



The Tidings

Saron United Church Of Christ

920-467-6202
December - 2023

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“It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.”

Lamentations 3:25

I can't quite fathom that this is the last Advent I will be planning worship for. It is one of the most fun seasons to prepare. Unlike Lent which can be so somber, Advent is filled with joy and wonder. There can be so many moving parts to the services and I am so appreciative of those who are willing to be a part of it. I also look forward to how the Worship Enhancement Team transforms the sanctuary. It is truly a special time, and I can hardly wait.

A few years ago, I read an Advent devotion entitled *The Challenge of Waiting* by Martin Copenhaver, a UCC pastor and former president of Andover Newton Seminary. In it he said, “Advent is a season devoted to waiting. It is a time when we celebrate waiting, honor those who waited for the coming of the Messiah and seek to learn something about how we might join them in waiting for the Spirit of Christ to be born again in our midst.” In a world of instant gratification, waiting can be so hard. Some waiting is irritating – at a doctor's office, in traffic, for a repair person to arrive. Some waiting fills us with excitement and anticipation – a package to arrive, a baby to be born, a birthday celebration, a celebration of any kind. This year, waiting has been more on my mind than other years. After my retirement, this congregation will be in a state of waiting. Waiting for a new pastor to be called. Hopefully, an interim will be found to help lead you through this process, but it will still be a time of waiting. What will that waiting be like? Will it be one of irritation and frustration or one of excitement and anticipation? You get to decide that. My prayer is that you work through the process and find the gifts at each phase. Don't rush to a final decision but enjoy the journey. Copenhaver continues, “To wait is to be open to the future. To wait is to be open to God.”

As we journey together through this Advent season, may the themes of hope, peace, joy, and love go with us into the future. Copenhaver's prayer at the end of the devotion is fitting. “God, you know that we can find it challenging to wait. So, teach our hearts to wait. Or, to put it another way, please give us the gift of hope. Amen.”

Blessings and Merry Christmas to you all.

Pastor RaeAnn



Blue Christmas Service – A Service of Remembrance and Hope

Wednesday, December 13 at 7:00 pm

While we are expected to feel joy during the holidays, the events in our lives can make it difficult. We have experienced not only the loss of human life, but the loss of jobs, companionship, celebrations, and so much more.

Come for an evening of quiet reflection, lament, and hope.

This service will give you a safe place to feel the loss, hurt, and pain, but also offer hope in the midst of your darkness.



Spread some Christmas Joy!

Christmas is a time of caring, a time of sharing and a time of love. Open up your heart this Christmas season and help make someone else's Christmas a joyful one too.



The Women's Guild will be sponsoring families whose children are in the Sheboygan County Head

Start Program. On the Advent tree you will find ornaments. These ornaments will list everyday items that these families are in need of. Also there will be clothing items and toys.

The Advent Angel Tree will be decorated with ornaments to pick from on Sundays November 26th, December 3rd and 10th. We invite you to take an ornament or two, purchase the item, wrap it, attach the ornament to the gift and bring it back to church.

ALL GIFTS NEED TO BE RETURNED BY DECEMBER 17TH. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO RETURN YOUR GIFT OTHERWISE A CHILD OR ADULT MAY NOT GET THAT GIFT.

The gifts will be delivered on Monday December 18th.

No time to shop or don't just care to? There will be a box for cash donations and the Women's Guild do the shopping for you. These gifts are sure to warm the hearts of many families this Christmas in the Sheboygan area.

The Women's Guild thanks you for your support to this mission project.

Have a blessed Christmas!

Thank you,
The Women's Guild



Christmas Cookie Sale

On Sunday December 17th we will be having our Christmas cookie sale. Come and get your favorite cookies for the Holiday season. There will be a free will offering.

**Thank you,
The Women's Guild and The Prayer Shawl Group**



Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Worship Services

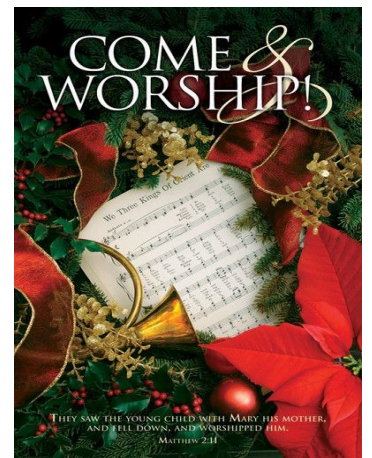
With Advent beginning on December 3rd this year, the fourth Sunday of Advent falls on December 24!

