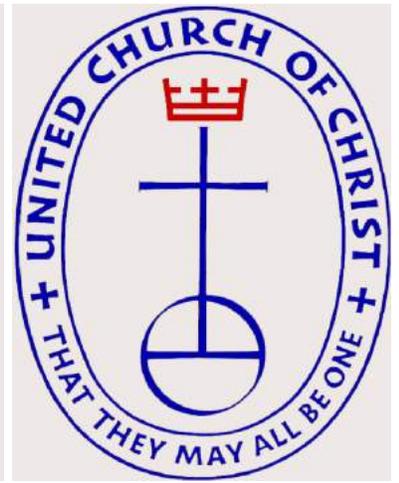


# The Hilltop News



DECEMBER 2017

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Poinsettia order form.....	2
Ladies Guild.....	2
Pastor's Letter.....	3
Jazz Noel, Road Rally.....	4
Envelope reminder.....	4
Monthly Ministry, Christmas Fund.....	5
Council Contacts, Prayer List.....	6
Food Pantry Needs.....	6
Calendar.....	7
About Us.....	10

THE CHILD GREW...  
AND  THE  
**FAVOR OF**  
**GOD**  
WAS UPON HIM.  
LUKE 2:40

*Pastor*  
Rev. Margaret Diz Philip  
*Council*  
Kelly Day, pres.  
Neil Glaser, treas.  
Liz Konneman, sec.  
Dale Konneman, grounds  
Janet Moehsmer, bldg. fund  
*Music Director*  
June Jones  
*Custodian*  
Neil Glaser  
*Office Admin.*  
Gail Schneider

St. Thomas United Church of Christ | 17842 Wild Horse Creek Rd. | Chesterfield, MO 63017

636-532-3556 | <http://stthomasucc.org/> | [ucc.st.thomas@gmail.com](mailto:ucc.st.thomas@gmail.com) or [info@stthomasucc.org](mailto:info@stthomasucc.org)



There's still time to get your order in!

### CHRISTMAS FLOWER ORDER FORM

This year the St. Thomas Sunday School will be supplying the flowers for decorating the sanctuary. If you are interested in purchasing a flower in memory or in honor of a loved one, please complete the form and return with a check, payable to St. Thomas UCC Sunday School.

<b>6 ½" Poinsettia</b>	<b>\$10.00 each</b>
Red _____	White _____
Pink _____	Marble _____

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

Order forms are due, to Terry Gelhot, on or before Sunday, December 3.

Please note: I will try to fill your order as indicated. At pickup, if I have an issue with stock being depleted on any color, I will pick an alternate color. If you have a second choice, please indicate above. Thanks.

We received a thank-you letter from the USO for our October collection of individually wrapped snacks.

In November we took a Wilderness Tour at Shaw Nature Reserve. We climbed aboard the Wilderness Wagon for a 3-mile tour around Shaw Nature Reserve's main loop road and learned about the history of the property and how it has changed through the years from the Gray Summit Extension, to The Arboretum, and finally to today's Shaw Nature Reserve.



Our Show-Me Dough sale netted \$587.50 for the Salvation Army to use for hurricane relief.

On December 6, we will lunch at the Mother-in-Law House and then walk Main Street to see the Christmas decorations. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex or call June Jones (636-532-9160) or JoAnn Barton (636-368-5197.)

## ARE YOU READY?!

*Wilderness and desert will sing joyously, the badlands will celebrate and flower—Like the crocus in spring, bursting into blossom, a symphony of song and color.... Energize the limp hands....strengthen the rubbery knees. Tell fearful souls, "Courage! Take heart! God is here, right here, on the way to put things right...." Blind eyes will be opened, deaf ears unstopped, lame men and women will leap like deer, the voiceless will break into song.... There will be a highway called the Holy Road.*

*No one rude or rebellious is permitted on this road - Nothing and no one dangerous or threatening. Only the redeemed will walk on it. The people God has ransomed will come back on this road. They'll sing as they make their way home to Zion, unfading halos of joy encircling their heads, welcomed home with gifts of joy and gladness as all sorrows and sighs scurry into the night.*

Isaiah 35 (Selected verses) MSG

As we enter the last month of the year, I imagine there are very few people who aren't going to be glad to leave 2017 in the past. There have been hurricanes, fires, droughts, and earthquakes. Our political life has been disrupted on a daily basis and everyone is trying to figure out how to prepare for the next mass shooting. It's harder and harder to tell what is "Fake" and what the real thing is. Millions of people have been praying, marching, writing letters, and actually helping to clean up and rebuild in places where havoc has been wrought. Some have described it like being on a roller coaster – just when you think things are looking better they take a downward turn. It's been a very hard year for all of us.

