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Dear Church Family,

It was really important to me to learn how to make communion bread for us. My teacher, Nancy Bedford, has shaped me in very deep ways. You'll get to know her when she is here to preach for my installation! She's amazing! She's also very humble and will never tell you all the accomplishments she has, how many languages she can speak or write in or has published in. She just tries to follow Jesus in everything she does. That is what she taught me. How you treat people matters. What you study in school is theological, because it can help create the kingdom of heaven on earth. Where you buy your gas and groceries,

etc. She attends a Mennonite Church in Evanston, IL. She grew up baptist in Argentina and the first time I met her, she asked me where I go to church. What matters most to her is community, and the way she teaches community in everything she does. She shared with me that she makes the communion bread, but no one knows that she makes the communion bread. Communion bread at Reba Place in Evanston has started whole conversations about community, but no one knows Nancy makes it.



When I started the search process with UUC, it felt important to me to learn how to make communion bread, so I reached out to my teacher.. She sent me her recipe. We talk every day about theology and how to follow Jesus, and what I love most is that she is still teaching me. This time, how to make bread and create community with y'all!

I thought it would be a nice addition to this new season of UUC to learn to make a gluten free and vegan bread for us! So, because of Deb Stephens' stand mixer and Cindy Tucker's bread machine, we have communion bread for this coming Sunday! It's not pretty, but a piece of art! Here's this Sunday's communion bread!

Thank you for your warm welcome of me as your new minister! I can't wait to build a lasting community with y'all! The world is in need of so much healing and so much hope. May we be the healing of the wounds!



Church News & Events



Mission of the Month

Allegany-Cattaraugus-Chautauqua Fund for Women

Submitted by Lana Meissner



The Board of Elders has designated the Allegany-Cattaraugus-Chautauqua Fund for Women (ACCFFW) as the Mission of the Month for February. According to their website: “The ACCFFW exists to invest in the lives of women in our communities in order to

promote sustained self-sufficiency. Our mission is supported by strong guiding principles, including: empowerment, community, good stewardship, equity, diversity, and self-determination.” As our church continues to build relationships and provide support to those in need, ACCFFW is a worthy partner. Melissa Jusianiec and Jan Porter serve on the Board of Directors, with Melissa serving as President.



Through the generosity of our UUC congregation and 4 community sponsors, we provided 20 Christmas boxes this year to 19 families and one organization (Gil's Hills, for whom we supply sustainable disposable tableware for their after school program). Partners who provided families to sponsor included ACCORD, Alfred-Almond Central School, Alfred State Nursing Department, Allegany County DSS, SHAPE/Catholic Charities.

Across the 19 families, we provided Christmas cheer to 47 children and 25 parents/caregivers in the form of gifts, food for a Christmas meal (including turkeys and hams purchased through monetary donations), homemade Christmas cookies, and food to fill their pantries. Many thanks to the diaconate for their work in securing boxes (and to Stearns for donating boxes), ordering turkeys, gathering cookie tins and packing cookies. Many hands certainly do make light work.

Christmas Boxes

Submitted by Melissa Jusianiec



Church News & Events

Christmas Eve Service



UUC Youth Celebrates

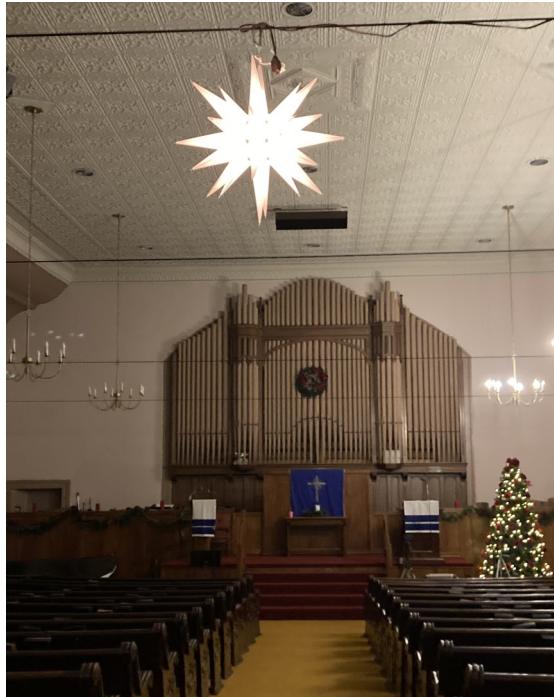
Submitted by Mary Perkins. Pictures by Melissa Jusianiec.

