
NOVEMBER 2020, VOLUME 33.11

The Messenger

St. John's United Church of Christ



From the desk of the Council President

“Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.” Philippians 4:14

It's hard to believe it's nearly Thanksgiving! This year has just flown by, hasn't it?

And the world has changed vastly from last Thanksgiving: the Pandemic with its current U.S. tally of 224,000 souls lost, and counting; collapse of our social order; massive unemployment; forced isolation; threats of nationwide evictions; governmental discord and distrust.

A Message from the Church Council President

However, from across the centuries Paul's voice calls out to us, for he, too, was very troubled. Writing from a Roman prison and facing his impending execution, he wrote to the church of Philippi of his joy for knowing them. "Not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you. For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need." (Philippians 4:15-16) Paul had traveled hundreds of miles, establishing churches in the backwaters of the then-burgeoning Roman Empire, knowing that at any time he could be crucified for being a heretic and revolutionary. Trusting in God and the promise Jesus had given, daily he relied on the kindness of strangers who responded to the Holy Spirit.

Finally, there he sat in prison, on our equivalent of "death row", knowing that at any time he could lose his life, and what did he do? Taking up his quill and parchment, he thanked the church in Philippi for supporting him and giving him help when he needed it. He thanked them for sharing his troubles.

It's really hard for me sometimes to share my troubles with people. "Everyone has troubles," I think. "Others are in worse shape than I am." It's the darned American independence streak most of us have, the one that says nobody wants to hear my troubles because they are going through more than I am and I need to fix this myself. I have to be reminded that's my being "stiff-necked" just as God called the Hebrews in Exodus.

This year, 2020, has been a year for sharing troubles. Even as the world around us is changing so rapidly that it makes our heads spin, we need to share our troubles, to help each other get over the fear, pain, and loss we have suffered, and to reassure each other that we are not alone.

As a congregation we have been like that plucky group in Philippi, sending aid out to help those in our community who are hurting. We are sticking together in our new digital worship space and expanding our congregation's reach into other states. Last year who would have thought we would have weekly worship with folks from New York, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Minnesota. We are continuing to stand together and lift each other up.

A Message from the Church Council President

In the face of the world today, St. John's has much to be thankful for. So as we enter into the season of harvest and Thanksgiving, let's remember to give thanks for where we are and for those who have shared our troubles this year.

"God, we thank you for sticking with us, walking with us, helping guide us, and for never abandoning us even when we feel alone and at our lowest." Amen

November Devotional

Therefore, What for?

Romans 12:1-2 NIV

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.”

This is, arguably, one of my favorite verses in the Bible. Like all Bible passages, it needs context. This one, however, demands context. Why? It’s a simple reason: the passage begins with “Therefore”. Where does “therefore” come from?

Romans 12 is the pivot point of the whole epistle. In the first 11 chapters, Paul spends much of the first part of Romans as an apologist for Jesus. He posits that Jesus’s life, deeds, and sacrifice are not only applicable to Israel, but to the rest of the world as well. Paul makes the argument that we should be like Jesus, understanding that we can never be separated from God’s love.

My history professor once told me that every essay, every research paper, needs to answer one question: So what? Arguably, Paul’s thesis is found in Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.” So what?

Romans 12 is Paul’s answer. After laying out who Jesus was, “Therefore” we are to be living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. A living sacrifice means that our lives should reflect the words and deeds of Jesus. We are to help the downtrodden, speak truth to power, show mercy, teach diligently, and love unequivocally. This is how we apply Jesus to our lives. We are to be our theology of love in action.

Daniel Martin

Congregational Life & Care

The Congregational Life Committee will meet after church on November 1st.

Any pastoral issues can be addressed by Rev. Beverly Lindsey. We thank her for her love and dedication to St. John's over the last 8 months.

If there are any members who would like to join us on the Congregational Life and Care Committee, we would love to have you. Please contact Betsy Bighinatti.

Guest Preachers:

November 2020

November 1st: Scott Siefert

Scott is a member of St John's United Church of Christ and a Member-in-Discernment in the Potomac Association. He recently relocated to St Paul, MN after living in the Richmond area for over 20 years. He is currently doing a pastoral internship at St Mark's United Church of Christ in Bloomington, MN. He earned a Masters of Divinity degree from Union Presbyterian Seminary and has a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Maine.

November 8th: Anthony Gaboton, Jr.

