



# *The Messenger*

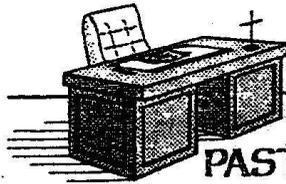
## Grace United Methodist Church

16 Hillcrest Drive

Ravena, NY 12143-1409

Rev. Judith Johnson-Siebold, Ph.D.  
Pastor

Rev. William F. Rogers, S.T.M.  
Pastor Emeritus



**FROM THE  
PASTOR'S DESK**

**January 2013**

Dear Friends,

Many of us begin a new year with resolutions related to exercise. I began my exercise resolutions a few years ago with membership in a YMCA. As a newbie to the world of sports and organized fitness I was struck by the following similarities between membership in the Y and in the Church:

+ Having hated high school gym classes, I assumed gyms and sports equipment were not "my thing". In the same way, many people assume that Church-related activities are not "their thing".

+ I was first drawn to the Y through a program for my child. Many people are drawn to the Church for the same reason.

+ At first I felt uncomfortable and out of place at my child's practices. What was a non-sports- buff like myself doing in this setting? Would someone find out I was an impostor? Only after I felt accepted by the other parents did I felt comfortable enough to look into what else the Y offered. Similarly, new persons in our church will only feel comfortable enough to expand their involvement when they feel accepted and included by those around them.

+ I explored the Y and discovered a walking track that would let me continue the exercise with which I'm already familiar but would have the advantage of providing it in a weather-proof environment. In the same way, persons will try new options in the Church

if those options use skills they already have but the new option will have an added benefit.

+ Just as I was finishing a lap, finding it boring and determined not to come back, someone I knew emerged from an exercise room. She joined me for two more laps and, while walking with me, enthusiastically described the treadmills-with-TV's in one of the exercise rooms. She explained the process of signing up, securing headphones, and wiping down the equipment when finished. She said these guidelines were posted, but I felt more secure having them explained to me by someone I knew. In the same way, people will be encouraged to join the Church family when someone they know enthusiastically invites them to participate and walks them through the procedures.

+ I decided to try a treadmill but was apprehensive because when I've tried them at people's homes or in hotels I've always fallen off. One of the Y representatives was available to give guidance, and he helped me understand that I had previously fallen off because I had selected the wrong walking speed. Similarly, new people at church will feel freer to ask for guidance if others are willing to explain how things work.

+ I was happy with my experience on the treadmill, but what kept me coming back was the friendliness of the staff and the cleanliness and brightness of the facility. In the same way people are drawn to us when we are genuinely friendly and the building is clean and brightly lit.

+ After I had exercised at the Y once a week for six months I began to feel like I belonged, suggesting that it may take half a year of worship before a newcomer to the Church feels at home.

+ I ended up exercising at the Y long enough that I was committed to it. I scheduled other recreation around it, rather than vice-versa. I went even if it's dark and cold. I missed it too much when I didn't go. Similarly, people who are new to worship will find it more enjoyable if they stay with it until they look forward to it and are ready to make a commitment.

As we begin a new year at GUMC let us be as committed to the spiritual exercise of worship as many of us are to physical exercise. In addition, may we offer newcomers in our midst the friendliness and inclusion that I found at the Y.

Grace and Peace,  
*Pastor Judi*



## PARSONAGE OPEN HOUSE REMINDER

The congregation of Grace UMC is cordially invited to the annual Holiday Open House at the Parsonage on Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup> from 2-4pm.

## ATTENTION ALL COMMITTEE HEADS

All information for "The Annual Report – 2012" should be submitted to Mary Alice by January 30<sup>th</sup>.

This includes letters, committee reports, Board of Trustee reports, Bargain Shed and Book Nook reports, reports from the Choir Directors and a report from the Sunday School Superintendent.

Also, all financial reports, membership statistics, audit report, 2013 proposed budget.

