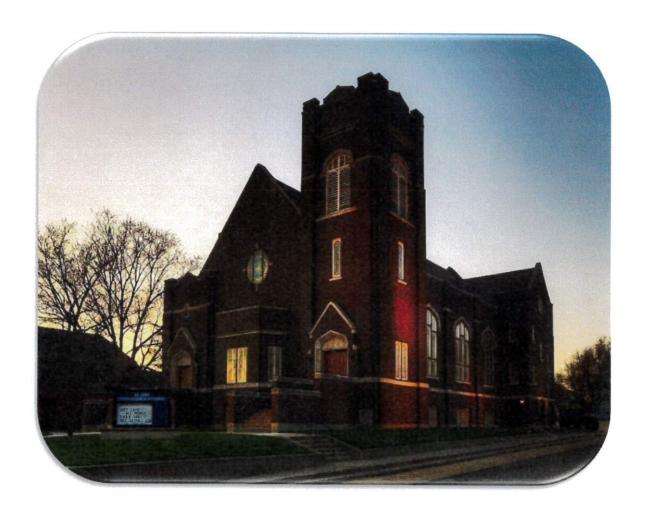
St. John's Chimes

Published monthly in the interest of



St. John United Church of Christ 204 Seventh Street Lincoln, Illinois 62656

February 2021 Newsletter

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

204 Seventh Street ~ Lincoln, Illinois 62656 217-732-6957

E-mail address: stjohnucclincoln@yahoo.com | Website: stjohnucclincolnillinois.com "Letting God's love shine through us to the Community we Serve"

Rev. Laurie Hill Pastor

Darlene Begolka Office Manager

Volume 52, No. 2 February 2021





ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST 204 Seventh Street | Lincoln, Illinois

Friday, February 19th | 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

To schedule an appointment, call 1-800-733-2767 (Red Cross).

A FEW NOTES...

The Church Office is open from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Monday – Friday.

- NEW WAY TO JOIN WORSHIP SERVICE. We will continue to Live Streaming every Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. You can watch the service. on our Facebook page or our website at 10:00 a.m. or later or late in the day. For those who are not on Facebook, you may go to the website at 10:00 a.m. and click the arrow and watch the service.
- Thank you for remembering to send in your gifts and offerings. We are very grateful, since just like at home, all the costs of life continue. If you don't want to mail in your gift, you can drop it off in the mailbox, (outside of the sunken gardens).
- Don't forget to continue checking the church's Facebook page and website for information!
- NOTE: If you need to talk or have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call Pastor Laurie!
 217-521-7747!
- All visits to the Church must be made by appointment only. You can call the church office, 732-6957, to make an appointment (we need to know when and who is in the building).
- All visitors must either wash their hands or sanitize upon arrival.
- All visitors must wear a mask.
- All visitors must stay 6' away from each other.

FROM OUR PASTOR...

Dear Friends,

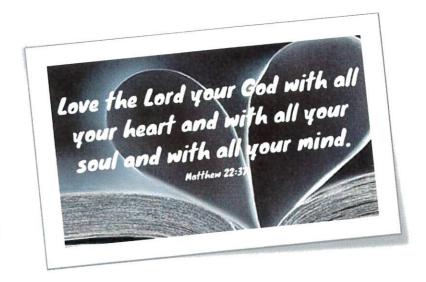
Wow, 2021 has started off tough, but you know, dear friends, that we still have so much to be grateful for! February is the month of the celebration of love. I hear you, Valentine's Day critics. . .it's just a Hallmark holiday to sell inordinate amount of cards, flowers and chocolate. Let's try to think of this in a way that celebrates the love of God, neighbor and self! That's the way Jesus wants us to celebrate love. Of course, that's not just for the 28 days of February but for our whole lives. Yet, February and the beginning of Lent, gives us the opportunity to examine our hearts a bit deeper in that "love" department. It is a season of self-examination, a season of deepening our faith, a season of understanding our own mortality as humans, and a season to ready ourselves for the celebration of the resurrection.

