

TIDINGS

The Monthly Newsletter of Forks United Church of Christ
No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey...

you are welcome here!

What We've Been Up To...

Lovefeast solo



Sunday School

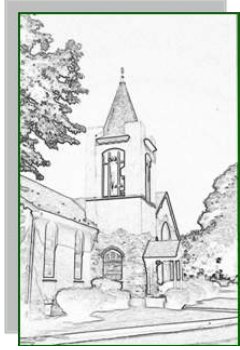


Christmas Star rehearsal



Thanksgiving dinners





The other day, I saw a commercial for Wal-Mart that advertised Christmas items with the line, “Capture the magic of the season.” Ironically, I think that our materialistic obsession with Christmas (it is only mid-November when I write this) has detracted from the sense of magic and mystery that I have always felt with the coming of Christmas.

I remember attending Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve as a child, and the experience of the incense, and bells, and candles and hymns created an aura of mystery, which was even a little bit scary for me. My favorite Christmas movies are stories which create those same feelings in me- “The Polar Express”, “Prancer” and “Elf”-(okay, that last one isn’t that mysterious but I love Will Ferrell). The sense of mystery surrounding our faith in God has always been something that has comforted me- I prefer to believe in a God that is far beyond my ability to comprehend, because I never know when and where and

how God will enter my life and surprise me. So, in the spirit of the magic and mystery of the season, I offer to you one of my favorite passages about Christmas, the newspaper editorial, “Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus.”

In 1897, eight year old Virginia O’ Hanlon sent the following letter to the newspaper, *The New York Sun*:

“DEAR EDITOR: I am 8 years old.
Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus.
Papa says, ‘If you see it in THE SUN it’s so.’
Please tell me the truth; is there a Santa Claus?”

One of the editors of *The Sun*, Francis Church gave his famous reply:

“VIRGINIA, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men’s or children’s, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, VIRGINIA, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no VIRGINIAS. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that’s no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby’s rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, VIRGINIA, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! He lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.”

I hope that you may experience the magic of the season this coming Christmas,

Pastor Bob

Stewardship and Finance

Electronic Giving... Helps you... Helps the Church

We've been encouraged and delighted these last few months to see both new and familiar faces at our worship services and hope it will continue. Many of you already support the congregation throughout the year with your time, talent, and financial contributions, but greater participation is always welcome. On that note, we do encourage you to look into our **electronic giving program** for making donations on a scheduled, automated basis. It is convenient for you and **provides much-needed financial consistency for the church** which keeps the ministries going and commitments on track. It also helps you better stay on track with your home budget and saves you time. It takes just a few minutes to set up this recurring giving plan. Please consider entering this program. The authorization form can be found in this newsletter. All information will be held in strict confidence in the church office.

Barrels of Oil Drive

We are seeking members of the Congregation to donate one or two barrels of oil at \$50 per barrel for the 2016-2017 heating season. Forks UCC entered into a contract with Fogel's Fuel and have a capped price of \$2.099 per gallon purchased. We need 140 barrels to pay our heating bill, based on the average of our past winter usage. Envelopes are available in the vestibules.

News from the Church Office

Poinsettias

Poinsettia Plants will beautify the sanctuary on Christmas Eve for the 4:00 pm and 8:00 pm services. Order blanks for the flowers are available in each narthex. Order and money (\$7.50/plant) must be in no later than Monday, December 12th.

Donations

All donations should be 'in the office' (allow time if mailing) no later than December 28th to receive credit for 2016. Any donations received after the 28th will be credited to 2017. Thank you. Anyone wishing to know "where they are" with contributions, please do not hesitate to call the church office (Mon.-Thurs.).



Mission and Action

Food Bank

Thank you for continuing to remember the urgent needs which our food banks seek to address. Canned goods and other non-perishables are always in demand. Please bring **anything** you think would be appreciated. Consider donating spices. Spices allow cooks to add flavor to food without additional salt. Think about buying cumin, cinnamon, coriander, onion powder, garlic powder, cloves, oregano, basil, parsley, cayenne pepper, rosemary, thyme, bay leaves, or any other spices you commonly cook with.

