



The Courier



FEBRUARY 2024



Church of Christ Uniting Kingston PA



thecourier@cocu4u.org

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The content of **The Courier** is only as good as your submissions. Articles and pictures must be received by Sunday February 18th at: thecourier@cocu4u.org for inclusion in the March 2024 issue. Thanks!

Editor: Curt Schwarzwald

WE HAVE A NEW MEMBER OF COCU!



Photo: Jeff Boerger



Photo: Evelyn Kersey

Please welcome Heidi Lyn Oldershaw who comes to us by Letter of Transfer from Plains United Methodist Church. Her Sponsor is Judy Vanderburg, Moderator Matt Pawlowski. Heidi, welcome to COCU. We are glad you are here.

COCU PARISH COUNCIL 2024



Commissioned and Installed - Details on Page 7

Photos: Evelyn Kersey

NEW MODERATOR



Karen Whipple passing the gavel to incoming Parish Council Moderator, Matt Pawlowski.

Photo: Evelyn Kersey

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATE



Robyn Chadwick, daughter of Bob and Romaine Fannon, recently graduated from Slippery Rock State University with a Master of Education degree with concentration

in autism. She is currently the Autism Support Teacher for the Minersville Area School District.

Photo: Bob Fannon

The Courier is free via email - \$10 per year donation requested for print edition



COCU Online: [YouTube channel](#) - [webpage](#) - [Facebook page](#)



PASTOR JANE'S MESSAGE



"Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, doesn't have a swelled head, doesn't force itself on others, isn't always "me first," doesn't fly off the handle, doesn't keep score of the sins of others, doesn't take revel when others grovel, takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, puts up with anything, trusts God always, always looks for the best, never looks back, but keeps going to the end. Love never dies." -I Corinthians 13:4-8a *The Message*

Love is one of the Fruits of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23. We as God's people grow in faith and this growth produces Christ-like virtues such as love and joy. The fruit of love is self-giving love. It is generous and unconditional. It is the kind of love God offers each one of us without price. Love is the most important gift we can give to anyone during our lifetime. This love is expressed in our words and actions whether we be at home, at work, at school, at worship, or simply in our neighborhood.

I read a story that described love in a simple yet moving way. A group of elementary students were asked to honor a teacher who had passed away by drawing a picture of something that reminded them of her. One young boy finished his work of art quickly. When asked why he colored the entire page red, he explained, "I wanted to draw a picture of her heart, but it was too big for the paper." What a wonderful way to be remembered.

We love others because God loves us so lavishly. As God's people we can't help but love because it is a part of who we are and a reflection of who we serve. Why not decide this month to give the gift of love to your partner, your family, your neighbors and your friends. You will change their lives and yours.

Have a fabulous February! -Pastor Jane

On Valentine's Day, we show our love; we express our deep affections. Those who are important to us get cards and sweet confections. But Christian love is not just for the ones we hold most dear, Jesus said, "love everyone." He made that very clear. For Christians, it is every day we should care and love and serve everyone we meet in life, whether they do or don't deserve. Let's follow Jesus' good command to love everyone we meet. Valentine's Day every day will make life twice as sweet. -Written by Joanna Fuchs

Lent: A journey of repentance and renewal. This period of time prepares us for Easter, the celebration of Jesus' resurrection. The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14th. It lasts 40 days, not including Sundays. Lent is a chance to renew our commitment to God, reflect on our lives and respond to Jesus' call to us to love and forgive one another. Some Lenten practices that help us renew our commitment to God may include fasting, self-denial, prayer, reflection on scripture, participation in worship services, and being generous.

Holy Week: Starts the Sunday before Easter. Holy Week commemorates the events that lead up to the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday.

Palm/Passion Sunday: Jesus is welcomed into Jerusalem with palm branches. During this day, we also remember Jesus' betrayal, suffering and death.

Holy Thursday: Jesus and his disciples gather in the upper room for the Last Supper.

Good Friday: Jesus is crucified and dies.

Holy Saturday: Jesus' followers wait in uncertainty.

Easter Sunday: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Scripture Readings for the Month of February



Sunday, February 4th- 5th Sunday after Epiphany-- Isaiah 40:21-31, Psalm 147:1-11, I Corinthians 9:16-23, Mark 1:29-39.

Sunday, February 11th- Transfiguration Sunday/Scouting & Frontier Girls 2 Kings 2:1-12, Psalm 50:1-6, 2 Corinthians 4:3-6, Mark 9:2-9.



Wednesday, February 14th- Ash Wednesday-- Joel 2:1-2 & 12-17 Psalm 51:1-17, 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10, Matthew 6:1-6 & 16-21.

Sunday, February 18th- First Sunday in Lent-- Genesis 9:8-17, Psalm 25:1-10, 1 Peter 3:18-22, Mark 1:9-15.

Sunday, February 25th- Second Sunday in Lent-- Genesis 17:1-7 & 15-16, Psalm 22:23-31, Romans 4:13-25, Mark 8:31-38.

What's on the Presbyterian Calendar?

