

Advent 2022

Volume 13, Issue 5

View more photos from church events via our website: upcbgm.org/programs-and-events/photo-gallery
Our worship services are livestreamed on our YouTube channel: upcbgm.org/youtube

Advent & Christmas activities

Our theme this Advent season is “From Generation to Generation”. We’ll be reflecting on the ways in which the story of Christ’s coming has been told through the centuries, including the two different Nativity stories in Matthew and Luke. We will also be inviting you to share stories about your family traditions as we light the advent candles:

Does/did your family have any particular traditions for the Advent season? For Christmas Eve? For Christmas Day? Did you share a special meal or special foods, and when did that take place?

If you have a special memory you’d like to share, let Pastor Kimberly know! We’re still working on how to “pass the mic” so we can have open sharing during worship, but we will ask one or two people to “start us off” every week as we gather around the light of hope, peace, joy, and love.

Mark your calendars:

Nov. 27 – **First Sunday of Advent, worship and communion in the sanctuary.**

Nov. 28 – **Advent Bible Study Begins: “The Christmas Stories”, with John Dominic Crossan.** This special session of our Bible study will feature four lectures by the esteemed biblical scholar and will use the book called *The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus’s Birth* to guide our study. We’d be glad to have you join us – let Pastor Kimberly know if you’d like a copy of the book.

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Our mission is to follow Jesus Christ by doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God.

Everyone is welcome here



**UNITED PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF BINGHAMTON**



Dec. 2, 5:00-7:00pm – Christmas Decorating & Cocktail Party in the sanctuary. Bring your energy, an item to decorate one of the window niches (they get hot, so preferably something that won't melt), and a snack and a story about your traditions to share. (Pizza cut cocktail size and soda will be provided.)

Dec. 4, following worship – ornament making for Community meal and pantry, seasonal Crafts in the Library Lounge. We had so much fun decorating Easter eggs as gifts, we thought we'd do it again for Christmas! We will have supplies for ornaments and decorating stations set up in the Library Lounge, and the coffee pot on in the lobby, and we hope that you will come and help us make ornaments that we can give as gifts to our guests to brighten their season! Sherry estimates that we'd need about 70 for the households we serve at the community meal, and another 60 or so for the pantry guests... come and join the fun!

Handchimes for Christmas Eve worship – We invite children (and the young at heart!) to perform in a piece on handchimes during the Christmas Eve service. If you would like to participate, please join us for two brief rehearsals immediately following worship on 12/11 and 12/18. Music TBD.

Dec. 24, 4:00pm – Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service in the sanctuary.

Dec. 25 – Worship will be pre-recorded and streamed, featuring musical performances by the UPC community.

Dec. 26-30 – Building will be CLOSED.

Jan. 1, 2023 – Worship will be pre-recorded and streamed, featuring readings and meditative opportunities.

Pastors' Ponderings

Greetings friends!

It's been a great fall. It was great to see more and more people as you came back from summer trips, long overdue, refreshed and restored. The colors on the trees were magnificent this year and the weather stayed beautiful for longer than usual to let us enjoy them. Our fall schedules fell into place with the school year and the choirs restarting. We've gotten to talk together, learn new things, and listen to where God is calling us next.



*Becky Kindig,
Associate Pastor*



This fall I have continued making Sunday school packets to mail home – with a big thanks to Marilynn Guinane for all her help with them! And we are planning ways to do some more things together with the kids. During our couple potlucks this fall, there have been activities for the kids to do so they can continue to build relationships with each other. At the September potluck, we had a station to count the money in the Palm Sunday Fish Boxes that were collected while I was out on medical

leave. (They had been safely put away for when I got back and then discovered again!) Aiden was a master counter and helped us get it all rolled. The youth collected \$117.50 for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering and that has now been sent in. We are now looking forward to Advent when we will have crafts for all ages to do together!

I have also continued our outreach at Binghamton University with the Interfaith Council. We continued our monthly Common Ground conversations where students, faculty, and staff could gather as we talked about a topic common to each of our faiths. This fall we have talked about holidays, climate change, and rituals, and had some great discussions with Jewish, Catholic, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Bahai, Atheist, Baptist, and Presbyterian participants. We also started an idea called Soul Care events so that members of the BU community can find ways to nurture their souls – regardless of whether they had a faith tradition or not. Our first event was a Drum circle in October, thanks to Elikem Nyamuame who generously donated his time and talents to help get us in tune with our heartbeats and out of our heads. The Interfaith Council is planning on more Soul Care events in the spring. It has been such a blessing to be able to do some of my work there and show people what it looks like to have discussions about difference with an open and curious attitude.

Also in these last few months, I have done a lot of listening as I have gotten to see more of you and others, since I have been able to spend more time at the church. It has been great to catch up with you, hear about your joys and concerns, as well as your thoughts. One thing I have heard over and over again is that our church is a sanctuary where people care about other people – a respite from the world we hear about in the news. I have heard it from many of you as members, I have heard it from our building partners, from our guests, and from people in the community. We care about each other and show that in our actions towards one another. We care about the community we live in and want to make it a better place for all our neighbors. And we care about people in other places and take to heart what Jesus taught us about caring for immigrants, the oppressed, homeless, hungry, or lost. This is a special community here at UPC.

This November marks my 10-year anniversary to coming here and joining you in ministry, and my 9-year ordination anniversary of when you offered me call and I was ordained as a minister of Word and Sacrament. I remember fondly that first time I walked through the lobby doors from the parking lot to meet with the Personnel Team and talk about coming to teach Sunday school for a while. The



feeling of the Holy Spirit rushing over me as I walked through the doors took me aback, and I knew then that whatever you offered me, I should say yes to it, because something special was happening in this place. And so I did, and it was one of the best decisions I have ever made. Being a part of this community gives me hope that the loud voices we hear in society that are full of hate, indifference, or greed are just the minority, because I can see God working

through us in this small corner of the world making a difference in people's lives every day.

This November also marks one year of my diagnosis with Myasthenia Gravis, which has changed my whole world. I started strong immune-suppressant medication to stop my immune system from

attacking my muscles, and will always need to have a mask on around other people. I have alarms on my phone that go off every three hours to take other medication to help my muscles move. I have weekly physical therapy and extra doctor's appointments, and I was out for six weeks for major surgery. I'm so thankful for the prayers and support that you all have given me through it all this year. Where some congregations would have questioned a pastor's ability to continue doing ministry with such an illness, you all just went with the flow and continued to see me and not my disabilities, and I am so grateful. Whether I come through the doors with a walker or cane, or now sometimes a wheelchair, you all have allowed me the grace to just use whatever tools that help me live my life and have not treated me as less abled, just differently abled, and more important, still me. And I am so grateful.

UPC is a special congregation, but it isn't just by chance. You all work hard to put your faith into action and you take bringing the love of God to the world seriously. May we continue to care for each other so that we can continue with whatever work God is calling us to next!

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Becky

How quickly the season changes.
We have scurried our way through November,
the autumn is gone
and winter is here:
the frost a little more real
and the cold more so.

We're on the cusp of something,
something born of good news.
The frost may grasp the dying light
and the sun may be thin and cold,
but at the heart of it all
there is a word set free,
born of the prophets
and lingers among us.

Now that the air is crisper,
the light thinner,
the day weaker,
we can perhaps hear it
more clearly:

God is putting on skin;
justice is on its way.

Blessings,
Pastor Kimberly



*Kimberly P
Chastain,
Pastor*



Music Notes

Music is an important part of our coming together at United Presbyterian Church. We are excited to make music with every resource that we have, and to use a variety of styles — not all at once, but intermingled. What emerges is a vibrant worship service with music that includes everyone who wishes to participate.

UPC's vocal choir is enjoying the use of our new choir room (next door to the chapel), and we meet **Wednesdays, 6:30–7:30pm**. We provide music for worship most every Sunday, sometimes assisted by “guest conductor” Aoife! We are welcoming new members at any time, and would love to have your participation during this Advent season. We have plans to sing at the Christmas Eve service and to record a few songs for the Christmas Day service. It would be good to have you with us!

United Ringers handbell choir rehearses **Sundays, 11:30am–12:30pm** in the Sanctuary. Our handbell choir plays 2–4 octaves of Malmark handbells and handchimes, providing music for worship about once a month. If you're interested in learning how to play handbells, please inquire. New members are always welcome! No previous experience needed. No auditions to start. If you can count to 4, you can learn to play!

