

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
Neillsville, Wisconsin  
Church 715-743-2147  
Pastor Jacoba Koppert  
Pastor's Office 715-743-2117  
[www.neillsvilleucc.org](http://www.neillsvilleucc.org)  
March 2021

*"There is a season for everything and a time for every matter under the heavens."*

***jacoba's jottings...*** Years ago, as I was working on continuing to lose weight, temptations increased during Lent. Let me explain. The church I served participated in a mid-week service with other churches. After the worship service we had fellowship time where the fantastic cooks of each church prepared their best sweets and appetizers. I went through the line that year finding the carrot sticks and broccoli leaving behind the vegetable dips and cookies I love. (Ok, I let myself have one each week.) It was my Lenten Discipline and I succeeded, not only in losing weight but also in relying on God for help.

This year I have added some weight and giving up sweets would again be a healthy decision. However, I just don't feel like giving up one more thing for Lent. Like everyone else, I have given up plenty since last Lent. It feels like the Lent of 2020 never ended. I am done with self-denial. I am much more likely to succeed in keeping my promises to God and myself this year by **adding** something that gives me joy for my Lenten discipline.



The intent to give up something for Lent was not to lose weight or be more productive or better persons, but to focus more intently on God as we succeeded in doing what we had decided to do for Lent. Each time we denied whatever we had promised God and ourselves to give up was an opportunity to focus on God, Jesus, or our faith. We can reach the same intention by adding something to our lives. Each time we do what we had decided to add for Lent, we could turn our success into an opportunity to thank God, remember the ways and love of Jesus and strengthen our faith.

In the never-ending season of the Lent of 2020- when we gave up plenty, is there something you could add during Lent of 2021 to strengthen your relationship with God and Jesus, and increase your faith as we prepare for Easter joy? Like giving up sweets, it doesn't have to be "religious" but whatever will help us remember: God is faithful; Jesus loves us and save us; and after death there is new life. As we turned to God for help in our self-denial, we can also ask God to help us with what we want to take on during Lent.

I am ready to add something for my Lenten Discipline this year. How about you? How will you prepare this year to take up the cross and follow Jesus. Will it be more self- denial or adding a new behavior, discipline, or savoring a treat? My hope is whatever we choose to do or not do in these next weeks of Lent prepares us for the death of Jesus and the joy of Christ's Resurrection.

## **Jacoba's Second Page**

### **Lenten Sermon Series**

#### **"Who is Jesus for Me?"**

One of the truths of the United Church of Christ is each of us is free to believe according to our own faith. At the same time we are to respect one another's interpretation of faith. This Lent, I will express some of what I believe about Jesus and my relationship with him. Five weeks will never give me enough time; it will only be a beginning.



As I speak about Jesus and my relationship to him, I hope to trigger what you believe and a

closer relationship and walk with him.

On Feb. 28 – I spoke of "Jesus, God's Beloved"

March 7 – "Jesus, Lover of God and Humanity"

March 14 – "Jesus, the Healer"

March 21 – "Jesus, the Teacher"

March 28 – Palm Sunday

"Jesus Crucified"

April 1 – Maundy Thursday

April 4 – Easter Sunday

"Jesus Raised, Going Before Us"

Come to worship this Lent, choosing a closer walk with Jesus. You are welcome to join us in the church Sanctuary, on-line on our You-Tube Channel, UCC-Neillsville or on the radio (WCCN 98.5 FM or 1370 AM).

### **The Sacrament of Holy Communion**

We will receive the Sacrament on March 7. The Deacons/ Deaconesses decided we will provide the elements for those who worship in person as they leave the sanctuary. How we will receive the elements on Maundy Thursday and Easter is yet to be decided.

### **COVID 19**

A number of our members have told me with excitement and relief they have received their Vaccine. I too have received my two doses. I realize some will choose not receive the vaccine. Others who would like to receive it are having

trouble getting it because they lack the ability to sign up or know where to go. **I am willing to help anyone who needs assistance in getting an appointment.** Call me or the church office and we will help you locate where you can receive your doses and make an appointment if you need to sign on the computer.

