



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Neillsville, Wisconsin
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May 2020

Jacoba's jottings.... What has caused me to smile in these days, I have never had so many people sitting so close to me during worship. You have all been sitting in the front pew! Actually, early on, I figured out, I needed to back up a bit - ok move my camera so you didn't see quite me quite so close up. What do you think, folks how about at least some of you sitting in the front rows when we are back in the sanctuary?

I never expected so many of you to visit me in my home. I would rather be in the sanctuary and see you face to face, however, it is kind of nice to invite you in for a visit. So far, you have been in my living room – and in my dining room. And not only have you been with me in my home, so have some of my colleagues. – I wonder how long it has been since you visited with your friends in their homes – we do so little of that these days – I know my sister and her friends are zooming each other. Even one of my doctors has seen my living room!

I have had a number of long conversations on the phone. With some of you, such conversations have rarely happened as we ran out of the church. I am sorry if your schedule is so busy, that you aren't getting a chance or not taking the time to remain or get connected with each other. What a gift – yes physically distanced, but socially closer than ever. Thank you notes and even surprise meals and little gifts in the mail or left at the doorstep expressing care and appreciation

I have learned things I never expected benefiting people far and wide. Who knew that learning how to Zoom or Facetime or Skype would let us be present even if we are hours away from one another? I can't see on our public UCC Facebook page who is with us – unless you greet one another – however early on, a family separated by distance, all worshiped together – from Granton, Neillsville and Indiana. Even my cousins in Holland dropped in for a devotion I offered. Those who can't come to worship at 10 am, on Facebook, can spend a few minutes when it works into their schedule. I have learned the value of mailing the bulletin to members who listen to us on the radio. I learned that even though I am not a soloist, I can lead you in singing a familiar hymn.

I have seen neighbors walking together as families enjoying the sun. Parents have gained new respect for teachers and some of us are noticing the hurt and anguish, the loneliness of others. We might even have noticed that the poor and people of color are dying disproportionately to the privileged. Maybe we have been grateful for people we rarely noticed before – even prayed for them. Maybe we have learned to appreciate those who serve in ways we rarely see. Maybe we have learned to care enough about the well being of others that we sew and wear masks to protect one another.

God didn't cause the pandemic; God didn't cause people to die or to lose jobs and businesses to close or to have to be with each other 24-7 and some to be so separated from loved ones in hospitals and facilities for the aging or on special occasions we have looked forward to for years. I bet God has wept greatly in these days – my hunch is God is also smiling.

May our experiences of love and care – noticing and connecting, missing and setting different priorities cause us to create a new world. My prayer is we have gained more than just clean closets.

Jacoba's second page

It is surely a different time. We are learning to **BE THE CHURCH** without a building. Our ministry has continued. I set up a small altar in my living room and since March 29 I have been filming myself on my iPad leading worship on Facebook. We have also had Children's time each Sunday and coffee hour on-line. We took communion together on Maundy Thursday sitting around our own tables. I was proud of our Confirmation Class members who served their own families that night. I was delighted to have members who don't have technology learn they could join us on their phones.

Audrey and I have made some phone calls, I regularly send out emails with information and bulletins and I have mailed bulletins to church members who do not have email.

If you have an email, and we are sending you our church news via the postal service – please give us your email.

My time has also been filled with learning more about the technology – so I am often on my computer these days doing continuing education kinds of classes. Bonnie Weyer – and her daughter Blair have been a tremendous help in helping me learn and do. I also thank the radio personnel at WCCN to help get our worship service on the radio.

Thank you also to Bonnie Weyer who with the help of Susie Karl contacted church members asking if they would call, email, send a note to other members of the church. I thank all of you who are reaching out to one another! We really have learned to **BE CHURCH**. Some of you have called me asking how can we get food to the food pantries. We have learned to support our neighbors. We have pulled out our sewing machines. – by the way – we will need to wear masks when we worship in the sanctuary again – not so that we stay well – but so that the one who sits next us doesn't get sick. So, keep sewing friends – and please wear those masks.

Thank you for the grace you have given to one another and to me as we all try to do our best in these days.

RETURNING TO OUR BUILDING

Audrey is in the building again to support our ministry. Jim is cleaning the church preparing for our return. I am in and out as I have been throughout these days. **The Trustees have decided we are to be the only ones who are to be in the building. Please do not plan to come in to talk with us. Call on the phone or send a text or email if you need something from the building.** The heat has been turned off to save some money.

