

# The Messenger



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

December, 2023 - special edition

Volume 18, Number 4.5

## From the Pastor



**T**he stories, scriptures, and traditions of the Christmas season have been passed down to us throughout the generations. Many of us enter this season with a swell of memories and emotions as vast as the cultural and religious rituals this holiday holds.

Like a tapestry woven throughout time, the Christmas story weaves us into

remember how God has shown up in the past, to continue the work of collective liberation, to behold the presence of God in flesh and bone.

Despite the challenges and vulnerability faced by Mary, she could glimpse the scale and scope of the good news she was part of bringing forth. This good news transcends time and space- it was and is bigger than just her. Christ is coming for collective liberation: God's redemption is at work for years to come. Therefore, the promise is meant to be lived out and passed on from generation to generation.

This Advent and Christmas season I encourage you to pay attention to each of the characters in these familiar narratives and ask:

What did each person pass on or contribute? How did they either participate in God's liberation and love-or try to thwart God's justice? What can we learn from them, and what is our role now? What will we pass on to the next generation?

Our theme for this holiday season is "From Generation to Generation."

The root word of "generation" is "gen" meaning "Origin" or "birth." Our theme is also a call to action: what are we being called to generate or bring forth? What have your ancestors and those who have come before you passed on for you to continue? Who are the spiritual elders in your community who planted the seeds for the things that are now blooming? What seeds are you planting for the future?

From Generation to Generation... reminds us of the ways our lives, histories, actions, and stories are interconnected and woven together. The work of God is always unfolding- in and through us. This Advent, may you remember that you belong— to a story etched into the wrinkles of time, to generations that have come before and will come after, to a love that won't let you go.

Peace and Love: *Pastor Jim*

[teamlangreder@gmail.com](mailto:teamlangreder@gmail.com) 262-309-5086

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## OUR TOP STORIES

### Your 2024 Pledge Card ...

... is due no later than Sunday, December 31. If you are a member of Genesee church, you will shortly be receiving a stewardship letter and a 2024 Pledge Card. At some point in the past, whether it be last month, or forty years ago, you became a member and you made a commitment to attend church on a "regular" basis, and support the ministry of our church, financially and otherwise. We expect that **EVERY** member will honor their commitment, give according to what they can and be a supportive member of the congregation. **NOW** is the time to make good on your commitment and return your pledge card. Thank you for your renewed or continuing stewardship!

**The 181<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting** of the Genesee 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational, United Church of Christ will take place immediately after the church service on Sunday, January 28. This is also the Sunday our worship time moves to 10:30 AM. Note both these important facts on your 2024 calendar!

Annual Reports from all boards and committees will be reviewed, the all-important 2024 Budget will be presented and accepted, and you will have an opportunity to vote on the slate of officers who will represent your church in 2024. Perhaps you have a calling to fill one of the empty seats and serve your church. Please mark **January 28** on your calendar- for this important event.

Reports from Boards and committees are due no later than Sunday, January 7. Thank you! Our goal is to have the Annual report available by Sunday, January 14.

Welcome to the December, 2023 special edition of the Messenger. We share Pastor Jim with the Hartland, UCC. As such, we have the early service six months and Hartland gets it the other six months.

Our Sunday service is currently at 9 AM. This will continue throughout 2023. On Sunday, January 28, the date we also have our Annual Meeting, our service time will move to 10:30 AM. We meet in the church sanctuary every Sunday of the month – except when it’s a FIRST Sunday. On the first Sunday of the month we meet at the Ed. Center (that brick building next to the church) – and communion is served.

Currently, the Hartland service is at 10:30 AM and is livestreamed on the Genesee and Hartland Facebook page; and You-tube channel (First Congregational UCC, Hartland, WI.) On Sunday, January 28, and thereafter, Hartland will move their service time to 9 AM.

### Coming Attractions:

As this newsletter goes to press, preparations are underway for the Ladies’ Advent by Candlelight Gathering. It will be at the Ed. Center, from 3:30 to 5:30 PM, the afternoon of Sunday, December 3. It is an informal gathering of adult ladies who will chat, eat, drink and enjoy some holiday entertainment.

On Sunday, December 10, during the 9 AM service, at the Ed. Center, come for a special service as we get an opportunity to view the 2023 Christmas Program. What do the children have in store for us this year?

