



December 20, 2020 - 10:00 am Live Stream Only

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL

217 E. Liberty St. Medina, Ohio 44256 330-725-4559

www.uccmedina.org Email: office@uccmedina.org

LIVE STREAMING OF THE SANCTUARY SERVICE IS AVAILABLE AT UCCMEDINA.ORG

“WELCOMING, LOVING, SERVING, WHERE GOD HAS NO LIMITS”

RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELL

PRELUDE “O Come, Little Children” – arr. Heather Sorenson

Cathy Fafrak, Organist

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE PEACE

VISIONING PRAYER

by Sharon Alberson

God, help us to be welcoming. God, help us to be loving.

God, help us to see that serving you can lead us to

A place full of grace with no limits where we can be free...

To open our hands, welcoming. To open our hearts, loving.

To be more than church on Sunday, to live in the light from above;

To celebrate in service and love.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH: The Candle of Love

Leader: Dear God, as our Advent pilgrimage draws to completion,

People: grant us the courage to share your love.

Leader: Love for the unexpected challenge,

People: Love for the vulnerable one.

Leader: Love for your creation

Help us as we strive to do all things in love (*Candle of Love is lit*)

You who are love,

People: We can't wait until you establish your beloved community,

Leader: Where love reigns in and through all people.

People: Thanks be to you our God, our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

Medina United Church of Christ presents
Christmas Letters

Opening Scene - Presentation of the Christmas Letters

Mother: Maggie Bixler, Children: Colin and Grant Bixler

Piano Solo: Ruby Gabrielsen *"Deck the Halls"*

Scene 1 - Letter to Joseph

Child 1: Sammy Ockunzzi, Joseph: Price Bilikam

Violin Solo: Laura Medley *"God Rest Ye Merry Gentleman"*

Scene 2 - Letter to Mary

Child 2: Olivia Miller, Mary: Ruby Gabrielsen

Piano Solo: Maggie Bixler *"O Come, All Ye Faithful"*

Scene 3 - Letter to the Inn Keeper

Child 3: Laura Medley, Inn Keeper: Nora Nolan

Violin: Laura Medley, Piano: Leah Medley *"O Holy Night"*

Scene 4 - Letter to the Shepherds

Child 4: Addisyn Miller, Shepherds: Eve and Sam Lindon

Solo: Katherine Johns *"I Wonder as I Wander"*

Scene 5 - Letter to the Angel

Child 5: Josie Bilikam, Angel: Leah Medley

Piano Solo: Grant Bixler *"Joy to the World"*

Scene 6 - Letter to Baby Jesus

Child 6: Katherine Johns

Duet: Eve and Sam Linton "Deck the Halls"

Luke Linton on the Ukulele

Closing Scene - Letter to the Congregation

Child 8: Hayden Pettit

Piano Solo: Leah Manners "Jingle Bells"

Piano Solo: Colin Bixler "We Wish You a Merry Christmas"

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Thank you

Thank you to all the parents! You had a lot more to do than usual. Thank you for getting your children organized, recording their parts, and getting them to us. We could not have done this without your help and support.

Thank you to Pastor Luke for working your magic and putting all the videos together to bring the virtual performance of Christmas Letters to life.

And finally, a BIG thank you to all the youth who participated in "Christmas Letters". 2020 has brought some challenges for all of us, but I know that your presentation of "Christmas Letters" will bring joy to many.

This would not have been possible without your hard work and desire to spread some Christmas cheer.

God Bless You and Merry Christmas

Stacie Yates



OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

Offering Invitation

In this holy season, when the sun's light is swallowed up by the growing darkness of night, you renew your promise to reveal among us the splendor of your glory. May what we offer be light to reveal you to the nations. Thank you, Precious Lord, for all your gifts given to us. Let us sing of your goodness!

Doxology *(Thomas Ken, 1674; adapted)*

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ all creatures here below;
Praise Holy Spirit, Comforter: One God, triune, whom we adore. Amen.**

Prayer of Dedication

We give you thanks, Ancient of Days. For what you have gifted us with. For the gifts of our youth. For the proclamation of your good news. For this and more, we give you thanks and praise! Amen!

BENEDICTION

Leader: As God's Own, in your waiting clothe yourself with hope, joy, and love.

People: And the greatest of these is love!

Leader: For God so loved the world,

People: That God sent Jesus to us.

Leader: Not to destroy the world,

People: But to save it.

Leader: And should troubles visit and tempt you to despair,

People: remember the candle of love and it's message:

Leader: You are loved beyond your wildest imagination!

Go now blessed to be a blessing, for this service has ended.

People: And our service now begins! Amen!

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE "God Be with You"

**God be with you 'til we meet again; By His counsels guide uphold you;
With His sheep securely fold you; God be with you 'til we meet again.**

POSTLUDE

"We Three Kings"

Gathering Band

"MORE THAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY"

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PASTORAL STAFF

Rev. Luke Lindon, Senior Minister - email: luke@uccmedina.org
Karen Brocco-Kish, Visitation Pastor

OFFICE STAFF

Cindy Korecky, Office Manager - email: office@uccmedina.org
Kelly Charnley, Financial Manager - email: financial@uccmedina.org

PROGRAM STAFF

Stacie Yates, Director of Christian Education
Nicole Rubino, Co-Director of Youth
Jim Kiser, Director of Music
Cathy Fafrak, Organist
Rebecca Rosen, Nursery Supervisor
Jennifer Vilimonovic, Director of Hobby Horse Preschool
Laura Garcia, Assistant Director of Hobby Horse Preschool
Jack Sharpe, Maintenance
Jack Manhoff, Custodian

POINSETTIAS



NAME OF DONOR

*Bruce & Connie Anderson
Bruce & Connie Anderson
Bruce & Sally Bauer
Pete & Syd Benson
Mary Bessick
Karen Brocco-Kish*

*Don & Marilyn Canfield
Jan & Tad Coleman
Ken & Sue Dean
The Farnham Family*

The Farnham Family

*Mary Gresco
Virginia Hall
Craig & Beth Hari
Cheri & Arnold Ingraham
Cheri & Arnold Ingraham
Faye Jessie
The Johns Family
Jim Kiser
Frank Kish
Dick & Joyce Komjati
Alan Parkhurst
Alan Parkhurst
Lori Price
Dennis & Allayne Reese
Barb Rosen
Lou & Jane Schaefer
Bonnie Shuman
Elaine Taylor*

IN MEMORY OF

*My parents, Betty & Ken Canfield
Bea Anderson
Our parents
Our parents
Mr. & Mrs. Arthur R. Dunger
My parents, John & Eleanor Brocco
and Frank & Hallie Kish
Grandparents
Jack & Jean Post
George Dean
Our parents: Ruth & Robert Wright
Mary & Denver Farnham
Our sisters: Katherine Jensen,
Carolyn Riordan & Carol Buck.
My parents, Nelson & Mary Chesler
Walter Hall
Our parents
Berneta Ingraham
Bill & Carol Brenneman
Carl Jessie
Jerry Johns
Barb Kiser
Pastor Terrie Ellwitz
Our parents
My parents, Sandy & Howard Parkhurst
Paul & John Wilder
Loved ones
Parents
Keith Rosen
Our parents and sisters
Loved ones
Ray & Alberta Taylor*

NAME OF DONOR

*Becky Weber
Marlee Winters
Betty Zarney*

*Ken, Karen & Greg Zuehlke
The Zuehlke Family*

IN MEMORY OF

*Dave Weber
Family and friends
My husband, Elmer Zarney
and my parents Fred & Irene Hostetler
Our dads
Carol Brenneman*

NAME OF DONOR

*The Bilikam Family
Dick & Dorie Christy
Jan & Tad Coleman
The Johns Family
Jim Kiser*

*The Metzloff Family
Lorrie Storch
The Winkvist Family*

IN HONOR OF

*Our granddaughter, Danielle
Our children
Our friends and family
All the soloists that have contributed to
our virtual worship
Loved ones
My 2 granddaughters, Reagan & Sophia
Our parents*



THE PILGRIM MESSENGER

DECEMBER 20, 2020

**“WELCOMING, LOVING, SERVING, WHERE GOD HAS NO LIMITS.
MORE THAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY!”**

December 20, 2020 thru December 27, 2020
WEEK AT A GLANCE

Sun **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
10:00 am Children's Christmas Pageant
Live Stream Worship Only

Mon

Tues

Wed

Thurs **CHURCH OFFICE CLOSURES @ NOON**

Christmas Eve Worship

6:00 pm Carol & Candle service
in the parking lot

8:00 pm Christmas Eve Service
Online only

Fri **CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED**
Merry Christmas

Sat

Sun **10:00 am** Online worship only

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

6:00 pm We will have a parking lot Carols and Candle Lighting service, weather-permitting. We will gather in a socially distant fashion to pray and sing carols and light candles.

8:00 pm A live streamed, pre-recorded service featuring a message, music and scripture readings from members.

Worship Highlights: 10:00 am Live Stream Only

The Children's Christmas Program
"Christmas Letters"

Altar Flowers: Poinsettias

VETERANS OF THE CROSS

A light is surely coming! Please give generously this holiday season to **THE CHRISTMAS FUND FOR VETERANS OF THE CROSS**, the unique UCC Special Mission Offering, collected on Christmas Eve, which recognizes and honors our **beloved ministers and their spouses who dedicate their careers and so much of their lives to the church.** For over a century, these offerings have been a tangible expression of God's love and light in the world. Year after year, United Church of Christ members and congregations have reached out in kindness, compassion, and gratitude to those who have faithfully shepherded our Church in the past and who now find themselves facing unexpected financial needs. This ministry cares for the active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ. Your gift will also provide for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants and Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks next December to lower-income retirees.

UPPER ROOMS AVAILABLE

New Upper Room daily devotionals for January/February are in! Pick up a regular or large print format on the table in the Welcome Area.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

Thank you to the 119 people who have already turned in their pledge cards for 2021! **In order to best forecast 2021 budgets the church is still in need of your 2021 Stewardship Card.** Blank cards are available on the table in the Welcome Area or on the website. Click on "Give Online Here" and download your own copy.

SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE JANUARY 3, 2021

Live streamed service at 10:00 am

On January 3rd we will remember those persons who have passed away this year. During the worship service, the names of the members of Medina UCC who have passed away during 2020 will be read. For each member a candle will be lit and a chime will ring. We would also like to read the names of family members and loved ones who have passed away during this past year.

If you have a loved one that you would like remembered, please call the Church Office no later than December 28th with the full name of the loved one, their relationship to you, and the date of their passing.

ALTAR FLOWERS

The 2021 Flower Chart is now hanging in the East Room Hallway. Please sign up to sponsor the Altar Flowers. This is a wonderful way to honor or remember someone, or to celebrate a special occasion.

Please fill in your name and **write "Church" or "Self"** to let us know if you would like the church to order the flowers for you or if you will be ordering them yourself. The cost of the flowers ordered through the church office is \$22.50.

Also, please write what you would like printed in the Messenger and if you want to claim your flowers after the 10:30 service.

ADVENT FOOD DONATION FOR CLAGGETT MIDDLE SCHOOL

As we prepare our hearts and minds for this year's Advent season, **the Mission Team has a "giving" mission to put before our congregation.** We would like to focus on the most vulnerable in our community, the children. The children in elementary school receive weekend food bags. Until recently there were no supplemental foods available for children once they moved out of the elementary schools. There is a food pantry at Claggett and the students can take items from the pantry as they need them. Together with the counselor at Claggett, we have compiled a list of their needs. A copy of this list (in the form of a Reverse Advent Calendar) was included in a mailing that you received from the church as well as on our website and facebook page. You may also email the church office for a copy or stop in the welcome area and pick one up. **Deadline for collection is Thursday, December 31st.**

It is our hope to help stock their shelves by filling boxes with food items they can use. If you are only able to "give" a few items, that would be wonderful too. Boxes (or bags) can be dropped off in the church welcoming area and we will deliver them to the school when they resume classes after the first of the year.

PILGRIM MESSENGER MAILING

We will not be mailing
the Pilgrim Messenger
between Christmas and New Year's
on December 24th or 31st
We will resume mailing again on
Thursday, January 6, 2019

MISSION TEAM DONATIONS UPDATE

At their December 6th meeting, the Mission Team addressed the disbursement of their funds for 2020 year end. The following decisions were made:

- \$1,000 to an elderly woman who needs assistance with a sewer issue
- \$300 to a mother undergoing chemo with who needs help with Christmas for her four children
- \$1,200 for lunches for the staffs of Elmcroft, Medina Meadows and the Inn at Coalridge in recognition of their care for their residents
- \$500 each to Medina Light Ministries, Battered Women's Shelter, Children's Care Center, Operation Homes, Project Learn, Cups Café, Feeding Medina County and Birthcare of Medina in view of their ongoing need.