We also invite instrumentalists and vocalists who'd like to share their gifts to talk with any of our music leaders about providing special music for worship — you can call the church office, email music@upcbgm.org, or speak with them in person after worship. All musicians must be fully vaccinated and boosted.



At United Presbyterian Church, children are included in all aspects of worship. We invite them to start early with participation in hymns and other pieces of music. An in-sanctuary play & learn area for families also gives easy access to the Time for the Young at Heart and hands-on thematic exploration.

We invite children (and the young at heart!) to perform in a piece on handchimes during the Christmas Eve service. If you would like to participate, please join us for two brief rehearsals immediately following worship on 12/11 and 12/18.



Our Church Family

In Memoriam

Gail G. Covert, 86, of Endicott passed away peacefully on Thursday, October 13, 2022. She is survived by her children Tracy Covert de Cuevas (Ruben), Adana Brauer, Denton H. Covert III (Jacqui), and Cameron Covert. She is also survived by her cherished grandchildren Valentina (Andrew) and Ruben, Sydney and Chloe, and Brenden and Griffen. Gail also treasured her relationship with her best friend and confidant Judy Stento and her beloved cousins Richard Young and Diane Lattimore. Gail was predeceased by her parents George and Janice Grineff and her brother Douglas Grineff. Gail attended UNC Women's College Greensboro and the University of Pittsburgh and was a graduate of Harpur College. She taught Social Studies/History in the Vestal School District for 30+ years and loved the interaction with her students and was an inspiration to many. Gail had a strong commitment to her community, serving as President of the Vestal Historical Society, running the Vestal flood center, and serving as a Deacon at First Presbyterian Church in Binghamton. An avid reader, Gail enjoyed the discussions and friendships in her book club, OBC. Gail enjoyed shopping, travel, and skiing the Alps. Her guilty pleasures included lobster, jelly doughnuts, Byrne Dairy ice cream sandwiches, and Joey's frozen custard. She loved baked goods and especially missed Wagner's on Seminary Ave. and Katz's Bakery in Liberty, NY. Gail loved her dogs, and her family will always remember the funny voice she used to speak to her pets. She had a passion for gardening and spent endless hours tending to her plants, creating bouquets from her flowers and harvesting vegetables to eat and share with her family and friends. In her memory, donations may be made to the Broome County Humane Society or Vestal Dollars for Scholars.



Join Us for Worship — in person, online, or over the phone

We worship together on Sundays at 10:00am, both in person in the sanctuary and online. The service is livestreamed on our public YouTube Channel [upcbgm.org/youtube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpCbGm), our Zoom room [upcbgm.org/zoom](https://www.upcbgm.org/zoom), and our website, and is also accessible on YouTube any time. Those who can't access the worship videos online can call in on the phone to listen live on Sunday mornings, using the Zoom information listed below. So if you are not ready or able to come "in person", you are welcome to participate as you are able.



If you're joining us in person, here's what you need to know:

- We wear masks and keep social distance, and the pews are marked to help us sit safely. We keep the inside doors open throughout worship, and air filtration units are deployed throughout the sanctuary to enhance your safety.
- Pastor Kimberly removes her mask while preaching and leading prayers, to accommodate those who rely on lip-reading to assist their auditory processing.
- Offering plates are placed by the doors of the sanctuary, but we do not pass them during the offertory. You are still invited and welcome to give online at [upcbgm.org/giving/donate](https://www.upcbgm.org/giving/donate) or to mail a check to the church.

Everyone is welcome to join us as we pray, hear God's word read and proclaimed, share our joys and concerns, and experience worshipful music. Our music is presented in person. All of our musicians are fully vaccinated, and the singers/instrumentalists at the front of the sanctuary are at least 15 feet away from the first row of pews.

If you're worshipping with us online, all of the hymn music and prayer words are shown on the screen, and live captioning is used for other parts of the service such as the sermon and the Prayers of the People. If you watch on a small screen and need the printed version of the worship guide, it is available for download from our website each week, or it can be mailed to you upon request if downloading/printing is not an option.

If you have been missing the time of shared prayer, join us at 9:30 before worship – either in the Chapel at church, or on Zoom – for a time of sharing and praying for the needs of our community. To join the Zoom room online, go to <https://upcbgm.org/zoom>. To call in: Dial 1-646-558-8656, then enter Meeting ID: 865 274 8433 #

It would be good to have you with us.

