

"And the Word became flesh; from his fullness we have all received, graced upon grace." John 1:14a, 16

Jacoba's jottings... A nursing assistant working with a man who had dementia, took him outside for a walk. When it was time to come inside and rest, the patient wouldn't sit down. Instead, he continued walking, including going outside. Six times the nursing assistant tried to help the man to sit, but each time he pushed the assistant away. Finally, as the assistant was ready to give up, he stood up in front of the man and hugged him and was surprised when the man hugged him back; then leaning into the man, he helped him sit down. All it took was a hug!¹

Who would have thought about the power of a hug! Well, God did. God in Jesus Christ became flesh and dwelt among us. God saw that the world was agitated and came to show us how to receive and give love. Jesus knew the power of a kind word and a gentle touch. He also showed his disciples the power of sitting quietly in the presence of God.

One does not have to have dementia to be agitated in body, mind or spirit. With so much on our "to do"



lists, so much on our minds, it can be difficult to sit down and rest awhile. And yet, many articles and news reports suggest just that on stress-filled days. Taking five-ten or twenty minutes of quiet, breathing deeply in and out can refresh us more than even a quick nap. Recently in my quiet time, I have leaned into Jesus and felt his loving hug. It has quieted me down, given me peace and helped me experience the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, when God became flesh God gave the world a hug! A hug from Jesus is one of God's Christmas gifts.

Some of us enjoy hugs, others not so much. Yet even when we do not physically touch, to surround someone who is agitated or who agitates us with

love, kindness and compassion frees the grace God intends for each of us. Having received God's grace, we are called to share it with one another. I know of no one who does not yearn for grace, peace and love. And in our day, the best way to share God's grace, peace and love is to show kindness and compassion. Cameron Trimble in her devotion writes:

An anonymous writer once wrote that, "kindness is a language that the blind can see and the deaf can hear." Indeed, kindness can unite and build us all. It crosses all of the barriers of language and culture and touches each of us at the core of our being; it touches each of us in that place of intimate and private vulnerability that only God could create.

Practicing compassion has the power to change someone's life – particularly yours.²

In this season, we again celebrate God's hug given to all the world as the Word becomes flesh. We are again offered grace upon grace. And again, we are encouraged to offer grace to one another. Look for those, near and far, (including yourself) who need to be surrounded by love, hope, peace and joy in your world. Imagine giving them a hug of kindness and compassion.

¹Story retold from the Still Speaking Daily Devotion of November 7, 2018 – written by Dar Mikula in *Rise Up! Spirituality for Resistance*

²Rev. Cameron Trimble, author of <u>Piloting Church: Helping Your Congregation Take Flight</u>

Pastor Jacoba's 2nd Page...

November was indeed a full month in the



Sanctuary. We began with remembering the saints who died in the last year and then all our dear ones in heaven. We remembered this cloud

of witnesses as together we came to the table with our Lord and Savior.

On November 11, we celebrated our Veterans, hearing their stories – thanking God for our freedom and God's faithfulness. I was privileged to gather with the Vets to plan the service – laughter, tears and support were openly shared as memories touched hearts.



On November 19, Marge Goetsch was named as UCC's Volunteer of the Year. An active member of UCC since 1999, she has served on the Board of Christian Education, as a Deaconess and on the Stewardship and Campital

Campaign Committees. Marge has a lifelong love for the church serving both locally and regionally. She taught Adult Bible Study and led worship services. Marge has a strong faith which she readily shares with others. Congratulations Marge! And thank you to all who serve in the ministry of UCC. Then on the 25th after worship, the sanctuary was

decorated for Advent and Christmas. The wreaths, the tree, the garland were fluffed and put into place. Thank you to all who helped. M.E. And Jim give leadership to the decorating. Our Advent



Wreath was decorated by Carla Marty. The tree was put together and lights added on Sunday under the direction of Jenny Romens-Erickson; Kevin climbed the ladder; and then the CDs decorated it on Wednesday.

