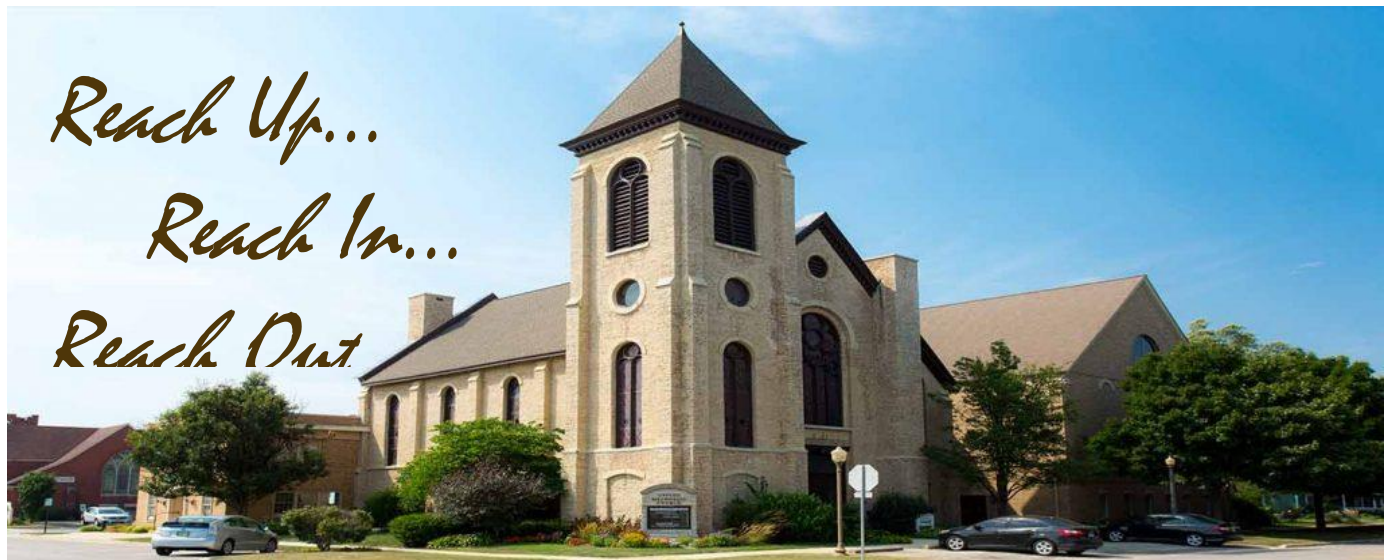


# *the* Messenger



## *Christmas Cantata*



Music Director Scott Stevenson conducted his cantata, "A Quiet Christmas," on **Sunday, December 16, at 9 and 10:30 a.m.** The 55-voice choir performed Stevenson's original song, "Quietly," along with arrangements of well-known Christmas carols, and was directed by Mike Popplewell, Director of Choral Ministries, and accompanied by Stevenson on piano, Deb Stevenson on English horn, and Isaac Stevenson on percussion.

*Photos by Tom Nicol*

# Pastor's Page

## *Looking for Signs*

As I write this column half-way through December, we've almost made it through the *Hallmark* Christmas movie season on TV. I've been watching these movies with my wife over the past few years—in spite of the fact that the plots of these nostalgic, romantic movies are at best rather thin. (I must admit, I can't help asking early on in each movie questions like, "Hmm, I wonder if *she's* going to fall in love with *him* before this movie's over?")

One *Hallmark* movie that sticks out in my mind this year was titled "A Godwink Christmas." I had never heard the term "Godwink," but have been familiar with the term "Godcidence." Essentially, the two terms are the same, referring to "an event or personal experience often identified as coincidence, so astonishing that it is seen as a sign of divine intervention, especially when perceived as the answer to a prayer." The challenge is to be on the lookout for Godwinks in our lives!

I believe in Godwinks. On Cantata Sunday, for instance, a parishioner came up to me after the service convinced that God was confirming their decision to come back to Geneva UMC after a bit of an absence. Why? Because the moment they opened their hymnal to sing, they noticed that the hymnbook they held in their hands had been dedicated to their beloved spouse who had passed away several years back. A Godwink? A Godcidence? I think so!

