



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

[www.graceumcravena.org](http://www.graceumcravena.org)  
518-756-6688

Pastor Kim Krause

*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.*

**December 2017**

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

Dear Grace Family,

By the time you receive this newsletter, we will be in the thick of things. By that I mean that busyness of the season will be upon us. I noticed that Christmas décor was going up in different stores even *before* Halloween was over. The rushing of the seasons and all that comes with the preparation for Christmas will tend to inundate our lives from now until Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>, if not beyond.

In the midst of all the craziness and busyness that ensues, I invite you to practice being present, truly present, in each activity that you participate in. Your presence is a gift that only you can give to those around you. I'm not saying that this is an easy gift to give, but as we celebrate Advent and anticipate Christmas and God coming to us in a new way, I simply want to remind us that the to-do lists will still be there, the seemingly endless round of parties and activities will still be there. Simply try to be in the moment – it will take nothing away from the activities that are to come, but can add immensely to your experience with family and loved one, and to theirs as well.

Be patient with yourself. Allow yourself time to just be...in the presence of God, in the presence of loved ones. And perhaps this year you may just give yourself the best gift you can – simply in being present.

Peace,

Pastor Kim

## BOOK NOOK REMINDER

Just a reminder that the Book Nook is now operating on winter hours:

Tuesday 9 to Noon  
Saturday 9 to Noon  
No Thursday Evenings



## EVANGELISM NEWS

### GIVING TREE

Every year the Evangelism Committee coordinates our wonderful holiday tradition of adopting several local families for Christmas and Thanksgiving.

As in past years, we're asking folks to provide one toy and one clothing item per child. Gift cards will also be appreciated. All necessary information for gift-giving will be listed on the "Gift Tag" ornaments and placed on the Giving Tree.

Simply take an ornament tag from the tree, purchase and wrap the gift, place the ornament tag on the package and place it under the tree!

## COFFEE HOUSE

Our next Coffee House is scheduled for **December 8**. Registration from 6:30 – 7:00pm. The theme will be Christmas, of course. So start thinking about something "Christmasie" that you'd like to share. There always seems to be a surprise performance or two...so don't miss the fun!

Mark your calendar now.

## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to everyone celebrating a birthday in December!

- 1 Jacob Black
- 2 Reggie Porterfield
- 4 Jim Sherman
- 6 Adrienne Seymour Greene
- 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
- 25 Hailey Maurer
- 28 Audry June
- 31 Al & JoAnne Burrill

## SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Many thanks go to the congregation for their generous support of our Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Drive. We donated 22 shoeboxes filled with goodies which will be shipped around the world to children in need. As the gift boxes are handed out, the boys and girls will have an opportunity to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We also sent two boxes of Halloween candy, toothbrushes and toothpaste to our military through Operation Gratitude. Thank you for generously supporting our Sunday School projects!

The Sunday school is in need of empty, clean 2-liter soda bottles to make luminaries for the Christmas Eve service. Please drop them off in the tub outside the office.

## BARGAIN SHED CLOSED

Saturday, November 18, was the last day to shop at the Shed until next spring. During the final 2 weeks we had a \$3/bag sale that was very successful. Regular and once-in-a-while customers had fun filling a bag to the brim. And it helped reduce the amount of inventory that has to be stored. In addition, donations were

made to Street Soldiers, City Mission in Albany, Salvation Army, Ravena Senior Center and Rock Solid. Receipts for the year totaled **\$5,850!**

Please keep us in mind when doing your spring cleaning. If you have not been in the shop, we accept seasonal clothes and shoes (men's, women's and children's), accessories, linens, small appliances, jewelry, glassware, china, knick knacks, toys, seasonal decor, etc., etc. We **DO NOT** accept, however, TVs, computers or exercise equipment. Small furniture pieces will be accepted.

Thanks to all our volunteers, donors and patrons!



## GREATEST WORTH

He came a babe of lowly birth.  
He was God's Son of greatest worth.  
We, like the angels, sing with mirth  
because God sent his Son to earth  
to ransom us and claim our worth.  
Praise God this babe of lowly birth!

—*MaryAnn Sundby*

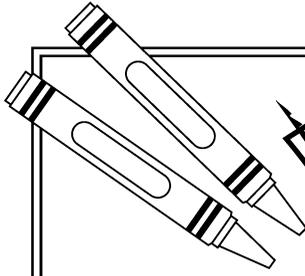
## THE PERFECT GIFT

Do you stress about finding just the right gift for everyone on your Christmas list? Does it make the season more a hassle than a joy? Pastor Mike Slaughter reminds us that Christmas isn't about perfect presents for people, as if it were their birthday – or ours. Christmas is about the perfect presence of Immanuel, God with us, through the birth of Jesus; it's his birthday, after all!

In *Christmas Is Not Your Birthday* (Abingdon), Slaughter writes, “How funny that it can be so hard to find gifts

that will please certain family members or friends – the people who seem to have everything – and yet it is so clear what the Lord of lords and King of kings wants for his birthday. God wants you – your time, your talent and your treasure – used in service to others.”





# PUZZLE

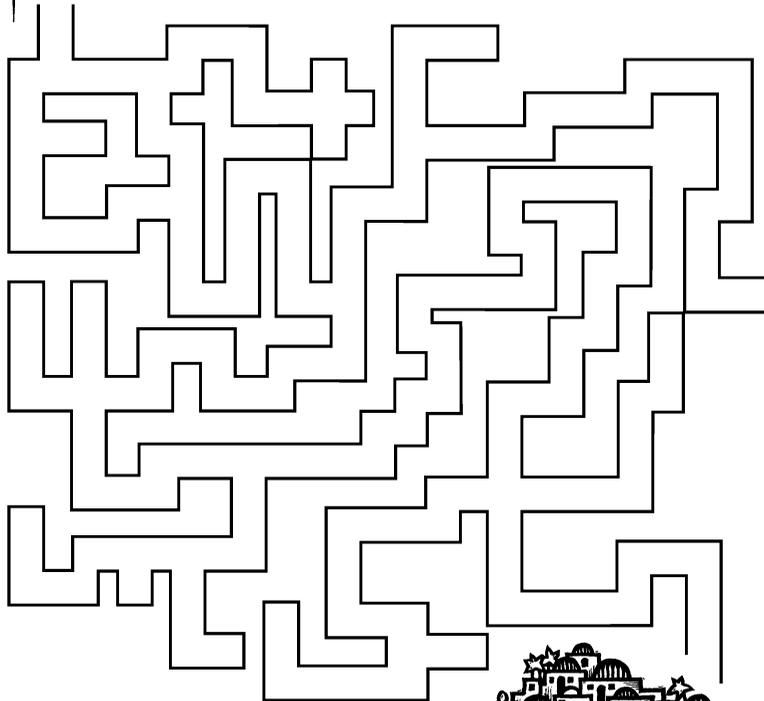
## JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

In the Christmas story in Luke 2, an angel tells some shepherds to go see baby Jesus in Bethlehem.



START

*Directions: Follow the maze to arrive in Bethlehem.*



BETHLEHEM



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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, including meetings and special events.

**OR VISIT US ON THE WEB:**

[www.graceumcravena.org](http://www.graceumcravena.org)



Deadline for articles for the **January** issue of *The Messenger* is **December 17 due to our Christmas holiday**. Please give or e-mail articles to Barb Bullock at:

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