



**Port Orange
United Church of Christ**
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Volume 45 Issue 12

December 2023

PASTOR'S MESSAGE



From the Pastor's Desk –

As this newsletter reaches you, November and Thanksgiving will be in our rearview mirror as we speed down the highway towards the hustle and bustle of the Christmas/New Year season. It also brings us into one of the two most holy seasons in the Christian calendar. As you make preparations

for your family's holiday traditions, I urge you to take time to reflect on the real meaning of the season. When I personally get that rushed and hurried feeling during this time of year, I try to stop and think about what is truly important. For me, it's taking time to let folks know how much I care by sharing the power of God's love in any way I can. I hope you can take a few moments on each of the four Sundays of Advent to reflect on the meanings of the season.

To help you, I wanted to share the following little rhymes to a song I was taught as a child for each of the four themes of the traditional Advent wreath: HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE.

HOPE: A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
A candle of hope in December's dark night.
While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky,
Our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.

PEACE: A candle is burning, a candle of peace,
A candle to signal that conflict must cease:
For Jesus is coming to show us the way;
A message of peace humbly laid in the hay

JOY: A candle is burning, a candle of joy.
A candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy.
Our hearts fill with wonder, and eyes light and glow
As joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.

LOVE: A candle is burning, a candle of love,
A candle to point us to heaven above,
A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth,
For Jesus is bringing God's love to our earth.

We are including a copy of suggested readings for Advent in this newsletter. You may wish to spend some time with your *Bible* each day as you prepare emotionally and spiritually for this Holy Season. Please note that this year Christmas Eve is on a Sunday, so we've decided to have just one service on

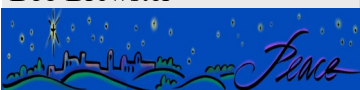
December 24th. It will be at 5:00 pm.

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Staff

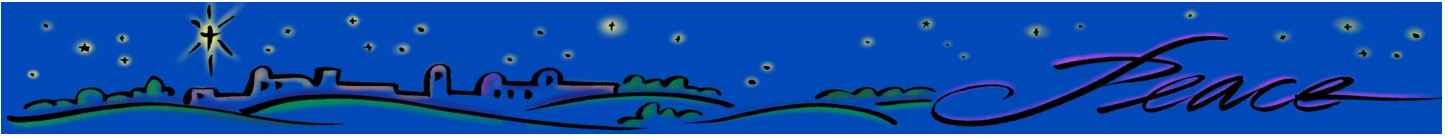
Pastor:
Rev. Patricia Holcomb
Office Manager:
Kathy Shaffner
Custodian
Ronnie Servant
Thrift Store Manager:
Emily McLean
Media Communications:
Bob Brewster



We will not have our usual Sunday morning service at 9:30 am. The time for our Christmas Eve Service is a little earlier than in the past. We hope you, your family and your friends will join us for this Holy Night Candlelight Service. We will hold our usual Sunday Worship Service on New Year's Eve Day at 9:30 am. May you experience the true joy of Christmas each and every day. I wish you all a blessed Christmas Season.

Blessings,

Pastor Pat



Advent Scripture Readings

As you prepare for this Christmas Season, spend a little time with your Bible during the month of December and read words of love, peace, promise, hope, and joy.

Week 1:

December 1 – Matthew 24:37-44

December 2 – Matthew 8:5-11

Week 2:

December 3 – Isaiah 11:1-10

December 4 – Romans 10:9-18

December 5 – Matthew 7:21, 24-27

December 6 – Matthew 9:27-31

December 7 – Matthew 3:1-12

December 8 – Luke 5:17-26

December 9 – Isaiah 40:1-11

Week 3:

December 10 – Isaiah 40:25-31

December 11 – Isaiah 48:17-19

December 12 – Matthew 17:9, 10-13

December 13 – Luke 1:39-47

December 14 – Matthew 21:28-3

December 15 – Luke 7:18-23

December 16 – Isaiah 54:1-10

Week 4:

December 17 – John 5:33-36

December 18 – Genesis 49:2, 8-10

December 19 – Isaiah 7:10-14

December 20 – Luke 1:5-25

December 21 – Luke 1:26-38

December 22 – Luke 1:46-56

December 23 – Malachi 3:1-4



Christmas Eve Day:

December 24 – Luke 1:67-79

Christmas Day:

