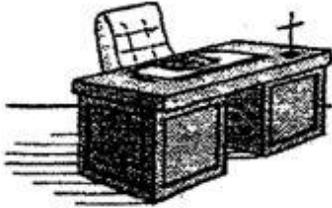




*The Messenger*  
Grace United Methodist Church  
16 Hillcrest Drive  
Ravena, NY 12143-1409

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



**FROM THE  
PASTOR'S  
DESK**

**July 2014**

Dear Friends,

In the past several years there has been a resurgence of people keeping diaries, or journaling, and many stores sell attractive bound books in which people can record their thoughts. But keeping a journal is not a new practice, at all. In fact, one person who kept a journal and even mentioned our predecessor congregations in it, was none other than Bishop Francis Asbury, a very well-known name in United Methodist history. Here are some excerpts from his journals:

"At Coeymans Patent...we hope 200 souls have been awakened the past year..." (July 13, 1793)

"We were crowded with people...at the Old Stone Church (on Winnie Ave. Ext., Pastor Judi's note), and I felt some life and warmth among them." (September 5, 1795)

Bishop Asbury even presided at Annual Conference at the Old Stone Church for the New York Conference in 1807.

Around 1833 the walls of the Old Stone Church were deteriorating, so the majority of the congregation voted to move to the new settlement of Coeymans. Ten years later Cossackie became a separate Methodist congregation, and three years after that Greenville did the same. In 1853 Coeymans Hollow Methodist Church was born, and in 1865 South Bethlehem Methodist Church began. In 1855 the New Baltimore Methodist Church began construction on its new building which was completed the following year, but growth in the town of New Baltimore was so rapid that plans were drawn up for a larger facility, and in 1873 the building that now stands in New Baltimore was dedicated.

In what is now Ravena, Methodists met with Dutch Reformed Christians in a school. In 1894 their new building was dedicated and became part of the Coeymans Hollow Methodist Circuit. The following year it became a separate charge, and the congregation voted to be Methodist and transferred the title of their property to the New York Conference.

Following the turn of the century, the community saw the loss of its ice and shipbuilding industries, but Ravena became the center of activity for a growing railroad. Consolidation was encouraged by increased access to transportation and communication, and in 1942 the congregations at Coeymans and New Baltimore again became a single charge.

On June 3, 1962, the former congregations of Coeymans, New Baltimore, and Ravena merged. The Ravena building was used for worship, the Coeymans building was used for Sunday School, and the New Baltimore building was used for storage. A committee was formed to search for land for a new Church building, and after some debate, "five acres of land on the northeast extension of the new Hillcrest development" was approved by the congregation. The cost was \$14,000. Over the following three years \$80,000 was raised toward a \$100,000 mortgage for a church building. The New York Conference donated \$20,000 and loaned another \$25,000 to the church.

Following is a statement written to describe the way forward: "At long last the door had opened. How many times since the merger had the congregation stared at the bridges which burned behind and faced a perplexing future with nothing left but faith. Suddenly the way was cleared." On Sunday, April 25, 1965, the new building was consecrated. The commemorative booklet for that day read "...we consecrate not only a building but an experience in faith - a gift from God!"

As I researched the history of our church I was struck by the honest expression of the difficulties involved...the original stone church building deteriorating, requiring a move (1833), members leaving to start new congregations (1843, 1846, 1853, 1865), lack of a

building necessitating worshiping in a school (until 1894), many problems associated with the merger (1962), debate over the purchase of the Hillcrest Drive property (1963), three years delay in construction in order to raise the money (1963-66), a shortfall in pledges requiring an appeal to the Conference for additional funding, and dissension over the construction of the fireplace and parking lot, (1964).

Clearly, moving the church forward instead of clinging to the past is hard work. It would have been so much easier to adopt an attitude of pessimism and declare each obstacle as the time to close the church doors. But these people, our foremothers and forefathers in the faith, dug deep into their spiritual reserves to widen the scope of their imaginations, and dug deep into their pockets to bring forth the visible evidence of their faith.

At the service of consecration for Grace Methodist Church, the following "General Confession" was prayed by all present:

"...we have done little to forward thy kingdom in the world...and to establish love as the law of life. We have allowed self to blind us, pains to embitter us. We have forgotten that whatsoever is done to one of the least of thy children is done unto thee. Pardon our shortcomings; forgive our neglect; give us a pure heart intent on pleasing thee. Help us in all our seeking to seek first thy kingdom and thy righteousness. And make us to come, as came thy Son Jesus Christ not to be ministered unto, but to minister..."

