

# ST. JAMES UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LIMERICK, PA

## AUGUST 2024 NEWSLETTER

St. James United Church of Christ in Limerick, PA is called to be disciples of Christ providing a caring, supportive, welcoming and inclusive community. We seek to faithfully spread the good news of Jesus Christ through generous mission, loving fellowship and curiosity about the Bible and our faith, with the help of God.

*Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."* John 6:35

Dear St. James family,

In August, we will be looking at the Gospel of John, and Jesus' difficult sayings about how we should eat his flesh and drink his blood. What does this stuff mean and how do we trust it?

One thing that tends to go wrong when people read the Bible is they take things literally, reading only on the surface (even the characters in John, like Nicodemus, tend to take Jesus at his literal word) and trying to parse out what it all means. Even in the Church, for instance, people grapple with ideas about the bread. They ask, "Is it really Jesus' body? And who can partake in the eating of this bread?" When this happens though, people are missing the point. Jesus is not calling us to be vampires or cannibals. But Jesus wants us to take him in - to get close to him. So close that we are one. So close that it is "no longer I but Christ who lives in me." (Gal. 2:20) When we have a talking and listening relationship with God, this becomes possible.

But how do we trust it? How do we trust that we can be one with God and that God can do amazing things in and through us? With people, we often have to prove we can be trusted before others will reveal their true selves to us. Many do not want to be vulnerable with someone they don't know well. With God, we have to trust from the outset that God will not harm us, and that it's okay to be vulnerable with our Creator. God says some surprising things, but the Divine will not harm us. The more we talk to God and listen, and act upon what we hear, the more we will find this to be true. Paul says to pray continually. It should be a constant practice on our part. Building relationships always are.

I had an opportunity to practice my trust in God on vacation recently. I was on my way home from Pittsburgh when I encountered a severe rainstorm. My GPS advised me to take a "safer" route home, away from the turnpike and adding a half-hour to my trip. I resisted, and the storm began, and I just kept talking to God. Go slowly, and keep my hazards on, and I'll be fine. The storm was hard, and when my GPS gave me another "safer" route, I decided that was a sign to get off the turnpike. I was grateful to see some familiar roads - the one I took to seminary, and one I used to take to a church I used to work for. It still rained hard - the "safer" route did not keep me from the rain. But as I kept driving, I would talk to God, "Thank you for getting me this far, God, only ten miles to go." "Five miles." "One mile." And on and on until I was safely in my garage. I never stopped talking to God - not through the twists and turns, not through the big puddles I encountered and prayed through and safely drove around and through. I gave God my trust and gratitude as I traveled, with a minimum of nervousness on my part. My trust in God got me home. I'm sure of that. (continued on page 2)

August letter FROM PASTOR BETH Continued:

Let us trust God in the sunshine and in the rainstorms, and know that when we are one with God, life won't necessarily be easier, but it will get better, and God will see us through it all. As a result, we will grow and change and transform into better versions of what God created us to be. Come and see.

With love in Christ,

Pastor Beth

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### Save the Date—October 22, 2024

Join us in participation of Boscov's *Friends Helping Friends* event. Sell a ticket giving the recipient 10% to 25% off purchases at Boscov's on October 22, 2024. Tickets for the event can be obtained with a \$5 donation. Tickets are available prior to October 22 and at the store on October 22. We are looking for your help by selling tickets prior to the event or to volunteer to man the table in the store on October 22. Your participation will help make this a profitable fundraiser for St. James! See Donna Serina to obtain tickets.

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### An Opportunity to Learn.....

All across the country, on Sunday mornings, pastors of the United Church of Christ welcome their congregation and community to worship sharing these meaningful words, "No matter who you are, no matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." This simple greeting means that everyone is welcome!

Although discussions and actions have been happening since the later part of the 1980's, only recently have we noticed signs and symbolic flags by churches announcing their commitment to be "Open and Affirming", or ONA. This means that all are welcome! It means that there is a safe space where each and every person can be their authentic self and they are valued as part of the church and are part of the family of God.

We invite you to join us and come together as we engage in meaningful conversations, embrace diversity, grow a culture of love and respect and together, learn more about what it means to be Open and Affirming. On Saturday, October 12th., Rev. Bill Worley, PSEC minister, will join us for food and fellowship followed by a discussion about ONA.. Come and bring your questions! This is an opportunity for St. James UCC to learn together!

Submitted by Laura Walters

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**Potluck Dinners** will resume on September 14.



### Women's Fellowship 2024 Schedule

September 16	Monday Dinner Out at SpringFord Diner, 5 pm
October 22	Boscov's Day Fund Raiser
October 26	Saturday Fall Rummage Sale
November 23	Saturday Fill Stockings for Salvation Army, 10 am
December TBD	Christmas Tea

### Line dancing Parties

Our August line dancing party will take place on **Monday, August 26 from 7-10 pm!** This is a change from our Friday parties. Our line dancing parties will occur on the *4th Monday of the month*, when we will have less conflict with other parties going on in the area. DJ Jim Dawson will be our DJ and instructor. He teaches short dances with easy steps done repetitively, and focuses on beginners so if you've never tried it, come on out! Please tell your friends and neighbors as everyone is invited to the party. There will be a \$10 fee/\$5 for church members and kids ages 12-17. Under 12 free. Proceeds from the August party will benefit Pottstown Beacon of Hope.



**Summer Time Change:** in August, worship will begin at 9:30 am.

### **Outdoor Services**

Sunday church services will be held outdoors in the church pavilion on August 4, and Aug 18, weather permitting.

Please sign up to help set up for these services. Thank you.



**Chamber of Commerce Zumba Class**

On Friday, August 2, the Spring Ford Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a Zumba class in Fellowship Hall from 8:00—9:00 am for their Women in Networking meeting. All ladies from St. James are welcome to participate, as we are members of the Chamber. Please bring comfortable shoes. Pastor Beth will be present. Let her know if you have any questions at [pastor@stjames-ucc.org](mailto:pastor@stjames-ucc.org).

**Gospel of Mark Bible Study returns!**

The Gospel of Mark Bible study will be returning on **Monday, September 16 at 1:00**.

- ✓ This will be a hybrid class—both in person and on Zoom. While we are getting close to the end of the gospel, everyone is welcome to participate as we discuss the end of Jesus' life. Stay tuned for when the study of Mark is over for new learning opportunities!

**Midweek study returns on *What is the Bible?***

Our midweek study will return on **Wednesday, September 11 at 1:00** as Pastor Beth and Laura Walters will facilitate a discussion on the lively, engaging and informative book by Rob Bell, *What is the Bible?* This will be presented on Zoom, and will last for five weeks, ending on October 9.

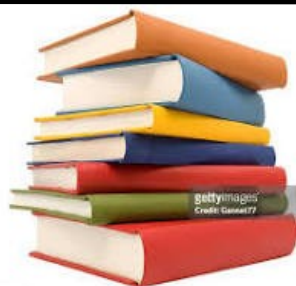
**Mindfulness workshop**

Emotional wellness and Leadership Coach Navixha “Navi” Bagga will lead a workshop on mindfulness on **Sunday September 22** after worship. Navi is a member of the Spring Ford Chamber of Commerce. More details in the September newsletter, but mark your calendars!

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Please **save the tabs** from your soda cans for Keira Serina. The tabs will be collected to benefit Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. A **jar** for this is on the table in the narthex.

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**Spiritual Library -The Little Free Library**—Have you visited the Spiritual Library lately? We have added additional books and there is now a binder with categories and books listed under each one. Also visit the Little Library outside for casual reading.

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- \* Volunteers are needed to read Scripture during the service, see Charlotte Fiedler
- \* The church is in need of used highchairs or booster seats, see Charlotte Fiedler
- \* The worship committee is seeking new members, see Charlotte Fiedler
- \* You can provide or sponsor altar flowers to honor someone or an event, see Donna Serina or Beth Miller, altar guild volunteers for August.

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*For our friends Heather Yates, Melissa Moore, Sang Hi Crater and others who are in long term care or unable to leave their homes. We pray for comfort, peace, healing, and companionship for each of them.*

*For our friends Dan S, Priscilla M, Daran B, Barb G, Shirley, Van S, Ken M, Brian S, Cheryl, Jim S, Alison L, Jackie, Dee L, Betsy R, Ginny T, JC, Paul M, Amy D, Barb M, Christine J, Barb G, Jean S, Michelle, Paul M, Bonnie, BJ, Ric F, Linda S, John K, Tabby, Karen, Phil, Dodie S, Carol T, Kork M, Don G, and all cancer survivors, we pray for treatment where it is possible and release from suffering where it is needed.*

*For our friends Shorty, Betty M, Paul M, Barbara B, Judy, Franklin R, Russell B, Lorraine R, Kevin, Shaun, Marion H, Brian, Kenny B, Mary Lou B, Sonny B, Cathy M, and others with ongoing health concerns and challenging life circumstances. May they be reassured of God's presence through the support of our congregation.*

*Prayers for all veterans that are still suffering from PTSD and all other side effects from their service in the military.*

**Lord, we come to you with praise and thanksgiving. We thank you for the healing of many and pray for all who are still struggling with medical issues. We pray for comfort for those who have lost loved ones and friends. Fill them with your comfort and peace. We pray for all who are being affected with wars that peace may be found. We pray that you continue to guide and walk with us through our greatest needs. Help us to spread our love to all we meet. We pray for wholeness and healing of mind, body and spirit upon us all. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.**

Please note that we will remove names on the prayer list after one month, except for homebound and hospitalized members. Let us know if you would like to add or renew a request by contacting Charlotte Fiedler by phone or email.

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### PRAYING FOR OUR FELLOW MEMBERS OF ST. JAMES

Initiated by St. James Prayer Team, each Sunday two church families are being included in the Sunday worship prayer time. You are invited to include these members and their families in your prayers throughout that week.

August 04 —Michael & Michele Terbush and James & Cynthia Valerio

August 18— Bob & Laura Walters and Lillian Weidner

August 25— Millie Alderfer and Ralph & Linda Bevan



CALENDAR

AUGUST 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2 ZUMBA 8-9 am	3 Men's breakfast 8:30 am
4 Worship service outdoors 9:30 am Outdoors in the pavilion with communion	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 Worship service 9:30 am, with 3 Fold Blessing	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 Worship service 9:30 am outdoors in the pavilion	19 Line Dancing 7—10 pm	20	21	22	23	24
25 Worship service 9:30 am	26	27	28	29	30	31

## **AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES**

17 Charles & Marion Hentz  
30 Philip & Joanne Levering

## **AUGUST BIRTHDAYS**

3 Laura Walters  
14 Anastasia Schell  
26 Richard Sarfert  
29 Audrey Grace Smith



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### **2024 CONSISTORY**

Richard Fiedler, President  
Bob Walters, V. President  
Kristen Serina, Secretary  
Cindy Valerio  
Ken Raspen  
Jay Smith  
Susan Myers  
Laura Walters

#### **Officers:**

Tom Mogel, Financial Sec.  
Margie Schweitzer, Historian  
Jay Smith, Treasurer

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**Materials for the September Newsletter are due to the office on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024.**

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### **CONTACT THE CHURCH**

321 South Limerick Rd.  
Limerick, PA 19468  
610-489-0990  
[www.stjames-ucc.org](http://www.stjames-ucc.org)  
Rev. Beth Eustis  
[pastor@stjames-ucc.org](mailto:pastor@stjames-ucc.org)  
*Music Director/Organist:*  
*Donna Pinto*  
[music@stjames-ucc.org](mailto:music@stjames-ucc.org)  
(610) 792-1679  
*Church office hours*  
Mon. & Thurs. 1pm–4pm  
[office@stjames-ucc.org](mailto:office@stjames-ucc.org)  
“Like” us on Facebook!  
[www.facebook.com/stjamesucc](http://www.facebook.com/stjamesucc)

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321 South Limerick Road  
Limerick, PA 19468