

CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

*"Making connections and offering opportunities for
faith, love, and service"*

Worship 10 am

Education Hour –11 am

TOTAL STEWARDSHIP: PRAYERS, PRESENCE, GIFTS, AND SERVICE

Pastor

Rev. Daven Oskvig

Office Administrator

Julie LoTempio

Minister of Music

Paul Staley

Financial Secretary

Doris Schanzlin

Custodian

Michael Andolina

350 Saratoga Road, Amherst, NY 14226

Phone: 839-2460

Fax: 839-2166

www.christchurchamherst.org E-mail: Cumc350@gmail.com

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 9 am – 2 pm

Office closed February 21



**April-May 2022
Caller Deadline:
Sunday, March 13, 2022
to
caller350@yahoo.com or
bbmitch@verizon.net**

**Questions? Contact Barb Mitchell
839-2435 or bbmitch@verizon.net**



The Caller



Photo by Brad Loliger

February/March 2022



Ah, February ... the month of love and indulgence, filled with passion and the pleasure of chocolate all displayed in hues of red and pink. From candy to cards, lines and words dripping with sentimentality bombard us. The saccharin realities of it are enough to make one sick, and yet challenging for any of us to avoid.

We often think that the church and the story that stands as the foundation of the church are devoid of such realities. And while we know better to sanitize it too much given the violence, betrayal, famines, death, and other things present, we don't tend to associate the biblical narrative with love. Yet a key attribute of our God is exactly this, love. Moreover, the biblical narrative as a whole could be seen as a lover's story. God so loved the world, and yet we continued to betray, turn away, tease our loyalties and affections, etc. Even taking it as such, we don't tend to think of the Bible as similar or comparable to the nonsense surrounding February 14th.

If we but plumb into its depths, we find that also to be untrue. There is love poetry throughout with much of it causing us to blush at the imagery. We neither have read it ourselves before nor heard it in church. While we are certainly behind the retail sector that was leaning into this month of love prior to Christmas, we will through the month of February be reading, hearing and exploring this evocative love poetry. Then, in March as we begin Lent, we continue through what could be seen as God's embodied love story to the world in Jesus. Hallmark has got nothing on our faith story!

*Yours in Christ,
Pastor Daven*

February Birthdays



March Birthdays

Barbara Burr.....	3	Marcia Snyder.....	1
Marion Rowlands.....	3	Gregory Yungbluth.....	2
Olivia Smith.....	14	Graciella Cordero.....	3
Donna Yungbluth.....	15	Michael Farley.....	4
Marilyn Welker.....	17	Clem Arrison.....	5
Laura June Merrill.....	17	Gregory Watson.....	7
Ben Bermudez.....	20	Brad Bermudez.....	8
Abigail Johnson.....	23	Andrew Lopez.....	12
Paul Staley.....	23	Joanne Gilbert.....	15
Viki Smith.....	25	William Morris.....	16
Linda Parete.....	26	Marshall Rhinehart.....	17
Michele Sciolino.....	27	Toni Neidel.....	18
Herb Wilber.....	28	Karen Arrison.....	19

February Anniversaries

None



March Anniversaries

None

Pat Noyes.....	24
Peggy Bermudez.....	25
Ashley Miller.....	26
Jordan Maliken.....	29
Jan Rhinehart.....	31
Warren Hammond.....	31

If you would like to add your birthday and/or anniversary to the list, please contact the church office (839-2460) or Barb Mitchell (839-2435.)

We wish to extend our prayers and sympathy to the family and friends of Mary Parsons upon her death at age of 97 on November 29, 2021.

We also extend our prayers and sympathy to the family and friends of Ruth Malone upon her death at age 99 on December 17, 2021.



To our Christ Church Congregation

On behalf of the Staff Parish Relations Team, I would like to thank each family who participated in the Staff Appreciation Gift this holiday season. Your generous contribution was a true reflection of your respect and appreciation for each member of our church staff and the support they give us throughout the year. 2021 has again been a year of challenges, but the creative, innovative, and caring staff at Christ Church has continued to enhance our Church experience and we are grateful for your recognition.

