



Peace United Church of Christ

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The Tidings

December 2020

-

January 2021



From the Pastor's Study • December 2020/January 2021

I've always loved Advent and I've sometimes become something of a grinch when I see Christmas lights and decorations up before Thanksgiving. We should be anticipating the season, not rushing it... or so I've always thought. I was surprised this year when my heart had a very different reaction to encountering all those colored lights and decorations starting to show up in the last few days. My grinch faded with a sense of delight in the twinkling lights and I realized how much my whole being is longing for the celebration of this season.

The opening words of Holden Evening Prayer often run through my head as the days shorten and the darkness closes in around us: "Jesus Christ, you are the light of the world; the light no darkness can overcome... stay with us now, for it is evening, and the day is almost over." This year the dark and cold are feeling even less welcome than in years past. Most of the people that I encounter are soul-weary with pandemic-fatigue, election-fatigue, and that profound longing for things to return to the way that they once were. We have been in a season of grief and darkness for a long time now. We are now approaching the holidays knowing that, for most of us, they will be very different than they have been in years past. I realize that I'm hungry for that proclamation that we assert on Christmas Eve just before lighting our candles: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it." (John 1:5)

Those twinkling lights appearing before their "season" are reminding me that we are to be "the light of the world" that we are to "Let [our] light shine before people, so they can see the good things [we] do and praise [our] Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14, 16). Jesus offers that teaching at the end of his sermon that we know as the Beatitudes. We so often forget that Jesus is offering a radical reorientation to the ways that the world has always been. He's blessing the wrong people, he's calling for a different way of seeing blessings and power, and he's beginning to offer people this crazy vision that it is God's love which is meant to transform the world. That love is meant to work through us.

Earlier today, one of our members shared a reflection on Thanksgiving that was encouraging people to look at the changed holiday a little differently. The thought was that as people changed their plans because of a pandemic and weren't gathered with all of their extended families, children, or others that this was a wonderful opportunity to pause and give thanks for ways that each of those close to us live in the world with their own sense of light and witness. This year has been a time where very little has seemed ordinary. I've encountered all kinds of people adopting that idea of "liminal time" – the in-between time when we have left what we have known but not yet arrived at our destination. It is a time that fills us with longing, but that also opens us to the opportunity to look at what has always been around us through new eyes.

I remember a sacred Christmas when I was far from home in the high Himalayas with a rag-tag group of international travelling companions. At midnight we took candles

and stood on the roof of the hostel and sang together Silent Night in several languages – and the love of our families and friends drew close to us reminding us that we carry that light within and nothing can extinguish it. This year I don't have to travel beyond my own home to experience that reorienting perspective (actually, I probably couldn't even if I wanted).

I've heard lots of people say that all of this is happening for a reason. That's a theology that moves through scripture in various places, but it is only one voice in the tradition. And too often this voice shifts the responsibility and the blame off us and onto God. That shift, however, isn't a faithful read of scripture. Instead we hear a command throughout scripture for us to be servants of God shining the love and light that God offers to the world. In these days before us I hope and pray that we can continue to be creative and resilient in finding new ways to shine with God's light and love, trusting that nothing can extinguish it. Wrap yourselves in thanksgiving, make room for God's love to be born in unexpected ways, in unexpected places, and know that even as we are distant from one another that you are all held in my prayers and woven together in the prayers of our church family. May God bless us,

Pastor ERIC

Worship Schedule for December & January

We continue regathered for worship in our church building at a very limited capacity. Service times have changed to: 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.

Reservations are requested: Please click on the links below or call the church office 626-4011. While the risk level is "Very High" we will be limiting attendance to 20 people per service, in addition to the worship leadership. None of the services since regathering have been completely full, so you are certainly welcome to come and see if there is space for you. But please understand that the 20 person limit will be firm.

8:00 am. worship- <https://peaceucc800worship.eventbrite.com>
10:00 am. worship- <https://peaceucc10amworship.eventbrite.com>

PLEASE USE THIS LINK FOR ALL SERVICES AFTER JANUARY 1
<https://peaceuccservices2021.eventbrite.com> (thru 5/30/2021)

We will continue recording services and posting them to our YouTube Channel at "Peace UCC Kewaskum" or you can find a link from our website: www.peace-ucc.org or through our Facebook page. We are also now streaming all funeral services and posting those online.

The Church building primarily remains closed with staff working remotely, but please contact us and we will we try to meet any needs you may have.

Christmas Services will necessarily look different this year...

We will be offering three in person services on **Christmas Eve**, they will all be candlelight services of lessons and carols. We will stream the indoor service and one of the outdoor services.

