

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST EAST GOSHEN

1201 North Chester Road, West Chester, PA 19380

An Open and Affirming Congregation

All are Welcome!

ADVENT 2018 NEWSLETTER



REV. ANGELEE BENNER-SMITH, PASTOR

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A Christmas Reflection

ALL YOU MERRY PEOPLE, RECEIVE COMFORT AND JOY!!

The Carol “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, sometimes called, *Tidings of Comfort and Joy*, or *God Rest You Merry People All*,” was written in the 16th century. We have heard it over the years with Bing Crosby singing it in his Christmas special, Charles Dicken’s *A Christmas Carol*, and even one of my favorites, *Seinfeld*, the comedy TV show, used it as a way to teach the cast how to sing carols the proper way, stopping for emphasis at various words. Like MERRY! But it is the refrain which draws me in. The refrain is such good news: “O TIDINGS OF COMFORT AND JOY!!!” The carol tells the amazing story of God’s love, “remember Christ the savior was born, From God a blessed angel came..., To save us...” The shepherds made haste to travel, leaving their sheep, and battling through the storm and wind to see the child in Bethlehem.

But the refrain is the call which keeps us going as we retell the story year after year, preparing, anticipating, longing, not giving up or not stopping before we get to Bethlehem and peak into the manger and see God on earth!. When we arrive at the manger the gift of hope which will keep us coming back, is Comfort and Joy!!!!

As I ponder the words Comfort and Joy, I feel my deep longing and need, my sometimes desperate hope, clinging to this dream of Comfort and Joy to be real!!!

This carol, like most all of the familiar ones we sing, talks about the intangible, free gifts of Christmas: joy, love, peace, hope, silence, stillness, dreams, comfort. And once again we are reminded to not postpone joy, comfort, peace, hope, but allow them to be the light and leading around us.

I know I need comfort, I need to be loved, experience peace, feel another's physical hug and touch. I need to know forgiveness from others and from God when I have let them down. I need to know that the blood-pressure-raising anger, jealousy, and bias I feel in the world, will not be the final word. I need to know I am not alone in my struggles of physical pain and depression. I long to know my name, my human life, my dreams and hopes, all matter in the greater plan. I ache to know even though I am only one, God came as a child with all His love, humanity, and divinity, and told me, "Come over here Angelee, peek inside the manger, this baby is for you!!!"

The good news of Comfort is such hope to claim! And Joy, what can I say? When our granddaughters, both in the kitchen trying to show "Oma" how they can dance and do somersaults, and when they fall atop of each other because the space they have chosen to use is way too small, their laughter is contagious and fills the space and I breath it in like air. I know God sent me this gift of Joy!

Now is the time to allow God's hand, heart, and child – Jesus - to comfort you, hug you in the fiercest body hug, and just sit and be. This is the time to go looking for the joy, wherever you experience it, and laugh with a belly laugh, maybe even making another laugh in the same space.

Luke 2:10: "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

May Comfort and Joy surprise you this season!!!



Pastor Angelee

We journey together toward the
bright morning Star, the Prince of
Peace, Emmanuel God with us.



OUR CHRISTMAS / ADVENT CALENDAR

December 1

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| Saturday | 12:00 PM | Women's Group Lunch and gift exchange at Arianna's Café, Cambridge Square, West Chester. |
| | 5:30 PM | Evening Worship - Roots & Roofs Celebrating World AIDS Day Progress |

December 2

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| Sunday | | <u>FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT</u>
Congregational Hanging of the Greens, Communion shared. |
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10:00 AM

December 5

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| Wednesday | 7:00 | Choir Rehearsal |
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December 6

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| Thursday | By 10 AM | Cook and Deliver meal to Salvation Army |
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December 7

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| Friday | 12:00 PM | Lunch Bunch at Gramm's, WC |
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December 8

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| Saturday | 5:30 PM | Evening Worship – Roots & Roofs
<i>Expecting New Life: Waiting for the Messiah</i> |
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December 9

- | | | |
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| Sunday | 10:00 AM | <u>SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT</u>
Worship Service
Choir Cantata – <i>Five Carols for the Eve of Christ</i> |
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December 11		
Tuesday	8:30-10:00 AM	West Chester Senior Center breakfast for everyone. Cost is \$4.50. Bring a small gift to give to exchange.
	4:30-5:30PM	Confirmation Class Meets
December 12		
Wednesday	7:00 PM	Choir Rehearsal
December 13		
Thursday	6-8 PM	Salvation Army Bell Ringing at Boscov's, Exton Mall
December 14		
Friday	7:00 PM	Blue Christmas Service <i>Finding Hope for those feeling sadness this season.</i>
December 15		
Saturday	5:30 PM	Evening Worship – Roots & Roofs <i>Expecting New Life: Waiting for the Messiah</i>
December 16		<u>THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT</u>
Sunday	10:00 AM	Family Worship , <i>Special Music: 4 Hand Piano</i>
December 17		
Monday	7:00 PM	Council Meeting
December 18		
Tuesday	6:30 PM	Dinner for Caroline Dunleavy
December 18		
Wednesday	7:00 PM	Bells/Choir practice
December 22		
Saturday	3:30 PM	Confirmation Cookie Making
	5:30-7PM	Evening of Christmas Caroling; meet at church at 5 PM and visit

those who most need to be blessed by joy this Christmas Season.

December 23

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday	10:00 AM	Worship—Preparing for Christ’s Birth Christmas Fund Collection
December 24 Monday	7:00 PM	Candlelight Worship Service Festive Music, Fellowship and Refreshment follows. Please bring a plate of goodies to share.
December 25 Tuesday		Happy Christmas!! A Peaceful & Safe Christmas to All!!
December 29 Saturday	5:30 PM	Roots & Roofs Evening Worship: a <i>musical celebration of the Christmas Season</i>
December 30 Sunday	10:00 AM	Worship Service with Lessons & Carols. Caroline’s last Sunday with us.
January 5 Saturday	5:30 PM	Evening Worship Roots & Roofs
January 6 Sunday	10:00 AM	Worship and Communion shared. Epiphany Sunday – Children share “Epiphany Around the Globe”

January 27, 2019 – Congregational Meeting

Please mark your calendars for our UCCEG Congregational meeting. We will receive Committee Reports and vote on our 2019 Budget.

Roots and Roofs Worship



Saturday at 5:30 PM

World AIDS Day: Celebrating our Progress. Grappling With Hope.

Potluck theme is: Celebratory Food!!

Stay after and help us decorate our tree!!

Upcoming is our two-part series for Advent:

Expecting New Life: Waiting For The

Messiah - We will explore the New Life that

Advent waits for, the New Life that Christmas brings and the Eternal Life that Easter promises.

Café Script ~ Tuesday Mornings in the New Year!

The Pastor's Bible discussion group will meet Tuesday mornings in January. We are taking December off!



Christmas Outreach



We will again be collecting cash donations toward the purchase of gift cards to Giant for the **Bridge of Hope** which supports single mothers and their children in danger of homelessness. Please consider giving what you can to this worthy cause. Please place your donation in the

Offering plate with the notation "Bridge of Hope". The Women's Group will purchase the gift cards. Please see Bonnie Yost if you have any questions. Donations are needed by December 2

An Opportunity for Service – Provide a Ride

Dear friends and members, can you volunteer to be on our list for every 6 weeks picking up a member and their family who live in Coatesville and wants to attend Sunday 10AM Worship. Please let Pastor Angelee know! ☺

Join the Bell Ringing on 12/13, 6-8pm, at Boscov's in Exton.

Our UCC East Goshen church members can help the Salvation Army by ringing the familiar Red Bell, and collecting funds for the needy during the holidays. Open



to everyone. If you can help, please let Bunny Watts (our leader for the evening) know you can be there!

Christmas Poinsettias



These symbols of the Christmas Season beautify our sanctuary every year. Order forms are in the Narthex on which to write your dedications and a box for your orders and payment (checks made out to the church preferred). The plants will be placed in the Sanctuary on December 16. You may pick them up after the service on December 23 or leave them for our Christmas Eve service. Please indicate on the order form if you want to donate your poinsettia to a shut-in or other friend of the church who needs cheering! See Carol Swingle for questions. All orders are needed by December 10.

Saying Thank You!

By now you may have heard that Caroline Dunleavy will leave our church as our organist and Director of Music Ministry, after many years of wonderful music leadership. She is moving out of the area and her last Sunday at UCCEG will be on December 30. On Tuesday, December 18, all members and friends are invited to share dinner with conversation and memories, thanking Caroline Dunleavy for her many years of wonderful music and faith shared with UCC East Goshen. Please sign up in the narthex **by December 9** to attend. Dinner will be held at Bunha Faun in Malvern (www.bunhafaun.net) at \$32/per person. Please contact Beth Saylor (bethwsaylor@gmail.com) with questions.



Cantata – Next Sunday – December 9



Bring a friend next Sunday and share the season in music. Our adult Choir will share *Five Carols for the Eve of Christ*, A Cantata by McDonald, during our 10 AM service. Plan to stay for a special fellowship time.

Christmas Fund Collection – December 16

All funds collected go to help retired clergy who, during their pastorates had little or no pension and now find themselves and their spouses in need of resources for housing and medical expenses. Please return your special appeal envelope by the end of the year. Envelopes will be in Bulletins on December 17.



Blue Christmas Worship – December 14

In this season of joy and celebration, remembrance of losses and sadness of change easily pulls us down and we can become “blue.” Please join Pastor

Angelee for a service of remembrance and hope at 7:00 PM, Friday, December 14 in our sanctuary. We will lift up the empty places and those who have died, as we hear scripture, light candles and share prayer. A time of refreshments will follow. Do you know someone who might feel supported by this service?

Advent Table: This year our Advent devotionals, “Come Lord Jesus” are available as well as other resources to read and share on your Advent Journey.

thank you

Thank You! Thank you, to all of you who made the November 11 celebration so amazing and memorable. I was deeply touched by the gifts of music, food, beautiful words, praying hands and of course the Spa treatment from you all.

I guess I can't say we will celebrate another 25 as Pastor and congregation, but these first 25 years have taught me, challenged me, comforted me, and formed me into the pastor I am proud to be. Thank you dear Council and congregation for sharing this amazing journey. It is true we can do much more as we are bound in faith together. Thank you for the ministry of love and faith we share. May together we know the peace and hope of Christ, so we can be a light to our community.

Pastor Angelee

Christmas Eve Service – 7:00 PM

The 24th December, as is our Congregational tradition we will gather at 7pm for a family candle light service. Music of bells, voice, piano and organ will fill the sanctuary as we travel with Mary and Joseph to the inn in Bethlehem. We will sing of Christ's birth, and anticipate Emmanuel - “God with us”

You are welcome to bring a plate of your seasonal goodies and meet together in the fellowship hall, sharing fellowship and conversation. This year Santa has written to say he will not be able to be with us after the service, but his best wishes are with us. Plan to invite a friend, or family member to share in this holy night and receive Christ's comfort and joy

Senior Breakfast, Tuesday, December 11 8:30 – 10

All ages are invited! Please bring a \$5.00 wrapped gift to share while we share a festive, delicious breakfast.



Epiphany Sunday

The wise men travel to find the baby Jesus and worship him on Epiphany. Different cultures celebrate this 12th night after Christmas. Come and share in the stories and music shared by our young people on January 6, 2019. Communion will also be shared.



HANDEL'S MESSIAH!

