

NOVEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
10207 Lincoln Trail, Fairview Heights, IL
Office Phone: 618-397-6323
www.stjohnfairview.org
Email address:
stjohnuccfairview@gmail.com

Pastor Rosemary Captain

Dear Sisters and Brothers in faith,

Here is another of Cameron Trimble's meditation. This reminds us that in our ancient history, people had a very similar situation that we have right now. Jeremiah speaks to the Jews at a time when they are being exiled away from Jerusalem to other countries because they were conquered by foreign enemies.

When Trust Is Gone, What Remains?

A Meditation by Rev. Cameron Trimble

"But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." — Jeremiah 29:7, NRSVUE

The words of Rev. Cameron Trimble

"In just over a week, Americans will head to the polls for the midterm elections. Usually, this is a routine part of our national life. Candidates have spent months sharing their views, people have been weighing their options, and election workers are getting ready to handle millions of ballots.

But this year, my conversations with friends and colleagues feel different. People are scared. They worry if everyone who can vote will actually get to vote. They wonder if ballots will be counted correctly, if the results will be certified, and if those who lose will accept the outcome. Some are bracing for possible intimidation or political violence. Others are just worn out by all the uncertainty.

It’s heartbreaking that so many Americans now approach an election unsure if the government will respect their choice.

There are reasons people feel this way. President Trump spent years spreading false claims about the 2020 election and tried to overturn the results. His administration has kept challenging election procedures and asking states for voter information. Now, election officials are getting ready for possible interference from the federal government, like disputes over ballots, enforcement near polling places, and attempts to delay certification.1

These worries are now serious enough that state officials, attorneys general, and election-security experts are making backup plans for situations that once seemed unthinkable.

None of this means the upcoming election is doomed. Thousands of dedicated public servants are working hard to keep the process fair.2 Courts have protected important legal boundaries, and states have systems for auditing votes and certifying results. Still, the fact that these protections are under such pressure says a lot about where we are as a country.3

I’ve been thinking about what happens when trust is lost. We usually don’t notice trust until it’s gone. We cross bridges assuming someone checked them. We take medicine believing it’s been tested. We send kids to school trusting the adults will do what’s best for them.

Democracy relies on that same kind of trust. We live under laws made by people we might not have chosen because we believe we’ll get another chance to speak up. We accept losing in politics because we trust the rules will still be there next time.

When people start doubting those promises, everything changes. The usual parts of democracy become stressful. Every legal challenge feels like a threat. Every delay in

counting ballots seems suspicious. People question every official statement: can we trust the person saying it?

The prophet Jeremiah understood what it was like to live through a collapse of public trust. In the sixth century BCE, Jerusalem came under Babylonian rule, and many people were taken into exile. The political and religious institutions that once gave their lives meaning could no longer provide the security they expected. They lived under foreign rule, unsure about the future and open to promises that things would soon go back to normal.

Jeremiah wrote them a powerful letter. He told them to build houses, plant gardens, raise families, and work for the good of the city where they now lived. He also warned them not to listen to prophets who gave comforting predictions that weren’t true.

Jeremiah knew that people facing political disaster need the truth about their situation. False comfort can be just as harmful as despair because it keeps people from dealing with reality. But he also knew that people can't give up their responsibility for the common good just because their leaders have become untrustworthy. He advised people to keep building the conditions for life to thrive, even when the political future was unclear.

I wonder what that advice means for us. We can't create trust just by saying everything is okay. Trust has to be earned through honesty, accountability, transparency, and responsible actions. When leaders break those promises, people have every right to question their authority.

But we have to be careful not to let our distrust of certain leaders turn into distrust of everyone and every institution in public life. I think about the election workers who spend long hours getting polling places ready, checking voter registrations, helping people with disabilities, counting ballots, and recording the results. Many are just regular neighbors who have taken on a tough job for their communities. Some have faced threats and harassment just for doing their work. They deserve our thanks and support.

I also think about the people who have spent years working to protect voting rights, fighting unfair restrictions, and helping others learn how to take part. Their work reminds us that democracy has always needed more than just trust in those in power. It takes people who are willing to take responsibility for the institutions that help us govern ourselves.

