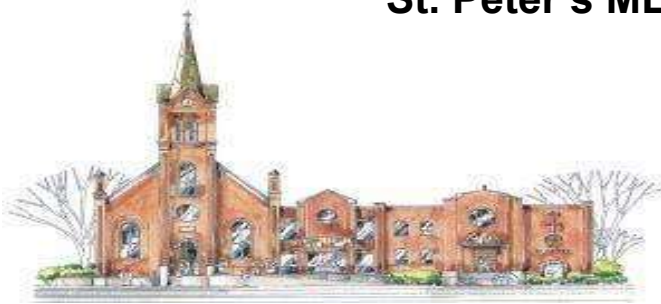


St. Peter's MESSENGER

St. Peter's United Church of Christ
20 East 5th Street P.O. Box 510
Washington MO 63090
636-239-6176

Website www.stpeters-washington.org

November 2024



Dear Friends,

As November begins, we as a congregation enter a month of thanksgiving and remembrance. Thursday, November 28 is Thanksgiving Day. It is a day to remember the abundance of God's blessings and to say "thank you, God." Stewardship, of course, walks hand in hand with thanksgiving. If we are so richly blessed, we then have a responsibility to be a blessing to others. Please join us for worship on Stewardship weekend, November 9 and 10, and for our Stewardship potluck after worship on Sunday, November 10.

In terms of remembering, St. Peter's UCC will begin and end the month honoring those who have gone before us. On November 2 and 3 we will be celebrating our congregation's 180th anniversary! We will reflect on our rich heritage during worship and how through the years we have served our membership, community, and the wider world. But we will also look forward as we baptize into the Christian faith Gus Maxwell Becker, the son of Casper and Erica Becker.

We then end the month with Totenfest, a tradition that began with our German Evangelical forebears. On that last Sunday of the church's calendar, we will remember by name the members of our church who have died this past year. This is always a moving service as we remember how our church has been blessed by our members throughout the years.

So, this month I would encourage you to mark these days (and not just November 28) as a time to both give God thanks and also remember the rich blessings of our faith ancestors who continue to shape and encourage this congregation and our very lives.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Pastor Kurt

Blessed are those who mourn . . . for they shall be comforted.

Please pray for the family and friends of Cara Czeschin who passed away Sept. 25, 2024



Sun., Nov. 3 at 2 a.m. is the end of daylight-saving time.

Turn your clocks **back** one hour before you go to bed on Sat., Nov. 2 to be on time to worship on Sunday.



Festival of Trees 2024

The Festival of Trees Committee will be moving the trees from storage to the auditorium on Sun., Nov. 3. We welcome any and all help. Tree set up times run Nov. 13-26. The event opens on Sun., Dec. 1 and will run all weekends in December prior to Christmas from 5-7 p.m., unless there is a special event planned.

Finance Board-Stewardship

St. Peter’s Church customarily emphasizes stewardship of time, talent and treasure during the fall. The second Sunday in November is designated as Stewardship Sunday. Cards will be passed out to attendees at both services on the first two weekends of November. The cards will ask for your signature to show your ongoing support of St. Peter’s. Cards will be placed in a box at the rear of the church and will be gathered together and dedicated during church services the weekend of Nov. 9-10. On Sun., Nov. 10, following the 10 a.m. service, there will be a carry-in dinner in the dining room. We hope that Saturday night attendees will join us. We are asking for salad and vegetable dish contributions from those attending. Meat, bread and beverages will be supplied. The Finance Board will bring dessert. Plan to attend! We look forward to a time of good food and community!

Boxes of 2025 offering envelopes are now available in the back of the sanctuary. Please call the office if you do not locate yours. Also be in touch if you need assistance getting your envelopes. You may pick up and deliver boxes to members you know. Thank you.

Women’s Fellowship

We will meet on **Thurs., Nov. 21 at 10 a.m.** After a short business meeting we will have a craft activity. Because that is also the monthly “*Game Day*,” we will have lunch and join in on the activities. Hope you can plan on joining us!

Game Day:

The third Thursday of each month is “*Game Day*.” Please join us on Nov. 21 for lunch at noon with games to follow. Remember to invite a friend

Mission Report September 2024

Washington Emergency Relief Fund

During the month of September, the *Washington Emergency Relief Fund* received 229 calls, giving out 27 grants to assist 71 people with a total of \$5,998.89 granted. Fifteen of those grants were for electricity, four for water, and eight for rent. We also were awarded a grant for \$5,500 to aid additional people.

The Harvest Table

Sept. 7 137	Sept. 21 127	
Sept. 14 157	Sept. 28 114	TOTAL 535

Food Pantry News

Thank you to ALL the volunteers who help the food pantry continue its vital ministry in our community. In September, 121 individuals representing 43 families were served. We also thank the following for their generous donations – September Food Pantry Donors: Joline Logan, Brenda Bruns, Brynn Kerr in memory of his mother Sibyl, Food Stock, United Way, and Wendell & Mary Lou Tyree

Hanging of the Greens

On Nov. 23 and 24 the congregation is invited to the Hanging of the Greens AKA Decorating for Christmas. Before worship on Sat., Nov. 23 at 4 p.m. and after worship on Sun., Nov. 24 the congregation is asked to help decorate trees, stairways, the altar, the balcony, the atrium and other areas of the church that need a little Christmas. A light lunch will be provided on Sunday. Please bring your family and help prepare for Advent and Christmas.



Friendly reminder---Jigsaw puzzles are in the hallway across from the quilting room. Time to gather puzzles for the cooler time ahead. If you can add any 300-piece puzzles to the group, it would be appreciated.

Thank You

A big thank you from the *Washington Emergency Relief* to those who sent us donations recently. We have been extremely busy, so the extra funds are very helpful. Thank you to **Ruth Rinne, Marilyn Sherman** and **Ron & Brenda Brinker**. The funds you donated have already been put to good use on bills to prevent disconnects of electricity for two households. Thank you again for helping our agency assist others.

The *Cemetery Board and sexton, Gary Edler*, would like to thank the faithful volunteers who assisted in our cemetery cleanup day. Many tasks were accomplished. Those who assisted were **Ben Alspach, Carl Clover, Steve Forget, Jim Gephardt, Jack & Rainey Harty, Erna Holland, Nathaniel Pfitzinger** and **Lewis & Pat Swinger**.

Thank you to all who helped with the Quilter's September Rummage Sale.

Quilters gather at St. Peter's on Monday afternoons and Wednesday's all day to quilt. The quilters have donated two quilts to the **Friends Event** being held at the Washington Knights of Columbus, lower level, on Sun., Nov. 3, 2024. Food is being served from 11:30-3, a silent auction 11:30 to 2, and the quilt auction begins at 2:30.

Thank you to the anonymous donor who, once again, bought and paid for five cases of copy paper and had it delivered to church. –Carol Hackmann

Justice Witness Update

Written by Dr. Kim Colter

The Justice Witness Committee continues to meet regularly. While there are several agenda items, the issue we spend most of the time on is the *discernment process* regarding whether it is wise to bring the issue of becoming a designated Open and Affirming congregation to a vote of our membership. At our most recent meeting, we reviewed the anonymous comments placed in the comment box in the Atrium. There have been both supportive comments and comments expressing concern and hesitation about becoming a designated Open and Affirming UCC congregation. It appears the comment box has been a forum in which members of the congregation have been able to be more frank about their thoughts and concerns than at the "*Lunch and Learn*" sessions. From my perspective as a physician, I want to share with the congregation the growing evidence for a genetic basis for sexual orientation.

From a scientific perspective, it is important to begin by saying that sexual orientation is not encoded by a single gene the way hemophilia, hemochromatosis, or sickle cell anemia are encoded. There is mounting evidence for sexual orientation being influenced by nearly a dozen genes in the human genome. From a genetic perspective, the genetics of sexual orientation might be compared to the genetics of being left or right-handed.

Left handedness and homosexual orientation in men both occur at a frequency of approximately 4%. Historically, efforts have been made to "re-program" individuals with same sex sexual orientation, just as efforts have been historically made to train or force natural lefthanders to write with the right hand. Left-handed people struggle to use scissors, can openers, guitars, and cameras in a "right-handed world." But the struggles faced by gay people include harassment, bullying and name-calling—clearly more trying issues than clipping coupons with the non-dominant hand.

