



Congregational Clarion

AMERY CONGREGATIONAL UCC

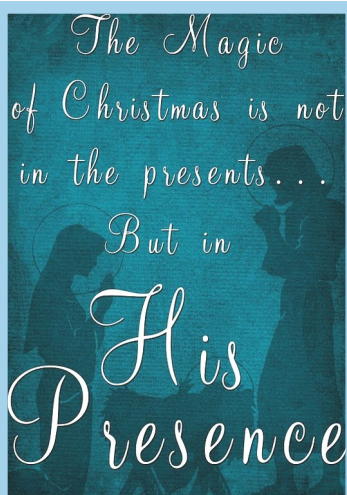


WELCOME,
DECEMBER

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PASTOR'S POINT

by Barry Schaefer

Dear one and all. It's December 2019, we are, at this writing at the beginning of Advent (the four Sundays prior to the celebration of Jesus' birth) and we have snow. These are most of the classic "touch stones" of Winter in Wisconsin. But... (please read the Gospel lesson for Dec. 29th Mt. 2:13-23) In this lesson we read God's word that is not "sweet baby Jesus", all swaddled in a Manger type stuff.

Mat 2:13 NLT After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and His mother," the angel said. "Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill Him."

This imagery does not square with our visions of a great Christmas season, of family, friends, faith, presents, red and green colors and candle-lit worship services.

Did you ever think about Jesus being a refugee, fleeing persecution? Try out this definition of persecution: "A family is forced to flee their homeland for fear of persecution." Does this definition look anything like the Matthew 2:13 text? I think it does. It is strange to see our Jesus' face as a persecuted refugee with the faces we've come to see on the news claiming refugee status. We do not often think of or conceptualize our Jesus in these same ways with these same images, borders,

walls, refugee camps etc.

When the whole lesson from Matthew is considered, one can see how God is at work through many and various themes, persons, and even despicable personages to bring about God's will. Look at how the prophecy has been announced:

Hos 11:1 NLT "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and I called My son out of Egypt."

To see Jesus and the church properly, we need to see God's hand at work looking back through the long arc of history. Our lives, Jesus' flight from persecution, the fulfillment of prophecy.

Consider this prophecy:

Jer 31:15 NLT This is what the LORD says: "A cry is heard in Ramah—deep anguish and bitter weeping. Rachel weeps for her children, refusing to be comforted—for her children are gone."

Even in the midst of great calamity and chaos God's derivative and capable hand is at work in our lives, and in the lives of all who inhabit the world. We are not, nor was Jesus, living at a time of randomness, a time when things spun out of control from the hand of our God. Yes the times we live in are scary, they are truly dangerous, and they do appear to be random...but as I've said, before, and will continue to say again, God's God this! Amen!



12/01 Stacy Wagner	12/15 Matthew Johnson
12/01 Michael Cree	12/17 Emily Russo
12/02 Bob Whitley	12/18 Zachary Frinack
12/02 Kennedy Miller	12/19 Charlotte Gillen
12/02 Larry Stelter	12/21 Janet Brown
12/02 Beth Jackson	12/21 Ethan Wagner
12/04 Zachary Silvis	12/21 Riley Pitchford
12/06 Wendy Heiken	12/23 Elijah Newton
12/06 Bob Holm	12/24 Alycia Anderson
12/11 Katrina Sorenson	12/24 Declan Benner
12/11 Katrina J. Sorenson	12/25 Kipp Harris
12/11 Joshua O'Rourke	12/26 Gwen Wiegrefe

Happy
Birthday



December born

Great sense of humor. Cheerful and vibrant. Ambitious. Short tempered. Impatient. More logical than emotional. Attractive looks and pleasing personality. Honest and trustworthy. Generous. Amiable. Dynamic. Love to be praised. Independent streak. Patriotic. Good dresser. Fun to be with. Outgoing.



