



10010 Fernwood Road, Bethesda, MD 20817

BethesdaUCC.org

# OUTLOOK

December, 2017

## **Come All Ye Faithful! Celebrate Advent at Bethesda UCC!**

**December 2<sup>nd</sup> FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT AND COMMUNION** HOPE: Worship 10:30 a.m., Rev. Dee preaching, "An Honest Hope." Today we begin our Advent journey together in worship with candle-lighting and Communion as we reflectively wait the coming of Jesus. Our Advent Study begins after worship in library at 12 noon. We will be reading Names for the Messiah: An Advent Study (paperback, 2016) by leading scholar, Walter Brueggeman. See advertisement in this issue of Outlook.

**December 8<sup>th</sup> 8 am PUTZ BUILDING** Our joyful tradition of setting up the Putz, a three-dimensional storybook of the Nativity stories happens this day. Come join the fun! Great hands-on activity for children, adults, families of all ages. No experience required! Please see Martha Knouss for further details regarding this event.

**December 8<sup>th</sup> 10-12 noon WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY GROUP** meets in Pastoral Counseling Office. Let's look at Advent from a woman's perspective; take a bit of time for reflection and sharing with other women of faith. And as we close out the calendar year and usher in a new liturgical year, let's celebrate with some Christmas cookies and cider as well.

**December 9<sup>th</sup> SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT: PEACE: Worship 10:30 a.m.** Rev. Dee preaching, "Losing Your Head for Peace." **Advent Study continues** in library at 12 noon.

**December 13<sup>th</sup> TAIZE SERVICE, 7:00 PM** in Sanctuary. Please join us for a lovely meditative evening service to help you to pause during this season of waiting. Music will be provided by BUCC's own Kathleen Meredith and Maria de la Cerda Rohde with play flute.

**December 16<sup>th</sup> THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT: PUTZ AND PAGEANT SUNDAY: JOY** Worship 10:30 a.m. **Special Children's Putz Pageant** with **Carol Singing** during Worship followed by a yummy

**ADVENT POTLUCK** in Fellowship Hall with festive music and gathered friends. Invite a new-comer, neighbor, or friend!

**December 23<sup>rd</sup> FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT: LOVE: Worship 10:30 a.m.** Rev. Dee preaching, "Believing in Fulfillment." **Our Advent Study concludes** after church in library at 12 noon.

**December 24<sup>th</sup> CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE at 7:00 pm**

*Welcome the birth of Jesus Christ* into the world with a joy-filled worship of music, singing, special readings, candle-lighting, and prayers of hope and well-being for our times! Before the service there will be a Wassail Bowl in the Narthex. Come early and enjoy warm cider and cookies before the service.

**December 25<sup>th</sup> A MERRY AND BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU AND YOURS!**  
No formal worship this day.

**December 30<sup>th</sup> NEW YEAR'S Worship 10:30 a.m.**  
Start the New Year with God!  
A special Guest Preacher TBA! We will welcome back Alice Laurissa Harris as our guest musician.

**January 6<sup>th</sup> EPIPHANY CELEBRATION** in **Worship 10:30 a.m.** Rev. Dee preaching, "Intentional De-tours."

**January 13<sup>th</sup> BAPTISM OF CHRIST SUNDAY: SPECIAL ALL-CONGREGATION RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS** Worship 10:30 a.m. Rev. Dee preaching, "Not Me..." Do you remember your baptism? Whether baptized or not, join with your church friends and family for a special ritual renewal of the promises made at our baptism. All are welcome to participate and you do *not* have to have been baptized to receive a special blessing this day! *If you are not baptized and wish to be baptized on this date, please contact Rev. Dee to arrange.*

## To (Voluntarily) Choose the Good

--from the Pastor

*I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.*

--Deuteronomy 30:19-20



Recently, I pulled the heavy bins from our storage room downstairs that held our Christmas decorations. A few years back, we became one of those families who participate in the “Elf on a Shelf” tradition because my mother gifted the boys with one of those Elf-on-a-Shelf books and its little red companion Elf. For those who don’t know this “new” tradition, the Elf moves around the house each night prior to Christmas and the children find him in the morning. (whoever “invented” this wasn’t really thinking through a good night’s sleep) Supposedly, the Elf travels to Santa each night; they have a direct line of communication. The Elf then reports what the children have been up to—behavior wise—so that Santa can make adjustments to that proverbial gift list, if necessary.

