

WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED

Every week an update is sent via email, usually on a Thursday afternoon. If you are not receiving the weekly email please contact, secretary@immanuel-ucc.org or call 610-777-7107.

Visit our Facebook page, website, or join our Immanuel Facebook group that engenders dialogue while we continue to be physically distance. Check it out by searching “Immanuel Shillington United Church of Christ”

HYBRID WORSHIP

As we Widen Our Welcome with in-person worship at 9am, our services will continue to be live-streamed on

YouTube

www.youtube.com/immanuelucc

and Facebook

www.facebook.com/immanueluccpa

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Friday
9AM – 3PM

Drop-offs in outside mail slot or bin, phone calls, and emails continue to be encouraged. If you plan to visit in-person please call ahead.

IMMANUEL

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

NEWSLETTER

May 5, 2021

Cleanliness is next to Godliness or so we have been told.

These pandemic times have accentuated how difficult basic care tasks can be when one is experiencing loss, anxiety, depression. Care tasks are those things that have to be done nearly every day, eating, vacuuming, showering, doing laundry, washing the dishes, brushing your teeth. And we all know that they are much more complex than simply performing the task, often there's planning, shopping, preparing, and then doing the task.

How often is it that adjacent to the pile of unfolded laundry is a heap of shame and disappointment in ourselves for not being able to “just do it” and “get er done”.?

In her book, *How to Keep House While Drowning: 31 Days of compassionate help* KC Davis reminds us that care tasks are morally neutral. Our mess has no inherent meaning. In other words, you are not a failure or a bad person because your house is a wreck.

KC Davis writes, “Care tasks exist for one reason only.... to make your body and space functional enough for you to easily experience the joy this world has to offer.”

Maybe the first bullet of our To Do List could read:

- Be Gentle with Yourself.



Dear God,

As you know, not all days are good days. Some days are just survival days. Grant me the grace and the kindness to know that care tasks are morally neutral. Help me to embrace the cleanli-mess of life - seeking rest when I need it, delighting in play and trusting in your word that no matter - I too am a beloved child of God. Amen.

HYBRID WORSHIP

As we **Widen Our Welcome** with in-person worship, our services will continue to be live-streamed on YouTube www.youtube.com/immanuelucc and Facebook www.facebook.com/immanuelucpa.

For those coming onto IUCC's campus for Sunday worship, here are a few reminders:

- Sanctuary Door and the Office Door will be open. Greeters will be present.
- Hand sanitizer will be plentiful. Just like God's grace you can never be covered with too much!
- Wear mask over your mouth and nose. We have extra masks in the event you forget.
- Respect social distance practices.
- Greeters will register your attendance. This will be maintained should the need arise for contact tracing. They will also review our Covid protocol questions.
- You may choose your seat from the open pews. We ask you keep space for the Holy Spirit between you and others who may choose the same pew.
- A condensed bulletin will be available. Liturgy will be shared on the screens.
- Speaking and singing the responses are asked to be done at a normal speaking level. Multiple recent studies suggest that quiet, masked singing creates about the same amount of aerosolized particles as breathing.
- Worship leaders will unmask when speaking/singing. They will be an extended distance from others. Note: All worship staff are vaccinated.
- Parlor, Quiet Room, and Nursery will be open for families to access. Bins are boldly labeled for the collection of toys after they've been enjoyed.
- Offering will be received in baskets in the parlor or electronic giving.
- Registration is not required, though it is helpful. This allows us to best prepare to extend our hospitality to all. Call the office or use the electronic sign up sent in the weekly email to RSVP
- Please worship with us from your home should you be experiencing any symptoms or you know of a recent exposure.

FAITH FORMATION

Faith Formation has been searching for examples of new life and resurrection in the beauty of the spring season that is all around us. We've traveled to trails and parks in the local community for these nature scavenger hunts. Families and learners of all ages are welcome to join us. All classes are from 10:15 - 11:00am. See our upcoming locations:

May 9 - Reading Museum

May 16 - Nolde Forest

May 23 - IUCC



May 23 will be our final faith formation class of the school year.

Be sure to join us at IUCC for this send-off into summer!

