

First Congregational Church of Greene, New York
United Church of Christ - Founded 1811

The Congregation

The Congregation is published monthly, except July and August, which are combined.

Volume LV

January 2010

Number 45

Spirituality: The center of our daily life is to continuously improve our relationship with Christ and all God's Creation.

Compassion: Actions that welcome and accept all people and help them experience the good feeling of God's unconditional love.



Integrity: With honesty and respect we support everyone's freedom to develop their Relationship with God.

Belonging: In sharing and celebrating life, we support our commitment to all others to nurture a family relationship of belonging.



ANNUAL REPORT DEADLINE, Sunday, 1/3/10

Un-decorate the Church, Tues. 1/5/10, 6:30 p.m.

Open Door Kitchen, Fri., Jan. 8th at 5:30 p.m.

Confirmation Class, 1/5, 1/12, 1/19, 1/26 at 6:00 p.m.

February Newsletter Deadline, Mon., 1/18/10

ANNUAL MEETING after Worship Sunday, 1/24/10

The Congregation is published monthly, except for July and August, which are combined.

OFFICE TELEPHONE: 607-656-4923 E-mail address: UCCGREENE@juno.com Pastor's Study: 607-656-7449

Website Address: <http://www.uccgreene.org>

Sunday School at 9:00 a.m. - **Worship Every Sunday at 9:55 a.m.**

Church Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC
28 N. CHENANGO STREET
GREENE, NY 13778**

**NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 204
GREENE, NY 13778**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Pastor: Rev. Curtis Whitman

Moderator: Art DeJager

Board of Deacons: Mary Gell & Donna Possemato

Board of Property: George Marr

Board of Christian Ed.: Laurel Acunto

Secretary/ Newsletter Coordinator: Linda Teter

Organist/Choir Director Claudia Kachmarik

Custodian: Wayne Hartley

Newsletter Volunteer: Jean Compeau



January 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 New Year's Day	2
3 Worship 9:55 a.m.—Communion Families in Need Collection ANNUAL REPORT DEADLINE Youth Group 5:00 p.m.	4 Cub Scouts 6:00 p.m.	5 UCC Chimers 4:50 p.m. Confirmation Class 6:00 p.m. Un-decorate the church 6:30 p.m.	6 WIC 8:30-4:30 Girl Scouts 5:30 p.m. Choir 7:00 p.m.	7 Care Team 9:00 a.m.	8 Open Door Kitchen 5:30 p.m.	9
10 Sunday School 9:00 a.m. Worship 9:55 a.m.	11 Cub Scouts 6:00 p.m. Deacons 6:30 p.m.	12 UCC Chimers 4:50 p.m. Confirmation Class 6:00 p.m. Property Board 7:00 p.m.	13 Girl Scouts 5:30 p.m. Choir 7:00 p.m.	14 ABC Support Group 10:00 a.m. Grief and Loss Sup- port Group 10:00 a.m.	15	16
17 Sunday School 9:00 a.m. Worship 9:55 a.m. Youth Group 5:00 p.m.	18 Cub Scouts 6:00 p.m. NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	19 Women's Fellowship 9:30 a.m. UCC Chimers 4:50 p.m. Confirmation Class 6:00 p.m. GAC 7:00 p.m.	20 Girl Scouts 5:30 p.m. Choir 7:00 p.m.	21	22	23
24 Sunday School 9:00 a.m. Worship 9:55 a.m. ANNUAL MEETING AFTER WORSHIP	25 Cub Scouts 6:00 p.m. Bicentennial Com- mittee 7:00 p.m.	26 UCC Chimers 4:50 p.m. Confirmation Class 6:00 p.m. Men's Fellowship 7:00 p.m.	27 Girl Scouts 5:30 p.m. Choir 7:00 p.m.	28	29	30
31 Sunday School 9:00 a.m. Worship 9:55 a.m. Blood Pressure Screening Food Pantry Collec- tion						

Minister's Musings

“When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.” (Luke 2:17, 18, 20)

These are the words which conclude the birth narrative of Jesus in the gospel of Luke. These words tell us what the response of the shepherds was at seeing the Christ child just as the angels had told them. These verses also show us how other reacted to the wondrous news of the birth of God's son, and how the shepherds responded as they returned back to their duties of tending after seeing the Christ child.

I have sitting here at my desk thinking about these verse and their implications for us today. Now that the Christmas season is behind us we are focused on the New Year which is approaching and not only that but a new decade. So how will we react to the glorious news of the birth of Jesus Christ? Will this wondrous message change our life – the way we live, and how we prioritize things? What place will God have in our lives now?

After seeing the Christ child, the shepherds responded by going out and spreading the word to others about the birth of God's son. The reader of this story is to get the impression that this was a life changing event for them. For as these shepherds returned to their fields they were shouting and singing glory and praise to God for what they had heard and seen. But what of the people who heard this wondrous news? What was their reaction to the shepherds shouting, singing and praising? We are told they “they were amazed at what the shepherds said.” Did they, in turn, spread the news of Jesus birth to others? Did they glorify and praise God? Did they go and find where the Christ child was born and worship Jesus? Was this a life changing event for them? The answer is no. They were amazed and that is all we are told.

So again, I ponder, what is our response to the message of the birth of Jesus in 2010? Do we go through the season of Advent feeling amazed, and that is it? Or do we go about after the birth of Christ and spread the news about our Lord and Savior, glorifying and praising God for weeks and months afterward? Is the message of the birth of God's Messiah going to be a life changing event for us in the coming year and new decade?

May God bless your lives during the coming New Year and this coming decade that we might all find things to glorify and praise God. Live your lives knowing that we have all been changed by Jesus birth, life, death, and resurrection.

Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Curtis



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The Executive Council is seeking individuals to help plan our church's 200th anniversary. If you are interested, please let Art DeJager know at 656-7818.

**FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER
DEADLINE:
Monday, January 18th.**

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Bob Burlison
Elisey Babiy
Carol DeJager
- 2 Wesley Basa
- 5 Anne Irwin
- 6 Jean Compeau
- 7 Ron Compeau
John Auwarter
- 11 Margaret Bryant
- 15 Andrey Babiy
Dan Acunto
- 18 Colby Meister
Jane Caracciolo
- 19 Peg Thomas
- 22 Liesl Ludolph
- 29 Louisa Ketcham
- 30 Dianne Breck
- 31 Bertha Barnes

JANUARY ANNIVERSARY

19 Janie & Dan Fitzgerald

(Please contact the Church Office at 656-4923 with any changes or additions.)



FAMILIES IN NEED

On the first Sunday of every month the Mission Committee collects 5 items for families in need; Toothpaste 5 oz., Bath Soap 4.5 oz., Shampoo 15 oz., Dish Soap 12.6 oz., and individually wrapped bathroom tissue. Boxes are provided in the Social Hall and Narthex. **Thanks for your help in supporting this project**

FOOD PANTRY

A collection is held the last Sunday of every month for the Food Pantry. Boxes are provided in the Narthex and the Social Hall. Please help support those less fortunate. Boxes are always available if you forget to bring in your items on the last Sunday.



CLOTHING BANK

If you have clothes you no longer need or no longer fit, there is a Clothing Bank in the village. It is located above the village office. Hours are 10:00 a.m. to Noon every Tuesday and Thursday and 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. every Saturday. Items are free and they will accept gently used clothing, shoes, boots, coats, etc.



COMMITTEES AND CHAIRS

Executive Council - Art DeJager, 656-7818
Board of Property - George Marr, 656-9452
Deacons - Mary Gell, Co chair, 656-5185
- Donna Possemato, Co chair, 656-7964
Board of Education - Laurel Acunto, 656-9094
Music Ministry - Amy Root, 656-8990
Mission Comm. - Carol DeJager, 656-7818
Women's Fellowship - Sharon Fowler, 656-9647
Head Usher - Russ Haberl, 656-9092
Altar Flowers - Margaret Bryant, 656-8201
Prayer Chain - Sharon Fowler, 656-9647
Care Team - Peg French, 204-0079
Parish Nurse - Sharon Fowler, 656-9647

The Mission Committee wants to thank the Congregation for their donations during our Food Bank Drive; many families will benefit from your generosity.

GREENE OPEN DOOR SOUP KITCHEN

The Open Door Kitchen will be open the following Fridays at 5:30 p.m.: 1/8, 2/12, 3/12. Volunteers are always needed to cook during the day (9:00 a.m.) and to serve/clean up (5:00-7:00 p.m.). We are also in need of financial support and your continued prayers. Please call Katha Root at 656-9654 with any questions.

*THE ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE
HELD AFTER WORSHIP ON
SUNDAY, JANUARY 24TH.*

**PLEASE GIVE ANY
SUGGESTIONS FOR OUR 200TH
YEAR CELEBRATION IN MAY
2011 TO CAROL DEJAGER.
WE ARE MAKING PLANS NOW.
THANK YOU.**

The Mission Committee sent \$340.00 to the Tioga Habitat for Humanity Fund. Thank you all for your generosity!

