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# Union Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Outreach and Justice News

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*“God is in the manger,  
wealth in poverty, light  
in darkness, succor in  
abandonment.”*

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

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## Sign Up Now

If you want to get involved and show some love to FTC residents, sign up at church on November 27 or December 4 OR email Sandra at [millersandr@gmail.com](mailto:millersandr@gmail.com) or text her at 501-908-5898. However, you sign up, please include both your email address and cell number.

We get as much as we give when we bring love and hope to people society has forgotten and those who serve them day in and day out. Thank you for your love and caring!

*Sandra Miller and Matthew Mahaffey with the Outreach and Justice Team*

## Advent/Christmas Celebration with FTC Neighbors

Just across the UACC parking lot, the Forensic Treatment Center, formerly Metropolitan Psychiatric Center, houses 75 men and women who have a major mental illness, brain injury, intellectual disability or other conditions severe enough to cause them to be unable to understand legal proceedings against them. UACC's own Matthew Mahaffey, a public defender who defends many clients from there, describes the residents as "largely forgotten by society."

Except by UACC, that is. Before COVID, the UACC choir sang for FTC residents four or five times as an outreach project. FTC Chaplain Karen Pitt describes the concerts as the high point of residents' time at FTC, a hopeful sign that they are not forgotten. Chaplain Karen says more than anything, FTC residents need to interact with people who care about them.

Putting together FTC's needs and the choir's outreach, UACC is going Christmas Caroling at FTC on Sunday, December 11 after cookies and coffee at church. Whether or not you choose to carol, there are lots of opportunities for adults and children to help show our love and give hope.

### Opportunities To Give Hope to FTC Residents

**Sign Christmas Cards:** We'll have 75 Christmas Cards that need brief handwritten words of caring signed by you on tables in the lobby Sunday, December 4 and 11 before and after church.

**Kids Draw Pictures for FTC:** We'll have markers and paper so kids can draw pictures on December 4 and 11 to give to the three FTC units to put on their bulletin boards. Alternatively, kids are invited to draw pictures at home and bring them to church on those Sundays.

**Help Wrap Gift Bags:** Wednesday, December 7 from 9:00 to 11:30 am at UACC we need 5-7 volunteers to assemble gift bags for 75 residents. It's a great opportunity to meet people you don't know yet, catch up with people you haven't seen for a while and make a difference in someone's life over spiced cider and Christmas cookies. And if you like, bring a friend.

**Come Sing with Us:** We need 12-15 carolers to walk across the parking lot to FTC after worship and coffee on Sunday, December 11. Pure Catering will provide lunch. Scott Schoonover will invite and encourage members of the choir to participate and bring music and song sheets. So if you love to sing and want to bring the hope of Christmas to FTC, come join in. Wear your Santa hats, reindeer antlers, outdated Christmas sweaters, ornament earrings, Dickensian scarves and top hats. It might just be the most heart-warming Christmas activity of the season. Let's get festive!

**Help With COVID Testing:** COVID tests are required for all who visit FTC. Chaplain Karen will be at UACC to administer COVID tests during coffee/lunch time after worship on December 11. We need 2 volunteers to time the tests. **SEE SIDEBAR ← to find out how to sign up!**

*“At this Christmas,  
when Christ comes, will  
he find a warm heart?”*

*Mark the season of  
Advent by loving and  
serving the others with  
God’s own love and  
concern.”*

-Mother Teresa



## Sharing Warmth at Christmas with Soldan School

UACC has had a rich relationship with Soldan International Studies High School, where nearly all of its 500 or so students qualify for free and reduced-price lunches.

Over the years, for example, UACC has tutored struggling students and provided breakfast snacks as well as hosted student art shows and meet-the-artist events. Most activities stopped with COVID. With Christmas fast approaching, the Outreach and Justice team has reached out to Soldan to reignite our work together.

### Christmas Gifts -- Winter Coats for Kids

As a first step, UACC has committed to provide winter coats (and maybe even hats, gloves and scarves) for the children of 10 families in dire need for Christmas. There are two ways you can be a part of this opportunity to make a difference.

