

December 2020 Newsletter



CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

***VIRTUAL WORSHIP at
www.apostlesucc.com
on the WORSHIP tab***

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THOUGHTS FROM THE PASTOR

“When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” Luke 2:15

A new Church year has begun. This means the season of Advent has arrived. Advent is a season of expectant waiting and preparation for both the celebration of the birth of Jesus and the anticipation of the return of Jesus at the time of the Second Coming. The word *advent* is adopted from the Latin *adventus* and means “coming” or “arrival.” In Western Christianity, Advent begins on the Sunday closest to November 30th (St. Andrew’s Day) and lasts through Christmas Eve, or December 24th.

Advent is a period of Spiritual preparation in which many Christians make ourselves ready for the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Celebrating Advent typically involves a season of prayer, fasting, repentance, followed by anticipation, hope, and joy. Many Christians celebrate Advent not only by thanking God for sending Christ Jesus to earth as a baby, but also, for his presence among us today through the Holy Spirit and in preparation and anticipation of his final coming at the end of the age.

In her book *“Kneeling in Bethlehem,”* Ann Weems has penned a wonderful writing entitled *In search of our kneeling places*. Let me share it with you:

*In each heart lies a Bethlehem
An inn where we must ultimately answer
Whether there is room or not
When we are Bethlehem-bound
We experience our own advent in his
When we are Bethlehem-bound
We can no longer look the other way
conveniently not seeing stars
Not hearing angel voices.
We can no longer excuse ourselves by busily
Tending our sheep or our kingdoms.
This Advent let’s go to Bethlehem
And see this thing that the Lord has made known to us
In the midst of shopping sprees
Let’s ponder in our hearts the Gift of Gifts.
Through the tinsel
Let’s look for the gold of the Christmas Star.
In the excitement and confusion, in the merry chaos,
Let’s listen for the brush of angels’ wings.*

*This Advent, let's go to Bethlehem
And find our kneeling places.*

This Advent season, my hope is that you will join me as we are "Bethlehem-bound." Just as the shepherds left their flocks to seek out the newborn baby, I invite you to leave behind all that would keep you from experiencing anew the good news of the gospels: the birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Let us take time to find our "kneeling places" and worship the new born king!

Blessings for the journey,
Pastor Narda

ADVENT CONNECTIONS

Attention Church of the Apostles members and friends!

Beginning on Wednesday night, December 2nd and continuing every Wednesday night, December 9, 16, and 23, we will be offering a time for all of us to stay connected during this time where we cannot gather for in-person worship. Our Zoom gatherings will start at 7pm and last for about an hour. During the hour we will give our folks the opportunity to share thoughts on the Advent devotional, sharing prayer requests and just checking in with our church family during the Advent season. We hope this opportunity will be a time of encouragement during these days we must continue to be vigilant and keep one another safe. Watch for the link that Linda Ritchey will send out so you can join the Zoom gathering.

THE TREE OF WARMTH

We will still have the tree up in the fellowship hall for donations to Waynesboro Human Services. We have decided to call it the **TREE OF WARMTH**. Anything that keeps us warm in the winter. That means we will accept gloves, mittens, scarves, hats, stockings. Any item that keeps our head, neck, hands or feet warm.



If we do not have in person worship until January, you can drop them off at the Church any Wednesday from 9am - 1pm. We will take them to Human Services after January 1.

In these trying times, they are finding more people need help than ever before. Our members do a great job of helping many people in many different ways. Thank you for helping our neighbors who are less fortunate. It is heartwarming to know we can still work together when we are not actually in person each Sunday.

Christian Outreach Team

Church of the Apostles requires that you wear a mask and maintain a good social distance from everyone who is not in your household while you are inside the church.

***Thank you
for understanding.***

A GREAT BIG THANK YOU

to everyone who purchased gifts or donated towards the children at Hoffman Homes this Christmas. We were able to buy 6 children the 3 gifts on each of their lists and 9 gifts for the group homes. You have brought Christmas joy to children who do not get any other gifts. Janet Miller will pick them up on her way to work Thursday, December 3.

Our team also decided to get our sponsored child in the Philippines, Nelwin, a Christmas gift. We cannot send packages or money to him. His country is not accepting packages from USPS. We agreed to send money out of our miscellaneous fund to the Church Wider Missions and designate it for a gift of clothing or shoes for him. The Christmas card we all signed is in the mail. We will be sending a birthday card in January.

Christian Outreach Team

If you have internet capability,
you can access

Apostles Virtual Church

on our website by visiting
www.apostlesucc.com.

Click on **"Live Stream Recordings"**
under the WORSHIP tab.
along the top of the page.

TITHES & OFFERINGS

From Stewardship & Finance Team

Church expenses
still need to be paid.

Please remember your
tithes and offerings.

The church office is open on
Wednesdays from 9am-12 pm,
they can be mailed to the church,

or dropped off
in the church mailbox.

The mailbox is locked
and Linda is checking it.



Birthdays & Anniversaries in December



15 Shirley Zeigler
16 Chris Bobb



*Please support these
Outreach Missions !*



A Message from our Consistory President

Hello Apostles Friends.

Suspension of indoor, in-person worship.

Governor Wolf has issued a stay-at-home advisory that lasts until January 4, 2021. It's essentially the same as the stay-at-home order he issued in April, except it says "I'm advising you to stay home," instead of "I'm ordering you to stay home." What's the practical difference between the two? For us, there is no difference. Religious institutions were exempt from the Governor's order in April, but the Governor asked religious leaders to voluntarily curtail in-person gatherings to limit the spread of the virus, and curtail we did. We're being asked to do the same now, and I believe we should respond in the same way. If anything, the COVID situation is even more serious now than it was eight months ago. I met with Pastor Narda to discuss this matter on November 24th, and we agreed that we should worship virtually until the Governor's order expires.

Consistory concurred with the decision to suspend indoor, in-person worship, but they really struggled with it. I can certainly understand the frustration and the feelings of sadness and disappointment that accompany a decision like this. It seems unfair that we should give up in-person worship while others are going to the grocery store, eating out in restaurants, and doing other things that seem to embody more risk than indoor



worship. Unfortunately, we can't control what other people do. We're only responsible for ourselves. We have an alternative to in-person worship that will keep us and people we come in contact with safe, so we decided we should use it.

Celebrating Advent and Christmas virtually.

I'm afraid this isn't going to be a normal Advent and Christmas season, but we have some ideas to enhance virtual worship in honor of the season. Here are a few:

We will have guest presenters for "The Child in All of Us" segment during Advent. Presentations will follow the traditional Advent themes of Hope (Laurie Hovermale, 11/29), Peace (Bob Benchoff, 12/6), Joy (Bert Hovermale, 12/13), and Love (Mary Lou Misner, 12/20).

In addition to solo pieces by our organist, Jim Heefner, we can look forward to a Christmas Cantata by the Penn Central Conference Virtual Choir. The cantata has been produced in such a way that we can share songs individually or as a complete program.

We plan to produce a special program for Christmas Eve featuring recorded performances from guest artists. We'll use these videos together with readings, a Christmas message, and prayers to construct a nice Christmas Eve worship experience that I think you will enjoy.

The last time we suspended in-person worship we reached out to members by publishing daily email inspirational messages. We called this experiment "Bridging the Social Distance." Instead of doing that again, Pastor Narda had an idea to have a midweek Zoom discussion with anyone who wanted to join. There will be a theme and a facilitator for each session. We are thinking of making this connection on Wednesday evenings. Please let Pastor Narda know if you are interested.

