

The Visitor


JANUARY
2024

Senior Pastor

Rev. William Mudge 315-292-0850

Congregational Care & Family Ministries

Rev. Jeff Hodge 315-383-4384

Administrative Pastor

Rev. Susan Ranous 315-445-1045

Pastor Emeritus

Rev. Gordon Knapp 315-200-1250

Music Director

Dan Williams 315-406-0232

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Church Office: 315-635-6442

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Normal Office Hours:

Monday - Friday, 9:00 am-2:00 pm

Church Office is closed January 1

E-mail: secretary@bvillefirstumc.org

Website: www.bvillefirstumc.org

PLEASE NOTE:

Articles for the ***FEBRUARY***
must be submitted to the church office
by ***January 15th***. Thank you.

[Church Calendar](#)



From the Pastor's Desk

"A Sheepdogs Tale"

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?' But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God's Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from the heavens said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'" Matthew 3:13-17 NRSV

Happy New Year!! As we turn the calendar from December 2023 to January 2024, the few seconds it took to flip the clock seemed to bring an enormous leap and opportunity for a fresh start. I have always been a big fan of fresh starts, and New Years – Happy New Year, Happy New Opportunities!

As I sat contemplating this first newsletter letter from me to you this calendar year, I was reading the various accounts of Jesus' baptism. Here in Matthew's Gospel, we see Jesus' cousin John declaring that the awaited Messiah was coming soon. John the Baptist was no sweet talker! His Call to Worship for the crowd was something like, "YOU BROOD OF VIPERS!! WHO TOLD YOU TO FLEE FROM GOD'S WRATH THAT IS TO COME?!?!?" I'm pretty sure in today's mainline church, this Call to Worship might be a career ender!

Look at John's reaction when he sees his cousin Jesus, a man he grew up with and new well coming to be baptized. John tries to prevent Jesus' baptism saying - **"I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"** Listen carefully to Jesus' response - **"Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness."** Jesus explains to John that there is an order to things, and they will excel by doing things in order.

As we embrace this New Years fresh start, I would like you to take a few minutes and ask yourself, "What is the proper thing for me to do next as I grow up in my Christian Journey?" I will talk about this as we move into 2024 together. We have a wonderful opportunity and a congregation full of strong leaders to journey with – let's not squander this chance!

I believe that God is ready willing and able to draw us into an exciting Kingdom sized journey this next year. Please, prayerfully consider coming along and going deep!

Come and join us for worship at 9am Sunday morning for our Heritage worship service featuring our choir and familiar hymns. If you are unable to join us in person, we are livestreaming our worship services on YouTube and Facebook. Plan to come and join us – we'll save you a seat!

Serving Christ with You,
Pastor Bill Mudge

CONGREGATIONAL CARE & FAMILY MINISTRIES

Rev. Jeff Hodge

Have a blessed and Happy New Year!

My prayer for each of us as we enter 2024 is that we take a real opportunity this year to further explore our relationship with Jesus and with our church. As Covid threats gradually subside and ministries re-emerge, there are so many ways for us to become more deeply involved as a way of understanding our own call to be a Disciple of Jesus Christ.

Here are just a few things to think and pray about this year:

- Attend worship as often as you can; consider bringing a family member or friend
- Join a short-term or long-term bible study or do further devotional reading on your own or with a friend
- If you are on a ministry team, faithfully attend meetings and engage with the work of that team
- Think of ways you can connect with one another; with those here and those not yet back or unable to attend
- Become part of a mission or outreach, here or on the district or conference level
- Discover your spiritual gifts and begin to seek ways to put them to deeper use

I look forward to growing together in faith in the coming year! -- *Pastor Jeff*

Celebrate *Wonder* Sunday School

Sunday School begins every Sunday following Children's Moment. Pastor Jeff will be away on Sundays, January 7, 14, and 21 and we will need extra coverage. If you can help with this ministry during those weeks (prepare a lesson, make copies, get helpers, and teach), please see Pastor Bill.

