



Keith's Korner

Desert Cross-Way

A friend of mine who came to the United Church of Christ by way of the Roman Catholic tradition tells me often how they appreciate the UCC because we promote personal responsibility regarding our faith and belief.



Although we are a united and uniting church that is centered in Jesus, the head of the church, we do not subject one another to tests of faith or to adherence to a prescribed doctrine. We, in true congregational polity and reformed piety, encourage each other within the context of the local congregation to struggle with the issues that really matter and take on the responsibilities required to live out our faith through our actions together.

Unfortunately we live in a culture that, although spouts an ideology of spirituality, still expects the institution to set our theology (what we believe) and serve "us." In other words the bulk of Christians in America are not willing to give the time to living out their discipleship but expect the institution which they tend to criticize for its sluggish decision-making and infant bank accounts to serve them — forgetting that the church is not

something we go to but rather who we are.

The journey that the Holy Spirit led Jesus on in the desert for forty days (where we get our season of Lent) is a journey that all of us have taken at one point or another (Matthew 4.1-11). The temptations that Jesus faced were temptations of the heart, temptations from within, temptations to let food be his inner source and not God's word, temptations to test God rather than to be faithful to God, and temptations to acquire the attention and service of the world for himself rather than to worship and serve only God. We are all tempted to place other priorities — events, family, work, money, sports, and entertainment — above God. And too often God is placed on the sidebar of our schedules. But the desert journey of Jesus tells us that God must be first — "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only God." (Matthew 4.10b)

It is our responsibility as disciples of Jesus to serve and worship only God. Like Jesus, we walk through our desert moments: our busy schedules, our packed weeks and weekends and find that everything but God is getting our time and passion. And we stand at a

continued on page 7

VISION STATEMENT

"We risk to extend the extravagant welcome of Jesus by creating accessibility, pursuing spiritual formation, and engaging with the broader community. We will fulfill this vision by providing discipleship training, enhancing our building, growing our resources, and developing our staff." This statement is our vision for SJUCC over the next five years, 2006 through 2010.

2008 HOLY WEEK & EASTER @ ST. JOHN

Palm Sunday

Sunday, March 16th

10:30 a.m.

The children will join the Chancel Choir in a Palm Procession and play rhythm instruments with the Palm Sunday hymn; the Chancel Choir, Ensemble, and Director of Music, Brad Caldwell, will lead in music; and Pastor Keith will bring his Lenten Sermon Series, "Real Faith for Real Life" to an end.

Holy Thursday

Thursday, March 20th

Join us for this Holy Week tradition at 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. A dramatic reading of the Passion story will be presented by our new Drama Ministry group, ARK (Acts of Random Kindness). Holy Communion will be offered for all and the service will conclude with the gradual extinguishing of candles, the ancient service of Tenebrae (Service of Darkness). The service music will be led by the Chancel Choir; Director of Music, Brad Caldwell; and soloist, Janel Frazee.

Easter Sunday

Sunday, March 23rd

9:00 a.m. Easter Brunch in the Fellowship Hall - all are invited and welcome

10:30 a.m. Resurrection Worship. The Chancel Choir, soloists, Director of Music, Brad Caldwell, and guest musicians will lead the music beginning with a grand procession with banners, ribbons and the children; ARK (Acts of Random Kindness) will perform; Pastor Keith will preach; and Holy Communion will be offered for all.

A nursery will be provided at all services of worship.

Sharing Resources-Changing Lives

There are many needs in our world. Hebrews says, "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have." There are nine denominations who work alongside Church World Service, transforming lives around the world. Our gifts to the One Great Hour of Sharing® offering will help people fleeing violence in Sudan, suffering from AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, reeling from devastation in Indonesia, starving in poverty in India, and recovering from disasters in the United States - like the tornadoes in southern Kentucky and Tennessee. The Justice, Peace, Mission & Stewardship Committee (JPMS) invites and encourages you to give generously to this special mission offering of the United Church of Christ on Sunday, March 2nd. For more information on this offering visit <http://www.ucc.org/oghs/> or contact Sandy Ruck.

Inclement Weather

If you're ever wondering this winter if church or any activity at St. John has been cancelled due to inclement weather, please call the church at (859) 261-2066 beginning two hours before the service/activity (this will include week-day events as well). If there is a cancellation, you will hear a voicemail recording giving you the cancellation information. If you hear no cancellation announcement, the service or event you plan to attend is still a "go!"

