



January/February 2022

A Monthly Update in the Life of our Church

## Contact



In 2 weeks, we will observe Ash Wednesday, and Lent will begin. The Monday book group will again meet, this time using the book *We Are Beloved, A Lenten Journey with Protestant Prayer Beads*, by Kristen E. Vincent. The group will meet on the Monday before Ash Wednesday (Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>) to assemble a set prayer beads for each participant. Everyone will assemble their own set, picking and choosing beads that call to them. If you would like to see what this is about before deciding to join, check out this video: <https://youtu.be/tUJP-WVCSwc>

Want to know more? This is from the author's webpage:

Christians often have the head knowledge that we are beloved, but deep in our hearts do we truly believe it? When we encounter Jesus in scripture, we tend to hear Jesus' words with judgment, thinking we cannot be beloved because we will never measure up to God's standards. Author Kristen Vincent takes us on a journey alongside Jesus that helps break this false understanding and allows us to discover how deeply beloved we are.

This 6-week Lenten journey follows stories of Jesus' experience of God's love. The incarnate Son of God was made fully human, which means that Jesus had to fully mature in strength and wisdom to learn that he was beloved. Just as Jesus learned of his belovedness, we, too, can cultivate the wisdom and knowledge that we are deeply loved.

Each week begins with a scripture passage, a weekly devotion, reflection questions, an optional prayer bead experience, and a listening meditation.

Protestant, or Anglican, prayer beads are not the same as a Roman Catholic rosary. One key difference is that a Catholic rosary always begins with a crucifix. Non-Catholic prayer beads can have any kind of special bead, medal, or cross to begin on. The Catholic Rosary is also very rigid in construction, with no deviation from the set pattern. Protestant prayer beads can be as simple as one large bead and several smaller ones all tied onto yarn. But the key difference is in how the beads are used. "...the rosary is used to pray a certain pattern of prayer – some beads are used to pray the "Hail Mary" prayer while others are used to pray the "Our Father" (Lord's Prayer) – there is no particular formula for praying with Protestant prayer beads. They are much more free form. My book offers a variety of suggestions for how you can pray with them."

Want to check out more about this before you decide to join the book study? Check out this link: <http://www.kristenevincent.com/learn-more-about-prayer-beads/>

Blessings,  
Pastor Christina

# Leadership Team Update

By Kira Merkert, Chair



The Leadership Team met for its regular monthly meeting on February 10, 2022. After the opening activities, we revisited our building covid guidelines. At this time, we will continue requiring masks during worship, and will strongly recommend masks for all the groups who use our building. We will not sing hymns as a congregation, but Mike, the Music Director, has placed a sign up sheet in the back of the sanctuary where several people each week may sign up to sing hymns with masks from designated places around the sanctuary. This allows us to social distance. We will revisit our covid guidelines every month.

A small group attended a zoom workshop on grant writing offered by the Parish Resource Center. The workshop was very informative and will continue with four more sessions. The group plans to continue and try to find a project that would benefit Redeemer to apply for grants.

The building use team will begin working to create guidelines for building use when people from the community request to use the building for special events, such as baby showers, weddings, family reunions, etc. We completed a funeral policy a few years ago and will use that as a starting point to create a more general building use guide.

We continued a discussion about building security. Based on some recommendations we received from Derry Township police, we will move some of the furniture in the nursery and also further investigate doorbell/buzzer systems to see if these would be a benefit to the church.

The Music & Worship team is busy planning Lenten worship. We will have an Ash Wednesday service at Redeemer. More details on that will follow.

We will continue working on the mission statement after Easter. During the summer we will also revisit the financial audit. Since we just started using our new financial software in January, we would like to have several months worth of data. Jonathan, our Treasurer, will meet with the officers to show

them how things are set up in the software, and then we will discuss completing an internal audit as we have done in years past in preparation for an external audit.

Pastor Christina plans to slightly change her office hours to allow for more flexibility with visitation and church activities. She will be in the office Mondays and Tuesdays from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm, and Thursday evenings as needed.

On a personal note, I want to thank everyone for their prayers and patience as the office hours have not been consistent while my husband has battled covid. He is now doing much better and will return to work half days in February. As he is able to drive himself, the office will be more consistently open during normal hours of 9 am to 12 noon.

The next monthly meeting of the Leadership Team will be on Thursday, March 10, 2022 at 6:30 pm. We would love to have some laypeople join us to learn more about the goings on of the church. The past two years, we have not had any new Leadership Team members join us. As folks end their terms, we will need to have new members join. Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kira Merkert  
Leadership Team Chair





**Dear Friends and Members of Penn Central Conference,**

*I, therefore, a prisoner of the Lord, beg you to live a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called...making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1&3, NRSV)*

Today I am thinking about the church in relation to a conversation I had with a UCC pastor who asked me if there was a place for him in the UCC. It sounds absurd since he is ordained in the denomination. Yet I've had that question posed to me multiple times by a variety of people. In one case it may be a theologically liberal woman (was she too liberal? too universal?) and in another it could be a theologically conservative man (was he too conservative? too narrow?). I confess that the question, when it comes from some of our own clergy, causes my heart to ache. My spirit is also deeply troubled when I hear some say, when a church leaves the UCC, "Good riddance." How did we reach a point that we might celebrate this instead of grieving?

Perhaps this is a curse of being a teacher of UCC history and polity. I want to point to the rich, complicated, wide-ranging, challenging, liberating, and sometimes-terrible theology of all our predecessor bodies and remind people of our broad and beautiful theological tent. All of these streams of theological life joined together in 1957 because, according to the Basis of Union written in 1948, "we" had a devotion to God, a belief that denominations only exist in that they serve the church, and because in "confronting the divisions and hostilities of our world" we hear with a "deepened sense of responsibility the prayer of our Lord 'That they all may be one'." I confess that I marvel at this.

