



Faith Connections – December 2023

Ionia United Methodist Church
2120 Elton Rd., Ionia, NY 14475
585-657-6984 www.ioniaumc.org

From Our Pastor's Desk:

Greetings loved ones,

Blessed Christmas to you as the Advent season begins. Advent is the time of preparation for the birth of the Holy child, the Messiah. I know it is cliché, but: **Jesus is the Reason for the Season!** So, if we are preparing our homes and calendars, how do we prepare our hearts of faith for Jesus? I like to be reminded of the depth of His love for us in this season of Advent and not get overly assured that grace will cover me in my humanity. How shall we remind one another of this precious miracle in our lives?

I sometimes think of preparing my heart for Jesus by sharing my love for him. Have you thought about how your Christmas messages inside your mailed cards lift up your love of Him? If you send out cards of hope and peace at the Savior's birth, amen. I do the same because even for my friends who are not believers, I am sharing what the Lord has asked me to share - which is the good news of the Incarnate God, Jesus, and how much he means to my life and can mean to all people.

Christians, I know you feel the same because Jesus is the center of our worship, mercy, our unearned grace; and he is the Savior of our souls. Saving grace and God's mercy make this life hold such rich beauty and meaning. This season of Advent, the waiting, anticipation, and preparing, guides us every year to refresh our message of love in Christ and the sharing of the good news. How shall we share this stunning message?



How about this: It might look like a cookie, but if it was a gift made from the hands of a caring friend or family member, it is more than a sweet treat. It is an expression of *hope, peace, joy, and love*. I pray your stocking will be filled to the brim with the same, expressed through the

relationships you have with God, friends, and family. I know you join me in that all we want for Christmas is *hope, peace, joy, love*, because Jesus has made it all possible for us. And it might, just might, look like a cookie (from you or for you)!

Where ever you are right now, whoever you plan to see this season for a visit – bring some cookies (homemade or store bought), that represent the gift that is our sweet Jesus: the One who brings us all hope, peace, joy and love.

Let us be blessed together with worship, company, joy and a few cookies(!) in this season of love.

With love in Christ,
Pastor Robin



Advent 2020 Sermon Series: The Gift

- 12/3/23 The Gift of Christmas: Hope
Luke 1:30-31, 34-35, 38
- 12/10/23 The Gift of Christmas: Joy
Matthew 1:18-25
- 12/17/23 The Gift of Christmas: Love
Luke 2:8-14
- 12/24/23 4pm The Gift of Christmas: Peace
Lessons and Carols



4:00 pm on Christmas Eve, our Family

Service will celebrate the birth of the birth of Jesus, through scripture, story, song and the candlelight beauty of *O, Holy Night*. Children are all welcomed to wear their favorite angel wings, shepherd's robes and royal crowns. Adults, too!



Pat & Ron, Kay, Doris, Mary D., Shirley, Elaine, Jan, MaryAnn & Cliff, Lola, & all our home-bound members

A parishioner's son & his parents

Our nation & the world & all countries engaged in war

Our military men & women

All those battling cancer, COVID, & chronic diseases

Joys

Holiday Fair Craft Show – thank you to all who helped set up, all who worked on Saturday & cleaned up, & all who shopped to patronized our craft vendors!

Antonio James Cuciti was born on Nov., 18th, grandson of Jim & Andrea Garling & great-grandson of Susanne Garling!

Thank you to everyone who does valuable jobs for our Sunday worship service to make it special & does many other jobs for our church!



Birthday Sunday

on the 2nd Sunday of each month

celebrating all those people with birthdays during that month! To make a cake for this celebration, you may sign up in Fellowship Hall or call Carol 657-7310.



Each Sunday morning, 8:30

am, Rev. Dr. Robin Blair hosts the, Finger Lakes Journal, radio show, on WYLF, AM 850.

It is about 20 minutes in length where Rev. Blair has interviewed a guest about something that is happening in the beautiful Finger Lakes area that could be of interest to the folks like us who live here!



Common Table Podcast

The Social Holiness Team of UNY AC UMC, (Pastor Robin) offers a variety of podcasts for your information regarding matters of social justice and love. Please visit:

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/1940809>



Ray Van Der Laan & Max Lucado DVD

Studies will be held after our Sunday fellowship time, except for on Birthday Sunday.



"The Gospel of It's a Wonderful

Life" Advent Study follows the story of George Bailey as we study the biblical principles of Goodness, Godliness, Prayers, and Miracles. You are invited to participate in this fun bible study during our season of Advent. Our Advent study will be highlighting the joy and challenge of life through the film of the same name. : **Wednesday mornings, 10 am 11/29, 12/6, 12/13, 12/20 at church.** See you there!

