

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!

New Sunday School helpers



Thanksgiving Baskets



Trunk or Treat

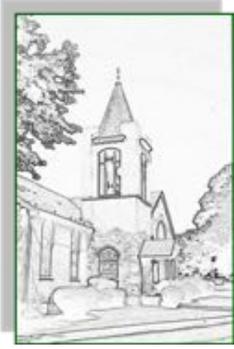


Sleepout for Homelessness



Brandon
Cressman's
Eagle Scout
Ceremony





Advent is a season of repentance. I could never seem to reconcile that essential component of the season. Advent always seemed to me a very joyful time. It occurs around my favorite time of year, the weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas. It's a warm and fuzzy time, a time for anticipating something wonderful. To borrow a secular phrase, "It's the most wonderful time of the year." When I got into ministry, it heightened that sense of anticipation- looking forward to candlelight services, singing the familiar carols, hearing the ringing of bells, and telling the story of good news of great joy for all people.

One of the things I could never seem to reconcile is that the lectionary always provides such out of place readings for this warm and fuzzy season.

The stories, during the season of Advent, mostly focus on the character of John the Baptist, and apocalyptic passages that exhort the reader to "Repent! Repent!" These exhortations always seem more fitting for the season of Lent, when it's okay to feel somber and remorseful.

That's how I always felt about the act of repentance- somber and remorseful. In the religious experiences of my youth, times of prayer usually left me feeling miserable- I was drained by my constant sense of my own sinfulness. In the religious upbringing of my youth, my perception of the experience was that God was unchanging, the Bible was inerrant, the Church was infallible, the priest was always right, the standards for moral and ethical behavior were set in stone and perfectly unattainable, and sinful and unholy and unworthy were how we were supposed to feel.

In an article that I read, professor, Brittney Cooper, recounts a similar experience growing up. And, as she writes: "Who wants to be in a relationship with someone who primarily sees all that is wrong with you and never what's good about you?" The epiphany for Cooper was encountering a fire-and-brimstone preacher, who had the courage to step into the pulpit and admit that, in preaching about a punishing God, he had been wrong.

That epiphany, and other experiences like it, helped Cooper to begin to see God as unconditionally loving, and also helped her to reimagine the act of repentance. One of the earliest definitions of the word, repentance, is "to change one's mind." I think, in a culture in which some folks are incredibly resistant to changing their minds, when so many people have their minds made up about everything, when people refuse to be swayed, even by concrete evidence, a return to and reclamation of the spiritual practice and discipline of repentance is needed more than ever. If we carefully examine the Scriptures, we can find that even God changes God's mind, from time to time. As author, Octavia Butler argued, "God is change."

As it turns out, I think the season of Advent is a perfect time of the year to repent and to celebrate the God who is change. After all, the season of Advent ushers in a new church year, a time for new beginnings, and hope for the future. The familiar stories of the season present to us characters- Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, the travelers from the East- who shatter our preconceived notions about who's worthy and who's unworthy to receive God's love. And, in the birth of a little baby boy, the world as people knew it was changed forever.

As Brittney Cooper goes on to write in her article: "Repentance refreshes the gospel for us, brings us into newness of relationship to it, to the world we are trying to build. If indeed it is true that we must repent in order to access the kingdom of heaven, I believe Christ is asking us to be willing to be completely transformed by our commitments to love, to challenge empire, to journey with and as the least of these to a better world."

May we be constantly changed by the coming of Jesus into our lives.



Happy Advent and Merry Christmas,

Pastor Bob December 2021/January 2022

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:

12/5 - maintenance and repair fund

12/12 - 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. We have entered into a contract with Fogels Fuel again. We anticipate our costs exceeding \$8,000. We are hoping you help us by buying "Barrels of Oil" for \$50 a barrel. There are envelopes in the sanctuary vestibule or you can donate on Breeze by choosing oil barrels.

“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.

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

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 (\$8/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 9AM to receive credit for 2021. Any donations received after the 30th will be credited to 2022. Thank you.

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.**

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.

