

From Pastor Moira's Desk...

It's January again. The wall calendars have twelve new pictures and the days stretch out before us in relatively uncluttered peace. Sure, we've got some things scheduled, and we know some of what's ahead (April will bring taxes and Easter; May will bring baseball; and July will bring my sabbatical), but for the most part what is ahead of us is the stuff of dreams and imagination.

I love that, in the church, we begin the new year still in the season of Christmas (the twelve days made famous by the song begin on Christmas and end on Epiphany ~ January 6th). We are still in the newness and awe of a baby born in Bethlehem, God daring to come into the world as one of us, in need of us, of human care and nurture. We begin the year still surrounded by the decorations and singing the traditional carols, easing our way into whatever lies ahead in those future days, weeks, and months.

It's tempting to try and fill up the calendar, to make plans, to "know" what this fresh new year will bring. But planning is tricky. I'm both very good at planning, and very bad at it. That has, I'm sure, something to do with the fact that very little of what I plan in a given day or week actually unfolds as I dreamed it might. Near the end of his life, Dutch priest and mystic Henri Nouwen wrote, *"My whole life I have been complaining that my work was constantly interrupted, until I discovered the interruptions were my work."*

I'm wondering what 2023 might be like for us if we tried to find a way embrace the interruptions, to both plan, and not plan, to have dreams and ideas about how this year will go, and to live in the glorious uncertainty of where God will lead us with all the surprises (good, challenging, and run of the mill) that might come our way; to trust in the promise of Emmanuel, that whatever tomorrow holds, God is right beside us giving us all we need to face it, together. And through it all, may we remember that we are in this together, that we are Jesus' hands, feet, heart, and soul in the world, learning and living together how best to follow in his footsteps that God's kingdom might come in its fullness.

In peace and grace, Pastor Moira

THANK YOU! For all your generosity, encouragement, prayers, gifts, cards, and love for my birthday and during the Christmas season.

I am so incredibly blessed and honored to be your pastor and I look forward to all that 2023 will bring us together! ♥ ♥

Readers & Greeters Schedule

If you are unable to make your date, please talk with Pastor Moira & Connie Wheeler.

On communion Sunday, greeters help serve communion.

Sunday January 8, 2023

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

Sunday January 15, 2023

Reader Jan Rohloff
Greeters Jan Rohloff
Mark Hooyman

Sunday January 22, 2023 ~ Annual Meeting

Reader Roberta Lorenz
Greeters Steve & Lindsay Seefeldt

Sunday January 29, 2023

Reader Audrey Blake
Greeters Gene & Audrey Blake

Sunday February 5, 2023 ~ Communion

Reader Connie Wheeler
Greeters Connie Wheeler
Cailey Wheeler
Steve & Pat Schomisch

Parish Celebrations

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

January Birthdays

2nd ...	Laurene Ferge Tiffany Biese
3rd ...	Vicki Helser Steven Pingel Rylen Wernet
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
24th ...	Arabella Marcks
27th ...	Cody Halvorson
28th ...	Samantha Holz

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 Black Creek
Council Meeting Minutes ~ December 13, 2022**

The meeting was called to order by President Pat Schomisch.

Present were: Pat Schomisch, Lizzie Tesch, Trevor Rohloff, Todd St. John, and Pastor Moira;
Absent were: Connie Wheeler & Dallas Waterstradt

The meeting was opened with prayer from Pastor Moira

A motion was made by Todd and seconded by Lizzie to approve the minutes from the last meeting (October 11, 2022); motion passed

A motion was made by Todd and seconded by Trevor to accept the financial secretary and treasurer's reports; motion passed.

Pastor Moira presented her report

- six funerals since 10/22/2022
- three church leadership dinner on 11/8/2022 was delicious & fun
- youth group turkey fundraiser totaled \$1,745
- will be gone from Monday 1/16 to Friday 1/20 to New Mexico, but available by phone

Committee Reports

Christian Education

- Connie Wheeler is coordinating gift bags for the children at Christmas
- Next meeting Tuesday February 21, 2023 at 6:30pm

Worship & Music

- Continue searching for a permanent musician
- Allison Schultz from Cecil will play for Christmas Eve – motion to pay her \$100 by Todd, second by Trevor, motion passed
- Next meeting Sunday February 5, 2023 after worship

