

From Pastor Moira's Desk... Gratitude

I'm starting to wonder if there's a time machine in my house somewhere because the days just seem to be flying past. Somehow it's already November of 2021. That means Advent, the season of preparing for the miracle of Jesus' birth, starts at the end of the month. Then we'll have the Christmas program, and Christmas Eve, and then the year will turn, and then it will be Valentine's Day, and then Lent will start on March 2nd, and then Easter will be here on April 17th and then....

You get the idea. It all just seems to rush together, one day rolling right into the next, sometimes all the days smushing together into one big Hallo-Thanks-Christm-Valent-Easter-Mess.

But hidden in the holiday rush between Halloween and Deer Hunting Season is something that might just provide us with the antidote we need to the relentless holiday hoopla. That would be Thanksgiving.

The cultural history of Thanksgiving is complicated, nothing as simple as the stories we learned in grade school about Pilgrims and Indians. There's a lot of work we need to do, individually and as a country, to understand what really happened when Europeans came to these lands, to address the ways native people were forced from their lands and traditions under the cover of religion and civilization. And the holiday has gotten caught up in eating more than is really good for us, and for many getting ready to spend too much money at Black Friday sales. There's also, of course, for many football to be watched and deer to be hunted, and maybe in all that the gratitude and actual thanks-giving part of the holiday be in danger of being lost.

Giving thanks, being grateful for the blessings in our lives, isn't something that, as disciples of Jesus, we are supposed to leave to one Thursday in November. It's supposed to be how we live our lives each and every day.

Some days the gratitude just pours out of us—when we're with our friends and family, when we welcome a new life into the world, when we celebrate love, when someone we love has a new accomplishment or achievement, when there's word of healing and health after a struggle. And, some days, of course, the gratitude is a little hard to find. It's still there, but it's under the grief, the struggle, the pain, the worry, the fear, and all those other things that happen in our lives. But even on those days we can be grateful for a friend who was there when we thought we were entirely alone; a beautiful sunrise reminding us of a new day ahead; a hot cup of tea and a bed to lie down in to allow our bodies to rest; a

cardinal at the feeder reminding us of someone we love who has walked on. And if nothing else, on the hardest of days, we can be grateful that they're over, that we don't have to live through that particular day again.

Yes, 2021 has been a wild ride full of all kinds of challenges personally, for our families, for our parish, for our communities, and for the world, and I know many people who are tempted to try and just draw a line under it, write off the year, leave it on the waste heap of the past (like some tried to do with the challenges of 2020). But I believe the year can still be redeemed, that there's good yet to find in these closing days of the year.

If you're reading this on November 1st, that means there are sixty-one days left in the calendar year. What if we all tried, as best we can, to find one thing to be grateful for in these days? If every member of our parish did that—one gratitude a day for the rest of the year—then on New Year's Eve we would have collected more than 18,000 gratitudes, more than enough to overwhelm the challenges that the past months have presented us with.

They can be big gratitudes like a new baby, a new job, healing and health returning; or they can be the small gratitudes of daily living. They don't have to be big. As I said in worship recently, not spilling my breakfast sandwich down my shirt on the way to church on Sunday is something I'm often grateful for. It can be getting the dishes washed, or remembering to bring back in the garbage bins after they've been emptied, or managing to wear matching shoes every day during the week.

But imagine it, 18,000 things we are thankful and grateful for. If we represented them with leaves on a tree, or pumpkins in a patch, or feathers on a turkey they would all be full beyond our imagining. And that's because when we stop to look, and we train our hearts and minds to see, then the gratitude is all around us, the things we have to be thankful for just keep coming, and coming. It turns out, when you start to look, you become better at seeing the gratitude. You learn to find it, even in the midst of the hard days, even on the days that seem like they're nothing but struggle.

My prayer for these closing days is that we might all cultivate, grow that attitude of gratitude in our hearts, and our minds, and our spirits that in all things, whatever the circumstances of our lives, we might give thanks for the many blessings of our lives, that we might live in gratitude and thanksgiving with our every breath, and that we might share that spirit with all the world through our words and our actions.

In peace, grace, and THANKS, Pastor Moira

Church Council "Preliminary" Meeting Minutes
October 12, 2021

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 Virtual and in Person Worship Services
- Conducted 1 funeral and 1 wedding
- Rally Sunday, Confirmation Class, Fall Feast, and meetings

Committee Reports

Membership: nothing at this time

Christian Ed: The teachers will be using the Deep Blue program, candy bar sales are going well, and the Christmas program will be Sunday, December 19th at 10:15 am.