The church Basement has also been a busy place. We began with the Chili Feed served all day on Election Day, the 6th. I think Mike told me 44 time slots needed helpers – and our members did not disappoint. We served from 11am to 7pm. Of course, cooking started before dawn and clean-up continued after the last dish was spooned up. The

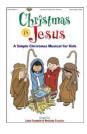
Treasures New to You Shop was pretty much set up by November 6 (thanks to Deb and Wendy and their helpers), however the other rooms were transformed on the 7th for the Holiday Bazaar Holiday Boutique, Bake Shop and luncheon. Lots of beautiful items were made under the direction of Carla Marty and many others; delicious goodies were brought in and lunch was prepared. Then as soon as the Bazaar moved out, Chicken Pot Pies Makers and Christmas Angel Project moved in. Our church members gave many hours, much energy and love working together to benefit our congregation and community. Thank you, one and all. You will find several articles in the Newsletter giving more details on these activities As I said, November was a full month for UCC!

One additional treat for me was to be invited to the Optimists Celebration of Youth. Dayne Loberg was among those honored this year. Congrats Dayne!

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

On Sunday December 2nd the Sunday School Classes are going to sing Carols at the older adultfacilities in Neillsville. We will meet at the Neillsville Retirement Community (1211 Lloyd St.) and then car pool to the other facilities (2nd stop will be at Care & Rehab and then on to Riverside.) We plan to be finished by 5:30. The Sunday School is asking youth to join us for this activity. *Friends this is a great way to show our children we care about them and want to be with them!*

The Christmas Sunday School Program will be presented December 16. The children are now practicing their parts and learning traditional Christmas Carols. The Senior Choir is going to join them for at least one song.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

4:30 Family Service (with battery operated candles and Communion at the altar)

7:30 Traditional Candle Light Service

(Choir Sings and Communion at the Altar) Join Us for Worship! Bring Your Family and Friends!

MERRY CHRISTMAS! May the Holy Baby bring joy and peace to all into our world!

December Newsletter 2018

Hi Everyone,

I hope you all had a great Thanksgiving! I was blessed to have a house full of family and friends. Good food and good company. I have a lot to be thankful for including my church family. Wow, what a month November was. We were busy here at the church. Pastor Jacoba will include a lot of what went on in her article. All Saints Sunday, Chili Feed, Veterans Sunday, Pot Pie Work Days, Volunteer of the Year and trimming the church in preparation of Advent. And now on to December and the December Newsletter.

See you in church! Audrey

Volunteers for December Sundays Acolytes Sunday, December 2 Bryce Erickson Parker Voigt Sunday, December 9 Sydney Subke Paige Voigt Sunday, December 16 Iris Vine Reese Ziegler Sunday, December 23 Haylee Erickson Dottie Holm Sunday, December 30 Bryce Erickson Parker Voigt If you are scheduled to light the candles and cannot be here, please let the Church office know.

(715-743-2147) Our acolytes are an important part of our worship service and we thank you for helping with the lighting of our candles.

Nursery We do have a nursery downstairs and a small nursery upstairs off the Narthex available for mothers/dads with small children. We do not have scheduled volunteers to take care of your children. It is required that an adult/parent be there with your child(ren) if you plan on using the

(Nursery continued)

nursery. Please leave it cleaned up when you leave. Thank you.

Ushers for December

Sunday, December 2

Emile Miller, Janice Miller, Sue Vornholt, Deb Holman

Sunday, December 9 & 16

Mark Brunette, Don Abel Jim Repinski, Joe Holman

Sunday, December 23 & 30

Jake Ratsch, Russ Karl Don Quicker, Jerry Quicker <u>Ushers Note</u>: 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 for your help.

Greeters for December

Sunday, December 2 Tim & Sue Voigt Sunday, December 9 (we need volunteers) Sunday, December 16 Cris & Lisa Hediger Sunday, December 23 Emile Miller & Ellie Keller Sunday, December 30 Darlene Mueller & Fran Ormond It is always nice to offer 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

We need some volunteers to help with coffee hour in December. Can you help out? December 16 will be the Sunday School Christmas program; Christian Education committee and Bonnie Shaw will be serving that Sunday. We need help Sunday's December 9, 23 and 30. On the 30 we were hoping that we could have a "cookie potluck." Left-over Christmas cookies will be served. Please bring them that Sunday. Thanks!

