



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
Neillsville, Wisconsin  
Church 715-743-2147  
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[www.neillsvilleucc.org](http://www.neillsvilleucc.org)

December 2021

*Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to us  
And all things shall be well*



***jacoba's jottings...*** My star word this year was "Joy." I admit finding joy, feeling joyful, sharing joy was not easy this year. Last year my word was "Boldness" not easy either – however the onset of COVID and the necessary changes and decision-making required boldness. Joy on the other hand has been elusive. This week my devotions were about joy. God wants us to experience joy.

As I was thinking about joy, how to feel it and write about it – in rapid succession, I heard Christmas present wrapping at the church had to be cancelled due to the high number of covid cases. Many of us are disappointed and concerned. I then learned there had been a school shooting at Oxford, Michigan. Many of us are heart-broken and angry that youth were again killed at school and fear was rekindled for children, parents, and school staff. That same afternoon I received a text saying another one of my mother's friends had died; three of her closest friends died in the last fourteen days. I was sad and grieved for their families and for my mother. All this news came to me on the day I wanted to experience joy and write about joy. I realize many of us have days and months like this – where one thing after another zaps the joy right out of us.

Henri Nouwen suggests that we are looking for joy in the wrong places. Our joy is not dependent upon what happens in the world or to us or because of us; instead, the deep joy Jesus promises is a result of God coming to be among us. Joy comes because we know we belong to God. God cares for us and about us. The deep joy of our heart is knowing God so loves the world that God came into world in the flesh.

While we expect to feel joy when things are going well, in the Bible, joy is often promised and experienced when the world is at its darkest. Jesus came into the world when the people no longer had hope. It is then that we hear the angels announcing:

*"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"  
which means, "God is with us." Matthew 1:23*

*"Do not be afraid, for see– I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:  
to you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."*

In Jesus Christ God has come into the world. God is with us. It is God's presence which causes abundant joy. Jesus tells his disciples his joy is a result of his relationship with his Father. He wants us to have that same joy. That joy comes when we realize Jesus loved by God loves us. Jesus encourages his disciples to remain in relationship with God. As we keep God's commandments and abide in God's love Jesus' joy will be in us and our joy will be complete.

The hymn we sing knows the source of our joy – all through the year:

*Joy to the World: The Lord is come! Let earth receive her King! Let every heart prepare him room.*

*Heaven and nature sing repeating the sounding joy for the world is filled with the wonders of God's love!*

## ***Jacoba's 2<sup>nd</sup> Page***

### **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES**

**4:30pm** This service intentionally welcomes children of all ages to celebrate Christ's birth. The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served. With battery operated candles we will let the light of Christ shine.

**7:30pm** The choir has been rehearsing and plans to sing during this service. The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served. We will share the light of Christ as we sing "Silent Night" together.



### **Buzzing Around the Church**



November was again a full month of activity. I thank the Deacons for preparing the altars for communion and with candles remembering members and friends who have died.

The Stewardship Committee sent out thank you post cards to our generous supporters of the ministry at UCC. Thank you, Stewardship Committee!

The Holiday Fair was a success in all ways. You can read Emile's report in this newsletter. Many thanks to the leadership and all the volunteers who offered their time, talent and treasure supporting the Fair. Many hours were given in the months and weeks leading up to the Holiday Fair.

The Afghan Refugee Committee continues to meet, learning about the resources available and how to assist the Refugees. Challenge gifts were given, and the congregation generously doubled the challenge. Our UCC committee continues to discern how we can best help our allies. Many folks have also brought in useful items. Kirk and Nancy have taken carloads of our donations to Sparta where they are sorted and then offered to the Afghans housed at Ft. McCoy. Volunteers are needed at both Sparta and at the Fort to assist in dealing with donations and with helping the Refugees learn English and how to live in an American Community.

Coffee Hour has resumed – with donut holes, coffee and water served in the narthex after worship. We are seeking hosts for the coffee hours; there is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board at rear of church. We thank Doris Bakker and Carole Romens for their help.

I also want to thank all who beautifully decorated the church for Advent and Christmas after the Packer game on November 21. Among the names I heard helping were Janice, Jenny, Carole, Doris, Deb, Jim, M.E., Kevin, Al and Audrey (please forgive me if I missed anyone – I was out of town.) Jackson Hemp, grandson of Leslie decorated the tree in the narthex and Haylee, Reese, William and Clare helped Jenny decorate the tree in the sanctuary and place the tree skirt made by Betty Opelt.