The narcissus is the December birth flower and symbolizes good wishes, faithfulness and respect. , which is a type of narcissus. Although most narcissus flowers are spring flowers, there are several species that bloom in the winter, such as the paperwhite narcissus — making it appropriate as the birth flower for December. The December birthday flower has a rich history. As a native of the Mediterranean, the narcissus was brought over to Asia where it became widely cultivated in China. From there, the narcissus made its way into Europe via European colonists and eventually made its way into North America. Today, the narcissus is mainly cultivated in Great Britain, Holland, and The Channel Isles.

Golden Age Manor

220 Scholl Street
Amery, WI 54001
(715) 268-7107
Kathy Picotte

Dave Waterman

Willow Ridge

400 Deronda Street
Amery, WI 54001
(715) 268-8171

Betty Jansen

Dorothie Mueller

Evergreen Village

611 Harriman Avenue
(715) 268-6640
Marian Peterson
Gussie Fennern

Memory Care

215 Birch St. W
Amery, WI 54001

Jeanne Murphy

Evelyn Monteith Halverson

Ginny Nelson

Sylvia Utter

Riverbend

475 Golfview Lane

715.268.9949

Beth Sorensen

Shirley Johnson

Baldwin Care Center

650 Birch St.

Baldwin, WI 54002

Mary Monson Apt. 27



MEMBERS AND
FRIENDS

from your YOUTH MINISTER



Help decorate for the holidays! Please join us for our 10am worship service on Sunday December 1st as we decorate the sanctuary for Christmas with the Hanging of the Greens service. Youth of all ages are encouraged to stay after church for lunch followed by decorating the Christmas tree in Charlotte's office and turning the youth hallway in to a winter wonderland! Youth may be picked up around 1pm.

WEDNESDAYS:

Dec. 04 - 3:30pm Homework & Hangout, 5:45pm family dinner, 6:30pm WOW and youth group. Evening concludes at 7:30pm

Dec. 11 - 3:30pm Please join us for an evening of Christmas caroling as we spread holiday cheer at Amery Memory Care following our youth group dinner at 5:45pm. Our evening will conclude at 7:30pm.

Dec. 18 - 3:30 Homework & Hangout, 5:45pm family dinner - Christmas Celebration. Evening concludes at 7:30pm

Saturday December 14th - Ruby's Pantry Service Day. Please be to Congo Church by 7:30am to help serve. Following Ruby's Pantry and clean-up, we will enjoy lunch together then head to Grace Place Homeless Shelter in New Richmond and decorate Christmas cookies with those staying at the shelter. Parent pick-up time is 3pm at Congo Church.

Sunday December 8th: Christmas program rehearsal during AND after worship for all Sunday school kids participating in this years' Christmas program which will be on Sunday December 15th during our 10am worship service. Lunch will be provided and parent pick-up time is 1pm.

Toys For Tots: Our youth group kids will be helping sort toys for Toys for Tots on Monday December 9th in New Richmond after school. See Charlotte to sign up!

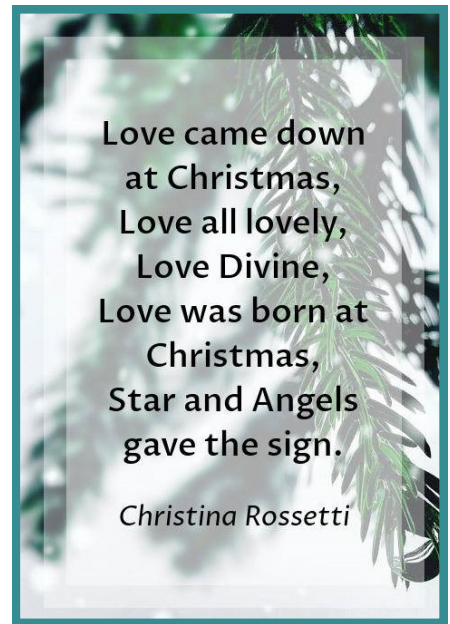
Salvation Army Bell Ringing: Wednesday December 11th our Congo youth group kids will be ringing bells at Dicks Fresh Market and Chet Johnson Drug after school. Please stop by and say hello and help support a great cause!





Sam's Christmas Village: Sunday December 15th - Please join us for an evening of fun and fellowship as we walk and enjoy the beautiful lights of Christmas and warm up in the cabin as well! We will depart together from Congo Church at 4:15pm heading to Somerset, Wisconsin. Admission is \$10 per adult, \$5 per child, 10 and

under. Children 3 and under are free. Concessions available. See Charlotte for more details.



Love came down
at Christmas,
Love all lovely,
Love Divine,
Love was born at
Christmas,
Star and Angels
gave the sign.

Christina Rossetti



**Sunday
December 22nd
Sunday school
Christmas party
during our 10am
worship service.**



Friday December 27th - Youth Group Service & Fun day! Please meet at Congo Church at 9am. After our morning of service, we will enjoy lunch together and spend the afternoon snow tubing at Trollhaugen in Dresser. Parent pick up time at Congo Church is 4:30pm.

Youth Director Contact Information:

Charlotte Gillen

715.268.7390; ext. 12

715.338.6929 (cell)

Youth.ameryucc@gmail.com



EVENTS

Congo Ladies Christmas Get-Together:

Tuesday December 17th - All (adults only please) ladies of the Congregation are invited to join us for a fun Christmas get-together including a Christmas cookie exchange and (\$10 limit) Christmas gift exchange. Social hour is from 5-6pm. Pot luck supper begins at 6pm so please bring a dish to pass. See Charlotte Gillen or Abby Betzold for more information.



FAMILY TABLE

Please join us at the Congo Family Table on Wednesday, December 18 at 11:30 am
Call Rae
715-268-7390, by Sunday, December 15th to make your reservations.
ALL ARE WELCOME

Free Will Donation

NEWBORN'S FIRST CHRISTMAS...

Have you received a new child into your family since Christmas Day 2018? Sunday, December 24, Christmas Eve Day, at the 4:30 PM worship service we will hold our annual First Christmas Service for newborns. This important family and children's worship service is to celebrate the new

children that God has entrusted to our church family. **We are asking all church family members to let us know of the babies/children who have arrived in your family through birth, adoptions or step-parenting since Christmas last year and who will be hearing the Christmas story read by Pastor Barry for the first time. We have a gift for these new little ones and need to plan accordingly. Please call the church**

office, 715-268-7390, as soon as possible, but no later than December 22nd

At the Special Family Worship Service, Pastor Schaefer tells the Christmas story to the youth. However, we hope the whole family will be at the service as our children hear about the birth of baby Jesus. Who can ever tire of the retelling of the beautiful account of the birth of our Lord and Savior.?

December 24 Special Worship Services

2:00 pm Christmas Barn Service at the home of Mark Kopp & Debra Strodthoff.

4:30 pm Family Service

9:30 pm Candlelight Service



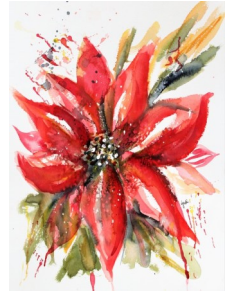
POINSETTA ORDERS DUE SUNDAY, December 8th

What is the meaning of poinsettias? Also known as the Christmas Star and Christmas Flower, it's said that poinsettias' association with Christmas comes from a Mexican legend. The story goes that a child, with no means for a grander gift, gathered humble weeds from the side of the road to place at the church altar on Christmas Eve. As the congregation witnessed a Christmas miracle, the weeds turned into brilliant red and green flowers.

Named after Joel Roberts Poinsett, first United States ambassador to Mexico and the amateur botanist who introduced the plant to the U.S. in 1825, the poinsettia is also known

as Mexican Flame Leaf, Winter Rose, Noche Buena and, in Turkey, Atakurk's Flower, because it was the favorite flower of Atakurk, the founder of modern Turkey.

