

Still Speaking

Indeed, the word of God is living and active...
-Hebrews 4:12

December 2022

Breathe and Push

On the fourth Sunday of Advent, churches across the world light the candle of Love. Love in this context isn't romantic love or even familial love, it's how we strive to model God's love.

Valerie Kaur is a lawyer who became a self-proclaimed activist after 9/11. She's a woman of Sikh descent, and after 9/11 became painfully aware of the increasing racism in our country. A dear family friend of hers was one of the first instances of a hate-crime murder linked to that awful tragedy. Balbir Singh Sodhi, a man her family called "uncle," was brutally murdered by someone who said that their motivation was that they were a patriot.

This murder of someone she held dear motivated Kaur to dedicate her life to the expansion of love. Kaur tells story after story of race-based aggression toward her and her community, but it is in the deep pain she feels seeing her toddler son being the target of white supremacy that she finds what I think is the most powerful imagery for love. She tells of her four-year-old son coming home from an outing with her father on which a woman on a crowded ferry boat had sneered at them, "Go back to the country you came from."

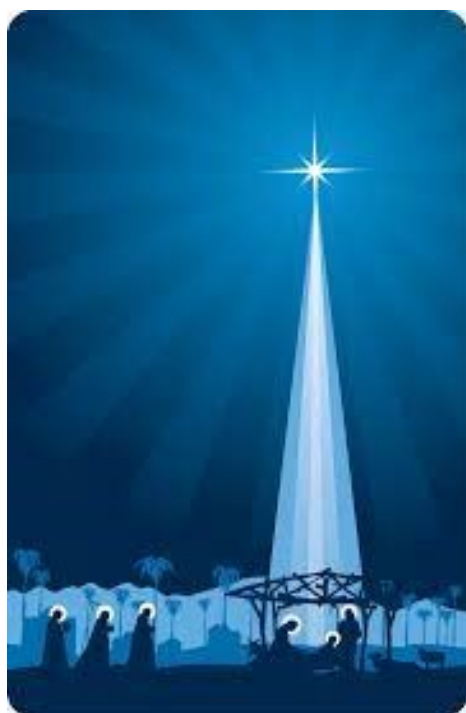
Because Kaur's father is hard of hearing, the four-year-old had to tell his grandpa what the mean lady was yelling.

She says that the only other time she ever felt this much pain was when she was giving birth and points out that the final stage of labor, called transition, feels like dying, but it is the stage that precedes the birth of new life.

She goes on to merge her pains, the physical pain of childbirth and the psycho-social pain and fear as her four-year-old is already experiencing racial violence, and invites us into seeing the darkness our world is experiencing right now not as the darkness of the tomb, but rather as the darkness of the womb.

And this, friends, is where we find the true depth of the Advent season. What we're preparing for isn't the marking of the historical Jesus' birthday.

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The Inside Scoop

Newsletter Deadline

*Our next newsletter
will be published the week of
February 15, 2023.*

*The deadline for that newsletter is
Friday, February 10, 2023.*

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Lectionary Readings**Dec. 18—4th Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

Dec. 24—Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

Dec. 25—Christmas Day

Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-4, (5-12); John 1:1-14

Dec. 31—New Year's Eve

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13; Psalm 8
Revelation 21:1-6a; Matthew 25:31-46

Jan. 1—1st Sunday after Christmas

Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-23

Jan. 6—Epiphany

Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

Jan. 8—The Baptism of Christ

Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29
Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17

Jan. 15—2nd Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11
1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42

Jan. 22—3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9
1 Corinthians 1:10-18
Matthew 4:12-23

Jan. 29—4th Sunday after Epiphany

Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15
1 Corinthians 1:18-31
Matthew 5:1-12

Feb. 5—5th Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 58:1-9a (9b-12)
Psalm 112:1-9 (10)
1st Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16)
Matthew 5:13-20

(continued from page 1)

We're preparing to birth God's ways of being into the world. "We are seeing the rise of far rightwing supremacist movements in this nation and around the world, propping up demagogues, mainstreaming nativism, undermining democracies and politicizing the very notion of truth," says Kaur. We are at a crossroads.