The SPR Team wishes all our Church family a year filled with blessings, good health, and happiness.

Thank you again,
Linda Ladowski
SPRT Chairperson

Thank You

We, the staff of Christ Church, are absolutely overwhelmed by the expressions of generosity from all of you at Christmas. Please accept our heartfelt gratitude and our personal delight to work for and alongside all of you. Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!

Thank You

I would like to send my heartfelt thanks to all the members of our Church who have sent cards and notes and made phone calls and in-person visits during my lengthy stay at Schofield. I am so blessed to be part of such an amazing group of people, and I thank God for all of you!

Debbie Laberta

Sermon Series for February

Song of Solomon

The book *Song of Songs* (also known as the Song of Solomon) contains love poems, or songs, of Israel. Often attributed to King Solomon, the author is not known, and the poetry may have come from several sources, developing over a long period of time before being consolidated into one book. There are two main speakers in this eight-chapter book, a man and a woman. Throughout the eight chapters a delicate mood of love and devotion is sustained. The woman and the man express their love for each other in poems that reflect desire, admiration, and boasting. Perhaps originally used in weddings, they underscore important values (mutuality and fidelity in love) and speak of marriage as it ought to be. Another level of their meaning is also present: the love between God and God's people. In this regard, the main characters are The Lord and Israel, or Christ and the Church or the individual soul. To this end, monogamous marriage is the norm for depicting the covenant relationship between God and God's people throughout Scripture. Human love becomes a good teaching device to cast light on divine love. As earth has come to reflect heaven, so human love can reflect the passion and love God has for creation.

Sermon Series for Lent

The basis this Lent in both our Spiritual Formation opportunities and worship will be Amy-Jill Levine's book [Witness at the Cross](#). This resource focuses on the experiences and perspectives of those who witnessed the death of Jesus. Each provide a different and distinct role, each provide meanings and messages of the cross across the centuries, and each give new insights. All offer us a possibility to come away from Lent transformed.



Remember to turn your clocks **ahead** 1 hour on
Sunday, March 13th!

Reconciling Ministry Update

Official Church-Wide Straw Poll on 2/20/2022

Official Church-Wide Final Vote on 3/6/2022



Christ Church is taking the final steps towards a vote on joining the Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN) and becoming a Reconciling Congregation. RMN is an organization seeking the inclusion of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in both the policy and practices of United Methodist Church. We will take an official church-wide straw poll on **February 20, 2022, immediately following worship** on whether or not our church is willing to adopt the following statement:

“We celebrate God’s gift of diversity and value the wholeness made possible in community equally shared and shepherded by all. We welcome and affirm people of every gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation, including all LGBTQIA persons, who are also of every age, race, ethnicity, physical and mental ability, level of education, and family structure, and of every economic, immigration, marital, and social status, and so much more. We acknowledge that we live in a world of profound social, economic, and political inequities. As followers of Jesus, we commit ourselves to the pursuit of justice and pledge to stand in solidarity with all who are marginalized and oppressed.”

If you are unable to vote on the straw poll in-person, there will be an online voting option as well.

We will take an official church-wide final vote on **March 6, 2022, immediately following worship**. If you are unable to vote in person, there will be an online voting option as well.

If you have questions, please reach out to Bradley Loliger at bradloliger@gmail.com, or speak to any of the members of our reconciling team: Peggy Bermudez, Sandy Cumming, Toni Neidel, Barb Mitchell, Karen Hoffmann, Carol Corsaro, or Julie Wrisley. We are happy to answer any questions you may have and to help you understand what this means for Christ Church.

Sabbatical Leave

The Lilly endowment National Clergy Renewal Program is a grant which provides an uninterrupted extended leave for a period of renewal and reflection to the pastor and congregation for regaining enthusiasm and creativity in ministry. We have been encouraged to reapply this year and will be largely using the same framework and proposal as last year. There are some tweaks and changes we will make relative to changes between years and encouragement that this should represent, particularly for the pastor, a renewing leave, undertaking activities which bring joy to help restore vitality and energy for ministry. We will post on the website a description of the program including the proposal of the nature and scope of that program which would take place largely during the summer of 2023. Questions, feedback, support, and concerns are encouraged and can be shared with Peggy Bermudez or Pastor Daven as congregational support is paramount to grant awarding.

