



► INTERIM PASTOR 2

○ Issue 12 | ○ Vol. 39 | ○ December 2015



► CHILDREN'S NEWS 4



► YOUTH GROUP 5

Union
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
Neffs, Pennsylvania

HONORING THE PAST * CELEBRATING THE PRESENT
BUILDING THE FUTURE

Advent & Christmas at Union UCC

I Believe, Even When...

By Pastor Kris

"I Believe" is a song arranged by Mark Miller. The words of the song were found etched into the wall of Auschwitz. The words are:

"I believe in the sun even when it's not shining.

I believe in love even when I don't feel it.

I believe in God even when God is silent."

"The story of the birth of Jesus is filled with common themes of human drama: unknowing, doubt, disgrace, fear, oppression, journey, hardship. In this poem we hear the affirmation of belief in spite of what seems like the absence of light, of love and sometimes, even what feels like the absence of God."

Journey to the manger with us. Believe, even when...

Sunday, December 6

Guest Musicians: Tangled Blue ,the music of Aimee and Joel Pakan

Sunday, December 13

Adult Choir Musical: "Let There Be Christmas" by Joseph M. Martin
From jubilant songs of praise to reflective carols of peace, this cantata is filled with moments designed to energize your spirit.

7:00 pm **The Parkland High School Chorale Holiday Concert**

Sunday, December 20

Lessons and Carols: All 4 pastors will lead us in readings, reflections and prayers while we enjoy special music and sing carols.

10:30 Worship will include the Chimes and Sunday Morning Alive.

December 24 Christmas Eve

3:00pm Candlelight & Communion

5:00 pm Candlelight (Children's Choirs)

8:00 pm Candlelight & Communion

11:00 pm Candlelight & Communion



Sunday, December 27

NO 8:00 am Heritage Service Today

10:30 am Horizon Service Only

At this service our college students and young adults will lead us in worship and song.

Sunday, January 3

New Year Communion

8:00am and 10:30 Worship

Holy Communion and New Year Covenants



From the Interim Pastor

Spiritual Opportunities

In the typical "Battle for Christmas" banter, we hear a lot about keeping Christ in Christmas, and preserving Christmas as a Christian "holy day." "Jesus is the reason for the season," and all that.

As a pastor, I think the bigger battle is not a cultural crusade about spelling or terminology. The greater battle is for Christians to see the deeper spiritual opportunities that the Seasons of Advent and Christmas offer. Too often we ourselves get caught up in the busyness of the season and miss opportunities for deeper spiritual growth.

The seasons of Advent and Christmas offer us ample opportunities to embrace the spiritual practices of waiting, patience, hope, and joy. These are wise practices but they come to us during a time when many of us are overwhelmed with obligations and extra work.

Instead of caving in to the stress of the holidays, let us stop briefly during Advent and the twelve days of Christmas to refresh our mind, body, and soul. Take a few moments each day to think about how God is present in your life. Read the birth narratives of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 1:18-2:23 and Luke 1:26-2:20. Attend a Bible Study or Adult Class at church, as well as weekly worship.

May this year's Advent and Christmas seasons bring you to a new awareness of God's presence in your life.

Pastor Allan

Consistory Minutes

by Jennifer Young (Subject to Approval)

The monthly meeting of the Union United Church of Christ Consistory Meeting was called to order on Monday, November 16th, 2015 by President Brad Hackett.

The Treasurer's Report and October/November bills were presented and approved.

Property and Maintenance Committee reported that the Fall clean-up is almost done, and we are anxiously getting ready for Christmas Season here at church. The property committee has been working with Jeff Herbine and Gary Yenchow to improve wireless throughout church.

Christian Education Committee reported that Advent Brunch/Craft is on December 6th. Junior Youth Group, the CIA, next event is November 28th- Lego Movie. Please bring unwrapped Lego toy to donate to Toys for Tots.

Mission Committee reported that Salvation Army Angel Tree is up in Memorial Hall. Please consider buying a present for a child in need. We are getting ready for advent self-denial. The two missions this year are the Guatemala Project and the Emergency Winter Shelter.

Church and Ministry reported that they are seeking consistory's approval on the 100 Series- Governance Policies of our church. They are:

- 101- Criteria for Healthy Church Leadership
- 102- Covenant for Christian Leadership
- 103- Leadership Nomination Process/Committee
- 104- Non-Discrimination Policy

Welcoming Committee reported that Received new members yesterday. 15 people joined the church. The new members are Doris Brotzman, Linda Buesgen, Judy Hankee, Jessica Knerr, Melanie Peters, Debbie Romig, John Romig, Heather Bunn, Gary Yenchow, Andrea Stewart, Amanda Roth, Betty Brittenburg, George Brittenburg, Brian Rubright, and Chris Bastidas. In addition, the committee is looking forward to hosting the Souper Bowl Party in February.

Stewardship Committee reported the Faith Commitment cards distributed to the congregation yesterday. January 10th is the deadline for the faith commitment cards. 65% of Consistory have returned their faith commitment cards.

Fellowship Committee reported that the Basket Social was on October 1st, 2015. They made a great profit of \$1,336. Roughly 150 people attended. Looking forward to cooking for the Advent Brunch- December 6th

Worship Committee reported that there are lots of exciting worship opportunities coming up! In addition, they are looking forward to adding the 4th service on Christmas Eve.

The next regular meeting of the Union United Church of Christ Consistory will be held Monday, December 21st, 2015 at 6:45 p.m. in Room 101.



Find us on
Facebook

www.facebook.com/unionneffs



A Future with Hope and Pie By Pastor Kris

We hope that you have been thinking and praying about the letter from the Financial Leadership Team that you received asking you to consider increasing your financial support to our church's ministry and mission this year.

