



Message from Rev. Hale

*“In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God. [John 1:1]*

..... and we’ll reach out and let those three phrases be *our beginning*; let them rescue us up and out of the revolving circle of worry that traps our thinking and drags us down; let them run and double down and pass around and sprint ahead of the lingering discouragement from that old year, that its despair might tire out trying to catch up to the “new”, and give up and drop out, and *let go of* the control it can have over our lives!

We’ll let these three phrases preface, *open the way, come before* all our hopes we have for this new year, because even if we have to dig deep to find them, *we’ll hit bed-rock!* Through them, we’ll touch the memory of the *promise within*—of that “*life and light*” that is the substance of our souls, the eternal *gift* within our being, the heart of all that brings us purpose and meaning as we find our way through one year then the next.

There is no beginning apart from God. There is nothing, no thing, no being, no life, no thought that exists apart from God. There is no beginning of a year or a day or moment in a day; no rising worry, intimidating fear, encroaching regret; no hope, no joy, no optimism, that exists apart from God.

In the beginning of all we can think of and all we experience, we will find God there *before*, in an eternity of existence and of presence.

In this beginning of a new year, dear friends, we’ll walk this way together, supporting one another, with thanksgiving for all the *Life* among us, and indispensably *present* in our world!

*Trusting God for all this life we share,
Marilyn*

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Lectionary for January / February 2021

January 3

2nd Sunday of Christmas
 Jeremiah 31:7-14
 Psalm 147:12-20
 Ephesians 1:3-14
 John 1 (1-9) 10-18

January 10

Baptism of the Lord
 Genesis 1:1-5
 Psalm 29
 Acts 19:1-7
 Mark 1:4-11

January 17

2nd Sunday after Epiphany
 1 Samuel 3:1-10
 Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
 Corinthians 6:12-20
 John 1:43-51

January 24

3rd Sunday after Epiphany
 Jonah 3:1-5, 10
 Psalm 62:5-12
 1 Corinthians 7:29-31
 Mark 1:14-20

January 31

4th Sunday after Epiphany
 Deuteronomy 18:15-20
 Psalm 111
 1 Corinthians 8:1-13
 Mark 1:21-28

February 7

5th Sunday of Epiphany
 Isaiah 40:21-31
 Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
 1 Corinthians 9:16-23
 Mark 1:29-39

February 14

Transfiguration of the Lord
 2Kings 2:12
 Psalm 50:1-6
 2Corinthians 4:3-6
 Mark 9:2-9

February 21

1st Sunday of Lent
 Genesis 9:8-17
 Psalm 25:1-10
 1 Peter 3:18-22
 Mark 19:9-15

February 28

2nd Sunday of Lent
 Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16
 Psalm 22:23-31
 Romans 4:13-25
 Mark 8:31-38

Mission Committee News Julie Pagett

HARVEST SUNDAY Thank you to everyone who contributed toward our annual Harvest Sunday Mission Project to provide a full holiday meal to two local families just in time for Thanksgiving! Your generosity during this difficult time is so appreciated.

PRESENTS FOR PANTHERS Your generosity also poured out for our annual Christmas toy collection. Three boxes of presents and 30 long-sleeved spirit shirts were taken up to Portville Central School and added to their Presents for Panthers toy drive. Thank you so much to everyone who gave to this worthy cause and thank you to Barb Fairbanks and Vicki Schmidt for their tireless work in "making it happen!"

DONATION TO CAMP DUFFIELD A \$1,000 donation was made from the Jack Shepard Memorial Mission Fund to the Duffield Camp and Retreat Center. Just like everyone else, COVID has hit the beloved summer camp hard. They were unable to hold camp sessions this past summer but did deliver Camp In A Box activity packages and Camp Duffield shirts to their campers at home, as well as shared videos on their Camp Facebook page. The funds sent by our church will help Camp Duffield maintain its facilities and pay its bills until it can recover from the pandemic.

DONATION FOR PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE Pending Session approval, a \$500 donation from the Jack Shepard Memorial Mission Fund will be made for **Disaster Relief – International Food Security Food Resources**. This designated account supplements the One Great Hour of Sharing – Hunger Program to enable a significant response to support international food security programs to ensure the availability of food to those impacted by Covid-19. Please remember to give thanks as you sit down to your next meal.

