

Peace United Church of Christ

The Tidings



December 2023

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January 2024

From the Pastor's Study • December 2023/January 2024

I heard the other day that social media was lifting up the amazing phenomena that this year December has five Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Some social media posts proclaimed that this occurs just once every 823 years and the Chinese even call the phenomena “bag full of money”. What a fun piece of trivia. I even shared this word with someone else after looking at the calendar and thinking, “cool, five weekends in December.” I have to say that I was a little sad when I sat down to write this reflection, only to find that this wondrous trivia was just another of those ubiquitous urban myths... I'm always delighted by observations that encourage us to see the world a little differently, even if only for an instant. I know that it's what continues to intrigue me in the study of scripture – I hold a deep longing to see and understand the world in new ways. The world steadily invites us to catch reflections of God's vision of a life that really is life. So, these unexpected glimpses encourage us to read our relationship to the world differently, more faithfully, with a greater spiritual challenge.

Thanksgiving and Christmas are quickly approaching. Almost every year there emerges some new insight or understanding related to how we tell these familiar stories. Some of the stories we have always been told might fall in that same realm of urban myth. We pray that the new glimpses we

learn encourage us to keep deepening our understanding of our history, our world, and our relationship with God. Thanksgiving is a much more complicated holiday when we listen to our history held alongside that of Indigenous Peoples. The Christmas story becomes full of fresh insight and revolutionary political critique when read through the histories and lenses of first century Palestinian-Jews living under Roman occupation. How do we see our stories through fresh eyes? That's the invitation of our Advent journey each year.

In this year of celebrating the journey of Peace UCC, I looked back at my first Christmas Tidings article and found a similar theme:

December 1998

We are about to once again enter the Advent season. In this season, time is our blessed gift. As people of faith, this is our time to prepare ourselves for the unexpected miracle of God appearing in our world in extraordinary ways. This is a time to put all of our assumptions on hold and really carefully watch and listen. We watch so that we might see the word and listen so that we just might hear the light.

We are continually on a journey of faith. So often when we all pile into our cars to go on physical journeys there is someone asking the question "are we there yet?" I remember taking trips with my Granddad when I was a boy. He loved to watch everything as we drove along. This didn't necessarily aid his driving, but wow, how it opened up the world! I always loved traveling with him, his pointing out the color of a field or the shape of a cloud or some other detail that I might have missed. Traveling with Granddad wasn't about arriving - "being there yet" - it was about watching all the details along the way.

In a world that tries to force us to arrive at Christmas before we are there, it's a very real challenge to pause and savor the journey. For the next few weeks, we watch the sky and look for a star, maybe this time... maybe, just maybe again. We watch the people around us and see how God is breaking into our world through the kind word of another, through a small child or through the wise eyes of someone at the other end of life. Take the time to open your senses, to open them in unexpected ways, see with your heart, hear with your eyes, taste with your ears...

The wonder of the season isn't social media-professed trivia, but rather the invitation to hear how God chooses to be made known in the world by radically reorienting our ways. Jesus' birth once turned the world upside down in its understanding of God's ways by challenging the way people understood what real power looks like: the power of unbounded grace and justice for the least, the last, and the lost. We still long for the light of God to break into the world and turn our attention toward all that would illuminate our souls. I hope that we might take the time again to delight in rediscovering God's story hiding all around us.

Wishing you the joy and the tender surprise of God bursting into your lives anew,

Pastor ERIC

Worship Schedule for December & January

Sunday, December 3 - 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. - **COMMUNION**

First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 64:1-9 • Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 • 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 • Mark 13:24-37

Sunday, December 10- 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-11 • Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 • 2 Peter 3:8-15a • Mark 1:1-8

Sunday, December 17 - 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 • Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46b-55 • 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
• John 1:6-8, 19-28

Sunday, December 24 - 9:30 am **ONE SERVICE**

Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 • Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 • Romans 16:25-27
• Luke 1:26-38

Sunday, December 24 – Christmas Eve - 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

Both are candlelight services of lessons and carols.

Monday, December 25 – Christmas Day 9:30 a.m.

