

The Visitor



December
2023

Senior Pastor

Rev. William Mudge 315-292-0850

Congregational Care & Family Ministries

Rev. Jeff Hodge 315-383-4384

Pastor Emeritus

Rev. Gordon Knapp 315-200-1250

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Dan Williams 315-406-0232

Secretary

Lisa Kane 315-635-6442

Bookkeeper

Rod Porter 315-247-7426

Treasurer

George Ramseyer 315-638-8177

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Church Office: 315-635-6442

Fax: 315-635-6963

Normal Office Hours:

Monday - Friday, 9:00 am-2:00 pm

E-mail: secretary@bvillefirstumc.org

Website: www.bvillefirstumc.org

PLEASE NOTE:

Articles for the **JANUARY**
must be submitted to the church office
by **December 15th**. Thank you.

[Church Calendar](#)



From the Pastor's Desk

"A Sheepdogs Tale"

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this." Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7 NRSV

This fall has flown by like a blur! Perhaps it is a trick of old age – I remember my father saying, *"The days are long, the years are short."* I never really understood what that meant, but I may be starting to see. The rapid passing of these last months may also be amplified by the crucial decisions and changes that we have experienced together. As of November 15th, our Baldwinsville First United Methodist Church family is yoked in a multi-site ministry with Pennellville United Methodist and Liverpool First United Methodist Churches. It took a lot of work and dreaming outside of the box, but we are embarking together on a very exciting adventure! If you have questions about this new ministry, I would be delighted to explain more about it when you are available.

As we move into this season following Thanksgiving called Advent, it is easy to get distracted by all of the busyness and activities surrounding Christmas. I am in favor of enjoying all of the lights and festivities available – and with our three congregations sharing calendars, we will find even more opportunities to enjoy this Holy season.

I wanted to take this newsletter opportunity to ask you, and to remind myself, not to get so busy celebrating that we, that I, miss the real miracle of Christmas. The Creator of all things puts on flesh and comes to live among us as a baby! Amazing love!

The prophet Isaiah foretold this incarnation here in Isaiah 9. You may find these verses used in Christmas cards – ask me when you see me in church, and I will explain to you my unhappiness with Hallmarks abbreviation of the prophets words. Read them over again and contemplate the enormity of this promise. **"For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."** Do you see it? This baby Jesus is the **Mighty God! The Everlasting Father!** Think about that when we sing – "What Child Is This?"

Come and join us for worship at 9am Sunday morning for our Heritage worship service featuring our choir and familiar hymns. On Christmas Eve we will worship at 9am, 5pm with our children's service, 8pm with our choir and our traditional service and finally at 10pm for communion. Plan to come and join us – we'll save you a seat!

Serving Christ with You, Pastor Bill Mudge

CONGREGATIONAL CARE & FAMILY MINISTRIES

Rev. Jeff Hodge



Advent Calendars are a meaningful way to Countdown to Jesus' birth –

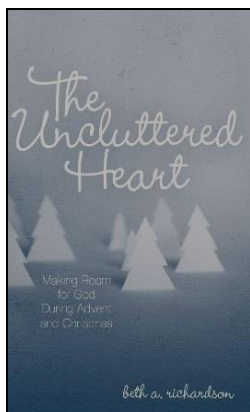
Advent calendars are a fun and popular children's Advent activity as well as a great catechesis tool. Advent calendars teach children to join with the Church in the waiting, expectation, and preparation of the coming of Jesus Christ. The Advent Calendar is believed to have been created by Christians in the early 19th century to mark the days of Advent leading up to Christmas. The first known Advent calendar was handmade in Germany in 1851.



Be sure to pick up your free advent calendars in the education wing lobby or the dining room and enjoy opening a new window each day as you journey closer to Christmas!

Advent Study via zoom begins on Wednesday, November 29

E-mail Jhodge312@yahoo.com to receive a zoom link.



This year's advent study, *The Uncluttered Heart: Making Room for God During Advent and Christmas*, by Beth A. Richardson, will meet four Wednesdays beginning Wednesday, November 29, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. Books are available for \$10 each. Checks may be made payable to Jeff Hodge.

It's a time when we prepare our lives--hearts, minds, and spirits--for the coming of the Christ child. We sweep out the corners of our hearts, cleaning up the clutter, to make space for God's hope, peace, joy, love, and presence.

The Uncluttered Heart offers four weeks of guided reflection through the weeks of Advent on through Epiphany. Each day provides a: quotation, scripture passage, reflection, and prayer.

