

The Monthly Newsletter of
the Pleasant Valley United
Methodist Church
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Pleasant Valley, CT 06063
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www.pleasantvalleyumc.com



The Link

Worship Services

Sundays 9:30 AM

Sunday School Offered Every Sunday!

Church Office Hours

Monday—Wednesday-Friday 1:00 PM
to 4:00 PM

Address Service Requested

Lectionary

Readings

*Sundays In
January*

January 2012

January 1: Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Galatians 4:4-7;
Luke 2:22-40

January 8: Genesis 1:1-5; Acts 19:1-7; Mark
1:4-11

January 15: 1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20); 1 Corin-
thians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51

January 22: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; 1 Corinthians 7:29-
31; Mark 1:14-20

January 29: Deuteronomy 18:15-20; 1 Corin-
thians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

Special Days & Offerings

January 1 Epiphany Sunday

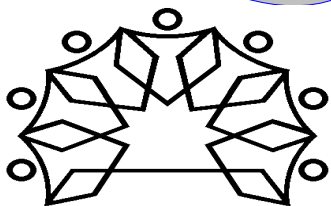
January 8 Baptism of the Lord

January 10 Charge Conference

January 15 Human Relations Day

We're on the Web

www.pleasantvalleyumc.com



**A NEW YEAR
PRAYER**

Church Cancellation:

Winter is upon us and in the event that church services need to be cancelled due to snow, please check on-line at www.nbccconnecticut.com, or tune in to Channel 3, WFSB for closing notices. Also, a message will be left on the church answering machine—call 860-379-2157 if you have a question.

Readers

- January 1: Shelley Bailey
- January 8: Becky Bridges
- January 15: Paul Foxx
- January 22: Gail Klein
- January 29: John Baum

FROM THE



PASTOR

Christmas greetings, in the name of Jesus, born to teach us how to live a life of joy and peace. I want to thank everyone for the generous Christmas gift that was presented to Diann and myself, last Sunday. Also, I want to thank those who left a cooler (in the church office) full of good food for my family to enjoy.

It's almost New Year and yet it is still the Christmas season. I love this period of time celebrating the traditional twelve days of Christmas ending on January 6th. It's kind of quiet now. It is really a good time to reflect on the real reason for the season. I love to tune into WJNJ, Catholic radio station, and listen to Christmas carols for the remainder of the season.

It's ironic that the world of commerce and the media have been promoting "Christmas" or "Holiday" sales and activity since Halloween. It's no wonder that come December 26th there are no Christmas tunes on the radio, and all the displays in the stores disappear and soon there will hardly be any sign of Christmas, anywhere, except for those inflatable figures of Santa Claus and snow men and elves and angels, laying all deflated on the lawns of many homes. The lights adorning homes will linger for some time to come, but Christmas is over, for sure, in the commercial sense. Did the world of commerce recognize the reason for the season? How about all the cooking shows and news/entertainment programs? Did they remember or were they ever aware of the reason?

Christmas, for me, is not so much about the birth of our Lord Jesus or the manger/stable scenes. Christmas is the in-breaking of God's love on earth. "Emmanuel," meaning God is with us, then in the life and witness of Jesus, the human, now in the witness and activity of the Holy Spirit in our lives, today. Boy, that sounds dry and heady.

I love to play hockey. I will play hockey as long as I'm able. Like any game there are certain rules and boundaries that must be observed. The rules help to give the game structure. The referees keep order by enforcing the rules. I love team sports because I get to play with athletes that are much better than me, yet I can provide my passion and my body to thwart all of the intentions of my worthy opponents. Once in a while I will score a goal. The other night I scored four goals! Bloxey, who is a couple of months younger than me, hollered out, "you'll never do that again the rest of your life!" He's right, I never have before and it's not likely I'll ever do it again. I watch hockey on TV and marvel at the incredible talent of millionaire players. But, you know, playing the game is far better than being a spectator.

So.....life is a game and being a Christian is also a game, a profoundly serious game, i.e., there are rules and boundaries and even referees to call the fouls (the Bible and the Book of Discipline). The game of being a Christian can be even more fun than hockey if you really play by the rules. Jesus gave us a few simple rules for life: do not judge your

neighbor or anyone else; give and it will be given to you; treat others in the manner that you would like to be treated, and best of all, Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you." Now you may think that Jesus is soft and flexible regarding these simple rules, but they are not suggestions; they are commands. When you break a rule in hockey, you get to spend time in the penalty box, while your team has to play without you and risk losing the game. When you foul the rules of Jesus you miss out on the joy and fulfillment of participating in His life. Christianity is a full contact activity of sharing your wealth, your time and your heart with others. It's about living free of having to judge others, thereby allowing yourself to be free to follow and practice in the ways of Jesus. We might be able to be a Christian without participating (I don't know; I'll have to think about that) and just watching from the stands (pews), but then we will miss out on the promise: "Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these..." (John 14:12).

So let's jump out of the stands (pews) into the arena of life having no fear (another command: "fear not") of not getting it right, because Jesus only asks that you play with passion and love, the best way that you are able. And, you will find your life of joy and fulfillment along the way. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Pastor Carl

White Gifts and Mitten Tree

Thanks to everyone who donated items to the Mitten Tree and those who bought White Gifts. Your White Gifts were delivered to Laurel Hill Health Care in Winsted. Also mittens, gloves



hats, and scarves were brought to the Winsted branch of the Salvation Army. Thank you for generosity to help make Christmas brighter and warmer for our community friends. Your thoughtfulness was much appreciated.

Christmas Events 2011

Our church had another busy Christmas season starting with the UMW Christmas Fair which was delayed until December 3rd due to snow. The Sunday School children performed their Christmas pageant on December 18th. A group of church members went Christmas Caroling later that day. Babysitting services were provided by the Youth Group on December 10th. Candlelight Christmas Eve Service was enjoyed by many and we celebrated the birth of our Lord Jesus Christmas Day. A Blessed New Year to all.



December UMW News

The UMW met on Wednesday, December 7th, for their annual Christmas Party. It was decided this year that instead of having a grab bag exchange, we would all bring in food items to donate to the Food Bank. A table full of various food items was on display. Everyone was very generous. There also was a table full of towels which were given to the Susan B. Anthony Project that houses women and children in need of shelter due to abuse. Again, everyone was generous.

We started with a business meeting that resulted in monies going to various organizations to help with Christmas needs. We gave money to Warm the Children, the Sharon Health Center, and FISH. We also put money aside to buy gift cards from Stop and Shop for several families at the Barkhamsted School. This is one of our favorite meetings because we get to help so many people in need.

Next Joanne did a Mission Moment on Community Outreach. Our church is undergoing a revitalization effort and she showed us a book on 101 Ways to Reach Your Community. Ideas can be brought to the church's attention and everyone can volunteer to help.

Pat gave the Devotion. She read The Christmas Story according to Luke and also read a little story called Wet Pants from the Otis Gazette. It showed the meaning of love and how, by being observant, you can help in little ways. She also brought in several Nativities that she has collected over the years. Several others brought their nativities also. Each one was very different.

Jennie and Pat were in charge of refreshments.

Games were led by Margo and Poochie. We all had a great time. We really had to use our thinking caps for most of them.

We closed our meeting by joining hands in a circle of prayer led by Ruth. We have so many people in our midst who are in need of constant prayer due to health problems. We pray for God's healing power to touch each one especially over Christmas.

Our next meeting will be on January 4th, 2012. Another year has come and gone so quickly. It will be a business meeting where we will decide on what we will do in the coming year.

May God's Peace and Love fill your hearts this Christmas Season and follow you throughout the New Year.

Blessings to All,

Pat Allen
Vice-president UMW

COM Article for January 2012 Link

Council on Ministries met on December 13th. The Worship Committee spoke about the plans for the Christmas Eve service at 5:00 PM and the Christmas Sunday worship service at our normal time of 9:30 AM. In addition, the plans for the Caroling event were discussed setting the gathering time of 4:00 PM and selecting about six families to visit. Following the visits all the singers will gather again at the church to enjoy a chili supper. Everyone is welcome to come raise their voices in song.

The UMW met in early December to celebrate their annual Christmas party. Donations were made to the food bank, and towels were collected for Susan B. Anthony. The ladies listened to the age old story of the birth of Christ, and studied the many various nativity scenes that were brought in to decorate. Of course games and refreshments were also enjoyed.

The Youth Group held their babysitting event and hosted 10 children for several hours at the church. There were adult helpers as well and everyone, clients and staff alike, had a wonderful fun time.

The Stewardship Committee reports that our pledges have been coming in and to date there is approximately \$56,000+ pledged. It is hoped that more pledges will come in as the time moves on.

