

# The Messenger



A Newsletter of the  
Genesee 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational, United Church of Christ, Inc.

November – December, 2020

Volume 15, Number 4

## From the Pastor



Charlie, was a prisoner, confined eight hours a day to a six-by-eight elevator cage, which was confined, in turn, to a sixteen-story shaft. In one building or another, he had made his living as an elevator operator for ten years. He estimated the average trip at about an eighth of a mile, and when he thought of the thousands of miles he had travelled, when he thought that he might have driven the car through the mists above the Caribbean and set it down on some coral beach in Bermuda, he held the narrowness of his travels against his passengers, as if it were not the nature of the elevator but the pressure of their lives that confined him, as if they had clipped his wings.<sup>1</sup>

*I am now guilty of the sin that I often admonish stores of committing when they decorate for Christmas too early! John Cheever's "Christmas Is a Sad Season for the Poor," I hope, is not unfamiliar to you, but, if it is unfamiliar, I envy your discovery and the emotional moment when you savor its prose. I will try not to be a spoiler for the uninitiated, but the setting of this book offers an intimate exploration on the difference between the wealthy and those with meager means. I chose a passage that illustrates this contrast without spoiling the plot.*

*It turns out that Charlie truly is well-traveled in terms of distance. It may even rival the traveling*

*Continued on Page 4*

<sup>1</sup> John Cheever's "Christmas Is a Sad Season for the Poor" was published in *New Yorker* magazine in the issue dated on Christmas Eve, 1949. It is available online.  
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1949/12/24/christmas-is-a-sad-season-for-the-poor>

Dear Church Members

This is an important message from Rev. Franz Rigert our Wisconsin Conference Minister. He is urging church's to temporarily suspend all in-person services. COVID infections continue to rise at record rates with record number of deaths and hospitals quickly moving towards maximum ICU occupancy. The forecast for the next several weeks is dismal at best.

After lengthy discussion and careful discernment, Rev. Peter St. Martin and his wife Judy – along with the moderator in Hartland, Sharon Kraklow and myself, believe there is no choice but to temporarily suspend in person services, at least until the numbers improve. We wanted to make this decision before we had an infection in our midst, rather than wait for an outbreak. I know many of you will be very disappointed by this, but it is the right thing to do – at least for now. Please also consider that there are real health concerns for all of us and we need to respect each individual's decisions when it comes to health and wellbeing. Rev. Peter has also reached out to Rev. Rigert to seek guidance on how to regularly and objectively assess our ability to return to in person service based on reasonable metrics and circumstances in our specific community. We will share this guidance as it becomes available. To clarify further, we might get to a determined "safe enough" level to hold something in-person one week and not be able to do so the next. It will require our discerning criteria for making such decisions and ongoing diligence as leaders responsible for the spiritual as well as the physical well-being of those who are part of the church family. This is uncharted territory and we beg you all to be patient and understanding. We will be scheduling an ad-hoc board meeting in the near future for further discussion on these issues and will report back to the congregation all that we discuss and decide.

I am very sorry about our current situation and pray we can all get through this and gather safely on the other side. Remember the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years but they did eventually arrive in the Promised Land.

Thanks for your patience and understanding. I am sure Rev. Peter will have more to say on this topic during Sunday's virtual services.

Faithfully,

Mike Whiteley, Church Moderator

October 23, 2020,

Dear members and friends of the First Congregational Church of Genesee, UCC:

Our congregation's traditional practice of "calling" a pastor affirms the active presence of God's Spirit in the search process. We prayerfully seek a pastor with particular gifts and skills while recognizing that candidates are also engaged in a Spirit-led discernment process. Thus, our church enters into a covenant with a new pastor always knowing that God may sometimes call that pastor to a new ministry setting.

In the days that have elapsed since Rev. Peter St. Martin mailed us his resignation letter (announcing his retirement), we have been keenly aware of God's new calling for him even as we have experienced a profound sense of loss. It is not easy to think about ending a Spirit-filled ministry nearly four years long. These next six months together will be a precious time, and we will inform you soon about our plans for special events to celebrate our shared ministry.

The members of our church board have already received a few questions about what comes next for our church and our call process. We want to assure you that we have already been in touch with our Conference/Association minister, Rev. Lorraine Cineceros. We will schedule a special meeting of our board with her in the near future. This meeting will allow us to hear directly from Rev. Cineceros about UCC procedures during a time of pastoral transition. She suggested that we share with you this brief overview.

1. *We will select an interim pastor to provide continuity to worship, pastoral care, and program/staff oversight. Rev. Cineceros will advise us on this process; she has assured us that she has several excellent candidates available who offer the specialized skills needed during a transition time. This pastor will not be a candidate for the "Settled" position.*
2. *After the interim pastor is in place, we will initiate a search process for a new pastor in accordance with the UCC bylaws. We will invite all of you to be part of the self-study that will identify our church's pastor needs. And we will develop a church profile for the pastoral candidates (just like we did 5 years ago).*
3. *Our Conference office will advertise our vacancy among UCC clergy all across the country. Our search committee will read ministerial profiles, screen candidates, conduct interviews, check references, and eventually select a candidate who will be recommended to the entire congregation. (In the near future we will be asking for volunteers to join our search committee.)*

We send this letter so you will know that we are taking steps to think about our future. We will keep you informed on a regular basis. (Please know that it is our intention to work with Hartland UCC to do a joint call of a shared pastor as we did with Pastor Peter.) For now, let us express our gratitude to God for Peter's ministry and enter into a time of celebration with him and Judy. Please keep them in your prayers even as you know from experience that they will be praying for us.

In Christ's name,

Your Church Board

Welcome to the November-December, 2020 edition of the Messenger. Restrictions, due to Covid-19, are still not allowing us to have in-person services inside our church building. In lieu of "normal" Sunday morning worship an online "Zoom" gathering has been set up. Here are the details.

SUNDAY, 9:30 AM (VIRTUAL SERVICE) Join us as early as 9 AM.

To Join the group via Computer or tablet or smartphone, click on the following link or copy into your browser. <https://zoom.us/j/396301165> Password = 365422

You may also join by going to <https://zoom.us> and click on the "JOIN A MEETING" heading at the top of the webpage. When prompted, enter:  
• Meeting ID: 396 301 165  
• Password: 365422

To join meeting by phone (Audio only)  
• Call 1-312-626-6799  
• and enter when prompted:  
o Meeting ID: 396 301 165  
o Password: 365422

### Communion on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month

As our Lord told the disciples on the *first* Last Supper, "Do this in remembrance of me," we have returned to the regular observance of the Sacrament of Communion on the first Sunday of the Month during the 9:30 AM "zoom" service. Yes, it is quite a different experience, as we cannot share the elements. We encourage you to do what you need to do to make the experience meaningful to you. You may want to have elements (grape juice or wine / bread) with you to partake along with Pastor Peter as he breaks the bread, pours the cup and partakes on behalf of us all.

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### Lectionary Bible Study

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This is your opportunity to learn about the Bible scripture for the upcoming Sunday. It is held every Thursday, at 10 AM. Like our "zoom" services, it is a "virtual" event. To Join the group via Computer or tablet or smartphone, click on the following link or copy into your browser. <https://zoom.us/j/324446460>

You may also join by going to <https://zoom.us> and click on the "JOIN A MEETING" heading at the top of the webpage.

When prompted, enter:  
• Meeting ID: 324 446 460  
• Password: 789656

To join meeting by phone (Audio only)  
• Call 1-312-626-6799  
and enter when prompted:  
o Meeting ID: 324 446 460  
o Password: 789656

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### MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS in a "VIRTUAL" world

The members and friends of our church have been very faithful in their giving during this time of Covid-19. Thank you and keep up the great work! We can't pass the collection plate like in a normal church service. But you can still take advantage of your great, God given, opportunity to make an offering. Make checks out to "Genesee 1st Congregational, United Church of Christ" OR, if you prefer, just "Genesee Church." Send them to the church office – GENESEE CHURCH / W306 S5075 Church St. / Mukwonago, WI 53149-9732. Our treasurer, Angela, picks them up on a weekly basis. OR You can mail your check direct to Angela: Angela Williams / W956 Miramar Rd. / East Troy, WI. 53120.

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### Annual "Adopt-a-Family" through the Christmas Clearing Council (CCC) of Waukesha County:

**"We won't be "adopting a family" this year. Instead we will be collecting gift cards for the Christmas Clearing Council. Please redirect your funds, buy those cards, and give generously to this worthy cause."**

This year the CCC has said they have a great need for \$25 gift cards from Walmart & Target. Gift cards will be collected during the month of November by these convenient ways:

- Drop off at the office - please call ahead for available hours **(262-968-3849)**. The secretary will be here from 2 – 4 PM on Wednesdays and Thursdays.
- Mail the gift cards to the church office by November 30: 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Church of Genesee, UCC / W306 S5075 Church Street / Mukwonago, WI 53149.
- Contact Sue Fleming **(262-470-6572)** to arrange pick up.

If you have any additional questions, please call Sue Fleming at the number above. Thank you.

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From the Pastor (from Page 1)

*of his wealthy passengers, but it is all confined to a 1/8-mile vertical elevator shaft at the direction of those he serves, and "he held the narrowness of his travels against his passengers." The difference between these lives is starkly portrayed here, and there will be more shows of this disparity, but the story ends, I want to say, happily with a bridging of the difference that makes a season of giving truly sad for some. Christmas is a sad season for the poor, not because of the difference between having much and having little. The season of giving is sad, because the poor have scarcely anything to give. The happy ending to this story comes not from a change in Charlie's station in life, but in the opportunity to make a difference for someone in need because he had something to give.*

*This story teaches the priceless blessing of giving beyond ourselves, and as depressing as having no means to give, I contend that a worse condition would be to have means and fail to give. When we have a chance to look back at our lives, assessing what has brought satisfaction, we would not find joy in merely getting by. Jesus spoke on this in a parable where servants were woeful because all they did what was expected of them and nothing more. (Luke 17:10)*

*Before Christmas on the unofficial Christian calendar is Stewardship Season where congregations seek contributions to support the ministry of their community for the coming year. Both holy seasons are about giving. Take some time to contemplate its value to your soul. Giving is the expression of the best of what is human. Giving brings the joy of being part of something bigger than yourself. Giving makes the love of God real in the world and in the lives of others. Imagine how dissatisfied it would be to look back on the year 2021 and you could only say that you have only taken care of yourself. God loves a cheerful giver! (2 Corinthians 9:7)*

Pastor Peter

e-mail: [stmartpb@msn.com](mailto:stmartpb@msn.com)

(c) 262-720-6939; (h) 262-201-4033

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## Notes from a Covered Bridge

Near the city of Winterset, Iowa is a special landmark. The Cedar Bridge, built in 1883, is one of six remaining covered bridges that lie within a 10-mile radius of this quaint little town. Situated in a small county park, this is the one bridge you may drive through. The structure of the large wooden beams is a testimony to 19th-century engineering. The bridges were covered to protect the decks from the effects of time and weathering. Even on a cold and windy day in October, as I numbly discovered, they draw numerous tourists to the area. Collectively memorialized in literature and the movies, they are known, simply, as "The Bridges of Madison County."

From the earliest days of history to the present, we humans have been bridge builders. Long ago bypassed by new paved roads and modern bridges of steel and concrete, early settlers once used the covered bridges to cross the numerous creeks and small rivers in this area. Since then, we have built larger and bigger bridges. The Golden Gate Bridge is a multi-lane span over San Francisco Bay and the 7-mile long Federation Bridge in Canada now provides a direct auto link between Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Our bridges are now longer, higher and stronger than at any time before in history. Yet, there remains one great chasm over which no humans, no matter how hard we try, have yet to build a bridge.

In Genesis we are given the account of Adam and Eve. Theirs was a basic, simple life in a paradise. It had perfect climate and they were given the opportunity to live forever. All they had to do was to remain obedient to God. What could be easier? Long story short, they ate from the one tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that God said not to eat the fruit of. By this disobedience of God's will (sin), they were forced out of Eden, could no longer have eternal life and, worse, were forever separated from a personal relationship with their creator, God.

