

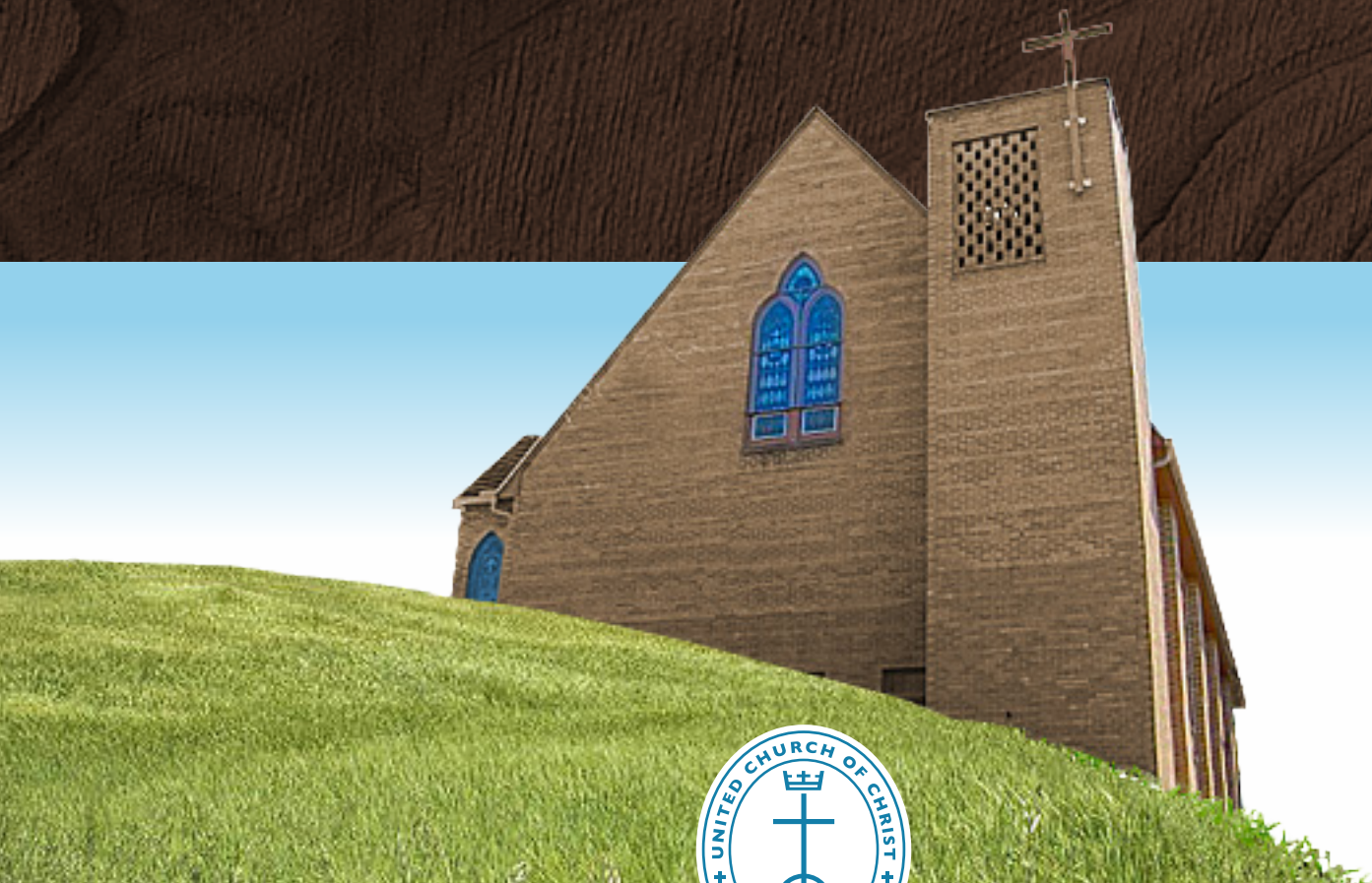


St. John's

United Church of Christ

Digital Newsletter

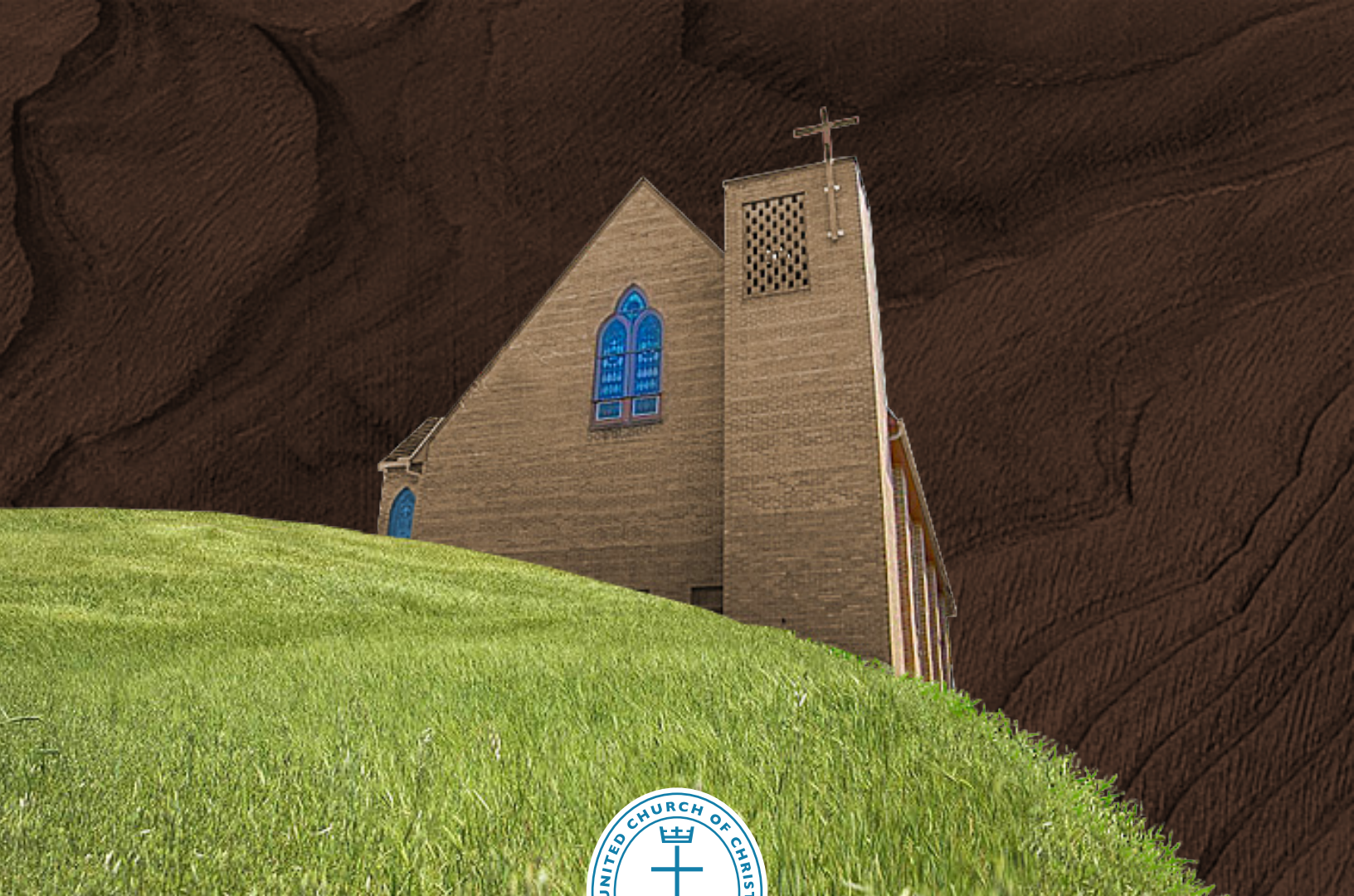
SJC Issue 0326 - March 2026



stjohnsfcwi.org

St. John's Church | PO Box 130 | 303 S Hill Street | Fountain City, WI

608.687.3277



Sunday Worship @ 10:30am

We offer two options for worship on Sundays: in person or online. Whether you prefer to worship from the safety of your home or with others, we at St. John's want to make sure you get the spiritual encouragement you need. Join us in person each Sunday at 10:30am or watch a video recording of the online service. The service is not recorded live but is uploaded after the service has ended. We look forward to worshipping with you!

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Letter From The Pastor

March 2026

As we go through Lent I usually sign up for a couple of extra devotions to appear in my inbox each morning. And sometimes they say something that 1) I think we all need to hear and 2) I could not say better if I tried. Later in the Newsletter you'll find information about upcoming Lenten and Easter services, as well as updates on the projects approved at the Annual Meeting in February. But before that I share with you this devotion by Kate Bowlers. It spoke deeply to me and I hope it will do the same for some of you. God's grace and peace, Pastor Deb.

Why the Faithful Might Need a Complain Department by Kate Bowlers

Lent has a branding problem.

Ask most Christians what Lent is for and you'll hear words like discipline, restraint, repentance, giving things up. Which is true—but incomplete. Lent is not only about what we renounce. It's also about what we finally tell the truth about.

And one of the truths we are worst at telling is this: **Some things hurt because something unfair happened, and no one ever really acknowledged it.**

We pray around this. We spiritualize over it. We turn it into gratitude exercises and growth metaphors. But we almost never say it plainly.

Which is strange, because the Bible is full of people doing exactly that.

If you listen closely to yourself—or to your friends—you'll notice something curious. There are stories we tell once, and then there are stories we tell a million times.

Continue...

Letter From The Pastor

March 2026

The story of the job you didn't get.
The conversation in which someone crossed a line.
The friendship that ended without explanation.
The church that harmed you and moved on as if nothing happened.
The diagnosis that was missed.
The apology that never came.

These stories are not rehearsed because we love drama. They repeat because they were never received.

We keep telling them because, somewhere deep down, we are still hoping for a witness. Or a reckoning. Or at the very least, a sentence that begins with: "You're not wrong. That shouldn't have happened."

In Christian spaces, these stories often get edited mid-sentence.

We are encouraged to forgive quickly.
To search for the lesson.
To ask what God might be teaching us.
To be careful not to sound bitter.

But Lent, of all seasons, invites us to stop managing our tone.

One of the quiet lies many Christians absorb is that complaint is the opposite of faith.

But biblically speaking, complaint is not faithlessness. *It's relationship.*

Continue...

Letter From The Pastor

March 2026

The Psalms are not polished prayers; they are protest letters (interspersed with a few pretty intense calls for vengeance that sound awkward when we read them out loud before the kids' sermon.) The prophets do not file their concerns politely; they rail against the powers and principalities. Job does not resolve his suffering with insight; he lodges a case.

Complaint, in Scripture, is what people do when they still believe Someone is listening.

It's what happens when ache moves from the body to language.

And that's the shift Lent makes possible: from unnamed ache →to articulated grievance.

I feel like I've been waiting a long time for someone to say this to me, so let me joyfully say it to you: this Lent, you might have some serious complaining to do.

My best friend and I invented something we call "The List" when we were in college and new to being regularly wronged. The List was a shorthand for the most unfair, most infuriating, most heartbreaking events that life had thrown at us. Something terrible happens and we text each other: "ADDING THIS TO THE LIST"

Together, we were filing formal paperwork with the Complaints Department of the Universe.

It was never written down, not really, but it was real enough. It was our way of keeping track of the terrible things that happened to us that really stuck. Did I have a teenage blowout with my sister over a Club Monaco shirt? Yes, but that doesn't make the ledger of grievances. Items that make The List are painful, calcified, irrefutable evidence that something bad happened. And it left its mark.

Continue...

Letter From The Pastor

March 2026

Like the time I watched a friend publicly absorb blame for something she didn't do because the truth would have embarrassed someone more powerful. Or the year I kept waiting for an apology that never came, only to realize that the silence was the answer.

Well, that's on The List. That's on *The List* forever.