We will not be offering a typical VBS program this year, **BUT** keep alert for information about a special weeklong summer program featuring Mr. Stephen, ukuleles, and other fun activities!

For information about faith formation events, watch your email for messages from Kelly and announcements via the weekly email, as well as for events on the Immanuel facebook page. If you are not receiving emails and would like to be added contact secretary@immanuel-ucc.org. If you have questions regarding the Faith Formation program, please contact director, Kelly Barnett, barnettkellym@gmail.com.

CONSISTORY UPDATE

It feels like we were just ringing in the New Year, but in the blink of an eye we find ourselves in May. Soon summer will arrive, and we'll say goodbye to another year of Preschool and Faith Formation classes, and we will welcome the special programs and ministries that summer brings our way. As time marches forward, so does the IUCC Community.

We remain incredibly proud of and dedicated to the many facets of our ministries and would like to thank all who are engaged with our outreach and ministry efforts in some way, whether through physical help and presence, financial help and contribution, prayerful support, or other engagement. A special thanks goes out to the members of the Reopening Committee who have helped to create a path for re-entry into the sanctuary for Sunday Worship.

We are so excited to have recently welcomed worshipers back into the sanctuary after over a year of online worship! Of course, online worship also continues for live viewing at 9AM on Sunday mornings, and is available for replay later on Facebook and YouTube. We're in awe of how our ministry leaders continue to adjust, pivot, and expand to meet the needs of our community. Because of this flexibility, our ministry didn't simply shift online for the pandemic; instead, it has *expanded* to include online as an ongoing worship opportunity for the foreseeable future.

As pleased as we are with all we have accomplished, we also recognize that we cannot continue to be successful if we are not properly staffed to support our ministries. To help fill the need, we are seeking a part-time Bridge Associate Pastor immediately while we perform a formal Search and Call for a long-term Associate Pastor.

- The full Search and Call team is in place and actively seeking a permanent part-time Associate Pastor.
- Concurrently, interviews have begun for the position of a Bridge Associate Pastor who we hope to have join us within the next several weeks. Our intention is for the Bridge Associate Pastor to remain with us until the long-term Associate Pastor is formally called and brought onboard.

With proper staffing and structure in place, we believe that the sky is the limit for IUCC! From a structure perspective, the Bylaws Committee is already working on finalizing drafts of various amendments to the recently ratified Bylaws. Upon completion, these will be presented to the congregation for review and voting. The amendments are intended to enhance and further refine the structure and guidance that currently exists in the new Bylaws.

The year may be well under way, but we're just getting started! We're excited for what the remainder of the year has to bring, and we look forward to continuing to engage with you virtually and in-person in the coming weeks as the IUCC Community continues to march on. As always, Consistory remains committed to open and clear communication with the congregation. You may reach us by email at iuccconsistory@gmail.com.

Warmly,
Colleen Kunkle, Consistory Treasurer

LIFFT

Ladies in Faith & Fellowship Together (LIFFT) will be taking a trip to the Penn State Berks Labyrinth on Wednesday, May 12. We will meet at the labyrinth (turn off for parking lot is at Janssen Road, off of Broadcasting Rd) at 6:30 pm. Covid protocols of masks, social distancing, hand sanitizing will be followed. Carpooling is strongly encouraged (rides provided if needed) and bring a chair. Dessert will be served. Please contact Jan Buskirk or Kathy Joffred if you plan to attend. No membership required – this event is open to all.

SENIOR MINISTRY

The next meeting of Senior Ministry will be Thursday, May 20, at 1:30pm in Fellowship Hall. We will host speaker Adi Shalev, Emissary from Jewish Federation. She will share "Her Story"

EXPLORE | CONNECT | JOIN

Would you like to learn more about Immanuel UCC (IUCC)? Explore|Connect|Join will be an opportunity to get to know the ministerial staff - Rev. Megan, pastor; Stephen Longenecker, minister of music; Kelly Barnett, faith formation director, ask questions about upcoming ministry, and a way for folks to learn about membership.

There will be an in-person meet and a virtual meet.

