

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Neillsville, Wisconsin
Church 715-743-2147
Pastor Jacoba Koppert
Pastor's Office 715-743-2117
www.neillsvilleucc.org
November 2021

All of the people shouted with praise to the Lord because the foundation of the Lord's house had been laid. ¹² But many of the older priests and Levites and heads of families, who had seen the first house, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this house, although many others shouted loudly with joy. ¹³ No one could distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping, because the people rejoiced very loudly. The sound was heard at a great distance. Ezra 3:11b-13 CEB

Jacoba's jottings... During my pastoral renewal time I finished reading the book "How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You are Going" by Susan Beaumont, published in 2019. She ends the book with the words from Ezra 3:11-13 I quoted above. As we prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving these words strike me as fitting for many of our families. There are many places in our lives where some of us are rejoicing and some of us are weeping because of how life is for us today.

Let me share a little context. As you may have realized several of the prophets in the Bible speak about how things were before, during and after Israel's exile from their homeland. Ezra writes in the days when Israel at long last is back home again. The people are rebuilding the temple which the Babylonians had destroyed. They are grateful as a new foundation is laid shouting with joy. However, as always when we rebuild what was, it is not quite the same. The priests saw the changes and loudly wept. As the text said the joy-filled shouting and the weeping was so great no one could distinguish between them.

Some of us long for the good old days as the older priests did – yearning for the days when the entire family gathered around the Thanksgiving Table. We remember fondly families sitting together in the pew, all of them lifting their voices in song while Grandma showed the one who just learning how to read where the words were in the hymnal. We remember talking with friends, who maybe thought differently than we did, however our opinions did not divide us.

Others among us, while missing what was, see the opportunities before us. Yes, things are different in our families, in the church and in our relationships; however, we see a future filled with hope. We are grateful for the new beginnings and new possibilities. We might wish for days past – yet we rejoice when our youth have found good jobs and strong relationships even knowing they might not be able to come home for Thanksgiving. We celebrate what was, while also realizing sometimes we must let go of what was because it holds us back, or because our priorities or interests have changed.

When our feelings, opinions, decisions are so different from one another that some of us are shouting for joy and some of us are weeping aloud it can be difficult to be together. Maybe as in the days of Ezra we need to let each one be where they are -some rejoicing, some weeping while confessing God loves us all.

As we weep and rejoice what can we together celebrate or lament? Israel was home – I bet everyone was glad about that. And I bet everyone grieved those who had not survived exile. In our day, may we rejoice and weep according to our experiences- honor our differences, acknowledge one another's joys and sorrows and find the places where we can all give thanks. I am sure you can find some common experiences for which you can give thanks at your dinner table, in the church and in your relationships. Let us have compassion for one another and follow Jesus who loves all of us bringing us together at His Table and our tables.

Jacoba's 2nd Page

DATE CHANGE HOLY COMMUNION and ALL SAINTS DAY OBSERVED NOVEMBER 7

On November 7, we will celebrate All Saints Day, remembering those who sat at Christ's table with us in times past. We will again light candles of



remembrance, - naming our members and friends who have died in the past year and then others who we continue to remember and miss.

In case you are wondering – the date was changed due to the cancellation of the Youth Faith Formation Retreat which I was going to attend along with our confirmands

Pastor's Blog



Congratulations to Al and Bonnie on being named as our Volunteers of 2020 and 2021. I too am grateful for their

support in the last 20 months as together with Karen we worked so the congregation could worship God and we could all remind one another to follow Jesus while our members were separated from one another – a choice some continue to make for a variety of reasons. I also celebrate the monthly meal give away. Worshipping God, Mission and Outreach, and Christian Education have always been what I hope the congregations I serve will do. We have done it differently this year – what a blessing to uncover new ways to worship, do mission and teach! I am grateful for all UCC's efforts to remain faithful to God and loving of our neighbors within and beyond our congregation. I commend also Stephanie H. and the other teachers have found a way to teach the love of Jesus and how to follow him to our young ones who come to the church or who join in by Zoom.

Last week we had our first Bible Study of Ephesians. As I prepared to preach and then preached on the book of Ephesians in August and September, I knew and let you know there was much to glean from this letter for the living of these days. I was pleased to have a larger group of members ready to study last week than at any time earlier in my ministry among you.

Three of our members who have never been to



camp – Colton, Tyler and William took the brave step of trying something new last weekend. I can't wait to hear about their (and Reese's – for whom Church Camp is a

favorite place) experiences at the Daycholah Center on Green Lake.