Roughly two years ago, at a Board of Ordained Ministry meeting, I met Rev. Mary Gay McKinney, a retired elder just placed on the board by our Bishop. We ended up serving on several interview teams together and soon realized we had much in common theologically.

We also had several very close colleagues serving as theology professors at Boston College. Fast forward - several months ago Geneva UMC was looking for someone to oversee our pastoral care ministries. So our SPRC put ads out in several venues recruiting a Coordinator of Pastoral Care. I soon received a phone call from Rev. McKinney stating she had just read an ad for the position. I had no idea she would see that ad much less act on it. I pointed her to our SPRC committee. Voila! Pastor Mary Gay will start her ministry with us the week of January 7. Coincidence? Godcidence? What do you think?

As we continue through the season of Epiphany in the New Year, I urge us, individually and as a church, to be open to, to be on the lookout for, and to act upon the signs of God's leading in our lives. Luke 2:12 speaks directly to the importance of being alert to the signs God is sending us when it states: "This will be a *sign* for you—you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." Thank God that the shepherds on that lonely hillside in Judea heard the angelic message delivered to them that night, trusted God and acted on the sign God sent them! Like those shepherds, may we be actively looking for the signs—the Godwinks—of God's direction and work in our lives. Above all, may we too, respond in faith and obedience to the signs that God is winking right at us!

Wishing you a blessed New Year!

*Pastor Rich*

# *REACH UP...*

## **January 2019 Worship Schedule**

### **8:00 and 9:00 a.m. Sunday Services**

Nursery provided at 9 a.m. service

### **Sunday School Schedule:**

**Children's Sunday School 9:00 a.m.:** Godly Play (3-years-old - Kindergarten)

Journey of Faith (grades 1-4) & Route 56 (grades 5-6)

**Youth Worship/Sunday School** – Starts January 20 from 9-10:15 a.m. (excludes First Sundays)

**Adult Sunday School** - 10:30 a.m.

**Happy New Year!** Worship services on the first two Sundays of the new year will focus on the season of Epiphany. Epiphany helps us experience those “aha” moments when the light of God’s love in the form of Jesus breaks through the darkness and we are able to see the truth of God’s revelation in the incarnation of our Savior. On the third Sunday of January we begin a six-week sermon series based on the work of our Vision 2020 team. The series will help us understand, and live into, our church’s new ministry plan embodied in the phrase ***Reach Up, Reach In and Reach Out.***

**January 6 - [Matthew 2:1-12](#) Epiphany Sunday/First Sunday** We know the darkness of midwinter; days are short and nights are long. But there are other forms of darkness - poverty, war, oppression, hatred, prejudices and fear - forms that affect us just as they did the people of biblical times. In today’s Gospel, light shines through the darkness, even to “outsiders,” the Magi, who follow the light of a star to the babe of Bethlehem, the Savior of the world. They returned home transformed. Will we? Pastor Rich preaches.

**January 13 - [Luke 3:15-22](#)** Jesus’s baptism by John in the Jordan begins Jesus’s public ministry revealing him as the Christ—the Messiah, the one foretold by prophets of old. As we reaffirm our baptismal vows on this special day, we will hear and experience God’s assurance that in our baptisms we, too, are beloved children of God. God loves you and me! How wonderful! How powerful! Pastor Rich preaches.

**January 19 - [Colossians 1:15-20](#) Saturday night worship at 5:00pm!** Come on out for a time of informal worship in the Sanctuary as Pastor Rich addresses the question, “Just how broad is the scope of salvation that God offers through the life and work of Jesus?” As part of the answer to that question, Pastor Rich will be sharing a slide show of his eco-mission in Burkina Faso, West Africa. Pastor Rich preaches.

**January 20 - [Isaiah 6:1-13](#) *Reach Up!*** This is the first of a series of sermons introducing Vision 2020’s ministry plan for our church embodied in the phrase ***Reach Up, Reach In, Reach Out.*** Today we focus on reaching up to God in passionate worship. We will look to the example of the prophet Isaiah whose life-changing call to ministry occurred in the context of worship. Pastor Rich’s sermon will address questions such as, “What is the nature, purpose and outcome of truly passionate worship?”