Like the people of Israel, some of us have begun to lose hope. The Israelites were acquainted with all kinds of hard times. Like some of us, they had little hope for tomorrow. So, when the prophet Isaiah promised them all kinds of good things were about to break forth with streams flowing in the desert, the people paid attention. They were ready!

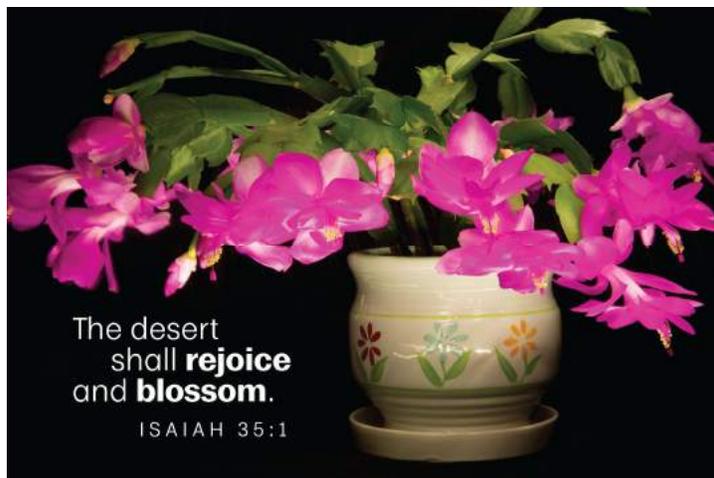
They had lived through severe droughts and their crops were dying, but droughts come in many forms; they show up when we are physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually out of resources. Today there are many "limp hands that need to be energized, feeble knees that must be strengthened, and fearful hearts that need encouragement and courage."

Prophets help us move on through these tough time. So Isaiah declares the good news - God is always on the way to provide living water – God will slake our greatest thirsts. Are you ready?

Genuine hope – hope with open eyes – eyes which see the suffering and yet know that all is not lost - believes in the future - this is the great gift of Christmas. Genuine hope looks forward.

This is, after all, the true message of Christmas – hope is on the way.

Are you ready? Will you be watching for Hope this Christmas?



*Peace,  
Margaret*



Please let us know if you do not want new offering envelopes for 2018!

## AS GOOD AS DONE

Upon the birth of the one who'd become known as John the Baptist, his father, Zechariah, praised God. Zechariah broke his nine-month inability to speak with these words: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old" (Luke 1:68-70, NRSV).

Notice how Zechariah describes God's actions as if they had already happened! In Good News of Great Joy, John Piper writes, "Nine months earlier, Zechariah could not believe his wife would have a child. Now, filled with the Holy Spirit, he is so confident of God's redeeming work in the coming Messiah that he puts it in the past tense. For the mind of faith, a promised act of God is as good as done."



The 2017 Scavenger hunt rally was a fun afternoon for 17 participants. We enjoyed a pot luck lunch after worship. Then we divided into 5 cars and rallied to find 50 items within 2 hours. 1st place team: Sheri Grimm, Debbie Brune & Terry Gelhot. Candy prizes were given to all.

**Jazz Noel**

Reimagine the Christmas Story...