Anthony is a resident and intern at Richmond Hill. He has an extensive religious background from: being an altar boy in the Catholic Church; the director of urban outreach at Oral Roberts University; to being the youth minister at a Baptist church in Brooklyn, NY. The other work Anthony has been involved with include being a teacher, community organizer, chaplain and mobile therapist. He earned his Masters of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary of New York, under the tutelage of black liberation theologian James Cone and his Masters of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, GA with a focus on 'Christianity and Culture'. His role recently transitioned to marketing coordinator and he is currently in discernment for ordination.

November 15th: The Rev. Joel Passmore

Joel Passmore serves as Associate Pastor and Worship Director at Northside Church of Richmond. He has lived in Richmond most of his life and is a proud VCU alumnus. In June 2002 he and his wife Nikki were married in a beautiful wedding ceremony held in St. John's UCC. Joel worked as a chemical engineer for a decade and then answered God's persistent call to ministry. He and Nikki have two wonderful pre-teen daughters (your prayers are appreciated), and as an extrovert he enjoys time with people, especially making music and playing games.

November 22nd: Daniel Martin

Daniel Martin lives in Richmond, VA with his family. He is currently the Director of Digital Outreach for St. John's and serves on Church Council and the Interim Search Committee. He is from Cleveland, TN and has a degree from Lee University. In his free time, he enjoys card tricks, singing, and playing guitar.

November 29th: The Rev. Beverly Lindsey

"Rev. Bev" is a **retired** UCC pastor. She served the Congregational & Baptist Church of Chester, NH (UCC & ABC) for 20 years. While in NH, she enjoyed doing annual rites of Blessings of the Pets and Blessings of the Motorcycles. She earned a Bachelor of Music degree from Salem College, Winston-Salem, NC and a Masters of Divinity degree from Andover Newton Theological School. Prior to entering seminary, she had a 17-year career in banking with a specialty in consumer lending. She and her husband, Charlie and their cats, Sassy and Jill, moved to Richmond in 2014 to be close to family.

November Mission of the Month: Church World Service

CWS gets hygiene kits and emergency cleanup buckets to people in times of crisis. These items make a huge difference in the lives of refugees, displaced people and victims of natural disasters. Due to the continued threat of the COVID 19 pandemic, we will not be assembling kits and buckets this year. A monetary donation will ensure that those most in need during times of crisis are still getting the help they need. A hygiene kit or emergency cleanup bucket makes it possible to tackle basic issues like simple hygiene or cleaning up after a flood.

“And don’t forget to do good and to share with those in need.” Hebrews 13:16



HURRICANE SEASON 2020

THANK YOU!

ONE HYGIENE KIT
CAN MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE FOR A FAMILY.
JESUS TOUCHED EACH PERSON'S LIFE
ONE BY ONE, AND WE CAN DO THAT, TOO.

CWS

Virtual CROP Walk for Hunger

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2020

The Walk is virtual, but the need could not be more real!

You are *really* needed to raise money and awareness.

2020 marks the **50th anniversary** of the Richmond CROP Walk for hunger. A “CROP Walk Week” will begin on **Sunday November 8th, 2020** with an online kickoff event, and run through Sunday, November 15th. During that week, walkers can participate as individuals or do “micro walks” in teams of 4-5 people, masked and socially distanced. Walkers are encouraged to share their walks via social media platforms.

To register as a walker, sponsor a walker or to make a donation go to:

www.crophungerwalk.org/richmondva/StJohnsUCC

As part of our **50th Anniversary** observation, every walker is encouraged to raise at least \$50. As in prior years, donations to support walkers may be made online to Church World Service by using the above link or by mailing a check payable to “CWS/Crop” to the walker you are sponsoring.

The work of Church World Service and our local hunger agencies continues – and with the possibility of a global famine on the horizon, raising money for vulnerable people is more needed than ever. 25% of the money raised in the Richmond CROP Walk will be given to support the work of three local agencies: Shalom Farms, CARITAS and the Peter Paul Development Center.

We hope that you will join and/or support the St. John’s UCC team of walkers – virtually - as we continue our shared commitment to stand up for the poor, the forgotten, and those left behind. The CWS Spring CROP Hunger Walks were down nearly \$1 million this year. It is urgent that this fall we continue to raise funds to provide permanent solutions to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster.

If you have questions or want to help with this year’s “walk,” please contact Beverly Lindsey at revbevlinndsey@gmail.com or 804-275-7165.

November Announcements

Election Day is November 3. Please vote. Your vote is your voice, and every vote counts.

Parking at St. John's

As we prepare to return to in-church worship on November 29th, you should be aware that the parking spaces in the alley have been marked for St. John's use only, and 26 spaces around the perimeter of the apartment building garage are marked with a "CH" for St. John's use. You may remember that in our former parking lot, we used to hang special tags from our rear-view mirrors to identify our cars as belonging to St. John's members and visitors.