February 1st- World Interfaith Harmony Week Begins. This week is an official U.N. observance based on The Common Word initiative, which calls for Muslim and Christian leaders to engage in a dialogue of love. World Missions has resources for celebrating this week.

February 4th- Presbyterian Media Sunday We celebrate publishing in the PC(USA) in the service of truth, justice and peace, through news, information and inspiration found in printed and digital magazines, books, curricula, videos, websites, social media and other resources. This special day is meant to encourage Presbyterians to access sound news coverage and commentary and give them resources to see the world through eyes of faith.

February 4th- Remember our Chaplains! Military chaplains are ministers of the Word and Sacrament providing pastoral care, spiritual counsel, and moral advice to those in military service and their families.

February 8th- Thursdays in Black: Thursdays in Black grew out of the World Council of Churches decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998), in which the stories of rape as a weapon of war, gender injustice, abuse, violence and many tragedies that grow outward from such violence became all the more visible.

February 11th- Camp and Retreat Sunday: Camp builds community and instills faith in children, youth and counselors. Camp folks who come back to your congregation bring energy and enthusiasm. Let's send some kids to camp this year!

February 14th- Ash Wednesday and Valentines' Day. Begin thinking about our One Great Hour of Sharing Offering.

February 18th- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Blue T-Shirt Sunday The first Sunday in Lent is designated "Wear Your Blue T-Shirt to Church Sunday" as a testament to one of the ways One Great Hour of Sharing makes a difference. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance urges all congregations to participate in a "blue-out" on this day. Be creative!

PRAYER- Dearest Jesus, come and sit with us today. Show us the lies that are still embedded in the soul of America's consciousness. Unmask the untruths we have made our best friends. For they seek our destruction. And we are being destroyed, Lord. Reveal the ways the lies have distorted and destroyed our relationships. They break your shalom . . . daily. Jesus, give us courage to embrace the truth about ourselves and you and our world. Truth: We are all made in your image. Truth: You are God; we are not. You are God; money is not. You are God; jails, bombs and bullets are not. And Jesus, give us faith to believe: Redemption of people, relationships, communities and whole nations is possible! Give us faith enough to renounce the lies and tear down the walls that separate us with our hands, with our feet, and with our votes! -Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. cited in [Prayers of Martin Luther King Jr.](#)

10 QUESTIONS ADULTS AND YOUTH USUALLY ASK ABOUT LENT

1- WHAT EXACTLY IS LENT? Lent is a time of preparation for Easter, which is the celebration of Jesus' resurrection. During this season of preparation, some people fast or give up something important to them. Some spend time in study, devotion, and prayer. Others cut back on their social life and give more time to service in the community.

2- WHAT DOES THE WORD "LENT" MEAN? The word "lent" comes from the Old English word "lencten", which refers to the lengthening of days and the coming of spring.

3- WHERE IS LENT MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE? Lent is not specifically mentioned in the Bible, but it is biblical nonetheless. Jewish tradition, based on the laws given in the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament, has always said that for every religious festival, there must be enough time for preparation. This idea carried over into Christianity.

4- WHEN DOES LENT BEGIN AND END? Lent lasts 40 days, beginning on Ash Wednesday and ending at sunset on Easter Eve.

5- WHERE DID THE NUMBER 40 COME FROM? In early times each number was felt to reveal a certain aspect of God. The early church fathers felt that the number 40, whether it was 40 hours, 40 days, or 40 years, was the necessary period for cleansing, testing, and strengthening. Using the number 40 is based on the following: Noah's ark floated in the flood for 40 days, Moses fasted 40 days before he received the 10 Commandments, The Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years before entering the Promised Land, Jesus fasted 40 days between his baptism and the beginning of his ministry, The Risen Christ walked with his disciples for 40 days between Easter and Ascension, Also, 40 days is approximately 10% of the year. That is why Lent is sometimes called a "tithe of the year."

6- WHY DO PEOPLE SAY THAT LENT LASTS 40 DAYS WHEN IT REALLY LASTS 46 DAYS? Sundays are not counted in Lent, since Sundays are always considered to be "little Easters".

7- HOW LONG HAS LENT BEEN OBSERVED? The earliest observances of Lent were in the days of the apostles. At that time, they observed 40 hours between Good Friday and Easter morning to commemorate the Crucifixion and Resurrection. The time was extended to 40 days at the Council of Nicaea in A.D.325 and has remained unchanged since then.

8- WHY DOESN'T LENT AND EASTER FALL AT THE SAME TIME EVERY YEAR? The method of determining the date for Easter has remained unchanged for more than 1,600 years. Easter begins the first Sunday after the full moon crosses the celestial equator, about March 30 of each year. At this time, day and night are of equal length everywhere. Easter will always fall between March 22 and April 25.

9- WHY DO PEOPLE GIVE UP SOMETHING FOR LENT? Many people give up something they enjoy for Lent. For example, many give up a favorite food for all of Lent or fast for certain meals. Others give up a favorite activity, like watching television. Giving up these things we enjoy become love gifts to God, given to God in adoration and praise. You could also add something to your life, like sending a note of cheer to someone in your family or community during Lent. Making a sacrifice, even a small one, helps people recall the great sacrifice Christ made for us all.

