



**Salem First United  
Presbyterian Church is:**

*Alive!*

# New Year Prayer

*Thank You Lord for giving me  
The brand new year ahead.  
Help me live the way I should  
As each new day I tread.  
Give me gentle wisdom  
That I might help a friend,  
Give me strength and courage  
So a shoulder I might lend.  
The year ahead is empty,  
Help me fill it with good things  
Each new day filled with joy  
And happiness it brings.  
Amen.*

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**Special points of  
interest:**

- Free Community  
Dinner January  
15th at 5pm
- Articles for the  
ALIVE! Are due in  
no later than Janu-  
ary 28th
- Annual Reports DUE  
January 25th
- 4 Cents a Meal Col-  
lection January  
28th

## A Note From The Pastor

### The Great Epiphany Challenge

It's January 5, and I know I should take my Christmas tree down. The needles are falling at an alarming rate and each morning as I sip my coffee in the kitchen I can hear the clunk of yet another ornament sliding off a branch and hitting the living room floor.

Clunk. Yep, another ornament just fell.

I really, though, want to wait a bit longer. I want to keep the white lights on the tree twinkling longer to remember the rest of the Christmas story — the moment when the Magi, after following the light of a bright star, found Jesus. This is an important part of the story that gets squeezed into the end of church pageants every December. The baby doll is placed in the manger and the little tots dressed as cuddly sheep look adoringly at it. Then the organist begins the first notes of the majestic song, “We Three Kings” and in come three children wearing crowns ready to present the iconic gifts of frankincense, gold and myrrh.

I say this is a pivotal moment in the Christmas narrative not because of the valuable gifts being presented. It is pivotal because the Magi, outsiders from far-away lands, had an epiphany that changed them forever. An epiphany as defined by Webster's dictionary being “a moment in which you suddenly see or understand something in a new or very clear way.”

When all the world around them was oblivious that God was now right smack in the world, the Magi saw Jesus for who he was. Jesus the Christ child. Jesus the Savior. The Promised One. The One who would walk with us in the stresses, hiccups and problems of life. Jesus. The Word made flesh.

We in the Presbyterian denomination haven't done a great job observing this part of the Christmas story. We focus place all our energies on the Christmas Eve service that we forget all about Epiphany. We don't do anything on January 6, that is marked on church calendars as the Feast of Epiphany, to celebrate what I dare say is perhaps the most important part of the story for us. The part in which we too are being invited to see God and to “suddenly see or understand something in a new or very clear way.”

Are you tired of muddling through life? Are you finally done with worrying about tomorrow? Are you struggling with a problem? Groping in darkness for an answer?

If the answer is “yes” then join me in the Great Epiphany Challenge. That is from January 6 to February 14, which is Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent, let's observe the light of Christ that is in our life. Let's observe the season of Epiphany, of God being made known to us. Each day join me in the challenge to give thanks for how it is God is walking with us. If there is darkness, seek the light for the light is always there. If there is a problem, look hard for the blessing in it, for the blessing is always there. See the promise of Christmas unfold in your life.

That is only part of the challenge.

The rest of the Great Epiphany Challenge is we need to share our epiphanies with one another. I invite you to go to our church's Facebook page “First United Presbyterian Church, Salem, NY” and write about your God moment. Or post a picture that captures a holy moment that made you stop and realize “God is right in front of me.” Share how it is you are seeing Emmanuel, God with us. If you are having trouble sharing on Facebook, email me your epiphany and I will post it. Or share the epiphany moments on Sunday.

Let's not pack away Christ with the holiday decorations. For the Light is in the world and He is shining brightly. Let us experience this healing and transformative light together.

Email me your epiphanies at [pastordonna1@gmail.com](mailto:pastordonna1@gmail.com) or go to Facebook and type in “First United Presbyterian Church, Salem, NY.”

Clunk. Clunk.

Excuse me, now. I must clean up some fallen ornaments on the Christmas tree — a tree that will stay lit for the Feast of the Epiphany.

Blessings,

*Pastor Donna*

## Scriptures

### Monthly Scripture Readings

The Scripture readings you will hear January will come from the following readings:

January 7th	Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29:1-11 Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11
January 14th	1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20); Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51
January 21st	Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20
January 28th	Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111:1-10 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

## Mitten Tree

As you may have noticed by now, the mitten tree is once again back on the platform in the Chapel, waiting for contributions of NEW mittens, hats, gloves, and socks (elementary school size). Collection Date is Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup>. They will then be taken to the Salem School Nurse for distribution when needed.

### NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Please get the information for any and all of the exciting activities that will occur the month of February to Holly Keys ([holly.keys@aol.com](mailto:holly.keys@aol.com) or call 854-3975 before 8 pm or drop something in her box in the business office at the church (just let her know its there)) by Sunday, January 28th Thank you!!!

## Free Community Dinner

A wonderful tradition was begun a few years back in honor of Millie and Cal Chapman. That tradition was a Free Community Dinner to be held on Martin Luther King, Jr Day. It is time to once again bring together family, friends and community over a wonderful meal and fellowship. The dinner will be held this January 15h at 5 pm.

There is a sign up sheet in the chapel. We are looking for the congregation to provide desserts, vegetables, and hot dishes. Mission is providing a roast turkey w/ mashed potatoes, a baked ham w/ scalloped potatoes, goulash, mac-n-cheese, bbq'd pork and beverages.

## Annual Congregational Meeting

It is hard to believe, but it is time to prepare for our Annual Congregational Meeting. The date has been set for February 11, 2018 following service that day. I am asking that all committees prepare their annual reports and submit them to me by **JANUARY 25th**. I know that this is early but it allows time for changes and so that I may build the final product. Copies of the finished report will be available on Sunday, February 4th. You may email reports to holly.keys@aol.com or leave in my box in the business office (please just make me aware that it is there). Thank you in advance for your assistance in completing this in a timely fashion.

Submitted by, Holly Keys

## Birthdays/Anniversaries

### January Birthday's

1st Jane Keys  
19th Nancy Bardwell  
David Moore  
26th Christopher Barrett, Jr

### January Anniversaries

3rd Tom & Jane Keys  
5th Seth & Dianna Pitts

If you would like a birthday or anniversary published in the Alive!, Please contact the church office at 854-9471 or holly.keys@aol.com.

## Prayer Requests

If you need a prayer or wish to place someone on the prayer list, please complete this form, or one found in the Narthex, and give it to an usher or deacon.

Name of Prayer recipient: \_\_\_\_\_

Cause for joy or concern: \_\_\_\_\_

You name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

# January 2018

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Worship 10am	2 Bible Study 8:30 am	3 Bible Study 8:30 am	4 Line Dancing 9:30am	5 Adult Crafts 10-2	6 Adult Crafts 10-2
7 Worship 10am	8 Cub Scouts 6pm Boy Scouts 7pm	9 Session 7pm	10 Bible Study 8:30 am Red Cross Blood Drive	11 Line Dancing 9:30am	12 Line Dancing 9:30am
13 Worship 10am	14 Martin Luther King Jr Day Free Community Dinner 5pm Cub Scouts 6pm Boy Scouts 7pm	15 Bible Study 8:30 am	16 Line Dancing 9:30am	17 Line Dancing 9:30am	18 Line Dancing 9:30am
19 Worship 10 am Worship & Music 11:30am	20 Cub Scouts 6pm Boy Scouts 7pm	21 Bible Study 8:30 am	22 Line Dancing 9:30am Annual Reports DUE	23 Line Dancing 9:30am	24 Line Dancing 9:30am
25 Worship 10am 4 Cents a Meal Collection ALIVE Deadline	26 Cub Scouts 6pm Boy Scouts 7pm	27 Bible Study 8:30 am	28 Bible Study 8:30 am	29 Bible Study 8:30 am	30 Bible Study 8:30 am

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**At First United Presbyterian Church:**

We believe that God calls everyone to serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ!

Join us on Sunday's for worship, music, and fellowship!

Service begins at 10 AM

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.salemmyfirstupchurch.com](http://www.salemmyfirstupchurch.com)

"This Newsletter is made possible through our giving to  
First United Presbyterian Church"

**Service Schedule for  
January 2018**

**Elder of the Month:**

Sunday, January 7th

Reader: Jane Keys

Coffee Time:

Sunday, January 14th

Reader: Marie Bell

Coffee Time:

Sunday, January 21st

Reader: Sylvia Graham

Coffee Time:

Sunday, January 28th

Reader: David Simmons

Coffee Time: