



# The VINEYARD

Newsletter of The Lockport  
United Church of Christ

*An Open and Affirming Congregation*

*Open to God's Spirit,  
we reach out in Love to the World  
and invite All to journey with us*



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DECEMBER 2023 – JANUARY 2024

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## *Advent and Christmas Worship Schedule*

The Season of Advent begins with our worship service on December 3. We will be sharing Holy Communion, decorating the sanctuary Christmas tree, and lighting the first candle on our advent wreath – the candle of *Hope*.

Then Advent services will continue in the weeks that follow, as we prepare for Christmas and anticipate the birth of the Christ child. Each week, we will lift up the themes of Advent. December 10, the coming of *Peace* and December 17, the *Joy* that Christ brings to the world.

This year, the fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve happen to fall on the same day. Therefore, we **WILL NOT HAVE a morning service on December 24**. We will have our candlelight Christmas Eve service that evening at **5:30 PM**.

*Come and worship with us for all of these special services of the season!*

*“If only you would tear open  
the heavens and come down!”*

(Isaiah 64:1 CEB)

Anticipation awaits action.

People who wait for a liberator are not merely  
looking for someone to make them feel good.

They hope for circumstances to change.

Hope too is active. Action is hopeful.

*What might God be waiting on us  
to be or to do?*

Advent invites our active participation as  
members of the kingdom of God.

(UCC Worship Ways)

HOPE  
is  
BORN

# From Pastor Rick

*Hello, all members and friends of  
Lockport United Church of Christ!*

*I'm writing to you a few days before Thanksgiving. Yesterday I made apple and pumpkin pies and put them in the freezer to wait for the big day. Usually, I'm not as organized as this, and I promise myself each year that I won't leave all meal preparation to the last minute! Thanksgiving might be my favorite holiday; no presents to wrap, no cards to send, just my three favorite things: family, friends, and food! I have much to be thankful for this year, including all of you. Thank you for allowing me to be your pastor and for sharing yourselves with me in many ways.*



*As this newsletter arrives, the Advent season will be upon us, and we will again be counting the days down till Christmas. Leroy bought a "Dog Treat Advent Calendar" for our pup Gunnar this year, so we will be counting carefully with him! It's always hard to wait for good things to arrive, though most of us could probably use some more time to be ready for the holiday... I do hope that the days ahead will be blessed with joy and peace for you and your family as you celebrate the coming of Jesus into our world!*

*As always, we will mark the weeks of Advent during worship with the lighting of candles and familiar songs of the season. This year, since Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, we will not meet in the morning but will gather in the sanctuary at 5:30 pm for a Christmas Eve service. I look forward to seeing everyone there who is able to attend. We will end the service with the lighting of candles as we sing "Silent Night."*

*This newsletter brings us into the New Year. Even though I'm still waiting for Thanksgiving as I write this, I know that the New Year will be upon all of us very quickly. May you experience all of the biggest and best blessings of God in 2024! We pray that many of the questions we hold about the future of our church will be answered in the New Year; I invite you to pray with me that it may be so!*

*Holiday blessings and  
God's peace to you!*

*Pastor Rick*



## *Pastor Away*

**Pastor Rick will be taking  
some vacation time from  
December 25 through January 14.  
If a pastoral concern arises,  
please contact the  
church office (726-433-2545)  
or call Cyndy at home.**



## *Worship Themes for December and January*

*As we move through the seasons of  
Advent, Christmas and Epiphany,  
here is a list of Worship Themes  
Pastor Rick has planned  
for Upcoming Services*

### **December 3 – First Sunday of Advent with Communion**

Text: Luke 13:24-37  
Sermon: Waiting

### **December 10 – Second Sunday of Advent**

Text: Mark 1:1-8  
Sermon: Get Out of the Way!

### **December 17 – Third Sunday of Advent**

Text: Luke 1:26-38  
Sermon: Rumors of Angels

### **December 24 – 5:30 PM – Christmas Eve/ Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Text: Luke 1:26-38  
Sermon: Did you Find What You Were Looking For?

### **December 31 – First Sunday after Christmas**

*Long-Awaited Gift – Stories of Christmas*

### **January 7 – First Sunday after Epiphany/ Baptism of Christ Sunday**

*Defining Moments*

### **January 14 – Second Sunday after Epiphany**

*Known and Loved*

### **January 21 – Third Sunday after Epiphany**

Text: Mark 1:14-20  
Sermon: Gone Fishing

### **January 28 – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**

Text: Mark 1:21-28  
Sermon: Good News!

## *Help Us Keep In Touch*

E-mails are a great way for us to get in touch with members when there is a need – Snow cancellations, a meeting change, etc. If we don't have yours, please take a moment to send an e-mail note to Cyndy, then we'll have yours on file when we need to be in touch quickly.



## **THE VINEYARD**

A publication of The Lockport  
United Church of Christ  
98 East Avenue  
Lockport, New York 14094  
(716) 433-2545

*The Vineyard is published  
bi-monthly to keep members  
and friends informed about  
programs of the church  
and news of its people.*

Submissions Welcome  
**Deadline for Next Issue:  
January 21, 2024**

*CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE*

Our complete newsletter and lots of other information is available on our website at:

lockportucc.com

*RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTER  
VIA E-MAIL*

If you would like to receive your newsletter via e-mail, just send your e-mail address to Cyndy. It's a quick and easy way to get your newsletter, and it will save the church money.



Like us on  
facebook

**Church Office**

98 East Ave. 433-2545  
lockportunited@roadrunner.com

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***If you are Hospitalized  
or in need of Pastoral Care***  
please contact Pastor Rick  
or the Church Office

*Christmas Eve  
Service*

December 24  
5:30 PM

(Note the time change)

*Lighting the  
Christ Candle*

*Lessons and Carols  
of the Season*



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*We will NOT hold a  
morning worship service  
on December 24*

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*Christmas Poinsettia Orders*

Poinsettias have been ordered and will be in place for Advent! We have ordered a few extra plants. If you would like a plant for a memorial, or just to help us cover the cost of decorating the sanctuary, please contact Cyndy to see what we have available. The color possibilities are Red, White, Pink.

6" pot (1 branch, 5-6 flowers) - \$11.00 each  
8" pot (3 branch, 12-15 flowers) - \$23.00 each

Memorials will be printed in the Christmas Eve bulletin. After that service, you may take your plant home.



## *Christmas Sharing*

Unfortunately, many children and families will not have a very merry Christmas unless someone lends a hand to make that happen. We have a few mission collections that will help to brighten another's holiday, and warm them for the winter.

Our **Mitten Tree** will be in the church narthex ready to accept your donations of mittens, gloves, hats, or scarves.

We will also be accepting your donations of **Toys** for children through the YWCA. (Please do NOT wrap your toy.)

You may bring in your donations at any time before Christmas.



## *Pantry Collection*

On December 17, we will be accepting donations of non-perishable foods. So many of our neighbors are in need, and our donations will be a blessing to a family's Christmas dinner right here in our own community.

## *UCC Christmas Fund Offering*

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

We will be accepting donations throughout December. If you wish to contribute, you may simply drop it in the collection plate or mail it to the church. Please note that it is for the UCC Christmas Fund. (Checks should be payable to Lockport UCC.)



In your Holiday Giving, we hope you will remember Your Church.

Special offering envelopes are available in the narthex, or you may just note on your check that it is for the Christmas offering.

Your gift may be placed in the collection plate throughout December, or mailed to the church. *Thank You!*



## *Annual Congregational Meeting January 21*

Immediately following our worship service, we will remain in the sanctuary for a congregational meeting.

Reports from Committees will be reviewed and election of officers will take place.



*Merry Christmas and  
Happy New Year  
to Our Shut-in Members*

**Lucinda Hohle**  
Absolut Center  
4540 Lincoln Dr.  
Gasport, NY 14067

**Linda Layer**  
**Kevin O'Connor**  
Mt. View Assisted Living  
5465 Upper Mountain Rd.  
Lockport, NY 14094

**David Payne**  
Lockport Rehab &  
Health Care Center  
909 Lincoln Avenue  
Lockport, NY 14094

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## *Our Church Cemetery*

Plots in St. Peter's Cemetery are available for \$800 each. If you would like to purchase plots, just call Dan Holler and he will be happy to help you with that.

## *Upcoming Community Dinners*

Edna and her crew of helpers are continuing to serve our free monthly dinners to assist those in our community who struggle with food insecurity.



The dinners are served on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month, between 5:00 and 5:30 PM, and available as take-out only.

Our next dinner is planned for **December 27**. January plans are not yet set. If you can help prepare or serve meals, or make deserts please contact Edna to volunteer.

