

Bristoletter

**Newsletter of the United Church of Bristol
A member congregation of the United Church of Christ**

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

“God is still speaking”

Jerry LaRue Fletcher
Treasurer

Catherine Joseph
Moderator

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Church School -- during service Worship -- 10:00 am Fellowship Hour -- 11:00 am

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Those Whom We Hold in Prayer

Carrie, Kevin, Cheryl, Sally, Rod, Marian, Sarah, Elaine, Linda, Jim, Cody, Barry, Joyce, Mary Lou, Paul, Bea, Shealynn, Stacey, Darlene, Sandy, La Rue and Peter, Joan and Bill, Rena and John, Tom and Tom, Leon and Teresa, Stephanie's mom, Margaret, Doris, and Ryan. Prayers of compassion for those struggling in mind, body, or spirit. Healing prayers for the families and friends of: Irene Pfuntner, Charlie Miller, Ernie Pestle, Cliffy Erb, Roger DeBell, Bill Verheile, Cindy Coffey, Joann Harter, "Sonny" Sherry, Joan Drake and Burgy Scott. Prayers for Cody and for Steven, and for all of the service men and women serving in our military. Prayers of safety for those traveling. Prayers of compassion for the citizens of France, and all who yearn for a deep and lasting peace, and an end to violence. Prayers of thanksgiving for freedom, clean water, good friends, supportive prayer, and for journeys of confirmation.

Deacons Report

The Deacons are saying good-bye and thank you to Catherine Joseph as she retires from the committee to focus on the duties of church Moderator.

The Deacons continue their birthday celebrations for our over 80 members and welcome information on anyone who is turning 80 in the coming months.

We have served as greeters at several funeral/memorial services, continue visits to home bound members and will host the **Ash Wednesday** soup supper on February 18th to start the **Lenten season**. Please join us for soup, bread/rolls and dessert at 6pm followed by service at 6:30. If there is anything we can do for you, please notify a Deacon.

Diane Bassage, Deb Footer, Bob Marcellus, Faye Brocklebank, Jim Burgess.

Altar Flower Committee Report

First, a thank-you to everyone for ordering poinsettias for the Christmas season; the Sanctuary looked lovely! A special thanks to Phil and Deb Footer for their part in decorating inside the church!

Gloria Miles [229-2322] will be doing the flower arrangements during February and Fran Staub [229-7306] will have the Sundays in March. Easter Sunday is April 5th; Spring will be just around the corner. Look for information in the bulletin about Easter flowers in March. The month of April will be coordinated by Diane Bassage [657-6609].

Please contact the appropriate committee member if you wish to place memorial flowers on the altar any given Sunday. Thank-you.

Joy Jar & Outreach Update

For the 2014 **Advent season**, socks, hats, glove and mittens decorated our sanctuary Christmas tree. These generously donated items have been distributed through local agencies to provide much needed warmth for veterans and women/children in need. Many thanks to Linda Ensman who again coordinated the **Angel Tree Project**, an outreach program that provides gifts to children with an incarcerated parent.

Our Christmas Eve offering supported the UCC Christmas Fund which assists retired ministers who are facing financial and medical hardships. On February 1st we invite the community to our **Souper Bowl of Caring** luncheon, featuring a variety of homemade soups and fix-ins. This event will benefit the United Church of Bristol food pantry. Donations of food and/or cash are most appreciated. (Items in high demand include peanut butter, jelly, cereal, canned veggies/fruit, spaghetti, pasta sauce, mac & cheese, and toilet paper.)

On Saturday, February 14th, a **Valentine's Day dinner** will be held at the church from 4:30 – 7:00 pm. Intimate dining and soft music will provide a welcome break from the winter blahs. Proceeds from the meal will support ministries to the poor and homeless in New York City. The cost of the meal is \$8.50.

Lent begins with an **Ash Wednesday** supper on February 18th at 6:00 pm, and a worship service to follow at 6:30. Additional **Lenten** soup suppers are scheduled for February 25th, March 11th and March 25th, all beginning at 6:00 p.m. A 6:00 **Maundy Thursday** supper and 6:30 service will be shared as part of our **Holy Week** observances.

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

From Stephanie Drayn:

Our Valentine's dinner on February 14 will support a homeless men's shelter in NYC. This site was chosen because my brother, Shawn O'Connor, is one of the Franciscan friars who operates this shelter. The friars are members of a religious order that provide help for the needy in this country and around the world. As friars they give up all their worldly possessions and take a vow of poverty. They survive on donations for their own needs as well as those of the people they assist. The proceeds from this dinner will be used to purchase food service supplies for the shelter - they provide an

evening meal to about 40 men each day. In addition, the friars supply grooming products for the men who frequent this shelter. A list of often needed grooming supplies is below. If you wish to donate any of these items they can be brought to the Valentine's dinner or to church on Sunday through the month of February. The list below also includes office supplies needed by the friars. Thank you in advance for your donations!

GROOMING/KITCHEN/OFFICE Supplies

Shampoo Legal paper pads
Soap Stenographer's pads
Toothpaste Toothbrushes
Scotch tape Deodorant
Notepad paper (approx. 3x5) for phone
Tylenol (acetaminophen) store brand is fine
Advil (ibuprofen) - store brand is fine
Paper napkins Large size bottles dish detergent

Pastor's Letter

Over the years, people have asked me a lot of questions. Some questions are relatively simple; some are more complex. In rare cases, I can offer a very clear, concrete answer – for example, “The bathrooms are located down at the end of the Social Hall on the left and the right.” Those moments of clarity are ever so sweet, perhaps because they are so infrequent! More often, I hear more puzzling queries such as: “When was the last water delivery to the church?” or “Where is the communion chalice?” or even “How many of the disciples were left-handed?” Generally, these are questions for which all my ministerial training has left me utterly unprepared. After 11 and half years of blank expressions, people are usually pretty forgiving of my ignorance and simply move the conversation on to simpler matters.

But of all the questions I hear, the most challenging one comes from folks of all ages and stages, often times of considerable stress. And it has the effect of slapping me in the face with its gut-level honesty. The question is: “Why am I here?” Sometimes, I'm so taken aback that I struggle for any available response. I'm tempted to venture an all-too-flippant reply such as, “Well, I guess it's a conspiracy of good genetics, good luck, and avoiding golf during thunderstorms.” Other times, I make it all about me and say, “You're alive and here today so that I can enjoy your company!”

But neither response seems very satisfactory to the one asking. I find that the question usually crops in a time of great loss or transition, when a kind of spiritual “dryness” can set in, and one's sense of purpose can shrivel up like a summer squash in a February basement.

When a community such as ours weathers so many losses in rapid succession, the question is bound to arise.

Or some variation of it, such as “Who am I without him or her in my life?” or “How does our community pick up and move on with this enormous hole in it?”

It can take a long time to reach our “new normal”, to incorporate this new loss into a fresh sense of self and purpose. Here's where communities of faith can be very helpful – on a lot of levels. Sometimes it's just as simple as providing a place to come where everything **HASN'T** been tossed into a cocked hat – where there is continuity and consistency.

Sometimes the blessing is as simple as a predictable offering of coffee, cookies and conversation with friends. There is enormous healing power in just sitting with a familiar face, holding a cup of something warm, and letting them convey to you, in one way or another, “I'm glad you're here! Life is hard. Losses come...**AND**...the coffee's brewed and I'm here for you.”

The television show “Cheers” was famous for its “Bull and Finch” bar where “everybody knows your name.” I'm not sure if we all know each other's names. (That may be a work-in-progress!) But there IS a sense that, whatever life may have tossed at us, we will find warmth and kindness and maybe even a glimmer of hope...as we gather up on the hill.

Peter's final instruction from Christ was to “feed my sheep.” Sometimes we sheep are wandering around stunned and bewildered by the “hits” of life – needing a bit of guidance to find that most needed “food.” A community, at its best, will steer one another toward the hot coffee and warm friendship, and in so doing (I believe) an encounter with the face of God. At least that's my prayer.

I'll see you at the coffee pot...

In faith...

Tim

United Church of Bristol Calendar for February and March 2015

January 25	Annual Reports Due
February 1	'Souper' Bowl of Caring Potluck and Holy Communion
February 4	Church sing-along with friends at M.M. Ewing Cont. Care Center
February 8	Annual Meeting
February 14	Valentine's Day Dinner [Linguine Alfredo or Lasagna] 4:30-7pm
February 15	Birthday cake Sunday and Deacon's Meeting 9am
	Cabinet Meeting 11:30am
February 18	Ash Wednesday Soup Supper [6pm] and service [6:30pm]
February 25	Community Lenten Soup Supper 6pm
March 1	Potluck
March 11	Community Lenten Soup Supper 6pm
March 15	April/May Bristoletter deadline, Birthday cake Sunday
March 25	Community Lenten Soup Supper 6pm
April 2	Maundy Thursday Soup Supper [6pm] and service [6:30pm]

Happy Birthday in February to:

Lyle Jenks	2/7
Karla Babcock	2/8
Joyce Gilbert	2/10
Chris Bailey	2/12
Dale Comfort	2/12
Colleen Miles	2/12
David Davenport	2/14
Pat Sanford	2/14
Zadoc Fletcher	2/18
Bob Bolcarovic	2/21
Walter Babcock	2/22
James Dunne	2/23
Fran Staub	2/25
Edie Thomas	2/25
Diane Marie Bassage	2/26
Dianne Marie Case	2/26

Happy Birthday in March to:

David Hudson	3/5
James Chappell	3/7
Bob Drayn, Jr.	3/10
Alexa Cooley	3/13
Dianne Marcellus	3/14
Kaylee Angell	3/15
Paula Dorn	3/15
Rena Faulkner	3/16
Noah Van Stralen	3/17
Pat Panzarella	3/17
O'Mallie Angell	3/22
Jase Chappell	3/22
Richard Johnson	3/23
Madeline Cooley	3/29

Liturgist, Greeters, & Fellowship Hour – Feb. & Mar. 2015

DATE	LITURGIST	GREET & FAREWELL	FELLOWSHIP HOUR
Feb. 1	Rena Faulkner	Bob & Dianne Marcellus	>> VanStralen Family Souper Bowl Potluck
Feb. 8	Cc Bodnar	Bob & Stephanie Drayn	Faye Brocklebank & Mary Lynne Parmelee
Feb.15	Dianne Marcellus	Richard & Norma Lyons	** Lance & Diane Bassage**
Feb. 22	Bob Drayn	Cc Bodnar & Cathy Joseph	Elaine Burd & Edie Thomas
Mar. 1	Diane Bassage	Faye Brocklebank & Mary Lynne Parmelee	>>Babcock Family
Mar. 8	Cathy Joseph	John & Rena Faulkner	Paula Dorn & Julie Searles
Mar. 15	Karla Babcock	Bob & Ginny Ford	** Bob & Dianne Marcellus**
Mar.22	Mary Lynne Parmelee	Paula Dorn & Julie Searles	Bob & Stephanie Drayn
Mar. 29	Lance Bassage	Sheila Hudson & Gloria Miles	John & Rena Faulkner
Apr. 5	Joan Hall	Jim & Mary Lou Burgess	Sally Ess & Pat Pestle

- **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 Wegmans 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.