

Tower Times

A Newsletter of St. John's United Church of Christ

515 E. 3rd St. Dayton, OH 45402

March, 2021



Dear Friends,

“What comes next?” If you have a copy of the March 2020 Tower Times around, you’ll see that was the subject of my article for that month. Little did you, I, or anyone else really seem to know just how many things were “coming up next” for our lives when March 2020 began! Oddly enough, in March 2021, I think many of us are still asking the question, “what comes next?” For St. John’s, this is a tricky question to answer.

As was alluded to in last month’s issue of TT, there are things we know and then there are things that we just simply do not know. When is it safe to open? What practices are low risk? What practices are high risk? Do those practices vary by age? How do you stay safe for the largest group of folks?

Oy! The questions seem limitless right now!

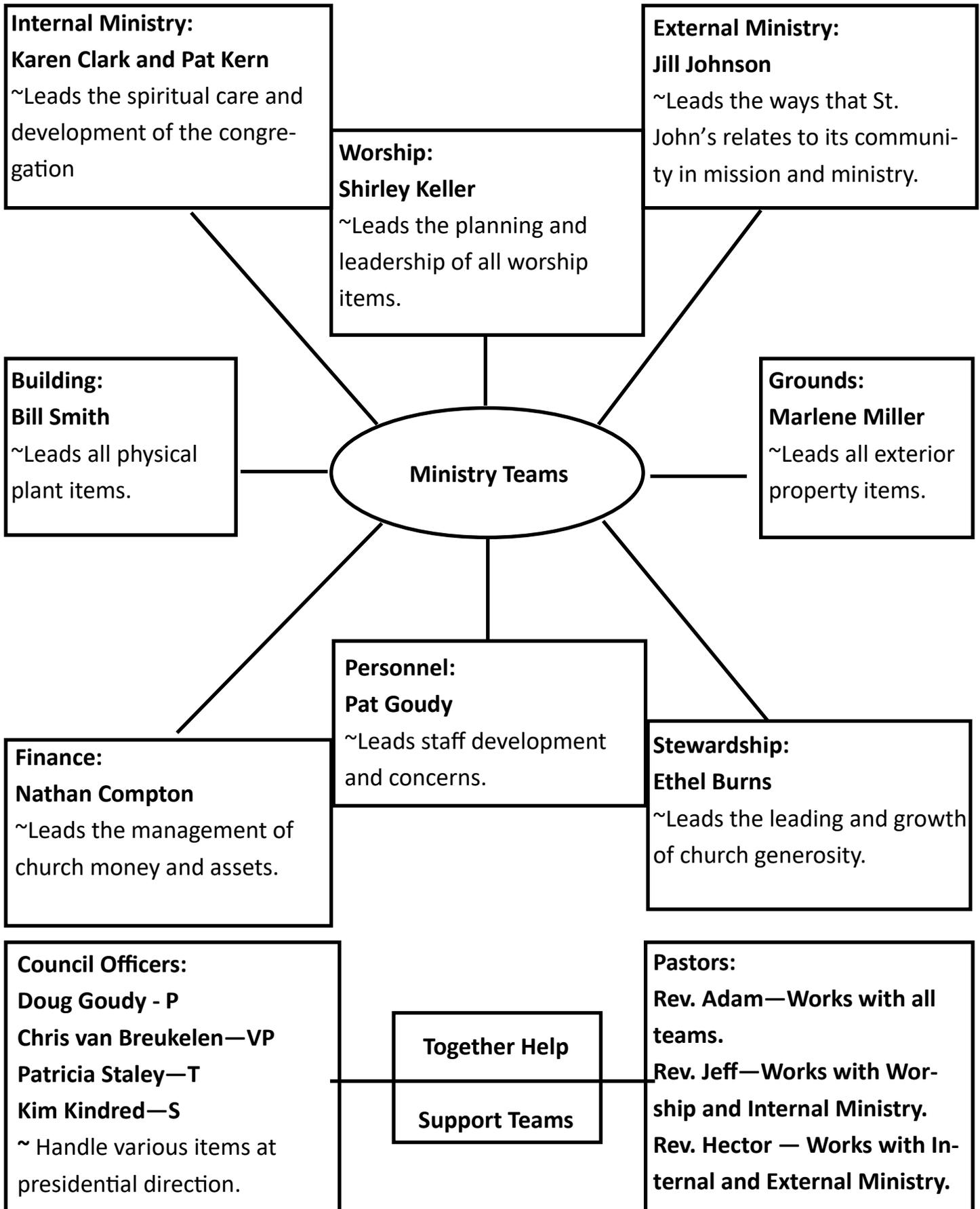
While I can’t offer you many details at this point, I can tell you that St. John’s is closer to reopening for in-person worship than it was last month. While we **are** getting closer to reopening, there are still some things that need to happen in the interim time. We need to see cases drop. We need to see alerts lowered. We need to have a coherent strategy for when we emerge from this crisis. This last point is, from an organizational standpoint, perhaps the most critical.

