

# The Ponderings of Pastor Beth

Dear Members and Friends,

Our two-year-old daughter Maya learned to say “Happy New Year” this week. But, her way of saying it comes out as: “Happy New You.”

In some ways, the new year can bring about resolutions and thoughts about changing our ways to create new routines and practices. Certainly the commercial world is all-too-willing to profit from our potential shortcomings. Look through the aisles or see the ads and you’ll surely find “cures” and “help” with weight loss, exercise, eating healthier, organizing your closet, etc.

The message behind the advertising and sales pitches—however subtle or over-the-top—is that somehow we aren’t “enough.”

*We aren’t skinny enough.*

*We aren’t fit enough.*

*We aren’t conscious of our eating patterns enough.*

*We aren’t organized enough.*

*We aren’t \_\_\_\_\_ [fill in your own blank] enough.*

Yet when we come to church we hear words like: God loves you. You are enough. Come as you are. Jesus loves all people.

So which is it? Are we ‘enough’ as we are or not? Should we change or are we ‘ok’ as we are?

It’d say it’s probably both. God does love each and every one of us. We are ‘enough’ in God’s eyes AND God desires us to continually be living into the fullness of God’s expectations for us. Like a loving parent, God thinks we’re pretty great AND that we could improve upon what’s already there.

What about considering ourselves as generous people AND continually stretching in our generosity?

What about being open-minded AND being willing to expand to even more ways of thinking and accepting others?

It’s true. God loves us. We are enough as we are AND God desires more from us. Thankfully we do not journey alone in faith: see you Sunday for worship!

*Pastor Beth*



(“Friend” me on [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com): Beth Abbott)

**Church Contacts:**

Pastor Beth's Office Hours:

Tu, Th, F 9 AM – 4 PM

Church: (414) 762-8260

Website: stlukesucc.us

Pastor's Beth's email: pastor@stlukesucc.us

Office Administrator Jennifer's email:

stlukesuccoffice@gmail.com

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**Who's Serving When?**

**January 7**

Opening the Church	Kaye Povlich
Ushers	Jilloyn Sodemann
Liturgist	Madalynn Fuchs
Communion Crew	Stephanie Pischke & Alex Pelczynski
Closing the Church	Kaye Povlich

**January 14**

Ushers	Steve Plumb & Joan Weller
Liturgist	Kelly Hansen
Kids' Korner	Frei Family

**January 21**

Ushers	Nall Family
Liturgist	Austin Orosco
Fellowship Time	<b>Need Volunteer</b>

**January 28**

Ushers	Pelczynski Family
Liturgist	Brad Uelmen

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**Our Congregational  
Annual Meeting**

**After worship on  
Sunday, January 28**

*Lunch & Child Care provided*

**What's Happening in Worship in  
January?**

**Epiphany Sunday  
January 7**

**Isaiah 60:1-6**

“Arise, shine!” on this Family Sunday will have us consider Jesus as the Light coming into the world. Gather for communion and join us afterward for fellowship at our fundraiser Cousin's Day 11 AM-2 PM in South Milwaukee.

**Baptism of Christ Sunday  
January 14**

**Mark 1:4-11**

Kids will bring back their baptismal candles (if they haven't been lit in a while) to remember their baptismal anniversaries as we remember Jesus' baptism. Bring coins and small bills for our Noisy Offering!

**Third Sunday after the Epiphany  
January 21**

**Mark 1:14-20**

Jesus calls his disciples into ministry with the words “Follow me.” As we share in the excitement of Finley's baptism, we'll rekindle our own call to follow in Jesus' footsteps.

**Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany  
January 28**

**Mark 1:21-28**

As a child, Jesus came to the temple and amazed the elders one day with the way he taught with such authority. They asked, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority?” On this Congregational Annual Meeting day, we'll wonder how we can claim our authority as the church and impact our community in even broader ways!

## **December 13th Board Meeting Minutes:**

The board meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM by Brad Uelmen & Pastor Beth led an opening prayer. A motion was made by Amy Wheelock-Brodzik to approve the Nov. Minutes; seconded by Kaye Povlich.

