Danby Church News

"Adding to and Building up the Kingdom of God"

February 2025

From Our Pastor!

What's in this Issue?

Pastor's Annual Report for the year 2024

"Lord, thank you for having us here." Perhaps the most important revelation we can embrace is God's will to position us exactly where we are most needed and most able to flourish.

2024 has been a year of change, bookended by losing Frannie Mason in February and Linda Howe in December. These dear saints spanned decades of our church's history and will be remembered for their contributions to God's Kingdom.

"God if it is your will." What a wonderful way to begin any prayer for growth! The irony is that on its surface, growth can look like either addition or subtraction. Adding new people or removal of obstacles are both net positives as we increase the potential for ministry. Ministry always comes with a cost in time, talent, and treasure.

The building we occupy is well-used and currently shows the wear and tear of time and foot traffic. On one hand, we should delight in the service and witness this place has provided to our community. On the other hand, we have the responsibility of upkeep. To address some of these issues we've started and are maintaining a capital campaign to fund needed upgrades and repairs.

This summer the Trustees initiated urgent repairs for the steeple. What we couldn't see from the ground was way too apparent to the folks sent to remove our shutters for repainting. On the various landings, roofing material had disintegrated and the exposed boards were rotting. Good news! Our steeple is now repaired and water-proof.

We've had to deal with some heating issues that go back to the construction of the education wing. We now have secured replacement fittings, but they were very expensive. Over time, the installation will add thousands of dollars in expense. The heating system is stable for now, but it will have to be watched carefully for leaks.

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Danby Church Officers and Leaders 2025

Pastor:	Ed Enstine *eenstine@aol.com* 607.592.8276
Admin Aide	Lynn Kingston-Harris *office@danbychurch.org* 607.272.1687

Administrative Council

Co-Chairperssons:	Paula Nelson *sfcnelson@aol.com* Sheila Enstine ssenstine@gmail.com
Secretary:	Dave McDermitt *davidmcdermitt@gmail.com*
Treasurer:	Paula Nelson *sfcnelson@aol.com*
Financial Secretary:	Maria Norman *mariaswartout@gmail.com*
Trustees Chair:	Charlene Testut *ctestut55@yahoo.com*

Area Coordinators

Hospitality: Charlene Testut
Spiritual Development: Sheila Enstine
Missions: Suzanne Walker
suzrwalker@yahoo.com
Staff, Pastor Oversight Committee SPOC: Chair: Katy Prince
Community Outreach: Chris Romano Schmitt
andechris.family@gmail.com
Praise Team Leaders: Katy & Tommy Prince

Webmaster: Janet Gray
jsg4@cornell.edu
Newsletter Editor: Janet Gray
Facebook: Janet Gray

On the Cover

Glenn Stevens

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In the world, everything costs money. In the Church, everything hinges on prayer and faith.

Please understand that as much as we ask the congregation to contribute, any giving needs to be brought before the Lord before even a penny goes into the plate. We do not want your money unless God provides and guides you to give it.

My primary concern for our faith community remains focused on service to the Kingdom of God. We are to be about God's business as the Holy Spirit directs. Are we praying? Are we meeting together often? Does the church body support one another? Do we minister to both saint and sinner alike? Are we known as a place of refuge in a hostile world? These are questions that go to our faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We have more people in Bible Study and an increase in prayer, although not in collective, intentional prayer. We have opened our doors wider to more community activity in cooperation with the Danby Community Council, Danby Senior Citizens, and others.

As individuals, we are responsible for inviting others to join us and finding our replacements. Someday someone else will occupy your pew. May that person find a well-worn cushion. Be persistent without being obnoxious and help people find their way into the Kingdom. If they join us on Sunday so much the better. Invite, invite, invite. The worst they could say is, "No."

The best you can say to involvement in the life of this fellowship is, "Yes" to the Lord's leading. Participate, volunteer, and join in events. In the coming year may we all be "Doers of the word and not hearers only."