While considered by the ancient Aztecs to be symbols of purity, in today's language of flowers, red, white or pink poinsettias, the December birth flower, symbolize good cheer and success and are said to bring wishes of mirth and celebration.



★ THE CHRISTMAS FUND

for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

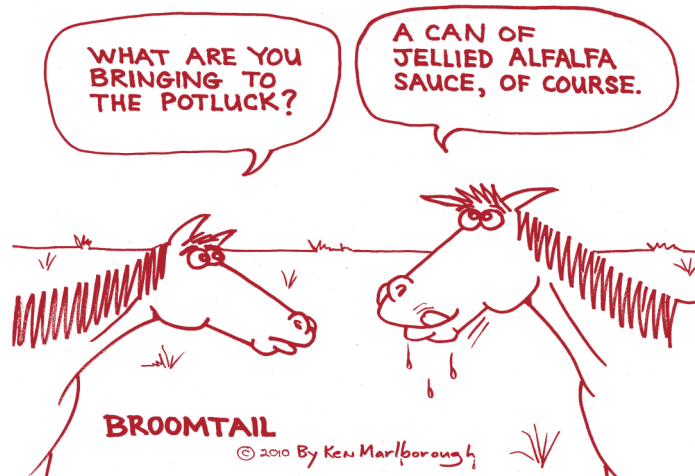
The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a Special Mission Offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. The offering is administered through the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards. Funds provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties. Active and retired clergy, lay employees, and their

surviving spouses may be eligible for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and/or Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks.

A special offering will be taken on Sunday, December 22.



Please join us for the 5th Sunday potluck after the 10am service on Sunday, December 29th



Council Meeting : October 8th, 2019

Attendance: Pastor Barry Schaefer, Virginia Ormsby: Treasurer, Sandy Morris: Clerk, Chad Leonard: Trustees, Abby Betzold, Rae Wooldridge: Congregational Giving, Sherry Monson: Deacons, Charlotte Gillen: Youth Director, Christian Education.

Pastor Barry opened the meeting in prayer at 6:05 pm. Chad motioned that the September minutes be approved, Charlotte seconded. Minutes were approved.

Treasurer: Virginia will have the budget ready for approval at the next council meeting, she needs all budget requests as soon as possible. We raised around \$1500 from our chicken and biscuit dinner. We also raised a little over \$600 from our Fall Festival food booth. Chad motioned to approve the treasurer's report, Charlotte seconded. Treasure's report was approved.

Clerk's Report: Sandy stated that there were no changes. Membership remains at 167.

Youth Report: Charlotte had a written report. Highlights included: Congo Kids Cook, Nine youth participated in the Fall Festival Pie Contest, and that they continue to stay active and busy.

Trustee's Report: Chad said they are continue to work on reviews for church staff. The change has been made that Ruby's Pantry helpers will be doing the church cleaning that weekend of each month to save us some funds. Our snow equipment is ready for the season. The ongoing ceiling tile problem will hopefully be worked on by the mission team. There will be a church work day on October 19th. He also informed us that there will be some needed building updates for next year.



Christian Education Report: Fall Family Fun Day will be on October 20th at 3:00pm.

Deacon's Report: Sherry let us know it will be the time of year to review membership again. We will also be doing a new member coffee on Sunday October 20th following the service.

Congregation Giving Report: Abby updated that pledge cards will be getting send out in October.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Barry was pleased to see attendance back up for the fall. He also mentioned how much he is continuing to enjoy teaching different classes.

Monthly Calendar Review: Budget & Election Meeting will be Sunday Nov. 17th directly following the service. Lefse will be starting up as well as looking at the holiday season.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

The next Council Meeting will be Tuesday,

November 12th at 6:00pm.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:50pm.

Pastor's Report for OCTOBER 2019

I AREAS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

Now that the Fall program has settled in to its new rhythm these are the classes that I'm either teaching or am involved in: a) Men's Tuesday Bible Study; b) Women's Tues Bible Study; c) Wed. Money Management Make up session; d) Thurs. Money Management Class; e) Sunday Confirmation Classes. This is quite the load, which is challenging, but at the same time very rewarding.

