

HUFF'S CHURCH CHATTER



2019

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 1, with mentors in the basement of the chapel at 9:15 a.m. and on December 8 at 9:15 a.m. in the chapel upstairs. No afternoon class in December. We resume classes on January 5, 2020, at 9:15 a.m. in the basement of the chapel.

Children's Christmas Program: Joy to the World

This year our children's Christmas program focuses on Christmas Around the World, from Germany to Latin America to an upside-down Christmas in Australia where "snow is not falling and trees are not bare." Throughout the world, people celebrate the fantastic news of the Christ Child's birth. Please join us on Sunday, December 8, at 6:30 p.m. to rejoice that Jesus is born. Refreshments will follow the program.

If you would like to bring finger foods to share, Julie Brought has volunteered to set up, Her telephone number is 610-378-9815 or e-mail: juliebrought@comcast.net. Bad weather date will be December 15 at 6:30 p.m.

Annual Congregational Meeting December 1

The annual meeting to approve the 2020 Budget and elect union council members will be held after the 10:30 worship on Sunday, December 1, in the sanctuary. In case of inclement weather, this important meeting will be held on December 8.

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 24 and December 1. 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-mailed to you. Please request this from Michele Boyer (boyer1107@gmail.com)

Lunch Bunch

Please join us for the Lunch Bunch to be held on Tuesday, December 17, 2019, at noon at the Alburtis Tavern in Alburtis, 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!

Acolyte and Crucifer Schedule

Dec. 1, 2019	Malachi Estrella, Avery Dixon, Gavin Hess, Chase Longacre plus one more.
Dec. 8, 2019	Maisy Funk, Alex Hersh and Alayna Watkins
Dec. 15, 2019	Kara Benfield, Jace Benfield & Brooke Boyer
Dec. 22, 2019	Tucker Ruch, Wyatt Miller & Madelynn Miller
Dec. 24, 2019 4:00 p.m.	Malachi Estrella, Brooke Boyer, Gavin Hess Bowie Richetti, Elijah Richetti
Dec. 24, 2019 8:00 p.m.	Chase Longacre, Brooke Boyer, Avery and Braylin Dixon and Wyatt Miller
Dec. 29, 2019	Maisy Funk, Madelynn Miller & Wyatt Miller

Small Group

The small group will meet on Saturday, December 7 at 10:00 a.m. in the basement of the chapel. Bring your Bibles. If you'd like to stay for lunch, bring something to share. We eat from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Manna Worship

The informal worship service, called Manna (Spiritual Bread for the Journey) will meet at 9:00 a.m. on December 15th in the upstairs of the chapel. Come share the spirit of expectation with us as we celebrate Advent.

Church Decorating and Taking Down of Decorations

The church will be decorated on Saturday, November 30th, beginning at 9:00 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 at 610-750-3464 if you have any questions.

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 6:00 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 8:00 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 Kropp before 7:15 a.m. to check. (610-944-5923 or 610-781-3187).

Christmas Eve

On Christmas Eve, Tuesday, December 24, we will have two worship services. The only difference between the 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 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. 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.

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 1, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. The Rev. Dr. Russell Mitman, Pastor of Parkside UCC, Phoenixville will preside, assisted by Pastor Kropp. 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.

Christmas Post Cards

The Renaissance Team has created a Christmas post card which will be mailed around Thanksgiving to our target audience homes. Extra cards are available to hand out to neighbors, friends, and relatives who are not in our mailing area. 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 Wednesday, December 18, 2019, at 7:30 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. A Mitten Tree will be set up for attaching caps, scarfs, hats, gloves etc. which will be sent to St. Vincent's Mission in David, Kentucky. Many thanks for your generosity.

Closing the Church Books for 2019

Any offerings to be credited to 2019 giving statements must be received by the church office by December 30, 2019.

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. 2019 reports are due in the church secretary's mailbox by January 19. Treasurer's reports are an exception; they will be due in the office by early February, 2020.

Ladies Aid Society

The next meeting of the Ladies Aid Society will be on Wednesday, December 4, 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 2020, 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 also give thanks for all the volunteer hours you have shared with Huff's Church in 2019, and hope you will consider things you might do in 2020 - 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.

Poinsettias for Christmas Eve

We will once again offer Poinsettias for Christmas Eve for you to give in memory of or in honor of a loved one. Cost is \$10 per plant. Orders are due by December 10. Order form is attached at the end of the newsletter or in the church next to the Sunday worship bulletins.

Advent/Christmas/Epiphany Sunday Worship Services

Advent 1. December 1 8:00 & 10:30 a.m. worship and the German Advent Service at 7:00 p.m. Continuous Communion at all three services. Annual congregational meeting after 10:30 a.m. worship service.

Advent 2. December 8, 8:00 & 10:30 a.m. worship. Joy to the World Children's Christmas Musical at 6:30 p.m., followed by refreshments.

Advent 3. December 15, 8:00 & 10:30 a.m. worship. (Inclement weather date for Joy to the World Children's Christmas Musical at 6:30 p.m.)

Blue Christmas. December 18, 7:30 p.m. Brief worship service for those grieving or sad.

Advent 4. December 22, 8:00 & 10:30 a.m. worship.

Christmas Eve. December 24, 4:00 & 8:00 p.m., pew Holy Communion and Candlelighting at both services.

Christmas Carol Worship. December 29, 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.

Epiphany Worship. January 5, 2020, at 8:00 & 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 12, 2020, at 10:30. Refreshments needed for our reception after the 10:30 a.m. worship service. We will need a volunteer to organize refreshments.

Sponsoring Bulletins or Flowers in 2020

New sign up sheets for sponsoring flowers or bulletins in 2020 will be posted in the Upper Narthex on December 1. The cost for sponsoring Bulletins is \$17 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. Please sign up with your name and whether this is in memory of 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, 2019, please call the office.

Pastor's Article

Dear Friends,

This year's Advent theme, from the ELCA "Words for Worship" series, comes in three parts: Do Less, Wonder, and Hope. I'd like to suggest we ponder these Advent themes.

"Do Less" What can you let go of or erase from your to-do list in order to be more present with Christ this Advent? (theme and questions c2019 Words for Worship Augsburg Fortress, used by permission) For a number of years, I challenged you to take time for quiet each day of the Advent season. My favorite response was from a woman who would go outside, sit in her coat and hat at a picnic table, and breathe in the silence after supper. Imagine! You and the stars, listening for the sounds of nature, in stillness. What an antidote to the hustle and bustle of the pre-Christmas season! The Holy Spirit comes to us, but we need to be open and receptive, not too busy to listen or to sense the divine presence. What can you drop, in order to become spiritually filled?

"Wonder" How can we experience wonder for God's works and be fed by wonder in the midst of this busy season? Often wonder overwhelms us—the birth of a child—how can this fully formed person exist when once there was nothing? How can the sky be so brilliantly colored? How exquisite to fall in love, and be overcome by pure joy! God gives such good things, and many times we become so used to them, we lost track of wonder. What would it take for you to rekindle that sense of wonder about God's incredible gifts to you?

"Hope" How can we hold on to hope in the midst of the world's troubles? As a young adult, I felt the pain of the world keenly. I almost resented those who seemed happy—were they so uncaring about others that they could be happy when so many people and places were suffering, or were they just simple-minded and didn't get it?! How my thinking has matured! I now see joy, goodness, love, and hope as gifts of a gracious God. In spite of horrors, there is goodness, beauty, and hope. We are assured that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus—not one single thing, because Christ has triumphed over death, violence, evil, hatred. In spite of the pain, we can have hope, because it's not over yet. After death comes resurrection. After this world ends, we have God's promise of a new age, governed by Jesus himself, and we pray for this in the Lord's Prayer: Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. What good news do you need to hear to put pain into perspective?

Pastor's Article (continued)

One bit of advice I've read for Advent—if you begin on December 1st and read one chapter of Luke's gospel every day, by Christmas Day you will have read the entire gospel. What a way to re-connect with what really matters in this holy season of Advent!

In Christian joy and expectation, Pastor Jane Kropa

Community Supper

On Friday, December 6, at St. Peter's Union Church from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. St. Peter's 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.

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.

Epiphany Dinner?

Are you still interested in having a covered dish meal the first Saturday of January (January 4) in the chapel? We are considering whether we wish to continue having this adult meal (for those confirmed and older) and also whether to move the time to 1 p.m. or continue at 5 p.m. If you are interested in continuing the tradition, please either respond through the E-Blast, or directly to Kelsey at ministry@huffschurch.com, or sign up on the sign up sheet on the downstairs bulletin board. We hope to *make a decision by December 16*. Signing up indicates you are interested; if we have enough folks (15 or more) interested, we will post a second sign up sheet to know whether you will bring an appetizer, soup or salad, main dish, or dessert. Questions? Please talk with Lea Kline.

Pennsylvania Southeast Conference

“Keep Awake” - An Advent Message

"Keep awake." Good advice for pastors and longtime church members. It still surprises me, the revelations that come about the Christmas story. I've read it so often I sometimes have very little confidence that I will learn anything new. And then, when I least expect it, there it is. That has become more common as my ministry requires me to travel places far beyond my home. It was true for the Christmas characters as well who traveled well beyond theirs.

Joseph and Mary traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem to pay taxes. The shepherds were away from home working in the fields when the angels came. Even the angels had to leave their home in heaven. And eventually some foreign wise men, who got lost in their travels, found the Christ child in Bethlehem. The only thing these diverse characters have in common is that none of them was home for the Christmas miracle.

By contrast, who missed the miracle? Caesar the emperor and Quirinius the governor of Syria. Herod the king also missed the miracle, even though he heard the child was born. Herod's priests and scribes missed it, even though they knew Christ would be born in Bethlehem. And the innkeeper missed the miracle, even though it was happening in his backyard. The reason they all missed the miracle was they stayed safely at home.

As the story goes, the only people who see the miracle of salvation, redemption and transformation are those who know they are not in the right place. I'm not saying you need to leave home physically for the holidays. I AM saying that you need to leave the life that is comfortable, but not in the right place.