Do you have a question you would like to ask Pastor Ed? It can be about God, Jesus, the Bible, faith, the church, religion. Send your questions to Janet Gray at jsg4@cornell.edu and your question (and answer) may appear in the next Danby Church News

Sunday Worship Celebration @ 10 am
Sunday Youth Church @ 10:30am
Sunday Adult Education Class @ 8:45am
Wednesdays, Live Music & Conversation @ 7pm
Thursdays, Pastor's Bible Study @ 7pm
Women's Bible Study Fridays @ 1pm

CHICKEN AND BISCUIT DINNER
Fridays, Feb. 14, March 14, April 11
5pm - 7pm
Chicken and Biscuits and all the fixings,
beverage and dessert
By donation

This month's issue of the Danby Church News is on the web at https://www.danbychurch.org/news.html!

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

from Sheila Enstine

Important Dates for February 2025:

The Church is in the season of Epiphany (manifestation) and the liturgical color is green, symbolizing growth. In this season we grow in our understanding of Jesus' identity as God's promised Messiah (the Anointed One) to the Jews and also the Gentiles. His mission is a universal mission and his kingship is a universal kingship.

Three narratives from the Gospels are emphasized during this season. These passages are: the visit of the Magi or Wise Men from the East; Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist; and Jesus' first miracle – the changing of water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee.

Epiphany lasts until the beginning of Lent, which is Ash Wednesday, March 5th, 2025.

Adult Small Groups:

The Sunday morning group is studying Genesis. The class meets on Sundays at 8:45 am. Let Sheila Enstine know if you're interested.

The Wednesday night Praise and Fellowship gathers at 7 pm with the praise team. After worship, we have a time of fellowship and prayer.

The Thursday evening Bible Study begins at 7 pm. Pastor Ed is leading a study on the Gospel of Matthew.

The Friday afternoon Women's Bible Study is not meeting during February. They will reconvene on Friday, March 7th and begin viewing season one of The Chosen. A study guide for the series will be available. All women are welcome to attend. Contact Suzanne Walker if you're interested.

Nursery: The nursery is available every Sunday for babies and children through age five.

Children's Church: After the first set of worship music on Sundays, children ages 6 through 10 (about 5th grade) are welcome to attend Children's Church

Prayer Opportunities:

- **In-person Prayer**: A Zoom prayer meeting is available on Thursday evenings at 6:30 PM. Contact Sheila if you'd like to join in.
- **Prayer Chain:** Contact Katy Prince at katyprince96@gmail.com.
- **Church Prayer Calendar:** After signup during the prior month's worship service, digital copies will be sent to those with email. Hard copies will be available at the church.

Congregational Care:

Thank you to Paula Nelson and Doug Nash for faithfully arranging for flower deliveries, and blessings to all of you who have, called, visited, prayed, and sent notes to your siblings in Christ.

Did you know we are now on Facebook? You can access us from your Facebook page (just search for Danby Community Church) or press the Facebook link on our church website: WWW.DANBYCHURCH.ORG. You don't need to have a Facebook account to see our Facebook page, but you will need a Facebook account if you would want to "like" our page or post a comment.

Sermon Talk-Back

By Katy Prince

After the message from God that I delivered on January 19th, 2025, a few of us sat around a round table and those who were sitting with me had some questions and comments about the message I been delivered that day.

In years past, I have heard about having a time right after the service for something called a "Sermon Talk-Back." It is a time right after the service set aside by whoever delivered the message that day for people to talk about said message. I am not going to make the decision for anyone else who delivers the message, but each Sunday that I deliver the message you will be able to find me in Fellowship Hall after the service sitting at a round table waiting for your thoughts, questions, and/or criticisms of the day's message. I welcome your feedback and hope that together we can grow into a closer relationship with Jesus.

Jesus said, ***"For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them."*** Matthew 18:20

P.S. I'll be delivering the message again on February 23, 2025.

