



The Carillon

United Church of Christ, Congregational, Arcade
(585) 492-4530

Editor: Shannon King

**December 2020 –
January 2021**

Everything is Gift

Advent and Christmas Greetings, Arcade UCC,

Many of us remember the feeling that we got when we were younger on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning. Christmas Eve brought anticipation – anticipation for gifts, for seeing family who would gather for the holiday, for being allowed to eat cookies for breakfast. And Christmas morning brought the realization of that anticipation. There were gifts under the tree and those exchanged among friends. There was, in my family, singing happy birthday to Jesus on Christmas morning, then packing up the car and heading to see family we did not get to see that often. And of course, after all of that, eating cookies for breakfast.

I remember one Christmas when I was younger (and if there are any other 90's kids reading this, you know how exciting this was for me), I woke on Christmas morning and found that Santa had left me a Gameboy under the tree! For those of us born in the 90's, Gameboys were like the best toys ever. You could choose from a whole bunch of different games (Pokémon was my favorite) and as long as your four AA batteries didn't run out, you could play videogames wherever you went! It was

one of the best gifts I ever received on Christmas, and I played with it all the time. In the car, on the school bus, in my bedroom, everywhere I went, I took my Gameboy with me. As sad as it might be to say, I really did cherish that Gameboy.

As we once again approach another Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, children will be anticipating and waiting for gifts from Santa under the tree. And they will be so excited as they open whatever today's modern-day equivalent of a Gameboy is (a Nintendo Switch maybe??) and cherish it and play with it all the time. But as I'm thinking of gifts, I'm reminded of a statement that was made during a bible study I led a few years ago: ***"Everything is gift."***

The implications of this statement are huge. What if we began to look at the things we consider mundane with the same anticipation and excitement as a child opening gifts on Christmas morning? What if we looked at all that we have, all that we are, as gift - a gift from God. Our talents and abilities, our jobs, our careers, our ministry, our family, our friends...all gifts from our Creator. What would our lives and our world look like if we viewed everything as gift? Would we become more grateful as individuals? Would division and strife decline as we began to see each other, all of humanity regardless of skin color, religion, or country of origin, as a gift to our world? Would justice and charity increase as those who are struggling with poverty, addiction, and homelessness are no longer stigmatized or marginalized, but are cherished as God's gift? How would we view our ministry and our careers/jobs and our retirement if we viewed the talents and skills that we have as gifts from God?

This Christmas season, I would challenge all of us to try to see the gift within everything that we have and receive. I would like to think that if we do this, an attitude of gratitude would spread beyond us and to others as well, as we work together to further the message of the greatest gift of all, a baby born in Bethlehem, who would change the world forever.

I pray that you all have a happy, safe, and gratitude-filled Christmas season.

Blessings,
P. Josh

December Birthdays

- | | | | |
|----|---------------|----|----------------|
| 3 | Randy Lutz | 16 | Sheila Vrenna |
| 11 | George Norton | 17 | Stacey Fudella |

January Birthdays

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------|----|-------------------|
| 1 | Karen Czesak | 23 | Marilyn Pirdy |
| 2 | Shannon King | 24 | Sharon Hawley |
| 8 | Katelynn Rogers | 24 | Dirk Norwich |
| 9 | Jim Vrenna | 31 | Shirley Kriedeman |
| 17 | Paul Sanio | | |

January Anniversaries

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Lary & Barbara Schaefer – 38 years |
| 3 | Bill & Karen Schaper – 51 years |

December Bible Readings

- | | |
|----|---|
| 6 | Isa 40:1-11
Ps 85:1-2, 8-13
2 Peter 3:8-15a
Mk 1:1-8 |
| 13 | Isa 61:1-4, 8-11
Ps 126
1 Thess 5:16-24
Jn 1:6-8, 19-28 |
| 20 | 2 Sam 7:1-11, 16
Luke 1:46b-55, or Ps 89:1-4, 19-26
Rom 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38 |
| 27 | Isa 61:10-62:3
Ps 148
Gal 4:4-7
Luke 2:22-40 |

January Bible Readings

- | | |
|----|--|
| 3 | Jer 31:7-14
Ps 147:12-20
Eph 1:3-14
Jn 1: (1-9), 10-18 |
| 10 | Gen 1:1-5
Ps 29
Acts 19:1-7
Mk 1:4-11 |
| 17 | 1 Sam 3:1-10, (11-20) |

Ps 139:1-6, 13-18

1 Cor 6:12-20
Jn 1:43-51

- | | |
|----|---|
| 24 | Jon 3:1-5, 10
Ps 62:5-12
1 Cor 7:29-31
Mk 1:14-20 |
|----|---|

- | | |
|----|--|
| 31 | Deut 18:15-20
Ps 111
1 Cor 8:1-13
Mk 1:21-28 |
|----|--|

Advent in a Bag

We hope that you are enjoying your Advent-in-a-Bag activities! We would love to see your pictures of your wreath and all the fun activities that you have decided to do. Please send your pictures to Pastor Josh (Joshua.bower39@gmail.com) if you would like them to be posted on our church Facebook page. Pastor will be posting the pictures he receives every week so we can see how everyone is celebrating the Advent season in their homes. Continued Advent blessings to you and yours!



Teach Us, Oh Lord
Written by Cherry Carl

Teach us, oh, Lord, oh teach us to pray,

*For there's much in our minds that we
need to say.*

*When our hearts are like stone and our
tongues made of clay,*

Teach us, oh Lord, oh teach us to pray.

*When the winds of living around us
blow,*

*Show us the path, Lord, and the way to
go,*

So the rivers of words may always flow,

*And our precious Lord we may come to
know.*

Guide us, we pray, that we may not fall,

*And fill us with strength as we're
climbing each wall.*

*Keep us safe and happy through life's
stormy squalls,*

*Ready to listen and heed your sweet
call.*



Time to Ring the Bell!



Excerpt taken from Dawn Harrison's Facebook page

IT IS THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN TO START THINKING ABOUT VOLUNTEERING TO RING THE SALVATION ARMY BELL. TOPS GROCERY STORE IN ARCADE HAS GIVEN US PERMISSION TO START NOVEMBER 17th TO DECEMBER 24th.

WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL FOR TOPS ALLOWING US TO DO THIS IN THEIR FOYER. AS WITH LESS BUSINESSES OPEN NOW DUE TO THE COVID 19 VIRUS, THERE ARE LESS KETTLES BEING UTILIZED ACROSS THE COUNTRY WHEN THE NEED IS SO MUCH GREATER THAN EVER.

THERE WILL BE A CHANGE THIS YEAR, AS REQUIRED BY TOPS. WE WILL ONLY BE ABLE TO HAVE **ONE PERSON RING THE BELL AT A TIME**. I KNOW THIS IS VERY DISAPPOINTING TO MANY PEOPLE. I AM NOT ABLE TO RING THE BELL WITH MY FAMILY EITHER.

VOLUNTEERS ARE REQUIRED TO RING FOR A MINIMUM OF ONE HOUR AND WILL NEED TO WEAR A MASK.

AS ALWAYS, I ENCOURAGE YOU TO BE FESTIVE. I LOVE TO SEE THE HATS AND ELF EARS SOME RINGERS WEAR. I ALWAYS BRING CHRISTMAS MUSIC TO LISTEN TO. WE HAVE A CHAIR AVAILABLE TO ANYONE WHO NEEDS IT. HAVE FUN EVEN IF IT IS IN A DIFFERENT WAY THIS YEAR.

OUR SMALL COMMUNITY DOES A GREAT JOB VOLUNTEERING AND DONATING AND I EXPECT THIS YEAR WILL BE NO DIFFERENT IN THAT REGARD.

PLEASE CALL DAWN HARRISON WITH ANY QUESTIONS. ❤️🔔 585-492-2428

Christmas Memorial Blessings

An email containing our Christmas Memorial Blessings form has been sent out and a hard copy was given to those without internet access. As in previous years, the donations will be given to Crabb Oil in Arcade to assist those in need with their home heating bills. If you wish to contribute to this worthy cause, please return your Memorial Blessings form with your check to Arcade UCC, PO Box 95, Arcade, NY 14009 by **December 15**. Form can also be found at the end of this newsletter.

News of Our People

Hi Arcade UCC Family. You may or may not have met me at this point, but it seemed fitting to participate in the life of our church by introducing myself in the newsletter.

For those of you who have not met me, I am a young-ish person who is seeking to go to seminary and pursue ordination in the UCC. I am an Olean resident, a small business owner, a musician, and an artist who prefers to dabble in public speaking, video, and photography. From the age of 5, I have understood myself to be a person with a calling. As I stood on my grandparents porch with my upside down orange Gideon's New Testament, and orchestrated a church service, complete with a passing of the Cornell themed offering plate, I knew that pastoral ministry was to be my vocation.

From that moment on, I have oriented my life around this understanding, and this understanding alone.

I attended Nyack College, which is a small Christian liberal arts college that was, up until this year, housed in the village of Nyack, on the banks of the Hudson River. During my time at Nyack, I led small groups, played on the worship team, played for the Gospel Choir, and joined Hands of Compassion, a missional small group that was aimed at meeting the needs of inner city kids in the Bronx and handing out food in and around Penn Station every weekend.

While at Nyack I also found Spirit calling me to a radical act of spending as much time working on my inner world as I did the outer world. I took every single gifting and calling or personal spiritual formation class that I could. And through this process I began to learn exactly who God had made me to be.

A queer Christian.

As you can imagine, or maybe you can't because you didn't grow up in the Evangelical world, this radical spiritual act of self discovery was catastrophic. It was world shattering. It was lonely.

From the time I was 12, I knew that I was called to walk a very lonely and specific road that would lead me to a place of discomfort for the Gospel. I knew I was meant for some type of trailblazing that would take every ounce of me.

And 10 years later I can definitively say, yep.

This deeply spiritual path of becoming has forced me to look at the inner most parts of my heart and reclaim what the locusts have eaten. It has forced me to sit in solitude and repeatedly utter the verse "though my flesh may fail me you are my portion forever."

And while this path has been painful, and slow, and all together not what I thought I signed up for, I am infinitely glad that it has led me here. Spirit, through a quirky combination of twists, turns, and outright chaos, has led me to this church family for such a time as this.

Arcade UCC, thank you. Thank you from the bottom of my weary heart for welcoming me in to this community, with open arms, to rest, heal, and take the next steps on my path towards the pulpit.

<3 Leo

If anyone has good news they would like in the upcoming issues of the Carillon, please contact Shannon King in the Church office, uccarcade@gmail.com or 585-492-4530.



Reverse Advent!

Once again reverse advent is happening! We will begin this year on the first day of advent, Sunday, November 29, 2020. The idea for this project is to set aside a food item each day of advent rather than remove a treat or item from the more traditional advent calendars. The food items we gather will then go to benefit our local food pantry which has been very busy lately.

If you feel so moved, a word of Christmas encouragement could be written on the food items such as Joy, Hope, Wonder, etc... Food can then be dropped off at the church to be arranged on the altar and then transferred to the food pantry. Or for those who might find this difficult, the Outreach committee members can pick up the donations weekly, which can be arranged by calling any of the Outreach members or by leaving your name and a call back number as a message on the church answering machine.

If you are in need of ideas for what the food pantry may need, they have recently expressed interest in any kind of side dishes, canned fruit, and vegetables for which they will be very grateful. Last year we did well with this project and we hope that we can do even better this year! We thank you all in advance for your faithful help as we are able to serve others in this way!

Pastor Josh Office Hours at the Church

**Tentatively: Tuesdays 2-6pm
and Thursdays 10am-2pm**

Anyone who would like to stop in during these times, please email Pastor Josh at Joshua.bower39@gmail.com to schedule a meeting. Please also follow physical distancing and mask rules during the meeting time. Thank you!



Take A Moment...

When you are filling out your Christmas cards this year, take a moment and send a card to this address:

A Recovering American Soldier
c/o Walter Reed
Army Medical Center
6900 Georgia Ave.
NW Washington, D.C.
20307-5001

If we each do this, think of how many cards these wonderful, special people who have sacrificed so much will receive.

Keep in Touch!

Want updated information on what's happening in your church? Like to know what's coming up? Join us on Facebook, Arcade United Church of Christ, Congregational, or visit our website at www.arcadeucc.com for up-to-date information, pictures, calendar of events and more!

Live Streaming Services

We will continue to have online services each Sunday at 9:30am through our Facebook page until we are able to reconvene at church. We are now streaming live each Sunday! Visit Arcade United Church of Christ Facebook page to worship together while we are apart! Communion services will be held the first Sunday of each month and Pastor Josh will bless the elements virtually at your own table.

UCC Christmas Fund

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a Special Mission Offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. The offering is administered through the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards. Funds provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties. Active and retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses may be eligible for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and/or Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks. If you want to give to this worthy cause, you can bring or send your donation to our church any time in December. Please be sure to indicate "Christmas Fund" on your check.

Information About Thanksgiving and Christmas Offerings to the Church

Greetings Friends – as some of you may have noticed, this year a letter was not sent out for a Thanksgiving church offering. The Christmas church offering letter will also not be sent out this year. If you normally give to either of these offerings, or if you have planned your church giving to include monies for either of these offerings, I would encourage you to instead pledge that money to the Christmas Memorial fund, which goes directly to helping those in need of paying their heating bills in our community. Due to your generosity and the incredible fundraising efforts that have happened this past year, we have decided that the money normally given in these two church offerings would be best served going directly to those most in need in our community. Thank you for the support you have shown the church and the donations you make to the Christmas memorial fund to benefit our community members.

~ P. Josh

Financial Report

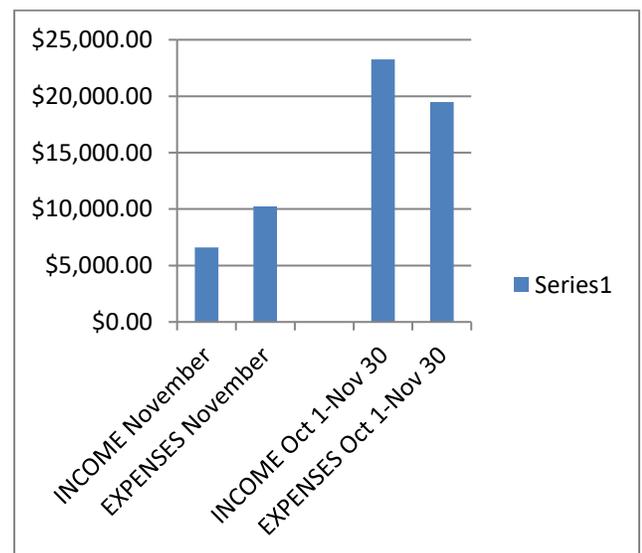
Our non-pass-through expenditures in November included \$4,040.59 pastor's salary and benefits; \$1,582.09 staff salaries; \$1,799 camera for livestreaming services; \$1,424.75 insurance; \$340 village utilities; \$300 Hope Lutheran community center; \$180 gas bill; \$135.39 copier leases; \$105.28 phone bills; \$100 Council expense; \$79.99 online service; \$66.94 custodial supplies; \$40.97 PayPal charges for online deposits; and \$30.80 postage.

Our members very generously contributed \$730 to the Pioneer Giving Tree to assist families in the Pioneer school district with holiday expenses. In addition, Pastor Bower contributed \$200 from his pastor's discretionary fund.

You might have noticed we did not send out a Thanksgiving or a Christmas fundraising letter this year. If you normally contributed in response to these fundraisers in the past and have not been affected financially by the pandemic, please consider giving more generously this year to the Christmas Memorial Blessings project. All of the money we receive will go to Crabb Energy Products to assist their customers who are having a hard time paying their heating bills this winter.

INCOME November	\$6,607.83
EXPENSES November	\$10,225.80

INCOME Oct 1-Nov 30	\$23,263.44
EXPENSES Oct 1-Nov 30	\$19,482.66



MEMBERSHIP ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to Bev Giles on her 45th anniversary of church membership on December 21 and to Ginger Comstock on her 40th anniversary of membership on January 4!

Heading into 2021 with a Smile

Taken from NY Conference's Happenings Around Our Conference, December 2, 2020

My Thoughts

Hope. On this past Sunday many of you, whether physically or virtually, lite the first candle on your Advent wreath. The candle of Hope. In this season of anticipation, I had to really stop and ask myself, what am I hoping for? This year, my answer was pretty simple. I'm hoping for Hope.

By the time you read this, I will have just closed another chapter of life and celebrated the "X" anniversary of my 18th birthday. Over these years I have learned that Hope is not necessarily something that is needed when things are going well. Rather it is in times of struggle and difficulty that Hope is essential to forward progress.

Needless to say, for all of us, this has been a challenging year and we all could use some Hope for a less challenging 2021. As I grow older, I'm Hoping that I'm doing so with some level of grace, even if arthritis isn't allowing me to do it gracefully. Further, I'm Hoping that we all will move into 2021 with more smiles and the ability to continue to laugh in spite of our current circumstances. Speaking of laughs, I Hope that some of "my thoughts" (*a few I swiped from the internet,*) on getting older will make you chuckle:

- Age 50 may be the new 30, but 9:00 pm is the new midnight.
- The older I get, the earlier it gets late.
- Life is what happens when you're expecting something else.

- When I say, "the other day," I could be referring to anytime between yesterday and 15 years ago.
- I hate when a couple argues in public, and I missed the beginning and don't know whose side I'm on.
- When you do squats, are your knees supposed to sound like a goat chewing on an aluminum can stuffed with celery?
- I used to wake up feeling like a million bucks, now it's more like a bounced check.
- I don't mean to interrupt people. I just randomly remember things and get really excited.
- I remember being able to get up without sound effects.
- My mind says I'm in my 20's. My body says "Yeah you wish."
- Each morning when I tie my shoes, I stop and wonder "what else can I do while I'm down here?"
- Oatmeal for dessert? Hmmmm?

I Hope you're smiling and learning it's ok to laugh, even at yourself. As we close out this crazy year, I leave you with the "Senility Prayer:"

God, Grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked; the good fortune to run into the ones I do like; and the eyesight to know the difference."

In Hope,
Marsha



Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams

Assoc. Conference Minister for Clergy and Authorized Ministry Concerns

mwilliams@uccny.org

Committee Reports

Worship & Music

November 5, 2020

Following devotions, prayer, consensus approval of minutes and budget review and approval, a discussion regarding Advent was held. Pastor Josh would like to do a sermon series and possibly "Advent in a bag." Jamey would like to decorate the altar with the donated items from the reverse Advent calendar.

Christmas Eve was also discussed with the possibility of pre-recorded readings and carols. In-person music might be Nick on cello, Laurie on organ/piano, Skip and possibly Leo on guitar. The number of congregants attending service could require the need for reservations, two services, etc. Pastor Josh may put together something for Blue Christmas and post it on our Facebook page during Advent.

Greeters/ushers will be needed for services and Christmas Eve. Communion will be different for in-person services. Rich will take care of putting up wreaths and banners. Worship/Music will decorate the tree this year. Advent candles readers were discussed as well.

The next meeting will be held December 2, 2020 at 7pm on Zoom.

Building and Grounds

November 14, 2020

October:

- 1] A new frame for the Secretary's office air conditioner was made and installed.
- 2] Batteries for the emergency lights were replaced.
- 3] The lawns were mowed.

November:

- 1] The sign in the front of the church was removed.
- 2] The fan in the annex women's room was repaired.
- 3] Mouse bait was replaced in the outside and inside mouse traps.
- 4] The rear annex entryway was power washed.
- 5] Car stops were moved to facilitate plowing.
- 6] Arrangements were made for the plowing of the parking lot and sidewalks.

