

Pastor Anne's Message, January 2023

The New Year is here! Welcome 2023! From Deuteronomy 11:12 ~ “A land that the Lord your God looks after. The eyes of the Lord your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.”

Know that whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here! Sharing with you this month, several mini-meditations and thoughts to lift you up in this season.

God of beginnings, be with us as we ring in the New Year! Be with our families and friends, our new friends whom we have yet to meet, our churches, our communities, our nation, and this whole wide world of people who are waking up to a fresh start. Thank you, Lord, for all you have in store for us this year in doing your work. Let us be willing partners in the important days ahead.

Sometimes it's the little things, Lord. It's the little things that 'get to us' and cause us stress: the driver who cuts us off in traffic, the spilled milk at dinner, our own foolish mistakes. But it's also the little things that can restore us: a compliment at work, a quick hug from a friend, a favorite hymn being sung at church. Please grant us peace and calm to deal with the little problems of life and an open heart to notice and appreciate the little joys as well.

Thank you for my family – the closest members who share my daily life and the larger extended family of nieces and nephews, aunts and uncles, cousins, and in-laws. We ask you dear God to be with them today, to send your angels to watch over them. Please bring healing to those who are suffering physically or mentally, comfort to those who are sorrowful, and a clear path to those who are struggling with a decision.



We are in the bright, cold days of winter now. Thank you for these days and for the brightness of the stars at night. We ask your blessings on the snowplow operators working through the days and nights of snowfall, the generous people who shovel their neighbors' sidewalks, and the doctors, nurses, technicians, and pharmacists who persevere in busy, demanding times. For all Essential Workers we give thanks!

Thank you for music, in all its wondrous varieties; from the sweet child singing nursery rhymes or “Happy Birthday” to the choirs, bands, and orchestras; pianos, guitars, and drum sets in many homes. Music is such a great gift! Let us use our voices to praise you, O God!

Happy New Year to everyone and may God shower you with His blessings!

Pastor Anne

Trustees Report

The past two months have been busy trying to get the carpets cleaned upstairs and the dining room floor cleaned and waxed in the dining room.



Bids were presented from Above All Window and Mr. Sandless Flooring. The council accepted the bid from Above All Window as they did carpets as well as the vinyl tile surface in the dining room.

After two weeks of delays and having all of the furniture stuffed into the office space and nursery Above All was released from the job and Mr. Sandless came to redo the carpets and floors. The carpet upstairs is so much cleaner and the dining room floor looks amazing. Thank you, Mr. Sandless for coming to our rescue.

There are a couple of basement lights that still need some attention, but at this point we are waiting on parts. We want to thank Todd Conard for changing the bulbs and fixing lights for us.

The contract between the Town of Collbran and the Congregational Church's Mother's Park was reviewed, and it was agreed that the

Town of Collbran will continue to pay for the water for the park and the power for the security light. The Church will continue to take care of the park, maintain the sprinklers and cover other expenses for fertilizer or grub control. The one change was that the contract will be for 5 years rather than the 10 years it had originally been written for.

Thank you to Tilda and Robert for keeping the building and the walks in great order. It is greatly appreciated.

Trustees,

Sue Bellotti, Cindy Price, Julia Cox, and Bernice Yanez.

Poinsettias Memorials

Beautiful poinsettias decorated the sanctuary for the Sundays of Advent again this year. Individuals purchased the flowers in memory or honor of family members and friends.

Tom and Julia Cox in memory of Scott Rienks, Grandma Ruth, and Grandma Ann

Dan and Shannon Currier in memory of Carleton and Joy Currier and in honor of Howard Christie and in memory of Bennie Christie

Sveto and Anne Djokic in memory of Miodrag and Helena Djokic and Reverend Don and Priscilla Morrison

Lew and Tilda Evans in memory of Nels and Rhoda Evans and John and Eric Myers

Mike and Beverly Loftus in memory of Agnes, Willard, and Terry Holtzer and Jean Loftus and Teresa Rex

Katy Sheffield in memory of Grandpa Bob and Nonno Sheffield

Sylvia Spangler in memory of Winnie Cook



Annual Meeting

The annual meeting will be held January 29, 2023. Annual Meeting reports will be handed out to the congregation January 24, 2023. It is important that all office and committee reports be given to Tilda by January 15, 2023.

There will be a potluck luncheon in the dining room following church, and then those attending the meeting will meet upstairs in the overflow room for the meeting. This will provide a warm, quiet space with a microphone. Great idea! Please plan on attending.