The List is reserved for the moments when something went wrong in a way that never got put right.

My best friend and I were so deeply anxious about seeming bitter or unspiritual that, for a long time, we weren't sure we could even admit these things to ourselves. But, in retrospect, we needed The List more than we needed a Gratitude List. We were completely out of practice in being honest.

There is something clarifying—almost stabilizing—about being able to say: *That mattered. That hurt. That counts.*

Spiritually speaking, The List did something important. It took our ache out of the vague, swirling chaos of our nervous systems and gave it language. It stopped us from turning every injustice inward, from assuming that if something hurt this much it must somehow be our fault.

Which, incidentally, is a very Lenten skill.

Because Lent is not just a season of restraint. It is a season of truth-telling. A season where we stop rushing past pain toward meaning and instead sit long enough to name what actually happened.

Continue...

Letter From The Pastor

March 2026

When we complain honestly—without polishing it into a testimony or redeeming it into a lesson—we do something spiritually countercultural. We refuse to confuse silence with holiness. We refuse to confuse forgiveness with amnesia. We refuse to call unfinished business “growth.”

Complaint, practiced this way, becomes a form of prayer.

So if you are looking for a Lenten practice this year—something ancient, biblical, and mildly inappropriate for polite Christian conversation—I humbly recommend filing a few formal grievances.

How to File a Complaint During Lent

A Brief Guide for the Faithful

- 1. Start with what you repeat.** Not sure where to begin? Think about a story you end up retelling. If it wasn't important, you probably wouldn't be telling it for the zillionth time to the person next to you on a plane.
- 2. Begin with the facts.** Name names! Someone didn't hurt you in general. It was Linda!
- 3. Use complete sentences.** God can handle specificity. (This is for your eyes only.)
- 4. Avoid adding a moral lesson at the end.** Don't worry about feeling like a good person. This is not about that.
- 5. Repeat as needed.** If it comes back, it has not been received.

Continue...

Letter From The Pastor

March 2026

6. **Feel free to use humor.** *The Psalms do.*

7. **Trust that honesty is not disobedience.** *It is often the beginning of faith. And if it still feels odd, let's remember Jesus had some complaints about heading to the cross. We can do hard things, but we don't always have to be happy about them.*

Lent does not immediately ask us to be nicer versions of ourselves. It asks us to move toward God with honesty.

I can say, quite openly, that I never would have stayed a Christian if I didn't believe God wasn't equally outraged by my cancer, my misdiagnosis, and the things that have happened along the way that couldn't be undone. It did me a world of good to picture the great creator of the universe putting down other people's paperwork to hear about what happened to me.

Because sometimes the most faithful thing you can say—before repentance, before surrender, before resurrection—is simply this: *God, I am adding this to The List.*

Author Of The Devotional ~

Kate Bowlers



Sunday Penny Collection

First Sunday of the Month

The Church School Students will be collecting pennies the first Sunday of every month. This money enables the children to choose how their donations go to people or projects in our area or throughout the world.

Sunday, March 1, 2026



Online Calendar

Visit Us Online 24/7

Please go online and visit our NEW easy to use website for current up-to-date, detailed event information. Our calendar is updated daily. Email us with any questions or comments.

stjohnsfzwi.org



Brats 4 Xylophones

C-FC Fundraiser

St. John's Church of Fountain City and Hope United Church of Cochrane will have a Fundraiser event on Thursday March 5, 2026 from 5:00pm to 6:25pm at C-FC School. Prior to Pops Band and Choir Concert. Proceeds go to Xylophones. Menu: Maloney's Brat or Hot Dog, Beans, Chips, Beverage and Dessert for \$7.00. Meals can be purchased ahead of time by contacting stjohnsuccfc@gmail.com. Thanks to B&S Express in Buffalo City, Kwik Trip in Fountain City and Midtown Foods in Winona, MN for their donations towards this effort

Thursday, March 5, 2026

- ✓ Brats 4 Xylophones
- ✓ C-FC School
- ✓ 5:00pm - 6:25pm
- ✓ Meals: \$7:00
- ✓ Prior To Concert



Annual Meeting

Projects Update

At Annual Meeting the congregation authorized the replacement/repair of three major capital items- replacement of the furnace system, replacing the Sanctuary sound system, and replacing the three windows in Fellowship Hall. The congregation voted to pay for these need repairs and replacements from the church's investment funds, and them have a Capital Campaign to reimburse the funds taken for these projects. We gratefully and joyfully announce that two of the three projects have been paid for thanks to the generosity of two of our members.