The youth celebrated with members of the church at the UUC Christmas dinner on December 17th. They lead 'Family Feud' Christmas Style, and everyone had smiles on their faces with the fun game! We are looking forward to Youth Sundays in 2024. Please mark your calendars for 2/11, 3/17, 4/14, 5/19 & 6/16. Keep your eyes open because we will be coordinating on times for the youth to interact with Rev Roberto and Erin..

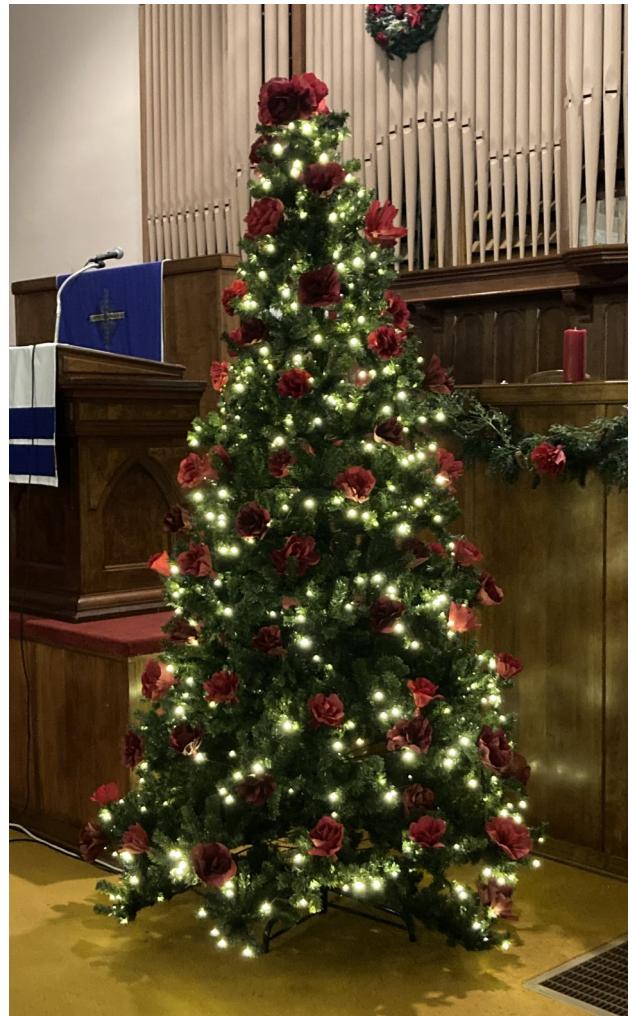
People

We Give Thanks to Various Church Members...

To **Dave Keefer** for the beautiful Moravian star that slowly made its way to the manger during the Christmas season. Also to **John Buckwalter** for figuring how to get electricity to the star and moving it each week.



To all who made roses for the tree in the sanctuary and to **Lana Meissner** for conceiving and heading up the project.



To **Dave Porter**, for “creating access” to the Church Center when the old door handle and lock would no longer work... and for seeing to that lock’s replacement.



And to **Sharon Burdick** for the donation of this cute globe shaped microphone that hooks directly into a computer. John Buckwalter is holding the mixer and cords that are no longer needed in the front of the church due to this donation from Vern’s collection of equipment.