Sunday, November 25.....51

Offerings

Sunday, October 28

General Offering	\$2215.00
Back Pack Program	100.00
Hearts to Hand Mission	155.00
Memorial Fund	
Angel Christmas Project	200.00
Neighbors in Need	5.00

Communion Assignments for Sunday,

December 2 – (In the pews) –Team 2 - Janice Miller, Jim Vradenburg, Wayne Voss, Jake Ratsch, Karlene Wallace Bread: Janice Miller Christmas Eve (Intinction) Volunteers 4:30 and 7:30 p.m.

Deacons/Deaconesses Hosting for December

Sunday, December 2	
Kathy Mathis	715-937-0690
<u>Sunday, December 9</u>	
Mitchell Erickson	715-937-2984
Sunday, December 16	
Betty Barr	715-743-3283
Sunday, December 23	
Jim Vradenburg	715-937-3881
Sunday, December 30	
Sue Vornholt	715-797-4031

Volunteers take NOTE: I will be working on schedules for Ushers and Greeters for 2019. If you <u>do not</u> want to be an Usher or Greeter – please let me know. If a better month works for you let me know. Thanks for your help.

Facts & Figures

Sunday, October 28	79
Sunday, November 4	102
Sunday, November 11	88
Sunday, November 18	50

Sunday, November 4

General Offering	\$2971.00
Use of the church	195.00
Back Pack Program	
Confirmation	75.00

Sunday, November 11

General Offering.....\$1145.00

Sunday, November 18

General Offering	g\$1645.00
Hearts to Hand	Mission20.00
Holiday Fair	

Sunday, November 25

General Offering	\$1571.00
Campital Campaign	
Pie Auction	320.00

November Automatic Giving......\$2140.00

<u>Automatic Giving</u> – Are you interested in giving to your church by "Automatic Giving?" 2019 is going to be here soon and maybe that would be a good time to think about giving by "Automatic Giving." It is very easy to set you up. Just stop by the office and we will give you the forms you will need to set it up. Think about it. No more looking for that offering envelope on Sunday morning.

Another option is to set the church up on your automatic bill pay through your bank.

Campital Campaign 2018

We are our close to our goal the final year of a three-year commitment. Our profits from the Chicken Pot Pie sales were \$2633.80. As a result of money donated



throughout the year and profits from the Chicken Pot Pie fundraiser, we are planning on \$5000 being sent to the Conference Office in January. If you were planning on donating to this cause we are still accepting monetary donations.

On Sunday, November 18 the radio broadcast portion of our worship service was sponsored by Doris Bakker in thankfulness of God's Goodness. And on Sunday, November 25 the radio broadcast was sponsored by Jim and Rosie Repinski in thankfulness of family and friends. Thank you to our November radio broadcast sponsors.

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

2019 Radio Broadcast Sponsors Needed

It's almost the end of 2018 and I still need a few more radio broadcast sponsors to fill in our 2019 dates. We know that we have a lot of radio

(Campital Campaign continued)

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 at https://www.ucci.org/.

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

Submitted by: Bonnie Weyer



Radio Broadcast

On Sunday, *November 4* the radio

broadcast portion of our worship service was sponsored by Phil and Donita Follen for the Church family.

On Sunday, November 11 the radio broadcast was sponsored anonymously by a faithful radio listener.

(Radio Broadcast Sponsors continued)

listeners and we want to keep this radio ministry on the air. The radio broadcasts are not a church budgeted item so we depend on you to help us out. The cost is the same: \$75.00 for a full broadcast; \$37.50 for a half broadcast; \$25.00 for a third broadcast. You may sponsor in memory of someone, in honor of someone; in thankfulness for something or someone or for any other reason you may have. Monies for these sponsored radio broadcast must be in by the end of this year (December 2018) We thank you for your continued support of our radio ministry. Call the church office 715-743-2147 and sign-up for a Sunday.