In 42 years of medical practice, I have noted the slow accumulation of preliminary evidence for subtly different brain anatomy in gay brains versus straight brains, and a similar progression of evidence at the molecular genetic level suggesting that there is a difference in the genome of gay people versus straight people. I don't think any of the scientific evidence to date is as convincing to me as listening to mothers. In my decades of clinical practice, I have heard several mothers of gay children say, "I knew at age 3", or "I knew at age 4." Handedness is apparent earlier than age 3 or 4, but when a mother tells me, "I could tell my child was gay at age 3", to me that is compelling evidence that sexual orientation is "baked in."

There is one other aspect in which left handedness and same sex sexual orientation exhibit similarities. If 4% of the population is left-handed, why is the incidence of left handedness so much higher in Major League Baseball, and among gifted pianists? Left handedness seems to come along with superior hand eye coordination. When gay people are compared to straight people, the incidence of both high school graduates and college graduates are higher in gay populations than straight populations. Gay persons are found with increasing frequency among those who excel in the arts and literature. Let me suggest that we all give consideration to the ways St. Peter's experience might be enriched and enhanced by worshipping alongside people who don't look like us, talk like us, think like us, or share our sexual orientation.

Justice Witness has also looked at the issues faced by African Americans and other non-Caucasian members of our community. Within the last months a dinner was shared in our auditorium with participants in the YMCA literacy program and the English as a second, third, or fourth language programs pioneered by Diane Schwab and other members of our congregation. Our building was

used to host this program prior to the pandemic. It was heartwarming to hear the testimony of how important this program was to the participants.

Justice Witness continues to try to discern how St. Peter's UCC members can provide for the needs of the homeless in our community. St. Peter's members continue to volunteer at the shelter established in the basement of Peace Lutheran Church that is open to the homeless when shelter is needed for extreme cold and extreme heat. The kinship and camaraderie that exists between members from Peace Lutheran and St. Peter's that is fostered by these efforts is seen as a positive by the JW committee members.

Justice Witness members are enthusiastic about the recent mission trip to Biloxi, MS and the bonds between St. Peter's members that are expected to be forged and intensified by similar trips.

Justice Witness continues to follow the efforts of the Salaam Clinic and its coordination with Harvest Table.

St. Peter's United Church of Christ Church Council Meeting Highlights October 15, 2024

Treasurer's Report:

- We are still approximately \$36,000 down on the General Fund compared to the budget, but are \$6,000 better than last month
- Last year at this time we were \$31,000 below budget, so this is still worse than last year.
- Stewardship weekend is Nov. 9-10 with a dinner on Sunday.

Senior Pastor's Report:

- The Back Bay mission trip last month went well, with five attending. We would like to do this again next year and have even more attend.
- The dedication service for the automated doors and Wilke plaque went well.
- Confirmation is meeting. There is a group of four youth.

Boards and Committees:

Building and Grounds:

- Nathaniel Pfitzinger has returned as Custodian.
- There are six test cards for the doors that some Council members will try.
- Security System update - they have a couple bids.
 - Trycon – Suggests 16 cameras, about \$14,000.
 - Will Electronics – Suggests 11 cameras, about \$24,700. Includes conduit installation for hardwired cameras.
 - There were discussions that wireless may not work well here due to the structure of the building. They need to clarify whether Trycon's system is wireless, as it is significantly less expensive.
- Choir Room heat – They are discussing adding heat strips that will heat the choir room without turning on the boiler.
- There have been comments that new HVAC Unit F is making a rumbling noise. Investigation was done, and there were some insulation mats that had fallen away from the walls in the space below it, and this may be causing the noise. This is being investigated further.
- The damaged fence across the street is being repaired.

Cemetery Board:

- The Pogue sculpture has been installed.
- The backhoe was sold for \$10,000.
- There was a cleanup day today.
- Twenty-two lots have been sold so far this year.

Board of Christian Education:

- There have only been two kids in Sunday School so far this year.
- Do we want to do a Christmas Program this year, given the low attendance? We would need more kids, and maybe the Confirmands and/or Congregational participation. We could also consider a youth participation service. The Board would like guidance on what to do. Some calls will be made to families. We normally start working on the Christmas program the first weekend in November.

Mission:

- Rhonda Stockglusner will be the Council liaison, replacing Jill Lesko who is moving.
- We do a Mission Moment each month.
 - This month is Neighbors in Need.
 - In November, we will discuss that we are a “5 for 5” church, donating to all 5 national offerings.
 - We met our goal on Festival of Sharing.
 - This group needs more people - currently it only has three.

