



Pastor's Page

How's your Advent going?

Good things: 1. Different church members undertook decorating the sanctuary all on their own – tackling tasks they could manage when it was convenient. Result: beautiful sanctuary decorated with little to no stress safely. 2. We can sing! [with a mask on and socially distanced – but singing!]

Not so good: I'm really, really, really, really, really{!} tired of COVID. And the need to mask. And social distance. I miss coffee and goodies following worship – even if I don't need coffee and goodies. What I really miss is seeing and hearing folks hanging out in the Fellowship Hall laughing and sharing.



'Advent' is one of the first 'churchy' words I learned. I grew up in churches without a formal liturgy. When I started attending a Presbyterian Church in 1983 words like Advent were like secret codes needed to get into a child's fort: what's the password? The thing about secret codes – at least for me – I felt awkward about admitting I didn't know the secret code or what they meant. Somewhere, I saw in that 'Advent' meant 'coming.' But, by the next year I had forgotten. What does Advent mean? So, I looked it up. Oh, yeah, Advent means coming. It became a mantra – every time I saw the word 'Advent' I added mentally 'means coming.' Advent means coming. It is the time to prepare for the coming of the Christ Child at Christmas.

Of course, in the US of A – there is not so much a time of preparation (maybe the days after Thanksgiving) as there is four weeks of full-on Christmas. In the more distant past, Advent was like Lent in that it was a time for thoughtful introspection and quiet reflection to prepare your heart and spirit to make room for Christ's arrival. My Advent days are rarely quiet. And with our schedules so busy with the challenges and joys of daily life it seems cruel to suggest additional spiritual practices. So, I'm not going to do that.

But maybe, maybe, there are moments we already enjoy in which we can be more mindful. From a very young age, I have enjoyed sitting in a darkened room with the lit Christmas tree providing the only illumination. Have you ever noticed that while you may have spent time carefully placing ornaments, when the lights are on the ornaments fade into the background? You might catch a glimpse of a star or a sparkling ball but mostly what is seen is the green tree and the light. Those

two elements, the evergreen tree and the lights, remind me of the most important themes of Advent and Christmas: God's eternal, evergreen love for us, and God's light coming to us in the darkest days in the life of Jesus.

So, whenever you are sitting in your space with your tree and the world is quiet (or quieter) sip your tea, coffee, or adult beverage and remember that all the busyness in our world diminishes in significance to those things of ultimate worth: God's love and light.

I will be keeping my focus (attempting to keep my focus) on God's love and light and continuing in the effort to realize my frustration with COVID and all the associated troubles can't diminish either.

May your Advent be bright, may the light of Christ shine on you and through you, and may God's love warm you. And let's sing together.

Blessings, Pastor Karen

December 2021

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." James 1:17

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 11:30 am Lectionary Study	2	3	4
5 Advent 2 Communion	6 10 am Bible Study	7	8 11:30 am Lectionary Study	9	10	11
12 Advent 3 Worship	13 10 am Bible Study	14 7 pm Session	15 12 pm Seniors Who Care	16	17	18
19 Advent 4 Worship & Pageant FAMILY PROMISE WEEK	20	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Services 7 pm 9 pm	25 Merry Christmas! 
26 Christmas Worship (Recorded)	27 10 am Bible Study	28 Office Closed	29	30	31	

CORE MINISTRY

Core Ministry focuses on spiritual growth through worship and faith formation opportunities for people at all ages and stages of their journey with Christ.

Elders assigned: Ravi Bolleddu, Tricia Hertz, Nina Nichols



Advent and Christmas

November 28 First Sunday in Advent (Hope)

"Homesick"

Candles: Walthall Family

December 5 Second Sunday in Advent (Peace)

"Home's Foundation"

Candles: Mbombo Edmonson Family

December 12 Third Sunday in Advent (Joy)

"A Home Worthy of Human Habitation"

Candles: Root Family

December 26 Fourth Sunday in Advent (Love)

Children's Christmas Pageant

Candles: Bolleddu Family

December 24 Christmas Eve

7 pm Lessons & Carols

9 pm Lessons & Carols

December 26 First Sunday in Christmastide

Recorded Service from Synod of the Northeast

11:15 am Christmas Pajama Zoom Fellowship



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19 DURING WORSHIP

RPMs Youth Group – Christmas Update

The RPMs Youth Group will be holding a Mayan Hands virtual sale this Christmas season. Mayan Hands provides beautiful handcrafted items made by women in Guatemala. All items are fair trade and because they are earning a fair return for their work, their children can attend school and will have a brighter future.

