

THE STEPPING-STONE January 12, 2022 Issue



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FROM THE PASTOR

The Season of Epiphany is a time of “Aha” moments – moments in which the grace and glory of God are revealed in common encounters and in surprisingly simple ways. Thus three Wise Men who traveled from the East, following a star in order to worship a new born king, find the King of Kings and Lord of Lords not in a gilded palace, but in the humblest of homes. And he who is Very God of Very God, comes to the waters of the Jordan River to get washed up clean by his cousin, John the Baptist, and in this simple act of washing in a river, sets the pattern for our initiation into the Christian life.

But it is January 2022 and we find ourselves again in a season of “Oh, No!” The Omicron variant of the coronavirus is surging and filling our hospitals and emergency rooms and doctors’ offices with very sick people. We scramble to find a rapid COVID test to make sure we aren’t infecting others or we stand in line waiting for our turn to get tested or boosted. We’re coming on two years of masks and social distancing and quarantining and it feels like COVID-fatigue is in overdrive! It’s hard to experience “AHA” when every aspect of our lives is permeated by “Oh, No!” We pray to God to reveal to us something of grace, something of hope, something of surety in an unsure time.

Doubt, Despair, Disbelief – Darkness that covers the earth. We wait and hope for the Light. What if we are the light – or rather, what if it is the way we reflect the Light of Christ into the darkness that is to help us through the “Oh, No” and into the “Aha” of God’s grace and glory. The prophet Isaiah wrote these words: **“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.”** (Isaiah 60:1-4) Isaiah speaks of God’s glory rising upon God’s people and being reflected so that nations would come to the light and Kings to the brightness of their witness. We, too, are God’s people and God’s light shines upon us; not just to enlighten us, but to be reflected and shared and seen by all who are around us.

The surprising light of “Aha” is in the kind words we speak to one another and the kind deeds we do for each other. It is in patience and strength and encouragement in these uncertain and challenging times. It is in simple acts and good intentions and faith in God to see us through that we see and we help others to see God’s Light.

God has no hands but our hands to do his work today;
God has no feet but our feet to lead others in his way.
God has no voice but our voice to tell others how he died;
God has no help but our help to lead them to his side.

Be “Aha” to one another!

Pastor Rick +

Moderator Message

I love the start of the new year. As part of my celebration, I always generate a list of New Year's resolutions. Somehow it feels like there is a clean slate that allows change and growth. As I was thinking of this month's moderator message, I wondered if we could make a list of resolutions for the church. Fortunately, losing weight and more exercise would not appear on this list. What would, you ask.

Each of us might add something slightly different, but I bet we would all agree that we should focus on making the TUCC mission come alive. That mission focuses us on being an inclusive community of faith that proclaims the message of God's love and the teachings of Jesus Christ through worship, teaching and service.

So, our church could focus on becoming more inclusive. We could invite, welcome, and support anyone seeking God and looking for His love and grace. Our list might say: each of us will invite **all** new people we meet to worship with us to TUCC. Once they attend, we commit to sharing our love and joy with them as we always do.

Our church could work to ensure that God's love shines through every worship service, each teaching moment, and every act of service. The resolution might say: **Every** member will offer their time, unique talent and/or resources to at least one aspect of our vibrant church work regularly. God needs each of us! All talents are needed and welcomed: singing, ringing, reading, decorating, storytelling, cooking, sewing, knitting, organizing, writing, budgeting, cleaning, and more.

Finally, our church should commit to blanketing all our work and the world in prayer. The final item on our list of resolutions might say: We, as a church, will commit to praying for the pastor, the church and its congregation, our community, our country, and the world. We trust the words of Jesus: **Where two or three are gathered in my name I am in the midst of them"** (Matthew 18:20).

Happy 2022. May God bless us as we love and serve Him and our community.

Preventing the Spread of COVID-19

TUCC continues to monitor state and federal recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID. Masks for all above the age of 2 are required for all those coming to TUCC. Cloth masks are no longer recommended. The church has ordered a supply of KN95 masks which provide the greatest protection. Donations are being accepted to defray the increased cost, but masks continue to be free to attendees.

Both choirs are going on hiatus for the foreseeable future. The congregation will go back to humming hymns, rather than singing. Social distancing continues to be highly recommended including minimal face-to-face conversations.

Coffee hour and senior luncheons have been suspended until at least early February.

If you are in a high-risk category, we urge you to attend via Zoom for the next few weeks. Monitor your health closely and if you have any symptoms of illness, please test for COVID before venturing out. If you are exposed to someone with COVID, follow the directions for quarantine.

If you have not gotten vaccinated or followed up with the recommended booster, please do that today.

