

January 2021

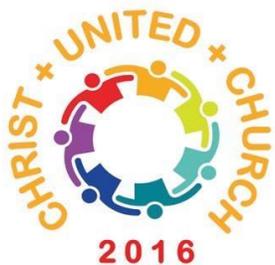
# The Good News

The monthly newsletter of Christ United Church

## Christ United Church

A federated church  
of the Presbyterian Church  
(USA) and the  
United Church of Christ

With Christ  
as our heart  
and God's love  
as our fire,  
we learn, we love,  
we care for all  
people.



## It's a New Year A message from Pastor Joel

Dear CUC Friends and Family,

2021 – a year that seems like it took a century to arrive at, but it's finally here. And now that it's here, I have to say I'm not even sure how to feel. It's a new year for us all after a year that has been unlike any other, but who knows what this coming year will hold for us? As I write this, though there is a vaccine being distributed and hope on the horizon, few if any of us have received it yet and we still carry on with online worship for the time being. COVID is still rearing its ugly head in Cuyahoga County and we don't know quite when to expect things to start improving on that front.

In the Silver Linings department, Janis and I have both heard positive feedback on the "I Believe... Even When" series that we shared in throughout Advent and Christmas. We are truly glad that you have enjoyed the devotional activities, the Film Festival, the music selections, and the overall focus on the hope that music gives us to keep on persevering... even when. And what a joy it has been to have our BW choral scholars, the virtual choir at Christmas, and so many of the things that make Christ United feel closer to us even when it's all so vastly different than we'd like!

Since this *does* mark a new year for all of us, I suppose it's also appropriate to consider our New Year's Resolutions – for Janis and myself, our resolution for this year is to keep looking for ways to keep Christ United... well, united! As we all continue to experience Zoom fatigue and screen burnout, we will be working with the Governing Board and our various committees and task forces to find creative ways that we can keep engaged and connected with one another, but we will also commit ourselves anew in this fresh year to reaching out, making contact with each of you, and maintaining community in the best ways that we can. May 2021 be a year filled with blessings for all of us! ✝

Happy New Year,

Rev. Joel Montgomery



## Epiphany Stars!!!

Epiphany Sunday is **January 3**. We have a plan in place for you to receive your Epiphany Stars for 2021. Sign up here: [Epiphany Stars Requests](#) to let us know how many your household needs and your stars will be mailed to you asap. If you cannot access that link, feel free to call (440-234-0150) or e-mail ([Office@ChristUnited.Church](mailto:Office@ChristUnited.Church)) the office with your star(s) request. ✝



## Congregational Meeting

January 31, 2021

Our next Congregational Meeting will be on **Sunday, January 31**, via Zoom. As in prior years, the focus of this first meeting of the year is financial and we will be voting on our 2021 budget. It will be e-mailed in advance of the meeting along with any other pertinent information. In addition to the budget, there will be an update on gifts we have made to other charitable organizations from CUC endowment funds and a recommendation from the Governing Board for a gift to be made in 2021. Please plan to attend and watch your e-mail for those documents as well as the Zoom information which allows phone access by voice only in addition to computer/smart phone video access. ✝

## Upcoming Dates

Epiphany – January 3

Advent Film Festival – January 3

Congregation Meeting – January 31

## We Get Letters

A Letter to my CUC Family

I can't thank you enough for all the cards, calls and support from all of you when I lost Jack in October. It happened very quickly, and I am slowly adjusting to living alone. So, thank you, thank you! I am anxiously awaiting a return to our sanctuary so we can be in real-time fellowship again.  
Diana Craig

## Governing Board News

December 2020 Meeting

by Cathy Green, President

Our latest Governing Board meeting was on December 8 via Zoom. Here is a summary of some of the key items that were reported or discussed. I apologize in advance for a longer report than usual. There is a lot going on, even in a virtual world!

**Grant to Church Street Ministries:** Our Focus Topic was to consider a grant request from Church Street Ministries (CSM). As you may recall, CSM President Ann Over attended the November Governing Board meeting. After that conversation, the Governing Board asked Treasurer Chris Landers to examine CSM's year-to-date financials which he has done and has provided a report to the Gov. Board. In normal times, CSM relies on income from the Second Mile shop to cover expenses for the food pantry. Unfortunately, Second Mile revenue during the pandemic has been so low that it isn't even covering store expenses, despite a rent accommodation from the landlord. Fortunately, community donors have been especially generous this year which means that CSM has a net gain through 9/30/20 of \$38,000 and expects to enter 2021 with a cash balance.

