

December 2018 Volume 32.12

St. John's United Church of Christ

St. John's United Church of Christ is a diverse community forming a united congregation, seeking to grow our faith, share it with others, and serve God's people wherever the need is present. We are living God's love and all are invited!!!

An Open and Affirming Congregation

503 Stuart Circle Richmond, Virginia 23220 **Telephone: 804.358.9291 Rev. Linda Higgins Pastor**

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Each year as we prepare for Advent we stop and think about what will help us to focus and celebrate this holy time of year. This year as I was doing research, I found out that this is the 200th year of Silent Night, Holy Night and that a beautiful set of worship materials had been written to celebrate this season based on it. After looking at with Shirley and at the Music and Worship meeting, we decided to go with it. This means we will be making some changes to the order of worship for the Advent/ Christmas season. Amongst the changes is that we will have stations for prayers and offering rather than how we do it now. I invite you to come to this worship time with a "beginners heart", open to finding how your heart can be opened in this holy season.

The symbol that is central to this worship is the star. We will be decorating the tree with Stars this year and **invite everyone to bring stars to put on the tree**. If you want it back as we take down the tree in January, please label the hanger with your name, so it gets back to you. We would not want any special items to not get returned.

We will have our traditional Christmas Tea on December 23rd following worship and our Christmas Eve Worship will be at 9pm on December 24th. I look forward to spending a meaningful and fun holy season with each of you. *Don't forget you are invited to an Open House, hosted by my family and I, on December 9th from 2 to 4 pm, located at 4321 Old Hundred Road South, Midlothian, Virginia, 23112. We hope to see you there!*

Peace,

The Rev. Linda Higgins



Church Council met for the monthly meeting on Monday, November 12, 2018.

The Parking lot sale closed. \$1,432,856.44 has been deposited into an interest bearing account at Suntrust. The Renovation Committee meetings are ongoing. They are proceeding with arrangements with Dunlop Engineering; will request an RFP and are working on making sure tax credits are obtained. They are receiving bids for an elevator motor upgrade and are focusing first on HVAC repair, replacement.

Finance – The committee met on November 11, 2018 and has questions for Sanya and Carol. Some accounts are not accurately reflected and all are working to straighten out.

The church has been using the gift from Helen Karnap to pay bills and expenses. Council will request the gift amount from Endowment when ready to determine best way to honor Helen's memory. Endowment is expected to honor June Sullen's memory as well.

Stewardship /Budget – Received 32 pledges for \$84,000 and are optimistic about receiving expected amount as outlined in the proposed budget. Roughly, there is a \$100,000 deficit and the committee expects Council to request funds from Endowment.

Committee Updates:

Mission and Outreach

Greenspring International Academy of Music is having concert on November 30 at 5:30 at St. John's. Health kits for Church World Service will be made Sunday, December 16 after church. Still need board member from St. John's for Circle Center.

Mission of the Month

- November: UCC Disaster Relief.
- December: Adopt families thru OAR to provide Christmas presents.

Facilities

See report. Concern about building use in the spring.



Worship and Music

They will request donations for poinsettias and any extra money will be donated to a charity. Greening of the Church is November 25 after church. Asking everyone in church to buy or make a star ornament to put on the tree. Advent service layout will be different.

Christian Education

Kids are reviewing worship practices

Congregational Life and Care

Reviewing rolls and will reach out to people who aren't coming regularly. The Christmas Tea will be December 23.

Motions:

- Minutes October 8 Minutes approved with correction. Removed PALs Concert from Calendar
- 2019 Proposed Budget approved and will be submitted to the Congregation with the recommendation that the budget by approved at the Congregational Meeting on December 2, 2018.
- Approved repayment of entire loan to Endowment: \$394,015 using proceeds from the parking lot sale.
- Approved request for use for Fellowship Hall by Canine Companions on Saturday, April 13 with stipulation that building may be under construction and they will be responsible for all cleanup including disinfection from animal waste.
- Approved Facilities Use Agreement Form.





Health Kit Sunday - December 16, 2018 After Worship

What's your morning routine? I turn on the light and roll out of bed bleary-eyed and prepare to face my two hungry cats! After I have my coffee I am ready to take on my day. For many this has not been how their day started. This year many people have been displaced by hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, and floods. Many people are missing the daily comforts offered by basic hygiene. Church World Service has supplied many of them with health kits. We are asking you to join us to help them restock. So when the next disaster occurs they can bring that caring feeling to people who have been displaced. We can

carry some light into their darkness! Mission & Outreach will supply all the necessities. We need your hands! Large & small hands are welcome!



