

CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

Worship 10 am
Education Hour –TBD
TOTAL STEWARDSHIP: PRAYERS, PRESENCE, GIFTS, AND SERVICE

Pastor
Rev. Daven Oskvig

Office Manager/Ministry Assistant
Sarah Wachowski

Minister of Music
Nic Steltzer

Financial Secretary
Doris Schanzlin

Custodian
Michael Andolina



350 Saratoga Road, Amherst, NY 14226

Phone: (716) 839-2460

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

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

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

Office closed: 12/25/23, 1/1/24 & 1/15/24



February—March 2024

Caller Deadline:

Saturday, January 13

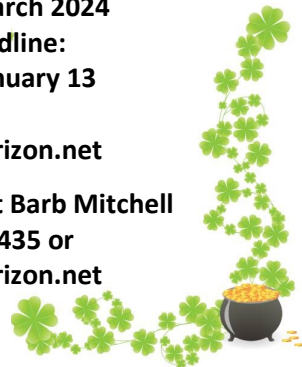
to

bbmitch@verizon.net

Questions? Contact Barb Mitchell

(716)839-2435 or

bbmitch@verizon.net



The Caller



Photo by Brad Loliger (see page 10)

December 2023/January 2024



While many reasons could explain the popularity of Christmas, perhaps the best is the appeal to lose ourselves in mystery. Among the twinkle of lights and anticipation of Christmas morning, the baking and cooking smells only present at this time of the year, memories of the past resurface alongside the creation of new ones in the present, while we hope for what is yet to come. The events of Bethlehem as the basis of our celebrations mix into all this as something outside the bounds of both human experience and explanation setting the tone for our experience.

This should not come just as an escape into the scene of the nativity, but the meaning of the creator of the cosmos coming in human form for the purpose of setting right all that has gone terribly wrong. As Laurence Hull Stookey writes, "Divinity takes on humanity, to restore the image of God implanted at creation but sullied by sin." In other words, God becomes like us so that we may become like God. God will accept death that we might accept life. Our wonder and awe should be stirred by the Lord, who can neither be created nor destroyed, becoming subject to both birth and death. Our worship seeks to hold us in this state. The story which so captures and captivates our imaginations; the hymns we sing out of memory and familiarity; communion where we receive Christ again; and the sharing of light as our light is restored in Christ's birth. It is a reminder that God still comes to us in humble guises – human words, songs, the dance of candlelight, in bread and cup. These worship experiences clue us in to how we will discover Christ in our midst in all kinds of other seemingly ordinary circumstances when we allow that light to illuminate our lives, our ways.

Christmas is our commemoration of this incredible mystery. We recall the historic reality, but also mark that the Eternal Word once again appears in our midst. So let the lights twinkle! Let the baking and preparations begin! Let the decorations be hung and songs be sung! For God comes to us that we may be able to come to God. "Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing."

*Yours in Christ,
Pastor Daven*

December Birthdays



January Birthdays

Robert Paddock	3 *	Marie Miller	1
Jean Ericson	5	Phyllis Nicholson	1
Diane Klenk.....	6	Barbara Critoph	2
Michael Keller.....	8	Tom Weaver	4
Dave Wolf.....	11	Guy Ferrelli	5
Goeff Hill.....	11	Johnathan Swist.....	7
Betty Kreib.....	13	Dennis Scaringi	8
Chris Smith.....	14	Pam Lopez.....	9
Amy Thormahlen.....	22	Lindsay Darling.....	10
Paula Kreib.....	29	Bob Loesch.....	10
		Matt Thormahlen.....	12
		Millie Staley	16
		Carol Teresi.....	17
		Lucille Mooney.....	18
		Nicole Sciolino Ast	20
		Robert Lovell.....	23
		Elvira Gonzalez.....	25



December Anniversaries



Clem & Karen Arrison.....	December 02, 2000
Michael & Patty Keller	December 05, 1987
Thomas & Evalis Swist	December 13, 2009
Peter & Patricia Zaleski.....	December 23, 1960

January Anniversaries—None

We wish to extend our sympathy and prayers to the family and friends of Rev. Daven, Leanne, and Amelia Oskvig upon the death of George Nolte, Leanne's father, October 2, 2023.

We wish to extend our sympathy and prayers to the family and friends of William Swenson, who, at the age of 101, passed on October 9, 2023.

We wish to extend our sympathy and prayers to the family and friends of Nic Steltzer, our Minister of Music, upon the death of his grandmother, Evelyn Miller, on October 16, 2023.


An Update from Church Council

Church Council is working hard on following up on our congregation-wide dreams session from September, and we look forward to sharing more on our action plan in the near future. We hope to lean into our identity as a reconciling congregation, and present ourselves as a Safe Haven Congregation for United Methodists who are looking for a new church home. Stay tuned for more information!

Paul Staley Memorial Concert: (see front cover)

On November 12, 2023 the Choirs of Christ United Methodist Church & University Presbyterian Church came together to present the first annual Paul Staley memorial musical program, a performance of Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem*. The beautiful performance was enjoyed by all, and we look forward to more of these collaborations in the future!

