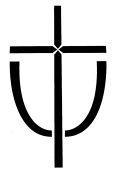




Still Speaking



Indeed, the word of God is living and active...
-Hebrews 4:12

December 2016

The Inside Scoop

Newsletter Deadline

*Our next newsletter will be published the week of **February 1, 2017**. The deadline for that newsletter is **Friday, January 27, 2017**.*

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Do you remember the line from Mary Poppins, “A spoon full of sugar helps the medicine go down?” I always think of that when I teach one of my favorite Confirmation lessons: Advent and Christmas.

In this class, I use a few worksheets about Christmas trivia to sweeten up what might otherwise be a tough pill to swallow. Even young teens don’t like to have their beloved Christmas images called into question.

We have fun figuring out what about Christmas is biblical (What animals were present at the birth of Jesus? a. sheep b. cows c. camels d. who knows) and what about Christmas has grown up out of later legends or tradition. We scour the Bible, and in doing so, learn that a lot of what we know about Christmas comes from tradition, not scripture. (The Bible doesn’t say which animals were present! We assume there would be some animals, since Jesus was laid in a manger, but it’s only later in the text that we hear of sheep. Cows and camels are never mentioned at all in the biblical Christmas stories.)

We do all of this so that the youth are already having some fun and already have some openness when we start talking about the idea that Christmas is much more than a birthday party for Jesus. In this Confirmation class, it is often the first time that young people encounter the idea that while in Christmas we do celebrate Jesus’ birth, it is really so much more than that.

We have fun with this trivia, not to take away the students’ beloved Christmas memories, but rather to help them be open to seeing Christmas in a different way. (The Confirmands walk into class quite sure that there were three magi; when we have them pour over the scriptures, they realize that nowhere does the Bible mention how many there were, only that there were three gifts.)

After a handful of pieces of trivia like this, the teens are finally in a state of mind that they’re able to start talking about the deeper meanings of Christmas. We all know that in Christmas we celebrate Jesus’ birth, but for most Confirmation students, this is the first time they realize that we’re celebrating so much more. We’re celebrating God’s love becoming flesh and dwelling among us.

We talk about the Roman occupation of the Middle East, how they were keeping the peace through violence and control, and how, in Jesus, we are

(continued on page 2)

given a different vision of God's peace through love and relationship. We discuss why God would choose to have the Messiah born in a barn to a poor teenage mother instead of in a palace to royalty. I'm always impressed that our teens understand that one – they get the idea of solidarity.

Every year, it's a heady class for me. The youth walk in to class with a childish image of Christmas as a birthday party, and they walk out with a profound concept of it being a celebration of God's unfathomable, creative love for us and all the world. Thank you for the opportunity to help a new generation understand that not only is Christmas relevant, but also that we need it more than ever.

In Joyful Hope, Pastor Bridget

Lectionary Readings

December 11

3rd Sunday of Advent

Isa 35:1-10; Ps 146:5-10 or
Luke 1:47-55; James 5:7-10
Matt 11:2-11

December 18

4th Sunday of Advent

Isa 7:10-16; Ps 80:1-7, 17-19;
Rom 1:1-7; Matt 1:18-25

December 24

Christmas Eve

Isa 62:6-12; Ps 97
Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:(1-7) 8-20

December 25

Christmas Day

Isa 9:2-7; Ps 96
Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

December 31 & January 1

New Year's Eve/Day

Eccl 3:1-13; Ps 8
Rev 21:1-6a; Matt 25:31-49

January 6

Epiphany

Isa 60:1-6; Ps 72:1-7, 10-14
Eph 3:1-12; Matt 2:1-12

January 8

The Baptism of Christ

Isa 42:1-9; Ps 29
Acts 10:34-43; Matt 3:13-17

January 15

2nd Sunday after Epiphany

Isa 49:1-7; Ps 40:1-11
1 Cor 1:1-9; John 1:29-42

January 22

3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Isa 9:1-4; Ps 27:1, 4-9
1 Cor 1:10-18; Matt 4:12-23

January 29

4th Sunday after Epiphany

Micah 6:1-8; Ps 15
1 Cor 1:18-31; Matt 5:1-12

Our Church Family

Love Life Ministry Book Fair December 17

Love Life Ministry and Barnes & Noble, is promoting a Book Fair on Sat., December 17 (9 a.m. to 8 p.m.) to raise money for Love Life ministry. Love Life assists low-income families with diapers, formula and basic needs for small children.

