

NOVEMBER 2018

UNITED CHURCH OF CLINTON

IN THIS ISSUE

SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

COPING WITH GRIEF
DURING THE HOLIDAYS

THE GERMAN
CHRISTMAS MARKET

WHY SING?



What's This "Why" Stuff?!

One of our members went to a church workshop recently called "Weird Church." We're may not be called to be a weird church as such, but I do know we are being called to something new, something yet to be discovered. We know the world is changing; that church attendance is declining not just at United, but across the word.

The United Church of Clinton has begun a process of discovery and discernment. I've been called as Revitalization Minister and as such my task is to guide our walk on this journey. The task before us is to discover who & what are we being called to as the body of Christ? There are many steps to take along the way and each of us will have some part in the journey. In the first book of Corinthians, ch 12, Paul says, "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work." As Christians we know that in the midst of declining churches and a changing world, God is alive and well, and at work in all the world! Beth Estock and Paul Nixon, authors of the book "Weird Church: Welcome to the Church of the 21st Century" tell us that there a 4 Key Concepts to keep in mind as we walk this journey:

First, it is a changing landscape. Each successive generation has more intense disaffection of institutional churches, and new forms of faith communities are emerging and evolving. Second, thriving faith communities are shifting from institutional maintenance toward mission, vision and purpose. (more about that to come.). Third, they propose that there are three faithful choices: stay the same as we are, being faithful to God – knowing that this will only be sustained for a very short period of time; evolve to be able to continue ministering in this changing word; or give birth to new forms of ministry and faith community. As a group of God's gathered community, we will choose one for United Church. But that's a way off in the future.

The fourth key concept the authors put forth is "Know Your Why" – and that's where we are now. Thriving faith communities have absolute clarity on their God given identity, purpose and DNA. It
(Continued on page 8)



Youth Council

November Youth Events

4th—Bake Sale for Turkey's Night of Remembrance

**Youth Please Arrive at the
Church by 4:00 to set-up.**

11th—Start Pageant Practice

18th—Shoebox Blessing & Delivery

Turkey Delivery



Sunday School News: We have classes offered to children from pre-school age through grade eight. Classes are held during the worship service, following the Children's Message. The children are encouraged to become active members in the worship service by volunteering to be an acolyte. Please sign up on the bulletin board upstairs.

Confirmation News: Students please come to volunteer at any of the events listed as Youth Events. We look forward to seeing you!

Youth council will meet on November 18 at 9:15, we have some great volunteering opportunities—come and check out this committee!

www.clintonunitedchurch.org



Serving Communion - October 2018

**Mark your calendar and let
your voice be heard!**

Semi-Annual Meeting

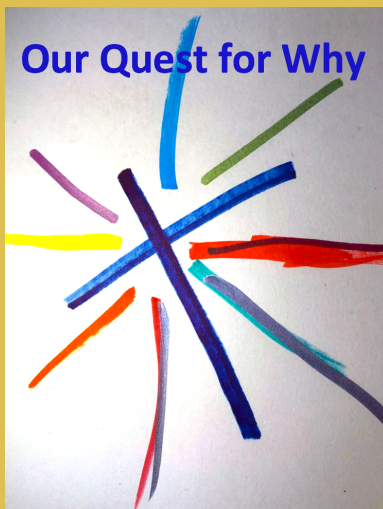
November 18

After worship

Melrose Church Uses Churches Alive Program to Help in Their Quest to be More Vital and Purposeful

Two years ago MHCC joined the Churches Alive process to explore their unique gifts as a congregation, the needs of the greater Melrose community, and their own passions - trying to discern the place where God is calling them to grow. "We did not enter into the process saying that we wanted to grow the church," said Horne. "We entered curious about how we could improve our vitality and step faithfully into the future."

Over the next year they engaged the congregation, got to know the wider community and came up with 4 pillars unique to their church. They then crafted a vision statement that included nourishing themselves spiritually, nurturing youth, serving those in need, and building community. Knowing their "why" has indirectly helped bring 19 new members into the church!



On October 24th, several of your Vitality Scouts attended a gathering at the Mass Conference, UCC to learn more about the Churches Alive program. We came away excited and energized and ready to introduce "Our Quest for Why". A crucial first step

in discerning what The United Church of Christ is being called to be in the 21st Century is to discover why we're even here; why we should continue to be here. We hope you'll join us for worship and coffee hour on Sunday November 4th for the kick-off of this step of the journey! In the meantime, we wanted to share a success story with you from a fellow UCC church. The full story can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/ybun4mkd> .

Come Lord Jesus!

"The season of Advent, more than any other time of the church year, invites us to embrace the spiritual discipline of waiting. The season of Advent will not be rushed. The Advent carols must be sung, the Advent candles must be lighted week by week, and the doors of the Advent Calendar must be opened day by day. Christmas will finally come when all the expectant Scriptures have been read and when the baby has finally been born."

That's a beautiful description of the first season of the Christian church year from Holly W. Whitcomb, a United Church of Christ minister. Advent is right around the corner. In fact, it's less than a month away. How will you

wait for Jesus to be born? In this season of rush and hurry, as you bake and decorate cookies, shop for the perfect gifts, plan your holiday meal, decorate the house inside and out, shovel the snow, and keep up with work deadlines, how will you practice waiting spiritually?

The longing of Advent is echoed in the plea of Revelation 22:20: "Come, Lord Jesus!"

If you long for a world that is illuminated by God's love, join us in praying this Advent, "Come, Lord Jesus." If you can long for the renewal of humanity and the end of violence, join us in praying this Advent, "Come, Lord Jesus."

The Still Speaking Writers' Group of the UCC has created a 2018 Advent Devotional called *Come, Lord Jesus: Hearing God where you live (and others surprising places)*. This is a unique collection of devotions that includes Scripture and prayer for each day of Advent. It begins December 2 (first Sunday of Advent) and continues through Christmas Day.

If you would like to order a copy, or see a sample, please let Pastor Lee know.



Join Us for an Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

November 25, 2018
United Church of Clinton
5pm



Give Thanks to the Lord, for God is good; God's love endures forever.

~1 Chronicles 16:24

Every night of November, I go to bed with the alphabet in mind. Not because I've forgotten my ABC's but it's how I give thanks to God for all the amazing blessings in my life. I challenge you to do the same. Give thanks for at least 26 things every night, starting with the letter A!

Who's going to cut the turkey?!

Coping with grief during the holidays

"Who's going to cut the turkey now that Granpa isn't here?" Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day are annual holidays that can be a very difficult time for people who have experienced the death of someone loved. Memories of good times and togetherness at the holiday season remind us of our loss and the emptiness we feel. Watching others who are feeling thankful and are celebrating when we feel overwhelmed, lonely or sad can be very painful.

We hope you will join us for any of the following:

November 4, 5pm - Annual Night of Remembrance. This brief service recognizes those we have lost and includes a beautiful luminary cross.

November 20, 6:30pm - Service for Grieving Parents. This ecumenical service is for parents who have lost a child of any age and includes poetry, music, and candle lighting.

December 18, 6:30pm - Blue Christmas Service of Light. A Christmas worship for those seeking light in the darkness of grief.

Tuesday evenings 6-7:00pm, November 13, 27, December 11, 25, January 1, 15 - On line grief support. Sponsored by CoachRev @the Crossroads. 508-308-7116 for more information.

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Moderator – Bob Lidstone (978.368.7747)
Deacons – Pam Dobeck (978.368.1632)
Social Justice – Gloria Parkinson
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Worship Planning – Gloria Parkinson
Music Ministry – Gloria Parkinson
Servants in Faith – Dawn Sivert
(978.660.5476)
Property – Perry Sivert (978.365.2840)
Youth Council – Chrissy Dobeck
(508.365.3105)
And Heather McNamara (978.838.9963)
Vitality Scouts – Pastor Lee (508.308.7116)



THE GERMAN CHRISTMAS MARKET

Our Christmas Market is coming fast. We are sewing, painting, crocheting, embroidering, cooking, planning, and just running around like Santa's little elves. If you have any talents and want to donate items, or help make tree decorations, let me know, We are planning on having approximately 20 Vendors this year along with our own For You Booth, For Your Home Booth, The Raffle Booth, and of course our Food Booth with all our wonderful cookies, waffles, applesauce, stolen, kuchen, grilled bratwursts, and of course sauerkraut.

We are looking for volunteers for setting up our booths, tables, lights, etc on the 25th of November after Church and the next couple of days. We are also looking for people that might like to make cookies, and help put them in bags for sale.

Other volunteers we need are people to help in the kitchen, help with the booths, help on the grill, help as floaters where you may be needed, helping our customers find their way to all the different vendors upstairs and down.

In the next week we will be putting up volunteer sheets for you to sign up to help. Please give thought and prayers in how you can help make our 2018 the best ever Market. The money we raise this year will be used for the Church, and to help the Vitality Committee in purchasing materials needed to help our Church grow and serve the Community of Clinton and the surrounding towns.

We will not be having a Concert this year on Sunday afternoon. We are going to invite other Churches, and members of the community to join us in a Christmas Carol Sing, to help launch the wonder and joy of the birth of our Lord Jesus.

Respectfully submitted

Dawn Sivert, Chairperson



Our Social Justice Efforts FEED MY SHEEP



WHEAT COMMUNITY CAFÉ: COINCIDENCE OR WHAT?

Our pizza, salad, and ice cream meal, delivered on the fourth Monday of each month, is currently being served to Community Café guests by members of the Clinton High School Excel Club. For the past couple of months, our meal has been served by Gabby Turcotte, one of our confirmands! By the way, have you noticed the Community Café place setting in our fellowship hall right where we line up for our coffee hour munchies? Nudge! Nudge! Our monthly meal costs around \$140 per month. Can you help?

GROWING FOR OTHERS 2018: OUR HARVEST SAFELY GATHERED IN!

All over until the 2019 planting season! Many thanks to those who participated in growing produce for the WHEAT Community Cupboard in Clinton. Bravo to everyone who helped with the recent October clean-up to make our growing boxes ready for the moment Jack Frost stops nipping next spring.



UPCOMING PROJECTS

In September's newsletter, your Social Justice Committee shared how it was evaluating projects we've been engaged in to make sure the support we offer continues to be what recipients actually want. Here's what we've heard back:



WINTER TOGS FOR THE SIOUX YMCA IN DUPREE, SD

Gloria Parkinson reached out to CEO Andrew Corley. Here's Andrew's reply:

"Thank you, Gloria, for your insight! I appreciate you reaching out and thinking about actual needs. The fact on our side is that we have become so reliant on your donations of hats, gloves and mittens, that we haven't needed to ask anyone else for them. It would be great to have you all continue the donations! (It snowed today.)"

So, church family, let's say "Yes!" to Andrew and fill the colorful box in the Sanctuary, created by our church children, with new hats, scarves, mittens, etc. Pastor Lee will bless our winter togs on Sunday, November 25, and we'll ship them to Andrew forthwith.

THE BUZZ ON OUR THIRD DAY GARDEN



pollinators
have found our
Third Day
Garden!

WINTER COAT COLLECTION FOR LOCAL DISTRIBUTION

After checking in with Lynne Serewiecz, president of the local nonprofit Thomas J. Serewiecz, Sr. Foundation, during December and early January we'll collect new or gently used winter coats.

SPARE CHANGE JARS: WHEREVER THE NEED IS GREAT

Given the spate of local and national emergencies, the collections in our Spare Change Jars will be flexible so we may respond in a timely manner wherever the need is great.

YOUTH PROJECTS

See elsewhere in this newsletter for the several projects our youth are engaged in.

”Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25)

Peace and blessings as winter approaches, Gloria (Parkinson)

On behalf of your Social Justice Committee members: Chrissy Dobeck, Heather McNamara, Madeline McTague, Gloria Parkinson, Gloria Popp, and Pastor Lee (ex officio)

HERORATS

The need continues for these energetic and efficient little critters. We'll need to decide soon on whether to continue funding this project that has a double benefit. One, by sniffing out mines, HeroRats allow for families and farmers to return home safely and resume their way of life in previous war zones. Two, again, the nose knows, with HeroRats testing for tuberculosis in rural communities that results in timely treatment.

Why?!

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evokes such passion and excitement that people are willing to move out of their comfort zones and status quo. All of us, from the newest visitor to the longest term member who grew up in this church are part of the answer to "Why?". Why did you come to this church?

Why have you stayed? Why is this Church here? Would it matter if we suddenly disappeared? Why?

When you hear me or our Vitality Scouts asking this question, we're looking for what it is about United (past or present) that expresses passion and excitement.

Sharing personal and collective stories will help us make this discovery as we hear repeating themes or responses. I think all of us could say "United is an extremely welcoming congregation" – that is but one piece of our DNA, what makes is "the place to be", why we all are here and why we want others to experience this.

At my installation Charlotte sang "In the Bulb There is a Flower" by Natalie Sleeth. (Ask Charlotte about the story of the first time she sang it to learn "why" it was sung for me again.) The lyrics were not only appropriate for that day, but I believe they are more than significant for us as we embark on OUR JOURNEY OF REVITALIZATION!

In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree; in cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free! In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

There's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody; there's a dawn in every darkness bringing hope to you and me. From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity; in our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity. In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

And so I invite you join with me praying, "May the just growing bulb that is United Church in Clinton become the most glorious springtime bloom to be found!" Amen!





Making a Joyful Sound!

Our Church's Music Ministry

Why Sing?

My passion for music and our church's music ministry is no secret!

I believe music during worship can take us to a place beyond the day-to-day. For me that translates into music having a deeply spiritual component with the power to transform.

I admit I can get carried away with this and I confess I occasionally wonder where this belief comes from. Well, guess what? Researchers at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, conducted a scientific study, the results of which support the "choir effect."

Simply put, it seems that group singing—think of our worship singing—promotes mindfulness, a proven beneficial state of contemplation. (The practice of mindfulness is now applied in many situations, including pain control.) Just thought I'd share....

With singing in mind, make a note in your calendars of a couple of early December delights coming to our church.

