

The Messenger



A Newsletter of the
Genesee 1st Congregational, United Church of Christ, Inc.

January – February, 2023

Volume 17, Number 5

Pastoral Ponderings

On Friday, January 6, we will observe the celebration of Epiphany. Epiphany is the day which celebrates the visit of the Magi to the Christ Child. Epiphany is celebrated 12 days after Christmas. There is a beautiful short story which reminds us of the Magi.

"The Gift of the Magi" is a short story written by O'Henry about a young married couple and how they deal with the challenge of buying secret Christmas gifts for each other with very little money.

Mr. James Dillingham Young ("Jim") and his wife, Della, are a couple living in a modest flat. They each have one possession in which they take pride: Della's beautiful long, flowing hair, almost to her knees and Jim's shiny gold watch, which had belonged to his father and grandfather.

On Christmas Eve, with only \$1.87 in hand, and desperate to find a gift for Jim, Della sells her hair for \$20, and eventually finds a chain for Jim's watch for \$21. She found the perfect gift at last and runs home and begins to prepare dinner.

When Jim comes home, he looks at Della with a strange expression. Della then admits to Jim that she sold her hair to buy him his present. Jim gives Della her present — an assortment of expensive hair clips for her hair (referred to as "The Combs"). Della then shows Jim the chain she bought for him, to which Jim says he sold his watch to get the money to buy her combs. Although Jim and Della are now left with gifts that neither one can use, they realize how far they are willing to go to show their love for each other, and how priceless their love really is.

The story ends with the narrator comparing the pair's mutually sacrificial gifts of love with those of the Biblical Magi. O'Henry concludes his story with these words, "The magi, as you know, were wise men – wonderfully wise men – who brought gifts to the King of the Jews in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no

See Pastoral Ponderings – Page 3



The official call-to-order for the 2023 Annual Meeting of the Genesee 1st

Congregational, United Church of Christ will take place following the 10:30 AM worship service on Sunday, January 29. Our church government is one of the purest forms of representative democracy. The meeting is a great opportunity for everyone in the congregation to have a voice and make important contributions to the life of the church. Annual reports from the pastor moderator, secretary and church boards and committees will be reviewed. You will also have an opportunity to vote on the slate of officers who will represent your church in 2023. Perhaps you have a calling to fill one of the empty slots and serve your church! The all important 2023 Church Budget will also be reviewed.

Please highlight the date of Sunday, January 29 on your personal calendar.

"The Times, They are A- Changin'" *

Genesee Church shares Pastor Dave with the Hartland Church. We also share service times with each other. We have a 9 AM service for half of the year (26 Sundays) and a 10:30 AM service for the other half. Our current 9 AM service time goes through, and including, Sunday, January 22. On Sunday, January 29 (which is also the date of the Annual Meeting) we go to a 10:30 AM worship time.

*Title of song, by Bob Dylan

Official call-to-order ...

180th Annual Meeting
of the

Genesee 1st Congregational,
United Church of Christ

Sunday, January 29

following the
10:30 AM Worship

Welcome to the January-February, 2023 edition of the Messenger. We share Pastor Dave with the Hartland, UCC. As such, we have the early service six months and Hartland gets it the other six months

In addition to the change in the time of service (see article on page 1), the location of Sunday services is also changing. On New Year's Day, January 1, we will be meeting – at 9 AM – at the Education Center. Services will remain at the Education Center through (and including) Sunday, April 2 (Palm Sunday). On, Sunday, April 9 (Easter Sunday), we will go back to the church sanctuary for our services.

During this time, we will continue to have communion on the first Sunday of the month.

By meeting in the Ed. Center, we will (1) be able to conserve on heat – the church still remaining at a 50⁰ minimum and (2) provide a more handicap accessible space during potentially inclement weather. The church steps, landing and parking spaces will continue to be shoveled / plowed during this time.

At 10:30 AM (9 AM on, and after Sunday, January 29) a “zoom” service is broadcast from the Hartland UCC. For those of you unable to get to our service, here is the link to that service.

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

Bible Study

This is your opportunity to learn about the Bible. It is held every Wednesday, at 10 a.m., at the Hartland UCC – (Capitol Dr. at Church St.) You may attend live by going to Hartland, OR like the “zoom” service, it is a “virtual” event for those in Genesee. To Join the group via Computer or tablet or smartphone, copy the following link 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:

- Meeting ID: 324 446 460
- Password: 789656

Church Budget Update:

The most recent income and expense figures are highlighted below.

November Income	\$3,703.00
November Expenses	\$4,146.46
Net Total	- \$443.46

We continue to be grateful for all the gifts contributed by our members. We pray for God's grace and blessings as we continue to navigate through these challenging times. We value your fellowship. Join us at our Sunday service. Listen to the good word and say “hello!”

How do I contribute my offering?

For those of you who absolutely, positively can't make it to the Sunday services...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.

Building Rental available

Do you have a large family gathering, wedding, birthday party, etc., but not enough room to host it? Both our Education Center and Church are available to responsible parties. Call the church office at **262-968-3849** for details and a rate schedule.

Pastoral Ponderings – From Page 1

doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the Magi.”

We give thanks to God when we realize how far Our Creator is willing to go to show God’s love for each of us, and how priceless God’s love really is.

Wishing each of you a blessed Epiphany Season,

Pastor Dave

pastordaveschnepf@gmail.com (c) 618-402-2041

Church Office Hours

I (Scott Burdette) am usually in the church office from 2 – 4 PM on Wednesdays and Thursdays. In addition, Rev. Dave Schnepf is usually in the church office from 2 – 4 PM on Wednesday and 9 AM – 4 PM on Thursdays. In emergency, call Pastor Dave at **618-402-2041**.

JANUARY – FEBRUARY USHERS

The following teams / individuals are scheduled to usher on Sundays in January and February. Arrive by 8:30 AM (for the 9 AM service); 10 AM (for the 10:30 AM service – starting January 29), greet people, hand out bulletins, light candles and take collection. Contact Diane to help fill one of the open slots. For the latest update, or if you are unable to fulfill your commitment, please notify Diane Sickels at **262-968-3954**.

January 1	Deacons
January 8	OPEN
January 15	OPEN
January 22	OPEN
January 29	OPEN
February 5	Deacons
February 12	OPEN
February 19	OPEN
February 26	OPEN

Serving at Hope Center

A special “Thank-you” to those who served at Hope Center on Wednesday evening, October 12. Our service dates for 2023 are not set yet. We’ll let you know as soon as we get that information.

Events Calendar

JANUARY - FEBRUARY events

Listed here are the dates of meetings, holidays and events in January and February 2023. All dates are correct at the time of publication. All events are at the Ed. Center, unless otherwise noted. First Sunday services are at the Ed. Center with communion.

JANUARY

- SU 1** **HAPPY NEW YEAR !**
9 AM service at the Ed. Center
w/ communion
- TU 3** 5:30 PM – Executive Board
- FR 6** **EPIPHANY**
- SU 8** 9 AM service at the Ed. Center
Annual Reports due
- SU 15** 9 AM service at the Ed. Center
- MO 16** **MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY**
- SU 22** 9 AM service at the Ed. Center
**Newsletter Copy due for
February special edition**
- SU 29** 10:30 AM service at the Ed. Center
180th Annual Meeting following service

FEBRUARY

- TH 2** **GROUNDHOG DAY**
- SU 5** 10:30 AM service at the Ed. Center
w/ communion
- SU 12** 10:30 AM service at the Ed. Center
- TU 14** **VALENTINE'S DAY**
- SU 19** 10:30 AM service at the Ed. Center
**Newsletter Copy due for
March-April Messenger**
- MO 20** **PRESIDENTS' DAY**
- TU 21** **MARDI GRAS**
- TU 22** **ASH WEDNESDAY**
- SU 26** 10:30 AM service at the Ed. Center

MARCH

- SU 5** 10:30 AM service at the Ed. Center
w/ communion

Star Born

Notes from the Trail of the Wise Men

“...we have seen his star in the east, and have come to worship him.”

Matthew 2: 2b (RSV)

On a clear, but not too cold, winter evening, it is a delight to gaze into the night sky and view the stars overhead. In the north are the familiar “Big Dipper” (Ursa Major) and the “Little Dipper” (Ursa Minor). Nearby is Cassiopeia, the “Queen.” Her chair is a large “W” in the night sky. Further south, Orion, the “Hunter,” rules the winter sky. Orion has his belt formed by three stars and he has a sword (three more stars) at his side. Following an imaginary line through the belt stars, we come to Sirius, the brightest star in the night sky. In the Spring, in ancient Egypt, Sirius rose in the east as a morning star. At that time of year, the Nile River would flood and it was a time to plant crops. Sirius was a harbinger of Spring, and new life. The three stars in Orion’s belt are also known as the “Wise Men” stars. Like those stars, the wise Men’s journey pointed toward “the bright and morning star,” Jesus. (Revelation 22:16) Let us follow the trail of the Wise Men.

Our journey begins in southern Persia. The Wise Men were astrologers, Babylon having been the birthplace of many legends, mythology and mysticism. “They would have also probably been very rich...”¹ This would have given them easy financial access to the gifts they would bring: gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Like the sun, the stars appear to rise in the east, move across the sky and set in the west. The planets, being closer than the stars, show movement against the background of the far, more distant stars. When stars and planets appear – from our line of sight on Earth – to be close to one another, they are in a meeting called “conjunction.” Such a meeting occurred in September of 7 B.C.² The bright planet Jupiter, known to the Persians as the “king” star,” appeared close to Saturn. For a time, the really bright planet, “Venus,” also came in on the action. This occurred in the constellation Pisces, long associated with the Hebrew nation.³ That is why we represent Jesus as a Pisces (fish-shape).

In conjunction, the three appeared as a single bright “star.” Its natural westward motion each night pointed the way the way toward Palestine. The straightest path from Persia to Palestine would have meant the hardship of traveling for many days across trackless desert. Instead, The Wisemen journeyed along a well-traveled trade route that led first north, then west and finally south through Syria an on to Judea and Jerusalem.

After many long weeks, they came to Jerusalem. The “star” had led the Wise Men in the correct direction, and they had the “neighborhood” right, but unlike a GPS it was non-specific. The Wise Men did not know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. In Matthew 2:2 they ask “Where is he who is to be born the ‘King of the Jews?’” Even Herod the Great, a non-Jew, did not know. Over hearing of their inquiries, Herod called the Wise Men into a secret meeting. He than called in scribes and Pharisees who, quoting scripture, noted the location was Bethlehem. The wise Men then travel to Bethlehem. Apparently, by now, they had lost track of the “star,” for in Matthew 2:10 we read: “When they saw the star [over the manger] they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.” They greeted Mary and Joseph, and then presented the first Christmas gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Before their return trip, an angel warned the Wise Men to bypass Herod. Why? Herod, fearing a possible challenge to his kingship from a newborn “King of the Jews,” issued an edict to have all new-born males two years and younger killed. An angel then warns Mary and Joseph. They take Jesus, escape to Egypt, and only return AFTER they learn of the death of Herod.

From the 1st Century A.D. historian Josephus, we learn that Herod reigned from 37 B.C. until his death in 4 B.C.⁴ From the timing of Herod’s death, the nature of his edict (kill all males two years old and younger) and the advent of the “star” conjunction, we can conclude that Jesus was born sometime between 7 B.C. and 4 B.C.

So, was Jesus born on December 25? In all likelihood, NO! But, that’s a topic for another article. On the trail of the Wise Men we are left, as with a Dan Brown novel, with a few Biblical “facts,” lots of reasoning and far more conjecture. A long time ago, in Bethlehem, there were no reporters from CNN; and no concern with time and dates, no instant messaging and no Face Book for Luke and Matthew to post their writings on. Yet, unlike much of contemporary news, in vogue today and forgotten tomorrow, wise men today still tell about the birth of our savior, born in a manger, in Bethlehem. It is the beginning of the greatest “Good News” account ever told!

