



the Messenger

In This Issue:

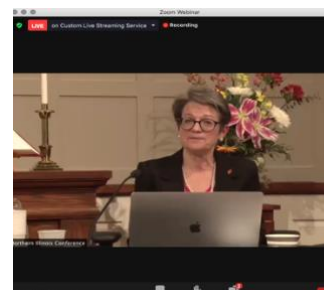
- 2 Pastor's Page
- 3 December Worship Schedule
- 4 Study and Group Opportunities
- 5 Finance Update
- 5 UMCg Church Conference
- 6 Children & Youth
- 8 Christmas Story Caravan
- 9 Angel Tree & Bell Ringing
- 10 Make a Christmas Video for Us!

Northern Illinois 2020 Annual Conference held via Zoom

The 181st Northern Illinois Annual Conference met via Zoom on Saturday, November 14. Clergy and lay members also attended a Pre-Conference briefing with Bishop Dyck, a technology training with GNTV, three sessions of Bible study with Rev. Junius B. Dotson General Secretary (chief executive officer) of Discipleship Ministries, in October, a finance briefing, as well as the Memorial service on November 13 and the retirement service on the Saturday evening. The ordination service was postponed.

Legislation included historical reports, passing the 2021 NIC budget, created a task force to do Anti-Racism training in the conference, reduced the number of districts from six to five, effective July 1, 2021, and accepting nominations to conference committees.

The Conference was presided over by retiring Bishop Sally Dyck. Starting on January 1, 2021, the NIC will be headed by (retired) Bishop John Hopkins for most of the year. The Conference included a message from Bishop Hopkins. Videos of all of the Annual Conference may be viewed at umcnic.org/AC2020.



See story on page 8

Christmas Worship Services

Christmas Eve Dec. 24
posted online from
5 p.m. on

Christmas Day Dec. 25
posted online from
6 a.m. on

Pastor's Page

Advent means “coming” in Latin. The early church created this season before Christmas to help us prepare our hearts for the birth of Christ. As we wait, we remember who Jesus is for our lives and our world, and we read scriptures from Old and New Testament reminding us of the darkness of problems and struggles and suffering and despair in our world, and then we read Scriptures from Old and New Testament reminding us of the Light and Love and Hope and Joy that God brings to us and our world in the baby Jesus. And so, we wait with longing and hope for God’s salvation to be born anew in our hearts and our world.

This Advent, this December, we wait during a pandemic, which makes very clear and personal to us the struggles, problems, suffering and despair in our lives, and in our world. As a church, we invite you to join one of our many Zoom studies of Rev. Adam Hamilton’s book Incarnation. In our discussions of the book we will reflect on the many names of Jesus that describe his saving presence for our lives and our world. Our worship will be based on these same texts.

While we wait in darkness, we remember a great light is coming and has been sent to save us. This light is manifest in our lives even now, in the everlasting love of Jesus that we share with one another. I encourage you to share the light of Christ’s love in safe and tangible ways with others this coming month: send a card to friends and those living alone; drop off cookies to neighbors, send gifts through our Angel Tree program, zoom with family and friends! As a family, create two lists of ways to share love with each other: 1) love with family: TIME spent together baking, playing games, watching Christmas movies..., and 2) ways to share love with others: go caroling to neighbors, send cards to nursing homes, cook a side dish for Hesus House... Then, choose one thing from one of the lists each day, to enjoy living and giving this LOVE of Jesus this Christmas season together as family.

Let us watch, wait, and prepare our hearts so that we are ready to participate in this year’s new birth of Jesus’ love for each one of us, and all of us in this world.

Blessed to be on this journey of faith with you,
Pastor Lisa 😊

If you or someone in your family tests positive for COVID 19 or needs to be self-quarantined for possible contact, please notify Pastor Rich or Pastor Lisa.

