

Celebration



*December 1, 2021
Church Newsletter*

Interim Pastor's Message



There's a Norman Rockwell painting that I like very much. The majority of the painting shows the front of a vast cathedral, and you can see the minister or priest supervising a custodian as he changes the sign out front to indicate that week's sermon title. In the foreground, the sidewalk is crowded with people walking by, intent on their business. Their faces are totally without color, so that they are in

black and white in contrast to the rest of the scene, and their heads are all hanging down, staring at the ground. And so they pass by the cathedral without ever seeing the sermon title hanging above them: "Lift Up Thine Eyes."

I think it's pretty easy, at least sometimes, to relate to those people walking by on the sidewalk. There is a lot that can cause us to miss the invitation to lift up our eyes. Each of us has our own cares, our own sorrows, our own worries about our own lives and the lives of those dear to us. And then, added to that, are our worries and our cares about our world: we are in the second year of the pandemic; there is much in the political situation of our nation to cause concern, no matter what your views; the effects of our poor stewardship of this planet are in the news constantly in the form of one climate-change-related natural disaster after another. And so sometimes, maybe, we find it hard to "lift up our eyes."

And so this month we give thanks for the gift of Advent, and the season it points to: Christmastide. For these are seasons that remind us that God came to us in Jesus Christ, at a time when the world was, just as now, full of sorrows; in a conquered land to an oppressed people; to a poor family with its own daily struggles. God came in Jesus Christ, bringing the good news to all people, no matter what their condition of life: poor and rich, shepherd and magi, old and young, sad and joyful: "Unto you has been born a Savior."

And so in these blessed seasons, we again have the chance to lift up our eyes, and to hear again the good news that in Jesus, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

As poet and writer Madeleine L'Engle reminds us:

*This is no time for a child to be born,
With the earth betrayed by war & hate
And a comet slashing the sky to warn
That time runs out & the sun burns late.*

*That was no time for a child to be born,
In a land in the crushing grip of Rome;
Honor & truth were trampled to scorn—
Yet here did the Savior make His home.*

*When is the time for love to be born?
The inn is full on the planet earth,
And by a comet the sky is torn—
Yet Love still takes the risk of birth.*

The peace of Emmanuel be with you, always.

Peace and all good,
Laurie



*Photos of the Sunday, November 28th
Advent Service*



For your information, here is Pastor Laurie's weekly schedule:

Pastor Laurie's days off are Fridays.

Also, Wednesdays are her sermon-writing day (at home.) She answers emails and calls on Wednesdays when the sermon is done -- usually late in the afternoon.

Ltiberi@downtownpresbyterian.org

585-325-4000 ext. 23

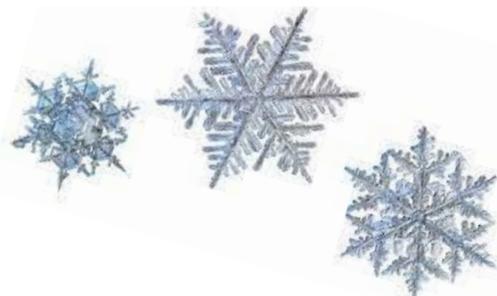
SESSION HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DECEMBER MEETING

The Session met via Zoom on November 16. Below is a list of the highlights from that meeting. Despite the long list of action items we managed to adjourn by a few minutes after 9pm. Praise be!

Thank you to each of the faithful, and hard-working members of Session for their thoughtful deliberations in the meeting and the work done through the various committees in preparation for this meeting.

- Many of you may already have read with interest the summary notes that Pastor Laurie prepared following the conclusion of the Cottage Meetings. We commend these to your reading and pondering.
- Thank you for continuing to keep up with your pledge payments. Our 3rd Quarter results showed income keeping pace with projections, and expenses running below budgeted projections. The budget under-runs are primarily personnel related with there being only one pastor, and the semi-retirement of Mark Anderson, the Director of Operations.
- Session voted to begin the search for a new part-time Director of Operations. The ongoing operation of our large facility and many tenants, on top of continuing Covid challenges makes this a necessary position to maintain.
- Brick Church was named in a notice of action filed against the Boy Scouts of America. South Presbyterian and Penfield Presbyterian were also named in similar actions. The three churches are retaining Ed Daniel's, of Refermat Hurwitz & Daniel PLLC, to advise them regarding these claims.
- Pastor Laurie will take vacation from Dec. 27 2021 through January 2, 2022, and Study Leave from Jan. 10-16.
- Worship on the Sunday after Christmas (December 26, 2021) will be pre-recorded and be virtual only. ***There will be no in-person worship on 12/26/2021.***
- The Advent Festival will return this year on Dec. 5. It will be held in the Hallock Lounge and the Shaw Room. People are asked to maintain 6' physical distancing.
- A Special in-person meeting of the Congregation is called for December 5, 2021, following worship, for the purpose of ratifying our electronic meeting policy, that provides for virtual (Zoom) meetings of Session and the Congregation.
- The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held electronically (via Zoom) at 5:00pm on Sunday January 9, 2022.

John DeHority, Co-Clerk of Session





DOWNTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ADVENT FESTIVAL!

WAITING FOR CHRISTMAS TOGETHER

Sunday, December 5th

9:30am – 10:45am & 12 Noon – 1:00pm

The Hallock Lounge

Our long-standing tradition of the annual Advent Festival returns this year in a modified version! We will be masked and physically distanced, and we will not be able to decorate Christmas cookies or share a meal or even any holiday food treats, but we can still gather safely as a community and enjoy some of the activities that have become traditions for us!

Fun Craft Projects - Work on some fun Christmas crafts during the festival, or take some supplies home to do your craft project during the Advent season.



Provide Christmas for a child from Jordan Health Center. Choose a name from the Angel Tree and your selected child's wish list will be provided to you. Return your purchased items to church and they will be distributed to the children in time for Christmas.



Building Minds in South Sudan Support this important mission by making a direct donation or purchasing BMISS notecards. Why not consider donating in honor of a loved one as a Christmas present!



One World Goods – Shop for the holidays from an assortment of handmade and sustainable gifts. Your purchases directly benefit the lives of artisans the world over. Be sure to bring cash or your check book – credit cards cannot be processed.

Family Promise (formerly known as RAIHN) – There are two ways to support Family Promise at the Advent Festival:

- Fleece Blanket Project – Help us prepare fleece to be made into blankets by the residents of Ashley Woods Assisted Living. The finished blankets will be donated to families in the Family Promise program. Or, donate fleece that can be used to make blankets. Each blanket requires 2 yards each of 2 coordinating fleece fabrics.
- Collection of personal care items for families and individuals in the Family Promise program. Bring one or more of the following supplies to the Advent Festival:
 - Sponges
 - Bathroom cleaner
 - Toilet cleaner
 - Toilet brush
 - All-purpose cleaner
 - Dish soap
 - Clorox or Lysol anti-bacterial wipes
 - Liquid hand soap
 - Paper towels
 - Toilet Paper
 - Body Wash
 - Razors
 - Bar Soap
 - Deodorant
 - Lotion
 - Chapstick
 - Hair care products for BIPOC
 - Broom and dustpan

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on the 5th! If you do not feel comfortable gathering in person but would like to participate/contribute to an activity, please contact Becky Parks (jimandbeckyparks@gmail.com) and she will connect you with the appropriate contact person.

The Engagement Team (CCE)





Liturgist's Rotation Schedule

Thank you for serving as liturgist!

We are so glad you'll be sharing your voice as we worship together.

12/05 Nancy Brown

12/19 Kim McConnell

12/12 Sally Allison

12/26 Lea Kone

If you are serving as part of the liturgist rotation and you are unable to serve on a certain Sunday, please contact one of the alternates to line up your own substitute. Then email Penny Crudup at pcrudup@downtownpresbyterian.org to let her know who will be serving in your place. Alternates/substitutes are: Susan Richane, Callie Babbitt, and Ed Saphar. If none of the alternates are available, please email worship@downtownpresbyterian.org for assistance.



Hi Friends,

As we approach the end of November, it is time to let you know who in our church family will celebrate a December birthday.

<i>Helen Ganotis</i> <i>Pat Sanborn</i> <i>Connie Ehindero</i> <i>Carol Samuel</i> <i>Mollie DeBoer</i> <i>Nora Babbitt</i>	<i>Andrea Folan</i> <i>Dolores Behourzy-Far</i> <i>Carol Blohm</i> <i>Constance Valois</i> <i>Sandra Knights</i>
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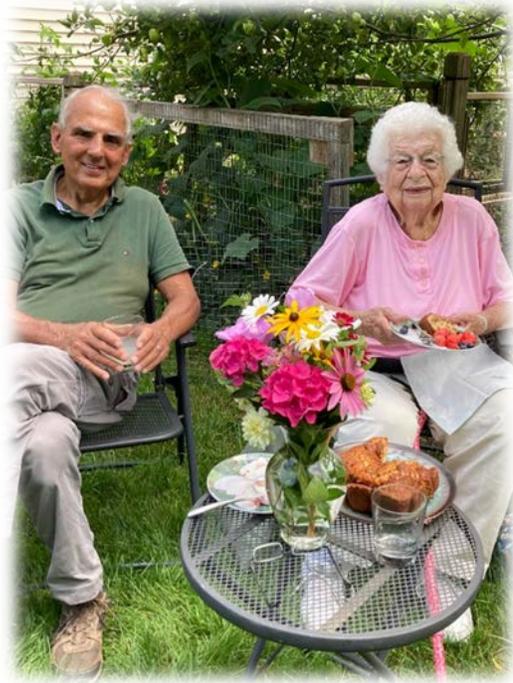
Best wishes to all! May you each have a lovely birthday and a year full of happy surprises.

