



The Messenger

Grace United Methodist
Church

16 Hillcrest Drive
Ravena, NY 12143

(518) 756-6688

Email: graceumcravena@statetel.com

Website: www.gumcravena.com

Rev. Kim Krause, Pastor

Working together to put our faith and love into practice.

**Services are held at 9:30am - Parking Lot Grace FM-89.7,
Temporary Sanctuary, Zoom & Facebook**

FEBRUARY 2023

FROM THE DESK OF THE PASTOR

Dear Family and Friends of Grace UMC,

Our journey continues! We have a few weeks before Lent begins, and we will spend the first two Sundays in February looking a bit closer at the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew. We have already taken a look at the Beatitudes, Matthew 5: 1-12, and have seen that perhaps the way in which we originally understood this passage does not really reflect what the Jesus' original hearers would have. We will spend the first 2 weeks learning more about Jesus' inaugural teaching to kin-dom living and how to be followers of the way – and hopefully coming closer to understanding what it is that we are called to do and be.

The third Sunday of the month brings us to the last Sunday before the season of Lent begins – which is always Transfiguration Sunday! Jesus brings his closest disciples up on the mountain with

him, and Jesus is joined by Moses and Elijah and transfigured right before the disciples' eyes. They hear God's voice calling Jesus their Beloved Son and that they should Listen to him!

Wednesday, February 22nd is the beginning of Advent. The leadership has decided to hold a day-time service (early afternoon), in order for more of our congregation to be able to attend in person and receive ashes. The Sunday after Ash Wednesday always has the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness as the lectionary text. We have decided to use Wesley's Covenant Service to get us ready for re-focusing ourselves in service to God.

One of the tasks in this refocusing is for us to discern what we are specifically called to be and to do as a faith community – to discern what God is calling us to be. One way to do that is to ask questions and seek answers from beyond our own current thinking. To help us in learning how to ask good questions and to seek answers in different ways than we have always done (because the answer we receive is always based on the question we ask), we will be looking at questions based on the lectionary during Lent. We'll be utilizing a series from Sanctified Art called Seeking: Honest Questions for Deeper Faith. "The lectionary for Year A offers us many stories of Jesus encountering people who are seeking: Nicodemus comes to him in the veil of night, he approaches a Samaritan woman at a well, he heals a man born without sight. In these stories, each person is seeking a new beginning, a different life, a deeper faith. What unfolds is an exchange filled with questions and exploration. Often, an unveiling occurs—assumptions are disrupted, a new perspective is revealed, mystery grows". How appropriate for our community of faith seeking a way forward!

This Lent, we are invited to engage in the spiritual practice of seeking. We are encouraged to stay curious, open, and nimble. There is a hope that we will soften our assumptions and expand our perspectives. We will pray that these questions will create a safe space to explore—to be drawn more deeply into the fullness of life, into the heart of God.

I look forward to entering this time of seeking and discerning with you, especially as we seek to put our faith and love into action. May it be so! Amen!

Peace for the journey,
Pastor Kim

Pastor Kim will be away from February 14th – February 28th on a trip to the Holy Land (part vacation, part continuing education). Emergency pastoral care will be set up before she leaves. Cindy Bliss and Fran Lobdell will have that contact information. We have leadership in our church that will be in charge of worship while Pastor Kim is gone. Zoom, Facebook and PowerPoint during worship will still be available.

The Lenten series Seeking: Honest Questions for Deeper Faith has a Lent Devotional Booklet, which can be used regardless of whether or not you attend worship. We will be sending out the document for you to use at home. If you are unable to utilize it at home or print it out on your own, and you are interested in having this devotional, please call or email the church office and let Fran know and she can print out a limited supply. There is also an e-reader version that can be used on computers and mobile devices without the need to print.

TAX INFO

Don't forget if you would like a statement of your donations to Grace UMC for 2022, please see Cindy Bliss (or email us at graceumcravena@statetel.com) and she will be happy to supply that for you.

FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

On Jan. 3, 2023, the new Upper New York (UNY) Conference Area Resident Bishop, Bishop Héctor Burgos Núñez (who prefers to be called Bishop Héctor), sent a letter to the UNY Conference. He expressed he and his family's gratefulness for the hospitality extended to them from UNY clergy, laity, and staff in December as he and his family began transitioning into a new missional assignment, home, and community.



