

ST. PETER'S MESSENGER



St. Peter's United Church of Christ
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January 2024

Dear Friends,

I am writing these words on Christmas Eve. By the time you receive this issue of the Messenger, Christmas will be past, and a new year will be upon us. I would like to thank St. Peter's UCC and all its members and friends who made our December worship memorable and meaningful. I would especially thank Mary Schaller Blaufuss and Sara Barnett for leading worship and our Sunday School program the weekend when Pastor Eric and I both had Covid. I also wish to thank everyone who helped make the Festival of Trees happen. Our church sure was beautiful! I'd personally also thank you for the outpouring of Christmas blessings and well wishes which you sent my way. I am blessed to be your pastor.

We now find ourselves at the start of a new year. Some of what this year will bring is already known to us. I'm looking forward to joining Eden Seminary students and alumni on an immersion trip to El Salvador in January. Might you have special family events like weddings, anniversaries, or graduations in 2024? I also know that there are plenty of unknowns in the year to come. There will be surprises both joyful and sorrowful. What I do know is that God will continue to abide with us throughout the new year.

But for now, I need to get back to preparing for tonight's Christmas Eve worship. Looking to the time when you will read this, I wish you all a Happy and Blessed New Year.

Pastor Kurt

The 2024 All-Boards and Committees Meeting will be Sunday, January 21 after worship. If you are serving on Church Council, a board or a committee please plan to attend.

All 2023 Boards and Committees. Year ending reports are due to the MESSENGER for printing in March 2024 for the Annual report. Please forward the reports to [Newsletter Annual Report. \(newsletter@stpeters-ucc.org\)](mailto:newsletter@stpeters-ucc.org) on or before Monday, February 12, 2024. Thank you!

A special thank you to “Secret Santa” for making the 12 days of Christmas more joyful!! Sincerely, Carol H. Hackmann

Taking Down of The Greens: Please help in Taking Down of the Greens or the “un-decorating” of the sanctuary and atrium after worship on Sun., Jan. 7. Thank you.

2024 CHURCH COUNCIL

St. Peter’s UCC’s council met on Monday, December 18. Among their business items was naming officers for 2023. They are as follows:

- President: Ben Alspach
- Vice President: Jennifer Kroeter
- Secretary: Donna Houchins
- Treasurer: Marty Derner
- Other members: Hank Anderson, Sara Barnett, Jon Bauer, Dottie Brinker, Jill Lesko, Mary Jo Stoyer, Sue Wehmuller, (one TBD)

The Church Council will hold their monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m.

St. Peter’s UCC would also like to thank our outgoing council members--Erna Holland, Bridgette Kelch, Jim Scannell, Denise Towell.

Thank You from The Festival of Trees!!!



These are just a few of the many comments we heard this year as we celebrated the 2023 Festival of Trees! “I am so glad the Festival is back in Church!” “The trees are beautiful!” And even, “Having Santa and Mrs Claus inside created a different experience for the kids and for Santa too!”

We agree, we are so glad to have had the Festival of Trees back at church and the trees were beautiful. Our count had 64 trees decorated, with 94 total trees. We also had Santa and Mrs. Claus welcoming guests each evening.

Thanks to the wonderful community who visited the festival and to the St. Peter’s community who worked the event! We had 1748 people enter our doors, received \$976.00 plus, and have not finished counting all the food donated.

Special thanks to those who made it all come together: Cecil Blankenship, Dottie Brinker, Sara Barnett, Diane & Jim Gephardt, Carol Hackmann, Cindy Holdmeyer, Ron & Donna Mueller, Susan Harms, Joan Howard, Dennis Sahm & Wendy Zick. They were invaluable. A Jolly thanks to all those who served as Santa and Mrs. Claus: Vince Sanfilippo, Matt & Karen McDonald, Charlie & Carole Sincox, Alvie & Donna Bucholz, Ron & Donna Mueller, Gary & Sally Edler and Jim & Diane Gephardt.

THANK YOU to everyone who assisted by hauling out trees and supplies, setting up, wiring the trees, decorating trees, organizing workers, cleaning up, making cookies, answering phone calls and being there to make the Festival of Trees beautiful.

Luke 2:14: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth, peace and goodwill toward men!"

Merry Christmas and Happy, Happy New Year!!!!

Festival of Trees Committee:

Dottie Brinker

Susan Harms

Sara Barnett

Cindy Holdmeyer

Cecil Blankenship

Ronnie Mueller

Diane Gephardt

Wendy Zick

WERF

The Washington Emergency Relief sends a big thank you to Marilyn Sherman, Jim & Diane Gephardt, and all who participated in the Trivia Night for the wonderful donations we received. Donations are always needed, but especially towards the end of one year and beginning of the next. These funds will allow us to assist a few more families in staying warm this holiday season. Thank you again!

2024 Altar Flowers

If you want to place altar flowers in honor or memory of someone or a special occasion, please contact the church office by phone 636-239-6176 or email office@stpeters-ucc.org and we will check the 2024 Altar Flower Chart to let you know whether that date is available. The chart is posted at the back of the sanctuary if you want to sign up. Information we need from you includes:

- Date you wish to provide the two arrangements.
- The information you wish to have printed in the worship bulletin.
- Whether or not you will come by church the Monday after worship to pick up the bouquets.

After a date has been secured, please contact a florist and arrange to have them deliver your selection on Friday before noon. Thank you.

2024 Worship Bulletins

The worship bulletin is an integral part of our worship service each week. If you would like to purchase the bulletins for a service in honor or in memory of someone, please mark the Bulletin Chart (2024 chart is posted at the back of the sanctuary) accordingly and contact the church office to inform us at to what you wish to have printed in the bulletin. Thank you.

St. Peter's UCC Missions in November 2023

- WERF:** In November, the Washington Emergency Relief Fund received 289 calls. We were able to give out a total of 29 grants totaling \$6202.57. Sixteen of the grants were for electric, four for water, and nine for rent. These grants were able to assist 105 members of our county.
- The Harvest Table:** The Harvest Table provided 598 meals for their guests in November. Besides nutritious, yummy food and fellowship for all, Blessing Bags, blankets, tents, sleeping bags, and raffles for gift cards were given.
- Salam Free Clinic:** The Free Clinic provided services by a physician and nurse to one needy patient in November. In addition to medical care by a physician, Nurse Leesa provided assistance to many at the Harvest Table. We are considering offering free counseling services to support more people.
- Food Pantry News** Thank you to ALL the volunteers who help the food pantry continue its vital ministry in our community. In November, 141 individuals representing 55 families were served. In addition to the regular amount of food given out, we gave Thanksgiving Turkey meals to 36 families consisting of 103 individuals. We also thank the following for their generous donations - November Food Pantry donors: Carol Muench, Joline Logan, Wendell & Mary Lou Tyree, Knights of Columbus, Brenda Bruns, XINuTheta Chapter Beta Sigma Phi Service Sorority, Alan, Leah & Dean Jacquin, VFW #2661, Ruth Konrad

If you would like to volunteer or donate to our missions, please see Pastor Eric.

St. Peter's United Church of Christ Church Council Meeting Highlights 18 December 2023

Harvest Table Presentation:

Brenda Morman presented a check from the Harvest Table. They presented St. Peter's with \$2500 and an additional \$420 to cover half of the trash bill. We thank them for their donation!

Treasurer's Report:

As previously discussed, the insurance has been switched to 10 payments/year to split up the cost throughout the year, rather than having large expenses at once.

We are currently behind \$30,989 as of the end of November.

For the new year, we either must come up with new fundraisers, ways to reduce spending, or significantly reduce the budget.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report. The motion passed.

Senior Pastor's Report:

A written report was received. Activities are ramping up for Advent.

It was noted that the 7:30 Christmas Eve service will be live streamed.

Pastor Kurt will be out of town from December 26–January 2 and in El Salvador January 6-13.

Associate Pastor's Report:

A written report was received.

Messy Church was fun and meaningful on the first Sunday of December.

Pastor Eric updated us on his developments and activities with his other ministry, the All-In Music Project.

Boards and Committees:

Building and Grounds:

- Tripod mounts for camera in the balcony is under consideration. This would allow the cameras to be mounted to the railing and keep the tripods out of the walking path in front.
- Baby changing stations have been priced.
- The wall at corner of dining room and atrium, which has a damp spot, will be repaired.

Cemetery Board:

- Jeff Adams will be digging graves at the cemetery. He does this for many cemeteries in the area including Borgia and Oddfellows, and has his own equipment.
- A sexton hire is being considered. He would have all the other responsibilities except for digging graves.
- We are considering raising the price of plots.

Christian Education:

- The children's Christmas program was December 17.
- A SWOT analysis (strength, weakness, opportunities, threats) was done during the December meeting. The results will be passed to the new Board for consideration in 2024.

Old Business:

Website Review:

- This group met in late November and continues to revise text and find photos for inclusion on the website.

Members We Haven't Seen in a While:

- This item will be kept on the agenda for further review in future months.

New Business:

AED and LifeVac:

- We need to inform the full Congregation of the location of these. We would like it to be mentioned in the announcements for a few weeks. Marty will also write up an announcement to send to Carol for the Messenger and eMessenger.
- We should add its location to room maps.
- There was further general discussion on the room maps to add escape routes and tornado safety areas.
- We previously ok'd the purchase of additional LifeVacs and need to get these ordered.
- The current LifeVac is in the kitchen

Festival of Trees:

- To date, 1598 people attended and donated \$875 plus many items of food.

At this point, the current Council retired and the new Council convened. The retiring members are Bridgette Kelch, Erna Holland, Jim Scannell and Denise Towell. Oncoming new members are Mary Jo Stoyer, Jill Lesko, and Sara Barnett. There is one open position.

Election of New Officers:

The following officers were nominated:

- President: Ben Alspach
- Vice President: Jennifer Kroeter
- Treasurer: Marty Derner
- Secretary: Donna Houchins

A motion to approve the slate of officers was made and seconded. The motion was approved.

Council Reps for Boards and Committees:

The Council representatives for Boards and Committees were assigned as follows:

- Cemetery Board: Dottie Brinker
- Christian Education: Jennifer Kroeter
- Internal Review: Jon Bauer
- Building and Grounds: Hank Anderson
- Finance: Marty Derner
- WERF: Jennifer Kroeter
- Advisory: Donna Houchins
- Evangelism: Sue Wehmueller
- Staff Relations: Dottie Brinker
- Worship: Jon Bauer
- Food Pantry Task Force: Mary Jo Stoyer
- Justice Witness: Jill Lesko
- Mission: Jill Lesko

Meeting Time/Date for 2024

The Council meetings will be on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

	November	2023 YTD	2022 YTD
Total Receipts	46,014.00	558,631.49	550,856.27
General Fund	33,136.32	449,198.24	402,281.93
Building Fund	5,887.30	52,192.98	62,870.90
Other	6,990.38	57,240.27	85,703.44

Building Fund	
Beginning Balance Nov 1	-723.69
Income	5,887.30
Expenses	938.16
Ending Balance Nov 30	<u>4,225.45</u>

General Fund	
Beginning Balance Nov 1	-25,516.85
Income	33,136.32
Expenses	38,609.31
Ending Balance Nov 30	<u>-30,989.84</u>

Washington Public Library Author Event

FRIENDS OF THE WASHINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
AUTHOR SERIES

KATHRYN MUEHLHEAUSLER
"TRILOGY OF THE MAGI"

JOIN US IN THE LIBRARY MEETING ROOM FOR
AN AUTHOR TALK AND BOOK SIGNING.
SPONSORED BY THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18TH
6:30 P.M.

TRILOGY
of the
MAGI

KATHRYN MUEHLHEAUSLER

Great Decisions 2024

The Foreign Policy Association announces the topic selections for *Great Decisions 2024*. Bill Schwab will lead the presentations on these foreign policy topics beginning Wed., Feb. 7, 2024, at 1 p.m. at the Washington Public Library. All are welcome to participate.



Mideast Realignment The United States and the Middle East are at a crossroads. Despite a reduced presence in the Middle East, the U.S. still has significant national interests there, and the area is a key arena for global power politics. Can the U.S. continue to defend its interests in the Middle East and globally with a lower level of military and political involvement, or should it recommit to a leading role in the region?

Climate technology and competition Will the United States and China, with other powerful countries following suit, approach current and future climate initiatives with an increased commitment to trade protectionism and nationalism, by various measures including trade restrictions? Or could a growing spirit of international accord develop to confront the “common enemy” of climate change?

Science across borders Scientific advances benefit from collaboration between researchers, but what happens when material, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) is controversial and important to a nation’s national security? Is there a middle ground between sharing information and denying access? How can we regulate cooperation?

U.S.-China trade rivalry China’s economic rise and its current policies of increasing the role of the state in the economy have led some U.S. policymakers to seek to deny China access to U.S. technology and investment. This is seen as a necessary corrective to decades of predatory Chinese economic policies. Is this a wise strategy, and how effective can it be?

NATO’s future Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has come under increased scrutiny, not because NATO troops are involved in the conflict, but because of its role in relations between Russia and its neighbors. Will expanding membership in NATO protect countries, or will it further provoke Russia?

Understanding Indonesia Despite its large size, Indonesia remains virtually invisible to most Americans. But as one of the world’s largest democracies, the world’s largest Muslim-majority nation, and as an economic driver of ASEAN, why does it fly below the radar? What are current issues in U.S.-Indonesian relations, and what role can the country play in Asia?

High Seas Treaty Areas of the seas beyond national jurisdiction comprise the high seas, which are facing the degradation of ecosystems due to climate change and the increase in human activities, such as shipping, overfishing, pollution, and deep-sea mining. The recently negotiated High Seas Treaty, also known as the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Treaty, will attempt to address these issues. How difficult will it be to convince nations to participate?

Pandemic preparedness Looking back at the COVID-19 pandemic, there are many lessons to take away in terms of domestic and international policies. Although this pandemic seems to have waned, how can we apply these lessons to future pandemics? Will countries cooperate, and will a consensus emerge on how to manage global health challenges?



Aluminum can collection

A pick-up truck will be parked in the back-parking lot on Sunday, January 1. **ONLY** bagged Aluminum cans should be placed in the truck. (Please do not include tin foil and/or pie pans.) Thanks for all the help we receive from the congregation!



On-Line Opportunities Worship

We will continue to provide worship on YouTube each Sunday morning at 10:00 am. The service can also be viewed later.



January 2024 Birthdays

Piper Bryant	01/02	Frankie Jo Hogan	01/17
Shawn Koesterling	01/02	Jim Gephardt	01/18
Ken Tucker	01/03	M. Jaden Larkins	01/18
Jax Maune	01/04	Cecil Blankenship	01/19
Lorin Rachels	01/04	Jenifer Fagre	01/20
Ruth Rinne	01/06	Fred Kruse	01/20
Janis Fox	01/08	Krista Meyer McAndrew	01/20
Bruce Miller Jr.	01/08	Jeffrey Hamlett	01/21
Taylor Rich	01/08	Shannon Roewe	01/21
Sandra Meyer	01/09	Lee Newman	01/23
Natalie Oesterly	01/10	Tammy White	01/23
Joyce Schatz	01/10	Robert Hawker	01/24
Keith Bobo	01/11	Doris Jones	01/24
Ellie Isaak	01/11	Carol Triplett	01/24
Joni Obermark	01/11	David Clines	01/25
Ben Oesterly	01/11	Michelle Kemp	01/25
Steve Sherman	01/11	Nancy Rich	01/25
Jacob Clines	01/12	Steve Schmitz	01/26
Ellen Maune	01/13	Jodi Schulte	01/26
Alex Graham	01/14	Jeffrey Francis	01/27
Lisa Creamalmeyer	01/14	Morgan Menefee	01/27
Kim Luechtefeld	01/14	Jeffrey Schonaerts	01/27
Marilyn Sullentrup	01/14	Sherry Huxol	01/28
Bridgette Kelch	01/15	Zachery Jasper	01/28
Clint Schneider	01/15	Nicole Ott	01/28
Daniel Houchins	01/16	Don Benne	01/29
Johanna Smith	01/16	Madeline Menefee	01/29
Emma Briggs	01/17	Jacque Owens	01/29
Nichole Briggs	01/17	Donna Houchins	01/30
		Rodney Stoyer	01/31