## *Building Sale Update*

In the last newsletter, we told you that Challenger's grant decision had been postponed until December, but we had reason to believe that the funds to purchase the building would still be forthcoming in December or before.

Shortly after the writing of that, we were notified that they would in fact not be receiving the grant funding. That brought an end to the sale, and we had to put the church back on the market.

Since then, we have had some possible buyers contact our realtor and tour the building. At the present time, we do not yet have any definite offers. We will keep the congregation informed of any new developments as they occur.

## *2024 Pledge Drive*



THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
**FINANCIAL  
SUPPORT**

Many thanks to everyone who has made a pledge or donation for 2024. Your support is greatly appreciated!

If you have not yet made your pledge, it's not too late. Cards may be dropped in the collection plate or mailed to the church.

(If you have any questions or need another pledge card please contact Cyndy.)



### December Birthdays

- 5 Jean Boots
- 7 Debra Mullaney
- 11 Richard Dodge II
- 14 Elizabeth Dodge
- 15 Tom Reid
- 18 Rol Sy
- 18 Cheryl Turner
- 27 Linda Layer
- 27 John Wright



### January Birthdays

- 2 Savino Pelligrina
- 11 Oliver Mietlowski
- 11 James Rongo
- 12 Gary Henning
- 19 Melody Zuercher
- 21 Jeff Boots
- 22 George Cruickshank
- 25 Melissa Gritzmacher
- 30 Carl VanderWeide
- 31 Skip Dodge

### Anniversaries

- Dec. 5, 1981 - Carl & Linda VanderWeide
- Dec. 30, 1967 - Nancy & Rol Sy
- Jan. 5, 1973 - Sam & Cyndy Corrieri
- Jan. 16, 1987 - Bobbi & Al Gritzmacher
- Jan. 18, 1992 - Tom & Melody Zuercher

## Weekly Vine

In the Weekly Vine, we share the full sermon from that week, some highlights from our service, and also any prayer concerns or news that comes up. **If we don't have your e-mail, you will not receive it unless you contact us.**

If you would like to receive the Weekly Vine, just contact Cyndy and provide your e-mail address. If you are receiving it and would rather not, let Cyndy know that, too.



### General Fund Financial Summary

September 25  
thru November 19

Income from	
Pledges & Offerings	5,294.01
Other Income	715.00
Total Income	6,009.01
Total Expenses	8,111.07

*If you have questions about our finances, please feel free to contact me. I am always happy to speak with you.*

Cyndy Corrieri, Treasurer



### *Tuesday Bible Study*

Our **Tuesday group** continues to meet at 10:00 am in the Mayflower Room. See Nancy Sy if you would like to join them or need more information.

### *Thursday Bible Study*

Our **Disciple group** has been on an extended break, due to the transitions happening in the church. We are now planning to resume classes in the new year.

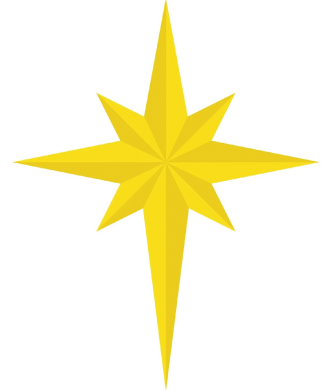
On January 11, we will start things off with a movie and pizza night. Then we will continue to meet for classes on Thursday evenings, 5:30 to 7:00 pm, in the Chapel. If you'd like to join us, please let Cyndy know so we can have study materials prepared for you.



*As we approach our waiting time, the season of Advent, we might ponder what it must have been like for the shepherds, in the darkness, waiting, and . . . . .*

### *Keeping Watch in the Night*

shepherds  
keeping watch in the night,  
close to the grassy slopes,  
at home in the darkness,  
a listening presence  
in the midnight emptiness



shepherds  
keeping watch in the night,  
terrified by a voice  
not heard before,  
not supposed to be there



shepherds  
keeping watch in the night,  
alarmed by a powerful light,  
up-ending their security

but they did not run away

they stayed in the dark  
and listened,  
stretched their ears  
to the unknown voice

and the voice said:  
“do not be afraid,  
stay in the dark place  
and listen.  
I have wonderful news:  
the Hope-for-One,  
the Birthing  
you’ve longed for  
in the depths  
of your soul,  
has come, oh yes,  
has come!”

