

**January 2025**



The Newsletter of First Congregational United Church of Christ  
132 N. Main Street, PO Box 231  
Angola, NY 14006

Phone 716-549-2115 E-mail [ucc\\_angola@verizon.net](mailto:ucc_angola@verizon.net)  
Website : [www.christchurchangola.com](http://www.christchurchangola.com)

**Happy New Year's!**

**Epiphany**  
**Tuesday, January 6, 2025**



## Scheduled to Serve in January

Head Usher—Michelle Becker

### Ushers

01/05 Jean Galfo, Carol Ann Obrochta,  
Laurie Ludwig, Bill Ludwig  
01/12 Jean Galfo, Dale Ketterer  
01/19 Jean Galfo, Gayl Weinheimer  
01/26 Jean Galfo, Melissa Borosky

### Greeter

Rick & Diane  
Coomer  
Marjorie McCarthy  
Rob Ingrassia  
Dale Ketterer

### Reader

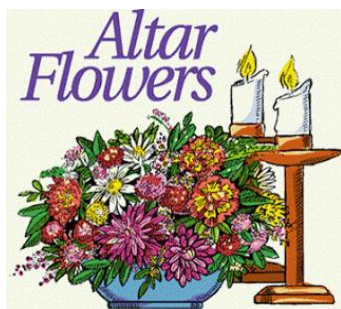
Bob Fuerst  
Kathy Bienias  
Michelle Becker  
Donna Nagel

### Counters

01/05 Michelle Becker, JonnyAnn Roach  
01/12 Marcia Whittemore, John MacPherson  
01/19 Darlene DePasquale, Judy Strade  
01/26 Sue Weinheimer, Annette Reynolds

## ALTAR FLOWERS

We would like to thank December Altar Flower Dedicators:



Darlene DePasquale

Marjorie McCarthy

Marcia Whittemore

Poinsettia Dedications

If you are interested in dedicating Altar Flowers, the cost is \$20.00, please see the sign-up in the Narthex or call Michelle in the office 716-549-2115.

## We would like to thank November Bulletin Dedication:



Carol Ann Obrochta gave this month's bulletins to the Glory of God and In Honor of my Church Family.

If you are interested in dedicating Bulletins, the cost is \$50.00, please see the sign-up in the Narthex or call Michelle in the office 716-549-2115.

## **From the Pastor:**

### **12 Days of Christmas and 3 “Rules”**

#### **Micah 6:8**

***“He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?”***

“On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me...” I am going to stop there as I don’t want to ruin the fun we are going to have when we sing about the 12 Days of Christmas during worship on January 12<sup>th</sup> when our children and youth help lead us in worship, teaching us about the ABC’s and 123’s of Christmas. But this year especially, I am grateful that there are indeed 12 Days of Christmas!

The Advent season passed so quickly, and our church family was busy preparing for Christmas (in spite of newsworthy snowstorms that put a damper on some things). Yet after all of the time of “let every heart, prepare Him room...,” I am just not ready for the season to be over. I am ready to make the days count—from the partridge in the pear tree all the way to the 12 drummers drumming.

Having celebrated the birth of Jesus at Christmas we now have time to consider what we do with that life-changing event at the manger; what we do with the awareness that Jesus was born, walked among us, and is with us still?

At the beginning of Advent, I sat in my office chatting with a friend of the church who had stopped in. We talked about a lot of things, but one sentiment seemed to weave its way back and forth into our conversation.

We both agreed that this past election season and the days leading up to it, and even the days following it, seemed particularly divisive; emotions ran high. We talked about how people did and said things that were hurtful in ways that weren’t anticipated, but were hurtful, nonetheless. When this happens, it is certainly unfortunate and often leads to feelings of regret, anger, hurt...you name it.

In this season of Christmas, as light broke through the darkness in the birth of a baby in the manger, we are called as followers of Jesus to bring that light into our community. It is time to do “the work of Christmas.”

How lucky are we that we have been given only 3 “rules” to follow in order to do the work we are called to do. What is required of us?

Justice...you must DO it!

Kindness...you must LOVE it!

Humility...you must WALK it!

As we move into a brand-new year, brand new possibilities and exciting opportunities, let us remember to listen more and offer forgiveness. Let us help each other and others and

lead with love. Let us truly be the light our community needs as we move forward into 2025!

