

CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

Worship 10 am

Education Hour –11am

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: 2/19,3/29

April—May 2024

Caller Deadline:

Wednesday March 13

to

bbmitch@verizon.net

Questions? Contact Barb Mitchell

(716)839-2435 or

bbmitch@verizon.net



The Caller



February/March 2024

Trustees cleaning the chandeliers in preparation for Christmas 2023



We like ice skating and, until recent years, always made a point of a few outings a year. As we went again after a couple of years had gone by, it honestly tested my patience to regain my confidence while frustrating me that I couldn't as easily or quickly move the way I remembered. As we age we forget how difficult it is to learn something new. We get to a place where the abilities we have acquired, the hobbies we enjoy ... the realities of our lives are stable and set. Returning to activities of the past, let alone discovering new ones, really challenge us (especially when it requires our coordination and feet!).

This same reality plays out in our faith lives. The world continues to move under our feet constantly removing our sense of security while testing our patience and compassion. We can feel as though our legs are unsteady beneath us, unable to ever catch our balance. Frustrated by the state of things, we can get to a place of complacency - unwilling to take the risk or lacking the patience to persevere.

As we begin Lent this month, we enter this season on unsteady legs. Taking those initial steps asks us whether we will commit to the time and discipline necessary to leave a little surer? Will we, through a willingness to take the risk of discipleship, recognize that we are always supported by God through the continued presence of the Holy Spirit? As we journey with Jesus into the wilderness, will we stand by our commitment to Christ when our balance is thrown off by adversity, maintaining our promises to work to make visible the ways he taught and lived? Responding yes does not mean that we won't fall along the way nor that it won't hurt. But it does mean that we will always be picked up, supported, and encouraged to try again and keep going. And someday we might just find that living as a disciple really does become second nature!

*Yours in Christ,
Pastor Daven*

February Birthdays

Barbara Burr	3
Marion Rowlands	3
Olivia Smith.....	14
Donna Yungbluth.....	15
Marilyn Welker	17
Laura June Merrill.....	17
Ben Bermudez	20
Abigail Johnson.....	23
John Glenn.....	23
Viki Smith.....	25
Linda Parete.....	26
Michele Sciolino	26
Herb Wilber	28



March Birthdays

Marcia Snyder.....	1
Gregory Yungbluth.....	2
Michael Farley	4
Gregory Watson.....	7
Brad Bermudez	8
Andrew Lopez	12
Joanne Gilbert.....	15
Marshall Rhinehart	17
Toni Neidel.....	18
Karen Arrison	19
Pat Noyes.....	24
Peggy Bermudez	25
Ashley Miller	26
Jordan Maliken	29
Jan Rhinehart.....	29
Warren Hammond.....	30



February Anniversaries—None

March Anniversaries—None



We wish to extend our prayers and sympathy to the family and friends of

Clem Arrison upon his death on December 21, 2023

David Bechtel upon his death on December 24, 2023.

William (Trey) Suggs upon his death on December 26, 2023

Nancy Hess upon her death on January 18, 2024



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

CUMC "Books We Have Loved" book club



"Books We Have Loved, was founded by former church member, Dorothy Brown, over 20 years ago. Dorothy gave the group its name and even wrote a book, "God and the Tree and Me" (you can find it in the church library). A remarkable woman, she is often mentioned fondly at our monthly meetings; a few of our members were fortunate to have known her personally. Although the format has changed from the original concept, our gratitude to Dorothy remains, as does the love of books and the friendships formed at the meetings. Books We Have Loved meets the first Friday of every month at 11am in the Wesley Room at church. Newcomers are always welcome. Contact June Gilbert at 716-835-4976 for more information .



AMHERST LIONS CLUB 29th Annual Pancake Breakfast



Proceeds to benefit the Lions' work with the blind, sight and hearing-impaired , and other important community needs in Western New York.

Saturday, March 9th 2024 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Christ United Methodist Church
350 Saratoga Road
Amherst, New York

Ticket Good for One Generous Breakfast Portion
Adults \$9 • Children 12 and under \$6

Join the fun, help support a worthy cause and have a great breakfast at the same time

Free Community Health Fair from 9-12

- 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**



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.

Lenten Opportunities

In addition to unique opportunities in the season of Lent, such as Music & Meditation on Fridays at 5:30 PM, Ash Wednesday, Holy Week services, and Lenten studies, we continue to maintain opportunities in-person and online in Exploring Sunday's Scriptures and online only in the form of Feasting on the Word. If you have never or simply fallen away from connecting with these short ways to enrich your faith, consider taking them on as a discipline through the season of Lent.

