

The Beacon

December 2017

OGDEN-HILLCREST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1061 CHENANGO STREET, BINGHAMTON NY 13901

Joyce K. Allen, Pastor

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD!” (Isaiah 40:3, NRSV). May we also prepare
our hearts for the Messiah’s coming.

It’s here, God — Christmas Eve day. But for a few more hours, may I be content in the waiting
time, like the quiet excitement of early labor.

“Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made
known to us” (Luke 2:15, NKJV).

Blessed Infant, nestle near my heart this day, and live in me forever

PASTOR'S PAGE



It really is the most wonderful time of the year. Oh, I know the weather isn't warm and sunny, but the seasons of our heart grow warm during Advent and Christmastime, and when your heart is warmed, you want to share that feeling with others.

When we worship together during the season of Advent we learn to wait for Christmas, to wait for Jesus to arrive again. We are reminded that waiting isn't easy. We want the family together. We want the



world to be at peace, we want someone to make us a nice Christmas dinner, and we want the end of disease and disaster. Advent teaches us to work for the things we can change, but to simply pray and wait for the others.

As we wait we light candles signifying some of the gifts God gives us: love, hope, peace and joy. And we try, especially at this time of year, to unwrap those gifts and to share them with the world. *"And so this is Christmas"*, said John Lennon, *"and what have you done? Another year over and a new one yet begun"*. Are you worshipping God yet? Are you finding your place in this world and the place where you belong? God wants family together too, and you have a whole bunch of folks waiting to love you at church. Please come and worship with us. Come to Christmas dinner on the 15th. Come to a study or an event that catches your eye. I pray that you will feel too, that this is really the most wonderful time of the year.

Peace,

Pastor Joyce

Christmas Eve Worship

On Sunday morning we will have one worship service at 9:30am. Our choir will be singing and we will celebrate the fourth Sunday of Advent. At 7pm, we will have our traditional Christmas Eve service. You can expect the traditional scripture lessons and carols, along with our choir, special music, and candle lighting. Please plan to come and worship Jesus for his birthday!



Editor's Note: There is NO calendar page this month. All events are covered in the articles. The only formal meeting as of this mailing is the: TRUSTEES MEETING , Dec. 4th , 7:00 pm (PH).

CHILDREN'S HOME INVITES US

Each of us has been invited to the Christmas Tree lighting at The Children's Home on Thursday December 7th from 5 to 6pm. The children lead us in a short ceremony of lighting their outdoor tree, their choir sings and we are offered hot beverages and sweet treats. Those who have attended in previous years have spoken about how much that brief time shaped their holidays.



In one short hour, you can make a difference to a child and the hard working staff members too. Our church has been traditionally associated with The Children's Home and we want to keep building that relationship. You can park in the side lots and walk to the Chenango Street side where the tree is. Here's one easy thing you can do for a child this Christmas.



BRONZISSIMO CONCERT

PLEASE WELCOME
BRONZISSIMO

We are hosting the Bronzissimo handbell group for their December Christmas concert on the 10th at 7pm. Bronzissimo is a community handbell choir ringing five octaves of Schulmerich handbells and four octaves of Malmark handchimes. Members are experienced ringers from across the Southern Tier of New York State, including Endicott, Endwell, Binghamton, Greene, and Vestal, New York. The group was formed in January of 1993 and since then has performed locally for many types of events, including concerts in the Spring and December. They have performed "en masse" and "en solo" at both National and Regional

Festivals of the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers (AGEHR), and at Binghamton's "First Night". The church will be filled that evening so you'll want to invite your friends and arrive early. In addition, we can help with the coffee hour after the concert.

To help celebrate this special time, let's have a cookie and punch reception after the performance. We will have signup sheets in church the first week in December. Let's all show our appreciation and participate by attending, inviting friends and family and bringing plated cookies etc.

Thank you all so much. Any questions call Joan Wilbur 724 - 8236 or Judy Clark 768 - 7301.