Sunday, December 2nd at 2:00 PM, as part of the German Christmas Market weekend, we'll be having a Community Carol Sing! Spread the word to family, friends, coworkers, and anyone who enjoys singing traditional carols.

On Sunday, December 9, our musician Ilana Cady has arranged for her mother to bring the high school choir she directs to share Christmas music with us during worship. How joyful is that?

Talking about Ilana Cady, in case you missed the October worship when Ilana invited her college friend Josh to join her at the piano, here's a picture of them practicing. Wow! It was a spectacularly uplifting worship that day.

May music and mindfulness be with us all.

Gloria Parkinson
Music Ministry Coordinator



Why? Because God's Love Conquers All!

A Reflection Written by Charlotte Gill, October 24, 2018

"Every Sunday morning, I sit in this pew. It's not a 'normal' pew. It's a choir pew. A pew at the front of the church facing the congregation. Every Sunday, I sit here and sing. I listen to my mom preach. I join the other members of the church as we pray for each other. As we greet each other and sing "peace be with you." As we listen to each other. As we love each other. Any other place of worship, no matter the religion, is not much different. People sit together. They worship together. They pray for each other and they love each other.

The view from this pew is a little different than most church members see. It's the "view from the choir." I look to my left at a beautiful stained glass window, which just a few weeks ago had a praying mantis hanging out on it. I look to my right and see Shadow the church dog sleeping behind the pulpit. I look out into the congregation and see a child coloring, a husband with his arm around his wife. I see someone helping their elderly friend find the right hymn. I see so much love.

I also see the doors to the church. The doors that are always open because ALL are welcome. "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." I've seen strangers walk through that door. They are always welcomed with open arms. Someone in one of the back pews notices them, hands them a bulletin, and invites them to sit wherever they'd like. We make sure they're invited to join us across the hall after worship for coffee and snacks and conversation. We wear our name tags. It's wonderful to see this church being such a welcoming place. I felt it myself when I was here for the first time.

But sometimes, a different thought crosses my mind. A thought that I hate having and try to push out of my mind as soon as it enters. "What if someday, the stranger that walks through that door is here to do us harm?" We have turned on the news too many times to hear about a shooting at a place of worship. And just yesterday, it happened again. It happened during a bible study in Charleston where a young man was welcomed with open arms and then he opened fire. It happened during Sunday worship in Texas. And yesterday, it happened at a synagogue in Pittsburgh, during a baby naming ceremony.

People came together to worship and celebrate and love each other, and someone came into their sacred space and killed them.

It's scary to think about. Because...what if? What if we welcome someone with open arms and they are here to do us harm?

So what can we do? Do we lock our doors when worship starts? Do we install metal detectors, or even hired armed guards to stand at our doors? OF COURSE NOT! No, we will continue to keep our doors wide open. We will continue to welcome every person who walks through them with open arms. We will not let one, or two, or even three acts of hate stop us from spreading God's love throughout our community, near and far. And we will continue to pray for those affected by violence in this world, for the victims and the families and the perpetrators, and have faith that God's love conquers all hate."

PLEASE NOTE
the Church Office
Will be closed on
November 22 and 23
Happy Thanksgiving!!

Thank you! To all of you at United Church of Clinton, I want to say "Thank you very much for a wonderful and very meaningful installation service. I couldn't have asked for better!

Peace
~Pastor Lee



November Birthdays

- 02- Patrick Ruperto
- 05- Donald Dobeck, Jr.
- 08- April Duclos
- 08- Jeffrey Kane
- 11- James White
- 11- Elijah Turcotte
- 16 - Pamela Jent
- 17- Linda Wheeler
- 20- Joseph Facendola
- 23- David Wheeler
- 24 Gayle Jennings-Postras
- 24- Emma Smith Ruperto
- 27- Christian Smith



November Anniversaries

- 14 - Susie and Richard Hoag
- 15- Dawn and Perry Sivert



Our Sympathies to Laura Garceau and her family, on the passing of her mom Daphe Schuler.

Our Sympathies to Mary Ellen Matthew, Gloria Parkinson, Janet Lamy, Dawn and Perry Sivert, who have recently experienced the death of someone dear to them.

Our sympathies to Family and Friends of Carl O'Donnell



- Carl O'Donnell
- Gloria Nilson
- Larry Gilman Sr.
- Dolly Ducca
- Marj and Art Lamy
- Justin Fillios
- Jan Ganusko,

- Bobby and Lauren Fillio
- Bob Wheeler
- Tyler Bauman and Family
- Cathy Darazio
- Charlotte Conway
- Chet Thompson
- Kayla Morkert,

- Bill Yacopucci
- Carol and Steve Granger
- Bill Cummins
- Scott Maynard
- Bonnie Clark
- Jamie McNamara

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The United Church of Clinton

Pass It On
November 2018