

The St. James Connector

October, 2011

St. James United Church of Christ,
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Proposed Marriage Policy

This past summer New York States Marriage Law was changed to allow the Marriage of same gender couples. We believe that this significant change in policy calls us to take a look at our Wedding Policy, and specifically how we as a church will respond if a gay or lesbian couple contacts us regarding being married here at St. James. Now obviously this can be very controversial. There are good Christians on each side of it, and both sides are reading the same Bible - and finding in the Bible support for their position.

After talking about this with our Church & Ministry Committee, they have decided on the following process:

Step One: We will have two gatherings of interested members of the congregation - Wednesday, October 19th at 7 p.m., and Sunday October 23rd - about 11:15 a.m. Each of these gatherings will start with a Bible Study covering some of the relevant Biblical texts, and that will be followed by a time where the participants are invited to share where they are on this issue, and what they believe our congregation's wedding policy should be.

(continued)

Step Two: The Church & Ministry Committee will be listening carefully at these gatherings, and use that information to make a recommendation regarding our Wedding Policy.

Step Three: That proposal would come back to the congregation for discussion and action.

This is an important issue for us to deal with, but even more importantly I think we need to be sure that we deal with it in a way that is respectful of and sensitive to all of the participants in the discussion. We believe that each person in our congregation is seeking to be faithful in their approach to this issue, and while none of us see the full truth, we all glimpse a piece of it, and somehow we need to listen to each other, and put those pieces together in a way that is faithful, caring, and respectful of our diversity.

Please be a part of one of these gatherings, as we want your voice to be part of these important discussions.

Mission 1

Our United Church denomination is on a shared mission for 11 powerful days to feed the hungry and confront food-related injustice - this is Mission: It is an opportunity to make real Jesus' prayer for his disciples: "That they may all be one." It is also an opportunity to live out our faith - in unity - by offering the worship that God most desires from us: loosening the bonds of injustice and sharing our bread with the hungry....shared by amos acree

For the first 11 days of November our UCC congregations, will join together to collect more than one million food items for local food banks, raise \$111,111 for Neighbors in Need and write 11,111 letters to congress in support of Bread for the World's 2011 'Offering of Letters, asking that US foreign assistance to more effectively serve the world's poorest.

St. James will participate in a food drive beginning November 1st through November 13th, our Harvest Home Sunday. We are asking all who can to donate food for this drive. The food will stay locally although some may be sent on to flood victims if enough food is collected. A tally will be made and included in the collection nationally.

Worldwide Communion Sunday

Sunday, October 2nd is Worldwide Communion Sunday. This is a special day as we celebrate The Lord's Supper with Christians all over the world. Once again we're reminded that it's not about just the United Church of Christ or Christians in the US, but rather that we are part of a faith that includes people of every background, every race, and who live and worship in every single country in the world.

Join us as we celebrate together in one of the most sacred ways of all.

Stewardship Campaign

Mark your calendars!!!

Commitment Weekend will be November 19th and 20th. Please plan to be part of these services as we all come together to renew our commitments - financial, time and talents, and spiritual - in support of the mission of this congregation.

Sewing Mission

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, October 11th at 9:30 a.m. in the Assembly Hall.

We are always in need of new members. Remember, sewing skills are not necessary as there is a lot of other work to do.

Bring your lunch and join us for a very worthwhile and enjoyable morning. Carol Wahlenmeyer will provide a delicious dessert.

Servers

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, October 25th at a local restaurant. Check the bulletin for location and time.

We thank everyone who has helped with our soup sale by making a donation, lending a hand, placing an order or attending.

Soup Sale

The Soup Sale will be held on October 15th from 11:30 until all the soup is sold. Pre-orders will be taken. There is a sign up sheet across from the Lounge or call the church office by October 10th. A quart of soup will be \$6.00.

You may eat in for \$5.00. Lunch will be a bowl of soup, bread, dessert and beverage. We have five soups to choose from: Vegetable Beef, Chicken Noodle, Broccoli Cheese and Chili. Please invite a friend to come and enjoy a lovely Fall luncheon.

Flu Clinic

The Visiting Nurse Association is again giving a flue clinic on October 13, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please support the VNA and get your flu shot right here at church. No appointment is necessary.

Cluster Pulpit Exchange

Our pulpit exchange is October 30th, and. Rev Sue Hodges will be preaching at St .James. Rev. Bob Matlack will be preaching at First Congregational and Rev. Jack Bacon will be at Trinity. Pastor Alva will serve as liturgist with Rev. Hodges. Each year we have this wonderful opportunity to get to know one of our neighboring pastors a little better.

Board Of Christian Ed

Our meeting will be held Tuesday, October 4th at 7 p.m. in the Resource Room.

Family Night

Our next Family Night will be Wednesday, October 5th at 6 pm. Please consider joining us for this fun event. We share a meal of pizza, salad and a beverage, the kids go to choir and then if we have some dessert we enjoy it together.

Neighbors In Need (Mission 1)

The UCC's nationwide 11 day campaign in early November to feed the hungry and confront food-related injustice, is being expanded to include a church-wide appeal to share our Neighbors In Need collection to aid famine-stricken folks of Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia.

