

# The Nimmonsburg Witness

Nimmonsburg United Methodist Church

918 Upper Front Street, Binghamton, New York 13905

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December 2023

## Clarifying our Vision



Whether it's cleaning the ice off a windshield or washing windows in the midst of Spring cleaning, taking time to clarify our vision is important. As we head into the new year, leaders of the church are asking questions we hope

will clarify our vision of the preferred future God has for us, and the next steps on the path we will take to get there.

Our mission is stable and clear: *to reach, resource and release disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!* The questions we have are about how we live into that mission in the midst of our current circumstances. **We need to hear from you** as leaders of our church seek to discern a vision that will help us set goals for the coming year and invest our resources wisely. At its best, the church is in an exciting partnership with the Holy Spirit moving in ways that draw people to Christ, and provide healing and positive change to the world.

A short survey will be coming out to you through a number of different church communication channels in early December. Please take some time to pray that we could see together the future God has for us as a congregation.

*Pastor Harold*



Please join us for:

**Worship Service at 9:30 am** on December 24th as we celebrate the upcoming birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the greatest gift of all!

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 4:00 pm** on December 24th with scripture, hymns and some very special music.

## “Hidden Figures” Movie and Discussion



Thanks to everyone who made the “**Hidden Figures**” movie/discussion such a positive experience. From popcorn transforming the scent of the space to pizza and deep discussion of the tools for dismantling racism, the sixteen folks who came out got to love one another and increase our knowledge of how to partner with God to confront evil in our world. It was good to be together.

## Holiday Cards, Greeting Cards and Calendars



United Women in Faith is again collecting new holiday cards, greeting cards and 2024 calendars for the Greater Binghamton Health Center. *(New cards and calendars you receive in the mail are welcome.)*

Please put items in the boxes on the shelf in front of the Church mail-boxes by **December 10th** so they can be delivered in time for the holidays. Thank you for helping !

## Christmas Poinsettias

**Time to order your Christmas Poinsettias!!** The cost is \$15 each *(same as last year)* and the deadline is **December 18th**. Order forms are available in the Church narthex, or you can call the office.

*(Payment is due when you order.)*



## Donations for SUNY-Broome Food Pantry



We were contacted by an instructor at SUNY-Broome asking if we would be willing to help with their Food Pantry. Their pantry is just about depleted and there are many students needing help. We have placed bins in the Church entryway where you can donate non-perishable food items for their pantry. There is also a need for personal hygiene items.

Thank you so much for helping out!





**MESSAGE FROM  
UPPER NEW YORK  
MINISTRY TEAM**

Please be aware of scammers attempting to get personal information from you either via your e-mail account or text messages.

We want to bring to your attention the existence of fraudulent e-mails and texts circulating within the UNY Conference. A lot of these scams ask for money, gift cards, credit card numbers, etc. Many of the messages show the sender as Bishop Héctor A. Burgos Nunez, your District Superintendent, or your Pastor. However, these e-mails and text messages are not from them! To identify these scams, carefully scrutinize the e-mail addresses. Legitimate communications from Bishop Héctor will always end with @unyumc.org, not with generic e-mail providers such as Gmail or Yahoo. Additionally, neither Bishop Héctor or your Pastor would solicit gift cards via text message.

If you encounter any suspicious messages, we strongly advise deleting them immediately.

# Christmas Shoeboxes

## For Boys and Girls Club of Binghamton

Nimmonsburg Church Women United will be collecting Children's Christmas Shoe Boxes and donating them to the Binghamton Boys and Girls Club.

### Suggestions for items to include:

Mittens, gloves, winter hats, earmuffs, socks, slipper socks, games, crayons, coloring books, stickers, writing paper, pencils, erasers, puzzles, tablets, jewelry (for girls), special toothbrush, toothpaste, washcloth, shower gel, barrettes, hair clips and hair ribbons (for girls), card games, game books, balls, checkers, jump ropes or other small toys.