December 25 – Luke 2:1-14



MODERATOR'S MESSAGE



We all love the Holiday Season which basically extends from Thanksgiving in November through New Year's Day, a total of about six weeks. It is a time for giving thanks, family get-togethers and celebrations. For many it is a time to rekindle relationships in family and with old friends and sadly it is also a time to remember those no longer with us. It is also a time for reflection on the past year and what we did and did not do. I also must admit that it is also a time for looking back at years past and looking forward at years remaining. For many of us in POUCC, we have far more years behind us than we have ahead of us. That realization can be quite startling when you consider things done or not done. It also points out the idyllic times of being young when time is not a real factor but is only something there that is both abundant and in ways never ending. Today, I look back at the years Ruth and I have been members of POUCC (almost 20), and then I look back at the many years spent attending other churches. The thing I remember the most is not the church buildings, the services and events, or even the pastor's wonderful messages of spiritual awareness. What I remember the most are the people. The other church members, who with their families and friends all formed a spiritual bond with each other. A bond that needed no words. A bond that in this life is an understanding that we are all moving forward on a path to a new everlasting life. This journey of worshiping and being together as a spiritual family knows no physical boundaries and does not end when we exit the church building, it stays with us. I hope that in POUCC during this holiday season that regardless of where you have been in your past, you feel that same spiritual bond with everyone around you who also believes that the road of life has a new beginning at its end. Ruth & I wish all of you a Very Happy & Healthy Holidays and a Very Healthy, Prosperous & Happy New Year 2024! Prayerfully submitted, *Bob Brewster, Moderator*

OPERATION'S & FINANCE TEAM

As I seem to start every article, welcome to the Holiday Season, Christmas, New Year's cooler, dryer weather is on its way. The following is Operation's Update:

APS Security Cameras: The dumpster camera has been adjusted to see the dumpster better, Bob and Emily have their phones connected to Total Connect so they can watch a live feed at any time on the eight cameras with their smart phone.



Site Lighting: Additional LED 35 watt site lighting was installed on the back of the thrift store to enhance the visibility of the dumpster area.

FPL monthly bill: Our demand charge has enhanced to a point where last months bill was over \$600.00; I have been in contact with FLP and they are investigating the reason. It appears FPL changed our rate without our knowledge. The energy audit was conducted on Monday November 6, 2023, FPL is reviewing all our recent monthly invoices and will adjust as necessary. FPL agrees our demand spike should not have happened. We will see the results in the next few months.

FPL Energy Audit Input: Many of the normal recommendations the report makes have been completed prior to the audit. Replacing the fluorescent lighting with LED, installing LED exterior site lighting, installing programmable thermostats, operating the large loads, (irrigation pump and sanctuary HVAC system) on off peak times, operating the other HVAC loads on off peak as much as possible. The report recommended the following:

(Continued on next page)



Lighting: Consider installing motion sensors. Timers or photo cells to control lighting. We have installed motion sensors in the Reed bathrooms. Site lighting is presently controlled by either a time clock or photo cells.

Cooling-A/C: Try setting the temperature at 75+ degrees during occupied hours.

We have installed set back thermostats on all HVAC units, thrift store is set at 76F during occupied hours and 90F during off occupied hours. Reed is set at 76F during occupied hours and 90F during non-occupied times. Sanctuary 16 ton unit is operated off peak on Sundays and twice a week in the middle of the night (off peak) for humidity control.

Water Heating:

Sanctuary bathrooms do not have a water heater.

Reed bathrooms have a water heater but it is turned off.

Kitchen has time clock operation and only operates during off peak periods.

So, as you can see, we have completed most if not all the items on the report prior to the audit.

We will continue to monitor the usage and adjust as necessary to keep the energy bill as low as possible.

Phase 2, French Drains: Peaceful Palms cleaned out the last under sidewalk drain and reconnected the leader to the drain. They installed a French drain and connected two of the downspouts to the drain. New sod was placed. This should eliminate the standing water during and after rain in the area of the thrift store entrance.

Irrigation System: is operational and all heads were checked, repaired and/or replaced as necessary. Irrigation heads that were in non-necessary areas were capped off. Monthly inspection and maintenance will be necessary.

Sanctuary Bathrooms: Four new HC toilets, four sink faucets have been purchased, Shaffer Plumbing will be providing and installing a new urinal valve (same as in the Reed bathroom) and installing the toilets and sinks, work should be completed by the end of November.