**January 26 - [Acts 2:43-47](#); [2 Timothy 3:16](#) *Reach Up!*** In addition to reaching up to God in passionate worship, disciples of Jesus also reach up to God in faith formation. Faith formation at UMC-Geneva occurs in many ways and many contexts. However, scripture and Bible study play a central role in faith formation as God transforms our lives according to the model of Jesus. Pastor Becky preaches.



## *REACH UP... REACH IN... REACH OUT...*

**Wondering what this is about?** We're introducing this descriptive phrase as part of our Vision 2020 plan. We **Reach Up** to God in worship and spiritual development, **Reach In** to help those in our congregation, and **Reach Out** to serve others in our community and the world. You'll be seeing and hearing more about this new initiative soon.

## *REACH UP...*

### ADULT COUNCIL EVENT

**Tuesday, January 22, 2019, 7:30 p.m.**

**LECIA BROOKS: "STANDING AGAINST HATE AND EXTREMISM"**

The Adult Council has reserved a limited number of free tickets to **Aurora University Celebrating Arts & Ideas Series**. The event is at Aurora University in Crimi Auditorium, 1347 Prairie St., Aurora. Lecia Brooks, outreach director for the legal advocacy organization Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama, will share the organization's research on extremist groups, civil rights and community resources, promoting tolerance and diversity. Brooks serves as director of the Civil Rights Memorial Center in Montgomery, Alabama, an interpretive center designed to provide visitors to the Civil Rights Memorial with a deeper understanding of the civil rights movement. Previously, she worked for 12 years in a number of capacities for the National Conference for Community and Justice in its Los Angeles office.

**To reserve your tickets or with questions please contact Jim McConnell at 630-715-3480 or email to [mcjamesc@aol.com](mailto:mcjamesc@aol.com). Reservation deadline is **Friday 1/18/19**.**

**Interested in being a Certified Lay Minister? Attend Information Session** Saturday, January 5, at Roselle UMC, 206 Rush St. Roselle, IL 60172. Registration begins 8:30. Session: 9:00 – 12:00 noon. Save your seat and help us plan. Registration fee \$5.00. Register here: <https://www.eiseverywhere.com/ereg/newreg.php?eventid=379284&>.

**Save the Date: Laity convocation, Saturday, February 9, 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.** at New Lenox UMC, 339 W. Haven Ave., New Lenox, IL. Keynote Speaker: Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey, Director of the Missional Church consultation Initiative for the West Ohio conference. She will lead us in a discussion about her Breakthrough Prayer Initiative from her recent book, book *Flood Gates: Holy Momentum for a Fearless Church*. Our small group breakouts will be all about learning and discussing the Way Forward and Special Session of General Conference, which will take, place Feb. 23, 2019. Register online soon at [www.umcnic.org/calendar/laity-convocation-1](http://www.umcnic.org/calendar/laity-convocation-1).

*REACH UP...*



## Christmas Eve Worship





## REACH IN...

### Welcome to Mary Gay McKinney, Coordinator of Congregational Care

We welcome Mary Gay McKinney as our Coordinator of Congregation Care. Mary Gay has a BA in Bible and Religion from Agnes Scott College in Decatur, GA., and a Master of Divinity from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. Mary Gay is an ordained Elder in the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church. During her pastoral ministry Mary Gay served First UMC of DeKalb, Plainfield UMC, and Ivanhoe UMC. Mary Gay also served the Mayfield Congregational UCC and Open Prairie UCC. She retired at Annual Conference in 2017.

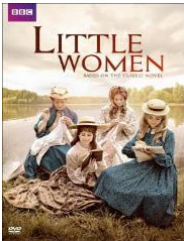


Mary Gay is a Member of the NIC Board of Ordained Ministry and a Member of NIC Reconciling Ministries Network. She is an avid outdoorsperson and has reached the summit of the Grand Teton. Mary Gay's children live in Colorado with one working in Denver and the other two yet in college. We'll be learning more about each other as we share the journey of faith at UMC Geneva.

Mary Gay will focus on supporting our ministries of Welcoming, New Members, Stephen Ministry, and Pastoral Care. Mary Gay has extensive experience in developing and supporting congregational care ministries in both large and small congregations and brings great experience and passion to this position. Please join us in welcoming her as our newest staff member. You can reach her at [MaryGay@genevaumc.org](mailto:MaryGay@genevaumc.org) or at 630-232-7120.

### Book Club News

*Book club meets in a public room at Carriage Oaks Senior Residence on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month at 10:30 a.m. New members are ALWAYS WELCOME to join us for interesting discussion and fellowship. Contact Sharon at 630-879-9544 for more information.*



**Tuesday, January 8** (please note the change of date to the 2nd Tuesday)  
***Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott**

Little Women was originally published in 1868 (150 years ago!) as a semi-autobiographical account of Louisa May Alcott's childhood years. The charming story of the March sisters -- Meg, Jo, Amy and Beth -- enduring hardships and enjoying adventures in Civil War New England has been adored by generations of readers.



**Tuesday, February 5**  
***Wonder* by R. J. Palacio**

Narrated from different characters' perspectives, this novel challenges readers, both young and old, to wonder about the true nature of empathy, compassion, acceptance, friendship, and kindness.

**“Mental Health for Adults” Seminar** The **Committee on Church in Society** will be hosting a “Mental Health First Aid for Adults” class in February 2019. The training, held at our church, is for the benefit of anyone who would like more information on identifying mental health problems in friends or family and then knowing how to respond. The class is offered free of charge through Northwestern Medicine (Delnor Hospital), and consists of either one 8.5-hour class or two 4.5-hour classes. The hospital provides the instructors, manuals, and class supplies.

If interested please call Nancie Lillie, at 630-232-6696, or email [sandnillie@gmail.com](mailto:sandnillie@gmail.com), indicating your preference for one full-day or two half-day sessions. An exact date or dates for the training will be worked out with Delnor once we are assured of the required number of participants.

# YOUTH at UMCG

## Youth Worship

All Youth are invited to join their families  
at 9 a.m. Worship Service in the Sanctuary  
January 6 & 13.

Separate Youth Worship returns January 20.

## Youth Activities

Return the afternoon of  
Sunday, January 20  
at UMCG!

*See you then!*

For more information, contact Denise Clementz,  
Director of Youth Ministry, at  
[denise@genevaumc.org](mailto:denise@genevaumc.org).



*Appalachian Service Project Youth, serving with  
Keith Worthington at Hesed House.*



## Children's Christmas Pageant Sunday, December 2



## REACH IN...

### CCG (Creating Community with God) 2018 Review

As the year 2018 comes to an end, *Creating Community with God* would like to say **THANK YOU** to all who helped make the year's activities a wonderful success: bakers, errand runners, decorators, and, of course, all of you who participate in these activities. **In 2018 we celebrated these ways:**

- All-Church Wisconsin ski trip
- *Saturday Evening Worship* fellowship dinner
- Marklund T-ball game
- Flowers and information sheet for VBS parents
- *Saturday Evening Service* with ice cream social
- Financial support (with other groups in church) for Safe Haven program in Maple Park
- Cougar's baseball game night
- *Worship by the Water* Sunday and luncheon
- All-Church Picnic
- *Saturday Evening Service* - Pie night fellowship
- Ethnic Potluck to honor Veterans and our diversity
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Sock Hop (approximately 700 pairs of new socks for Hesed House)

Fellowship helps us to find common ground, love, and respect. We are looking forward to the next year of adventures with UMCG and hope that you can participate in and support our activities. We are always seeking ideas for fun and interesting fellowship activities. Please share your ideas with us.

### Recycling Greeting Cards... *from the Creation Care Team*

**The rule is: The simpler the card the easier it is to recycle.** Card covers that include glitter, foil (including envelope liners), felt, ribbons and plastic all make a card cover destined for a landfill. So when choosing cards to give others, think simple.

**Card covers can also be repurposed.** Separate the cover from the back of the card. Recycle the back and use the fronts to make gift tags, bookmarks, decorate a plain gift bag or make a new card.