Following is a list of Sundays that are still available:

January: 27 March: 3- 17-24-31 June:- 30 July: 7-14-21 August: 25



September: 8-15-22 October: 20-November: 3-10-24 December:1-8-22 (half)-29



Remember our Shut-In's/Homebound

Let's not forget our shut-in's, those in nursing homes and assisted living during the holidays. Send a card, give

them a call, or go visit them. This can be a lonely time of year for them. We know that many of you send cards, call and visit and even do clinic runs and we *thank you!* If you know of anyone needing a visit from Pastor Jacoba, please call her or the church office. If you would like to help with serving communion to our shut-in's with Pastor Jacoba. Let her know. We can always use extra hands.

Mission & Outreach News

"<u>Sun Cather's Café</u> – The December meeting of the Sun Catcher's Café will be on *Thursday*, *December 20* from 10-11:30 a.m. here at the United Church of Christ. This month they will feature the Neillsville High School Concert Choir, led by Jodi Rueth. They will perform a selection of their special Christmas songs and also do some old favorites, so folks can sing along. There will also be yummy holiday treats as well as coffee and cider.

<u>ADVENT Offerings</u> – Don't forget your Advent offering. If you don't use the Advent folders you can write a check and designate in the memo line "Advent Offering." Remember the Advent monies collected go towards local missions. Thank you for your support.

Souper Bowl Challenge

Just got word from Calvary and they want to remind us that the Souper Bowl Challenge will again take place in January. St. Mary's will also be competing. Just a heads up...the challenge will again be on in January but with more competition!

Stewardship News

The Christmas Fund

The UCC Special Offering this month is "The Christmas Fund" for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund –This year's theme "The Light is surly coming.

Did you know that a portion of the gifts we give to The Christmas Fund come back to Wisconsin churches, pastors, Lay staff and missions?

For instance, the Christmas Fund makes it possible for the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance to provide compassionate response to:

*authorized ministers and lay employees who face difficult circumstances—like the newlyretired

pastor who has Parkinson's and lacked resources to fill a three-month gap in insurance premiums. *the mission worker whose global service changed lives, but left her with a pension too small to cover a rent increase

*the church pastor who suffered a two-year illness that "used up every cent I had," and

(The Christmas Fund continued)

*widows of pastors who have limited funds because they worked full-time alongside their spouses for free.

How do funds come back to Wisconsin?

In 2017, 37 assistance awards were made to recipients in WISCONSIN, totaling \$90,898. Of this, 14 assistance awards were made to recipients in the Northwest Association, totaling \$32,532. Categories of this assistance to low-income or retired UCC clergy and lay employees include:

- *emergency grants for unforeseen circumstances
 - *monthly small-annuity supplementation for basic needs
 - *quarterly health premium supplementation *Christmas "thank you" checks."

Please give your support to THE CHRISTMAS FUND! You will find the special Christmas Fund envelopes in the pew racks.

2018 UCC Holiday Fair Summary

Report by: Emile Miller The 2018 Annual Holiday Fair made a profit of \$6,087.32.

*Crafts - \$3,262.25 *Baked Goods- \$620.00 *Raffle - \$294.00 *Lunch - \$820.00 *New to You Treasures - \$379.05 *Card Sales - \$55.00 *Next Day Sales - \$657.02

Our door prize was a porch pot made by Carla Marty, which was won by Linda Berg. This year we had four (4) raffles:

*a quilt made by Betty Opelt and Christie Country Quilters, which was won by Gwen Van Asten *a Christmas Galvanized Three (3) Tier Tray made by Barb Miller, which was won by Alexa Gross * a Badger Basket donated by Jenny Romens-Erickson, Corrine Armitage, Carla Marty, and Em Miller, won by Marcia Gross *an antique decorated chair donated by Jason and Hannah Raine and Carla Marty won by Carla Stozewski

Congratulations to our winners!

(2018 UCC Holiday Fair Summary continued)

Our luncheon consisted of chicken salad on a croissant, bowl of Betty Opelt's famous baked potato soup, and a wedge of cantaloupe, not to mention the delicious variety of bars donated by church members. Thanks to all who donated the ingredients, prepared, and/or served the luncheon; it was and is always greatly appreciated.

