



Conference District Superintendents Urge Churches to ‘Share the Love of Christ’

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ at our United Methodist congregations in Upper New York,
“Joy to the World, the Lord is come!”

As followers of Jesus the Christ – from the manger to Galilee, from the cross to the Emmaus Road – we place our trust in the Prince of Peace who is the Hope of the World. As followers of Jesus, striving to become more and more like Him, we not only follow the Light of Christ, but by God’s grace we are to **be** the Light of Christ for the world!

During the season of Christmas, we open our hearts and lives to welcome the newborn Christ. Even in a time when fear and distrust have gripped our nation – while many warn of the foreigner, the stranger, of people who are “different” – we are called to open our hearts to share the love of Christ. When angry voices call for shutting out our Muslim neighbors, turning back refugees fleeing Syria, or suspecting people who are different from us, the message of the Christmas angels is clear. *“Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy for all the people.”* For **all** the people. Their message calls us even today to seek to understand one another and cooperate in healthy ways; to stand up against acts of hatred and violence that threaten to diminish the acts of charity and gifts of love that are so much a part of this Holy season.

So how will we welcome Jesus in the new year? Confronted by the very simple story of Christ’s birth, how can we offer Christ’s Light in this particular time of fear and mistrust? We welcome Jesus as a baby, but we remember that the Babe of Bethlehem grew to be a man who challenged the powerful and lifted up the lowly – a Savior who calls His followers, even today, to walk in the way of courage and compassion, justice and love. That could mean speaking up with courage when we hear hate-based speech, whether in our workplace, with friends, on social media, or in our family. It may mean taking time to listen and understand a neighbor, stopping harassing behavior rather than turning the other way, or using our voices to challenge violence as we proclaim the grace and love of God’s Hope and Peace for all. Above all, we are called to not just hear the story, but to respond to it.

“Joy to the World, the Lord is come!” As we kneel at the manger this Christmas, let us pray it may be so.

Peace in Christ,

Signed by the 13 District Superintendents of the Upper New York Conference

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT VAN DUYN

Van Duyn Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing would like to start an auxiliary in January. Not only would there be opportunities to volunteer, but they want to start an “Adopt a Resident” Program. Many of the residents have no visitors and a friendly face, once a month, would mean so much.

If you are interested, please contact Nancy Harris, Director of Community Relations, at 449-6184 or email her at nharris@vanduyncenter.com.



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LITURGISTS NEEDED

Starting a New Year, we need to look for new and continuing Liturgists. A liturgist greets the congregation on Sunday morning, has some readings as per the Pastor, and whatever else may be planned for a particular Sunday. Many of you have helped with this and I thank you for your help. If you have any questions and/or are willing to help, please contact Linda Parton by phone at 469-3460 or by email at ljparton@bluefrog.com. Thank you!

A NEW NEW YEAR'S GREETING

We are just barely into this new year, and we have already begun to wonder whether this is really going to be a happy new year. While our problems tend to increase like our federal taxes, as we add up our holiday debts and look at our credit card bills, we might seriously question how happy this year of our lives will be.

The Chinese celebrate their New Year in February at the new moon. Confucius, a saintly Chinese sage, had an expression that holds the secret to how our new year can be both good and happy. He said, "The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor any person perfected without trials."

Since the goal of our lives is to be perfect (at least Jesus challenged us to be perfect as is our heavenly parent), it would seem fitting to propose a new New Year's greeting: "May you have a Troubled New Year!" Yet the very sound of such a greeting hurts the heart. We all have enough troubles now; who wants a whole year full of them?

No one of sane mind would ask for troubles, but we know that the days of this new year will have their fill of minor and major problems, troubles and trials. If the gem of the God-seed within each of us is to be made brighter and more beautiful by these problems, we will need to recall the words of another holy man, St. Francis de Sales. He said, "Do not look forward to what may happen tomorrow; the same everlasting Father who cares for you today will take care of you tomorrow, and every day. Either God will shield you from suffering, or God will give you unfailing strength to bear it. Be at peace, then, and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations."

A realistic view of the coming weeks and months tells us that we will have times of trial. But we should recall the counsel of saintly Francis de Sales to "put aside all anxious thoughts" and to "be at peace." One way to be at peace as we hear the newest trial ringing our doorbell is to remember as well the words of Confucius: "The gem cannot be polished without friction...without trials."

Each time you respond to a difficulty using the compass of the Gospels – meeting hate with love, greeting anger with peace and holding the pain of others with compassion – that hidden gem within your heart grows brighter and brighter. If we truly understand the purpose of these brief years of life given to us, we might actually find a new year to be happy *because* it would be full of polishing opportunities.

So perhaps the best greeting for the new year is to wish you "A _____ New Year" and let you fill in the blank with what your heart tells you is the best adjective.



NURSERY SCHOOL NEWS

The end of the calendar year brought holiday activities filled with music, family and shared time. We celebrated the holiday season in early December when families had more time to break away from work and other obligations to see their children sing songs decked in snowman costumes they created during school. Both of our classes did a great job entertaining families and then we all shared some light refreshments.

