



Saron United Church of Christ
W3830 County Road J
Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085

February—2023

The Tidings

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“My mouth will proclaim the Lord’s praise, and every living thing will bless God’s holy name forever and always.” Psalm 145:21 (CEB)

At our Annual Meeting on January 22nd the question was asked, “how can we get more people to come to worship?” We had just voted to have one worship service year-round. Some remarked on why Saron had gone to two services in the first place. “Bursting at the seams” was the term used I believe. Now, we are facing the fact that fewer people participate in worship in-person. It can be disheartening. While there has been a decline in people attending worship (not just here at Saron, but nationwide) for a long time, it seems to have been accelerated by COVID. People haven’t returned to many activities they were involved in before and perhaps priorities have changed as we lived through the pandemic. I have read many articles and been involved in discussions with many colleagues about this topic. No one really has an answer of what will reverse this trend.

How can we get more people to come to worship? I thought about that question all day after the meeting and I think it is a valid question to be asking ourselves as a congregation and in the various groups within the church. I might ask it a slightly different way though, more about our purpose. What do we offer people that they just can’t live without? During the time after Epiphany, we heard and reflected on the calling of the disciples from John’s gospel and from Matthew’s. One an invitation to “come and see.” The other to “follow me.” How do we understand these invitations? What do they mean for us as a congregation? As we struggle with these questions, I believe, we will begin to hear God’s particular call to us. Once we can articulate our call and purpose, ways of living it out in community will become easier and easier.

Discipleship isn’t easy and involves a lot of work. But the other thing to remember is that it is not all up to us alone. God has a part to play as well and the Spirit continues to move amongst us and through us. We may never see the seeds we plant grow or the fruits of our labor, but we trust in the one we worship. Taking the first step even if we can’t see the top of the staircase.

Let’s keep asking the questions. Let’s keep struggling with the answers. Let’s continue to be open to the movement of the Spirit even when it takes us out of our comfort zones and away from those things we are familiar with. We are not alone. We have one another and Emmanuel, God with us.

Blessings,

Pastor RaeAnn

Lenten Worship Series

Seems like we just got through Christmas and now Lent is right around the corner. It begins on February 22 with Ash Wednesday. Saron will be offering two different worship series for Lent.

Sunday Mornings

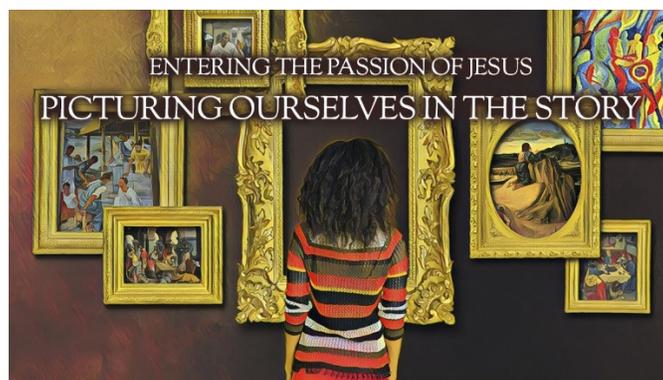


The Christian scriptures offer many images of where love, grace, forgiveness, righteousness, and healing can REALLY be found. And it is not in the “usual” places. Don’t we often look for wholeness and happiness in places that offer only temporary “good feelings” and satisfaction? Lent is a wonderfully reflective time to reassess where we are searching for meaning and purpose. We’ll move through stories of Jesus to find out who offers the “real deal.”

Wednesday Evenings

5:30 pm Simple Meal

7:00 pm Worship



The events of Christ’s Passion, which take place during the last week of Jesus’ life, often don’t receive enough time in our worship and study. These stories are important to our faith journey and our identity as followers of Jesus. And yet we often move too quickly from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday with little time to take in the dramatic story of that last week. On Wednesday evenings we will “freeze-frame” moments in Holy Week so we might put ourselves in the picture, thereby “Entering the Passion of Jesus.” How might taking a closer look at the ancient story open us to deeper conviction of our role in its ongoing message?



Are Back!

We are pleased to let you know that Lenten Suppers are back!

Lenten Suppers will be served from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We will be collecting a free will offering.

Church Service to follow at 7:00 p.m.

Here is the Lenten supper schedule:

- March 1st: Sunday School
- March 8th: Senior Choir
- March 15th: Women's Guild
- March 22nd: Men's Group
- March 29th: No meal (Passion Play)

Please join us for good food, fellowship, and delicious Saron desserts.



Just a friendly reminder that we sell scrip cards for all your needs. We have them available every Sunday after church or stop by the office and talk to Kathy. You can also order scrip cards online at <https://www.raiseright.com>. If you any questions call Kathy 920-467-6202.

