

December  
2023

# United in Faith News



*Why are we  
Here?  
We are to be  
God's  
hands,  
feet and  
voice  
in the  
world.*



Candles, singing and writing are the vehicles of our Advent reflection this year. Advent is the beginning of the church year. As the world around us races toward frenetic preparations and holiday vacations we as the Church are invited into 28 days of reflection.

Each Sunday we will light a candle signifying our focus for that week. Each candle has a name: Hope (the Prophecy Candle), Peace (The Bethlehem Candle), Joy (The Shepherd's Candle) and Love (the Angel's Candle).

Each Wednesday we will gather at 7pm for Holden Evening Prayer inviting Christ to light our way and remind us of the blessings we have been given.

There are many ways to practice reflection: the settling in for serious thought and deep consideration. Additionally, this season United in Faith is preparing for our next challenges, our next steps in our life on Irving Park Road. As part of this season of reflection, I would like you to use the next weeks to write a letter to the church. Most particularly a love letter. Would you please sit and reflect on what you are thankful about being part of United in Faith. Then using one of the templates below capture the answers to these questions.

In what ways has belonging to United in Faith inspired you?  
What would you miss if United in Faith disappeared tomorrow?

Then write one of these letters:

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Dear United in Faith,  
I love you because...

If you disappeared tomorrow, I would...

With love,

---

Dear United in Faith,  
I am writing a letter to you to let you know about the things that inspire me and that I love about you....

I am very thankful to have you in my life, and if tomorrow you would disappear from existence this is the impact it would have on me...

With love,

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You can email your letters to me at [pastor@unitedinfaith.org](mailto:pastor@unitedinfaith.org), put a copy in the offering plate, or snail mail it to the office: United in Faith, 6525 West Irving Park Rd, Chicago, IL 60634. We will gather them through this advent season and compile them into a book to share.

Taking the time to do this will be a blessing to us all. Thank you for considering it. Thank you for being part of this congregation. Thank you for being the church in a frantic and frenetic world.

You make a difference by simply being here and I am grateful for you,

*Pastor Jeanine*

At  
United in Faith,  
The Guiding  
Principles are:

+

Jesus is  
Lord and  
*Savior*

+

Reflect  
God's *Love*

+

Pray and  
*listen* for God's  
guidance

+

Continue to  
strengthen  
*faith*

+

Include *All*  
in God's  
*work*

+

Meet people  
*where they*  
*are*

## January St. Cyprian's Paper Drive?

No, this isn't like the paper drives that scouts used to hold! This paper drive is for United in Faith members to donate items that St. Cyprian's clients need, but cannot be purchased for them by the food pantry. St. Cyprian's can accept such in-kind donations, which are often items that would be costly for the clients to purchase themselves. Here is the list of what to donate:

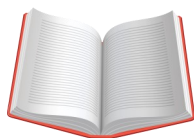
- Toilet paper
- Toilet tissues
- Paper towels
- Diapers
- Women's feminine products



The collection point will be the red cart, just opposite the door to the back parking lot. We will be collecting these items during the entire month of January.

## Book Club News

In January the focus will be on mental health as we discuss ***The Bell Jar***, a novel by Sylvia Plath. The work, a thinly veiled autobiography, chronicles a young woman's mental breakdown and eventual recovery, while also exploring societal expectations of women in the 1950s. Read the book and join the discussion on Saturday, January 20th at 3:00 in the lounge.



## ~ Longest Night/Blue Christmas Service @ UIF ~

*Thursday, December 21st at 7:00 PM*

This year, on **Thursday, December 21st at 7:00 PM**, Pastor Jeanine will lead a **Longest Night Service** (also known as a "Blue Christmas" service). This service occurs on the Winter Solstice, as an acknowledgement that some find the season around Christmas to be a season of grief and darkness.

Whether you are facing *grief, loss, loneliness, depression, or illness* at this time of year, you may feel overwhelmed by the **hustle** and **bustle** of the holiday. A Longest Night service is an opportunity to **gather** for worship, pray, and *open our hearts to healing, peace, and God's comfort*.

