



The Messenger

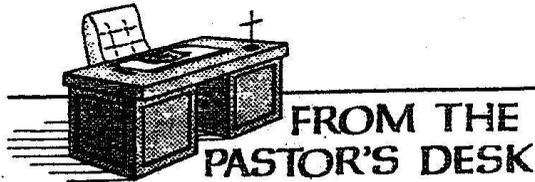
Grace United Methodist Church

16 Hillcrest Drive

Ravena, NY 12143-1409

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

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



December 2013

Dear Friends,

In speaking of Christmas, the carol "O Little Town of Bethlehem" puts it so well: "The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight." Our hopes and fears are simple when we're children, but much more complex as we grow older. Children hope for specific toys, and they fear they won't get what they want. Adults hope for a day of joy and peace, and they fear poverty, tragedy, ill-health, and family quarrels.

When we celebrate Christmas this year, we will not just celebrate Christmas 2013. We will be celebrating past Christmases and anticipating future Christmases. If this was the year of bereavement, then this will be the first Christmas without our loved one. If this was the year we went off to college, then this will be the first Christmas of going home but then returning to our new home on campus. If this was the year of a new baby, then this will be the first Christmas with a little one to adjust for. We have so many hopes and so many fears, it's almost too much to expect any one day to fulfill.

And yet, we do pin our hopes on Christmas, just as we pin our hopes on God and on Jesus and on the Church. We hope that in the ceremonies and customs we observe we will find the elusive Presence, the Spirit of God Who is Joy.

To that end, members and friends at Grace UMC will participate in the following Advent and Christmas observances:

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath:

December 1st – The Harris Family
December 8th – The Porterfield Family
December 15th – The Ginder Family
December 22nd – The Schoenig Family
December 25th – The Mattick Family

Sunday, December 8th:

10:30am: Our District Superintendent's Consecration of the pew cushions
Nightingale Choir sings
Bell Choir plays
Noon: Cookie Swap

Saturday, December 14th – *6:30pm:* The Choir Christmas Concert

Sunday, December 15th:

10:30 am: The Sunday School Program
4:00 pm: The Live Nativity

Tuesday, December 24th – *7pm:* The Christmas Candle lighting Service

Sunday, December 29th – *Noon:* De-Greening of the Church

Tuesday, December 31st – *7–Midnight:* New Year's Eve Party

It is our deepest wish that any and all of these opportunities might be a vehicle through which God's grace comes to us this Holy Season. "O come to us, abide with us, O Christ, Emmanuel." (From O Little Town of Bethlehem)

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Judi



YOUTH GROUP LOCK-IN

Youth group, ages 6th grade and up, will be having a lock-in on Friday, December 6, starting at 6pm through Saturday, December 7, 11:30am. We will have pizza and are asking kids to bring a snack or drink to share for dinner. Bagels, fruit, and juice will be provided for breakfast.

Friday night we'll have a movie and games, and Saturday morning we'll be making some goodies to share at the cookie swap on Sunday. Anyone interested in coming or helping, please contact Barbara Coryell at 929-6262, rbcoryell@yahoo.com, or you can message her through the church's Facebook page.

ALBANY DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT TO CONSECRATE PEW CUSHIONS

You will not want to miss worship on December 8th when the District Superintendent, Rev. Rick Weiling, will be on hand to preach and consecrate the new pew cushions, the project spear-headed and financed by Kate and Rick Robertson and carried out by so many willing volunteers. The Nightingales Children's Choir will

delight us, the Bell Choir will play, and the Senior Choir is hard at work on their musical offering for that day. Following worship please join us for the annual Cookie Swap.

SUNDAY SCHOOL IN DECEMBER

For children the best time of the year has arrived, and for the teachers and volunteers involved with the children in the Sunday School, all the activities related to the birth of Jesus are special, indeed. Here are those welcome volunteers and their activities for the month of December:

December 1 – Bread Making for persons confined to their homes, with Kate Robertson

December 8 – Singing Christmas Songs with Sharon Phillips

December 15 – Children's Christmas Program during worship

December 22 – Snuggly Blanket (Swaddling Clothes) Making with Sue Eccleston

December 29 – Thank You Card Making with Dotty Backlund and Fran Hoffman

As always, many thanks go to these volunteers.





