

The Tradition of Christmas Wafers (Oplatki)



For centuries on Christmas Eve, families in Poland, Lithuania, the Czech and Slav Republics have practiced a beautiful tradition. It is the breaking and sharing of the Oplatek - Christmas Wafer. Oplatek taken from the Latin word oblatum, meaning Sacred Bread, has been the symbol of Christianity and Jesus Christ, who is our bread of life.

On the holiest Night of the year, a festive 12 course meatless dinner is prepared for the gathered family and friends. An extra setting is placed for a begger (our Lord) who may come to the door, or a poor family (the Holy Family) looking for a place to stay. The host or hostess leads the group in a special prayer and distributes an oplatek to the participants. Each person breaks off a piece of the other's oplatek and continues until they have all exchanged good wishes, a hope for the new year and blessings with everyone. Traditionally at midnight the head of the household take the pink oplatek and shares it with the animals

on his or her farm or at his or her home. The custom brings us back to that Holy Night when even animals were welcomed (and by legend were able to speak) reminding us that we are all God's creatures.

It's part of our tradition as Eucharistic Christians (people who see communion as a tangible connecting point with God's grace in Jesus) that what we do when we come to church, the sharing of Word and Sacrament, goes *with us* and *fills our lives* with the Spirit of Christ wherever we go, and especially when we are at home, sharing daily life with those people who make up our family. We are to be strengthened by those significant relationships in our lives to *go out* and be a *healing or compassionate bread* in the many circles we move about in our living. Thus, our meals together can either be chaotically rushed through, or truly shared in the image and likeness of the Eucharistic meal!

Community United Methodist Church, Cedarburg

ANNOUNCEMENTS

December

Week of December 31, 2017

<p>New Year's Eve</p> <p>John Wesley Watchnight Service WORSHIP 10:00 AM Bring your leftover treats!</p>	<p>Happy New Year!</p> <p>Office Closed</p> <p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Handbells 6:30 PM Finance 7:00 PM</p>	<p>Mens Study 7:00 AM</p> <p>Mommy & Me Playdate 9:00 a.m. to Noon</p> <p>Chancel Choir 7:00 PM</p>	<p>Office Closed</p> <p>5</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>WORSHIP 8:00 AM & 10:15 AM</p> <p>7</p>	<p>Women of Faith 1:15 PM</p> <p>8</p> <p>Charge Conference 6:30 PM</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Acts 29 7:00 PM</p>	<p>Mary Martha Circle 12:30 p.m. Prime Minister Confirmation 5:00 PM Mosaic Youth 6:00 PM</p> <p>Outreach 6:00 PM Handbells 6:30 PM</p>	<p>Mens Study 7:00 AM</p> <p>Barcel Violin 4:45 PM - 7:00 PM</p> <p>Chancel Choir 7:00 PM</p>	<p>Office Closed</p> <p>12</p>	<p>13</p>

Office Hours Monday - Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Looking Ahead

Sunday, January 7, 2018, 10:00 a.m.

Greeters: 8:00 a.m. - Need Volunteer
Coffee Fellowship: 8:00 a.m. - Kunz
PC Operator: 8:00 a.m. - Need Volunteer
Sound: Bruce Krenzke
Welcome Center: 8:00 a.m. - Sarah Lovy

10:15 a.m. - Need Volunteer
 10:15 a.m. - Need Volunteer
 10:15 a.m. - Need Volunteer
Acolyte: Need Volunteer
 10:15 a.m. - Linda Kunz

» Our Charge Conference (Annual Meeting) is 6:30 p.m., January 8 «

Three Adult Classes

- begin next Sunday at 9:15 a.m.

- » **The Invitational Life** - Lee Ann Blackmer continues this study on living a contagious life of grace and witness to our Lord. (This class ends on January 28.)
- » **Growing through Life Transitions** - Sarah Lovy leads this new class dealing with critical pivot moments in your life, those you love, and those you meet. Based on "Care Notes." (4 weeks, concluding January 28.)
- » **Managing Change, Vision, and a Church's Identity** - Pastor Dave helps address changes in churches, having a prevailing vision, and how to change a church's identity...for the better. (4 weeks, concluding January 28.)

Outreach

Coin Drive — September 1 through today, December 31. Our funds will go to meet Harbor House Crisis Shelter's greatest needs.

Human Relations Day — Together we extend a helping hand to those in crisis so they can overcome formidable obstacles. Let's nurture at-risk youth, strengthen community development efforts, and advocate for the oppressed! Please give generously on January 14th.

Pecans — Our Schermer Pecans are available for purchase after both services for \$10.00 a bag. Profits will benefit UMCOR Material Resources Advance, which provides supplies during the time of crisis and disaster.

Family Promise — Our next two host weeks begin Jan. 21st and Apr. 15th. Please check the January schedule to help out in some way. Thank you!

