

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....



Outdoor Fellowship

Thanksgiving Baskets



Pumpkin Painting

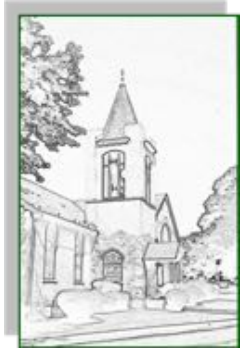
All Saints Sunday

Forks UCC Art Series



Youth Group Roller Skating





As I write this we are preparing to experience, in a couple of days, one of the coldest Thanksgiving holidays on record. This morning, the temperature is barely above thirty degrees. Yet this morning, as I pulled myself out of bed, I heard a bird chirping outside my bedroom window. I thought to myself, “Why hasn’t that bird flown south for the Winter? Doesn’t that bird know it’s not supposed to be here?” The song of that bird seemed so out of place.

As we approach the seasons of Advent and Christmas in the church, and reflect upon the mission and existence of the church itself, we might feel that the church and the celebration of those seasons of the church are a bit out of place in the world in which we live. During the four weeks of Advent, we lift up the themes of hope, peace, joy and love. I wonder how many of us actually strive to practice those virtues in the weeks leading up to Christmas? On Black Friday, we begin, in earnest, the Christmas shopping frenzy (although, truthfully, it began for most folks a few weeks ago already). We begin to practice, in earnest, what many in our society consider to be our true civil religion, “consumerism.” Many people in our society would probably feel more comfortable lifting up the themes of stress, greed, fear and anxiety for the four weeks leading up to Christmas. The message of Advent seems out of place.

Bible scholar, Walter Brueggemann, in an interview that I watched, says that the church, and the message and the mission of the church *needs* to be out of place in the world in which we live. Brueggemann describes the ideology of our society as “military consumerism”, the promise of safety and happiness, and says that this ideology has created in our society a pervasive sense of what he calls, “frightened anxiety.” The church needs to be disentangled from the dominant narrative of our culture, Brueggemann says, in order to undertake what he believes are the critical tasks of the church, which he lists as: 1. Telling the truth about our society 2. Witnessing to a way of living that is alternative to the culture in which we live 3. Changing public attitudes and policy in our society. The church needs to be out of place to do the work we are called to do. If we practiced forgiveness instead of vengeance, if we practiced hospitality instead of exclusion, if we practiced generosity instead of consumerism, we might actually experience hope, peace, joy and love instead of stress, greed, fear and anxiety in the weeks to come.

We have been trying some new things in worship over the last year or so, trying to be creative and open-minded in terms of experiencing God’s presence in our midst, but the reality is that the hour of worship is not a concert, it’s not a comedy club, it’s not entertainment. It’s church, and it’s supposed to be different. You may have noticed that I’ve taken to wearing a robe and employing a few more formal liturgical practices in worship. It’s not just because I look good in a robe. These are minor details, to be sure, but they remind us that the time of worship is supposed to feel different from the rest of our lives, that the experience of God’s presence should be something that transcends our culture.

During the season of Advent, we will be proclaiming a message, in worship, that the gifts of the season might actually help us to look at life a little differently. And our Christmas play, “Miracle on 34th Street”, while not overtly religious in theme, proclaims a message that is contrary to the consumerism and materialism that so many people demonstrate at this time of the year. I hope you will be able to join us for these experiences. I hope you will experience God’s presence in the upcoming seasons. And I hope that you will remember that the church is meant to be out of place, and that is a good thing.

Happy Advent and Merry Christmas,

Pastor Bob

Evangelism and Outreach

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.

Emergency Prayer Chain

An outreach for prayer when you or someone you know and love has an emergency, unexpected surgery, accident, etc. The place to call is:

- Church Office - (610) 759-5676
- Lois Steward - (610) 759-3519
- Rita Blossey - (484) 373-0614

One of us will start the chain. Anyone who would like to join our Emergency Prayer Chain, please call Lois Steward or Rita Blossey at the numbers listed above.

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 vestibule. Order and money (\$7.50/plant) are due to the Church Office.

Donations

All donations should be 'in the office' (allow time if mailing) no later than December 27th at noon to receive credit for 2018. Any donations received after the 27th will be credited to 2019. Thank you. Anyone wishing to know "where they are" with contributions, please do not hesitate to call the church office (Mon.-Thurs.).

Parish Life

Advent Workshop

Please join us on December 16th to create a craft for yourself and our homebound friends. We will work on these after Worship.

Caroling

The crafts that were created at the annual Advent workshop will be given to our homebound friends on December 30th when we go caroling. Lunch will be served after worship that day before we leave for caroling. **Come spread some holiday cheer!**

Stewardship and Finance

As Christmas approaches, we ask that you remember Forks UCC in your holiday plans. While shopping for gifts and gatherings with loved ones, please consider setting aside part of your budget to support the work of our Church with a tax-deductible charitable donation.

The CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING (sometimes called Veterans of the Cross Offering) is an expression of appreciation and caring to those who served as clergy (and certain lay employees) who are now retired or disabled and financially strained. During this holy time of year, the offering is a profound gift. It helps provide pension supplements, health premium subsidies, emergency assistance to active or retired clergy families, and Christmas gift checks to hundreds of retirees and to those who are disabled. You will find the special offering envelope in your boxed set. Thank you.

Thank You

We would like to thank all of you for your kindness and support during this difficult time. The outpouring of support and generosity our family received was greatly appreciated. Pastor Bob's service was such a beautiful tribute to Jim and was truly representative of who he was and the life he lived. Rick Taylor's solo was very powerful and had me clinging to every word. The donations of food and the Adult Fellowship's work throughout the luncheon was invaluable. We also found comfort in the beautiful cards and kind notes that we received. We are truly blessed to have such a wonderful church family. ~ Sandy Schaadt and Family

Creative Worship

Forks Children's Choir

During Advent, we will be starting a children's choir. The choir will sing periodically throughout Advent. Rehearsals will take place after Worship. Please contact Anthony Newett (215-805-4353) if your child is interested in participating.

Christmas Services

Please join us at **4PM** on Christmas Eve for our Children's service. It will include the play and hymns. At **8PM**, we will have our traditional Christmas Eve candlelight service. Come early for parking!

Stained Glass Window

Have you taken notice that the stained glass window in the Social Hall is missing? It will be out for the next couple of months as it is being refurbished. This is just the third window being refurbished out of our 14 windows that need to be refurbished over the next few years. This is a very expensive process. How is it being paid for? Our fundraisers over the past couple of years have been designated for this expense, as well as portions of our Rummage Sale profit will be donated by the Adult Fellowship. We also have families who have donated their loved ones memorials to this project. If at anytime you wish to contribute to the window refurbishing projects please let the church office or Jacob Allen know or simply put your donation in the offering plate marked "Stained Glass". Thank you for your continued support.

Christian Education

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, Miracle on 34th St. for the 4:00 service. There will also be a performance on Saturday, December 22nd at 7PM. Thank you to Pastor Bob for adapting this play for our children.

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.

Offering Envelopes

Do you use your offering envelopes? If not, please contact Cheryl in the church office (610-759-5676) to cancel your order. These envelopes are purchased and if you are giving electronically, we'd rather not waste the paper and money. Thank you!

Forks UCC Art Series

Our third presentation will be from the Easton Municipal Band. They will be performing Christmas songs at Forks UCC on Sunday, December 9th at 2PM. Refreshments will be available for purchase.

Vitality Days

A leadership group attended a seminar in September and again November, provided through the PNEC called Vitality Days. The core group has a deep love of the church and its family, wants the church to prosper, create more energy, and grow in faith with a renewed mission and purpose. The first session was about transformational worship. Please see a member of the team to discuss changes you've experienced in Worship and your feelings. They are eager for feedback. Your Vitality Team is: Bob Gutekunst, Margaret Zabe, Gary Barraco, Rocky Starner, Kim Starner, Lois Steward, Sandy Borger, Glenn Borger, Carolyn Mitch, Brenda DeLong, and Alice Hornbake.



Rummage Sale Thanks

A big thank you to everyone involved in the rummage sale this year. It is a very big job to set up for the event, sort through the goods, man the actual sale, cook in the kitchen, and clean up everything afterward. It is more than a week's worth of preparations each year. This year we had record sales bringing in \$6,576.83.

