



Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)



United Church of Christ

# COLLENBROOK UNITED CHURCH LINK 'N' TOWER

Volume 117, Number 10

December 2017

**Melanie Lawrence-Caldwell, Pastor**

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE 8PM**



Most of us, if we're completely honest, live in a chaos of our own making, for the most part. We find ourselves being too busy with too little time, too little patience, too little money, too little help, too little resources, too little hope, too little courage, too little... (you get the point). What is it that you have "too little of" right now? Stop and really think, deep down where it may even hurt a little, and think about what it is you REALLY need?

That is the beginning place for you as you start preparing for the coming Christ Child. It isn't anything you'll find on the surface layer of your being, but it lies deep within you. Advent is a time of preparing, and as it is the beginning of the church calendar year, there is no better time to do a self assessment into your greatest need from our gracious God.

Perhaps God has found a place in you that needs a gentle healing touch, or an embrace of comfort. Maybe forgiveness is what you seek, as in that which you offer or that which you receive – maybe both. Maybe what you have isn't too little time or patience, but you need more focus on what really matters in life. Could we spend less time stewing over things that really aren't so important and focusing our energy on things that build up and offer hope to others?

If we spend all our time leading up to the birth of the Christ Child baking, decorating, sending cards shopping and wrapping, we're going to miss the amazing opportunity God places before us to look deep

within and receive the gift God already has there awaiting us.

Shalom, brothers and sisters,

Melanie

PS

Last Sunday I preached on the text of Jesus telling the story of when they did something for the least of these thy brothers and sisters, they did it to me. When I think back to that sermon, I missed something. I focused more on the negative things that we do to each other... bullying, shaming, judging, name calling, etc. What I neglected are the good things we do. So here goes.

When you build each other up... you did it to me, Jesus. When you offer a hand... you did it to me, Jesus. When you offer a smile, a handshake, a welcome, a hug, a cup of coffee, a plate of food, a prayer, a blessing, a thank you... you did it to me, Jesus. Keep your list going here! It's a much more productive list than the ones we make of our 'things to get done.' There's so much more joy in this one!

### **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.

### **EXCITING THINGS**

**MUSIC** Please come join us at the **December 17<sup>th</sup>** Sunday worship service for an exciting Collenbrook Christmas Choir Cantata. Led by our very own Bill Lowden, the choir will lead you on a musical Christmas journey. Also, be sure to catch the Collenbrook Bell Choir on both **Christmas Eve services (10:30am and 8pm)**.

**COMMUNITY DINNERS** are always a fun time and are growing. We typically feed around 100 per month. To that end we desperately need financial donations to help keep this ministry alive. If we can buy most of what we need in bulk we save money and it doesn't become a financial burden to just a few people. Also, it has always been the goal to serve as many outside community people as possible but our space is limited so we ask that if you are a member of Collenbrook to please allow our guests to sit and

eat first. **Next Dinner is on December 28<sup>th</sup> starting at 5 pm.**

**FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES** It's that time of year again when Pastor Melanie and family open their home to all of you as a thank you for being you. Please come join anytime between the hours of **3-7pm on Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup>** for holiday snicky snacks and wonderful fellowship. The Lawrence-Caldwell clan have moved so this year will be in a new location in North Wilmington, DE. Just ask either Pat or Mel for address and directions.

Dottie has a fellowship opportunity on **December 9<sup>th</sup>** at Rose Tree Park. If interested in seeing the lights just let her know.

### **Agape Breakfast**

On December 31<sup>st</sup> at 10:30am a wonderful tradition takes place here at Collenbrook: the annual Agape Breakfast. It is a time to break bread together as we fellowship, pray, maybe sing a hymn and we do it in the fellowship hall. In other words, it is worship while we eat! Please bring a small dish to pass (doesn't have to be fancy, donuts will do) if you are able.

### **CHURCH INFORMATION - NEW**

Pastor Melanie has changed her days off to Mondays and Fridays, at least for now. She was finding herself working many Tuesdays due to various meetings, etc. Therefore, Melanie will be in the office on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Please call the church or drop in during those days if you would like to speak with her. It is always a good idea to call ahead just to make sure she is available.

Please remember there are times when she is out of the office during these days working on church or denominational business.

**Collenbrook United Church, 5290 Township Line Rd., Drexel Hill. PA 19026**

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**All articles and calendar events must be in to the editor no later than the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month. Please send items to [collenbrookunitedchurch@gmail.com](mailto:collenbrookunitedchurch@gmail.com). Please note that this email is different than the church email. If you do not have email please give your articles/event dates to Pat Lawrence-Caldwell in legible form.**

*From the editor: if you are not receiving an email copy of the newsletter and would like to please send an email to the above email address so you can be placed on the newsletter email list.*

# COLLENBROOK UNITED CHURCH CALENDAR

## DECEMBER 2017

SUNDAY	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3 9:30 <b>Choir</b> 10:30 <b>WORSHIP</b>		5 7pm <b>Active Shooter Seminar</b>	6 7pm <b>Bell Choir</b>	7	8	9 6:30pm <b>Rose Tree Park lights</b>
10 9:30 <b>Choir</b> 10:30 <b>WORSHIP</b>	11	12 7pm <b>Council</b>	13 7pm <b>Bell Choir</b>	14	15	16 10am <b>Choir Rehearsal</b>  3pm <b>Pastor Open House</b>
17 9:30 <b>Choir</b> 10:30 <b>WORSHIP</b> <b>Choir Christmas Cantata</b>	18	19	20 7pm <b>Bell Choir</b>	21	22	23
24 9:30 <b>Choir</b> 10:30 <b>WORSHIP</b>  8pm <b>CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE</b>	25 <i>Pastor vacation</i>	26 <i>Pastor vacation</i>	27 <i>Pastor vacation</i>	28 <b>SPM COMMUNITY DINNER</b> <i>Pastor vacation</i>	29 <i>Pastor vacation</i>	30 <i>Pastor vacation</i>
31 10:30 <b>Agape Breakfast</b>  <i>Pastor vacation</i>						

### LEGEND

Sanctuary – S

Choir Room – CR

Fellowship Hall – F

Chancel – C

Off Campus – OC

Office - O

Downstairs Room - DR

Nursery - N

*Remember we have non church groups that use our building during the week:*

Ancona Montessori: Monday – Friday from 7am-6pm

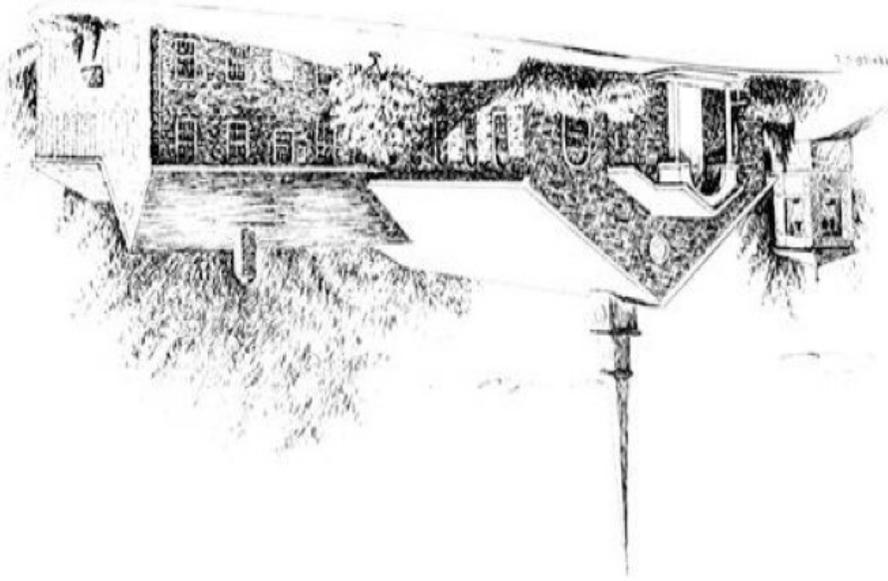
Podowan: **Sundays @ 1pm; Fridays @ 7pm**

AA groups: **Sundays @ 7pm; Thursdays @ 7pm; Saturday @ 3pm**

Daisy Scouts: **every other Monday evening**

Civitan: **every other Wednesday @ 5pm**

Yoga: **Tuesdays @ 7pm; Thursdays @ 6pm**



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