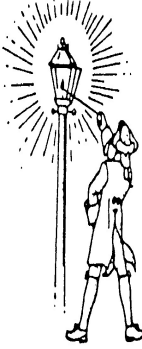


The United Church
Presbyterian-American Baptist
11 Gibson Street
Canandaigua, NY 14424

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage Paid
Permit No. 26
Canandaigua, NY 14424

Or Current Resident

The Lamplighter



The United Church
11 Gibson Street



Canandaigua, NY
585-394-0503

Worship Service, 8:45 and 11:00 am

March 2024

Rev. Dr. Wade Allen



- March 4** – Trustees meeting, 7 pm
- March 5** – Stewards, 7 pm
- March 12** – Committee Night, 7 pm
- March 16** – Iron Sharpens Iron Men’s Conference
- March 16** – Family Bowling at Roseland, 5 pm
- March 17** – Kateri’s Organ Concert dress rehearsal, 2 pm
- March 18** – Official Board Meeting, 7 pm
- March 22** – EROI Organ Concert, 7 pm
- March 24** – Palm Sunday
- March 28** – Maundy Thursday service, 7 pm
- March 29** – Office Closed on Good Friday
- March 31** – Easter Sunday

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SPECIAL MEMBER BIRTHDAYS:

Special Members are those in their 90s, and/or who are homebound, in nursing homes, or who need special care. Please contact Virginia at the church office if you need a list and addresses for our Special Members –sending cards shows them how much their church family cares about them!



[Calendar page here...](#)

Eleanor Oskamp: March 17. Eleanor is our oldest member and is turning **100 years old!**

Let’s shower Eleanor with **100 cards** from her church family! If you don’t have a church directory with her Canandaigua address, please call the office at (585) 394-0503, or email Virginia Holroyd at virginia.holroyd@uccdga.org. **Also, please stop in the Welcome Center sometime between March 1st and 10th to sign the big Happy Birthday banner that we’ll deliver to her!!**

Eleanor and her late husband, “Buzz,” joined our church in 1980 and were involved in many ways over the years. They were married for 77 years!! and raised three daughters while they owned *Oliver’s*, a ‘world famous’ candy store in Batavia. They enjoyed living on Canandaigua Lake for over 20 years, celebrating holidays with their family. Eleanor loves to read, watch some sports, spend time with her daughters, and hear from her loving grandchildren and great-grandkids.

Remembering our treasured Special Member:

Kathy Mills, age 89, passed away on February 11th. Kathy joined our church in 2012 and was very active, attending worship services, Sunday School, Bible Study Small Group, Circle 7, knitting group and card making. She also helped keep the pews organized with all the information in the card holders. She had 3 children, 4 grandkids, and several great-grandsons. We will miss Kathy greatly.

TO OUR CHURCH “SENIORS”

The Stewards would like to know which members are turning **90 years old** this year!!

If **you** are, or you know of a church member who is, we’d like to know because at age 90, these members become part of our marvelous group of **Special Members!** Please contact Virginia Holroyd at the office or email her at:

virginia.holroyd@uccdga.org.

We’d also like to know about those who are **ages 87-89** so we know who is on the horizon!



Special Members are those in their 90s, are homebound, in nursing homes, or need temporary special care. The members of the **Board of Stewards** visit our Special Members regularly.

REMEMBERING:

Our prayers and sympathy are with **Linda Wells**, whose brother, **Paul Miner**, passed away on January 27th. Please keep the family in your prayers during this difficult time.

Our prayers and sympathy are with **Alison Boseck**, whose mother, **Jean Pollard**, passed away on January 30th. Please keep the family in your prayers during this difficult time.

CELEBRATING:

We celebrate the birth of **Joanie Elle Norah Cheney** on January 24th. Her parents are **Stephanie and Michael Cheney** and her grandparents are **Gary and Nancy Preece**. Please keep the family in your prayers during this special time.

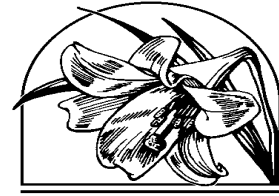
MEMBER CARE: If you are aware of anyone in our church family who is ill, having surgery, who had a death in the family, is having troubles in some way? Are you missing your neighbor who sits in the pew next to yours? Or do you know someone who has a happy occasion to celebrate, please let us know!! The Staff works with the **Outreach and Congregation Care Committee** to connect with members of our church family who need encouragement and recognition. **We care about you!** Call the church office or Congregation Care Committee Chair: Sue Vadney, at (585) 739-8615

Easter Lily Order Form 2024

PLEASE PRINT

NAME: _____

I would like to order _____ Lilies at **\$12.00** each.



They are given in memory or honor (**circle one**) of:

1. Honor / Memory of: _____

Given by: _____

2. Honor / Memory of: _____

Given by: _____

3. Honor / Memory of: _____

Given by: _____

4. Honor / Memory of: _____

Given by: _____

5. Honor / Memory of: _____

Given by: _____

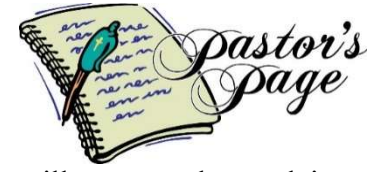
6. Honor / Memory of: _____

Given by: _____

Place this in the offering plate WITH your check made payable to "THE UNITED CHURCH STEWARDS". List in the memo section: "EASTER LILY". You may also mail it or bring to the church office.

ORDERS MUST BE IN NO LATER THAN Sun. March 17th.

Please pick up your lily after church on Easter Sunday. Thank you!



He Is Risen

Easter is in March this year. Easter Day is the first Sunday after the first full Moon on or after the March equinox. It most often occurs in April, but it falls on the last day of March this year. We will spend most of March in the season of Lent, but we will corporately proclaim together on the last Sunday of this month, He is Risen! He is Risen, Indeed!

Preparing for Easter, we will walk through six miracles in Mark's gospel. As I mentioned last month, Mark records at least ten essential miracles that point to Jesus' authority or power. Each miracle highlights an area in which Jesus is in charge. As we follow Mark's story, it becomes clear that Jesus is God, able to offer Himself as the sacrifice for our sins. Please plan to join us each week as we move through these extraordinary encounters.

Finally, let me remind you that we will gather on Maundy Thursday at 7 PM for a special communion service. Contemplating the Lord's Supper and Jesus' journey to the Cross is an appropriate way to remember Jesus' love for us.

Here is a list of readings for each Sunday. Please take time each week to read these passages before coming to worship.

Wade

Worship Schedule and Readings

- March 03 - Power Over Nature (Mark 4:35-41)
Additional Readings: Psalm 29, Isaiah 43:8-13
- March 10 - Power Over Death (Mark 5:21-43)
Additional Readings: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22, Ephesians 2:1-10
- March 17 - Power to Provide (Mark 6:30-52)
Additional Readings: Ezekiel 34:11-15, Psalm 145:10-18
- March 24 - Power Over Evil (Mark 9:14-29)
Additional Readings: Hebrews 11:1-3, Ephesians 2:1-10
- March 31 - Resurrection Sunday (Mark 16:1-8)
Additional Readings: Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11



The QR code to the right will also take you to the streaming page

GREETERS of ALL AGES are needed for our Services in MARCH:

Greeters play an important role in extending hospitality in our church on Sundays. Greeters welcome people as they enter the church building, they hand out Bulletins, and they collect the Offering at each Sunday Service. This is a role where kids can help too!

The **Sign-up Sheet** is on the **Church Office door**. Reminders and instructions are emailed the Friday before your scheduled Sunday. If you have any questions about being a Greeter, please talk with any Steward (listed on the back of the Sunday Bulletin) or Virginia Holroyd. Our **March Steward of the Month** is **Martha Ashley**. *We really appreciate your service!*



EASTER LILY ORDERS:



The **Easter Lily order form** is included in this Lamplighter. Forms will also be available in the Welcome Center. **ORDERS are DUE by: Sun., March 17th** **COST: \$12/plant. Checks payable to: United Church Stewards**

You may order your plant *in memory of* loved ones or *in honor of* special people in your lives.

