

## Connecting UCC and Disciples Congregations in Western New York

from Rev. Robert Dievendorf

### The Season of Advent

Advent. In linguistics, Advent is recognized as deriving for the Latin *advenio* and *tus* or *adventus*. Its English linguistical translation means “arrival” or “coming”. While the word “advent” can and is used in a variety of ways in our English and American languages (such as the advent of a special celebration or the advent of particular period in our life), it most generally is understood in Christianity as a season – the four weeks and Sundays leading to, preparing for and remembering the sacred and holy day on which we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Christ. The beginning of Advent, or Advent Sunday, can occur from November 27 to December 3 and actually falls on December 1 (as it does this year) only when Christmas Day is on a Wednesday. No one is sure when Advent actually was first recognized, but it dates to at least 567 CE when it is recorded that monks were ordered to fast during December leading up to Christmas. Now that we’ve established what Advent is, how do we live into it?

Unfortunately, I believe many folk in this 21<sup>st</sup> century totally lose sight of Advent’s celebration. To many it has become the time for frivolity and merry-making in recognition of the coming of Santa Claus. It is a time for decorating, parties, baking, shopping and (lest we forget) Christmas music!! For all too many, Advent is considered to begin the day after Thanksgiving – Black Friday – when everything (and I mean everything) becomes Christmas oriented.

But for the Christian, Advent actually has three meanings. First, and the one most thought of, is the recognition of the event some 2000 years ago when Jesus was born in Bethlehem as a son to Mary and Joseph, and who grew into manhood as the Son of God to teach, heal and ultimately die for us for the forgiveness of sins. History records healings, miracles and other signs performed by this born-on-Christmas salvific Son of God which instill, in each of us, the desire to learn more and to change the way we live our lives. This leads to the second meaning of the season of Advent – Jesus wants to enter our lives now to change the way we live, think, act and speak. You’ve no doubt seen the painting by William Holman Hunt of Jesus at the door knocking. You’ll notice there is no handle on the outside of the door – it must be opened from the inside. Advent is the time Jesus especially wants us to open this door and let him enter.

The third meaning of Advent can be the eschatological meaning. Eschatological is a fancy word meaning the “end times” – when the world ceases to exist. Scripturally this time is when Jesus comes again as King and Judge. As no one knows the time of this event, so Advent can be the time in which we live prior to this scriptural fulfillment.

Advent – coming. Whether you undertake this 25-day Christian season with calendars, candles, special readings, special prayers, fasting or any number of other traditions, remember what Advent is for us, as Christians. Then prepare yourself for the coming of Jesus, the Christ. My prayer is that each and every one of us may live into a most blessed and meaningful Advent this year. Shalom.



## Prayerlists – December 2019- February 2020

### December Prayer List

UCC Congregational, Arcade. Pulpit supply;  
Deb Wood, Christian Education;  
Charles Hobbs, pastor emeritus  
Immanuel UCC, Orangeville.  
Elizabeth Meacham, pastor  
St. Paul's UCC, Attica.  
Lauran Heidenreich, pastor;  
Marie Lowe, Faith Community Nurse;  
Charles Williman, pastor emeritus  
Salem UCC, Bennington.  
Rosann Lowder, pastor  
Payne Avenue Christian Church, North Tonawanda.  
Robert Fleming, pastor  
Endowment Committee  
Western Area Youth (WAY)  
NY Conference UCC,  
David Gaewski, Conference Minister

### January Prayer List

Good Shepherd Community of Faith, Buffalo.  
Tanya Spencer, pastor;  
Sue Allen, Faith Community Nurse  
Grace UCC, Buffalo.  
Larry Jackson, pastor  
Kenilworth UCC, Town of Tonawanda.  
Lori Keller Burns, pastor  
First Grace United Church (UCC/DC), Wellsville.  
Supply pastors  
Resource Center for Christian Growth  
Voice Buffalo  
Harriett Tubman Christian Church, Buffalo.

### February Prayer List

Amherst Community Church, Snyder.  
Lisa Drysdale, pastor;  
Debra Cullen, Christian Education  
New Covenant UCC, Buffalo.  
Jacquelyn Ross Brown, pastor

Union Road Community Church UCC, Cheektowaga.  
Supply pastors  
Kenmore UCC, Kenmore.  
Dawn Marie Meier, Supply pastor  
Cleveland Heights Christian Church, Cheektowaga.  
Jennifer Heckmann, pastor;  
Laura Mazurkiewicz, Christian Education;  
Ken Neal, pastor emeritus  
New York School of Ministry, Lay Ministers  
United Church Manor  
Karen Zmich, Manager  
United Church of Christ, National Office  
John Dorhauer, General Minister  
and President  
Riverside Salem UCC/DC for  
Environmental Task Force  
Lockport UCC for Samaritan Pastoral  
Counseling Scholarships



### National Youth Event 2020

Save the dates for the National Youth Event 2020! United Church of Christ's National Youth Event will take place at Purdue University in West Lafayette Indiana July 22-25th 2020. This four day event is celebrated as the largest denominational gathering. Often bringing in 4,000 participants, this time together is centered on faith, leadership, service and social justice to empower our youth.

