

December  
2022

# United in Faith News



*Why are we  
Here?  
We are to be  
God's  
hands,  
feet and  
voice  
in the  
world.*



From the desk of . . .

*Pastor Carla*

Who invited you to United in Faith (or one of the previous congregations) for the first time? Maybe it was a neighbor. Maybe it was a co-worker. Maybe it was a family member. Maybe even the pastor. Almost everyone came to a church for the first time because they were invited by someone. It didn't have to be a Sunday morning service – maybe it was a Girl Scout meeting or a sewing circle event or a Luther league program. Or maybe if you just found the church yourself, someone invited you back.

I still think how serendipitous it was that my family became Lutheran. My parents had grown up in the Methodist church, but we did not attend anywhere while I was young. When we moved to the suburbs and I was in sixth grade, suddenly my parents decided we would start going to church. But where to worship? We visited practically every Protestant congregation in Northbrook. When my parents visited Gloria Dei, someone (a layperson) followed up with a phone call asking if they had any questions about the church and inviting them back the following Sunday. We began attending Gloria Dei Lutheran Church where I was baptized, and some forty years later, I'm now a Lutheran pastor.

But what would have happened if my parents had not gotten that friendly phone call inviting them back? We might have visited again, but a personal invitation has a lot of power. Unfortunately, we as Lutherans don't do very well inviting people to church. I don't mean strong-arming – there are definitely other denominations that are pretty good at either guilt trips about sin or scare tactics about hell. We Lutherans try to be so understanding that we just never invite! Either we assume that people already have their own church. Or we assume that people know what church is about and they just don't want to participate. In today's world, I think those are both pretty big assumptions.

During this time of year, many people who do not have a church home are thinking about God. For some, the holidays remind them of loss of people who have gone before and whose presence they miss. For some, the holidays bring up memories of past traditions (candlelight Christmas eve, caroling, hanging of the greens) that make them more open to considering new holiday traditions. For others, the holidays have become kind of hollow once they realized how consumeristic they were.

Whenever I announce something at church, I often ask you to invite a friend or family member to join you. Not everyone can be at everything, but I assume that as active church members you will try to participate in

(OVER)-->

At  
United in Faith,  
The Guiding  
Principles are:

+

Jesus is  
Lord and  
*Savior*

+

Reflect  
God's *Love*

+

Pray and  
*listen* for God's  
guidance

+

Continue to  
strengthen  
*faith*

+

Include *All*  
in God's  
work

+

Meet people  
*where they*  
*are*

# FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR CARLA, CONTINUED..

something...Sunday worship, Messy Church, Advent midweek services, Thanksgiving eve service, book discussion, choir, food pantry, or something else.

Inviting someone is actually easy, but it often feels hard. Even if it makes us a bit anxious and nervous to invite someone new, it is a worthwhile task. It helps us to grow as Christians, and it helps our congregation to have new people to welcome. First, identify who you will invite to what event. Second, pray that God would give you the words and courage to invite that person. Third, make the call - invite the person. Sometimes we have flyers or invite cards at church to hand to a person you are inviting (see the "Come As You Are" invite cards for the next Messy Church).

Here are three sample scenarios:

*Scenario # 1* – I know my friend has been having a rough time with grief and depression this fall. While at lunch, I say, "my church is doing a Blue Christmas service on December 21<sup>st</sup> at 7pm for some of us who have been having trouble finding the Christmas spirit. I'm gonna go. Would you like to come with me? I could pick you up, or if it's better for you, we can meet in the parking lot. Can I text you and remind you the week before?"

*Scenario # 2* – I'm feeling sad about not seeing some of our families with young kids at church. I don't know what has happened to them, but I used to talk to \_\_\_ (fill in the blank of a parent of a kid from UIF) when we saw each other at coffee hour. I call, knowing that I might have to leave a voicemail saying that I'm thinking about them and I hope they can call me back. When we chat later, I ask whether they might want to attend the next Messy Church on Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, from 4-6pm. It's really chill and relaxed - we do some fun crafts, talk about a Bible story or Bible verse, and have a light supper at the end. I'd love to see you if you can make it, with or without the kids.