Please note:

**While I am on my trip to South Africa,
Pastor Bill is on call for all pastoral emergencies
between January 2 and January 22.**

Of Continued Concern:

Dave Horan, Elijah Huling, Pat Kline,
Jim Larmondra, Janet McIntosh,
Kathy VanWie (Crouse), Ron Waterbury,
Robert Yeddo

Friends & Neighbors:

Francis Bliven, Julia Bliven's husband
Larry Disotell, friend of Pam Fallesen
Carolyn Dixon
Emily Gibbs
Richard Greer, Dave Greer's brother
William Hobart, friend of the Kisselsteins
Craig Hodge, Pastor Jeff's brother
John Hughes, Joyce Wilkinson's brother
Dana Kaiser, Donna Foster's son
Roberta Maxwell,
 sister-in-law of Patty & Rocky
Blakely Nowicki, Kisselstein family
Zachary Thomas, grandson of Mary Thomas
Lisa Wilson & family, Judy Herbs' niece
Ruby VanDuser, friend of Suzanne Ellis
Isobella Vecchio, friend of Ron Waterbury

Pray for our Service Men & Women:

Holly Abbott, Jeff Coover, Brian Cunningham,
Casey DeLapp, James Scott Gibbs,
Casey Hargrave, Jeffrey Lucy, Dr. Kristen Lucy,
Jeffrey Meany, Brandon Merle,
Benjamin Nordmark, Tyler Reynolds, Peter Slye,
Richard Slye



Sympathy to:

Gail Gray & family on the passing of
her mother, Dorothy Clary

Linda Miller & family on the passing of
her husband, Daniel Miller

Helen Stafford & family on the passing of
her husband, Richard Stafford
(not in the printed newsletter)

Remember Those at Home and at Care Facilities:

Joan Foster

Bill Barrett – Loretto-Cunningham #504
Charles Bordwell – Brookdale #53
Sharyn Brown – Sedgwick Heights #344
Gertrude Collins – Loretto-Cunningham #936
Marjorie Dence – McHarrie Pointe #513
Judy Herbs – Elderwood #225D
Barbara Johnston – Van Duyn #457
Mildred Long – Syracuse Home #122
Ernestine Parry – Syracuse Home #107
Mary Eleanor Slye – McHarrie Pointe #401

A Peak into Pastor Jeff's Trip to South Africa

Thank you for your prayers and for your interest in my Cross Cultural Immersion to South Africa. It is a Seminary experience that will give us a cross-section of experiences. Head to Columbus January 4. We leave the country on January 5. I will be in South Africa from January 6-19. I will return to the U.S. on the 20th and to work on the 22nd. I can't share my entire itinerary, but I thought I'd share a few highlights so you can check out links, pray, and participate on some level:



January 7

We will begin our day just like you will – in worship at 9:00 a.m. at Regina Mundi Catholic Church is located in the Township of Soweto, in the Suburb of Moroka. The Church forms part of the rich History of Soweto and is the largest Catholic Church in South Africa – able to seat 2,000 people, with standing room for 5,000. During the Apartheid era the Regina Mundi Church opened its doors to Anti-Apartheid groups and provided shelter to Anti-Apartheid activists. Here is a link to the church:

[Regina Mundi, Catholic Church, Soweto | South African History Online \(sahistory.org.za\)](http://sahistory.org.za/regina-mundi-catholic-church-soweto)

January 8

2:30 pm -- We will visit and meet with leaders from The Philani Maternal, Child Health and Nutrition Trust has been addressing maternal, child health and nutrition problems in the informal settlements surrounding Cape Town since 1979. Here is the link: [Home | Philani](#)

January 11

9:30 am -- Visit to the Hector Pieterse Museum and talk with Antoinette Sithole (Speaker session). Antoinette is the sister of Hector Pieterse, who was shot and killed during the Soweto uprising on June 16, 1976.

Here is the link: [Hector Pieterse Memorial and Museum - CIPDH - UNESCO](#)

January 13

8:00 am -- Depart for Robben Island Tour Robben Island Tour: home to the infamous prison in which Nelson spent 18 years imprisoned in a tiny cell, forced to hard labor, along with thousands of other political prisoners.