Before we reopen to the general public, Council and the Pastoral Team need to have a clear plan of **who St. John’s is**, after the last 12 months, **what we want to do as a community of faith**, in light of the new world we live in, and **how we’re going to do it all**, with regard to digital, in-person, and other forms of ministry. In preparation for this, Council and the pastors are all reading “The Post Quarantine Church” by Thom Rainer. This book, and the conversations it both has and continue to provoke, is based around the premise that our world has seen a rather irreversible paradigm shift. There will be no return to “business as usual” because both the ways of the world and the outlook of its people have been drastically altered in this time of pandemic. In a great number of ways, we are going to have to re-launch a brand new church within this historic setting. That doesn’t mean leaving our heritage or even giving up all (though maybe some) of our traditions, but it does mean a great re-imagining and re-engaging and that requires a good deal of preparation and planning.

So what will all the things that come next look like? Again, I don’t know, but you’ll find, within this issue, information that helps for understanding where we are and also an article that helps challenge us to consider where we might go with our future?

Whatever comes next, it’s certainly going to be interesting! ~Rev. Adam

As A Reminder: Who Does What Around Here ?!?!



Lofty Words

By Rev. Jeffrey Campbell, Minister of Worship

All of March is a Lenten month this year. Palm Sunday is the last Sunday, March 28.

Maundy Thursday is April 1, Good Friday is April 2 and Easter Sunday is April 4.

We made changes in our Sunday service to observe Lent. We have substituted a Kyrie (“Lord, have mercy upon us”) for the Gloria. Our Alleluia verse (sung between the Epistle and Gospel) is filled with a Lenten verse. We are choosing not to sing any Alleluias until Easter when we can shout it out!

If you are watching our service as it is streamed over the internet, you’ll notice we are once again singing and not just listening to the hymns. We are thankful for the voices of Mark Kennedy, Nathan Compton, Rev. Adam, Rev. Hector, and our newest musician, Shane Hall.

Shane also has been adding to our worship with his unique piano style.

A very special service will be March 21, which we are calling “The Sunday of the Passion”. We will hear the Biblical story of Jesus’ suffering and death in readings from the Gospel of Mark. Special music and/or hymns will follow each reading. This will be very similar to our “Lessons and Carols” service at Christmas. Guest musicians that day will include Doug and Lynn Norton, as well as some of our St. John’s musicians.

On Palm Sunday, David Wion will return to our piano and soprano April Bennett will be singing. Get yourself a branch from your yard to wave as you sing and hear the “Hosannas”!

I hope you are able to catch my Lenten Series on Facebook. Each Wednesday I will be discussing “Lent A Time for Growing Our Faith”. We have covered Prayer. The next weeks include, Worship, Scripture, Service, and Stewardship.

I sure miss you all. I will keep you in my heart and in my prayers, Do the same for me?

Rev. Jeffrey



Lent 2021

St. John's UCC

Series presented by Rev. Jeffrey

“LENT – A TIME FOR GROWING OUR FAITH”

Streamed Each Wednesday in Lent via Facebook– Time TBA

March 3 – Worship

March 10 – Scripture

March 17 – Service

March 24 - Stewardship



Tower Times February 2021

Hello everyone,

Grace and peace to you all from our Lord Jesus Christ!

We have just entered the period of lent. As Christians, we consider this as a season for spiritual preparation and we are encouraged to take some spiritual discipline like spending more time in prayer, Bible reading and meditation to draw nearer to God.