10- WHAT IS HOLY WEEK? Holy Week commemorates the last week of Jesus' earthly life. It begins on Palm Sunday and culminates with Easter Sunday.

COCU Calendar - February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
-LOCATIONS: CR= CONFERENCE ROOM FH= FELLOWSHIP HALL LL= LUKENS LOUNGE S= SANCTUARY				1 6PM GRIEFSHARE -LL	2 Groundhog Day	3
4 10AM WORSHIP COMMUNION -S 11AM FELLOWSHIP HOUR BY PARISH LIFE -FH 11:15AM ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL -LL	5	6 9:30AM LECTIONARY ZOOM MEETING 2PM EXERCISE CLASS -FH 6PM FRONTIER GIRLS -FH	7 8AM PRAYER BREAKFAST -OLLIES 12-2PM FOOD PANTRY -FH 7PM CHOIR REHEARSAL, EDUCATION ZOOM MEETING	8 6PM GRIEFSHARE -LL	9	10
11 Transfiguration, Souper Bowl of Caring 10AM WORSHIP -S SUNDAY SCHOOL FAITH SNACKCHAT 11:15AM ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL -LL, PARISH LIFE MEETING -CR 1:30PM DINNER AND A MOVIE -FH, LL	12	13 9:30AM LECTIONARY ZOOM MEETING 1PM MARY'S GROUP -THE ATRIUM 2PM EXERCISE CLASS -FH	14 Ash Wednesday, Valentine's Day 8AM PRAYER BREAKFAST -OLLIES 12-2PM FOOD PANTRY -FH 7PM ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE -S	15 11AM LUNCH BUNCH -LL 6PM GRIEFSHARE -OLLIES	16	17 9AM MEN'S BREAKFAST -SCRATCH KITCHEN
18 1 st Sunday in Lent 10AM WORSHIP -S SUNDAY SCHOOL FAITH SNACKCHAT 11AM FELLOWSHIP HOUR BY PARISH LIFE -FH 11:15AM ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL-LL 1-2PM NOVA FOR YOUTH The Courier deadline	19 Presidents Day	20 9:30AM LECTIONARY ZOOM MEETING 2PM EXERCISE CLASS -FH 6PM FRONTIER GIRLS -FH 7PM ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING -CR	21 8AM PRAYER BREAKFAST -OLLIES 12-2PM FOOD PANTRY -FH 6:30PM BIBLE STUDY -LL 7PM CHOIR REHEARSAL	22 11AM LUNCH BUNCH -LL 7PM PARISH COUNCIL -FH	23 11AM WOMENS FELLOWSHIP EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING -CR	24
25 2 nd Sunday in Lent 10AM WORSHIP -S SUNDAY SCHOOL FAITH SNACKCHAT 11:15AM ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL -LL	26 4:15PM STEPHEN MINISTRY -LL 5:30PM WOMEN'S CLUB MEETING -FH	27 9:30AM LECTIONARY ZOOM MEETING 1PM STAFF MEETING -CR 2PM EXERCISE CLASS -FH	28 8AM PRAYER BREAKFAST -OLLIES 12-2PM FOOD PANTRY -FH 6:30PM BIBLE STUDY -LL 7PM CHOIR REHEARSAL	29 11AM LUNCH BUNCH -LL 6PM GRIEFSHARE -OLLIES		

SUNDAY 10AM WORSHIP AVAILABLE IN PERSON OR ONLINE LIVE AND ON DEMAND LATER



ST. VALENTINE'S DAY- Each year on February 14th, we celebrate Valentine's Day. We exchange cards, notes, flowers and candy and for some a special dinner with those whom we love. St. Valentine's Day is named for a Christian martyr and dates back to the 5th century. Some interesting facts from [kidskonnnect.com](https://www.kidskonnnect.com):

1. One of the popular origins of Valentine's Day was Saint Valentine, who defied Emperor Claudius II. Valentinus was imprisoned for illegally officiating marriage among soldiers.
2. Emperor Claudius banned such marriages because he believed that they distracted soldiers. Valentinus was soon executed. It was believed that before his execution, he wrote a letter to Julia, the daughter of his jailer. The letter was inscribed with "From your Valentine."
3. Allegedly, Valentinus was buried on February 14th. Julia planted almond and pink blossoms beside his grave symbolizing lasting friendship and love.
4. There was another Saint Valentine who served as a pope for 40 days in 827 A.D.
5. During the 1300's, Valentine's Day was associated with the idea of love and romance. Birds' mating season falls in February, which is why doves are often associated with love.
6. In 1537, King Henry VIII declared February 14 a holiday. The king was known as the last Tudor king who had six wives over the course of his life.
7. By the late 19th century, Richard Cadbury released the first Valentine's Day candy box.
8. In 1866, Necco sweethearts also known as conversation hearts were invented.
9. The most popular gift on Valentine's Day is flowers followed by chocolates and jewelry. February 14th also became the most popular day for marriage proposals.
10. Cupid, son of Venus, was associated with Valentine's Day as the matchmaker. Venus was the goddess of love and beauty.
11. Mass weddings are officiated in the Philippines every February 14th
12. Oregon became the 33rd state admitted to the Union on Valentine's Day of 1859, while Arizona attained its statehood in 1912.
13. On Valentine's Day 1962, the U.S. First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy appeared on the first televised tour inside the White House.
14. On Valentine's Day in 1876, Alexander Graham Bell applied for the patent of the telephone.
15. On February 14, 1929, Alexander Fleming introduced penicillin.