What does loving God mean? Most of us know the first commandment of the ten from Moses and the two from Jesus. "Love God with your whole heart, mind and soul." Loving God means a lifelong quest of trying to know God better. Of course, we cannot "know" God completely and through our humanness, we can only know God from our own particular humanness. However, it's all over Scripture that God loves it when we worship, when we pray, when we act in faith, when we love and serve those who are the "least of these". So, I believe God smiles on us when we worship (yes, even remotely). God smiles on us when we talk to God. God smiles on us when we serve others using the gifts God gave us. God is happy when we treat the earth well, for we are to be Stewards of the earth. God loves it when we study the Bible and when we talk with each other of how God has been so awesome in our lives. Our first Valentine this month, should be a Valentine for God.

What can you do to give God a Valentine? Love. Love as much and as often as we can. Love even your enemies. Love even those with whom you vehemently disagree. Remember, love means we hold others accountable for actions of destruction or harm, but in that holding accountable, hope and pray for the best for that person. In your prayers and in your life to others, say loving words such as "thank you", "please", and "I forgive you" and "I forgive myself", "God, please forgive me", "I love you", "I love me", "I love God" more often than you ever have before. Use less "You" language and more "I language". For God knows our hearts and the hearts of those around us.

No matter the state of the world, we serve our God first and foremost. And God has given us so many Valentines! It is God who increases our faith and love. Our Creator, creating still; Redeemer and redeeming still; and Sustainer and sustaining still, weeps with us, rejoices with us, understands and encourages us. I thank you for your faithfulness and your love. I hope we can forgive and love each other and build up our church (both virtual and in person) with all the gifts of the spirit! After all, it's true! "Love does make the world go around!"

Blessings! Pastor Laurie



NEW CONFERENCE PLAN

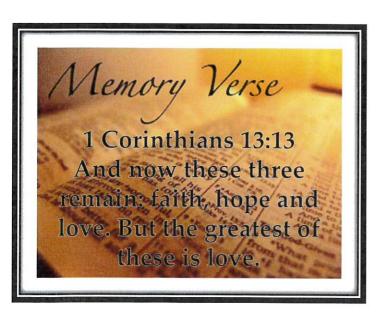
On Saturday, February 6th at 10:30 am, there will be a meeting in Fellowship Hall for whomever is



interested in the new plan devised by our new Conference Minister, Rev. Molly Carlson to restructure our conference and save money. If you read Bill Gosda's report, you will understand that our Conference has a crisis of finances but also of trust in Conference leadership. I will present the plan and

some concerns that some have voiced about the plan. And I will listen to what your thoughts are as well and relay them to the Conference Minister. You could also relay them to her yourself, if you would like.

If you are interested in attending, it would be helpful to let Pastor Laurie know you are coming but if don't let that stop you from attending. There will be room for all.





WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2021

HOW WILL WE DO ASH WEDNESDAY?

Even though we actually can worship together, the imposition of ashes means a bit too much closeness. So, this year, we decided to do something creative! If nothing else, COVID-19 has necessitated a creative mind for our Worship Team.

We will be giving out and/or mailing out white masks before Ash Wednesday. Each one will have the sign of the cross on it and have a short liturgical prayer service with it. We are hoping on Ash Wednesday, you will follow the liturgy and wear this mask. Please take a picture of yourself and send it to Pastor Laurie, if you like. Also, after it's washed, you may decorate the mask for Easter however you like! We hope that you will wear your mask on Easter Sunday if you attend in person and if you don't, you will once again, take a picture of yourself and send it to Pastor Laurie.

These masks will be available at church to pick up either on a Sunday or during the week. If you would like one mailed to you, please contact the church office. If you get a bulletin and sermon mailed to you, please know you will automatically receive one. Let us begin our Lenten journeys with this sign of our mortality and our faithfulness in our God: Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST UNAPPROVED CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES ZOOM MEETING Monday, January 11, 2021 7:00p.m.

Present: Warren Goetsch, Randy Pech,

Keith Birnbaum, Laura Lee, Jack Leich, Edna Mara, Troy Meinershagen

Carolyn Pech, Tricia Pineda,

Darlene Begolka (Office Manager),

and Pastor Laurie Hill

President Goetsch called the ZOOM meeting to order at 7:00p.m. on Monday, January 11, 2021, and Pastor Laurie Hill gave the invocation.

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL

It was moved and seconded to accept the November 2020 council minutes (there was no December meeting) with the consent agenda as presented. All voting aye, the motion passed.

