

CHRISTMAS EVE 2024



But first: ADVENT; a Time of Preparation!



Share the Holidays with UCC Greenawalds!

Worship begins at 10:00 am

Fellowship Time at 9:30 am

Streamed LIVE on

Facebook and YouTube &

Available to listen LIVE on your telephone by calling 508-924-3609!

NEXT UP on our Holiday Happenings for you and yours!

There are sign up sheets in the church lobby BUT if you click on this link, it will take you to an Online Registration Form!

<https://forms.gle/WV7Y79B771TJ1FCY8>



"The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear!"

We have TWO OPTIONS for Caroling:

1. Go around Greenawalds on a Christmas Decorated Hay Ride to sing for our neighbors.
2. Choose to travel via car pool to some of our homebound members to sing for them.

If you would like to help set up the party instead, that would be a BIG HELP!

**FYI This party isn't just for the carolers...
all are invited out for an hour of cookie eating, hot chocolate drinking,
and merry making!**

December 22, in worship-

Get ready for our annual Christmas pageant!

Our amazing Greenawalds kids will be performing "The Birth Of Our Savior"

(this includes Sunday school and the Pathfinders)!



PARENTS: Please contact Sue Roth at 610-554-2781

Or tell your Sunday School/Pathfinder teacher if your children will participate in this minimal prep pageant this year.

FYI 12/15- Rehearsal for Pageant and fun, light Christmas breakfast during Sunday School time. THANKS!

Sunday,
December 29 -


There will be no
Sunday School
classes.
During 10:00 am
worship...

Carson will be with
us to play the
hymns.



Do you have a heart for Peace? For justice and witness ministries??

So did Jesus.



**65th Annual
Peace Pilgrimage**
Sat, December 14
A Christian Witness for Peace!

The full walk is 10 miles on Rt 191 from Nazareth to Bethlehem (however, you can join at any point along the way). The walk symbolizes the journey of Mary and Joseph, but also represents the non-violent ways of Jesus and his message of love.

More info is available in the lobby with a sign up sheet

Join in on the 65th Annual Nazareth to Bethlehem Christmas Peace Pilgrimage on Saturday December 14, 2024. Walk the road of peace.

The Pilgrimage began in 1960 as a Christian witness for peace. We welcome all persons of any age to join the Pilgrimage, symbolic of the journey of Mary and Joseph. During the 10 mile trek from Nazareth to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania we seek to reflect the non-violent life of Jesus Christ and his truth of forgiving love.

Walk with your family and friends and make new friends with others who seek a more peaceful world.

10:30 am - Buses begin loading @ 529 E. Broad St., The Center, Bethlehem
Buses Depart promptly

11:45 am - Pilgrimage begins at 11:45am @ 4 Main St., Moravian Church, Nazareth

1:30 pm - Rest Stop (w/apples) @ 323 Nazareth Pike (Rt. 191), Trinity Lutheran Church

2:45 pm - Rest Stop (w/ Hot Cocoa) @ 3235 Linden St., First Baptist Church

4:30 pm - Candle Lighting @ W. Durham & Masslich St. College Hill, Moravian Church

5:00 pm - Carol Singing, @ 11 W. Church St., Bethlehem Area Public Library

5:30 pm - Fellowship, Conversation and Light supper. @ 75 E. Market St., Christ United Church of Christ

The Faith Formation Ministry Team of UCCG would love to get a group together that would be interested in this amazing experience!

We can coordinate and customize our day to suit our needs based on who signs up, keeping in mind that we aren't committed to participate in the entire walk.

If you are interested, please let Ashley Adams, Karen Adams, or Pastor Janet know as soon as possible.

The Justice and Peace Action Network (JPANet) is our denomination's grassroots advocacy network composed of individual members and local UCC congregations across the country. The JPANet both educates and engages its members in shaping public policy and keeping with God's vision of a just and loving society. Our work is grounded in General Synod resolutions, consonant with historic UCC witness, and formed by a biblical understanding of prophetic ministry.

Would you like to participate in the UCC Grassroots Advocacy Network? See the link below for the invitation page to receive emails:

<https://www.ucc.org/what-we-do/justice-local-church-ministries/justice/washington-dc-office/justice-and-peace-action-network/>

FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR JANET



Holiday Greetings Everyone!



As I sit on "my" reclining seat on the sectional couch in my family room which also serves as Anthony's Studio, I find myself very reflective. That happens a lot this time of year to most of us. I wonder how you feel when you look back over the last 11 months? Despite my circumstances, I find myself with a grateful heart. I'd like to tell you a few of those reasons.

