



A United Church of Christ/
United Methodist Church
& a LGBTQIA
Welcoming Congregation

UCUP

2021

January Newsletter

**JOIN US
ONLINE**

Annual Meeting and Charge Conference

United Church in University Place
January 20, 2021 - 6:30 p.m.

ZOOM link:

<https://greaternw.zoom.us/j/91439910982> Or, join by phone: +1 253 215 8782 (Tacoma)

Please plan to join in the Zoom call for our annual meeting and charge conference. We will be approving the nominated slate of officers and trustees for 2021, approving the 2021 budget, and hearing reports from Pastor Cathlynn Law and United Methodist District Superintendent Rev. Derek Nakano.



Pamela Maddess Retired

Pamela retired at the end of 2020 from New Tacoma Funeral home after serving there for 13 years. She graciously accompanied individuals and families with End of Life Planning/Last Gifts of Love and was present in people's lives when loved ones died. Someone once heard her call herself a "Last Responder". We wish you well in your second retirement Pamela, and are grateful for your presence in our lives as a beloved member at UCUP. (Photo of Pamela participating in our virtual Blue Christmas worship service.)



**Rev. Dr. Joanne Carlson Brown
Virtual Retirement party on zoom
January 7th at 6:30pm**

Rev. Joanne Brown served UCUP from July 1999-November 2007, one month after hiring Jeff Andersen to be UCUP's music director.
Join us on zoom to wish her well in retirement.

*Join
Us*

FROM OUR PASTOR



We've turned the page to a new year and we have left 2020 behind. Now we can truly have 2020 hindsight about what this momentous year was all about. I recently read a profound article by NPR, featuring a well known Scottish ballad "Auld Lang Syne" to ring in the new year. I will be paraphrasing the article, but it is worth reading in its entirety, and listen to a black choir sing this song in a church in Alabama where white deacons once refused to seat African Americans at the height of desegregation during the 1960s. (The link is too long to put in: google NPR, Auld Lang Syne, choir to bring up the article and video). The video of this song "reminds us why preserving our memories of this historic year is vital — even if we'd rather just leave 2020 behind".

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot And never brought to mind?" Do we remember the past or do we simply turn the page to a new year and forget everything that brought us to this place?

The performance of "Auld Lang Syne" offers archival footage of racial justice protests and vigils from 2020. It also conveys how the pandemic has disproportionately impacted communities of color. "The coronavirus is infecting and killing people of color at higher rates, while the economic fallout of the pandemic is exacerbating existing wealth inequality."

There's a line in "Auld Lang Syne" about how we might approach this new year: "We'll take a cup o' kindness yet For days of auld lang syne." Music Director and community organizer Carrie Davis said, "Together in love, that's the way we're going to make this work. That's the only way we're going to move forward. Not forgetting the past — remembering the past, but moving forward."

Faithful people of UCUP, let us continue to *"take a cup of kindness yet, for days of auld lang syne"* as we move forward as this community of faith in 2021.

Our Reader board continues to get the attention of our community. A woman walking by the other day mentioned how much she enjoys our messages. We also have a new family tuning into our virtual worship services because they liked our sign. Do you remember our reader board message for March? "Worship is going virtual -- not viral thru end of March. "How hopeful that message was, or naive, or perhaps simply wishful thinking. It turned out to be the understatement of the year. Or maybe what we really meant was through March 2021!

If you have thoughts for a message you'd like to see on our reader board, let Pastor Cathy know.



FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Acceptance and Adjustment

I recently heard a story on National Public Radio that gave me pause to reflect. The interview was with Matt Norvell, a hospital chaplain at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. He talked about the hardships of working through the pandemic, when some of the most common approaches for a hospital chaplain – a touch on the shoulder, a hug, or just sitting next to a patient or family member while waiting for updates from the medical teams – were off limits.

Here's what the reporter said: "Throughout the pandemic, Norvell says his faith, his connection to God, has deepened. He's Christian, but one thing that's helped him cope is a Buddhist teaching – acceptance.

"Personally, I've come to accept this is just going to be hard and different for a long time. I've been working on accepting that," said Norvell.

I've been thinking about that word – acceptance – as we move into a new year and still find ourselves dealing with the limitations and hardships of the pandemic. I tend to be doggedly determined when working toward a goal, so I first had to acknowledge what acceptance in this context is not. It is NOT denial. It is NOT settling for something less than our highest goals and aspirations. It is NOT giving up.

With acceptance, however, there is acknowledgement that things are different and, yes, hard. I believe acceptance also nurtures a measured, intentional response. It brings a sense of calm as we consider how to adjust our mindsets and actions.