I see there are cars in the parking lot as the Senior Choir resumes their ministry of music. Corinne and Karen are taking the lead. I look forward to having the choir back.

The church basement is again filled with gifts and food for families in our area. Even though we are not gift- wrapping the gifts, much activity is taking place. With Stacy at the helm a few volunteers are making sure families will receive what they need along with some of what the children want. The community has again been generous in purchasing gifts and donating money. Mike, Jim, and Don put together the boxes again this year. Larry and Kathy are picking up the gifts from locations in town. Our congregation continues to be vibrant and active.

### **My Resignation**

By now everyone should have heard that I am called to be the settled pastor at Community Congregational UCC in Pinckney MI. My last Sunday at UCC, Neillsville will be February 28.

I have contacted the Rev. Rob MacDougall, Conference Staff; he will be in touch with Paul Vine and the Council to begin the process of seeking an Interim Minister.

In these next months, I will continue to serve with you faithfully as we begin to say good-bye and may the Lord bless you and keep you!

## **Sunday School News** from

Stephanie Heck

We are planning the Christmas program to be live on December 19th during the 10am church service. We will continue to practice at the start of Sunday School at 9:15 AM each week.

We will be taking a few weeks off for holiday break and will let you know what day we will resume in January once we have that decided.



**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.**

Charlotte Gress, 97 years of age died on November 19th. Charlotte was an active member of the church; she participated in the Bible Study led by Marge Goetsch and was treasurer for the Circle of Friends.

She usually came to worship at Neillsville Retirement Community in the last years of her life. The Rev. Jim Mohr officiated at private service for her on November 22.



We are now **taking orders for poinsettias** from Falls Florist for our sanctuary's Christmas Eve Services. You can choose between white or red poinsettias this year. The price is \$15.00 and they can be ordered in honor, in memory or for any other reason you may have. They can be taken home after the 7:30 p.m. Christmas Eve service. Please make your check out to Falls Florist. Thank you for your orders. Deadline for ordering will be December 12<sup>th</sup>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of / In memory of      white / red (please circle one)

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of / In memory of      white / red (please circle one)

\_\_\_\_\_



**September**  
**VANCO**  
 General Offering  
 \$1133.19

**VANCO – Online Giving**

With 2021 coming to an end and you get ready to prepare for the tax season, if you need to have a tax deduction, remember our church by using our online program called VANCO.

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. There is one (1) new activity on the website:

- Christmas Fund
  - Stewardship mission

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

We offer our sympathy to the family of Robert



Carpentier, who passed away December 2<sup>nd</sup>. He was a long time church member. His daughter, Natalie is

married to Brad Buddenhagen, the son of Byrl & Sharon Buddenhagen.

## **Facts and Figures of November 2021**

### **Attendance for In-Person Worship**

October 31	*online 3	Sunday	50
November 7	*online 8	Sunday	41
November 14	not working	Sunday	44
November 21	*online 5	Sunday	37
November 28	*online 9	Sunday	35

*\*online watching at time of service*

### **Offerings for November 2021**

#### **November 1, 2021**

General Offering	\$2,775.00
Radio	150.00
Neighbors in Need	25.00
Mission/Outreach	80.00
Circle of Friends	77.75

#### **November 15, 2021**

General Offering	\$2,415.00
Radio	750.00
Neighbors in Need	10.00
Mission/Outreach	50.00
Holiday Fair	49.00
Refugee Fund	25.00
House of Mercy	25.00



Sunday, November 7, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Phil & Donita Follen in "Appreciation of the Church Family".

Sunday, November 14, the radio broadcast was sponsored in memory of by Gordon & Faith Vine by their children; Jane Nelson, Virginia Fennema, Paul Vine, Jeff Vine and Kristine Kirschoffer.

Sunday, November 21, the radio broadcast was sponsored by a faithful listener.

Sunday, November 28, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Dolores Johnson, in loving memory of husband, Lloyd Johnson.



