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FEBRUARY 2019

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25

Not so long ago, an orange light on your dashboard meant your car required immediate attention because something was seriously wrong. Today's "smart" cars tell you when it's time for preventive maintenance—which means it's easy to put it off until the timing is more convenient. In my early marriage, years ago, my husband and I discovered the cost of putting off an oil change for too long. At that time, we didn't have a light to remind us "maintenance required" and before we knew it, two years had gone by without an oil change. We realized our negligence when we ended up with some engine trouble. To our dismay, we found ourselves with the inconvenience of a broken down car and a costly expense to pay for our mistake.

Just as an automobile requires periodic maintenance, we also need to keep up with our spiritual maintenance. It's so easy to put your spiritual life on the back burner. Life is busy. There are other things to do. We're tired, overwhelmed, and burnt out. Other priorities make demands on our time and often take precedence before church, Bible reading, prayer, worship etc. But when we neglect these things, we may find ourselves in trouble



FROM OUR PASTOR

at some point. Life will be going along just fine, just as our car kept running while we put off the oil change, but then something happens. An illness. A death. An accident. Or maybe just a bad day. And we discover that our spiritual gas tank, so to speak, is empty. But when we remember to take care of our spiritual lives so

that our faith is strong, we find that God gives us the strength to handle anything that comes our way. God gives us peace and hope in every circumstance. And most importantly, God reassures that

He is with us every step of the way. After all, that's the message we recently celebrated at Christmas and see in the stories of Jesus' life on earth—God is with us.

Not only is spiritual maintenance important in our personal lives, it's important in the church as well. When we don't support our church fully and regularly—especially with our presence, the sharing of our gifts and talents, and our financial resources—we may find out one day that the church can no longer keep going, just as my car eventually broke down from lack of maintenance. While we live in a time when so many things compete for our time, it's easy to take the church—and God—for granted. We may think that the church will always be there just as it's always been. Now that it's a new year, it's a good time to look back and see how much spiritual maintenance we did in 2018—both for ourselves and for our church. And it's a good time to make a resolution to do better in 2019. The years go by quickly, just as

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the two years without an oil change in my car seemed to fly by. Don't let the time go by without taking care of your own spiritual maintenance or in taking care of the church. We don't have an orange light on the dashboard to remind us, so I hope you'll make it a priority to set aside time every day for prayer and an hour every Sunday for worship. Maintenance required.

Peace,

—Rev. Del

Cancelled?

In case of inclement weather, notice of closing/cancellation of worship services, meetings, or events will be posted on Channel 9, social media, and the church website (as soon as available).

In case of cancellation of a church-wide event or worship service, every effort will be made to contact the entire congregation. The best way of doing this is through e-mail, so please be sure to keep the church updated on any changes in your address.

Phone calls will be made to those who do not use e-mail, however, please do not assume that because we do not have an email address for you that you are automatically on the phone calling list. **If you are willing to make phone calls for this emergency purpose, please let the church office know.**

Those who have downloaded the church app on their phones and have allowed push notifications may also receive a notice from the app.

Watch for upcoming info on organizing yet another way of communication in setting up group text messages for those who use smart phones.

UPPER ROOM and OUR DAILY BREAD

for the next season are available in the narthex. Donations are appreciated to help cover costs.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Do you need help with home repairs? Catholic Charities will provide small home repairs at very low costs. For information or to schedule a repair, call the Project Fix Office at 424-1810 ext. 16.

Special dates

- African-American History Month
- Valentine's Day, February 14, 2019
- Presidents Day, February 18, 2019

Story of a Prayer Shawl

The very first Prayer Shawl I made I started for a serviceman in Iraq. It was summer and our church had agreed to make Prayer Shawls with another church to send to our brave soldiers fighting for us, to help keep them safe and warm.

My husband and I were invited to a summer wedding for a couple in their mid-thirties. I was so happy for them, I couldn't wait to attend. That night tragedy struck. The groom fell from a 3rd story balcony, landing in the parking lot below. He was given CPR and rushed to Upstate by ambulance. He lay in a coma for over a week. The doctors were not giving the family any hope of recovery.

I was crushed. I started knitting on my prayer shawl every free minute I had, and prayed to God not to take this young man on his wedding night. In a few weeks the Shawl was done and, after getting some more people to pray with me, I delivered it to the hospital.

The family had no idea what a prayer shawl was so I explained the best I could to them and to the patient. Weeks went by and he awoke from his coma, attended rehab and went home. The prayer shawl went everywhere with him and his wife. In time he was able to pass the test to get his driver's license back, and you could talk with him without knowing he had had such a brain injury.

