



ST. JAMES UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LIMERICK, PA

JANUARY 2025 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.

⁴The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. ⁵The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.

Psalm 29:4-5

Dear St. James family,

Happy New Year! In January, one of the things we will talk about is Psalm 29. This Psalm mentions “the voice of the Lord” seven times. Seven is a number of wholeness and completeness in the Bible, along with three, twelve and forty. We will talk about how the voice of God is powerful. Many of us have been taught that God is all-powerful. I believe that is true, but I think some folks get all-powerful mixed up with all-controlling. Even biblical scholars, in my opinion, are getting it wrong. To be powerful is to be able to have the potential to influence, but to control is to direct or manipulate something or someone to your will. God is very powerful, but does not control. If God did control everything, in a way, wouldn’t everything be better? No more climate change to worry about, no wars, no shootings, no illnesses, no car accidents. So to me, God created but does not control. We have been given the gift of free will. God loves us so much that God would prefer that we choose to love the Divine out of our own free will, and not because of Divine manipulation. God doesn’t work that way.

And because God doesn’t work that way, this means we have the opportunity to choose to be closer to God. We can choose to pray and listen and act on what we hear, or not. We can choose to come to worship. We can choose to help those in need. We can choose to be in relationship with God and with each other. When we choose God, we are choosing challenge, joy, peace, comfort, love, grace, hope, courage, wisdom and so much more. When we choose God, we are choosing to work with God to work for justice for the marginalized. When we choose God, we are choosing to make changes to our lives that will be for the better. When we choose God, we are choosing to love God and the world that God so loves. Let’s choose to let God’s power work in us in 2025!

With love in Christ,

Pastor Beth

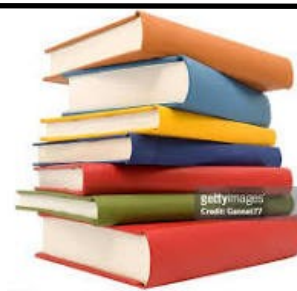
February will be the month devoted to collecting "Seeds for Moringa". This marks our 11th year of sending seeds to our friends in Ghana for planting in their community garden. The seeds can be any variety....but they do grow a lot of tomatoes, squash, pumpkins and corn. They appreciate the packets of flowers we have also included! We will be mailing them the first week of March in hopes of allowing them to plant before the Spring rains. Thanks for your cooperation on this project!!

Submitted by Sandy Koenig



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

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.



You can provide or sponsor altar flowers to honor someone or an event, see Laura Walters, altar guild volunteer for January.

There will be a Line Dancing Party near the end of January, date TBD. More information will be provided in the weekly bulletins,



The **Missions Committee** is seeking your help in determining the focus of our Mission Partners for the coming year (2025). Please be in touch with any of the committee (Jay Smith, Kristen Serina, Linda Kramer or Sandy Koenig) to let them know of your interest!

Midweek study will watch *The Chosen*

Pastor Beth will facilitate a discussion on season one of the TV series *The Chosen* starting on Wednesday, January 15 at 1:00 via Zoom. This show is available on Hulu, The CW, Peacock, Amazon Prime Video and through its free app, among others. *The Chosen* is the dramatized story of Jesus and his disciples. Participants should watch one episode per week and we will discuss on Wednesdays. **If you are unable** to watch the show at home, Pastor Beth will show each episode on Wednesdays at noon at the church, prior to the 1 pm discussion time. This class is open to the community, so please feel free to invite your friends. Any questions, please email Pastor Beth at pastor@stjames-ucc.org.

Increasing Love

by Leo Tolstoy

I believe in this: I believe in God, whom I understand as Spirit, as Love, as the Source of all. I believe that He is in me and I in Him...I believe that man's true welfare lies in fulfilling God's will, and His will is that men should love one another and should consequently do to others as they wish others to do to them – of which it is said in the Gospels that in this is the law and the prophets.

I believe therefore that the meaning of the life of every man is to be found only in increasing the love that is in him; that this increase of love leads man, even in this life, to ever greater and greater blessedness. And after death gives him the more blessedness, and the more love he has, and helps more than anything else toward the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth; that is, to the establishment of an order of life in which the discord, deception, and violence that now rule will be replaced by free accord, by truth, and by the brotherly love of one for another.

I believe that to obtain progress in love there is only one means: prayer...private prayer, like the sample given us by Jesus, consisting of the renewing and strengthening in our consciousness of the meaning of our life and of our complete dependence on the will of God.

submitted by Charlotte Fiedler

Ring Out, Wild Bells (from In Memoriam)

By Lord Alfred Tennyson

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.
Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.
Ring out the grief that saps the mind
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.
Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.
Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes
But ring the fuller minstrel in.
Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.
Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.
Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.



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 Ruth Ann W, Vickie K, Debarah B, 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 Siena J, Barbara B, Wyatt W, Bob S, Beaner, Laura W, Kris B, Wendel K, Elaine W, Marion H, Mary Lou B, Sonny B, 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 before you with praises and thanksgiving. We thank you for the healing you have given many of your children and ask that you continue to heal those that need your healing. We pray for those that have lost loved ones and friends, that you give them peace and comfort. Help us to take time to be still and listen to you. We pray for your Spirit's guidance each day in all we say and do. We pray for wholeness and healing of mind, body and spirit upon us all. In Jesus' name we pray. 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.

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.

January 12— Beth Miller and Pete & Mae Mogel

January 19— Thomas Mogel and Melissa Moore

January 26— Melissa A. Moore and Edward & Susan Myers

CALENDAR

JANUARY 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 Happy New Year	2	3	4 Men's breakfast 8:30 am
5 Worship service 10:15 am with Rev. Mike Todd	6 Girl Scouts 5:30 Boy Scouts 7pm	7	8	9	10	11 Fellowship dinner 5 pm
12 Worship service 10:15 am	13 Boy Scouts 7pm	14 Consistory meeting 7 pm	15	16 Worship committee meeting 1 pm	17	18
19 Worship service 10:15 am	20 Girl Scouts 5:30 Boy Scouts 7pm	21	22	23	24	25
26 Worship service 10:15 am, ANNUAL MEETING	27 Boy Scouts 7 pm	28	29	30	31	



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

9 Barbara Brightbill
21 Leisel Sarfert



JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

3 Wendell & Sandy Koenig
22 Colin & Jenna Homa

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

Materials for the February 2025 Newsletter are due to the office on January 20th, 2025.

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