

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Neillsville, Wisconsin
Church 715-743-2147
Pastor Jacoba Koppert
Pastor's Office 715-743-2117
www.neillsvilleucc.org
December 2017

Jacoba's jottings... Ya (I) gotta do it! This is the season when we have so many “ya gotta do it” on our to do lists. We each have our own expectations of ourselves and sometimes it just gets to be too much. Some of us have learned how to cut corners – again the corners we cut are personal preference. Still what we put on ourselves can just be too much.

This morning, the mother of Jesus helps me focus on what I want to do in this season. When Mary learns she is with child, she goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth. Mary knows she needs her family and to be in relationship with those who are most dear to her. She needs Elizabeth's support. When things get crazy for me, I need to connect with those who love me and can support me. Who is that for you? And how do you connect with them? Visits – family gatherings – phone calls – sending cards – shopping together?



While Mary and Elizabeth were together, Mary realized what God was doing for her and through her. She broke out into song, celebrating how God had blessed her. As she praises God for what God has done for her, she quickly also realizes what God is doing in the world.



My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. .. God has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; God has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.
(Luke 1:46-48, 52-53)

In this season, how will we celebrate what God has done for us? How will we keep Christ in our Christmas? In what ways will we worship God? How will we draw our attention to what God is doing in the world?

Any woman who is with child knows she must take care of herself for the sake of the baby growing within her. Mary surely realized the importance of self-care. In this season when we are pulled in so many directions, we too need to take care of ourselves. For me that will include exercise, eating right, getting enough sleep. I am also thinking about what I want to do and what I need to let go. I will not send Christmas cards to the congregation this year. I will put off sending cards to family and friends until after Christmas. My open house for the congregation will also take place in early January. I learned this year the ease of ordering gifts on-line. I know some of us have learned gift cards and money works best for our giving. What can we simplify or put off so that we can more fully enjoy the season? I will focus on including children in worship and try to support our children and youth in their activities. My priority will be those who need support in this season: those for whom God seems distant or absent in their lives: those who are hurting because of grief or lack close relationships; and those whose financial struggles make this season difficult for them.



May God's love be made known to us, in us and through us as we keep Christ in Christmas.

I wish you a joy-filled, hope-filled, faith-filled Christmas and New Year!

Pastor Jacoba

PASTOR 2nd JACOBA'S PAGE

Last month I commented on all the activities on a Sunday morning. In November, the church has been filled with activities throughout the week.

- † Much work took place around preparing for and then putting away the Holiday Fair.
- † Holiday Fair – many workers and guests
- † Making 250 Chicken Pot Pies
- † Christmas Angel Project
- † Nar-a-non
- † Memory Café
- † Hilltop HEC
- † PEO making candy
- † Quilt Guild
- † Optimist Award Dinner – Congrats Sarah Fields!
- † Applique Group
- † 2nd Half Lunch
- † CD's and Confirmation classes and decorating the Christmas Trees.
- † Church Meetings
- † Circle of Friends, Bazaar Ladies, Men's Club
- † Choir Rehearsals



Our building is used... and still there is room for more! We are grateful for all who use our building, for those who keep our building in good repair and those who support our budget so the building bills are paid. I also offer a word of appreciation to Jim Vradenburg who not only keeps things tidy – but frequently checks to make sure our doors are open for events and secured after everyone leaves.

Many thanks to all who in any way supported the Holiday Fair. The leadership included: The Circle of Friends who put on the Bake and Card Sale; Carla Marty and Emile Miller took the lead in Craft Area; Merrill Brunette was in charge of the Breakfast Buffet and Wendy Sigurdson organized the “Treasures New to You” Shop. I will put together a collage of pictures of the Holiday Fair (on-line and on my office door.)

Chicken meat was plucked off the bone, rolling pins were flying, pies were assembled, packaged and frozen. Again, many hands made the project a success. The organizers of this project were Bonnie Weyer and Sue Vornholt.

Christmas Angel Project is going full throttle at this moment. The gifts are arriving and many people are wrapping them. Stacy Schilling is the hardworking coordinator. It is great to see so many involved – but



my favorite is working with the youth who have not wrapped gifts before.

The Church is again beautifully decorated for the season. M.E. Sjolin gives leadership to this work. Jenny guides the folks who put our tree together and then oversees the CD's in decorating the tree... Tammy with some helpers put up the tree in the narthex. Thank you all. As you can see – it has been a busy month at UCC.



