



The Messenger

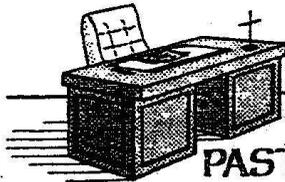
Grace United Methodist Church

16 Hillcrest Drive

Ravena, NY 12143-1409

Rev. Judith Johnson-Siebold, Ph.D.
Pastor

Rev. William F. Rogers, S.T.M.
Pastor Emeritus



**FROM THE
PASTOR'S DESK**

March 2012

Dear Friends,

I was walking by an empty store front the other day when I saw these words in the window:

This store is not empty. It is full of opportunity.

To most people, the store was indeed empty. There were no fixtures within, no lights, no items to be purchased, no reason to give the store a second glance. But to someone looking for a place to display and sell their products, the store was certainly full of opportunity. Someone looking for such a place could see in their mind's eye what most of us could not: shelves full of colorful objects, brightly illuminated and cleverly displayed to entice shoppers.

As you and I spend our nights and days during the season of Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday on February 22nd and extending until Easter on April 8th, we are aware of all the emptiness around and within us. A tough economy results in more empty store fronts, food pantries find their shelves emptying more quickly than normal, costly plans deferred leave hearts feeling empty, the stress of under-employment or working multiple jobs just

to make ends meet can make marriages feel empty, and certainly anyone with savings has had to watch their bank account empty.

So we begin Lent with emptiness, and we remember that Jesus was described in the New Testament as the one who "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but taking the form of a servant, emptied himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross." (Philippians 2:5-8).

That cross held his form for a few painful hours, but then it was emptied and he was placed in a grave. Scripture tells us that three days later that grave was empty because God raised Jesus from the dead.

Thus, what began with Jesus' self-emptying concluded with the grave's emptying and the resurrection of Jesus. Because of his life and teachings, his death and resurrection, what looked like the emptiness of death can be seen as new opportunities for life, love, hope and joy.

As we move through Lent, let us do so with the intention to look with eyes of faith at all the emptiness we encounter so that we may see not just emptiness, but reassurance that God has the last word: life overcoming death, love overcoming hate, hope overcoming despair, and joy overcoming sadness.

Let us observe a Holy Lent,
Pastor Judi

Reminder...our Lenten and Easter schedule:

- Wednesday, Feb 22nd - Introduction and brief Ash Wednesday service around the tables
- Wednesday, Feb 29th - First practice of fruitful congregations
- Wednesday, March 7th - Second practice of fruitful congregations
- Wednesday, March 14th - Third practice of fruitful congregations
- Wednesday, March 21st - Fourth practice of fruitful congregations
- Wednesday, March 28th - Fifth practice of fruitful congregations
- Wednesday, April 4th - Conclusions
- Thursday, April 5th - Holy Thursday Tenebrae around the tables, w/youth drama
- Sunday, April 8th - 6am Easter Sunrise Service at GUMC
- Sunday, April 8th - 10:30 Easter Service



St. Patrick used the shamrock to teach people about the Godhead. Holding up a shamrock, he challenged them, “Is this one leaf, or three?” Inevitably, people replied that it was both, prompting St. Patrick to draw the analogy that so, too, is God: one God in three Persons — the Holy Trinity.

SPAGHETTI DINNER A SUCCESS

Thank you to the members of the Administrative Council for hosting our annual spaghetti dinner on February 11th. The Council would like to thank all who contributed to the special sauce, the preparation of the meal and setup, servers, clean up, and of course to all of those who purchased dinner! The profit for the dinner was \$723! Great job everyone!

MARCH GREETERS

In an effort to ensure we have someone to meet and greet folks coming into church, the following people have volunteered to be greeters for the month of March:

3/4-Janet Mantynen & Gabriella Selbe
3/11-Adrienne, Paige & Josh Seymour
3/18-Ken & Cindy Bliss
3/25-Fran Hoffman & Dotty Backlund

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY

I want to thank everyone who helped make our annual Souper Bowl another success. We made \$275 to purchase food for the local food pantry and 100 food items were brought in during the 3 weeks leading up to the Souper Bowl. Mark your calendars as we are having another soup Sunday on April 22nd.

-Barbara Coryell

MEMORY/HONORARY PLANTS

For all who are interested in having a plant placed on the altar in memory of or to honor a loved one on Easter, please contact Dotty Backlund at 756-2510.

The price for bulb plants (tulip, lily, hyacinth or daffodil) is \$10. All orders must be placed before 3/31/12 and checks should be made payable to Grace United Methodist Church.

TRUSTEES

In February, the trustees fixed the long-needed light in the coat closet and also the sign light. They put carts together for the rectangular and new round tables. These new round tables being used in the fellowship hall were purchased with memorial fund monies of Nils Backlund. The round white tablecloths were beautifully decorated for the spaghetti dinner by Dotty Backlund and Stacey Gallagher. Our fellowship hall has a fresh new look thanks to these additions.

SOON TO OPEN!

The Bargain Shed

On Saturday, April 14, the Bargain Shed will open for the 2012 season. Our hours will be the same as they have been for the last several years (Tuesday morning, Thursday evening and Saturday morning).

There have been a few staff changes and this means we are looking for an additional person or two to volunteer for Thursday evenings. If you would like to be a part of this rewarding experience, please see Edna Rominger or call her at 966-8740.

We are also always looking for names of substitute workers who could be

available when a regular staffer cannot be present.

Dates for receiving donations will be announced in the April newsletter. **[Keep saving, please!!!]**

Thank you for your unending support.