One other thing I want to say. The day I delivered that shawl the intense energy I felt while I was working on it left me during the delivery. It felt like it stayed with the shawl and I had passed God's energy on to the patient.

—Written by Norine Stephan



You are invited to join the group that is making prayer shawls.

When completed, they are blessed and made available to those who would benefit by having a comforting shawl to surround them during a time of illness, stress or loss, etc.

For more information contact Norine Stephan at 315-437-8581.



On the one hand, there is the new Mitch Albom book, *The Next Person You Meet in Heaven*. It is a thought provoking sequel to his earlier bestseller, *The 5 People You Meet in Heaven*. They tend to envision a world set up by a loving God who is deeply involved in, and concerned with, life on earth. And this God has set up a glorious heaven with order and wonder we can only begin to imagine.

There is another perspective however. I was listening to a Don Henley (the drummer and singer from the Eagles for those of you who are unfamiliar with him) song with a description of life as we know it, calling it a 'soul sucking' existence! It is very critical of our modern day pursuit of 'things'. These things can be seen as our drive to make more money, or to get more or better cars, boats, camps, homes etc. Even our glorification of power and status.

Which brings to mind the prophecies of Isaiah. This Old Testament prophet had been called to a very difficult task: to tell the chosen people of God Almighty that they are doing wrong; chasing after the wind, in the words of Ecclesiastes. The people had forgotten about the blessings provided by the Lord each and every day. They followed other 'gods' too: wealth, influence and position.

As we drove Camryn back to Stonybrook for 2nd semester last Sunday, we of course encountered a mass exodus from and entrance to, New York City. Literally zillions of cars racing to and fro, and to what purpose? Why do we spend so much time searching? And maybe even more significantly, what is it we are searching for? We have certainly had our share of cold and blustery days this winter (thank another result of global warming). But we can't catch those winds or these other winds we all seem to be so concerned with either. We may get \$\$\$\$ and promotions, etc... however they do not provide the lasting peace and life of purpose that we NEED, not just want. Which brings us back to the only way to reach these vastly more important goals: the SPIRIT. It is only through our belief in God, our parent, and the son, Jesus, that we can truly find peace.

So as we reach February, we can spend Groundhog's Day (if you recall seeing the movie of the same name) over and over again seeking all the 'things' of this life. Or we can celebrate Valentine's Day by sharing the love of our Lord and Savior. The choice is ours. What do we believe? Who do we think we may encounter in the next life? And what will be the result of that encounter?

May God bless our searching.

Peace,

—Dale H. Greabell for the Christian Education dept.

February Follies

- 3 - communion
- 10 - Valentine creating and celebrating
- 17 - snow exploration
- 24 - no Christian Education - winter break

The church as mosaic



A mosaic consists of thousands of little stones. Some are blue, some are green, some are yellow, some are gold. When we bring our faces close to the mosaic, we can admire the beauty of each stone. But as we step back from it, we can see that all these little stones reveal to us a beautiful picture, telling a story none of these stones can tell by itself.

That is what our life in [the church] is about. Each of us is like a little stone, but together we reveal the face of God to the world. Nobody can say: "I make God visible." But others who see us together can say: "They make God visible." [Christian] community is where humility and glory touch.

—Henri J.M. Nouwen

Communications:

If you would like to receive e-mail updates from the church, place your e-mail address on the Friendship pad or leave it in the office.

Food Collection

Please bring to church non-perishable food for our pantry. Please note dates on any items. Items with expired dates **cannot** be used. A basket for donations is in the narthex every Sunday. Food will be used for our holiday basket distribution.



The 2018 Treasurer's Report showed a surplus of \$12,417 at the end of the year, which includes \$3,559 surplus carried over from 2017. The total actual income for the year is \$159,573 and the expenses are \$150,715.

The budget for 2019, adopted by the congregation at the Annual Meeting, is \$155,479, which includes \$1,703 from the 2018 surplus, if needed. The budgeted expenses are \$155,479. The salaries for staff are increased by 2% in 2019. Starting in January 2019 our church's newsletter, Contact, is being delivered via electronic sources. It is estimated this change will decrease the cost more than \$1,300 this year as a result of savings from postage, toner and paper usage. For those who do not have an electronic device or prefer to receive a printed copy of Contact in the mail, notify the church office. A few copies will be available in the narthex.

The major sources of income are pledges, other offerings, interest and fundraising events. If you experience a significant change in your finances during the year, please notify our church Assistant Treasurer, Cheryl Fox, at 315-656-4625 or cafox9@gmail.com.