People & Projects

Lenten Project: Heifer International

Submitted by Lana Meissner



Once again this year the Board of Elders has selected “Fill the Ark” through Heifer International as our Lenten Project. Last year we raised \$1,185 (which was tripled by a Heifer International matching grant) enabling us to purchase 3 goats, 8 flocks of chicks, 2 sheep, 1 alpaca, 1 water buffalo, and 1 water buffalo share. Lent begins on February 14. Let’s spread our love by giving generously to this year’s ark. We will survey the congregation to determine your “favorite” animal donations. Here is the list: flock of chickens (\$20), goat (\$120), heifer (\$500), pig (\$120), sheep (\$120), water buffalo (\$250), flock of ducks (\$20), honeybees (\$30). Checks should be made out to UUC with “Heifer” noted on the memo line.

Rev. Espinoza on the Road

Submitted by Lana Meissner

Roberto will be away from Alfred starting Sunday, January 28 through Sunday, February 4 as he joins a delegation traveling to El Salvador under the auspices of the United Church of Christ. The purpose of the trip is to see the martyr sites there and to view firsthand how poverty, the environment, the LGBTQI community, and other concerns are being addressed. Roberto has arranged for Sarah Jacoby Murphy (January 28) and Jennifer Harris Dault (February 4) to fill the pulpit while he is away.

Buckwalters at Camp

Submitted by Laurel Buckwalter

John and Laurel Buckwalter quickly changed into sandals and short sleeves and settled into their camper at Camp Ithiel on January 5 after a long visit in Roanoke with their daughters and their families. This is the Buckwalters’ third year volunteering at this camp run by the Church of the Brethren, an Anabaptist group close to the Mennonites. Cooking, cleaning, changing beds, office organizing, repairs, painting, and gardening are possible activities, along with concert attending, choir rehearsals, and nature walks. Plans are to return to Alfred in mid March.



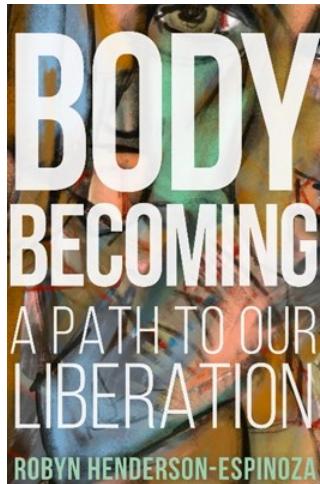
The Pastor is
here!

Church News & Events

Book Group is Back!

Submitted by Lana Meissner

Book Group will meet for the first time on February 8, 2024 at 3:30pm in the UUC Church Center. All are welcome to join. The first book we will be reading is "Body Becoming: a Path to Our Liberation" By Robyn Henderson-Espinoza. Please purchase your own copy.



New Church Directory

Submitted by Lana Meissner

We are glad to announce that an updated UUC Directory is finally finished. All updates received to date have been included. Because we are concerned about privacy issues, the directory will NOT be posted in the "members only" section of our website. Rima will include a link to the pdf of the directory in "This Week @ UUC" for a couple of weeks so that you can print a copy at home. If you are unable to print at home, you may request a copy from the Church Office. A few copies will also be available in the sanctuary, and you may request one from the usher.



A Thank You

A report to the congregation from Janice Porter as read to the congregation in December



It has been said that it takes a village to accomplish great things.

I think it takes the congregation of UUC to accomplish great things. We are a congregation of body, heart and soul givers.

I am thankful for the workers who gathered to set up, make sandwiches, decorate tables, and set places.

I am proud of all the Santa Saucers and gift certificates created and sold.

I am thankful for the makers of soup and pies and baked goods, and the servers of and sellers of soup and pies and baked goods.

I am grateful for all the kitchen and dining room helpers. And I am grateful for those who helped clean crock pots and pie pans and put up extra soup and pie for sale, later. And, I am always glad for the dining room clean up as well.

I am grateful, too, for all the Sunday help given so freely to help sell soup and pie and Santa's Saucers and baked goods at the Farmers' Market.

