

THE ABBEY REFORMED UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Abbey Reformed United Church of Christ is to fulfill the Gospel of Jesus Christ by sharing in the experience of worship; by the care, nurture and Christian education of all people doing all these things in the spirit of love, compassion and concern, for all God's Creation.

The Abbey Reformed UCC

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Email:

abbeyreformed@gmail.com

Website:

abbeyreformed.org

Facebook:

The Abbey Reformed UCC

YouTube:

The Abbey Reformed U.C.C.

PWC Site:

www.pennwest.org

UCC National Site:

www.ucc.org

A Message from Pastor Suzanne Morelli

Family of Faith at the Abbey,

Saturday, November 5th we set our clocks back and gained an hour. We check our clocks often, ...our watches, cell phones and any other way we keep note of the hours in our days. Yes, it is good to pace ourselves in very full days of responsibility and in the carefree days that come as well so that we don't miss out on the possibilities that could be before us.

Checking with our hearts, our thoughts, our very being that connects to our actions, can be a similar practice. Although this practice is often more neglected than checking the time of day. Setting our hearts in humility and thanksgiving to God often open the way for more of God's goodness to be experienced in our lives. This can prove to be a very good practice indeed, even as we check the time.

Our Lord taught in parables so that we would know more practically good guidance and the gifts of God available to those after God's heart. In Luke's gospel, chapter 18, the teaching is about the need to pray, connecting to the living God within our daily lives. **Pray and don't lose heart!**

The second parable is about our attitude in prayer. Humanly we end up trusting ourselves more than God. One person standing by himself, was praying by thanking God he was not like other people... then, listed what he had done in fasting and giving. This one was trusting in his own position and accomplishments alone. That was the prayer, beginning and end. Another person, stopped in his tracks, could not even look up to heaven and trusted in God's mercy in his prayer. In the face of knowing his human state, checking his heart, he knew there were times he had not trusted in God's way. The second prayer was a transformational prayer leading to a turning of the heart in true repentance, leading to God's renewal and restoration. So, a clear point our Lord is making here, reminds us that there is so much more! This heart prayer opened the person to a restored relationship connecting with God, community, and the world around him. The one who was self-absorbed was actually missing out.

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Message from Pastor Morelli cont.

Checking our hearts and setting them **in thanksgiving and humility is a key to live by!** It is keeping in mind God's presence in all of our lives which opens us to more possibilities! We so need this in our day! The vision of others around us, journeying together, helps us find a way together. The psalmist in Psalm 84:3 reminds us that 'even a sparrow finds a home' in God's care. May we open our hearts to the space made for us to find our home and a way forward with God, others and creation. We truly connect with open heart prayers and thanksgiving! We learn that we need one another! An example is the intergenerational ideas of Gen X and Gen Z, so needed in the mix.

Here we are this November 2022, within our nation we are encouraged and reminded to vote by November 8th. We recall and give thanks for the Veterans who have served and given so much for the freedom & democracy we share. A traditional time of Thanksgiving is on our calendars later this month. We journey forward in a perplexing, changing time with humility and thanksgiving. Our Lord is present, showing the way forward, together.

With remembrance, thanksgiving and love in Christ,

Pastor Suzanne

Annual Turkey Challenge Give Thanks by Giving Back

We are collecting donations of Thanksgiving meals to contribute to the Huntingdon Food Pantry. Please bring your donations to the church on **Sunday, November 20**. Giant or Weis gift cards are available to purchase from Loida Woomer at the church office Mon. - Fri. 9:00 am to Noon or on Sunday mornings. The goal is to collect enough meals/gift cards to feed at least 25 families.

Hanging of the Greens

We will be having Hanging of the Greens on Sunday, **November 20** after the worship service. Please plan to stay after church to help decorate. There will be a light lunch provided by the Fellowship Committee thanking the helpers.

In preparation we would like to have help on **Sunday, November 13** bringing down the decorations from the attic after the worship service.

The Advent Season

It has come to our attention that there have been rumors in our area regarding this coming Advent Season. We have heard that there will be some special "Regal Visitors" planning to visit us at the Abbey during this time. Everyone is encouraged to be on the alert and watch for these special envoys in the HOPE that they will have an opportunity to meet them or at least be able to catch a glimpse of them. You never know what JOY, PEACE, or LOVE you may feel after seeing them! We wish you all success in this opportunity, and we pray that you will have a Blessed, REGAL Christmas Celebration.

The Sounds of Christmas

The Abbey Church musicians would like to share the 'Sounds of Christmas' with daily music selections from several of our ensembles. Selections of Christmas music will be posted daily beginning the first Sunday of Advent, November 27th, to [The Abbey Facebook](#) page and to the [Abbey You Tube page](#); the recordings can also be found through a link on [The Abbey Church's website](#) If you use Facebook, we ask that you please share the posts so more people can receive the 'Sounds of Christmas.'

A special 'thank you' goes out to our faithful 'AV Club' for compiling all of the music and posting it on social media.