The Prayer group of St. John's have been turned into a virtual study group for a couple of months now, but we are having a break during the lent to give ourselves time for self-examination and reflection as to how we could be more relevant both as an individual Christian and as a body of Christ the church.

After the Easter we have plans to continue the virtual group study on the theme "How to Walk with God." And we are delighted to invite more people to join us not just for the sake of learning but also to have fellowship, prayer and encourage one another especially at this time of pandemic that we are restricted to congregate in person. I hope and pray that you will consider this invitation in due time. Thank you.

"And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near." (Hebrews 10:25 New Living Translation)

In Christ,

Hector F. Guzman

Director of Family Life Ministries



Prayers of Intercession and Thanksgiving

The St. John's Prayer Chain is here to lift to God your troubling concerns as well as rejoice in your blessings. Contact Dottie Norton (937 298-4876) with your requests, or Rev. Adam (937-532-9322) if Dottie is unavailable. The information you provide will remain confidential and can be as brief or in-depth as you choose. Dottie will then pass your requests or rejoicings onward to the prayer chain members. Members on our Prayer Chain are Ethel Burns, Karen Clark, Pat Goudy, Jill Johnson, Pat Kern, Ann Morrissey, Janet Neubauer, Dottie Norton, Anne Pepiot. If you'd like to join the chain, please let Dottie Norton know!



WORSHIP TEAM

The Worship Team mourns the loss of our teammate and friend, Cheryl Zwick. May her memory be a blessing.

of

Lent is underway and we have opportunities to strengthen our Lenten journey.

Lenten Practices

Why are Gloria and Alleluia omitted from the service during Lent?

Gloria and Alleluia are omitted during Lent because it is a time for mourning our sins. Sins prevent us from an authentic relationship with God. Once these are removed through prayer, fasting and good works, we are able to rejoice again. Gloria celebrates the coming of the Lord and Alleluia follows Moses and the Israelites as they wander the desert for 40 years. It is a time of agony and purification, one where the faithful join together in singing, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" (Psalm 137:4) It is a time when the people of God were in exile, waiting for the Messiah to come and save them. Alleluia and Gloria return again at Easter as we celebrate Christ's resurrection and our own rebirth of spirit.

Shirley A. Keller



St. John's Grounds Team

Mark your calendars for two items!

First March 14th is time change! Set your clocks forward one hour!

Second, March 20th, "Grounds Cleanup Day!" 10-Noon at St. John's! We'll work on cleaning up flower beds, garden beds, doing some liter pickup around the church and making sure everything is ready for us to begin doing a little "beautification" work as the weather continues to improve! Come get some fresh air and exercise along with helping St. John's and the Webster Station Neighborhood!

Marlene Miller,
Grounds Team Lead



GROUND
TEAM

St. John's United Church of Christ
Building Team February Report

The Critical Role of the Building Team Members
First Impressions are Lasting Impressions.

In the books *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell and *Real Good Church* by Rev. Molly Phinney Baskette, they conclude, "A person makes a decision about the situation in the first few seconds of observation."

The goals for St. John's Building Team are for the building to be:

- CLEAN – sparkling, noticeably clean.
- WECOMING – warm, inviting.
- INFORMATIVE – where do I go? What is happening here?

January and February continued to be within the pandemic guidelines. The only exceptions are that the MCTC school classes opened with a reduced number of classes offered and few students. The goal for March is to increase both the number of classes and student and remain within the numbers and guidelines of the Health Department.

The second exception was the introduction of the SONKA offices and their program. There are two staff members at this time and a limited number of training or other programs offered. Thus, all that stay under the recommended limits.

The lower level has remained closed for use. The worship services are limited to ZOOM. St. John's UCC has continued to offer comfort for families for funerals. The actual services are on ZOOM for friends and families.

According to news reports the efforts of social distancing, masks and vaccines are making a positive effect. All of these are within the person's control and decisions. We trust that members and friends make the best decisions for themselves and families.