Will we devolve into further civil war, or will we birth something new and beautiful? The only way that the story ends well is if ALL OF US show up with love. Not Hallmark Channel, cozy-peppermint-latte-by-the-fire love, but fierce love willing to endure unfathomable pain to bring about a new reality love.

Kaur names three commitments for making the darkness we're in the darkness of the womb rather than the tomb. The first practice is to "see no stranger." Here at Union, for the last two years, we've been centering ourselves around the phrase, "love your neighbors...no exceptions."

This is the first practice—that everyone, even those we dislike or do not know, is our God-given neighbor. To bring this perspective home, Kaur asks "Who have you not yet grieved with? Because who you grieve with, who you sit with and weep with, determines who you organize with and who you will fight for."

The second practice of birthing love is tending to the wound. "It's tempting to see our opponents as evil, but I have learned that there are no such things as monsters in this world, only human beings who are wounded, people whose insecurities or anxieties or greed or blindness cause them to hurt us. Our opponents—the terrorist, the fanatic, the demagogues in office—are people who don't know what else to do with their insecurity but to hurt us, to pull the trigger, or cast the vote, or pass the policy aimed at us. But if some of us begin to listen to their stories, we begin to hear beneath the slogans and sound bites. We begin to understand how to defeat the cultural norms and institutions that radicalize them. Loving our opponents is not just moral, it is pragmatic. It is strategic. It focuses us not just on removing bad actors, but birthing a new world for all of us."

Tending to the wound includes both tending to our own woundedness (that is, making sure our own grief and rage and pain don't turn into violence and toxicity) as well as tending to our opponents' wounds. For it is in seeking to understand the unresolved grief and rage in others that we will be able to labor with God in the transformation of society.

The third practice of birthing love is to breathe and push. That is, to take time for replenishment and nourishment at regular intervals, then to work as hard as we can, and then to repeat. Breathing and doing self care is essential to the healing of the world. Allowing ourselves respite isn't a luxury. It's critical to having the energy and the perspective to continue the labor. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote some of his most powerful work in Jamaica. The scriptures tell us repeatedly of Jesus taking time away to pray regularly. This is part of why I really work hard to keep my Sabbath, a day of rest. Taking time to breathe is critical.

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Giving Tree Update

For those still planning to buy items for charities on the three Giving Trees, there are ornaments left to select. Please remember to leave the gift unwrapped, but attach the ornament. The Giving Trees will remain up through Christmas or until all ornaments are gone.

The Cloud Room (which is at the top of the main stairs next to the church hall) is the drop-off location for your gifts. Please place your gift near the sign for the non-profit you bought for. Gifts will be forwarded to the charities after Christmas (except those for Rosa Minoka-Hill School, which will be delivered December 19).

Thank you for supporting this important community outreach. Your gifts mean a lot to these charities. Thank you!

—Outreach Ministry.

Priscilla Circle Slated to Meet January 24.

Weather permitting, members of Priscilla Circle will meet at 1:00 p.m. in the English Room. If you have questions, please contact Helen Krueger at 920-609-5580.

Ladies Lunch Bunch

All who identify as female are welcome!

Mondays, Dec. 19 & Jan. 16
11:30 a.m. at the Village Grille
801 Hoffman Road

Men's Breakfast Group

All who identify as male are welcome!

Wednesdays, Jan. 4 & Feb. 1
7:00 a.m. at Denny's
2894 S. Oneida Street

Advent and Christmas at a Glance



Saturday, December 17 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal

We rehearse our Christmas Pageant beginning at 9:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 18 4th Sunday in Advent—Christmas Pageant

We tell the story of Jesus' birth in the drama of the Christmas Pageant. **NO FAITH FORMATION or CONFIRMATION** this Sunday.

Saturday, December 24 Christmas Eve

Our early service is more informal with special thought given to children's attention spans. Our later service of scripture, carols, and candlelight is preceded by wonderful Christmas music starting at 7:30 p.m. Join us!

3:00 p.m. Worship with a special welcome to our children

7:30 p.m. The Music of Christmas

8:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight worship

Sunday, December 25 Christmas Day

NO WORSHIP this Sunday, but the Christmas Eve livestream will still be available.