DINNER GROUP CHRISTMAS PARTY

We had so much fun last year, we're doing it again! Our second annual Christmas party is for singles, families, couples and anyone else out there! Join us at the church on December 15th at 6pm, with dinner served at 6:30. Phil's Chicken House will be bringing each person half a chicken, roasted potatoes and cabbage salad. A group of Christmas angels are providing a buffet of desserts guaranteed to send us home in a sugar coma. And we'll have take-out containers ready for you! There will be gifts and prizes and perhaps some surprises too! All this is only \$10.00 a person. And here's the real deal, if that's a hardship for you, someone else has already given some money "just in case". Let Pastor Joyce if you need it.



You need to sign up and pay by Monday morning, December 11. You may sign up with Pastor Joyce or at the church office. Checks should be made out to the church but noted that they are for the Christmas party. Invite your family and friends!



Our Sunday school classes will present their annual Christmas pageant on December 17th at both services. Please come and support them as they show us the true meaning of Christmas. It's not Christmas without a Christmas pageant!

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

Don't miss our traveling Christmas party right after church on December 17th. Pastor Joyce has some surprises planned for us. Please let her know if you are planning to come so we have drivers ready for you. Our next meeting will be on January 7th at 5:30 and we'll make plans for the New Year.



CHRISTMAS MISSION



Once again this year we will collect winter hats, mittens, scarves, and gloves for children and young adults. These items will be donated to the local schools for children in need. Hat and Mitten Christmas tree is in the Ever Ready room. You may place your donations under or on the tree.



HOW you can
HELP



Years ago, hospitals would call the church office to let us know if a church member or friend was in the hospital. With the HIPPA law of 1996, hospitals must keep patient names confidential and by law they cannot call your pastor to have her come visit you. They will ask if you want a visit, but that is from their chaplain. If you or your family member or friend is in the hospital, and a pastoral visit is desired, please call Pastor Joyce at 607-287-7552 or call the church office at 723-2637. Pastor will get there as soon as possible once she knows you are there. Thank you.

MISSION CENTRAL HUB PROVIDES SUPPORT FOR FLOOD RECOVERY



The Upper New York Conference Mission Central Hub was in great use as Mike Block, a member of the VIM Steering Committee and a member at Immanuel UMC in Camillus, and Dave Greer, President of United Methodist Men at Baldwinsville UMC, helped load 624 Cleaning Kits (Flood Buckets) and 1,544 Health Kits, in a truck that would take them to the main campus of Mission Central located at Mechanicsburg, Pa. From there they will be shipped to areas where the United Methodist Committee on Relief is helping with hurricane and flood recovery.

THE CHURCH MOUSE

I am still singing the praises of our church. I just love it here and I am not going away again any time soon. I am really glad I got home before that chicken and biscuit dinner so I could gorge myself on that. And the pies. Oh my! You folks sure know how to make a pie. Yum.

I've missed some of my friends in church lately. Doris Slater has been at home feeling weak and tired lately, after a stay in the hospital. Carol Harrison was in the same hospital right after Doris was. Carol is having treatments for cancer in her esophagus, and soon she will have surgery for it too. Please pray for both of them. Barbara Stratton has gone on the heaven and so has Cathy Goodstahl's mom, Betty Price. You could say a prayer for those families too.



Linda Judd is in Florida taking care of her daughter Heather, while she is on bed rest while waiting for her twin girls to be born. It won't be long now Heather and Doug! Nancy Keyes has headed to Florida for the winter, but Roger and Betty Savage decided to stick it out up here in the cold with the rest of our church family. Pray that they stay nice and warm after many years of Sarasota winters!

I hope you were in church on All Saints day to hear the young man tell the pastor his dead fish can't be in heaven because it got flushed down the toilet! That was a good one. Pastor said she believes that animals go to heaven too and I am sure glad of that. Having kids around the church makes us all better off. Sometimes they teach us more about God than we teach them. Our kids and teens will be presenting us with their Christmas pageant at both services on the 17th and I sure plan to be there. I hope you do too.

