



The Asbury BEACON

February 2021

Volume 21, Number 1

THE VISION OF ASBURY

*To Make Disciples for
Jesus Christ for the
Transformation of the World.*

THE MISSION OF ASBURY

*To inspire People of
All Generations to
Love, Learn and Lead Through
Worship, Education, and Service.*

THE ASBURY MOTTO

*No Matter Where You Are on
Life's Journey, You are Welcome Here!*

AN ADULT STUDY FOR LENT

"Hope For Hard Times"

In preparation for our Lenten study, I skimmed through about 7 different studies. Hope for Hard Times by Magrey R. DeVega, spoke most clearly to me, so I've chosen it for this season. I'm sure the ongoing drain, isolation, frustration and downright fear from the current COVID crisis played a role in my decision. We were in uncharted waters for much of 2020 and continue to be as we enter 2021. We are waiting for vaccinations, and hoping to encourage those who are reluctant to have one. We are weekly choosing whether to worship "in church" or "online." We are weekly deciding if our meetings should be "in person" or "via ZOOM." We are eager to return to the days of handshakes and hugs, the seeing of smiles and outright laughter not hidden behind triple-ply masks. We want to be encouraged to sing again in worship. We want to reengage with the world, visit family and friends, enjoy local restaurants, and celebrate the goodness of life and of God.

Hope For Hard Times explores the work of two prophets of the Old Testament, Elijah and Elisha, who struggled to proclaim the Word of God in the midst of drought, conflict, doubt and grief, all emotions that challenge us in a real way.

But throughout their thirty years of combined ministry, Elijah and Elisha offered a consistent message, "Don't give up, and don't lose hope. Trust that God will help you find a way."

Even though, the Lenten season lasts for 6 weeks, this study is for four weeks. We will meet via ZOOM, on the following Sunday evenings, beginning at 6:30 pm: March 7th, March 14th, March 21st, and March 28th.

I have pre-purchased 12 books for those who wish to read each chapter in preparation for the class. They cost \$8.50 each. If that is too difficult an expense, a special reserved fund can cover that expense. If you would like to have a book, please let the church office know. Also, if you intend to participate in the class, please let the church office know.

I hope you will prayerfully consider this study for yourself. It may help you to discover "hope" again, even amid the hardest times.

Grace and peace,
Laura

ASBURY'S STAFF

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
FAITH KIRCH

**ASSISTANT TO THE PASTOR/
DISCIPLE DEVELOPMENT**
MAX BOVEE

BROADCAST MINISTRY
BOB KURTZ

CHILD CARE WORKER
ASHLEE WELDON

CLEANING SERVICES
FRANCES GOUTREMOUT

CONGREGATIONAL CARE
PAMELA QUIMBY
DARLENE WELBOURN

FAITH COMMUNITY NURSE
DARLENE WELBOURN

FINANCIAL SECRETARY
DAN WEBB

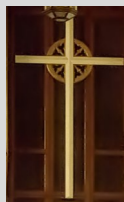
TREASURER
DEBORAH VANHOUTEN

MAINTENANCE
KENNY FORBES

**MUSIC PROGRAM
DIRECTOR**
CATHERINE MOWERS

MUSIC PROGRAM STAFF
GHILYANA DORDZHIEVA
LYNN MORGAN
MELANIE RAFFERTY
MICHELLE RUDD
LISA SMITH
HELEN TIMERMAN
BINA WEST
JENNIFER WHITENACK

PASTOR
REV. LAURA CALOS



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2021 Asbury Leadership Team

Listed below are the members of our Church Council who will lead our combined efforts to make 2021 a spiritually rewarding and fully productive year for all of us.



Pastor
Chairperson, Asbury UM Church Council
Assistant to Pastor (Disciple Development)
Children/Youth Ministry
Finance Committee
Lay Leaders
Membership & Evangelism
Memorials & Gifts
Pastor/Staff Parish Relations
Trustees
Worship Committee
Ushers
United Methodist Women
Safe Sanctuaries
Member at Large
Financial Secretary
Treasurer

Rev. Laura Calos
James Rafferty
Max Bovee
Sarah Lehman
Joanne Rhode
Lindsay Webb
Lisa Smith & Melanie Rafferty
Grace Burke
Myrtie Schilling & Sue Snell
Glen Snell
Orie Phillips
Lorraine Irwin
Sue Snell
Leah Mae Carlisle
Bruce Irwin
Dan Webb
Deb Van Houten

Please keep these church leaders in your prayers for their meaningful and necessary efforts to help us keep Asbury alive and vibrant. Feel free to reach out to me directly to share your questions, concerns or ideas.
My phone number is 315-408-9036.

