

# The St. James Connector

## JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2009

St. James United Church of Christ  
76 Main Street, Hamburg, NY 14075  
716-649-6171

Robert Matlack, Pastor  
Music

Alva Looze, Associate Pastor

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### CONFIRMATION:

Our 2009 Confirmation Class will begin with a meeting for all confirmands, mentors and parents of confirmands on Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, immediately following our worship service.

Once again, each confirmand will have a mentor who will meet with their confirmand on a weekly basis to talk about issues of faith. Ninth graders and other interested students should contact either Pastor Looze or Rev. Matlack to let them know that they would like to be part of this year's class.

### ASH WEDNESDAY

Easter is April 12<sup>th</sup> this year, which means that Lent begins February 25<sup>th</sup>. We will mark that day with our traditional Ash Wednesday observance. Our worship will be at 7:30 and a potluck supper will precede it at 6:30 p.m. Please plan to attend!

### WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome our newest members, Joyce Walker, Veronica Pigeon, Leslie and David Staffone.

### ANNUAL MEETING

#### Come One - Come All!!!

The Annual Meeting of our Congregation will be held on Sunday, February 8<sup>th</sup> following worship. Please join us and be a part of this important gathering! We anticipate that the Annual Reports will be ready the Sunday before the meeting to be picked up by members of the congregation.

### WESTERN AREA YOUTH (WAY) WINTER RETREAT

This year's retreat will be held here at St. James on January 16 - 18, 2009. The cost for Youth is \$20.00 and Advisors \$10.00 and must be postmarked by January 2<sup>nd</sup>. A \$5.00 late fee will be assessed after January 2<sup>nd</sup>. There will be no reservations at the door!

**START:** Registration 6 p.m. Friday, January 16<sup>th</sup>

**FINISH:** Pick up is 11:15 a.m.

Sunday January 18<sup>th</sup> after church

**BRING:** Sleeping bag, pillow, conservative sleep wear, towel, washcloth, soap, toothpaste, etc. good clothes for church.

**FORMS:** All registration and Covenant Forms must be completed (continued in next column)

**ADVISORS:** Medical portion completed by everyone

**CHECKS:** Can be made out to Western Area Youth.

An entertaining and exciting program is planned for you! We will begin the evening with registration and then to the HSBC Arena to see the Buffalo Bandits Lacrosse Team play the Rochester Knighthawks at 7:30. We will leave the church at 6:30 so please be prompt for the registration time.

Saturday we will have Denise Philips Beehag, Director of Refugee & Employment Service from the International Institute of Buffalo speak on how the agency helps refugees establish new lives in America. We will lend our energies in the afternoon in Buffalo to help furnish and arrange apartments for the refugees.

Saturday evening will bring us back for a talent show which you may be a part of in groups or individually. Later we will have short stories and prepare skits for a wider audience.

There will also be free time to visit and our traditional evening worship services each night.

Please join us for this exciting weekend here at St. James. We look forward to seeing you.

## **PROGRESSIVE DINNER**

**January 24, 2009**

As was mentioned in the November newsletter, we have scheduled a Progressive Dinner Sunday, January 24<sup>th</sup>. Those of you who attended last year will remember that it was great fun and provided a good opportunity to get to know each other. For those who would like to join us, we'll meet at the church for appetizers and get our salad and dinner assignments. At 5:45 we'll move in groups of 6 - 10 to homes for our salad course. At 7:00 we'll move in different groups of 6 - 10 for our dinner course. At 8:30 we'll reconvene at the church for dessert. All food will be purchased ahead of time and distributed to those homes close to the church who are willing to host. If you live too far away to host a meal, you'll be asked to bring an appetizer or dessert. Someone will be asked to host the appetizer and the dessert courses (setting up the table, preparing beverages, etc.) The cost of the meal is reasonable.

