



The Trumpet

Genesee Valley Association
New York Conference
United Church of Christ

December 1, 2015



Pennies for People (PFP) Grant Applications

If you are a participant in the PFP outreach program, you may nominate a group to receive funds from the program.

Applications may be obtained by emailing Sue Mitchell at Webster UCC and should be returned to Sue by Dec. 30. Her email address is smitche4@rochester.rr.com.

If you have questions, please contact Linda Bull at LBull08@frontiernet.net. Applications will be reviewed and submitted to the GVA Program and Mission Support committee for a decision. Preference is given to groups that do not receive significant government funding. No group will receive funds two years in a row but may reapply in a subsequent year.

PFP is a UCC NY Women's outreach project based on the old "Cent Societies" of the 1830's and 1840's and began in May 1988 at the Annual Conference of UCC NY Women. Churches participating may collect pennies in any way they choose throughout the year.

SAVE THE DATE! The annual meeting of the New York Conference of UCC in conjunction with the regional gathering of the Disciples of Christ will be held here in Rochester next year! Mark the dates on your calendar: June 10-12 and watch for more details.



Genesee Valley
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What's Inside

Page 2: What's New at the Resource Center

Page 3: GVA Churches Celebrate Advent and Christmas

Page 4: Church News and New Words for an Old Song

Page 5: The Madonna Program

Page 6: Calendar of Events and People News

Page 7: Refugees are Human Beings – Joint Statement by UCC and DOC leadership



What's New at the Resource Center

These are the newest additions to the Resource Center. For more information and access, go to <http://pbygenval.org/about-us/missions-ministries/resource-center/line-catalog/> - for the on-line catalog, <http://pbygenval.org/about-us/missions-ministries/resource-center/> - for

information about the Resource Center, or <http://pbygenval.org/category/resource-center/> - for News & Updates regarding the Resource Center

SHORT STORIES BY JESUS by Levine, Amy-Jill

Jesus was a skilled storyteller and perceptive teacher who used images from everyday life to stir up interest in his message about the Kingdom of God. But life in first-century Galilee and Judea was very different from our world today, and many traditional interpretations of Jesus's stories not only ignore this difference, but also often import anti-Jewish and sexist views. In this wise, entertaining, and educational book, Levine explores Jesus's most popular parables, revealing their hidden depths, exposing their misinterpretations, and showing how they can still challenge and provoke us two thousand years later.

FEASTING ON THE WORD, CHILDREN'S SERMONS by Wehrheim, Carol A.

Practical suggestions for preparing and delivering the children's sermon. After explaining the purpose of the children's sermon, noted Christian educator Carol Wehrheim provides a story for each Sunday of the church year based on the Revised Common Lectionary. In addition, a few stories are provided for special moments in the church's life, such as when a mission group is commissioned, church leaders ordained, and a death occurs. This resource provides pastors and other church leaders with fresh, engaging stories that children will understand.

SIMPLY GOOD NEWS by Wright, N.T.

Noted Bible scholar N.T. Wright shows us how Christians today have lost sight of what the "good news" of the gospel really is. In *Simply Good News*, he takes us back in time to reveal how the people of the first-century—the gospel's original audience—would have received Jesus' message. He offers a clear and thoughtful analysis of what the "good news" really is, and applies it to our lives today, revealing its power to transform us.

ACCIDENTAL SAINTS: FINDING GOD IN ALL THE WRONG PEOPLE by Bolz-Weber, Nadia

Tattooed, angry and profane, this former standup comic turned pastor stubbornly, sometimes hilariously, resists the God she feels called to serve. But God keeps showing up in the least likely of people—a church-loving agnostic, a drag queen, a felonious Bishop and a gun-toting member of the NRA. In a time when many have rightly become dis-illusioned with Christianity, *Accidental Saints* demonstrates what happens when ordinary people share bread and wine, struggle with scripture together, and tell each other the truth about their real lives. This unforgettable account of their faltering steps toward wholeness will ring true for believer and skeptic alike.

SPIRITUAL COMPANIONING by Reed, Angela H., Osmer

Among the smiling faces in church on Sunday mornings are those who long for deeper, more genuine relationships within their local congregations—active, intentional relationships that nurture the soul and encourage personal encounters with God. Drawing on decades of experience in spiritual direction, congregational ministry, and seminary teaching, this book offers a clear and rich introduction to the theology and practice of spiritual companioning in the Protestant tradition. The authors explore the topic in a biblically based and historically informed manner and give practical help for cultivating spiritual relationships in congregations and beyond, using stories throughout to illustrate key ideas. Discussion questions are included.

