

St. Luke's United Church of Christ

The Messenger

December 2020 Newsletter

From the Pastor's desk

Advent is a curious season in the Christian year. In our modern world, we associate these weeks leading up to Christmas with the hustle and bustle of Christmas and the often dizzying dazzle of over consumption. But originally the Advent season inspired Christians to reflection, confession and preparation. Beginning in the fourth century, Advent — like Lent — was seen as a time of fasting and penitence. While we may well engage in — even enjoy — the business of the season, Advent is a time of restlessness and reflection for any and all who take the season seriously.

Seems to me that restlessness makes sense given that Advent reveals the ambiguity of Christian hope and history. The Christ whose birthday we soon celebrate has died and risen, but how will Christ come again? Advent calls us to look both at the coming of Jesus the child in the manger inspired to be God's saving presence to humankind, and the Second Coming of Jesus, anticipated as the fulfillment of history.

To wait and anticipate Christ come to earth is not just passive, pious, prayerful churchly thing. On the contrary! To wait for Christ to come in his fullness is above all else to act in Christ's stead as fully as we know how. To wait for Christ is — as best we can — to be Christ to those who need us to be Christ to them most and to bring them the most we have of Christ's healing and hope because unless we bring it, it may never be brought at all.

Advent challenges us to live with the tension of “this is God's world, filled with wonder and beauty: and “why aren't we there yet? Why haven't we reached the promised land, the beloved community of wholeness and healing?” We have to start where we are in a God-filled, imperfect universe; but we cannot end our journey in accepting injustice, oppression, inequality, and disease. Advent inspires a prophetic unrest that challenges our current achievements as well as our obvious failures in light of God's realm of possibility, beauty, and wonder.

So, let us sing a few Christmas carols. Let us rejoice in the wonders of a God-filled universe. Let us embrace the exuberance of incarnation. But, let us equally embrace the divine restlessness that calls us to expect more from ourselves as we seek to be fitting companions of the One whose birth and future presence we await.

God with us. Immanuel.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Mary

Advent: Our theme for Advent “Dreaming God’s Dream”. We still have advent kits available and would love for all who want one to have one. Please email or call the church office to make arrangements.

Church leadership tending to our transition out of church building and beyond:
Please meet the members of the Advisory Committee for the Church Transition:

Janet Mierendorf - co-chair

Tisha Hodgins - co-chair

Pam Rossi

Lori Mierendorf

Jill Petrus

Kaye Povlich

Their work will be leading and guiding the congregation in next steps and will work alongside Board members during this period of transition. But we know these efforts require many hands and hearts, so please do not hesitate to reach out and help where you can. More than all, please continue to pray and trust in God’s abundant presence to be with us - individually and collectively - each step of the way.

For your Advent reflection and meditation:

THE COMING OF GOD

Our God is the One who comes to us
in a burning bush,
in an angel’s song,
in a newborn child.

Our God is the One who cannot be found
locked in the church,
not even in the sanctuary.

Our God will be where God will be
with no constraints,
no predictability.

Our God lives where our God lives,
and destruction has no power
and even death cannot stop
the living.

Our God will be born where God will be born,
but there is no place to look for the One who comes
to us.

When God is ready
God will come
even to a godforsaken place
like a stable in Bethlehem.
Watch...

for you know not when
God comes.

Watch, that you might be found
whenever
wherever

God comes.

Kneeling in Bethlehem, Ann Weems

Financial Report for October 2020

Balance as of 9/30/20.....	10,010.62
Receipts.....	1,581.00
Total Receipts.....	1,581.00
Expenses for October.....	<u>6,633.20</u>
Balance as of 10/31/20	<u>4,958.42</u>

ST. LUKE'S UCC BOARD MINUTES

November 18 , 2020

PRESENT:

Pastor.....Rev. Mary Carlin
President.....Brad Uelmen
Vice President.....Amy Wheelock Brodzik
Financial Secretary.....Veronica Shea
Recording Secretary..... Pam Rossi
Facilitator/Stewardship.....Kathy Immel

EXCUSED

Treasurer.....Kaye Povlich

The board meeting was called to order at 6:38pm by Brad Uelmen and Pastor Mary led an opening prayer.

A motion was made by Veronica Shea to approve the October Board Meeting Minutes seconded by Amy Wheelock Brodzik, motion approved.

PASTOR'S REPORT:

- Pastoral letter will be sent out to the congregation addressing the sale of the building.
- Pastor Mary will contact Andrew Warner to set up meeting with an advisory board to oversee the funds from the sale of the church building.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

- A motion to approve the September financial reports was made by Amy Wheelock Brodzik and seconded by Kathy Immel, motion approved.
- This month giving was a bit low. The balance is still good.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Congregational Meeting went well on November 15, 2020. 22 members attended in person and 7 members were included via Zoom. A motion was made by Ken Hicks to accept the offer of \$550 thousand dollars for the church building, seconded by Jeff Brodzik, motion was approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

- After the meeting closed, the board members did a quick walk through of the entire church building to get a rough idea of items that are currently in the church.

ANYTHING ELSE:

Brad closed the meeting at 7:15pm, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Rossi Recording Secretary

*As we prepare to transition out of the church building, the sanctuary will be open for those who desire to come and spend some time in this space on two occasions: Sunday, December 6th between 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m and Wednesday, December 9th between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

On Wednesday the 9th Amy will also be collecting the white gifts. If you cannot make this time please make arrangements with Amy as she will be taking them to Human Concerns by 6:00 that day.

Please enter the front door of the church, only. While in the building, please adhere to CDC guidelines including wearing a mask over your mouth and nose and physically distancing a minimum of six feet from those outside your household. We want this to be a meaningful time for those who come and request that you email or call the church office and leave a message to let us know which day and time you plan to arrive to allow for social distancing.

During your visit, if you wish, you may take your name tags and your hymnals with your names on them. We will also have some decorations, including Christmas ornaments, on display that you may take; one you donated or another one or two that are available.

At this time if you have any bags for the Better Earth boxes, please bring them. The boxes will be picked up for a final time by the end of December.

*If you have an idea to share, a question or concern contact the church office and leave a message, or contact any board member.

Church Contacts: Church Office: (414) 762-8260 Website: stlukesucc.us Pastor Mary's email: stlukesuccpastor1@gmail.com Office email: stlukesuccoffice@gmail.com