From Our Church Council President

Peace to you and your family in the upcoming holiday season.

Thanksgiving has come and gone and Advent is here. The past 6 months have been full of activities including celebrating the 175th anniversary and culminating in the final closing on the sale of the parking lot. My head is spinning with everything we've accomplished since June.

The missions we have worked with have been varied and we continue to support our community by lending our facilities to organizations needing a place to meet who share our view of justice and have need. From Coming to the Table to The Poor People's Campaign and the concert for Greenspring International Academy of Music, who lost their facilities due to the fall hurricanes, we have a reputation in the community as a sharing and compassionate church willing to lend a hand.

2019 will be no less busy as we move to the restoration phase of the parking lot sale. We'll be contracting with a supplier to provide and install the much needed HAVC system which is the first of many projects we'll be undertaking.

We will continue our CARATAS support early in the year. Our Mission & Outreach committee will continue outreach in the community with The Circle Center, RISC and much, much more.

Please continue to keep the leadership in your prayers as we strive to hear GOD's voice and direction for our church in the months to come.

As we move into Advent, let us all remember this is the season of birth in our church year. Let this symbolic birth of the Prince of Peace bring peace to all of us, our families and our community.

Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Dreama



Call to Congregation Meeting December 2nd

In accordance with the St. John's By-laws, the Church Council calls you to attend a Congregational Meeting after church on Sunday, December 2nd, for the purpose of considering and voting on the proposed church budget for Calendar Year 2019. Copies of the proposed budget will be available for review.

Stewardship Update

As of November 28th, we had received 31 pledges for the works and ministries of St. John's in 2019, of which five were from first-time pledgers and 12 were from people who had increased their pledges over the current year amount. Thank you very much to everyone who has pledged. The amount pledged so far is just under \$83,500, compared to the proposed budget of \$100,000. If you have not yet pledged, you may put your pledge card in the Sunday collection plate, mail it to the church, or put it through the church office mail slot at any time. If you have pledged in previous years, but have not yet pledged for next year, you will be contacted by someone from the Finance Committee to make sure that you have received a pledge card. In the meantime, please contact Stewardship Chair Jeff Jacobs if you need another pledge card or if you have any questions about, or would like to discuss, any church finance or stewardship issues or concerns.

Renovation Task Force Report

With the sale of the parking lot on Halloween Day, the Church Trustees and other members of the Renovation Task Force (formerly known as the "Parking Lot Task Force") are now working with an engineering firm to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to replace the church's HVAC systems, and will also be looking to secure bids to upgrade the mechanism for the church elevator, the church rest rooms and the church electrical systems. Additional funds from the sale of the parking lot will be used to help expand St. John's mission and outreach activities, and explore ways to enhance church membership and participation. Please contact any of the Task Force members (Sarah Allen, Betsy Bighinatti, Richard Bighinatti, Jeff Hetzer, Jeff Jacobs, Rob Osborn, Dreama Terrill and Pastor Linda) if you would like to assist or provide input on these or other initiatives – all ideas are welcome! We will provide additional updates as developments proceed.



WORSHIP AND MUSIC MINISTRY

It's hard to believe that we will be doing the "Greening" of the church sanctuary this coming Sunday (November 25th). It seems like only yesterday we were wearing shorts and sandals and complaining of the heat and now we're donning wool coats and scarves and decorating for Advent and Christmas. We sincerely hope you will join us after worship this Sunday to help "green" our church sanctuary and make it come alive with seasonal symbols and spirit.

We are very excited about our Advent & Christmas worship services this year. We are using a new liturgy entitled, "Calm & Bright: 200 Years of Silent Night." The theme for each Sunday and Christmas Eve is based on a verse of the very familiar Christmas carol, "Silent Night." Worship will take on a new look and feel even as we light the traditional Advent candles and offer our prayers for Peace, Joy, Love and Hope. We will be introduced to new music and a new way of offering both our gifts and prayers. **As part of our Advent worship, we ask everyone to** <u>bring a star or make a star to hang</u> <u>on our tree on December 2nd, the first Sunday of Advent.</u>

As we did last year, we suggest that instead of purchasing a poinsettia for the sanctuary, you make a donation in memory or celebration of loved ones to benefit a mission of the church. That mission will be named on the form that you use to make your donation. As we did last year, we will publish the names of those you are honoring with your donation in the Christmas Eve bulletin. The forms will be available at the beginning of Advent.

This year our Christmas Eve service will be at 9:00 P. M. Parking and shuttle service will be provided as on Sunday mornings.

We hope that you will prayerfully consider giving our church a Christmas gift of your time and talent by signing up to host a Coffee Hour or be a liturgist this month and in the new year.

