



Shenkel United Church of Christ



December 2020

SHENKEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
1580 Shenkel Road
Pottstown, PA 19465

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



2020

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

		1	2 Bible Study 7 pm	3	4	5
6 Virtual service 9:45 am Communion Sunday School 11:30 am—Zoom	7	8 Consistory 6:30 pm	9 Bible Study 7 pm	10	11	12
13 Virtual service 9:45 am Sunday School 11:30 am—Zoom	14	15	16 Bible Study 7 pm	17	18	19
20 Virtual service 9:45 am Sunday School 11:30 am—Zoom	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Services 3 pm & 6 pm in Pavilion Office Closed	25 THE MIRACLE OF CHRISTMAS	26
27 Virtual service 9:45 am Sunday School 11:30 am—Zoom	28	29 Office Closed	30 Office Closed	31 Office Closed		

Shenkel United Church of Christ

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor
Rev. Suzanne Spaulding

Organist:
Susan Royer

Music Director
Dan Wolgemuth

Office Administrator:
Lisa Dice

Sexton:
Stacey Keim

COVENANTED MINISTER IN MISSION

Rev. Wanda D. Craner,
Gestalt Pastoral Care
Minister and Trainer
Gestalt Pastoral Care
Associates

CONSISTORY

President:
Randy Berriker

Vice President:
Sandy Rowe

Secretary:
Dan Jenkins

Treasurer:
Ken Bevan

Financial Secretary:
Joan Palubinsky

Elders:
Randy Berriker
Joan Palubinsky
Sandy Rowe

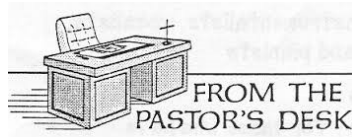
Deacons:
Dan Jenkins
Gary McDermit
Pat Kuestner
Tony Gulotta

MINISTERS

All the members
of the church

1580 Shenkel Road, Pottstown PA 19465 610.326.3535

Email: shenkelucc@aol.com www.shenkelucc.org



As we begin a new month and a new season in the liturgical calendar, Advent, in many ways it feels like we're back to March and the season of Lent! We are once again worshipping virtually. The numbers of people sick with Covid-19 is rising again, and at alarming rates. We really did not want a re-run of the spring and summer and yet it sure feels like a re-run to me. Even though this may feel remarkably close to the movie "Groundhog's Day", time does continue to move on and we are trying to move on as well.

For Advent this year we will be focusing on a particular word each of the four Sundays before Christmas Eve. I'll share them with you here so that you can use them to prepare your hearts for this season of waiting for the Light to come into the world. The first word is *wait*, the second is *prepare*, the third is *witness*, and the fourth is a phrase: *Let it be...*

Although we cannot be gathered together in the same room for worship, as we live-stream and record the services I believe that God is still at work in each of us and through us. The pandemic does not stop the Spirit of God from doing the good work begun in each one. I encourage you to email or call me with your prayer requests that can be shared during our Prayers of the People each Sunday.

As I was sitting for my meditation time this morning (Thursday) I was feeling very antsy. I just wanted to jump up and do something, fix something, be active and get something done. The Spirit quietly reminded me to "be still, and know that I Am God". Sometimes being still is the hardest and best thing we can do! This Thursday's daily prayer also was a help to me today and so I share it with you, from St. Teresa of Avila:

Let nothing disturb you.

Let nothing frighten you.

All things are changing.

God alone is changeless.

Patience attains the good.

One who has God lacks nothing.

God alone fills all our needs.

May your Advent waiting be blessed beyond measure.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Suzanne

Newsletter Editor: Lisa Dice

November Consistory Highlights

- We approved the Worship and Music Committee's plan for Christmas Eve services. Two "rustic", simple services are planned for the pavilion on Christmas Eve. A 3 pm service, which will be recorded and posted on YouTube, and a 6 pm service. Watch for more details about these services.
- We approved a \$1,000 donation from the Program and Missions 2018 Allocation to the Mustard Seed Malawi program that is run by Angela Reed. This donation is in lieu of the free-will offering we typically take each year for her school.
- We approved a \$1,000 donation from the Program and Missions 2018 Allocation to the Pottstown 143 Program that provides backpack food for under-privileged children in the various Pottstown schools.
- The wording on our Funeral Fee Schedule was revised so that the Sexton Fee would be \$75 if Fellowship Hall OR the Pavilion/Grove Area were to be used.
- We want to thank the Congregation for faithfully following the COVID-19 protocols we had adopted in July. After review, we elected to keep them as they are for now. Copies are available through the church office for anyone to receive.
- We set Sunday, December 20, as the date for a Congregational Meeting after the morning service to approve the 2021 Current and OCWM Budgets. After the December 8th Consistory Meeting, members will receive details about the 2021 Budgets and will have the opportunity to vote via proxy for them. Watch for more information on this.
- We are still looking for a member to volunteer to be a backup to the Cemetery Superintendent. If interested in learning more, please contact Randy Berriker.

CALLING STRONG MEN AND STRONG WOMEN

Your strength and willingness are needed on

Saturday December 12 at 11:00 am at the pavilion

to help move the picnic tables out and prepare for our

Christmas Eve Services

Many hands make light work and work done in short order!

Thank you in advance for your help.

November 2020

Rev. Suzanne Spaulding
Shenkel United Church of Christ
1580 Shenkel Rd
Pottstown PA 19465

Dear Rev. Spaulding:

People of faith in this community are our roots. From our 1967 founding, to our 2019 service of 25,623 people, we couldn't sustain the same level of assistance without these community partners, in 2020 and beyond. We are grateful for generous giving and numerous volunteers from our friends of different faiths and denominations. *Extending your mission and community service to embrace our work supports our activities and nourishes our inspiration.*

As you know, this year has been unlike any other in recent history. The impact of the pandemic on the health and finances of our community has been unsettling for all of us. There are many who have never asked for help before in their life - until now. Bread-winners found themselves out of work, without the resources to pay rent or buy groceries – or having to choose between them.

From June of 2019 to June of 2020, the **unemployment rate in Montgomery County jumped from 3.4 to 11.4 percent.** This kind of crisis puts so many more families at risk with **Pottstown's existing poverty rate at 21.7 percent,** well above the Pennsylvania average of 12.5 percent.

In 2019, the Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities disbursed 592,007 pounds of food to hungry neighbors. When the pandemic reached its first peak in March, we were forced to immediately shift how we help people. Some of our food distribution changed from individuals to intermediate locations, like schools. From April through June, we provided 1,267 families in the school lunch program with non-perishables, milk and produce. We expanded home deliveries to the disabled, older adults, and those at high risk. *It was possible* to redirect this food on short notice due to flexible volunteers, experienced staff, and generous donors.



Our Outreach Center is open weekdays, both in-person and for remote online shopping in our food pantry, and we have sustained some of our pandemic-related community disbursement programs. Unfortunately, many of our neighbors are still struggling and the winter months will only make things more difficult. For example, a \$1,000 gift can keep a family warm for the winter, though we value your unrestricted giving so that we can direct it to the *area of greatest need.*



Tammy:

With the medical problems of our little guy, I am not able to work and the Pottstown Cluster has been a huge help to us. I don't have to make a choice between food and his medication, and my family gets nutritional meals.

Jared:

I was homeless at one point and the Pottstown Cluster saved me. They were here in my time of need.

The Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities is one of few Montgomery County organizations providing eviction prevention services. Eviction prevention programs avert homelessness and keep people safe at home with less risk from a pandemic. Prior to COVID, we were working with two eviction courts, now we are working with seven. Where possible, we have taken advantage of grant support to expand this critical work, though grants alone do not provide all that is needed.



Kelley said, "We were homeless and in a shelter. Now my five children and I live in a house. It is so comforting to know we are safe. In fact, the Cluster staff call and check on us and tell us about other programs like holiday food. I don't know where we would be without this help."

Property owners are also at risk. Losing large blocks of affordable housing because landlords have been forced to go without income, could produce a catastrophic lack of modestly-priced housing and eventually lead to blighted properties. "I rent to 32 families and if I weren't able to make my mortgages, families would be displaced and the properties would likely sit empty for several years pending foreclosure," said one landlord.

As all of us close this year, still fighting the pandemic, we will continue to offer critical resources to community members in need, and work to improve overall stability. We recognize that your own organization may be struggling, so we are asking you to support us, as you are able, at this critical time and in the New Year.

Best wishes for a healthy close to this challenging year.

With gratitude for your past support,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Wilhelmy".

Barbara Wilhelmy
Executive Director

P.S.

