



***From Pastor Steve's Desk...
Come, Lord Jesus, Come...***

It was not suddenly and unannounced that Jesus came into the world. He came into a world that had been prepared for him. The whole Old Testament is the story of a special preparation... . Only when all was ready, only in the fullness of his time, did Jesus come. (Phillips Brooks, The Consolations of God: Great Sermons of Phillips Brooks)

When we consider the time between the day after Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, our minds flood with anxiety, joy, anticipation, and a general sense of having been here before. Yet, in 2020, we haven't really been here before in some profound ways. Are we preparing differently? Or better yet, are we being prepared in a different way? You see, in December of each year, we often spend our time making all the preparations for Christmas in a stunning array of presents, parties, and decorating. These things even take place importantly at church with our brothers and sisters in the body of believers. This year, we're still doing some of that, but in new ways...maybe better ways.

Is there a way to look at this from a new perspective? We know that Christmas is coming. We know that each year, our calendars are very clear to announce that December 25th is Christmas. If we spend our time preparing, will we as a church and as individuals be ready? Sure our houses, our church building, and our offices will be beautiful, but will our hearts be ready? What might it look like for us to be prepared for the coming of Jesus?

The Old Testament story of the preparation of the world for Jesus is not about the fight sacrifices, the right Temple, of the correct alignment of the stars. At the heart of the Old Testament is...well, the heart! Every time God got angry at the people for not following His commands, it was an issue of the people's hearts not being willing to have faith that what God said was true. The special preparation that God planned for His people was meant to give them all the chances needed to be ready for God to save them and lift them up. That preparation was provided, but they did not all want to be prepared.

As people living in the time between the Old Testament promises and prophecies and the time when Jesus returns, we have a vivid picture of what has already been prepared for us. Our task is to regularly allow ourselves to BE PREPARED to receive Christ into our hearts - to immerse ourselves in Jesus and his incarnation. The most meaningful way to allow God to do that for us is to practice inviting God to invade our lives in the special seasons of the year like Advent.

And this year, may it be the first year...may it be the fullness of time for you and for me as we are prepared for the coming of the Christ child, God with us, Emmanuel. Remember, this is not something that is sudden or unannounced. We all know it's coming...allow yourself to be prepared by the power of the incarnation of God in human form...and in your heart.

Shalom,
Pastor Steve

Panama United Methodist Church Mission Statement
We seek to love the Lord God by introducing people to His Son,
Jesus Christ, and helping these relationships to grow.

Panama United Methodist Church
Baptisms and New Members

November 15, 2020

Jason Fardink - Adult Baptism and Professing Membership
Randall Scott - Adult Baptism and Professing Membership
Ava Hill-Rice - Child Baptism
Brendon Scott-Child Baptism

Travis Johnson - Membership Transfer from North Clymer UMC
Kelly Johnson - Membership Transfer from North Clymer UMC
Dennis Hinsdale - Membership Transfer from North Clymer UMC

November 22, 2020

Owen Martin - Youth Baptism and Confirmation
Chase Hartnett - Confirmation
Tate Catanese - Confirmation
Bryce Hinsdale - Confirmation
Hialeah Johnson - Confirmation
Caroline Apthorpe - Confirmation
Carter Brink - Confirmation

We “officially” welcome you into our church family!

WORSHIP UPDATE:

Since July 19th, we've been worshipping in the sanctuary. To keep us safe, we've been using hand sanitizer, wearing masks except when seated or singing, keeping a safe 6' physical distance and refraining from touching each other.

I'm very proud of the team, the congregation and all who've come to worship in-house. I'm also thankful for all who have continued to worship online. Thanks, specifically, goes to our Audio/Video Ministry Team who has done such a great job with in-house and online worship presentation. If you have any questions about returning to the building for worship, please let us know. We'd love to have you join us in-house if you haven't yet.

Blessings,
Pastor Steve
and the Worship Team

Blue Christmas Worship

On Sunday, December 13th, at 6pm, you're invited to a special worship service that will help all who are struggling with finding and maintaining JOY in the Christmas season. This is needed like never before.

The message of hope in the coming of Christ will invite us to come to the manger and see Jesus. As we do, we will be filled with the love of God in Christ Jesus. All are invited to come to this special worship experience.

Christmas Eve Worship Announcement

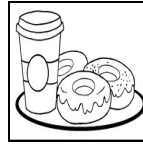
This Christmas Eve, we are planning to worship at 4pm and 11pm. In order to have adequate spacing and safe distancing, we will offer these two worship experiences for our congregation and Community. Both services will be livestreamed, as well, at www.livestream.com/panamaum for those who desire to worship remotely.

The early worship service will be great for families and those who don't wish to stay up late. The later service will be our traditional candlelight worship, ending at midnight, welcoming Christmas Day.



FREE Blood Pressures and Fasting Blood Sugars

in Jody's office,
Stop in on the first Sunday of each month.



