December 2024

The Good News Herald



Zwingli
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A Small Church with a Big and Open Heart!

Check out our Zwingli UCC - Paoli Facebook page! https://www.facebook.com/zwingliuccpaoli



The busy month of December is here! There is so much to DO to be READY for Christmas that sometimes we get overwhelmed and exhausted before Christmas even arrives. We are a DO-ing culture, but the Church season of Advent invites us into a time of BE-ing, and preparing our hearts to receive the gift of God-with-us. Advent is an ancient season in the Church calendar which invites us to 4 weeks of centering ourselves into the mystery of God-with-us in Christ. When we take the time for Advent BE-ing, we can experience Christmas in a much deeper way. Recently I discovered a reflection that I hope can give you support in your Advent journey. It's by Ann Freeman Price.

A Mantra for Today

The blessing came.
Johns says, "In the beginning was the Word."
Mark starts out his gospel saying, "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."
Luke writes, "And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."
Matthew says, "Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way."
They are all accounts of this amazing blessing to the world.
And that one blessing has reverberated about the world and has traveled through time.
The blessing came.

The blessing comes.
If anyone had need of proof of a resurrection, that person could look into the lives of all those people in whom the Christ is born anew.
The Jesus of Bethlehem was born again in a Francis of Assisi, in a Dorothy Day, and in a Martin Luther King Jr.

The blessing of that nativity comes again in the Christina Rosetti hymn urging the gift of one's heart.
The blessing comes in the neighbor across the street, in the person in the grocery, in the stranger far away, in the soul struggling mightily in a very real prison.
There is no ending. The birth continues in this very moment.
The blessing comes.

The blessing will continue to come.
There is excitement in knowing about forever-ness, knowing that this birth in Bethlehem will continue into the future.
There is relief in the promise that there will always be nativity beyond the manger, that God has promised a faithfulness that does not despair and does not give up -- even on a world that seems trapped in transgression.
There is joy -- such a joy that in the very midst of working for peace and love in the present, one can also relish the future.
The blessing will continue to come.

It's a mantra - say it often and believe it in your heart:

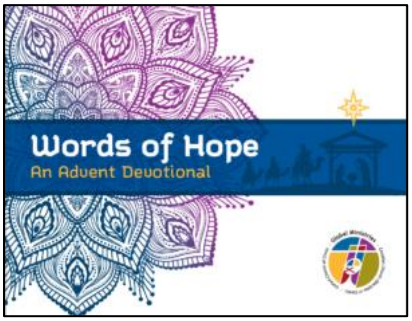
The blessing came.
The blessing comes.
The blessing will continue to come.

Advent Blessings to you and yours,
Karla



Washington Reformation United Church of Christ (N6026 Church Rd. Monticello, WI 53570) is offering a special Worship Service for those who are grieving during this holiday season: **Blue Christmas**, Saturday, December 21, 2024 at 10:30AM. Zwingli members have been invited to attend if this is something that might be meaningful.

Advent is a time for pondering God-with-us



In Luke 2:19 we are told that "Mary pondered all these things in her heart". During the season of Advent, we are invited to take time away from our busy secular Christmas activities, to prepare ourselves spiritually for Christmas. If you are looking for a short daily devotional to do this, I invite you to check out this resource by the UCC Global Ministries Office - Words of Hope: An Advent Devotional (you can read it online or download and print it out). The author of this devotional is Rev. Anne Gregory.

Anne was born in Elkhart, IA, and grew up as the child of mission co-workers in Thailand. After receiving her MDiv and serving churches in Iowa, Anne was invited to return to Thailand as a mission co-working in 2014. In Thailand, Anne also served as Co-Pastor for English-Language Ministries at Wattana (pronounced WHAT-tuh-nah) Church. Anne shares, “What is different is that every day is a multi-lingual day, every day is a multi-cultural day, and every day is a day of working with people of all different social and economic standings. I am, I believe, walking in the footsteps of Jesus: learning, struggling, tripping and falling, getting up again, experiencing trouble and loss, but also knowing God’s healing, strengthening power, grace, and love. I believe I’m called to share all this with those I meet.”

I've only read the first day of her devotional, but was deeply moved and eager to use it as one of my Advent devotionals this year. It was short but profound. So I'm eager to share it with you!

Advent Blessings,
Karla



It's Rich and Ruby Sunday--December 29

We are happy to look forward to having our former pastor, Rev. Rich Pleva and his wife, Ruby join us to celebrate their ministry among us on December 29. As many will remember, Rich retired in the midst of Covid and although we gave them gifts and our thanks, we weren't able to have an in-person worship and party. So, now we are!!