Please join us on December 17 at Barnes & Noble, or place your order online between December 17 and December 22. You MUST use the ID code: 12003745 at check out. If you are planning to buy books for your family or yourself for Christmas, join us on the 17th and help support Love Life at the same time. We will wrap your books free! Thank you for your generosity.

—Union Church Outreach Ministry

NOTE: If ordering online, order early and choose EXPRESS SHIPPING at check out to ensure delivery by Christmas, OR call the Green Bay store (920-490-1770) no later than December 9 and have your order sent directly to the store. On the 17th, stop by our welcome desk to pick up your voucher prior to paying.

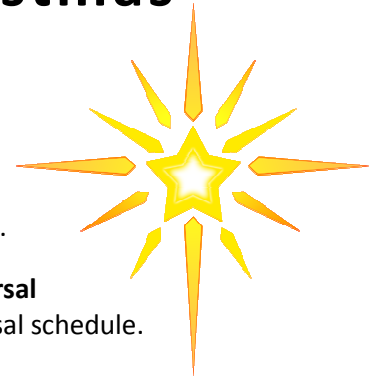
12th Night Celebration

When: January 6 (6 p.m.)
Cost: \$10 per person

Enjoy some fun, fellowship and entertainment in Pilgrim Hall. Bring friends. Inreach Ministry will provide the entrée, dessert, wine and beer. Please bring a dish to share. Child care will be provided. Sign up at Union Central.

—Inreach Ministry

Advent and Christmas at a Glance



Sunday, Dec. 11 **Third Sunday of Advent**
This Sunday, we celebrate Joseph and Mary and their amazing part in the gift of God’s love.

Saturday, Dec. 17 **Christmas Pageant Rehearsal**
See below for the Christmas Pageant rehearsal schedule.

Sunday, Dec. 18 **Fourth Sunday in Advent—Christmas Pageant**
We tell the story of Jesus’ birth in the drama of the Christmas Pageant.
NO STORYTELLER, FAITH FORMATION or CONFIRMATION this Sunday.

Saturday, Dec. 24 **Christmas Eve**
Our early service is more informal with special thought given to people of all ages. The late service of scripture, carols, and candlelight is preceded by wonderful Christmas music. Join us!

- 4:30 p.m. Worship with a special welcome to our children
- 8:45 p.m. The Music of Christmas
- 9:00 p.m. Christmas Eve candlelight worship

Sunday, Dec. 25 **Christmas Day**
We continue the celebration of Jesus’ birth in worship at 10 a.m.
NO CHILD CARE, FAITH FORMATION or CONFIRMATION this Sunday.

Thursday, Dec. 29 **Christmas Walk**
Tour our downtown churches and be inspired by their Christmas sights and sounds. The walk begins at 6:30 p.m. at First Church of Christ, Scientist.

Sunday, Jan. 1, 2017 **New Year’s Day**
10:00 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion (intinction)
NO FAITH FORMATION or CONFIRMATION this Sunday.

Our Christmas Pageant is December 18



Rehearsal — Saturday, December 17
9:00 a.m. Costume Distribution
9:45 a.m. Pageant Walk-Through
10:30 a.m. Pageant Readers and Key Points

Pageant — Sunday, December 18
8:30 a.m. Rehearsal; 10:00 a.m. Pageant

Sign up at Union Central.