**Who:** Young people who have completed 6th through 12th grade.

**What:** United Church of Christ's National Youth Event

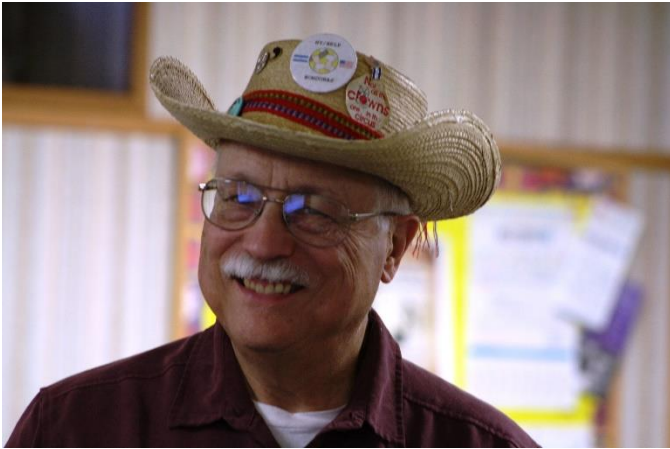
**When:** July 22-25th 2020

**Where:** Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana

**Cost:** \$375 (February 1<sup>st</sup>-February 29<sup>th</sup>) | \$435 starting March 1<sup>st</sup>

More information can be found at:

<http://www.uccpages.org/nye2020/>



### In Memoriam

Gordon Frederick Comstock, MD passed away on October 25, 2019 at the age of 76 from Acute Myeloid Leukemia. Born on January 27, 1943 in Miami, Florida, Gordon was the first child of epidemiologist George Wills Comstock and community activist Margaret (Karr) Comstock. Gordon met his wife and life partner, Ginger (Virginia) Kelly, at Antioch College in Ohio, where he majored in Chemistry and the Maples Volunteer Fire Department. Gordon joined the Peace Corps, teaching math in Ghana for two years before marrying Ginger on July 27, 1968. Gordon studied medicine at Case Western Reserve University and completed his residency at University of Rochester/Highland Hospital Family Medicine Program. From 1980 to 2018, Dr. Comstock practiced family medicine in Arcade, serving the area's youngest to oldest residents with patience and respect.

Always an Eagle Scout, Gordon believed in leaving his campsite - and the world - better than he found it. He dedicated his life to service and teaching. Gordon was originally contracted for two years in a "doctor shortage" area, and because of the people and the community spirit, he and his family chose to stay in Arcade. Gordon mentored numerous medical students in family medicine at his office and then took them home for dinner. From 1989 to 2017, Gordon made 29 trips to La Laguna, Honduras as a part of NY/HELP mission. He inspired Ginger, both daughters, and at least eight community members to travel with him, and they were supported by countless others. Both Gordon and Ginger have been continuously active with NY/HELP, and Gordon became the medical

director. He learned Spanish to communicate with the clinic nurse and patients, graciously accepting language corrections and retranslations. Learning from and serving the people of the La Laguna region were sources of joy for him.

In addition to his medical and mission work, Gordon could often be found with his nose in a book, mowing the lawn at his church, ensuring the high school football players made it safely off the field, or admiring the Arcade & Attica trains.

Gordon and Ginger raised two daughters, Barbara Comstock-King (Daniel King) of Lebanon, CT and Kimberly (Geoffrey [Morton]) Mortstock of Seattle, WA, and adored their three grandkids, Margaret "Maggie" and Elizabeth "Ella" King and Calvin Mortstock. Gordon is also survived by his brother Lloyd Comstock (Judy Kramer), sister Martha (Daniel) Williams, three nieces, and his stepmother, Emma Lou Comstock.

Donations may be sent to Arcade UCC (PO Box 95 Arcade, NY 14009) or NY/HELP Honduras (PO Box 551 Dewitt, NY 13214).

*from Rev. Gary Ferner*

### Churches in Transition

The following churches are currently in transition. 'In Transition' can mean different things. Epiphany UCC of Clarence Center and Pembroke Community Church both have leadership now but will begin their search in earnest in the new year, so they are considered 'Churches in Transition.'

- Epiphany UCC, Clarence Center
- Kenmore UCC
- Trinity UCC, Gowanda
- Pilgrim Memorial/First Congregational, Jamestown
- Lockport UCC
- St. James UCC, Hamburg
- Arcade UCC
- First Congregational Niagara Falls
- Faith UCC, Williamsville
- Pembroke Community Church

*from Jeff Mason, treasurer, WNYACIC*

## **Treasurer's Report**

The following churches made Covenantal Share payments between August 15 and November 19: Amherst Community Church; Arcade UCC; Church of the Nativity (Town of Tonawanda); Cleveland Heights Christian Church (Cheektowaga); Covenant UCC (Gasport); East Aurora Christian Church; Ebenezer UCC (West Seneca); Faith UCC (Williamsville); Lockport UCC; Salem UCC (Tonawanda); St. Paul's UCC (Attica); St. Paul's UCC (Shawnee); St. Paul's UCC (Wendelville); St. Stephen's-Bethlehem UCC (Williamsville); Union Road Community Church (Cheektowaga); and Zion UCC (Town of Tonawanda).

Covenantal Shares are the Western Area's main source of income. At \$6.00 per reported member, ours has been the lowest rate in New York State for many years. The 2020 amount of \$6.00 per member will be based on the membership a church reported at the start of 2019. As reported at the November 3 Annual Meeting, the Western Area Council has reluctantly decided to raise the amount to \$8.00 per reported member for 2021, due to an increase in the projected deficit. The 2021 Covenantal Shares will be based on membership reported at the start of 2020.

In addition to the Covenantal Shares, our United Church of Christ congregations are asked by the NY Conference to send a \$2.00 per member Per Capita for the New York Conference. The 2019 Per Capita is based on the membership a church reported in the 2018 UCC Yearbook, and the 2020 amount is based on reported membership in the 2019 Yearbook. The following UCC churches made Per Capita payments between August 15 and November 19: Amherst Community; Church of the Nativity; Covenant; St. John's UCC (Dunkirk); St. Paul's (Attica); St. Paul's (Shawnee); St. Paul's (Wendelville); and Zion.

