

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Neillsville, Wisconsin
Church 715-743-2147
Pastor Julie Ruegsegger
Pastor's Office 715-743-2117
Cell Phone 608-558-2397
www.neillsvilleucc.org

MARCH 2025 NEWSLETTER

Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:31

Dear Friends,

I hope and pray that you are well as we continue through this season of bitterly cold weather and viral illness. The flu bug and all its "cousins" this year seem to be more virulent than ever, affecting so many people and lingering long past our expectations. As I write to you today, the sun is shining and the temperature is above freezing, and it gives me hope that the end of our winter malaise is near.

I have been thinking about hope a lot lately. We recently watched the movie "Green and Gold," and spent a long time discussing the ending. It is not a typical Hollywood "happily-ever-after" ending with everything tied up neatly with a bow, but it does leave the viewer with an enduring promise of hope. It reminds us that life continues, sometimes in contentment and relative ease, and others in struggle and uncertainty, but in all times, there is a glimmer of hope.

Although I am not terribly fond of poetry, I have always enjoyed the works of Emily Dickinson, particularly "Hope is the Thing with Feathers". It reminds us of the presence of hope within, even in the darkest storms of life. Even when we have no words to express it, hope continues to sing in our souls, if only we listen. No matter what trials and tribulations we face, there is hope to encourage us and get us through.

As faithful people, we know a deeper source of trust and hope. We are reminded that God will give us the strength to weather any storm, to face our trials and tribulations, to keep moving forward toward brighter days ahead.

There are many reasons for us to get mired down in our daily struggles and uncertainty: illness, grief, economic challenges, broken relationships, societal worries, systemic injustice, hurts and fears that feel bigger than our abilities to cope or help. Yet there is always a glimmer of hope, if we just look and listen.

God promises that when we continue to trust and hope in the Lord, we will be given the strength to soar like eagles, to run and not grow weary, to walk and not faint. Hope in the Lord gives us the strength and courage to endure, to live the Mission of Christ: to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind to liberate the oppressed (Luke 4:18). This is God's promise to each of us.

"Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord." Psalm 31:24

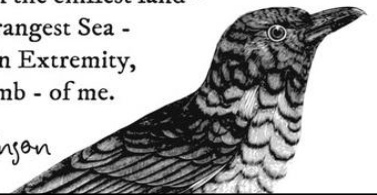
Grace and Peace, *Pastor Julie*

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
 That perches in the soul -
 And sings the tune without the words -
 And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
 And sore must be the storm -
 That could abash the little Bird
 That kept so many warm -

I've heard it in the chilliest land -
 And on the strangest Sea -
 Yet - never - in Extremity,
 It asked a crumb - of me.

Emily Dickinson



Ad Hoc Future Connections and Outreach Committee Update

Paul Vine, Moderator

In January an ad hoc group of parishioners began the brainstorming process to improve our church's financial future. This ad hoc committee has met several times and is composed of representatives from standing committees, Members are: JoAnn Voss and Kirk Rodman (Stewardship), Mike Perkl (Trustees), Byrl Buddenhagen (Deacons) Barb Petkovsek, Emile Miller, Paul Vine (Council); and Pastor Julie.

The committee initially focused on fundraising but agreed to broaden its scope and discuss ideas and ways to better engage members as well as the community. The committee is helping plan and support four fundraisers in 2025. Below is a tentative schedule with volunteers who will help organize and coordinate each event. We welcome member support and help!

Pie & Bake Sale	Emile Miller, Carla Marty	Sun. April 6
Church Barbecue	Bob Petkovsek	Sun. April 27
Carnival Pancake Feed	Mike Perkl, Barb Petkovsek	Sat. August 23
Chili Feed	Barb Petkovsek, Mike Perkl	Sat. October. 25

The committee is recommending proceeds from these fundraisers be committed to support the church general fund. In addition, it is hoped we can promote and encourage people outside of the church to attend and attend these events.

The committee is also continuing to discuss ways and opportunities for parishioners to become involved in Sunday services and other church activities. We look forward to working with the standing committees, Pastor Julie and members in supporting UCC. Stay tuned for more updates and details on the next steps.



RESULTS FROM 2025

597 UCC

412 Calvary Lutheran

403 St. Mary's Catholic

Thanks to all those who brought in cans of soup.
This collection went to our local food pantry.



Continuing the following in our thoughts and prayers.

Janet Harrington Gayle Schermitzler
Lisa Schermitzler Fran Ormond
Duane Marty

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



† to the family & friends of **Wallace (Wally) Garbisch**, 87 who passed away on February 7th.
Wally was a member of our church, who was a well-known member of the Granton community. During his earlier years he was a farmer for almost 45 years, school bus driver for 56 years, and volunteered many hours at the Granton Ball Park, for the FFA alumni, 4-H and other events.
Our thoughts are with his wife,
Patricia (Pat) Garbisch, family and friends.
His services were held here on
Monday, February 12, 2025.

† to the **family & friends** of Sandy (Eddy) Henseler, who passed away on February 12th. Sandy is the sister of **Debbie Holman, Sue Gurney, & Brian Eddy** members of our church.
Her funeral service was held here at UCC on Thursday, February 20, 2025.

In grateful appreciation to Pastor Julie for the beautiful service, all members that organized the lunch, baked bars, made salads, served and cleaned up.
Thank you from
the family of Sandy (Eddy) Henseler



JAM for youth ages 3K to 6th grade

Wednesday, March 5th 5PM at UCC
Wednesday, March 19th 5 PM at Calvary

Confirmation
each Sunday 11 AM after worship



Sundays, February 2, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Dan Patey & family in loving memory of Elvira Patey.

Sunday, February 9, the radio broadcast was sponsored anonymously with a message “May His Word be Heard by All”

Sunday, February 16, the radio broadcast was sponsored anonymously “In praise of Jesus Christ”.

Sunday, February 23, the radio broadcast was sponsored by Pat Acheson & Herman Seebandt in honor of Fran Ormond; a friend, faithful church member and radio broadcast listener.

**2025 Radio Broadcast
Sponsors Needed**

Would you like to sponsor a radio broadcast?
You may choose to dedicate or honor someone for a particular service date.
The cost remains the same - \$75
Please contact Janice in the office or phone 715-743-2147 to reserve a date.

Facts and Figures of February 2025

Attendance for In-Person Worship

February 2	online 5	Sunday 51
February 9	online 6	Sunday 63
February 16	online 9	Sunday 52
February 23	online 11	Sunday 51



- 1- Rick Buchsteiner
Wendell Kuhn
Dick Lewis
- 4- Millie Mathis
- 5- James Mankowski
- 7- Dixie Hediger
- 8- Randy Hauge
- 10- Sherrie Holub
- 12- Larry Marshall
Lisa Schermitzler
- 13- Krue Czarnecki
Bob Petkovsek
- 16- Francis (Butch) Carl
- 17- Glenna Rhoades
- 20- Steve Barrette
Max Heck
Russ Karl
- 21- Howie Mathis
- 23- Frances Short
Brody Bergemann
- 29- Lane Kranz
- 30- Kellie Murphy Czarnecki
- 31- Joe Anderson

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



Anniversaries

- 20- Patricia Acheson & Herman Seebandt
Lydia & Ron Schumacher



APRIL 1 -9

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

April 1-9

Birthdays

- 4- Carla Marty
- 5- Tye Kranz
- 6- Kirk Rodman
Bonnie Weyer
- 9- Ray Weyer

Anniversaries

- 2- Jenna & Josh Ziegler
- 6- Neil & Corrine Armitage



SET YOUR CLOCKS
Ahead!

THIS SUNDAY, MARCH 9th
set your clocks
ahead one hour.



Baked Goods Auction Scheduled

Mark your calendars for Sunday, April 6th right after church in the fellowship hall. Remember, it's just not pies, we will auction off bars, muffins, casseroles, hot dishes, or any other type of baked goods.

Proceeds from this auction will go into the church's general fund to help with our deficit.

So now for the first step of this fundraiser, we need the help of our trusty bakers/cooks of the church. Please use the signup sheet in the narthex, if you are interested in making any items to be auctioned off. If you cannot make it to church to sign up for a baked good item, please call the church office at 715-743-2147 and Janice will sign you up!

When deciding what to bake, consider different portion sizes, such as an 8 x 8 pan size, along with our 9 x 13 size. This way all family sizes can benefit from this baked goods auction.

Bidders, if you have a favorite pie or baked goods, talk to the bakers/cooks so you get the one you want and a good donation to the church; what a deal!

Thanks for your continued support and get ready to bid!

Emile Miller & Carla Marty



Joy and sorrow. Big wins and even bigger failures. Lent is one of those rare seasons where we get to stop pretending things will suddenly get better. Instead, we hold space for life's fragility—and let

God meet us there, right in the middle of it all. Our worship series for this season of Lent is called **"The Hardest Part: Hurt We Carry, Hope We Find."**

We will gather with members of Calvary Lutheran on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. for a brief worship and deeper study of the Sunday scripture.

Our first gathering will be

March 12 at Calvary

March 19 at UCC Fellowship Hall (downstairs), continuing to alternate throughout the six weeks of Lent. Light snacks will be available.

Our hope is that this Lenten series will allow us to acknowledge how heavy the world can feel, but where, bit by bit, we might also hold out hope for what might still be possible. Because when we stay with the hard part, something else happens: the good part begins to unfold, slowly but surely.



515 West Second Street

10:45-11:00 AM

Prepared by Living Hope

UCC Financial Update

Below is an update of UCC Financials. Included are receipts of regular offerings as well as nontraditional donations. 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.

	January	February	March	Year to date
Receipts	\$7054.00			\$7054.00
Expenses	\$13865.61			\$13865.61
Grand Total	(\$6,877.61)			(\$6,877.61)

Statements can easily be printed on request during the year. If you would like to be on a list to have your statement quarterly please notify the church office or Bonnie. They can be emailed or printed. Thanks for your continued support of our church.

**Donate to "One Great Hour of Sharing"
Mission Offering on March 30th.**

Our UCC church will take a special mission offering for "One Great Hour of Sharing" to respond to humanitarian and development needs in the world. The offering brings hope to people around the world and in the U.S. Gifts to "One Great Hour of Sharing" carries God's message of love and hope to people in crisis. Through work with local churches, conferences, international partners and organization, "One Great Hour of Sharing" provides sources of clean water, food, education, health care, and small business micro-credit loans, advocacy, resettlement of refugees and displaced person, emergency relief, and rehabilitation as well as disaster preparedness and response.

Approved Annual Meeting Minutes Neillsville United Church of Christ

The meeting was held on Sunday, **February 25, 2024** in the Sanctuary at the Neillsville United Church of Christ.

Vice Moderator Petkovsek called the meeting to order at 11:03 AM.

Attendance

The following were in attendance: Barb Petkovsek, Stephanie Heck, Bonnie Weyer, Karlene Wallace, Kirk Rodman, Nancy Rodman, Jim Repinski, Rosie Repinski, Allan Hoesly, Hap Eddy, Ben Mathis, Kelly Mathis, Kathy Mathis, Nancy Boon, Doris Bakker, James Vradenburg, Audrey Vradenburg, Barb Shoemaker, Ken Shoemaker, Jerry Quicker, Linda Stalsberg, Janice Miller, Sue Vornholt, Bob Petkovsek, Don Quicker (see attached sign in sheet).

Invocation

Interim Pastor Sue Vornholt guided those in attendance with an opening prayer.

Vice Moderator Petkovsek shared Moderator Vine's message from page four (4) of the Annual Report, reading the first and last paragraphs.

Minutes

Motion by Hap Eddy, seconded by Kathy Mathis to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2023 Annual Meeting, recorded by past secretary Dave Harnisch. Voice vote taken with all "aye"; motion carried.

New Business

Investment Fund Report

Members were directed to the written report on page 15 of the Annual Report, since Committee Chair Allan Hoesly had nothing more to add.

Vice Moderator Petkovsek yielded the floor to Assistant Treasurer Don Quicker who shared highlights from financial pages 17 through 22 of the Annual Report. Quicker stated it was a good year financially due to the reasonable cost of filling the pulpit with Pastor Sue and Pastor Jim.

Annual Committee Reports

Vice Moderator Petkovsek asked members in attendance to review the committee reports found in the Annual Report and if they have any questions, they should contact the Committee Chair directly.

MORE →

Committee Membership – Nomination Committee

Vice Moderator Petkovsek shared the following additions to the Committee Membership printed on page 25 of the Annual Report:

- Audit Committee – Nancy Rodman
- Stewardship Committee – Kathy Mathis and Kirk Rodman

Motion by Bob Petkovsek, seconded by Stephanie Heck to approve the Committee Membership as presented. Voice vote taken with all “aye”; motion carried.

Other Business

Vice Moderator Petkovsek shared that Pastor Julie will be here on Sunday, April 21 or Sunday, April 28. Pastor Sue and Pastor Jim have agreed to fill the pulpit until Julie’s arrival.

Any Additional Business or Announcements

Nothing currently.

Closing Prayer

Vice Moderator Petkovsek guided those in attendance with a closing prayer.

Adjournment

Motion by Allan Hoesly, seconded by Bob Petkovsek to adjourn. Voice vote taken with all “aye”; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 11:13 AM.

Submitted by:

Emile J Miller

Neillsville UCC Council Secretary

Approved Minutes

Neillsville United Church of Christ Council

The meeting was held on Wednesday, January 15, 2025 in the church lounge at the Neillsville United Church of Christ.

Moderator Vine called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM.

Council Members Present: Trustee Rep. Doris Bakker, Christian Education Rep. Stephanie Heck, Vice Moderator Barb Petkovsek, Moderator Paul Vine, Deacons Rep. Karlene Wallace, and Treasurer Bonnie Weyer. Others: Pastor Julie
Unable to attend: Emile Miller

Prayer: Pastor Julie guided the committee with a prayer.

Minutes

Motion by Stephanie Heck seconded by Karlene Wallace to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2024 council meeting and the minutes from the December 8, 2024 Congregational meeting. Voice vote taken with all “aye”; motion carried.

Financial Report

Motion by Karlene Wallace, seconded by Stephanie Heck 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.

- Special THANKS to Don Quicker for his doing the “legwork” on helping secure an additional \$6000 from the Employee Retention Credit Program. THANKS DON!!

New Business

- 1) 2025 Annual meeting date: The Annual meeting will be held immediately following the Sunday, March 2 service. Committee chairpersons should get their electronic report to Jance by Thursday February 6, 2025.
- 2) Update on Future Connections and Outreach Committee: Moderator Vine summarized the recommendations and ideas from the ad hoc committee. The committee is recommending fundraisers, opportunities for parishioners to be involved in church activities and community members to participate in church activities and fundraisers.

Committee members include: Trustee rep. Mike Perkl, Deacon Rep. Byrl Buddenhagen, Stewardship rep. JoAnn Voss and Kirk Rodman, Council reps. Paul Vine, Barb Petkovsek, Holiday Fair rep. Emile Miller, and Pastor Julie Ruegsegger.
- 3) Committee responsibility review: At the first meeting of the year committees please review their committees’ roles and responsibilities as outlined in the by-laws. A hard copy of the constitution and bylaws was given to each council member.

Pastor Report/Update: Pastor Julie shared the following:

- At least one person is expressing interest in joining UCC. Deacons are responsible for membership. Pastor plans to schedule a meeting with this person and requested others let her know if they know of other potential new members.
- A Baptism is scheduled for the near future
- Confirmation is going well
- She conducted two (2) funerals and has another scheduled for early Feb.
- UCC hosted two (2) Christmas eve services. 126 people at the 4PM service with 40 people at the 8PM service. Thanks to Karlene and Byrl for their extra efforts with communion.
- On New Years Eve, Pastor hosted a game night. Twelve people participated
- Pastor has done four (4) hospital visits and several home visits.
- Pastor needs to complete a Theology class to complete ordination requirements. She is requesting to enroll in a class that will take place over the next eighteen months. This could result in her ordination being done in 2026 versus 2025. All present expressed support.

Committee Reports/Update

Trustees - Doris Bakker shared the following:

- bathroom unplugged Monday, January 6
- Boiler systems have been evaluated and repaired
- Photo of pastor Julie will be added to the wall

Christian Education - Stephanie Heck shared the following:

- The children's program was done on DEC. 15. This went very well
- JAM will be held on Jan. 22, 2025.
- Lenten services will again be shared with Calvary Lutheran. It is recommended that JAM be held at same site as the scheduled WED service

Deacons - Karlene Wallace shared the following:

- The Deacons helped host two Christmas Eve services. All went well

Other:

Dishwasher and stove repair: Bonnie has been working with two vendors to get repairs completed.

Draft membership Directory: Bonnie passed out a draft members directory and requested members review and let her know any people who may have been missed and/or edits to contact info.

Bingo Option: The Future Connections & Outreach committee is requesting approval to gather details and requirements for a state bingo license.

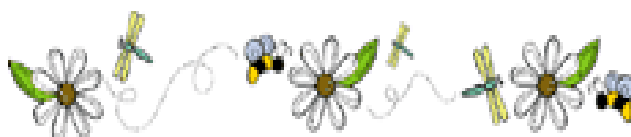
Next Meeting Date and Time: 5:30 PM WED. FEB 19, 2025

Adjournment: Motion by Stephanie Heck and seconded by Karlene Wallace to adjourn meeting. Voice vote taken all "aye". Motion carried. Minutes submitted by Paul Vine

Hnatiuk Family Update

The Hnatiuk family marked two years on the Luchterhand farm on January 30. After arriving in 2023, Olesia and Mykola found jobs, worked on improving their English, and settled into their new way of life. The immigration service gave them 2 years of Humanitarian parole which could be extended by applying for another 2 years under a re-parole program offered by the Biden administration. Olesia mailed all 4 applications together, but only hers was processed and approved. She had to reapply for Mykola and the boys. Mykola's work authorization expired on January 28, 2025 because his paperwork was delayed due to a clerical error. He could not work as he waited for a new authorization period. One week ago he received his renewed authorization just as the new administration paused all processing. He can now work until October 19, 2026 if their temporary protective status is not canceled as has happened to other immigrants.