For those unable to attend the Annual Meeting: When one of the two furnaces for the sanctuary went out, it was discovered the venting of the system through the chimney had issues that were not repairable. Thanks to Bill Ruben and Stephen Prussing we were able to secure a bid in time for the meeting to be considered. It is for the replacement of the furnace system with a new venting that will run out of the back of the church building. This includes replacing all the furnaces. We are grateful to John Stettler who gave a donation to cover the full cost of the replacement.

Replacing the sound system in the sanctuary was another high-cost item on the agenda. Our current one is from years ago when the sound system went out and the contractor gave us what they had on hand. Over the last few months there have been several instances when microphones have cut out during the service, as well as several people who attend through the online service remarking that there has been a change in the sound quality. After the Annual Meeting Bert Schaffner gave a donation to the church to cover the cost of replacing this system.

Thanks to the generosity of these two members, our need for funds for the large capital expenses for these repairs has been cut by two-thirds. The Consistory is currently working to obtain bids to replace the Fellowship Windows. During the repairs made to the other windows in the church last summer it was discovered that these three were not repairable and were in danger of falling out over the next year or two. After bids are received and the Consistory has a chance to choose a contractor they will reevaluate the extent of a capital campaign to reimburse the investment funds for the funds withdrawn.

One Great Hour of Sharing

Special Offering

For over 75 years, the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering (OGHS) has been helping Christians bring God' hope and healing to hurting people both in the US and around the world.

OGHS's mission is to support domestic and international development, fight poverty and its consequences, bring aid and relief to communities torn by war or ravaged by national disaster, provide advocacy and resettlement assistance for refugees and displaced persons, and combat injustice in its many forms. OGHS provides funding and hands-on assistance in collaboration with local and international partners.

Each year, OGHS is gathered by several denominations and Church World Service (CWS) under a single theme developed by the ecumenical OGHS Committee.

In the United Church of Christ, the Global H.O.P.E. team oversees the distribution of the offering. You can learn more about this team at www.ucc.org/global-hope.

Thank you for supporting One Great Hour of Sharing for over 75 years. You continue to embody a love offering to the world.

Sunday, March 15, 2026



Palm Sunday

10:30am | St. John's Church | Fountain City, WI
Sunday, March 29, 2026

Maundy Thursday

6:00pm | St. John's Church | Fountain City, WI
Thursday, April 2, 2026

Good Friday

6:00pm | Hope United Church | Cochrane, WI
Thursday, April 3, 2026

Easter Sunrise Worship

6:30am | Eagle Valley Church | Fountain City, WI
Sunday, April 5, 2026

Easter Sunday Worship

10:30am | St. John's Church | Fountain City, WI
Sunday, April 20, 2026

C-FC Area Food Shelf

Report For February 2026

As part of our Stewardship as a church please consider a monetary donation or food donation for our Food Shelf here at Church. See list below of our most needed items. This past year we have been much busier than usual providing food to people in need in our community. If we want to continue this service we do need your assistance to continue. Please put your donation of food in the green bin at church located in the Food Shelf room across from Pastor Deb's office or your monetary donations can be placed in the offering plate or mailed to church with checks made out to [C-FC Area Food Shelf - St. John's Church, PO Box 130, Fountain City WI, 54629.](#)

Donations Most Needed:

