

HUFF'S CHURCH CHATTER



JANUARY 2023

Church Address: 540 Conrad Rd., Albutris, 18011
Church office: 610-845-2626 Church & Chapel: 610-845-2541
Pastor: Rev. John Steitz
Pastor Home Office: 215-820-1650
Office email: office@huffschurch.com
Website: www.huffschurch.com
Facebook Page: Huff's Union Church, Inc.
Facebook Group: Huff's Union Church

MISSION STATEMENT

We, the members of Huff's Union Church, desiring to be blessed together with Word and Sacrament and to become evermore the Body of Christ in our world, do hereby commit ourselves to a ministry which includes increasingly meaningful worship, creative Christian Education, intentional witnessing, dedicated service, and responsible support.

Making Disciples: Inside and Out. UCC slogan: God is still speaking. ELCA slogan: God's work, our hands.

LANGSCHWAMMER NEI YAAHRS WINSCH

We will celebrate the **Langschwammer Nei Yaahrs Wunsch** at the 10:30 a.m. worship service on Sunday, January 8, 2023. This is a PA Dutch New Year's Blessing given in the Dialect.

EARLY WORSHIP SERVICES DISCONTINUED

After many years of struggling with the pros and cons of having two worship services, Union Council has made the decision to discontinue the early Sunday services. It has always been difficult to find a substitute pastor who is willing to serve at both services, especially the early one. But the biggest reason is the low attendance. We rarely have more than 20 people at the early morning service and 3 of those are paid staff. During polls taken at the early service, we learned that, while the few regular attendees preferred that time, if it was not available, they would still attend the later service.

With the cost of heating the church for so few people and with the pastor's health issues, Union Council feels it is the right time to discontinue this service.

BRINGING BACK THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND

Huff's is facing increasing maintenance costs and major expenses in the coming years. The church roof is in poor condition and needs to be replaced soon. The PA Department of Environmental Protection is forcing Huff's to install water treatment systems in the church, chapel, and park. Wood on the buildings needs painting and some replacement. Council hopes that by bringing these upcoming expenses to your attention, your additional donations can reduce the need to withdraw more from investments.

ANNUAL REPORTS DUE

Because we want to have a complete picture of what is happening at Huff's Union Church each year, we ask every committee, team, or group to submit a report of what they have done in the previous year. 2022 reports are due in the church secretary's mailbox by January 23, 2023. Treasurer's reports are an exception; they will be due in the office by early February, 2023.

HELP NEEDED FOR SNOW REMOVAL

If you can help shovel the walkways around the church property on Sunday mornings and/or Saturdays and weekdays, contact Jim Meitzler Sr. at Home 610-845-2581 or Cell 610-504-1089.

2023 CHURCH OFFERING ENVELOPES & ELECTRONIC GIVING FORMS:

The Church Envelopes have been delayed due to production issues. When they are ready, we will make an announcement in church and through Eblast along with newsletter and bulletins.

Church Envelopes are available for your pickup in the lower level of the church. We have decreased the number of envelopes ordered to reduce waste. As a result, if you want an envelope pack for someone who was not assigned an envelope number, please contact the church office and a pack will be issued. Due to cost of postage, we do not mail a full box of envelopes. If you would like to have only a few envelopes sent to you, please contact the office.

Please consider completing an Electronic Giving form for an easy and convenient way to set up automatic transfer from your bank account, and it is less costly for the church. Return completed forms to the church office or call with questions.

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

Please remember to fill out a communion card for 2023 and place it in the offering plate, or use your Church Giving envelope or a Welcome envelope indicating your name. To be an active member of Huff's Church, our constitutions require you to contribute or commune at least once every two years.

Please contact Pastor Steitz if you wish to remain a member but have a special circumstance which prevents you from contributing or communing during the year.