Sunday, January 1 New Year's Day Jazz Worship

Join us for Jazz Worship with Holy Communion and a potluck brunch in the church hall. A service will also be available online.

NO FAITH FORMATION or CONFIRMATION this Sunday.

Sharing Your Gifts in Worship

Would you be interested in sharing your gifts in worship? Worship Ministry is always looking for folks to offer their gifts. Please contact the people below to learn more about how you can contribute:

Serving Communion – Betty Bienash (betty.bienash@gmail.com)

Reading Scripture – Gail Hohenstein (ghohen@aol.com)

Ushering – Glen Verstegen (rockland54115@att.net)

A/V (cameras and/or sound) – Zoe Harkoff (zoejames13@gmail.com)

Singing in the Choir – Haley Steele (music@unionucc.com)



Judy Sharp (right) and her son, Steve.

Still Speaking Newsletter Remembers Judy Sharp

Even in death, Judy Sharp informed this administrative assistant.

Judy Kay Sharp, who passed away on October 14 at the age of 85, was baptized and married at Union Church. She taught Sunday School here and later served as unofficial historian to the congregation.

Judy was a longtime friend of this newsletter having affixed the wafers on each mailed issue up until a couple of years ago. Before that, she was part of the crew that gathered twice monthly to assemble, staple, and fold this publication.

When a call went out for church angels in 2012, Judy answered. Soon, she was the only angel earning her wings as she alone tidied up the sanctuary each week.

While searching for a lead for this piece, I turned to a folder Judy had left with me. In it, I came across a cast list for "Freddie Plays Cupid" a one-act farce likely from the 1940s. Among the names listed: Ann Silverwood, Judy's older sister, and Herdis McCrary.

Herdis played for the Packers, (1929-33), but the gentleman in the play was Herdis McCrary Jr., his son, as I found out using newspapers.com. So, thanks, Judy, for all your help and for pointing out that the McCrarys not only had ties to the NFL, but to Union Church as well.

—Eric Goska

Our Church Family

In this season of hope, peace, joy, and love, we join our hearts and minds in prayer with:

(continued from page 2)

But, of course, nothing comes of labor if we don't push, if we don't do the hard work to birth a new reality.

Friends, we're rounding the corner on Advent. Christmas will be here before we know it. But the birth of Christ that we are being invited to prepare for is so much more profound than the anniversary of a child taking their first breath in a manger. For joy and love to rule the day, it's going to take seeing the other as God's beloved, it's going to take tending to our own wounds and recognizing that violence and oppression are unresolved wounds in others, and it's going to take us both pushing and taking time to breathe.

This is how God will be born anew, when we, like Joseph and Mary, lean into love and the ways of love with our entire beings.

May it be so,
Pastor Bridget Flad Daniels

AmazonSmile

Thanks to everyone who has designated Union as your AmazonSmile Charity. Through your purchasing, Union received \$73.74 for the third quarter of 2022. If you have not yet designated a charity, go to www.smile.amazon.com, follow the prompts to select Union Congregational United Church of Christ, Green Bay, and then shop with smile when you use Amazon.

Seminary Secrets: Luke, the “Love” Gospel

Studying each Gospel on its own terms is a fascinating, eye-opening experience! That’s what I said in last fall’s ad for the Seminary Secrets Mark series, and I stand by that claim. After discovering why “Mark is so dark,” we’re moving on to a kinder, gentler Gospel: **Luke**, which is full of encouragement to be filled with compassion and to have an inclusive world view.

What makes Luke unique?

- Luke wrote his Gospel about 85-90 AD, about 15 years after Mark.
- He had access to Mark’s Gospel and copied quite a bit, but made some changes when he wanted to make different points; this is how we detect Luke’s particular beliefs and themes.
- He had access to a list of Jesus’ sayings (called Q), and incorporated many into his Gospel.
- He tells a unique birth story.
- The Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son are found only in Luke.
- He, more than any of the other gospels, emphasized compassion, inclusion (e.g. of women), and concern for the poor.
- His salvation theology emphasized God’s response to repentance; it did not depend on Jesus’ death on the cross.
- His is the only Gospel in which Jesus ascends after his resurrection.