The devastating reports of drought and famine in East Africa have caused many of our congregations to urge a new goal be added to "Mission: 1" that addresses the crisis that is taking place there. Therefore our UCC leaders have decided to "double our financial goals, something that is ambitious and do-able given the enthusiasm that is building across the church for Mission:1"

The new goal, an addition to earlier stated goals, including raising 111,111 for Neighbors in Need hunger related ministries, writing 11,111 letters to our Congress members in support of a more effective US foreign aid program, and collecting one million items of healthy food for local pantries across the US.

Under the new plan, monetary gifts made to "Mission:1" during the campaign will be divided equally between the UCC's East Africa famine appeal and Neighbors in Need hunger related ministries.

St. James will participate in this campaign in November and hope that you will support "Mission:1" with your financial support, items of food and letters to our elected officials.

Don't forget our Youth Fund Raising Projects:

Abitibi paper recycling
St. Pauly's clothing shed
Can and Bottle Return
Candy Bars

Community Crop Walk Sunday, October 16th

You can make a difference! You can help feed hungry people. You can help to stock food pantries. You can help provide disaster relief. You can help to provide tools. You can help to shelter refugees.

JOIN THE CROP WALK!

Our Church School Children will **NOT** be walking during class time this fall. The Church School held their walk in the spring and will do so again in May 2012. More info. will be given in class once a date has been chosen! We are however accepting donations to hand into CROP. You can place your donation in an envelope and mark CROP on the outside and we will include it with the money we raised this past May.

BUT you can choose to support the Community CROP Walk by walking on Sunday, October 16th. Registration is at 12:30 p.m. and the walk begins at 1 p.m. The walk will begin at Hamburg Presbyterian Church. Mark your calendars to sponsor a walker or become a walker yourself. Pledge information will be posted near the bulletin board during the month of September up to the day of the CROP Walk. Talk to Karen if you need more information. Remember if you walk please turn your collected donations to the church office so we can keep track of who walked and what they raised. Legacy fund will match donations!

The Youth House will be **NOT** be open as a rest stop for people participating in the CROP WALK due to the new route being walked.

FOOD PANTRY:

Oct 1 Paper products
Oct 8 Jello\ pudding mixes
Oct 15 Breakfast bars, oatmeal
Oct 22 Spaghetti sauce, stew, pasta
Oct 29 Pancake\bisquick mix

Heifer Fair

Our Heifer Fair will be held Sunday, October 16th following worship in the Assembly Hall. Please plan on joining us as the children of the Church School Program present their annual Heifer Fair to raise funds for Heifer International during coffee hour. Everyone will have a chance to support this mission project and watch the delight on the faces of the children as they raise funds to support their particular project. The classes have picked the animals they would like to sponsor and are busy planning some exciting things for the fair. Remember to come to church and check out what is happening at the Heifer Fair. The Senior High Class will be serving Lunch in conjunction with the Heifer Fair to raise funds for this mission project. Please plan on attending and helping to support their efforts by buying lunch.

Dunkirk Conference Center Halloween Happening

On October 22nd Dunkirk will hold it's Halloween Happening.

Over 300 people from the community attended last year's event and the conference center is hoping to increase the number in attendance this year. There will be many activities and area Youth Groups are planning on lending a hand to get Dunkirk in the Halloween Mood. There will be games, music costumes, a hay ride etc. Check out the website www.dunkirkcc.org for more information.

Mens Breakfast, Sunday October 16th @ 8:00 am.

Bring a friend to our first Men's Breakfast before church. Pancakes, sausage, orange juice and coffee will be served. Pastor Eric Johns from Buffalo Dream Center will be speaking about living on the streets with the homeless. Sign up on the bulletin board.

CIA Undie Sunday 2011

During the month of October Churches In Action will collect new packaged underwear and socks for men, women and children to be distributed to the needy of WNY.

For many years CIA has been gifting underwear to those in need. The smiles on the faces of recipients tells it all - that this is a need that only we fill! So come on...get enthused!! Get "behind" this initiative and make it the best UNDIE SUNDAY EVER!!!!

Way October Retreat at Dunkirk Conference Center October 21st - 23rd

Calling all Middle and Senior High youth! Come spend the weekend at Dunkirk Conference Center to help set up and work at their Halloween Happening. The cost is \$10 for St. James youth and \$20 for friends. The money and registration forms must be handed in by October 9th to Karen Reinagel in the Christian Ed Office. The forms are located on the Youth Bulletin Board or outside the Christian Ed office. Remember to fill out both sides of the forms and keep the top copy for you records.

Church School Halloween Party for 5th Grade and Under

On Sunday, October 30th during Church School, all children are invited and encouraged to invite a friend to attend our Halloween Party. Please come to church in costume. Please remember to sign-up so we know how many to plan for. Also indicate on the sign-up sheet if you are willing to donate anything for the party. The party will conclude in the Assembly Hall with a parade of costume during coffee hour. Everyone is invited to attend. Interested in helping? Speak to Karen Reinagel.