Thanks to everyone for their support of our mission projects. The response to filling the pantry of Claggett School has been wonderful. More on that later and also two new initiatives that we will be taking on and requesting your support for in the new year.

SENIOR ADULTS IN ACTION SPOTLIGHT

by Jackie Smith

Are you feeling lonely or isolated? Circle of Caring would like to help. You may not be able to gather together with others in-person, but you can always connect by telephone. Circle of Caring introduces the **Senior Adult to Senior Adult Phone Call Friendship Ministry**.

Before Covid-19, whether you attended service in-person, or Live-streamed church services, you probably know many others who attended church services. Circle of Caring invites you to reach out to people you know from church, and call friends or neighbors you haven't talked to in a while. **Need church membership phone numbers?** They're in the Church Directory, or call the church at 330-725-4559, or email the church office at office@uccmedina.org.

When making phone calls...find things to talk about. Questions to ask could be:

1. What books are you reading? Have you read a really good book that made you laugh? If they don't enjoy reading, ask about their hobbies.
2. What have you been watching on TV? Do you have a favorite TV series you've seen every episode of? Have you been watching classic movies, or binge-watching movies?
3. What kinds of food have you been eating? Have you tried any new foods recently?
4. Are you doing any kind of holiday baking? Do you have a special cookie recipe that your grandmother made? Have a special dish that is part of your holiday traditions?
5. What is your preferred music genre? What is your favorite music station? Do you have a favorite band or artist?
6. Are you an avid online shopper or do you prefer to visit stores in person?

Due to Covid-19, many may be lonelier than normal. This holiday season will be unlike any we have had. Senior Adult to Senior Adult Phone Call Friendship Ministry will make it memorable. Please help take the edge off isolation. Be a phone friend to others.

GOSPEL GALLEY

by Vicki Miller

On Aug 8th, 2017 I received the following invite from Dave Weber: *"We invite you to participate in the renewal work of our Medina UCC 'Galilee Gospel Galley' team! As a fellow oars-person, we ask you share a periodic meditation to be printed in the weekly Sunday Galilee Gospel Galley bulletins. This is an opportunity to keep our Medina UCC Galley moving forward in prayerful meditation of our faith. We ask that you write a meditation growing out of your own life experiences, observations, scriptural study, interpersonal conversations or just plain lazy day musings. Once we get really rowing, we'll put out an invitation to anyone who would like to grab an oar to move Galilee Gospel Galley forward."* Writing my "lazy day musings" over the past 3 years has been a wonderful experience for me. I hope you have enjoyed reading the meditations from all of the "oars-persons" as much as we have enjoyed writing them. Merry Christmas and a (much improved) New Year to all.

The deadline for submission of articles for NEXT Sunday's *Messenger* is this Sunday at 11:30 am

Please submit articles to the church office at office@uccmedina.org

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm MONDAY THRU FRIDAY

Luke 1:26-38

Birth of a Promise

Today is the fourth Sunday of Advent, the season of watchful waiting for the coming of the Christ Child. If you have practiced a ritual of lighting Advent candles, either in community or in your own home, then this Sunday you will light all four candles. As we do, we celebrate and acknowledge the gifts of this season - Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we are also invited to receive the Christmas Fund Offering. As the promise of God's light and presence shines through the advent candles, we can bring hope, peace, joy, and love to those we honor with our special offering. Soon it will be time to put the advent wreath away for another year. But through your gift to the Christmas Fund Offering, you can keep hope, peace, joy, and love alive all year long for those who have served the church.

The Christmas Fund funds four programs: Christmas Thank You Checks, Pension Supplementation, Health Benefits, and Emergency Grants.

Christmas Thank You Checks are for retired United Church of Christ clergy and lay employees. Retirees with limited financial resources receive a gift at Christmas time as a way of saying "thank you" for years of service to the UCC. Last year, more than a quarter million dollars was given to 521 individuals, and the number of those helped increases every year.

Pension Supplementation is for lower-income retired United Church of Christ clergy and lay employees. These are monthly payments designed to bring household incomes up to a basic level to be able to afford basic needs like food, utilities, and medical expenses.

Health Benefits supplementation is for lower-income retired UCC clergy and lay employees who may receive assistance in paying Medicare premiums.

Emergency Grants are for currently active or retired clergy or lay employees who are facing unforeseen circumstances that create financial need.

Give to the Christmas Fund at: <https://www.pbucc.org/index.php/christmas-fund-home>.