



Connecting UCC & Disciples Congregations of Western New York

A Hug or a Handshake?

by Lois Vidaver

The TV news coming across the airwaves this past year has driven me to distraction. When I watch mayhem blowing up the world, near and far, the feeling I experience in the pit of my stomach debilitates me. It is dread, pure and simple. The antidote to this is a mind-game I have always on the ready. Its goal? To drain the dread and find the hope. Snapping off the TV and using my electronics, I search for peace in other voices, listening for hope in their words and inspiration in their actions. I'll share favorites.

Inspiration often comes to me by way of Facebook. When author Anne Lamott's essay popped up on my FB screen recently, it began with the sentiment, "Now is the time for grassroots love." This was interesting. What does she mean? She went on, "Grace is grassroots kindness, sitting quietly with the shattered, a gentle touch, glasses of water for the thirsty." She urges me to live my life, a life of love and compassion, serving others in my own little world. In other words? Bloom where I am planted. I can do better at that.

I also find encouraging words when I listen again on Sunday afternoons to the morning's sermon on FB. Our pastor encourages us to be our "authentic selves." When the world feels a little raw, continue being the good neighbor you have always been, she says. "We can feel an intense feeling of hope in the simple acts of walking together, sharing meals and stories and visiting others when there is illness." This is a good reminder. When things get tense, I tend to hibernate. Picking up the phone would be a good thing.

On a gray day, I turn to music on Echo Dot. Our robo friend Alexa is adept at answering the call to, "Put on Anne Murray's music, please." Her song, "A Little Good News" expresses my sentiments exactly. After lamenting about the bad morning events, Anne broods during the day about the news at night. "I'll come home this evening," she sings. "I'll bet that the news will be the same." Anne wishes for a world where "Everybody loves everybody in the good old USA. We sure could use a little good news today." This refrain lifts my spirits, just knowing others are seeking the same peace. John Denver and Pete Seeger's songs ease the soul, as well.

Then there is YouTube. YouTuber Nate and his family's journey among the homeless portrays hope in action. "How are you doing, bro?" Nate calls out to an elderly man sitting on his possessions in a mall parking lot. "What do you need? How can I make your day better?" The man looks up, suspicious at first. Will he be robbed of his meager belongings...again? "Well, maybe some food," he says. Nate collects a shopping list of needs, hops to the nearest clothing store and fast-food place, and brings back treasures. "Gee, thanks, son. You are an angel." "Okay," Nate replies. "One more question. A hug or a handshake? You choose." The appreciative man leans in for a big one.

Filled with inspiration and hope, I breathe the dread out of me by wishing good happenings to my neighbors. I commit to continue to be strong in the communities that sustain me: my family, my friends, my church, my writing groups. The pandemic taught me an important lesson. Hold on to those who love you and love back.

"A hug or a handshake? You choose."
I choose a hug.



Prayer Lists

December 2023 Prayer List

UCC Congregational, Arcade:
 Josh Bower, Pastor
 Deb Wood, Christian Education
 Rev. Robert Dievendorf, Pastor Emeritus

Immanuel UCC, Orangeville:
 Rev. Elizabeth Meacham, Pastor

St. Paul's UCC, Attica:
 Rev. Lauran Heidenreich, Pastor
 Marie Lowe, Faith Community Nurse
 Rev. Charles Williman, Pastor Emeritus

Salem UCC, Bennington:
 Rosann Lowder, Pastor

Payne Avenue Christian Church, North
 Tonawanda:
 Rev. Robert Fleming, Pastor
 Church & Ministry Committee

Western Area Youth (WAY):
 Krista Ulrich, WAY Advisor

NY Conference UCC:
 Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams, Transitional
 Conference Minister

January 2024 Prayer List

Good Shepherd Community of Faith, Orchard
 Park:
 Rev. Tanya Spencer, Pastor

Grace UCC, Buffalo:
 Larry Jackson, Pastor

Kenilworth UCC, Town of Tonawanda:
 Rev. Lori Keller Burns, Pastor

Grace United Church, Wellsville:
 Dr. Karen Borchert, Pastor

Center for Christian Growth of WNY
 Kirsten Albrecht-Carrie, Debbie Katz,
 Co-Leaders