This column invites submissions from anyone who knows of someone in the church who we should thank. This month we'd like to thank:

Many thanks to the following families who have agreed to lead the Lenten Candle Ritual at Worship during the Lenten Season:

Feb 26th – **Barbara Lisa & Juliann Banahan**

Mar 4th - **The Robertson family**

Mar 11th - **The Frazee family**

Mar 18th - **The Canham family**

Mar 25th - **The Ginter family**

Apr 1st - **The Sherman family**

Also, thank you to:

***Alan and Wanda Whitney** for their outstanding job cleaning the remainder

of the books out of fellowship hall and the downstairs hall

***George June** and **Wayne Pearson** for fixing the coatroom light that hasn't worked in ten years

***Jan Bradshaw** for polishing the candle holders

***Adrienne Seymour** and **Mary Alice VanWie** for cleaning out the store room

GET YOUR CHOCOLATE BUNNIES HERE!



It just wouldn't be springtime without a chocolate bunny. That's why the Youth Group will be making them and selling them to the congregation. Under the direction of Wanda Whitney, the Youth Group will meet on Sunday, March 4th, at 6pm to make chocolate bunnies, chocolate eggs, and chocolate chicks.

Orders can be given to any Youth Group member for the delicacies whose suggested donations are \$1.00 for the smaller candies and \$2.50 for the larger chocolate bunnies.

UNNATURAL

It's countercultural, unnatural even — this Lenten call to deny oneself and resist temptation, to put aside comfort

for a time in reflection of Jesus' sacrifice for us. It's downright uncomfortable.

Lent is a most unwelcome experience because human nature seeks pleasure and avoids pain at all costs. But those who dare to follow Jesus into the desert will find a rich reward.

TAX RECEIPTS

This is a reminder to anyone who would like a receipt for their 2011 contributions to the General Fund, please contact Don Moon at church or call 756-6920.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Birthday and Anniversary wishes go out to those celebrating in the month of March:

- 13 Dotty Backlund
- 14 Sandy Racey
- 16 Logan Moss
- 19 Vera Mahnken
- 20 Erick Mattick
- 20 David Sugrue
- 21 Ray & Jan Bradshaw
- 21 Emily Buckley-Crist
- 27 Joseph Bliss
- 28 Laura Case
- 29 James June

TEACHING CHILDREN TO CARE FOR OTHERS

“Time Especially for Children” is an activity that Grace’s children will remember all their lives. Before they settle in to listen to Pastor Judi’s story for the week, they are seeing firsthand that our church is a caring community that donates regularly to our local food pantry. They are witnesses to the kind and thoughtful acts of members who remember to bring a canned or boxed good each week.

Our children have quickly gotten used to looking around the congregation before going forward for someone’s outstretched hand holding an item for them to add to the basket on the altar. Thank you to all who remember each week that there are those less fortunate than ourselves.

JESUS VIDEO TO SHOW Friday, 3/30/12

On Friday March 30th, the Evangelism Committee will host a special showing of the "JESUS" film. Based on the Gospel of Luke, this historic film has been translated into more than 1,120 languages. Since 1979 more than 200 million people worldwide have accepted Jesus after viewing this film. Praised for its archeological

accuracy, it was filmed on location at over 200 sites in the Holy Land.

Prior to the movie, at 6:30 pm, we'll have pizza and beverages in the fellowship hall. At 7:00 pm, the movie will begin. A children's version, "The Story of Jesus for Children" will also be shown in the lounge.

Don't miss this opportunity to experience the life of Jesus. Please consider sacrificing a few hours on Friday evening to watch this historic film. This special showing will be open to community as well...so, please bring a friend.

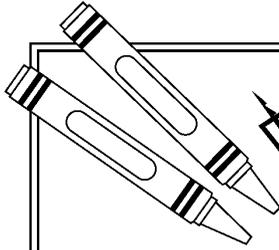
To find out more about the film, go to: www.jesusdvd.org.

SPRING FEVER

Four high school students afflicted with spring fever skipped their morning classes. After lunch, the boys told their teacher they’d had a flat tire.

Much to the boys’ relief, the teacher smiled and said, “Well, you missed a test, so take seats apart from one another and take out a piece of paper.”

Still smiling, she waited for them to sit down. Then she said, “First question: Which tire was flat?”



PUZZLE

SIGNS OF *Rebirth*

Isaiah 35 describes the rebirth of a dry land when Jesus returns, as well as the signs of God's beautiful creation at springtime.

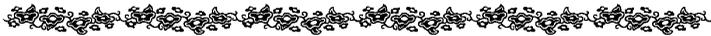
Directions: Solve each math problem. Then write the words in order, from smaller numbers to larger numbers, in the spaces below.

bloom $6+1=$ ___ blossom $2 \times 2=$ ___ rejoice $4 \times 2=$ ___

burst $3+3=$ ___ wilderness $2+1=$ ___ joy $5+5=$ ___

crocus $3+2=$ ___ desert $1 \times 0=$ ___ parched $0+1=$ ___

glad $2 \times 1=$ ___ shout $10-1=$ ___



"The _____ and the _____ land will
be _____ ; the _____ will rejoice
and _____. Like the _____,
it will _____ into _____ ; it
will _____ greatly and _____ for _____."

Isaiah 35:1-2, NIV

Answers:
"The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy."

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JOIN US ON FACEBOOK

If you are on Facebook, please join the church page by *liking us* at Grace United Methodist Church, Ravena, NY. Find out what is happening each week from Sunday's Service sermon title and hymns to meetings and special events.



Deadline for articles for the **April** issue of *The Messenger* is **March 18th**. Please send or e-mail articles to Barb Bullock at:

bbullock812@gmail.com

or

fax to: **731-8994**