## 2021 UCC 57<sup>th</sup> Holiday Fair Summary

We were able to host our annual Holiday Fair in person again at the church this year and it was a HUGE success, thanks to a lot of people in the church, and not just the women! We made a profit of **\$8,155.25** with the following breakdown:



- Greeting Cards - \$66
- Raffle - \$280
- New To You Treasures - \$717
- Luncheon - \$791
- Kitchen Cupboard - \$961.25
- Crafts - \$5,340

I would like to thank the people that took the chairman lead in each of our areas, without someone taking the lead, it would not be as organized as it is:

- Greeting Cards – Susie Karl and Carole Romens
- New to You Treasures – Debbie Perkl
- Kitchen Cupboard – Susie Karl and Carole Romens
- Crafts – Carla Marty

A special thank you to Barb Petkovsek, Kathy Mathis and Rosie Repinski for preparing the soup and chicken salad on Thursday, so I could attend my grandson's doctor's appointment, I'm truly grateful.

Whether you donated your time, made, or donated items to the Holiday Fair, and/or purchased items or our luncheon at the Holiday Fair, we thank you very much!

Our door prize was a beautiful handmade wooden toolbox donated and made by Carol Struensee's husband, our new maintenance personnel for our church. The toolbox was decorated with pine boughs, red branches and a red and black plaid bow, which was won by Dixie Oldham of Neillsville. Congratulations!



We held two (2) raffles this year, a beautiful quilt that was donated by Nancy Sandstrom and won by Debbie Holman and a "Red Truck" raffle that was donated by Barb Miller and won by Kay Heck, which is Stephanie Heck's mother-in-law.

Our luncheon consisted of chicken salad on a croissant, a cup of Betty Opelt's famous baked potato soup, and a brownie. We ran out of our luncheon, which is good but many of us never had a chance to enjoy it! Thanks to all who donated the ingredients, prepared, and/or helped package the "to go's" for the luncheon; it was and is always greatly appreciated.

The following businesses donated to our Holiday Fair, so when you see them, make sure you extend a thank you on behalf of our church:

- Hansen's IGA
  - the "to go" containers for the chicken salad sandwich
  - the trays for the Kitchen Cupboard goodies to be sold on
- Kwik Trip
  - \$50 gift certificate that was used toward the brownies that was the dessert for the luncheon
- WCCN
  - FREE advertisement of our Holiday Fair
- Drescher Oil (BP)
  - the "to go" soup containers for our baked potato soup
  - advertising the Holiday Fair on their marquee
- Custom Heating
  - advertising the Holiday Fair on the marquee
- Vine Christmas Trees (Paul and Kelley)
  - Pine boughs for our Porch Pot Kits, the flower boxes under the bells, porch pots, and Christmas boxes
- Carla's Creations (Carla and Mickey)
  - Opening their home again this year for our craft nights
  - All the supplies, whether it was scrap wood, ribbon for bows, paint, brushes, wire ... you name it, she donated it towards this worthwhile project



We also want to thank individuals for their generous donations ... Jeff Turner for donating some pine boughs and Jim Simek for donating the birch.

If anyone is still interested in any of the leftover craft items, they are still available and are on the UCC closed Facebook Page or contact myself and I will meet you at the church so you can "shop". They will be available until Friday, December 17, 2021, before we put them in storage.

If anyone has any antique milk cans, galvanized pails, desk drawers, or scrap 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.

Thank you again!

- Emile Miller

## UCC CHRISTMAS FUND

“Thank you all so very very much! Keeping you all in my prayers. May the gift of your generous blessing spread wide and far.” A quote from a retired pastor’s widow and recipient of UCC Christmas fund emergency assistance in 2020. For over 100 years the Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ . The Christmas fund provides emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities, and health premiums and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks to lower income retirees.

Each year UCC congregations have generously blessed the Christmas fund. Your care and compassion will be appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you for your gifts to the annual UCC Christmas fund. “Christmas fund” envelopes are located in the pews or by the offering box located in the back of the church. Or, give on- line by going to the website <https://www.neillsvilleucc.org/> and click on the “on line offering” link where you will find the “Christmas Fund” icon.

“Good news.....Great Joy.....All the people. Luke 2:10

## ADVENT FOLDERS

In Advent and Lent the Local Mission and Outreach of the Church is supported by our donations. Over the years we have filled our Advent or Lenten Folders with a quarter each day. We then return our Folders at the end of the season.

