



UMC LAKE AND RIVER PARISH NEWSLETTER

1st QUARTER 2022

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From the Pastor

Happy New Year, dear Friends! I believe I can speak for most of us when I say I am glad to see the closing of the year 2021. Each of us has our reasons. Some are more personal. Others are more global. All of them come with a desire to give thanks for what was good and say grace over what was not so good, as we move forward into 2022 with a renewed sense of hope and optimism.

Early in this new year, I take the opportunity to remind us that each day of life is a gift. Not everyone woke up this morning. Don't take any day for granted, but rather receive each day as the gift that it is and squeeze every ounce of life out of it. Live your life in such a way you give your day back to God as a pleasing offering when the day is done. Number each day. Make it count. Live for Jesus. Serve others. Love well. Forgive often. Embrace life. Count your blessings.

Continued on Page 2...



Personally, I had a hectic Fall... with the various activities and events that usually take place during such a season... preparation for annual Charge Conference, retreat with the Commissioning class, working on my numerous papers and projects, leading to my appearance before the Board of Ordained Ministry in the Spring, dealing with the issues in our Parish that include various leadership challenges, plus my beloved Felix's recent health issues.

Moses wrote Psalm 90 from the wilderness of Israel's profound faithlessness, then he prayed "Teach us to number our days—that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12). Amid the challenges posed by a persistent pandemic, we have so much to be thankful for. Our doors remained open, and we had beautiful worship experiences, starting with a healing service in support of those for whom the holidays can be difficult for different reasons, our Sunday School children ably prepared by their teachers and parents, did wonderful Christmas presentation, and the week before that they did the "hanging of the greens". Inspiring was the Live Nativity Scene outdoor for Church and Community. Candlelight Services were held both at the Three Mile Bay Church and the Cape Vincent Church. Following the Christmas Eve Service, I traveled to Columbus, OH where I spent four amazing days with my two sons, their fiancées, my two amazing grandsons and their extended families.

As your pastor, I find myself spurred on more by the urgency of the Gospel and helping those I serve to grow closer to Jesus and grow in faith, love, forgiveness, and hope. Moses' prayer turned from the threshold of despair toward God's grace. What he prayed for next I keep receiving through Jesus Christ in great measure as I keep the faith. "Have compassion on your servants. Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days" (Psalm 90:13b,14). Jesus fulfilled every promise in this Psalm—it is finished! God has done everything necessary to restore our relationship with Him. We just need to trust Him!

I would like to use this forum to encourage us now to invest our days in serving God—not from fear, but from gratitude and the life the Holy Spirit has given to us. In the accounting of my days, I try to number the opportunities God grants me to preach, teach, lead, counsel, and sing the good news of God's love for us! God has been faithful to me and will continue to be.

Moses then prays, "May your deeds be shown to your servants—your splendor to their children" (Psalm 90:16). I pray this prayer will be answered in my biological children and grandchildren, but also through my spiritual children and grandchildren. May we be blessed to see God fulfill this prayer in all our lives. May God grant each of us the wisdom to number and invest our days in things that last forever! I pray that we will all learn to number our days. With Jesus into the world, we are given a new way to live and a new attitude for life as individuals and a family of God. We need to remember in this New Year that with God, all things are possible! Abundant blessings to you and your loved ones for 2022 and beyond!!

Pastor Chris

Covenant Service

Traditionally, Methodists hold an annual Covenant Service, at which we celebrate all that God has done for us and affirm that we give our lives and choices to God. The traditional Covenant prayer (shown below) makes it very clear that this affirmation is a serious one that embraces the whole of our life, in all its parts. Most people find it quite tough to say, and really mean it. But the prayer is so central to the Christian life that other Churches have also adopted it. It is about surrendering to God in love and joy. (there is a brief history of this Service, instituted by John Wesley)

On January 2, our congregations were invited to renew their covenant with God, and below are the Covenant words:

The Covenant Prayer

I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing,
put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you,
or laid aside for you,
exalted for you,
or brought low for you;
let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things,
let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.'



A Look Back and Ahead (a message from the Author)

The season of Advent and Christmas have come and gone, despite wishes of some who cherish the holidays and long for more time to celebrate the magical birth of our Lord in a simple manger in Bethlehem. (Continued on next page)

A Look Back and Ahead (a message from the Author) Cont.

For others it has been a time of reflection thinking back to when grown children were small and filled the house with shrieks of joy over favorite cookies, decorating the tree and of course, during the unwrapping of all those gifts under the tree. The New Year has arrived, the tree dismantled and ornaments are packed away for the next year's celebration. We continue to celebrate the coming of Jesus, our lord, as he grows into his sacred role as our redeemer. We dream of what it must have been like to witness the power of the Holy Spirit anointing Jesus by fire during His baptism with John at the river. Imagine hearing the voice of God declaring that Jesus was his son with whom he was well pleased. Oh to be a mouse in the rushes during that day by the river!

