

FOCUS ON



FAITH

Volume 53, Number 1
2023

OUR VISION STATEMENT

United with Christ, we are committed to sharing the transformative love of God's grace and peace through service to our neighbors.



10:15 a.m.—WORSHIP

9:00 a.m.—SUNDAY SCHOOL

Watch us on [YouTube](#)

LEAD PASTOR: Rev. Dr. Bruce C. Stevenson
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC/ORGANIST: Dennis J. Duda

Faith United Church of Christ

5992 Route 378

Center Valley, PA 18034

610-282-3939

faithchurchcv@gmail.com

www.faithchurchucc.org

We are an Open & Affirming Congregation



No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you are welcome here.

*We are a people
who have come together
through a common faith,
a common love,
and a common covenant
with the triune God;
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
and together we endeavor
to be a community of
worship,
education,
mission,
fellowship,
and stewardship.*

2023 Consistory

Officers:

President: Tom Hovis

Vice President: Jerry Trexler

Secretary: Joan Hassler

Elders:

Mike Ford

Jerry Trexler

Tom Hovis

Deacons:

Ken Koehnlein

Cindy Talaber

Avery Koser

Kim Ritter

Joan Hassler

Donna Schudel-Barone

Melissa Shafer

Church Treasurer: Deb Herstine

Liaisons:

Christian Ed: Kim Ritter

Fellowship/Outreach: Tom Hovis

Enduring /Mem. Gifts:

Property: Ken Koehnlein

Staff Relations: Joan Hassler

Mission: Cindy Talaber

Budget/Finance: Jerry Trexler

Day Care: Pastor Bruce

Fundraising: Tom Hovis

Worship: Joan Hassler



A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

Well, New Year's will be upon us soon. What are your hopes for the new year? Are you hoping for change in your own life, the lives of others, or the state of the world? Personally, I can think of changes that I would like to see in all three and other areas that I haven't even mentioned.

When it comes to changes in areas that are beyond myself, I question my ability to do much of anything. For example, I am deeply concerned about world. I can contribute food to Betty Lou's Pantry and other relief programs but will that make world hunger go away forever? I don't think so. But it will make sure that over 300 people in our community will not go to bed hungry. I guess I will have to settle for that.

I know that the Samaritan Fund will go a long way in keeping people warm this winter. But will it keep everyone in our area warm in winter and winters in the future? I can really sympathize with this right now as there was *another* leak in our home this summer. The roof has been repaired but the ceiling in our bedroom still has a big hole in it. A contractor will fix it but not until January but man, is it cold at night!

If only all the needs in our lives; personal, communal, global, could be resolved once and for all. It is just beyond our ability. However, we are not alone in such efforts.

When it comes to making "New Year's Resolutions" Dr. Ralph Wilson said this: *New Year's is a time to learn to rely more heavily on the grace of God.* Now if I understand Dr. Wilson correctly, while

all of our wishes for change in this world during this new year may not be possible if left to our own devices, much more can be achieved if we rely more on the grace of God than our own abilities.

And so make your resolutions and list your wishes for change but do not rely on your own resources to achieve them. Lean on the grace of God and while we may not achieve all of them, we will get a little further in the struggle for justice and peace.

Peace,



Sunday, January 8, 2023

**Epiphany Sunday
Communion**

**Owen and Izzy Hovis will be
receiving their first communion.**

On January 6 Christians celebrate Epiphany, when the Magi came to worship baby Jesus. Epiphany, which means an appearance or manifestation, symbolizes the first recognition of the Savior by non-Jews. Because Epiphany also is a reminder that Jesus came as the light of the whole world, its symbols include light, candles and a star.

How did the wise men know — and how do we know — that Jesus is the light of the world? As preacher George Buttrick said, “It would little avail to ask how we know. That would be like asking how we know that Beethoven’s ‘Hymn to Joy’ is joyous. If a man were to say, ‘It is not joyous to me,’ he would not condemn the music; he would tell only his morbidness. There is no logic to establish an axiom, for an axiom is the basis of all logic; and the soul of Jesus has axiomatic truth. Jesus is light, and there is no proof for light except light itself.”