*****Our blessing box will remain on the front step of the church. Please use it to drop off donations or to fill a need you have.**

ONA Corner

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

Our team is meeting again!! Watch this area for news and updates. Please use this link to find out more about Open and Affirming in the United Church of Christ: <https://openandaffirming.org/>

On Sunday, September 26th, we had two women visit our service and speak about "Why" ONA is important. If you missed that service or would just like to hear it again, use this link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_Z0JcWB0Jk and watch the whole service or scroll to about 1 hour 7 minutes in to hear the ladies speak.

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

Christmas Eve Services

We will be utilizing a reservation system for both the 4PM Children's Service and 8PM Traditional Service. Information will be emailed and also found in the Weekly Happenings. The reservation system opened on November 15th. If you do not receive emails from the church, please call the church office at (610) 759-5676 to make arrangements. We will also be streaming both services.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0f4baea92ca2fbc43-reservations>

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.

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. Or you can watch on our YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEOmIblk8CHl3wb55Ir-djg>) Never miss a week!

In Person Worship

On Sunday, **September 5**, we returned to the sanctuary and adjacent social room for worship. The large doors are open for the service in order to provide ample, safe distancing. Masks are strongly encouraged. You are invited outside immediately after worship for refreshments.

Newsletter Submissions

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

Thank You

I would like to thank the congregants of Forks UCC for the very generous monetary gift presented to me in church for the staff appreciation month. I can only tell you how much it is to be appreciated for my work. I hope to be your groundskeeper at Forks for quite awhile. Again thank you very much. It is greatly appreciated. God Bless. Frank Mengel, Groundskeeper

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 12th at 2PM.

Adult Fellowship

The Adult Fellowship will again this year be selling Christmas wreaths. An order form will be available in the beginning of November. They will be available for pick up in early December. Adult Fellowship will be holding our Christmas covered dish on Monday, December 20th at 6:30PM. Ham will be provided. Please bring a covered dish to share and a \$5 gift for a man or woman to exchange.

NEW JOURNAL ARTICLE

The latest issue of the Journal of the Pennsylvania German Society (Der Reggeboege) includes an article that explores how the formerly German-speaking Reformed Church in the United States moved towards English. The Church represented the families of colonial immigrants from the Switzerland and the Holy Roman Empire, most of whom arrived between 1710 and the American Revolution. Up to 1820 its common records were written in German. But by 1872 just about all of the denominational records in areas serving the "Pennsylvania Dutch," now well scattered from New York to the Carolinas, and west over the mountains were being kept in English. This change was complicated by the arrival of new European immigrants who needed services in German. The article explores where and when the changes took place, and what factors impacted the change. Their Mother Tongue, was written by the Rev. Richard H. Taylor, who explored all the extant Synod, Coetus, Classis, and District records of the Church as part of the work on his recent book Congregations of the German Reformed Church in the United States. Copies of the issue can be obtained by calling the Society at 717-597-7940. (Cost \$26.80 includes tax and shipping.) The issue includes an excellent article on Reformed churches in Wythe County, Virginia, including interesting information on Reformed pastor John Jacob Repass, and other articles as well.

Submitted by Rick Taylor

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 5 - Sharon Getz

December 12 - AVAILABLE

December 19 - Carolyn Mitch

December 26 - AVAILABLE

Those Serving

December 5 -

December 12 -

December 19 -

December 26 -

Housekeeping

We are 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.

Confirmands

Andrew Biddle, Eleanore Hornbake, Kaiden Kresge, Chloe Miller, Grace Quinn, Mekhi Zuniga

Visitation List

Please see the Church Directory or contact the Church office or a member of the visitation team for addresses. Warren Eberts, Chuck Givler, Anna Laudenslager, Florence Saylor, Janet Rush, 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 Bruch	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

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

December 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5 <i>Communion</i> 2nd Sunday of Advent	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 3rd Sunday of Advent Easton Municipal Band Concert 2PM	13 Stewardship & Finance 7PM	14 Spiritual Council 6PM Consistory 7PM	15	16	17	18
19 4th Sunday of Advent	20 6:30PM Adult Fellowship	21	22	23	24 4PM Children's Service: <u>△</u> <u>Charlie Brown</u> Christmas performance 8PM Traditional Service	25
26 1st Sunday after Christmas	27	28	29	30	31	

Sundays
10AM - Worship

January 2022

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

Sundays
10AM - Worship