Building Maintenance is on-going

Boiler and Sanctuary heat

Thank you, Brian Dunkle. The boiler has required attention almost weekly for the past several weeks. Fortunately, there has been nothing total drastic but did create work and required time. The repairs are made and appear to be well under \$1,500. Which is great for the number of years used. All these repairs will provide heat and good service for another 20 years. With all the moving parts involved in the system and the age of many of the pipes and pumps, some dollars will need to be invested annually as almost anything mechanic does. Again, without Brian, the cost would be much higher, and we are thrilled with the sharing of his expertise,

Kitchen Refrigerator

Seals on two of the three doors were replaced. Within this year the third probably will need replacement. It has been several years since any have been replaced.

Heating unit repair and replacement

In the Education Building heat and a/c are provided by individual units. Over time, the motors get tired and require attention. When possible, the unit is repair and sometimes a motor requires more work or replacement. We have replaced and repaired motors in several units. We are at the conclusion of serious heating issues. Once we switch over to a/c there will be some repairs required.

Automated External Defibrillator (AED)

Automated External Defibrillator (AED) has been undated, the 2008 one served its purpose and needed replaced. We have a certified AED, a storage box for the AED and will have first aid items for the box. The box will be mounted in the stairway first floor between the Education Building and Sanctuary. This provides safety for all three floors and persons involved in activities.

Do you need some chairs or office furniture?

Because of moving SONKN into the building and repurposing rooms on both levels, there are some pieces of furniture and chairs available to any one in the church who has the ability to pick up the items and remove for the property.

There are several wood-framed, cloth backed yellow chairs in good condition. Two cadences are available for personal storage are available. Also available in one large metal base with attachable filing top part. The unit is about four feet wide and about six feet high. It is in two pieces, so it is moveable. A large conference table with a damaged corner is waiting to provide you service. There are a couple pieces of carpet for your viewing pleasure. Probably sufficient for a small room. If you have needs or want to look at any of this, please contact me for a date and time before the 15th of March.

Thanks to Wilfred van Breukelen, the church made several donations of useable items to Habitat for Humanity. They are sending truck to remove the items. If you have furniture or household items to dispose, you might contact Habitat for Humanity.



Safety inspections continue.

Fire safety inspection was finished in February and issues were addressed and repaired. With all the entrances and door, this is a complicated process. Fire Extinguisher Inspection will be this month. Boiler inspection happens toward the end of the heating season. Organ and piano inspection and tuning will occur in a couple months.

Custodian Returned

Steve Boggs, the church long-term custodian, returned to work this past week. Welcome back, Steve, and pleased you have recovered well.

Large Renovation Projects

Two maintenance areas are of continuing concern. One is the outside brick work of the entire church. It has been too long that tuck pointing, sealing and mortar work needs to be scheduled. That work would include gutter repair and down spouts. That is a several thousand dollars project.

Inside maintenance is the second area of major concern. There is water damage in various places around all parts of the church and education building. The cause of this A second major maintenance concern is plaster damage throughout the church and Education Building. The damage is water damage from outside brick work. These areas need plaster repair and painting. No need to fix until the outside is secure. Again, this is a several thousand-dollar repair cost.

Another set of concerns are the tower bells, painted murals, and stain glass windows. In a long-range plan, these especially important and expensive historical treasures need to be reviewed and appropriately budgeted.

Outside front ramp and inside platform lift

The plans are complete, but the project is not. After several reviews and discussions with Dayton city, there appears to be agreement on how to proceed. As usual each of these decisions and discussion had a cost consequence. It appears those delays could be over and there is a light at the end of the ramp that might signal progress on those projects. We will continue to update. A great big thank you to Rev. Dr. Adam for being a wonderful shepherd of these projects. Getting thought the wilderness of remodeling takes tremendous patience, strong negotiation skills and a touch of Godliness.

Sanctuary Carpet Cleaning

After much discussion and consideration, the recommendation is to contract the services to clean all the Narthex, sanctuary, altar, choir loft and all the pew pads. That is a huge space and requires people and time to complete this is a professional and reasonable manner. This will require Council approval and if you have input or ideas, please contact Council President. The timeline for the cleaning would be after construction completion and before return to face-to-face worship services.

Building Team Looking for Members

If you are interested in using your time and talents to support the maintenance needs of the church facilities, please contact Bill Smith.

EXTERNAL MINISTRIES



One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is part of UCC denomination's wider church ministries and global outreach.