CONFIRMATION RETREAT

The Confirmands had a great time at Moon Beach. I missed being with them for the first part of the event (I was at the Holiday Fair) however to hear their reports and see their excitement as they showed me what they had accomplished was a pretty special time for us. They made bread for communion – and because I was asked to lead the communion service, I asked our youth to help me. The girls read scripture and the boys served the bread and the cup. They had created displays about some famous UCC folk – Did you know Jackie Robinson was UCC? Me either. The youth also made mats for homeless people out of plastic bags and created bags out of old T-shirts to hold items like tissues and tooth paste. I want to thank Ellie Keller and Bonnie Weyer for chaperoning the group with me.



JOIN US FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

Keep Christ in Your Christmas

December 3 Lighting of the Advent Candle; –Sr. Choir singing; Communion served in the pew.

December 10 Children's Sunday School Program – the Manger Scene will be acted out. Jesus' birthday celebrated at the Coffee Fellowship after the service.

December 17 Senior Choir singing

December 24 10 am Celebrating the 4th Sunday of Advent – Senior Choir singing.

December 24 4:30 pm Family Christmas Eve Service – Holy Communion will be served at the altar; music by one of our youth (and Eileen) and candle lighting using battery operated candles.

December 24 7:30 *Christmas Eve Candle Light Service* Senior Choir Singing; Sacrament of Holy Communion served at the altar.

December Newsletter 2017

Hi Everyone,

This will be our last Newsletter for 2017.

December Newsletter this week. I hope you all had a great Thanksgiving and if you were a deer hunter, I hope you got your deer. November was a busy month for our church. We began with All Saints Day on Sunday, November 5. Many families came forward to light a candle(s) in remembrance to those that lost a loved one this year. Following the death of this year's loved ones, others also came forward to light a candle(s) for those they have lost.

On Saturday, November 11 the Annual Holiday Fair took place here at our church. We had a little snow in the morning to clear away, but all was gone before the end of the day. It was a great day. We do not have the final figures on what we collected this year as of this writing. I know there is some money yet to come in. We will let you know as soon as we know. A big thank you to all that donated in anyway. All shops had an abundance of items to sell. Our church did proud again!

We had six confirmands, Pastor Jacoba, Ellie Keller and Bonnie Weyer attend a Confirmation Retreat at Moon Beach from Friday, November 10 through Sunday, November 12.

Then we had the sale of the "chicken pot pies". What a production that was. A big thank you to Bonnie Weyer and Sue Vornholt in organizing this. Read Bonnie's article in the Newsletter.

See you in church! – Audrey

Volunteers for December Sunday's

Acolytes

Sunday, December 3

Parker Voigt
Logan Erickson

Sunday, December 10

Bryce Erickson
Alex Northup

Sunday, December 17

Mackenzie Hediger
Paige Voigt

(Acolytes continued)

Sunday, December 24

Parker Voigt
Logan Erickson

Sunday, December 31

Bryce Erickson
Alex Northup

Please let the church office know (715-743-2147) if you are unable to light the candles as scheduled. We are always looking for other youth to help with lighting our candles. Let us know if you want to help, we will help train you.

Nursery

Note: Our nursery does not have scheduled volunteers, but it is open to anyone who wishes to use it. Our only requirement is that an adult/parent must be with your child(ren) If the nursery is used, please be sure the toys/etc. are put away. Thank you for your help.

Ushers for December

Sunday, December 3

Mickey Marty, Don Abel
Jake Ratsch, Darwin Zwieg

Sunday, December 10 & 17

Cris Hediger, Cole Hediger
Butch Carl, need a volunteer

Sunday, December 24 & 31

Kevin Erickson & Luke Erickson
Bob Petkovsek, need a volunteer

Note Ushers: If you are unable to usher when you are scheduled - please exchange with someone else if possible and call the church office to let us know. 715-743-2147. Thank you.

Thank you to our volunteer ushers who help to fill in on Sundays when our scheduled ushers are unable to be here.

Greeters for December

Sunday, December 3

Kevin & Jenny Romens-Erickson

Sunday, December 10

Tom & Karlene Wallace

(Greeters for December)

Sunday, December 17

Ben & Leah Wilson

Sunday, December 24

Craig & Wendy Sigurdson

Sunday, December 31

Tim & Sue Voigt

It is always nice to have a warm welcome to our church when you walk in the door. Thank you for serving as a greeter. If you are unable to greet, please contact the church office. Thank you.

