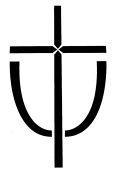




Still Speaking



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

December 2018

The Inside Scoop

Newsletter Deadline

Our next newsletter will be published the week of **Feb. 6, 2019**. The deadline for that newsletter is **Friday, Feb. 1, 2019**.

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Living with an Attitude of Gratitude— In a Season of the Desire to Acquire

Dr. Jon Pahl

Some of you know that I’ve written a book titled *Shopping Malls and Other Sacred Spaces*. That book (first published in 1993) is a critique of what I call the desire to acquire, and a recommendation of living with an attitude of gratitude (you’ve heard that phrase from me before, and you’ll hear it again!)

That critique of consumerism and recommendation of gratitude is particularly appropriate in this Advent and Christmas season (and, no, that’s not a subtle plea for you to buy the book for someone as a gift—how pathetic that would be!).

But wouldn’t it be almost natural for even a pastor to be caught up in blatant commercial/consumer culture? There are plenty of churches out there where you’ll be scolded for your consumer habits, while worshipping in a space that looks like a shopping mall. You know the approach: “Keep Christ in Christmas!” (damn you). That’s the air we breathe during this Advent and Christmas season.

One of my colleagues, Leigh Schmidt, who’s taught at Harvard and Princeton and now is at Washington University in St. Louis, wrote a book that I’m happy to recommend titled *Consumer Rites: The Buying and Selling of American Holidays*. It’s a study of Christmas, Easter, Valentine’s Day, and Mother’s Day over the course of American history. And it’s not what you think. Leigh doesn’t judge. He inquires. How did we get here?

And if you’re swamped by feeling pressure to get “just the right” gift(s) this year, mindlessly wandering around a mall, you might ask yourself the same question: how did we get here? How did Christmas go from a holiday that our Pilgrim forbearers banned in 1659 (too much revelry) to the festival of consumption we celebrate today?

To answer that, Leigh explores exactly what gift giving means, and why the gift became so crucial during the holidays. Part of it, of course, is simply effective marketing: toy manufacturers saw an opportunity and took it. Others followed suit.

But at the heart of the Christmas story is the birth of Jesus. And that gift to humanity—or as Bach put it, that joy of human desiring—can inspire in us the

(continued on page 2)

Lectionary Readings

Dec. 16—3rd Sunday of Advent

Zeph 3:14-20; Isa 12:2-6
Phil 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

Dec. 23—4th Sunday of Advent

Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:46b-55
or Ps 80:1-7
Heb 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)

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. 30—1st Sunday after Christmas

1 Sam 2:18-20, 26; Ps 148
Col 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52

Dec. 31—New Year's Eve

Ecll 3:1-13; Ps 8
Rev 21:1-6a; Matthew 25:31-46

Jan. 1—New Year's Day

Ecll 3:1-13; Ps 8
Rev 21:1-6a; Matthew 25:31-46

Jan. 6—Epiphany

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

Jan. 13—The Baptism of Christ

Isa 43:1-7; Ps 29
Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Jan. 20—2nd Sunday after Epiphany

Isa 62:1-5; Ps 36:5-10
1 Cor 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

Jan. 27—3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Neh 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Ps 19
1 Cor 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21

Feb. 3—4th Sunday after Epiphany

Jer 1:4-10; Ps 71:1-6
1 Cor 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30

Feb. 10—5th Sunday after Epiphany

Isa 6:1-8, (9-13); Ps 138
1 Cor 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11

(continued from page 1)

desire to give back. And when we give back, we can discover (or rediscover) the joy of gratitude.

Not only do we experience the joy of another when we give them a gift. But we also experience the joy of giving ourselves, as a kind of rebound effect. And underneath that joy of giving resides an attitude of gratitude—the awareness that we are grateful for the life of the person to whom we are giving a gift. That's what gifts represent. And that's what's key to remember: all those gifts are tokens, material signs, finite reminders, of the infinite love of an infinite God for each of us.

So, I don't care if you tell me "Merry Christmas" or "Happy Holidays." I see little benefit in turning a holy day into a weapon in a culture war. No.

What I do care about, as a pastor, and as a teacher of the church, is that whatever your celebration of the holiday happens to be, that you receive all that the holiday brings with that attitude of gratitude. So, giving, receiving, participating mindfully—that's what it means to "keep Christ in Christmas." Living with an attitude of gratitude isn't a dogmatic list of do's and don'ts. To live with an attitude of gratitude is to recognize how precious, and how fragile, life truly is.