Annual Meeting Information

Thank you to all Saron members who agreed to run for office in the 2023 election. Congratulations to the following people who were elected to office: Justin Boedecker—Elder; Barb Post—Deacon; Linda Barthels—Treasurer; Devin Gardapee—Trustee; Luke Kwekkeboom—Endowment Committee; Mary Albright—Pastor Parish Relations Committee; Donna Rabe—Board of Christian Education and Steve Bender—Cemetery Board.

The Congregation overwhelmingly supported several proposals at the 2022 annual meeting: (1) The congregation approved a Consistory proposal to change to one 9:30 worship service each Sunday. This new schedule will begin at the conclusion of the Sunday school year this spring. (2) The congregation approved two Endowment Committee proposals: one that would lower the minimum principal balance needed for income to be extended from \$100,000 to \$75,000, and the other gives the Endowment Committee more flexibility in spending the interest income.

Treasurer's Update As of December 31, 2022

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 insurances (the items that are included in our line-item budget).

YTD income \$171,851 YTD expenses \$185,971 **YTD Deficit \$14,120**

As you can see, we ended 2022 with a deficit in our general fund. Although there is a reserve built up in the general fund, \$14,120 of that reserve was used for expenses. Please prayerfully consider your support of the daily and weekly vital functions of Saron Church as we go forward through the new year.

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 \$35,838 YTD expenditures \$73,280 (including \$38,902 roof
& \$33,322 for septic)

Total Fund Balance \$40,748 Total Approved Remaining Exp.(Septic) \$7,084
Unexpended Balance \$33,665

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 \$27,080

Designated Disbursements:

SPARE (minimum of \$1,250 - \$2,200 designated)

OCWM (\$20,500 commitment - \$19,499 designated, **\$1,001 deficit**)

Pass Through for Special Offerings and Mission Projects (\$5,381 distributed)

This update does not include all funds at Saron. An update on these funds is available in the 2022 annual report or from the treasurer. If you have any questions about Saron's finances, please contact Treasurer Tracy Beeck or any Consistory member.



Mission Team Report

The purpose of the Mission Team is to find single-day mission projects or activities and to make the members of Saron aware of these mission projects and encourage and facilitate the congregation to support them. We have set up one panel of the kiosk to be for Mission Team projects, so please be alert to these postings. The members of the Mission Team are Darlene Gumm, Joan Laack, Kari Mooney and Barb Post. The Mission Team is excited to announce these new projects:

(1) Bridgeway & Beyond

Bridgeway is a residential transitional living program for homeless women with children in Sheboygan. They support 4-6 families at a time. Beginning in January, Saron will collect donations of paper products for the home. Paper towels, toilet paper and tissues can be placed in the tote by the entry doors of the church.

(2) Sheboygan Warming Shelter

Saron Church has agreed to make, deliver and serve the evening meal for residents of the shelter on **Tuesday, February 28th and Friday, March 10**. We are asking for donations of food items for these meals and also for people to prepare the meals at Saron and then deliver and serve the food at the Warming Shelter in Sheboygan.

The sign-up sheets will be up on the kiosk at the end of January with the menus and the items to prepare the food on the menus. There will also be a signup to help prepare the meals on the afternoons of these two dates.

We anticipate an afternoon and evening with lots of joyful noise in the church kitchen as Saron members work together to heed God's call to help those in need. Please consider how you can assist with this project.

(3) Mary's Room

Mary's room help's assist needy families of newborns. Saron is planning on having a 'Baby Shower' on Sunday, April 23, where members will be encouraged to donate baby food, clothing and furniture.

We hope the members of Saron will continue to support these and other upcoming projects as we seek to spread God's love to those nearby who are in need.

If you have any questions or suggestions please speak to any member of the Mission Team.

2nd Annual Cornhole Tournament

On March 4, Saron will again be hosting a brat fry and cornhole tournament at Laack's Hall. We are hoping all members of Saron will attend to enjoy some food and fellowship and perhaps form a team for the tournament. There is also an opportunity to help by volunteering to serve food, work with the raffles or bake some bars or cookies to sell. There are sign up sheets on the kiosk in the narthex for these jobs. We also are asking some members to donate a basket of items to be raffled off. Similar to the advent angel tree, we have placed slips with suggested items for the baskets on the kiosk. Please take a slip and return the items for the basket to the church by Sunday, February 26. We also have a donation jar in the narthex to help offset the costs of the event. All proceeds from the event will go toward Saron's Endowment Fund. Contact Devin Gardapee, Carl Laack, Dave Rautmann, Micah Rautmann or Jay Grosshuesch with any questions or suggestions.



SARON FAMILY NIGHT WILL BE IN APRIL!
Join us on Wednesday April 19th, 2023 for
LARRS at 6:30 p.m.
in the Fellowship Hall.

Come meet a bird and reptiles!
More details coming soon.

Saron UCC Endowment Fund Committee Asks: Did you know?

Did you know...that Donor Advised Funds (DAF) have become a very popular form of charitable giving? Any qualified charity can receive funds from a DAF. Saron UCC Endowment Fund has benefited from a DAF contribution.