We have been touring new families interested in enrollment in September. Now that we have a rolling interest and enrollment list, we are being contacted to begin the process, tour new children and begin developing student lists for next year. Remind anyone interested in next year that they can call Kathy at 475-2344 to begin the process.

We are in the process of planning our spring semester activities. We have many exciting events and special visitors planned that are sure to make for a fun-filled start to 2016!

We hope you enjoyed a peaceful, family-filled holiday season and that 2016 brings you all good things.

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Early SAVE THE DATE!!

Civic Morning Musicals is celebrating its 125th anniversary this season and has invited back former Concerto/Vocal Competition Winners including **Gordon Hershberger’s daughter, Amy**. As many of you know, Amy resides in California, so you won’t often get the opportunity to hear her play her violin. Amy will be performing with Sar-Shalom Strong on piano & harpsichord and Gregory Wood on cello **in Hosmer Auditorium at the Everson Museum of Art on Sunday, February 14, 2016 at 2 pm**. Tickets \$20 at the door or at civictimorningmusicals.org. Students free with valid ID.

CITY-WIDE LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

Nelson Price of University UMC has offered to coordinate another Lenten Devotional Guide, like we enjoyed last Lent. The Guide will include entries from volunteers across our congregations and will have the theme **‘That’s the Wisdom I Found in the Word’**.

Interested contributors should contact Nelson at nprice@twcny.rr.com. Easter is early this year, and this needs to be complete, go to the printer, and be available prior to Ash Wednesday, Feb 10th.

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CROSSROADS DISTRICT DAY

District Day with Bishop Mark Webb will be held at Bellevue Heights UMC on **Thursday, January 14th**, from 10 am to 8 pm. A gathering of **laity and clergy** will take place from **6:30-8:00 pm** in the sanctuary. All Crossroads District churches will be a part of this gathering, which will include worship and communion. The theme for the evening is “Increasing Our Capacity.” Bishop Webb’s sermon title is “Radical Church” based on Acts 2:1-13, 37-47. All are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to meet with the Bishop and with people from other congregations. **Clergy** will have lunch and a time with Bishop Webb beginning at **10 am**.

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BAPTISM AND RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

On Sunday, December 13th, Kelly Grier, Jackson David Grier, Kaitlyn Ellen Grier and Adalynn Marie Grier were baptized into the United Methodist Church. Immediately following the baptisms, Kelly Grier, Mark Grier and Doreen Jacobs were received into membership at Bellevue Heights UMC. Congratulations and we welcome you all into our fellowship!

Special Days in January

From A Pilgrim’s Almanac by Edward Hays

Jan. 2 – Feast of Baby New Year – The image of a diapered baby wearing a banner with the number of the year has its origin in 14th century German culture. But the New Year symbol of a baby is an ancient one, going back to the Egyptians and Romans who carried an infant in a basket in their New Year parades. How can your new year really be a sign of new life rather than just a dull continuation of the past year?

Jan. 11 – Feast of St. Theodosius the Archmonk who lived for a time in a cave said to have been the resting place for the Magi on their way to Bethlehem. He died at the age of 106 in 529 A.D. This is a feast for creating the inner spaciousness to receive all the guests and pilgrims you meet today – as well as the Divine Guest.

Jan. 15 – Birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King in 1929. A leader in the civil rights movement in the 1960’s, Dr. King organized nonviolent marches that opened the way for demonstrations for equal rights and justice by all sorts of groups, from students to farmers. This brief quote sums up much of his vision: “I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality.”

Jan. 18 – Festival of Rereading Your Christmas Cards. Before you store them or throw them away, take time to once again read the messages of love and friendship that you received during the Christmas season.



Bellvue Heights UMC Signal – Jan 2016

Jan. 31 – The Norse Feast of Soldag. In the northern parts of our planet in the middle of winter, the sun doesn't shine at all. As it begins to appear at the end of January, villagers in Norway celebrate this "Sun Day." By your smiles and warm greetings you can make this a day when the sun shines for all those persons you encounter.

January Birthdays

Happy Birthday to you!!!



Please notify the office by phone or e-mail with additions or corrections.

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|----|---------------------|----|-------------------|
| 01 | Rev. Andy Anderson | 14 | Peter Cole |
| | Deborah Haines | 16 | Bill Gessler |
| | Jeanette Callaghan | | Mary Stoddard |
| | Mallory Hohm | | Susan Spooner |
| 02 | Pamela Martin Louer | 18 | Emily Curran Wade |
| | Youngsoo Kim | | Robert White |
| 04 | David Kovarik | 20 | Constance Hall |
| 06 | Madelyn Hornstein | | Emily Rowles |
| | Marilyn McDermott | | Julia Sturton |
| | Robert McIntyre | | Ray Dewitt |
| 07 | Abigail Haines | 22 | Brenda Kelley |
| | Claire Aloan | | Donald Davis, Jr. |
| 08 | Kyle Phelps | 23 | Susan Garman |
| | Stephen Strock | 24 | Valerie Garfield |
| | Warren Covell | 25 | Thomas Cowin |
| 09 | Suzanne Dewitt | 26 | Barbara Bouton |
| 10 | Amy Castle | 27 | Courtney Rich |
| | Dorothy Anderson | 28 | Patricia Wojenski |
| | Stephanie Discepolo | 29 | Daniel Corcoran |
| 11 | Edward Prosser | | Linda Parton |
| | Thomas Martin | 30 | Eric Lind |
| | Gary Tyler | 31 | Melissa Gloop |
| 12 | Melanie Foster | | |
| 13 | Eric Brown | | |