This annual event would not be possible without the help of many volunteers within the church who work hard all year long; not to mention the week of and after the event. Whether you donated your time, made or donated items to the holiday fair, attended and/or purchased items at the holiday fair we thank you very much! A special thanks to Carla Marty for organizing this yearly event and for Debbie Perkl for taking the lead in the New to You Treasurers shop...THANK YOU!

If anyone has old barn boards, milk cans galvanized pails, or wood pieces that they would like to donate to the Holiday Fair, please let us know; they are our biggest selling items.

Also, if there is a certain item that you would like to see sold at the Holiday Fair next year, please let us know and we will try our best to have it there; any ideas to keep this project a success is greatly appreciated.

Once we start meeting again on Wednesday nights to work on projects for next year's Holiday Fair, we will have an article in the newsletter. You do not need to be an expert or have worked on crafts before. Carla has many crafty ideas and there is something for everyone to do. Thank you again! -Emile Miller

Circle of Friends News

First of we want to *thank* each and everyone who helped in any way with the "Bake Shop" at the Holiday Fair. The donated baked goods, candies, produce, greeting cards, etc. were so very much appreciated. Also, those of you that helped set-up, cut bars, packaged cookies, helped sell, take money etc. We could not have done it without you. Thank you – Thank you!

(Circle of Friends continued)



Christmas Party -Now on with new business! December and the Annual Circle of Friends "pot luck" Christmas Party on Thursday, **December 13.** We will begin at 12 noon. All are INVITED to join us.

Christmas Party

Greeting Cards: The many greeting cards that you are able to purchase are always handy down in the card room. If, there is nobody in the card room to help you and you need 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 you can give the

money to Audrey in the office. We thank you for your continued support!

We want to remind you again, 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.





<u>Poinsettia Orders</u>

It's time to get those orders in for poinsettias. We are ordering from Falls

Florist in Black River. The cost is the same as last year. \$13.00 each. The deadline to order is December 16. If you write a check, please make it out to **"Falls Florist."** Order in memory of someone, in honor of someone or for any other reason you may have. We will print the names in an insert in the Christmas Eve bulletin. You may take your poinsettia home with you following the Christmas Eve Candlelight service.

Thank You's

From Dolores Johnson – Thank you for all the beautiful birthday cards and those who attended my birthday party. It was very precious to me and I will always cherish and remember it! Also I want to thank the group of young people and their leaders for coming to rake my leaves and moving them out to the street. It was so very appreciated! God Bless

Dolores Johnson

More Thank You's

From Franz Rigert-Conference Minister- Dear Neillsville UCC thank you for your generous gift of \$200.00 to help defray the cost of hosting General Synod 32 in Milwaukee. Your support and commitment to the Wisconsin Conference is greatly appreciated. We are looking forward to providing extravagant hospitality to our sisters and brothers in Christ. Celebrating the beauty and diversity of Milwaukee while acknowledging the deep racial disparities present there and throughout our state. Together we will continue to make a difference in the ministries of the Wisconsin Conference and the Wider Church.

In Ministry with you, Franz Rigert – Conference Minister

Thank you – We again thank Merrill Brunette for cleaning out the flower boxes under the bells and filling them with beautiful greens. We thank too, Paul Vine for providing the greens. They really look nice.

Thank you – We want to thank M.E. and Jim Sjolin and all that helped with the trimming of the church for our Advent Season last Sunday. Thank you too to the youth that trimmed the tree.



Sigurdson

December Birthdays

Lydia Schumacher
 Jeff Raine
 Joyce Johnson
 Marla Raine
 Logan Jansen
 Lynne Abel

Owen

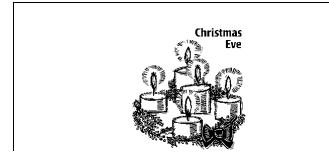
17-Michelle Holub
20-Charlotte Hediger Tetzlaff
22-Abigail Averill
24-Dayne Loberg
27-Kalvin Heck
28-Sally Sadowsko
29-Jenna Ziegler
Happy Birthday to all of you with a December
Birthday! Did we miss your birthday or have the wrong date? Let us know if we did.