Of Continued Concern:

Robert Eastman, Sally Graham,
Dave Horan, Elijah Huling,
Pat Kline, Jim Larmondra, Tim Link,
Janet McIntosh, Cheryl Metrick,
Susan Ranous, Ron Waterbury,
Robert Yeddo

Friends & Neighbors:

Francis Bliven, Julia Bliven's husband
Larry Disotell, friend of Pam Fallesen
Carolyn Dixon
Emily Gibbs
Richard Greer, Dave Greer's brother
William Hobart, friend of the Kisselsteins
Craig Hodge, Pastor Jeff's brother
John Hughes, Joyce Wilkinson's brother
Dana Kaiser, Donna Foster's son
Roberta Maxwell,
 sister-in-law of Patty & Rocky
Blakely Nowicki, Kisselstein family
Zachary Thomas, grandson of Mary Thomas
Lisa Wilson & family, Judy Herbs' niece
Ruby VanDuser, friend of Suzanne Ellis
Isobella Vecchio, friend of Ron Waterbury



Remember Those at Home and at Care Facilities:

Joan Foster

Bill Barrett – Loretto-Cunningham #504
Charles Bordwell – Brookdale #53
Sharyn Brown – Sedgwick Heights #332B
Dorothy Clary – Commons-Loretto, Auburn
Gertrude Collins – Loretto-Cunningham #936
Marjorie Dence – McHarrie Pointe #513
Judy Herbs – Elderwood #343
Barbara Johnston – Van Duyn #457
Mildred Long – Syracuse Home #122
Ernestine Parry – Syracuse Home #107
Mary Eleanor Slye – McHarrie Pointe #401
Richard Stafford – Syracuse Home #301

Pray for our Service Men & Women:

Holly Abbott, Jeff Coover, Brian Cunningham,
Casey DeLapp, James Scott Gibbs, Casey
Hargrave, Jeffrey Lucy, Dr. Kristen Lucy, Jeffrey
Meany, Brandon Merle, Benjamin Nordmark,
Tyler Reynolds, Peter Slye, Richard Slye

Thanks and Praise

To My Church Family,
Thank you for the cards and for coming to my dad's (David Lane) calling hours. I am truly thankful for your support during this time. Karen Witter

This Year's Live Nativity is a "Moving" Experience!

Join us on

Saturday, December 16 at 4:00 p.m.

for a moving experience as our Nativity Characters journey through the village and make their way to the manger scene on the church's property on Genesee Street. A "moving" nativity will meet at Seneca Federal Savings Bank on Oswego Street at 4:00 p.m. in the tradition of "Las Posadas", and process to the Church. For those who are not able to join the procession, gather in front of the church at 4:00 for a time of music and storytelling. When the procession arrives at church, we will go inside for a Happy Birthday Jesus Party that includes refreshments, music, and games.



This church and community celebration, which first started in 2008 at BFUMC, takes a lot of help. Please consider being part of this special event as we share the Christmas story with the B'ville community. There are sign-up sheets in the lobby of the education wing and the dining room.



Needs:

- Costumed characters for the Procession
- Costumed characters for Church
- Someone to assemble songbooks
- Host/hostess for Happy Birthday Jesus Party
- Someone to lead games at Party
- Outdoor lighting for church
- Lanterns to be used for procession

**Join us Sunday, December 24 at 5:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary
for our Children and Family Service**

Join us at 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve for this interactive service focused on celebrating Christmas with children and families. Pastors Jeff and Bill team with a company of Christmas Story storytellers to bring the good news to life. This year we are adapting a Skit Guys play, "You Can't Have Christmas Without..." by Rebecca Wimmer. The meaningful and upbeat service ends with the singing of "Silent Night" as children and families fill the room with light using LED Christmas light and rope lighting and LED Christmas candles.



An Update On My Ministry Journey

Pastor Jeff

When I received my first ministry appointment in 2008, I believed I was doing what I would always be doing in full time ministry as a Deacon in The United Methodist Church. I felt that my part-time appointment to this church (BFUMC) to work with children and families, and my role as a church consultant and resource helping churches assess their ministries and help them determine next steps fulfilled my call. Nothing could prepare me for the adventure that God has blessed me with!



When I began ministry, there were three things I didn't think I was equipped for: pastoral work in the church, pastoral care, and end of life ministries, including funerals. Those who know me best know that those are the three things that have shaped and transformed my ministry! I know now that God's plan for me and my ministry with God's people is bigger than anything I could have imagined on my own.

I now realize that I am called to go even deeper and have declared my intention to transition from an Ordained Deacon to an Ordained Elder. One of the steps toward that is to complete my Master of Divinity Degree. While I have a Masters in Christian Education, I lack some credits for the dual degree. Earlier this year, the Council of Bishops approved a proposal to allow students to complete their education at Methodist seminaries online, so I have been attending classes since June 2023 and expect to graduate from Methodist Theological School in Ohio, where I received my initial degree in 2008, in May 2024. As part of MDiv. I must complete a Cross Cultural Immersion Trip to South Africa this January. While the travel details aren't complete yet, I will be travelling with about two dozen classmates to South Africa between January 4 and 21 to participate in a cross section of experiences throughout the country that give us insight into the culture. We will be looking at different religions, traditions, lifestyles, and experiences throughout this two-week journey.



BFUMC has been a huge part of my ministry journey, so I wanted to let you in on this new and exciting chapter. I invite your prayers as I travel in January and this winter and spring as I complete the coursework while of course maintaining my regular schedule as a pastor in the Baldwinsville-Liverpool-Pennellville partnership.

Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Jeff

S.A.M.A.S.A.N. Christmas Party

Everyone is invited! Join us on Saturday, December 9, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the church. Please bring an appetizer to pass and a gift that costs no more than \$10.00. Label the gift for a man or a woman. Please call: Mickie Lorenz (315-877-0087) or Patty Maxwell (315-569-5077). It's an **Exciting** and **Fun** night!



Children's Christmas Bazaar!

Saturday, December 9, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Again, this year the multi-purpose room will be transformed into a Children's Christmas Bazaar where children (up through grade 5) can shop in secret for Christmas presents for friends and family and have them wrapped.

Children should bring:

- A list of people – gift tags will be available
- A shopping bag for bringing home their treasures
- Money to spend – all items will cost 50c.

We will provide:

- A shopping "Elf" to help small children pick out gifts and keep up with the cost of the items
- Gift wrapping

Mom and Dad: take a coffee break in our pastry "café" while the children shop for friends and family.

Any questions, please contact Janet Brooks: JBrooks48@aol.com; 315-415-6416

The Longest Night - A Service of Remembrance and Hope

This candle lighting service is extended to all people in the Baldwinsville Community. On Sunday, December 3 at 2:00 p.m., the Hands of Hope Group will once again host a remembrance service in the church Sanctuary.



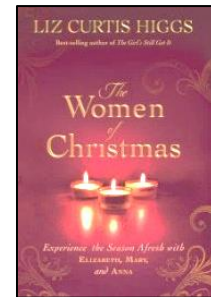
If you are grieving the loss of a loved one, the holidays can be a difficult time and we need the space and time to acknowledge our sadness and concern and to know that we are not alone. This is a special time to remember that person and light a candle in their memory.

If you would like, come early so you may print your loved one's name on paper and set a framed picture on the altar table before the service begins. Fellowship in the dining room after the service with light refreshments.

If you would like to make memorial donations for flowers, candles, cookies, or expenses, please contact Karen Picco (652-2917) or Lisa (635-6442).

Advent Book Study

Join us for a book-centered Advent experience incorporating scripture, video and discussion featuring the book *The Women of Christmas: Experience the Season Afresh with Elizabeth, Mary, and Anna* by Liz Curtis Higgs. We will meet on Wednesdays, December 6 & 13, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. in the chapel. To register, or if you have any questions, please contact Jeanne Pray (jwpray@aol.com; 638-1289) or Barbara Jones (barbaraj73@gmail.com; 727-4692). Note: we have a limited number of books to borrow or purchase. Please contact Jeanne as soon as possible if you are interested.

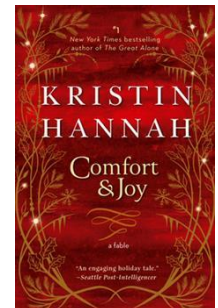


Eureka! Book Club for December

Eureka! Book Club is Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. The final book for Eureka! Book Club in 2023 is **Comfort & Joy by Kristin Hannah**. Kristin Hannah is a familiar author to our book club. She is beloved by readers around the world for her unique blend of powerful emotion and exquisite storytelling. In *Comfort & Joy*, she offers a modern-day fairy tale--the story of a woman who gets a miraculous chance at happiness.



