

Rooted in the past,
Living faithfully in the present

St. Paul's United Church of Christ

December
2019

*“By listening to
the still
speaking God,
we seek to
connect people
to God and to
others through
worship,
service, and
fellowship.”*

We are a church
that values:

Welcome

Fellowship

Outreach

Tradition

**God
is still
speaking,**

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

The Joy of Christmas Creep

“What!?! Christmas stuff already. It isn’t Halloween yet.”

Who hasn’t said this? It is a Christmas tradition to complain about what has been labelled, Christmas Creep. The tradition of complaining about Christmas Creep is part of the accumulative traditions of Christmas in North America.

People have been saying Christmas is starting too early for decades. A couple Charlie Brown specials make this clear. The TV special A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving from 1973 has a scene in it where Sally goes shopping for a turkey tree for Thanksgiving but can only find Christmas stuff. A year later, It’s the Easter Beagle, Charlie Brown, has the Peanuts characters going shopping for Easter in the middle of April and seeing Christmas displays.

In a non-fiction based example, a St. Petersburg Florida newspaper from September 25, 1968, reads as follows:

“Earlier every year. It used to be the day after Thanksgiving, then the day after Halloweed, and now it’s shortly after Labor Day that the Christmas season starts showing up in St. Petersburg stores. Several already have put up Yule displays, urging shoppers to get the jump on each other.”

As far back as 1912, there were retailers selling the idea of shopping early. An advertisement from October 28, 1912 in the Montreal newspaper Daily Telegraph reads: “This may SEEM a little premature to you—but it really is NOT... not many days left in which to do your Christmas buying.”

A brilliant article in the webzine Slate discusses how Christmas Creep goes all the way back the Victorian age. Author Paul Collins says, “The problem, then as now, was not the idea of shopping before Thanksgiving—that barrier had already toppled—but the more heated question of pushing past another holiday and into the precincts of Halloween. Sioux City, Iowa, merchants were berated in 1901 for revving up Christmas sales in mid-October, and that same season saw the Philadelphia Inquirer signing the annual complaint that ‘Gift buying has begun in earnest—seems to get earlier every year.’”

(continued on next page)

For a time, there was a genuine reason for the season's Christmas Creep in those days, the early 1900's. As the article in Slate lays out, increasing the days of Christmas shopping meant less abuse of child labor in that frenetic, and fearsome final week of Christmas shopping. Progressive giant Florence Kelly, co-founder of the NAACP, and Labor Unions pushed for shopping to be evenly spread in a longer shopping season so that the final week before Christmas day didn't see children working long, exhaustive hours selling, manufacturing, or bike-delivering gifts. Collins writes, "Early shopping was part of Kelley's crusades for child labor laws and an eight-hour workday, because the last few weeks before Christmas were exactly when overtime and seasonal child labor were most abused."

During times of war, more time for Christmas shopping assured that soldiers got their gifts by the big day. This is where we get the Christmas in July adage. Buy in July and get it to the boys overseas in time.

The added benefit was to the retailers. They had more evenly spread books and a longer shopping season, which meant better and more consistent sales.

So, there is nothing new under the sun when it comes to the quip, "Christmas comes earlier each and every year."

That said, is Christmas coming early such a bad thing? Having worked retail for many years and experienced many a Christmas season, the existence of more time for people to shop means less stress for clerks working in those frenetic, last days before Christmas.

But more importantly is the spiritual import. I am also reminded of that Christmas tune, made famous by the Charlie Brown special, Merry Christmas, Charlie Brown. "Christmastime is here, happiness and cheer, Oh, that we could always see such spirit through the year."

Yes, the retailing involved in a longer Christmas season may be a problem. However, a longer Christmas season itself, one whose spirit lasts through the year, that would be a good thing, as the song suggests.

A spirit of Christmas not just early but perennially – what would that look like?

Finally, we must ask -- the spirit of Christmas, what is it? It is the spirit of Joy to the World, a joy that results from Hope-realized, hope for love and forgiveness and liberation.

Luke 4:18 makes it clear what the spirit of Christmas is. Here Jesus says, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

The Spirit of Christmas is the jubilee brought forth by a baby's birth, a jubilee marked by a new way for the poor, freedom for those celled in and kept down, sight for those who've never seen.

So when you see and want to complain about Christmas coming too early, see it as a reminder that we need the Spirit of Christmas all the time, we need the Spirit that offers us poor souls good news amid the bad, that shows a way out of no way, an insight into light instead of darkness.



One of the amazing things I get to do on a daily basis in the office is read some of the notes that come in from past congregants. I thought I would share this one from Ann Stoutenboroughs grandchildren who remembered St. Paul's fondly. One of the best parts of my job...Ann



We will be collecting hat, gloves and socks for the local harm reduction needle exchange. Look for the baskets in Friendship hall to place your donation in.
Thank you....



Our Annual Chili Lunch will be held on December 15 after services



Dear Beloved,
Our grandparents, Paul + Eva Marie Stoutenborough were married in your church Jan 7, 1922. Almost 100 yrs later, our mother, Ann Stoutenborough, passed away. To honor her family, she designated this donation, to your church.
Blessings on your continued work in the name of our savior, Jesus Christ.
Lea, Scott + Carol Stoutenborough

...so many thoughts of special people like you.
Wishing You a Wonderful Thanksgiving



Decembers Special Offering

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a Special Mission Offering that 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.

December Volunteer Schedule

Date	Greeters	Refreshments	Ushers	Liturgist
1st	L. Adams D. Adams Communion — C. Kinyalocots & C. Clark(Altar)	P. Beatty	L. Adams D. Adam C. Lowman	C. Lowman
8th	J. Ratliff M. Ratliff	B. Flory	C. Batliner J. Batliner R. Lyons	C. Burnett
15th	C. Batliner J. Batliner	R. McQuade	T. Shibley M. Shibley J. Rockwell	J. Ratliff
22nd	C. Clark R. Lyons	C. Clark	C. Clark C. Kinyalocots C. Burnett	M. Minge
24th	J. Williams A. Turner		D. Adams L. Adams C. Lowman	
29th	J. Rockwell A. Turner	S. Canter	C. Clark C. Burnett D. Flory	C. Clark



Don't forget to pick up your poinsettia after church on Christmas Eve



*Virginia Elam Lorraine Clark Cleo Habig Amanda Lorig
Carroll Stein Charlene Hale
Frances Stoutenborough
Shirley Fore Darlene Moss
Kathryn(O'Conner) Kuhn*



*Prayers for our service men and women..
Chase McConnehea Jake Burley*



December 2019

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

1	2	3	4 Choir 4:30	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Choir 4:30	12	13	14
15 Chili Lunch Shalom Dinner	16 Shalom Breakfast	17	18 Choir 4:30	19	20	21
22	23	24 Christmas Eve Services	25 	26	27	28
29	30	31 				

* Bible studies are held at Triple Moon Coffee shop 1100 Central Avenue, Middletown

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MIDDLETOWN, OHIO

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES.

NOVEMBER 10, 2019

PRESENT: Barb Flory, Chuck Clark, Bryan Canter, Larry Adams, Darlene Adams, Rick Lyons, Judy Brewer & Rev. Don Erickson. ABSENT: Julie Ratliff.

OPENING PRAYER: Rick

APPROVAL OF MINUTES from May 19, Sept. 22 & Oct. 13, 2019.

May 19: Approved as amended - changed Sisley to Shibley. Chuck/Bryan.

Sept. 22: Approved - Chuck/Darlene. Oct. 13: Approved - Chuck/Bryan

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Approved as amended. Added #8 - Radiator. Chuck/Bryan

TREASURER'S REPORT: Filed for audit. Judy/Bryan

PASTOR'S REPORT - Rev. Don

1. Core of my time is spent on worship planning and sermon writing.
2. Bible Study continues on Tuesdays with an average of 6 attending.
3. Pastoral care has again been limited in October. A couple folks put their name and Number in the visitation box and I have visited.
4. I am contemplating hosting a spiritual-themed movie night or matinee on a monthly basis. One thing that would be needed is a good LCD projector. Also, a license to show movies.
5. The Trillion Tree Campaign continues Nov. 10 with us joining a group of Miami University To plant trees at Elk-Creek Park (Meadow Ridge area).
6. I will be away for 2 Sundays (11/17 & 24). Pastor Robert Walker will fill the pulpit.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Church Profile needs to be completed before the Search Committee can begin their work. Those on council who are able will meet on Wed. Nov. 13 to work on the profile. A second Meeting will be on Dec. 1st after church.
2. By-Laws in regards to number of church members needed to be on the search Committee. It was decided to bring to the Congregational Meeting the need to add a Sentence to the by-laws reserving the right of council to bring the congregation the need To change the number needed based on the number of members of the congregation. This will be voted on Sunday, December 1 giving the two week notice needed.
3. Hanging of the Greens will be Nov. 30 from 9am-noon. Larry will get a new tree.
4. Cell phone for minister? AT&T has a program that will allow the church to get a cell phone For the Pastor as an emergency line for approx. \$40 a month. This will allow any interim Or permanent pastor to have an emergency # and not have to publish their personal Phone #. Ann will check on this. Tabled to the next meeting.
5. Use and capacity of sanctuary. Need to check the policy. Tabled until next meeting.
6. Crayons to Computers would like a quote response regarding what Crayons to Computers means to area teachers. Jennie Webb will be asked to provide a response.
7. Proposal to have the Harm Reduction Program at St. Paul's UCC as a temporary location. This was a written proposal by Ann. After discussion, it was decided that St. Paul's would Not provide a temporary location but could take up a collection of hats, gloves & socks.
8. Pioneer Cemetery has requested the metal radiator cover that has been stored in the Basement to be used to finish the ceiling in the historic vault building. Council decided Give the cover to the Pioneer Cemetery.

OLD BUSINESS

1. So far, we have five members on the search committee. From council - Chuck Clark & Rick Lyons; from the congregation - Jennifer Batliner, Carl Batliner & Cindy Burnett.

CO-MODERATORS' REPORT - Barb & Rick. No report

SERVICE - Julie & Judy. The snack sale money will go for the purchase of turkeys.

WORSHIP - Barb & Darlene. Need to check if more candles are needed for "Passing of the Light" on Christmas Eve.

FELLOWSHIP - Chuck. No report regarding fellowship. Chuck cleaned up a pile of garbage That was at the corner of the building and put it in the garbage.

PROPERTY - Rick & Larry. Snow removal will be handled by the same person as last year.

Larry will be the contact person. Boiler needs a valve repaired. Robinson Heating & Air-Conditioning will be coming in on Nov. 14 to do the repair. Otis Elevator is under contract to Come in and service the elevator. Need to check when it is due for repair. Roof - copper Flashing for each side will cost \$750.00 for a total of \$1,500.00. In the balcony, the plaster is Starting to come off the wall. This is basically due to the weather. Need to have someone Come in to look at it.

BUDGET & FINANCE - Bryan. Budget is under. Mutual funds are growing.

NEXT MEETING: December 8, 2019

NEXT MONTH OPENING PRAYER: Darlene

Attendance: October 2019 - 107. (27/4 week average)

October 2018 - 124 (31/4 week average)

Respectfully submitted by
Judith S Brewer,
Church Council Secretary

FALL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING.

NOVEMBER 17, 2019

CALL TO ORDER - Rick Lyons

OPENING PRAYER - Rick Lyons

APPROVAL OF MINUTES from May 19, 2019 Congregational Meeting

Approved as amended - V. Changed Sisley to Sibley. Dan Meeker/Roger Britton

PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED 2020 CHURCH BUDGET - Bryan Canter

Bryan presented the 2020 budget and answered any questions.

DISCUSSION & VOTE FOR PROPOSED BUDGET - Barb Flory/Rick Lyons

After discussion, a motion was made by Chuck Clark to accept the proposed budget and
Was seconded by Dan Meeker. Motion passed.

CO-MODERATORS' COMMENTS - Barb Flory/Rick Lyons

There are new sign-up sheets for time & talents. Even if you have previously filled one out
You are being asked to fill out a new sheet.

Hanging of the Greens date was announced for Nov. 30, 2019 from 9am to noon.

SAFETY MEASURES - Larry. Larry explained the safety measures that are now in place.

CLOSING LITANY - Psalm 67

Rick led those in attendance in the reading of Psalm 67.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Respectfully submitted by
Judith S Brewer,
Church Council Secretary

UPDATE FROM THE SEARCH COMMITTEE:

The interim time between ministers is an intentional season that is guided in part by the preparation of a Local Church Profile. Using the Profile, the church can discover its data and express its story for the reliable discernment of a search committee and the beginning of a new pastorate. Searching ministers will want to see this document in its entirety. Three sections of the Local Church Profile are: Who Are We Now, Who Is Our Neighbor, and Who Is God Calling Us To Become. Some questions are easy to answer. Some are not so easy.

Council, Rev. Don, and office manager Ann have been gathering information and working on the church profile. Pastor Sheresa began the process before she left when we were all asked to write our thoughts on the long paper in Friendship Hall. Rev. Don also distributed a survey. This information has been tabulated and included.

When our profile is complete, it will be sent to the conference to post online at UCC Ministry Opportunities. Then the search committee, comprised of Carl and Jennifer Batliner, Cindy Burnett, Barb Flory, and Rick Lyons representing both Church Council and membership, will begin receiving ministerial profiles to read and discuss.

We will keep you updated.

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
114 S. BROAD STREET
MIDDLETOWN OHIO 45044

OPEN AND AFFIRMING
10:15 a.m. Worship Service

Nursery Provided • Lift to Sanctuary • Handicap Accessible
Holy Communion celebrated on the first Sunday of the month.

Rev. Don Erickson, Pastor
Marsha Minge, Choir Director • Barbara Flory, Pianist



Pastors Office Hours Tuesday, Wednesday 9:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. Thursday by appointment
Church Office Hours Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday 11am-2pm
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