Coffee Hour

Looking for volunteers to sign-up for December. The volunteer server list is on the bulletin board. Sunday, December 10 Christian Ed will host “Jesus’ Birthday Party. No Coffee/Fellowship on Sunday, December 24. Please look and see if you can help us out by volunteering a Sunday. Thank you for helping! Call the church office if you would like to host a Sunday. 715-743-2147.

Communion Assignments December 3

(Pews) Team 2 – Janice Miller, Wayne Voss, Jake Ratsch, Karlene Wallace, volunteers

Bread: Janice Miller

Deacons/Deaconesses Hosting for the Month of December

Sunday, December 3

Marge Goetsch.....715-937-0793

Sunday, December 10

Jake Ratsch.....715-937-1612

Sunday, December 17

Betty Barr.....715-743-3283

Sunday, December 24

Karlene Wallace.....715-743-6723

Sunday, December 31

Ben Wilson.....715-937-2929

Facts & Figures

Attendance

Sunday, November 5.....149
Sunday, November 12.....73
Sunday, November 17.....48
Sunday, November 26.....50

Offerings

Sunday, October 29

General Offering.....\$2020.00
Christmas Angel Project.....145.00

Sunday, November 5

General Offering.....\$3361.00
Radio Fund.....300.00

Sunday, November 12

General Offering.....\$1693.00
Campital Campaign.....10.00

Sunday, November 19

General Offering.....\$1027.00
Radio Fund.....300.00
Campital Campaign.....300.00
Christmas Angel Project.....400.00
House of Mercy.....150.00

Sunday, November 26

General Offering.....2458.00
Christmas Angel Project.....150.00
Radio Fund.....75.00

November Automatic Giving.....\$2195.00

Automatic Giving

Are you interested in giving to your church by “Automatic Giving?” If you are – stop by the church office and we will get you set up. 2018 is coming fast, maybe you should check into “automatic giving” this year? This is a good way to keep up your “faith promise.” Check it out.



Radio Broadcast Sponsors

On Sunday, November 5 the radio broadcast

portion of our worship service was given anonymously by a faithful radio listener.

On Sunday, November 12 the radio broadcast portion of our worship service was given by Phil and Donita Follen for the church family.

On Sunday, November 19 the radio broadcast was sponsored today by Ron and Teri Marden in honor of Anita Lulloff’s birthday November 21.

(Radio Broadcast sponsors continued)

On *Sunday, November 26* the radio broadcast portion of our worship service was given by Dolores Johnson in memory of her sister, Dorothy Amport.

Thank you to our radio broadcast sponsors who sponsored the November broadcasts.

The radio broadcast portion of our Sunday Worship Service can be heard On WCCN AM 1370 on Sunday morning at 11:00 a.m.

**TAKE NOTE!
WE STILL NEED 2018 RADIO SPONSORSHIPS PLEASE SIGN-UP NOW. THANK YOU! Give me a call to set up a date. The cost is the same as last year: \$75.00 full broadcast- \$37.50 Half – \$25.00. third.**

We still have some dates to fill (see list) – Please take a look and see if there is a date you can sponsor:

Sponsorships Needed for the following dates:

March – 4, 18, 25

April – 8, 29

May – 6, 13

June – 10

July – 1, (Half) 8, 15, 22

August – 5, 19

September – 30

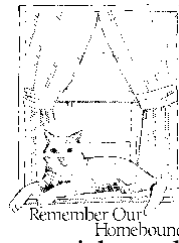
October – 28

November 11

December – 9, 16, 30

If we want to continue our radio ministry we need to fill up these dates before the end of the year. (This is not a budgeted item so monies for these broadcasts must be in by the end of 2017) Thank you to those that continue to support this important ministry of our church.

Remember our Shut-Ins/Homebound



Please remember our shut-in's, those in nursing homes and assisted living. They really do enjoy your cards, calls and visits. We want to *thank* those of you that send cards, make calls, visits, clinic runs, sit with people and share your time. If you wish a call from Pastor Jacoba, give her a call or call the church office and we will give her the information.

Mission & Outreach News

Mission Projects

Food Pantry - Bring your non-perishable and paper product donations – ALL food pantries are in need of all items - Thank you for your support!

