



R E A C H I N G   O U T  
First Congregational Church of Berkshire, NY  
State Route 38 & Glen Road  
P.O. Box 196  
Berkshire, NY 13736

**Thank You:**

Thank you Jenn for accepting the pew pastor position. I am very grateful. I would also like to take time to thank each and every pew pastor for a job well done. Also, I thank the greeters, ushers, and acolytes, for always being there when asked to help at any time. You will all be in my prayers every night.

God Bless each and every one of you, Betty Kasmarcik

**Next Deadline: January 22<sup>nd</sup>:**

Our newsletter goes out to a lot of people. Both within our church and outside. All articles telling of the activities taking place are appreciated, showing the life taking place here. Please take the time to sit down and write something for me to put in here.

**CONTACT US:** You can reach our church by sending an email to [BCC\\_Secretary@yahoo.com](mailto:BCC_Secretary@yahoo.com) or calling us at 657-2677. Our website is [redbrickchurch.org](http://redbrickchurch.org)

For Pastor Chuck, call 657-8058 or email him at [BCCPastorChuck@yahoo.com](mailto:BCCPastorChuck@yahoo.com)

# Reaching Out

NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BERKSHIRE, NY

Volume 32

January, 2012

Number 01

## The Old & the New.

We've had a full year! We've adopted a new set of By-Laws that is more Biblically based. In our January congregational meeting, we'll confirm God's choices for the Biblical offices of Elder and Deacon. We'll also set up our new Ministry Teams: outreach, worship, fellowship, discipleship and ministry placement. If you're not sure what all of these are, come join us for our 8 week Sunday school course on them. We'll see what the Bible says about them and we'll brainstorm about how we can make these ministries come to life here in Berkshire.

I'm excited about the new year because this is when my role here will be completed. As God has given me the wisdom, I've worked to prepare a solid foundation for the new pastor. He'll come in to see a solid core of disciples ready to follow his lead in serving God and this community. He'll have a group of Elders to help him determine God's will for the congregation and its ministries. He'll have a group of Deacons already reaching out with acts of mercy and hospitality.

It has not always been easy for the Deacons and the Transition Team to prepare our congregation for this process. It was hard for them at the start to understand that we needed to prepare *ourselves* for a new pastor, not just get someone in here. The Deacons (and Transition Team) did everything they could to make the process as open as possible, but there were still problems in communicating these issues to others in the church. Indeed, there are some in our congregation who are not happy with the changes even now. I am sorry that they feel this way, but I can testify that the Deacons and Transition Team were as open and honest as they could be. There has been a lot of prayer supporting the work that they've done.

So now we have our Church Information Form into the CCCC placement office. In early January we'll start receiving *Pastor* Information Forms from potential candidates. The Transition Team has already discussed what to look for in these "PIF's." When we find several that look promising, the real work begins. The Transition Team will tell them about our congregation in more detail and have several pointed questions to ask to help them find God's fit for our congregation. While I may offer some advice when asked, I am not an active part of this process. God will use the people you elected to the Transition Team to find His choice for your next pastor.

Please keep your Transition Team members in your prayers. You can thank God for their faithful service so far and lift them up for this final phase of their task. It has been a lot of time and work, and that will actually increase in these final steps.

As I reflected on the old and the new, I asked several people to do the same. What follows here are their reflections on where we've been and where they hope we're going. In Him, Pastor Chuck

We would like to give our perspective of this time of transition we have experienced over the last year and a half. Probably most important is that we have both felt an increased brother and sisterhood among some of the members of the church, fostered by our involvement in the Monday night studies (Men in Ministry and Women's Bible Study) as well as participation in the adult Sunday school classes that have been offered. These opportunities have allowed us to grow spiritually and given us a more outward perspective toward the church and the community. This regular fellowship with fellow believers has increased our strength of faith, sense of family in the church, and developed bonds of friendship that we believe will hold over the long term. When our family bond is strong, we can do great things in God's kingdom, and we believe that there are great things in store for our church as we go forward and collectively press on toward the prize.

With love for our church family,

Scott and Sarah Albrecht

The Lord found a perfect spot for a real nice Church, which is the First Congregational Church of Berkshire NY. It has a beautiful organ, which I enjoy a whole lot. It also has wonderful people. Most of the people that went there when us tow girls first started are deceased or moved away.

The church people of today are so helpful for me. I could write a book of the good things the Lord has done for his people and helping everyone to find the right path. I worship all the time I have with all of them.