So all told, with generous giving of yourselves, we raised \$1830, \$100 more than last year. We served fewer than 100 people, but a few more than last year. With courage, we will hope for more attendance for next year.



Mission of the Month:
Allegany-Cattaraugus-
Chautauqua Fund for Women

Lenten Project:
Heifer International

“Groundhog found fog. New snows and blue toes. Fine and dandy for Valentine candy. Snow spittin'; if you're not mitten-smitten, you'll be frostbitten!”

~ The Old Farmer's Almanac

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 11:30 am: Nutrition Site 1 pm: UUC Offices Open 6 pm: Knit Night	2 1 pm: UUC Offices Open 7 pm: AA	3
4 10:30 Worship Communion	5 11:30 am: Nutrition Site	6 11:30 am: Nutrition Site 6 pm Boy Scouts	7	8 11:30 am: Nutrition Site 1 pm: UUC Offices Open 3:30 Book Group 6 pm: Knit Night	9 1 pm: UUC Offices Open 7 pm: AA	10
11 Youth Breakfast 10:30 Worship Farmers' Market	12 11:30 am: Nutrition Site	13 11:30 am: Nutrition Site 6 pm: Boy Scouts 5 pm: Pancake Supper	14 Lent Begins	15 11:30 am: Nutrition Site 1 pm: UUC Offices Open 6 pm: Knit Night 6 pm: AAUW	16 1 pm: UUC Offices Open 7 pm: AA	17
18 10:30 Worship Lent 1	19 11:30 am: Nutrition Site	20 11:30 am: Nutrition Site 6 pm Boy Scouts	21	22 11:30 am: Nutrition Site 1 pm: UUC Offices Open 6 pm: Knit Night	23 1 pm: UUC Offices Open 7 pm: AA	24
25 10:30 Worship Lent 2	26 11:30 am: Nutrition Site	27 11:30 am: Nutrition Site 6 pm Boy Scouts	28	29 11:30 am: Nutrition Site 1 pm: UUC Offices Open 6 pm: Knit Night		

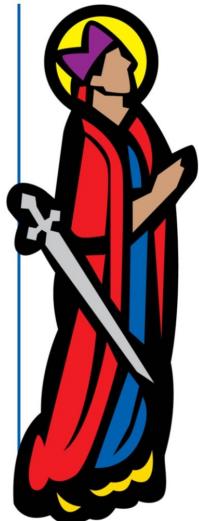
February Board Members of the Month

Deacon	Nancy Evangelista (nancyjevangelista@gmail.com; (607) 281-9587)
Elder	Cathy Rees (catherinesrees@gmail.com; (607) 382-9410)
BOCE	
Fellowship	
Trustee.....	Joe Dosch (doschjoe@gmail.com; (607) 968-0616)

Whom do you call? Flowers or lay leading—call an Elder; greeting or coffee hour—call a Deacon; Sunday school—call BOCE; building issues—call a Trustee.

Who was St. Valentine? A History Lesson

From Church Art Pro (Newsletter Newsletter)



St. Valentine was a priest who was executed around 270 A.D. There are many things we don't know about this martyr, but there are numerous, sometimes conflicting, stories about his life and death. One says that he was slain for performing weddings in secret after the Roman Emperor, Claudius II, had outlawed them. Another legend says it was because he helped Christians escape from brutal Roman prisons.

In 498 A.D., just over 200 years after Valentine's execution, Pope Gelasius declared February 14 as St. Valentine's Day. Valentine's love for God and humanity has made him "the patron of love" in the Roman Catholic Church and for people around the world.

By the mid-1700s it was common practice for friends and sweethearts to exchange trinkets made in the shape of hearts or to send handwritten notes of affection on February 14. It's believed that Valentine himself sent the first "valentine" while imprisoned. He is said to have written a letter to a young girl who visited him in prison just before his death. He signed the letter, "From your Valentine," a sentiment still used today.