### Ideas for older children:

Small radios, pocket calculators, toothpaste and toothbrushes, shampoo, pens, inexpensive digital watches, movie and food gift certificates. **Girls would also like** body wash, slipper socks, gloves, brushes, combs, curling irons, fancy soaps, jewelry, makeup kits, nail polish, stick-on nails, chap stick, hand cream and journals. **Boys would also like** tube socks, gloves, ski caps, team apparel (Giants, Yankees, Syracuse, etc.), brushes or combs, nail clippers, wallets, chap stick, hand cream, snap together models, and batteries (AA or AAA).

Boxes should be colorfully wrapped, and ribbons and bows may be used. Place on the outside indicating if it is for a boy or girl, and the child's age group. Labels are available in the Church entryway.

**Please do not include candy, gum or snacks due to allergies.**

(See Cheryl Weeks if you need a shoebox or if you have any questions.)

***The deadline for boxes is December 19th.***

***We would love to fill all of the 68 boxes which are needed to give these children a nice Christmas!!***



Everyone who attended the **HARVEST DINNER** enjoyed delicious food, fun and fellowship!



# Let's Keep Christmas

Changes are everywhere. Many institutions and customs that we once thought sacrosanct have gone by the board. Yet there are few that abide, defying time and revolution.

The old message: *“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord”* is still the heart of Christmas. It can be nothing else. And this message can neither be changed—nor quite forgotten although there are many things that tend to make us forget.

The idea of Santa Claus coming in a helicopter does not ring true. No interior decorator with a fondness for yellow or blue could ever persuade me to forsake the Christmas colors of red and green.

I must confess that modernistic Christmas cards leave me cold. I cannot appreciate the dogs and cats, the galloping horses, the ships in full sale ... or any of the cute designs that leave out the traditional symbols of the star ... the manger ... the wise men on their camels. Angels there must be—but not modernistic angels in evening dress with peroxide permanents.

There is no need to search for stories new and different. There is only one after all—and no modern author can improve it:

*“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night, and, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel of the Lord said unto them, ‘Fear not, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you this day is born in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.’”*

We all feel the pressure of approaching Christmas. The traffic is terrible. You can't find a parking space ... The stores are crowded ... mob scenes make shopping a nightmare.

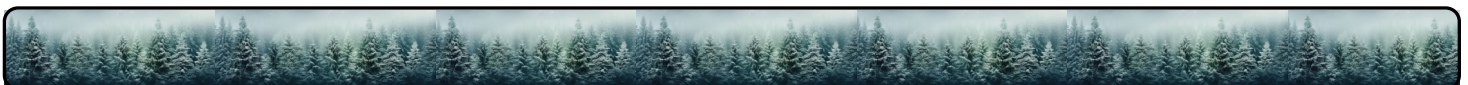
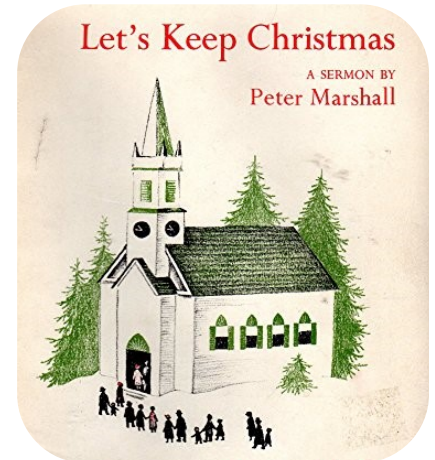
You are thinking about presents—wondering what in the world to get for so-and-so. You can think of friends and loved ones who are so hard to shop for. You can't think of anything they need (which is rather strange when you take time to think of it).

Maybe there is nothing in the store that they need. But what about some token of love—what about love itself ... and friendship ... and understanding ... and consideration ... and a smile ... and a prayer? You can't buy these things in any store and these are the very things people need. We all need them. Blessed will they be who receive them this Christmas or at any time.

Let's not permit the crowds and the rush to crowd Christmas out of our hearts ... for that is where it belongs. Christmas is not in the stores, but in the hearts of people.

Let's not give way to cynicism and mutter that *“Christmas has become commercialized.”* It never will be unless you let it. Your Christmas is not commercialized unless you have commercialized it.

Let's not succumb to the sophistication that complains: *“Christmas belongs only to the children.”* That shows that you have never understood Christmas at all, for the older you get, the more it means, if you know what it means. Christmas, though forever young, grows old with us.



# Let's Keep Christmas—Continued

Have you ever been saying, “I just can’t seem to feel the Christmas spirit this year”? That’s too bad. As a confession of lack of faith, it is rather significant.

You are saying that you feel no joy that Jesus came into the world ... You are confessing that his presence in the world is not a reality to you ... Maybe you need all the more to read the Christmas story all over again, need to sit down with the Gospel of Luke and think about it.

I thank God for Christmas. Would that it lasted all year. For on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, all the world is a better place, and men and women are more lovable. Love itself seeps into every heart and miracles happen.



When Christmas doesn’t make your heart swell up until it nearly bursts ... and fill your eyes with tears ... and make you all soft and warm inside ... then you’ll know that something inside of you is dead.

We hope that there will be snow for Christmas. Why? It is not really important, but it is so nice and old-fashioned, and appropriate, we think.

Isn’t it wonderful to think that nothing can really harm the joy of Christmas ... Although your Christmas tree decorations will include many gadgets such as lights with bubbles in them, it’s the old tree decorations that mean the most ... the ones you save carefully from year to year ... the crooked star that you’ve been so careful with.

And you’ll bring out the tiny manger and the shed, and the little figures of the Holy Family, and lovingly arrange them on the mantel or in the middle of the dining room table. And getting the tree will be a family event with great excitement for the children ... And there will be a closet into which you will forbid your husband to look. And he will be moving through the house mysteriously with bundles under his coat, and you’ll pretend not to notice.



There will be a fragrance of cookies. Baking spices and fruitcake, and the warmth of the house shall be melodious with the lilting strains of “*Silent Night, Holy Night*”. And you’ll listen to the wonderful Christmas music on the radio. Some of the songs will be modern—good enough music perhaps—but it will be the old carols and the lovely old Christmas hymns that will mean the most.

And forests of fir trees will march right into our living rooms. There will be bells on our doors and holly wreaths in our windows. And we shall sweep the Noel skies for their brightest colors and festoon our homes with stars.

There will be a chubby stocking hung by the fireplace ... and with finger to lip you will whisper and ask me to tip-toe, for a little tousled head is asleep and must not be awakened.

And finally Christmas morning will come. Don’t worry—you’ll be ready for it. You’ll catch the spirit all right, or it will catch you which is even better.

And then you will remember what Christmas means—the beginning of Christianity ... the Second Chance for the world ... the hope for peace ... and the only way. The promise that the angels sang is the most wonderful music the world has ever heard. “*Peace on earth and good will toward men.*”





## Let's Keep Christmas—Continued

It was not a pronouncement upon the state of the world then, nor is it a reading of the international barometer of present time ... but it is a promise—God's promise of what will come to pass.

The years that are gone are graveyards in which all the persuasions of men have crumbled into dust. If history has any voice, it is to say that all these ways of men lead nowhere. There remains only one way—The Way— untried, untested, unexplored fully ... the way of Him who was born a babe in Bethlehem.

In a world that seems not only to be changing, but even to be dissolving, there are tens of millions of us who want Christmas to be the same ... with the same old greeting “*Merry Christmas*” and no other.



We long for the abiding love among men of good will which the season brings ... believing in this ancient miracle of Christmas with its softening, sweetening influence to tug at our heart strings once again.

We want to hold onto the old customs and traditions because they strengthen our family ties, bind us to our friends, make us one with all mankind for whom the Child was born, and bring us back again to the God who gave His only begotten son, that “*whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*”

So we will not “*spend*” Christmas, nor “*observe*” Christmas. We will “*keep*” Christmas—keep it as it is ... in all loveliness of its ancient traditions.

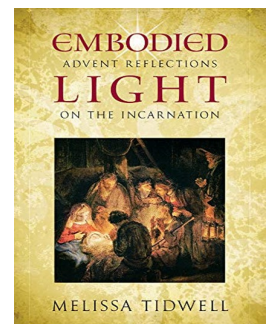
May we keep it in our hearts that we may be kept in its hope.

*This sermon was preached over 50 years ago by Peter Marshall, a Pastor at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. (the same church as George Washington) and U.S. Senate Chaplain.*



## Advent Study - “Embodied Light”

Advent is a time of focus that allows us to practice the spiritual discipline of waiting. We live in a culture that has a difficult time with waiting, a culture that values making things happen and filling our time with busyness. The practice of emptying ourselves to make space for God to lead us on God's time is challenging. This year we will be offering an Advent Study by Melissa Tidwell called “*Embodied Light*”. Scheduling information will be in the church narthex. We hope you can make it!



Please note that the **UMW Christmas Tea** has seen **cancelled**. We apologize that we had to cancel but we are considering having a “*special*” tea sometime early in the new year. Watch for that date .....



## Days to Remember in December

### Birthdays:

12/1 -	Scott Lindsey	12/18 -	Michele Hennings
12/3 -	Judy St. John	12/19 -	Mark Rueffer
	Nathan St. John	12/23 -	Janet Franklin
12/4 -	Michael Burish	12/24 -	Patricia Hiser
12/9 -	Dan Morgan	12/28 -	Mary Fuller
12/11 -	Victoria Austin		Lindsay Rovere
12/12 -	Andy Halavik	12/31 -	Judy Zwick
12/13 -	Holly Sensenig		



***Please let us know if we missed your birthday or anniversary.  
We want to celebrate with you!***

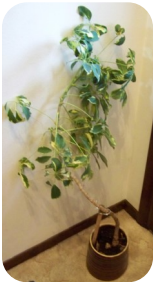


It's that time of year again! Time to start thinking about helping out a less-fortunate family this Holiday Season. We have adopted two families with two children each. There are two boys and two girls. They range from 9 months to 14 years old. We have family "wish lists" and will begin shopping soon. **We need to deliver everything by December 10th.** This is the only holiday assistance this family receives, so let's make it a really wonderful holiday for them!

We are asking for monetary donations so that we can complete all the shopping and be sure the kids' gifts are well balanced. If you would like to donate, please contact Debbie Hagerman at [debhag@hotmail.com](mailto:debhag@hotmail.com) or catch her at church. She does have a Venmo account if you want to send money, or you can give her a check. We will also be providing a gift card for the family's Holiday meal.

Please let Debbie know if you have questions or need any additional information. Thank you!!

It's been 32 years since I survived colon cancer—chemo, radiation, colostomy—the full "nine yards". The first thing I remember as Rev. Flohr held my hand and gently woke me up in recovery was, "I'm alive ... I can beat this!" The Lord was with me and guided the hands of a team of outstanding doctors who were committed to giving me a renewed and high quality of life. The rest of the story and my full recovery is indeed a miracle!



One certainly appreciates the cards, phone calls, prayers and good wishes during such challenging times. Another thing I am grateful for is the living plant given to me by the UMW (now the United Women in Faith). The plant has also survived for 32+ years. It may look a little straggly but we all tend to change a bit after 32 years.

I cherish my long friendship with this beautiful tribute from the United Methodist Women. As I proceed in downsizing in preparation to move to the Highlands/Hilltop (*hopefully soon*), you can be sure my plant will be going with me. One must cherish relationships and old friends! Regardless of its condition, my plant is beautiful in my eyes, and in bringing back memories of the many good wishes I received.

Best wishes to the UMW/UWIF as they continue their outstanding ministry.—Jim Tregaskis



**NIMMONSBURG UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**



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