Worship/Music: Looking at November 7 or 16 for the meeting dates.

House: We are waiting for the elevator inspection certificate.

Stewardship: For the month of November we will be collecting for the Turkey Fundraiser for the Salvation Army.

Old Business:

- The discussion continues for two new council members needed by the January congregational meeting.

New Business:

- The Fall Feast profit was \$2092.34
- The Choir TV will cost about \$1400 and will be coming from the music memorial fund.

Prayers and Thank You's:

Taycie Schmidt, Kelcie Hooyman, Ruth (Elizabeth Tesch manager), Kim (Connie's friend), John (Connie's coworker) and Lisa St. John.

A motion was made by Pat Schomisch and seconded by Gary VanderLinden to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed.

Next Council Meeting will be Tuesday, November 9, 2021 at 6:00 pm (meeting with the other 2 church councils at 6:30 pm)

The meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Minutes of the Special Congregational Meeting Sunday October 24, 2021

President Bob Menning called the meeting to order following worship.

There were 41 members present which established a quorum for the meeting.

Item 1—repair of the large south window in the sanctuary

- Staige Stained & Leaded Glass Restoration LLC, authorizing a total of \$35,000.
- Motion brought to the meeting by the Council.
- Second by Carla Menning.
- There was some discussion.
- The vote was taken and passed by voice

Item 2—Investment of the remaining parsonage sale funds

- Investment of the remaining balance of the parsonage sale (\$119,250) to the existing St. John's UCC Endowment Fund
- The church is authorized to draw from the principle investment amount as needed.
- The Endowment Fund is authorized to use interest generated from this principle amount.
- Motion brought to the meeting by the Council.
- Second by Robin Schmidt.
- There was some discussion.
- The vote was taken and passed by voice.

Motion to adjourn by Robin Schmidt. Second by Randy Miller. Motion passed by voice.

Minutes recorded by Pat Schomisch

Women's Guild Minutes

The Women's Guild met on Wednesday October 6, 2021 at 1:30pm with eight members present.

Our devotional leader was Sally Dickinson with a special message about sunflowers. They are very unique and of such beauty. Their beautiful heads turn to the sun. They can be seen around homes and in big fields of golden luster. They can be seen around Cecil. They represent a religious symbol of happiness, longevity and God's love and loyalty. People are like flowers of beauty and togetherness. She had many beautiful decorations of sunflowers and closed with a prayer.

The offering was taken.

The business meeting was called to order by President Roberta Lorenz. The Secretary and Treasurer's reports were read and approved with \$11,947.29 in the general fund and \$497.98 in the memorial fund.

Pastor Moira gave a very great report on the Fall Feast. Very well planned with some pies that were sold. Sold 250 meals. Many thanks to all.

Many thanks to Pastor Moira and others for selling 15 boxes of candy bars.

After some discussion, a motion was made to give \$300 to those going to the work camp. Motion carried.

The All Church Christmas Party will be discussed more at our November meeting.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer in unison. We sang the Doxology and were served a delicious German apple cake by Sally Dickinson.

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday November 3rd, 2021 as a cleaning day. God bless all and many thanks to all.

Audrey Hooyman-Blake, Guild Secretary

Scripture Readings

Sunday November 7, 2021

All Saints Sunday

Psalm 146

Hebrews 11.1-16

Sunday November 14, 2021

Psalm 93

Mark 12.38-44

Sunday November 21, 2021

Reign of Christ Sunday &

Thanksgiving Sunday

Revelation 1.4b-8

John 18.33-37

Sunday November 28, 2021

First Sunday of Advent

Thinking About John the Baptist

Isaiah 35.1-10

Luke 1.57-80

All Church Christmas Party Thursday December 2nd

All the details aren't quite set yet, but mark your calendars to join your church family & friends for a party with good food, skits, carols, and more.

Youth Group Turkey Fundraiser

Help us raise \$1500 to purchase turkeys for the Salvation Army Thanksgiving meal!

All the turkeys stay local, helping families in our area enjoy the abundance of a Thanksgiving feast.

We have fabulous items for auction which can be seen in the Gathering Room at church and at our online auction site:

<http://charityauction.big/sjuccturkeyfundraiser>

You can bid in person or online. To bid online, visit the site then click "Auction" to view the items, register to bid and make your offer.

In person bids will be updated every Sunday afternoon.

Bidding in both forms closes at 10am on Sunday November 21st.

Monetary donations are also more than welcome. Look for the Turkey Fund envelopes or simply send a check to church with "Turkey Fund" in the memo line.

Questions?

Talk with Sue Biese or Pastor Moira

Parish Celebrations

*If your special day is incorrect,
please let Pastor Moira know.*

November Birthdays

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

1st ...	Michael Flaherty
2nd ...	Tim Rihm
5th ...	Bev Kruse
6th ...	Duane Henke Connie Wheeler
7th ...	Randy Miller
8th ...	Keith Kruse Abbie Flaherty Samantha Scott
9th ...	Debbie Boettcher
11th ...	Marcus Flaherty Seija Neff
19th ...	Paul Henning
20th ...	Audrey Hooyman-Blake
22nd ...	Adam Rihm
28th ...	Jaiden Wheeler
30th ...	Joe Biese

November Anniversaries

*We give thanks for those whose love we
celebrate as they remember their vows
in the covenant of marriage.*

November 7th

Pat & Steve Schomisch

Stained Glass Window Repair Funds

At the special congregational meeting on Sunday October 24th we approved the removal, repair, and restoration of the large south window in the sanctuary. Soon the window will be removed and taken to the Staige workshop over the winter for cleaning, re-leading and more.

In addition to existing memorial funds, we are asking for your help with funds for the project (\$34,000).

We have a generous anonymous donor who will match gifts given to this project up to \$5000. Look for the special giving envelopes at church, or send contributions to church clearly marked "WINDOW FUND" in the memo line.

Questions?

Talk with Pastor Moira
or Gary Vander Linden

Reader & Greeter Schedule

If you are not able to make it on your assigned day, please let Connie Wheeler & Pastor Moira know. Greeters also help serve communion.

Sunday November 7, 2021 ~ Communion

All Saints Sunday

Reader Bob Menning
Greeters Bob & Carla Menning
Mike & Connie Rohloff

Sunday November 14, 2021

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

Sunday November 21, 2021

Reader Randy Miller
Greeters Sally Dickinson
Mike Dickinson

Sunday November 28, 2021

Reader Jim Rucci
Greeters Jim Rucci
Randy Miller

Sunday December 5, 2021 ~ Communion

Reader Sue Biese
Greeters Sue & Joe Biese
Ryan & Stephanie Julius

Sunday December 12, 2021

Reader Jan Rohloff
Greeters Jan Rohloff
Trevor Rohloff

Sunday December 19, 2021

Program Sunday

Reader Connie Wheeler
Greeters Connie Wheeler
Hollie Wheeler

Friday December 24, 2021 ~ Christmas Eve

Worship at 7pm with Communion

Reader Bob Menning
Greeters Bob & Carla Menning
Connie Wheeler
Cailey Wheeler

Sunday December 26, 2021

Reader Robin Schmidt
Greeters Gary & Bonnie Vander Linden

As we look towards a new year, would you consider joining our readers & greeters rotation?

Pastor Moira provides the readings in advance so you have lots of time to practice. There are usually two readings each week and Pastor Moira also provides some help with pronouncing all those special words & names in the scriptures.

Greeters welcome folks to church, make sure they know where bulletins & other information are located and help serve communion on the first Sunday of the month & special days.

**Talk with Pastor Moira
or Connie Wheeler
to join us, or for more information.**

St. John's United Church of Christ Financial Secretary's Report SEPTEMBER 2021

	9/12/2021	9/19/2021	9/26/2021			Direct Deposit	Total
Checking deposit	6649.98	1468.00	2250.64			300.00	10668.62
Member Giving Towards Budget							
	9/12/2021	9/19/2021	9/26/2021			Direct Deposit	Total
General Fund	4538.50	1223.00	2135.00			300.00	8196.50
Fue Fund	250.00						250.00
Total Member Contributions	4788.50	1223.00	2135.00			300.00	8446.50
Other Income (in & out funds and income for designated purposes)							
	9/12/2021	9/19/2021	9/26/2021			Direct Deposit	Total
Building Fund	35.00	5.00	100.00				140.00
Hurricane Relief	180.00	170.00					350.00
Endowment Fund	5.00						5.00
Women's Guild credit card reimbursement	1047.48		15.64				1063.12
Team Rubicon Refugees	130.00	70.00					200.00
Don Gregorious Memorials	464.00						464.00
Total Other Income	1861.48	245.00	115.64				2222.12
Total Checking Deposit	6649.98	1468.00	2250.64				10668.62