Begin 2024 with the invitation --- and challenge—to grow in faith, to deepen your walk with God. Pastor Bill will be the book host on January 23, leading us through a thought provoking conversation



of Keith Idelman's challenging book on spirituality and discipleship, **not a fan.**

Baldwinsville Christmas Bureau 2023

We **DEPEND** on local businesses, churches, school groups, organizations, and individuals to help make the holidays a little brighter for those not as fortunate as ourselves.



Donation drop-off open: November 25 - December 11

located in the B'ville School District Operations Building on Albert Palmer Lane

M-W-F: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; T-TH: 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.;

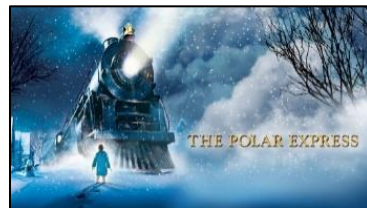
Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

For monetary donations, make checks payable to *Baldwinsville Volunteer Center* and note 'Christmas Bureau' in the memo area. Mail to our office at: 8200 Loop Road, Suite 101, Baldwinsville. Call Lauri Bernstein, Christmas Bureau Coordinator, with any questions (315-727-5435). You are more than welcome to stop by during our open hours and we would love to show you around to see just how your donations are going to help those in your Baldwinsville Community!

Adventure on the Polar Express at Pennellville UMC

Sunday, December 10 at 3:00 p.m.

Pastor Jeff and the Christian Education Team at Pennellville UMC invite you to "Hop Onboard!" for an afternoon of adventure. The event includes readings, film excerpts, crafts, and many experiences – including hot chocolate of course – that help prepare the whole family for Christmas. Pennellville UMC is about 20 minutes from BFUMC. The address is 389 County Route 54, Pennellville, NY13132.



Church Giving

If you are not in church, you can continue supporting our church using automatic payments on your on-line bank account or the church's on-line payment system.

Using your bank's on-line bill payment feature, you can set up an automatic payment where your bank sends a check to the church. You control the frequency and amount of the payment. Simply use Baldwinsville First United Methodist Church, 17 W. Genesee Street, Baldwinsville NY 13027, indicate the amount and frequency of payment. Most banks do not charge you any additional cost for this feature.

The church also has an on-line payment system thru VANCO. Go to the on-line church's website www.bvillefirstumc.org and on the right-side column press 'Online Giving – Make a Donation'. You set up your account and make your donation to the general fund or other areas listed. You will go to a screen where you can enter the amount, frequency of payment and if you want to pay using a bank account or credit card. You will have the option to offset the charge the church incurs for this system.

If you prefer to use a mobile device (cell phone), use the following QR code and it will take you to the on-line payment system from VANCO. Follow the same procedure to set up your contribution as the on-line system. <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z7C7/home>



For more information, contact Rod Porter, Bookkeeper (315) 247-7426 or Rocky Maxwell, Chair of Finance Committee (315) 488-5700. Thank you for supporting our church.



December BIRTHDAYS

12/01 Sierra Burke
Erin Simmonds
12/02 Ella Smith
Tod Monroe
12/05 Barb Derby
12/07 Beverly Archer
Beth Cavalieri
12/08 Janet Wojnovich

12/09 Faith Scheemaker
Penny Sweeney
12/10 Pam Fallesen
12/12 Mary Coogan
Harriet Mark
12/14 Ethan Wojnovich
Joan Ellsworth
12/15 Marcia Thompson
Ryan Radicello
12/16 Jill Kantak
12/17 Jared Kantak
12/18 Jadya Kantak
Charlotte Georger
Frank Bahamonde

12/19 Wyatt McCaleb
12/20 Adam Pacheck
Elisabeth Scheemaker
12/22 Sean Stewart
Suzanne Ellis
12/26 Sally Smith
Lorraine Sahn
Collin Thompson
12/30 Kyle Hunsberger
12/31 Raven Klint



POINSETTIAS

If you wish to order a plant to be in honor of or in memory of someone, please use this form or call the church office **no later than December 4.** You may also place your order in the offering plate on Sunday mornings. Any questions, call the church office (635-6442).

POINSETTIAS: (\$9.00 per plant) No. of plants: _____ Total: _____

(PLEASE print neatly)

Name: _____ Telephone No. _____

In Honor of _____

In Memory of _____

You can bring your money to the church office or mail it. Make your check payable to: *First United Methodist Church, 17 W. Genesee St., Baldwinsville, NY 13027*