Covenantal Share money remains with the Western Area, while Per Capita money is sent to the New York Conference. To avoid confusion, UCC churches are reminded when they send a check, please indicate whether it is for Covenantal Shares or Per Capita. If paying for both in a single check, please indicate the breakdown so you receive the correct credit and so the treasurer forwards the correct amount to the New York Conference. Thank you!

As noted in the last issue of In the Vineyard, the total value of the Endowment on June 30, 2019 was \$412,131.80. On September 30, the total value had increased to \$434,655.32. Based on that amount, a total of \$21,790 will be disbursed in January, as follows: \$6,537 each to Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center, Plymouth Crossroads, and the Department of Community Ministries; \$544.75 to the United Church Home Society for its Senior Wishes program; and \$1,634.25 to be retained by the Western Area to reduce the projected 2020 budget deficit.

*from Karl Shallowhorn*



## **From Hope to Healing: A Mental Health Journey**

Karl Shallowhorn experienced a major psychotic episode at the age of 18 while being a freshman at General Motors Institute. The next seven years found Karl cycling through many Buffalo-area mental health hospitals and was diagnosed with bipolar and co-occurring addiction disorder.

On Wednesday, December 11 from 7-8 pm, at Pilgrim-St. Luke's UCC, 335 Richmond Ave., Buffalo, 14222, you will hear Karl share his story of triumph against all odds. Hear about how he went from the rooms of the Buffalo Psychiatric Center, ECMC and the Buffalo General Hospital Community Mental Health Center to becoming the Education Program Coordinator at the Community Health Center of Buffalo, Chairperson of the Erie County Anti-Stigma Coalition, and Board member of the Mental Health Association in New York State, among others.

This program will serve to both educate and inspire. This is a free event with the opportunity to make a free-will donation to the Pilgrim-St. Luke's UCC Sanctuary Ministry. Light refreshments will be provided.

To register go to:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/from-hope-to-healing-a-mental-health-journey-tickets-81252922679>

For more information contact Karl Shallowhorn at [karl.shallowhorn@gmail.com](mailto:karl.shallowhorn@gmail.com)

*is also so good and all their equipment is good too. They also make it so much easier to bring people together and make new friends.”*

## 2019 Dunkirk Family Camp 2

I had looked forward to Family Camp since February. It was the second year my 12-year-old grandson, Pierce, was able to fly in from Atlanta to go to Dunkirk with me. I saw old friends, watched my grandson play basketball, made a craft at the craft barn, went swimming and attended class every morning. I sat around the campfire with folks I enjoyed and don't see except at camp. I even had a three hour nap. How delightful!

I enjoyed the food at Dunkirk; from the pot full of oatmeal to the salad bar, to the main courses at supper time. My grandson said, "I wish family camp was two weeks long." Jay Rich said, "There's no way I could eat like this for two weeks." I gain at least three pounds from camp every year. Then there is the corn roast. Thirty-four years ago, I held the record for the most ears of corn eaten that night (it really was 18 ears). My body can't do that anymore. There is nothing like freshly roasted corn over the bonfire.

The Rich grandsons, Jake and Jeff, would emcee the talent show with their own routines; better than Jimmy Fallon. The jokes worked for the adults and the children. The only time I saw Pierce was during meals, at vespers and at bedtime. At the picnic he was eating with friends. We would talk about our classes. I told him I fell asleep in class on Wednesday and he laughed. What fun we were having with the old friends he was reacquainted with and new friends he had made. We would review what the next day was going to look like and say our good nights.

This is the second year we were in the cabin with Dave Wilson and Mark Vidaver and we all have so much fun together. Those two are so good with Pierce, always attentive and funny. I had brought a special formula for making bubbles and the adults enjoyed them as well as the children in the cabins around us. The guys had coffee pots so I always had a fresh cup whenever I wanted it.

*Pierce adds: "At Dunkirk Camp, I had an amazing time. Everybody there is so nice and they always include everyone in activities and games. The food*

Friday night vespers is a chance to make a donation for a specific need at Dunkirk or another cause. This past year, the offering was going to repair the kiddie pool (possibly with a splash pad), put some money in the scholarship fund for Family Camp 2 and also to buy a new ping pong table for our camp. A family stepped up to buy the ping pong table that will be kept just for our camp. It was the first year in a while that we hadn't had a ping pong tournament. The baskets were passed and this year, we collected \$6600.

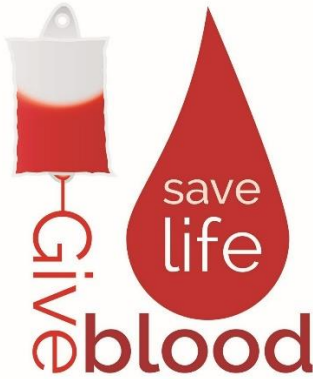
Is Family Camp 2 alive and well? From the youngest infant to the 90-year-old retired pastor, there is life at Dunkirk. If you have never joined us, plan on it and get your reservation in early. We were almost to capacity in 2019, so who knows how many there will be in 2020?



*Thursday Vespers Dunkirk Family Camp, August 2019*

## Update

Lois Vidaver spoke with amos acre recently and would like everyone to know; "amos acre is recovering from his recent heart-valve replacement surgery. His recuperation is expected to go well. He thanks everyone for their concern and support."



## Community Nurse Notes January – National Blood Donor Awareness Month

January has been designated as National Blood Donor Month (NBDM) to encourage donors to give or pledge to give blood. First-time and regular donors are encouraged to make a difference in their communities by giving blood every January, and regularly thereafter.

Blood is traditionally in short supply during the winter months due to the holidays, travel schedules, inclement weather and illness. January, in particular, is a difficult month for blood centers to collect blood donations. A reduction in turnout can put our nation's blood inventory at a critical low.