Our next book study will be during Lent, 2024. Look for something in the February Newsletter, Lent begins Feb 14th!



Let us all give at this

special time of year. Our church Advent

Offering Envelopes are enclosed with this newsletter & available in this newsletter

Please place it in the offering plate or mail it to PO Box 8, Ionia, NY 14475



Advent Flowers for our Altar

Order Deadline: Monday, December 11th. Poinsettias in 6 1/2 " pot @\$8.50 in colors Red, Pink, White, Marble; Christmas Cactus in 6 1/2" pot @ \$8.50. Payment by cash or check made payable to Ionia UMC with "poinsettia" on memo line and place in offering plate. Sign up in Fellowship Hall or call Jacquie Shellman at 585-755-3825. You may take your flower(s) home after the Christmas Eve services.





Our church's mission is to serve our church family & community

The Mission Team reports our church giving throughout 2023:

- Open Door Mission
- UMCOR
- UNY Conference 6 offerings
- Family Promise of Ontario County
- Blessing Room
- UMC Red Bird Mission in Kentucky
- Heifer Project & Ark
- Heifer Water Project
- Safe Harbors of the Finger Lakes
- Rochester Refugees
- Water for South Sudan
- Willow
- Habitat for Humanity



We will be collecting items for the Open Door Mission in Rochester this Christmas on a "Mitten Tree" for men, women & children: new socks, new hats, new gloves & mittens, & new underwear.



Also collected will be new or gently used winter clothes: coats, boots, sweatshirts, sweaters, & sweatpants. A tree will be placed in Fellowship Hall for these items & there will also be a collection box outside at the church back door. The deadline is Sunday, Dec. 17th



In addition we will be collecting gifts for two boys in a family served by the Family Promise of Ontario County. There is a small tree with "gift tags" hanging on it with the gift needed, the boy's age and size. The deadline is Sunday, Dec 10th



Double Your Impact by Thanksgiving
We will continue until Sunday, Dec. 17th the giving to Red Bird Mission through Ionia UMC means your gift is doubled. The Mission Team pledges to match dollar for dollar. Give \$1, Red Bird receives \$2. Give \$10, Red Bird receives \$20. The Mission Team's Red Bird goal is to match \$1,000 of giving

Cash donations should be in an envelope marked with Red Bird Mission. Write checks to Ionia UMC with Red Bird Mission on the Memo Line. Place in the collection plate or mail to: Ionia UMC, 2120 Elton Rd, PO Box 8, Ionia 14475

Red Bird Mission is a United Methodist mission site in the Southeast corner of Kentucky. The mission's programs include a K-12 Christian school, senior center, test kitchens, education for new mothers, low-cost access to clothing, food, health care, dental care, and home repair. Red Bird Housing, Inc. provides an eight-unit apartment building to house elderly or disabled low-income citizens.

Clay County, where Red Bird Mission sits, is one of the poorest counties in the United States. Compare:

Living Below Poverty Line	Clay County	Ontario County
Families	35.4%	4.9%
Population	39.7%	7.4%
Under 18	47.6%	9.1%
Age 65 or over	31.3%	6.4%

Questions about Red Bird Mission and its ministries can be directed to email for Roger (rcullen1@rochester.rr.com) or Donna Cullen (dccret@rit.edu). Their home phone is 398-1282.



December Food Shelf for the Blessing Room: a call for diapers and feminine hygiene products (these items are not covered by EBT cards), & canned/boxed food items Place them in the wooden boxes for the Blessing Room in Fellowship Hall or there is a tote on the back porch to drop off donations.

Thank you for helping make the holidays brighter for our neighbors in need!

Missions continued:



This year the Missions Team decided to give people a gift card for Christmas Dinner food so they could pick the food items they would like for their dinner.



Drop off your clean "NYS deposit" Pop Cans & Bottles for Missions

Place into the crate or trash containers next to the shed behind the church. Please drain the bottles & **cans & place them in plastic bags!** Thank you for all your **over 15,000 can donations** this year so far, **netting over \$900 for missions!!**



In Our Area:

Sat., Dec. 2nd, 9am-3pm 50th Annual Teazaar.

Christmas Bazaar
50th
"TEAZAAR"
 Christmas Crafts & Gifts
 Christmas Decorations / Tree Ornaments
 Baked Goods / Fudge / "Festive Foods"
 Candles/Cookie Assortments/Cabot Cheese
 50th Anniversary Tea Area
 Children-only shopping room
 Take-out tasty soups
Special Areas for:
 Pre-enjoyed Christmas decorations
 Pre-enjoyed jewelry
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2023
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 27 North Main St. (next to the Gasbo)
 HONEOYE FALLS, NEW YORK
 If a Covid surge should occur before our event, safety measures may be required for attendees.
**** Enter at Main Street RED Front doors****



Sat., Dec 9th, 9am-noon, Cookie Sale, W. Bloomfield Congregational Church, \$9/lb., cut-outs, & lots of other favorites, sweet breads, candy



Our 2023 Advent/Christmas Events



Advent Study, Wednesdays 10am



1st Sunday of Advent: Dec. 3rd
Hanging of the Greens & Pot Luck Brunch Bring a dish to pass & then decorate the church afterwards!



