

The Connection

Faith Sharing from The United Church of Warsaw

Volume 6, No. 12—December 2017



The United Church of Warsaw

Serving God's People with Love.

Dear friends and members of our family of faith:

As December concludes our calendar year, this twelfth month often brims with hurrying schedules and flurrying snowflakes. Peace to you amid the hurrying and flurrying.

During this month, our faith community will: (1) **begin** the season of **Advent with a Jesse Tree ceremony**, as well as adorn the interior of the church and assemble the creche on the exterior of the church in preparation for Christmas; (2) host our monthly **“Room at the Table” Potluck Lunch**; (3) participate in our annual **Christmas Cookie Exchange**; (4) experience our yearly **Christmas Pageant**; (5) provide “White Gifts” for 54 Project Head Start youngsters; (6) attend our **Annual Congregational Meeting**; (7) complete our **“For Everything There Is a Season” sermon series**; (8) light candles and sing carols to commemorate the **birth of the Light of the world**; and, (9) ring in the New Year with **“Lessons and Carols.”**

Throughout December, we will meet in the sanctuary to make the spiritual journey from Advent to Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, to New Year's Eve. On December 3, we will decorate our **Jesse Tree** and honor the heritage of Jesus with symbolic ornaments and Biblical stories. Likewise, we will celebrate the **Feast for All Sinners and Saints**, support our **Sharing-the-Light Food Collection**, “bring Christmas” inside and outside of our church, and gather for our monthly **Potluck Lunch**. On December 10, we will continue our **“For Everything There Is a Season” sermon series** and share in our yearly **Christmas Cookie Exchange** (i.e., Bring two dozen cookies! Take two dozen cookies!) On December 17, we will delight in our **Christmas Pageant**, and then gather for our **Congregational Meeting**. On December 24, in the morning, we will conclude our **“For Everything There Is a Season” series**. In the evening, we will gather for our **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**. On December 31, the **first Sunday of Christmas**, we will mark the season with a message of **“Lessons and Carols.”**

On December 3, **F.A.C.E. (Faith And Caring Encounter) Group** members will **assemble Christmas Joy Packages**. A week later, December 10, the F.A.C.E. Group will **deliver Christmas Joy Packages**. On Christmas Eve, F.A.C.E. Group members will serve as **Candle Lighters** for the Candlelight Service.

Mark the Date:

On **Sunday, January 14, 2018**, we will move to Miller Chapel for our Sunday morning time of faith-sharing and **dedicate the piano** given by the family of Rev. John Mair.

As we near the end of 2017, we rely on and give thanks for God's promise to meet our needs and for the faithful generosity of friends and church members. Through eleven months, the level of **Committed Gifts and Free Offerings** has remained strong. We invite a spirit of generosity to manifest itself in year-end gifts and contributions to offset expenses incurred in fortifying our Food Pantry. We are grateful to those who have already responded to the principles of commitment: **family, faith and future**. We invite all to support these same principles through the end of 2017 and throughout 2018. May God bless you for giving to the work and mission of our church this year. May God empower to you to strengthen your commitment in the year to come.

God be with you till we meet again.



A Shove from the Dove

Beside you in the journey of faith,
Rev. Dr. Barbara Therese

Testimony: Thirty Years Ago and the Ninth Question

Do you remember any significant event that occurred 30 years ago in your lives? Did any memorable occasion happen to you in December 1987?

On breezy but sunny Saturday afternoon, on December 12, 1987, in the sanctuary of the First Presbyterian Church of Matawan, New Jersey, in the Presbytery of Monmouth, in the Synod of the Northeast, your pastor was ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

During the rigidly religious ordination ceremony, the Moderator of the ceremony posed ten questions from the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which all candidates for ordination are required to answer with the words “I do” or “I will.”

Of the ten Constitutional questions that were asked with pious solemnity, one question—the ninth question—evoked a most enthusiastic and passionate “I WILL!”

The ninth Constitutional question posed to this ordination candidate 30 years ago was:

Will you seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination and love?

These four characteristics of ministry served as the cornerstones for the ministerial spirit of your pastor, beginning in December, 1987.

Eight churches, three chaplaincies, ten youth groups, 50+ baptisms, 100+ weddings, 300+ funerals, 1200+ sermons and 30 years later, your pastor still humbly but exuberantly seeks to serve God and God's people with energy, intelligence, imagination and love.

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Dear members and friends of the family of faith at The United Church of Warsaw:

Blessings to you in this season as we celebrate the birth of the Light of the world.

Gratitude to you for sharing the radiance of that Light with me and with others in our faith community and beyond.

To each of you who contributed to the Pastor Appreciation Gifts presented on Sunday, October 29, thank you so much. Your kind and thoughtful generosity deeply touched my spirit.

To all of you who attended the sacred drama presented by “Women of the Well”--*Go, Tell My People*—on November 12, thank you for your presence. By prior arrangement, I commissioned the group of liturgical performers to present their program of scripture, story, song and dance as a gift to our congregation and to acknowledge my thirtieth anniversary of ordination.

To every one of you who welcomes God's ministry through me, thank you for the privilege to serve among you.

Late last month, a local resident asked me, “So, Barbara, what do you do?”

After the briefest of pauses, I replied, “You might say I am an Agent of the Divine in 14569.”

Together, in this holy season, may we seek, find and hold the Christ Child in the arms of our hearts...once again.

With energy, intelligence, imagination and love,
Rev. Dr. Barbara Therese

Testimony of Healing and Gratitude

Written by Gary Cousins

Members of the United Church and Rev. Dr. Barbara,

I want to thank all of you for your kind thoughts and prayers for me and my family during my recent illness and surgery, and for the beautiful “Prayer Blanket.” It has been a true blessing to have such a rich, extended family in this time of trial, and that support has been a priceless support and gift beyond measure!

It has been a journey of enduring and growing faith. The love of “brothers and sisters” in Christ continues to strengthen me until the day that I can meet our most loving, heavenly Father, Lord and Savior!

May He bless all of you!

**The United Church of Warsaw
Presbyterian (U.S.A.) and
United Church of Christ
(Congregational)
10-22 South Main Street
PO Box 205
Warsaw, NY 14569**



Worship Service: Sundays at 10 a.m.
Sunday School 10:20 a.m.
Please join us! All are welcome!
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December 2017 Acolyte Schedule

3	Mandi Curtis
10	Russel Broughton
17	Ben Myers
24	Charlotte Church
31	Joe Fisher

December Events at The United Church of Warsaw

December 3 at 10 a.m.	First Sunday of Advent: Jesse Tree Ceremony Feast for All; Sharing-the-Light Food Collection Decorating Sanctuary and Assembling Christmas Creche
At 11:30 a.m.	Potluck Lunch – Bring a dish to pass; in Fellowship Hall
December 10 at 10 a.m.	Second Sunday of Advent: Christmas Cookie Sunday “For Everything There is a Season” Sermon #12
At 11:15 a.m.	Christmas Cookie Exchange – Bring 2 dozen and take 2 dozen!
December 11 at 6:30 p.m.	Commission Meeting in East Room
December 17 at 10 a.m.	Third Sunday of Advent: Christmas Pageant
At 11:20 a.m.	Annual Congregational Meeting in sanctuary
December 24 at 10 a.m.	Fourth Sunday of Advent “For Everything There Is a Season” Sermon #13
At 7 p.m.	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
December 31 at 10 a.m.	Service of “Lessons and Carols”