When we support OGHS, together with other UCC churches, we help in disaster relief around the world. Below are two "good news stories" of help through OGHS UCC ministry. When we donate to this important mission work, we are part of these stories.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING is our mission focus for March. Please mark your donations for this mission. Thank you for your generous hearts as we support this work. Read below two good news stories from One Great Hour of Sharing.

When Life Gives You Scraps

by Phyllis Richards | published on May 13, 2020



"It's so good making masks because it helps the community," said Sandra, a Congolese refugee we welcomed in 2018.

She's one of more than a dozen refugee women using skills she learned in RefugeeOne's Sewing Studio to give back to the place they now call home.

Sandra and her husband were recently laid off from their manufacturing jobs due to COVID-19. She says sewing face masks is a good way to keep busy until she can get back to work—she's glad to use her skills and time at home to help others.

So far, Sandra and the other sewers have made 1,000 masks for essential workers and people in need. They are working from home using the brand new sewing machines given to Sewing Studio graduates.



The refugees donated the masks to places like The Selfhelp Home retirement community, Connections for the Homeless, and to their local Alderman's office to distribute to those in need.

While refugees like Sandra are making the best of a difficult time by caring for others, there are still worries that they face daily. Hundred of refugees in the program have lost their income and aren't sure when they'll return to work. Many are worried about making ends meet.

RefugeeOne is supported by your generous donations to One Great Hour of Sharing and is supported by Church World Service.

UCC Disaster Ministries supports Hurricane Michael recovery in six FL counties
by Carol Fouke-Mpoyo | published on Oct 9, 2019

\$5,000 seed grants from UCC Disaster Ministries will go toward costs for three Hurricane Michael long-term recovery groups in the Florida Panhandle – Liberty (County) Strong, Gadsden (County) Strong and the North Florida Inland Long-Term Recovery Group (Jackson and Calhoun Counties). The UCC also is supporting recovery in Bay and Washington counties, including with recruitment of volunteer work teams.



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Community-based LTRGs help guide disaster survivors through the recovery process, including mobilizing available resources such as FEMA and SBA grants, insurance payouts and personal financial resources. LTRG

case managers look for the unmet needs, prioritizing the most vulnerable survivors, including elderly and disabled residents. Other functions include fundraising, construction and volunteer management, with the goal of stretching resources to help as many people as possible recover.

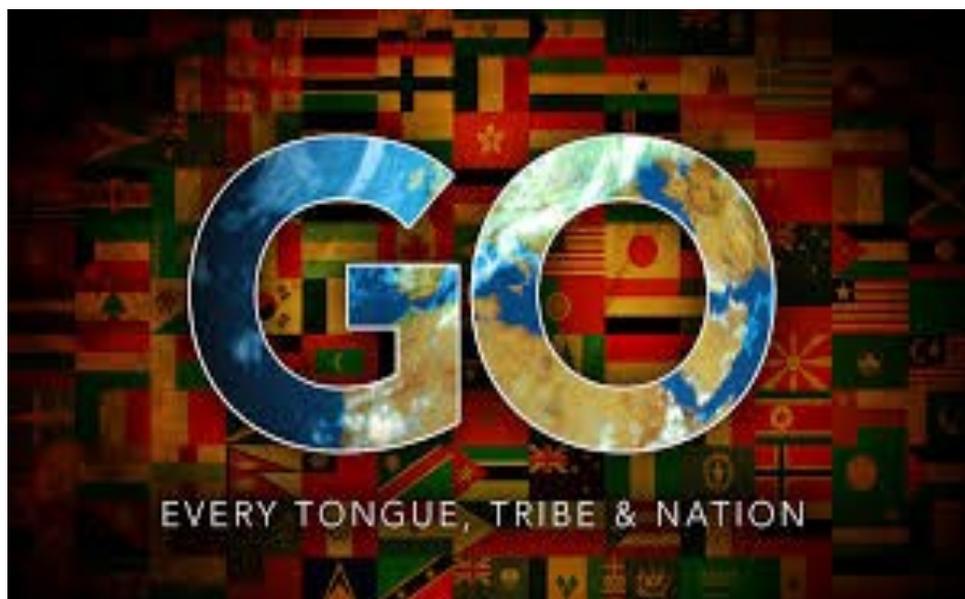
“Many residents still have blue-tarped roofs that leak when it rains,” reported Liberty Strong. “Still others are struggling to feed and clothe their families while trying to pay for repairs to their homes.”