Here is the link: [Home - Robben Island Museum \(robben-island.org.za\)](http://robben-island.org.za)

3:00 pm -- Visit Table Mountain: Take the tram up to Table Mountain. Get a breathtaking view of the city of Cape Town. Here is the link: [Our African Wonder | Table Mountain](#)

January 15

6:00 pm -- Depart to Stellenbosch. Session: Meet with Dr. Alan Storey to discuss white privilege & racism in South Africa, at Stellenbosch University. Session at the University of Stellenbosch and speak to Professor Nel. Here is the link: [Stellenbosch University Home \(sun.ac.za\)](http://sun.ac.za)

Get rid of those winter blues with your
preschool family at Baldwinsville Nursery School's:



Thursday, January 25th 5:30 - 7:30 PM
First United Methodist Church Dining Room

Delicious Food!

All you can eat menu: Chili-cook off (sign-ups in lobby),
hotdogs & beverages

Wear your Winter P.J.'s!



Fun Activities!

Before & after you eat,
visit the Polar Bear's PLAYLAND for crafts & games

and...

Very Special Guest

the one and only... **Olaf!**

Make your reservations today!

Order forms can be found outside the church office and on the BNS bookshelf.

Pre-sale tickets (thru 1/18): \$5.00 each

Ticket price starting 1/19: \$8.00 each

Children under 2 are free

Church Giving

If you are not in church, you can continue supporting our church using automatic payments on your on-line bank account or the church's on-line payment system.

Using your bank's on-line bill payment feature, you can set up an automatic payment where your bank sends a check to the church. You control the frequency and amount of the payment. Simply use Baldwinsville First United Methodist Church, 17 W. Genesee Street, Baldwinsville NY 13027, indicate the amount and frequency of payment. Most banks do not charge you any additional cost for this feature.

The church also has an on-line payment system thru VANCO. Go to the on-line church's website [www. https://www.bvillefirstumc.org](https://www.bvillefirstumc.org) and on the right-side column press 'Online Giving – Make a Donation'. You set up your account and make your donation to the general fund or other areas listed. You will go to a screen where you can enter the amount, frequency of payment and if you want to pay using a bank account or credit card. You will have the option to offset the charge the church incurs for this system.

If you prefer to use a mobile device (cell phone), use the following QR code and it will take you to the on-line payment system from VANCO. Follow the same procedure to set up your contribution as the on-line system.
<https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z7C7/home>



For more information, contact Rod Porter, Bookkeeper (315) 247-7426 or Rocky Maxwell, Chair of Finance Committee (315) 488-5700. Thank you for supporting our church.

Heartwarming News to Share

Approximately 200!!! That's the number of new and excellent condition non-religious books, for children grade 6+ and adults of all ages, that were generously donated by S.A.M.A.S.A.N. and the Baldwinsville First United Methodist Church family and friends, to the Baldwinsville Christmas Bureau. Our sincere thanks to ALL and a special thanks to Bill Brotherton, who made the special delivery of the many books to the Christmas Bureau.

*The S.A.M.A.S.A.N./Christmas Bureau Book Donation Benefit Nov 2023 Committee:
Nancy Brotherton, Ellen Jennings, Nancy Smith*

01/01 Brian DeLola
01/03 Susan Lison
01/04 Karen Burke
Brett Pickett
01/05 Melba Lindsey
01/07 Virginia Johnson
01/08 Clara Trew
01/09 Lauren Witter

01/10 Joe Kenney
01/11 Jackie Anderson
01/13 Bill Brotherton
01/14 Nancy Brotherton
Judy Herbs
01/15 Chris Wooldridge
01/17 Emerson Derby
Dan DiRenzo
Lisa Smith
01/19 Janet Ramseyer
01/20 Mary Eleanor Slye
David Smith

01/21 Jennie Hewitt
Donald Metrick
01/22 Jill Evans
01/23 Brianna Stewart
01/24 Olivia Oyer-Halen
Ray Rice
01/28 Stephen Brooks
Tom DiRenzo
01/29 Mildred Long
01/30 Janet Hawley
Anna Smallwood
01/31 Allie Derby
William Otter

Eureka! Book Club

Eureka! book club is open to anyone with an interest in reading and conversation. We begin the new year on January 23. Both January and February will be on **zoom**. If you are new to participating, give the office your e-mail address so that we can send you a zoom link.

January 23, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.(via zoom)

Share your Favorite Short Stories! Pastor Jeff will facilitate our time together. Bring a favorite short story, have two points and/or questions that you would like to pose. This is a great way to start the year, and if you are new to **Eureka!**, a great way to get started with a book club!

