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What traditions do you have around the Thanksgiving holiday? Sure, there are some favorite traditional dishes. Some look to the tradition of football, and may even play a game themselves. Others can rely on the tradition the same stories being told over and over by the same family member.

Maybe you have this tradition. Going around the table and saying what you're thankful for. That can be a loaded question this year—especially if your family has different politics. But giving thanks can be a helpful exercise, regardless of whether you're happy or sad about the current state of affairs.

Gratitude is a virtue. All virtues take a little work. They need to be cultivated, often by force of habit. Gratitude gives us greater perspective. Not that it denies our problems. It puts them in context with the little blessings everywhere. No matter how bad things get, no matter how bad we feel, there is always some gift somewhere to be found.

Brene Brown puts it this way. "*Gratitude is an emotion that reflects our deep appreciation for what we value, what brings meaning to our lives, and what makes us feel connected to ourselves and others.*" [Brene Brown is a social researcher, and this quote comes from her published research on the emotions, Atlas Of the Heart]

The last bit of that quote really struck me. Gratitude or giving thanks makes us feel more connected to ourselves and others. I think we need to feel connected to others—now more than ever.

I am grateful for the relationships in my life—for my family. I am grateful for all of you—my church family.

This season, we are reminded of being connected to a much larger church family. We will celebrate a Thanksgiving service with other churches in the newly formed Valley Faith Community. Each week, we've been praying for our faith partners in Guatemala. We are all part of a larger family connected by faith.

I give thanks for you. May we prove to be a blessing to each other, and this greater community.

**In Gratitude,
Chris**



Thanksgiving Services

Sunday, November 24 9:30 am. We celebrate thanksgiving with a food drive for the Stephentown Emergency Food Pantry. The number of clients the pantry is helping on a regular basis has nearly doubled since before Covid. On top of that, grocery prices have risen significantly. Consequently, our funds are dwindling at a rate that is unsustainable without assistance from donors and from food drives held by local organizations such as your church. We are very grateful for the help. Here is a list of things we always need:

peanut butter, jelly, cold cereal, tuna, canned chicken, condiments such as ketchup, mustard, cooking oil, salad dressing, mayo, maple syrup, canned fruit, canned soup, canned vegetables, pasta and pasta sauce, dessert mixes (not much baking mix is used), coffee, baked beans (other beans are not very popular)

They have the supplies they need for the holiday dinner bags they provide. They do add a treat bag for each client which includes candy kisses, candy canes, hot cocoa mix which would be used for the Christmas bags.

VALLEY FAITH COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING SERVICE

At 4pm we will be sponsoring a Thanksgiving Worship Service along with the Canaan Congregational Church and the Church of Our Savior(Episcopal) in New Lebanon. The Valley Faith Community invites the Community to this service. There will be a food drive and donations will be split between the Stephentown Emergency Food Pantry and Charlie's Pantry in New Lebanon.



ANGEL TREE 2024

It's that time of year again – time to plan for the 14th Annual ANGEL TREE donation for local families in need. Last year we helped make Christmas special for 10 families thanks to your generous gifts. The schools have provided me with the families, 8 this year, and the angels are ready. Remember, if you prefer not to shop yourself, I will be happy to go for you – please have your donation to me by November 15th. Those who shop themselves, please remember not to wrap the gifts for the New Lebanon families (at their request) and to bring your gifts to church on Sunday, December 15th.

As always, thank you for your kindness and support.

Blessings, Nancy

Friends,

Being included in the Stephentown Federated Church Family has been our joy over the last 13 years. We are leaving Stephentown fit fond memories of working with so many of you on various projects to further the Lord's work.



Blessings to all of you. Doug & Laurelyn



Treasurer's Report

We are grateful for all of you who have donated towards our Siding/Painting of the manse project. We have raised \$25,452.00 of the \$35,465.00 cost of the project. It's never too late to give. Remember you can always give via the **GIVE NOW button on our webpage. THANK YOU!!!!!!!!!!**

Giving envelopes are available for 2025 in Pierce Hall. Please sign your name on the sheet that corresponds with the box you take so I can identify you. If you are giving once a year or by check, envelopes are not necessary. Again, you can always setup giving thru the **GIVE NOW button on our webpage: stephentownfederatedchurch.org. Thank you. Barbara**

SonShiners

Thank you to all who came out and joined us for lunch at the Election Day Luncheon.