Altar Poinsettia Order Deadline Dec 11th
 Details in the separate article



Christmas Gift Baskets & Giving Tree Deadline December 17th
 Details in their separate articles



Sat., Dec. 24th Christmas Eve Service at
 4:00pm (**no 9:30am service**)



Happy December Birthdays!

- 1 Myrna Belding
- 2 Mike Giessler
- 3 Carlie Burse
- 4 Terry Parrish
- 5 Anita Parrish Robinson
- 6 Jason Baldwin
Sara Price
- 7 Bambi Talley
- 10 Carol Hinds
- 19 Craig Vary
- 20 Abigail Frelier Aloisio
- 23 Terry Dunlop
- 24 Shirley Kelly
- 25 Larry Evans
- 28 Kristen Washburn
- 29 Colleen Sullivan
- 31 Bruce Semmler

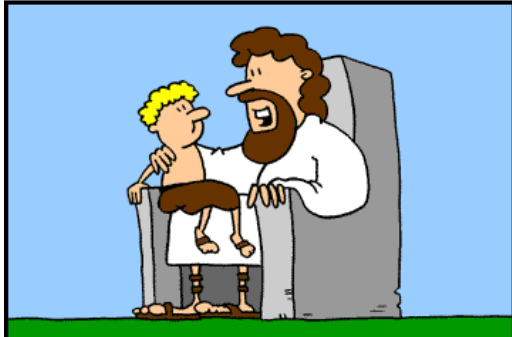
\$\$ Treasurer's Report

Thank you for the financial contributions you make to the church. Let's keep it going, together, in the name of Christ and for HIS sake!
 Amen and praise be to God!



All Saint's Day Altar

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Thanks to Christopher Huffman

12-24-1998

HOW ABOUT IF INSTEAD OF GIVING YOU EVERYTHING THAT YOU THINK YOU WANT FOR CHRISTMAS I GIVE YOU WHAT YOU NEED?



Favorite Church Recipes

Cranberry Bread - makes 1 loaf

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour 1 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp salt 1/4 cup milk, room temperature
Zest of 1 large orange, divided
1/4 cup orange juice, freshly squeezed
6 Tbsp unsalted butter, softened
3/4 cup granulated sugar 2 large eggs, room temp.
1 1/2 cups fresh cranberries, rinsed and patted dry
1/2 Tbsp all-purpose flour

Orange Glaze:

1 cup powdered sugar
1 1/2 Tbsp freshly squeezed orange juice, or to reach desired consistency
1 tsp orange zest, reserved from the orange above
In a separate bowl, stir together powdered sugar, orange juice and reserved teaspoon of zest. Stir until

smooth. It should have a drizzling consistency. Add more orange juice to thin it out or powdered sugar to make it thicker.

Instructions

1. Prep: Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter a 6 cup (8 1/2 by 4 1/2 bread loaf pan) then dust with flour, tapping out the excess flour.
2. In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together: flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.
3. In a measuring cup, combine together milk, zest of 1 orange (Reserve 1 tsp zest for the glaze), and orange juice. Set aside.
4. In a large mixing bowl, cream together butter and granulated sugar on medium/high speed (2-3 minutes on high speed). It won't be smooth, just combined. Beat in 2 large eggs, mixing until well incorporated.
5. Add flour mixture in 2 parts, alternating with the milk mixture and mixing on medium/low speed just until incorporated with each addition. Scrape the sides of the bowl with a spatula as needed.
6. Toss cranberries with 1/2 Tbsp flour then fold them into the batter just until incorporated. Spread the batter into your prepared pan and bake for 45-50 min at 350°F until golden on top and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Let cool in pan 10-15 minutes then run a cake release tool or knife around the edges and transfer the loaf to a wire rack to cool completely before glazing.

A Holy Habit! Advent Devotions (online):

This Advent season daily devotions are abundant online and in print. For those of you who enjoy a bit of time in prayer and reflection through online sources, I would point you to something I found very beautiful in faith: <http://adventdoor.com>
Jan Richardson is a visual artist who works with a variety of UMC resources and presents an Advent Devo that uses her blessed art as well as reflections that speak to the soul. I hope you will find these devotions meaningful this season.

