



Connecting UCC & Disciples Congregations of Western New York

## ***Living with Tiptoe Anticipation***

### ***Devotions for Advent***

***by Rev. Hope Douglas Harle-Mould***

***First published in These Days magazine, 2021***

### ***Todo La Tierra (All Earth Is Waiting)***

Indigenous children in La Laguna and Mataderos, Honduras, don't count for much in the eyes of the world. But they, too, yearn to learn and find work they love, to build future dreams and sing together "Todo La Tierra": *All Earth is Waiting*.

For three decades our area churches have sent mission teams to work with tribal leaders to provide medical clinics, schools, roofs, safe stoves, clean water and sanitation. Since my trip, I've felt forever linked with these faith-filled, new neighbors of my world.

In God's eyes they are the chosen ones to be lifted up, to be filled with good things. But I was not sent empty away. Kids nicknamed me "Ocho Loco," (teaching them Crazy Eights and chasing them with wet "verde" brushes, painting the clinic).

It's been said our gravest loss is the genius of the poor. If we're looking for where the Christ-Child chooses to be born to incarnate a new world, gaze into the faces of Mirtila, Jose, Perla, Jorge, Emilia, Reina, and Ramon. Let them teach you to sing.

*In empty moments, O God, fill me with your love for your never-forgotten ones. Amen.*

### ***The Gift Within the Gift-Within***

Whenever we give a child a Christmas gift, we're giving something more. What's the gift within? Our deep love and the joy of sharing a moment of delight. But what's the gift **within** the gift-within? It's the palpable presence in that moment of the Love that came down at Christmas, God-with-us, *Emmanuel*.

Last fall I got to know gas station/market manager Nadeem, who knew all the struggling families in our neighborhood, especially those walking in to buy food. I marveled at his friendliness and funniness, making

people feel better whenever they came in. Sometimes he'd even give free bread and eggs to the poorest. So, I started giving him gift cards to give away, because I knew he would know who needed them most.

What was the gift within the gift card? A surprise of hope: that some unknown person cares, that maybe their future is possible. What was the gift **within** the gift-within? The Christ Child connecting one soul to another across borders and walls, saving us all by teaching us to sing the angels' song.

*Emmanuel, take us deep enough into your gifts to weep for joy. Amen.*

### ***Welcoming Christmas to Abide with Us***

One November our church decided to welcome a refugee family from war-torn Bosnia—whose 4-year-old daughter had never known a night without guns and bombs. Preparing for their January arrival, the call suddenly came: they're arriving in eleven days! Miraculously we got a donated apartment, fully furnished it, and greeted them at the airport with signs, balloons, and stuffed animals for the little girls.

After an hour orienting them, we walked together down the long corridors. At one point 8-year-old daughter, Anya—walking with me and her father, Sasha—suddenly ran forward to catch up to her sister and mother, Francika, walking with my wife. As she ran with laughter, balloons and bear, Sasha turned to me and said, "Look! No more scared! She no more scared." One year later, Sasha had a good job and provided Christmas tree and presents for his family. At their home he said, "There's something I want you to know: my wife's maiden name. Her name is *Borzhic*. It means... 'Christmas.' When your church welcomed us, you were literally welcoming Christmas to come and stay with you."

*Holy Refugee Family, may I always open my heart for you to abide. Amen.*



## **Prayer Lists – December 2022-February 2023**

### **December 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. Luran 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 and Ministry Committee  
Western Area Youth (WAY):  
Krista Ulrich  
NY Conference UCC:  
Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams, Transitional  
Conference Minister

### **January Prayer List**

Good Shepherd Community of Faith, Buffalo:  
Rev. Tanya Spencer, Pastor  
Sue Allen, RN, Parish Nurse  
Grace UCC, Buffalo:  
Rev. 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  
FeedMore WNY  
East Aurora Christian Church:  
Rev. Jan Mahle

