

On the Journey ... at St. John's

December
2021

St. John's United Church of Christ
538 E. Thomas St.
Coopersburg, PA 18036
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Volume 22 Issue 11

Advent Blessings to One and All!

This Advent has extra meaning because we can worship together! Last year at this time, we had to go back to recorded worship. One of the lessons we have learned over the past year is the value of community. God created us to be in communion with him through Jesus and to experience all the great attributes of being Holy by being in relationship with each other. You have a choice in every relationship to represent the love God offers freely to us.

The first candle we will light this year is the candle of hope. Hope is being grounded in our faith and trust of Jesus Christ. That hope has been challenged this year. It has been both a blessing and curse that we have had to learn to do things differently and learn to be a little more flexible. We also were forced to live with uncertainty and trust that God will provide. And God has certainly come through although sometimes it has been messy and painful. I admit I often took Greeting our Neighbors or Passing the Peace as small, pleasant exchange. However, when Covid made the practice unsafe, or I had to try and say "Good Morning" to everyone through a video camera lens I found myself getting very depressed.

The second candle we light is the candle of peace. Peace has been hard to find at times this year. Political divides, living into the pandemic, economic struggles, our fears in our own heads all seemed to challenge peace. Peace is not the absence of noise or activity but rather a state of your head and heart. For me, it always starts with remaining diligent in my devotion and practice of faith. I quickly lose my sense of peace when I slide into a people-pleasing role or allow everyone's opinion to fill my head. As cliché as it has become, I often have to ask myself "What would Jesus do" in a situation.

The third candle we light is the candle of joy! I have appreciated how people have told me they so appreciated being able to travel to see family or sit at the same table with loved ones.

The fourth candle is the candle of love. I never thought I would have to proclaim wearing a face mask is an act of love towards your neighbor. We also faced a year of learning to love those who have different points of view than ourselves.

The final candle we light is the Christ Candle; the light that was given to us by God to sustain us through our darkest times.

I invite you to practice celebrating Advent by lighting a candle and spending time with Christ through prayer or even create an altar at home. Be intentional and spend time in the light!

Keith and I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a healthy New Year.
Blessings Pastor Teresa

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

December 5th Advent “Making Room”

December 12th Advent-- “A Place at the Table” June Thomas will be joining us for special music

December 18th from 1-3pm a Church Social around Betty Bamberger’s fire pit. Come join us for s’mores, hot chocolate and a chance just to visit and celebrate the season with us. (weather dependent)

December 19th Advent “How Much is Enough” Outrageous Christmas Sweater Celebration.

Vespers at 5 pm. Rooted in Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy. A traditional Christmas celebration!

December 24th “ The Inn” **Service at 5 pm.**

December 26th Breakfast/hymn sing 10 am Church Fellowship Hall. Please look for the sign up sheet and come join us!

December 31st from 1-3 pm. Pastor Teresa will be available for prayer and Holy Communion as we start the new year firmly Rooted in Christ. This is a drop in event, and you may come at any point during this time!



MILESTONES TO CELEBRATE

Happy Birthday December

- 5 Martha Helverson
- 6 Gary Urmy
- 15 Terry Fegley
- 17 Noah Bamberger
- Beverly Bernd

Happy Birthday November

- 12 Lenore Bamberger
- 13 Brian Fegley
- 29 John Ruby

Happy Anniversary December

- 3 Steve & Judy Mayer

Happy Anniversary November

- 3 Bryan & Maureen Urmy
- 8 Donald & Diane Kuhns

Please help keep this listing up-to-date by contacting the office with additions and/or corrections! Thank you!

HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROTOCOLS

Approved by Council 08/18/21

Once again, we are forced to adjust our Covid-19 guidelines.

Masks are no longer required in the building for vaccinated church members.

However, we are encouraging everyone to use their own good judgment.

A few members who have severe health issues may choose to wear masks.

Please be respectful and practice social distancing around them.