The lilies will adorn our Sanctuary for **Easter Sunday** and you may take your plant(s) home right after the Easter Services on March 31st. *Thanks so much for your orders!*

Financial Items

Treasurer's Financial Summary for Jan 2024

Description	January 2024 Actual	2024 Budget
Income		
Total Giving	61,084.15	39,735.90
Other Income	(34.76)	1,122.20
Total Income	61,049.39	40,858.10
Spending		
Education and Ministry	3,457.17	3,419.17
Operating	5,707.53	6,147.22
Personnel & Related	31,612.32	31,175.04
Total Expenses	40,777.02	40,741.43
Net Income Year to Date	20,272.37	116.67

During January, we have taken in \$20,272.37 more than we have spent. This is because of the donors who choose to pay their entire pledge at the beginning of the year.

Thank you for your faithful giving!

Nancy Lamberson, Treasurer

Online Giving

Our new church management program makes online giving very easy! Access it through our website, app, or scan this QR code. You can give one-time gifts or set up recurring giving to happen on whatever schedule you choose.



THE STEWARDS ASSISTANCE FUND:



Donations to the Stewards Assistance Fund help those in our church family who are going through financial challenges. If **you** need some assistance *or know of someone* in our church family who does, please contact Virginia Holroyd at the Church. Monies have been given to help pay for groceries, car repairs, electric bills, other household expenses, and medical expenses. The recipients of these funds are very, very appreciative!!

Thank you for helping your church family!

Dear Pastor Wade and the whole United Church

February 3, 2024

I want to express my sincere appreciation and thanks for all the prayers I have received over these last few weeks of my surgery experience.

As I have stated repeatedly, I am a believer in God and know that God's powers are omnipresent. They sure were for me. The healing power of prayer has been working in me. I truly believe my quick recovery so far has been aided by all the prayers I have received from all of you.

I never had any fear of the process at all. I was a bit apprehensive of the pain I knew I was going to suffer but it was not a fear. God provided me with confidence that his will would be met and if God wanted me to live then I would. If not, I was thankful for all God has provided me, which was incredible. I have been very blessed my whole life and I know it. I stand in awe in what God has done for me. I'm not worthy of it but thankful for everything. I'm a struggling Christian, but everyone else is too. I'm no Saint but I believe God stands by me still.... And everyone else too. How blessed we are.

I know the prayers that people said for me were real, effective, and helpful to me. God does hear our prayers and I am so thankful for all of you.

God Bless,
Kerry Van Iseghem

PASTORAL MINISTRY

Our Adult Education Retreat produced a number of takeaways. This is the **final** Lamplighter where I share snippets from our retreat to serve as important reminders. For those who did not attend the retreat, I still encourage you to consider these approaches within the context of all sorts of divisive issues, not just the retreat theme (the retreat theme was about moving from an adversarial to a missional posture pertaining to the topic of human sexuality).

This month, I'd like to share the **fourth, fifth, and sixth** steps to cultivating a missional (not adversarial) posture of dialogue. Please join us in prayerfully discerning the statements below, and how God may be asking us to respond.

Look to Jesus as the measure of faithfulness

The model of Christ calls us to live together in Christian community, welcoming all people, embracing the other, and loving as Christ loved. At the same time, Christ affirmed the teaching of the ancient faith tradition in which he was rooted, striving not to overthrow it, but to bring it to its deepest and most faithful expression. Therefore, our faithfulness as a community must be measured by the example of Jesus (rather than varying perspectives on the morality of immorality of the behavior of others).

Walk with humility, unafraid of where the journey might lead

In the face of varieties of interpretation in our culture on human sexuality, we seek to engage in humble and respectful dialogue. Situated in the deep, consensual teaching of the church, we welcome the insights of the best of contemporary thinking. We humbly seek a posture that neither arrogates itself as superior to the teaching of the past, nor refuses to listen to the insights of the present. We engage this humble dialogue without fear because we trust that the God of all truth will lead us to faithful articulation and engagement in every historical situation.

