

# The Asbury BEACON

December 2023

Volume 23, Number 8

#### THE VISION OF ASBURY

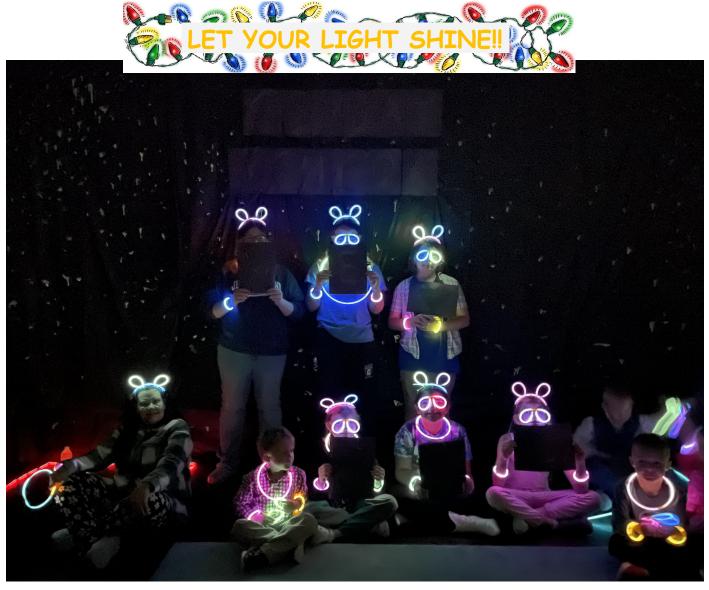
To Make Disciples for Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World.

#### 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.



#### **ASBURY'S STAFF**

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT FAITH KIRCH

# ASSISTANT TO THE PASTOR-VISITATION

JANE EASTHAM
CELL PHONE: 315-804-1350
EMAIL:

URBANMISSIONJANE@YAHOO.COM

#### **BROADCAST MINISTRY**

**BOB KURTZ** 

#### **CLEANING SERVICES**

FRANCES GOUTREMOUT

#### CONGREGATIONAL CARE

PAMELA QUIMBY
DARLENE WELBOURN

#### FINANCIAL SECRETARY

DAN WEBB

#### **TREASURER**

FAITH KIRCH

#### MAINTENANCE

WILLIAM NOVISKI

#### MUSIC PROGRAM DIRECTOR

**CATHERINE MOWERS** 

#### MUSIC PROGRAM STAFF

GHILYANA DORDZHIEVA
MARTHA JABLONSKI
LYNN MORGAN
MELANIE RAFFERTY
MICHELLE RUDD
LISA SMITH
LAURA WASHBURN
BINA WEST

#### **NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

SUE BEAMAN
ASBURYBEACON@GMAIL.COM

# PASTOR

MICHAEL TERRELL



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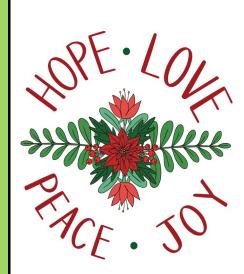
#### **THE ASBURY MOTTO**

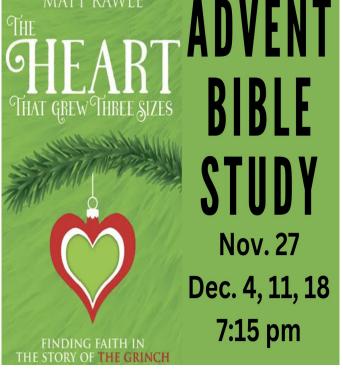
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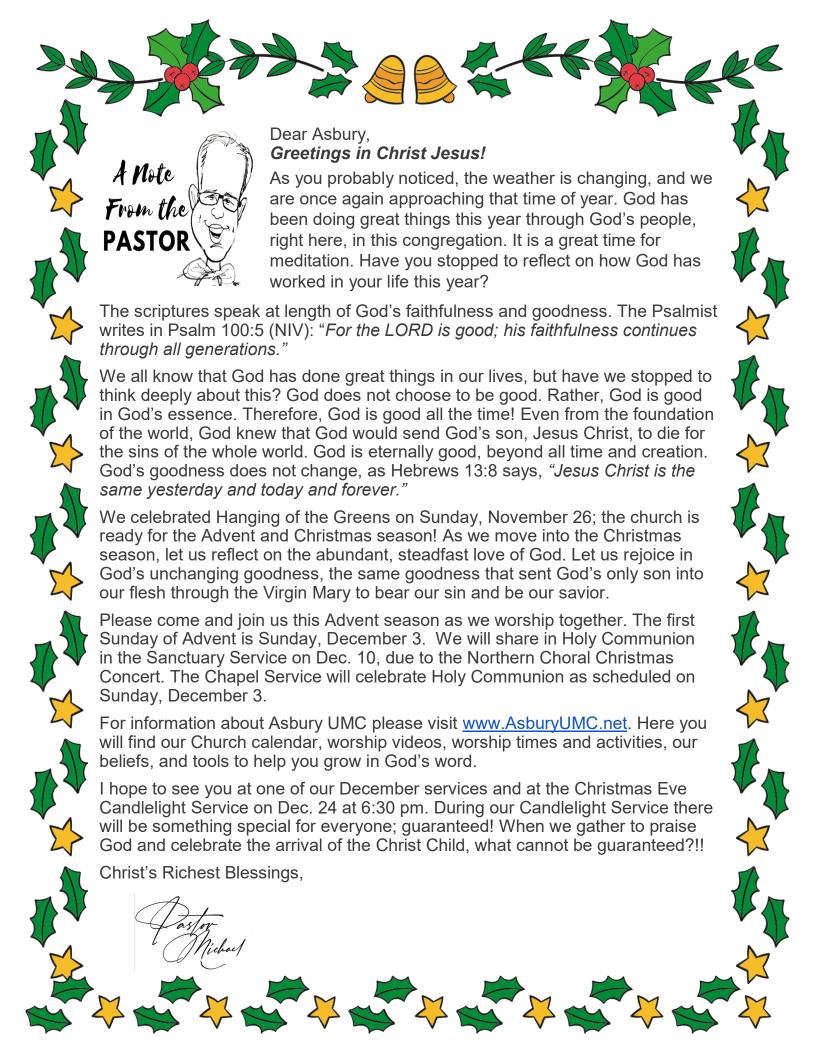


## HELP MAKE CHRISTMAS BASKETS!!

The Women in Faith are sponsoring a get-together to make 25 Christmas Baskets. We are meeting directly after church on Sunday, Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> 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!









# **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.

# 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@amail.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."



# Merry Christmas!!



# **TO OUR ADOPTED PLATOON**





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



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Bill and Lisa Smith December 27, 1997

Rev. Peter and Catherine Mowers December 29, 2001



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



OCTOBER & NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES



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

# ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

327 Franklin Street Watertown, NY 13601 315-782-3240

E-Mail: asbury@gisco.net Website: www.AsburyUMC.net 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





