



# St. John's United Church of Christ

The Lighthouse

December, 2015

## "A Spirited Christmas" - December 19

Come one, come all to "A Spirited Christmas."

Everyone is invited to enjoy storytelling, song, and celebration at the all-community Christmas Concert! The concert begins at 6:30 pm and we look forward to celebrating with you and reflecting on the messages of this special season.



## Keep Lighthouse on Monthly Publication Schedule

We really need your help! Give yourself the gift of the monthly Lighthouse Newsletter! Make it your New Year's resolution to send us your email address so we may continue to publish the Lighthouse every month!

It costs us \$245 every month to print and mail the Lighthouse. These are costs that will over extend our budget. The good news is that we can continue publishing the Lighthouse monthly if we can distribute it via email.

Please send us your email address!!! It will only take 2 minutes! Here are several options for getting your email address to send us your email:



Call the St. John's office (715) 747-3945

Call Lee Baker (651) 470-1317

Email St. John's [stjohnsoffice@cheqnet.net](mailto:stjohnsoffice@cheqnet.net)

Email Lee Baker [LB@sprintmail.com](mailto:LB@sprintmail.com)

Thank you in advance for helping us reduce our monthly newsletter costs so we can continue to keep you well informed of timely news, announcements, and events!

## Celebrating Winter Solstice

How will you honor the new solar year? Winter Solstice invites us to be creative in welcoming new light and rebirth. Will you share a bonfire? Light candles? Place herbs at your home's threshold? Prepare a feast? Make a Good Yule wish? Light a Yule log? Ring bells? Feed birds and other creatures of nature? Wishing you Happy Solstice!



## December's Events and Happenings

2	Soup Supper/Discussion, 6:00 pm, Fellowship Hall
3	Theological Discussion, 11:00 am
3	Christmas Choir Rehearsal, 4:30 pm
5	AA Meeting, 5:30 pm, Fellowship Hall
6	Worship and Communion, 10:00 am
6	Blood Pressure Checks, 11:00 am
6	Christmas Choir Rehearsal, 11:15 am
9	Soup Supper/Discussion, 6:00 pm, Fellowship Hall
10	Theological Discussion, 11:00 am
10	Christmas Choir Rehearsal, 4:30 pm
12	AA Meeting, 5:30 pm, Fellowship Hall
13	Worship, 10:00 am
13	Christmas Choir Rehearsal, 11:15 am
15	Walking Club, 9:00 am
16	Soup Supper/Discussion, 6:00 pm, Fellowship Hall
17	Theological Discussion, 11:00 am
17	Christmas Choir Rehearsal, 4:30 pm
19	AA Meeting, 5:30 pm, Fellowship Hall
19	"A Spirited Christmas" Concert, 6:30 pm
20	Worship, 10:00 am
22	Walking Club, 9:00 am
22	Winter Solstice
24	Community Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 4:00 pm
25	Christmas Day – light a candle, sit by the Christmas tree, sing a Christmas carol, enjoy silent time, celebrate this special day with traditions that bring you joy
26	AA Meeting, 5:30 pm, Fellowship Hall
27	Worship, 10:00 am
29	Walking Club, 9:00 am

## Remembering Christmas Long Ago

Excerpt from Rev. Otto Schroedel's Pastor's Letter, Christmas, 1956

*Dear Friends of Lovely Madeline,*

*Snow again blankets our island and the shore ice is creeping out farther and farther. We have had a number of days when the cold steam rose in clouds from the lake freezing on trees and weeds making every branch a thing of beauty. According to the old saying it takes three cold spells when the lake steams to bring the freeze-up.*



*Now Christmas is near and your island looks like Christmas land.*

## The Pastoral Column

Dear Friends,

December marks the coming of Light. The great festivals of Solstice, Hannukah and Christmas all speak to the dawn of new beginnings, light in dark times, and hope.

According to one of my favorite little books, *Pocketful of Miracles* by Joan Borysenko:

*December is the month in which all the forces of nature are aligned to help us give birth to the Light within. We use the stories of the Christ Child in a universal sense as a source of December contemplation.*

*Those stories are timeless reminders of the hearts' true light—Compassion and Forgiveness.*

With the global events of grief and terror in November still present, we turn to the stories of hope in December, the birth of a Holy Child who called us to Love, Walk Humbly, and Serve those most in need of mercy.

May the silent nights of this month birth the presence of Compassion and Forgiveness within us, our families, our communities, our nation, and most certainly, the world.

May there, indeed, be Peace on Earth.



**Pastor Marina**

The staffs at St. John's and Woods Hall wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

## Theology Class: Rise of Christianity

Every Thursday at 11 AM, coffee and tea (and a few bakery treats) are spread out on the parsonage dining room table to begin the feast of discussion and dive into topics that stretch our spiritual beliefs. What are we discussing? Matters of faith and hope.

We are discussing the rise of Christianity within the Roman Empire and its interaction with the Roman government.