May you see Christmas through the eyes of a child this year. They show such love to baby Jesus, and they seem to understand how much he loves them too. And, I would be remiss if I did not point out that there were certainly mice running around that manger scene on the first Christmas. My people have as long as history of being with Jesus as yours do. Let's be there together for him this Christmas.

Merry Christmas to All, Methodius



Look, Children
It's Uncle Bill!



December 1, 2017

Dear Members and Friends,

Once a year I ask you to think about the promises you have made to God through the church. If you recall, those promises include giving time, talents and gifts to the church. I would send you a lovely letter on fancy paper, but that's not good stewardship. Instead, this year, pledge cards were handed out at church and through the newsletter. This frees up enough money to run our Sunday school for one week or enough to produce the newsletter for one month.

It's not that our church is poor, but we are always close to paying all of our bills, and we know there is so much more ministry we could do. Last year we paid all of our bills for the first time in many years. Now, the question is, can we do it again? I believe that God will make that happen again this year and in years to come.

Ogden Hillcrest has always been a church of good givers and mission minded people. You proved that again this year with a record number of mission projects and dollars given. Often, people complain to me about the many requests for money they receive in the mail. I say, when you give to a world-wide connected church like ours, you are giving gifts that make a difference in the lives of people around the world, but especially right here at home.

We really are a rich church, but our richness comes from God's love and grace. It comes from the children who run up the aisle to talk with the pastor and then run fast down to Sunday school. It comes in the love and care many of us feel from our church family. We are rich because of what God has done for us. Now the church asks us to declare what we can do for God in the coming year. The pledge card asks about monetary donations but God is also asking for time and talents. Please prayerfully consider how you may fulfill your vows to God in the coming year. The card may be mailed to the church office or placed in the collection plate on our pledge Sunday, December 10th.

With love,
Pastor Joyce

2018 Pledge Card
Ogden-Hillcrest United Methodist Church
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Recognizing God as the Creator, Owner, and Giver of All, acknowledging my (our) stewardship to God, appreciating the many blessings received from God, I welcome the privilege to give to God's church during the coming year, or until I express a wish to change.

Current Expenses \$ _____ weekly Envelope # _____
Benevolence \$ _____ weekly

NAME _____ PHONE _____
ADDRESS _____

Mail or drop this card in the collection plate by
Pledge Sunday, Dec.10.
Your cooperation will aid the church in estimating its income.

Advent'-urous

Advent — the first season of the liturgical year — includes the four Sundays and weeks prior to December 25. Advent dates from the fourth century, when it lasted 40 days and included fasting and solemnity, much like Lent.

Advent is from *Adventus*, Latin for “coming,” referring to Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem and also his second coming. The traditional colors of Advent are purple for penitence or blue for hope.

Observing Advent is a meaningful, adventurous way to prepare for Christmas. Buy or make an Advent wreath and use candles of your choice: four blue, four purple, or three blue or purple and one pink. If you have a fifth spot, add one white Christ candle. During meals or devotions, light only one candle the first week. Add another for each new week (the pink candle traditionally marks the third week), concluding with the white candle (if you have one) on Christmas. The increasing light reminds us we’re getting closer to celebrating Christ’s light coming into the world.

Puzzle!

Use the clues to fill in the blanks. Then write the word from the boldface vertical column. Also unscramble the circled letters to reveal a seasonal phrase.

1. Carolers and instrumentalists make this
2. What happens at malls
3. The angel Gabriel appeared to her
4. You'll find this under a Christmas tree
5. He was a carpenter
6. Joseph had to pay this in Bethlehem
7. The "ship of the desert"
8. Cattle eat out of this
9. Shepherds tend this

Bold word: _____

Seasonal phrase: _____



If you have never visited Sky Lake in the winter, now is the time. Our church retreat is February 2-4, 2018. Come enjoy the warmth of the fire, joy of our church family, challenges of the games, invigoration of the outdoor activities, and the fellowship of spending time with our fellow Christian family. What a great Christmas gift to yourself and your family!

Thrift Shop Annual



CHRISTMAS
Holiday Sale

Sale Thursday, Dec. 2nd, 7th and 9th
2017