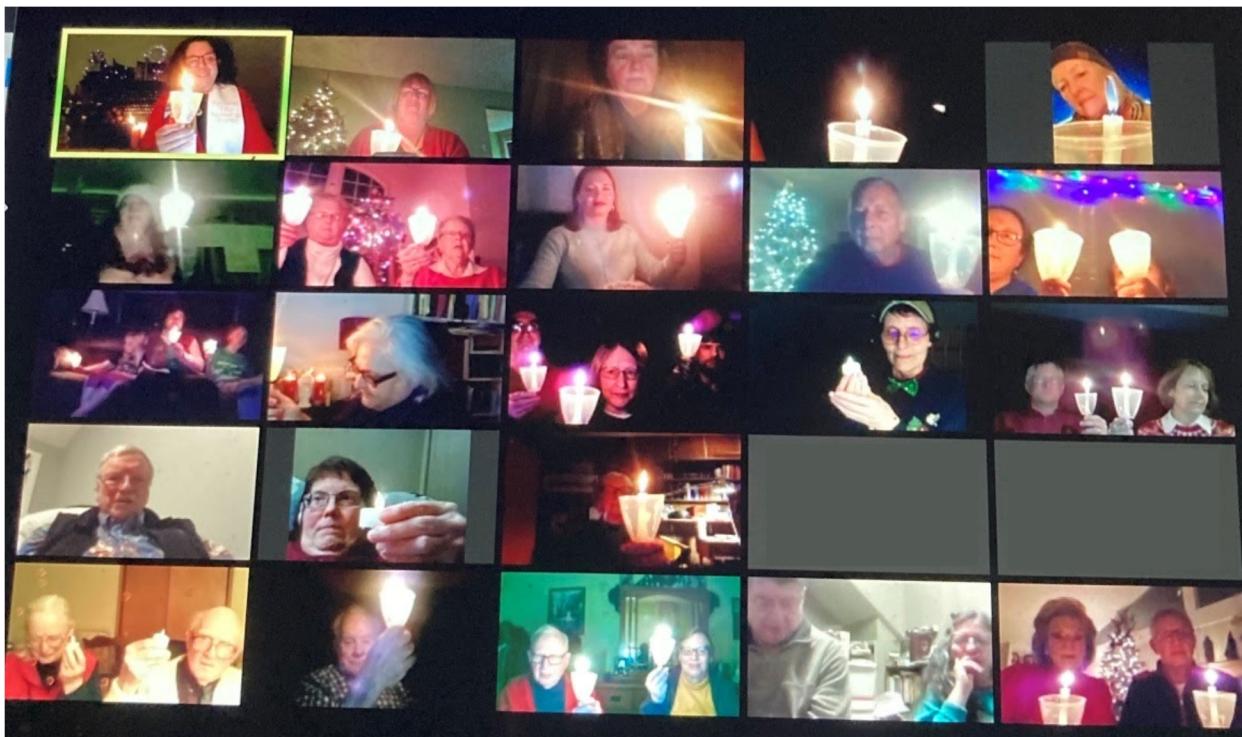
When the weather turns bad when we're hiking and skiing, I can shake a fist at the sky and complain that it's not fair to ruin a fun day with miserable weather. But I don't, because it wouldn't change the situation. Well, alright, I would probably complain a bit. Who wouldn't?? So, I grumble a little and acknowledge the changed conditions require adjustments to our plans for the day. Perhaps we modify our route. We put on extra clothes to protect against the elements. We may choose to go home early. What's important is that we accept the circumstances and make choices to improve the likelihood of a safe return home at the end of the day. We adjust.

In the past year, our church has adjusted in multiple ways, on multiple levels. As we grew to comprehend the enormity of the COVID-19 pandemic and the likelihood that it would impact our lives for many months, our pastor and church members acknowledged that we could not meet for worship in person and moved to virtual services. The church board approved a comprehensive plan for the church operations during the pandemic. The opening statement of the plan noted that "as we work toward reopening, the church will undergo a period of transformation both in how we worship and how we carry out our programs and ministry." We accepted that it would not be "business as usual" at United Church in University Place, and we made hard choices about how to carry out our ministry and maintain community. Some of our actions may even be described as transformational. It will be interesting to see what our "new normal" looks like as we start to emerge from the pandemic restrictions sometime in 2021.

We know that we still have months to go before we return to full attendance in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings. We know that the past year has been difficult for our church members and their extended families. We know that many face economic uncertainty. The church is ending 2020 on good financial footing, but the 2021 budget that will be presented at the annual meeting and charge conference on January 20th reflects a reduction in anticipated income from pledged giving. We are grateful for the generosity of our members, and thankful that we are able to maintain full support for our staff and facility, but the committee program budgets have been reduced to limit the projected deficit.

We accept that there is still a hard road ahead, and much work to do. I am heartened by our strong, ever-present sense of Christian community and the openness to transformational ways of being church. Whatever the pandemic has in store for the coming year, I know that we will walk together toward that light at the end of the tunnel.

With peace and acceptance,
Marilyn Thompson,
President



Celtic Christmas Eve Virtual Worship



It was a Celtic Christmas Eve virtual service to remember. It was hard not to come together in our sanctuary to hear the bagpipes, sing the carols with each other, listen to sublime choral music, join the Christmas Hail processional, or bask in the glow of candlelight while singing Silent Night. And yet...we celebrated a meaningful worship service singing along to last year's recording of Christmas carols, thanks to Don Morgan faithfully recording every worship service through the years. Our visual artists from our Worship Production Team continue to create meaningful visuals to accompany our music. Pamela's exuberance in leading us through the Christmas Hail was well received, along with photos of previous babies cast in the role of the symbolic Christ Child. Jeff and AJ's duet of Silent Night with accompaniment from Don's guitar created a moment of beautiful solidarity as we all held our lit candles to our zoom screens. We had a number of guests join us (~15, including our pipers Seamus & Suzanne and Pastor Cathy's brother) and our final attendance registered about 94. The Smalls took us out on a high note with their upbeat rendition of Joy to the World, with last year's photos of our congregation demonstrating their Advent Joy! Hopefully this will be the only time we have to hold Christmas Eve service virtually, but you could definitely feel the love and joy exuding through our zoom screens.

2020 FINANCIAL UPDATE

Dear UCUP,

As we approach the end of the year, I want to update you on the Church's financial performance in 2020.

At the January 26, 2020 Annual Meeting, the congregation approved a budget that projected a nearly \$9,000 deficit for the year. As you can see in the table below, we are likely to finish 2020 with a small budget surplus. The unexpected surplus is due to several factors. On the income side: 2020 pledges are slightly ahead of projections (thank you!), and in June we received a bequest of \$3,500 from the estate of Dorothy Burkhart. On the expense side: office expenses, utilities, and programs are all significantly down this year due to the impacts of Covid-19.

| | 2020 Budget | Jan-Nov Actual |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Total Income: | \$182,461.50 | \$174,709.76 |
| Total Expenses: | \$191,438.60 | \$169,530.95 |
| Net Income (Deficit): | (\$8,977.10) | \$5,178.81 |

In May, the church applied for and received a loan for a little over \$7,300 from the Paycheck Protection Program. In January, we will be applying for 100% of the loan to be forgiven. When that happens, we will move the loan amount from a liability against our net assets to income for 2021.

While I am sorry that Covid has so impacted all of our lives and the life of the Church, at least I am able to report to you that the Church's financial performance was better than expected in 2020.

Very best regards,
Dave Higby, Chair
Finance Committee



Interfaith Advocacy Day

Please mark your calendars for February 11, 2021 as the day Faith Action Network holds its Interfaith Action Day (They abbreviate this as IFAD). It will be a virtual event, and I don't yet know the particulars. When we have

gone in the past, it has lasted from 8:30 A.M. until about 3:00 P.M., so you might plan for that, but I am guessing it will be shorter. We, as a church, have a history of being very active at this event over the past five or more years. I hope this continues.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Brown

JOYS & CONCERNS

Last month we gave the Stewardship Committee 4 stars for the shows they put on for this year's pledge drive, BUT after seeing their last broadcast we are upping that to 5 stars...and we want to thank that Committee for all the time and effort they put into this year's pledge drive and we can't wait to see when Janna Hosanna Anna Danna and/or Church Lady show up again.

Please keep all those who have contracted Covid-19, as well as those who have lost someone to the virus, in your prayers. We pray that the vaccine will free us and life will return to 'normal' in '21.

We want to thank Neva Laurie-Berry for her leadership during the last Sunday ZOOM service of '20. It was very enjoyable to hear the worship production team's favorite carols and the reflections that accompanied them. Wes provided the only reason I can completely remember about why "Angels We have Heard on High" was his favorite carol: "Because I liked it." Thanks, Jeff, Stuart, Don, Tom, AJ, Neva and Wes.

The Care & Concerns Committee want to thank Pastor Cathy, Jeff Andersen and the many who have helped with the services, especially the ZOOM services, in 2020. We also want to thank President Marilyn Thompson, her fellow officers and committee chairs, choir AND our office manage, Kelly Krisman..... for keeping United Church In UP going this past year.

BEST WISHES for '21, Your Care & Concerns Committee

Happy Birthday!



GUESS WHO TURNS 90 ON JANUARY 11TH?!?

It's the keeper of UCUP's birthday list

- Joyce Demarest - who doesn't seem to age a bit.