I don't know what will happen on November 3 or in the days after. I hope the election is peaceful, every legal vote is counted, and the results are certified as the law requires. These are reasonable things to expect in a healthy democracy, and we should demand them. But no matter what happens, the work of building trust in our shared life will still be there.

Maybe Jeremiah's old advice matters now. When politics are uncertain, we still owe things to each other. We can be honest, protect the vulnerable, support people who act with integrity, and keep building communities that respect human dignity.

I wish we were going into this election with more confidence in the people trusted with our democracy. I wish we could take the peaceful transfer of power for granted. We've learned how risky it is to assume our institutions will take care of themselves.

In the days ahead, I hope we remember that the people counting ballots, defending our rights, and demanding honest government are carrying responsibilities that really belong to all of us. When trust in those in power is broken, it's even more important for us to be trustworthy to each other. We are in this together, Cameron (Shared by Pastor Rosemary)

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

11/2 Charlie Harris
11/4 Henry Captain
11/11 Jackie Canterbury
11/15 Jim Eisenhauer
11/17 Jessica (Riess) Kilian
11/19 Mark Stern
11/22 Ellen Taylor
11/27 Steve Banjavcic
11/27 Chris Brown
11/29 Chris Arbeiter



PRAYER LIST: Becky Ballard, Mary Lou and Urban Baum, Carol Bulva, Jackie Canterbury, Geralyn Gammon, Ginny Ganschinietz, Russ Hartmann, Kim Holmes, Wayne Huss, Cindy Jablonski, Marilyn Paul, Pam and Syd Safriet, Jim Warning, Yvonne Weber, our Beloved Country.

REMEMBER THOSE WHO ARE UNABLE TO WORSHIP WITH US

Becky Ballard
1211 Moreland Apt 12
Belleville, IL 62223

Ivy Schneider
213 Merriweather Ln
Fairview Heights IL 62208

Jeanette Brown
5904 Perrin Rd
Fairview Heights IL 62208

Yvonne Weber
200 St Clair Dr
Fairview Heights IL 62208

Jackie Canterbury
105 W Julie St Apt C
Shiloh IL 62269



TOTENFEST

Sunday, November 22, 2026 is the last Sunday of the Church Year and, in the old German tradition, is the day for remembering those who have passed and whose funeral service was held during the last Church Year. Totenfest, literally, the festival of the Dead, is the time set aside in the service to name our sisters and brothers who no longer answer the call in this life, to commemorate their passing with a rose and a candle, and to offer special prayers of thanksgiving for their journey with us on this earth. This year we will celebrate any and all our family and friends we have lost throughout our lives.

CHOIR

The choir started their season in October and are off to a great start! I am so thankful for all the singers that show up for us. We will be singing two Sundays in November, so you have twice the opportunities to hear them!

Here are the dates the Choir will be singing.

November 1
November 29
December 20
December 24

COUNCIL NOTES

Two Council members, Sharon Banjavcic and I, attended the Annual Meeting for Illinois South Conference on Saturday October 17, at Salem UCC in Alhambra Illinois. The hospitality shown to us by the congregation there was outstanding! We participated in worship and small group discussions. We heard about the financial status of Illinois South as well as the entire United Church of Christ.

One thing that was pointed out to us, that I had forgotten, is that 80% of our OCWM giving (you know, those envelopes that show up in the bulletins in the fall) stays in the Illinois South Conference. That is support for the conference staff, which has been reduced by half in the last few years, along with DuBois Center, Hitz Home, Hoyleton and other ministries. Due to a decrease in giving, all of those areas are having to rethink how to best serve the people of Illinois South and those who need our help. You can also give to "Friends of the Conference". 100% of those gifts stay in Illinois South.

Matt Wagner, son of retired Pastor Don Wagner and Sharon's cousin, gave us a lot of information on the financial status of the entire UCC. He is in charge of all UCC investments. We are in good hands!

