

What We've Been Up To...

Advent

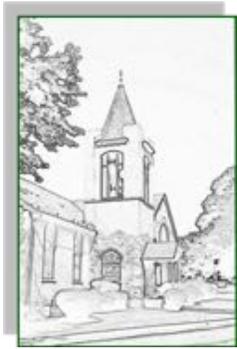


A Christmas Carol



caroling





When I first started coming back to church and exploring Christianity after several years away, I didn't really want anybody to know about it. I remember checking out some Christian websites when I was on my breaks at work, and quickly clicking on to something else if someone would walk past my cubicle...I didn't want them to know what I was doing. When a friend of mine caught me wearing a bracelet that read, "W.W.J.D."- "What Would Jesus Do?"- she said, "I didn't know you were a Christian", I quickly made up an excuse, "Oh, a friend of mine just gave this to me...I just liked the color." I wasn't comfortable sharing my faith with anybody because I didn't really know all that much about it, and I didn't want people to think I was some kind of "Holy Roller" or something.

Even now, when I am a pastor and sharing my faith with others is part of the deal, it's not always easy. Some of my friends who are atheists ridicule me for my faith. Others want to put me on the spot because my actions don't always live up to the teachings of Jesus.

Sharing faith with others isn't easy. Unfortunately, it is necessary. There's a reason that "The Way" or "Following Jesus" or whatever Christianity was called two thousand years ago evolved from a small, scared group of uneducated fishermen into the dominant religion of Western civilization- because people were willing to share their faith...and they risked a lot more than just social discomfort and embarrassment.

Writer and preacher, Quinn Caldwell, in a recent UCC Daily Devotional, reflects on the passage from Acts that reads, "*In the first book...I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles...*" and says, "At some point, Disciples turn into Apostles. In this passage, Jesus evolves the Disciples into Apostles, readying them to be sent out with a message. I for one am glad they let it happen; if they had chosen not to change, Christianity would have died when they did." He goes on to ask, "What stage of Christian evolution are you in? Do you go to church, try to live a good life, and leave it at that? Or do you talk with other people about it as well? For the sake of everyone else in the break room who doesn't know how sweet faith can be, isn't it time to stand up to that loud atheist/fundamentalist/whatever at work?"

It's amazing to me how much of our lives we share with one another nowadays via social media posts. We share our travels, we share recipes, we share relationship struggles, we share D.I.Y. videos, we share our opinions on politics and sports. Why not share our faith as well? I would guess that every member of Forks United Church of Christ would think that their church, and their faith as well, is at least as important in their lives as all of these other things we share so easily.

Caldwell, in his reflection, goes on to suggest, "Do what one member of my church does: she periodically sets her Facebook status to something like, "Can't wait for church tomorrow! Anybody want to go with and then get brunch after?" You'd be surprised how many take her up on it. Or you could just be sure your FB profile lists your religion and a link to your church. Or you could write a letter to the editor—explicitly as a Christian—on an issue of the day. Or...well, you get the point: be creative. Do you think Christianity—or your flavor of it—matters enough to be kept alive, or are you happy to let it die with you? If the latter, then enjoy your discipleship. If the former, it's time to evolve."

Blessings,

Pastor Bob

Evangelism and Outreach

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. February's food of the month is breakfast items.

Thank You

We supported the Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley when we collected Holiday Hope Chests in November. This year 6,056 boxes were collected in total. Thank you for your support of this important program!

Christian Education

Christmas Pageant

Thank you to everyone involved in this year's production of A Christmas Carol. Specials thanks to Pastor Bob, Tootsie Ortiz, and the cast. It was wonderful!

Congregational Meeting

The February Congregational Meeting will be on Sunday, February 25, 2018.

Donation Requested

The church is in need of a color printer. The estimated cost with back up cartridges is \$575. If someone from the congregation is inspired with the generosity to donate this item, or a portion of it, please contact the church office for details. Thank you.

Welcome

We are thrilled to welcome Anthony Newett as our new music director. Please say hello on Sunday!

Many Thanks

Eric Hanlein and Gary Barraco have been working daily and diligently on the efficiency apartment in the Memorial home. Eric came up with some unique and efficient designs which certainly improved the attractiveness of the apartment! It will be ready to rent by March. Any interested individuals can contact the Church Office for an application. Thanks to all who participated in this renovation. This includes: Eric, Gary, Jim, Glen, Steve, Sandy, Moe, and Jacob.

Making ConneXions

We are eager to know more about the people who worship with us. If you would like to share yourself and “make a connection”, please email Alice Hornbake (wmhornbake@yahoo.com) for the form. Thank you!

Featuring:

Betsy Warner from Nazareth, PA is a Healthcare Executive Search Consultant and has been attending Forks UCC for 18 years:

★If you had to describe yourself in five words, what would they be?
kind, compassionate, dedicated, spiritual, reliable

★What accomplishment are you most proud of and why?
I am most proud of the job that my husband and I have done in raising our son to be an intelligent, fun, handsome and recently engaged 24 year old!

★Where do you like to vacation?
My favorite place to vacation is Cape Cod, Massachusetts. We travel to Barnstable which is in the middle of Cape Cod and often go to Chatham, Osterville and Yarmouth for great shopping and restaurants. CC is fun no matter what time of year, but we particularly like going there in the fall.

★What’s on your bucket list?
My bucket list includes travel to places I have not been to, such as Hawaii, Alaska, and Colorado.

★If you could change something in the world, what would it be?
I would love to see all people, regardless of ability or disability, be fully accepted and valued in society. I grew up with a brother with Down Syndrome and I have a special place in my heart for those who are challenged with physical and/or intellectual disabilities. Everyone has a gift to give – but those who receive those gifts must do so without condition or prejudice.

★What will be your legacy?
I hope that I will leave this earth knowing that I have given support and encouragement to everyone in my family. Hopefully they will also remember all of the silly things I have done over the years!



Kaitlin Grogg from Easton, PA is a junior in high school and has been attending Forks UCC since April 2017:

★If you had to describe yourself in five words, what would they be?

Kind, Funny, Smart, Responsible, Outgoing

★What accomplishment are you most proud of and why?

Making it to the semi-finals in states for tennis

★Where do you like to vacation?

Florida

★What's on your bucket list?

To travel out of the country

★Which of your parents are you most like and why?

My dad because we are both athletic, fearless, and we have the same sense of humor.



Altar Flowers

If you would like to sponsor altar flowers, select your Sunday and affix your name and intention (“In honor of” or “In memory of” or “To the Glory of God”). The arrangements are \$30. Another way of showing your love is to opt out of having flowers, rather choosing to have a single candle on the altar and your flower money will be donated to a charity of your choice. This is a powerful way to honor the day but make a difference in our world. Please make checks payable to “Forks UCC” with the notation “Altar Flowers”. Simply drop your payment in the offering plate. Thank you.

Altar Flower Sponsors for February

February 4 - OPEN

February 11 - OPEN

February 18 - OPEN

February 25 - Mike & Cathi Tirrell

**March 4th is also open. Please see the tripod in the main narthex to sign up.

Those Serving

Greeters/Offering Collectors

February 4 - Chuck & Carol Hartway/Brenda DeLong and Joan Mumaw

February 11 - Carol & Dave Young/Dawn Trimble and Jean Cooper

February 18 - Alice and Eleanore Hornbake/Rocky Starner and Rita Blossey

February 25 - Sandy Perrine and Amy Richard/Julie and Kaitlin Grogg

Celebrate with our Church Family

Happy February Birthdays

01 Cathy Tirrell	16 Ann Bauman
03 Vilma Milham	16 Dale Wilson
05 Cayden Shook	16 Kim Edelheiser
05 Samantha Shook	16 David Warner
05 Gabrielle Francis	19 Pauline Frace
08 Bob Zabe	21 Gloria Burkos
08 Diane Dewalt	21 Shelby McCollian
08 Alan Hartzell	22 Will Hornbake
09 Nick Hendricks	23 Kim Starner
10 Shannon McCollian	23 Chris Mumaw
11 Tyler Mitch	24 Dolly Abel*
13 Jennifer Wood	25 Patti Starner
15 Roger Keat	26 Ron Mumaw
15 Ruth Gable	26 Violet Ortiz
15 Lily Ringhoff	26 Abigail Audenried
15 Jakob Herres	26 Devon Clifton
15 Allison Silfies	28 Judy Kinsey



*Best wishes to Dolly Abel who celebrates her 91st birthday!

If your name does not appear in the birthday or anniversary section and you would like it listed, please contact the church office.

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.

Confirmands

Ashley Cressman, Evan Dugan, Gavin Gaul, Hannah Gutekunst, Shanon McCollian, William McNally, Tanner Riehl, Samantha Shook, Tagan Steward, Landon Uhler, Riley Williams

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, Dorthy Kortz, Florence Saylor, Perma Seiple, Irene Tenges, Bonnie Warren, Marge (Koch) Ziegenfuss



February 2018						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 5th Sunday after Epiphany Communion <i>Pick up of Relay for Life hoagies after Worship</i>	5	6	7 1PM Study Group 6PM Handbell Choir 7PM Sanctuary Choir 6:30-8PM Open Support Group	8	9	10 9AM-2PM Stand Up for Homelessness 4:30-7PM Spaghetti Dinner to benefit youth
11 6th Sunday after Epiphany	12 7PM Stewardship and Finance	13 6PM Spiritual Council 7PM Consistory	14 1PM Study Group 6PM Handbell Choir 7PM Sanctuary Choir 7PM Ash Wednesday Worship	15	16	17
18 1st Sunday of Lent	19	20 6:30PM Evangelism and Outreach	21 1PM Study Group 6PM Handbell Choir 7PM Sanctuary Choir 6:30-8PM Open Support Group Lenten Worship	22	23	24 Alternative Worship
25 2nd Sunday of Lent <i>Winter Congregational Meeting after Worship</i>	26 7PM Christian Education	27 6:30PM Parish Life	28 6PM Handbell Choir 7PM Sanctuary Choir Lenten Worship	Lenten gatherings with area churches Soup and Fellowship 6-6:45PM Worship 6:45-7:30PM 2/21 - Forks UCC 2/28 - Grace Lutheran Church, 5907 Sullivan Trail		

Sundays
8AM - Meditative Worship
10AM - Worship