The sale will run from **December 4 to December 9**. Your purchases will be individually packed and delivered to the Delmar Reformed Church on Dec. 12th. If you purchase items we will contact you for pick up times.

To purchase items so that they are part of the RPMs Sales:

- Go to www.mayanhands.org and do your shopping.
- When you're done selecting your products, press **buy it now**.
- In the next screen, you write down your contact information, email, name, **and the shipping address of the church (386 Delaware Ave. Delmar, NY 12054)**
- The next screen is **Shipping**: on the top right side of the screen you'll see a box that says **Gift or Discount Code: please write DRC (this code will automatically take off the shipping charges)**
- Then press **continue to payment**: in this screen you will input your credit card information. **Please remember to write down YOUR billing address now (as it is different from the shipping address)**

Thank you for your support of Mayan Hands and the RPMs.



CARE MINISTRY

Care Ministry is focused on effectively demonstrating and communicating DPC's core values within our church and out in our community. Being advocates and support for our neighbors near and far through social events, awareness activities, and relief efforts.

Elders assigned: Nancy Braaten, Irene Harbison, Laura Scott

DEACONS

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1	Ryan Kilgallon
2	Laura Scott
6	Mary Ingraham
7	Nate Cady
9	Bob Mattox
10	Irene Harbison
11	Jaiden Gray
11	Will Storrs
14	David Andersen

19	Tricia Hertz
19	Judy Riopelle
20	Sara Howard
20	Madeleine Walthall
27	Christa Cady
29	Ginny Hazard
30	Jo Hyde
30	Betsy Katz
31	Bob Criswell

Seniors Who Care Invites All to Their Holiday Gathering – December 15



All ages are invited to join us on December 15th. Linda and David Van Deusen will be treating us to “Holy Day and Holiday,” a musical potpourri, which promises to entertain and infuse us with the Christmas Spirit.

This unique and creative program will include the viewing of both religious and secular musical selections performed by well-known performing artists, as well as scriptural and inspirational readings to help us all reflect on the Christmas season.

We will meet in the Fellowship Hall at noon. Please bring a bag lunch – a dessert and beverages will be supplied. In accordance with DPC's COVID policy, we ask that you wear a mask except when eating or drinking. We will also respect and accommodate individual distancing preferences.

Don't hesitate to bring a friend but please RSVP to Pam Taft – (518) 439-9281 or pamtaft73@gmail.com. We need to know how many chairs and placemats to set up! Thank you.

Seniors Who Care Calendar for January–March, 2022

We plan to meet virtually for January, February, and March. Please note the 1 PM start time. Actually, this isn't due to COVID but because of the uncertainty of weather conditions. We don't want anyone to drive on slippery roads or walk on icy paths. There are wonderful programs scheduled so put them on your calendars.

Thursday, January 27 at 1 PM on Zoom

Bird Feeding – Presenter, Drew Hopkins,
Environmental Educator, Five Rivers

Thursday, February 24 at 1 PM on Zoom

Shakespeare in the Garden – Presenter,
Cathie Gifford, Master Gardener Volunteer,
Albany County



Thursday, March 24 at 1 PM on Zoom

Finding Your Roots: Genealogy 101- Presenter, Dr. Ed Taft

Family Promise Week: *December 19–December 25*

DPC and B'nai Sholom are teaming up to provide dinners for the guests at the Family Promise Day House during Christmas week. We are very grateful to our faithful dinner providers! B'nai Sholom will cover Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. To learn more, please contact Irene Harbison at miharbison@gmail.com.