UCC of Greene
Budget
As of 11/30/09
Income \$13,1179.12
Expenses \$13,8303.08
Net (\$7,123.96)

Please note that our Congregation is depleting investments in order to cash flow negative balances.

Welcome New Members!

The following new members joined the church on 11/29/09. Please add them to your directory.

Philip Barton
10 Davidson Street
Greene, NY 13778
656-7651

Cheryl Plahanski
14 Davis Road
Binghamton, NY 13901
648-7330

Emily Case
21 Juliand St.
Greene, NY 13778
656-8472

Kris Sexton
PO Box 28
Greene, NY 13778
656-9433

Sharon Norovich
10 Davidson Street
Greene, NY 13778
656-7651

Pictured, l to r: Cheryl Plahanski, Emily Case, Pastor Curtis, Sharon Norovich, Philip Barton. Not Pictured – Kris Sexton



Welcome New Members!

DEACON'S DOINGS

The 200 Year Anniversary Committee is meeting to organize calendar of events for 2011. Amy Root is the Chairman. Any facts or pictures are greatly appreciated.

The Christmas Eve Service, December 24, will be at 7:30 PM with the children and Joyful Ringers performing at 7:00 PM as the Congregation enters.

Pledge cards are returned so if you forgot please return your card.

Our church is blessed with new members:

Emily Case
Philip Barton
Sharon Norovich
Cheryl Plahanski
Kris Sexton
Welcome.

The Youth Group went Christmas Caroling around town with hot chocolate and cookies.

Remember the church camera is stored in the Social Hall by the kitchen.

“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you, he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Luke 2:8

May you all have a joyous, healthy and blessed Christmas and New Year,

God Bless You All
Pat Ford, Deacon's Secretary



COFFEE HOUR

This is a schedule for the next four months. If you can't participate on a Sunday for which you are scheduled, please call a friend and ask them to switch with you.

If you're not on the list, and would like to help with coffee hour, please call Paula at 656-9258. Coffee hour is just a nice time to socialize with each other. If you have coffee and punch, that's good enough. Please don't feel the need to spend a lot of money or time baking for Sunday. If you want to bring a package of cookies from the dollar store or a bag of pretzels, that's fine. There are no rules and we need to make it cost effective for everyone. Just enjoy.

Jan.3 George and Peg Marr/ Ruth Bennett
Jan.10 Sue Borchardt/Jim and Ellen Sherwood
Jan.17 George and Kathy Estey/Pat Ford
Jan.24 Maggie and Charlie Hurtgam/ Donna Possemato
Jan.31 Charles and Sherry Brown/ Karen Scott

Feb.7 Tim and Mary Gell/ Steve and Cherie Bentley
Feb.14 Kent and Jessie Garringer/Kay Doak
Feb.21 Candy Harrington / Paula Basa
Feb.28 Dan and Laurel Acunto/ Lauren and Lanette Breck

March 7 Jim and Cindy Gagnon/Phil and Sharon Gagnon
March 14 Alta Martin/ Dave and Marlene Sherwood
March 21 Bob and Nancy Root/Amy Root/Katha Root
March 28 John and Ellie Rugg/Ron and Jean Compeau

Thank you all very much for all you do.

Paula Basa



THESE DAYS are available in the Narthex and Social Hall. Pick up your copy next time you are at church.

Grief and Loss Support Group to be offered in Greene

Brenda Birdsall, bereavement coordinator from Hospice of Chenango County will be facilitating a monthly support group to those in the community who are coping with the loss of a loved one. This group is open to all community individuals (no prior connection to Hospice is required.) This support group will be held the second Thursday morning of each month from 10-11:30 a.m.; it will meet in the First Congregational Church's library and the next meeting will be on Jan. 14th. Please contact Brenda Birdsall at 334-3556 for any questions.

JOYFUL RINGERS

Happy New Year! Some of the Joyful Ringers who are going to stay in the frigid north this winter want to keep ringing to stay warm! Any ringers or want to be ringers who will be around this winter are invited to resume rehearsals on Thursday Feb. 4 at 6:30 pm. We will have some music ready for 1 or 13 ringers. Come on ring those bells!



Brava!, Bravo!, Cheers, and Applause!

To our wonderful UCC Chimers for their two contributions to the Christmas music at UCC, Greene. Their chimes blended so well in the performance with the Joyful Ringers of the beautiful, "One Small Child". Thanks to Matt DeJager for stepping in to do the low chimes for us.