Look elsewhere in this newsletter for information from Ginny Ganschinietz about a way to use your RMD funds to help St. John. Once you are 73, you are required to take annual withdrawals from your personal investments. Check it out! Nancy Eisenhauer

CIRCLE

Our first Circle meeting will be after church on November 8th. Please check the Oct. newsletter to review items on the meeting agenda.

Carol Bulva will also have a quick craft (angel magnets) to be given to residents of Grand Manor.

I hope everyone will be able to attend.

Remember November is the month to express your "Thankfulness". 🙏

Eileen Gammon Co-Chair

THOUGHT TO PONDER:

No wishbone ever took the place of a backbone. Carol Bulva

FROM YOUR TREASURER

It's that time of the year for your treasurer to start planning for 2027. My first chore is to decide how many sets of envelopes we need for next year. Many of you have chosen to take advantage of tax breaks by giving a once-a-year lump sum direct from your IRAs or other investments. By doing so, you avoid paying tax on that income. We deposit your yearly gift in our savings account and transfer out a portion of it each month. For those of you who choose this method, envelopes aren't necessary.

Envelope sets are around $7.50-$8.00 each, so I don't want to order a set for you if you aren't going to use them. If you have decided to change your method of blessing our church with your offerings, please let me know. I'll plan to order sets for all who have been using them this past year.

Thanks, Ginny

USHERS FOR NOVEMBER

November 1:	Judy Schmitt, Jim Eisenhauer
November 8:	Tom and Jan Miller
November 15:	Chuck Kistler, Carol Bulva
November 22:	Sue Williams, Jan Miller
November 29:	Sue Ganschinietz, Ginny Ganschinietz

THANK YOU!

We want to thank those of you that helped us get ready for our "50th" celebration.



Sometimes it does take a village! We appreciated all the cards, gifts, and anniversary wishes. It was a great lunch and a great time! Fun trip to Branson topped off a wonderful "50"th!

Thanks also to Doris, Eileen, Tom & Jan for the food they brought over to the house right after my bike "mishap" on Labor Day weekend. That really helped out a lot! Joe & Carol

FOOD PANTRY IDEAS

If you help families, single people, foster youth and the homeless, this list can help better taylor your donations!

1. Everyone donates Kraft Mac and Cheese in the box. They can rarely use it because it needs milk and butter which is hard to get from regular food banks.
2. Boxed milk is a treasure, as kids need it for cereal which they also get a lot of.
3. Oil is a luxury but needed for Rice a-Roni which they also get a lot of.
4. Spices or salt and pepper would be a real Christmas gift.
5. Tea bags and coffee make them feel like you care.
6. Sugar and flour are treats.
7. Tuna and crackers make a good lunch.
8. They get lots of peanut butter and jelly but usually not sandwich bread.
9. Butter or margarine is nice too.
10. Cake mix and frosting makes it possible to make a child's birthday cake.
11. Dish Soap / Dishwashing detergent is very expensive and is always appreciated.
12. Feminine hygiene products are a luxury and women will cry over that.
13. Everyone loves Stove Top Stuffing.

Also, please consider donating dog and cat food. Some people have hit a temporary low point and don't want to give up their pets but find they have to choose to feed themselves or their pets.

November 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 **DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS** Service of Word & Sacrament 10 am Choir rehearsal 9 am Choir sings at service Fellowship time after worship	2	3	4	5 Zoom Bible Study 6:30 pm AA Meeting 7 pm	6	7
8 Service of Word 10 am 1st Circle Meeting	9	10	11 Council Meeting 7 pm	12 Day Quilters 10 - 2 Zoom Bible Study 6:30 pm AA Meeting 7 pm	13	14
15 Service of Word 10 am	16	17	18	19 Zoom Bible Study 6:30 pm AA Meeting 7 pm Show Meeting 6:30-8:30 pm	20	21
22 Service of Word 10 am Totenfest 10 am	23	24	25	26 AA Meeting 7 pm **HAPPY THANKSGIVING**	27	28
29 Service of Word 10 am Choir rehearsal 9 am Choir sings at service	30					

Daylight savings time ends Sunday, November 1. "Fall Back".We will have communion and we ask you bring items for the food pantry. The choir will be singing; always a treat. SEE YOU NOVEMBER 1.

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