

*So. Montrose Community Church
January, 2016*



Dear Family and Friends:

Happy New Year to Everyone!
Here we are in 2016! It is hard to believe that a new year has dawned upon us already, but it is here. I am thankful for each new year. It gives me an opportunity to begin again. A chance to recognize my sins and to seek God's forgiveness for them and to admit my mistakes of the past year. A new year also affords me an opportunity to do better than I did in the past year. 2016 also gives me a chance to grow spiritually. What happens to me spiritually in the new year will depend entirely upon my own openness to God, so that he can move and work in my life. I am reminded time and again that our God never forces himself on anyone one of us for any reason. All we have to do is be open to the Spirit. Take some time to take a personal inventory of your life as you begin 2016. Decide to make God #1 in your life each day, every day! Take time for daily prayer and Bible reading. It really does make a difference on how your day goes. Share your hopes and dreams with your God and ask him to help you reach your goals. Then, really believe that God can work with you and through you to accomplish those

goals. As the Bible says, "redeem the time". Make the most of the "now" because it is really all anyone of us has. As 2016 begins, please take some time to ponder these resolutions: Forget the past, and spend time honoring God more, **Live** each day for Christ, **Trust** God with a strong faith, **Remain** faithful to your Church. **Witness** with your words and actions, **Cultivate** and use the talents that God has given you. Have a safe and prosperous 2016!

Pastor Jane

A Special Thank You

Thank you to Pastor Jane for leading us through another advent and Christmas season. Through her thoughtful sermons, Bible studies and other services, she showed us how important it is to anticipate the birth of Jesus, get excited about it, and spread the good news.





SOUP NIGHT

Chris Smith

Thank you for Your Support

Once again our church family helped out a family in need this Christmas. The SMCC family is so generous, we collected enough money to make the Christmas for our family of four a happy one. They received the gifts that they asked for, as well as the wrapping supplies, and a big basket of cleaning supplies and paper products. Thank you to Mary Hinds, Chris Smith, Charmarie Bisel, Sue Vandermark, and Pastor Jane for doing the shopping. It's always a fun day!!

Soup Night will be the 4th Monday in January this year, just as it was last year. Again, Levi has a 3 day hockey tournament in Rochester which ends on Martin Luther King Day, so soup night will be January 25th. It will mark the anniversary of the fire at Gracious Living Estates last year. The cooks @ GLE are donating all the desserts for us this month! Last January was when we tied the record of 111 guests. Help me beat the record. Tell EVERYONE about soup night! December's soup night had 85 people. The donations were \$233 & I gave \$116 to the food bank. January's soups will be sausage & bean stew and bacon cheddar soup. See ya there!

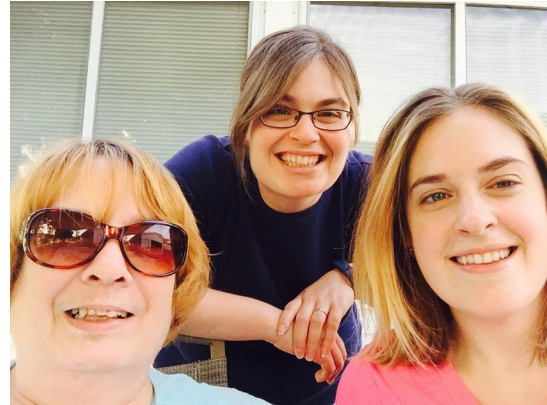


Children's Christmas Play

Some of our children entertained us with a small Christmas play on Sunday, December 13th. Participating were Elizabeth Stone, Clay Frystak, Cole Frystak, Matthew Hinds, Sierra Knight, Levi Smith and Chloe Smith. Adult helpers were Susan and Kelly Pratt, Mike Hinds, and Angie Frystak.



Our spotlight for January 2016 Charmarie Bisel



Where were you born? I was born at Wilson Hospital in Johnson City, N.Y.

Where did you go to high school? I went to Elk Lake from first to twelfth grade. There was no kindergarten then. I did try a short stint at the Catholic Kindergarten in Montrose but it was not my thing!

Were you involved in any sports or clubs in high school? I was really shy in high school but I did join the French Club and participated in band. I also was on the stage crew for our senior play.