If you find yourself struggling with this holiday season due to grief, stress, or loss, **please join us** as we seek God's healing and share grief, sadness, loneliness, or confusion.

# ADVENT / CHRISTMAS

## at UNITED IN FAITH



**DECEMBER 3**  
Advent 1

9:00 am Coffee Hour  
10:00 am Worship in person & livestreamed

**DECEMBER 6**  
Mid-week service

7:00 pm Holden Evening Prayer

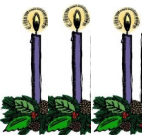


**DECEMBER 10**  
Advent 2

9:00 am Coffee Hour  
10:00 am Worship in person & livestreamed

**DECEMBER 13**  
Mid-week service

7:00 pm Holden Evening Prayer



**DECEMBER 17**  
Advent 3

9:00 am Coffee Hour  
10:00 am Worship in person & livestreamed

**DECEMBER 20**  
Mid-week service

7:00 pm Holden Evening Prayer

**DECEMBER 21**  
Mid-week service  
BLUE CHRISTMAS

7:00 pm Longest Night/Blue Christmas



**DECEMBER 24**  
Advent 4  
Christmas Eve

9:00 am Coffee Hour  
10:00 am Worship in person & livestreamed  
11:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship Service in person & livestreamed



**DECEMBER 25**  
Christmas Day

10:00 am Christmas Day Worship Service in Person & livestreamed

**DECEMBER 31, 2023**  
New Year Eve

9:00 am Coffee Hour  
10:00 am Worship in person & livestreamed

**JANUARY 7, 2024**  
Epiphany

9:00 am Coffee Hour  
10:00 am Worship in person & livestreamed

# Christmas and Poinsettias?



How did the brilliant poinsettia plant become associated with Christmas? Indigenous to Mexico and Central America, the poinsettia was first described by Europeans in 1834 and takes its English name from the first U.S. minister to Mexico and botanist, Joel R. Poinsett. In the 1820s he began sending poinsettias from Mexico back to his greenhouses in South Carolina. The actual flower of the plant are the small yellow structures found in the center of each leaf bunch and the leaves are both red and green.

Wild poinsettias occur from Mexico to southern Guatemala, growing on mid-elevation, Pacific-facing slopes. Aztec people cultivated the plant to produce red dye and used it in traditional medicine. Today in Mexico and Guatemala it is known as the "Christmas Eve flower" or Flor de Nochebuena or simply Nochebuena, meaning "Christmas."

The plant's association with Christmas began in 16th-century Mexico, where legend tells of a girl, commonly called Pepita or María, who was too poor to provide a gift for the celebration of Jesus' birth and was inspired by an angel to gather weeds from the roadside and place them in front of the church altar. Crimson blossoms sprouted from the weeds and became poinsettias. From the 17th century, Franciscan friars in Mexico included the plants in their Christmas celebrations. The star-shaped leaf pattern is said to symbolize the Star of Bethlehem, and the red color represents the blood sacrifice of Jesus's crucifixion.

Poinsettias are popular Christmas decorations in North America due to a marketing campaign by the Ecke family whose California ranch serves half the worldwide market and 70% of the US market. In the US, December 12 is National Poinsettia Day, marking the anniversary of Joel R. Poinsett's death. That day is more well known as the day to venerate Our Lady of Guadalupe. In 1531, Juan Diego of Guadalupe, had visions of the Virgin Mary and miracles occurred. Ultimately, the Guadalupe shrine became a significant pilgrimage destination, and Our Lady of Guadalupe became known as the Patroness of Mexico and the Continental Americas.

- Excerpted from Wikipedia.

## WE NEED YOUR HELP!!

THIS YEAR, to help us decorate our sanctuary for Christmas Eve & Christmas Day, we are asking you to BRING in a poinsettia plant (red, white, or pink – no preference) on December 24th at 10:00 am. Label it on the bottom of the pot (or foil) with your name so we know where they belong after the holiday. Take them home on Monday, December 25<sup>h</sup> or Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>.