Remembering Your Church

For many people, the ability to make a gift to their church in their wills is a source of comfort and great satisfaction. They know that long after they are gone, the ministries of their beloved faith community will still thrive and grow, in part because of their generosity.

Making your church a beneficiary of your will isn’t difficult. You’ll want to talk to your attorney, of course, and work with him or her to draft a legal document that is well-written and complete. Your gift may be in the form of cash, or you may make the church a beneficiary of a life insurance policy, thus allowing your gift to be far more significant in size than what you might otherwise be able to give. You may also gift the church with appreciated securities, real estate, charitable gift annuities or charitable annuity trusts, or IRA distributions.

As you prepare to set up your will, talk to your loved ones so that they understand your wishes regarding your bequest to your church and the rest of your estate. And, of course, spend time in prayer and contemplation to help you discern how best to use your financial assets .

FINANCE TEAM

The Christmas offering to date is \$1,803 and is to be split 50-50 between Hearts for the Homeless and Journey's End.

Thank you all for a very successful pledge campaign as those who make a financial pledge to the church, and do so within the requested time frame, make the work of the Finance Team much easier. Without the support of pledge information, it is very difficult to construct a budget for the following year. By late fall the expense requests from the various teams and the projection for staff salaries are available. However, if we don't have the pledges to create the revenue side of the budget, we have to work through and then rework the budget several times. In the past the Finance Team has had difficulty recommending a budget to the Church Council before the end of the calendar year.

We received a total of \$5,765 for our Memorial Fund this past year.

We received \$359 for the Turkey Baskets Offering and our Thanksgiving Offering was \$567.

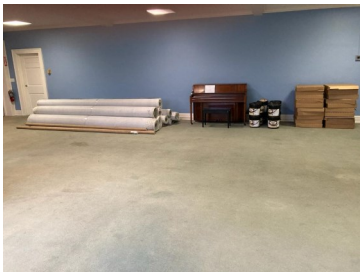
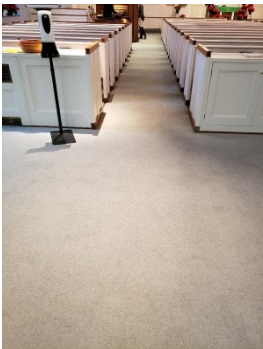
The United Methodist Student Offering was \$52.

CUMC Finance Team



Watch This Space!

Thanks to the efforts of the Hospitality Committee, this area will soon be updated further.



Ash Wednesday



Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. Ash Wednesday emphasizes a dual encounter: we confront our own mortality and confess our sin before God within the community of faith. The form and content of the service focus on the dual themes of sin and death in light of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ. The use of ashes as a sign of mortality and repentance has a long history in Jewish and Christian worship, and the Imposition of Ashes can be a powerful nonverbal and experiential way of participating in the call to repentance and reconciliation. Ashes, the sign of death, are put on the forehead not in some random pattern but in the shape of a cross. This alters the starkness of the message from one of just recognition of mortality, to the immortality possible in Christ. This practice is the historic focus of Ash Wednesday observance and gave the day its name. It is traditional to save the palm branches from the previous Passion/Palm Sunday service and burn them to produce the ashes for this service.

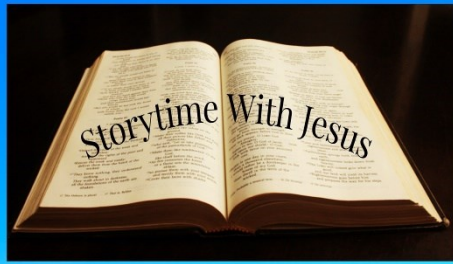
An Ash Wednesday Service will be held on March 2 at 7pm in person and on line.