Bishop Héctor also voiced his excitement to be joining a Conference with fruitful ministries and important priorities. He said, "God is calling us to shine brightly with the light of Christ, sharing faith, love, mercy, and justice with all people and in all places – **and that's exactly what we will do TOGETHER.**"

CROP HUNGER WALK

ENDING HUNGER ONE STEP AT A TIME



The CROP Hunger Walk is a nationwide movement sponsored by Church World Service to raise funds to end hunger and poverty in the U.S. and around the world. Hundreds of religious groups, businesses, schools and others organize local Walk events in their communities each year, while others join the National Walk and choose their own location and experience. Your walk brings food, clean water and the daily items neighborhoods need to make it through their roughest patches.

That's why we need you to sign up today:

www.crophungerwalk.org/ravenany This year's CROP walk will be on Sunday, May 7.

FEBRUARY Birthdays & Anniversaries

4 Anne Frauenberger
5 Linda Sherman
7 John Robertson
14 Kathy Porterfield

17 Amy Devine-Young
20 Sharon Phillips
24 Amy & Mark Young

Some of the special days celebrated in February are:

- Black History Month — February 1-28, 2023
- Groundhog Day — February 2, 2023
- Valentine's Day — February 14, 2023
- Presidents' Day — February 20, 2023
- Transfiguration Sunday — February 19, 2023
- Ash Wednesday — February 22, 2023



MARKED BY LOVE



Through the centuries [people] have displayed many different symbols to show that they are Christians. They have worn crosses in the lapels of their coats, hung chains about their necks, even had special haircuts. Of course, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with any of this, if one feels it is [one's] calling. But there is a much better sign, a universal mark that is to last through all the ages of the church until Jesus comes back.

Love — and the unity it attests to — is the mark Christ gave Christians to wear before the world. Only with this mark may the world know that Christians are indeed Christians and that Jesus was sent by the Father.

—Francis Schaeffer

LENTEN SIGNALS



Why should we observe Lent? This 40-day season of repentance and reflection that begins on Ash Wednesday has three important purposes. Lent helps us STOP, LOOK and LISTEN.

We observe Lent because it tells us to STOP and rest awhile — and to stop sinning. Lent tells us to LOOK inward for an honest self-examination, to look upward to see the cross of Jesus with healing and love, and to look forward to the hope of the Resurrection. And we observe Lent because it tells us to LISTEN — to the voice of God, the words of Christ and the movement of the Holy Spirit. STOP, LOOK and LISTEN! These commands that are so crucial for travel safety are also important for our journey through Lent.

at the start - A Prayer for Ash Wednesday

Is this the fast I choose? Will I wake with the sun each morning? Will I start with thank you? Will I peel back the cage around my frame to let you in or will I get too busy? Will my Bible collect dust on the shelf, along with my journal, along with my sense of self, or will I roll back the stone and wade in? Every new season beckons something of us—attention, beauty, the chance to create. This season is no different. So, like moths to the light, will we find our way toward God, or will we hover, circling fake suns? I am seeking something deeper. I am kicking off my shoes. I am starting this season on holy ground.

Prayer by Rev. Sarah Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

NEWS FROM THE BOOK NOOK

The Best Book Deals Around

Happy Valentine's Day month. We have free boxes of valentines for the kids and free giant ones for adults. And until further notice, all CDs and DVDs are half price, 50-cents. Be sure to stop in Tuesdays or Saturdays, 9 to noon. All proceeds/donated books benefit Grace and literacy.



MARTIN LUTHER KING SCHOLARSHIP – The Martin Luther King Scholarship Committee of the Capital Area Council of Churches awards the scholarship each year to graduating seniors who, in part, show a commitment to the ideals and teachings of Dr. King. Applicants are also rated on financial need, academic record, and evidence of service to school, faith community and society. Students chosen as finalists are invited for an interview before the committee. There are copies available at Grace UMC or you may access the scholarship on line at www.capareacc.org. The deadline for applications is March 31, 2023. Please contact the Council's office at (518) 462-5450 or at capareacc@gmail.com, if you have any questions regarding the application and process.

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
16 Hillcrest Drive
Ravena, NY 12143-1409

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK

If you are on Facebook, please join the Church page by liking us at Grace United Methodist Church, Ravena, NY. Find out what's happening each week, including meetings and special events.

OR VISIT US ON THE WEB: www.gumcravena.com