Using the DVD series 'The Foundation of Western Civilization' produced by PBS, Pastor Marina Lachecki and Rev. Jim Kasperson lead

discussions that challenge and inspire! Join us for conversation on Thursdays, December 3, 10, 17 at 11:00 AM at the Parsonage!

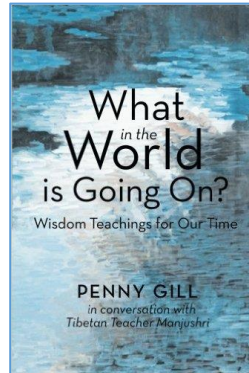
## Soup Suppers: Nourishment for Body, Mind & Soul

Soup will nourish the body, friendships will nourish the soul, and book discussions will nourish the mind! Everyone is welcome at Soup Suppers in the Fellowship Hall where we're serving up sustenance, fellowship and wisdom!

Come! December 2, 9, and 16 at 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Please bring soup or bread to share.



We're reading and discussing Penny Gill's book "What in the World is Going On? Wisdom Teachings for Our Time." Penny Gill, a



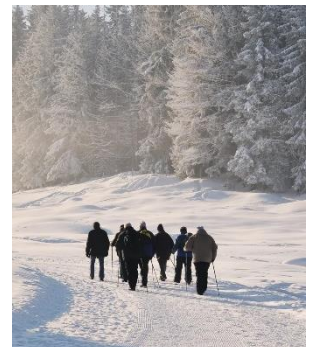
Madeline Island summer resident for over 25 years, is a Mary Lyon Professor of Humanities and has taught political science for forty years at Mount Holyoke College, as well as having served as dean. Long interested in comparative spiritualities, she has recently received teachings from Manjushri, a Tibetan master. She divides her time between Granby,

Massachusetts, and Madeline Island, Wisconsin.

Here's a synopsis of Penny's book that appears on Amazon. "Do you worry about our planet, with its environmental crises, global warming, widespread violence, and global poverty? Do you feel powerless to change your life and impact your world? What in the World Is Going On reframes these crises as an invitation to open our minds and hearts to a new awareness of our fundamental interdependence with all beings. With breathtaking optimism, it offers courage and hope to all who hold the world in their hearts and grieve. Crises bring opportunities. We are poised to vastly expand our consciousness, allowing us to address our deep fears and create communities which embrace and serve all of us."

## Marina's Walking Club

Join Pastor Marina for 3 – 4 miles of aerobic walking and fellowship! Meet at St. John's parking lot at 9:00 am each Tuesday! Get on Marina's Walking Club list by sending an email to [Pastor Marina](mailto:Pastor Marina)!



## Support and Sustain St. John's Service

Many of you attended the Congregation's Annual Meeting in August when we adopted a new Strategic Plan. Our plan reaffirms St. John's role as the center of spiritual and religious life on the Island and asserts that St. John's is being called to envision ministry and spiritual enrichment in new and innovative ways.

Michael Collins' recent letter to St. John's members is reprinted below. We invite you to provide support for St. John's service and outreach.

*Dear Friends of St John's UCC,*



*There's a simple and startling powerful moment in the lives of those who gather each Sunday at St John's. We are asked to sit quietly and breathe. In an instant a room full of families and*

*strangers, visitors and residents is changed. We breathe together and, one more time, become united in a kind of peace that many of us can find nowhere else.*

*This unity that is shaped and reinforced each week is the key to St John's remarkable capacity to serve. In the face of countless demands both predictable and surprising, the people of St John's act as the hands and feet of God.*

*From feeding the needy with a pantry that on occasion has had a loaves and fishes quality about it to the formation of ministries that counsel and inspire the whole Island community, St John's serves. Every day the church wakes to face the expected demands of utility bills, staff salaries and maintenance. All too often, these repairs have necessarily been delayed in the face of the unexpected. There is no shortage of urgent surprises among the Island community.*

*This letter is sent with a reminder of what Bill Green once wrote to us, "Thanksgiving is an act." It's a verb that's propelled by joy and sacrifice. This letter is sent with the hope that, once again, the friends of St John's can give in support of this small church's unique ability to serve so many, so often.*

*Please take a moment to fill out and return the enclosed with a check or pledge. In the meantime, know that you have my gratitude and hope for the time when we'll gather together again.*

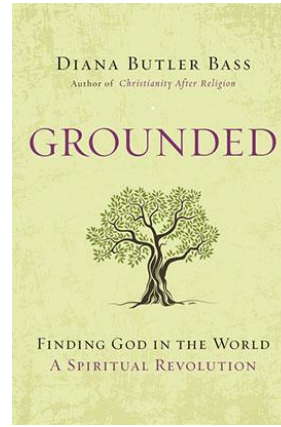
*Michael Collins*

*On Behalf of St. John's Stewardship Committee*

Tax deductible contributions to St. John's can be mailed to PO Box 14, La Pointe, WI 54850. Thank you in advance for your generosity. Your gift is an act of Thanksgiving that propels our ability to serve in meaningful ways.

