



Peace United Church of Christ

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The Tidings

December 2021

-

January 2022



From the Pastor's Study • December 2021/January 2022

“Welcome! Have you got any beer?” That’s said to have been the greeting that Squanto offered to the Pilgrims as he met them. He would become one of their lifelines after that first horrendous winter.

This year’s Thanksgiving marks the 400th anniversary of the occasion when our forebearers gathered for a thanksgiving meal after that deadly first year that had taken the lives of 50 of the 102 people who had set out on the Mayflower. They had finally managed to make a treaty with the Indigenous People (Ousamequin of the Pokanoket Wampanoag) and had managed to grow enough food and build enough shelter to think that they might survive. The Pilgrims’ religious practice was to gather for a feast of thanksgiving to God for the blessings. The stories always gather the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag together to share in a feast that many historians now say almost certainly didn’t happen as we’ve imagined it... but there was a gathering, and sharing, and thanksgiving.

Those Pilgrims are our UCC ancestors who, for my family growing up, were always a very present part of the Thanksgiving table. My ancestors trace their roots back to the immigrants on the Anne in 1623 (and Laura’s family on the Mayflower in 1620). The Congregational branch of the UCC traces back to those Pilgrim’s Puritan roots that sought to purify the church from the tradition that had emerged as the state religion: the Church of England (until 1534 England was a Roman Catholic nation, when King Henry VIII broke from Rome and declared himself head of the new national church). The Puritans wanted to reform the Church to get back to a simpler faith that was more aligned with the early Christians. Another group, the Separatists, wanted to break from the Church of England completely. Such are our roots – that commitment to return more closely to the ways of Christ and the early Christians instead of the trappings of the church or the ways that culture leads us from Christ’s ways of justice and love.

It’s interesting that it’s only been in the last couple of decades that I’ve started hearing Squanto and the Pilgrims’ story a little more deeply. “Welcome, have you got any beer?” is a greeting that could make any Wisconsinite smile. But most of us don’t remember why this Indigenous Person would offer this greeting. The greeting belies a sober story of Squanto knowing how to speak English and knowing of the blessings of beer because of his having been captured and enslaved. Enslavement allowed him to learn English and perhaps even be baptized prior to finding his way back to a land that would be renamed Plymouth – a land where his tribe had been all but wiped out by the diseases brought by earlier visits of Europeans. It’s interesting to consider how the survival of even the Pilgrims was dependent on this fruit of slavery and the inadvertent extermination by disease of the Indigenous Peoples.

Part of what’s interesting to me is that these Pilgrims who were trying to purify their faith practices were clearly still having a hard time letting Jesus lead them into a relationship with God that was beyond their deep-seated cultural assumptions. This is always the case for us. We want to hear good news of God’s love, but maybe only to the extent that it reinforces what we already believe. But that’s not the full message of the good news.

Very quickly our season moves from Thanksgiving to Christmas. We might move from giving thanks for the blessings of our lives and this year, to pondering what new stories we need to learn to truly be thankful for our lives and to be more closely aligned to God’s ways.

Perhaps the journey toward Christmas might help us to be more open to God's challenge to grow with each day. As we hear *"Away in the manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus lay down his sweet head..."* we might hear not only the magic of Christmas but also the challenge that this gift of God's love offered the world. It should be a little stunning to us when we stop and remember what scripture's story of that first Christmas must have sounded like. Everything about the narrative is shocking, disruptive, perhaps even offensive!

John Dominic Crossan writes about how Jesus' miraculous birth was a story that had roots in the culture of the time. He describes how the Roman Emperors would also have had miraculous birth narratives told about them in order to emphasize their power and importance, their divine sanction. But Jesus' story took an outrageous, radical, twist away from the norm. Jesus' story was the counter cultural divine birth story. Instead of his being born in all the powerful, auspicious, culturally celebrated, and acceptable ways; Jesus was born with a tenuous paternity, to a low caste single mother in a stable in the shadow of the empire. He was a nobody who was God's anointed. All of the titles that were used for Caesar Augustus: Divine, Son of God, God from God, Lord, Savior of the World, Redeemer, Liberator...; all of these terms were now shifted to this Jewish peasant child. Christianity hardly started in a place where the dominant culture would carry the story. No, the dominant culture found the story absurd and then offensive or threatening enough that Jesus' birth precipitated his crucifixion. You don't live a life that would dismantle the current cultural values without there being consequences.

Thanksgiving, Christmas, a New Year... God's story is inviting us to a place of growth, to a place of love, to a place of hope.