I am working right now, as I type this, with Sue Berger on Echoes. We share this document. She takes what you give her from the various Ministry Teams and we both format it, deciding together where things should go, for example. Sue may be the Church Secretary but she is my Executive Assistant, my "right hand," and the *bacon* to my *eggs*! I couldn't do this without her.

But also, just working on Echoes while reflecting on what is happening, what is coming and what this year has been, makes me so thankful for the whole community that is United Church of Christ Greenawalds. I am so humbled to be your spiritual leader. I am grateful for your love and support. I appreciate your trust and respect, and I reciprocate that all to all of you both individually and as a congregation. (*Aren't we both so lucky?!*)

I suppose I have the Thanksgiving holiday still on my mind but it is never wrong to tell the people you love how you feel about them. So thank you also for the prayers for my family- for Anthony, especially. To those of you who have given, and keep giving, to our "Phone Fund/Weekly Fund," you are truly guardian angels for us; may God bless in return when you least expect it, but need it the most.

*I give thanks to my God always for you
because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus* 1 Cor 1:4

Lastly, I am so excited for December. I cherish this time of anticipation and preparation. A time when we explore some of my all-time favorite words: HOPE, PEACE, JOY & LOVE. I also am excited about my *Coloring Page* idea for Advent- I hope you will all participate. In these next four weeks, perhaps the quickest of the entire year, will you slow them down by sharing them with your faith community? With worship on a Sunday morning, we order our week with God at the center. Like the Shepherds and the Wise Men, let's follow the star to the Christ Child together to experience the beauty of the Holy Light coming into the world to save us all!

With hope and love, ~Pastor Janet



Ant's Corner

Inside Edition, Part 9 Ear Candy



As we enter the season of Advent and approach the most wonderful time of the year, Christmas music is everywhere. Whether it's Andy Williams, Bing Crosby, or Mariah Carey, the melodies of the season are nearly impossible to escape—and they tend to stick with us long after we hear them. But why do these simple melodies embed themselves in our minds so effectively?

I found myself reflecting on this as we started singing Christmas carols in our MCCF chapel services. I remembered a story my dad once told me about Maurice Ravel, the classical composer. Ravel knew he had achieved a personal milestone of success when he heard a trash collector whistling his composition "Boléro" (if you're around my age, you may recall this piece from the 1979 film "10" starring Bo Derek). Ravel's goal was to create something that anyone could connect with, not just classical music fans.

So what exactly did he do to make Boléro so universally appealing? How did he craft a piece of "ear candy"?

The first time I heard the phrase “ear candy,” I was with friends listening to a catchy song with a simple hook, fun lyrics, and a great rhythm. Someone in the room said, “This is pure ear candy.” The description struck me as perfect: a song that exists simply to give your ears a treat. There wasn’t anything deep or meaningful in the lyrics; in fact, they were playful and lighthearted. It was the musical equivalent of a sweet snack, like a candy bar next to Bob Dylan’s nourishing, thoughtful poetry.

Let’s analyze this further by breaking down the parts that make a song. First, there’s the melody—a series of pitches with a specific rhythm, often the part we whistle or hum (like the trash collector did with Boléro). If it’s a vocal piece, there will be lyrics tied to the melody. A good set of lyrics often tells a cohesive story, with a rhyme that flows poetically. Then there’s the harmony, supportive notes usually played in chords to provide rhythm and depth.

Each of these elements in and of themselves has the potential to make a song memorable. In the case of Boléro, both the rhythm and melody are captivating. Its driving beat is so iconic that musicians, to this day, may ask a fellow musician to add a “Boléro Beat” to a song. The melody is also incredibly catchy—ideal for becoming an “earworm” (what Merriam-Webster defines as “a song or melody that keeps repeating in one’s mind”).

Another classic example of ear candy is “My Girl” by The Temptations. The rhythmic bass line at the beginning, paired with the guitar’s six-note phrase, makes it instantly recognizable—even before the lyrics or melody start.

Many church hymns have that “ear candy” potential because they are crafted with strong, standalone melodies. This is why traditional hymns (and especially Christmas carols) can often be recognized when played instrumentally (without lyrics).

In the world of pop and rock music, songwriting masters like Freddie Mercury, Billy Joel, and Elton John masterfully blend catchy melodies with rhythms and storytelling, creating music that appeals across generations (just like our friend Ravel achieved).

Of course, what qualifies as ear candy is subjective. A song might have all the elements but still miss the mark. Yet most of us can agree that certain tunes have a sweetness that resonates with us. Think about some of your favorite songs from the past and try humming the melody to yourself. If it stands on its own, you’re likely humming a piece of ear candy.



The best part? You can indulge in as much ear candy as you want this holiday season without gaining a pound. Merry Christmas to my church family. I look forward to seeing you soon!

Director of Music



2024 Fall Meeting of PNEC

On Saturday, November 9, 2024, each of the four United Church of Christ conferences in Pennsylvania passed the same motion requesting authorization from the UCC General Synod for the four to become one. These coordinated but separate meetings were one step further toward the possibility of forming a new, combined Keystone Conference from the [Penn West](#), [Penn Central](#), [Pennsylvania Southeast](#), and [Penn Northeast](#) Conferences. After each conference voted separately, they joined a Zoom call to share the results.

The votes passed with a wide margin in each conference - with each one nearing or surpassing 90% affirmative votes. The idea and work toward a combined **Keystone Conference** has been about two years in the making. It was noted the importance of the trust that has been cultivated in the process to make the case that “Together, We Are Stronger.”

Now that the motion has passed all four conferences, it will be presented as a resolution to the Governance Committee of the UCC Board of Directors for a delegate vote at the 2025 General Synod in Kansas City. There is a lot of work to be done in the coming months and, hopefully, if the vote is positive at Synod, years to inaugurate this Conference. Everyone is looking forward to the General Synod meeting in July.

UCC Greenawalds was well represented by two voting delegates - Pastor Janet and Jayne Christman. Also attending Ashley Adams, Markie Adams, JJ Barnett, Larry Christman, Karen Griffith, and Ben Gullledge.



Larry and I agreed that this Annual Meeting was by far the most exciting of any we've attended. It was like watching a great movie with friends who were elated to be together once again. There was an impressive array of food, snacks, and drinks. Stories were told that made you laugh, while others brought us to tears. We enjoyed the music and “feel good” singing. We met some real “characters” and “comedians” who brought levity to the space. There were moments of suspense and then a very happy ending! We left feeling renewed, refreshed and confident of the outcome.

~ Jayne and Larry Christman

REMODELING PROJECT

Grant and Lee are currently working in the Choir Room on the second floor of the Christian Ed wing where they've been busy spackling walls in preparation for a new coat of paint in the room.

To date, we have received \$4,453.30 for our remodeling campaign.

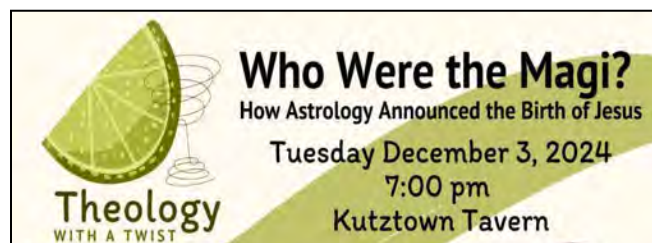
Thank you for your generous contributions to help us take care of our church!

Annex Sewer Pipe Saga ...

For several decades we have been able to keep the annex sewer line open with frequent augering of the line and limiting what the tenants put in the waste stream. Unfortunately this fall was the tipping point and plumbers were unable to open the line. Thankfully, West End Property Management was able to contact a plumber with an excavator to complete the emergency sewer line replacement in one day. The total cost of the work emptied the Annex Fund (money kept in savings to make repairs as needed to the annex).

We need your help to build the Annex Fund back to the \$10,000 mark for any future repairs. If you are able to donate to this fund, please mark your envelope "Annex Fund" and drop in the offering plate or mail to the church.

Thank you for your generosity.



On December 3, a group from UCCG is taking a trip to the Kutztown Tavern for *Theology With a Twist!*

TOPIC: Who Were the Magi?

If you are interested, speak with Pastor Janet!



LET US PRAY TOGETHER FOR:

Ruth & Ken Newhard; Larry & Janie Bear; Drena Merkel; Althea Blose; Nancy Saeger; Anthony; Jameson; Bill Auman; Carter Boyle; Raylee Jaymes LaAsmar; Grace; Anita Adams; Tracey Hildebeidel; Bruce Stocker; Ray & Terry Ward; Judy Nordell; Jenn Seidel; Dolly DeLong; Ray Smith; Frank Keglovitz; Nelly Roeder; Nydia Grube; Dunbar

family.

