

The Connection

Faith Sharing from The United Church of Warsaw

Volume 6, No. 2—February 2017



The United Church of Warsaw

Saving God's People with Love.

Dear members and friends of our family of faith:

Greetings of love and thoughts of historical remembrance to you in this month when—among other events--we will honor St. Valentine and two U.S. Presidents!

In this second month of 2017, we will conclude our sermon series on six blessings recorded in Holy Scripture. Then, the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, we will begin a new seven-sermon series on “The Seven Last Words of Christ,” seven expressions Biblically attributed to Jesus during his crucifixion.

On the four Sundays in February, we will continue to meet in Miller Chapel for our times of faith-sharing. Meditations offered on the first, second and third Sundays will highlight three different blessings recorded in the Old and New Testaments. The fourth Sunday will consider the first of Christ's seven final utterances. On February 5, we will celebrate **The Feast of All Sinners and Saints** and collect **non-perishable food items for the Warsaw Food Pantry** for our monthly Sharing-the-Light Food Collection. On February 19, we will celebrate **Hat Sunday**, when all are invited to **wear hats to church**. On February 26, we will prepare for the season of Lent, the 40 days immediately preceding Easter Sunday.

Throughout February, members of our **F.A.C.E. (Faith And Caring Encounter)** Group will be active in Sunday Morning Ministries. On February 5, Super Bowl Sunday, the youth will collect canned soup for their **Souper Bowl Mission**. The canned soup donations will go to the Warsaw Food Pantry. All friends and church members are graciously asked to support this mission. Goal: 51 cans of soup, coinciding with Super Bowl LI, scheduled to play that Sunday.

On Sunday mornings, our church-wide **Prayer Challenge** continues to invite individuals to practice a once-a-day pattern of prayer. On Thursday evening, February 16, at 6:30 p.m. in Miller Chapel, Mrs. Sherry Cousins will lead a **Reunion of “The Battle Plan for Prayer” Group**, which began as an on-site Bible/Book Study last fall. Participants of that class will meet first in the chapel and then move to Fellowship Hall for refreshments.

At the beginning of 2017, we seek to maintain the momentum of generosity reflected in our **Church Budget** at the end of 2016. As individuals and families adjust to holiday and seasonal expenses, we note a dip in **Committed Gifts and Free Offerings**. Likewise, as colder weather outside our church moves us to adjust thermostats inside our church, we brace for the incurred heating costs. Your faithful support—both prayerful and financial—enable us to keep pace with the day-to-day expenses of our faith community. May God bless all of you as you share from your life and thereby strengthen the life and mission of our family of faith.



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 on Book/Bible Study on Prayer

Written by Sherry Cousins

Last fall's Book/Bible Study, "The Battle Plan for Prayer," written by Stephen and Alex Kendrix, began September 27, and ended November 8. Twelve participants enjoyed this journey of faith experience. The results were that we came to know God more deeply, we increased our faith knowledge through the study of God's Word, and our lives are richer through sharing our faith stories.

Important and basic to faith is a personal relationship with God through Jesus, God's Son. Daily interacting with God through prayer is serious faith. Clara, the prayer warrior in the faith-based film, *The War Room*, stated that, to have a serious faith, we are required to seek God, to trust God, and to stand on His Word. This daily walk with prayer strategies affirms our identity in Christ as described in Ephesians 1:4-5: "In love, He predestined us to be adopted as His children through Jesus Christ."

It is important to use God's Word during prayer. Knowing scripture strengthens faith and gives clarity to prayer because God's Word is truth. We will know who God is. We will learn to ask God for what we really need because as the Word states, God already knows what we need.

It is also important for God's people to pray for one another and to pray together to remain faithful. Praying defensively is to put on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6). Praying offensively is to ask that God's will be done. Praying preemptively is to be vigilant or to be prepared in order to resist evil. To pray extraordinarily is to pray fervently, constantly in corporate form with persistence and passion during a crisis.

With praise and thanks, I embrace this learning and opportunities to use the prayer strategies from this study. I thank everyone who contributed to this study.

To God be the glory!

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NOTE: A Reunion of "The Battle Plan for Prayer" Study Group is scheduled for Thursday, February 16, at 6:30 p.m., in Miller Chapel. All participants of the Bible/Book Study from last fall are invited to attend!

Testimony: Baby Jesus Is Still There!

Written by Jim Carter

Our church's outdoor crèche is a wonderful way to share Christmas with the Warsaw community!

Each year, after the "Hanging of the Greens" is completed in the sanctuary to prepare for the Advent season, volunteers meet to assemble a life-size crèche in front of the North Church. The wooden shelter (representing the stable) is put together. The large figures (of Mary, Joseph, two shepherds, two Magi, one angel, one sheep, one lamb and one camel) are arranged, facing the empty manger where the doll, representing the Baby Jesus, will lay when His birth is celebrated on Christmas Eve night.

