

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

Tim Smith

Financial Secretary

Doris Schanzlin

Custodian

Michael Andolina

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Phone: (716) 839-2460

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CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 9 am–1 pm

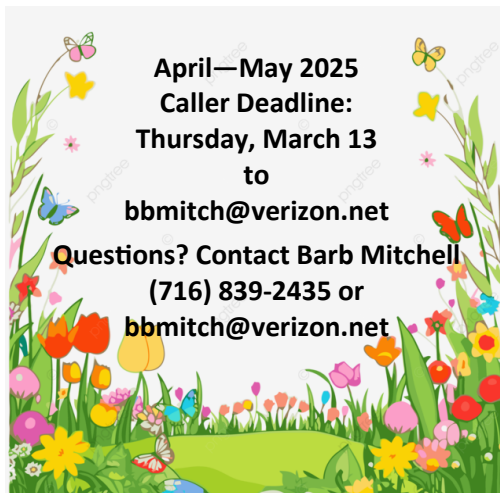
Office closed 2/17



The Caller



FEBRUARY MARCH 2025





“So ... what should we give up for Lent this year?” I asked. The question sat in the air as we tossed around some ideas as a family which kept coming back to diet. Our stomachs are the route that Lent generally takes, at least its disciplines. Maybe it just feels like good practice between Valentines and

Easter, giving up chocolate, sweets, soda, or countless other treats. And yet an interesting reality of Christianity is its absence of food rules and taboos. Even the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, who spoke and wrote of the importance of fasting in its many forms saw that when it came to actual diet, it remained an individual’s choice and not an institutional or religious mandate.

There is something to be said about this common practice, just how countercultural abstention is to the logic of consumption. It becomes a witness in our lives of what really matters, or at least an attempt to grow in our understanding of what gives life meaning, depth, and purpose. When we apply these beyond just a brief season, choosing to live on enough rather than more than enough, they help us to affirm an alternative logic of thankfulness. Honestly, Methodists are well versed in the rich tradition and connection between food and spirituality. Lent and its disciplines help us to simply reconnect food and spirituality subjecting eating to the scrutiny of Christian conscience and tradition. It is to ask and answer what, why, how, and how much which speaks volumes about us and our God. So, as we enter Lent, we sound a fast and reconnect to our spiritual heritage and traditions allowing us to enter more fully into the life of Christ, the doctrines about Christ, and Christ’s sacrifices made for us.

*Yours in Christ,
Pastor Daven*



February Birthdays



March Birthdays

Barbara Burr.....	3	Marcia Snyder	1
Marion Rowlands	3	Gregory Yungbluth	2
Donna Yungbluth	15	Michael Farley	4
Laura June Merrill	17	Gregory Watson	7
Ben Bermudez.....	20	Brad Bermudez.....	8
Abigail Johnson	23	Andrew Lopez.....	12
John Glenn	23	Joanne Gilbert	15
Vicki Smith.....	25	Marshall Rhinehart.....	17
Linda Parete	26	Toni Neidel	18
Michele Sciolino	27	Karen Arrison.....	19
Herb Wilber.....	28	Pat Noyes	24
		Peggy Bermudez.....	25
		Ashley Miller.....	26
		Jordan Maliken.....	29
		Warren Hammond	31



February Anniversaries – None

March Anniversaries – None



Calling all Camera Buffs!!!

If you like taking pictures, please consider contributing photos of CUMC activities to The Caller. Send them as a jpeg to bbmitch@verizon.net or text to (716) 949-2433. Thanks!

Barb Mitchell—editor

We wish to extend our sympathy and prayers to the family and friends of Brad Bermudez upon the death of his mother, Barbara, on November 23, 2024.

We wish to extend our sympathy and prayers to the family and friends of Larry Burdette upon his death on December 17, 2024.

We wish to extend our sympathy and prayers to Doris Schanzlin upon the death of her friend, Tom Dixon, in December 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 Soups
- Pasta/Pasta Sauce - no mac & cheese please
- Canned proteins: Tuna, Chicken, Ham
- Toilet Paper/Paper Products.
- Canned Veggies
- Peanut Butter

Thank you to all who participate in this ministry!



