

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST Neillsville, Wisconsin Church 715-743-2147 Pastor Jacoba Koppert Pastor's Office 715-743-2117 www.neillsvilleucc.org January 2020

*Jacoba's jottings*.... I am still at my Mother's home on this New Year's Eve. She is frying Oliebollen – a Dutch New Year's Eve tradition that is centuries old. It seems right to enjoy on New Year's Eve something that my Great, Great, Great, Great, (and add a few more) Great-Grandparents also made and enjoyed. It is fun to connect to our history with recipes, however there are likely other significant connections for us to bring to our remembrance. What are your memories?

Bob Petkovsek recently finished the task Doris Bakker and Pastor Jim Mohr have had on their minds for several years. Thanks to Doris, Pastor Mohr and Bob we now have displayed pictures of all the "Called" Pastors of UCC since 1959. The pictures are beautifully displayed between the Pastor's Office and Lounge. As members have seen the pictures, they have commented on how nice they look and recalling which Pastor baptized, confirmed, married, brought them into membership, or buried loved ones. Members have told stories that made them laugh and stories that caused them to reflect on the ministries and personalities of former pastors. I am often blessed to overhear members reminiscing with Audrey about years gone past.

As you remember and tell stories to the next generations – what do you share? Family history is a lens not only into the past; it can help us understand the present and can lead us into the future. The lives of



our ancestors have much to teach us. As we tell our stories, do we also include how our faith has supported us, guided us, encouraged us? Looking back over this last decade, I can name any number of places where God was working and the Holy Spirit was causing connections in my life. I invite you to do the same. It seems difficult to speak of our faith- it is much easier to talk about or write about job changes, family and friends who were born

or died, what the children and grandchildren are doing. Has your faith in God made a difference? How can we incorporate our faith journey into the telling of our family stories?

The new pictures hanging on the wall remind me of the history of this church and cause me to wonder what happened during each Pastor's tenure. What was the focus of the ministry during their years among us? What captivated the church? I hear about the building, dinners, mission, confirmation classes and youth events. As we tell those stories can we also say how faith, hope and love were expressed? With the pictures of the pastors now displayed, I wonder who were the lay leaders and what gave them joy as they offered their gifts toward the ministry. How does the ministry of the past impact our ministry today and where will it lead us in the future?

The Oliebollen continue to be a treat today, yet we are aware given our current lifestyle, they surely are not healthy for us. In the 1600's my hunch is that the extra fat was welcome in the cold and hard winters and worked off very quickly. As the times change, some of what worked years ago, no longer fits today. As we tell stories of the past, we might also consider how we can modify what once was so that that which was valuable continues. Going to Grandma's for the Sunday after church chicken dinner doesn't' work for most families anymore. Yet – the faith, hope and love shared around that table still needs to be learned and lived. How can we do that? And in the changing life of the church, what still needs to be expressed, learned and experienced? Looking back- looking forward is a valuable exercise to do with our families and in the church as we strive to live faithfully today. How about that as a goal for our congregation this year?

Jacoba's second page... December is always a full month in the church. Traveling to be with family for both Thanksgiving and Christmas was made possible by Pastor Jim Mohr leading worship on December 1 and Julie Garber leading worship on December 29. Jenny Romens-Erickson and Bonnie Weyer helped with the service on the 29th as well. I thank all four of them.

# Lighting the Advent Candles- families and friends this year...

1st Sunday - Bryce Erickson & Paige Voigt 2nd Sunday - Nancy & Kirk Rodman 3rd Sunday - Barb Shoemaker, her Godchild, Nicky Keller & Nicky & Chris's son Jake 4th Sunday - Kellie Murphey, Neil, Karsen, & Krue Czarnecki

4:30 Christmas Eve - Kathy, Ben & Benjamin Mathis

7:30 Christmas Eve – Ellie Moseid and Luke Erickson

Thank you folks!.

