



The Messenger
Grace United Methodist Church
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Rev. David E. Smith
Pastor

Dedicated to building a strong Christian family for all of God's children, working together for the purpose of putting our faith and love into practice.

February 2016

FROM THE DESK OF THE PASTOR

TAKING STOCK

Lent is a time for taking stock. A time for following the example of Jesus and taking time away from the events of everyday life to reflect on what God is calling us to do with our life. The Gospel tells us that Jesus began his ministry by retreating into the desert. While most of us don't have the ability to enter an extended retreat for contemplation, I would encourage you to join me during Lent in carving out time for reflecting on what it might mean to follow Jesus more closely. To assist in this task I have purchased copies of a daily devotional called "Way Words" that provides a short 5-minute reflection on a word related to following the way of Jesus. The devotions begin on Ash Wednesday, February 10th. You can pick up your copy at the church office when I am in the office during the week or on Sunday morning. I will also be doing a study on Wednesday evenings, beginning February 17 at 7pm based on Jesus' final words from the cross; a free copy of the study book is available from the pastor. We will also be having special services on Ash Wednesday, World Day of Prayer, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday as part of our Lenten journey.

Lent is a solemn time during which we recall Jesus' journey that led to sacrifice on a cross; but we also know that the cross leads to the resurrection and the celebration of eternal life.

Tears may roll down our cheeks during the dark of night but for those who dare to believe, joy follows as certainly as day follows night.

Yours in Christ's Service,



David E. Smith

David E. Smith, Pastor



FEBRUARY WORSHIP SERVICES

2/07 - Transfiguration Sunday

Scripture: Exodus 34:29-35; 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2; Luke 9:28-36

Affirmation

of Faith: # 884 – Korean Creed

Theme: Jesus opens the way to experiencing God's presence.

Sermon: Beyond Rules

Hymns: 2119 Where the Spirit of the Lord Is

349 Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus

393 Spirit of the Living God

2/10 – Ash Wednesday

Scripture: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Imposition of Ashes

Theme: Making time for Jesus yields life's true treasure.

Sermon: A Treasure Hunt

Hymns: 2128 Come and Find a Quiet Center

395 Take Time to Be Holy

496 Sweet Hour of Prayer

2/14 – First Sunday of Lent – Boy Scout Sunday

Scripture: Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Luke 4:1-13

Responsive

Reading: Litany for Boy Scout Sunday

Theme: Remembering the stories of God's people can strengthen us.

Sermon: Remember and Believe

Hymns: 57 O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing (v 1-4)

2002 I Will Call Upon the Lord

615 For the Bread Which You Have Broken

2/21 – Second Sunday of Lent

Scripture: Philippians 3:17-4:1; Luke 13:31-35

Affirmation

of Faith # 885 – A Modern Affirmation

Theme: Following Jesus means rejecting the temporary for that of lasting value.
Sermon: Bling or Value
Hymns: 295 In the Cross of Christ I Glory
396 O Jesus I Have Promised
2158 Just a Closer Walk with Thee

2/28 – Third Sunday of Lent

Scripture: Isaiah 55:1-9; Luke 13:1-9

Responsive

Reading # 788 – Psalm 63:1-8

Theme: God longs to redeem us from the problems we have created.

Sermon: Longing to Help

Hymns: 2146 His Eye Is on the Sparrow
347 Spirit Song
349 Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus

CALLING BELIEVERS, DOUBTERS, AND QUESTIONERS

Our alternate services on Sunday morning at 8am and Thursday evening at 7pm are designed to be informal services featuring contemporary music and a time to be in dialog with the message of Scripture and one another. I welcome those who have questions and even doubts about Christianity and its teachings.

This is designed to be a place where it is safe to question and even disagree. Here is a place for individuals looking to feed their spirit but who are unsure if Christianity is really the answer. Here is a place for someone to express their doubts without fear of ridicule. Here is a place where the words of faith are expressed in contemporary language and images.

Do you know someone looking for a place like this?

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL JANUARY 12th MEETING

We did have a rather small turnout for our meeting – but as usual, we had much to discuss! Items will be needed to fill bags for distribution to the

homeless, especially in this cold weather. Kate Robertson will provide the details. Preparations are being made for our Lenten and Easter worship services. We are still looking for a choir director. Thank you to Curtis and Sharon for sharing their talents with all of us! Many projects have been recently completed. There is still a “to do” list but many projects are being crossed off. New, money-saving dumpsters will soon arrive. The fireplace has been repaired much to the delight of the Friends Around the Fireplace. Lifetouch will be at church on January 26th and 27th to take pictures for our new directory – we would love to have everyone involved in this. It doesn’t cost a penny to have your portraits taken! The date of our next Administrative Council meeting is **February 9th** – we’d be glad for more chairs to be taken up!