Since then, we humans have developed various and numerous religions in an attempt to not only again understand God's will, but to recover our relationship with God. We have developed many good works in an attempt to bridge the great chasm of sin that separates us from God. All our efforts have been like building a long pier into the Pacific Ocean. It's a great place to fish for souls, but it fails to bridge a great chasm.

Yet, in spite of our disobedience, God still cares for us. We are, after all, God's best creation – creatures made in the very image of God. Even while we were failing to reach God, God reached down to us! He sent his son Jesus to be the bridge between us and God. Unlike any other bridge, Jesus not only spanned over the great chasm of sin, but, through His resurrection victory over sin, he actually removed the chasm.

Although we now can have a restored relationship with God, through faith in Jesus' victory over sin, we remain as imperfect humans with a sin nature. Though forgiven, we are not yet changed. Even if only like a small creek, we still spout forth the waters of sin that can separate us from God. But, fret not for in Christ we can have total victory over sin. When temptations to sin, or the storms of life come, we can take cover in God. Let Jesus be your bridge to God over the troubled waters. God's got you covered.

Scott Burdette,

Cedar Bridge County Park, Winterset, Iowa.

*"So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom."*

- Psalms 90:12

## Events Calendar

### NOVEMBER - DECEMBER - JANUARY events

Listed here are the dates of meetings, holidays and events in November, December and early January. All dates are correct at the time of publication. All meetings are via Zoom conference, unless otherwise noted. Virtual "Zoom" worship Services are 9:30 AM each Sunday morning. Lectionary Bible study (via "Zoom") is each Thursday, 10 AM. For "zoom" LINKS see Page 3. Gift cards are due throughout November (see page 3).

#### NOVEMBER

- SU 1 ALL SAINTS DAY**  
9:30 AM – Communion during "Zoom" service  
**Daylight Saving Time ends (set clocks back 1 Hour.)**
- TU 3 ELECTION DAY VOTE !**
- WE 11 VETERANS DAY**  
Deacons: 1:30 PM (at Ed Center)
- TU 17 Executive Board: 5 PM – (Virtual)**
- SU 22 Newsletter Copy due** (for Dec. issue)
- TH 26 THANKSGIVING DAY**
- FR 27 BLACK FRIDAY**
- SU 29 1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY IN ADVENT - HOPE**

#### DECEMBER

- SU 6 2nd SUNDAY IN ADVENT - PEACE**  
9:30 AM – Communion during "Zoom" service  
The Christmas Fund - offering
- MO 7 PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE DAY**
- SU 13 3rd SUNDAY IN ADVENT - JOY**
- SU 20 4th SUNDAY IN ADVENT - LOVE**  
**Newsletter Copy due** (for Jan. – Feb. issue)
- MO 21 Winter solstice (Winter begins 10:19 PM CST)**
- TH 24 CHRISTMAS EVE**
- FR 25 MERRY CHRISTMAS!**
- SU 27 Your 2021 Pledge Card is due.**
- TH 31 NEW YEAR'S EVE**

#### JANUARY

- FR 1 HAPPY NEW YEAR!**
- SU 3 9:30 AM – Communion during "Zoom" service**

## CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING

A special **THANK YOU** to everyone who contributed to the Neighbors in Need (NIN) offering on World Communion Sunday, October 4, and throughout October. Our next special offering is "The Christmas Fund." This fund helps the pensions board of the U.C.C. provide ministerial assistance to retired pastors in need. It's a way for them to bring hope to the "Veterans of the Cross" who have faithfully and selflessly served. **Mark Sunday, December 6 on your calendar** and have your special offering ready for this great cause! The offering will also be accepted throughout the Sundays in December.

## A Christmas Alphabet

**A Blessing Comes Down,  
Eternal From God,  
Here Is Jesus,  
Kingly Love Manged Now.  
Of Peace, Quiet Rest, Sing;  
The Ultimate Victorious Word,  
eXciting Your Zeal!**

## MESSENGER AVAILABLE VIA E-MAIL

If you are not receiving your newsletter via e-mail, and you have an e-mail address, send an e-mail to: [geneseechurch@wi.twcbc.com](mailto:geneseechurch@wi.twcbc.com) and the secretary will get you on the e-mail list. Also, let us know if your e-mail address changes by sending an e-mail using your new e-mail address. Thank you for helping us save mailing costs.