I think it was a record. Thank you to all who helped.

We got through another year of events.

Meetings: 8am Bring a dish to share

November 17th

December 15th

January 19th

February 16th



Choir

We welcome Rob into our choir group. We are beginning to rehearse Thanksgiving and Christmas music. If you would like to sing with us during these two seasons, please see Bev so we have music available for everyone that needs it. The choir is singing special music for the Valley Faith Community Thanksgiving service on Nov 24th at 4 p.m. and the Longest Night of the year service on Dec 22nd at 4 p.m. Rehearsals are on Thursday nights at 6:15 for the next three weeks then it goes back to 6:30 p.m.

The Community Breakfast Group News

Fall 2024 – Winter 2025

Welcome to Late Fall - early winter, although it doesn't feel at all like Fall. Warm temps and lots of sun make it more like late summer. The monthly breakfast meetings of the Community Breakfast Group at the Stephentown Federated Church have begun. First Sunday of every month, now thru June. Breakfast starts at 8:00am sharp. Attending church after breakfast is not required, however, we'd love to have you for both! Come and join us. Bring a friend, there's always plenty to eat.

Our first 2 breakfast meetings (October and November) were very well attended - 38 in October and 31 in November. Many thanks to our great cooks. We voted to donate some of our funds to the manse siding project and in an e-mail poll, decided to provide the church Christmas "Angel Tree Project" with \$300. Our annual "All Church Turkey Dinner" will be on February 22, 2025.

Some activities for the upcoming months:

December 1st – Breakfast at 8:00am.

January 5th – First Breakfast of the new year, 8:00am sharp.

February 2nd - Breakfast at 8:00am. Work of final plans for the turkey dinner.

March 2nd - Breakfast at 8:00am.

If you'd like to be on our e-mail list or know of someone who would like to receive our church newsletter in the mail, please reach out to Paul McMillan, Larry Eckhardt or Ted Bears. Everyone is invited – come one, come all.

Any questions or need additional information, contact Larry Eckhardt at 518-573-2565.



ADVENT

HANGING OF THE GREENS December 1st. We will be having a hanging of the greens to decorate our church following the service. All are welcome to help.

Our first Sunday in Advent begins on December 1st. The Celtic tradition has this phrase to talk about deep spiritual experiences. They call them “thin places,” where the boundaries between heaven and earth disappear. The Advent stories perfectly illustrate such thin places. Join us this season as we hear the familiar stories and find out what Jesus means when he says, “the kingdom of heaven is among you.”

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Beginning Dec 1st for the four weeks of Advent we are asking anyone, any family, or couple that has an interest in lighting the advent candles for a Sunday to let Pastor Chris or Bev know you are interested in being a part of this weekly advent celebration.



LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE, December 22nd - 4pm. When nights are long, when darkness lasts longer than the day, we can trust in the fact that light will dawn another day. Join us for our Longest Night Service, welcoming the Light. We can't force the days to be longer, but we can share the coming Light with one another. It will be a service filled with music, prayers, poems, candlelight, and reading. This is a community event, and we invite anyone in the community to bring a refreshment/dessert to share at the end of the service, and/or a poem or song to share with the community to welcome the light during the service. Think of it as a service with an open mic and potluck afterwards. No obligation to bring anything to attend.



CHRISTMAS EVE

Join us December 24th at 7:30 pm for our Christmas Eve Service. Some stories never get old. Even the ones we know by heart. We can hear them over and over again. Join us on Christmas Eve for a celebration of Christ's birth. Come hear the familiar songs and story of Christmas. This is a story of hope for all ages. Join us for music from the Front Pew Band and the Choir.