From Generation to Generation, We Tell the Story

The stories, scriptures, and traditions of the Christmas season have been passed down to us throughout the generations. Many of us enter this season with a swell of memories and emotions as vast as the cultural and religious rituals this holiday holds. Like a tapestry woven throughout time, the Christmas story weaves us in – to remember how God has shown up in the past, to continue the work of collective liberation, to behold the presence of God in flesh and bone.



Our Advent theme is also a call to action: What are we being called to generate or bring forth? What have your ancestors and those who have come before you passed on for you to continue? Considering the many ways we embody, remember, and tell the story of Christ's birth, which rituals hold the most meaning for you? What about this season will you pass on to the next generation?

From Generation to Generation... reminds us of the ways our lives, histories, actions, and stories are interconnected and woven together. The work of God is always unfolding – in and through us. This Advent, may you remember that you belong – to a story etched into the wrinkles of time, to generations that have come before and will come after, to a love that won't let you go.

Nov. 27 – First Advent: There's Room for Every Story

Focus Scriptures: Matthew 1:1-17; Isaiah 2:1-5

Matthew begins the story of Jesus with a genealogy that goes back to Abraham. Embedded in that genealogy are stories of triumph and hope, but also of grief and loss, exploitation and despair. Because there is room in God's love and God's economy for every story. God's promises have come to every generation, in every human condition, and as we retell the old, old story, we remember anew that there is room for our stories as well.

Dec. 4 – Second Advent: God Meets Us in Our Fear

Focus Scriptures: Luke 1:26-38; Isaiah 11:1-10

"Do not be afraid," the angel tells Mary when she receives the news that she is to bear a child. This phrase occurs more times than any other in the Bible. From generation to generation, God shows up

in the midst of our fear and uncertainty and confusion and calls to us with these words. They carry a promise, not that we will be free from trouble or pain, but God will never leave us alone. The promise gives Mary the courage to say “yes” to God, and through the ages our ancestors in faith have responded to God’s calling and God’s promise. We hear the words again in this season of uncertainty and confusion, and remember anew that we can trust God to be with us as we work for a realm where peace and freedom reign.

Dec. 11 – Third Advent: We Can Choose a Better Way

Focus Scriptures: Matthew 1:18–25; Isaiah 35:1–10

Joseph also hears the voice of the angel saying “do not be afraid.” The voice of the angel gives him the courage to turn aside from a path that makes sense in the world he lives in and live into a future that he cannot control. He stays with Mary and they form a nontraditional family, following God’s call to choose grace over condemnation. Our ancestors in faith have sometimes chosen the better way, and sometimes not. In our world today, what are the choices that we lead us to the holy way?

Dec. 18 – Fourth Advent: We See God in Each Other

Focus Scripture: Luke 1:39–58

Mary goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth, perhaps to share the waiting time together. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and speaks a blessing upon Mary as her own child leaps and kicks within her womb. She sees how God is at work and names it out loud. This connection inspires Mary to sing her radical hymn of praise, declaring how God’s liberating love remains steadfast throughout the ages. From generation to generation, we can see how God is at work in our relationships. The way we see the divine in each other affects how we live and move in the world. When we view every human being as a child of God, we generate a different world.

Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve: We Tell This Story

Focus Scripture: Luke 2: 1–20

We tell this story every year. We tell this story because it illustrates so clearly God’s desire to be in relationship with us. We tell this story because we, too, are invited to come to the manger and witness the miracle of birth. We tell this story because it brings us hope and good news—hope especially for those deemed powerless, unworthy, or unwelcome. We tell this story because it is a story we need to hear again and again, to pass along this good news and to continue to thread together the generations with hope.

Remember that on Christmas Day and New Year’s Day, our worship will be online only.

Session Highlights

by Andy Chadwick, Clerk of Session

While small, Session has been busy during October and November. Some of the actions taken include:

- The Christmas and New Year’s schedule was approved:
 - Saturday, December 24 – Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion service at 4pm
 - Sunday, December 25 – prerecorded music service, online streaming only
 - Sunday, January 1 – prerecorded meditative service, online streaming only
- Session approved the closing of the church building between Christmas and New Year’s; very little takes place during that time and all our tenants are off. It will be a paid vacation for hourly staff.