No one knows when we will return to the building to worship. We are paying attention to the Health Department orders and recommendations. The Wisconsin Conference of the UCC and the Wisconsin Council of Churches are giving churches some guidance. It is likely we will be socially distancing; will be asked to wear masks; there won't be coffee hours; passing the peace will likely continue as we have in these last weeks. We will be asked to respect each other's needs. I don't know yet how we will serve the Sacrament of Holy Communion or when we will celebrate Easter. Not all of us will be coming back together at the same time – probably only 50 or under people will be allowed to be together in one room for a time. I have already had people tell me, that because they are among the vulnerable population or caregivers for people who are vulnerable, they will continue to stay home. We will continue to offer an on-line service.

There is so much we do not know, and it can all change in a few days. Let us have grace, compassion and care for one another as these things are discussed and decided.

Hi Everyone,

I hope everyone is doing well and are safe. Our lives have really been on hold since the Corona Pandemic has taken over our lives. Not only in our personal and family lives but in the life of the church. We are going to send you a May Newsletter. It will be an abbreviated version. Pastor Jacoba will update you on the schedule for the May worship services that will be recorded from her home. Emails, texting, letters, phone calls and ZOOM the new technology that we are now learning to do will be our way of communication with our church family until we can be together again.

Hope to See you in Church Soon!

Audrey

First, we want to THANK everyone who have been sending in their offerings or putting them in our locked mailbox. Thank you for continuing to support your church. Remember, you do have the option of doing automatic giving or you can set the church up on your automatic bill pay through your bank. Whatever works for you we appreciate your financial support to your church.



**Radio
Broadcast
Sponsors for
April**

On *Sunday, April 5* Neil and Corinne Armitage sponsored the radio broadcast.

On *Sunday, April 12* the radio broadcast portion of our worship service was sponsored by Dolores Johnson for Easter Blessings to her church family.

On *Sunday, April 19* our radio broadcast was sponsored by Ruth and Bob Schmidt in memory of sister, Joyce Schmidt.

(Radio Broadcast sponsors continued)

And on *Sunday, April 26* the radio broadcast was sponsored by Susie and Russell Karl in memory of parents, Brooks and Lila Karl and Harvey and Virginia Neuendorf.

Thank you to all that sponsored the radio broadcast for the month of April.

2021 Radio Broadcast Sponsors

Note: If you would like to sponsor a 2021 radio broadcast, we are looking for sponsors now. Just call the church office and let me know what date you would like and for what dedication you would like to do it for. The cost is the same: \$75.00 full broadcast; \$37.50 half broadcast and \$25.00 for a third broadcast. Look for a 2021 Sunday and sign-up now. Thank you for supporting the radio ministry.

Spring Change of Season Cancelled

The annual Spring Change of Seasons project co-sponsored by Saint Mary's Justice and Peace Committee, Interfaith Caregivers of Clark County, and Clark County Office on Aging and Nutrition is cancelled due to ongoing concerns over the COVID-19 virus epidemic. The Spring project was originally scheduled for Saturday, May 16th. It was determined that proceeding with the project would put the elderly and disabled recipients, the volunteer workers, and kitchen volunteers at risk. The Spring Change of Seasons involves washing windows, minor yard clean-up, clearing rain gutters and downspouts for people unable to do these tasks themselves. We are hopeful and praying the Fall Change of Seasons can be scheduled in October or November. The fall project involves leaf raking and rain gutter and downspout maintenance.



May Birthdays

1- Don Quicker
2- John Subke
3-Emily Voigt
Erin Voigt

6-Ashley Vine
Sharon Buddenhagen
7-Jocelyn Vine
9-Rachel Anderson
Haylee Erickson
12-Marge Goetsch
Byrl Buddenhagen
13-James Sjolín
Lacey Erickson
Carol Harnisch
15-Sue Jodarski
16-Ann Schoengarth
17-Delores Walker
Bernard Walker
21-Santana Subke
26-Arlene Stark
27-Michelle Bergemann
Victoria Ratsch
Adelyn Sadowska
29-Paul Schmidt
30-Craig Sigurdson

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



May Wedding Anniversaries

1-Roberta & Bob Gaier
3- James & Autumn Marshall
4-Ruth & Bob Schmidt
9-Ben & Kelly Mathis
11-Charlotte & David Tetzlaff
18-Don Quicker & Cindy Grotta

Happy Anniversary! Did we miss your Anniversary or have the wrong date? Let us know if we did.

THANK YOU – To UCC Funeral Team

*During a time like this
we realize how much
our friends and relatives
really mean to us.
Your expressions of sympathy
will always be remembered.*

A big thank you to all who donated, prepared and served food and did cleanup for our mother's funeral luncheon.

*God bless you all.
The Family of Phyllis Embke*

The May 3rd Sunday bulletin is included in this newsletter as are the ways you can connect with each other on the phone or through the internet.

Please join us for Coffee or Tea on Thursdays and Sundays, for worship on Sundays and Devotions on Thursday evenings.