The Christmas season will end on January 5<sup>th</sup>, giving way to the season of Epiphany. Epiphany is a season of light, of growth, of action...time for the real work of Christmas to begin:

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
when the star in the sky is gone,  
when the kings and princes are home,  
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,  
the work of Christmas begins:  
to find the lost,  
to heal the broken,  
to feed the hungry,  
to release the prisoner,  
to rebuild the nations,  
to bring peace among the people,  
to make music in the heart.

~Howard Thurman—theologian and civil rights leader

Our Epiphany season will help us re-focus on the nature and purpose of Jesus, shining forth in glory. We are reminded that Jesus came as the Light of the World, and that we are sent to all the nations, all people, to share that Light and to be who we say we are as a sent people, as followers of Jesus!

Arise, our light has come!

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## **Christmastide Bible Study, Movie Night and Potluck Dinner**

Thursday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>

5:15pm start

Join us to watch “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever”



Based on the beloved book, “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever” has recently been released as a

movie by the creators of The Chosen.

In “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever,” the Herdmanns...the worst kids in the world...take over their local church pageant and teach the community the true meaning of Christmas in amazing and unexpected ways!

Everyone is welcome! Please sign-up in Updyke Hall.

# **Year in Review for Community Outreach and Missions**

Friends of the Village – monthly meetings

Sub Sales in February, April, September and December

Spaghetti Dinner/ Talent Show to benefit VBS and Christian Ed.in February

Dinner and Bible Study in February & March for Lent, and December for Advent

Historical Society Dinner in March

LSACC Clergy (monthly), LSACC Quarterly Meetings, LSACC Lenten Bible Study & Luncheon (hosted February 28<sup>th</sup>)

St. Patrick's Day Parade, milkshakes, cookies and bake sale – March 9<sup>th</sup>

Ham & Scalloped Potato Dinner & Bake Sale - March 10<sup>th</sup>

Supper Club at Chef's in September

Maundy Thursday

Hospice Bouquets

Chicken BBQ in May and Roast Beef Dinner in September

Hot Dog and Yard Sale - June 1<sup>st</sup>

Strawberry Social in June

VBS "Camp Firelight" - July 29<sup>th</sup>- Aug. 01<sup>st</sup>

Church Picnic on August 18<sup>th</sup>

Rally Day & Backpack Blessing – September 8<sup>th</sup>

Soulshine Revival September 14<sup>th</sup>

Friends of the Village Spaghetti Dinner on September 29<sup>th</sup>

Halloween Happenings at Dunkirk Conference Center

Fall Bazaar in October with pre-sale pie pick-up in November

Advent Workshop in December with Baked Potato Bar

Angel Fund - 12 families

Salvation Army Bell Ringing in December

Christmas Caroling Hayride on December 6<sup>th</sup> with hot chocolate & cookies

Christmas in the Village hosting Breakfast with Santa, Craft Vendors and Special Christmas ornament handout for the children to take home was unfortunately cancelled

Evangola Community Theater presents “Twas the Night Before Christmas” by Steve Brachmann

Our very own “Gang of Scoundrels” – an evening of Christmas music on December 17<sup>th</sup>

OGN donation in December 2024 for Christmas hams

Special Envelop Offerings: Angel Fund, Music Ministry, Capital Campaign and Discretionary

Special Offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing in March

Strengthen the Church in May

Neighbors in Need in October

Christmas Fund (VOC) in December

Current of OCWM for year so we are 5 for 5 in 2024

Exercise Classes – Chair Yoga on Tuesdays & Thursdays from 11:15am-12:15pm, The “Love” Movement on Wednesdays at 9:30am-10:30am and Cardio Drumming on Tuesdays from 5:30pm-6:30pm and Thursdays from 6:30pm – 7:30pm

# **“Twas the Night Before Christmas” Presented by Steve Brachmann**





**Thank You to all who helped make this a joyous  
and beautiful Christmas season at First Congregational UCC**



### **Sunday School News!**

Happy Holidays to everyone!

The children are very busy being creative. They are learning about Jesus' Birthday, they are enjoying the story very much.

On Sunday, January 12<sup>th</sup> the children will present their program A to Z Christmas. Practices will be announced.

Please continue to sign your children in and out. The safety committee needs this information. Thank you for helping. If you are interested in helping out in the Nursery during and after worship please see Michelle. We are in need of parental supervision for the children during coffee hour.

As always, all children are welcome to join our classes as we welcome in the new year. Have a blessed and happy holiday season!

~Ms. Cherryl Vincent-Becker



## **ANGEL FUND**

The locally sponsored “Angel Fund” has again anonymously benefited several families in need at Christmas time. All who supported this effort are sincerely thanked for their help. We were able to help 12 local families this year with the generosity of all who donated.

## **GIVING ENVELOPES**

The recently received first quarter set of yellow Giving Envelopes for the beginning of 2025 contained a single white envelope that is to be used for the support of the envelope system. It is suggested that \$24 yearly be donated to cover a portion of the cost of the envelopes. This is not the \$10 per member Covenantal Share or “dues” to the Larger UCC organization and Per Capita to New York Conference UCC. An envelope for the Covenantal Share will be distributed later with your annual giving statement that you will need for income tax purposes in the mail.

## **PLEDGE CARDS**

Everyone has received his or her pledge cards. Please take time to fill them out and send them into the office if you haven't already. Additional pledge cards are available in the back of the Sanctuary.

## **DE-HANGING OF THE GREENS**

On Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, after worship, we will be taking down all the Christmas decorations. Please join us in celebrating Epiphany Sunday and help de-hang the decorations that made our sanctuary beautiful. At this time, all the Poinsettia plants can be taken home. Once again, thank you for purchasing them to help decorate the sanctuary for the Christmas season.

## **Annual Congregational Meeting: January 19, 2025**

**Committee Reports were due to Michelle by January 1<sup>st</sup>, if you have not handed yours in please do so ASAP.**

## **HOSPICE BOUQUETS**

It is going to be that time of year again to start planning on placing your order for Hospice Bouquets. Orders will be taken from January 26<sup>h</sup>- February 9<sup>th</sup>. Orders must be pre-paid as we send the money in when we place our order. Please see Michelle to place your order. Delivery of bouquets will be the week of March 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>. The standard bouquet is \$14 and tribute bouquet is \$35.

### **Thank You...Thank You... Thank You...**

Dear Board of Trustees and Church Family,  
Thank you for the thoughtful gifts, it is very much appreciated. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! ~Michelle Becker

Dear Board of Trustees and Church Family,  
I am truly grateful for youe generous Christmas gift, thank you from the bottom of my heart. Love & God bless ~ JonnyAnn Roach

Dear Board of Trustees and Congregation,  
Thank you very much for the generous gift. It will come in handy, especially this time of year. ~ Charles Walker

I want to thank you all in the Angel Fund for the Tops gift card. It was greatly appreciated and very thoughtful – it really came in quite handy. ~ Judy Kinter

THANK YOU TO THE Bell Ringing Volunteers for your help in making this year so successful! Well done all ringers, In Christ's Love... Angola Service Unit

THANK YOU kindly for your donation toward hams for Christmas, for guests of OGN food pantry. We are grateful for your support on our mission to provide for many in our community. We are humbled by your quick response to our need! God Bless ~Bill & Claudette

Merry Christmas and a Happy Blessed New Year to all, I miss my church family so much, especially at this time of the year. Everyone please stay well and safe. God Bless and lots of love to all ~ Ronda Marvel

## **MEMORIALS**

Donations to Memorial can be made any time during the year – not just upon a memorial for a death. A memorial plate will be purchased and placed on Memorial Boards in parlor. Some of our wish lists for this year are an additional liquid candle and base, one more set of banners, etc.

## **TRUSTEES REPORT**

Well, church family - can you believe we are in the Advent/ Christmas season! Trustee meeting was held on December 10<sup>th</sup>. We opened with prayer and round table discussion. Usual business conducted, financial reports reviewed, bills to be paid approved and committee reports heard.

Many events discussed – successful LSACC Thanksgiving service with 73 in attendance with joint choir – a joyful noise indeed! \$475 was collected and to be used for LakeShore Central clothes closet. Hospice Bouquets will be delivered the week of 3/3-3/8; Christmas in the Village is an eventful packed program starting Friday evening 12/13 through Sunday 12/15; Hanging of greens and light supper on 12/20 at 6pm; New church members on 12/8 and baptisms on 12/7 & 12/22; “Blue Christmas” Vesper service on 12/22 in Morris Meeting Room; Pancake breakfast on 1/26/25.

Church service cancellation and office closing criteria discussed. No service if driving ban in place and no office if lot not plowed by 7am and no school, Michelle to determine and contact Charles if we will be closed. JonnyAnn determines if Meals on Wheels is open, Meals on Wheels is considered “essential work”. Plan in place for 12/12 due to State of Emergency in Erie County due to snow!

9 families designated for Angel Fund to date. Everyone is busy, busy, busy but stop and remember “Jesus is the reason for the season” Bless us all!