It is a form of behavior management and I don’t really know why I went along with the whole thing as it involves leaving a warm and cozy bed on nights that I “forget” about making sure the Elf has “moved.” Not to mention the weirdness of an Elf threatening little kiddos with reports of misbehavior. I’ll admit to having become a bit ambivalent on this point.

Even so, in my early years, I was taught by the Church that God watched our every move—and BAM! – if you were caught doing something wrong, you’d have Hellfire and damnation to pay...for eternity...unless you got “right” with God. Even though I was basically “good” as a kid, I didn’t much care for that, nor the Elf, nor baby monitors because they reminded me too much of Orwell’s Big Brother.

Add to this that I believe many, many more adults actually need an elf on a shelf, more than our kids do. Daily, we create hell for each other on a regular basis. It has become acceptable behavior. Who monitors this craziness? Certainly not our personal Elf that we’ve affectionately called “Dominic.”

Religion—from “re-ligare”—means “to re-bind” or to “reconnect.” But to what? Most of time, we think of

reconnecting to God, to community, and to each other. *But we also reconnect to the good.* We figure out, discern, and name, as a community, what “the good” is and try to follow that. Yes, it can be tricky to discern this and yes, we may disagree on what “the good” is, in any particular situation. Still, *we try with an eye towards Jesus’ life and teachings.* And the amazing thing is that God hopes that we would *voluntarily* choose the good, and to voluntarily choose loving ways, without acting under some kind of compulsion or threat. No Elf needed.

It remains for the Church to help people to voluntarily choose and desire the good, regardless of the difficulty or consequences of that choosing. I would hope that my children grow to want the good and to choose that even when some Elf isn’t reporting to Santa, or to God for that matter.

There are some who believe that all religion looks for conformity and a desire to control human beings against their will. But that really isn’t the case. As the church, we try to make transparent the reasons for our choices and to help people to understand their own conflicting motives and their own misuse of power, to help us to make the small and large choices that serve God’s kingdom values, and to help us all live in a way that is life-giving, justice-seeking, and ultimately peaceful.

This Advent, as we welcome Jesus as a child into this world, let us ask how we are learning to choose the good voluntarily—for ourselves—before we impose that choice or expectation on others. Though I sometimes resent someone else (God!) scrutinizing my actions, I know that my actions show that I need that “Elf” much more often than my kids. And I am glad the Church exists to help me to figure that out.

May you pause long enough in your day to enjoy the season,

Rev. Dee

## Bible Reading ... at Home

(Adapted from Outlook November—December 2015)

### December 2 - Sign of Things to Come

Jeremiah 33:14–16      Psalm 25:1–10  
1 Thessalonians 3:9–13      Luke 21:25–36

Advent is traditionally a time of waiting, longing, promise, and preparation. Advent reminds us that we live in the “not yet” time. How do we remain faithful to God when our hopes are as yet unfulfilled? Like Jeremiah, our waiting is filled with purpose and a certainty that even in the midst of chaos and struggle, righteousness will prevail insofar as we ourselves embody it.

### December 9 - Make Ready

Baruch 5:1–9 or Malachi 3:1–4      Luke 1:68–79  
Philippians 1:3–11      Luke 3:1–6

Zechariah’s song of praise and prophecy as he blesses his son, John, cascades into promises of hope for the people. The anticipated ministry of John recalls the prophecy of Malachi, and looks forward to God’s reign of righteousness and peace.

Zechariah’s words lift up the role of John in God’s redemptive work. What do you hear Zechariah’s song affirming about life, self, vocation, and God: as they relate to John, and as they relate to you? In what ways are you being called to be a prophet in your churches, your homes, your communities, in the world?

**REFLECTION:** Holy God, we have a job to do this Advent season. You call us to prepare the way, as you called the prophets of old. You are doing a new thing through us. Like a refiner’s fire that destroys the old so that the new may shine through, refine us and give us courage – courage to be messengers of justice and righteousness, and courage to be bearers of grace and light. Amen.

### December 16 - Look Forward

Zephaniah 3:14–20      Isaiah 12:2–6  
Philippians 4:4–7      Luke 3:7–18

John the baptizer bids us to look forward – to turn to God and to Christ and allow ourselves to be transformed from the inside out. It is a call to re-orient our lives to the radical, justice-seeking ways of God’s reign. Today’s readings assure us that no matter our life circumstances, God loves us and desires to draw us closer. What actions and attitudes might draw you into a closer relationship with God this Advent season.

**REFLECTION:** God of compassion, while we desire to be people of justice and peace, there are times when

we ignore those in our community who are in need of physical or emotional support. We want to bear good fruit, but sometimes we get in our own way. Help us to let go of those things that are holding us back from you. Amen.

