

United In Christ



Lutheran Church

2018
Bulletin of Annual Reports

2019 Congregational Council

Ken Baker, *treasurer*

Ken Criswell

Emma Danowsky†

Charles Dinsmore, *vice president*

Kathy Guffey

Lisa Rabuck, *secretary*

Syann Stewart†

Bob Swartz*

Rick Whitesel

Cami Zimmerman, *president*

* *denotes council member in their second term*

† *denotes youth council member (one-year term)*

United In Christ Lives in Transition

2018 Baptisms

Willow Jean LaBarron	06/03/18
Cadence Gabrielle Whitacker	06/03/18
Syann Destiny Stewart	06/24/18
Beckett David Swanger	10/21/18

2018 Confirmands

Owen Arndt

2018 New Members

Mary Kay Harper	Benjamin Criswell	Kimberly Criswell
Sandra Brown	Judy Rishel	Justin Cooley
Johanna Swanger		

2018 Funerals

Bobby Brouse, Jr.*	d. 02/02/18	Gerald Baker, Sr.	d. 10/25/18
Faye Ritter	d. 02/04/18	George Rice, Sr.	d. 11/25/18
Meda Moyer	d. 02/27/18	Ruth Stump	d. 11/25/18
Cheryl Baker	d. 03/07/18	Mac Keifer	d. 11/25/18
Only Rishel	d. 06/12/18	Roger "Ed" Harper*	d. 11/28/18
Arna Dershem	d. 06/28/18	Lisane Snyder	d. 12/14/18
Esther Minium	d. 07/02/18		

**denotes individuals for whom UIC conducted services, though not active members*

2018 Weddings

Danielle Scott and Jen Benson 06/23/18

Pastor's Report

Dear United In Christ,

I'm sure that this probably comes as a great shock to many of you, but it's not often that I find myself at a total loss for words.¹ Looking back at 2018, though, I feel simply dumbfounded in trying to find a way to capture even a *sense* of what all this last year contained. The year was packed. It was exciting. It was challenging. It was joy-filled. It was heart-wrenching. It was a blessing, though at times I thought it was cursed. One of the gifts of our tradition is being able to see and name this world as a "both/and place" where multiple, even seemingly opposing, concepts can be recognized as reality at the same time. I really do think that 2018 was *both* all of these descriptions *and* more than can be named. Yet, despite all of these disparate moments, there has never been any doubt that God has been at work in and through this community in both beautiful and often unexpected ways.

It all started last January. For the first time since I had arrived here, I woke up one Sunday that month, came to the building, and realized that the paths to our campus were more treacherous than they were worth. Cancelling worship for the first time in my tenure here, we



The snow day sanctuary - 1/22/18

decided to go out on a limb and try something altogether different and new. With about an hour of notice, we got word out that that morning's worship would be held online on Facebook and that folks were invited to join us and participate through this different medium. Now, here's my confession: I honestly wasn't sure *anyone* was going to tune in. Yet, in booting up the service, so many of you took the time to come and gather for worship by *actually participating* in this funny new format, rather than simply bask in the time of a Sunday off. Your commitment to worshipping, no matter the form, gave me great encouragement, so much so that this system has become our new protocol for snow days!

But if online church was the first way in which you demonstrated your fantastically flexible liturgical limbs, then the rest of the year solidified the authenticity of your range for me. Later that same month, we were met by an exercise in Murphy's Law fueled by the flu when our Scout Sunday worship was thrown a curveball when both of our go-to musicians for the day came down with the bug that had to keep them home. Yet, you all did not miss a single beat when we carried our worship with the help of some contemporary sing-a-long hits from YouTube while still welcoming *dozens* of visitors into our space that day! Over and over again, you have shown how our worship and praise of the God who greets us is never contained to one simple pattern or

¹ If you read that sentence with a heavy dose of sarcasm, you were spot on.



style in this place. From the somber reflections of Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday to the joy-filled humor of our first Seusscharist, I have been routinely impressed in the ways in which this community is able to wholly engage in extremely diverse styles of worship; there is a trust here that regardless of what worship may look like, the greater intent and greater good is in the God who greets us!

It must be from that perspective, then, that you are also willing to regularly embrace the diversity of those who actually go about leading worship. One of the most encouraging, heart-warming, and satisfying sights for me as a pastor is in watching as this community not only recognizes, but lifts up and celebrates when members of all ages take part in worship. This past year, we have heard from youth members as they reflect on their experiences at Camp Mount Luther and the National Youth Gathering in worship. We have been led by our youth in Holy Week services and our Holy Moly Club during Advent. *Every* Sunday we have students from all different ages participating and assisting throughout our worship service. Without condition or question you make clear that our students undoubtedly have a place of full participation in our worship. In turn, you have facilitated a culture here at UIC where our students actually *want* to be involved in worship. This past year I have seen that earnest desire to be a part of worship in the excitement of our new acolytes, in the smiles of the students holding trays of glasses, and in the awe of one of our youngest members marching straight to the front of the sanctuary on Maundy Thursday to intensely soak in the solemnity of the altar being stripped. More than simply welcoming kids into worship, this community ensures that our students are wholly included in our liturgy, a point which has brought me incredible joy and pride in this past year.