## A FINAL NOTE 🎵

The deadline for the December special edition is Sunday, November 22. The deadline for the January-February, 2021 edition is Sunday, December 20. To submit an article, event information, or to receive your newsletter via e-mail, send e-mail to:

[geneseechurch@wi.twcbc.com](mailto:geneseechurch@wi.twcbc.com)

Articles submitted in person need to be typed or written legibly.

Scott W. Burdette





# Puzzle Changers

## ACROSS

- 1 Office acronym
- 5 Weight unit
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_ guilty
- 12 Feline sound
- 13 \_\_\_\_\_ McIntire of Country Music
- 14 Adam's partner
- 15 Talk about past events
- 17 Average mark
- 18 Dealer's car
- 19 Howard \_\_\_\_\_ of radio
- 21 Map feature
- 24 Quizzes again
- 26 Small spot
- 27 Coastal birds
- 28 Speaker
- 32 Spin
- 35 Recorded
- 37 Future fish
- 38 Come before
- 40 Synthetic fabric
- 42 Sour fruit
- 43 Dinner or lunch
- 45 Malt beverage
- 46 Lively
- 51 Metal container
- 52 Raise
- 53 Street edge
- 54 Fall mo.
- 55 Male descendants
- 56 Amtrak stops (abbr.)

## DOWN

- 1 Tax mo.
- 2 Take to court
- 3 Upper limb
- 4 Vanity
- 5 Bleak
- 6 Vacation spot
- 7 CBS rival
- 8 Eminent conductor
- 9 Essential
- 10 Public
- 11 Adolescents
- 16 Butterfly catcher
- 20 Portable shelter
- 21 Groom's response (2 wds.)
- 22 Also not
- 23 Declaration
- 25 Poet's eternity
- 29 Mexican snack
- 30 Can \_\_\_\_\_ (kitchen devices)
- 31 Beet's color
- 33 As well as
- 34 Still (poetically)
- 36 Dishonor
- 38 Greek philosopher
- 39 Ancient object
- 40 Old cloth
- 41 Baldwin and Guinness
- 44 Miscalculates
- 47 "The Matrix" hero
- 48 Mummy name
- 49 Retiree's acct.
- 50 ABC rival

## Genesee Church Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15				16						17		
			18					19	20			
21	22	23				24	25					
26						27						
28			29	30	31		32				33	34
		35				36				37		
38	39							40	41			
42						43	44					
45				46	47					48	49	50
51				52					53			
54				55						56		

## Answers to previous puzzles In September-October Messenger

A	L	P		O	W	N	S		S	H	O	P		
T	E	E		P	E	A	K		P	O	S	E		
A	I	R		A	D	V	I	S	A	B	L	E		
		S	A	L	S	A		T	R	O	O	P		
S	P	O	T				L	E	E					
P	I	N	A	T	A			A	N	C	H	O	R	
I	T	A	L	I	C			S	C	R	A	P	E	
T	A	L	E	N	T			T	H	E	R	E	S	
				S	S	W			P	A	N	T		
P	A	S	S	E			E	A	V	E	S			
O	S	C	I	L	L	A	T	E			S	U	E	
D	I	A	L			A	V	O	N			E	N	G
S	A	N	K			W	E	P	T			D	O	G

Answer to: "PUMPKIN" SEARCH

The message is: "TRICK OR TREAT"

## "ADVENT" SUDOKU

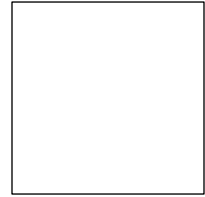
Fill out the grid below, so that every row, every column and every 2x3 box contains all the letters of "ADVENT."

T		V			N
	D			N	E
					V
		D	N		
	E				

GENESEE 1<sup>ST</sup> CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, INC.  
W306 S5075 CHURCH ST.  
MUKWONAGO (GENESEE), WI 53149-9732  
262-968-3849 www.geneseechurch.org

NEWSLETTER NOV/DEC 2020

TIME VALUE MAIL  
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



**9:30 AM**  
**Sunday**  
**Virtual Worship**  
(see Page 3 for LINK)

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