The Mission Team 2020 (our 21st Year) convened on the second Sunday of October, (10/13/19). This year's destination was announced, and it is LaCrosse WI. The dates for the MT20 are June 14 (Send Off Sunday) and June 21 (Return Sunday service) The MT20 members will be back home on Saturday June 20, but the "trip is not over" until the Come Back Service is complete. We've been to LaCrosse before and have had a great experience with this Habitat Affiliate.

October 12th. Was Ruby's Pantry. We had a complete "sell-out" of all shares. This was at one level good, but at another level it is hard to say "sorry we're all out" to those 6 or so families who came for food. Earlier in the month (10/5//19) at North Heights Church, I attended the Ruby's Pantry Annual Conference. The chief announcement is that RP is coming out with new, Web-based registration materials. They hope to begin "rolling it out" in January 2020. We'll see about that

FUNERALS: 1) Rita Giudice, 10/2/19 in Hudson WI at O'Connells FH



Budget and Election Meeting-2019

The Budget and Election meeting was held on November 17, 2019. Copies of the budget and the ballot for election of the officers was distributed to persons attending. Sheldon Betzold, Moderator, opened the meeting with prayer at 10:55 am.

Sheldon read the minutes from the 2018 Congregational Budget meeting. The floor was open for questions or discussion. Thelma Betzold moved to accept the minutes; Jeff Bylander seconded the motion. It was voted on and approved.

Chad Leonard discussed the current budget. He said if weekly giving maintains, then we will be able to make our budget for 2019. Some unexpected expenditures came up this year, but we were able to move and transfer funds to accommodate the expenses that arose.

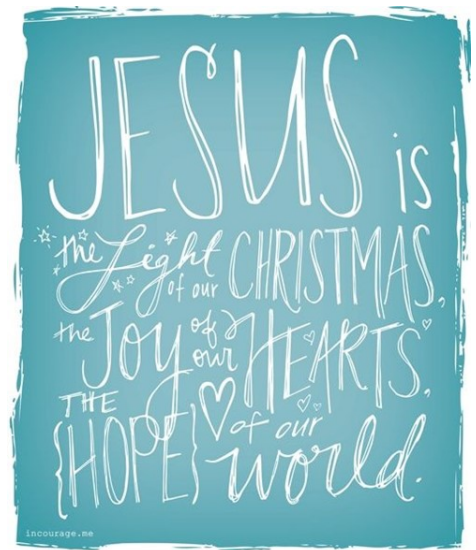
Virginia Ormsby presented the 2020 budget. She discussed some of the expenses that will be challenging for 2020, including a \$12,000 expenditure for a new air conditioning unit. The concept of e-giving was discussed and expenditures involved with that. Even though there are minimal processing fees, it still is beneficial to streamline the giving process. Tom Bowen moved to accept the 2020 Budget, Jeff Bylander seconded. The motion was voted on and approved.

Chad Leonard discussed the importance of upgrading our security system for the church building. Scott Smith asked for examples and discussion as to why we need to improve our security and surveillance of the building. Chad gave several examples of ways in which the building is used including: Boy Scouts, Ruby's Pantry and our Youth group. With so many various ways in which our building is used, we want the people here to be safe. Tom Bowen confirmed that it is a good idea to make the building more secure, it helps with our outreach to the community; people using the building will feel more secure. When you have many outreach programs to the community, you have more and more people coming in and out of our doors...which is a good thing. However, with more people also comes more opportunities for "issues". After a short discussion on this topic, Tom Bowen made a motion to provide funds, not to exceed \$5,000, to proceed with upgrades to our building's security and a surveillance system. Rick Maukstad seconded the motion. It was voted on and approved.

The current ballot of officers was presented. The need to fill the position of Financial Secretary was brought forth. Abby Betzold made a Motion to accept the Ballot as printed, Chad seconded. The Ballot was voted on and approved.