Items Needed:

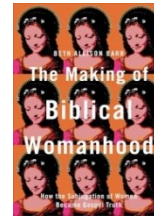
- Paper Towels
- Toilet Paper
- Tissues

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



**Daylight Savings Time begins
Sunday, March 9th.**

SPIRITUAL INFORMATION TEAM



AOL: Adult Opportunities for Learning

The Making of Biblical Womanhood by Beth Allison Barr
(*How the Subjugation of Women Became Gospel Truth*)

Sundays January 12 – February 23

in the Wesley Room following worship

Books available for \$12.00

Facilitator: Peggy Bermudez

This bestseller examines church history—ancient, medieval, and modern—to show that the belief that God designed women only to be submissive wives, virtuous mothers, and joyful homemakers, a belief which pervades North American Christianity, is not scripturally based or divinely ordained but arose from a series of clearly definable moments in human history.

As the Caller went to press, plans for Lent were still being finalized.

Please watch the Weekly Update for more information.

Thirstaid

Unafraid; Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times

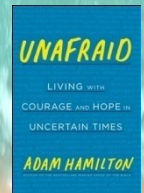
By Adam Hamilton

Thursdays, January 16 – February 27 on Zoom

Zoom link will be in the Weekly Update. Books available for \$15.00

Facilitator: Diane Klenk

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.



As the Caller went to press, plans for Lent were still being finalized.

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 to another Special Mission Pin Recipient for 2024,
Beth Reilly Brown, for her service to
the ministries of Christ Church and Good Neighbors Healthcare!

Saturday, March 22, 10:00 am Breakfast Gathering
Slow Fashion with Karen Wehn
Cost: \$5.00



Did
YOU know:
There is enough clothing
on the planet right now to clothe
the next 6 generations?
The U.S. produces 26 billion pounds
of textile waste annually?
Our demand for fast fashion
harms workers and the planet?
YOU can be part of
The solution!

RSVP to Peggy Bermudez by March 17th
(716)626-4897 or bradbermudez@hotmail.com
Pledge Service (Postponed from November)

Christ Church UWF for 2025

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

**Amherst Lions Club 30th Annual Pancake Breakfast
and 11th Annual Community Health Fair**



Date: **Saturday, March 8**

Time: **Pancake Breakfast 8a-12:30p**
(pancakes, sausage, applesauce cup, oj, coffee, and tea)

Cost: Adults \$10

Children 12 & under \$6



Free Community Health Fair 9a-noon

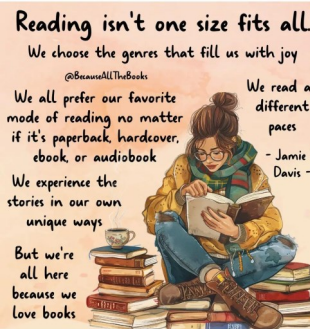
(examples: **Kaleida blood draw from 7:30-10a for
blood sugar and cholesterol (fasting)**, ophthalmologist
from Ross Eye Institute for general vision and glaucoma.)

There will also be a silent auction offered and Guide Dog Trainers
and their trainees attending .

Come join the fun, help support a worthy cause and have a great
breakfast at the same time!!

BOOKS WE HAVE LOVED

Book Group meets the 1st Friday each month at 11am.



Everyone is welcome to share their latest read,
to get book suggestions and maybe take home
a book that someone just finished.

Didn't read a book this month? Come and add
to your reading list. We're all here because we
love books!

Have too many books at your house? Bring
them to the bookshelf in the Café or donate
them to the AAUW (American Association of

University Women) book sale. Proceeds from the sale provide scholarships
for women. Details can be found in the Café.



Our thanks to Nic, for his
contribution of music, to Sarah
for her participation in choir, and
to Grace for her enthusiasm for
life. We thank you and wish you
well in your new adventure.