Please plan to attend worship on December 29 for a special worship service of recognition and thanks. Pastor Rich has agreed to offer the sermon that day to make this even better! Following worship, we will have a potluck and time to visit. We hope the weather cooperates, but if it doesn’t, we will be sure to reschedule.

Installation Service Memories

On Sunday Nov. 10, Zwingli welcomed 70 guests to celebrate with us as we installed Pastor Karla as pastor and teacher of Zwingli. Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped welcome and feed our guests, served as liturgists, acolytes and/or musicians, or took pictures! Here are a few of the memories from that day! You can view more pictures on our Zwingli FB page.



A Big Thank you!!



Thank you to all who contributed to our special First Fruits Offering. There were some very nice gifts and each one is appreciated. Between this and our end-of-year giving, we will be able to close the gap a bit on the deficit for this year. We go into the new year with hope as we look to the future and the thriving of our church and its mission.

Thank you all for all you give to help our congregation thrive!







Happy 90th Birthday to Reinhold Meihsner! His family shared these pictures of the celebration: one of the whole family, and one with his children (L-R: Amy, Doug, and Larry)! His children thank Zwingli for keeping Reinhold in our thoughts and prayers.

Poinsettias

The following members have donated beautiful flowers and greenery to adorn the sanctuary this holiday season. Any additional donations will be noted in the weekly bulletins.

- Sue Bovre - In memory of Marcus Sr. and Marques Jr. & our parents
- Debbie Versnik - In memory of Steve Versnik, Harold & Rachel Eichelkraut
- Jack & Linda Everson - In memory of our parents and granddaughter, Mackenzie Cleary.
- Lee & Becky Stilwell - In memory of their parents
- Petra Streiff & Larry Stuessy
- Eldon, Kriss & Jason Ace – In memory of our parents & grandparents
- Dave & Katie Batker – In honor of our combined families
- Jerry Brown - In memory of the Brown family



Lighting the Advent Wreath

Thank you to those individuals who have signed up to light the Advent Wreath.

Kriss Ace	Advent 1 - Hope	Dec 01
Gail & Ken Bauman	Advent 2 - Peace	Dec 08
Jeanette Bossingham	Advent 3 - Joy	Dec 15
Sue Bovre	Advent 4 - Love	Dec 22

Cookies for Kelsch



Once again, we would like to say *"thanks"* with COOKIES to Kelsch for allowing us to use their parking lot each week. **Please bring one dozen cookies to church on December 15.** If you can stay after Worship and help package the cookies, please do so. Debbie would appreciate your help! She will deliver the cookies on the 16th.

The Christmas Fund



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.

The Christmas Fund is one of four annual UCC special mission offerings. At Zwingli, we will receive donations through the end of December. Checks should be made out to Zwingli, with "Christmas Fund" in the note section.

Items of Note

December Birthdays

Andy Beal

Ilana Beloungy

Larry Brunkow

Faith Wittwer



Looking for Council Members

As usual at this time of year, we are looking for a couple of people to step up and join the Council in February. Please consider joining a good working group of members to help plan and dream for our future, as well as keep the building and grounds and current programs in good shape now. If you are interested, please let any member of Council know.

Thank you for considering serving!

Zwingli UCC Annual Meeting is Sunday, January 26, 2025

Church Committee Leaders: please submit your year-end reports to the Administrative Assistant, Kathie Wagner, at zwingliuccpaoli@gmail.com by Monday, December 16.

DEC 1: 9:30 AM - 1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT WORSHIP
FRIENDSHIP TIME AFTER WORSHIP

DEC 8: 9:30 AM – 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT WORSHIP
BOOK GROUP MEETS AFTER WORSHIP

DEC 15: 9:30 AM -- 3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT WORSHIP
COUNCIL MEETS AFTER WORSHIP

DEC 16: COMMITTEE REPORTS DUE TO ADMIN ASST

DEC 22: 9:30 AM -- 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT WORSHIP

DEC 24: 7:00 PM -- CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP W/ CANDLES, CAROLS AND HOLY COMMUNION

DEC 29: 9:30 AM -- CELEBRATION OF RICH AND RUBY WORSHIP AND POTLUCK

CHURCH COUNCIL

Minutes of the October 20, 2024 meeting are now available in the wall pockets near the mailboxes.
Contact the church office to request an electronic copy.

For those interested in giving to a food pantry, here's a plan you might like:

