

Old Dutch Church Steeple Chimes

December 2017



He calls himself Junior. He showed up at the Church some time last year and asked if he could practice his piano playing in Bethany Hall in preparation for admission to Juilliard. Of course, we welcomed him. On the days he sat down to practice, his fingers flying over the keyboard, the music he made filled and spilled out of the Hall. Then Junior just stopped coming and we had no idea what happened to him.

Three weeks ago a letter came from him. He was in the Ulster County Jail, arrested on false charges, and asking whether someone from the Church could write a letter to the Judge testifying to Junior's character, his musical gifts, and his dedication in preparing himself for a better future. He also wrote that if he were convicted and sentenced to stay in prison, he would find a way to end his life.

I went to visit Junior. Sitting in a little windowed room in his jail pod, Junior poured out his painful story and performed several of his own beautiful rap and gospel songs. With my eyes filled with tears I listened, and with my voice quivering I prayed with him. I promised to write the letter, and visit again, and, with the Church, to keep praying for him. As I was leaving the pod, another young man asked if I would come and visit him. My first thought was, "I don't have time," but the words that came out of my mouth were, "I will." And this week I asked some others to take the training that would allow them to visit those imprisoned.

As we enter the season of Advent, the watchword is "Keep awake. Keep awake for the coming of Jesus the Christ." As we prepare for Jesus' birth and first arrival, we are invited to remember that he will come again in glory to bring God's peaceable kingdom to completion. We are invited to live in hope of this future that God promises when suffering, injustice, pain, death, and weeping will end. God's promises will surely come to be in a future we cannot now see.



And in the meantime—today, tomorrow, and the day after that—we live wide awake to the reality that Jesus is not absent from the world. In Matthew 25, Jesus tells us that he is fully present (albeit hidden) in the one who is hungry, or naked, or sick, or homeless, or in prison. In all of these, Jesus is uniquely present. In the sister whose stroke has left her unable to speak. In the husband whose Alzheimer's has stolen his memory. In the child whose parents can't afford a single Christmas gift. In the old woman who takes her midday meal at the Clinton Ave. United

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Methodist Church, and the homeless man who sleeps there in the cold of winter. In Junior, who waits for justice, and sings and groans in jail.

Keep awake—today, tomorrow, and the day after that—to all the ones who are present to you in their need. In and of themselves, they are a gift to you. With your presence, you are gift to them. And in the sharing of your lives, Jesus Christ is the ever-present, self-giving gift, who is in our midst, wide awake to every human need, and overflowing with love and new life. Wishing you a wake-full Advent.

Pastor Renee

PRAYER CORNER

Hospitalized - **Austen Hearn** (Kim Hearn's 2 y/o nephew), **Linda Ferraro** (Sloan-Kettering ICU), **Ah Tua Teo** (Deirdre Ourso), **Giada Pettengill** (2 y/o with cancer), **Thelma Lucas** (Betty Williams)

Nursing Homes/Assisted Living - **Mary Markle, Audrey Hornbeck, Edna Atkins, Dorothea Clearwater, Maida Blankschen, Donald Bell, Aletha Takken** (Pastor Renee's mother)

At Home – **Betty Williams, Galen Kelly, Joel Brink, Ed Ford, Carol Werner, Howard Hopkins, the Milczarzyk Family - Dee, Mary Ann, Anthony, Annie; Sylvia Van Etten, Tom Pape, Marion Ostrander, Liam Lezniak** (Matt Hall), **Crystal**(Luci Windsong-Rain), **Lynda Thaisz**(Pat Allen), **Ellen Fine**(Deirdre Ourso), **Jessica** (Deirdre Ourso's sister), **Jennifer Potter** (Karen Van Kleeck's sister), **Michael Fisher** (Gene Hall), **Peter Rosier** (son of Henk & Barbara), **Stephen Miles** (son of Pastors Nick & Linda), **Solon De Usoz** (Deirdre Ourso's nephew), **Paul Vinett, Patricia Martone** (Pat Hall), **Dave Sponaugle**(Gene Hall's brother-in-law)

Incarcerated - **Herbert (Junior) Hill**

(Names will remain on our At Home Prayer List for one month, unless otherwise requested)

Missionaries - **Rev. Aaro Rytkonen/Al Amana Center** (Oman), **Jim & Beth Harrison** (Bahrain)

Military Service - **James Bonestell** (son of Ken & Rebecca Rosier)

Church Life Committee of the Classis of Mid-Hudson encourages us to regularly pray for one another. During the weeks of December we are asked to pray for: Don Poest, Interim General Secretary of the RCA, December 3rd; Blue Mountain Reformed Church, December 10th; Flatbush Reformed Church, December 17th; High Woods Reformed Church, December 24th; RCA General Synod Council Staff, December 31st.



Our Prayers and Sympathy go to Diane Harrison and their family and friends on the passing of her mother, Betty Harrison, in mid-November. Betty and her late husband, Al, were long-time, faithful members of Old Dutch. Most recently, Betty had been in Golden Hill.