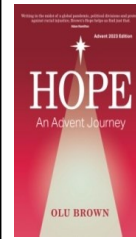


 This Fall CUMC “**Books We Have Loved**” book club welcomed two new members: Sandy Cumming and Jim Cook. Both introduced us to new books and authors they have enjoyed. We look forward to hearing more from them and others in the months ahead. Our next meeting on December 1st is a special sharing of Christmas books, poems, and/or memories. This will surely put us in the holiday spirit! CUMC book club meets the first Friday of every month at 11am in the Wesley Room at church. Come join us!



SPIRITUAL INFORMATION TEAM

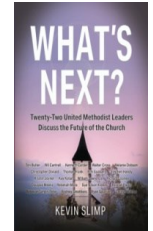
AOL: Adult Opportunities for Learning



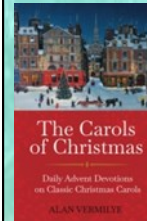
ADVENT STUDY: Hope - an Advent Journey by Olu Brown
In spite of any difficulties we face, we have Emmanuel. Our hope is not based on external situations, but eternal promises.
Sundays, November 26 - December 31 in the Wesley Room after worship
Facilitators: Janet Cook & Peggy Bermudez

ALL CHURCH READ:

What's Next? Compiled by Kevin Slimp
22 United Methodist Leaders Discuss the Future of the Church
Sundays, beginning January 7th
in the Wesley Room after worship
Shared Leadership



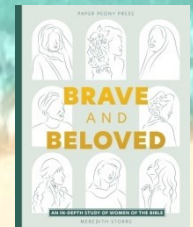
Thirstaid



ADVENT STUDY: The Carols of Christmas by Alan Vermilye
Discover intriguing stories and thought-provoking details about four favorite carols in this Advent devotional.
Thursdays, November 30, December 7, 14, 21
On Zoom – look for the link in the Weekly Update
Facilitators: Diane Klenk & Peggy Bermudez

Brave and Beloved by Meredith Storrs
This study explores the wisdom and diversity of women in the Bible and offers insightful cultural context.

Thursdays, beginning January 11
On Zoom – look for the link in the Weekly Update
Facilitators: Diane Klenk & 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



United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith of Christ Church

Christmas Tea

Saturday, December 2, 2:00 – 4:00 pm

Sweets ~ Savories ~ Songs of the Season

ALL are welcome! Cost: \$5

RSVP to Peggy Bermudez at 626-4897 by November 30th



THANK YOU!

Your support of the UWF Fall Bake Sale resulted in \$366.52 for Missions supported by UWF. Your generosity makes a world of difference!

AND

Your 2023 pledges to United Women in Faith supported missions for women, children, and youth globally, nationally, and locally, including UMCOR, Beechwood, Family Justice Center, Gateway, and Jericho Road. Your pledges also support book studies, guest speakers, special mission recognition pins, and gifts to mission in honor or in memory of those who serve or have served our community so faithfully.

Pledges for 2024 are now being accepted. If you have not pledged already, please mail your pledge to Diane Klenk, 227 Enez Dr, Depew, NY 14043. Your pledges make life-changing missions possible!



CIRCLE NEWS

Circle of Joy: Thursday January 4, 2024 at 7p at Peggy Bermudez’s home.

Elizabeth Circle: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 –Christmas Lunch at 1p in the Wesley Room. Bring your dish to pass.

Tuesday, January 9, 2024 in Wesley Room at 1p.

“Do you recognize me?” Bring a baby picture.



People Helping People



- Canned Fruit
- Canned Beans
- Cereal
- Pancake Mix/Syrup
- Crackers
- Granola Bars
- Cake/Brownie Mix
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Condiments
- Ramen Noodles
- Paper Towels
- Toilet Paper
- Tissues



- Canned proteins (Tuna, Chicken, Rice, Ham)
- Canned Fruit
- Canned Vegetables
- Peanut Butter
- Oatmeal Canisters
- Pasta Sauce
- Juices
- Toothpaste
- Toilet Paper/paper products



CUMC LITTLE FOOD PANTRY



Coats 4 Kids

There is a collection barrel from Colvin Cleaners in the narthex! Please bring new or gently used coats, hats, gloves, scarves, etc.



Cards For Caring is getting ready for the holidays. An abundance of Christmas cards is available, as well as a variety of other gift cards.

With so many cards available, won't you make someone's day happy by sending them a greeting during the holidays?

Happy days to you all.





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 12/1, 12/8, 12/15, and 12/22, 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, builds as it progresses, and/or employs the addition of instruments or soloist. All this 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.

Silence is 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 are offered in-person and will be available via Live stream through our YouTube channel and archived following the conclusion of that live stream.



On this holiest of nights, we gather to be inspired and immersed in song and scripture. Being together to hear the Lessons and sing the Carols is a key facet of celebrating God's gift in Christ. Again, this year, we will share in this

experience on 12/24, Christmas Eve, at 8 pm for a Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols. It will be offered both in-person and Live Stream through our YouTube Channel, which remains available anytime following the conclusion of the service online.