Focus first on common ground rather than the details of the difference

Though somewhat counter-intuitive, common ground on the most difficult issues of human disagreement – or differences of interpretation – is often found not in the euphoric discovery of a shared assumption or proposition, but in the sobering recognition of a mutual grief. The path forward, therefore, must often begin at the place of lament. We lament the pain experienced by hurting people; we lament the isolation; we lament the loss of life; we lament the bigotry; we lament the unwillingness or inability to understand. With eyes open to our common anguish, heartache, and sorrow, in name of God and humanity, let us learn to lament together.

By the time you read this article, we have likely just begun our Adult Education (Sunday School) and Youth (Cause Program) discussions on human sexuality. Please join me, with prayerful focus, to live these steps out, as God would have us, during our discussions, and in our everyday lives



Mark Slomski | Pastor of Youth & Adult Ministry | Mark.Slomski@uccdga.org | 585-455-7491

BIBLE & THEOLOGY

In our church calendar, we are in the season of Lent. If you have not already, feel free to grab a copy of this year's Lenten Devotional (at no cost to you), which is located in the Welcome Center (underneath the TV). If there are none left, please let me know, and we can order another copy for you! This year, our devotional is from the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams. The devotions are based off the Gospel of Mark, which conveniently is also the Gospel account that Pastor Wade is preaching on during the Lenten season.

For those unfamiliar, here is a brief history about Lent:

In short, Lent is the fast of 40 days before Easter. Generally speaking, Lent is observed as a time of penance, and is expressed through abstaining from festivities, by almsgiving, and increasing time spent on religious exercises.

During the first three centuries, fasting in preparation for Easter lasted no more than three days. Fasting for 40 days was first mentioned in the Canons of Nicaea (AD 325). 40 days were selected in honor of the 40-day fasts of Moses, Elijah, and Jesus.

However, the exact details of what days counted towards the 40-day Lenten season were debated. Some counted weekends, others did not. By the seventh century, the Latin Church followed the 40-day observance that we are more familiar with, once Ash Wednesday was established. Even the times of day to break the fast changed over time, moving from 3:00 pm to 12:00 pm, influenced by the timing and preparation needed for Vespers service (evening prayer).

Fasting adherence was strict in the early centuries, but began to relax by the ninth century. Jumping all the way to 1966, the Roman Catholic Church published an Apostolic Constitution (titled *Paenitemini*) which limited fasting to Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. The Orthodox church have not followed suit, as they have committed themselves to rigorous fasting standards to this day.

What about the protestants? After the Reformation, the Church of England continued the observance of Lent. The observance was integrated into the Book of Common Prayer. Other protestant denominations also observed (and still observe) the Lenten season, though not all. Today, the ABC-USA encourages an embrace of the Lenten season, because it is another opportunity to draw close to our Lord, and to pray for our neighbors near and far. The PC-USA encourage the same, stating Lent is a time when Christians dig deeper in their relationship with Christ.

Here at the United Church, we encourage others to join in on the Lenten season. We pray the devotional serve as a helpful tool, as you personally (and we corporately) tend to your (and our) relationship with God.

Resources used:

- Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, section 5.24.12
- The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, Lent
- ABC-USA Website
- PC-USA Website



Special Easter Offering

This year we will be receiving our offering for the One Great Hour of Sharing on Palm Sunday, March 24. Your gift shares faith, hope and love all around the world. Both the Presbyterian and American Baptists churches use the funds from this offering to serve individuals and communities in need, providing victims of fires, tornadoes, war and hunger by supporting programs in over 100 countries. Each gift to the One Great Hour of Sharing helps improve the lives of the suffering and vulnerable.



On March 24 please join with both of our denominations in sharing God's love with our neighbors-in-need around the world. You will find envelopes in this Lamplighter and in the pews or mark your gift for OGHS.

