

# The Visitor



## The Silver Tree



In Burma, Karen Baptist Churches often have a silver-colored Christmas tree in the church. Small envelopes in which gifts of money can be placed are nearby. The envelopes are pinned to the tree and the money collected is usually given to the pastor as a Christmas gift.

Tabernacle's teens are making a Silver Tree for the sanctuary. But, they are doing a twist on the tradition. *The money collected from the envelopes pinned to the tree will support our Retired Ministers and Missionary Offering.* Look for the silver tree in the sanctuary with the small red and green envelopes nearby. This is another way we can say "Thank You" to our Retired Ministers and Missionaries!

## Pastoral Search Informational Meeting

On **Sunday, December 4** there will be an informational meeting with the Rev. Jerrod Huguenot - Associate Executive Minister of American Baptist Churches of New York State. Rev. Huguenot will address the congregation **BETWEEN the 10:00 a.m. English language worship service and the Karen worship service in the Sanctuary.** We ask everyone to remain in the sanctuary following the Benediction on that Sunday. He will explain how the search process for a new Pastor will be done for Tabernacle. Also, he will address questions and concerns regarding this transition for Tabernacle. Please plan to attend this important meeting and bring any questions you have so they can be answered.

**The Deadline to submit an article for the January Visitor is Sunday, December 18.**

**All Annual Reports are due in the church office by Sunday, January 8.**

**The Church Office will be closed on Mondays, December 26, 2016 and January 2, 2017.**

### Meaningful Messages for Today



**December 4**  
Second Sunday of Advent  
Communion  
Isaiah 11:1-10  
*The Hope for Peace*

**December 11**  
Third Sunday of Advent  
Isaiah 35:1-10  
*When Joy Blooms*

**December 18**  
Fourth Sunday of Advent  
Isaiah 7:10-16  
Matthew 1:18-25  
*God With Us!*

**December 25**  
Christmas Day  
Luke 2:1-20  
*Say, "Yes" to Christmas*





### *Welcoming Our Vulnerable God*

*... he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.  
Philippians 2:7 (NRSV)*

During this Advent season, as we prepare our hearts and ready our lives to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ on Christmas Day, we do so against the backdrop of a global refugee crisis. The United Nations High Commission on Refugees reports that over 65 million people around the world have been forced from their homes. Half of them are under the age of 18.

The one we worship as Emmanuel – *God with us* – came to us as one of our world’s most vulnerable. He was born into a displaced, homeless, refugee family.

The Bible provides us with two accounts of Jesus’ birth. The Gospel of Luke not only tells us the picturesque story of angel choirs and shepherds “watching their flocks by night,” but of a young couple caught in a tsunami of human migration. Mary and Joseph are forced to move against their will by an imperial decree. They return to the place of Joseph’s ancestral origins, Bethlehem, to be counted in the Roman census. The desperate, homeless couple takes shelter among the animals in the stable. There, Mary gives birth to the incarnate Son of God.

Matthew’s Gospel tells us the story of how the magi – astrologers from the east – came to Jerusalem seeking the one whose star they had observed and followed. They pay a visit to King Herod seeking “the child who has been born the king of the Jews.” Herod responds by slaughtering all the children who might be a rival to his throne. Fearing for the life of their newborn son, Joseph and Mary flee their homeland for refuge of Egypt.

Toward the end of his ministry, Jesus teaches his disciples about the coming judgement day (see Matthew 25:31-46). There is one criteria by which human beings are judged: their treatment of the most vulnerable. Jesus says that in feeding the hungry, quenching the thirst of the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, caring for the sick, clothing the naked, and visiting the imprisoned we are ministering to him. “... just as you did to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” And, failure to minister to the vulnerable is a rejection of him. I have often wondered if Jesus was describing in this passage his own experience as the young child of a displaced, stateless, refugee family. To be a refugee is to know the pain of hunger, thirst, and sickness. To be a refugee is to live without adequate shelter and clothing. To be a refugee is to be deprived of your freedom because you are stranger and perceived as a threat.

