

The Old Man's News

Mt. Sinai Congregational Church, UCC - January/February 2024

Events @Mt.SinaiChurch

MISSIONS' CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE

This past December's toy drive was a great success. Many thanks to everyone for the wonderful toys and gift card donations to benefit Family Services League, a sampling of which you can see in this picture. You most certainly made a difference to the children.



COAT DRIVE HELD BY MISSIONS

Thank you for a very successful coat drive for the benefit of



Maureen's

Haven Homeless Shelter in Riverhead.

Thanks to your generosity, we donated 75 men's and women's coats to those in need.



IHFP BENEFIT CONCERT

The Island Heart Food Pantry held a fun benefit concert on Saturday, January 13th at Mt. Sinai Church. "A



special 'Thank You' goes out to *Andy Del and the Courageous Cats* for donating their time and talents!" said Kathy Lahey, IHFP Director. "A great time was had by all, with lots of dancing and excellent music! "



The Island Heart Food Pantry leaders and volunteers thank everyone involved in making this evening a success and helping to raise much needed funds to address food insecurities in our area.

WORSHIP & SACRAMENTS

Lent 2024 -- A Journey from Re: Choice to Rejoice

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. ² He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 4:1-4

Lent, the forty day period that begins on Ash Wednesday and concludes on Good Friday, commemorates the time Jesus fasted in the desert prior to beginning his ministry. Hungry and alone, he confronted the temptation of forsaking God in favor of comfort, power, and wealth. *And he chose God each time.*

This year, the Worship and Sacraments Board asks you to consider the choices we all make in our lives. What guides them? Do we ever really "have no choice?" What hopes or fears do our choices imply? What consequences come of them? Have there been choices we wish we'd reconsidered? How do we handle regret? If our lives are our journeys, what happens when we choose one path over another as Robert Frost expressed?

*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

As our forty-day Lenten journey takes us along a path from **re: choice to Rejoice** on Easter Sunday, we are asking those who bring the message on Sunday mornings to reflect on a theme captioned by a word that begins with the prefix, "re," such as "reclaim," "restore," "revise," "reinvent." We encourage everyone to ponder how so many of these words move us to modify our choices. With the Holy Spirit guiding us, what will change if we, like Jesus, consciously choose God each time?

Blessings and peace,
Sue Hoff

PULPIT SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY

2/4/24	Rev. Candace Whitman
2/11/24	Dennis Laderwager
2/14/24	Ash Wednesday ("Re: Choice") Without a Settled minister, we will forgo an evening Ash Wednesday service this year.
2/18/24	Patrice Perreca
2/25/24	Diana Aiello





Happy New Year!

New to Sunday School in 2024!

On the first of the month, Communion Sunday, our children will travel the world and experience what other cultures/religions practice or experience.

For example, on January 7, 2024 the children experienced the *Festival of Lights of Hanukkah/Chanukah*, a Jewish festival that honors the victory of the Maccabees over the Syrian-Greek militants, as well as the oil miracle that burned for eight days in the Temple. (Source: The Rock of Israel Congregation, A Messianic Church Synagogue).

The children started with our traditional reading of the last supper and when it came time for the breaking of the bread, we broke Matzos! Ms. Stacey prepared an interactive slide presentation that took us on a journey of the Jewish religion, pictures of “who’s who” within our Church to “who’s that” when she showcased Rabbi’s. We all enjoyed a game of “Dreidel” and I had the song in my head for the rest of the day: “*I have a little dreidel, I made it out of clay. And when it’s dry and ready, then dreidel I will play.*” And, if you can’t get that song out of your mind try our closing song: “*Hava Nagila!*” We gathered in a circle and clapped along!



We hope you will embrace this opportunity to share other religions with our Children. Next month we will explore Buddhism. What do Buddhists Believe?

We love to share what we are doing in Sunday School, so please stay connected with us and watch this space next month for an update!!

With love and thanks, Ms. Stacey, Ms. Cheryl and Ms. Caroline



SUNDAY WORSHIP AT MT. SINAI CHURCH

In-Person Worship - Join us at our 10 a.m. service in the sanctuary. Communion, as always, takes place on the first Sunday of the month.

Digital Worship - Digital worship is now available as a live stream. at 10 a.m. on the LIVE tab of our YouTube channel: [Mt. Sinai Congregational Church, UCC - YouTube](https://www.msucc.org/giving/). After that time you can find the service in the regular recordings section.

Offering - There are many ways to donate to the church: via check or cash (offering plate, drop-off or mail), electronic payment via the church website <https://www.msucc.org/giving/>, by setting up bill pay through your bank or roll-over from a 401(k)/403(b). We appreciate your support.



The following article appeared in the January 11, 2024 Stillspeaking Daily Devotional distributed by the United Church of Christ (UCC). It carries an interesting message.

