



St. John's United Church of Christ

The Lighthouse

January, 2016

Sanctuary Transformed for Christmas Celebration



A big round of applause to everyone who helped decorate St. John's Church for Christmas! Ken Peterson



and Chris Thompson carved the crèche, Cindy Dalzell decorated

the altar and hung swags over the windows. Ted Pallas and Jim Erickson put up the Christmas tree!

Your creativity is inspirational! Thank you for transforming our Sanctuary into a place to worship the birth of Jesus Christ and celebrate the Christmas season.



Burning of the Greens on January 6

Join Pastor Marina in the St. John's Church parking lot on Wednesday, January 6 at 5:00 pm for the annual Burning of the Greens. Lift your voice in singing "O Tannenbaum" to pay tribute to the trees, wreaths, garlands, and other greens of Christmas.

The "Burning of the Greens" is a Christmas tradition that reaches back into the Middle Ages in the Britannic world. It was the traditional day of taking down Christmas decorations, and thus the tradition arose of the "burning of the greens," with people contributing their wreaths, Christmas trees and garlands to the bonfire. The evergreens were recognized as the promise of renewed fertility and life. The fire symbolized the coming of the Light of the World in the midst of the world's darkness. By burning the greens, the life and gift of the trees and wreaths were honored.

January's Events and Happenings

2	AA Meeting, 5:30 pm, Fellowship Hall
3	Worship and Communion, 10:00 am
3	Blood Pressure Checks, 11:00 am
5	Walking Club, 9:00 am
6	Burning of the Greens, Church parking lot, 5:00 pm
6	Soup Supper/Discussion, 6:00 pm, Fellowship Hall
7	Theological Discussion, 11:00 am
9	AA Meeting, 5:30 pm, Fellowship Hall
10	Worship, 10:00 am
12	Walking Club, 9:00 am
13	Soup Supper/Discussion, 6:00 pm, Fellowship Hall
14	Theological Discussion, 11:00 am
16	AA Meeting, 5:30 pm, Fellowship Hall
17	Worship, 10:00 am
19	Walking Club, 9:00 am
20	Soup Supper/Discussion, 6:00 pm, Fellowship Hall
21	Theological Discussion, 11:00 am
23	AA Meeting, 5:30 pm, Fellowship Hall
24	Worship, 10:00 am
24	Full Moon Circle, 7:00 pm, Fellowship Hall
26	Walking Club, 9:00 am
27	Soup Supper/Discussion, 6:00 pm, Fellowship Hall
28	Theological Discussion, 11:00 am
30	AA Meeting, 5:30 pm, Fellowship Hall
31	Worship, 10:00 am

Condolences to Sharon Okonek

Please hold Sharon Okonek in your prayers. Sharon's mother, Ruthie Rydberg passed away on December 19. A memorial service is planned for January 2 at 11:00 am at Spooner Methodist Church. Click [HERE](#) to read Ruthie's obituary. Memorials may be directed to Woods Hall.

Sharing prayer in Full Moon Circle

What is the Full Moon Circle that Pastor Marina leads every month? St. John's Full Moon Circle is a spiritual ceremony with deep historical roots that contains a sacred fire surrounded by women in prayer in accordance with the cycles of the full moon. Each month, Marina is inspired and guided to arrange the candles on the altar to represent specific energies within the community of women and needs of the world. Women who are too far away to attend in person may participate in spirit. Contact [Pastor Marina](#) for more information.



Contact St. John's UCC

Reverend Marina Lachecki lighthouse@cheqnet.net
 Parsonage 715-747-3903
 Church Office phone 715-747-3945
 Church Office email stjohnsoffice@cheqnet.net

The Pastoral Column

Dear Friends in Christ,

Throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons, we proclaim Jesus as *Emmanuel*, "God with us." That is the most precious Christmas present: to understand that by the Spirit of God coming to earth in the form of a human being, the Presence of the Divine became flesh, and showed us the way.

Often we focus on the birth and death of Jesus, Christmas and Easter, but diminish the importance and dominance of the 'ordinary days' of the church year. On Christmas Eve, the prophet Isaiah announced the birth of a "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace."

Throughout the Advent season, we used the words of the Advent candles to meditate on: **Hope, Love, Peace and Joy**. These words share the way we are to prepare God's way in our lifetimes, in our communities and families, in our world. How do we present the Christ to others? How do we incarnate the spirit of God in our midst?

So here is my New Year's spiritual practice for you:

Over the next two weeks, look back at 2015 with these words in mind; where have you exhibited love, hope, peace or joy? Where have you been a good counselor for those in need, a caring presence for those lost? A source of peace in the conflicts of our daily lives? Note them. Send a prayer of thanksgiving that you brought Christ onto the earth.

And then look forward to 2016. Light a candle and say a prayer asking for God's guidance to love, bring hope, provide peace, and exhibit joy as God moves through your life and enters, daily, the world He so loved.