Let your New Year's resolution be this:

We will be there for one another as fellow members of humanity,
in the finest sense of the word.

Goran Persson, former Prime Minister of Sweden

Ever wonder what they do with the huge Christmas Tree displayed at Rockefeller Center at the end of the Holiday season? The lumber from each tree has been used by Habitat for Humanity to build a home for a family every year since 2007.

PICTURED ON THE FRONT PAGE

At Sunday morning worship on January 21st, we **Commissioned and Installed Parish Council Members for 2024**: Moderator: Matthew Pawlowski, Vice Moderator: Beth Evans, Past Moderator: Karen S. Whipple, Pastor: Rev. Jane M. Pykus, Pastoral Care Visitor: Cheryl Fuller, PhD, Treasurer: Diana Grinavich, Assistant Treasurer: Ethel Drasnin, Administrative Coordinator: Sherri Boerger, Secretary of Council: Janice Oriel, Bookkeeper: Barbara Swanson, Members at Large: Cathy Baumann-Hecht, Jack Wise, Bob Fannon, June Gavenonis, Commissioners to Presbytery: Dave Oriel, Karen S. Whipple, Lay Delegate to Annual Conference: Donna Dickinson, Alternate Lay Members to Annual Conference: Alexa Eidam, Jack Wise, Youth Delegate to Parish Council: Mirabai Reitsma, Women's Fellowship: Helene Reed, Prison Ministry: Bill Ellsworth, Christian Education Director: Betsy Jones, Safe Sanctuaries: Betsy Jones, Pastor Jane, Matt Pawlowski, Ex-Officio Members: COCU Food Pantry: Dave and Jan Oriel, Disaster Planning Coordinator: Charlie Dancheck, Parish Life Ministry Team: Peg Knapich, Phyllis Johnson, Mission and Outreach Ministry Team: Barbara Swanson and Cheryl Fuller, Education Ministry Team: Betsy Jones, Administrative Ministry Team: Jack Eidam and Todd Swanson, United Methodist and Presbyterian Trustees: Matt Pawlowski, Steve Davenport, Harry Haas, Nominations Committee: Pastor Jane, Personnel Ministry Team: Steve Davenport, Michelle Giza, Communications Task Force: Kristin Haas and Bob Fannon.

INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES

"In life, it's not where you go. It's who you travel with." -Snoopy Lovers

"BE the type of person that no matter where you go or where you are, you always add value to the lives of those around you." -Hector A. Burgos

"Two things to remember in life: Take care of your thoughts when you are alone, and take care of your words when you are with people." -Snoopy's World

"God gives us courage like he gives us grace---just when it is needed." -Turning Point, Dr. David Jeremiah

"To be kind is more important than to be right. Many times, what people need is not a brilliant mind that speaks but a special heart that listens." -F. Scott Fitzgerald

"Jesus leaving the 99 to find 1 seems crazy until you are that one." -author unknown

"You may not always see the results of your kindness--but every bit of positive energy you contribute to the world makes it a better place for all of us." -Winnie the Pooh

"To be happy you must let go of what's gone. Be grateful for what remains. Look forward to what is coming next." -Snoopy's World

"If you're facing something frightening, take courage. Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them, for the Lord your God. He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." -Deuteronomy 31:6

"It may be time to put away the Christmas decorations, but DO NOT put away your Christmas Spirit. Keep it all the year!" -Mandy Rain Crum

"No matter how stressed you are, remember how blessed you are." -Derry White

"A great attitude becomes a great month, which becomes a great year, which becomes a great life." -Mandy Hale

"Be the kind soul that makes everybody feel like they matter." -Kelsey Norris

"No Perfect Church, No Perfect Family, No Perfect People, But we have a Perfect God. Amen!" -Jesus Digital

"No matter what happens in life, be good to people. Being good to people is a wonderful legacy to leave behind." -Taylor Swift



"MARY'S" GROUP – FEBRUARY 2024- PLEASE NOTE THE TIME CHANGE:

We are meeting for lunch Feb. & Mar. Date: Tuesday, February 13th.

Place: The Atrium, 3rd Ave., Kingston (in the same plaza as JCC.)

