

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST EAST GOSHEN

1201 North Chester Road, West Chester, PA 19380

An Open and Affirming Congregation

All are Welcome!

ADVENT~URES 2021



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An Advent Reflection

One thing that I love about the church is that it comes with a built-in structure with which we can (should?) approach each season of life. Further, this structure is based upon the wisdom of generations before us and continues to live and grow with us. You may have noticed in recent years that the winter holidays seem to come quicker and quicker leading to an influx of internet arguments about when is the appropriate time to decorate or start listening to carols. Friends, you can put string lights around pumpkins while singing “Jingle Bell Rock” all year round if it makes you happy; that doesn’t change the season. There is a natural rhythm to this life and it stands to reason that the Creator is quite aware of this, in fact, might even insist on it. As the days get short and the nights grow long, our bodies may grow weary and our bones a little stiff. We begin to crave the foods that are more readily available and that urge to return home comes upon us. Capitalism gives us plenty of stress-filled ways to put enough pep in our step to host that big family dinner, but church gives us the focus. Hope, peace, love, and joy are the four words used to prepare us for the coming of the infant Christ. The peace we’ve been hoping for is both here and on the way. Let us love and take joy in our new opportunity to walk hand in hand with G-d as we grow from our own dingy mangers to our triumphant ride into Jerusalem.

**On this journey of faith,
Seminarian Maxwell Staley**





Saturday, Nov. 27	5:30 PM	Roots & Roofs	
Sunday, Nov. 28	10 AM	1st Sunday of Advent Candle of Hope is lit Stewardship Testimonial	
Wed., Dec. 1	11 AM	Café Script	
Saturday, Dec. 4	5:30 PM	Roots & Roofs	
Sunday, Dec. 5		2nd Sunday of Advent Candle of Peace is lit Dedication of our 2021 Pledges Stewardship Testimonial	
Wed., Dec. 8	11 AM	Café Script	
Saturday, Dec. 11	5:30 PM	Roots & Roofs	
Sunday, Dec. 12	10 AM	3rd Sunday of Advent Candle of Joy is lit Communion Sunday	
Wed., Dec. 15	11 AM	Café Script	
Saturday, Dec. 18	5:30 PM	Roots & Roofs	
Sunday, Dec. 19	10 AM	4th Sunday of Advent Candle of God's Love is lit Special Family Service and Christmas Fund offerings for retired UCC clergy is received.	
Friday, Dec. 24	6 PM	Christmas Eve Service The Celebration of Christ's birth Candlelight Service	
Sunday, Dec. 26	10 AM	Service of Lessons and Carols	

We journey together this advent carrying the light
of the world, Our Emmanuel, Jesus!



Roots & Roofs

Roots and Roofs has been undergoing a lot of changes recently. Moving from entirely on Zoom to meeting live in the fellowship hall with a Zoom in option, our time together has been shifting slowly from self-reflection and growth to include a basic framework for practice. We recently finished a series exploring the arts and spirituality which allowed us to once again add to our spiritual toolbox. As we move into the Advent season and prepare for longer, colder nights, Roots and Roofs will take a look into the world of the saints and sainthood in an attempt to gather more companions for our journey together. All are welcome to attend Roots and Roofs either in person or via Zoom (link is available on UCCEastGoshen.org). For more information about what we do, check out our Facebook page.

Worship & Music

We are excited and blessed to begin this Advent Season on November 28th.

Advent candles will be lit at the beginning of each service.
The Advent schedule is listed below:

Nov. 28 Rev. John Woodcock

Dec. 5 Maxwell Staley (NO Communion)

Dec. 12 Rev. Wanda Craner, Communion Sunday

Dec. 19 Rev. John Woodcock, special service involving the children and youth

Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Rev. Wanda Craner

This service is to begin at 6:00 PM. Small candles will be available for adults and battery-operated candles will be available for children.

On Dec. 26 we will have a Lessons and Carols service led by Maxwell Staley with music coordinated by Marty Meyer.

We wish you all a Blessed Advent and Christmas Season.

Advent Devotionals

Advent Booklets not available - Advent booklets are out of stock and will not be available for distribution as planned. However, they are available via PDF download. Each person who wants one will need to download it at a charge of \$3.00. Each person will pay for their own. [Click here to order your copy](#) and choose PDF from the drop-down menu.

50th Anniversary

During the holiday season help us to celebrate our history of 50 years of good works.

In December, please support The Giving Tree by donating articles of clothing to be delivered to Old First Reformed UCC Church in Philadelphia. Basic clothing items – hats, gloves, socks are desperately needed. Toiletry items as well – toothpaste, toothbrushes, lotion, and soap.

In January, please join us for a soup luncheon to be served after services on January 9.

Looking forward we will celebrate our achievements and outreach in many ways. Spring will host a clean-up day for our grounds to celebrate Arbor Day. We will host a drive for pet food, toys, leashes, etc. for our Blessing of the Pets service. Mother's Day we will donate pouches filled with necessary items for a women's shelter. Our local Fire and Police keep us safe, so we will surprise them with a goodie basket to say thank you!

Please stay tuned to see how you can help us gather the items we need to complete our outreach projects.

Café Script

The discussion group will meet at 11 AM in fellowship hall with masks the following Wednesday mornings: Dec 1, 8 and 15. **All are welcome to participate.**



Poinsettia Orders

Order forms for Christmas Eve Poinsettias are available in the Narthex. Orders are due by December 5. Please see Bonnie Yost with any questions.



Special Family Service on December 19th!

Instead of a traditional Christmas Pageant this year some of the young people in the church are going to light the Fourth Candle of Advent, the candle of Love, on December 19th, and provide some Christmas readings. Cathy Yost and her family and Ann Boohar, bassist, will be providing musical selections. Several favorite Christmas Carols will be sung by the congregation during this worship service too.

Some new ideas for this day:

Please wear your favorite Christmas outfit or dress up as a character from the story of the Birth of Jesus!

Please bring Christmas cards to add to a display board so you can share Christmas greetings with others in the church. Blank cards and construction paper will be available for children to decorate and make their own cards during the service. They can leave them on the board, share with a special friend at church, leave in a basket to be sent to a shut-in, or take them home for a family member or friend.

Please bring cookies and/or other treats to share. Due to COVID precautions we are still not sharing food together in our building (hopefully SOON!) but wrapped treats can be shared with others to take home after the service.

Please bring your own hot drink travel mugs. We will be serving coffee, tea, and hot chocolate outside on the porch after the service. (In order to limit disposables we will have our regular coffee mugs available for those who don't have their travel mugs.) Maybe we can do a little bit of impromptu caroling! "Weather permitting" will be the watchword on what we are able to do outdoors. But we will celebrate the coming of the Christ Child no matter the weather!

Giving Tree 2021



The holidays are a wonderful time to stop and think about others in need. For the 3rd year in a row UCC East Goshen would like to help the men from the shelter at Old First Reformed UCC Church in Philadelphia. Over the years many of our youth and volunteers have served meals there and spent time getting to know the men. There are a few ways to help with the Giving Tree.

- You can Venmo me (@Barton-Yost) and I will purchase items in need.
- You can also use the Amazon wish list link below to purchase items you would like to donate: [tinyurl.com/2vr3nyn9](https://www.amazon.com/wishlist/ref=ast_wishlist_title?pf_rd_p=26111111-1111-4444-8888-999999999999&pf_rd_r=26111111-1111-4444-8888-999999999999)
- Finally you can drop items off at church under the tree or to Cathy Yost's house – address is in the directory.

Here are the items needed-

Blankets -small fleece, Winter Hats, Socks, Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Lotion and Soap.

Thank you for your generosity!

Community Service by our Youth

Members of Youth Group United will be working together to prepare part of the December meal for the Salvation Army that our church provides the first Thursday of each month. Cathy Yost is hosting this event on December 1st. Please contact Carol Swingle if your youth (grades 6-12) would like to be included and hasn't been contacted. Due to space limitations there is a limit as to how many youth can participate.

ADULT EDUCATION

Chuck Gosselink would like to lead a 2 or 3 session journey (through presentation and discussion) to the history of the Christian church in the Middle East. Please contact Carol Swingle to express your interest in this indicating times you would be available, and whether you would attend in-person sessions or virtually only. These will likely be offered in the spring.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We would like to start in-person Sunday School as soon as it is deemed safe. Although children are back to in-person school during the week we don't have the facilities or training to follow current CDC guidelines in our classrooms. But we need teachers first! If you are interested in this important aspect of the church program, please [contact Carol Swingle](#). Child abuse and criminal background checks are required by law, and we would require proof of vaccination.

Another volunteer project that someone might enjoy would be to restock the Activity Bags by the door with materials. This would involve a minimal time commitment but would be perfect for a creative person or an older youth looking for community service hours.

SAVE THE DATE

Monday, January 17, 2022 is the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. You're encouraged to "make it a day on, not a day off" by volunteering in your community. Some of our church members typically participate with the wonderful program at St Paul's Baptist Church in West Chester. More details will be forthcoming depending on the COVID situation, but it typically involves several hours of volunteering in the morning (at the location of your choice), a free luncheon back at St. Paul's, and an optional program of speakers, music, or worship afterwards. If we sign up as a group, we can volunteer as a group! [Let Carol Swingle](#) know if you want to be kept up-to-date.

SALVATION ARMY DINNER

UCC-East Goshen has been providing one meal a month to the Salvation Army in West Chester for about 10 years. The volunteer chefs agree to make one part of a meal usually every other month. The menus are set so no need to figure out what to cook or bake! We are in need of a few additional chefs to fill the schedule as some volunteers have had to drop out. If you have questions or are interested in volunteering, please contact Bonnie Yost- 610-696-4137.

WOMENS GROUP

A big THANK YOU to all those who baked goodies or worked the Election Day Bake Sale! The voters were very pleased we were back! Thanks to the generosity of the community, we made over \$280.00! We will use the funds to support Christmas outreach. Thanks again!



Harvest Sunday Thank YOU!

Thanks to your generosity, this morning (November 22nd) I delivered 79 pounds of food to the West Chester Food Cupboard and another 53 pounds to the Chester County Food Bank on behalf of our church. Your incredible food gifts will help many families struggling with food insecurity.

--Many, many thanks from the Mission & Outreach Committee



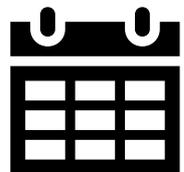
Transition Team

The Transition Team is currently interviewing Interim Pastor applicants. It is our goal to have an interim in place by January 1, 2022.



Annual Congregational Meeting - January 30, 2022

Please mark your calendars for our UCCEG Congregational meeting. We will receive Committee Reports and vote on our 2022 Budget. This will be open to all members and will be held in person and via Zoom. Keep your eye on our weekly email and January Newsletter for further details.



Outreach Opportunity



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.

Members and Friends should feel free to use the envelope provided at church or send their contributions (clearly labelled as such) through the month of December either through the mail or via PayPal on the Church Website.

Memorial Bricks Fundraiser

UCCEG is offering the opportunity for members and friends to present a lasting gift to UCCEG in the form of memorial bricks dedicated to loved ones' memory, a family, or simply a loving thought. The bricks will be installed as our new front walkway up to the front door of the church. What better way to honor loved ones and family or share a message! These make great Christmas gifts! **Order yours now online or pick up an order form in the Narthex/Lobby.** [Any questions can be directed to Bonnie Jackson.](#)
ucceastgothen.org/blog/50th-anniversary-brick-sale

Worship Volunteers Needed: We have a continuing need every Sunday for volunteers to read scripture, greet, manage the tech for livestreaming and do children's chats. Some of these things can be pre-recorded. Please view the sign up genius in the weekly email and on our website (under the members tab) to volunteer or type this into your browser: tinyurl.com/yu5acnnv



Flower Sponsors Needed: Now that we have resumed indoor services, it would be great if we can have fresh flowers in the sanctuary again! The cost is \$15 for one vase and \$25 for two vases. Your dedication will appear in the bulletin/power point for that week. Please sign up on the Narthex Bulletin Board or using the sign up genius on our website. Any questions can be directed to Bonnie Yost.

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Dear God, Here we are again. Another new church year has begun and we feel unprepared to meet all of the challenges that it brings. Help us to remember that in the season of Advent, this season when we are waiting and preparing for the wonder of the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, You are also waiting and preparing for us. Help us to remember that You are calling to us. You are waiting for us to hear Your still, small voice amid the hub-bub of our daily lives. Help us to remember that when Jesus came to his earthly parents they weren't prepared. But You had prepared for them and sent them the help that they needed. Help us to know that You are waiting and preparing to greet us if we would but have faith and listen and watch for You. Amen.

Advent Wreath History

One of the fondest Advent traditions for both congregations and families is the lighting of Advent candles. The tradition reaches back to pre-Christian northern Europeans. During the darkest days of winter, they lit as many as twenty-four candles on an evergreen-covered wheel or wreath. By lighting a candle a day, they marked time, anticipating the return of the sun's light and warmth. By the 1500s, both Lutherans and Catholics adapted the Advent Wreath as a devotional way to prepare for the coming of Christ, the Light of the World.

Today, the Advent Wreath is usually an evergreen wreath placed on a table or suspended from a ceiling or an arch. In the wreath are four candles (usually blue or purple, occasionally one is pink); each candle represents one week during Advent. A white candle is often placed or suspended in the center of the wreath.

The symbols of the Advent Wreath are interpreted in many ways. The circle of evergreens reminds Christians of the eternal and ever-renewing promises of Christ. The lighting of candles, spanning the season, acknowledges the deepening of our preparation and the increasing light that bursts forth at Christmas. The colors of the candles also vary. Often the candles are purple or blue, noting the season's expectations of royalty, liberation, redemption, and hope. For the third Sunday of Advent, occasionally a pink candle is lit. This recognizes a shift of Advent themes in the Bible. The first two Sundays focus on the Bible's prophetic vision of Christ's future and final return; on the third and fourth Sunday, the readings focus on the coming of Jesus, the Christ. The third Sunday traditionally recalls John the Baptizer's call for repentance, and the fourth recounts God's call to Mary and her faithful response. The third Sunday has been identified in some traditions as "Gaudete," a day of joy and rejoicing. Finally, on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, a center white candle is lit. The light of Christ is fully present. Jesus is born.