Don't forget to pick up your Apostles Advent Devotional Guide. The daily messages were written by some of the same folks who contributed to "Bridging the Social Distance." The theme of the guide is "Finding Peace in the Chaos." I think we were right on target with that one! I hope the devotions help you "find the good" this Advent season. May God heal our 2020 scars and grant us peace in the new year. Amen.

Bert Hovermale
Consistory President

SAVE THE DATES

WAYNESBORO AREA FELLOWSHIP OF CHURCHES SPONSORING ZOOM EVENTS

Reconciliation: Bringing Together the Body of Christ

January 21st, 2021 - 7:00 - 8:00 pm

Speaker: Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, General Minister and President of UCC

Topic: Reconciliation: Desiring and Achieving Unity and Oneness

January 28th, 2021 - 7:00 - 8:00 pm

Speaker: Dr. Lois Waters

Topic: Reconciliation: Breaking Down the Walls of Division

February 4th, 2021 - 7:00 - 8:00 pm

Speaker: Rev. Tabatia Ssonko

Topic: Reconciliation: Healing Wounds of Division in the Body of Christ

February 11th, 2021 - 7:00 - 8:00 pm

Speaker: TBA

Topic: Reconciliation: Active and Proactive Hearts of Love and Forgiveness

All culminating with a **UNITY SERVICE on Sunday, February 14th, 2021**

Speaker: TBA

Time: 3:00 pm

Watch for complete information in the January 2021 Apostles Newsletter.

2020 STAFF GIFTS !!!

Let's thank the church staff for all they do!

Please, use the **STAFF GIFT** envelope in this newsletter for your donation and mail it to the church or drop it in the church mailbox.



Deadline is December 20 to be distributed by Christmas.

We
will
be
collecting
donations
for
the
Veterans
of
the
Cross
through-
out
the
month
of
December.



"For Such a Time as This."

Esther 4:14

Each year, the Pension Boards receives many notes and letters of thanks from recipients of assistance made possible by your gifts to the Christmas Fund.

These letters come from both retired and active UCC pastors or their surviving spouses. Here are excerpts from just two of the letters received by the Pension Boards letting us know what a difference your generosity has made in their lives and the lives of their families. Here are excerpts from two notes received last year:

"My/our gratitude goes beyond words! With this gift I was able to pay the outstanding propane bill and have the propane tank refilled. It was depleted to 10% of capacity, and we have been having some very cold nights this winter. My husband's illness has precluded him from doing any work for the last 6 months, and we have fallen way behind in our living expenses..."

"My church, although solvent, was unable to give me a raise this year and is experiencing a shortfall in pledges. Thank you again for your faithful and compassionate gift which has enabled us to keep warm!"

"This note is a heartfelt thank you for the very generous emergency grant that the Board provided us to help offset costs associated with my kidney transplant and follow-up medical procedures and appointments. Not surprisingly, our family prayed a lot in the months leading up to my transplant in great anticipation of what was coming, and in the time since, having received the gift of a 'second chance' at life..."

"We are grateful for modern medicine, excellent medical providers, and the support of our local and wider church families and friends, including the United Church of Christ Pension Boards..."

"We never lost faith, trusting in Christ's promise that we would not - and will not - have to walk alone. Thank you for meeting us along our path and for extending your outstretched hand to help us financially."