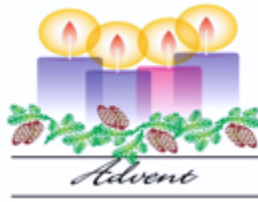
For pastoral care, contact Pastor Rich or our Coordinator of Congregational Care, Pastor Mary Gay McKinney, by cell at 815-508-2055, or email marygay@genevaumc.org. Please let her know if there is someone who needs a phone call.

If you have prayer concerns, or birth or death information to share, please continue to send this information to communications@genevaumc.org, or phone Lorie at 630-992-0671. Email to communications@genevaumc.org goes to Lorie Montanye, Debbie Sampiller, and Becky Nicol.

If you are in need of help, we have volunteers to deliver food and such. Please contact the pastors.

Giving – Your faithful generosity shown by giving online, by text, and through the mail is greatly appreciated as the pastors and staff work to continue to keep us connected through worship, group meetings and pastoral care.

REACH UP...



DECEMBER 2020 Worship Schedule

Worship is held online at genevaumc.org & facebook.com/umcgeneva

Children's Sunday School – contact jcpoboe@msn.com

Youth Sunday School – at 11 a.m. via Zoom – contact denise@genevaumc.org

Youth Activities – contact denise@genevaumc.org

Pen & Paper meets Saturdays 6-9 p.m. online – contact denise@genevaumc.org

Coffee Time Zoom 10-10:30 a.m. Sundays - link will be sent via email

Adult Sunday School on Zoom 10:30 a.m. Sunday – contact mcjamesc@aol.com

Neighborhood Group study on Zoom at 10:30 a.m. – contact lisa@genevaumc.org

What's in a name? A lot! His parents named him Jesus. Prophets, shepherds, wise men and angels addressed him by other names. This Advent and Christmas, our sermon series is based on Adam Hamilton's book *Incarnation*, helping us explore the meanings of Jesus's titles and what they tell us about the babe of Bethlehem we celebrate in worship. **Join us for Coffee-Time Zoom every Sunday in December from 10-10:30 a.m.** - a time just to chat and catch up! The Zoom link will be sent via email to the congregation.

Sunday, December 6 – 2nd Sunday of Advent/Holy Communion. [Matthew 1:20b-21; Luke 2:8-12](#)

The Deliverer's Title: Savior. Who and what needs saving today? Saving from what and for what?

Today we explore God's comprehensive salvation offered us in Jesus our Savior. Pastor Rich preaches.

Sunday, December 13 – 3rd Sunday of Advent. [Matthew 1:20b-23; Hebrews 1:1-3](#)

The Incarnate Title: Emmanuel. What does the pandemic have to do with Advent and Christmas?

Everything! Fear is rampant. So why not fear? Because the heart of the Christmas story is that the God who has always been with God's people is with us now, in the flesh, in Jesus. Pastor Lisa preaches.

Sunday, December 20 - 4th Sunday of Advent. [John 1:1-5; Matthew 5:14-16](#)

Title: The Light of the World. We cannot appreciate the light that Christ brings until we linger in the dark for a while: pandemics, economic hardship, hurt and pain, grief and death. Then light shines in the darkness; the Word becomes flesh, and Jesus lights our way. Pastor Rich preaches.

Thursday, December 24 – Christmas Eve (*posted online from 5 p.m. on*)

Reverse Tenebrae Service. With the lighting of candles, we move from darkness to light, symbolizing the light of Christ breaking into our lives and our world in the birth of Jesus, our Savior. Special music includes children presenting a bells tune, a duet by Mike and Julie Popplewell, musical families singing beloved carols, and the virtual choir singing "Quietly" and "Silent Night."

Friday, December 25 – Christmas Day/Holy Communion (*posted online from 6 a.m. on*)

Worship will feature beloved carols, children playing bells, traditional scripture, and the celebration of Holy Communion. Pastor Becky will read a wonderful story about how every person, every creature, is a part of a far greater plan as God sent his Son on that first Christmas. Have your juice and bread or communion packet on hand.

