

### Education:

#### Adult Christian Education:

- We have a faithful Adult Sunday School, that meets 9:30am every Sunday, and studies various Biblical studies and current day issues.
  - All types of resources are used but we reference to the Bible and folks take turns reading the verses. On occasion, we will use:
    - The Wired Word.
    - Videos and books from our own library. (Library catalog available upon request.)
      - An example of curriculum that we enjoyed was “The Purpose of a Driven Life”
- Manna is a contemporary worship with contemporary music. We focus on the weekly lectionary and sermons for the week. We also have discussions with questions that are presented on a screen. Manna meets once a month.
- During the summer, the adults used to have class during VBS.
- Small Group Bible Study – monthly held on a Saturday.

#### Retreats & Training:

- In the past we have done Council Retreats: Women’s, Confirmation, Youth, Confirmation, Council
- We support continuing education for Pastor and Organist.
- Sunday School teachers have training and retreats.
  - The Sunday School team and educational board will meet quarterly.

#### Children Christian Education:

- Children Sunday school meets during the 10:30am service. Children are dismissed from the service after the Children’s Moment.
  - During Covid, we offer online Sunday School called “Hey Kids,” we are using “Sermon 4 Kids” and “Ministry for Children.”
  - There are Monthly Zoom meetings for youth fellowship.
  - Curriculum is decided at Sunday School meeting, curriculum is intergenerational.
- We offered Christian Kids Club – this group normally met during the week.
- Vacation Bible School is held during the summer for one week, Cokesbury is normally chosen for the curriculum.
- Children’s programs help in the following areas: singing after a baptism, parade during Palm Sunday, bringing in the vegetables and canned food during the Harvest Home Sunday,
- Youth Sunday
- After the lessons are taught, children participate in singing, praying and creative expression.
- Confirmation is offered while children are in 6<sup>th</sup> grade or older this is a two-year program. Confirmants participate in a variety programs in the church to earn confirmation credit and attend a variety of field trips.
- We would like to see Youth Group offered again. (Lay lead)



## **Huffs Church Who We Are**

### **Community Outreach:**

**Our congregation has supported the following issues in our community:**

- Drug Abuse Awareness – Local Community Task Force
  - At events, we pray with individuals and offer information about activities at our church.
  - We also help financially with organizations at activities that are held, in the community.
- We support and participate in the Potato Project.
- We used to hold a Hunger/Homeless Walk.
- Members have given testimonies on various issues, during our worship services.

### **Mission to our Congregation means helping locally and globally.**

**We understand that our local community is just as important.**

- We do mission trips both in the USA and in other countries. Mission Trips are inspired by individuals or groups who organize the trip.
- The Mission Endowment is available to help new Mission programs in the church as well any new non-profit outreach programs in the community.
- We provide financial/volunteer support:
  - Allentown Rescue Mission – serving a meal at least twice a year
  - Local Needy: helping out individuals or family with a specific need.
  - Members can donate to One Great Hour of Sharing/ for a special offering.
  - Disaster Relief
  - Valentine Card collection – gift cards from local businesses for those who are in need.
  - Food pantry - Boyertown Multi-Service, Open Link in Upper Perk, Friend's Incorporated (hunger/homeless are agencies we support)
  - Topton Home visits
  - Joe's Café that provides chaplains with coffee for soldiers in active military
  - Making blankets for the needy.
  - Mitten Tree & Seed tree for needy folks in David, Kentucky

### **Disaster Relief:**

- During times of disaster, we have taken a special collection. Some individuals from our congregation have gone to help areas in need. Locally we help the following areas:
  - Members/Pastor reach out to families and see what their needs are.
  - Local Needy fund
  - Visiting Shut ins prior to COVID
  - Sending out greeting cards
  - Helping to get groceries in time of need.
  - Drive people to medical appointments/church



## **Worship :**

### **Prayer in Worship**

- During worship, we pray in the following ways:
  - Youth Sunday: youth lead the prayer.
  - Worship assistants help with prayer.
  - Responsive Prayer
  - During baptisms, new members, installation of new council members, Sunday School teachers, confirmation special prayers.
  - We pray during various committee and various functions we hold.

### **Attendance & Changes to Worship:**

- Our 8am service had members that were committed to worshipping at that time, while our 10:30am had more members in attendance.
- Our highest time of attendance is during Easter and Christmas, when families gather together.
- During summer, our attendance is the lowest due to family vacations.
- When COVID hit, we began with prerecorded online services, which we continue to offer on our website and Facebook. Then we moved to one outdoor service in June when our interim pastor began. When it was safe, we began to worship indoors with guidelines. Both indoor and outdoor worship services can be heard on the FM car radio.
- Prior to COVID, we offered a variety of special services for families. (Pet blessings, Rally day, Blue Christmas, VBS Sunday, Healing services, Youth Sunday, etc.)
- We discussed having TV monitors in the Sanctuary, at this time we have decided not to move forward. We also discussed holding services other than Sunday morning.
- Manna began in 2014 as a new format of service. Manna had a steady attendance with our current members. New ways of holding this service are being discussed.
- Our congregation enjoys celebrating Advent and Christmas, New Year's, Lent and Easter with the added music and special elements.

## **Holy Communion:**

- We offer communion on the first service of every month and during special services. (like Christmas and Easter, etc.) To honor our two traditions, we alternate having communion at the altar or in the pew.
- Prior to COVID, trained Lay Visitors took communion to shut ins. During COVID, we pass out prepackaged elements for in person worship and we invite member to supply their own elements during online service.
- Our children receive Holy Communion after taking classes with the pastor. Parents and pastor decide when a child is ready to attend. Some children wait until they are confirmed to take communion.
- Children are blessed by the pastor if they are not receiving communion.

### Worship Planning:

- Currently, pastor plans the structure of the service with the help of the Music Director and Media Specialist.
- This will continue after the pandemic is over.
- For special services, committees have input.



*Our church was built in 1852 and our historic pipe organ dates back to 1865. We have stained glass windows, hand painted murals displayed around the altar area and a painted ceiling. A few congregation members decorate the sanctuary throughout the year. In the early 2000's our church members donated more than \$900,000 for renovations. Check out our website at [www.huffschurch.com](http://www.huffschurch.com) for more information about the history of our church and campus.*



### Structure of Service:

- We follow the format of the UCC and ELCA traditions, but we seldom sing the ELCA liturgy.
- Lay leaders help to lead the service.
- On occasion when the Pastor is on vacation, congregational members will lead the service.
- Occasionally we have dramatic readings, liturgical dance, and special music.
- Our youth help with Youth Sunday and VBS closing program.
- The highlights of our service are the sermon and music.

### Music in Worship:

- We have a variety of music during our service. We have talented guests and members with diverse musical talents.
- We continue to have liturgical dance perform on special occasions.
- In the past, we have had a contemporary band.
- Our congregation likes to make a joyful noise, it is important for our service.
- We currently have the following choirs: Children's (6-10 members), Senior (15- 20 members), Bell Choir (12 members), Day Bell choir (6 members).
- We currently use the following hymnals: With One Voice (ELCA – contemporary music), The Lutheran Book of Worship (green book), The Hymnal (Reformed, 1941). We currently do not have intentions on purchasing new hymnals.
- We are trying to balance technology and tradition as we introduce new songs.
- Our church holds special musical cantatas and performances, and we sponsor special choirs.

### Sermon:

- A good sermon for us is one that inspires and remains with us through the following days.
- Some sermons challenge us to action; help us to forgive others and bring us peace.
- We like sermons that compare biblical texts to everyday life.
- We occasionally like sermon series that convey a theme over several weeks.

### Community Worship:

- We work with another local church throughout the year for various seasonal community services.
- We also offer special community services (Labyrinth walk, Seder Meal, Last Supper dramatization, Blue Christmas, New Year's Wish, Pet blessings, Memorial Day remembrance, healing services).
- We enjoy gatherings after worship with a covered dish or refreshments.
- We welcome everyone to participate and help out with the services.



### **Congregational Life**

#### **Retreats:**

- In the past we have had retreats for Council and committees for brainstorming and planning.
- We have paired with other congregations for Women's retreat.
- During confirmation, a retreat was held with confirmation students and their mentors.
- Our youth have participated in retreats.
- We have found them helpful and are interested in having retreats in the future.

#### **Prayer and Spiritual Practices:**

- Individually we pray and spend time, listening to all viewpoints, before making a decision together.
- We welcome people sharing their ideas during meetings and decision-making processes.
- Our communal spiritual practices include: Labyrinth walks, meditation, and prayer groups.
- During council and committee meetings, members begin with devotions and end with the Lord's prayer. We teach our confirmands various ways to pray. For us, prayer helps us to find spiritual peace and guidance. We draw closer to God by praying for ourselves and others. Pastor prays before special events.

#### **Community Events:**

- Our congregation has regular events that allow us to get to know our members and community and help us to lead better. Church members and youth enjoy both the work and fellowship, involved.
  - Church picnics
  - hoe down
  - oyster pie sales
  - apple dumplings
  - Armchair traveler
  - Highway cleanup
  - Christmas Caroling
  - Volleyball
  - Egg hunt – telling the Easter story.
  - Monthly summer educational program
  - Christmas Pageant – sometimes in service
  - Christmas Open house
  - Fall Festival
  - Labyrinth walk.
  - Last Supper
  - Variety of music
  - Super Bowl of Caring
  - Harvest Home
  - Previously held activities:
    - Fersommling (meal and entertainment in PA Dutch)
    - Chicken BBQ
    - Clam Bake
    - Talent Show
    - Musical Plays

## **Organizational Structure**

### **Budget Process:**

- We have an operating and capital budget which are both documented.
  - Capital budget is used for large expenses spent for maintaining the buildings.
  - Operating budget covers the daily expenses of the church.
- Our budgets do not include volunteer hours due to the amount of volunteers helping with events.
- Groups submit financial needs for the upcoming year and for future planning based on what was spent in the previous year.
- At the spring congregational meeting, a year-end report is submitted from each group displaying their accomplishments and financial standings.
- We have a Mission Endowment Fund that supports new ministry outreach in the community.
  - A new ministry outreach can be supported for five years through this program.
- We try to support the ELCA and UCC with 10% of our operating budget.
- We have special monthly offerings for additional outreach.

### **Outreach Goals:**

- Outreach goals are set by committees throughout the year.

### **Decision Making:**

- Many of the congregational decisions are made through committees with support from Union Council as needed.
  - Ideas for fundraisers are presented to Union Council for approval.
- Budget is initially approved by Union Council before presenting to the congregation at the Fall meeting for formal approval.
- Union Council meets once a month for an average of 2-2 ½ hours a month.
  - Other than attending Union Council, participating in other committee meetings is at the Pastor's discretion.
- Ladies Aide meets monthly, all other committees meet quarterly or as needed.
- Leadership positions and committee membership can be difficult to fill because of the time commitment.
- Committees communicate to the congregation through an Eblast, social media, bulletin, newsletter, and church website.
- When a quick decision needs to be made, communication is made through email, zoom and phone tree. Union Council or the Executive Committee will make most decisions, but if a Congregational meeting is needed, a two-week written notice is given.
- The annual report, Bylaws, and chart of committees are available upon request.

## **Previous Suggestions**

- Continue to invest in our facilities and grounds. Visible progress at Huff's is a signal to the community that things are happening, and we are a lively congregation.
- Revisit the idea of media in the sanctuary and the use of on-line tools for meetings and small groups continue on-line worship presence.
- More in person meetings, small groups, Bible studies, and retreats.
- Continue to broaden our awareness of community needs and increase our involvement with them.
- Offer fellowship opportunities.
- Incorporate all members into the life of the church, with a special focus on the youth.



## **Questions to Ponder...**

*Please bring your responses on Sunday, May 23, 2021.*

*If you cannot attend, please e-mail responses to [rahelwelch@yahoo.com](mailto:rahelwelch@yahoo.com)  
or return them to the church office.*

**Where is God calling us?**

**How has Covid changed us?**

**Where do we see possibilities in Ministry and Mission Outreach?**

**Do you have anything to add about who we are?**