**The Sunday School Program "Star of Wonder"** was a delight. The children each did very well – they learned new songs and had lots of speaking



lines memorized. Jill Williams and Jenna Ziegler were the main directors – however they were also helped by the other teachers and parents and Dante

& Chad Erickson who built the manger. To the lists of **thank yous** Audrey mentions, I want to add a few. William, Jenna and Reese offered lovely special music at the 4:30 Christmas Eve Service. Thank you Zieglers!

The Sanctuary was again beautifully decorated.

Many thanks to those who helped with putting up the tree, decorating it, hanging the wreaths and wall hangings. Kirk and Nancy



Rodman took on the task of finding taller candles for the pew candle sticks. Unsuccessful, they talked with Bishop Kolano who made inserts for the candles so shorter candles could be used. Thank you Rodmans and Bishop. The Poinsettias this year were arranged by Nancy Boone and Karlene Wallace using fabric donated by Corrine Armitage. Thank you Ladies!

### HELP NEEDED THIS SUNDAY,

January 5. The decorations and trees all need to be put away. If you can stay after the worship service to help - your help will be much appreciated.

**"THE GIVING MANGER."** was given to each of the Sunday School families by

the Board of Christian Education. The premise of the giving manger is that when someone does something kind, or

respectful, or caring for another, a stick of straw was to be added to the manger. By Christmas Eve



the hope is that there is enough straw in the manger because of the kindnesses done for Baby Jesus to have a bed. At our Family Christmas Eve Service, connecting with the Giving Manger and doing things for others in Jesus' name, I invited our congregation to bring gifts for babies. It was a joy for the children to bring the items and to talk about their kindnesses as they filled the bigger manger with straw.

#### NEW MEMBERS TO BE RECEIVED Renewing Our Baptismal Vows January 12

We will receive new members on January 12. If you would like to officially become a member, or are considering joining, please speak to me as soon as possible.

#### **STAR WORDS** Epiphany – January 5

On Epiphany we remember the Wisemen were led by a star to worship the new-born King. The Confirmation Class and Audrey helped me to create Star Words. They are a collection of some 300 words written on stars. I will invite the congregation to choose a star on Epiphany -one that will not only be a word to guide your journey in 2020 – but that may also help you in your journey to worship, serve and follow the Christ. Several of our members have shared a word they chose for themselves. They have chosen some great ones. If you already have your word, maybe consider one you randomly pick in worship as a secondary word for your journey.

#### **January Newsletter 2020**

Hi Everyone, I hope you had a great Christmas! Even though it was a sad Christmas without our favorite brother-in-law we had a pretty nice Christmas. We are happy we have so many good memories of our loved ones that are no longer with us. First of all, I want to thank everyone who sent me Christmas cards and gave me gifts. Thank you for thinking of me. A Belated Merry Christmas and a Blessed and Happy New Year to all of my church family!

December is such a busy month in the life of our church. The Christmas Angel Tree Project went so smoothly again. Stacey and her crew are so well organized that everything was delivered to families in need by the end of Saturday, December 14. We thank all of our UCC people and volunteers that helped in any way with this project.

The Circle of Friends Christmas Party had to be postponed a week due to the bad weather on the  $12_{th}$ . So, it was held the following week. Pastor Jacoba and I want to thank the Circle for inviting us to their party and for the generous chamber gift certificates. The potluck lunch was really good too.

The Sunday School Christmas Program was held on Sunday, December 22. What a wonderful job they did!! Thank you to their teachers and helpers that put this program on. Good Job Kids!! Following the program, we were all invited to Jesus' Birthday Party where some birthday cake and lots of other good treats were served. Thank you to the Christian Education Board for sponsoring the party.