Time: 1:00 pm for devotions followed by lunch and discussion of the Intro - Chapter 3 in our new study, *Meeting Jesus At The Table: A Lenten Study* by Christine Coy Fohr and Cynthia McCall Campbell. Cost: \$14.00 per person includes tax & gratuity for sandwich, chips (or Asian pasta salad), drink and dessert. RSVP: Donna Dickinson at 570-696-2539 by Sunday, February 11th. If you would like Donna to order you the book, the cost is \$11.00. You can also find it on Amazon, christianbook.com, etc. *"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."* -John 6:35



WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY- Lent will soon be upon us. This year for this special season of repentance and renewal, we are going to do a video study entitled *Tales from the Madhouse* written and directed by Norman Stone. We will be watching and discussing one-person dramas on

Pilate's Wife, Rich Man, Best Friend, Barabbas, Centurion and Thief. They are linked by one unifying and crucial event in their lives; each of them has had an encounter with Jesus of Nazareth in some way, an experience that has left a mark. They touched the light but lingered in the shadows. They were offered freedom but made friends with their chains. Now they are haunted by the memory of what was and what might have been. The dramas open up the scriptures to us in ways that we may have not seen before. Come join us at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday evenings: 2/21, 2/28, 3/6, 3/13, 3/20 and 3/27.

LUNCH BUNCH BIBLE STUDY- Lent will soon be upon us. This year for this special season of repentance and renewal, we are going to do a video study entitled *Tales from the Madhouse* written and directed by Norman Stone. We will be watching and discussing one-person dramas on Pilate's Wife, Rich Man, Best Friend, Barabbas, Centurion and Thief. They are linked by one unifying and crucial event in their lives; each of them has had an encounter with Jesus of Nazareth in some way, an experience that has left a mark. They touched the light but lingered in the shadows. They were offered freedom but made friends with their chains. Now they are haunted by the memory of what was and what might have been. The dramas open up the scriptures to us in ways that we may have not seen before. Come join us at 11 a.m. on Thursday mornings: 2/15, 2/22, 2/29, 3/7, 3/14, and 3/21.

THE WEDNESDAY MORNING PRAYER BREAKFAST GROUP meets at Ollies Restaurant 84 S. Wyoming Ave. in Edwardsville on Wednesdays at 8 a.m.

MEN'S BREAKFAST meets on the 3rd Saturday of each Month (in January it's the 20th) at The Scratch Kitchen, 1335 N. River Street, in Plains at 9 a.m. All Men are welcome to attend. If you would like to have more information, please feel free to contact Todd Swanson at 570-762-2887.



DINNER AND A MOVIE continues to gather on the 2nd Sunday of each month at 1:30 pm. This month it's February 11th. We meet in Fellowship Hall and Lukens Lounge. Enter the church by the Market Street parking lot and Fellowship Hall door (at the ramp.) Those attending are asked to bring a food item to share. Paper products are provided along with drinks. After a time of eating and fellowship we will watch a Christian movie that we choose by consensus from a selection of movies provided. Please feel free to come join with us.

EXERCISE CLASS- So, how are your New Year's resolutions going? How many times did you say you should join a gym but don't really want to? Or you are too stiff and just want to start easy and have fun with a small, informal group? Come join us at Church Of Christ Uniting on Tuesdays at 2 pm. for 45 minutes of stretching, balance, and simple exercises. There is nothing on the floor, no jumping, and even some sitting on a chair, led by a professional who will help with issues. There is no fee, but donations are appreciated. Some pay \$2, some \$5, some nothing. If you have questions, feel free to call Phyllis at 570-690-1342.

COMMUNION AT THE RAIL- For the months of December, January, February and March, we will receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion at the rail. You will be coming up to the rail by pews to either stand or kneel as you are able. You will receive the Bread and the Cup and there will be a Gluten Free option as well. Michelle will also have the Bread and Cup available for those who can't come up front to kneel or stand. There will be wastebaskets at each end of the rail for you to dispose of your cups. If you wish to continue at the rail to pray following communion, please feel free to do so. Folks in the pews, please be vigilant as people leave the rail so that you can then come up and share in communion.



FELLOWSHIP HOUR- The Parish Life team meets once each quarter to supervise the fellowship hour hosting, help with worship services, membership updating and other events in the life of the church family. If you (and a friend) are interested in hosting a fellowship hour, please speak to Peg Knapich, Phyllis Johnson or Pastor Jane. As a host you are responsible for making some coffee (all supplies are ready to use), setting up a food/snack table. The snacks can be as simple as you would like or as fancy and complex as you would like. The main idea is to have fellowship time with each other. Water bottles and other cold drinks are also provided as are the paper products. Of course, you are welcome to create/provide a theme for your fellowship hour. The Parish Life team will meet immediately following worship on Feb 11, May 12, Aug 17 and Nov 10.

VOLUNTEERS FOR THE CHILDREN'S MESSAGE- If you are thinking, "I would like to do the Children's Message," please let Pastor Jane know. It is always good to have different voices in worship to share God's message with our children on a Sunday. Please call either the church office at 570-288-8434 or the cell at 570-396-5883. Thanks in advance for volunteering!!!

LITURGIST- Anyone who is interested in being a liturgist, please call or text Diana Grinavich at 570-954-4525 or email dlg219@hotmail.com

FRIENDSHIP PADS are in the pews. The primary reason is not to take attendance, but to afford visitors and others in the pew a connection with the people they are sitting with. It is also important for us to realize who has been away from church so that we can find out if there is some issue that is keeping them from sharing in worship. I would like for us as a congregation to reach out to people who are experiencing difficulties with prayer, a visit, a note. Friendship pads are also a way to keep in touch with visitors. I can't always meet new people at worship. Friendship Pads are about connecting each other with Jesus and changing lives. Each Monday, I read the names of our attendees and pray for those individuals. Our receptionist on Mondays, Kay Smith, writes a note of welcome to visitors who share their address. Please sign in each week so that we can stay connected with each other. -Pastor Jane



RECYCLE YOUR OLD INK CARTRIDGES- Please bring in and deposit in our recycling box all of your used ink or laser cartridges. We get reward \$\$\$ at Staples monthly with your help and our turn in.

Check this out! Here is a great RECIPE for Super Bowl Sunday

FRENCH'S CHEESEBURGER DIP (mccormick.com)

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups cooked ground beef
- 1 (8oz. pkg.) cream cheese softened
- 1/4 cup American cheese
- 1/2 cup French's Tomato Ketchup
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup French's Classic Yellow Mustard
- 1 tablespoon dill pickle relish
- 2 tablespoons French's Classic Worcestershire Sauce

Instructions:

Combine All Ingredients in a deep pie dish.

Heat in a 350 degree oven for 15 minutes or until hot.

Garnish with the crumbled bacon and or green onions if so desired.

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING SUNDAYS- As Super Bowl Sunday approaches that means it is time for our annual Souper Bowl of Caring Campaign. We will be collecting Food and Monetary donations for our COCU Food Pantry on Sundays February 4th and 11th. We will display the food collected in front of the Communion Table and our Soup Pots of Monetary donations as well. On Super Bowl Sunday February, 11th, please be sure to wear your favorite Football Jersey to worship. We participate in Souper Bowl of Caring Sundays because we want to help people in our area who are food insecure. Your donations help to combat hunger among our local residents. Dave and Jan Oriel who head up our COCU Food Pantry will be at worship on February 11th to share a message of the hunger needs in our community with our children and adults.

Ways to give:

- 1: Bring your non-perishable food items Sunday February 4th and 11th.
- 2: Cash in an envelope clearly marked COCU Food Pantry and placed in a Soup Pot in the Narthex or in an offering plate.
- 3: Checks made payable to the COCU Food Pantry and placed in one of the Soup Pots in the Narthex, placed in an offering plate or brought to the church office or mailed to the COCU Food Pantry, 190 S. Sprague Ave., Kingston, PA 18704

So, you are challenged to **TACKLE HUNGER** and make this a successful **SOUPER BOWL OF CARING** Campaign for our COCU Food Pantry. We can all be winners on February 11th just by participating! Thanks in advance for all your food and monetary donations. We are grateful to all for your participation once again this year.



NEIGHBORS IN NEED PROJECT 2024- A Huge

Thank You to all who donated in 2023!

At the October Costume giveaway we had four tables filled with Personal Care and Cleaning necessities.

They were gone in less than 20 minutes so the need is great! We will continue this project for 2024. Each month we ask for certain items. Boxes will be in the narthex & reception office.

February Collection: Paper Towels, Toilet Paper.

March Collection: Shampoo, Body Wash or Bar Soap for Men & Women.

April Collection: Toothpaste, Deodorant for Men & Women.

May Collection: Laundry Detergent, Fabric Softener Dryer Sheets.

June Collection: Dishwashing Soap, Multi-Surface Cleaner (Like Mr. Clean), Sponges.

July Collection: Garbage Bags, Foil or Plastic Wrap.

August Collection: Resusable Shopping Bags.

September Collection: Any of the above items -Shopper's Choice.



EDUCATION MINISTRY NEWS- The children and youth of COCU are continuing to learn the story of Moses and the journey to the Promised Land. As we continue on the journey we are meeting new people along the way, including Joshua. Be prepared for some Kazoo sounds coming from Sunday School later this month as we talk about the walls of Jericho coming down! The children and youth will also be hosting a "bring a friend" day on February 18th that will include Sunday School and Faith Snackchat lessons, a pizza lunch and then a fun hour at NOVA Trampoline Park. We are asking for each child to contribute \$10 toward the cost and COCU will cover the rest. If your child, grandchild, niece, nephew, or family friend is interested in joining the fun, let Betsy Jones know before February 4th at htebazile724@yahoo.com or by phone at 607-215-5382. We look forward to a day of fellowship and fun together!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED- We have a need for volunteers! Pushing a broom? Running a vacuum? Dusting a few shelves? Between now and the time our new employee begins taking over the custodial duties, we have a need for a few willing people to help with operations at our church. It will involve nothing too strenuous, and will be easier with each pair of hands added to the roster. Interested? Please contact Sherri at our church office (570-288-8434) for more information.

COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY TEAM- There is a live streaming sign-up sheet for upcoming services next to the live streaming station in the balcony. If you are interested in helping with live streaming, please check the schedule for available dates to sign up. Contact Kristin Haas if you are in need of a refresher course or training for live streaming.

CLOTHES RACK- At COCU we are collecting "gently used" clothing of all sizes for women, men and children. There is a cardboard box in the Narthex in which to deposit your contributions. Clothing will be sorted, hung on clothes racks, and available during Food Pantry hours on Wednesdays from noon until 2:00 p.m. In conjunction with this project (which will be for all seasons), now we are especially interested in collecting winter coats of all sizes as well as hats, gloves and scarves. These contributions may be left in the clothing box in the Narthex, also. Thank you for your interest in this project.



MEALS ON WHEELS at COCU is in need of volunteer drivers to deliver meals throughout the week. They are in need of volunteers especially when the regular drivers go on vacation or are ill. Please contact Amy at 570-288-1023 for more information about being a volunteer driver for MOW. Thanks in advance for your time.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO FEED DINNERS TO KIDS- The Ollie's Program, Dinners for Kids, is in need of 2 teams of 2 people to deliver meals to needing children. Two meals to each child of a needing family is delivered on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Volunteers are scheduled for the month. You, as a volunteer, are asked what days you are unavailable to deliver the next month. The schedule is made based on when teams are available. You are usually asked to deliver the meals for only two or three times a month. On your day for delivering, you will be picking up the meals at Ollie's Restaurant in Edwardsville about 2:30 p.m. again on your Monday, Wednesday or Friday assigned day. The route sheet has the address, the number of children, (two meals are in each bag and each child gets a plastic bag.) There are directions from one home to the next home of the next recipient. See Charlie Dancheck if you have questions and are interested.

SUNDAY BULLETIN COVERS- If you would like to honor the memory of a loved one or celebrate someone's special birthday or anniversary, bulletin covers are available for purchase any Sunday of the year. The cost is \$30. Please call the office at 570-288-8434.

HOME ASSISTANCE ITEMS AVAILABLE



IF YOU NEED ANY OF THE FOLLLOWING ITEMS PLEASE CONTACT DONNA DICKINSON 570-696-2539: WALKER, TOILET ASSIST – 2, WHEELCHAIR, TUB CHAIR, TUB BENCH, BESIDE COMMODE, TOILET SEAT 4 INCH RISER – 2.

ALZHEIMER SUPPORT GROUP- Do you have a family member or friend who has Alzheimer's disease? Do you know someone who may be struggling because their loved one has Alzheimer's? There is a support group that meets the 1st Thursday of each month at the Dallas Leggio's Restaurant. The meeting starts at 10 a.m. and is facilitated by Lois Reese who for years took care of her husband. Some people stay and have lunch but that is optional. –Donna Dickinson



STEPHEN MINISTRY CARDS are in the pews. Please share them with a friend. COCU's Stephen Ministry program provides lay people one-to-one Christian care in our congregation and community who are experiencing difficulties in their lives. Stephen Ministry is confidential. The identity of those receiving care and everything they discuss with a trained Stephen Minister remains private. Could you benefit from this kind of one to one care? Do you know someone, perhaps a co-worker, relative, friend or neighbor who could benefit from this ministry? If so, please take the card and pass it to them. Questions, please contact Donna Dickinson at 570-814-6713 or Pastor Jane at 570-288-8434.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY- Do you like to knit, crochet, sew or not sew or quilt? Here is a ministry opportunity for you that will bring a smile and warmth to someone's heart. Prayer shawls, blankets, lap robes, pocket prayer shawls or even the cross in your pocket are made with love and prayer. These items have been made for centuries to symbolize an inclusive, unconditionally, loving God. Those who receive these gifts have been uplifted and prayed for by the maker. The gift then has one final blessing at worship before the recipient receives it. What are the gifts used for? Folks undergoing medical procedures, as a comfort after a loss or in times of stress, during bereavement; during an illness or recovery, or when someone just needs to know that they are wrapped in prayer. If this is a ministry you would like to get involved in, please let Pastor Jane know.



DEVOTIONAL LINE- 570-288-2334. Don't forget to start or finish your day by listening to our church members and staff share their thoughts and prayers. Each volunteer records daily devotions for Sunday through Saturday for one week.

THINKING OF YOU... THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH!– The Parish Life Ministry Team is sending 25-30 "thinking of you" greeting cards each month to homebound, inactive and hospitalized COCU members. The cards are available in the Narthex before worship for everyone to sign. Please join us in this ministry each month in an effort to keep our COCU family close in our thoughts and prayers. If you would like to donate "blank or hello/thinking of you" cards to the team, please leave cards in the church office.