- Session voted to offer space to a therapy group for formerly incarcerated sex offenders from 10:30am to 2pm every other Friday.
- Bovina United Presbyterian Church was looking for approximately 100 copies of the blue *The Presbyterian Hymnal*, of which we have many. Session approved donating the hymnals, including an accompanist version and several large-print editions.
- Session has been diligently working on the 2023 budget.
- Aaron Whitney reported on the November 12 Presbytery meeting. The 225th General Assembly proposed a number of constitutional amendments. While most of them are minor wording changes, there are several that could have a larger impact on churches; Session will be discussing these in the next couple of months.



Boxing up the hymnals that we donated to Bovina United

Please don't hesitate to ask any member of Session about what we've been doing!

Supporting Our Mission and Ministry

We are able to receive tax-deductible contributions online through our website (upcbgm.org/giving/donate). Contributions can be made by E-check or credit card, and can also be set up as a recurring gift.

We encourage you to lift up in prayer how God will use you to bless UPC in fulfilling our mission to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.

Get Involved!

Our church teams are always welcoming new team members. If you'd like to help with or learn more about the workings of the church, talk to one of the pastors or the elders on Session: **Card Committee:** Suzie Raboy; **Finance,** Lou McKeage or Andy Chadwick; **Personnel,** Lou McKeage; **Worship & Music,** Suzie Raboy or Andy Chadwick.

Our YouTube Channel

Did you know that you can "subscribe" to the UPC YouTube channel? Did you know that it won't cost anything, and that when we have 100 or more subscribers, we get access to some special "perks" as a content creator?

Here's how it's done:

- Open YouTube to one of the United Presbyterian Church recordings, by following this link (<https://youtu.be/nn8ZBeTU0kw>) or searching on YouTube.
- Scroll down under the video until you see:



United Presbyterian Church of Binghamton

That's it!

There's a button over here that says "**SUBSCRIBE**". Click on the button.

Programs & Events

News from the Kitchen

by Sherry Conklin, Community Kitchen Coordinator

After 2½ years of serving pre-packaged to-go meals, in October we switched our Community Meal to dine-in only. Our guests are very much enjoying the ability to sit inside and dine. Most arrive at 4:30 to sit, have some coffee, and warm up. The pantry, diaper program, and hygiene program are growing every month. We are seeing more and more homeless people as the code enforcement continues to close buildings and evict people.

Pictured, from left to right:

Hygiene pantry supplies delivered as we stock up for the monthly hygiene product giveaway days, the 3rd Monday & Wednesday of each month.

On Monday morning, the products were shelved and ready to give to our guests.

And Wednesday night after the giveaway days, the cupboard is nearly bare again!



The meal has four new volunteers from the Raymond Corporation in Greene. These women have had drives at work and have donated cases of hygiene products, feminine products, and long underwear, socks, hats, and gloves. We are all so grateful to them for doing this as well as volunteering on Tuesday once a month for serving the meal. We are still looking for donations of men's long underwear, coats and jackets, gloves, and hats if anyone would like to donate any of these items. And the pantry can always use lots of reusable grocery bags. I am so grateful to all the volunteers we have recruited locally, from the university, and from Greene.



In September, Sherry and Pastor Becky took part in Binghamton University's Community & Civic Engagement fair. We were glad to recruit several students who signed up to volunteer for the pantry and the meal.

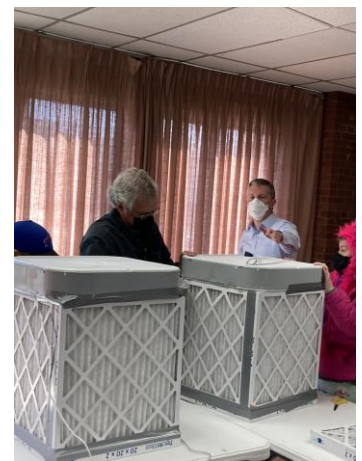
Improving air quality for our Pantry & Community Meal guests:

After worship on October 16, a group of about 10 of us built Corsi-Rosenthal boxes for the Tuesday meal waiting area and dining room. What are Corsi-Rosenthal boxes? We're glad you asked! Corsi-Rosenthal boxes are unassuming (some might even say "janky") cubes made of four or five filters and a box fan. They are as effective at cleaning air as they are aesthetically unappealing.