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| ✓ Toilet Paper | ✓ Crackers (Saltines) | ✓ Canned Chili |
| ✓ Canned /Ham/Salmon | ✓ Rice/Pasta Pouches | ✓ Canned Stew |
| ✓ Cake/Brownie | ✓ Vegetable Spray | ✓ Spices |
| ✓ Muffin Mixes | ✓ Brown Rice | ✓ Spam |
| ✓ Canned Frosting | ✓ V8/Tomato Juice | ✓ Salad Dressing |
| ✓ Instant Oatmeal | ✓ Boost | ✓ Ketchup |
| ✓ Cereal (Healthier) | ✓ Ensure | ✓ BBQ Sauce |

1st & 3rd Monday: 4:30pm - 6:30pm
2nd & 4th Wednesday: 3:00pm - 5:00pm



- ✓ 873 Pounds Of Food Distributed
- ✓ Averages 15 Pounds Of Food Per Person
- ✓ 58 Total People Helped
- ✓ 12 Children
- ✓ 23 Adults
- ✓ 23 Seniors
- ✓ 25 Households (4 Came Twice)

Volunteers: March

Ushers

Richard Ruben, Bill Ruben

Greeters

03.01.26 Randy & Judy Boehm
03.08.26 Bob & Sherry Guenther
03.15.26 Bev Engel
03.22.26 Sue Kreher
03.29.26 Sandy & Tom Ruben

Counters

Randy & Judy Boehm

Communion & Flowers

Sue Schaffner

Financial Report

For detailed information regarding the financial standing of St. John's Church, contact the office to review financial documents.

St. John's Church
United Church of Christ
303 S Hill Street
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Birthdays

Nick Pehler
Tucker Pozanc
Carly Schaffner
Calvin Stettler
Everett Engler
Sue Kreher
Mallory Wicka
John Reiter
David Fugina
Macy Tennant
Isaac Wolfe
Jared Schaffner
Jason Schaffner
Greg Osborn
Margaret Dietrich
Werner Engel
Louis Kuhn
Austin Repinski
Tom Ruben
Heidi Wachowiak
David Schaffner
Ella Walth
Neal Schaffner
Bryan Guenther
Cienna Cheney
Brian Semling
Mary Schmitt
Sherry Hoch
Oliver Engler
Gina Guenther

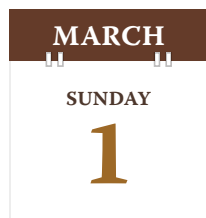
Anniversaries

Mike & Chris Fetting
Bryan & Laura Madsen

Other Special Events

St. John's Church

Along with our Sunday Worship Service schedule, Pastor Deb's Office Hours, Consistory Meetings, Food Shelf Schedule and other recurring events. Below is a list of SPECIAL EVENTS located at St. John's Church and or the local area. Please contact us with any questions. Thanks again for all the support from volunteer and the community.



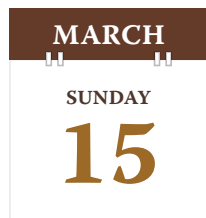
Penny Collection St. John's Church

303 S Hill Street
Fountain City, WI
Starts @ 10:30am



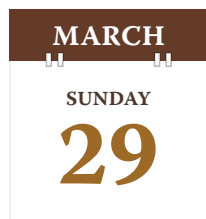
Consistory Meeting St. John's Church

303 S Hill Street
Fountain City, WI
Starts @ 6:00pm



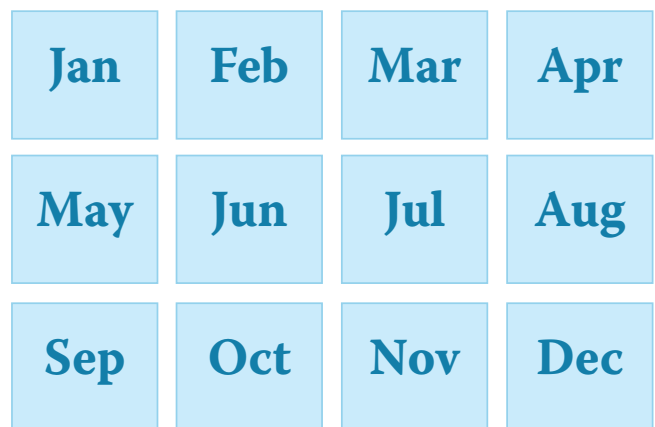
One Great Hour Of Sharing St. John's Church

303 S Hill Street
Fountain City, WI
Starts @ 10:30am



Palm Sunday St. John's Church

303 S Hill Street
Fountain City, WI
Starts @ 10:30



Online Calendar

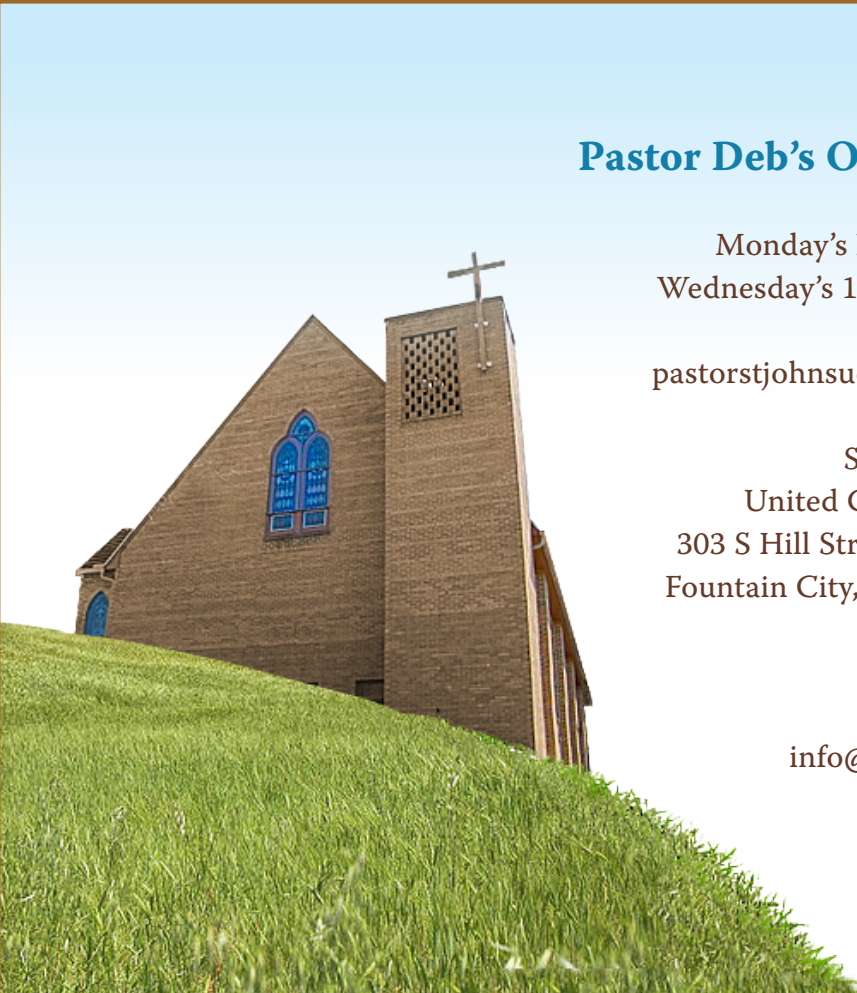
Please go online and visit our NEW easy to use website for current up-to-date, detailed event information. Our calendar is updated daily. Email us with any questions or comments.

stjohnsfcwi.org
info@stjohnsfcwi.org

Prayer Requests

St. John's Church - Pastor Deb Kunkel

Congregation members and non-members are encouraged to request prayers for times of need, comfort, healing, celebration and joy. If you would like a visit from Pastor Deb, please call her to set up a time today!



Pastor Deb's Office Hours:

Monday's Noon to 2:00pm
Wednesday's 10:00am to Noon
239.994.2528
pastorstjohnsuccfc@gmail.com

St. John's Church
United Church of Christ
303 S Hill Street, PO Box 130
Fountain City, WI 54629-0130

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St. John's

United Church of Christ

Church Office:

stjohnsuccfc@gmail.com

Newsletter:

stjohnsfcnewsletter@gmail.com

Pastor Deb's Office Hours:

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