On Sunday, November 15th we revealed how the leadership of our church (Consistory and the Leadership Planning Team) has responded. After only a few weeks, we have received a 65% commitment from our leaders saying they will increase their financial giving this year. ***Together they have committed to give \$12,436 more in contributions.***

This is a fantastic and faithful commitment on their part. We thank them for their inspiring faithfulness and we thank you. We been blessed to have so many faithful members and friends who give of themselves so generously in so many ways. We hope that you will join us in renewing your commitment to share your time, talent and treasure with Union UCC even more fully than you have.

Help us make sure that Union UCC continues to change hearts and lives with the grace and love of Jesus Christ – for our members, for anyone who comes here, and for our community and the world. Help us continue to be the church of Jesus Christ that lives out what it says, "No Matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."

Please respond anytime between now and no later than **January 10th** by returning your Faith Commitment Card to us through the mail or Sunday's offering plate.

There is no better investment in the world than to invest in the ministry and mission and Jesus Christ here at Union UCC. It will make a difference in the lives of Gods people and it will make a difference in your life as well.

There's still talk about pie. Your piece of pie, our piece of pie. Pie to eat. Pie to throw? Stay tuned.

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Jeremiah 29:11

FAITH COMMITMENT CARD

I/We have made the faith-promise to God to assist our church in the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ at Union UCC by promising to **INCREASE** my/our financial support starting in the year 2016 :

\$ _____ a week or \$ _____ a month or \$ _____ as a one time gift.

Name/s _____

Please bring this commitment card to worship on **January 10th** where they will be received and blessed. Or mail to the church or place in the offering plate on any Sunday prior to January 10, 2016.

"For surely I know the plans I have for you...to give you a future with hope." Jeremiah 29:11



When you shop at Amazon, go to smile.amazon.com to make your purchase; 5% of your order will be donated to Union UCC, as a charitable organization. Don't forget to set Union UCC, Neffs as your charity.

On All Saints Sunday, November 1, 2015 we remembered the following members and friends:

Gloria Beltz, Anthony Caiazzo, Reuben Christman, Donald Diehl, Rachel Diehl, Henry Fenstermaker, Alan Greiss, Miriam Hausman, Robert & Dorothy Hoppes, Floyd Hoppes, Betty Kern, Audry Knerr, Caroline Leh, Edna Leopold, John Linde, Jr., Luella Peters, Donald Reider, Mollie Rex, Harold Smith, Patricia Szapacs.

Children's Programs

Nursery to 6th Grade

Contact: Kathy Bonsell 610-767-6961

Email: dired@unionucc.org



BETHANY HOME CHRISTMAS DRIVE:

All donated items must be at the church by Dec. 6th! We will be driving the items to Womelsdorf, PA that afternoon. Thank you to all who donated to help make this a successful Christian Education mission project.

DECEMBER Children's Church

Dec. 6 Church Family Worship
(Advent Celebration)
Dec. 13 Malachi 3:1-4
Dec. 20 Zephaniah 3:14-20
Dec. 27 Church Family Worship
NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School 's 4th Annual

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA - DEC. 20

Please arrive by 9:15, when breakfast will be served by your Sunday School teachers, in their PAJAMAS!. You are also invited to wear your pajamas to church.
We will also have games and a very special visitor.

PARENTS: We could use your help with dessert. Please bring one dozen of your favorite Christmas cookies to Fellowship Hall.



CHILDREN'S CHURCH

Our Children's Church curriculum, WHIRL, is a big hit with the leaders and the children. The children see a fun, short video, read the lectionary scripture in the new WHIRL story Bibles, and complete two to three activities in their leaflets.

PARENTS: The children will bring home at-home activities weekly which go along with the lesson. It would be great if you could find one activity to do at home during the week.

CIA MISSIONS

(Children In Action—K-6)

December- I SPY Winter Birds

Speaker and Workshop Project
Friday, Dec. 18, 6-8pm

January- Bowling

(details to be announced soon!)

Please RSVP or send questions to Tammy, Kathy and Jennifer at
NeffsCIA@gmail.com

All Christian Education Volunteers:

Sunday School,
Children's
Church, VBS, CIA,
Little Lambs
Nursery, and the
CE Committee



Gift Bibles were presented to third graders and above who have attended at least 5 Children's Church or Sunday School sessions. Congratulations to:

Emma Milander, Owen Dimler, Garet Hill,
Regan Hailey, Hunter Bower, Bruce Thrash,
Luke Thrash, Ryleigh Minnich,
Hannah Minnich

Thank you for participating in our CE Committee fundraisers to support this program.



Youth Group News 6th-12th Grades

For more information contact: Pastor Kris assocpastor@unionucc.org 610-657-6007 Cell
Or Dave DiPaolantonio at 610-349-9162 and youthgroup@unionucc.org.

Facebook: Union UCC Youth Group

[www.unionucc.org/Ministries/Youth Group](http://www.unionucc.org/Ministries/Youth%20Group)

Anyone who is in grades 6-12 is considered a member of youth group. Any parent, guardian of our youth or adult can assist youth group. Friends and families are always invited (unless noted).



Gertrude Hawk Candy Sale Thank you for everyone's support.
Please pick up candy at church on Tuesday, Dec 1st, 4-7pm.



Sun Dec 13 Youth Group Advisory Team Lunch and Meeting 11:30-1



Sun Dec 20th 2-6pm Christmas Caroling to local Nursing Homes

We will visit 2 area homes and then stop for supper. Bring money for supper.

Christmas Eve Worship 3pm 5pm 8pm 11pm
Youth Group Decorates Church with Luminaries

Sign up to help. Set up at 4pm, check before/after each service, take down midnight.