### December 23 - Moving with Mary's Song

Micah 5:2–5a      Luke 1:47–55 or Psalm 80:1–7  
Hebrews 10:5–10      Luke 1:39–45, (46–55)

Mothers, seers, and prophets sing praises, which lift up promises fulfilled and promises awaited. Mary’s song – the *Magnificat* – invites us to join this community that celebrates God’s will for justice, hospitality, and peace. Mary and Elizabeth create a mutually supportive community, which in turn acknowledges ties to a communal history. What is our community story – as a Christian family, as denominations, as individual church communities?

**REFLECTION:** O God, you are with each one of us. You are with the young, the elderly, the disenfranchised, the war weary, the content, and the discontent. You give freely and exuberantly to all of us. No matter who we are, no matter what stage of life we are in, we each receive your gift with gratitude and songs of praise. We gather to live in the fullness of life, which you have given to us. Amen.

### December 30 - Who is This Child?

1 Samuel 2:18–20, 26      Psalm 148  
Colossians 3:12–17      Luke 2:41–52

It is not surprising that the scripture focus on unbridled joy; after all, we are celebrating Jesus, Emmanuel, who shares our humanity and reaches out to us in love. Yet the word “joy” can be deceiving, because we may expect it to equal happiness, and that is not always the case. For Hannah, we can only assume her sorrow at not raising her child is challenged by the joy that he is serving in the temple. Similarly, Mary and Joseph’s anxiety over their lost child is presumably abated as they marvel at the youngster’s wisdom. Colossians reminds us that we should give thanks (again, with joy) to God in all we do. Most of all, Psalm 148 calls upon all creation to offer joyous praise to God.

**REFLECTION:** We praise you this day, O God, remembering all that you have done. As a new year begins, we ask you to be with us each day, helping us follow the example of Jesus to make our world a little more loving. Amen.

## Preparing for Christmas



## BUILDING THE CHRISTMAS PUTZ

On **Saturday, December 8th, at 8:00 am**, we will begin our Advent miracle of transforming crates, stumps, and moss into a middle-eastern landscape to tell the Christmas story. Activities will commence early in the morning so come join in the fun. There are jobs for all ages -- unpacking figures, carrying stumps from the shed, unraveling lights, and best of all -- creating a scene. We work in pairs for most scenes so that first time folks can learn from our experienced scene builders. If you have any questions, contact Martha Knouss.



## ADVENT BOOKLET

*Come, Lord Jesus: 2018 Advent Devotional* from the UCC Stillspeaking Writers' Group is a unique collection of devotions that includes

Scripture and prayer for each day of Advent. Begins December 2 (first Sunday of Advent) and continues through Christmas Day. Excellent for both individual and group use. **The booklets are available in the Parlor**. We are requesting a donation of \$4.25 to cover costs.

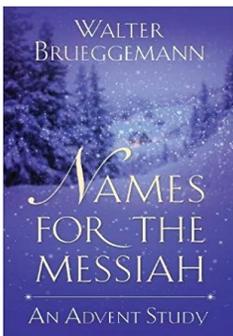
## ADVENT POTLUCK LUNCH on DECEMBER 16



Please join us after the Children's Pageant on Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup> to enjoy our annual Advent potluck lunch.

Potlucks have a long tradition at BUCC and are full of delicious surprises. All are welcome. No contribution is required, but if everyone brings a dish to share, from your own kitchen or your favorite carry out, all will be filled and there will be plenty of leftovers.

For more information contact Carla Evans.



## OUR ADVENT STUDY 2018: Names for the Messiah: An Advent Study by leading scholar, Walter Brueggemann.

In Isaiah 9:6, a divine utterance is given to us using four royal titles--Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. *Names for the Messiah* ponders each title and how the people understood it then, how Jesus did or did not fulfill the title, and how Christians interpret Jesus as representative of that title.

Christians have claimed from the beginning that Jesus was the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament. In this study, best-selling author Walter Brueggemann tackles the questions: "What were these expectations?" and "Did Jesus fulfill them?" --From review on Amazon....

**We will be meeting three Sundays in Advent, December 2, 9, and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 12 noon after church, for an hour discussion and exploration. No meeting on Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup>.**

**Rev. Dee will have a limited number of books available on December 2 for purchase. \$13.00. Please make check payable to Rev. Dee. Thanks!**

## PLEDGE CARD? CHECK! WHAT'S NEXT?

Thank you very much! Many of you have responded by completing your pledge cards and making a financial commitment to BUCC for 2019. A few might still be wrestling with a decision... and some might periodically wonder where the elusive pledge card might be hiding under papers still waiting for our attention.

So, what comes next?

The Treasurer and Stewardship Committee continue to anticipate that outstanding pledge cards will find their way to the church office. Please be assured, it is not too late to make a decision.

The Trustees have met to begin the process of evaluating the expenditures of 2018 to date, and gathering information on what might change in 2019. Will utilities go up? What can we learn about health insurance rates? Will postage costs increase? What do we give to the wider church for mission work we cannot do by ourselves? What do we give to groups that serve our local community? How do we invest in our children? You can probably add to this list of questions based on your own experience with your personal budget.

Then there is a moment of realization when we compare the projected income with projected expenses. Do these numbers match? If not, which is greater? The conversation will move on to the question, "What's next?"

We shift to a time of reflection... what are our priorities? What is our vision? What is our reality?

We bring our personal history and experience with finances into the mix... some of our community will want a balanced budget... others will want to be conservative and make sure there is a little extra at the end of 2019 to "put away for a rainy day" [my mother's advice over the years]. Some of us will want to move forward in faith -- seeking to be the church in this community and willing to accept a deficit budget [my father's position]. I will be re-visiting what I have been taught by my family with what I have learned over the years about my own relationship with budgeting [or not] and money.

That inner dialogue and "outer" conversation will continue within the Trustees and Leadership Team until you receive the budget... and then we all come together at the annual meeting in January to make a decision.

What happens after that? We move on to thinking through our time and talent commitment for 2019. There are lots of opportunities to serve and be a part of the church... what will I decide to do this year? What might you decide to do?

Peace be with you,  
Judy Bond



### TAIZE SERVICE

Thursday, December 13, 7:00 pm

Please join us for a lovely meditative evening service to help you to pause during this season of waiting. Music will be provided by BUCC's own Kathleen Meredith and Maria de la Cerda Rohde with play flute.

This quiet, meditative service is a nice break from the business of the holiday season and can help prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus.

## TEMPERATURES ARE DROPPING... BRR... IT'S MITTEN TREE TIME!

Once again, BUCC will be collecting mittens, gloves, scarves and other cold weather gear for children in Montgomery County. This program is part of our partnership with Linkages for Learning. Please bring your contributions to church and place them on the Christmas tree in the parlor. The final collection day will be announced soon. For questions see Dee D'Angelo.





Seekers will meet on Thursday, December 20 at 7:15 pm for our book discussion and Christmas party.

Everyone is invited to join us, even if you haven't read the book. Please bring a holiday treat to eat and share.

Because of the weather Seekers didn't meet in November. So in December, we will discuss Khizr Khan's book, "An American Family: A Memoir of Hope and Sacrifice".

This inspiring memoir by the Muslim American Gold Star father and captivating DNC speaker is the story of one family's pursuit of the American dream. *An American Family* shows us who Khizr Khan and millions of other American immigrants are, and why—especially in these tumultuous times—we must not be afraid to step forward for what we believe in when it matters most.

## BUCC COLLECTS CHRISTMAS TOYS and GIFTS FOR LOCAL KIDS THROUGH DECEMBER 9

### PLEASE DONATE!

BUCC is again collecting gift cards and new, unwrapped toys for children ages 0-18 who stay at the local Greentree Road Shelter run by the National Center for Children and Families (NCFE). There will be a collection box in the Narthex or Parlor on Sundays, through December 9.

This year, there has been an influx of teenagers into their program and so are in desperate need of gifts that teenagers will like, such as gift cards to movie theaters, CVS, Giant, iTunes or to go clothes shopping at Westfield Montgomery Mall, Target, Walmart, Payless Shoes, Old Navy, other clothing stores.

Toy ideas for younger children include: puzzles, board games, arts and crafts kits, scooters, wagons, bikes, lego/duplo blocks, dairies, stuffed animals and baby dolls, books, sleeping bags, and pajamas.

NCFE's mission is to promote diversity and inclusion as it creates healthy living environments for vulnerable children, youth and families in the metropolitan Washington area. NCFE has four main service divisions: Adolescent Services, Community Based Services, Family Services, and Foster Care and Adoption Services. The Greentree Shelter is part of NCFE Family Services Program. It provides emergency shelter and food to homeless families, as well as comprehensive services to support their ability to relocate to community-based housing within 3-6 months.

