

ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

January MESSENGER

JANUARY 2020

Volume 34.1

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

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**Rev. Linda Higgins
Pastor**

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Dear All,

Each year one of my advent gifts to you is to stop and pray for each of you as I write your Christmas cards. I pray for you each twice a month, praying for what is going on right now using a page of the membership list each day. But in advent I think of your year and what all has been going on throughout the year. This year I am struck by how much change each member of the congregation has experienced. I am also struck by how positive a lot of that change has been. We not only had weddings and births of family members, but we have had promotions and retirements in our church family as well. Some have new homes and others have new loves. I do hope you each take some time as we ring in the new decade to truly count your blessings, both those that are new and exciting and the ones you have come to take for granted.

I do of course recognize that some of you have also had to deal with some hard transitions as well. Losses of loved ones, losses of abilities yourself, unemployment, health challenges. For all these transitions know you continue to be in my prayers regularly. If there are things you would like me to pray for whether they are to be included on the prayer list or not, please let me know. I am happy to add them to my prayers.

Life changes whether chosen or not are always a time to look anew at our choices and our priority. Often as we are going through changes, we lose sight of some of the routines that help us: like regular prayer time, whether that looks like prayer or gardening or cooking or even cleaning. I know with the addition of Sandy and Logan in my life I have had to back up and re-plan for my time with God as I no longer live alone in the quiet of that life. And though I celebrate that change, it is change, so I must make time for God in my new life. For some of you who are now retired, in new homes, in new relationships or with new career expectations you too may need to re-plan your time with God.

These times of transition also invite us to re-imagine how we act on our faith in the world. Is this a time when your actions are more private like taking care of the planet with a more plant-based diet or taking care of one other person a foster child or elder? Or is this the time you feel called to work for justice and are ready to spend lots of time on canvassing or at the general assembly? How do you feel called in this time to act on your faith? How and where is God calling you as you enter 2020?

Prayers and Love as we enter 2020,

Pastor Linda

Linda Higgins

Announcements

Fellowship Lunch January 9th

This month we'll return to the Southside for our Fellowship Lunch on January 9th at 1 pm. Our destination is Joe's Inn Bon Air, located at 2616 Buford Road. Please RSVP to Jeff Jacobs at jwjacobs9@gmail.com or (202) 361-9887 to reserve your spot.

Celebration of Mission January 26th

Sunday, January 26th, our worship will include a celebration of our call to serve. During 2019, members of St. John's, under the direction of Marcie Agee and the Mission committee, donated their time, energy, and both monetary and nonmonetary contributions to a number of organizations serving those in need. Our efforts supported organizations that are local, national, and international. Dreama Terrill, Church Counsel President, will provide a year in review of our 2019 mission work and we will launch our 2020 mission initiative. We here at St. John's have truly been blessed by God to be a blessing to Her people.

January Read and Get Together February 9th

Let's read Jim Wallis new book *Christ in Crisis: Why We Need to Reclaim Jesus* and get to together on February 9th after church to discuss it for lunch in the guild room. Pastor Linda will bring some soup.

There is a podcast by the same name for those who listen easier than read.

Parking Update

During construction of the apartment building in the church's former parking lot, we have had free access to the VCU parking deck at Harrison and Broad Streets, with van shuttle service on Sundays between the parking deck and the church. Please let the church office know, at (804) 358-9291, if you are using this service and would like to have it continued in the new year.

Early Spring Cleaning

As renovations in the education wing of the church get underway this winter, we need to organize and clean out materials in the second floor classrooms. We will be announcing some work parties to get this job done, but if you are interested in helping out please contact Jeff Jacobs at jwjacobs9@gmail.com or (202) 361-9887.

Attention Church History Buffs

The Church History Room has an archive of materials tracing the history of the St. John's congregation over its 175-years in Richmond, of which nearly 100 years have been at its current location. If you are interested in helping organize these materials, please contact Pastor Linda.

Stewardship Update

Many thanks to all those who have returned their 2020 pledge cards. As we approach the beginning of the church's fiscal year we have received 43 pledges totaling \$87,400 toward our budgeted pledges of \$100,000. Pledging is annual; your pledge does not roll over automatically from year to year. We have electronic (credit card and EFT) giving options available, and can also receive donations of stock. Please contact Stewardship Chair Jeff Jacobs, or any member of Church Council, if you have any questions about church finances or the 2020 ministry plan, or if you need a pledge card.

St. John's UCC Monument Avenue 10K Team

St. John's is forming a Monument Avenue 10K Team. Register [here](#). Choose team **St. John's UCC** and select wave **XA Walk/Jog**. Register by January 15th to save money and spread the word to anyone you think would be interested!



Worship & Music

MINISTRY

Our Worship and Music Committee wishes to thank all who volunteered to participate in any or all aspects of worship during 2019. You greeted people and handed out bulletins and maybe bread for the visitors; you worked the sound system, you videoed the sermon for live-streaming; you set the communion table, you decorated the worship space, you sang in the choir, you read scripture, you collected the offering, and you hosted coffee hour. Your generosity in sharing your time and talent is a blessing from God. We hope that you will continue to volunteer your services next year.

And going into this new decade, we pray for new people to join the Worship and Music Committee. Our responsibilities include: evaluating the worship programs to ascertain if they are meeting the needs of the worshippers, working with the Pastor in developing worship services, evaluating the music programs, establishing a standard of quality for the church music, assisting in helping to plan special music programs/events. We are also responsible for enlisting people to participate in worship in many varied ways.