Isaiah 62:6-12 • Psalm 97 • Titus 3:4-7 • Luke 2:(1-7), 8-20

Sunday, December 31, 9:30 a.m. **ONE SERVICE**

First Sunday after Christmas

Isaiah 61:10-62:3 • Psalm 148 • Galatians 4:4-7 • Luke 2:22-40

Sunday, January 7, 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. **COMMUNION**

The Baptism of Christ

Genesis 1:1-5 • Psalm 29 • Acts 19:1-7 • Mark 1:4-11

Sunday, January 14, 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Second Sunday after Epiphany

1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20) • Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 • 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 • John 1:43-51

Sunday, January 21, 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Third Sunday after Epiphany

Jonah 3:1-5, 10 • Psalm 62:5-12 • 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 • Mark 1:14-20

Sunday, January 28, 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Deuteronomy 18:15-20 • Psalm 111 • 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 • Mark 1:21-28

Events and Activities

Peace Church Christmas Offerings: Christmas offering distribution will be divided equally between Peace Church Peace Pantry, West Bend Full Shelf Pantry, and the Wisconsin Conference's Disaster Relief Fund.

Scholarship Fund Christmas Cookie and Coffee Sale

During fellowship time on December 17, there will be a Christmas Cookie Sale sponsored by the Scholarship Committee.

We are asking all parents of Scholarship Recipients to please bake and bring cookies by 7:30 - 8:00 a.m. on Sunday to be sold between our two services. We will be making variety plates. Help is needed with baking, packaging, and selling the cookies. Ten college students have applied for scholarships for the 2023-2024 school year and will be receiving their scholarship money in February after we receive their first semester grades. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Community Meal Desserts Needed! – The December Community Meal will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 6th from 4:30 – 6:00 pm. The menu will be sloppy joes, tater tots, fresh veggies with dip, peaches, plus dessert and beverage. We need desserts! If you can make a dessert, please contact the office, and let us know! Thank you!

Peace Church Book Group - The Wednesday morning Peace Church book group will meet December 6th to discuss the book "Women Talking" by Miriam Tews. Mugs McFadden is the discussion leader for this book. Everyone is invited to attend the discussions on the first Wednesday of the month (September through June). The group meets in the choir room at 9:30 a.m.

On January 3, the group will discuss the book "Still Alice" by Lisa Genova. Karen Grundahl will lead the discussion. Future books include: "East of the Mountains" by David Guterson on February 7 and "Three Weeks with My Brother" by Nicholas Sparks on March 6.

For more information, please contact Lynn Rusch at lynnrusch@yahoo.com or 262-306-4025.

Peace Church Banned Book Group – will meet on Wednesday, December 20 at 1:30 p.m. in the church music room. The group will discuss "The Hate You Give" by Angie Thomas. Books are reserved at the Kewaskum Library and can be picked up starting October 15th. If you need assistance with obtaining a book, please contact the church office.

The Giving Tree

Helping Those
in Need



Gingerbread House - Giving Tree

Every year Peace Church participates in the Gingerbread House Giving Tree. Once again, Peace Church will be giving gift cards instead of purchasing presents for families. It is suggested to purchase a gift card (Target, Walmart, Amazon, Piggly Wiggly, Kohls, etc...) and either mail it to Peace Church at PO Box 433, Kewaskum, WI 53040 or drop in the offering plate or deliver to the church office. We will collect the gift cards and deliver them to the Gingerbread House, which is part of The Youth and Family Project of Washington County. If you cannot get out to purchase a gift card, you may send a check to Peace Church, and we will purchase the gift card for you. Please make sure you note that the donation is for the Gingerbread House program. The deadline is December 12, 2023.

Young Adult Habitat trip - is scheduled for January 1, 2024, to January 7, 2024. Any young adult is welcome to come along. They don't have to be members of our church. Pastor Eric and Sheri Rehn will be the chaperones. They will be going to Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The cost is \$200.00 per person for the week, and this includes staying at the Volunteer Lodge, breakfast, lunch, and dinners. Meals on the way there and back, and on our off day, are not included in the cost. If you or someone you know is interested in joining, please let Robin in the church office at 262-262-4011. Paperwork and payment are due by December 11th. If you have any questions, please call Pastor Eric at 262-707-0758 or Karen Kletti at 262-224-2212.

Thank You from Peace Church

Thank you to all who gave their time and talent to create beautiful hats, mittens, and scarves to help warm the children of Washington County. We were able to donate to the following: Kewaskum Elementary School, Family Promise, Friends Inc., and the Kewaskum Food Pantry. It is never too early to start creating for next year!

EcuMen News – The EcuMen, a community-based men's chorus, will be presenting an hour-long concert on Sunday, December 10, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. at Peace Church. The program consists of traditional carols, spirituals, and secular Christmas songs. The EcuMen chorus is led by Dave Bertleson. Several men from the Peace Church choir are part of the group. This is a free concert and open to the public. Here is your chance to hear more of this fine singing group!

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Happy Birthday! (Ages 1-18)

December 1	Croix Kivell
December 7	Wesley Spaits
December 8	Lauren Krebs
December 20	Corbin Walker
January 11	Jade Brei, Xander Kivell
January 12	Molly Kedroske
January 16	Amelia Krebs
January 23	David Dorn
January 27	Kyla Kivell

Anniversaries

December 1	Rosemarie & Cliff Maeder (70)
December 20	John & Margaret Schmahl (53)
December 29	Jean & Jeffrey Reigle (49)
December 30	Matthew & Rachel Schemelin (22)
January 13	Emil & Sandra Radeztsky (28)

Birthdays (80 years plus)

Dec. 3	Arthur Schmidt (86)
Dec. 4	Ralph Faisst (95)
Dec. 5	Betty Hallen (97)
Dec. 6	Carol Clark (94)
Dec. 6	Jeanne Wood (87)
Dec 8	Dennis Novotny (80)
Dec. 11	Rose Marie Knoth (84)
Dec. 25	Betty Spaltner (83)
Jan 15	Karen Staehler (80)
Jan. 30	Clarence Westra (86)
Jan. 31	Marilyn McIntosh (88)

Christmas is Coming

Before you know it, we will turn the calendar to December and many wonderful events will be at hand. A few, which specifically involve our congregation, are outlined below:

Saturday, December 2nd - Intergenerational Cookie Decorating – 1:00 p.m. We will need about 150 cookies. If you can donate unfrosted cutout cookies, please contact the office.

Sunday, December 3rd - Kewaskum Cookie Walk - 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Peace Church will participate in the Kewaskum Cookie Walk, sharing freshly baked and decorated Christmas cookies, the Christmas narrative, schedule of holiday services, and a small gift for each child.

Sunday, December 3rd – 5:00 p.m. The Kewaskum Christmas Parade kicks off with the theme “Favorite Childhood Game.” Peace Church will be entering a float in this year’s parade. All children, youth, and adults are invited to participate by walking next to the float. Costumes will be provided. Details coming soon.

Wednesday, December 6th - Peace Church will be hosting a Community Meal from 5:00 - 6:30 p.m. This meal is sponsored by the Peace Pantry Committee and is open to all!

Sunday, December 10th – EcuMen Concert at Peace Church – 2:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 17th - Children's Christmas Program - 9:30 a.m. service.

Sunday, December 24th - There will be the fourth Sunday of advent services at 9:30 am and Christmas Eve services of lessons and carols at 6:30 pm & 8:30 pm.

PLEASE NOTE: NO 8:00 A.M. SERVICE.

Monday, December 25th - Christmas Day Service - 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, December 31 - New Year's Day service - 9:30 a.m. **PLEASE NOTE: NO 8:00 A.M. SERVICE.**

Financial Reports

Financial Report October 2023

General Fund

Adjusted Beginning Balance as of September 30, 2023	(\$60,728)
Receipts	\$35,265
Expenses	(\$30,389)
Ending Balance as of 10/31/2022	<u>(\$55,852)</u>

Benevolence Receipts

Kewaskum Food Pantry	10.00
Neighbors in Need	160.00
Peace Pantry	654.00
Total Benevolence Receipts	<u>824.00</u>
Church Kitchen Remodeling Project	(\$31,678.79)

Council Meeting October 10, 2023, Minutes

Members present: Clark Pearson, Vikar Jakob, Tim Stoffel, Vance Reif, Paul Behring, Brad Preder, Lisa Atwater, Mark Bocher, Becky Manthei, Kathy Charland, Melissa Polzin, and Pastor Eric

Members absent: Ken Singer, Melinda Sargent, Kathy Mertz

The meeting opened at 6:00pm with a prayer from Vikar Jakob.

Motion to approve the agenda Clark P, with a second from Paul B. Motion carried.

Motion to approve the September minutes made by Mark B, second from Lisa A. Motion carried.

Opening prayer: Approval of Agenda (a) Motion: Second: Motion approved.

Approval of Minutes from prior month Motion: Second: Minutes approved.

Financial report presented by Cathy Stern. Motion made by Clark P. to place the financial report on file for audit, with a 2nd coming from Vance R. Motion approved.