Hurricane Michael made landfall as a Category 5 storm Oct. 10, 2018, northwest of Mexico Beach, the most powerful hurricane on record to hit the Florida Panhandle.

Bay, Washington, Liberty, Gadsden, Jackson and Calhoun counties were among counties that suffered extensive damage from Michael’s heavy rain, high winds and extreme storm surges. Needs include repairing and rebuilding homes – along with spiritual or mental health services, especially for those whose homes have been completely destroyed and are still in need of suitable housing.

A \$5,000 seed grant from UCC Disaster Ministries will go toward start-up office supplies and outreach to volunteers and partners for the long-term recovery group Liberty Strong, formed to address the needs of Liberty County, Fla., residents resulting from Hurricane Michael last fall.

Another \$5,000 seed grant is for use by the North Florida Inland LTRG, working in Jackson and Calhoun counties, to assist individuals and families with such unmet needs as roof repairs, mold mitigation, demolition and new construction.



Council Minutes
St. John's United Church of Christ
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St. John's United Church of Christ
February 11, 2021

Present: Rev. Dr. Adam Wirrig, Douglas Goudy, Chris van Breukelen, Jill Johnson, Shirley Keller, Pat Kern, Kim Kindred, Marlene Miller, Bill Smith

January meeting called to order by President Doug Goudy at 6:04 p.m.

Prayer offered by Rev. Adam Wirrig.

January minutes approved with no changes.

Financial & Treasurer's Report

Rev. Adam Wirrig stated that it was probably the best January in 5 years! We made budget for tithes and offerings, and we are on track for February if giving continues faithfully. However, expenses are always high in January/February. Heating is of course higher. Insurance, licenses and assessments are coming in. Ex: Workman's Comp, fire system, alarm system, chair lift. Budget Expenses are relatively high as well.

We are paying a grounds keeper to clear the snow and to salt the sidewalks while our custodian is out.

- Ice or 0-2 inches snow = salt
- 2-4 inches = clear snow and salt
- Over 4 inches = it gets much more expensive

Construction expenses: we tried to get all bills paid in 2020 but that did not always work with each vendor, so some lines were moved to the 2021 budget.

This 2nd Paycheck Protection Program is much more difficult, but we should be getting approved soon for approximately \$20,000.

Jill Johnson asked if we can change the name of "H2W/H2G Holding" to read "External Ministries". Rev. Wirrig directed her to get in touch with Patty Staley.

President Goudy asked the committee to please contact Nathan and Patty first with financial questions and copy him. If they cannot come up with the answer than Doug will get with Rev. Wirrig.

Chris van Breukelen made a motion to approve the financial report. Pat Kern seconded. Motion passed by vote of the church council.

Old Business

Ramp Install: Rev. Wirrig shared that there are communication difficulties with the architects and the city of Dayton. President Goudy added that Rev. Wirrig is doing everything possible; however, there are no set dates on a build. Rev. Wirrig said we have put everything on pause until we have the permit that we need from the city of Dayton stating there are no more fees or changes. On 1/25/21 Medmart is coming to set up the platform lift (where steps currently are in the vestibule).

New Business

Funeral Policy: Chris van Breukelen had previously asked about adding a custodial fee to the new policy. That has been done. The consensus is that each situation will have to be considered on a case by case basis. Rev. Adam and the committee feels this policy would be good to have in place as a set of guidelines.

Kim Kindred made a motion to approve the Funeral Policy. Shirley Keller seconded. Motion passed by vote of the church council.

AED: We now have money in the budget. Bill Smith provided a detailed overview. He stated that Dayton, Montgomery County and Ohio do not require defibrillators in public buildings except schools. Churches can have AEDs, but it is not required. He pointed out that we have a school in our building. As a landlord we have a liability. Our old unit flashed a message saying to replace the battery. We did and then many messages popped up. Do we replace ours with a reconditioned model? We are looking at a cost between \$700-

\$1300. Rev. Adam suggested we look for a refurbished one and if it does not work out, then purchase a new unit.