FeedMore WNY

February 2024 Prayer List

Amherst Community Church, Snyder:
 Rev. Lisa Drysdale, Pastor
 Carissa Gigliotti, Director of Christian
 Ed/Community Engagement

New Covenant UCC, Buffalo:
 Reginald Burt, Interim Pastor

Kenmore UCC, Kenmore:
 Rev. Dawn Marie Meier, Pastor

Cleveland Heights Christian Church,
 Cheektowaga:
 Rev. Jennifer Heckmann, Pastor
 Rev. Kenneth Neal, Pastor Emeritus

Riverside Salem UCC, Grand Island:
 Rev. Catherine Rieley-Goddard, Pastor
 Environmental Task Force

Lockport UCC:
 Rev. Dr. Richard Danielson, Pastor

Lay Ministers/Members in Discernment (MIDs)
 United Church Manor
 Karen Zmich, Manager

United Church of Christ, National Office
 Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson,
 General Minister and President

Samaritan Pastoral Counseling Services,
 North Tonawanda

*from Rev. Gary Ferner, Associate Conference
Minister*

Churches in Transition

Covenant UCC, Gasport
 New Covenant UCC, Buffalo
 Church of the Nativity UCC,
 Town of Tonawanda

St. Matthews UCC, Hamburg
 St. Paul's UCC, Wendelville
 St. Stephen's-Bethlehem UCC



from Rev. Jan Mahle

Celebrating 180 years as a Congregation in East Aurora, NY: Going Strong with God's Help

Throughout the month of October, East Aurora Christian Church celebrated its anniversary. We began with a potluck (our potluck was a zero-waste event!) and then a Revival.

We were blessed to have these guests: Rev. Thad Allen, Regional Minister of The Northeast Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Rev. Brad Donahue, the Regional Minister for Pennsylvania and West Virginia; Gayle Donahue, former pastor at EACC; Rev. Terry Bartlett, retired pastor in Ohio; Diane Bartlett, whose grandfather was the pastor at EACC from 1929-1943; and Rev. Arthur Davis, retired pastor and great friend of us all.

Our theme for this event was *Still in God's Hands*. Rev. Allen preached about the beauty, tenderness, and grace of His hands.

Throughout the month, our outreach project was making scarves for those in need. We had a casual gathering after worship on October 22 with cake and cider.

We added a Trunk or Treat for the kids on the 28th and an intergenerational worship experience complete with three living statues: Anna, the woman at the well and Jairus.

We as a congregation have so much to be thankful for and continue to be guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

(Photos submitted by Rev. Thaddaeus Allen.)



Reverends Arthur Davis (left) and Thaddaeus Allen, Regional Minister



Rev. Arthur Davis with Rev. Jan Mahle



by [Kayla Berkey](#) | published Sept. 26, 2023 on the United Church of Christ National website, featuring St. James UCC of Hamburg

'More fair, equitable and just': Congregations celebrate Just Peace Sunday

Churches across the United Church of Christ marked Just Peace Sunday as they gathered for worship Sunday, Sept. 17.

This year's theme and resources focused on "[A just forgiveness and the way of peace](#)," which congregations adapted for their communities and worship services.

"Given what is happening in the world, not only is it important for our churches to lift up issues of peace and justice, but joining such a day is also an important reminder that we are not alone," said the Rev. Michael Neuroth, director of the UCC's [Washington, D.C. office](#). "We can take courage from one another for the struggle ahead and affirm that the hope of God's peace, God's Shalom, is in fact being built here on earth in new ways."

The [Just Peace](#) pronouncement calls for UCC churches to address systemic injustice using nonviolence and Just Peace practices. The annual designated Sunday — the Sunday preceding Sept. 21 each year — creates the opportunity for churches to dedicate prayers, services and coordinated actions toward celebrating Just Peace work within a congregation and renew their commitment.

A new Just Peace church

One such church was [St. James UCC in Hamburg, N.Y.](#), which celebrated their first Just Peace Sunday as a [Just Peace church](#) this year.



A Sept. 17 bulletin shows St. James UCC marking Just Peace Sunday for the first time as a Just Peace church.

"The people of St. James UCC made it clear that they want to be involved in the community and beyond in making things more fair, equitable and just," said the pastor, the Rev. Paul Werner. "People who had recently joined the church told us at the annual meeting in February that our commitment to inclusivity and our desire to be a people of peace with justice are what attracted them to the church."

