

# The St. James Connector

**DECEMBER 2010**

St. James United Church of Christ,  
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## *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 25<sup>th</sup>.

This year Advent begins on November 28<sup>th</sup>. The focus of the season includes preparation for the celebration of the anniversary of Christ's birth, and 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. We get so busy and preoccupied with other things that have become part of the season! In many ways, 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. When you get right down to it, that's the most important way that we can observe Advent! As an added

(Cont'd)

benefit, observing the original intention of Advent doesn't cost any money – only some time, some effort, and some openness to God and God's 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. Service**

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

## **CHRISTIAN ED ADVENT ITEMS**

On the first Sunday in Advent, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 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 Tree which was mentioned in the November newsletter.

A basket of advent items is on display located near the bulletin board. Please help yourself to any items you might like during the advent season, compliments of the Board of Christian Ed.



## **ADVENT WORKSHOP**

On December 5<sup>th</sup> we will be filling our bags with projects we have made. We will be frosting cookies and enjoying subs with our families prepared by the youth.

Please plan to come and enjoy helping your children with a craft, and have lunch with a sub in honor of Pearl Harbor Day

## **SEWING MISSION**

Our next session will be Tuesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. We meet in the Assembly Hall at 9:30 a.m.

This month, following our sewing session, we will drive to Heidi's Hide-A-Way for our Christmas Luncheon. All are welcome to join us. Entree choices and payment must be made by Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup>. See Jenny Altes or Karen Sutton for details.

## **SERVER'S**

The Server's Christmas Party is Tuesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 1 p.m. at the West End. Our next meeting will be held in the Horton Lounge on Tuesday, January 25<sup>th</sup> at 1 p.m. The collecting of items for the Buffalo City Mission was a great success. Thank you for the many donations.

## **UPDATE OUR SERVICE BOARD**

If you have a loved one in the armed services, please give the office a picture and address or update the present one so that we can keep in touch with our service women and men

## **CIA CHRISTMAS CAROLING**

This event is very popular. On December 6<sup>th</sup>, we will meet at Hamburg Pres, 177 Main St. at 6:30. Groups of 8-12 people will then go out to group homes for the developmentally disabled in the community. We will carol in these homes and then share in fellowship and refreshments with the residents. All ages are welcome. Please call Susan Rich at 648-5785 if you would like to carol or make cookies.

## **Ready for Visitors**

The next few weeks are likely to bring visitors to St. James. Are you ready?

Being "ready" isn't a matter of name tags, beautiful flowers or even vibrant worship. It is a sense of heartfelt hospitality.

Hospitality, rather than being is something you achieve, is something you enter. It is an adventure that takes you where you never dreamed of going. It is someone you become. You make room for one person at a time. We grow more hospitable by welcoming one person when an opportunity is given.

from Casting Your Nets

## **SNOW ANGELS**

Don't forget youth are needed again this year to help in the community. If you can sign up, please contact Lynn Detzel at 649-6170 or email me at [ldetzel@villagehamburg.com](mailto:ldetzel@villagehamburg.com) or contact Recreation Director Bill Nye at [bnye@villagehamburg.com](mailto:bnye@villagehamburg.com).

## **PERMISSION FORMS**

If you haven't done so, please make sure you complete the Youth Permission Form so that you can attend local activities with the Senior and Middle High Youth Groups. If you have questions, contact Karen, Donna or Patty.

## **BOARD OF CHRISTIAN ED**

The Board will hold its annual Christmas Party and Meeting on Tuesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> in the Horton Lounge at 7 p.m. Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share.

## **Angel/Mitten Tree**

Each year during the Advent season the Board of Christian Education sponsors the theme of "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 with 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 our goal. 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. 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. The warm hats, mittens, gloves, and scarves are placed on the branches of the tree and given to those in need. 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 may either purchase the suggested items or choose one that you like. The gift tags will be in the Lounge once they arrive so be on the lookout for them and 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 items. The Salvation Army needs to be able to see all the gifts. The deadline to bring in gifts is Sunday December 12th. If you have any questions please speak to Karen Reinagel.

## CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Our Christmas Pageant is Sunday, December 19<sup>th</sup> this year, so circle the date on your calendar. 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 10:00 a.m. and the pageant will be presented in place of the children's sermon. Fittings for costumes will be taking place November 14<sup>th</sup> and finishing on December 5<sup>th</sup>. Please be sure to fill out a pageant permission form and return it. Permission slips may be picked up from your child's church school teacher, the church office or on the table by the CE bulletin board display. You may return the completed forms to any of the locations mentioned.

The dress rehearsal for the pageant is scheduled for Saturday, December 18<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to Noon and will be followed by a holiday pizza party. If you would like to help with the pageant, rehearsal or party, please speak to Karen Reinagel. We always have room for all the children that would like to be included in the cast. Participation in the pageant is usually for children 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.

## REGISTRY

### Baptism:

Riley Alexander Hojsan-  
Casselberry  
Born: July 9, 2010  
Baptized: Nov. 7, 2010  
Parents: Brian and Kristen  
Casselberry

## LITTLE DRESSES FOR AFRICA

Make a little dress that will be a prize possession for a little girl in Africa. For sewers it is a simple pattern to use your left over cottons. If you like to sew this is a snap. There are examples in various sizes in the lounge, Alva has the pattern and shipping instructions.

## DUNKIRK CONFERENCE CENTER

A message from Larry Cornwall to anyone interested in helping with a fundraiser for Dunkirk Conference Center over the Holidays. As we approach the Holiday Season, and with more people buying items on-line, please remember to use GoodShop, when doing your shopping:  
[www.goodsearch.com/goodshop.aspx](http://www.goodsearch.com/goodshop.aspx)

When doing so, be sure to designate Dunkirk Conference Center as your charity of choice. Up to 30% of your purchase price may be donated to DCC, depending on which store you shop at. There are over 1,500 participating stores. And be sure and check out their on-line coupons as well. Please pass this onto others who you know that shop on-line. So far for 2010 we have over \$50 that will be sent to us after January 1, 2011 from this year's usage, and we still have time to go this year. Last year we received \$46.77. It is an easy way to obtain donations for Dunkirk.

Thanks, Larry Cornwall

## FOOD PANTRY

Dec. 5 Dry/Canned Milk  
Dec. 12 Cake, Muffin, Bread  
Mixes  
Dec. 19 Canned Vegetables  
and Fruit  
Dec. 26 Instant Potatoes,  
Dry Pasta

## WESTERN AREA RISK ASSESSMENT

Rev. amos acree is an active participant in Parish Nursing. He asked churches to include a Diabetes Risk Assessment Quiz in our newsletters. You will find it included in this newsletter. Please complete the form and return it to the church office If you feel you are at risk, please see your doctor to find out if you have diabetes.

## FAMILY NIGHT

The date of our next family will be announced so keep an eye on your weekly bulletin. It will be from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. and will be our Christmas Family Night so please bring a holiday treat or dessert as we celebrate the season.

Please remember to sign up if you plan to attend and indicate if you can stay and help clean up.

If you have a special activity to lead be sure to let Karen know. Remember to sign up, help if you can and attend. This night is for you.....talk to Karen if you have questions or ideas.

## G.I.F.T. THANKSGIVING DINNER

What a blessing to see folks gather together from various churches to enjoy a wonderful turkey dinner prepared by Joanne Roberts and volunteers from the various churches.

Worship was shared by all with Dennis Paufler and Charlotte providing our music.

After worship we shared yummy desserts brought by the G.I.F.T. churches.

Thanks to all who attended, helped, baked and enjoyed fellowship together. We all went home full, tired, and content as it was a day of sharing laughter, work and fellowship.

All leftovers were give to the food pantry in Niagara Falls.

**Character Council of  
Hamburg, Inc**

**December:**

**Sensitivity vs Callousness**

To demonstrate sensitivity in my life, I will...

Listen to others fully.

Watch facial expressions.

Notice tone of voice.

Put myself in others' shoes.

Show that I care.

**UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS**

**"12 Hours of Christmas"** - Calling all Middle & Sr. High Youth - Tuesday, December 28th - Leaving church @ 9am and heading to the Newcomb Farm, 10659 W. Perrysburg Rd., Perrysburg, NY & returning to St. James at 9pm. 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. Questions, talk to Donna! Bring warm clothing for outdoor activities. Interested in Chaperoning or driving talk to Karen, Donna or Patty.

**WAY Retreat** for Sr. High Youth Grades 9th -12th will be coming up in Jan. Most likely over Martin Luther King Jr. Weekend at TBA. More information to follow. Check the Youth Bulletin Bd. for details & forms or talk to Karen or Donna.

**Sledding at Chestnut Ridge** For Everyone (weather permitting) - Saturday, Jan 22nd - 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 up for a sign-up sheet after the 1st of the year. - THINK SNOW!

**Youth Board** - January 25th at 6:15 p.m. in Resource Room

Calendars for the first half of the season have been mailed. Be on the look out for the second half. Be sure to pick one up if you don't receive one.

**YOUTH FUND RAISERS**

Don't forget our on-going fund raising projects:

*Abitibi Paper Recycling*

*Can & Bottle Drive* (this activity ends December 31<sup>st</sup>)

*St. Pauly's Textile Drive*

*Candy Bar Sale*; and

*"Enjoy The City Coupon Books"*

which are \$20 each and available in the church office.

Please speak to a youth, Karen or Donna if you have questions.

**PLYMOUTH CROSSROADS**

The Board of Trustees of the United Church Home is pleased to announce that a home has been secured for abused and homeless youth for our Plymouth Crossroads Project. A purchase of a two-story residence on Broadway Ave. in Lancaster, will become home for youth in need of long-term housing.

The home will serve 35-40 male youth and young adults annually, ages 16 to 30, from WNY. The residence will house up to 8 youth at any given time in a home environment and the average length of stay will be six to twelve months. The program will provide safe shelter and empower young people to develop independent, healthy paths to their future by offering the tools they need to be self-supportive and avoid long-term dependency on social services.

You or your church can contribute to our youth. Sponsor a Room and we'll place a plaque in your honor. Bring the kids out of the cold and into a safe home. Our goal is to open by December. We are still in need of some items. Please contact Carol Halter, United Church Home at 716-508-2108 for a list of items needed.

**THANK YOU**

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

Youth Classes - Thank you to Bob Whitworth and the Middle High Class for bagging the Harvest Home Collection on Sunday, November 21st.

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.

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 in desperate situations worldwide through gift-filled shoe boxes and the Good News of God's love.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered and worked on the wonderful GIFT Thanksgiving Dinner.

All from Karen Reinagel



St. James  
United Church of Christ  
76 Main St., Hamburg, NY 14075

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## Finding God

*Excerpt from Isaiah 12*

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my might.”  
Reflection by William C. Green, a United Church of Christ minister, and Director of Long Looking

A Muslim (Sufi) story says a lot about finding God. “Help us find God,” the seeker begged the Elder. “No one can help you there,” the Elder answered. “Why not?” the seeker insisted. “For the same reason that no one can help a fish find the ocean.”

God is a constant presence. In hard times we endure. In strength we thought we didn’t have. In confidence we thought we lacked. In hope and blessing we long for. Isaiah doesn’t pray for something we must attain. He’s praying about what’s already true and present right now: God, along with salvation, trust, confidence, “strength and might.” The spiritual task is simply to recognize this, not to keep trying to achieve it.

How did you get through the nightmares you’ve known? The loss of someone dearly loved. Times when family life was out of control. Periods of loneliness and confusion. And what of the surprises when things you most worried about worked out after all. Or times when you were simply happy, whatever was going on.

We’ll never know what we have if we don’t remember what we’ve known before. Named or not, we have known the divine presence. As Frederick Buechner wrote, “God doesn’t sign [the] sunsets.” But God’s there--here, too, with us, all the time.

**Prayer:** May I remember your presence, God. You have always been who you are right now: my strength and my salvation. Amen.