Traditionally we have always had a regular service on the Sunday before Christmas, and then a service on Christmas Eve. This year, Christmas Eve (December 24) falls on a Sunday. We have decided to have a special morning service at 10 AM, and no evening service. There will be an evening service at the Hartland UCC, at 4 PM. Those of us attending the morning service (on Sunday, December 24) will have an opportunity to hear the Genesee Church Praise Choir sing a specially prepared and spiritually uplifting anthem.

### Bible Study



Study is the sermon message for the following Sunday.

This is your opportunity to learn about the Bible. It is held every 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday, at 1:30 PM. For specific dates in December and January, see the events calendar on page 3. The topic for discussion at each Bible

### Explore God’s Word Daily

Copies of the devotional booklet: “The Upper Room” for January - February 2024 are available. Call the church office at 262-968-3849, or come to worship service on Sunday morning, to get your copy. On every page is an inspirational reading and accompanying Bible verse for each day.

### Church Budget Update:

The most recent income and expense figures are shown below.

October Income	\$3,033.00
October Expenses	<u>\$7,076.88</u>
Net Total	- \$4,043.88

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, enjoy the beauty of our church building, listen to the good word and say “hello!”

### DECEMBER – JANUARY USHERS

The following teams / individuals are scheduled to usher on Sundays in December and January. Arrive by 8:30 AM (for the 9:00 AM service). On January 28, arrive by 10 AM (for the 10:30 AM service). Your job is to greet people, hand out bulletins, light candles and take collection. For the latest update, or if you are unable to fulfill your commitment, please notify Diane Sickels at 262-968-3954.

December 3	Deacons
December 10	OPEN
December 17	OPEN
December 24	OPEN
December 31	OPEN
January 7	Deacons
January 14	OPEN
January 21	OPEN
January 28	OPEN

### 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.

# Events Calendar

## DECEMBER - JANUARY events

Listed here are the dates of meetings, holidays and events in December 2023 and January, 2024. All dates are correct at the time of publication. All events are at the Ed. Center, unless otherwise noted.

Service time is Sundays, 9 AM – at church - (except 1<sup>st</sup> Sundays - at the Ed. Center). **EXCEPTIONS:** On Sunday, December 10, our service will be at the Ed. Center. This will allow staging of the **2024 Christmas Program** during the 9 AM service. On Sunday, December 24, our service will be at 10 AM at church. On Sunday, January 28 our service time moves to 10:30 AM.

Bible Study continues on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of the month at 1:30 PM. The breakdown is as follows. Wednesdays, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>; January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. NO Bible Study December 20<sup>th</sup> or January 17<sup>th</sup>.

Mindful Yoga continues on each Thursday at 9 AM. Thursdays, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>; and January 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup>.

**NEW** In addition, the Ed. Center is used for a Pilates class which meets 8:30 AM each Saturday. The breakdown is December 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 23<sup>rd</sup>, with no meeting on Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup>. In January they meet on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>.

### DECEMBER

- SA 2** NO Pilates
- SU 3** **2nd Sunday in Advent – PEACE**  
9 AM service at the Ed. Center w/ communion  
*Ladies' Advent by Candlelight Gathering – 3:30 – 5:30 PM*  
*Adopt a Family and Toy Shop gifts due Christmas Fund offering*
- WE 6** 1:30 PM: Bible Study
- TH 7** **PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE DAY**  
9 AM: Mindful Yoga
- SA 9** 8:30 AM: Pilates
- SU 10** **3rd Sunday in Advent – JOY**  
9 AM service at the Ed. Center  
*Christmas Program 2023 – during 9 AM service*
- MO 11** 2 PM: Executive Board  
NO Deacons meeting
- WE 13** 1:30 PM: Bible Study  
7 PM: Longest Night service
- TH 14** 9 AM: Mindful Yoga
- SA 16** 8:30 AM: Pilates
- SU 17** **4th Sunday in Advent – LOVE**  
9 AM service at church  
*January-February edition copy due*
- WE 20** NO Bible Study

- TH 21** 9:27 PM CST: Winter Solstice (Winter begins)
- SU 24** **CHRISTMAS EVE - CHRIST**  
10 AM service at church  
4 PM Christmas Eve service (Hartland UCC)
- MO 25** **MERRY CHRISTMAS**
- WE 27** 1:30 PM: Bible Study
- TH 28** 9 AM: Mindful Yoga
- SA 30** NO Pilates
- SU 31** **NEW YEARS EVE**  
9 AM service at church

