



St. John's UCC  
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DATED MATERIAL





Because we typically know so little about spiritual traditions other than our own, we are easily misled to believe that our own versions of religious belief and practice are unique, and that they have no relationship to that which exists anywhere else in the world. In my previous study, I came across a little story which clearly calls all that into sharp question.

The story comes from the Sufis, which are a mystical arm within Islam. It concerns the sheikh Junaid, who had among his students, who were dervishes, a young one whom he loved very much. His older dervishes were very jealous of this young one, and they could not understand what in the world the old sheikh saw in him.

One day Junaid told all his dervishes to buy a chicken in the marketplace and then to kill the chicken where no one was present and where no one could see them. This was a task that they had to complete by sundown at the latest. One by one, the older dervishes returned to the sheikh with a slaughtered chicken under his arm. Finally, just as the sun was setting, the young dervish likewise returned, but with a live chicken still squawking under his arm. The older students laughed and whispered among themselves that the young man couldn't even carry out his sheikh's orders.

Junaid asked each of the dervishes to describe how he had carried out his instructions. The first said that he had returned home with the chicken and locked the door and closed the curtains before killing it. The second said that he had gone home, also locking the door and closing the curtains, but additionally taking the chicken into the closet, where he killed it. The third also took his chicken into the closet in his secured home, further blindfolding himself so he himself could not see the slaughtering.

Finally, it was the young dervish's turn. He hung his head in embarrassment, sensing that he failed to carry out his sheikh's instructions to sacrifice the chicken. "I brought the chicken into my house," he stammered, "but everywhere in the house there was a Presence. I went into the most deserted parts of the forest, but the Presence was still there with me. Even in the darkest caves, the Presence was still there. There was no place that I could go where I was not seen."

It's a great story! The point of the task, of course, wasn't about killing the chicken at all, but about assessing the dervishes' individual awareness of the Presence.

Despite the gulf that is commonly imagined to exist between Christianity and Islam, it is a very short step from this tale to the words of the Psalmist, words that may be ringing in your memory even before I add them here:

*Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?*

*Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?*

*If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there!*

*If I make my bed in Sheol, Thou art there!*

*If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Thy hand shall lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.*

*If I say, 'Let only darkness cover me, and the light about me be as night,' even the darkness is not darkness to Thee. The night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light with Thee. (Psalm 139.7-12)*

In light of this striking parallelism, we must confess that there is something core about being human in relation to the Supra-human that all religions discern in their own manners. There are common denominators that, against the background of their own respective histories and traditions and in their own concepts, each of the religions articulates for its own adherents.

While I can speak only as a single Pastor representing one limited vein within a very broad spectrum of Protestant Christianity, I can say from my own reading and experiencing that the number of such basic parallels is truly awesome. I have a strong intuitive sense that we have more in common with other spiritual practitioners than we have ever tried to appreciate. At a very fundamental level, Hindus and Jews, Buddhists and Christians are more alike than we are different.

In a day when we have celebrated decisions on the part of the United Church of Christ and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America--two historically-related, mainstream Protestant denominations!--to share full Communion, we can see how far we must go before the Spirit truly makes us all one.

May we all be making tangible, personal contributions to the eroding of false boundaries that separate and estrange us from all the people of this universal Spirit--a multi-colored, multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, multi-traditioned world community of the Presence.

Cordially,

Bob Stoudt

#### **A REMINDER CONCERNING THE NEXT CONGREGATIONAL FORUM**

Since the informal "Congregational Forum" format seems to work pretty well for us, as was demonstrated back in June, it is proposed to offer a second one in September.

This will specifically occur on Sunday, the 10<sup>th</sup>, immediately following worship. When worship is concluded that morning, we'll begin the conversation while remaining in our comfortable pews--which will be a bit of a change from our previous covered-dish experience.

Please plan to remain after worship that morning for about an hour, in order to participate in the latest information-gathering and dialogue concerning who we are and where we are looking to go as a congregation. The clearer the sense we have of that, the better the decision we will make concerning the next settled pastor.

The greater the attendance, and the broader the participation, the better the results, too! It promises to be time well-spent!



## BELL CHOIR REHEARSALS BEGIN

**SEPTEMBER 13, 2017**

New members are always welcome. We have 6 octaves of bells, so, many hands are needed. Some experience in reading music is an asset, but not a requirement. We have several members who never played any instrument before, and are really enjoying ringing.

Rehearsals begin Wednesday, September 13th at 6:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. We look forward to seeing you.



## WE NEED YOU AT CHANCEL CHOIR

**SEPTEMBER 10, 2017**

We know you can sing. We've heard you in church

The Chancel Choir is open to all from *ninth grade* to ninety plus. Practices begin September 10th at 9:15 a.m. in the music room. Come join us.