Toys for Tots Sunday

December 11 we will be having Toys for Tots Sunday. Contributions can be left in the box in the sanctuary. Please consider donating a new unwrapped toy to help bring a little joy to children in our local community. If you know of a family that could benefit from Toys For Tots, please call 814-506-6229.

Christmas Eve Flower Garden

If you would like to donate a poinsettia for our Christmas Eve Flower Garden, please drop off your poinsettia at the church by Friday, December 23.

If you would like to have your poinsettia in honor or in memory of someone please send your information to the church office by Sunday, December 18 at abbeyreformed@gmail.com or call the office 814-643-1340. Information will be listed on the power point and in the church outline/bulletin for the Christmas Eve service.

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

We will be having our Christmas Eve service both in person and online beginning at 7:00 pm. All are welcome to join us in the sanctuary or virtually for the singing of Christmas Carols, reading of the Christmas Story, Holy Communion, a Christmas reflection from Pastor Morelli and the lighting of candles. This celebration of the divine light shining in deep darkness is captured in this special service that welcomes the true light born for us.

Online Worship Only on December 25 and January 1

We will not be meeting in person on Christmas Day and New Years day for worship that falls on Sunday this year. There will be a worship service available at 10:30 am online. This is considered a gift to the worship team and the tech team who share their time and talents throughout the year.

Ice Skating at Galatic Ice

Save the date! Tuesday, December 27 from 7:30-9 pm we will be having an Abbey Group Outing at Galatic Ice, Lakemont. Pizza will be provided. There will be a sign-up sheet in the sanctuary or you can call the church office to be added to the list. This is a great opportunity to have some fun after the busy holiday.

28th Annual Festival of Song

The 28th Annual Festival of Song will be held Saturday, December 3, 2022 at 7:00pm at the Huntingdon Presbyterian Church. Donations will be accepted to benefit the Huntingdon Area Forum of Churches Emergency Fuel Fund. As in year's past, there is a wonderful line-up of talented musicians. In addition to performers, there will be audience Christmas Carol singing. Please plan to attend for a festive evening of music!

Abbey Youth Mornings with Jim

At 9:30 am on Sunday, December 4th, Abbey youth are invited to a time together with Jim Wenner. You will meet downstairs in the Social Hall for snacks, fun and learning amidst our faith/life journey!

UCC Hurricanes 2022 Appeal

During the month of October we were taking donations to support the UCC Hurricanes 2022 Fund for those in crisis in the aftermath of Hurricanes Fiona and Ian. Funds collected will help with immediate needs while basic infrastructure is repaired, and more complete assessments can be made. To date, we received \$310.00. Thank you to everyone who made contributions to support this cause.

The Christmas Fund Special Offering will be collected during the Christmas Eve Service



Year after Year, Your Gift Brings Joy

The Advent season of waiting and watching is also a season of preparing. Our generosity prepares the way for hope, peace, justice, and community. United Church of Christ retired clergy, servants of the church, have spent lifetimes baptizing and blessing, teaching and preaching, marrying and burying, comforting and empowering God's people. Now, through the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross, we have the opportunity to sustain and empower them.

Our gifts of gratitude and love bring hope to the hopeless, joy to the sorrowful, and deep love to those who have ministered in God's love for so long. By giving generously to the Christmas Fund, we will help retired clergy, church staff, and their families to pay bills, maintain health insurance, and meet emergency needs. Year after year, our gifts make a difference, easing the anxiety of constant financial worries.

Last year, the Christmas Fund, administered by the Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ, provided over \$1.6 million in pension and health benefits supplementation, emergency grants, and thank-you checks to retired servants of the church and their families. Every cent of that money came from the pockets of people like you. Please give as generously as you are able this year!

In 2021, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled:

- Monthly pension supplementation for 231 retired clergy and lay employees (\$1,104,479)
- Health benefits supplementation for 87 retired clergy and lay employees (\$177,600)
- Emergency grants for 53 individuals and families (\$150,338)
- Christmas "Thank You" gift checks to 509 retired clergy and lay employees (\$254,000)

The Christmas Fund

For the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

Follow-up From the Congregational Meeting- Carol Wenner

On Sunday, October 23, a congregational meeting was held for the purpose of providing an update to the congregation from the Search Committee regarding the pastoral search process. This is a brief summary of the meeting, for anyone who may not have been able to attend the meeting in person.

The committee has had limited activity for the past 5-6 months. We are facing several challenges, primarily the issue of an unprecedented shortage of pastors, which results in a shortage of pastoral candidates. We have been encouraged by Penn West Conference to explore alternative options, some of which include consideration of a part-time pastor or shared ministry.

Our focus of discussion has been on the possibility of having a part-time pastor. The committee explored the “pros and cons” of this option, and felt it was worth talking with Spiritual and Executive Councils, as well as the congregation; we wanted to offer the opportunity for questions and input.

We are pleased that there is a general consensus to move forward with considering this option. This is “unchartered territory” for our congregation, as our long-standing tradition has been with that of a full-time pastor. However, as Sonny Knepp so eloquently reminded us, change is difficult, but times are changing and we need to change with them, as long as we don’t compromise the spiritual integrity of our congregation and church.