We had two really nice Christmas Eve services; the early Family service and the traditional Candlelight service To get ready for these services the help of many are needed. Pastor Jacoba, Allan Hoesly, the Choir, Choir Director, Bonnie Weyer, Paul Vine, the Erickson family, the communion teams, the organists, pianist, Jim and myself. We thank all of them and anyone else I may have missed. The weather was good, so people were able to attend. Our church looked so beautiful with all the candlelight and the pew candles. Always a good feeling when I leave the church on Christmas Eve. Again, thank you to everyone that helped with our Christmas Eve services.

It's Monday, December 30 and it's SNOWING, and we are trying to get this January Newsletter out to you. Pastor Jacoba is in Michigan with her family and hoping to get back by Wednesday. We will see if this happens.

Tuesday morning and 8 inches of snow later and we are back in the office. No New Year's plans. Just plan on a good night's sleep.

I hate to bring it up, but your annual reports are due in my office by Monday, January 6. All chairs of boards and committees we need your report for our Annual Report. Thanks. . See you in church! Audrey

## **Our Volunteers for January**

Acolytes Sunday, January 5 Haylee Erickson Dottie Holm Sunday, January 12 Colton Williams Landon Bergemann Sunday, January 19 Iris Vine Reese Ziegler Sunday, January 26 Haylee Erickson Dottie Holm

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 us.

*Note:* There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board and downstairs for Acolyte Training. Watch for a date and time when this will be taking place. **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. Please leave it cleaned up when you leave. Thank you.

## Ushers for January

January 5 & 12

Don Abel, Bob Petkovsek Butch Carl, Russ Karl

January 19 & 26

Hap Eddy, Roger Carl Howie Mathis, Neil Czarnecki

*Note:* I see that I have scheduled some of our very important Choir members on a Sunday(s) that you are needed in the choir. We will substitute. We do not want to get in trouble with our choir!

**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 for your help.

Ushers take Note: There have been some changes in the ushering duties. Please read over the letter you receive in the mail. If you have any questions, please talk to Mike Perkl. We are looking for a **Head Usher** that could help us out on Sundays. (The Head usher would make sure we have ushers in place and that they are aware of what they are to do and to answer their questions.) Even Co-Head Ushers would be nice. Can you HELP us out and volunteer for this position? Thank you to those of you that fill in on Sundays when we NEED YOU. It is very much appreciated.

## **Greeters for January**

Sunday, January 5 Ben & Leah Wilson Sunday, January 12 Kevin & Jenny Romens Erickson Sunday, January 19 Substitutes

#### (Greeters continued) Sunday, January 26 Substitutes

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.

#### **Communion Assignments for January**

Sunday, January 5 – *Altar Communion* Team 1- Betty Barr, Mitchell Erickson, Kathy Mathis, Paul Schmidt, Substitute Bread: Betty Barr

## **Deacons/Deaconesses Hosting for**

January
Sunday, January 5
Wayne Voss (?)715-937-3072
Sunday, January 12
Karlene Wallace (?)715-743-6723
Sunday, January 19
Substitute
Sunday, January 26
Jim Vradenburg715-937-3881

### **Coffee Hour for January**

Would you like to host Coffee Hour sometime in January? We could use some volunteers for Sunday, January 5, 12, 19. On Sunday, January 26 (Annual Meeting) Deacon/Deaconesses will serve. Sign-up on the bulletin board or call and let us know if you can help out.

A committee has been formed to work on a schedule for our Coffee Hour. We are hoping that we can get a schedule set-up for this year. Watch for further information. The committee feels this is an important time for our church family to get together. Please consider volunteering to help serve. Thank you.



SUNDAY JANUARY 26 ANNUAL MEETING Following Worship – Downstairs in Fellowship Hall

Plan on attending this important meeting of your church. Refreshments will be served.

