

From Pastor Moira's Desk...

It's February. Yesterday they pulled the innocent groundhog out of his den over in Pennsylvania and the poor creature saw his shadow which means there are six more weeks of winter. Of course, with below zero temperatures today and even colder wind chills, we already knew that here in Wisconsin. Yes, it's going to warm up next week (quite a lot actually), but we all know better than to put away the heavy coats and boots just yet.

But at the same time we are through the darkest of the winter nights. The sun is now setting after 5pm (only by a few minutes, but still that counts), and it won't set before 5pm again until November. The seeds are in the stores, and this month spring training for baseball will begin. There's still time to enjoy some winter and outdoor adventures, but we're also at the place where we can look forward to spring and summer.

This is an interesting in-between place to stand, where we can feel both seasons at the same time, and in the life of the church when we're between Christmas and Lent. These weeks of Epiphany are an in-between place too. The miracle of Emmanuel is still fresh in our hearts and minds, the wonder of Bethlehem and Christmas, of the incarnation, God becoming fully human, to know our lives and live with us. And, we can see Lent on the horizon, those weeks of waiting and praying, thinking and wondering about all that led to Jesus' arrest, trials, death, and resurrection and what it means for us this particular year.

And then there's all we're dealing with as a country. We're all overwhelmed by the news (and video if you watched it) of the death of Tyre Nichols at the hands of police officers in Memphis, and we keep his family in our prayers as their personal grief has become so very public. And we keep the entire community of Memphis, and of every place in the world, in our hearts as we work together to figure out how such tragedies happen, where does such violence come from in our personal and shared history, and how we can prevent them from happening again.

Plus, it's only February and we've already had more than 50 mass shootings. These shootings are in cities, and small towns and cross all kinds of social, ethnic, and other lines. It's like an infection running deep through our society.

Something is terribly wrong and we've got to find ways to work together to figure out what to do. It's not just a guns problem, though that is definitely part of it. There are issues of community support, social networks for physical and mental health, how we handle our anger, and so much more. Governments will only be able to do so much, so let's talk, as Jesus' disciples, about how we might do our part, in our communities, to help them be safer places for all people.

And in news of the world, the war in Ukraine slogs on, nearing the one year mark. It's been two years since the coup in Myanmar, much of Africa is suffering under a terrible famine, parts of Australia and New Zealand are dealing with record flooding, and for everyone everywhere there are rising prices, stretched budgets and tempers, and so much more.

Take a breath. Seriously, right now. Take a breath as deeply as you can, in and out, and feel the Spirit moving through you.

Yes, the news is challenging. Living in these days is full of all kinds of struggles, but there is also goodness and grace abounding. All three of our parish churches finished the year financially stable even in these challenging times. More than that, we continue to gather to worship, support each other, pray with and for one another, laugh and cry, work and play together, and truly work towards being a place of abundant welcome for all God's children.

We are places of hope where we trust in a greater truth than anything the news can tell us ~ that God is always with us. We are places of grace where we work together, across all our different understandings and ideas about the world, for a common calling ~ the abundance of God's kingdom. We are places of kindness, compassion, mercy, and peace where we can all be who we are, fully feeling our feelings, honest about our joys and struggles, knowing that we are loved beyond anything we can imagine.

May we find, in these in-between days in the church and in the life of the world, ways to be together as Jesus' disciples, to trust in the goodness of God's grace, and to know that together, with God and one another, we can meet whatever lies ahead.

In peace and grace, Pastor Moira

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 February 5, 2023 ~ Communion

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

Sunday February 19, 2023

Reader Robin Schmidt
Greeters Robin Schmidt
Carol Schmidt

Sunday February 26, 2023

Reader Devin Schmidt
Greeters Brandon & Melissa Rohloff

Sunday March 5, 2023 ~ Communion

Reader Sue Biese
Greeters Mike & Connie Rohloff
Lisa Waterstradtd

Sunday March 12, 2023

Reader Connie Wheeler
Greeters Connie Wheeler
Cailey Wheeler

Sunday March 26, 2023

Reader Roberta Lorenz
Greeters Ryan & Stephanie Julius

Parish Celebrations

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

February Birthdays

1st	...	Leo Halvorson
2nd	...	Aubrey Stevens
3rd	...	Lindsay Seefeldt
6th	...	Maggie Seefeldt Hadley Seefeldt
9th	...	Jim Rucci Bonnie Vander Linden
11th	...	Crissy Zuleger
13th	...	Bradley Holz Trevor Rohloff Ryan Schomisch, Jr.
14th	...	Adam Holz
15th	...	Steven Felton
17th	...	Stephany Boettcher
25th	...	Sue Biese
26th	...	Nate Seefeldt
27th	...	Steve Seefeldt Keegan Hooyman Raphi Jochman

February Anniversaries

7th	...	Duane & Carol Henke
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Church Council Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2023

The meeting was called to order by President Pat Schomisch with Todd St. John, Lizzie Tesch, Connie Wheeler and Pastor Moira Finley present.