Scott Burdette -

One clear winter night, December, 2022

¹ www.whychristmas.com/story/wisemen.shtml

² Carroll, Susan, “The Star of Bethlehem: An Astronomical and Historical Perspective

³ Ibid, p. 4

⁴ www.bing.com/search?q=herod%27s+death+year&form

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Margaret Towner served as one of our Parish Pastors from 1972-1989, during the time Genesee Church was part of the Kettle Moraine Parish.

P.E.O. stands for "Professional Employer Organization," a company providing key HR services for businesses and individuals.

Advent 2022 Greetings from Sarasota

Dear friends and family:

Biggest News: We relocated from Independent Living to Assisted Living. New address: 7377 Scotland Way, Apt. 6203, Sarasota, FL 34238

A tumultuous 12 months of preparing to move on May 4! We made it with months of help -family, friends, neighbors: what to keep and what to donate or sell with help of P.E.O. Sister Carol Papa sold furniture, pots, pans, and jewelry; clergy daughters Kathi Wiggins, Karen Wismer, and Deborah Block sorted, [packed and mailed my historical material to be organized for Pres. Hist. Soc.] Ron and Jinny Miller sorted files and shredded sermons and class material. Deborah Block helped Marg weed out clothes to be donated. Linda Clapp helping Barb sort her closet of shoes and clothes. Shari and Tim Merrill sorted Barb's slides and outdated IRS Records. Tim and Marg made many shredding trips and furniture delivery as did Brian Merrill making many visits cleaning out laundry room things. Marg's cousin helped pick Towner/Schloeman history to be mailed. Neighbor Mary Al Gagnon packed books; and helped dump trays of Carousel slides. Moving day came: Kathi and Karen gave us a Sarasota Tour and lunch. I am Still trying to find where the movers put things and feel the loss of independence upon selling the Toyota Siena Van - to Barb's nephew Brian. We learned a new way of communicating-Zooming-meetings of P.E.O., Presbytery, Clergywomen (hosted by Kathy Dain). We survived two tragic hurricanes, Ian and Nicole, which brought much pain to so many people and families - losing homes - among them employees here at the Glenridge.

For 2023 let us sing "What the world needs now is love..." that all may follow the Old Testament Prophet Micah's challenge in 6:8: "What does the Lord require of you, O Mortal, do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God." Blessings, Peace, Hope and Love.

Barb Marg

Your 2023 Pledge Card

The deadline for turning in your 2023 Pledge Card was Sunday, December 25. If you're considered an "active" member, and you have turned in your pledge card, THANK YOU ! If not, "Git 'r done!" Bring it to church next Sunday, OR... Mail your pledge to our church office address (W306 S5075 Church st. / Mukwonago, WI 53149-9732) or personally drop it off at the church office during office hours (see page 3). Not an active member and wish to pledge? Call the office at **262-968-3849**. We will be happy to mail you a pledge card!

Life Changes

As a general "rule of thumb" the average family, in the United States, will move once every five years. When we move, we change our address – and often phone number and e-mail address. We have to let our bank, post office and utility companies know of the change. As a Christian, the church should be of premiere importance in these matters. Don't forget to notify the church. If your address, phone number or simply e-mails change, we are asking that the church office (**262-968-3849**) be notified of the change. We can't keep you informed and inspire you, if we can't find you! Thank you.