Sanctuary Hallway & Bathrooms: Premier painting (same folks that painted our exterior two years ago) will be repairing the ceilings, painting the ceilings and walls in the hallway, the men's, ladies' bathrooms and replacing all the pitted hardware in both bathrooms commencing on November 20, 2023.

Thrift Store Pavers: NSB Pavers has removed the existing sod at the end of the thrift store and installed pavers. We realized with the traffic it was impossible to maintain sod in this area, further thrift store clients use this area to move from the parking lot to the thrift store. NSB again donated a portion of the cost to the church.

Office Furniture: We are fortunate Bob Brewster's office was eliminating some of their office furniture and donated it to the thrift store. We placed two desks and 3 chairs in the back office for our tenant, he is extremely happy, the ladies also placed a painting on the wall for him. All office spaces now have matching chairs.

New pending jobs:

Church Office sign at the Reed room entrance.

Emergency light installation in the corridor outside the sanctuary bathrooms as well as on the old kitchen side of the wall.

Irrigation maintenance contract.

Removal of the dead shrubs and trees and installation of new shrubs in the island outside the sanctuary main entrance. *Art Horton, Chairman*

Financial Update—Operational Budget as 10/31/23



	<u>August Actual</u>	<u>YTD Actual</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>YTD Differ- ence</u>
Income	17,370.00	143,461.56	91,716.10	51,745.46
Expenses	<u>13,490.57</u>	<u>115,270.35</u>	<u>118,037.64</u>	<u>(2,767.29)</u>
Profit/(Loss)	3,879.43	28,191.21	(26,321.54)	54,512.75

Other Income/Expenses as of 10/31/2023 Capital Improvements

	<u>YTD Actual</u>
Income	5,940.00
Expenses	<u>68,071.57</u>
Profit/(Loss)	(62,131.57)
Combined Profit/Loss)	(33,940.36)

We had an Operational profit of \$28,191.21 for the ten month period ending October 31st. Of course, it is now December but we are always two months behind with our financial report because our accountant must close the books each month and that takes some time. But, it is December and it is time to rejoice in the season and the true meaning of Christmas and to share our blessings with family and friends. Our thanks go out to our amazing volunteers and to all who support our Church. *Merry Christmas to all, Barbara Horton, Treasurer*

*“For unto you is born ... a Saviour,
which is Christ the Lord.”*

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS

Luke 2:11

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN



Stewardship is a word we use rarely but it has a powerful meaning when describing an act or actions. We have all heard the words...”we need to be good stewards of the land” or “we need to be good stewards of our monies” . I also want to add that “we need to be good stewards of our church”. Our church in one sense is our property, buildings and all equipment, furnishings and fixtures. That is the physical side that requires good stewardship. The church is also our people – members, families and friends. We need to be good stewards of all this. Stewardship requires protecting, caring for and looking ahead to the future. Stewardship requires contribution of time, talents and money. At POUCC we are gaining every day in all three of these stewardship functions. We are very fortunate to have a small but very dedicated team of people watching over everything our church does. Thank you to everyone! Important to Stewardship is what we can donate financially both for today and the future. Today’s giving can be writing a check or donating cash or pledging future giving (See attached **Pledge Card**). Today’s giving can also be *setting up a future gift* through a Will naming POUCC as a beneficiary, making POUCC a beneficiary of a Trust or donating all or a portion of a retirement account’s Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). All of this can be done tax free. Think seriously about what you can do now for both today and tomorrow that will be your action for being a “Good Steward” to preserve our church for those who are following us.

Thank you, *Bob Brewster, Moderator*

MY PERSONAL GOAL TO GOD AND TO PORT ORANGE UCC

Out of gratitude for God’s gifts and trusting God’s enabling power, I/we have made the following faith-promise:

<input type="checkbox"/> \$125	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 10	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Yearly
<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15		<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

ANNUAL MEETING

On **Sunday, January 28, 2024 following the 9:30 AM Service**, we will have our Annual Meeting. Topics to be presented are the 2023 Budget as well as nominations and election of officers for the year. A list of nominees will be posted prior to the meeting on the Sanctuary bulletin board. Annual Reports are due by **Friday, January 5th**. Please type your report in Microsoft Word for easy compilation and e-mail it to the Church Office. Mark your calendars and plan to attend.



THE GIFT & THRIFT STORE



The Thrift Store has seen record numbers in customers and donations being dropped off. One of our cashiers suggested we use walkie-talkies to communicate between the front desk area and the work room. This was a great suggestion and works well. Problem solved. Thanks to Bob Brewster, we have a new Taylor Road sign. Thanks Bob for all your kind help with this project. We are blessed with truly kind and caring workers. *Emily McLean, Manager*

YOUR FOOD BASKET DONATIONS

Communion Sundays are designated as “Fill the Food Basket” Sunday. Last month’s collection of 38 bags benefited Halifax Urban Ministry’s Food Pantry. Thanks to Chuck Konopsky and Mary Ann Stewart for delivering the food. **As a reminder, December 3rd is our next collection.** Please make sure all donations have **NOT** passed their expiration dates.



CHRISTMAS FUND SPECIAL OFFERING



“Grace Upon Grace”: The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. Please show your continued gratitude for our active and retired UCC clergy who need our support by giving generously to the Christmas Fund this year. Offering will be received **December 24th.**

SECOND THURSDAY FELLOWSHIP DINNER



Christmas Dinner

Every Second Thursday at 6:00 pm, POUCC has a wonderful Fellowship Dinner in the Jim Reed room.

Our next Fellowship dinner is December 14th. It's our “Christmas Feast”. Ham will be provided, you bring the sides. See Sign-up Sheet circulated during Worship Services.

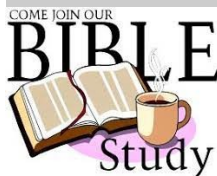
ALTAR FLOWERS

We will be decorating our Sanctuary with poinsettias for the Christmas Eve Service (**December 24th, 5:00 PM**). Please deliver your poinsettia with your name on them by **Wednesday December 20th** (place in Jim Reed Room). Poinsettias may be taken home or donated after the Christmas Eve Service. Sign-up sheet will be circulated at Worship Services.



Poinsettias

BIBLE STUDY



COME JOIN OUR

BIBLE
Study

POUCC Bible Study: POUCC “Wired Word” Bible Study will always be held on the **1st and 3rd Sunday** of each month at **11:00 AM**. (right after church service (9:30 – 10:30 AM)). We hold the class at the church in the Sanctuary.

December 3rd, 2023 (1st Sunday) New Survey reports Americans are united in their negative perception of national politics. What role Christians plays in political involvement.

December 17, 2023 (3rd Sunday) Holocaust deniers and why do people lie. Stories of lying in the Bible. Importance of having a correct understanding of who God/Jesus is.



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS*

Ted Batturs	12/4
Chuck Henderson	12/5
Grayson Osteen	12/6
Chuck Konopsky	12/10
Art Horton	12/11
Susie Greiff	12/16
Erika Hobson	12/17

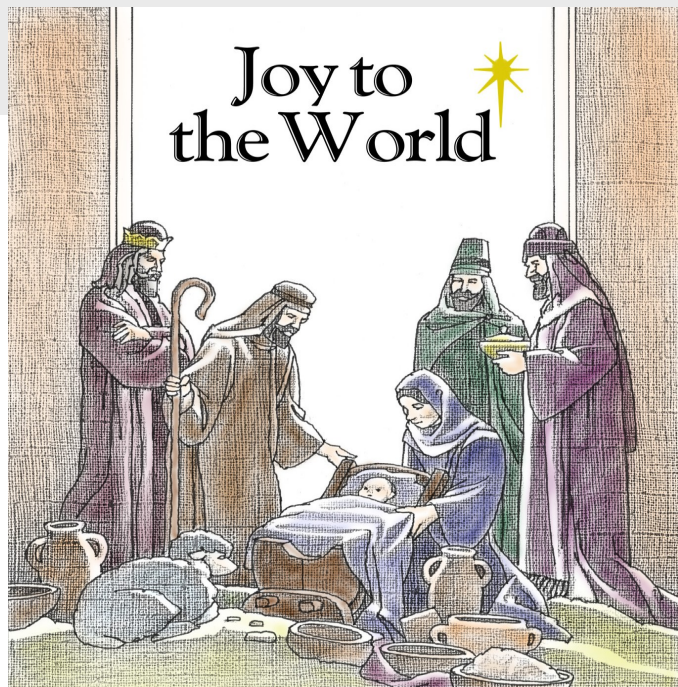
DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES*

