

The Shepherd's Messenger



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KNOWING JESUS AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD & SHARING THE RISEN CHRIST WITH ALL.



"Are you ready for Christmas?"

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 3:2 NIV).

It seems like everywhere you go during the month of December people ask the same question. At the grocery checkout counter - "Are you ready for Christmas?" At the bank drive through window - "Are you ready for Christmas?" At the doctor's office - "Are you ready for Christmas?"

I think the answer to that question depends on how you define "ready." Let me ask you this question: "Are you ready for Jesus?" Now that puts the idea of being ready in a completely different Christmas light, doesn't it?

John the Baptist was sent by God to get the people ready to meet Jesus. Here's what Matthew had to say about him:

In those days, John the Baptist came preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

"A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord; make straight paths for him.'..." "People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River" (Matthew 3:1-3, 5-6).

We don't like the words "repent" or "repentance" very much. They mean "to make a radical change in one's life, to turn and go in the opposite direction from sin (another word we're not too fond of today) to God". Repentance involves an element of grief over the way we have lived apart from God and a decision to run toward the Father. That was God's idea of the way to prepare for Christ's arrival in the book of Matthew, and it is still God's idea of preparing to worship Him today. Now that's what I call getting ready for Christmas!

Let's reflect for a moment on the words to this poem and then answer the question, "Are you ready for Christmas?"

Continued on Page 5

Wishing you a Blessed Christmas!

PLEASE PRAY FOR:
Our World situation

Others to keep in prayer:

- Norma Andrus
- Todd Baxter
- Bob & Sandy Beard
- Russell Brown
- Family & friends of Virginia Clayson
- Hazel Cornell
- David Edwards
- Nancy Frazier
- Brian Fries
- Tyler Griffin
- Don Hall
- David Halstead
- Donna Hart
- Bernie Hawks
- Bob Huddleston
- Katie Kellogg
- Sandy Lathrop
- Bruce Metler
- Mark Middaugh
- Nellie Moses
- Justin Murphy
- Keith Pierce
- Laroy Spateholts
- Mary Lou Sprague
- Donald Thompson
- Jessica Veiders
- JoAnn Viglietta
- Clint Wilder
- James Woodruff
- Ken Wyant
- Judy Zayac



Please keep our prayer list up to date.

If someone should be added or removed from the prayer list, please submit their name in writing.
Thank you!



If you have a prayer request, call the prayer chain.

Call Ruth Holden at 968-1933



- 3 Robert Amundson
- 4 Rhonda Cornell
- 9 Jared Battistoni
- 15 Pamela Higby
- 20 Janet Calcagno
- 25 **Jesus Christ**
- 28 Sandra Allen
- Andy Nelson



- 12 John & Mary Hupp
- 28 Dean & Cheryl Wildrick



Rob and Rhonda Cornell are grandparents. Kate had a 7 lb. 13.2 oz. boy, Clayton Reed Torrey, on November 5th.

Statistics Needed: \$1,767

Date	Worship	SS	Offering
11/1	27		\$2,907.00
11/1		Gil's Hills	\$ 220.00
11/8	26		\$1,756.99
11/15	34		\$ 865.00
11/22	27		\$ 863.00

December
Helping
Hands



Greeter:
Kevin Kranock

Power Point:
Rob Cornell

Pianist:
Christine Berardi

Altar Guild:
Cindy Dutton
Thela Snow



Robert Campbell, who formerly attended the Cuba UMC, died on Friday, October 6, 2020 at Mason Christian Village, Mason, Ohio.



You can watch **live videos of Sunday Services** on our website www.cubaumc.org.

The services are also on the Cuba UMC Facebook page.

Virginia M. Clayson, a member of Cuba UMC, died on Saturday, November 21, 2020. Graveside Services held on November 27 in Mount Prospect Cemetery, Franklinville, NY.

Praying for Our Churches, Pastors and Leadership in Cornerstone District:

December 6 Findley Lake UMC. Rev. Dave Cooke, his wife Heather and their children Ben, Grace & Nathan.