We will continue the search and call process with prayer and discernment, knowing that we can open our hearts and minds to necessary change as we are called to do. Please feel free to reach out to any Search Committee member if you have additional questions or would like to provide any feedback. As a reminder, the committee members are:

Bill Bressler, John Dickison, Chris Hindman, Jonathan Reveley-Cohen, Linda Skipper, Chad States, Delta States, Loida Woomeer, Mel Woomeer and Carol Wenner.

We would ask for your continued prayers, not only for the committee, but for the Abbey congregation as we faithfully seek our next pastor.

Worship Leaders

We are looking for volunteers to serve as worship leaders for our Sunday morning worship service. Anyone interested please call the church office for details.

AED/CPR Training or Refresher Course

Thursday, January 12, 2023 at 6:30 pm there will be an AED/CPR training or refresher course in the Abbey Social Hall. Anyone who is interested in the training or just a refresher is welcome to attend. Please sign up on the sheet on the front table or call the church office so that we know how much materials will be needed.

Annual Reports

Annual Reports are due from all Committee Chairs by Sunday, January 15, 2023. You can email your report or drop it off at the church office.

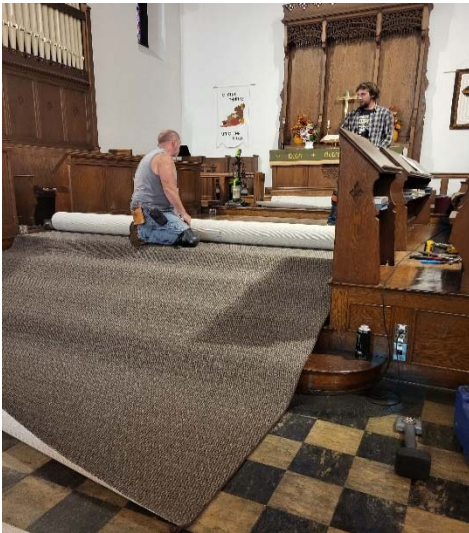
Updated Contact Information

Please remember to report any changes to your contact information to the church office. There will be an updated Church Directory coming out at the beginning of the year.





A final Good-bye to the red carpeting that has served us well for many years.



Blair Mill Carpet Outlet did the installation



Finished Product

New Carpeting in the Altar Area

New carpet has been gifted to the Abbey this week! The red carpeting has served us well for many years but unfortunately has been showing quite a bit of wear.

Erin Wilson had been consulted as to what color to use and to offer up suggestions as to whether we wanted to have the new carpet installed in the same way as the old or to cover the entire area. As you can see pictured to the left it was decided to go with completely covering the area between the choir lofts. A neutral color was selected so that the focus could be on the beautiful details of the sanctuary.

Homebound Abbey Members

There is a list of names and addresses of homebound Abbey members on the front table in the sanctuary for anyone who would like to send cards to let them know we are thinking of them.

Mission Grants from the Penn West Conference

In October applications were submitted by the AV Committee to the Penn West Conference requesting funds to support our online presence by the means of subscribing to Boxcast streaming service. We were awarded a grant totaling \$814.00.

Pastor Morelli applied for funds to support our Youth Together program, leading to confirmation. The Abbey was awarded \$1,500.00 which will provide aid for a weekend youth retreat planned for January 2023 and a mission trip in the summer of 2023. There will be more information on these projects in the next newsletter as details are ironed out.

We are very grateful for the support from the Penn West Conference which enables the Abbey to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

October 2022						
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November 2022



December 2022						
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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 AA Meeting 7 pm	2 Choir Rehearsal 6 pm	3	4	5
6 Adult Sunday School 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am	7	8 AA Meeting 7 pm	9 Choir Rehearsal 6 pm	10	11	12
13 Adult Sunday School 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Good Samaritan Offering	14	15 AA Meeting 7 pm	16 Choir Rehearsal 6 pm	17	18	19
20 Adult Sunday School 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Turkey Challenge Hanging of the Greens	21 Choir Rehearsal 6 pm	22 AA Meeting 7 pm	23	24 Thanksgiving Day Church Office Closed	25 Church Office Closed	26
27 Adult Sunday School 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Building Fund Off.	28 Choir Rehearsal 6 pm	29 AA Meeting 7 pm	30			

November 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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December 2022



January 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 Festival of Song at the Huntingdon Presbyterian Church 7 pm
4 Adult Sunday School 9:30 am Abbey Youth with Jim 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am	5	6 AA Meeting 7 pm	7 Choir Rehearsal 6 pm	8	9	10
11 Adult Sunday School 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Toys for Tots Good Samaritan Offering	12	13 AA Meeting 7 pm	14 Choir Rehearsal 6 pm	15	16	17
18 Adult Sunday School 9:30 Worship 10:30 am	19	20 AA Meeting 7 pm	21 Choir Rehearsal 6 pm	22	23	24 Candlelight Christmas Eve Service 7 pm
25 Christmas Day Worship is Online Only at 10:30 am	26	27 AA meeting 7 pm Ice Skating at Galatic Ice 7:30-9 pm	28 Choir Rehearsal 6 pm	29	30	31