## **ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Please join us in the Lounge at 9:00 a.m. Sunday mornings to discuss God's word and how it applies to living a faithful life. Come whenever you're able. No need to be a Bible scholar - just have a desire to know God more deeply.  
Heidi & Mark Walling, Facilitators

## **CONTRIBUTOR'S STATEMENTS**

Please pick up your contributor's statements near the beginning of January. Thank you

Your envelopes can be picked up at the back of the church. If you need envelopes, please call Barbara Reuter at 649-0230

## **SERVERS**

We will be meeting on January 27<sup>th</sup> in the Horton Lounge at 1:00 p.m.

Our meeting on February 24<sup>th</sup> is yet to be decided. Watch your Sunday bulletins after the January meeting for details.

## **SEWING MISSION**

Our next meeting will be held Tuesday, January 13, 2009. Our February meeting will be held Tuesday, February 10, 2009. We will meet in the Assembly Hall at 9:30 a.m.

Join us for a pleasant morning of charitable work and conversation. Bring your lunch but save room for a delicious dessert served by the hostess of the month.

All are welcome and sewing skills are not needed.

## **CYN FAIR**

Casting Your Nets (CYN) will be sponsoring a Committee Information Fair with a Progressive Brunch after church on January 11<sup>th</sup>.

If there is a committee you would like to join or learn about, this is a great opportunity. It is a time to browse, munch and sign up.

## **GIVE UP A MEAL DAY**

Don't forget to give up a meal on January 15<sup>th</sup>. The Katherine Mary House will be thankful for our efforts. A request has been made to the Legacy Committee for matching funds. Breakfast is \$5.00, Lunch is \$7.50 and Dinner is \$10.00. Please bring your money on the January 18<sup>th</sup> where there will be folks ready to collect from you outside the Lounge.

## **DE-GREENING & CHILI LUNCHEON**

January 4<sup>th</sup> we will be taking down the greens and the Youth will be providing a Chili Luncheon. Come, help, and enjoy a bowl of chili.

## **UPCOMING FAMILY NIGHTS**

Wednesdays, January 7, 2009 from 6:30 to 8:30 and February 4, 2009 from 6:30 to 8:30. Please remember to check the bulletin board for a sign-up sheet and other information.

## **ADVENT WORKSHOP**

The Cabinet would like to thank all those who helped in the Advent Workshop. The "subs" were great!

It was good to see youth helping in the kitchen, Cabinet and young parents working together providing crafts and the biggest hit as always was Bill Shadle's work project. Close seconds were the scratch offs, bath salts, hot chocolate mix, bags and cards.

As always, we are looking for ideas for next year. It was suggested to have an adult project.

## **WESTERN ASSOCIATION** **February 28, 2009**

The meeting will be held at Ebenezer Church with sessions on:

1. Quicken & tracking church finances;
2. Membership edge;
3. Computer ethics;
4. Fundamentals of web design;
5. My facebook; and
6. Creating an on line community.

This is a great opportunity to learn, not only for delegates but anyone interested. If you would like to attend, please notify the church office.

## **BLANKET SUNDAY**

Our yearly Blanket Sunday will be held on Valentine's Day. February 14<sup>th</sup> seemed like a fitting day to help the poor. Watch for posters and a special presentation.

## **ASH WEDNESDAY AND SOUTHTOWNS LENTEN SERVICES**

Ash Wednesday is February 25<sup>th</sup>. Traditionally we gather for a potluck and Ash Wednesday service here at St. James. Then we gather each Wednesday thereafter for potluck and services with our sisters and brothers from the Southtowns Cluster Churches. Tentatively, the schedule for this Lenten Season is:

2/25 St. James, Hamburg

3/4 St. John's, Eden

3/11 Faith, Boston

3/25 First Congregational, Angola

4/1 Trinity, Gowanda

The schedule is the same each week with dinner at 6:30 p.m. (bring a dish to share and your place settings) with worship to follow at 7:30 p.m.

## **CHARACTER COUNCIL OF HAMBURG, INC.**

### **January - Orderliness**

Orderliness is arranging myself and my surroundings to achieve greater efficiency.

### **February - Forgiveness**

Forgiveness is clearing the record of those who have wronged me and not hold a grudge.