Hunger Task Force — Cedarburg United Methodist Church is signed up to help sort food at the Hunger Task Force on Saturday, January 27th from 9:00 – 12:00 PM. This is an OUTSTANDING outreach for individuals and families, as it helps out so many families as they are Wisconsin's leading anti-hunger organization. Please sign up on the kiosk in Fellowship Hall.

Church News

No Sunday School — There will be no Sunday School today; resumes next week.

Women of Faith — The Women of Faith will meet January 8th and begin a new study. The book is John Ortberg's "Who Is This Man". (The Unpredictable Impact of the Inescapable Jesus.) We meet in the church library the second Monday of the month at 1:15. If you would like to come and have a question call 262-375-4051.

Mary Martha Circle — Mary Martha Circle will be meeting on Wednesday, January 10, 12:30 p.m. at the Prime Minister Restaurant in Thiensville. If you have questions, contact Orrene Reblin (262)376-9421.

Men's Study Group — The Thursday Men's Study Group will delve into the culture and spiritual beliefs of the Native Americans. We will be reading and discussing "The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian" by Joseph Epes Brown. Dr. Brown was Professor of religious studies at the University of Montana. The text we will be using is a special commemorative edition which also includes a collection of essays by Michael Oren written about his life with Black Elk, an Oglala Sioux. Recently, there has been a growing interest in the religious and cultural heritage of Native Americans. Underlying this heritage and central to their religion is their reverence for nature and life. The religious practices of these peoples represents a rich and truly American heritage found nowhere else in the world. Please consider joining us as we learn more about the spiritual life of the first and true Americans. We meet Thursday mornings at 7 am at PJ Piper's in downtown Cedarburg; Coffee or breakfast is optional but not the discussion.

Cribbage — Do you like to play cribbage? Join us on Sunday, January 14, at 11:30 a.m. in the Wesley Room at CUMC. Please bring a nutritious snack to share. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Carla Schmidt.

Youth & Children's Ministries

Mommy & Me Playdates — For those stay-at-home moms with children! Come join Tricia Gruber and Jen Lange with their children at CUMC on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. for some great social interaction. This is also a great entry point to introduce young moms to our church, a church that cares.

Winter Retreat 2018 #NoFilter — Come and join us at Expeditions Unlimited in Devil's Lake on March 2 - 4 for what promises to be an amazing weekend of fun! \$130 Early Bird if signed up by January 10th. \$145 for those who sign up January 11th or later. Sun, snow, rain, shine... we've got you covered. This will be an amazing retreat and chance to connect with God and friends! Join us!

Kid's Church — We are always looking for more volunteers to share their talents and gifts during Kid's Church on Sunday mornings. The kids love to sing along to musicians playing various instruments. We have a song book that you can choose from or bring your own music! There are also opportunities to be a guest speaker and lead our kids in prayer. We have a list of topics that you can select or you can always create your own. Talk to either Tricia Gruber or Jen Lange to see how you can get involved.

COPE Hotline Celebrates 40 Years

COPE provides emotional support and crisis intervention to those in the Greater Milwaukee area and beyond. Last year, more than 28,000 calls were made to COPE Services of Ozaukee County. This year's annual luncheon—A Commitment to Hope-- will be held Wednesday, Feb. 7th, 2018, at the Ozaukee Country Club from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Miss Wisconsin 2014, Raeanna Johnson, will give a message on The Impact of Substance Abuse on the Family. The luncheon will have raffles, auctions to bid on (including personal experiences like lunch and a tour of Wisconsin's capital with Jim Ott and a 2-night stay at a bed and breakfast in Sister Bay), and wonderful artwork from artists in Ozaukee County. For more information, go to www.COPEservices.org or call Val Nichols, 262-893-0968, as a number of our congregants are planning to attend, including Pastor Dave. This is a fundraiser for COPE, tickets are \$65.00 each (or table of 10 at \$55.00 each.)

"The Light of Our Prayers"

Why do we light candles...
as expressions of our prayers?

The first thing one notices upon entering an Orthodox Church is the sandbox full of lit candles. People make an offering, take a candle, light it, saying a prayer and then place the candle in the sand. So what is this all about?

Christ said, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12) Each time we light a candle, we are called to remember that it is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who is the True Light and anyone who follows Him need not fear the darkness. Every candle that we light is an active and visible expression of prayer. We reflect upon the salvation that the Lord gives, we recommit ourselves, renewing our Baptismal vow and committing that as children of God, we are called to "Let our light so shine before men, that they may see (our) good works and give glory to (our) Father who is in Heaven." (Matt. 5:16)

Lastly, as we place the candle in the sand, we say "Lord have mercy," repenting for our sin while at the same time "re-igniting" our own flame and recommitting our whole life to God. Thus, we begin again to live as light, helping others see the Way, the Truth, The Life amid a world of darkness.

