



**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**Neillsville, Wisconsin**  
**Church 715-743-2147**  
**Pastor Julie Ruegsegger**  
**Pastor's Office 715-743-2117**  
[www.neillsvilleucc.org](http://www.neillsvilleucc.org)

## **DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER**

*"A thrill of hope - a weary world rejoices and yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!"*

Dear Friends,

It is no secret that I love music, but not many know just how much I love Christmas music. I never tire of the round-the-clock Christmas music in the month of December. I get teary-eyed when I hear "I'll Be Home for Christmas", and my foot starts tapping when I hear "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree." My favorite of all Christmas songs, though, is "O Holy Night." There is something extra-special about a song that marries thoughtful and thought-provoking lyrics with a soaring melody that makes your heart sing. Every line—from the thrill of hope for the weary soul to the promise of an end to oppression—feels weightier and more glorious with each new Christmas season.

The story of this beloved Christmas song begins in the small French town of Roquemaure, when a wine merchant, Placide Cappeau—a fellow known more for his poetry than his church-going—was asked by a parish priest to write a poem for Christmas mass. He turned to the gospel of Luke for inspiration, and then, "moved by his own work", he decided his words needed to be set to music, and he turned to Adophe Charles Adams, a popular Jewish composer.

"Cantique de Noel" debuted in 1847 at a midnight mass and became a favorite among French congregations, until it was banned by the church when Cappeau joined a socialist movement. Except that the French people loved it. And kept singing it. So much so that, a decade later, a reclusive American writer, John Sullivan Dwight—a Harvard Divinity grad who would have been a minister but for the debilitating panic attacks that kept him out of the pulpit—discovered the song and translated it for an American audience in 1855. He published the updated version in his magazine, "Dwight's Journal of Music," which propelled the song to popularity in the United States.

Only God could take these particular people—a poet who knew wine but not the true Vine, a composer who didn't call Jesus "Messiah," and a minister so crippled by anxiety that he could not go out in public—and use them to create such a powerful, enduring song. And only God can take us—with our doubts and our fears and our messy, upside-down lives—and call us Beloved.

*Truly He taught us to love one another;  
His law is love and His gospel is peace.  
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother  
And in His name all oppression shall cease.  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,  
Let all within us praise His holy name!*

Grace and Peace,

*Pastor Julie*

**2025 Budget and Committee Election  
Congregational Meeting, Sunday, Dec 8th**

On Sunday, December 8, 2024, Neillsville UCC will hold a Congregational meeting immediately following the service. At this meeting we will review the proposed 2025 budget, as well as vote on committee members. All members and friends are welcome to attend.



to the family & friends of Lois Lonning, who passed away on November 17<sup>th</sup>. She was a long-time member of our church. Our heartfelt condolences to you all.



Continuing the following in our thoughts and prayers.

Janet Harrington	Gayle Schermitzler
Lisa Schermitzler	Fran Ormond
Wallace Garbisch	Jim Repinski
Duane Marty	Cheryl Steinbach

Please let us know if others not listed (with their permission) would like prayer requests.

**JAM for  
youth ages  
3K to 6th  
grade**



- Wednesday,  
December 4th  
5 PM at UCC

Christmas Program Practice #2

- Wednesday, December 11th  
5 PM at UCC

Christmas Program Practice with costumes

- Friday, December 13th  
3:30 – 7:30 PM at UCC

Christmas Party

- Sunday, December 15th

Christmas Program



Come one, come all to New Year's Eve Game Night! Let's gather in Fellowship Hall for an evening of family-friendly fun. We will have a variety of board games - everything from Candyland to Monopoly, card games and activities, snacks, and lots of fun. The doors will be open from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. for anyone to join - bring your family and friends. Come at 6 and stay all night or pop in whenever it's convenient for you. Let's ring in the New Year together!



Sunday, November 3, the radio broadcast is in loving memory of Betty Opelt sponsored by her family.

Sunday, November 10, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Paul Vine and Kelley Burch in honor of Gordon & Faith Vine.

Sunday, November 17, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Phil & Donita Follen in honor of our church family.

Sunday, November 24, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Jerry Quicker in memory of sons, Mike & Paul Quicker.

**Facts and Figures of November 2024**  
**Attendance for In-Person Worship**

November 3	online 2	Sunday 63
November 10	online 8	Sunday 59
November 17	online 7	Sunday 84
November 24	online 4	Sunday 43

A special **thank you** to Mickey Marty for taking in our aluminum cans for recycling. Thanks to Rick Buchsteiner for assisting in this job over the past years. Our last deposit was \$47.00



- 1- Lydia Schumacher
- 3- Jeff Raine
- 6- Steve Buchholz  
Marla Raine
- 14- Lynne Abel  
Janet Meredith  
Owen Sigurdson
- 17- Michelle Holub
- 20- Charlotte Hediger-Tetzlaff
- 27- Calvin Heck
- 28- Sally Sadowska
- 29- Jenna Ziegler

*Happy Birthday to all who have a December birthday!  
 Did we miss your birthday or have the wrong date?  
 Let us know if we did.*



- 8- Barb & Bob Petkovsek
- 26- DeWayne & Kathy Seelow
- 27- Steve & Leslie Buchholz

**JANUARY 1 -9**

We are adding the first days of JANUARY birthdays and anniversaries so as not to miss any if the newsletter comes out late.

January 1-9 Birthdays

- 3- Kathy Mathis
- 5- Michael Holub, Jr.
- 6- Allan Hoesly
- 9- Wayne Voss

January Anniversaries

none

## UCC Financial Update

Below is an update of UCC Financials. Included are receipts of regular offerings as well as nontraditional donations. In addition, the year to date total includes \$9,000 funds from investment income. Expenses include regular operating, salaries, benefits as well as 10% contributions to area and wider missions. If anyone has more specific questions please contact Bonnie Weyer or Don Quicker.

	August	September	October	Year to date
<b>Receipts</b>	<b>\$6,615.00</b>	<b>\$13,808.00</b>	<b>\$9,013.00</b>	<b>\$114,301.27</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$11,464.19</b>	<b>\$16,008.46</b>	<b>\$10,796.19</b>	<b>\$119,588.50</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>(\$4,849.19)</b>	<b>(\$2200.46)</b>	<b>(\$1,783.19)</b>	<b>(\$5287.23)</b>

**Our year to date loss for August was \$1303.58.**

**Our year to date loss for September was \$3504.04.**



### *Hnatiuk Family UPDATE*

Dear United Church of Christ members,

We are deeply grateful for your generous donation. Your kindness means so much to our family and has brought us support.

Your thoughtfulness reminds us of the power of community and compassion. We truly appreciate your generosity and the positive impact you have made in our lives.

This gift will help pay for my college tuition. Your support eases our financial burden and inspired me to work hard and succeed.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

With warm regards,

Hnatiuk Family

# 2024 UCC 60<sup>th</sup> Holiday Fair Summary

Our 60<sup>th</sup> Holiday Fair was a success, thanks to a lot of people in the church, and not just the women! We made a profit of **\$8,787.95** with the following breakdown:

- Greeting Cards - \$72.50
- New To You Treasures - \$889.95
- Luncheon - \$1,198.00
  - Chicken salad on a croissant, baked potato soup (Betty Opelt's recipes), and brownie
- Kitchen Cupboard - \$921.00
- Crafts - \$4,284.50
- After Saturday Sales - \$1422.00

I would like to thank the people that took the chairman lead in each of our areas, without someone taking the lead, it would not be as organized as it is:

- Greeting Cards – Susie Karl and Carole Romens
- New to You Treasures – Debbie Perkl
- Kitchen Cupboard – Susie Karl and Carole Romens
- Crafts – Carla Marty



Our door prize was a two-sided door panel with “Welcome” on one side and a “Snowman” on the other side. The lucky winner was Becky Trybula of Neillsville, congratulations!

The following businesses donated to our Holiday Fair, so when you see them, make sure you extend a thank you on behalf of our church:

- Hansen's IGA
  - the wonderful croissants for the chicken salad sandwich
- Russell's
  - 100 pounds of potatoes for the Baked Potato Soup
- River Country
  - advertising the Holiday Fair on their marquee
- Custom Heating (Sue and Tim Voigt)
  - advertising the Holiday Fair on their marquee
- Vine Christmas Trees (Paul and Kelley)
  - Pine boughs for our Porch Pot Kits, the flower boxes under the bells, porch pots, and Christmas boxes
  - Two (2) trees; one (1) to display our homemade Christmas ornaments and one (1) for our “Grinch Tree”
- Carla's Creations
  - Various crafting supplies

Various church members donated items for all the areas of our Holiday Fair, whether it was for the New to You Treasures, Baked Goods, Crafts, or luncheon ... we thank you very much. Without these donations, our profits will go down tremendously!

If anyone has any old sleds, wooden skis, antique milk cans, galvanized pails, desk drawers, or scrap wood pieces that they would like to donate to the Holiday Fair, please let us know; they are our biggest selling items.

Also, if there is a certain item that you would like to see sold at the Holiday Fair next year, please let us know and we will try our best to have it there; any ideas to make this project a success is greatly appreciated.

Thank you again!

- Emile Miller

## **UCC Holiday Fair Volunteers Recognized during "Thank You Sunday" Service**

In honor of the 60th Holiday Fair anniversary, the Stewardship committee honored all the volunteers that contributed to the successful events through the years. According to Nancy Boon, the first "Bazaar" was started to reduce the church's debt and continued through the years to help beautify the church. Some of the past financial donations were earmarked for pavement, windows, carpeting, and tables.

For sixty years volunteers gave of their time, talents and treasures to make the yearly event a success. The people in leadership positions have changed, but all were dedicated to make the Bazaar or Holiday Fair the best it could be!! They baked, created works of arts, knitted, quilted, made greeting cards, and recycled. An ongoing tradition was a delicious noon meal.

The menu has changed, but it's as scrumptious as ever!! Early on in its history, the "Bazaar" was organized by the women of the church, but as of late the men have also made contributions to the Holiday Fair.

The names of each of the Holiday Fair areas have evolved over time. The Bazaar name was replaced with the Holiday Fair. The "twice around" area became known as the "New to You Treasures." And the craft room was renamed the "Gift Boutique." One of the newest creations in the Gift Boutique are porch pots. The "Bake shop" is now known as the "Kitchen Cupboard." There are new foods such as "mountain dew jelly" and pie filling for sale to complement the traditional Christmas bars, cookies, candy, breads, and cranberries.

Here is a "Thank You" to all Holiday Fair volunteers through the years---

We "thank you" for offering your time, talent and treasures for the service of the Lord. We praise him for giving you the gifts you possess and the heart to share them. Holiday Fair volunteers, as well as all UCC volunteers are indeed the hands and feet of Jesus. Thank you for your contributions.

### **"The Christmas Fund"**

Dear United Church of Christ,

For over one hundred years, The Christmas Fund has provided direct financial assistance to the healers in all our lives; retired and active United Church of Christ ministers, church workers, and their families. In 2023, over 1,800 UCC congregations joined together to secure the physical, financial, and spiritual health of those engage in the life of the church. Will you join our Christmas Fund special offering by placing your gifts in the envelopes provided in the church pews?

Receiving The Christmas Fund offering this year ensures more ministers, church workers, and their families receive the loving support of the Church in their moment of deepest need.

Peace,

Rev. Dr. Paul Leon Ramsey  
Director, Church Relations & Philanthropy  
United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance (UCBMA)  
212.729.2738 | pramsey@pbucc.org

# Helping Galvary with Thanksgiving Dinner



A total of 357 Thanksgiving Meals

**Meal Giveaway**  
December 15, 2024  
10:45 -11:00 AM  
UCC NEILLSVILLE 515 WEST SECOND STREET

# Approved Minutes

## Neillsville United Church of Christ Council

The meeting was held on Tuesday, October 22, 2024 in the lounge at the Neillsville United Church of Christ. Moderator Vine called the meeting to order at 5:33 PM.

### Attendance

Council Members Present: Trustee Representative Doris Bakker (left at 6:38 PM), Christian Education Representative Stephanie Heck, Vice Moderator Barb Petkovsek (left at 6:36 PM), Moderator Paul Vine, Deacons Representative Karlene Wallace, and Treasurer Bonnie Weyer.  
Others in Attendance: Pastor Julie and Sophie Heck.

### Prayer

Pastor Julie guided the committee with a prayer.

### Minutes

Motion by Barb Petkovsek, seconded by Bonnie Weyer to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2024 meeting with the date correction of the Vacation Bible School (VBS). Voice vote taken with all "aye"; motion carried.

### Financial Report

Motion by Stephanie Heck, seconded by Karlene Wallace to approve the financial report as presented by Bonnie Weyer reading Assistant Treasurer Don Quicker's written report. Voice vote taken with all "aye"; motion carried.

### New Business

#### Review 2025 Committee Membership

Moderator Vine stated that there will be two (2) openings on the Investment Committee for this next term and asked if anyone had any information on the other committees.

Stephanie Heck stated that Lydia Schumacher has replaced Jenna Ziegler on the Christian Education Committee, and she will check with the other members to see if they will continue for another year and report back to Paul.

#### Congregational Meeting to Vote on Committees and 2025 Budget

The congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, December 8, 2024 right after the service.

### Old Business

#### Review/Update Camp Scholarship Fundings and Guidelines

Moderator Vine shared the Ray Family Opportunity Fund Guidelines, application, and summary of camp scholarship funds provided since 2021.

Bonnie Weyer shared that the Ray Funds provided scholarships in 2024 for seven (7) UCC adults, six (6) non UCC adults, five (5) UCC children, and 13 non UCC children. The following is the breakdown per camp:

MORE →



- Boyd Camp – four (4) UCC adults and one (1) non UCC adult; three (3) UCC children, seven (7) non UCC children
- Mohr Camp – five (5) non UCC adults and six (6) non UCC children
- Active Adult Camp – two (2) UCC adults
- Youth Camp – one (1) UCC adult and two (2) UCC children

Per the guidelines, there is a maximum of \$15,000 per year to be used for “positive impact upon the church and community, with strong application towards youth/adult religious education and enlistment and maintenance of congregational membership.”

Bonnie Weyer suggested the following proposal:

- Take all applications, like in the past
- UCC adults and children receive 100% scholarship of the camp cost they are attending
- Non UCC adults receive 50% scholarship and non UCC children receive 75% scholarship for the camp cost they are attending, with the understanding that if the total cost of participants attending camp goes over the yearly budget of \$15,000, the non UCC applicants would be required to pay more of their camp cost

Since the Ray Funds are not only for church camps, but they could also be used for educational speakers, etc., Moderator Vine tabled this agenda item until next month with possible action at that time.

### **Pastor Report/Update**

Pastor Julie shared the following:

- Community Practice – attending the third Tuesday of every month in Eau Claire
- Stewardship Committee
  - November 10, 2024 will be Thank You Sunday honoring volunteers in the church
  - Stewardship Committee members have presented information during church service
  - AODA speaker presented information during church service and during fellowship time after church
    - NA program has been very successful, adding meetings on Sunday night besides the Wednesday nights

### **Pastor Report/Update Continued**

- Installation of Beth Voigt – attended in Tomah (Pastor’s Northwest Association Mentor)
- Pastoral Visits - home and retirement facility
- Mission Committee – donating money to the Loyal Food Pantry and Ukraine family
- Dementia Program – met with ADRC personnel to establish a partnership with church
- Hurricane Kits – still accepting donations
- October 26 – Interfaith Change of Seasons
- November 3 – All Saints Sunday
- November 4 – New Clergy Orientation
- November 10 – Thank You Sunday
- November 10 – Dueling Pianos hosted by Eau Claire and Bloomer churches, sponsoring men from Africa (Pastor will be participating in this)
- November 17 – Confirmands leading worship
- Game/Movie Night – would like to start this at the church in December
- Election Day – e-mails from other churches stating they will hold services and/or have the church open this day. After discussion it was decided that there will be no service, but Pastor will be available that day if anyone needs her services or just wants to come to church and pray.

MORE →

- Wisconsin Conference – moving forward on dissolving the four (4) associations and develop one (1), with a vote on this sometime next year

### **Next Meeting Date and Time**

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 20, 2024 at 6 PM.

### **Other**

Bonnie Weyer wondered if a “Visit Train” for Cheryl Steinbach like the “Food Train” should be developed. After discussion, it was decided to have anyone interested in visiting Cheryl to go through David Steinbach to set up a date and time.

***Barb Petkovsek left the meeting at this time.***

### **Committee Reports and Request for Action**

#### Trustees

Doris Bakker shared the following:

- Due to the financial update from Don Quicker, the following items have been tabled:
  - Shed Roof Project
  - New cushions for the sanctuary pews
- Parking lot light was referred to NSP and repaired
- A work crew is being established to shampoo downstairs carpet in January

### **Committee Reports and Request for Action Continued**

#### Trustees Continued

- Approved the use of the church building for the Christmas Angel Project
- Consideration for membership
- Reviewed memo from Dave Harnish regarding the church shrubs and landscaping

***Doris Bakker left the meeting at this time.***

#### Christian Education

Stephanie Heck shared the following:

- Jesus and Me (JAM)
  - September 25 – held at Calvary
  - October 9 – held at UCC
    - Attendance down with 40 children with about 20 being UCC children
  - October 23 – will be held at Calvary
  - November 6 – due to Holiday Fair set up, will check if class can be at Calvary
  - November 20 – will split churches since each church will be doing their own Christmas program separately; confirmands will be helping with the Christmas program
- Confirmation Sunday – mentors and confirmands met, and all enjoyed the scavenger hunt, with each confirmand receiving their own bible at the end MORE →

## Deacons

Karlene Wallace shared the following:

- The next meeting will be October 30 to finalized “All Saints Day”
- The last meeting was hosted at Byrl and Sharon Buddenhagen’s home
- No changes for the year 2025 for the Committee members

## **Other**

Motion by Bonnie Weyer, seconded by Stephanie Heck to have a real Christmas tree for the sanctuary this year, with Paul Vine donating a tree. Voice vote taken with all “aye”; motion carried.

## **Adjournment**

Motion by Stephanie Heck, seconded by Karlene Wallace to adjourn. Voice vote taken with all “aye”; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7 PM.

Submitted by:

Emile J Miller, Neillsville UCC Council Secretary



**SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE**  
December 1, 2024 – January 26, 2025

	<b>Deacon/ host</b>	<b>Greeter(s)</b>	<b>Usher(s)</b>	<b>Power Point</b>
<b>Sunday, December 1, 2024</b>	JoAnn Wren	Sandy Bieneck Michelle Bergemann	Bob Petkovsek Barb Petkovsek	Janice Miller
<b>Sunday, December 8, 2024</b>	Wayne Voss	Stepanie & Craig Heck	Paul Schmidt Cris Hediger	Bonnie Weyer
<b>Sunday, December 15, 2024</b>	Barb Shoemaker	Kirk & Nancy Rodman	Mickey Marty Joel Raine	Emile Miller
<b>Sunday, December 22, 2024</b>	Byrl Buddenhagen	Byrl & Sharon Buddenhagen	Ken Shoemaker Russ Karl	Crispin Hediger
<b>Sunday, December 29, 2024</b>	Sally Sadowksa	Jim & Rosie Repinski	Paul Vine Kelley Burch	Crispin Hediger
<b>Sunday, January 5, 2025</b>	Karlene Wallace	Lydia Schumacher Karen Northup	Craig Heck Max Heck	
<b>Sunday, January 12, 2025</b>	Janice Miller	Pat Acheson Herman Seebandt	Don Quicker Jerry Quicker	
<b>Sunday, January 19, 2025</b>	JoAnn Wren	Linda Stalsberg Carla Mar;ty	Hap Eddy Roger Carl	
<b>Sunday, January 26, 2025</b>	Wayne Voss	Howie & Kathy Mathis	Debbie Perkl Mike Perkl	
Please call the church office if you are unable to be here, or make arrangements with another church member. <b>715-743-2147</b>				



# DECEMBER

# 2024

# United Church of Christ

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1 <u>First Sunday of Advent</u></b> 10 AM Worship Communion 7 PM <b>NA</b>	<b>2</b> 9 AM Card Making	<b>3 Each Tuesday -</b> 1 PM Marge Goetsch Bible Study – church lounge / bring bible 5 PM – Deacons Mtg	<b>4 JAM</b> 5-6 PM Christmas Program Practice at UCC 7 PM <b>NA</b>	<b>5</b> Noon- T&C Quilters	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8 <u>Second Sunday of Advent</u></b> 10 AM Worship 7 PM <b>NA</b>	<b>9</b> PM - PEO	<b>10</b> 1 PM Bible Study	<b>11 JAM</b> 5-6 PM Christmas Program Practice at UCC *Meal Prep 7 PM <b>NA</b>	<b>12</b> 1 PM Circle of Friends Christmas Party *Meal Prep	<b>13</b> 3:30 – 7:30 PM JAM Christmas Party *Meal Prep	<b>14</b>
<b>15 <u>Third Sunday of Advent</u></b> 10 AM Worship Childrens Program Meal Give Away 7 PM <b>NA</b>	<b>16</b> 9 AM Card Making 9 AM T & C Quilters	<b>17</b> 1 PM Bible Study 5:30 Trustees Mtg	<b>18</b> 7 PM <b>NA</b>	<b>19</b> 5:30 Council Mtg	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22 <u>Fourth Sunday of Advent</u></b> 10 AM Worship 7 PM <b>NA</b>	<b>23</b> 9 AM Card Making	<b>24</b> Christmas Eve Services 4:30 8:30	<b>25</b> Merry Christmas 7 PM <b>NA</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29 <u>First Sunday after Christmas</u></b> 7 PM <b>NA</b>		<b>31</b> New Years Eve 6-10 PM Game Night All Welcome				