Diabetes Clinic

We have prepared a series of classes for members of St. James and friends to bring up-to-date information about diabetes. If you want to learn more about diabetes, are diabetic, or have a family member who is a diabetic, this series of classes is for you.

A six week course, each week covering a different aspect of diabetes will begin October 30th and run through December 4th. Each class will be about one hour, beginning at noon each Sunday.

Please contact the church office or Charlotte Cialone at 649-8493 if you are interested in joining us.

Christmas Pageant

Pageant rehearsal is Saturday, December 17th. The Christmas Pageant Sunday, December 18th during worship.

WANTED:

By The CE Department and Karen:

1. A 2nd gas grill in good to excellent condition for grilling for church events.
2. People interested in working with the Middle and Senior High Youth Program.
3. Teachers and Assistants for the various Church School Classes.

Watch your mail for the Youth Calendar of Events. If you don't get one let Karen Reinagel know.

GIFT Thanksgiving Dinner

Our annual GIFT Thanksgiving Dinner will be held on November 12th here at St. James. Dinner will be served at 5 p.m. to be followed by worship at 6 p.m. We will then have wonderful desserts downstairs after worship. Please sign up on the bulletin board for this special evening.

4th Grade Bible Study

Once again our 4th graders will be receiving a copy of the Good News Bible. The children will be studying with Pastor Alva in preparation to receive Bibles this Fall during a worship service. This is a special time in the life of the children; they are now old enough to be able to read and they have a better understanding of what has been written about within the covers of this special book.

If you have a child in Fourth grade, be on the lookout for a letter explaining the details of the Bible study and the presentation. If you have any question please feel free to speak to Karen Reinagel.

Church School Registration and Permission Forms

All parents are being asked to fill out a yellow Church School Registration and Permission Form and return it to the Christian Ed office. We keep the cards on file in case we go for a walk or some other church event or if you drop your child off at a church event.

The cards are to ensure the safety of your children. Please take a few minutes to fill out a card for each of your children. Hopefully this year's new form will hold us for a while and you will only have update your information each year. Thank you for your cooperation. The yellow forms can be found outside the church office on the table, the main Bulletin Board, the Youth Bulletin Board, and in the bin outside the Christian Ed office.

Thank you to everyone that supported the Dunkirk Walk A Thon. Your efforts are greatly appreciated! Don't forget to let the Christian Ed office know how much you raised in pledges. A copy of your pledge sheet would be great as Legacy funds will match your donations.

Character Council Thoroughness v. Incompleteness

Thoroughness is knowing what factors will:

- Diminish the effectiveness of my work or words if neglected;
- To demonstrate thoroughness in my life, I will plan my work;
- Pay attention to details;
- Make a list so I do not forget;
- Finish what I start; and
- Clean up before I quit.

Paula Pfister Pie Auction

The pie auction is coming Sunday, November 20th. It's not too early to check over your recipes, dust off your rolling pin and think about what you'd like to bake and donate to this worthwhile event.

Operation Christmas Child

Our 2011 collection for shoe boxes is November 6th - 20th. This means that all the shoe box donations must be turned in by Sunday, November 20th in order for them to be delivered on time. This project is being sponsored by the Senior High Youth Class.

REGISTRY

Wedding:

Donald E. Hornberger, Jr. and Jennifer L. Glende
Married: August 20, 2011

Deaths

Harold Lilga
Died: August 29, 2011
Service: September 1, 2011

Thank you to everyone who pitched in and helped to make the Church School Fall Kick Off and Opening of Church School a great success! A special thank you to our ice cream scoopers and also thanks to everyone who helped in the kitchen. Your help and dedication is appreciated.

Thank you to everyone that volunteered and attended VBS. Once again we had a great week.



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

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

What a Miracle Feels Like

Excerpt from Mark 6:45-56 *"When he saw that they were straining at the oars against an adverse wind, he came towards them early in the morning, walking on the sea."*

Reflection by Christina Villa, on the staff of the United Church of Christ in Cleveland, Ohio.

This sentence from Mark is just one example of the peculiar way the Bible often has of describing extraordinary events. Jesus walking on water is surely one of the major astounding things in the entire New Testament. And yet here it's related almost as an afterthought, a minor detail, as in "she stepped off the curb, into a puddle."

You'd think there might be a little more build-up, some mention of the urgency Jesus felt to get out to the boat full of disciples by the most direct route. But no, he sees them in trouble and goes over to help, "walking on the sea." No drama at all, just a flat statement.

This does often seem to be the way longed-for good news or desperately-needed help arrives in our lives. Without fanfare or advance notice, often after you've stopped waiting and wishing for it—there it simply is, like your lost dog sitting on the back steps. The job offer from an interview last year. The college acceptance letter amid a pile of rejections. The positive pregnancy test after years of infertility. You can't believe it, you thank God, you look twice to make sure it's really true.

When you're straining at the oars against an adverse wind, remember that at any moment you might look up and see salvation walking toward you, even if that seems as impossible as walking on water.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for the quiet miracles that change our lives. Amen.