



# *The Messenger*

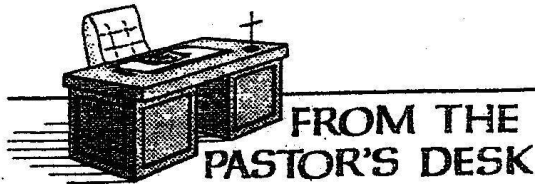
## Grace United Methodist Church

16 Hillcrest Drive

Ravena, NY 12143-1409

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

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



**February 2013**

Dear Friends,

In the midst of scarcity, economic downturns, and job layoffs, do we as Christians have nothing to say? Are we just about being good so that when we die we won't go to hell?

It's so tempting to join the negative choruses all around us when people who are scared become people who are angry and demand instant change to conditions that took years to develop. As Christians, do we have nothing to offer them? I think we do:

We offer the *forgiveness of Christ*. If anyone had a reason to be angry, it was Jesus. Yet, as He hung dying at the hands of people who were hateful, insecure, and unjust, He asked God to forgive them, "for they know not what they do." In every age people look for scapegoats to blame for the conditions in which they find themselves. "Shock radio" has no shortage of people to blame for current economic conditions. As Christians we will refuse to listen to its messages or carry its short-sighted, hate-filled atmosphere into our interactions with others. Where we find others at fault, we will forgive as Jesus forgave.

We offer the *values of Christ*. Jesus thought outside the box. He knew that our lives consist not of what we own but of how we make ourselves helpful to God. He had His priorities in the right place. It is amazing that even in these tough economic times there are people who will get their nails done rather than donate to earthquake victims in Haiti, or think nothing of spending money on entertainment while truly believing they're strapped for cash.

We offer the *hope of Christ*. Anyone can be hopeless, but Christians have a reason to be hopeful; indeed, we have the obligation to have hope. Our hope is based on the sure knowledge that God always has the last word. Our Bibles are full of such stories. The lions should have devoured Daniel, but they didn't. Goliath should have destroyed David, but he didn't. Esther should have been executed, but she wasn't. Death should have been the end of Jesus, but it wasn't. Peter should have been silenced by his cowardice, but he wasn't. Huldah should have been too scared to prophecy but she wasn't.

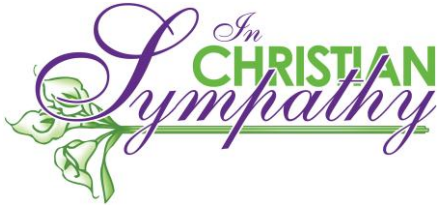
We offer the *persistence of Christ*. Jesus met with many obstacles in his endeavor to witness to the love of God, but he never gave up. His was not the gospel of easy answers. He had the courage to act on his commitment instead of turning tail when the going got rough.

We offer the *compassion of Christ*. Jesus never blamed the poor for their poverty or the sick for their illness. His heart went out to the people who were suffering and he was willing to spend time and energy where it could help alleviate their distress.

We live in a time when people want easy lives and easy answers. Indeed, they assume that's the way things should be. In contrast, Christians are called to speak out for people and issues that are complicated and sometimes difficult, but we're up to the challenge, for we are nurtured and taught by the Master of difficulty - Jesus Christ, Himself. In these times of scarcity let us praise God that we have been given an abundance of *forgiveness, values, hope, persistence, and compassion*. Let us use those gifts to minister to all.

Faithfully,  
*Pastor Judi*





The congregation would like to extend our deepest sympathies to Lee and the entire Case family as we all mourn the loss of our beloved sister Laura. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all.

Our prayers go out to Sue and Wally Eccleston as they mourn the loss of Wally's brother. May peace be with you and your family.

## FEBRUARY IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

This month's emphasis is on Jesus' stories of the Kingdom of God.

**February 3<sup>rd</sup>** – The Sower and the Seeds

*Craft Rotation:* Seed planting with Stephanie Canham

**February 10<sup>th</sup>** – The Good Samaritan

*Craft Rotation:* Making gifts for confined members with Kate Robertson

**February 17<sup>th</sup>** – The Lost Sheep

*Craft Rotation:* Activity with Sue Eccleston

**February 24<sup>th</sup>** – The Forgiving Father  
*Craft Rotation:* Activity with Peggy Sherman

## THOUGHTS GOING OUT

In case you were unaware, our sister Velma Armstrong is now at Sunnyview Rehab in Schenectady. If you have a chance to visit or drop her a line, I'm sure she'd love it.