St. John Garden Club

Dale Clark is the new Chair of the Garden Club. If you would like to help with preparing flower beds for spring and other needs for the church yard please contact Dale at Garden@StJohnChurch.net.

New Orleans Mission Trip

The Biloxi mission trip has been canceled due to housing issues. However, another UCC mission trip to New Orleans is scheduled for May 10-18 and is filling up fast, yet there is still room for YOU! The due date for registration (\$150) has been extended to March 15. The total cost is \$300, which includes van rental, fuel, two nights in a motel, lodging at the church on site, materials and most meals. Send your check to George Siddall, 403 Green Gate Dr., Lebanon, OH 45036 to hold your place on the team. For more questions contact George at gtsiddall@juno.com.

Children's Ministry

Be a Honey and Stuff for the Bunny! St. John is sponsoring an Easter Egg Hunt at Bellevue Beach Park on Saturday, March 29 at 10:00 a.m. Lots of plastic eggs filled with candy (no chocolate please) or coins/stickers/prizes are needed. Please take 1 or more bags in the back of the Sanctuary to fill and/or add some more eggs to the stash by Friday, March 28. Volunteers are also needed from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on March 29. Contact Jennifer McGraw at Children@StJohnChurch.net for more info.

Medicine Bottle Ministry

The Justice, Peace, Mission and Stewardship Committee is collecting used medicine bottles to send to our health clinic in Kenya, Africa where it is common for medicine to be distributed in old envelopes or even leaves. Please remove the label and place your bottles in the box in the back of the Sanctuary. This ongoing ministry helps our brothers & sisters in Africa and our environment.

Lasagna Cook-off & More

The Hospitality & Fellowship Committee invites you to "Welcome To The Table" Luncheon on Sunday, April 27 following worship for our Lasagna Cook-Off and Salad Bar. Also, join us for the Easter Breakfast on Sunday, March 23 at 9:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall (Room LL100). For more details on these and other upcoming H&F events contact Will Tackett and Penny Poirier at HF@StJohnChurch.net.

MEMORIAL FUND

In Memory of:

James West

Carol & Ed Stitt

Nancy Evans Barth

Pat & Charles Giglia, Ed Ulsas Family, Ed & Carol Stitt, Jeanette Ludwig, Carroll Berringer, Melissa Artopoulos, Diane Cottingham, John & Nancy Gutknecht, Jerry & Dorothy Marshall, David & Julia Grimm, Dixie Gunn, Debby Fessenden, Eleanor Richards, Julie Byrn

Virginia Foscue

Diana Steckel

Eric Steichen's Jahrzeit

Paule Asch

Lucille Davis

Judith Davis Weiss

Carrie Ludwig & Louise Reis

Jeanette Ludwig

Designated for Accessibility:

In Memory of:

Roberta Reker

Pat & Charles Giglia

Office Hours

Pastor & Teacher, Keith M. Haithcock is typically off on Mondays and in the office on Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays. On Fridays and Saturdays Pastor Keith is off site for study, sermon and worship preparation, appointments and visitation. Due to pastoral care, visits, hospital calls, counseling, meetings, and/or off-site appointments these hours will vary. Always leave a detailed message at (859) 261-2066 or his new email address Pastor@StJohnChurch.net.

Administrative Assistant to the Pastor, Shirley Koopman, Shirley@StJohnChurch.net: Mondays, Tuesdays, & Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (lunch hour: 11:30 to 12:30).

Youth & Adult Bible Study

Sundays at 9:00 a.m. in Room 201. The study will focus on the texts that Pastor Keith and others will be preaching. A schedule is available on the Welcome Table in the back of the Sanctuary or on the website, www.StJohnChurch.net.

Electronic Newsletter

We had difficulty with sending our last issue of Previews via email. However, we hope that we have that problem settled. We will now be sending you an email to remind you to go to the website and download the newsletter from the website. Thank you for your patience. You may sign up for an electronic version of Previews instead of this paper edition by emailing Shirley@StJohnChurch.net and requesting that you want Previews electronically.

A Praying Church

Each Sunday we publish The Weekly (the green sheet) which is handed out with the Order of Service. In The Weekly is our latest list of prayer concerns. If you have a prayer concern you would like to share with the congregation, please call the office (859) 261-2066 or send your concern to TheWeekly@StJohnChurch.net.

