

HUFF'S CHURCH CHATTER



DECEMBER 2018

Church Address: 540 Conrad Rd., Alburton, 18011

Church office: 610-845-2626 Church & Chapel: 610-845-2541

Pastor Home Office: 610-944-5923

Office email: office@huffschurch.com

Website: www.huffschurch.com

Facebook Page: Huff's Union Church, Inc.

Facebook Group: Huff's Union Church

MISSION STATEMENT

We, the members of Huff's Union Church, desiring to be blessed together with Word and Sacrament and to become evermore the Body of Christ in our world, do hereby commit ourselves to a ministry which includes increasingly meaningful worship, creative Christian Education, intentional witnessing, dedicated service, and responsible support.

Making Disciples: Inside and Out. UCC slogan: God is still speaking. ELCA slogan: God's work, our hands.

Confirmation Classes

Confirmation class will meet on Sunday, December 2 with mentors in the sanctuary, and on December 11 at 9:15 a.m. in the chapel basement. No long class in December. We resume classes in January on January 6 at 9:15 a.m. in the chapel basement. To celebrate Epiphany, you may bring a snack to class to share on January 6.

One Starry Night Children's Christmas Musical

Sunday, December 9 at 10:30 a.m.

(Snowdate: December 16)

During the 10:30 Worship Service on December 9, 2018 our children retell the Nativity Story through music and dance. ***One Starry Night*** by Luke Gambill tells of the shepherds' amazing experiences that one special starry night and includes a Live Nativity. Refreshments will follow. Please invite friends and family members to enjoy this special presentation with us. If you can help with refreshments, please contact Shirley Fluck at 610-367-5058.

Annual Congregational Meeting December 2

The annual meeting to approve the next year's budget and elect union council members will be held after 10:30 worship on Sunday, December 2, in the sanctuary. In case of inclement weather, this important meeting will be held on December 9.

Proposed ELCA and UCC budgets are included with this newsletter. Proposed Union budgets will be available on the bulletin table at worship services on November 25 and December 2. Proposed Union budgets are also available at the office, on-line (in the newsletter section of our website www.huffschurch.com) or you may have one e-mail to you (please request this from elainecrump@ptd.net)

Proposed Union Council members: to fill two 2-years terms: Kay Kriebel and Gary Fogel; to fill two 3-year terms: Raymond Lorish and Michael Diehl.

UCC officers: Duane Bortz, President; Michele Boyer, Vice President; Jimmy Meitzler, Jr., Secretary; Jon Benfield, Treasurer.

ELCA officers: LeRoy Leibensperger, vice president; Ann Taylor, Secretary; Matthew Haines, Treasurer. President still to be selected.

Church Decorating and Taking Down of Decorations

The church will be decorated on Saturday, December 1 beginning at 9 a.m. We will need people of all ages and abilities to put up and, in early January, to take down decorations. Please talk with Kerry or Lucy Meitzler if you have any questions (610-899-0290)

Acolyte Schedule

- 12/2/18 Luke Geist, Easton Albert, Page Geist, Kylee Albert and Kara Benfield
- 12/9/18 Children's Musical - No Acolytes necessary
- 12/16/18 Gavin Hess, Austin Hall and Chase Longacre
- 12/23/18 (10:30) Maisy Funk, Madelynn Miller and Wyatt Miller
- 12/24/18 (4:00 p.m.) Brooke Boyer, 4 more needed; 3 minimum; Please sign up in the Sacristy if you can help, or call office.
- 12/24/18 (8:00 p.m.) Chase Longacre, Logan Watkins and 3 more needed; please sign up in the Sacristy if you can help, or call office.
- 12/30/18 Kane Weller. 2 more needed; please sign up in the Sacristy if you can help, or call office.

The processional cross has been refinished; crucifers are asked to wear gloves, which we provide.

Small Group

The small group will meet in the chapel basement on Saturday, December 1 at 10 a.m. Bring your Bibles. If you'd like to stay for lunch, bring something to share. We eat from 11:30-12:30.

Epiphany Winter Dinner

The Epiphany winter dinner will be held in the basement of the chapel on Saturday, January 5, beginning at 5 p.m. Please sign up so we know what type of dish you will bring and how many to expect. Contact Lea Kline with questions (610-845-8431).

