

# BE THE CHURCH

Protect the environment. Care for the poor.  
Forgive often. **Reject Racism.**  
**Fight for the powerless.**  
Share earthly and spiritual resources.  
Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.



# Saint John's Journal

December 1, 2024

**Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!**



1934 Bridge Street NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

616.453.2497



[www.stjohnsuccgr.org](http://www.stjohnsuccgr.org)



[facebook.com/stjohnsuccgr](https://facebook.com/stjohnsuccgr)



[@StJohnsUCCGR](https://twitter.com/StJohnsUCCGR)



<http://alturl.9-16com/etrte>



## Thank You!



Our sincere thanks to all of the individuals that provided food for Hanging of the Greens and also to everyone that stayed to help make the church beautiful for the Christmas season!

## Mobile Food Pantry

Let's work together on Wednesday at St. John's UCC in partnership with Sudanese Grace Episcopal Church will host a Feeding America Mobile Food Pantry at 1550 Oswego NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504. Volunteers will gather at 5:00pm, distribution begins at 6:00pm. We are an equal opportunity provider. Last month, we served 144 households, 420 individuals, 178 children, 90 seniors and 13 veterans. A total of 26 awesome volunteers moved 7,660 pounds of food. Three new people joined our volunteer crew: Mary Rose Johnston and sister Cathy brought neighbor Fern, who knitted and distributed hats and dishes.

A small donation of surplus food was delivered to UCOM by Richard Johnston and Jeffrey Dick. For more information about the Mobile Food Pantry, feel free to contact Teresa Markoski at 616-690-4566 or at [tmarkoski2004@yahoo.com](mailto:tmarkoski2004@yahoo.com). Financial support is always welcome by donating on the church app or by writing a personal check to St. John's United Church of Christ, 1934 Bridge Street, 49504. It takes a village to feed our neighbors, together we serve. **Location:**

[The Sudanese Grace Episcopal Church](#)  
[1550 Oswego NW](#)  
[Grand Rapids, MI 49504](#)

## Worship Team Volunteers Needed

The Worship Team is in need of volunteers to set up communion and clean up afterwards during the coming year. Setting up takes about 10-15 minutes and should be done about a half hour before the service. Clean up takes another 10 minutes and should be done right after the close of the service. Most months we celebrate communion on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. During Advent (December) and Lent (March into April) we celebrate communion every Sunday. If you would be willing to serve in this way, please contact Becky Tiedt at ([worship@stjohnsuccgr.org](mailto:worship@stjohnsuccgr.org)) to volunteer.

## Pastoral Emergency Contact

In the event of a pastoral emergency, feel free to reach out to Pat Partridge at 616-915-7171.

## Upcoming Events

**Training for Ushers:** This morning at 12:00 p.m. there will be training for all current and future ushers.

**Children's Christmas Pageant** is scheduled for December 22 during our worship service at 10:00 a.m.

**Candlelight Christmas Eve Service**, December 24 at 7:00 p.m.

CHURCH  
chat

Today during coffee hour.

**Lectionary  
Reading for Next Week  
December 8, 2024**

Bar 5:1-9  
Luke 1:68-79  
Phil 1:3-11  
Luke 3:1-6



Tuesday 8:00—1:00 p.m.  
Wednesday 8:00—2:00 p.m.  
Thursday 8:00—2:00 p.m..  
Friday 8:00—2:00 p.m.  
You may email Sally at:  
office@stjohnsuccgr.org  
or call 453-2497.

**Bell Choir** will resume on **December 5** from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.  
**Chancel Choir** 7:30—8:30 p.m.

**Mission**

**Outreach Touches**

**This Month:**  
**663**

**Year to Date:**  
**51,782**

**Since Inception**  
**362,661**



Prayers of thanks for everyone who donated spices for UCOM.

Prayers for everyone traveling for Thanksgiving and for awkward family encounters.

Prayers for Judy's son, Lucas, who is looking for a place to live.

Prayers of joy for Pat's son and grandson coming for Christmas for the first time in 12 years.

Prayers for Ellen who may have Covid.

Prayers of thanks for Joel's directions of the choir and prayers for more choir members.

Prayer for Heidi and her family.

**Northwest Pantry**

If you or your family are looking for a holiday giving project, Northwest Pantry is looking for volunteers, donations, or sponsors for their Thanksgiving and/or Christmas food baskets. If you are interested in any of the opportunities to help them out, please contact them at 616-300-5079. They are located at 1224 Davis N.W.

Because of our partnership and commitment to UCOM we are not sponsoring this project this year. But doing projects in support of UCOM such as the Spice Drive going on now, and collecting canned goods in December. If you have any questions, please talk to a membership team member.

**Little Free Library Donations Needed!**

Our church's Little Free Library could use more books! If you have any gently used adult or children's books you'd like to donate, please drop them off in the box located in

the narthex. Teresa will use your generous donations to stock our library. Thank you for helping us keep our library full and vibrant for those in need!



**"Girlfriends"**

We will be reading "Kitchen Table Wisdom" by Rachel Naomi Reman. It's a beautiful collection of stories that heal by a Jewish MD. A reviewer says, the book is about the human tradition of shared experiences that show us life in all its power and mystery and reminds us that the things we cannot measure maybe the things that ultimately sustain and enrich our lives." We will meet by zoom on Tuesday, at 6:30 p.m. If you have any questions, give me a call or text at 616-438-1336.

**Meetings.....**

**Worship Team Meeting** tomorrow at 6:30 p.m.  
**Membership Meeting:** December 9 at 6:30 p.m.  
**Council Meeting,** December 16 at 7:00 p.m.

# Neighbors in Need 2024

This year’s Neighbor in Need theme “Mental Health Justice for All: “Mental Health is a Universal Human Right” highlights our God-given right to mental health. Everyone is created in God’s image, and everybody should receive quality mental health care.