### **February Prayer List**

Amherst Community Church, Snyder:  
Rev. Lisa Drysdale, Pastor  
Carissa Gigliotti, Director of Christian  
Ed/Community Engagement  
New Covenant UCC, Buffalo:  
Supply Pastor  
Union Road Community UCC, Cheektowaga:  
Supply pastors  
Kenmore UCC, Kenmore:  
Rev. Dawn Marie Meier, Pastor  
Cleveland Heights Christian Church, Cheektowaga:  
Rev. Jennifer Heckmann, Pastor  
Laura Mazurkiewicz, Christian Education  
Rev. Kenneth Neal, Pastor Emeritus  
Lay Ministers/NYSOM  
United Church Manor  
Karen Zmich, Manager  
United Church of Christ, National Office  
Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, General Minister  
and President  
Riverside Salem UCC, Grand Island:  
Rev. Catherine Rieley-Goddard, Pastor  
Environmental Task Force  
Lockport UCC:  
Rev. Dr. Richard Danielson, Pastor  
Samaritan Pastoral Counseling Scholarships

*from Rev. Gary Ferner, Associate Conference Minister*

### **Churches in Transition**

Pilgrim Memorial/First Congregational UCC,  
Jamestown  
Covenant UCC, Gasport  
New Covenant UCC, Buffalo  
Church of the Nativity, Buffalo



**The *In the Vineyard* Editorial Board would like  
to welcome Ginger Comstock to the Board!  
We thank you for sharing your time and  
talents with the Western Area newsletter!**



## Arcade UCC Provides Community Outreach Through Free School Supply Giveaway



*Debi Lutz, Sheila and Jim Vrenna, and Pastor Josh Bower of Arcade UCC during their free school supply giveaway.*

The Arcade UCC congregation collected donations of school supplies just before the start of the school year and provided a free school supply giveaway to the Pioneer community. The Arcade Salvation Army supplied backpacks for this outreach service, which were conveniently filled with the needed supplies and handed out to middle and high school students and their families (elementary students had their supplies provided for them through the schools). 165 backpacks filled with the needed school supplies were handed out to families of the Pioneer community! Thank you to all of the volunteers who gave donations and gave of their time. And thank you to the local Salvation Army for providing for the local community!

*from Jeff Mason, Church Historian for Arcade UCC*



## CONGRATULATIONS TO DONA ROLL

The Annual Meeting of the United Church of Christ New York Conference was held in June at Silver Bay. At that time, Dona Roll concluded her six years of service as moderator. Those six years were challenging ones, as the Conference dealt with staffing and operational changes, plus the added changes brought on by the pandemic. Congratulations to Dona on her successful service in this important position!



## Prayers and Reflection

During the Annual Meeting, we took time to pause, reflect, and remember all of those who we hold dear to us that have transitioned in the last year or more. It is important for us all to allow for space to mourn, and to know that we are not alone in our moments of sorrow. **If you feel you need a helping hand in grieving/mental health wellness, please email: [sestilley@uccny.org](mailto:sestilley@uccny.org)**





## News from Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center

The Board of Trustees for Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center offers thanks to all the folks in Western New York and beyond who participated and volunteered in our 2022 Centennial Anniversary. You'll recall there were many fun creations and events: in April a Dinner was held in Hamburg, a 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 2022 Calendar and 100<sup>th</sup> Year history book of the DCC was created, campers shared fond memories and old photos in the Spirit newsletter, in August a 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary community picnic was held, in October nearly 700 Children received treats, dancing and games at the Halloween Happening. We are overjoyed to share the rich history and wonderful happenings at Dunkirk Camp and Conference Center.

We also thank all the churches, businesses, families, and individuals who have contributed to our 2<sup>nd</sup> Century Fund. There is still time in this season of giving to make a contribution to help us reach our \$1,000,000 goal and grow into the next century. Donations may be sent to: DCC 2<sup>nd</sup> Century Fund c/o Jill Greene, 3443 South Creek Rd. Hamburg, NY 14075.



*Pastor Krista Ulrich*



*Gary, Ryan, Sara, Brendan and Christopher Burdick-  
100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner*



*Marsha & Hugh Guillaume*



*Dunkirk Halloween Happening*



*Jennifer Vacanti, Becky Sievers, Emmy & David Hess*

*from Rev. Lynn Morgan, treasurer, WNYACIC*  
**Western Area Treasurer's Report**

Thanks to all the churches who have faithfully supported the work of the Area through Covenantal Share giving. To date, 25 churches have paid some or all of their Covenantal Share. Current Covenantal Share income is 62% of the budgeted amount for the year. Many churches pay their Covenantal 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 2022 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 2022, please be sure to indicate that on the check so it gets attributed correctly.

The proposed budget for 2023 passed without amendment at the Annual Meeting held at First Congregational UCC in Angola. The total budget for 2023 is \$71,763.32, which reflects a 2.4% increase in general spending, primarily attributable to cost of living increases for staff. The portion of the budget funded by Endowment Fund income is up 19.6% due to a fresh infusion of funds to the fund from the Khan estate. This allows for increased funding to Dunkirk Conference Center, Plymouth Crossroads, Western Area Youth, Senior Wishes, and supplemental funds for the general fund. The 2023 budget projects little or no surplus, but if there should be any, it will be used to repay the Budget Contingency Fund (our 'rainy day account' from which we borrow as needed and which we currently owe \$5,000).

Thanks to all who remain faithful in giving to support the ministry and mission of the Western Area.

\*\*\*\*\*

*from Jeff Mason, Finance Committee*

### **ENDOWMENT NEWS**

The financial markets did not perform well during the late summer and early fall, so our balances in the three Endowment Funds accounts reflected that. Based on the bequest we received in June from the estate of Helen Khan, the Finance Committee is continuing our "dollar cost averaging" method of transferring some money each month from one of our United Church Funds accounts into the other one.

As of September 30, 2022, we had \$32,807.63 in the Capital Group American Funds (down from \$34,659.04 at the end of June); \$468,203.50 in the United Church Funds Account 009 (up from \$446,696.94 in June); and \$90,812.37 in the United Church Funds Account 010 (down from \$140,820.46 in June).

The total value of our endowment accounts on September 30 was \$591,823.50, which was a decrease of \$30,352.94 from the total on June 30. The September 30 total is the one we always use to determine the amount of Endowment money to be disbursed the following January.

Based on September's total, the disbursement in January 2023 will be \$29,591.00. That amount will be divided as follows: \$8,877.00 each to the Department of Community Ministries, Dunkirk Conference Center, and Plymouth Crossroads; \$900 to the Western Area general budget; \$1,000 to the United Church Home Society; \$1,000 to Western Area Youth; and \$60 to the general budget contingency fund. These amounts were all approved at the Western Area Annual Meeting on November 6.

*from Jeff Mason, Church Historian for Arcade UCC*

## **Rev. Robert Dievendorf Becomes Pastor Emeritus at Arcade United Church of Christ**



*Pastor Joshua Bower stands with Pastor Bob Dievendorf following the service*



*Debi Lutz, Church Moderator, presents Pastor Bob with a certificate of Pastor Emeritus*

Arcade UCC voted in April 2021 to confer the title of Pastor Emeritus on their former pastor, Rev. Robert C. Dievendorf, and a worship service to make it “official” was planned for later in the year. Issues beyond anyone’s control unfortunately forced the postponement of the service until this year.

The service of conferral of the Pastor Emeritus designation took place on Saturday morning, August 20, 2022. The hymns and scripture readings were chosen in advance by Pastor Bob. The hymns included “How Great Thou Art,” “The Old Rugged Cross,” and “Here I Am, Lord.” His daughter, Stephanie Paradiso, read Jeremiah 29: 10-14 and Joshua 24: 14-15, and Pastor Josh Bower read the Gospel, Matthew 22: 34-40.