And, the Report of Committee on Lay Leadership for 2013.

## JANUARY IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

**Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>** – *Bible Event:* John Baptizes Jesus

*Craft Rotation:* Dove-making and singing "On the Wings of a Dove" with Sharon Phillips

**Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>** - *Bible Event:* Jesus Teaches the Lord's Prayer

*Craft Rotation:* Lord's Prayer plaques with Susan Eccleston

**Jan. 20<sup>th</sup>** - *Bible Event:* Jesus teaches that God cares even about "the birds of the air."

*Craft Rotation:* Bird houses/feeders with Cindy Bliss

**Jan. 27<sup>th</sup>** - *Bible Event:* Jesus teaches the Golden Rule

*Craft Rotation:* Golden rulers with Peggy Sherman

"We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year's Day."

—*Edith Lovejoy Pierce*



## January Birthdays

Wishing the very best to all those who will be celebrating in January:

- 11 Amanda Wolfe
- 15 Colin McTigue
- 16 Lisa D'Arcangelis
- 18 Will Robertson
- 23 Adam Newton
- 24 Karin Beswick
- 29 Sonya Moss
- 31 Jeffrey Haslett

## BIG THANK YOU'S GOING OUT TO:

- *Dottie Backlund* for decorating the Sanctuary during Advent and Christmas
- *Ken Bliss* for splitting firewood for Fellowship Hall fireplace
- *Choir members and friends* for singing and playing at the Christmas Concert
- *Carly Crewell* from Friends Around the Fireplace for offering

- to teach Gingerbread House-Making next November
- *Lisa D'Arcangelis* for directing the Christmas Concert
- *John Ginder* for Deejaying the New Year's Eve Party
- *Fran Hoffman* for completing a year's service as Office Assistant
- *Christine Ingraham* and *Fran Lobdell* for caring for the Sanctuary window candles
- *Mary Alice VanWie* for volunteering extra hours during the holiday rush
- *Mark Young* for donating the installation of gromets in the church's banner

The following adults helped put the Sunday School Christmas Pageant together:

- *Josh Dedrick, John Ginder, Jay Ingraham, Mike Mattick, Colin McTigue, Brian Melick & Adrienne Seymour* – Scenery & props
- *Marlene McTigue & Barb Bullock* – Directors
- *Sharon Phillips* – Led carols on guitar
- *Edna Rominger* – Coordinated refreshments
- *Beth Spoor, Stacey Youmans & Amy Young* – Costumes

And these folks all volunteered to participate in the Live Nativity:

- *Annie Coryell* – Mary
- *Reggie Porterfield* – Joseph
- *Christine & Ginny Frazee & Caelin Gordon-Stacey* – Angels
- *Mike Mattick, Mark Gordon, & Aaron & James June* – Shepherds
- *Ray Bradshaw, Nate Gordon & Quaniesha Porterfield* – Wisemen
- *David Crist* – King Herod
- *Barb Coryell* – Directing the Live Nativity
- *Rodger Coryell* – Lighting
- *Jan Bradshaw* – Hosted the Live Nativity Reception
- *Pastor Judi* – Leading the carols
- *Audry June* – Narrator
- *Marty VanWie* – Videotaped the Live Nativity now posted on the Church’s Facebook page. You can find it on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMUV3NB5rcU>. (If you don’t want to type in all that address, go to YouTube.com and put “live nativity 2012 by Barbara Coryell” in the search. It will be your first choice.)

### **A Special Note of Thanks:**

Pastor Judi and family wish to express their thanks for your loving cards and generous gifts during the Advent Season.