Upcoming Sunday Leaders

If you are not able to serve as scheduled, please switch with someone listed on the charts below and notify the Church Office. If you are unable to find someone to switch with you, please contact either the Elder of the Month or the Deacon of the Month.

Date	Greeter	Lay Leader	Flowers	Coffee	Usher
February 4	Mary Smith	Anna McHale	Communion	Mary Smith	J. Meacham
February 11	Meachams	Amie Acton	Cathy Rees	Schulzes	J. Meacham
February 18	S. Hopkins	M-L Cartledge	M-L Cartledge	Reginios	J. Meacham
February 25	Cartledges	Larry Casey	Lent 1	M. Hluchy	J. Meacham
March 3	D. Stephens	Rick Stephens	Communion	Anna McHale	J. Meacham
March 10	Mindy Smith	D. Stephens	Lent 3	M. McDonough	J. Meacham
March 17	B. Heineman	N. Evangelista	Lent 4	Watsons	J. Meacham
March 24		H. Meacham	Lent 5	Fasano/ Heineman	J. Meacham
March 31 Palm Sunday		J. Buckwalter	Lana Meissner		J. Meacham

Just for Fun

Lesson Learned



Valentine's Day Jokes for Animal Lovers

What did one sheep say to the other?
I love ewe!

And how did the other sheep respond?
You're not so baaa-d yourself.

Why do skunks love Valentine's Day?
They are very scent-imental creatures.

What did the enamored deer say?
I'm very fawn-ed of you!

What question did the penguin ask on February 14?
Waddle I do without you?

What do you call two birds in love?
Tweethearts!

What did one bee say to the other?
I love bee-ing with you, honey!

My Kind of Kid

A church had a picnic and invited the entire community to come. The Pastor placed a basket full of apples on one end of a table with a sign saying, "Take only one apple please - Remember that God is watching."

On the other end of the table was a plate of cookies where one of the children had placed a sign saying, "Take all the cookies you want -- God is watching the apples."

Symbols of our faith

While teaching children about world religions, a teacher asked her students to bring a symbol of their family's faith to class.

The next day, she asked each student to come forward and share the symbol with the class.

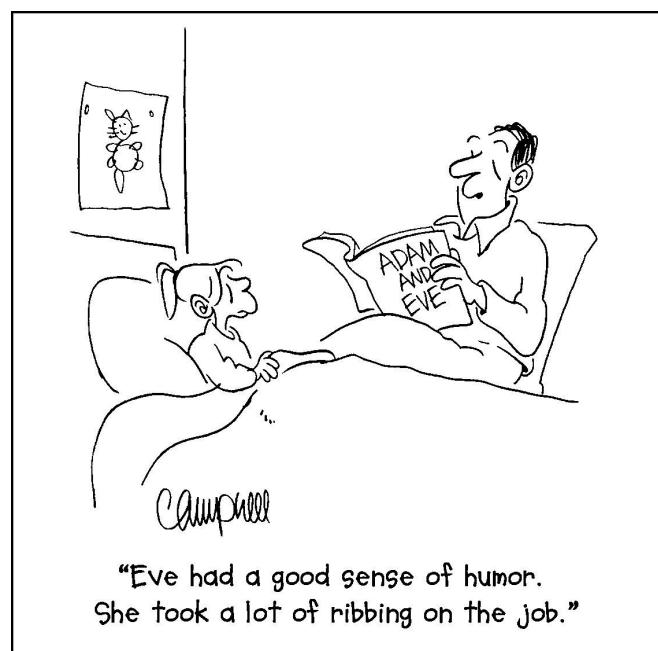
The 1st child said, "I'm Muslim, and this is my prayer rug."

The 2nd child said, "I'm Jewish, and this is my family's menorah."

The 3rd child said, "I'm Roman Catholic, and this is my Mom's rosary."

The 4th child said, "I'm Greek Orthodox, and this is an icon of my patron saint."

The 5th child said, "I'm a Baptist, and this is my casserole dish."





**29 North Main Street
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