

HUFF'S CHURCH CHATTER



March 2018

Church Address: 540 Conrad Rd., Alburtsis, 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.

Easter Story Egg Hunt - Saturday, March 24 at 1 p.m. - Rain or Shine

Families with children of all ages are welcome to the Easter Story Egg Hunt. Come to the front doors of the Church (not in Chapel) to first hear the story of Jesus' week before Easter, receive a gift, gather in the Sanctuary, and then hunt eggs! If you can help at the Easter Story Egg Hunt to hide eggs, tell a part of the Easter Story to the children, or be a guide, please contact Joanne Benfield at 610-845-2978 or

jobenfield1213@gmail.com

Volunteers Needed To Pick Up A Bag Of Plastic Eggs At Church, Fill Them With Candy & Return By March 18

We have at least 20 bags at Church with about 30 empty plastic eggs in each. Please pick up a bag, buy candy, fill the eggs, and return filled eggs by Sunday morning, March 18. On the bag of eggs, there will be directions listing the types of individual wrapped candies to buy and how to fill the eggs. We are preparing for about 60 children this year. Any questions, contact Rachel Welch at 484-226-0333.

Christian Summer Camp Information

Children and youth have three ELCA or UCC related camps to choose from for a Christian camping experience. New Goshenhoppen UCC has a day camp for children and overnight camping opportunities for teenagers (ages 13-17). Hartman Center (Milroy, PA) is our closest UCC camp; Bear Creek Camp, in the Poconos, is the ELCA camp. Huff's Union Church helps with expenses for our member children or teens to attend a UCC or ELCA church camp. Check the Sunday School bulletin board, or go on-line to www.bearcreekcamp.org , www.hartmancenter.com , or newgoshucc.org. Check with Pastor Kropa to request financial assistance to attend an ELCA or UCC camp.

Special Offering for the Month of March

In March we will receive the United Church of Christ One Great Hour of Sharing offering. This offering provides developmental and emergency relief to people throughout the world. Offering envelopes are in the pew racks, or simply use a blank envelope, mark it UCC One Great Hour of Sharing, and place filled envelope in the offering plate or mail it to Huff's Church. Include your name if you wish to be credited for this gift on your giving statement.

Armchair Traveler Review

The Armchair Traveler event brought in 18 people (4 non-members) on February 10. Three presentations were made: Western USA, Canadian Rockies including a rail journey, and Scotland. Response was so positive that the Renaissance Team will schedule another such evening in November. Watch for details.

Acolyte Schedule

- 3/4/18 Logan Scott, Reilly Rollman & Danielle Bortz
3/11/18 Kara Benfield, Logan Watkins & Chase Longacre
3/18/18 Kane Weller, Raegan Pilgert & Billy Geist
3/25/18 Luke Geist, Page Geist & Alex Hersh
3/30/18 Maisy Funk, Brooke Boyer & Billy Geist 7:00 pm
Good Friday

Lenten Schedule

Lenten evening worship with St. Peter's Union Church: meal at 6 p.m.; worship at 7 p.m. Theme is Lenten Ascents. March 7 and March 24 at Huff's; March 14 at St. Peter's.

Maundy Thursday, March 29, Meditation, Prayer, and Communion (see article in this newsletter) from 4:30-6:45 p.m. Group worship with communion from 6:45-7 p.m. or Traditional Maundy Thursday worship at St. Peter's Union Church at 7 p.m.

Good Friday, March 30, worship at noon at St. Peter's (stations of the cross) and at 7 p.m. at Huff's (traditional worship).

Lenten Coin Folders

Please return your filled coin folders to church by April 8. If you have filled the folder with coins, please put the filled folder into a plastic bag (a bread bag works well) and rubber band the bag around the coin folder. This way, if the coins fall out, they are in the bag. Please do not tape coins; it makes it very hard for the people who count the offering. If you use a check, just tuck it into the final slot. If you have put your name and address on the outside of the coin folder, it will count as an offering. All coin folder offering goes to support the general fund.

We collect filled folders in a basket in the Upper Narthex, right before you enter the Sanctuary for worship. Thank you for supporting Huff's Church as one of your Lenten practices.