**Dorothy Ellen Noyce**

July 4, 1925 - August 10, 2017



### Grocery Cards

Weis and Giant grocery cards are a great, easy way to support St. John's! The church receives 5% of the amount sold. If we sell \$1000 a week, in a year the church would earn \$2600!

## ***SEPTEMBER VOLUNTEERS***

Ushers: **BRIAN GRIFFITH, CAROL ANN BERRY**

Lock-up Person: **BARRY CATHERMAN**

Lay-Reader: **BETH MOSER, SUE GEMBERLING**

Preparation of Communion Elements: **CAROL ANN BERRY, MARY GEYER**

SEPTEMBER	Children's Church	OPENER/FLOWER DEL.
3	<b>DON ADAMS</b>	
10	<b>LIZ DeSANTIS</b>	
17	<b>RALLY DAY</b>	
24	<b>ANGIE DONLIN</b>	

SEPTEMBER	FLOWER SPONSORS	Acolyte	Drivers Route 1*
3	<b>JUNE SEAMAN</b>	<b>DAVID BOZELLA</b>	<b>SEAMAN</b>
10	<b>TODD HUMMEL</b>	<b>ERIN DeSANTIS</b>	<b>ADAMS</b>
17	<b>MARK SATTESON</b>		<b>BAISH</b>
24	<b>LAUREN &amp; RICK RAUTZHAN</b>	<b>JAMES DONLIN</b>	<b>SEAMAN</b>

SEPTEMBER	GREETERS
3	<b>MARTHA/BRUCE RAUCH</b>
10	<b>DOT/ART BOWER</b>
17	<b>TESS/FRED GROOVER</b>
24	<b>LINDA WILLIAMS/DANA HAILE</b>

*If you need a ride to church, please contact Ron Zug (570-523-3987) who schedules the drivers.*



**Prayer List - (Please contact the church office, at 524-7606, with any updates!)**

**At Home**- Sid Bowersox, Ruth Brouse, Carol Erdley, Betty Hackenberg, Elaine Klingler, Donna Pauling, Mary Stover.

**Shut-In/Homebound**- Ann Beasom, Fred Brouse, Marilyn Correll, Leona Fertig, Pearl Fisher, Bill & Lola Fuller, Louise Heistand, Lois Hummel, Evelyn Mabus, Watsontown Rehab, (rm. 17), Ethel Moser, Robert Ritter, Shirley Seese, Alda Wagner.

**In our Prayers** -The Family of Dodie Noyce, Marlin Rautzhan, Christine Sartwell, Sheila Seaman.



**Church Sign replacement.** Estimates are in. Work in progress.

**By-Laws Work Sessions.** Are being held every other Sunday, to revise the Church By-Laws prior to seeking a new Pastor.

**Landscaping.** Several landscapers were contacted to get bids on redoing the landscaping around the Church and Parsonage. One was chosen and the motion was made, seconded, and approved to proceed with a company from the Penn's Valley area. Work will begin on August 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Rejoicing Spirits:** We are looking into the possibility of being the host Church for the **Re-joicing Spirits** worship services. Contact will be made to the Council of Churches to get information.

**Marian Anderson's Ordination:** Marian Anderson would like to thank Consistory for all the help and support she got from St. John's UCC. The day went well.

**Stewardship/Finance/Personnel:** The committee is starting the budget for 2018. There will be a Baked Bean Sale for Labor Day. The beans will be made ahead of time.

## ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY

### The Meaning of Faith: Lessons from the Historical Jesus

This September, join our new Sunday morning class, led by Gary Nottis, as it explores various aspects of Christianity and its practice. It will begin with an inaugural three-Sunday series focused on the meaning of faith from the perspective of the historical Jesus. We will examine Jesus' genuine words and deeds and how they formed the basis of four classical Christian understandings of faith: (1) Assent, (2) Trust, (3) Fidelity, and (4) Vision. Key to this study will be an ongoing class reference book, *The Gospel of Jesus, According to the Jesus Seminar*. Classes will normally meet on Sunday morning's, from 9:00 to 9:45 AM, in the Library at St. John's. The schedule for the first three Sundays is provided below.

If you are interested in taking part in this exciting series, please contact Gary Nottis (570-523-7137) for more information or Todd Hummel, at the church office, to receive your copy of the class reference book. We hope to see you there!