Nominations for the Council

<u>OFFICE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>LENGTH OF SERVICE</u>
Moderator	Tilda Evans	1 of 1 year
Moderator Elect	Beverly Loftus	1 of 1 year
Past Moderator	Julia Cox	1 of 1 year
Clerk	Monica Klingler	1 of 1 year
Treasurer	Sue Bellotti	1 of 1 year
Christian Education	Julia Cox	2 of 2 years
	Berenice Yanez	1 of 2 years
Music Director	Shannon Currier	1 of 1 year
Stewardship Chair	Cyndi Leinberger	1 of 1 year
Trustees	Cindy Price	2 of 2 years
	Julia Cox	2 of 2 years
	Sue Bellotti*	1 of 2 years
	Mike Loftus	1 of 2 years
Stewards	Bev Loftus	2 of 2 years
	Lew Evans	2 of 2 years
	Jerry Gaddy	1 of 2 years
	Loi Hittle*	1 of 2 years
Women's Fellowship	Sue Bellotti	1 of 1 year

Scammers Beware!

There seem to be more scams coming our way over the holidays and into the New Year. I would like to take a minute to try to give some guidance to avoid being caught in these sneaky webs.

Beware of anyone calling on the phone telling you they have a package to deliver to you but there must be an error in the address. **DO NOT GIVE THEM YOUR ADDRESS.** Hang up the phone.

The following article was received from the Social Security Administration warning of current, active scams.

Many of us spend the holidays relaxing and sharing in goodwill with friends and family. But some bad actors use the holidays to take advantage of people's generous spirits. Scammers frequently target the older and other more vulnerable members of our communities. They pretend they are from Social Security or another government agency to steal your money or personal information.

Caller ID, texts, or documents sent by email may look official, but they are not. Fraudsters are calling to verify information about the 2023 cost-of-living adjustment for people who get benefits. Remember, this adjustment is automatic and a beneficiary does not need to verify anything. Social Security won't ask you to provide information or money to get your benefit increase. Know that how we do business with you doesn't change because it's the holidays. We may email or text you about programs and services, but we will never ask for personal information via email or text.



Recognizing the signs of a scam can help you avoid falling victim to one. These scams primarily use the telephone to contact you, but scammers may also use email, text messages, social media, or U.S. mail. Scammers **pretend** to be from an agency or organization you know to gain your trust. Scammers say there is a **problem with your Social Security number or account**. Scammers **pressure** you to act immediately. Scammers tell you to **pay** in a specific way.

Know what to look for and be alert. Scammers don't take days off and neither should you... when it comes to making sure you identify suspicious communications and report it. If you receive a questionable call, text, or email, hang up or don't respond and report it at oig.ssa.gov/report. Scammers frequently change their methods with new tactics and messages to trick people. We encourage you to stay up to date on the latest news and advisories by following SSA's Office of the Inspector General on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#) by subscribing to receive email alerts.

Those working on their computers are fair game to many scams. There are several indicators of illicit activity. If you did not request information from a company's website do not respond to their queries online. Emails are often fraudulent and if you respond to the email or call the phone number on the email you are caught in their web. **HANG UP THE PHONE IF YOU EVER**

HAVE ANY QUESTION. Do not give out bank account information, your name, date of birth, or social security number. As one friend discovered they requested she fill out a check and hold it up so they could take a picture of it.

If you have a question about your Social Security, Medicare, or Bank Accounts it is important you contact the office directly. The phone number will be on the letter you received in the mail with all of your correct information.

If you are contacting Social Security, Medicare, or your bank on your computer be sure you have a secure website. It is important that you read the address before you ever open the page. It is often the case a bogus company will supersede your query and direct you into their web page before you realize what has happened. Government services should not cost you anything. If your credit card is requested or an amount posted to provide the service it is important to close the page. Back out of the search engine you selected and start over being much more cautious.

People can call and tell you they are with any company and agency in the country but it is your responsibility to not fall into their traps. The FBI has no reason to call you. Believe me that is not how they would contact you if they wanted to talk to you.

The power company will not call up and ask for payment in gift cards from Walmart. **HANG UP!**

Donating to charities over the phone and online can also be fraud. Do not give out your credit card numbers or personal information. If you choose to donate to a charity select one you know well and trust. Donate locally or to a charity you are already connected with.

Like everyone says, “I don’t want to scare you but...” Maybe I do want to scare you just a little.

Please be cautious, be suspicious, quick to stop the call or computer contact. Read your senior citizen magazines when they come in the mail. They often have articles on protecting yourself and your information. Be informed.

Sue Bellotti



THE MUSTARD SEED
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
COLLBRAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
PO BOX 160
COLLBRAN, CO 81624

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Annual Church Meeting

Sunday, January 29, 2023

Potluck lunch immediately after the
church service

Annual meeting to follow after potluck

Agenda includes adoption of budget,
election of church officers,
and by-law change