



The Link

December 2019

Dear Friends,

Advent! The season of waiting and watching for the Christ Child is a busy one for many of us. Extra gatherings, parties, performances and celebrations – not to mention extra calories! – can make this seem like a frantic time.

As a Christ-following congregation, we have the opportunity to enjoy the gifts of Advent in a new way. This year, during our Advent candle-lighting ritual, we will be invited to a moment of quiet meditation. Of course, there are many other ways to quiet your mind and body during this season. But for this one moment out of each week and each worship service, we will join together in a period of sacred silence.



We sometimes say that worship is practice – practice for the rest of life. In worship, we practice praising God, learning from our past, expressing hope for the future, creatively expressing our soul's longing, giving generously back to our generous God, and being in community with others who may be very different from ourselves. This advent, we will also have the opportunity to enter into quiet for a short time. I look forward to hearing if our practice of silence is contained in worship, or if it moves with you into the rest of your week.

Advent blessings – I look forward to seeing you in worship! Jennifer



Worship: Sundays 10 AM
Office Hours: Mon thru Thurs: 10 AM—2 PM
360-693-1476

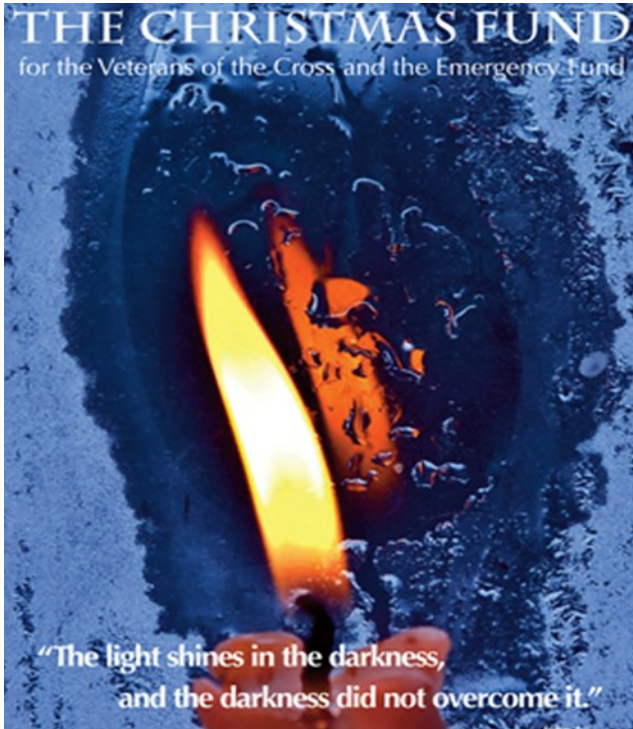
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MISSION AND OUTREACH



The UCC Special Offering for December is the Christmas Fund

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund has been a tangible expression of God's love and light in the world for over 115 years. One of the four Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ, the Christmas Fund provides UCC congregations and members an opportunity to reach out in compassion to those who have faithfully shepherded our Church and who now find themselves facing worrisome financial needs. The United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards, on behalf of the whole church, passes on this direct support so that these needs may be met and our support may be felt. With your continued generosity, more individuals will receive the support of the church in their time of need.

Our retired clergy/lay employees relied on this income supplementation for basic needs such as food, utilities, and living and medical expenses.

Through your gifts to the Christmas Fund, you can help ensure that "The Light Shines in the Darkness" for those who have so faithfully served our church.

Please support this important UCC fund during December by writing a check to our church and putting "UCC Christmas Fund" in the memo line.

SAFETY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Safety Committee Update

As Chairman of Safety Committee I would like to thank the 21 members of the congregation, and members from Martha's Pantry and MCC, who participated in the first aid, CPR and AED training on October 12. Thanks also to Leslie Chapman, Kristina Martin, and Pat Sutherland who acted as hosts in my absence.

Members of the congregation should feel comfort that if there is any future medical emergency, or other emergency, these individuals will be able to react and assist. There are other members who are already certified that are currently employed in the medical field. Ken Rowe



MISSION AND OUTREACH

**LOVE OF
NEIGHBOR**

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. - 1 John 4:11



REFUGEE RESTART KITS

As an Immigrant Welcoming Congregation, we collaborate with our community partner Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW), the only federally funded refugee agency in Clark County, on special projects. Refugees are proven victims of persecution that flee their homelands in search of hope, justice and a safe place to raise their families. Vancouver has been receiving between 200-400 refugees per year.

Refugees arrive to the United States with very little and they have to quickly begin their lives over again. **Restart Kits** are a significant part of us welcoming and honoring them in Vancouver. The kits are filled with essential items that give refugees the start of what they need to rebuild their lives here. The hope is that these kits would bring honor to refugees coming to Vancouver, reflect their dignity, while also meeting a very tangible need. We ask that you only collect new items for these kits, and leave the price tag on the item. (Tags will be removed before the family receives them, but the value of items must be recorded per regulations.)

Sign-up sheets for the Restart Kits will be available at church beginning November 17.

Items are due on December 15 at church. Gift cards can be delivered ahead of time in a clearly marked envelope. Questions? Contact Karen Kulm at lk.kulm@gmail.com.



Tom Renner found a home for the piano. Here is the lovely note we received from the grateful recipient!

Dear Tom, and any others involved, I thank you much for the piano. It has been a great blessing to me. It makes my practice much more enjoyable as well as encouraging my efforts. I really appreciate the gift.

many Thanks
Tommy
Robinson

COUNCIL MODERATOR'S UPDATE—NOTES FROM JEANIE FOR DECEMBER 2019



Greetings and Blessings!

Advent, which prepares us for the arrival of the Christ child, is upon us. Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace Advent candles will be lit as we remember our calling to find and follow the Messiah during this Christmastime and beyond.

In October, Council reviewed the current representatives and their responsibilities. All have agreed to continue in their positions for at least one year starting with the January election. We had a very productive discussion about the changes made with our new bylaws. All representatives enjoy the new flexibility of short term task groups, we also reflected on input from the wider congregation.

Please continue to give feedback to the representatives leading the task groups you participate in. We will be following up on these changes and our mission at the whole church retreat scheduled for February 29 at the church. Please save that date to participate in our church's future vision.

I'd like to personally thank the members of our 2020 Stewardship campaign. The planning, materials and meetings were so well organized and presented. Please join me in appreciation of Sandy Mathis, Arlene Arnold, Steve Bloodworth, Jan Foulke, Richard Trefren, and Megan Dixon with the support of Jennifer Brownell, Elizabeth Spanring, and Kristina Martin.

I'm excited for our celebration Thanksgiving dinner on November 24 organized by master cook, Leslie Chapman, and prepared by a wonderful group of volunteers. We are so very blessed to have such dedicated volunteers and staff to enrich our church life.

Our hearts and prayers are with Pastor Jennifer and her family. This is a very trying time for them with the health issues they are facing now.

Personnel has approved a lighter schedule for Jennifer so we all need to roll up our sleeves and do what we can to support her.

We celebrate the blessing of our LEAP classes as well as our pastoral care team in supplementing Jennifer's role. Please remember that the Council is YOUR council!

Meeting minutes are always posted on the church bulletin board and all officers and representatives look forward to receiving any feedback you might have.

Together, we are the body of Christ, doing the work to "be the church".

May the blessings of this community echo throughout our gathered experience, and may the peace and love of Jesus be in all our hearts. May you breathe in the hope, love, joy, and peace around you this Advent season.

Merry Christmas! Jeanie Beary Stolle
Jtstolle@comcast.net



CONGREGATION NEWS



Classical Christmas Concert Special Organ Concert

Dr. Schindler will present a concert of organ music with an Advent and Christmas theme on Saturday, December 7 at 2 pm at Van UCC.

The concert will include music of Bach, Handel, Dandrieu, Daquin, Liszt, Messiaen and traditional carols. Admission: non-perishable food item(s) recommended.



Have a talent you want to share with our congregation? We have such a gifted community we want to celebrate you! Contact Allison Kocher at 360-521-2781 or email ankocher76@gmail.com to sign up to provide Musical Offering for our Sunday service. This will be the prayer response after the sermon and can be a reading, instrumental, and/or vocal selection. THANK YOU!!!

The Breakfast Group meets at 9:30 am every 2nd Saturday at the Peachtree Restaurant and Pie House at 6600 NE Hwy 99, Vancouver, WA, 98665.

Please join us at the next breakfast on December 14.

Special Concerns

Joan Barber
The Family of Joan Blair
The Chapman Family
Wayne Fletcher
Steve Hitchens
Janet Hunter

Jean Matthews
Sue Rush
Connie Oppel
Karen Owen
Gary Roberts
Kathy Woolley

Mary Jo Ebel Circle

Wednesday, December 18, 1 pm
Nettie Fries Lounge

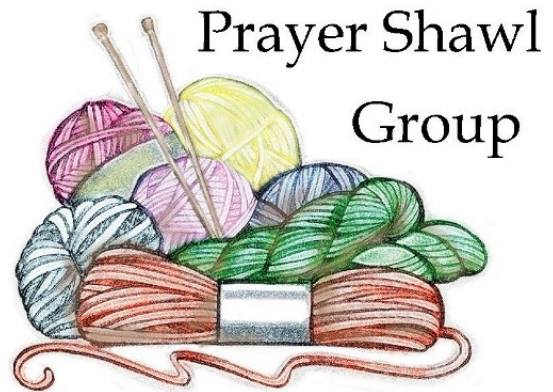
Harriet Forbes will be the guest speaker, talking about her performing background and involvement with VaVaVoom, a local performing musical troupe. All women of the church are invited. Please join us for an informative, entertaining program, social time and opportunity to get to know Harriet, a member of our choir. Co-hosted by Judy Walter and Ruth Hamme.r



In November we launched Sunday School and youth group for our middle schoolers!

In class we started exploring the creation stories and reading *We Make the Road by Walking* (by Brian D. McLaren) together. Our first youth group hangout was a huge success; we played board games and ate pizza and had a blast — all very important ingredients to building community. :)

We're still trying to figure out the best grade ranges for each group. For December we're going with Middle School = 5-7, and High School = 8-12. We'll let you know if that changes in 2020. Thanks for your patience as we make sure we have the best setup for our youth! Let Bre (bre@vanucc.org) know if you have any questions.



The Prayer Shawl Group meets on the second Thursday of each month at 10 am in Clawson Corner. All knitters and crocheters are welcome to join us. Please contact Joanie Nelson for more info.



Honoring Kristina Martin

Join us on Sunday, December 22 in honoring Kristina, during worship and immediately following. Come wish her the best in her new adventures! We will miss Kristina's organizational skills and good humor in the office, and are so grateful for her more than 12 years of service to the church.

Giving Thanks and Celebrating Advent & Christmas at Vancouver United Church of Christ



Sun, December 1, Advent Festival: following worship

A book fair featuring UCC gifts is a new addition to this family tradition.

A variety of fun crafts and cupcakes to decorate.

Pie potluck – sign up to bring your favorite pie.

Tues, December 3, Christmas Caroling: 4-7 pm

Join an eclectic and enthusiastic crowd of singers serenading our shut-ins and friends.

Dinner will follow at Richard and Kristin Trefen's home.

Sun, December 8, Children's Christmas Pageant: 10 am

Let Pastor Jennifer (Jennifer@vanucc.org) know if you are interested in taking part in this fun and meaningful experience.

Sun, December 15, Christmas Chorale: 10 am

An inspiring ode to joy as the choir lifts their voices to the music of Lloyd Larson.

Tues, December 24, Christmas Eve Service: 4 pm

Interactive Christmas service featuring Godly Play stories and candle lighting.

Tues, December 24, Christmas Eve Service: 10 pm

Our own take on Festival of Lessons and Carols, featuring the Chancel Choir and candle lighting.

Sun, December 29: 10 am

Instead of worship in the sanctuary, bring your holiday leftovers for a traditional Christmas brunch in Bradford Hall.



No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here! Join your faith community for these fun and festive gatherings.



December

BIRTHDAYS

- December 2 Nancy Woodworth
- December 6 Norma Priel
- December 6 Stephanie Queen-Eversole
- December 8 Olivia Martindale
- December 11 Chloe Brittain
- December 11 Jennifer Garrison Brownell
- December 12 June Lasher
- December 13 Aurelia Eddington
- December 13 Jack Melton
- December 13 Judy Walter
- December 15 Jan Foulke
- December 17 Chuck Foulke
- December 18 Dan Schnabel
- December 24 Christopher Schindler