Manna Worship

The informal worship service, called Manna (Spiritual Bread for the Journey) will meet at 9 a.m. on December 16 in the upstairs of the chapel. Come share the spirit of expectation with us as we celebrate Advent.

Winter Weather

We will try to publicize worship cancellations on channel 69 (if our reporter has electrical power) and also on the web site. You may call a council member to ask about whether we are having worship. We will decide before 6 a.m. on a Sunday morning whether worship will be held. If there are more than two inches of snow Saturday night or Sunday morning, the 8 a.m. service is automatically cancelled. If church is cancelled, adult Sunday School and Confirmation classes are also cancelled. If you are unsure whether there is church, you may call Pastor Kropa before 7:15 a.m. to check. (610-944-5923 or 610-781-3187).

Christmas Eve

On Christmas Eve, Monday, December 24, we will have two worship services in the evening for Christmas Eve. The only difference between the 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. services will be the special music, Both will offer pew Holy Communion and candlelighting. Both worship services feature the singing of Christmas carols between scripture readings and a meditation on the story of God's light coming into our darkness. Please remember to invite people you know to experience the wonder and beauty of Christmas Eve as we recall the meaning of Christ's birth. You may take some of the extra post cards on the bulletin table outside the sanctuary to hand out to people who are not in our mailing area.

German Language (Hoch Deutsch) Candlelight Holy Communion Advent Service

Huff's Church will celebrate a German Language Candlelight Holy Communion Advent Service on Sunday, December 2, 2018 at 7 p.m. The Rev. Dr. Russell Mitman, pastor of Parkside UCC, Phoenixville will preside, assisted by Pastor Kropa. Bulletins will be in both German and English. Please help us to publicize this service, especially to high school and college students who are learning German. If you can help with refreshments, please contact Shirley Fluck (610-367-5058). We would appreciate a greeter downstairs and one upstairs; no need to speak German. Please let Pastor Kropa know if you can do this. Please arrive by 6:35 p.m. to be a greeter.

Thank you to all who helped with the apple dumplings.

Christmas Post Cards

The Renaissance Team has created a post card which should arrive at our target audience homes around Thanksgiving. Extra cards are available to hand out to neighbors, friends and relatives. Let's share the joy.

Special Offering Opportunity for December

The special offering opportunity for December is the UCC Christmas Fund. This offering supplements pensions and health care costs for those retired pastors and leaders of UCC congregations who fall into very low income brackets, or provides emergency assistance for pastors and families in financial need. Please use the envelopes in the pew racks or literature racks and place filled envelopes in the offering plate, or mail in your contributions, clearly marked "Christmas Fund". Thank you for helping those retired servants of God in their time of need.

Blue Christmas Service

We will have a brief worship service on Thursday, December 20, at 7 p.m. for those experiencing grief, loss, or general sadness during this time of the year. Please join us as we gather in the sanctuary in a prayerful spirit. The service is geared for anyone who wishes to acknowledge sadness at this time of year, not just to those who have lost loved ones.

Mitten Tree

With the Christmas Season at our doorsteps, the church will again be beautifully decorated. Therefore, the Mitten Tree, will be erected upstairs for attaching caps, scarfs, hats, gloves etc. which will be sent to St. Vincent's Mission in David, Kentucky. Many thanks for your generosity.

Christmas Caroling

Congregational members and their friends of every age are invited to go Christmas Caroling to our homebound members on Sunday, December 30 after sharing a simple lunch in the downstairs of the chapel. We will have three groups who car pool to homes of our homebound members. Please sign up on the sheet in the downstairs Narthex of the church.

Annual Reports Due

Because we want to have a complete picture of what is happening at Huff's Church each year, we ask each committee team or group to submit a report annually of what they have done in the previous year. 2018 reports are due in the church secretary's mailbox by January 20. Treasurer's reports are an exception; they will be due in the office by early February 2019.

Ladies Aid Society

The next meeting of the Ladies Aid Society will be on Wednesday, December 6, at 7:00 p.m. in the Chapel. All ladies are invited to attend. Please continue to save your Redner's & Radcliffe's receipts. There is a basket for these on the Food Bank cabinet near the men's room.