—Anne Coughenour, for Your Finance Committee

Important Reminder

Any accident or incident that occurs on church property, in or outside the building, that results in an injury to any person must be reported as soon as possible.

Although an injury may seem minor and does not require attention by a medical professional, it must be reported to the appropriate person(s) serving in an oversight position for the church.

Currently reporting is to be to Anne Coughenour, Parish Council Chairperson and/or Bill Jacques, Building Manager.

An injury that initially seems minor, may develop into a more serious condition. Thus, it is important for the church to have a completed Accident Report form on file.

Puzzle!

Love is a fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23. Identify another fruit that can make Valentine's Day — and every day — special. First, write a word that fits each clue below. Then unscramble the letters from the bold, vertical column to find another fruit of the Spirit.

Write it on the blanks below.

LEAVE

CHAPEAU

TRANQUILITY

BECOME MATURE

RESPOND

SPHERE

OLD TESTAMENT QUEEN

DISCOVER

CONFIDENCE

ALWAYS



Lighten your load

Keeping sabbath, not just on Sundays but throughout the entire week in an integrated way, keeps us sane, says Donna Schaper. While our culture pushes us to move faster, work harder and acquire more money and stuff, sabbath observances promote play, rest, love and worship.

"Sabbath — time for God — is a gift in its origin and in its keeping," Schaper writes in Sabbath Keeping (Cowley Publications). "It is not another must; it is a may. God invites us to keep sabbath; God does not demand it."

The commandment to keep the Sabbath day holy, she notes, "is an invitation to a party, not to a hanging. Sabbath keeping is not one more thing to add to our already long lists. [It] is lightness, not heaviness."

The Newsletter



In February

1. Elaina Jane Gooden,
2. Anne Coughenour
3. Barbara Manley
4. Richard Greabell,
Sue Borasky
5. Phillip Thomas Evans
11. Jodi Sanson,
William Evans (child)
13. Dennis Cooter
14. Karen Novak,
Carol & Ron Courtwright's anniversary
15. Paul Spero
17. Austin Davis
18. Karen Dunn,
Jill & Bill Capsello's anniversary
20. Joshua Law Post
23. Ray Carney,
Diana Law,
Robert Briggs
24. Forrest Law,
Barbara Weyer,
Cheryl DeNero,
Gabrielle Orphanides
25. Samantha Lear,
Darlene Lesser
26. Carole Weyer
28. Jacqueline Law,
Lee Clark



Bottles for the Budget/ Cans for the Church:

Please bring **only clean and rinsed out New York State deposit bottles and cans** to church every Sunday.

Proceeds raised will go to our Building Fund.

Prayer and Personal Concerns



In Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Assisted Living

Nancy Bregard – Morning Star Care Center - Oswego
Juanita Coleman – Elderwood – Diane Shafer's mother
Paul Harding – Crown Park Nursing Home - Cortland

At Home

Chuck Baker
Daniel Camp – friend of Christy Knowlton
Shayna Fielding – Bev & Earl Lowe's granddaughter
Jean Troy & Debbie Kelly – Shancy Gorman's cousins
Betty Hickox – Lynn Jacques' mother
Chuck & Madeline Kieb – Horton family friends
Tim Krezmien – Nancy Miller's grandson
Eugene Lansing
Terri Lavergne
Mary Pat Lavigne – Chuck & Marsha Provo's daughter
Barbara Manley
Heather Miles – friend of the Provos
Patty Miller – friend of the Provos
Christine Opera – Shancy Gorman's niece
John Novak
Dolores Ruszczyk –
Mark Radley
Bob Stanton – Terri LaVergne's uncle
Judy Walters

Serving in the Armed Forces:

Tina Bearup - US Navy - Joan O'Donnell's niece
Bret Gratien - US Air Force – Dover AFB - grandson of Peggy & Ray Haynes
Jamie Jarmacz - US Air Force - Dick & Diana Law's son-in-law
Andrew Metz – California
Austin Miller – US Navy – Linda Graves grandson
Beth and Nate Roczen – US Army - Horton family friends
Eric Spero – US Navy

Please notify the office of any changes so this list may be kept current.



February 2019

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

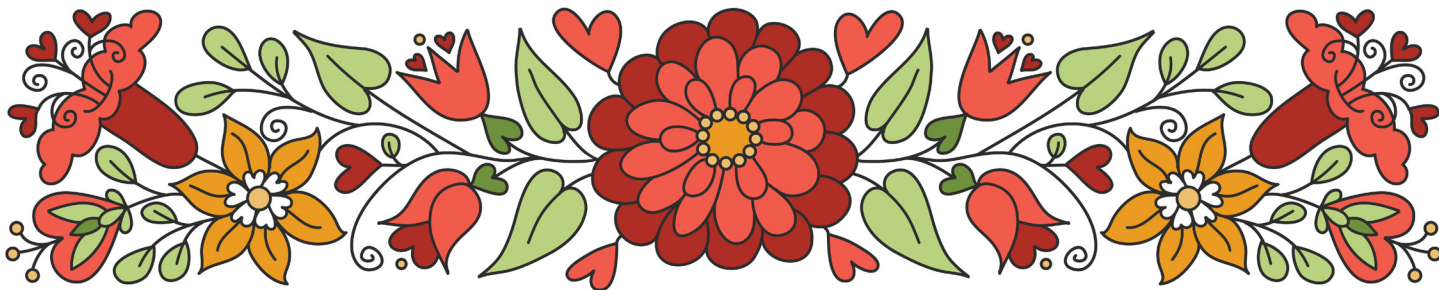
Sat

Puzzle Answer key (from page 4)

Answer: depart, hat, peace, grow, answer, ball, Esther, find, trust, ever, gentleness

					1	2 Groundhog Day
3 10:00 AM Worship & Christian Ed. 2:00 PM Girl Scouts, (Lounge)	4	5	6	7 5:30 PM Girl Scouts (FH)	8	9
10 10:00 AM Worship & Christian Ed.	11 7:00 PM Girl Scout Service Unit (Lounge)	12 Lincoln's Birthday 6:30 PM Parish Council (Lounge)	13	14 Valentine's Day 5:30 PM Girl Scouts (FH)	15	16
17 Installation Service 10:00 AM Worship & Christian Ed. 11:15 AM Sandwich Making 2:00 PM Girl Scouts, (Lounge) 3:00 PM Mission Comm. @ The Crossings	18	19	20	21 5:30 PM Girl Scouts (FH)	22 Washington's Birthday	23
24 10:00 AM Worship & Christian Ed.	25	26	27	28 5:30 PM Girl Scouts (FH)		

First United Church of East Syracuse Events



A MESSAGE OF *Love*

Make this valentine for a family member or friend.



What you need:

- 10 wooden craft sticks
- Painter's tape
- Markers
- A photo and glue (optional)
- Craft knife (and adult help)
- Ribbon or a rubber band

What you do:

1. Set the sticks side by side. Secure with two tape strips.
2. Flip the sticks over. Draw (or glue on) a picture or write a message or Bible verse. If using glue, let dry.
3. Flip the sticks again and remove tape. If you glued on a photo, have an adult help cut the sticks (and photo) apart.
4. Secure the sticks with ribbon or a rubber band.
5. Deliver the gift and invite the recipient to assemble the puzzle.



WITH LOVE FROM ABOVE

The Bible is full of special words from our loving God.

Directions: Using the messages on the candy hearts, complete the Bible verses (all NIV) below.



God is our _____ and _____,
an ever-present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1

"Surely I am with you _____." Matthew 28:20

And the _____ of God ... will guard
your hearts and your minds in
_____. Philippians 4:7

Whoever lives in _____ lives in God,
and God in them. 1 John 4:16

_____ love drives out fear. 1 John 4:18

Answer: refuge, strength, always, peace, Christ Jesus, love, Perfect

First United Church of East Syracuse
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Neighborly love

As an ordained minister, Fred Rogers harnessed the power of television to tell children they were loved — and to show them how to love others. In *You Are Special*, he writes, “When we love a person, we accept him or her exactly as is: the lovely with the unlovely, the strong along with the fearful, the true mixed in with the façade, and of course, the only way we can do it is by accepting ourselves that way.”

In a review of the touching documentary *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* a writer for *Variety* notes: “Rogers’ real secret was ... that the call to love your neighbor as yourself isn’t a slogan to hang in your kitchen with flowers around it — it’s a decision you make at every moment, to view every man, woman and child on earth as your neighbor. If you don’t see and feel that, and act on it, then you’re just another narcissist with a kitchen slogan.”

Last October, when a synagogue shooting shattered the peace of Rogers’ real-life former neighborhood, residents of all religions embraced one another as neighbors. Afterward, the Fred Rogers Center stated, “We long for a day when there is no more tragedy born from hatred.”

Got love?

Love asks nothing in return but seeks those who need it. And who needs our love more than those who are consumed with hatred and are utterly devoid of love?

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