## Facts & Figures Attendance for December

Sunday, December 1	42
Sunday, December 8	
Sunday, December 15	
Sunday, December 22	
Christmas Eve – 4:30	
Christmas Eve – 7:30	
Sunday, December 29	

## Offerings

Sunday, November 24	
General Offering	\$5727.25
Sunday, December 1	
General Offering	\$1092.00
Christmas Fund	
Sunday, December 8	
General Offering	\$2957.00
Back Pack	
Radio Fund	112.50
Advent Offering	
Sunday, December 15	
General Offering	\$1834.00
Advent Offering	
Radio Fund	75.00
Holiday Fair	65.00
Christmas Fund	100.00
Circle of Friends	25.00
General Fund	1645.00
Memorial Fund	
Pie Auction	355.00
Sunday, December 22	
General Offering	\$1621.00
Back Pack	
Advent Offering	
Back Pack (PEO)	
Christmas Fund	
Christmas Eve - 4:30	
General Offering	\$666.00
Christmas Fund	60.00
Christmas Eve – 7:30	
General Offering	\$1556.00
Radio Fund	75.00
Advent Offering	
Christmas Fund	
Sunday, December 29	
General Offering	\$2050.00
Advent Offering	
Circle of Friends	

**Automatic Giving** – Are you interested in giving to your church by "Automatic Giving" in 2020? If you are, stop by the church office and we will help you with the forms that need to be filled out. Very easy to do. You decide how much you want to give monthly and about the 10th of every month that amount will be taken out of your account. Another option you can do to give to your church is to set the church up on your automatic bill pay through your bank. With the busy schedules that many of you have and if you are unable to make it to church Automatic Giving would be a way to keep up with your *faith promise* to your church. Please consider giving this way.

#### **Trustees Report**

Trustees update with carpet installation: The week of January 20 will begin the process of the carpet removal in the sanctuary, balcony and cry room. The old pews will be removed and stored in the Bazaar work room. The pulpit, piano, organ and everything within the sanctuary will be removed and stored. Allen Hoesly has measured and remeasured everything to make it all work. Paul Vine will be coordinating the removal of everything and has obtained some outside help, along with members of our church. Thank you Paul.

The week of January 27th the loop will be put in, then the new carpet. Our hopes is to have everything back in the sanctuary by Sunday, February 2 so we can resume church services. Otherwise, while the church is under construction services will be held in Fellowship Hall. Pastor Jacoba will announce more relating to the services.

Please be patient and understanding while we move forward with this project! It will be a wonderful, new, beautiful look for our church. Thank you to the Holiday Fair ladies for their most generous donation to have this new carpet installed. Also, to the Memorial Committee and the Bob Shaw Family for the installation of the new hearing loop.

#### (Trustees Report continued)

I also want to thank the Trustees for moving forward with this big undertaking and for the committee of Betty Barr, Deb Perkl, Nicky Keller and myself for help in the selection of the carpet! It's going to be beautiful!

If anyone has any questions, please direct to one of the Trustees.

Reported by Wendy Sigurdson, Trustees

#### "Soup"er Bowl Challenge



I just heard from Calvary and they want another "Soup'er Bowl Challenge! Can we do it again? Are we up to it? We collected 526 cans of soup last year! Calvary collected 391 and Living Hope had 364. The challenge is on! They are all out

to surpass us. St. Mary's and Hillside are also joining in on the challenge. Start bringing in those cans of soup. Look for the table in the narthex to put the cans of soup on. We will collect through Sunday, February 3 "Super Bowl Sunday." The soup is divided up between the food pantries and aging office.

#### **Radio Broadcast Sponsors**



On *Sunday, December 1* the radio broadcast portion of the worship service was sponsored anonymously by

a faithful radio listener.

On *Sunday, December 8* our radio broadcast was sponsored by Doris Bakker in celebration of the birth of Jesus.

On Sunday, *December 15* the radio broadcast was sponsored by Doris Bakker in celebration of the birth of Jesus.

On *Sunday, December 22* our radio broadcast was sponsored anonymously by a church member.

#### (Radio Broadcast Sponsors continued)

On *Sunday, December 29* the radio broadcast portion of the worship service was sponsored anonymously by a faithful radio listener.