May this prayer be ours, as well, and may we, too, have the vision and courage to dig deep in our faith and deep in our pockets so that we may continue that work.

Faithfully,  
*Pastor Judi*

**Note:** *Information referred to came from the Commemorative Brochure on the occasion of Grace Methodist Church's Consecration, April 25, 1965, and from conversations with people who were involved in the events referenced.*



## ALL-CHURCH MEETING

The District Superintendent will be here to meet with us on the topic of options for dealing with the church's financial difficulties on July 8<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Everyone is invited to attend.



Please join us as we honor our dear, departed friend, Rev. William Rogers at a memorial service to be held at 1:00pm on Saturday July 12<sup>th</sup>. A lunch will be served in Fellowship Hall immediately following the service.



## BARGAIN SHED

The Bargain Shed presently has a half price sale on ladies' blouses, tops, shorts and capris. During July and August there will be other "spot" sales throughout the shed.

If you haven't visited us yet, please stop in! You just may find something

you like or need. Our inventory is continually changing.

Latest sales for the Bargain shed stand at **\$2,469!**

## SUNDAY SCHOOL ACTIVITY

Thank you to everyone who came for Children's Day! We had a lovely sunny day and lots of good food to eat. It was really nice to see (and hear) the church full of children and we appreciated their help before and during the service. A special thank you goes to Edna Rominger for her help in organizing, setting up and cleaning up the picnic. During the service we were able to honor our wonderful teaching staff which includes, Phyllis Shook, Barbara Coryell, Mike Mattick, Amy Devine-Young, Stephanie Canham, James June, Gabby Selbe and Devin Whitney.

We appreciate all the time and energy you put into preparing and teaching your classes. Thank you to Pastor Judi for arranging our Hands-on Helpers and to the following folks: Dottie Backlund, Cindy Bliss, Jan and Ray Bradshaw, Barbara Coryell, Sue Eccleston, Christine Frazee, Bonnie Ginter, Tracy Harris, Fran Lobdell, Sharon Phillips, Edna Rominger and Wanda Whitney for helping run a craft or sing-a-long with our younger Sunday School students to go along

with the bible story for the week. Elizabeth Robertson, Eric Mattick and Devin Whitney were presented bibles on Children's Day as well.

Thank you once again to our generous congregation for all their help with our Smile Train fundraising. We achieved our goal (and then some!) by raising over \$285. This will allow one child to have cleft palate surgery and go towards helping another child as well. Thank you so very much for making a difference in someone's life!

The Sunday School is in need of full size canning/mason jars for a project for the fall. If you have spares in your home that you would be willing to part with, we would appreciate it. There will be a box outside the office to leave them in over the summer. Thank you!

### **Congratulations to Dashanna Siebold!**

Dashanna is one of our 2014 graduates and she has been accepted at Hudson Valley Community College where she will major in criminal justice. After receiving her Associates Degree, Dashanna plans to transfer to a four-year college.





## **Congratulations to Devin Whitney!**

Devin is another one of our graduates this year. He has been on the high honor roll throughout high school and has a four-year average of 89.47. He is rated 33 out of a class of 165. Devin has also earned college credits while in high school.

Devin has been involved with soccer since the age of 5. He was on the JV and Varsity soccer teams. He was also a member of FCCLA and a Boy Scout. Devin has only lost one day of school while in high school due to an emergency at home. He is a very considerate person, a member of the Grace United Methodist Church and for the last year he has taught Sunday School.

Since the age of three, Devin has loved to cook. He has chosen Schenectady Community College, Culinary Program to follow his dreams of becoming a chef and eventually he would like to own his own restaurant.

## **BOOK NOOK UPDATE**

Sales for the Book Nook YTD have reached **\$5,100!**



Congratulations to everyone celebrating birthdays & anniversaries in July:

- 3 Joshua Dedrick
- 3 Janet Mantynen
- 3 Quaniesha Porterfield
- 5 Alan Baumbach
- 5 Jean Lyons
- 7 Christine Frazee
- 10 Mike Ellis
- 10 Mark Gordon
- 12 Lidia Ruso
- 13 Jan Bradshaw
- 14 Ken & Cindy Bliss
- 14 John & Pam Ginder
- 14 Ethan Roe
- 14 June Baumbach
- 16 Matthew Ginder
- 22 Mike Mattick
- 25 Leland Case
- 26 Karen Black
- 29 Adam & Donna Newton
- 29 Trey Coryell



## COVENANT-MAKING PROCESS UPDATE

The SPRC has begun the covenant-making process. We started by getting the input of our congregation. Please be sure to pick up a copy of the church survey (which was also included in our last newsletter) on the table outside the office and return it at the same location. Although the deadline has passed, we will still accept survey responses until the end of June.

