

The Word



ADVENT

Therefore the Lord himself shall
give you a sign; Behold, a virgin
shall conceive, and bear a son,
and shall call his name Immanuel.

ISAIAH 7:14, KJV

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December 2023

Minister's Musings

Advent and Christmas are especially wonderful because so many people enjoy the celebration. The town shines at night with lights on homes up and down every street. We rejoice because Jesus, the light of the world, comes to us as Emmanuel, and his birth is announced by bright angels and a shining star. But I know that many of the lights I see are put up by people who are celebrating the solstice or are claiming the joy of Christmas because it's wonderful joy to celebrate. Everyone's reasons for celebration don't have to be mine in order for us to share light in the darkness and trees with snowflakes and red ornaments. There are some who celebrate other occasions as well. I wish them all well. I'm happy to share why I observe Advent and celebrate Christmas, and I'm happy to hear what's important to my neighbors, even if it centers more around memories of Grandma's cookies than it does around a manger. It's all grounded in love.

One of the joys of sitting at a table and welcoming conversation, as I do as Pastor with Coffee each Wednesday morning, is the exposure I'm offered of the hopes and dreams and beliefs of so many different people. Sometimes I'm visited by Christians who want to talk about ethics or the cross or last week's sermon. Sometimes I talk with people who follow a different path to peace and want to tell me about it. Sometimes I'm approached by seekers, people who want to



engage with God but haven't yet found a way that seems comfortable. And sometimes I just have conversations about the weather or dogs. I'm firmly convinced that the way to God, whom I know in Jesus Christ, is love. And love is made real in the world through relationships and through justice. So following Christ, at Christmas and throughout the year, begins with listening, and caring, and sharing – building relationships of friendship and love. Put up your wreaths and your tree, shine your lights from your porch and from your heart. Rejoice with those who rejoice. And may the coming of the Christ child strengthen your faith and open your heart even more widely to care for the world.

Grace, peace, and merry Christmas,

Pastor Cathy

Highlights of November Parish Council

The November meeting of Parish Council opened with devotions. For the Topic of the Month Pastor Cathy was requesting some input about changes in worship that would help streamline the worship time. We discussed doing the announcement differently, maybe starting them earlier or putting them on the screen and cycling them prior to starting worship. We also discussed shortening the service a little by cutting back on the length of the passing of the peace which has been getting longer because of visiting that takes place. Also discussed was the exclusive use of the United Methodist hymnal since COVID, due to the lower cost at the time of using the music rights online (streaming) The cost of the Presbyterian hymnal use is around \$500 for the year. There was discussion about where the funds could come from for this and whether there's been a vocal desire to switch hymnals from the congregation (which there hasn't been)

It was reported by Eloise Henault that the Play School board had a meeting recently but there was not really anything major to report. Currently there are 8 students. There will be another meeting in December. The Bottle Drive was a huge success, raising around \$300. Reminder was given that bottles can be dropped off at Dutch Redemption on Rt. 28 at any time. Just tell them it should go on the Play School account.

Laura presented the Treasurer's Report. At the end of October, we should be at 83% of the budget. Income is at 68% and expenses are at 73%. Carol has been going through building use forms to see if the donations that groups committed to have been given. Carol found that the majority have, but it was discovered that DSS had inadvertently missed paying for last year and 2023. We will be getting a check from DSS for \$2000 to catch up before the end of the year. Evelyn brought up the Osborne Holiday JOY Fund, which is no longer a program and has remaining balance of \$1480. Evelyn made a motion to transfer these funds to Play School and it was approved by council. This will close out this fund.

During the Trustees report, Gideon reported that he and Barb Jones (SPR chair) did the parsonage walk through. No major issues. Phil Zwick cleaned out the gutters on the church and parsonage for \$165. The Trustees initiated a transfer from investment funds for \$25,000. \$5000 was to back fill the savings account for

Play School monies that wasn't transferred from investments in 2021 and \$20, 000 for the budget. The Trustees graciously accepted a \$2,500 donation from the WJ Barney Foundation, for which Tom Pandick is the treasurer, for use for either infrastructure improvements or maintenance or for youth programs.

Finance Committee chair Stephanie McCann reported that they met on October 30th and continued to work on the 2024 budget including a line by line review. The committee will meet again on December 5th at 5:30 pm.

Barb Jones reported that SPR met on October 24th and it was a small group. They began to discuss the budget items they are responsible for. They will meet again on November 27th. They began planning a Staff recognition day and working on annual SPR reports.

Pastor Cathy has not done as much visiting as she usually does due to her injured foot and inability to drive. She did visit Cathy Johnson. She has spent more time in her office and people have dropped by to chat. We had 89 in worship during the joint service with the local Presbyterian congregations, for which she did the planning. The Methodists are proposing a cooperative parish concert on Epiphany Sunday-likely at the Andes Methodist church. Cathy reported she is down to her last \$89 of her reimbursement budget. She has been in the Diner for Coffee with Pastor for November but will be moving to the Legion for December as crowds increase for the market.