Then on Children's Day, they played a delightful arrangement of, "Pat-a-Pan". Thanks to the expanded ensemble of Amy Root on flute and piccolo, Mike Gell on bass guitar and Gabby Sherwood as the vocalist. (also thanks to Bob Root for his talented expertise with mikes when needed!) Thanks to all the parents for transporting these Chimers and supporting the program.

Good work!—Hannah Ludolph, Nora Gagnon, Mary Borchardt, Annie Whitman and Elissa Case.

We would welcome new members in 2010!



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

ATTENTION ALL LADIES!

Women's Fellowship will meet on Tuesday the 19th of January 2010 at 9:30am. The purpose of the meeting will be to plan our activities for the year. We need your input-- please plan to attend and bring your ideas and dreams of what you would like to see happen in this brand new year.

Sharon Fowler



PROPERTY BOARD

At last month's writing, the barn basement remained to be filled with clean fill. Thanks to the efforts of Fred Kronke and Charlie Hurtgam, the fill was obtained at a minor cost of \$105 through Phil Fenton, our snowplow contractor. This is all we can do at this time. We do need to finish grading the fill and planting grass in the spring.

Ruth Bennett has spent many hours and much searching in order to reduce our insurance cost, which now totals \$13,400. She has succeeded. Yes, I know that last month it looked grim with no progress. This month I am happy to report that we have signed a cancellation agreement with Heffernan Insurance Brokers and signed on with UCC Insurance Board with very much the same coverage for \$7,923.00 annually. Workmen's Compensation also was changed but for approximately the same cost of \$960.00. Workers' Comp is regulated by NY State and the cost is almost the same whoever is the provider. When all the refunds and adjustments are made, we will have a saving of approximately \$3,000 annually. Way to go, Ruth! I also feel that we no longer need a task team for insurance reviews since the coverage items are virtually the same. The Insurance Board is part of the UCC national organization.

Of course, there are several unfinished items, which probably will remain for the next year. Some cannot be done now others are just awaiting hands to accomplish them. The south side handicapped door, dishwasher repair, and the kitchen door come to mind. On the subject of dishwashers, delving into the problem, one finds a solenoid malfunction for the rinse aid dispensing and a heater that has no current spare part. We may be supplying (or can supply) hot enough water to bypass the need for this heater. And the rinse aid is not that old. We also need more thermostat lock boxes.

The heating season is upon us and the minor problems with thermostats have been corrected. All the thermostats have been set to 65° and must remain at that set point.

As always, please remember:

- *Lights must be turned off when leaving restrooms that do not have occupancy sensors.*
- *Lights must be turned off after meetings, practices, and functions held in the church.*
- *The doors locked.*

George Marr

Just a reminder...

Since the monthly newsletter is no longer mailed, please remember that if you change your address to call the church office at 656-4923. We need to keep our records up to date for other mailings and the church directory.

THANKS!



It will be time once again to un-decorate the church. Please mark your calendars for:
Tuesday, Jan. 5th starting approx. at 6:30 p.m.

Hope to see a good crew there!

ANNUAL REPORT DEADLINE

For the January 2010 report is:
Sunday, January 3rd.

The beginning of January all reports are due for the church annual report. Please send your reports in as early as possible. All written reports shall be submitted to the Church Secretary by January 3rd. You can e-mail your report to uccgreene@juno.com. Reports are needed from:

Deacons
Board of Property
Board of Christian Ed.
Clerk
Treasurer
Moderator
Board of Finance
Head Usher
Board of Missions
Music Ministry Team
Susq. Assoc. Delegates
Greene Area Churches Delegates
Women's Fellowship
Stewardship Ministry Team
Nominating Committee
Christian Caring Services
Wedding Coordinator
Pastor
Historian
Librarian

Thanks in advance for your help.



Linda Teter
Secretary

YOUTH GROUP CAROLING

The youth group members braved the messy weather on Dec. 13th and went caroling through the village. Our joyous voices warmed hearts at Birdsell Street apartments, Autumn Years, and the TLC home, along with several other stops in Greene. Thank you to those who allowed us to sing for you. Also to George Estey and Candace Harrington for your yummy hot chocolate!



HAVE A

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

CHOIR NEWS

Thank you to those who participated in the Advent and Christmas seasons by bringing such beautiful music to the congregation. The group, Simple Gifts with guitarist Paul Sweeney and recorder player Barbara Kaufmann, provided music for communion as well as playing during the service for the first Sunday in December. The Greene Chamber Singers presented their Christmas program on December 6th. Thanks to Jan Strain and all those who participated in this excellent program.