We're truly blessed here at Union Church with a beautiful sanctuary, lovingly decorated by our sisters and brothers in the faith, passed down to us across generations. We're blessed with an extraordinary range of ministries where we can give back, every day—gorgeous music, extensive outreach, superb education. And we're blessed with a heritage of faith that extends over 2,000 years, and that has changed history and changed hearts.

I do hope you'll join us for some of the many opportunities we have to express together our gratitude this holiday season. I truly look forward to seeing you. Come share in joyful singing and praying, filled with gratitude for the many glorious gifts we have been given, no matter how many packages (or not!) there might be under the tree.

Our Church Family

Communion Servers Needed

We are looking to recruit more friends who are willing to help serve Communion on the first Sunday of each month. It is a very easy way to get involved in the life of the church and it does not require any special skills! If interested, call the church office at 437-9266 or Kathy Baldwin at 499-1430 and we will get you on the list!

Love Life Fundraiser Book Fair December 19

A Bookfair to benefit Love Life East of Green Bay will be held from 9 a.m. until 7 p.m. on Wednesday, December 19, at Barnes & Noble in Green Bay. Barnes & Noble will donate a percentage of in-store purchases to help Love Life families. Love Life provides diapers, infant furniture, clothing and supplies to low income families with newborns and toddlers.

Shoppers may use the code 12395596 at the cashiers' or mention Love Life. You can shop online at www.BN.COM/bookfairs and use the numerical code from December 19 to December 24 to obtain the percentage for Love Life. This is a good chance to finish up your last minute Christmas shopping.

Happy shopping and thank you from Love Life.

Call Jean Smithback if you have questions. 920-983-8579.

—Union Church Outreach Ministry

Advent and Christmas at a Glance



Sunday, Dec. 16 Third Sunday of Advent

We celebrate Mary and her amazing part in the gift of God's love.

Monday, Dec. 17 Christmas Jazz Service at 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 20 Longest Night Service at 7:00 p.m.

For people struggling with loss or feeling a disconnect from the holiday spirit.

Saturday, Dec. 22 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal at 9:00 a.m.

Sunday, Dec. 23 Fourth Sunday in Advent—Christmas Pageant

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

Monday, Dec. 24 Christmas Eve

Our early service is more informal with special thought given to children's attention spans. The late service of scripture, carols, and candlelight is preceded by wonderful Christmas music. Join us!

3:00 p.m. Worship with a special welcome to our children

8:35 p.m. The Music of Christmas

9:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight worship

Greater Green Bay Area Annual Martin Luther King Interfaith Prayer Gathering

Monday, January 21—7 p.m.

at Trinity Lutheran

330 S. Broadway

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.

Longest Night Service

Thursday, December 20
7 p.m. at Union Church

First Congregational UCC of De Pere and Union Congregational UCC invite you to our "Longest Night Service," a special holiday service designed for those for whom the holidays might be difficult, to be held on Thursday, December 20 at 7 p.m. at Union Church. If you have undergone a difficult loss, transition, or life change, the church cares about you and invites you to a special time of music and worship. All are welcome.

Second Sunday Series

Returns January 13
9 a.m. in the Bagby Chapel

The Greater Green Bay Community Foundation is committed to continually improving the quality of life in our area. On January 13, join Amber Paluch, vice president for community engagement, as she provides greater insight into the work of the Greater Green Bay Foundation.

Attendance

November	2018	2017
1st Sunday	144	--
2nd Sunday	134	158
3rd Sunday	150	123
4th Sunday	113	125
Totals	541	406
Average	135.3	135.3

the Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work

Note finalized details!

Sundays of February 3, February 10,
February 17, and February 24 from 1 to 4:30 p.m.

The Seven Principles Workshop for Couples is based on the internationally acclaimed research of Dr. John Gottman as presented in his New York Times bestselling book—*The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*. This educational workshop is designed to help couples improve their friendship, enhance romance and intimacy, and manage conflict constructively.

Leader: Julie Harder, who has recently completed training by the Gottman Institute to become a Gottman Leader, will present the workshop.

Format: Designed by the Gottman Institute, this program includes short lectures alternating with private couple exercises (no public sharing of issues).

Benefits: Provides structure, motivation, and accountability to truly enhance your relationship, using evidence-based tools gleaned from Dr. Gottman's 40 years of research.

Location: Union Church

Cost: \$70 per couple, includes books, presenter, and light snacks (scholarships and early bird discounts available)

Dates: Sundays, February 3, February 10, February 17, and February 24

Time: 1 to 4:30 p.m.

Registration and Payment Deadline: Wednesday, January 16 (necessary to order materials)

To Register: Fill out a registration form and return it with \$70 payment (cash, check, or charge) to the church office by January 16. (early bird discount = \$55/couple) Forms are available at Union Central. Scholarships available by contacting Pastor Bridget via the church office.