- Nominees for council – several people are asking for nominees. Will continue asking people if they would serve in 2024.
- Annual meeting
- Request made to make the church aware if members are in the hospital. The church is not being made aware of people entering the hospital, so spreading the word would be helpful.
- Brenda Roehrig is resigning from the Safe Sanctuary position. Robin has agreed to take over these duties.
- Church service attendance for 1st service has been 27, 30, 39, 30, and 34. Attendance for 2nd service has been 126, 94, 105, 94 and 93. At this time we will continue having 2 services.
- Articles have started in the Statesman. Will have 8 articles in total. On Nov 5th we will have a meal. Request made for 1 service on that day. Pastor will ask the 8 am service to confirm it is ok.
- Discussed options for ushering and communion. Looking for ways of how we can organize to ensure people are in place.
- Vikar Jakob is discerning a call to pursue ordination in the UCC. Pastor Eric made a motion to endorse Jakob to be presented to Church and Ministry for consideration as a member in discernment. 2nd motion by Tim S. Motion carried. His visa is good until Dec 2024, and he can renew it.
- Kathy, Melissa, and Lisa will assist with communion on Nov 5th at the 9:30 service.
- Kathy C. made a motion to strike the motion made last month which was to budget \$20,000 for OCWM and for any designated offerings to go on top of the \$20,000. The new motion is to budget \$20,000 for OCWM. Designated offerings will be part of the \$20,000. If more than \$20,000 is designated for OCWM, then the whole designated amount will go to OCWM. 2nd motion by Clark P. 1 vote for No, 1 abstain, the rest yes. Motion carried.
- Vance reported the fan, lighting, and the speaker projects are completed. The breaker box is ordered but has an extremely long lead time.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50pm with the Lord's prayer.

Next meeting: Nov. 14, 2023 – 6:00 p.m. Full Consistory

December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
						Cookie Decorating 1 pm
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Worship 8 & 9:30 am Vikar Jakob – Service Sunday School Pre-K- 5 th grade 6- 8 th Grade Confirmation Kewaskum Cookie Walk 1-4 pm 9 th Grade Confirmation 5:30-7:00		LECTIONARY 10 AM 7:00-8:30 Adult Faith Formation – Amy Jill Levine, Light of the World	XYZ CLUB Book Club Community Meal 4:30- 6			Children's Program Rehearsal 9-11:30 am
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Worship 8 & 9:30 am Sunday School Pre-K- 5 th grade 6- 8 th Grade Confirmation EcuMen Concert 2 pm @ Peace 9 th Grade Confirmation 5:30-7:00	Deadline for Habitat Trip Sign-Up	LECTIONARY 10 AM CONSISTORY 6:00 PM	XYZ CLUB	Living the Question 10 am Grief Group 1 pm		Children's Program Rehearsal 9-11:30 am
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Worship 8 & 9:30 am 6- 8 th Grade Confirmation 9 th Grade Confirmation 5:30-7:00 Children's Christmas Concert 9:30 am		LECTIONARY 10 AM Faith Formation 7- 8:30 pm	XYZ CLUB Banned Book 1:30 pm			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Worship 9:30 a.m. Christmas Eve Worship-6:30 & 8:30 pm NO 9 th Grade Confirmation	Christmas Day Service 9:30 a.m. Office Closed	LECTIONARY 10 AM	XYZ	Living the Question 10 am Grief Group 1 pm		
31						
Worship 9:30 am NO 9 th Grade Confirmation						

January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Office Closed	LECTIONARY 10 AM	XYZ CLUB BOOK CLUB 9:30 Community Meal 4:30 – 6 pm	Prayer Shawl Group – 1 PM		
Habitat Trip – Winston-Salem, NC						
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Worship 8 & 9:30 am Sunday School Pre-K- 5 th grade 6- 8 th Grade Confirmation NO 9 th Grade Confirmation		LECTIONARY 10 AM CONSISTORY 6:00 PM	XYZ CLUB	Living the Question 10 am Grief Group 1 pm		
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Worship 8 & 9:30 am Sunday School Pre-K- 5 th grade 6- 8 th Grade Confirmation 9 th Grade Confirmation 5:30-7:00	Tidings Deadline	LECTIONARY 10 AM Adult Faith Formation 7-8:30 pm	XYZ CLUB Banned Book Club – 1:30 pm			
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Worship 8 & 9:30 am Sunday School Pre-K- 5 th grade 6- 8 th Grade Confirmation 9 th Grade Confirmation 5:30-7:00		LECTIONARY 10 AM	XYZ CLUB	Living the Question 10 am Grief Group 1 pm		
29	30	31				
Worship 8 & 9:30 am Sunday School Pre-K- 5 th grade 6- 8 th Grade Confirmation 9 th Grade Confirmation 5:30-7:00		LECTIONARY 10 AM Adult Faith Formation 7-8:30 p.m.				