When you are next at the church, please pick up an orange hang tag from the table inside the back door (at the foot of the stairs leading to the Parlor), and use it whenever you park at the church. In addition, you can also continue to park on the Monument Avenue median strip. Please contact Jeff Jacobs at jwjacobs9@gmail.com or (202) 361-9887 if you have any questions.

Finance Update

We appreciate all who have been supporting the works and ministries of the church while we have been worshipping remotely. Remember that checks can be sent to the church at 503 Stuart Circle, Richmond, VA 23220, and donations can be made online at <https://bit.ly/stjohnsdonations> for church operations and missions. The November Mission of the Month is Church World Service, a cooperative ministry of 37 Christian denominations, including the UCC. Because of the pandemic we will not be able to assemble hygiene kits and emergency cleanup buckets this year, but your donation will ensure that those who are most in need will receive necessary assistance in times of crisis. This assistance makes a huge difference in the lives of refugees, displaced people and victims of natural disaster in the United States and around the world, including hurricanes, floods, tornados, and wildfires.

In Sympathy

We extend our sympathy and condolences to the family and friends of Roberta "Robbie" Doswell, mother-in-law of Jeff Jacobs, who died on October 20, 2020, at the age of 94. Services will be private at Hollywood Cemetery.

St. John's extends our sympathy and condolences to the family and friends of Thomas Pridgen, who died on October 23, 2020.

November Announcements

Sunday Protest Vigils - NEW TIME

St. John's UCC is demonstrating our support of peace, justice and the Black Lives Matter movement. We will meet on Sundays at 4:00 p.m. on the steps of the church. Bring a friend and a sign. We will also have signs available for those who need them. We are wearing our masks and observing social distancing as we stand in solidarity on the front steps of the church. Contact Lindsey Franklin at lfrankli@gmail.com or (978) 877-7132. We look forward to seeing you whenever you are able to attend.

Covid Memorial Service November 1st

On Sunday, November 1st, at 2:00 pm, St. John's will host an outdoor service in its side yard to memorialize those who have died from Covid-19 and pay tribute to those who have survived and those first and second responders who care for those affected by the pandemic. Participants are requested to wear masks and observe social distancing.

Central Atlantic Conference Election Eve Prayer Vigil November 2nd

You are invited to join a vigil for this Upcoming Election and the Days Ahead. There will be prayers for Wisdom, Peace, Justice, Unity, and Healing. Please join us in a time of much needed prayer for much needed prayer. Join at:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82396235852?
pwd=NHpUaTU0b1lzTXV1ckJwd0g5Y3REZz09#success](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82396235852?pwd=NHpUaTU0b1lzTXV1ckJwd0g5Y3REZz09#success)

Pledge Sunday November 8th

Our stewardship campaign will culminate in our worship service on November 8th, Pledge Sunday, during which we will have a special litany to bless the pledges received by then and thank all who so generously support the ministries and missions of St. John's with their time, talent and treasure. This year's campaign is based upon a selection from the First Letter of John, "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." 1 John 4:7. Across our Christian movement, we embody God's love in many ways. The work of our congregation to manifest God's love in the world is only possible because of the generous volunteer and financial support of our members and friends. Please remember that pledging is annual, so you need to renew your pledge even if you pledged last year. You can mail your pledge cards back to the church, or email or call in your pledge to Stewardship Chair Jeff Jacobs, at jjwjacobs9@gmail.com or (202) 361-9887. Thank you for your consideration!

November Announcements

Fellowship Luncheon November 17th

Following on the outdoor Fellowship Luncheons in September and October, we are scheduling a luncheon for November 17th. Given the seasonal change in weather, we are looking for a covered outdoor location with heaters. If anyone has suggestions, please contact Jeff Jacobs at jwjacobs9@gmail.com or (202) 361-9887.

Greening of the Sanctuary November 21st

In anticipation of returning to the Sanctuary in time for in-person services at the end of November, a work team will assemble at the church on Saturday, November 21st, at 9:30 am, to green and decorate the church for Advent and Christmas. More information will be forthcoming in the weekly eBlasts.

Congregational Budget Meeting November 22nd

The Church Council calls you to a Congregational Meeting after worship on November 22nd to consider the church Ministry Plan for 2021. On October 25th, the Finance Committee presented an outline of the proposed budget, and a copy of the detailed and summary budgets are available [here](#) and [here](#). Please contact Jeff Hetzer, Betsy Bighinatti, Jeff Jacobs or any member of Church Council if you have any questions about the proposed budget or church finances.