The congregation observed the Sunday last year as well, and in February of this year they voted unanimously to [officially declare themselves a Just Peace church](#).

The Sept. 17 worship service included music with themes related to justice, peace and liberation and emphasized the importance of creation justice as part of Just Peace practices.

**from Pastor Tanya Spencer,
Good Shepherd Community of Faith**

Looking Back and Moving Forward Our Story: Good Shepherd Community of Faith



In July of this year (2023), Good Shepherd Community of Faith Church finalized the sale of our church building in South Buffalo. Our church was in a building that we have occupied for more than 90 years; a staple in the community, the place we called home. The building, being built in 1925, was difficult to maintain, but the small congregation remained determined to keep the doors open. We housed the South Buffalo Community Table for over 40 years; we served our South Buffalo community with many missions and we were also the first Welcoming and Affirming church in Western New York.

“What now?” many have asked over the past five months. Orchard Park United Methodist Church was gracious to open their doors and allow Good Shepherd Community of Faith to share space within their walls for us to worship and hold meetings as we navigate through the next steps.

In doing so, Good Shepherd Community of Faith has been able to have a combined worship service with St. Stephens-Bethlehem on three separate Sundays: two in September and once in October.

Good Shepherd Community of Faith would love to worship with other churches to fellowship and get to know new people, which will hopefully lead us to our new home. We are a small congregation of about 25. We are God-loving people who want to serve as God would have us to do. We do not know what the future holds but we do know who holds the future. We are serious about finding a new space, place, and congregation to make our forever home. We can be contacted at 716-339-1910 (leave a message). You can also email us at gscofchurch@gmail.com if you are able and would like to worship with us where you are.

We are an Open and Affirming congregation who Love God and God’s people.

We stand on the Word of God!

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Grace and Peace to you,
Pastor Tanya Spencer
Good Shepherd Community of Faith

**An Open
and Affirming
Congregation**



**from Shannon King, on behalf of
Arcade UCC**

Tailgate Worship Service



Lil' Rick Vogt (far left) plays the bongo drums with the praise band, Far Cry, (Dona Roll, Vanessa Adams and Skip Tillinghast, left to right), during the worship service prior to the start of the Bills' game, with prepared tailgate snacks in the foreground.

Several weeks ago, the Buffalo Bills provided us all with a 9:30 am game as they played that Sunday in London, England. Knowing that many of our Western NY fans would hate to miss the game, many churches in the area provided a "tailgate worship service" and Arcade UCC was among them!

Sunday, October 8 brought a lighthearted and fun abbreviated worship service at Arcade UCC, followed by "tailgating" with snacks and refreshments while watching the Bills game together! Everyone at Arcade UCC dressed in their red, white and blue Bills attire and rooted on their team! Although the Bills didn't end up pulling out the win, everyone enjoyed this time of being together with some "fan"-tastic fellowship!



IN MEMORIAM



In Memory of Rev. Kathryn Wilsey Baker

April 28, 1939 - November 1, 2023

Please lift prayers of thanksgiving for the life and love of The Rev. Kathryn Wilsey Baker. Kathy died on November 1st, All Saints Day. For a portion of her long and wonderful career in ministry, she was a member of Pilgrim-St. Luke's UCC and served as an executive minister in the UCC.

During this sacred time, may all who knew and loved Kathy experience the comforting embrace of our ever-present God in the love, care, and prayers of family and friends, near and far.

A service will be planned at the Community Church of Vero Beach in Florida on a date yet to be determined. In lieu of flowers, please consider sending contributions to a Memorial Education Fund being set up in her name.

Below is a link to Kathy's obituary:
<https://obits.macdonaldfuneral.com/obituary/kathryn-baker>

New Clergy Feature



Rev. Paul Werner

Rev. Paul Werner (he/him) is the pastor of St. James UCC in Hamburg, and began his pastorate in January 2022. Originally from the New York metro area, he lived in Florida for 33 years before coming to WNY. He is still adjusting to WNY weather! Paul is proud of St. James UCC for voting unanimously to become a Just Peace church in February 2023, and the church is currently working to declare itself a Creation Justice church.

