



Still Speaking

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

December 2020

What Do You Want for Christmas?

What do you want for Christmas? It's a perennial question, asked of young and old alike.

Secular Christmas songs give us some ideas. Your two front teeth? A hippopotamus? Snow?

There's nothing inherently wrong with wanting a new stand mixer or fuzzy slippers or even a pony, but as one of my former colleagues used to rant regarding the commercialization of Christmas, "It's Jesus' birthday, not yours!"

And in this year, a year so very different from anything any of us have experienced, Christmas wishes to be home or to be kissing under the mistletoe have taken on sharper poignancy than ever. My heart breaks that the Baby's First Christmas picture frame that we were gifted will feature a Zoom screenshot where I'd envisioned the snap of Josie held in her grandma's arms. I weep anticipatory tears for the families who will lose someone in 2021 and who will question in retrospect whether making the healthy choice to practice distance this holiday season was the right thing to do.

In her remarkable book of prayers titled "All Desires Known," Janet Morley writes, "I understand the Christian life to be about the integration of desire: our personal desires, our political vision, and our longing for God. So far from being separate or in competition with one another, I believe that our deepest desires ultimately spring from the same source."

Under this rubric, your Christmas wish for the family to be together and the desire for peace on earth come from the same source.

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The Inside Scoop

Newsletter Deadline

Our next newsletter will be published the week of **February 10, 2021.**

The deadline for that newsletter is **Friday, February 5, 2021.**

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Christian artist and poet Jan Richardson latches on to Morley's concept, and helps us to flesh it out further by inviting us to reflect, "What and whom do I desire? Do my desires spring from a longing for wholeness or from a sense of inadequacy? Do they come from within me or from what others say I should want? Will the things I long for bring healing to others as well as to myself? Will my desires draw me closer to God? Do I really believe the Holy One desires me, loves me unconditionally, longs for me?"

And so, as your pastor, I ask you to dive deep this Christmas. Along with making sure your Christmas packages are mailed in time, take time to really sit with the age-old question of what you want for Christmas. Take Morley's and Richardson's lead and pray with your desires: What speaks to you? What calls to you? What dreams have you buried? What wounds cry out for healing? What longs to be born in you in this season? What is the yearning that you have not dared to name?

Friends, my Christmas wish for you is that God will grant your deepest desires. May you get exactly what you want for Christmas. (Oh, and lest you imagine me to be a grinch, Josie IS getting a pony.)

In Joyful Hope,
Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels

Our Church Family

Join Us For These Special Holiday Services

Longest Night Service

December 21 at 7:00 p.m.

This year has had its share of losses and sadness, and in the season that our culture says is “the most wonderful time of the year,” we understand that some of us may not feel that way. Our Longest Night Service is a time for us to pause amid the holiday season, and to acknowledge the difficult feelings and emotions that can creep in, sometimes even overwhelming us this time of year. It also reminds us of Emmanuel, God With Us, as we long for the hope Jesus’ birth promises us. All are welcome to join in this service to be shared on Monday, December 21 at 7 p.m. via the church website and on Facebook Live.

Christmas Eve Service

December 24 at 7:00 p.m.

While we will not worship at church this year, we plan to make our celebration of Jesus’ birth special. All are welcome to join in this service to be shared on Thursday, December 24 with special music beginning at 7:00 p.m.

- Join us via Facebook Live or on our website.
- Additionally, all who are interested are invited to our **Drive-In Christmas Eve Celebration!** Gather together in the Associated Bank parking lot at the corner of Elm and Madison Streets to watch our Christmas Eve service on a giant video wall!
- Bring a flashlight or other light for “Silent Night.”

Advent and Christmas at a Glance



Sunday, December 20

Fourth Sunday of Advent—Christmas Pageant

10:00 a.m. We tell the story of Jesus’ birth in the drama of the Christmas Pageant.

Monday, December 21

Longest Night Service at 7:00 p.m.

This is a time to pause amid the holiday season and to acknowledge the difficult feelings and emotions that can creep in. It also reminds us of Emmanuel, God With Us, as we long for the hope Jesus’ birth promises.

Thursday, December 24

Christmas Eve (the church office closes at noon)

7:00 p.m.