So far, the outcome for question #1 has been very encouraging! The overwhelming response to "What brings you joy" about your church: the PEOPLE, the feeling of FAMILY and the CARING congregation. We are indeed a wonderful church family and together...we will move forward!

The next part of creating our church covenant will involve researching our community. A church must always seek to match its strengths with the needs of the surrounding community. Jesus calls us to encourage each other in the faith as we reach out in love to our neighbors. Of course, we already meet many needs through the ministry of the Bargain Shed and Book Nook. Let's expand on what we are currently doing as we seek new ways of spreading the Good News to our friends and neighbors.

To this end, the Evangelism Committee will plan another "Friendship Sunday" in September. This will be your opportunity to invite a "friend" to attend church. There will be a special message on the importance of God's command to "love one another as God loves us" and a special gift for all of our guests.

Start thinking about who you would like to invite! 😊

## COFFEE HOUR REQUEST

Would you be willing to donate a cake or a snack for coffee hour? Volunteers are needed to help out with this important part of our fellowship time. Please consider signing up for a Sunday.

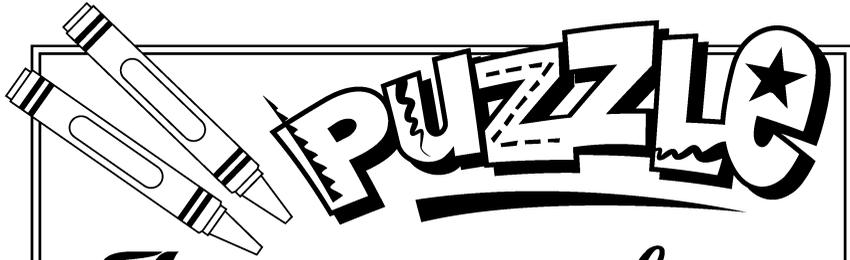
## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Saturday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> will be the  
HUGE FALL BOOK SALE!

"There are two freedoms — the false, where a man is free to do what he likes; the true, where he is free to do what he ought."

—Charles Kingsley

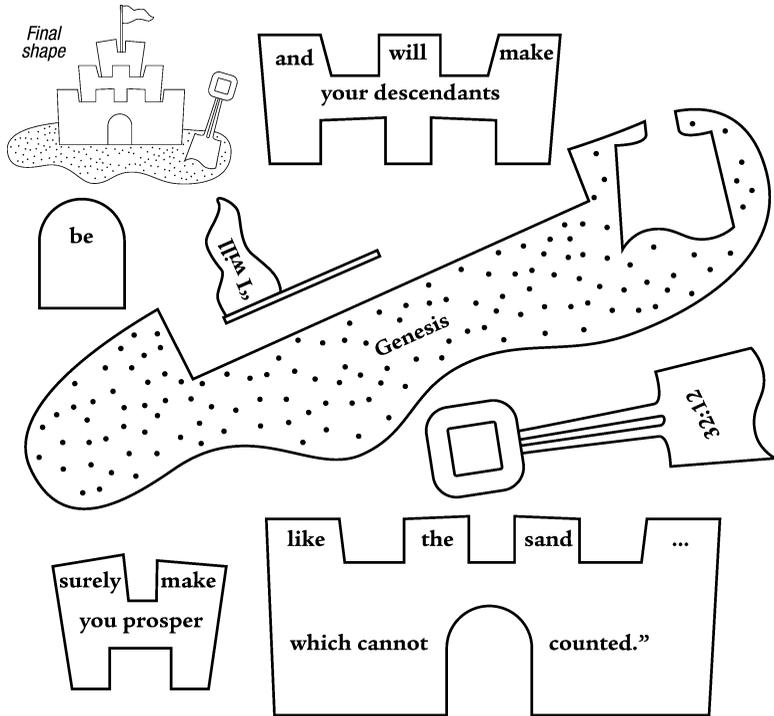




# A promise kept

In Genesis 32:12 (NIV), Jacob remembers a promise God made about his family. We, too, can be part of that promise. God always keeps his promises.

**Directions:** "Build" a sand castle using the shapes below. Cut out and assemble the shapes to complete God's promise. (Use the "final shape" image as a guide.)



Answer: "I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand ... which cannot be counted." Genesis 32:12, 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)



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

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

or

fax to: **731-8994**