

St. John's United Church of Christ

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

10 A.M. Worship Nov 17, 2024

Twenty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost

WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS FOR THE WORD OF GOD

Ringling of the Chimes

Welcome and Announcements

*(Please note the * indicates when you should stand*

Members and Visitors please make note of your attendance by signing in on the pew pads.)

***Sharing the Peace of Christ**

Peace be with you

And also with you

Prelude

"Andante"

Williams

***The Call to Worship**

We come today with questions.

The presence of God is with us.

We come today with doubts.

The strength of Christ is with us.

We come today hoping for transformation.

The inspiration of the Spirit is with us.

Let us Imagine Together

* Hymn	"Creator God Creating Still"	#62
<p>Creator God, Creating still, by will and word and deed, create a new humanity to meet the present need.</p> <p>Redeemer God, redeeming still, with overflowing grace, pour out your love on us, throughout, make this a holy place.</p>	<p>Sustainer God, sustaining still, with strength for every day, empower us now to do your will. Correct us when we stray.</p> <p>Great Trinity, for this new day we need your presence still. Create, redeem, sustain us now to do your work and will.</p>	

***Gathering Prayer** *(In Unison)*

Living God, we know that all good gifts come from you. We believe in the strength of your Spirit to bring healing and renewal. We long for that vitality in our bodies, minds, and communities. Yet, it is so easy for us to feel discouraged when we are tired or overwhelmed. Rush into our worship today. Help us to see ourselves through your eyes, through water and Spirit. Encourage us as we *Imagine Together*. Amen.

Time for the Child

"Child of Blessing, Child of Promise"

Rev Katie Jo Bielke

**Child of God your loving parent,
Learn to listen for God's call
Grow to laugh and sing and worship,
Trust and love God more than all.**

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

Scriptures: John 3:1-10

Nicodemus Visits Jesus

3 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. 2 He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person." 3 Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." 4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. 6 What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' 8 The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." 9 Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" 10 Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?"

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Hymn	"Spirit"	#249
Chorus Spirit, Spirit of gentleness Blow through the wilderness Calling and free Spirit, Spirit of restlessness Stir me from placidness, Wind Wind on the sea You moved on the waters You called to the deep Then You coaxed up the mountains From the valleys of sleep And over the eons You called to each thing Awake from your slumbers And rise on your wings You swept through the desert You stung with the sand And you gifted your people With a law and a land When they were confounded With their idols and lies Then You spoke through Your prophets To open their eyes	You sang in a stable You cried from a hill Then You whispered in silence When the whole world was still And down in the city You called once again When You blew through Your people On the rush of the wind You call from tomorrow You break ancient schemes From the bondage of sorrow The captives dream dreams Our women see visions Our men clear their eyes With bold new decisions Your people arise	

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer *(In Unison)*

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

WE RESPOND TO THE WORD OF GOD

Testimonial

Jim Pisoni

Invitation to Give Generously

(Thank you for being so generous in your care of St. John's UCC and its mission, through your participation and giving. Your stewardship makes a difference. You may make your offering several ways including in church, online, by text at 833-502-0657, or mail. We are grateful for your support.)

Offertory

"Meditation"

Morrison

***Doxology** *(In Unison)*

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly hosts;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.**

***Prayer of Dedication** *(In Unison)*

Giving God, you have challenged us to do the work of vitality. It isn't always easy to commit our resources to community and to transformation. We pray that you would bless these gifts that we offer with the wind of your Spirit, so they may blow to the place they are most needed. Amen.

WE GO FORTH TO SERVE

*** Hymn**

"This Is a Day of New Beginnings"

#518

**This is a day of new beginnings,
time to remember and move on,
time to believe what love is bringing,
laying to rest the pain that's gone.**

**For by the life and death of Jesus,
God's mighty Spirit, now as then,
can make for us a world of difference,
as faith and hope are born again.**

**Then let us, with the Spirit's daring,
step from the past and leave behind
our disappointment, guilt and grieving,
seeking new paths, and sure to find.**

**In faith we gather round the table
to taste and share what love can do.
This is a day of new beginnings;
our God is making all things new.**

**In faith we'll gather round the table
to show and share what love can do.
This is a day of new beginnings;
our God is making all things new.**

Benediction

Pastor: Rev. Katie Jo Bielke
Liturgist: Carolyn Golfin
Usher Team: Ken Ruff
Technology: Steve Hawkinson
Fellowship/Lockup: Carol Tindira
Organist: Evelyn Weber

Announcements

We pray for
Karen (Scooter) Beatty, Kevin Beatty, Donna Dollgener, Rev. Dwayne Dollgener, Elizabeth Hart, Mark Lindberg, Cherie Messina and Gloria Vaclavik. Please let us know your prayer concerns. If you have private prayer concerns please speak with Rev Katie Jo Bielke.

Global Ministries requests that we pray with **Eswatini** this week

<p style="text-align: center;"> Totenfest 11/24/24 Service Liturgist: Amanda Jones Usher Team: Jim Pisoni Technology: Steve Hawkinson Fellowship/Lockup: Carol Tindira Special Music: Flautist </p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> Hope; First Sunday of Advent 12/01/24 Service Liturgist: Danny Mueller Usher Team: Larry Sontag Technology: Steve Hawkinson Fellowship/Lockup: Philip Difani Special Music: Handbells </p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> Peace; Second Sunday of Advent 12/08/24 Service Liturgist: Kathy Scherr Usher Team: John Bartelt Technology: Steve Hawkinson Fellowship/Lockup: Philip Difani </p>
--	---	---

... Looking Ahead November

Mon	11/18	6:00 PM	Council Meeting
Tue	11/19	6:00 PM	Cookies with Santa Prepwork
Wed	11/20	10:00 AM	Book Group “The Lincoln Highway” by Amor Towles.
Thu	11/21	5:00 PM	Newsletter Articles Due
		5:30 PM	Table Fellowship at Olive Garden <i>(please RSVP)</i>
Sun	11/24	9:20 AM	Loaves & Fishes
		9:45 AM	ECH Donations Due Take ornaments from the tree in the Narthex
		10:00 AM	Totenfest & Global Ministries Pray for Korea
Sun	11/24	11:00 AM	Mission Meeting
Sun	11/24	12 noon	Combined Thanksgiving Dinner <i>(RSVP Narthex or QR code below)</i>
<i>(Join us for a combined Thanksgiving Dinner in Fellowship Hall with St. Thomas and Ivy UCC churches.)</i>			
Thu	11/28 & 29		Thanksgiving (office closed)
Fri	11/29	8:00 AM	Biweekly Newsletter (subscribe)



RSVP TABLE FELLOWSHIP



Thanksgiving Dinner RSVP



ECH Shopping List



Metro Singers Concert



online giving



St. John's News & Events

Join us on Sundays

9:00 a.m. - **Fellowship** in Fellowship Hall
10:00 a.m. – **Sunday School**
10:00 a.m. – **Worship**
In-Person, Facebook Live, or Virtual

15370 Olive Blvd. Chesterfield MO 63017

(636) 532-0540

stjohnsuccconolive@gmail.com

www.stjohnsuccchesterfield.org

... Looking Ahead December

Sun	12/1	10:00 AM	Hope; First Sunday of Advent with Communion
		11:00 AM	Hanging of the Greens with luncheon to follow.
Mon	12/2	11:00 AM	Advent Bible Study
Tue	12/3		Giving Tuesday (please consider St John's)
Wed	12/4	11:00 AM	Senior Ministry Meeting
Thu	12/5	5:00 PM	Newsletter Articles Due
Sat	12/7	9:00 AM	Cookies with Santa at the carousel
Sun	12/8	10:00 AM	Peace; Second Sunday of Advent & GM Pray for Honduras
		10:00 AM	The Christmas Program
		2:00 PM	Sr Ministries Metro Singers Christmas Concert
Mon	12/9	11:00 AM	Advent Bible Study
		1:00 PM	Exec Council
Fri	12/13	8:00 AM	Biweekly Newsletter
Sat	12/14		Habitat Build Date
Sun	12/15	10:00 AM	Joy; Third Sunday of Advent & GM Pray for Hong Kong
Mon	12/16	11:00 AM	Advent Bible Study
		6:00 PM	Council Meeting
Tue	12/17	10:00 AM	Book Group Reading "Comfort and Joy" by Kristin Hannah
Wed	12/18		ECC Christmas Break Begins
Thu	12/19	5:00 PM	Newsletter Articles Due
Thu	12/19	5:30 PM	Table Fellowship at TBD
Sat	12/21	3:00 PM	Longest Night Service
Sun	12/22	9:20 AM	Loaves & Fishes
		10:00 AM	Love; Fourth Sunday of Advent & GM Pray for Afghanistan
		11:00 AM	Mission Meeting
Mon	12/23	11:00 AM	Advent Bible Study
Tue	12/24	4:00 PM	Christmas Eve Candle Light Service
Tue	12/24	7:00 PM	Christmas Eve Candle Light Service
Tue	12/24 & 25		Christmas (office closed)
Wed	12/25		Merry Christmas

Please check your News Notes/Website for specific information around upcoming activities

<https://www.stjohnsuccchesterfield.org/fellowship>



Imagine Together: Vitality

Nicodemus, initially criticized by Jesus, gradually evolves into a vibrant follower. His narrative highlights the importance of spiritual curiosity in maintaining vitality, addressing the tendency for stagnation and fear of change. How could a commitment to curiosity be transformative for us? The Covid pandemic forced churches to explore new ways of ministry. However, in this post-pandemic moment, many return to familiar patterns of the past. Have we lost our ability to experiment?

The story of Nicodemus serves as a model for gradual transformation, contrasting with more dramatic biblical conversions. As Rev. Dr. S. Chapin Garner notes, "Curiosity led Nicodemus from darkness to light, from ignorance to understanding, from stagnation to vitality. If we want to not only imagine but experience vitality, all we need to do is steward our natural God-given curiosity. Accept invitations. Explore new places. Get to know different people. And when the spirit within us is piqued...trust that prompting is from the Lord, and get excited to not only imagine, but experience, where we will be led!"

Embracing curiosity can be the key to experiencing and maintaining vitality. How can we steward curiosity in our congregation?