Interested in Becoming a Member of Faith U.C.C.?

We have been so please to have welcomed so many new faces in worship or the last several months! During the month of February (date and time have not been set) Pastor Bruce will hold a new members orientation. Should you be interested in making Faith Church or



Dear Friends of the PNEC:

As the Chairperson of the Conference's Staff & Personnel Committee it is my responsibility and pleasure to keep you updated on significant staff events that may impact you and your interactions with the Conference. As you know, our staff and Conference Minister continually strive to provide you with the necessary resources and support for you to be successful in your ministry. Their uncompromised focus and dedication to the extended work of the PNEC is commendable.

Our current Conference Minister, the Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates, will be taking a well-deserved rest and renewal sabbatical in the first quarter of 2023 (Jan, Feb, & Mar). In preparation for her absence, the Staff & Personnel Committee, with her guidance, has embarked on the task of developing a sabbatical coverage Job Description for critical tasks during this period as well as selecting, with the Conference Board's approval, a suitable candidate to fill the role of Sabbatical Coverage Conference Minister.

I am pleased to announce that the Rev. Dr. Becky Beckwith has ac-

Puzzle Answer: Savior

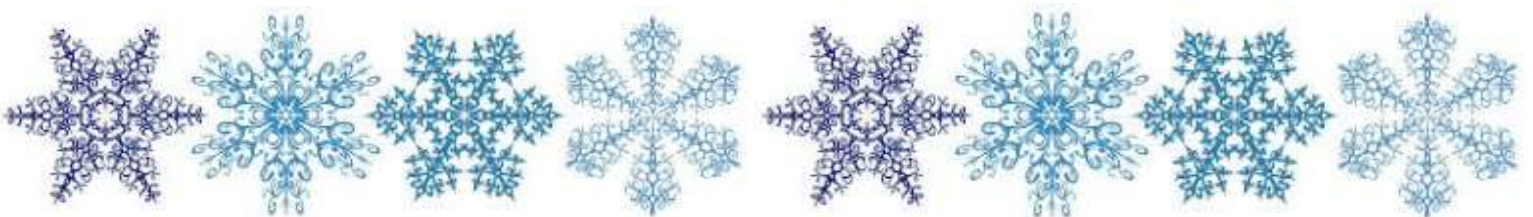
cepted the position of Sabbatical Coverage Conference Minister. In major aspects of her coverage, we will be looking to Becky as both a Pastoral and Spiritual leader who maintains a climate of pastoral care through guidance and support of authorized ministers and congregations. As an Administrative Leader, the PNEC is in excellent hands. Becky will assume the supervisory role of PNEC paid and volunteer staff, facilitate all Church and Committee on Ministry functions of the Conference and oversee the Search and Call process for full time calls as well as to be available to staff within the Conference for assistance. As her schedule permits, she will participate in programs and celebrations for authorized ministers and congregations in times of transition, crisis and special needs.

Becky has already begun exploring and learning about Search & Call. As a volunteer under the direction of Bonnie, Becky is beginning her orientation to the multifaceted aspects of her job. This paid position will be a 30 hour per week position, beginning January 1, 2023. Some of the work will be done remotely, some meetings held via Zoom and the Sabbatical Coverage Conference Minister is expected to be present in the PNEC office to demonstrate the importance of the relational aspect of this ministry. Her Conference email address will be released in December 2022.

Please join me in welcoming Rev. Dr. Beckwith in this role and in wishing Rev. Dr. Bates a truly restful and renewing sabbatical.

Blessings,

Barbara Davies, Chair
Staff & Personnel, PNEC



Celebration of Adoption and Baptism Sunday, December 4, 2022



Kenneth Carter Adams was officially welcomed into the family of Tracy (Talaber), Mike, and Lily Adams on November 1st and baptized during worship on December 4th.

God's blessings to the family!