BUCC is again working with NCFE to spread holiday cheer and bring smiles to the children, youth and families utilizing NCFE shelter services. Often these children experience hardships that may be particularly challenging during the holiday season. Your donations help maintain a wonderful Christmas morning tradition for local children. Last year, the BUCC toy drive collected over 60 items that helped many families at the Greentree Road shelter, just down the street from BUCC.

Any questions, contact Gina Capra, [ginacapra@yahoo.com](mailto:ginacapra@yahoo.com), 301-318-8769. THANK YOU for donating for these local children at Christmas!

December, 2018

## WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY GROUP

When? Saturday, December 8, 10am -12 noon

Where? Pastoral Counseling Waiting Room



Friends, we will gather this month in the season and spirit of Advent—a time of waiting and watching, wondering what God will bring to birth within and among us. Will you let yourself consider what that might be? What is God preparing to bring to birth in us all—as individuals, as a community of faith, as a country?

Let's look at Advent from a woman's perspective; take a bit of time for reflection and sharing with other women of faith. And as we close out the calendar year and usher in a new liturgical year, let's celebrate with some Christmas cookies and cider as well.

We would love to have you join us. Questions? Call Phyllis Rumbarger or Jean Thompson.



Toy and Gift Collection

## THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH! FROM THE SHARING TEAM

Due to the generosity of the congregation, the Sharing Team was able to deliver twenty-five bountiful bags of groceries to our neighbors at Viers Mill Elementary School just in time for Thanksgiving. In addition to the foodstuffs, the families received \$20 gift cards to Shoppers Food Grocery Store to enable them to purchase the protein/meat of their choice. Ms. Victoria Villegas, the Community School Coordinator for Linkages to Learning, expressed her profound gratitude on behalf of the families and confirmed that they had been able to help all of the families identified as most in need of this support. Here is the note we received from Ms. Villegas:

*“As a program coordinator and as a site as a whole, we would just like to emphasize the asset that an organization as the Bethesda United Church of Christ is to our community. The families in our school community are able to and partake in festivities that they and their families would not otherwise be able to because of your generosity and attention to detail in serving them. We are so grateful as a site and as a community school to have partnerships as yours.”*



*The first set of groceries delivered to VMES was packed in Trader Joe’s ‘Maryland-centric’ reusable bags. Notice that in many cases, additional plastic bags are attached to the reusable bags which overflowed with nutritious foods specific for the holiday as well as some staples that will fill the families’ pantries.*

BUCC members contributed in a variety of ways to the Thanksgiving drive: gift cards, groceries, monetary contributions to BUCC designated ‘Thanksgiving drive’, and/or a check written to the family. At present, our expenditures have exceeded our budget so if you haven’t had the opportunity to contribute to this drive, it’s not too late.



*Similarly stuffed with the items recommended by Linkages as well as thoughtful purchases by the shoppers, the second set of groceries required an additional trip to VMES.*

In coordination with the Labyrinth Walk, BUCC donated sixty-eight pairs of new socks. These socks were delivered to the men in transitional housing at Dorothy Day Place, formerly known as the Bethesda Shelter, along with their dinner. On the first Sunday of each month, BUCC provides the meal for this group of men; the presentation of the socks was an additional treat. If you are interested in contributing to a meal, the sign-up sheet is on a board adjacent to the Narthex. You are welcome to donate part of all of the meal: check with a member of the Sharing Team if you would like to learn more.

Pat Miller and the Sharing Team

## BOOK GROUP

The Book Group **will not meet in December.**

On **Tuesday, January 15 at 3:30 pm** in the church library, the Book Group will discuss is "**My Life with Bob**" by **Pamela Paul**.

"Imagine keeping a record of every book you've ever read. What would this reading trajectory say about you? With passion, humor, and insight, the editor of *The New York Times Book Review* shares the stories that have shaped her life... Bob is Paul's Book of Books, a journal that records every book she's ever read... *My Life with Bob* isn't really about those books. It's about the deep and powerful relationship between book and reader. It's about the way books provide each of us the perspective, courage, companionship, and imperfect self-knowledge to forge our own path. It's about why we read what we read and how those choices make us who we are. It's about how we make our own stories." ([Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com))

All are welcome to join in the discussion and fellowship.

## ANNUAL ALL- CONGREGATION RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS

On January 13th, the First Sunday after Epiphany, BUCC will celebrate the baptism of Jesus Christ in worship—through the scripture readings, prayers, and song.

What are baptismal vows? These are the promises that our parents or guardians made on our behalf if we were baptized as infants; they are very similar to the vows that we reaffirm if we are confirmed in the church, and they are also very similar to the affirmations and promises we make when we become members of our local church. This is a wonderful way to remind ourselves of our communal walk with Jesus in the New Year. What if you have never been baptized? Those who have not been baptized into the Christian faith may receive a blessing this day during worship, or they may request to receive the rite of baptism as adults after meeting with the pastor. Please contact Rev. Dee if you have questions about baptism, would like to receive the sacrament on this day, or you are curious about uniting with the BUCC faith community.

## SHEPHERDING THE LIGHT — CHRISTMAS FUND 2018 THE CHRISTMAS FUND FOR THE VETERANS OF THE CROSS One of the four special offerings of the UCC

Each Christmas, UCC congregations have reached out in kindness and gratitude to those who have faithfully served the church in the, past and who now find themselves facing unexpected financial needs. Now, in their time of need, you can be the church to them.

We invite and encourage you to join thousands of UCC members and congregations who will generously support this year's appeal so that even more individuals will receive financial help in their time of need.

Donations to the Christmas Fund provide direct financial assistance to individual UCC clergy, lay church employees, and their surviving spouses/partners—the funds don't support programs or institutions, but people.

On behalf of the hundreds of clergy, lay employees, and their families whose lives are touched by your support of the Christmas Fund Offering, we offer our sincere thanks for your generosity!

How the Funds Are Used

- MONTHLY PENSION SUPPLEMENTATION -- for lower-income retired UCC clergy, lay employees, and surviving spouses/partners.
- QUARTERLY HEALTH PREMIUM SUPPLEMENTATION. These funds subsidize premiums for the UCC Medicare Supplement Plan so that individuals can afford and receive quality health care.
- CHRISTMAS "THANK YOU" GIFT CHECKS for retired UCC clergy, lay employees, and surviving spouses/partners. This special gift at Christmas time reminds these Veterans of the Cross that they have not been forgotten and that the Church is grateful for their service.
- EMERGENCY GRANTS for active/retired UCC clergy and lay employees. Sometimes those who serve the Church need help to respond to unexpected and unfunded emergencies. In 2017, special gifts were provided to over 300 ministers in Florida and Houston area after hurricanes devastated their regions.

## HAPPENINGS AT COUNCIL BREAK THE SILENCE SUNDAY

Recently, Bethesda United Church of Christ was asked to endorse a resolution that is in the process of coming before our UCC General Synod next summer in Milwaukee. The resolution, if passed, would encourage churches to observe a “Break the Silence Sunday” on an annual basis to support survivors of rape and sexual violence within our congregations. At our November Council meeting, our Church Council voted unanimously to support this resolution so that it proceed in the next step of the process and can come before General Synod.

Our UCC process requires a minimum of 6 churches to endorse a resolution before it can continue on its path for endorsement. Presently, BUCC is one of 5 churches to endorse and likely, the resolution will have several more endorsements before it makes it to the General Synod.

Below is some information about the resolution and links for congregants to read the text of the actual resolution and the rationale and scripture supporting it.

### **“Supporting Survivors Of Rape and Sexual Violence Through An Ongoing Church-Wide Observance of Break The Silence Sunday (BTSS)”**

(Resolution for General Synod next summer in Milwaukee)

“According to the Rape Abuse Incest National Network (RAINN), one in four women and one in ten men in the United States will be victims of attempted or completed rape in their lifetimes. These are our brothers and sisters in faith, folks we share our pews with on Sunday mornings, the ones who stand beside us at fellowship time, pot-lucks, and everything else that is the work and ministry of our congregations. Yet the church has often been silent, not reaching out to support survivors, sometimes perpetuating harmful or destructive theologies, and not offering the healing love, and grace of God through the strength of Christ’s community.

But we can do better. Churches can become places where survivors know they can tell their stories privately to a pastor or deacon, or publicly in a Bible study or forum without fear, shame, or guilt. It can be a place where pastors and congregations can reach out to survivors, letting them know that the church stands with them, witnessing to the trauma and lasting impact of sexual violence, and resolving to help change the culture that allows such violence to continue.

All the resolution is asking for is that Break the Silence Sunday be on our calendar to suggest to churches. It does not take any political stands.”