Paul earned a B.A. in Spanish Language and Literature, a M.A. in Foreign Language Education (Spanish), and a graduate certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language from the University of South Florida in Tampa. He taught middle school, high school, and college students for more than 20 years.

He began attending First United Church of Tampa in his teens, and ultimately answered

God's call to ministry by earning his M.Div. from the Florida Center for Theological Studies (which has since merged into St. Thomas University in Miami). Paul was twice awarded the UCC's William R. Johnson Scholarship, a competitive seminary scholarship for openly LGBT ministerial candidates in the UCC.

Paul was licensed for ministry in 2008 and ordained in 2013 by the Florida Conference. He served three Tampa Bay churches, including First United Church of Tampa, a bilingual church that has made being Open and Affirming, multiracial, multicultural, anti-racist, and accessible to all, some of its core values. He also served on the Board of Directors of the Florida Conference. Because Paul comes from the perspective of liberation theology, he has a passion for social and economic justice. He is especially interested in how churches can express a progressive Christian faith and witness with prophetic voices and actions to practice the gospel.

Paul serves on the Church and Ministry Committee of the Western Association, and he was recently elected Assistant Moderator of WNYACIC. He also serves on the board of Hamburg Pride. He is single and lives with two cats, Emma and Teddy, who know they are in charge.



from Rev. Dr. Karen Borchert, Grace United Church, Wellsville

Grace United Church of Wellsville Community Happenings

Grace United Church of Wellsville hosted a harvest dinner for 120 people on October 28. The beautiful place settings were warm and welcoming and represented the bounties of the harvest. It was a time of wonderful food and fellowship.

A few short days later on Halloween, Grace United handed out candy to the hundreds of children who passed by the church while out trick-or-treating. Everyone was in the Halloween spirit and dressed in costume, much to the children's delight!



Halloween fun with the community at Grace United Church of Wellsville

from Patricia Burgstahler, Kenmore UCC
Kenmore UCC Has a Busy Fall



Kenmore UCC's Family Sunday

Kenmore UCC has had a very active and enjoyable fall. In September, we had a successful meat raffle fundraiser, followed by another successful spaghetti dinner in October. October was our church's 97th anniversary. We had a Family Sunday and we invited many of our family members to join our service even if they don't normally attend our church. Our attendance was double that of a regular Sunday.

Following the service, we enjoyed a luncheon where we had a display of photos of family events in the history of the church. Congregation members brought in pictures of their weddings, baptisms, and confirmations, etc. It was fun seeing the changes in the church as well as the different ministers who were serving and even the wedding dresses and hairstyles of those memorable moments.

At the end of the month, we took the last of three donations to Harvest House which totaled just over two hundred items.

We are looking forward to many activities for the rest of the year and we wish all of you a wonderful Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year.

***from Carissa Gigliotti,
Director of Christian Education &
Community Engagement,
Amherst Community Church***

CWS Period Packs Event a Huge Success!



At the 2023 NY UCC Conference Annual Meeting, we were challenged to create Menstrual Hygiene Kits (“Period Packs”) for Church World Service (CWS). Some statistics and examples of the negative effects of period poverty were shared, including lost days of education and shame. These facts motivated several local pastors and individuals in attendance to organize a collection in

our area to address the need. The goal for the NY Conference was to assemble 250 Period Packs by December 31. That was the goal for the entire state! Thanks to the generosity of the churches and individuals of the WNYACIC, we blew well past that number with 391 assembled kits just from our Area!

Thirty-one volunteers of all ages met at Amherst Community Church (ACC) on November 11 to pack the items collected from Area churches and purchased with monetary donations. Volunteers representing ACC, Church of the Nativity, Ebenezer, and Zion worked together to turn overflowing tables of items into completed kits. In addition to contributions from the congregations present, we also received two boxes of pre-assembled kits from Kenilworth and donations from Salem. A huge thank you to everyone who participated by donating items, money, and/or time to make this mission project successful! We are especially grateful for the Endowment Fund donations from Ebenezer and Zion, for the coordination of Pastor Krista Ulrich, and the amazing volunteers from Ebenezer, ACC, and Nativity who set everything up in advance of the event, did additional shopping when we ran out of supplies, and helped push us through the last leg when the reserve supplies arrived. In addition to helping end period poverty nationally through our donation of 300 kits to CWS, we will also be able to assist women and girls locally, with the remaining 91 kits being distributed in the City of Buffalo through the Better Together partnership. Plus, the items we had left over that did not fit into the completed kits will be donated to St. Luke’s Mission of Mercy where they will help our unhoused neighbors.