Linda Lakatosh underwent open heart surgery on November 14. She spent the last two weeks in the Open Heart Intensive Care Unit, but on Friday night, November 29, she finally moved to a step-down unit. We continue to pray for her recovery.

If you have a prayer request and any updates, please contact Sue Borger or Pastor Janet.

ALWAYS REMEMBERING OUR HOMEBOUND FAMILY AS WELL:

Eleanor Limpar, at home

Naomi Thomas, at home

Doris Shaver (Phoebe - Room T313A)

Lois Tice, at home

Do you read every article in Echoes? We hope so because we are at it again!

Congratulations to Michelle Adams - our randomly chosen winner in the OCTOBER Echoes.



YOU COULD BE OUR NEXT WINNER!

Somewhere in this month's edition of Echoes, hidden amongst all of the valuable information and inspiring work we do in our church, is a name: the name of one of our wonderful brothers or sisters in our **UCC Greenawalds faith community!**

It will be MID-SENTENCE, not the one listed as someone who wrote an article or is obviously named as someone who you are to call to volunteer for something. So read all about what is coming up at UCCG and if you find YOUR NAME, YOU are the BIG WINNER! Contact Sue in the church office to claim your prize!



Congratulations to Mike & Kristen (Griffith) DiMariano on the birth of their new baby boy, Mark Joseph DiMariano, who was born on Thanksgiving Day, November 28. Mark joins big sister Monroe Elaine. Mark Joseph is the seventh grandchild of Mark & Karen Griffith. Congratulations to all!!

Outreach + Mission = GROWTH



The Clubhouse of Lehigh County is the 2024 recipient of 10% of any fundraising profits at UCC Greenawalds.

LITTLE FREE PANTRY

Our Little Free Pantry has seen increased usage and continues to be a blessing to our food-insecure neighbors. We are currently in need of **JELLY and CEREAL**. Your contributions of food items are, as always, very much appreciated.



Our **Little Free Pantry Fund** is also in need of monetary support; if you would prefer to donate directly to our Pantry, please indicate “Little Free Pantry” on the check memo line or on the front of the envelope. THANK YOU!

“Whoever has two shirts is to share with the one who has none, and whoever has food is to do the same.” ~ Luke 3:10

HARVEST HOME

Wow! What a harvest this year! Our Harvest Home collection filled 12 boxes with 222 non-perishable food items that were delivered to the Ecumenical Food Bank on November 25 in time for holiday distribution! THANK YOU!

*“The generous will themselves be blessed for they share their food with the poor.”
~ Proverbs 22:9*

THE CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING



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. Help

support the financial foundation of those engaged in the life of the church by donating to The Christmas Fund this year. Your care and compassion Glenn Horlacher will be especially appreciated by those servants of the UCC who are facing a time of need.

Envelopes are available on the table in the lobby. Thank you for your support and generosity to this important mission of the United Church of Christ.

*“Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”
~ Romans 12:13*

CHRISTMAS MISSION FOCUS



Bethany Children's Home was chosen as the recipient of our 2024 Christmas mission focus. A Christmas tree has been placed on the back wall of the sanctuary. The tree ornaments are gift requests from the Home's residents. Gift requests range from socks and gloves - to guitar picks and paint pens - to sports equipment and gift cards – and many other items!

If you'd like to donate a gift to a Bethany Children's Home resident (ages 10-21), remove an ornament from the tree, purchase the item, and return it to the narthex/lobby not later than Sunday, December 15. Gifts must be new and unwrapped; please put them in the designated box in the lobby. Gifts will be delivered to Bethany Children's Home on December 16! (If you would be interested in accompanying the delivery team to Bethany, see Karen Griffith or Janine Hensinger.)



*“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”
~ Hebrews 13:16*

*“It is not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving.”
~ Mother Teresa*



SIGHT & SOUND DVD SHOWINGS

Join us for the inspiring TRUE STORY behind the beloved Christmas Carol ... Known as America's Poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow leads an idyllic life – until the day his world is shattered by tragedy. With a nation divided by Civil War and his family torn apart, Henry puts down his pen, silenced by grief. But it's the sound of Christmas morning that reignites the poet's lost voice as he discovers the resounding hope of rekindled faith.

Our next Sight & Sound showing, **I HEARD THE BELLS**, will be presented in the theater room at Horizons at the Village at Whitehall (behind Whitehall High School stadium) ... at **6:00 pm on Thursday, December 5**. The showing is FREE; however, you must make a reservation as seats are limited. Join us – and invite your family and friends. Reserve your seats on the Sign-up Sheet on the shelf in the lobby.



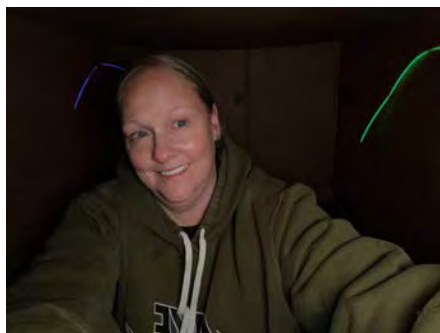
At this time, there are four families in the rotation. In just two weeks, we'll be hosting again. THANK YOU to all our wonderful volunteers who have filled the schedule for meal prep, evenings hosts, and overnight hosts.

We'll be hosting three times in 2025 - January 26 to February 2, April 6 to 13, and November 2 to 9. Because our Fellowship Hall is not air conditioned, we pick host weeks in the cooler months so our next host week will be here at the end of January. If you know which night you are available to help (make a meal, evening host or overnight host), please contact Karen Griffith at 610-703-6826 now to pick your date. Thank you!

It's also not too early to pick your date to volunteer for any of our other host weeks in 2025 - the other two dates are April 6-13, and November 2- 9. Call Karen now and pick your date and job.

Night Without a Bed

On Saturday night, November 23, Family Promise and UCCG teamed up with the Lehigh Conference of Churches to promote awareness of homelessness and hunger. UCCG was the host site and members of Neffs Union UCC and Congregation Keneseth Israel joined 12 members of UCCG. We had some wind and some rain, but the 15 of us persevered - some slept in boxes, some in their cars, some in a tent, and we had one young lady who slept in a box inside a tent. We raised \$160 for this event. We enjoyed a walk to see the Lights in Greenawalds, played a game to get to know one another, and even enjoyed playing bingo to learn some facts on homelessness.





Saturday, January 18 - Purse Bingo at Jordan UCC - More details to follow at a later date.

Sunday, March 16 - Lehigh Valley Phantoms vs. Wilkes-Barre Scranton Penguins Ice Hockey Game - More details to follow at a later date.

Saturday, March 29 - Family Promise Homecoming Event at Twin Lakes - More details to follow at a later date.

Let's welcome UCC Greenawalds' Newest Members!

On November 24, in worship, we joyfully received these five new members.

*Joanne Benfield
William Gieringer*

*Henry Grube
Nydia Grube
Brian Roeder*

We will be introducing them to you in the January Edition of *Echoes* so you can begin to get to know them better. There will be another joining opportunity in January, with a UCCG-101 class for these 5 and anyone new. So if you are thinking about joining us in our mission and ministry but want to learn more about the United Church of Christ as a denomination, about UCC Greenawalds as a church, and even Rev. Janet as a pastor and a person, **then UCCG-101 is FOR YOU!**

Next UCCG-101 tentatively scheduled for January 18 with joining on January 19.

[Contact Pastor Janet via email or text with your interest and to let her know your availability on these dates.]

THANK YOU!
thank you!

To **Rich and Nanci Snyder** for taking the initiative to fill the space between our two entrances on Orchard Street where the tree had previously been.

They handcrafted this beautiful **JOY** sign for us!



And Thank you:

To Linda Altrichter for the donation of furniture to the Youth Room- the Pathfinders appreciate it so much and it looks great!



Recycle Beyond the Bag

Recycling plastic bags has become a habit for many of us at UCCG. The receptacles are in place - one in the lobby outside Pastor Janet's office door and one in the Christian Ed entrance way. The time frame is 12 months to collect 1,000 pounds of plastic, and we have already collected 575 pounds. Our planet thanks you. 😊

Thank you to Ashley Adams for leading this recycling effort.

“There is no such thing as ‘away’. When we throw anything away it must go somewhere.”

~ Annie Leonard, Proponent of Sustainability



The Holiday Blues:

Coping with the Stress of the Holidays; by Anthony Newett

The holiday season is often portrayed as a time of joy, connection, and celebration. Glittering lights, cheerful music, and festive gatherings dominate the landscape, making it seem as though happiness is mandatory. However, for many, especially those living with a mental health disorder, the holidays can exacerbate feelings of sadness, isolation, and emotional exhaustion.

For someone with depression, for example, the emotional weight of the holidays can feel insurmountable. Depression isn't just about "feeling sad." It's a complex mental health condition that affects mood, energy levels, and the ability to find joy. During the holidays, these symptoms may be amplified by:

- **Unrealistic Expectations** can create a sense of failure or inadequacy. When your reality doesn't match the idealized version, it can deepen feelings of worthlessness or hopelessness.
- **Loneliness and Isolation** - especially for those grieving a loss or lacking close relationships with family or friends
- **Financial Pressures**, whether relating to hosting, travel or gift-giving, finances weigh heavily on those with limited resources
- **Social Pressures/obligation** can feel overwhelming for someone who already struggles to get out of bed or manage basic tasks.
- **Memories and Grief** -the holidays can trigger feelings and memories in unique ways
- **Changes in Routine** can be very disruptive when trying to manage our stress and depression symptoms.

The Intersection of Mental Health Challenges and Holiday Sadness

For individuals with mental health challenges, the sadness felt during the holidays isn't just about circumstantial stressors—it's layered on top of an existing mental health condition. Depression alters the brain's chemistry, affecting how a person processes emotions and responds to external stimuli. What might feel like a temporary stressor for someone without depression can become a prolonged and overwhelming emotional spiral for someone with the disorder. Symptoms such as fatigue, irritability, difficulty concentrating, and feelings of guilt or worthlessness can make it challenging to participate in holiday activities.

It is important to note that even well-meaning attempts from others to cheer you up—such as urging you to “just focus on the positive” or “try harder to have fun”—can feel invalidating and increase feelings of isolation.

Strategies for Maintaining a Better Well-Being During the Holidays

If you're living with depression, navigating the holiday season may require extra care and intentionality. These tips can be helpful for any of us if we find ourselves with a short temper and a fake smile. Here are some strategies that can help:

Acknowledge Your Feelings: It's okay to feel however you feel; you don't have to force happiness or pretend to enjoy activities that feel draining. Acknowledging your emotions without judgment is an important step toward self-compassion.

Set Realistic Expectations: Let go of the pressure to create a "perfect" holiday experience. Focus on what feels manageable for you and prioritize your emotional well-being over external expectations.

Create Clear Boundaries with family and friends: Politely decline invitations if needed, or limit the time you spend at events. Communicating your needs honestly with loved ones can prevent misunderstandings and help you protect your mental well being.

Maintain Healthy Habits: Prioritize sleep, eat regular meals, and make time for physical activity, even if it's a short walk. Consider getting involved with a fun hobby. Perhaps you can join "Ant Jams" (yes, that was a shameless plug).

Seek Out Support: You aren't alone and sharing your feelings with others can help alleviate the sense of isolation. If you don't feel comfortable discussing your feelings with loved ones, consider connecting with a therapist or counselor.

Focus on Small Joys: Finding moments of comfort or pleasure, even in small ways, can help counteract some of the heaviness you feel. Watch a favorite movie, light a scented candle, or engage in a creative activity. While these moments may not "cure" depression, they can provide brief respites from its weight. Yes- look for the glimmers!

Practice Gratitude, Gently: For someone with depression, the concept of gratitude can sometimes feel invalidating, especially if it's framed as a solution to sadness. Instead of forcing yourself to "be grateful," try noticing small things that bring you even a sliver of peace, joy or comfort—a warm drink, a kind gesture, or a moment of quiet. Keep a journal of these items.

Give Yourself Permission to Grieve: If the holidays bring up feelings of loss, allow yourself to grieve. Whether it's the loss of a loved one, a relationship, or an idealized version of what the holidays "should" be, acknowledging your grief can help you process it in a healthy way.

Limit Exposure to Stressors: If financial pressures are a source of anxiety, consider setting a budget for holiday expenses and sticking to it. Opt for handmade gifts or experiences rather than expensive items. (Some of my favorite and most treasured gifts have been handmade by my daughter Aria!)

Additionally, reduce time spent on social media, where curated holiday posts can contribute to feelings of inadequacy or envy.

Looking Ahead: If the holidays feel insurmountable, it can be helpful to remind yourself that this season is temporary. Making small plans for the weeks or months ahead can give you something to look forward to, even if it's as simple as starting a new book or taking a day trip.

What's Missing??

You may have noticed that none of the above coping techniques involve our faith. I like to think I saved the best for last. In fact, I'm going to let someone else's story do the work for me.

Enclosed are some profound words from the only real friend I've made here at MCCF. For now, I'll refer to him as "Mike" to protect his privacy. Mike has spent more of his life in jail than on the outside. Over the short time we've known each other, I've had the privilege of witnessing a remarkable transformation in him. I am grateful to be a part of his spiritual journey and fully intend to continue our relationship after his release. I asked Mike to share a few words about his feelings of sadness and loneliness during the holidays. Here's what he shared:

Being alone in prison is a terrible feeling. Even though I'm surrounded by people, it's not the same—it's very depressing. Anger builds up inside me, and sometimes I feel like I want to take it out on someone. During the holidays, it's even harder because it's supposed to be a time for family.

I've been alone ever since my mom died. She was my everything. In the past, I turned to drugs to cope and pass the time. I've seen guys here who can't handle being alone with their thoughts. Some fall into deep depression, and sadly, I've even seen people take their own lives.

I'm thankful that I've never given in to those thoughts. Looking back, I realize that feeling pain and hurt has shaped me into who I am today. When my mom was alive, being away from home didn't feel so bad because I always knew I could come back to her. But after she passed, I gave up on myself. I stopped crying and became numb. My heart turned to stone, and I started to hate people.

When Anthony asked me to write about my feelings of sadness during the holidays, I don't think he fully understood how much his friendship has impacted me. He introduced me to God, and through that, I've come to understand that I've never been truly alone. God has always been with me, giving me the strength to endure.

I'm tired of coming back to jail. I'm ready to live a positive life, guided by God. While it's sad that I had to go through so much pain to change, I'm grateful to be alive to share my story. I hope it can help someone else. Accepting Christ into my life has given me a new sense of hope, and I believe that everything happens for a reason.

To sum it up, while the holidays may not be a time of unbridled joy for everyone, they can still be a season of self-compassion and resilience. Please remember, you are not alone in your struggle. Give yourself grace, honor your needs, and remember that it's okay to approach the holidays the way that is best for you.

The Mental Health Ministry Team members are Christy Dunbar, Colleen Horlacher, Anthony and Janet Newett and Sue Sawyer. Thank you Anthony for this month's info! We would LOVE more of you to join our team. You don't have to have special knowledge; you just have to be willing to learn with a desire to help make Greenawalds the safest place for all God's children. Contact any one of us if you are interested.

NURSERY SCHOOL UPDATE:

Contact: Sheri Stephens at 610-442-3176 or Nursery School office at 610-435-5467

- Our January fundraiser is Matey’s Pizza - The sale will begin on Thursday, January 9 and continue thru Thursday, January 23, with delivery on Thursday, February 7. An order form will be available in the lobby when the sale is underway. You may also contact Sue Borger 484-695-7954 or Sheri Stephens 610-442-3176 to place your order.
- Please continue to collect used clothing, bedding, purses, and shoes, and please place your items in sturdy garbage bags and bring them to the church any time between now and next April. You may place them in the Christian Ed entrance way.
- We are now accepting registrations for the 2025-2026 school year. If you know of someone who may be interested in enrolling their child, please have them call the Nursery School office at 610-435-5467 or Sheri Stephens at 610-442-3176.
- THANK YOU for your continued support of our Nursery School program. ❤️

Your 2024 Consistory *THANK YOU FOR SERVING!!*

Our Consistory met on Thursday, November 21, 2024 at 4:30 pm.

- All Ministry Team, Standing Committee and Task Force Reports were reviewed and accepted as presented. The Financial Reports were also reviewed and accepted.
- The Pastor’s Report was reviewed and accepted. There are many items she is working on.
- The proposed 2025 budget will be presented to the congregation for approval on Sunday, November 24.

Officers:

Moderator - Karen Griffith
 Vice Moderator - Larry Christman
 Recording Secretary/Financial Secretary - Sue Borger
 Treasurer - Bonnie Marmon

Members-at-Large:

Mark Adams
 Linda Altrichter
 Jayne Christman
 Nanci Snyder
 Matt Stalter

Delegate to PNEC Annual Meeting - Jayne Christman

Month	Budget	General Offering Income	*Other Income	Total Operating Income	Operating Expense	Net Income
Jan-24	\$12,859	\$8,225	\$3,965	\$12,190	\$16,299	(\$4,108)
Feb-24	\$12,859	\$8,740	\$3,481	\$12,221	\$15,957	(\$3,736)
Mar-24	\$12,859	\$10,227	\$7,515	\$17,742	\$12,774	\$4,968
Apr-24	\$12,859	\$8,749	\$2,685	\$11,434	\$12,780	(\$1,346)
May-24	\$12,859	\$8,632	\$3,145	\$11,777	\$13,015	(\$1,237)
Jun-24	\$12,859	\$8,015	\$4,179	\$12,194	\$11,137	\$1,057
Jul-24	\$12,859	\$10,012	\$1,845	\$11,856	\$10,672	\$1,185
Aug-24	\$12,859	\$7,630	\$1,451	\$9,081	\$18,439	(\$9,358)
Sep-24	\$12,859	\$9,478	\$2,839	\$12,317	\$10,860	\$1,456
Oct-24	\$12,859	\$8,064	\$3,199	\$11,263	\$19,555 *	(\$8,292)
Nov-24	\$12,859	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Dec-24	\$12,859	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$154,309	\$87,773	\$34,303	\$122,076	\$141,487	(\$19,412)