Kids worship takeover practice - 12/15/18

That said, if 2018 proved anything it's that your support of our students is not relegated to 10am on Sunday mornings. Above and beyond supporting our bi-weekly youth group and Holy Moly Club, beyond facilitating the dozens of students participating in our four Scouting programs, this past year you helped send three students to Camp Mount Luther and *six* of our Senior High Youth to Houston, TX for the ELCA National Youth Gathering. These incredible experiences gave our students the opportunity to see their faith in action while also being nurtured in that very same faith. Joining with their peers, whether in cabins or arenas, our students were able to see

the effects of their faith put into practice for the sake of the world. After getting the chance to spend a week with the students and staff at Camp Mount Luther in July, I am encouraged by our students who attend the weeks of camp and return with a renewed energy and excitement about the God whom they encountered. Similarly, after spending the week with our youth group at the Gathering in June, I can say that I am incredibly proud of our students who demonstrated a level of willing engagement, authentic participation, and profound maturity that effortlessly showed the true colors and character of who they are as the individuals God has called them to be.



UIC Youth in Houston - 6/27/18

But you know, while your collective support of these students is certainly remarkable and worthy of celebration, what impresses me just as much is how such support seems to come so second-nature to this community. Time and time again, you demonstrate that your care for one another and the support you lend are authentic reflections of the relationships you have built and sustained here at UIC. One of my great joys as pastor for this community is getting to bear witness to the ways in which you all care for and lift up each other through all seasons of life. I've



UIC carolers visiting Mrs. Yost - 12/16/18

seen you rally to support individuals and families in the midst of crises. I've seen thirteen carolers joyfully squeeze into living rooms and nursing home lobbies to bring the season's joy to our homebound members. More times than I'd admittedly cared to this year, I've watched as you mobilize to care and support families in the midst of grief at the loss of loved ones. As we gathered for the Daughters and Sons Banquets and the end of year potluck, I caught glimpses of the joy you find in simply being together. I've felt your care for one another in the prayers you lift each week. I've heard your concern in asking after those we haven't seen lately. I've seen it in the candles you lit on All Saints Sunday. Time and time again in this past year you have demonstrated how one of the greatest strengths of this congregation is the authentic care you have for one another. Your genuine relationships *are* the DNA of this place.

Yet, your levels of care do not end with those counted as members of UIC. This year was jam-packed with events and occasions that showed how your care for our neighbors extends *well* beyond the bounds of our building. In 2018, this congregation supported numerous ministries and individuals beyond our walls by making monstrous kettles of ham and bean soup during the Harvest Festival with proceeds going to American Cancer Society's Hope Lodge in Baltimore, MD.

You collected hundreds of prizes to raffle off during Operation Santa Claus, all for the sake of giving the entire proceeds to support the children of our communities and their families. In Lent



Mark Rabuck presenting the Ham and Bean Soup Sale check to Hope Lodge - 11/28/18

you supported the ministry of Transitions in Lewisburg to help meet the needs of victims of human trafficking and domestic violence in our immediate area. In Advent you bought the whole darn farm to give away to developing neighborhoods across the world via ELCA Good Gifts. Through regular donations and the boosts of Harvest Home and SOUPerbowl Sundays, you helped provide food security by filling pantries and backpacks for those in our communities. Did you know that, in total in 2018, almost **\$12,000** was raised through the generosity and efforts of

UIC to go back out into ministries and opportunities beyond our own congregation? That represents an additional 9% beyond our regular giving to support those whom we may never meet or know. Combine that with our budgeted \$8,000 contribution in 2018 to the Upper Susquehanna Synod for the sake of its continued ministry and the numbers tell a remarkable story of this congregation's support for the ministries that surround us. The faithfulness and trust in God's Spirit moving through ministries beyond our own is incredibly encouraging for me to bear witness to in your efforts.

Yet, your support of those beyond us in 2018 did not end with financial contributions. Time and time again, you all relished the opportunities to serve in incredibly tactile ways with



UIC Crop Walkers! - 10/7/18

your own hands and feet this year. During September's "God's Work. Our Hands" Sunday, you trekked out to Camp Mount Luther to help tidy up during the off-season to make the space as welcoming as possible for the myriad of students who call it home one week at a time through the summer. In October, you mobilized alongside other congregations for the sake of hunger's visibility in the annual Crop Walk in Lewisburg. In March, you welcomed dozens of kids from our community to take part in

a totally free Easter Egg Hunt, complete with prizes and enough chocolate to keep them buzzing until the Resurrection! In December, you put your Pinterest boards into action by hosting a free Christmas Workshop to provide a day of crafts for kids and families to come make and take home with them. And in *all* of these things, you came out with *joy* to serve the neighbors God has placed around us. Well done, good and faithful servants!



Trudy getting thrifty at the Christmas Workshop - 12/1/18

As if such points of service weren't enough to keep this community engaged, 2018 proved yet again how you all wield an earnest desire to continue growing and learning as individuals and as a community, so as to never become complacent or stagnant. With genuine interest and curiosity, you gathered to put our faith into 21st century context through our TED Talks Bible Study series. With a vested interest in the direction of our Church and our culture, you faithfully gathered to engage in conversations surrounding the ELCA's draft social statement on "Women and Justice." You gathered to hear and learn the hard realities of human and sex trafficking in the Susquehanna Valley from FBI Victim Specialist Melissa Howley and Transitions representative Colleen Kocen. In so many ways you engaged in the hard work of seeking the ways in which the



*Participants of our Communion Day field trip at
Shade Mountain Winery - 8/13/18*

rubber meets the road in our lives of faith lived in and for this world. Yet, you also sought to continue the paths that nurture such faith. Through the Adult Forum every Sunday, you have come with questions about the very same lessons we hear during worship. The students of our Holy Moly Club have spent an incredible year hearing the stories of our faith and the good news of God's love for them. Our Youth Group and the rebooting of our Confirmation classes continue to serve as places for our older students to come and build relationships with one another and ask the questions of their own lives of faith. This summer, we even had a group of students gather for a whole day to learn about the practices of communion that feed us and send us forth in worship each and every week. At every possible turn, this past year you *all* have shown a willingness to never settle for complacency or lukewarm faith, but to instead reach out and seek new understandings of our God at work in our lives and in our world.

Even with all these remarkable activities and convictions from this community in this past year, though, 2018 still admittedly held a great deal of challenges with it. Most visibly, of course, is the incredible amount of transition that has occurred in this community in the past year. In 2018 alone, eleven members of United In Christ passed away. When compared with the active membership of our congregation, that represents an almost 10% loss for this community. At the same time, however, the congregation also welcomed eleven new members (including by baptism). Together, this points out the unprecedented shift that has occurred in this community these past few months. Yet, through it all, you held one another in tremendous grace. You stood with one hand stretched out in comfort and solidarity with those who grieved at the loss of loved ones while simultaneously reaching out with the other to welcome those who were new to this community, inviting them into the fullness of life in this place.

And that, UIC, is perhaps what I am most happy to report. This past year you put on full display just what you are about. At the root of *all* of these snapshots from 2018 are the authentic relationships that you have built and continue to foster within this community. Time and time again you have demonstrated that the true strength of this congregation is also its greatest source of joy. The ways in which you perpetually work to support and build one another up speaks volumes about the convictions of this congregation. As for this pastor, I must say that it is a continued honor and privilege to get to bear witness to the remarkable ways in which God's Spirit moves among God's people in the full of Christ shining in this community. For that, and all that this year has held, I can only say: thank you.

Now, United In Christ, what's next?

Yours, united in Christ,



Property Committee Report

Maintenance Items Completed in 2018:

1. Installed wood backers behind sanctuary stair rails
2. Repaired ceiling at kitchen entrance
3. Repaired roof & replaced ceiling over men's restroom
4. Replaced two faulty door closers
5. Rebuilt kitchen door lock
6. Rebuilt garbage bin
7. Repaired dishwasher leak and installed leak pan

Projects Completed in 2018:

1. Library Shelves Installed - built by Marianne Murray with wood donated by Donna Kling
2. Diaper Changing Table installed in handicap fellowship hall restroom
3. Kitchen flooring replaced
4. Replaced church sign at Churches Road and Col. John Kelly Road
5. Obtained new electric contract, yielding 7% savings
6. Narthex lighting upgraded to LED
7. Partial parking lot lighting upgrade to LED

Planned Projects for 2019:

1. Fellowship Hall flooring replacement and repainting walls

Planned Projects for 2019 continued:

2. Trim/Replace Shrubbery
3. Parking Lot restriping
4. Repair Sunday School Addition roof and gutters
5. Restore Brick Sign and clear/replant landscaping
6. Install interior and exterior campus signage
7. Complete parking lot lighting
8. Replace water heater timer
9. Replace vestibule heater timer
10. Fellowship Hall air conditioner