Now again we are living amid divisions and hostilities. Those divisions and hostilities have crept over us, infecting our churches in a way we have not seen since pre-civil war. I am not saying anything new. But I have been reminded lately of how seriously we are to take our role in preserving unity in the bond of peace as the body of Christ. We begin by modeling places of authentic acceptance and mutual respect. This might be some of the most difficult work we take on as churches. This does not mean that we tolerate abuse or destruction in the name of unity. But it does mean that we begin with ourselves, look deeply, and encounter our inner sinner, before we exclude, judge or reject others.

The UCC has been a broad theological tent since its formation. At local church settings it remains such. Visit the churches of Penn Central and you will see that our theological beliefs, perspectives, practices, and questions are wide-ranging. We do not all agree. We wrangle and argue and reconcile and argue again. Yet I am convinced that we remain one body. Our founding documents testify to the belief that our role was to aid in overcoming hostilities and divisions, not adding to them. May we all receive the grace to be voices and bodies joined in committed unity.

**Peace,  
Carrie**

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call  
Conference Minister  
Penn Central Conference

# Redeemer Announcements

**Join us for our Lenten Book Study:** We will be reading “We Are Beloved,” and will also make and use Protestant prayer beads throughout the study. A pre-Lenten meeting will take place on **Monday, February 28 at 7pm**, when we will make our prayer beads. The book study will take place on Mondays from **March 7 through April 11 at 7pm**. The cost to purchase the book and beads is \$15. Contact Jan Stong or call the church office for more information.

**This month’s Love, Inc. collection:** We will be collecting **Ladies’ Deodorant and Dishwasher Pods** during the month of February to donate to Love, Inc. Donations may be placed in the bin in the narthex. Thank you for your January donations of laundry detergent. These gifts are much appreciated by members of our community in need.

**UCC Homes Dinner and Auction:** The UCC Homes will host a Dinner and Auction on Saturday, May 7 at the Hershey Country Club. Please consider donating basket items of gift cards by March 1. Contact Lorna Davis or call the church office for more information.



**Pastor Beth has invited anyone interested in making Ashes for Ash Wednesday to come to Hummelstown UCC on February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 12:30pm:** Pastor Beth will burn palms for Ash Wednesday. Bring old palms if you have any. Please wear old clothes, because your clothes may smell after the burning.

**We are looking for volunteers to provide childcare in the nursery on one or two Wednesday evenings between March 9 and May 11:** Volunteers must have clearances. Contact Jan Stong or call the church office for more information.

**Scrip Gift Card Orders for March:** Orders are due on March 16, to be delivered on March 23. Gift cards are available for a wide variety of stores and are a great way for Redeemer to raise funds. The church receives a percentage of each gift card sold. Contact Jan Stong or call the church office for more information.



This issue of CONTACT is generously sponsored by:

*Tom & Adrienne Bell, in honor of Henry & Sam  
Jane Gallozzi, in memory of her husband, Vincent*



## Year in Review: Redeemer 2021 Financial Summary

Gross Income: **\$126, 113.58**

Gross Expenses: **\$121, 439.48**

Restricted (Designated) Income and Expenses: **\$19, 094.78**

-includes Benevolences, Storm Water Fee and Scrip/ Grocery Cards

Income w/o Restricted: **\$107, 018.80** (97% of Budget excluding Benevolences)

Expenses w/o Restricted: **\$102, 344. 70** (92.8% of Budget excluding Benevolences)

Net Surplus: **\$4, 674.10**

### ***Notable Income:***

Building Use: **\$17, 205**

Envelope and Loose Plate: **\$79, 844**

### ***Notable Expenses:***

Employee Compensation: **\$46, 804**

Building Insurance: **\$10, 470**

Utilities: **\$10, 226**

Custodial Service: **\$10, 697**

Snow Removal/ Lawn: **\$5, 810**

### **Bank Balances as of December 31, 2021**

Checking Account : **\$8,937** (with \$5, 300 uncleared payments)

Checking Account Net Balance: **\$3,637**

Money Market: **\$2,794**

*More information or details can be provided upon request*



# February 2022

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
		1 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	2 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	3 12pm Nooner AA	4 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	5 7am Sunrise AA 12pm KISS AA
6 9:15 am Worship 11am LGCCC 3pm KISS AA	7 12pm Nooner AA 7:30pm OA	8 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	9 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	10 12pm Nooner AA	11 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	12 7am Sunrise AA 12pm KISS AA
13 9:15 am Worship 11am LGCCC 3pm KISS AA	14 12pm Nooner AA 7:30pm OA  <i>Happy Valentine's Day</i>	15 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	16 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	17 12pm Nooner AA	18 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	19 7am Sunrise AA 12pm KISS AA
20 9:15 am Worship 11am LGCCC 3pm KISS AA	21 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm Music & Worship 7:30pm OA	22 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	23 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	24 12pm Nooner AA	25 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	26 7am Sunrise AA 12pm KISS AA
27 9:15 am Worship 11am LGCCC 3pm KISS AA	28 12pm Nooner AA 7pm Bead Making (for book study) 7:30pm OA					

## Church of the Redeemer UCC

500 W. Chocolate Avenue, Hershey PA 17033

717-533-7300

[www.redeemerchurchucc.org](http://www.redeemerchurchucc.org)

[info@redeemerchurchucc.org](mailto:info@redeemerchurchucc.org)