This means that there will be two services on December 24th.

We will celebrate the fourth Sunday of Advent with the Sunday School Christmas program at 9:30 am and

our traditional Christmas Eve service will be at 7:00 pm. The Choir will be singing, and communion will be shared.

Christmas Day worship will be at 9:30 am.



The Christmas Fund

Grace Upon Grace

“From Christ’s fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.” (John 1:16)

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. Gifts to the Christmas Fund make an immediate impact on those who have so faithfully served us over the years. Thanks to the generosity of UCC members and congregations, no request goes unfulfilled. Envelopes are available in the Narthex and in the pew racks. Checks should be made out to Saron UCC with The Christmas Fund in the memo line. You can also make donations on-line at www.christmasfund.org. We will dedicate this offering on December 24 at the 9:30 am worship service.





A Message From Our Financial Secretary

The last day to have financial contributions recorded for the year **2023 will be Sunday, December 31**. Please have any offerings to the church by that date. If mailing, be sure to allow enough time to have the mail delivered to the church by that date.



SAVE THE DATE - JANUARY 7, 2024

Please put the following date on your calendar! **Pastor RaeAnn will be retiring soon and her last day will be Sunday, January 7th, 2024. Saron will host a Retirement Party and Lunch that day following the 9:30 a.m. worship service.** More details on where we will be holding the event will be released soon. Please watch for updates via Thursday Greetings and bulletins, and for the sign-up sheet on the kiosk soon. RSVP will be required by Christmas.



We hope all can make it to the special service and the party.

The Saron Consistory

Upcoming Mission Opportunities sponsored by Saron's Mission Team

Below are several opportunities for Saron members to serve the community in the name of Jesus. Please consider supporting one or more of these worthwhile projects.

Immanuel UCC Food Pantry– We encourage Saron members to continue to support this food pantry. Soup is the suggested food item to donate for November and December.

Sheboygan Community Cafe–Saron has committed to provide four volunteers to serve lunch from 10:30 AM - 2:00 PM at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Sheboygan on Thursday, December 14. Please sign up at the kiosk in the narthex.

Sheboygan Warming Shelter–Saron is in charge of providing a warm meal for this homeless shelter in Sheboygan on Jan. 23 and March 12. We are planning on preparing the first meal on Monday evening, Jan 22nd. Sign-up sheets to donate ingredients or help prepare and deliver the meal will be forthcoming.

Members of Saron's Mission Team are Darlene Gumm, Jay Grosshuesch, Joan Laack, Kari Mooney, Barb Post and RaeAnn Beebe. Please contact any of these people with your feedback.



Endowment Fund News

The Endowment Fund Committee is excited to announce we have finalized the application process for distribution of funds. We will be accepting applications starting in early 2024 and distributing funds to qualifying applicates. The EC committee will be giving back to Saron in the form of distributions to support Saron UCC programs. Christian Education, Community Services and Wider Missions. More details will be provided in future updates. If you have questions, please contact any member of the Endowment Committee consisting of Teri Strub, Donna Rautmann, Nate Dassow, Jack Jarvis, or Luke Kwekkeboom.

ENDOWMENT FUND



Looking Ahead...

Kathy will need the financial reports of Saron’s organization’s to the church office no later than January 7th. Please submit your report as a Word Document.

SAVE THE DATE!

**Saron Cornhole Tournament and Brat Fry
Saturday, March 9th, 2024
Laack’s Hall**

Those who are homebound or in care centers: Marilyn Perronne (at home), Eugene Weiskopf (Field of Dreams Assisted Living, Kiel) Shirley Schmidt (at Song Bird Pond), Merlin Schmidt (at home), Sally Nohl (at Rocky Knoll) Alyce Beeck (at home).....



**Ben Lenz
U.S. Air Force)**

**Christopher
Kletzien
(U.S. Army)**

WHAT TO DO IF WE ARE HAVING BAD WEATHER

Winter is here! We hate to cancel worship, but if we need to, Tune in to WHBL 1330 AM (Sheboygan), Milwaukee TV Stations 4 (WTMJ), FOX 6, 12 (WISN), 58 (CBS 58) or Green Bay TV Stations 2 (WBAY) or 5 (WFRV); call the church office to listen for a cancellation message (467-6202) or check the church website for a cancellation notice (www.saronucc.org).





IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE CONSISTORY

We are reaching out to inform you about changes in the schedule for our upcoming budget and annual meetings. Due to circumstances and in the interest of ensuring the best possible participation and engagement from all members, we have decided to adjust the dates for the upcoming meetings.

