

February 2017 Newsletter



St. John's United Church of Christ

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Rev. Dr. Tom Fritz, Pastor (920)-268-5757

“The purpose of this congregation is to be a faith community promoting the kingdom of God through worship, teaching and action...GET READY!”

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>February 2017</h1>			1 1:30 p.m. Women's Guild 7:30 p.m. Senior Choir Practice	2	3	4
5 Communion Sunday 9:00 a.m. Sunday School, Confirmation Class, & Adult Bible Study 10:15 a.m. Worship 11:15 Meeting of Worship Committee	6	7	8 7:30 p.m. Senior Choir Practice	9	10	11
12 9:00 a.m. Sunday School, Confirmation Class, & Adult Bible Study 10:15 a.m. Worship	13	14 <i>Happy Valentine's Day!</i> 7:00 p.m. Council meeting 	15 7:30 p.m. Senior Choir Practice	16 9:00 a.m. Newsletter Info due in church office	17	18
19 9:00 a.m. Sunday School, Youth Group, & Adult Bible Study 10:15 a.m. Worship	20	21	22 7:30 p.m. Senior Choir Practice	23 2:00 p.m. Assemble Newsletter – please call to confirm after 1:00	24	25
26 9:00 a.m. Sunday School, Confirmation Class, & Adult Bible Study 10:15 a.m. Worship <i>(Randy preaching)</i>	27	28	<p><i>“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (John 3:16, NRSV).</i></p>			

Love and War— The Beginning of Valentine's Day

As February draws near many of us will be making plans for celebrating Valentine's Day. Flowers or candy will be purchased. Children will fill out Valentine's cards for classmates at school. Couples may plan a night out together. We do such things to celebrate romantic love.

Valentine's Day actually has its roots in war. When Claudius II was emperor of Rome, the Roman Empire was engaged in several bloody wars. Casualties were high, and the empire had trouble finding men to serve as soldiers. Claudius reasoned that this was due to married men not wanting to leave their brides and children to fight, so he cancelled all marriages and made it illegal to get married.

Valentine was a priest in Rome at this time, and he decided to defy the emperor, performing marriages in secret. His actions got him arrested and killed. Years later he was canonized and become a saint. Valentine took his stand in support of love, and the rest, as they say, is history.

In my own life I saw the dance between love and war. My parents married just before World War II. Before they could start a family, my father was drafted and served in the European theater of the war. Separated by distance and time, my parents wrote to each other to keep their love alive. Decades later, when my father died, my mother renewed that practice. She wrote love letters to my father as if he was away at war. Later, when she died, I found all of those love letters and was deeply touched.

When love is strong, it bridges the divides between us. When the circumstances of life seek to separate us from each other, as individuals or groups, love has the power to



And / or
Happy Wedding Anniversary!



“And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13 NRSV).

Do You Have a Home Email Account?

If you have email and are not positive that the church office has your current email address, please send Kim an email at stjcreek@gmail.com and ask her to double check her contacts for yours! Thank you!



February 2017 Schedule

Sunday, February 5 – Communion Sunday

Reader	Bob Menning
Greeter / Usher	Bob & Carla Menning
Usher	Ray Menning & Bev Kruse

Sunday, February 12

Reader	Connie Wheeler
Greeter / Usher	Connie Wheeler & Kelcie Hooyman
Usher	Cailey Wheeler & Keegan Hooyman

Sunday, February 19

Reader	Vi Brown Luebke
Greeter / Usher	Vi Brown Luebke & Stephanie Julius
Usher	Lisa Waterstradt & Kimberly Marcks

Sunday, February 26

Reader	Roberta Lorenz
Greeter / Usher	Roberta Lorenz & Audrey Hooyman Blake
Usher	Gene Blake & Darwin Ethington

1 John 4:7

“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God”
(NRSV).

March 2017 Schedule

Sunday, March 1, 2017 – Ash Wednesday

Reader	Robin Schmidt
Greeter / Usher	Carol & Robin Schmidt
Usher	Steve Hanson & Barry Zuleger

Sunday, March 5—Communion Sunday

Reader	Lisa St. John
Greeter / Usher	Todd & Lisa St. John
Usher	Tanner St. John & Jonathan Tesch

Sunday, March 12

Reader	Marian Zuleger
Greeter / Usher	Marian Zuleger & Marian Goodwin
Usher	Duane Zuleger & Jennifer Sassman

Sunday, March 19

Reader	Jan Rohloff
Greeter / Usher	Mike & Connie Rohloff
Usher	Trevor & Brandon Rohloff

Sunday, March 26

Reader	Jim Rucci
Greeter / Usher	David Holz & Aron Rasmussen
Usher	Jeff & Trevor Rasmussen

April 2017 Schedule

Sunday, April 2 – Communion Sunday

Reader	Trudy Koon
Greeter / Usher	Sadie & Portia Fenske
Usher	Keith Kruse & Mark Hooyman

Sunday, April 9—Palm Sunday

Reader	Bob Menning
Greeter / Usher	Bob & Carla Menning
Usher	Ray Menning & Bryce Vander Linden

Sunday, April 13—Maundy Thursday

Reader Sue Biese
Greeter / Usher Duane Zuleger & David Tesch
Usher Steve Hanson & Jonathan Tesch

Sunday, April 16—Easter @ 7:00 a.m.

Reader Kent Abel
Greeter / Usher Randy & Kris Vande Corput
Usher Adrianna Vande Corput & Lisa Raaths

Sunday, April 16—Easter @ 10:15 a.m.

Reader Robin Schmidt
Greeter / Usher Duane & Carol Henke
Usher Karen Arnold & Bev Kruse

Sunday, April 23

Reader Connie Wheeler
Greeter / Usher John & Connie Wheeler
Usher Cailey Wheeler & Ashley Lison

Sunday, April 30

Reader Roberta Lorenz
Greeter / Usher Roberta Lorenz & Esther Meyer
Usher Judy & Kerri Samson

May 2017 Schedule

Sunday, May 1—Communion Sunday

Reader Jan Rohloff
Greeter / Usher Gary & Carla Lathrop
Usher Jan & Brandon Rohloff

Sunday, May 14—Mothers' Day

Reader Randy Miller
Greeter / Usher Randy Miller & Gary Vander Linden
Usher Morgan Vander Linden & Darwin

Ethington

Sunday, May 21

Reader	Bryce Vander Linden
Greeter / Usher	Stephanie Julius & Lisa Waterstradt
Usher	Grant & Brandy Krull

Sunday, May 28

Reader	Marian Zuleger
Greeter / Usher	Marian Zuleger & Mark Hooyman
Usher	Gene Blake & Audrey Hooyman Blake

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bring us together. It was like that for my parents, both in war and in death. It is like that for all who follow Jesus.

In many ways our relationship to Christ is like that of separated lovers. Jesus comes to the world to reveal God's love, then he leaves us to return to God. Having been touched by God's love in this way, we await the return of Christ when God's love will be fully revealed to all creation. In the meantime, we write our love letters to God, doing our best to keep the love alive.

We write such letters in many ways. Worship is one way that we write our love letters. We praise God with music and song. We thank God with prayers and offerings. We seek God's guidance so that the life we live between worship services becomes another kind of love letter. Every good deed we do; every sacrifice we make for others; every ministry or program that touches human need; every time we welcome strangers; every time we stand for justice; every time we treat others with love and respect; all such acts, whether done by one or many persons, are love letters to God. They keep the love of Christ alive in human hearts and

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minds. They transform the world and bring the kingdom near, paving the way for Christ's return.

I am convinced that we need to send more love letters to God these days. The past election season was the meanest and most divisive that that I have ever seen. Politicians played on fears and hatred in order to gain a political advantage. Candidates demonized each other. There were fights at rallies. Tensions rose, not only in our country, but around the world. History is full of such sad chapters—times when the dark side of humanity seems to triumph over our better nature. In such previous times, it has often been people of faith who have stemmed the tides of anger, hatred, and injustice and brought about more positive transformations. It was like that long ago when Valentine defied an emperor. It needs to be that way again! Those of us who love God, who claim the name of Christ, need to write new love letters to God. Only that kind of living and loving can help us close one sad chapter of human history and begin writing another glad chapter when love triumphs and life is transformed.

Enjoy your Valentine's Day this year. Celebrate that special love you feel for that special someone. Then make a pledge to write love letters to God throughout the year. Those letters are needed now more than ever!