## **BARGAIN SHED FINAL FIGURE**

As reported in the December 2012 issue of *The Messenger*, when the Bargain Shed closed on November 17 they made \$6,888. In addition to that, on Fall Fair day, another \$500.50 was received. So, the total for the season was **\$7,388.50!**

## **PAYING FOR OUR PARKING LOT’S RESURFACING**

This is a friendly reminder to those who have pledged \$20/month for one year to give your monthly gift to Ken Bliss. If you haven’t pledged a monthly donation and would like to, or if you want to make an occasional or even a one-time donation, please contact Ken, the Trustee Chair, at 756-3663 (h), 487-1145 (cell to speak or text) or, [kmcdbliss1@aol.com](mailto:kmcdbliss1@aol.com). If everyone pitches in, we can pay this debt off even sooner!

## **WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!**

Congratulations and welcome to the eight new members who joined Grace UMC on December 23<sup>rd</sup>:

Marty & Amy Young and Curtis & Stephanie Canham were received into membership by transfer from another congregation.

Aaron June, Reggie Porterfield, Quaniesha Porterfield and Devin Whitney were received into membership on professions of faith.

Please congratulate our brothers and sisters when you next see them!

## NEW YOUTH GROUP TIMES

At a recent meeting of the Education Committee it was decided to offer Youth Group for grades 7-12 two times per month - the first Sunday of the month at 9am with Barb Coryell, and the third Sunday of the month at 6pm with Adrienne Seymour.

The new design encourages the youth to attend at both times, but if that is not possible, to choose the time that works best for them.

## A NEW YEAR POEM

Another fresh new year is here ...  
Another year to live!  
To banish worry, doubt, and fear,  
To love and laugh and give!

This bright new year is given me  
To live each day with zest ...  
To daily grow and try to be  
My highest and my best!

I have the opportunity  
Once more to right some wrongs,  
To pray for peace, to plant a tree,  
And sing more joyful songs!

—William Arthur Ward



Epiphany, from the Greek word *epiphaneia*, means an appearance or manifestation. Christians celebrate this festival each year on January 6, the 12<sup>th</sup> day after Christmas. Epiphany ends on Ash Wednesday, when Lent begins.

Epiphany marks the coming of the Magi, or wise men, to worship the baby Jesus. Because the Magi were Gentiles, Epiphany symbolizes the first recognition of Christ by non-Jews. It's a reminder that Christ came as the light – and Savior – of the whole world.

The traditional color for Epiphany is green, indicating life, growth, hope and eternity. Symbols for the season include a light, candle or star; a crown

or three crowns; three gifts; and a globe. In the modern church, Epiphany has become a time to focus on reaching out and “showing” Jesus as the Savior of all people. It’s also a reminder to engage in Christian community and to heal divisions among God’s children.

## FOR THE NEW YEAR

- H**old fast to your faith  
(Hebrews 4:14)
- A**ssemble with the saints  
(Hebrews 10:25)
- P**ray earnestly every day  
(1 Thessalonians 5:17-18)
- P**ray for great blessings  
(Malachi 3:10)
- Y**ield not to temptation  
(1 Thessalonians 5:22)
  
- N**eglect not your talents and opportunities  
(Galatians 6:10)
- E**xamine yourself daily  
(2 Corinthians 13:5)
- W**ork diligently for the Lord  
(1 Corinthians 15:58)
  
- Y**ield your members to righteousness  
(Romans 6:11, 16)
- E**xercise yourself in godliness  
(1 Timothy 4:7)
- A**im for a perfect, mature faith  
(Hebrews 6:1)
- R**edeem the time  
(Ephesians 5:15-16)

—Gus Nichols

## NEW YEAR’S EVE PARTY

This annual event was organized by Adrienne Seymour and attended by people of all ages. It was deejayed by John Ginder and there was a variety of food options and a number of activities from Wii to card games to Scrabble and puzzle-doing. The majority of people stayed to watch the televised dropping of the ball in Times Square to usher in the new year.

## READING THE BIBLE WITH CHILDREN

As infants, my sons received children’s Bibles. The short stories and bright pictures were perfect for their early introduction to the Christian faith. Soon they started reading the stories back to us. But as their comprehension improved, children’s Bibles became “too young” for them, while the regular Bible wording was still beyond their grasp.