- **The annual meeting of Saron UCC normally held the 4th Sunday of January has been moved to January 21st 2024 immediately following service.**
- **Budget meeting has been moved to Sunday January 14th at 8:30am in the fellowship hall.**

Please make note of these changes and adjust your calendars accordingly. We appreciate your understanding and flexibility during these adjustments. Thank you for your continued dedication to Saron, and we look forward to your active participation in the upcoming meetings.

This year we will have two special proposals to consider:

Proposals:

1. Parking lot sealing and maintenance
2. Cemetery sign

See the following written proposals for details, any questions will be happily answered.

Thank You

Saron Consistory

Proposal #1 for annual meeting January 21st 2024

Dear Saron UCC Congregation

We are writing to seek approval for a project that is essential for maintaining the integrity and safety of Saron's premises. We propose to invest up to \$25,000 in sealing the parking lot and church. This project is crucial to extend the lifespan of the parking lot, improve its appearance, and ensure the safety of our employees, and visitors.

****Project Scope: ****

The project will include the following key elements:

Project scope limited to church property parking lots and drives. (Proposal excludes cemetery property, cemetery maintenance will be conducted and paid for with cemetery funds).

1. ****Surface Preparation: **** Thorough cleaning and preparation of the parking lot surface to remove debris, dirt, and loose materials. This step is vital to ensure proper adhesion of the sealant.



2. **Crack Filling:** Filling and repairing any cracks in the pavement to prevent water infiltration, which can lead to further damage.
3. **Sealcoating:** Application of a high-quality sealant to protect the asphalt surface from UV rays, water damage, and general wear and tear. Sealcoating will also enhance the overall appearance of the parking lot.
4. **Line Striping:** Re-striping the parking lot for clear and organized traffic flow, parking space delineation, and ADA compliance. Fresh paint will improve visibility and safety for all users.

Benefits:

1. **Prolonged Lifespan:** Sealing the parking lot will significantly extend its lifespan, reducing the need for costly repairs and resurfacing in the future.
2. **Enhanced Appearance:** A freshly sealed parking lot not only looks better but also creates a positive impression for customers and visitors.
3. **Safety:** A well-maintained parking lot with clear line striping enhances safety by reducing the risk of accidents and ensuring accessibility for all, including those with disabilities.
4. **Cost Savings:** Proactive maintenance is more cost-effective than reactive repairs. Investing now can save us money in the long run.

Budget:

The estimated cost for this project is \$20,000, which includes all materials, labor, and equipment needed for the job. We have obtained competitive quotes from reputable contractors in the area.

Timeline:

We propose to initiate this project at the earliest convenient date after approval and complete it within a reasonable time frame to minimize disruption to our daily operations.

Funding Source:

The funds required for this project will be allocated from our Improvement Fund in accordance with our financial guidelines.

Recommendation:

The consistory recommends that we move forward with this parking lot sealing project to maintain our facility's safety and functionality. The long-term benefits outweigh the initial investment, and it is a necessary step in ensuring the well-being of our employees and visitors.

We kindly request your approval for this project, and we are available to provide further information or clarification as needed.

Thank you for your attention to this proposal. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Saron Consistory,

Doug VanHelden (President), Jeff Meinnert, Justin Boedecker, David Rautmann, Judy Glander, Barb Post, Linda Barthels.



Proposal #2 for annual meeting January 21st 2024

Dear Saron UCC Congregation

The cemetery board is proposing the installation of a new sign on our west cemetery, currently there is no sign designation in the west cemetery.

Purpose of the project:

To install a new cemetery sign that is visually appealing and durable.

Enhance the overall appearance of the entrance, creating a more inviting atmosphere for visitors.

Design and Features:

Similar in design to the south cemetery sign using polished mahogany granite tablet and base.

Grey granite side marker would be etched with an image of Saron UCC.

Poured on site concrete foundation.

Estimated cost:

The estimated cost for the sign project is \$22,500, inclusive of design, materials, labor and installation.

Funding source:

With consistory approval we propose to allocate funds for this project from the Memorial Fund, which has been set aside for improvements that honor and respect the memory of those laid to rest in our cemetery.

Cemetery funds cannot be used for this project in accordance with our financial guidelines.

Benefits:

Improved aesthetics that contribute to a dignified and respectful environment.

Enhanced visibility and ease of navigation for visitors

Project timeline:

Pending approval, the project is expected to be completed in the summer of 2024

Next Steps.