**We will decorate the sanctuary on December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 am. Please join us at that time. Many hands will help make this happen.**



# GIRL SCOUTS at UiF!

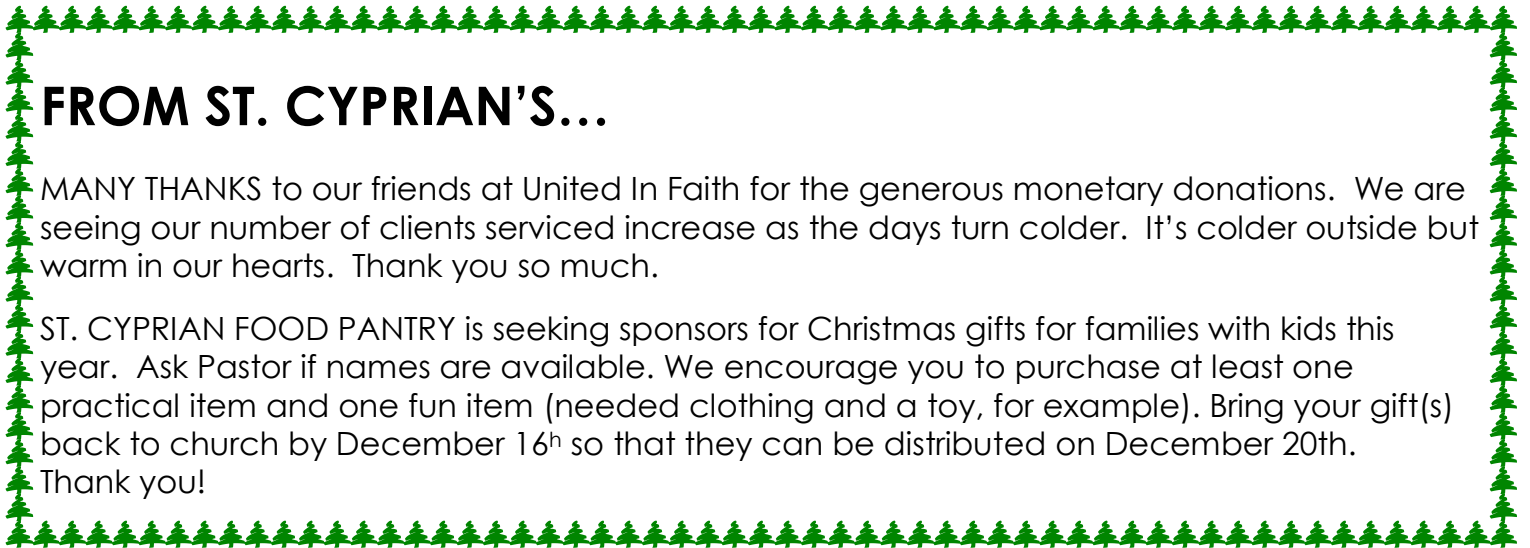


Our Girl Scout troops have been having a good time! The Brownies and Daisies worked on Girl Scout Ways, the Juniors and Cadettes went to Camp Greene Wood in November and had a grand time messing around outside. We also built butterfly houses that we will bring to the Dunning Read Nature Area. The Juniors and Cadettes have some more plans to build things--be on the lookout for our work! Cookie Season will be starting in December, please let me know if you need cookies! Please keep saving your travel size toiletries for us! We would also like new washcloths, and new socks. Thank you for all your support!

And as always, we have room for new girls in all of our troops if you know anyone looking for a troop!

Merry Christmas to all of UIF from your Girl Scout troops!

*Janeen, Sharon, Cat, Alex, Cathy and Kathy*



## FROM ST. CYPRIAN'S...

MANY THANKS to our friends at United In Faith for the generous monetary donations. We are seeing our number of clients serviced increase as the days turn colder. It's colder outside but warm in our hearts. Thank you so much.

