

the Messenger

*Reach Up...
Reach In...
Reach Out...*



*Christmas
Cantata
December 15*



Pastor's Page

Three “P’s” for a New Year

Recently members of a study group at UMCg were asked to share their favorite parable or story from the Gospels. Answers came fast and furious as an amazing array of favorite stories poured forth. As we enter the New Year of 2020, I'd like to reflect briefly on one parable and one story that are favorites of mine. In fact, the two are told sequentially in Luke's Gospel: the parable of the Good Samaritan and the story of Mary and Martha hosting Jesus in their home. (Luke 10:25-42 – I encourage you to read both stories together.) On the surface, these two stories appear to be very different in terms of their setting, focus and content. The parable of the Good Samaritan is set on a dangerous stretch of public highway between Jerusalem and Jericho. The story of Mary and Martha takes place in the safety of their private home. While the Good Samaritan focuses on very public issues—controversial issues of ethnic, religious and political tension, Mary and Martha's squabble focuses on matters of proper etiquette and hospitality – what it means to be a good host or hostess in one's home.

Yet, when one digs deeper, delving beneath the surface, one discovers that these stories are intimately connected and deal with the same themes – three themes that are important for us to consider, and act upon, as we enter a new year. What are these themes? They are our priorities, perceptions and practice. So let's start with priorities. What priorities do these stories foster as we enter 2020? In a word – the priority is love. Love for neighbor (the Good Samaritan) and love for God (Mary and Martha). The Good Samaritan reminds us that our neighbor is anyone in need, and that the “good life” emerges as we move from a self-centered existence to an other-centered existence. So let's beware in 2020 when we hear folks saying things like “me first,” “my ethnic group first,” “my political party first,” “my religion” and “my nation first.” Mary and Martha also stress the need for love—our top priority is to love God (and God's word). Love of God and love of neighbor, then, are our priorities for 2020.

What about perceptions? Both stories say a whole lot about it! If you *look closely* at the parable of the Good Samaritan, you'll come to *see* that it focuses on *seeing*. *Seeing* those in need. And if you *listen* closely to the story of Mary and Martha, you'll *hear* its focus on the importance of listening to others, but especially to Jesus. So in 2020, as we look out on our world, will we be looking for and seeing persons in need? And will we be listening, truly listening to Jesus and his life-changing, world-altering message?

Finally, these two stories have a third theme in common – the theme of practice, the importance of doing! Take a good hard look at how paradoxical these two stories are. In the Good Samaritan, both the priest and Levite (religious leaders) see the broken and bleeding man in the ditch but choose to walk on by, doing nothing for him. The Samaritan, however, sees him, has compassion on him, goes to him and bandages his wounds, puts him on his donkey, brings him to an inn, takes care of him, pays for his room and board and offers to do more! As for Mary and Martha, we are reminded that love for God is manifest in active listening that leads to obedience. Instead of telling Jesus what to do (as did Martha), Mary chooses the better part, listens to the Lord, and lets Jesus tell her what to do.

In 2020, let's allow these two powerful stories from Luke 10 to be our guide. Let's make love of God and neighbor our priority. Let's both hear and do God's word. And let's be sure to share God's transforming love in both the private and the public spheres.

Have a blessed New Year!

Pastor Rich

REACH UP...

January 2020 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 and 6)

Youth Worship/Sunday School - 9-10:15 a.m. except First Sundays

Adult Sunday School - 10:30 a.m.

January 5 Epiphany Sunday – *Light in the Darkness* (Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12)

Today's scripture is more than a story of evil King Herod and good King Jesus who is worshipped and adored by the Magi. These verses are full of promises - of light to those who live in darkness, of justice to those who suffer at the hands of others, of grace to the lost and salvation to the Gentiles. Epiphany is a day to celebrate God's love for all – especially for those in most need of God's love and light. Pastor Esther preaches.

January 12 Baptism of the Lord – *The Power of Memory* (Matthew 3:13-17)

Today we not only celebrate Jesus's baptism; we remember our own baptisms and call to discipleship and ministry. We are all God's beloved, and God is pleased when we recognize and respond to our creation and our call. Today we will remember and be thankful for our baptism. Pastor Rich preaches.

January 19 Reaching Out – *The Bridges of God* (John 1:35-49)

This is the first of two sermons that will complete a series of sermons begun last Fall on our Vision 2020 theme of Reaching Up, Reaching In and Reaching Out. In his sermon, Pastor Rich points out that effective outreach is not rocket science, but begins with existing networks of FRANs (friends, relatives, associates and neighbors). These networks are the natural bridges God uses to connect persons to the Lord.

January 26 Reaching Out – *Getting the Word Out* (1 Corinthians 1:1-9)

Reaching out to others involves actions, but it also includes words – the messages we write and things we say. Paul tells the community at Corinth that they have been enriched in speech and knowledge and spiritual gifts. He cautions that this abundance should be used to bear witness to Christ. How are we getting the Word out as we reach out to people in our community? Pastor Becky preaches.



REACH UP... REACH IN... REACH OUT...

We **Reach Up** to God in worship and spiritual development, **Reach In** to help and care for one another in our congregation, and **Reach Out** to serve others in our community and the world.

REACH UP...

ADULT STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

Spirited Women meets each Wednesday morning at 9:15 in the Parlor and will begin a new study in January. Contact Marty Janners for additional details.

The men's study group, Early Bird Fellowship, meets each Thursday at 6:30 a.m. at Colonial Café on Randall Road. They will continue their study of *Beatitudes from the Backside* by J. Ellsworth Kalas in January. Join us!

The Adult Sunday School Class meets each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. in the Parlor and will begin a new study by Adam Hamilton: *Half Truths-God Helps Those Who Help Themselves and Other Things The Bible Doesn't Say*. Please join us in this discussion class.

Adult Class begins in February. Pastor Rich will offer a class in February (dates and times TBD) that will build on his previous classes (Bible 101, Christianity 101, Doing Theology the Methodist Way). The class will use biblical scholar Marcus Borg's book *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time* as a basis of learning and conversation. You will gain both an understanding of the broad sweep of scripture, its relevance and application to our lives and world today.

Coming In Late January/February – Discussion groups and more based on the movie *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*. Watch for more details.

Check our weekly e-News and Sunday bulletins for more information and opportunities.

Adult Council welcomes your ideas for studies, field trips, and other areas of interest that you would like to see offered. Please contact either Marty Janners (630-701-5665), myjanner@mtu.edu or Jim McConnell (630-715-3480), mcjamesc@aol.com.

2020 Women's Retreat—Beyond the Golden Rule

Women of all ages, please join us **January 24-26** for our annual **Women's Retreat**. This is a wonderful opportunity to grow in God's spirit and to kick back, relax, laugh and spend time with friends – old and new. This year's retreat will center on learning more about yourself and your strengths, while understanding and encouraging the strengths of others. This retreat will leave you energized to see the world and your relationships with others in new ways.

Our very own UMC member, Betsy Petrie, will lead the Saturday workshop, "Making the Shift: Saying Goodbye to the Golden Rule." Betsy has a Master's Degree in Organizational Communication, and has been working in leadership development for over 10 years. Betsy came to the retreat for the first time last year and was so inspired she plans to attend every year! Whether you are a seasoned retreator or a first-timer, this is a marvelous opportunity to learn and grow.

Brochures and sign up sheets are available on the Women's Ministry Bulletin Board in Fellowship Hall. Feel free to invite friends and please encourage others to attend. The cost for the weekend is \$150 (partial scholarships are available). If you have questions, please call Joan Hansen at 630-365-9217.

REACH UP...



Children's
Christmas Program
December 8



Sock Hop/Undie Sunday



REACH IN...



MEAL MINISTRY

The Meal Ministry of UMCG helps the members and friends of the church when they are home after surgery, a hospital stay, or other events that cause making meals and transportation impossible. First, reach out to the church office or to Jill Nettleton, Meal Ministry coordinator, to get your name and contact information on our list. When someone is in need, Jill sends an email inviting you to sign up online at takethemameal.com. No Internet? Contact Jill so you can be involved via phone. You might cook a meal, pick one up at a local restaurant, or shop at a local deli or market, about once or twice a year. We count on the meal receiver to let us know of food allergies or dietary preferences. As the old saying goes, "Many hands make light work." The most special thing of it all will be when you drop by for a few minutes to bring your meal and good cheer!



A parade of 75 men and women bearing yoga mats enters the church each week. When the first yoga classes were offered in January 2000, no one imagined that hundreds would benefit from multiple classes by January 2020! Our expert instructors, Donna Burg, Barbara Armbruster, and Colleen Fasbender now teach four classes weekly! Class members appreciate both the low cost, recognized as a community outreach, and how the beauty of our Fellowship Room invites quiet and meditation.

**Happy Birthday,
UMCG Yoga Community!**

Monday	Wednesday	Thursday
January 6 - March 23	January 8 - March 25	January 9 - March 26
9:15 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. or 6:00 p.m. - 7:15 p.m. Note new start time	9:15 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	9:15 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
\$120 for 12 classes	\$120 for 12 classes	\$120 for 12 classes
Colleen Fasbender 630 715-9012 colleenfas@icloud.com	Donna Burg 630 309-0614 donnabbb@comcast.net	Colleen Fasbender 630 715-9012 colleenfas@icloud.com

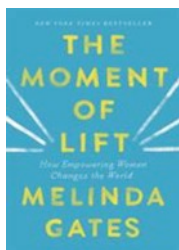
BOOK CLUB NEWS

Book Club meets in a public room at Carriage Oaks senior residence on the 1st Tuesday of the month at 10:30 a.m. New members are ALWAYS WELCOME to join us. Contact Sharon Knott at 630-879-9544.



Tuesday, January 7 – Raising Lazarus: A True Story of God's Miracles by Darlene Marcusson

A memoir from Darlene Marcusson the founder of Lazarus House, a charitable organization serving the homeless in St. Charles, Illinois.



Tuesday, February 4 – The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the World by Melinda Gates

Philanthropist, mother of three, and wife of one of the world's richest men, Melinda Gates delivers a thoughtful and empathetic treatise that demonstrates how empowering women can change the world and lift families from poverty (from the *Publisher's Weekly* review).

Coming up: March 3 – *The Chilbury Ladies' Choir* by Jennifer Ryan
April 7 – *The Life We Bury* by Allen Eskens

YOUTH

Contact Youth Ministry Director, **Denise Clementz** at denise@genevaumc.org, or 309-507-2328, or **Jodi Borger**, Director of Children's Education at 630-232-7120.

Sunday Youth Worship:

- 1/5 First Sunday, Sanctuary, 9 a.m. – Students will attend and assist with the worship service.
- 1/12 Youth Worship, Youth Room, 9-10:15 a.m. – Youth Worship will still be held for students not attending Camp Arctic Blast.
- 1/19 Youth Worship, Youth Room, 9-10:15 a.m. Beginning study on world religions.
- 1/26 Youth Worship, Youth Room, 9-10:15 a.m.

Youth Activity Schedule:

1/10-1/12 – **Camp Arctic Blast**

Youth adventure camp held by the UMC Northern Illinois Conference for students 6-12 grades. Final payment due no later than 1/10.

1/26 **Good Night, Sleep Tight Blankets**, 3-5 p.m.

Youth will make tie blankets for Trace Powell's organization for fostered children. You may donate fleece fabric for this specific event by dropping it off in the church office, marked "Blankets – Youth," or bringing it the day of the event. Fabric must be 3 yards in length.

2/23 **Open Gym** 4-6 p.m.

This is an **All-Church Event**. The gym will be set up for basketball, volleyball, and a "young children's section" with games suitable for young children. Bleachers will also be available for those who would like to join the fun, but prefer to cheer from the sidelines!

Pen & Paper: Meets on January 4, 11 and 25.

Confirmation Class: TBA – will continue either late January or early February.

Pen and Paper Group



Children's and Youth Ministry Consultant Project Update

At the December meeting Church Council approved utilizing Ministry Architects (MA) for an 18-month engagement to help us support and strengthen our Children and Youth Ministry programs. This 18-month plan will include three onsite visits from MA experts to help us identify pressure points with our current programs, formalize vision plans, and create a detailed one-year teaching program for both ministries. Besides the onsite visits, on a monthly basis MA will work closely with the Renovation team, Denise, and Jodi to address the pressure points, build a larger volunteer pool, and coach us toward success. MA will provide quarterly progress reports for the congregation. The Renovation team will also provide monthly updates in the *Messenger*. The Renovation Team thanks the council and our congregation for their commitment to our Children's and Youth Ministries.

We are pleased to share that we already have 46% of the total cost of the program promised from different groups and individuals within the congregation. We invite you to prayerfully consider supporting this investment in faith development of our youth and children. Please include "Ministry Architects Project" in the memo line of any checks.

For more information or to get involved, please don't hesitate to reach out to any of the Renovation Team members or to Pastor Esther, as she is our Pastor Liaison.

Prayerfully, your Renovation Team:

Keith Rawson, Maria Isely, Sharon Anderson, Jen Karwoski,
Jim Karwoski, Brian Kilmer and Alison Wetmore.

New Area for Infants/Toddlers during Worship

By the Vision 2020: Hospitality Team

The Vision 2020 Hospitality Team has been considering how we are providing hospitality to children (birth to 3 years old) and their families during our worship service – are we being welcoming and encouraging their participation in worship?



In conversation with parents and guardians of these young ones, we found that many want to have their children worship with them – some because it was part of their weekend family time, and some want to have the children experience worship. Because this is a trend at churches, many are developing an area called a "Pray Ground," a part of the sanctuary specifically set aside for children during worship, and designed for quiet play. Parents sit close by.

Beginning in January, the Hospitality Team will conduct a trial run of our own "Pray Ground," at the back of the Sanctuary near the choir entrance. It will be furnished with a kid's table and chair set, activity sheets and crayons, and no-noise toys. There will be reserved pews beside that area for parents and guardians of the children using this area. We encourage families with infants and toddlers to consider this as one of the options to worship with your children, along with the continued offering of the nursery and *Godly Play* (for ages 3- kindergarten, for 9 a.m. worship service only). We will also appreciate your prayers as well as donations of new or very gently used fabric books, foam blocks, stuffed animals, colorful rugs, and a clear bin with lid. Please contact Pastor Esther or a member of the Hospitality Team to be involved or to make donations.

Women's Advent Service & Tea December 9



Children's Christmas Party

December 15



SALVATION ARMY FOOD PANTRY NEEDS FOR JANUARY:

Ravioli/spaghettios, ramen noodles, dry pasta, canned fruit, baked goods (cake mix, cookie mix), peanut butter and jelly, and dish soap.

UMCG Church Staff

Rich Darr	Senior Pastor
Esther Lee	Associate Pastor
Debbie Sampiller	Director of Administrative Ministries
Lorie Montanye	Administrative Assistant
Jodi Borger	Director of Children's Education
Denise Clementz	Director of Youth Ministry
Scott Stevenson	Director of Music Ministry
Mike Popplewell	Director of Choral Ministries
Becky Nicol	Director of Communications
Mary Gay McKinney	Coordinator of Congregational Care
Carol Schreiber	Nursery Supervisor

Inclement Weather Policy

Now that winter weather has arrived, please remember that according to the policy our Staff Parish Relations Committee adopted in 2014, the church office will be closed for inclement weather whenever the Geneva Schools are closed for inclement weather. Staff and Pastors will also continue to use their best judgment to stay safe in winter weather conditions. Stay safe this winter.



CHURCH COUNCIL

Chair	David Dias
Vice Chair	
Recording Secretary	Jean Eakins
Lay Members to Annual Conference	John Kemble
	Sharon Anderson
	Dan Poremba
Church & Society	Carolyn Sprawka
Co-Chairs	Gary Dittmer
Youth Council Co-Chairs	Keith Rawson
	Keith Worthington
Children's Council Chair	Jen Karwoski
Adult Council Co-Chairs	Marty Janners
	Jim McConnell
Endowment Fund Chair	Bill Johnson
Finance Committee Chair	Dave Werman
Men's Club President	Mark Byars
Missions Committee	Jim Manos
Co-Chairs	Sharon Anderson
Scholarship Committee	Keith Worthington
Staff-Parish Relations	Jules Heinemann
Stewardship Committee	Stuart Henn
Treasurer	Jim Karwoski
Trustees	Tony Zefron
Women's Ministry	Betty Keeler
Youth Representative	Trace Powell
Worship Committee	Dick Keslinke
Pastors (w/o vote)	Rich Darr
	Esther Lee
Member-at-large	Rob Anast

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

Pizza with

a purpose

Bring in this flyer, present it to your server and we'll donate 20% of your check to the organization listed below. Purchases include dine-in, takeout, catering and all beverages.

FUNdraiser in support of:
United Methodist Church of Geneva
for Scholarship Funds

Wednesday, January 15, 2020
11:00 AM – 9:00 PM



Valid at the following location:

California Pizza Kitchen
Geneva Commons
1202 Commons Drive
Geneva, IL 60134
(630) 845-1731

Join the **CPK Rewards**™ program and receive a **free Small Plate** on your next visit after registering. Register today at **cpk.com** or download our new app today!



Fundraiser offer valid only on the date(s) and at the CPK location identified on the flyer. Only 501c organizations and non-profit schools are eligible to participate in CPK's fundraiser program. CPK will donate 20% (twenty percent) of all food and beverage sales to the organization. Tax, gratuity, gift card and retail sales are excluded from the donation. Offer valid for dine-in, takeout, online, catering, curbside or delivery orders placed directly with CPK. Not valid for third-party delivery. Offer void if flyer is distributed in or near restaurant. For more information about the 501c organization participating in the fundraiser, please contact the organization directly.

MESSENGER DEADLINE

Submit Articles for the February *Messenger*
by **Wednesday, January 15.**

Send information to

communications@genevaumc.org

Subj: Messenger