



175 Fifth Avenue
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
(518) 584-3720
www.saratogaumc.org
office@saratogaumc.org

THE MESSENGER

From the Pastor's Desk



The season of Advent is upon us! Throughout the season we will be exploring the theme of Joy. Our sermons will focus on the joy of waiting, the joy of salvation, the joy of transformation, and the joy expectation. As we wait for the coming of Jesus we are charged to actively stay alert seeking the breaking in of God's presence in the world.

During Advent there is an expectant waiting that causes us to pause and reflect. We seek the presence of God, which renews our hearts and leads to the changing of our lives. We wrestle with the pressures surrounding us to focus on our own wants in the midst of a world that is suffering and in desperate need. Yet Advent calls us to change our focus and urges us to look for the salvation of God. Salvation brought to us in the form of a little babe who enters human hearts so that the world may be transformed.

As you take time to reflect may you discern the ways that the breaking in of God, stirs something new for you this Christmas. How will your heart be transformed by the fullness of grace that steps into time? And how will that transformation shape the living of your days?

One of our favorite Advent hymns is "Come Thou Long Expectant Jesus." This classic hymn reminds what advent is truly about, joyful waiting and expecting of the coming

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From the Pastor's Desk	1
Mission Minutes	2
Christian Education	3
Church Life	4
Christmas News	5
Madrigale	6
The Spot Light	7
In the Know/Small Wonders	8
In Our Prayers	9

Christ child. Throughout Advent let us sing!

"Come thou long expected Jesus born to set thy people free; from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee. Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art; dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart."

Advent Journaling:

Don't forget we invited you throughout advent to join with us in journaling. Please use these four questions to guide your nightly entries.

The questions we invite you to engage are:

1. Where have you seen God's presence?
2. How has this encounter transformed your heart?
3. Where did you struggle to connect with God?
4. How will you nurture your connection to God tomorrow?

We will be available Friday nights at 6pm for journaling discussions, please join us!

Blessings of hope and transformation for the journey!
Pastors Heather and Drew

Mission Minutes:

ABOUT OUR TRIP TO NYC

By: Maya Wright

On November 20, a group of about thirty SSUMC members and clergy took a fascinating trip to New York City organized by the Mission Committee and Pastor Drew. The purpose of the trip was to tour UMCOR Headquarters, attend a panel discussion on Islamophobia and visit the 9/11 Memorial.

With the help of our speedy bus driver, Danny (and his impressive navigation through city streets), we arrived at the UMCOR and UMW Headquarters early on Friday morning. We were able to not only tour several floors of the building (countless different cultures could be seen just in the decorations), but hear from a leader in UMW and our UMCOR guide, Hannah, about the variety of ways United Methodists around the world are helping to provide safety, food, and education globally, as well as how we can help. One project, for instance, is working to improve living conditions in South Sudan by helping the people cultivate schools of fish to harvest and sell. This project in particular inspired us, and so our mission team decided to donate \$1500 to help.

After a quick pit stop for lunch (and a significantly less quick drive across the city), we arrived at the Church Center for the United Nations for a seminar on Islamophobia led by a diverse and distinguished panel. The seminar was eye-opening. It helped us understand how unfair the treatment of Muslims and Sikhs is in our country and how we can help stop this unfair treatment. For example, did you know that a possible response to a prejudicial statement can be as simple as "That's not my experience?" This was a major learning for a lot of us. Perhaps if we all responded to prejudicial statements by offering our experience of Muslim and Sikh individuals we could end islamophobia.

Our last stop was at the 9/11 Memorial and Museum, a solemn and moving experience. And thanks to another great driver, we made a sleepy and safe trip back home after a full day.

Special thanks to Laura LeCours, Dave and Betsy Gibbs and Pastor Drew for organizing such a great day!

THE CHRISTMAS SLEIGH!

This year we are doing more, by supporting both Franklin Community Center and Syracuse Westside Urban Mission. It is always the right time to share our bounty. Here are some suggested items for your shopping list:

Adult Men or Women: T-shirts, sweatshirts, pajamas, sweat pants, underwear, boxers- sizes small to 4XL. Socks, thermal underwear, slippers-all sizes.

Teenage girls: Hoodies, sweatshirts, T-shirts, pajamas, sweat pants, underwear - sizes 12 to 20 socks, slippers - all sizes, make-up kit, nail polish, emery boards, perfume kits, headphones, nail polish remover, hair accessories, jewelry kits, MP3 players or iPods, art Supplies or drawing kits.