This Lenten season, please give generously to the One Great Hour of Sharing. If we all do a little, it adds up to a lot!

AN INVITATION...Please consider joining a short-term mission trip to Mexico April 17 -24th. Our United Church has a history of mission work in Quintana Roo, Mexico fostered by the commitment of Pastor Emeritus Rev. Fred Magley to the Presbytery Mission Trips when several from this church joined with others and traveled to Bacalar to engage in construction and VBS activities. More recently we have been actively supporting and engaging with the work of Living Waters for the World (LWW) and its mission to "empower everyday people to change lives through clean water." LWW trains, equips, and supports volunteers to form clean water mission partnerships bringing clean water and the love of Christ to communities in need.

A group of five are making plans now for a LWW 2nd year sustainability trip to the community of Tabi, just outside the major city of Felipe Carrillo Puerto, and visits to Limones and Cedralito where our church has established covenant relationships with sisters and brothers of faith at Misión Sinai in Limones and Misión Monte Horeb in Cedralito and their LWW water plants. There will be opportunity for some tourism and some worship, but the renewing of relationships and the sustainability of the LWW mission is at the core. The United Church mission committee's trip fund helps cover some of the approximate \$1,400 expense. Please speak with Ken Allen and Linda Werts for more info.



Called to Care, Canandaigua's "Chasin' the Blues" benefit raised \$18,500 to continue its mission of welcome and resettlement. Yes, indeed, the fundraising committee excelled for this 2nd year event! The kickoff band was wonderful, speakers were inspirational, food was delicious, but it was Dr. Jade Myers' moving testimony of personal life changing events that gripped the audience last Friday night. Each one of our, now nine, families who have been quietly resettled here in Canandaigua have similar stories of resilience and hope. As an all-volunteer organization we have risen to serve now as resource to other communities seeking to welcome and resettle families. It all happens because of the passion, compassion, and determination of church and community folks just like you who know we are "called to welcome the stranger" and want to make a difference in the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable. We continue to partner with World Relief Western NY with its mission of empowering a local church, organization, or community to serve as a Good Neighbor Team

to make a difference in the lives of a family. As we move into our third year, all our committees will benefit by engaging new volunteers. Our current Good Neighbor Teams are ready and willing to share their experience with volunteers who are ready to welcome a family. Our nominating committee is working to gather the new leadership to serve on our Board of Directors. The invitation and call is now for you...will you join us, in big ways or small, to welcome, advocate for, integrate into community, and make a meaningful difference for a family forced or choosing to flee for safety from their homeland? Cathy Bush and Linda Werts are hoping to hear from you.

HOME: Migration and us. Where is “home”?

Many United Church members were not born in Ontario County. United Church members, including some whose grandparents and great grandparents were nurtured by Canandaigua’s Presbyterians and Baptist, have welcomed us into fellowship when we came to Canandaigua.

Few of us were displaced from former home communities by war or natural disaster. Migration by choice brought us to a new home in Canandaigua, “the Chosen Spot”. We remain free to return to our original home.

2,400,000 is the number of South Sudan refugees (mostly women and children) displaced across the nation’s borders. **Shelvis and Nancy Smith-Mather**, have been missionaries to war-torn South Sudan from 2011. They are now in neighboring Uganda serving with the refugees who are longing to safely return home.

Refugees in “temporary” camps are not welcomed immigrants. Refugees long for what was left behind. Food, shelter, water, and sanitation are each needed as they wait. **Pray** as Shelvis and Nancy work in collaboration with local partnerships to find long-term solutions to the conflicts. They encourage and guide South Sudan refugees seeking to create a shared plan for the future. Pray as our missionaries share God’s love in a broken world. Shelvis and Nancy live among the people they serve. They share the Gospel in the language of the local people. They share a call to reconciliation and seek to build Christian fellowships with all South Sudanese. Pray for refugees looking for signs God and other Christian have not forgotten them as they find “home”.



Silent Auction 2024

Your help is needed to make our Silent Auction a success.

We are looking for **volunteers** to help plan and/or work at our Bi-Annual Silent Auction. The auction this year is planned for June 2-June 9, 2024. If interested, please contact Regina Allen at (585) 260-4060 or regieallen@gmail.com

We also need **donors** of items such as: home crafted items, store bought items, gift baskets, pledges of your time or talents to help someone (such as 1 or 2 hours of gardening or babysitting time), antiques, a boat ride on Canandaigua Lake, a home cooked meal for a group of people, etc.

The funds raised for our Trip Fund will assist our Youth and Adults as they go out into the mission field. For example: Mission trips by the Youth Group; Adult Mission Trips to Mexico to install clean water plants through Living Waters for the World; and Mission Trips to Nicaragua with AMOS to provide health clinics, Computer labs and libraries.

Prayerfully consider how you can help us raise money for our Trip Fund. It takes much planning and many hands to make this happen. We would appreciate any help you can give us. Thank you.



March 24, 2024 we are receiving the One Great Hour of Sharing (Special Easter Offering)

ADULT ED MINISTRY

Reflections & Learnings

The **Adult Education Sunday School Hour** continues! Starting in late February, our group is venturing into a conversation about faith, sexuality and gender. The primary focus of our time together is on LGBT people and what the Bible says about their experience. Due to the importance and sensitivity of this topic, we will be combining our other Adult Education Sunday School groups into one large group that will meet in the Downstairs Dining Hall, with the exception of our Corporate Prayer Group (meeting in the Youth Office). This Corporate Prayer Group will be praying for the large group as we journey together as a church family.

Our **Young Adult** lunch meets every first and third Sundays of the month, 12:00 PM – 12:50 PM, after service. The **Young Adult** group also meets every second and fourth Saturday evening, 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM. This event includes worship, Bible study, and discussion.

As always, **Adults** in our church are engaged in various small group ministries. To name a few, we have our Men’s breakfast, Women’s circles, Bible study groups, knitting group, and prayer shawl knitting. Check out the church calendar for times and locations of these different groups!

As for **Special Events**, we are inviting men to attend the **Iron Sharpens Iron Conference** in Buffalo (March 16). Looking out towards the summer, our **Adult Ed Retreat** will be August 17 at Onanda Park. Wally Fleming will be our guest speaker! We are also conducting our **Sunday Service** on August 18th at Onanda Park. Into Fall 2024, we are hosting our first **United Church Seminar**, November 2. Our guest speaker is Dr. Richard Middleton, Professor Emeritus at Northeastern Seminary.

The **Adult Education Ministry Team** continues efforts, facilitation, and discernment for the 2024 Sunday school groups. Please continue to keep this team in prayer as they serve in this important ministry. We are also coordinating a **Young Adult Ministry Discernment** group, which conduct prayerful discernment on the direction of the young adult ministry program here at the church.

As a special add, I share with you below a list that our young adults made, consisting of short reflective statements from their time at the **Passion 2024** conference in Atlanta, Georgia:

*Give our anxiety to God, and let the pressure fall to the foot of the cross.
What they meant for evil turns around for God’s good.
Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life!
God has a message and plan for you, even though you are in exile.
We are here on purpose.*

Looking Forward

Iron Sharpens Iron Men’s Conference - March 16, 2024

Adult Education Retreat & Sunday Service – August 17 & 18 (Onanda Park)



Mark Slomski | Pastor of Youth & Adult Ministry | Mark.Slomski@uccdga.org | 585-455-7491

YOUTH MINISTRY

Reflections & Learnings

The Cause youth program continues their journey together through the “Can I Ask” that curriculum. Recently, they have discussed the contents of the chapter titled “Does God endorse violence?”. Starting in late February, and going into early May, our Cause youth will be receiving Christian education on human sexuality.

Our Youth Ministry Team continues their faithful work! For 2024, instead of a formal agenda with a 1-hour meeting, we adapted our time together to share a meal together, bond through a fun activity, conduct an established devotional and prayer time, and engage in ministry discernment. We have met in January under the new format, and will be adjusting our time together as we test out our new approach!