City Wide Youth Group 2016

Save the following dates for some exciting activities for youth in Grades 7-12:

Schedule:

Sunday, January 3rd – Sledding at Bellevue Heights UMC

The remainder of the January program will be provided once it has been scheduled.

If you have any questions, please call:

Diane Dermody or

Laura Mattice

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ONE SOLITARY LIFE

He was born in an obscure village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. He then became an Itinerant preacher. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a house. He didn't go to college. He had no credentials but himself ... Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today, He is the central figure of the human race. All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that...

One Solitary Life.

(submitted by Bob Large)

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HELP AVAILABLE

Need a hand cleaning on a regular basis or just now and then?
Carey Cutter is honest, reliable, thorough and reasonable

For a reference, call Kim Kromer Murphy .

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SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR JANUARY:

Jan. 3 – Epiphany Sunday: Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

Jan. 10 – 1st Sunday after Epiphany/Baptism of the Lord: Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Jan. 17 – 2nd Sunday after Epiphany: Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

Jan. 24 – 3rd Sunday after Epiphany: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21

Jan. 31 – 4th Sunday after Epiphany: Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30

COFFEE HOUR RESPONSIBILITIES:

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|----------------|---------------------------------|
| January | Trustees |
| February | Staff Parish |
| March | Christians in Action |
| April | Friends in Faith and Fellowship |
| May | Choir |
| June | Finance |
| July/August | Congregation Signups |
| September | Church Council |
| October | Youth Group |
| November | Worship |
| December | United Methodist Women |

USHERS FOR JANUARY:

Head Usher – Jeff Morey
Regular Ushers: Valerie Mattice, Leslie or Michael Streissguth,
Jasheim Newman

GREETER: Dawn Daggett



Confirmation Informational Meeting

A meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, January 6, 2016, at 6:30 pm at University United Methodist Church for anyone 6th grade or older who has not yet been confirmed. This meeting is for parents and prospective confirmands. The City Clergy Team – Revs. Anderson, Wood, Norris and, hopefully, Song – will lead the class. Please come and join us if you are interested in being confirmed.

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FREE CONCERTS

Temple Concord proudly presents the 2015-16 **Regina F. Goldenberg Cultural Series**, a monthly series of FREE concerts performed at Temple Concord, 910 Madison Street, Syracuse - open to everyone! All performances unless otherwise noted are on Tuesday evenings at 7 pm. Free parking in the Temple lot, on the street, or 1200 E. Genesee St. Medical Building lot.

January 12, 2016 – **The Mana Saxophone Quartet**. Championed by Chamber Music Magazine as “Saxophone Ambassadors”, the Arizona-based Mana Quartet has, since its inception in 2007, presented fresh interpretations of 21st century repertoire and many virtually unheard of 20th century masterworks. Using vintage instruments built to the specifications of the saxophone’s inventor, Adolph Sax, Mana’s passionate presentations offer audiences a chance to view the saxophone in a new light – a striking aesthetic characterized by intrinsic warmth, dynamic range of character, and absolute versatility. Mana redefines the saxophone quartet and the saxophone’s place in classical music.

February 16, 2016 – **Peter Rovit, violin, Arvilla Rovit, viola, Ida Tili Trebicka, piano** – An evening of charming duets and trios for violin, viola and piano.

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to:

Mary and James Stoddard 01/02/2004
Gloria and Ray Brunner 01/10/1981



Please notify the church office, either by email or phone, of any necessary changes.

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Men’s Fellowship Breakfast

On Thursday, December 18th, 23 men and women met with Mr. Orin “Mac” MacMurray, C&S chairman emeritus. Mr MacMurray informed us all about the \$500 million award from Governor Cuomo and, then, at 10:30 that morning Central NY was awarded the grant-talk about timely! Our next meeting will be Wednesday, Jan 20th, at Fairmount Wegman’s at 7 AM. Our speaker will be announced shortly—stay tuned.

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SPAGHETTI DINNER & AUCTION

COME ONE, COME ALL:

- WHO: Bellevue Heights UMC Circle of Concern
- WHAT: Spaghetti Dinner and Auction - Silent & Live
- WHERE: Bellevue Heights’ Fellowship Hall
- WHEN: Saturday, February 27, 2016
Dinner at 5:30 PM; Auction Preview at 6:30 PM
Auction from 7:00-9:00 PM

You will be receiving a call for a donation of a basket, food, craft or a service. Thank you.

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