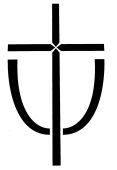




Still Speaking



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

December 2017

The Inside Scoop

Newsletter Deadline

*Our next newsletter will be published the week of **February 7, 2017**. The deadline for that newsletter is **Friday, February 2, 2017**.*

Second Sunday Series.....	2
Advent and Christmas at a Glance .	3
Why Does Christmas Matter?	3
Love Life Ministry	3
Blue Christmas	4
New Year's Eve Taizé Worship.....	4
Open & Affirming Churches Gather	5
MLK Interfaith Prayer Gathering	5
Seminary Secrets.....	5
12th Night Celebration	6
182nd Annual Meeting	back page

It's not uncommon for people to tell me that they get more out of the children's sermon than they do out of the one written for adults. Usually, I don't take this to mean the longer sermon was not meaningful; I assume that they're saying that the very clear, overt, succinct style of the children's sermon works for them.

And so, in the midst of our celebration of Advent, I'd like to explore a little more deeply the theme of my last children's message. Our reader had just proclaimed Isaiah 40:1-11 in which we hear, "A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'"

I wasn't alive when President Eisenhower initiated the Interstate Highway System, but I've been on plenty of summer road trips to know some of what highway construction entails:

- You slow down. Often.
- In fact, you'd better be prepared to stop.
- Often, the new road takes you past glorious vistas that you never knew were right there, just beyond view of the old road.
- Highways are safer than old twisting-turning byways.
- Highways are also more direct, and that's the point.

When we are told by the Prophet Isaiah, and then again by John the Baptist, to prepare a highway for God, the idea is to make it easier for God to get to us and for us to get to God.

And so I ask you, as our Christmas preparations unfold, how can you make it easier for you to get to God and God to get to you? What obstacles need to be cleared away? What needs to be smoothed over? Maybe you have a rather well functioning path to and from God, but there are some potholes that need to be filled in.

For some of us, the obstacles keeping us from a direct route to God are our things and our embrace of our material possessions. For some of us it may be

(continued on page 2)

Lectionary Readings**Dec. 10—2nd Sunday of Advent**

Isa 40:1-11; Ps 85:1-2, 8-13
2 Pet 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

Dec. 17—3rd Sunday of Advent

Isa 61:1-4, 8-11; Ps 126 or Luke 1:47-55
1 Thess 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

Dec. 24—4th Sunday of Advent

2 Sam 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:47-55 or
Ps 89:1-4, 19-26
Rom 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

Dec. 24—Christmas Eve

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

Dec. 25—Christmas Day

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

Dec. 31—1st Sunday after Christmas

Isa 61:10-62:3; Ps 148
Gal 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

Dec. 31—New Year's Eve

Ecc 3:1-13; Ps 8
Rev 21:1-6a; Matt 25:31-46

Jan. 1—New Year's Day

Ecc 3:1-13; Ps 8
Rev 21:1-6a; Matt 25:31-46

Jan. 6—Epiphany

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

Jan. 7—The Baptism of Christ

Gen 1:1-5; Ps 29
Accts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11

Jan. 14—2nd Sunday after Epiphany

1 Sam 3:1-10, (11-20)
Ps 139:1-6, 13-18
1 Cor 6:12-20; John 1:43-51

Jan. 21—3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Ps 62:5-12
1 Cor 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20

Jan. 28—4th Sunday after Epiphany

Deut 18:15-20; Ps 111
1 Cor 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

(continued from page 1)

our pride. For others, it may be addiction or a fear of vulnerability. Maybe filling in the pothole that has developed in a relationship will smooth out the road between you and God.

However you are called to do it, I pray that you are able to take some time to prepare a way for God this Advent. Clear things away, fill in, smooth over, and trust that the God of Light and Love is our ultimate destination.