Update: Family Promise is looking to return to the model in which families once again overnight at local churches with the support of the congregations to provide meals and overnight volunteers. These overnights would tentatively begin after Easter. Obviously, rules are being discussed with vaccination status, etc. as well as whether we feel comfortable in hosting families. Stay tuned and brush up your favorite comfort food recipe.

Sharing the Joy of Christmas

White Manger

You are invited to participate in this year's White Manger Christmas by donating gifts for children of all ages for the Sheriff's Hilltowns Christmas celebration. Your donations, wrapped in white tissue paper, may be dropped off at the church by December 19.





Mitten Tree

Don't forget to create and collect warm weather gear for our Hilltown children as well. We can use plenty of hats, mittens, scarves, and socks. Your items can be placed on the mitten tree in the narthex or in the bin outside the main entrance door. Thank you!

THE PLASTIC CHALLENGE

Feedback from the Adults – Submitted by Nancy Braaten

This fall the Earth Care Task Force made a resolution that was endorsed by session to focus on plastic waste awareness with reducing single use plastics, proper recycling, and education. Christian Education took the lead on this with Plastics Pledge and Challenge to the congregation. These are some of the observations of some adults that took on the Challenge:

“My family was already pretty conscious of use of plastic, but there's always more to do... there is one favorite snack that we used to buy in single use containers and have switched to a larger container that can be reused. We also are using (very recyclable) aluminum foil rather than plastic when possible.” Carol Scott

“One change in our plastic use was to begin purchasing both orange and grape juice in the frozen concentrate form. This has eliminated the use of large plastic bottles. While reducing the use of plastic was the motivation for this change, we are also saving money.” Pam and Ed Taft

“The exercise made us more conscious of products we buy where we have a choice to make, e.g., plastic coated paper clips vs metal ones, plastic herb containers vs glass, juice containers, etc.” Lynda Spielman and John Moser.

“This increased our awareness of how many times we used plastics in our everyday life. We tried laundry strips to replace plastic laundry detergent containers and are decreasing use of plastics as food storage. This initiative will continue as we search out alternatives to our plastics use.” Nancy and Jack Braaten

(Continued)

Feedback from the Children – Submitted by David Andersen

Working with the instructional team for the DPC Plastics Pledge has been one of the most fun things that I have had a chance to do at Delmar Presbyterian. Pastor Pollan found a whole set of “Earth Care” worship materials from Australia, and we were able to extract from these the scriptural readings that the kids in Church School used to talk about “Why does God care about single use plastics, anyway?”. Lisa and Ravi Bolleddu were able to follow up these materials with a unit in October that focused on a Faith-based view of Earth care.

Nancy Braaten worked with us on behalf of the Earth Care Task Force and every week we had helping parents in the class. Dan Rain, Bethlehem’s Recycling Coordinator, came and taught a class for our kids while Sam Messina helped them to draft a letter to the Editor of the Times Union (that got published!!). Also, our students published their own website with all results of the pledge which you can see by clicking “DPC Plastics Pledge Website.”

During the month of October, all the active households kept track of their activities to reduce single use plastics, and the class sent out a weekly “newsletter” to each team. Here is a copy of the final such letter to participating teams,

“Thank you for supporting the DPC Plastics Pledge all during the month of October. The final scores have all been tallied and Planet Earth is the clear winner. In all, 25 households participated in the DPC Plastics Pledge and during the month, those households took 245 actions both to score points for their teams and to reduce single use plastics. To see how your team scored, you can look at the full results for all teams that are still posted on the project’s website, “DPC Plastics Pledge Website.”

More importantly, the challenge continues. Overall, the three church school teams with your help identified 38 great ideas that can help all of us reduce single use plastics. We can keep up the good work for weeks, months, and years into the future. All 38 of these ideas are listed in the attached document along with some indication of which ideas the kids in our class liked the best.

Finally, if anyone ever doubts that 13 kids can make a big difference, please click on this link, “The GREAT OCEAN CLEAN UP--System Two,” to see how a small team is cleaning up a portion of the Pacific Ocean the size of Texas. I suspect that one day one or more of our 13 kids will be doing similar big things with their lives!!

Congratulations to all the teams and all the participating households.

Finally, the whole congregation did a great job of identifying many ways that we can all work together to reduce single use plastics. Here is that list:

Top Rated Idea by Kids in Church School

Runner Up Top Rated Idea by Kids in Church School

Use Tru Earth Eco-Strip Laundry Detergent-Not Plastic	Made solution of 1-part soft soap refill to 3 parts water to create foaming hand soap containers
Use dishwasher pods, NOT PLASTIC containers	For years, we have washed and reused zip lock bags
Paper Lunch bags	Make your own seltzer and don't buy seltzer in plastic cans
Bring the same cardboard box to farmers' market week-after-week	Make your own bread and don't buy bread in plastic bags
Bake your own Bread—do not buy it in a package	Buy seltzer in cans—we got a can cap so we can save part of a can
Send a letter to the Times Union	Reusable lunch bags
Reuse plastic "clamshell" containers for items that don't require sealed lids such as crayons, thumbtacks: they are good see-through containers	Cut off the top of a 2-liter soda bottle and use top half as a funnel and bottom half for terrarium
I keep a supply of straws and storage containers in the "glovebox" of my car. I refuse a straw at coffee shops and restaurants. I rinse out a straw and use it again.	Use empty Chobani yogurt containers to store leftovers in the refrigerator
Pack boxes—I mail using recycled packing paper instead of plastic (no "bubble" wrap).	Use clear plastic empty Jiffy peanut butter jars to store beads and other small workshop items
Use silicone lids/covers for micro-waving and storage.	Use empty galloon milk jugs to use with bean toss game "scoop ball"
Bought frozen orange and grape juice so won't buy "simply orange" which is in plastic	Switch to bar soap instead of plastic dispenser soap
Reuse Newspaper plastic bags for garbage	Bread bag buddies—match dog owners with people willing to save their bread, newspaper, rice cake, etc. plastic bags (as dog waste bags??)
Use Clay Saucers for plants—no to plastic saucers!!	Pack your own shampoo when you travel instead of using the little hotel bottles
Started using laundry sheets	If you need a trash bag liner, use a leaf bag (paper) liner

Reviewed use of plastics in house and what can replace them—lots in bathroom with shampoos and cleaners	Replacing all sponges and dishcloths with 100% cellulose bio-degradable sponges (and decreasing paper towel use)
Trying beeswax wrappers	Switching to Unni compostable bags for kitchen garbage (Amazon—Unni 100% compostable and Ethique bar shampoo)
Buy Deodorant in glass containers from Earth Hero	No more Styrofoam egg cartons—only cardboard
Buy milk in half gallon paper not full gallon plastic containers	Use (and wash) a cloth mask, not disposable ones
Buy deodorant etc. in non-plastic containers from Earth Hero or similar place	THANK YOU DPC KIDS!

SUPPORT MINISTRY

Support Ministry enables the work of the church by faithful stewardship of the church's resources. Elders assigned: Jim Finke, Dave Rees, Lynda Spielman.

Office Notes

Our office manager will be away Dec. 8 to Dec. 16. Emails and phone messages will be monitored but may not receive an immediate response. Please save routine matters for her return.

Stewardship Update

Thank you for catching-up on your 2021 contributions. Your continued support allows us to continue the Church's work. You will be receiving your 2022 Pledge request in a few weeks so look for that in the mail.

Gifts for the Pastor

Working for our church is more than a job – it requires you to see your work as part of our mission to live out the Two Great Commandments. And we are blessed to have staff who help us do that.

It has been our custom to provide our Pastor with a token of our appreciation at Christmas time. If you would like to make a contribution toward a Christmas gift for Pastor Karen, you can drop off your check (made payable to "Delmar Presbyterian Church") at the church office or put it in the mail to DPC, 585 Delaware Avenue, Delmar, NY 12054, or give online through the DPC website (see "Donate" button). Please indicate your contribution is for "Pastor's Christmas Gift".

Similarly, if you would like to contribute to a gift from the church to our staff members, please designate on the check or envelope "Staff Christmas Gift". Again, checks should be made payable to "Delmar Presbyterian Church".

We will be accepting your gifts through December 24.

Dave Rees, Elder

Thank You

Dear DPC Friends,

Thank you to all the people of DPC for your acts of kindness and the cake and card on my birthday.

Bill Garvey

Community Christmas Day Dinner Saturday, December 25, 2021



Open to all residents of the Town of Bethlehem
Community Christmas Day Dinner has temporarily changed to delivery only.

Reservations required no later than December 13, 2021

Please call Elizabeth at Bethlehem Senior Services 518-439-4955, #1176

Goodwill offerings accepted

Dinners include

Turkey and Ham, Dressing, Gravy, Cranberry Sauce
Mashed Potatoes, California Medley, Peas and Onions
Dinner Rolls & Pie

ALL meals will be delivered. Reservations are required to receive a meal.
Delivery time is between 1:30 p.m.—3:30 p.m. on December 25, 2021 and you must be home between these hours to receive the meal. You Must wear a mask when answering the door.

Meals will NOT be left at your door.

No one will be available to come back if you are not home.

Contactless delivery methods will be employed. Limit of one meal per person.

Albany Presbytery Blog Post – A Book Review

by Larry Deyss, Pastor Emeritus of DPC



The New Climate War- The Fight to Take Back Our Planet, by Michael E. Mann. Published by Public Affairs – Hachette Book Group (2021)

Every once in a while a book comes along that is head and shoulders above the rest. I find this book to be one of them. Mann writes in a way that is clear and accessible. He has a deep command of his subject, giving the reader insights into the methods of those who seek to derail the work on climate change. By being better informed we can move ahead more effectively.

In the first chapter, “The Architects of Misinformation and Misdirection,” he writes, “The origins of the ongoing climate wars lie in disinformation campaigns waged decades ago, when the findings of science began to collide with the agendas of power vested interests. These campaigns were aimed at obscuring the public understanding of the underlying science and discrediting the scientific message,

often attacking the messengers themselves.”

These practices still continue to fool a large number of the public. Mann names the institutions and organizations engaged in this activity. Furthermore, he takes an in-depth look at the birth of deflection campaigns and the tactics of “divide and conquer” which use wedge issues to derail the climate moment.

In the chapter titled, “The Non-Solution Solution,” he points out that there are those who want to make it look as if they are really doing something about the problem, but in fact are not. He calls these people, “inactivists.” He writes, “The inactivists have sought to hijack actual climate progress by promoting “solutions” (natural gas, carbon capture, geo-engineering) that aren’t real solutions at all. Part of their strategy is soothing words and terms- “bridge fuels,” clean coal”, “adaption”, resilience” – that convey the illusion of actions but, in context, are empty promises.” This gambit provides plausible deniability; inactivists can claim to have offered *solutions*. Just not good ones. They are delay tactics intended to forestall meaningful actions while the fossil fuel industry continues to make windfall profits -what noted climate advocate Alex Steffens has referred to as “predatory delay.”

In the closing chapter, “Meeting the Challenge”, Mann says he is objectively hopeful and details the reasons for hope. Among these is the fact that extreme weather disasters have vivified the climate change threat. Second, a global pandemic has taught us lesson about vulnerability and risk. Also, we have seen the reawakening of environmental activism across the world. He also says that the collapse of plausible climate change deniability provides us with unprecedented opportunity for progress. Add to that the fact that inactivists have been forced into retreat from “hard” climate denial to “softer” denial. All of these points, and others, are given in depth coverage in the final chapter which also gives us guidance for our ongoing work. This chapter alone is worth the price of the book.

Michael E. Mann is a distinguished professor of atmosphere science at Penn State, with joint appointments in the Department of Geosciences and the Earth and Environmental Systems Institute. In 2019 he received the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement.