

The Bell Tower

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Hatfield, UCC

2022

November

No. 11

Let's Take Thanksgiving Seriously

At the CROP Hunger Walk last month, I was surprised to hear the announcement offered as we prepared to begin our walk. I appreciate the work of Church World Service, and its CROP Hunger Walk fundraiser, in that it offers a hand-up rather than only a hand-out.

They invest in programs that allow impoverished communities to improve their lives by creating sustainable initiatives. The founding idea behind the nationwide Walks is “We walk because they walk.” In many communities, most often the women need to walk great distances to provide potable water for their families. Something as simple and underappreciated as turning on our water faucets is instead a laborious task for many in our shared world.

I think many of us have long realized that ordinary Americans are far better off than most others in the world, but I was still shocked by the announcement at the start of October's Walk. It was said, and this is based on the scholarship of Homi Kharas of the Brookings Institution, that an annual income in the United States of \$59,000 for a family of three ranks a family in the 91st percentile globally. This means that if we earn \$59,000 a year we are among the wealthiest 10% of humans on the face of the earth. If we increase that number to a combined household income of \$100,000 per year, such a family is blessed to be in the top 3% of all people living today!

There's a question on our ballot this November 8th concerning people who earn \$1million or more per year. Also, there is persistent talk about the rising power of billionaires over society. Such matters are valid, but they can also skewer our attention, locking it onto the division of the obscenely wealthy from the rest of society.

However, the figures shared at the CROP Walk highlight the fact that many Americans, while far from being free of monetary anxieties, remain among the most fortunate on planet earth. As a matter of fact, we are much closer to the wealth of the billionaires than we are to the

ordinary poverty that afflicts so many of our brothers and sisters alive today.

I bring this up because November is the month of our national holiday of Thanksgiving. This is an intentional pause for our nation, a quiet time to give thanks to God for all the blessings in our lives. I don't think it is as pronounced now as it was in the recent past. I think online sales have dampened the frenzy of Black Friday Sales. You may remember, however, that Thanksgiving meals or visits were once shortened in many homes because people needed to line up at the doors of stores to get the best buys on more stuff.

The day of intentional thanks-giving was truncated by the need to leave table and family and friends behind in order to buy more stuff. The physical imagery of midnight lines may have faded, but it's only because we have been enticed by new ways to buy more stuff. And I remember well my days working retail sales and the wild frenzy of the day after Thanksgiving. For someone who does not shop, it was eye-opening.

If we combine the unnecessarily long and indulgent span of Christmas sales (to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child in abject poverty) with the often unacknowledged wealth we enjoy as ordinary Americans, we may be better able to see that we should treat Thanksgiving with a refined perspective of how truly blessed we are and how thankful we should be.

November 29th is the 10th anniversary of *Giving Tuesday*. What a wonderful innovation! Their organization explains: “Everyone has something to give and every act of generosity counts. Join the Giving Tuesday movement and reimagine a world built upon shared humanity and radical generosity.” I wish this were born in the life of the church, and maybe it was indirectly, but in addition to generosity's offsetting of rampant consumerism, let us also focus on giving thanks to God for how truly blessed we are. We are among the lucky few in this world. Let us not take this lightly. Let us give thanks.

OCTOBER EVENTS

Tue. 1 st	Rev. Randy will attend the monthly Association Committee on Ministry meeting at 5:45pm.
Sat. 5 th	Remember to turn your clocks BACK one hour as we return to Standard Time.
Mon. 7 th	Rev. Randy will attend the monthly meeting of HEART (Hatfield Equity Alliance fighting against Racism Together) at 5:30pm. Online <i>Exploring the Bible</i> study group from 7-8:00pm.
Tue. 8 th	Election Day. Every citizen's voice matters. Voting is a privilege and a responsibility in a democracy; and it and its administrators need to be treated respectfully.
Fri. 11 th	Veterans Day. Honour those among us who have served in our Armed Forces.
Sat. 12 th	Roast Pork Supper. Take out only from 5 – 7:00pm.
Mon. 14 th	Monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees at 7:00pm.
Tue 17 th	Rev. Randy will attend the online annual meeting of HEADS Up at 6:30pm.
Mon. 21 st	Online <i>Exploring the Bible</i> study group from 7-8:00pm.
Thur. 24 th	Thanksgiving Day.
Sun. 27 th	First Sunday of Advent.
Tue. 29 th	Monthly online meeting of the Board of Deacons at 6:00pm.

REGULAR GATHERINGS

Sundays: Worship Service begins at 9:30am online and in person. Sunday School begins after the children's sermon during the worship Service.

Tuesdays: Yoga classes are offered every Tuesday in the church parlor at 5:30pm.

Thursdays: Choir rehearses in the sanctuary at 7:00pm.

CHURCH COVID POLICIES

The Church Council has decided that while the numbers remain higher than we would like, the COVID vaccines and COVID treatments have combined Accordingly, the Council encourages for the benefit of those who may be are now optional. The Council will the numbers spike upwards, then we may return to the mask requirement if needed.



to lower the risks of this pandemic virus. those attending in person to wear a facemask immunocompromised, but face coverings continue to monitor the COVID numbers. If

HORN OF PLENTY FOOD DRIVE

Autumn is a beautiful time of year, and it is also the season of harvest. The majesty of God's good earth and the abundance it provides leads us to offer thanksgiving. This is often symbolized by the cornucopia, which is a word that comes from the two Latin words *cornu* and *copiae*, which translate literally as "horn of plenty." It is filled to overflowing with the fruits of the harvest. In our congregation, we place a large cornucopia in the chancel throughout November. We then fill it with donations for our Horn of Plenty Food Drive. Hopefully, when we recognize that we have been blessed with so many good things, we will then in a spirit of thanksgiving share what we can with those who are less fortunate, with those who must rely upon others to help them feed themselves and their families. I hope as you come to church in November that you will remember our food drive and that you will share your offering as a sign of thanksgiving. Donations may be made in kind with non-perishable foods or with a monetary donation, checks being made payable to *FCC Benevolence Fund*.



SEASON OF ADVENT

The four-week Season of Advent begins this year on November 27th. This is also the first Sunday of a new liturgical year, the church's calendar. The liturgical year follows the life of Jesus. It only makes sense that it would begin as we prepare for His birth at Christmas.

The four weeks of Advent represent the putative 4,000 years during which the world waited from creation to the coming of the Saviour on Christmas. This is a time of spiritual preparation. We prepare our souls to be like Bethlehem's manger. We ready ourselves to welcome and hold the coming Saviour.

Advent is a season of increasing light as the birth of Jesus approaches. It pushes back the darkness of the world that does not know Christ. To symbolize this beautiful message, we will light the candles of the Advent Wreath, adding one candle each Sunday. On Christmas Eve, we will light the Christ Candle as we celebrate Jesus' birth.

I hope you will try to be with us on all four of the Advent Sundays. While the world rushes around with an exhausting and often unnecessary pace of its own X-mas celebrations, we need to refocus on the truest preparations for Christmas so that the wondrous mystery of Jesus' Incarnation may dwell within us richly.

BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Our online Bible study group is reading from the Gospels of Luke and John and the Acts of the Apostles at present. If you would like to join us as we read this distinct account of Jesus' life and ministry, and then of the early days of the church, we would love to have you join us. Let's read, study and discuss the book that literally has changed the world. Send an email to randyc1897@gmail.com for the login. We meet on alternate weeks for one hour. If you have any questions about how Bible study works, send them along to the same email as above.

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN 2023

Our Stewardship Campaign for the new year began on October 16th. We do hope that those who had made pledges for 2022 are up to date in their contributions as the year draws toward its close. Pledged offerings are one of the pillars we use to plan for the future and develop an annual budget. A mailing was sent to our members and supporters that shared this year's stewardship theme. It links the spiritual and mystical aspects of church with the spiritual and practical aspects of supporting the church. We should not overlook the spiritual nature and connection of our worship, our sacraments and our stewardship. They are all interconnected and are all part of the workings of the church. We hope you will be as generous as you are able. Thank you.



NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE WORK IN PROGRESS

The Nominations Committee is at work currently seeking volunteers to serve as officers of the church and on our church committees. If you would like to help with the work of our church, please let the Nominations Committee know. If you are approached by one of its members, please give it due consideration. We are fundamentally democratic in our governance and operation. We cannot function without the participation of our members. The members of the Nominations Committee are Bill Belden, Jeff Folts, Carolyn Forsyth and Edwin McGlew.

CHURCH MUSIC

Music is important in our congregation. We appreciate the talent and work of our Music Minister, Anthony Tracia, but Anthony cannot do it alone, and ours is a volunteer choir. We owe them our thanks and appreciation. They are asked to rehearse on Thursday evenings and then to lead us in song on Sunday mornings for most of the year. And they work hard at what they do. As we gradually return to the worship patterns of the pre-pandemic world, the choir takes on an increasingly important role. If you would like to become a part of our choir and add to the beauty and impact of our worship, we would so appreciate it. Please speak to Anthony if you are interested.



CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR

The Christmas Craft Fair will be held on Saturday, December 3rd. "The craft fair will be here before you know it! Real Folks will be looking for volunteers to sign-up and help, such as setting up and later taking down tables, baking, making raffle baskets, donations for raffle baskets and new ideas. Jewelry – see Jennie Belden. Jennie will need jewelry donations for her table Raffle Baskets – see Mary McCarthy if Bake sale – see Maki Reopel. New to the golumpki, chili, potato salad, lazy pierogi, year. Or if anyone, or a couple of people potato or cabbage pierogi that would be in demand as are a variety of baked goods such as cookies, cakes, breads, trail mixes, granola, fudge, and jams and jellies. The gift card tree – see Larry and Paula Mattison. This raises a lot of money for the church. If you are out and about, pick up a gift card for our tree. Outdoor sales – see Amy Novak. We have many sellable Christmas items for sale outdoors, but maybe some greens, sleds, skates or outdoor winter toys and items would



be a nice addition. To make this another successful year we need all our church families' help. Thank you. Linda Milewski"

GIFT CARDS

Big Y and *Stop and Shop* gift card sales are a continuing fundraiser of our congregation. Please contact Linda M. if you would like to purchase any. The church earns 5% on all sales. Thank you.

A REMINDER

Altar flowers can be donated by anyone for any occasion or for no special occasion at all. Fresh cut, wild, plants, whatever – they are all appreciated. Bring your flowers arranged and then take them home after the church Service. Sign up on the calendar at the front of the church. Questions – Jeannie B. is the chair.

Please sign-up for a Sunday **Coffee Hour**. The sign-up sheet is also at the front of the church. Make a snack, coffee is provided. If we all take a turn, we can continue to offer *Chat and Coffee* fellowship after church. Mary M. is chair if you have questions.

CONTACT INFO: HATFIELD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Website: www.hatfieldchurch.org Facebook: www.facebook.com/First-Congregational-Church-of-Hatfield-UCC

Pastor: Rev. Randy Calvo 413-824-1630 randyc1897@gmail.com

Committee Chairpersons:

Benevolence, Amy N.

Christian Education, Anita W.

Church Moderator, Jonathan B.

Deacons, Jeff F.

Music Minister, Anthony T.

Real Folks Society, Martha Z.

Trustees, Ed M.

Roast Pork Supper



Saturday, November 12, 2022

TAKE OUT ONLY from 5 – 7:00pm

Menu:

Roast Pork, Gravy, Mashed Potato, Squash, Apple Sauce, Rolls-Butter and Dessert.

\$17/ticket

Reservations may be made by calling Linda at 413-247-5604, or Bill at 413-247-5905, or by emailing the church at hatfieldcongchurch@gmail.com