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

A motion was made by Todd St. John and seconded by Lizzie Tesch 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 in person and virtual Worship Services
- Attended church meetings, administrative meetings, and group meetings
- Coordinated Christmas program
- Worked with Dave and Bonnie with hiring a new musician

Committee Reports

Membership: Nothing at this time to report

Christian Ed: Connie Wheeler coordinated the Christmas gift bags for the children. Youth group will be going bowling on January 15th. The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 21 at 6:30 pm.

Music / Worship: Allison Schultz from Cecil played for the Christmas Eve service. Hired a new musician for services. Next meeting will be February 5 after service.

House/Building Grounds: Gary is looking into another company for the plaster repairs. Trevor cut the filters for the humidifiers. We are waiting on the installation of the upper half of the stained glass window. Kone came for the routine elevator inspection. Randerson Heating is coming to do the yearly service on the furnace.

Stewardship: The collection for January is menstrual products and hygiene, February will be for the Food Pantry, and March is for the One Great Hour of Sharing.

Cemetery: Nothing to report at this time.

Endowment: Nothing to report at this time.

Women's Guild: Muehl-Boettcher Funeral Home will be coming on February 8th at 6:00 pm to give information on "Let's Talk About Death" to talk about pre planning as a gift for your loved ones.

Garden Project: Pastor Moira will be ordering materials for beds and potting benches. A member has offered to donate the seeds. Thank You!

SCRIP: Nothing to report at this time.

Old Business:

- The window is in progress and should be finished by mid-January
- We are waiting to hear back from the company to start the plastering
- Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 22, 2023 after service

New Business:

- Nothing at this time

Prayers and Thank You's:

- Thank you to Connie Wheeler and Dallas Waterstradt for their time and service on the church council.
- Prayers for Lisa St. John and Roberta Lorenz

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

Next Council Meeting will be Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 6:30 pm.

The meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Wednesday Lenten Worship ~ Into The Wild

March 1st through March 29th

Using the work of the artist Henri Matisse (1869-1954) we'll be going "Into The Wild" to think about our life of faith at this particular moment, in the place where we find ourselves, with all that we are carrying. Join us as we reflect on all these things and our life of faith during this Lenten season.

5pm Soup & bread supper will be ready

6:15—6:45pm Worship & Prayer

Everything will be held downstairs in the Black Creek fellowship hall (accessible)

Additional copies of the devotional book will be available if you're not able to make it to Wednesday nights. Questions? Want to help? Talk with Pastor Moira

P.S. You can stay and join us for choir practice at 7pm too!

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?

We are very close to a firm plan for worship leadership. Pastor Moira serves as mentor to a Member In Discernment (MID), a student studying for ordained ministry in the UCC. We are working with him (Mark Schmitt) to confirm his preaching and leading worship for the **Sundays of Pastor's sabbatical at Trinity & Black Creek. At their annual meeting, the Cecil** folks decided not to have worship at Cecil during those weeks, but to use our video ministry and carpool to Trinity or Black Creek for worship, strengthening the ties that make our parish so strong. Stay tuned for more information about Mark in the coming months.

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

We are in need of a contact person (or two would be better) from each church in the parish, someone folks could contact if they are in need of pastoral care. These folks would have some training from Pastor Moira and would be able to handle routine needs and prayers. They would also be able to contact local clergy who are available to help with more complicated pastoral care needs.

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

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 ~ DECEMBER 2022

	12/4/2022	12/11/2022	12/18/2022	12/24/2022	12/29/2022	Direct Deposit	Total
Checking deposit	2,544.00	823.50	2,438.00	2,927.00	2,165.00	300.00	11,197.50

Member Giving Towards Budget

	12/4/2022	12/11/2022	12/18/2022	12/24/2022	12/29/2022	Direct Deposit	Total
General Fund	2,384.00	688.50	2,057.00	2,592.00	1,995.00	300.00	10,016.50
Fuel Fund				20.00			20.00
Total Member Contributions	2,384.00	688.50	2,057.00	2,612.00	1,995.00	300.00	10,036.50

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

	12/4/2022	12/11/2022	12/18/2022	12/24/2022	12/29/2022	Direct Deposit	Total
Building Fund	50.00	45.00	96.00		80.00		271.00
Christmas Fund		50.00	25.00	290.00			365.00
Endowment	30.00	30.00	5.00		55.00		120.00
Memorial Fund	50.00		100.00		35.00		185.00
Christmas Treats	30.00	10.00	30.00				70.00
Community Garden			125.00				125.00
Salvation Army				25.00			25.00
Total Other Income	160.00	135.00	381.00	315.00	170.00		1161.00

Total Checking Deposit	2,544.00	823.50	2,438.00	2,927.00	2,165.00	300.00	11,197.50
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St. John's United Church of Christ Treasurer's Report ~ DECEMBER 2022