Did you go to college? If so, where? Yes, I started my college career at Keystone. I loved it there but it was only a two year school. I then decided to be daring and went to the University of Delaware. This country girl did not feel safe there so I came home after one semester and finished my undergraduate degree at Marywood. **What degree?** I got a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work in

1976 and then went back to Marywood after Brittany finished high school to get my Master's Degree in Social Work. I graduated with specialties in Behavioral Health and Child Welfare.

What was your first job? I baby sat.
Other jobs? My first professional job was the counselor at an adolescent health care program at Barnes Kasson Hospital. When my children were small, I worked at EMHS as a receptionist. I then was a children's mental health therapist at Tri County Human Services followed by 29 and 1/2 years at Susquehanna County Services for Children and Youth and finally back to being a mental health therapist in New Milford.

What places have you lived? I lived in Dunmore for a short period while in college, in Virginia for a short period while Chris was in the Navy. We lived in New Jersey for a year after Chris was done with the Navy and then we moved back to Susquehanna County. We have lived in Gibson, New Milford, Forest Lake and Dimock.

What is your favorite vacation spot? I really am not much of a vacationer. I am a serious homebody.
Favorite vacation memory? My family would sometimes go to my father's army reunions. We got to go to New York City when the World's Fair was there. It was Awesome!

What do you do in your spare time? I am always busy with something but I love to read and do crafts.

How long have you attended SMCC? Forever. I was baptized here. Even though I did visit a couple of churches in my travels, South Montrose has always been my church.

Do you have a favorite Bible verse or story? I am often challenged by things I encounter through my work and Philippians 4:13 has always been my go to verse "I can do all things through Christ who Strengths me. One of my favorite anthems is "The First Song of Isaiah". The chorus goes "Surely it is God who saves me, I shall trust in Him and not be afraid for He is my stronghold and my sure defense and He shall be my Savior".

What is your favorite room in your house? The Living Room. It is my place to relax.

How has your faith helped you through a difficult time, or was there a specific time that you could feel God working in your life? As I mentioned above, there have many times when I have went to God for help for my work with families and children. It is a huge responsibility making decisions that deeply affect the lives of others. That being said, I know that God was with me and holding me up and together when my mother died. I felt that I had lost part of myself. I was certainly not strong enough to deal with that on my own.

Tell us something about yourself that most people would not know.

That although I do like chocolate a great deal, my favorite flavor is vanilla.



GIFTS Chris Smith

In the Message James 1:17 says this, “Every desirable and beneficial gift comes out of Heaven, The gifts are rivers of light cascading from the Father of the heavenly lights.” Just to compare this verse I want to state how it appears in the NIV version, Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. I like both versions. They help me see what God considers a gift. They remind where these gifts come from. Both versions call God

our Father. Both refer to Him as being full of light. As people we give many gifts to each other. But the bible calls what God gives desirable, beneficial and perfect gifts. I already love the gift before I even recognize it sometimes. Because what He gives is exactly that...desirable to me personally, beneficial to my well-being, and perfect, in that it is exactly what I need at exactly the right time. This article is mainly about being a mom. But it also about recognizing what God has given me. (And that sometimes I am immediately aware of His gift & other times it comes to me over years.) So I wanted to share my experiences & memories with you as a way to give God glory for His love & to thank Him for the children He has allowed me to care for.

Some cool things have happened just since Christmas Eve that may not or will not ever happen again for me. Some people call these things coincidences or just fun little memories, I call them miracles & blessings. First of all it was 68 degrees on Christmas Eve! Levi & Chloe wore shorts just to be silly. It was warmer in Montrose on Christmas Eve than it was on the 4th of July this year. My kids played outside in shorts & t-shirts.

Christmas Eve is also the day I get to celebrate Christmas with my step children. They have been in my life since 1998. This is the 18th Christmas Eve I have shared with them. Even once during mine & Tim’s courtship,

we were broke up at Christmas time and their mom & him still let them come see me on Christmas Eve. So since I have used the word step children in this article, just so you know who I am talking about, I want to tell you what I really call them. Our culture almost always associates the words, step children, step mother, or step father with bad feelings, divorce, arguing, etc. So when I had my biological children, I realized I did not want them a calling each other “half” brothers & sisters. So Megan, Andrea, Ashley & Josh are my big kids. Levi & Chloe are my little kids, and Jr, Bryson & Paige are my babies, my grandchildren.