Back Pack Program - Thank you for your continued support for the “Back Pack Program.” If you wish to contribute to this special mission and want to write a check make it out to United Church of Christ and in the memo line specify “Back Pack Program.” If you have any questions about this program, contact Deb Perkl. 715-743-4047

Memory Café “Sun Catchers” – is an informal get-together for people with early memory loss or dementia. It's an opportunity to socialize, listen to speakers and to participate in activities. Come on your own or bring a spouse, friend or family member. Refreshments will be provided. The Memory Café meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month. **December 21** will be the date of the next meeting here at the United Church of Christ from **10-11:30 a.m.** We will be making Gingerbread Houses. For more information or questions contact Deb Perkl 715-743-4047

ADVENT – Don't forget your **ADVENT** offering this year. We do have the Advent folders out in the Narthex if you wish to use one. This is a very important mission project for our church. All monies raised go for local mission projects. Thanks for your support!

Mission Committee: Cheryl Steinbach, Sue Gurney, Deb Perkl, Carole Romens, Kathy Mathis, Tim Voigt

Circle of Friends News

The Circle of Friends want to **THANK** each and everyone of you for your generous donations for the “Goodie Shop.” Thank you too to those of you who helped work on the day of the Holiday Fair.



The Circle of Friends Annual Christmas Party will be held **Thursday, December 14** at 12 noon in the Fellowship Hall. It will be pot luck and all are invited.

At our November 16th meeting we voted to donate \$300.00 to the Campital Fund. \$75.00 for the Radio Fund and \$150.00 to the House of Mercy. We also donated \$50.00 to the Holiday Fair Fund for the sale of 100 cards sold at the fair.

These donations were made possible because of the sale of our greeting cards made by our members. Thanks to everyone for their time spent making cards as well as those who purchase them.

Greeting Cards: Our cards are always available for you to purchase. When buying our cards – if nobody is in the card room to help you and you want to purchase a card(s) you can use the self-serve change jar or the I.O.U. tablet which is on the table in the card room or give your money to Audrey in the office. Thank you for your continued support!

Again, we want to remind you, if you donate cards, please leave the verses in them. We sometimes get some really nice cards, but we cannot use them if the verses are not there.



New Baby In Our Church

Congratulations to Travis and Ashley Vine on the birth of a baby boy. Theamore Richard was born on November 22. He joins his sister’s Iris and Jocelyn. We look forward to meeting Theamore.

Senior Choir Members – The Senior Choir is still looking for some more people to join them. Men, women and high school students are all welcome to come and sing with us. The choir practices on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. and on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. when they sing.

Christmas Fund – The Stewardship committee is encouraging you to donate to the Christmas Fund this December.

This ministry cares for the active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ. Your gift to the Christmas Fund will not only assist pastors in need, but also provide for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and Christmas “Thank You” Gift Checks next December to lower-income retirees.

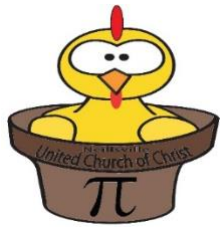
Your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low-income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. This is your opportunity to participate in God’s promise of renewal by enabling this ministry of compassion and care.

There will be envelopes placed in the pews for you to use. You may put the envelopes in the offering plate on any Sunday during December; the offering will be dedicated on *December 24*.

Thank you for considering this worthy cause. Please know that it is truly appreciated and that it will brighten the lives of God’s servants who may be facing a moment of personal need.

Second Half Group - On Tuesday, November 21 we had a nice group of 25 people attend the Second Half Group. Another delicious M&M lunch was served. We had a very interesting presentation by Charles Ramberg along with his well-trained service dog who he works with. His dog was trained in tracking as well as finding drugs. Many questions were asked and answered. The drug problem is as bad here in Clark County as anywhere else in the country. We are very fortunate to have these trained dogs here. As he said, the “bad guys” don’t like to see a dog and are much more willing to turn themselves in as try to run. We thank Capt. Charles Ramberg for his very informative talk.

We will not be meeting in December or January but put on your calendar, **Tuesday, February 20**. Our guest speaker will be Kathy Levac. This will be a program on Health and Wellness. Pastor Jacoba was at a program she presented and felt this would be a good program to have for the 2nd Half Group.



Campital Campaign 2017

We have reached our goal for the second year of a three-year commitment. Our profits from the Chicken Pot Pie sales were \$2044.00. As a result of money

donated and profits from the Chicken Pot Pie fundraiser, we will be sending \$5000 to the Conference Office.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people who donated their time, talent and money to this cause. Our outdoor ministry will be enhanced by the improvements that these funds are supporting. This year would be a good time to check out Pilgrim Center or Moon Beach.