Still, CSM will remain fragile until the pandemic is over, which won't happen until mid-year at the earliest. The Mission Committee suggested that CUC commit to paying \$3600 a month to their landlord for six-months to give CSM some breathing room. The \$3600 is the reduced rent that the landlord has allowed during 2020 and it is hoped it will stay at that level for most or all of

2021. Given the relationship that CSM has had with us, and especially with First Congregational UCC of Berea, the Governing Board wants CSM to have every opportunity to continue serving the community. Consequently, the Governing Board decided to approve a \$3600 rent payment for January from endowment funds, a decision that is within board authority, and asks the congregation to approve an additional grant of \$18,000 to cover months February through June. The \$3600 monthly amount, if approved by the congregation, will be paid directly to the landlord.

For those of you that don't regularly get information about the work that CSM does, here is a recent report:

- In November, Second Mile Food Pantry served 2,220 people 26,640 meals.
- They passed out 345 Thanksgiving dinners for families
- 26 Thanksgiving meals to the HUD-VASH Veterans
- 130 hot Thanksgiving meals provided by Red Tail Golf Course Clubhouse

**November Financial Report:** Treasurer Chris Landers reported that November CUC receipts covered all but \$125 of church expenses, a trend that has continued for a number of months. There is a year-to-date budget deficit of \$8956, but that is considerably less than what was expected and budgeted. This is due to continued generosity from church members and careful expense control by staff and leadership.

**2021 Budget:** Chris also shared a preliminary budget for 2021. The biggest unknown at this point is a complete report of pledges from the congregation for next year. The Budget Committee will bring a recommended budget to the January Governing Board meeting on January 12.

**Community Outreach Task Force:** Rich Spinner provided an update on grants that have been dispersed thus far and brought two new requests which were both approved by the Governing Board. We are pleased at the impact this outreach effort is having and look forward to receiving an assessment in the first part of 2021. I am grateful to the members of the Task Force who are carefully evaluating requests from residents when referred by the city of Berea. Task Force

members are Marcia Karchmer, Don Michaelson, Barb Silvers, and Rich Spinner

**Other news:** Bobbi Perkins-White reported on the most recent Presbytery meeting and brought two suggestions for our church to look at:

- That CUC develop a Statement on Racial Justice. This matter will be referred to the Faith Formation Committee to recommend a course of study and recommended action(s) at the February GB meeting.
- That CUC become a Matthew 25 congregation. Bobbi believes that CUC could easily qualify with our current activity and the Governing Board is referring this idea be given to Mission Committee to make a recommendation.

Other committees reported a variety of other activities and plans but those will be communicated by them at the appropriate time.

If there are any questions or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact me at [green.cjm@gmail.com](mailto:green.cjm@gmail.com) or 313-580-8072. ☩

## November Financials

Month	Y-T-D	Y-T-D BUDGET
Congregational Giving		
\$ 21,351	\$ 221,714	\$ 241,870
Building Use/Misc.		
\$ 1,358	\$ 20,737	\$ 27,132
Total Income		
\$ 22,709	\$ 242,451	\$ 269,002
Total Expenses		
\$ 22,834	\$ 251,407	\$ 288,686

The month of November saw expenses exceeding income by only \$125. However, our November year to date deficit is \$8,956. ☩

# Happy Birthday!

## January

- 4 Alec Suehrstedt
- 11 George Haag
- 15 Jeremie Hilberg
- 15 Nancy Wares
- 18 Carol Gardner
- 18 Zackary Van Zante
- 20 Georgia Wilson
- 25 Jennifer Malusky
- 27 Joan Dangelo
- 28 Leah T. Allen



Mary is grandmother to four children. Three are in her custody and one is in foster care. Her landlord increased her rent by 50% and she had to leave her home. She is staying with a friend and hopes to find another rental property in Berea. Meanwhile, she has been unable to work because her 4 year old's daycare has been closing off and on due to the pandemic.

Colleen lost her husband in October and is struggling to take over his responsibilities especially handling the finances.

Kathryn takes care of her disabled son. Her boyfriend is unemployed. They are behind in the gas and electric payments and having trouble getting government assistance.