MISSION SPOTLIGHT

Renovation House

Renovation House is a Christ-centered, residential discipleship training program for men and for women. This is a 12 month program where they find freedom from addictions and other life-controlling issues, encounter healing from life's hurts, habits and hangups, discover who they are in Christ, find restoration, and develop lifelong relationships. Guided by resident pastors and staff and visiting teachers, they follow a set schedule of devotions, house chores, classes, work practicum, bible study and free time. The men's program has been in operation for over 30 years and has an 83% success rate among those who have graduated. For more information find them at renovationhouse.org, on facebook or check their newsletter on the hallway bulletin board. Danby Community Church supports them with the noisy offering every month. ***Suzanne Walker***

Finding your philosophy, in cold and darkness

By Zoë Romano Schmitt

My fingers curve towards my palms, turning inside to create a cavern of warmth in the encasement of my sparkly pink mittens. My toes curve up from the cold pavement. These tried and true cowboy boots are equally as durable in July as they are in the early days of this New Year. Usually. But it's just too darn cold and any hope of cheery life seem to go up in smoke as quickly as the puffs of breath escaping from the tightly wrapped scarves, wound like boa constrictors around necks, heads, ears, anything most susceptible to the monster known as January.

Isolation. That feeling as the cold amplifies the silence, a lack of moisture on this bitter night. At the opposite end of the year, 7PM would be the beginning of the evening. Concerts, fun, a ride into the city and some enjoyment on campus, dancing in the crisp sun-burnt grass till twilight's darkness. Now, this shadow of darkness casts a pallor over the day, that even at noon darkness is never too far away. Looming closer with each passing second. Those whispers of the underworld, the dark side, our own collective id of humanity that balances out the positive summer in each of us, the counterweight to every nimble, jovial June. When almost half the day is in darkness, it's a thought that lingers inside, and unfolds itself in a complex origami of shadow come 5 o'clock. It's just the reality.

It's common practice to shiver. It's a tingling sensation of hyperreality, a technicolor cold which activates the blood, reminding yourself that you are, indeed, unpleasantly below ideal temperature. If possible, it's best to remove oneself from the premises. Luckily, it's only a dozen short, shuffling steps from the car to the church.

Like winter fairies, we materialize inside the church hall. Two hours of band practice, singing warm-ups, tropical blend tea growing cold, set upon a wooden stool. Dulled and yet simultaneously hyper enhanced, a reshuffling of mental, cognitive priorities, interacting with others in a limited capacity. Much like winter birds at the feeders on our farm, the focus is food, warmth and shelter, and all else stems (and thereby relates to) those singular, well-worn survival instincts. Time, itself, is both long and short. In winter, lost are the quasi-barometric, pseudo-scientific human measurements of hours in the day, replaced by the meshing and sidestepping into an attempt to align with the natural world's idea of January. That is, an understanding and acceptance that the days are short and it's going to require a lot of coffee to persevere into the hours of the night.

January is about survival. For the birds, for the male and female cardinal outside, they expect nothing more than to merely survive the winter. It's in their nature to do so. To persevere, to show up, to step up and assert themselves as active winter survivors, to engage at the bird feeder, to fight, tooth and nail (and bill), against every arctic blast that sweeps through the valley like a locomotive in the night. Whistling higher like a plaintive wail of fright, that wind becomes not the enemy, but the challenge. Are you going to survive? Are you going to face the nighttime of your soul and battle for one more chance, begging, please God, I'm worthy. Although tempting, tantalizing, agonizing, each breath becomes easier. This light burns bright, and to trust that, once again, life will rise up like a phoenix and triumph, anew. Unlike wildlife, the cold won't kill us; we aren't dependent on the goodwill of wild plant or person to shell out sustenance and nourish our starving souls, but in our human world, we count on the gamble of each other to not betray us, to not succumb to the darkness existent in our relationships. Lest the human kindness forsake us and we're left, adrift, on a wild and desolate prairie. On our farm, we watch red squirrels dart from stick shelter to stick shelter in the side yard between our rambling old house and the small pond. The juncos forage beneath the bird feeders. Constant foraging, constant movement, constant fight to beat the cold. In this season, it's nothing more than survival. And the mere factor of accomplishing this admirable goal is a source of celebration.

