



FIRST CHURCH CHATTER

November 2021

We are always looking for stories, poems, photos, thoughts to contribute. If you have notices about upcoming events which you would like published, please let [Anne Short](#) or [Jody Green](#) know and we will try to include. Thanks.

We are continuing the new layout this month, with larger, 1" margins, to show the poems and reflections as they were intended. We await your comments if you want this to continue or prefer the columns as has been our previous style. You can connect with Jody Green, Anne Atkinson Short or Carrie Waara for comments if you wish.

This is another edition of our church newsletter. We thank those members and friends who have contributed stories, biographies, reflections, letters, poems and encourage any who wish to contribute to our church newsletter. As you can read in this edition, we have many talented friends and church members. We would like to get to know all of you better and encourage you to send your thoughts, poems, stories, photos, to us to publish. Thanks so much.

The newsletter will be printed at the beginning of each month and be sent via email to church members and friends, be sent by mail to those who would prefer a written copy and be available in the foyer for all to pick up when the church is reopened.

Hyperlinks: If you received this as a *.PDF file, use the links to take you Chatter pages, internet sites and such, or to open your email program to respond to an author. If you received a paper copy, links to the sites can be copied and pasted into your browser to take you to those sites:

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Charitable Tax Deduction

From Rev. Mark Seifried:

Churches Should Inform Members of the [Universal Charitable Tax Deduction](#) for 2021:

(<https://www.sneucc.org/blogdetail/universal-charitable-tax-deduction-for-2021-15700711>)

Late last year congress extended and expanded the universal charitable tax deduction that became law as part of the CARES Act. This deduction now allows individual taxpayers to deduct up to \$300 and couples filing jointly and married to deduct up to \$600 in charitable contributions made in 2021. For many people, this restores the deduction for charitable contributions they benefited from prior to the 2017 Tax Cut and Jobs Act (TCJA).

To qualify, charitable donations must be: 1) in cash, not property (a “cash” donation includes money contributed by cash, check, credit card, electronic funds transfer, or payroll deduction), and 2) given to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, charitable organization, such as a religious organization like your local church, the SNEUCC, and/or the national setting of the UCC. Importantly, this universal deduction is used to calculate one’s Adjusted Gross Income (AGI), so taxpayers don’t have to itemize their deduction on Schedule A to claim it. Instead, taxpayers can simply enter their qualifying amount on line 10b on page 1 of their Form 1040, then deduct it from their gross income.

There is no requirement that taxpayers provide any documentation for their contributions with their tax returns. However, the IRS does require that taxpayers keep a written record of the cash contributions. For cash donations under \$250, donors can use a bank record or other documentation that substantiates the payment. For cash donations above \$250, the donor must have a document or timely receipt from the charity, for example, the church.

Because of the TCJA, it is estimated that approximately 90% of Americans now choose to take the standard deduction instead of itemizing, and thereby are unable to deduct their charitable contributions. While tax deductibility is generally not the primary reason why people make charitable contributions and/or how much they give, it can be a consideration.

Item #3 in the Taxpayer Bill of Rights states, “Taxpayers have the right to pay only the amount of tax legally due...” With this extension and expansion of the universal charitable deduction, individuals filing a tax return for 2021 have a right to claim up to \$300 (\$600 for a couple filing married and joint) in charitable contributions they make, including those made to the church, and thus reduce their taxable income.

I urge our churches to inform their members and friends of this tax change so that they can avail themselves of it when they file their 2021 tax return. Although there is legislation pending to both expand and extend this universal charitable deduction, its future is unclear. Hence, this may be the last year it is available.

Reminder: In Tax Laws and Giving to Your Church, I wrote about a tax-wise way for people to financially support their local church, the Southern New England Conference, the national setting of the UCC, or any nonprofit organization for that matter, by making a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from their Individual Retirement Account (IRA). People can also make gifts of Appreciated Stock. While I've posted a brochure explaining this on our Planned Giving web page, gifts of appreciated stock can also be used for annual giving and capital campaign giving.

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Flower Committee

The Flower Committee needs volunteers for November and December. Flowers are usually arranged by volunteers for the Sanctuary of the Church for Sunday service. After service, the flowers are gifted to a member of the Church. Usually, a member who needs extra cheering up or who has contributed in a special way to the life of the Church receives the flowers.

Since we have been meeting on Zoom for Sunday worship, a volunteer from the Flower Committee brings a wrapped bouquet directly to a Church member. Flower purchases are reimbursed by submitting receipts to Elayne Murphy in the office.

If you'd like to help out during the Holiday season, please contact Adrian Dunn at adrianfdunn@gmail.com.

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Great Pie Palooza

Are You Ready to Bake (or Buy) Pies?

As Thanksgiving approaches, our thoughts turn naturally to The Great Pie Palooza. Like last year, sadly, we cannot enjoy our traditional tasting event, but we are responsible for supplying the Berkshire Food Project with pies for their community Thanksgiving feast.

We are asking you, once again, to bring two pies to church on Sunday, November 21, and we will send both the pies to the Berkshire Food Project. Last year we delivered 60 pies and still they ran out, so we need a big effort! **Remember that we cannot accept cream pies or any that need refrigeration.**

Bring your two (or more) pies (homemade or store bought) between 11:30am and 1:30pm on November 21 to the church door at the top of the ramp. There will be volunteers in the vestibule to receive your offerings.

Please let Carolyn Behr know if you can bring pies or if you can help that afternoon in the church kitchen as we process and package the pies for delivery: carolynbehr@gmail.com.

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"What it was like"
During the 1930's in rural Indiana
by Doris McNabb

"I was born on my grandparent's 180 acre farm near Ft Wayne, Indiana. My grandfather and my grandmother had other family who also owned farms in the area, so I had ample opportunity to observe farm life before electricity and running water. My grandmother was one of 9, so many of her family lived nearby, thus, there were lots of cousins to play with. I was at their farm often and spent my summers there so got to experience the day to day activities of farm life.

"My grandparents had a large 1800's farmhouse with six bedrooms. They made their own straw mattresses which were okay unless persons of different sizes slept on one previously in which case they could be very uncomfortable. In the mornings after waking up, I brought my clothes to the kitchen and hung them over the back of a chair near the stove to warm them while I washed. After dressing, I had hot oatmeal with my grandfather who had already milked about a dozen cows by hand. I helped with the process of separating cream from the milk by use of a "separating machine". After breakfast, my grandfather harnessed the horses for a day's work in the fields while my grandmother cleaned the dishes and handled other household tasks which needed to be done.

"If it was a day to do the laundry, my grandmother pumped cistern water, heated it on the stove. sometimes used a washboard and then turned a crank to operate the washing machine which also had a wringer . She hung the clothes outside all year long except when it was snowing or raining when she used a drying rack in the house.

"Another day was devoted to ironing, using an thick iron block with a handle (shaped like an iron) on top. She kept the iron hot by alternatively placing it on the four different iron plates heated on the wood stove. Only natural fabric was available (no wash and wear fabric) so she would have to dampen the clothes and then iron the wrinkles out.

"Every summer there was need for canning to be done, even if it was oppressively hot outside. No fans were available and no telephone talking with others to pass the time.

"She made many of the family members' clothes, often using empty feed bags that had pretty designs on them, colorful enough for skirts and blouses. She used a foot-driven treadle sewing machine. No store-bought shirts, dresses and shirts were available for her because stores which sold clothes were far away from the farm and no one had time to go to the town by horseback. Shopping for clothes and household items where done with a Sears Roebuck catalog and then delivered to their house by mail.

"Always, there was a noon day meal to prepare, the largest meal of the day that had to be ready before ringing a bell at 12:00 sharp. My Grandmother used the very large wood stove in the kitchen and I always marveled that my grandmother knew how to get the temperature just right. She baked bread or rolls, cooked vegetables and often baked a chicken, the preferred choice of meat for the day. This she did even on the hottest days of the summer. No electricity, so no air conditioning. She continued with her chores after cleaning the dishes until it was time to prepare supper, the smallest meal of the day.