## **REGISTRY**

### **DEATH:**

Gordon J. Arbuckle

Born: August 29, 1927

Died: December 9, 2008

Service: December 12, 2008

## **LOVING CHILDCARE!**

As you know, one of the missions of TLC is to provide affordable child care to families in the community and to keep our tuition costs down.

We have decided to try an ongoing fundraising idea. TOPS gift cards will be sold to the public for face value, and then TOPS will give TLC a small discount on the amount sold. They may be used for gas or groceries and there will be a choice of several denominations. They are ideal for gifts and for personal use. The cards will be available to purchase after Sunday service in the church office from Heidi Mueller or Charlotte Lujan in January.

Please consider purchasing these cards. Best Wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Patty Connors, Director

## **CIA**

Thank you to all who participated by singing and/or baking cookies. We were able to share cookies, carols and fellowship at 11 local group homes. This is two more houses than last year. What a great turnout!! There were 170 carolers of all ages. For many, this event has become tradition and the residents also look forward to the evening. Leftover cookies were sent to Pastor John's street ministry in Buffalo.

Thanks, Sue Rich

## **MYSTERY YOUTH GROUP MEETING AND EVENT**

An event will be held February 8, 2009. Check the bulletin board and church bulletins for more details.

Don't forget we have snugly animals in the rear of the sanctuary for children to hold and love during the church services. There are also activity bags to use. Please remember to return them to the baskets following worship.

## **MANY VOICES - ONE SPIRIT**

Celebrating Cultural Diversity Through Music will be presented by the Hamburg Presbyterian Church on January 17-18, 2009. Everyone is invited. The program will be lead by Dr. Melva Costen, internationally known composer, arranger, author and speaker. She will offer two workshops, one on Saturday at 9:30 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. with a refreshment break at 10:30 a.m. and Sunday at 3:00 p.m. where a massed choir from Buffalo and local area churches lead by Dr. Costen as choir director, accompanied by Joanne Hollenbeck. To continue the evening everyone is welcome to attend a potluck dinner and encouraged to bring a favorite cultural dish to pass. There is no charge for the weekend. Reservations can be made by calling Hamburg Pres at 649-1970. If there is no answer, please leave a message.

## **A REMINDER FROM SERVERS**

There is a plastic water jug on display every Sunday for spare change. Everything you put into that jug goes to charity. Please remember to stop by and add to our collection.

## **HELLO FROM TENDER**

## **STUFFED ANIMALS DURING OUR SERVICES**

## **FROM THE MUSIC MINISTRY**

A warm thank you to all the choirs and everyone at St. James that made our Advent Christmas Services so meaningful with their music.

As we enter the winter months our Schedule is as follows:

Chancel Choir

1/4 warmup 9:15

1/18 warmup 9:15

2/1 warmup 9:15

2/8 warmup 9:15

2/15 Chancel Choir warmup 9:15

Special Music Sundays will be January 25<sup>th</sup> and February 22<sup>nd</sup>

Rehearsals for Chancel Choir are at 11 a.m. January 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. Please join us any time if you would like to sing during Lent.

Cherub/Youth Choir will have meet Wednesday January 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. There are no Wednesday Rehearsals during February.

### FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

If you are moving or going away for the winter, please let the church office know your current address. The post office charges a fee for returned mail. Please let us know when you are leaving and returning so you don't miss any news.

### VALENTINE'S GET TOGETHER

Please join us for a get together on Saturday evening following our service on February 14<sup>th</sup> for music, fellowship and dancing. Desserts and refreshments will be served. Look for more information.

Patty Jensen

### COLDEN TUBING COMPANY

January 25<sup>th</sup> the Middle and Senior High Youth Groups will be traveling to Colden to go tubing. We will leave St. James at 2 p.m. and return at 7 p.m. The price is \$20 per person and includes tubing, pizza and wings. Please sign up on the youth bulletin board if you would like to join us.

### FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT

**January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at 7 p.m.**

Plan to start out the New Year right and attend a Family Movie Night in the Horton Lounge. We will be viewing "Kit Kittredge - An American Girl Movie". This is a great family movie that deals with a young girl becoming a reporter during the depression era. We will have popcorn and watch the movie on our 42" TV in the lounge. It will be better than going to the theater since it will be FREE! Sign up on the bulletin board. If you have questions, please speak with Karen Reinagel.