December 13 Clymer & North Clymer UMCs. Pastor Kevin Costner, his wife Heather and their sons Caleb & Joshua.

December 20 Forestville UMC. Pastor Jim Hankey, his wife Andra and their family.

December 27 Rev. Tim Phelps, serving in extension ministry as Chautauqua Hospice and Palliative Care chaplain, his wife Liz and their family.

For the first time in its history, **Houghton College's Christmas Prism** will be a virtual performance. Over 100 students and faculty from the Greatbatch School of Music will present music and reflections on the theme "O Come O Come Emmanuel."

The College is sharing Christmas Prism with the community for 15 days. Christmas Prism 2020 will be available for viewing from Friday, December 11 at 8:00 p.m. through midnight Christmas Day at this link <https://www.houghton.edu/prism/>.

Dr. Mullen said "This year, in this strange time of prolonged anxiety and uncertainty, we know *together* as a community, as a nation, and as a world, that we need to be reminded of God's Presence, of God's Power to make something new of these painful circumstances that we are powerless to change, and of God's Purposes that will be accomplished despite all appearances to the contrary."

The program always concludes with Handel's *Messiah*.

Puzzle!

Use the code to complete Isaiah's prophecy about Jesus, our Savior.

CODE:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
H	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	

10 23 13 17 14 6 18 21 21

11 14 12 10 21 21 14 13

6 24 23 13 14 1 15 4 21

12 24 4 23 2 14 21 24 1

22 18 16 17 3 8 16 24 13

14 5 14 1 21 10 2 3 18 23 16

15 10 3 17 14 1 25 1 18 23 12 14

24 15 25 14 10 12 14

ISAIAH 9:6, NIV

Answer: And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6, NIV

COCONUT BANANA BREAD

Doris Wyant

- 1-½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 1-½ tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. salt
- 2 eggs

- ½ cup butter, melted
- ½ cup flaked coconut
- ½ tsp. almond extract
- ½ cup chopped walnuts
- ½ cup chopped maraschino cherries
- 1 cup mashed bananas (2 med.)



In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder & soda and salt. In a small bowl, beat eggs, bananas, butter coconut and extract. Stir into dry ingredients just until moist. Fold in walnuts and cherries. Pour into greased 9x5x3" loaf pan. Bake at 350° 50 to 55 min. or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pan to wire rack. Yield: 1 loaf

COUNCIL OF CHURCHES NEWS

Submitted by Peggy Pearce

The Cuba Council of Churches met on Sunday, November 8 at Cuba First Baptist Church. Social distancing was observed and face masks required.

The Senior Luncheon Center is open again Monday through Thursday for lunches. The site manager dishes up the meals; some people bring their own table service although this is optional. Social distancing is observed and all surfaces are sanitized. To be able to continue offering this service in Cuba, there needs to be seven in attendance. The Cuba site is located in the A.A. Arnold Community Center at 51 East Main Street and is sponsored by the Allegany Country Office for the Aging.



Applications for participation in the Holiday Assistance Program have been sent. This year, in order to observe the COVID safety regulations, ten households at a time will be served in twenty-minute blocks. Distribution is set for Thursday, December 10th from 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon, and from 4 to 6 p.m. As in the past, cash vouchers to Giant for perishable food items and cash vouchers for toys to a local business (based upon kids in the home 18 or younger) will be provided. The Council works in cooperation with the Toys for Kids program of the Cuba Chamber of Commerce that provides pre-selected gifts (based upon kids in the home 13 or younger). Last year the program served 200 children and 90 households. This year due to COVID-19 there are likely many who have normally donated who cannot, as well as a likelihood of more people than normal being in need of the assistance. If you are able and wish to assist, your donation should be written out to "Cuba Food Pantry" with "Holiday Assistance" in the memo line of your check and mailed to 32 Spring Street, Cuba, NY 1472 c/o Pastor Jon Ward.

