



PeacePress

Official Peace Church Newsletter
A Global Mission Church



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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PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE



Well, it's that time of the year again: Advent. Yes, and because the commercialism of our holiday season overwhelms all religious meaning connected to this season, let us remind ourselves what Advent, the lighting of our Advent wreath, and Christmas is all about in our Christian faith.

The Advent Season

Advent is a season of spiritual preparation for the celebration of the birth of Christ (Christmas) and looks forward to the future reign of Christ. Expectation rather than personal penitence is the central theme of the season. Advent is a preparation for rather than a celebration of Christmas, so Advent hymns should be sung instead of Christmas carols. The first Sunday of Advent is not the beginning of the Christmas season. The Christmas celebration begins on Christmas Eve and continues for the next "twelve days of Christmas." Purple is normally Advent's liturgical color, associated both with the sovereignty of Christ and with penitence. Deep Blue is also sometimes used to distinguish the season from Lent. As the color of the night sky, Blue symbolizes Christ who in one ancient Advent song is called the "Dayspring" or source of day. As the color associated with Mary, Blue also reminds us that during Advent the church waits with Mary for the birth of Jesus.

Christmas and Christmas Season

The Lectionary readings for Christmas and the following twelve days—

(culminating in the feast of the Epiphany) invite the church to reflect on the Incarnation (or embodiment) of God as a human being: "The Word became a human being and lived among us, and we have seen his glory...." (John 1:14). In Christ, God enters human history and identifies fully with the human condition.

The traditional colors of the season are White or Gold, symbolizing joy in the light of day. One of the fondest Advent traditions for both congregations and families is the lighting of Advent candles. The tradition reaches back to pre-Christian northern Europeans. During the darkest days of winter, they lit as many as twenty-four candles on an evergreen-covered wheel or wreath. By lighting a candle a day, they marked time, anticipating the return of the sun's light and warmth. By the 1500s, both Lutherans and Catholics adapted the Advent Wreath as a devotional way to prepare for the coming of Christ, the Light of the World. Today, the Advent Wreath is usually an evergreen wreath placed on a table or suspended from a ceiling or an arch. In the wreath are four candles (usually blue or purple, occasionally one is pink); each candle represents one week during Advent. A white candle is often placed or suspended in the center of the wreath. The symbols of the Advent Wreath are interpreted in many ways. The circle of evergreens reminds Christians of the eternal and ever-renewing promises of Christ.

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Pastor's Persp. Cont.

The lighting of candles, spanning the season, acknowledges the deepening of our preparation and the increasing light that bursts forth at Christmas. The colors of the candles also vary. Often the candles are purple or blue, noting the season's expectations of royalty, liberation, redemption, and hope. For the third Sunday of Advent, occasionally a pink candle is lit.

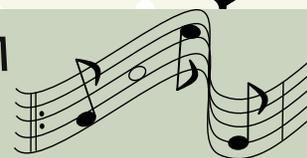
This recognizes a shift of Advent themes in the Bible. The first two Sundays focus on the Bible's prophetic vision of Christ's future and final return; on the third and fourth Sunday, the readings focus on the coming of Jesus, the Christ. The third Sunday traditionally recalls John the Baptizer's call for repentance, and the fourth recounts God's call to Mary and her faithful response. The third Sunday has been identified in some traditions as "Gaudete," a day of joy and rejoicing. Finally, on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, a center white candle is lit. The light of Christ is fully present. Jesus is born. It is often difficult to stay focused upon the coming birth of Christ during the Advent and Christmas season. Thus, my prayer is that this year will truly be a year of being re-centered in the story of birth and new life that comes with the Christ-child.

Advent calls us to prepare. Christmas call us to respond. In Jesus - Emmanuel - God is with us.

Get ready....

Pastor Tom

A NOTE FROM ELISABETH



Imagine a world without music! Imagine Christmas without music! We would certainly still celebrate the birth of Christ, but how different it would be. Music surrounds us during the Advent and Christmas seasons and is such an integral part of our worship. The birth of our Savior is the revelation of God's love for each of us - the wonder of how He could give His Son to die for us and the wonder of the obedience of Mary and Joseph. Then there are the traditions we have known through the years. However, the pandemic has certainly made us aware that traditions cannot always be followed, and we may need to rejoice in the new ways we can celebrate with family and friends.

The Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany hymns are found from pages 119 - 178 in our hymnal. This year why not choose one of the old, familiar carols and make it the focus of your personal devotions in a new way? Why is this carol special to you? Does it recall happy memories? Does it tell the beautiful Christmas message of Jesus's birth? Does the music make you feel a certain way? What are the words really saying? Many of them have a Scripture reference in an upper corner of the page. For example, page 154, While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks, is based on Luke 2:8-14. Then you find as you read the words (even though they are very well-known) the angels' announcement and -

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UCC CUBA STUDY SEMINAR 2022

After a long and difficult year, Cuba is opening up again and it looks like the UCC Cuba Study Seminar will go in 2022. The dates for this coming trip are January 28th through February 6th. Pastor Tom and Kim Miller lead this trip each year and are excited to reconnect with our friends in Cuba! Anyone who would be interested in being part of this trip is encouraged to talk with Pastor Tom.

Note from Elisabeth Cont.

– account of Jesus’s birth and then words of joy, and glory, and praise to God. These elements could certainly be part of a personal devotional time. Focusing on the words of a carol (or several carols) and letting them speak in a concentrated and intentional way can help create a new tradition and help us remember the special, individual way God comes to each of us through a baby – His Son.

May we all listen for the true message of Jesus during this season.

Elisabeth Penry

The Longest Night in the Longest Year

December 21st is recognized as the “longest night” of the season as the winter darkness settles in. This night is often recognized with a worship service addressing the sadness that can accompany some people during the buildup to Christmas. On Tuesday, December 21st we will have a “Longest Night” service in the sanctuary at 7:00pm. We will recognize this longest day in the context of this longest year that we have been through in 2021. Join us for this important time of worship.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- December 5th – Rosina Whitfield
- 6th – Laurie Baker
- 9th – Ian Myers
- 12th – David Dole
- 13th – John Patterson
- 18th – Ramona Griffin & Daniel Warren
- 22nd – Alexa Dole
- 23rd – Toni Tagert
- 26th – Russ Haver & Olivia Jolliff & Laura Small
- 28th – Don Wheeling
- 31st – Deb Shiner

Missions of the Month

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL LIVING GIFTS

This Christmas, give a life-changing gift to Heifer International in honor of friends or family. It is a gift that brings promise to struggling families and the opportunity for a better life to the less fortunate. For more than 75 years, Heifer's gifts of livestock and training have changed parents into successful business owners with a steady income to feed their families and send their children to school. For each \$10 toward the purchase of an animal, you will receive a card to send to those on your gift list showing that a gift was made in their honor. Each Sunday in December Heifer Honor Cards will be available to purchase in the Narthex.

THE CHRISTMAS FUND

The past eighteen months have had a profound impact on UCC clergy and congregations--physically, emotionally, spiritually, and financially. But because of gifts to the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross, the people who have been affected the most have known they are not alone. Last year, donations to the Christmas Fund helped pay the rent for low-income retired ministers and bridged the gap for one active minister's family when her husband lost his restaurant due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Christmas Fund gifts took care of the unexpected expense of a major car repair, helped a retired minister attend his brother's funeral, and assisted in paying for daunting medical expenses, prescriptions, and groceries.

Gifts to the Christmas Fund bring relief and hope to those who have dedicated their lives to serving our churches. By supporting the Christmas Fund, you make a huge difference and bring great joy!

The Christmas Fund provides Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks for retirees and those facing unforeseen financial hardship.

Please give generously on December 19.
Offering envelopes are available in the Narthex.

Let's Celebrate
Christmas
Ready for a little
holiday cheer?



Come celebrate with Hands-On on Wednesday, Dec. 15 at 12 NOON. As usual, we are happy to have guests, and it will be the first time we will have no work session in the Fellowship Hall. We are just going to eat lunch and have some fun with each other. We know we have many well-wishes in the congregation, so spend a little time with us.

Yep, you read it here. All are welcome to our Hands-On Christmas Celebration!

No RSVP is required. Bring nothing but a big holiday smile!

From the Church Office

by Anne Badgett

I started celebrating Christmas about 3 weeks ago. I start celebrating every year when 99.5 FM tells me to celebrate which if you didn't know, is normally on November 6th. Sometimes this dulls the season a bit, and wears out the favorite Christmas songs and movies, but it's a tradition that I made for myself. No one told me that part of growing up and becoming an adult meant making your own traditions, and it's both exciting and bittersweet. My family has many Christmas traditions that we took with us all the way to South Africa. Every year my mom makes about 2 batches of Moravian sugar cake which leaves us with about 14 sugar cakes to give out as gifts and 4 sugar cakes to dig into ourselves. One of her cousins would mail us a large tin of Moravian sugar cookies. Another favorite sweet is something we call Nutty Fingers, I've found other recipes that call them wedding cookies,

but we call them Nutty Fingers because they look like fingers and have nuts in them! My encouragement for you this Advent season is to share one of your season traditions with someone else and have fellowship just like the fellowship that Christians had in Acts 2:46 (NIV) - "Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts".

I've attached my mom's recipe for Nutty Fingers so you can try it out!

P.S. Use pecans or walnuts!

Nutty Fingers

½ lb. butter (1 stick)

4 tbsp. powdered sugar

½ tsp. salt

2 c. flour

1 tsp. vanilla

2 c. chopped nuts

Bake 350° in greased pan - roll in powdered sugar while hot. Bake 24 minutes. Yields 60.

Thank You's from Church Members

From Jean Morgan,

"Dear Peace Church,

Thank you very much for the flowers you sent to me! This was such a delightful surprise - all in beautiful fall colors. It is a very real blessing to be apart of this community of caring folk! Thank you all again!

Imogen (Jean) Morgan"

From Jane Ford,

"Dear Peace Church,

I so appreciate the kindness of the church in giving the bouquets. The flowers were beautiful!"

thank you

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From Deb Kaynor,

"To: Ava Chambers, Consistory President
Pastor Tom Warren, and members and friends
of Peace United Church of Christ –

Dear, Dear Friends,

It's not very often that I am at a loss for words, but this past Monday afternoon was one of those times. I had been working at my kitchen table when a knock came on the door of my apartment. "Just a minute," I called out in return.

Upon opening the door, there stood a member of Friends home at Guilford Security Team holding a vase...a container filled with a colorful arrangement of flowers and ferns. Blossoms large and small in shades of red, pink, deep purple and apricot. The soft lavender of beach heather, white and yellow miniature

lilies and a single deep pink rose in bud.

My surprised, quiet thoughts were racing and raising the question..."What are Peter (my youngest son) and his wife Sandra doing sending me another vase of flowers this soon?!? You see, they'd sent me flowers every month of the year since I'd moved from Connecticut almost 5 years ago! Then, I noticed the florists' card was from a different florist and was from YOU!!

I was absolutely speechless!!!

Thanks to all of you who bring Peace United Church of Christ in Greensboro, NC alive, bearing witness in these troubled and turbulent times we are living through.

With sincere and heartfelt "thanks"-----

Debbie Kaynor...a fellow traveler"

Peace United Church of Christ - Greensboro, NC Treasurer's Report as of October, 2021 for General Fund

Account #	Account Name	Period Activity	YTD Balance	Annual Budget	Annual Budget Remaining
Offerings					
4001	Pledges	9,055.00	88,030.00	107,081.00	19,051.00
4003	Loose Offerings	125.00	609.00	250.00	(359.00)
4004	Initial offerings	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00
4006	Non-Pledge Offerings	1,150.00	12,953.75	37,102.00	24,148.25
4007	Sunday School	0.00	0.00	100.00	100.00
Total Offerings		\$10,330.00	\$101,592.75	\$144,583.00	\$42,990.25

	Period Activity	YTD Balance	Annual Budget	Annual Budget Remaining
October 2021 Income Total	\$15,275.53	\$133,553.21	\$164,683.00	\$42,550.55
October Expenses Total	\$16,922.98	\$129,111.07	\$196,284.00	\$73,427.79

October Income-Expenses: \$15,275 - \$16,922.98 = \$1,647.45

Year-to-Date Balance Income Expenses: \$133,553.21 - \$129,111.07 = \$4,442.14 (thanks to PPP loan)

Advent Decorations!

This year several women from the Women's Fellowship came out to decorate the Church for Advent! Here are some pictures in case you aren't able to see them in person, but if you are able, please come see them on Sundays! Thank you to the Women's Fellowship for a fantastic job!



Important Dates and Announcements

- December 5 – The Women's Fellowship will be celebrating the Christmas season with a luncheon at Mimi's on December 7 at 11:30 am. All are invited to attend, but reservations are required so please contact Abbie Wheeling at 336-708-6478 to save your spot. The deadline for reservations is Sunday, December 5. We hope to see you there!
- Christmas Poinsettias will be ordered and are available to be purchased in memory or in honor of a loved one. Each poinsettia is \$20 and the sign-up list is in the narthex. These poinsettias will be in the sanctuary for Sunday, December 19th as well as for Christmas Eve worship. Checks should be made out to "Peace UCC".
- Church Office Hours are going back to a 9 AM – 1 PM schedule for the season. If you have questions on a specific day, please email the office!