## Spirituality: Widening the Crossbeam

Pastor Marina and the St. John's Council continue engaging in discussions about how we are evolving and how our Strategic Plan is guiding us in spiritual leadership. Below is an excerpt from Franz Rigert, UCC Wisconsin Conference Minister discussing Diana Butler Bass' newly published book, *Grounded*.



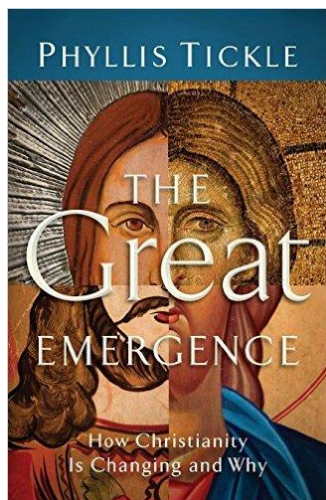
*Bass offers new framework for the Church of the 21st Century ...if we intend to spiritually engage our society in relevant and transforming ways.*

*At the same time that institutional religion continues to decline, the discovery of new spiritual practices continues to rise. While we sing our age-old lament about dying churches, millions in our society are waking up to fresh encounters with the Sacred. For too long, too many in the Church have viewed this paradox through the lens of religious turf - that is who they are; this is who we are. Butler Bass says, "Nonsense!" We've created a false and unnecessary dichotomy. Instead of drudging up old conversations about the rise of the "Dones & Nones" in Church world, we should explore new ministries that connect us with the rise of the mystics (as she refers to this movement). In other words, our calling may not be to make the spiritual more religious, but rather the religious more spiritual. The vital Church of tomorrow will work for a "just and generous world" (words of Cameron Trimble) through synthesizing the religious traditions of Church with the spiritual practices of the rising mystics. The walls between Culture and Church will become more permeable, the mission will be more collaborative, and the innovators will lead us!*

*The Church has tended to align itself vertically - the erecting of steeples, the raising up of altars, the lifting of prayers to the heavens, the elevating of bishops. This hierarchical approach built the institutional Church. It thrived in an era of "membership" and a time when the city square gave it a prominent voice and immense influence. The vertical portion of the cross also symbolically emphasizes personal redemption and salvation . . . and the exclusive notion of only through the cross. Instead, Diana Butler Bass calls us to widen the crossbeam, to extend our reach, to stretch the arms of Jesus in order to embrace and care for the entire world.*

## Need Some Gift Ideas?

Consider a book for a friend or family member! To launch discussion at November's Council meeting, Pastor Marina Lachecki read a passage from *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why*.



Phyllis Tickle's premise is that we are in the midst of a pivotal time in Church history, one that is equally rivals the radical impact of the Protestant Revolution.

Tickle contends that every 500 years, Christianity experiences a significant transformation.

According to one review on Amazon, "Counting back from the present, the Great Reformation took place about 500 years ago -- 1517 to be exact. Prior to that, The Great Schism occurred when the Eastern and Western churches split over icons and statues. Five hundred years earlier, Gregory the Great blessed and encouraged the monastic orders which would preserve the Christian faith through the Dark Ages. Of course, 500 years before that, we're back in the first century and the time of the apostles. Today, Tickle contends, the church is in the throes of The Great Emergence.

*But, the Great Emergence is not just religious. It is also cultural, technological, and sociological. Of course, context shaped each of the other 'great' church transformations as well, and this time is no different. Tickle takes the reader on an overflight of church history, world events, and charts the shifts in the center of authority in the life of the church. In the Great Reformation, of course, the cry of authority was sola scriptura - only scripture. Tickle traces the diminution of the authoritative place of scripture in culture and Christianity from its heady beginnings in the Reformation to its marginalization in the current postmodern era. The book provides thoughtful tracing of influential elements as Tickle leads the reader on a quest for a center of authority."*

### Contact St. John's UCC

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## Discover Holy Islands in England and Scotland

Travel with Pastor Marina to discover the cultural, historical and holy grounds of England and Scotland, June 5 – 16, 2017.

Pastor Marina Lachecki has partnered with St. John's members, world-travelers and fellow Islanders, [Nile](#) and [Sarah Norton](#), to explore [Lindisfarne](#) in northeastern England and [Iona](#) in northwestern Scotland. Fly into Glasgow, spend time exploring the holy islands of Celtic Christianity, walk along [St. Cuthbert's Way](#), and spend a day in Edinburgh.

The cost of the pilgrimage is estimated to be \$4000/person. If you are interested, contact [Marina](#) or Nile and Sarah Norton. There are spaces for 16 people and a few people are already signed up! A deposit of \$200 will secure your place.

Sign up today to enjoy two weeks journeying with joy, song, prayer, fellowship, and sacred word along the Pilgrim's Way.



## MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!



*St. John's is a Christ-centered church and spiritual center that welcomes all.*

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