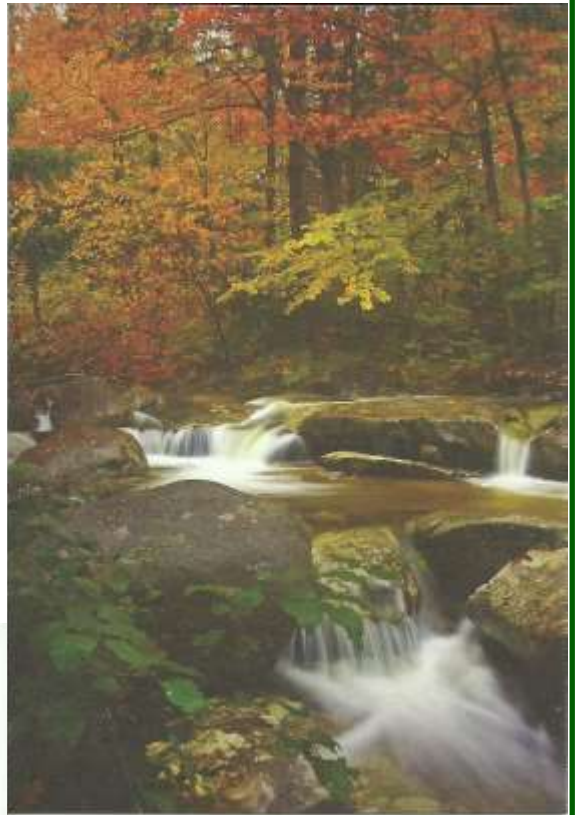
In 2019, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled:

- Monthly pension supplementation for 350 retired clergy and lay employees (\$1,347,419)
- Health premium supplementation for 144 retired clergy and lay employees (\$374,577)
- Emergency grants for 69 individuals and families (\$123,727)
- Christmas "Thank You" gift checks to 521 retired clergy and lay employees (\$260,500)

THE CHRISTMAS FUND

For the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

Thank You
from
Dave Patterson's
Family



To all of Uncle Dave's
Church Family,

Thank you so much for
all of your love and support
for our beloved uncle during
his sudden diagnosis and
passing. We realize that
our loss is just as much
yours as he truly was part
of your family also.

For those of you who
befriended him during these
recent years, fed him ☺,
cared for + prayed for him,
sent him cards + flowers,
baked desserts for his
funeral + helped in many

With heartfelt gratitude,
our family thanks you for your
kind thoughts and support.

ways to make his service
special - we thank you!
We know you are grieving
with us and we too appreciate
your friendship.

God's blessings to each
of you...
Love for our entire
family



*Church
of the
Apostles
supports
the
Black Tie
&
Blue Jeans
Gala*



Recipe for Gratitude

- 1 Gallon of Awareness*
- 2 Cups of Humility*
- 2 Tbsp. of Stillness*
- 3/4 Tsp. of Hope*

by
contributing
\$100
to
the
Silent
Auction.

Success Story

One of our recently discharged youth lived with us for almost a year. The child was diagnosed with PTSD and had a history of severe physical and sexual abuse. This youth came to us with no where to go after treatment and was overcome with frustration towards the idea of being in a residential treatment program. The child struggled to create and maintain healthy relationships, as well as work towards therapy goals. After being introduced to a family who had a heightened interest in welcoming the child into their home, this child became much more engaged and involved in treatment. The child participated in family sessions and visits with the potential adoptive family. The kindness this family had shown in supporting the youth through treatment was a key turning point. Through the constant support of staff, therapists, and the treatment team, the child made significant progress. The child showed exponential growth, not only in their behaviors, but as a role model for peers in the residence. The child eventually completed their treatment and was placed in the care of the adoptive family. To witness this child create healthy relationships and be united with a supportive family was phenomenal. This child continues to progress, excel, and work towards future goals, all while having a supportive adoptive family to be by their side along the way.

Thank You

Your support for the children through our reimagined event is truly heart-warming. You are the reason we are able to help so many children get the treatment they need. We are grateful for YOU!

the
NO SHOW BLACK TIE
& Blue Jeans
Gala
Providing the children in care at
Hoffman House for Youth!



Black Tie
& Blue Jeans
GALA

THE CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES
336 BARNETT AVENUE
WAYNESBORO, PA 17268-0288

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Please forward an address change to the Church office.



December 2020

MISSION STATEMENT

We are called together to worship God, united by the Holy Spirit, and chosen as instruments of our Lord's purpose to teach, support and serve all people. We witness to the church, the community and the world by showing joy in the faith and using our talents to praise God.