Ash Wednesday Explained:

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. We are planning an Ash Wednesday service with more information coming soon!

Maundy Thursday Explained:

This evening service commemorates the supper Jesus shared with his disciples before his crucifixion, when Jesus washed the disciples' feet and instituted the Lord's Supper. Particular traditional actions are part of this night including: confession and pardon, proclamation of the Word, footwashing, the Lord's Supper, and the stripping of the church. Footwashing is a powerful symbolic response to the Word, dramatizing the servanthood of Jesus, both on the night before his death and in his continuing presence in our midst. The title of this day, Maundy Thursday, recalls the new commandment (mandatum novum in Latin) in John 13:34. The service may be appropriately called Maundy Thursday when footwashing occurs in imitation of Jesus' actions and as a response to his new commandment to love one another. The ancient practice of stripping the Lord's table and sanctuary following communion is a vivid and dramatic way of showing the desolation and abandonment of the long night in Gethsemane and what followed. The church remains bare until Easter.

Music and Meditation

Christ Church has offered a time during the seasons of Lent to quietly reflect and prepare. Currently this is a short, 30-minute, candlelight service on Friday evenings beginning at 5:30 pm on 2/16, 2/23, 3/1, 3/8, 3/15/ 3/22, 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.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Second Sunday, Second Helping Offerings

At Christ Church, we are proud to collect Second Sunday, Second Helping Offerings each month to support community organizations aside from those who we usually support through our missions. Each month, Church Council chooses an organization to support. Here are two upcoming opportunities:

February 2024 - Buffalo 10 Scholarship: The Buffalo 10 Scholarship was adopted at the 2022 Upper New York Annual Conference following the racist massacre in Buffalo on May 14, 2022, and is dedicated to helping youth in identified communities of Buffalo, New York succeed in higher education. The Mission of the Buffalo 10 Scholarship is to improve educational opportunities in the zip codes adjacent to the Jefferson Avenue Tops Market (14208, 14211, 14214). Specifically, the scholarship helps youth in these areas address persisting inequities by resourcing them to complete their college education.



March 2024 - Reconciling Ministries Network: Reconciling Ministries Network ("RMN") celebrates that LGBTQ+ persons are a good expression of God's diverse creation and exists to advocate for the affirmation of all of God's children in the Church and the work. RMN is committed to intersectional justice across and beyond the United Methodist connection, working for the full participation of all LGBTQ+ people throughout the life and leadership of the Church. Christ Church Amherst became a reconciling congregation in 2022 and this offering is part of our commitment to RMN.



LOVE, LUCK and EASTER

are yours in February and March.

How about sharing some special greetings with family and friends?

Cards for Caring is ready!



FROM YOUR HOSPITALITY TEAM

The ministry of the Hospitality Team is to make Christ Church a welcoming place for our congregation, visitors, and all the community groups that fill our building through the week. On Sunday mornings, the team coordinates the greeters who welcome all to worship at Christ Church and the Café (coffee and refreshments) following worship.

We need Greeters and Café volunteers for Sunday mornings.

Members of the team will be available to guide you. If you can help, please contact a member of the Hospitality Team: *Mary Ball, Barb Critoph, Donna Hammond, Pam Lopez, Toni Neidel, Kathy Weaver or Peggy Bermudez.*



AN UPDATE FROM CHURCH COUNCIL

Dreams for 2024 and Beyond

Church Council is working hard on following up on our congregation-wide dreams session from September. Leadership has taken a serious look at all suggestions, and we realized that we needed to focus on concrete tasks we can complete now, as opposed to changes that are merely aspirational. As such, a small team is meeting to discuss how we can go "back to basics," leaning into our identity as a reconciling congregation practicing radical hospitality. Further, we are in the process of becoming designated as a Safe Haven Congregation by the UNY Conference, which will allow us to specifically attract new members who are members of United Methodist churches that are disaffiliating from the denomination, but who wish to remain United Methodist and are looking for a new Church home. Additionally, a small group will meet to discuss ways to connect with lay leadership of other United Methodist congregations in the area to encourage collaboration. Please let Pastor Daven, Peggy Bermudez, or Brad Loliger know if you would like to be part of these groups or if you have any questions. We are hopeful that the changes in our denomination can be seen as an opportunity for growth and a stronger Church in the 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!

Walking the Labyrinth at Daemen College

A labyrinth has a long history with Christian tradition. Different from a maze, a labyrinth has only one path and no dead ends. As far back as the 4th-century, they have been a present on church walls and floors. Part of their usage relates to providing an alternative to pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The hope is that through the walk pilgrims would shed everything on their mind; all of their worries, fear and concerns. Upon reaching the center, one is still and waits for illumination or healing or a sense of God's presence. Then, walking the winding way out, one feels at one with God, self, others, and nature.