Ethel Ceuter

We are so thankful to have such a wonderful and uplifting church family here at Berkshire Congregational. We have always felt at-home and comfortable here; and we're so blessed that our daughters have had the chance to grow up in a Spirit-filled, Bible-based church. We love that visitors are welcomed with open arms & friendly smiles. Our youth programs are excellent and appeal to all ages (Nursery - High School). It's great that we also offer several adult classes and Bible studies so that all ages can learn and grow in their spiritual walk. Our church is an active and vibrant church where people can come for worship and fellowship.

Looking toward the future, we are sincerely hoping to continue to grow together. We would like to see the continuation of the adult courses and various Bible studies that are being offered - the more we can help others grow in their faith the better. Also we want to see our youth programs (Sunday School, Youth Groups...) continue to see growth and depth as well - we have great kids involved and fantastic leaders to teach them! It is our prayer that the pastor God has planned for us will see that Berkshire Congregational Church is one filled with promise and potential, but most-of-all that we are people who love the Lord and seek to do His will above all else both in our own lives and in our church family.

In Him, Jim & Jenn Willard

I would like to let everyone know how grateful I am, that I am a member of this Congregation. The people here are thoughtful, caring, loving, and supportive. Someone is always there when you need them. I am looking forward to having our permanent pastor and will continue to serve when and where I can.

Betty Kasmarcik

I was asked to write a paragraph about where I think the Berkshire congregational church is going. I thought about it for some time and thought it might be best said through a personal story. One thing I can say is the church has not changed, it's just the thoughts of the people that have changed, knowing that the people are the church everyone has a common goal... RIGHT? The loss of some good friends, the gain of some new friends and the struggles that come with both.

You can imagine that for the better part of my life all I heard was my Grandfather (Rev. Vernon Gehm). As all good things have to come to an end he passed away from a terrible accident, where a tractor ran him over. I was Crushed! After much prayer and asking God where do I go what do I do, I heard Him saying, "I need you and so do my children." I got the answer alright it, and, it was like a lightning bolt crashed out of the sky and hit me right on the head. Plane as day the Lord sent a message. "Deal with it Barb." CHANGE is not a bad thing! Go back, give the pastor a chance. You will see he is just a man like the rest of us trying his best to give us the word of GOD and what GOD wants us to know.

If you are afraid of CHANGE or just can't get used to ones new style of loving the Lord, don't take it personal, don't feel that people are trying to destroy what you have worked so hard for, don't think that anyone is trying to take your church family away. Look at it as the word of GOD, as said in the Bible. is the only word that matters, no matter who is delivering it. Those that have gone, we miss you, you are important to the family of GOD and of the Church. Good things are happening: the children are getting more involved I am learning a lot not only from pastor Chuck, but from the members of the Church that are there. The members are working together to teach each other and to teach the children. Everyone has a common goal to recruit for Jesus Christ. I even text my family to invite them all to Christmas services, hmmm imagine that texting **ABV** a change, did you ever see that coming? Maybe not, but it's not a bad thing. Barb Jordan

We are in a storm but we cannot abandon ship, the Lord is with us. We are trying to stay strong and positive 'til the transition is complete for the new pastor.

Strong and positive for the many Bible studies in progress, praying for our youth group – their band, we are proud of them, praying for the Sunday-school programs, the men's ministries etc. The Ladies tea is fun, join us, chat a while, we're getting to know each other, talk and pray about what the Lord has done and is still doing in our lives.

John and Ede Adams

I have greatly been enjoying the Monday night "men in ministry" sessions with anywhere from 3 or 4 to 6 or 8 guys from week to week. We have used a number of books as a guide to our conversations. Sometimes we stick quite closely to the materials and sometimes we just enjoy thoughts ideas and encouragement on a topic that is of concern to one or more of us. Overall it has been a very enjoyable part of my week. Mark Friebe

As I think about what's happening at our church, I think we've had a lot of blessings and lessons. I love to see the children coming down for the children's sermon. Some of them are so inquisitive! I love to see their smiling faces and enthusiasm. I enjoyed the Christmas program with their sweet faces. And that band! They have come so far and sound so good.

As the new pastor comes and gets settled, I look forward to seeing people and new faces coming to both Sunday school and church. I look forward to seeing them come to the Lord, including my family. Dot Klinge

Someone once said "Hindsight is a wonderful thing." I am inclined to agree. Over the last year, I have watched God work in amazing ways in our church. Even though it hasn't always been easy, I have witnessed incredible growth in my brothers and sisters in Christ. Recently I had the opportunity to watch our young people practice in the youth band. It was great to see the enthusiasm and excitement. They are sounding great! We have many activities. Bible studies, Womens Fellowship, Men in Ministry, and a terrific youth group. There are wonderful ladies teas once a month. I am certain the Our Heavenly Father has much planned for us. I look forward to sharing His Love with others, so that they can know the Joy of a relationship with Jesus. Darlene Wait

What drew me to Berkshire Congregational Church was the warmth and love that came from within. I saw a reflection of Jesus coming from His people. That is still the factor that draws me here. I have found a family of God, desiring to serve Him! I am honored to be serving in that family, and want to do so for many years to come. Amanda Wait

### **Adult Sunday School:**

- Where Are We Now? A review of the new church positions: what will our elders, deacons & trustees do? Where do I fit in Outreach, Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship or Ministry Placement? This course will give you a chance to ask questions and brainstorm about how God will use us as a family and you as an individual.
- Hymns for the Head and Heart. Ever feel lost when the congregation sings a hymn? For the next 8 weeks, Becky will lead a special class to cover the hymns & praise songs we'll sing that day. You'll get to talk about what the hymns actually say and you'll get to practice singing them so you can get comfortable with the tune
- How to Study the Bible. We are reoffering this course by popular demand. If you are serious about *studying* your Bible, look at what you'll get from this course:
  1. Why The Bible Is Central To Our Faith
  2. How The Bible Came To Us (moving from Hebrew & Greek to English)
  3. Interpreting The Bible (why do different churches "read" different meanings into the Bible?)
  4. What Bible Should We Use? (why do different Bibles have different words and notes?)
  5. Logical Bible Study (here are some tricks to get more from what you read)
  6. Dictionaries & Concordances (these books help us understand more of what we read)
  7. Bible Commentaries & Other Study Helps (see what your pastor uses to prepare sermons)
  8. Reconciliation And Accommodation (how do we fit confusing parts together?)

Because we want our Sunday school teachers to learn this stuff as well, we're offering it at a different time than our regular Sunday school. Starting on Friday, January 6, we'll meet from 7 - 8:15 for this 8 week course.

**Memory Verse for this Month:**

With the coming of the new year, we can look forward to all that God has waiting for us. Here is His promise:

**Jeremiah 29.11-13:** For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

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**Helping Hands Food Pantry:**

The Helping Hands Food Pantry was able to distribute Christmas food boxes on December 17th to 123 families which included meals for 376 people. Also this year, we were able to provide toys for younger children thanks to the U. S. Marine Corps "TOYS FOR TOTS" program which donated a pickup truck load of toys for us to distribute. Many thanks to all who helped pack and distribute the boxes.

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**A Christian Take on Money:**

Do you worry about money? Does money cause fights in your marriage? Would you like to understand your personal finances better? It just happens that Pastor Chuck is a retired professor who taught personal finance. So in January, he is offering a pair of seminars to help you out.

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|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Living with a budget         | Wednesday, <b>Jan 17</b> , 7 PM |
| 2. Using credit and debit cards | Wednesday, <b>Jan 24</b> , 7 PM |
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**From the Transition Team/Pulpit Committee:**

Now that the Transition Team/Pulpit Committee has completed the Church Information Form (CIF) which contains our resume to possible candidates for the position as pastor, we start the next phase of the search process. This stage includes receiving Pastor Information Forms (PIF's) from possible candidates through the 4 C's and evaluating them for "fit" within our congregation. We should begin to receive these forms within the next few weeks.

The Transition Team/Pulpit Committee has developed pertinent criteria to aid us in our evaluations to determine the best possible candidates and ranking them for further consideration. After initial reference checks, more in-depth telephone interviews will follow of those selected from the initial evaluations seeking answers to questions that were not covered in the materials received, narrowing down the prospective list of candidates and possibly re-ranking them eliminating any that no longer appear to be a good match. Following this, we will schedule and conduct face-to-face interviews with the remaining top candidates and spouse, if possible.

Once the committee has a preferred candidate, final reference and background checks will be made before extending an invitation for the candidate and his family to visit to the church and meet with the congregation, various boards and conduct a worship service.

Finally, the congregation will have the final decision as to whether the candidate should be called as our new pastor.

John Stoughton, Secretary

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**Soup & Salad Supper:**

Please bring the family and come for a lovely variety of homemade soups and salads, with drinks and yummy desserts! To be held the first Saturday of January, February, and March, from 4 to 7 PM at the Richford Congregational Church, Route 38 Richford. Any questions, please contact the church at 657-2592.

**BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES:**

**Anniversaries:**

None

**Birthdays:**

Ken Mott	1/04
Judy Baldwin	1/06
Fred Smith	1/06
Dan Thomas	1/12
Amanda Wait	1/12
Jean Underwood	1/26

We are trying to get all of our birthday and anniversary information in one place. If you see an error or omission, please let our church secretary know. Thank you

**OCTOBER WORSHIP SUPPORT:**

<b><u>Greeters:</u></b>		<b><u>Junior Church:</u></b>	
January 1 <sup>st</sup>	- Sandy Kasmarcik Jenn Willard	January	- Becky Horvath
January 8 <sup>th</sup>	- Dot Klinge Kit Michaud	<b><u>Junior Church II</u></b>	
January 15 <sup>th</sup>	- Charlotte Alexander Betty Kasmarcik	January	- Mike Kunik
January 22 <sup>nd</sup>	- Sheryl Kunik Ede Adams	<b><u>Nursery:</u></b>	
January 29 <sup>th</sup>	- Amanda Wait Vicky Kemmerer	January 1 <sup>st</sup>	- Vicki Kemmerer
<b><u>Ushers:</u></b>		January 8 <sup>th</sup>	- Carol Olcott
January 1 <sup>st</sup>	- Jim Willard Paul Kunik	January 15 <sup>th</sup>	- Tami Payne
January 8 <sup>th</sup>	- Mike Kunik Bob Wait	January 22 <sup>nd</sup>	- Renee Kozak
January 15 <sup>th</sup>	- Bob Maynard Mark Friebel	January 29 <sup>th</sup>	- <b>Prayer &amp; Praise</b>
January 22 <sup>nd</sup>	- Dave Michaud John Adams		
January 29 <sup>th</sup>	- Scott Albrecht Mike Kemmerer		

# Congregational Church Events - January 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>1</b> 9:30 AM- Sunday School 11 AM- Worship</p> <p><b>Deadline for Annual Reports&gt;</b></p>	<p><b>2</b> 7 PM- Ladies Bible Study</p> <p>7 PM- Trustees Meeting</p>	<p><b>3</b> 1:30PM- Ladies Bible Study</p>	<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>5</b> 7 PM- Youth Group Band</p> <p>7 PM- Transition Team Meeting</p>	<p><b>6</b> 2 PM- Ladies Bible Study</p> <p>7 PM- How to Study the Bible</p>	<p><b>7</b></p>
<p><b>8</b> 9:30 AM- Sunday School 11 AM- Worship- Communion</p> <p>6 PM Youth Group</p>	<p><b>9</b> 7 PM- Ladies Bible Study</p> <p>7 PM- Men in Ministry</p>	<p><b>10</b> 1:30PM- Ladies Bible Study</p>	<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>12</b> 7 PM- Youth Group Band</p> <p>7 PM- Deacon's Meeting</p>	<p><b>13</b> 2 PM- Ladies Bible Study</p> <p>7 PM- How to Study the Bible</p>	<p><b>14</b></p>
<p><b>15</b> 9:30 AM- Sunday School 11 AM- Worship</p> <p>6 PM Youth Group</p>	<p><b>16</b> 7 PM- Ladies Bible Study</p> <p>7 PM- Men in Ministry</p>	<p><b>17</b> 1:30PM- Ladies Bible Study</p> <p>7PM- Living with a budget</p>	<p><b>18</b></p>	<p><b>19</b> 7 PM- Youth Group Band</p> <p>7 PM-Women's Fellowship</p>	<p><b>20</b> 2 PM- Ladies Bible Study</p> <p>7 PM- How to Study the Bible</p>	<p><b>21</b> 10 AM- Senior Pantry 6 PM-Dish to pass 7 PM- Annual Meeting</p>
<p><b>22</b> 9:30 AM- Sunday School 11 AM- Worship</p> <p>6 PM Youth Group</p>	<p><b>23</b> 7 PM- Ladies Bible Study</p> <p>7 PM- Men in Ministry</p>	<p><b>24</b> 1:30PM- Ladies Bible Study</p> <p>7PM- Cash, credit &amp; debit</p>	<p><b>25</b></p>	<p><b>26</b> 2 PM- Ladies Tea</p> <p>7 PM- Youth Group Band</p>	<p><b>27</b> 2 PM- Ladies Bible Study</p> <p>7 PM- Y\How to Study the Bible</p>	<p><b>28</b></p>
<p><b>29</b> 9:30 AM- Sunday School 11 AM- Worship</p> <p>6 PM Youth Group</p>	<p><b>30</b> 7 PM- Ladies Bible Study</p> <p>7 PM- Men in Ministry</p>	<p><b>31</b> 1:30PM- Ladies Bible Study</p>				