### THANKS FOR LIGHTING THE STAR

Thank you Christian Gillman Reinagel for ringing the bell for Hamburg Holiday's Star Lighting on December 5<sup>th</sup>. Christian and his dad Phil joined Gay Lynn Nelson to ring the bell as the star on the water tower was lit for the holiday season. Nice job, Christian!

### LENTEN HANDOUTS

Handouts will be available during the Lenten Season. They can be found in a basket near the Bulletin Board. Please help yourself to one or more of the items for you and your loved ones to use to guide you through the Lenten Season.

### FOOD PANTRY

1/4 Spaghetti sauce, canned

stew, ravioli  
1/11 Pancake mixes, oatmeal  
1/18 Pasta and pasta dinner mixes  
1/25 canned, dry soups  
2/1 Peanut butter, meat products  
2/8 Canned juice, juice mixes  
2/15 Dry milk  
2/22 Cake, muffin mixes

### SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

February 1, 2009 is the day of the Super Bowl or at St. James the Souper Bowl of Caring! Help the children of the church school program as they battle hunger with thousands of others. Every dollar you drop into a soup pot will help people in need feel the power of God's Love. This program began 18 years ago when a group of inspired young people decided to do something to help fight hunger. They created the SOUPER BOWL DAY OF CARING. Since going nationwide in 1993 more than \$25 million has been raised for people in need.

On Sunday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, our church school classes will decorate soup kettles and walk through the building following worship looking for donations. Please don't forget to stop at the bulletin board to vote for the charity you would like to donate to this year. Please speak to Karen Reinagel if you have any questions.

**CHILDREN AND YOUTH  
OFFERING ENVELOPES**

Rev. Matlack will once again share a special children's sermon on the importance of church offerings sometime during the month of January. He will have boxes of offering envelopes available for the children if they would like to take one home. In addition, boxes of children's and your offering envelopes will be on the tables at the rear of the sanctuary. Having your child put an offering in an envelope each Sunday is a wonderful way to involve them in the weekly ritual of making an offering. All money placed in the envelopes goes toward our church school program.

**NEW YORK STATE  
YOUTH EVENT**

This year the Youth Event will be held on March 6th-8th at Watson Homestead in Painted Post, New York. The Theme will be God's Rhythms. The cost for the weekend is \$135 per person. Those eligible for the weekend are High School Youth grades 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> of the New York State Conference. The deadline for registration is February 16<sup>th</sup>. If you would like more information please speak with Karen Reinagel or Donna Schumacher.

**YOUTH BOARD  
MEETINGS**

Tuesday, January 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:15 p.m.  
in the Resource Room  
Tuesday February 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:15 p.m.  
in the Resource Room

**THANK YOU**

A special thank you for everyone that helped to pull this year's Christmas Pageant together. It was a large undertaking and many people contribute to putting the finished project together. When people tell me how wonderful the pageant was I often wonder if they realize how many volunteers help get it ready. All of the following people helped by doing multiple jobs such as fitting costumes, helping with dress rehearsal and the party, helping on the day of the pageant, video taping, putting costumes away, putting tables and risers up and down, moving the altar, and moving it back again. I hope I didn't leave anyone out. If I did please let me know so I can personally thank you, Robin Lindstrom, Gay Nelson, Margaret Stuhr, Elizabeth Srutowski, Patty Jensen, Peter and Jennifer Reinagel, Nick Reinagel, Philip and Jenny Reinagel, Jen and David Mumm, Kim Waryk, Dawn Berlin, Cher Hall, Karen Gerwitz, Laurie Karn, Bob Matlack, Christina Shrewsbury, Beth Scheffler, Karen Touris.

