



Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

United Church of Christ

COLLENBROOK UNITED CHURCH LINK 'N' TOWER

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Melanie Lawrence-Caldwell, Pastor

FROM THE PASTOR

Longest Night or Winter Solstice 2018 is Friday, December 21st. This is the longest night of the year and has often in history been commemorated with reflection and lighting candles. This date also converges with the traditional feast day for Saint Thomas the Apostle, making some connections between Thomas's struggle to believe the "tale" of Jesus' resurrection and the long nights before Christmas and the struggle with darkness. It has also been a time for those who have suffered loss to honestly be where they are during the holidays. It can be challenging to be around everyone else who is happy and jolly when that's not what you're feeling.

Whether it is the loss of a loved one, loss of a job, those living with cancer or some other disease, or many who are disturbed and deeply saddened by the horrific tragedies of mass shootings, fires and hurricanes, this is a time set aside for you. Perhaps you know someone who would be helped by this time. Tell them about it or better yet, offer to pick them up and bring them.

This year, I am offering a time for Longest Night at Collenbrook United Church on Friday night, **December 21st at 7 pm**. Join me for candle lighting, soft music, prayers and readings. It isn't a time to be depressed or sad, but reflective and open to God's Spirit among us.

Peace, Melanie



CALENDAR

Worship Opportunities:

Sundays 10:30am
1st & 3rd Sundays 7pm

December

2nd ADVENT BEGINS

2nd *Contemporary Worship 7pm*

9th Christmas Lights/ Rosetree

15th Pastor's Open House 3pm

16th *Contemporary Worship 7pm*

21st *Long Night Service 7pm*

**24th Christmas Eve Worship
7pm**

27th Community Dinner

30th Agape Breakfast

*Handbell Choir rehearsal every
Wednesday at 7pm.*

*Cantata Choir rehearsal Sundays
at 9:30am.*

RETIRED CLERGY FUNDS (December Mission of the Month)

Do you remember your childhood pastor? Do you ever wonder whatever happened to him or her? When I was a child my pastor lived in the house provided by the church. His family lived there for many years. I grew up and moved away but I always wondered where Pastor Miller went when he retired. The house wasn't his, it didn't belong to him but to the church he served. Did he retire to Florida or Arizona as so many of my parent's contemporaries did when they retired? Was there some sort of retired clergy sanctuary or enclave they went to? Although this may sound a bit silly it really is something to think about. How many clergy actually had or have a retirement plan? What happened to the plan when a pastor went to serve another church? Did individual churches provide a retirement plan or did it come from the denomination? If they had some sort of retirement, was it adequate to provide for that pastor and family?

Our pastors took care of their flocks: they baptized our children, they married our friends, they buried our parents. You knew you could call your pastor anytime, day or night, if needed. Our pastors never blinked an eye at a call at 3 am because someone was in the hospital; our pastors never hesitated to hold our hands, council us, pray with us in our time of need. This month think about your childhood pastor and ask yourself if he is able to pay his rent, does he have enough to eat? Is someone there for her in her hour of need? Think about your childhood pastor and give generously.

**Festival of LIghts-Rosetree Park
Saturday, December 8th at 6pm**

Nothing says holidays like strolling through the beautiful Christmas decorations with family and friends. We will meet at the start of the walkway at 6pm. If you need a ride please let Jeff or Pat know.



Save the date: **December 15th starting at 3pm is Pastor Melanie's Annual Christmas Open House.**

Melanie and Pat enjoy opening their home to their Collenbrook family. Singing, food, conversation and plain old holiday cheer are in store so please join us as you are able.

Did you know...?

"Xmas" is a common abbreviation for "Christmas.". It originated as a hand-written abbreviation for "Christmas" by combining the Latin derivative of the Old English word for "mass" and the Greek letter Chi, or "X.". The latter was used because it is the first letter in the word "Χριστός," Greek for "Christ.".



Choir Cantata

The choir is back, presenting “The Glory of Christmas: Celebrating Christ's Birth” on Sunday, **December 23rd during our 10:30 am** morning worship service. Please join us for an amazing musical concert of many of your beloved and favorite Christmas carols. It is a wonderful prelude to our Christmas Eve service the next evening. You won't want to miss it!

Christmas Eve

Monday, December 24th at 7 pm we hold our annual Christmas Eve service with candle lighting and Communion. We remember that this is a holy night for many, and an exciting night for others anticipating the birth of the Christ Child and the arrival of the reindeer and the guy in red. There is something for everyone this night. I hope you will take time to celebrate with us what this season is really all about – new life, birth and God's greatest gift to us. Bring all the family and your friends and neighbors.



Agape Breakfast

As is Collenbrook United's tradition, we gather for an Agape Meal – BREAKFAST on the Sunday following Christmas. This year, on **December 30th**, our usual time of 10:30 am worship becomes our breakfast with informal readings and stories. You can even wear your pajamas if you want! Actually, I dare you to wear your PJ'S! What a wonderful way to finish out our worship for 2018 with a “love feast!” A sign-up sheet will be out soon so you can let us know what you'll be sharing for the feast! We also have some of the best cooks around, so you won't want to miss it!

COMMUNITY DINNER December 27th 5-7 PM