

News & Views

Brownback's United Church of Christ
Spring City, Pennsylvania

January 2021

Annual Congregational Meeting

On Sunday, **January 31**, Brownback's UCC will hold its annual meeting immediately following our 10 am Service. At this time, we will reflect on 2020 and plan for 2021.

The meeting will be held via Zoom for those with Internet access as well as those with telephone access. People attending the service via phone can remain on the line. One week prior, the church office will email a Zoom link for those with Internet access.

Our Annual Reports will be mailed on **January 19** to members without email and emailed that same week. The booklet presents the record of our life together in 2020.

Included in the reports will be the 2021 budget which is to be proposed by the Budget Committee and recommended for our consideration and adoption by Consistory.

All church treasurers and committee chairpersons must submit their end-of-year reports to the church office no later than **January 3**. The reports should provide a summary of the year's activities as well as a listing of receipts and expenses incurred by the committees.

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Pastor's Ponderings

Greetings to you and may you have had a safe and meaningful Christmas celebration! As I write this article before that special celebration, anticipation is growing all around us and there is no loss of energy in our home. 😊

As I prepare for our service on Christmas Eve, I want to look ahead to the upcoming New Year. In January, we will begin what I am hoping is a big turn back towards some sort of normalcy and stability, beginning with our Congregational meeting on the last Sunday in January.

Another piece that I know will be the same is our Confirmation class. It is refreshing for me as I see churches coming together to move forward in deeper inclusivity. I believe that is the thread that will keep us building towards God's will into the future. In that spirit of inclusiveness, we are also entertaining the idea of a combined service with all three churches! As we continue to dream, please share with me your hopes as we continually adapt to changing world.

Social Issues discussion group and our Bible Study will both resume during the week of January 11th (Monday and Wednesday, respectively) at 7:00 PM. I will be providing more information regarding the Social Issues group on how best to continue having deep discussions around current events and our Christian response.

As we move forward into a new year with new hopes and dreams, we look to and follow the light of Christ with eternal hope! The biggest hope I have is that we can continue to grow in our spiritual lives and our ministries here at Brownback's! Stay safe and be healthy!

Sincerely,
--Pastor Mark

Church Election Results

Following the service on December 20th, the following members were elected to service at Brownback's starting in 2021:

Elders: Kelly Clark and Linda Raifsnider

Deacon: Julie Radel

Cemetery Board: Mike Behe and Calvin Idler

Endowment Board: John Stone

Thanks to the following people who faithfully served and completed terms at the end of 2020:

Elders: Earl Brungess Barry Vining

Deacons: Derrick Boaman Kaitlin Iezzi

Cemetery Board: Rick Francesco

Endowment Board: Mike Houck

Virtual Worship Service

After careful consideration, our church services have returned to only virtual services through at least January 4, when we will re-evaluate how to proceed.

Each service can be enjoyed via livestreaming at the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/BrownbacksChurch/live/> or on the telephone. Contact the church office for contact information via phone.

Worship Music

Due to COVID restrictions, congregational and choral singing is not permitted indoors. This has presented some challenges for churches everywhere.



Starting in December (and carrying forward until we are able to once again sing as a group), we have begun pre-recording vocal and instrumental musical selections to include in the Worship Services. Each Sunday, one of the hymns in the service will be performed by a solo, small group, or family unit, socially distanced in the sanctuary. We are also pre-recording special music selections to share each week.

Many thanks to all of the musicians who have shared their time and talents. Many, many thanks to Kaitlin Iezzi, who handles the production of the recordings for inclusion on Sunday mornings.

If you are interested in taking part in this music ministry, contact Penny Sallade at pennysallade@yahoo.com or 610.716.7572.

Livestreaming Assist Needed

Since the COVID pandemic began in March, 2020, the Brownback's UCC Worship Service has been made available to watch and listen to each week. There is a VERY small team of folks who make this happen each week. **In order to continue to provide our worship services in this way**, this team is looking for additional support so that the tasks can be performed on a rotational basis week-to-week.

Help is needed to man the video camera on a tripod, set up and test microphones, and project the livestreamed service over the Internet. Please consider helping out so that the workload can be spread out a bit.

Christmas Letter

Thank you to everyone who shared family updates for the church family Christmas letter. The letter was mailed to members in time for Christmas! We've missed a lot with each other this year, but this letter helps us to reconnect with each others' lives!

Project Outreach Donations

Thank you to those who filled the Mitten Tree in the lobby with hats, mittens, socks, and scarves for donation to Project Outreach in Spring City. We filled two large bags with donations.

Thanks to Michelle Kullen for delivering the donations.

Bethany Children's Home Donations

Each year our church supports Bethany Children's Home through Missions, but this year we had the opportunity to bless the youth at Christmas time. Bethany serves youth who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned, and they often reside at Bethany where they benefit from spiritual services, recreation, social services, and more.

Thanks to your generosity, we delivered a full carload of towels, bedding, clothing, group games, coloring books, sketch pads, yarn, and LEGOs® to the



children at Bethany. In addition, the Missions Committee provided twenty \$25 Walmart gift cards.

Thanks to Greg Siwik for delivering the donations.

An Old Rite Gets a New Twist: Confirmation Mentorship

The Confirmation Mentorship Program seeks to create a connection between the confirmand and a church member outside of his or her family to foster fellowship, communication, and intergenerational learning. Although all church members sponsor the youth at Confirmation, the mentor's role is to form a bond with the confirmand and learn more about his or her interests to encourage growth as an active member of the church. Each confirmand was asked to choose 3-5 church members whom he or she believed would be good candidates for mentorship. With the guidance of his parents, Jimmy Faust chose me as his mentor.



Jimmy and I are beginning to form a friendship and to learn more about each other. We are finding our way through this pandemic and communicate through email and text. It is not ideal, but we are making the best of the situation. In the fall, I attended a local soccer game, and witnessed his drive and focus on the field. In November, Jimmy joined me in sharing the lector duties where he experienced something that I enjoy doing during worship. Although I will not be taking up soccer, he said that he'd be willing to serve as lector again. In December, we were practicing to play bells together, but COVID restrictions postponed our performance.

Jimmy says that he is enjoying the Confirmation class even though it is being presented virtually. Recently, he enjoyed discussing the topics of forgiveness and judgement with the pastors and fellow

confirmands. He is such an interesting young man. I have been blessed by this pairing.

Faithfully submitted,
Kelly Clark

Education Bags for Our Children

The children at Brownback's continue to be enriched. Each Worship Play child will receive a Christmas activity. And starting in January, each family will receive a box each month, containing items that will tie into the weekly Word for All Ages shared during the Worship Service.

Meet Brownback's New Youth Group Directors

In last month's *News and Views*, it was announced that Alissa Vining and her fiancé, Joel Sheriko, have agreed to lead Brownback's Youth Group. Chadd Bauer recently had a virtual sit-down with Alissa and Joel. They discussed their goals for Youth Group and provided some fun facts about themselves.

Question: When do you anticipate the first meeting and how often will you meet?

Alissa (A) and Joel (J): We would like to meet once a month, most likely on a weekend. The first meeting will be a Zoom meeting and we are still working on a date.

Question: Tell us about yourself...

A: I grew up in the area and graduated from OJR. I then went to Penn State and graduated in May. I have an older brother (David) and sister-in-law (Maggie). My mom and dad are members of Brownback's. They have both served on Consistory, with my mom being the treasurer and my dad as Consistory president. I also

have a dog (Hailee) and two cats (Ebonie and Utley). I work at Vanguard based in Malvern.

J: I was born in Atlanta, Georgia and have one brother (Zach), one sister (Nicole), and a brother-in-law (Harry). My family is from Canada. I graduated from West Chester Rustin High School and from Penn State in May. My parents currently live in West Chester. I work for On Air Direct Logistics Company, which is based in Pottstown.

Q: Are you a dog or cat person?

J: Either or, but really a reptile person. I had a chameleon in college and love snakes. I would really like to get a Tegu lizard.

A: I would say more dog than cat, but it depends on the cat.

Q: What do you like to do in your spare time?

A: I enjoy making crafts and reading books, mostly fiction. I am a big Harry Potter Fan.