Congregational Spring Meeting

We will hold our annual congregational spring meeting on Sunday, March 4 (bad weather date March 11). All who are members in good standing (have communed or contributed at least once in the past two years) are eligible to vote on anything brought up at congregational meetings. We will have the vote to approve the appointment of Sheri Shaner, Jane Arndt, Bill Stoudt and Jimmy Meitzler, Sr. to Union Council. (When people are not able to be voted upon in the December election, council may appoint them to serve until the congregation votes approval in the spring meeting.)

Copies of the annual report are available at the entrance to the Sanctuary. If you see an area of church life in which you would like to participate, please talk with a committee member, the committee chairperson, or Pastor Kroppa.

Thank you for living out your baptismal vows and for being a disciple of Jesus Christ at Huff's Church.

Prayer Partners

If you would like to pray for 1-2 congregation members during the year, please fill out the prayer request in the March bulletins and place it in the offering plate, or e-mail John Leaser at birdmanjhl@aol.com. John will provide a new partner list after Easter.

Jean Reinert Memorial Scholarship

The Jean Reinert Memorial Scholarship information and applications are posted on the Sunday School bulletin board. Any high school senior who will pursue additional education (vocational training or college) and has remained an active member of Huff's since confirmation, is welcome to apply. Deadline to apply is March 31, 2018. Completed applications may be placed in Michele Boyer's mailbox.

Apple Dumpling Sale Information

There were 594 apple dumplings sold. We had 31 volunteers and 120.25 hours spent making the dumplings. Our profit from the sale is \$1,632.93. This profit will be donated to the Huff's Union Church General Fund.

What Happened to CIF Envelopes?

You will have noticed that CIF envelopes were replaced by envelopes bearing the word “Utilities.” This is because the bequests we have received in the past few years have enabled us to have investment money, which we might use when we need to fund potential CIF projects. We have also requested that memorial money now be directed to the General Fund, where we have financial need.

If you still wish to donate to CIF, you may do so by marking “CIF” on one of the blank lines on your offering envelope. The Utilities envelopes help to pay for heat, air conditioning, lighting and other costs of keeping the buildings comfortable.

Blood Bank

Thank you to those who donated blood on January 15. 14 units of blood were donated, with 2 people deferred. Together we make a difference in the blood supply in our community.

Manna

Manna discussion and steering committee meeting will be held on April 15, after the 10:30 worship service. A light lunch will be served in the basement. Please sign up.

Men of Huffs Church and St. Peter's

Men's Group Breakfast Saturday, March 17, 2018, 9 a.m. at the Pied Piper Restaurant, Route 100, Bally.

Come and join us in friendship, fellowship and discussion of how we can best serve others. We continue to support the Community Meal at St. Peters, the first Friday of each month. March 2, dinner will be served from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Seed Tree

Our Annual Seed Tree for St. Vincent's Mission in David, Kentucky will be placed in the upper Narthex during the month of March.

Their planting season begins earlier than ours and most of the families do have gardens. They do thank you for your donations.

Pastor's Article

Dear Christian Friends,

One evening in February, I met Jesus. He spoke with a Southern accent and was driving a semi.

I was driving to the Topton Lutheran Home, and had to go around a truck parked on the side of the road, just beyond the fire company in Lyons. The driver motioned me over and asked where East Penn Manufacturing was. He said that all the detours had totally confused his sense of direction. I explained that it was behind him, just about close enough to walk. He groaned and asked where he might be able to turn his truck. I mentioned that there were a few places, depending on whether they had been plowed from the morning's snow. He thanked me. I thought of Jesus' words about doing for the least of these... the driver was a stranger, and I tried to help him.

I was heading to the Home because a woman was dying. Her family did not want to call her pastor out in potentially icy weather, and it would have been almost an hour's drive for her. The chaplain was at a seminar out of town. So, I came to condole with the family, to help them say their good byes, and to feel that the presence of God was in that room, that Jesus was waiting for their beloved mother, that all would be well. I thought of Jesus, telling us that when we visit the sick, we are visiting him.

So many times we don't think about Jesus being present in our everyday encounters, but we have the promise that he is there. I find it wonderful to think how present Jesus is to us, in the faces of strangers, in those whom we try to help. This is why I love being a pastor—the variety of places where I meet Jesus. Although the word “cleric” comes from the word “clerk” which is why church records are important (to have a record of births, deaths and marriages in a parish) my heart is not in record keeping. My heart is with those who call and say, “Pastor...” and I know that I can bring the presence of Jesus to them, but also that they, without knowing it themselves, are meant to be the presence of Jesus for me.

Pastor's Article (continued)

As you consider where you see God—in the beautiful sunset, in the grand mountains and roaring brooks—also consider where Jesus meets you—in the hungry, thirsty, stranger, ill and imprisoned. Let's keep our eyes open for the presence of the divine, even in the midst of the everyday.

In Christian service,
Pastor Jane Kropa

Church Family

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

3/5 - Annabelle Stegman	3/6 - Meredith Jones
3/7 - Robert Reinhard	3/7 - Lloyd Weller, Sr.
3/16 - Pearl Hoffman	3/17 - Evelyn Hladchuk
3/31 - Lorraine Hunter	

ANNIVERSARIES

3/6 - David & Mabel Bittenbender
3/9 - Robert & Nancy Schleicher
3/17 - Donald & Elizabeth Heimbach

41st Year of the Dramatized Last Supper

This year, on March 25, the two Palm Sunday performances of the Dramatized Last Supper will be at Solomon's UCC in Macungie at 10:15 a.m. and The Lutheran Home in Topton at 2:30 p.m. If you know a resident at the home, you are welcome to join them for the performance.

Allentown Rescue Mission

The next Allentown Rescue Mission meal is scheduled for Sunday, April 8th. Check the Bulletin Board for donations of food needed. Call Carl Arner at 610-841-0639.

Union Council Highlights

A-choir will come to Huff's Church in 2019; they are booked elsewhere for 2018.

A proto-type choir robe will be viewed before ordering and purchasing new robes for the choir and bell choirs—a gift to our congregation.

Bill Stoudt is researching the automatic light switches in the church bathrooms—please turn out the light by pressing the bottom of the switch as you are leaving the church bathroom.

CSI sent a representative to adjust our sound system, and to train volunteers. The system should require limited monitoring. It has been adjusted to work with the pastor's voice on the pulpit and headset microphones. A new headset microphone is ordered.

Three proposals will be created by CSI for review: a recorder so we might begin podcasting of the pastor's sermons, the proposal for the LCD monitors and equipment, and a proposal for upgrading the sound system to more modern technology (it is now 18 years old) Council will review recommendations and decide how to proceed.

We need to have the fire alarms cleaned of dust to prevent false alarms.

We are working on wireless capabilities for the church and chapel; a high reach needs to be rented to finish installation.

The shed we use for garbage, etc. was the victim of a hit and run accident on February 9 or early February 10. A police report has been filed and information has been forwarded to the church insurance. The shed will be replaced. Should we consider cameras to monitor the back of the chapel, since this is the second act of vandalism? (A few months ago, wires on the back of the chapel were pulled down.)

Confirmation Class Schedule

9:15 March 4 with mentors—upstairs chapel

9:15 March 11 with parent—basement chapel

9:15 March 25 (time changed for Palm Sunday)—
basement chapel

Meditation, Prayer and Communion on Maundy Thursday (March 29)

Challenged to find a way to relate to those who are not available for a one-hour Maundy Thursday worship service, yet who want to receive communion on this holy day when we celebrate Jesus' institution of the sacrament of Holy Communion, we are trying something new. Knowing that Huff's Church Road boasts lots of traffic of people coming home from work in the late afternoon, we are offering an open sanctuary with soft music playing, and an opportunity to meditate, pray, commune, and receive a copy of Holy Week scripture according to St. Mark's gospel. Here is our invitation to you:

Come into our beautiful sanctuary anytime from 4:30 to 6:45 p.m. to meditate upon Jesus, have a private prayer with the pastor, hear again the story of the first Lord's Supper, receive communion, and receive a copy of Mark's Holy Week Gospel. For those who wish to participate in a short, more formal, worship service, we will gather from 6:45-7 p.m. You are welcome to bring a non-perishable food item or paper item for our food pantry, as our way to be the body of Christ in the world. Choir will rehearse at 7 p.m. that evening.

If you would like a one-hour traditional Maundy Thursday worship service, please worship with St. Peter's Union Church members and friends at 7 p.m. on March 29.

If this does not turn out to be a viable way to meet the needs of our members, neighbors and friends, we are open to trying something else in the future. We understand that the church is ever-evolving, and needs to meet the needs of modern people, not just repeat "the way we've always done it." What can you do to help us discern God's will for Huff's to celebrate this holy day? Honor this day as special. Do something that will set it apart, as your introduction to the three holy days culminating with Easter. Pray, read the Holy Week scriptures, and try to find an opportunity to receive Holy Communion. Maundy comes from the word "mandatum" which means mandate, or commandment—Jesus said, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another." Focus on this scripture during the day. Meditate upon it, whether in our sanctuary, or at various moments during your day.

***Meditation, Prayer and Communion on Maundy Thursday
(March 29)*** (continued)

Make this year's Maundy Thursday an important step in your preparations for the Easter Feast.

Volunteer greeters at the front door, and to be with the pastor in the sanctuary, are needed. Please sign up for a one-hour time; sign up sheet posted on the bulletin board in the lower Narthex.

Here is the invitation to share in Holy Communion, traditionally made on Maundy Thursday: (UCC Book of Worship)

This table is open to all who confess Jesus as the Christ and seek to follow Christ's way. Come to this sacred table, not because you must, but because you may. Come not because you are fulfilled, but because in your emptiness you stand in need of God's mercy and assurance. Come not to express an opinion, but to see a presence and to pray for a spirit. Come to this table, then, sisters and brothers, as you are. Partake and share. It is spread for you and me that we might again know that God has come to us, shared our common lot, and invited us to join the people of God's new age.

**Spirit on Tap
Meets at Doubletree Hotel by Hilton
701 Penn St., Reading, PA
At 7 p.m. on the evenings listed below.
*You may order food or beverages.***

March 13, 2018 - Healing Touch - Janice Stewart

For more information contact:

Dr. Harry L. Serio - HLSerio@aol.com - 610-944-7032

Dr. Robert A. Stewart - rastheo1951@msn.com - 610-775-2836

Dr. Stephen Ohnsman - ohnsman@comcast.net

Spirit on Tap is sponsored in part by the DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton and by individual contributions.

Rededication Old Main Lutheran Home at Topton

Thursday, March 15, 2018 4:30 Dedication

5-7:30 Public Open House

Prayerful Presence Group

Life experiences have a way of causing depression in many of us. How do we cope with these weaknesses effectively as to not put ourselves at risk? Let us consider fear.

Our First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt once advised that you gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience by which you stop to face your fears. Being able to say, "I lived through that horror, I can take the next thing that comes along." Free the thing you fear, and you do away with that you fear!

Imagine if you will, the courage it took for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to face his fear, crucifixion, to suffer unimaginable suffering and then death so that we may be forgiven of our sins.

During this season of Lent, let us face our fears as Christians who can stand and pray that our Savior is our strength and through him we have nothing to fear! Amen.

Prayerful Presence Group meets the 4th Sunday of the month at 9:15 a.m. up on the balcony in the sanctuary. This month we will meet on March 25th.

Shared with you by the Prayerful Presence Group

Youth Adventure to Reading Rocks

Enjoy an afternoon with your friends at the indoor climbing gym in Reading on Sunday, March 18, at 2:00. Cost is \$2.00 for Huffs youth in good standing and \$ 6.00 for non-active youth and friends. Meet at the chapel following the 10:30 church service on March 18th for pizza and fruit, review required forms, and car pooling. Questions please call Skeeter Crump at 610-966-9552.

Small Group

First Saturday of the month in the chapel basement from 10-11:30. Bring your Bible for conversation (we keep what is discussed confidential) and study. From 11:30-12:30 bring something to share for lunch.

Pennsylvania Southeast Conference

We Thank You.

You have made a difference in the lives of people and communities over the last year through your OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) support. Thank You!!

Whether you shared from your Sunday morning offering or included OCWM in your annual budget, you extended the reach of the United Church of Christ to both local and global neighborhoods. (Huff's is working towards tithing: giving 10%, of its operations budget, divided between the United Church of Christ, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.)

As we close the chapter that was 2017, PSEC congregations and individuals contributed \$824,448 OCWM dollars toward the work of our Conference.

With those funds, we...

Presented workshops for pastors and lay leaders on Stewardship Development, Pastor/Parish Relationships, Church Administrators and Financial Officers Training

Offered Leadership and Congregational Vitality Training sessions and workshops

Supported the discernment work of 24 Members in Discernment on the way to pastoral ministry

Sponsored the participation of more than 32 PSEC youth and adult delegates at the UCC General Synod

Guided 43 congregations and pastors through the search and call process

Sent delegates to a fantastically-faith filled Annual Spring Conference Meeting at West Chester University

Strengthened global partnerships with fellow Cuban and German Christians

Called a new Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Development with the call of Rev. Cean James.

(This is a short list of the Conference activities that make up a long list of changed lives!)

Although \$37,552 short of our OCWM goal of \$862,000, our staff and consistory held the line on expenses and ended the year in the black!

Pennsylvania Southeast Conference (continued)

Your generosity, which supported the work of the Conference, impacted lives all over God's creation. Through the other special offerings of the UCC, disaster relief collections, and pass throughs, \$288,297 was sent through the Conference office to support causes including disaster relief, Lancaster Seminary, Bethany Children's Home, E&R Historical Society, Phoebe Homes, etc.

In short, OCWM drives everything you do through your church, the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference and the United Church of Christ!

Thank you and may God lead you to a meaningful and prosperous 2018!

Thank You Notes Received

From Diakon

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your gift of \$400.00 to Diakon Volunteer Home Care. Each year, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries serves thousands of children, families, youth and older adults with many hands, one heart.

MaryEllen Dickey, CFRE
Senior Vice President of Advancement

From United Church of Christ

Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you for your gift of \$223.00 in support of the United Church of Christ's UEK Forum. We are deeply grateful for your donation.

Nichole M. Collins, Associate Director,
Annual Giving & Special Events

From Friends, Inc.

Dear Congregation,

Thank you for your congregation's gift of \$448.33 to Friends, Inc. Community Services. With your support, Friend's is able to provide coats and food to our communities.

Sandra L. Wise
Executive Director

Thank You Notes Received
From Lutheran Home at Topton

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your donated gifts for our Annual Christmas Sharing at the the Lutheran Home in Topton. Thank you to the many people who assisted with setting up the “store”, transported and supported the residents as they shopped, wrapped and organized gifts.

Karen Sinkovits
Activity Director

From Union Evangelischer Kirchen

Dear Jane & Friends in Christ,

Thank you and Huff’s Union Church for your generous donation of \$223.00. Your donation will help us to continue the good work of developing and nurturing relationships between the UCC and UEK.

Dr. Peter E. Makari
Executive
Middle East & Europe

Maria Smith Warren
Administrative Assistant
Middle East & Europe

From St. Jude Childrens Research Hospital

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generous gift of \$184 to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital that was made possible through your Endowment Fund to help with children who have cancer and need chemotherapy and other treatment plans.

For the Children,
Marlo Thomas

From The Open Link

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generous donation of 150 pounds of assorted items to our food pantry. Your generosity improves and enriches the lives of your neighbors in the Upper Perkiomen Valley.

Stuart Bush, Ph.D.
Executive Director

January 2018 Treasury Report

	January	YTD Actual	Annual Budget
Monthly Income	\$33,971.87	\$33,971.87	\$308,189.00
Monthly Expense	\$22,317.03	\$22,317.03	\$307,843.00
Balance	\$11,654.84	\$11,654.84	\$346.00
40101 - Pass thru Income Account	\$1,305.00		
60100 - Pass thru Expense Account	\$2,877.33		
Account Balances	January 31		
Designated Fund	\$79,174.37		
General Fund	\$10,439.70		
Sunday School Fund (Checking Account)	\$9,686.49		
Youth Group Fund (Checking Account)	\$20,228.93		
Total	\$119,529.49		

EASTER LILIES & PINK TULIPS AVAILABLE

Easter Lilies and/or Pink Tulips will adorn the Nave of the church for our Easter Worship Services. If you'd like to order one, please complete the form below and submit it with your payment to LeRoy & Ruth Leibensperger, 214 Greiss St., Alburdis, PA 18011, (610-682-7346) or Robin Diehl, 50 Eric Lane, Alburdis, PA, (610-845-7092). Orders are due by Tuesday, March 19, 2018. The cost is \$10.00 for Lilies and \$7.50 for Pink Tulips. Please make checks payable to **HUFF'S UNION CHURCH**.



EASTER LILY & PINK TULIP ORDER FORM

of Lily Plants _____ @ \$10.00 per plant \$ _____
of Pink Tulip Plants _____ @ \$7.50 per plant \$ _____

IN MEMORY OF: _____

IN HONOR OF: _____

PRESENTED BY: _____