Future Projects to Consider

1. Increase glass size in Fellowship Hall Doors
2. Clean/Repair Steeple
3. Polish/Seal Basement Floor
4. Paint Exterior Woodwork
5. Paint Interior Walls/Woodwork
6. Remodel Kitchen

Submitted by Ken Criswell

Worship and Music Committee Report

In 2018 the Worship and Music Committee decorated the Sanctuary as part of making different seasons more meaningful. In the season of Lent a cloth was placed on the large wooden cross behind the altar. This cloth was changed every two weeks to a deeper color of purple each time to symbolize the deepening of the season. It was changed to white on Easter and lilies and tulips were placed around the Sanctuary and the "tomb" was placed in the front of the church. In May in celebration of Pentecost the Sanctuary was decorated with red and many red geraniums which were donated by members of the congregation. In September Harvest Home was observed and the area in front of the altar was decorated with food which was given to organizations to help people in need. In November All Saints Sunday was observed. The committee set up tables with candles to be lit by the congregation in memory of departed loved ones. Candles were also placed on the baptismal font to be lit by family of members deceased during 2018 and in honor of those baptized during the year. In December the Sanctuary was decorated for the Advent season.

Submitted by Sharon Weiser

Finance/Audit Committee Report

Addendum coming 2/24.

Social Ministry Report

In the month of February the committee spearheaded Souper Bowl Sunday, collecting \$250 in monetary donations for the Community Meal and 2161 food items for Panther Packs. The scouts, youth and congregational members all participated in collecting donations as well as the local community. Also this month, the committee served approximately 90 people at the Milton Community Meal in Milton and sent Valentine's gift cards to one each military personnel and college student.

In June we packed lunches for the Summer Lunch Program in the local community.

In August we also collected backpacks and school supplies for students heading back to school for the new year.

During the month of December we asked congregational members to purchase gifts for nine residents of Country Comfort Alternative Living in New Columbia as well as going out to purchase gifts for gift bags for all 20 residents.

During the year food items were collected for Milton Hand-Up and Mazeppa Manna distributing these items in alternating months.

Submitted by Annette Baker

Stewardship Team Report

Coming in 2019!

Rich Huff Committee Report

The RH committee was very active in 2018. We gave out over 15,500 diapers to needy families as well as diaper wipes, socks, children's board books, and gloves. Clothing, lunches and several Christmas presents were purchased for families-in-need.

The committee awarded 3 (\$500) scholarships to area high school seniors, helped a camper attend Mt. Luther and paid camping fees for several Boy Scouts. "Super Hero" patches were purchased for area Girl Scouts.

Lastly, by purchasing an AED machine for the church, it is available to help the young and the old for years to come.

Submitted by Shirley McPherrin



Older Adults Kickin' it UP SENIOR CENTER

2018 FINANCIALS

Sunday Offerings	\$125.00
Synod Grant	\$1,000.00
Meal/Bingo Donations from those attending OAKs	\$693.25
CommunityAid Bin	\$143.00

Activities	\$180.74
Administrative Supplies	\$18.99
Bingo Prizes	\$397.03
Food and Lunch Supplies	\$513.78

Total Income \$1,961.25

Total Expenses \$1,110.54



2018 was a great year for OAK Senior Center. OAKs celebrated its 5th anniversary. It's amazing how much we have grown in 5 years. We went from putting 2 tables together to sit around to putting 9 tables together to form an E to hold everyone. Our average attendance is 42 seniors, 2 staff and 5 kitchen volunteers. July's OAKs had a record attendance of 52 seniors! Some folks from the Lewisburg Senior Center started attending OAKs in May. Rabbit transports seniors to OAKs from the senior center in Lewisburg then takes them back when OAKs is over. We usually have around 10 people that come from the senior center in Lewisburg.



In March we partnered with CommunityAid Thrift Store by placing one of their collection bins on our property. CommunityAid gives their partners \$.04 per pound of clothing/shoes collected from the bins. Money generated will be used to help run OAK Senior Center.

\$ 14 March bin collection

\$129 April - June bin collection

\$138 July - Sept. bin collection (check was received in January 2019 and will be counted as 2019 OAKs money)

Please continue to support us by dropping off any lightly used clothing or shoes.

August 8, Union-Snyder County Agency on Aging once again handed out Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program produce vouchers. 58 vouchers were handed out. That's an increase of 52% from last year! The majority of the people that came out to pick up vouchers were not people that attend OAKs.

It is truly a blessing to be able to help our aging community by offering a safe, friendly, loving place for them to gather. The majority of our seniors live alone and they've commented on how much they look forward to OAKs each month!