Some of the volunteers mentioned they wished we had more opportunities like this to partner with other churches to get to know each other and do good work. This event shows how much we can accomplish when we all work together! I hope it serves as a model for the Western Area in the future.

from Tracy Meyers

St. Matthew's UCC Pastor Retires



St. Matthew's UCC in Hamburg wishes to extend great congratulations to Rev. Lynn Morgan as he begins his next chapter, which includes retirement from full-time ministry. We have been blessed to have had Rev. Morgan and his wife Sandy with us for the past six years.

Rev. Lynn Morgan entered our lives as a "God" match. St. Matthew's was in a period of transition and through a family connection from a church member, we were introduced to one Reverend Lynn Morgan who had been looking to make some changes after his hiatus from ministry. He agreed to support us in our transition. After some time had passed, it became clear, Lynn and Sandy were a match for us, and this led to us calling him as our settled Pastor. He served us as our called minister for five years. In that time, he guided us through many challenges. His guidance and steadfastness were a gift and while we wish him and Sandy much happiness in their future, we will miss them dearly.

We wish to thank Lynn for his service and commitment to us these past years and ask you to wish him and Sandy all the best as they enter this next phase of their life journey. We will forever be grateful for you both!!

from Lois Vidaver, on behalf of the "In the Vineyard" Editorial Board



The Saga of the Missing Zip Code

A friend (who was driving) and I, on our way to a luncheon, were first picking up a third person. The driver recited our friend's address (minus the zip) into the GPS app. Arriving at a house in Tonawanda, she rang the bell. The door began to open and she called in, "Ready to come to the luncheon?" A man appeared. "No," he said, smiling, "but it sounds tempting." His address was identical as our friend's, but her house was in North Buffalo. He sent us on our way, knowing exactly where she lived; this had happened before. Another friend, living in the 14226 zip, has the same address as a 14228 resident. The mail often winds up in the wrong box.

Moral of this story? Please include zip codes in all submissions to *In the Vineyard*. It will help the drivers find your events effortlessly. Thank you!

Thank You!

**from Rev. Lynn Morgan, treasurer,
WNYACIC**

from Jeff Mason, Finance Committee

ENDOWMENT NEWS

Western Area Treasurer's Report

The 2024 proposed budget was passed unanimously by the delegates at the Annual Meeting at St. James UCC. The budget has very few changes for 2024. Probably the one that will be most evident to our UCC churches is the increase in the Per Capita assessment. Beginning next year, the Per Capita assessment is \$2.50 per member (up from \$2.00 per member currently). Per Capita funds are collected by the Association, but 100% of them are passed on to the Conference to fund ministry around the state.

The endowment portion of the 2024 budget shows an 11% increase in funding for Dunkirk Conference Center, Plymouth Crossroads, and the Department of Community of Ministries. This increase is attributable to the Kahn Estate bequest and the favorable trends in interest rates.

Thanks to all the churches who have faithfully supported the work of the Area through Covenant Share giving. To date, 29 churches have paid some or all of their Covenant Share. Current Covenant Share income is 59% of the budgeted amount for the year. Many churches pay their Covenant Share at the end of the year, so I am hopeful that we will close out the year without a deficit.

For those planning to make payments at the end of the year, be advised, I will keep our 2023 books open in early January to accommodate late payments that come in after the end of the year. If you send in a payment in January that is for 2023, please be sure to indicate that on the check so it gets attributed correctly.

Our three Endowment accounts had mixed results for the third quarter of 2023. In addition, we received the final bequest from the estate of the late Helen Khan during the summer.

The American Funds account was \$38,170.02 on September 30, down from \$38,852.92 on June 30. The United Church Funds account ending in 010 was \$50,807.01 on September 30, up from \$47,267.91 on June 30. When we received the final bequest of \$50,237.46 from Ms. Khan's estate in the summer, we deposited it in the United Church Funds account ending in 009. The balance of that account on September 30 was \$589,316.69, up from \$564,330.05 on June 30.