The Music of Christmas and A Service of Lessons and Carols

(you may wish to have candles ready to light during “Silent Night”)

Join us via Facebook Live or on our website. Additionally, all who are interested are invited to our Drive-In Christmas Eve Celebration! Gather together in the Associated Bank parking lot at the corner of Elm and Madison Streets to watch the service on a giant video wall!

Friday, December 25

Christmas Day (the church office is closed)

A Blessed and Merry Christmas to all!

Sunday, December 27

First Sunday after Christmas

10:00 a.m. Worship. **NO FAITH FORMATION.**

Thursday, December 31

New Year’s Eve (the church office closes at noon)

Friday, January 1, 2021

New Year’s Day (the church office is closed)

Sunday, January 3, 2021

Epiphany

10:00 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion



Your Church Library

by Cathy Putman

This past Sunday, Mary's "Magnificat" loomed large. Her song, the voice of a nobody, socially speaking, praises God for upending social and political hierarchies.

David Hall's "A Reforming People" (2011), a story of a similar although slower upending, describes the lasting social and political changes brought about by the Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

The Puritans are one of our denomination's forbears. Arriving in 1630, the one thousand strong were set on establishing a community of co-believers and were armed with a royal Charter that granted them governance over a spacious territory. As both church and state, the Puritans established a thriving colony, but their intolerance drove out religious dissenters such as the insurgent Anne Hutchinson, nonconformist Roger Williams, Quakers and Baptists.

In a dismal hour, several ministers succumbed to rumor mongering and accusations that resulted in the Salem witch trials. The 1692 witch trials were upended by the witness of neighbors and friends of the accused, who testified to their innocence. That their testimony was heard and seriously weighed despite its implicit criticism of the clergy is due in part to the reforms the Puritans instituted.

With copious evidence from New England town meetings held between 1630 and 1650, Harvard Divinity School church historian David Hall points to new ideas about governance which began to percolate.

Participation was an integral part of church and civic life. The citizenry was highly literate and wary of the abuses of power that marked the rule of Charles I in England. A well-attended court hearing

served to air out grievances and restore peace. The highly participative town system for distributing land was conducted with an eye to fairness and impartiality.

Massachusetts Bay Colony's old school governor John Winthrop preferred a government of the few. From the first, he was in conflict with a citizenry aware of the English policy requiring consent to taxation and legal charges. His appointed magistrates were balanced by an election of people's delegates. For Massachusetts Bay and three adjoining colonies, elections for delegates and all officers, including governor, were held annually, assemblies and courts met every year, and rotation of office holders was encouraged. With no aristocracy and little church hierarchy in New England as barnacles on the process, the people's sovereignty advanced in a few short years.

Events in England pushed the population of the Massachusetts Bay Colony to 20,000 by 1640. This influx put church membership to the test. Reluctant to repeat the standoff which resulted from Anne Hutchinson's excommunication and faced with children who were less religious than their parents, standards of church membership were relaxed. Religious outsiders found that the diversity of new towns meant more toleration and places where they could secure church membership.

In the 1640s, the church/state government created a legal system unburdened by many of the abuses of the English system. Some laws were informed by Biblical sources but others were detached, such as making marriage entirely secular and permitting divorce. Still offenses against the church were serious and, despite reform, witchcraft remained a capital offense. It would take almost two centuries for all of New England's Congregational state churches to become disentangled from civic life.

To read more, we have books on Roger Williams, Anne Hutchinson and several Congregational histories in the church library. Find them in the basket under the window in the church library.

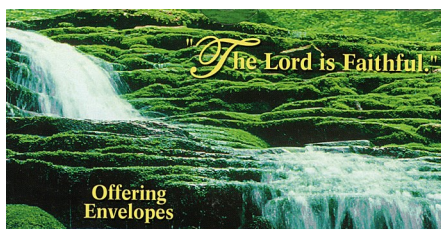
EPH News

In this season of giving and preparing for the holidays, would you please consider donating to the families who are served by the Ecumenical Partnership in Housing, EPH? These families have been hit particularly hard by the COVID crisis, and could use our assistance to make their holidays brighter. Union has a long-standing history of supporting EPH.

