

THE PULSE

MCFARLAND UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

a church with heart - weekly newsletter

"I will put my teaching in their minds and write it on their hearts..."
Jeremiah 31:33



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13 2020

Worship Using Zoom Technology 10am at this link:

<https://zoom.us/j/97010988439> Note: Because of the threat of "Zoom Bombing," Sunday Morning Worship is password protected. If you would like to join us, and do not yet have the password, please email our very warm and friendly choir director Tom Ludwig at tludwig.rn@gmail.com.

Bible Study 11:45am <https://zoom.us/j/262314649>

WEEKLY EVENTS

WEEKDAYS

Devotion & Check In
8:00 am

We will continue to have morning devotion time Mon. through Fri.
Link Here: <https://zoom.us/j/94276813637>

TUESDAYS

Bible Study &
Discussion 6:30 pm

This open conversation is ALWAYS rich, meaningful, and usually a nice combination of deep insights and humorous quips and observations. There are no taboo questions or thoughts. Led by Pastor Bryan at this link:
<https://zoom.us/j/95481817891>

TUESDAYS

every other @ 5 pm

We will continue to have morning devotion time Mon. through Fri.
Link Here: <https://zoom.us/j/94276813637>

WEDNESDAYS

Midweek Inhale
6:30 pm

We focus on spiritual practices that help nurture our connection to God & help us stay grounded in the Spirit. Link Here: <https://zoom.us/j/123020606>

Holiday Events & Schedule



THE GIVING TREE

December, 12

As many of you know, MUCC has participated in the Giving Tree, supporting the McFarland Food Pantry for many years. Thank you to everyone who signed up this year! Just a reminder, gifts cards are due to the Food Pantry by December 12. Thank you again for your continued generosity!!!



CHRISTMAS THROUGH STORY, ART, & MUSIC

December, 20 at 10 am during Sunday Zoom Worship

This special online worship service will incorporate art, music, etc. submitted by you! More information can be found in Pastor Bryan's message farther down in this newsletter. Send in your art to Bryan by Wednesday, Dec. 16th. And there are no expectations here—just a fun invitation to see what we might come up with!



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

December, 24 at 6:00 pm on Zoom

We'll share a special Christmas Eve service together ending with the traditional candle lighting during "Silent Night." More information can be found below if Pastor Bryan's message.

A FEW WORDS FROM PASTOR BRYAN

Bring Your Advent Candles & a Joke With You to Worship This Sunday!

Hi folks. Well here we are in the month of December. December 2020. Many of us find that this is an emotionally complex time of year on so many fronts, and with the pandemic we have more reasons this year than ever before to feel pulled in a lot of different directions. So if it all seems different this year and somewhat confusing or disorienting, that's only because it IS different this year!

There are lots of reasons, even without a pandemic exploding, why the holiday season can be complicated. Maybe it's because it touches us in some of the most beautiful AND painful places of our lives and our "being"—all at the same time!



Some of the "magical" feelings of the season—the lights, the excitement of the children, the music, the spirit of peace and generosity, a sense of "homecoming," the Story of Christ's coming to earth—are often in some internal tug of war with the fact that it's getting colder, there is less light and more darkness as the days shorten, many of the "kids" are grown or gone or not able to get home this year, we can't sing together, divisions around politics are more obvious than ever, those of us who are alone are more isolated than ever, the economy is in crisis and unless congress can get it together the bottom is about to drop off for a lot of people very soon, and let's face it—far too many people seem to have no room left in the "inn" of their hearts for Christ to be born into.

And then there is the annoying sense that we somehow "SHOULD" be feeling good and happy during the Christmas season. I don't know about you, but something in me always has a harder time feeling happy when people (or one darn advertisement after another!) are telling me that I'm SUPPOSED to be feeling happy.

For all these reasons, I'm glad that this coming Sunday's Advent theme is Joy. Advent Joy is a reminder that one of God's greatest gifts is the experience of a hopeful, peaceful sense of gladness and gratitude that is deeper than any difficult circumstance. It is an invitation to rediscover some light-heartedness and for the heaviness to be balanced out a bit or put into perspective.

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It's a reminder that while Light may not "defeat" or negate darkness completely, it always "overcomes" darkness by enabling us—no matter how difficult things are—to be able to find our way in the dark or see or rediscover what is most important and most precious.

Joy and "happiness" are not necessarily the same thing. I'll talk a bit about that in my message this coming Sunday. But Joy is an invitation to remind us of all the things that make life so precious even when it is hard. One of those things is the gift of laughter, and so we're going to take a little time during worship this Sunday to share some jokes. So bring your favorite (clean, church appropriate, you know!) joke to worship with you. The shorter the better of course, and we won't have time for everyone to share one, but you'll know it if yours really needs to be heard! And if you don't get the chance during worship then you can share it in the break-out room after worship. OR, you can send it to me and I'll include them in next week's Pulse. We wouldn't want a good joke to go to waste!

