



## *Friedens Church of Washington, UCC*

*“A Country Church with a New Spirit”  
Open Doors and Open Hearts*

Grace to you and peace in the name of Jesus Christ,

Another year ends and a new one is upon us. Another Christmas has passed, presents have been given, the parties are over, the decorations are being put away, and the pounds have been added because of all that good food! The New Year often brings resolutions, and with them a renewed determination to do better, to make it right, to step forward. We remind ourselves that God is always with us, guiding us, helping us, leading us to His Kingdom. Emmanuel—God-with-us, has come, and our Lord will not leave us in darkness, for a light still shines, the light of Jesus Christ.

As we face a new year, many are anxious about the state of our world, our economy, and what will come of us in the months and years ahead. And unfortunately, when we need to be reminded of God’s love and assured of God’s continued presence, it has been unsettling to find folks upset at church. In the last couple of months things have been tense with emotions running high, feelings easily hurt, words spoken in haste. Things can make you angry, especially when they concern deep-felt beliefs and values. As anyone knows who’s been married, sometimes fights can be hurtful, and what we want to say is not always what comes out.

It is time to heal.

Within this newsletter is a letter from James Kolkhorst, council president, about the formation of a committee to study the pros and cons of disassociating with the United Church of Christ. Perhaps another denomination is a better fit for our church. I believe this can be potentially very healing for the congregation and for those who have been upset about our denomination. But there is a danger as well, for no matter which way this goes, whether we stay in the United Church of Christ or we leave, some are bound to be very upset with the decision. The committee must be very open with the process, solicit as much input as possible from the congregation, and listen well. It will require research, listening, an open mind, and most of all prayer to discern God’s will and direction for our church, which all of us love so much. And as we are a church, made up of many members, we must strive for consensus and unity. Though folks may have strong opinions, ultimately the church together will have to make this decision, and individuals will need to surrender to the will of the body.

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Paul reminds us in Romans 8:28: “We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.”

If we truly put our love of God first in this process, listen for His voice, seek to do His will, no matter what the outcome, we can trust in our Lord to use our congregation to bring glory to God. And we have nothing to be afraid of, for God walks beside us.

And as another New Year dawns, let us pray for God’s blessing upon our church, that we may come together in the unity of Jesus Christ, bound one to another, bound to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Blessings and Peace,  
Pastor Ron