

HUFF'S CHURCH CHATTER



August, 2018

Church Address: 540 Conrad Rd., Alburdis, 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 Class Begins Sept. 9

Confirmands will meet at 9:15 in the chapel basement. Confirmands should bring the completed copy of the Luke worksheet, your Bibles and notebooks. Please mark your calendars for the Confirmation trip to the Seminary Ridge Museum in Gettysburg on November 3 at 10 a.m. During the worship service that day, you will be introduced to the congregation. Please plan to be at either the 8 or 10:30 a.m. worship service.

Picnic Games for Children

Thank you to Tess Woloszanski for overseeing children's games from 5-6 p.m. at our three picnics, including our upcoming picnic on August 18. New this year has been the Gaga ball pit, loaned to us by Solt Sawmill. If you can help Tess, please contact her to volunteer (610-619-2652) or tess314@windstream.net. You will need background checks on file in the office.

Village Volleyball

Thank you to those who have volunteered to set up and take down supplies for Village Volleyball. Our August sessions will be held on August 1, 8, 15, and 22. If you have background clearances and would like to volunteer, sign up on the sign up sheet at church, or call the office to volunteer. It is great to be a community fun spot.

Final Summer Community Picnic Needs Your Help

Just a reminder to sign up to help with the August 18 community picnic. We need help with food preparation on Thursday, August 16 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. and Friday, August 17 from 7:00 a.m. to noon. We also need help with serving food on Saturday (choose one or both of the two shifts), with the cake walk (we need baked goods in non-returnable containers) and with clean up. If you cannot sign up at worship, call the office to volunteer your time. Confirmants will receive 1 participation credit for each 2 hours of work.

Small Group

The small group will meet on Saturday, August 4, at 10 a.m. Come with your Bible. If you'd like to stay for lunch, please feel free to bring something to share and eat with us from 11:30-12:30.

Ladies Aid Meeting

The next meeting of the Ladies Aide will be on Wednesday, August 1st 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.

Acolyte Schedule

8/5/18	Volunteer, Bill Geist, Brooke Boyer
8/12/18	Volunteer, Kara Benfield, Raegan Pilgert
8/19/18	No Acolytes - outdoor worship
8/26/18	Kane Weller, Raegan Pilgert, Brooke Boyer

NEPS Ministry Fair

On August 11 from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. (Lunch provided) a Ministry Fair will take place at the Lutheran Center (2354 Grove Rd., Allentown, PA, near the Lehigh Valley Airport). Visit the Synod's Resource Center to learn about the ministries of the Northeastern PA synod, share resources offered by synod teams, and attend mini-sessions. There will be an opportunity to share your congregation's information/ministries at your own sharing table. A children's corner will be provided. Sponsored by the Faith Formation Resource Ministry Team. For more information, visit the synod website at <http://nepasynod.org/event/ministry-fair>.

Lunch Bunch for August

Lunch Bunch meets Tuesday, August 21, 2018, at noon, at PC's Pub, East Greenville, Pa.

Come and join us for fun and camaraderie. Option after lunch: "Try the Y" at the nearby Upper Perkiomen Valley YMCA. We can enjoy the no cost tour of this beautiful YMCA. Special note: Senior citizens enrolled in the Medicare Advantage program are eligible for the Silver Sneakers Program, and YMCA membership is free! Check out your eligibility at the YMCA.

Special Offering for August

The special offering for August is our own congregation's mission and ministry. Please pray for our outreach into our community, and our ability to help people connect to God's loving presence through the Holy Spirit. Please continue to support us as we try to live out Christ's call to love God with our heart, mind, soul and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Pastor's Article:

Dear Christian Friends,

Why is it sometimes so difficult not to get bored with Christian practices? How can it be that some days we practically sing through our prayers, and other days we just wonder whatever is wrong that we can't even settle down enough to pray? Why do some worship services move us, and others don't do much for us?

Richard Rohr, in his book Sacred Fire, says the problem is not with our prayers, nor with our worship, nor with us, but in our not realizing that boredom or frustration in prayer is not only normal, but to be expected. Rohr reminds us that great religious leaders have experienced just such things with in their own walk with Jesus. What makes the difference in their lives is their willingness to persevere through the "dry" spells, just because prayer and worship are worth doing.