Several years ago, at the end of the Candlelight Christmas Eve Service, two of my visiting grandchildren were asked if they would like to place "Baby Jesus" in the manger.

They did so with responsibility and pride.

The following morning, Christmas Day, as my family drove by the church, the grandchildren anxiously checked to see if "Baby Jesus" were still in the manger.

He was.

This past year, the outdoor crèche was assembled on a balmy day. However, the day it was dismantled and stored was very cold and wind-chilled. The weather conditions made it tempting to postpone the job. But the crew of church volunteers hustled and completed the task quickly.

Putting up the outdoor crèche in anticipation of Christ's birth and then taking it down in thankfulness are rewarding fellowship.

Leaving a Legacy:
Please plant seeds for the future
through a bequest to The United Church of Warsaw



- The generosity and foresight of you—the members of the family of faith of The United Church of Warsaw—can ensure that your church will have financial means to carry out its missions in the future.
- The Endowment Fund of The United Church of Warsaw can be supported through your planned gifts (bequests, designated donations, etc.)
- The power of planned gifts is that they grow over time and that they enable donors to serve the needs of others in perpetuity.
- Providing a planned gift to The United Church of Warsaw ensures your continuing gift or final gift of generosity. A planned gift from you helps to ensure your church's ongoing financial strength and ability to fulfill its missions.
- How can you begin? Simply work with your financial adviser or your attorney to:
 - Plan for your family's needs
 - Plan for your own future needs
 - Learn how you may use your remaining assets to create a lasting legacy

Please consider including The United Church of Warsaw in your estate plans.

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If you would like to discuss further the possibility of a planned gift
 for The United Church of Warsaw,
 please contact Rev. Barbara at the Church Office: 585-786-3868.

Official Statements of Contributions for Tax Year 2016

The new year of 2017 has just begun. Even so, the deadline for State and Federal Tax filings, in mid-April, will arrive soon enough. For those who require an official statement of their financial contributions to The United Church of Warsaw during the 2016 Tax Year: Please present your request for a Financial Statement to our Administrative Assistant, Mrs. Cindy Kiel. By mail, you will receive the official statement of your monetary contributions given in 2016. This document may be included with your 2016 Tax Returns, both State and Federal.

Clerk's Corner

Notes from Clerk of Commission, Lance Bush
 Highlights from Commission Meeting of January 9, 2017

New Commission members were welcomed: Margaret Duschen, (Missions Committee); Cynthia (Fisher) Flint (Congregational Care Committee); Brian Howard (Facilities Committee); Lisa Johnson (Ministry Committee); and, Kevin Miller (Personnel Committee).

Through the efforts of Lisa Johnson, our church is now on Facebook. Check it out at:
www.Facebook.com\UnitedChurchofWarsaw.

As part of the “**Fortify Our Food Pantry**” Campaign, **change collection containers** will be placed in various businesses around the village and town. While shopping or doing business with local merchants, look for “Fortify Our Food Pantry” Collection Containers. And please share your loose change!

Also, when returning aluminum cans and plastic and/or glass bottles to the **Redemption Center** at Family Life Church, you can now **designate the proceeds to go to the Warsaw Food Pantry**. If you have any **additional ideas** to support “Fortify the Food Pantry,” please see **Missions Committee members: Linda Demers or Margaret Duschen**.

“**In Memoriam**” Sunday on January 29, at 10 a.m. in Miller Chapel, **will honor** church members who passed away in 2016: **Jack Spencer, Dorothy Slocum, Marjorie Yarrington, Judy Plowe, and Lucille Carlson**.

**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!
 585-786-3868
 ucwarsaw@frontiernet.net
 www.ucwarsaw.org
 www.Facebook.com\UnitedChurchof Warsaw



February 2017 Acolyte Schedule

February 5 Joe Fisher
 February 12 Russell Broughton
 February 19 Lauren Howard
 February 26 Mason Johnson

February Events at The United Church of Warsaw

February 5 at 10 a.m. (In Miller Chapel)	Feast of All Sinners and Saints Sharing-the-Light Food Collection 4th Blessing: <i>God Bless Travelers!</i>
F.A.C.E. Group sponsors:	Super Bowl Mission – Bring canned soup for Food Pantry!
February 12 at 10 a.m. (In Miller Chapel)	5th Blessing: <i>God Bless Workers and Laborers!</i>
February 13 at 6:30 p.m.	Commission Meeting in East Room
February 16 at 6:30 p.m.	Reunion of “The Battle Plan for Prayer” Study Group in Miller Chapel
February 19 at 10 a.m. (In Miller Chapel)	Hat Sunday – All are invited to wear hats to church! 6th Blessing: <i>God Bless Our Minds!</i>
February 26 at 10 a.m. (In Miller Chapel)	1st Word of “Seven Last Words of Christ”: <i>Father, Forgive Them</i>