

Those Whom We Hold in Prayer

The people of Syria, the Philippines and all areas of the world afflicted with violence or natural disaster, anyone facing a serious medical diagnosis, those who experience depression and/or grief during the holidays, the unemployed, those without community support, care-givers offering support to those in rehab or recovery, and anyone who struggles to sense the presence of God in their life. The **New Hampshire Fletcher Family** at the birth of son Silas Elton; **Bill and Joan Hall; Paula Dorn, Steve Lochte and Natalie** at their upcoming marriage; **Vicki Trumbower and Peter** at their upcoming marriage; those for whom Christmas is blue.

Our Heartfelt Gratitude to:

To our trustees who care for our beloved sanctuary, social hall and grounds; those who offer silent, anonymous donations to support both our church and our outreach efforts; Lon Chase for his assistance with our outdoor beautification projects; all of the volunteers who assisted with the Red Cross blood drive and the community lunch at St. Peter's Episcopal Church; our Moderator and Cabinet for their ongoing leadership; and the children who bring so much vitality and hope to this Body of Christ! Everyone who pitched in on the recent work day, especially those who tackled the basement, and the Staubs and their crew for landscaping work; all who are assisting in bringing our new directory to us; those who decorated the sanctuary so beautifully for the harvest season, and those planning decorations for Christmastide; and of course, our many members and community friends who lent a hand to make the turkey dinner so fine.

Music Committee

As the winter months approach us, we know some will make their way back to Florida. We will miss Lynn's beautiful smile and voice until she returns in the spring. Our choir has at times been a little thin so please think about joining us for a song or two. In December we will have the children perform for special music. If there are any songs you would like to hear, especially during the holidays; please let us know.

As always, may the Lord bless you and sing in your heart. Rena Faulkner

Joy Jar & Outreach Update

The generous spirit of our church family remains strong! On October 6th, Worldwide Communion Sunday, our church received the Neighbors in Need offering. This special collection supports the Justice and Witness Ministries of the UCC. The October 27th Joy Jar collection was sent to UNICEF's general fund.

In addition, hats, glove/mittens and scarves are being collected and will be used to decorate our sanctuary Christmas tree. These items will be distributed through a local agency to provide much needed warmth for hands, heads and hearts in our community. Donations are gratefully received until December 15th. Linda Ensmann has again coordinated the Angel Tree Project, which provides gifts to children of an incarcerated parent.

Internationally, the UCC Challenge for Disaster Relief has asked congregations around the U.S. to raise \$250,000 to aid early relief efforts in the Philippines. Our Joy Jar offering on Thanksgiving Sunday, November 24th, will support this outreach. The Christmas Eve offering will support the UCC Christmas Fund which assists retired ministers who are facing financial and medical hardships.

An ecumenical free lunch was served on Wednesday, November 20th at St. Peter's Episcopal Church. It is hoped that this might evolve into a weekly free meal program supported by various churches and other community organizations. The United Church of Bristol took the lead in providing the food for this first luncheon of soup, salad, bread and dessert.

The Outreach/Missions committee wishes to thank everyone for supporting these many expressions of God's love!

Update from the Deacons

As we head into the holidays and the end of the year, we are reflecting back on what we accomplished this year. We started a new tradition and helped twenty-two parishioners celebrate their birthdays while getting to know them. We gave support throughout the year at funerals, baptisms, weddings and served communions. We welcomed new friends into our church family and reached out to friends in need. We've worked on a new directory and will soon have it in hand. We plan to continue reaching out to all through the New Year and welcome suggestions and concerns. The Deacons wish everyone a very Merry Christmas.

Community News

Diane and Greg Case will be in Australia for Christmas, visiting Diane's daughter for the holidays. They are planning on a visit to upstate NY next summer, sometime in August!

36th Annual Community Messiah Sing-Along
3pm at First Congregational Church 58 N. Main St. Canandaigua.

Altar Flower Committee Reports

Holiday decorations for the Church are underway! It is a coordinated effort this year with many committees and individuals involved!! The poinsettias will be in church on Sunday Dec. 22nd; sign-up sheets will be in fellowship Hall 12/01; last order date is 12/15. This year you will have a choice of 2 different colors; traditional red and marble [a variegated pink/white] @ \$7.75 each. Our thanks in advance for your order so that once again our sanctuary will be beautiful for the Christmas Holiday!!