Why study individual Gospels? These studies will set us up for an in-depth study of the **historical Jesus**, which will be our final topic in this year’s series.

What does the “historical Jesus” mean? Each Gospel portrays Jesus differently—what he did and said differ and sometimes conflict. Since we can’t time-travel, how can we know what Jesus really said and did? This would seem to be important in a church that professes to “accept the religion that Jesus lived and taught”! A sub-specialty of biblical scholarship has analyzed the Gospels and developed critical tools to assess which sayings and deeds most likely go back to Jesus himself. From this study, a picture of the “historical Jesus” emerges. To appreciate HJ scholarship, one first needs to have some familiarity with the gospels; hence our studies of Mark and Luke.

What if I missed the Mark study? Please feel free to sign up for the Luke one. I can find ways to catch you up. No prior biblical knowledge is necessary!

VENUE—HYBRID CLASSES! We will use a Meeting Owl Pro device, which allows people to attend either in-person or via Zoom.

TIME? Wednesdays, 6:15 to 7:30 p.m.

DATES? Starts January 11 and will probably run for about six sessions (no classes February 1 or 8).

IF YOU MISS a class, recordings will be available so you can catch up.

TO SIGN UP & GET THE READINGS, contact Julie Harder at jblackharder@gmail.com or call 920-465-0752 (landline, so don’t text).

Please indicate whether you’d prefer to attend in-person or by Zoom.

QUESTIONS? Like, what is “Seminary Secrets”? How much time does the “homework” take? Or anything else to help you decide whether this is for you—please call or email Julie!

Opportunities to Bless the Blessing Box

Outreach Ministry has designated the Blessing Box as a participant in two Union Church Christmas community sharing traditions: the *Giving Tree* and the *Reverse Advent Calendar*. In light of Blessing Box inclusion in these programs, we did not hold a December food drive.

Monetary donations are always welcome and appreciated! To donate, send a check to the church office via the offering plate or in the mail, with “Blessing Box” on the memo line. Or, go to the church website and click on the “Giving” tab.

Union Sponsored an Ark!

Thanks to everyone who contributed to our Heifer Living Gift Market this year. We’re sending Heifer \$6,111.13, more than enough to sponsor an ark. Thanks for your generosity, and know that your gifts change people’s lives.

Our Attendance

November	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
1st Sunday	124	87
2nd Sunday	107	56
3rd Sunday	124	72
4th Sunday	93	56
Totals	448	271
Average	112.0	67.8

Feasibility Study Report Now Available

Pre-Capital Campaign
Feasibility Study Report



November 2022

Prepared by:

The James Company
advancing generosity

The James Company recently completed the Pre-Capital Campaign Feasibility Study Report, and our Common Ministry has decided to recommend to the congregation at our January 29, 2023 Annual Meeting that we vote to undertake a Capital Campaign.

The James Company did prepare a longer report, with all of the comments gathered during the process. Paper copies of this report are available from the church office for anyone who would like to take a deeper dive into the study.

We want to thank all who participated in providing feedback, whether by surveys, listening sessions or interviews. The robust response from the church gave the James Company deep confidence in their recommendations.

Please contact Moderator Tim Harder or Pastor Bridget if you have any questions.



RESPECT
HONOR
REMEMBER

The mission of the Union Memorial Garden is to provide a beautiful and peaceful final resting place. Costs are often less than traditional funeral arrangements.

Options include:

- Single crypt ----- \$3,200
- Double crypt ----- \$4,450
- Memorial Plaque ----- \$500
- Companion Plaque ----- \$850

Have questions or need assistance? Contact:

Phil Hauck: 920-309-1416 or phauck1@gmail.com
Bob Fahres: 920-468-7860 or rfahres@new.rr.com
Jeff Zahn: 920-360-9853 or jeff.zahn@snc.edu



Join us for

New Year's Day

JAZZ WORSHIP AND POTLUCK BRUNCH

10am January 1, 2023

We'll gather around tables in the church hall, serve Communion to one another, and continue our celebration with feasting and music