Reports from the various church representatives were received:

- Christ Episcopal Church is continuing virtual 9 a.m. Sunday services with radio or internet through WRAQ 92.7, the radio station in Angelica, NY. They have added ZOOM coffee hours following the service to their outreach. They have communicated with a person in the Philippines who listens to the service.
- Cuba First Baptist Church continues holding in-person worship but have had to cancel their many fall outreach programs. The rummage rooms are open on Saturday and limit persons shopping at any one time. Being open depends upon many COVID-related factors, so you might want to check before going.
- North Park Wesleyan Church continues physical services at 9 and 11 a.m. They are planning their Live Nativity again this year, but will be unable to hand out Christmas cookies.
- Our Lady of Angels is offering one mass per parish with limited capacity and attendance due to the pandemic restrictions.

The next meeting of the Council will be Sunday, January 10 at North Park Wesleyan Church.



Thank you to the caring person that sent me the beautiful fall flower arrangement. It definitely put sunshine in my day. May God bless you.

Julie Hawks

We have 15 flood buckets filled and ready to take to Upper New York Conference's Mission Central HUB in Syracuse or to Christ First UMC in Jamestown. The buckets lack the required N95 dust masks due to these being restricted to organizations on the front lines responding to COVID-19. Instead of the masks, the Conference suggests we send \$4.00 per bucket, or \$60 total. If you are able to donate to this, please make your checks out to the Cuba United Methodist Church with "flood buckets" in the memo line. Thank you for considering this outreach ministry. We are also looking for someone to take the buckets to Syracuse or Jamestown.

UMW NEWS

Submitted by Peggy Pearce



Nine United Methodist Women met in the church sanctuary on November 14 at 10 a.m. Social distancing was observed, face masks were in place and a lot of "catching up" went on since many attending haven't seen each other due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Officers for 2021 were elected (President Janet Calgano, Vice President Thela Snow, Secretary Peggy Pearce, and Treasurer Holly Scoville).

A \$100 donation was approved for the Chamber of Commerce Toys for Kids drive and a decorated wreath will be provided for the Many Splendored Evening auction (also to benefit the toy drive).

It was decided to continue the tradition of helping local families have a happier Christmas through the Holiday Assistance Program (HAP) sponsored by the Cuba Council of Churches. Walmart and Giant gift cards will be given to families suggested by the HAP coordinator. Up to \$1000 has been allocated for this outreach.

Even though Christmas decorating is somewhat in limbo, we would still like to use poinsettias to adorn the sanctuary as in the past. An order form is included in this newsletter. Plants are \$6.00 each and the deadline is December 6. Order forms and payment may be mailed to Thela Snow, 5841 Hilltop Road, Cuba or given to Janet on Sunday morning. If a Christmas Eve service is held, you may pick up your plants after the service is over. If there is not a Christmas Eve service, plants will be available after the December 20th service. In the event in-person worship is canceled due to the pandemic, the plants will be in the church foyer for pick up at a specific date/time to be announced (on the order of what happened with the Easter plants).

No future meeting date was set at this time.



(Pastor Becky's letter - Continued from Front Page)

"Ready for Christmas," she said with a sigh
 As she gave a last touch to the gifts piled high...
 Then wearily sat for a moment AND READ
 Til soon, very soon, she was nodding her head.
 Then quietly spoke a voice in her dream,
 "Ready for Christmas, what do you mean?"
 She woke with a start and a cry of despair.
 "There's so little time and I've still to prepare.
 Oh, Father! Forgive me, I see what You mean!
 Yes, more than the giving of gifts and a tree.
 It's the heart swept clean that He wanted to see,
 A heart that is free from bitterness and sin.
 So be ready for Christmas - and ready for Him.