Building & Grounds

- Working on the plastering project & new filters for the sanctuary humidifiers
- Sanctuary stained glass project continues and should be finished by mid-January

Stewardship

- December – Christmas fund (UCC offering) & adopt a family
- January ~ menstrual products & hygiene

Cemetery

Nothing to report

Endowment

Transfer of \$10,000 to garden project accomplished

Women's Guild

- All church Christmas party and potluck 12/1
- February 1, 2023 ~ Let's Talk About Death with Joel Walters from Muehl-Boettcher about the gift of preplanning

Garden Project

Greenhouse took some structural damage; will be repaired in the spring

SCRIP

Off to a very good start; will order more often if needed as long as we cover shipping costs

Old Business

- Window – in progress; finished mid-January
- Plastering ~ no updates on a start date
- New Committees ~ continuing
- Sump pump backup ~ done
- Sabbatical ~ continuing

New Business

- Resignation of Dallas Waterstradt as treasurer – accepted
- Christmas gifts for the staff ~ Trevor will coordinate with Dallas
- 2023 Budget ~ reviewed and a motion from Todd, second by Trevor to accept, motion passed
- Annual Meeting ~ January 23, 2023 after worship – discussion of new council members & Pat will talk with them

Thanks & Prayers

Motion to adjourn by Todd, second by Lizzie, motion passed.

The meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting ~ Tuesday January 10, 2023 at 6:30pm

Respectfully submitted, Pastor Moira Finley

Sabbatical Corner...

Now that we've entered the new year, Pastor Moira's sabbatical, that extended time for renewal and continuing education, is getting closer. This time is a gift from our community to Pastor Moira so that she might reconnect to herself, and to God, to nourish her soul and spirit so that she can prevent burnout.

The dates for Pastor's sabbatical are:

June 25 – July 31, 2023 (six weeks)

December 31, 2023 – January 24, 2024 (four weeks)

What will happen for worship?

Pastor Moira and our parish leadership (Cecil Consistory, Black Creek Council & Trinity Council) are working on the schedule for worship leadership while she will be away. **We will be drawing on some of Pastor's resources as well as people in the area who do pulpit supply for other UCC churches.** We will have details for you in the coming months.

What about if I have an emergency or need a pastor?

We're working on that too. The plan is to identify a few people in each of our parish churches who would be willing to take calls from folks in need of prayer and support. These folks wouldn't necessarily provide the care, but would know who might be able to make a phone call, stop by to visit, or provide other support. These would be for things like "planned" surgeries, "routine" illnesses, and "minor" emergencies. All those things are in quotes because it will all depend on the circumstances. Our volunteers will be given some advice and training from Pastor Moira about how to handle these things, what can be done by our own parishioners (you all already visit and care for and pray for each other after surgery and during illness so this won't really be much different). **Our parish volunteers will also know how to reach local area clergy who would be willing to provide other kinds of care that might need a pastor.**

Please consider if you'd be willing to be one of our parish volunteers.

We probably need **2-3 people at each church, and you don't have to commit to being available the entire time (we know, some of it is summer).**

If you're interested, or need more information, please talk with Pastor Moira.

Will I be able to call, text, or send messages to Pastor while she's on sabbatical?

Yes, and no. Yes, of course you will. Please continue to share what's going on in your life, your joys and concerns, **BUT please don't expect responses (or quick ones).** This is a time for Pastor Moira to be away, to step away from the demands of the phone (and email) and maybe even turn it off, to renew herself so she can continue to enjoy being our pastor for years to come. And because it's who she is, she'll still be on social media so you'll know what she's up to.

St. John's United Church of Christ Financial Secretary's Report ~ OCTOBER 2022

	10/02/2022	10/09/2022	10/16/2022	10/23/2022	10/30/2022	Direct Deposit	Total
Checking deposit	1,684.00	1,512.50	1,700.00	1,824.00	1,977.00	300.00	8,997.50

Member Giving Towards Budget

	10/02/2022	10/09/2022	10/16/2022	10/23/2022	10/30/2022	Direct Deposit	Total
General Fund	1,548.00	1,452.50	1,678.50	1,748.00	1,322.00	300.00	8,049.00
Total Member Contributions	1,548.00	1,452.50	1,678.50	1,748.00	1,322.00	300.00	8,049.00

Other Income (in & out funds and income for designated purposes)

	10/02/2022	10/09/2022	10/16/2022	10/23/2022	10/30/2022	Direct Deposit	Total
Building Fund	25.00	10.00	1.50				36.50
Neighbors in Need					60.00		60.00
Endowment	5.00						5.00
Plastering Project	76.00						76.00
Community Garden	30.00						30.00
Turkey Fundraiser		50.00	20.00		535.00		605.00
Hurricane Relief					50.00		50.00
Good Shepherd Bus Fund				76.00	10.00		86.00
Total Other Income	136.00	60.00	21.50	76.00	655.00		948.50

Total Checking Deposit	1,684.00	1,512.50	1,700.00	1,824.00	1,977.00	300.00	8,997.50
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St. John's United Church of Christ Financial Secretary's Report ~ NOVEMBER 2022

	11/6/2022	11/13/2022	11/20/2022	11/27/2022		Direct Deposit	Total
Checking deposit	1,675.00	3,264.00	921.00	1,285.00		300.00	7,445.00

Member Giving Towards Budget

	11/6/2022	11/13/2022	11/20/2022	11/27/2022		Direct Deposit	Total
General Fund	1,395.00	2,499.00	713.00	994.00		300.00	5,901.00
Fuel Fund	15.00	130.00					145.00
Total Member Contributions	1,410.00	2,629.00	713.00	994.00		300.00	6,046.00

Other Income (in & out funds and income for designated purposes)

	11/6/2022	11/13/2022	11/20/2022	11/27/2022		Direct Deposit	Total
Building Fund	35.00	20.00	53.00				108.00
Endowment	10.00						10.00
Turkey Fundraiser	170.00	615.00	155.00	200.00			1,140.00
Good Shepherd Bus Fund	50.00						50.00
Christmas Treats				15.00			15.00
Plastering Project				76.00			76.00
Total Other Income	265.00	635.00	208.00	291.00			1399.00

Total Checking Deposit	1,675.00	3,264.00	921.00	1,285.00		300.00	7,445.00
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St. John's United Church of Christ Treasurer's Report ~ NOVEMBER 2022

Building Fund	Beginning Balance	\$19,938.77
	Deposits	\$108.00
	<u>Disbursements</u>	\$0.00
	Ending Balance	\$20,046.77
Memorial Fund	Beginning Balance	\$10,205.47
	Deposits	\$0.00
	<u>Disbursements</u>	\$0.00
	Ending Balance	\$10,205.47
Organ Fund	Beginning Balance	\$4,455.00
	Deposits	\$0.00
	<u>Disbursements</u>	\$0.00
	Ending Balance	\$4,455.00
General Fund	Beginning Balance	\$28,861.53
	Interest	\$0.67
	Deposits	\$7,261.00
	<u>Disbursements</u>	(\$8,958.98)
	Ending Balance	\$27,164.22
Boiler/Furnace Fund	Beginning Balance	\$1,800.00
	Deposits	\$0.00
	<u>Disbursements</u>	\$0.00
	Ending Balance	\$1,800.00
Stained Glass Fund	Beginning Balance	\$35,000.00
	Deposits	\$0.00
	<u>Disbursements</u>	\$0.00
	Ending Balance	\$35,000.00
Plastering Fund	Beginning Balance	\$7,556.00
	Deposits	\$76.00
	<u>Disbursements</u>	\$0.00
	Ending Balance	\$7,632.00
Gardening Project**	Beginning Balance	\$45.00
	Deposits	\$0.00
	<u>Disbursements</u>	\$0.00
	Ending Balance	\$45.00

**We appreciate your continuing
to send contributions by mail
as you are able:
St. John's UCC
PO Box 264
Black Creek, WI 54106
If you have questions,
please be in touch with
Lizzie Tesch or Dallas Waterstradt**

YTD Membership Giving	\$95,250.05
YTD Expenses	(\$91,095.52)
Net Amount*	\$4,154.53
* excludes contributions and disbursements for special offerings	

FUND TOTALS	
Beginning Balance	\$107,861.77
Deposits	\$7,445.00
Interest	\$0.67
<u>Disbursements</u>	(\$8,958.98)
Ending Balance	\$106,348.46

** A transfer of \$10,000 was made from the endowment (as approved by the congregational meeting from the sale of the parsonage); that will be reflected on the year-end statement

SCRIP CORNER

THANK YOU! You've been most generous as we started our SCRIP program, the easiest way you can support our church, buying gas, grocery, restaurant, and other gift cards and return a percentage of the full face value to the church.



Our order dates are:

January 1st (for pickup on January 8th)

February 5th (for pickup on February 12th)

*If you are interested in putting in an order at another time, **please talk to Pastor or Brandi ... we are more than willing as long as we cover the shipping costs.***

There is a SCRIP order station in the gathering room where you can find all kinds of information including the LONG list of participating retailers across the country and the percentage back that the church will receive for your purchases.

You'll also find order forms, and a basket where you can place your orders at any time (they'll be picked up & secured until the first Sunday of the month).

"All I know is that my life is better when I assume
that people are doing their best.

It keeps me out of judgment and lets me focus on what is,
and not what should or could be."

Brené Brown

Women's Guild News

The Guild does not meet in January so our next meeting will be Tuesday February 1st at 6:30pm. We are having a guest speaker, Joel Walters from Muehl-Boettcher Funeral Home, who will help us think about how we can make plans and express our wishes as a gift for our loved ones. This will be open to the community & refreshments will be served.

After that we will gather on Wednesday March 1st at 1:30pm for a more traditional meeting. Everyone is welcome to join us at all our gatherings & meetings.

January 2023

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

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

Sunday Schedule: Trinity ~ 8:45am Worship
Black Creek ~ 9am Christian Ed for all ages & 10:15 am Worship
Cecil ~ 4pm (beginning September 11th)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Communion SCRIP orders NO Cecil worship	2 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;">Key to locations: BC = St. John's Black Creek T = Trinity C = St. John's Cecil ALC = Ascension Lutheran</div>	3	4 6:30pm BC Choir	5	6	7
8	9	10 6:30pm BC Council	11 6:30pm BC Choir	12	13	14
15 11:30am BC Confirmation	16	17	18 4-6pm ALC Pantry 6:30pm BC Choir	19 9am C Closet work day	20	21 9-11am ALC Pantry
Pastor Moira Away ~ If you have an emergency please call						
22 BC Annual Meeting	23	24 12-3pm C Closet	25 6:30pm BC Choir	26	27	28
29 C Annual Meeting 11:30am BC Confirmation	30	31	February 1 6:30pm BC Women's Guild ~ Let's Talk About Death	February 2	February 3	February 4 <i>Tomorrow...</i> • Communion • SCRIP • T Annual Meeting • BC Worship & Music

Scripture Readings

Sunday January 1, 2023

Communion

Psalm 148

Sermon ~ Resolutions

Sunday January 8, 2023

Isaiah 42.1-9

Matthew 3.13-17

Sermon ~ Baptized

Sunday January 15, 2023

Psalm 40

John 1.29-42

Sermon ~ Following

Sunday January 22, 2023

Congregational Meeting

Psalm 27

Matthew 4.12-23

Sermon ~ Still Following

Sunday January 29, 2023

Psalm 15

Matthew 5.1-12

Sermon ~ Blessings

News From The Church Garden... The Garden of Eatin



There's snow on the garden ground (and everywhere), but we're dreaming of spring.

Now that stores are clearing out the Christmas decorations, those spaces will soon be filled with seeds, and hose reels, and so much more. We've had someone generously offer to donate the seeds for our garden (two kinds of beans, two kinds of tomatoes, and strawberries at the least).

The garden beds should be arriving sometime in January and will need assembling, as will the work benches, and the benches (both of which have been given in memory of loved ones by members of the church).

Stay tuned for assembly days, and if you know a good fencing contractor, please talk to Pastor Moira as we will need to work to keep the critters out. And be thinking about your availability to help water, weed, and tend our garden this coming summer!

Questions? Talk to Pastor Moira

January
2023

"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



Congregational Annual Meeting
Sunday January 22, 2023
after worship

If you have a report to submit for the Annual Meeting book, please get them to Pastor Moira as soon as possible after the end of the year.

If at all possible (given how bank statements work), reports are due by **Sunday January 8th.**

Annual report books will be sent out by email (as a PDF) and will be available in print form in the sanctuary by Sunday January 15th.

If you wish to receive one by postal mail, please be in touch with Pastor Moira to request one.

US Mass Shootings

643

January 1, 2022
to
December 29,
2022

*According to the
Gun Violence
Archive*