Please consult your tax advisor for advice on these topics. Feel free to contact any member of Saron's Endowment Fund Committee member with questions.

ENDOWMENT FUND



Sheboygan County Warming Center



Saron Church has agreed to make, deliver, and serve the evening meal for residents of the shelter on Tuesday February 28 and Friday March 10.

The Warming Center is run by a group of inter-denominational churches, organizations and friends joining together to provide overnight shelter for any adults during the cold winter months.

The shelter is hosted by Ss. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church located at 828 New Jersey Ave. Sheboygan, WI 53081. It is operating between the months of December through March from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m., seven days a week. Guests can arrive between 7:00pm and 7:45pm. Food is usually served at 7:30pm. After that time, they may only gain admittance with a police referral. Guests leaving after 7:45pm may not re-enter.

Saron will have a fantastic opportunity to serve these guests. There have been between 15-24 guests each night.

There are sign-up sheets on the kiosk with the menus items to bring along with a sign-up to help prepare and serve the meals.

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 home) Marilyn Heiden (The Waterford)



Ben Lenz
(U.S. Air Force)

Christopher Kletzien
(U.S. Army)



We extend our Christian Sympathy to the family of **Cleo Leonard, sister of Lou Meinnert**, who died on December 26, 2022.....**And** to the family of **Ruth Grosshuesch, Mother of Jay**, who died on December 31, 2022.....



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).





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).

February 6 Jeff & Kim Hanke

February 11 Glenn & Maureen Schnicke

February 17 Russ & Erlinda Beebe—55 yrs.



February 24 Jim & Peggy Leu

February 27 Randy & Verla Peichl

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).

February 1 Jill Imig
Michelle Johanning
Bryan Rick
Arwin Zimbal

February 2 Al Blasel

February 3 Hartley Bell
Haley Post
Rachel Rautmann

February 4 Brandon Gumm
Jada Lorenz

February 5 Lisa Schneider

February 6 Lloyd Feldmann
Mairin Jarvis
Kevin Wieck

February 7 Adam Konz

February 8 Collin Dulmes

February 9 Julie Wieck

February 10 Randy Beebe
Brian Wagner

February 11 Nathan Dassow

February 12 Anna Depping-Herzog
Julianna Kuzulka

February 13 Tyler Chisholm
Jaiden Haack
Ava Imig
Calob Rautmann

February 15 Ann Boll
Sara Skeris

February 16 Tammy Grunewald
Heather Zimbal

February 17 Eugene Rautmann

February 19 Judy Glander
Max Prange

February 20 Judy Dumke
Shaun Haas

February 21 Roy Herzog
Brynn Oppeneer
Barb Sebald

February 22 Kristi Belcher
Bonnie Hanke
George Sommer

February 23 Gretchen Herzog

February 24 Lana Jankus
Peggy Nohl

February 25 Dan Doebert

February 25 Karl Fasse

February 27 Deb Rautmann

February 28 Gloria Kanzelberger



News from the Wisconsin Conference

Rev. Dr. Stephanie Perdew has been called as the Damascus Project Director: Stephanie is a lifelong member of the United Church of Christ. She received a bachelor's degree in religion and Native American Studies from St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, and a Master of Divinity from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, from which she also earned Ph.D. She served in parish ministry for 25 years, has served on the adjunct faculties of McCormick Theological Seminary and the University of Chicago Divinity School, and is an affiliate professor of Christian history at Garrett. She holds certificates in online education and in spiritual guidance training. For the past year, she has served on the Illinois Conference UCC staff as an interim associate conference minister. She is an enrolled tribal citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma and co-chairs Garrett's Indigenous Study Committee.

Rev. Michael Jones has been called as the Associate Conference Minister for the Northwest Association: A native of northeast Ohio, Michael received a bachelor's degree in religious studies from Indiana University, where he was a member of the swim team, and a Master of Divinity from Harvard Divinity School. His most recent pastorate was at St. John UCC in Arlington Heights, IL.

Conference office will be moving to Daycholah Center in Green Lake this Spring. Due in part to the pandemic, UCCI (United Church Camps Inc) was facing a debt where the only solution seemed to be selling Daycholah Center (formerly Pilgrim Center). The UCCI Board and the Wisconsin Conference Board met on several occasions to discuss solutions other than selling Daycholah Center. The Trost Center in DeForest has seen a decrease in usage since the pandemic as much of the work is done remotely and many meetings are held on-line. As discussions progressed the solution to both situations seemed to be for the Conference to sell the Trost Center and purchase Daycholah Center. Both transactions have occurred. Daycholah Center will continue to function as it has in the past and the Conference will have office space at Daycholah Center. It is an exciting opportunity for both organizations. A couple other changes at the Camps is the hiring of Rev. James Schlief as Executive Director of UCCI and Amanda Edwards as Managing Director of Daycholah Center.