Lenten Season

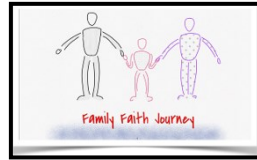


Lent is a season of repentance, fasting, and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent was a time to prepare new converts for baptism. Today, Christians focus on their relationship with God, often choosing to give up something or volunteering and giving of themselves for others. The forty days of Lent represent the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation. Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter" celebration of Jesus' victory over sin and death.



January 16, 2022 February 20, 2022 March 20, 2022 April 17, 2022 May 15, 2022

Family Faith Journey



3rd Sunday of each month
11 am in Fellowship Hall .
All are welcome!

The theme is centered around 5 parables of Jesus:

1. Why Jesus Told Parables (1/16)
2. Parable of the Sower and Seeds (2/20)
3. Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (3/20)
 4. Parable of the Talents (4/17)
 5. Parables of Lost Things (5/15)

Music and Meditation



Christ Church has offered a time during the seasons of Advent and Lent to quietly reflect and prepare. Currently this is a short, 30-minute, candlelight service on Friday evenings beginning at 5:30 pm on



March 4 - April 15 following the style of Taizé (pronounced teh-zay'). A Taize service is a service of song and silence, prayer, and scripture, that hopes to lead participants to contemplate and celebrate their relationship with God and with one another. Music repeats many times. It begins with a simple melody that is sung together and can remain that way, building as it progresses, and/or employing the addition of instruments or soloist. It all fits together, even simply experiencing the music as an observer. Texts are short and reflective Taizé invites one to feel and interact with the readings and songs. Prayers are invitational and conversational to promote an experience of dialogue with the living present Christ. The silences are intentional, opportunities to wonder or to consider the words or music heard. It is combined with a sense of the living presence of God in the flickering candles. All services will also be available via Live stream through our YouTube channel and archived following the conclusion of that live stream.



Christ Church Little Free Food Pantry



Small Non-perishable Food items:
soup, canned fruit/vegetables, macaroni & cheese cups , rice packets (e.g. Knorr, Ricearoni), peanut butter, oatmeal.

No beans please (kidney, black, etc.)



TIGER'S DEN
Food Pantry

Toilet paper, paper towels, facial tissues, laundry detergent, liquid dish soap, sugary cereal, canned beans (all kinds), crackers, and juice

Place in collection bins in church office hallway.



Clothing, shoes, blankets
Collection bin in church parking lot.



A Friendly Reminder to Leaders

Please contact Julie in the church office (716-839-2460 or Cumc350@gmail.com) when you know dates for your meetings with the time, date, and name of your group to schedule a location in the church and also to put it on the church calendar.

It would also be helpful if you would contact Barb Mitchell (bbmitch@verizon.net or 716-839-2435) so your information could be put into The Caller each month.

Thank you!
Barb Mitchell

TRUSTEES REPORT

The storm sewer replacement project was completed the week between Christmas and the New Year. Total cost of \$16,602 came from Trustees Repairs & Maintenance budget line. We'll be a *bit* over Budget for 2021 but the work was necessary to keep rainwater from backing up into basement rooms.



Photos by Tom Weaver



Book Club

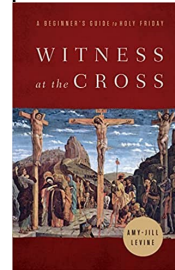
The CUMC book club, "Books We Have Loved", had a special meeting in December, sharing different holiday readings (books, poems, essays) with each other over coffee/tea and cookies. This year we are using a different format for our monthly meetings: each attendee can, if they so choose, give a short description of a book they have personally read over the past month. Everyone seems to be enjoying this informal sharing of books and often, we end up loaning each other something new to read. "Books We Have Loved" is a great opportunity for fellowship and we invite newcomers to join us the first Friday of the month at 11:00 am in the Wesley Room at church. Our next meeting is February 4th.