### JANUARY, 2024

- MO 1** **NEW YEAR'S DAY**
- WE 3** 1:30 PM: Bible Study
- TH 4** 9 AM: Mindful Yoga
- SA 6** 8:30 AM: Pilates
- SU 7** 9 AM service at the Ed. Center w/ communion  
*Committee Reports due*
- MO 8** 2 PM: Executive Board
- WE 10** 1:30 PM: Bible Study
- TH 11** 9 AM: Mindful Yoga
- SA 13** 8:30 AM: Pilates
- SU 14** 9 AM service at church
- MO 15** **MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY**
- WE 17** NO Bible Study
- TH 18** 9 AM: Mindful Yoga
- SA 20** 8:30 AM: Pilates
- SU 21** 9 AM service at church  
*February special edition copy due*
- WE 24** 1:30 PM: Bible Study
- TH 25** 9 AM: Mindful Yoga
- SA 27** 8:30 AM: Pilates
- SU 28** 10:30 AM service at church  
*Note: This is the first Sunday at 10:30 AM 181st Annual Meeting – after the service*
- WE 31** 1:30 PM: Bible Study

### OFFICE HOURS:

I (Scott Burdette) am usually in the church office from 2 – 4 PM on Wednesdays and Thursdays. The office phone number is **262-968-3849**.

In addition, below are the Rev. Jim Langreder's hours (during a typical week). In emergency, call Pastor Jim at **262-309-5086**.

- Monday:** Genesee 8 AM – 2:30 PM
- Tuesday:** Hartland 8 AM – 2:30 PM
- Wednesday:** Hartland 8 AM – 12:30 PM  
Genesee 12:30 AM – 2:30 PM
- Thursday:** Genesee 8 AM – 12 PM  
Hartland 12:30 PM – 2:30 PM

## The Christmas Fund offering

**A** special THANK YOU to everyone who contributed to the Neighbors in Need (NIN) offering on World Communion Sunday, October 1. We were able to raise \$45.00. NIN is “a special offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States.

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. This is a way for them to bring hope to the “Veterans of the Cross” who have faithfully and selflessly served. **Mark Sunday, December 3 on your calendar** and have your special offering ready for this great cause!

We will accept offerings to this special fund throughout the month of December.

## Sunday School **HELP** needed in February

**S**unday School help is needed on Sundays in February (4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>). Easy lesson plans that are easy to teach and easy to learn will be provided for each Sunday. Interested? I know you are! Contact Rhea Whiteley (**262-617-8512**) or Pastor Jim Langreder (**262-309-5086**).

## Laws of Nature

**Murphy’s Law:** If anything can go wrong, it will.

**Hofstadter’s Law:** It always takes longer than you expect.

**Finagle’s Law:** Misfortune will happen at the worst possible time.

**Cole’s Law:** Thinly sliced cabbage.

## HOPE CENTER MEAL SERVICE DATES FOR 2024.

Our church is one of 46 congregations, throughout Waukesha County, which serve the meals at Hope Center in Waukesha. The service dates are, every week except holidays, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Meals are served at 5:30 PM – with volunteers asked to arrive by 5 PM. Our dates for 2024 are...

Wednesday, April 10

Friday, June 28

Friday, November 29

We are asked to have 6 – 8 volunteers present to serve, on average, 60 – 70 people. Trays of desserts: cookies, brownies, cake, etc. are also asked for and are always well appreciated. Hope Center is located at 502 N. East Av., in Waukesha.



## A FINAL NOTE 🎵

**T**he deadline for the January-February, 2024 edition is Sunday, December 17. The deadline for the February, 2024 special edition is Sunday, January 21. 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.

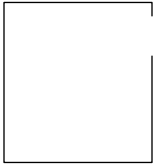
Scott W. Burdette



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NEWSLETTER DEC 2023

TIME VALUE MAIL  
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



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**Sunday services**  
**9 AM**  
**at church**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month**  
**9 AM Sunday services**  
**at the Ed. Center**  
**with communion**  
**Exceptions:**  
Sunday, December 10  
9 AM service at the Ed. Center  
Christmas Program 2023  
Sunday, December 24  
10 AM service at church