

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST EAST GOSHEN

1201 North Chester Road, West Chester, PA 19380

An Open and Affirming Congregation

All are Welcome!

ADVENT~URES 2020



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An Advent Reflection



Hope, Peace, Joy, Love: what wonderful words - with images enough to help us sleep well and have vivid dreams of a world with all the beauty which Louis Armstrong paints in his old song "What a wonderful world." Trees of green, red roses, gracious and welcoming hands of strangers now friends. What a wonderful world.... Each year, 12 months from the last December, expectation is a veil over us; anticipation of hopeful change is in the air, and we wait, and count days, and add to the buildup, and paint the miracle of Christ's birth into the mural of our life. It is a familiar story, with Angels and wise men, straw, donkeys, birth and life, hope and unrelenting love, travel and arrival. It is a hinge for many of us to link the seasons and dates on calendars together, It can seem as if the only time there is good will or a cease fire, broad expressions of compassion and forgiveness is when Christmas is on our radar.

Since March we have lived in months of darkness; beauty has been hidden; the veil over all of us has been so gray from isolation and living 6 feet apart. Christmas joy is not in most of our vocabularies. The watchwords are COVID-weary, fearful living, lost livelihoods, virtual school, cancellation and postponements of family gatherings. We do indeed need a little (or *a lot of*) Christmas as Jonny Mathis' song reminds us. With the world we are living in this year the way to receive the hope and Joy of Christmas is to look inside, not outside. Read the gospel Christmas message in Matthew not the *Santa Clause* version. Count intangible blessings, not the gifts under the tree. Believe we are part of the miracle of the good cheer and unrelenting love, of the story, not waiting to find it in entertainment or an experience. Somehow this year Christmas will come to us in a very personal, individual way, or it will be lost altogether in dreams of the past. The usual trappings and anticipation, experiences and traditions of the season will be different, yet the message of one life born for us, one God come to Earth, one night which changed the world can still be claimed. Let us pray for each other every day this advent season, that Hope, Joy, Peace and Love find new roads into our lives and the doors to our hearts will swing wide to welcome the Christ child!

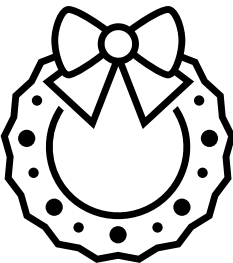


On this journey of faith,

Pastor Angelee



Even as we are apart, we journey together this
 advent carrying the light of the world,
 Our Emmanuel, Jesus!

Saturday, Nov. 28	5:30 PM	R & R Zoom Worship “Waiting for the Promise” led by Al and Pastor Angelee Benner-Smith
Sunday, Nov. 29	10 AM	1st Sunday of Advent Candle of Hope is lit FB Live Service Dedication of our 2021 Pledges Stewardship Testimonial
Tuesday, Dec. 1	6:00 – 6:45 PM	Meet to pray for Christ’s gifts of healing, hope, and Faith to be a part of our personal lives and the world, bring your prayers and meet with Pastor on Zoom
Wed., Dec. 2	11 AM	Café Script Zoom scriptures: Isaiah 40:1-11 & Mark 1:1-8
Saturday, Dec. 4	5:30 PM	R & R via Zoom – details below
Sunday, Dec. 5	10 AM	2nd Sunday of Advent Candle of Peace is lit Holy Communion will be shared Isaiah will visit this day FB Live Service with 5 members of the UCCEG community are invited to sign-up online to attend in person in the sanctuary
Wed., Dec. 9	11 AM	Café Script via Zoom Scriptures: Luke 1: 46-55 & Psalm 126
Saturday, Dec. 11	5:30 PM	R & R via Zoom – details below

<p>Sunday, Dec. 13</p>	<p>10 AM</p>	<p>3rd Sunday of Advent Candle of Joy is lit We celebrate Mary the mother of Jesus with special music and words of the Magnificat from Luke 1:46-55 as Mary comes and visits us at UCCEG. Worship will be open to 5 people from the congregation. You must sign-up in advance.</p>
<p>Tuesday, Dec. 15</p>	<p>6 PM – 6:45 PM</p>	<p>December Prayer for our world and families with Pastor via Zoom.</p>
<p>Wed., Dec. 16</p>	<p>11 AM</p>	<p>Café Script via Zoom Scriptures: Luke 1:26-38 & Psalm 89</p>
<p>Saturday, Dec. 19</p>	<p>5:30 PM</p>	<p>R & R via Zoom – details below</p>
<p>Sunday, Dec. 20</p>	<p>10 AM</p>	<p>4th Sunday of Advent Candle of God’s Love is lit Hand bells, a surprise guest visits at worship, and a special offering of the Christmas Fund offerings for retired UCC clergy is received.</p>
<p>Thursday, Dec. 24</p>  	<p>5 PM</p> <p>4:30 – 6:30 PM</p> <p>6:15 – 6:45 PM</p>	<p>Christmas Eve Service </p> <p>The Celebration of Christ’s birth - Zoom service at 5 pm - worshippers should have a candle to light as we close the service with <i>Silent Night</i> and our candles are lit. Pastor Angelee will preach from the church but all other musicians and readers will be taped.</p> <p>Luminaries will surround the church outside if you want to drive by between 4:30-6:30pm.</p> <p>Musicians will play outside the church building following the 5 pm online service from 6:15-6:45 pm. You are invited to bundle up, mask-up and stop by to listen outside.</p>

Roots & Roofs

The upcoming Roots and Roofs series will run from 11/21 to 1/9 incorporating 4 Saturdays of Advent prior to Christmas. We will prepare for this season of waiting by first making space through gratitude. Through Advent, we will discuss what exactly is the promise that we're waiting for, the hope and the joy we associate with said promise and how can we bring it all to life. The Saturday after Christmas will be a relaxing, joy-filled evening of musical praise and caroling. As we enter the new calendar year we will explore covenant-making practices and Epiphany will be celebrated with a special guest speaker on the subject of creative light. Roots & Roofs meets in a Zoom Conference room at 5:30 on Saturday evenings. You'll find the link on the Roots And Roofs Facebook page, the UCCEG web site and in the weekly e-mails.



Café Script

The Pastor's Bible discussion group will meet at 11 AM the following Wednesday mornings: Dec 2, 9 & 16. Zoom link is in the weekly email and on the website. **All are welcome to participate.**



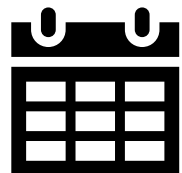
Prayer Group Via Zoom

Pastor Angelee invites you to join her via Zoom 6 PM – 6:45 PM for prayer: Tuesdays, Dec. 1 & 15. No experience is required, and all are welcome! Find the link in the weekly email and on the website.



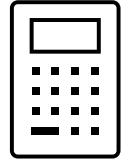
Annual Congregational Meeting - January 24, 2021

Please mark your calendars for our UCCEG Congregational meeting. We will receive Committee Reports and vote on our 2020 Budget. This will be open to all members and will be held via Zoom. Keep your eye on our weekly email and January Newsletter for further details.



Financial Updates

Our first ever online auction netted \$6,400! Thank you to all who donated time, items and money. And we could not have done it without our bidders! Thank you to our Office Administrator, Jen Troutman, who did a great job setting things up and keeping us on task.



The advent season begins with the dedication of our pledges for 2021. If you have not already done so, send your pledge in to the attention of the Financial Secretary. Questions? See Todd Speece or Beth Saylor.

Outreach Opportunity

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THE CHRISTMAS FUND
for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

Christmas Fund Collection – (all of December)

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a Special Mission Offering that UCC 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. After this most difficult of years, we can only expect this fund to be providing even more financial support to those serving and retired from the Church. As always, *thank you* for your generosity.

This offering is traditionally received on the Sunday before Christmas, but due to the current circumstances, Members and Friends should feel free to send their contributions (clearly labelled as such) through the month of December either through the mail or via PayPal on the Church Website.

Each week our Advent candle lightings will be lifting up: Racial Justice and the person of Zachariah Walker

*Let justice roll down like a river and righteousness like
a mighty stream. ~ Amos 5:24*

Few people know that a very public lynching took place within the boundaries of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference (PSEC) of the United Church of Christ in the early 20th century. Zachariah Walker, an iron worker who left Virginia in search of work and landed a position at the Worth Brothers Steel Company in Chester County, was lynched on August 13th, 1911 in Coatesville, Pennsylvania. The Zachariah Walker Racial Justice Initiative was born out of a desire to remember this atrocity and raise awareness about the ways people of faith can follow the prophetic call to stand up for racial justice.

In this time of challenge and reckoning, the light of Christ is shining through the sins of the generations, revealing how white privilege has colluded with, chosen to ignore, or refused to see the sin of systemic racism in our midst. As Christians, we are called to open our eyes, and open wide our hearts to Black communities and all people of color who continue to be oppressed by our nation's original sin – racism.

The veneration and idolatry of whiteness and white power creates degradation, enslavement, oppression, and racial violence that grievously injures Black and Brown people and diminishes the humanity of white people who commit both the interpersonal and structural violence that sustain racism.

The Holy Spirit is moving through this land in the voices and hearts of those challenging the status quo of hundreds of years of racial and economic injustice and who are calling for real, concrete change. The PSEC seeks to answer this call to work for racial justice and create a culture of anti-racism within our churches and our communities by:

- (1) facing and embracing our collective past,
- (2) opening our eyes, minds and hearts to the present racial suffering and injustice, and
- (3) repenting and turning our hearts once again to our loving God who creates all of humanity in the divine image.

This intergenerational sin can end with us as we work toward creating a culture of anti-racism and repair.

To this end, PSEC's Zachariah Walker Racial Justice Initiative will offer ways that churches can stand in support of our Black members, neighbors, and friends. We will educate ourselves about the terrorism of white power and the violence of systemic racism and turn our hearts to action and prayer. The Zachariah Walker Racial Justice Initiative will be sharing with pastors and churches historical information, educational resources, and worship suggestions that follow the liturgical calendar, beginning in Advent 2020.