The Longest Night

A Special Service
In the Christmas Season

First Congregational UCC

10th & Cedar Streets, De Pere

December 21, 2016

5:00 to 5:30 p.m.

In this season that our culture says is “the most wonderful time of the year,” we may not be feeling that way at all. The Longest Night Service is a time for us to be together, to pause amid the holiday rush, and to acknowledge the difficult feelings and emotions that can overwhelm us this time of year. It also assures us of Immanuel, God with us in a Christmas when we long for the light and hope Jesus’ birth promises us. This is a meaningful and powerful service. Invite friends and family.

The Christmas Giving Tree

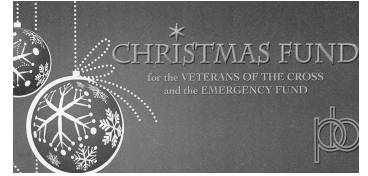
Pilgrim Hall is the site of our annual giving tree. This year the gifts benefit EPH clients and the pantry for transitional housing residents at New Community Shelter.

On the tree you will find ornaments with a request on the reverse side. The variety of items—from cookware to toys to Magic Erasers—you can find no matter where you shop, from Target to Fleet Farm to Wal-Mart.

Please bring your chosen gifts back to the tree unwrapped between now and the Epiphany celebration at church on January 8. Have a little shopping fun and thank you for your generosity!

Christmas Fund Offering

I am the church
You are the church
We are the church together.



That Sunday School song reflects an important part of who we are at Union. We can show how we are the church together by contributing to the Christmas Fund on Sunday, December 11 or throughout December. The fund is monetary help for those who have been the church to us, both retired clergy and church lay workers, and who are now facing a crisis or hardship.

Please live out your commitment to our church family with a gift. The size is not important, but the giving is! There will be special envelopes in the bulletin of December 11 for you to use or mark a regular envelope with Christmas Fund. If contributing by check, you may simply make out your check to Union Church and mark it with Christmas Fund in the memo line. Your gift will be included on your annual giving statement. Thank you, Union family!

Women’s Advent Reflection was December 5



Choir photo taken by Sue Tucker; others taken by Tom Towill



Youth Choir members and Music Director Courtney Sherman sang at the celebration.

Announcing the Austin Robert Bush Memorial Work Safari Scholarship



Austin Bush loved his YCA Work Safari experiences. Both the trip to Grand Rapids, Michigan and two years later to Kansas City, Kansas were some of his favorite memories.

His youth leaders tell the story of working at a meal program on one work safari. The staff were assigning various tasks to the student volunteers when they asked, "Is there anyone willing to chop onions?" After an uncomfortable silence in which NO ONE volunteered, Austin raised his hand...and then for the rest of the afternoon had a blast chopping onions, joking and making friends with the meal site staff he was working with. He made even the most undesirable tasks enjoyable.

That's who Austin was. Throughout his time in YCA, he had fun, and he made sure others around him were having fun also, whether leading the other youth in playing pranks or sitting with a fellow student who seemed to be alone.

That is why Austin's family is happy to announce the establishment of the Austin Bush Work Safari Scholarship from donations to his memorial fund. Through this Scholarship, youth who would not otherwise be able to participate in the memorable, formative experience of a Work Safari will be able to do so. These need-based scholarships will be administered by Union's Gifts and Memorials Ministry.

Friends of Austin, the Bush family, and of YCA are welcome to make further contributions to this Work Safari scholarship. Simply write "Austin Bush Memorial" on the memo [line](#) of a check and send it to the church office. Austin's family is deeply grateful to all of you for your love, support, and care through these months.

Greater Green Bay Area Annual Martin Luther King Interfaith Prayer Gathering

Monday, January 16—7 p.m.
at Union Church

Hosted by G.I.F.T.
(Gathered In Faith Together)



All are welcome to attend this interfaith Martin Luther King gathering co-sponsored by a variety of G.I.F.T. congregations. The prayer service will be lead by religious leaders representing the co-sponsoring congregations. Contact the church office if you can bring a dessert for the social after.