CHURCH FRIENDS UNITING- The Parish Life Ministry Team has an outreach program to identify church members who would benefit from a phone call or visit. Our hope is to maintain and strengthen the connection these members have to COCU. This effort would further support our monthly "thinking of you" card ministry. To learn more about this project, please contact any of the following members of the Parish Life Ministry Team: Phyllis Johnson (570-690-1342), or Judy Vanderburg (570-270-6647)



THE EDUCATION TEAM is starting a card writing ministry to our college students to give them a reminder of home and let them know that we're thinking about them and praying for them. In order for this to work, we need to know who our college students are! In the narthex are half sheets of paper to provide names, addresses, and a little bit about the students - like their year in college, what their major is, etc. Thank you for helping us make this project a success!

PARISH LIFE MINISTRY TEAM meets quarterly. Our next meeting is February 11th. We have set up a sign-up sheet in the Narthex for **Fellowship Hour**. We are requesting people (2-3) to host a time of fellowship after worship. We will also be sending **dinners to St. Terese's Homeless Men** ministry once a quarter (the 2nd Monday of each quarter - the day after our meeting.) Anyone from the congregation is invited to help with the men's meal. We sponsor a monthly **dinner and movie** usually on the 2nd Sunday of each month.

EPILEPSY RESOURCE CENTER NOW OPEN IN KINGSTON- Saturday, January 20, 2024 marked the official opening of the Michael P. Loughlin Epilepsy Community and Resource Center. Rena Loughlin, wife of Michael and Mary Loughlin, mother of Michael will be heading up the Resource Center. The center will provide education and other resources for those living with epilepsy and their families. The center is located at 845 Wyoming Ave., Kingston. Phone number: 215-629-5003

DEDICATED NURSING ASSOCIATES- 724-327-7599

If you are in need of help at home or transportation to a Doctor's Office, Dedicated Nursing Associates may be able to help you. Give a call and see if you qualify for this type of assistance. They say they serve people throughout the entire state of Pennsylvania.



THE CARING CONNECTION is Ready to Serve You! If you need transportation to and from worship, doctors or shopping, wish a home visit, would like communion at your residence, could use a meal due to a family illness, please call the church office at 570-288-8434 (preferably before noon.) Give your name, the request and your contact number. Someone from The Caring Connection will be in touch.

IF YOU OR A LOVED ONE ARE ADMITTED TO THE HOSPITAL Please call the Church Office at 570-288-8434. In an emergency, if you cannot reach Pastor Jane, please feel free to call her cell at 570-396-5883 or give a call to our Pastoral Care Visitor, Cheryl Fuller at 570-954-8877.

REQUEST FROM ALTAR GUILD- Thank you to everyone for purchasing flowers for Sunday services. Altar Guild is asking if you were given altar flowers in a glass vase(s), would you please return the vase(s)? We will use them for future flowers. If you have vases that you no longer need and want to donate them, Altar Guild will accept them for future use. Thank you.

ALTAR FLOWERS- If you would like to place flowers on the altar or on the side credence tables to remember or honor a loved one or special event, please contact Lois Giza at 570-287-0617 or at sandlgiza@verizon.net. You can check the floral calendar in the narthex for available dates and to sign up. The cost is \$30. You can send your payment to: COCU, 190 S. Sprague Avenue, Kingston PA 18704. Attn: Altar Guild. Thank you to everyone who provides our flower arrangements each week! Any flowers not taken home by the donors are given to our homebound, those in assisted living, or members who are in the hospital.
> An Easter Flowers order form is on the next page >



Photo: Curt Schwarzwald (April 4th 2021)

EASTER FLOWERS

Under the direction of the Altar Guild, spring flowers will be placed in the sanctuary on Sunday, March 31st. The cost of each plant is \$8.50. Window arrangements are \$36.00. The deadline for flower orders is Wednesday, February 28th. **NO LATE ORDERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.** Payment must accompany your order.

Please make your check payable to COCU Altar Guild. Orders may be mailed to Barbara Swanson, 215 Noxen Road, Harvey's Lake, Pa. 18618 or to Michelle Giza, 86 E. Vaughn Street, Kingston, Pa. 18704 or dropped off during service.

IN HONOR OF _____

GIVEN BY _____

IN MEMORY OF _____

GIVEN BY _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

Please make checks payable to COCU Altar Guild.

Lily _____ Mum _____ I will take my flower(s) after the service. _____

CHURCH OF CHRIST UNITING

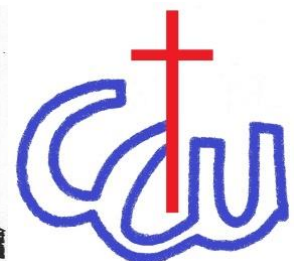
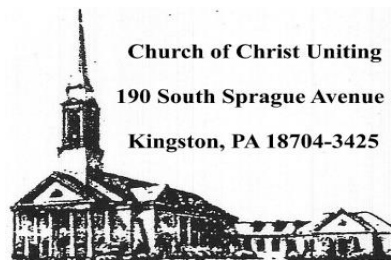
Come share our Joy!

Morning Worship 10:00 a.m.

Sunday School 10:15 a.m.

Rev. Jane M. Pykus, Senior Pastor

Dr. Cheryl A. Fuller, Pastoral Care



📖 COCU Online: [YouTube channel](#) - [webpage](#) - [Facebook page](#) 📖

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