There is much for us to celebrate despite the new mandates, variants and fear. God is with us; He loves us; He is in control and knows us all by name. He promises us each a heavenly room within His mansion when He calls us home to Heaven. Life can be hard, but if we focus on the joy of Jesus, invite the Holy Spirit to fill us with the sure and certain peace of God, and share this good news with everyone we meet, God will fulfill His promise as He welcomes us home. Hallelujah!

~Sharon Briggs

Witnesses to the Christmas and Advent Seasons **in the Lake and River Parishes**

Once again, the Three Mile Bay congregation served our Lord by organizing and assembling exceptionally nice Christmas baskets that were distributed throughout the Lake and River Parish. The baskets were overflowing with treats and little extras to help make the Christmas season a bit more festive and delicious. Members of TMB and Cape gathered to fill and wrap the donated items. First time participant from Cape, Colleen Knuth shared with me that this simple act of God's love helped to make her Christmas so much more meaningful and she had the pleasure of getting to know Kathy Golden better on the drive over and back, along with some of our sisters and brothers at TMB. We are called to love our neighbors and provide for others who struggle; this project fulfilled that command issued by Jesus. Great job!

Christmas as presented by the Cape Vincent Sunday School

Weeks of practicing culminated in a wonderful skit and song the children of CV presented on Sunday morning December 12th during the service. Cathy Golden, the education chairperson and Sarah Benjamin, a Sunday school teacher with actual theatrical experience and a voice like an angel, offered an opportunity for the children to perform a Christmas skit and song celebrating Christmas.

The kids were so excited and set about learning their song and lines from the legend of the candy cane. Practice began, background music provided, props were made and the excitement level skyrocketed as the youngest members of the congregation committed to multiple rehearsals. Finally, on Sunday December 12, the work all paid off in a rousing performance honoring the birthday of our king! The kids were wonderful; Sarah and Cathy were wonderful and the congregation was wowed by the excellent music and tale.

It was a very special event and, because of modern technology, everyone with a computer can watch the event recorded by Tom Rowe. Simply go to lakeandriverparish.org, click on sermons and videos, scan down to Dec 12th and click on the Children's Program and the Christmas song. The joyous sounds and smiles will warm your heart. A huge thank you to the entire cast including Ahnika and Alistair Benjamin and Chase and Riley Coombs. Great Job!



Live Nativity

The United Church of Cape Vincent held the annual live nativity on the church's front lawn on December 23rd. This event was begun and remains an outward celebration of our deep abiding faith and hope of the coming of our Lord. Maureen Fairbanks, who has organized the lovely celebration since its inception, has always resisted the temptation to make this an extravaganza, wisely choosing to maintain the peaceful, lowly, coming of the Christ child. He is surrounded by his mother, father Joseph, the angels and wisemen along with a bevy of live animals who witness the birth. Hymns are sung and few who attend are not moved by the simplicity of the miracle in Bethlehem. Included in the re-enactors were: wisemen: Barry Davis, Alan Fairbanks and Perry Golden, shepherd: Ryan Fairbanks, angel: Gwen Stone, Mary: Zalena Davis, and Joseph: John Stone. In a world tumultuous at times, the tranquil peace of the virgin birth as portrayed in Cape, was a calming breath for all.



Christmas Eve Service

Christmas eve services were very special in the parish. Music filled the air in Cape as several members of the congregation sang in honor of the King: Barry Davis with Sarah Benjamin sang "Oh, Holy Night", Doug McKenzie played guitar and sang an amazing rendition of "We Three Kings", Pastor's soprano filled the church along with the sacred music from the organ played by Robin Booth. How blessed we are to worship freely!



A New/Old Friend Returns

Welcome Rebekah Solar to the paid part-time administrative assistant position in the Lake and River Parish!

Our three churches share in the services of this position. The United Church has the equipment and office space. We have parish-wide communications, a shared bulletin, and joint annual conferences, plus we share pastoral expenses. We have two joint committees: Worship and S/PPRC. The Finance Committees and Administrative Councils also share some common work, so it is beneficial to have Bekah join us in administrative duties.

Bekah is no stranger to our three churches, calling this Parish her church family. She and husband Mike and three young children just moved back from Massachusetts to this area at the end of December, while she takes a respite from pursuing ordination as an Elder in the United Methodist Church.