Music for the service was provided by Dona Roll on the piano, and by the Far Cry praise group. Skip Tillinghast reminded the congregation that Pastor Bob often joined Far Cry on bass guitar or upright bass. The church choir, directed by Dona Roll, sang Bach’s “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring,” accompanied by Marvin Zehr on the organ and Nick Tillinghast on cello.

Pastor Josh Bower delivered the sermon and read messages from people who were unable to be present, including Pastor Bob’s father, Owen Dievendorf. Video greetings came from Associate Conference Minister Rev. Gary Ferner and Pastor Shawn Hannon of Hope Lutheran Church.

The “Recognition of Ministry,” delivered by Rich Vogt, was based on the resolution voted on by the church in 2021 and described some of the highlights of Pastor Bob’s life and ministry before and during his time in Arcade. Dona Roll, the former moderator of the New York Conference, delivered the Presentation of Pastor Emeritus, followed by a Prayer of Thanksgiving by Council Co-Chair Bill Schaper and a unison Confirmation by the congregation. Council Co-Chair and Moderator Debi Lutz called Pastor Emeritus Bob up to the front before she read the Declaration of Honor and presented him with a certificate in honor of his new title.



The highlight of the service, of course, was the response from Pastor Bob. He gratefully acknowledged the honor and reflected on his ministry and his time in Arcade. He especially noted that he and his beloved Cathy were always a team in ministry until her passing in 2016.

Pastor Josh and Pastor Emeritus Bob delivered the benediction, after which everyone adjourned to Wetzel Hall for a bountiful and beautifully presented reception.

It was a special weekend in the life of the Arcade UCC church, and they look forward to many more years with their new Pastor Emeritus.



Readers respond to the *Vineyard's* question: **"What Christmas music is most meaningful to you and why?"**

**from Lori Burns, Kenilworth UCC**

Over the years, I have grown to appreciate winter instrumentals and gentle Celtic hymns. For me, they are like hibernation for my soul in a season that often bears too much twinkle and flash.

**from Gary Burdick**

I enjoy almost all of the Christmas Music, both sacred and secular. But my favorites are Handel's "Messiah" and the traditional carols we sing in worship during Advent, Christmas Eve and the Christmas Season. Amongst my favs are "O Come, All Ye Faithful" and "Silent Night".

**from Shari Edgcomb, Kenilworth UCC**

The music or song that resonates with me the most is, "Do You Hear What I Hear?" This is one of the first songs I remember hearing when I was a child on the stereo in my home. Mom had many albums of music for the holidays but this one struck a chord in my soul when it was played. The story of the Christ child, told in a way that makes my heart soar.

**from Yvonne Dembinski, Kenilworth UCC**

There was always music and a piano at my home growing up. My mom played the piano; she played all kinds of music, especially hymns. My brother and I were taught to play piano and read music. One of my favorite Christmas songs was "We three Kings of Orient Are". After I married Bob, we would play Christmas albums at our place. One of the songs was another favorite: "Go Tell It on the Mountain".

One more favorite is "The Little Drummer Boy". Growing up I always liked the sound of the drum. Starting in seventh grade, I played the drums. I was in the concert band and marching band while in Junior and Senior High School.



from Rev. Jan Mahle

## Thank you, amos!

"Friends are friends forever, when the Lord is Lord of them.... a lifetime's not too long to live as friends." (*Friends. Song by Amy Grant, Gary Chapman, and Michael W. Smith*)

There are so many of us for whom these lyrics from *Friends* capture our relationship with rev. amos acree.