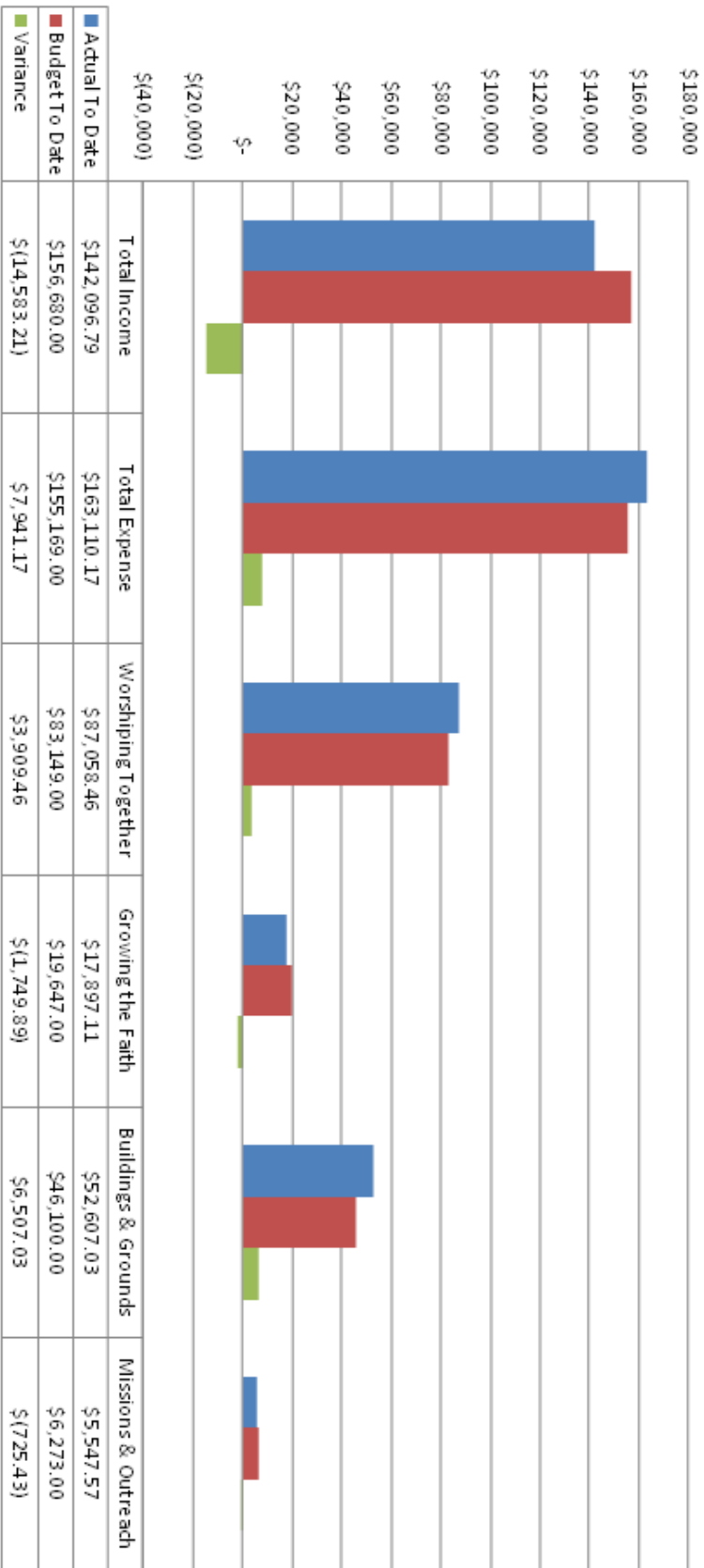
Meeting was adjourned at 11:20 am.

Respectfully submitted, Julie E. Smith, Recording Secretary



Amery Congregational Church - October

2019



Income to Expense Variance \$ (21,013.38)

\$19,613.36 Unallocated Contributions