From the Financial Secretary

To anyone in the congregation who has moved or has gotten a new address during 2021, please contact Mel Moore (Financial Secretary). Mel needs your current address information to mail out your **IRS 2021 contribution statements**. Mel can be reached by email mlacny@gmail.com or by sending a text to **315-247-6000**. 2021 Contribution statements will be mailed by January 30th. Contact Mel if you have not received a statement a few days after January 30th.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

BIRTHDAYS:

Jan. 20th – Mark Guttendorf, Jan. 21st – Hollis Rotella, Lee Winger, Jan. 24th – Cathy Burgett, Nate Currie, Jan. 25th – Mark Stachowski, Jan. 26th – Jeanette Holden, Jan. 28th – David Franke, Jan. 31st – Leilani Schoff,



Feb. 1st – Dan Johnston, Dedrea Scalza, Feb. 6th – Robert Thompson, Tom Brown, Feb. 7th – Sonja Shepherd, Paula Mickelson, Breanna Foster, Rebecca Bickelhaupt, Feb. 8th – Sharon Hoogs

ANNIVERSARIES:

Jan. 31st – Jim & Sherla Millis

Feb. 4th – Tony & Donna George, Feb. 7th – Bill & Sue Wright, Feb. 8th – Smiley & Karen Prince

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

		Total
Sunday, December	19	63
Sunday, December	24 7:00 pm	21
Sunday, December	24 11:00 pm	43
Sunday, December	26	37
Sunday, January	2	60
Sunday, January	9	No Service (Ice Storm)

CONTRIBUTIONS (Sunday Offering and Loose Offering) for Sunday

		Total
Sunday, December	19	\$2,926.00
Sunday, December	24 7:00 pm	N/A
Sunday, December	24 11:00 pm	N/A
Sunday, December	26	\$4,481.00
Sunday, January	2	\$1,701.00
Sunday, January	9	\$1,500.00

Prayer and Praise

Prayer Requests:

Nancy Lajoie for medical issues. Rich Tordell is in the ICU with COVID. Mimi Cornue is in University Hospital ICU palliative care. The family of Brad LeFever, (Brad passed away 1/6/22) Karen Prince's brother. The family of Judith Nelson whose funeral was 1/8/22. The family of Timothy Poulin, (Tim passed away 12/25/21) Pamela Poulin's brother.



Continue prayers for:

the following individuals who we hope are all getting better and staying healthy: Joan Reppert who has moved to Longview in Ithaca. Beth Lattimer, Mary Thompson, Linda Cottrell, Steve and Pam Simon's son, Jeremy Simon, who is a missing person. Ed Hillenbrand, Leslie (Cornue) Sanderson, Betty Brady, Jocqueline Franke's mom.

Joys Shared:

Flynn Alexander Frechette born Dec 21st, to Cassandra & Alex Frechette-Great Grandparents are Ed & Janet Hillenbrand.

Upcoming TLC Recipients are:

Patricia Bloodgood, Pat Ehlers, Lura Rouse, Linda Cottrell

Church Activities

Bell Sales – On going. There are still a few anniversary bells that have the carillon printed on them for \$10.00. Holiday bells are on sale for \$15.00. If you are interested in purchasing a bell, please contact Pamela Poulin (607- 749-3474).

January - Prayer Shawl Meetings – There will be no prayer shawl meetings until further notice. Requests are still being taken. Shawl makers will be knitting and crocheting at home. Finished shawls can be left at the church office. If you have any questions, please call Sandy Burgett at 315-696-5197

There are **NO Tuesdays, at Noon – Senior Luncheons** until further notice.

Monday, January 17th Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Ways to Support Your Church and Community

Ministries come in many forms. Some take time, some take money, and some take both! Here are some suggestions for giving to others:

1. Offerings to TUCC – mail or drop off at church; use the PayPal link on the church website or pay through the electronic bill payment process of your bank.
2. St. Leo's Food Pantry and Outreach, POB 574, Tully, 13159. Attn: Cheryl Paccia. Pantry needs monetary donations for fresh produce, meat, and dairy
3. Donate sauce, tuna, canned veggies, PB, jelly, toiletries, paper products, etc., for the Food Pantry. A donation box is at the church or they can be left just inside St. Leo's hall between 9am – 2pm or just outside the door.
4. Shop *smile.amazon.com* and select TUCC as your non-profit. A percentage is returned to the church!
5. Contact the Pastor, any Board chair or the Moderator to offer your ideas, time or talent. A vibrant church is built around the passions and talents of the congregation.

Meditation and Sunday Service in our Sanctuary

Our sanctuary is open daytimes for prayer or meditation. Hand sanitizer is provided by the door. Masks are available for you to wear and take for added protection during COVID19.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87556610214?pwd=WE9kMnhaK2lSS3dFSk51WTI4MlVlQz09>

Meeting ID: 875 5661 0214

YouTube service: Please watch your emails, our website and TUCC Facebook for the update.

TUCC INDOOR WORSHIP GUIDELINES are on our bulletin board and website tullychurch.org.

***Remember: Wash your hands. If you are not fully vaccinated, wear your mask in public.
Stay home if you are ill.**