Worship:

- Parament samples and photos were shown. Photos were also shown of the wear and aging on the current white paraments.
- The Worship Committee recommends that we purchase these. The cost is \$2,480 for new altar covers, lectern covers, etc. There is a 3-month lead time. The recommended supplier is Kanel Brothers in Ohio, as there were no suitable local options.
- A motion passed to authorize the purchase of the new paraments, to be funded from the Memorial Fund.

Advisory:

- Letters were sent on Sept. 28 to those who do not get emails and who have not responded to the original survey email. We have received 61 responses so far. 242 outstanding units have not responded (a unit can be more than 1 person). Many of these have been inactive more than 5 years.
- We have received some Yes responses from members who have been physically and financially inactive for many years. We would like to contact them this fall.

Evangelism:

- Soup and game day is this Thursday afternoon, Oct. 17.

Old Business:

Website:

- Site statistics were shown, including which pages are being visited the most and which are being visited the longest.
- Click tracking has been turned on so that we can see which links are being used. This has shown a lot of use of the YouTube link.
- Pages with the most traffic are being focused on for updates.

Custodial:

- Byron would like help / relief on Sundays.
- There were suggestions for the ushering team to help lock the building after service, or Council who is assigned to lock up the offering that week.
- Would also need help opening the building in the morning.
- We also need more ushers on the team
- Worship Committee will discuss the situation and possibilities further.

Harold Wilke Plaque Dedication Report:

- The dedication service went well.
- We need to get the plaque hung.

Nominating Committee:

- There are still some empty ballot slots for 2025.

Good Samaritan Fund Signatories:

- Pastor Kurt and Sara Barnett will be the new signatories. A motion to approve them passed.

New Business:

Holiday Worship Schedule:

- Is the Christmas Day service necessary? It is the lowest attended service of all Christmas services.
- **A motion passed to suspend Christmas Day service this year.**
- It was suggested that if we eliminate Christmas morning service, we need to have Communion on Christmas Eve.

December Council Meeting:

- There was a suggestion that it be a Christmas Party, with invitations to new oncoming members but also invite all boards.
- There was a suggestion that each board have goals that will guide the group.

Open and Affirming (ONA) Update

- Justice Witness started looking into the church becoming ONA in 2019 using UCC guidance. The group has done many initiatives including: Lunch and learn, book studies, Salam Clinic, Little library.
- Face to face interviews with church members was the first step. Forty-two of 87 identified people were interviewed. Forty of the 42 were in favor of proceeding.
- Held the first "*Lunch and Learn*," in the fall of 2023. That audience reported 20 yes, 1 no, 1 undecided about ONA. However, was that audience attending because they actually favored ONA, and do they represent the opinion of the whole church?
- JW handed out surveys at the Fall Congregational meeting but only 37 were returned. That group voted 54% yes, 19% undecided, and 27% no.
- The draft covenant is all inclusive and does not single out any one group.
- The group wants an overwhelming majority to be in favor of this motion to proceed, probably over 80% in favor.
- At this point it isn't clear what the true level of support is.
- The group wants to present the covenant to the Congregation at some point in the future, with more informational meetings before any decision is made.

Fall Congregational Meeting:

- Mailings for the Congregational Meeting went out but may have issues. We received feedback that some have duplicated or missed pages.
- Due to no activity on Zoom at the last two Congregational meetings, we will not offer the meeting via Zoom this time. It will be recorded for later viewing.

Conference Annual Gathering:

- Conference Annual Gathering will all be online this year.
- The Conference Transitional Minister will be up for vote as the settled minister.

Financial Report

Receipts	September	YTD 2024
General Fund	\$ 38,591.59	\$ 345,704.29
Building Fund	\$ 3,178.40	\$ 30,653.81
Youth Fund	\$	\$ 351.00
Memorial Fund	\$ 545.00	\$ 15,892.75
Sanctuary Music Fund	\$	\$ 1,113.00
Pass Thru In	\$ 9,813.23	\$
Total Receipts	\$ 52,128.22	\$ 393,714.85

Expenses	September	YTD 2024
General Fund	\$ (33,238.15)	\$ (369,566.76)
Building Fund	\$ (10,938.16)	\$ (29,769.93)
Youth Fund	\$ (208.73)	\$ (1,147.52)
Memorial Fund	\$ (11,600.00)	\$ (15,171.38)
Sanctuary Music Fund	\$ (75.49)	\$ (494.20)
Pass Thru Out	\$ (9,813.23)	\$
Total Expenses	\$ (65,873.76)	\$ (416,149.79)

Bank Balance Report 9/30/2024

Heritage Bank Balance	\$ 50,128.65
Less Building Fund	\$ 7,600.07
Less Youth Fund	\$ 7,914.84
Less Memorial Fund	\$ 66,367.36
Less Music Fund	\$ 3,920.84
<u>Less Perpetual Member</u>	<u>\$</u>
General Fund Balance	\$ (35,674.46)

St. John's UCC New Melle is having a Sausage Supper, featuring potatoes pancakes on Sunday, November 3 from 11am-5pm

Triva Night supporting WINGS is Fri., Nov. 1, Play begins at 7 p.m.



*_*_*_*

CHRISTMAS MEMORIALS/POINSETTIAS

St. Peter's is once again giving everyone the opportunity to remember their loved ones by helping to decorate the sanctuary on Christmas with poinsettias or providing memorials. Please return this form to the church office by Dec. 19 for inclusion in the Christmas Eve worship bulletins. We ask that the plants be delivered to the church before noon on Dec. 23.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIALS/POINSETTIAS

Given by: _____ Phone or email _____

I wish to place a POINSETTIA in memory of:

I wish to donate a CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL in memory of:

Enclosed find: \$ _____ for Memorial Fund \$ _____ for Building Fund \$ _____ for General Fund.
Please note: Any poinsettia not picked up by noon Dec. 27 will be delivered to shut-ins.



The 2024 Festival of Trees

Walk through a winter wonderland of amazing holiday trees decorated by schools, organizations, and friends.

Bring your cameras to capture that holiday photo!

Free to all!

Accepting canned food and monetary donations for local food pantries.

*Open each Saturday & Sunday in December
with Santa visiting during this time!*

5 - 7 p.m.

Special Events

<i>Dec. 1st</i>	<i>Civic Chorus</i>	<i>2 p.m.</i>
<i>Dec. 6th</i>	<i>ECC Concert</i>	<i>7 p.m.</i>
<i>Dec. 14th</i>	<i>Piano Recital</i>	<i>2 p.m.</i>
<i>Dec. 15th</i>	<i>Festival Concert</i>	<i>2 p.m.</i>
<i>Dec. 15th</i>	<i>Downtown House Tour</i>	<i>4 - 7 p.m.</i>

**St. Peter's United Church of Christ
20 E 5th Street, Washington, MO**

happy birthday

November Birthdays

Alex Phinney	11/01	Gwen Francis	11/15
Cole Phinney	11/01	John Tyler Homeyer	11/15
Jacob Renth	11/02	Dale Kriete	11/15
Juliet Renth	11/02	Ruth Wood	11/16
Dan Buschmeyer	11/03	Kendall Schwentker	11/17
Kartal Stewart	11/03	Bruce Barnett	11/18
Evanne Kelley	11/04	Linda Jaeger	11/18
Claudette Walker	11/04	Carol Muench	11/18
Terry Buddemeyer	11/05	Evelyn Noud	11/18
Kacie Huxol	11/07	Charles Johns	11/19
Michael Abrams	11/08	Lynn Eckelkamp	11/20
Dennis Borgman	11/08	Karen McDonald	11/20
James Wacker	11/08	Taylor Scheible	11/20
Karen Dawson	11/09	Camden Stoyer	11/20
Gary Edler	11/09	Kylee Stoyer	11/20
Judy Pope	11/09	Joel Sullentrup	11/21
Colin Briggs	11/10	Delores Borcharding	11/22
Daniel Kriete	11/10	Carl Clover	11/22
Melinda West	11/10	Kylie Lamke	11/22
Randy Gillig	11/11	Lauren Roewe	11/22
Emma Menefee	11/11	Isaac Gildehaus	11/23
Beatrice Butler	11/12	Barb Kell	11/23
John Fagre	11/13	Laura Pinnell	11/23
Emilee Kellermann	11/13	Owen Zastrow	11/23
Patricia Swinger	11/13	Kristen Monzyk	11/25
Lisa Schoonover	11/14	David Triplett	11/26
Daniel Bargaen	11/15	Linda Sentivany	11/27
Kaleb Briggs	11/15	Samantha Wacker	11/28
Grant Francis	11/15	Lisa Harman	11/30
		Robert Wacker	11/30