How would you like to relax and enjoy pizza and a movie at the end of a long week?

Join us at the church on **Friday, Feb. 1, at 6:00 PM for Shrek 2.**

We'll have veggies and drinks to go with pizza and popcorn to go with the movie.

A free-will donation of \$2.00 per person will be gladly accepted\*.

\*Proceeds will be donated to UMCOR for distribution of flood buckets to Hurricane Sandy victims

## SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

The Sunday School is looking for donations of homemade soup, brownies and bread. Souper Bowl of Caring takes place on Super Bowl Sunday, February 3rd. We will be having our annual Souper Bowl luncheon during coffee hour. Lunch includes soup, bread, brownie, and drink for only \$4. It is an all you can eat after everyone has gone through once. Take out is available if you can't stay. Think about inviting a friend.

Here is a little background of the event:

Souper Bowl of Caring is youth across the nation working to fight hunger and poverty in their own communities around the time of the Super Bowl football game.

A simple prayer: "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat" is inspiring a youth-led movement to help hungry and hurting people around the world.

This prayer, delivered by Brad Smith, then a seminary intern serving at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC, gave birth to an idea. Why not use Super Bowl weekend, a time when people come together for

football and fun, to also unify the nation for a higher good: collecting dollars and canned food for the needy? Youth could collect donations at their schools and churches in soup pots, and then send every dollar DIRECTLY to a local charity of THEIR choice.

The senior high youth of Spring Valley Presbyterian liked the idea so much they decided to invite other area churches to join the team. Twenty-two Columbia churches participated that first year, reporting their results so a total could be determined, and then sending all \$5,700 they had raised to area non-profits.

In the weeks leading up to or on Super Bowl Sunday, young people take up a collection (many use a soup pot), asking for one dollar or one item of food for people in need. They give 100% of their donation directly to the local hunger-relief charity of their choice.

In 2011, more than 260,000 youth participated in Souper Bowl of Caring, collecting more than \$9.5 million in dollars and food for local hunger-relief charities. That's a total of more than \$81 million collected since the movement began in 1990! This year's goal is to empower 275,000 young people to collect \$11 million for charities in their communities. Help us

grow this movement and tackle hunger in America!

We have participated in the Souper Bowl of Caring for 7 years. Our total collected is \$1,775 and 377 food items. Our best year was last year when collected \$275 and 100 food items.

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The Sunday School is also going to be conducting a Bottle & Can Drive to support the Fisher House at the VA Medical Center. Fisher House is a place where family members can stay while their ill veteran loved one is hospitalized. We will be collecting cans and bottles from January 19 – February 10th.

## **YOUTH GROUP**

Youth Group will be meeting at 9:15 on February 10<sup>th</sup> to wrap candy for VA/Fisher House. On February 24<sup>th</sup> we'll be snow tubing at Windham Mountain after church. This event is open to all church families as well. The more, the merrier!

## **SPECIAL INSERT**

Notice this month that in addition to the Calendar, there is a 40-Day Guide to Lent and Easter. We hope that you'll

read it each day from Ash Wednesday right up to and including Easter and that you'll do some searching into your own life using the suggestions made.

## **EVANGELISM NEWS**

During the Advent season committee members encouraged the congregation to wear name tags. Most people welcomed the opportunity! Some even admitted knowing a face but, not necessarily a person's name. It seems that wearing a name tag helps both members & visitors. It also helps us avoid awkward moments of having to remember someone's name or visitors having to ask everyone's name until they eventually become familiar with the congregation. (Ask our pastor how long that takes!)

Soon we'll be going from temporary stickers to permanent name tags. Of course, wearing a name tag is always voluntary. But, we hope you will become comfortable wearing one and make it part of your Sunday morning routine. Studies show that visitor-friendly churches make wearing name tags a regular practice. We strongly encourage everyone to make it habit at Grace!