Sun Jan 17 11:30am-1pm Spuds and Suds Lunch

Baked Potato Lunch with over 15 toppings!

\$5 per person for 1 potato and beverage.

Sign up to help 9am-2pm and/or to donate a topping.

Watch for a Snow Tubing date and other winter events.

Sun March 6 is Youth Sunday! Mark your calendars and start thinking of how you want to participate. Sign up to greet, take the offering, read, preach (Seniors!), sing, dance and smile.

SUNDAY MORNINGS
9:15-10:15am

THE MUNCH BUNCH (6th & 7th grades 2nd Floor Room 203)

CONFIRMATION CLASS
(8th grade Youth Room)
Confirmants can go to The Breakfast Club when there's no class.

THE BREAKFAST CLUB (9th-12th)



Merry Christmas
to our youth
group families!
Dave D and
Pastor Kris



National Youth Event 2016—Walt Disney World
July 25-30, 2016

Fundraisers:

January 17

Spuds and Suds

Baked Potato Lunch

Sunday Morning Alive



Sunday Morning Alive leads worship on Sundays at 10:30 for about six Sundays throughout the year.

We have a worship team that includes a group of singers, guitar players, keyboards and drums.

We play traditional and favorite hymns as well as contemporary and alternative worship music.

**December 20 at 10:30
Worship**

Golden Times

(Senior Adults) *For those wise in years and young at heart.*

Our next gathering will be **Tuesday, December 1
12 noon – 1:30pm**

Program: TUBA FOUR OR MORE ~ Seasonal Favorites and Requests

Friendship, homemade soup, lunch, dessert and a program ~ Free!

Feel free to bring a dessert to share.



Women's Lunch & Retreat

**Women's Lunch Date
Saturday, December 5th at 1-3pm**

Take a break and sneak away for some time with us. Includes a devotion and some Christmas cheer.

Starlite Diner - 233 Pennsylvania Route 100,
Allentown

Lunch – choose from the menu, pay your own.

RSVP to Aften Hamm by Friday, Dec 3
at Unycorn12@msn.com



April 22-24, 2016

**Trout Lake Retreats, Stroudsburg
Lavender Springs Spa: Where Women Rest in
God's Faithfulness**

Members, Friends, Family members are invited.
Cost: \$125 (Collecting \$60 deposit now, final payment due April 5.)

Pay to "Union UCC" with memo "Women's Retreat."
Please mail or put in Barbara Carinci's mailbox.
Leaders: Pastor Kris and the Planning Team

Home Visitation Members' Birthdays

Anna Lord - Dec. 2

5244 Grange Drive
Schnecksville, PA 18078-2249

Curtis Frantz—Dec. 11

4403 Main St. —Egypt
Whitehall, PA 18052

Ferne Strauss - Dec. 18

6334 Lamar Ct
Slatington, PA 18080-3022

Marian Supp—Dec. 28

2642 Old Post Rd.
Coplay, PA 18037-2306



Hospital Info Update:

If you are in the hospital, please ask a family member, friend, or the hospital chaplain to call a pastor or the church office to let us know if you'd like us to visit. **Please do not rely on the church code system to tell us since it has proven to be inconsistent with information.** Our church code is 511 and if you are listed correctly, when we call the chaplain's office, you will appear under our number. Usually the pastors do hospital visits on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays hoping they will catch everyone at some point during their stay. We are more than glad to visit and pray with you, so **please don't hesitate to call on us.**



***Ruth Ensley is our Catch the Spirit recipient for December.
She will be recognized on December 13, 2015 at the 10:30 am worship service.***

Ruth, a dedicated Busy Bee Quilter and church bazaar helper was raised, baptized, confirmed, and married at Union UCC. She has been quilting for at least ten years and has helped with baking and finances at the Country Holidays Craft Show and Country Sale. She remembers attending church with her great grandfather who was a Consistory member and church elder. Ruth was married to her late husband, Walter, here in 1959. She has two children, six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Ruth is an avid reader, crocheter, and scrapbooker. Following her retirement from working at a credit union, Ruth has been a caregiver to her sister Dorothy Rabert. Dorothy has since moved to a care facility but Ruth continues to visit her regularly. Ruth is immensely grateful to the congregation for their support and care of Dorothy and herself.

Ruth's favorite memories are of the church picnics in the summers. She tells of listening to bands in the grove and buying penny candy for her children at the candy shack. She reminisced that she would catch up with people whom she may not have seen at church on a regular basis during those times. Ruth says that being a member of the church hasn't changed her life so much as it is an important part of her life. She loves her church because, "It is friendly." She enjoys great fellowship with people she knows and meeting new people at church. Ruth adds, "It's like home."

Book Club

Next book: "A Red-Bird Christmas" by Fannie Flagg.

We will meet December 9 at 7pm in the Conference Room. For more info contact Kathi Charles ka-c4b@hotmail.com or 610-462-5551. Bring some cookies to share!



IMPORTANT REMINDER:

All committees and groups must complete a use of facility form to schedule events or activities.

Please contact Barbara, Church Administrator, in the church office at 610-767-6961
or
administrator@unionucc.org for forms and room availability. Thank You!

Year End Donations

For donations to be credited in 2015 all donations need to be into the church office by **December 29, 2015**. Any donations received after December 29, 2015 will be credited for giving year 2016. Any questions please call the church office.

2016 Envelope Packets

Envelope packets for 2016 will be ready for pickup after Thanksgiving. Please pick up your packets in Memorial Hall, along with those of family members, neighbors or friends. The more envelope packets picked up, the more we save on postage costs.

Please do not use the new envelopes until 2016, everyone gets new numbers each year.

