



## Stardust

*Well, I came upon a child of God  
 He was walking along the road  
 And I asked him, Tell me, where are you going  
 This he told me*

*Said, I'm going down to Yasgur's Farm  
 Gonna join in a rock and roll band  
 Got to get back to the land and set my soul free*

*We are stardust, we are golden  
 We are billion year old carbon  
 And we got to get ourselves back to the garden*  
 "Woodstock" — Joni Mitchell

I wasn't at Yasgur's Farm in August of '69, but then again, neither was Joni. This song, like so many that are lodged in my memory, is actually a little before my time. My musical reference points skew older because I spent my formative years as the mascot of my older sister.

These powerful lyrics do more than evoke a flashback to a music festival in the hinterlands of Upstate New York, hugging the Pennsylvania border west of the Hudson. The lyrics, and the iconic rendition of the song by Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, speak to the yearning that transcends any particular place or time.

The lyrics tell the story of a child of God on a pilgrimage. They address all of us. Using the language borrowed from Genesis, they speak of the human yearning to go back to the Garden.

I don't pretend to know the contents of Joni Mitchell's theology or if she would even confess to having a theology, but this song touches the depths

**Prayer:** Thank you for this longing.  
 Let it grow stronger than the fear that holds me back.

of human longing, and in my book, that's theological territory.

The quest to return to a golden age is a theme that can be found in the mythology and legends of many cultures throughout history. In our own tradition, the message is pretty clear: there's no way back to the Garden. An angel bars the way. It's a fools errand to quest after Eden. There's no return to paradise.

We know this and yet the yearning continues – though perhaps not for the Garden itself, perhaps not even for the dreaming innocence of our mythological forbears. The yearning, I think, is to find our created dignity, to experience our humanity as it was meant to be experienced.

We are stardust, offspring of the dawn of the universe, and yet we often experience ourselves as alienated from the created order and from one another. We experience estrangement from our selves and from the Wellspring of our being.

Despite all this, there is within us a drive towards self-transcendence, to live unselfconsciously; to love openly and unreservedly; to be in harmony with our selves, with our neighbors, and with God.

Jesus revealed the way back home. It's not blocked by a flaming sword, but a cross. The paradox of the gospel is also the terrifying leap of faith. It is only in dying to the self-centered false identity to which we cling so tightly that we can become the true self we long for.



# Welcome New Church Year!



September 10

Kick-off the new church year with **Sunday School** and **Sundae Sunday!**

during coffee hour



September 24

**Special time of fellowship after worship to honor Pastor Lynn and his retirement.**

(This will be Pastor Lynn and Sandy's last day at St. Matthew's.)

**Coffee Fellowship** will be 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month (except December: 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays). Please sign up on the table in the Narthex if you'd like to host in October, November, or December.

(Calendar note: The Not So Newlywed Game on September 15th has been cancelled.)



Teachers are gearing up for a great year of sharing Christ's love with bible stories, crafts and more!

*Parents/Grandparents/Guardians:* Please mark your calendars with the following dates for Sunday School: September 10 and 24; October 8 and 22; November 12 and 26; December 10 and 17 (same schedule as our Coffee Hours). Children ages 4-12 will attend worship with their family and then go to class following the Children's Time; teachers will meet them at the back of the Sanctuary.

## Helping our Neighbors

Help support both the students in the Frontier School District and those who seek help from the local food<sup>+</sup> pantry at SS. Peter & Paul R.C. Church in the Village of Hamburg (pictured right).

There has been an increased need as more people struggle to make ends meet.

**The drive for school supplies ends this Sunday, the 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

Michelle will deliver items on Wednesday, the 6<sup>th</sup>.



Marilyn Fenske, Karen & John Kaitanowski, Hadley Knapp, Jimmy Kruszka, Maria Wahl, Denise Woodruff; our elderly members & friends in assisted living or homebound: Lola Donner, Jewell McFarland, Helen Mellerski, Reta Rauker, Yvonne Shearer, Helen Wilson, those serving in the military: Alex Steinbroner, Aydan Stormer

Would you like the congregation to pray for your loved one(s)? If so, please fill out a prayer card in the pews and place in the offering plate or contact Pastor Lynn or Michelle in the church office. Names will be put in the bulletin and Newsflash and/or sent to the prayer text chain upon your request.