Karen Reinagel

**DUNKIRK CAMPING**

The season has begun. Super early bird deadline is March 15<sup>th</sup>, but in order to meet that deadline St. James will need the money by March 8<sup>th</sup>. Keep on the lookout for the display on the CE bulletin board as well as outside the CE office for the forms to sign up. The Senior High Camp is June 29<sup>th</sup> - July 4<sup>th</sup> and the Theme is "Breakthrough". Those attending must be entering graded 10, 11 and 12 in the Fall and graduating Seniors. The cost is \$285 per person by April 15<sup>th</sup>. Other camps are to be announced at a later time.

The Lenten Meditative Walk will be available during the Lenten Season. Please be sure to take the time, beginning the first week of Lent, to visit the walk which can be found throughout the church building. This is the seventh year it has been available and I hope people find it inspiring and though provoking. There will be a list of stops on the walk at the rear entrance of the building. If you have any questions, please speak to Karen Reinagel.

**ANGEL/MITTEN TREE**

I am pleased to report that we did indeed complete our goal of "No Tag Left Behind!"

We had 19 remaining tags. I felt like a Christmas Agent had blessed my office. What a wonderful feeling to know that each child received a gift this past holiday season. Great Job!

**THANK YOU!!!**

Special thanks to Horst Kirsten and Don Pfister for painting the church office.

The Office Staff

Thank you Ruth Rathman for the beautiful tree in the sanctuary. Ruth has been providing the tree for the last twenty-five years in memory of her husband "Buddy".

Thank you to the Newcomb family for providing us with greens each year to decorate the outside of the church.

**CHRISTMAS PAGEANT**

**LENTEN MEDITATIVE  
WALK**

**YOUTH FUND RAISING**

### Youth Can and Bottle Drive

Please feel free to leave your cans and bottles in the bins on the front porch of the Youth House. If you need help, please ask a youth.

### Youth Candy Sale

The youth are selling candy bars for \$1.00 each. They are located in the church office, or ask a youth. They would be happy to sell you one or more.

### Paper Recycling Program

The youth are continuing their paper recycling drive and the paper retriever bin is at the rear of the church parking lot. Please support their efforts and bring your paper recycling to drop off in the bin. It helps us raise money for the youth program. Remember NO PLASTICS IN THE BIN. THIS MEANS NO PLASTIC BAGS ALSO!

### St. Paulys Clothing Drive

We encourage you to bring your unwanted clothing to our clothing shed at the rear of the Youth House. It helps if the clothing is put in a plastic bag. This is a great fund raiser for our youth program and we appreciate your help. Thank you to Harold Cobb from the Youth for your tremendous help by stopping each day to check the St. Pauly's Shed for clothing donations. We appreciate your time, effort and dedication to helping our Youth program.

*In this season and every season,  
O God, help us to sing your  
steadfast love forever. Amen*

### From the Christian Ed

#### Director:

Each year I hear stories from people who have taken a tag from the Angel/Mitten Tree and share their experiences with me. This year Cher Hall shared her story and I would like to share it with you. She found a tag for a 12 year old boy who wanted a guitar. Cher thought how great it would be to give the gift of music so she and her son Sean decided to share the expense. On Cyber Monday she got a great deal. Then her sons Sean and Tim decided to make a CD of music for the boy to play along as he learned. Tim decided to donate old music books. The guitar needed a case. The music store owner gave them a deal and charged \$5 for the case. Now the gift was complete. Cher said she wished she could see the boy's face on Christmas morning. When I looked at the gifts under the tree it warmed my heart to think of all the gifts you took the time and energy to provide for someone in need. Thank you for participating in this great tradition at St. James. HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Karen Reinagel

### PLEDGE ARREARS

If your pledge is behind for the year 2008, please make up the difference as soon as possible.

### AUTOMATE YOUR

### GIVING

Some of you may have forgotten, new members may not know. St. James offers all pledging and regular givers the opportunity to have contributions deducted directly from your bank account. This works just like arrangements you may have for insurance bills or other monthly payments.

Just get a form from the church office and fill it out to sign up. You also need to fill out a new form any time you change the amount you are having deducted. Nothing can be deducted from your bank account without your authorization. If you increase your giving you also have the option to keep your automated deduction the same and write a check for the total increase.