If we have learned anything this year, it is we cannot plan too far ahead. In all things we now need to be flexible and concerned about the well-being of one another. As we moving into the Lenten and Easter Seasons, how we do things will change – we just don't know how and when. Please be patient as we continue to follow the recommendations of the CDC, Clark County Health Department and the Wisconsin Council of Churches and the WI Conference- UCC.

### **Easter Lilies**

If you would like to purchase and Easter Lilly this year for the sanctuary, please call the Church Office to order them. The cost will be \$15 with a double bloom on each plant. Checks need to be received by March 30, made out to Falls Florist.

### **Thank you!**

I want to thank all who prepared a report for the Annual Report this Year. Your efforts to provide a complete report 2020 are appreciated. I recently learned I missed passing on the Mission and Outreach Annual Report – it is printed in this Newsletter.

I also want to thank all who have completed their terms of service in February and all who have said yes to serving in the coming year. We had challenges in the last year to continue the ministry of UCC. However, we learned how to over those challenges. Thank you for your willingness to try new ways to do what we are called to do.

### **Souper Bowl Results**

UCC Members and friends were again generous in bringing in **395** cans of soup, plus there were monetary gifts. St.

Mary's came in second with 352 cans and Calvary third with 332 cans. For a total of 1082! Our Food Pantry was grateful for your gifts.



## Facts and Figures for February 2021

### Attendance for In-Person Worship

Sunday February 7, ---21

Sunday February 14,-- 27

Sunday February 21, --24

Sunday February 28,--30

### Offerings for February 2021(February 1-18)

*Thank you for your generosity!*

#### February 1, 2021

General Offering.....\$1642.00

#### February 17, 2021

General Offering.....8,438.20

Souper Bowl Money Donation..... 120.00

Mission and Outreach .....435.00

February Automatic Giving..... 890.00

#### February Vanco Giving

General Offering..... \$126.69

Mission and Outreach..... 75.75

## Our 2021 Elected Officers



Paul Vine, Moderator; Barb Petkovsek, Vice- Moderator; Dave Harnisch, Secretary; Bonnie Weyer, Treasurer; Don Quicker, Assistant Treasurer; and Audrey Vradenburg, Financial Recording Secretary.

**Committee members elected in 2021 Trustees:** Hap Eddy, Kevin

Erickson, Mike Perkl; Deaconesses: Karlene Wallace; Pastor Parish: Ruth Zwieg, Lacey Erickson; Nominating: Russell Karl; Mission and Outreach: Carole Romens; Music: Jo Ann Voss; Memorial: Don Quicker, Barb Miller. Many thanks to all who are willing to faithfully serve God and our church.

## February Radio Sponsorships:

On *Sunday February 7*, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Dan Patey in memory of Elvira Patey.



On *Sunday February 14*, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Jim Filitz in remembrance of Anne Filitz's birthday given by Jim and Jim John Filitz.

On *Sunday February 21*, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Ruth and Bob Schmidt in memory of mom, Luella Mohr and sister Lois Mendenhall.

On *Sunday February 28*, the radio broadcast was sponsored by anonymous donor in praise and thanksgiving of God our Father.

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

## OFFERING STATEMENTS FOR 2020

*We want to express our gratitude to each person who generously supported UCC in the past year. Thank you for your generosity.*

The 2020 donation statements are available for pickup if you have not already collected yours. You can pick them up at the church office. You can also call the church office and ask us to send you your copy via US-mail or simply ask that we read it over the phone.

**All statements that are not collected by April 15<sup>th</sup> will be shredded.**

## Vanco – Online Giving

Your generosity and continued support to the Neillsville UCC is greatly appreciated, whether it is by using your church envelope, a check, cash and/or using the new online giving program called VANCO.