Workshop is appropriate for heterosexual and gay/lesbian couples who are:

- Contemplating engagement
- Pre-marital
- Newlyweds to decades-long marrieds
- In other long-term committed relationships

It is inappropriate for:

- Couples in severe relationship distress
- Significant emotional or physical abuse
- Mental health problems
- Relationships where one or both partners are addicted to drugs, alcohol, or other compulsive behavior.

Questions? Contact Julie Harder at jblackharder@gmail.com or 465-0752.

Seeing with New Eyes

Many years ago, I was a graduate student puzzling about the culture shaping powers of television, I used the insights of classical Athens and Rome as a context for this study. Years later I don't think much about mass media but I do know that the Greek thinkers shaped my understanding of culture in fundamental ways.

The interplay between experienced culture and the ancient text of the Bible is formative also. Ask any church school teacher who ponders how to make the lesson meaningful for his or her student. Elaine Pagels describes Bible reading as a way of "thinking through" and "feeling through" events in our own lives.

Not all of us have the will to shape our lives around our faith like Shannan Martin does. Her free form ministry as told in *The Ministry of Ordinary Places* welcomes her neighbors – those reentering after incarceration and on parole (her husband is a jail chaplain), recovering from addiction, single and alone. She pays attention to people on the street in front of her house. Her once dwindling church now welcomes the neighborhood in. Her understanding of the Bible story is very contemporary and Martin is easy to follow, illustrating the situations of the Bible with scenes from her own life. Using the crucible of the neighborhood, she has taught herself to see Biblical living with new eyes.

In *The Talking Book*, Allen Dwight Callahan makes the case that the evangelical "great awakenings" in early U.S. history enabled some slaves to become literate in order to read the Bible. Once empowered, the stories, read in the context of slavery, found resonating stories of exile, exodus, Africa (as enfolded into mentions of Ethiopia), and through Jesus. Callahan offers examples of how Bible stories informed Harlem Renaissance writing, and Hip Hop, again seeing with new eyes.

Pastor of the Bethlehem Christmas Church, Mitri Raheb wrote *Faith in the Face of Empire* to help Westerners like us see how U.S. support of Israel has installed a Rome-like empire in the Middle East. After five chapters of background, Raheb insightfully explains that the various ways Jews dealt with the Romans have parallel behavior patterns in today's Palestine. And the way Jesus spoke about the poor in the Sermon on the Mount speaks to Palestinians facing the implacable power of Israel. Raheb calls this "the Bible through Palestinian eyes."

The books mentioned here can be found in the basket under the window in the church library. Please visit the library also if you need a children's Christmas picture book or two. They are on the top shelf in the corner of the library.

—Cathy Putman, church librarian

Christmas Giving Tree

Outreach Ministry is sponsoring a Christmas Giving Tree again this year. We are seeking items for needy families in our area to share God's love through our gifts this Christmas. The tree in Pilgrim Hall has ornaments with requested items listed on the back. Please purchase the item and return it wrapped along with the ornament tag. Gift cards should be turned in to the church office for safekeeping. It is very important that all items be returned by December 23. That afternoon, we will sort the items for delivery before Christmas.

If you have any questions, please contact Pat Shafer (469-1661 or pashafer@aol.com).

Call to the 183rd Annual Meeting

The 183rd Annual Meeting of Union Congregational United Church of Christ will convene on Sunday, January 27 immediately following worship. We will conduct our business meeting and share a potluck luncheon. Reports concerning the ministry of Union Church in 2018 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 2019 will be adopted.

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

Christmas Fund Offering
is
Sunday, December 16!

Giving Envelopes

If you would like to receive weekly giving envelopes for 2019 and haven't received them in the past, please notify the church office by December 9. Conversely, if you no longer want to receive giving envelopes in 2019, please notify the church office by December 9. You may pick up envelopes as of December 16 outside the church office.

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 December 14 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, feel free to contact Winnie Hutjens at finance@unionucc.com.

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 2019

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.

A Jazz Christmas at Union

Featuring MAR Jazz Duo, the Peguero Sisters, Tim Dorsey (and other friends and family)

Monday, December 17 at 7 p.m.

All are welcome!

Come join us and sing along with Christmas classics set to jazz changes and to hear some great arrangements of Christmas favorites including:

"Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful!"
"This Christmas"
"Angel Eyes"

"Let it Snow!"
"Mary Had a Baby"
"Jingle Bells"

And many more!

