

Silent night Holy night

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Happy Birthday to:

- December 02- Cathy Chaplinski & Caroline Walp
- December 03- Lewis Burgett & Karen Byers
- December 05- Deanna Petula
- December 08- Sarah Miller
- December 10- Randy Miller
- December 11- Virginia Stone
- December 13- Kathryn Poe
- December 16- Richard Kepner
- December 17- Lori Smeigh
- December 19- Brian Bauer
- December 21- Clay Herman
- December 25- Richard Weary
- December 26- Dennis Minnich
- December 29- Linda Rutz & Kenneth Spangler



- December 08– Dennis & Ann Eckman, 48 years
- December 19– Paul & Pat Teitrick, 62 years
- December 20– P. Gary & Patience Eckman, 52 years
- December 27– James & Myrna Barefoot, 66 years

Happy
Anniversary!



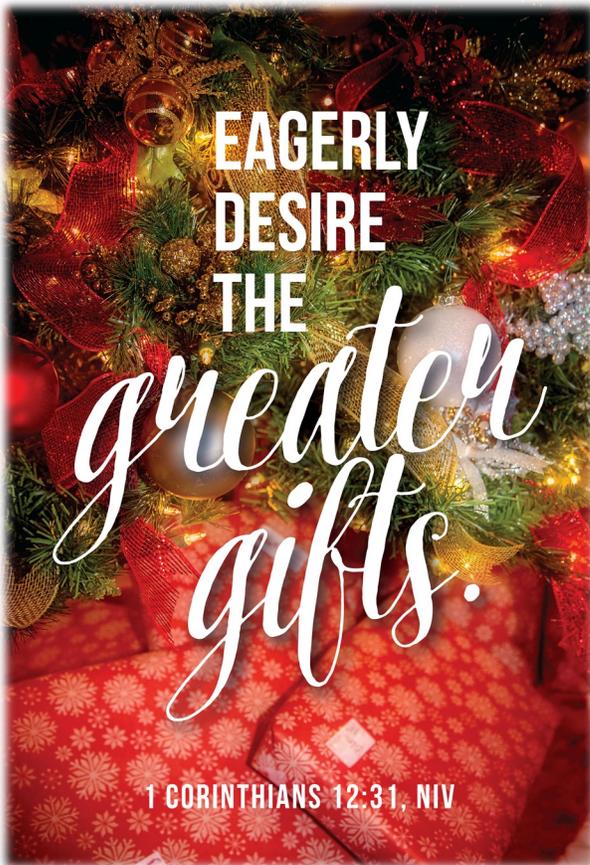
Adopt a Family for Christmas

A letter was sent out Wednesday, November 10th and a statement has been posted on Facebook to describe this project. If you missed the letter or did not see Facebook, 1st UCC adopted three families for Christmas!

These families have struggled this year and needed help providing some Christmas Cheer for their kids. The mothers have provided lists of needs, clothing sizes, and wish-lists for the kids. Thanks to all of your tremendous generosity, 1st UCC is able to make these mothers' and kids' dreams come true this year!

We have some shoppers who will be purchasing and wrapping the gifts by Friday, December 17th. At which point, the mothers will come pick up their gifts.

Thank you all for your wonderful kindness! One of the greatest gifts in life is to give to others. These mothers feel incredibly blessed to receive such a lovely gift from 1st UCC!



Keep on the Sunny Side

“What a Friend We Have in Jesus: Words of HOPE from Scripture,
Song and Poetry”

By: Chaplain Donna Hale



November 28, was the first Sunday in Advent; and, HOPE was both theme and message of Scripture, “Songs,” and our Sunday Service. At some point during Worship, I recalled the Scripture from Romans 12:12 reminding us to “Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer” [ESV]. And, one of the hymns I grew up with in the Baptist Church, “What a Friend we Have in Jesus,” also came to mind reminding me of how important faith was in my family who planted the “seeds” of “hope, patience, and prayer” flowering as mainstay practices in my life.

Another practice my grandmother encouraged was keeping a “Prayer Box”—usually just a 3”x5” wooden/metal box—where she would keep her daily prayers written down and placed in her prayer box as she simultaneously prayed: “Lord, please take care of my prayers.”



I still have my prayer box; although I confess, I have not used it in quite a while. However, for Advent, I decided to restart--reboot the practice of writing out my prayer requests and putting them in my prayer box. I have not yet set a date on my calendar when to review my prayer requests, but I am thinking about revisiting them in February, the month I was born, in honor of my grandmother who named me—which as she would say: “Another story for another time.”