Once the airborne transmission of COVID-19 became evident, people started wearing masks and building managers rushed to upgrade their ventilation systems to include filters that would trap the virus. At United Presbyterian, we placed high-efficiency HEPA filter machines where people were gathering. A HEPA filter works by capturing virus-laden particles: Air is forced into a porous mat, contaminants are filtered out, and clean air passes through. The catch is that these are quite expensive and we had to keep moving them around and maintaining them.

Corsi-Rosenthal boxes to the rescue! Corsi-Rosenthal boxes are cubes consisting of four or five off-the-shelf furnace filters (rated MERV 13 or higher) topped by a standard box fan blowing outward. Once sealed together with tape, it can sit on a floor, shelf, or table. The fan draws air through the sides of the cube and out the top. The units are simple, durable and easy to make, and are about as effective as a HEPA filter and more effective than simply placing a single filter in front of a box fan. With minimal technical expertise, it took us about an hour to build six of them. The total cost was between \$80 and \$100 in materials that are available from any home supply store (we got our filters from www.texairfilters.com and our fans from Target).



If you are interested in making your own, we recommend following the instructions found at cleanaircrew.org/box-fan-filters

Supporting Mexico–U.S. border ministry

by Dave Ruston

We sold over \$500 worth of merchandise from our friends in Sasabe (Sonora, Mexico) and hope to continue to support the women’s sewing group there. We will have handbags and other crafts available for sale to support this important mission in the future. Dave and Greg will be supporting the Tucson Samaritans again from January to April. We look forward to visitors from Rutgers Presbyterian Church in New York City, who will join us for a couple of weeks in February, and we would welcome anyone else who might



Bill & Joyce show some of the items we’ve sold to support Casa de la Esperanza’s work.

want to share this experience with us. Please continue to pray for our brothers and sisters making this dangerous journey along the borderlands.

We held a retreat in October where over a dozen folks from UPC joined Greg and Dave at their cabin in the hills of Harpursville to consider the challenges of global migration and how UPC can support those facing these challenges. We hope this can be an annual event and send out a heartfelt thank you to those who took the time to consider these issues and how we can help.

UPC's "Zoom room"

Modern technology is marvelous! Thanks to the Zoom meetings system, we can gather virtually even though we can't be together in person. We've used our "Zoom room" for worship but also for prayer groups, book studies, hymn sings, and social times.

You can join our meetings and worship services online via your computer, tablet, or mobile device by going to upcbgm.org/zoom. If you've never used Zoom before, you'll be prompted to download the Zoom meetings app, which will ask for permission to use your microphone and your camera. We use our "Personal Meeting ID" for worship and most of our programs, so they're always in the same familiar place.

You can also call in over the phone, if you don't have a microphone on your device or you can't join online. To join as a phone call, dial **1-646-558-8656**, then enter our Meeting ID: **865 274 8433 #**

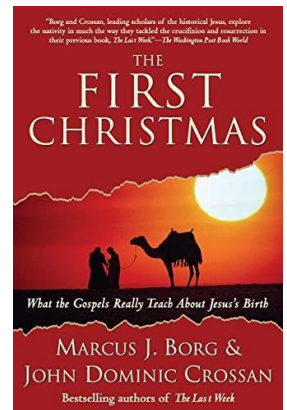
If you have questions or need help using Zoom, feel free to call the church office for assistance.

Bible Study

Mondays, 12:30-1:30pm, Chapel or Zoom Room

During Advent, our Bible study group is looking at the stories found in Matthew and Luke with the help of *The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Birth* by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan. Dr. Crossan will be teaching a webinar using the book as his text, so we will have the opportunity to listen to his lectures as well as discuss the book.

We'd be delighted to have you join us for this brief study if you are interested, and will be glad to make more copies of the book available to any who are interested. The online class starts on Monday, November 28, and will continue for 4 weeks. Speak to Pastor Kimberly or Pastor Becky to join the fun!



Sewing Group: Wednesdays, 10am-1pm (with Zoom lunch hour, 12pm-1pm)

by Cindy Chadwick

Ready, Set, Sew!

We're not sure who counted them all, but statistics indicate there are between 9 and 11 million quilters in the country. Our bet is that very few have been together as a group for more than a half-century like the Wednesday Sewing Group! Gathering each week to craft crib- and lap-sized quilts for the community, the group also makes "carry bags" for use on walkers, mittens, hats, scarves, pillows, and more. In the past year, the group made more than 70 quilts.