Give blood. Don't wait for a disaster. Someone needs blood now! Contact the [American Red Cross](#) or your local blood bank for more information. Use #NationalBloodDonorMonth and #GiveBlood to share on social media. Here are some of the biggest reasons giving blood is so important:

1. About 36,000 units of red blood cells and 7,000 units of platelets are needed every single day in the U.S.
2. The most requested blood type by hospitals is type O. This kind of blood can be transfused to patients of all blood types, so it's always in great demand and in very short supply. Only 7% of people in the U.S. have type O.
3. A single car accident victim may need up to 100 pints of blood to survive.

4. About 6.8 million people donate blood every year in the U.S.
5. 38% of our population is eligible to donate, but less than 10% actually do.
6. Donating blood is a simple, safe process. All you have to do is register, take a mini medical history test, donate, and then accept free refreshments like water, Gatorade, granola bars, etc.
7. A single donation from a single patient can help more than one person.

Remember, just one pint of blood can help save up to three lives. For more information, contact the Red Cross (716- 886-7500) or Connect Life (716-529-4300).



### Rainie's Foster Closet

Helping to Clothe Foster/Kinship/1017 Families

Located @ St. Peter's United Church Of Christ  
1208 Oliver Street, North Tonawanda NY 14120  
Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 10am-1pm, also by appointment.

\*Hours Can Change\*

Rainie's Foster Closet is an all-volunteer, donation based, non-profit organization that provides aid to the foster care community. We supply clothing and other needed child/young adult items at **NO COST** to the families. We believe that all children while in a different environment should experience love, respect and kindness while living in foster care.

Rainie's Foster Closet offers up to five days of clothing/items per child. The only qualifications are placement papers and photo ID.

Donations of new or very gently used and washed clothing and other child/young adult related items are welcomed.

Find us on FACEBOOK or contact us: Jessica at 716-465-8697 or Alicia at 716-316-9043.

## Dunkirk Camp's 2019 Season

The year 2019 was a very good camping season for DCC. The weather was terrific after the 4th of July. Our family camps were well attended while our youth camps are trending like our church populations, down just a bit. Our Day Camp continues to be a blessing for the local community, as does the opening of our pool for lessons and local swims.

The surprise for 2019 was that Paramount Pictures selected DCC to film a portion of the movie "A Quiet Place 2". They added a gazebo and porches on cabins six and seven that will be retained. They also helped groom our shoreline and rebuild some ramps. They filmed for five days in mid-August. It was very exciting to have a major motion picture film crew on site. More will be shared after the March 20th release date for the film.

Financially we are doing okay. We will not have to borrow in 2019 and the Paramount project will help support some capital projects being planned for the spring.

### *Postscript from Nancy Pankow*

Just to remind folks that donations for DCC are always needed. We continue to have to replace roofs and building support piers for cabins.



## Updates From Dunkirk Camp & Conference Center

Dunkirk Camp & Conference Center is planning to add NEW playground space! We have been given a small grant and are planning to buy one to two pieces of playground equipment to be placed in the field area between the Dining Hall and the Far Circle. This work will be done in the Spring of 2020.

### **Referral Discount**

In 2020, Dunkirk Camp & Conference Center will be offering a Referral Discount. Refer a friend(s) and once they have registered for one of our week-long overnight camps and paid their \$150 deposit/camper, you will receive a \$25 discount/registered referral. Questions?? Call 716-366-1900.

### **Save The Dates**

**Dunkirk Camp & Conference Center  
Annual Work Weekend**

Saturday, May 16, 2020

And

**NEW!! Fall Work Weekend**

Saturday, October 24, 2020

Lodging available. Meals provided.



### Living Nativity at Ebenezer UCC

Sunday, December 15, 2019

Two performances: 7:00pm and 7:30pm

Light refreshments served in the Fellowship Hall afterward.

**Ebenezer United Church of Christ**  
in our Garden of Joy  
630 Main Street  
West Seneca, NY 14224  
716-674-4566  
eucc.org



### Pioneer Community Chorus and Arcade UCC Present Christmas Cantata

The Pioneer Community Chorus and Arcade United Church of Christ, Congregational, led by Dona Roll, will be presenting a Christmas Cantata entitled, "A Christmas Offering," on Sunday, December 15 at 3pm. It will be held at Arcade UCC, 297 Main St., Arcade 14009. No admission fee. This performance offers a Christmas worship experience of contemporary songs, woven together with meaningful narration. All are welcome and invited to attend!

### 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Friday Free Lunch Program

Faith United Church of Christ is pleased to announce its **Annual Friday Free Lunch Program** and cordially invites you to attend! Beginning on **Friday, February 14 – April 3, 2020** we will open our doors to the Community from **11:30 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.** to partake in food fellowship, and fun!

**1300 Maple Rd – Corner of Maple/Hopkins, Williamsville, NY 14221**

**All are welcome ~ Bring a friend!**

If you wish to volunteer to help, please contact Sandra Hamann via email at [sandrashamann@aol.com](mailto:sandrashamann@aol.com) or call 716-741-3851.

# VIP PARTY RED REBEL

**WHEN**  
Wednesday December 11th  
7pm - 10pm

**WHERE**  
**THE COVE (Main Stage)**  
4701 Transit Rd, Depew NY 14043

**WHAT**  
Founder of Queen City Collaborative, Gwendolyn A. Bork, ANNUAL VIP CHARITY EVENT. Featuring live music by "The Red Revolution", National Comedian, Solo performance by "The Red Rebel". Special Guest Appearances to be announced.

**WHY**  
Proceeds to support Addiction Prevention Resources & Events & WNY Youth Homelessness

**TICKETS INCLUDE**  
3 Hours Open Bar, 1 hour of Unlimited Food, Raffles, Door Prizes, 50/50's

WWW.QUEENCITYCOLLABORATIVE.COM

**TICKETS**  
\$40 pre-sale  
\$50 day of

**SOLD ONLINE**  
[www.QUEENCITYCOLLABORATIVE.COM](http://www.queencitycollaborative.com)

**WHO BENEFITS**  
**PLYMOUTH CROSSROADS:**  
**WNY's ONLY YOUTH HOMELESS HOUSING FOCUS: YOUTH ADDICTION PREVENTION COALITION**

**DONATIONS GLADLY ACCEPTED**  
CALL  
716-444-6769





## ST. PETER'S PRESENTS CHRISTMAS COOKIE SALE

St. Peter's United Church of Christ, 1475 Orchard Park Road in West Seneca 14224, will hold a giant Christmas Cookie Sale on Saturday, December 14, 2019. The event will be held in the church's fellowship hall, and runs from 9:00-11:30 a.m. It is open to the public, so hungry shoppers are encouraged to arrive early for the tastiest cookies! St. Peter's has many wonderful bakers who are known for their delicious baked goods. If you don't have time to bake or need more cookies to fill your stockings or give as gifts, then you don't want to miss this sale. We will have a huge variety of favorite holiday cookies, candy, fudge, and other sugar-laden goodies for sale. This event is sure to be a real treat! Details on this or any other activity of St. Peter's may be obtained by calling the church office at 716-674-1233 or visiting the church's web site at [www.st-petersucc.org](http://www.st-petersucc.org).



**CHRISTMAS**  
*Vespers*

**DECEMBER 8, 2019**  
**7:00 PM**

Join us for an hour of choral and instrumental music to celebrate the Christmas season.  
Refreshments following the service.

**EBENEZER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
630 Main Street, West Seneca NY  
LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK

## New Ministries

*In the Vineyard* asked, "What new thing is your church doing this year?"

*from Rev. Pat Ludwig, First Congregational UCC, NF*  
"First Congregational UCC in Niagara Falls, honored **Marna Pritchard, Pastor Emerita**, with a wonderful worship and reception afterwards. There were tributes to her years of ministry at the church by several people who were touched by her ministry." The celebration included her favorite hymn, "Here I Am, Lord."

*from Krista Ulrich, Ebenezer UCC*  
Ebenezer hosts a Saturday Club the first Saturday of the month for youth grades 2-4. This is a feeder group for its youth groups which begin at grade 5. "We share scripture, make crafts, play games, have snacks and share some good fellowship. This is also open to youth from any church."

*from Rev. Jan Mahle, East Aurora Christian Church*

## **Blue Christmas Service**

Not everyone is cheery for the Christmas holidays. Dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after divorce or separation, coping with the loss of a job, living with cancer or some other dis-ease that puts a question mark over the future and a number of other human situations, make parties and joviality painful. On **Wednesday evening, December 11 at 7 p.m.**, EACC, 464 Main St., East Aurora, 14052, is offering sacred space and a service of reflection for people living through dark times. If you or someone you know is “blue” this Christmas, please invite him/her/them to this time of quiet hope and healing. Let us as a community of faith reach out and give comfort to those who mourn.

## **Yule Log Burning**

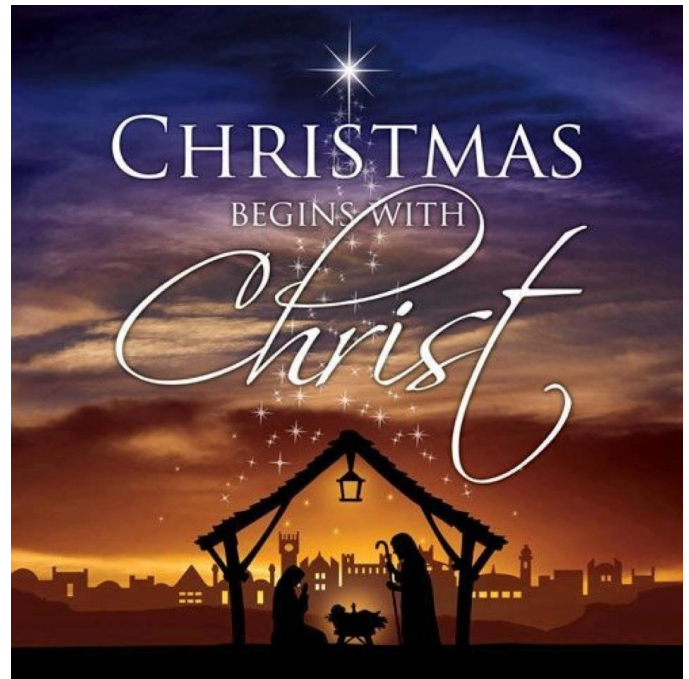
Burn up the Old Cares, Worries, Wrongdoings of 2019, then Bask in the Warmth and Light of a **Blazing Yule Log** in Preparation for 2020. Join us at East Aurora Christian Church, 464 Main St., East Aurora, 14052, on **Tuesday, Dec. 31**. Stop by the Meditation Garden on the North Grove side of the Church anytime between **4 p.m. and 7 p.m.** We are adapting the yule log tradition by having a small controlled yule log burning in our Meditation Garden. You will be given a stick to lay on the log to symbolize the release of the 2019 cares, troubles, worries, wrongdoings. As your stick is burned, let the warmth of the flame remind you of God’s love and forgiveness and the light of the flame guide your 2020 year. Please do “drop” by to see the blazing Yule before us!