For concerts and other events where we are encouraging public participation masks will be required. If we have fellowship events, it will be required to wear a mask around the food tables.

We continue to encourage everyone to use hand sanitizer, and if you are feeling ill, please stay home on that particular Sunday.

We will not have greeters handing out material but will start to have someone present to verbally greet people as they enter the building.

We will not be passing the peace.

We will not be passing plates.

We will be returning to the disposable communion sets.

The water fountain will not be opened. Bottled water will still be available. We will be slowly introducing singing once again.

Also, because of space issues, we will not be going to Fellowship Hall to worship if the weather is warm. We will still be recording worship services

We will be recording worship and concerts if the performer gives permission.



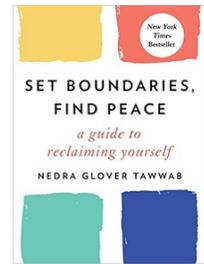
CHURCH CHRISTMAS WISH LIST

- **Faucets for kitchen and ladies' room**

We have a couple of items needed at the church and we are hoping that we can raise some money to cover them. We are not ordering Poinsettias for the church this year. For a \$10 donation (or more) to the Church list, we will post that a donation has been made in honor or in memory of someone. If you would like to donate, please clearly mark your donation Church Christmas Wish List. I also clearly list who you would like memorialized or honored in the bulletin. Example- \$10 donation from Pastor Teresa and Keith, in honor of our grandchildren.

BOOK STUDY

Greetings! We are starting a new book study/ discussion group. If you are interested in joining us, please sign up or email Pastor Teresa. Amazon has the book \$14.99 Kindle, or \$18.25 for the book . Cheaper used books are also available.



If cost is a problem, please speak to Pastor Teresa. The class will be meeting Monday night 6:30 by Zoom every other week.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We are looking for volunteers to help in 2022. We need someone to be in the church entryway to greet people. We need to train people to be slide tech, sound tech, camera operator and also to train to the count collection after service. None of these jobs are really complicated, but your help is vital in helping Saint John's succeed.

Volunteer Form

Your Name _____

I am volunteering for (Circle each one you are interested in)

Greeter, Slide Tech, Sound Tech, Camera, Collection Counter

Please put slip in collection plate or in the church office.



LET IT SNOW!

Tis the Season for bad weather. If you are not an "internet" person, please buddy up with someone who has access. We will post by email, and Facebook if we are closing or delaying services.



ONLINE GIVING

Online giving is now available through the app tithe.ly. Go to St. John's website, click on give, and then follow the cues. Credit or debit cards are accepted on our secure site. An email receipt of your giving will be sent to you.

BETTY LOU'S PANTRY

Needs of the Pantry: Meat and tuna helpers, hearty soups, canned pasta, boxed potatoes.

Our church's month to staff the food bank is January. The dates are January 8 and 22 from 8 am to 10:30 am. If anyone wants to volunteer please contact Martha Helverson. I have two spots working in the basement packing boxes, and I am looking for 2-3 people to do heavy lifting. If you know of someone who might be interested in that please have them contact me. We also need laundry detergent; about 80 bottles.



ALL-CHURCH PLANNING RETREAT

On Saturday January 8th with a snow date of January 15th from 9:30-12 in the fellowship hall we will be having a church calendar planning and brainstorming about fund raisers for the church. **We need your participation and new ideas.** Coffee and donuts will be provided! Please set aside time and join us as we start the new year by dreaming and planning for our church's future!



ELECTION OF 2022 COUNCIL

Last year due to Covid, we went to a model of one year commitments to Council. We are going to continue to do so this year as we still do not know the extent the pandemic may have on us. We would love for you to serve! If you are interested please speak to Pastor Teresa or Muriel Moore (current council president) This note also serves as notice we will have a congregational meeting on December 12th with snow date of December 19th after church to vote on the officers. We will also provide a financial update of the church finances at that time.



WE ARE PART OF THE AMAZON SMILE PROGRAM!