YouTube & Facebook

We encourage everyone to Like & Subscribe to our YouTube Channel and Facebook Page. This will help to alert you every time a new video or opportunity is added to that platform. Also, as we enter this season of Advent, we will have even more available in Advent Studies, devotionals, Music and Meditation, and Candlelight Christmas Eve worship. Don't miss out! Like and Subscribe today!



Children's Ministry is back with instruction in Bible Times Theater and will be held in the art room located in the basement (rooms #20 & 21) in the office wing following worship, 11am - 12pm and continuing every 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month. December and January theme of "God Is With Us" continues. All Are Welcome!

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

We hope you will all attempt to participate in some of these "challenges" as we all strive to be better Stewards of God's World:

- Rather than collecting and bagging your leaves, mow over the fallen leaves; by mulching them in place, you return their nutrients to your lawn and you avoid adding to a landfill.
- When shopping on-line go for a "two-for"; look for both the product you want and for a provider that cares for creation. Some companies donate a percentage of profits to ocean clean-up or planting trees, for example. Some start with sustainable materials and ethical practices. Read the "About" on the website to see their vision.
- Choose Bamboo; it's sustainable, fast-growing and versatile and used in personal care products, clothing, musical instruments, building materials, paper products, towels, sheets, furniture, and more.
- How many Christmas catalogs have you already received? Put a stop to unwanted ones by calling the Company and tell them to take you off their mailing list **immediately** and **forever**. You'll save trees, emissions, and annoyance!
- Urge your Local Government to go Zero Waste! Providing curbside organics collection and food-scrap drop-off sites has allowed NYC to keep 11,000 tons of food waste/day out of landfills.

How ever you choose to be Thankful this month, please consider being thankful for this planet we call Home and you will make God thankful!

Missions of the Month

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

Turkey Baskets

Thank you for your bountiful gifts of food for the Turkey Basket Project this year. Your faith and generosity enabled families to have Thanksgiving dinner who might have gone without. Through the efforts of North Presbyterian Church and community partners like Christ Church, 500 families received Thanksgiving baskets.

The Mobile Food Pantry needs YOU!

Every Monday between the hours of 12:30 and 4:30, Hearts for the Homeless Mobile Food Pantry comes to the church to help feed the hungry. *If you have an hour or more on a Monday afternoon and would like to help with this ministry, please see Toni Neidel or contact the church office. Please sign up online at [Hearts for the Homeless.com](http://HeartsfortheHomeless.com).*

The Christmas Cookie and Candy sale is returning on December 10th!



Our Christmas trays make great hostess gifts and are great to have on hand during the Christmas season. They are always displayed on a festive tray and help to keep you out of the kitchen! Donations of cookies and candy are always greatly appreciated and can be brought to church by December 8th. The proceeds enable us to support the many missions of our church.

Giving Tree

One of our traditions at Christ UMC is our Giving Tree which is an opportunity to share God's love and blessings with others at Christmastime. If you would like to help, please take a tag from the tree, fulfill the wish, and return the gift to the tree by the date on the tag. There are opportunities from Haven House, Gateway Family Services, Veterans, Family Justice Center, SPCA, and the Maternal Stress Free Zone. To help make the holidays warmer for people in need, please consider placing mittens, gloves, socks, or a scarf on the tree when you take a tag.



Missions of the Month

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

Crafting for a Cause

Every second Saturday of the month, a group of ladies with all different skills come together to share fellowship and make a creative project for the benefit of others. To date we have made cooling scarves for the troops, walker bags for the elderly, Teddy Bears, mittens, scarves, crate mats for the SPCA, tie blankets, curtains for new arrivals, blankets and pillows for the veterans, small drawstring bags for Hearts for the Homeless, baby blankets for the Maternal Stress Free Zone, fidget quilts for people with dementia, and pillowcases for Enchanted Makeovers. All are welcome to join us!

Human Relations Sunday-January 21

Human Relations Day is a denomination-wide Special Sunday designed to celebrate and raise awareness to further the development of better human relations by involving congregations in community and youth outreach. A special offering was received on the Sunday before Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. Gifts received for the offering build King's vision of "the beloved community" through programs such as Community Developers, United Methodist Voluntary Services, and Youth Offender Rehabilitation Programs. Churches are encouraged to donate through their local churches or [give online](#).

FINANCE TEAM

The 2nd Sunday Offerings were as follows:

October: Native American Community Services: \$248

November: Turkey Baskets for Thanksgiving: \$346

We have also received \$150 for UMCOR directed for Israel.

We also received \$356 from the free will offering at the Paul Staley Memorial Concert, performed on November 12. This donation will be given to UMCOR in memory of Paul Staley.

As of mid-November, we have received only 66 of our usual 80+ pledges. If you have not sent your pledge in yet, please do so as soon as possible so we know where we are headed.

Thank you all so much for your support of Christ Church.

~CUMC Finance Team