Celebrating in the month of December:

- 1 Jacob Black
- 2 Reggie Porterfield
- 3 Joseph Mancini
- 4 Jim Sherman
- 6 Adrienne Seymour
- 9 Edna Rominger
- 10 Louis Newburg V
- 11 Catherine Bradshaw
- 11 Pdraig McTigue
- 11 Marty Van Wie
- 16 Sarah Bliss
- 18 Druhan Gordon-Stacey
- 19 Jim & Devonna Quinn
- 22 Don Moon
- 22 Rick Robertson
- 23 Ray Bradshaw
- 28 Audry June
- 31 Al & JoAnne Burrill

THANKS...

to all those who served as Sunday morning greeters this past year. Your willingness to share about 30 minutes of your time to make sure our congre-

gation was warmly welcomed is very much appreciated. Thanks again!

ADOPT-A-FAMILY RETURNS TO GRACE UMC

Every year the Evangelism Committee coordinates the wonderful holiday tradition of adopting a family for Christmas. As in past years, this involves purchasing one toy and one clothing gift per child. We also seek gifts of cash or check which will be used to provide a grocery gift card for the family's Christmas dinner.

This year the committee has decided to provide gifts for two families: the Kier family (recently burned out of their home) and the Sullivan family (a single parent, unemployed). Both are in need of our assistance this holiday season.

All the necessary information such as names, ages, gift ideas and clothing sizes will be placed on ornament tags and placed on a Christmas tree in front of the church office. Please consider taking an ornament tag (or two) and bringing the gift back to church. All gifts should be wrapped with the ornament tag taped securely on the package.

There will be a sign-up list on the tree's table as well. Please be sure to

give us your name along with the name(s) of the child/children you have decided adopt.

As always, we thank everyone for the generosity that this church has shown in the past years and look forward to the same spirit of generosity this holiday season as well!



What better way to get into the Christmas spirit than to hear your own church choir present a beautiful concert for you, your family, your friends, and your neighbors! Everyone is invited to join us on Saturday, December 14th at 6:30pm for a free evening of Christmas music and refreshments afterwards.

Everyone is welcome to join the singing festivities. There will be two practice dates prior to the event: November 24th and December 1st, immediately following coffee hour.



The Live Nativity will be happening at Grace UMC on Sunday, December 15th at 4pm with cookies and hot chocolate to follow. We're looking for cookie makers and performers which include Mary, Joseph, shepherds, wise men, angels, and a narrator. Tentatively, there will be a run-through on Saturday, December 14th at 3pm.

Anyone interested in helping please contact Barbara Coryell at 929-6262, rbcoryell@yahoo.com, or you can message her through the church's Facebook page.

BARGAIN SHED NEWS

By the time you receive this newsletter, the Bargain Shed will be closed for 2013. It has been a year of hard work and dedication by all our workers – beginning with our preparations to open in April and continuing to our closing on November 23rd.

Our wonderful staff this year included Fran Hoffman, Alice Ross, Beth

Babcock, Dotty Backlund, Fran Lobdell, Cindy Bliss, Jan Bradshaw, Kate Robertson and Edna Rominger. We also were joined on Fall Fair day by Jean Lyons, Sue Eccleston and Phyllis Shook. Sandy Racey served as a sub when needed.

We look forward to next spring and hope you will save your donations until that time. Best wishes to all for a blessed holiday season.

YTD sales for the Bargain Shed as of November 17th are **\$7,089** and that figure still isn't final. We'll have more receipts to report on soon!

SUNDAY SCHOOL ACTIVITY

The Sunday School has been busy fundraising for some worthy causes. Thanks to a very generous donation of money raised from their trick-or-treating hayride, troop leader Marlene McTigue with members Ginny Frazee and Maddy McTigue, presented the church with over \$230 dollars to benefit UNICEF. This brought the total money raised to \$500 which is enough money to give a community a new well. Thank you for your help in changing the world for the better!