Peace and Joy, Pastor Tom

Women's Guild—December 2016

The Women's Guild did not meet in December, but we had an All Church Christmas party, on Thursday, December 1, 2016, at 6:30 p.m. Everyone in the congregation was invited. Around 40 people were in attendance; it was a

delicious potluck supper! We began the evening with a prayer by Bonnie Vander Linden and Bonnie's introduction of the *Alphabet Reading*—reading from A to D. We sang "Happy Birthday" to Brandy Krull and Jaiden Wheeler. Cailey Wheeler shared a reading. Then we heard the *Alphabet Reading* of E to K.

Sue Biese called all children to come forward. Some held stars while Jan Rohloff shared a reading of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star—How I wonder Who You Are." The children sang the song after each reading!

Robin Schmidt read a skit entitled, *T'was the Week Before Christmas*. Aron Rasmussen did a super job of portraying a busy woman working for a 'special person' to help find an angel. Hollie Wheeler invited them back for tea and cookies. Wonderful!

L to P of the *Alphabet Reading* was shared. Carla Menning shared a reading entitled *You can Be Whatever You Want to Be*. She shared the offering prayer, while Jan Boman played several Christmas songs on the piano.

Q to T of the *Alphabet Reading* was shared. Ila Mae Jens had everyone re-do some Christmas songs in groups from one to three. The words were all changed with lots of noise and fun! They all did a super job.

U to Z P of the *Alphabet Reading* finished the *Alphabet Reading*. Sue Biese shared a closing prayer of angels. It was a very nice program under the direction of Sue Biese, Ila Mae Jens, Vi Brown Luebke, Jan Rohloff and Connie Rohloff and all the participants, with a great deal of preparation making this a wonderful celebration. Many thanks to all with a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy new year.

There will not be a January meeting of the Women's

Guild, but we will resume meeting on Wednesday, February 1, 2017, at 1:30 p.m. Ila Mae Jens will lead devotions and Roberta Lorenz will be our February hostess. Come, and join us!
God bless you all, Audrey Hooyman Blake, Guild secretary

Boy and Girl Scouts—Past and Present!



Wyatt Samson, son of Kerri and George Samson, will be receiving his God and Family Knot, during our Sunday, February 5th worship service! All past and present Boy and Girl Scouts are invited to wear any / all parts of your Scouts uniform (e.g. scarf, tie, bandanna, uniform, headgear, etc....). Come, and celebrate Wyatt's accomplishment! Congratulations Wyatt!

Church Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 13, 2016



The meeting was called to order by President Randy Miller, with Aron Rasmussen, Judy Samson, Gary Vander Linden, Lisa Waterstradt, Bob Menning, and Steve Hanson present. The meeting was opened with a prayer by Randy Miller. A motion was made, by Bob Menning and seconded by Aron Rasmussen, to accept both November Council meetings' minutes; motion passed.

Then, moved to discuss Rev. Thomas Fritz's profile, which he sent to us regarding our interim ministry position. After discussion, the council decided to look at setting up a date and time to meet with Rev. Fritz, about our opening. Randy will contact him, and then he will get back to us.

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A motion was made, by Bob Menning and seconded by Steven Hanson, to accept the November financial secretary's and treasurer's reports; motion passed.

We went through the 2017 budget. OCWM increased \$500.00 from 2016. We will be conducting reviews on jobs related to the church. A good way to share information from council to employees and back. Total budget is approximately \$16,000.00 less than 2016. A motion was made, by the budget committee and seconded by Aron Rasmussen, to put forward and accept the 2017 Budget; motion passed.

Lay Pastor's Report

- Conducted 5 Sunday services, Thanksgiving service, and one communion service.
- Conducted 2 hospital visits with Michael M.; E. Zuleger does not want visits at this time.
- Toured Salvation Army with youth group; and had numerous side meetings after church.
- Visited Good Shepherd with Sue B.; visited Judy S and Donna F. (Sue's mother).
- Received authorization from Pastor Jane to serve as a licensed minister; Rev. Greg Watling is my mentor. Contacted Pastor Greg Watling and will have first meeting in January.
- Attended worship committee meeting on December 5, 2016, and safe sanctuary committee meeting on December 6, 2016.
- Served communion to Jan and Larry R., at their residence.

The council discussed forwarding mail to Pastor Mark Schwinn. A motion was made, by Bob Menning and seconded by Aron Rasmussen, to send a letter to Pastor

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Mark Schwinn informing him that as of April 30, 2017, St. John's will no longer forward mail to him. Due to the fact he was using the church's address for personal mail, it will be his responsibility to contact all senders; motion passed.

Committee Reports

Membership: *Nothing new at this time.*

Christian Ed.: Met Thursday, December 8th. Christmas program change this year; it will be presented during Sunday morning service [December 18].

Worship: Met Wednesday, December 7th; will meet next in February of 2017 to discuss Easter matters. Making a few changes to service and doing feedback with Randy Miller in regards to these.

Music: All is well at this time. Busy at Christmas time.

House: Need to fix women's bathroom toilet. Parts are here. Working with Seymour Lumber regarding the patio door. Will check parsonage during cold weather.

Stewardship: Received a few responses related to letters that were sent out. Some past members are now giving again.

Campital Campaign: \$340.00 for month of November. We are close to yearly goal!

Old Business

- **Safe Sanctuary** meeting was held and covenant was discussed.
- **Old members returning** – still working on this.

- **Council search committee** – Connie Rohloff and Stephanie Julius (need at least 2 people and possibly 3).

New Business

- **January 1st Worship Service** will be a hymn sing service.
- **Communion Sunday** will be January 8, 2017.
- **Christmas Decorations** to be taken down, after church on January 8.
- **F.Y.I.** Christmas Eve will be our last services before the end of the year. Any contributions should be in by the 30th of December.
- **Annual meeting** set for January 29, 2017, after church. Reports are due no later than the 12th of January, for the Annual Report.
- **Gideons** – Seminary Sunday, February 26, 2017, considering a special offering.

Thanks and Prayers

- **Thank you** to everyone who helped with Christmas decorating.
- **Prayers** for Ethan and St. John Family
- **Prayers** for Eileen Zuleger

Next Council Meeting will be Tuesday, January 10, 2017, at 7:00 p.m.

A motion was made, by Aron Rasmussen and seconded by Lisa Waterstradt, to adjourn the meeting; motion passed.

Meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer.

President's View

Greetings to all of my friends in Christ our Lord!! I am saddened that this will be my last report to you as president of the church council. The last year has been a whirlwind of emotions and activities. I am so thankful for all of the hard work that has been done by the council. With their talent, experience, and dedication to serving the church, we have been able to continue serving our Lord in the manner that we have always been capable of. In addition, I truly am thankful for the hard work that our secretary, Kim, has put in along with the many talents that she displays in performing her duties.



We as a church are also blessed and grateful to have Pastor Tom Fritz accept our call to be our intentional interim pastor. Pastor Tom has done an exemplary job in conducting two funerals within the first two weeks that he has been here, along with his needing to be acquainted with the day-to-day operations of the church. We are truly blessed to have him here, at St. John's.

As a member of St. John's, I see a new spirit and a renewed energy that will help us go into the New Year being better able to accomplish what the true mission of St. John's is all about. With Pastor Tom's leadership and our strength and faith that we find in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, we can do great things. May God bless St. John's in the work that it does, and may we always be open to new ideas and adventures that will better serve those who need to have Jesus in their lives.

In His Service, Randy Miller

A Warm Welcome to The Reverend Doctor Thomas Fritz

As we get acquainted with Pastor Tom, and he with us, here is some helpful contact information for reaching out to him:

- Phone number is 920-268-5757.
- Email is styward@sbcglobal.net.

If you send Pastor an email, be sure to make it evident that you are

- from St. John's UCC, in Black Creek, in your subject line so he knows your email is not spam!
- Pastor intends to be in the church office Tuesday and Thursday mornings from about 9:00 to Noon and conduct visits in the afternoons.
- If you have a pastoral emergency, please feel free to call him on his cell, 920-268-5757.

Also, if you are hospitalized, it is important that you let the hospital staff know that you would like Pastor / church know, so that he is made aware of your need for a visit. If you know ahead of time (such as a scheduled surgery or other procedure) and would like him to be aware, please feel free to let him know.



1 John 4:11

“Beloved, since God loved us so much,
we also ought to love one another” (NRSV).