### **PASTOR'S REPORT:**

- Christmas Eve 7 PM service will have Communion by intinction with 2 stations for quicker movement.
- New Year's Eve will be in Fellowship Hall with breakfast during worship.
- Lifeline confirmed that we are able to accommodate their Health Screening Sat. Mar. 17. They'll donate \$100 to use the space. We will look into coordinating a bake sale fundraiser at the same time.
- Pastor Beth is in year 8 of her 10 year young clergy program (UCC's Next Generation Leadership Initiative). Her continuing education this year includes supervision skills, extravagant welcome & Alzheimer's.
- Feb. 14 is Ash Wednesday. We'll arrange a speaker from Guest House in Milw. to continue our theme from last year of hunger and poverty. Guest House helps homeless men and we'll also assemble sandwiches that night to donate. During Lent, we'll collect needed items for Guest House such as socks, soap, etc.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT:**

- A motion to approve the November financial report was made by Kelly Hansen and seconded by Kathy Immel. Motion approved.
- November was pretty good. Endowment Fund paid for snowplowing.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- Budget set for 2018 \$121,545.00. Motion made by Kaye Povlich to accept the 2018

budget, seconded by Kelly Hansen. Motion approved.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- We looked over the responses from our stewardship "Write the Vision" we collected. We saw common themes: increase in community outreach, membership growth to support additional church activities, expanded spiritual education, tough financial decision making, welcoming, accepting and accessible church.
- We approved to use The 5 Practices of Fruitful Congregations offered by the WI Conference. Pam Rossi in worship Dec. 31 & Jan. 7 to encourage members to participate on the forming team.
- Annual meeting will be on Jan. 28. Lunch and child care provided.
- Motion to amend the bylaws for the Endowment Fund use for operating expenses of the church was made by Kathy Immel, seconded by Amy Wheelock Brodzik. Motion to be put to a vote at the annual meeting on Jan. 28.
- Eagle Scout Project-Joey Hicks from Boy Scout Troop 252 presented his project idea for 6 planter boxes for the courtyard. The boxes will only be half full to decrease the weight and have handles to help with moving them about the church if needed.
- Fundraisers: Potbelly's will need vouchers starting in 2018; Cousin's Day Jan. 7 11AM-2 PM. Pam Rossi to look into Dominos fundraiser cards.
- Craft/Vendor Fair in Apr/May. Kelly Hansen to look into details.

Next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 10 6:30 PM. Brad closed the meeting at 8:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pam Rossi, Recording Secretary

**Financial Report for  
November 2017**



Balance as of 10/31/17	\$97.74
Receipts	5,927.70
Transfer in-Housing Allowance	2,500.00
Total Receipts	<u>8,427.70</u>
Expenses for November	\$7,410.11
Balance as of 11/30/17	\$1,115.33

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**Pastor Beth's Ministry Highlights  
from December:**

- The **Sunday School students** led us in a beautiful Christmas program Dec. 17 "God's Promises Came True!" Well done students and all helpers!
- Visiting each of our **homebound members** and delighting them with a Christmas bag from the church!
- We enjoyed wonderful and meaningful **Advent** and **Christmas** services together including Christmas Eve morning's "Happy Birthday Jesus!" worship for all ages, Christmas Eve's candle lit "Silent Night," and Dec. 31's informal worship with breakfast in Fellowship Hall.

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**A Special Thank You**

Donations of stuffed animals were greatly appreciated by the Hope House as well as Sojourner. Thank you to all who donated.



**Five Practices of Fruitful  
Congregations—Join the Team!**

From our "Write the Vision" stewardship campaign, we heard you! Now the Board has approved our church's participation in the WI Conference (UCC)'s program Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations to rediscover our congregation's purpose and passion! The program offers a practical process to strengthen the quality of our church's essential ministries and reconnect with God's purpose for our congregation.

We need 5-6 members to join a Five Practices team who'll meet monthly and bring the Five Practices to life! Do you love your church? Do want to help us plan & dream? Join us!

It is not necessary but would be very helpful for those considering being on the team to attend Feb. 3's Five Practices day-long training at the WI Conference office near Madison (carpooling is encouraged). See a Board Member for details or to express your interest!

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**January's Confirmation Classes!**

**Sun. Jan. 7**

What is **Baptism**?  
(Part 1: Jesus' Baptism)

**Sun. Jan. 21**

What is **Baptism**?  
(Part 2: My Baptism: What Does It Mean?)

**Sun. Jan. 28**

Attend **Congregational Annual Meeting** and  
Can **Faith** and **Science** Dance Together?

## The Hat & Mitten Tree



is available throughout the winter months for donations of hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, etc. All items will be donated to Human Concerns to support our neighbors in greater need.

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## Fellowship Time

Sign up to sponsor fellowship the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month. Kids now share in these snacks, so please offer at least 1 kid-friendly item (applesauce pouches, string cheese, cutie oranges, etc.) Sign up with a friend to make it easier!

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## January 14

### Three Kings Cake after worship

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### Noisy Offering Collection

Our 'soup kettle' Noisy Offerings from Nov. 12 was an impressive \$56, but we challenged you to raise at least \$100 on Dec. 11—and you did! We raised \$113.88 which brings our Noisy Offerings Nov/Dec. for Human Concerns total to almost \$170!

Keep saving up your extra change and small bills for **Sun. Jan. 14** when we'll collect for One Great Hour of Sharing, our special UCC offering which supports ministries around the globe!

## Change to Our Monthly Potbelly's Fundraiser

**Tues. Jan. 16 from 5-8 PM** (& every third Tuesday of the month) eat at Potbelly's in Oak Creek (in strip mall between Chick-fil-A & Five Guys).

The church gets 25% of the proceeds, but **starting in 2018, you will need a voucher.**

Pick one up at church or you can simply show on your phone our church's facebook page with the voucher which will be posted monthly.

Anyone in the community can support this fundraiser, so just let them know to show a voucher (print or on phone).

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## Sharing Sunday: January 21 (third Sunday of each month)

### Suggested Items:

### Pasta/Sauce & Boxed Meals

Your donations will be collected during children's time and shared with our neighbors in greater need through Human Concerns. Thank you for your generosity!

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### Looking Ahead...



Sunday, February 4

“Souper” Bowl Sunday

Bring small cans of any variety of soup along with small jars of your favorite peanut butter. All will help our hungry neighbors through Human Concerns.



**Free Community Meal**  
for South Milwaukee  
residents seeking or needing  
a hot meal & fellowship

**First Congregational**  
**United Church of Christ**  
**1111 N. Chicago Ave. South Milwaukee**  
**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month:**  
**Jan. 18 5-6:30 PM**

Please enter through the parking lot door  
*Sponsored by city religious communities,  
civic agencies and private businesses.*

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**January Birthdays**

Jeff Anderson	1/2
Chase Hodgins	1/4
Nadia Trudeau	1/10
Kaye Povlich	1/12
David Boucher	1/15
Michelle Uelmen	1/17
Myah Harder	1/20
Jack Pantaleo	1/22
Jilloyn Sodemann	1/27
Donald Boucher	1/29
Alex Pelczynski	1/31

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**January Anniversaries**

Skip & Bunny Scudder	1/24
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**Member Directory Updates**

**Elsie Parr:** 414-762-7489

**Mike Mason:** 414-336-1139

**Amber Mason:** 414-345-0418

**Margy Harder:** margyh56@gmail.com

**Lois Brosowsky** 2090 E. Spruce Court

**Return Your Child(ren)'s Baptismal  
Candles Jan. 14**

If you haven't brought your child(ren's)  
baptismal candles back to church in a while  
to celebrate their baptismal anniversary,  
bring them on Sun. Jan. 14 to be re-lit  
during children's time as a part of  
celebrating Jesus' baptism. Candle holders  
will be on the altar, so place candles there  
before worship. No need to let us know  
ahead of time!

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**An Important Reminder**

Due to privacy restrictions, when you or  
your loved one seeks medical treatment at a  
hospital, nursing home, etc, you need to call  
Pastor Beth (920) 207-3889 to have her  
visit, pray for you, or just be aware. Medical  
staff are no longer able to make these  
contacts.

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**Switch to Egiving?**

At any time, you can update your scheduled  
amount or begin automatically withdrawing  
your offering from your checking or savings  
account. Fill out an authorization form (pink  
paper in narthex or stlukesucc.us) and select  
your monthly withdrawal to be on the 1<sup>st</sup> or  
the 15<sup>th</sup>.

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**Worship Cancellations**

In the event that we would cancel worship or  
church events due to unfavorable weather  
conditions, watch channel 12 (WISN/ABC)  
or check online (wiscn.com) for an official  
announcement.



