

Journeys

A PUBLICATION OF CARVERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



XXXVI | No. 9

WHEREVER YOU ARE ON LIFE'S JOURNEY WE WELCOME YOU HERE.



DARKNESS — and LIGHT

The morning sun is shining brightly as I write. Even though the air remains crisp from the night, the feeling of warmth on my face as I walk the dog brings brightness to my morning mood.

Such positive images are vital to our well being. They are a remedy to a world of increasing darkness.

For one, our days become shorter and the nights longer as we approach the longest night of the year. This is a time of seasonal affective disorder for many who experience a form of depression that accompanies the seasonal change.

Another kind of darkness descends on many who are without family members this season. COVID-19 travel restrictions will prohibit countless family gatherings. COVID-19 deaths are altering tens of thousands of families forever.

Our country, from the broadest perspectives to our neighborhoods and families, is also living through a darkness that most of us have never experienced. Extreme ego- and ethno-centrism prevails.

- Too many care only about me, myself, and mine.

- Too many see life as a zero-sum game; if others' well-being improves, then mine will surely worsen.
- Too many believe that God hates the same people they do, and that they are chosen by God to be a privileged people.

As the seasonal darkness descends, and we see all kinds of darkness around us, we Christians observe Advent—the season of reflection and preparation for the Light we are certain will come.

We can see signs of that Light every day.

- The generosity of millions whose food bank contributions help feed millions of others who experience food insecurity in these days.
- The dedication of medical professionals, first responders and caregivers of all kinds who serve on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The thoughtfulness of scientific and political leaders who draw us toward a future of greater medical and economic health.

As we reflect and prepare for the Light that is to come, we must also see that the Light is already with us. As we can see signs of the Light every day, God also calls us to be that Light for others each day.

Christians have a particular Light to share with others—a Light that we often do our best to obscure.

“SERVICE OF THE LONGEST NIGHT”

Theologian Chris Glaser writes, “As we know from our own Christian tradition, no one can claim the moral high ground better than a self-righteous legalist, traditionalist, or fundamentalist. As an aside, [Walter] Brueggemann also points out that no one can claim the moral high ground better than a self-righteous liberal, progressive, non-literalist. . . . All of us tend to equate God’s views with our own, what Brueggemann calls ‘the cunning little secret of certitude.’”

The antidote to the moral high ground continues to be Jesus’ Great Commandment: love God, and love your neighbor as yourself.

During Advent 2020, love of neighbor is powerfully important. Because in the midst of the darkness in which so many find themselves, the lack of love for neighbor seems especially prominent this year.

Jesus teaches that our neighbor is anyone who is in need—whatever kind of need that is. The obstacle that prevents most of us from fulfilling Jesus’ expectation is that we can’t let go of how we keep judging one another. Instead of sharing the Light of forgiveness, we continue to live in shadows of our own making. In judging others’ rigidity, we overlook our own.

“In awe of God, we are called to, in a sense, *privilege* the neighbor to be truly neighborly and faithful to God,” Glaser points out. “We are to consider their needs, their beliefs, their practices above our own needs, beliefs, and practices. . . . That requires forgiveness—forgiving that the other is not all we expected, forgiving mistakes and ignorance and insensitivity, forgiving wrongs and inabilities and limitations. *And forgiving ourselves these things as well.* We are not perfect people. We are forgiven people.”

So in preparing to receive the Light of Christ once again, may we remember that the Light is also already here. The Light is always with us. It is always coming to us as well. May we prepare for the Light that is to come by practicing how to share the Light that is already with us.

— Pastor Fogal

Holidays aren’t always happy for everyone. With the covid pandemic keeping us from the support of family and friends this holiday season, many hearts are hurting from a wide variety of loss. It may be the loss of a spouse, family member or beloved pet, loss of a job, or separation from a loved one because of the pandemic, military service or illness.