Bill Smith made a motion to approve the purchase of a refurbished and/or a new AED. Jill Johnson seconded. Motion passed by vote of the church council.

Leadership Calling Tree: President Goudy discussed why our church did not have a service on the Internet this past Sunday. When our hardworking members are not able to be available we need trained backups. He gave examples of how things can go wrong: no one to set up the computer and run it, or possibly no one to turn on the heat if needed. He added that what is most important is that “if someone asks to be trained than they must show up and do the duty.”

Rev. Adam explained that everything was different when custodial & tech support and he were all out during a cold snap while broadcasting. The council must decide if we need people as a backup. Do we have folks internally? Should we build a team around tech staff? Build capacity around all of this? Do we hire someone for 10 hours a week for tech help? Everyone please give this some thought. While Rev. Wirrig was on vacation it was frustrating that the left and right hand did not know what they were doing. We must have a go to person when Rev. Adam is out. Our communication needs to improve.

President Goudy will be here this upcoming Sunday to do the audio and video.

Bill Smith suggested that we utilize Realm when cancelling church. Rev. Adam informed the council that the congregation is not willing to utilize Realm. Only 30 some of 140 people that received invitations have ever logged in.

Bill agreed that we do not know who does what to communicate properly. Who takes care of a boiler not working, who do we call if the parking lot is vandalized? Rev. Wirrig feels this is all something we can work on. We need to put together manuals and grow with them for tasks such as:

- How do you do a Sunday morning at St. Johns?
- How do you do a Funeral at St. Johns?
- How do you do a Wedding at St. Johns?

Jill Johnson suggested that contractual relationships be set up ahead of problems so we know who to call for issues like IT and the boiler.

Rev. Adam explained that churches grow into process leadership. Small churches have a process where so and so can take care of it. But when you are a small church getting busy than you need processes.

Items for the Good of the Order:

President Goudy had been here one day and discovered the door to the refrigerator in the kitchen was left open 3" and running continuously. Try to add the basement to your rounds when checking the church.

He also asked the council to notice the 3/8/21 deadline for reports. It is helpful to keep on the same e-mail trail with all replies. Rev. Wirrig asked that we please only use his Gmail address for all his e-mails. President Goudy and Rev. Wirrig asked that the committees all please send updates monthly before each council meeting and send it to all council members.

Rev. Wirrig was asked to speak on the future Sunday Service reopening. He explained that UCC, specifically the Ohio Conference, feels we can start talking about a reopening on a smaller scale when Montgomery County is out of the red, with no public health risk. Until then, it is too risky to open back up.

Jill Johnson asked when the External Ministry's "Free Little Pantry" can be installed. Marlene suggested March 20th during the "Church External Cleanup".

Committee Reports Received

No reports received for this meeting.

Calendar:

Council Reports Deadline: March 8, 2020

Next Council Meeting: March 11, 2020

Tower Times Deadline: February 23, 2020

Adjournment: Jill Johnson made a motion that the meeting be adjourned which was seconded by Bill Smith.

Closing: Council meeting was closed at 7:21pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Kindred, Council Secretary

Next meeting is Thursday March 11th at 6:00 PM.

Risks Your Church Should Take

(Originally published by the
Malphurs Group, a church leadership/health thinktank.)

Nothing in life is a sure deal.

You make plans, do the leg-work, and research the details. Sometimes, despite the planning, don't work out.

This inherent risk of failure sidelines a lot of churches from making bold moves that could launch them into more significant influence and gospel impact.

But there's a balance. A big move isn't always a smart move, and the pay-off isn't guaranteed.

When I was a student at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary at the Charlotte campus, I wondered at the number of churches in the Queen City. However, it wasn't just the quantity of churches that surprised me; it was the number of churches with massive campuses.

One church, in particular, has a massive cathedral-like appearance on a campus that seems to stretch for dozens of acres. Thousands of parking spaces line up around a beautifully built and even more immaculately landscaped facility. Being from out-of-town, I asked a local student about the church.

"Empty," he said. "Or, at least it feels empty given the size."

When I was growing up in Dallas, I went to a weekly Bible study for young adults at a large megachurch. Several hundred students showed up from week-to-week at the event, but the place felt empty because it was built for thousands. That church *did*, in fact, fill-up on Sundays, but I can only imagine if things were to go south how hundreds of people in a room for thousands would be demoralizing. The Charlotte church had taken a risk, and over time, it hadn't paid off.