I thank Pastor Jim and Sue Vornholt for leading worship while I too spent some time at our church camps. Dave Harnisch shared in worship and now in this newsletter his testimony on generosity. The Holy Spirit came to him in the night – I am grateful he was willing to share how the Spirit called him to become more generous and to invite us to join him.

Kirk Rodman is prodding us to consider how we can join the efforts to show the Afghan Refugees we want to be their neighbors. A bigger group than expected came to hear his thoughts and agreed to join him and Nancy in figuring out what is possible in Neillsville. In the meantime, the Mission and Outreach Committee has invited the congregation to bring items needed for the Afghans as they transition at Camp McCoy. Check the list in this newsletter so you can pick up an item or two while you are shopping.

A time of fellowship and coffee has returned to our Sunday morning activities. Some of us have missed each other – when you are ready to take this step, grab a cup of coffee or water, and maybe even a treat after worship.

Another way we are choosing to express our faith and care for one another in the sanctuary is after worship we remain seated to pray for our members by name according to their needs. Members tell me this prayer time is important for them. An additional bonus is we get to hear the postlude as the radio broadcast and camera are turned off. I do not want to neglect acknowledging the diligent and deliberate work of the Constitution Committee. Their first fruits are now available for the congregation's input and decision. Thank you, Paul, Barb P., Dave S. and Doris. We have many spent many hours together and done plenty of homework too.

Spirit of Generosity: A Testimonial

By: Dave Harnisch, Secretary, UCC Stewardship Committee

One evening this past August, I couldn't sleep due to an emergency light flashing at the former hospital across the street from us. Why it kept flashing after the police had arrived hours earlier, I do not know, yet the white strobing light coming through our window and flashing on the bedroom wall seemed to be calling me to my feet.

I decided to get up and try to put myself to sleep by reading from a book on pruning shrubs that I had placed on the kitchen table earlier that evening. The reading, not accomplishing any drowsiness, I decided to turn on the TV and, possibly, fall asleep to a movie in an effort to ignore and forget that flashing white light that was, seemingly, penetrating the interior of my home.

Oddly, with Christmas being some distance away, the movie, "A Christmas Carol," starring George C. Scott, was on the TV. Most of us recall Ebenezer Scrooge, and how his surname became used as a synonym for an overabundance of frugality, and his use of the phrase, "Bah, humbug" as he applied it to Christmas activities.

Of course, I was familiar with the story, *A Christmas Carol*, from beginning to end, but only caught the ending on that early morning. When I tuned into the movie, Scrooge was taken by one of the spirits to his Christmas Future, and it was at that time in the movie where he was finally moved to a reigniting of his Christmas spirit...and the generosity and kindnesses that he had once possessed as a young man had been re-installed.

At that moment, when he bought the turkey for Tiny Tim's Christmas dinner and had given Tim's father a doubling of wages---it was at that point where I was reminded, and truly moved, of how my spirit of generosity had waned over the years---and I, along with Ebenezer, was taken back to recapturing my spirit of giving.

I felt so melancholy that tears came to my eyes. I thought to myself, why am I feeling so sad when I just watched, although only a fictional character, a man who had gone from a grumpy old tight-wad, thinking that Christmas was only an event held for commercial purposes, to a man who re-discovered the true meaning of giving---where Christ and generosity was put back into his Christmas? Why was this making me sad...and not happy? Sad, I conclude, because I, like Ebenezer, had let my spirit of generous giving, fade.

How, was the spirit of giving now re-imbedded into Ebenezer? I believe that if the original novel's author, Charles Dickens, had written a sequel using the same character, it would have gone on to describing Ebenezer's as a truly generous and kind-hearted man, with an ongoing, bountiful, and festive generosity of spirit and giving---a healthy spirit of generosity that continued well into his remaining years.

Now, you ask, what does a flashing white light waking me in the early morning, Ebenezer, and Christmas time, have to do with us here and now? I believe daily, our spirit of generosity is tested. And, it is demonstrated with our giving of our talents, time, and treasures to our church and its missions.

For many, it doesn't take a walk alongside the Spirit of our Futures to entice us to give; it doesn't take a flash of light to awaken us; and it doesn't take an old movie to regenerate our generosity. Yet, some, like me, do require reminders that our generosity may have stalled, and our enthusiasm towards giving does need occasional stimulation.