Upon reflecting on our decade-long friendship, I have come to appreciate his humility, for example his name. Using all lower case letters was a mark of his humility. For the longest time I thought he forgot how to use the shift key on the keyboard. No, his lower case use was about being humble before the Lord. His name was not only lowercase but central to his identity as a prophet. He claimed that role in the tradition of the Hebrew prophet, Amos. Amos of the Hebrew Scriptures was not afraid to proclaim truth to power; to take up the cause of social justice. So too, amos was active in social issues: race, environment, peace, non-violence. His Bible studies, his sermons, his prayers, all challenged listeners to love the world and do justice.

amos grew up in Tallahassee and found spiritual kin in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). He attended Bethany College (a Disciples college), Colgate Rochester Divinity School and pastored Disciples congregations. His love of ecumenism was evident in his ministry with the UCC congregations, the Disciples House at Chautauqua Institution, and his presence at Chautauqua for 2-3 weeks each summer.

For me and many others I think, amos is a wise man, always there with a healing presence (oh, did I mention he is a nurse? A parish nurse!) and one who has been shaped by the Lord as an instrument of peace. Thank you, amos.



The *In the Vineyard* Editorial Board would like to thank amos acree for his longtime devotion to chairing the Board and for his dedication to bringing a high-quality and current newsletter to the Western Area!



**Trinity is Cooking for Our Community**

**Everyone is Welcome!**

**FREE!**

**Community Meals**

**TAKE OUT ONLY**

**At Park Street Entrance**

**Driving: East Main to Railroad Ave and then down Park St. Follow the Signs Or Walk up!**

**No Meal in December**

**January 14 – Scalloped potatoes and ham, vegetable, bread & cookie**  
**February 11 – Homemade soup, salad, bread & cookie**

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

**4 pm –until gone or 6 pm**

**Free will donations are appreciated but not necessary.**



ST. PETER'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
**MEAT RAFFLE**  
**Saturday, December 10**  
1475 ORCHARD PARK RD, WEST SENECA

Doors Open at 6:30 pm - First Spin at 7:00 pm

**Tickets \$10 each**  
Tables of 8 for \$70

Ticket includes admission, a beer or pop, and a sandwich.  
Additional drinks and sandwiches can be purchased.  
Bring your own snacks and cooler for winnings.

**50/50 RAFFLES**

**Tickets available now**  
call 716-674-1233

Meat supplied by Camillo's Sloan Meat Market



**Payne Avenue Christian Church**  
1459 Payne Ave.  
North Tonawanda, NY 14120

**Is Having a Drive-Through Chiavetta's  
Chicken Dinner**  
Noon to 4pm on Sat., Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Ticket price will be \$15.00. Dinners  
include: ½ chicken, roll & butter,  
macaroni salad & coleslaw! Arrive early  
before they are sold out!**

**Questions call Debra @  
716-990-3942 or  
the Church Office 716-260-1217**

## Upcoming Christmas Events and Services



**Kenmore Tonawanda Churches'  
Blue Christmas Service  
At Church of the Nativity United  
Church of Christ**

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 19<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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 the Nativity United Church of Christ, 1530 Colvin Boulevard, one block north of Sheridan Drive in the Town of Tonawanda, 14223. Telephone No. (716) 875 3365. Access to the recorded service will be available after, at [www.nativityucc.org](http://www.nativityucc.org).

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



**CHRISTMAS**  
*market*

---

Aprons for you & your little ones    Homemade Fudge and Caramel Apples    Madagascar Bean Homemade Vanilla

Buffalo Football Ornaments & Tumblers    Homemade sugar cookies-take home and decorate!

Christmas Crafts, Note Cards, and Much More!

---

**Saturday December 3rd: 10 am-6 Pm**  
**Sunday December 4th: 11 am-6 Pm**

Arcade UCC, Corner of Main and Church Streets-diagonal from the A&A station.