Another resource that is faithfully useful comes from Luther Seminary: <https://bit.ly/35B80QZ>

This link will bring you to a daily devotional sign up for your email. These are from 2022, but I really liked them so I am sending it again. Here are the free online devotions for 2023 from Luther Seminary <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Hid5hRLafyOv2bLWIRmwl55XngHypSm/view>

In terms of printed materials, one can download from the Luther seminary links, or, use the Upper Room resources we receive at the church. They also have beautiful daily devotions, [follow this link.](#) If you come to church, you will be given a book of devotions for the season.

If you have a resource for Advent Devotions that you would like to share with the congregation, please let us know!



Some Ways to Share at Christmas:

Donate a Mitten Tree Gift!	Hug someone!
Random Acts of Kindness!	Giving of yourself!
Christmas Dinner ingredients!	A friendly "Hello!"
Donating to a worthy cause!	A smile!

Bloomfield Blessing Room mail to: The Blessing Room, Inc., PO Box 556, Bloomfield 14469

UMCOR – US Disaster Response – Advance # 901670 www.umcor.org To donate call 1-888-252-6174 or by check payable to Advance GCFA with Advance number on the memo line & mail to: Advance GCFA, PO Box 9068 GPO, New York, NY 10087-9068 100% goes to the relief effort!

Habitat for Humanity - 3040 Co. Rd #10, Canandaigua 14424 or 121 Habitat Street Americus, GA 31709-3498 www.hfhoc.org

Heifer Project – www.heifer.org – gives animals To give people a new life - mail to: Heifer International, PO Box 8058 Little Rock, AR 72203-8058; or call: 1-800-855-848-6437

Salvation Army - PO Box 510, 110 Saltonstall St, Canandaigua 14424 salvationarmyusa.org

Open Door Mission – care for the homeless PO Box 14236, Rochester 14608; 454-6696; www.opendoormission.com

Asbury 1st UMC – Asbury Storehouse – they give clothing & food to those in need in Rochester 1050 East Ave, 14607 www.asburyfirst.org

Red Bird Mission. Beverly, Kentucky, online <https://rbmission.org/> - see article in this newsletter

UMC's 6 Special Sundays Offerings

- Human Relations Day - January 15, 2023
- UMCOR Sunday - March 19, 2023
- Native American Sunday - April 23, 2023
- Peace With Justice Sunday - June 4, 2023
- World Communion Sunday - October 1, 2023
- United Methodist Student Sunday – Nov. 26, 2023

To donate to one or more of these offerings, place your donation in one of the special envelopes and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church: Ionia UMC, PO Box 8, Ionia, NY 14475.



Announcement: Rev Blair will be taking a bit of time off after Christmas. See you again in the New Year! You may call in emergencies, if you need her. Otherwise, God bless you and see you in worship! Monday evening Lectionary bible study will resume in January online!

From Jimmy Carter on Christmas:

"The only things that we can truly give to each other are the only things that we truly need – an ear to listen, a heart to care, a word of encouragement and a hand to help."

What is Advent?

The season of Advent, which comes from the Latin word *adventus* meaning "coming" or "visit," begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year for Christians. (Liturgical is from the word liturgy, which means the forms and functions of public worship.)

During Advent, we prepare for, and anticipate, the coming of Christ. We remember the longing of Jews for a Messiah and our own longing for, and need of, forgiveness, salvation and a new beginning. Even as we look back and celebrate the birth of Jesus in a humble stable in Bethlehem, we also look forward anticipating the second coming of Christ as the fulfillment of all that was promised by his first coming.



Ionia United Methodist Church
PO Box 8
2120 Elton Rd.
Ionia, NY 14475

December



Merry
Christmas



Ionia United Methodist Church
2120 Elton Road, P. O. Box 8
Ionia, New York 14475

Sunday Worship Service:
9:30AM AM

Church Website: www.ioniaumc.org

Church Email: ioniaumc2120@hotmail.com

Facebook: "IoniaUMCNY"

Church Phone: 585-657-6984

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Robin Blair

Pastor's Email: revrobinblair@gmail.com

Pastor's Phone: 315-729-4485



Advent Schedule

Sundays, 9:30 AM Worship Service

10:30 AM Coffee Hour & DVD Study

Wednesday Advent Studies

Sunday, December 10th: Birthday Sunday

Family Promise Gift Deadline

Monday, Dec. 11th: Flower order Deadline

Sunday, Dec. 17th Open Door &

Red Bird Donations Deadlines

Tuesday, December 19 Ad-Board meeting

Sunday, Dec 24th Christmas Eve Service at
4:00pm

Sunday, Dec. 31st: New Years Eve Brunch