Forum on Religion & Discrimination

On March 4, at 7:00 p.m. the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Alliance Committee of St. John United Church of Christ is co-sponsoring a free public forum on faith and discrimination against lesbian and gay persons. This event will take place at the Harriet Tubman Theater at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center on Cincinnati's riverfront. A panel will discuss the ways people of faith fight discrimination even when it is seemingly opposed to their faith tradition. The featured speaker will be Lutheran pastor Brad Schleming from Atlanta who was defrocked in July 2007 for being a gay pastor in a committed relationship. The event will also be broadcast online at www.freedomcenter.org/freedomradio. For more information please call the Freedom Center at (513) 333-7518.

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST MISSION STATEMENT

As a vibrant, growing, diverse Church, our mission is To be representatives of Jesus Christ, To provide a spiritual, compassionate, nurturing place of worship, learning, and fellowship, To share our gifts and resources, serving all with unconditional love and acceptance.

Financials for December 2007 & January 2008

For any financial question you may contact:

Treasurer Patrick McGraw at Treasurer@StJohnChurch.net or Financial Secretary Jim Myers at FinSec@StJohnChurch.net

	Unified Budget Offering	Receipts Over/Under Budget	Attendance
December			
2	2,797.50	-216.10	83
9	3,722.00	708.40	98
16	1,578.00	-1,435.60	62
23	3,702.00	688.40	85
24	3,566.00	3,566.00	
30	2,311.69	-701.91	78
Total (Dec.)	17,677.19	2,609.19	Avg. 81
January			
6	2,370.00	-765.08	95
13	2,060.00	-1,075.08	89
20	2,583.50	-551.58	82
27	3,116.50	-18.58	87
Total (Jan.)	10,130.00	-2,410.32	Avg. 88
2008 Year-to-Date Through 1/31/08			
	10,130.00	-2,410.32	81

continued from page 1

Cross-Way and have to choose our responsibility for our faith and belief. Out there alone you will most likely find yourself stuck in the desert. But when gathered as the church for worship, study, prayer, and service together you are able to move forward to the way of the Easter Cross of hope and redemption.

See you in the Church House on Sunday!

— *Pastor Keith*

Websites to Know & Visit:

St. John United Church of Christ - Bellevue: www.StJohnChurch.net

St. John's United Church of Christ - Newport: www.stjohnsuccnewport.org

National United Church of Christ: www.ucc.org

Southwest Ohio Northern Kentucky Association: www.sonkaucc.org

Ohio Conference: www.ocucc.org

River Valley Covenant Cluster: www.RiverValleyCovenantCluster.org

THE CHURCH ON THE AVENUE



ST. JOHN
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**520 Fairfield Avenue
Bellevue, KY 41073**

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
NEWPORT, KY 41071
PERMIT NO. 451

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE 10:30 A.M.

Holy Communion First Sunday of Each Month

STAFF

The Rev. Mr. Keith M. Haithcock, Pastor & Teacher

Mr. Brad Caldwell, Director of Music

Ms. Shirley Koopman, Administrative Assistant to the Pastor

Ms. Lora Capehart, House Keeper

OFFICE PHONE & 24-HOUR VOICE MAIL: (859) 261-2066

WEBSITE: www.StJohnChurch.net

PUBLISHER: St. John United Church of Christ — Bellevue, KY

EDITOR: Keith M. Haithcock, Pastor@StJohnChurch.net

Items for publication must be received by the 10th of the month. To subscribe or cancel, contact Shirley@StJohnChurch.net or call (859) 261-2066.

DESIGN & LAYOUT: Jennifer Miles

Address Service Requested

Youth Ministry Kick Off @ St. John

On March 30th the Youth Ministry will host an Ice Cream Social from 12:00pm to 2:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. This Kick Off event for Youth Ministry at St. John will let our youth know they have the full support of our church family. So show up! It will be a fun time for all and a great chance to get to know the youth.

Also on March 30th a Youth Ministry Planning/Pizza Party will take place at 2:15 p.m. following the Ice Cream Social. All youth and interested adults are invited to attend. Come help develop the mission and ministry for our 2008 Youth Ministry. And it will be fun making and eating pizza too. Contact Doreen Johnson at YM@StJohnChurch.net if you have any questions.

National Youth Event
July 24-28, 2008
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, Tennessee



The UCC National Youth Event, held every four years, provides an opportunity for over 3000 youth (ages 13 to 18) to gather for worship, workshops, faith, fun and fellowship. It is planned by the collaborative efforts of national staff and a National Youth Event Planning Committee comprised of a diverse group of UCC youth and young adults. The next NYE will be held at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville from July 24 - 28, 2008. The registration cost for NYE is \$345 per person, and includes accommodation and meals from Thursday night through Sunday night.