Let's Pray

Dear Lord, I want to be ready for Jesus today and every day. I come to You now in repentance for my sins: my sin of selfishness, stubbornness, and rebellion. I turn from my self-centeredness today and commit to keep my focus on You. God, I cannot do this on my own. I am not able. So, I ask that You fill me with the power of Your Holy Spirit. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Blessings,

Pastor Becky



DUDLEY TAILS

Submitted by Cheryl Wildrick

Our house has a ‘breezeway’ connecting it and the garage. It is where Miss Kitty’s Condo is located. The Condo is not always used in spring and summer... although she does stop by periodically for the free meal deal. As any good customer would do, Miss Kitty has spread the news of the free meal deal.

It was early spring when he first appeared: a very attractive orange male cat. He had been in the neighborhood for years, but he had kept his distance... and didn’t want any people within ten feet of him. Then, one day, there he was - in the breezeway - having breakfast with Miss Kitty.

Tom exited quickly, perhaps embarrassed that he was eating food that someone else had provided. Miss Kitty finished the meal. Tom (full name: Tom Cat) came every “now and then”... but would hurry away if anyone saw him eating at Miss Kitty’s place.

Dudley began to take notice of this new routine, when milk, bread, and cat food was placed in a small plastic bowl. In cooler weather, the food was heated in the microwave before serving. Dudley made a habit of whining when this meal was prepared. He followed it to the side door, and when the door was opened, he usually saw Miss Kitty. It was then, that loud barking was added to the routine.

Dudley’s daily walk (around our place) was usually in the evening on summer days, but after Daylight Savings time, the walk was moved to the afternoon. It was not unusual for Miss Kitty to be on the outside steps when the door opened into the breezeway. Then the race was on. Out through the open back door she went, with Dudley (barking loudly) close behind. She weaved through the feed buckets, the chainsaws, and containers of gasoline. Dudley’s little legs tried to keep up. Then - when Dudley wasn’t looking - Miss Kitty jumped up onto the metal-topped table. Here egg carton bottoms (filled with soil and planted seeds) usually sat in the sun.

Was Dudley looking at Miss Kitty? No. Dudley was wandering in circles, following her scent. But her scent abruptly disappeared and Dudley didn’t know where to go next. (Miss Kitty sat on the table, watching Dudley in his confusion.)

Every day experiences can be opportunities to increase our faith and do good. Just as Miss Kitty showed Tom where he could find food, and she shared what was hers, so we - who are the children of God - should share what we have, with others in need. The New Testament book of first Timothy (chapter six, verse eighteen) says to, “be generous and willing to share.” This is greatly needed in today’s world.

When Dudley playfully chased Miss Kitty, and lost sight of her... Miss Kitty (sitting on the table) was probably thinking. “You’re not too smart. All you had to do was look up.” And when we need help, all we have to do is look up.

The Old Testament book of Isaiah (chapter forty, verse twenty-six) says to, “lift your eyes and look to the heavens.” Our blessing will be two fold. First, we will see the vastness of creation, and our own troubles will not seem so overpowering. And second, it reminds us that our creator is always in his creation. His Spirit is always around us and in us. Just ask, and He will calm, comfort, and communicate with you. Amen!



No groups and activities are allowed to use the church at this time due to COVID-19.

DECEMBER 2020

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE
11:00 AM
Mask & Social Distancing Required

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6 UMW Food Panty Collection	7 Holiday Assistance Program drop off at Baptist Church 9am-4pm	8 Holiday Assistance Program set up at Baptist Church	9 Holiday Assistance Program distribution at Baptist Church 8:30am-12pm and 4-6pm	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 January Newsletter Deadline Noon	22	23	24 	25 	26
27 Gil's Hills Collection	28	29	30	31		

The Shepherd's Messenger

CUBA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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The Shepherd's Messenger is a publication of the Cuba United Methodist Church, and is published monthly to report news & keep members and friends informed of church programs and events. Deadline for article submission is the third Monday of each month at noon. Please email articles to Editor's email address, or drop articles off to the church office.

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 Home: (716) 373-4332

She will give birth to a son,
 and you are to give him
 the name Jesus, because
 he will save his people
 from their sins.

MATTHEW 1:21



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED