

*From Pastor Moira's Desk...*

My friends, thank you for your prayers, encouragement, support, and patience. As many of you know, I had a challenging end to 2020 and beginning of 2021. Sometime near my birthday I had an occlusion of a vein in my right eye, or in plain words a stroke in one of the small veins in my eye. I thought I had a sinus infection or allergies or something, but it kept not getting better. The week after Christmas I finally gave in and went to the urgent care which led to a trip to the emergency room which led to spending New Year's Eve Eve (the 30th) at two different eye specialists including having my eyes dilated twice in one day, something I do not recommend at all.

Let me be very clear ~ this was not caused by stress or by pastoring, but is likely a complication of among other things, the high blood pressure I have dealt with my entire life. In my mid-20s my doctor and I spent about six months finding the right medications and he said that I would probably have to do this again when I got closer to fifty. So here we are. I have started treatments for my eye with a specialist I very much trust in Green Bay. He says that one in three people have a tremendous return to their eyesight. I have decided to be that one. Already, after just one treatment, I estimate that the vision is about 20% better. The vision in my right eye is what I would call "fuzzy", but eyes and brains are amazing. My left eye is doing a wonderful job of compensating for the things my right eye can't quite focus on yet which is wonderful. I do notice that if I'm looking at the computer for a long time without a break my right eye seems to get tired, but that just means I need to take a break.

So I am back in the office, although I will still take the vacation time that I had planned this month and entrust you to the care of our licensed pastor, Randy Miller on Sunday January 17th. I thank you for your patience, particularly with things like this newsletter which is getting to you much later than I had planned and hoped.

I am deeply grateful for Randy's willingness to step in on very short notice and lead worship on January 3rd so I could rest, and for the support of our entire parish leadership, the Black Creek Council, Trinity Council, and Cecil Consistory. It has been scary, but knowing that your love, prayers, and support surround me has made a tremendous difference. I am grateful that, whatever we might have to face in this life and in the life of the world, we face it together. With all my love ...

*Peace and grace, Pastor Moira*

*Church Council "Preliminary" Meeting Minutes  
December 8, 2020*

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Menning with Pat Schomisch, Todd St. John, Gary VanderLinden, Dallas Waterstradt, Connie Wheeler and Pastor Moira Finley present.

The meeting was opened with a prayer from Pastor Moira Finley.

A motion was made by Dallas Waterstradt and seconded by Todd St. John to accept the minutes from last month. Motion passed.

A motion was made by Connie Wheeler and seconded by Todd St. John to accept the Financial Secretary's and Treasurer's reports. Motion passed.

**Pastors Report**

- ♥ Conducted Video and In Person Worship Services, confirmation class and 2 Funerals
- ♥ Prepared and delivered Advent at Home kits
- ♥ Helped in decorating the churches for Christmas

**Committee Reports**

**Membership:** Nothing new at this time. Directory for 2021.

**Christian Ed:** Christmas program will be a video of the children of the churches and will be shown during the service on December 20.

**Worship:** Nothing at this time.

**Music:** Nothing at this time.

**House:** The ignitor was paid for by a donation. Thank You to the donator!

**Stewardship:** Year of Giving; Collection for January will be diapers and hygiene products. Collection for February will be donations of money to the UCCI (Church Camps).

*minutes continue—>*

## Council Meeting Minutes continued

### Old Business:

The steeple work is being done but the weather plays a role on the days they can work on it.

### New Business:

- ♥ We went over the budget for 2021 and there was a motion made by Connie Wheeler and seconded by Pat Schomisch to accept the budget.
- ♥ The boiler pump went out and needed to be replaced.
- ♥ We discussed and approved Christmas bonus gifts for 2020.

### Prayers and Thank You's:

- ♥ Prayers for Sheila Neff and the Kruzicki family (Audrey's brother in law passed away)
- ♥ A BIG Thank You to all the teaching staff in our schools.

A motion was made by Todd St. John and seconded by Connie Wheeler to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed.

Next Council Meeting will be January 12, 2021 at 6:30 pm.

## January 6, 2021 ~ A Pastoral Word

Friends, Epiphany blessings to you. Today is a day when we, as followers of Jesus, remember the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus, bearing gifts, and then refusing to go back to King Herod and, as the scriptures say, "returned to their home country by another route". It is a day that reminds us of how fragile the miracle of Jesus' birth can sometimes be. The next thing that happens in the scriptures is that, angered at the Magi's disappearance, Herod orders the slaughter of all the boys under the age of two. The joyous coming of the Prince of Peace to share the abundance of God's love is met with fear and violence by the powers of this world.

Today we have also all seen something happen in Washington, D.C. that has stunned, scared, and overwhelmed us. As the Constitution requires, a joint session of Congress met to certify the results of the Electoral College's votes about the presidential election. There were, as encouraged by the First Amendment, protestors outside the Capitol building on several sides ~ those who were in support of approving the Electoral College's vote for Mr Biden, and those who were against it, supporting Mr Trump. As Congress was meeting, the protests turned violent.

*continues —>*

Armed terrorists stormed the U.S. Capitol building, breaking windows, breaking into congressional offices, and causing chaos. There are also reports that the terrorists threw things such as flash grenades and tear gas. At this moment, law enforcement has confirmed that one person inside the Capitol building was killed. At this moment (almost 5:30pm, Central time), police from several jurisdictions along with the support of the National Guard are attempting to clear the scene to enforce a district-wide curfew issued by the Washington, D.C. mayor.

Friends, I have chosen the word "terrorist" above very carefully. I don't use it lightly, ever, but terrorism is an act designed to scare, intimidate, and otherwise silence others. The actions taken today were intended to do just this. People within the Capitol building ~ elected officials with whom you may or may not agree, and their staffers who are just people like us ~ were immediately targets of this terror. Others, truly all of us, were targeted by this terror. The people who did this intended to destroy the democratic process. What started as a protest or rally, a hallmark of democracy, turned into something very different, something designed to threaten all of us, and the functioning of our government. They intended to say that if we do not get what we want politically we can simply take it by force. That is not the way democracies function, even if we have tremendous disagreements. That is the work of terrorist states, dictatorships, and other controlling forms of government. We often talk of terrorists coming from overseas, but it can and does also come from within. We have a lot of work to do to figure out how we got to what happened today, but calling it by its true name, acknowledging that this was and is terrorism, is a start. Let us not paint over it with nicer words and maybe in doing so we can face up to the sins that divide us and the challenges ahead of us.

In addition, when you see some of the videos or still photos of events today, you will see some of the terrorists (both outside and inside the breached Capitol building) waving flags saying Jesus and claiming their actions are in keeping with the practice of Jesus. Let me be clear - that is entirely false. Yes, Jesus overturned the tables in the temple in Jerusalem, but that is an extraordinary moment in a life otherwise filled with the quest for peace in our hearts, our lives, and our communities. Over and over again, Jesus spoke of the need to be peace, to work for peace, and that those who live by the sword will die by it. I cannot imagine any way in which the Jesus we try to follow would endorse what happened today.

My friends, what happened today is mired in deep and complicated questions about who we have been, who we are, and who we truly want to be. Please know I am here with you and for you. Let's talk. Let's cry. Let's scream if we need to. Let's renew our commitment to one another as Jesus' community, people who try and fail and try again every day to do what he asked us to do.

My prayer for all of us, for our hearts and souls, for our country and for the world is that we might find a way forward.

Peace and grace, Pastor Moira

## Scripture Readings

### January 3, 2021

Second Sunday of Christmas

Jeremiah 31.7-14

Psalm 147

Ephesians 1.3-14

John 1.1-18

### January 10, 2021

Baptism of Jesus & Epiphany

Genesis 1.1-5

Psalm 29

Acts 19.1-7

Mark 1.1-11

### January 17, 2021

1 Samuel 3.1-20

Psalm 139

1 Corinthians 6.12-20

John 1.43-51

### January 24, 2021

Jonah 3.1-10

Psalm 63

1 Corinthians 7.29-31

Mark 1.14-20

### January 31, 2021

Deuteronomy 18.15-20

Psalm 111

1 Corinthians 8.1-13

Mark 1.21-28

## January Birthdays

*We give thanks, Gracious God, for those you have brought into our lives and we celebrate their birthdays with joy and thanksgiving.*

2nd	...	Laurene Ferge Tiffany Biese
3rd	...	Vicki Helser Steven Pingel
4th	...	Gregory Volkman Roman Halvorson
7th	...	Nikki Berndt
10th	...	Karsyn Berndt Ali Holz
11th	...	Kelcie Hooyman
12th	...	Duane Pingel
14th	...	Aron Rasmussen
16th	...	Helen Hanson
17th	...	Ruth Hanson
24th	...	Arabella Marcks
27th	...	Cody Halvorson
28th	...	Samantha Holz

*If your special day is incorrect, or is not listed, please let Pastor Moira know.*

## Women's Guild NEWS

Because of continuing concerns about covid and no pressing business, the Women's Guild will not meet in February. *Our next meeting will be Wednesday March 3rd at 1:30pm.* If you have questions, please be in touch with Guild President Roberta Lorenz

## St. John's United Church of Christ Financial Secretary's Report November 2020

	11/01/2020	11/08/2020	11/15/2020	11/29/2020		Direct Deposit	Total
<b>Checking deposit</b>	3002.00	2848.00	3210.50	14925.50		300.00	24286.00
<b>General Fund</b>	2189.00	2242.00	2470.50	3840.50		150.00	10892.00
<b>Building Fund</b>	83.00	201.00	150.00	1085.00		150.00	1669.00
<b>OGHS*</b>							
<b>NIN*</b>		40.00					40.00
<b>STC*</b>							
<b>Christmas Fund</b>							
<b>Fuel Fund</b>		120.00	30.00				150.00
<b>Total Member Contributions</b>	2272.00	2603.00	2650.50	4925.50		300.00	
<b>Other Income</b>							
Turkey Fund	730.00	245.00	560.00				1535.00
Endowment for AV upgrade from Mike Minschmidt memorial gift				10000.00			10000.00
<b>Total Other</b>	730.00	245.00	560.00	10000.00			
<b>Total Checking Deposit</b>	3002.00	2848.00	3210.50	14925.50			
*OGHS = One Great Hour of Sharing NIN = Neighbors In Need STC = Strengthen The Church				NOTE: In-person worship was cancelled October 11 through October 25th due to rising covid-19 rates			

# St. John's United Church of Christ Treasurer's Report

## November 2020

<b>Building Fund</b>	Deposits	\$11,669.00
	Interest	\$8.49
	Disbursements	\$11,000.00
<b>Memorial Fund</b>	Deposits	\$0.00
	Disbursements	\$0.00
<b>Organ Fund</b>	Deposits	\$0.00
	Disbursements	\$0.00
<b>General Fund</b>	Deposits	\$12,617.00
	Disbursements	(\$9,414.11)

Feel free to continue sending your contributions by mail if you are more comfortable doing so. You can mail them to:

**St. John's UCC**  
**PO Box 264**  
**Black Creek, WI 54106**

If you have questions, please be in touch with our financial secretary, Gary VanderLinden

<b>Totals</b>	Beginning Balance	\$221,081.98
	Deposits	\$24,286.00
	Interest	\$8.49
	Disbursements	(\$20,414.11)
	Ending Balance	\$224,962.36

<b>General Fund</b>	\$14,050.17
<b>Building Fund</b>	\$19,836.72
<b>Memorial Fund</b>	\$23,121.47**
<b>Organ Fund</b>	\$4,997.00
<b>Parsonage Fund</b>	<u>\$162,957.00</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$224,962.36</b>

<b>YTD Membership Giving</b>	<b>\$88,493.75</b>
<b>YTD Expenses</b>	(\$88,703.55)
<b>Net Amount*</b>	<b>(\$209.80)</b>

\* excludes contributions and disbursements for special offerings

\*\*of which \$15,060 is designated for building projects

## *Reader & Greeter Schedule*

We will be resuming the reader and greeter schedule in July. Greeters will NOT hand out bulletins, or shake hands, but will point out the location of bulletins, sanitizer, and offering plates, and generally help make people feel welcome. They will also help in serving communion on first Sundays of the month. If you have questions or concerns, or if you're not quite ready for this, we understand. PLEASE talk with Connie Wheeler or Pastor Moira.