PASTOR'S REPORT

Pastor Laurie submitted her report. She mentioned that the Worship Team met, via emails, discussed Ash Weds. The church would purchase white masks and pastor would put the cross of ashes on them and put in baggie and they would be mailed to everyone along with the liturgy. The council discussed this and told pastor it was fine and do as the committee suggested.

Pastor reported that Cathy Sanders, our custodian had submitted her resignation since she got a full-time job elsewhere. Pastor notified Office and Staff committee and they discussed, via emails, how to proceed. The committee recommends to begin advertising for a new custodian and a new bell choir director (which will may gradually include Chancel choir director-when it is possible to have a choir again) as soon as possible. For the time being Bill Gosda has agreed to fill in as custodian, during the interim period. And Toni Reifsteck will direct

the bell choir when it is possible. The council discussed this and gave its unanimous consent to follow through with the decision made by the Staff and Office Equipment Committee.

Report about CPR (Center for Progressive Renewal): Pastor said she talked to Gregg Carlson, the head of CPR. Having a fall retreat was discussed last year, but because of COVID-19 it didn't happen. There is still \$2000 left in the CPR fund that can be used. The idea of having a retreat is still a possibility, so when the church is completely back open this will be discussed again.

OLD BUSINESS

Annual Congregational Meeting Agenda: It was moved and seconded to accept the Annual Congregational Meeting Agenda as presented. All voting yea, the motion carried. The Annual Meeting will take place on Sunday, January 31, 2021 after church. Depending on the governor's mitigations, the church will plan on meeting in person to have the meeting. A quorum of 10% or 16-17 of active members is needed to have the meeting. So it should be possible to have the meeting in the sanctuary. The Annual Report will be emailed out on January 24th, 2021. (for protocol of distribution see New Business, in the minutes).

Nominating Committee: The nominating committee members were Randy Pech, Laura Lee, Selma Wilham, and Kaye Wilmert. The election ballot (slate) will be as follows:

Council: Bill Gosda, Jr.

Jan Hahn Kent Paulus

Western Association: Laura Lee

Wayne Mara

Illinois Conference: Donna Kessinger

Scholarship Trustee: Lynn Spellman

It was moved and seconded to approve the slate of candidates submitted by the nominating committee for this year's annual congregational

meeting. All voting aye, the motion carries. It was suggested that a copy of the constitution and bylaws of the church be given to the new council members (each year) for reference. President Goetsch thanked the Nominating Committee for their work in bringing a full slate of names. It's not an easy task, but it was accomplished this year.

NEW BUSINESS

Outreach and Publicity: The committee has asked the council for a decision regarding the ringing of church bells and/or handbells in an event being held at noon and lasting five minutes on Wednesday, January 20 - Inauguration Day at the Courthouse on the corner of Kickapoo and Pekin Streets. The event is meant to be a peaceful event held nationwide. After some discussion, the council agreed that if individuals want to participate by ringing their own bells, they could, but decided not to sponsor this event, because of the partisan nature of an Inauguration day and because there has been a safety concern for churches perceived as "liberal" in the past few weeks. We will not have the church bell rung or allow the use of the church for this event.

Secondly: Jack Leich reported that the Outreach and Publicity committee are thinking of sending a Daily Devotional to our home and/or facility bound members. Pastor Laurie has discussed many different kinds with the committee and will research the costs, etc. for their next meeting. Jack Leich also suggested that Pastor Laurie could write one that would go out in the weekly mailings.

COVID-19 Protocol: Because of the pandemic restrictions currently in place the distribution of the Annual Reports was discussed. The reports must go out either by email or be available to all by January 24, 2021. Those who have no email may pick them up at church during the week.

Pending the loosening of governmental restrictions of the pandemic by January 31st, it was moved and seconded that we resume in-person worship starting Sunday, January 24, 2021 at 10am as long as we are complying with the governor and public

health mitigations. All voting aye, the motion passed. With that decided the church staff will begin resuming the office hours as usual. If mitigations don't change the Annual Meeting may need to be postponed.

CORRESPONDENCE AND E-MAILS: None

ADJOURNMENT AND BENEDICTION

With no further business to discuss a motion was made, seconded, and passed to adjourn the meeting. The meeting ended at 8:15p.m.

Next Meeting – (if able) Re-organizational Meeting following the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 31, 2021. February meeting TBD.