Rohr gives the example of a good marriage or even a friendship—how many moments do we have of scintillating conversation, sparkling experiences, euphoric moments, and how many more everyday experiences do we share? How many moments do we share that we would not write down in our diaries, moments that seemed so ordinary, so every-day, they are not worth mentioning? How many conversations that focus on mundane details of our life together have we had over the years, yet, when all is said and done, this is what constitutes a relationship—showing up and remaining together.

Rohr suggests that always looking for ways to produce the most engaging and innovative worship experiences might be leading people to expect nothing but "high's" and not helping them to deal with the hum drum of everyday life. He reminds us of Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, and Mother Theresa, who all experienced times when they could not even feel the presence of God, yet all persevered in their worship and prayer lives. Sometimes it's about staying in the relationship, not about what we feel, which will naturally change day by day depending on the amount of sleep we have, the amount of distractions in our lives, the temperature of our surroundings, what else might be happening in the room at that moment, etc.

Pastor's Article (continued)

If worship and prayer are opportunities for us to turn to God, asking for God's presence in our lives, we need to recall Jesus' words about his being present whenever two or three are gathered in his name. Whether we sense Jesus' presence (the unseen guest at every meal; the invisible listener to every conversation) or not, we have his assurance that he is indeed with us. Don't be harsh with yourself, fearing you have done something wrong if you are going through a time of restlessness in prayer and worship. The leaders of faith would counsel—give it time; trust God's promises; know that all will be well even if you can't feel anything at the moment. This experience has also been referred to as being beset by the noontime demon—the one who whispers, "What does it matter anyway? Who are you to think God is really listening to you? Who do you think you are to change the world for God?" What is one to do? Resist the noontime demon; hold fast to God's promises, and persevere, even if it means slogging through the swamp for a period of time. God is there; no matter what.

In Christian faithfulness,
Pastor Jane Kropa

Pastor's Sabbatical

After seven years, an ordained pastor serving Huff's Union Church receives a 12-week Sabbatical--a time to rest, renew, and come closer to God. Pastor Kropa has agreed to take 3 weeks of Sabbatical time per year, for four years, to make it easier for Huff's to keep moving forward with our new outreach projects. This year is her third year of Sabbatical time. She returns to her pastoral duties on Saturday, August 4.

Any requests for emergency pastoral care should be directed to the office during office hours, and to Pastor Gade (610-967-5309) during weekends and evenings. Pastor Kozlowski, from Calvary UCC in Barto, has agreed to help with any visits needed in the Boyertown, Reading, or Pottstown area. (484-529-2241)

Huff's sets aside \$500 yearly so that there will be money in the budget to cover pastoral supply during these weeks. Sabbatical supply pastors are paid an hourly wage plus mileage. Sunday morning supply pastors are paid according to NEPA Synod ELCA guidelines.

Save the Date: Rally Day and Baptismal Renewal Service September 9

September 9 is Rally Day/Kick Off to the New Sunday School and Confirmation Year.

We could always use some new teachers or helpers to work with our children. If you are interested, please contact Rachel Welch at 484-226-0333 or rahelwelch@yahoo.com to advise her of your intentions, and to get your background clearances.

Both 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. worship services will feature the theme of baptismal renewal (recommitting our lives to Christ's service including a time to come forward and touch the waters). The 10:30 a.m. worship service will be held outdoors, weather permitting.

5-week Series on Addiction and the Christian Community

The Lehigh, Northern Lehigh Valley, and Bethlehem/Easton Mission Districts ELCA are sponsoring a five-week educational series on addiction within the context of the Christian community. The event will be held at Nativity Lutheran Church in Allentown every Wednesday in October from 6:45 - 9:00 PM: October 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31. All are welcome and encouraged to attend, including the afflicted, their loved ones, all members of the community including counselors, nurses, chaplains, social workers, pastors, those in the criminal justice system, first responders, educators, etc. There is a flyer on the bulletin board at church with registration information. \$10 per person for all classes, or \$15 per family.

Huff's Church will pay the registration fee for anyone from our congregation who wishes to attend. Please talk with Pastor Kropa or Elaine Crump about this.

St. Peter's Church Offers a Community Supper

St. Peter's offers a Community Supper on the first Friday of each month from 5pm to 7pm. The meal is served in St. Peter's Place, next door to St. Peter's Church. All are welcome. There is no charge for this meal. A free will offering can be made to help offset costs. The men of Huffs Church are invited to help prepare and serve this meal. Typically, around 100 people enjoy this supper each month. The next Community Supper is **Friday, August 3**. Please come out to support our sister church and enjoy good food and fellowship.

Manna Contemporary Worship

Manna Service is on Sunday, August 12 at 9:00 a.m. Manna is our contemporary worship experience held in the upstairs of the chapel building. We will meet on the third Sunday of September.

Save the Date for Our - Cornfest and Hoedown

On Sunday, September 9th, we are having a special event! From 4-7 pm we will be serving food in the church park, including corn on the cob and hotdogs. Keith Brintzenhoff and The Toad Creek Ramblers will be playing music from 5-7 pm so we can enjoy a hoedown outside under the park pavilion! This will be a rain or shine community event! Please spread the word and save the date. Help may be needed with food prep and serving – please watch for details in the coming weeks!

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.

ANNIVERSARIES

8/8 - Paul & Nancy Meitzler
8/15 - Charles & Carol Zwoyer
8/19 - Alfred & Christine Henson
8/20 - Charles & Connie Ways
8/23 - Barry & Julia Sheetz
8/25 - Melvin & Norma Greiss
8/27 - John & Bonita Geist

BIRTHDAYS

8/2 - James Garber
8/4 - Patricia Zetner
8/10 - Jean Britton
8/10 - Gloria Romig
8/12 - Marvin Diehl
8/17 - Ruth Acker
8/22 - Fern Hoffman

PSEC News

After Annual Meeting:

Reconciliation in a Declining Church

Dear Friends,

The 2018 PSEC Annual Spring Meeting, held last weekend around the theme of “Reconciliation,” inspired many and challenged us all. Our UCC General Minister and President, Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, closed the first day by preaching at our opening worship service. John spoke passionately and faithfully to the narrative of church decline from Ezekiel 37 “I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life” and dared us to defy the work God can do to restore, renew and revive faith communities.

Our Saturday evening keynote speaker, Jeff Chu, the author of *Does Jesus Really Love Me?* moved listeners to deep thoughts, laughter and tears with amazing stories of Christian witness and reconciliation from his personal and professional life. At our Saturday morning conferring session, we gave more shape to the vision and dream for a consolidated conference in eastern PA and pledged our support to the UCC Pension Board Ministerial Assistance Capital Campaign. We closed Sunday morning with a final word of grace and inspiration from Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates, Conference Minister of the Penn Northeast Conference.

Our meeting began Friday morning with an overview of our Conference’s “situation-in-life” using statistics provided from our churches annual reporting data. The decline in our system has a direct effect on our clergy, congregations and Conference staff’s ability to effectively carry out their mission. It also presents us with exciting opportunities to define our core values, confront non-working realities, try new things and live in new ways that begin with the question “What if...?”

There is much more work to do but at this meeting it became clear to many that the culture of the Conference is changing toward deeper connection, community and creativity. Yes, we live amid a narrative of decline. BUT that does not have to be our future. God is doing something in our midst and we get to be part of that. In the words of Fr. Richard Rohr “Those who agree to carry and love what God loves,

PSEC News (continued)

both the good and the bad of history, and to pay the price for its reconciliation within themselves — these are the followers of Jesus (Philippians 3:10-12). They are the leaven, the salt, the remnant, the mustard seed that God can use to transform the world.”

May it be so,
Bill

Rev. William P. Worley
Conference Minister

CHURCH FAMILY

MEMORIALS

In memory of Robert Taylor
Scott & Emelie Swackhammer

In memory of Fern Seidt
Marion Miller & Sandy Miller
Amy Keefe

BAPTISMS

God’s blessing on Owen Alan Hansley, son of Courtney & Shane Hansley who was baptized on July 8.

Confirmation Mentor Training

If you are a confirmation mentor for the new class (who will be confirmed in 2020) please attend a mentor training session with Pastor Kropa. Training dates are either Sunday, August 26 at 9:15 a.m. in the basement of the chapel, or Tuesday, August 28 in the office at 7 p.m. If you cannot make either day, please contact Pastor Kropa for a make up date. Your first time with your Confirmand will be at the Mentor-Confirmand retreat, Saturday, September 22 from 9-3 in the chapel. Please bring something for lunch to share with our group. Beverages will be provided. No confirmands or confirmand parents need to attend Mentor training.