Pursue Jesus — and your passions

If you struggle with making and keeping resolutions, you're not alone. It can be discouraging to focus on what you're doing "wrong" and all the difficult changes in store. Yet January offers great opportunities to listen to God's direction. After all, Jesus came to give us abundant life and wants us to pursue him.

As you review the previous year, ask: What brought me joy? How did I grow? How did I help others? What did I do that no one else could have done? Whether your list includes spending time outside, mentoring or coaching young people or making crafts to give away or sell, continue doing what brings you joy. God gives us each unique gifts and circumstances, so live passionately for him this year!

—Janna Firestone



PJ Sunday, December 11, 2022



Wisdom from MLK

I am convinced that love is the most durable power in the world. It is not an expression of impractical idealism, but of practical realism. Far from being the pious injunction of a Utopian dreamer, love is an absolute necessity for the survival of our civilization. To return hate for hate does nothing but intensify the existence of evil in the universe. Someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate and evil, and this can only be done through love.

—Martin Luther King Jr.

The Church Office will be closed on Monday, January 16th in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr Day.



JANUARY VOLUNTEERS
Head Usher: Tom Hovis Fin. Sec.: Tom Hovis

Date	Ushers	Lay Reader	Altar Flowers
01/01	Mike Ford	Barb Maursky	N/A
01/08	Tim & Sara Hovis	Rose Mirth	Available
01/15	Chuck Talboo Tony DiSanto	Karen Talboo	Available
01/22	Doris Horwath Heather Koser	Darin Jellison	Available
01/29	Ruth Smith Catherine Stevenson	Cindy Talaber	Available



NOVEMBER	Month	YTD
Receipts	\$24,495.74	\$217,019.02
Disbursements	\$17,967.26	\$217,233.70
	\$ 6,528.48	(\$214.68)

Special Offering

Joyful Noise-\$5 Betty Lou's Pantry-\$100

Faith's 2022 Closing Date is Sunday, January 8, 2023.
Please plan your closing so that your final 2022 remittance
will be received in the office by Sunday, January 8th.
Offering received after the 9th will be credited to 2023.

2023 Offering Envelopes for regular users and those who
have requested them are available in the Narthex.

If you would like some, please contact the church office
610-282-3939. You do not have to use
envelopes to get credit for your contributions.



In 1990 the Souper Bowl of Caring began with a simple prayer from a youth group in South Carolina. The prayer was simply this:

“Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat”.

Since then, more than \$110 million has been raised and donated to organizations that provide shelter to the homeless and food for the hungry. Right here in the Southern Lehigh area, Betty Lou’s Pantry provides food for over 100 families and 300 individuals, many of whom are children.

The Mission Team would like to challenge all of you to support the Souper Bowl of Caring by bringing several of these food items **EVERY** Sunday starting January 15 through every Sunday in February:

**BEEF STEW * HEARTY SOUP
CHILI * CHICKEN NOODLE (Condensed)**

We challenge the congregation to donate at least **125** cans of soup. Donations can be left in the Narthex on the table marked Souper Bowl of Caring.

THEN...On February 12, we will be holding a “**Soup Cook-Off**” after worship. Start planning now to bring your favorite soup to share and maybe your recipe will Faith Church’s Best Winner! More details will be available in the February Newsletter.

I am sure that many of you will be gathering with friends and family to watch the Super Bowl. There will more than likely be an abundance of snacks and beverages. As we gather for this event let us not forget our neighbors in need and help to provide a family with a hot bowl of soup on a cold winter’s night.



Many thanks for your continued support of Betty Lou's Pantry! Our donations for the last three Sundays of November and the first Sunday of December included 264 items.

ITEMS CURRENTLY MOST NEEDED:

Baked Beans

Canned Pasta

Spaghetti Sauce

Items stocked at the Pantry include:

Pork & Beans

Chili

Spaghetti Sauce

Canned Pasta

Peanut Butter

Canned Tomatoes & Canned Sauce

Kidney Beans

Chunky Soups

Canned Fruit

Macaroni & Cheese

Beef Stew

Canned Chicken and Salmon

Dry Pasta & Spaghetti

Monetary donations are a particularly effective way to help the Pantry. A donation of \$10 will buy over 60 lbs of food through Second Harvest.