## Thank you to our December radio broadcast sponsors.

The radio broadcast portion of our Sunday Worship Service can be heard on WCCN AM 1370 and 98.5 FM on Sunday morning at 11:00 a.m.

**2020 Radio Broadcasts** I want to thank everyone that has signed up to sponsor a radio broadcast in 2020. If anyone is interested in sponsoring a broadcast, we do have some dates that are open. They are listed below:

> March – 1, 22 April – 26 May – 3, 24, 31 July – 5, 12, 19, 26 August – 2 September 13, 20 November 22, 29, December 6, 20, 27

Thank you for your continued support!



#### **Remember Our**

*Shut In'* Let's not forget our shut-in's at home,

Remember Our Homebound Members those in nursing homes and in assisted living facilities. These winter days can be so long. Send a card, give them a call, or go visit them. We know that many of you do send cards, call and visit and even do clinic runs. We thank you! If you know of anyone needing a visit from Pastor Jacoba, please call her or the church office and we will set up a time to visit. If you would like to help Pastor Jacoba serve communion to our shut-in's let her know. We can always use extra hands when we serve communion at our Assisted living facilities. For the month of January communion will be served at the Neillsville Retirement Community on Sunday, January 5. Our shut-ins enjoy it when you come.

"Sun Catchers Café – The Sun Catchers Café is sponsored by the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Clark County. Sun Catchers Café is a get together for people interested in lifelong learning, brain-healthy activities, and interesting, positive discussion. It is free and meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 10 a.m.-11- a.m. here at our church. Refreshments are provided.

The December Sun Catchers Café met on Thursday, December 19. The Neillsville High School Choir came and sang some nice Christmas songs. We had a small crowd but lots of Christmas spirit from the kids. Refreshments were served downstairs in Fellowship Hall.

The January meeting of the Sun Catchers Café will meet on Thursday, January 16. The program will be "Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and Grief & Loss." This will be presented by Rebeca Greisen and Amy Kuhlka.

#### STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE NEWS \_Christmas Fund

The theme for this year's Christmas Fund was "The Light Shines in the Darkness." For over 100 years, the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund has been a way to ensure that a light of love and hope will always shine for faithful servants of our church who find themselves facing unforeseen financial need. Funds gathered are used for monthly pension and health premium supplementations, Christmas "Thank You' gift checks, and emergency grants; grants such as needed for large medical expenses and home damage from natural disasters.

Offerings made to the 2019 Christmas Fund totaled \$560.00 as of December 31. The members of the Stewardship Committee express their appreciation to all those who contributed.

A special 'thank you' goes out to committee member Emilie Miller who provided a fine testimonial before the congregation on the Christmas Fund.

#### **Special Offerings Report Soon Available.** Stewardship Committee member Dave Harnisch is working on an overview and update for this year's"5 for 5" offerings:

- 1. Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)
- 2. One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)
- 3. Strengthen the Church (STC)
- 4. Neighbors in Need (NIN)
- 5. The Christmas Fund (TCF)

The upcoming report, "SPECIAL OFFERINGS: An Overview and Update," may be obtained mid-January at the church office or requested through email.

#### Upcoming Educational Stewardship Webinar Stewardship Committee members are planning on signing up for an upcoming educational webinar on January 30, 2020. This webinar will introduce the concept of a 12-month stewardship plan. It will be focused on how to organize and lead an effective year-round practice of storytelling (or testimonials) related to generosity. According to the Wisconsin Conference, national research shows that teaching about stewardship at least once a month correlates to increases in congregational giving.

This webinar is taken from a series of educational webinars being offered in January and early February by the Wisconsin Conference, designed and developed by Rev. Andrew Warner.

**Change in Stewardship Membership** The church's Nomination Committee announced at the Church Council meeting held in December that current Stewardship Committee member Sue Voigt will be leaving the committee following completion of her term. Kelly Burch has been nominated to fill the vacancy created by Sue's departure from the committee.

When you see Sue, thank her for the wonderful contributions she has made to the "5 for 5" offerings and other projects undertaken by the committee. Her fellow committee members will truly miss Sue's contributions of time, talent, and treasures. Also, please welcome Kelly Burch to

#### (Stewardship Committee News continued)

the Stewardship Committee. Kelly's nomination will be considered at the January 26 Annual Meeting, and installation will occur at a church service soon after.

**Committee Members:** Marge Goetsch, Dave Harnisch, Emile Miller, M.E. Sjolin, Sue Voigt (outgoing), and nominee Kelly Burch. The Stewardship Committee is considering a January meeting. *Report by Dave Harnisch* 

## United Church of Christ "Wild Game Feed"

**Plans are under Way 2020** – Wild Game is Needed – Please save any wild game that you would like to donate. (Various kinds of Fish, Venison, bear, pheasant) See Deb Perkl or Barb Petkovsek to let them know about your donations

## Thank You's

*From Phyllis Embke* – Thank you Silent Angels for your gift of goodies and other useful items. This is greatly appreciated. Thank you to my church family. Merry Christmas to all *Phyllis Embke* 

*From Amber Pischer* – Thank you! A special thank you to the Youth Group for coming to sing Christmas carols, especially to me.

My thanks and love, Amber Pischer

Thank you to all that ordered a Poinsettia(s) this year. They looked so nice in our sanctuary on Christmas Eve. Please pick up your poinsettia if you ordered one. It is just to hard to keep them looking nice. They need your tender loving touch. Thank you!



## **January Birthdays**

- 3- Kathy Mathis
- 5- Michael Holub Jr.
- 6- Allan Hoesly
- 8- Donna Dekker
- 9- Wayne Voss
- 10- Tammy Loberg
- 11- Everett Raine Lexi Woods
- 12- Sam Craig
- 16- Dale Opelt Michael Holub Sr.
- 18- Landon Bergemann
- 19- Keith Loberg
- 21- Emilia Mathis Bruce Rakestraw
- 22- Sidney Sadowska
- 23-Dorothy Steiger Parker Voigt Paige Voigt
- 25- Jim Vradenburg Haddie Mathis
- 28- David Steiger
- 29- Jill Williams Clint Woods
- 31- Lisa Hediger

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



January Wedding Anniversaries

3- Gary & Lois Corey18- Tom & Karlene Wallace26- Joe & Marjorie Felser

Happy Anniversary to all of you! Did we miss your anniversary or have the wrong date? Let us know if we did.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 NEW YEAR'S DAY (Office Closed)	2	3	<b>4</b> 7 am UCC Men's Club Breakfast
<b>5</b> 9 am Choir practice 10 am Worship – Communion	6 ANNUAL REPORT DUE	7	8	9	10	11
Fellowship/Coffee Hour 3 pm Communion served at Neillsville Retirement Home	6:30-7:30 pm Nar-Anon		3:30 pm Confirmation	1:30 pm Circle of Friends meeting		
12 10 am Worshiip New Member Reception Fellowship/Coffee Hour	13	<b>14</b> 10 am Ministerial Alliance Meeting at UCC	15 3:30 pm Confirmation	<b>16</b> 10-11:30 am	17	18
	6:30-7:30 pm Nar-Anon			Sun Catchers Cafe		
<b>19</b> 10 am Worship Fellowship/Coffee Hour	20	<b>21</b> 5:30 pm Trustees 6:30 pm Deacons & Deaconesses 7:30 pm Church Council	22 3:30 pm Confirmation	23	24	25
	6:30-7:30 pm Nar-Anon					

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
<b>26</b> 10 am Worship ANNUAL MEETING following Worship downstairs in Fellowship Hall	27	28	29 3:30 pm Confirmation	30	31		
	6:30-7:30 pm Nar-Anon						