ST. CYPRIAN FOOD PANTRY is seeking sponsors for Christmas gifts for families with kids this year. Ask Pastor if names are available. We encourage you to purchase at least one practical item and one fun item (needed clothing and a toy, for example). Bring your gift(s) back to church by December 16<sup>h</sup> so that they can be distributed on December 20<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you!



- |               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| <b>DEC 1</b>  | Justin Dombroski  |
| <b>DEC 9</b>  | Mary Ann Hudie    |
| <b>DEC 12</b> | Elisabeth Wittman |
| <b>DEC 22</b> | Owen Devine       |
| <b>DEC 24</b> | Barbara Patrick   |
| <b>DEC 26</b> | Peggy Devine      |
| <b>DEC 29</b> | Joy Csapo-LaCour  |

## UNITED IN FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH EDUCATION ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP

United in Faith Lutheran Church has established an Education Endowment Scholarship Fund which is available to members of our congregation. Students who have a financial need can apply for assistance. Eligible awards can be for any Christian pre-school through high school as well as any post-secondary school and can include special educational needs or gifts at any level of education.

Each application is carefully reviewed by the Education Endowment Scholarship Committee. Awards are based on need and funds available. The application forms are available in the church office and must be completed in full to be considered for a scholarship for the school year 2024-2025 and returned no later than February 28, 2024. Place the completed form in the church mail box marked "Scholarship" located in the hallway or give to any scholarship committee member. All information on the application will be treated as confidential.

- Applicants must be active members of United in Faith Lutheran Church.
- Identify, to the best of your knowledge, all school related expenses for the school year, plus any other source of income or assistance you have to meet those expenses.
- Applicants and their parent(s)/guardian(s)/legal care giver(s) must participate in the life of United in Faith Church. This can include but is not limited to: serving as an acolyte, usher, reader, assisting minister, Sunday School aide or teacher, participation in fund raising activities, and assisting with church events to the extent that is reasonable and possible.
- Attendance at worship is required.

The Committee will then give careful consideration for awards on each application. Applicants will be notified of the Committee's decision by March 31, 2024. An applicant may receive a scholarship in subsequent years as long as they meet the requirements. Scholarship amounts may vary from year to year based on the number of applicants and funds available each year.

If you have any questions, or are interested in joining this committee, please contact Bonnie Maginnis 773-237-5357.

The Education Endowment and Scholarship Committee  
Pastor Jeanine, Bonnie Maginnis, George Schultz

## IMPORTANT DEADLINES TO REMEMBER...



**ANNUAL REPORT 2023 DEADLINE:**

*on or before January 15, 2024*

**JANUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:**

on Wednesday, December 20


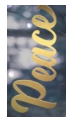
THANK YOU for adhering to these deadlines.

**\*\*If you stop by the church building in December, please pick up your 2024 offering envelopes. We will mail those that remain in early January 2024.**