Then I tried reading from a modern-language paraphrase. I chose The Message, but others will work, too. No need to worry about a lack of pictures; kids are adept at imagining events. Not sure what passages to read? Consult the scripture references accompanying the stories in a children’s Bible. Read the story yourself first, to know where to

stop and to avoid less child-friendly passages.

However you share God’s Word with youngsters, there are no sweeter words to a Christian adult than “Mom [Dad, Grandma, Auntie... ], let’s read the Bible!”

—Heidi Mann

## THE ULTIMATE RESOLUTION

Resolutions are easy to make but oh so hard to keep. In fact, many people refuse to make them for that very reason. After all, by February, most people have broken them, and by March they don’t even remember what they were. It’s just too hard to change, so why try?

Yet Scripture exhorts us to be more like Christ, to forgive our enemies, to tithe and to be thankful in all situations. Shouldn’t we resolve to put some of these into practice, even if ever so imperfectly?

Peter admonishes us to be holy as God is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). That’s the ultimate New Year’s resolution – all but certain to be broken repeatedly before the sun sets on the first day. Yet though we fail, are we not better for trying?



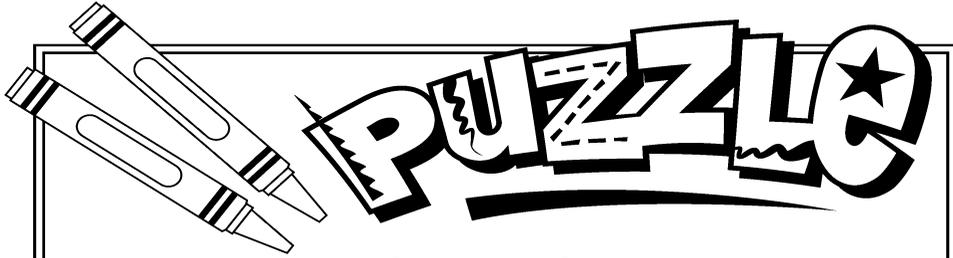
As you head into 2013, create a special journal for the new year.

### What you need:

- Spiral notebook (with a plain-colored cover)
- Foam letters, numbers and shapes
- Stickers
- Jewels and glue (optional)

### What you do:

- Decorate the notebook cover with letters and numbers. Options include “2013,” “Journal” or your name.
- Decorate with foam shapes, stickers or jewels.
- Write in the journal daily – or whenever possible – recording life events, thoughts, prayer requests and more.
- Keep the journal private or share it with your friends and family.



# PLANS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Want to start the new year off right?  
Remember to always ask God for guidance.

Directions: Write each word (or word part) in the correct numbered box to complete Proverbs 16:3, NIV.

J A N U A R Y 2 0 1 3						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

14 – tab    18 – Pro    7 – ever    6 – what    15 – lish    8 – you    4 – the  
 21 – :3    16 – your    9 – do    1 – Com    20 – 16    11 – he    10 – and    22 – NIV  
 3 – to    12 – will    19 – verbs    13 – es    2 – mit    17 – plans    5 – LORD

Answer: "Commit to the LORD whatever you do and he will establish your plans." Proverbs 16:3, NIV

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**JOIN US ON FACEBOOK**

If you are on Facebook, please join the church page by *liking us* at Grace United Methodist Church, Ravena, NY. Find out what's happening each week from Sunday's Service sermon title and hymns to meetings and special events.

**OR VISIT US ON THE WEB:**

[www.graceumcravena.org](http://www.graceumcravena.org)

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**



Deadline for articles for the **February** issue of *The Messenger* is **January 20<sup>th</sup>**. Please send or e-mail articles to Barb Bullock at:

[bbullock812@gmail.com](mailto:bbullock812@gmail.com)

or

fax to: **731-8994**