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# THE EPISTLE

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Volume 23 Issue 1

January 25, 2018

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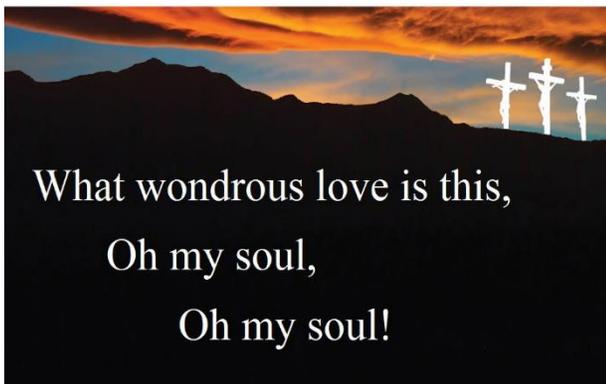
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Dear Members & Friends of First Church:

As I look toward February, I see it as a half-and-half month for not only our church but the whole Church of Jesus. The first two Sundays in February are still “Sundays after Epiphany” – Epiphany, that season of the Church Year when the manifestation of God’s glory shines through the visit from the Magi to the baby Jesus, Jesus’ baptism, Jesus’ healing ministry, and Christ’s transfiguration. Then all of the sudden on February 14<sup>th</sup>, Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, a day when many Christians mark their foreheads with ashes and remember their own mortality with the words, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19). Not the cheeriest of words to hear on Valentine’s Day when a lot of people celebrate their love for one another. But here’s a thought: Lent celebrates the sacrificial love for all of humanity that led Jesus to die on a cross for our sins. In the words of the anonymous Holy Week folk hymn, “What wondrous love is this, O my soul! O my soul! . . . What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul, to bear the dreadful curse for my soul!” Lent is a time to stop and take a good, long look at the love of God that triumphs over the ways of sin and death.



Life is sometimes like the month of February; it’s half-and-half. There are often moments of great glory and revelation when everything seems to come together and shine brightly. But then, there are also times when we have to stop, turn all the way around, and take a good, long, honest look at where our life is going and ask God for our life’s directions.



Peace & Light through Christ our Sovereign!  
*Pastor Greg Rupright*





## February Worship Schedule

### **SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS & MESSAGES** (bold font indicates key scripture text(s) for the Message)

#### **FEBRUARY 4<sup>TH</sup>**

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany/Holy Communion

Isaiah 40:21-31; **Psalm 147:1-11**, 20c;

1 Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39

*Intergenerational Message: "Who Is I Am?"*

*Presented by the Sunday School, directed by Ms. Jennifer Lessard*

#### **FEBRUARY 11<sup>TH</sup>**

Transfiguration Sunday/Scout Sunday

2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6;

**2 Corinthians 4:3-6**; Mark 9:2-9

*Message: "Encouraging Light"*

#### **FEBRUARY 18<sup>TH</sup>**

First Sunday in Lent

**Genesis 9:8-17**; Psalm 25:1-10;

1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15

*Message: "Drunk, Naked, Loved"*

#### **FEBRUARY 25<sup>TH</sup>**

Second Sunday in Lent

**Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16**; Psalm 22:23-31;

Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38

*Message: "The Promise – Our Best Hope!"*

# CHURCH NEWS



## ANNUAL GIVING STATEMENTS:

2017 giving statements are now ready. They can be picked up in Fellowship Hall. If you need to have your statement mailed to you, please contact the church office.

## MEAGER MEAL & ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

On Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 P.M., all are invited to join us for a Meager Meal of vegetable soup, bread, and water followed by a 7:00 P.M. Ash Wednesday Service with imposition of ashes to begin our celebration of Lent.



## EASTER IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER!



**Meager  
Meal**

Easter is on April 1 this year, so that means that Lent begins on February 14. To help us center our hearts and minds for the Easter season, Worship Ministries is planning to serve a Meager Meal on Ash Wednesday, February 14 at 6pm. The meal will be followed by the Ash Wednesday service at 7pm.

The Meager Meal will consist of delicious vegetable soup, various breads, and water. All food will be provided by Worship Ministries.

Please look for the sign-up sheet for the Meager Meal on the rolling bulletin board.

## WEDNESDAY LENTEN COMMUNION

Each Wednesday during Lent, there will be an informal and brief Communion Service in the Snow Room at 10:15 A.M. on February 21<sup>st</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>.



## A SERVICE FOR HEALING & WHOLENESS



There will be a Service for Healing & Wholeness in the Snow Room on Sunday, February 18<sup>th</sup> at 10:45 A.M. All are welcome!

## MORNING BIBLE STUDY GROUPS

The 11:00 A.M. Wednesday Morning and Sunday Morning Bible Study Groups are reading *Worship Old & New* by Robert E. Webber and studying scripture pertaining to the worship history of the Judeo-Christian faith.

