

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 Manager/Ministry Assistant

Julie LoTempio

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: 9 am–2 pm

Office closed: 12/24-25, 1/1, 1/20



February—March 2025

Caller Deadline:

Monday, January 13

to

bbmitch@verizon.net

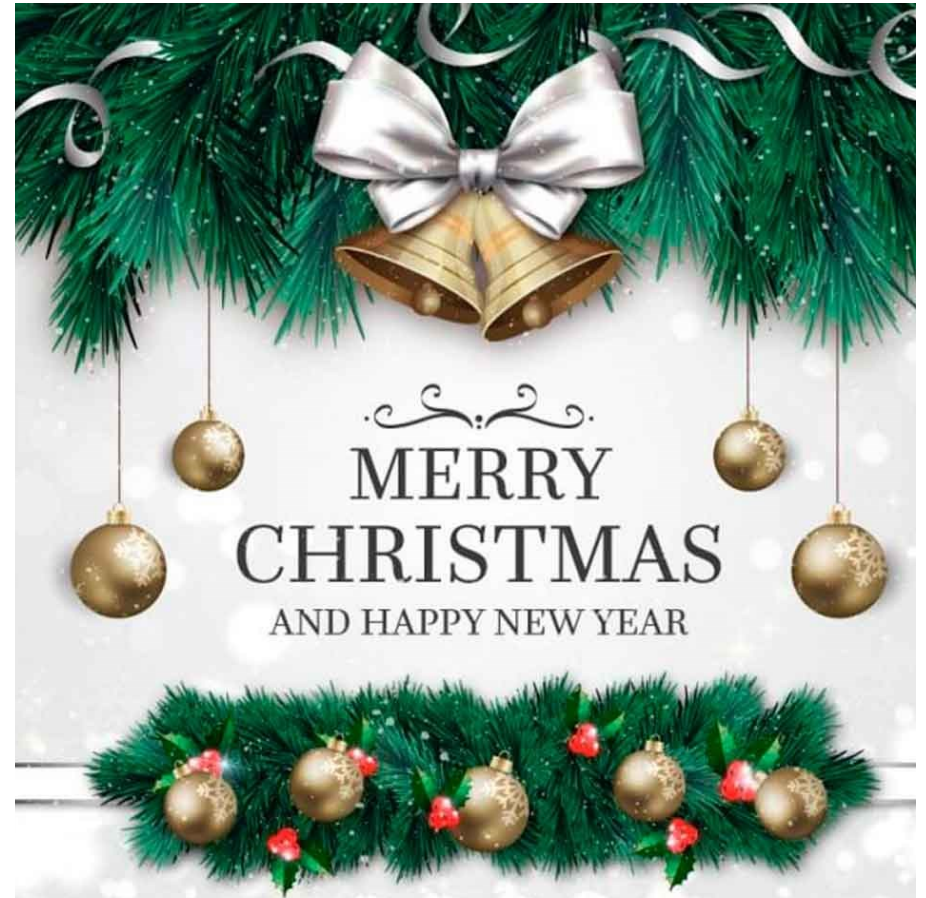
Questions? Contact Barb Mitchell

(716) 839-2435 or

bbmitch@verizon.net



The Caller



December 2024

January 2025



Nothing quite captures our imaginations like the Christmas story. We think of the star rising in the sky, the young couple making their way to Bethlehem with Mary riding on a donkey, angels, wise men, shepherds, animals, and even the weather. This picture of Christmas shaped by imagination and art, however, is likely far removed from fact. The cast of characters is both embellished and a conglomeration of different versions of the events. Even the date is one of speculation likely established to replace other pagan festivals of the season.

Does that mean we become skeptics of Christmas or that the story and events lose any of their insights and potency? In fact, this incredible fascination and interest is an effort to reveal something so mysterious and beyond normal that it represents an effort to try and describe the indescribable. Maybe that means a little hyperbole has been woven into it, but honestly how can one possibly describe the incredible vulnerability of God’s love that to grow requires the care and nurture of parents and created community when it has been turned out into the cold by the culture? How does one describe that which can open treasures and commitments in new possibilities? How can one describe a new way, a new light by which to see the world? How does one explain people others had rejected forming a community of connections on the hillsides singing songs and amazed that they could know love and belonging? And so, like Mary, we ponder it all in our hearts (Luke 2:19) as we gather annually to try and make sense out of what our ears hear, our imaginations see, and our hearts welcome - that God so loved the world ...

*Yours in Christ,
Pastor Daven*



December Birthdays



January Birthdays

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



December Anniversaries



Michael & Patty Keller	December 05, 1987
Peter & Patricia Zaleski.....	December 23, 1960

January Anniversaries—None



Thank you for all the cards, meals, Prayers, and phone calls. It meant a lot to me to know I have a caring Christian community who always steps up to help those in need! I have a few challenges ahead of me yet, but I feel the prayers you lift up for me. Thank you again.
Diane Klenk

We wish to extend our sympathy and prayers to the family and friends of Lynda Painton upon her death September 26, 2024.

