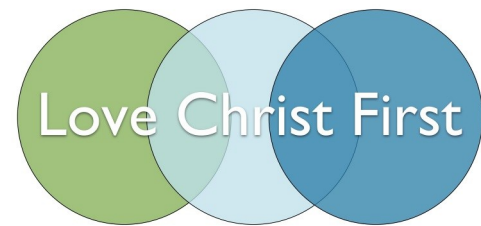




Hanging of the Greens Service



DECEMBER 2023



December Mission

New Bethany Ministries

New Bethany Ministries offers hope and support to people who experience poverty, hunger, and homelessness. They believe that all people, regardless of circumstances, should be treated with dignity and care without judgment. No one who seeks help is turned away.

This organization is home to many in need throughout the Valley, and their additional sites in Bethlehem, Allentown, and Coplay allow the organization to magnify its Valley-wide impact. Their services provide food support, hygiene support, wellness programming, transitional housing, permanent affordable housing, and financial case management to individuals and families who are working toward self-sufficiency.

You can show God's love and provide hope to your neighbors by making a donation with your contribution to First Church. Please note the amount you want to go to this project and First UCC will send a single check to them with the donations.



First United Church of Christ
 Pastor Becky Thomas
 501 Northampton Street
 Hellertown PA 18055
 (610)838-8811
office@firstucchellertown.org





Installation of Pastor Becky Thomas



Rev. Rebekah Thomas was installed as our Settled Minister on 11-12-23.

Officiating at the Installation was Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates from UCC Penn Northeast Conference.



On November 19th we dedicated Items donated to Fill-the-Sill Mission Project. The items will be shared with our Blessing Box and New Jerusalem Food Bank.



The Sunday School Class was learning about Joseph and his Coat of Many Colors. They made their own "coats" and displayed them for all to see.



Bible Sunday

Bibles are given to our Third Graders. Matthew Harvey received his Bible on October 29th.

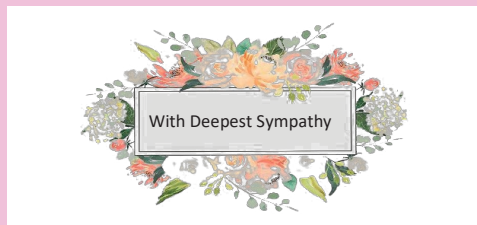


Remembrance Sunday

We remember those who passed this past year.

Peg Masiado	Irene Heller
Ruth Hill	Wayne McCullough
Jeffrey Petruno	Mark Diehl
James Joyce	Dorothy Freeman





To the Family and Friends of
Claire Moran

November 9, 2023

Richard Hacker

November 12, 2023

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servants, sheep of your own fold, lambs of your own flock, sinners of your own redeeming. Receive them into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints. in light. Amen.



*The Trustees of the Remembrance Fund
have received and gratefully acknowledged*

a gift given in loving memory of Mark Diehl:

Dave & Georgie Stuempfle Wayne Packer & Andrea Danner

a gift given in loving memory of Richard Hacker:

Carlann Broglie Wayne Packer & Andrea Danner Jane & Al Parenti

Alfred & MaryAnn Horvath Sandra Belletti Glenn & Ann Brown

The Teitsworth Family First UCC Dart Team Bill Roth

Roxann L. Martin Jack, Carol & Gary Stork Tammie Vosburg

Margaret & Bruce Kelly Sally & Gary Strawn Kevin Brown

Thomas Taylor Fred & Kathleen Lebeduik Al & Susan Lishman

Mary Nauroth Woody Stauffer Bob & Louise Krill

Mike & Edna Santo Sharon Jezick

a gift given in loving memory of Claire Moran:

Carlann Broglie Wayne Packer & Andrea Danner Bob & Phyllis Scherer

Mark & Linda Grubb Thomas & Denise Neith Jane Chromczak

Richard, Jackie & Michael Teitsworth Tammie Vosburg

Betty Parsons Bill Roth Bob & Louise Krill

Mark & Crystal Moran Mike & Edna Santo Sharon Jezick

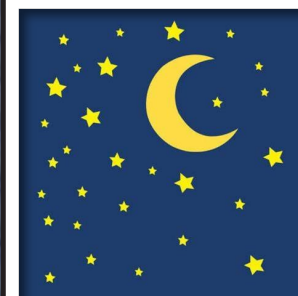


It is hard to believe that we are approaching Advent once again. The beginning of a new church year is upon us. As I write this, we are planning the decorating of the sanctuary. Christmas music was playing in my car on my way to church on Sunday morning. Parking lots are already full of people doing their holiday shopping. You would think, as a pastor, the season wouldn't seem to sneak up on me, as I have to plan ahead. Yet it did. It feels like November passed by in the blink of an eye.

