



PeacePress

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST www.peaceucc.com

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The mission of Peace United Church of Christ is to reach our community for Christ, develop disciples, and empower all people for ministry.



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Mr. Ted Wilkinson
 Youth Director

Ms. Abigail Miller Warren
 Nursery Attendant



Jambalaya Sale & Church Yard Sale

SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 2019

11:00 A.M. — 2:00 P.M.

(see page 7 for more details.)



Committee Chairs & Department Leaders



Please get your Committee/Department's annual report in to the church office by **Friday, February 1** to be included in the 2018 Annual Report. The Annual Report will be published and mailed in mid-February.

Pastor's Perspective

I have always found it interesting that in the gospel of Luke, the set-up for the birth of Jesus is situated very specifically within the particularities of history. John the Baptist, who will be the primary public relations guy for the Jesus-event, receives the word of God and sets off on a baptismal blitz. It goes like this:

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar -- when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Tracoonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene -- during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, son of Zechariah in the desert. He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” (Luke 3: 1-3)

All that historic detail: the years, the names of emperors, governors, tetrarchs, and priests; these are the details we hardly even notice, nor care much about. But the gospel writers did care, and saw to it that *when* Jesus came, *what* Jesus did, *where* Jesus went, and *how* Jesus died was all meticulously documented. Time, place, personalities, and historic moment all seemed to be of importance; but why?

While our post-Christian cultural tendency is to turn God into a generic entity - bland, malleable, and useful to our own agendas - the biblical God is quite specific in terms of agendas. The revelation of God's will through the machinations of history is how we understand our God. Our biblical narrative is so central and important to our faith because it reveals to us the *character* of our God. And that character, what of it?

Our God is odd. God hears the cries of the Hebrews in Egypt (Exodus 2: 23-24), and jumps into action. The Hebrews, most clearly defined by the term 'sojourner' (Hebrew word *ger*) is equivalent to our modern day concepts for "resident alien," "immigrant," or "refugee." Biblically speaking, these were folks who were displaced due to economic, political, or military disruption; that is, human beings left vulnerable by the dark processes of history.

With the birth of Jesus, God again hears the cries of the sojourner in the midst of history's tragedies. Jesus, born in a barn, is quickly "on the run" (Matthew 2: 13-18) as Herod seeks his death and willingly slaughters the

innocents in his pursuit of the Christ-child. The "players" of history pursue death and destruction of "those at the gate," and God intervenes.

Sadly, nothing has changed. The 'sojourners' are still pursued, while the powerful remain purveyors of death. Yet, God and God's people continue to subvert those who attempt to define the valued and less-than-valued among us.

With Jesus born in Bethlehem, the powerful have been put on notice. All humans are beloved children in the eyes of God, especially the ones rendered most vulnerable. This is the Good News!!

Blessings and hope in this new year!

~ *Pastor Tom*



O&A TASK FORCE TO HOLD LUNCH/Q&A SESSION ON SUN., JAN. 20TH

The Open and Affirming Task Force of Peace Church has made arrangements to have **Dr. Kathryn Shaner, Assistant Professor of New Testament at Wake Forest School of Divinity** to speak to us and answer questions at an after church lunch and presentation on **Sunday, January 20, 2019.**

Dr. Shaner is a graduate of Luther College, Harvard Divinity School, and Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. She has participated in excavations of sites in Israel that required digging through centuries of dirt to discover early Roman temples and buildings dating to the time of Jesus. Her students receive the benefit of her study and travel as she teaches courses about the Gospels and Letters of the New Testament and helps to illuminate the ancient texts for us. Specifically, of course, we have asked Dr. Shaner to speak to us about the New Testament understandings of sexual orientation, the people who comprised the early church and what the scripture offers to us as we seek to discern its truth about acceptance and love in this day and time.

We will provide the food (contributions will be requested to offset the cost) and we will have child care available in the nursery. Please join us on Sunday, January 20th for this excellent opportunity for learning and fellowship.



A note from Elisabeth...

2019 – another gift from God of twelve whole months to find ways to serve and worship Him!

I do want to begin this year by thanking the wonderful members of both the choir and handbells for their hard work during the Christmas season. We begin rehearsing our Christmas music months ahead of time, but as December gets closer each year, we feel the pressure of wanting to sing and play our best when worshipping God. The choir members not only practice each Wednesday, but also with our cantatas we are able to purchase CDs, so they can sing in their cars and at home – and they gave two Saturdays to extra rehearsals! I really appreciate their dedication and willingness to share their talents. In addition, we are so grateful for the congregation's encouraging and supportive words as well as singing. During the 2018 Advent season (with all its snowy surprises!) we also had our children sing during worship and Hannah Summers' solo began the cantata. Our musical worship is multi-generational and a group effort!

Beginning in August of 2018, we included a *Hymn of the Month* in our worship using part or all of the hymn each Sunday within the month. During 2019, we will continue trying to learn some of the less familiar songs in our hymnal, and begin in January by considering something about the way we sing the hymns. Periodically, I remind the choir to “sing with the punctuation.” As we sing, please look at the phrasing of the words and try not to breathe unless there is a punctuation mark – even if the music makes you feel like you want to breathe. There are times when the music is at the end of a phrase, but the meaning of the words carries over. Not breaking the line with a breath keeps the sentence together and helps us focus on what the hymn writer is trying to communicate.

And... I certainly want to say a huge, “Thank you” to this congregation for all the cards, notes, and remembrances during the Christmas season. I was truly overwhelmed at the church's generosity when I opened the Christmas gift. You are a loving group of people, and I am blessed to be a part of this church. I look forward to discovering what 2019 holds for us!

~ Elisabeth Penry



Hello and Happy New Year, Peace Church! As a new year is beginning I'd like to tell you all about what the youth of Peace Church did during the season of Advent. For our first Sunday, the Sunday of *Hope*, we had Advent calendars for the children so they could count the days till Christmas and we made Advent wreaths so they could celebrate each week with their families.

The second Sunday of Advent, which was the Sunday of *Peace*, unfortunately was snowed out. The third Sunday, our Sunday of *Love*, we learned about how Jesus' coming is a sign that God loves us and the children made stockings for their loved ones.



Our final Sunday in Advent, the Sunday of *Joy*, was spent making gifts for our families and friends to bring them joy this holiday season.

As we look to the new year I'd like to thank everyone who has volunteered to help with Children's Chapel and everyone here at Peace who supports our youth ministry in so many ways, we wouldn't be able to accomplish so much without you. God bless you and I look forward to seeing everyone in the New Year.

~ Ted Wilkinson, Youth Director



Peace United Church of Christ

MISSION OF THE MONTH

LAVASTIDA CHRISTIAN CENTER

The Lavastida Christian Center is a vibrant Christian ministry located in Santiago, Cuba. Conceived and developed over the past 20 years by the Reverends Elmer and Gisela Lavastida, the Lavastida Center has a variety of Christian outreach programs to the city of Santiago and the surrounding rural areas.

Programs at "The Center" include Bible training programs for lay and clergy members, education and advocacy programs for women in situations of domestic violence, environmental education and development programs which empower local communities in self sufficiency while having minimal impacts on the local environment, and a variety of programs for local children. The Lavastida Center works very closely with local Christian congregations of all denominations.

Funding for the Lavastida Center is of a critical nature and our gifts are a life line for these programs and the many people touched by this outreach. Pastor Tom will personally deliver our financial gifts while he is in Cuba with the UCC Cuba Study Seminar (February 1st-15th). Please give generously. We will have offering envelopes available each Sunday in January. Thank you!!

GUM Honor Cards Update

Greensboro Urban Ministry Holiday Honor Card sales totaled \$1,170.00. Thank you Peace Church for caring about those experiencing hunger, homelessness, and crisis by helping fund assistance programs through Greensboro Urban Ministry.



NEWS & Notes

INSTALLATION OF NEW CONSISTORY MEMBERS/OFFICERS



On **Sunday, January 13th**, there will be a Service of Installation for our new Consistory members. This will take place during the second half of our morning worship service. Those being installed include Jeanne Bryan (President), Ava Chambers (Vice President), Jane Ford (Assistant Treasurer), Clodagh Leszinski (Assistant Secretary), Grant Jolliff, Rick Owen (Secretary), Harold Poffenbaugh, Melinda Summers (Treasurer), and Ted Wilkinson.



Free Wills Workshop To Be Offered

On Sunday, January 27th, Peace Church member **Amy Williams** will be offering a workshop for anyone who would like to have a personal will created for their end-of-life concerns. Amy will not only offer professional legal advice regarding wills, but she will help participants create their own will so that they have it "in hand" upon completion of the workshop. This free workshop will be held in the Fellowship Hall following worship. Interested person are asked to sign-up in the Narthex and bring a bag lunch.

Amy Williams graduated from Elon University School of Law and practices law in Greensboro.



HANDS-ON HITS 800!!

For the first time ever... Hands-On has distributed 800 pillows in a calendar year! In fact, 841 for 2018! That's 48 more pillows than we made in 2017.

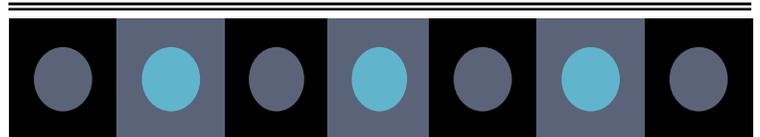


Understand, Hands-On does not work with quotas, so we never go into a session with a goal of making a specific number of pillows. Of course, we have a certain number of pillows we would like to deliver to each of our recipients each month. If we have them, we do. If not, we deliver what we have. It just works out.

Thanks to all who contributed to this fine effort. It takes all of us to make this happen. And, to many, it doesn't seem like work. At the December session, one member commented, "This group is so much fun!"

2019 could be your year to join Hands-On and join the "fun".

Join us the second Wednesday each month at 1:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.



JRVC Announces 2019 Work Camp Schedule

Johns River Valley Camp offers meaningful and enjoyable Mission Camp opportunities for youth in our Southern Conference churches. Surrounded by the Southern Appalachian Mountains, JRVC delivers ministry in a creative rural tension of beauty and poverty.

The following weeks have been set aside as Mission Camp weeks for 2019: June 9-15, June 23-29, July 7-13 and July 21-27. Contact JRVC today at phardy.jrvc@gmail.com to begin planning a trip.



Winter Youth Retreat

The Planning Team for the UCC Winter Youth Retreat have offered a "save the date" press release. The annual retreat will be held on January 18-21, 2019, at the Blowing Rock Conference Center, focused around the theme: *Act Justly, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly*. Guest speaker is Robyn Henderson Espinoza (Ph.D.). Music will be provided by Gravel and Silk. This retreat is for youth ages 14-18 years of age. Those who are interested can speak to Pastor Tom or check out the website at www.uccwinteryouthretreat.org.

Wider Church UCC News

The United Church of Christ will hold its 32nd General Synod national meeting from June 21-25, 2019 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This is the bi-annual gathering of the entire United Church of Christ, its 39 Conferences, various instrumentalities, and representatives from both local congregations and global ministries.

The theme for the 32nd General Synod is based on Matthew 5:16, "In the Same Way Let Your Light Shine Before Others", and will feature the best UCC women preachers in the denomination including Rev. Kaji Spellman Dousa, Rev. Traci Devon Blackmon, Rev. Sharon Lee Mei-Shem MacArthur, and Rev. Dr. Amy Butler.

For more information about General Synod 32 please go to www.ucc.org. This is an event not to be missed.

Please Note: Pastor Tom will be having an information table in the display center for the *UCC Cuba Study Seminar* and would welcome some company.



Peace Church Recipe Corner

EASY CHOCOLATE CHIP POUND CAKE

1 box moist yellow cake mix
1/2 cup sugar
1 small box instant chocolate pudding mix
4 eggs
1 cup sour cream
3/4 cup water
3/4 cup vegetable oil
1 cup milk chocolate chips
Powdered sugar for dusting



Mix first 3 ingredients. Add eggs, sour cream, water, and oil. Stir in chocolate chips.

Pour into greased and floured bundt pan. Bake at 350 degrees for about 1 hour or until knife comes out clean. Sift powdered sugar over cake.



Dear Peace Church Members and Consistory,

I would like to express my gratitude, and utter surprise, for the Christmas gift given to me and other staff members of Peace Church this year. Your generosity and thoughtfulness for your church staff was quite evident and I am so thankful for it. I love our Peace Church family and am thankful for the wonderful opportunity I have to serve here. Thank you again. I hope you all have had a wonderful Christmas season and I pray God's very best for you and yours in 2019.



~ Sherri Vestal



Peace UCC Card Ministry

For over 25 years, we have had an all-church card ministry. For most of the time, it was under the auspices of Stephen Ministry. With the disbanding of Stephen Ministry, it was moved to the PeaceCare Ministry. We continue to send concern cards and holiday cards when applicable.

As part of this ministry, we try to include relatives or friends of members whose concerns are brought to our attention. It is an amazing outreach for us that takes very little time and expense. In some instances, ours may be the only care cards the person receives on a regular basis. Members can help facilitate this process by sharing the mailing information with us. It is better if you provide it voluntarily rather than our having to ask for it.

Please provide this information to Theo Scott, and be sure to let her know when the person has recovered or no longer needs to receive the cards.

The Love Fund is very low on funds. This fund is used to help people who need emergency financial assistance. If you would like to contribute, please make contributions payable to Peace Church, marked "Love Fund" on the memo line.



We have just shown our staff how much we appreciate them with the Christmas bonuses. You can speak to anyone on the Pastoral Relations committee — **Larry Clapp, Jane Ford, and Jean Morgan** — and to convey a message to the pastor at any time. The committee meets quarterly and the next meeting will be in February.



Theo's Home Church Christmas Picture: Theo Scott wanted to share a photo of some of the Christmas decorations in her home church, Ebenezer AME Church in Charleston, SC. This is the right side of the pulpit and an adjacent door that leads upstairs. Looks beautiful!

2019 Jambalaya Sale & Church Yard Sale

Yes, you read that correctly! On Saturday, March 2nd, we will have our annual Jambalaya Sale in conjunction with our first ever indoor Yard Sale. The Yard Sale and Jambalaya Sale will be from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Pre-orders for jambalaya will be taken during February (narthex sign-up list) and from now until March 2nd we will be collecting good quality yard sale items. Just bring your donated items to the church and we will hold them until the sale date.

So, start collecting your yard sale items and get ready to place your order for our great jambalaya sale made by Chef Rick Owen!! Read more in our February Peace Press.

NOEL HALLELUJAH MERRY CHRISTMAS HAPPY NEW YEAR

Please keep these members of our church family in your thoughts and prayers:

Lois Bell; Dot Benshoff; Bertie Bowman; Nan Buchanan; David Fesperman; Millie Harmon; Jim & Mary Lillie; Buddy Lippard; Carol MacDonald; Sally McGrogan; Abigail Miller-Warren; Sharon Mitchell; Mary Ann Murray; Jack & Marcy Neal; Nora Norred; Gertrude Radford; Becky Taylor; Lucille Waynick; Kelly Wyrick; Doris Yeattes.

Remember these wider church family and friends:

Lyn Ann Bailey (niece of Harold Poffenbaugh); Chris Barnes (nephew of Harold Poffenbaugh); Katie Bowen (daughter-in-law of Cynthia Bowen); Boley Brown (brother-in-law of Sherri Vestal); Eric Chapman (nephew of Jane Ford); Janet Faucette (sister-in-law of Yvonne Smothers); Donna Green (friend of Maria Smith); Theresa Grill (neighbor of Sue Smith); Betty Larimer (aunt of Trish Larimer); Beatrice Rosenthal (mother of David Dole); Annette Sarty (sister of Yvonne Poffenbaugh); Michael Shoffner (grandson of Edith Sink); Tom & Rhoda Taylor (niece & her husband of Harold Poffenbaugh); Sherri Vestal.

ATTENDANCE & OFFERING FOR DECEMBER

DATE	SUNDAY SCHOOL	WORSHIP	REGULAR OFFERING	OTHER OFFERING
December 2	8	71	\$4,397	\$142
December 9	NO SERVICE DUE TO SNOW			
December 16	4	55	\$15,044	\$2,475
December 23	8	61	\$1,679	\$910
December 30	0	32	\$1,575	\$19,513

PEACE CHURCH FINANCIAL REPORT SUMMARY

(Through November 30, 2018)

	Current Month	Year to Date	YTD Budget	Amount Over (Under) Budget
Contributions from Members & Friends, Plus Other Receipts	15,830	170,892	166,946	3,946
Disbursed in Support of Ministries, Programs & Facilities	16,190	178,427	183,689	(5,262)
Neighbors In Need	320			



January Birthdays



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Eileen Johnson	2 Bryan Morgan	3	4 Ellen Mason	5
6 Mathieu Freeman	7	8	9 Don Willoughby	10	11	12 Kevin Hege
13	14	15 Mike Williams	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23 Jeanne Bryan	24	25	26 Debbie Kaynor
27	28 Femi Quakenbush	29 Kim Miller	30	31 Sophia Lewis		