Our Youth Sunday School continue their activities between church services! For our High School students, they are wrapping up a series titled **The Outsiders**, where our group has learned about how to live in the Kingdom of God every day. They will then venture into a series titled **Marvel**, which helps students explore what it means to have a lifestyle of worship. Our Middle School students are journeying through a series titled **Hopeless**, which helps students focus on dealing with mistakes and failures.

The Middle School Youth Club group has recently covered sessions about forgiveness, community, being known by God, and remembering that God is with us. These sessions are all produced by Hyfi curriculum.

For February, our Special Events included our **SouperBowl of Caring** fundraiser. Donations collected are given to CCIA to help those in need. We also held a **youth game night** event. Finally, we hosted a special meeting for our **Group Workcamp Trip** to Newark, New York.

Our **Monthly School Youth Connects** continue! This mid-week program is aimed at providing positive connections for youth with their faith family. This is also a great time for the parents to connect with one another! Check out the dates below for the next connection dates, times, and locations.

Looking Forward

Seder Dinner – March 24 (Cause night!)

Connect Canandaigua – February 13 @ 6:45 AM (North Road Tim Horton’s) (Second Wednesday)

Connect Marcus Whitman – February 18 @ 2:30 PM (Gorham Free Library) (Third Monday)

Connect Victor – February 20 @ 6:45 AM (Main Street Tim Horton’s) (Third Wednesday)

NO CAUSE – March 31 (Easter)

Summer Youth Retreat – August 16-17 (Onanda Park)



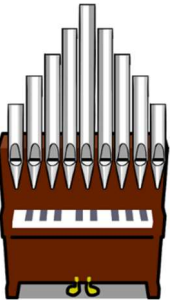
Mark Slomski | Pastor of Youth & Adult Ministry | Mark.Slomski@uccdga.org | 585-455-7491

Miscellaneous ...

Organ Concerts in March

We invite the community to the **March 22nd EROI** (Eastman Rochester Organ Initiative) Concert at 7:00 p.m. Four very talented Eastman Organ Department students will entertain us for an hour-long organ concert. There will be a free-will offering taken that will benefit the students for their European music studies tour. Please invite family and friends.

You are also invited to come listen to our own organist, Kateri Andress, give a “dress rehearsal” for her Master’s Program recital here at the United Church. She will play on Sunday, **March 17** at 2 pm and says that having an audience will help her prepare for her recital later that week at Eastman.



Stampin’ Up!

The next Stampin’ Up class is scheduled for March 23rd from 9 - 12. We will be making the cards pictured! If you have any questions or are interested in signing up by March 17th, contact Sharon Meyer.



Save the Date

After years of dedicated service to the United Church, Virginia Holroyd is retiring. We are excited to show our gratitude, so please join us for her celebration!

Retirement Celebration for Virginia Holroyd

Date: April 7th

Time: 9:45-10:45

Place: Dining Room

CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY MINISTRY

What's happened...

Our **Youth Club** numbers have grown. We invited friends to Youth Club in late January and now we have **55 children** enrolled in Youth Club. What a joy to share the love of Jesus with so many children each week! On February 14, the Youth Club children filled **45 Birthday Bags**. These bags are given to families in need who use our local food pantries and have someone celebrating a birthday. **Thank you to all who donated to this service project!**

Sunday school and **Youth Club** kids received age-appropriate **Lenten** devotionals. It is our hope that providing these devotionals to children and youth will give them an opportunity to grow closer to our Lord and Savior Jesus. It is also a special time that families can engage in **faith conversations at home**. Parents are encouraged to set aside daily time to use the devotionals together. **Pray for our families** as they engage in faith conversations through this Lenten season!

On February 25th, **Sunday school children** and **youth** were given **Rice Bowls**. These bowls are filled with loose change or bills to help feed children in orphanages all over the world. There is also a way to donate online: <https://ricebowls.networkforgood.com/projects/218960-the-united-church> We appreciate your support of this special Lenten offering!