In any case, Joy is this week's theme. No worries, you don't HAVE to feel it if you can't! But maybe sometimes it's enough to just be reminded that Joy is always waiting for you to embrace once again when you're ready.

Hang in there. Know that God loves you and is with you. And please wear your masks and be safe! Pastor Bryan



SUNDAY ZOOM WORSHIP, DECEMBER 20TH

"Christmas Through Story, Art, & Music"

As many of you know, we typically have a "No Practice Christmas Pageant" during Sunday morning worship the Sunday before Christmas. This is actually one of my favorite McFarland UCC traditions, and I think it's a brilliant way to tell the Christmas Story, sing Christmas Hymns, and have a fun and playful pageant for all ages without stressing anyone out with trying to pull off some production that requires rehearsals, etc. But of course we can't do this in our typical way this year because we're not in the sanctuary together. So here's what I have in mind.

First, I know that Tom Ludwig has been in touch with a few of you about recording certain pieces of music in your own special way. We are hoping to have a number of videos of musicians sharing a Christmas song of some kind. Well I want to open up the invitation to any of you who would like to offer some kind of artistic expression of some aspect of the Christmas season or Story in a way that is meaningful to you. It could be a Christmas prayer you've written. It could be a song, or a poem.

An instrumental piece. It would be great to have some versions of two verses of your favorite Christmas Hymn or carol. It could be a painting or photograph or something you've made. Maybe a picture or video of your own Christmas tree or of a favorite ornament that you hang on your tree that has particular meaning for you and your family. The trick is that we'll need either pictures or videos to use. Some of them will be used on Sunday morning, December 20th, and some on Christmas Eve, and maybe some on December 27th if we have lots.

If you have an idea of something to share but do not know how to get it in a picture or video format, please be in touch with me and I'll try to help you with that. Most of you have "smart phones," and all you need to do is take a video from your phone. If you don't know how to send it to the church office (office@mcfarlanducc.org) be in touch with me and I'll show you how. It's not complicated.

Please try to have these to me by the end of the day on Wednesday, Dec. 16th so I can figure out how to weave them together for our worship services. And there are no expectations here—just a fun invitation to see what we might come up with!



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

December 24th, 6:00 p.m. on Zoom

In addition to more special music and art from some of you, we'll share a special Christmas Eve service together on zoom. We DO want to end the service as we typically do by turning out all the lights and lighting candles during "Silent Night." If you have a candle to use for this purpose of your own that's great, but at noon on December 23rd I will place a box of candles that we usually use just outside the front door of the church. Feel free to drop by at your own socially distanced time and manner and take some for your family to use for this purpose. We will post the zoom link for this Christmas Eve service in the Pulse next week and during Christmas week (as well as on the website), and the password will be the same as for Sunday mornings (betgether).

CONNECT WITH US

CHURCH STAFF & LEADERSHIP

Pastor Bryan Sirchio

pastorb@mcfarlanducc.org
608-577-8716

Melissa Mendl, Office Admin

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608-838-9322

Office Hours: T/W/TH/F 9-1pm

SaLT

(Servant & Leadership Team)

salt@mcfarlanducc.org

NOTE: this email address goes out to all SaLT Members listed below:

Hélène Benink, Moderator
moderator@mcfarlanducc.org

Colleen Krattiger, Vice Moderator

Joan Jacobsen, Treasurer
treasurer@mcfarlanducc.org

Anne Gerke, Clerk
clerk@mcfarlanducc.org

Lavon Geasland, Ann Ross, Cindy Wendorf, SaLT Members

FINANCIAL

SECRETARIES

finsec@mcfarlanducc.org

Sue Haeffner & Ann Ross

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Other Helpful Email Addresses You Might Like to Have

N.I.O.N. nion@mcfarlanducc.org

Eco-Justice Green Team ecojustice@mcfarlanducc.org



IT'S ALL ON THE WEB!

CALENDAR with QUICK UP TO DATE EVENT INFO

mcfarlanducc.org/calendar

EVENT DETAILS

(easy to share with friends)
mcfarlanducc.org/upcoming-events

ONLINE DIRECTORY

(password protected to respect privacy of those who offered their personal information. Call or email Melissa in the office for the login password)
Mcfarlanducc.org/directory

FORMS

(Church Building Use, Ministry Idea, etc)
Mcfarlanducc.org/forms

ALL CURRENT SIGNUPS

Mcfarlanducc.org/signups

Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.