**As a Group:** Sunday School Classes, AGUA, Choir, Faith Formation, Plant and Property, Outreach, and other groups are encouraged to sign up as a group to provide coats (and hats, scarves or gloves, if you want) for all the children in a family. Commit now by emailing Rochelle Kaskowitz at [rakasko@gmail.com](mailto:rakasko@gmail.com). Provide the name and telephone number of the group's point of contact. You will receive the name, age, gender and size for each child in the family on Saturday, December 3. (One Sunday School Class has already made a commitment).

**As Individuals and Families:** You are encouraged to sign up for one or more individual children. To do this, take an ornament off the Angel Tree in the lobby on Sunday, December 4 (and December 11 if there are any left). Ornaments will include the name, age, gender and size of coat needed. On the table next to the Angel Tree, you will find a signout sheet asking for your name, telephone and email address as well as the name and ID number on the ornament.

### Wrapped Coats Due At Church December 12

Gift wrapped coats and whatever hats, scarves and gloves you might want to include are due at the church no later than December 12 by 4:30 pm.

*Rochelle Kaskowitz and Rose Fischer* are our leaders for this project.

### **WHEN GIVING IS ALL WE HAVE**      *by Alberto Rios, Poet Laureate of Arizona*

***We give because someone gave to us.***

***We give because nobody gave to us.***

***We give because giving has changed us.***

***We give because giving could have changed us.***

***We have been better for it, We have been wounded by it -***

***Giving has many faces: It is loud and quiet, big, though small, diamond in wood-nails.***

***Its story is old, the plot worn and the pages too,***

***But we read this book, anyway, over and over again:***

***Giving is, first and every time, hand to hand, mine to yours, yours to mine.***

***You gave me blue and I gave you yellow,***

***Together we are simple green. You gave me***

***What you did not have, and I gave you***

***What I had to give – together, we made***

***Something greater from the difference.***

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### **Outreach and Justice Ministry Team Members**

**Dianne Benjamin**

**Kathy Davis**

**Rose Fischer**

**Jacque Foster (Chair)**

**Rochelle Kaskowitz**

**Daniel Leach**

**Matthew Mahaffey**

**Sandra Miller**

Please contact a member of the Outreach and Justice Team if you have questions about UACC's work in the community and the world.

### A Note on Giving

If you are looking for other opportunities to support the **MEMORIAL BOULEVARD CHRISTIAN CHURCH FOOD PANTRY**, you might want to consider a year-end, tax-deductible cash donation. Any Missouri taxpayer who donates cash or food to a Missouri food pantry may claim a tax credit. The credit claimed shall equal 50% of the value of the contribution or donation made. Credits cannot exceed \$2,500 per taxpayer per year, cannot exceed the taxpayer's tax liability, and **acknowledgement of the donation using form MO-FPT must be signed by a representative of the pantry organization.** More information and the MO-FPT filing form are available

## Memorial Blvd Food and Clothing Pantry

We at Union Avenue have been committed to supporting Memorial Blvd Christian Church with the food ministry in their high need area. We commit financially to the MBCC Food Pantry each year; this year our church budgeted contribution has been \$2,500.00. We are glad to be able to make this commitment. Our financial commitment is a beginning; it is a gift that calls us to deeper engagement with God's people in need of care and with our Disciples community at Memorial Blvd who welcome us to work hand in hand, and heart to heart with them.

As noted in Daniel's reflection last week, we hope to have at least one UACC volunteer at the Food Pantry each Thursday. Daniel and Randy plan to volunteer one Thursday per month, and we would love to fill in a schedule that would offer UACC support and relationship-building each week!

Please contact *Daniel Leach* the first week of December to talk with him about volunteering!

Each Sunday, we will continue to collect your food donations to be placed in crates in foyer.

### Items Needed at This Time

**Canned soup, canned vegetables, canned beans, as well as peanut butter.**

**They also need fresh meat products to serve during their hot meal distribution.**

Financial contributions will allow the Pantry staff to make these fresh meat purchases. If you would like to make a financial contribution you may place a check in the offering plate. Please make it payable to Union Avenue Christian Church, indicating on the 'memo' line that it is for MBCC Food Pantry. You may also contribute online through the Union Avenue Givelify App. There you may indicate that it is for the Memorial Blvd Food Pantry.

Daniel and Randy took these pictures (along with the ones shared last week) titling them

*'Back of house'* It takes a lot of help to feed so many, so well, with such love!

Now thank we all  
our God

With hearts,

and hands,

and voices ...

- Martin Rinkart