* Other income includes; Annex Rental, bulletin, flowers, bill tree and special income

* \$8,428 of this amount is the Annex sewer pipe replacement

Join us January 11 for a Chili Cook-off and a Night at the Movies!
 And it's time to bring out the competitive nature...
 Uh... We mean *fun-loving* family spirit of UCCG



More Info to Come in our December Weekly Words and Announcement Sheets!



Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1 9:30 am Fellowship 10:00 am Worship w/Holy Communion E&O Mtg after worship 6:00 Confirmation Class	2	3 6:30-8:00 pm Cub Scout Den Mtg.	4 10:30 am Faith Club	5 6:00 pm Showing of <i>I Heard the Bells</i>	6	7
8 9:30 am Fellowship 10:00 am Worship 4:30-6:30 pm Caroling 6:30-7:30 pm Party	9	10 6:30-8:00 pm Den Cub Mrtg	11 10:30 Faith Club	12	13	14 Peace Pilgrimage Private Rental in Fellowship Hall
15 Echoes and Hymn Sing Song Choice Deadline 9:30 am Fellowship 10:00 am Worship w/House Band 3:00-6:00 pm Piano Recital (Sanctuary) Family Promise Host Week	16 11:00 am OMG Team Mtg Family Promise Host Week	17 6:30-8:00 pm Cub Scout Den Mtg Family Promise Host Week	18 10:30 Faith Club Family Promise Host Week	19 Nursery School Family Sing-a-long NO Consistory Mtg/Reports still due Family Promise Host Week	20 Family Promise Host Week	21 Family Promise Host Week
22 Family Promise Departs 9:30 am Fellowship 10:00 am Worship w/Children's Christmas Pageant	23	24 Christmas Eve Services 7:30 pm & 10:30 pm	25 Christmas Day!	26	27	28
29 9:30 am Fellowship 10:00 am Worship w/Hymn Sing and live music with Carson	30	31	** Pastor Janet on vacation 12/26-12/31	** No Nursery School 12/23-12/31	No Sunday School Dec. 29 otherwise every Sunday at 9:00 am	

OUR STAFF

Rev. Janet Newett, Pastor	610.657.2189 cell
pastorjanetn@gmail.com	
Church Office/Main Phone	610-435-1763
Susan Borger, Church Secretary	484-695-7954 cell
Anthony Newett, Music Director & A/V Tech Advisor	215-805-4353
Lee Stephens	610-216-1664
Nursery School	610-435-5467
churchoffice@uccgreenawalds.org	

Pastor’s Office Hours Vary

**For a visit with Pastor Janet, please call her cell phone. (Text messages preferred)
Church Secretary Office Hours are Wednesday, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm.
(Other hours, from home. Call as necessary.)**

ECHOES is a monthly publication of the United Church of Christ, Greenawalds. Members, committee chairpersons leading a group and anyone with pertinent information are encouraged to submit information and upcoming events. **Submit news by email to the church office at churchoffice@uccgreenawalds.org or to Sue Borger at borgersusan@yahoo.com no later than the 22nd of each month.**

The **DECEMBER 2024** Edition of *Echoes* is sponsored by:

Bonnie Bates

In celebration of her birthday on December 20.
Happy Birthday, Bonnie!

Communication to our members is an important part of our ministry. If you cannot attend church regularly, or do not use a computer, you can remain connected with the news, our mission and upcoming activities through this newsletter.

Sponsors for the *Echoes* help to support the ministry of UCC Greenawalds to all members. Call Sue Borger 484.695.7954 to sign up for a sponsorship and include your dedication information.

Cost is \$20.00 per sponsorship.

Each Friday, in our email newsletter entitled, WEEKLY WORDS, we share all of our prayer concerns, weekly bulletin and upcoming events. If you would like to be added to our email distribution list, please email churchoffice@uccgreenawalds.org
