

First UCC Happenings



DECEMBER 2020



We have entered into the season of advent (waiting). I recall moments from childhood when, as a family, we had an advent wreath that would sit on top of the piano. Each week we would have a devotional and one of my sisters, or I, took a turn to light each candle. Eventually, my father would read the Christmas story and light the final candle. The period of waiting was coming to a close.

By the time Christmas morning had arrived the waiting was excruciating. I probably woke several times throughout the night and as the sun started to peer through the sky. My sisters and I had a tradition of gathering in one of our bedrooms, again, waiting to walk down the hallway and into the living room. The waiting seemed like hours until our parents said that all was ready and we would walk the hallway into the living room and see the gifts that were left for us. One by one, alternating each year, from the oldest, then the next year the youngest, we would enjoy giving and receiving gifts to one another. The waiting was finally over.

If this year has done nothing else, it has had us waiting. Perhaps you find the waiting as difficult as I did when I was younger. I wish I found my ability to wait to increase with my age, but waiting at Christmas time is still both exciting while being mixed with impatience. The good news is, that Jesus fulfilled the promise of Scripture by coming to earth so many years ago, which is why we celebrate advent. His return is soon, but while we are waiting for that glorious day, I pray you will join me in experiencing the excitement, and maybe a little impatience too, in waiting for the Messiah to return and to provide the most wonderful gift yet again...Himself and life eternal.

God bless you and your families as you celebrate this Christmas and thank you for the privilege of serving you!

Rev. Ed Lilley



From the Director of Music

Diane Drury

Virtual Ring in the Season Concert to Launch on YouTube Tues., Dec. 1

On Tuesday, Dec. 1, the 35th Annual Ring in the Season Concert to benefit Habitat for Humanity Peninsula & Greater Williamsburg will launch on YouTube! I am so excited that I have found a way to still do a holiday concert, yet create it and present it safely for all. On Dec. 1st I will be sending out an email, as well as posting to Facebook, the sharable link to a playlist of connected videos of musical contributions to this concert. You will be able to view the concert any time during December and I encourage you to share the link with family and friends. A fun way to enjoy a YouTube playlist concert is to create a “watch party” when family and friends can watch in their individual homes, yet at the same time. It doesn’t have to be watched all in one sitting either. You can start and stop at any point while viewing.

We have been very much challenged in this endeavor, not just because of the safety guidelines for singing and gathering during COVID-19, but also because of copyright restrictions for virtual concerts. Even for benefit concerts, music that is broadcast as part of a concert (rather than as a worship service) must either be completely in the public domain, or be given (often with a very expensive fee) specific permission by the composer, arranger, and lyricist, to use in such a concert. I admit that many churches and performing ensembles were not able to participate because of all of these restraints, but others were able to be very creative in order to make this concert possible. First UCC will, of course, be well-represented, but I have other choirs and bell groups, and instrumentalists who will play a part too.

I would like to thank my friend and colleague, John S. Dixon, for composing and granting us (free) the required permissions for two delightful piano duets for my Virginia Choral Society piano duet partner, Valentina Sorbera (pianist for Fox Hill First United Methodist Church), and me to present for this occasion. Our own Judith Coffman and the Potter’s Place Musicians arranged a lovely carol, and Rev. Ed performed a beautiful bass aria from Handel’s *Messiah*. I have recorded some

Christmas organ music too. Our Virtual Choir performed a traditional carol, as well as a Bach (possibly Kuhnau) cantata movement that required me to write a new German-English translation in order for it to be used. Many thanks need to go to our virtual choir members for rehearsing and recording these (as well as our weekly worship music) in the painstaking manner required. Several other churches are preparing videos for me to include, and Habitat for Humanity has provided a beautiful video about their organization.

Instead of taking up a collection, we ask that those who wish to make a donation to write a check made out to “Habitat for Humanity Peninsula & Greater Williamsburg” and mail it directly to:

Habitat for Humanity Peninsula & Greater Williamsburg
11011 Warwick Blvd.
Newport News, VA 23601

Zoom Advent Music Events

On Thurs., Dec. 3, at 7 pm, we will have our Zoom Advent Evensong service. Gathering time will be at 6:45pm. Music will be for the Advent/Christmas season.

On Thurs., Dec. 17, at 7pm, we will have a Zoom Christmas Caroling Event. I will take requests during the event for Christmas carols, both sacred and secular, and we will sing one verse of each. These will be familiar enough that we won't need words. I will have to limit it to music I have in my possession.

Virtual Choir Music CDs to Go to Shut-Ins

Because we can't do our traditional Christmas caroling to our members who are homebound or in nursing homes this year, I will be creating CDs of our virtual Christmas music to mail to our shut-ins. I may also include some of our favorite anthems and hymns from this fall.

**A VERY MERRY
CHRISTMAS
and Happy New Year!**

from your First UCC staff:
Rev. Ed Lilley, Judith
Coffman, Diane Drury,
Courtney Phillips & Jamille
Hamilton



STEWARDSHIP 2020-21 October 4 – October 25

Stewardship theme: “Beloved, Love”

**Based on scripture "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."
- 1 John 4:7**

Each Sunday in October, our Pastor, Ed Lilley, and music ministries provided theme-based worship services. Our theme song for the month was “We Will Love, Love, Love,” written by Christopher Grundy, a UCC pastor.

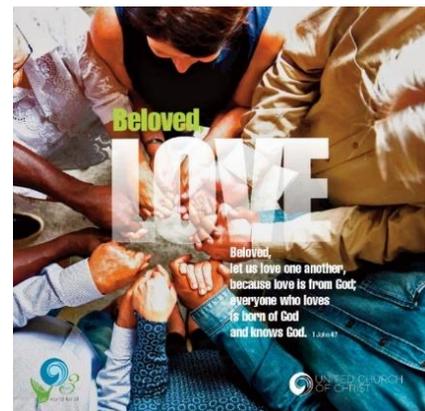
Due to Covid-19, our activities were revised. Our mission project was to sponsor five families (suggested by Forrest Elementary School) with a \$50 Food Lion gift card. Sadly, our visit with shut-ins was by telephone.

Twenty-three of us met in Wallace Hall for our Stewardship Celebration Sunday on the 25th. With social distancing and masks, we enjoyed a light continental breakfast pastry and fruit salad.

The 2021 budget was presented and approved. Pastor Ed led us in a short devotional time, including the dedication of offerings and pledges of \$67,470 for the new year.

The Stewardship Ministry appreciates and thanks each of you for your continued monetary support. Pledges are still welcome, and prayers are needed as we start another challenging year.

Judith Coffman, Ministry Chair





First UCC Weekly Offering

Oct 25	\$ 1,335.00	Nov 1	\$ 2,340.00
Nov 15	\$ 2,189.00	Nov 22	\$ 1,310.00

Thank you to all who have practiced stewardship through your gifts during this challenging time. Prayerfully consider your tithing to support the ministries and staff of First UCC. Thank you!



Treasurer's Report as of 11/23/2020

General Operating Checking Account Balance	\$ 6,817.59
Breakdown:	
Bills to Be Paid Through 12/03/2020	\$ 3,862.78
Mission & Evangelism	\$ 1,112.35
General Fund	\$ 1,500.31
Youth Fund	\$ 0.00
UCC Local Missions Grant	\$ 342.15
Reserve Fund Balance	\$ 1,007.46



Our Christmas Eve worship service will be online only, posted to Facebook and YouTube the week of the 20th. A church-wide email will also be sent containing the link. Sunday morning worship services will continue to be held in the sanctuary, as well as streamed live on our Facebook page.



Church-Wide Prayer: Pray with us each day at noon

December 1-15

Dear Lord, don't let us miss You this Christmas season. Help us to simplify our activities and traditions so we can focus our celebration on Your birth. Thank You for being the Prince of Peace, and I ask You for that supernatural peace to reign in our hearts. Thank You for the simple but life-changing message of Your love for us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

December 16-31

Heavenly Father, through this Christmas season in which we celebrate the birth of your dear Son, Jesus, help us to keep our minds stayed on the "reason for the season"...and the LOVE that shines forth from your dear Son. Help us to be more like him, to be able to love without attachments, requirements, and let our light shine that people will see the LOVE of GOD shining in our lives every day. We thank you for sending Him to earth to the way through LOVE. I give you the praise, honor and glory due your name. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen!

If you wish to place an order for a POINSETTIA PLANT in honor or memory of a loved one:
 Please contact Pat Kline at 757-725-1555
 The cost is \$13.00 each, due at time of order.
 Deadline to order is Sunday, December 13th.

I would like to order _____ poinsettias for Christmas.
 Enclosed is my check for \$13.00 for each poinsettia.

Total amount: \$ _____

IN HONOR OF: _____

IN MEMORY OF: _____

GIVEN BY: _____



Wider Missions & Outreach



We have sent our Mitten tree gatherings on to Jonesville, VA. You were generous to give them 25 hats & 66 pairs of gloves/mittens. They will help keep the Southwest VA folks warm this winter.

We will have an angel tree again this year. The family has 3 children & recently had a son who died. The family is going through Homicide Grief Counseling. We will be generous with our gifts & will give a gift card to Food Lion. Deadline for bringing gifts to the church will be Sunday the 20th of December.

We donated 4 turkeys to Tarrant MS for their Thanksgiving baskets & a Food Lion gift card to our family.

Thank you all for being so generous in your gifting & in giving food to members who are ill.

Pat Kline & Carol Diehl, Chairs.



The Christmas Fund offering will be collected on Sunday, December 20th. You can also donate directly and securely any time at www.christmasfund.org. The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. Since last March,

because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the emergency financial needs of many who serve the church have increased dramatically. These difficult times make the need for the Christmas Fund more urgent than ever. Thank you for supporting the Christmas Fund!

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



- 8 Wai-Yun Quach
- 9 Ernest Hamilton
- 13 Jeanine Scherrer
- 28 Ann Fordham
- 28 Robyn Gallagher
- 30 Judith Coffman
- 31 TJ Gallagher

If you have a birthday and it's not on the list, please let us know so we can correct our records.



December Anniversaries

12/28 Barry & Dianne Forbes

*If you have an anniversary in November, December, or January please let us know, so we can correct our records.

**First United
Church of Christ
1017 Todds Lane
Hampton, VA 23666-1924**

Tel: 757-826-7560

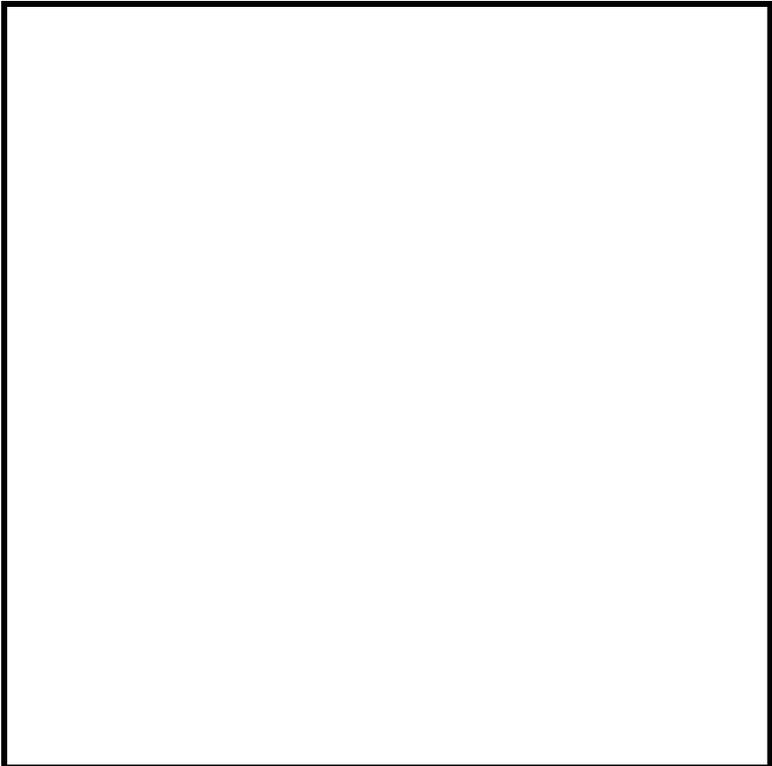
E-mail: firstuccyo@verizon.net

Website:
www.firstucchampton.org



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<https://www.facebook.com/1stUCCHampton/>



TOGETHER Worshipping God
Growing Spiritually
Serving Others

**Indoor Worship Services
Sundays at 10:30am**

**Christmas Eve Virtual Service
Online Only
(See page 5)**