There are two (2) ways that you can donate to the church using this new program:

- Via online at the Neillsville UCC website  
<https://www.neillsvilleucc.org/>
  - Click on **DONATE ONLINE** in the black menu bar
  - Click on the orange **ONLINE OFFERING** under the scrolling pictures
- Via your smartphone



If you would like step-by-step instructions for either version of donating, go to the Neillsville UCC website

<https://www.neillsvilleucc.org/> and click on the appropriate menu bar that is listed like this or if you are receiving this newsletter via e-mail, just click on the hyperlinks below:

Directions for Online Giving with Your Computer

Mobile App Directions for Giving Online

The church is charged a processing fee for each transaction, so you may want to donate monthly if you use this service instead of weekly, which is:

- 2.75% using a credit or debit card
- 1% using a banking account

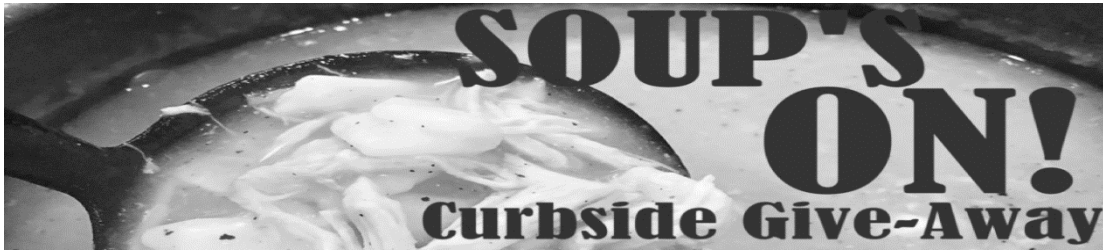
If you would like to contribute to the processing fee, there is a toggle box to select when making your donation.

If you have any questions or would like help, please contact Emile at 715-937-4626.

If enough people are interested, Emile will set up a time and date at the church to go over these steps with individuals.

If you have any questions regarding this new program, please contact any of the committee members:

- Barb Miller
- Emile Miller
- Barb Petkovsek
- Don Quicker
- Paul Vine
- Bonnie Weyer



On Friday February 12, in the morning the soups were started and by the afternoon the bread was being made. Kathy Mathis, Barb Petkovsek and Carol Romens took the lead on cooking and baking. Bonnie Weyer and Deb Perkl gathered the ingredients and helped in prepping for the soup and bread. JoAnn Voss helped in making the bread. Putting the soup in containers and packaging the bread was done on Saturday. Carol and Dave Harnisch, Mike Perkl and Bob Petkovsek were added to the crew on Saturday. Numerous people also helped to deliver our soup to members and their families. Ray Weyer and Kathy Mathis were at the church on Sunday for the curbside give-away. Thank you to everyone who helped prepare the lunch and/or delivered it.

We would also like to thank those who donated financially to our soup give away. A special thanks to Sue and Russel Karl for the hamburger donation and Lynn Dairy for the cheese donation.



We are planning another soup give-away on March 28th (Palm Sunday). Lenten folders are one of the ways we receive money to do our local mission work. Giving can be done via online giving, getting a Lenten folder from the church office or writing a check with Mission and Outreach in the memo.

Thanks,  
Mission and Outreach Committee



## **Mission and Outreach Annual Report 2020**

The mission and outreach committee once again continued to support several of the same projects as in the past. We also did add some new ones this year. Our projects are all funded by the generous donations of our members and the community, especially with the Lenten and Advent folders. The donations were down because of less in person services. We did receive several donations after the dairy give-away. We sponsored the "Souper Bowl Sunday" where church members were asked to bring in cans of soup or donate money. We again competed against Calvary as an incentive and it worked well. The mission was a great success.

Hearts for the Home fund provided money for projects to help residents at the Neillsville Care and Rehab. These projects included providing haircuts, perms, fish fries and other special items that they could not afford otherwise.

A small group of volunteers, led by Doris Bakker again conducted our "Silent Angels Project" to remember our church family shut-ins during the holidays and in the fall. In the fall a treat bag was given to them. A small 12" decorated Christmas tree and a Christmas ornament donated by Karlene Wallace was given to them during the holidays.