The Christmas Eve service provided an opportunity for the young people to again showcase their talents. It is great to hear how they improve each year. Also new this year was an arrangement of O Holy Night by our Greg Smiley featuring Greg and Pastor Curtis in duet along with the choir. Joan Smith also presented her new arrangement of The Huron Carol for cello, flute, piano, and voice featuring Nancy Sloan and Greg Smiley. We are so fortunate to have so many talented people giving us their gifts of music.

On Sunday, January 17, 2010 we will have a hymn sing before the start of the service. John Rugg will lead the congregation in singing your favorite hymn. Plan to come early as the hymn sing will start at 9:45 AM.

I want to again thank everyone in our music programs who give of themselves weekly to ensure that our worship experience is joyful and uplifting to God. Each of these folks is a dedicated worship leader. Please take a moment to let them know how much you appreciate their devotion to this church.

Soli Deo Gloria

Claudia



BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

The 2009 "Breakfast with Santa" was total success! A total of \$806.00 was donated by our guests, an amount which translates into \$403.00 for each charity. The amount collected this year was down from last year (\$901.00), but considering the economy such as it is people's generosity is amazing.

A round of applause and thanks is due to those wonderful volunteers who got up early to cook, those who came down at 7:45 to serve and those who came at 10:00 to clean up. Without these people and the generosity of those who came to see Santa and have breakfast we would not have had such a wonderful return to help Rotary with their Christmas baskets and Chenango County Habitat for Humanity to build a house here in Greene.

A special thanks to Peg Marr who, again, provided the beautiful Christmas decorations on the tables and for writing the news article placed in the Chenango American.

Again, Thank you ALL,
George Estey



DON'T FORGET...



THE ANNUAL REPORT DEADLINE IS
SUNDAY, JANUARY 3rd
**The Annual Meeting will be held Sunday,
January 24th after Worship.**

LIBRARY NEWS

Two copies of *The Red Tent* have been donated to the library. Many thanks to the donors. These are paperback copies and are located for the present in the recent acquisitions by the card catalog/sign-out area on the display case.

Historically Speaking and Seeking

No one seems able (as of this writing, at least) to provide any information on the whereabouts or existence of our old church records. I have continued my perusal of the minutes of the "Official Board" for the year 1906, which seems to be the oldest existing written record of church operations. You will recall these minutes of meetings are handwritten in a small lined tablet, approximately 6x8 inches labeled "Uncle Sam's Bond Tablet."

The first recorded meeting in the tablet was held on January 29 at the home of E.L. Page. Apparently the minister at the time, Reverend Livingston, had just arrived and his wife was to follow. One order of business addresses this forthcoming event, as follows;

"A committee was appointed consisting of E. L. Page, C. H. Graves, and E. L. McKenzie to act with any committee from the Ladies Aid Society, in arranging for a reception to the pastor and his family as soon after the arrival of Mrs. Livingston as will be consistent under existing exigencies."

The next meeting took place on March 5th at the home of Charles Graves. The handwriting is a bit difficult to decipher, but business centered on paying bills of \$4.00, \$25.00, and

"\$1.00 each to Mr. Daniels and Mr. Juliand....for use of rooms two evenings during the lecture courses."

"Mr. [Lenderson? Henderson?] came before the meeting and made a statement in regard to the insurance on the church & fixtures showing a total of \$5,000 of insurance, ½ amount carried by Mr. Lenderson & Mr. Smith, each. Mr. Page

moved that Mr. Lenderson be instructed to renew the policies on the church & continue for the same amount being for the amount of \$2,500."

Compare this with our current insurance cost of about \$8,000!

"The matter of those who had left the church and now reside in other places was brought up by Mr. Livingston and it was thought best that the pastor correspond with such members and find out what their wishes were. Mr. Livingston presented a system of cards to provide for all the different collections and benevolences of the church. A suggestion in regard of how the card should be presented was adopted and the card system is to be adopted."

A decision was made to hold the pastor's reception the week of March 17th

"and to ask the ladies to appoint a committee to work with the church officials to arrange for same."

Trouble in Paradise (the minutes continue as follows):

"The subject of the sexton was discussed and all felt that the present sexton was not doing his work as it ought to be. A committee of Mr. E.L. Page, Mr. C. Graves & Mr. Wm. Kelly were appointed to see Mr. Edgerton and take the matter up and arrange to have the church property taken care of."

We are left to wonder whether Mr. Edgerton was the negligent sexton or whether he was the new hire or the individual in charge of replacing the current unsatisfactory sexton. Perhaps the minutes of April 1906 will be more enlightening (and easier to decipher) as the saga continues.

Peg Marr
Librarian and Historian