(Presented before the Neillsville UCC congregation members on Sunday, 10/17/21, as part of the Stewardship Committee's *Stewardship Campaign*)

Sunday School News from Stephanie Heck

We are planning the Christmas program to be live on December 19th during the 10 AM church service. We will start practicing this Sunday, October 31st. At this time Sunday school continues to meet at 9:15 AM and but we may adjust time as Christmas program gets nearer.

If any kids would like to bring money in for Sunday School offering it will go towards the Christmas



Angel Project. We will collect thru November 21st



September
VANCO
 General
 Offering
\$955.76

Just a reminder that one way of donating to the church is by using our new online program called VANCO. You can support your church with your weekly/monthly offering by writing a check, using your offering envelope, or giving online with VANCO (once you have this set up you are set to go).

Visit the Neillsville UCC website <https://www.neillsvilleucc.org/> and click on the appropriate link or download the VANCO app for your smartphone.

If you have any questions or suggestions or need assistance with VANCO, please contact Emile at 715-937-4626.

The new online giving program is not only for your weekly/monthly offering ... you can also donate to any church activity through VANCO. The two (2) newest activities on the website are:

- Neighbors in Need
 - Stewardship mission
- Holiday Fair

As a committee of our church, if there are any programs that you need added to the VANCO website for online donations, please get a short write up for the webpage to Emile two (2) weeks prior to the date you need it posted.

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 VANCO.

Thank you!

- Emile Miller

Facts and Figures of October 2021 **Attendance for In-Person Worship**

October 3	*online 4	Sunday	42
October 10	*online 4	Sunday	37
October 17	*online 4	Sunday	35
October 24	*online 6	Sunday	45

**online watching at time of service*

Offerings for October 2021

October 4, 2021

General Offering	\$3,040.00
Neighbors in Need	260.00
Mission/Outreach	30.00
Circle of Friends	33.00

October 18, 2021

General Offering	\$3,020.00
Radio	525.00
Neighbors in Need	250.00
Mission/Outreach	271.00



Sunday, October 3, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Rosie & Jim Repinski to "Rejoice in the coolness of Fall"

Sunday, October 10, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Ruth & Bob Schmidt in memory of sister-in-law, Pat Mohr and dad, Albert Mohr

Sunday, October 17, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Jim & Jim John Filitz in remembrance of Jim & Anne's wedding anniversary

Sunday, October 24, the radio broadcast was sponsored anonymously "In praise & thanksgiving of God our Father"

Sunday, October 31, the radio broadcast was sponsored by a faithful listener

Help Needed

With funerals being held again in person at the church with luncheons following in the basement, think about a talent you could give to your church that doesn't cost anything but your time.

We are still in need of someone to take the lead on the Clean Up Committee. This person doesn't need to be at every funeral, they just need to call and get workers to run the dishwasher, put dishes away, etc. If you would like to try this leadership role, please give me a call.

Also, if you would like to help at any funerals, whether it be with making salads or bars, setting tables for the funerals, waiting on tables, or being on the clean-up crew, please contact me also.

Thank you for considering your time and talent helping others in our church during a difficult time for themselves and their families.

- Emile Miller
715-937-4626

Mission and Outreach will be doing a collection to help support Afghan families at Fort McCoy and to help them in their resettlement efforts. Following is a list of items we will be collecting :

Diapers
Diaper cream
Baby Wipes
Pacifiers
Bottles (no glass)
Bars of soap
Shampoo
Combs/brushes
Deodorant
Towels
Washcloths
Toothpaste/toothbrushes
Masks
Hand sanitizer
Feminine hygiene products (pads only no tampons)
Reusable water bottles (no glass)

All items can be dropped off at church.



Mission & Outreach Report

Our committee met and discussed the future meal give-aways. The October meal was prepared by members of the Neillsville PEO. 80 meals were prepared. The meal was Shepard's Pie Soup, mashed potatoes, cheese and biscuits. Our meals in November and December will be prepared with the help of the Optimist's Club.

It was voted on to give a donation to Shirley's House of Hope, Marshfield. Their goal is to Rebuild, Renew and Restore lives of women and children hurting from domestic violence along with alcohol and drug addictions. A donation was given to NewStart. Through the program NewStart, former inmates can chat with volunteers about the resources available that can help get them on their feet, and be provided clothing, food, and a safe place to go. This is a non-profit that meets with prisoners released from the Clark County Jail and discusses resources that can help them while living in the area. Money was also given to Hannah Center a home for young mothers with children. It is a Goal Based Program for *women with children*, a pregnant woman or a single woman in crisis.