Mykola is currently looking for a new job. Olesia continues as an exemplary student at Midstate Technical College taking credits toward a nursing degree. She works as a daycare teacher at Zion Lutheran Early Childhood Center in Colby and as a nursing assistant at Clark County Rehabilitation and Living Center while taking classes. It is a very stressful time for them, but the family continues to make their life as normal as possible for their two boys ages 8 and 4. The boys enjoy swimming at the YMCA in Marshfield and Roman has a wrestling class at his school twice a week. He speaks English very well, but has some difficulty in school understanding all the lessons. For instance he is good in math, but has trouble with story problems. Dmytro is in 4 year old Kindergarten two days a week. When asked what he would like to do for his birthday in April, he responded he wants to go fishing, That was his favorite activity last summer along with racing around the farm (he loves to run), jumping on the trampoline, and picking raspberries and apples. Mykola has bees for honey, but Roman loves maple syrup which he never had before coming to Wisconsin. The family is looking forward to helping in the Luchterhand sugarbush this spring.



SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE
March 9, 2025 – April 27, 2025

	Deacon/ host	Greeter(s)	Usher(s)	Power Point
Sunday, March 9, 2025	JoAnn Wren	Scott & Jill Williams Family	Bonnie Weyer Ray Weyer	Bonnie Weyer
Sunday, March 16, 2025	Wayne Voss	Sandy Bieneck Michelle Bergemann	Russ Karl Hap Eddy	Reese Ziegler
Sunday, March 23, 2025	Byrl Buddenhagen	Carole Romens Jenny Erickson	Don Quicker Jerry Quicker	Crispin Hediger
Sunday, March 30, 2025	Barb Shoemaker	Wayne & JoAnn Voss	Larry Marshall Ken Shoemaker	Emile Miller
Sunday, April 6, 2025	Sally Sadowska	Nancy Boon Audrey Vradenburg	Ben Mathis Paul Schmidt	Barb Petkovsek
Sunday, April 13, 2025	Karlene Wallace	Debbie Holman Sue Gurney	Hap Eddy Roger Carl	Bonnie Weyer
Sunday, April 20, 2025	Janice Miller	Larry & Kathy Marshall	Mickey Marty Joel Raine	Paul Vine
EASTER				
Sunday, April 27, 2025	JoAnn Wren	Nancy & Kirk Rodman	Russ Karl Paul Schmidt	Barb Petkovsek
Please call the church office if you are unable to be here, or make arrangements with another church member. 715-743-2147				



2025

United Church of Christ

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Each Tuesday - 1 PM Marge Goetsch Bible Study – church lounge / bring bible				1
2 <u>Transfiguration</u> Sunday Communion 10 AM Worship ANNUAL MEETING 11AM Confirmation 7 PM NA	3 9 AM Card Making	4 1 PM Bible Study	5 JAM 5 PM at UCC -Ash Wednesday Service 6:30 PM At UCC 7 PM NA	6 Noon- T& C Quilters	7	8 NW Association Mtg - Wausau
9 <u>First Sunday in Lent</u> 10 AM Worship 11AM Confirmation 7 PM NA	10 6 PM PEO	11 1 PM Bible Study 4:30 PM Deacons Mt	12 6 PM Lenten Study at Calvary *Meal Prep 7 PM NA	13 1:30 PM Circle of Friends Meeting 4 PM Future Connections & Outreach Mtg *Meal Prep	14 *Meal Prep	15
16 <u>Second Sunday in Lent</u> 10 AM Worship 11AM Confirmation Meal Give Away 7 PM NA	17 St. Patrick's Day 9 AM Card Making 9 AM T& C Quilters	18 1 PM Bible Study 4 PM Trustees Mtg	19 JAM 5 PM at Calvary 6 PM Lenten Study at UCC 7 PM NA	20	21	22
23 <u>Third Sunday in Lent</u> 30 10 AM Worship 11 AM Confirmation Both Sundays 10 AM worship 7 PM NA	24 31	25 1 PM Bible Study 5 PM Deacons Mt 6 PM – HCE meeting	26 6 PM Lenten Study at Calvary 7 PM NA	27 5:30 PM Council Mtg	28	29