

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Neillsville, Wisconsin
Church 715-743-2147
Pastor Gary Wilner - Interim Pastor
Pastor's Office 715-743-2117
www.neillsvilleucc.org
December, 2022

Greeting to you all this Avent Season,

We soon get to experience the anniversary of God's great gift to us at Christmas. That celebration formally starts on the first Sunday of "Advent" which means "Coming." So, with four Sundays beginning on Nov. 27th and ending on Christmas Eve, we look forward to and celebrate the coming of the Christ Child.

Now, so much is said about the hustle bustle of the holidays and how worn down and frustrated folks get during this time. We are encouraged by so many pastors and counselors to step back and find time to relax, pray and meditate in order that the real meaning of Christmas might come to us. And that is certainly wonderful advice!

However, I would like to share a little different perspective. When we celebrate Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day and so many others, we are honoring the person(s) but even more so, we are celebrating what they did for us. God's gift to us in the form of a baby, came to create change. No, more accurately he came to create radical change for the good of all creation. A movement away from many of the religious laws of his day to the law of love: love of God and love of neighbor. God sent Jesus here as a change agent! A baby who would grow up to move people away from always looking back and locking in on traditional laws. The importance of laws and rules and membership lists and "who qualifies for what" guidelines, were of no use to Jesus. All were welcome- kings and paupers, and especially those in need. And of course, He brought greater insight into the true nature of God, a God of totally inclusive love and forgiveness.

So yes, let us take time to reflect, pray, meditate and relax. But let us also remember what God sent Jesus here to do. Let us celebrate the arrival of Jesus that Christ and let all that he did and all his teachings inspire us to move forward ourselves and be creative change agents. Relax, pray and meditate THEN put those walking shoes on and minister to others in whatever way you feel you have been called, by the Babe in the manger.

Oh, come all ye faithful! Let us celebrate God's gift of Jesus to us, both his birth and his ministry of love. He remains with each and every one of us today bringing us Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

May God's richest blessings be with you always,

Pastor Gary

Thank You Pastor Gary Wilner



As most of you know Pastor Gary Wilner will be returning to his family in Colorado at the end of December. We want to take this opportunity to thank Pastor Gary for his time and service to Neillsville UCC.

Pastor Gary started his service on April 1, 2022. The council and Gary agreed that one of the primary objectives was to help UCC identify a roadmap for the future of UCC. Over the summer Pastor Gary organized and facilitated congregational visioning meetings. From these conversations we agreed to the following priorities:

1. Seek ways to energize worship through the use of a variety of music.
2. Activate faith development.
3. Increase youth and adult participation.
4. Re-activate some social, small group activities.
5. Seek ways to reinvigorate membership.

Thank you, Pastor Gary, for your leadership and service to the Neillsville UCC. We wish him and his family well.

2023 Radio Broadcast Sponsors Needed

Would you like to sponsor a 2023 radio broadcast? Please reserve your date with the church office. You may choose to honor or dedicate a particular service to someone. 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 the year. The cost remains the same: \$75 for a full broadcast; \$37.50 for half broadcast.

Welcome Jim Mohr and Sue Vornholt



We are happy to announce that Jim Mohr and Sue Vornholt have

agreed to serve as co-interim pastors effective Sunday, January 1, 2023. Both are long-time members of Neillsville UCC and Pastor Mohr served as our pastor for many years.

They have agreed to work cooperatively in sharing the pulpit and will use a common Sunday service format. They have also agreed to preside over funerals. Due to other commitments, they will have limited office hours and focus primarily on providing consistent Sunday worship services.

Pastor Mohr retired from the Neillsville UCC and has provided pulpit supply to a number of churches in central Wisconsin. Sue recently completed a two-year interim pastor position at a Marshfield UCC church. She is currently the moderator of the Northwest Wisconsin Association.

The council will take official action at its regular meeting on Tuesday, December 20th. We look forward to welcoming Jim and Sue.



- † Continuing the following in our thoughts and prayers.
Darlene & Herman Mueller Betty Opelt
Delores Johnson Graeme Williams
Dorothy Steiger
- † To Craig & Stephanie, Calvin, and Sophie Heck we offer our condolences on the death of your brother and uncle. May God give you the support that you need.

Update Constitution and Bylaws

December 2, 2022

In April 2021, UCC members were invited to join an ad hoc review committee to examine the current church constitution and by laws. The UCC constitution and by laws were last reviewed by a similar committee in 2012.

The constitution is the overarching document used by UCC churches, to provide a framework for the church as a whole, the membership, the pastor as well as the council, and the committees. The bylaws define the structure, role and purpose for the board and committees.

Barb Petkosevk, Dave Harnisch, Doris Bakker and Paul Vine, volunteered to be part of the ad hoc committee. In May 2021 these members along with Pastor Jacoba began the review of other UCC constitutions and by-laws. On October 31, 2021 the congregation approved a revised Neillsville UCC constitution.

Since that time the ad hoc review committee has been working on revising the by laws. A primary focus of the committee was to “streamline” committees as well as more clearly outline roles and responsibilities.

The ad hoc review committee, along with help from Pastor Wilner, has completed a draft of the revised bylaws. On Sunday, January 1, 2023 following the regular service, UCC will host a special congregational meeting to review and vote on the revised by-laws, as well as a couple of minor wording changes to the constitution.

Copies of the updated bylaws will be emailed to members. If members would like a hard copy of the changes they can contact Janice Miller in the church office 715-743-2147 or email her at neillsvilleuccoffice@gmail.com

Church School News

from Stephanie Heck



-We are planning the Christmas program to be during the 10 AM worship service on December 18th. We will be practicing at 9 AM each week.

-After the Christmas program the children and their parents will host a "celebration of Jesus' birth" with refreshments in the fellowship hall.

-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.

Please reach out to Stephanie at 920-948-7783 with any questions.

OFFERINGS FOR NOVEMBER 2022

November 11, 2022

General Offering	\$4,440.50
Radio	150.00
Holiday Fair	100.00
Back Pack	100.00
Neighbors in Need	25.00
Meal Give Away	20.00
Kitchen Fund	200.00
Memorial Fund	<u>512.50</u>
	\$5,548.00

November 28, 2022

General Offering	\$5,102.50
Holiday Fair	1,477.75
Back Pack	320.00
House of Mercy	200.00
Meal Give Away	193.00
Christmas Fund	120.00
Memorial Fund	<u>40.00</u>
	\$7,453.00

(Online Automatic Giving)

VANCO – General Offering – October
\$633.44

Facts and Figures of November 2022

Attendance for In-Person Worship

November 6	*online 3	Sunday	78
November 13	*online 8	Sunday	74
November 20	*online 6	Sunday	57
November 27	*online 5	Sunday	44



Sunday, November 6, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Phil & Donita Follen in honor of the Church Family.

Sunday, November 13, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Jane Nelson, Virginia Fennema, Paul Vine, Jeff Vine, Kris Kirschoffer in honor of their parents Gordon & Faith Vine.

Sunday, November 20, the radio broadcast was sponsored by "a faithful listener".

Sunday, November 27, the radio broadcast was sponsored by "a faithful listener".

ADVENT FOLDERS are available in the Narthex. These donations support our Local Mission and Outreach of the Church. Another option would be to donate a gift marked Advent Gift in your contribution.

Stewardship Scripture Quotes

“Stewardship, simply put, is what we do with what we have.”

**-UCC Stewardship
Committee Members**



**Marge Goetsch will be hosting
a Bible Study Class at her home, every
Tuesday at 1 PM
510 W Fourteenth Street, Neillsville**



- 1- Lydia Schumacher
- 6- Marla Raine
- 14- Lynne Abel
Janet Meredith
- 20- Charlotte Hediger-Tetzlaff
- 24- Dayne Loberg
- 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.***



- 8- Bob & Barb Petkovsek
- 27- Steve & Leslie Buchholz

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



JANUARY 1 -9

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

January 1-9 Birthdays

- 3- Kathy Mathis
- 6- Allan Hoesly
- 9- Wayne Voss

January 1-9 Anniversaries None

**Wishing All of You a
very Merry Christmas
and a Happy Healthy
New Year!**

**From Pastor Gary,
Janice, Carol**



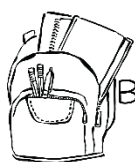
Mission and Outreach Report

Our meal give-away is being planned for the twenty-third month of it's existence. Our costs have gone up for preparing for each meal. The cost per meal is averaging \$650 per month. We exist on grants and donations from individuals. Please consider a donation to our Meal Give-Away fund for the new year. If you chose to support this mission please write a check and put Meal Give-Away on the memo line. We now have \$4805.81 dollars in our fund. This mission will stop when the money runs out.

We want to thank the Circle of Friends for a donation that was given in November.

We have a need for more brown bags and ice cream pails.

Groups outside our church are still helping us to prepare the meals. St. Mary's Catholic church of Neillsville helped prepare the November meal and donated money to the fund. Our church is responsible for the December meal. We have a group of 5-8 people that come anytime we need extra help. A Bible study group from Living Hope will be preparing the March meal.



Mission Backpack Program

Mission and Outreach is requesting donations to our school backpack program.

The backpacks are sent out every other Friday. We are able to get quality food items from Feed My People. Children receiving these are based on free and reduced lunches and teacher recommendation.

Please consider helping us continue this important program. Checks can be made out to United Church of Christ and add Mission Backpack to the memo line, contact Deb Perkl with any questions.

If you have any questions or suggestions, feel free to ask anyone on our committee.

Mission and Outreach

Deb Perkl

Carole Romens

Carol Harnisch

Kathy Mathis

Bonnie Weyer

THE CHRISTMAS FUND

It is advent season, time to count our blessing and be thankful for what we have. It is also a great time of the year to pray for and care for those less fortunate.

For over 100 years the UCC Church Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees. The Christmas fund provides emergency grants and small annuities and health premiums for lower income retirees. Christmas "Thank you gifts" are awarded to retired UCC clergy/lay employees with limited income as a way of saying thank you for year of service. Emergency grants are awarded to retirees who face unforeseen circumstances that create financial hardship.

Retirees with limited income may receive monthly payments to bring household income up to a level so they can afford basic needs such and food, utilities and medical expenses. Donations to the Christmas fund can be dropped off in the box at the back of the church using the envelopes from the pews, on line through automatic giving, using our VANCO account or mailed to the church at 515 W. 5th Street, Neillsville .

Thank you for your contributions to the UCC Church Christmas fund. God's blessings one and all during this beautiful Advent Season, Merry Christmas from the Stewardship committee. If you have any questions or suggestions, feel free to ask anyone on our committee.

JoAnn Voss

Dave Harnisch

M..E. Sjolín



2022 UCC 58th Holiday Fair Summary

Our 58th Holiday Fair was a HUGE success, thanks to a lot of people in the church, and not just the women! We made a profit of **\$9,097.00** with the following breakdown:

- Greeting Cards - \$41
- Raffle - \$272
- New To You Treasures - \$957
- Luncheon - \$1,279
 - Chicken salad on a croissant, baked potato soup (Betty Opelt's recipes), and brownie
- Kitchen Cupboard - \$1,321
- Crafts - \$5,227

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
- Luncheon – Emile Miller

Our door prize was a beautiful handmade wooden burnt lantern made and donated Bob Petkovsek and decorated by Carla Marty with fresh greens and a bow. The lucky winner was Sandi Aderhold of Neillsville, congratulations!

We held two (2) raffles this year:

- “Design your own Firepit” by Joe and Michelle Kranz (donated at a discounted price) won by Jim and M.E. Sjolín of Neillsville
- “Pumpkin Spice Basket” donated by Carla Marty, Barb Miller and Jenna Sigurdson and won by Barb Cooper of Marshfield

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 and soup
 - the trays for the Kitchen Cupboard goodies to be sold on
- Kwik Trip
 - \$50 gift certificate that was used toward two (2) of the trays of brownies for the luncheon
- WCCN
 - FREE advertisement of our Holiday Fair
- Drescher Oil (Joel and Marla Raine)
 - ice
 - advertising the Holiday Fair on their marquee
- Custom Heating (Sue and Tim Voigt)
 - advertising the Holiday Fair on the marquee
- Kuhn's Decorating
 - advertising for 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
- Love + Flour Bakery (Jenna and Erik Sigurdson)
 - Gift certificate for pumpkin cheesecake in the raffle basket

Various church members donated items for all the areas of our Holiday Fair, whether it was for the New to You Treasures, Baked Goods, Crafts, Raffle or luncheon ... we thank you very much. Without these donations, our profit could not have been so high!

If anyone has any old sleds, wooden skis, 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

Angel Project will need help on these dates -

Sat., 12/3 – 9:00 - First deliveries; Volunteers wrap gifts (Lunch provided)

Wed., 12/7 – 5:30 - Volunteers wrap gifts; Deliveries (Supper provided)

Sat., 12/10 – 9:00 – Final deliveries



Sunday, December 18th

10 AM - Children's Christmas Program during worship

Saturday, December 24th – Christmas Eve

4:30 PM – Family Service – Communion & candles

7:30 PM – Traditional Candlelight Service – Communion

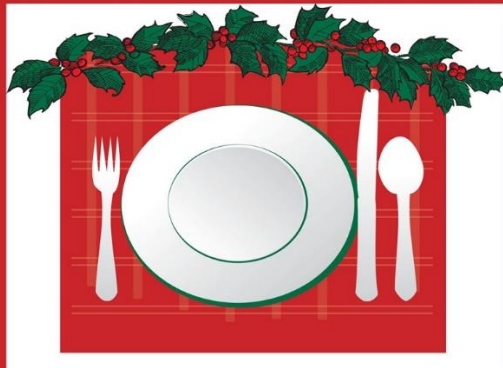
Sunday, December 25th – Christmas Day

Currently planning – details to follow

December 18, 2022

United Church
of
Christ-Neillsville
515 West 2nd Street

Curbside Pick-Up
11:00-11:15 a.m.



Lunch Give-Away



2022

United Church Of Christ

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Each Sunday 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Church Service 11:00 Radio				1	2	3
4 Second Sunday of Advent Communion served	5 9:00 am Card Making	6 1:00 pm Bible Study at Marge Goetsch's home/bring bible 3:30 Deacons Mtg	7	8 1:30 Circle of Friends Christmas Party	9	10
11 Third Sunday of Advent	12	13 1:00 pm Bible Study at Marge Goetsch's home/bring bible 5:00 pm Trustees Mtg 7:30 pm Leadership	14	15	16	17
18 Fourth Sunday of Advent	19 9:00 am Card Making	20 1:00 pm Bible Study at Marge Goetsch's home/bring bible	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve 4:30 Family service 7:30 Traditional candlelight service
25 Christmas Day 	26	27 1:00 pm Bible Study at Marge Goetsch's home/bring bible	28	29	30	31