

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**Neillsville, Wisconsin**  
**Church 715-743-2147**  
**Pastor James Mohr- substituting for March**  
**Pastor's Office 715-743-2117**  
[www.neillsvilleucc.org](http://www.neillsvilleucc.org)  
**March, 2022**

### ***jacoba's jottings...***

Greetings Church,



These are likely my last words to the congregation as your pastor. We have cared for each other, served together, worshiped God together, managed, to the best of our ability, the Pandemic, and striven to be faithful to God in all things. Could you and I have done some things differently - of course. Have we done some things well? Yes, indeed. We have sought to be faithful to our calling.

I will soon no longer use my church email, nuccpastor@gmail.com (Pastor Wilner may choose to use it.) I will not be able to support you in the challenges of life nor lead the congregation in worship or service. I will, with prayers for you, unfriend all members from my personal Facebook page. I will no longer be a member of the church's closed Facebook page. When your new called pastor (not the interim) is established as your pastor you may again request me to be my friend on Facebook. For me, it will be a joy to see your pictures and watch your family mature. However, I will not respond to comments about the celebrations and concerns of the church. I have no intention to interfere in the leadership of your new pastor or the decisions you make. I will pray for you and my heart will be with you. I am one who believes the ground between us is holy ground; I will trust that God is among us, supporting us - no matter who we are or where we are on our journey.

I thank you for your gifts – from the church – a beautiful Lenten stole, a lovely picture album of church pictures- including all my Confirmands through the years – and a framed picture of the church. Kind words were spoken- a lovely reception in Fellowship Hall – cards, gifts, texts, meals out, and prayers lifted up. I also appreciate several members and friends who helped a lot with getting my things ready to go. Thank you. I shall miss you.

Rev. Jim Mohr has graciously agreed to lead worship services in the month of March. If there is a need for pastoral care, he stands ready to walk with you. On April 1, Pastor Jim will again step back and support Pastor Gary Wilner as he becomes your Interim Pastor leading UCC into a new future and preparing you to receive a new called pastor - again under God's guidance.

On Friday, I signed the papers to close on the sale of my home. The moving van arrived on Tuesday, March 1. Thank you to those who assisted in packing, sent cards, and took me out for a meal. I begin my ministry at Community Congregational United Church of Christ in Pinckney, Michigan on March 23. I look forward to being the pastor of this new to me congregation. I thank you for the opportunities you offered me through which I gained valuable learnings.

If we missed, saying farewell to each other, know that I thank you and that it has been good to be in relationship with each other and with UCC and our community.

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

Pastor Jacoba Koppert



### FAREWELL TO PASTOR JACOBA

On Sunday February 27, 2022 we said farewell to Pastor Jacoba and wished her well.

At our morning worship service, Joe Anderson surprised her and sang "The Church's One Foundation".

Pastor Jacoba shared with the children that "Jesus Loves You" and her meditation to the congregation was "Keeping Our Eyes on Jesus".

The Rev. Don Bauman, Chair of the Committee on Ministry, Northwest Association, led the ending of an authorized ministry.

As the Congregation presented Pastor Jacoba with a stohl, picture book of her time in Neillsville and a picture of the church, the following words were shared

#### "Pastor Jacoba

You have served the Lord and our church the United Church of Christ Neillsville for the past 9 years.

You have cared for us on Sunday mornings, through happiness and joys, through trials and tribulations, through health and illnesses and much more.

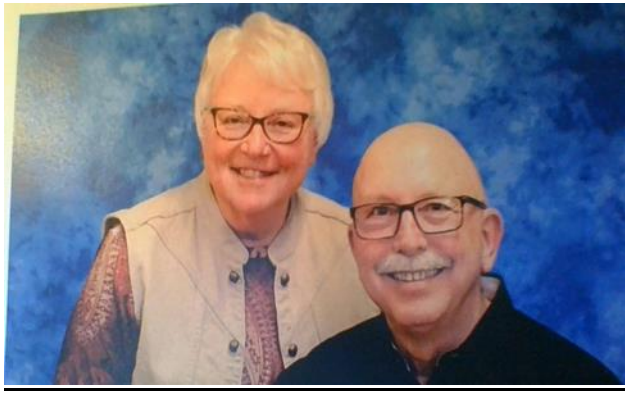
Your life has had many chapters and now this chapter has ended and the next chapter will be written. May the God of Grace richly bless you and watch over you, may the God of Peace grant you peace always and may the God of Abundant Joy shower you daily.

As Jeremiah 29:11 would speak to all of us:

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Memories were shared at the end of the service and downstairs while everyone enjoyed coffee and treats.

**Wednesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>** – there will be no worship service here at UCC. We are invited to attend Ash Wednesday service at Calvary Lutheran church at 7:00 pm. Invitation is also extended to join them at 6:00 pm for their soup supper.



### **INTERIM MINISTER HIRED**

UCC Vice-moderator, Barb Petkovsek, announced at the February 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting that Gary Wilner has been hired to be our interim minister.

In mid-January, Rob Mac Dougall of our Midwest Conference, first brought Pastor Gary to the attention of our church Moderator, Paul Vine.

Following a full profile review and interview held January 26<sup>th</sup>, the members of our Leadership Council agreed to welcome Pastor Gary to our church.

In 1984, Pastor Gary received his Master's Degree in Business Administration from Wake Forest University in North Carolina. Before retiring from a career in business, he had extensive experience as an executive for several large companies, and offers his experience in strategic planning to help move our church during the transition and help the congregation plan for the future.

He began his study of interim ministry in 2002, and in the Fall of 2003 completed the Wisconsin Conference's Lay Academy. He held interim positions in several Wisconsin communities, including Neenah, Kempster, Howards Grove, Phelps, Elcho, Stratford, Land-O-Lakes, Rhinelander, and Mt. Vernon in Verona, where he also held 'visioning' workshops. In 2012 he completed Church Transition Training to Assist Association Ministers.

Pastor Gary also worked with the Wisconsin UCC's Northeast Association as its Ministries and Communications Coordinator, which included being the staff lead for the Division of Local Church and the Division of World Ministries.

In 2019, Gary and spouse Dorry moved to Bailey, Colorado. But, as the reader may have guessed from

his background, they are no strangers to our state-- Gary grew up in the Oshkosh area, and Dorry, Milwaukee. They have five grown children who are spread out throughout the country. Gary enjoys the out-of-doors, especially fishing and hiking, and Dorry was involved with Wisconsin's Master Gardener Volunteer Program and continues that interest in Colorado.

Pastor Gary will be joining our community around April 1, moving into a downtown apartment in Neillsville, and his plans are to perform his first Sunday service on April 3. The Neillsville UCC has agreed to a six-month covenant, with the option to extend in three-month increments.

In addition to Pastor Gary's regular duties with Neillsville UCC, he will be assisting the Nomination Committee in its selection of a Pastoral Search Committee, and will assist the latter in its preparation of our church profile.

We hope our church membership will all join in and provide a warm UCC welcome to Pastor Gary.

**-UCC Leadership Council**



**Gary & Dorry's children**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

In early October of 2021, several members of the UCC congregation informally met at the request of Kirk and Nancy Rodman to research the possibility of the Neillsville community hosting an Afghan refugee individual or family, as well as to consider formally establishing a local placement group. The initial groundwork involved assignments by those attending to contact several organizations in a discovery to learn more about the needs and placement procedures. Following its first formal meeting on October 16, 2021, the Afghan Refugee Research and Outreach Committee (ARROC) was formed.

Amongst the many groups contacted by ARROC during the period of initial research were, to name a few:

- Ft. McCoy Community Services
- Lutheran Immigration Refugee Services
- Team Rubicon USA
- local Workforce Development
- local Catholic Services
- Goodwill
- Salvation Army
- Clark County Social Services
- UCC Wisconsin Conference Immigration Working Group
- Sparta Armory Refugee Needs Collection Center
- Clark County Age and Disabilities Resource Center
- various churches and businesses,
- veterans and language interpreters of the Afghan military involvement

Several critical topics that would affect the adjustments needed by both the new guests and the community were at the forefront of discussions including, but not limited to:

- language challenges
- acceptable and affordable housing
- worship availability
- medical needs and legal questions
- home and property furnishings
- transportation and mobility needs
- educational adjustments
- sponsorships by local individuals/families
- costs for sponsoring a family
- food and clothing needs

Food and clothing needs were the first priority when the guests first arrived at Ft. McCoy. Our local community and ARROC ran an impressive donation campaign that involved several businesses and churches. Many bags and boxes of clothing, personal hygiene items, and children's books were donated and taken by Kirk and Nancy Rodman to the collection site at the Armory in Sparta on several occasions. Sizes and items that did not seem fitting, or ended up as an overage following the closing of the Sparta collection center, were distributed to other local efforts, such as the Hospital Auxiliary and Homeless Veterans collections in Neillsville and the The Highground, respectively, and the House of Mercy in Loyal.

As the work of ARROC progressed for the gathering of food and clothing needs, the likelihood of a small rural community being an approved site for refugee placement seemed to be overshadowed by larger communities that had long-time experience in refugee placement and cultural adjustments, and these more populated communities that already had an established and well-seasoned refugee placement group were receiving the most attention and communications from those responsible for determining placement.

Just prior to ARROC's February 18th meeting, what appeared to be a last move for local placement that the group had within its grasp was investigating a recommended group called Sponsor Circles. This group's programming asked for a minimum of five individuals or families to become certified, and the program asked each to sign a Code of Conduct agreement and live up to its Sponsor Circles Welcome Plan. Within this plan, hosts obligate themselves to:

- finding proper housing
- providing basic necessities
- discovering documentation needs
- acquiring all services and benefits
- providing health and mental health services
- discovering legal assistance
- providing education and language assistance
- providing needed interpretation and translation services
- assuring cultural connections

- offering community orientation and employment
- transportation and mobility needs
- submitting 30 and 90 day progress reports to the program
- responsible for a financial commitment of \$2,275.00 per member of an Afghan family

Within almost all of ARROC's meeting discussions, concerns involving cultural connections and acceptance, possible language adjustments, and ready access to regular places of worship seemed to come to the forefront as suggested by the Sponsor Circle Program. The concerns, however, along with those in charge of placement giving preference to larger and experienced communities, along with the inability to find four or five local families to obligate themselves to the 24-7 challenges asked of the Sponsor Circles Program, the ARROC determined that hosting here in the Neillsville area was an uphill effort that could not be reached at this time.

Although to some degree ARROC has placed its hosting efforts on the back burner for the time being, the membership's history of activities and progress has been documented for individuals or groups that may wish to take up the refugee hosting banner going into the future. In addition, the group's efforts have brought to light some of the groundwork and contacts for future efforts, and its efforts have highlighted and reminded many local institutions and businesses to consider honing their current planning in the possibility of meeting the future needs of any refugee family that may someday find the Neillsville area their home. For those members of the UCC who continue to feel the need to contribute and have further input or interest, please contact any member of the UCC Mission and Outreach Committee.

Going into the group's current dormancy, it held its final meeting at this time on February 15, 2022 to discuss the financial donations provided to ARROC since its October beginnings. The group, after considering the recommendations from major financial donors, voted unanimously to write a check for the current amount gathered to Wausau's Ethiopian Community Development Council

(ECDC). The amount estimated at the meeting of the 15th was approximately \$4,000 that will go directly to an Afghan refugee family determined by the ECDC.

ARROC will keep its concerns alive by following the progress of the family that receives the money, and by seeking ongoing updates on the family's needs, well-being, and progress made in the family's new cultural surroundings. In turn, members of the ARROC group will pass on any news or needs to the UCC congregation and Neillsville community.

Dave Harnisch, Secretary, Afghan Refugee Research and Outreach Committee (ARROC) and the UCC Leadership Council

### **From the Afghan Refugee Outreach Committee**



Thank you for supporting the Afghan Refugee Outreach Project in the collection of clothing and school supplies for the refugees housed at Fort McCoy. Six car

loads were delivered to the National Guard Armory in Sparta, Wi. Your commitment to helping welcome these folks to our country is very much appreciated.



## The Rite of Confirmation

I was very proud of our three confirmands this year. With their parents, mentors and me, we worked hard so that Reese, Colton and Haylee could be confirmed before I left Neillsville UCC.

Several others (and me too) complimented them on their Statements of Faith.

It was a joy to work with this class. I began as their Sunday School teacher on Zoom last spring – we transitioned to Confirmation in the fall. We enjoyed some engaging conversation and they supported each other in their studies.

The confirmands, who confirmed their faith on February 20, 2020 are (listed with their parents, mentor and Confirmation verse).

Haylee Erickson, daughter of Chad and Lacey – Mentor – Carol Romens.