ENVISIONING THE CONGREGATION PRACTICING THE GOSPEL by Stewart, John W.

Reflecting a wealth of ministerial experience, this accessible and instructive book is designed to equip lay leaders and pastors of Protestant churches to better envision and practice gospel-driven ministry amid the challenges of our twenty-first-century context. Especially addressing Baby Boomer and Gen X leaders, seasoned pastor and practical theologian John Stewart presents and explains five biblically mandated, foundational practices for being and nurturing the church: belonging, discipling, witnessing, serving, and worshiping. Stewart believes that these five practices are "essential markers" for congregations that seek to remain faithful to their risen Lord, and he offers memorable examples of how specific churches are carrying them out well.

GVA CHURCHES CELEBRATE ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS!

Churches in the Genesee Valley Association are actively celebrating Advent and Christmas with a variety of activities. Here is a sample of what is going on in our community, in addition to traditional worship services.

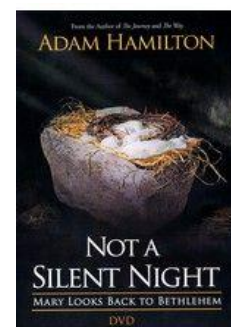
Immanuel UCC of Ontario is hosting a Christmas Cantata with North Ontario United Methodist with a combined choir performing at 3:30 pm on Sunday, December 13, with a reception following.



Honeoye United Church of Christ will have a Christmas concert with cookies and punch at 3 pm on December 20 followed by caroling at 5 pm to various church members' homes.

First Congregational Church in Fairport will host an "Advent-ure" Sunday December 6 following worship in which the church family may participate in crafts and activities for all ages, including making Christmas ornaments and cards, as well as decorating cookies. Special brunch finger foods will be provided by the deacons and after a visit from Santa, the group will go caroling at the homes of some church members.

Henrietta UCC is having a Thursday night Advent Bible Study the first three Sundays of December based on the book *Not a Silent Night*. The church will also have a children's Christmas pageant on Sunday, Dec. 13, at 10:30 am worship.



First Congregational Church in Spencerport will celebrate the season with a Christmas Party and Special Music/Cookie Walk following worship on December 13.



Salem UCC's "Cookie Stroll" offers cookies without the baking at the Salem Women's Fellowship Cookie Stroll at Salem UCC on Saturday, Dec 12 from 11 am to 2 pm. People are invited to purchase one of two size boxes and fill them with the assortment of cookies available. There will be a few Christmas crafts on sale also.

Salem UCC's annual 'get ready for Christmas' will take place on Sunday Dec 6th following 10 am worship. The event starts with a potluck meal and then focuses on Christmas crafts and service opportunities. Nutrition Center guest gift bags will be assembled and home congregation cards written. There will be crafts for every age and ability.

REMINDER

Please be sure to send your covenant contributions and all correspondence to the GVA Office address at P.O. Box 67263, Rochester, NY 14617.



Please share the work and play of your church with your GVA sisters and brothers. Send your church news to gvauc@gmail.com Thanks!

West Bloomfield Congregational Church presented “Bloomfield Home Companion Old Time Live Radio Shows” Nov 6 and 7 featuring a real live sound effects lab courtesy of the Antique Wireless Museum, fun old-time and newer “radio” plays, goofy costumes, jokes and laughs, and music from the church’s house band and several special performers.

First Congregational Church at Rushville celebrated their 214th Year Anniversary on Sunday, November 22nd with a special service and a Thanksgiving feast following church.

First Congregational Church at Spencerport’s Book Club will be reading Reverend Sarah Griffith Lund’s *Blessed are the Crazy: Breaking the Silence about Mental Illness, Family and Church* for their January 11 discussion.

Honeoye United Church of Christ has partnered with the Ontario County Office for the Aging to once again offer the Community Dining Program beginning in January 2016. The Congregate Meal Program will offer a hot, nutritious meal to any person over the age of 60 and provides speakers throughout the year to talk about nutrition and answer questions.