Our total on September 30 was \$678,293.72, up from \$650,450.88 on June 30. Based on the average of our totals in 2023, we expect to disburse \$32,906.00 from the Endowment to the Western Area treasury in January 2024. That will be an increase from the January 2023 disbursement of \$29,591.00.





Grants Available

Grants of up to \$1500 are available through the Department of Community Ministries to help congregations develop or build ministries serving their local community or bringing them into closer connection with their community or neighborhood. If you have an idea for outreach in your community, feel free to contact us and we will be glad to help you explore and develop a fundable plan.

Examples of recent grants include: a community "Canine Carnival" collecting donations and supplies for the SPCA of Erie Co., an "Emergency Preparedness Initiative" in the congregation and local community, and an immigrant and refugee respite program.

Any member congregation in good standing with the WNYACIC is eligible to apply. A grant can be requested for a maximum of \$1500 and a church may request up to two grants per calendar year (total of \$3000 per year per church).

For more information contact Ted Brelsford (pastor@faithunitedchurchucc.com 716-941-3529).



Readers respond to
In the Vineyard's question:

"Where do you find hope and inspiration when life seems overwhelming?"

**From Karen Heil Borchert,
Grace United, Wellsville**

My favorite authors are Kate Bowler and Barbara Brown Taylor. They're both very articulate and engaging authors who recognize that we often stumble in the darkness, not understanding where God is or where we are headed. "There is no math to suffering," Bowler would say. It doesn't add up. But we can learn new things about ourselves, others and God in the journey. Both of these authors decry "sunny spirituality", the "blessed" mentality that pervades our culture. Often, I remind myself and others of whom Jesus called "blessed" in the sermon on the mount. We're blessed not by the accumulation of wealth, or of healthy bodies and perfect families - rather we're blessed when we understand who we are in relation to God and others - when we know we're cherished by God - no matter what - and that God is present.

**From Shannon King, Editor,
*In the Vineyard***

From church! When life gets to be too much and things seem overwhelming, I find peace and inspiration at church! The music fills my soul, the pastor's message gives me promise and hope, and the fellowship of everyone being together to worship rejuvenates me! I leave with a whole different outlook on the day and even the week ahead!

The *In the Vineyard* Editorial Board welcomes any meditations or devotions that tie into the church year for our newsletter's front page.

(Word count of 400-475 words, please.)

Please submit your piece to inthevineyardeditor@gmail.com

Thank you in advance!

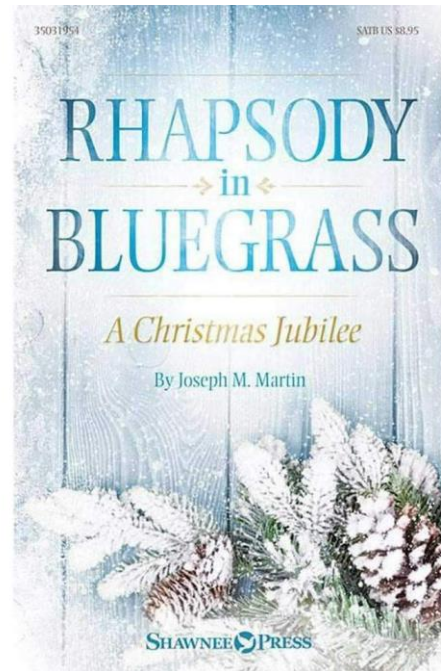
Advent Quotes

"At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving others with God's own love and concern." - Mother Teresa, from Love: A Fruit Always in Season

"Faith is salted and peppered through everything at Christmas. And I love at least one night by the Christmas tree to sing and feel the quiet holiness of that time that's set apart to celebrate love, friendship, and God's gift of the Christ child." - Amy Grant, Christian singer/songwriter



from Dona Roll, Choir Director,
Arcade UCC



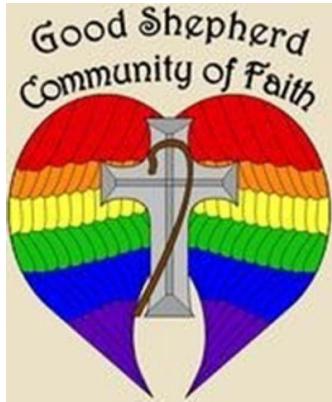
**Christmas Community Cantata
at Arcade UCC
297 Main St.
Arcade, NY 14009**

Howdy, friends and neighbors! It's time to put on your favorite flannel plaid shirt or Bills regalia and saunter down to the Arcade United Church of Christ to hear the Christmas Story retold in a brand spankin' new way!