Sunday, December 27 – 1st Sunday after Christmas. [Matthew 2:1-2, 8a, 9-11](#)

Title: Jesus is Lord. When the magi finally found baby Jesus, they knelt down and paid him homage. The first Christians were also clear that Jesus was the Lord, not Caesar. Jesus as Lord means that Jesus is the highest authority in our lives. Pastor Lisa 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

All-Church Incarnation Study this Advent

This Advent, as we travel through the pandemic together, we as a church will join together in studying the names attributed to Jesus at his birth by the Gospels and prophets. The study is based on the book **Incarnation**, by Rev. Adam Hamilton, lead pastor of the Church of the Resurrection. All church folks and friends are invited to participate in any one of our study groups. All are on Zoom; contact the convener listed to be emailed the Zoom link.

- **Spirited Women** Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m., Dec 9 & 16. For additional information and a Zoom invitation please contact Jenean Larsen at jenean_larsen@yahoo.com or Marty Janners at myjanner@mtu.edu.
- **Early Bird Fellowship** men's study group meets via Zoom each Thursday at 8:00 a.m. They will begin the 4-week Advent study **Incarnation** by Adam Hamilton beginning December 3. For more information and a Zoom invitation to join the weekly discussion, please contact Jim McConnell at mcjamesc@aol.com.
- **The Adult Sunday School Class** meets each Sunday morning at 10:30, starting November 29. We will also begin the 4-week DVD supported study **Incarnation** by Adam Hamilton. If you would like to join the weekly discussion, please contact either Marty Janners or Jim McConnell for the Zoom link.
- **Neighborhood Study Group** Pastor Lisa leads this group, also at 10:30 a.m. on Sundays via Zoom. Contact Pastor Lisa if you are interested, and to receive the Zoom link. (630/605-4423 or lisa@genevaumc.org.)
- **Youth** will also join in using the **Incarnation** book study.

Spirits & Studies Spirits & Studies meets Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom - Dec. 1, 8, 15, then TBA. We'll be checking in around a question. We welcome newcomers, and people who can join in occasionally. For more information email marygay@genevaumc.org. Phone or text her @ 815-508-2055.

Adult-Ish - the group for 18-30 somethings meets via Zoom monthly on Google Meets. Email Connor at connormck37@gmail.com or Maria at maria.isely@gmail.com with any questions or comments!

Disciple I Bible Study - coming in January!

Sisters and brothers in Christ, remember the song that Scott and the choir introduced to us a few year ago, "Order my steps in your word, O Lord. Lead me, guide me, every day. Send your anointing father I pray"? Here is your chance to make that song part of your action plan.

In January, we will be offering a **Disciple I Bible study** in 1-hour weekly Zoom gatherings, (holidays and most of the summer off) over a 2-year period. We'll take two weeks for each of the 34 sessions, so there'll be half the amount of reading each week. Of course, as soon as it is safe to gather as a group, we will return to meeting face-to-face. This study is appropriate for beginners as well as seasoned Bible enthusiasts. It will be facilitated by Pastor Lisa and Tom Tamlyn on Wednesday evening.

Adult Council welcomes your ideas for studies 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 with any ideas or questions.

Health Team Update #6

The UMCG Health Team, including pastors, continues to meet to address issues and plan for the future as we move forward during the pandemic. The Trustees and Worship Teams are heavily involved in this effort. Their task is affected by the return to higher levels of COVID in our area. In addition, the air exchange requirements for any indoor gathering adds further complication.

A Town Hall Meeting was held for the congregation on Saturday, November 21. The Health Team along with the Worship Team and Pastors presented information on all the work they've been doing and criteria for re-opening the church building. **The Town Hall Meeting will be available on our website** for viewing under the *Reach In* menu.



Photo by Tony Zefron



UMCG Church Conference held November 3

The UMCG 2020 Church Conference was held Tuesday, November 3 at 7 p.m. via Zoom. District Superintendent Rev. Jeffry Bross led the meeting and 32 attended. He shared a video message from Bishop Sally Dyck. Rev. Bross spoke about the 3 Conference goals and Pastor Rich addressed the question about how UMCG impacts the community.