IF YOU ARE HOSPITALIZED

If you are hospitalized, please call the church office or ask someone to call for you (hospital chaplains are willing to do this). Please let us know if we have permission to put your name on our prayer list for prayers in worship and from the people who have signed up to pray for our congregation at home. Please let us know when you are discharged.

YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Please remember that it is helpful for us to have your correct contact information. If you have changed your phone number, mailing address, or e-mail address, please let us know by contacting the church office.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The December congregational meeting was held on December 11, 2022, during the 10:30 worship service, at which time the 2023 Operating and Capital Budgets were adopted by the Congregation. At the same time, the following individuals were elected to Union Council for the year 2023.

2023 Council & Staff Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
Michael Diehl	610-737-0661	michaelediehl@gmail.com
Lisa Kauffman	610-413-9283	kauffmanschildcare@msn.com
Martin Kriebel	610-845-2960	martin.kriebel.315@gmail.com
Lori Lanahan	610-367-6525	framelori@gmail.com
Carol Leh	610-845-7005	lehcs@dejazzd.com
Jim Meitzler, Sr.	610-504-1089	pamij6@gmail.com
Thomas Mitchell	610-906-2823	dilligas1213@gmail.com
Matthew Schantz	610-462-7233	countryboypuller@gmail.com
Rev. John Steitz	215-820-1650	revsteitz@gmail.com
William Stoudt	484-507-4953	wpslstoudt@gmail.com
Rachel Welch	484-226-0333	rahelwelch@yahoo.com
Elaine Witman	267-733-3148	eaw12049@comcast.net
Theresa Woloszanski	610-618-6399	tess314@windstream.net

UNDECORATING THE CHURCH

We will be putting our church decorations away on Saturday, January 7, 2023, beginning at 9:00 a.m. A big thank you to everyone who helped decorate the church for the Christmas Season.

THE MITTEN TREE

The Mitten Tree has been adorned with many hats, gloves, scarfs, mittens, etc. On January 7th, the items will be removed and delivered to St. Vincent's Mission in David, Kentucky, to be distributed to the needy. Many thanks to everyone who contributed items for the tree!

CHURCH FAMILY

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

We are honoring our members who will celebrate their 80th birthday or older and also honoring those members who celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary or more. Please let us know if we missed anyone.

BIRTHDAYS

Audrey Diehl	- 1/4
Janice Rauch	- 1/4
Berry Crum	- 1/6
Marianna Strunk	- 1/12
Minerva Arner	- 1/17
Milton Kerchner	- 1/23

FUNERALS

Please pray for the family and friends of Jeffrey Boyer, who passed away on November 13, 2022.

Please pray for the family and friends of Gail Rothermel, who passed away on December 7, 2022.

UPDATING OUR LIST OF HOMEBOUND MEMBERS

If you know of a church member who is no longer able to get to church, please call the office to have that person added to our Homebound List. For the sake of confidentiality, we no longer publicize our homebound list in the newsletter. However, if you'd like to have a copy, please contact the church office.

FRIEND, INC. FOOD FOR NEEDY TRUCK AT HUFF'S

Friend, Inc. will bring their mobile food truck to Huff's Union Church parking lot to distribute food on Thursday, January 5 from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

SPECIAL JANUARY OFFERING

There is no special denominational offering for the month of January. We would appreciate your continued support of Huff's Union Church's mission and ministry in 2023.

JANUARY BIBLE STUDY GROUP

The Bible Study Group will meet on Saturday, January 7, 2023, at 10:30 a.m. in the chapel. Come with your Bible. If you'd like to stay for lunch, please feel free to bring something to share and eat with us from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

PASTOR'S ARTICLE

The New Testament scholar, Scot McKnight has a wonderful series of books on what he calls “The Jesus Creed.” The Jesus Creed, which is based on the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40), provides a Christian version of what in the Jewish tradition is called the Shema (pronounced Sh'ma, quickly with an almost silent “e,” not sheee-ma) prayer.