Local musicians are joinin' together to delight you with their rendition of "Rhapsody in Bluegrass: A Christmas Jubilee" by Joseph M. Martin.

You won't want to miss the fun we are goin' to have on Sunday, December 17th, at 3:00 pm at the Arcade UCC! A reception afterward of Tantalizing Tailgate Tidbits will get us all in the mood to watch the Bills at 4:30 pm on the big screen in the sanctuary!

C'mon down now, ya' hear?!?!



News from Good Shepherd Community

Free Exercise every Monday with Cheryl
 Fellowship Hall
 Orchard Park United Methodist Church
 3700 N Buffalo St., NY 14127
2:15 pm (for a duration of one hour)
 Questions? Call 716-662-7912
 or bsuea@yahoo.com.

*Please Note:
 The Chronic Pain & Fibromyalgia
 Support Group held at Good Shepherd
 has been disbanded due to poor
 attendance.*



Trinity Cooks for Their Community

Trinity UCC's next free community meal is Sat., January 13, from 4 to 6 pm or until gone. Drive or walk up. On the menu: homemade soups, salad, roll and cookie.

**Trinity United Church of Christ
 30 Erie Avenue
 Gowanda, NY 14070**



**Living Nativity
 Sunday, Dec. 17, 2023**

2 Performances: 6:00 & 6:30 pm
 Light refreshments served in the Fellowship Hall afterward.

Ebenezer United Church of Christ
 in our Garden of Joy
 630 Main Street, West Seneca
 674-4566 ★ www.ebenezerucc.church



**Payne Avenue Christian Church
 1459 Payne Ave.
 North Tonawanda, NY 14120**
 is having a Drive-thru
 Chiavetta's Chicken Dinner
 from noon-4 pm
 on Saturday, December 2, 2023.

Tickets are \$14 and include ½ chicken, roll and butter, macaroni salad and baked beans.

Arrive early before they are sold out!
 Questions? Call Brett at
 716-491-6205
 or the Church Office at 716-260-1217.
 We accept Cash and Venmo!



**Kenmore-Tonawanda Churches’
Blue Christmas Service
Mon., December 18th, at 7 pm
at
Church of the Nativity UCC**

The holiday season can be difficult for those who have experienced a loss, illness or hardship. The Ken-Ton Clergy Association has chosen Monday, December 18th to hold a Special Blue Christmas Service to acknowledge the sadness some people may feel during the holiday season.

The service, on December 18th at 7:00 pm, 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 the Nativity United Church of Christ, 1530 Colvin Boulevard, one block north of Sheridan Drive in the Town of Tonawanda, 14223, (716) 875- 3365.

Access to the recorded service will be available after, at www.nativityucc.org. The church is fully accessible. Parking is in the rear. All are welcome.



BREAKFAST with SANTA

**At Epiphany UCC
9365 Clarence Center Rd.
Clarence Center, 14032**

Saturday, December 16, 9-11:30 am

Cost: \$10 adults, \$8 children ages 2-10, (under 2 years are free).

RSVP by Dec. 10 to the church office, 716-741-1441.

Limited tickets at the door if not sold out. Bring your Christmas wish list for Santa and your appetite!



Church & Ministry Meetings –

2nd Monday of each month, 9:30 am to 2:00 pm
Ebenezer UCC, 630 Main St., West Seneca, 14224.
Members & guests notified directly of any changes.

New York Area Churches in Covenant (WNYACIC)

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inthevineyardeditor@gmail.com

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 14, 2024.****

St. Peter's United Church of Christ, 1475 Orchard Park Road in West Seneca 14228, will present a free Christmas concert on Sunday, December 3 at 7:00 pm in the church sanctuary. The concert will highlight

St. Peter's musical group, "Strike the Rock," under the direction of Mark Kasprzak, along with featured musicians.

All are welcome to attend and enjoy an evening of uplifting spiritual music. There is no admission fee for this concert, but a freewill donation will be requested. Further information may be obtained by contacting the church office at 716-674-1233 or visiting the church's web site at

www.st-petersucc.org.