The grade 4-6 class, led by Mike Mattick and Dave Crist were able to

raise \$50 with their auction of ski passes through the Bethlehem Ski Club. This money will go towards Andrew Ginder's annual Albany Med NICU fund.

The Bewitching Buffet and annual Halloween Party on October 26th, was a great success thanks to the hard work of our church's youth. Approximately 80 children and adults attended the free dinner and party which included games, crafts and the "haunted hallway." The youth did a fabulous job decorating and planning the party and a fun night was had by all. Thank you to Liz Spence, Ken and Cindy Bliss and Jay and Chris Ingraham for all their help in the kitchen and to everyone who donated food for the dinner. (Look for even more pictures to show up soon on the bulletin board at church!)



The Sunday School is asking for updated addresses for our college students so that some holiday cards and

goodie boxes can be sent out later this year. If you are a student (or a parent of a college student), please send your address to Kate Robertson at rarksr@gmail.com. Please don't be left out...and that includes those students living at home while going to college!



Toddlers, 2s & 3s Celebrate Halloween at Grace UMC

PEOPLE YOU MAY WANT TO SEND CHRISTMAS CARDS TO:

Leah Distin
210 Bethany Village
W. Coxsackie, NY 12192

Emma Lou Hamilton
Atria Guilderland
Apt. 117
300 Mill Rose Court
Slingerlands, NY 12159
(518) 456-0451

Vera Mahnken
1086 Medway-Earlton Rd.
Earlton, NY 12058-4105

Lorraine Richter
Pines at Catskill
154 Jefferson Heights
Catskill, NY 12414

Rev. & Mrs. William Rogers
Pines at Catskill
Room 320
154 Jefferson Heights
Catskill, NY 12414

Roberta Salvesson
Daughters of Sarah, Rm. 428-Red
180 Washington Ave. Ext.
Albany, NY 12203



ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL FRESH HAM DINNER

The recent ham dinner proved to be most successful. Many folks attributed much of that success to the highly visible publicity the dinner got in the community. It's impossible to name everyone that contributed in some way and you all know who you are. Thanks to the many that were willing to pitch in, the dinner grossed a total of **\$2,205**

(before expenses) & over 160 dinners were sold.

BOOK NOOK UPDATE

Sales for the Book Nook as of November 17th are **\$10,207!** With another month to go in 2013, we will be well past that previous goal of \$10,000. Just a reminder that the Book Nook will be open for business on Tuesday and Saturday mornings during the winter months.

KEEPING CHRISTMAS

Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world – stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death – and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem [two thousand] years ago is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love?

Then you can keep Christmas. And if you can keep it for a day, why not always? But you can never keep it alone.

–Henry Van Dyke



Dear Lord,

You have brought us to Christmastime once more. May we not relish the glitz, and miss the glory of your incarnation. May we not focus so much on the parties and the presents, the decorations and the allure of the creations of humans, but instead think of Christ who bore the imprint of your very being and who carried with intensity and complete dedication your message of love and hope for us all.

In the glorious name of Christ, we pray. Amen





A Child is Born

Jesus received many different names — even before he was born. Isaiah 9:6 (NIV) prophesies about four of these names.

Directions: Unscramble the words on the name tags below. (Hint: The first letter is capitalized.)

MY NAME IS
gyhMti

dGo

MY NAME IS
lerWnofud

esnruooCl

MY NAME IS
vrelEnsitga

eahFrt

MY NAME IS
niPcre
_____ of
aPcee



Answers: Mighty God, Wonderful Counselor, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
16 Hillcrest Drive
Ravena, NY 12143-1409

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



Deadline for articles for the **January** issue of *The Messenger* is **January 5th**. Please e-mail or fax articles to Barb Bullock at:

bbullock812@gmail.com

or

fax to: **731-8994**