4:00 p.m. - **Christmas Eve inside service** - The service will be limited to 20 people and will be streamed online. We will not be doing any singing during this service, instead we will be relying on our musicians and treating hymnody as poetry.

6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. **Christmas Eve outdoor services** - We will also be offering two abbreviated candlelight services held in our church parking lot. Being outside will allow us to sing together more safely some of our beloved carols. It will still be required that people wear masks over their mouths and noses throughout these services (an easy thing to do outside at this time of year.) And equally important we ask that people still practice social distancing. A mask does not remove the guidance for distancing! This is Wisconsin, if people can bundle up to share in a Packers' game than they can certainly do it for a celebration of Christmas.

Christmas Day will be strictly Virtual this year. We will continue our tradition of lifting some special Christmas cheer, but this year you can stay home and watch the celebration in your pajamas with a hot mug in your hands! We will plan to post this service by 8:00 a.m. Christmas Day

This has been a year of many changes – Remember, Christmas is surely about the inbreaking of the unexpected changing the world. This year we will continue in celebrating together God's light and love dwelling among us in unusual ways. Imagine, God as a baby. Imagine, Christmas Eve with a parking lot full of little group of candles and gentle singing... imagine.

Sunday, December 6 - 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. at **Peace Church - COMMUNION**

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 13- 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. at **Peace Church**

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 20 - 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. at Peace Church

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

Thursday, December 24 – Christmas Eve – see above

Friday, December 25 – Join us for a Virtual Service on YouTube

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

Sunday, December 27 - 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. at Peace Church

First Sunday after Christmas

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 and Psalm 100 • Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 and Psalm 95:1-7a •
Ephesians 1:15-23 • Matthew 25:31-46

Sunday, November 29 - 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. at Peace Church

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Happy Birthday! (Ages 1-18)

December 1 Croix Kivell (3)
December 3 Matthew Gill (16)
December 7 Ryan Thull (13)
December 8 Lauren Krebs (14)
December 15 Mason Spoerl (9), Kyle Spoerl (9)
December 20 Corbin Walker (6)
December 24 Elly Fochs (7)
December 26 Anna Piittmann (18)
December 29 Damian Koch (11)
December 30 Isabelle Vey (12)
January 3 Blake Weisser (18)
January 11 Jade Brei (2), Xander Kivell (5)
January 16 Amelia Krebs (2), Lorelai Luther (4)
January 28 Kyla Kivell (6), Sam Ogi (6)
January 31 Matthew Buss (18)

Anniversaries

December 1 Rosemarie & Cliff Maeder (68)
December 5 Harvey & Nancy Brodzeller (56)
December 20 John & Margaret Schmahl (51)

Birthdays (80 years plus)

Dec. 2 Virginia Michaels (92)
Dec. 3 Arthur Schmidt (83)
Dec. 4 Ralph Faisst (92)
Dec. 5 Betty Hallen (94)
Dec. 6 Carol Clark (91)
Dec. 6 Jeanne Wood (84)
Dec. 11 Rose Marie Knoth (81)
Dec. 23 James Gardner (87)
Dec. 30 Betty Spaltner (80)
Jan. 16 Carol Sedgwick (89)
Jan. 30 Patricia Reigle (95)
Jan. 30 Clarence Westra (84)
Jan. 31 Marilyn McIntosh (85)

December 30 Matthew & Rachel Schemelin (20)
January 1 Martha & Dennis (7)
January 2 Markus & Rosemary Frank (21)
January 13 Emil & Sandra Radeztsky (26)
January 26 Liz (Jankowski-Gaulke) & David Gaulke (3)

We hold in our prayers the family and friends of those who have entered eternal life:

Robert Neumann – 10/31/2020

Rev. Kathryn Kuhn – 11/2/2020

Rev. Daniel Schowalter – 11/5/2020

Heidi Thomas – 11/7/2020

Lois Schmidt – 11/8/2020

Marion Doms – 11/9/2020

Phyllis Bade – 11/11/2020

Tony Zancanaro – 11/13/2020

Mitch Ogi – 11/18/2020

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.” **John 14:1-3**

Events and Activities

Tuesdays at 10 am. - Lectionary group. Each week we will study the scripture for the upcoming Sunday. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact the church office. Each week we will study the scripture for the upcoming Sunday.

Adult Faith Formation, Confirmation Redux Resumes:

First, third, and fifth Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. - We will continue studying the confirmation materials used by our 9th grade confirmands.