**\*Please note that the Wednesday Morning Bible Study Group will meet on Thursday, February 8<sup>th</sup> instead of Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>. This is to accommodate some Wednesday members who will be attending the Interfaith Bible Study at the Louis S. Wolk Jewish Community Center, 1200 Edgewood Ave, Rochester, NY from 12-1 P.M.**



### FEBRUARY 8<sup>TH</sup>\* & 11<sup>TH</sup>

Read *Worship Old & New*, Chapter 11, “Worship Renewal in the Twentieth Century,” pp. 121-134.

### FEBRUARY 14<sup>TH</sup> & 18<sup>TH</sup>

Read *Worship Old & New*, Chapter 12, “The Environmental Setting of Worship” & Chapter 13, “Content, Structure, and Style,” pp. 135-152.

### FEBRUARY 21<sup>ST</sup> & 25<sup>TH</sup>

Read *Worship Old & New*, Chapter 14, “Assemble the People” & Chapter 15, “Listen and Respond to the Word,” pp. 153-171.

*We Meet In The Snow Room & All Are Welcome!*

## LOVE THOSE VOLUNTEERS

It’s so great when members of our church family volunteer to help with the many tasks that need doing in our church. Although we have Boards and Committees who head up these tasks, we’ve reduced the number of Board and Committee members so many times there aren’t enough of us to do all that needs doing. That’s why I’m giving an extra special thanks to those who came to help decorate our church and sanctuary for Advent and Christmas (**Barb Law, Doug Jones, Dee Jackson, Pastor Greg, Jim Franzen, Sandy Conrad, Jeff Allen, and Kelly Weidman**), and those who came to ‘undecorate’ after Christmas despite the frigid weather (**Barb Law, Pastor Greg, Dee Jackson, and Jim Franzen**). We had wonderful fellowship, snacks, and music. Hope you can join our happy group next year. **Thanks Volunteers!**

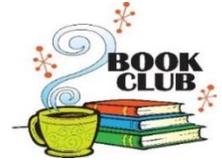


Sondra Franzen  
Chair, Worship Ministries



## BOOK CLUB

On February 26th Pat Patt will lead our discussion of *The Language of Flowers*, by Vanessa Diffenbaugh. We meet in Fellowship Hall at 1:00 and all are welcome.



Our March 26 book selection is *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead.

# YOUTH NEWS

## WINTER BREAK YOUTH GROUP EVENTS

We have several activities available for Jr/Sr High youth during the February Winter break (2/17 - 2/25). If you are looking for activities for your young people, please consider one of the following. Yes, they can bring a friend.



- GVA Youth Mission Event at Mountain Rise Church, Fairport - February 21st - 22nd. The GVA Youth team will be meeting January 29<sup>th</sup> and more information will follow shortly.
- Greece Baptist Church's "Famine for Faith" - February 23rd - 24<sup>th</sup> youth overnight to benefit the food shelves in the Greece Area. Please see Ms. Jen for a flyer and permission slip.
- Movie Night, "Soul Surfer" - Date to be announced. We will have devotional time before and after based on the difficulties faced by the main character, based on a true story. We will reflect on Pain and Other Hard Things (2 Corinthians 12, Matthew 26:36-46). We will announce this in the "News in the Pews" when the date gets closer.

Peace,  
~ Ms. Jen.

## CONFIRMATION PROGRAM WITH MT. RISE UCC

First Congregational UCC has joined with Mt. Rise UCC for A Joint Confirmation Program, beginning in December.



Confirmation Session dates and meeting places:

02/11/18 (Mt. Rise)

02/25/18 (First)

03/11/18 (Mt. Rise)

03/25/18 (First);

04/15/18 (Mt. Rise)

04/29/18 (First)

05/06/18 (Mt. Rise)

05/20/18 Confirmation Sunday (First).

Presently, all Confirmation Sessions will be from 1:00-2:30 P.M., which may vary depending on the focus of each Confirmation Session. The facilitators are the Ms. Anne-Marie Miller & the Rev. Dr. Greg Osterberg (Mt. Rise UCC) and Ms. Jennifer Lessard & the Rev. Greg Rupright (First Congregational UCC).

## SUNDAY SCHOOL “HAPPENINGS”

During the month of January, the Elementary and Jr High kids have been working on an upcoming intergenerational message for the first Sunday in February, Feb 4th. The message is called “Who Is I Am?” and is based on Psalm 147 and also various bible verses where Jesus talks about who he is. A signup sheet will be placed on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall.

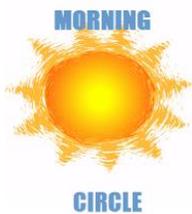


We also encourage Elementary and Jr/Sr High to sign up for other elements of the worship on the first Sunday of each month, such as readers, greeters and assisting to serve communion.