NOW Reports included: Fred Onasch (Witness) reported that he is supporting Pastor Cathy and what she does. Deb is working hard at pushing church events out on Facebook, so it shows up more on other pages.

Evelyn (Nurture) reported that coffee hours continue and that there will be a Potluck luncheon on December 3rd, followed by the decoration of the church for Advent. Hoping many hands come to help. The Kid's Club will put on a pageant on December 17th.

Edie was not at the meeting to report on Outreach-Food Pantry but Carol reported that Edie and helpers were able to distribute 25 Thanksgiving boxes. There has been a large amount of food being donated to the Food Pantry through Price Chopper and the pantry also received a lot of items from a food drive by the SME Club at the college. Both have produced a large inventory which will help the need.

The next Food Giveaway is scheduled for December 2nd. There will be an Adopt-A-Family mission for Christmas this year which Carol and Edie are starting to organize.

Council approved three Building Use forms.

Our meeting was closed in prayer.

Any questions about anything that goes on at our council meetings? Please feel free to contact me or any member of council.

Carol Greene

Grant Received

Many of you may remember the Pandick Family from when they attended The United Ministry many years ago. Tom Pandick and his family still maintain a strong attachment to our church and as a result Tom recognizes that the decreasing size of our congregation and the revenue coming in makes it difficult to support the infrastructure of the church and its programs. He recommended to the W.J. Barney Foundation, where he serves as treasurer, that they provide a grant to our church of \$2500. This money can be used for either infrastructure improvements, maintenance or for the youth programs, such as summer church camp. Trustees will discuss the best use of this kind gift.

Women's Open Circle

Women's Open Circle will meet on Thursday, December 14th at noon in the Harder Room for our annual Christmas Luncheon. After lunch, we'll be filling bags with cookies and fruit for staff, friends, and shut-ins. Please bring your contribution to the luncheon and 2 dozen cookies.

Members of the congregation are also invited to donate 2 dozen cookies to help fill the gift bags!

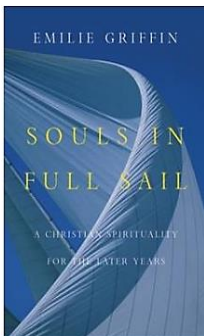
Don't forget the Birthday Box in the Harder Room!

Dr. Yoshiro Matsuo Compassionate Care Award

This award was created this year by **Helios Care** to honor a member of the community who displays Dr. Matsuo's qualities of compassion, kindness, leadership, benevolence and selfless service. Dr. Matsuo was one of the organization's founders and voluntarily served as its medical director for more than 25 years. Helios Care has assisted patients and families in the counties of Delaware, Otsego and Schoharie counties with end-of-life care since 1983. Lois Haight serves on the committee that was tasked with choosing someone to receive this award. She approached Pastor Cathy and I with the suggestion that Edie Campbell met the criteria necessary to receive this award. It was easy for me to complete the form with all the ways Edie has served her community and church over the years. Her commitment to the Food Pantry ministry is well known here at the United Ministry. For years Edie organized and ran the CROP walk which raised money for people with food insecurities throughout the world and our community. While Edie did not win the award this year, Lois wanted everyone to know that she came in second and that she was the first choice of several of the committee members. We are truly blessed to have Edie in our congregation, and we hope everyone will thank her for devotion that go to our food pantry mission.

Carol Greene

The Thursday Morning Book Study



copies of the book.

The Book Study will start a new book together on December 7: *Souls in Full Sail: A Christian Spirituality for the Later Years*. Anyone is welcome to join us. Pastor Cathy has

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee will meet on Tuesday afternoon, December 5, at 4 pm in Pastor Cathy's office.





Service

Thursday, DECEMBER 21, 2023 at 7:00PM

The United Ministry of Delhi

1 Church Street | Delhi, NY 13753

Fireside Room, downstairs.

Elevator access through parking lot.

Joint service with St. John's Episcopal Church,
First Baptist Church, and The United Ministry of Delhi.

Food Ministry

I'll start with projects coming up in December. On Friday the 1st, Carol and her crew will be setting up for the senior boxes and then delivering on Saturday the 2nd.

Later in the month Deb plans to deliver boxes to the homeless staying at the Buena Vista.

As has been our tradition for many years, we will also be providing Christmas to 3 families. Carol has put up the tree in the Harder Room with tags for one family while we wait for the information on the other families. I know providing for these families is something many of you look forward to every year so be sure to claim your tag while they are still available.



The food pantry is also planning to give out boxes of food for a Christmas dinner to those who sign up.

Now, to try and recap the busy month of November. We received many blessings and had much to be thankful for. Deb not only delivered food to the Buena Vista she also picked up and delivered hot turkey dinners from the Community Thanksgiving dinner and delivered them. The pantry handed out 25 boxes containing turkeys or whole chickens so that our clients could enjoy a meal. As usual there were some people who didn't show up on the assigned day but contacted Deb who graciously put together boxes for them.

I need to count but we had a lot of people use the pantry. We

also received large donations of bags with selected items from Price Chopper and over 700 items from the food drive that was conducted by the SME club at the college. The college also ordered 20 turkeys for us at \$1 a pound. When the boxes were all handed out I felt like Thanksgiving was over but I certainly had a heart full of gratitude for all the helpers and donations that made the day possible.

Thank you and a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

Edie



Sorting and putting away some of the many donations received during the month of November, thanks to our very generous community!



Fund Raiser at Price Chopper to benefit the Food Pantry at UMD. Through the end of the year, shoppers are asked to purchase pre-filled bags of food for \$10, which are then donated to our Food Pantry.

Adopt-a-Family

We have again partnered with Public Health Nursing to gift 2 families with baskets of food and gifts for Christmas. The tree in the Harder Room has tags with names and details about wished-for gift items. Please take a tag and return the wrapped item, with tag attached by Sunday, December 19th.

There are also baskets in the hall outside the offices - a basket for each family we have adopted for Christmas - for your non-perishable food items. Monetary donations will be used to purchase turkeys, milk, and other fresh items. Monetary donations should be clearly marked 'Christmas Families' and may be placed in the offering plate or left at the church office. The gifts and food baskets will be picked up by Public Health Nursing to be delivered to the families in time for Christmas.



Faith Giving



Are you saving your spare change? The last *Faith Giving* of the year will be received the last Sunday of December. Envelopes will be distributed on December 24th and will be available on the table in the hall as well as on the table as you enter the sanctuary.

Year End Deadlines

With the end of the year quickly approaching, there are some deadlines for people to be aware of:

Contributions: All contributions to be included on your 2023 giving statement must be received by Sunday, December 31st.

Invoices: all bills that are to go against the 2023 budget must be given to Laura by Friday, December 29th.

Annual Reports: It is not too early for Committee Chairs to start thinking about Annual Reports! All reports are due to the office by Monday, January 15th. Reports not received by that date may not be included in the Annual Report



Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 17th

During worship service

The Kids' Club will be performing a Christmas Pageant during our worship service. They've been working hard, rehearsing and memorizing. Plan to attend and enjoy the story they tell to us!





The Greatest Gift

Poinsettias and Donations to the Food Pantry



We have ordered 25 poinsettia plants to decorate the sanctuary for Christmas Eve Worship service. You are invited to purchase one in memory or in honor of a loved one or special event in your life. We are also offering the option of donating to the Food Pantry, also **in memory or in honor of loved ones or special** events in your life.

The Deadline to order Poinsettias is Sunday, December 17th.

Please fill out the form **exactly** as you would like the announcement to read:

\$ _____ for _____ plants at \$15.00 each.

___ I will supply my own poinsettia(s)

In Memory/Honor of _____

(circle one)

By: _____

In Memory/Honor of _____

(circle one)

By: _____

In Memory/Honor of _____

(circle one)

By: _____

In Memory/Honor of _____

(circle one)

By: _____

Please pick up your plant after worship on Christmas Eve. If you are supplying your own plant, please bring it to the church by 2pm, Thursday, December 21st.

Coffee Hour Hosts & Flowers for the Sanctuary



Have you signed up to host Coffee Hour yet? Coffee, tea, lemonade, and paper goods are supplied. Cookies are optional. Sign up on the sheet on the Bulletin Board or call the church office to pick your date.

Coffee Hour

Dec 3 Advent Potluck
 Dec 10 _____
 Dec 17 _____
 Dec 24 _____
 Dec 31 _____

Would you like to commemorate a loved one or special event in your life? Garden and wild flowers are always welcome! If you are uncomfortable creating the arrangement, call the office and we can make the arrangement for you.



Flowers

Dec 3 _____
 Dec 10 _____
 Dec 17 _____
 Dec 24 Poinsettia's
 Dec 31 _____

Sign-up sheets are on the bulletin board outside the office.



Ben Moyse	12/3	Charle Cash	12/15
Jim Small	12/3	Gregory Onasch	12/17
Beth Huneke	12/5	Viola Albert	12/27
Paul Johnson	12/6	Zachary Anderson	12/28
Eric Guy	12/9	Jim Bramley	12/29
Pat Nabinger	12/14	Rick Edwards	12/29
Skađi Gielskie	12/14	Matthew Griswold	12/30
Barb Onasch	12/15		

Word and Worship

December 2023

Sunday, December 3

First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37

Sunday, December 24

Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:46b-55
Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

Sunday, December 10

Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

Sunday evening, December 24

Christmas Eve

Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-20; John 1:1-18

Sunday, December 17

Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

Sunday, December 31

First Sunday of Christmas

Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148
Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

December Lectors

Dec 1 Rev. Rick Edwards

Dec 10 Ruth Kazmierski

Dec 17 Evelyn Jacksto

Dec 24 Fred Onasch

Dec 24 – Christmas Eve 7 pm – Liz Frisbee

Dec 31 Edie Campbell

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