

The St. James Connector

January 2011

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

Robert Matlack, Pastor
Alva Looze, Associate Pastor
Jess Kacalski, NYSOM Student
St. James email: stjamesucc2@verizon.net

Karen Reinagel, Director of Christian Ed
Ciaran Krueger, Director of Music
Patty Jensen, Office Secretary
Website: www.saintjamesucc.com

2011 – A NEW BEGINNING

At the end of each year as I reflect back on the previous year I ask myself.. What have I accomplished? Have I asked for help from God along the way? Have I stubbornly, independently thought I could do it alone?

God works in mysteriously ways and I know that without Him I am nothing. That goes along with the church. It takes many volunteers for things to run smoothly. I am always thankful for all of you who have help, said a kind word, prayed, have been part of my life, and the life of the church. Thank you and have a blessed new year.

Alva

ANNUAL MEETING

Come One - Come All!!!

The Annual Meeting of our Congregation will be held on Sunday, February 13th 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 the members of the congregation.

CONFIRMATION

Our 2011 Confirmation Class will begin with a meeting for all confirmands, mentors and the parents of our confirmands on Sunday, Jan. 23rd, immediately following Sunday School.

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 students who may be interested, should contact Pastor Looze or Rev. Matlack to let them know that they would like to be part of this year's class.

DE-GREENING & CHILI LUNCHEON

We will be taking down the greens on January 9th and the Youth will be providing a Chili Luncheon. Stay after church, help and enjoy fellowship and a bowl of chili.

Character Council Of Hamburg, Inc.

January - Enthusiasm vs Apathy.

Enthusiasm is expressing joy in each task as I give it my best effort.

SERVER'S NEWS

1..2..3..4..5..6...!

At the Servers' November meeting, discussion about the newly established Plymouth Crossroads Residence, a home for abused and homeless youth, led to a decision to purchase and donate 6 twin mattresses. They were delivered December 4th and greatly appreciated. The home is operated by United Church Home and will house up to eight male youth, ages 16-20, at any given time.

They are hoping to open in January. The transitional living program will provide safe shelter and empower the youth to develop independent, healthy paths to their future by offering them the tools they need to be self-supportive and avoid long term dependency on social services. It was our pleasure to help them make a house a home.

Thank you to everyone who supports Servers, which in turn allows us to help other.

THANKS

St. James members and all who use the building say "Thank you" to Clyde Collins for cleaning the sidewalks we are truly blessed for that endless task.

Server's

The Server's next meeting will be held in the Horton Lounge on Tuesday, January 25th at 1:00 p.m.

Sewing Mission

Our January meeting will be Tuesday, January 11th. We begin at 9:30 a.m. in the Assembly Hall. Start the New Year off right by joining our group and being a part of charitable work. Bring your lunch; dessert will be provided by Laura Zittel. We are in need of old sheets for chux pads.

Board of Christian Education

Our next meeting will be held Tuesday, January 4, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in Resource Room

Youth Board Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 25th at 6:15 p.m. in the Resource Room

Western Area Winter Meeting

Our next meeting will be held at the Payne Avenue Christian Church on Saturday, Feb. 26th

The program, will be led by Lighthouse and the theme, "Youth Extravaganza" will include presentations, resources, workshops, mission trips, work groups, and inter-generational worship, music and more.

See Alva for reservations by February 18th.

From Barb Reuter:

Please pick up your statement and envelopes in the back of the Sanctuary in the beginning of January.

If anyone needs envelopes, please call Barb Reuter at 649-0230.

Stuffed Animals to Love During Church

Don't forget we have snugly animals located in the rear of the sanctuary for children to hold and love during the church service and we also have activity bags for the children to use. Please return items to the baskets following worship each week.

Check Your Surroundings

New Year's is a good time to evaluate your home in case a disaster happens. The church office has a printed checklist that can be useful in preparing information.

Family Night

Don't forget to come to our Family Night on Wednesday, January 5, 2011 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 pm. Please remember to check the bulletin board for a sign-up sheet and other information.

Sabres vs. Islanders Game

Come to a Sabres game on Sunday, February 13th at 3:00 p.m. The cost is \$35.00 per ticket which includes lunch. This event is pending the availability of tickets. For questions or to pay see Karen, Patty or Donna.

Family Movie Night

Our next Movie Night will be on Friday, January 28th, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. Plan on starting out the New Year right and attend a Family Movie Night in the Horton Lounge. The movie had not yet been selected before this newsletter went to print. Come join us have popcorn and watch the movie on our 42" TV. It will be better than going to the movie theater since it will be FREE! Sign-up on the bulletin board. If you have questions talk to Karen.