A FINAL NOTE 🎵

The deadline for the February special edition is Sunday, January 22. The deadline for the March-April edition is Sunday, February 19. To submit an article, event information, or to receive your newsletter via e-mail, send e-mail to:

geneseechurch@wi.twcbc.com

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

Scott W. Burdette



Puzzle Changers

ACROSS

- 1 Tit for _____
- 4 Actor _____ McKellen
- 7 Freon and Oxygen
- 12 Groom's vow (2 wds.)
- 13 Wind direction (abbr.)
- 14 Green shade
- 15 Rummy variety
- 17 Concur
- 18 Ore refinery
- 19 Nasty looks
- 20 Slippery fish
- 21 Bro, e.g.
- 22 Poisonous snake
- 25 Rump
- 30 Hammer or screwdriver
- 32 Golf norm
- 33 "The Diary of _____ Frank"
- 34 Startling revelation (2 wds.)
- 37 Baseball hat
- 38 Tax agency (abbr.)
- 39 Intention
- 41 Malice
- 44 Pardon
- 48 West Point student
- 49 Make like new
- 50 Vigilant
- 51 Fury
- 52 Lubricate
- 53 Disordered
- 54 Pack animal
- 55 Summit

DOWN

- 1 Twitches
- 2 Eden man
- 3 Musical sound
- 4 Foot part
- 5 Gazelles
- 6 Adjacent
- 7 Certain hockey player
- 8 Branch of math
- 9 Beget
- 10 Eternally
- 11 Watches
- 16 Brewery product
- 21 Party ribbons
- 22 Dined
- 23 Asian sauce
- 24 Edgar Allen _____
- 26 _____ Diego
- 27 "Murder, _____"
- 28 "Snakes _____ Plane" (2 wds.)
- 29 Agent (abbr.)
- 31 Lingers
- 35 "_____ in Pink"
- 36 Removes suds
- 40 Citi Field player
- 41 Sting
- 42 Lacking color
- 43 15th of March
- 44 Diva's specialty
- 45 Chimney dirt
- 46 Threesome
- 47 Sharp bark

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		

Answers to previous puzzles
In November - December Messenger

A	R	E	A		F	I	L	M		O	A	T		
T	E	R	N		I	D	E	A		N	B	A		
L	A	R	D		R	O	A	D	S	T	E	R		
A	C	O	R	N		N	A	P	A					
S	T	R	E	E	T	S		M	A	R	I	A		
				W	E	A	T	H	E	R	I	N	G	
A	H	A			M	E	A			O	C	T		
W	E	L	L	H	E	E	L	E	D					
E	E	R	I	E		R	E	L	E	A	S	E		
			E	A	S	E			F	E	L	L	A	
S	T	A	R	T	L	E	D			P	I	E	R	
T	A	D			O	S	L	O			E	V	E	N
A	N	Y			N	E	S	T			N	E	T	S

NATIVITY WORD SEARCH
Answer

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Winter Word Search

C S S F S N O W
 O C B R C P R S
 A A O O O I N L
 T R O S L G I E
 S F T T D S C D
 T E E L S I C E
 O M I I G L O O
 N W I N T E R G

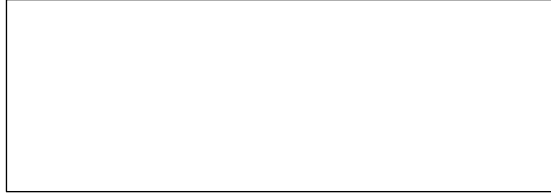
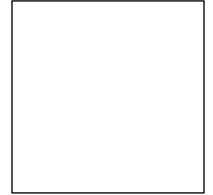
Using the word list below, find the words in the letter grid at right. They are found "across" or "down." Circle each letter when you find a word. The remaining letters spell out a special message of hope.

Word List: BOOT, COATS, COLD, FROST, ICE, IGLOO, SCARF, SLED, SLEET, SNOW, WINTER

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

NEWSLETTER JAN / FEB, 2023

TIME VALUE MAIL
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Join us for worship
– at the Ed. Center
9 AM, Sunday worship
thru Sunday, January 22
10:30 AM, Sunday worship
starting: Sunday, January 29
1st Sunday of the month:
COMMUNION

IN THIS ISSUE

OUR TOP STORY

180th Annual Meeting - Page 1

Pastoral Ponderings – Page 1

“Zoom” service LINK, Bible Study LINK,
– Page 2

Church Budget Update – Page 2

Events Calendar – Page 3

Star Born – Page 4

Greetings from Sarasota – Page 5

...and more!

Plus:

Puzzle Challenges – Page 6