**All Profits Benefit the Arcade Beautification Committee and Pioneer Area Food Pantries**

## BREAKFAST WITH SANTA




**SATURDAY,  
DECEMBER 10th  
9am—11:30am  
At Epiphany UCC  
9365 Clarence Center Rd  
Clarence Center, NY, 14032**



Cost: \$10.00 Adults  
\$8.00 Children 2-10  
(Under 2— Free)

\*\*\*\*\*



A Gospel  
Christmas Celebration  
for SATB Choirs

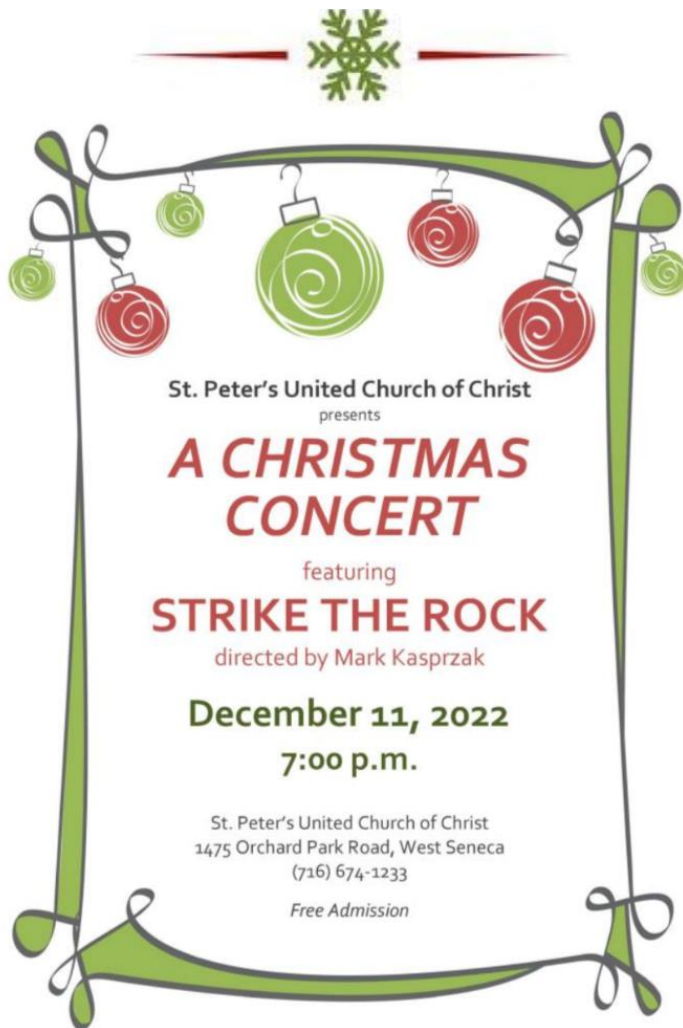
Composed & Arranged by  
**Joel Raney**

**2022 Community Christmas Cantata Concert! Mark your calendar: December 18th at 3 p.m. at the Arcade United Church of Christ, 297 Main St., Arcade, 14009. All are welcome!**

## Christmas Services at Angola UCC

**Angola UCC, 132 N. Main St., Angola, 14006, will be holding two Christmas Eve services this year at 6:30 pm and 11 pm.**

**Their Christmas Day Service will be at 10 am and will be available online as well. All are welcome!**



### **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 are notified directly of any changes.

\*\*\*\*\*

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

### **Editorial Board**

**Rev. Hope Harle-Mould, Ginger Comstock**  
**Editorial Assistant - Lois Vidaver, Editor - Shannon King**

### **Distribution – Michelle Kemp**

5289 McKinley Parkway, Hamburg 14075  
716-649-1532, e-mail: [wny.area@gmail.com](mailto:wny.area@gmail.com)

**Visit the WNYACIC website:**

<https://wnyuccdoc.wixsite.com/wnyacic>

**Send newsletter items to:**

[inthevineyardeditor@gmail.com](mailto: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, 2023.**

**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](mailto:inthevineyardeditor@gmail.com)

**Thank you in advance!**