



**Partners in Blessing - Cooperative Mission,
Cooperative Ministry**

NEWS of the 26 Churches of the York Association

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December, 2022 – Newsletter

Mission Statement

We, the members of the York Association of the United Church of Christ, are called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit to represent Christ by:

- supporting one another in our covenantal relationship;
- calling clergy and laity to mutual accountability to the faith and order of the church;
- witnessing together to God's redeeming love. (Adopted April 28, 1991)

Getting to Know the York Association

BREAKING ASSOCIATION BOUNDS



Mount Zion UCC in Spring Grove has entered into a partnership in ministry with **Christ UCC in Jefferson/Codorus**. Since Christ UCC is in the Gettysburg Association, we are now straddling two Penn Central Conference associations. After a series of informal conversations during the summer and fall of 2021, the two congregations decided to enter into a working partnership in December 2021. Since then, we have been alternating worship services between the two church buildings weekly. As of October 16, the people of both congregations, gathered together in a common congregational meeting, voted to continue this relationship. For the time being, the finances of both congregations are being maintained separately, and both buildings are still being utilized for worship and other activities. We are sharing in special offerings since both congregations were already "Five-for-Five" congregations. We also both contribute both financial and volunteer support to the Harvest of Hope Food Pantry, which serves our area of York County. Together we also support Hoffman Homes for Youth, Homewood at Plum Creek, and Heifer International. During this holiday season we are also participating in Church World Service's "Best Gift" program.

It will come as no surprise to learn that both of these congregations were struggling to maintain meaningful church life independently. Dwindling active membership, which was accelerated by the Covid

pandemic, was taking its inevitable toll both on worship participation and on financial support. The situation became more critical when Christ UCC was finding it next to impossible to find interim and/or supply pastoral leadership. Mt. Zion expressed a willingness to share their pastor (me) with Christ UCC, which agreed in turn to share in supporting pastoral compensation. During one of our shared leadership meetings it was suggested that rather than having the pastor travel from one church to the other every Sunday to lead worship twice, we would have the congregation move between the two churches, alternating Sundays. This has led to a surprisingly harmonious blending of two congregations (along with making life much more pleasant for the pastor). It has also effectively doubled the size of the worshiping congregation, which creates a much livelier worship experience for all.

Where this relationship will ultimately lead has not yet been determined. But rather than viewing this uncertainty as a problem, we are looking at it as a God-given opportunity to discern together how and where we are being called to serve. We recognize that the church of the future will not, indeed cannot, be the same as the church of the past. While we will continue to treasure our history and the traditions that have served well in the past, we are also searching for new ways to "be the church" and to "do church." We are bold enough to believe that this partnership can be "one small step" of faithfulness to our calling to be Christ's disciples. So, for now, we will continue to worship, to work, to enjoy Christian fellowship, and to serve our communities and the world together in obedience to Christ's call.



Submitted by Larry Smith, Pastor

Art for the Earth

Kids of all ages can join in the United Church of Christ's Climate Hope Cards art contest. Participating children will design postcards that highlight hope for and love for the earth. Any child can enter, but church youth especially are encouraged to participate. The deadline is Nov. 30th. More info at www.ucc.org/climatehopecards

PCC Office News

- Here is an update regarding the Keystone Project in which the four Pennsylvania Conferences are working toward resource and ministry sharing. Each Conference has an initial team who will work with the Conference Ministers to explore possibilities, challenges, and opportunities. In time (2023) there will be further conversations and focus groups across the conferences, so you will have an opportunity to be part of this process. Our first large group meeting was Friday November 14 in Harrisburg. The group did community building, learned of some of the statistical results of the early 2022 clergy survey, formed a group covenant, and designed expectations and possible next steps. The next meeting is Friday, November 11th. The PCC members of the groups are Rev. Dwight Hein (Board Chair), Ms. Carolyn Herman (Board Vice-chair), Mike Gibbs (former Chair of Strategic Planning), Rev. DiAnn Baxley (Chair of Personnel), and Rev. Sterling Fritz (Finance committee member of Board) plus staff members Carrie Call and Nora Foust. Any questions regarding the project can be sent directly to Carrie.

Around the Association

Starview UCC has a **Director of Music** position open. This position involves 1 Sunday morning worship service, special liturgical services throughout the year, and direction of the church choirs. The estimated time per week is 6 hours, which naturally, will vary depending on the church season and number of services planned. Compensation is negotiable. Resumes may be emailed to: starviewucc@comcast.net or mailed to 4832 N. Sherman St. Ext., Mount Wolf, PA 17347.

Seeking Part Time Ministry Coordinator

Shiloh UCC is looking for a Family and Children Ministry Coordinator. It is a part time position. You can find the job description at www.ShilohUCCYorkPA.org.

Hayshire UCC,

100 Haybrook Drive, York, PA

What: Cookies and Story Time with Santa

When: Saturday, Dec 3 @ 3pm & 4:30pm

Families are invited to bring their children to meet Santa and enjoy a special story time to learn about the true

meaning of Christmas. There will be cookies, juice, and hot chocolate for all. Doors will open at 2:45pm for the 3pm event and doors will open at 4:15pm for the 4:30pm event. RSVP by going to our website at www.hayshireucc.org/events.html to register.

St Paul UCC,

161 S Main St, Shrewsbury, PA

What: Troy D. Winemiller Concert

When: Saturday, Dec 11 @ 3pm

St Paul UCC presents in concert Troy D. Winemiller, "*The Glorious Sounds of Christmas*"

What: New Year's Eve Service

When: Saturday, Dec 31 @ 2pm

Please join St. Paul UCC, as they celebrate a New Year's Eve Service, the final day of their 200th Anniversary Celebration, Pastor Martha Boyer's final service as Pastor followed by refreshments and a program of "Short Stories of Love and Peace."

Heidelberg UCC, 47 W. Philadelphia St, York, PA

What: Longest Night Service

When: Tuesday, Dec 20 @ 7pm

You are invited to join us for an evening of held space, healing, and hope leading up to the longest night of the year. Beginning at 6:30 p.m. we will have music by candlelight for meditation in the sanctuary. There will be interactive prayer stations and a walkable labyrinth in the Auditorium for contemplation and centering as well. At 7:00 p.m. there will be a service to name the griefs and challenges of the year, the complicated feelings many of us hold during the holiday seasons and remember that God is with us even in the longest night of our souls.

Please mark your calendar for the next meeting. For more information call Martha Boyer, Communicator at 717 858-2991, or email marthahboyer@hotmail.com

York Association UCC Clergy Gathering

Wednesday, December 14, @ 11am

Lion's Pride Restaurant

20 Dairyland Square, Red Lion, PA 17356

The Communications Ministry of the York Association

Newsletter – Sue Barnes, news@yorkassociationucc.org
Facebook – Stephanie Oelrich, info@yorkassociationucc.org
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The next newsletter will be emailed Dec 15th. Please send all articles to news@yorkassociationucc.org by Dec 11th. Thank You!