Here's a wish list of items requested by EPH families. These items can be gently used as long as they are in good working condition. If you're upgrading appliances or furniture, consider donating your gently used items to EPH.

- Refrigerators
- Electric Stoves
- Microwaves
- Washers (simple models)
- Electric dryers (simple models)
- Dressers (not overly large ones)
- Living Room side chairs
- Twin and full-sized blankets
- Twin-sized mattress pads
- Pack-N-Plays
- High Chairs
- Kitchen Tables and Chairs
- Menard's Gift Cards
- Grocery Store Gift Cards
- Toilet Plungers
- LED Light Bulbs 60 and 100 watt
- Paper Napkins
- Facial Tissue
- Toilet Paper
- Toothpaste
- Laundry Pre-Treater (such as Spray and Wash or Resolve)
- Liquid Multi-Surface Cleaner (such as Mr. Clean or Pine-Sol)
- 2021 Calendars
- Alarm Clocks
- Box Fans
- Crock Pots
- Night Lights

Additionally, if you'd like to do something special for our church's family at Jubilee House, it would be much appreciated. Perhaps bringing some holiday cookies, or a gingerbread house kit, or a gift card to help buy groceries for a holiday meal. You could make an ornament for their holiday tree, or anything that you think would bring joy to the family. Thank you for your generosity and for thinking of our EPH families. If you plan on making a donation, please visit www.ephgb.org or call EPH at (920) 680-8667.



Giving Envelopes Are Here

If you have used numbered envelopes in the past or requested them for 2021, they are ready to be picked up outside the church office. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

—Winnie Hutjens

Greater Green Bay Area Annual Martin Luther King Interfaith Prayer Gathering

Monday, January 18—7 p.m.

On Facebook Live

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



All are welcome to view 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.

Bonhoeffer in Our Times: Adult Education Opportunity with Professor Michael Lukens

Only days after Christmas 1942 and just weeks before his arrest by the Gestapo, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, German theologian, resister, and martyr, wrote an unusual piece that has become perhaps his most famous essay. It was a secret narrative sent to three of his closest associates, who were also co-conspirators in the plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler.

This essay, "After Ten Years," is a disparate set of brief, intensely astute reflections that cut across the struggle against the Nazis. Bonhoeffer writes in frustration, over endless complexity and ambiguity, disappointed by failure, but, perhaps most importantly, bluntly discouraged by the passive irresponsibility of the people and the lack of the Church's courage. Yet, it is grounded in hope. He assesses a monumental trial, leading to the age-old question: what do we do now?

Today, although not in such an extreme strait, we are in a highly stressful social and political trial. We, too, must ask: what do we do now? His essay is a guide for our discussion, including our anti-racism work.

The seminar meets Sundays (9 a.m.), January 10, 17 and 24 via Zoom.

[https://](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89323819197)

us02web.zoom.us/j/89323819197

Meeting ID: 893 2381 9197

The text for this seminar is the pamphlet, "After Ten Years" – Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Our Times, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2017. The text has two parts: an introduction by Bonhoeffer scholar, Victoria Barnett and the essay itself. The link takes you to the Amazon site, but it can be purchased from any bookstore.

Stock the Box Drive is Saturday, January 2

Our next drive will take place January 2 (9 a.m. to noon). We will accept items at the north Madison Street entrance. In particular, we are looking for:

- Boxed mac and cheese, rice, pasta and soup mixes
- Peanut butter
- Flat packaged tuna, salmon or chicken
- Healthy cereals, oatmeal packets
- Powdered milk, apple cider and hot chocolate packets
- Healthy snacks: granola bars, nuts, muffins, Rice Krispie bars, crackers
- Fruit in plastic: applesauce, etc.
- Toiletries: shampoo, conditioner, feminine hygiene products, soap, sanitizers, lotion, deodorant, razors, toothpaste and brushes and masks.
- Paper products: paper towels, Kleenex and toilet paper
- Winter hats, gloves and mittens, scarves in adult and children sizes

***Please, no glass jars that might freeze or break in the cold. Thanks!**

Lectionary Readings

Dec. 20 — 4th Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

Dec. 24 — Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

Dec. 25 — Christmas Day

Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-4, (5-12); John 1:1-14

Dec. 27 — 1st Sunday after Christmas

Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148
Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