We wish to extend our sympathy to the family and friends of Phyllis Nicholson upon her death November 12, 2024.



Hearts for the Homeless Mobile Food Pantry

Hearts for the Homeless Mobile Food Pantry needs your help. Please prayerfully consider helping for an hour or more on a Monday afternoon between the hours of 12:30 pm and 4:30 pm when the mobile food pantry is parked in front of Christ Church. Volunteers welcome and encourage shoppers and assist them in selecting and bagging groceries. If you can help with this ministry, please see Toni Neidel.

Christ Church Free Little Food Pantry

Our Little Food Pantry is doing its job and needs your continued help in continuing to offer sustenance and hope to our neighbors. Please consider adding an extra item to your grocery list and bring it to church with you next week. The current needs are:



- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Canned Fruit | Canned Veggies |
| Canned Soups | Peanut Butter |
| Oatmeal Canisters | Juices |
| Pasta/Pasta Sauce - no mac & cheese please | |
| Canned proteins: Tuna, Chicken, Ham | |
| Toothpaste | Rice |
| Toilet Paper/Paper Products. | |

Thank you to all who participate in this ministry!



Items Needed:

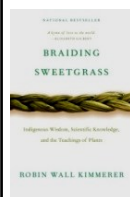
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|------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Soup | Crackers |
| Cereal | Sugar |
| Pasta | Spaghetti Sauce |
| Flour | Cooking oil |
| Canned Tomato Products (stewed or diced) | |

Thank you for your continued support of the many missions of Christ Church.



SPIRITUAL INFORMATION TEAM

AOL: Adult Opportunities for Learning



Braiding Sweetgrass, Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants

by Robin Wall Kimmerer

Sundays, December 8, 15

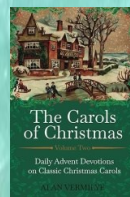
In the Wesley Room following Worship

Robin Wall Kimmerer of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation is a botanist and a professor at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse. Weaving together storytelling, indigenous wisdom, and scientific knowledge, she engages readers in exploring our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world.

Facilitator: Peggy Bermudez

As the Caller went to press, plans for AOL for January were still being finalized. Please watch the Weekly Update for more information.

Thirstaid



ADVENT STUDY: The Carols of Christmas, Vol. 2

by Alan Vermilye

Discover intriguing stories and thought-provoking details about four favorite carols in this Advent devotional.

Thursdays, December 5, 12, 19 on Zoom

On Zoom – look for the link in the Weekly Update

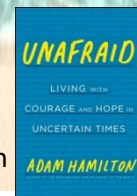
Facilitators: Diane Klenk & Peggy Bermudez

Unafraid; Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times

By Adam Hamilton

Thursdays, January 16 – February 27 on Zoom

Learn how to face and overcome the fears we feel about loneliness, illness, financial insecurity, disappointing others, failure, insignificance, and aging. Drawing on recent research, inspiring real-life examples, and fresh biblical insight, Hamilton uses a mixture of facts and faith to help readers understand and counter fears.



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

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to our Special Mission Pin Recipient for 2024, Toni Neidel, for her service to the ministries of Christ Church and missions in our community!



THANK YOU!

Your 2024 pledges to United Women in Faith supported missions for women, children, and youth globally, nationally, and locally, including Gateway, Compass House, Jericho Road, Journey's End, the Giving Tree, and UMCOR. 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 2025 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!

Mark Your Calendars!

Christ Church UWF for 2025

Saturday, March 22, 10:00 am Breakfast Gathering

Slow Fashion with Karen Wehn

Sunday, April 13, Spring Bake Sale

Sunday, July 13, Churchwide Picnic (Rain Date July 20)

Sunday, October 26, Fall Bake Sale

Saturday, November 15, 10:00 am Breakfast Gathering



Niagara Frontier District UWF for 2025

Saturday, April 12, 9:30, Communion Breakfast and Memorial Service at Churchill Memorial UMC, Boston, NY

Saturday, May 17, 9:30, Gift Day at Orchard Park UMC

July 24-26 – Mission U at Camp Asbury, Silver Lake, NY

Saturday, September 20, 9:30, Annual Meeting at Agape UMC, West Seneca

Saturday, November 8, 9:30, Network of Leaders at Asbury UMC, Getzville

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

If we were to apply good biological management in agriculture across the planet, we could functionally sequester all the carbon dioxide that's been added to the atmosphere since the Industrial Revolution began in the 1750s in just 3-4 years - just ponder that for a few minutes!

Remember who you are and Whose you are - here are a few ways to do that:

Attend a City/Town Hall Meeting: What kinds of environmental issues are being discussed? Any ideas/issues you'd like to share with your community? What work is already being done/needs to be one? How can you be involved?