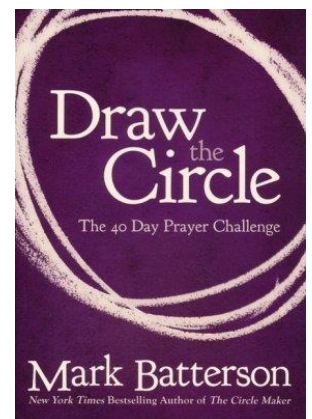
Bekah will have office hours on Thursdays each week, and other hours on Tuesdays or Wednesdays as scheduled. Call 315-654-2881 with any announcements for the T. I. Sun or What's Happening, keeping in mind the deadlines of those separate organizations. Please call or email with any mailing address/phone number/email address changes so we can keep connected to one another.

We are very blessed to now have Bekah, joining with volunteers Sandra Coombs as Director of Communications and Sharon Briggs working with the quarterly newsletter and Christina Wahl-Loew formatting the bulletin, to accomplish this work of the Church. Thanks be to God, who does exceedingly abundantly above all we could hope for or ask.

40-Day Prayer Challenge

We look forward to you joining us for another round of the 40-Day Prayer Challenge, during Lent, starting March 3rd. We will use the same book as last year, Draw the Circle by Mark Batterson, and are purchasing additional books for those who do not have one yet.

The goal is for everyone to read one chapter daily and meet on the free conference telephone line 1-425-436-6304 Access code 639723# every **Wednesday at 6:00 pm on 3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30, 4/6, 4/13** and the chapter of the day will be discussed. More information will be provided.

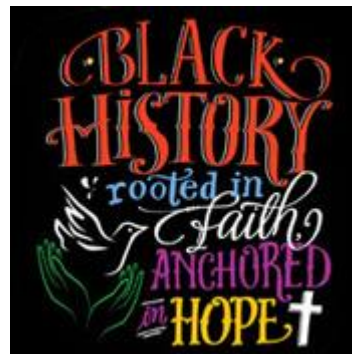


Upcoming Events and Services

February

Black History Month Celebration –

- We will conduct a viewing of Black History Month Celebration Videos, from the National Abolition Hall of Fame, via our Facebook Page. Please check Page 9 for a link to the page.
- There will be in-person viewings of the movie “The Best of Enemies” (PG-13). Dates and times for each church are as follows:
 - TMB: Wednesday, February 23rd at 12pm
 - UCCV: Thursday, February 24th at 6pm
- February 27, the last Sunday of Black History Month, we will have Rev. Nola Craig-Anderson as our Guest Preacher. She is an ordained Elder in the UMC and is currently the Superintendent of two Districts: Crossroads and the Finger Lakes Districts.



March

Ash Wednesday Services (3/2/2022) will be held at noon at Three Mile Bay United Methodist Church, and at the United Church of Cape Vincent at 6:00 pm.

April

Good Friday Services (4/15/2022) will be held at noon at Three Mile Bay United Methodist Church, and at the United Church of Cape Vincent at 6:00 pm.

Easter Services: 17th April 2022

- Sunrise Easter Service – outdoor at TMB, 6:00 am
- UCCV Service at 9:30 am with Holy Communion
- TMB Service at 11:00 am with Holy Communion

This is it! You heard it here!

Plan on Chicken and Biscuits at TMB!

The fantastic, anxiously awaited, drive in Chicken and Biscuit Suppers will be served on the third Wednesday of the month begin in March! Dates are as follows:

- Wednesday, March 16
- Wednesday April 20
- Wednesday May 18
- Wed. June 15
- Wed. July 20
- Wed. August 17
- Wed. Sept 21
- Wed. October 19
- Wed. Nov. 16



Church Website and Facebook Pages

Have you seen the church website (<https://www.lakeandriverparish.org>) or our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/lakeandriverUMC>) lately? Please feel free to let us know if you would like to see any changes or improvements to either. Is there a recurring type of post you would like to see or a new page on the website? Let us know!

- Sandy Coombs (sandra.c.coombs@gmail.com)

Call for Help with Future Newsletters

This newsletter is for all of our three sister churches (UCCV, TMB, and PP). PLEASE send me your pictures, upcoming events, and special happenings to share in YOUR newsletter. We are so much better together. I look forward to hearing from YOU!

- Sharon Briggs (quiltchick555@gmail.com)

Parish Contact Information

Pastor: Rev. Christiane Depestre
Parsonage (315) 654-2401
Parish Office (315) 654-2881
Pastor Chris's Cell phone: (347) 517-8461
Parish email: lakeandriverumc@gmail.com

United Church of Cape Vincent (UCCV)

260 Broadway Street
Cape Vincent, New York 13618
9:30am Service

Three Mile Bay UMC (TMB)

8580 St Rte 12E
Three Mile Bay, NY 13693
11am Service

Point Peninsula UMC

8580 St Rte 12E
Three Mile Bay, NY 13693
Closed for the Season