Coffee, tea and light individually packaged snacks, are available on Sunday mornings, from 8:30 until 10:15am. Please join us!

We would be happy to teach you how to use the "new" coffee pot...it really can't get much easier. We would love to sit and have a socially distanced cup of coffee with you.

Also, if you are interested in signing in people at the door on their way to worship, we would welcome your help. It is a great way to meet and greet some PUMC friends and neighbors who you may not have seen for awhile.

See you Sunday!

White Gift Offering for December To Bless Families in Need

Our White Gift Fund is a discretionary fund setup for use by Pastor Steve to meet the needs of people in our community during times of crises or loss.

For December, all donations made to the White Gift Fund will be used to bless as many families as possible for Christmas, depending on needs.

If you know of a family that could use a blessing, please contact Pastor Steve, (steven.taylor@panamaum.org) or call the church office at 716/782-4031.

Please pray about giving generously to the White Gift Fund in December and all year long.

Thank you and blessings!

With Sympathy to the Family of...

*Robert L. Beckerink
and
Carolyn B. (Wevers) Beckerink*

Robert was born in Corry, PA on February 4, 1930.
He passed away on Wednesday, September 23, 2020.
Carolyn was born in Bear Lake Pa., on May 22, 1934.
She passed away on Friday, November 13, 2020.
Bob and Carolyn were married on September 23, 1959.
Together, they operated the Beckerink Dairy Farm for 55 years.
They were longtime active members of the Abbe Reformed Church in Clymer.

Robert and Carolyn are survived by their three children: Rod (Marion) Beckerink, Philip Beckerink and Janna (Wayne) Anderson, granddaughter, Tera Anderson, and their step grandson, Josh Karpeh. They are also survived by Carolyn's brother, Lester (Wyona) Wevers, Arthur Hodges and many nieces and nephews.

Memorials may be made to the Abbe Reformed Church,
595 Clymer Sherman Rd., Clymer
or the Clymer Volunteer Fire Department, Box 31, Clymer.

***The love and prayers of the church and community
are with you and your loved ones as you continue
through this time of grief
and adjustment.***

Be Encouraged!

Covid-19 has been challenging, to say the least.

Because I went into "survival mode" way more than I care to admit throughout my life, I want to encourage people to desire to thrive with Jesus instead. It wasn't until the song, "Thrive" came out that the Lord opened my eyes to the fact the simply "surviving" wasn't healthy, not as a born-again Christian who has the Holy Spirit living inside him or her.

Thriving and trusting in the Lord certainly doesn't come "natural," nor is it "easy". We pray that the thoughts shared by brothers and sisters in Christ will encourage and lift you up, despite circumstances.

Please check out encouraging thoughts from brothers and sisters in Christ. Go to Panamaum.org and click on Encouraging Journal on the middle left.

You will be encouraged by reading and reflecting on these thoughts.

CONNECTIONS

Our Connections Ministry is up and running for the 2021 school year! We are following the COVID safety protocols from the CDC and the Health Department

So far, all is going well! We have an average of 14 students per day. To keep this ministry running smoothly, we need your support! In addition to donating snacks, please consider making a direct monetary donation to Connections this year. All donations will help us keep our tuition at its current rate.

Thank you for your support to the families in our community!

Stacy



New offer this year
from the Missions Team...

VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS GREETING CARD!

Send your greetings and/or
picture to

contact@panamaum.org
asap, but no later than 12/15.
Please call the office (782-4031)
If you have any questions.

The Missions Team is accepting
donations for this year's PUMC
holiday greetings!

DECEMBER Birthdays and **Anniversaries**

- 1 Bert Anderson, Brianna Marsh
- 2 Arianna Seekings
- 3 Judy Parkman
- 4 Earl Foulk, Aria Ireland
- 5 Rob Peck, Paige Weise, **Dennis/Cindy Furlow**
- 6 Eloise Smith, Kandi Catanese
- 7 Roger Kester, Evan Vande Velde
- 11 Ann Schnars, **Larry/Gay Ostrander**
- 12 Warren Crouch, Amanda Anderson, **Cam/Scotty James**
- 14 Becky Dominey, Debbie Loveless
- 15 Alyssa Jaeger
- 16 **Mike/Kelly Range, Jan/Howie Wheeler**
- 18 Olivia Nagel
- 23 Jamie Halpainy
- 25 Joyce Dole, Peg Naetzker
- 26 Marie Dole, Becky Cable, David Munsee
- 29 Rachel Steffan, Jessica Keefer, Landon Miller
Greg/Carrie Edwards
- 30 Lee Kester, Janette Weaver

Looking ahead to January 2021...

- 1 Carl Anderson
- 3 Caroline Apthorpe, Erin Miller, Reese McGaffick,
Pam Sali
- 4 Isaac Landin
- 5 Kimberly Barton, Betty Johnson
- 6 Jeff Ireland
- 7 David Rowe, Andrew Apthorpe





<<<<< Just One 4 Others >>>>>

The **DECEMBER** item of the month is
Dental Floss.