*Break The Silence Sunday is a creation of the Rev Moira Finley (UCC pastor in northern Wisconsin). It consists of liturgies, prayers, music suggestions, sermon ideas, and other resources to help congregations with the work of supporting survivors. We have drafted a resolution to go before the 2019 UCC General Synod that would call on the national church to include Break The Silence Sunday as an observance. The suggested date is the fourth Sunday of April to be a part of the national observance of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, but the date is only a suggestion. Some congregations have held this on other April Sundays or in October which is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.*

*The full text of the resolution can be found here:*

<https://breakthesilencesunday.org/2018/11/16/general-synod-resolution/>

*There is a link in the third paragraph of the post that will take you to the resolution.*

If you have questions, please feel free to email Pastor Moira Finley at [pastormoira@gmail.com](mailto:pastormoira@gmail.com) or Maren Tirabassi [mctirabassi@gmail.com](mailto:mctirabassi@gmail.com)

# BUCC — DECEMBER 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<b>1</b> <b>8:00 AM</b> SDA (S, MCCA, L) <b>10:00 AM</b> Choir Rehearsal (PCC) <b>6:00 PM</b> SDA (S)
<b>2</b> <b>10:30 AM</b> Worship Service, Sunday School <b>12:00 PM</b> Advent Study: 7 Names for the Messiah <b>2:00 PM</b> CrossPointe Fellowship (FH, K, L)	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> <b>7:00 PM</b> Metro Garden Club <b>7:30 PM</b> Worship Team	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> <b>12:30 PM</b> Islamic Center of MD (FH) <b>7:00 PM</b> CrossPointe Fellowship (FH, K, L)	<b>8</b> <b>8:00 AM</b> Putz Build <b>8:00 AM</b> SDA (S, MCCA, L) <b>10:00 AM</b> Women's Spirituality Group (PCC) <b>6:00 PM</b> SDA (S)
<b>9</b> <b>10:30 AM</b> Worship Service, Sunday School <b>12:00 PM</b> Advent Study: 7 Names for the Messiah <b>2:00 PM</b> CrossPointe Fellowship (FH, K, L)	<b>10</b> <b>10:00 AM</b> Glenbrook Cookie Exchange (FH) <b>7:00 PM</b> Christian Education Team	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> <b>7:30 PM</b> Taize Service	<b>14</b> <b>12:30 PM</b> Islamic Center of MD (FH) <b>7:00 PM</b> CrossPointe Fellowship (FH, K, L)	<b>15</b> <b>6:30 AM</b> SDA (FH, K) <b>8:00 AM</b> SDA (S, MCCA, L) <b>12:30 PM</b> SDA (MCCA, L, FH, K) <b>6:00 PM</b> SDA (S)
<b>16</b> <b>10:30 AM</b> Worship Service, Pageant Sunday <b>12:00 PM</b> Advent Potluck <b>2:00 PM</b> CrossPointe Fellowship (FH, K, L)	<b>17</b> <b>7:30 PM</b> Trustees Meeting	<b>18</b> <b>7:15 PM</b> Leadership Council Meeting	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <b>7:15 PM</b> Seekers	<b>21</b> <b>12:00 PM</b> DEADLINE for OUTLOOK articles <b>12:30 PM</b> Islamic Center of MD (FH) <b>7:00 PM</b> CrossPointe Fellowship (FH, K, L)	<b>22</b> <b>8:00 AM</b> SDA (S, MCCA, L) <b>6:00 PM</b> SDA (S)
<b>23</b> POINSETTIA ORDERS DUE <b>10:30 AM</b> Worship Service, Sunday School <b>12:00 PM</b> Advent Study: 7 Names for the Messiah <b>2:00 PM</b> CrossPointe Fellowship (FH, K, L)	<b>24</b> <b>7:00 PM</b> Christmas Eve Service	<b>25</b> BUCC OFFICE CLOSED <b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> <b>12:30 PM</b> Islamic Center of MD (FH) <b>7:00 PM</b> CrossPointe Fellowship (FH, K, L)	<b>29</b> <b>8:00 AM</b> SDA (S, MCCA, L) <b>6:00 PM</b> SDA (S)
<b>30</b> <b>10:30 AM</b> Worship Service, Sunday School <b>10:30 AM</b> Worship Service, Sunday School -- Showing Our Support (Following Service) <b>2:00 PM</b> CrossPointe Fellowship (FH, K, L)	<b>31</b>					



## POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS

You can purchase one of the poinsettias that will decorate our sanctuary on Christmas Eve. The cost is only \$9.00 per poinsettia.

If you would like your poinsettia to be in memory or honor of a loved one, we will include that in the Christmas Eve Bulletin.

Please complete the order slip below along with your check made out to BUCC with notation "Poinsettia" and place in the offering plate or send to the BUCC office. Order deadline is Sunday, December 23th. You can take the plants you ordered home following the Christmas Eve service.