**JAZZ**  
**PHOTOGRAPHY**  
**POETRY**

**Sunday, December 17 - 3:00 pm**  
**First Congregational Church**  
**10 W. Lockwood Ave. Webster Groves**



## DECEMBER MINISTRY: CIRCLE'S HOLIDAY ADOPTION PROGRAM

We are providing Christmas gifts for 6 senior citizens this year. The gift tags were placed on the back window of the Sanctuary for last Sunday (11/26) and tags for five of the six remain. You'll find clipboards on the Narthex table which correspond to the six individuals. Please choose a tag and record your name and tag info on the proper clipboard. Wrap your selection and attach the tag. Gifts should be returned by December 10th so they can be delivered to Community Christian Church in Manchester on December 12th.

### CHRISTMAS FUND

For 116 years, the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund has been a tangible expression of God's love and light in the world. One of the four Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ, the Christmas Fund provides UCC congregations and members an opportunity to reach out in kindheartedness to those who have faithfully shepherded our Church and who now find themselves facing unexpected financial needs.

In 2016, UCC congregations and members generously contributed \$1,562,260 to the Offering. This enabled the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards, to provide, on behalf of the whole Church, Supplementation of Small Annuities, Retiree Health Premium Supplementation, Emergency Grants, and Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks to individuals and families in need.

The theme of the 2017 Christmas Fund Offering is Shepherding the Light, and our goal is to raise \$1.7 million to help support these ministries of light and love. The recipients of these gifts have faithfully served the church and now, in their time of need, we can be the church to them. We invite and encourage you to shepherd God's light and support this year's appeal.

We will collect the Christmas Fund offering throughout December.





*If you have knowledge of someone on the Prayer List who no longer needs our prayers, please let us know.*

Content removed for web version

Peanut Butter

Jelly

Tomato Products

Canned Chicken

Canned Mixed Vegetables

Razors

Bar Soap

Body Wash

Conditioner

**The following item is CRITICAL**

Snacks (granola bars, pudding cups, crackers, veggie chips etc.)



Sunday School and  
Christian Education  
continues in  
January.

“One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas Day. Don’t clean it up too quickly.”  
—Andy Rooney

**COUNCIL CONTACTS**

President	Kelly Day	314-307-7890 kmday44@gmail.com
Treasurer	Neil Glaser	636-391-0279 njglaser@att.net
Secretary	Liz Konneman	636-458-5643 enkonneman@live.com
Buildings & Grounds	Dale Konneman	636-458-5643 dalekonneman@hotmail.com
Building Fund	Janet Moehsmer	636-458-1058 jmoehsmer@gmail.com

# December 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 1st Sunday of Advent	4	5 *Glen Clark *Jim Crosby *Evan Schnatmeier 1:30pm Centering Prayer	6 10am Ladies Guild Lunch in St. Charles	7	8	9 *Craig Jones
10 *Dale Konneman	11	12	13 Christmas Caroling - Time TBD	14 *Terry Gelhot 2pm Book Club	15	16 *Dale Ponce *Gail Schott
17	18	19 1:30pm Centering Prayer	20	21 1st day of Winter	22 +Rich & LaVerne Brueggeman	23
24 7:30pm Christmas Eve Service	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29	30



St. Thomas UCC  
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www.stthomasucc.org

Phone: 636-532-3556

E-mail: ucc.st.thomas@gmail.com

PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE



Worship: 8:30 (summer) & 10:00 am (all year)

11:00 am Fellowship Time

We are ADA Accessible.

Childcare is provided during Worship.

Office Hours: 10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Please call first if you need to stop by!

Office Phone: 636.532.3556

## About Us

### Mission Statement

We are St. Thomas UCC, a caring faith community welcoming all to share with us. You will find us supportive, nurturing, and encouraging. Our worship is traditional yet contemporary, applying scripture and Christ's teachings to everyday life. Accepting all who come as family, we are St. Thomas UCC.

### Value Statement

We are a close-knit welcoming community. We cherish and honor the traditions of our 100 years past. With respect and compassion we work together. We strive to grow in our faith by serving the community. We embrace and celebrate our youth and the promise of each new generation of God's children. We seek God's blessings and wisdom in the joys and challenges of our daily lives. We grow in our understanding of Christ's teachings while being respectful of our differences.

### Vision Statement

We seek to :

- Invite others to join in our faith journey
- Explore worship opportunities
- Enhance our fellowship and service outreach
- Expand our use of technology
- Increase our community involvement