Building Fund	Beginning Balance	\$20,046.77
	Deposits	\$271.00
	<u>Disbursements</u>	\$0.00
	Ending Balance	\$20,317.77
Memorial Fund	Beginning Balance	\$10,205.47
	Deposits	\$185.00
	<u>Disbursements</u>	\$0.00
	Ending Balance	\$10,390.47
Organ Fund	Beginning Balance	\$4,455.00
	Deposits	\$0.00
	<u>Disbursements</u>	\$0.00
	Ending Balance	\$4,455.00
General Fund	Beginning Balance	\$27,164.22
	Interest	\$0.70
	Deposits	\$10,616.50
	<u>Disbursements</u>	(\$1,838.62)
Ending Balance	\$39,620.04	
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	\$7,632.00
	Deposits	\$0.00
	<u>Disbursements</u>	\$0.00
	Ending Balance	\$7,632.00
Gardening Project**	Beginning Balance	\$45.00
	Deposits	\$10,125.00
	<u>Disbursements</u>	\$0.00
	Ending Balance	\$10,170.00

**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
a member of the Council**

YTD Membership Giving	\$105,286.55
YTD Expenses	(\$99,256.20)
Net Amount*	\$6,030.35

*** excludes contributions and
disbursements for special offerings**

FUND TOTALS	
Beginning Balance	\$106,348.46
Deposits	\$11,197.50
Interest	\$0.70
<u>Disbursements</u>	(\$8,161.38)
Ending Balance	\$119,385.28

** 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

SCRIP is one of 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:

February 5th (for pickup on February 12th)

March 5th (for pickup on March 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.

Woodman's SCRIP cards are now available.

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).

Women's Guild News

The February Guild meeting is the event on Wednesday February 8th with Joel Walters from Muehl-Boettcher Funeral Home in Seymour to talk about how we can make arrangements for our funeral wishes as a gift to our families & loved ones. The event begins at 6pm and light refreshments will be served.

The March Guild meeting is a more traditional meeting on Wednesday March 1st at 1:30pm with devotions by Karen Zuleger and hostess Audrey Hooyman-Blake.

February 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	2	3	4
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Wednesday Lenten Worship <i>all at Black Creek</i> 5pm ~ soup supper 6:15pm ~ worship (1/2 hour) 7pm ~ choir practice</p> </div>			6:30pm BC Choir		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Key to locations: BC = St. John's Black Creek T = Trinity C = St. John's Cecil ALC = Ascension Lutheran</p> </div>	
5 Communion SCRIP Order Trinity Annual Meeting BC Worship & Music	6	7 9am ALC Pantry Board	8 Let's Talk About Death 6pm at BC No Choir	9 5:30pm T Council	10	11
12 BC Kids Sing 11:30am BC Confirmation	13	14 <i>Valentine's Day</i> 2pm T New Hope Circle 6:30pm BC	15 4-6pm ALC Pantry 6:30pm BC Choir	16	17	18 9-11am ALC Pantry
19 BC Choir Sings	20 <i>President's Day</i>	21 6:30pm BC Christian Ed	22 Ash Wednesday Worship Trinity ~ 5pm BC ~ 7pm	23 9am C Closet work day	24	25
26 <i>First Sunday of Lent</i>	27	28 Noon-3pm C Closet	March 1 1:30pm BC Guild Wednesday Lenten Worship (see box at top)	March 2	March 3 <i>World Day Of Prayer</i>	March 4 Tomorrow... Communion SCRIP Order

Scripture Readings

Sunday February 5, 2023

Communion

Matthew 5.13-20

Sermon ~ Salt

Sunday February 12, 2023

Psalm 119.1-8

Matthew 5.21-26, 43-48

Sermon ~ Perfection

Sunday February 19, 2023

Transfiguration Sunday

Exodus 24.12-18

Matthew 17.1-9

Sermon ~ Shhh...it's a secret

Wednesday February 22, 2023

Ash Wednesday

Isaiah 58.1-12

Matthew 6.1-6, 16-18

Sermon ~ Fasting

Sunday February 26, 2023

First Sunday of Lent

Psalm 32

Matthew 4.1-11

Sermon ~ Starting Out Right

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



The seeds have been donated! We have tomato and bean seeds for our garden and we're getting close to time to start planting ... indoors at least.

There's a small seed starting greenhouse in the classroom by Pastor Moira's office (the one we use for Confirmation). That's where we'll start the tomato seeds soon, and the bean seeds in good time.

We have the waist-high garden beds for the tomatoes (they were on sale at Menard's), a hose reel, and the benches for sitting on to admire our garden. The low to the ground beds (which will be for the beans) and work benches will come soon and then we'll need to assemble everything, probably during late February & early March.

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.

Questions? Talk to Pastor Moira

February
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
101 South Clark Street (PO Box 264)
Black Creek, Wisconsin 54106

Church Phone 920-984-3845
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



Let's Talk About Death

Making plans for your funeral is an incredible gift you can give your loved ones. Join us for a conversation about what options are available and how to express your wishes.

Wednesday February 8th at 6pm
with Joel Walters

Muehl-Boettcher Funeral Home, Seymour
Light refreshments will be served

St. John's U.C.C. Black Creek
(corner of Clark & Burdick Streets)

Our facility is accessible, please use WEST entrance

**US Mass
Shootings**

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January 1, 2023
to
February 3, 2023

*According to the
Gun Violence
Archive*