Come hear this classic Christmas masterpiece! All performances feature professional soloists and a professional orchestra. The Wayne Oratorio Society presents Messiah, with a 175-member chorus, at Wayne Presbyterian Church, 125 E. Lancaster Ave, Wayne PA, 19087, Saturday and Sunday, December 1 and 2, at 7:30 PM. The sanctuary is usually packed for these performances so plan to arrive early. For a more intimate setting, the Main Line Ecumenical Choir will present Messiah on Sunday, December 2, at 3:00 PM at St. Mary Magdalen Church, 2400 N. Providence Road, Media PA, 19063. A choir of 45 voices will perform in a beautiful sanctuary with excellent acoustics and plenty of seating. All three concerts are free, no ticket required, but a free will offering will be taken to defray the costs of the concerts. Church members Don Rising, Todd Speece, and Carol Swingle are performing in all three concerts.

Cookies & Music!!

Our confirmation class will be baking cookies on Saturday, December 22 at 3:30 and together with hosts of angels from our congregation, we will deliver cookies and sing Christmas Carols with some of our church members not able to attend regularly and others in our community. Join the Joy! Meet at 5pm for caroling. See Charity Harter for questions.



From Our Treasurer

Thank you for your constant, faithful and generous giving to UCC East Goshen. Our financial books will close on Monday, December 31.

Any gifts received after that date will be credited to 2019. Many of our members and friends donate goods to the church without asking for reimbursement. If you have done so and would like a receipt from the church, please see Beth Saylor. Thank you.

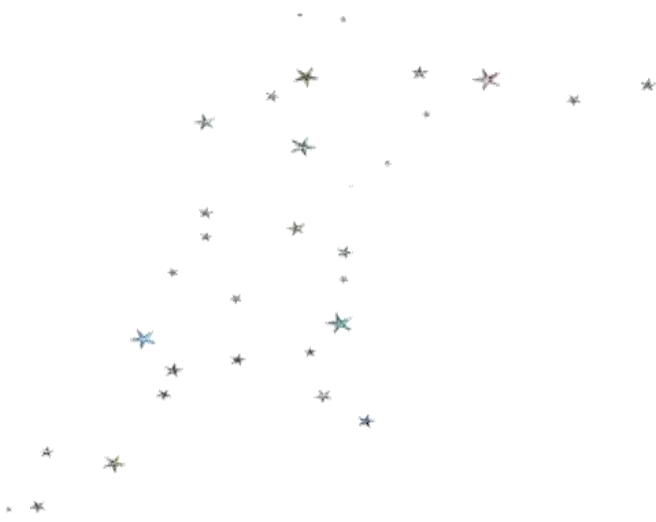
and Financial Secretary

Thank you for your stewardship pledge! Your pledge is vital to the financial health of UCC East Goshen. Knowing how much to expect from members and friends helps us to have a realistic budget.

It's not too late to turn in your 2019 pledge card. Please put it the offering in an envelope marked "Financial Secretary." If you have any questions regarding your giving for 2018, please see Leslie Siebert.

The "Lunch Bunch" will meet Friday December 7 at 1:00 pm at Gramm's in West Chester.

The UCCEG Personnel Committee is receiving applications for the Director of Music Ministry position. Resumes with cover letter should be sent to the church office at 1201 N. Chester Road, West Chester, 19380 or to office@ucceastgoshen.org.



Life Is an Advent Season

CONNECTIONS, 11-28-93

Life is a constant Advent season: we are continually waiting to become, to discover, to complete, to fulfill. Hope, struggle, fear, expectation and fulfillment are all part of our Advent experience.

The world is not as just, not as loving, not as whole as we know it can and should be. But the coming of Christ and his presence among us—as one of us—give us reason to live in hope: that light will shatter the darkness, that we can be liberated from our fears and prejudices, that we are never alone or abandoned.

May this Advent season be a time for bringing hope, transformation and fulfillment into the Advent of our lives."