Our next meal give-away is November 21st. Plan to take a meal for yourself or a neighbor, friend or someone in need of a home cooked meal. Curbside pick up will be 10:45-11:15.

Mission & Outreach Committee

Thank you for your support.
Mission and Outreach

Stewardship News



STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE NEWS

Stewardship Committee members were active during our October 24th church service. Jo Ann Voss gave out this year's *Volunteer of the Year* award for 2021 to Bonnie Weyer, and member Dave Harnisch announced Allan Hoesly as the *2020 *Volunteer of the Year* award recipient. Committee Chairperson, M.E. Sjolín assisted Pastor Jacoba with the reading.

Stewardship Committee members select an outstanding member volunteer each year to be recognized as the church's *Volunteer of the Year*. (See details on the two award presentations and winners in other sections of this newsletter)

Committee members extend a thank you out to Bob and Barb Petkovsek for providing homemade cupcakes following the *Volunteer of the Year* awards presentations.

As the Stewardship Campaign moves forward, member Harnisch presented a testimonial on generosity during the October 17th Sunday service. Members will also be considering the possibility of their submitting of monthly bible quotes on the topic of generosity to our church newsletter in 2022.

Committee members are now looking ahead to the Christmas Fund mission that begins in late November and runs through December. Members are planning a mission moment reading and a video for two Sundays in December. The next Stewardship Committee meeting is scheduled for November 3, 2021.

Current Stewardship Committee members are: Marge Goetsch, Dave Harnisch, Chairperson M.E. Sjolín, and Jo Ann Voss.

* Due to the Stewardship Committee not meeting on the *Volunteer of the Year* project in 2020, committee members decided to reach back a bit into history and select an outstanding volunteer to receive last year's recognition as well..



Hoesly Awarded 2020 Volunteer of the Year

Allan Hoesly was awarded the Neillsville UCC *Volunteer of the Year Award* for 2020.

At the beginning of our services held on Sunday, October 24, 2021, Hoesly received the award from selection committee member, Dave Harnisch.

"The recipient for the 2020 Volunteer of the Year award has been a long time member of the church, helped chart our investments, been integral in assuring that our services

during the Pandemic went out to the local radio station, was instrumental in setting up our technology to aid our hearing-impaired, and continues to be an active member in many, many ways." Harnisch said during the presentation.

The recipients of this award receive an award certificate from the Stewardship Committee, and they have their name engraved on an entryway plaque that list all the recipients of this award since the project began.

Congratulations Allan!

(Due to COVID, the Stewardship Committee's selection committee had not met on the project in 2020.)

(Stewardship Committee News Articles Continue...)

Weyer Earns 2021 Volunteer of the Year

At the Sunday, October 24, 2021 church service, long time church member **Bonnie Weyer** received this year's *Volunteer of the Year* award for 2021.

Stewardship Committee selection committee member Jo Ann Voss, presented the award, and highlighted Weyer's contributions that earned her this year's award,

"Bonnie was instrumental in keeping our church services available to the members of the congregation as well as the community as far as the Internet reaches. She spent countless hours implementing on-line services including organizing special music. Being a long standing member of the choir she was able to shake the rafters and bring in many outside friends as part of the virtual choir that was formed during the pandemic. As church treasurer, she steered our Stewardship Committee's mission obligations to success while COVID had prevented mission fund-raising activities."

Voss went on to say, "As a member of the Mission and Outreach Committee, Bonnie was also outstanding in her leadership in organizing our free meal of the month project"

Weyer's name is engraved on the entryway wall plaque listing the recipients of the past, and she received an award certificate from the Stewardship Committee.

Congratulations Bonnie!

CLERGY RENEWAL GRANT

On my leave for renewal, I spent several days at Moon Beach Camp and at Daycholah Center. It was a time for reconnecting with nature, the Holy, reading, visiting with a few colleagues and Don and Joy Abel, and catching up at home. Walking the labyrinth is my go-to form of prayer; both camps have labyrinths. A labyrinth is a circular maze using the same entrance and exit. For me, as I move toward the center of the labyrinth, I too am centered and I hear God's guidance, assurance, encouragement as I move back out of the labyrinth. If you have been in Phoenix Park in Eau Claire, you may have seen a labyrinth.



I also finished reading the book How to Lead when You Don't Know Where You're Going by Susan Beaumont.

