



*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 2017**

## **FROM THE DESK OF THE PASTOR**

### **WHAT NOW?**

There has been a variety of reactions to the election and installation of President Trump. There are individuals who see the election of Trump as a welcome change and others who see his election as troublesome. Rather than cast my vote for one side or the other, I want to reflect on the larger issue of religion and politics.

First and foremost, I want to acknowledge that faithful followers of Jesus Christ can have differing views on issues. I also believe that despite our differences we can celebrate those basic beliefs we hold in common and still work together.

Second, I believe that while our nation is founded on the principle of separation of church and State that as followers of Jesus Christ, our faith should inform our interactions in politics.

Third, Christianity has from its very beginnings had a tradition of protest and even civil disobedience. Jesus over-turned the money-changers' tables in the temple, Paul defied the prohibitions of Roman authorities, Martin Luther King, Jr. organized sit-ins at segregated lunch counters.

Fourth, a core principle of Christianity is that love should undergird all of our actions.

Finally, being true to our calling as followers of Jesus requires us to respond to the needs of others. I believe that responding to the needs of others can necessitate involvement in political issues. I also believe that our call to love one another necessitates that we avoid violence in our response.

Your comments and questions are always welcome. Feel free to contact me by phone or text at 518-572-4051 or email at [revdavid76@gmail.com](mailto:revdavid76@gmail.com).

Yours in Christ's Service,



*David E. Smith*

David E. Smith, Pastor



## **FEBRUARY WORSHIP SERVICES**

### **2/05 – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany**

Scripture 1 Corinthians 2:1-6; Matthew 5:13-20  
Affirmation  
Of Faith #883 – “We Are Not Alone”  
Theme The Holy Spirit empower us as God’s ministers.  
Meditation Ordinary to Extraordinary

### **2/12 – Boy Scout Sunday**

Scripture Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Matthew 5:21-37  
Litany for Boy Scout Sunday  
Theme Called to move beyond rules.  
Meditation Beyond Rules

### **2/19 – Seventh Sunday after Epiphany**

Scripture 1 Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-23; Matthew 5:38-48  
Responsive  
Reading #840 – Psalm 119:33-40  
Theme Called to be faithful not successful.  
Meditation Planting Seeds

### **2/26 – Transfiguration Sunday**

Scripture Hebrews 1:1-4; John 1:1-14  
Affirmation  
of Faith #884 – “Korean Creed”  
Theme Christ is fulfillment of law and prophets.  
Meditation Jesus is the One

### **3/01 – Ash Wednesday**

Scripture Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21  
Responsive  
Reading #785 – Psalm 51:1-17  
Theme Called to true repentance.  
Meditation Beyond Sunday Morning

## THANK YOU

I would like to say “Thank You” to the church family and to Pastor David for being with me, and for the many acts of kindness shown to me during and after my surgery. For fear of forgetting someone, I am not naming anyone – you know who you are. The prayers, phone calls, cards, visits, food and other acts were overwhelming. I can’t say “Thanks” enough. May God bless you all.

– *Harriet Marple*

## ANOTHER THANK YOU

Thank you for your generous Christmas gift. The cards, goodies, and financial gift are all greatly appreciated. I am even more grateful though, for your faithful participation in the ministry of the church, your words of appreciation and encouragement, and the way you reach out to those beyond our walls.

– *Pastor David*

## SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY

**February 5<sup>th</sup>** will be our annual Souper Bowl Sunday! We’re looking for folks to bring in a crock pot of their soup of choice. There will be a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall, but if you forget to sign up, you can still bring one on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

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 so desire). Beverages, bread, and brownies will be supplied.



## SPAGHETTI & MEATBALL DINNER

On Saturday, **February 11<sup>th</sup>**, we will be having our Annual Spaghetti & Meatball Dinner. Take-outs will be available starting at 4:30pm and seating will be from 5-7pm.

Dinners will be the cost of a good-will donation. There will also be gluten-free and vegetarian options available.

