



The Asbury BEACON

December 2023

Volume 23, Number 8

THE VISION OF ASBURY

*To Make Disciples for
Jesus Christ for the
Transformation of the World.*

THE MISSION OF ASBURY

*To Inspire People of
All Generations to
Love, Learn and Lead Through
Worship, Education, and Service.*

THE ASBURY MOTTO

*No Matter Where You Are on Life's
Journey, You Are Welcome Here!*



"Jesus is a light- but when we walk with Him and obey His words, we are also lights to the world." This was the focus of the Sunday School lesson on Sunday, October 29th. The kids then enjoyed games and activities in a day glow room along with some Fall snacks of popcorn and apple cider.



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HELP MAKE CHRISTMAS BASKETS!!

The Women in Faith are sponsoring a get-together to make 25 Christmas Baskets. We are meeting directly after church on Sunday, Dec. 10th in the Parlor. Anyone is welcome to help. Please bring items like apples, tangerines, candy, small decorations, cookies, etc. Please wrap cookies individually. Baskets and cards will be supplied. Thank you!



MATT RAWLE

THE HEART

THAT GREW THREE SIZES

ADVENT BIBLE STUDY

Nov. 27
Dec. 4, 11, 18
7:15 pm

FINDING FAITH IN
THE STORY OF THE GRINCH



*A Note
From the
PASTOR*



Dear Asbury,
Greetings in Christ Jesus!

As you probably noticed, the weather is changing, and we are once again approaching that time of year. God has been doing great things this year through God's people, right here, in this congregation. It is a great time for meditation. Have you stopped to reflect on how God has worked in your life this year?

The scriptures speak at length of God's faithfulness and goodness. The Psalmist writes in Psalm 100:5 (NIV): "*For the LORD is good; his faithfulness continues through all generations.*"

We all know that God has done great things in our lives, but have we stopped to think deeply about this? God does not choose to be good. Rather, God is good in God's essence. Therefore, God is good all the time! Even from the foundation of the world, God knew that God would send God's son, Jesus Christ, to die for the sins of the whole world. God is eternally good, beyond all time and creation. God's goodness does not change, as Hebrews 13:8 says, "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*"

We celebrated Hanging of the Greens on Sunday, November 26; the church is ready for the Advent and Christmas season! As we move into the Christmas season, let us reflect on the abundant, steadfast love of God. Let us rejoice in God's unchanging goodness, the same goodness that sent God's only son into our flesh through the Virgin Mary to bear our sin and be our savior.

Please come and join us this Advent season as we worship together. The first Sunday of Advent is Sunday, December 3. We will share in Holy Communion in the Sanctuary Service on Dec. 10, due to the Northern Choral Christmas Concert. The Chapel Service will celebrate Holy Communion as scheduled on Sunday, December 3.

For information about Asbury UMC please visit www.AsburyUMC.net. Here you will find our Church calendar, worship videos, worship times and activities, our beliefs, and tools to help you grow in God's word.

I hope to see you at one of our December services and at the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on Dec. 24 at 6:30 pm. During our Candlelight Service there will be something special for everyone; guaranteed! When we gather to praise God and celebrate the arrival of the Christ Child, what cannot be guaranteed?!!

Christ's Richest Blessings,

*Pastor
Michael*



BAZAAR RESULTS

\$1600 and still counting! If anyone owes money, please bring it to church next week. Thanks to all of you who created the lovely items and those who helped support our church budget by buying things. Thank you, also, to Sarah Lehman for organizing the food sale. The baked goods were scrumptious!

HANGING OF THE GREENS



Asbury's children and youth assist in decorating the Christmas tree as a part of the "Hanging of the Greens."

The Evergreen Tree:

In ancient times the cedar was revered as the tree of royalty. It also signified immortality, and was used for purification. We have placed this tree in the sanctuary as a symbol of Christ, who reigns as King forever, and whose coming will purify our hearts.





Stewardship with Rev. Susan Ranous *Year End Reminders About Charitable Donations*

I thought, as we got closer to the end of the year, that I'd give everyone a list of reminders. I know more and more people aren't itemizing, so, for many, charitable donations aren't tax deductions, but some may still itemize and some may still have the mindset of making contributions prior to year-end. So here is a list of information. I think it might be a good idea to include this in your church newsletters as a reminder to folks.