Christians have almost always been a part of the culture that much more closely resembles the powerful empire that Jesus was trying to transform than the community to which the Christmas story was made real. We take the message of a different way of being and turn it into cute, commercialized holidays that challenges none of our ways and only reinforce the brokenness of the world instead of transforming it with love.

We should hear the proclamation that "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" as a word of profound hope in a world that continues to be wracked with discord, distrust, and fear. That little child is born in all the wrong places proclaiming a different way. That light is Love that is humble and giving, that sees in the other not fear but hope and promise. The Christmas story is a gift that God offers us to draw us out of our cultural comfort zone to welcome the unpredictable divine.

May God bless us this season!

Pastor ERIC

Worship Schedule for December & January

NO THANKSGIVING SERVICE

A year ago, my hope was that by this time we would be gathering for what has been our tradition of an ecumenical Thanksgiving service. Instead, our Catholic neighbors have named the reality that attendance has been waning over the last few years and that it felt to them like time to let go of this last service that we have shared together. The hope was expressed that we can look for other opportunities to serve God and our community together in the future. I certainly hope that we can find and nurture those opportunities.

Sunday, December 5 - 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. - COMMUNION

Second Sunday of Advent

Baruch 5:1-9 or Malachi 3:1-4 ● Luke 1:68-79 ● Philippians 1:3-11 ● Luke 3:1-6

Sunday, December 12- 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Third Sunday of Advent

Zephaniah 3:14-20 ● Isaiah 12:2-6 ● Philippians 4:4-7 ● Luke 3:7-18

Sunday, December 19 - 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Micah 5:2-5a ● Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 80:1-7 ● Hebrews 10:5-10 ● Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)

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

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

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

Isaiah 9:2-7 ● Psalm 96 ● Titus 2:11-14 ● Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

Sunday, December 26, 9:30 a.m.

First Sunday after Christmas

1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26 ● Psalm 148 ● Colossians 3:12-17 ● Luke 2:41-52

Sunday, January 2, 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. - COMMUNION

Second Sunday after Christmas

Jeremiah 31:7-14 or Sirach 24:1-12 ● Psalm 147:12-20 or Wisdom of Solomon 10:15-21
● Ephesians 1:3-14 ● John 1:(1-9), 10-18

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

The Baptism of Christ

Isaiah 43:1-7 • Psalm 29 • Acts 8:14-17 • Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Sunday, January 16, 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Second Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 62:1-5 • Psalm 36:5-10 • 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 • John 2:1-11

Sunday, January 23, 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Third Sunday after Epiphany

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10 • Psalm 19 • 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a • Luke 4:14-21

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

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Jeremiah 1:4-10 • Psalm 71:1-6 • 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 • Luke 4:21-30

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Happy Birthday! (Ages 1-18)

December 1 Croix Kivell
December 7 Ryan Thull
December 8 Lauren Krebs
December 13 Grace Lee, Eli Ogi
December 20 Corbin Walker
December 29 Damian Koch
December 30 Isabelle Vey
January 1 David Dorn
January 11 Jade Brei, Xander Kivell
January 16 Amelia Krebs, Lorelai Luther
January 27 Kyla Kivell
January 29 Sam Ogi

Birthdays (80 years plus)

Dec. 2 Virginia Michaels (93)
Dec. 3 Arthur Schmidt (84)
Dec. 4 Ralph Faisst (93)
Dec. 5 Betty Hallen (95)
Dec. 6 Carol Clark (92)
Dec. 6 Jeanne Wood (85)
Dec. 11 Rose Marie Knoth (82)
Dec. 23 James Gardner (88)
Dec. 25 Betty Spaltner (81)
Jan. 30 Patricia Reigle (96)
Jan. 30 Clarence Westra (85)
Jan. 31 Marilyn McIntosh (86)

Anniversaries

December 1 Rosemarie & Cliff Maeder (69)
December 5 Harvey & Nancy Brodzeller (57)
December 20 John & Margaret Schmahl (52)
December 29 Jean & Jeffrey Reigle (48)
December 30 Matthew & Rachel Schemelin (21)
January 1 Martha & Dennis (8)
January 13 Emil & Sandra Radeztsky (27)
January 26 Liz (Jankowski-Gaulke) & David Gaulke (4)

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

Cody Nuernberg – 10/9/21

Eileen Ramthun – 10/20/21

Joy Brott – 10/27/21

Carol Sedgwick – 10/29/2021

Markus Frank – 11/5/2021

Nancy Brodzeller – 11/12/2021

“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.



Middle School Youth Group

Karla and Josh Spaits are leading the Middle School Youth Group with lots of fun activities and events! Spread the word, bring a friend, come!

- **November 28 (Sunday)** - Cookie Decorating at Church for Kewaskum Cookie Scavenger Hunt - After the second service
- **December 5 (Sunday)** - Kewaskum Christmas Parade and Cookie Scavenger Hunt Scavenger Hunt 1-4 pm; Christmas Parade: 5:00 p.m.
- **December 11th** - 5-8 pm Movie and Games
- **No Youth Group December 18th, 25th, or January 1st.**
- **January 8th** - 5-8pm Movie and Games
- **January 15th** - Tubing at Sunburst
- **January 22nd TBD and January 29th TBD**

Scholarship Fund Christmas Cookie, Coffee and Tea Sale

During fellowship time on December 12, there will be a Christmas Cookie Sale sponsored by the Scholarship Committee. Coffee and tea will also be available.

Occasionally over the next few weeks during fellowship time between services, coffee and tea will be available for purchase. Thank you, Peace Church, for supporting this wonderful program!

We are asking all parents of Scholarship Recipients to please bake and bring cookies early 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.

Seventeen college students have applied for scholarships for the 2019-2020 school year and will be receiving their scholarship money in February after we receive their first semester grades. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Young Adult Habitat Trip

Come join us for a Habitat Trip for young adults. Maybe you're in college, maybe you're working, maybe you're taking a break . . . maybe you're just longing to still be considered young and crazy enough to take a week to do mission work with other faith-filled people! Regardless, this trip is for YOU!

Our plans are coming together to travel toward warmer weather (perhaps North Carolina) to work with Habitat for Humanity. This year we will need to figure out appropriate COVID precautions for our group and our affiliate that will at the least include asking that people are fully vaccinated or have a negative COVID test to join us. We are planning to leave Kewaskum on January 2nd and will return on January 10th. Please talk to Pastor Eric if you would like to join us.

Gingerbread House - Giving Tree

Every year Peace Church participates in the Gingerbread House Giving Tree. Last year, because of circumstances, Peace Church gave gift cards instead of purchasing presents for families. We will be doing that again this year. 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 15, 2021. Last Christmas Peace Church donated a total of \$1,075 in gift cards that were given to the Giving Tree! Thank you all for participating in this very worthy program!

Peace Church Christmas Offerings: Christmas offering distribution will be divided equally between Ventures in People, St. Joseph's Home, Kewaskum Food Pantry, West Bend Food Pantry, and Albrecht Free Clinic

Thank You From Peace Church



Thank you to all who gave their time and talents to create the 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!

Thank you to Melinda Sargent for her generous donation of yarn for the prayer shawl ministry!

Thank you to Jeanne Griep for her donation of clothing and other miscellaneous items to assist Peace Church in its mission to help various organizations such as Karl's Place and Family Promise.

Thank you Peace Church!

Thank you, Women of Peace, for your continued prayers and cards. Your kindnesses are much appreciated. Betty Skaug

Peace Church Book Group

The Peace Church book group will be meeting on Wednesday, December 1, at 9:30 a.m. in the upstairs music room. The December book is "Talking to Strangers: What We Should Know About the People We don't Know" by Malcolm Gladwell. The discussion leader is Kay Blackburn. This is a nonfiction book. The January 5th book is "A Woman in the Window" by A. J. Finn. For more information on the book group, please contact Lynn Rusch at lynnrusch@yahoo.com or 262-306-4025.

For men only: Are there five or more men interested in forming a book discussion group? If so, please let the church office know your name and preferred meeting day and time (example, mornings, afternoons, or Saturdays).

FOCUS ON SUNDAY SCHOOL

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:

Sunday, December 5, Noon – 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 5, 5:00 p.m. The Kewaskum Christmas Parade kicks off with the theme “Christmas at the Movies.” Peace Church will be entering a float in this year’s parade, with the theme being from the movie “It’s a Wonderful Life”. All children, youth, and adults are invited to participate by walking next to the float. Costumes will be provided. Details coming soon.

Sunday, December 12 – The Sunday School Christmas Program will be offered during the 9:30 a.m. worship service. (Rehearsals 12/4 and 12/11)



Sunday, December 19 – Allow the choirs from Peace Church to lift your holiday spirit by performing beautiful music of the season at their annual Choir Concert. Youth and adult choirs will participate.