The path winds throughout becoming a mirror for where we are in our lives, touching our sorrows and releasing our joys. One approaches with an open mind and an open heart. There are three stages in the walking - purgation (releasing); illumination (receiving); union (returning). First, purgation is the act of shedding thoughts and distraction enabling one to let go of the details of life. It is a time to open the heart and mind. Second, illumination at the center seeks guidance. Finally, union follows the same path out with strength and clarity to find and do the work to which God has called one.

All are encouraged to walk the outdoor labyrinth in front of Curtis Hall on the campus of Daemen College (Main St. & Getzville).



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!!!



March 10th Daylight Savings time begins. Clocks move ahead 1 hour.
Don't be late for Church!!!

SPIRITUAL INFORMATION TEAM

AOL: Adult Opportunities for Learning

ALL CHURCH READ:

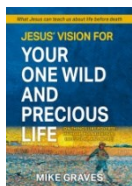
What's Next? Compiled by Kevin Slimp

22 United Methodist Leaders Discuss the Future of the Church

Sundays, January 7th – February 11th

in the Wesley Room after worship

Shared Leadership



LENTEN STUDY

Jesus' Vision for Your one Wild and Precious Life

By Mike Graves

Sundays, February 18th – March 31st

in the Wesley Room after worship

Thirstaid

Brave and Beloved by Meredith Storrs

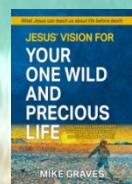
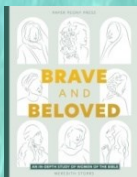
This study explores the wisdom and diversity of women in the Bible and offer insightful cultural context.

Thursdays, January 11 – February 8

On Zoom – look for the link in the Weekly Update

Facilitators: Diane Klenk & Peggy Bermudez

After Easter, we will resume this study.



LENTEN STUDY

Jesus' Vision for Your one Wild and Precious Life

By Mike Graves

Thursdays, February 15th – March 28th

On Zoom – look for the link in the Weekly Update

If you met Jesus for coffee once a week for half a year, how would you describe him to your friends? What are the seven essential sayings of Jesus, the seven first words? With each of the seven words/teachings of Jesus, Graves leads us in an exploration of the Gospels and also provides some social commentary on our day, on things like: poverty, inclusion, loneliness, polarization, hunger, and more.

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

STEWARDSHIP TEAM—SANDY CUMMING

As we continue to search for ways to be better Stewards of God's world, consider these things you might adopt as we head into a New Year with new possibilities:

Junk Mail accounts for 41 pounds/person every year; 80-100 million trees lose their lives to print junk mail and much of it ends up in landfills. To opt out of Advertisements go to DMAchoice.org; it costs \$4 to remove 80% of the mail. For Credit Card/Insurance offers go to OptOutPrescreen.com; free for a 5yr. opt-out or you can fill out a short form for a permanent opt-out. CatalogChoice.org allows you to choose any company in their extensive list and a letter to opt-out will be sent on your behalf, so now work on your part!

Positively Green Cards are made from recycled material, printed with soy ink and manufactured using green power; the company also donates 10% of their profits to organizations that care for the environment.

We are moving into another volatile election year - support those who work for good, encourage family and friends to do the same, then most importantly VOTE.

Hot food containers or drink cups made of Styrofoam leach Styrene and Benzene, both known Neurotoxins and suspected Carcinogens; demand and use alternatives such as glass, ceramic, aluminum and even multi-use plastic ware. Speak up for your health and the health of the environment!

Lastly, consider purchasing clothing from a Thrift or Second-Hand store; it uses fewer resources, generates fewer emissions and less waste, gives other people work, extends the life of the garment, and keeps textiles out of landfills. (Remember textile recycling also works.)



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

UPDATE FROM FINANCE TEAM CHAIR, BOB LOVELL

On behalf of the Financial Team, I want to take this opportunity to bring you up to date on your church's finances. After the first 11 months of 2023 we were up to date with all of our financial obligations and expect to end the year on a positive footing and ahead of our 2023 budget. The team was confident enough to agree that the Christmas collection should go to Compass House in support of our local mission efforts.

Although our uncontrolled expenses such as insurances inch up each year we have created a budget for 2024 that will allow the church to support all of the existing programs again. Each of the members of the Finance Team has attended almost every meeting and have shared their ideas that benefit all of us so that we can continue to be financially stable.

You have no doubt noticed that a few members of the congregation exit the sanctuary just before our Sunday service is completed. These volunteers carefully count the money received in the collection under Doris Schanzlin's careful supervision. The money is then deposited in the bank as quickly as possible. Our volunteer counters do a quiet and wonderful job for all of us.

We want to thank the entire congregation for continuing to financially support your church. Our efforts would fail if it were not for your pledges and support in every way.

If at any time you have questions please contact me, Bob Lovell, as chair of the Finance Team or Greg Maliken, our treasurer.



FINANCIAL SECRETARY REPORT—DORIS SCHANZLIN

The 2nd Sunday Offering for December was \$393 for the Restoration Society.

The Christmas offering included the Music and Meditation Offerings was \$2,283 for Compass House..

The January 2nd Sunday offering—church closed for weather restrictions
Thank you so much for your generous giving.

We received a total of \$17,347 from those who use our building, including the Nursery School.



United
Women
in Faith

Easter Treats Fundraiser

Sunday, March 24, following worship (Palm Sunday)

Homemade Baked Goods for Your Easter Celebration!

FREE WILL offering for baked goods will benefit UWF Missions.

If you would like to provide baked goods, please bring them wrapped and ready to go on March 24th. Thank you!



PLEDGES TO UWF

Your pledges to United Women in Faith support 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!



CHRIST CHURCH UWF 2024

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Sunday, March 24 – UWF Easter Treats Fundraiser

Saturday, April 13, 10:00 am – General Meeting – Compass House

May – Keeping in Touch Visits, May 26, 11:00 am – Updates in Cafe

Sunday, July 14 – All Church Picnic

Friday, September 27, 7:00 pm Sugar & Spice “Off the Wall”

Sunday, October 27 – Fall Bake Sale

Saturday, November 16 – General Meeting - MoonCatcher Project

Niagara Frontier District UWF – Saturday, March 23, 9:30 am
Communion Breakfast and Memorial Service at Eden UMC



Missions of the Month

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

Compass House

Compass House was founded in 1972 as a homeless shelter. Today along with the Emergency Shelter, they operate a Resource Center, and a Rapid Re-Housing Program. Their mission is to provide runaway, homeless and street youth with safe shelter and services, through a voluntary and mutually agreed-upon process, in an environment that supports dignity, respect and self-reliance. They serve approximately 300 youth at their shelter annually and an additional 300 youth at their Resource Center. Thank you for your generous support of this mission through our Christmas Eve offering. Together we gifted them over \$2200!

Thank you for your support of the Giving Tree!

Your generosity made Christmas brighter for individuals and families served by Haven House, Gateway Family Services, Veterans Administration Medical Center, Family Justice Center, SPCA and Durham's Maternal Stress Free Zone.



Thank you for your support of the Cookie and Candy Sale



We hope you enjoyed them! With your help we are able to support the missions of our church with the \$800 we raised.

Save the Date-Souper Bowl Sunday is returning February 11

There is nothing like a hot bowl of homemade soup on a winters day! The Outreach team will be busy in the kitchen making an assortment of soups to sell. They will sell for \$8.00/pint. Donations of homemade soup are also welcome.



Missions of the Month

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

Blanket Sunday-February 18



The CWS Blankets program is all about sharing love. Through this simple act of kindness, amazing things can happen. For over 75 years, Church World Service has been helping people of faith bring God's hope and healing to people in the U.S. and around the world.

When difficult times happen, a kind and loving response can make all the difference. That's why the CWS Blankets program was created—to give a kind, loving and tangible response to someone facing a difficult time, reminding them that they are not alone. A gift of \$10 can provide a blanket to someone in need.

UMCOR Sunday March 17

Through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) we are able to provide hope for communities and individuals whose lives have been upset by storms, wars, fires, displacement and climate change. This ministry is achieved exclusively through your generosity. UMCOR Sunday is a denomination wide celebration designed to raise awareness and support for UMCOR. The special offering on this Sunday underwrites UMCOR's "cost of doing business" making it possible for UMCOR to focus on responding to communities and individuals when they need immediate assistance. It allows UMCOR to preserve the promise that 100% of any donation to a specific UMCOR project or missionary will go towards that project and not administrative cost.



CIRCLE NEWS

Circle of Joy: Thursday February 1, 2024 at 7p at church – sewing mooncatcher kits

Elizabeth Circle: Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at 1p—Minister of Music Nic Steltzer will provide the program

Tuesday, March 12 in Wesley Room at 1p—a discussion of the book "West With Giraffes" by Lynda Rutledge.