## HAPPY NEW YEAR — ANNUAL REPORTS DUE



Team Leaders should have this as their top New Years Resolution. The 2019 Annual Congregational Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 27 following the worship service. It is important that the Team Reports be in Colleen's hands by Wednesday, January 16th so that a final Annual Report can be assembled for the Annual Meeting.

This important task deserves some thought now, even though it is a busy time of year. If you don't, you WILL be reminded.

## CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS



Decorate the sanctuary during Advent.  
Order yours to take home following Christmas Eve services.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

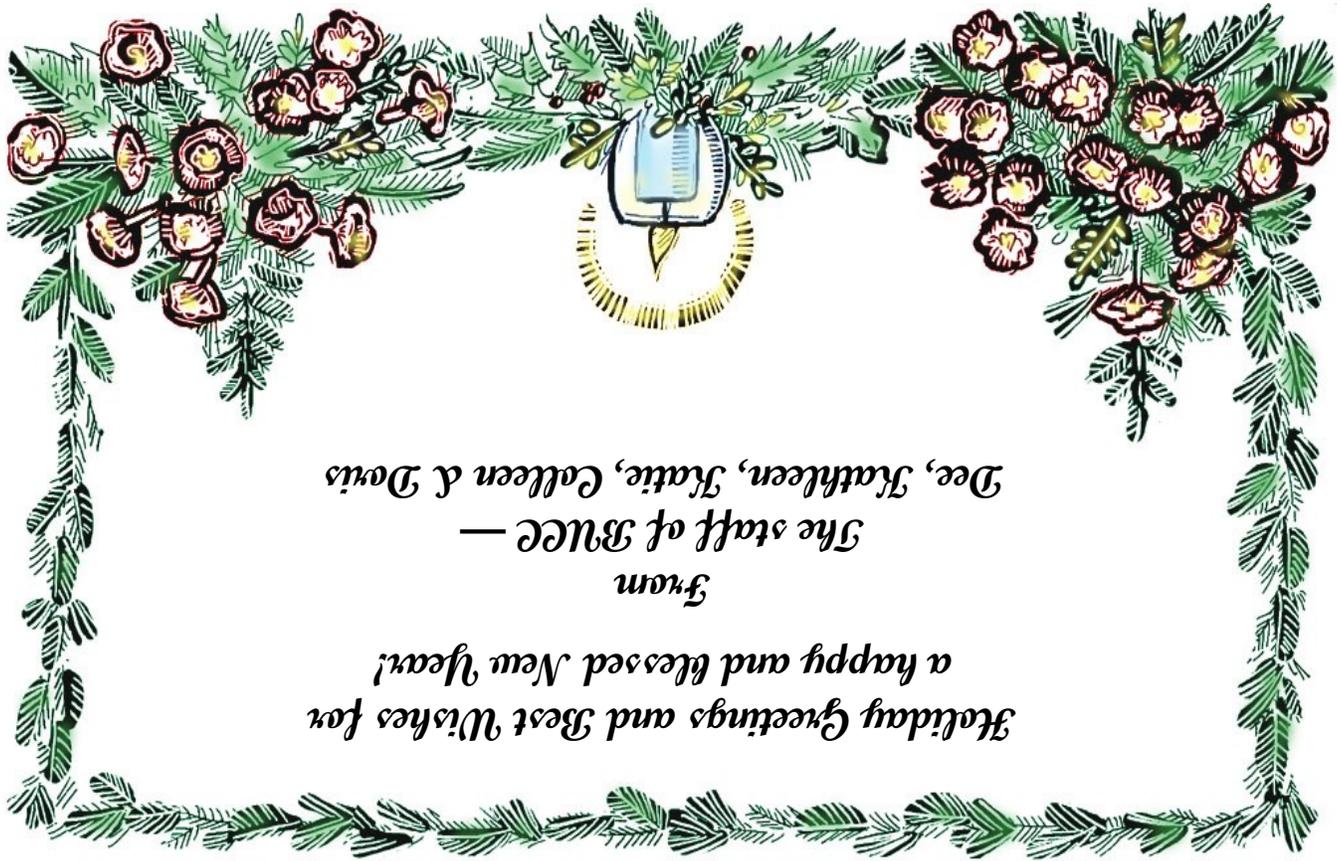
I /We would like \_\_\_\_\_ Poinsettias @ \$9.00 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*In memory/honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

(\*Circle one: Donors will be listed in the Christmas Eve Bulletin.)

**Deadline for orders: Sunday, December 23**

\_\_\_\_\_ I wish to donate my plants to the Pastoral Care team for distribution.



**OUTLOOK**

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