*“Let your light shine before people, so they can see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven”  
Matthew 5:16.*

Reese Ziegler, daughter of Jenna and Josh–

Mentor – Deb Perkl

*“Teach me your way, Lord so I can walk in your truth. Make my heart focused only on honoring your name.”  
Psalm 86:11*

Colton Williams, son of Scott and Jill-

Mentor- Jim Mankowski (who could not attend the service due to a family funeral)

*“May God encourage your heart and give you strength in every good thing you do or say.”*

II Thessalonians 2:17

I wish our confirmands God’s fullest blessings – and that they will ask God for the help we all need in keeping our vows.



Pastor Jacoba, Carole Romens, Haylee Erickson, Reese Ziegler, Deb Perkl, Colton Williams

## March Worship Services

**Starting March 1st** – Pastor James Mohr will be substituting for our worship services. He will also be on call for emergency pastoral care. Please call the office number 715-743-2147 or Pastor Mohr's number 715-743-7626.



**On Sunday, February 13<sup>th</sup> Pastor Jacoba performed the Rite of Holy Baptism to Alexander John Vine, son of Travis and Ashley (Edgington) Vine. Godparents are Jason and Hannah Raine**

## TIME TO ORDER EASTER LILIES



Place your orders for Easter Lilies by April 1<sup>st</sup>. If you wish to dedicate your lilies, please let Janice know how

you would like it listed in the bulletin. The cost of the lilies this year is \$17.00, please make your check out to **Falls Florist**. Please take your lily home with you following Easter worship service. Thank you for adding to the beauty of our sanctuary on Easter Sunday.

## **NEILLSVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2021**

To: The Neillsville United Church of Christ  
Leadership and Membership

The Audit Committee has audited the financial reports of the Neillsville United Church of Christ dated 12/31/2021 and contained herein. While our audit was limited to testing the transactions and balances and would not necessarily disclose all errors, we found no material differences resulting in significant errors or omissions. In our opinion, the finance reports mentioned above are fairly stated.

Any and all recommendations for better practices have been reviewed with the church treasurer, assistant treasurer, church moderator, trustees and leadership council.

We wish to thank the treasurer, assistant treasurer, financial secretary and money counters for their fine work this past year. Their gift of time and talent is appreciated by the congregation.

Anyone wishing to review the audit documents contact the church office.

Respectfully submitted;

Audit Committee:

Barbara Petkovsek, Michelle Kranz, Barbara Miller  
February 25, 2022



goes to the family of Lorraine Shaw, who died in the early morning of February 8th.

She died of some underlying health issues and a recent bout of pneumonia.

We will miss her. She and Bob were long time active members of the

church, usually present on Sundays in worship – and always ready to help. She was the recording secretary for many years. She was a woman of strong faith with a lovely caring heart. A memorial service for Lorraine will take place May 14th.



## **Sunday School News** from Stephanie Heck

We will continue to meet on Sundays at 9:15 am for all kids ages 3K thru 6th

grade in person and via Zoom for both groups. Please let us know if joining on Zoom, so we make sure to watch and let you into the meeting.

If interested in attending a church camp the website is [www.UCCI.org](http://www.UCCI.org). You can apply for a scholarship to have the camp either fully or partially covered thru our church website (on the main page under church camp scholarships).

Remember to not put any down-payment when registering for a church camp, but to put paying by check (the church will make a check out),



## **Facts and Figures of February 2022**

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

February 6	*online 18	Sunday	37
February 13	*online 22	Sunday	63
February 20	*online 18	Sunday	81
February 27	*online 19	Sunday	71

### **Offerings for February 2022**

#### **February 7, 2022**

General Offering	\$2,664.00
Radio	375.00
Circle of Friends	132.00

#### **February 21, 2022**

General Offering	\$2,510.00
Mission Outreach (meal give away)	181.00
Circle of Friends	12.50

## **VANCO – General Offering – January**

\$1,113.19



Sunday, February 6, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Dan Patey in loving memory of wife, Elvira Patey.

Sunday, February 13, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Pat Acheson and Herman Seebandt in honor of Pastor Jacob's inspiring and thought provoking meditations and her beliefs in diversity as "All are welcome in the United Church of Christ Churches".

Sunday, February 20, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Ruth & Bob Schmidt in memory of mother, Luella Mohr and sister, Lois Mendenhall.

Sunday, February 27, Pastor Jacoba sponsors our radio broadcast to the glory of God and in honor of our radio broadcast listeners with gratitude to Kevin Grap, his family and employees of WCCN.