Trees mean rain. Every day, just one acre of maple trees emits as much as 20,000 gallons of water into the air.

**New Members!**



**Laurie Schwab (L)**  
 9283 Sandrock Rd, Eden  
 14057  
 ---  
**Sandy McCusker (R)**  
 4543 Camp Rd, Bldg 52/1,  
 Hamburg, 14075  
  
 July 9, 2023



**Ann Marie  
 Leverentz**  
 6175 McKinley  
 Pkwy, Hamburg  
  
 August 20, 2023

**NEW BABIES!**



**Penelope Ann McArdle** came into the world (7 lbs, 4 oz, 19.5" long) on July 5<sup>th</sup>, born to Natalie (Stormer) and Colin McArdle. She joins older brother Teddy and big sister Josephine. Grandparents Beth & Doug Stormer are excited to welcome their third grandchild!



**Michael Gregory Zymowski** was also born on July 5<sup>th</sup> (6 lbs, 4 oz, 20 inches long) to Emily (Kemp) and Chris Zymowski. He surprised everyone coming 10 days before his due date and first-time grandma Michelle Kemp is thrilled!

*Happy Birthday!* 

**SEPT:** David Kaznica (9/1), Kathee Simon (9/8), Brenda Carver (9/14), Conner Wilson (9/14), Ryan Wilson (9/14), Molly Hamm (9/15), Tom Koch (9/17), Jacob Zdrojewski (9/17), Pastor Lynn Morgan (9/20), Lola Donner (9/23), Kerry Shearer (9/23), Arthur Hamm (9/24)

**OCT:** Karen Schneider (10/3), Shirley Haberman (10/4), Linda Velazquez (10/5), Eli Hamm (10/7), Emma Rich (10/8), Chris Goetz (10/14), Theo Rozewicz (10/14), Cindy Rich (10/15), Joyce Corlett (10/16), Dolly Errington (10/16), Jay Rich III (10/22), LaDonna Painter (10/28)



*Happy Anniversary!*

- |  |                                       |  |                                     |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| David & Pamela Kaznica<br>9/13/1975      | Lynn & Sandy Morgan<br>9/20/1997      | Jacob & Lauren Zdrojewski<br>9/22/2007 | Chris & Dawn Goetz<br>9/24/1994     |
| Debi Dinkuhn & Robin Miller<br>10/8/2021 | Martin & Amanda Rozewicz<br>10/8/2021 | Doug & Beth Stormer<br>10/10/1987      | David & Karen Cuddihy<br>10/10/1992 |
| Roger & Joyce Corlett<br>10/13/1989      |                                       | Bob & Linda Velazquez<br>10/18/1986    |                                     |





## And All Shall be Well

Very few of you, dear readers, ever had the privilege of meeting Sandy's mother, Thelma. You are the poorer for it, but you are not totally deprived of her gifts and graces, because if you have seen the daughter, you have seen the mother.

Since this is true, I couldn't say anything other than how much I loved and admired my mother-in-law. She was warm and kind. In the mental images I carry of her, she is always smiling. I know that can't be the only expression she had because she surely knew hardship and pain, but it is the image that is seared into my memory as if by a laser.

Whether smiling with mischievous grin or wondering delight at her grandchildren (or even me), what was always truest about her was the utter reliability of her love for the ones who populated her life. Everyone needs someone who will resolutely love you and be unashamed to let you know consistently just how crazy they are about you. Thelma was one of those precious people who did this for me. She was also one of those people who could talk about God and prayer with sincerity but without cloying sentimentality. She was not one of those religious people who make me look for an exit whenever I'm trapped with them in the same room.

Thelma became ill with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma just a couple years after Sandy and I were married. Sometime before her diagnosis, someone introduced her to the writings of Julian of Norwich, who among other things, is reliably believed to be the first woman to publish a book in English. Julian was a person of deep prayer. She was an anchorite, which is to say, a quasi-hermit who lived within the outer wall of a monastery. Apart from the communal prayers, she didn't leave her hermitage. Pilgrims came to her for spiritual guidance and just to experience her saintly presence.



Julian had a series of revelations or "showings" as she called them. One of them (the 13th) included the words for which she is most famous: "...all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well."

Thelma fastened fiercely on this saying of Julian.

She would repeat the phrase, especially as her condition became more dire, almost as a mantra. It was, perhaps, her only bad habit.

At least that's how I felt about it initially. You see, Thelma was congenitally hope-filled, and I have a low tolerance for exposure to optimism. I thought that she was clinging to this phrase in the mistaken belief that somehow her condition was going to be transformed, that she would get well.

Not so. She knew, as Julian did, that getting well is not a condition of all things being well.

In fact, although many people know the part of Julian's affirmation that Thelma quoted, almost no one quotes the first part of the sentence. It goes like this: "It was necessary that there should be sin; but all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well." The one speaking here is the vision of Jesus.

Julian mourned the effects of sin in the world, in the people who sought her counsel, and even in herself. She thought if there were no sin, all would be well. Jesus sets her straight.

Love demands freedom which allows for sin and so in its way sin is necessary. But all shall be well because sin, and sickness, death, and alienation are swallowed whole in the grave that swallowed Jesus, the grave that Jesus emptied, the grave that Jesus conquered.

### **Prayer:**

*All shall be well,  
and all shall be well,  
and all manner of thing  
shall be well.*

*Give me grace to say  
"Amen" to that.*

## In The Box ... St. Matthew's Special Offerings

If you tithe using envelopes provided by the church, every month you will find extra envelopes in your box. On the first Sunday of the month, there is an envelope labeled Communion. The monies given in those envelopes go towards the purchase of wine and wafers.

On the third Sunday of every month, you will find an extra envelope labeled Fellowship Programs. Any amount you put in that envelope will be used to offset expenses associated with events organized by our Hospitality Committee (i.e., potluck lunches, game night, etc.).



Thank you for your continued generous support of the day-to-day operations and ministries of St. Matthew's.



## Baskets & Brunch

Saturday, November 4, 2023

The Columns Banquets, 2221 Transit Rd, Elma \* 10:30am

Purchase tickets thru Robynn Rich (716-649-8677) no later than October 15. Adult: \$35; Child: \$20

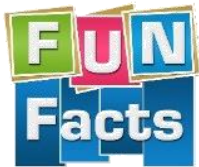
Early Bird Special: Order by September 15<sup>th</sup> & receive free sheet of basket tickets (\$10 worth).

United Church Manor's annual fundraising event will include a high-quality basket raffle and silent auction.

Brunch stations will be available from 10:30am until noon.

To benefit  
United Church  
Manor Senior  
Programs

The United Church Manor, a program of UCHS, Inc. and supported by the UCC, provides affordable housing for low-income seniors and disabled individuals. Fundraising benefits resident social activities, transportation to grocery stores, and home-like aesthetic improvements to the facility. *Manor is located at 50 North Ave, West Seneca.*



Ronald Reagan was a lifeguard during high school and saved 77 people's lives.

Cats walk like camels and giraffes. Their walking sequence is both right feet first, followed by both left feet, so they move half of their body forward at once.

Famous for their chocolate and appropriately themed amusement park, Hershey Park, the Hershey's Kisses product has a hidden logo: an extra Kiss. Turn your head to the left and you'll see that between the 'K' and the 'I' there is a Hershey's Kiss in the logo.



### Happy Grandparents Day!

Grandparents Are Like Angels  
Sent by God to Unconditionally  
Love You and Pamper You.  
Happy Grandparents Day.  
Sending You Lots of Love and  
Wishes on Grandparents Day.

September 10, 2023



The Hospitality Committee is once again donating \$50 in honor of all the grandparents at St. Matthew's for Grandparent's Day!

Grandparents represent one-third of the population and lead 37% of all U.S. households in this country.

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

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