The good news is that many people from this church and the community have stepped up to provide many families with toys and gift cards during the holiday season. We are expecting more requests for assistance when the holidays are over, and the government subsidy programs stop on December 26. Pray that Congress will find it in their hearts to extend assistance to individuals and families in need. ✚

## Fifth Sunday Offering: Community of Hope (formerly Open Door)

The Community of Hope is a Cleveland based, trauma-informed team-mentoring program that surrounds each young adult aging out of foster care with 5-6 caring mentors. They meet with the young adult weekly for at least a year. We have a mentoring group at CUC! Outcomes for 2020 (even during a pandemic): 97% now have stable housing, 86% have improved optimism after one year, 76% are working and 0% are incarcerated. This is transforming and meaningful work! Please support our mentoring group and give on the Fifth Sunday, January 31 so that other groups may be started. Community of Hope is changing lives! ✚

## Community Outreach

The Community Outreach Task Force continues to be the hands of the CUC congregation in the community of Berea. We have received eight requests for assistance and provided funds to help six of these requests. A few of these families need your prayers as well. Please pray for the following families:

Richard and his wife suffer from epileptic seizures every week. He receives assistance from the government, but she has been denied assistance. Her case is being appealed. Meanwhile, their expenses exceed their income.

## The Good News

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Christ United Church  
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**Sunday Worship 10:00 AM**

**currently on Facebook and YouTube**

Judy Mitchell, Editor

Betsy Clark, Associate Editor

### Church Personnel

Revs. Janis and Joel Montgomery Co-Pastors

([Pastor@ChristUnited.Church](mailto:Pastor@ChristUnited.Church))

Bryan Bowser, Director of Music

Nichole Fehrman, Keyboardist

Betsy Clark, Office Manager



## Nominating Committee Presents Evangelism Committee

*This is the fifth of the articles that will appear each month in the monthly newsletter sharing a commentary on the committees that make-up the leadership of our church. The purpose of these articles is to educate the members on the purpose of the committee, how it works, and key skills valued to help fulfill their responsibilities. Keep in mind that someday you may be called to serve on one of these committees. You may not feel passionate about or qualified to serve, but God provides what we need to accomplish service in His name.*

**What is the Evangelism?** Evangelism is how we acknowledge that all we have is a gift from God, all we have belongs to God, and all we have is to be used to serve God.

**What are the Goals of the Evangelism Committee?** Guiding church members in sharing their faith. Inviting those outside the church to become followers of Jesus.

**These Goals are achieved through initiatives such as . . .**

- Informing and educating the church membership on the importance of evangelism in terms of bringing people to Jesus and continuing his mission on earth
- Organizing events and ongoing activities that lead members to share their faith with others through discussion, writing, and other arts.
- Collaborating with other committees and staff to inform the local communities about the church and its activities through internet and other media
- Organizing activities to invite, welcome, and engage church visitors
- Hosting events to reach the surrounding communities on a regular basis
- Developing procedures for welcoming visitors and inducting new members
- Developing procedures for integrating new members into the life of the church

**Who is on the current Evangelism Committee?** Phyllis Michaelson is the Governing Board representative; Jeff Smith and Chris Szabo are elected committee members. Individuals who have special interests in any of the Evangelism initiatives

are encouraged to reach out to the committee to volunteer or offer ideas or suggestions.

**Evangelism Committee Members are:**

- Open to sharing their Evangelism testimonies with others, yet humble in their attitude toward themselves. Eager to help others understand how to share their faith.
- Mature in their personal commitment to Christ and practicing stewards of time, talents, treasure, and testimonies.
- Committed to the mission of the church and regular in attendance at worship.
- Committed to the growth and transformation of people in their giving, serving, and caring.
- Able to work with others and open to God's direction for their lives. ✚

## The Magi's story — and ours

The story of the Magi is our story. God has used his supernatural means to draw us unto himself. On one glorious day, when we were exhausted and wearied in our sin, God led us to gaze upon Jesus just as the Magi did. We see the glory of God manifested through Jesus Christ in the internal work of the Holy Spirit. We see our utter sinfulness and God's abounding grace offered in the Messiah. We are filled with joy as this grace sinks into our hearts.

We fall down on our knees and confess our need of this Messiah. We worship him and offer up our lives as our greatest offering to him. Then we continue on in our lives, carrying the truth about the Messiah. ✚

—Travis Cunningham, [tvcresources.net](http://tvcresources.net)