This service will feature the MAR Jazz Duo—recording artists and recent UWGB grads Matt Hillman on guitar and Rissel Peguero on piano and vocals accompanied by Dr. Bill Sallak on drums, Andrew Bader on bass, Dr. Jon Pahl on saxes. Other guests include the Peguero Sisters (Marvelis Peguero Almonte and Yaina Peguero Almonte) and their dad, Roberto Peguero, among other guests.

A free will offering will benefit the musicians and the general music budget of Union Church.

Women's Advent Reflection was December 3



Sixty women enjoyed fellowship and the spirit-filled program "Love Came Down at Christmas" at the Women's Advent Event. Pictured from left to right are Hazel Kalkofen, Annika Osell, Sharilyn Osell, Gloria Gail, Traci Briggs and Karen Hogan.

(photo by Sue Tucker)

Union Church Calendar

December 16, 2018—January 29, 2019

December 16 3rd Sunday of Advent
 CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING
 9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
 10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary

December 17 Tuesday
 7:00 p.m. Jazz Christmas at Union

December 18 Tuesday
 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

December 19 Wednesday
 LOVE LIFE FUNDRAISER
 5:45 p.m. Dinner
 6:15 p.m. PF & YCA

December 20 Thursday
 7:00 p.m. Longest Night Service

December 22 Saturday
 9:00 p.m. Pageant Rehearsal

 Rehearsal should finish by 11:00 a.m.

December 23 4th Sunday of Advent
 CHRISTMAS PAGEANT
 8:30 a.m. Pageant Rehearsal
 10:00 a.m. Christmas Pageant

December 24 Monday
 CHRISTMAS EVE
 CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED
 3:00 p.m. Family Worship
 8:35 p.m. The Music of Christmas
 9:00 p.m. Candlelight Worship

December 25 Tuesday
 CHRISTMAS DAY
 CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED

December 26 Wednesday
 NO YOUTH GROUPS

December 30 Sunday
 10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary

December 31 Monday
 NEW YEAR'S EVE
 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSSES at NOON

January 1 Tuesday
 NEW YEAR'S DAY
 CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED

January 2 Wednesday
 7:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast Group
 NO YOUTH GROUPS

January 5 Saturday
 1:00 p.m. Proud Theater

January 6 Sunday
 9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
 10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary

January 8 Tuesday
 12:00 p.m. Bible Study
 4:30 p.m. Outreach Ministry
 5:30 p.m. Bell Choir
 5:30 p.m. Stewardship Ministry
 6:00 p.m. AG-SA Presentation: The Complex Mosaic of Human Sex

January 9 Wednesday
 5:45 p.m. Dinner
 6:15 p.m. PF & YCA

January 10 Thursday
 5:30 p.m. New Member/Inreach
 7:00 p.m. Common Ministry

January 12 Saturday
 1:00 p.m. Proud Theater

January 13 Sunday
 9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
 9:00 a.m. Second Sunday Series:
 Amber Paluch—Greater
 Green Bay Foundation
 10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary

January 14 Monday
 4:30 p.m. Personnel Committee

January 15 Tuesday
 12:00 p.m. Bible Study
 5:30 p.m. Bell Choir
 6:00 p.m. Education Ministry
 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

January 16 Wednesday
 5:45 p.m. Dinner
 6:15 p.m. PF & YCA

January 19 Saturday
 1:00 p.m. Proud Theater

January 20 Sunday
 9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
 10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary

January 21 Monday
 7:00 p.m. G.I.F.T. MLK Service
 at Trinity Lutheran

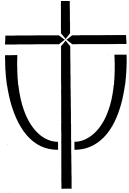
January 22 Tuesday
 12:00 p.m. Bible Study
 1:00 p.m. Priscilla Circle
 5:30 p.m. Bell Choir
 6:30 p.m. Saudade
 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

January 23 Wednesday
 5:45 p.m. Dinner
 6:15 p.m. PF & YCA

January 26 Saturday
 1:00 p.m. Proud Theater

January 27 Sunday
 183rd ANNUAL MEETING
 9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
 10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary

January 29 Tuesday
 12:00 p.m. Bible Study
 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir



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

Return Service Requested

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PERMIT NO. 53
GREEN BAY, WI

Christmas Eve



at
Union Church

- 3:00 p.m. Christmas Eve for all ages with a special message to our children
- 8:35 p.m. The Music of Christmas
- 9:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

Join us...and invite your friends . . . as we celebrate the joy of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ!

Union Congregational United Church of Christ

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

Bridget M. Flad Daniels

Senior Minister

Dr. Jon Pahl

Minister of Faith Formation
and Community Engagement

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>