Almost twenty years ago, Dr. Konrad Raiser, then General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, in his 1997 Christmas message wrote these challenging words about the meaning of Christmas:

*This Christmas, God is still on the move with the millions of uprooted people who look for a safe place to be received. Today, to remember and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ is to do so in a world where millions of people are also compelled to be on the move: refugees driven from their towns and villages by war, children on the road without a home, asylum seekers rejected and deported from a country of refuge, migrants separated from their families. They all knock at our door. Will we open it for them?*

The plight of our world’s refugees should be of special concern for us during this Advent and Christmas season. Some of our political leaders, professing the desire to restore our nation to greatness and to its “Christian identity,” propose building walls, locking our doors, and turning our backs on the world’s most vulnerable. If I understand Jesus correctly, saying, “no” to the world’s most vulnerable is saying, “no” to him.

During this holy season, may we welcome the one who emptied himself and became vulnerable for our sake. May we see him in the displaced, the stateless, the strangers who seek refuge in our midst. In welcoming them, may we welcome the living Christ.

Grace and peace,  
*Pastor Mark*

## Stewardship Update



Thank you to everyone who placed a completed pledge card in the offering plate as we dedicated our pledge cards on Sunday, November 13. As of November 20, about 65% of the money needed to fund our 2017 Current Expense and Mission budgets has been pledged. About 57% of the Restoration and Preservation fund has been committed. If you have not been able to return your pledge card to the church, please make certain to place it in the offering plate during a Sunday morning worship service, or mail it to the church, Attn:

**Tabernacle Baptist Church  
Finance Secretary  
13 Clark Place  
Utica, NY 13501**

If you need a pledge card, please speak with Pastor Mark, Pastor Daniel or contact Tammy in the church office at 735-7534 or [churchoffice@tbcutica.org](mailto:churchoffice@tbcutica.org).

## Search Committee Report

The Search Committee met for the first time on November 20, 2016. The members, by our Constitution, consist of: The Moderator, Michael Dunne; one member from each of the three Ministry Teams - Karen Dunne (Faith Nurturing); Kler Eh Soe Victor (Stewardship Ministry); Gwen Deragon (Worship and Witness); Staff Relations, Thomas Deragon; Church-at-Large, Khinsoe Moe; and Youth Representative, Olive San

## Final Mary Martha Meeting

Mary Martha will meet on *Monday, December 12 at 7 p.m.* at the home of Janet Barnes. This will be our final meeting. We invite and encourage all members, past and present, to join us as we celebrate Christmas and the end of this ministry to women which has been ongoing for over 20 years.

## Hope is Born



Make plans to join us on *Saturday, December 24 at 7:00 p.m.* as we present our annual Christmas Eve pageant. This year's theme is "Hope is Born." This original dramatic presentation will present the traditional Christmas story with songs performed by our Children's Choir as well as dances performed to special music. The TBC Youth Group with our own praise band will perform as well. We hope you will take time out of your busy holiday plans to join us as we pause, reflect and seek the light of Christ in our lives during this Advent and Christmas season and beyond.

## Christmas Day Celebration

All members and friends of Tabernacle are invited to attend Tabernacle's Christmas celebration on *Christmas Day, December 25 at 11:00 a.m.* (following the Christmas Service). Come! Enjoy a meal, singing and fellowship! Following the meal, there will be a Gift Exchange. Each family or couple is invited to bring a wrapped useful household gift to exchange.





# Faith through Gratitude

## 2016 Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering

*We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. – 1 Thessalonians 1: 2-3*

The theme of our **2016 Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO)** is *Faith Through Gratitude*. According to the dictionary, faith is a noun. But, practicing our faith is closer to a verb, an action word. Through our faith in God, and our gratitude for Jesus Christ's saving love, we are called to be faithful servants of the gospel and to live out the ministry of Jesus in word and deed.

**Our gratitude for God's gift in Christ is the seed from which our love for others grows.** Putting our faith into action is important. Faith expressed through gratitude for others matters – to those who are hurting, and to those who are in need.

In our Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) **theme scripture** from 1 Thessalonians, the apostle Paul commends this community for their service that is grounded in their faith, love and hope in Jesus Christ. As Christians today, we recognize that we too, must serve just as the Thessalonians before us.

The **Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO)** gives American Baptists the opportunity to live out this important message to the Thessalonians. Through the RMMO, **we are given the opportunity to join with American Baptists across our nation in expressing our gratitude** to the many servants who stepped forward and said, *Here am I, send me.*

In 1948, American Baptist congregations, like Tabernacle, began donating to the November Communion Fellowship Offering. **This offering provided financial assistance to our denomination's elderly ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses.** As a way to continue this practice of gratitude, in 1977 American Baptist Churches USA formally introduced the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering.