This year, when you're acutely aware you and the world are not in the right place, you are now ready to leave the home you've built for yourself to find your true home with the family of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; Mother, Daughter, Sustainer.

Because the miracle of the Christmas story is that even God became homeless to find a home in you.

May it be so with all the blessings of God,

Bill (Rev. William P. Worley, PSEC Conference Minister) (Dec. 23, 2018)

Blankets for Allentown Rescue Mission

On October 13th, fifteen people gathered after worship to have a simple lunch and to tie fleece together to create blankets. Fifteen blankets were finished, which were then 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.

St. John's ELCA Sponsored Women's Retreat

Women of Huff's Church are invited to a retreat on Saturday, January 18, 2020, from 9-3 at St. John's ELCA Church, Lower Level with Pastor Jenn. Sing, Sing, Sing, Songs of the Bible, Songs of our worship, Song of our praise. The \$20 registration fee includes light breakfast and lunch. Registration forms are hanging on the bulletin board at Huff's. Send form with check made out to St. John's ELCA, WELCA Retreat by January 7, 2020. If you have any questions, please email Betty Long at bettylong@dejazzd.com or call her at 610-367-8095.

May 2020. Visit Our Saxony Companion Synod.

Have you ever considered visiting Germany? An invitation has been received from our Saxony companion synod inviting a delegation of 15 to visit Germany this coming spring. It is an opportunity to explore our historical roots, reflect upon ministry here and abroad and strengthen our relationship with our German brothers and sisters in Christ. We are looking to travel between May 3 and 15 (depending on flights) and participants are responsible for their expenses. If you would like more information or to receive an application, please contact Prs. Wayne and Michele Kaufman (kaufman19@verizon.net).

Church Family

FUNERALS

Please pray for the family and friends of Dennis C. Moll who passed away on September 23, 2019.

Please pray for the family and friends of James Mayer who passed away on October 20, 2019.

MEMORIALS:

To the CIF Memorial Fund in memory of Ruth Crossley

Robert & Kathy Shoemaker

Terry & Linda Beibleheimer

To the CIF Memorial Fund in memory of Kristen Jo (Meitzler) Oswald

Robert & Kathy Shoemaker

To the CIF Memorial Fund in memory of Wanda (Moll) Boyer

Robert & Kathy Shoemaker

To the General Fund in memory of Anna Kramer

Carole J. Price

NEW MEMBER

Welcome to Amanda Lee Sellers who jointed Huff's Union Church on November 17, 2019.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

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

BIRTHDAYS:

12/4 - Charles Hoffman

12/20 - Pauline Reinhard

12/24 - Jean Kline

12/25 - Stanley Geisinger

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY:

12/28 - John & Jane Leeser

Apple Dumpling Sale

We sold a total of 894 apple dumplings with a profit of \$2,553.58. They were enjoyed by all.

Thank You Note

From: Pauline & Ron Marks & LeRoy Marks

To: Huff's Church UCC Congregation

Thank you for your fine gift, I felt very honored when asked to prepare the meats for your 275th UCC Anniversary.

It was very heart warming for the three of us.

We will enjoy a fine meal while thinking of your gift.

Allentown Rescue Mission

On Sunday, October 20th, Minerva Arner, Val Arner and Wayne Fogel began peeling potatoes and preparing the meatloaf for the ovens at 9:00 a.m. Everything was ready for the meal as the serving crew of Val Arner, Brooke Boyer, Michele Boyer, Wayne Fogel, David Funk and Maisy Funk left the Chapel for serving the meal at 4:00 and 4:30.

We served 47 men and they all had good appetites with an abundance of thank you's, thanking you for all the necessary food donations. Our church has been bonded to the Allentown Rescue Mission for over 25 years.

Additionally we delivered the fifteen quilts which were made by our church volunteers under the guidance of Logan Scott. He has done this project for three years. Thank you Logan.

Serving Christ,
Carl Arner

HUFF'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH BUDGET FOR 2020			
	2020 Budget	2019 Actual	2019 Budget
Huff's Union Church Assessment	\$13,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Kutztown Lutheran Campus Ministry	100.00		100.00
Eastern Berks Mission District	150.00	150.00	150.00
Lutheran Synod Benevolence	250.00		250.00
Synod Assembly	450.00	300.00	450.00
Miscellaneous	200.00		200.00
Total	\$14,150.00	\$10,450.00	\$11,150.00

October 2019 Treasury Report

	October	Full Year Actual	Annual Budget
Monthly Income	\$84,047.50	\$310,022.44	\$319,352.00
Monthly Expense	\$83,796.15	\$337,400.42	\$318,885.00
Balance	\$251.35	-\$27,377.98	\$467.00

40101 - Pass thru Income Account
 60100 · Pass thru Expense Account

Account Balances	October 31
Designated Fund	\$63,171.44
General Fund	-\$19,318.52
Total	\$43,852.92



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 form below and hand it to Ruth or Leroy Leibensperger 610-682-7346 or Robin Diehl, 610-845-7092, along with a check for the proper amount. Orders must be placed no later than December 10th. 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 _____