I plan to begin each Advent morning with my customary prayer; and, after the Amen, read aloud the Scripture from Romans 12:12 followed by writing my Prayer Request on a 3”x5” card and putting it in my Prayer Box—not to be reread until a date in February 2022—probably on my birthday—February 23. My goal is to prayerfully reflect on how God has “moved” in my life during Advent.

Below is my alphabetical list of “positive words” I plan to keep in mind as I pray each day during Advent and refer to again when I revisit my prayers in February to assess how practicing Hope, Patience, and Prayer gets us through “One Day at a Time.”

A	Authentic	N	Nourished
B	Better	O	Optimistic
C	Confident	P	Positive
D	Determined	Q	Qualified
E	Empowered	R	Resilient
F	Faithful	S	Stronger
G	Grateful	T	Transformative
H	Healed	U	Uplifted
I	Inspired	V	Validated
J	Joyful	W	Welcomed
K	Kind	X	XOXO
L	Liberated	Y	Yes
M	Motivated	Z	Zest

I truly believe in the “Power of Positive Thinking” (Dale Carnegie, 2005) and “Positive Psychology” (Dr. Martin Seligman’s research at the University of Pennsylvania). I practice “positive thinking” in both my daily life and as a community chaplain; AND, I recognize it in the varieties of “Positive Thinking and Positive Psychology Practices” in our Carlisle community and beyond.

I would like to close my column with a frequently quoted verse from Emily Dickinson’s poem—“Hope” is the thing with feathers—that perches in the soul—and sings the tune without the words—and never stops—at all.” [Copyright Free.]



AMEN.

To the Glory of God, We Serve.



Self-Care with Pastor Rachel

As we prepare for the season, I turn to one of my favorite poets to keep me "Bethlehem Bound" this season. May you all have a blessed and peaceful Advent and Merry Christmas!

"In Search of Our Kneeling Places"
A poem by Ann Weems, from the book, *Kneeling in Bethlehem*

In each heart lies a Bethlehem,
an inn where we must ultimately answer whether there is room or not.

When we are Bethlehem-bound
we experience our own advent in his.

When we are Bethlehem-bound
we can no longer look the other way
conveniently not seeing stars,
not hearing angel voices.

We can no longer excuse ourselves by
busily tending our sheep or our kingdoms.



This Advent let's go to Bethlehem, and see this thing that the Lord has made known to us.

In the midst of shopping sprees,
let's ponder in our hearts the Gift of Gifts.

Through the tinsel, let's look for the gold of the Christmas Star.

In the excitement and confusion, in the merry chaos, let's listen for the brush of angels' wings.

This Advent let's go to Bethlehem and find our kneeling places.



From the Editor

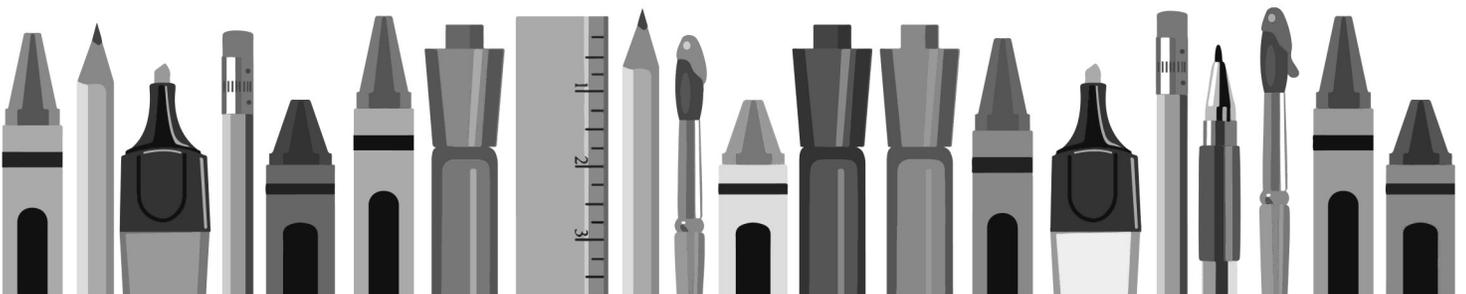
By: Lyndsey Hendricks

It has come to my attention that some of my previous newsletter articles have come across as offensive or too controversial to some members. I wanted to take this time to acknowledge the raised concerns. I apologize if I came across as offensive or pushing my views onto everyone else. That was not my intention at all. My only intention was to bring a different perspective to subjects that have been taught or seen a certain way in previous years. I want you to know these are my own views and the Pastors and other staff members did not encourage me to write the articles I wrote. Those were all written under my own volition.