Upon approval, we will initiate the design and fabrication process, coordinating with reputable vendors to ensure the highest quality.

Conclusion:

The cemetery board with the full support of the consistory believe that investing in a new cemetery sign is a meaningful way to honor the memory of those we've lost and to provide a more comforting experience for their loved ones. We appreciate your consideration of this proposal.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. We look forward to the opportunity to enhance our cemetery's entrance and provide a lasting tribute to those we serve.

Sincerely

Jack Hanke, Jay Flagel, Steve Bender and Roy Herzog.



Treasurer's Update

As of October 31, 2023

First and foremost, the Consistory would like to thank you for your generosity. Without your financial support the mission and ministry of Saron UCC would not be possible. The Consistory would also like to keep you, the congregation, updated on the financial situation at Saron.

The **General Fund** supports the work of the church through salaries, programs, building upkeep, office expenses, utilities, supplies, and of course insurance (the items that are included in our line-item budget).

YTD income \$140,520 YTD expenses \$154,740 YTD Deficit \$14,220

For the month of October, there was a net income of \$11,620 which helped to reduce the year-to-date deficit in our general fund to the amount shown above. **Please prayerfully consider your support of the daily and weekly vital functions of Saron Church as we approach the end of the year so that we can erase the deficit entirely.**

The **Improvement Fund** supports all maintenance of the buildings and property that is not covered under General Fund expenses. Monies in this fund can be carried over from year to year.

YTD income \$15,200 YTD expenditures \$7,700 (includes final septic bills)

Total Available Fund Balance \$48,250

The major improvement projects of the new roof and the septic system have been paid in full. Thanks to the generosity of all of you, these costly projects were completed without depleting the improvement fund. There are no improvement projects scheduled, so the balance in the fund should cover any emergency issues that might come up.

The **Benevolence Fund** supports our OCWM commitment, our SPARE student, other mission opportunities and acts as a pass-through account for the UCC Special Mission Offerings.

YTD income \$19,812

Designated Disbursements:

SPARE (minimum of \$1,250 - \$0 designated)

OCWM (\$20,500 commitment - \$16,687 designated, = 81% of commitment)

One Great Hour of Sharing - \$1,295.68.

Neighbors In Need - \$ 380

Souper Bowl of Caring (distributed to the Sheboygan County Food Bank) \$464.

Strengthen The Church - \$380

Blanket Fund - \$350

Other pass-throughs for special mission offerings and projects are distributed as they are collected throughout the year.

This update does not include all funds at Saron. An update on these funds is available from the treasurer. If you have any questions about Saron's finances, please contact Treasurer Linda Barthels or any Consistory member.



Happy Anniversary We hope you keep the following people in your prayers as they celebrate their Anniversary this month, If we missed your special day or reported a wrong date please let us know by calling the church office at (920-467-6202 or email adminoffice@saronucc.org).

December 2 Kevin & Melissa Fleck

December 7 Rich & Kathy Specht

December 19 DuWayne & Tammy Grunewald



December 20 Keith & Betty Steiger

December 27 Mike & Kari Mooney

December 30 Brian & Linda Barthels

Happy Birthday We hope you keep the following people in your prayers as they celebrate their Birthday this month. If we missed your special day or reported a wrong date please let us know by calling the church office at (920-467-6202 or email adminoffice@saronucc.org).

December 1 Erin Gumm

December 2 August Haas
Hailey Haas

December 3 RaeAnn Beebe
Danielle Zimmermann

December 7 Randy Peichl
Du Wayne Wieck

December 8 Jon Anhalt
Kathy Novak
Eugene Schaap

December 9 Gracianne Nohl
Kassidy Taylor

December 10 Jennifer Albright

December 11 Ashley Guell
Tracy Kwekkeboom

December 12 Tracy Anderson
Steve Bender
Jayden Van Helden

December 13 Ralph Knuth

December 15 Joy Grunewald

December 16 Kelly Kaat

December 18 Larry Boedecker
Jerry Henning

December 19 Jason Bitter
Ethan Schuette

December 21 Amanda Bell
Joy Michell-Fessler

December 22 Josh Beitler
Jim Fritz
Raechel Grunewald
David Morse
Kathy Specht

December 23 Brody Schmidt
Mike Walsh

December 24 Julie Chisholm

December 25 Dan Grunewald

December 27 William DeHart
Emily Grunewald
Janet Lammers
Brooke Zimmermann

December 28 Jill Grosshuesch
Caitlin Trumm

December 30 Nancy Decker