Join in person in fellowship hall or connect by zoom:

Rev. Eric Kirkegaard is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91928904117?pwd=SFIDNzF0ZmwrNINydCtpQXFPWE9EQT09>

Meeting ID: 919 2890 4117

Passcode: 655329

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,91928904117#,,,,,0#,,655329# US (Germantown)

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Dial by your location

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+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 919 2890 4117

Passcode: 655329

Financial Reports

Financial Report October 2020

General Fund

Adjusted Beginning Balance as of September 30, 2020	\$ (46,240)
Receipts	19,532
Cemetery Transfer	0
Internal Transfer	0
Incr/Decr from Investments	0
Expenses	(\$23,647)
Ending Balance as of 10/31/2020	<u>(\$50,255)</u>

Benevolence Receipts

Kewaskum Food Pantry	40.00
Neighbors in Need	285.00
Family Promise	15.00
Dr. Albrecht Free Clinic	100.00
Total Benevolence Receipts	<u>440.00</u>

The Christmas Fund Offering

“For Such a Time as This.”
Esther 4:14

Our joy at Christmas is a response to God’s promise of new life through the birth of Jesus. It is a joy we are called to share through our witness and gifts, both to loved ones and to distant neighbors. The theme for the 2020 Christmas Fund Offering is

For Such a Time as This.

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a special UCC Offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. This offering is administered through the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards.

The proceeds from the Christmas Fund Offering are used to provide direct financial support to clergy and lay employees in all stages of their lives and ministries to and through the UCC. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the emergency needs of many who serve the church have increased dramatically. In such a time as this, the need for the Christmas Fund is more urgent than ever. The availability of these funds is critical to the ability of the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance to help ensure a sustainable quality of life for those who ultimately receive the gifts.

- ❖ Gifts to the Christmas Fund will help Veterans of the Cross who dedicated their lives to the ministry of the church in their years of active service. Christmas *Thank You Checks* for retired UCC clergy remind them that the Church is grateful for their service.
- ❖ Gifts to the Christmas Fund provide resources for the Emergency Fund, which offers assistance to active or retired UCC clergy and lay employees to help cover costs that arise unexpectedly.
- ❖ Gifts to the Christmas Fund help provide Pension and Health Premium Supplementation to lower income retired UCC clergy and lay employees. These individuals rely on this income for basic needs such as food, utilities, living expenses, and medical care.

Special offering envelopes for your Christmas Fund contributions are included in this Tidings, or you can use the “Other” line found on your weekly envelopes and write in **The Christmas Fund**. For online giving, specify “The Christmas Fund.”

In the spirit of love, please give generously to this special mission offering, as together we keep covenant with the many beloved friends who have been, and continue to be, faithful servants of the church. We give thanks for all who have faithfully shepherded the church, sharing the good news, offering peace, and giving hope.

Book Reading List for 2020 – 2021

The Peace Church book group will be meeting on Wednesday, December 2, at 9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall (with masks and social distancing). The selected book to discuss is "The Girl from Venice" by Ruth Ware. Chris Rode will be leading the discussion this month.

For January the book group will be meeting on Wednesday, January 6, at 9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall to discuss "The Underground Railroad" by Colson Whitehead.

For more information, contact Lynn Rusch at lynnrusch@yahoo.com or by phone (262-306-4025).

<i>Month</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>Author</i>
Dec 2	The Girl From Venice	Martin Cruz Smith
Jan 6	The Lying Game	Ruth Ware
Feb 3	The Underground Railroad	Colson Whitehead
Mar 3	We Were the Lucky Ones	By Georgia Hunter
Apr 7	Educated	Tara Westover
May 5	Ask Again, Yes	Mary Beth Keane
Jun 2	Finding Chika	Mitch Albom

Peace Church Fundraiser



Looking for the perfect
Christmas gift or stocking
stuffer?

Peace Church is selling
handmade soaps – made by some
of our talented church members.

All proceeds go towards Peace
Church's General Fund.

Handmade Soaps

Customer Name _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____
 Email _____
 Please deliver to my address _____
 I will pick-up at Peace Church _____
 All orders will be ready December 14th.

All Soaps are \$4.00 each (3 oz).

Lavender sachets are also \$5.00 each.

The soaps and sachets will be in gift bags ready for Christmas giving!

Soap Fragrance	Number of Soaps	Subtotal
Patchouli & Wild Flower Honey (\$4.00 ea)		
Cedar & Saffron (\$4.00 ea)		
Oatmeal Milk & Honey (\$4.00 ea)		
Backwoods Hike (\$4.00 ea)		
Lemon Verbena (\$4.00ea)		
Lavender Sachets (\$5.00 ea)		

Total for order _____

Make checks payable to Peace UCC

Return via mail: Peace UCC, PO Box 433, Kewaskum 53040

Or email back to office@peace-ucc.org OR knklett@gmail.com