Please continue using the stickers until we get the permanent name tags. Thanks for your cooperation.

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Because Lenten Season begins on February 13<sup>th</sup>, the Evangelism Committee will be handing out necklaces to the congregation on February 10<sup>th</sup>. These unique necklaces are representative of the nails used to crucify our Lord. All are encouraged to wear the necklace every day during the entire Lenten Season (until Easter).

If you are out and about and someone happens to admire your necklace, you are welcome (and encouraged) to take it off and present it to the admirer and offer a short explanation of its significance. The next time you come to Church, we will replace it for you so that you always have one to wear.

Let's all take part in sharing the love of Jesus Christ.

## LENTEN WORSHIP

Every year Christians all over the world observe the forty days leading up to Easter as Lent. The Lenten Season this year begins on February 13th, Ash Wednesday. We will have an informal service of ashes that evening in the dining room beginning with a potluck supper at 6pm. All are invited to come.

During each of the Sundays of Lent there will be special lit candles on the Communion Table, and each Sunday a family from our congregation will extinguish one of them as we draw closer to Holy Thursday (March 28th) and the Service of Tenebrae (Darkness) in Fellowship Hall.

The following families will share in extinguishing a candle:

February 17 – The Matticks  
February 24 – The Frazees  
March 3 – The Mantynens  
March 10 – The Robertsons  
March 17 – The McTigues  
March 24 – The Ginders

Please make a special effort to participate in worship during this Lenten season.

## HURRICANE SANDY OUTREACH

The Evangelism Committee would like your help with filling several 5-gallon buckets for distribution by UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief). These buckets will be filled with specific cleaning items (see list).

Please be sure to purchase the requested size (or smaller) as larger sizes will prevent the bucket lid from

sealing. We'll be shipping these buckets to UMCOR for distribution to victims of Hurricane Sandy.

If you would rather not go shopping for the requested cleaning items, we'll be happy to do it for you. Please place your check or cash donation in one of the designated envelopes near the buckets outside the office and then give it to Barb Bullock or Pastor Judi.

Cleaning Bucket items will be collected throughout the month of February. Let's do our part to assist the flood victims with the overwhelming task of cleaning up and beginning to rebuild their lives.

May God bless you in your giving.

#### Cleaning Bucket Items:

- \* 5-gallon bucket with re-sealable lid (buckets from fast food restaurants or bakeries can be used)
- \* liquid laundry detergent (two 25-oz. or one 50-oz.)
- \* liquid household cleaner (16-oz. cleaner that can be mixed with water – no spray cans)
- \* dish soap (16-28-oz. bottle)
- \* air freshener (aerosol or pump)
- \* scrub brushes (plastic or wooden handle)
- \* cleaning wipes (handi wipes – no terrycloth towels)
- \* sponges

- \* scouring pads
- \* 50 clothes pins
- \* clothesline (two 50-ft. or one 100-ft.)
- \* roll of heavy duty trash bags
- \* dust masks
- \* disposable kitchen gloves (rubber or latex)
- \* work gloves (cotton or leather)

## **FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

Happy birthday wishes go out to our friends who will be celebrating in February:

5 Linda Sherman  
7 John Robertson  
19 Meaghan Houk  
20 Sharon Phillips

## **BOOK NOOK UPDATE**

The final Book Nook total for 2012 was **\$9,735**.

The Spring HUGE Book Sale and mini-rummage sale will be held Thursday, Friday and Saturday, March 14, 15 and 16. We will need HELP to set up and work from March 10th to the 16th. Please write us in your calendar. (More information will be in the next issue of *The Messenger*.)

The Book Nook had 10 young people volunteer to fulfill their Martin Luther King "give back" project. They selected books they would enjoy reading and then packed them. The books will be sent or given to those not fortunate enough to have books of their own.

## RECEIPTS FOR 2012

Anyone who would like a receipt for their 2012 contributions to the General Fund, please contact Don Moon in person or call him at 756-6920.



## ACOUSTIC DOORWAYS: SWING BLUES

Once again, we will be hosting one of The Acoustic Doorways' concerts. Please join us at 7:30pm on Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup> for an evening of entertainment featuring Big Joe Fitz & the Low-Fi's with Brian Melick.