This Photo by Habemus

Long – term Prayer Concerns:

Holly Wheeler, Carol, June Ross, Rusty Melancon, Makayla & Julie, Kathy Carringer, Sean Northrup, Georgie, Kelly, Joey, Peggy, Mike, & Greg, Lance, James & his family, Garrett, Brenda & Bob, Mathew, Emma Richardson & her son Mike, Connie (FL), Pat Sample, Del Wise and his sister Vicki, John L., Bev & Jerry, Bob Vincent, John & Danielle, Melaney, Colleen P., Norm, Tanya Joyes, Tasha-Chris & family, Sal, Karen, Christina, Linda Lee, John Anello, Mary Martin, Sherry Ciliberti, Carolee, Toby, Kelly, Kevin, Angelica, Jim & Ann Peck, Radley family, Jenny, Rick Newton, Jim Chambers, Michael Monyahan, Judy & Joe Leland, Pat B., Joy & Bob Lowenthal, Susan G., Peter, Samantha, Owen McGinnis, Shannon W., Pattie Lewis, Sahara, Cindy Hennig, Hal, Don Leab, Frank, Janice, Donnie, Sue, Bob & Deb, Tom Foody, Sally Guimarra, Jerry (AZ), Stephanie & Devin, Dan & Nancy, Dennis L., Eckhardt's friend going through depression, Terrienne Koepp, Lori, Trygve Tomlinson, Nancy & Malcom Beal, Linda P., Adrienne & family, Sandy & John, Tracy & family, Wanda, Kay Sessor, Isabella, Carter & family, Molly & family, Mary's brother and his family, Debbie Knapp, Bonnie & Rick, Barbara (Leland's daughter), Dottie Meppan, Larry Eckardt's cousins in NM, Gene Sawin, Joe & Arlene Longo, Tony Longo & his partner Dana (praying for the blessing of a baby), Sal Longo, Liane, Liam (Beal's grandson), those from the Ukraine and all who are helping them, Shannon & Scott Adams, Perry, JoAnn (Pastor Chris' mom), Joan (Ellie's grandma) & Brittany (Ellie's mom), Laurelyn & Doug's daughter-in law's mom, Beth, Kathy, Zack Hanson, Gladys (Nancy Beal's sister), Carol Baker, Edna May, Peter Hamilton, Tom & family, Leo & family, Karen, Peter, Jackie Eckhardt, Kathryn & the twins, Betty Ann Hanlon, Mike, Carter La Casse, Doris & Arnold Sours, Rick Monyahan, Jodie Doherty, Craig (Ellie's Uncle in MT), Ella (Beal's Granddaughter), Nancy Machler, Nancy & her brother John, Mary Hamilton, Tammy Madden, Baby Gus, Rick Fosby, Dwight & Devon Peterson, Martha Lagerwahl, Karen Volpi, Kathi Jones, Becca Fenander, Margie Fenander Theresa Terpening, Ed Mullett, the LGBTQ community, Santo, Ronnie, Ella, Alex, Kathryn, Sam & Ben, & Kathy Norton, Nancy Rogers, Melisa/Lou/Jake/Brett and Tommy Castillo

**Please pray for our prayer partner church and their Pastor
Dios Viviente Aldea Pueblo Nuevo, San Juan Ostuncalco
Pastor Martin de Leon Juarez**

As always . . .we pray for:

Our farmers, Pastor Chris & family, those with emotional/mental/physical illnesses, the unknown addict, those being cared for & the caregiver, those in transition, those suffering from addiction(s), Emergency Responders, youth of today, those in weather ravaged places, those who don't get where they are going who are cold/alone, the Military and their families, our Veterans, & our elected leaders, those imprisoned, Citizens of Lesothos & the student we sponsor, organ donors, those who mourn, those

persecuted for their faith, those who have no one to pray for them, those not mentioned out loud, the unemployed, all refugees and the nations locked in conflict
Safe travel for all

THANK YOU GOD FOR OUR MANY BLESSINGS!



Birthdays
to
Celebrate

November	2	Kalee Hennig
	9	Mark Morris
	11	Judy Leland
	11	Aliza Berry
	19	Valerie Sandstrom
	21	Sopha Corral
December	5	Marianne Smith
	5	Acelyn Plouffe
	17	Janice Walther
	18	Fred Wallbank
	19	Lynn Morris
	25	Donna Densing
	26	Nancy Beal
	26	Kelsey Hennig
	28	Malik Plouffe
	31	Joan C. McMillan
	31	Helen Wallbank
January	14	Malcolm Beal
	17	Mel Feathers
	17	Mary Schnyer
	17	Portia Westfall
	24	Richard Beckwith
	25	Stewart Pease
	25	Marge Feathers
	27	Jean Bolen
	30	Linda Secor

**ANNUAL
MEETING**

Our annual meeting will be held on January 12th, 2025 following the church service. Please plan to attend this important part in the life of our church. Also, those responsible for group reports please have them into Arlene Longo email: alongo6177@fairpoint.net no later than Dec 15th if possible. I know it's not quite the end of the year, but it takes time to create the report packet for the congregation by the first Sunday of the year.

WE WONDER WHY WE ALL ARE CALLED TO COME TO BETHLEHEM'S CATTLE STALL.
 HOW COULD THE GOD WHO FORMED THE EARTH BE FOUND IN SUCH A LOWLY BIRTH?
 THIS INFANT WILL IN HUMBLE GUISE DISARM THE STRONG AND FOOL THE WISE
 AND BLESS THE POOR, ALL THOSE ONCE SCORNFUL, IN BEAUTY DRESS, BY GOD ADORNED.

<p>LIGHT ONE CANDLE! 1</p>  <p>JER. 33:14-16</p>	<p>SEE THE MOON. 14</p>  <p>ISAIAH 55:12</p>	<p>SEEK OUT A FRIEND... 20</p>  <p>LUKE 1:39-40</p>	<p>... OR A STRANGER. 21</p>  <p>HEBREWS 13:1,2</p>
<p>CHOOSE PEACE. 16</p>  <p>ISAIAH 11:1-9</p>	<p>UNDERSTAND. 11</p>  <p>JOEL 2:28</p>	<p>BE READY. 3</p>  <p>ESTHER 4:14</p>	<p>IMAGINE HER CONFIDENCE. 19</p> <p>Let it be to me...</p> <p>LUKE 1:26-38</p>
<p>FINISH IT. 7</p>  <p>PHIL. 1:3-6</p>	<p>LIGHT TWO CANDLES. 8</p>  <p>LUKE 3:1-6</p>	<p>SING! 17</p>  <p>PSALM 95:1,2</p>	<p>DO IT. 4</p>  <p>JAMES 1:22</p>
<p>FIND STILLNESS. 5</p>  <p>PSALM 46</p>	<p>MAKE ROOM. 23</p>  <p>LUKE 2:1-7</p>	<p>FOLLOW. 12</p>  <p>JOHN 8:12</p>	<p>LIGHT THREE CANDLES. 15</p>  <p>ZEPH. 3:14-20</p>
<p>REACH OUT. 13</p> <p>Love - Prayer - Patience Hospitality - Rejoice Affection</p> <p>ROMANS 12:9-13</p>	<p>SEE NEWNESS. 2</p>  <p>ISAIAH 43:18,19</p>	<p>LIGHT FOUR CANDLES. 22</p>  <p>MICAH 5:2-5A</p>	<p>LISTEN WITH CARE. 10</p>  <p>PSALM 19:1-4A</p>
<p>HEAR A TEACHER. 9</p>  <p>ISAIAH 52:7</p>	<p>FEEL THE LIGHT. 18</p>  <p>ISAIAH 9:2</p>	<p>GIVE SECRETLY. 6</p> <p>ST. NICHOLAS</p>  <p>2 COR. 9:6-8</p>	<p>24</p>  <p>JOHN 1:14</p>

WE'LL COME TO THAT IMPOV'RISHED PLACE AND FIND OURSELVES IN NEED OF GRACE.
 WITH ALL THE WEAK, THE WOUNDED, LOST, WHO GATHER 'ROUND THE MANGER TROUGH.
 SO COME, DEAR FRIENDS, WITH WONDER, AWE AND WORSHIP AT HIS BED OF STRAW
 WITH SHEPHERDS AND THE HOST ABOVE, COME, WELCOME CHRIST, THE LORD OF LOVE.

Stephentown Federated Church Newsletter November/December 2024

It is time to place your orders for poinsettias in memory of your loved ones. This year the poinsettias are \$10.00 each. We are asking that you have your order in by December 1st. You can send your check and order form to: **Stephentown Federated Church, PO Box 10, Stephenstown, NY 12168**. Poinsettias will be placed on the altar in time for our Christmas Eve service.

Your name or family name(s)	In memory of:
Your name or family name(s)	In memory of:
Your name or family name(s)	In memory of:
Your name or family name(s)	In memory of:



Total number of poinsettias ordered at \$10.00 a piece _____

Your total amount enclosed \$ _____