If you missed the live-stream of our annual event last month, you can view it here ~

pottstowncluster.org/2020yghheventvideo/

You can also make an online gift at ~

pottstowncluster.org/donate/

If you need information on donating stock, or have any questions about giving, please e-mail jgood@pottstowncluster.org or call Jacqui Good at 215-570-8321/mobile.

POTTSTOWN CLUSTER OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

2019 IMPACT

Food Security, Housing Stability, and
Supportive Services and Education

25,623
LIVES TOUCHED



1,542
HOUSEHOLDS SERVED



592,007
POUNDS OF FOOD DISPERSED



14,091
COMMUNITY PLATES SERVED



23,436
VOLUNTEER HOURS DONATED



12,323
CARE ITEMS DISTRIBUTED



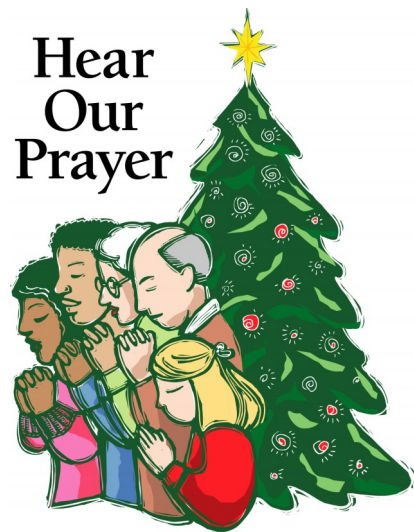
POTTSTOWNCLUSTER.ORG



Chidawu, Isabelle	12/04
Hudick, Kortne	12/04
O'Drain, Mari	12/04
Dise, Abigail	12/09
Foss, Analexis	12/15
Walters, Verna	12/15
Caplan, Gillian	12/18
Gergle, Judith	12/20
Bortz, Betty	12/21
Faust, Jim	12/22
Klein, Timothy	12/22
Palubinsky, Josh	12/23
Augustine III, TJ	12/24
Bevan, Anna	12/26
Luckenbach, Jeffrey	12/26

During the month of December, Shenkel UCC will be praying for these randomly selected members and friends of our congregation:

- 12/6 Ron Christman
Lori and Kaya Skulski and Jordon
Gerhardt-Skulski
Jaden Viti
Tesia Craner
Lori Scharneck
- 12/13 Verna Walters
Stacia, Joe, Glen and Noah Bradley
Ben Mocarski
Robertta Peterman
Charlotte White
- 12/20 Priscilla Denham
Margie and Doug Allen
David and Tim Klein
Jennifer and David Braley
TJ Augustine
- 12/27 Kathy Murphy
Lynn, Dave and Katie Derman
Dawn Yocom
Linda and John Jonides
Debbie and Glen Hoff



The following activities are still **not** being held:

The Sewing Circle

Lunch Bunch

Midday Dinner

Card Making Club



As of October 31, 2020	Current Fund	
ACTUAL	Month	YTD
Opening Bal.	(1,467)	8,784
Giving	10,155	112,073
Expenses	(13,527)	(140,848)
Subtotal	(4,839)	(19,991)
Rent Income	1,700	17,000
Other	1	(147)
Ending Balance	(3,138)	(3,138)
Net Chg	(1,671)	(11,922)
BUDGET	Month	YTD
Giving	14,707	147,067
Over (Under)	(4,552)	(34,994)

Our Church's Wider Mission		
October 31, 2020	Month	YTD
Actual	1,095.00	9,051.00
Budget	958.33	9,583.33
Over (under)	136.67	(532.33)

Poinsettia Sunday, December 20, 2020

Deadline to order a pot of poinsettias is Sunday, December 13, 2020.

Color is red only. Cost is \$8.00 per pot



Luminary sales sponsored by Shenkel Youth: Help to beautifully light the path leading to pavilion on Christmas Eve with a luminary dedication. Order/ dedication and payment can be made by either mailing the form below or dropping it off in the church office. Cost is \$5/luminary or 3/\$10. Dedications received by 12/20 will be acknowledged on a bulletin insert at the Christmas Eve services.



SHENKEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST YOUTH GROUP

Christmas Luminaries **\$5.00 each or 3 for \$10.00**

Name of the person/persons to recognize for the purchase (your name)

Check box(es):

- ☐ In memory of _____
- ☐ In honor of _____
- ☐ In celebration of _____



Please place
your cash or
check (payable to
Shenkel UCC) in
an envelope and
drop off in office
or mail to
Shenkel UCC.

(office use only)

cash check

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