Date	Topic
September 17th	Introduction and Faith as Assent
September 24 <sup>th</sup>	Faith as Trust and Fidelity
October 1st	Faith as Vision and Conclusion





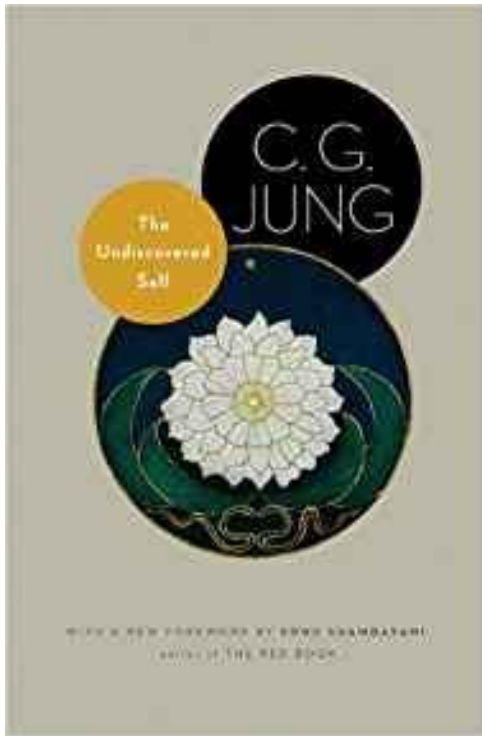
A large, empty rectangular box intended for listing September birthdays.



An empty rectangular box intended for listing September anniversaries.



A large, empty rectangular box intended for the Treasurer's Report.



### **A SEMINAR REGARDING “THE UNDISCOVERED SELF”**

The first of two adult enrichment opportunities will begin in a few weeks.

It will focus on a study of the book The Undiscovered Self, written by depth psychologist Carl Jung, a favorite author on the part of those who appreciate the brilliant way that he blends together the spiritual and psychological streams.

This provocative little work looks at the plight of the individual in modern society and sees self-knowledge as the answer to much of what ails us. While written in the late-1950's, what it has to say rings pretty true today, most especially in the light of what gets reported nightly on the evening news.

This is a three week seminar that will be offered on the Tuesday evenings of September 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>, beginning each night at 7 p.m., in our Community Room.

Fifteen copies of the text are now on hand and available at \$10 a copy, if you wish to begin the reading. Drop off to visit Todd or talk to Pastor Bob, and we can put one of those in your possession. Deadline for “registration” is Friday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, in order for an adequate number of supporting materials to be provided.

And speaking of self-knowledge, looking a bit further down the road, October will offer persons the chance to plumb their own depths by learning more about dreams as a significant personal resource. From time immemorial, dreams have been looked to as a primary avenue to glimpsing what the gods have in mind. This thinking persists in our Bible, where the Hebrew Scriptures feature a number of notable dreamers and dream-interpreters (Jacob, Joseph, Daniel), and where Matthew's gospel version tells the story of Jesus' birth by including a number of notable references to dreams.

Looking to provide both content regarding dreams as well as opportunities actually to do some personal dream interpretative work, this, too, will be a three-week seminar, covering the Tuesdays evenings of October 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup> (if there is interest, a fourth session on October 31<sup>st</sup> could also be added).

### **LOOKING FOR A FEW NUMBERS-ORIENTED PEOPLE!**

On the surface, it may not look like there's a whole lot going on regarding the hiring of the next settled pastor. Beyond the regular week-by-week, Sunday-morning activity, however, there is already considerable effort being focused on the first of the steps in this direction--namely, the preparation of the “Local Congregational Profile.”

This lengthy Profile represents the distillation of St. John's story to date, complete with all manner of facts and figures, in the effort of presenting a fair and accurate picture of where the congregation presently finds itself. Prospective candidates will review the Profile in the interest of their deciding whether or not the position feels like a possible “fit,” so it's a very important document.

To that end, we are seeking a handful of folks who enjoy crunching numbers, studying the demographics of our neighborhood, as provided by Penn Central Conference, and discerning and defining the sorts of ministry and mission opportunities that are available to us, as seen through this lens.

It is proposed to have this ad hoc group up and running by October. It is a short-term assignment (perhaps a matter of three meetings as a group), but it will make a substantive contribution to the development of St. John's profile.

If you're an interested and agreeable candidate to perform this function, please contact the church office or talk to Pastor Bob at your earliest convenience.





**WORSHIP HOURS**  
Sunday School: 9:00 a.m.  
Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Visit us on the Web!  
[www.stjohnslewisburg.org](http://www.stjohnslewisburg.org)



**St. John's  
United Church of Christ**

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Lewisburg, PA 17837  
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E-mail: [stjohnsucc@ptd.net](mailto:stjohnsucc@ptd.net)

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



The Communion offering for **September** is dedicated to **The Food Pantry**.  
The Communion offering for **October** is dedicated to **William Cameron Engine Co.**

**SPECIAL SEPTEMBER OFFERING - "HARVEST HOME"**

Thanks for your continued support of St. John's missions!



**Rally Day-September 17th, 2017, 10:00 a.m.**

Our worship service will be held outdoors in the picnic pavilion. Please join us and help celebrate God's creation. Bring your lawn chairs and dress casually.

Following the service we will have a picnic for **all** in attendance.

Bring a dish to share.