But these cautionary stories should not hold you back.

This article is not about taking a chance on building a massive facility, saddling your congregation with decades of debt.

It's about risks . The ones *worth* taking. **The risks your church should take.**

Here are five risks your church should take this year:

Spend the money.

People give money to your church so that ministry can happen, not so it can sit in a bank account unused and uninvested in kingdom work. Be smart, have a few months of reserve built up in case of emergencies, and a bad month of giving or a downturn in the market, but here's the truth: people give more to churches that are doing more.

I once worked with a church that had tens of thousands of dollars tied-up in an account reserved for the upkeep of a cemetery. There's more than a little symbolism there. *Spend the money, leaders.*

Invest in kingdom work. Take a chance on something important. Spend it strategically, but spend it. The Church should be the most active, generous entity on Planet Earth; play your part in that mission. Your church doesn't get a crown when Jesus returns for having a year's worth of budget in the bank .

Shut down the program.

People give more to churches that are doing more *of the things that matter*. There are one or two or seven programs that your church is doing right now that are a drag on your resources: time, leadership, money, volunteers.

You've kept the program(s) around because they matter to a few people or are accomplishing a marginal amount of good. But the reality is that long-term, these programs are slowing you down. You've avoided shutting them down because "someone" will be frustrated or hurt.

Now is the time. Shutting down programs that aren't beneficial to the long-term mission and healthiness of your church is a relational risk your church should take.

Launch the ministry.

God has likely put a dream in your heart to start a new ministry within your church: adding a new service, beginning the process of planting a church or campus, a mission project, a new division within kids, or student ministry, or something else.

Yet you've been held back by fears about whether or not it will work or if it will be well-funded. Don't sit still on a vision from God. Do the due diligence and plan strategically, but then *do it*.

Launch the ministry. Move forward. See what God will do. There's a whole process on how to launch something well, but as they like to say in Silicon Valley: "done is better than perfect." There will be plenty of time to make adjustments to your newly-launched ministry, but get it out there. Make this the year you finally launch that new thing God put on your heart to do.

Get the training.

Every week I'm on the phone with pastors around the country talking to them about how I can help train and equip their team. I hear it in their voices, this desire to do it—to bring in someone to give their team contextualized training, but there's the same apprehension: is it worth the cost?

Whether it's bringing in a leadership consultant or attending a conference, there's a hesitation rooted in fear of spending "ministry money" on training.

The reality is that the cost of getting training is far less than the price of *not* getting the training. Healthy leaders lead to healthy churches.

Unhealthy leaders, eventually, lead to unhealthy churches. Conferences, training, and con-

sulting all have a cost, but their value in launching your church into greater effectiveness and impact is often incalculable .

This year, earmark the funds to get the training-whatever that looks like for you.

Empower the leader

Too many pastors feel that if they want a job done right, they have to do it themselves. Letting go of a leadership role and empowering someone else to take on the mantle is inherently risky.

It's true. The newly empowered leader *may not* do the job as well as you. They may struggle. They may fail. However, if you choose not to enable leaders to take on some of your leadership role this year, it's a guarantee that you'll not be able to move into uncharted leadership territory.

When you don't empower other leaders, you risk burnout. When you don't empower other leaders, you will never know what you *could* have done if you *had*.

Jesus was most assuredly the best man for the job of spreading the good news, but he chose to empower the Twelve. You and I are sharing this moment on this website because Jesus empowered other leaders .

What impact could you have this year if you let go and empowered others to share your leadership load?

Risks are scary.

Spending money, shutting things down, starting new things, investing in training, relinquishing control are *scary* risks for many leaders. You might be thinking, "You don't know me or my church. *I can't afford* to take those risks, not this year."

Maybe.

But if I had to venture a guess, I'd say it's more like that you can't afford *not* to take those risks.

March Birthdays

12 th	Janice Zahn
13 th	Rose Papenbrock
20 th	Jeffrey Campbell
24 th	Carl Robinson
25 th	Jeff Gerrior
25 th	Lynne Yates
26 th	Dee Goudy



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