Please keep your cans coming and place them in the pantry shelf. December's food of the month is canned soups, while January's is pantry items such as spices, flour, sugar, etc.

Christmas Lights

Our Christmas Lights gift card program is underway. Get a pre-loaded Wal-Mart gift card and Christmas card from Gary Barraco or Kim Starner. Simply fill out the greeting card and donate \$25 for each. These will be given to families to buy gifts, food, or other items to make their holiday better.

T-Shirts

Are you interested in starting a conversation about the amazing work you and your church take part in? Consider ordering a new t-shirt and strike up conversation as you wear it around town. Your shirt will be customized for you by shirt color, font color, and the wording displayed on the front and/or back. See Gary Barraco for orders.

Hoagie Sale

Keep watch for the Relay for Life Super Bowl hoagie sale information that will be coming mid-January.

Valentines for Vets

In January, we will begin our work on our valentines for vets. These will be sent to our men and women serving our country.



Parish Life

The crafts that were created at the annual Advent workshop will be given to our homebound friends on December 18th when we go caroling. Lunch will be served after worship that day before we leave for caroling. **Come spread some holiday cheer!**

Christian Education

Thank You

Thank you to all those who helped with the Children's service in October with organization, bulletin covers, and any other help that was provided.

Christmas Around the World

Please join us after worship on December 4th to learn about Christmas in other countries.

Christmas Pageant

Sunday School continues at 10AM each Sunday throughout the program year. During the month of December we continue to work on our Christmas Eve play, Christmas Star for the 4:00 service. There will also be a performance on Friday, December 23rd at 7PM. This play is written and directed by our own Thomas Rush. We greatly appreciate his dedication to this effort.

Music & Worship

Join us for each Sunday in Advent as we prepare for Christmas. Watch each week as we progressively decorate for Christmas.

Christmas Services

Please join us at **4PM** on Christmas Eve for our Children's service. It will include the play and hymns, as well as, candle-lighting.

At **8PM**, we will have our traditional Christmas Eve candlelight service. Come early for parking! On Sunday, December 25th, we will have our hymn sing for the 10AM service.

Call the Church Office When...

- A member of your family is admitted to the hospital so the proper people are notified.
- Your home phone, email address, or mailing address has changed.
- An addition to your family has occurred.
- You want your birthday and/or anniversary added to our newsletter list.
- You feel the church can help you in any way.

Is Church Canceled Today?

To find out this winter, or anytime, if Forks UCC services are canceled due to inclement weather, the Consistory has implemented procedures to notify the congregation.

The Forks UCC Congregation can find out if church is canceled the following ways:

- The cancellation notice will be sent out to members on the mass e-mail list
- The cancellation notice will be posted on the Church Webpage
- The cancellation notice will be posted on WFMZ.com & in extreme weather conditions on WFMZ TV
- Members who sign up will receive a phone call between 7:00 AM – 7:30 AM on the Sunday in question if services are cancelled. To sign up please let the Church office know or e-mail Jacob E. Allen at jacob.e.allen@gmail.com. Sign up using the yellow forms in each vestibule.

Please take advantage of these services to find out if church services are ever canceled.

Teen Prayer List

Abbie Buck, Tyler Avery, Larissa Bernecker, Sakura Bolte, Takumi Bolte, Masaki Bolte, Abbey Chesney, Brandon Cressman, Olivia DiPierdomenico, Sophia DiPierdomenico, Makayla Fleming, Christopher Flyte, Karlee Flyte, Ashleigh Gaul, Emily Gutekunst, Julia Gutekunst, Tommy Gutekunst, Derek Hammerstone, Diana Hammerstone, Emilee Hendricks, Abbi Hoke, Kyle Hoke, Michael Lopresti, Jayson Mitch, Rebecca Mitch, Tyler Mitch, Julia Ortiz, Georgia Pump, Hailey Quier, Ethan Riehl, Breanna Schneebeli, Cayden Shook, Alexandria Wood, Emma Wood

Confirmands

Abbie Buck, Evan Dugan, Derek Hammerstone, Kyle Hoke, Shanon McCollian, Tyler Mitch, Katelyn Raymond, Tanner Riehl, Cayden Shook, Tagan Steward, Landon Uhler

Visitation List

Please see the Church Directory or contact the Church office or a member of the visitation team for addresses. Earl & Dolly Abel, Fred Bolling, Mary Correll, Corinne Eberts, Tony Jiorle, Charles Kessler, Dorothy Kortz, Marge Markley, Winnie Mengle, Patti O'Donnell, Jane Rader, Florence Saylor, Irene Tenges, Fran Uhler, Marge (Koch) Ziegenfuss

Going Green

We would like to explore the option of our *Tidings* newsletter being emailed. We will be collecting your thoughts on this. Please email or call Alice Hornbake (wmbornbake@yahoo.com or 610-703-3095) **if you would like to continue** having a hard copy sent to your home.

Thank you!

Newsletter Submissions

If anyone wishes to submit any articles for the NEWSLETTER, please have all items emailed by the **20th of each month** to: wmbornbake@yahoo.com

Altar Flowers

Every Sunday the church has fresh flowers on the Altar. The flower arrangement costs \$30 weekly and provides an opportunity for you to sponsor them “in honor of” someone’s anniversary, birthday, etc. and also to present them “in memory of” those who have passed. The signup sheet is hanging in the NEW location in the front Vestibule. Please take a look at the calendar signup sheet and fill in any Sunday(s) that you want to sponsor. Write a check payable to Forks UCC with the memo “Altar Flowers” and simply drop it in the offering plate on Sunday. Thank you.

Altar Flower Sponsors for December

December 4 - Joan and Ron Mumaw
December 11 - Carolyn Mitch
December 18 - Fran Uhler
December 25 - Mike & Cathi Tirrell
January 1 - Shirley Thatcher



Those Serving

Ushers/Coin Collectors

December 4 - Jean Cooper
December 11 - Kim Starnier
December 18 - Ron Mumaw
December 24 - Sam and Jane Kemmerer (late service)
December 25 - VOLUNTEERS please

January 1 - VOLUNTEERS please
January 8 - Bob Zabe
January 15 - Jean Cooper
January 22 - Sam & Jane Kemmerer
January 29 - Steve and Diane Dewalt

Greeters/Offering Collectors

December 4 - Bob & Brenda Egolf/Carol & Dave Young
December 11 - Mel Kresge and Bob Zabe/Vic & Anna Zeeman
December 18 - Sandy Perrin and Barbara Huff/Joan Jud and Marguerite Obulaney
December 24 - Jean Cooper and Gregg Cressman (early service)/Debbie & Burt Ackerman and Bob & Dawn Trimble (late service)
December 25 - VOLUNTEERS please

January 1 - VOLUNTEERS please
January 8 - Sandy Fehnel and Debra Roth/Debbie & Steve Chesney
January 15 - Linda & Dick Armbrust/Char Lehman and Betty Stocker
January 22 - Louise Bruch and Jean Cooper/Donna Lee Cresina and Carol Hartway
January 29 - Sally DeWalt and Alice Bartholomew/Ron & Joan Mumaw

Celebrate with our Church Family

Happy December Birthdays

01 Carole Steckel	14 Diane Parker
01 Beverly Hendricks	15 Karen Bernecker
02 Rachele Starner	15 Kurt Berger
03 Jeff Stoudt	16 Margaret Ackerman
03 Kris Sales	17 Charles Prutzman Jr.
04 Miranda Harden	17 Tyler Avery
04 Connor Sikora	19 Anna Jones
05 Brenda DeLong	20 Carol Hartway
05 Amanda Knitter	20 Walter Francis Jr.
05 Logan Hancik	21 Jason Flyte
06 Karen DeJesso	22 Floyd Mohn
07 Arthur Brush	23 Char Lehman
07 Scott Hughes	25 Duane Edelheiser
07 Matt Dewalt	26 Renee Metzgar
07 Scott Hughes	28 Zachary Herres
10 Sam Kemmerer	29 Colton Keat
10 Richard Bartholomew	30 Doug Steckel
12 Bill Remaly	30 Cindi Wilson
12 Sophia Gleason	30 Jamie Schaadt-Psarras
13 Marguerite Obulaney	30 Grant Stackhouse
13 Joanne Mitch	