YES, YOU DO

*Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. -
Philippians 2:4 (NRSVUE)*

*If one member [of the Body of Christ] suffers, all suffer together with it; if one
member is honored, all rejoice together with it. - 1 Corinthians 12:26 (NRSVUE)*

“I don’t need the microphone. Everyone can hear me. I’m loud enough!” How many times have you heard this? Or maybe you couldn’t hear it because...

Yes, you do need the mic. You might not need the mic to speak, but others need it to hear.

Sometimes microphone resistance has an air of bravado, awkwardness, or technophobia. Yet underlying all of that is ableism. When we use our own ability — or our current, temporary lack of disability — to assume the abilities of others, we center ourselves, dismissing and dishonoring others. Nurturing a covenant that honors all members of the Body requires a dialogue instead of a monologue, moving us from “I don’t need it, so no one else does” to “I don’t need it, but others say they do.”

Paul’s words to the Philippians offer a counterpoint to and continuation of “Do unto others as you would have them do to you” (Matthew 7:12), inviting us to set aside our assumptions, preferences, and even discomfort so that the needs of many are met. When even one member’s needs are dismissed, the whole Body suffers. But when one member’s needs are met, the whole Body benefits.

So yes, we do need the mic so others can hear what we’re saying. Even more, we need to pass the mic so we can amplify the Body’s rejoicing.

Prayer

Move us from self-focused assumptions to other-informed radical inclusion. Amen.

*For resources on accessibility and inclusion, visit UCC Disabilities Ministries (uccdm.org).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR - Chris Mereschuk (he/him) is an Unsettled Pastor and the Founder of RevCJM, LLC, specializing in church vitality and Legacy consulting and coaching.



CALLING ALL SINGERS!

Like to sing? So do we! Come join us in the Chancel Choir. Rehearsals are at 9:00 a.m. each Sunday in the choir room.



MODERATOR'S MESSAGE

As 2024 commences, as church we should not neglect to look back at 2023 to both recognize successes, and address shortcomings that we would rather not repeat in the coming year. The funny thing is that while achievements can be easily recalled, failures are a bit more elusive and may take some effort on each our parts to recognize. That's certainly one problem we can easily deal with. From my humble perspective, I hold a very optimistic view of 2023, and lift it up as one of our church family's success stories, the likes of which we have not seen in more years than we might like to admit.

2023 was a marvelous post-pandemic, resurgent year for us. In the Annual report coming out next week, I noted it as being a transition year. A transition that moved us from isolation and remote connections to actively working together as church family to advance the message and mission that God's love is not restricted, and that it is alive and well at Mt. Sinai Congregational Church. With significant collaboration and participation by many members and friends, we came to an awareness that the "good old days," while holding wonderful memories and successes, did not offer a model that would sustain us as church, let alone better position us for growth and expansion.

The newly formed Game Changers team recognized that action was needed to place the community we serve at the forefront of our actions and at the same time, nurture our active church members and friends. Thoughtful collaboration brought about action plans that combined events for a greater impact, extended publicity, and provided options for community participation. The result, a

full year of events that not only brought hundreds of individuals through our doors to get acquainted with us, but resulted in new faces sitting in our pews, some actively participating in the life of the church.

Technology in this day and age is not an option, it's a requirement. Significant steps were taken to form a team, revamp our Facebook page, and in the very near future, will result in a completely revamped church website that will be relevant, up to date, easy to navigate and at the same time, will provide a wonderful platform for communication to both church and community.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the boards and action teams that stepped up in more ways than can be counted with support and actions that nurtured us and helped us to move forward. Each of their successes are recounted in the Annual Report; a must read for all.

The failures? Sorry, I ran out of space to numerate them here. 😊 In fact, I find it hard to even recall them. Our successes have totally overshadowed any shortcomings. You, brothers and sisters in faith, are the very reason for our successes. The Spirit of the living God is vibrant and active in our church community. May the Spirit continue to guide us, and may we all, with the power of the Spirit, continue with the same passion and fervor as we move into a new year. A year that offers opportunities that will multiply our successes and help us answer the call to build God's kingdom in the here and now.

Peace,
Dennis Laderwager, Moderator

SEARCH COMMITTEE NEWS

Good News! Our profile has been approved by Rev. Barbara Toll of the UCC New York Conference and is now posted for candidates to see. You can read it in its entirety by following [THIS LINK](#) to our posting and clicking on the **Download More Information** button.

What's next? We wait for responses so that we can begin the interview process. Rev. Toll will also be available for questions or a conversation, via Zoom, on Sunday, March 10th, right after services.

Thank you for your continued support and patience.