New Words for an Old Song

At Henrietta UCC, Pastor Martha wrote some Advent words to the tune of “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice!” that the church will be using, one verse a week, to match the themes of hope, peace, joy, love. The new words are a way of satisfying people’s need to sing familiar carols while not missing out on the “waiting” aspect of Advent.

Good Christian friends, rejoice
With heart and hand and voice!
Advent HOPE will pave the way
As we watch and wait and pray.
Hear and share the news so bold:
Our God will come, just as foretold!
Hope will pave the way,
Hope will pave the way!

Good Christian friends, rejoice
With heart and hand and voice!
Leave your hatred, heed the call:
Christ brings PEACE for one and all.
Come and join us as we sing,
Let the news of Christmas ring:
Peace for one and all,
Peace for one and all!

Good Christian friends, rejoice
With heart and hand and voice!
Such surprise: the angels say,
“JOY has come to us this day!”
Seek and find God’s goodness here,
For Jesus casts away our fear.
Joy has come this day,
Joy has come this day!

Good Christian friends, rejoice
With heart and hand and voice!
LOVE is here and yet to come,
For God with us will make a home
Sorrows, fears and dreams we’ll tell,
As we await Emmanuel.
Love is yet to come,
Love is yet to come!

The Madonna Program

Parma Greece UCC has been presenting the Madonna Program, a unique, biennial holiday production since the church celebrated its 175th year anniversary six years ago. The focus of the hour-long event is the presentation of eight live tableaux replicating in precise detail eight classic portrayals of the Madonna and Child.



In each tableau, a painted backdrop duplicates the background of the original painting, and the live model representing Mary, is dressed in a custom-made costume (almost) identical to that in the original masterpiece. As she sits absolutely still within a life-size gilded frame, special lighting effects produce the highlights and shadows created by the artist. The result in the totally darkened room is a breathtaking illusion, a living replica of a beautiful and inspirational work of art.

As each work is presented, a narrator shares information about the painting and the artist who created it. Besides the tableaux, the evening includes musical interludes, both choral and instrumental, and the recitation of poetry and scripture verses celebrating the Madonna. Light refreshments follow the production.



The church is planning for the December 2016 production and is seeking volunteers to help with this labor intensive project. They are looking for very dedicated volunteers to assist with all aspects of this event - production coordinator, director, young ladies to sit as Madonnas, seamstresses, artists, behind the scenes assistance, manual labor, electrical, audio, visual, research, writing/editing, public speaking, singing, instrumentals, decorating for the reception, baking cookies, etc.

A lot of the work occurs for months before the event, but the last week is very intense. All positions would have experienced people working with them for guidance, but the small congregation needs others to join them to make this a success next year.

The church views this program as a prelude to the holiday season, and the congregation offers this as their Christmas gift to the community. It occurs on the first weekend of December so as to not interfere with most other holiday events. For more information, contact Jodie Traugott at 730-7186 or jmartkt@yahoo.com.

“Jesus stands at the door knocking (Rev. 3:20). In total reality, he comes in the form of the beggar, of the dissolute human child in ragged clothes, asking for help. He confronts you in every person that you meet. As long as there are people, Christ will walk the earth as your neighbor, as the one through whom God calls you, speaks to you, makes demands on you. That is the great seriousness and great blessedness of the Advent message. Christ is standing at the door; he lives in the form of a human being among us.” – **Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *God Is In the Manger***

Calendar of Events

Please be sure to send information on your church's events to gvaucc@gmail.com

December 3

Free Webinar from Parish Resource Center and the UCC New York Conference

You Can Lead an Adult Study! (click here to register) - Thursday, December 3, 2015 - 7:00 - 8:00 PM EST. Small groups in the church have the power to bring people closer to God. Learn to use this power effectively as we discuss the skills necessary for leading adult study groups. Material covered will include selecting study topics, putting group together, different approaches to leading discussions, supplementing curriculum with various learning activities.

December 4

Rochester Church Women United's Advent Celebration "Companions on the Journey of Advent" from 9:15 am to 1:30 pm in the Horizon Room at Brickstone, adjacent to St. John's Meadows; 1325 Elmwood Avenue, Rochester. Gloria Ulterino and Jennifer Case will be speakers. Lunch will be brown bag.

