



the **Messenger**

Christmas Cantata
December 15
9 & 10:30 a.m.

This holiday season, experience *Rise Up!* an upbeat collection of Christmas carols in a modern gospel style. This energetic musical program will be performed by more than 50 singers plus rhythm and horn sections featuring well-known Chicago-area musicians. Four of the six pieces are from Broadway Inspirational Voices Group arrangers Michael McElroy and Joseph Joubert. Director of Music Scott Stevenson will conduct.

The Sanctuary Ringers handbell choir will also perform. Both performances are identical. Bring your family and friends!

**SOCK HOP &
UNDIE SUNDAY**

December 8 – 10:15 a.m.



**Come enjoy music, coffee, cookies,
hot chocolate and FUN!**

**Help prepare gifts for our friends at Lazarus House!
Plan to join in on this multi-generational event.**

**Bring some new WHITE socks or NEW underwear, or drop them in
the box under the coat rack in our Atrium ahead of time.**

**Sponsored by CCG (Creating Community with God Committee)
together with the Geneva High School SockBox Club (see p. 10).**

Christmas Eve Worship Services

4:00 p.m.

**Adapted for
Children**

6:00 p.m.

**with Special
Music**

11:00 p.m.

**with Chancel
Choir**

**All 3 services include carols and congregational candle lighting.
Children of all ages are welcome in worship.**



Pastor's Page

Looking Toward The New With Hope

Wilderness, desert, wild animals - these are the words that come to mind in reflecting on the year 2019. Countless news reports about acts of violence and lives lost and victimized by hate, discouraging results from once hope-filled efforts for doing less harm in the denomination, and no break to the systems that hurt families and children - it was indeed a difficult year to keep eyes dry from tears from heartache, fists from waving with anger and frustration, and minds from pondering and questioning "what is this world coming to?" Where are the rivers through the desert, way through the wilderness, and the "honoring" and tamed behavior of wild animals talked about in Isaiah 43?

Personally, the Lee's parsonage experienced some things we really could have done without this year, as 2019 began with my postpartum health concerns, Aria's "terrible 3s" starting early, and multiple doctors appointments with our newborn Brielle. (Nothing serious, but it is always disconcerting to keep having to do check-ups with a newborn). Thinking back to my prayer life and concerns that kept me up at night, this year beats all other years as I spent much of 2019 nights praying, "God, why this and why now? Please have mercy." If I just think about the difficulties of this year, I find much to be afraid, discouraged, and to "throw in the towel."

But, I do remember a highlight of this year, which came to me from a message from our Bishop Sally Dyck, who said, "God never forgets! When God remembered in the Bible, great things happened. There is no way that God would forget his people and that the phrase, "God Remembered..." is used to express the time of waiting from their perspective which then activated God's great actions, God's faithfulness revealed.

It's about perspective and perception! Isaiah 43:18-19 continues, "Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"

With your help, the Lee's celebrated the first birthday of our healthy Brielle, Aria started preschool, and I believe that I am experiencing great blessings in ministry! Vision 2020 and its work is in progress full force, many at UMCG are experiencing newfound zeal for the different ministries of the church, and our annual conference is working hard to be vital and to assist local churches to be vital (information can be found on our conference website of all the exciting things happening.). Indeed there is evidence of God making a "way in the wilderness" and "rivers in the desert." God is indeed doing new things in the hearts of people everywhere, especially in the hearts of those around us only if we perceive it. My 2020 will begin by asking God to help me "perceive" more of the "new thing" God is doing and to be involved in it. I KNOW in faith God is doing something awesome and I want to be a part of it and have the front row view of it! Will you join me?

Pastor Esther

Advent is a season of preparation. It's a time to practice spiritual disciplines. One of the things I've been doing is reading favorite psalms right before I go to bed at night. I read one or two—beginning from Psalm 1 and working my way towards the end. Psalms 1, 8, 19, 27, 42, and 46 are a few that have meant a lot to me. They calm me down before I go to sleep. They center me. I love Psalm 46 that reminds me that amid the chaos of life, God is our ever-present help. God is with me.