Seeking Partners in Ministry

Back in September of 2024, the Church Council voted to seek out partners for collaboration and ultimately consolidation in ministry. This is recognizing that we have reached a critical moment in viability and ultimately ministry vitality in this current paradigm of autonomous and siloed ministry. We seek to be proactive and not reactive looking back not only at our own but other faith communities' histories of times which included more robust staffing, filled worship services, frequent baptisms, and daily programming to name just a few. We feel strongly that the vitality that once was, can return, not as it was, but in a renewed and different capacity as a result of merging. We renewed this effort in January remaining committed to this work and hoping that partners will come forward by mid-2025.

We know that such conversations are difficult and always come with those so wedded to particular spaces that they are often stifled before they can even begin or by the time it is truly needed it is too late. They, for example, require an honest and open sharing of budgets, worship statistics, and assets. We, however, are seeking to look ahead to the great and glorious things God has yet in store in ministry for us all.

This would be a lay led process employing a transition team curated from participating faith communities who would work with a mutually chosen and retained consultant to create a plan and corresponding timeline. We know that these conversations and the potential change raise anxiety. Please surround this with prayer as we seek not to look at endings, but new beginnings as we are a people of resurrection faith.

God Moments

Have you had a moment which just captured your imagination, made you slow down and appreciate something, an encounter which moved you? Some people call these "God moments" when an experience moves us and helps us to see more clearly. Pastor Daven tries to capture this through the Weekly Update and in Facebook messages. He is looking for others to share their experiences with him so that they can be included in one of those formats. Please reach out to him if you have something to share!

CIRCLE NEWS



Elizabeth Circle: **Tuesday, February 11** –Book discussion "The Other Einstein" by Marie Benedict. Hostess is Diane Glenn

Tuesday, March 11—Dolls with Esther Kirdani. Hostess Donna Hammond and Marcia Snyder

Children's Ministry

1st and 3rd Sunday of every month 11a-Noon

Story Room 20 and Art Room 21

Beginning in 2025, we will be learning about the books in the New Testament.

Hope to see you there!



FINANCE TEAM

The 2nd Sunday offerings were as follow:

December for the Mental Health Advocates was: \$389.

January for UMCOR Disasters: \$438, plus \$1,142 which members of the congregation have given during the past months for a total of \$1,580.

The Christmas offering was \$3,124 which is to be split between Code Blue and Sleep in Heavenly Peace.

We sadly lost several members during 2024; in turn we received a total of \$15,366 in gifts for our Memorial Fund.

The Finance Team wishes to Thank You all for your very generous giving.

CUMC Finance Team

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Spring Worship Committee will meet Saturday, March 1, at 10 am.

Any questions can be asked at hmwilber3@verizon.net.
Herber Wilber— Committee Co=chair



Missions of the Month

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

THANK YOU!!

Cookie and Candy sale



This year's Christmas Cookie and Candy sale was even better than last year's. Together we raised **\$700** for missions. Thank you to everyone who contributed in any way. Thank you to the bakers, platers, decorators, clerks, and those who purchased the goodies. We hope you enjoyed them.

Giving Tree



Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's Giving Tree, With your help we brightened Christmas for people at Veteran's Administration Medical Center, Haven House, Gateway-Longview, Compass House and our furry friends at the SPCA.



Souper Bowl Sunday will be returning this year. The Outreach team will be busy cooking up an array of delicious soups to purchase on Sunday **February 9th**.

Blanket Sunday- February 16. The CWS Blanket program provides warmth, hope, and care during cold and trying times. A gift of just \$10 provides a sturdy, comforting blanket to children, men and women who are struggling against the cold.



UMCOR Sunday-March 16. This offering allows the United Methodist Committee On Relief to use 100% of all funds given to humanitarian response and recovery efforts directly to communities in need. These gifts ensure UMCOR can respond swiftly to disasters around the world and as a source of hope and healing for those left most vulnerable.

Thank you for your continued support of the many missions of our church and for sharing God's love with the world.

2nd Sunday 2nd Helping for March 2025: 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 March 2022, and this offering is part of our commitment to RMN and in celebration of the third anniversary of CUCM becoming a Reconciling Congregation.