When you have 6 kids and the oldest & youngest are exactly 20 years & 20 days apart, life can be busy, interesting, and challenging. In a Hallmark movie, the mother would say they enjoyed every minute, but in reality I can say some minutes were extremely difficult. I have not tried to be my big kids mom. They have a great mom. That is another gift the Lord has given me. The gift that Sue & I care about each other & get along very well. If I am not their mom & don't want to be called their “step mom”, what am I? I like to think of myself as their “bonus” parent. Some of the things my big & little kids all know about me is that I am their biggest fan & #1 cheerleader. They also know I am not afraid to discipline them. They also all know that if they

are to ever be hurt unjustly, I will be a force to be reckoned with.

All 6 have very different personalities. They have some things in common here & there, but for the most part are quite different. One of the other gifts the Lord has given me is the ability to really *see* them. It is actually difficult to explain how I *see* them all. I know it is God. Let me give you an example....when any of my kids walk in the door I can tell immediately by their face if they are going to tell me something awesome that happened and they want me to be excited & proud, or if they are grouchy and want to be left alone, or if they want to tell me that so & so is a real jerk & want me to stick up for them, and then sometimes it is something serious in their eyes and somehow I know to wait a few minutes, go in another room, call their name as if I need them for something and then they tell me what happened. God has given me these revelations, all because I just say simple prayers like....”show me how to be good to them Lord.” And He does just that.

Getting back to Christmas Eve, that morning Levi & Chloe were super excited! My little kids don't just get excited about Santa coming, they get excited about Josh coming. In 2011 Sue got remarried & moved to Virginia. Josh went with his mom & only came for holidays after that. We sure missed him. Josh isn't just a nice guy & a good big brother, he is a perfect gentlemen, fantastic brother &

silly clown rolled into one. He is the best play date any little brother or sister could ever have. So from about 7:00 am until he got there that afternoon I heard, "how much longer until Joshie gets here?...about 3,451 times! Josh is now 21 years old. He lives in Maryland and is an underwater welder. He is 6'3". He really is my big kid. In the next hour or so, all the big kids & their husbands, fiancé, and babies arrived. At dinner I asked the big kids if they remembered when we used to go to New Milford to church on Christmas Eve. We all started talking about the music & candles & how it is midnight and therefore actually Christmas morning when you leave. I told the big kids I had not been since Levi was born because it is too late for little kids. WELL....that got Levi & Chloe's attention. They told me they are big kids & they could stay up that late. The girls went back to their own homes that night and me, Josh, Levi & Chloe headed to church in New Milford.

On the way to church, we talked about how Pastor Jane was going to be surprised to see us! (Which in itself is just another little gift from God. How cool that my pastor at my church now, is also the Pastor at the church I grew up in?) And yep she was surprised. She said, hey guys nice to see you here! I told her Levi & Chloe had decided they were old enough to come to church late on Christmas Eve. The service was beautiful. Levi

even commented on the musical talent in that church (which is not a typical Levi statement.) Chloe was fading towards the end but she held on like a trooper. Now here is where it gets cool.....If you don't have a personal relationship with God, these things may go unnoticed. But guess what Pastor Jane said as we left? Well, you made it guys, You are big kids now.

Driving home I realized that Levi & Chloe are becoming big kids now too. They are at a special age where innocence meets maturity. God was showing me to embrace this stage of their life. It also made me realize that this was Levi & Chloe's 1st time to Christmas Eve service in New Milford, but maybe it was Josh's last. He is a grown up. He might meet the girl of his dreams in the near future & be too big to spend the night on Christmas Eve at my house. What an awesome gift this night was to me.

God's work continued this past Sunday. That morning as I got ready for church Tim was talking about how much the grandkids enjoyed these singing snowmen I have. Out of the blue he says, it really is amazing how much they all love you. I said who? He said, all the kids. They love to please you & can't stand disappointing you. He said he wasn't sure how I did it. I told him, I didn't do it. God did. He just looked at me. So I told him years ago, I read Luke 2:52 where Mary prayed for Jesus. I wrote the verse out on an index card in the form of a prayer & replaced my

children's names in it. I have said this prayer almost every day for about 9 years. And I left for church. Well, what was Pastor Jane's scripture reading? Luke 2:52

As soon as she started to read it my eyes filled with tears. I have had a couple things happen in 2015 that weren't ideal situations. They brought out emotions I would rather not have. I like being happy & cheerful. But the gifts God has given me the last couple days told me He was saying, "Nevermind the junk that happened. I'm in control. Continue taking care of the gifts I've given you."

So be careful what you call luck or coincidence. It is most likely a miracle. A gift from God. His gifts are full of light. They are more desirable than any item from a store. He knows what you want & need before you could ever make a list.