For Advent: The Advent season celebrates the incarnation of Christ. What does incarnation have to do with creation? Where do you encounter the Divine?

A Green Christmas: What can you reuse this Christmas? Can you create decorations out of recycled materials? Sustainable gift ideas include beeswax wrap, vegetable seeds, metal straws, bamboo utensils/toothbrushes and the ubiquitous reusable cloth shopping bags.

When going Christmas tree shopping, choose a real tree over plastic. Tree farms help sequester carbon and provide habitats for birds and other wildlife.

Happy New Year! Start the new year by choosing a "green" resolution that is meaningful to you.

How can you make more eco-conscious choices this year? How can you care for creation in 2025?

Winter is a time for rest and renewal for the earth and God's creatures, including us. How does winter reflect the Sabbath?

Your Stewardship team wishes you all a blessed Christmas and a healthy, happy New Year!



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 **11/29, 12/6, 12/13, and 12/20**, 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 online following the conclusion of the service .

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!

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.*

Last Sunday Café Buffet

Our next **Café Buffet** dates are Sundays, **December 29** and **January 26**. Members of the Hospitality Team will make the coffee and **YOU are invited to bring your favorite baked good or morning snack to share** as we gather in the Café after worship. Thank you in advance for your generous hospitality!



Children's Ministry

1st and 3rd Sunday every month

11a-Noon

Story Room 20 and Art Room 21

Hope to see you there!



CIRCLE NEWS

Elizabeth Circle: Tuesday, December 10, 2024 –Christmas Lunch at 1p in the Wesley Room. Bring the food you signed up for.

Tuesday, January 14, 2025 in Wesley Room at 1p for **GAME DAY**. Bring your favorite game to share or just come for fun. Mary Ball is Hostess.

Missions of the Month

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

Thank you for your Support of the Turkey Basket Project!



Your generosity fills many Thanksgiving tables and is gratefully received!

Giving Tree

The Giving Tree has made its appearance in the Family Room. This year our recipients include Compass House, the SPCA, Veterans, Gateway-Longview, Haven House and the Family Justice Center. Please take a tag off the tree, fulfill the wish and return your *unwrapped* gift to the tree by the date on the tag. Please consider bringing a pair of mittens or gloves or hat with your gift. Thank you for generously brightening Christmas for members of our community!



More Good News.....

Our Annual Cookie and Candy Sale is coming up!

The Outreach Team will be hosting their Annual Cookie and Candy Sale on **Sunday, December 8th**. Leave your holiday baking to us or bring a special treat to a friend! A delicious assortment of confections will be on sale. Contributions of sweet treats and candy are also welcome and should be brought to church before December 7th. All proceeds will benefit the many missions of our church. For more information, please see a member of the Outreach Team.

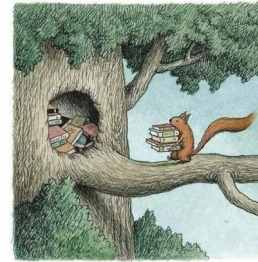
Human Relations Day – Sunday, January 19

Human Relations Day is a Special Sunday set aside to raise awareness and to further the development of better human relations. Celebrated on the Sunday before Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's birthday, gifts received for this offering build King's vision of "the beloved community" through programs such as Community Developers and United Methodist Voluntary Services and Youth Offender Rehabilitation Programs.

Crafting for a Cause Moves to a New Time

Crafting for a cause will meet **after worship on the third Sunday of the month**. We would love to have you join us!

Preparing for the winter??



Join us for **Books We Have Loved** on the **first Friday of every month at 11 am**. Participants share their current reading material and recommendations. You can pick up a book for your winter reading!

As a bonus in December you're invited to share a Christmas story, poem, Christmas memory, or meaningful experience.

The refreshments, the books, and the fun are free.



On **Sunday, December 15 @ 12:30 pm** we are planning to go Christmas Caroling to some of our shut-ins. The plan is to visit 3 sites where our members can collectively gather so we can regale them with some holiday cheer. You can either bring a lunch to church and hang around or return at 12:30 pm when we will depart carpooling to our first site at 1pm. We should be back at the church by 3 pm.



FINANCE TEAM

The 2nd Sunday offerings were as follows:
October for the Native American Assoc.: \$21
November for Veterans One Stop Center: \$307
World Communion Sunday Offering was: \$137

Thank you so much for your generous offerings and please get your 2025 Commitment Cards in so we can make our Ministry Plans for next year. You may place them in the offering plate on Sunday morning or mail them to the church office. Thank you in advance for getting the pledges to us.

~~CUMC Finance Team~~

PoAs (Power of Attorney), HCPs (Health Care Proxy), & More with Brad



Please join Brad Loliger in the café after worship on Sunday, **December 1, 2024** for an information discussion about **health care proxies, powers of attorney, wills, and end of life legal issues**. Please come with questions, and we hope to see you there!