~Peace, Jean Galfo

## **SUNDAY COUNTER VOLUNTEERS**

It's that time of year when we will be working on scheduling our Sunday Counter Volunteers for 2025. We are in need of some new volunteers, if you are interested in becoming one or have questions please see JonnyAnn Roach or Michelle Becker. This is a great way to meet members of the congregation. We would like to thank all of our counters past and present. We greatly appreciate all of your dedication to our church. There is no prior experience needed. There is a sign-up sheet in Updyke Hall.



## MEMORIAL PLANTS

The Poinsettias which grace the sanctuary, are dedicated to the glory of God  
**IN LOVING MEMORY OF** the following...

### **Loved Ones**

*By The Obrochta Family*

### **My Brother**

*By JonnyAnn Roach*

### **Joe Donner**

*By Donna & David Donner*

### **Loved Ones**

*By Dale Ketterer*

### **David Pawlak**

*By Michelle Becker & Family*

### **Gerecke, Staubitz, Cash & Weglewski Families**

*By Edward Gerecke Jr. & Dorene Shores*

### **Harry & Bertha Shores**

*By Edward Gerecke Jr. & Dorene Shores*

### **Parents, Donald & Betty Volker**

*By David & Nancy Volker*

### **Loved Ones**

*By Diane & Rick Coomer*

### **Loved Ones**

*By Marcia Whittemore*

### **Loved Ones**

*By Joan & Jody Blais*

### **Loved Ones**

*By Heather Pappas*

### **Mikey Arakelian**

*By Weinheimer Family*

### **Loved Ones**

*By Paul & Anne Becker*

### **The Church**

*By Sheila Lombardo*

### **My Mom & Dad**

*By JonnyAnn Roach*

### **Loved Ones**

*By Marjorie McCarthy*

### **Loved Ones**

*By Darlene DePasquale*

### **Edward & Dorothea Gerecke**

*By Edward Gerecke Jr. & Dorene Shores*

### **Eleanor Zimber and Florence Karczewski**

*By Michelle Becker & Family*

### **Loved Ones**

*By Donna Nagel*

### **Brother, Leigh Volker**

*By David & Nancy Volker*

### **Mom & Dad**

*By Brenda & Jim Greene*

### **Loved Ones**

*By Sarah & David Valtin*

### **Loved Ones**

*By: Joan & Jody Blais*

### **Loved Ones**

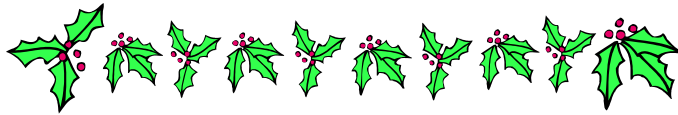
*By Heather Pappas*

### **Kate Heyden**

*By Weinheimer Family*

### **Loved Ones**

*By Manni Bhalla*



## MEMORIAL PLANTS

The Poinsettias which grace the sanctuary, are dedicated to the glory of God  
**IN LOVING MEMORY OF** the following...

### Loved Ones

*By Gayl Weinheimer*

### Loved Ones

*By Miriam & Tony Oster*

### Loved Ones

*By Kathy & Bob Bienias*

### Loved Ones

*By Jean & Tony Galfo*

### Loved Ones

*By Annette Reynolds*



## MEMORIAL PLANTS

The Poinsettias which grace the sanctuary, are dedicated to the glory of God  
**IN LOVING HONOR OF** the following...

### Chris Donner Family

*By Donna & David Donner*

### Mazur Family

*By Donna & David Donner*



## MEMORIAL PLANTS

The Poinsettias which grace the sanctuary, are dedicated to the glory of God  
**IN CELEBRATION OF** the following...

### The Lives of William & Lillian Andrews and Hazel & Henry Donner

*By Donna & David Donner*

2024

First Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
132 North Main Street  
P O Box 231  
Angola, New York 14006-0231

**Address Service Requested**

TIME VALUE MAIL  
Mailed on December 30, 2024  
**Please deliver promptly.**

**Sunday Worship- 10:00 AM**

**Sunday School – 10:00 AM**

OFFICE HOURS: MON., TUES., THURS., FRI., 9:00am-1:00pm

For **Emergency Pastoral Services**, please call

Pastor Jen Mazur at 716-725-2157, Michelle in the Church Office 716-549-2115,  
or Deaconess Darlene DePasquale at 716-549-1331

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of this church shall be to bring together followers of Jesus Christ,  
to live and preach His gospel, to celebrate the sacraments  
and to be a beacon and model of faith for all.

- **The Next Newsletter deadline is January 08, 2025**
- **There is PLENTY of room for your article!!!**