At Tabernacle, we continue this tradition by receiving the Retired Ministers and Missionary Offering each December. Each year, we help provide assistance to those who have devoted their lives to God's service by providing a **"Thank You" check**. Through the generous giving of American Baptists, in 2015 the RMMO provided checks to more than **3,436 recipients and distributed \$1,105,147.**

**Our 2016 RMMO goal at Tabernacle is \$2,500.** Will you help us reach our goal? **Will you help us express our gratitude to those who have served Christ and our American Baptist congregations?** I invite you to join me in honoring God's committed servants.

Yours in Christ,

*Pastor Mark*

On behalf of the Worship & Witness Ministry Team

## Church Directory Address Corrections/Additions



Our new Tabernacle Baptist Church 2016 directory is complete. Copies are available in Thorn Chapel and the Narthex. If your information is incorrect, missing, or needs to be updated, please contact Tammy in the church office at 735-7534, so that we are able to keep our church database and church directory information up-to-date.

*Please make the following corrections/additions to your Church Directory:*

DeChris Seedo  
1438 City St.  
Utica, NY 13502

Naw Ae and Tu Nu  
1413 Brinckerhoff Ave.  
Utica, NY 13501-4603



*In Loving Memory of*

*Violet Black*

*September 30, 1925 — November 12, 2017*



## Memorial Poinsettias

Every year at Christmas time, our Church is decorated with Poinsettias; usually given as memorials.

After the December 25 Christmas Service, you may either take your plant(s) home or have it delivered to a sick or shut - in member.

To place an order, complete and return this form with your payment to the church office by Sunday, December 11.

The cost is \$8.00 per plant. Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please include the following name(s) on the Memorial list which will be included in the Christmas bulletins:

PLEASE PRINT

*Names in whose memory flowers are given:*

- I will take my plant immediately after the December 25 service.*
- My plant may be given to a shut-in.*
- I will help deliver plants to shut-ins.*

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_





THE RESCUE MISSION OF UTICA  
& TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH



*Invites you to a*  
**Christmas**  
**CONCERT**

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16 at 6:30 p.m.

.....  
TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH

13 CLARK PLACE, UTICA

Featuring:

MARK BOLOS BAND, DAVID OSSENFORT & KAREN YOUTH CHOIR

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED FOLLOWING THE CONCERT

*All Are Welcome!*

Advent and Christmas  
**Sweet December Schedule**

*Walking in Hope*

*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
Those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined. ~ Isaiah 9:2*

**NOVEMBER 29 ~ Advent I**

- 10:00 AM Worship - Theme: *Coming... – Isaiah 2:1-5*
- 11:15 AM Karen Language Worship Service

**NOVEMBER 30**

- 6:00 PM *Karen Sweet December Celebration and Service (Service begins at 12 midnight)*

**DECEMBER 4 ~ Advent 2**

- 10:00 AM Worship - Theme: *The Hope for Peace – Isaiah 11:1-10*  
RMMO Offering ~ Communion
- 11:15 AM Pastoral Search Informational Meeting
- 11:45 AM Karen Language Worship Service

**DECEMBER 16**

- 6:30 PM *Rescue Mission Christmas Concert and Sing Along*

**DECEMBER 11 ~ Advent 3**

- 10:00 AM Worship - Theme: *When Joy Blooms – Isaiah 35:1-10*
- 11:15 AM Karen Language Worship Service

**DECEMBER 18 ~ Advent 4**

- 10:00 AM Worship - Theme: *God With Us! - Isaiah 7:10-16, Matthew 1:18-25*
- 10:15 AM Birthday Cake for Jesus during Sunday School (Children)
- 11:15 AM Birthday Cake for Jesus in Thorn Chapel (Adults)
- 11:15 AM Karen Language Worship Service

**DECEMBER 24 ~ Christmas Eve**

- 7:00 PM Christmas Eve Service & Children's Christmas Pageant - *Hope is Born*

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25 ~ Christmas Day**

- 10:00 AM Worship – Theme: *Say "Yes" to Christmas – Luke 2:1-20*
- 11:00 AM Christmas Meal and Gift Exchange



*Children's Coloring Page*







2016 Hospice & Palliative Care's  
**Light Up A Life**

Visit a holiday tree location to make a donation and place a holiday tag on the tree in honor or memory of a loved one.



**Joannie Grande**  
 McDonald's

Meet our  
*Light Up A Life*  
 Honorary  
 Chairpersons



**Ann S. Tyler**  
 AmeriCU Credit Union



**Steve McMurray**  
 WKTU News  
 Channel 2

Dear Friends of Hospice, 

The holidays are a special time. It's the time of year when we come together as a community, regardless of faith or culture, to remember people who are special to us.

You may want to remember someone who has passed and is forever in your thoughts. This year we will be remembering our loved ones as well. Or, you can honor someone who is living that has had an impact on your life and would appreciate this recognition. Why not give thanks for these special people by dedicating an ornament on one of Hospice's holiday trees.

Donations to Light Up A Life will benefit Hospice & Palliative Care's mission to provide quality, compassionate end-of-life care to family members, friends, neighbors and co-workers when they need it most.

Please participate in this holiday tradition and "share the spirit of the holidays with a gift in honor or memory" by donating to "Light Up A Life" by December 31st. **Your donation helps touch more lives every day.**

*2016 Location & Dates*

Sangertown Square Mall, Center Court  
 New Hartford: Nov. 14 to Dec. 23

AmeriCU, Black River Blvd. & Griffiss Park,  
 Rome: Nov. 28 to Dec. 23

Hospice & Palliative Care Office  
 New Hartford: Nov. 28 to Dec. 30

Community Bank, Oneida & Hamilton:  
 Nov. 28 to Dec. 23

Kinney Drugs, Old Forge:  
 Dec. 5 to Dec. 11

Hummel's Office Plus, Rome & Herkimer:  
 Nov. 28 to Dec. 23

Sincerely,

*Joannie Grande*  
**Joannie Grande**  
 Utica Area

*Steve McMurray*  
**Steve McMurray**  
 Herkimer & Eastern Madison Counties

*Ann S. Tyler*  
**Ann S. Tyler**  
 Rome Area



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# DECEMBER

## ***December Services, Meetings, Special Events and Deadlines***

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <i>Piano Lessons</i>   | <i>Saturdays, at 8:30 a.m., except 12/24 and 12/31</i>                   |
| <i>Violin I Lessons</i>  | <i>Saturdays, at 3:20 p.m., except 12/24 and 12/31</i>                   |
| <i>Youth Meeting</i>   | <i>Saturdays, at 6:00 p.m., except 12/24 and 12/31</i>                   |
| <i>Violin II Lessons</i>   | <i>Saturdays, at 6:00 p.m., except 12/24 and 12/31</i>                   |
| <i>Karen Choir Practice</i>  | <i>Saturdays, at 4:00 p.m., except 12/24</i>                             |
| <i>Karen Language Class</i>  | <i>Saturdays, at 4:00 p.m., except 12/24</i>                             |
| <i>Prayer Service</i>  | <i>Sundays, at 7:00 a.m.</i>   |
| <i>Chancel Choir</i>   | <i>Sundays, at 9:00 a.m., except 12/25 and 1/1</i>                       |
| <i>Trumpet Practice</i>  | <i>Sundays, at 11:30 a.m., except 12/25 and 1/1</i>                      |
| <i>Youth Christmas Preparation and Practice</i>                            | <i>Saturdays, 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Sundays, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.</i> |
| <i>Nominating Committee Meeting</i>  | <i>Sunday, December 4, 1:30 p.m.</i>                                     |
| <i>Circle 16 Bake Sale</i>   | <i>Sunday, December 11</i>   |
| <i>Stewardship Ministry Team Meeting</i>                                   | <i>Sunday, December 11, 6:00 p.m.</i>                                    |
| <i>Final Mary Martha Meeting</i>   | <i>Monday, December 12, 7:00 p.m.</i>                                    |
| <i>Rescue Mission Christmas Concert in Thorn Chapel</i>                    | <i>Friday, December 16, 6:30 p.m.</i>                                    |
| <i>January Visitor Submission Deadline</i>                                 | <i>Sunday, December 18</i>   |
| <i>Christmas Eve Service</i>   | <i>Saturday, December 24, 7:00 p.m.</i>                                  |
| <i>Christmas Day Service followed by Fellowship Dinner and Celebration</i> | <i>Sunday, December 25, 10:00 a.m.</i>                                   |
| <i>Office Closed</i>   | <i>Mondays, December 26, 2016 and January 2, 2017</i>                    |



Do you have any information regarding yourself or your family members that you would like to share with Tabernacle friends and members in the Visitor? Please let the church office know by calling Tammy, Mon. – Thurs., 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at 735-7534, or emailing [churchoffice@tbcutica.org](mailto:churchoffice@tbcutica.org).



THIS MONTH'S  
 Birthdays  
**DECEMBER**



|                     |       |                   |       |
|---------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| Mor Chi Soe         | 12/2  | Shwe Win          | 12/15 |
| Eh Knyaw            | 12/2  | Wisdom Htoo       | 12/16 |
| Moo R Too Lu        | 12/3  | Veera Aung        | 12/17 |
| Decenter Sancrown   | 12/3  | Hser Nay Doh Htoo | 12/17 |
| Jeffrey Moo         | 12/5  | Ta Mla Wah        | 12/18 |
| Lily Eh             | 12/5  | Let Win           | 12/19 |
| Paw Dee Say         | 12/6  | Rachel Bennett    | 12/22 |
| Serpway Win         | 12/6  | Hsar Bway Htoo    | 12/22 |
| Brandon Lee         | 12/7  | Aaron Green       | 12/24 |
| Wah Nay Moo         | 12/7  | Bwae Htoo         | 12/24 |
| Elijah Htoo         | 12/7  | Eh Taw Lo Moo Mu  | 12/24 |
| Wahnay Moo Kwa      | 12/6  | Ywa Htoo          | 12/24 |
| Tamla Win           | 12/8  | Jaw Ley           | 12/24 |
| Ethan Ellis         | 12/8  | Kee Kie Wah       | 12/24 |
| Kyaw Htoo           | 12/8  | Daw Nah Moo       | 12/25 |
| Adrienne Leuthauser | 12/9  | Sha Ra Ya Mu      | 12/25 |
| Natalie Sparks      | 12/10 | Ba So Gay Doh     | 12/27 |
| Tha Law Gaw         | 12/10 | Ma La Kee Pyu     | 12/27 |
| Kyi MI              | 12/11 | Bway Paw          | 12/28 |
| Shar Paw Moo        | 12/12 | Htoo Lily         | 12/28 |
| Tee Shee Ler Moo    | 12/12 | Kapur Htoo        | 12/29 |
| Vinton M. Thein     | 12/12 | Lydia Doe         | 12/29 |
| Bway Mur            | 12/13 | Stewart Williams  | 12/29 |
| Baby Naw            | 12/14 | Eh Mu             | 12/30 |
| Baby Moo            | 12/14 | Joel Bennett      | 12/31 |
| Christina Win       | 12/15 | Eh Thaw Paw       | 12/31 |







**Tabernacle Baptist Church**  
13 Clark Place  
Utica, New York 13501

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**Tabernacle Baptist Church  
Sunday Worship**

7:00 a.m. Karen Prayer Service  
10:00 a.m. English Service  
11:15 a.m. Karen Worship

**Office Hours**

Monday through Thursday  
8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.  
*Closed on Fridays*

**TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH**

|                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Rev. Dr. Mark S. Caruana  | Pastor                    |
| Rev. Daniel Calvin San    | Associate Pastor          |
| Rev. Dr. James V. Davison | Pastor Emeritus           |
| Karen Dunne               | Minister of Christian Ed. |
| Michael W. Moore          | Minister of Music         |
| Say Wah Htoo              | Christian Ed. Associate   |
| Tammy Daly                | Administrative Secretary  |
| David White               | Sexton                    |
| Lewis Olivadese           | Assistant Sexton          |
| Michael Dunne             | Assistant Sexton          |

**CONTACTS**

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Mail            | 13 Clark Place, Utica, NY 13501  |
| Telephone       | 315-735-7534   |
| Fax             | 315-734-9030   |
| Pastor's e-mail | <a href="mailto:pastor@tbcutica.org">pastor@tbcutica.org</a>             |
| Office e-mail   | <a href="mailto:churchoffice@tbcutica.org">churchoffice@tbcutica.org</a> |
| Website         | <a href="http://www.tbcutica.org">www.tbcutica.org</a>                   |

**The Pastor is just  
a phone call away**

Pastor Mark can be reached by calling him at the church office (735-7534) or at his home (733-4112). Answering machines are at both numbers to take your message when he is unable to personally answer. Please call him when you, or a family member, are anticipating hospitalization, in times of crisis, when you need someone with whom to talk and pray, when a wedding is being planned, or when there is a celebration to be shared. He will also be happy to arrange a convenient time for you to visit with him in his office or in your home. *Remember, the Pastor welcomes your call!*