8-Robert & Barbara Petkovsek
17-Irv & Glenna Rhoades Marg
18-Donald & Joy Abel
26-DeWayne & Kathy Seelow
Happy Anniversary! Did we miss your Wedding
Anniversary? Let us know if we did.

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR EACH DAY ADD AN ITEM TO A BOX. **ON CHRISTMAS EVE DONATE** THE CONTENTS TO A FOOD BANK or TO CHURCH December 1 – box of cereal December 2 – peanut butter December 3 – stuffing mix December 4 – boxed potatoes December 5- macaroni & cheese December 6 – canned fruit December 7 – canned tomatoes December 8 - canned tunaDecember 9 – dessert mix December 10 - jar of applesauce December 11 -canned sweet potatoes December 12 -cranberry sauce December 13 – canned beans December 14 -box of crackers December 15 -package of rice December 16 -package of oatmeal December 18 -spaghetti sauce December 19 -chicken noodle soup December 20 -tomato soup December 21 -can of corn December 22 -can mixed vegetables December 23 -can carrots December 24-can green beans

> Merry Christmas And a Blessed and Happy New Year! To Our Church Family Peace to All! Audrey & Jim Vradenburg



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

4:30 p.m. Family Service (With battery operated candles and Communion at the Altar 7:30 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Service Christmas Message – Senior Choir Sings Communion at the Altar Join us for Worship! Bring your Family and Friends!

House of Mercy – Christmas Dinner

Working Beyond Shelter Because everyone needs a place to call HoM

House of Mercy needs your help to find our families a place to lay their heads this Christmas Season. Sadly, the struggle of Mary and Joseph to find a place to stay continues on in Clark County. We need your help to love and support those families most in need in Clark County and to get them back on their feet. Our women's shelter is a place of hope and second chances for so many. Where: Fannies Supper Club When: 5:30 pm **Thursday, December 13 Cost: \$10 per Adult with Ticket** \$5 for ages 3-8 (\$15 at the door) What: Ham & Roasted Chicken Call (715) 503-1005

Nov 2018	▲ Nov 2018 December 2018 Jan 2019 ►					
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						7 am UCC Men's Club Breakfast
2 1st Sunday of ADVENT 9 am Sunday School 9 am Sr. Choir practice 10 amWorship/Communion Lighting 1st Advent Candle Fellowship/Coffee Hour 3 pm Communion served at Neills. Retir. Comm. 4 p.m. Christimas Caroling meet at Neills. Retir. Comm.	3 6:30-7:30 pm Nar Anon	4 6 pm Pastor/Parish meeting	5 3:30 pm CD's & Confirmation	6	7	8
9 2 nd Sunday of ADVENT 9 am Sunday School 10 am Worship Lighting 2 nd Advent Candle Fellowship/Coffee Hour	10 6:30-7:30 pm Nar Anon	11	12 3:30- pm CD's & Confirmatiobn	13 12 Noon pm Circle of Friends Christmas Pot Luck Party	14 2 pm Communion served At Riverside Assisted Living	15
16 3 rd Sunday of ADVENT 9 am Sunday School 10 am Worship/Sunday School Christmas Program/Lighting 3 rd Advent Candle Jesus' Birthday Party following	17 6:30-7:30 pm Nar-Anon	18 5:30 pm Trustees meet 6:30 pm Deacons and Deaconesses meet 7:30 pm Church Council	19 3:30 pm CD's & Confirmation	20 10-11:30 am Sun Catcher's Cafe	21	22
	24 (Office Closed) 4:30 pm Early Christmas Eve Sevice 7:30 pm Traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Communion	25 CHRISTMAS DAY (Office Closed) MERRY CHRISTMAS!!	26 (Office Closed) No CD's or Confirmation	27	28	29
30 NO Sunday School 10 am Worship Fellowship/Coffee Hour "Potluck Cookies"	31 New Year's Eve		·	·		