

Dear Friends,

As I write this, it is before Christmas, because of how everything falls this year. Often my column for this newsletter is a much edited version of my annual report to the congregation. Instead of that, however, my annual report is included as an enclosure of sorts. It reminds me of in ye olden days, little booklets were printed up at the end of the year with membership statistics, financial information, and the pastor’s report. So, I suppose, including my report as an enclosure is a throwback, of sorts, to this tradition.

So in this space, I want to offer a short and simple reflection. That is, “The Word became flesh and lived among us.” How many times do we read this, or hear this, and for many of us who have heard this much of our lives, we have a tendency to skim over it. We know it and all; but this *is* what we celebrate. The eternal Word of God took on flesh and lived among us, in lives like us. It is not as though God made a pathway back to God, but rather, God came to us to meet us where we are. And when we look at Jesus, we look to the fullness of God’s self-revelation. If we want to know what God is like, we look to Jesus. This, to me, is pretty amazing.



With deep and abiding love,

Pastor Matthew

In case of severe weather on any Sunday morning....

During the winter months in case weather circumstances necessitate the cancelling of worship:

- * A message will be placed on the church's answering machine (518-861-8711) announcing the cancellation, and will appear on our ARC Facebook Page.
- * Members of Consistory will make the effort to call the homes of individuals and families who typically worship on Sunday mornings.
- * An email will go out to individuals and families who typically worship on Sunday mornings.
- * A sign about the cancellation will be posted on the parking lot door to the church building.



Save the date and start collecting toiletries!

Our annual campaign for the Blankets and Tools program of Church World Service will be coming up next month, beginning with a breakfast on Sunday, Feb. 12. One of the things we'll be doing that day is assembling Hygiene Kits, hundreds of which are needed to distribute to refugees and disaster victims. So, keep an eye out for sales and pick up one or more of the following items: hand towel (approximately 15" x 28"; no fingertip, bath, dish or micro-fiber towels), washcloth; sturdy wide-toothed comb (no picks); nail clipper; bath-size bar of soap (in wrapper); toothbrush (individually wrapped). Items may be brought to the Missions Corner in Fellowship Hall any time leading up to Feb. 12 and we will have a time between breakfast and the worship service to put the kits together. Financial donations towards shipping and handling are also welcome.



Benevolence News

Thanks to all who contributed to the Christmas Adopt-a-Family project! Your generosity provided many gifts for the Mom and 3 children, as well as several gift cards for Hannaford, Target, a meal at Paisano’s, and ice cream or gas at Stewart’s.

Community Dinner

Our next "First Monday Spaghetti Dinner" for the community will be on January 2. Food will be served from 5 to 6:30 and includes spaghetti with sauce (meatballs and sausage), bread, salad and dessert.

We can not do this without the wonderful 30-35 volunteers. Please consider helping out by signing up on the sheets in Fellowship Hall or by calling (518) 861-8711. Thank you!



CONSISTORY CONSIDERATIONS

Notes from the December consistory meeting



Committee reports

Benevolence Committee:

- * Affirmed funding from the People in Mission fund to "adopt-a-student" from the Cornerstone Protestant Campus Ministry at UAlbany for their winter mission trip to Kentucky (as we have done for many years)
- * Approved the participation, again, in the CWS Blankets and Tools campaign to run from February 12 to March 12

Congregational Life

- * 134 Dinners were served at the November Community Dinner

Finance Committee

- * Approved 2023 Budget as presented to the congregation

Board of Deacons

- * Distributed 10 \$25 gift cards for Thanksgiving and 10 \$50 cards for Christmas to Altamont Elementary School. The school's social worker distributes to families in need. It was noted that Altamont Elementary has the highest rate of free and reduced lunch in the Guilderland District.
- * Helderberg Partnership seems to be going well.