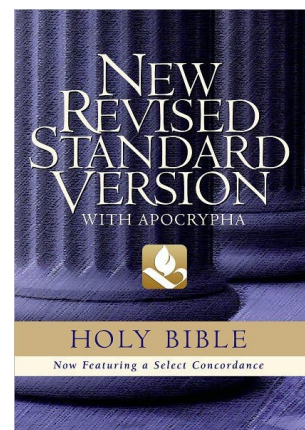
BIBLE LITERACY - A Bible Study Program

“We’re gonna need a bigger boat!”

- Terry Burke after seeing how many people squeezed into the conference room for the new Bible Literacy program.

There has been an enthusiastic response to the long-awaited Bible study program curated by Terry Burke. Over 30 members and friends have joined together each week to listen to and discuss thought-provoking lectures on the Bible. January’s topics have been the Early Christians and Their Literature, what didn’t make it into the New Testament and the Book of Mark.

Join us as we gather after service, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Bring a lunch or a snack. For more information contact the church office or Terry Burke at terryburke@optonline.net.



Let’s Have a Big Round of Applause for Jane Carter!!

Jane Carter was celebrated on January 21st for her contributions to Mt. Sinai Church. The honor was for her 57 years of service as Clerk, a post from which she retired in December, but there is more to celebrate about Jane’s longevity with our church.

Jane has been a member longer than anyone else here today. She was confirmed by Reverend Voorhees in 1945. Her love of music kept her involved with the choir over the years, and of course, she has been our organist, both active and emeritus.

In addition to her service as Clerk, Jane has been (and will surely continue to be) our historian, rule-watcher, story teller, ancestry maven, and much, much more. Thank you for your dedicated service, Jane!



Old Man’s News

Published by the Mt. Sinai Congregational United Church of Christ, formerly known as The Congregational Church in the Community of Old Man's, Miller’s Place & Rocky Point, established 1789.

If you would like something in the church’s monthly newsletter, the deadline to let the editor know is the **20th of every month**. Please, keep in mind that your submission may be edited for content and for space. Email the OMN Editor at cdwiebel@optonline.net with all submissions and questions.

Mt. Sinai Congregational Church

We are a congregation committed to justice. All are welcome into our full life and ministry regardless of age, race, abilities, economic or marital status, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identification. We are a church that is open and affirming of all people, as we are each made in the image of God.

No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.

CONGREGATIONAL NURTURE



FRIENDLY CIRCLE!

The knitting, quilting and crafting group looked to the past for its new, official name: **The Friendly Circle**. The group will continue to meet on Tuesdays in the Conference Room from 2 to 4 p.m. Participants work on personal projects while sharing conversation and good feelings. If you are interested in joining the

Friendly Circle, feel free to drop by on Tuesdays or give the office a call at 631-473-1582. On Tuesdays, if the door is locked call the office and Jayne will open the door for you.

CARING MINISTRY

The Caring Ministry provides many emotional support services for the church. We are active in providing meals to those who are temporarily in need of assistance. Our card ministry sends out cards (frequently made by our Sunday school children), for those who are ill, post-surgery, grieving, or for birthday and holiday celebrations. And, you might see a Caring ministry member ushering at a memorial service or running a Grief Support Group.

The church's **Prayer List** is updated weekly and shared each Sunday in the Order of Worship insert, as a way to provide support through prayers for members, families and friends in need. **All are invited** to share prayer requests via email, mscc1@optonline.net, prayer request cards found in church, at www.msucc.com – prayer request page, or calling the office at 631-473-1582.

Caring Ministry is always looking for new members. If you would like to join us, please leave a message in the office.

Super Bowl of Chili Fundraiser

Take home some of the finest chili in the area for your Super Bowl gathering (or PBS show)!

Voorhees Hall
Sunday, February 11, 2024
11:00 am pickup

MEN'S BREAKFAST GROUP AND WOMEN'S BREAKFAST AND LUNCH GROUPS

Men of the church are invited to meet each Thursday morning at 8 a.m. for coffee, food and conversation at Zona Out East diner in Rocky Point. Want to be reminded via email? Please send your email address to Dennis Murphy at murphyde@optonline.net.



Please call the office if you are interested in knowing more about the women's Lunch Bunch and breakfast groups.

BUILDING & GROUNDS UPDATES

Thanks to some generous donors, Building & Grounds (B&G) was able to install new carpet on the main floor outside Voorhees Hall and through the hallways on the church west entrance side. Peter and Margaret Larom, Barbara and Tom Lyon and an anonymous donor came through for Mt. Sinai Church and we thank them.

B&G also hired contractors to make repairs to the Parsonage gutter and roof, and Island Star Painting to paint the house exterior. Stop by and check it out, the house looks wonderful!

Bill LaRosa
Buildings and Grounds Board

THANKS FROM THE EDITOR

Each month after publishing the Old Man's News, I receive wonderful comments from readers about the content and presentation. I'm here to say that I couldn't do this job without the contributions of the many busy, wonderful people who work so hard for this church.