Jim Rafferty, Chairperson
Asbury UM Church Council

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

- Isaiah 41:10

DR. FRANK RHODE TO DISCUSS COVID

On Saturday, January 30, at 9:30 am, Dr. Frank Rhode will lead a discussion on Zoom answering your questions about Covid and the vaccines available. To participate in this Zoom meeting, please contact Leah Mae Carlisle at leahtomc@gmail.com or Susan Snell at a4bells@verizon.net. You will be sent a link to join the discussion. **This program is sponsored by Asbury United Methodist Women** for anyone who has questions and concerns about our current pandemic. Don't miss this opportunity to get honest answers from Dr. Rhode, who is a member of our congregation.





SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS



Over the past 11 months of this pandemic, we have learned to be flexible. We have learned that what we plan today, most likely will need to be changed - possibly on a monthly basis, a weekly basis or sometimes on a daily basis.

The last time that I had to write for the Sunday School newsletter was back in mid-November for the December/January issue. Just like in the past 11 months, what we had planned had to be modified. However, these modifications need to be celebrated.

One celebration was the Sunday School Christmas Pageant. Going in, we knew we would need to modify our traditional process of putting on a Christmas pageant to meet social distancing measures. Additionally, we lost 3 class preparation times when church was cancelled due to the broken furnace. With the perseverance of our Christmas Pageant leader - Michelle Rudd, our Sunday School teachers, families and kids, Sunday School was able to create a video presentation, "A Christmas Storybook for Asbury."

We modified our Christmas Party time. In lieu of meeting in person, our Sunday School families were each given a goodie bag with a family Christmas activity lesson and hot cocoa/candy canes to enjoy. The bag also included bingo board supplies including chocolate Hershey kiss bingo markers to use during our Zoom Christmas bingo held on the afternoon of December 20th.

A thank you to those who donated for the diapers and baby wipes drive. Thank you to Dave Stoodley and Bruce Irwin for taking the items over to the Urban Mission - over 1500 individual diapers/wipes collected.

Now it is mid-January as I write for this February issue. Again, like in the past 11 months, we need to remain flexible. We continue to keep the health and safety of those we serve - our kids, families and teachers at the forefront. So, when the teachers met on January 3rd, we took into consideration the uptick in local COVID cases, expected Christmas related surge still to peak, concerns about need to quarantine in case of exposure, and the potential for inclement weather/cancellation of church due to weather. We did make the tough decision to place Sunday School on pause. As the days in January proceeded, we noted many schools in the area also paused in-person classes.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support of Asbury's Sunday School program. We continue to look forward. We are hoping to resume in-person classes on Sunday, February 14th. We are already looking forward to Easter - modifying our traditional Easter egg hunt into an Easter/Spring themed table 'n treat parade.

Sarah Lehman



James W. Wright	February 3	Adrianna Weldon	February 12
David White	February 3	Daniel S. Dickinson	February 14
James Rafferty	February 5	Nicole Lamica	February 17
Sue Gamet	February 5	Cherie Danforth	February 19
Deborah Simmons	February 5	Melanie Rafferty	February 24
Carol Plemons	February 8	Max Bovee	February 24
Karen Boomhower	February 9	Victor Adjaben	February 24
Jean Sayers	February 12		



2020 was a challenging year for everyone. As I reflected, it occurred to me that we at Asbury achieved many successes even in the midst of the pandemic. We should rejoice and be thankful to our Lord for our blessings. Let's all continue to pray that God will help us remain positive, cheerful, and determined to succeed in doing His work in 2021.

Here are a few of the successes for which we should offer our thanks:

- ◆ Our dedicated and helpful members - so many people assisted in so many ways.
- ◆ New light bulbs in all the lights to brighten our sanctuary.
- ◆ Weekly phone calls to all of our congregants during COVID church closing.
- ◆ Porch fairies provided gift bags to Sunday School kids (during COVID shutdown).
- ◆ Adult Sunday School (The Wired Word) was provided for multiple Sundays via ZOOM.
- ◆ New church website developed and now in place.
- ◆ Online giving established and easy to use.
- ◆ Pastor Penni and her "Monday Musings" & "Thoughtful Thursdays" & prayer concerns.
- ◆ Use of ZOOM enabled us to carry out the work of our church while remaining safe.
- ◆ Reopening Committee which formed to ensure everyone attending services is safe.
- ◆ Safely re-opened church on June 21st after being closed for 90 days.
- ◆ Spacious church that enabled us to have safe distancing & accommodate our congregants.
- ◆ Our PPP Loan enabled us to keep employees on the payroll and continue our programs.
- ◆ Our wonderful music program which adapted to COVID rules and provided us with quality music for a meaningful church service.
- ◆ Greeters & Ushers working in close coordination.
- ◆ "Coffee Hour On A Tray" in lieu of Fellowship Time after Sunday Service.
- ◆ Our new pastor, Laura, and all the gifts she brings to us to include her weekly "Whimsical Wednesdays" & prayer concerns.
- ◆ People taking care of each other throughout the entire year.
- ◆ Revitalized outreach with Membership & Evangelism Committee.
- ◆ 150 people reached by Max, Penni & Laura during 2020 through Bible studies.
- ◆ New Church Directory was updated and distributed in August.
- ◆ Sunday School re-opened using safe distancing.
- ◆ "Table n' Treat" activity at the end of our church service at Halloween.
- ◆ A new roof to sustain our building for many years, with \$700,000 bills all paid.
- ◆ Boiler repair which now provides us a comfortable church.
- ◆ Asbury Shepherding Program – training occurred in early December and it's operating.
- ◆ Hiring of Faith Kirch as our Church Office Administrator and Kenny Forbes as Custodian.
- ◆ Virtual Children's Christmas Program which was presented to the congregation.
- ◆ Live streaming enabling those not attending in person to participate at 10:15 on Sunday.
- ◆ Painting of the sanctuary, beginning soon in 2021.

Jim Rafferty
Chairperson, Asbury UM Church Council

MY HOPE RESTS IN GOD!!

As 2020 was coming to an end, I began thinking about what I would remember about 2020 (in 5 years or 10 years.) I started listing things in my head that 2020 would bring to mind in the future. God called both my sister and my nephew home in 2020. My life was turned upside down by Covid-19. Suddenly my daily routine had to be adjusted. I began learning a new vocabulary. I was hearing about essential workers, and I had to wear a mask and stay 6 feet from everyone. Businesses were shut down; church services were cancelled. Holy Week and Easter services did not happen. My world was changing faster than I could keep up. Then the worst happened - there was not a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. I could not remember in my lifetime a year when there was not an in-person Christmas Eve service at Asbury. That is when I heard God say stop, and I realized I was only remembering the negative things that had happened. There had to have been some positive things that happened. This caused me to focus on the things that had brought joy to my heart: I was able to gather with my children and grandchildren in the summer when there was a down tick in Covid; God brought back my freedom, as I was able to lease a car; thanks to my new laptop and internet service, I am now able to Zoom and Skype from home; for ten weeks I was able to focus on something other than the virus, as Max led us in a study on the Apostle Paul's letters. I received many notes, cards and phone calls from my family, my friends and my church family. Last, but not least, Asbury's refurbished bell tower was finally lit on the very last day of 2020 (*the light still shines and the darkness has not overcome it.*)

What will my grandchildren read about in the history books regarding 2020? I hope they read about how thousands of people worked tirelessly to keep us all safe and healthy. I hope they read about the outpouring of help and love to those in need. I hope they read about how thousands of people worked diligently to bring us a vaccine in just 9 months. People are now able to work from home and live where they choose. For better or worse, Zoom and livestreaming have become a part of our lives. Will they read about how just for a moment, Democrats and Republicans stood together in the name of Democracy as our Capitol Building was being attacked? Someone recently said to me, "there are far more good people in this world, than bad." Will we remember the good things and the people whose hearts are filled with the Holy Spirit? **I HOPE!**

Will 2020 be remembered as a turning point in our society, in our world and in our Christian lives? Will the events of 2020 bring us closer to God? I hear many people say, "I have grown so much in my faith this past year." I see more people turning to prayer and devotionals for answers. They are turning to God for strength and love and guidance and hope. Will we move closer to being one nation under God, one people under God? **I HOPE!**

I love to ponder what our world would look like if everyone followed God's laws. Can we get there? Have we turned a corner? **I HOPE!**

What I will remember about 2020 is that God walked with me every step of the way, and I grew closer to Him every day!

The Psalms have been a source of peace, joy, love and hope for me in these last few months.

*O come, let us sing to the LORD;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!
For the LORD is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his also.
The sea is his, for he made it,
and the dry land, which his hands have formed.
O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.*

- Psalm 95:1-7

May your hope rest in God,
Sue Beaman

From Our Assistant to the Pastor - Max Bovee

AMF (Asbury Men's Fellowship) – Our annual wreath pick-up at Hemlock Haven, Sandy Creek was scheduled on 9:00 A.M. on Tuesday, December 1. All who helped met at the church to car pool at 8:30 A.M. or at Hemlock Haven at 9:00 A.M. This event was followed by lunch @ Cracker Barrel once we unloaded at Asbury.

2021 Activity Brochure is completed. Please obtain your copy from the Welcome Center on Sunday or in the church office during office hours. You may contact Faith in the church office so you can plan your schedule and not miss anything.

PSPRC UPDATES

The Pastor Staff Parish Relations Committee thanks all of you for your very generous contributions to the staff bonus gifts for 2020. As you all realize, it takes a large staff to support the well-being of this congregation. Asbury is very fortunate to have these dedicated people working for us. We thank them for their service.

It is with regret that we announce the resignation of Gerald Holder from the custodial position. In Gerald's brief time with us, he did an excellent job keeping the sidewalks clear and dry, reorganizing the supplies and tools in the boiler room office, and taking out the weekly trash. He will be missed.

However, our new custodian will be Kenny Forbes, a senior at Watertown H.S. His main job will be snow blowing and salting sidewalks. He will also work inside as needed. We are very pleased he is available and willing to do the job.

Update from the FINANCE COMMITTEE



The annual budget for Asbury was passed at the December Church Council meeting. The final operating budget is \$304,798. This is a decrease from 2020 of about \$19,000. Having said that, we are still in a deficit budget. Thank you for all of the support you gave in 2020. It was such a difficult year and I'm sure we are all looking forward to 2021! The on-line giving has been very successful. If you would like to try this and have any questions, you can reach out to any Finance Committee member. The site is found on the Asbury website. The monetary support you give provides funds for Sunday school, music programs, salaries, nursery supplies, membership and evangelism, and over \$33,000 for our shared ministry to name just a few. Please prayerfully continue to support Asbury with your time, talents and gifts. Thank you!

Joanne Rhode, Finance Chair

FROM THE TRUSTEES

On December 31, 2019, at 5:30 p.m., a celebration was held in the Parker St. parking lot next to the church. We bid goodbye to the old year and welcomed 2021. Hymns were sung with music supplied by Jim Rafferty on his accordion. And we celebrated the finishing of our roofing and tower project. YEAH!!! At 6:00 p.m. we turned on power to the roof lights that illuminate our tower. It was a stirring and beautiful sight. In the darkness of the world today, our tower shines as a beacon. At present, it will be on from 5pm to 12am. If you are in Watertown any evening, drive by and take a look. It is impressive!

Painting and repairs of the sanctuary will start sometime after February 1st. Scaffolding will be set up in the sanctuary and rotunda for a while including during Sunday services. We don't know how long this project will take. That will be determined by the condition of the ceiling when the painters are up at ceiling level.

We have finished our payments to our major contractor for the roof. The final payment was a little over \$81,000. Continued giving to our Capital Campaign Fund has allowed us to remain debt free. The ceiling repairs and painting will be another considerable expense. The exact amount is unknown at this time. We are hoping and praying that 2021 will bring back something toward normal. We can then celebrate together again in a Sunday church service and raise our voices as a community of faith.

Blessings,
Glen Snell, Trustee

The Membership/Evangelism Committee



assembles the **COFFEE HOUR ON A TRAY** treats that are offered to parishioners as they leave Sunday services. If you wish to bake cookies or a dessert, bring in some fresh, washed fruit or donate small bottles of water, please leave them on the counter of the upstairs kitchen where they can be labeled before going on the tray. We are most appreciative of your help with this project. Thank you.



A Heartfelt Thanks



On behalf of the staff and me, I want to express our deep appreciation for the most generous Christmas gifts from the congregation. We were overwhelmed by the outpouring of support and encouragement. Believe me, we felt the love!

Laura

UNCLAIMED PROJECTS

When Covid struck and the church closed, there were many projects that remained unfinished and scattered around the various work areas. It would be helpful for those who tidy up if projects were labeled so we could speak to someone who knows about how to deal with them. Just tape up a sheet of paper with the name of the group that "owns" the project and who to talk to about it. Thanks.

In Honor and Recognition of Toby Schilling



You see, we don't go around preaching about ourselves. We preach that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we ourselves are your servants for Jesus' sake. - 2 Corinthians 4:5

I met Toby a hundred years ago when I first came to Watertown to work after completing college. He was working at Mercy Hospital. He was always friendly and helpful as well as knowledgeable about the various human service agencies. He always struck me as a very wise person. It was not until later that we met again in another capacity, as fellow congregants and Christians at Asbury United Methodist Church. After connecting at Asbury, it dawned on me why he had been such a positive supportive colleague, he was living his faith. After some time, I was asked to serve on the Worship Committee. Toby was the chair for this committee and I was welcomed by him and made to feel comfortable. I was relieved that he would be the leader with whom I was familiar. We had productive meetings and many great ideas generated for meaningful worship experiences. We also had many good laughs during meetings. I learned that he was an ordained pastor, which enabled him to be a valuable resource when planning services. Under his leadership, we had many memorable services. Two of the most significant experiences I remember under Toby's direction were the Tenebrae services with fully costumed disciples falling away from Christ and the Easter Sunrise Services at Thompson Park. Toby had served as the chair for worship committee until this January when he has moved on to serve on other committees. I am so blessed to have been on this committee and able to have been enriched by Toby's knowledge, and kind accepting demeanor. He truly embodies the definition of a loving servant of Christ.