"My grandfather's day involved hitching horses to whatever implement was needed for the field work waiting to be done. This was before tractors so farmers always relied on horsepower. I particularly remember harvest days when a large threshing machine would arrive, and when 8-10 neighboring farmers came to help out my grandfather, something he did for them when it was their turn to harvest crops. The farmers went from farm to farm, everyone helping each other. Wives of those farmers who were helping would help my grandmother prepare a huge dinner (baked chicken, many vegetables, bread and rolls and several different kinds of pie). Afterward, the wives cleaned the dishes and men returned to the farm work.

"So, these were some of the roles of men and women. As a child, I helped out by running the cream separator and driving a team of horses pulling a binder that cut and bound shocks of wheat or oats. Sometimes, when a sheep had twins, I fed one with a baby bottle. I often played with my cousins and other local children, sliding down a banister, playing card games, pickup sticks, jacks, and outside, hide and seek or playing in the hayloft or wheat bin. Another happy time was Wednesday afternoon when the "huckster with his horse drawn cart" would arrive with necessities such as white flour,spices, specific needs for a farm wife which couldn't be made on the farm or ordered. We children got to choose candy for our treat.

"But there were other features of farm life that were not related to gender but experienced by all. For example, how did everyone keep clean? All members of the household used an outhouse, relying on old Sears and Roebuck catalog paper instead of toilet paper. But when it was cold, they used chamber pots in the house, especially at nighttime. Saturday night was bath night. Cistern water was heated and poured into large metal tubs. There were 2 tubs, one with water for bathing and another for rinsing. Children bathed first and rinsed off in the second tub.

"Where did they get the water? There was a cistern to collect rain water which then could be pumped by hand into the kitchen. Outside, they had a well for water they accessed with a large hand pump. On days with a breeze, a windmill would bring up water for them and the animals. The well water was hard and difficult to soap up so they preferred the rain water from the cistern for bathing and cleaning clothes.

"Everyone went to their church, mainly Lutheran, on Sunday except for the wives who always stayed home to prepare the noon time meal. Children went to church with the men and that is why I have such strong memories of hearing only men's voices singing hymns.

"Once the day's work was done, it was time to read or for Doris to do her homework, all of them using kerosene lamps for lighting. They had candles for light and even put lit candles on the Christmas tree .Without electricity, her grandparents went to bed at sunset and were up early when the sun rose and the roosters crowed to start their chores.

"So, these were the operations of the farm without electricity or running water, day by day, week by week, every month and every year. A different era to be sure"

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Why We Are Here

waiting at bus stops
riding the subway
sitting at lunch counters
she listened to strangers tell their life stories.

in the town center
she calmed wailing babies
leaned into their carriage
said a soft word
let them hold her first finger
stroked their hand with her thumb.
when the infant was quiet
she'd comfort the mother.

she had me doing chores
running errands for old folks
before I was nine.
when two old soldiers stopped paying
for the morning paper
and their plug of Prince Albert
she sent me anyway.

old friends from her childhood
stopped her while shopping
she always had time,
they often had trouble.
that poor woman, she'd whisper,
then turn my attention
to flowers or food.

when the old folks had passed
and new families moved in,
i'd see the young mothers
circled around her.
i did the shopping by then
she needed her rest.

the third of eight,
with no father,
some years she lived
in the orphans' home
from the time she was twelve
she worked in the mills.
but even on rest days

some needed her help.
when asked why she did it
she answered
i do what i can
it's why we are here.

Hugh Guilderson

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November Birthdays

6th Terry Clark
8th Tenley Smith
13th Jean Donati
18th Anne Skinner
18th Anna Duhon
19th Doris McNabb
29th Ed Bianchi

Please remember to send me the dates of everyone in their family so they can all be in the church birthday book.

Thanks,

Anne

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