Respectfully submitted by,



Laura Lee, Church Council Secretary



Articles for the **March 2021** newsletter should be in the Church Office by **February 19**th.



WE EXTEND OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO...

Larry and Verdeen Ingram and family at the death of his brother-in-law, Jack Yates.



DECEMBER FINANCIALS

Beginning Balance

\$24,508.41

Income

\$34,451.88

Expenses

\$25,825.27

Ending Balance

\$33,135.02

ATTENDANCE

January 3rd
96 on Facebook, 21 services mailed
and website = 117+

January 10th 87 on Facebook, 22 services mailed and website = 109+

January 17th
128 on Facebook, 23 services mailed
and website = 151+

January 24th
25 In-Person, 69 on Facebook, 23 services mailed and website = 117+





Donna Kessinger would like to thank everyone for their cards, call, prayers and concerns while she was at Christian Village and now that she is home.



LET'S REMEMBER OUR HOMEBOUND...

ST. CLARA'S REHAB and SENIOR CARE

1450 Castle Manor Drive, Lincoln, IL 62656

Dave Armbrust

Evelyn Fulkerson

Esther Johnson

Susan Webb

John Wilmert

VONDERLIETH LIVING CENTER

1120 N. Topper Drive, Mt. Pulaski, IL 62548 Dorothy Conklin

CASTLE MANOR

1550 Castle Manor Drive, Lincoln, IL 62656 Carol Turner

CHRISTIAN VILLAGE

1507 Seventh Street, Lincoln, IL 62656 Marcella Lenhardt

CONGREGATE BUILDING AT CHRISTIAN VILLAGE

1500 Seventh Street, Lincoln, IL 62656 Leola Dowling

AT HOME

Jean Cummings 1114 Pekin Street, Lincoln, IL 62656

Marita Schneider 1361 – 2050th Street, Lincoln, IL 62656

ALTAR FLOWERS FOR FEBRUARY

February 7th:

February 14th:

February 21st:

February 28th:



Blood Program

Dear Blood Program Leader,

Thank you very much for your ongoing dedication to the American Red Cross. Every day, I am deeply moved by the kindness and generosity of



spirit you bring to our vital mission. But it's times like these – times of great uncertainty – that I am truly in awe of your unwavering commitment.

As thousands of blood drives around the nation were cancelled due to the impact of COVID-19, please know that your drive protected the health and well-being of the most vulnerable among us – including accident victims, cancer patients, those suffering from chronic illnesses and many others.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for stepping up to help collect and donate lifesaving blood, even as the circumstances of the coronavirus outbreak often made it difficult to do so.

To express my deepest gratitude for your tremendous service to the Red Cross and to our country, please accept this Certificate of Outstanding Service and an honorary badge for your social media profiles.

On behalf of those we serve, thank you once again for your tremendous efforts to strengthen and advance our Red Cross mission during this uniquely challenging time. We look forward to better times ahead, and to our continued partnership to save lives.

Sincerely,

Gail McGovern
President and CEO



The following is note from our Sister Church in Chicago written by their pastor, Rev. Dr. Charlotte Nold:

Dear members of St. John UCC,

What a blessing you are to us here at St. John Church. Thank you for your most generous donation of \$230 to our mission work.

Our food pantry is growing, and we gave out Turkeys and Chickens and other wonderful Thanksgiving and Christmas treats for the Thanksgiving holiday.

You truly are a blessing to us.



The Lincoln/Logan Food Pantry board and volunteers thank you for your generous donation in January 2021.



Note: This was from the Christmas Eve offering. The local choice was the Lincoln/Logan Food Pantry.





I want to thank everyone for the calls, cards and well wishes I received for my birthday! I am so blessed to have a great church family. Thank you so very much!

Janet Johnson

MISSION COMMITTEE...

By: Verdeen Ingram, Co-Chair

SPECIAL OFFERING SUNDAYS... The Mission Committee has designated the following Sundays:

- Second Sunday of each month a special offering will be taken following church for the new Children of Lincoln project.
- Fourth Sunday of each month a special offering will be taken following church for the Diaper Project for Head Start at Community Action.



The following is an email Verdeen received from Community Action:



I've noticed the coats are almost ALL gone!

Just a few things I

observed while collecting and giving out coats:

- If we could get more boys sizes that would be great.
- Boys sizes 3T and Small adult are our biggest need!

