



Wheat Ridge Congregational Church -United Church of Christ
January/February 2020 Volume 82, No. 1 & 2

Practice. Then Practice Some More.

As long as you live, keep learning how to live. — SENECA

Practice is Nine-Tenths. — RALPH WALDO EMERSON

I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of a person to elevate their life by conscious endeavor. — HENRY DAVID THOREAU

A concert pianist who does not rehearse? Absurd. An Olympic swimmer who refuses to train? Impossible. Learn to ride a bike or fly a plane without doing it over and over? Unrealistic. Become good at hope (*or joy, or compassion, or justice, or generosity . . .*) without practicing it? Not likely! So how do you practice hope or any of the other qualities related to meaningful and transformative living?

You practice by naming hope whenever and wherever you find it. When you see it in everyday events, in the actions of others, in the world around, you note it. You put up your antennae and you keep them up.

You practice by highlighting hope as you come across it. You can do that by pondering it, journaling about it, speaking of it, meditating on it.

You practice by taking hope in. You internalize the hopeful messages you find in the music you listen to, the movies you watch, the articles you read, the people you spend time with. You make conscious choices about what you see and hear.

You practice hope by expressing it. You tell yourself daily what you're hopeful about and what you're hoping for. You repeat stories of hope to others and to yourself.

You practice hope by preserving it. You keep record of it, if only in your mind. You build a reservoir of hope so you can return to it when you want, so you can call upon it when you need. You keep your hope nearby and available.

When you practice your ability to hope, it becomes like any other skill you develop. You get better at it over time. You become strong at doing it. You become more natural at showing it.

Who knows? By keeping at it, you may even become a pro.

Adapted from the book, *Finding Hope*



Celebrating Our Volunteers! On January 19 we will honor persons who have served as officers or committee members and are now leaving office. We also want to thank the committee heads who still have another term and all the new individuals coming on to committees. We have an amazing group of volunteers who faithfully serve the church and provide us with excellent leadership. The officers and committee heads who are continuing are: Board of Deacons, Gabrielle Sherry; Christian Education, Jennifer Brozovich; Moderator, Shirleen Joha; Clerk, Becky Anderson; Treasurer, Cynthia Parkinson. After many years as Head Trustee, Fred Rollenhagen is leaving the committee and position. We thank Jim Thomson for his willingness to become the new Head Trustee. Karen Parkinson will also be leaving the Financial Secretary position, and Deana Carter will become the new Financial Secretary. Christine Bland has been serving as the Pastoral relations chairperson. Thank you all for a wonderful year. Your leadership, commitment, and engagement in the mission, building, education, worship, and financial health of this church are essential!— Pastor Claudia

We Can't Thank You Enough!

Once again our wonderful congregation has donated generously to our church employees' Christmas bonus fund. Your kindness and generosity are amazing!

Mark, Ro, Nancy, David, Claudia and Melissa are all very touched and grateful!

Thank you from all of us!

The Wisdom to Survive

My mom said she learned how to swim. Someone took her out in the lake and threw her off the boat. That's how she learned how to swim. I said, "Mom, they weren't trying to teach you how to swim." — Paula Poundstone

Reframing what happens to us can be a healthy way to survive terrible things, or it can become a veil of denial that keeps us from moving on. Often, we simply have to trust that we will see the truth of things when we are strong enough and ready.

Yet the danger in not seeing things as they are or were is that we can start to believe that in order to learn something we need someone to throw us off the boat, or out of the relationship. If we can't see the difference between the cruelty or hardship we experience and the wisdom waiting in our reflex to survive, we can find ourselves needing crisis and pain in order to learn. While much learning comes from crisis and pain, not all of it needs to.

We don't need something to go wrong in order to change.

- *Sit quietly, and bring to mind one change you are afraid to make in your life.*
- *Breath deeply, and ask yourself: are you waiting for someone to push you off the boat?*
- *Breath gently, and don't worry now about what to do or how, simply exhale and feel the wisdom to survive and grow waiting inside you.*



Photo Gallery

We had a wonderful Advent and Christmas season. Here are a few pictures!

Tyce, Zoe, Conner, and Isabella did a great job playing shepherds and angels in the children's Christmas program



We had some Advent angels who helped put the Christmas wreath and tree up.



The Song Beams concluded the program by ringing and singing "Glory to God."



The choir performed the cantata "The Glory of Christmas."

Unfortunately we don't have any pictures of them singing. This is the crowd dispersing. We had 71 people in church, which was more than even on Christmas Eve.



We had several helpers decorating the Christmas tree!

Anniversaries and Birthdays for January and February.

Elisa Rains Thomas	9-Jan
Cathy Conner	12-Jan
Skyler Sherry	13-Jan
Dave Nachtweih	14-Jan
Renate Westfall	15-Jan
Constance Wise	19-Jan
Teagan Schultz	23-Jan
David Conner	24-Jan
Vic Westfall	27-Jan
McKenna Sherry	1-Feb
Wanda Bonner	5-Feb
Katie Packard	6-Feb
Melissa Baker	17-Feb
Mary Todd (turning 100!)	17-Feb
Jeri Mitchell	20-Feb
Lane Stocking	27-Feb
Tom Kenney	27-Feb
Krista Williams	28-Feb

**Don't wish me
happiness. I don't
expect to be happy. It's
gotten beyond that,
somehow. Wish me
courage and strength
and a sense of humor. I
will need them all.**

— *Anne Morrow
Lindbergh*



Offerings and Attendance

12/1/2019	\$ 2857.00	59
12/8/2019	\$ 2791.00	50
12/15/2019	\$ 3867.00	71
12/22/2019	\$ 2002.00	50
12/29/2019	\$ 1085.00	21

Total received for the general fund was \$12,602.00 . (Other revenues are reserved for specific purposes such as benevolences, special offerings etc.)

The church needs about \$10,000 per month to fund our operating expenses.

Dates to remember for January and February

- January 19 – Recognition Sunday
- February 2 –We will have a party celebrating the **retirement of Pastor David Conner**. The party is being held at the church from 11:30 until 1:00 pm.
- February 9 - **Melinda Townsend** will be preaching.
- February 22 - Women's Homelessness Initiative at 6th Avenue UCC.
- February 26 – Ash Wednesday



During this Advent and Christmas season our congregation participated in many worthwhile activities and donated to many projects and funds.

- ✓ Over 30 Christmas gifts were given to the Action Center.
- ✓ Our grocery cart was filled and delivered to the Action Center.
- ✓ We collected 512 pairs of socks for the homeless. The socks were then donated to the Action Center.
- ✓ An offering was received and distributed to the UCC Christmas Fund.
- ✓ We participated in another Women's homelessness Initiative, setting up cots and giving gift bags.
- ✓ Our mitten tree was overflowing with mittens, hats and gloves.
- ✓ You gave generously to the staff Christmas bonus fund.



Thank You!

Action Center Report

The Action Center is an organization that our church has supported since 1968. It provides an immediate and compassionate response to those in our community experiencing hardship and offers the resources and services needed to stabilize lives and promotes pathways lasting change. I received the following report from them:

On Wednesday, December 4, we attempted to break the world record for the Largest Sock Drive! **We collected 37,556 pairs of new socks.** Our goal was to collect 10,587 pairs of socks to raise awareness around homelessness issues in Colorado. The number represents those Colorado residents who were experiencing homelessness last year.

What a monumental feat! We're so appreciative of the community that not only continues to support the Action Center, but believes in helping those in need! **WE DID IT!!**

On December 23 we received notice from Guinness World Records that The Action Center now holds the world record for most socks collected in under 8 hours. We couldn't have done it without the support of the Faith Community.

The Action Center also reported: "On Sunday, November 24 we held our annual Thanksgiving Meal Kit Distribution! **We were able to provide 1,981 Meal Kits, which will make nearly 5,570 meals for families** in need this past Thanksgiving Season. Each kit was filled with all the 'fixin's' for a traditional Thanksgiving meal."

— Pastor Claudia

Mouse Morsels

Hello, Wheat Ridge UCCers! Welcome to the new year. We hope this new year will be filled with meaning, adventure, and opportunities for compassionate action!

First we are going to start off with the travel news! We have a lot to report. **Fred Rollenhagen** spent Thanksgiving with his sister and family in Oregon. He visited some botanical gardens and said they were beautiful. **Sue Schafer** and **Barb Nash** took an amazing 20-day trip traveling through Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos. **Cynthia and Karen Parkinson** took a trip to Kansas City to meet their new great-niece, Isadora Loretta Sorbelli (Izzie). They said it was very special. Aren't they cute!



The **Anderson** family celebrated **Bella's** 10th birthday at the Great Wolf Lodge in Colorado Springs. The lodge has an indoor water park, arcade, child friendly bowling alley and more. They all had a great time! **Deana Carter** and **Ro Rains** have a trip planned to Hawaii for February. I bet they can't wait! Speaking of Ro, Ro was featured in the Porter Hospice Foundation Newsletter. **Ro** is a Certified Music Practitioner, and visits the Porter Hospice Residence every week where she plays her flute to offer comfort and peace. Beautiful!

The Advent and Christmas Season was filled with wonderful music, bells, special people, flute playing, and inspiring programs. The choir offered a beautiful cantata called "The Glory of Christmas" and it really was glorious. A caroling quartet also went to sing for some of our senior seniors. They brought joy and cheer. Wonderful! **Tyce and Zoe Brozovich** along with **Bella and Conner Anderson** did a great job in the children's Christmas program. They played angels and shepherds. **PJ Idler** was going to participate in the program but she was sick. We are happy to report she has recovered from her illness but she does have an ongoing eye condition. Please keep her in your prayers. Please also keep the **Daly family** in your prayers. We were all so sorry when Keith departed this world. He was an exemplary human being who devoted his life to making the world a better place.

A big shout out to Kevin Meyer for getting the Knox Box installed and to Shirleen Joha and Kendall Johnson for initiating the installation the Ring alarm system.

Both projects were more complicated than expected.

We mice wish you a very Happy New Year.



Let us know if you have any news! We love to hear from you! — *the Mice*

The Church Mouse is published monthly by the Wheat Ridge Congregational Church, United Church of Christ. The deadline for copy is the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Articles may be handwritten or typed, but we prefer plain text sent via email to wheatridgeucc@gmail.com. Articles must indicate the name of the writer and/or sender. Unsigned articles are written by the editor. The church website is: www.wheatridgeucc.org. News and photos for the website should be sent to the same email address listed above.

Sunday worship is at 10:00 a.m. Sunday School for children is held during morning worship beginning at approximately 10:20, following the Time With Our Children in the sanctuary. Adult Education begins at 9:00 a.m. every Sunday. Office hours are 9:00 to noon daily. Monday is the minister's day off. The pastor may be reached at 303-238-6271 (office), 303-522-7016 (cell), or wheatridgeucc@gmail.com.