Outreach Minutes

November 17, 2020

ZOOM MEETING

Members present: Sheila, Ginger, Jo, Dirk, Kim, and Wally

Minutes reviewed and approved. Community Suppers continue to be on hold, but options are being evaluated. Shepherd's Program continues as Jo and Margaret continue to send out cards and letters of hope. Personal visitations remain on hold also at this time.

"Open for Prayer" and Coffee Break is currently being maintained through our telephone calls until we can once again offer this service. This calling has become a valuable avenue for the committee to pass on important information as well as to inquire if members need additional help or services.

The November food pantry collection has been completed that was carried out over Nov. 14th - 18th with an unmanned donation box labeled with who is making the collection and to whom it will go. Outreach members collected the food which will be dropped off at the food pantry including what had been left at the church.

Reverse Advent will happen again! An announcement has been made in the Carillon as well as a church announcement verbally and in the bulletin. These contributions will also benefit the local food pantry. Any monetary donations will be used by the food pantry through "food link" to purchase additional supplies. Outreach committee members are willing to pick up weekly from those who are unable to bring the food to church. Jamey has volunteered to place the food around the altar so that everyone can see it growing.

Meeting was adjourned until January 12, 2021.
Respectfully submitted by Kim Common

Council Corner

November 19, 2020

Following Devotions and Celebrations and Concerns, the Consent Agenda was approved.

Pastor Josh shared possible logos for our church and shared about the upcoming Advent in a Bag. Bill Schaper welcomed Vanessa Adams and Dirk Norwich back to Council.

The Reopening Committee has recommended that in-person services stop after the Nov. 29th service due to an increase in local COVID cases. Church will be closed until further notice, but online live services will continue.

The LED sign is coming! Wetzel Hall flooring is also coming! Installation is scheduled for Dec. 14, 15 and a ½ day on the 16th. Christmas Memorial Blessings will be sent out next week. Over \$1400 was raised through Bill Schaper's stained glass fundraiser. Crosses are the only option still available for sale.

Bill Schaper was nominated to remain as Co-Chair of Council. Upon approval of the updated Moderator description this Sunday, Debi Lutz would be the second Co-Chair.

The Village of Arcade is asking to gain ownership of the sidewalk portion of the church property – we can either donate it or sell to them. Council will recommend that we donate this to the Village. It will go to congregational phone vote.

Upcoming meeting: December 17 at 6pm over Zoom.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL-BLESSINGS PROJECT

If you are interested in participating in the Christmas Memorial-Blessings Project, please fill out this form and return it to the church office at 297 Main St., PO Box 95, Arcade, NY by **December 15, 2020**. Please include your name and/or church offering envelope number.

Given by: _____
_____ In Memory of _____ \$ _____
_____ In Honor of _____ \$ _____
_____ For Blessings Received \$ _____

This year's Christmas Memorial-Blessings donations will be given to Crabb Oil to be used to assist those in need with their home heating bills, etc.

Please enclose payment with this form. Checks may be made payable to Arcade UCC. Thank you for taking part in this project. If you have any questions, please call the church office, (585) 492-4530.



The Carillon

The Carillon is being compiled, printed and mailed by a committee of three – Audrey Erick, Margaret Homan, Shannon King. Please continue to watch for the deadline date for your articles and reports and give them to any of the above members. We hope to produce a quality newsletter. Any suggestions are welcomed. The deadline for the February issue is January 18, 2021.

We welcome articles and written pieces from our congregation! For this reason, we need to add the disclaimer that the views written in the Carillon are not necessarily the views of the Arcade United Church of Christ, Congregational, but are those of the individuals who write the submissions.

The Carillon

Published 10 times per year by the United Church of Christ, Congregational, 297 Main St., PO Box 95, Arcade, NY 14009.

Office Phone: (585)492-4530
Office E-mail: uccarcade@gmail.com
Website: www.arcadeucc.com

.....
United Church of Christ, Congregational
297 Main St., PO Box 95
Arcade, NY 14009