Don’t forget to bring in jars of your favorite meatless spaghetti sauce for the blending of our special “Methodist Spaghetti Sauce.”

## FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Since Kate wasn’t available to coordinate the Pancake Breakfast and Pajama day on January 22<sup>nd</sup> with the Sunday School, it’s been rescheduled

for **February 12<sup>th</sup>**. Breakfast will be from 8:30-10am for a good-will offering to benefit UNICEF. Breakfast will include pancakes, eggs, bacon, fruit, juice, coffee, milk and tea. A special thank you goes to Bonnie Ginter's son, Keith Hoyt, at Save-a-Lot Foods, who generously donated the eggs, bacon, butter and juice for the breakfast.

Also, we are asking the congregation to donate \$1 to UNICEF for the opportunity to wear their pajamas to church. The youth have already raised \$400 in pledges from the congregation so that Pastor David will be preaching in his pajamas that Sunday!

More excitement on **February 12<sup>th</sup>**: members from the organization "Street Soldiers" will be coming to talk to the Sunday School children about their work with the homeless in Albany. To support their group, the Sunday School is collecting the following:

- Hot Hands (little warming packs)
- Chapsticks
- Men's and ladies deodorants
- Hand sanitizers
- First aid kits
- Sewing kits
- Any travel-size essentials
- Gloves

- Hats
- Scarves
- Cups of peanut butter
- Applesauce cups
- Beef jerky
- Clementines
- Bananas
- Trail mix
- Pudding cups
- Plastic spoons
- Baggies
- Canned goods
- Water

Let's help our children help those less fortunate so they can experience the meaning of loving others.

We'll be having a Movie Night at 7pm on Friday, **February 24<sup>th</sup>**. Come see the movie "Miracles from Heaven" on the big screen in Fellowship Hall. Here's a synopsis:

***Miracles from Heaven*** is a 2016 American Christian drama film directed by Patricia Riggen and written by Randy Brown. It is based on *Miracles from Heaven* by Christy Beam, which recounts the true story of her young daughter who had a near-death experience and was later cured of an incurable disease. The film stars Jennifer Garner, Kylie Rogers, Martin Henderson, John Carroll Lynch, Eugenio Derbez, and Queen Latifah.

Drinks and snacks will be provided. Feel free to bring pillows, sleeping bags and blankets to get comfy!

Next up...Mark your calendars! Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup> from 6-8:30pm the Sunday School and youth will be having a NERF battle at Grace United Methodist Church. More details to come.

Once again we will be sending care packages to our youth in college. If you have a child who is a student in college or know of some student who could use a pick-me-up, please forward the addresses to Kate Robertson by 3/1.



## BOOK NOOK NEWS

The Book Nook total for 2016 was **\$17,561!** Fantastic job!!

And so far, as of January 22<sup>nd</sup> the 2017 total is **\$829.**

Mark your calendars...the first **BOOK SALE** of 2017 will be March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. We will be setting up Sunday, the 19<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday, the 22<sup>nd</sup> or until finished. Your **HELP** would be greatly appreciated.

## TAX INFO

Don't forget if you would like a statement of your donations to Grace UMC for 2016, please see Harriet Marple and she will be happy to supply that for you.

## ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL MEETING

The Administrative Council meeting on January 10<sup>th</sup> was attended by 11 individuals. As usual, we covered a wide range of topics. The Book Nook continues to bless many people and generates a sizable income for our church ministry; and even though it is closed for the winter, the Bargain Shed is staffed by helpers who continue to sort through donations in preparation for opening in the Spring.

There are many events in the upcoming months – a chili cook-off, “Souper Bowl” Sunday, the annual spaghetti dinner, a movie night and much more!

The pastor will continue to plan our calendar through his term in June. We are grateful for his guidance in so many areas.

The sanctuary has been hit with some sizeable repair issues recently, and there are some financial expenditures

in our future – pipe replacement, roof leaks, carpet replacement, etc. and we are still waiting for loan information – although it should be coming soon.

We are close to signing a family for rental of the parsonage – wonderful news for our church! We have had interest in the music director position, so please pray that it comes to fruition. In the meantime, Adrienne continues to do a great job! We will be participating in the Brown Bag Program again for the April school break and will be seeking donations from our always generous congregation by March 14<sup>th</sup>.

We do hold true to our 9pm stop time – so if you can take a couple of hours from your busy schedule, meetings are open to everyone. Our next is on February 15<sup>th</sup> (postponed one day due to Valentine's Day) – we'd welcome your presence!

## **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

## **LENTEN ACTIVITIES**

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on March 1<sup>st</sup>. There will be an Ash Wednesday service with the imposition of ashes and a Lenten study beginning Wednesday, March 8 at 7pm and continuing each Wednesday through April 12<sup>th</sup>.

Easter this year will be celebrated on April 16<sup>th</sup>. Watch the newsletter and Facebook for details on the Lenten Study and special Lenten and Easter events.

## **EVANGELISM NEWS**

### Upcoming Events:

- March 17<sup>th</sup> (St. Patrick's Day) – Grace's Coffee House
- Lenten "Nail" Cross necklaces will be available during Lent
- EASTER - April 16<sup>th</sup> – Easter cards will be sent to our inactive members.
- We also plan to extend our prayer blanket ministry to include celebrations, such as

welcoming a new baby, graduations and weddings.

- Friendship Sunday, May 7<sup>th</sup> - We ask everyone to please pray to be intentional about who you'd like to invite to church. We will have a special gift for all visitors, as well as a delicious pot-luck lunch. The challenge for Friendship Sunday will be for everyone to invite one person. Wouldn't you love to help us fill those empty pews? Please pray about it.

Meetings are held at 7pm on the first Tuesday of the month. The next one is scheduled for **February 7<sup>th</sup>**. We invite new ideas and new members to join the committee.

## SOME MORE "SAVE THE DATE" INFO

*March 3<sup>rd</sup>* – Church Women United meeting, 12:30pm at Trinity UMC in Coeymans Hollow. Beverages and dessert will be provided.

*May 5<sup>th</sup>* – Church Women United Annual Fellowship meeting and collection for RCS Scholarship Fund. Lunch will be provided at 12:30pm with the location to be determined.

*May 7<sup>th</sup>* – 2017 Crop Walk at 1pm. Details will be forthcoming.

## BARGAIN SHED

The Bargain Shed will re-open on Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup>. We will begin accepting donations on Monday, March 27<sup>th</sup>. Please keep us in mind when you're doing your "spring cleaning".

Thank you all for your past donations and patronage. See you soon at the Shed!

## IN ALL HIS GLORY

On the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, many Christian churches celebrate the Transfiguration of Our Lord. After telling his shocked, uncomprehending disciples that he would die and rise again, Jesus took Peter, James and John up a mountain. Suddenly Jesus appeared to be glowing! "He was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light" (Matthew 17:2, ESV).

Moses and Elijah appeared, and a voice said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him" (verse 5). Jesus' disciples fell to the ground, overcome by fear. But Jesus touched them, told them not to be afraid and led them down the mountain.

The disciples witnessed firsthand the glory and Godhood of Jesus, who would soon die for the sins of the world and rise again to give us life.

## GOD'S CONVERSATION HEARTS

Those familiar conversation hearts that show up every February can be more than just trite romantic or friendly sayings. Use them to remind you – or to teach a child – of the greatest love of all: God's love for us, which empowers our love for others. For example:

♥ TRUE LOVE: What love is truer than giving up one's only Son so people might have everlasting life? (John 3:16).

♥ MINE: Jesus knows us intimately, as a shepherd knows his sheep. No one can snatch us from him (John 10:27-29).

♥ FOREVER: God loves us with an "everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31:3).

♥ LOVE ME: The greatest commandment is to love God with our whole being (Luke 10:27).

♥ TRUST ME: "Let not your hearts be troubled." We can count on Jesus, now and for eternal life (John 14:1-3).