Sunday, November 20 marked the annual "Blessing of the Quilts" in preparation for distribution to area organizations during the holiday season. Locally, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, the



The sanctuary was decked out with many colorful quilts as we blessed all the work of our congregation on Sunday, November 20.



YWCA, the Relocation Assistance Program, and others receive the hand-crafted items. Hats, mittens, and scarves are also provided to our UPC food pantry, community meal, and lobby guests during the winter months.

Throughout the year, quilts are given to newborns in our church community and to others for special remembrances. UPC's quilts even reached other places in the Northeast, with donations hand-delivered by Chris and Cindy Burger to Camp Sunshine, an organization based in the State of Maine which provides a retreat for children with life-threatening illnesses and their families.

Sewing Group member Nancy Walter began a new tradition this year of naming each quilt based on its color, theme, and individual personality. Soon, "Pretty Posies," "Celestial," "Creamside," "Cookie Monster's Birthday," "Birds of Paradise," "Porkchop," and "Marsh Madness" (with lily pads and a cute frog pattern) among many others will find a home within the community. Most of the fabric used is generously donated by those who have an ample supply or no longer sew.



Sewing Group members Janet Hoover, Jean Hill, Ellen Hancock-Berti, and Ann Cobb.

The Sewing Group is interested in expanding, and encourages folks to join the fun on Wednesdays from 10am to 1pm in UPC's Upper Lounge, second floor. At noon, it's "needles down" for an hour of food, fellowship, and Zooming (for those unable to attend in person). Bring your own lunch; chips, pickles, tea, and cookies are provided. Please know that sewing skills aren't a requirement as there are plenty of non-sewing jobs to do. If Wednesdays don't fit your schedule, you can pick up a quilt to work on at home.

Sincere in its mission to provide warmth, comfort, and care to others, Sewing Group members gain much in return. As aptly said by Ann Cobb, a 50-plus-year member of the Sewing Group, "Where there is love, there is hope, and we love what we do." Pardon the puns, but the cohesiveness of this group mends their souls and keeps them in stitches as they work to help others. Please join! Reach out to the church office if you'd like more information.

Zoom Happy hour: Friday evenings, 5–6pm

Bring your own beverage, "Zoom in", and join the fun as we catch up on the events of the week and share how we're doing. It's a great way to keep in touch while we it remains complicated to see one another in person.

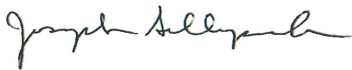
Dear Friends,

“I thank God every time I remember you.” That short sentence is the opening remark in Paul’s letter to the Philippians. It expresses perfectly how we feel about you and your support this year. Together we were able to help so many people find hope and resiliency during this season of economic and financial hardships. Your support helped in so many ways.

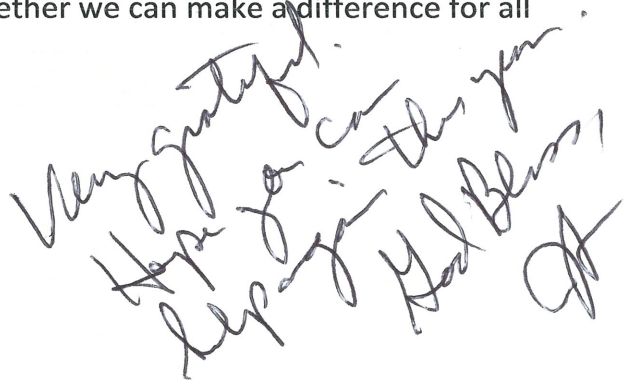
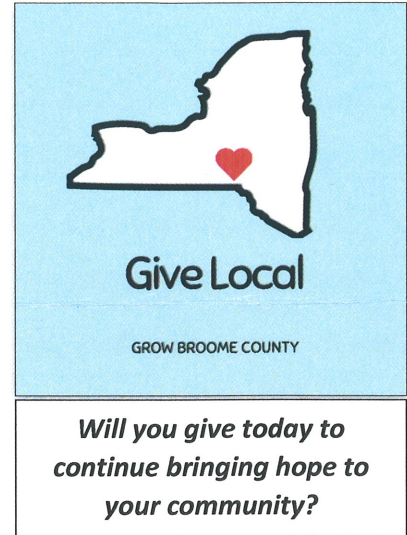
- Together we distributed nearly 2.5 million meals through CHOW®.
- Together we drove over 17,000 miles for grocery and medical appointments through *Faith in Action Volunteers*.
- Together we provided crisis intervention, pastoral care, discharge planning, and more for the incarcerated and their families.
- Together we supported patients, families, and hospital staff through the Hospital Ministry.
- Together we served nearly 10,000 customers at the Greater Good Grocery.

As we approach the new year, we do not know what challenges or obstacles we may encounter, but one thing is for certain. Together we can help. Together, as scripture reminds us, we can bring food into deserts and streams of water to drought infested lands. Won’t you help us again this year? Together we can make a difference for all God’s children who call Broome County home.

God bless,



Rev. Dr. Joe Sellepack

P.S. – Please give a gift this holiday season to continue the good work happening in Broome County.

Joys and Concerns



Expecting: Amanda & Doug (and Clyde & Declan); CJ & Katie; Aimée & Ernest (and Aoife)

Grieving – Friends & Family of: Dick D.; Len B.; Gail C.; Brendan; Ellie D.; Marlene S.; Roger W.; Peggy B.

Recovering: Dave & Margaret; Kayla; Bill D.; Marty D.; Joan K.; Jon M.; Aaron; Luke; Dave S.

Living with Cancer: Mary Ann; Molly

Ongoing: Michael; Nateka; Rachmani family; Larry & Ethel; Gloria; Abraham; Dinah; Sandra; Shantel; Carlos; Gary

Homebound/Managed Care: Kristie P., Marian P., Char S., Jim S.

Other Concerns: We pray for

- Shootings in Virginia, Colorado
- Buffalo & Western New York after storms
- Ukraine
- Immanuel Presbyterian Church as it ends its ministry
- Kaden
- People affected by Covid-19, RSV
- Immigrants
- Homeless

Recent & Upcoming Birthdays

December

- 2 Aoife Backus
- 3 Anne Boyer Cotten
- 9 Douglas Hill
- 10 Declan Jones
- 14 Linda Griffin
- 15 Chris Burger
- 19 Lee Day
Andrea Livingston
- 25 Grace Hickey
- 27 Jon Morse
- 30 Nancy Walter
- 31 Peter Griffiths

January

- 9 Jackson Seman
- 10 Gabriel Hickey
- 11 Elikem Nyamuame
- 18 Suzanne Souza
- 20 Allison Nyamuame
- 27 David Jurena
- 29 Andrew Chadwick
Zackk Meade
- 31 Harley Meade

February

- 1 Sarah Chadwick
- 3 Bob Walter
- 4 Dave Davis
Elinor Hugenbruch



- 8 Jullian Wanjama
- 14 Pastor Kimberly
- 18 Jenni McKeage
- 19 Cathy Ciganek
- 26 Ron Glowacki
Emily Hugenbruch
- 27 Aaron Whitney



Everyone is welcome here

**UNITED PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF BINGHAMTON**



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☎ 607-722-4219 • ✉ office@upcbgm.org • 📘 UPCBinghamton

Address Service Requested

Christmas Eve worship service **Saturday, December 24 at 4:00pm**

Christmas truly is the most wonderful time of the year. We hope you will join us for our family-friendly service of carols and candlelight on Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24 at 4pm. You can attend in person, join us online via our YouTube Channel [upcbgm.org/youtube](https://www.upcbgm.org/youtube) or Zoom [upcbgm.org/zoom](https://www.upcbgm.org/zoom), or join over the phone by calling 646-558-8656 and then enter Meeting ID 865 274 8433. The service can also be viewed later on our YouTube Channel.



Christmas Day and New Year's Day online worship services

We will not meet in person at the church for worship on Sunday, Dec. 25, and Sunday, Jan. 1. Our services will be pre-recorded, premiering live on YouTube [upcbgm.org/youtube](https://www.upcbgm.org/youtube) and Zoom [upcbgm.org/zoom](https://www.upcbgm.org/zoom) at 10am and available for viewing on YouTube any time after they premiere. The Christmas service will offer musical performances by the UPC community. The New Year's service will feature readings and meditative opportunities.