What's happening...

Join us for a **church family bowling night** on **Saturday, March 16th** from **5-8pm**. We have reserved the VIP room at **Roseland Bowl** for our church family to enjoy an evening of fun and fellowship! Spaces are limited, so *sign-up is required*. We will enjoy **pizza, soda, dessert, and bowling**, of course! We also ask that those who are able help defer the cost of the night by paying \$10 per adult and \$5 per child (with a family maximum of \$30). Scholarships are available to those who need them, just ask Mark or Deb. Please use the QR code to sign-up, or ask Deb or Mark for help. Thank you!



And, on **March 20th**, the **Youth Club kids** will go **bowling** at Roseland Bowl. After we arrive at church and have snack, we will divide up into cars and head over to the bowling alley. We will bowl a few games and then have pizza and soda. **Parents**, please note, **pick up** your children **early** at **5:30pm** at **Roseland Bowl**.

Upcoming Events...

March 16 – Church family bowling night at Roseland, 5-8pm – sign up required

March 20 – Youth Club kids go bowling! Early pick up at 5:30pm at Roseland Bowl

March 24 – Palm Sunday; children's palm parade during 11am service

March 27 – Resurrection Egg Hunt for Youth Club kids

March 31 – Easter Sunday – Christ is RISEN! (no Sunday school)

CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Scuba VBS - registration opens March 1st!

Scuba VBS – **July 8-12, 9am – 12noon**

Kick-off: Sun., July 7 at 6:30pm

At **Scuba VBS**, we will take kids deep into an amazing undersea adventure where they'll experience the ever-flowing, never-ending love of God. Kids will be immersed in the Word and discover what living water is really all about! Feel free to invite friends to join you in this deep sea adventure!

All children, ages **4 years old** through those who **completed 5th grade**, are welcome to **participate!** Register here: <https://uccdga.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/2176309>

Children/teens who **completed 6th – 12th grade** are encouraged to **volunteer!**

Contact Deb Marshall if you are interested in being a volunteer

Personal reflection...

We are currently in the season of Lent, a period of 40 days during which we remember the events leading up to and including the death of Jesus Christ, whose life and teachings are the foundation of our faith. In researching Lent, I found that this 40-day period is called Lent after an old English word meaning 'lengthen'. This is because during this time of year, the days start to get longer as we approach spring and summer. It is a time of reflection and of asking for forgiveness, and when we prepare to celebrate Jesus's resurrection at Easter, which comes at the very end of Lent. It's also a time when some of us give up something as a sign of sacrifice and/or to represent Jesus Christ's sacrifice when He went into the desert to pray and fast for 40 days before later dying on the cross.

Though some may disagree, I don't think it is necessary to give something up during Lent. This is a practice that may help people draw closer to Jesus during Lent, yet I don't think it is a requirement during this season. However, I do believe it's important to use Lent to reflect on Jesus' love for us, His life on Earth, and, most importantly, His sacrifice on the cross for us. Setting aside more time than usual to spend in prayer, using a special Lenten devotional, reading through one or all of the Gospels, or giving up something may be helpful ways to focus on Jesus' sacrifice during this season.

We often talk about hope during the season of Advent; however, the season of Lent is often a time I remember the hope of Heaven due to Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection. I'm thankful that I one day will be united with my Savior and loved ones for eternity. It is also a time of hope for me because, as mentioned above, days are getting longer and we are moving closer to spring and summer. And, it's a time of hope because Jesus gives us new life in Him when we accept Him as our Savior. There's so much I could not do without Jesus; it makes me very thankful to know him as Lord and Savior.

As we move closer to Holy Week and Easter Sunday, may our focus be on Jesus – His sacrificial love for us and the hope we have in Him. Out of this focus, I pray that we will be able to share His love, hope, and light in a hopeless, dark world. What would happen if we each asked God every day how we could share His love and hope? Imagine what a difference we could make!

~ Deb

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.”

~ 1 Peter 1:3-4 ~