WYCLIFFE BIBLE TRANSLATORS We received a newsletter from Steve and Margie Doty. They are in Houghton, teaching linguistics and training a new generation of Bible translators. Like so many others, a Christmas season separated from their children was difficult, but they still found ways to joyfully celebrate the birth of Christ. Stop by the Mission bulletin board by the back door to read their full newsletter.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING I don't know about the rest of you, but football is so much fun to watch these days as our local Buffalo Bills are on fire! As we head into the playoffs and have our eye on the Super Bowl, let's also work to remember the upcoming **Souper Bowl of Caring**. Especially now in the midst of a terrible pandemic, the needs of so many who are struggling to keep food on the table is staggering. This year's Souper Bowl of Caring will take place on February 7th. As you are out grocery shopping in the coming weeks, please consider picking up some extra cans of soup to donate to this worthy cause. You may also make a monetary donation if that is convenient. Our own Portville Community Food Pantry is the recipient of the donations received. While the date of our return to in-person worship is still pending, please hold onto your donations for now and look out for updates in the coming worship bulletins.

FUN FLEECE FESTIVAL Each February, many members of our church and the surrounding community gather together in the church's basement to tie fleece knotted blankets to be given to the Southern Tier Child Advocacy Center where they are distributed to children who come to their facility. These blankets provide children with a sense of warmth and comfort in a time of need. Unfortunately, COVID will prevent us from gathering together in the basement this year, however we can still provide those fleece blankets! With funds from our Rummage Sale Mission Fund, ten small fleece blanket kits have been purchased and are awaiting someone to pick one up, assemble it and return it to the church. The kits are in the downstairs Sunday School room (Bizzy's classroom) along with a sign-out sheet so the kits may be tracked. You may also call Barb Fairbanks to get a kit if you can't make it to the church. Thank You!

Food Pantry News - Stephanie Hill

There's an old saying that a picture is worth a thousand words . . . A few pictures to tell the story of Client Choice for Food Pantry users, food collection by the Honor Society at Portville Central School, and . . .



sorting/organizing of donated food thanks to Judy and Randy McClain . . .



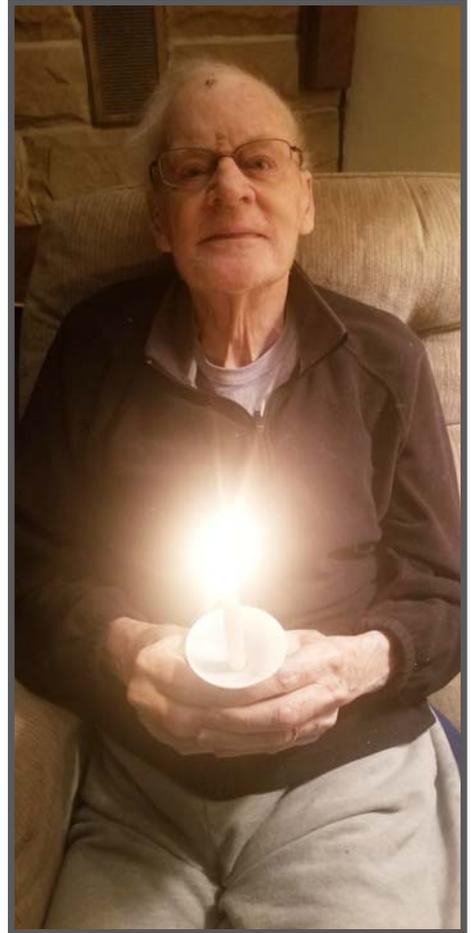
Sharing the Joy of Christmas Eve

A chuckle from Sue Atkinson on how she was able to take a picture of Walt holding a lighted candle. . . Thank you for sharing this, Sue!

It was kind of funny and somewhat frustrating getting the picture of my dad with the lit candle. When I would get my dad to hold the candle while lit, I would turn to get Steve's phone and the candle was out. So I put the phone down and relit the candle. Then I turned to get the phone and I would turn back and the candle wasn't lit again. This happened three times.

My dad was a bit confused I guess, and kept blowing out the candle. I asked him if he was blowing out the candle and he said yes. I said, "Dad, it isn't a birthday candle." (Even though I guess it is Jesus's birthday candle)

Then when I finally got a picture, he was looking down at the candle every time. It looked like he was sleeping. So I used a little psychology.