It's tradition at UCUP to FINALLY get a cake when you make it your 90th birthday. We may not be able to do a cake during the pandemic, but we will figure out some way to celebrate in a safe way. Stay tuned via email to find out what the plan is.

| January birthdays | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Jim Fohrman |
| 2 | Jon Foreman |
| 11 | Joyce Demarest - 90 |
| 16 | Randi Byrd |
| | Anthea Hubanks |
| | Elizabeth Scherman |
| 18 | United Church In UP |
| 20 | Hadi Dadashia |
| 21 | Cierra Gillard |
| 29 | Michelle Wallace |

You never know what you might encounter...



when you pop into the church to get some work done, or on a weekly check-in to make sure the building is standing. On different days after a bit of rain, Don

Thompson and Dave & Sheila Higby wandered through the building and noticed that the carpet in the entryway below the skylight was wet, but not leaking from the skylight. Turns out another scupper had gotten clogged with pine needles. With multiple trips up the ladder this past week, Dave and Don cleared the clog, ripped back the carpet to dry it out, and are ensuring no further leaks. It was not the way we wanted to ring in the new year, and yet we are so fortunate to have different people in



our church taking care of various tasks to keep our building and our ministry in good shape.

Worship Production Team is growing for our Virtual Worship Services

When we switched from worshiping in person to holding worship on a virtual platform, UCUP never skipped a Sunday. We turned on a dime using the gifts and knowledge of our folks and social media platforms available to us. In the beginning, Amara (with social media savvy), Neva (who used her newfound skills for teaching university classes virtually, adapting them for UCUP worship) and Tom (who had experience in video production) met frequently with Pastor Cathy in the beginning of the pandemic to create meaningful worship experiences. Over the last nine months, the gifts and graces of our congregation have continued to emerge and we are so grateful. The Small Family Singers offered the single largest household choir and accompanists in the church and have been recording what is lovingly referred to as the HotW (the hymn of the week) almost every week. Jeff figured out how to record not only his beautiful piano solos and accompaniment tracks, but also started offering his voice to lead us in song, frequently harmonizing with himself. Other musical artists include Neva (sometimes featuring a duet with Wes), Stuart, and AJ, with guitar accompaniment from Don. Our sound mixing team has included Tom, Don and Stuart. And our Visual Artist team is growing as they take our musical collaborations and create visuals to enhance our experience of worship. Judy and Duncan have recently joined our Worship Production Team, to create visuals along with Tom, Neva, Don and AJ. It would be impossible to calculate the number of hours crafting each worship service takes. It is truly a labor of love. Behind the scenes, Kelly, our office administrator, handles a variety of other details. Worship in a pandemic truly takes a village!



Christmas Greetings!

Greetings and Merry Christmas!

This past year Pilgrim Firs has lived into our purpose statement "to provide a sacred oasis for creativity and community" a bit differently than we might have imagined in January. Since March we have welcomed nearly 90 guests for quarantine and isolation due to COVID. The stays have been between a few days to 2 weeks. Our partnership with Kitsap County provides a space of healing and a place for keeping our community safer.



As this Christmas season approached, we have prepared to welcome our guests over the holidays. With gratitude to Kathy and Ron & Bob for their generosity, we will be making sure our 4 guests that we know will be on site (there may be additional guests arriving at any time) will have some Christmas cheer - even as they struggle with not feeling well. The two families, a parent & teen and a parent & young adult child, have small Christmas trees in their cabins and special menus in the works for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The generosity allowed us to give a gift of art supplies for the aspiring artist teenager, stockings of course for Christmas morning for all and assorted gifts waiting to be unwrapped on Christmas Day. We also gave some Christmas cheer and gratitude to the 20+ county volunteers and staff who most directly deal with our guests in the form of truffles and a Starbucks gift card.

There is tremendous gratitude in my heart for all the ways people have been generous in this past year. We received gifts of hand sewn masks, toiletry items, hand written get well cards, books & games, and dollars to make sure we could keep living into our purpose. Thank you to all that have been so amazingly generous. Thank you to all who have prayed and sent their good thoughts our way. Your generosity continues to make a difference for our guests, our volunteers, our staff and certainly to me.

Thank you! And Merry Christmas!

Wade Zick
Managing Director, Pilgrim Firs Camp and Conference Center



Gift cards went to three FHN families to brighten their holiday shopping. **Thanks to all who were able to donate.**
Judy



Did you know that we have some folks in our congregation who are not connected to the internet, email, or social media? A few of them have been consistently calling in to worship on their phones and receiving worship orally. Kelly, our office manager figured out a way to download the visual content onto a Kindle Fire so that people could participate in the visual aspect of worship as well. Every week Kelly uploads the newest worship service and an exchange is made so worship can be more fully experienced. Do you know of other folks who would appreciate this ministry? Let the church office know.