

The St. James Connector

DECEMBER, 2009

St. James United Church of Christ
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Edited by Charlotte Cialone

A Message from Bob

Advent was set aside as a season of anticipation and preparation.

The first Sunday in Advent is the fourth Sunday before December 25th. This year Advent begins on November 29th. The focus of the season includes preparation for the celebration of this anniversary of Christ's birth, and also the anticipation of Christ's return at the close of history. The liturgical color for Advent is purple, reminding us of Christ's royalty. In some traditions blue is used, jointly symbolizing royalty and hope.

In our society we do a lot of things to prepare for Christmas, but most people find it very difficult to spend time in reflection and preparing themselves spiritually to celebrate the wonder of Christ's birth, and to anticipate Christ's return. It's easier when we can feel like we're doing something, particularly in a season where we feel like there is so much to be done!

Yet Advent isn't so much about doing, as about our state of being. It's a time to really prepare ourselves inside, a time when we need to stop and reflect, to pray and to ask God to really prepare us for the wonder of Christ's birth.

In this season of economic hardship in our nation, observing the original intention of Advent doesn't cost any money - only some time, some effort, some openness to God and Gods plans for our lives.

This year let's try to really observe Advent. Let's spend some time waiting and preparing, time that really focuses on our spiritual lives and seeks to get us ready to celebrate Christ's birth in the most meaningful of all ways. This year, may Advent be a time of really preparing for the wonder of Christmas!

Bob

Christmas Eve

7:30 p.m. Family Candlelight Service There is something for everyone in this celebration. It includes many favorite carols, a Christmas Story, and of course, communion.

11:00 p.m. We will welcome Christmas Day with our traditional Candlelight Communion Service. This is a very quiet, reflective service as we await the coming of Christmas Day.

One of the special ways that we observe Advent is with the lighting of candles on our Advent wreath. These candles remind us of some of the many gifts God offers to us. Any individuals or families who would like to help by lighting the Advent Candles on a particular Sunday - or to help light the aisle candles on Christmas Eve, please contact Pastor Alva Looze..

Christian Ed Advent Items

On November 29th, the first Sunday in Advent, during the children's sermon, the children will receive a special advent gift. They will also hear about the special "No TAG Left Behind" policy for this year's Angel/Mitten.

There is a basket of advent items on display located near the bulletin board. Please help yourself to any items you might

like during the advent season, complements of the Christian Education Department.

ADVENT WORKSHOP

December 6th, after church, there will be projects for everyone: card making, adult crafts, decorating cookies, making gifts for our shut ins and more.

Enjoy helping your child with a craft and taking time for lunch provided by the youth in honor of Pearl Harbor Day.

FAMILY NIGHT

On Wednesday, December 2nd from 6:30pm - 8:30 pm we will have our Christmas Family Night so please plan to bring a holiday treat as we celebrate. Please remember to sign-up if you are planning on attending and indicate whether you are willing to stay and help clean up following the event. Also indicate if you are willing to bring a dessert. If you have a special activity you would like to lead to entertain the children, be sure to let Karen know. Karen is always looking for suggestions and help.

Remember sign-up, help if you can, and please remember to attend. This night is for you and you can make it what you want! Talk to Karen if you have questions or ideas.

POINSETTIA SUNDAY

Our Poinsettia Sunday is December 13th. You may pick up your plant following our Saturday Evening or Sunday worship service.

The deadline to return orders and/or dedications will be on December 6th. Bea Young will be in the church office on November 29th and December 6th following the service to take

orders.

SERVER'S

The Server's Christmas Party is Thursday, December 10th at 1 p.m. at the West End. Our next meeting will be held in the Horton Lounge on Tuesday, January 26th at 1 p.m.

SEWING MISSION

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 8th at 9:30 a.m. in the Assembly Hall. Our annual Christmas luncheon will follow our work session and will be at Heidi's Hideaway.

Reservations must be in by December 1st. All are welcome. For more information, contact Jennie Altes or Karen Sutton.

Church School News

The Board of Christian Ed will hold it's annual Christmas Party and meeting on Tuesday, December 1st in the Horton Lounge at 7 p.m. Please bring an appetizer or a dessert to share.

GIFT DINNER

The GIFT Thanksgiving dinner was attended by over 130 guests. Again, volunteers led by Joanne Roberts prepared a wonderful turkey dinner with trimmings. Attending churches provided delicious desserts.

GIFT celebrated fifteen years together and the Rev. Jim Fishbaugh, who originated the GIFT churches, shared his thoughts.

Volunteering brings people closer together to share laughter, work and fellowship.

Everyone went home full, tired and content.

Thanks to all who attended, helped, baked and enjoyed. And a special thanks to Joanne Roberts for saving Karen Reinagel some of the gluten free cookies!

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Our Christmas Pageant will be held on Sunday, December 20. It is always a special morning and service when the children of our congregation tell the story of the birth of the Christ Child. The service begins at 10 a.m. when the pageant will be presented in place of the children's sermon.

Fittings for costumes will take place in November, and finish on December 6th. Please be sure to fill out a pageant permission form and return it to the box at the CE. Bulletin Board or the CE Office. We mail permission forms if you call and request one.

The dress rehearsal is on Saturday, December 19th at 10 a.m. and will be followed by a holiday pizza party. We plan to finish around noon. If you would like to help with the pageant, rehearsal or party, we would love to have you. Please speak to Karen. Permission slips are available on the table by the CE bulletin board display. We always have room for all children who would like to be included. Participation in the pageant is usually for four years old and up. If a parent feels that their three-year old is ready to be in the pageant, please speak to Karen to make arrangements. The youngest children are usually the stars. If you have any questions please feel free to call the Christian Education

Office and speak to Karen

FROM BARB REUTER

Please pick up your statement in early January, 2010.

A money order was put in the collection plate on October 17th/18th. If it is yours, please contact me at 649-0230.

Thank you.

MUSIC MINISTRY

December is a time for joyful singing as you sing and share music of the season from all parts of the world. Carols and folk songs from other lands will tell the Christmas story. During worship, and in other added programs, you will hear many familiar tunes. You are always welcome to join the choir in singing during this Christmas season.

On December 23rd, the Chancel Choir will perform an Advent Choral Concert. Please plan to attend church a little earlier and enjoy this unusual treat.

With Blessings, Christina

December Rehearsals:
Wednesday, Cherub and Youth Rehearsals 7 and 7:30 on December 2, 7, 16

Sunday, Chancel Choir
Warmup 9:15 on December 6, 13, 20
Rehearsals 11 a.m. on December 6, 13, 20

Sunday, December 27
Special Music Sunday
9:30 warm up for participants

CHARACTER COUNCIL OF HAMBURG, INC.

Self-Control v. Self Indulgence

Self Control is rejecting wrong desires and doing what is right.

SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN

If you have a loved one in the armed service, please give the office a picture and address, or update the present one, so they can be put on our Service Board.

ANGEL/MITTEN TREE

The Board of Christian Education is once again centering this Advent Season around the theme "Giving" and with that in mind the Board is pledging to make sure every tag on the Angel Tree has a gift to be sent back to the Salvation Army. The "No Tag Left Behind" policy. The money donated in the children's offering envelopes will help to defray the cost of purchasing the gifts we need in order to fulfill the goal of "No Tag Left Behind". You are also invited to make monetary donations to help defray the cost of purchasing gifts to fill the tag requests during the advent season, just place them in an envelope, label the envelope "No Tag Left Behind" and place it in the offering plate or leave it in Karen Reinagel's mailbox in the church office. Please help make this Christmas special for someone in need.

The Angel/Mitten Tree has been a tradition at St. James for as long as I can remember. It is used to place warm hats, mittens, gloves, and scarves on the branches which are then given to needy children. The tags on the tree are to be taken so you can purchase a gift for the child whose name appears on the tag you've chosen. You can either purchase the suggested items or choose one that you would like to give. If you keep your receipt it can be attached to the top part of

the tag for tax purposes.