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 Guild for December -

Altar Flower Sponsors for December

December 2 - Joan & Ron Mumaw
December 9 - Lori Rowlands
December 16 - Carolyn Mitch
December 23 - Cathi & Mike Tirrell
December 30 - Sandy Schaadt & Family

***The 2019 flower chart will be posted on an easel in the Social Room in early December.

Those Serving

Ushers/Coin Collectors

December 2 - Sam Kemmerer	January 6 - Glenn Borger
December 9 - Steve Dewalt	January 13 - Robert Zabe
December 16 - Bob Zabe	January 20 - Steve Dewalt
December 23 - Bill Dreisbach	January 27 - Mel Kresge
December 24 - Burt Ackerman	
December 30 - Jim Milham	

Greeters/Offering Collectors

December 2 - Lori Avery & Barb Huff/Lori Raolaidis and Mike Brueningsen
December 9 - Sandy Perrine & Brenda DeLong/Amy Richards & Rocky Starner
December 16 - Louise Bruch & Rita Blossey/Bill and Lorna Dreisbach
December 23 - Gary and Ruth Gardever/Lorraine and Mel Kresge
December 24 - Cressman family/Dawn and Bob Trimble
December 30 - Barb Huff & Kim Starner/Margaret and Bob Zabe

January 6 - Carol and Dave Young/Joan Jud & Sarah Happel
January 13 - Joan and Ron Mumaw/Deb and Burt Ackerman
January 20 - Barb Huff & Rocky Starner/Sharon Merluzzi & Carolyn Mitch
January 27 - Sandy and Glenn Borger/Jane & Sam Kemmerer

Celebrate with our Church Family

Happy December Birthdays

01 Carole Steckel	13 Joanne Mitch
01 Beverly Hendricks	14 Diane Parker
02 Rachelle Starner	15 Karen Bernecker
03 Jeff Stoudt	16 Margaret Ackerman
03 Kris Sales	16 Chris Jesson
04 Miranda Harden	17 Charles Prutzman Jr.
05 Brenda DeLong	17 Tyler Avery
05 Amanda Williams	20 Carol Hartway
05 Logan Hancik	20 Walter Francis Jr.
06 Karen DeJesso	22 Shelbi McGraw
07 Arthur Brush	22 Floyd Mohn
07 Matt Dewalt	25 Duane Edelheiser
10 Sam Kemmerer	28 Zachary Herres
10 Richard Bartholomew	29 Colton Keat
12 Bill Remaly	30 Eric Hanlein
12 Sophia Gleason	30 Doug Steckel
13 Marguerite Obulaney	30 Jamie Schaadt-Psarras
	30 Grant Stackhouse



December Anniversaries

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

Happy January Birthdays

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

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

Earl Abel celebrates his
92nd birthday on January
23rd. Happy birthday
Earl!

Confirmands

Ashley Cressman, Tyler Grogg, Hannah Gutekunst, Samantha Shook, 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, Corinne Eberts, Tony Jiorle, Dorothy Kortz, Marge Markley, Florence Saylor, Irene Tenges, Bonnie Warren

December 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 1st Sunday of Advent Communion	3	4	5 6PM Handbell Choir 7PM Sanctuary Choir	6	7	8
9 2nd Sunday of Advent 2PM Easton Municipal Band	10 7PM Stewardship and Finance	11 6PM Spiritual Council 6:30PM Consistory	12 6PM Handbell Choir 7PM Sanctuary Choir	13	14	15
16 3rd Sunday of Advent Advent Workshop	17 6:30PM Adult Fellowship	18	19 6PM Handbell Choir 7PM Sanctuary Choir	20	21	22 7PM <u>Miracle on 34th St.</u> performance
23 4th Sunday of Advent	24 4PM Children's Service: <u>Miracle on 34th St.</u> performance 8PM Traditional Service with all choirs	25 Hark! The herald angels sing, glory to the newborn King... Merry Christmas to all!	26	27	28	29
30 1st Sunday after Christmas Hymn Sing Caroling after Worship	31 Watch Night Matthew 25:31-46					

Sundays
8AM - Meditative Worship
10AM - Worship

January 2019						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 NEW YEAR'S DAY Matthew 25:31-46	2	3	4	5
6 EPIPHANY – Three Kings Day Matthew 2:1-12 Communion	7 7PM Stewardship and Finance	8 6PM Spiritual Council 7PM Consistory	9	10	11	12
13 THE BAPTISM OF JESUS Luke 3:15-17, 21-22	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 2 nd SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY Ecumenical Sunday	21 NO Adult Fellowship in Jan./Feb.	22	23	24	25	26
27 3 rd SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY	28 7PM Christian Ed.	29 6:30PM Parish Life	30	31	Jan. 18 – 25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	

Sundays
8AM - Meditative Worship
10AM - Worship