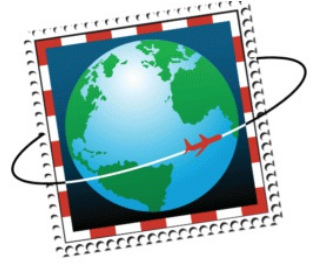
From the missions:

✧ The Capital Area Council of Churches invites you to attend two special events this month. On Sunday, January 8, beginning at 1:30 pm, at the First Church in Albany (Reformed), current and prospective participants in the Ecumenical Witnesses of Baptism program will gather for their annual meeting and recommitment service. Anyone interested in becoming a witness is invited to attend. Witnesses receive emails when baptisms are scheduled, and commit to attending at least two of them during the year. This means attending baptisms in a church of another tradition (e.g. Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran) to welcome the newly baptized into the wider body of Christ. First Church is located at 110 No. Pearl St., Albany, 12207 and has a parking lot next to it. Use the parking entrance. For more information, call the CACC office at (518) 462-5450 or visit their web site, www.capareacc.org

The second event is the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Interfaith Memorial Service, which will take place Sunday evening, January 15, beginning at 7pm, at the Macedonia Baptist Church, 26 Wilson Ave., Colonie. The program will feature special music, readings and prayers from various faith traditions, and a message from the Rev. Jamel K. Robinson, Pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist Church. The evening seeks to keep the legacy of Dr. King alive and the offering received during the service supports the Council's MLK Scholarship Fund. If you can't make the service and would like to contribute, you may send a check to the CACC MLK Fund, 646 State St., Albany NY 12203.

✧ Several Cornerstone Campus Ministry students will be traveling to Madisonville, KY during their winter break (Jan. 8-14) to help rebuild homes damaged by last year's tornadoes. Please pray for safe travel and a safe week. Both retiring Campus Minister Sandy Damhof and incoming Pastor Becca Ehrlich will be with the group.

✧ Pastor Brad Kautz writes from Dulce, NM, that "it's very much winter here on the reservation, with overnight temperatures down to zero. One does not expect to see any new life emerging outdoors, but we thank God that he does not work according to the calendar but works through this ministry on his own timetable. It has been very encouraging that during an exceedingly busy Christmas season the Lord is bringing new life in some very unexpected people and relationships. Please pray that we remain faithful and for the Lord to continue to bring life and healing here on the reservation."



Altamont Reformed Church

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To contribute articles for the ARC Lite, send to the editor c/o ARC

or email the editor, Theresa Lasselle, at lasselle@aol.com

ARC's website: <http://altamontreformed.org/>

The due date for the next edition of the ARC Lite is January 27.

ALTAMONT REFORMED
CHURCH
P.O. Box 671, Altamont, NY 12009



✧ The Regional Synod of Albany has scheduled two new sessions of Faithwalking Module 1, each one lasting 10 weeks. This is a wonderful way to give your faith life a boost. One group will begin on Jan. 25 and meet from 10:00-11:30 each Wednesday morning. The other group will begin Feb. 9 and meet Thursday evenings from 5:30-7:00pm. Cost: \$175. Please register by Jan. 13 by visiting www.albanysynod.org.

✧ Josh and Alison Perkins send Christmas greetings from the United Arab Emirates, where they were actually able to have a real Christmas tree! Josh has been meeting with area church leaders and planning training seminars, while Alison is teaching secondary school algebra to mostly male students. After an initial period of feeling uprooted and isolated in this new place, they have found that the Lord has provided a supportive international church community and facilitated processing of visas and residence permits. They ask for prayers for: opportunities to develop meaningful relationships with neighbors and other locals, for Alison as she teaches her students and connects with parents inside and outside of school, and for Josh as he networks with other ministry leaders and develops training seminars. Their latest newsletter is posted in the Missions Corner.



Pam Fialkoff	January 2	Jim Pavoldi	January 17
Greg Goutos	January 3	Jason Conover.	January 21
Bill Johnson.	January 3	Stephen Ritzko	January 21
Peg Jones.	January 4	Stephen Ritzko, Sr.	January 24
Melissa Haas	January 5	Rich Lasselle	January 26
Hannah Pavoldi	January 5	Sallie Townsend	January 27
Ryan Brewer.	January 8	Don Wilford	January 27
Laurie Rodwell	January 8	Ben Mayer.	January 28
Emily Van Hook.	January 16	Barbara Wilford	January 30