December Anniversaries

Joan & Ron Mumaw	12/06/1959
Alexandria & Matthew Dugan	12/06/2004
Kathy & Mike Boushell	12/27/1990
Lorna & Bill Dreisbach	12/22/1993
Sarah & Ryan Fry	12/31/2004

January Anniversaries

Sandy & Glenn Borger	1/02/1971
Elizabeth & Barry Durie	1/03/1970
Kim & Dale Starner	1/18/1975
Patti & Tim Weis	1/29/1983

Happy January Birthdays

01 Dale Lehman	16 Matthew Johnson
05 Dawn Trimble	17 Jermaine Schaadt
07 Joan Phillips	17 George Prutzman
08 Carol Young	18 Sarah Rutt
08 Ed Gable	18 Joe Herres
09 Chuck Hartway	18 Katie Barrick
09 Denise Polkowski	19 Al Stecker
10 Brian Berger	19 Pam Davis
10 Patti O'Donnell	21 Gary Fleming
10 Adia Wagner	22 Josh Starner
11 Joan Jud	23 Earl Abel*
11 Verna Bolte	23 Earl Rohn
11 Beth Schatzel	24 David Reinman
13 Bobbi Ricci	24 Jenifer Schaadt
13 Brent Wood	25 Sherry Prutzman
14 Amy Barrick	26 Rebecca Mitch
14 Paul Polkowski	27 Alexis Happel
14 Bethany Francis	29 Jim Laudenslager
	31 Michel DeJesso

Earl Abel celebrates his
90th birthday on January
23rd. Happy birthday
Earl!

December 2016						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
4 2nd Sunday of Advent 10AM Communion 12:30-2PM <u>Christmas Star Rehearsal</u>	5	6 6:30PM Music & Worship	7 6PM Handbell Choir 7:15PM Sanctuary Choir 6-7:30PM <u>Christmas Star Rehearsal</u>	8	9	10
11 3rd Sunday of Advent 12:30-2PM <u>Christmas Star Rehearsal</u>	12 7PM Stewardship/ Finance	13 6:30PM Consistory Christmas Party	14 6PM Handbell Choir 7:15PM Sanctuary Choir 6-7:30PM <u>Christmas Star Rehearsal</u>	15	16	17
18 4th Sunday of Advent Caroling after Worship 12:30-2PM <u>Christmas Star Rehearsal</u>	19	20 6:30PM Mission and Action	21 6PM Handbell Choir 7:15PM Sanctuary Choir 6-7:30PM <u>Christmas Star Rehearsal</u>	22	23 7PM <u>Christmas Star Production</u>	24 Christmas Eve 4PM Children's/ Family Service - <u>Christmas Star</u> 8PM Traditional Service with all choirs. Candle lighting at both services.
25 Christmas Day Alleluia! Jesus is born! NO 8AM service	26	27	28	29	30	31

Sundays
8AM - Meditative Worship
10AM - Worship/Children's Sunday School

January 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 New Year's Day NO 8AM service	2	3 6:30PM Music & Worship	4	5	6 Epiphany Read Matthew 2:1-12	7
8 The Baptism of Christ	9 7PM Stewardship/ Finance	10 6PM Spiritual Council 7PM Consistory Meeting	11	12	13	14
15 2nd Sunday after Epiphany	16	17 6:30PM Mission and Action	18 7:15PM Sanctuary Choir Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Jan. 18-25	19	20	21
22 3rd Sunday after Epiphany	23 6:30PM Adult Fellowship	24 6:30PM Parish Life	25 7:15PM Sanctuary Choir	26	27	28 Parish Life Dance at Jacobs Farm
29 4th Sunday after Epiphany Men's Choir sings	30 7PM Christian Ed.	31	Notes:			

Sundays
8AM - Meditative Worship
10AM - Worship/Children's Sunday School

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Christmas

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