The gift tags have arrived so let the giving begin. **Remember do not gift wrap your gift!!!!** Please just return it and place it under the tree in the sanctuary or the lounge with the original tag attached to the item/s. The Salvation Army needs to be able to see all the gifts, if you wrap them they have to unwrap them to check each gift. The deadline to bring in gifts, hats, mittens, etc. is Sunday December 13th. If you have any questions please speak to Karen.

Calling All Youth - Snow Angels Needed

Forecast - snow, snow, snow, and more snow! Sound familiar? Winter is just around the corner and the village gets more than its share of snow. As winter arrives, the inevitable comes: the chore of keeping sidewalks and driveways clear of snow and ice.

Last year more than 30 youth in the village signed up to be "Snow Angels" and volunteered to provide assistance to village residents who are in need of assistance during the winter months. Our Snow Angel Program was recognized by the National League of Cities as one of the most successful and creative programs from cities and towns across the country.

We want to continue the Snow Angel Program again this year and are looking for volunteers to sign up. The village tries to match up youth in the same area of the village where the residents have a need. All arraignments will be made between the youth and the resident.

If you are a youth that would like to participate, please contact: Lynn Detzel, 649-6170

(ldetzel@villagehamburg.com)
or (bnye@villagehamburg.com)

Recreation Supervisor Bill Nye

It is this service spirit that enables the village to work toward its vision of being the most desirable community in Western New York where quality of life, affordability and innovation are the norm.

Thank you!

FOOD PANTRY

Dec. 6 canned & dry soups

Dec 13 peanut butter & milk products

Dec 20 canned juice, juice mix

Dec 27 dry milk

Youth News

Don't forget our ongoing fund-raising projects: Abitibi Paper Recycling - Can & Bottle Drive - St.Pauly's Textile Drive, and our Candy Bar Sale

We will also be selling **"Enjoy The City Coupon Books"** during November and early December. Books are \$20.00 each. Please speak to a youth or Karen or Donna if you are interested in purchasing a book.

Youth Calendar of Events 2009 - 2010

If you are a member of our Youth program you should have received a mailing of our yearly events calendar list for 2009 - 2010. If you did not receive one please let Karen know and she will have one sent to you or you can pick up a copy in the bin outside the CE Office or in the bin on the Youth Bulletin Board.

Youth Board

Our next meeting will be held January 26th at 6:15 p.m. in Resource Room

PRAYERS FOR THOSE WHO WERE LOST AT FORT HOOD

Staff Sergeant Amy Krueger died on November 5th at Fort Hood, Texas, at the age of 29 doing what she loved, proudly serving her country. She was a member of St. Peters UCC in Indiana. Our prayers go out to her family.

St. James Permanent Youth Permission Form

We are trying something new this year! Each Middle and Senior High Youth are being asked to have a filled out and signed permanent permission form on file with the CE Department in order to attend events. This will save parents the chore of signing countless permission forms and to save the Christian Ed Department from the countless forms that are handed out and then collected. The forms can be obtained from the Christian Ed office or the Youth Bulletin Board. Both sides of the form need to be filled out, signed by the parent/s or guardian and returned to the Christian Ed Office. The form is for local activities the youth attend, there will still be additional forms when we attend something like the New York State Youth Event, Regional or National events.

If you have any questions please feel free to speak to Karen or Donna. The form is also required to be filled out by friends that attend activities with our youth group so be sure to remind your youth to

have their friends fill one out if they plan on attending events with us. The forms are good for one year and then they will be reviewed to see how this is working out and if it works well we will just update them for any new information each year. It is also better for the environment since we will be using less paper.

Youth Thank You's

Thank you to everyone who continues to support our Youth fund-raisers.

Thank you to the Sr. High Class for bagging the Harvest Home Collection on Sunday, November 22nd.

Thank you to CE Staff who helped to run this year's Halloween Party. I received many positive comments on what a great job you did and the kids told me they had a lot of fun.

Thank you to all the youth who helped at the Western Association dinner held at St. James on November 1st. They did a wonderful job.

Karen Reinagel

Paula Pfister Pie Auction

Thank you to everyone who donated something for the auction and thank you for everyone who attended and bid on the goodies. The proceeds of the auction go to the Paula Pfister Scholarship Fund. Paula was a wonderful person who served as our CE Director and she worked hard for our children and congregation.

Operation Christmas Child

Thank you to everyone who participated in this event. ***The Power of a Simple Gift*** - Operation Christmas Child bring joys and hope to children who are in desperate situations worldwide through gift-filled shoe boxes and the Good News of God's love.

Upcoming Youth Events

"12 Hours of Christmas"
Calling all Middle & Sr. High Youth!

Tuesday, December 29th we will be leaving church at 9 a.m., heading to the Newcomb Farm, 10659 W. Perrysburg Road in Perrysburg, New York. We will be returning to St. James at 9 p.m. Information and sign-up sheets will be on the Youth Bulletin Board. Bring a \$5.00 gift to exchange if you care to participate in the optional gift exchange. If you have questions, talk to Donna. Please bring warm clothing for outdoor activities. If anyone is interested in chaperoning or driving, talk to Donna or Karen.

WAY Retreat for Sr. High Youth Grades 9th -12th

Our Way Retreat will be held on Jan. 16th thru 18th at Faith UCC, Boston..

. You may check the Youth Bulletin Board for more details and forms or talk to Karen or Donna.

Sledding at Chestnut Ridge

Everyone is invited, weather

permitting, Saturday, January 23rd, so mark your calendar the youth are inviting everyone to go sledding at Chestnut Ridge. Watch the bulletin for more information and don't forget to be on the look out for a sign-up sheet after the 1st of the year. FYI....I read in The Sun that the toboggan run is supposed to be open this season

THINK SNOW!

THANK YOU

A special thank you to the talented folks who crocheted the BEAUTIFUL lap throws. They will be donated to area nursing homes and will be a special surprise for recipients! Thank you.

St. James Sewing Mission

The Upcoming Mid-Atlantic Regional Youth Event

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Youth Event (MARYE) is set for July 21-25, 2010 at Lebanon Valley College, in Annville, Pa. "Take the Journey...Follow the Holy Brick Road" - One of the best youth events you have EVER attended is coming your way!

Our journeys of life can take us all over the map, but there is one very EXCELLENT way to follow - the way of the Holy Brick Road! This youth event will take you on a journey of faith and celebration, and by the strength of the Holy Spirit, you'll be able to follow the Holy Brick Road and discover a whole lot about God, yourself, our world, and much more!

There will be great youth-led worship, great music, great speakers, great workshops (Moments of the Road), great friendships, and oh, so much more.

Registration information can be found on the Youth Bulletin Board or by talking to Donna or

Karen. You can also check on line at the RYE website www.marye-ucc.org.

Come with us! Take the journey...Follow the Holy Brick Road! The deadline to hand in completed registration forms to CE Department is Wednesday, February 17, 2010 - all forms will be processed and mailed through St. James and need to be turned in on time so Karen can get them to MARYE by their February 28th deadline. The cost to attend this event is still being determined but we estimate a cost of \$150.00 per youth plus additional spending money they bring. Registration is open until July 1st but after February 28th it will be more expensive.

REPORT FOR WESTERN ASSOCIATION

On Sunday, November 1st St. James hosted the WNYCC Area Business Meeting. We welcomed Rev. Dr. Glenda Prims, our Interim Western Region Conference Minister and Rev. Dr. Rita Root, our interim Conference Minister.

The area business meeting was held and after the meeting, volunteers made and served a delicious Italian dinner. It was so nice to see so many volunteers, youth and adult, serving and cleaning up.

We had many comments that our youth were both friendly and polite.

We need to recognize and say a special thank you to everyone who worked on Nov. 1st. What a great group of workers. Thank you to our youth, Hayley and Madison Loretto, Emily and Sara Jensen, Matthew Touris, Jason Stuhr and Erica Jackson as well as our adults, Joanne Roberts, Gladys Hornberger,

Margaret Stuhr, Karen Touris, Nancy and David Banks, Don Pfister, Horst Kristen, Roger Jackson, and Philip and Jenny Reinagel for helping usher, work in the kitchen, setting up and cleaning up.

Congratulations on doing a great job!

DEATHS

Charles F. Buchanan

Born: February 28, 1926

Died: November 2, 2009

Service: November 5, 2009