This is the way the corporation of Amazon.com gives back to the community. Your Prime membership and passwords stay the same and are not shared. .05% of every sale goes to the church. Below is the link to take you directly there. Any questions, speak with Pastor Teresa. Her email is RevTeresaMartin@outlook.com <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/23-6286946>

A SELF-HEALING DAY

A beautiful gift to yourself, is a day of healing and nourishing just for you.

Human beings carry within themselves the seed of healing. Our choices affect us more than we realize, and it is because of this that we tend to place responsibility for our wellness in the hands of others. As beneficial as regular visits to a healer can be, we have the power to heal ourselves at will. When we dedicate a day to the pursuit of wellness, we can relax and renew ourselves in a nourishing and comfortable environment. A sincere desire to open ourselves to the highest realities of our physical and spiritual selves is the key to self-healing so that healing energy can flow into us unimpeded.

A self-healing day should address the vital needs of the self as a whole while directing healing energy where it is needed most. Solitude is an important part of the process as is the ability to take refuge in a space that is both beautiful and peaceful. Start your healing day by setting the intention that you are dedicating this time to healing yourself. Flowers, candlelight, incense, and music can guide our focus toward a more tranquil state. For a more intense session, try listening to music through headphones since tuning out can help you tune in. It is up to us to decide what we need to do to cultivate wellness in our lives. For some, it may be time spent in reflection. Others will turn to calming activities that help them remember their purpose, such as journal writing, being in nature, or studying. Our healing may even take a more direct form as we use color, sound, or crystals to balance and ground ourselves.

Ultimately, your wholesome intentions transform what might otherwise be a simple day of rest into a day of healing. Grant yourself permission to relax and savor the stillness. If you attune yourself to the calm around you, worldly distractions will be minimized and the unadulterated flow of your consciousness will reestablish itself in the forefront of your mind. The needs of the body, the heart, and the soul will then be revealed to you, empowering you to tap into the essential healing energy of the universe. The mechanism you use to channel this energy will be dependent on your shifting requirements, so each day of healing you enjoy will be unique. All will replenish you, however, allowing you to recreate yourself in a perfect image of health.

AN ARTICLE FROM DAILYOM NEWSLETTER

EVENING VESPERS DECEMBER 19th 5:00 – 6:00 pm

Theme - "Hope, Peace, Joy & Love"

Enjoy Christmas Holiday music as we welcome back our guest musician, **RENEE MCFILLIN.**

Meet Renee.

Renee is a Singer/Actor/Dancer based in New York. She is a graduate of DeSales University, where she studied musical theatre, and was guest musician during our first Vespers season in 2017.

Among her many performances: Rag Time, South Pacific, Dames at Sea, Alice in Wonderland. She is currently performing in a Christmas themed play "Really Good Tidings" at the Act II Playhouse in Ambler.

How did we meet Renee? She came to St. John's offering to do volunteer service. She did lots of weeding and clean up outside the church.



EVENING VESPERS IN THE FUTURE

A major aspect of a church living in "Transformational Ministry" is faithfully following a process to review everything we do, thoughtfully considering what we do, how we do it, to what extent are we meeting needs and goals, what might we need to change. Your thoughts and comments are important considerations.

You will notice that changes have been made in format and variety of music and musicians. Council will be reviewing our Evening Vespers ministry to see how we may go forward. Stay tuned...

Thanksgiving Blessings,
Marlene & John



**PLEASE REMEMBER OUR WEBSITE
(STJOHNSCOOPERSBURG.ORG) OR OUR FACEBOOK PAGE
(ST JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, COOPERSBURG)
HAS UP-TO-THE-MINUTE CHURCH INFORMATION**

St. John's United Church of Christ
538 Thomas Street
Coopersburg, PA 18036

www.stjohnsuccoop.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

OUR MISSION:

**To know and share the love of God through worship,
fellowship and outreach to the community.**