I told him that he needed to not blow out the candle, and look directly at me and smile like he was looking at everyone at church. That is when my dad looked up and he had a big smile on his face (thinking about his church family). Then I was able to get the picture for the Christmas Eve Service.

And we were all so glad that Ray Roulo was able to make it to a service. Mark Hendrix was able to snap a picture of him holding a lighted candle for inclusion in our virtual candle lighting photo montage. Thank you to all who were able to send in a picture, as

challenging that may have been, you preserved!

During this pandemic the Wiseman's Epiphany journey around the church was recorded . . . Let's follow the Wiseman through the many lands that were crossed to reach the stable where the Christ Child lay.

It took me a week to travel across the Land of Quilts. Can you guess where I was when this picture was taken?



Week 2 found me riding across the Land of Narthex. I'll bet the window will give you a clue for my location here!



During Week 3, I traveled through the Land of Sanctuary Windows. I did my best to stay out of sight. Did I succeed?



Week 4 found me getting closer to my destination. I traveled across Choir Land. Did you see me there?



I came even closer to the Light during Week 5, as I found myself in the Land of Pine Cones and the Christ Candle.



The 6 week journey was worth it. I finally arrived at the stable where Baby Jesus lay. Were you there?



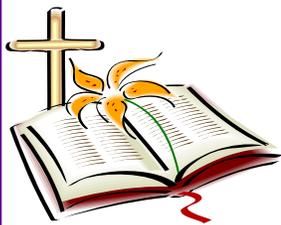
January / February Birthdates to Remember

Jan 2 Richard Jones
 Jan 3 Dan Schmidt
 Jan 7 Sandra Coletti
 Jan 10 Owen Spehar
 Jan 17 Jack Pagett
 Jan 20 Alex Woodhead
 Jan 22 SJ Gardner
 Jan 22 Emmy Woodhead
 Jan 27 Jean Kessler

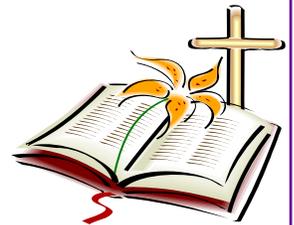


Feb 2 Max Patterson
 Feb 5 Wanda Hollamby
 Feb 6 Ray Roulo
 Feb 6 Amy Spehar
 Feb 10 Briar Spehar
 Feb 13 Barb Fairbanks
 Feb 13 Terry Keeley

happy birthday!



Our heartfelt sympathy and prayers for God's comfort and peace to Stephanie and Joe Hill and family on the loss of Stephanie's father: Robert (Bob) Watson September 6, 1926 - January 3, 2021



Property Committee News Norm King

No new developments or projects happening at the church, at this time, on the part of the Property Committee. Just a reminder that the 2021 Sanctuary Cleaning Schedule is being set up for the coming year. There are still some open spots on the schedule and we are asking for volunteers to fill the spots. If you are able help with the cleaning or have questions, please contact me, Norm King. My contact information is in the church directory.

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SELF-SCREENING HEALTH QUESTIONS:
PLEASE DO NOT ENTER THE CHURCH BUILDING IF:
IN THE LAST 10 DAYS YOU...

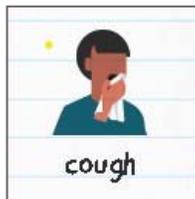
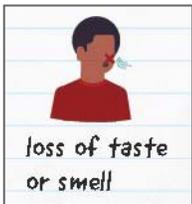
HAVE BEEN **DIAGNOSED** WITH **COVID 19** OR...

HAVE **BEEN IN CONTACT WITH** ANYONE WHO IS ILL, SHOWN SYMPTOMS OR HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH **COVID 19** OR...

YOU HAVE **TRAVELED** OUT OF THE COUNTRY OR TO ANY STATE THAT REQUIRES NYS RESIDENTS TO QUARANTINE OR...

YOU HAVE **BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT** WITH **ANYONE WHO HAS TRAVELED** TO THOSE AREAS OR...

IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING :



Other Symptoms Include:
 fever, runny nose, diarrhea, vomiting or nausea, headache, feeling tired, poor appetite

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 ages 3 to adult
 Worship Service: 10:00 am

Website:
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