Theology in Nativity Art Dec. 11 and Jan. 1 (9 a.m.) in the Bagby Chapel Led by Dr. Michael Lukens

Beyond the aesthetic enjoyment of art, there is the challenge of interpretation and meaning. Artistic representations of the birth of Jesus portray an intriguing array of differing historical and theological understandings of this event, often reflecting controversies within the faith. Our discussions will focus on distinctive interpretations in the nativity tradition through selected paintings across the centuries.

Second Sunday Series Responding to the Call for Immigrant Justice

Barbara McClure-Lukens will share turning points in her personal journey from a general awareness of immigration issues to advocacy for justice. Join us on January 8 (9 a.m.) in the Bagby Chapel.

Attendance

November	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
1st Sunday	195	130
2nd Sunday	171	148
3rd Sunday	163	150
4th Sunday	124	141
5th Sunday	—	138
Totals	653	707
Average	163.3	141.4

A Note Regarding Your Pledge

For those who wish to prepay on your 2017 pledge before this year ends, please be sure to indicate this on the memo line of your check so proper credit can be given. We will assume unmarked checks to be for the current year (2016). This information is also needed should you be gifting stock to the church before the year ends. Thank you.

—Winnie Hutjens

Stock Gifts

Members and friends of Union Church, if you choose to make a gift of stock to the church, please initiate this transaction no later than Dec. 18 so the gift can be credited to your account this calendar year. Also, we would appreciate you telling us of your intention to make a stock gift so we are aware it is your gift when we see the stock sale come to us.

If you need information on how to make a gift of stock, contact Winnie Hutjens at the church office.

Altar Flowers

Please consider providing flowers for the altar in memory of a loved one or in celebration of a special event. These dates are available:



January 2017

Please call the church office at 437-9266 or sign up on the board next to the office if you'd like to provide altar flowers. Thank you.

Christmas Altar

Please join us in preparing our altar for the Christmas season. We will be purchasing poinsettias by **December 16**. The average cost of each will be \$20.00 (two for \$35). If you wish to contribute, please fill out this order form and return it to the church office, indicating any necessary information for the bulletin.



Poinsettia Contribution

I/we would like to contribute for poinsettias

Name(s) _____

Phone _____ Amount Enclosed _____

Dedication for the Bulletin

Please return this form to the church office. Thank you!

Ecumenical Downtown Christmas Church Walk

Thursday Dec. 29, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.

Walk Begins

First Church of Christ, Scientist
130 N. Monroe Avenue

Walk Ends

The Divine Temple of God in Christ
425 Cherry Street

A bus will be available for those unable to walk.
For the bus, meet at 6:15 p.m.
at The Divine Temple of God in Christ.

For more information call 337-0561.
Donations of canned goods, hats, scarves, gloves
and personal toiletries
for an area food pantry are appreciated.



Union Church Calendar

Dec. 11, 2016—Jan. 29, 2017

December 11 3rd Sunday of Advent CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
9:00 a.m. Adult Education:
Theology in Nativity Art
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary
11:15 a.m. Confirmation

December 13 Tuesday

1:00 p.m. Bible Study
5:00 p.m. Stewardship Ministry
5:30 p.m. Inreach Ministry
6:30 p.m. Common Ministry
6:30 p.m. Adult Gay-Straight Alliance

December 14 Wednesday

12 Noon EPH Luncheon
4:55 p.m. Youth Choir
6:15 p.m. PF & YCA

December 15 Thursday

5:30 p.m. Handbells
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir

December 17 Saturday

9:00 a.m. Costume Distribution
9:45 a.m. Pageant Walk-through
10:30 a.m. Readers and Key Parts

December 18 4th Sunday of Advent

10:00 a.m. Christmas Pageant

December 20 Tuesday

NO BIBLE STUDY

December 21 Wednesday

6:15 p.m. PF Christmas Party
NO SEMINARY SECRETS or YCA

December 22 Thursday

5:30 p.m. Handbells
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir

December 24 Saturday

CHRISTMAS EVE

4:30 p.m. Family Worship
8:45 p.m. The Music of Christmas
9:00 p.m. Candlelight Worship

December 25 Sunday

CHRISTMAS DAY

10:00 a.m. Lessons and Carols

December 26 Monday

CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED

December 27-28 Tuesday-Wednesday

NO BIBLE STUDY
NO YOUTH GROUPS
NO SEMINARY SECRETS

December 29 Thursday

6:30 p.m. Church Walk

December 30 Friday

CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED

January 1 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Adult Education:
Theology in Nativity Art
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary

January 3 Tuesday

1:00 p.m. Bible Study
5:00 p.m. Outreach Ministry
5:00 p.m. New Member Ministry
5:30 p.m. Worship Ministry
6:30 p.m. Education Ministry

January 4 Wednesday

4:55 p.m. Youth Choir
5:45 p.m. Dinner
6:15 p.m. YCA (NO PF)
6:15 p.m. Seminary Secrets

January 5 Thursday

5:30 p.m. Handbells
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir

January 6 Friday

6:00 p.m. 12th Night Celebration

January 8 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
9:00 a.m. Parent to Parent
9:00 a.m. Second Sunday Series
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary
11:15 a.m. Confirmation

January 10 Tuesday

NO BIBLE STUDY

5:00 p.m. Stewardship Ministry
5:30 p.m. Inreach Ministry
6:30 p.m. Common Ministry
6:30 p.m. Adult Gay-Straight Alliance

January 11 Wednesday

4:55 p.m. Youth Choir
5:45 p.m. Dinner
6:15 p.m. PF & YCA
6:15 p.m. Seminary Secrets

January 12 Thursday

5:30 p.m. Handbells
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir

January 15 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
9:00 a.m. Adult Education
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary
11:15 a.m. Confirmation

January 16 Monday

7:00 p.m. G.I.F.T. MLK Service

January 17 Tuesday

1:00 p.m. Bible Study

January 18 Wednesday

NO YCA

PF—Swimming at the Tundra Lodge
6:15 p.m. Seminary Secrets

January 19 Thursday

5:30 p.m. Handbells
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir

January 22 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary
11:15 a.m. Confirmation

January 24 Tuesday

1:00 p.m. Bible Study

January 25 Wednesday

4:55 p.m. Youth Choir
5:45 p.m. Dinner
6:15 p.m. PF & YCA
6:15 p.m. Seminary Secrets

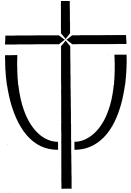
January 26 Thursday

5:30 p.m. Handbells
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir

January 29 Sunday

181st ANNUAL MEETING

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
9:00 a.m. Adult Education
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary



Union Congregational
United Church of Christ
716 S. Madison Street
Green Bay, WI 54301

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Call to the 181st Annual Meeting

The 181st Annual Meeting of Union Congregational United Church of Christ will convene on Sunday, January 29 immediately following worship. We will share a potluck luncheon and conduct our business meeting. Reports concerning the ministry of Union Church in 2016 will be presented, outgoing ministry chairs and vice-chairs will be recognized, elections will be held for new leaders in our ministry structure and a budget for the ministry of Union Church in 2017 will be adopted.

Please bring a salad, vegetable, casserole or dessert for the common table. Common Ministry will provide meat, drinks and table service.

Union Congregational United Church of Christ

716 S. Madison Street
Green Bay, WI 54301
e-mail: office@unionucc.com
(920) 437-9266

Rev. Bridget M. Flad Daniels

Senior Minister

Rev. Steven B. Hartman

Pastor of Visitation

Lou Ann Norsetter

Moderator

Church Office Hours

Mon.-Fri. 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

For more information about us,
visit our web page
at <http://www.unionucc.com>