Wishing all a peaceful, joyful and blessed Advent and Christmas season.



December Adult Faith Formation

Join us at 9am Sunday mornings as we Look at how our faith can be enriched by science. Painting the Stars is a study that celebrates the communion of science and faith. This 7 session study is written by Bruce Sangeuin with

interviews from over a dozen evolutionary theologians and progressive thinkers.

December 2 December 9 December 16

Evolutionary Christianity Imagining the Future An Evolving Spirituality: Mysticism

<u>December Mission of the Month</u>



Making the holidays bright at OAR! St. John's is sponsoring several families for Christmas through OAR. OAR asks that we provide one warm outfit for each child, and one gift from their wish list. They are also asking for a small gift for the **OF RICHMOND** caregivers. The Christmas Tree in the Parlor has tags for each

person. For each tag, there is one for you to take and one to place in the basket. Please write your name on the tag going in the basket. All gifts must be returned, unwrapped, with the tag attached by Sunday, December 9. Please attach the tag you took from the tree so we can make sure the gifts go to the appropriate person. All gifts will be delivered to OAR on Monday, December 10. It would be helpful if we coordinate outfits for each child. If you can buy all the clothing for one child, take all three tags. If you can get one item, try to coordinate with others buying for the same child. If you want to donate but are not able to shop, please place money in the offering plate using the blue envelopes marked OAR, no later than Sunday, December 2nd. Please see Elisabeth Burnette if you have any questions.



This year your mission team has been pretty engaged. Several of us were able to visit some of the organizations that supported the were by congregation and the generosity of the Stille Grant. We visited with Circle Center, Side by Side,

Childsavers, Healthbrigade, and OAR. We served with Comfort Cases, The IRC, Feedmore and Blessing Warriors. We had representatives from Grace Inside, Side by Side and Canine Companions. We hope that you all learned something new about our community and the wonderful work being done by our neighbors. We are looking forward to serving in 2019 as well. Thanks for all your support,

Marcie Agee, Terri Weaver, Terri Pendleton, Elisabeth Burnette, Chris Hagan, Christine Wing, Dreama Terrill, David Agee



Please give on 12/23 and 12/30

In 2017, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled

- Small pension supplementation for 424 retired clergy, lay employees, and surviving spouses/partners, totaling \$1,513,602
- Health benefits supplementation for 210 retired clergy, lay employees, and surviving spouses/partners, totaling \$492,863
- Emergency grants for 384 servants of the church, totaling \$136,012
- Christmas "Thank You" gift checks to 477 retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses, totaling \$228,300

This year you can make a donation to our **Poinsettia Fund** in memory or celebration of loved ones. Our suggested donation is \$15. This year's donations go to benefit **The Richmond Fisher House**, that supports families of Veterans. The Fisher House provides lodging to families of veterans receiving treatment at the McGuire VA Hospital, at no cost. Having family members nearby provides significant benefits and advantages to patient treatment rehabilitation and recovery.

By providing cost-free living quarters for patient families, the Fisher House provides an immeasurable benefit to patient care, in addition to the care and well-being of our veterans' family members. Forms will be in the Sunday bulletin or in the Parlor area. Please have your poinsettia form in by Sunday, December 16th. Contact Johanna Gilbert at 804-405-6225 for information.



On Saturday, November 17th, the Central Atlantic Conference held a special meeting to affirm Rev. Freeman Palmer as our new Conference Minister. The meeting was held in three churches across the conference. The main location was **Evangelical Reformed United Church** of Christ in Frederick, MD and the action there was lived streamed to two satellite locations. Community Congregational Church in Short Hills,

NJ and St. Stephens United Church of Christ in Harrisonburg, VA. The moderator for the meeting was Rev. Brian Murray.

Rev. Palmer led the meeting attendees in worship. After the meeting was called to order and the quorum was declared, Jill White, chair of the Conference Minister Search Committee, gave an overview of the search process and invited several members of the Search Committee to share their perspectives. Jill then invited Rev. Palmer back into the pulpit to share some personal remarks. He spoke of his knowledge and respect for the Central Atlantic Conference, the importance of supporting the local churches, challenges faced by the wider church and his love for the UCC. After a question and answer period, he was excused, and the delegates voted unanimously to affirm Rev. Freeman Palmer as the Conference Minister for the Central Atlantic Conference.

After the vote, the delegates celebrated Rev. Palmer, who expressed his gratitude for being given the opportunity to serve as the conference minister. Rev. Chuck Rush, chair of the Central Atlantic Conference Board of Directors, asked for the search committee, the board members and all in attendance to lay hands on Rev. Palmer and gave a closing prayer.