Teenage Boys: Hoodies, sweatshirts, T-shirts, pajamas, sweat pants, underwear - sizes 12 to 20 socks, slippers - all sizes. Basketballs, footballs or soccer balls, handheld games, skateboards, MP3 players or iPods, headphones.

Kids/Girls: Sizes 2T to 18 - T-shirts, hoodies, sweatshirts, pajamas, sweat pants, underwear, coats or jackets; socks - all sizes. Dolls, Barbie's, jewelry, art kits, toys for girls ages 6 to 12

Kids/Boys: Sizes 2T to 18 - T-shirts, hoodies, jeans, sweatshirts, pajamas, sweatpants, underwear, coats or jackets; socks - all sizes. Trucks, cars, baseballs, basketballs, art kits, toys for boys ages 6 to 12

Babies: Clothes for ages 3 months to 24 months. Toys, diapers, wipes, or anything for babies 6 months to 24 months.

Kitchen items: Coffee pots, can openers, stew pots, large soup pots, pots and pans, dishes, silverware, baking pans, mixers, cooking utensils, blenders.

Toiletries: Towels, washcloths, blankets, sheets, pillows, laundry soap, laundry baskets, shampoo, lotion, conditioner, dish soap, bar soap.

Family games : Educational math or ELA games, Life, UNO, Sorry, Skipbo, Yatzee, Lego, Monopoly, Phase 10, etc.

Christian Education

YOUTH GROUP NEWS!

In November the youth attended the Upper New York Conference Fall Gathering at First United Methodist Church of Schenectady. The youth had a great time worshipping, playing, talking, eating, sleeping, laughing, learning, praying, supporting, and singing. It's great that they learned new things and met new people.

This was the first time and John Renehan (Sr. High Youth Leader) and I attended. We did most of the same things the young people did (only with more coffee!) and reaped some great benefits. Witnessing youth from around the conference put together three worship services and organized activities for 100 youth is inspiring. They read scripture, played instruments, lead prayers, sang, and performed skits in front of the whole group. One youth gave a sermon asking the question "Why Were You Born?" It was one of the greatest messages I have ever heard, especially from a youth. His message was clear: God gave us life for a reason so let's do something good with it!

By far the best thing I gained from this event was making connections with other leaders from churches around the conference. It is wonderful to bounce ideas off of other youth leaders, to get and give advice from people who are in the same boat as me. It was great to attend workshops, learning information and skills is enlightening! An added bonus: some of these other leaders know some fun stories about Pastors Drew and Heather, ones that might prove useful down the road...

Events like these, where we can connect with people from other churches can only be beneficial to us. The fellowship and insight gained from spending time with them is important for our church community. Attending the Fall Gathering has made me a better youth leader, a better Methodist, and a better person altogether. I'm hoping all of you take a chance to make a meaningful connection with others from the larger church body.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY!

Winter Sunday School Our Winter curriculum begins with Advent, anticipating the birth of Jesus. Kids will learn about the Joy of the season through stories with Gabriel, Mary, Elizabeth, and others. After Epiphany the children will be learning about the early days of Jesus' ministry and who his helpers were. This quarter of learning promises to teach the children a few new things about the stories of the Bible.

Advent Peace Night is combining with our Third Thursday meal group with a church-wide event that is perfect for relaxing with your church family. A potluck supper will be followed by crafts for kids and adults. We will then join together in an informal "Potluck Pageant." Bring a costume and a dish to share on Thursday December 17 at 5:30!

Happy Birthday Jesus! Join us for a party during Fellowship Hour between church services on December 13th for a great birthday party. There will be games, crafts, and of course, CAKE!

Important Dates for Youth

December 6 th	Joint meeting 6-8:00
December 13 th	Jr High @ 6:00-7:30 Sr High @ 7:00- 8:30
December 20 th	Christmas Party 6-8:00
December 27 th	No Youth Group

AWESOME UPCOMING EVENTS

April 22-24: UPWORD '16

*"Children are not a distraction from more important work.
They are the most important work."*

-C.S. Lewis

Church Life

UMW: meets every fourth Tuesday of the month at 7pm in the lounge. The only requirement to attend is to be a woman! We would love to see you join in this fun group as we talk about the church and have fun activities. See you then!

RUTH CIRCLE: We meet the fourth Monday of the month at 1pm in the Saratoga Room at Woodlawn Commons, 156 Lawrence Street, Saratoga Springs. Come join us! All are welcome!

UMW COOKIE WALK : Don't feel like baking Christmas cookies this year? Then come to the 2nd annual Cookie Walk sponsored by the UMW. A large variety of cookies will be on sale between the 9 and 10:45 services on December 6th. You pick out the cookies you want and we will package them for you. Imagine the clean kitchen you will have and time you have save when you buy cookies at the Cookie Walk! Tell your friends and loved ones! This is a great way to enter the Christmas season.