Written in 2019 it was intended to address the decline of the mainline institutional Church helping church leaders to move into a future yet unknown. Liminality is that time between when we feel some clarity and things are going well – and then slowly or quickly, sometimes expected, sometimes unexpected there are changes and we do not know what the future holds. Susan wrote the book to support churches going through the liminal time.

A few of the things I picked up – I underlined a good portion of this book – as have my colleagues who read the book.

- † To be curious about what is taking place and where it might lead.
- † To move from knowing to unknowing
- † To move from advocating to attending
- † To move from striving to surrender
- † To seek God's guidance and tend the soul of the institution.
- † To know that to be a leader in liminal time will take patience, listening to the Spirit while paying attention to the values of the institution, taking risks, embracing failure, monitoring anxiety, being open to what emerges, finding coherence.
- † Some people will rejoice in the new beginning as it emerges, and some will weep because what was is no more.

I commend the book to you and am willing to discuss it with those interested in reading it.



*57th Holiday Fair
United Church of Christ
2nd & Park Street, Neillsville
Saturday, November 13, 2021
9 AM - 1 PM*

*Gift Boutique, Greeting Cards,
Kitchen Cupboard, &
New to You Treasures*

*Lunch from 11 AM - 1 PM
CARRY OUTS ONLY - Call 715-743-2147
Chicken Salad on a Croissant
Baked Potato Soup & Dessert
Adults - \$7; Kids Under 10 - \$5*



2022 Radio Broadcast Sponsors Needed

Would you like to sponsor a 2022 radio broadcast? Please call the church office to see what dates are available. You may choose to dedicate or honor someone for a particular service date. We believe our radio broadcast is a valued service and want to keep it on the air. This is not a budgeted item in our church operations, so we would appreciate it if all monies are in by the end of this year 2021.

The cost remains the same: \$75.00 full broadcast; \$37.50 half broadcast; and \$25.00 for a third broadcast.



The Choir will be starting practice for the Christmas season the second week of November. We are asking those who live to sing to call Corrine Armitage (715)743-4747 or just let the church office know. So looking forward to have our members back to SING & PRAISE HIS NAME.

Irma Rizner, 103 years of age died on October 10. What a spunky woman – always dressed to the nines- attended worship at UCC and then at the Neillsville Retirement Community. As her pastor, I will miss her. I officiated at a graveside service on October 15. We express our sympathy to her children, Elsbeth and Bob Johnson and Roger and Johnson. She died in peace – knowing she was going home.

**Thursday,
November 11th
Thank & Pray for
all who have
served our
nation.**





- 5- Phil & Donita Follen
- 6- Ben & Leah Wilson
- 5- Erik & Jenna & Sigurdson
- 12- Mark & Merrill Brunette
- 14- Emile & Dan Miller
- 29- Tom & Betty Barr

Happy Anniversary! Did we have the wrong date or miss your Anniversary?



- 2- Debra Holman
- 3- Merrill Brunette
- 9- Betty Opelt
- 10- Travis Vine
- 14- Roberta Gaier
- Kelly Mathis
- 15- Hanna Opelt
- 16- Neil Armitage
- Sue Gurney
- 18- Chad Erickson
- 19- Harold Eddy
- 22- Theo Vine
- 24- MacKenzie Keller
- 25- Joe Kranz

Happy Birthday to all who have a November birthday! Did we miss your birthday or have the wrong date? Let us know if we did.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Each Sunday 9:15 Sunday School 10:00 Church Service 11:00 Radio	1	2 10:30 Neillsville Retirement Comm. Serving communion	3 5:00 Stewardship 6:00 Confirmation	4	5 9:00 Constitution	6
7 Twenty-Fourth Sunday After Pentecost All Saints Day & Communion	8 9:00 Card Making Group meeting	9 10:00 Neillsville Clergy at Gesche's 2:00 Bible Study 5:00 Deacons Mtg	10 Crafts 6:30 pm	11 VETERAN'S DAY 1:30 Circle of Friends Meeting	12	13 
14 Twenty-Fifth Sunday After Pentecost 11:00-12:30 Confirmation	15	16 2:00 Afghan Refugee Outreach Comm. 6:30 Council Mtg	17 6:00 Confirmation	18	19	20
21 Reign of Christ Late afternoon- Decorating church	22 9:00 Card Making Group meeting	23 1:00 Bible Study	24 6:00 Confirmation	25 THANKSgiving Day 	26	27
28 First Sunday of Advent No Sunday School	29	30				