*Scenario # 3* – I meet someone at a community event who asks me about churches in the neighborhood. I tell them about United in Faith. "We're a small welcoming Lutheran congregation with a lot of heart and activity. Is there more I can tell you about our church?" I exchange contact info with them, and I invite them to worship with us this Sunday at 10am. Invite to a particular event – not just generally to Sunday worship..."I'll be out of town this week, but I'll be at church next week, the 10<sup>th</sup>. Could you meet me at coffee hour at 9:15?" Anyone who is coming to our church building for the first time can get turned around. There are a TON of entrance doors to our building, so do whatever you can to meet the person before they have to walk in by themselves. If you have ever visited a new building or attended an event where you didn't know anyone, you know what that anxiety feels like!

In Romans 10, St. Paul reminds us that we are the ones who bring good news of Jesus to the world around us: "But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'" (Romans 10:14-15)

*Pastor Carla*



# FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION...

Our 2022 Advent & Christmas materials reflect the theme "From Generation to Generation" using biblical stories of humans involved in the Christmas story, paired with Isaiah lectionary scriptures. We'll use these "From Generation to Generation" themed materials during Advent, Christmas, and even on Epiphany Sunday.

Available at United in Faith:

- \* Advent calendar, with an invitation to do an activity and color a space as you count up to December 25 (Christmas).
- \* Black-and-white printed "From Generation to Generation" Devotional (also available in color e-reader format through [flippingbook.com](http://flippingbook.com) – please ask the church office for details)
- \* Full color Artwork related to each weekly "From Generation to Generation" theme

Our theme scriptures look at the Christmas story focus on both the human interactions and events recorded in the Gospels, as well as the prophecies in the Old Testament book of Isaiah. Mary's song of protest and praise (known as the Magnificat) includes these lines:

*Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him*

***from generation to generation.*** (Luke 1: 48b-50)

From the Sanctified Art infographic on this theme: "Despite the challenges and vulnerability she faced, Mary could glimpse the scale and scope of the good news she was part of bringing forth. This good news transcends time and space—it was and is bigger than just her. Christ is coming for collective liberation: God's redemption is at work for years to come. Therefore, the promise is meant to be lived out and passed on from generation to generation."

"We are invited to look at the characters in our scriptures and wonder: What did each character pass on or contribute? How did each character participate in God's liberation and love? Which characters try to thwart God's justice and what can we learn from them? What is our role now? What is our generation's task? What will we carry forth, and what should we leave behind?"

"*From Generation to Generation...* reminds us of the ways our lives, histories, actions, and stories are interconnected and woven together. In the midst of narratives, policies, and rhetoric designed to divide us, what does it look like to practice belonging to one another? The work of God is always unfolding—in and through us. This Advent season, how will we carry it forth?"



## Christmas and Poinsettias?

How did the brilliant poinsettia plant become associated with Christmas? Indigenous to Mexico and Central America, the poinsettia was first described by Europeans in 1834 and takes its English name from the first U.S. minister to Mexico and botanist, Joel R. Poinsett. In the 1820s he began sending poinsettias from Mexico back to his greenhouses in South Carolina. The actual flower of the plant are the small yellow structures found in the center of each leaf bunch and the leaves are both red and green.

Wild poinsettias occur from Mexico to southern Guatemala, growing on mid-elevation, Pacific-facing slopes. Aztec people cultivated the plant to produce red dye and used it in traditional medicine. Today in Mexico and Guatemala it is known as the "Christmas Eve flower" or Flor de Nochebuena or simply Nochebuena, meaning "Christmas."

The plant's association with Christmas began in 16th-century Mexico, where legend tells of a girl, commonly called Pepita or María, who was too poor to provide a gift for the celebration of Jesus' birth and was inspired by an angel to gather weeds from the roadside and place them in front of the church altar. Crimson blossoms sprouted from the weeds and became poinsettias. From the 17th century, Franciscan friars in Mexico included the plants in their Christmas celebrations. The star-shaped leaf pattern is said to symbolize the Star of Bethlehem, and the red color represents the blood sacrifice of Jesus's crucifixion.