*Christmas Blessings to all!*

# DECEMBER 2023



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>26</b> 9:00am Coffee Hour 10:00am Worship in person and livestreamed	<b>27</b> 9:00am Food Pantry	<b>28</b> 10:00am Golden Rebels Bingo 6:00pm Brownies/Daisy 6:45pm Girl Scouts 7:00pm Church Council	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 9:00am Food Pantry 10:00am Golden Rebels Bingo	<b>1</b> 6:30pm AA 7:00pm Girl Scout Unit 286	<b>2</b> 9:30am Al-Anon 10:00am NL OB Work Day 1:00pm Knitting Group 4:00pm Survivors of Incest
<b>3</b> 9:00am Coffee Hour 10:00am Worship in person and livestreamed	<b>4</b> 9:00am Food Pantry 12:00pm Ladies Discussion Group	<b>5</b> 10:00am Golden Rebels Bingo 6:00pm Brownies/Daisy 6:45pm Girl Scouts	<b>6</b> 7:00pm Holden Evening Prayer	<b>7</b> 9:00am Food Pantry 10:00am Golden Rebels Bingo	<b>8</b> 6:30pm AA	<b>9</b> 9:30am Al-Anon 1:00pm Knitting Group 4:00pm Survivors of Incest
<b>10</b> 9:00am Coffee Hour 10:00am Worship in person and livestreamed	<b>11</b> 9:00am Food Pantry 12:00pm Ladies Discussion Group	<b>12</b> 10:00am Golden Rebels Bingo 6:00pm Brownies/Daisy 6:45pm Girl Scouts	<b>13</b> 7:00pm Holden Evening Prayer	<b>14</b> 9:00am Food Pantry 10:00am Golden Rebels Bingo	<b>15</b> 6:30pm AA	<b>16</b> 7:00am Food Pantry delivery 9:30am Al-Anon 1:00pm Knitting Group 4:00pm Survivors of Incest
<b>17</b> 9:00am Coffee Hour 10:00am Worship in person and livestreamed	<b>18</b> 9:00am Food Pantry 12:00pm Ladies Discussion Group	<b>19</b> 9:00am Food Pantry 10:00am Golden Rebels Bingo 6:00pm Brownies/Daisy 6:45pm Girl Scouts 7:00pm Church Council	<b>20</b> 9:00am Food Pantry clean up 7:00pm Holden Evening Prayer	<b>21</b> 9:00am Food Pantry 10:00am Golden Rebels Bingo 7:00pm Blue Christmas	<b>22</b> 6:30pm AA	<b>23</b> 9:30am Al-Anon 1:00pm Knitting Group 4:00pm Survivors of Incest
<b>24</b> 9:00am Coffee Hour 10:00am Worship in person and livestreamed 11:00pm CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE - in person and livestreamed 	<b>25</b>  <b>MERRY CHRISTMAS</b> FOOD PANTRY CLOSED OFFICE CLOSED 10:00am CHRISTMAS DAY Worship in person & livestreamed	<b>26</b> FOOD PANTRY CLOSED OFFICE CLOSED	<b>27</b> FOOD PANTRY CLOSED OFFICE CLOSED	<b>28</b> FOOD PANTRY CLOSED OFFICE CLOSED 10:00am Golden Rebels Bingo	<b>29</b> FOOD PANTRY CLOSED OFFICE CLOSED 6:30pm AA	<b>30</b> 9:30am Al-Anon 1:00pm Knitting Group 4:00pm Survivors of Incest
<b>31</b> <b>HAPPY NEW YEAR</b> 9:00am Coffee Hour 10:00am Worship in person and livestreamed	<b>1</b> FOOD PANTRY CLOSED OFFICE CLOSED	<b>2</b> 6:00pm Brownies/Daisy 6:45pm Girl Scouts	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> FOOD PANTRY CLOSED	<b>5</b> 6:30pm AA	<b>6</b> 9:30am Al-Anon 4:00pm Survivors of Incest



# Worship Schedule

**DECEMBER  
2023**



<b>Dec 3</b>	9:00 am 10:00 am	Coffee Hour Worship in person and livestreamed
<b>Dec 10</b>	9:00 am 10:00 am	Coffee Hour Worship in person and livestreamed
<b>Dec 17</b>	9:00 am 10:00 am	Coffee Hour Worship in person and livestreamed
<b>Dec 21</b>	7:00 pm	BLUE CHRISTMAS
<b>Dec 24</b>	9:00 am 10:00 am 11:00 pm	Coffee Hour Worship in person and livestreamed Christmas Eve Worship in person & livestreamed
<b>Dec. 25</b>	10:00 am	Christmas Day Worship in person & livestreamed
<b>Dec. 31</b>	9:00 am 10:00 am	Coffee Hour Worship in person and livestreamed

UNITED IN FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH  
6525 West Irving Park Road  
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Pastor  
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**Jeanne Rice**, Church Administrator

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