Tickets are available at the door for \$5. Refreshments will be served during

intermission. If you can donate a baked good, it would be greatly appreciated. Please call Jay Ingraham at 756-6618 with any questions.

To review the Acoustic Doorways' events page, you can go to their website:

[http://www.rcscommunitylibrary.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=catalogory&layout=blog&id=50&Itemid=64](http://www.rcscommunitylibrary.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=catalogory&layout=blog&id=50&Itemid=64)

## NEW BARGAIN SHED SEASON

The Bargain Shed will open for the 2013 year on Saturday, April 13. It will be open for the same days and hours: Tuesday morning, Thursday evening and Saturday morning.

Please remember us when you are doing your annual Spring cleaning. We appreciate all donations; however, we do not accept TVs or computers. Small furniture pieces are welcome.

As always, we can use any volunteers, whether you want to work on a regular basis or as needed. Please contact Edna Rominger if you are interested (966-8740).



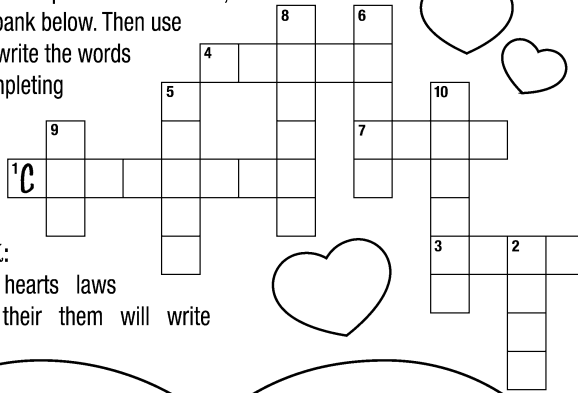


# PUZZLE

## ON THEIR HEARTS

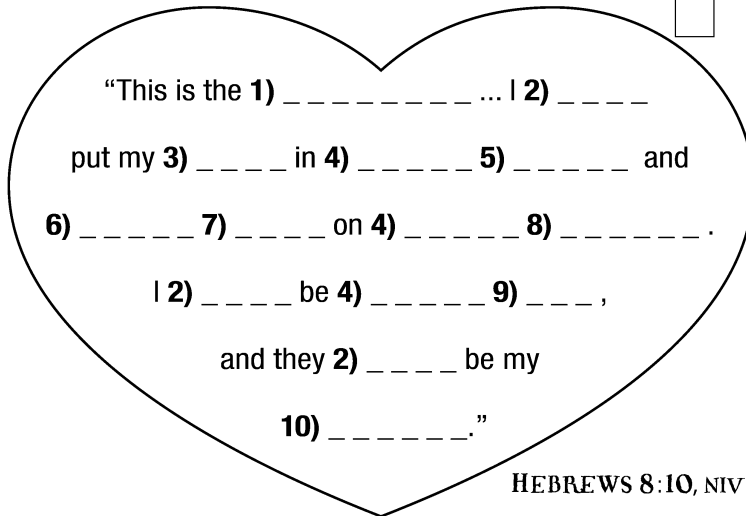
*God made a special promise about a relationship he wants to have with people who love him.*

**DIRECTIONS:** Complete the crossword, using the word bank below. Then use the numbers to write the words in the heart, completing God's promise.



**WORD BANK:**

covenant God hearts laws  
minds people their them will write



“This is the **1)** \_\_\_\_\_ ... | **2)** \_\_\_\_\_  
 put my **3)** \_\_\_\_\_ in **4)** \_\_\_\_\_ **5)** \_\_\_\_\_ and  
**6)** \_\_\_\_\_ **7)** \_\_\_\_\_ on **4)** \_\_\_\_\_ **8)** \_\_\_\_\_  
 | **2)** \_\_\_\_\_ be **4)** \_\_\_\_\_ **9)** \_\_\_\_\_,  
 and they **2)** \_\_\_\_\_ be my  
**10)** \_\_\_\_\_.”

**HEBREWS 8:10, NIV**

Answer: “This is the covenant ... I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”  
 Hebrews 8:10, 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.orgb](http://www.graceumcravena.orgb)



Deadline for articles for the **March** issue of *The Messenger* is **February 17<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**