♥ SWEET TALK: God's words are sweeter than honey (Psalm 119:103).

♥ BE GOOD: We show our love for Christ by keeping his commands (John 14:15).

♥ CALL ME: God longs to be in fellowship with us. We can talk to him anytime in prayer (Jeremiah 33:3).

♥ FRIENDS: The greatest love involves laying down your life for your friends (John 15:13) – precisely what Jesus did.

♥ #1: "We love because [God] first loved us" (1 John 4:19).



## YOU ARE CHERISHED

We must understand that God does not "love" us without liking us – through gritted teeth – as "Christian" love is sometimes thought to do. Rather, out of the eternal freshness of his perpetually self-renewed being, the heavenly Father cherishes the earth and each human being upon it. The fondness, the endearment, the unstintingly affectionate regard of God toward all his creatures is the natural outflow of what he is to the core – which we vainly try to capture with our tired but indispensable old word "love."

– Dallas Willard,  
*The Divine Conspiracy*

## THE COST OF HIDING OUR LIGHT

A Los Angeles restaurant owner recently discovered that a neon light had been covered – without being disconnected first – during a construction project 77 years prior. The calculated electricity cost to run the hidden light all that time was \$17,000!

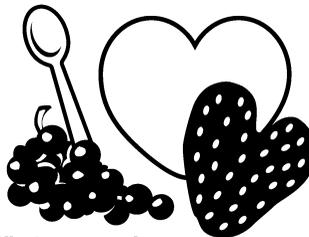
People don't intentionally hide light; that would be counterproductive, not to mention wasteful. Yet when we shrink back from sharing Jesus' good news, we do indeed hide "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14) that is in us. When we're too modest to use God-given talents such as singing, playing piano or reading to bring others joy, we hide our light. When we put our own wants ahead of meeting someone else's needs through giving and serving, we hide the light of God's love. And at what cost?

"Let your light shine before others," Jesus says, "that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (verse 16).



## Heart FRUIT SALAD

Make this cute, healthy snack for your loved ones on Valentine's Day.



### What you need:

- Adult help
- Washed fruit (watermelon, cantaloupe, strawberries, grapes)
- Knife and cutting board
- Small heart-shaped cookie cutter
- Bowl and spoon
- Mint leaves (optional)

### What you do:

1. Slice the watermelon and use the cookie cutter to make heart shapes.
2. Slice the cantaloupe and cut chunks into heart shapes.
3. Remove strawberry stems and cut berries in half. Cut a small V atop each half to form a heart.
4. Cut grapes in half.
5. Place fruit in bowl and stir. Sprinkle strips on the salad. Enjoy!
6. Wash and cut the mint.

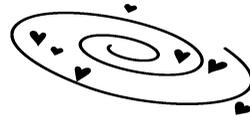


# Love your neighbour as yourself

Valentine's Day is the perfect opportunity to live out God's love.  
How does Jesus say we should treat other people?

*Directions: Find a hidden word in each sentence. For example, "the" is hidden here:  
(12) "It's Harry's hat he stole." The (12) means the hidden word starts on the 12<sup>th</sup>  
letter (ignore punctuation). Use the answers to complete Matthew 19:19, NIV.*

(1) You really like ice cream! \_\_\_\_\_



(16) Carly has a really fat hermit crab. \_\_\_\_\_

(21) My favorite animals are moth, ermine and eels. \_\_\_\_\_

(4) "Hello, Vera!" called Joseph. \_\_\_\_\_

(11) When horses neigh, boredom reigns. \_\_\_\_\_

(17) Their daughter, Kara, sat patiently. \_\_\_\_\_

(6) "That's yours, elf!" the fairy yelled. \_\_\_\_\_



"Honor \_\_\_\_\_ and



\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ your

\_\_\_\_\_."

Matthew 19:19, NIV

Answers: "Honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 19:19, 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 **March** issue of *The Messenger* is **February 19<sup>th</sup>**. Please give or e-mail articles to Barb Bullock at:

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