Information for this ministry can be found on the web <https://www.ucci.org/>.

Committee members are Kathy Mathis, Sue Vornholt, Marge Goetsch, Hannah Erickson and Bonnie Weyer.

Submitted by: Bonnie Weyer

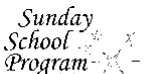


Poinsettia Orders

We are taking orders for poinsettias. Falls Florist in Black River is offering their

poinsettias to our church for \$13.00 each. The deadline for these plants is Sunday, December 10.

If you write a check, please make it out to **“Falls Florist.”** Names will be printed in the Christmas Eve bulletin. Order in Memory of someone, In Honor of someone or for any other reason you may have. You may take your poinsettia home with you following the Christmas Eve service.



Sunday School Christmas Program

On Sunday, December 10 the Sunday School children will present their Christmas Program during the 10:00 a.m. worship service.

Following the program everyone is invited downstairs in Fellowship Hall for Jesus' Birthday Party.

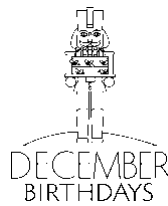


Christmas Eve Services

10 a.m. Christmas Eve Morning Service; Sr. Choir singing

4:30 p.m. Early Christmas Eve Service Christmas Message; Special Music; Communion (Intinction); Candle Lighting

7:30 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Service; Christmas Message; Sr. Choir singing; Communion (Intinction); Candle Lighting



December Birthdays

1- Lydia Schumacher

4- Joyce Johnson

6- Marla Raine

12- Logan Jansen

14- Lynne Abel

Owen Sigurdson

17- Michelle Holub

20- Charlotte Hediger Tetzlaff

22- Abigail Averill

24- Dayne Loberg

27- Calvin Heck

28- Sally Sadowska

29- Jenna Ziegler

Happy Birthday to all of you with a December Birthday! Did we miss your birthday or have the wrong date? Let us know if we did.



December Anniversaries

1- Pam & Kevin Stitt

8- Susie & Gale Gall

8- Robert & Barbara Petkovsek

17- Irv & Glenna Rhoades Marg

18- Donald & Joy Abel

26- DeWayne & Kathy Seelow

30- Adam & Michelle Slemec

Happy Anniversary! Did we miss your Wedding Anniversary? Let us know if we did.



We want to wish our Church Family a Very Merry and Blessed Christmas!

Peace to all of you!

Audrey and Jim Vradenburg

December 2017

◀ Nov 2017

Jan 2018 ▶

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 7 am UCC Men's Club Breakfast 9 am Christmas Angel Project Workday
3 First Sunday of ADVENT 9 am Sunday School 9 am Sr. Choir practice 10 am Worship/Communion Fellowship/Coffee Hour 3 pm, Communion served at Neills. RetirementCommunity	4 6:30-7:30 pm Nar-Anon	5 6 pm Pastor/Parish meeting	6 3:30 pm CD's & Confirmation 6 pm Christmas Angel Project Worknight 7 pm Sr. Choir practice	7	8	9 9 am Christmas Angel Project Workday
10 2 nd Sunday of ADVENT 10 am Worship/S.S. Christmas Program Fellowship/Coffee Hour 'Jesus Birthday Party'	11 6:30-7:30 pm Nar-Anon	12 10 am Ministerial Alliance Meeting/ Memorial Medical Center	13 3:30 pm CD's & Confirmation 7 pm Sr. Choir practice	14 12 Noon Circle of Friends Christmas Party	15	16
17 3 rd Sunday of ADVENT 9 am Sr. Choir practice 10 am Worship Fellowship/Coffee Hour	18 6:30-7:30 pm Nar-Anon	19 5:30 pm Trustees meeting 6:30 pm Deacons/Deaconesses 7:30 pm Church Council	20 7 pm Sr. Choir practice	21 10-11:30 am Memory Cafe	22	23
24 4 th Sunday of ADVENT 10 am Worship No Fellowship/Coffee Hour 4:30 pm Early Christmas Eve Service/Communion 7:30 p.m. Candlelight Christmas Eve Service with Communion	25 CHRISTMAS DAY (Office Closed) No Nar-Anon	26 (Office Closed)	27 No CD's or Confirmation No Sr. Choir practice	28	29	30
31 10 am Worship Fellowship/Coffee Hour No Sunday School						