Supporting Our Congregation

Just like household expenses rise yearly, our congregation's expenses do this as well. As you prepare your household budget for 2019, please consider how you might help our congregation. We give thanks for all you already are doing to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. (We are presently experiencing a budget shortfall in 2018)

We also give thanks for all the volunteer hours you have shared with Huff's Church in 2018, and hope you might consider things you might do in 2019—snow shoveling, grounds clean up, light maintenance, teaching Sunday School children, folding and stapling bulletins, assisting with counting the offering, assisting to plan and supervise youth events, singing in the choir, playing in the bell choir, offering solo music (instrumental or vocal), assisting the Renaissance Team to plan and host invitational events, being a greeter, etc. Please speak with Pastor Kropa to volunteer.

Advent/Christmas/Epiphany Sunday Worship Services

Advent 1. December 2. 8 & 10:30 a.m. German Worship at 7 p.m. Continuous Communion at all three services. Annual congregational meeting after 10:30 worship service.

Advent 2. December 9, 8 & 10:30 a.m. One Starry Night Children's Christmas Music at the 10:30 worship service, followed by refreshments.

Advent 3. December 16. 8 & 10:30 a.m. worship. (inclement weather date for One Starry Night at 10:30)

Blue Christmas. December 20. 7:00 p.m. Brief worship service for those grieving or sad.

Advent 4, December 23. 10:30 a.m. worship. Focus on Mary.

Christmas Eve. December 24. 4 & 8 p.m. pew Holy Communion and Candlelighting at both services.

Christmas Carol Worship. December 30, 8 and 10:30 a.m. Christmas caroling - have light lunch and go caroling after 10:30 worship service.

Epiphany worship. Jan. 6 at 8 & 10:30 a.m. Continuous communion. Installation of new council members.

PA Dutch New Year's Wish. (Special music and history of our area) January 13 at 10:30.

Refreshments needed for our reception after the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Please contact Shirley Fluck if you can help. (610-845- 5058).

Poinsettias for Christmas Eve

We will once again offer Poinsettias for Christmas Eve. Cost is \$10.00 per plant and there is an order form in the newsletter for you to give in honor or in memory of a Loved One. Orders are due by December 10. Order form is attached at the end of the newsletter.

Sponsoring Bulletins or Flowers in 2019

New sign up sheets for sponsoring flowers or bulletins in 2019 will be posted in the Upper Narthex on December 2. Please sign up with your name and whether this is in memory or in honor of someone. Payment may be sent to the office or use a pew envelope and mark it bulletin or flower sponsorship. If you would like to sponsor flowers or bulletins for December, 2018, please call the office. Prices for 2019 are posted on the sign up sheets.

Pastor's Article

Dear Friends,

Often we think of Christmas as especially important to children, and we may recall how important Christmas was in our own lives. I recently watched the movie “Won’t You Be My Neighbor” which talked about Pastor Fred Rodgers (yes, he was ordained to TV ministry by the Presbyterian Church) and his Ideas about what children need to hear.

Fred suggests that often adults make the mistake of trying to shield children from things that might be difficult or frightening. Fred decided that he would not be afraid of such topics, such as the assassination of Robert Kennedy, but talked about it on a child’s level, reassuring them that bad things might happen. “When something bad happens,” advised Fred, “Look for the helpers.”

How might we talk about the Christmas story to children? Tell the story. It’s OK to talk about how the people of Jesus’ day were longing for a special word from God, because their lives were not very happy. What in our lives do we hope will change, as we think about the birth of Jesus? What did change for people after Jesus was born? This might be a difficult answer, because sometimes it looks like very little has changed. How can we be honest about wishing for a perfect world, and learning to do our part to make an imperfect world a kinder, gentler, more loving place?

Advent is a special time that prepares us for the Christmas miracle. Why do we have to wait? Because the people of God had to wait for Jesus, and there are many things in life that require waiting. Waiting can build excitement. Waiting can teach us to delay gratification. Waiting is a normal part of existence we need to learn how to tolerate.

What do we do with the ending of the story, when Joseph learns in a dream that King Herod will try to kill baby Jesus, and takes the family to Egypt to escape? Many people don’t bother telling this part of the story, yet it does teach us that even God’s son had his life made difficult by an evil ruler. Evil attacks good, but God’s assurance is that good eventually wins. Jesus is saved, and his family does return to Nazareth where he finishes growing up. We can be thankful for those who reached out to help the struggling family, and that there was a place where they could go for safety. It makes Jesus real, not just a story, but a real boy whose parents had real struggles. The good news is they were helped.