Spiritual Formation Team

Lenten Study

Witness at the Cross

By Amy-Jill Levine



Experience Holy Friday from the perspective of those who watched Jesus die: Mary his mother; the Beloved Disciple from the Gospel of John; Mary Magdalene and the other women from Galilee; the two men, usually identified as thieves, crucified with Jesus; the centurion and the soldiers; Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus - Jews and Romans, friends and strangers, the powerful and the powerless, the hopeful and the despairing. Each Gospel has its own story to tell, all the witnesses have their own

memories, and every reader comes away with a new insight.

Thursdays, March 3 – April 7th 1:00-2:30 on Zoom

Sundays, March 6 – April 10, following worship in the Wesley Room

Facilitators: Diane Klenk and Peggy Bermudez

AOL in the Wesley Room after worship.

Through Feb. 27 - Join Rev. Oskvig in a conversation about the sermon
March 6 – April 7 – **Witness at the Cross**

Thirstaid Thursdays from 1:00 – 2:30 on Zoom

February 10, 17, 24

Love, a Tiara, and a Cupcake

Three Secrets to Finding Happy

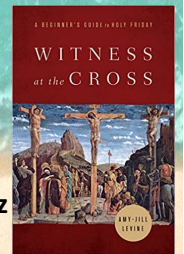
By Susan Sparks

March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, April 7

Witness at the Cross

By Amy-Jill Levine

Facilitators Diane Klenk and Peggy Bermudez



Exploring Sunday Scriptures: posted on YouTube and an in person opportunity on Tuesdays at Noon - Join Rev. Oskvig in a conversation about the scriptures which will be explored in the sermon on the following Sunday.

Feasting on the Word with Rev. Oskvig – posted Wednesdays on our website: www.christchurchamherst.org

Lent Poem



Lent Opens
and we're off again
with forehead freshly smeared
and spirits seared anew by memories of dust, rumors of all
or nothing up ahead.
These frigid days and weeks lean
inward, huddling for warmth, and
disciplines attempt in vain
to shape them toward value, meaning,
promise. Warmth will, of course, return bearing its customary,
temporary, blossoming.
But all remains a stay of execution
till the stone is rolled, those sentries flee,
and startled women run with aching news.
-J. Barrie Shepherd

United Methodist Women



The UMW Leadership Team met on January 11th to make plans for 2022. While we will have no activities in February and March because we want everyone to stay safe and healthy, watch upcoming Callers for activities happening in the spring, summer, and fall.



CIRCLE NEWS

Elizabeth Circle will meet **Tuesday, February 8 at 1pm at church**. We will have a guest speaker from Messinger Woods Wildlife Care and Education Center. On **Tuesday, March 8 at church at 1 pm**. Our program will be a discussion of *"Where the Crawdads Sing"* by Delia Owens.

Inez Beachley
12300 Morris Road Apt 104
Alpharetta, GA 30005

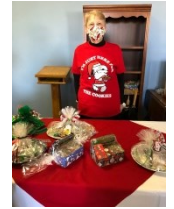
Debbie Laberta
Elderwood Assisted Living
111 Ensminger Rd. Apt 128D
Tonawanda, NY 14150

Missions of the Month

Opportunities to share ourselves, our talents, and our resources with others



Thank you for generously supporting the Cookie & Candy sale. We hope you enjoyed them. With your help, we raised over \$500 for our local Outreach partners.



Thank you for your generous offerings on Christmas Eve. Journey's End Refugee Services and Hearts for the Homeless will benefit greatly from the over \$1800 that was given!

Superbowl Sunday



There is nothing like a hot bowl of homemade soup or chili on a cold winter's day! We will be selling various soups and chilis after worship on February 13th. Go Bills!

Crafting for a Cause



By request, the crafting group is currently sewing curtain panels for Journey's End Refugee Services. Presently, we have 32 panels that we are working on. If you would like to join us or have large pieces of fabric that you would like to donate please see Lee Watson or Diane Klenk for details. **We would love to have you!**



Free Little Food Pantry



In these trying times, many are in need of assistance. Our food pantry has been actively used and is in need of constant supplies. Suggestions for the most chosen food products are peanut butter, mac & cheese cups, soup and rice packets (Knorr or Ricearoni). Any non-perishable items would be welcome.

Thank you for your continued support of the many missions of our church.