

December 2019 Newsletter

Come join us for Worship on Sunday mornings at 9 am and Wednesdays at 5:30 pm;
510 E. Broadway Ave, Medford, WI 54451
To contact Pastor Mary Jo Laabs, call: 715-351-0450 (cell phone); 715-748-3391 (church office)
Church website: www.uccmedford.org
believe417@gmail.com or cuccofmedford@gmail.com

Dear friends,

The new Church Year has begun. We will once again hear the stories in the life of Jesus, beginning with the celebration of his birth, as recorded in the gospel of Luke 2:1-20. The traditions of Christmas surround us in the church and in our homes and in our communities.

Without letting go of memories of Christmases past, I encourage you to consider a different kind of gift-giving this year. Imagine ways to give the gift of hope, the gift of time, the gift of peace, the gift of joy, the gift of love...the gifts that WILL keep on giving and will not wear out or be forgotten or broken. These are the gifts that may be *returned* in more ways than you can imagine!

The birth of Jesus is a miraculous story of the eternal God being born into this world in a small, rugged stable. The story that we learned when we were very young was that there were angel choirs and shepherds gathered around and that wise men came from far away to give him gifts and to worship him. As Christians, we have come to know that the message of Christmas is much more than the pretty little scene that each crèche portrays. It is more than the "Christmas" of presents, decorations, Santa Claus, cookies and fudge. The spirit of Christmas that we need to be displaying is that which opens our eyes to smallness, humility and servanthood.



Let us consider being the ones who squeeze into the small places in the lives of those around us who have great need. Let the Babe of Bethlehem, Jesus Christ, be known to those who least expect it this year!

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." ~ Isaiah 9:6

-Come join your church family in the activities of our Church:

***Worship on Sundays** at 9am; we share the Sacrament of Holy Communion, the first Sunday each month. Our practice of "Open Communion" welcomes all people of faith to Christ's table. During this season of Advent, each Sunday Worship and Christmas Eve Worship will include lighting the candles on the Advent Wreath.

* **Christmas Eve Choir** is rehearsing Sundays at 10:30-11:30 (until Dec. 22)
Come, join us!

***Sunday School Christmas Program**, December 15th. All children are welcome!
(Rehearsal will be held on December 8th during worship/Sunday School time.)

*There will be **no Sunday School on December 22**

***Worship on Wednesdays at 5:30 pm**

***Decking the Halls (and supper) on December 4th following Worship**

***Angel Tree** gifts are "due" in the Church Office by Dec. 15th. If you have taken a "stocking" tag. Money that is to be used for buying gifts, placed in a red stocking, is due by Dec. 9th

Merry Christmas and a healthy new year to you! God bless us everyone, whether distant or near. May we have every reason to give thanks and to say that this is our merriest Christmas ever!

Pastor Mary Jo

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES (November)

OPENING Randi H. called the meeting to order at 4:59 p.m. and Pastor Mary Jo read a prayer of guidance.

PRESENT Randi H., Mike G.-P., Jerry G.-P., Pastor Mary Jo., Scott K., Mark J, Pam O., Joyce P.

ABSENT Gloria C., Anna G.

GUEST: Dan H.

CONSENT AGENDA

SECRETARY'S REPORT The minutes from the October 2019 meeting were emailed prior to the meeting for preview per the Consent Agenda method. Jerry G.-P. made a motion to accept the minutes. Gail P. seconded the motion. Motion passed without discussion.

TREASURER'S REPORT The October 2019 Treasurer's Reports were emailed prior to the meeting for preview per the Consent Agenda method Joyce P. made motion to accept the minutes.

Mark J. seconded the motion. Motion passed without discussion.

PASTOR'S REPORT The October Pastor's Reports were distributed to the Council Members for review. Pam O. made a motion to accept the report. Jerry G.-P. seconded the motion. Motion passed without discussion.

GROUP AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Had a meeting to look at things down the road. Dan H. distributed the list, which included:

Parsonage window installation and labor	\$ 12,255.30
Parsonage door installation and labor (front, upstairs, back)	\$ 5,759.93
Parsonage garage floor new slab	\$ 8,200.00
Parsonage furnace and A/C	\$ 9,700.00
Parsonage upstairs flooring	\$ 3,200.00
Motion light for back of house	\$ <100

Council discussed the option of selling the parsonage rather than putting more money into the house. And decided that the issue of selling or fixing should be up for vote at the annual meeting. Jerry G.-P will research options for motion light.

FIVE PRACTICES

A series of letters to the congregation prior to the 2020 Giving Drive starting in January.

Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 26 2019 at 8 am at Uncommon Ground.

CHRISTIAN ED

Anna G. will be presenting ideas for a Sunday School Christmas program and participation in the Christmas Eve service

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NEW BUSINESS

Joyce P. attended the UCC in Owen and shared her experience – the service was wonderful, but it is obvious that the church doesn't "want" – they really "need." Joyce asked us to understand how blessed we are here at CUCC.

Randi H. brought up the fact that the expenses are not allocated correctly between operations and maintenance. The 2020 Budget does not include property maintenance expenses. Based on the 2019 expenses we need to increase our 2020 budget by \$3,200 for miscellaneous property expenses.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, December 12, 2019 at 5pm.

CLOSED SESSION After reciting the Lord's Prayer, the Council members went into Closed Session.

ADJOURNMENT Gail P. made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Scott K. seconded the motion Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

The Goal to Increase the Number of 5 for 5 Congregations in the Northwest Association

5 for 5

Supporting OCWM and the Special Mission offerings listed below is how a local church becomes "Five for Five."

1. Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)

OCWM funds the work the UCC does in its Associations and Conferences, and in the national and global church. Funds are invested in programs, resources, and tools needed to keep local UCC churches strong, effective, and growing.

Special Mission Offerings

2. One Great Hour of Sharing

Contributing to OGHS makes us partners funding health, educational and agricultural development, providing emergency relief, sustaining refugee ministries, as well as enabling the response to disasters, both here at home and around the world.

3. Strengthen the Church

Through our contributions to Strengthen the Church, we provide aid for church growth, the development of both pastoral and lay leadership, as well as youth and young adult ministries, so that the church might continue far into the future with new and strong leadership.

4. Neighbors in Need

Jesus commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves, and the Neighbors in Need collection is one major way in which we live out that commandment. The Neighbors in Need offering supports Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM), as well as justice initiatives, various advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

5. The Christmas Fund

This offering provides direct financial help to both retired and active authorized ministers, lay employees, and surviving spouses in our denomination. This offering provides help by supplementing health and pension premiums, emergency assistance, and even thank-you checks at Christmas.

Requirements to be 5 for 5

ONE: contributions must be made to all five of the above

TWO: contributions to Our Church's Wider Mission must be within calendar year plus a two week leeway into the next year--that is, between Jan. 1 and Dec 31 plus the first two weeks of the next January.

THREE: contributions must be around 85 to 88% of goal that church commits to, in response to a letter or email asking for that goal. If church doesn't set a goal, a goal will be set for it, which will usually be the amount that the church gave the previous year.

The above information along with our prayers and encouragement given by the DMCW

CANDLELIGHT MEETING MINUTES

The Candlelight Guild would like to thank everyone who helped in the Annual Holiday Fair. The vendors for joining us, the shoppers, the bakers, the workers and the 5 practices group for making the chili lunch. We all agreed it continues to be a fun event! Thank you all!

The Giving and Red Stocking tree are set up in fellowship hall. If you would like to select and shop for a child from the giving tree, please have your unwrapped gifts to the church by Sunday, December 15th. If you would like us to shop for you, please use the Red Stocking and give any monetary amount to Susie by December 8th and we will use that money for the purchase of gifts from the Giving Tree.

We will deliver gifts to the Octogenarian members and friends on December 12th

Please join us on Wednesday, December 4th following 6 pm Worship to decorate the sanctuary for the Christmas season. We will provide you with a light meal following the decorating. Please come and join us for decorating, food and fellowship.

For the CG, Dawn



Time-Sensitive Opportunity for Church Members to Make a Gift to Your Congregation

Pastors and church leaders: IRA Charitable Rollovers (or Qualified Charitable Distributions) enable people 70½ or older with a traditional IRA to give up to \$100,000 per year tax-free to charitable organizations.

Please share the attached handout on making an IRA Charitable Rollover with people in your congregation, before **December 31st**.

You may want to include the name of your congregation, the address, and EIN when reprinting this handout in your church bulletin, next print newsletter, or email communication. The Wisconsin Conference produced this resource to help strengthen stewardship in our congregations.

Please contact [Rev. Andrew Warner](#), Director of Development, with questions or to learn more about other planned giving opportunities for your congregation.

[IRA Charitable Rollovers Handout \(Word\)](#)

[IRA Charitable Rollovers Handout \(PDF\)](#)

CHTISTMAS FUND, one of the “5 for 5”

Our joy at Christmas is a response to God's promise of new life through the birth of Jesus. It is a joy we are called to share widely, through our witness and gifts, both to loved ones and to distant neighbors.

"It wasn't easy picking up the telephone to share with you my present situation. In fact, it was one of the most humiliating experiences of my life although it reminded me that grace still happens. Sometimes we as clergy persons lose sight of God's grace when the negative stuff comes into our lives."

"...thanks so much for sharing your time and ministry with me. Your most gracious gift is appreciated more than words can say as I continue to live in the 'meantime.'"

These eloquent words are from a pastor who is the recipient of the caring and concern of those who contribute to the Christmas Fund Offering.

You have the opportunity to be a part of this ministry that cares for the active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ through your participation in this year's Christmas Fund Offering.

Your gift to the Christmas Fund will not only assist pastors like the one above, but 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.

Your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low-income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. This is your opportunity to participate in God's promise of renewal by enabling this ministry of compassion and care.

To facilitate your giving, you may use the PayPal system utilizing the link in the left hand column or mail a check directly to the address provided in the left column. However you choose to provide your gift, please know that it is truly appreciated and that it will brighten the life of one of God's servants who is facing a moment of personal need.

[Click here to view the Special Missions Offering video](#)

Newsfeeds

United Church News

<http://feeds.feedburner.com/UnitedChurchOfChrist>

Disaster Updates

<http://feeds.feedburner.com/disasterupdates>

Global Ministries News

<http://feeds.feedburner.com/globalministries>

Daily Bible Readings and Daily Devotional

<http://feeds.feedburner.com/uccdailydevotional>

A Prayer for Christmas Eve

One candle is but a flicker,
but together, we create a bright flame
of Christ's light in the world.

Consider the beauty of our lights shining
together.

Jesus is the light of the world!
Jesus is the hope of all our tomorrows!

May we be witnesses of the light Christ brings,
Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION OUTREACH:

If you are unable to partake in Holy Communion during our regular worship service and would like to receive it in your home, hospital, etc., please contact either the Pastor directly at 715-351-0450 or call the church office at 715-748-3391

HOSPITALIZED? PLEASE LET US KNOW.

If you or someone in your family is hospitalized and would like Pastor to visit at Marshfield Medical Center (formerly St. Joseph's) Marshfield, Aspirus Wausau, St Clare's Weston or Medford Hospital, please call Pastor Mary Jo, 715-351-0450 or Church office at 715-748-3391.

LATEST UCC NEWS

[Conference Minister has lived with debt, is 'thrilled to be part of a solution'](#)

November 12, 2019 at 12:00 AM

[Colorado church gives away piece of its campus for low-income housing units](#)

November 11, 2019 at 5:00 AM

Christmas Shopping?
Why not use SCRIP?

SCRIP cards make nice gifts.



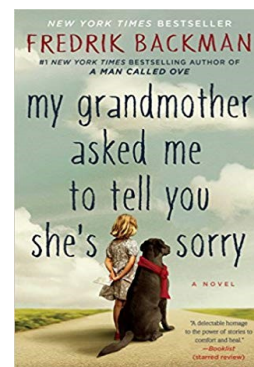
Our Church gets a percentage of the cost of each SCRIP card purchased.

Stop in the Church office or buy SCRIP on Sundays. The SCRIP "volunteer" will be happy to special order other SCRIP. Arby's, Maurice's, Foreman's, Old Navy, Kohl's, Buffalo Wild Wings, Barnes and Noble, BP, Walgreens, Aldi's, Famous Footwear, Best Buy, Burger King, Bed, Bath and Beyond, ULTA, Target, TJ Maxx, Taco Bell, KWIK TRIP, Subway, Hardees, Ace Hardware, Applebee's and more.

PAGE TURNERS

Our next book is "*My Grandmother Asked Me To Tell You She's Sorry*," by Fredrick Batman.

Meeting on December 19, 2019 at 6:00 pm at Pastor's home. Please click on book below to get audio version.



Dear friends, OUR Mission Statement:

As an open-minded and inclusive community of faith, Community United Church of Christ, Medford, WI, welcomes everyone as Jesus would.

MISSION STATEMENT

We are the church – an open and affirming community in which diversity is celebrated as an asset and fully embraced into our life, leadership, ministry, community, worship, rites, sacraments, responsibilities, and blessings without qualification or discrimination because of ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, or sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. It is our mission to serve, to pray, to love, and to hold true to these words:

“No matter who you are and where you are on your life's journey, you are welcome here.”

LET US PRAY...

For those with health concerns: friends and family; those anticipating medical testing; those at home recovering from surgery; those traveling; those serving our country here and abroad; leaders of our communities; our President, Medford faith communities, those who lives have been affected by fires, flood and hurricanes; those who have been separated from us by distance or difference of opinion.; those who are grieving the loss of loved ones.

Lay Academy

Lay Academy is a ministry of the Wisconsin Conference that engages lay people in spiritual growth and development through theological education. Anyone who longs to grow in faith, discover new ways to serve God and their community, and deepen their knowledge of Christian tradition, ministry, and mission is welcome.

Please click on links below for more information

<https://www.wcucc.org/programs-education/lay-academy/>

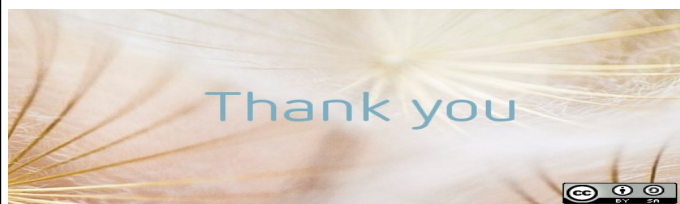
The Spark: A Lay Academy Witness by Ruth Schmidt

<https://www.wcucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/spark-article-ruth-schmidt-2.pdf>

DECEMBER NEWSLETTERS AND BULLETINS

Bulletins given by: Mike and Jerry in honor of all the people we love.

Newsletter given by: Mike and Jerry in memory of all we have lost and still miss.



COUNCIL MEMBERS:

If any questions should ever arise, please feel free to contact any of our Council members.

President- Randi Hirt (2021)

Vice President- Joyce Peterson (2021)

Recording Secretary- Pam Ouimette (2020)

Financial Sec.- Jerry Goen-Penney (2020)

Treasurer- Scott Knoff (2022)

Gloria Christensen (2022)

Mark Jensen (2022)

Gail Paulson (2020)

Anna Grube (2021)



DIGITAL NEWSLETTER:

You can receive this newsletter by email. If you would like to try the digital option, send an email to: cuccofmedford@gmail.com and ask to be added to the email newsletter list

NOVEMBER FINANCES:

As of 11-29-2019

Income \$ 4,787.50

Expenses \$ 4,242.69

December 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 AA 7pm Worship and Communion 9am X-mas Eve choir 10:30	2 Mike 9-1	3 Mike 9-1 AA/Alanon 7pm	4 Mike 1-4 Conf. 3:30 Wednesday worship 5:30 pm Tree decorating after worship. Light dinner served	5 Mike 9-1 AA 7pm Community mission with Jesus at 11:00 at our church	6 NA 7pm	7
8 AA 7pm Worship, 9am Sunday school X-mas Eve choir 10:30	9 Mike 9-1	10 Mike 9-1 AA/Alanon 7pm	11 Mike 9-1 Wednesday worship 5:30 Bible study 6pm	12 Mike 9-1 AA 7pm Council 5:00	13 NA 7pm	14
15 AA 7pm Worship 9am X-mas Eve choir 10:30	16 Mike 9-1	17 Mike 9-1 AA/Alanon 7pm	18 Mike 9-1 Conf. 3:30 Wednesday worship 5:30	19 Mike 9-1 Page turners 6:00 AA 7pm	20 NA 7pm	21
22 AA 7pm Worship 9am X-mas Eve choir 10:30	23 Mike 9-1	24 Mike 9-1 Christmas Eve Candlelight worship 5:00	25 Merry Christmas	26 Mike 9-1 AA 7pm	27 NA 7pm	28 Ruby's pantry
29 AA 7pm Worship 9am	30 Mike 9-1	31 Mike 9-1 AA/Alanon 7pm				

Community United Church of Christ

510 E. Broadway Avenue

Medford, Wisconsin 54451



Open and Affirming

“No matter who you are and
where you are on your life’s
journey, you are welcome here.”

Worship:

**9 am each Sunday
and Wednesday at 530 pm**

*** Holy**

**Communion:
the first Sunday
and first Wednesday**

**Sunday School:
(2nd and 4th Sundays)**