Poinsettias are popular Christmas decorations in North America due to a marketing campaign by the Ecke family whose California ranch serves half the worldwide market and 70% of the US market. In the US, December 12 is National Poinsettia Day, marking the anniversary of Joel R. Poinsett's death. That day is more well known as the day to venerate Our Lady of Guadalupe. In 1531, Juan Diego of Guadalupe, had visions of the Virgin Mary and miracles occurred. Ultimately, the Guadalupe shrine became a significant pilgrimage destination, and Our Lady of Guadalupe became known as the Patroness of Mexico and the Continental Americas.

- Excerpted from Wikipedia.



## WE NEED YOUR HELP!!

THIS YEAR, to help us decorate our sanctuary for Christmas Eve & Christmas Day, we are asking you to BRING in a poinsettia plant (red, white, or pink – no preference) on December 18<sup>th</sup> or December 24<sup>th</sup>. Label it on the bottom of the pot (or foil) with your name so we know where they belong after the holiday. Take them home on Sunday, December 25<sup>h</sup> or Sunday, January 1<sup>st</sup>.



## GIRL SCOUTS at UiF!

Our Girl Scout troops are buzzing along! We all went camping to Juniper Knoll the first weekend of November. The weather Saturday was rainy and VERY windy, but we still did some hiking around the camp and had a great time. We all stayed in one large lodge there, but we had separate sides with the Daisies and Brownies on one side and the Juniors, Cadettes, and Seniors on the other. We are still collecting items for our hygiene kits, so if you have any small travel size toiletries, new washcloths, or new hair brushes/ combs we could certainly use them.

Cookie sales begin mid-December this year! There is a new cookie this year, the Raspberry Rally! It looks rather like the old favorite Thin Mint, but has a raspberry flavored cookie. This cookie is only available through on-line orders.

And we just have to crow about Annette--did you know our dear Super-leader has been a Girl Scout for 75 YEARS! Congratulations to you Auntie-Net!!!! We love you!



Merry Christmas to all of UIF from your Girl Scout troops!

*Janeen, Sharon, Cat, Alex, Cathy and Kathy*

## FROM ST. CYPRIAN'S...

MANY THANKS to our friends at United In Faith for the generous monetary donations of \$290.00 in September and \$325.00 in October. We are seeing our number of clients serviced increase as the days turn colder. It's colder outside but warm in our hearts. Thank you so much.

ST. CYPRIAN FOOD PANTRY is seeking sponsors for Christmas gifts for families with kids this year. Ask Pastor Carla if names are available. We encourage you to purchase at least one practical item and one fun item (needed clothing and a toy, for example). Bring your gift(s) back to church by December 12<sup>th</sup> so that they can be distributed. Thank you!



- DEC 1** Justin Dombroski
- DEC 8** Carol Arnswald
- DEC 9** Mary Ann Hudie
- DEC 12** Elisabeth Wittman
- DEC 22** Owen Devine
- DEC 24** Barbara Patrick
- DEC 26** Peggy Devine
- DEC 29** Joy Csapo-LaCour

## UNITED IN FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH EDUCATION ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP

United in Faith Lutheran Church has established an Education Endowment Scholarship Fund which is available to members of our congregation. Students who have a financial need can apply for assistance. Eligible awards can be for any Christian pre-school through high school as well as any post-secondary school and can include special educational needs or gifts at any level of education.

Each application is carefully reviewed by the Education Endowment Scholarship Committee. Awards are based on need and funds available. The application forms are available in the church office and must be completed in full to be considered for a scholarship for the school year 2023-2024 and returned no later than February 28, 2023. Place the completed form in the church mail box marked "Scholarship" located in the hallway or give to any scholarship committee member. All information on the application will be treated as confidential.

- Applicants must be active members of United in Faith Lutheran Church.
- Identify, to the best of your knowledge, all school related expenses for the school year, plus any other source of income or assistance you have to meet those expenses.
- Applicants and their parent(s)/guardian(s)/legal care giver(s) must participate in the life of United in Faith Church. This can include but is not limited to: serving as an acolyte, usher, reader, assisting minister, Sunday School aide or teacher, participation in fund raising activities, and assisting with church events to the extent that is reasonable and possible.
- Attendance at worship is required.