Fewer and fewer of us are filling the folders with quarters or dollars. Another option would be to donate a gift marked Advent Gift in the season of Advent and Lent Gift in the season of Lent. These gifts are dispersed by the Mission and Outreach Committee for use to support agencies and facilities.

## CONFIRMATION

Class members are lighting the Advent Candles this year with their mentors.

This year the class members and their mentors are Haylee Erickson – whose mentor is Carole Romens Colton Williams – whose mentor is Jim Mankowski Reese Ziegler – whose mentor is Deb Perkl We thank the mentors who will meet with the confirmands reading and discussing the Gospel of Luke and assisting them with their Statement of Faith.

Because of the pastor’s resignation, the class will be meeting every week for an hour and half hoping to complete the curriculum so they can be confirmed before Pastor Jacoba leaves.

## SUPPORTING FOLKS WHO ARE SICK WITH COVID OR QUARANTINED

The Neillsville Retirement Community is now into its fourth week of lockdown (Pastor’s count and memory). The residents must stay in their rooms all the time. Residents and staff are really struggling. We saw the effects of isolation last year. There are also people of all ages sick or quarantined at their homes.

There are some things we as a church and individuals can do without jeopardizing our well-being.

- † We can have window visits. Go to the window, knock on the window. If hearing each other is a problem – call them on your cell phone – you will be able to have a conversation and see each other. These window visits have brought great delight to those in lockdown
- † Another option is a phone call from your home.
- † “Thinking of you” cards lift spirits.
- † You can bring small gifts to the facility – and give them to staff who answer the facility door to pass on.
- † We can gather a group together and sing Christmas carols outside of windows.
- † On FB was a thank you to an anonymous donor who sent doughnuts from the Love and Flour Bakery in town.

## 2022 Radio Broadcast Sponsors Needed

Would you like to sponsor a 2022 radio broadcast? Please check the listing below 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.

### 2022 Dates still open

Jan 2	Apr 24	Sept 11
Jan 9	May 22	Sept 18
Jan 16	Jul 3	Oct 23
Jan 23	Jul 10	Oct 30
Jan 30	Jul 17	Nov 20
Feb 13	Jul 30	Nov 27
Feb 27	Aug 7	Dec 4
Mar 27	Aug 14	Dec 18
Apr 3	Aug 21	Dec 25
Apr 17	Sept 4	



- 8- Bob & Barb Petkovsek
- 18- Don & Joy Abel
- 27- Steve & Leslie Buchholz

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



- 1- Lydia Schumacher
- 6- Marla Raine
- 14- Lynne Abel
- Janet Meredith
- 17- Michelle Holub
- 20- Charlotte Hediger-Tetzlaff
- 27- Calvin Heck
- 28- Sally Sadowska
- 29- Jenna Ziegler

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



**CHOIR – will continue to practice for the Christmas Season every Thursday at 6 pm.**

**We are asking those who love to sing**

**please call Corrine Armitage (715-743-4747)**



Christmas Greetings from all of the staff at UCC, Pastor Jacoba, Janice, Carol, and Karen.

May you have a joyous Christmas and happiness in the New Year!





2021

# United Church Of Christ

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Each Sunday 9:15 Sunday School 10:00 Church Service 11:00 Radio			1 10:00 Pastor Parish	2	3	4
5 <u>Second Sunday of Advent</u>  Communion	6 9:00 Card Making Group meeting	7 10:30 Neillsville Retirement Comm. Serving communion 1:00 Bible Study 5:00 Deacons Mtg	8	9 Circle of Friends Christmas Luncheon – noon	10	11
12 <u>Third Sunday of Advent</u>	13	14 10:00 Neillsville Clergy mtg at Calvary 5:30 Trustees 6:30 Council Mtg	15 6:00 Confirmation	16	17	18
19 <u>Fourth Sunday of Advent</u> Sunday School Christmas Program during worship service	20 9:00 Card Making Group meeting	21 1:00 Bible Study	22	23	24 Christmas Eve 4:30 Family Service – Communion and candles 7:30 Traditional Candlelight – Choir Communion	25 Christmas Day
26 <u>First Sunday after Christmas</u> No Sunday School	27	28	29 10:30 Confirmation	30	31	