Financial Reports

Financial Report October 2021

General Fund

Adjusted Beginning Balance as of September 30, 2020	\$ (37,297)
Receipts	15,473
Cemetery Transfer	0
Internal Transfer	0
Incr/Decr from Investments	0
Expenses	(\$21,739)
Ending Balance as of 10/31/2020	<u>(\$43,563)</u>

Benevolence Receipts

Kewaskum Food Pantry	126.78
Neighbors in Need	265.00
Peace Pantry	180.00
Dr. Albrecht Free Clinic	96.79
Total Benevolence Receipts	<u>668.57</u>
Church Kitchen Remodeling Project	\$8,537.00

KEYS Christmas Concert

The annual KEYS Christmas concert will be held Sunday, December 12 at 6:30 p.m. in the Kewaskum High School Theater. The Kewaskum Big Band, the EcuMen, and Kewaskum High School Choir will feature a variety of musical selections including Christmas and Holiday music. These groups have generously donated their musical talents for the benefit of KEYS.

KEYS is a non-profit organization established to accept donations to provide scholarships for Kewaskum High School graduates. All money contributed to KEYS is used directly for scholarships.

General Admission tickets for the concert are \$5.00, and will be available at the door.

Come to the Kewaskum High School on December 10 to experience an evening of spirited music to start the holiday season. Help KEYS to grow and benefit Kewaskum High School graduates. Donations to KEYS may be mailed to KEYS, PO Box 124, Kewaskum, WI 53040.



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 2021 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.

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.

Consistory Meeting Minutes

**Peace United Church of Christ
Consistory Meeting Minutes
October 12, 2021**

Members present: Paul Behring, Kathy Charland, Karen Kletti, Tom Kolb, John A. Lemke, Becky Manthei, Roger Mertz, Clark Pearson
Also present: Pastor Eric, Cathy Stern (Treasurer)

- A. Call to order: 6:35 pm
- B. Opening prayer
- C. Approval of agenda:
amendments: 1. Add Budget Discussion, Consistory Responsibilities, and Rejuvenation of Congregation. Approve: Pearson/Behring. Carried
- D. Approve minutes from 9/14/2021. Motion to approve Kolb/Kletti Carried.
- E. Financial report:
General fund contributions were down in September. Motion to accept the financial report and put on file for audit by Pearson/Kletti
Action item: Deacons to meet quarterly to discuss financials.
- F. Pastor's report: Pastor Eric submitted a written report. Pastor Eric praised the efforts of Karla and Josh Spaits working with the middle school youth.
- G. Pres. Report
Pres. Report: A job description for the Associate Pastor position is prepared and ready to be sent to the conference upon approval at the annual meeting.
- H. Old business:
Faith Formation/Care & Connection - no candidates have responded so far to the posted position.
Regathering Update: Mask wearing has been addressed. It is a regathering committee decision.
- I. New business:
Budget: Budget to be presented at the annual meeting with little change from 2021 budget. A two percent increase in salaries has been proposed for the 2022 budget.
Motion Clark Pearson, Kathy Charland seconded. The addition of Associate Pastor was added. Motion carried.
Consistory responsibilities: Be more helpful to worshipers, ushering and rebuilding the worship experience.
Rejuvenation of congregation: Discussion on how to increase participation.
- J. Committee Reports
Trustee committee: broken door glass in Narthex to be repaired.
Office remodel is completed. Looks good and functions well.
- K. Adjournment: 9:06 pm

Next meeting: November 9, 6:30 pm

Poinsettias

This year we again invite you to order a Christmas poinsettia through Peace Church. The plants will be identical in size and all of them red in color. They will be in 6 1/2 inch pots and come with foil wrap. Cost per plant will be \$17.00. These plants may be ordered in memory of loved ones, in honor of special moments or persons, or just love gifts. They will be placed in church on December 24th. After the service on December 25th you may take your plant home to enjoy.



Wouldn't you like to help beautify the church sanctuary with these traditional Christmas flowers? Please contact the church office 626-4011, email: office@peace-ucc.org, or mail: P. O. Box 433, Kewaskum, WI 53040 by November 29th. Plants must be paid for in advance. When ordering please indicate whether you will take your plant home or if you would like your plant taken to the sick, shut-in, or those unable to come to Church at Christmas. If you are willing to help deliver plants, please inform Robin in the church office. Thank you!

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Christmas Poinsettia Order

Please order _____ Plant(s) for me:

Name _____

Amount of Check _____ (\$17.00 per plant – payable to Peace UCC)

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

Other Designation _____

____ I will take my plant home

____ I would like my plant(s) delivered to those unable to come to Church on Christmas

____ I will help deliver plants