Tonight, in the warm buzz of the church, those sort of heightened senses brought on by the cold and also the simultaneous dulling of awareness to anything other than temperature, the mood is a somber, a slowed down, 0.25x-on-a-YouTube video quality where time moves in deceleration. Any slower, and we might be moving back in time! Like wounded animals retreating back into the den to lick our wounds until the healing sets in, winter reminds us of the

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death that needs to come to the land before we can give birth to new life. We gather around in a circle skirting two plastic folding tables in a corner of the big room, the hazy fluorescent lights casting fuzzy light as Ruthie, the church cat, scurries around our feet, prancing off to a far corner of the big linoleum-floor. Talking about everything, small talk… war stories… doughnuts… requests for prayers for sick friends. One of our favorite naturalists and writers, Aldo Leopold, said that, in January, observation can be as simple as watching snowflakes. And so we sit. We pray. We are reminded to be grateful for the cold. For the darkness. For the lazy warmth of the big room. The first step is to be grateful for it all. For the miracle of the snowflakes that we observe, for the bitter cold that seeps through down coats and hats. All of this is necessary for spring. To reflect on the darkness in our souls, on the wounds we suffer and the inevitable hurts we accumulate over the year.

As the meeting grows to a close, it's once again lazy movement to put on coats, hats, gloves. Second coats. Scarves, too. Once the wooden doors swing open and we are launched out into the night, the grand outdoors, the air once again hits us. A forceful reminder, wake up! The vast expanse of the open farm fields. The wide stretch of highway. The few old homes dotted along the road. The dim glow of the nativity set, still arranged on the lawn. Icy tire tracks snake through the parking lot like a time capsule of past movements. Now cemented in time, forever memorialized, Goodyear guidelines toward each static SUV, freezing in the lot. The isolation. Being outnumbered against the elements, the wild animals, the overwhelming sensation of being out on our own, alone, and so very desolate. Unlike the city, in this little rural town, it's quite clear that we are the minority. The city makes it easy; there's always a taxi, an Uber, a bus, a salted sidewalk. Here, we're engulfed in the vast enormity of the universe. The dark, clear sky stretching above us with every star shining in glorious eminence. No matter what the temperature is (14 degrees, with a 4.8 wind chill, according to someone in the group), we will persevere. No matter the cold, the dark, the bitter wind making even the most cold-hardy Upstater crave a fire and soup, we still say our goodbyes, "see you Sunday morning"s, the prolonged Midwest-like goodbye stretches on until the final conversation trails off in smoke puffs and fervent foot stamping.

Back in the cavernous car, the new one with the touchscreen that glows neon and warns of icy roads. Yep. Trust us, we know. But thanks for the shoutout. The heat on full blast, I watch as my dad nimbly shifts back and forth between low-drive gears for the ice and swifter sports mode for the highway. Going inside… a surrendering to the season of cold. That we're in the midst, the darkest of days, the blackest of nights. The whispers of the dark side in every life lived, it's also a source of gratitude. Thankful for the cold, thankful for the night, thankful for the ones who help us get through these inevitable times.

Artwork by Ande Romano Schmitt

Hello DCC! Our family is so happy to be here (Chris and Ande, Zoë and Zach, Grandma Jeanne and Grandpa Joe) Romano Schmitt. This article and artwork were created by the three generations of girls of our farm family: Zoë, Ande, and Jeanne. Since 2016, our family has been regenerating the abandoned Christmas tree farm on Fisher Settlement Road, and the historic, 1853 farmhouse. We call our farm The Philosophy Family Farm, and our motto is "we grow family, and we farm stories". We are working to create educational outreach on reconnecting and healing both land and people while we establish sustainable agriculture and regenerate wildlife habitat, all for future generations. We're a family of environmental science and ecology, cultural anthropology, art, writing and education and, of course, philosophy!

Danby Community Church
1859 Danby Road
Ithaca, NY 14850

www.danbychurch.org

Welcome Home!!

What's Happening?

Chicken and Biscuit Dinner

Fridays, February 14, March 14 and April 11
5-7pm

Free Coffee and Donuts

Mondays, Feb. 17, Mar. 17, Apr. 21, May 19
8am - 10:30am