

Bristoletter

**Newsletter of the United Church of Bristol
A member congregation of the United Church of Christ
December 2014/January 2015**

**United Church of Bristol
7177 County Road Two
Bloomfield, NY 14469**

TO:

“God is still speaking”

Jerry LaRue Fletcher
Treasurer

Catherine Joseph
Moderator

Catherine Joseph
Chair of Deacons

Rev. Thomas (Tim) Hamlin, Pastor E-mail: redcedar58@gmail.com Phone: 585-727-2938

**Church School -- during service Worship -- 10:00 am Fellowship Hour -- 11:00 am
<churchofbristol@gmail.com> Church phone 585-657-7030 Web: UnitedChurchofBristolUCC.org
to receive Bristoletter by e-mail, contact jschrader@cnbank.com**

Liturgist, Greeters, & Fellowship Hour – Dec. 2014 & Jan 2015

DATE	LITURGIST	GREET & FAREWELL	FELLOWSHIP HOUR
Dec. 7	Bob Drayn	Lance & Diane Bassage	>> Sally Ess & Pat Pestle
Dec. 14	Cathy Joseph	Bob & Ginny Ford	Bob & Dianne Marcellus
Dec. 21	Rena Faulkner	Paula Dorn & Julie Searles	**Faye Brocklebank & Mary Lynne Parmelee*
Dec. 28	Joan Hall	Bob & Stephanie Drayn	Elaine Burd & Edie Thomas
Jan. 4	MaryAnn Strasser	John & Rena Faulkner	>> Priscilla Cratsley & Deb Footer
Jan. 11	Bob Marcellus	Sheila Hudson & Ann Ward	Paula Dorn & Julie Searles
Jan. 18	Art Babcock	Joan Hall & Gloria Miles	** John & Rena Faulkner **
Jan.25	Mary Lynne Parmelee	Babcock Family	Bob & Stephanie Drayn
Feb. 1	John Faulkner	Bob & Dianne Marcellus	VanStralen Family

- **“Greeters”**: Please try to remember to have one or both of you be a “fareweller” at the end of the service by the door to wish those people well who may not be staying with us for the fellowship hour. Thank you for adding this new task and making everyone feel welcome all the time at UCB! Your other duties still are to be at the door by 9:20, remember to wear your name tag, have guests sign our guestbook, hand out the Sunday bulletins and any other hand-outs, count all the attendees and enter the total in the book, take up the collection when called by the Pastor. Headsets are now kept in Pastor’s office and should be returned there after the service.

-**“Fellowship Hour”**: will need to provide juice for children and non-coffee drinkers. Pick up the cake, if it is ****cake Sunday****, Pat and Sally order it. Cake is picked up at Wegman’s Catering desk. You pay for it, then are reimbursed by the church when the receipt is turned in.

****These represent “birthday cake Sundays”**. If you should be on fellowship hour for this Sunday and are new to this, please see Pat or Sally.

>>These are “pot-luck Sundays”. A huge spread for “fellowship hour isn’t really necessary on these Sundays. Please, all are welcome to join in for a pot-luck luncheon after a light fellowship snack.

+Please find your own substitute if you are unable to fulfill your appointed task. THANKS!

+If you would like to be added to this list, please let Pat or Sally know.

Those Whom We Hold in Prayer

Carrie, Kevin, Ray, Cindy, Kali, Uncle Tom, Dale, Denise, Sally, Leila, Roger, Doris, Emily, Kim, Sandy, La Rue and Peter, Joan and Bill, Rena and John, Tom and Tom, Stephanie's dad, Margaret, Ryan, David, Jean, Leigh, Jim, Lynne, Mary Lou, John and Emily, grandpa Jim, the Fox family, the Fletcher family, and baby Hunter. Prayers of compassion for all those in recovery. Prayers for Steven, and for all of the service men and women serving around the globe. Prayers of compassion for the care-givers. Prayers of thanksgiving for the freedom to vote and worship, for church members and ministries, for Wendy's determined embrace of life, and every good gift of spiritual vitality.

Deacons Report

As the holidays move ever nearer, the Deacon's welcome Jim Burgess to our ranks. Jim has already jumped in with both feet, helping with birthdays and communion. We are looking forward to his added input.

We have been busy working on the inactive members list and have received many replies from form letters sent to those people we could find. We hope to have a finished list by next month.

Fall decorations will come down and decorations for the Christmas season will then go up.

We have started an in-home communion service with Pastor Tim and have served communion three times to people at home. If you know someone who is not able to make it to church that would like this service, please let a Deacon know.

As the New Year approaches, we are asking anyone turning 80 in 2015 to please let a Deacon know so we may add you to our birthday list.

We wish everyone a safe and Happy Thanksgiving!

Altar Flower Committee Report

Many thanks to Joan Hall and all for the Fall decorations in the Sanctuary! Also, to Gloria Miles for summer flowers and we welcome Fran Staub back in 2015!!

Now it's time to turn our attention to Advent and the Poinsettia order! Look for announcements and sign-up sheets very shortly.

Please contact Diane B. [657-6609] if there is a Sunday in December that you wish to adorn the altar with a memorial arrangement. Again, thank-you in advance for your poinsettia order; the church always looks so lovely during the Christmas season.

Outreach/Missions

We do, indeed, give thanks with a grateful heart! On October 5th, Worldwide Communion Sunday, our church received the Neighbors in Need offering. This special collection supports the Justice and Witness Ministries of the UCC.

The sanctuary tree will feature donations of socks this year. These socks will be donated to our local veterans. Hats, glove/mittens and scarves will continue to be collected this year, and will be donated to women and children in need. These items will be distributed through a local agency to provide much needed warmth for hands, heads and hearts in our community. Linda Ensmann has again coordinated the Angel Tree Project, which provides gifts to children of an incarcerated parent.

Our church has also been invited to provide holiday gifts for long-term residents of The Pines at M.M. Ewing Continuing Care center.

Recent outreach efforts have included: UCB Food Cupboard Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets, Hands of Hope Kitchen, Doctors without Borders, Save the Children, Salem Nutrition Center, Wildlife Defenders and Happiness House.

The Christmas Eve offering will support the UCC Christmas Fund which assists retired ministers who are facing financial and medical hardships.

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

Committee Handbook Updates

Committee members - please submit a short two or three sentence description of your committee's purpose and primary activities. Please e-mail or hand-deliver your submission to Catherine Joseph by December 15th.

2015 Draft Committee Budgets

Committee members - please submit your 2015 Draft Committee Budget to La Rue by December 15th.

Christian Education

Dates to Remember:

December 14th - 9am Annual Holiday Craft Bazaar

An opportunity for our youth to make Christmas crafts and frost & decorate cutout cookies, some of which will be used on the Angel Tree caregiver goodie plates.

News of Our Wider United Church of Christ

The Fall Assembly of our Genesee Valley Association, UCC, was hosted by Salem UCC in downtown Rochester, with most all of our 31 congregations represented. While others from Bristol were unable to be physically present, our commitment to "Christ in the City" was clearly felt - and deeply appreciated - through our generous Joy Jar contribution to help with ongoing costs of the Salem Nutrition Center, which serves a full hot meal each Monday and Tuesday to upwards of 200 neighbors in need.

Our New York Conference Minister, David Gaewski, recently met with GVA clergy to discuss annual gatherings of the Conference; after meeting at Silver Bay on Lake George in 2015, the annual gathering may well come to the Syracuse/Rochester region in 2016. News from our Conference Board, on which I sit, is that our Investment Committee has been charged with developing plans to transfer investments to the new Fossil Fuel Free Fund established by decision of UCC General Synod in Long Beach last year. The Conference "Covenant Share" offering, to be given soon when Ryan Henderson, our Associate Conference Minister, speaks during worship at UCB, is an important part of our Conference budget, assisting with many products and services to UCC congregations across our NY Conference.

Plans for General Synod 30 are underway, to be hosted in Cleveland next summer. As one of three members in our GVA delegation, I will endeavor to report as the program takes shape and resolutions are introduced for consideration by Synod, our national governing body. Lyle Jenks, delegate to Genesee Valley Association

Pastor's Letter

Bristoletter: 1/13/14

I pulled the honey jar out of my kitchen cupboard intending to pour a bit of sweetness onto my English muffin. The honey had other ideas. I quickly learned that 55 degree honey is stubborn. It hates to be rushed. So the honey and I were at a stand-off: How long could the cold honey remain in the container? And how long could I wait for my breakfast? In the end, I cheated: I resorted to a butter knife...and extracted some of the reluctant honey, lest I be having English muffins for my dinner.

I find that there is generally an implicit pace to things – a pace we try to alter at our peril. Department stores aside, we can't rush Christmas. It will arrive on December 25th. Contrary to popular myth, clocks don't run any faster during December. It's the same pace it always is...roughly one second per second...one day in a day. However, I will grant you that there ARE moments when it feels like some sort of conspiracy to accelerate time to a ridiculous rate.

I was visiting family in Boston not long ago. After getting a bite to eat, we left the restaurant and found our car in the parking garage. (Behind lobster and baked beans, Boston's flag-ship commodity is parking garages!) We pulled up to the exit gate to pay our fee and be liberated to, once again, take our life in our hands on the Boston roadways. Upon inserting the parking ticket, the computer lit up with the following instruction: "Your fee is \$9225. Please insert your credit card." With one voice, we gasped "What?!", then "Don't DO it!"

Even taking into account inflated urban prices, this seemed a bit excessive. After identical results at 2 other automatic gates, we eventually found a "non-cyber" human who obligingly sprung us for a mere \$6. Never seemed like such a deal! Time keeps flowing at its usual pace. But not every computer believes it. Apparently, the parking garage computer accelerated our mealtime to last for 341 days!

Many spiritual traditions honor the practice of "living in the present moment", including Buddhism, Sufi Islam, and Contemplative Christianity. The "moment" is deemed precious. The present moment is the place of centering, of calm, of gratitude, of grace. And the practice of staying in the moment seems to be a good antidote to the break-neck, anxious living that so often characterizes the holidays.

About the only place that the "present moment" gets a slight nod is just prior to carving the turkey, when the knife hangs motionless, and folks take a hasty break to bow heads and give thanks. It's certainly better than nothing! But we might do well to expand the practice a bit, and make it a regular part of our holiday "diet." With any success, we might just begin to "live in the present moment" the whole year through.

Our worshipping community can often seem a bit out of date. We don't have I-pods or I-pads in the sanctuary. There's generally no "googling" during the sermon, (though there is undoubtedly "doodling"!) And the only "cloud" mentioned in church is the "cloud of witnesses." But for all our "anachronistic" tendencies, one thing we do that is cutting edge (not to mention deeply healing) is "live in the moment." It is a delightful thing...especially in the middle of holiday hurry...to pause for prayer, relax for a little reflection, and linger with friends over a drink and a snack.

As we enter the time of waiting we call "Advent", I'm eager to share some moments with you all – slow, gracious, peaceful moments. May the peace of Christ - "the peace which the world can neither give nor take away" - dwell richly in your hearts...in every moment.
Tim

United Church of Bristol Calendar for December 2014 and January 2015

November 22	Hand out Thanksgiving boxes
November 23	Ryan Henderson, UCC Area Conference Minister will give message during worship service. Fall decorations taken down.
November 30	First Sunday of Advent
December 5	"One Man Show - A Christmas Carol" - St. Peters Church in Bloomfield at 7:00pm
December 7	Second Sunday of Advent Pot Luck and Holy Communion
December 14	Third Sunday of Advent, Annual Holiday Craft Bazaar @ 9am Deacons meeting
December 15	Cabinet meeting at 6:30pm
December 18	Blue Christmas Service - 7pm @ South Livonia UCC
December 24	Christmas Eve Service - 5pm @ United Church of Bristol
December 21	Fourth Sunday of Advent, Angel Tree delivery Missions/Outreach meeting, hand out Food Cupboard Christmas boxes

Happy Birthday in December to:

Don Sanford – 12/6
Carolyn Jenks Odell – 12/7
Ethan T. 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

Happy Birthday in January to:

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