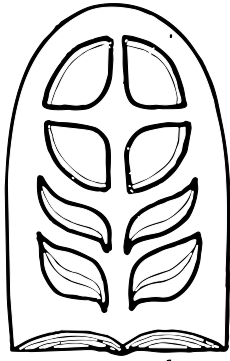
## **Kenmore-Tonawanda Blue Christmas Service**

The holiday season can be difficult for those who have experienced a loss, illness or hardship. The Ken-Ton Churches Association has chosen Monday, December 16<sup>th</sup> to hold a special Blue Christmas service to acknowledge the sadness some people may feel during the holiday season.

The service, on December 16th at 7:00 p.m., will emphasize the presence of God who comes as light into the midst of darkness, bringing comfort and hope. It will be held at Church of Nativity United Church of Christ, 1530 Colvin Boulevard, one block north of Sheridan Drive in the Town of Tonawanda, 14223.

The church is fully accessible. Parking is in the rear. All are welcome.





## Old Testament Course

Christian Growth Academy  
Presbytery of Western New York  
WNY Area Churches in Covenant

Location: Presbytery Office, at Maryvale  
Presbyterian Church  
425 Maryvale Drive, Cheektowaga, NY 14225.  
Take the Thruway to the 290. Exit at Harlem Rd.,  
turn left onto Maryvale Dr., right turn onto  
Community Rd., left into the parking lot. (Drive  
past Aspire to the Maryvale Presbyterian Church  
parking lot.)

**Saturdays 8:30am to 12 noon**  
**Jan 25, Feb 1, 8, 29, Mar 7, 21, 2020**  
**(Make-up slot TBA if needed)**

### Leader: Jonathan D. Lawrence

Rev. Dr. Jonathan D. Lawrence is an Associate  
Professor of Religious Studies, at Canisius College.  
He is ordained with the American Baptist Churches  
USA since 1998 and presently serves as pastor at  
St. Peter's UCC, North Tonawanda, since 2013.

This course will provide an introduction and  
overview of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, in its  
historical setting, with a focus on using it in  
preaching and church education. We will survey  
many of the significant stories in the Hebrew Bible,  
looking at their texts, genres, content, and  
connection to historical and cultural evidence. We  
will discuss what the texts may have meant in  
antiquity, how they've been used over the  
centuries, and how they can be used in ministry in  
our own time.

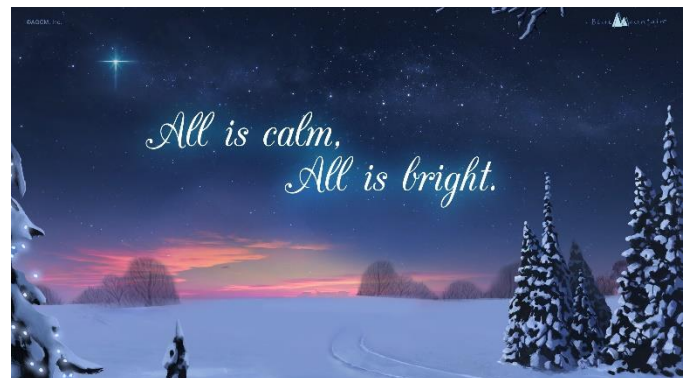
**Texts required:** *The Old Testament: A Very Short Introduction* by Michael Coogan, Oxford and *Daily Life in Biblical Times, Archaeology and Biblical Studies*, by Oded Borowski. Optional text: *A Guide Through the Old Testament* by Celia Sinclair, Westminster/John Knox Press. **A Study Bible** – preferably NRSV with Apocrypha. Options: *Harper Collins Study Bible, New Oxford Annotated Bible, or College Study Bible*, (NAB), St. Mary's Press, 2006.

**Cost: \$100 per person**

**This course will benefit people:**

- **Who want a deeper understanding of the Old Testament**
- **Interested in becoming Commissioned Ruling Elders or Lay Preachers**
- **CEU credits for UCC pastors**
- **Wish to lead a Bible study**

**Registration: Please register by Jan. 13, 2020.**  
**Send name, address, phone number and church name plus \$100 check payable to Education Committee of WNY to Center for Christian Growth, 300 North Forest Rd., Williamsville, NY 14221.** For more information, contact Debbie Katz or Kirsten Albrecht-Carrié at 716-631-0979 or email us at [resourcecenterwny@gmail.com](mailto:resourcecenterwny@gmail.com)



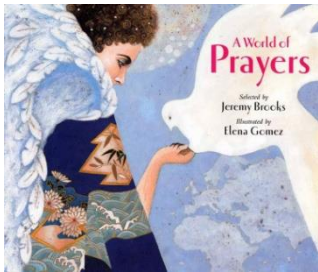
from Kirsten Albrecht-Carrié

## New and Noteworthy at the Center for Christian Growth

(formerly known as the Resource Center)

Friends, we have lots of new books for children, adult programs, and spiritual growth. Stop by any time Mondays through Thursdays from 10am to 3pm. Consider using the Center for your next Christian Ed. Committee meeting place. Call ahead to make arrangements, 716-631-0979.

Here are some great resources for Sunday Schools of all sizes:



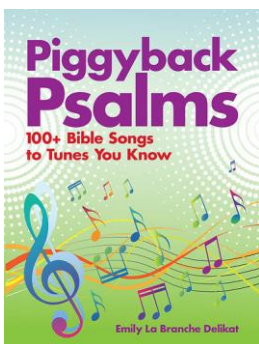
**A World of Prayers** is a collection of prayers from around the world with wonderful illustrations. From Ireland comes this morning prayer:

*I go forth today in the might of heaven,  
In the brightness of the sun, in the  
whiteness of the snow,  
In the splendor of fire, in the speed of  
lightning,  
In the swiftness of wind, in the firmness of  
rock.*

*I go forth today in the hand of God.*

And from Uganda, here's a bedtime prayer:

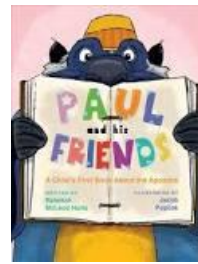
*In your hands I commit myself tonight. Let  
your angels surround my bed.  
Help me to rest in you and wake up  
To glorify your name.*



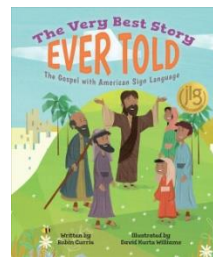
Here's a collection of a 100+ psalms to singable tunes like "The Wheels on the Bus," "Rockabye Baby," or "She'll be Coming Around the Mountain." The words to the psalms are straight out of the Bible. The books of psalms is the hymnbook of the Bible.