**Card fronts can also be donated.** St Jude's Ranch for Children accepts donations. Check their website @ [stjudesranch.org](http://stjudesranch.org) for more details.

More information on how to reuse and recycle greeting cards can be found at [recyclenation.com](http://recyclenation.com).



### UMCG FINANCE FACTS

**DID YOU KNOW.....when you use a credit card** to make donations/payments to the church, such as church offering, books, classes, events, or ASP fees/donations, the church does not receive your entire payment? For example, UMCG receives approximately \$96.40 for every \$100.00 donation/payment. You receive full credit for the \$100.00, but the church does not receive the entire amount. Please consider increasing the amount you pay to include these fees, so the church will receive the total support that you intended. Questions? Please call the church office Monday through Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 630-232-7120.



## REACH OUT...

### Reaching Out Beyond the Walls of Church (Aurora District Training Event)

Please join us at this event on Saturday, January 26

#### Schedule:

9:30-10:00 a.m.	Registration
9:45	Time of Singing
10:00-10:55	Outreach ideas that really work and do not cost a lot!
10:55-11:05	Break
11:05 - Noon	Engaging the new disciples into the life of the church

Held at **Bethany of Fox Valley UMC, 2200 Ridge Ave., Aurora.** Registration is \$5.  
Sign up and we'll pay your registration! [Becky@genevaumc.org](mailto:Becky@genevaumc.org).

### Opportunities to Reach Out



**Salvation Army Food Pantry** needs for January: canned tuna, canned fruit, jelly, peanut butter, dish soap, laundry detergent, toothpaste, and shampoo.

#### **Lazarus House in St. Charles - Overnight Volunteers needed 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays every month**

Where did you sleep last night? Where will you sleep tonight? Most likely your answer is, "at home in my own bed." What if you didn't have a home to call your own? *Lazarus House* in St. Charles provides a place for people to sleep who have no home – no other choice of where they will sleep. Please consider volunteering to sleep one night at the shelter. UMCG supports *Lazarus House* on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays each month by providing dinner and an overnight volunteer (9:30 p.m.-7:00 a.m.) The volunteer gets to sleep on a rollaway bed in a private staff office, and a *Lazarus House* staff person is awake and on duty all night. The volunteer helps with any late dinner arrivals and in the morning setting out a continental style breakfast. Questions? Please contact Carolyn at 630/222-4150.

## Thank You Notes

**A BIG Thank You** to everyone who helped with our Christmas services: musicians, ushers, choirs, office staff, greeters & all those who helped get the Sanctuary decorated and ready, put out luminaries, showed slides, assisted with worship, and lighted Advent candles. *Thanks for helping!*

**Salvation Army Bell Ringing at Wal-Mart in Batavia** – Thanks to everyone who helped with Christmas ringing!



#### **Cantata Bake Sale supporting *Rebuilding Haiti Now* and *Kids Alive Haiti***

A huge thank you to all the bakers, buyers, and helpers! This year's **Cantata Sunday bake sale** raised \$1,000, which will be split between *Rebuilding Haiti Now* and *Kids Alive Haiti*. If you would like to learn more about these two ministries, feel free to contact Veronique about *Rebuilding Haiti Now* and Sharon Anderson about *Kids Alive*. *Kids Alive* Christmas gift catalogues and sponsorship cards are available in the church narthex for anyone interested.



*Please join us for the*  
**Geneva United  
Methodist Church**

## **Scholarship Fundraiser Wednesday, January 9, 2019**

It's Easy and Fun! Present this coupon to your server, delivery driver or at the carryout window and the Geneva United Methodist Church Scholarship Fund will receive 15% of your total check.

**Good ALL DAY Wednesday, January 9, 2019**

only at the

Geneva Aurelio's 330 W. State St. 630-262-8440

Hours: 11am - 9pm

\*Good for Carryout, Delivery or Dine-In!

### ***MESSENGER DEADLINE***

**Submit Articles for FEBRUARY Messenger  
by Tuesday, January 15.**

Send information to

[communications@genevaumc.org](mailto:communications@genevaumc.org)

Subj: Messenger

**United Methodist Church of Geneva**  
211 Hamilton Street  
Geneva, IL 60134