Thank you, The Stewardship Committee.

Christmas Arrives Early at the Country Holidays Craft Show

What a gift our Craft Show was to our church and community! It almost felt like Christmas. We hosted over 50 crafters and over 750 people during the day. It's a joy to have the Geiger Family Farm bring their wonderful potatoes and fall produce. And our kitchen crew always fills our stomachs with delicious food, especially those soups. We have some of the best bakers in the area who help to fill our dessert table and bake sale area. Again, thank you.



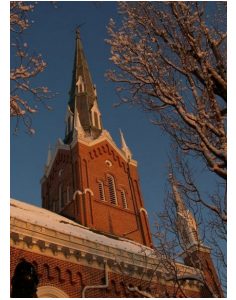
This event raised about \$4,000. This money is used to support things like the Neffs Fire Company, our Golden Times group, the Pastors' Discretionary Fund (to assist those in emergency need), the National Youth Event at Disney, and the church's General Fund. God is good, all the time!

The committee who helps to organize this event includes: Mary Burdick, Janet Creitz, Deb Wenner, Linda Migliori, Maryann Puia, Lisa Wright, Susan Smith, Diane Schaller, Vicki Sorg, Claire Kern, Phil Wehr, Kathy Bonsell, and Pastor Kris.

Property Committee

By Phil Wehr

December is the most wonderful time of the year to visit Union United Church of Christ. The Christmas spirit fills the air, beautiful Christmas decorations adorn the sanctuary, Christmas festivities fill the rooms with children, adults, and families all celebrating the birth of Christ. The poinsettia tree makes its annual appearance on Christmas Eve, along with candle stands, and the manger scene.



Thank you to the many people who help to transform our church property for the Christmas season. Everyone is invited to join in the Christmas festivities, please check the church calendar, there is something special going on each week. Join your church family during this most wonderful time of the year.

This year on Christmas Eve there are four services to choose from, please arrive early giving ample time to find a parking spot and seating in the sanctuary. The grove parking lot will be fully lit and available for all to safely park. Prelude music will be starting before the services, so plan to come early and enjoy our church members sharing their talents of music and song. Let the celebration begin.

Join the Choir!

Practice Schedules:

Tuesday Nights—Youth
Cherubs (age 4-1st grade)— 6pm
Juniors (2nd-5th)-6:30pm
Middlers (6th-8th)-7:00pm
High School (9th-12th)-7:30pm

Sunday Mornings—Adults

Heritage Choir-7:00am
Horizon Choir-9:15am

Sunday Sponsors:

We are always in need of sponsors weekly for Adult/Children's Bulletins and Spread the Good News. Flower Baskets are available as well.

Flower Basket (\$30), Adult & Children's Bulletins (\$20, \$8) contact Phyllis Hamm at 610-349-0324 (leave a message or text).

Spread the Good News (\$20) contact- Tara Henninger, 610-767-6961 (secretary@unionucc.org)

Please note: we have discontinued Sign-Up Genius



By Annette Wilcox

DO YOU HAVE UNWANTED HOLIDAY DECORATIONS?

It's that time of the year when you are decorating and un-decorating for the holidays. How many items do you keep in your holiday bin that you don't even use anymore?

SANTA'S ATTIC is looking for those unwanted decorations. Christmas, Thanksgiving, Halloween.....even Easter decorations are welcome! Bring your "gently used" decorations to Memorial Hall and place them in the marked box on the stage during the months of **December and January**.

GO GREEN for the HOLIDAYS....let's reduce, reuse and recycle those decorations!

STAFF CHRISTMAS GIFTS - In the tradition of giving gifts to friends and loved ones, we as a congregation have traditionally expressed our love and appreciation for our hard-working pastors and staff by presenting each with a monetary gift. If you'd like to share in this gift, please send a check payable to Susan Ondrey, 2901 Strohl Rd, Allentown, PA 18104 no later than Sunday, Dec 21. Any questions, email Sue at ondrey@ptd.net.

In the spirit of Thanksgiving, the Preschool would like to express its heartfelt thanks to the Neffs UCC church family for all of the support and encouragement sent our way. We are proud to be a part of the church ministry. The students in the preschool had an opportunity to celebrate a Thanksgiving feast complete with decorated Pilgrim hats and Indian headbands. Enjoying the delicious food tied into learning about the five senses and in particular, the sense of taste.

As the Preschool continues to grow, we would like to welcome Mrs. Stephanie Smith to our teaching staff. Mrs. Smith will be teaching a 3 year old class on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. She previously taught kindergarten at Franklin Elementary school. Mrs. Smith's bilingual skills will allow students in her class the opportunity to learn some Spanish words



Tales From the Road

By Rev. Dr. Patience Stevenson, Minister of Visitation

Traditions

Have you ever stopped to wonder how certain church traditions get started? What inspiration, generosity or hard work make many of the lovely traditions happen around our church?

Let's take a tradition that we will soon be enjoying in the beginning of Advent, the outdoor manger scene. This entire scene was created by Curtis Rabert (cousin to our Dorothy Rabert and Ruth Rabert Ensley) based on the plans and

drawings provided by Pastor Harper Schneck and a generous donation for the project. Once Curtis Rabert cut out the shapes Mary Burdick painted them. For all these years a small team of our members, Donald Bachman, Paul Creitz and Mary Burdick, have braved the cold to set up and dismantle the manger scene so that we can enjoy the blessing of this reminder of our Christmas story from the beginning of Advent until Epiphany. Let's give a big thank you to all those who have continued to make this tradition possible at Union UCC!

Mission Committee News

By Vicki Mayk

Mission Committee Announces Advent Offering Recipients

The Mission Committee has identified two projects to receive the proceeds from our advent offering. The projects, one local and one an international project led by church in the Penn Northeast Conference of the United Church of Christ, bring God's love in the form of aid and services provided.

Guatemala Project

The Penn Northeast Conference of the United Church of Christ has been building an ecumenical, congregational relationship with the Ecumenical Christian Council of Guatemala, specifically Concejo Ecumenico and the church in rural Quetzaltenango and Monte Margarita, Guatemala over the past several years. The group leading this project has become known as Los Amigos de Guatemala. Our member Kathi Fuellhart was part of one the mission teams that visited Guatemala during this process. The multi-purpose facility and clinic will promote good health and education for all the people of the rural area surrounding Monte Margarita. The facility will also be used for community meetings, a place for business minded people to share ideas, and whatever else fits the needs of the villagers.

The partners realized some basic needs had to be met before the dreams of their collaborative ministry project could continue. There would be a need for electricity to be grounded, and the polluted, ground water to be cleaned in order to better live out the vision of God continuing to still speak within what some from both countries might definitely call, unexpected places. The village was so remote, plumbing to run water to it was available but the water is not potable. It is not an easy task to provide clean water in the village. The ground is broken and they are ready to start building.

Lehigh County Conference of Churches Emergency Shelter at Alliance Hall

Beginning on November 1 and continuing until April, the Lehigh County Conference of Churches operates an emergency shelter at Alliance Hall, 534 Chew St. It can be accessed by homeless individuals and families seeking overnight accommodations and relief from the cold. It is what is called a seasonal warming center, open only during the coldest months. The shelter is open from 7 p.m to 7 a.m. daily. Users sleep on cots in Alliance Hall's gymnasium. In addition to offering a warm place to sleep, some medical services are provided once a week.

This year the Mission Committee will be collecting cold weather accessories for local families living at the 6th St. Shelter in Allentown. We are asking for donations of new hats, scarves, gloves, mittens, and socks in men's, women's, and children's sizes.

The collection will begin the Sunday after Thanksgiving, November 29th and will run during the month of December. This will assure that the shelter will receive them in time for the colder winter months ahead.

Count your blessings. Help us to spread the warmth by helping to warm the hearts, heads, hands, and feet of our less fortunate neighbors this holiday season. Donations can be put in the collection boxes under the mission tree in Memorial Hall.

Since 1984, the Shelter has been providing temporary housing for Lehigh Valley homeless families with children. Today the Sixth Street Shelter proudly offers 19 individual family apartments. It is the only shelter in the Valley to offer homeless families the privacy and security of a furnished apartment with a complete kitchen. The philosophy of the Sixth Street Shelter, in keeping with the broader mission of the CACLV, encourages those it serves to accept responsibility for themselves.

Operation Project Food Bank

Thank you to everyone who volunteered their services to distribute food at the Northern Lehigh Food Bank during the month of November. Thank you to everyone who donates food, groceries, toiletries, and cash donations to the food bank throughout the year, either in the shopping cart, through the VBS mission campaign, during the Harvest Home collection, or the annual Boy Scout collection. **YOUR help is greatly needed and appreciated by all of the families that the NL food bank serves in the local community.**

Union UCC also donates 250 - five pound bags of potatoes for their annual special distributions at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. This donation is made possible through Mission Discretionary spending of the general budget, through your direct extra gifts provided to the Benevolence envelopes in your yearly packet. Please continue to support the Benevolence envelope which allows the Mission Committee to provide funds for this project and other mission needs through out the year.

Helping families around the world never stops, people need our help all year long, please give graciously and regularly all year long.



Adult Study

Friday Morning Adult Class

9:30am-11am – Room 5 (Basement)

Everyone is welcome at any time as your schedule allows.

Dec 4, 11, 18 with Pastor Kris

Finding Bethlehem in the Midst of Bedlam (by James W. Moore) Christmas or confusion? Bethlehem or bedlam? Which will you choose this year? The truth is, we don't have to choose because Christmas always happens right in the midst of our chaos. God breaks in and brings us Christmas, no matter.

Sunday Morning Adult Class

9:15-10:15 - Room 5 (Basement)

Everyone is welcome at any time as your schedule allows.

December 6 *"Re-telling the Birth Narratives of Jesus"*

Pastor Allan will review the different accounts of Jesus' birth narratives as recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

December 13 *"Searching for the Historical Jesus"* The quest for the historical Jesus refers to academic efforts to provide a historical portrait of Jesus. Pastor Allan will discuss scholarly efforts to describe Jesus as a historical figure.

December 20 *"Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time"*

Pastor Allan will discuss Biblical scholar Marcus Borg's book and invite persons to think about how their understanding of Jesus has changed throughout their lifetime.

TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Every Tuesday 7-8:30PM room 5.



We are starting with Genesis and how it relates to the coming of the Messiah.

You are invited to come learn new things and grow in faith. Contact Harry B. Burger 610-767-5344.

Helping Hearts and Communion Ministers

Our Helping Hearts group cares for our members on our visitation list by delivering flowers sponsored by church members and by visiting, sharing prayers and Christian friendship. Our Communion Ministers also share in this ministry by delivering communion. **Our next meeting will be December 10th at 7pm.**

Helping Meals: We are always looking for people who can make a meal for our families when they face a challenging time. If you can help, please contact **Lisa Rex at 484-225-5883.**

The pastors are also collecting donations of Weis and DiFiores Restaurant gift cards to assist families.

Christmas Eve Yard Signs

Yard Signs are available for you to pick up. If you already have a yard sign, please use it if it's in good shape. We ask that you place them in your yard or at important corners near your home to help us share the hope of the Christmas season with your neighbors and invite them to our church. Please hold onto signs for next year or return them to the church office in the New Year.

This effort is hosted by the Welcoming Committee and Sponsored by the Spread the Good News Fund.

Thanks to our Office Helpers!

Tom & Linda Anderson, Donald & Janet Bachman, Madeline Bingell, Eunice Diehl, Teresa Dalrymple, Phyllis Hamm, Judy Hoffman, Eleanor & Ron Kleckner, Linda Migliori, Barbara Panner, Linda & Wilbur Romig, Jill Schlosser, Jean & Stan Wieand, and Marianne Ulrich



Our Church's Same-Sex Marriage Policy

From Pastor Kris

As part of this interim time in our church's life, we set as one of our priorities to revisit our church's policy on same sex marriage for these reasons: it is now legal in our country to perform these weddings, Pastor Thomas asked us to review this policy before we call our next Senior Pastor, and the Leadership Planning Team (LPT) claimed as one of our core values to be a church that is open, affirming and inclusive.

The LPT created an Open and Affirming Ad Hoc Team to work on a recommendation to Consistory and that recommendation was presented to the Consistory in October. The recommendation was to change the policy so that same-sex weddings could be performed in our church by our pastors under our church's care. **At our November 16th meeting the Consistory approved this recommendation by a vote of 14 voting yes and 6 voting no. Pastor Bill shared this result with the congregation in worship on November 22nd.**

As Pastor Bill has said, we all hope that regardless of where you stand on this issue that you know that your pastors and leaders believe that God's church here at Union UCC is big enough for all us. This is not the first time we have disagreed on an issue and it certainly will not be the last time. This family of faith has been through many big and small disagreements throughout our 260 year history and God's spirit and love has helped us grow, kept us strong, and united us as the body of Christ.

I am proud of our leaders, pastors, staff and members for the hard work, energy, and prayer they have given to this. They modeled for us what it means to disagree with grace, love and respect. Keep praying for each other as we move through this time of healing. Your pastors are here for you, even when, and especially when we disagree. Please call on us.

"I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers." (Ephesians 1: 15-16)

Union UCC...in search of mission, vision and leadership

"If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves. But when they attend to what God reveals, they are most blessed." Proverbs 29:18 [MSG]

The **Leadership Planning Team [LPT]** held its final meeting on November 10th, 2015. In that meeting they unanimously endorsed the **Draft of Union's Plan for Ministry & Mission, Rev-5 with Addendum** and the Search Committee's **draft Union UCC Profile**. Both of these documents will be presented to Consistory at their November 16th, 2015 meeting, asking for their endorsement and recommendation to the congregation for adoption at **the January 24th, 2016, semi-annual congregational meeting**.

The **Financial Leadership Team** continues to focus on the **Fall Stewardship Campaign**. That campaign officially started on Stewardship Sunday, November 15th, 2015 and will conclude with **Faith Commitments Cards being returned through Sunday, January 10th, 2016**. All the **Committees and small groups** of the Church are fully engaged in implementing their **Plan for Ministry and Mission**.

The **Search Committee continues its work** with our PNEC representative, Len Kesselring, to prepare for review of pas-

toral candidate resumes and interviewing pastoral candidates.

The search for Union's next Senior Pastor is ahead of schedule and planned to commence in February 2016!

Thanks to each of you for your Christian leadership and discipleship, your commitment to the work of our intentional interim ministry, and, your faith filled commitment to the ministry, mission and gospel of Jesus Christ through Union UCC!

Please **visit our Union UCC web site** where you will find a link to a page that contains an overview of the process we are following as well as other pertinent documents related to our work and ministry together. As we "attend to what God reveals" during this process, **please continue to keep Union UCC, its staff, leaders and the entire congregation in your prayers.**

Pastor Bill

Rev. A. William Metzger



Sunday, December 6, 2015

2nd Sunday of Advent

8:00am Heritage Service

10:30am Horizon Service

Special Musical Guests: Tangled Blue – the music of Aimee and Joel Pagan <http://tangledblue.com>

Lay Readers: 8:00 - Suzanne Schneider

10:30 - Dave Fleming

Greeters: Glenn & Susan Mattern, Lou & Mary Burdick

Acolytes: 8AM - Peyton Schlosser

10:30AM - Sonya Shivok, Chase Misera

Sunday, December 13, 2015

3rd Sunday of Advent

8:00am Heritage Service

10:30am Horizon Service

Adult Choir Musical: "Let There Be Christmas" by Joseph M. Martin

Lay Readers: 8:00 - Susan Rumble

10:30 - Donna Christman

Greeters: Jane Schappell, Dana Krisko

Acolytes: 8AM - Will Filipovits

10:30AM - Justin Trexler, Ian Henninger

Sunday, December 20, 2015

4th Sunday of Advent/Lessons and Carols

8:00am Heritage Service

10:30am Horizon Service-Sunday Morning Alive

Message: Why This Jubilee?" by James C. Howell

Lay Readers: 8:00 - Suzanne Schneider

10:30 - Fawn Albert

Greeters: Dave and Karen Fleming, Claire Kern

Acolytes: 8AM - Garret Fitzgerald

Christmas Eve –Thursday, December 24, 2015

3pm Family Service - Candlelight, Communion,

Message: "Why Christmas Trees Aren't Perfect"

Sermon: Rev. Kris P. Snyder-Samuelson

Lay Reader: Claire Kern

Acolytes:

5pm Family Service - Candlelight, Children & Youth Choirs,

Text: Luke 2:1-14

Message: "Reflections of an Old Scribe"

Sermon: Rev. Dr. Allan Kramer-Moyer

Lay Reader: Youth

Acolytes: Karl Schmidt, Jr., Hannah Horvath

8pm - Communion & Candle Lighting, Adult Choir

Message: "You're Invited! Save the Date! Breaking News!"

Sermon: Rev. Kris P. Snyder-Samuelson & High School Choir

Lay Reader: Harry Burger

Acolytes: Amanda Lane

11pm - Communion & Candle Lighting, Adult Choir

Text: Luke 2:1-14

Message: "Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time"

Sermon: Rev. Dr. Allan Kramer-Moyer

Lay Reader: Dave Fleming

Acolytes: Sonya Shivok

Sunday, December 27, 2015

1st Sunday after Christmas/Young Adults Lead

NO 8am worship

10:30am Horizon Service-Church Family Worship

Text: Colossians 3: 12-17

Message: What Would Jesus Wear (WWJW)?"

Sermon: Rev. Kris P. Snyder-Samuelson

Lay Readers: 10:30 - Young Adult

Greeters: Gene & Christina Thrash, Kim Krempasky

Acolytes: 8AM - Will Filipovits

10:30AM - Hannah Horvath, Chase Misera



Holy Grounds Coffee Hour

Every Sunday

9:15-10:15 & 11:30-12:00

Continues on Sundays after 8am and 10:30 Worship Services and in between the services in Memorial Hall (on the same level as the sanctuary). Stop by for snack or drink, to say hello to a friend, or learn about something new about a committee.

Thank you to our hosting committees:

December 6—Advent Brunch

December 13—Confirmation Class

December 20—Consistory

December 27—No Committee



Financial & Attendance Reports

| | <u>Operating Fund</u> | <u>Designated Funds</u> | <u>Grand Total All Funds</u> |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 7-1-2015 | \$ 9,644.00 | \$25,635.00 | \$35,279.00 |
| Income | \$118,344.00 | \$16,000.00 | \$134,344.00 |
| Expenses | \$127,497.00 | \$17,349.00 | \$144,846.00 |
| 10-31-2015 | \$491.00 | \$24,286.00 | \$24,777.00 |

Designated Funds category includes offerings for NIN, Mother's Day, OGHS, Lenten, Advent, Improvement Fund, Flowers, Directory, Bullets, Phoebe Campaign, & Special Gifts.

Wedding

Stephen George and Taylor Boyer were married under the care of Union UCC on November 7, 2015

Memorials

The following donations have been received into the Union UCC Memorial Fund in memory of **Betty E. Kern:**

Lady Lillie Best Rebekah Lodge , Inc.

#222

E. Barry Wotring

Rose Croix chapter 235 OES

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Worship Service</u> | | <u>CC/ Video/ Nursery</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-------------|------------------------|-----|---------------------------|--------------|
| October 4 | 107 | 216 | 44 | 367 |
| October 11 | 70 | 156 | 34 | 260 |
| October 18 | 61 | 184 | 45 | 290 |
| October 25 | 70 | 195 | 43 | 308 |

TOTAL ATTENDANCE

October 2014– 1,644 October 2015 – 1,225

AVG ATTENDANCE

October 2014– 411 October 2015 - 306

Did You Know?

You can get **weekly emails** updating you on the events and Sunday services at church?

- You can get your monthly **newsletter online**?
- We have a **Facebook** page: [Facebook.com/unionneffs](https://www.facebook.com/unionneffs)
- You can sign up for **E-giving** at no cost to you?

To sign up to get emails/e-newsletter, or for E-giving visit our website: **WWW.UNIONUCC.ORG** and click on the **RESOURCES** tab or send an email to: **secretary@unionucc.org**

UNION UCC CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Kris Snyder-Samuelson

Acting Senior Pastor
Cell Phone: 610-657-6007
assocpastor@unionucc.org

Rev. Dr. Allan Kramer-Moyer

Interim Pastor
interimpastor@unionucc.org

Rev. Dr. Patience Stevenson

Pastor of Visitation
Cell Phone: 610-248-5587
vispastor@unionucc.org

Rev. A. William Metzger

Pastoral Consultant
Renaissinc@aol.com

Rev. Thomas N. Thomas

Pastor Emeritus

Kathy L. Bonsell

Director of Christian Education
dired@unionucc.org

Barbara Carinci

Church Administrator
administrator@unionucc.org

Tara Henninger

Communications Coordinator
secretary@unionucc.org

Mike Baer

Music Coordinator
dirmusic@unionucc.org

Blake Hoppes

Organist/Accompanist
Blake.charger@gmail.com

Church Office:

610-767-6961
Fax: 610-767-7128

PO Box 66,
5550 Route 873
Neffs PA 18065-0066

www.unionucc.org

Preschool Office:
610-767-5327

Ronald Kneller

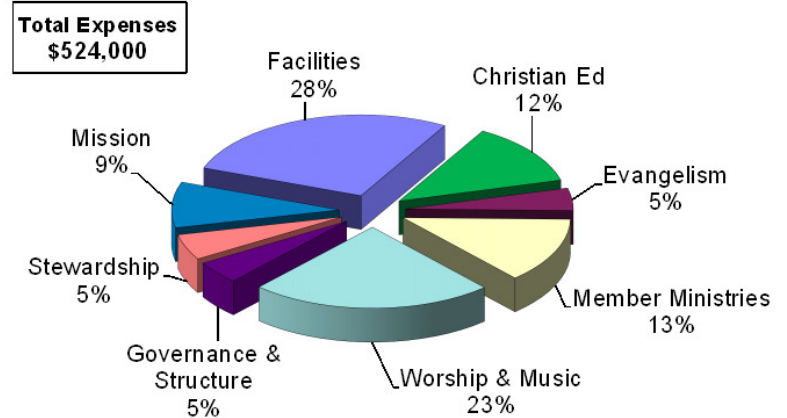
Facility Caretaker
caretaker@unionucc.org

Church Telephone Extension Directory 610-767-6961

| | |
|-----------------|---------|
| Pastor Kris | ext. 25 |
| Pastor Allan | ext. 24 |
| Pastor Patience | ext. 31 |
| Barbara Carinci | ext. 21 |
| Tara Henninger | ext. 22 |
| Kathy Bonsell | ext. 27 |
| Mike Baer | ext. 26 |
| Kitchen | ext. 30 |

The following is a summary of the church's total income and expenses for the current fiscal year.

Where our Stewardship Giving Goes



- **Worship and Music** in our weekly and special services comprise a significant portion of overall spending (23%)
- Our **Member Ministries** seeks to nurture, support and connect members in a variety of programs and ministries through numerous groups and committees (13%)
- **Christian Education** provides a variety of educational programs, events and activities for all ages to learn about Christian faith and comprises 12% of overall spending
- Our **Mission** giving is focused on helping those in need, both in the local community and the world. Our support includes OCWM, local mission agencies and food banks, and other mission projects (9%)
- **Governance and Structure** includes managing our staff and participating in the PNEC (5%)
- **Evangelism** is focused on sharing the good news of the Gospel and comprises 5% of our spending
- Spending on **Facilities**, the church building and property, is significant at 28% of overall spending but is critical in maintaining the church, its properties, and office equipment



December 2015

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|---|---|--|--------------------------------|
| | 1 <u>9am</u> Staff Mtg <u>10am</u> Program Staff <u>12pm</u> Golden Times <u>6pm</u> Cherub Choir <u>6:30</u> Junior Choir <u>7pm</u> Middler Choir <u>7:30pm</u> High School Choir; Bible Study | 2 <u>9:30am</u> Busy Bee Quilters <u>10am</u> Knitwits <u>6:30pm</u> Spiritually Fit <u>7pm</u> Church & Ministry | 3 <u>7pm</u> Christian Ed, Chime Choir; Search Committee | 4 <u>9am</u> Bulletin Prep <u>9:30am</u> Bible Study | 5 |
| 7 <u>6:30pm</u> Spiritually Fit | 8 <u>10 am</u> Helping Hands <u>6pm</u> Cherub Choir <u>6:30</u> Junior Choir <u>7pm</u> Middler Choir <u>7:30pm</u> High School Choir; Bible Study | 9 <u>9:30am</u> Busy Bee Quilters <u>10am</u> Knitwits <u>6:30pm</u> Spiritually Fit <u>7pm</u> Book Club | 10 <u>7pm</u> Chime Choir; Helping Hearts NEWSLETTER DEADLINE | 11 <u>9am</u> Bulletin Prep <u>9:30am</u> Bible Study | 12 |
| 14 <u>6:30pm</u> Spiritually Fit | 15 <u>9am</u> Staff Mtg <u>10am</u> Program Staff <u>6-8pm</u> Youth Choirs <u>7:30pm</u> Bible Study | 16 <u>9:30am</u> Busy Bee Quilters <u>10am</u> Knitwits; Preschool Board <u>6:30pm</u> Spiritually Fit <u>7pm</u> Chime Choir | 17 <u>7pm</u> Search Committee | 18 <u>9am</u> Bulletin Prep <u>9:30am</u> Bible Study | 19 <u>5:30pm</u> CIA |
| 21 <u>6:30pm</u> Spiritually Fit <u>7pm</u> Consistory | 22 <u>6-8pm</u> Youth Choirs <u>7:30pm</u> Bible Study | 23 <u>9am</u> Bulletin Prep <u>9:30am</u> Busy Bee Quilt <u>10am</u> Knitwits <u>6:30pm</u> Spiritually Fit | 24 Christmas Eve Worship 3pm 5pm 8pm 11pm | 25 <u>Church office closed</u> | 26 |
| 28 <u>6:30pm</u> Spiritually Fit | 29 <u>9am</u> Newsletter Mailing <u>6-8pm</u> Youth Choirs <u>7:30pm</u> Bible Study | 30 <u>9am</u> Bulletin Prep <u>9:30am</u> Busy Bee Quilt <u>10am</u> Knitwits <u>6:30pm</u> Spiritually Fit | 31 <u>Church office closed</u> | | |
| SUNDAYS | | | | | |
| 6 2nd Sunday in Advent <u>8am</u> Heritage Service <u>9:15 - 10:15 am</u> Holy Grounds Education Hour Bible Study Horizon Singers Confirmation Class <u>10:30am</u> Horizon Service-CFW <u>11:30am</u> Holy Grounds Advent Brunch | 13 3rd Sunday of Advent <u>8am</u> Heritage Service <u>9:15 - 10:15 am</u> Holy Grounds Education Hour Bible Study Horizon Singers Confirmation Class Tech Committee <u>10:30am</u> Horizon Service Children’s Church <u>11:30am</u> Holy Grounds Youth Group Advisory <u>7pm</u> Parkland Chorale | 20 Lessons & Carols <u>8am</u> Heritage Service <u>9:15 - 10:15 am</u> Holy Grounds Education Hour Bible Study Horizon Singers Confirmation Class <u>10:30am</u> Horizon Service-Children’s Church <u>11:30am</u> Holy Grounds; Prebaptism <u>5pm</u> Youth caroling | 27 <u>NO 8am Worship</u> <u>9:15 - 10:15 am</u> Holy Grounds Education Hour Bible Study Horizon Singers <u>10:30am</u> Horizon Service/CFW <u>11:30am</u> Holy Grounds | | |