The season of Advent is a time for us to draw closer to God. But, I also believe it is a time for us to draw closer together. Jesus is called the light of the world, a symbol of hope for all people. Still, there are times where the darkness of this world can make it hard to see that light. As we journey through this season of cold, long nights, my prayer is that you walk together. Carry the light of God with you. Shine it into the dark places in this world whenever you can.

In light and love,

Pastor Becky



Longest Night Service (Blue Christmas)

Thursday , December 21, 7 pm

A joint worship between 1st UCC and Lower Saucon UCC—held at Lower Saucon UCC.

**CHRISTMAS EVE - 7PM
CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP**



CONFIRMATION CLASS



Beginning in December, class will meet twice a month from 11:30-1pm Dec 3 and Dec 17., January 7 and 21. To sign up or with questions, please contact Marji Hughes or Pastor Becky Thomas



SUNDAY SCHOOL CALENDAR

Dive into God's Word

Children pre-K through grade 6 leave for classes following the Children's Message in worship. 3-6 year old children may play in the nursery or come to worship prior to the Children's Message.

December 3 following Sunday School will be an Advent Craft and Fellowship Hour in the Wimmer Room. We will create cards and a craft for our homebound members as well as crafts to take home – PLUS have some good snacks!

December 24 – 10:30am worship is our Pop-Up Christmas Pageant and Love Feast! When you show up for church you will be given a costume to help tell the Nativity story. Adults and children!! Then sit back and join in the singing of traditional Christmas songs and enjoy cookies juice and hot chocolate.

December 24 – 7pm traditional Christmas Eve service.

Contact Marji Hughes - mphughes22@gmail.com 610-984-5053 if you have any questions at all about Faith Formation at 1st UCC.

NURSERY care is offered on Sunday mornings during worship for babies and toddlers as needed. Adults may still listen to the service while in the nursery. There is a child-sized bathroom and a changing table available as well. An adult is required to remain in the room when anyone under age 16 is present.

We are looking for volunteers 16 years and up to help staff the nursery on Sunday mornings. Please contact the office 610-838-8811 or Tricia Shelly if you'd like to sign up. With enough helpers it would be not more than once a month.

Fellowship Hour & Advent Workshop



Sunday, December 3

In the Wimmer Room immediately following worship. Create Christmas Cards and a craft for our homebound and make a craft or two for yourself.



December - Sponsors/Volunteers

December 3

Counting Team.....	Team 2
Ushers.....	Team 4
Altar Flowers.....	Wayne Packer/Andrea Danner
Bulletins	Doug Miller
Lay Reader	Diane French

December 17

Counting Team.....	Team 4
Ushers	Team 1
Altar Flowers.....	Norine Haas
Bulletins	Daphne Rodriguez
Lay Reader	Sandy Panick

December 31

Counting Team.....	Team 2
Ushers.....	Team 3
Altar Flowers	Larry Muldowney
Bulletins.....	Joan & Nick Kiak
Lay Reader.....	Dave Stuempfle

December 10

Counting Team.....	Team 3
Ushers.....	Team 5
Altar Flowers.....	Larry Muldowney
Bulletins	Alice Totenbier
Lay Reader.....	Bob Scherer

December 24

Counting Team.....	Team 1
Ushers (AM)	Team 2
Altar Flowers	Jean & Leroy Miller
Organ Flowers.....	Daphne Rodriguez
Bulletins.....	Dave & Georgie Stuempfle
Lay Reader.....	Andy Spear

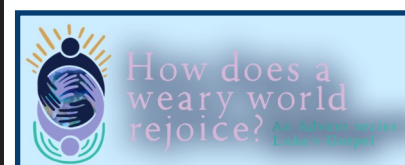
The December Newsletter

has been sponsored by:

Diane French

2024 Sponsors Needed

We are looking for sponsors for Newsletters, Bulletins and Altar Flowers for 2024. The cost to sponsor Newsletter is \$60.00/mo., Bulletins - \$10.00/wk., and Flowers- \$40.00/wk. Sign-up sheets for the Newsletter, Flowers and Bulletins may be found in the Narthex.



"How Does a Weary World Rejoice?" An Advent Devotional

From A Sanctified Art. These are available in the Narthex for those who would like one.

Staff

Rev. Becky Thomas, Pastor	610-297-2295
Marji Hughes, Minister of Faith Formation	610-984-5053
Pat O 'Connell, Minister of Music	
Phyllis Scherer, Administrative Asst.	
Tammie Vosburg, Church Treasurer	
Sherwood Stauffer, Sexton	

Consistory Members

Email address Phone Number

Elders

Sandy Bender	purplepeep@rcn.com	
Amy Mixa	athomeamy@hotmail.com	
Georgie Stuempfle	gdflea@yahoo.com	

Deacons

Minga Ferencin	mingaf1@gmail.com	
Karen Frankenfield	gumbycat1@gmail.com	
Diane French— Pres.	dcfrench48@gmail.com	
Sandy Panick	hygienist2000@msn.com	

Trustees

Ann Brown—Sec.	forglan@verizon.net	
Keith Lentz	keithlen56@gmail.com	
Doug Major	pamajors@rcn.com	
Aaron Kelley		

Church Office Hours: — The Office will be open **9:00 am to 1:30 pm**, Monday thru Friday. Please make your calls to 610-838-8811 and conduct your business during those hours. Other calls will be recorded on voicemail. Thank you for your thoughtfulness and cooperation.

Always inform the church office if you are hospitalized. Please do not trust that word will get to the office through the grapevine. **Our hospital code is 428.** You can mention that if you are admitted.

“Bibles and “Brunch”

for all 1st UCC women members & friends!

Monday—December 11th

10:30am in the Wimmer Rm

For our Holiday gathering, Bibles & Brunch will discuss:

“The Angels of Christmas”



All Women are welcome to join the discussion. Light refreshments will be available. Pick up the reading in the Wimmer Room or from Marji Hughes. Our next meeting in January 8.

Sunday Morning Study 9:15 each week

in the YA Café. Just come and join any Sunday

Speak with Tricia Shelly 610-657-3828 for more information.



Every Sunday morning

9:45 AM

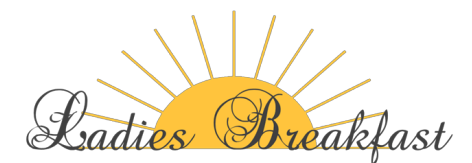
before worship

in the Wimmer Room



Women's Breakfast at the Hellertown Diner

December 12th, 8 am



Second Tuesday of each month.

Come as you are!

Come whenever you are able!

First one there, grabs a table!

Please feel free to join us !





NEW BETHANY HOSPITALITY CENTER BETHLEHEM
First Wednesday of every month
10:00 AM – 1:00PM



Our monthly crew visits to the soup kitchen has resumed. First UCC is signed up for the **first Wednesday of every month**. Four members are needed to chop, prepare, and serve meals at noon finishing at 1:00.
Interested in starting a second crew or be put on a sub list????

Contact : Jeannie Miller 610.838.9704 Elsie Stout 610.838.6470
Jane Joyce 610.838.7593

7th-12th grade YOUTH GROUP
December 10, 2023 from 5-7pm
Christmas Party
at Lower Saucon UCC 1375 Third Ave.



No church affiliation is required.

Bring your friends!

Food, fun and friendships, in a place where all feel safe, supported and accepted for who you are.

If you cannot make our meeting, PLEASE let us know you still want to give us a try.

Any questions, just ask!!

Pastor Becky - pastorbecky1121@gmail.com 610-297-2295

Marji Hughes - mphughes22@gmail.com 610-984-5053

Like us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/hellertownucc



December Birthdays

12/2	Emily Morello	12/22	Annie Policare
12/3	Lisa Fenon	12/24	Bernie Musgung
12/4	Melanie Litz	12/24	Rachel O'Connell
12/4	Mark Lorah	12/26	Ben Schroeck
12/4	Shannon Parsons	12/26	Grady Schroeck
12/7	Glenn Brown	12/27	Matthew Harvey
12/7	Al Lishman	12/27	Jan Stoneback
12/7	Jeannie Miller	12/29	Paul Laub
12/8	Emily Stetser		
12/9	Search Willson		
12/10	Madelyn Ball		
12/12	Sharon Musgung		
12/16	Micheal O'Connell		
12/17	Janice Csrnko		
12/20	Richard Hanner		
12/22	Julia Major		



December Anniversaries

12/9	Al & Susan Lishman
12/15	Kevin & Milou Brown
12/29	Bill & Cindy Sabo
12/30	John & Kathy Chapman



Stewardship of God's People at First Church

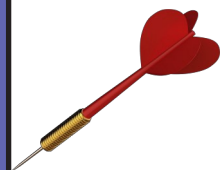
Date	Contributions	Benevolences	Attendance
Oct 1	\$2,068.03		62
Oct 8	\$2,082.53	CROP WALK	53
Oct 15	\$2,238.50	\$198.00	105
Oct 22	\$3,095.43	Fundraisers	50
Oct 29	\$3,009.99	\$1,041.00	54
Total	\$12,494.48		
Budget	(20,000.00)		
Over/Short	(\$7,505.52)		

Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
2 Corinthians 9:6-7



Faith Crosses

Our skilled Woodcraftman, Doug Miller, has created Faith Crosses. They are approximately 6 inches tall by 2.5 inches wide. They will be available in the Wimmer Room. Donations will be gratefully accepted and added to the General Fund of the church. Thank you, Doug, for your lovely creation!



Attention All Dart Players—December Schedule

12/4 Away @ Fritz Wesleyan

12/11 Home vs College Hill

For **anyone** who is interested in joining this group,
please **contact Leroy Miller at 610-838-9704.**

*Thank
You*

October 29, 2023

Dear Friends,

I read in the "Morning Call" this morning that the Church of the Manger was closing down and would be replaced with housing. They will join the congregation of St. Thomas UCC. I was very sad as I remember going to many gathering at the Church of the Manager both for women and synod.

I felt I needed to write a letter to our Consistory and commend them for the actions they took to keep our church open. We also need to say a big thank you to our forefathers for paying off our mortgage. Some on Consistory can remember their actions. Mike and I have attended First Church since August 1964. We love First Church and its members. To be able to stay open and support a half-time pastor and Christian Education director is a credit to our congregation and Consistory. So again I say thank you to Consistory.

Sincerely,
Edna Santo

November 17, 2023

My daughters and I want to thank everyone for their kind words and comforting thoughts during the passing of Dick.

Many wonderful friends are a blessing.

I thank you all for your concern and love.

Dawn Hacker,
Jill Long &
Kelly Emmen



Upcoming Schedule of Services

You will be notified by Facebook or One Call of any changes to the schedule listed below. If you are not receiving messages by One Call, please contact the Church Office with your contact information. If you have recently changed your email address, or phone number, please update your information in the church office. Thank you.

Dec 2023	10:30 AM	3	Worship/Sunday School/Communion
	10:30 AM	10	Worship/Sunday School
	10:30 AM	17	Worship/Sunday School
	10:30 AM	24	Worship/Pop-up Pageant
	7:00 PM	24	Candlelight Service
	10:30 AM	31	Worship
Jan 2024	10:30 AM	7	Worship/Sunday School
	10:30 AM	14	Worship/Sunday School
	10:30 AM	21	Worship/Sunday School
	10:30 AM	28	Worship/Sunday School
Feb 2024	10:30 AM	4	Worship/Sunday School
	10:30 AM	11	Worship/Sunday School
	7:00 PM	14	Ash Wednesday Service at Lower Saucon UCC
	10:30 AM	18	Worship/Sunday School
	10:30 AM	25	Worship/Sunday School

Join us Online!

To watch on Facebook, go to <https://www.facebook.com/hellertownucc> and you will see the live stream as the top post.
To watch on YouTube, go to <https://www.youtube.com/@firstucchellertown/streams>.
To view a playlist of our choir anthems, go to <https://tinyurl.com/FirstUCCMusicMonday>.

Blessing Box Schedule



Our Blessing Box Food Pantry is being used heavily. We are blessed to be able to help. Obviously, there are many in our community who are aided by your generosity. We need to replenish our emergency supply. Always needed are: breakfast foods, tomato sauce, spaghetti noodles, soup, vegetables, canned tuna, other pasta, etc. However, please do not purchase large boxes of cereal or extra large jars of tomato sauce because they do not fit in the box. We suggest buying items in cans and plastic containers.