Can we bring in 100?????

Thank you all for supporting this ministry. If you have any questions, please contact Jody, our Parish Nurse. Please place your donations in Jody's office in the hallway just past the elevator.

The God's Groceries Food Pantry can be found at PUMC, next to the kitchen. If there is a need, please call the church office for more information, or see Tina Swineford.

The Food Pantry entrance is on Church Street...look for signs.

Monday Morning: 9-10am

Monday Evening: 6-7pm

Thursday Evening: 5-7pm



BIBLE QUIZZING!

We are studying the following chapters of the Gospel of Matthew this month: 4, 8, 9, 23, & 28. Our next quiz will be Saturday, December 12th in Canisteo. We appreciate your prayers as we travel to Salamanca and Falconer alternately for our quiz practices and as the team studies diligently their assigned portion of Matthew. May the Word and His mighty power transform our hearts and minds as we study.

In the photo are the top quizzers of the day on November 21st. As you can see, Josh and Gracie are among those quizzers. We placed 2nd as a team and our quizzers have a 77% CAP (Correct Answer Percentage). A good goal for a team is 66% so our team is very accurate!

The team was very thankful to have Jessica Nelson come to cheer and support us last month in Olean. We are very much wanting to host a quiz at Panama UMC in 2021. I know that you would help us to do an excellent job if that indeed comes to pass.

Becky Cable
By Faith coach

****Unable to download By Faith submitted photo...sorry.**

Sour Cream and Chives Mashies Jody Marsh, Parish Nurse

12 oz. (1 medium) russet potato
3 c cauliflower florets
1/4 c light sour cream
1/4 c light/reduced fat cream cheese
1/4 tsp onion powder
1/2 tsp garlic powder
1/2 tsp salt
1/8 tsp pepper
1/4 c plus 5 Tbsp chopped chives

1. Bring a medium pot of water to boil. Peel and cube potato.
2. Add potato and cauliflower. Once returned to boil, reduce to medium heat. Cook until very tender, 15-20 minutes.
3. Drain potato and cauliflower in a strainer. Transfer to a large bowl.
4. Add all remaining ingredients except chives. Thoroughly mash and mix.
5. Fold in 1/4 c of chives.
6. Top each serving with 1 Tbsp of remaining chives.

HARVEST DINNER DRIVE-THRU!!!!

We would like to thank each of you that had any part at all in our first attempt at a drive thru dinner...which was a TOTAL success! If we started naming names or thanking people individually, we would surely leave someone out and we do not wish to do that. As the saying goes, many hands make light work...and together, along with every person who drove thru and supported our efforts, we succeeded, and not in a little way, to make this one of the best dinners we have ever done....and it was delicious, to boot!

Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!!
Julia and Pam

Looking ahead...Mark your calendars!

December 8 Annual Charge Conference; 6:30pm

December 13 - Blue Christmas Service; 6pm

December 24 - Christmas Eve Service; 4pm and 11pm

Merry Christmas!

If the names of your immediate family are not included on our monthly birthday/ anniversary list, and you would like them to be, please drop a note into the Newsletter mailbox in the office workroom or let Debbie in the office know. (First and last names as well as birthday and or anniversary dates). We would like to include you and yours!

FAMILY SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

Be on the lookout for what's next for FAMILY SUNDAY SCHOOL - the first Sunday of every month! Watch your calendars!

December 6, the very first Family Sunday School "happens" with a cocoa bar and a Family Escape room activity in the Community Room.

Bring your mom and dad....mom's and dad, bring all the kids! Should be a fun time!



WHITE GIFT

White Gift donations for the month of December will be used for Christmas needs in our community. Please talk to Pastor Steve if you know of a need.

THANKS...you will be blessed!

Reverend Steven M. Taylor, Lead Pastor
steven.taylor@panamaum.org
Debbie Johnson, Ministry Coordinator/Admin. Asst.
debbie.johnson@panamaum.org
Julie Nagel, Music Director/Accompanist
Krista Odell, Accompanist
Jody Marsh, Parish Nurse
Jon Cable, Custodian

Pastor Steve's Office Hours
9:00am - Noon: M, W and Th

Church Phone (716) 782-4031
Church Fax # (716) 782-2326
Church E-mail – contact@panamaum.org
Church website - www.panamaum.org
www.facebook.com/panamaum

Please check the calendar
inside for weekly
meetings and activities
for the month of **December**.

Cornerstone District Office
Christ First UMC
663 Lakeview Ave.
Jamestown, NY 14701
(716) 665-2423



Panama United Methodist Church
22 East Main St., PO Box 218
Panama, NY 14767
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Church Fax # (716) 782-2326
Church E-mail – contact@panamaum.org
Church website - www.panamaum.org
www.facebook.com/panamaum