Please let us know if we have missed a birthday. We want to remember everyone.

Love to all,

Deacons of the Downtown Church

Remembering Jane Coons



As Rev. Laurie has shared in her recent email—over the past year many of the “pillars” of our congregation have died, leaving us love and memories. Our latest “pillar” to leave is Jane Coons.

Several people in the congregation have shared their memories of Jane, and I know we all have lasting “souvenirs” of her life at Downtown United Presbyterian, as well as Brick Presbyterian.

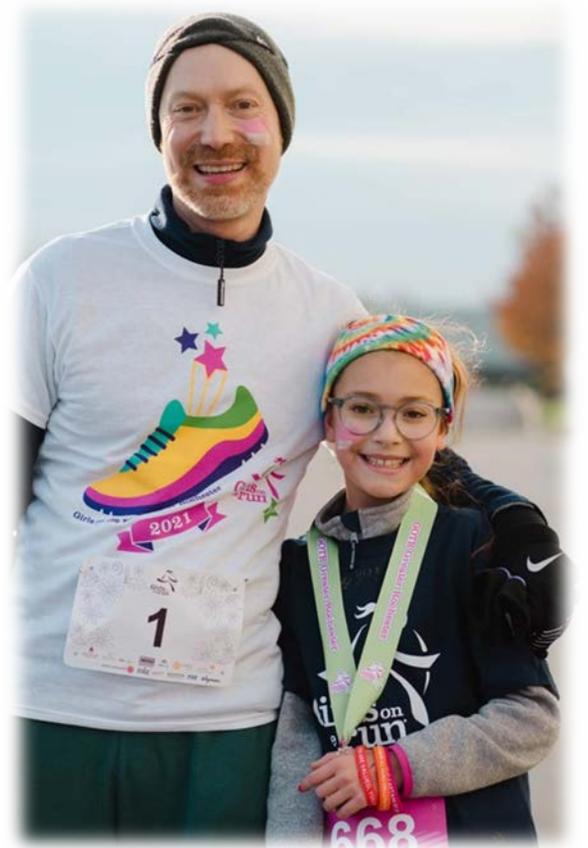
The photo here is of Jane with Bob Richane, taken by Susan Richane in their garden this past summer. Susan writes, *“The Spirit blessed the three of us... and continues to bless all of us in the Light and Life”* of Jane.

Jane Coons’ memorial service will be Saturday, December 18, 11am in the Sanctuary.

Celebrating Lucia's First 5K!

Submitted by Cat Ruderman

Lucia ran her first 5k with her dad, Tucker, as her running buddy. They had a blast! Anni was a very enthusiastic cheerleader and couldn't resist joining in the last little bit of the race.



Advent Group Reading – Tuesday Mornings at 10:30AM

Perhaps you'd like to do something special for Advent?



The Tuesday morning Bible Study Group will shift our readings from the Book of Psalms, to four sets of Advent scripture readings:

Nov. 30 – Magnificat: Mary – Luke 1: 46-55

Dec. 7 – Benedictus: Zechariah – Luke 1: 68-79

Dec. 14 – Gloria in Excelsis: The Angels – Luke 2:8-14

Dec. 21 –Nunc Dimittis: Simeon – Luke 2: 29-33

You are welcome to attend all or some of these discussions which will begin each Tuesday morning during Advent at 10:30 AM. (*We meet for a little over an hour.*) For those who will be working or can't attend, we encourage you to take some time throughout this season to read these scriptures and perhaps discuss them with your family members or friends.

The link to attend online is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89794353524?pwd=V0pSdmFRNmFzOGUwVXdUdm5hdHRUdz09>

Meeting ID: 897 9435 3524

Password: 793899

Phone to call in: 1.929.205.6099

For questions or concerns please call Marie Gibson (585.472.3137), or contact her via email at mgibson@frontiernet.net.