In 2015, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ passed a resolution to become WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged) for mental health.

A just world for all is a world where the human rights and well-being of people with mental health challenges are respected, no matter who you are or where you are in life’s mental health journey

Here are 12 key messages that are important to know:

- 1. Good mental health is a key part of overall health and wellbeing.
- 2. Good mental health helps us cope with challenges, connect with others, with God, and

- thrive throughout our lives.
- 3. Mental health is vital and deserves to be recognized and respected.
- 4. Everyone has the right to access quality treatment that meets our unique needs and respects our human rights throughout our lifetime.
- 5. Mental health challenges are a significant threat to the wellbeing of young people.
- 6. Depression is the leading cause of disability in the world.
- 7. We must break the silence about mental health challenges.
- 8. 8. We must dismantle the stigma, shame, and discrimination surrounding mental health challenges.
- 9. We all have the right to live our lives free from the stigma and discrimination in church, school, and in the workplace.
- 10. Good, quality, affordable, and accessible community mental health services and supports

- are crucial for a just world for all.
- 11. Mental health is fundamental to enjoying a good and meaningful life.
- 12. Everyone’s mind is beautiful, complex, unique, and made in God’s image.

In a Just World, Mental Health is a Universal Human Right! Please join us in supporting the 2024 Neighbors In Need Special Mission Offering.

Donations to Neighbors in Need 2024 can be made online by selecting Neighbors in Need or in-person/ by mail by identifying on your envelope or check that the donation should be applied to Neighbors in Need.

Two-thirds of your donation to NIN support advocacy, programming, and grants. One-third of your generous gifts directly support CAIM.

For more information, visit <https://www.ucc.org/nin/>

## Gift Bags

Again we will be creating gift bags for some of our senior (mostly home/house bound) members. We will be creating 8 bags to be given out while the church goes caroling to them, on December 15th. We are looking for help with items for the bags:  
Suggested items—and please feel free to add other items to this list are:  
Games/puzzle books  
small puzzles  
fruit (orange-easy peel ones—bananas, grapes (in baggies ready for each bags for the grapes or other small fruit)  
Cookies/brownies (in individual baggies or wrapped for each bag)

Flavored water drops or packets  
Small projects they can work on )those wooden ornaments, etc. to be painted at the dollar store)  
Candy/fudge ( in individual baggies or wrapped for each bag)  
Small home/Christmas decoration  
Small game (cards/dice)  
Color books for adults and crayons or colored pencils  
Homemade card/picture from your child  
Pocket Calendar  
Small loaf of bread or muffin (individual wrapped, please for each bag)  
Anything to keep their minds/fingers active  
What can you think of

that’s new or different?  
A small box has been placed on the table by the furnace room for gift bag donations. It has a message on it Gift bag items and a small list of suggested items.  
Please have your donation to church by Dec. 12th. We are planning on assembling bags on Dec. 13/14 (depending on if we have to shop for items.)  
If you are interested in helping assemble the bags/ or delivering one, please let a member of the caregiving or membership team know. We are always thankful for any extra hands. (this is a easy project that kiddos are welcome to help out with.)

Serving on Sundays

Date	Ushers	Liturgists	Coffee Hour
Dec. 1	Bernie Huitema	Chris Grooms	Judy Merrills
Dec. 8	Open	Sue Bradford	We Celebrate You!
Dec. 15	Judy Merrills	Spencer Hoffmann	Sally Oracz
Dec.22	Open	Jen Berg	Fellowship
Dec. 24	Diana DeKorte	Becky Tiedt	To be announced
Dec 29	Open	Peter Huschilt	Open

2024-2025 Education Schedule

Date	Nursery	WC1 WC1 Floater	WC2	Bridge	Floater
November 24	Jen	Lisa Chloe	Tarah	Makenzie	Dan/Mia
December 1	Betsy	Lisa Heidi	Susan Tarah	Becky	Teresa
Dec. 8	Pam	Lisa Jenna	Susan Tarah	Becky	Teresa
Dec. 15	Shelby	Lisa Chloe	Susan Tarah	Becky	Ashley
Dec. 22	Betsy	Lisa Chloe	Tarah Susan	Becky Makenzie	Jen
Dec. 24	??	No Worship Center	No Worship Center	No Worship Cener	No Worship Center
Dec. 29	??	No Worship Center	No Worship Center	No Worship Center	No Worship Center

Pulpit Schedule

December 1	Bill Newsom
December 8	Marcus Little
December 15	Barb Huitema
December 22	Jeffrey Dick
December 24	Jeffrey Dick
December 29	Barb Huitema

Jesus Is Coming Again

Luke 21:25-36

Word Search Puzzle

T N A I D N H G C M W N S R Y  
H D A T O E E E C Y J P T F T  
F J F T K W V S A A H L A N W  
I I I F I B A L C V R D N M S  
L F B D W O A T Y A E E D V E  
I R S S H Y N Q C S P N F K A  
F E G U A L T S Z H D E J U E  
E D B G N X F U T G L O R Y L  
V E C H B O D R B A W O R L D  
D M L S E I L R U Y R H L D H  
Q P O S I G N S M F U S S T N  
G T U I P D R G Q Z P F R O S  
B I D P O W E R S Z D A O T X  
W O Q G R H E A D S E M W N V  
G N L P R A Y G Q J A Z J U E

CAREFUL	GLORY	MOON	REDEMPTION	STARS
CLOUD	HEADS	NATIONS	SEA	SUN
EARTH	HEAVEN	POWER	SIGNS	WATCH
ESCAPE	LIFT	PRAY	STAND	WORLD

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here.



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

Jesus didn't reject people.  
Neither do we.

ucc.org