Souper Bowl of Caring

February 6, 2011 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 help 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 19 years ago on Super Bowl Sunday when a group of inspired young people decided they wanted to do something to help fight hunger. They created the SOUPER BOWL DAY OF CARING. Since it has gone nationwide in 1993, more than \$25 million has been raised for people in need.

Our church school classes will decorate their soup kettles and will walk through the building following worship looking for people to donate to their kettles and their cause. Don't forget to stop at the Christian Ed bulletin Board. Display and vote for the charity you would like to see receive our donation this year. If you have any question regarding this event please speak to Karen Reinagel, Vicky Loretto or Jen Mumm.

Food Pantry

Jan. 2 Paper products
Jan. 9 Jello/Pudding Mix
Jan. 16 Cereal/Breakfast bars
Jan. 23 Spaghetti sauce, canned stew, canned pasta
Jan.30 Pancake mix, Bisquick

Music Appreciation

WOW! The music program is back and well at St. James. We have counted as many as 20 children and youth in the youth choir. What a joyful sound they make!

The adult choir has also grown in size and they continue to raise the roof on Sundays.

Thanks to Cirian and Jonathan for bringing music back to St. James!

Children and Youth Offering Envelopes

Rev. Matlack will once again be sharing 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 some home. In addition, boxes of children's and youth 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. The envelopes are provided for those who wish to use them. All money placed in the envelopes goes toward our church school program.

Sledding at Chestnut Ridge

This is an event for everyone (weather permitting). On Saturday, January 22nd from Noon - 3 p.m. the youth are inviting everyone to go sledding at Chestnut Ridge. Watch your bulletin for further information and don't forget to be on the look out for a sign-up sheet after the 1st of the year.

FYI....I hope the toboggan run will be open this year - THINK SNOW! Everyone that attended this event last year has a great time.

BAPTISM

Tessa Karen Reinagel
Born: 9/17/2010
Baptized: 11/28/2010
Parents: Phil and Jenny Reinagel

"12 Hours of Christmas"

Note date change to Saturday, January 8, 2011 from 9am - 9pm. Please sign up on Youth Bulletin Board so we can plan how many people are attending this event. This event is for Middle and Senior High Youth. Plan to have fun! Bring a \$5 gift to exchange, warm clothing for playing in the snow, boots, gloves, etc. In other words come prepared!!!! This event leaves from church at 9 a.m., goes to the Newcombs, and we return to church at 9 p.m.

Dunkirk Camping Information

This year Dunkirk is offering a camp for grades 2nd - 8th called Winter Adventure Camp,. There is only space for 21 children to attend, so register soon if you are interested. Information together with registration forms can be found on the Youth Bulletin Board. The cost is \$100.00 per person. As Karen if you have questions.

As soon as last summer's season ended, the planning began for the 2011 season. Remember the super early bird deadline is March 15th (and in order to get the checks and information to Dunkirk on time the St. James deadline is Sunday, March 6th). So keep that in mind and be on the look out for for the Dunkirk Camp Display on the Christian Ed Bulletin Area as well as the bin outside the CE Office on the 2nd floor. That is where you will find the forms and information you need to sign up to attend camp.

REMINDER:

The Youth are no longer accepting cans & bottles. Thank you for all your past support with this fund raiser.

New York State Youth Event

Our event this year is scheduled for March 4th - 6th at Watson Homestead in Painted Post, NY. The theme and cost will be announced at a later time. High School Youth grades 9 - 12 in the NY Conference are eligible.

The Deadline to Register is due Feb. 6th. For more information, talk to Donna or Karen

Watch for information.

Angel/Mitten Tree

I am pleased to report that we did indeed complete our goal of "NO TAG LEFT BEHIND"! We had only 2 tags left on the tree and Cher Hall called and offered to take the money people donated and shop for the 2 remaining tags. I felt like a Christmas Angel had blessed my office. What a wonderful feeling to know that each child will receive a gift this holiday season! I appreciate all the gifts that were handed in and all the financial contributions that were made to help with this worthwhile cause. GREAT JOB!!!!!!

When I looked at all the gifts under the tree in the lounge this year, it warmed my heart to think so many of you took the time and energy to make this Christmas season special to someone in need. Thank you for participating in this great tradition at St. James. HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!

Thanks to Gay Lynn and Gary Nelson for ringing the bell at St. James for Hamburg Holiday's Star Lighting on the water tower, Friday, December 3rd , 2010 for the holiday season.

Permission Forms

Once again, the St. James Permanent Youth and Church School Registration and Permission Forms are available. Each Child in Church School as well as Middle and Senior High youth are being asked to have a completed Blue permanent registration and permission form which has been signed on file with the Christian Ed Department in order to attend events. This is to save the parents the chore of signing countless permission forms and to save the Christian Ed Department from countless forms that are handed out and then collected. The forms can be obtained from the CE office or the Youth Bulletin Bd. Both sides of the form need to be filled out, signed by the parent/s or guardian and returned to the CE Department. The form is for local activities that might be attended, there will still be additional forms for youth when we attend something like WAY Events, the New York State Youth Event, Regional or National events. If you have any questions please feel free to speak to Karen, Donna, Christina Wilder or Patty. The forms are also required to be filled out by friends that attend activities with our church so be sure to remind your children and 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 and updated for any new information each year. It is also better for the environment since we will be using less paper. Forms are available from CE Department or on Youth Bulletin Board.

Christmas Pageant

A special thank you for everyone that helped with this year's Christmas Pageant. The pageant is a large undertaking and many people contribute to putting the finished project together. When people tell me how great the pageant turned out, I often wonder if they realize how many people volunteer to help with the pageant. All of the following people helped by doing multiple jobs such as fitting costumes, helping with the dress rehearsal and 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 but if I did please let me know so I can personally thank you; Robin Lindstrom, Gay Nelson, Margaret Stuhr, Elizabeth Strutowski, Patty Jensen, Veronica Pigeon, Nick Reinagel, Philip & Jenny Reinagel, Jen & David Mumm, Kim Waryk, Dawn Berlin, Cher Hall, Rev. Bob Matlack, Pastor Alva Looze, Ciaran Krueger, Jonathan Rizzo and the Chancel Choir and all the parents who shared their children so they could help share the pageant with our congregation.

Ongoing Fundraisers:

Please don't forget the youth fundraisers:

Youth Candy Sale (\$1.00 per candy bar) and

Enjoy the City Coupon Books at \$20.00 each are available in the church office;

St. Pauly's Clothing Shed (bring used clothing, plastic bags are fine; and

Abitibi Paper Recycling (no plastics please including bags).

The Youth appreciate all you do to help them fund raise.

THANK YOU!!!!

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

To Barb and Dan Newcomb for brining the tree, and providing the greens each year to decorate the outside of the church.

To Don Pfister and Horst Kirsten for the set up of the tree, the stands, and all those who helped set up the poinsettias.

I wish to thank all who send cards and their prayers while I was in Rehab after my knee surgery. Also to those who called after I was home. Thanks loads. God Bless.

Myra Ferguson

The cabinet would like to thank all who helped from set up, crafts, santa hats and luncheon. We had a good time making the crafts, hats, fellowship and lunch. Bill Shadle's bird houses were a great hit as usual.

I want to thank all of you, who wished me well before my surgery and all the for all the calls, cards and continued well wishes after the surgery . It will be a long road back, but I will recover from the shoulder surgery!

Butch Meyer

The Youth would like to thank Harold Cobb for stopping by each day and checking on the St. Paulys's Shed for clothing donations and moving them to the end of the shed. We appreciate your time, effort and dedication to helping our Youth program.



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



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More Wonder

Excerpt from [John 1: 15-25](#) : He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord.’”

Reflection by Anthony B. Robinson, a United Church of Christ minister, is a speaker, teacher and writer.

At the conclusion of the movie, “Reality Bites,” the female lead is, surprisingly, the class graduation speaker. With a lovely smile, she says, “The answer is . . . I don’t know the answer.” When the religious authorities got concerned about John the Baptist, the message he was proclaiming and the crowds he was drawing, they sent a team of experts out to the desert to get the answers, to find out who he was, to pin John down. He proved as hard to catch as a Monarch butterfly. “Who are you?” they demanded. John, maybe more of a trickster than we have thought, told them who he was not. “I am not the Messiah.” “What then,” they asked, “Are you Elijah?” “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” “No.”

Then, really exasperated (I love this), they said to John, “*Who are you?* Let us have an answer for those who sent us.” As if to say, “Help us out here John, we’re just doing our job, if we can’t fill out this report we’re going to be in trouble with the higher-ups. Who the heck are you? Give us an answer.”

So John, Advent’s herald, helps them out. “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord.” And then he adds, “Among you stands one whom you do not know.” Even John didn’t know him. But he’s here, among you, in our midst, said John.

When what we want and think we need is answers, maybe it’s not? Maybe we don’t need more answers but more wonder. “Concepts create idols,” claimed the 4th century desert monk, Gregory of Nyssa, “only wonder comprehends anything.”

“Among you stands one whom you do not know.” Makes you wonder, doesn’t it?

Prayer When we want only answers, dear God, create in us the space for wonder. Amen.