Everyone seemed to LOVE the knitted scarves! Huge hit!

The hats and gloves were appreciated as much as the coat itself.

NOTE: Since this email was received: 16 more coats have been taken out to Community Action (CAPCIL).







OUTREACH and PUBLICITY HIGHLIGHTS...

By: Jim and Leslie Wilmert, and Tonita Reifsteck, Co-Chairs

Outreach & Publicity met on January 7, 2021 in the home of Jim and Leslie Wilmert (church unavailable due to Covid-19 restrictions). Present were Jim and Leslie, Jack and Nancy Leich and Tonita Reifsteck. Pastor Laurie joined on ZOOM.

- Reports on Christmas "Drive by Parade"
- Participation in ANGEL TREE at St. Clara's Manor (4 names-\$100) plus reporting others in church took names individually.
- Reported sending cards-shut-ins and military (Wyatt Conrady now stateside but no address available)
- Report from Central Elementary and □HS support
- Noted that CCC (Christian Child Care) no longer needs milk jugs but other items welcome!
- Animal Shelter welcome newspapers and empty prescription bottles.

New business

- Devotional materials for shut-ins and/or others wanting such will be researched.
- Ad in Mason City paper discontinuedinformation not current and no sense of being effective.
- Voted to support Martin Luther King Scholarship with \$100. (Years past we have sponsored a table)
- Certificates of Appreciation were shown –
 Jim, Leslie and Toni will deliver since Annual
 Meeting is not possible. Edna Mara did the
 lettering on certificates.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.



Presentation of Award to Sandy Wilmert January 12, 2021

by Jim and Leslie Wilmert

The Lord said: "Feed my sheep – Tend my lambs" and you, Sandy heard that and have been doing that for more years than we can count. You have provided food at church and in homes for those ill or in mourning and often picked up people to get them to meals.

You have:

- Picked people up for shopping, meetings, choir rehearsal, church, and doctor appointments.
- Supported Church programs helped decorate at Christmas.
- Organized monthly birthday parties and COVID did not stop you – continued with Drive-by or lawn birthday remembrances – and not only for church members-until it got too cold and then inspired what is "TOY NETWORK" Thinking of You for anyone to pick up a phone or paper and let someone know they are being thought of.

You have never drawn attention to yourself on this, only once in a while asking for some help, but someone was watching.

Your church family wants you to know how much you are appreciated and loved as we present this CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION and a small gift to say BLESS YOU!" "As You did it unto the least of these you did It unto me" said the Lord in Matthew 23:34-41

CHARITY GUILD MEETING VIA EMAIL DECEMBER 2020

Many past helpers were contacted by email and asked for input concerning 2020 annual Christmas gift suggestion, since we would not be able to meet in person. Recommendations and approvals were given by ladies responding to the initial email.

Annual gifts are as follows:

- \$100 each to our Sister church St. John of Chicago and also personally to their Pastor Charlotte Nold.
- \$100 to Salvation Army of Lincoln, Illinois.
- 8 \$30 gas only gift cards from Thorntons which were unused from 2019 Christmas Funds.

Addition purchase of 5- \$20 gas only gift cards with \$100 donation given by Charity Guild member. These gas cards were given to The Oasis Senior Center for Gift Bags they put together for Christmas. The gas cards were given to volunteers there to purchase gas when transporting Senior citizens for cancer treatments in Springfield. Beneficiaries were chosen by Director Nancy Cunningham.

Toni checked with Charlie at IGA. At this time, there are enough funds for groceries to be given to people in need who come into the store. Several other organizations in town help to fund this project.

Charity guild has a current fund balance of \$725.95 for possible future needs. Ladies seemed to agree to hold remaining funds until see what needs may arise in 2021. Income has been limited this year due to COVID-19 restrictions on indoor gatherings for funeral dinners, etc.

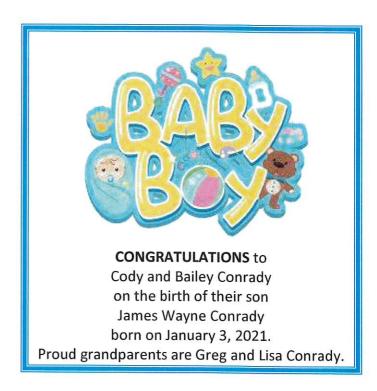
Some have suggested socks and underwear for students at Central School. These needs may become more apparent once all students return to "in person classes". The Outreach Committee does have some funding from the church budget for this project.