We were saddened to learn of the death of Ann Beesmer, former member of Old Dutch, at the end of November. Ann is survived by her mother, her children, Michael Boice, Michelle Boice, Matthew Beesmer,

Melissa Amodio, five grandchildren and several siblings.

Melissa Fisher sends her thanks for your prayers for her at the time of her recent surgery. She's home and doing well.





Annual Congregational Meeting to elect Consistory officers for next year will be held on Sunday, December 17, immediately following the worship service. The names presented by the Nominations Committee are: **Robert Sweeney**, 3 yr. term as Elder; **Gilbert Plantinga**, 3 yr. term as Deacon.

Playing with the Word Bible Study will not meet again until the new year. You are invited to join Pastor Renee for Advent Vespers and a light supper on Wednesdays, 6-8 pm, December 6 & 13.

Christmas Wishes has provided us with a list of names, children, some parents, a few elderly, in need of Christmas gifts this year. If you are interested in taking a name, please speak to Adam Kudlo during the Coffee Hour.



Our monthly collection gathers food donations for local food pantries. Some of the items most requested by food banks are protein foods - canned meats, chicken, tuna, sardines, stews, Spam, peanut/almond butters, beans, Progresso soups; kids' lunch box items - granola bars, juice boxes; other - pasta, spaghetti sauce, mayonnaise, mustard, ketchup, vegetable oil. Items may be left in the basket in Bethany Hall on the first Sunday of each month.

World AIDS Remembrance Day will begin at 5:30 pm at the LGBTQ Center Monday, December 4, and proceed by candlelight to the church for a brief memorial.

Mendelssohn Club Christmas Concerts, with Guest Artists **The Kingston High School Choir**, will be held in our Sanctuary at 8:00 pm on Friday & Saturday, December 8th & 9th. The KHS Brass Choir will present a half-hour of Christmas music before the concert and members of the KHS Orchestra will also be here to accompany one of the selections. This is always a wonderful concert and sure to make it seem like Christmas! Tickets, @ \$10/ \$8 for Senior Citizens & Students, are available from any Mendelssohn Club member, at Nekos-Dedrick's Pharmacy, or at the door.



Fools' Mass, featuring actors playing medieval village idiots, will take over the Old Dutch Church to enact their own Christmas Mass. Theatre Group Dzieci (Polish for "children") will present its signature creation, *Fools Mass*, on Sunday, December 10, at 5:00 p.m. This absolutely unique theatrical experience has been embraced by theatre lovers and an array of spiritual communities (spanning a multitude of paths and practices) across the nation. The piece celebrates the sacred, the miracle of life, and the enigma of death, with lovely choral singing, riotous comic buffoonery, and extraordinary dramatic invention. *Fools Mass* captures the heart of the holidays this winter season. Doors for this **free** performance will open 15 minutes prior to performance time.



The 68th Annual Living Nativity will take place on Wednesday and Thursday, **December 20 and 21**, with performances at 6:30, 7:00, & 7:30 p.m. Please come to help dress the community children who will be the characters in the Christmas story (or to be a character yourself), to serve refreshments, to sing, and to offer welcome to all who come to remember and celebrate the birth of God's love in Jesus Christ. Bring your friends,



families, neighbors, and the stranger you meet on the way!



Sunday, December 24, is Christmas Eve. Our celebration of Jesus' birth will begin at 7:00 p.m. (*Please note that this is ½ half hour earlier than in recent years.*) This traditional service of Lessons & Carols, through Scripture and song, tells the whole story of God's long, faithful, creative, astounding love. At the close of worship we raise our tiny candles in the darkened sanctuary to remember and give thanks for "Love's pure light." Invite others to celebrate the mystery of Christmas with us.

Organist Chase Castle will be here on Sunday, December 17th, to present a concert in our Sanctuary at 12:30 pm. Castle is an active organist and collaborative musician from Norwalk, OH. He studies music history & organ performance with Nicole Keller at Baldwin Wallace Conservatory of Music in Berea, OH, and is on faculty at Far Around Recording in Norwalk, OH, as a keyboard instructor. He is Director of Music at Church of the Epiphany in Euclid, OH, and spent last summer as the resident organist and choirmaster of the Squirrel Island Chapel in Squirrel Island, Maine.





Advent and Christmas at Old Dutch Church

UPTOWN CHRISTMAS SNOWFLAKE FESTIVAL & OPEN HOUSE

Friday, December 1, 5 - 8 p.m. Children's Snowflake Parade through uptown to the Christmas Tree at Wall & North Front. Christmas Music, Windmill Cookies for our visitors.

ADVENT I - Sunday, December 3, Worship Service @ 10:30 a.m.

ADVENT VESPERS & LIGHT SUPPER

Wednesdays @ 6:00 p.m., December 6 & 13

WINTER FARMERS' MARKET - Opening Day - Saturday, December 2, 10 am

Continues alternate Saturdays through April, 10 am - 2 pm

MENDELSSOHN CLUB CHRISTMAS CONCERTS

Friday & Saturday, December 8 & 9 @ 8:00 p.m.; guests KHS Choir

ADVENT II - Sunday, December 10, Worship Service @ 10:30 a.m.

FOOLS' MASS Interactive Drama

Sunday, December 10 @ 5:00 p.m. Supper & discussion to follow; free for all.

ADVENT III - Sunday, December 17, Worship Service @ 10:30 a.m.

ORGAN CONCERT BY CHASE CASTLE - Sunday, December 17 @ 12:30 p.m.



68th ANNUAL LIVING NATIVITY

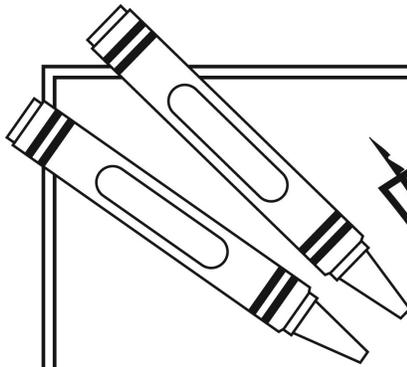
Wednesday & Thursday, December 20 & 21

Performances @ 6:30, 7:00, 7:30 p.m.,

ADVENT IV - Sunday, December 24, Worship service @ 10:30 a.m.



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PUZZLE

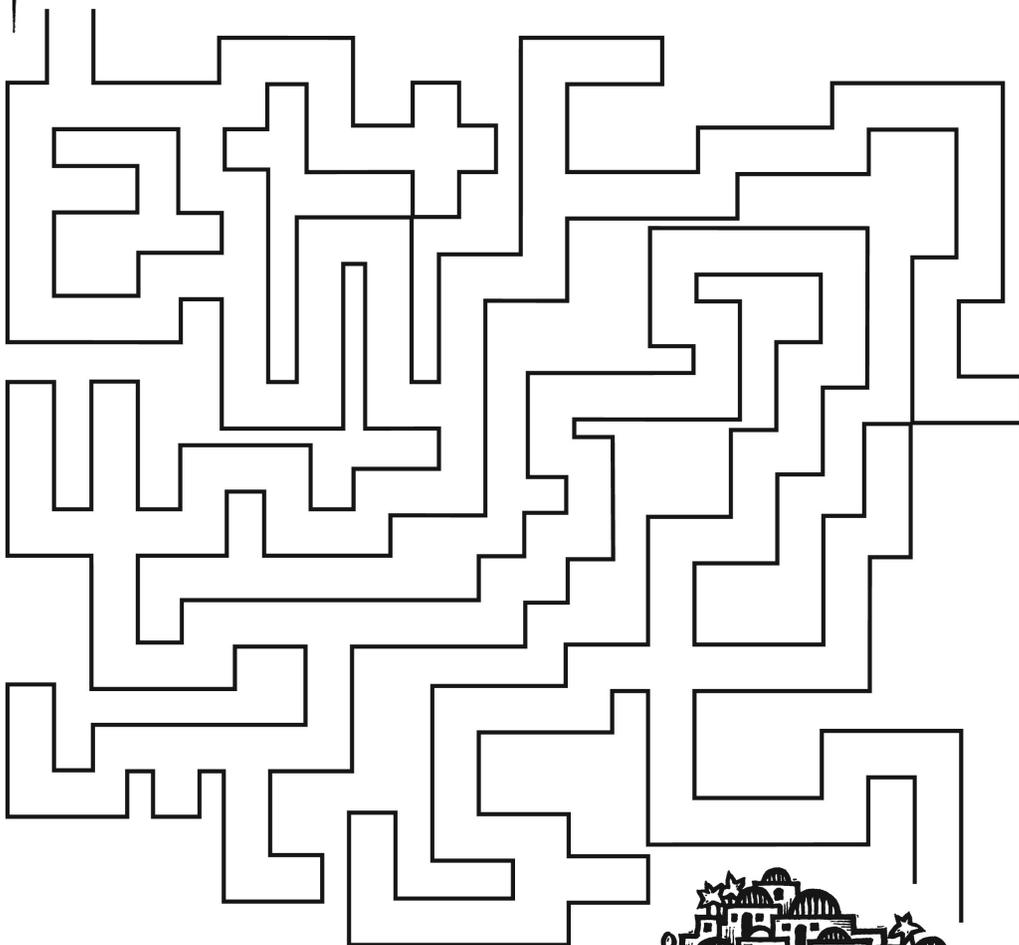
JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

In the Christmas story in Luke 2, an angel tells some shepherds to go see baby Jesus in Bethlehem.



START

Directions: Follow the maze to arrive in Bethlehem.



BETHLEHEM



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