

# 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!*



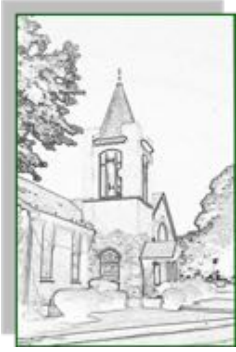
Movie Night

Musical performances from friends



Trunk or Treat





I was talking with my daughter, Julia, last week, and she was a little disheartened that, because of age and health issues, we would not be able to gather with all of our usual friends and family members during this pandemic-influenced holiday season. “It just stinks!” she said. Yes, it does. Christmas will be different this year.

An article in the Boston Globe says this, “All of the trademark features we’ve grown accustomed to during pandemic life are spilling over into the holiday season, and not even jolly Saint Nick and his Christmas magic are exempt. Face shields attached to red caps. Masks made specifically for people with bushy beards. Plexiglass dividers and social-distancing for children making mall visits. And yes, virtual calls straight from Santa’s busy “workshop” via Zoom. While the coronavirus can’t stop Christmas from coming, some traditions will understandably be as restrained as the reindeer guiding Santa’s sleigh.”

Country singer, Gary LeVox, of Rascal Flatts fame, has just released a song, “Christmas Will Be Different This Year”, the lyrics of which convey my daughter’s disheartened state of mind:

*Snow should be falling like angels to the ground  
Cathedrals should be singing but the pews are empty now  
And I should be driving on my way home to you  
Counting decorated houses, singing every Christmas tune*

*I’ll set the dinner table the way that you taught me  
Send greeting cards and presents, hang lights on every tree  
But I’ll miss you Christmas morning while the world is waking up  
But I’ll keep the fireplace glowing, but it won’t be enough*

The song repeats this depressing refrain:

*But I won’t be there and you won’t be here  
Christmas will be different this year*

Certainly, things will be different in the church this year. We are used to a full sanctuary on Christmas Eve, practicing for the Christmas play, and participating in several different mission projects during the holiday season. And those things just aren’t going to happen this year.

But, you know...God didn’t decide to come to earth in the person of Jesus Christ during a time when everything was all warm and fuzzy and perfect and everything was going smoothly. Jesus was born during the regime of the oppressive Roman Empire. Mary and Joseph had to travel 90 miles or so (while Mary was pregnant, by the way!) to Bethlehem, where she gave birth in a barn, surrounded by complete strangers (foreigners from the East and rough-around-the-edges shepherds). Afterwards, they had to flee the evil clutches of King Herod, who wanted to kill them. This is the story we tell every Christmas season. This is the story we tell, while we also sing about Emmanuel, God-with-us. Because God is always with us, in every season...even in this strange one.

We are still collecting Holiday Hope Chests. We will re-broadcast seven year’s worth of Christmas plays the week of Christmas. On Christmas Eve, we will have an outdoor service at 4, singing carols and hearing a Christmas story. And we will stream our main service at 8, which will still include a lot of wonderful Christmas music. And God will be with us.

As one of the department store Santas in the Boston Globe article says, “It’s definitely going to be weird, but also, that’s okay. It’s not going to be like this forever. The magic is in the season.”

And, as Gary LeVox ends his song,

*But I’ll look for the magic anyway, and I’ll keep all our traditions just the same  
Even though Christmas will be different this year*

Merry Christmas,

Pastor Bob

December 2020/January 2021

## 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:

12/6 - maintenance and repair fund

12/13 - 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 need to start paying for our Fuel Oil for the upcoming heating season. Again this year we are hoping you help us by buying "Barrels of Oil" for \$50 a barrel. 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!

### "For Such a Time as This" Esther 4:14

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. Over the past nine months, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the emergency financial needs of many who serve the church have increased dramatically. These difficult times make the need for the Christmas Fund (formerly 'Veterans of the Cross' offering) more urgent than ever.

Please read this note from a retired pastor's widow and recipient of emergency assistance in 2020: "Thank you all so very, very much! Keeping you all in my prayers. May the gift of your generous blessing spread wide and far."

If making a donation . . . please make your checks payable to Forks U.C.C. with a notation "The Christmas Fund". Thank you.

## 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.

## ONA Corner

Visit this area of the newsletter for current Open and Affirming information.

ONA Committee members are: Brenda DeLong, Bob Gutekunst, Sharon Solt Harfman, Alice Hornbake, Carolyn Mitch, Rick Taylor, and Betsy Warner

## 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.**

**\*\*\*Also please check Weekly Happenings and our Facebook page for our Reverse Advent calendar. Items will be donated to food pantries.**

## Thank You

Many thanks to Cathi and Mike Tirrell who donated 25 turkeys for our Thanksgiving baskets from the Wilson Borough Republican Club.

## Housekeeping

In the new year, we will be looking for volunteers to help keep our church clean. Some responsibilities include emptying the trash cans, swiffering the floor under the pews, and vacuuming. If you or a group of your family or friends would be interested in doing this once for a particular month, please contact Jacob Allen (610-533-9108) or Alice Hornbake (610-703-3095) for details. Youth can also earn community service hours for their participation. Thank you for caring for our congregation and building.

## Good Reads

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

\*\*\*Exciting news!!!!

Richard Taylor is pleased to announce the publication of his new book, "Congregations of the German Reformed Church in the United States." Running to over 700 pages, it includes a directory of over 4,000 German Reformed Churches formed before the 1934 Church merger, and their subsequent life. It includes 53 in Northampton County. The book begins with a summary of social and organizational history of the denomination. You can discover the stories of the church family within which our Forks congregation grew. You can check out the other churches that were in former charges with Forks. The book also notes about 1,300 Lutheran churches that were in union arrangements with Reformed churches, such as the former Salem Lutheran Church at our site. The book is designed to be a useful tool for genealogists. If you think you had German Reformed ancestors in other places, you can find the churches in those areas, which ones are alive, if they have merged, where they are affiliated, and other useful information to identify where you might find their records. Forks members will be particularly interested in the picture on page viii. Rick will be giving an online release presentation of the book at the Sigal Museum later this year. The date and time will be shared with Forks people so that you can tune in. The list price of the book is \$35.00. But a 10% discount is being offered for orders received before **December 31st**, making the price \$31.50. If anyone would like to order a copy, let Rick know (610-438-3771 or [pilgrimrht@rcn.com](mailto:pilgrimrht@rcn.com)). To save on postage he'll leave them at the Church, where you can pick them up at your convenience.

## Missing Church this Week?

No fear! You can watch from your computer. If you are on Facebook, go to our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/forkschurch/>) around 10AM and tune in LIVE. If you are not on Facebook, you can STILL go to our Facebook page watch. Never miss a week!

# Creative Worship

## Christmas Services

Please join us at **4PM** on Christmas Eve for an outdoor service. It will include hymns. At **8PM**, we will have our traditional Christmas Eve candlelight service virtually. Join us online!

## Newsletter Submissions

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

## 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.

## A Testimonial

10/20/2020 - Two months ago on August 10, 2020, I was admitted to the hospital. The diagnosis was E. coli which produced shiga toxin which in turn nearly caused kidney failure. At one point, a central line was put in my neck and that same day a procedure called plasmaphoresis was performed and also on each of the next two days in an effort to turn things around. My prayer in the beginning was this: Lord, if it's time for me to come home to you, I'm ready, but if you have something, some reason, for me to remain here on this Earth, then so be it. I will seek your will. As the days wore on and after the plasmaphoresis, it became clear God needed me here, so I began to wonder what His plan was. When you're in the hospital 15 days, you have a lot of time to think. and so I began to consider my unique set of personality traits, talents, abilities, strengths, weaknesses. It occurred to me that here I am at Forks UCC, but why me and why here? Make no mistake, this is NOT all about me, me, me. God has a plan for ForksUCC, but he brought each of you here, too, each also with your unique set of personality traits, talents, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses because He needs all of us, each different from the other, to accomplish it. We each bring something to the altar. We are all in this together and if we will each seek our part in God's plan here, Forks UCC will have an impact that will be more far-reaching than we could imagine. ~Sandy Borger

## 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 6 - Joan and Ron Mumaw  
December 13 - Sarah Happel  
December 20 - Carolyn Mitch  
December 27 - Cathi and Mike Tirrell

## Those Serving

## Visitation List

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

## 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
05 Brenda DeLong	17 Charles Prutzman Jr.
05 Amanda Williams	17 Tyler Avery
05 Logan Hancik	18 Julie Grogg
06 Karen DeJesso	19 Anna Jones
07 Arthur Brush	20 Carol Hartway
07 Matt Dewalt	20 Walter Francis Jr.
07 Scott Hughes	22 Floyd Mohn
10 Sam Kemmerer	25 Duane Edelheiser
10 Richard Bartholomew	28 Zachary Herres
12 Bill Remaly	29 Colton Keat
12 Sophia Gleason	30 Eric Hanlein
13 Marguerite Obulaney*	30 Jamie Schaadt-Psarras
13 Joanne Mitch	30 Grant Stackhouse
	30 Douglas Steckel

\* Marguerite Obulaney  
celebrates her 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday  
on December 13. Happy  
Birthday to you!

### 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
07 Ellis Young	17 Jermaine Schaadt
08 Carol Young	17 George Prutzman
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	24 David Reinman
10 Adia Wagner	24 Jenifer Schaadt
11 Joan Jud	25 Sherry Prutzman
11 Verna Bolte	26 Rebecca Mitch
13 Bobbi Ricci	27 Alexis Happel
13 Brent Wood	31 Michel DeJesso
14 Paul Polkowski	

### January Anniversaries

Sandy & Glenn Borger	1/02/1971
Elizabeth & Barry Durie	1/03/1970
Patti & Tim Weis	1/29/1983

## Confirmands

Andrew Biddle, Jacob Hackman, Chloe Miller



## December 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b> <i>Communion</i> 2nd Sunday of Advent	<b>7</b> Stewardship & Finance 7PM	<b>8</b> Spiritual Council 6PM Consistory 7PM	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b> 3rd Sunday of Advent	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b> 4th Sunday of Advent	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 4PM Outdoor Service 8PM Virtual Traditional Service	<b>25</b> Christmas Day Jesus is born, Alleluia! John 1:1-14	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> 1st Sunday after Christmas	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>		

Sundays  
10AM - Worship

## January 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
<b>3</b> <i>Communion</i> 2nd Sunday after Christmas	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> EPIPHANY – Three Kings Day	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> The Baptism of Christ	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 2nd Sunday after Epiphany	<b>18</b> Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Spaghetti Drive Thru Dinner
<b>24</b> 3rd Sunday after Epiphany	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> 4th Sunday after Epiphany						

Sundays  
10AM - Worship

