, Jan. 12
Sharon Koenig, Jan. 16
June Boggy, Jan. 25

February Dates

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

ST. JACOB BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

December Dates

Loretta Tague, Dec. 3
Donna & John Lowe, 40 years, Dec. 8
Dian & Ty Gansmann, 29 years, Dec. 8
Sam Frey, Dec. 9
Peggy Bohnenstiehl, Dec. 10
Brittany Frank, Dec. 17
Germain Reh, Dec. 18
Tiffany Duncan, Dec. 19
Cameron Woods, Dec. 19
Carol Casperson, Dec. 20
Lauren Gansmann, Dec. 22
Zach Mueller, Dec. 25
Jack Bittle, Dec. 26
Melissa Anderson Taylor, Dec. 26
Myrna Anderson, Dec. 29

January Dates

Jane Noeltner, Jan. 2
Alex Scheiber, Jan. 2

Brian Meyer, Jan. 9
Katie Prange, Jan. 12
Sandy Rujawitz, Jan. 12
Debbie Zobrist, Jan. 14
Gene Gansmann, Jan. 16
Rodney Ahlmeyer, Jan. 25
Gina Hirsch, Jan. 27

February Dates

Austin Becker, Feb. 8
DiAnn Rufer, Feb. 11
Terri Barnhart, Feb. 14
Karen Steinkoenig, Feb. 16
Judy Bolton, Feb. 19
Rachel Yann Mueller, Feb. 20
Tavey Duncan, Jan. 22
Ryan Becker, Jan. 23
Bruce Frank, Jan. 24
Zach Lowe, Jan. 24
Justin Huelsmann, Jan. 26

St. John's Prayer List

Don Koenig, Christy Lanning, Fred Lanning, and
Sean and Dustin, sons of Margie & Wally Foxworthy

St. Jacob Prayer List

Carol Casperson, Marvin Docter, Lori Foley,
Jackie Miller, and Kathleen Ritter