Pastor's Article (continued)

As Advent moves closer to Christmas, it provides a time when we can reflect on our preparedness for Christ to return, not as a baby, but as the righteous judge. Jesus promises to return to make everything work as God intends it to work. We look forward to his coming, and do not fear it, because we know he loves us as his very own. Are we taking the time to ponder these holy mysteries, and letting children in our midst know that it's OK to take time out, to reflect, read our Bible, say a prayer?

Children can be helped to understand silence by talking about silence with them. You might try setting a timer, for perhaps 3-5 minutes, for children to practice keeping silent until the timer rings. You might ask them what they thought about, or prayed about, and how it felt to be absolutely still to think about Jesus.

I hope you realize that, even though we talked about children, we adults can also profit by taking time to ponder, reflect, pray, read the Bible, and sense the comforting presence of God, who promises to turn even evil into good (Heidelberg Catechism, question 26).

I wish you a very blessed and wonder-filled Christmas.

In Christian hope, Pastor Jane Kropa

Community Supper

On Friday, December 7 at St. Peters Union Church from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. St. Peters does this on the first Friday of every month. There is no charge for this supper, but free will offerings are accepted. All are welcome. Men of Huff's Church: You are welcome to help prepare and serve the Community Suppers. Men can contact Tom Mitchell, (610) 845-2978, for volunteering information.

Thank You To All Counters

I would like to thank all of the counters that I have had this past year. You have done a great job. Also if anyone is interested in counting the offerings, we count on a Monday Morning between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Call Edwina fox at the church office if you are interested.

Lessons from Pennsylvania Southeast Conference churches

At the beginning of my tenure as Conference Minister, I set upon the task of preaching in every one of our (now) 161 congregations. I have returned several times to some for anniversaries and ordinations. I hunger to go back to others but now have less than twenty churches to visit. This has been one of the best experiences of my work. I have encountered amazing places of vitality including just last Sunday at St John's, Birdsboro for a 225th Anniversary celebration of a small church with a mighty spirit. I have witnessed growing congregation connections with communities, like at the Evening Worship Service at St. Peters in Tremont two weeks ago where members of the Schuylkill Association gathered with flood-ravaged neighbors to give thanks for deliverance and the generosity of Conference neighbors near and far. I witnessed the members of St. Peter's Tohickon offer gracious hospitality to a Muslim neighbor who spoke in celebration of that church's long and faithful history.

I have learned a few things and confirmed my sense of others. First, a handful of people on fire with the transformative power and presence of the resurrected spirit of Jesus Christ can change the world — and do. Second, it really is possible to welcome all people when the sole agenda is the working of Jesus Christ as that happens differently in the life of each person. Third, where vitality is happening there is a vitalized, faith-filled visionary leader training and inspiring other leaders. Finally, I am fond of the question, "If your church burned down on Friday would you all show up on Sunday to worship in the ashes?" I know the answer almost as soon as I walk in the front church door. There is an unmistakable atmosphere of connection among people who love being together AND who can't wait to include new people in that togetherness; born not from a need to save a church or find a committee or contribute to a budget but from a desire to widen the circle of friends and to share the faith.

That is happening all around our Conference and I am blessed beyond measure to witness it, celebrate it and give thanks to God for it. And for you.

Pastor Bill

Rev. William P. Worley
Conference Minister

PSEC Conference News

At the fall meeting of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, the decision was made not to proceed with the merger of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference and Penn Northeast Conference, at this time. The proposal to unite the conferences, into one Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, will continue to be refined and might be presented again, in a more thorough form, in the future. Rachel Welch, Duane Bortz and Pastor Kropa represented our congregation at this meeting.

Blankets for Allentown Rescue Mission

On November 11 about thirty people gathered after worship to have a simple lunch and to tie fleece together to create blankets. Nineteen blankets were finished, which will be donated to the Allentown Rescue Mission. Thank you to everyone who helped.

We received a \$250 Thrivent Action Team grant to purchase supplies for this project, as well as 25 tee shirts from Thrivent to give to participants. Pastor Kropa was the Thrivent sponsor for the grant money.

All Welcome Lunch

Please join us for the All Welcome Lunch to be held on Tuesday, December 18, 2018 at noon at the Alburdis Tavern in Alburdis, PA.

Members and non-members are welcome to this “pay for your own” lunch. Come and share in fellowship and Christian caring. We hope to see you there!

St. John's ELCA Sponsored Women's Retreat

Women of Huff's Church are invited to a retreat on Saturday, January 19, 2019 from 9-3 at St. John's ELCA Church, lower level. \$20 registration fee includes light breakfast and lunch. Theme: Revelation: Hollywood's Favorite Book of the Bible. Presented by Rev. Dr. Jennifer Phelps Ollikainen. Registration forms hanging on bulletin board at Huff's. Send form with check made out to St. John's ELCA, memo: WELCA retreat by January 7, 2019. Questions? Call Betty Long: 610-367-8095.

HUFFS LUTHERAN CHURCH
BUDGET FOR 2019

Huff's Union Church Assessment	\$ 10,000.00
Kutztown Lutheran Campus Ministry	\$ 100.00
East Berks Mission District	\$ 150.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 200.00
Lutheran Synod Benevolence	\$ 250.00
2019 Synod Assembly	\$ 450.00
Total	\$ 11,150.00

Flower & Bulletin Charts

The 2019 Flower and Bulletin Charts will be posted in the church in December. The cost for sponsoring Bulletins is \$16 and the cost for Flowers is \$31. More than one bouquet can be ordered for a particular Sunday, but if no one orders one for any Sunday, we will not have flowers in the church on that Sunday.

**Huffs UCC
2019 Budget**

	2018	2018 Fore- cast	2019
	Budget	Budget	Budget
PSEC-OCWM	5,300	5,300	5,300
Bethany Childrens Home	1,600	1,600	1,600
Phoebe Home	1,600	1,600	1,600
Lancaster Seminary	1,600	1,600	1,600
Huffs Union support	14,500	14,500	10,000
Bank & investment fees	4,000	4,000	4,000
Meetings - spring & fall	555	570	570
275th UCC anniversary celebration	-	-	500
Covenant Association dues	35	180	180
Pension Board Generations of Service Campaign	-	100	100 (a)
Miscellaneous	175	-	200
	29,365	29,450	25,650

(a) first year of a 5-year pledge from 2019-2023

Church Family

FUNERALS

Please pray for the family and friends of Margaret Weller who died on October 26, 2018.

Memorials:

To the Memorial Fund in memory of Margaret Weller

George & Loni Weller

Funplace Oley, Inc.

Mary Bashore

Sandra Martin

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

We are honoring our members who celebrate their 80th birthday or older and also honoring those members who celebrate their 50th anniversary or more. Please let us know if we missed anyone.

BIRTHDAYS

12/24 - Jean Kline

12/25 - Stanley Geisinger

12/25 - Kenneth Hilbert

A Request From the Counters

It is easier for the counters if you do not fold your check or cash when you put it into your offering envelope.

Please do not tape the envelope; it makes it difficult to open.

Please do not include blank envelopes with your offering. As long as the front of the envelope is marked where you wish the money to go, it will be counted and used for the cause that you designate.

Please do not combine a check with cash in the same envelope.



POINSETTIAS will again adorn the Nave of the Church for our Christmas Worship Services. If you would like to order a plant(s), please fill in the order below and hand it to Ruth or Leroy Leibensperger 610-682-7436 , along with a check for the proper amount. Orders must be placed no later than December 10. The orders can be mailed to RUTH LEIBENSPERGER, 214 GREISS RD., ALBURTIS, PA 18011 OR ROBIN DIEHL, 50 ERIC LANE, ALBURTIS, PA 18011. Please make all checks payable to HUFF'S UNION CHURCH. Plants should be ordered from the Altar Guild only.

NAME _____

IN HONOR OF _____

IN MEMORY OF _____

NUMBER OF PLANTS _____

COST PER PLANT IS 10.00

Thank You Notes Received:

From: Phoebe Ministries

Dear Huff's Church Members,

Thank you for your gift of \$4. Your gift will help Phoebe meet the needs of older adults through diverse residential options, comprehensive care and exceptional educational programs. From independent living to affordable housing to skilled nursing, charitable contributions truly make a difference in the daily lives of our seniors.

Thank you,

Stacey L. Prohaska
Executive Director
Office of Philanthropy

From: Lancaster Theological Seminary

To: Friends of Huff's Union Church

Thank you for your gift of \$95 in support of the ministry of theological education at Lancaster Seminary.

The support you provide with your prayers and your gifts opens the door for our students' education, opens their minds to learning and opens their hearts to serving.

Thank you,

Rev. Dr. Carolyne Call
Executive Director of Development & Communication