Officers for 2021 will be decided once we are able to have an in-person meeting.

Thanks to all who helped with the above decisions and fund raising in 2020.

Karen Birnbaum, President









- 6 Avery Birnbaum Loren Birnbaum
- 9 Morgan Fuller Ruth Post
- 10 Kent Paulus
- 12 Carol Turner
- 13 Wyatt Conrady Sandy Meinershagen
- 15 Gina Lockenvitz
- 19 Sandra Morgan
- 27 Jan Hahn George Wilmert
- 28 Aidan Nemeth Bailee Pineda



- 2 Jeff and Jackie Curry
- 7 Rich and Barb Reinwald



FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Monday, February 1st

Worship Team at 7:00 p.m.

Boy Scouts at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 2nd

Creative Delights at 3:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 3rd

Rotary at 12:00 noon

Thursday, February 4th

Outreach and Publicity at 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 7th

In-Person and Live-stream Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.

Communion

Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday

Monday, February 8th

Boy Scouts at 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 10th

Rotary at 12:00 noon

Sunday, February 14th

In-Person and Live-stream Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.

Blanket Sunday

Monday, February 15th

Church Council meeting at 7:00p.m.

Boy Scouts at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 16th

Creative Delights at 3:00 p.m.

Ash Wednesday, February 17th

Rotary at 12:00 noon

Friday, February 19th

Blood Drive from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 21st

In-Person and Live-stream Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.

Monday, February 22nd

Boy Scouts at 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 24th

Rotary at 12:00 noon

Sunday, February 28th

In-Person and Live-stream Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.

PRAYER LIST



Jane Agnew

Harlan Atteberry

Steve Aue

Ron Brandy

Bert Burge

Bill Dennis

Claudette Jouett Ellstrand

Mindy Farris

Marsha Fernandez

Dan Fulk

Alta Gehrke

Ruth Gordon

Dave Harding

David Hirst

Larry Ingram family

Marianne Ingram

Emily Jewsbury

Donna Kessinger

Brian LeBoeuf

Mary Francis (aka Franny)

Marcella Lenhardt

Michael Paige

Mary Pickett

Alicia Reed

Mercedize Reves

The Ritchhart Family

Nate Rohlfs

Chris Sprague

Kathy Staten

Patricia Southerd

Karen Sutton

Kent Tangman

The Walton Family

Allen and Gayle Webb and family

Emma Welp and family

Emily Wilmert

Fred Wiseman

Jason Yates

Anita

Carvn

Kenneth

Jo

Joyce

Nathan

Elizabeth

- The Residents at the Christian Village and St. Clara's Rehab and Senior Care
- All those from our "Church Family",
 Community, State and Nation working in the
 Medical Field
- Illinois Conference/Wester Association

MILITARY

Wyatt Conrady

FACILITIES AND HOMEBOUND

David Armbrust, Dorothy Conklin, Jean Cummings, Leola Dowling, Evelyn Fulkerson, Esther Johnson, Marita Schneider, Carol Turner, Susan Webb, John Wilmert



Staff of St. John United Church of Christ

Members and Friends of St. John UCC Ministers
Rev. Laurie Hill Pastor

Darlene Begolka Office Manager
Carolyn Pech Financial Manager

Dana Denny Custodian

Steve Spaulding Maintenance Person

Laura Lee Organist

Darlene Begolka Chime Choir Director
Tonita Reifsteck Interim Bell Choir Director

Church Council for 2020



Warren Goetsch (Elder), President Keith Birnbaum, Vice President and Current Fund Treasurer Laura Lee, Secretary Troy Meinershagen, Special Funds Treasurer Randy Pech (Elder), Financial Secretary Carolyn Pech

Jack Leich Edna Mara Tricia Pineda (Elder)

Contact us:

Email: stjohnucclincoln@yahoo.com

Website: stjohnucclincolnillinois.com

St. John United Church of Christ 204 Seventh Street Lincoln, Illinois 62656 217-732-6957

Pastor Laurie's cell phone number: 217-521-7747 Pastor Laurie's email address: pastorlauriehill@gmail.com

"Letting God's love shine through us to the Community we serve"