

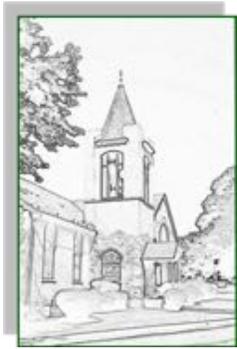
## What We've Been Up To...



All Saints  
Sunday

Alternative Worship





This year, I am excited that for our Christmas Play, we are performing a version of one of my favorite Christmas movies, “The Polar Express.” I think that one of the reasons that “The Polar Express” is one of my favorites is that, unlike many other favorite Christmas movies, it actually is a little scary at times...disturbing...unsettling...and that’s what makes it exciting, I think. I’m not sure that our version of the story will quite capture that element of fright- our kids might just be too darn cute to pull that off!- but we will do our best! Most people, I would imagine, when thinking about traditional Christmas stories, imagine scenes of comfort, cozy gatherings, Christmas cheer, peace and goodwill toward all people, glad tidings of joy...this is what the season is about, after all!

Of course, we know that the original Christmas story that we read and hear in church every year was, in fact, pretty scary at times...quite disturbing at times...and more than a little unsettling. Mary was a young, teenage girl, probably around the age of 14, when she became pregnant before she was officially married, and pregnant by someone other than the man she was engaged to, an event which, the Bible tells us, could have led to public disgrace in that time and place. Mary and Joseph, in Matthew’s version of the story, have to flee to Egypt to escape the murderous intentions of King Herod, who himself is deeply disturbed by the arrival of Jesus, and whose fear manifests itself in very disturbing behavior. Then there’s the character of Joseph. He has to deal with the knowledge that the woman who he is engaged to has become pregnant, and he is not the father! I heard a priest once suggest that there was a reason that Joseph did not live to a ripe, old age. “He had to live with two people who were perfect. How could you live with that? I’ve had to live with people who thought they were perfect, and that was bad enough!” When we consider all of the elements of this story, we understand the reason that the angel, Gabriel, in Luke’s version of the story, needs to say to Mary, “Do not be afraid.” Yet, even in considering all of the scary, and disturbing, and unsettling elements of the story, Mary responds to God with a “Yes”... “May your word to me be fulfilled.”

I read about a college professor, teaching a class on the New Testament, and he spoke about how Matthew and Luke wrote two different versions of the Christmas story, and how the wise men appeared in only one of them, while the shepherds and angels appeared in the other. A student came up to him in tears after the class, and said to him, “You’ve ruined my Nativity scene forever!” That is, perhaps, a little dramatic, but the unsettling aspects of the Christmas story might cause to reflect upon the ways that God’s entrance into our lives may, at times, unsettle us as well.

How might we, for example, respond to the strangers in our midst, those “others”, who do not look like us, or speak like us, or think like us? How do we deal with our fears and insecurities, especially when it appears that others around us are doing better than we are? How do we manage the uncertainties and lack of control that are most certainly a part of all of our lives, at one point or another? When God’s guidance and direction leads us away from comfort, and peace, and cheer, might we, like Mary, still say “Yes!” to God’s disturbances in our lives? Some thoughts to consider, as we read and hear, once again, this familiar and beloved story.

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,

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.**

## Hoagies

Orders to support Relay for Life will be taken in January. Get ready for your Super Bowl feast!

## Stewardship and Finance

You can always give your special offerings (envelopes) online at:

<https://forksucc.breezechms.com/give/online>

The special offerings this month are as follows:

12/1 - maintenance and repair fund

12/8 - UCC Christmas Fund

12/24 - Christmas Eve Fund

Please note those words in the "comment" box while completing your online gift to allow your gift to be moved into the correct account.

## Barrels, again!

Beginning in September we started paying for our Fuel Oil for the heating season. We have entered into a contract with Fogels Fuel again at a price of \$2.459. Our monthly payments are \$860 a month. Again this year we are hoping you help us by buying "Barrels of Oil" for \$50 a barrel. We need 173 barrels to complete our goal. You will find "Barrels of Oil" Envelopes in the pews and vestibules beginning in September. Together we can ensure we can worship in a warm sanctuary all throughout the cold winter.

## 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!

## Creative Worship

### 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!

### Youth Group

Youth Group meetings will continue the first Sunday of each month immediately following worship. If you would like to be involved and can't make a meeting or simply have ideas, please contact Lois Steward at 610-759-3519.

### 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](mailto: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.**

### 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 event helps so many by allowing some to clean out their homes, others to acquire goods at a substantial discount, and most importantly, some to take what they need for free. If you haven't done so already, **please** consider volunteering your time for this event next year. This year's profit was \$8, 056.32, an all new record!

## Christian Education

### Christmas Pageant

Sunday School continues at 10AM each Sunday throughout the program year. During the months of November and December we continue to work on our Christmas Eve play, The Polar Express for the 4:00 service.

### 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 Blossy - (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 Blossy 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 30th at 9:15AM to receive credit for 2019. Any donations received after the 30th will be credited to 2020. Thank you. Anyone wishing to know "where they are" with contributions, please do not hesitate to call the church office (Mon.-Thurs.).

### Forks UCC Art Series

Our next presentation will be from the Easton Municipal Band. They will be performing Christmas songs at Forks UCC on Sunday, December 8th at 2PM.

## Thank You!

Thank you to all those who participated in our annual Pork and Sauerkraut Dinner. This year we set an all new dinner record with \$2,012 profit. Special thanks to Brenda and Jeff Stoudt for donating toward the pork and making our homemade sauerkraut and to Jacob Allen for donating toward food and advertising for the dinner.

## Spaghetti Dinner

Our annual spaghetti dinner will be held on Saturday, January 25th from 4:30-7PM. Tickets will be available around Christmas. Tickets are \$11 in advance and \$12 at the door. All proceeds benefit our youth activities.

## Pictures Needed!

Our new church directory is underway. We are in need of pictures of the Life at Forks Church. Please send any pictures you may have of our events or Worship services, Sunday School, etc. to Jacob Allen ([Jacob.e.allen@gmail.com](mailto:Jacob.e.allen@gmail.com)). Thank you!

## Parish Life

### Advent Workshop

Please join us on December 8th 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 29th when we go caroling. Lunch will be served after worship that day before we leave for caroling. **Come spread some holiday cheer!**

### Save the Date

Our annual dance this year will be on Saturday, February 8th from 7-10PM.

## Adult Fellowship

Our yearly Adult Fellowship Christmas party will be on Monday, December 16th at 6:30PM. Ham will be provided. Please bring a covered dish to share and a \$5 gift. **All are welcome and encouraged to join us in fellowship!**

## Good Reads



Welcome to our section sharing what we're reading now. Please send your recommendations to [wmbornbake@yahoo.com](mailto:wmbornbake@yahoo.com) to be featured next month.

### In the Lingering Light; Courage and Hope for the Alzheimer's Caregiver by Cynthia Fantasia

*"Alzheimer's is a particularly cruel disease. It robs us of the people we love—slowly, subtly, but unrelentingly. Our love for them is tested as their needs increase and their recall decreases, and our own needs suffer neglect as more and more of our time and attention is given to our loved one. Cynthia Fantasia is a caregiver. In this deeply understanding and empowering work she walks you through the landscape of caregiving—for your loved one and for yourself. She introduces you to friends and fellow travelers who offer their own words of empathy and insight. And she slowly, subtly, but unrelentingly empowers you to live well as you care for your loved one in the lingering light."* Synopsis courtesy of Amazon.com

Recommended by Betsy Warner

### **A reading for December 24<sup>th</sup> :**

#### **'SAVORING THE GIFT OF GRACE'**

*Be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ~ 2 Timothy 2:1*

*It's time!* The preparations are finished, the gifts wrapped, the decorations hung.  
*It's time!* Time to kneel. Time to adore. Time to worship.

*Listen!* Savor God's grace:

*For you . . . (Yes, you!)*

*Is born . . . (In humility too deep for words)*

*This day . . . (God's gift for now and forever)*

*A Savior . . . (Bringing forgiveness, hope, peace)*

*Christ . . . (Messiah, the long-promised One)*

*The LORD . . . (Your King!)*

Let your heavenly Father's undeserved love enfold you. Let it hold your rapt attention.

Meditate on love so deep,

So vast, so high.

This night, this holy night, Life – eternal Life – lies sleeping in Bethlehem's manger.

This night, this holy night, Light – inextinguishable Light – has begun to shine.

Savor the goodness of your God! Ponder the love beyond all telling!

Christ, the Savior, is born! Oh come, let us worship him!

*It's time!*

*~ Jane L. Fryar*

Submitted by Cheryl Hahn

## 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 December

December 1 - Brenda Guavy

December 8 - Ron and Joan Mumaw

December 15 - Carolyn Mitch

December 22 - Mike and Cathy Tirrell

December 29 - Shirley Letson

\*\*\*The 2020 flower chart will be posted on an easel in the Social Room in early December.

## Those Serving

### Ushers/Coin Collectors

December 1 - Ron Mumaw

December 8 - Sam Kemmerer

December 15 - Bob Zabe

December 22 - Steve Dewalt

December 24 - Glenn Borger

December 29 - Burt Ackerman

January 5 - Steve Dewalt

January 12 - Gregg Cressman

January 19 - Ron Mumaw

January 26 - Bob Zabe

### Greeters/Offering Collectors

December 1 - Carol and Dave Young/Vic and Anna Zeeman

December 8 - Brenda DeLong & Rita Blossey/Joan Jud & Sarah Happel

December 15 - Joan and Ron Mumaw/Sam and Jane Kemmerer

December 22 - Sharon Merluzzi & Bobbi Ricci/Carla Solt & Maggie Obulaney

December 24 - Debbie Hartzell & Cindy Aicher/Jean Cooper & Lori Rowlands

December 29 - Barb Huff & Rocky Starner/Lori Avery & Amy Knitter

January 5 - Lorna and Bill Dreisbach/Carolyn Mitch & Sandy Perrine

January 12 - Mike and Cathy Tirrell/Glenn and Sandy Borger

January 19 - Deb and Burt Ackerman/Margaret and Bob Zabe

January 26 - Barb Huff & Rocky Starner/Cressman Family

## Celebrate with our Church Family

### Happy December Birthdays

01 Carole Steckel	14 Diane Parker
01 Beverly Hendricks	15 Karen Bernecker
02 Rachelle Starner	15 Kurt Berger
03 Jeff Stoudt	16 Margaret Ackerman
03 Kris Sales	17 Charles Prutzman Jr.
05 Brenda DeLong	17 Tyler Avery
05 Amanda Williams	19 Anna Jones
05 Logan Hancik	20 Carol Hartway
06 Karen DeJesso	20 Walter Francis Jr.
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 Jamie Schaadt-Psarras
13 Marguerite Obulaney	30 Grant Stackhouse
13 Joanne Mitch	



### December Anniversaries

Joan & Ron Mumaw	12/06/1959
Lorna & Bill Dreisbach	12/22/1993
Sarah & Ryan Fry	12/31/2004

### Happy January Birthdays

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

### 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

### Confirmands

Tyler Grogg, Jacob Hackman

### Visitation List

Please see the Church Directory or contact the Church office or a member of the visitation team for addresses.  
Fred Bolling, Corinne Eberts, Bob Egolf, Dorthy Kortz, Florence Saylor, Betty Stocker, Irene Tenges, Bonnie Warren

## December 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> 1st Sunday of Advent - Psalm 122 Communion			<b>4</b> 6PM Handbell Choir 7PM Sacred Choir			
<b>8</b> 2nd Sunday of Advent - Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 Advent Workshop 2PM Easton Municipal Band	<b>9</b> 7PM Stewardship and Finance	<b>10</b> 6PM Spiritual Council 6:30PM Consistory	<b>11</b> 6PM Handbell Choir 7PM Sacred Choir			
<b>15</b> 3rd Sunday of Advent - Psalm 146:5-10	<b>16</b> 6:30PM Adult Fellowship		<b>18</b> 6PM Handbell Choir 7PM Sacred Choir			
<b>22</b> 4th Sunday of Advent - Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 UCC Christmas Fund Mission Offering 1PM <u>The Polar Express</u> performance		<b>24</b> 4PM Children's Service: <u>The Polar Express</u> performance 8PM Traditional Service with all choirs	<b>25</b> Christmas Day Jesus is born, Alleluia! John 1:1-14			
<b>29</b> 1st Sunday after Christmas - Matthew 2:13-23 Hymn Sing Caroling after Worship		<b>31</b> New Year's Eve Psalm 8	Committee Chair should contact members in regard to any December and January meetings.			

Sundays  
 8AM - Meditative Worship  
 10AM - Worship



## January 2020

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

Sundays  
8AM - Meditative Worship  
10AM - Worship