If you are in need or know of someone in the area who is, please call **610-282-2838** and leave a message, or email

bettylouspantry18036@gmail.com —*Mike Ford*



**The church office will be closed on
Monday, January 2nd
in observance of NEW YEAR'S DAY**

and

**on Monday, January 16th
in observance of
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR DAY**



JANUARY BIBLE READINGS

January 1

Isa. 62:6–7, 10–12

Heb. 2:10–18

Matt. 1:18–25

January 7

Isa. 52:3–6

Rev. 2:1–7

John 2:1–11

January 13

Isa. 42:10–17

Eph. 3:1–13

Mark 2:13–22

January 2

Gen. 12:1–7

Heb. 11:1–12

John 6:35–42, 48–51

January 8

Isa. 40:1–11

Heb. 1:1–12

John 1:1–7, 19–34

January 14

Isa. 43:1–13

Eph. 3:14–21

Mark 2:23–3:6

January 3

Gen. 28:10–22

Heb. 11:13–22

John 10:7–17

January 9

Isa. 40:12–24

Eph. 1:1–14

Mark 1:1–13

January 15

Isa. 43:14–44:5

Heb. 6:17–7:10

John 4:27–42

January 4

Exod. 3:1–5

Heb. 11:23–31

John 14:6–14

January 10

Isa. 40:25–31

Eph. 1:15–23

Mark 1:14–28

January 16

Isa. 44:6–8, 21–23

Eph. 4:1–16

Mark 3:7–19a

January 5

Josh. 1:1–9

Heb. 11:32–12:2

John 15:1–16

January 11

Isa. 41:1–16

Eph. 2:1–10

Mark 1:29–45

January 17

Isa. 44:9–20

Eph. 4:17–32

Mark 3:19b–35

January 6

Isa. 52:7–10

Rev. 21:22–27

Matt. 12:14–21

January 12

Isa. 41:17–29

Eph. 2:11–22

Mark 2:1–12

January 18

Isa. 44:24–45:7

Eph. 5:1–14

Mark 4:1–20

January 19
Isa. 45:5–17
Eph. 5:15–33
Mark 4:21–34

January 20
Isa. 45:18–25
Eph. 6:1–9
Mark 4:35–41

January 21
Isa. 46:1–13
Eph. 6:10–24
Mark 5:1–20

January 22
Isa. 47:1–15
Heb. 10:19–31
John 5:2–18

January 23
Isa. 48:1–11
Gal. 1:1–17
Mark 5:21–43

January 24
Isa. 48:12–21
Gal. 1:18–2:10
Mark 6:1–13

January 25
Isa. 49:1–12
Gal. 2:11–21
Mark 6:13–29

January 26
Isa. 49:13–23
Gal. 3:1–14
Mark 6:30–46

January 27
Isa. 50:1–11
Gal. 3:15–22
Mark 6:47–56

January 28
Isa. 51:1–8
Gal. 3:23–29
Mark 7:1–23

January 29
Isa. 51:9–16
Heb. 11:8–16
John 7:14–31

January 30
Isa. 51:17–23
Gal. 4:1–11
Mark 7:24–37

January 31
Isa. 52:1–12
Gal. 4:12–20
Mark 8:1–10



Share the good news of Jesus' birth
in a creative way.