Return to the Sanctuary November 29th

On November 29th, the first Sunday in Advent, we will return to the Sanctuary for in-person worship. In accordance with CDC and Virginia Health Department Guidelines, precautions to maintain the health and safety of our friends and members will be observed, including: temperature checks at the door; required mask wearing; distanced seating; no-contact Peace, offering and communion; and no live singing. We recognize that not everyone will feel comfortable returning to the church building at this time, and so we will continue to livestream our worship over our Zoom platform. At present there are no plans to resume "cookie church" after worship, but members and friends may gather outside the church for conversation.

Wednesday Bible Study

All are invited to attend our Wednesday Night Bible Study from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Zoom. We are exhibiting a powerful spirit and energy as our beloved community is coming together to study the Word. All our invited and affirmed (even if you weren't able to attend previous sessions).

We are studying the prophets Amos and Hosea, which are particularly pertinent in these times. We are using the Kerygma Bible Study entitled: Amos & Hosea: Boundaries, Tough Love, Amazing Grace. Kerygma says, "This study challenges study groups to join the prophets in being boundary-crossers; to cross the boundary between religion and politics, or that boundary between "us" and "them." Amos' and Hosea's message is surely relevant for a society such as ours, divided on issues of theology, politics, economics, government, and morality. We need to hear about God's tough love and amazing grace which are extended by the Lord to a people who have often broken the divine heart."

The link to purchase the study guide directly from Kerygma is:

<https://kerygma.com/collections/ot/products/amos-hosea>

It can be purchased with lower shipping if you have Amazon Prime. The link for that is: <https://www.amazon.com/Amos-Hosea-Boundaries-Tough-Amazing/dp/1882236661/>

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83862586668pwd=eUxGQjlrCtsbzVteHc2RHhYTjFJdz09>

Meeting ID: 838 6258 6668

Passcode: 003903

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,83862586668#,,,,,0#,,003903# US (Germantown)

+13126266799,,83862586668#,,,,,0#,,003903# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

If you have any questions please contact Scott Siefert at (804) 350-0826, or email him at sesiefert@gmail.com.

November 2020 Calendar

Sunday, November 1st, 10:00 a.m. - Worship by Zoom

Sunday, November 1st, after church - Congregational Life and Care Meeting by Zoom

Sunday, November 1st, 4:00 p.m. - Anti-racism Vigil at St. John's

Monday, November 2nd, 7 - 8:00 p.m. - CACUCC Prayer Vigil

Tuesday, November 3rd - VOTE

Wednesday, November 4th, 2 p.m. - Worship and Music Committee Meeting by Zoom

Wednesday, November 4th, 7 p.m. - Bible Study by Zoom

Sunday, November 8th, 10:00 a.m. - Worship by Zoom

Sunday, November 8th, 4:00 p.m. - Anti-racism Vigil at St. John's

Sunday, November 8th - CROP Walk Week

Monday, November 9th, 6:30 p.m. - Church Council Meeting by Zoom

Wednesday, November 11th, 2 p.m. - Worship and Music Committee Meeting by Zoom

Wednesday, November 11th, 7 p.m. - Bible Study by Zoom

Sunday, November 15th, 10:00 a.m. - Worship by Zoom

Sunday, November 15th, 4:00 p.m. - Anti-racism Vigil at St. John's

Tuesday, November 17th, 1 p.m. - Fellowship Lunch (location TBD)

Wednesday, November 18th, 2 p.m. - Worship and Music Committee Meeting by Zoom

Wednesday, November 18th, 7 p.m. - Bible Study by Zoom

Saturday, November 21st, 9:30 a.m. - Greening of the Sanctuary

Sunday, November 22nd, 10:00 a.m. - Worship by Zoom

Sunday, November 22nd, after church - Congregational Budget Meeting by Zoom

Sunday, November 22nd, 4:00 p.m. - Anti-racism Vigil at St. John's

Wednesday, November 25th, 2 p.m. - Worship and Music Committee Meeting by Zoom

Wednesday, November 18th, 7 p.m. - Bible Study by Zoom

Sunday, November 29th, 10:00 a.m. - First Sunday of Advent

Return to the Sanctuary and Worship by Zoom

Sunday, November 29th, 4:00 p.m. - Anti-racism Vigil

November Birthdays

November 1st - David Craig

November 5th - Jerilyn Monts

November 6th - Matthew James Gilbert

November 10th - Kevin Hetzer

November 14th - Laura Totty

November 16th - Bob Corby

November 17th - Gary Beasley

Kate Schaefer

Terri Weaver

November 30th - Mark Atkinson



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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