Because of the pandemic there were no church camps, as a result no money was donated for scholarships. The Back Pack program is going strong and services approximately 60 families in K-5 grade who receive free or reduced meals at Neillsville School. Deb Perkl continues to coordinate this project where she purchases non-perishable foods from the Feed My People food bank for a very low amount of money. The food is delivered to Neillsville Food Pantry, students who belong to the FFA put the food in the back packs as part of their community service hours. The backpacks are distributed every other Friday at the Neillsville Elementary to ensure that the children have food for the weekend. This mission is funded by donations from the community and our church.

The Christmas Angel project continues to be a huge success. Stacy Schilling manages the program. This year a small group worked to complete the mission, because of the on going pandemic. Gifts were not wrapped and they had curbside delivery.

The Sun-Catchers Memory Café was discontinued this year due to the virus.

We also supported several other missions again this year. We made contributions to House of Mercy- money was used for carpeting in one of the apartments. House of Mercy is located in Loyal. Money was also donated to Hannah Center and Shirley's House of Hope both located in Marshfield.

In June we had a dairy give-away. Cheese, cheese curds, beef sticks and butter were given to church members to keep for themselves or they could pay it forward. In December snack bags were given to health care providers at Marshfield Clinic Neillsville Center. A fish fry supper was given to health care workers at the Marshfield Medical Center-Neillsville the same week.

We are always looking for ways to help the local community. If you know of a program that needs help, please let us know.

Submitted by Mission and Outreach Members,

Kathy Mathis,

Deb Perkl,

Carol Romens,

Sue Gurney,

Carol Harnisch,

Bonnie Weyer

## **COUNCIL MEMBERS DISCUSS UCC COMMITTEE/BOARD RESTRUCTURING**

By: Dave Harnisch

After being brought out as a concern by the Nomination Committee at the Annual Meeting held earlier in the month, UCC Council members placed on its February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda a discussion on *Committee Membership and Future Options*.

The initial concern addressed by Nomination Committee members, and outgoing church Moderator Mike Perkl, was the difficulties in filling committee and board positions that are required by the church by-laws.

Customarily, by the time the Annual Meeting is held, the Nomination Committee's reporting shows a filled committee and board roster. Going into the February 14<sup>th</sup> annual gathering this year, four openings remained in Deacons/Deaconesses, two openings in the Christian Education Board, and two openings with the Stewardship Committee.

All church members hold on to the hope that more active church recruitment of congregational membership may bring a surge in the church family's size---from which the Nomination Committee members could draw from and have greater success. Yet, here lies the question, according to church leaders: Should the church take a wait-see approach and rely on hope and the possibilities of an increase in congregational membership, or should a sub-committee be formed to review the current committee structure and make recommendations for changing the Constitution and by-law requirements?

The considered changes currently highlighted from recent discussion by Council, involved reducing the required amount of members on some, or all, existing committees and boards and/or combining committees and boards.

The growing challenge, according to church leaders and Nomination Committee members, is recruiting a fairly large percentage of congregation members for committee and board volunteerism from a small and lessening church membership.

Currently, the Nomination Committee reviews nearly sixty (60) volunteer positions each year. The frustration felt in filling volunteer positions is derived from trying to draw this large number from a very limited pool of approximately 100 active church members. Although the church population number given in the recent Annual Report shows a membership of 233, this number also includes many who may be considered unavailable for committee and board activities, such as nursing home and assisted living residents, shut-ins, and college and high school students.

At this time discussions have only been initiated, and Council members are asking for input from members of the congregation. Council has also opened its arms to any members who might have an interest in becoming a member of a sub-committee to review this increasing challenge. Here, with some degree of irony, the Council and other church leadership is facing a challenge in forming a sub-committee to review the problems of filling committee vacancies.

A few questions that may be considered by a future *Sub-committee on Committee and Board Restructuring*: How would changes in the committee structure affect our purpose and doctrines? What are other churches doing to meet similar challenges? What recommendations will our UCC Wisconsin Conference offer? How will members of the congregation respond to changes in our constitution and by-laws?

Church members who are interested in finding out more, wish to provide input, or would enjoy participating in this review, are invited to contact Church Moderator, Paul Vine or Pastor Jacoba.