### Sunday January 3, 2021 ~ Communion

Reader	Sue Biese
Greeters	Sue Biese Joe Biese

### Sunday February 7, 2021 ~ Communion

Reader	Randy Miller
Greeters	Steve Schomisch Pat Schomisch

### Sunday January 10, 2021

Reader	Vi Brown-Luebke
Greeters	Vi Brown-Luebke Darwin Ethington

### Sunday February 14, 2021

Reader	Jan Rohloff
Greeters	Jan Rohloff Trevor Rohloff

### Sunday January 17, 2021

Reader	Connie Wheeler
Greeters	Connie Wheeler Marian Goodwin

### Sunday February 21, 2021

Reader	Robin Schmidt
Greeters	Robin Schmidt Carol Schmidt

### Sunday January 24, 2021 ~ Annual Meeting

Reader	Roberta Lorenz
Greeters	Roberta Lorenz Kimberly Marcks

### Sunday February 28, 2021

Reader	Tanner St. John
Greeters	Tanner St. John Todd St. John

### Sunday January 31, 2021

Reader	Bob Menning
Greeters	Bob Menning Carla Menning

### Sunday March 7, 2021 ~ Communion

Reader	Connie Wheeler
Greeters	Connie Wheeler Cailey Wheeler

## **Year of Giving ~ Diapers & Hygiene**

Looking towards the new year we will be collecting diapers, baby wipes, shampoo, body wash, soap, deodorant, menstrual products, and other hygiene items for the Black Creek Salvation Army, the Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry, and Harbor House Shelter in Appleton. You can bring items to the tables at the front of the sanctuary. If it's hard for you to get out and purchase items, you can also make a monetary donation, or talk to Pastor Moira about other ways to contribute.

# January 2021

How to reach Pastor Moira: phone 715-851-3080  
email [pastormoira73@gmail.com](mailto:pastormoira73@gmail.com)

Sunday Schedule: 8:45 am Trinity Worship

9am Sunday School/Bible Study & 10:15 am Black Creek Worship

7:00 pm Cecil Worship

## Pastor's Office Hours

Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 10am - 5pm

Please call/text to make sure  
or to make an appointment.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Key to locations:</b> BC = St. John's U.C.C. Black Creek T = Trinity U.C.C. outside Nichols C = St. John's U.C.C. Cecil ALC = Ascension Lutheran Church Navarino					1	2
3	4	5	6 Epiphany	7	8	9
10 C Consistory after worship	11	12 9am ALC Food pantry board  6:39pm BC Council	13	14 5:30pm T Council	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Pastor Moira vacation</div>	
17 Randy Miller preaches at all three churches	18	19	20 5-7pm ALC Food Pantry	21 9am C Closet work day	22	23 9-11am ALC Food Pantry
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">Pastor Moira vacation; Randy Miller available for emergencies</div>						
24 Black Creek Annual Meeting	25	26 Noon-3pm C Closet	27 4:30pm BC Confirmation	28	29	30
31 Cecil Annual Meeting	<i>February 1</i>	<i>February 2</i> 9am ALC Food Pantry Board	<i>February 3</i>	<i>February 4</i>	<i>February 5</i>	<i>February 6</i>  <i>TOMORROW</i> <i>Trinity Annual</i> <i>Meeting</i>

January  
2021

"The purpose of this congregation is to be a faith community promoting the kingdom of God through worship, teaching, and action ... get ready!"

**St. John's United Church of Christ**  
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**Wisconsin Conference UCC**  
[www.wiucc.org](http://www.wiucc.org)

**United Church of Christ**  
[www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)



### Continuing worship changes because of covid-19

As we continue with in-person worship, we have made changes to our time together for our collective health and safety. Please talk with Pastor Moira if you have questions:

- ♥ **MASKS/FACE COVERINGS ARE REQUIRED (per the Governor's order)**
- ♥ we can sing quietly and with masks on
- ♥ social distancing (6' apart from folks you haven't been with during the pandemic)
- ♥ interior doors will remain open whenever possible;
- ♥ hand sanitizer available at every entrance to each of our sanctuaries;
- ♥ no passing of the peace or fellowship time;
- ♥ communion will be changed to limit physical contact;
- ♥ the offering will be collected in plates at each door rather than passing the plates;
- ♥ contact tracing (attendance) records will be taken;
- ♥ other changes might come as we respond to this ever changing virus pandemic.

Our online worship and print worship delivery continues as well. Let's all be gentle, kind, and compassionate with ourselves and one another as we live through these days.