In church business, salaries were approved for Pastor Rich and Pastor Lisa. The nominations list and Pastor Becky's salary were not ready for voting, so another church conference will be held in December.

Rev. Bross reported that statistics show that many UMC churches are doing well during the pandemic - attendance is up, expenses down, and giving is about the same or increased. He noted the toll on clergy who have shifted to doing everything online.

He also mentioned that a vote would be taken at Annual Conference on redistricting, going from 6 to 5 districts. Rev. Darneather Murph-Heath (Elgin District) is retiring in July, all other D.S.'s remain. Bishop Dyck will be retiring the end of December, and we will have Bishop John Hopkins as interim Bishop for most of 2021.

REACH IN...

KIDS

Julie Popplewell named Interim Director of Children's Education

The Staff Parish Relations Committee is pleased to announce that we have hired Julie Popplewell as Interim Director of Children's Education, starting November 15, 2020. This is a part time position, but one that is very important in our church and education of our children. Julie has been doing a great job leading the program since the start of COVID 19. She is qualified for the position and knows our church families and children well. We feel fortunate to have someone with Julie's abilities join the UMCG staff.

Keith Eakins, Staff Parish Relations Committee Chair



Fall Children's Program Highlights

by Julie Popplewell

The kids are loving our once-a-month in person (and masked) Sunday School meetings! In October we talked about "Blessed are the Poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." We colored small pumpkins with encouraging words and pictures then scattered them around the outside of the church for a small "scavenger" hunt. Kids also took ceramic piggy banks home to paint and use for their weekly tithes!

In November we met and talked about "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth." We discussed taking care of the planet and passed out flyers for the food drive the following week. Children then left painted rocks around the city of Geneva and their own neighborhoods to beautify the world with love and compassion.

In December we hope to ring bells and have some fun with playing Christmas carols! Details to come!



PHOTO: Making playdough for kiddos at Hesus House! What an amazing and kind heart!



YOUTH

Contact: Denise Clementz, Youth Ministry Director
at denise@genevaumc.org or 309-507-2328.

This year has been anything but usual, and as we wrap up 2020, I look forward to Youth Ministry continuing in our online formatting and hope for the day we can be in person again. Thank you to all the students and parents who committed their participation to our ministries! It's truly made a difference to still be able to meet, even if mostly online, and to keep growing with one another and with God. Thank you to our youth leaders and volunteers, you have kept the work of our ministry pivoting forward despite all of the hardships we've encountered working with our students and families in uncharted formats for our church. To staff, parents, volunteers, and students, I couldn't have handled 2020 without you. I can't wait to see what we can do together in 2021!

- Please be sure to follow our updates in the weekly email for Youth and Parents.
- Youth will be participating in the **Incarnation** book study during Advent, Sundays at 11 a.m. on Zoom
- Youth Virtual Christmas Party, December 12, 1 p.m. on Zoom - Look for exciting updates about Cookie Contest, prizes, and more!

REACH IN & OUT...



Robbin making pies



Robbin & Rolland planting at church



Rolland peeling apples!



Delivering pies



Socks & underwear donated for Hesed House



*Hesed Breakfast prep takes many!
Howie boils 6 dozen eggs, Bill & Sharon chop & prep ingredients -
Rolland bakes breakfast casseroles & makes sausage gravy - others make toast & more!*



REACH IN...

Travel from Batavia UMC to
UMC Geneva to
Baker Memorial UMC
...in any order
Please remain in your car.



At Batavia United Methodist Church, 8 N. Batavia Ave Hear the familiar story of the angel appearing to Mary and enjoy favorite Christmas music. Get the URL for an online Advent calendar where you can open a door every day until Christmas! There will be a bin to safely collect mittens, gloves, hats, scarves, and leggings - in all sizes, which will be donated to local charities.

At United Methodist Church of Geneva, a nativity scene with live animals and music will reflect the theme "Receive God's Love." Donations will be accepted for Heifer International, an organization that works with farmers and communities to end hunger and poverty in 21 countries. Contributions will do things like provide sheep, goats or cows; help with clean water; or assist a small business effort.

At Baker Memorial United Methodist Church, 307 Cedar Ave. in St. Charles Remember the story of the shepherd's visit with special Christmas music. You can write a prayer to hang on their beautiful Prayer Tree and take home a luminaria kit to make your own! Funds will be collected for missionary Clara Biswas, who works with street kids and their families in Cambodia.

Neighborhood Groups By Pastor Lisa



We hope many of you will connect over Zoom this month to share Christmas love and cheer. Many groups are connecting for an outreach project of some kind as well: several collected food for our food drive this past month; some have sponsored a family for Thanksgiving; some are considering doing the Angel Tree project together for Christmas! If your neighborhood has not met yet nor checked in with each other for prayers, it could be that your neighborhood needs a leader! Contact Pastor Lisa if you would like help getting your neighborhood connected. About half of our 27 groups are connecting in some way now. It will be especially helpful for us to love our church neighbors, and others!, through the next few months of winter! You should have received an email through church with ideas for connecting and reaching out in Advent. Contact Pastor Lisa for more info! We give thanks for the many groups who are meeting either on Zoom or who are connecting for prayer joys and concerns. Any of our four pastors can help your neighborhood meet on Zoom – don't hesitate to call or email us for help!



Prayer Shawl Group

Our Prayer Shawl Group will Zoom and knit and crochet together on Thursday, Dec. 17 at 7 p.m. We have given away four shawls now and are working on more to share with our church folks in need. If you would like to join us, please email Pastor Lisa (lisa@genevumc.org) to get the zoom link, and come knit or crochet with us! We infuse the shawl with our prayers for comfort and healing for those who will receive them. Typically, they are shared with folks who have just been through or will soon go through some life-changing event or are recovering from a crisis or trauma. If you would like to share a name of someone to receive one, please email Pastor Lisa. As we build up a greater supply, we can share more widely with folks in long-term struggles or hardship.

REACH OUT...

Salvation Army Angel Tree and Bell Ringing

by Heather Pleus



With the Christmas season comes our church's annual tradition of supporting the Salvation Army Angel Tree and Bell Ringing. As is the trend, COVID is changing how these ministries will operate this year.

Angel Tree

If you would like to support the Angel Tree, there are three options this year:

- 1.) You can use the Walmart "Registry for Good." This is the easiest option as it allows you to shop from home and the gifts will be sent directly to The Salvation Army in St. Charles.

Instructions for accessing are below.

Step 1: Go to <https://www.walmart.com/registry/registryforgood/welcome>

Step 2: Scroll down to the "Find a cause in your community" map/search

Step 3: Change the "location" to the St. Charles zip code of 60174

Step 4: Click the Salvation Army St. Charles (Tri-City) Community Center Angel Tree. The registry list will open, displaying requested gift cards, toys and clothes.

Step 5: SHOP! Add items to your cart and pay as you would for any online order. Walmart will ship the gifts directly to The Salvation Army in St. Charles.

- 2.) You can choose Angel Tree tags from the Salvation Army's virtual angel tree site. You will need to create an account to access the tags. <https://satricity.theangelgivingtree.org/>

Return the UNWRAPPED gift to The Salvation Army at 1710 S. 7th Ave in St Charles by Dec. 7

- 3.) You can provide gift cards. The Salvation Army requests these to be in increments of \$25.00.

You need to drop off or mail to The Salvation Army at 1710 S. 7th Ave. in St. Charles by Dec. 7

Bell Ringing

This year sign-up for bell ringing will be done via The Salvation Army's website by individuals interested in signing up. Instead of our church committing to a specific location and dates this year, you can select any available day/time and location throughout the Tri-Cities. You can access the sign up via this link <https://www.registertoring.com/shifts-locations.aspx>

Please Note: You will need to create a login for the website site and the time commitment is **2 hours**.

Lazarus House began resuming overnight volunteers effective Nov. 1. Please use the sign-up form on our website if you are able to help on the 1st or 3rd Tuesday overnights. Contact Carolyn Sprawka for more information: csprawka@gmail.com.

HOLIDAY SHOPPING? USE AMAZONSMILE

Shop at smile.amazon.com - select *Get started* tab, and they will donate 0.5% of your purchases to UMCG. Enter United Methodist Church of Geneva as charity.

ASP IS ON FOR JULY 2021!

UMCG is confirmed for **ASP** on **July 3-10, 2021!**

There will be new safety measures and limits on how many volunteers can be at the same center.

Please fill out the 2021 UMCG registration form if you are interested in going! We need adults!!

Feel free to forward the google form to friends who would be interested. We are probably limiting our numbers in 2021, so secure your spot! The registration form is under **Sign Ups** on our website.

REACH IN...

We Need a Little Christmas...!

Worship and Communications **invite you** to make SHORT videos of yourselves singing or talking about a favorite Christmas hymn, or telling us about your favorite Christmas creche/nativity scene, or about your favorite Christmas ornament or decoration. Record a senior friend or family member's favorite Christmas memory or Christmas prayer, and send these **SHORT** recordings in to Becky and Tom Nicol, for us to use in worship or on our Facebook page in December.

Help us all celebrate the season! SHORT means 2-3 minutes tops. You can use Wetransfer.com, or contact Becky and Tom for help sending your video: Becky@genevaumc.org; thnicol@gmail.com.



AMPLIFYMEDIA AVAILABLE IN DECEMBER!

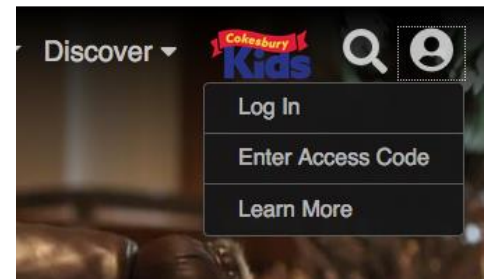
Amplify Media is a multimedia platform that provides church congregations with all kinds of resources - books, studies, lectures, worship, and programs for everyone from kids to adults. Topics include antiracism/reconciliation, Women's studies, worship/inspiration, the Bible in 30 seconds or less, things for kids, and much more.

We have it free for all of December and the first two weeks of January. Please take a look and let me know if you think this is something to which UMCG should subscribe. Becky@genevaumc.org

Here's how to log in to Amplify Media:

Go to <https://my.amplifymedia.com/amplify>

- You will need to create a (free) account to use the site.
- Pull down menu and click on **Enter access code** →
Congregation Access Code: **GFJLWR**
- Enter our code and click the purple **verify** tab
- This takes you to a new page to create your account
 - Use our access code and your information
 - Click purple **Start a free membership** tab at bottom of the page



A BIG THANK YOU

...to everyone who helped at the Nov. 14 Salvation Army Pantry Food Drive/Socks & Underwear collection for Hessed House/Styrofoam collection and Communion packet pick up!

We collected 300 bags of food, a car-load full of Styrofoam to recycle, and a carload full of socks and underwear for Hessed House!





Portillo's® for GOOD

FUNDRAISERS

Bring in this flyer or show it on your smartphone
and 20% of the proceeds will benefit

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF GENEVA

December 9, 2020

11:00am - 8:00pm

at the Portillo's located at:

531 N. Randall Road

Batavia, IL 60510

We look forward to seeing you there!

To learn more about how you can partner with us
to serve up a better tomorrow, visit
portillos.com/good



MESSENGER DEADLINE

Submit articles for the January *Messenger*

By **Tuesday, December 15.**

Send information to: communications@genevaumc.org

Contact us at genevaumc.org

United Methodist Church of Geneva

211 Hamilton Street
Geneva, IL 60134