Asbury owes you a debt of gratitude for your faithful humble service.

THANK YOU TOBY!



From the Worship Committee

(Written by Karen Hill)



2020 Wreath Sale



The annual wreath sale was a tremendous success! Thank you to each of you who sold or bought the 303 pieces that were ordered this year. Thank you to Glen Snell who made arrangements for the U-Haul truck which ensures that the wreaths and other items transport well. A special thank you also to the Men's Group who accompanied us to Hemlock Haven to load and then unload the wreath order. Another special thank you to those women and men who helped sort and prepare the evergreen pieces for pick-up. As you can see this definitely requires a team effort! The Finance Committee is proud to announce that the profit for this year's sale was \$2,041! This will be most helpful during the cold winter weather.

Lynn Morgan

A NOTE FROM OUR FRIEND IN TANZANIA

Tito Kilale visited us in August, 2019, and spoke to the folks at Asbury. He also visited the Urban Mission and met Dawn Cole and some of the other workers there. Tito is an ordained Lutheran pastor in Tanzania, teaching school now in the capital city of Dodoma. His sister Sophia, is a friend of Barbara and myself whom we met in Tanzania in 1997. At that time she was a student at the mission school, the music director, the dean of girls and the assistant storekeeper. She invited us to supper in her home with other American volunteers and we made and ate "ugali" which she mixed in an iron kettle over an open fire. She was the mother of twins - a boy and a girl -- and her husband had left her because twins were thought by non-Christian Tanzanians to bring curses. She graduated from college in Kenya with a degree in music and community development and now teaches school and leads its choir in Dodoma.

Letter received December 2020:

Dear David,

Greetings to you from Tanzania.

I hope you are fine and doing well with your pain. How is Barbara?

Last Sunday we joined other choirs in singing songs of praise and supplication to God for protecting us as a country from COVID-19. Choirs of the Lutheran tradition come together for this humble moment to our Almighty God. A choir from Roman Church was invited too. We met at Lutheran Cathedral in Dodoma. Sophia directed this choir. One special song our choir sang was: WERE YOU THERE WHEN THEY CRUCIFIED MY LORD. I translated its words in Swahili. The singing was very fantastic!

I understand the election is finished. I think you liked the results. Congratulations on it! It is my hope that many are waiting with hope for what the new leadership brings.

Please stay healthy, safe and peaceful. Say hello to all in your church and the center for me.

God bless you.

Tito

SCRIPTURE OF THE WEEK

February 7: Psalm 72:19

"Let the whole earth be filled with his glory."

February 14: Psalm 86:7

"When I am in distress, I call to you, because you answer me."

February 21: Psalm 102:17

"He will respond to the prayers of the destitute. He will not despise their plea."

February 28: Psalm 104:24

"How many are your works, Lord!"

Submitted by Max Bovee

ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

327 FRANKLIN STREET
WATERTOWN, NY 13601
315-782-3240

E-Mail: asbury@gisco.net
Website: www.AsburyUMC.net
www.Facebook.com/Asbury13601

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Join us for
SUNDAY WORSHIP
at
10:15 A.M.

Who Is Asbury United Methodist Church?

*We invite you to open this
newsletter and meet the People of
Asbury United Methodist Church.*



*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give
you. I do not give to you as the world
gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled
and do not be afraid.*

~ John 14:27

***No Matter Where You Are on Life's Journey,
You are Welcome Here!***

MAKING OF FRIENDS

If nobody smiled, and nobody cared and
nobody helped us along,
If every moment looked after itself and good
things always went to the strong,
If nobody thought just a little about you and
nobody cared about me,
And we stood all alone, in the battle of life,
what a dreary old world this would be.
Life is sweet, just because of the
friends we have made
And the things which in common we share.
We want to live on, not because of ourselves,
but because of the people who care.
It is doing and giving for somebody else,
on which all life's splendor depends,
And the joy of this world, when you've summed
it all up is found in the making of friends.

~ Edgar A. Guest

***A sweet friendship refreshes the soul
- Proverbs 27:9***