Advent's purpose is to remind us of Immanuel—God with us—in the form of a helpless child, Jesus, the Light that has come into the darkness. Please join me in reviving anew our spiritual disciplines in this season. You will find many opportunities to do so in this Messenger.

Come and see what the Lord has done!
(Psalm 46:8)

Pastor Rich

REACH UP...

December 2019 Worship Schedule **(*Note: Service times vary)**

Sunday, December 1 - 1st Sunday of Advent/Holy Communion offered at both services.

8:00 & 9:00a.m.

Advent takes us back to when persons of faith yearned for the first coming of the Savior. This season attempts to capture that spirit of hope in the midst of hopelessness as we look for the coming of Jesus to save a world gone wrong. **Matthew 24:36-44. Pastor Rich preaches.**

Thursday, December 5 - Memorial Communion Service

6:30 p.m. in the Parlor

The Holiday Season poses a special challenge for people who are grieving. Join us for this meaningful service that helps us connect with Christ's healing love. **Pastors Rich & Esther.**

Sunday, December 8 - 2nd Sunday of Advent

8:00 a.m. Liturgical Worship including scripture, readings, and Christmas carols led by Pastors Rich Darr and Esther Lee, and Music Director Scott Stevenson.

9:00 a.m. Children's' Christmas Program "Do You Hear the Children Singing?"

The combined children's choirs of UMCG will present several songs to accompany a Bible reading of the familiar Christmas story. Directed by Choral Director Mike Popplewell and accompanied by Music Director Scott Stevenson.

Monday, December 9 - Women's Advent Service & Tea

9:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

This much loved tradition of women's worship and tea helps center our hearts and minds during the Advent season. The message is given by Pastor Mary Gay McKinney. Bring a friend! Childcare provided upon request to the office.

Sunday, December 15 - 3rd Sunday of Advent/Cantata *No 8 a.m. Service.

9:00 and 10:30 a.m.

Celebrate the season with **Rise Up!**, a modern collection of Christmas carols in a gospel style. Sanctuary Ringers will also play.

Both services are identical, with more seating available at 10:30.

Sunday, December 22 - 4th Sunday of Advent/Taizé

8:00 a.m. Regular service with advent readings

9:00 a.m. Taizé service with baptisms

Tuesday, December 24 - Christmas Eve Services

4:00 p.m. Adapted for Children

6:00 p.m. With Special Music

11:00 p.m. With Chancel Choir

All three services include carols and congregational candle lighting.

Children of all ages are welcome in worship. No childcare available.

Wednesday, December 25 - Christmas Day

10:30 a.m. - Worship & Communion

A serene worship experience featuring beautiful music, beloved carols, traditional scripture, a story, and reflection. **Pastor Becky preaches.**

Sunday, December 29 - 1st Sunday after Christmas/Carol Sing

8:00 & 9:00 a.m. - Service of Carols Come and sing all your favorites!

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 and will offer a 4-week Advent study from November 27 to December 18. The study will be Amy-Jill Levine's book: "Light of the World."

THE MEN'S STUDY GROUP, EARLY BIRD FELLOWSHIP meets each Thursday at 6:30 a.m. at Colonial Café on Randall Road. They will offer an Advent study for the month of December and 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 in the Parlor and will offer an Advent study led by Becky Nicol in December. We will use the book "Almost Christian" by authors: Magrey DeVega, Ingrid McIntyre, April Casperson, and Matt Rawle, and will be supplemented by a short video. Books are available in the Church Office or for Kindle, but not required. Please join us!

Note: This study will also be offered Tuesdays starting 12/3 at 2 p.m.

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.