ANNUAL REPORTS DUE

Information for the Annual Report is due to the office by **February 3rd**. This includes statistical information and committee reports. If we could have it earlier, it would be greatly appreciated. Thank you so much.

*Frannie L.
Secretary*

SPECIAL THANKS

Kudos goes out to Anne Frauenberger for un-decorating and taking down the church Christmas trees. Then she, her husband (Mark) and Alan Whitney carried it all over to the Bargain Shed for storage. Thank you so much.

SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY

February 7th will be our annual Souper Bowl Sunday! We're looking for folks to offer to bring in a crock pot of their soup of choice. There is a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall, but if you forget to sign up, you can still bring one on the 7th.

This will be a free-will offering event. We'll have two pots in which you can donate either money or two cans of any flavor soup (both if you choose to do so). Beverages, bread, and brownies will be supplied.

BOOK NOOK NEWS

For Valentine's Day, why not put a little romance in your life? The Book Nook has romance novels for everyone's taste – Small-Town Romance (Sherryl Woods), Christian and Sweet Romance (local author, Jean C. Gordon), Cowboys and Western

Romance (Linda Lael Miller), Historical Romance (Mary Balogh and Stephanie Laurens), and many, many more. Stop by Tuesday or Saturday from nine to noon and check out our February featured authors display and full selection downstairs...and enjoy some Valentine chocolates on us.



As you can see, our HUGE selection of books caters to all ages:



The Book Nook YTD total sales figure as of January 24th is **\$947!** And the final year-end figure for 2015 was **\$15,626!**

FINAL WORDS FROM THE CROSS

**A Lenten Study
by Adam Hamilton**

Jesus spoke many words during his ministry but his final words from the cross, spoken with great effort and suffering are filled with great emotion and meaning for those who would follow him. I invite you as part of your Lenten journey to join in exploring Jesus' final words. A free copy of the study book is available from the pastor.

We will meet Wednesday evenings beginning **February 17** at 7pm for six weeks followed by a session after Easter on Wednesday, March 30th at 7pm as we reflect on the words that follow those last words.

SPAGHETTI DINNER

This year the Spaghetti Dinner will be on Saturday, **February 20th**. **Take-outs** will be available starting at **4:30pm** and **sit-down dinners** will be held from **5-7pm**.

Once again this year, dinners will be available for a free-will offering. We are asking the congregation to donate jars of their favorite (meatless) sauces as we have in the past and brownie mixes will be made available to those who can volunteer to bake them for the dinner.

To accommodate as many folks as possible, we will have three different options at our spaghetti dinner. We will be offering our usual spaghetti sauce (mixed Methodist blend!) with meatballs made by Village Pizzeria, homemade gluten-free meatballs and sauce and lastly, a homemade "very veggie" sauce courtesy of Michelle Wagner. There will be a variety of drinks, rolls and brownies and ice cream for dessert. We hope you can join us for dinner and would welcome any assistance you could provide before or during the meal. Please contact Audry June or Kate Robertson if you are able to help.

CONCERT REMINDER

Just a reminder that this years Acoustic Doorways Concert is on Friday, **February 26th** from 7-9pm. Admission is \$10. The name of the quartet performing is Golfstrom and they offer a very big mix of music; featuring tangos, swing, waltz and two-step. The

music will also include vocals in French, Russian, and Ukrainian. Their instruments include accordion, clarinet, upright bass, vocals and percussion.

There will be an intermission with refreshments provided by members of Grace; just as we have in the past. If you can donate finger foods, we ask that they arrive at the church by 6:30pm (1/2 hour prior to the show beginning) to avoid interrupting the show.



FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

How many times have you driven by a homeless individual and not known what to do for them? Either you don't have money on hand, or don't feel comfortable giving it to them. Have you stopped somewhere to pick up food for them only to find they aren't there when you return? Or do you just drive by and feel guilty? We hope to solve that problem with our Blessing Bags.

Over the next month, the Sunday School will be collecting items to pack into drawstring bags that you can keep

in your car and hand out when the opportunity arises. We will have a tub outside the office to collect the following items:

- baby wipes
- lip balm
- lotion
- socks
- gloves
- hats
- scarves
- toothbrushes
- toothpaste
- band-aids
- deodorant
- hand sanitizer
- brush/combs
- gum/mints
- cough drops
- feminine products
- hand warmers
- non-perishable food items (i.e., diced fruit, applesauce or pudding cups; granola bars (preferably soft vs. hard due to possible dental problems)
- instant coffee
- tea bags
- water bottles

If you have inspirational magazines like Guideposts or small devotionals we would like to include those as well. It doesn't matter if they're out of date!

If you have drawstring bags (they're often given out at conferences) or if you can purchase those, please donate those as well. We will be filling the bags on **February 21st**. If you don't want to shop but would be willing to donate money to this cause, please see Stephanie Canham or Kate Robertson.

It's that time of year again! We will be sending our college students a care package to let them know we're thinking of them. In order to do this, we need your help! Please email Kate Robertson with the address of your student so they can receive a care box. Even if your child is living at home we would like to include them as well.

Our annual Game Night with potluck dinner will be held on Saturday, **March 19th**. Please plan on joining us for an evening of fun!

Looking ahead to April, we will once again be having a pancake breakfast before church with a pajama day fundraiser. Mark your calendars as more information is to follow!

HELP NEEDED

Our spring book sale and mini-rummage sale will be held **March 3rd, 4th and 5th**. We could REALLY use

help with organizing, carrying books up from downstairs and setting up.

We will begin bringing up books from downstairs and setting up on Saturday, February 27th (9am – 3pm), Sunday after church, and also on Monday and Tuesday, until finished. Any help you can give would be appreciated. Many hands make light work.

If you “happen” to be doing your spring cleaning ☺ and come across some books or rummage sale items that you can part with, we would certainly WELCOME them.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to everyone who is celebrating a birthday or anniversary in February!

5 Linda Sherman
7 John Robertson
14 Kathy Porterfield
16 Casey Sherman
17 Amy Devine-Young
19 Meaghan Houk
20 Sharon Phillips
24 Amy & Mark Young



TAX INFO

Just a reminder that if you would like a statement of your donations to Grace UMC for 2015, please see Harriet Marple and she will be happy to supply that for you.



BARGAIN SHED NEWS

The Bargain Shed will be opening on Saturday, **April 9th**. We look forward to being "back in business". Clean-up and set-up will begin on April 4th. During that week donations will be received anytime the staff is in the shop.

Please remember that we do not accept TV's, computers or exercise equipment. We welcome seasonal donations of items that are clean and in good repair. Also, please do not leave anything outside the building. The weather and overnight moisture damage them and many times we have had to discard them.

See you soon!

AN EARLY START TO SPRING CLEANING

Although Lent starts early this year, before spring appears in many areas, it's an appropriate time for spring cleaning. Indeed, *Lent* comes from old German and English words for "spring." So, while it might be too soon to open windows or hang clothes on the line, now is ideal for some *spiritual* spring cleaning.

Lent calls us to examine our beliefs, confess and dispose of old grudges and selfish habits, dust off our Bibles for a new routine of study and prayer, air out our hearts and brighten up our attitudes. "Lent cleaning" lets the Holy Spirit freshen our faith – and it's never too early for that.



AN ASH WEDNESDAY PRAYER

Dear righteous Lord, we enter the holy season of Lent confessing our many sins that separate us from you. We're sincerely sorry for offending you

repeatedly through our thoughts, our words and our actions – and often through our inactions, too.

Forgive us, Lord, and show us your tender mercy. Restore and strengthen us to become your faithful and faith-filled servants. During our Lenten journey, remind us to show mercy to other people, just as you’ve shown mercy to us. In Jesus’ name, *Amen*

LOVE ALL YOU DO

Blogger Rachel Macy Stafford gained a following by admitting she’d acquired the “disease of distraction.” Her children and family paid the price for her dependence on technology and a super-packed schedule.

In *Hands Free Mama* (Zondervan), Stafford describes how she made room to live, breathe and appreciate each day. One step involved changing the slogan on the front of her planner from “Do It All” to “Love All I Do.”

Now Stafford encourages others to take a Hands Free Pledge, “letting go of distraction, disconnection and perfection to live a life that simply, so very simply, consists of what really matters.”

FRIENDSHIP CARDS



This month, don't just *send* valentines; *be* a valentine! Create these Friendship Cards to express love through kind acts for your loved ones — all month long.



What you need:

- 29 index cards
- A small box or container
- Colored pens or glitter pens
- Stickers

What you do:

1. On each card, write something nice you can do for other people. Ideas include “Give someone a hug,” “Clean someone’s room,” “Read to someone” and so on. You can use colored pens to draw a picture.
2. Decorate the box or container. Place the cards inside.
3. Each day in February, select a card and do that nice thing for someone!

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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



Deadline for articles for the **March** issue of *The Messenger* is **February 21st**. Please e-mail or fax articles to Barb Bullock at:

bbullock812@gmail.com

or

fax to: **731-8994**