MORAVIAN LOVE FEAST

On January 3rd (Epiphany Sunday), our service will again be a Moravian Love Feast, featuring the Moravian Star, Scriptural watchwords, and Moravian hymns (both bells and voices). We aspire to become the light of the world, following Christ's light as did the Wise Men on their journey to meet Mary and the infant Jesus. Diners (servers) are needed for both services; please contact Ruth Helgerson (518-879-4884) or Mary DeRidder (518-587-1391) for further information.

WELCOMING/NURTURING: If you know of anyone in our congregation who could use a get well, sympathy, or thinking of you card, please contact Betty Bedrey She can be reached at (518)587-4048 or bedreyrebeltiger@aol.com.

Covenant Bible Study: This study will lead participants through the Bible in three 8-week sections (24 weeks in total) beginning December 1st. It is a commitment of exploration and thoughtful preparation. Classes will be 6:30-8:30pm each Tuesday evening. It is an intense and exciting adventure for 12 participants through the majority of the Bible. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Heather.

FREE VOICE CLASS meets on Tuesday evenings (7:00-8:00pm) in the choir room! Anyone interested in learning more about singing with confidence, projecting your voice, increasing your vocal range, better breath control, and relaxation techniques is welcome. Dates are Dec. 1, 8 and 15. Come and bring a friend! (For further information, contact Pamela at sweetpeasler@gmail.com)

December

6th 10am- UMW Cookie Walk

11th 7pm- Madrigale

12th 3:30pm- Madrigale
7:15pm - Madrigale

14th 7pm -UMW Reads

17th 6pm -3rd Thursday &
Advent Peace Night
7pm- Finance Meeting

21st 6pm- Trustees Meeting
7pm- Longest Night Service

22nd 6:30pm- UMW Meeting

24th Christmas Eve Worship(s)

25th Christmas Day!

THE MUSIC BOX

December is the busiest time of the year for musicians! Eleven of the 15-voice Children's Choir will perform as sprites for the Madrigal Dinner on Dec. 11 and 12. The Children's Choir also sings an Advent anthem with bells, "Come, Lord Jesus, We Are Waiting" on 12/20 (9:00am). On Christmas Eve (4:00pm) they perform "Jesus, Light of the World" (again with bells!). Come and invite a friend to these high-energy services!

God's Bells and Chancel Ringers are focusing on international carols, and will perform "People Look East" (English), "Fum, Fum, Fum" (Spanish), "Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella" (French), "Still, Still, Still" (Austrian), "Silent Night" (German), and "We Three Kings" (American) during Advent. On Christmas Eve (7:00pm) Joyful Hope and both bell choirs will present familiar carols with voices and bells. Come listen and sing along!

Christmas Flowers:



Each year we decorate our sanctuary for Christmas with beautiful poinsettias. You may participate by purchasing a flower to be used in our sanctuary either in memory or in honor of a loved one. Once all the Christmas Eve services have concluded you may take your poinsettia home.

Or you may purchase a poinsettia to be delivered to our church home bound members. A team will be delivering the flowers designated as such along with a Christmas letter from our pastors.

To purchase a poinsettia please fill out the order form below (front and back). Then cut it out and send to our church office. Thanks so much for your participation

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SCHEDULE:

4:00pm Family Style Worship

This service will feature children friendly activities and music. Our Children's Choir will offer an Anthem and the Sunday School will lead us in an interactive pageant.

7:00pm Traditional Worship

This service will feature lots of music as our Joyful Hope Choir, God's Bells, and Chancel Ringers will offer special music to welcome in the Christ child.

9:00pm Traditional Worship

In this service the Chancel Choir will present their gift of music to celebrate the birth of Jesus as they sing their anthem. This service will conclude with candle lighting and the singing of Silent Night.

11:00pm A Service of Communion

An intimate worship celebrating Christ birth with communion and a solo offered by Pamela Easler.

Christmas Flower Order Form



Every year we decorate the Worship Area with beautiful poinsettia plants.

This year we will be ordering from Sunnyside Gardens.

Please make your selections below AND
TURN PAGE OVER to make your tribute.

___ Red

___ White

7 inch plant ___ x \$20.00= _____
OR

___ IN LIEU OF CHRISTMAS FLOWERS,
I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE TO THE
HOMEBOUND FLOWER FUND.

DEADLINE IS Friday, DECEMBER 11th

NOTE: Poinsettias may be taken home at any time AFTER the 11pm Christmas Eve service.