Altar flowers for the month of December are coordinated by Diane Bassage; if you have any memorials you wish to place on any Sunday in December please call Diane @ 657-6609.

Fall Dinner Report

Thank you to all who helped with the dinner this year, it was a great success. 288 dinners were served to neighbors and friends, with a profit of over \$2400! Thanks again in any way that you helped out, it was greatly appreciated!!!

Christian Education

The annual **Children's Holiday Craft Bazaar** will be held on Sunday, December 8th at 9am, continuing during Sunday school. Anyone who can coordinate a craft - that includes planning, buying supplies and 'man or womaning' a table during the bazaar please contact Jan Schrader.

Adult Formation [Sunday school] will kick-off on Sunday, December 15th when participants will receive their materials. Classes will be held on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month after service. If you have any questions and/or are interested in joining the group call or e-mail Cc Bodnar at [396-0344] or [c.k.bodnar@gmail.com].

Words to Live By Book Available Soon

Even as we work to produce a new photo directory, and will soon turn our focus to the annual report for 2013, its good news that the long-awaited **Words to Live By** publication is now at the printer. Please sign up in the social room to reserve your copy, or contact churchofbristol@gmail.com; a limited number of booklets will be printed. The cost will be less than \$10. We thank the 150th Anniversary Committee, and especially Cc Bodnar, for bringing this project to completion. Lyle Jenks, Moderator

Pastor's Letter

Sitting in a waiting room would not be my first choice for penning thoughts about Advent. However, it's where I am at the moment. So, I pen away. And I suppose it does fit...since Advent is a season traditionally associated with...waiting. I sit quietly...in a waiting room...waiting for thoughts...about...waiting. It's a comfortable room I'm in. On the wall hang a couple of impressionistic prints featuring lots of flowers. A few chairs ring the room – sufficiently cushioned for an hour's sit, but not so comfy as to put you to sleep. A Culligan water dispenser stands in the corner, just opposite a conveniently located bathroom. An hospitable place for waiting, all in all.

But I wouldn't want to live here. There's no food, no TV, and no beds in this waiting room. My astute powers of observation discern that waiting here is intended to be of a limited duration. Less than a week, to be sure. Probably less than 24 hours. For those who sit here, the assumption is that something will happen in fairly short order. A door will open, and we “waiters” will pass through it...on to something else. Waiting doesn't last forever. It occurs to me that Mary, of Bethlehem fame, would have roundly (pun intended) affirmed that waiting has its limits. In time, the baby's head will emerge and – hail, Mary – let's start the breathing exercises! Even elephants don't gestate forever. Something new is coming...and let's get on with it! Perhaps one of the blessings of Advent is that it ends...on December 25th. We aren't left hanging forever. There is a consummation...a culmination...in a grand and glorious event. The wait was worth it! By contrast, waiting for a bus or a train or a plane that never arrives can feel like a first-class waste of time. Not so with the Christmas miracle.

If I were to distill down one of the nuggets of Christian faith, it would be that Jesus will show up. Show up at Christmas. Show up at home, at work, at church, in nature, in prayer, in community. Often little, seemingly improbably arrivals of joy...or peace...or forgiveness...or hope that we have longed for, perhaps after a period of darkness. But not eternal darkness. He shows up...and with him love...and light – a light which drenches all the dark crevices and obstinate corners of fear with a bright hope. And things are new and different and somehow better.

The water cooler gurgles to my right, but otherwise little has changed in this waiting room for several minutes. There isn't much to mark the passing of time. Not even a clock on the wall. Yet things are happening. I trust it. I'll be moving along soon, to another place and another experience. Things will happen, however static it may look at the moment. Jesus is gestating – growing in our midst. Pushing, progressing and – in time – arriving. Wait with good heart...and bright hope. It won't last forever...and it'll be worth the wait.

Advent blessings...

Tim

Birthdays

December:

Don Sanford 12/6

Carolyn Jenks Odell 12/7

Ethan Thomas-DiBiase
12/7

Evelyn Wallace 12/8

Marie Bennett 12/9

Joe Stoltz 12/15

Tom Ensman 12/17

Becca Wood 12/23

Carlyn Coe 12/30

January:

Priscilla Cratsley 1/2

Jack Fagan 1/3

Wendy Wheeler 1/7

Tyler Chappell 1/8

Kim Bolcarovic 1/23

Jenna Rose Babcock 1/24

Nancy Green 1/28

Peter Fletcher 1/31

Elizabeth Strasser 1/31