Happy New Year, *Pastor Marina*

*"I will light candles of joy despite all the sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of love to inspire all my living..."*

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the shepherds are back with their flock,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among others,
to make music in the heart."*

*Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman (1899-1981)
Dean of Boston University Chapel
Mentor to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Celebrating Trevor Laroche-Theune

St. John's is excited to share exciting news about [Trevor Laroche-Theune](#) who hails from Madeline Island and whose family is active within the St. John's community.



Trevor, a senior attending University of Wisconsin-Superior, was recently named Co-Offensive Player of the Year in recognition of Trevor's outstanding contributions to the Yellowjackets' soccer team. Trevor was also named to the Upper Midwest Athletic Conference Men's Soccer All-Conference First Team.

Here's an excerpt from the press release:

Laroche-Theune had a banner year for the Yellowjackets, appearing in a career-high 21 games. He scored a career-best eight goals and chipped in five assists. His 21 points were tops on the team. Even more impressive was the fact that five of his eight goals were game winners.



"I can't say enough about what Trevor accomplished in his four years with us. This is a player who came in as a walk-



on and just continued to get better," Yellowjacket Head Coach [Joe Mooney](#) said. "Then for him to lead the team in scoring and be one of the best players in the region says a lot about him. We kept telling him that his hard work was going to pay off and it certainly did with the year he had."

Click [HERE](#) to read the complete press release!

CONGRATULATIONS TREVOR!!!!

What's your news? The Lighthouse welcomes news about our members and the extended St. John's community! Send your news to stjohnsoffice@cheqnet.net

Marina's Walking Club



Grab your hats and boots and 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! Send an email to Pastor Marina to get on Marina's Walking Club list!

Infinite Boundaries Retreat

A four-day wellness retreat for breast cancer survivors is coming to Madeline Island this summer. July 28 – 31, 2016, Breast Cancer Recovery is coming to the Music Camp facility to offer breast cancer survivors a healing experience for body, mind, and spirit. Based on the belief that healing can be found in nature, this retreat will integrate nature experiences into the recovery activities. Visit [Infinite Boundaries Retreat](#) for complete details and registration.



Theology Class: Foundations of Western Civilization

Join Pastor Marina Lachecki and Reverend Jim Kasperson on Thursday mornings for discussions that are sure to challenge and inspire you! Everyone is welcome at the Parsonage at 11:00 am for coffee, tea, and treats, and a chance to dive into topics that are guaranteed to stretch our spiritual beliefs and understandings.

We are using one of [The Great Courses](#) entitled [The Foundations of Western Civilization](#), taught by Professor



Thomas F. X. Noble, University of Notre Dame. "Western Civilization has always accorded a prominent place to religion and, by extension, to religious institutions and leaders," explains Noble. "We will focus on three dominant monotheistic traditions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Each of these religious traditions produced sacred books and vast commentaries on those books."

Soup Suppers: Nourishment for Body, Mind & Soul

Soup will nourish the body, friendships will nourish the soul, and book discussions will nourish the mind!

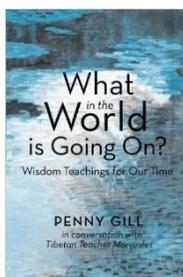


Everyone is welcome at Soup Suppers in the Fellowship Hall where we're serving up sustenance, fellowship and wisdom!

Come! January 6, 13, 20, and 27 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, has taught political science for forty years at Mount Holyoke College.



Thank you for your generous gifts!

Thank you, thank you to everyone who contributed to St. John's in response to the letter from Michael Collins. We were overwhelmed with the generous gifts that have already been received. And, we are pleased to report that contributions continue coming in!

Your contributions increase St. John's capacity to serve as the center of spiritual and religious life on the Island and provide ministry and spiritual enrichment in new and innovative ways.



Tax deductible contributions can be mailed to St. John's, PO Box 14, La Pointe, WI 54850. Your gift is an act of Thanksgiving that propels our ability to serve so many, so often, in a multitude of meaningful ways.

Holy Ground: Madeline Island to the Mystic Isles

Explore sacred monasteries, historic castles and cultures, hike 3 days along Saint Cuthbert's Way, and learn about Celtic Saints. Travel with Pastor Marina Lachecki and Sarah and Nile Norton on a modern day pilgrimage from Madeline Island to the sacred isles of Great Britain, June 5 – 16, 2017.



Click [Holy Ground Pilgrimage](#) for the trip's full itinerary and complete details. Sign up today to enjoy two weeks journeying with joy, song, prayer, fellowship, and sacred word along the Pilgrim's Way.

Hope, Love, Peace, and Joy to you!

"Joy is found through facing and enduring suffering until one is able, however briefly, to forget oneself through wonder at the world and service to others." Anne Ramirez



May the Spirit help us discover the wonder in God's creation over the winter months, and discover the joy of being disciples of Christ, the Incarnate One.

Pastor Marina