Downtown United Presbyterian Church

*Christmas Eve
Worship Service*

Friday, December 24 at 7:00pm



*In observance of Christmas Day and New Year's Day,
the church office will be closed on the following days:*

Friday, December 24, 2021

&

Monday, January 3, 2022

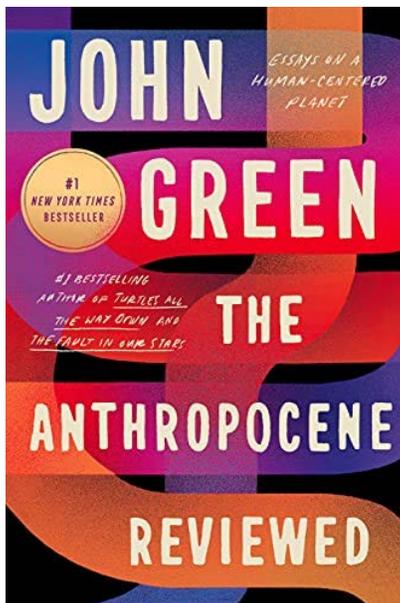
WomanSpace

Womanspace will meet virtually on Sunday, Dec. 12, 7PM, for a discussion on Christmas memories and who in the creche we most relate to—what person would you have liked to have been in the manger the day Jesus was born?

Folks are asked to bring their favorite manger figure and why it's special to you.



Roundtable Book Group Meeting



Roundtable Book Group will not meet in December.

We will take time off to catch up on all the books we have stacked on our bedside table!

In January we will meet virtually on the 3rd Friday at Noon – Jan. 21 and discuss our first read of 2022 – the Anthropocene Reviewed by John Green. It's a book of well written and entertaining essays on "the exploration of the paths we forge and an unironic celebration of falling in love with the world."

All are welcome to join us.

DECEMBER MEETING AND EVENTS

Newsletters arrive the 1st of every month!



Wednesday, December 1	5:30pm	Justice League Meeting – Zoom
Thursday, December 2	4pm	Choir Rehearsal
	5pm	Worship Committee Meeting – Zoom
	7pm	Congregational & Community Engagement Meeting - Zoom
Saturday, December 4	10am	Memorial Service for Pearl O'Meally
Sunday, December 5	9:30am	Advent Festival
	11am	Worship
	12:15pm	Coffee Hour Fellowship



Monday, December 6	7pm	Nominating Committee Meeting - Zoom
Tuesday, December 7	10:30am	Advent Scripture Reading - Zoom (Luke 1:68-79)
	1pm	Personnel Meeting – Zoom
	7pm	Session Conversations - Zoom
Wednesday, December 8	7pm	Choir Rehearsal
Thursday, December 9	5:30pm	Finance Team Meeting – Zoom
	7:30pm	Property Team Meeting
Saturday, December 11	9am	Advent Special Music Rehearsal
Sunday, December 12	11am	Worship
	12:15pm	Coffe Hour Fellowship Time – Zoom
	7pm	WomanSpace Gathering - Zoom



Monday, December 13	7pm	Nominating Committee Meeting - Zoom
Tuesday, December 14	10:30am	Advent Scripture Reading – Zoom (Luke 2:8-14)
	6:30pm	Deacons Meeting – Zoom
Wednesday, December 15	7pm	Choir Rehearsal
	7:30pm	Website Team Meeting - Zoom
Friday, December 17	12noon	Round Table Book Group Meeting - Zoom
Saturday, December 18	11am	Memorial Service for Jane Coons
Sunday, December 19	11am	Worship
	12:15pm	Coffee Hour Fellowship Time – Zoom



Monday, December 20	12noon	Newsletter Article Submission Deadline
	7pm	Nominating Committee Meeting - Zoom
Tuesday, December 21	10:30am	Advent Scripture Reading – Zoom (Luke 2:29-33)
	7pm	Session Meeting – Zoom
Wednesday, December 22	7pm	Choir Rehearsal
Friday, December 24	7pm	Christmas Eve Service
Saturday, December 25		Christmas Day



Sunday, December 26	11am	Worship via Zoom - <i>There will be no in-person worship on 12/26/2021.</i>
	12:15	Coffee Hour Fellowship Time – Zoom
Monday, Decmeber 27	7pm	Nominating Committee Meeting – Zoom
Tuesday, December 28	10:30am	Pslam Bible Study - Zoom

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*Friday, December 24, 2021 &
Monday, January 3, 2022*



Downtown United Presbyterian Church
121 North Fitzhugh Street
Rochester, New York 14614
585-325-4000
office@downtownpresbyterian.org