I was looking back at older issues this month and couldn't believe how different the OMN looks now with our re-energized mind set. There has been an outpouring of love and information in the past nine months and it is reflected in each and every issue. On my end, I love the puzzle aspect of putting everything together, and making it into a cohesive unit drives my creative side. Thank you, again for your contributions and support.

Carol Wiebelt, Editor, Old Man's News



CONTACT US

**Mt. Sinai Congregational Church
United Church of Christ**



233 North Country Road
Mt. Sinai, NY 11766
Phone: 631-473-1582
Fax: 631-474-0556

Sue Hoff, Worship Lead
mshoff23@gmail.com

Dennis Laderwager, Moderator
bigreaders54@yahoo.com

Caroline LaVopa,
Christian Education Director
clavopa@optonline.net

Linda Preuss, Musician
mssc1@optonline.net

Jayne Garrido Hardy
Office Administrator
mssc1@optonline.net

Carol Wiebelt,
Old Man's News Editor
cdwiebel@optonline.net

FIND US ONLINE

Email
mssc1@optonline.net

Website
www.msucc.org

Please visit our website if you would like to be added to our email list.

Office Hours

9 - Noon, MWF & 1-4 p.m. on TTh
Church Food Cupboard,
Tuesdays, 9:15 to 11:45 a.m.

MISSION MINISTRY
ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITIES

ISLAND HEART FOOD PANTRY IS SERVING MORE PEOPLE THAN EVER

2023 was a busy year at the Island Heart Food Pantry. Many more visitors needed food as is shown in this chart that compares Annual Food Pantry Numbers from 2021, 2022 and 2023:

	Adults	Children	60+	Families	Individuals
2021	8,259	4,563			12,914
2022	9,279	6,218	2,164	3,577	17,661
2023	13,355	7,987	2,862	5,093	24,204

WE ARE ALWAYS IN NEED OF MORE FOOD, BUT RIGHT NOW WE ARE ASKING THAT YOU CONSIDER BECOMING A **NEW VOLUNTEER** FOR THIS MUCH APPRECIATED MISSION.

WE NEED PEOPLE FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- Food set-up at the pantry on Wednesdays from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Unpack boxes, fill shelves and assemble boxes of food in preparation for distribution later in the day.
- Food distribution on either Wednesday or Thursday from 2:00 to 4:15 PM. Fill boxes, talk with visitors and carry boxes to cars.
- Food Pick-up - Volunteers pick up food at Long Island Cares in Hauppauge and bring it to the pantry, usually on Wednesdays. Usually mid-morning, but it is different each week. You will need to have access to a large vehicle/truck.

We thank you for your consideration of these volunteer opportunities.

CHURCH FOOD CUPBOARD

The Food Cupboard at the Church serves local people in need of food and supplies. Thanks to all for the generous donations in the past. There is still a need for canned tomatoes, tomato sauce, canned vegetables and fruits, soups and jelly/jams. We also need personal care items like toilet paper, toothpaste, deodorant and shampoo. Your help is greatly appreciated.

We are open on Tuesdays from 9:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

June Kelly and Diane Murphy



Upcoming Events @Mt.SinaiChurch

February & March

(See individual articles for more information)

Bible Literacy

Sundays from 11:30 to 12:30 will continue into the future.

February

2/11 Super Bowl of Chili, 11:00 AM

March Preview

3/24 Palm Sunday

3/31 Easter Sunday



2024 Church Events - The Gamechangers, in partnership with many others, have developed a list of community-wide **Events at Mt. Sinai Church** for 2024. It looks like its going to be an exciting year!

April	Half day retreat with Rev. Whitman
May	Opening day of Red Barn, Antiques Fair and Quilt Show
June	Family Fun Day at Cedar Beach
July 27	Chicken Barbeque and Steeple Showcase Concert
August 31	Steeple Showcase Concert
Nov. 9	Holiday Fair
December	Cookie Exchange



GET READY FOR THE BIG CLOTHING DRIVE IN MAY

The Strategic Planning Action Committee (SPAC) will host a clothing fundraiser on May 5th. Please start saving the following items:

Clothing, shoes, handbags, backpacks, stuffed animals, small, single item, plastic toys (NO PUZZLES, BOARD GAMES, LEGOS OR TOYS WITH PIECES) and linens including towels, curtains and table linens (NO BLANKETS OR COMFORTERS)

Please put all items in kitchen size garbage bags. The company pays 20 cents per pound up to 10,000 lbs. (100 bags = about 2,000 lbs.) and 25 cents for each pound over 10,000.



If you can, please keep your donations at home until May 5th. If you don't have space at home, you can bring your donations to church, and put them in the closet in the middle of the big room in the basement. If you need assistance bringing the bags to church or downstairs, we can help. Email us at dmcinerney63@gmail.com. If you need to come during the week, please email or call the church office to make arrangements.