December 8

Living in Harmony, an interfaith environmental group convened by Elizabeth Pixley at Henrietta UCC, will focus its December 8 meeting on two climate groups that have become active in the Rochester area recently. They are the Rochester People's Climate Coalition (RPCC) and Mothers Out Front. Volunteers from these organizations will provide information on their activities, the issues confronting us, and what we can all do to get involved. The meeting begins at 7 pm at Henrietta UCC, 1400 Lehigh Station Road. For more information, contact Elizabeth Pixley at eypixley@gmail.com or call (585-334-0977).

December 17

GVA Clergy Colloquy at Webster UCC beginning at 10 am. Topic will be Being in the Spirit/Conversation and Carols led by Carl Richter.

January 23, 2016

The Presbytery of Genesee Valley will offer a Church Leadership Development Day from 8:30 am to 12 noon, with an optional working lunch course from 12:15 to 1:45. The event will include ten morning courses plus eight working lunch courses and will be held at the Perinton Presbyterian Church. For additional information, visit <http://pbygenval.org/events/church-leadership-development-day-2/> or <http://pbygenval.org/publications/church-leadership-development-day/>

People News

- James K. Boodley has been called as intentional interim minister to the UCC at Honeoye.
- Eric Falla will join the Committee on Ministry as a lay person in January 2016.
- Nancy Peebles has resigned as GVA Moderator and in her resignation to the Executive Council noted "It has been a privilege to serve as your moderator for the past two years as I finished out an unexpired term. Although I had thought that I would continue to serve in that capacity through the term for which I was elected, circumstances have necessitated that I step back from that position. I will continue to be involved in the Association as a pastor in Spencerport, but will no longer serve as moderator. May God's blessings be on you all. And may the churches in the GVA continue to serve in mission and ministry for our Christ."
- Steven Price, formerly Vice Moderator, has assumed the role of GVA Moderator

Not Terrorists; Not Tourists: Refugees are Human Beings

The leadership of the United Church of Christ and the Disciples of Christ released a joint statement Nov. 17, "Not Terrorists; Not Tourists: Refugees are Human Beings," speaking out against the current comments from many politicians — including the governors of 24 states who say they will not accept Syrian refugees for resettlement — along with members of Congress and U.S. mayors, who want the Obama administration to rethink the refugee policy, which will admit 10,000 Syrians in 2016. Here are some excerpts from that statement. Read more at <http://disciples.org/general/disciples-ucc-make-joint-statement-on-refugees/>.

The Syrian war is the worst humanitarian crisis of our generation, and it has no resolution in sight. More than half the Syrian population has been forcibly displaced from their homes, and more than four million Syrians are now refugees in neighboring Middle Eastern countries and Europe. Over half of Syrian refugees are children.



Recognizing the enormity of the Syrian crisis, our churches around the nation have prayed, extended care, and advocated for allowing more refugees from Syria—and in fact more refugees and potential immigrants generally—to be welcomed. In seeking such a welcome, we assert our faith commitments to “love the sojourner” (Deuteronomy 10:19) and to treat “the foreigner residing among you...as your native-born” (Leviticus 19:34). We likewise continue to advocate for negotiated steps to end the root cause of the Syrian and Middle Eastern refugee crisis—the Syrian war. We stand firmly behind those positions.

It is tragic that our country continues to witness the scapegoating and systematic collective punishment that it has known in the past. During World War II, those of Japanese heritage were interned. In former eras it was Catholics, Jews, and repeatedly Asians who were refused entry or inclusion into our immigrant nation. Today we watch still as a new manifestation of Jim Crow leads to the mass incarceration of great numbers of African-Americans. We have experienced how fear and suspicion lead to institutionalized discrimination and systematic dehumanization of whole communities.

We are appalled by the punitive and discriminatory rhetoric and actions by many political leaders to restrict and deny the admission of Syrian refugees because they are Syrian, or because they are Muslim. Such restrictions and limitations only make the displaced Syrian population doubly victimized: victims of the violence of war, and victims of the violence of hatred and bigotry.

We aspire to something greater than this. We celebrate the human community. We recognize evil in the world, but the answer is not to shut out whole populations collectively. We are called to be a merciful and caring community; to seek justice and to honor every person; and to stand up and shout out when such a vision is challenged or violated. We urge caution and caring in our discourse and in our actions, so that we all may hold ourselves to a higher standard and ideal.

--- A joint statement of the leadership of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)