Dave Reichard

### THANKS

St. James members and all persons who use our building would like to express their sincere thank you to Clyde Collins for his never-ending energy clearing our sidewalks when the snow comes. You are very appreciated.

### PRAYER OF THE MONTH

Merciful God, we have sinned in what we have thought and said, in the wrong we have done and in the good we have not done. We have sinned in ignorance: we have sinned in weakness: we have sinned through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry. We repent and turn to you. Forgive us, for our Savior Christ's sake, and renew our lives to the glory of your name.

Amen

## CASTING YOUR NETS

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the Casting Your Nets Worship Survey. The goal of the survey was to discover the congregation's reaction to some of the worship ideas we have tried as part of the Casting Your Nets vision of continued spiritual growth within our church.

Several of our innovations were with an eye toward welcoming visitors and making everyone feel comfortable. Including the text of the Lord's Prayer and the Doxology within the bulletin allows everyone to participate in the communal portions of our worship. Wearing name tags allows visitors and newer members to more comfortably greet their neighbors. Offering prayer slips allows us to lift up joys and concerns in prayer during worship.

The use of prayer slips was particularly well received. While the effectiveness of the name tags was less clear, several folks noted their potential if everyone would consistently wear them. To those of you who offered additional suggestions for a more inclusive service - thank you for sharing your thoughts!

Other ideas were intended to add variety to our traditional worship service. The hymn sing was very popular, with 84% finding it an effective form of worship. The skits were also rated very effective (81%). Many of you expressed appreciation for the variety of worship styles and encouraged continued innovations. For those who expressed concerns about changing our service, please know that we are sensitive to maintaining the traditions within St. James and are seeking to build upon them, not to replace them.

It is clear that St. James is open to new members and to new ideas. Let's keep them both coming!

## INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BUFFALO

Established in 1918 to support immigrants who faced exploitation in the United States, the International Institute of Buffalo is dedicated to assisting refugees and immigrants overcome language and cultural barriers so that they can become self-sufficient, productive members of our community and to promoting global education and international connections in Western New York. On an average day, they welcome more than 200 people into their building to learn English, get oriented to life in America, acquire job skills, seek refuge from domestic violence, receive interpreting and translation assistance, or learn about cultures, languages and countries around the world. Many refugees have fled war and persecution in their native countries and in many cases have spent years, even decades in refugee camps.

The institute assists refugees with immediate critical needs like food, clothing, housing and medical care, helps them overcome language and cultural barriers and provides employment training, job placement services, and school advocacy. Life is far from easy for most refugees when they first come to Buffalo. The shock from what they have fled and what their new culture requires of them can be overwhelming, even with the friendly faces and material support that the institute provides. Buffalo is an exciting global city with worldwide linkages, a major gateway to Canada, and a citizenry from over 80 different countries, contributing to our rich social, ethnic and cultural diversity".  
-Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown.

## SEE THAT NO PROPHET IS TO ARISE FROM GALILEE.

Excerpt from John 7:40-52

### **Reflection by Felix Carrion**

In Jesus' day some folks simply believed that nothing good could come from Galilee. Galilee was not Jerusalem, the political and cultural center of the Jewish story and people. For sure, if you were truly the messiah or a legitimate prophet, you could not issue forth from Galilee.

"Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee."

We often hear the question, "What would Jesus do?" But a more poignant question may be, "Where would Jesus come from if he lived today?" Would he come from a town or village or city or province or county or country that had the kind of reputation Galilee had in its day? For that matter, "What would he look like today?"

If I follow this question with an open array of profile possibilities for Jesus, well, surely this could prove really disturbing. Am I ready to abandon all my biases, to put it quite diplomatically, to encounter the Jesus of today? Surely, he would not fit the bill today as he did not in his day. To know for sure, we can "search and see" for ourselves.

**Prayer:** O God, grant that I may go beyond my "surely," to be encountered by the Jesus who comes to us today. Amen.

Felix Carrion is Director of the Stillspeaking Ministry, United Church of Christ, Cleveland, Ohio.

## SEARCH AND YOU WILL