## One Great Hour of Sharing: Let Love Flow

As it turns out, lines on a map don't stop the spread of disease; a pandemic does not recognize human-made boundaries. Whether we like it or not, our lives are deeply intertwined. Our well-being is bound, inextricably, to that of neighbors close to home, and those halfway around the world. The sooner we recognize that human codependency, the better we are able to let love flow—generously and indiscriminately— to those who need it most.

When water comes to a village, everything changes. It touches every area of life—literally and figuratively! Having clean water close by means that women in Nicaragua don't have to spend their whole day walking to the source, so they might have other opportunities for learning or vocational growth. Children in Kenya no longer spend their days carrying heavy buckets, so they can go to school instead.

Improved sanitation slows the spread of disease, so there is less preventable illness. Crops thrive in Vietnam, meaning that food security and nutrition improve in the whole community. Families can spend more time together. People of all ages around the world are empowered to provide for their families today, while also planning for the future of their communities.

To help bring about that more just, abundant vision for humanity, One Great Hour of Sharing supports projects around the world that create opportunity and empower communities.



Through global partnerships, your offerings promote food security; enable health and wellness programs; support education and vocational training; and of course—provide access to clean, safe water.

Water, after all, is life.

In many ways, our world was not prepared for the weight of the COVID-19 pandemic. But because of your past generosity through One Great Hour of Sharing, many communities were better prepared to meet the challenges presented by COVID-19. Through the projects that you've supported in the past, more people were equipped for the crisis with improved sanitation; access to clean, safe water for handwashing; and were empowered to prevent the spread of disease among their family and neighbors.

When you share what God has given, you **“let love flow.”** That love crosses all sorts of spaces and dividing lines, knitting together a better human story, and bringing the Kingdom of God about in our time.

When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you support water and other sustainable development projects all over the world. When you **“let love flow,”** lives are not just saved—they are transformed.

**Make a donation to One Great Hour of Sharing either at church or online at [neillsvilleucc.org](https://neillsvilleucc.org)**  
We will dedicate our gifts on March 14.

*This article was summarized from “One Great Hour of Sharing” materials provided by our denomination.*





# Free Lenten Lunch

## March 28, 2021

Curbside Pick-up

11:30 am - Noon

Neillsville United Church of Christ

515 West 2nd Street

### **Expressing Our Sympathy**

Glenna Rhodes Marg has let us know that her husband, Irv Marg passed away on February 26. Glenna assures us her friends in Florida are taking good care of her. If you would like to send her a card, please call the office and we can give you her mailing address in Florida.

We also express our sympathy to the Vornholt family. Marie Vornholt the daughter of Marian and the sister of John died on February 5. Larry Marshall's mother, Viola passed away on February 11. A number of our members have recently grieved the death of loved ones. May God's love and the promise of the resurrection grant them comfort and peace.



## Guidelines for In-Person Worship Reminders

The Council met Tuesday, January 19, and made the decision to resume in-person worship starting on February 7 at 10am.

**We will continue to offer our services on YouTube, UCC-Neillsville, our website – [neillsvilleucc.org](http://neillsvilleucc.org) , our Facebook pages and on WCCN 98.5FM and 1370AM.**

If you feel safe and feel well, we look forward to seeing you in the pews again. All of the requirements for worshipping or being in our building remain in place.

Please Carefully Review the Guidelines We Have Set Out For Worship Services and the Use Of Our Building

† All who are in the building **will be required to wear a mask**. If you cannot wear a mask, you are asked to worship with us on-line or on the radio.

† Please bring your own bulletin. One will either be emailed/or mailed to you earlier in the week. The bulletins are also made available on our website. Contact the office if you have any questions.

† The names of those present will be recorded to assist the Clark County Health Department if necessary with contact tracing.

† Sit only in the designated pews maintaining a distance of six feet from anyone not in your household. Families living in one household are asked to sit together.

† You can support our ministry through putting your monetary offering in the wooden box in the entryway, through your bank's bill pay, mailing your gift or placing it in our locked mailbox. We are now offering Vanco- a way to pay online. See page (X) for details.