I can't promise that I won't try to encourage new thoughts and ideas, but, in the future, I will try to be more sensitive about the topics I choose or how I write about certain topics. The articles I write will be here, if you are interested in reading them.

Sincerely,

Lyndsey



Give and Forget

By: Rachel Hackenburg

An Article from the United Church of Christ Website

Peter came up and said to Jesus, "Lord, how often will my sibling sin against me, and I forgive them? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times." - Matthew 18:21-22 (ESV)

Seventy-seven times. Or seventy times seven, depending on the biblical version of Matthew 18:21-22 you're reading. Or seven times a day, per Luke 17:4. That's how often we should mindfully consider the person in front of us, acknowledge the harm they have caused us, and release the harm (and/or the person) from further damage.

Be mindful ... seventy-seven times.
Acknowledge ... seventy times seven.
Release ... seven times a day.

Guidance for faithful stewardship encourages the same disciplined steps: Be mindful. Acknowledge. Release. Be mindful of community, of creation, of God—seventy-seven times. Acknowledge need, desire, greed, fear—seventy times seven. Release first fruits, release 10%, release possessiveness, release consumption—seven times a day.

With a little magical math (and some technological tools), I can faithfully turn those sevens into ones:

Be mindful ... once a year when setting up auto-giving.
Acknowledge ... one at a time when adding a new financial commitment to my budget.
Release ... once per month according to a pre-set payment schedule.

"One" is not quite seventy times seven or seventy-seven times or seven times a day. But one can still be a faithful measure of giving. Because giving—like forgiving—is too often at the mercy of a moment and an emotion. It can be subject to the pressures of any given day. It can be drowned out by crises. It can be out of the way, like swinging by the ATM before worship to get cash for the offering plate. For my financial giving to be faithful, my best effort is to set it and forget it. Just once.

Prayer

May the autopay of my checking account and the e-giving of my apps be acceptable to you, O God of all goodness, my rock and my redeemer.



Church Events

Theology Pub:

Sunday, December 5th

The next **Theology Pub** will occur on **Sunday, December 5th**. Starting at **4 pm**. It will take place at **Mollie Pitcher**. This month we will be focusing on gratitude and what we are thankful for, as we have recently gone through the Thanksgiving holiday and now are heading toward the Christmas/Holiday season. Last month we talked about what experiences people had travelling to different countries in the past, where people go to be accepted as they are, and sending personalized texts to the wrong people. As usual, Shenani-gans can happen at theology pub. All are welcome, no conversations are banned. Look forward to seeing you Sunday afternoon. [#1ucccarlisle](#)

Truck Stop Ministry Christmas Cookies:

Youth will be collecting cookies before the 10:00 service the first three Sundays in Advent. Please drop off our cookies and the youth will bag them and add a message. If you have any questions, please contact **Lisa Harrison** at **(717) 243-8316**. Youth will be available to take your donations at a table outside the sanctuary from **9:30- 10:00 Sunday**:

- ◆ **November 28th**
- ◆ **December 5th**
- ◆ **December 12th**

Please support the youth in making a trucker's day a little brighter with a sweet treat. Sydney, Ryan, and Aiden thank you for your support!!

Worship Service Update

*Update on Church Choir



A subcommittee met recently to discuss whether we can bring back our Choir in a safe manner during the current Covid pandemic. It was noted during our meeting that both Churches and professional Choral groups have begun to do this and have published some of their recommendations and guidelines. There has also appeared some scientific literature about how to do this safely. After a review of this literature, our subcommittee feels that we can safely adopt some of these measures as a trial during the upcoming Advent season. We also believe that we must periodically review how successful this is in relation to the pandemic activity over the next several months. We summarize our recommendations as follows:

1. All choir members must be vaccinated for Covid.
2. While singing, choir members have the option not to wear masks. After singing is finished, masks must be worn.
3. Appropriate social distancing of the Choir from the congregation.
4. Songs will be sung during the last 15 minutes of our Church Service to reduce possible exposure to airborne infection.

We hope these measures will make our Advent season more festive and continue to keep our congregation safe!



COVID-19 UPDATES



Covid Update

Submitted by Greg Lewis

October 2021

I have continued to review Covid statistics as published in the Sentinel this month and would like to give an update on where Cumberland County stands and the implications for First UCC.

The statistics for Tuesday, October 21st are the most recent ones that I have at the time of this update but realize that these numbers fluctuate daily—sometimes up and sometimes down. As a general trend over the past several weeks the number of cases in adults and children have trended slightly lower. The CDC still puts Cumberland County as a high transmission County.

For this Tuesday there were 33 deaths in Cumberland County in October—the highest since there were 36 in February. 114 people are hospitalized in Cumberland County hospitals and 22 are in the ICU and 15 are on ventilators. These numbers are high but slightly improved over the past several days. Only 10 of 113 ICU beds are available to patients. In children during the 7th school week there have been 118 cases of Covid and 1070 for the school year. The percent of cases testing positive is 11.5% (Under 5% is recommended for showing that the Covid is beginning to go away). The incidence of new cases per 100,00 population is 198.1 and under 50 cases is recommended for good Covid control. About 71% of eligible patients in our county are fully vaccinated.

In the UPMC's 4 hospitals—approximately 18 to 20% of fully vaccinated people have been admitted with Covid. Most of these breakthrough Covid cases are mild and in general do not require ICU admission or ventilators—but there are a few exceptions to this.

I would like to make several points about the current Covid environment in Cumberland County. First the cases are slowly diminishing, but case counts are still high, and some fully vaccinated people are being admitted to the hospital. Second, there are several children with Covid and although they usually don't become seriously ill, they can carry the virus home and infect their parents and grandparents and possibly their family's friends—even infecting those who have been fully vaccinated. Remember that many of us have been vaccinated 6 or more months ago and our immunity is diminishing. Also, since many of us are older, we have a higher susceptibility to the virus. For this reasons Booster shots have been recommended and Flu shots for the coming Flu season.

In summary, because of the Covid situation in our County and the Covid numbers among the adults and children, I believe the Science dictates that our Church continue to take preventive Covid measures and continue to wear masks in Church and socially distance. I also believe with more vaccinations and Booster shots that soon we can relax some of these restrictions and maintain a healthy environment, although with an increased awareness about how vulnerable we are to some of these more serious infectious diseases.



Church Update

Council Meetings

Consistory– 3rd Monday Every Month

Church & Ministry- 1st Monday Every Month

Advisory– Quarterly

Caring Fellowship– 2nd Tuesday Every Month

Christian Ed– 1st Sunday Every Month

Church & Community Connections– 2nd Tuesday Every Month

Property Management– 4th Wednesday Every Month

Stewardship– 2nd Wednesday Every Other Month

Special Mission– Truck Stop Ministry

*You can find all council reports on the church website (www.1ucc.org). If you would like a copy, please email Lyndsey (Lyndsey@1stuccofcarlisle.org). Check out the “Council News” for highlights!

Project Share and Community CARES Collections

Don't Forget!

Project Share (Spaghetti and Sauce) and Community CARES (Ramen noodles) collections!

- ♦ On the **first Wednesday** of every month from **10 am – noon**, there will be a table at the parking lot door of the church where **Project Share** donations can be dropped off (or handed to a volunteer). This is the day when we will receive packets of **Spaghetti and Spaghetti Sauce** for the organization.
- ♦ On the **second Wednesday** of every month from **10 am – noon**, there will be a table at the parking lot door of the church where **Community CARES** donations can be dropped off (or handed to a volunteer). This is the day when we will receive packets of **Ramen noodles** for the organization.



BRING YOUR GOOD, USED CLOTHING, PURSES, AND SHOES TO CHURCH TO BENEFIT PROJECT SHARE

First United Church of Christ is now collecting good used clothing, purses, and shoes year-round to benefit the community and our Community Aid Partner, Project Share.

Our first Community Aid cart-full of donations is on its way to those in need!

Our cart has been FULL again since this picture of project organizers Lyndsey Wilston and Suzy Coulson was snapped, and now it is ready for MORE! As a Community Aid partner, First UCC earns 4 cents per pound and other benefits for Project Share.

Please keep the donations coming!

Items needed: Clothing for all ages and sizes, shoes, and purses. Please put donations in plastic bags, with shoes and purses in separate bags from clothing. Bags are available beside the cart, across from the Church Office.

Home Pick-up of donations is available - call Lyndsey at 717-243-2512 or text/ call Suzy at 717-580-8063.

Thank you for your support of this community project!



Our cart is ONLY for clothing, shoes, and purses. If you wish to donate other items, you may take them to the local Community Aid Thrift Store - 4833 Carlisle Pike, Mechanicsburg. Please let them know that you are a member of First UCC's Project Share partnership. Ask them to credit **Project Share Partner Number # 10166**, so those donations will count, too. Receipts are available upon request.

Questions? Contact Susan Coulson 717-580-8063 or sccoulson@comcast.net; or Lyndsey Wilston in the Church Office 717-243-2512 or lyndsey@1stuccofcarlisle.org. For more information about Community Aid go to the website at <https://communityaid.org>.



Church & Ministry

- ◆ **St. Paul's Brass** will be performing on **December 5th** at our 10:00am service
- ◆ Church & Ministry Council has recommended to Consistory that we have one service on Christmas Eve, beginning at 6:00pm.



Delivering a dozen bags of coats, mittens, hats, and boots to Community Cares. Suzy with Trent from Community Cares.

Christian Education

Join us **Sunday, September 12th** at 9:00am for **Launch Sunday!**

Classes for everyone from Elementary to Adult.

Elementary – Bill Harrison and Theresa Martin – Join in Bible lessons, music, crafts, and snack.

High School – Lisa Harrison - Read the Bible in a year.



Church & Community Connections

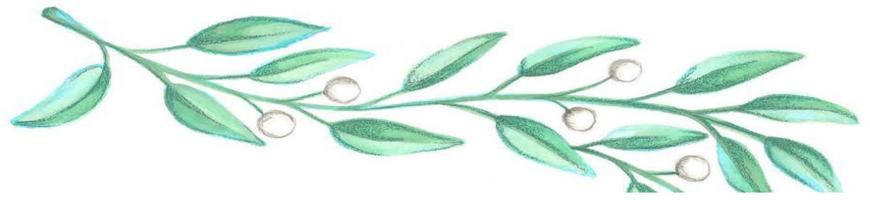
- ◆ CCC is sponsoring and serving at **My Brother's Table** on **Saturday, April 9th**.
- ◆ The Advent Walk will be canceled this year. If interested in watching the Advent Walk, please see the info below.
- ◆ Lastly, CCC will be providing a special offering of \$250.00 to the Truck Stop Ministry.

Advent Walk

View our video of The Advent Walking Tour of Carlisle Churches, including First United Church of Christ again this year, on your home computer, since we are currently unable to offer the Tour in-person.

Go to: **Cumberland Valley TV.com** and select/type: **The Advent Walking Tour of Carlisle Churches**

We hope everyone will enjoy the beautiful churches and meaningful messages for the Advent Season.



Earth Stewards

December Tip of the Month

1. **Make Your Own Wrapping Paper or Go Without**
2. **Buy Energy-Saving LED Holiday Lights**
3. **Add Organic & Local Foods to Your Holiday Feast**
4. **Get a Pesticide-Free Tree**
5. **Recycle Your Christmas Tree**
6. **Recycle Your Old Cellphone or Tablet**
7. **Offset Your Holiday Travel**
8. **Donate Your Time or Money to an Environmental Cause**
9. **Make Handcrafts & DIY Gifts**
10. **Give Experiential Gifts**
11. **Purchase Eco-Friendly & Locally Made Gifts**
12. **Stuff Stockings With Yummy, Natural Treats**

Gifford, Dawn, and About The Author Dawn Gifford Dawn is the creator of Small Footprint Family. "12 Ways to Have an Eco Friendly Holiday." *Small Footprint Family*™, 5 Aug. 2021, <https://www.smallfootprintfamily.com/eco-friendly-holiday-tips>.

Have an Earth Stewards Tip to SHARE? Email: sccoulson@comcast.net or text or call 717-580-8063. Let's ALL WORK TOGETHER to help the Planet!



Church Group Activities Update



Color, Craft & Fellowship!

Yearning for some fun and fellowship? Well, come join us on **Wednesdays** from **2:00pm to 4:00pm** to **Color, Craft & Fellowship!** Bring your coloring books, markers, paints, crochet hooks, knitting needles, or whatever craft you feel like doing that day! If you are interested in joining, please contact **Lyndsey** at **Lyndsey@1stuccofcarlisle.org** or **717-243-2512**.

Book Chat News!

Our Book Chat group has enjoyed meeting outside, although the wind and chill of approaching winter have now nudged the group indoors for bi-monthly meetings. Members are masked and socially-distanced in The Upper Room on the first and third Sundays of each month at 11:00 AM for fellowship, devotions and book discussion.

The group is currently reading *The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah. It is a realistic historical fiction chronicle of the life of a multi-generational farm family, experiencing the severe environmental and economic hardships of the Midwest Dust Bowl in the 1920-30's.

Questions about Book Chat may be forwarded Lyndsey Hendricks in the church office.



Lunch Bunch News!

The Lunch Bunch Ladies will be meeting **December 9th** at **12pm** at the **Rustic Tavern**. If you are interested in joining, please call **Barb Simonton** at **(717) 329-0123** for reservations.