Now that Rev. Palmer has been affirmed as the Conference Minister, he will assume the position on February 1, 2019. The Conference Board of Directors is grateful to Jill White and the Search Committee, the churches who hosted the meeting and all the delegates that gave of their time to participate in this very important meeting. We also want to express our gratitude to Rev. Roddy Dunkerson, who has served as our Interim Conference Minister since January of this year. His steady hand and heart for service has been a blessing for this conference. We are excited about the one that God has sent to lead our conference and are committed to working with him as we look to the future.



New Parking Plan ~ Sunday parking is available at the VCU deck located at Broad and Harrison Streets. You will receive a ticket to access parking. Shuttle service is available one hour before service to transport members and guests from the parking lot to church and at the church following service and coffee hour. At church you will be given a bar code to use as you exit the parking lot, so you do not pay for parking. Parking is also available on Sundays from 7 am to 2 pm on the island side of Monument Avenue. For more information, call the church office at (804) 358-9291.



St. Johns Church Shuttle

The vans will pick up at the parking structure at 534 N. Harrison Street and transport to the alley behind the church. Shuttle service from parking structure to church begins at 9:00 am and will run until 10:15 am.

After the church services are complete the shuttle will begin transporting the congregation from the alley behind the church back to the parking structure at 534 N. Harrison Street. **The return shuttle will begin at 11:30 am and run until 12:15.**

St. John's UCC

Validation



Expiration Date: 06/30/2019 11:59:59 PM

Validation Number: WB-603

Description: 100.00% off.

Steps to Using a QR Code:

- 1. When coming into the deck press the button on the machine to receive an entry ticket.
- 2. Obtain a copy of the QR Code while at the church.
- 3. When exiting the deck reinsert the entry ticket into the machine so it can calculate time spent and the associated fee.
- 4. Scan your QR Code on the scanner just left of the machine.













December Volunteer Ministries

Ministry	December 2 Team 2	December 9 Team 2	December 16 Team 3	December 23 Team 3	December 30 Team 4
Welcome Team Leader	Lynn Snyder	Lynn Snyder	Bill Watson	Bill Watson	Dorothy Cook
Sound System	Will Atkinson	Will Atkinson	Bruce Miller	Bruce Miller	Jeff Michel
Tellers	Rob Osborn Tony Sharpenstein	Rob Osborn Tony Sharpenstein	Jeff Jacobs Scott Siefert	Jeff Jacobs Scott Siefert	
Liturgist	Dreama Terrill	Chris Wing	Sarah Allen	Rev. Beverly Lindsey	
Facilities	Jeff Hetzer	Jeff Hetzer	Bill Watson	Bill Watson	Bud Higgins
Altar Guild	Erin Burnette Georgianne Stinnette	Lynda Merry	Johanna Gilbert Charlotte Quick	Helen Bunch	
Fellowship Hosts	Laura Totty	Betsy Bighinatti St. John's Players	Pam and Bruce Miller	Christmas Tea	
Altar Flowers	Poinsettias	Poinsettias	Poinsettias	Poinsettias	Poinsettias

Teller Coordinator: Bud Higgins 804-301-5059

Fellowship Host Coordinator: Rev. Beverly Lindsey 804-239-2871 Celebrating a special occasion? Honoring a loved one?



Please find a substitute if you are unable to perform your ministry and contact your Team Coordinator AND the office to let them know who will be filling in for you. Thank you for making our church ministries run smoothly!

December 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 9 am Adult Faith Formation 10 am Worship Call to Congregation Meeting	3	4	5	6	7	8 6 pm Holiday Cabaret and Buffet SOLD OUT
9 9 am Faith Formation 10 am Worship 2-4 pm Open House/Pastor Linda	10 6:30 pm Church Council Meeting	11	12 6:30 pm Mission & Outreach Mtg. Agee's Home	13	14	15
16 9 am Adult Faith Formation 10 am Worship Health Kit Sunday	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 9 am Adult Faith Formation 10 am Worship <i>Christmas Tea</i>	24 9 pm Christmas Eve Worship Service	Christmas	26	27	28	29
30 9 am Adult Faith Formation 10 am Worship	31					



- 2 Robert Wieckmann Ulysses Hall
- 3 Jeff Hetzer
- 6 Catherine Jacobs
- 7 Anita Sharpenstein
- 9 Chris Burnette Patricia Mutia Logan Vass

- 14 Eric Hetzer
- 22 Christine Krausse
- 29 Kyra and Lacy Miller
- 30 Melissa Mascher
- 31 Iola Miller