Another Bible Study will be offered after the New Year. Meetings will take place after coffee hour in the Parish House on Sundays, and anyone is welcome to attend. More information will be available as John and Cathy Baum select the study guides.

The Evangelism committee has some ideas that will be implemented after the New Year begins that we hope will introduce our church to a wider circle of neighbors. If you are interested in helping with this effort, please speak with Joann Little or Cathy Baum.

There will be some exciting new programs and initiatives introduced as we begin the New Year. It is time to revitalize our church and get enthusiastic about our future and the role we play in sharing the love of God and the good news of the Bible. We want to continue to be a vital, alive fellowship of Christians in the community and we invite you to take this opportunity to recommit yourself to our church and its ministries.

Council on Ministries will meet again on Tuesday, January 10th at 7:00 PM in the Parish House. Please consider coming to this meeting and sharing your ideas, suggestions, hopes, and prayers for our church and the direction of its ministries as we move into the future of 2012.

What is **Epiphany**? The literal meaning is "manifestation" — an indication of the existence or presence of something, especially of a divine being. It means to show, make known, or reveal. The third and final observance of the Christmas Cycle (Advent-Christmas-Epiphany). Epiphany is one of the oldest celebrations of the Christian church, even predating Christmas. In the Eastern Church, the main theme for Epiphany Day is the baptism of Jesus; but in the Western Church, we commemorate the visit of the magi. Traditionally, on the first Sunday after Epiphany, we focus on the baptism of Christ; and on the last Sunday after Epiphany, the Transfiguration.

Helpers This Month

Greeters

- 1/1 Margo Fenn
 1/8 Marie & Bruce Phelps
 1/15 Janet Lee
 1/22 Ann Kramer
 1/29 Terri Collins

Sanctuary Cleaning

- 1/1 Klein
 1/8 Klein
 1/15 Kramer
 1/22 Kramer
 1/29 Peck

Coffee Hour

- 1/1 **Cathy Baum**, Mary Liz Simons, Dot Lavieri
 1/8 **Janet Lee**, Marie Phelps, Robyn Lyons
 1/15 **Margo Fenn**, Kate Fenn, Karen Carvalho
 1/22 **Gail Klein**, Suzanne Gerber-Hurley, Janet Lucas
 1/29 **Barbara Bailey**, Becky Bridges, Shelley Bailey

Counters

- 1/1 Gail Klein & John Baum
 1/8 Ann Kramer & Becky Bridges
 1/15 Mary Liz Simons & Steve Bailey
 1/22 Emil Klein & Mary Lou Centofanti
 1/29 Ann Kramer & Becky Bridges

Ushers

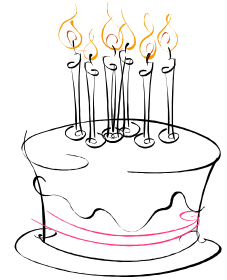
- 1/1 Ann Kramer & Shirley Green
 1/8 Sharon & Paul Foss
 1/15 Dawn & Wayne Renfrew
 1/22 Gene & Wendy deRoode
 1/29 Barbara & Steve Bailey

Acolyte

- 1/1 Samantha Benham
 1/8 Aaron Benham
 1/15 Ashley Civelli
 1/22 Matthew Civelli
 1/29 Thomas Henry

Birthdays

- January 3 Jay LaGrange**
January 6 Chip Simons
January 12 Leah Sullenberger
January 14 Barney Connors
January 15 Steve Bailey
Patricia Barone
January 16 Elijah Connors
Mike Naticha
Suzie Zygmunt
January 18 Keegan Zygmunt
January 20 Jeremy Dyer
Michael Collins
January 22 Poochie Montgomery
January 24 Jim Fenn
Jin Lee



January Wedding
 Anniversaries

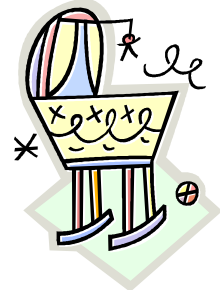


January 20 Gail & Emil Klein



Nursery Care

- 1/1 Pat Allen
 1/8 Sharon Foss
 1/15 Crystal Diyulio
 1/22 Barbara Bailey
 1/29 Karen Dietz



Please have all articles for the February newsletter to Sharon by January 17, 2012. Send to psfoxx@att.net or leave in Secretary mailbox