Union Church Calendar

December 18, 2022—February 1, 2023

December 17 Saturday

9:00 a.m. Pageant Rehearsal

**December 18 4th Sunday of Advent
CHRISTMAS PAGEANT**

NO FAITH FORMATION OR
CONFIRMATION

8:30 a.m. Pageant Rehearsal
10:00 a.m. Christmas Pageant
in the sanctuary or
stream it online

December 19 Monday

11:30 a.m. Ladies Lunch Bunch
at the Village Grille

December 20 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study
5:30 p.m. Bell Choir
6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

December 21 Wednesday

5:45 p.m. Dinner
6:15 p.m. Youth Groups

December 24 Saturday

CHRISTMAS EVE

3:00 p.m. Early Worship Service
7:30 p.m. The Music of Christmas
8:00 p.m. Candlelight Worship
Service

December 25 Sunday

NO WORSHIP THIS DAY
The Christmas Eve
livestream will be available

December 26-27 Monday-Tuesday

CHURCH OFFICE is CLOSED

December 29-30 Thursday-Friday

CHURCH OFFICE is CLOSED

January 1 Sunday

NO FAITH FORMATION OR
CONFIRMATION

10:00 a.m. Jazz Worship and Potluck
Brunch
(A recorded service
will be available online.)

January 3 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study
3:15 p.m. Worship Ministry (Zoom)
4:30 p.m. Outreach Ministry (Zoom)
6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

January 4 Wednesday

7:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast Group
at Denny's on Oneida
3:00 p.m. Education Ministry (Zoom)
5:45 p.m. Dinner
6:15 p.m. Youth Group

January 8 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation and
Confirmation
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary
or stream it online

January 10 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study
5:30 p.m. Stewardship Ministry
6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

January 11 Wednesday

6:15 p.m. Seminary Secrets

January 12 Thursday

5:00 p.m. Membership and Inreach
Ministry
6:00 p.m. Common Ministry

January 15 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation and
Confirmation
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary
or stream it online

January 16 Monday

11:30 a.m. Ladies Lunch Bunch at the
Village Grille

January 17 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study
5:30 p.m. Bell Choir
6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

January 18 Wednesday

5:45 p.m. Dinner
6:15 p.m. Youth Groups
6:15 p.m. Seminary Secrets

January 22 Sunday

9:00 a.m. Faith Formation and
Confirmation
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary
or stream it online

January 24 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study
1:00 p.m. Priscilla Circle
5:30 p.m. Bell Choir
6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

January 25 Wednesday

6:15 p.m. Seminary Secrets

January 29 Sunday

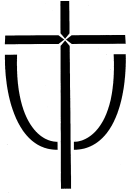
187th ANNUAL MEETING
9:00 a.m. Faith Formation and
Confirmation
10:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary
or stream it online
11:30 a.m. Annual Meeting

January 31 Tuesday

12:00 p.m. Bible Study
6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

February 1 Wednesday

7:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast Group at
Denny's on Oneida
5:45 p.m. Dinner
6:15 p.m. Youth Group



Union Congregational
United Church of Christ
716 S. Madison Street
Green Bay, WI 54301

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ANNUAL MEETING

Call to the 187th Annual Meeting

The 187th Annual Meeting of Union Congregational United Church of Christ will convene on Sunday, January 29 at 11:30 a.m. We will conduct our business meeting and share a time of fellowship after our agenda is concluded. Reports concerning the ministry of Union Church in 2022 will be presented, outgoing ministry chairs and vice-chairs will be recognized, elections will be held for new leaders, and a budget for the ministry of Union Church in 2023 will be adopted. We will also vote on revisions to our bylaws and Common Ministry's recommendation to undertake a capital campaign.

Our annual report will be emailed to all households on our mailing list. Contact the church office if you would like a paper copy mailed to you.

Union Congregational United Church of Christ

716 S. Madison Street
Green Bay, WI 54301
e-mail: office@unionucc.com
(920) 437-9266

Bridget M. Flad Daniels

Senior Minister

Tim Harder, M.D.

Moderator

Church Office Hours

Mon.-Fri. 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

For more information about us,
visit our web page
at <http://www.unionucc.com>