In-person - Thursday, May 20th, 6:30-7:30pm – outdoors on IUCC campus (sanctuary as rain alternative)

Virtual via Zoom - Tuesday, May 18th, 7-8pm - contact secretary@immanuel-ucc.org for the zoom link

If you cannot make either date please reach out to secretary@immanuel-ucc.org and we will schedule an alternative.

BREAKING BREAD

Next meeting will be Friday, May 21 at 11:30am. Bring your own lunch and we will partake in conversation, guided by a focus question, supporting scripture, and sending prayer. We trust that together we will grow deeper in our understanding of ourselves, each other and the invitation to feast upon and share God's goodness. We will meet outside at the edge of the parking lot (by the Labyrinth) so please bring a chair. In case of inclement weather, we will meet in the parlor of the sanctuary (enter through the sanctuary doors).

IUCC PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

IUCC's prayer shawl ministry "With Sacred Yarn" has been serving our wider community since June 2004. Prayer shawls to those who are sick, grieving simply indeed of the reminder of God's warm embrace. The ministry expanded to include baptismal shawls as well as renal sleeves, hats, scarves, confirmation stoles, gifts to mission trip partners, etc. Even during this pandemic, members and friends continue to knit and crochet from home. If an item is needed, contact the church office and the small but mighty group will see the need is fulfilled. We hope to resume meeting in-person in June.

OBSERVING MEMORIAL DAY – MAY 31ST

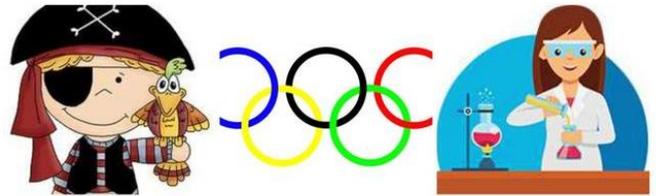
Memorial Day Community Remembrance Service 10am Fairview Cemetery
Shillington Ceremony 11am Borough Hall

PRESCHOOL UPDATE

SUMMER CAMPS

Each camp is \$95.00 per week and email preschooldirector@immanuel-ucc.org with any questions or to register.

July 12-16- 9:00-11:30 a.m.- "Swashbuckling Pirate Week"
Enjoy a fun week of being pirates. Read Pirate stories, play pirates, follow treasure maps, and enjoy crafts, music, and games with a pirate theme!



July 26-30- 9:00-11:30 a.m.- "Let's Go to the Summer Olympics" Pretend to go to Tokyo, Japan for the Summer Olympics! Enjoy a week of stories, art, music and of course Olympic sports and games. Learn about Japan as well as the international multi-sport event.

August 9-13- 9:00-11:30 a.m.- "Science Explorations" Enjoy learning and exploring a different science concept daily. One day build a big box city and learn about engineering and architecture. Another day learn about chemical reactions with experiments with baking soda and vinegar. Additional topics such as solid, liquid and gas and the natural sciences with insects will also be explored this week.

Thank you for your support in Do it Local meal pop -up fundraiser for scholarships to the preschool. \$209.49 was raised!

The National Association of the Education of the Young Child's "Week of the Young Child" was April 10-16. To celebrate, our students illustrated what they want to do when they grow up and we posted the pictures in the hallways and made a video of them to share with families on our Facebook page and via e-mail and ClassTag. Be sure to like our Facebook page "Immanuel Preschool of Shillington" (with a profile picture of our sign) to check out the video. In addition, classes did silly and fun things that week in celebration. One class had a silly hat day!



MUSICAL OPPORTUNITIES & ACTIVITIES

Spring Choir: *The Awakening* – Help the choir prepare this beautiful anthem by Joseph Martin on Thursdays from 7:30PM-8:30PM in the sanctuary. In-person rehearsal on May 6th; Rehearsal/Recording on May 13th – Email Stephen to sign up, music@immanuel-ucc.org.

June 13th - Summer Sunday Gathering: “Music Made Locally”

The first of three “Summer Sunday” outdoor gatherings, you and your family and friends are invited to bring a lawn chair or blanket and your own refreshments to Immanuel’s outdoor stage for an evening of music and fellowship hosted by Cara, Stephen, and other local musicians. Additional details and performers will be announced over the next two weeks. If you aren’t already receiving our weekly e-mails, contact the office today so you don’t miss important updates about this event!

The Music’s All Right: Classic Rock Thursdays at Immanuel

*Come join Uncle John’s Band,
Playing Thursday nights.
Bring some friends or come alone,
The outdoor stage will be our home!*

Musicians are needed to rehearse and play a 60-minute set of classic rock music for our July outdoor summer gathering. We will meet Thursdays in June and July from 7:30PM-9:00PM, focusing on 2-3 songs each night to allow for the greatest flexibility; and we will perform on July 18th at an outdoor concert/BBQ event. All ages and skill levels are welcome to join the band. We are looking for instrumentalists and vocalists. Contact Stephen for more information.

IUCC Summer Arts/Music Camp – July 26th-July 30th 9AM-12PM

Students who have completed grades K-6 can look forward to a week of fun activities that focus on music, art, friendship, and fun. Each day, campers will rotate through a series of age-appropriate activities that allow them to explore their creativity in a safe and nurturing environment. Thanks to support from our Gift of the Arts fund, every camper will also have an opportunity to learn the basics of the Ukulele and share those skills in an end-of-week performance. Mark your calendars now and look for registration and sign-up information in the beginning of June.

Worship Musicians Needed!

Do you have a musical talent? Are you in a local group or organization that is looking for opportunities to perform? Are you willing to share your time and talent with our Immanuel worship community? Contact Stephen to connect about participating in summer worship!

BROADWAY GOES TO CHURCH

Back by popular demand with all new songs and shows, we return in the fall of 2021 to explore the crossroads between our faith and some of our most beloved musicals. Stephen is looking for a core group of adults and students to meet 2-3 times over the summer to help create and prepare music for this worship series. E-mail Stephen to get involved.

So long as the human spirit thrives on this planet, music in some living form will accompany and sustain it and give it expressive meaning. – Aaron Copland

SPECIAL MISSION OFFERINGS

In addition to Our Church's Wider Mission, the United Church of Christ has 4 Special Mission Offerings (SMOs). These offerings exist to allow congregations and individuals to meet people at points of critical need in their lives. SMO's allow a common witness and make a collective positive impact. The second of four identified areas where these critical human needs exist is upon us:

Strengthen the Church, May 23, reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC.

The theme for the 2021 STC offering is "Renew!" When you share your gifts through STC, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults. If you are moved to give, please write STC on your memo line and mail or drop off at the church office (special offering envelopes are available in the parlor and outside the office), OR list under "other" when giving online.

Thanks to your generosity, Immanuel **DOUBLED**, over 2020, its One Great Hour of Sharing financial support. One of four special offerings supporting the UCC's wider mission, OGHS focuses on our most vulnerable neighbors – addressing immediate needs and the underlying causes. From natural-disaster recovery to fresh water supply to refugee shelters, YOU are there. Thank you for letting your love flow.



The Hope Blooms flower program which took place in lieu of traditional potted Easter annuals was a huge success. Thanks to your generous giving, permanent planters and vibrant annuals will soon "sprout" up around campus. These arrangements will be found outside the office & sanctuary entrances, the Fellowship Hall walkway, and on the ark playground fencing. Once planted, a list of those that presented the memorial/tribute plantings will again be listed during service announcements.

Immanuel is thrilled to announce that we recently received a matching grant from the Climate Justice Team of the PSEC whose goal is to inspire climate-changing activities by member churches. We will be using our "seed money" to create a pollinator & butterfly garden on campus. More details to come soon!!



Love nature? Don't have a garden of your own? Looking for an act of service that your children can participate? Immanuel is establishing a new team – the Hope Blooms Crew – to maintain our Hope Blooms planters and Pollinator garden. The crew will be essential for watering (and light weeding) during the high-

heat summer-early fall months with minimal commitment the rest of the year. Like offering counters or greeters, the Crew will be assigned set week or day(s) rotation so the time investment is shared. If you are interested in joining the crew, please call Kathy Arnold or email karnold@immanuel-ucc.org to provide your name and contact information.