MADRIGALE 2015

The Madrigale Feaste Committee is happy to report that sales are brisk and excitement is building for what will be a most enjoyable event.

Fred Tracy, who provided us with a most memorable brunch on October 25th, will be our Chef. You can imagine, with Fred cooking, that there will be many treats and surprises in store. Don't miss out!!

Reservations are still available, but Friday, December 11th is on the way to being sold out with Saturday, December 12th @ 3:30PM not far behind, and Saturday, December 12th @ 7:15PM showing the most availability.

Reservations (cost is \$45 per person and seating is assigned according to receipt of reservation) can be made online by going to: [madrigalefeaste -- brownpapertickets.com](http://madrigalefeaste--brownpapertickets.com). Or by mailing check (made out to SSUMC/Madrigale) and reservation form to SSUMC/Madrigale, 175 Fifth Avenue, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866



We still need volunteers in all capacities, please sign up after church or contact Linda Rodriguez at: phone# 275-9126 or Email: umcmadrigale@gmail.com.

If you have questions call 518-584-3720 x119
Or email: madrigal@saratogaumc.org

Christmas Flower Order Form



In Memory of (please print clearly)

In Honor of (please print clearly)

THIS GIFT OF CHRISTMAS FLOWERS IS
Given by (please print clearly)

Return this order with a check to: SSUMC "Christmas Flower Orders" in Memo

Mail to: Saratoga Springs United Methodist Church
175 Fifth Avenue, Saratoga Springs NY 12866

DEADLINE IS Friday, DECEMBER 11th

In the Spot Light:

The Knitting Ministry

By Colleen Farnan



The Knitting Ministry in our church has touched many lives in our community and beyond. This ministry initially started in 2004/2005. A group of women prayerfully knit or crochet items for anyone in need. When made aware of a need, they try to do their best to fulfill it. As a result, the group has created a large number of items including hats, baby blankets, shawls, mittens and scarves. This ministry became popular and at one time grew to include 20 participants. During the years when the group initially met, close to 400 prayer shawls were made for other people.

The group did not meet for a period of time but was recently revitalized. BJ Fisher says she started up the group again this fall when some women approached her about reinstating the group.

As with most small groups in our church, BJ says that the Knitting Ministry is a spiritual group. When the Knitting Ministry group gathers, BJ relates that they open with a prayer. The purpose of the group is to make homemade items for other people only. Attached to each homemade item is a card. The card might indicate that the item was made by the Knitting Ministry with loving words such as, "May this give you warmth, peace and love."

The items made by the group have been wide ranging. As everyone is aware, prayer shawls are given out at baptisms in our church. Other items lovingly made include squares for quilts that are put together for lap blankets. Once the lap blankets are made, these items are given to veterans all over the country.

Hats for preemies in hospitals have also been created. In addition, a shawl was made for patient's families who use the Saratoga Hospital Chapel. A card attached to the shawl is included and says, "wrap this shawl around you in warmth and love while you sit and pray."

BJ considers it a joy to be involved with this ministry as it is an expression of God's love and another way to support church members. She knows of the warmth and love of the people receiving homemade items with a personal note. According to BJ, it is rewarding "doing for others" as well as teaching knitting to beginners. Additionally, BJ enjoys the fellowship of the group as women share stories with each other when the group meets.

BJ relates that the group is an opportunity to meet other women informally which promotes a special kind of friendship. The group welcomes all knitters, crocheters and those who want to learn. The Knitting Ministry is held monthly on the 2nd Tuesday from 7:00-8:30 p.m. and on the 2nd Wednesday from 1:00- 2:30 p.m.



In the Know

FROM THE TRUSTEES:

The Trustees have been busy this past year making much needed improvements to the church building. In response to the ice damage last winter, the attic ventilation has been improved by enlarging the soffit vent openings and the attic insulation has been doubled to tripled in thickness. We prayerfully hope that this will significantly reduce the risk of ice damage to the roof in future winters. In addition, heating costs will likely be reduced as an additional benefit.

Thanks to all who contributed. The rotted and drafty fellowship hall doors are scheduled to be replaced at the end of November. The replacement of these doors will be greatly beneficial to the many groups who use our fellowship hall and to us as heating cost should reduce and water can no longer enter our building. Much thanks to a generous and dedicated church family in taking care of our building.

-Trustees

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE: For all members of SSUMC who are currently enrolled in their first year of college, there are small scholarships available. The applicants must have been active in the church community during their high school years. Scholarships will be awarded on December 20. For applications please see Katie Iglor or e-mail christianed@saratogaumc.org



Saratoga Springs United Methodist Church is blessed to have such a fun and successful weekday preschool ministry. Please take some time to see what they've been doing by looking at the bulletin boards in the education hallways. Church members are always welcome to stop by and say hello to the kids and teachers. And if you have a talent or skill you would like to share with the children, please let us know, we would love to have you visit and teach our little ones something wonderful!

Small Wonders News Christmas is such an exciting time in preschool! The classes are busy as can be, spending their time singing, rehearsing, making gifts, and learning about the Christmas season! They are working hard on getting ready for performances at our Barnes & Noble Book Fair on December 4 and their annual pageant on December 22 at 11:15 here at the church. If you would like to watch the little ones on stage, you are more than welcome at both events. These Small Wonders are a part of your church family, show them your love!

Barnes & Noble Book Fair Please support Small Wonders Christian Preschool! The preschool receives a portion of any purchase made at the Wilton Barnes & Noble on December 4. In the evening we will be holding a Polar Express story time featuring crafts for kids, hot chocolate, and singing by our Small Wonders! If you are unable to get to the store on that day purchases can be made at www.bn.com. Just enter Book Fair Code 11732765 during the checkout process.



In Our Prayers: Edna Lloyd, Patty Gandee (Rosie Spring's Aunt), Carolyn Vallelunga, Glen Flannagan, Ruth Burton, Bob and Betty Allen, Don and Linda Carpenter, Ray DeRidder, Arthur Crouch (Frank's father), Thomas Family, Alden Barton, Ryan Vaughn, Robert Dake, Terry Ross (Kristen's brother), Kathy Boice, Sandy Mercaldi, Peggy Evans, Louise Hunter, Margo Larson, Lori Bussing, Barbara Thomas, Linda Griffing, Peggy Abbondandolo, Lexi Gurka, Marti Ladue, Barbara Peck, Barbara O'Brien, Patricia Squailia, Frank Crouch, Jane Flannagan (Glen's mother), Tracy Imes, Sue Zutterling, Virginia Cooley, Ethel Clark, Janet Woodcock, Shirley Bozony, Jeanne Cramer, Helen Richardson, Dorothy Place, Marge Bramhall, Helen Smead, Rev. Walter Taylor, Jaclyn Hakes.

For Those Who Mourn the Loss of: Marjorie Grout, Eric Baum, Richard Gerlach, William Schewe, Stu Hefter, Kay Runge, Sylvia Hoyer, Don Smith, Rosy Zinn, Paul Jones, Mini Mae Coleman, Charles Coleman, Alden Sharp, Rev. Jane Borden, Miriam Ellsworth, Michel Kril, William Young.

For Those Around the World: Those serving their country at home and abroad, victims and families involved in violence, victims of recent natural disasters, those listed on our Prayer Board in the Lobby.

** Please submit changes or additions to our prayer list to our church office.*

FELLOWSHIP HOSTS

December 6th

Missions, Joy in the Morning, and Church & Society

December 13th

Happy Birthday Jesus
Welcoming & Nurturing
and "Birthday People"

December 20th

Music Teams

December 27th

SPRC, Trustees, and Finance

*Embracing everyone through deep meaningful connections to
draw closer to God and each other!*

Saratoga Springs United Methodist Church
175 Fifth Avenue
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-3700

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit #6
Saratoga Springs, NY

*Address Service Requested
Dated Material-Please Deliver Promptly*

*We invite you to join us for Worship on Sundays at 9:00am & 10:45am,
with Coffee Fellowship between the services.*

Pastors

Rev. Heather Williams, x111
pastorheather@saratogaumc.org

Rev. Andrew (Drew) Sperry, x112
pastordrew@saratogaumc.org

Office Manager

Betsy Rhodes Norton, x110
office@saratogaumc.org
Monday-Friday,
9:00am-2:00pm
(518) 584-3720

Business Manager

Amber Lysyczyn, x113
business@saratogaumc.org

Finance Secretary

Jim Douglass, x118
finsec@saratogaumc.org

Facilities Manager

Darrin Hartmann, x115
darrin@saratogaumc.org

Christian Ed Director

Katie Iglar, x117
christianed@saratogaumc.org

Director of Music

Rand Reeves
Rreeves1@nycap.rr.com

Organist

Erich Borden
erichborden@gmail.com



The Mission of Saratoga Springs United Methodist Church is to spread God's word as we embrace persons of any age, gender, race, ethnic background, sexual orientation, economic condition, and physical or mental ability as full participants in a loving community of worship, fellowship, study, and outreach.