† We ask you to remain physically distanced as you enter and leave the building. We ask that you remain physically distanced in your conversations with each other– we encourage outdoor visiting whenever possible.

† We will not be singing in person together. A virtual choir on the screen will sing and the lyrics will be provided in the weekly bulletin but there will be no in person singing.

† We will not share in a fellowship time; food will not be shared in our building.

† The building will be sanitized according to CDC recommendations. Hand sanitizers will be made available.



The Rev. Franz Rigert of the Wisconsin Conference writes, "I write with deepest gratitude for your congregation's 2020 OCWM. Your generosity toward Our Church's Wider Mission strengthens all ministries and advances UCC outreach." [The WI Conference] continues our mission of supporting pastors and guiding local congregations through all sorts of changing dynamics. Franz also names our justice ministers and the support the Conference to churches as we ministered digitally. He thanks us for our faithful response to Our Church's Wider Mission this. Year. – Our gifts have helped bring God's message of hope to people far and near.



## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

1. Wendell Kuhn  
Dick Lewis
7. Dixie Hediger
8. Randy Hauge  
Betty Barr
9. Lois Corey
10. Sherrie Holub
11. Mark Brunette
12. Larry Marshall  
Lisa Schermitzler
13. Krue Czarnecki  
Robert Petkovsek  
Ben Wilson  
Leah Eddy
15. Jennifer Roenz
16. Francis Carl
17. Glenna Rhoades Marg
20. Russell Karl
21. Howard Mathis
23. Francis Short  
Brody Bergemann
24. Piper Keller
25. Wallace Garbisch
29. Lane Kranz
30. Kellie Murphy
31. Joe Anderson

### Birth notice:

Mia Grace was born on Christmas day at 1:05am. She weighed 7lbs and was 19inches long. She was born to Laruen Hart, granddaughter to Gayle Schermitzler



**Happy 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to  
Bernard and Delores Walker  
on March 10**

### Also Celebrating Anniversaries

20. Lydia and Ron Schumacher
20. Patricia Acheson and Herman Seebandt

*Did we forget someone or  
have the wrong date? Let us  
know!*



### A few more thank-yous:

**Gayle and Lisa Schermitzler** would like to say thank you for the Christmas tree, the cookies, and the candies during this past Christmas season. The felt that it was very thoughtful.


**Pat Wall** would like to say thanks for the soup delivery on 2/14. It was a particularly nasty day she was grateful for the delicious, warm, soup that was delivered to her.

**Pastor Jacoba** thanks all who encourage her and support her ministry among you. She also thanks you for your well-wishes, cards and gifts on her birthday.

**Judy Morrow** also sent a note of thanks for the cans of soup given to the Clark County Resource Center and Food Pantry.



## March 2021 United Church of Christ Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 7:15 7 <sup>th</sup> grade CD	4	5	6
7 <u>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent</u> 9 am Sunday School 10am in person church service, and online 11am radio service	8	9	10 7:15 7 <sup>th</sup> grade CD	11	12	13 
14 <u>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent</u> <b>Day Light Savings Time- Turn clocks ahead</b> 9 am Sunday School 10am in person church service and online 11am radio service	15	16  5:30 Trustees  7:30 Council	17 St. Patrick's Day  7:15 7 <sup>th</sup> grade CD	18	19	20
21 <u>5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent</u> 9 am Sunday School 10am in person church service and online 11am radio service	22	23	24  7:15 7 <sup>th</sup> grade CD	25	26	27
28 <u>Palm Sunday</u> 9 am Sunday School 10am in person church service and online 11am radio service	29	30	31  7:15 7 <sup>th</sup> grade CD	<b>APRIL</b> 1 Maundy Thursday 7:00?	2 Good Friday	3
4 <b>Easter Sunday</b>	5	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In person worship service has returned. 10am Sundays. Please see the guidelines on page (X)</li> <li>Online services will continue. You can find us at and after 10 am on: Facebook, YouTube "UCC-Neillsville", and neillsvilleucc.org</li> <li>Details about Easter services will be coming soon</li> </ul>			