Open Link

Submitted by Sue Stockdale

Open Link, one of the non-profit agencies we support, recently had their annual Community Partnership Breakfast for the volunteers, donors and community partners who continue to help make the organization strong.

As our church supports Open Link in one way through our food pantry, I was drawn to a table displaying the project: Paper Plate 2018. Each paper plate had a message written on it from a grateful client. I have listed a couple below:

“When times are tough and the food at home is slim to none, there is Open Link’s Pantry with open hearts, filled food shelves and always a big smile.”

“I am thankful for food pantry because it stretches my budget.”

“Open Link is important to me because everyone here shows me that there is still love in the world. Their service has provided such a wonderful support during my transition. Thank you food pantry for making a DIFFERENCE in a temporary time of need.”

I pass on the thank you from Open Link that I received that day to the members of Huff’s Union Church for their continued support over the years for Open Link.

Food Pantry

The recipient of April/May/June food pantry donations is the Allentown Rescue Mission. Elvin Keiser, Bob and Sue Stockdale boxed 156 food and toiletry items and delivered them recently. Thank you to all the church members who generously share in this mission.

Thank You Notes Received

From Ben Schwenk, Troop 575

Dear Members of Huffs Union Church,

Thank you for all your donations. I was able to help give Friend, Inc. a pretty large amount of pet food. They are very thankful for your donations.

Ben Schwenk
Troop 575

From Bethany Children's Home

Dear Pastor Kropa & Members of Huffs Union Church,

Thank you for your gift of \$95 to Our Wider Church Mission through the PA Southeast Conference. Through your special gifts, we can provide each youth an opportunity to a caring structured environment to live within. These experiences help our youth to begin setting a new course for their life.

Meggan Korber
Director of Development

Topton Home - "Peaches & Ice Cream

It's once again summertime, therefore, late in August we have been serving the guests at the Topton Home, "Peaches & Ice Cream" for over 60 years.

This year's date is Friday, August 24, 2018. I'll need volunteers to peel and slice peaches in the Chapel starting at 12:00 p.m. I will also need five or six volunteers to serve at 2:30 p.m. at the Topton Home. The serving volunteers need to be at the Topton Home by 2:00 p.m. We usually serve 150 guests.

If you'd be interested in the preparation or serving, see me during Sunday School hours, Church Service or call me at 1-610-841-0639.

Thank you for helping to continue with this mission at our church.

Serving Christ
Carl Arner

275th Anniversary

The United Church of Christ congregation of Huff's Union Church will be 275 years old in 2019. Church records state that the Reformed congregation was formed in 1744, which became the Evangelical and Reformed denomination, then the United Church of Christ and finally Huff's Union Church on the way to full federation of the ELCA and UCC congregations.

We would like to not only celebrate the past, but look forward to the future, especially by reaching out into our local communities to ask them to share our joy, that we are 275 years old. Do we want to hand out water bottles (with our name on them) or something else at Community Days in East Greenville and Pennsburg? Do we want to hand out something special at Battle of the Bands at the Brandywine Heights High School? Your ideas of how to give back in celebration of our 275th are welcome. Please share in the Dream box.

We are also hoping to compile a memory book, and are asking each of our members to jot down a memory or two of Huff's Union Church and/or its organizations, programs or groups. Please leave your memories (typed or hand written) in the Dream box, or e-mail them to: office@huffschurch.com. We will need a volunteer or two to compile this book of memories. If you can help with typing, xeroxing or collating, please talk with Carl Arner.

We are thinking about having our anniversary worship service in the summertime, in the park, and asking conference minister Rev. Bill Worley to be our guest preacher. We might have some things displayed on our grounds, and a festive luncheon (meat provided; covered dishes of vegetables, starches, or desserts requested). We could use a few volunteers to work on the food aspect of our celebration.

If you have additional ideas for the celebration, please place them in the Dream Box or speak with Carl Arner or historian Scott Swackhamer. It sounds like a long time away, but we know how time flies. Let's make this 275th a very special milestone that focuses us on our future, supported by the foundation laid by our ancestors in faith.

Keep watching the newsletter for updates on our anniversary ideas and plans.