If you have ever experienced worship that truly touched your soul, awakened your mind or opened your heart, then we need you to share your experiences with us and tell us how the Spirit has moved you. Worship is a quintessential part of our life together in Christ. We need your ideas and input.

Please continue to sign up to host a Coffee Hour or be a liturgist. The sign-up sheets are on the easel in the Fellowship Hall. If you have any questions about either of those commitments, about joining the choir or the Worship and Music committee or participating in any of the other aspects of worship, **please call Rev. Beverly Lindsey at (804) 275-7165.**

Happy New Year!

Announcements



As part of RISC's research for this year's issue work, committee members have met with Heather Crislip (Executive Director of HOME), Ray Tarasovic (retired Richmond Police Chief), and Dan Carey (VA Secretary of Health & Human Services). There will be quite a few more meetings by the end of January, and the Issue Committees will be processing next steps forward with each of the issue campaigns at their next meetings. All interested network members are encouraged to attend the next round of Issue Committee meetings at the end of January:

Housing & Evictions Committee Meeting
Tuesday January 28th 6:30 – 8 pm
Location to be determined

Gun Violence Committee Meeting
Thursday January 30th 6:30 – 8 pm
Southminster Presbyterian Church
7500 Hull Street Road Richmond, VA 23235

I **Concert and Dinner in Support of
Richmonders for Peace in Israel-Palestine**
Sunday, January 12, 5:00 to 8:00 pm
at Natalie's Taste of Lebanon
3601 Cox Road, Suite A, Richmond, VA



Arrive at 5:00 pm and enjoy a delicious Lebanese dinner before settling down for an evening of folk music featuring Tom Neilson and Lynn Waldron. According to one reviewer *"Tom Neilson and Lynn Waldron have it all – medium and message: form and content ...they delight and give meaning, inspiration, and outrage as an antidote to these woeful times."*

Tickets are \$45 per person, which includes a delicious Lebanese dinner with appetizers, choice of entree, and dessert, as well as the concert. **Tickets must be purchased in advance. Click [here](#) to purchase your ticket(s) and select your dinner(s).**

Announcements

Faith & Democracy 2020

*An Initiative of the Central Atlantic Conference
Justice & Witness Action Network*



In November, the Central Atlantic Conference Justice & Witness Action Network endorsed a Faith and Democracy Initiative, identifying a list of priority issues for the upcoming Virginia General Assembly and deciding to partner with the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy on issues of common interest.

The Faith and Democracy Initiative focuses on what UCC churches can do to support a just and equitable society by encouraging all people to vote in the 2020 election and participate in the 2020 Census. We want to work in partnership with each other and with organizations that are already on the ground working these issues. Stay tuned for more information on training for and actions that can be taken by our church members to get out the vote and ensure that the 2020 Census counts all people.

In addition to the Census and voter participation, the following issues were identified as priorities for the 2020 legislative session: the ERA, gun safety/reform, immigrant justice, and paid sick days. Please reserve January 22 on your calendars to participate in the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy Day for all People in Richmond. More information will be coming in early January on our plans for that day. St. John's UCC has offered to be a gathering place before we head to talk with Virginia legislators on our priority topics.

Join VICPP at the General Assembly to advocate social justice.

[Day For All People 2020 Flyer \(download PDF\)](#)

Registration will begin at 7:30 am. We will have a light breakfast available and the program will begin promptly at 8:30 am.

We will review our priority issues and then everyone will meet with their State Senator at 10:00 am and Delegate around 10:45 am. Lunch will be served around 12:00 pm and people will have an opportunity to gather with others from their area.

[Register here.](#)

January

VOLUNTEER MINISTRIES

Ministry	Jan. 5 Team 3	Jan. 12 Team 4	Jan. 19 Team 4	Jan. 26 Team 1
Welcome Team Leader	Pam Miller	Helen Bunch	Helen Bunch	Richard Bighinatti
Sound System	Bruce Miller	Jeff Michel	Jeff Michel	David Pittman
Tellers	Terri Weaver Beverly Lindsey	Jeff Jacobs Scott Siefert	Jeff Jacobs Scott Siefert	Rob Osborn Tony Sharpenstein
Liturgist	Dahlia Burks	Jennifer Martin	Sandy Higgins	
Facilities	Bill Watson	Bud Higgins	Bud Higgins	Richard Bighinatti
Altar Guild	Erin Burnette Georgianne Stinnette	Lynda Merry	Johanna Gilbert Charlotte Quick	Helen Bunch
Fellowship Hosts	Scott Siefert	Betsy Bighinatti	Jeff Jacobs	Sandy Higgins

Teller Coordinator:
Bud Higgins
301-5059

Fellowship Host Coordinator:
Rev. Beverly Lindsey
(804) 275-7165

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!

January

CALENDAR

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Renovation Committee 6 pm	3	4
5 Mission Committee after worship	6	7	8 Pastor Linda's Birthday	9 Fellowship Lunch Joe's Inn Bon Air 1 pm	10	11
12	13 Church Council Meeting 6:30 pm	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 ANNUAL DAY FOR ALL PEOPLE 7:30 am—3 pm	23 Music and Worship Committee 1:30 pm	24	25
26 Celebration of Mission	27	28	29	30	31	



3 Rick Pearman
 3 Marcie Agee
 6 Freida Walsh
 8 Kathy Freise
 8 Pastor Linda Higgins
 9 Georgianne Stinnette

14 Hank Allen
 20 Fritz Will, IV
 23 Vicky Lyle
 25 Joachim Altenkirch
 25 Charlotte Quick
 26 Bruce Miller

If you would like to be added to the birthday list, please contact the church office.