What you need:

- Newspaper
- Bible
- Smooth, clean stones
- Pencil
- Oil paint pens
- Adult help



What you do:

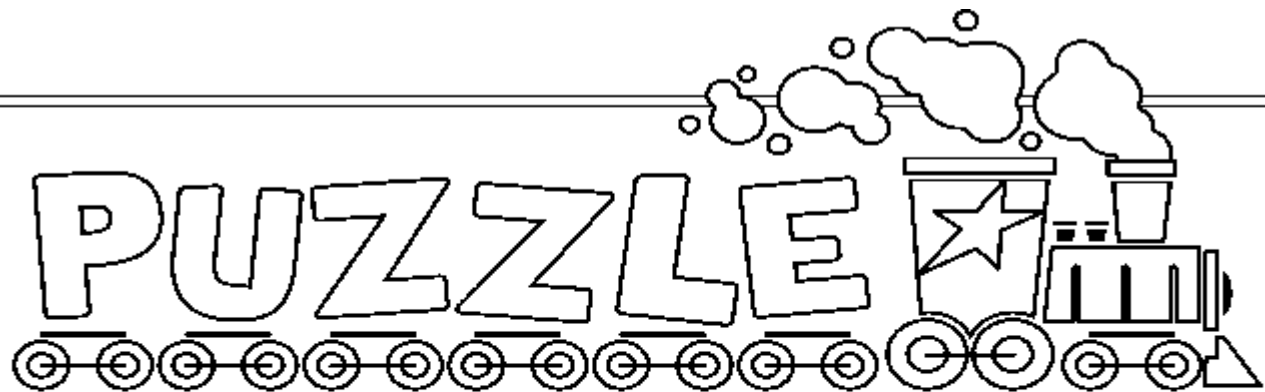
1. In a well-ventilated area, cover a work surface with newspaper.
2. Read Luke 2:1–20 and choose key people and places to draw.
3. In pencil, sketch one drawing on each stone.
4. Follow directions on paint pens to fill drawings with color. Let dry.
5. Hide stones for younger siblings to find, set out a new stone each day or order them in a row and tell the Nativity story.

January

01 Eric Schoenberger	22 Koltin Leh
01 Justin Koser	25 Matthew Talboo
04 Jameson Hughes	27 Luke Schafer
04 Liam Shelly	27 Riley Snyder
05 John Marple	28 Ronald Stoffey
09 Dennis Eisenhart	30 Leah Conners
10 Jared Gunther	31 Gail Clark
10 Preston Amato	31 Matthew Allison
11 Larry Leight	
13 Joan Hassler	
13 Thomas Heineman	
15 Andrew Sosnowsky	
15 Jerry Trexler	
16 Robin Davis	
19 Dwayne Schantz	
21 Richard J Featherman	
22 Christian Heaps	
22 Christian Miller	



Please call the church office with any omissions or corrections.



Seeking the story

Angels joyfully announced a special arrival in Bethlehem at Christmas.

Directions: Find the words listed below. Then unscramble the intersecting letters to complete Luke 2:11, NIV.



WORD BANK

Shepherds
Child
Nazareth
Census
Baby
David
Mary
Travel
Town
Register
Born
Night

T	B	W	Y	A	Z	K	E	S	H	N	G	D	J	K
Q	O	Y	A	P	R	A	L	B	F	P	I	C	Q	L
N	R	W	X	B	E	Y	R	M	B	D	M	O	E	E
S	N	O	N	W	G	A	I	B	A	C	D	O	T	D
R	G	X	J	F	I	W	M	V	B	R	R	C	E	O
P	S	C	E	N	S	U	S	H	Y	U	Y	F	P	N
O	T	P	I	G	T	Q	C	N	T	G	M	U	S	T
O	A	N	D	B	E	C	H	I	L	D	N	Z	F	A
A	T	B	A	U	R	W	H	G	F	V	A	B	U	M
T	R	A	V	E	L	J	C	H	V	O	Z	G	N	H
F	B	Q	I	W	D	X	P	T	E	N	A	O	L	Q
Z	C	R	D	Q	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	S	V
R	U	V	Y	K	N	I	R	T	K	G	E	Y	I	R
K	V	A	Z	X	L	S	H	Y	T	P	T	J	S	K
L	L	E	S	M	J	Z	L	Q	R	U	H	V	W	X

"Today in the town of David a _____
has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

LUKE 2:11, NIV