Here is my prayer: Dear God, I pray that Levi & Chloe grow in wisdom and understanding, in stature and in years, and to have favor with You and People. In Jesus name, Amen
-Luke 2:52



**Women's Resource Center
Donations Needed**

Here is WRC most recent Wish List

Cleaning Supplies:

brooms, mops, sponges, dish soap, scubbies, scouring powder, Laundry detergent, 64 oz or smaller, fabric softener sheets, paper towels, toilet paper, aluminum foil, plastic wrap, quart and gallon size disposable plastic baggies.

Personal items:

shampoo, baby supplies, wipes powder, lotion, bath wash

Household:

Sheets, towels, hard covered journals

Gift cards:

Price Chopper \$25.00

Pump & Pantry \$10.00

As I read their "wish list" and think about how many times a day we use each one of these items I can't even put myself in their situation. It really is the simple things in life that we take for granted. Thank you for continuing to do what we can for these women and children.

Thank you, Cathy

McCain



Country Partner Dancing

Tom and Sherry Weller are teaching Country Partner Dancing on Tuesday evenings @ 6pm. All that is required is a small donation for the use of our church. Come have some fun and dance with us!

For more information, call (570)278-1489.

Happenings at Sky Lake

Special Needs Winter Retreat

January 3-5, 2016: This is a retreat designed for our friends with special needs. High staff-camper ratios allow participants to enjoy outdoor and indoor winter activities such as hiking, singing, crafts, sledding, building snowpersons, and making snow angels.

Family Winter Weekends

January 15-18 & February 12-15, 2016

These are perfect for families of all shapes and sizes. Both retreats offer ample opportunities to spend a few days sledding, snowshoeing cross country skiing, catching up with old friends, making new friends, worshipping and enjoying other wintry activities at Sky Lake.

S'more Time

January 23, 2016: This is an afternoon gathering at Sky Lake for youth in Middle and High School to enjoy some more time at Sky Lake. There'll be plenty of fun, fellowship, and food (s'mores of course!)

Youth Winter Weekend

February 5-7, 2016: This weekend is geared toward youth in Middle and

High School. They'll get to spend the weekend with friends old and new; with plenty of time to play in the snow, hangout, and deepen one's relationship with God.

Rejuvenate: A Spring Ladies of the Lake Experience:

April 8-10, 2016: This is a fantastic opportunity for women from your church to enjoy meaningful, Christian fellowship in a setting that naturally lends itself to encountering God.

Registration forms are available online at www.skylakecenter.org.
Phone: 607-467-2750



Red Bird Mission

Keep saving those labels! Thank you for all the donations thus far. See the fliers at the end of June's newsletter for the products UPC labels that we collect.



Dennis Snell, Helen Petersen, John & Daniel Snell, David Pierce, teachers & students, those in the military, the unemployed, those in nursing homes, people in prison, our country, our world, our church and each other.

Our Prayers

In the church: Jim Frystak, Matthew Hinds, JoAnn Jerauld, Harry Snell, Aggie Holbert, Grace Harvey, Don & Joyce Blaisure, Nic Remington, Theresa Owen, Ben Owen, Craig Estelle, Marian Nye, Alice Porter, Gladys Barber, Peggy Wood, family of Doris Sebring.

In our community: Cindy Holdridge, family of Holly Eddy, Mike Kerr, Clara, Kaylee & family, Luella, Mrs. Pettyjohn, Sarah Stone, Patsy Gesford, Molly McVaugh, Betty Allen, Hunsinger family, Ken & Evie Walter, Tammy, John Frye, Herm & Maxine Zappe & their children, Marie Benedict, Considine family, Augusta Ostrow, Elijah, Jim Taylor, Charlie & Norma, Bernie Boyer, Carol Jones, Jim Ochse, Joyce Lathrop, Jane Perry, Joyce Millard, David Snell, James Walters, Dorothy Wegman (at Gracious Living), Staff @ Children & Youth, Dottie Henry, Catalina, Pat Whitaker, Mickey Patrick, Sandra Lathrop, those struggling with addictions, our teenagers in Susquehanna County, Debbie Bush, Sarah & Bill, family of Robert Atticks, Randy Ward, Keith Pratt, Helen Crotta, Lisa Steele, Dee Pierson, Dick Millard, Duane Snell,

Church Website

<http://southmontrose.umcchurches.org>

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