Bill & Susie Greiff	12/12/1970
Ron & Sonnie Zinke	12/23/1958



PRAYER REQUESTS*

Charlie & Molly Baskin	Members of POUCC
Bob Brewster	Member of POUCC
Beth & Chris Brown	Family of Sheila Fisher
Rafael Castels	Friend of Sheila Fisher
Stephanie James	Friend of Emily McLean
Harry & Jim Manchester	Family of Shelia Fisher
Frank & Carol Matos	Friends of Molly Baskin
Liz Mills	Former Member of POUCC
Howie Mumma	Friend of Sharon Williamson
F/F of Bill Nicholls	Member of POUCC
Jeremy Parker	Canadian friend of Sheila Fisher
Carmella Potenza	Granddaughter of Don & Denise Gates
Kay & Don Schweitzer	Members of POUCC
John Sedgwick	Friend of Sheila Fisher
Renee Smith	Friend of Beth Brown & Sheila Fisher
Amy Stevens	Daughter of Jackie & Bob Gaither
Tammy & Danny	Friends of Ann Tobin
Seth Wanie	Family of Bill & Susie Greiff
Joseph Williamson	Son of Sharon Williamson
Darlene Wolfson	Friend of Sheila Fisher
Ron Zinke	Member of POUCC



In Care Facilities

Margie Hoebing	Friend of POUCC (Care Center in PO)
Marge Monat	Member of POUCC (Care Center in DB)

Special Needs

- Victims of Coronavirus & Those on the Front Line Fighting the Virus
- All of Our Military, Veterans & Their Families
- Those Fighting Terrorism Worldwide

Note: *Please contact the church office to update our records if we missed your special date or to add a Prayer Concern.

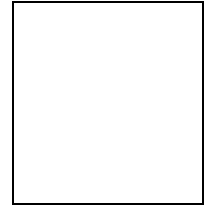
POUCC December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Weight Watchers 7:30 & 9:00 am
3 Worship Service 9:30 am Bible Study 11:00 am MOL* Worship Service 5:00 pm	4 MOL Bible Study 7:00 pm	5 Weight Watchers 9:30 am	6	7 Weight Watchers 9:30 am	8	9 Weight Watchers 7:30 & 9:00 am
10 Worship Service 9:30 am Fellowship 10:30 am MOL* Worship Service 5:00 pm	11 MOL Bible Study 7:00 pm	12 Weight Watchers 9:30 am	13	14 Weight Watchers 9:30 am	15	16 Weight Watchers 7:30 & 9:00 am Council Meeting 10:00 AM
17 Worship Service 9:30 am Bible Study 11:00 am MOL* Worship Service 5:00 pm	18 MOL Bible Study 7:00 pm	19 Weight Watchers 9:30 am	20	21 Weight Watchers 9:30 am	22	23 24
24  Christmas Eve Worship 5:00 PM	25 Office & Thrift Store Closed  Merry Christmas	26 Office & Thrift Store Closed	27	28	29	30

31
Worship Service
9:30 am
Fellowship
10:30 am
MOL* Worship
Service 5:00 pm

*Thrift Store Hours: M-F 9 am – 2pm, Sat. 9 am – Noon
In observance of Christmas, the Thrift Store and Church
Office will be closed Tuesday, December 26th.
Church Office Hours: M-F 9 am - 1 pm*

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Church Staff

Pastor: Rev. Patricia Holcomb
Office Manager: Kathy Shaffner
Custodian: Ronnie Servant
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Media Communications: Bob Brewster

Office Hours

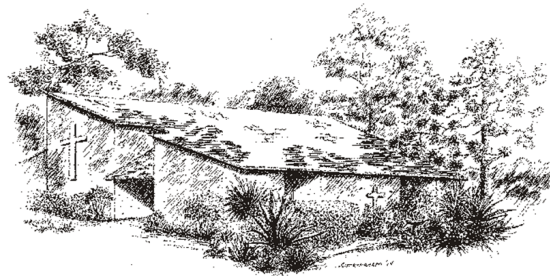
9:00 AM—1:00 PM
Monday—Friday

Thrift Store Hours

9:00 AM—2:00 PM
Monday—Friday
9:00 AM—Noon
Saturday

Sunday Worship

9:30 AM



Phone (386) 788-0920