The Shema prayer is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5. The focus of the Shema prayer is on loving God with all of one's being. Faithful Jews say the Shema prayer on going to bed, and on rising in the morning. They say the Shema prayer as they leave and as they enter their homes. The Shema prayer is taught to young children to ground them in living a faithful life. Jesus, as a faithful Jew, would have said the Shema prayer daily since his childhood.

When he gave the Great Commandment, Jesus essentially took the Shema prayer with its focus on loving God, and after affirming this, added loving your neighbor as yourself. The Jesus Creed reminds us to Love God, and love neighbor.

What McKnight advocates is that Christians get into the habit of saying the Great Commandment / Jesus Creed when we go to bed and when we awake in the morning, and also when we leave and enter our homes. And that we teach our children to say the Jesus Creed as a daily faith practice.

I invite you to do this. When you get up, say the Jesus Creed. When you go to bed, say the Jesus Creed again. When you leave your home, say the Jesus Creed. When you enter your house, say the Jesus Creed one more time.

THE JESUS CREED

Hear O Israel:

The Lord our God, the Lord is One.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart,

With all your soul,

With all your mind,

And with all your strength.

The second is this:

Love your neighbor as yourself.

There is no commandment greater than these.

(From Mark 12:29-31)

APPROVAL OF STATEMENT OF MERGER

Attorney Keith Strohl advised that the Statement of Merger of Huff's UCC Inc and Huffs ELCA Inc into Huff's Union Church Inc will be approved by the PA Department of State to be effective December 31, 2022. The current UCC and ELCA officers will hold their positions into 2023 in case there is anything that may come up for signing after December 31. Huff's UCC and Huff's ELCA are in the process of transferring all checking and investment funds to Huff's Union Inc.

The Penn Southeast Conference of the UCC and Penn Northeast Synod of the ELCA have been advised to update their Church records to reflect this merger and sent the following congratulations.

From Rev. Bill Worley, Conference Minister, Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, United Church of Christ: *Congratulations and well done! I am grateful for the work of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee as well as the support of the staff and congregation...Now is the ongoing challenge to live long and well into the relationships and structure you have created and to serve as a model and mentor for other congregations who might go down this same path. For that you have my ongoing prayers. Blessings, Bill*

From Rev. D. Michael Bennethum, Senior Advisor to the Bishop: *Atty. Strohl has worked with our congregations in the past and is a good person to guide you through this process. Although the process may have seemed cumbersome at times, the perseverance of the leaders at Huffs is testimony to a beautiful Christ-centered spirit cooperation and ministry-focus among the leaders and members of the congregation. Your persistent attention to detail has helped this process move along toward a happy conclusion. In this season of anticipation and preparation for another celebration of Christmas, I wish you and all the members of Huffs Union Church well. - Pastor Mike*

INCLEMENT WEATHER

If weather conditions are unsafe, we will post the cancellation of services on the WFMZ (Channel 69) television station as well as Huff's Facebook page or www.huffschurch.com. You may also call a council member. We will make our decision by 8:00 a.m. on Sunday morning. If there are **more than two inches of snow** Saturday night or Sunday morning, the adult Sunday School class is automatically cancelled. *If you are not sure of conditions, put your safety first and enjoy our online worship.*

Financial Report

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Variance	Annual Budget
Giving	133,096	156,620	(23,524)	175,740
All other income	80,053	58,836	21,217	58,991
Total income	213,149	215,456	(2,307)	234,731
Expenses	288,580	309,834	(21,254)	336,095
Operating income (loss)	(75,431)	(94,378)	18,947	(101,364)
Transfers from Investments	65,250	92,950	(27,700)	101,400
Net income (loss)	(10,181)	(1,428)	(8,753)	36

Balance Sheet

	11/30/22	10/31/22	12/31/21
Designated funds	62,687	62,661	116,006
General funds	8,754	21,631	23,251
Sunday School CDs	4,384	4,384	4,379
Total assets (a)	75,825	88,676	143,635

(a) excludes investments managed by Youngs