The Committee will then give careful consideration for awards on each application. Applicants will be notified of the Committee's decision by March 31, 2023. An applicant may receive a scholarship in subsequent years as long as they meet the requirements. Scholarship amounts may vary from year to year based on the number of applicants and funds available each year.

If you have any questions, or are interested in joining this committee, please contact Bonnie Maginnis 773-237-5357.

The Education Endowment and Scholarship Committee  
Pastor Carla, Bonnie Maginnis, George Schultz

## IMPORTANT DEADLINES TO REMEMBER...



### **ANNUAL REPORT 2022 DEADLINE:**

*on or before* January 1, 2023

### **JANUARY 2023 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:**

on Wednesday, December 14



THANK YOU for adhering to these deadlines.

**\*\*If you stop by the church building in December, please pick up your 2023 offering envelopes. We will mail those that remain in early January 2023.**

*Christmas Blessings to all!*

# DECEMBER 2022



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>4</b> 9:00am Coffee Hour 10:00am Worship in person and livestreamed on Facebook or YouTube	<b>5</b> 9:00am Food Pantry 1:00pm Ladies Discussion Group	<b>6</b> 10:00am Golden Rebels Bingo 6:00pm Brownies/Daisy 7:00pm Girl Scouts	<b>7</b> 11:00am Midweek Service livestreamed on Facebook or YouTube	<b>8</b> 9:00am Food Pantry 10:00am Golden Rebels Bingo 7:00pm Boy Scout Troop Leaders Meeting	<b>9</b> 6:30pm AA	<b>10</b> 9:30am AI-Anon 1:00pm Ladies Knitting Group 4:00pm Survivors of Incest
<b>11</b> 9:00am Coffee Hour 10:00am Worship in person and livestreamed on Facebook or YouTube	<b>12</b> 9:00am Food Pantry 1:00pm Ladies Discussion Group	<b>13</b> 10:00am Golden Rebels Bingo 6:00pm Brownies/Daisy 7:00pm Girl Scouts	<b>14</b> 11:00am Midweek Service livestreamed on Facebook or YouTube	<b>15</b> 9:00am last Food Pantry until January 5, 2023 10:00am Golden Rebels Bingo	<b>16</b> 6:30pm AA	<b>17</b> 9:30am AI-Anon 1:00pm Ladies Knitting Group 4:00pm Survivors of Incest
<b>18</b> 9:00am Coffee Hour 10:00am Worship in person and livestreamed on Facebook or YouTube	<b>19</b> 1:00pm Ladies Discussion Group	<b>20</b> 10:00am Golden Rebels Bingo 6:00pm Brownies/Daisy 7:00pm Girl Scouts 7:00pm Church Council Meeting	<b>21</b> 11:00am Midweek Service livestreamed on Facebook or YouTube	<b>22</b> 10:00am Golden Rebels Bingo	<b>23</b> 6:30pm AA	<b>24</b> 9:30am AI-Anon 4:00pm Survivors of Incest <b>11:00 PM Christmas Eve Service in person and livestreamed on Facebook or YouTube</b> 
<b>25</b> <b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b> 10:00am Worship in person and livestreamed on Facebook or YouTube	<b>26</b> 	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 6:30pm AA	<b>31</b> 9:30am AI-Anon 4:00pm Survivors of Incest



# Worship Schedule

**DECEMBER  
2022**



<b>Dec 4</b>	9:00 am 10:00 am	Coffee Hour Worship in person and livestreamed
<b>Dec 7</b>	11:00 am	Midweek Service in person
<b>Dec 11</b>	9:00 am 10:00 am	Coffee Hour Worship in person and livestreamed
<b>Dec 14</b>	11:00 am	Midweek Service in person
<b>Dec 18</b>	9:00 am 10:00 am	Coffee Hour Worship in person and livestreamed
<b>Dec. 21</b>	11:00 am 7:00 pm	Midweek Service in person Blue Christmas service in person
<b>Dec 24</b>	11:00 pm	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service in person and livestreamed on Facebook or YouTube
<b>Dec 25</b>	10:00 am	Christmas Day Service in person and livestreamed on Facebook or YouTube

UNITED IN FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH  
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Pastor

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