A special thank you to all volunteers that are continuing to help make Sunday School offerings for both Elementary and Jr/Sr High possible! The Candy Cane Christmas, a mini-pageant performed the morning of December 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday worship, gave the children an opportunity to teach the congregation the real meaning of the “J” shaped candy treats.

Thank you also to everyone who helped make this effort successful. Please keep an eye out for photographs posted on our web page and/or Facebook. We continue to look for volunteers to help with Sunday School, so please keep an eye out for openings each week. Thank you. ~ Ms. Jen

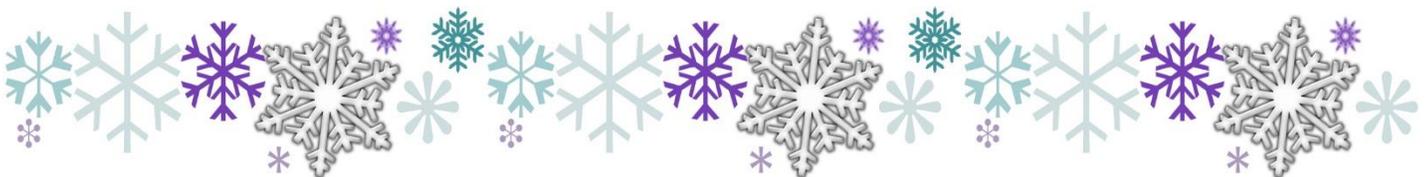
# Circle News



## MORNING CIRCLE

Morning Circle will meet on Tuesday February 13 at 10:00. Nan Notar will give a travelogue on her trip to Seattle, the San Juan Islands and British Columbia.

All are welcome to join us for the program.



# MISSIONS

## HILLSIDE THANK YOU

A note of thanks to you for helping ensure a wonderful holiday season for so many youth and families in our community. We are proud to have your partnership and couldn't do what we do without you.



Please accept our gratitude and appreciation for your dedication and support.

~Hillside Special Santa

## THANK YOU FOR THE FOOD BASKET DONATIONS



Thank you to everybody who donated items or money to the Christmas food baskets in 2017. We delivered baskets to 6 families; consisting of 10 adults and 8 children. Each delivery was valued at about \$108.00. Donated money was used to buy perishable items for the food baskets. The money people donated, in excess of what was needed, was given to the Perinton Food Shelf.

~Board of Missions and Outreach

### *“What Do I Have?”*

*What do I have, Lord, that you would need me as a servant?*

***Eyes**, he said, to see the beauty in all that I've made — and my children as they travel life's highway.*

***Hands**, he said, to reach out and touch hurting souls, to give a hug or encouraging pat on the back.*

***Feet**, he said, to lead my children through this world of strife and to help them run from sin and follow me.*

***Mouth**, he said, to lift up your voice and sing praises to me so others may hear the joy in your heart.*

***Ears**, he said, to listen to my still, small voice of love and to hear my children when they cry for help.*

***Heart**, he said, so you may know the full love of my Spirit and love my children as I have loved you.*

~Thomas Butler

# OUR CHURCH FAMILY

## SYMPATHY & CONDOLENCES

The members and friends of First Congregational United Church of Christ extend their heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the family of John F. Giorgi, who entered eternal life on December 20, 2017. Sympathy cards may be mailed to his son, John Giorgi at 57 Old Country Lane, Fairport, NY 14450

*Rest eternal, grant John F. Giorgi, O God; may light perpetual shine upon him. Amen.*

## LIGHT THE NIGHT



Thank you to John Cedarleaf for keeping the steeple lights burning bright in January in memory of Jean Cedarleaf.

Thank you to Sue and Bill Harris for lighting the night during the month of February in memory of their parents.



## REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Charlotte Jackson, Heathwood  
 Robert Wagner, Fairport Baptist Home  
 Gerry Hammond  
 Charlotte Jackson  
 Mary Lou Woodhouse  
 David Breckenridge  
 Sue Boland  
 Easton "Kel" Kelsey.



**Next "Epistle" Deadline is**  
 (The "Third Thursday")  
**February 15, 2018**



Frequently our church will take photos or videos of members, including children and youth, involved in church related activities. These photos and videos may be used in church-produced publications, on our website or on social media including but not limited to Facebook. If you do not wish to have photos or videos of yourself or your child used, please see Vicki Sherry in the church office to sign an exclusion form.

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Church Service Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

Church Office Hours: 9:00-3:30  
Monday through Friday (Monday-Thursday in July and August)

Rev. Gregory J. Rupright, Pastor  
Rev. Dr. John N. Cedarleaf, Pastor Emeritus  
Administrative Assistant: Vicki Sherry  
Church Moderator: Steve Smith  
Organist: Beatrice Benedict  
Director of Music Ministries: Heather Watras  
Business Administrator: Sue Brooks  
Wedding Coordinator: Betty Shamblen  
Christian Education Teacher: Jen Lessard



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First Congregational United Church of Christ  
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