In Joyful Hope, Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels

Race Relations and the Justice System

January 14, 9 a.m., Bagby Chapel

For our Second Sunday Speaker in January, we have invited a dear friend of Pastor Bridget, the Honorable Lindsey Draper, J.D. Draper grew up with parents who worked alongside Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and his passion for civil rights and justice has never wavered. His career spanned 30 years, including work as Commissioner of Milwaukee County Children's Court, and in the state Department of Justice as the State's Disproportionate Minority Contact Coordinator. Since retiring, he travels the country training middle and high school civics teachers how to engage at-risk students in the study of U.S. history from a Constitutional perspective. Draper will speak about the state of race relations and the justice system.

**Our Church Family**

Why Does Christmas Matter?

December 10

9 a.m. in the Bagby Chapel

Join Michael Lukens for a lively discussion of the meaning of Christmas. Christmas is so significant for many of us, but this is often based on inconsistent reasons. We'll discuss what many of those dominant reasons are and what holds true for us.

Love Life Ministry

Book Fair

December 10

You supported Love Life Ministry with your diaper donations in August! Please help us again by supporting our Book Fair at Barnes and Noble, 2498 S. Oneida Street, on December 10 from 10 a.m. until closing. Love Life will receive a percentage of your in-store purchases on the 10th, or online from December 10 through December 15.

It is easy to do: Just mention Love Life to the cashier in the store on December 10 or go to BN.COM/bookfairs online and use the code 12233623. We will be in the store on the 10th to remind you, and there will be refreshments and other activities, plus free gift wrapping. What a way to get some Christmas shopping done!

See Jean Smithback if you have questions. Thank you for your continued generosity.

—Union Church Outreach Ministry

Advent and Christmas at a Glance



Sunday, Dec. 10 Second Sunday of Advent

This Sunday, we contemplate Mary's witness to the divine.

Saturday, Dec. 16 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal

For the Christmas Pageant rehearsal schedule, please see below.

Sunday, Dec. 17 Third Sunday in Advent — Christmas Pageant

We tell the story of Jesus' birth in the drama of the Christmas Pageant. **NO FAITH FORMATION** this Sunday.

Sunday, Dec. 24 Fourth Sunday in Advent — 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! **NO FAITH FORMATION** this Sunday.

10:00 a.m. Worship with a special message to our children

8:45 p.m. The Music of Christmas

9:00 p.m. Christmas Eve candlelight worship

Monday, Dec. 25 Christmas Day

A Blessed and Merry Christmas to one and all! The church office is closed.

Tuesday, Dec. 26 Day after Christmas

The church office is closed.

Sunday, Dec. 31 New Year's Eve — Taizé Worship

10:00 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary. **NO FAITH FORMATION** this Sunday.

Friday, Jan. 5, 2018 12th Night Celebration

For details, please see page 6.

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2018 Epiphany

10:00 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion in the Sanctuary.



Our Christmas Pageant is December 17

Rehearsal — Saturday, December 16
9:00 a.m. Costume Distribution & Readers
9:45 to 11 a.m. Pageant Walk-Through

Pageant — Sunday, December 17
8:30 a.m. Costumes & Rehearsal
(sweet rolls & juice available for the cast)
10:00 a.m. Christmas Pageant

Sign up at Union Central

Blue Christmas

Service of Light
in the Midst of Darkness

Thursday, December 14 at 6:30 p.m.

Ascension Lutheran Church

2911 Libal Street
(near Broadview YMCA)

Not everyone is up and cheery for Christmas celebrations. Dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after divorce or separation, coping with the loss of a job, living with cancer or some other disease that puts a question mark on the future, and a number of other human situations make parties and joviality painful for many people in our congregation and community.

We will gather at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 14 for a short service of scripture, silent reflection, healing prayer and Communion. We gather in the healing light of Jesus our Lord, whose birth we remember. Welcome, and bring others who might find this service meaningful.

A Heifer Thank You

Thank you, Union Church, from a community in need that will receive numerous animals, seeds and training to improve their health, education and standard of living. This is made possible by your generous gift of \$7,165 to Heifer International through your recent Living Gift Market. You will never meet them or know where they are, and that makes your gift even more meaningful.

Thank you for continuing this important ministry.

—Elizabeth Delvaux
and Jean Smithback



Our 10 a.m. worship on Sunday, December 31, will be in the style of Taizé. Taizé worship is intended to help us to pray and listen with the whole self rather than with mind only. By singing short, simple chants that are easy to learn, and repeated many times, those worshipping in the style of Taizé are able to let go with their mind and to pray and listen to God with their heart. The chant becomes the prayer, and the chant becomes lost in the prayer.

Women's Advent Reflection was December 4



Seventy women enjoyed fellowship and the spirit-filled program "Out of the Darkness, Into the Light" at the Women's Advent Event. Pictured are co-hostesses Mary Kay Bishop (left) and Marcia Martin. (photo by Sue Tucker)

Gathering of
NE Association
Open and Affirming Churches
(and those aspiring to be!)

*January 6, 2018
9:30 a.m. to Noon

Union Congregational UCC
716 S. Madison St.
Green Bay, WI 54301

Come, be inspired by our fellow ONA churches as we gather to resource one another and explore areas of possible combined ministry.

**RSVP the Union Church office,
920-437-9266 or office@unionucc.com**

*In the event of inclement weather, the event will be rescheduled to Saturday, January 13, 2018. Notice of the rescheduling will be posted on the Union Congregational UCC Facebook page.

**Greater Green Bay Area Annual
Martin Luther King
Interfaith Prayer Gathering**

Monday, January 15—7 p.m.
at Union Church

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



All are welcome to attend this interfaith celebration of the life and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King. 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.

Christmas Fund Offering is Sunday, December 10!

January Seminary Secrets
“What’s the reason for the ‘secrets’?”

When, in the many classes I’ve led, I share information about the Bible that comes from the principle of scholarly biblical criticism, I often hear: “Why was I never taught this?!” Why, indeed?

Although seminarians of mainstream denominations are routinely taught the principles and implications of biblical criticism, once out in the congregation, these pastors seldom share this knowledge. In effect, they keep “Seminary Secrets.”

When I was earning my master’s degree in theology, I felt driven to investigate this phenomenon for my master’s thesis; the title of the thesis was, of course, “Seminary Secrets.” In it, I explored a variety of reasons that pastors hesitate to pass on this basic information.

Seminary Secrets participants have expressed interest in reading/discussing my thesis in a series of sessions. If this interests you, please consider joining us!

WHEN: Wednesdays, 6:15 to 7:30 p.m.,
January 17, 24, and 31

WHERE: Chapel Classroom

LEADER: Julie Harder

Sign up at Union Central or contact Julie at jblackharder@gmail.com or 465-0752. If you’d like to read the abstract before deciding, contact Julie.

Attendance

November	2017	2016
1st Sunday	--	195
2nd Sunday	158	171
3rd Sunday	123	163
4th Sunday	125	124
Totals	406	653
Average	135.3	163.3

A Note Regarding Your Pledge

If you wish to prepay on your 2018 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 (2017). 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. 15 if you would like your gift to be credited to your account this calendar year. Also, please let us know 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, please contact Winnie Hutjens at the church office.

You are invited to a 12th Night Celebration

**Friday, January 5 (6 to 9 p.m.)
in Pilgrim Hall**

Tickets \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door



Please join us for a night of fun and fellowship!
Live Music, Games, Dinner, Dessert, Beer & Wine Provided
Please bring a side dish or appetizer to share
Child Care provided

As a nod to the gifts the Magi brought Jesus, we will be taking donations for the Green Bay Veteran's Home and Eye Heart World (which provides aftercare resources for trafficking victims, prevention for at-risk youth, and training for professionals and community members).

**Sign up/purchase tickets after worship services in Pilgrim Hall
or at the door on the night of the event!**

What is 12th Night and Why Celebrate?

The 12th Night refers to the 12th day after Christmas, which marks a holiday known as Epiphany. Epiphany celebrates the arrival of the Magi to deliver their gifts to baby Jesus. Here at Union, we hold a 12th Night party to celebrate the occasion and wrap up the Christmas season.

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 2018

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.

You Might Benefit

If you are 70.5 years old or older, you might take advantage of a simple way to benefit Union Congregational United Church of Christ and receive tax benefits in return. You can give from your IRA directly to a qualified charity such as Union Church without having to pay upfront income taxes on the money. There may also be Medicare benefits depending upon your tax bracket.

You pay no taxes on the gift. The transfer generates neither taxable income nor a tax deduction, so you benefit even if you do not itemize your deductions.

If you have not yet taken your required minimum distribution for the year, your IRA charitable rollover gift can satisfy all or part of that requirement. This information is not intended as legal or tax advice. For such advice, please consult an attorney or tax accountant.

Union Church Calendar

December 10, 2017—January 31, 2018

December 10 2nd Sunday of Advent CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING

- 8:30 a.m. Youth Choir
- 9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
- 9:00 a.m. Adult Education: Why Does Christmas Matter?
- 10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary

December 12 Tuesday

- 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 13 Wednesday

- 5:45 p.m. Dinner
- 6:15 p.m. PF & YCA

December 14 Thursday

- 5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir
- 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir
- 7:00 p.m. Associate Pastor Search Committee

December 16 Saturday

- 9:00 a.m. Costume Distribution and Readers
- 9:45 a.m. Pageant Walk-Through

Rehearsal should finish by 11:00 a.m.

December 17 3rd Sunday of Advent CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

- 8:30 a.m. Costumes & Rehearsal
- 10:00 a.m. Christmas Pageant

December 18 Monday

- 5:00 p.m. Communications Team

December 20 Wednesday

NO YOUTH GROUPS

December 21 Thursday

- 5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir
- 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir

December 24 4th Sunday of Advent CHRISTMAS EVE

- 10:00 a.m. Family Worship
- 8:45 p.m. The Music of Christmas
- 9:00 p.m. Candlelight Worship

December 25 Monday

CHRISTMAS DAY
CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED

December 26 Tuesday

CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED

December 27 Wednesday

NO YOUTH GROUPS

December 31 Sunday

- 10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary

January 2 Tuesday

- 4:30 p.m. Outreach Ministry
- 5:30 p.m. Worship Ministry
- 6:30 p.m. Education Ministry

January 3 Wednesday

- 5:45 p.m. Dinner
- 6:15 p.m. PF & YCA

January 4 Thursday

- 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir

January 5 Friday

- 6:00 p.m. 12th Night Celebration

January 7 Sunday

- 8:30 a.m. Youth Choir
- 9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
- 10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary

January 9 Tuesday

- 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 10 Wednesday

- 5:45 p.m. Dinner
- 6:15 p.m. PF & YCA

January 11 Thursday

- 5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir
- 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir

January 14 Sunday

- 8:30 a.m. Youth Choir
- 9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
- 9:00 a.m. Second Sunday Series
- 10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary

January 15 Monday

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

January 17 Wednesday

- NO YCA; PF at the Tundra Lodge
- 6:15 p.m. Seminary Secrets

January 18 Thursday

- 5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir
- 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir

January 21 Sunday

- 8:30 a.m. Youth Choir
- 9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
- 10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary

January 24 Wednesday

- 5:45 p.m. Dinner
- 6:15 p.m. PF & YCA
- 6:15 p.m. Seminary Secrets

January 25 Thursday

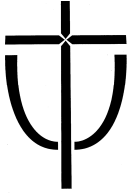
- 5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir
- 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir

January 28 Sunday

- 182nd ANNUAL MEETING
- 8:30 a.m. Youth Choir
- 9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
- 10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary

January 31 Wednesday

- 5:45 p.m. Dinner
- 6:15 p.m. PF & YCA
- 6:15 p.m. Seminary Secrets



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

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GREEN BAY, WI

Call to the 182nd Annual Meeting

The 182nd Annual Meeting of Union Congregational United Church of Christ will convene on Sunday, January 28 immediately following worship. We will share a potluck luncheon and conduct our business meeting. Reports concerning the ministry of Union Church in 2017 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 2018 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

Sandy Polarek

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>