J: I love ice hockey and play a couple of times a week. I also enjoy playing video games such as Fortnite and video sport games such as NHL Hockey.

Q: What is your favorite sports team?

J: The Montreal Canadiens.

A: Penn State Football.

Q: What do you want the youth to get out of Youth Group?

A: I would like for the youth to build a bond with each other and have great camaraderie. When I was in the youth group, I remember the enjoyment of attending and having fun during group activities.

J: Similar to Alissa. I want to promote fellowship and friendship. I would like the group to grow together and know they have people they can reach out to talk to in times of need.

Q: Where is your favorite place to vacation?

J: Maine. A family friend has a lake house that we go to almost every summer.

A: Orlando, Florida. I am a huge Disney fan!

Q: What is your favorite Disney movie?

A: My favorite Disney character is Rapunzel. So I will go with "Tangled".

J: Since Disney owns Star Wars, I will go with Count Dooku. I am a huge Star Wars fan. However, I really enjoy comedies on TV. This is the Golden Era of television. So many good shows...

Thank you for your time.

--Chadd Bauer

Consistory Minutes

For those with email access, Consistory minutes will be emailed to you following the monthly Consistory meetings. If you do not have access to email but would like to receive a copy, contact the church office.

The Church Bell will be Ringing

If you are outside on Sunday mornings, listen for our church bell. Due in part to good weather, Elderhorst Bells was able to make the necessary repairs sooner than expected. The bell will be rung to mark special occasions such as a call to worship prior to church services, celebrating weddings, tributes to members who have passed away, and major world events. Several members of the church have stepped forward to get our bell back in working

condition and we are thankful for their generosity. So when you go outside, keep an “ear” out for the Brownback’s church bell.

--Chadd Bauer

Next Year's Giving Envelopes

The 2021 Giving envelopes are available for Brownback’s members in the lobby near the Welcome Center. Stop by on Sunday morning, or call the office to arrange a time for pickup.

Online Giving

As we begin another year, consider signing up for online giving to Brownback’s UCC. You can make a one-time online donation or set up a recurring donation make at whatever frequency you choose. You can also change or cancel the recurring donation at any time.

How it Works: On the Home page of the church website (www.brownbackschurch.org), click the button titled "Click for Online Giving" to set up one-time or recurring donations.

Your online contributions will appear in your annual tax report. Please reach out to Anne Behe or Kaitlin Iezzi with any questions.

Sincerely,
Brownback's Consistory

End of Year Statements

If you would like a statement indicating your 2020 giving, please contact Anne Behe at crzy410s@comcast.net or call her at 610.469.1233.

These letters will be sent to members during the month of January.

Mission Support

If you have suggestions for how the Missions allotment from the Endowment Fund should be allocated in 2021, please contact one of the following Missions Committee members:

Linda Bauer, Chair
Greg Siwik, Treasurer
Vickie Bradley
Jeanette Francesco
Michelle Kullen



The amount allotted for Missions will be calculated in January 2021, at which time the committee will meet to draft its recommendation. Upon Consistory approval, the recommendation is then taken to the congregation for a vote during our Annual Congregational Meeting.

Criteria for recommendation is that a group be faith-based and meets needs for local, national, and global organizations as well as our church-related requests.

Young at Heart

Paul's letter to the Romans in Chapter 12 tells us about the gifts God gave us and how to use them. Brownback's Young at Heart is seeking your talents. We need to keep this program going, because it is a successful and establish program in the community.

We need volunteers to:

- Coordinate programs each month
- Organize table decorations for the sit-down lunch (approximately 10 tables)
- Set up the drink table
- Set up the buffet table
- Serve and clean up a catered meal
- Coordinate advertising in the community

- Request desserts

The more help we have, the easier the tasks are, and the more fun the events are.

What we don't know:

We don't know when Young at Heart will resume. We are expecting it to be in 2021. First, we will need to be able to hold Social Hours after Church, and then we will decide when to plan to begin the programs. That being said, Brownback's needs to be prepared to keep the Young at Heart programs going in the future.

Thank you for your consideration to help. If you are interested, please contact Earl Brungess at 610.513.7454 – leave a message or text him -- or email earls_vintage@yahoo.com. You can also contact Pastor Mark at 610.495.6788 or email brownbacksucc@comcast.net.

Cemetery Reminders

Friendly reminder that any items found to be unsafe or unauthorized will be removed .Flowers can be placed in front of headstone not to exceed 12 inches and squared front only. Due to high winds, any potted plants, holiday arrangements, and planters are to be staked down securely. All holiday arrangements and decorations will be taken down between February 23rd and March 12th in preparation for Easter. At that time, empty planters can be picked up on the side of the shed in the parking lot.

Paper and Plastic Bags

Giving food at the Spring City Food Pantry continues! The Pantry is in need of clean paper and plastic grocery bags. Please donate your used bags at our church for the Pantry. Boxes are labeled and located under the table in the Signup Center in the lobby. Thank you for your donation!

News & Views Deadline

The deadline for the February issue of the *News & Views* newsletter is **January 21**. To include information in the newsletter, you can leave information in the *News & Views* mailbox in the church lobby or email information to Penny Sallade at pennysallade@yahoo.com.

Prayer Concerns

“And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.” – Matthew 21:22

For those who serve:

- Reed Bauer, First Sargent at West Point, The United States Military Academy
- Nathaniel Cherubini, Chief Warrant Officer 3., United States Marine Corp. Nephew of Rick and Jeanette Francesco
- Brock Fasnacht, nephew of Doug and Sue Kandler, Army National Guard
- Andrea Shade, 2nd Lieutenant in the Army based in Ft. Bliss in El Paso, TX
- Thomas Shade, Captain in the Army based in South Carolina

Members: Joe Kandler, Sr., Bob Keeley, Sr., Bob Miller, Thelma Nelson.

Friends of Brownback's: Eva Diener, Sean Mahoney.

Celebrations

We rejoice with those of our church family who are celebrating birthdays and anniversaries.



January Birthdays

1/2	Brooke Radel
1/5	Dirk Diener
1/6	Jonathan Blair
	Bob Jacob
1/8	Austin Boaman
1/9	Steve Guy
1/10	Greg Gerhart
	Matt Gerhart
	Amy Stone
1/11	MaryKate Stone
1/12	Melissa McFarland
	Paul Roussey
1/17	Oliver Moore
1/18	Roxanne Overholtzer
1/19	Calvin Idler
1/20	Alexis Keeley
	Ashley Keeley
	David Vining
1/24	Josh Bradley
	Martin Kullen
	Mackenzie Kurtz
1/25	Alyssa Kurtz
1/27	Anne Behe
1/29	Sue Kandler

January Anniversaries

1/10	Lawrence and Lisa Blair
1/12	Rodney and JoAnn Bauer
1/18	Paul and Missy Martin

Our Church Leaders

Rev. Mark Stryjak, Pastor and Teacher
Barry Vining, President
Mark Sweitzer, Vice President
Lara Faust, Secretary
Anne Behe, Financial Secretary
Holly Vining, Current Treasurer
Kaitlin Iezzi, Benevolence Treasurer
Calvin Idler, Major Improvements Treasurer

Elders

2020	Earl Brungess	Barry Vining
2021	Randall Ruilova	Mark Sweitzer
2022	Chadd Bauer	Bob Keeley

Deacons

2020	Derrick Boaman	Kaitlin Iezzi
2021	Calvin Idler	Anne Behe
2022	Lara Faust	Larry Potts

Cemetery Board

2020	Rick Francesco	
2021	Brian Iezzi	Greg Siwik
2022	Mike Houck	Barry Vining

Endowment Board

2020	Mike Houck	
2021	Bob Keeley	Barry Vining
2022	Bill Moore	Julie Radel

Our Church Staff

Kaitlin Iezzi, Parish Administrator
Penny Sallade, Choir Director
Patricia Kandler, Organist
Larry Simmers, Sexton
Kaitlin Iezzi, Christian Education Chair
Greg Siwik, Cemetery Superintendent

Brownback United Church of Christ
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Spring City, Pennsylvania 19475

Address Service Requested