1. Only donations made during 2023 are deductible in 2023. A donation made in 2024 will be deductible in 2024.
2. What happens if my contribution that I mailed in December isn't received by the church until 2024? It all depends on what the postmark is on the envelope. If the postmark is 2023, it is deductible in 2023, even if the envelope isn't received by the church until 2024.
3. Is the amount I send to the church for a retreat or other event deductible? No. Receiving benefits (attendance at a retreat, a dinner, etc.) worth an amount equal to or greater than the amount you sent in means it is NOT deductible. Only the amount that exceeds what you received would be deductible.
4. I spend a lot of time volunteering at my church. If they had to pay someone to do what I do, it would cost a great deal of money. Can I deduct the value of what I do as a contribution? No. The value of personal services is never deductible. Only the amount of unreimbursed expenses that you spent while doing the services (i.e. mileage at the charitable standard rate (14 cents per mile) plus any other out of pocket costs (paper, supplies, etc.)) As an example, a mission trip might have some unreimbursed travel expenses that could be deductible as a charitable contribution.
5. There are IRS limitations on what is a deductible contribution on a tax return. The amount that can be deducted in any given year usually cannot exceed 60% of the adjusted gross income of the taxpayer.
6. What records do I need to keep?
 - a. No cash contributions can be deducted unless you have a cancelled check, bank statement or credit card statement showing the name of the church, the amount and date, a receipt (or letter or other communication) from the church, or payroll deduction records.
 - b. For individual contributions (cash or property) of \$250 or more, you will need to have a contemporaneous written acknowledgement from the church with the church's identifying information, a designation of any non-cash contributions and a statement that "no good or services were received in exchange for this contribution other than intangible religious benefits."
 - c. For contributions worth \$500 or more, other rules apply. Noncash items worth more than \$5000 will require a special tax form on the taxpayer's return (Form 8283). Exceptions may apply.
 - d. For donations of cars, boats or planes, there are special rules.

Other reminders for the treasurer/financial secretary:

1. Non-cash donations are not reported on the "normal" giving statements that contain cash donations. A separate letter by the church acknowledging the non-cash item received is what should be used instead, i.e. "500 shares of Apple stock were given on August 1, 2023." No value specified, and nothing included on the giving statement.
2. Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD) are also not reported on the normal giving statement. A letter is sent to the donor (owner of the retirement account), acknowledging the receipt of the QCD, amount, date, and from whom it was received (i.e. JPMorgan). A second letter is sent to the company that sent the funds (i.e. JP Morgan). A contribution made via QCD is not deductible by the giver, because the retirement distribution is also not recognized as income by the giver. If you have other question on this, there is an earlier blog that might be helpful. (Qualified Charitable Distribution – February 8, 2023).

Of course, each person should consult with their tax professional to get specific questions answered. These are the general items that pertain to charitable contributions. If you wish more information on this or would like to discuss stewardship and its relationship with discipleship, please feel free to contact me at (315) 427-3668 or sranousacctg@twcny.rr.com. I'd be happy to help.

Submitted by Paul Simmons

Annual Memorial Tree Celebration

Dear Asbury family,

As we approach the season of Advent, we invite you to join us in a cherished tradition that holds a special place in our hearts - the Annual Memorial Tree.

The back of the sanctuary will be adorned with a memorial tree, symbolizing the enduring spirit of our loved ones. You have the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the Memorial Committee in honor of someone dear to you.

How it works:

- Make a donation to the Memorial Committee. Make your check out to "Asbury UMC - Memorial Tree."
- Fill out the form included in the Sunday bulletin and return it with your check to the church office by **Sunday, December 10th**. Please do not include it in your regular weekly offering envelope.
- In return, a beautiful ornament will be placed on the tree throughout the Advent season. Each ornament bears the name of the person you wish to honor, creating a lasting tribute in our sacred space.

This act not only illuminates the beauty of remembrance but also contributes to the meaningful work of our Memorial Committee. Your participation in this tradition helps us create a sanctuary filled with warmth, love, and the enduring spirit of those we hold dear.

For more information, please contact Lisa Smith at ljsmith2100@gmail.com or (315) 778-4173.

With love and gratitude,
Asbury Memorial Committee



SCRIPTURE OF THE WEEK

submitted by Max Bovee

December 3: Hebrews 10:35

"Do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward."

December 10: James 3:17

"The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable."

December 17: James 4:6

"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

December 24: 2 Peter 1:8

"If these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord, Jesus Christ."

December 31: Revelation 22:20

"Surely, I am coming quickly."



10th Mountain Division

*Merry
Christmas!!*



TO OUR ADOPTED PLATOON



- December 1 Joanne Rhode
- December 1 Paul Simmons
- December 1 Lawrence Littell
- December 7 Mike Hill
- December 12 Sarah Lehman
- December 21 Olivia Lehman
- December 21 Willow Terrell
- December 22 Mary Smith



**OCTOBER & NOVEMBER
BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES**



Bill and Lisa Smith
December 27, 1997

Rev. Peter and Catherine Mowers
December 29, 2001



**A Loss
in the Church
Family**

Perry O. Kelts
November 5, 2023
73 years of age



Pam Quimby, Cathy Mowers, Dale and Marianne Scott, Tamara Klock, Darlene Town, Valerie Gehring, Martha Jablonski, and Lindsay Webb

ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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www.Facebook.com/Asbury13601

Address Service Requested



Join us for
SUNDAY WORSHIP
at
8:15 a.m.
10:15 a.m.



Scan to visit
Asbury's
website



Asbury United Methodist Church

*No Matter Where You Are on
Life's Journey,
You Are Welcome Here!*