I am absolutely awed by the number of cards, notes and hugs I have received following the death of my dear friend, Tom Dixon. Thank you all so very, very much, it means a great deal to me to be the recipient of such an outpouring of your kind thoughts and prayers.

Doris Schanzlin



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!!!




THE HISTORIC COLORED
MUSICIANS
CLUB & JAZZ MUSEUM

**2nd Sunday 2nd Helping
for February 2025:
Colored Musicians Club
& Jazz Museum**

In Honor of Black History Month, and Christ Church's dedication to the arts, our 2nd Sunday 2nd Helping Offering is designated for the Colored Musicians Club and Jazz Museum ("CMC"). A not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, the history of The CMC is one of triumph over adversity, pride in African-American heritage, excellence in performance, and inclusiveness. It is the only continuously running, all-Black-owned music venue in the United States. Musicians' Local 533 was formed in 1917 during a time when African Americans were not permitted to join the White union. The following year, members formed a social club, which was chartered in 1935. Any Black musicians who wanted to perform in the area had to pay a fee to the union, whose offices were located on the first floor of the club. Local 533 was the most fiscally responsible, socially progressive Black union in the country. Union President Raymond Jackson's stellar managerial skills took him across America as a consultant to other Black Musicians' Unions. The club was incorporated in 1935, utilizing the second floor for performances, practice, and rehearsals. World-renowned musicians like Billie Holiday, Dizzy Gillespie, and Count Basie mingled with the audience. Here—color was not an issue... jazz was. In 1969, after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, Local 533 was ordered to merge with the White union. But the newly integrated union favored its White members. Fortunately, the Colored Musicians Club was a separate entity from Local 533, so it offered Black artists performance opportunities. It became a place for musicians of all colors to gather after their gigs to jam. Here hope triumphed over hate. Inclusivity and diversity reigned. The CMC brought people of all races together and inspired a new generation of musicians.

(Continued on page 11)

STEWARDSHIP TEAM

To celebrate Valentine's Day this year considering having a  for the planet we call home:

Choose one new thing to do throughout the year to care for creation.

Make your home more energy efficient: fix the air leaks, use drapes to block the cold, change to LED lights, investigate possibilities for Solar or Energy Star appliances.

Embrace Zero waste: Put a recycle bin next to your wastebasket; offer composting; challenge family, colleagues and church members to be thoughtful about their habits.

Learn & teach: Dig more deeply into the connections between science, the natural world and faith. The more you learn the more you can help others to do the right thing.

Consume less meat: Explore options for foods that are kinder to earth and to health; what we eat does have an impact on nature and climate change. Try a new recipe. Host a meatless Potluck and invite people to share their recipes.

When eating out, bring your own non-plastic take-home containers. Substitute bamboo, silicon, cloth from natural fibers, glass or aluminum products for ones made of plastic.

Minimize the use of paper to save trees: Choose instead E-Mail, texting, recycled paper or reusable scrap paper.

Speak up: Talk to your family, friends, church members about what you are doing as your example and encouragement are key to spreading the idea of caring for God's planet and people. Consider reaching out to your local and state representatives to encourage them to incorporate these ideas into their workplaces.

Your heart will leap for Joy in response!

Search for New Minister of Music

As soon as Nic Steltzer announced his departure, the SPPRT began the process of searching for a replacement. The job has been posted and shared through a variety of sites and sources. At the time of this writing, two candidates have submitted materials. We hope to make an announcement soon on our next Minister of Music and will keep all posted to our interim plans following Nic's departure at the end of January.



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!



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.

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.

Music and Meditation



Christ Church has offered a time during the seasons of Advent and Lent in the past to quietly reflect and prepare. It remains our hope to maintain this short, 30-minute, candlelight service on Friday evenings beginning at 5:30 pm beginning on March 7, 2025 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.

If we are unable to offer an in-person option this year, being between Ministers of Music, we will repost past Music & Meditation Services each Friday on our Facebook page and Youtube channel. As we get closer to March 7, we will share our final plans.



Walking the Labyrinth at Daemen University

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 University (Main St. & Getzville).