St. John's United Church of Christ Treasurer's Report ~ SEPTEMBER 2021

Building Fund	Deposits	\$140.00
	Interest	\$1.33
	Disbursements	(\$4,929.45)
Memorial Fund	Deposits	\$464.00
	Disbursements	\$0.00
Organ Fund	Deposits	\$0.00
	Disbursements	(\$625.00)
General Fund	Deposits	\$10,064.62
	Disbursements	(\$8,521.94)
Parsonage Proceeds	Deposits	\$0.00
	Disbursements	\$0.00
Boiler/Furnace Fund	Deposits	\$0.00
	Disbursements	\$0.00

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 or Treasurer Dallas Waterstradt

Totals	Beginning Balance	\$197,033.80
	Deposits	\$10,668.62
	Interest	\$1.33
	Disbursements	(\$14,076.39)
	Ending Balance	\$193,627.36

General Fund	\$17,665.11
Building Fund	\$17,544.78
Memorial Fund	\$13,505.47**
Organ Fund	\$4,455.00
Boiler/Furnace Fund	\$3,700.00
Parsonage Fund	<u>\$136,757.00</u>
TOTAL	\$193,627.36

** of which \$4,580 is designated for building projects

* excludes contributes and disbursements for special offerings

YTD Membership Giving*	\$71,305.75
YTD Expenses*	(\$72,939.36)
Net Amount*	(\$1636.61)

November 2021

How to reach Pastor Moira: phone 715-851-3080
email pastormoira73@gmail.com

Pastor's Office Hours
Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays
Please call/text to make sure

Sunday Schedule: Trinity ~ 8:45am Worship
Black Creek ~ 9:00am Education Hour & 10:15 am Worship
Cecil ~ 7:00pm Worship

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Cecil soup cooking, 9am	2 Cecil Fall Soup Sale 11am until we run out	3 1:30pm BC Women's Guild 6:30pm BC Choir	4	5	6 Daylight savings time ends tomorrow ... set clocks BACK one hour before bed
7 All Saints Sunday BC Worship & Music committee after worship	8	9 9am ALC Pantry Board 2pm T New Hope Circle 6pm BC Council 6:30pm BC Three Church Leadership dinner	10 6:30pm BC Choir	11 3:30pm C Cemetery Committee (at Doug Hoppe's) 6:30pm BC Budget Committee	12	13
					<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Key to locations: BC = St. John's Black Creek T = Trinity C = St. John's Cecil ALC = Ascension Lutheran Church Navarino </div>	
14 11:30am BC Confirmation	15	16	17 5-7pm ALC Pantry 6:30pm BC Choir	18 9am C Closet work day	19	20 9-11am ALC Pantry
21 BC Youth Turkey Auction ends	22	23 Noon-3pm C Closet BC Decorate sanctuary for Adent	24	25 Happy Thanksgiving	26	27
28 First Sunday of Advent	29	30	<i>December 1</i> 6:30pm BC Choir	<i>December 2</i> BC All Church Christmas Party	<i>December 3</i>	<i>December 4</i> Tomorrow... Second Sunday of Advent Worship at Good Shepherd

November
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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Black Creek, Wisconsin 54106

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Office email stjcreek@gmail.com
Website www.stjucbc.com
Facebook: St. John's UCC Black Creek
YouTube: search for Moira Finley

Pastor Moira Finley
Phone 715-851-3080
Email pastormoira73@gmail.com

Wisconsin Conference UCC
www.wiucc.org

United Church of Christ
www.ucc.org



Covid-19 Procedures for Worship & Gatherings

- ♥ **Face Coverings** ~ masks or face shields are requested (for everyone over age 5) who is not fully vaccinated;
- ♥ **Distancing** ~ keep social distance as best as possible;
- ♥ **Offering** - there are plates at the sanctuary doors;
- ♥ **Respect** ~ respect others in our community by wearing a face covering and keeping distance when talking with folks you don't live with

Mandatory 10 Digit Dialing

Due to changes implemented by the Federal Communications Commission, ten digit dialing (area code + phone number) becomes mandatory on October 24th, but they are encouraging you to start getting used to the change now. It's also important to check that anything you have that auto dials like medical monitors, alarm systems, and internet connections are converted to ten digit dialing. Long distance calls from land line phones continue to be 1 + area code + phone number and emergency services continue as before.