Dec. 31 — New Year's Eve and Day

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13; Psalm 8
Revelation 21:1-6a; Matthew 25:31-46

Jan. 3 — 2nd Sunday after Christmas

Jeremiah 31:7-14 or Sirach 24:1-12
Psalm 147:12-20 or
Wisdom of Solomon 10:15-21
Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:(1-9), 10-18

Jan. 6 — Epiphany

Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

Jan. 10 — The Baptism of Christ

Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29
Acts of the Apostles 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11

Jan. 17 — 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20);
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51

Jan. 24 — 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

John 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12
1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20

Jan. 31 — 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111
1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

Feb. 7 — 5th Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
1 Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39

Feb. 14 — Transfiguration

2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6
2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9

Union Church Calendar

December 20, 2020—February 8, 2021

December 20 4th Sunday of Advent

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

10:00 a.m. Christmas Pageant

December 21 Monday

7:00 p.m. Longest Night Service

December 22 Tuesday

7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir (Zoom)

December 24 Thursday

CHRISTMAS EVE

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSSES at NOON

7:00 p.m. The Music of Christmas
Drive-in
Christmas Eve Celebration

December 25 Friday

CHRISTMAS DAY

CHURCH OFFICE is CLOSED

December 27 Sunday

NO FAITH FORMATION
NO ADULT EDUCATION

10:00 a.m. Worship

December 31 Thursday

NEW YEAR'S EVE

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSSES at NOON

January 1 Friday

NEW YEAR'S DAY

CHURCH OFFICE is CLOSED

January 3 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
10:00 a.m. Worship
with Holy Communion

January 4 Monday

4:00 p.m. Discernment Community

January 5 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study
4:30 p.m. Outreach Ministry
5:30 p.m. Worship Ministry

6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir (Zoom)

6:30 p.m. Education Ministry

January 6 Wednesday

6:15 p.m. Youth Groups

January 10 Sunday

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

January 11 Tuesday

4:00 p.m. Discernment Community

January 12 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study
5:00 p.m. Stewardship Ministry
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir (Zoom)

January 13 Wednesday

6:15 p.m. Youth Groups

January 14 Thursday

5:00 p.m. Inreach Membership
Ministry
6:00 p.m. Common Ministry

January 17 Sunday

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

January 18 Monday

4:00 p.m. Discernment Community
7:00 p.m. G.I.F.T. MLK Service
on Facebook Live

January 19 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study
5:30 p.m. Bell Choir (in person)
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir (Zoom)

January 20 Wednesday

6:15 p.m. Youth Groups

January 24 Sunday

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

January 25 Monday

4:00 p.m. Discernment Community

January 26 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study
3:00 p.m. Bell Choir (in person)
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir (Zoom)

January 27 Wednesday

6:15 p.m. Youth Groups

January 31 Sunday

185th ANNUAL MEETING

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
10:00 a.m. Worship
11:15 a.m. Annual Meeting
follows Worship

February 1 Monday

4:00 p.m. Discernment Community

February 2 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study
4:30 p.m. Outreach Ministry
5:30 p.m. Worship Ministry
6:30 p.m. Education Ministry
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir (Zoom)

February 3 Wednesday

6:15 p.m. Youth Groups

February 7 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation
10:00 a.m. Worship
with Holy Communion

February 8 Monday

4:00 p.m. Discernment Community



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

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ANNUAL MEETING

Call to the 185th Annual Meeting

The 185th Annual Meeting of Union Congregational United Church of Christ will convene via Zoom on Sunday, January 31 immediately following Worship. We will conduct our business meeting and share a time of fellowship after our agenda is concluded. Reports concerning the ministry of Union Church in 2020 will be presented, outgoing ministry chairs and vice-chairs will be recognized, elections will be held for new leaders, and a budget for the ministry of Union Church in 2021 will be adopted. Our annual report will be emailed to all households on our mailing list. Contact the church office if you would like a paper copy mailed to you.

Union Congregational United Church of Christ

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(920) 437-9266

Rev. 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>