Week of Dec 3-9 - Letty Petrino

Week of Dec 10-16— Carlann Broglie

Week of Dec 17-23—Doug Miller

Week of Dec 24-30—Marji Hughes

Week of Dec 31-Jan 6 — Andy Spear

Week of Jan 7—13—Phyllis Scherer

Week of Jan 14—20 —Ann Brown

Week of Jan 21— 27 —Sandy Panick

Week of Jan 28—Feb 3 - Amy Mixa

Week of Feb 4—10—Diane French

Week of Feb 11-17 —Tammie Vosburg

Week of Feb 18-24—Georgie Stuempfle



Walking Together Women's Retreat

in combination with Lower Saucon UCC

Has been Rescheduled to:
JANUARY 27 - SAT. ONLY
at First UCC Hellertown
For all women ages 18 and up
Saturday 8am - 3pm

Includes breakfast and lunch!

Sign up in the Narthex.

Speak with Pastor Becky or Marji Hughes
for more information

You were all called to travel on the same road and in the same direction, so stay together, both outwardly and inwardly

The Consistory Minutes in Brief November 13, 2023

Treasurer's Report: Tammie Vosburg, Treasurer

Highlights: While our fundraising supports our budget needs totaling \$6,502 for the year, our church goal should be to keep to our budget through giving. Our benevolence giving is strong, \$7,800, and that doesn't include donated items for the many programs and missions we support. This money is given directly to our missions at the end of each month.

However, with all these exciting events, our attendance has not returned to our per-summer levels, and neither has our giving. This month, again, our expenses have outpaced our offerings.

- A preliminary expense budget for review presented in December for discussion and approval before the annual meeting.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Becky Thomas

Highlights: Total Hours: 100 : Breakdown of hours for major responsibilities, Hours Dedicated to Worship: 35

Hours Dedicated to Pastoral Care: 15, Continuing Education Hours: 6. Office Hours: 24

Meetings: 13

Important Event: I attended the PNEC Fall Meeting on 11/4. The discussion for the day was about the possible merger of the four Pennsylvania conferences.

Faith Formation Report: Marji Hughes

- Confirmation classes will begin on November 26 following the soup luncheon.
- Youth Group began November 5, combined with Lower Saucon.
- Bibles and Brunch will finish the book and video study "The Big Picture" on November 27 and plan a discussion of Angels in the Christmas story at our December 11 meeting.

January 27, 8 am-3 pm. The Women's Retreat has been rescheduled.

Deacons' Report: Sandy Panick

We are working on the 2024 Ushering schedule and attempting to gather more team members. Each team will receive a letter with an ushering procedures' checklist.

Elders' Report: Georgie Stuempfle

Elders plan to send Gift cards to our college students and service members for Christmas. Amy Mixa is coordinating this task.

Trustees' Report:

- Acorn Stairlift service contract approved.
- Arbor Doc Tree Service: Request for a yearly contract with Arbor Doc Tree Service:
- Boiler Inspection Certificate has been approved.

Music and Worship:

- **November 26 - Hanging of the Greens** - Readers to be chosen for each "piece" of greenery to be discussed and placed. Special music by the choir, as well as appropriate hymns sung.
- **December 3 - First Sunday in Advent** --- The first Advent candle will be lit by - Matthew Harvey, and the Children's Message will be a short discussion on the meaning of the Advent Wreath.
- **Fellowship Hour and a "mini" Advent workshop** (3 crafts) in the Wimmer Room after the worship. Please sign up to bring a snack and to help with clean up.
- **December 21 - Thursday - 7 pm Longest Night** (Blue Christmas) service in conjunction with Lower Saucon with special music - soloists tbd.
- **December 24 - 10:30 am Worship: Pop-Up Pageant AND Love Feast** - Charles Knecht is heading the cookies, juice, and volunteers needed! Children will participate in the whole service.
- **Candlelight Christmas Eve service at 7 pm.** The choir will sing at both services.
- **December 31, 10:30 am worship, no Sunday School -no choir.**
- Hopefully we solved the battery question for the microphones on Sunday mornings. A mike check will be done each week using a battery tester to test the efficacy of the batteries.

Stewardship - Georgie Stuempfle:

Discussion about possible fundraisers for the first six months of 2024. We will present a list at December's consistory meeting.

A copy of the full minutes is available in the Church Office.