Memorial Communion Service - Thursday, December 5, at 6:30 p.m. in the Parlor The holidays can be difficult when people are grieving. You are invited to come to this calm and meaningful service that helps us connect with Christ's healing love.



Women's Advent Service and Tea

Monday, December 9 • 9:30 a.m. or 7:30 p.m.

Please join us and bring a friend!

Worship, Décor and Refreshments invite us into the true meaning of Advent.

Message by Pastor Mary Gay McKinney

Childcare provided upon request.

Contact the church office at 630-232-7120 or office@genevaumc.org.

Sign up on the Women's Ministry board in Fellowship Hall to:

*Create a table centerpiece from your own Christmas collection.

*Provide tea sandwiches, cookies or fruit for either service.

REACH OUT...



COME TO OUR CHRISTMAS CRAFT & COOKIE PARTY

- Ornament Crafts
- Bake and Eat Cookies
- Indoor Snowball Fight
- Build an Igloo

Calling all bakers! Cantata Sunday means Bake Sale Sunday. This free-will offering sale will benefit two of our mission partners in Haiti—*Kids Alive* and *Rebuilding Haiti Now*. In addition to

raising funds for Haiti, the sale is a way to encourage everyone to gather in fellowship hall for conversation. Please drop off your individually packaged, ready-to-sell baked goods in the kitchen:

Saturday, December 14, from 9:00 to noon, or
Sunday morning, December 15, before 8:30
Please label for the Bake Sale.



2020 Women's Retreat—*Beyond the Golden Rule*

Attention MEN: this is a great Christmas gift for women you love!!

Women of all ages, please join us 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 UMCG 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 retreat 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 weekend is \$150 (partial scholarships are available)

This retreat would also make a lovely Christmas gift for a special woman in your life!

REACH IN...



MEAL MINISTRY?

What is that? For newcomers and others who may not be familiar, the Meal Ministry of UMCG helps the members and friends of the church when they are home after surgery, a hospital stay, or other event that causes making meals and transportation impossible. How does it work? 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. What if I don't do Internet? That's ok ~ Jill has other ways of involving you! What shall I bring? You might cook a meal, pick one up at a local restaurant, or shop at a local deli or market. We count on the meal receiver to let us know of food allergies or dietary preferences such as vegetarian. How often will I be called on? Most likely once or twice a year. 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! And we never know when it might be us who are in need!

Wellness Programs for Body & Soul

Wing and a Prayer YOGA:

(NEW! Also on Wednesdays at 11:15 am and 7:00 pm) & Mondays 11:00 am-12:15 pm through December 16. Winter session begins January 6, 2020

Wisdom of the Body Groups ~ Monthly InterPlay

SACRED TIME – SACRED SPACE: The Art of Waiting, is our theme for our session on Saturday, December 7, 1:00-3:30 pm (FR 12/6 6:30-9pm is available upon request)

Spirit in Motion (InterPlay, Dance and Yoga)

ONGOING Saturdays 10:15-11:30 am (no 12/7)

Facilitator Jane Siarny is an advocate for embodied spirituality and helping individuals and groups find health and wellness through dance, yoga, music, art and InterPlay®. For information and pre-registration: Contact Jane at 630/715-8590 or jsiarny@att.net

BOOK CLUB NEWS



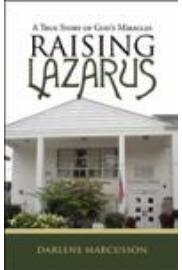
Book Club meets in a public room at Carriage Oaks senior residence. New members are ALWAYS WELCOME to join us.

December – A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserly businessman, learns the true meaning of Christmas after he is visited by the ghosts of Christmases past, present, and future.

January – 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 persons who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in St. Charles, Illinois.



Coming up: Feb. – *The Moment of Lift: how empowering women changes the world* by Melinda Gates
March – *The Chilbury Ladies' Choir* by Jennifer Ryan

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:

12/1 – First Sunday, Sanctuary, 9 a.m. Students will attend and assist with the worship service.

12/8-12/22 – No Youth Worship. December is family worship month.

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.

Youth Activity Schedule:

Sunday, Dec. 15	Children's Christmas Party, 2:30-4:30 p.m. - Youth (7-12 grades) are needed to assist with the children's Christmas party. Please contact Jodi Borger or Denise.
TBA- Christmas Caroling	Youth (5-12 grades) will travel to visit members who are shut-ins and at retirement homes to sing carols. We'll return to the church for pizza and hot chocolate. Parents needed to help transport students during this event , please contact Denise.

Pen & Paper:

Meets on December 7 and 14, and January 4, 11 and 25.

Confirmation Class:

Meets December 1 from 5:30-7 p.m.



Youth archery event



Youth helping with yard work

There Is No Planet B!

Check it out! There are educational posters, news articles, and inspirational quotations on the new **Earth bulletin board** in Fellowship Hall.

Featured are pleas from our Route 56 class, Annie McQueeny's striking watercolor of our beautiful and endangered Earth and the good news of Jenna Karr's work in Marine Debris Research. Bring news clips you find and add to the Good News/Bad News lists. We CAN make a difference working together!

Message from the Renovation Team (Children's & Youth Ministry)

"Tom and I joined UMCG about six years ago, before we had kids, and fell in love with the church. We were drawn in by the traditional worship style, the inspiring sermons, wonderful music and welcoming congregation. We have since welcomed two children (5-year-old Jimmy and 3-year-old Gracie) who also love UMCG and are genuinely excited to go to Sunday school each week. We desperately want that enthusiasm for church and their faith to continue and grow as they grow, but we can't help but be concerned with the low youth and children's engagement at UMCG. We believe working with Ministry Architects is absolutely an investment in the current and future of the entire church, not just the youth and children. We want UMCG to grow and thrive well into the future, but without strong numbers of youth and children that's just not going to happen. This project will help our wonderful youth and children's programming be even better than it already is AND more importantly will help us reach and connect with more children and families in the community. The tools we gain from Ministry Architects will be invaluable for our congregation and all the ministries we have. We are so hopeful and excited to be a part of this exciting investment in the future of our church."

- Ali Wetmore, Renovation Team Member

Why use consultants for our children's and youth ministries?

- They work with us to achieve a component of the overall 2020 plans for building our church. Children's and Youth ministries are critical to the current and long-term health of churches.
- They help us develop multi-year vision and mission statements/plans.
- They will help invigorate and move our programs forward.
- They will help us with the visioning and implementation of programs, as well as provide continued feedback, accountability, and recommendations.
- They will provide tools for continued evaluation of children and youth ministries that will carry beyond the MA contracted date.
- They are a large company with extensive experience: 80+ Consultants; 30+ years; Hundreds of churches; 5 denominations across 7 countries.
- Their program is dependent on systems/plans, not on individuals. Meaning if Pastors or Directors leave it doesn't derail the ministry.
- Their feasibility study provided an 18-month timeline of recommendations, pressure points, and plans for implementation.
- Their program includes periodic checkpoints for tracking the progress and adjusting as needed.
- They provide regular communication to the congregation concerning the plan and overall ministries.

How much will this cost?

18-month Investment: \$40,495 (lowest cost of their 3 options, and the one MA recommended)

First month's payment: \$6,495

Remaining monthly payment (for 17 months): \$2,000

How will we pay for this?

- Payments can be spread out over three years.
- We can dedicate a reasonable amount to this project over the next three years in the children's and youth budgets.
- The Renovation Team plans to do fundraising in creative ways as needed.
- We are asking for donations from those who want to see our children's and youth ministries succeed.

We are pleased to share that **we already have 46% of the total cost of the program promised** from different groups 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 the Renovation Team members or to Pastor Esther as she is our Pastor Liaison.

Prayerfully, the Renovation Team

REPORT FROM NORTHERN ILLINOIS CONFERENCE 2019 SPECIAL CONFERENCE

Lay Representative John Kemble, Pastor Rich and Pastor Esther will report to Church Council about what transpired during the Special Session of NIC Annual Conference held at Kishwaukee College on Saturday, November 16. The Conference budget and Apportionment formula were discussed and a reduced budget was passed. More information can be read [here](#). Bishop Dyck gave her Episcopal Address focusing on inclusion, which can be read [here](#).

As we await decisions to be made at GC 2020, the NIC Exploration Team, 30 persons with a variety of views, has been at work. Their report contained the following Identity and Covenant Statements. More work will be done on revising these at our Annual Conference in June, following General Conference 2020.

NIC 2020+

Introduction: The 2019 Special Session of General Conference passed the Traditional Plan that becomes effective on January 1, 2020. In anticipation of the 2020 General Conference, we seek to provide an identity and covenant statement that defines us as a Conference. This statement will help guide us as we make decisions on our future, and as we assess potential partners in ministry.

Vision Statement/Motto: “Opening Hearts, Opening Minds, Opening Doors”

Mission Statement: The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Identity Statement: *Following the witness of Jesus, we, the Northern Illinois Conference, are committed to becoming entirely inclusive and welcoming. We foster and celebrate the dignity and sacred worth of all of God’s creation. By the power of the Holy Spirit and Christ’s love, we commit ourselves to grow in love and understanding for one another, and commit to breaking down the walls that divide us. We hold the fullness of Wesleyan theology as a cornerstone of our faith, including the receiving and testing of Holy Scriptures through the lens of reason, tradition, and experience. We seek to do no harm, to do good, and to stay in love with God.*

Covenant Statement: *Therefore, we covenant to the following:*

- ❖ *To live into our baptismal vows to resist evil and injustice and oppression in all forms, including racism, sexism, and every abuse of power and privilege.*
- ❖ *To affirm the full participation of all ages, nations, races, classes, cultures, gender identities, sexual orientations, and abilities.*
- ❖ *To affirm the sacred worth of LGBTQIA+ persons, and commit to being in ministry together.*
- ❖ *To eliminate discriminatory language and the restrictions and penalties of marriage and ordination in the Book of Discipline regarding LGBTQIA+ persons, and stand united in resisting trials and punishments.*
- ❖ *To affirm the right and responsibility of clergy to discern, counsel, and officiate for marriages.*
- ❖ *To engage in acts of justice, grace, mercy, kindness, compassion, and reconciliation.*
- ❖ *To affirm that God works in and through community and acknowledge that Jesus welcomes all people as beloved children of God.*
- ❖ *To embody and exemplify the best practices of our historic Methodist faith, including John Wesley’s emphasis on grace, and to continue the practice of an open table.*

Respectfully submitted,

The Northern Illinois Conference Exploration Team

Giving to UMCG CHANGES Lives

SockBox...is a club at Geneva High School with the mission of collecting and distributing new socks to people who need them. We all go on ASP every year, and we wanted to find a way to make people's lives "warmer, safer, drier" here at home. We volunteer in the store at Hesed House and we learned that people always need new socks. SockBox Club is setting out collection boxes around town and planning events to collect more socks for places like Hesed House, PADS, and St. Charles Redeemer Fellowship's Clothes Closet. We recently collected over 300 pairs at our soccer banquet! We are excited to help work at the Sock Hop at UMCG in December.



Adult Library News

There will be several Advent and Christmas books on display on the table in front of the Library in the Atrium starting December 1. Check out a book to enjoy to enhance your Advent experience this joyous Christmas season.

Inclement Winter 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.



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

CHURCH COUNCIL

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

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



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

Scholarship Fundraiser

Wednesday, December 11, 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, December 11, 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 the January *Messenger*
by Thursday, December 12.

Send information to
communications@genevaumc.org
Subj: Messenger