What a great way to learn Psalm 40 by singing, "I put my hope in the Lord, Hur-rah, hurrah! I put my hope in the Lord, Hur-rah, hurrah! When I fall in

the mud and muck, he sets my feet on the solid rock, I will sing a song of praise to the Lord." *Tune: The Ants Go Marching.*



Here's a great storybook for young children about **Paul and His Friends**. This should be in every church library for families to borrow and enjoy. Or stop by the Center for Christian Growth and borrow our copy.



With the help of gentle, repetitive text and simple American Sign language described in words and pictures, children and adults can learn, remember, and retell the gospel story again and again. The stories include Creation, Jesus' birth, the boy Jesus at the temple, healing a blind man, feeding of the 5000 with five loaves and two fishes, Jesus' death and resurrection and finally the story of Pentecost. This is a short, concise gospel in words and hand gestures.



## Senior Apartment Available

United Church Manor's one-bedroom market rate apartment is available for rent. Head of Household must be 55 or older. Rent includes heat, water, electric, and cable. An air conditioner and appliances are included. Pet friendly and non-smoking. \$840 month. Call Karen Zmich or Jennifer Miller at 668-5804 for additional information.



*from Jeff Mason, Church Historian*

## **THE ARCADE UCC, CONGREGATIONAL, PRIOR TO THE CIVIL WAR**

The Arcade UCC, Congregational, is the oldest congregation in the Western Area, tracing its roots back to its founding in the summer of 1813. The Rev. John Spencer, a traveling missionary who planted the seeds for a number of churches in this end of the state, started our church with just six members. It was usually up to the deacon to keep the church going in the early years, but we eventually grew enough to be able to construct our first church building in 1834.

Later in the 1830s, we had the first of several pastors trained at Oberlin College in northern Ohio, which has a long tradition of progressive thought. For the next three decades, we were heavily influenced by the ideas of “Oberlin Perfectionism” when it came to the important social issues of the day. On the issue of slavery, for example, a perfectionist believed it was not enough for a Christian to say he or she was opposed to slavery. Instead, it was a Christian’s duty to take active measures to bring about the abolition of slavery.

In January 1840, we hosted a convention of the Western New York Anti-Slavery Society. This was a follow-up to a meeting held in Warsaw two months earlier that is sometimes considered the origin of the Liberty Party. In the summer of 1844, we hosted the Grand Liberty Convention, which saw a huge gathering of abolitionists come from a wide area to hear prominent speakers discuss the need to abolish slavery.

The family of Rev. Dr. William Lyman was especially prominent in the abolition movement. One son, Huntington Lyman, became a prominent traveling speaker for the American Anti-Slavery Society. Another son, Ralston Lyman, remained in Arcade, where his home was one of the “stations” in town that assisted fugitives on their way to Canada via the Underground Railroad. A son-in-law, Charles Shepard, was one of the leaders of the Liberty Party in New York State, and is known to have hosted the noted abolitionist Frederick Douglass in his home on at least one occasion.

Other perfectionist ideas that took hold in our church were temperance and women’s rights. Not everyone, however, agreed with the perfectionists, and a deep schism in 1849-50 nearly

caused a permanent end to the church. This division was eventually healed, and the church was served by two more Oberlin-educated pastors between 1857 and 1864. Church membership grew after the Civil War, and in 1877 the old church building was moved down the street and the present church was built on the same site at the corner of Church and Main streets.

## **Fall Western Area Meeting**

The Fall meeting of the Western New York Area Churches in Covenant on November 3, 2019, began with reports from the 2019 UCC New York Conference Annual Meeting, the 2019 Disciples of Christ General Assembly, the UCC Biennial Synod, and the 2019 youth mission trips to an impoverished area of Philadelphia. A worship service followed the reports, which ended with an offering, which was sent to the disaster ministries of the Disciples and the UCC. Ways to help your church be a little “greener” were also shared, including: not using Styrofoam take-out boxes (substitute something recyclable), recycle more (silverware, plasticware, etc.), and to change from plastic communion cups to glass ones.

The next part of the afternoon was the annual business meeting, during which reports were approved and officers were elected for 2020. The treasurer’s report and the proposed 2020 budget were discussed, with much of the discussion dealing with the Area Council’s decision to increase the Covenantal Share amount to \$8.00 per reported member in 2021. The budget was eventually approved, and the new and continuing officers were installed. Everyone who attended appreciated the hospitality shown by the people at the Cleveland Heights Christian Church.