The Longest Night Service, also called the Blue Christmas Service, is designed for those who are feeling “blue” or sad. It is a quiet service of prayer, meditation, and peaceful reflection. The service will be held on Monday, December 21 at 7 pm, and it will be a **virtual, live streamed service** that can be you may watch from the safety and comfort of home. It can be accessed from the front page of the church website (www.carversvilleucc.org) beginning at 7 pm.

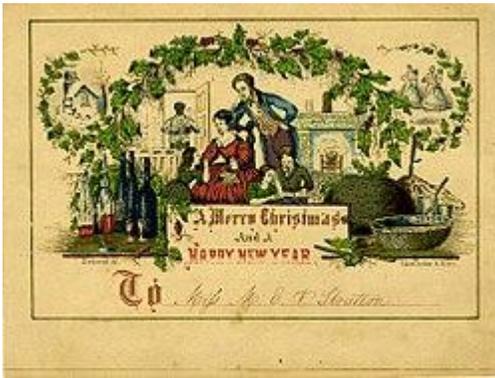
Please mention the service to anyone you feel might benefit from this quiet, peaceful holiday service.

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CHRISTMAS EVE ~ ONLINE

A Christmas Eve tradition in the Village of Carversville continues...online! In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, its safety guidelines and state capacity regulations, our church sanctuary can only accommodate a very small number of people. As a result, we’ve decided to make our annual, beloved candlelight Christmas Eve an online service. It will be live-streamed and can easily be accessed from the front page of the church website (www.carversvilleucc.org) beginning at 7:00 pm on December 24th.

Join us online at 7:00pm to hear beautiful music from local musicians, sing along with your favorite, traditional holiday hymns and enjoy the wonderful spiritual readings which mark this very special time of the year. We are grateful to the musicians, church friends and family who are working hard to make this a safe, comfortable, and memorable service to be enjoyed by all this holiday. Have a blessed Christmas!



BRIARLEAF & DEC & 2020

*"There's not a day in all the year
But holds some hidden pleasure,
And looking back, joys oft appear
To brim the past's wide measure.
But blessings are like friends, I hold,
Who love and labor near us.
We ought to raise our notes of praise
While living hearts can hear us."
Ella Wheeler Wilcox - 1850-1919*

Briarleaf continues to remain closed to all visitors. In the meantime, we plan to continue to send 30 notes to cheer the residents each month. A special thanks goes out to Jan Heebner for contributing handmade holiday cards during November. If you would like to write a short note to a Briarleaf resident on behalf of Carversville UCC, contact Catherine Halper at chalper@aol.com. The small investment of your time will yield rich rewards!

Annual Reports Due

I ask that if you are the chairperson or head of a committee, a board, or an officer you must submit a report to the church office (carversvilleucc@gmail.com) or to Jan Heebner (janheebner@yahoo.com) by January 6. Your reports may differ considerably from those in the years past as this has been a most unusual year for our church and how we have been operating. However, we still need to compile all the reports before our Annual Meeting. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

OUR NEIGHBORS ARE HUNGRY AND NEED OUR HELP

Thanks to your very generous food donations, we have donated almost 900 pounds of food to the Doylestown Food Pantry over the last several months! That's filling a lot of empty tummies! Please know that the need for food still remains high and your continued generosity is greatly appreciated, especially around the holiday season. Can we reach a donation poundage of 1,000 pounds by the end of the year? YES WE CAN, little church with a big heart!

Food donations can be dropped at church and left outside the office on Sunday mornings, and Tuesdays and Thursdays between 9-12 am.

The Food Pantry is suggesting donations of the following items:

-canned meats such as tuna or chicken; canned or dried beans; oatmeal or breakfast cereal; pasta sauce; canned vegetables especially carrots, potatoes, tomatoes; flour; sugar; pepper; salad dressing; cake or cookie mixes for a treat!



Not a creature was stirring ...

Not even the Women's Fellowship. As you've probably surmised, we've had to cancel this year's Women's Fellowship Christmas party.

We'll miss oohing and aahing Chinese auction treasures, and tasting everyone's sometimes sinful creations.

Let's hope we'll be able to see each other soon – maybe the annual luncheon in June? Stay tuned.



What's the Book Group Doing?

The sun wasn't shining. A drizzle was falling. It was chilly BUT the smiles and discussion about All the Devils Are Here was warm! We all agreed this was another great who-done-it by Louise Penny that kept us guessing until the very last page. We cheered on the strong sense of family and right winning over wrong. Can't wait for the next book now that everyone is back in Three Pines!

Our next book is This Tender Land by William Kent Krueger. It's along the lines of Where the Crawdads Sing and we all loved that book.

We'll meet on Monday, December 7, in the social hall for a socially distanced brown bag lunch and a great discussion! Love to have you join us!

A LETTER FROM CHRISTMAS PAST:

Dear Friends,

My daughter, Kate, and I were fortunate enough to be in Bucks County for a trip down memory lane a couple weeks ago. Part of the weekend was a stop at Carversville Church where we were very lucky to find Jeannie Brown on a Saturday morning. It was so good to see her familiar face! So many wonderful memories came to mind as we looked around and lots of changes. The narthex looks wonderful as does the social hall – all newly painted and shiny. When we got to the sanctuary, I could barely keep the tears from falling. Many good friends and good times came to my mind: Alexis making the Christmas wreaths, choir!, Allison and Rebecca playing harps, Oyster Pork Supper and all the preparations that go with it, Paul Ritter doing a Christmas service of Songs and Readings when the

choir did a cantata (I still have, and listen to, the CD), Women's Fellowship, Eleanor Price and Dick Magill, Gert, Norma, Pearl, Anita, Jim C. I could go on and on.

And life goes on too we've been in MA for 10 years and I still miss Bucks. It took me a very long time to "grow where I'm planted" up here in New England. I retired when we moved and now work part time as secretary at a Baptist Church and am still in the choir.

Please don't take your little country church for granted for it is a wonderful place full of beautiful people. I miss all of you.

Stay safe and be well.

Fondly,
Barb Gunn



2021 GIVING ENVELOPES

The giving envelopes for 2021 have arrived and labels have been affixed to them. You will be able to pick them up on or after Sunday, December 12. They will be located in the Conference Room.





CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS UPDATE

Traditionally, the pick-up for the poinsettias follows the Christmas Eve service. As with almost everything else in 2020, this too will be non-traditional. Since the Christmas Eve service is live-stream only the distribution of the plants will be on Sunday, December 27 between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. (If you are participating in the service, you can pick them up after the service.) If you have any questions, please call Jeanne Brown at 215-348-3614.

Moderator's Minute

Pre-Electronic Holidays



Buried in the basement of my mother's house, I found an old Crokinole Board. It took me winging back in time to childhood holidays when my extended family of a dozen adults and 25 kids headed up to the north woods.

Even back in the city, we were the last of a generation to grow up without television, radio and automatic washing machines. The closest that we came was the wringer washer, an old Victrola and my Dad's collection of 12" Long Play (LP) 33 1/3 rpm microgroove records.

We were constantly entertained by outdoor games, swimming, fishing and canoeing. In the evenings and during inclement weather, out came the card decks, and the Cribbage, Chess, Monopoly, Parcheesi and Crokinole boards.

Crokinole is a dexterity board game of Canadian origin similar in various ways to carrom, marbles, shove ha'penny, with elements of shuffleboard and

curling reduced to table-top size. Players take turns shooting discs across the circular playing surface, trying to have their discs land in the higher-scoring regions of the board, while also attempting to knock away opposing discs. If no rival disks are on the board, the target is the center hole that is surrounded by wooden pegs and only slightly larger in diameter than the disks

We competed to develop the best "pichenotte" style. It involves shooting the wooden disk by turning your hand sideways and flicking your finger with your thumb against the side of the disc while keeping your other three fingers raised artistically.

If you are looking for a new family obsession go to Crokinole.com and explore. Happy Holidays!

Catherine Halper

Treasurer's Report

Submitted by Cheryl Costella

YTD 10/31/2020

Giving	\$ 67,822
Other Revenue	<u>4,633</u>
Total Revenue	72,455
Total Expenses	<u>(109,947)</u>
Surplus/(Deficit)	(37,492)
Investment Income	2,567
PPP Loan	<u>14,900</u>
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	<u>(\$20,025)</u>

The church is currently running at a deficit for the year of \$20,025. Last year at this same time we had a deficit of \$8,900; therefore, we are \$11,000 down from last year at this same time.

Compared to last year at this time, a few items to consider:

1. Giving is down 3% or \$2,300
2. Kitchen rental income is down \$5,700 from last year
3. Oyster Pork was a \$11,700 loss
4. Expenses are within \$1,000 of October 2019

Giving is down – General fund giving is down vs. last year. By general fund, that is donations giving to run the general needs of the church. Salaries, utilities, missions, marketing, office expenses, business insurance and maintenance. This does not include all the substantial donations that we passed through for the greater good to help the many people dealing with food insecurity, the UCC funds like Neighbors in Need, covering flower expenses, etc. As Bob has mentioned, our donations have far exceeded last year. Great Job!!!

September and October have also been stronger on general giving vs. prior months with the weekly giving averaging \$1,860 and \$1,696, respectively. Our YTD weekly average is \$1,577 only \$56 less than the same time last year. So, if we continue doing better every Sunday, we can increase our weekly average and make a dent in the deficit. Remember, we will be missing the food festival (about \$4,500) as well ☹️

Kitchen Rental – We are not advertising our kitchen rental right now. We did have a couple people ask about leasing it, but our kitchen did not meet their needs for what they wanted to do. We also need to be mindful of the safety of those in the church while the pandemic is still hanging around.

Oyster Pork Loss – We did cancel the dinner this year because of the pandemic as everyone knows and lost \$11,700 revenue. However, the Payroll Protection Payment (PPP) we received from the Small Business Administration of \$14,900 will be forgiven and more than covers our lost revenue. Yes, it was to cover the payroll that we continued to pay but since our giving held fairly steady (Thank You!) we were able to supplement from the PPP.

Expenses – The reason we have a deficit higher than last year is our expenses stayed the same. Although we saved money on lower utilities, no cleaning, and less fuel oil, we had more marketing expense to advertise our awesome virtual church (Thanks to Peter & Jackie Putman, Elizabeth Richardson, Pastor Fogal, Lynn Bullock, Wayne our web guy, and anyone I missed), our annual fire alarm service testing (that is almost \$3,000 and

because of timing we didn't have it last year), and the trees that needed to be cut down.

Treasurer's Trove Submitted by Cheryl Costella

I wanted to remind everyone that the church can take donations through Paypal. There are two ways you can do it:

1. Sign in to Paypal and send money using our email carversvilleucc@gmail.com
2. Simply go to our awesome website at www.carversvilleucc.org and there is a "Giving" button in the very top right. It will take you to a page to enter your Paypal info

If you shop with Amazon, switch to Amazon Smile. Same exact Amazon, you just get to choose a charity to support with your Amazon purchases. For every purchase that qualifies (which I have not come across any yet) 0.5% will deposit into the church's bank account. I set the account up, but I do not see any of your information, I do not know who makes the purchases, what is purchased or how much. We just receive a deposit quarterly. It is a great way to give a little more to the church and all you have to do is shop. Here is the link <https://smile.amazon.com/> and login with your regular Amazon login. If you have not registered with Amazon Smile yet it will ask you to choose a charity. Just search Carversville (it's in with our Tax ID name so you could enter Carversville Christian Church UCC as well).

Finally, please think and pray on your pledge cards and remember to mail them or drop them in the offering plate on Sunday.

Thank You!





ALTAR FLOWER CHANGE
by Jeanne Brown

Cut & Dried of Bucks County, located in Carversville, will no longer be the church florist. Keith and Tom have made beautiful Sunday altar flower arrangements for us since September 2004. When we requested roses for special occasions and funeral arrangements, they also filled that need.

The shop had to close in March because of COVID-19. Now that they are allowed to work, Keith and Tom have decided to only do weddings and large parties.

Beginning in November, the new church florist will be Market Way Flowers & Gifts, located in Buckingham Green. Bob O'Brien is looking forward to making our arrangements.

The cost will be \$25.00 per arrangement effective November 1st.

If you have any questions, please call me at 215-348-3614.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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Dr. Bob Fogal, Pastor 610-945-4955
Email: pastorfogal@gmail.com
Lynn Bullock, Organist 215-297-1569
Email: lynnbullock8@gmail.com
Chris Ochadlick, Office Admin. 215-297-5166
Email: carversvilleucc@gmail.com

Office Hours

Tuesday & Thursday, 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Website: CarversvilleUCC.org
3736 Aquetong Road, PO Box 26
Carversville, PA 18913



HOLIDAY FESTIVAL OF FOODS

Since the Food Festival has been cancelled for 2020, we are doing something different to help our vendors this year.

Attached to this newsletter, you will find several pages of information from our vendors describing their products. They have also included contact information for ordering.

Let's support our vendors in this challenging year!

Thank you.



CUCC FAITH FORMATION

THE THREE-STRANDED CORD

“You can’t effectively repudiate a worldview that nearly half the country believes in. Or at least is willing to vote for.”

Monica Hesse¹. 3 Nov 2020.

In modern times, the imagery of the three-stranded cord found in Ecclesiastes is used as part of a popular marriage ceremony to symbolize the joining of two people by God in marriage. This is an elegant application, and the passage is worthy of further review.

Ecclesiastes is part of biblical *“Wisdom Literature,”* along with Proverbs and Job. The genre is concerned with the practicalities of life. Ecclesiastes is traditionally attributed to an “older and wiser” Solomon – after he returned to God from his immersion in idolatry, sin and disobedience (see 1 Kings 11:1-10.)

We are living through a similar period as that described in 1 Kings 11 as Solomon’s fall. We chase after sensual pleasures and false “idols,” neglecting and even demonizing those who differ from us and are suffering want. It is no accident that this country is polarized.

The most difficult part of this journey is to discover how we ourselves have turned the “other” into a cartoon villain rather than engage in real dialogue and productive debate. Without the Three-Fold Cord that is inclusive, we will not find the way out of these challenging times.

” Two are better than one, in that their cooperative efforts yield this advantage: if one of them falls, the other will help his partner up – woe to him who is alone when he falls and has no one to help him. Again, if two people sleep together, they keep each other warm; but how can one person be warm by himself? Moreover, an attacker may defeat someone alone, but who can resist him; and a three-stranded cord is not easily broken. “

Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12

For the three strands to make a cord, they must intertwine appropriately. This cannot be done from a distance, and it cannot be done alone.

To the extent that we can shed our expectations long enough to learn to accept – or ideally – love people as they are: if we can maintain patience and a selfless attitude towards others: if we can work

together to provide unconditional care for people in all situations then we can become the Three-Stranded Cord that Solomon described.

The Book of Psalms or Book of Praises is a collection of songs and prayers set to music. In times of trouble, traditional Jewish communities have turned to the recitation of psalms — often the entire book — as collective prayer for health and recovery.

Beyond its Psalms role in liturgy and healing efforts, readers often turn to individual psalms for solace or inspiration.

Many psalms have been set to modern music in hymns and popular songs – a testimony to the enduring power of music and these ancient songs.

It is this imagery that we should lean on as we struggle with the isolation and challenges that we face – and let us face them together!

*“He will cover you with his pinions
and under his wings you will find refuge.
His truth is your shield and refuge.
You will not fear the terrors of the night
or the arrow that flies by day.
or the Plague that roams in the dark,
or the Scourge that wreaks havoc at noon.”*

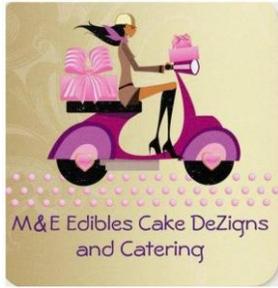
Psalm 91:4-6

Catherine Halper

¹ *Monica Hesse is a Washington Post Columnist writing about gender and its impact on society.*

FAITH FORMATION STORIES & READINGS	
DATE	ADVENT
12/06/20	Mark 1: 1-8: <i>John the Baptizer</i>
12/13/20	Luke 1:47-55: <i>Magnificat</i>
12/20/20	Luke 1:26-38: <i>Annunciation</i>
CHRISTMAS	
12/27/20	Isaiah 61:10-62:1 <i>A New Name</i>
01/03/21	Eph 1: 13-14: <i>Inheritance</i>





M&E Edibles Cake DeZigns and Catering.

We will be creating **cakes, cupcakes, pound, and bundt cakes** in the following flavors: Jewish apple, sour cream, eggnog, lemon, carrot, vanilla, chocolate, red velvet and coconut. We also offer a white chocolate raspberry cheesecake.

Our selection of **pies** includes: apple, cherry, chocolate pecan, pecan, pear cranberry, sweet potato, pumpkin and caramel apple.

We also offer assorted tins for your gift giving needs, along with other baked goods for the holidays, events, and just your pure enjoyment.

We are ready to cater your gatherings, for the holidays or just because. You create the menu and we deliver. We love to decorate too!!!

Please contact us at 215.356.1281 and we will be more than happy to help.

<https://www.facebook.com/mandeedibles>
<https://me-edibles-cake-dezigns-and-catering.business.site/>



Since 2002, we've been handcrafting our unique confections in small batches. Our award winning specialties include: Truffles, Toffee, Barks, Bars and Hot Cocoa Mixes. We are doing Chocolate & Wine/Beer/Spirit pairing events **virtually**. The next event is Friday the 13th November, which is sure to be a lucky day to stay home and log on to our Virtual Live guided chocolate tasting event!

We are also rolling out our new Gift Boxes just in time for all of the holidays. These boxes are easily shipped or picked up from our workshop in Buckingham.

Contact: Laurie Douglass, 215.756.3631.
Email is Laurie@laurieschocolates.com
Website: www.laurieschocolates.com



Pampered Chef is a company that offers a line of kitchen tools, food products, and cookbooks for preparing food in the home.

Website: www.pamperedchef.biz/nicole062013

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PRODUCTS:

- All Edible Gingerbread Bird Houses ~ Small: \$25.00 ~ Large: \$50.00 [All encrusted and filled with birdseed]
~ Lebkuchen Honey Squares ~ Small square: \$7.50
~ Long thick bar: \$22.50 [Decorated with old-fashioned paper Santas]
~ Lebkuchen with Decorated Paper ~ Small Santa: \$7.50 ~ Large Santa \$10.00 ~ Hansel & Gretel: \$10.00
~ Lebkuchen ~ Large decorated hearts: \$25.00
~ Lebkuchen Mug Huggers ~ 4 cookies: \$10.00
~Anise Springerle Imprinted Cookies ~ Small: Lambs, santas, angels, acorn & other Christmas themes: \$2.25 ~ Baker's Dozen: \$25.50
~Anise Springerle Imprinted Cookies ~ Medium: owls, nativity & other Christmas themes: \$8:00
~Anise Springerle Imprinted Cookie~ Large: Santa, reindeer, angel, Santa with tree: \$10.00
~Handmade Santa Folk Art Doll with hooked rug face, dressed in vintage wools with vintage baubles attached to his belt: \$325.00
~Hand Painted Pair of Ice Skates: \$225.00



The Apothecary Shop has an assortment of all natural herbal care products, soaps and gifts.

If you're looking for an herbalist to work with your foundational nutrition, support stress, or assist with ongoing chronic conditions, you can contact me through Glas Flora as well!

My website address for my online store is: <https://www.glasfloracom/apothecary-shop>
Ashley Gamarello, Proprietor