## **COFFEE HOUR** **HOSTS WANTED**

We again want to offer an opportunity for Fellowship. We are serving doughnuts, coffee, and water. We are asking the hosts to stop at the IGA on their way to the worship service, pick up the already ordered doughnuts (cost covered by the church), make the coffee in the church lounge (clear directions are available to make coffee) and roll the cart out to the narthex near the end of worship.

We ask that the host straighten up the area, return the cart to the lounge and rinse out the coffee pot.





- 10- Bernard & Deloers Walker
- 20- Patricia Acheson and Herman Seebandt

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



- 1- Rick Buchsteiner  
Richard Lewis  
Wendell Kuhn
- 4- Millie Mathis
- 5- James Mankowski
- 8- Randy Hauge
- 9- Lois Corey
- 12- Larry Marshall  
Lisa Schermitzler
- 13- Krue Czarnecki  
Robert Petkovsek  
Ben Wilson
- 14- David Steinbach
- 16- Butch Carl
- 17- Glenna Rhoades
- 20- Russell Karl
- 21- Howie Mathis
- 23- Brody Bergemann  
Frances Short
- 24- Piper Keller
- 25- Wallace Garabisch
- 29- Lane Kranz
- 30- Kellie Murphy

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

We are adding first days of April's birthdays so as not to miss any if the Newsletter is late.



- 4- Carla Marty
- 5- Tye Kranz
- 6- Bonnie Weyer
- 9- Ray Weyer

## **We are the Champions**

### Souper Bowl Challenge



UCC	439
St. Mary's	371
Calvary	222

All soup going to our local food pantry



**Sunday, March 13th**

## Stewardship Scripture Quotes

### GENEROSITY

*Command them to do good,*

*To be rich in good deeds,*

*And to be generous and willing to share.*

*1 timothy 6 : 18-19*



One Great Hour of Sharing is “love is action”. In the name of Love OGHS feeds the hungry, digs wells for those who need water, builds shelters for those who need shelter, cares for the sick and responds to disasters. Love is in action around the world as well as right here at home.

One Great Hour of Sharing is one of our “Five for Five” offerings. This ecumenical project has been putting love in action for over 70 years.

OGHS is a special Lenten offering which is taken the fourth week in lent, March 27. Please donate to this special love in action project. Offering can be in person, mailed, using bill pay through your bank or on line through VANCO.

These three remain; faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is Love. I Corinthians 13:13

## LUNCH GIVE-AWAY

**MARCH 20, 2022**

**NEILLSVILLE  
UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST  
515 WEST 2ND STREET**

**CURBSIDE PICK-UP**

**10:45-11:00 A.M.**

**MEAL DONATED BY**



### Mission and Outreach March Thanks You

We would like to thank our volunteers for February's meal give-away. Willard's Holy Family Parish PCCW helped prepare the meal. We also have a core group of women that come monthly known as the cutting crew. The crew consists of Vicki Steffen, Jan Smith, Carol Tomasello, Diane Renne and Margarite Cunningham. They have cut pounds of carrots, celery, onions, potatoes and chicken. We also have a group of bread bakers consisting of Diane Opelt, Georgia Janssen, and Mary Jo Gregorich. We have many church members that are also involved in this mission. We are blessed with people who help fund the mission of food for all. People give free will offers as they pick up the meals. We have church members that have donated money to sustain the give-away. Clark County Community Foundation gave \$1300 in a form of a grant. This will fund two meals. The committee is also seeking other grant possibilities. Anyone interested in giving to this cause just put meal give-away in the memo of your check and it will be designated to the correct fund.

Thanks you,  
Mission & Outreach  
Deb Perkl, Kathy Mathis, Carol Harnisch,  
Carole Romens, Bonnie Weyer



# 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	2 <u>Ash Wednesday</u> <u>no service here at</u> <u>UCC.</u> Service available at Calvary 7:00 pm Soup supper 6:00 pm	3	4	5
6 <u>First Sunday in</u> <u>Lent</u>  Communion	7 9 am Card Making Group meeting	8 5 pm Deacons Mtg  7 pm- Christian Ed Zoom meeting	9	10 1:30 Circle of Friends Mtg	11	12
13 <u>Second Sunday</u> <u>in Lent</u> Day Lights Savings Time Change	14	15 5:30 Trustees Mtg 6:30 Leadership Council Mtg	16	17	18	19
20 <u>Third Sunday</u> <u>in Lent</u>  27 <u>Fourth</u> <u>Sunday</u> <u>In Lent</u>	21 9 am Card Making Group meeting  28	22  29	23  30	24  31	25	26