*(A special thanks to Jeff Mason and Ginger Comstock for providing notes from the meeting.)*

## **February Western Area Meeting**

**Mark your calendars! The Winter Western Area Meeting will be held on Saturday, February 22, 2020. It will be a “learning extravaganza!” Location, time and further details TBA.**



### December 2019 Calendar Notes

- 5 WNY UCC & DC Retired Clergy Luncheon, 11:30am prayer, 12-2pm lunch, Location TBA – contact Kathy Najuch for details: 716-835-4120 or E-mail - [uccnywes@verizon.net](mailto:uccnywes@verizon.net)
- 8 Christmas Vespers, Ebenezer UCC, 630 Main St. West Seneca, 14224, 7pm
- 9 Western Association Church & Ministry, Ebenezer UCC, 630 Main St., West Seneca, 14224, 9:30am-3:00pm. For more information call 716-882-7705.
- 11 East Aurora Christian Church, Blue Christmas Service, 464 Main St., East Aurora, 14052, 7pm
- 11 From Hope to Healing, Pilgrim-St. Luke's UCC, 335 Richmond Dr., Buffalo, 14222, 7-8pm
- 11 VIP Party Red Rebel to benefit Plymouth Crossroads, The Cove (Main Stage), 4701 Transit Rd., Depew, 14043. Pre-sale tickets online at [www.queencitycollaborative.com](http://www.queencitycollaborative.com) or purchase the day of.
- 12 Education Committee, Resource Center, North Presbyterian Church, 300 N. Forest Rd., Williamsville, 14221, 1pm
- 14 St. Peter's Christmas Cookie Sale, 1475 Orchard Park Rd., West Seneca, 14224, 9-11:30am
- 15 Christmas Cantata, Arcade UCC, 297 Main St., Arcade, 14009, 3pm
- 15 Living Nativity, Ebenezer UCC, Garden of Joy, 630 Main St., West Seneca, 14224, two performances – 7pm and 7:30pm. Call 716-674-4566 for more information.
- 16 WNYACIC Council, St. Stephens-Bethlehem, 750 Wehrle Dr., Buffalo, 14225, 7pm
- 16 Kenmore-Tonawanda Blue Christmas Service, Church of Nativity UCC, 1530 Colvin Blvd., Town of Tonawanda, 14223, 7pm
- 19 North Towns Clergy, Church of the Nativity, 1530 Colvin Blvd., Buffalo, 14223, 12pm
- 21 RACHELS - breakfast group for clergy spouses, Denny's, 3920 Maple Rd., 9am

- 31 Yule Log Burning, East Aurora Christian Church, Meditation Garden, 464 Main St., East Aurora, 14052, 4-7pm

### January 2020 Calendar Notes

- 2 WNY UCC & DC Retired Clergy Luncheon, 11:30am prayer, 12-2pm lunch, Location TBA – contact Kathy Najuch for details: 716-835-4120 or E-mail - [uccnywes@verizon.net](mailto:uccnywes@verizon.net)
- 9 Education Committee, Resource Center, North Presbyterian Church, 300 N. Forest Rd., Williamsville, 14221, 1pm
- 13 Registration deadline for Old Testament Course at Maryvale Presbyterian Church. See details on page 11.
- 13 Western Association Church & Ministry, Ebenezer UCC, 630 Main St., West Seneca, 14224, 9:30am-3:00pm. For more information call 716-882-7705.
- 16 North Towns Clergy, Church of the Nativity, 1530 Colvin Blvd., Buffalo, 14223, 12pm
- 18 RACHELS - breakfast group for clergy spouses, Denny's, 3920 Maple Rd., 9am
- 20 WNYACIC Council, St. Stephens-Bethlehem, 750 Wehrle Dr., Buffalo, 14225, 7pm
- 25 Old Testament Course, Maryvale Presbyterian Church, 425 Maryvale Dr., Cheektowaga, 14225, 8:30am-12pm

### February 2020 Calendar Notes

- 1 Old Testament Course, Maryvale Presbyterian Church, 425 Maryvale Dr., Cheektowaga, 14225, 8:30am-12pm
- 6 WNY UCC & DC Retired Clergy Luncheon, 11:30am prayer, 12-2pm lunch, Location TBA – contact Kathy Najuch for details: 716-835-4120 or E-mail - [uccnywes@verizon.net](mailto:uccnywes@verizon.net)
- 8 Old Testament Course, Maryvale Presbyterian Church, 425 Maryvale Dr., Cheektowaga, 14225, 8:30am-12pm
- 10 Western Association Church & Ministry, Ebenezer UCC, 630 Main St., West Seneca, 14224, 9:30am-3:00pm. For more information call 716-882-7705.
- 13 Education Committee, Resource Center, North Presbyterian Church, 300 N. Forest Rd., Williamsville, 14221, 1pm

- 14 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Friday Free Lunch program begins, Faith UCC, 1300 Maple Rd., Williamsville, 14221, every Friday through April 3, 11:30am-1pm. Call 716-741-3851 for more information or to volunteer.
- 15 RACHELS - breakfast group for clergy spouses, Denny's, 3920 Maple Rd., 9am
- 17 Deadline for submissions to the first quarter *In the Vineyard* spring 2020 issue – send to [inthevineyardeditor@gmail.com](mailto:inthevineyardeditor@gmail.com)
- 17 WNYACIC Council, St. Stephens-Bethlehem, 750 Wehrle Dr., Buffalo, 14225, 7pm
- 20 North Towns Clergy, Church of the Nativity, 1530 Colvin Blvd., Buffalo, 14223, 12pm
- 22 Western Area Meeting, "Learning Extravaganza," location, time and more information TBA
- 29 Old Testament Course, Maryvale Presbyterian Church, 425 Maryvale Dr., Cheektowaga, 14225, 8:30am-12pm

*In the Vineyard* is published quarterly by the Western New York Area Churches in Covenant (WNYACIC).

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*In the Vineyard*, published four times a year, invites you to send us your comments and opinions, expressions of faith and announcements of events. We welcome information regarding the health and welfare of our clergy and others in the Western Area. Please write us when you know of a birth or celebration, a serious illness or a death in our church family – please include your name and telephone number.

Please have submissions for the upcoming Spring issue in by February 17, 2020.