

April 2025

BAKER NEWS

Living God's will to love, welcome, and share Christ with all.



JOIN US IN WORSHIP

Worship Service on
Sunday mornings at 10:00 am
Live-stream Sunday worship
through bakerchurch.org and
YouTube at


<https://www.youtube.com/@eastaurorany-bakerchurch8572/streams>


Church Office Hours


Mon, Wed, Thurs ~ 8 am - 2 pm
Tues ~ 8 am - 1 pm
Friday ~ CLOSED

*If you have a **pastoral emergency** outside of regular office hours and need to reach Pastor John, you may call the church office at 652-0500 and press 5*

Connect With Us

 345 Main St.
East Aurora, NY 14052

 (716) 652-0500

 admin@bakerchurch.org

 www.bakerchurch.org

Pastor ~ Rev. Dr. John Loeser
Admin Asst. ~ Tammy Carroll
Music Director ~ Jeffrey Thompson
Family Life Director ~
Judy Baumgartner

April 2025 Baker News Pastor's Column

Dear Baker Members and Friends. This month, I write on behalf of the Baker Finance Team to share with you the current financial situation of Baker Church. Every week our Finance Secretary, Burt Foster, prepares a weekly income report for the Finance Team, Adam Holtz our Treasurer, and me. These reports are a weekly record of all general and designated giving to Baker Church. Burt also prepares a monthly year-over-year comparison report of pledged and non-pledged general giving. These reports show the overall giving trends that assist your Finance Team in their work of making sure funds are available to support the operation and ministries of Baker Church.

Over the past year, these financial reports have indicated a downward trend in the overall general giving. The year-over-year reports show that slightly more than half of Baker's giving households donated less dollars in 2024 than they donated in 2023. These reports also show an approximate 8% loss in giving households from 2023 to 2024. These losses happen for various reasons, yet they all impact Baker's budget. In terms of real dollars, at my request Burt prepared a year-over-year report on the period of 10/23 to 2/24 compared to the period of 10/24 to 2/25. This report shows a loss of \$37,685 in general giving during the 10/24 to 2/25 period compared to the 10/23 to 2/24 period.

As you know, Western New York has just come through a much harsher winter than we've experienced in recent years. The snow and cold temperatures have increased Baker's utility bills above recent winters, the cost and frequency of snow removal has also increased, and we've had some unexpected repair bills for building equipment.

What is Baker's current financial picture? From 2020 to 2024, Baker ended each year with a small financial surplus. This was achieved through a combination of generous giving, including several large gifts from a few individual givers through 2023, along with 2 years of forgiven PPP loans. However, these large income sources did not continue into 2024. A balanced budget was also achieved through reduced spending across many lines in Baker's annual budgets through 2024.

Nevertheless, the reduced giving over the past 5 months combined with the increased costs listed above have required the Finance Team to transfer some of Baker's reserve funds to pay for general expenses during March, 2025.

What is coming in the next several months? First, your Baker Board of Trustees has committed to have a large window repair project done this summer on the Center St. side of the building. This will also require the Finance Team to use some of the reserve funds to pay for this project. This cost is in addition to regular annual maintenance and upkeep costs to the building. Baker Church will also receive a new appointed pastor, Rev. Robin Hays and her family, starting July 1, 2025 (see article on the new pastor elsewhere in this newsletter). She and her family will be living in the parsonage. Thus, the parsonage will transition from housing 1 person part of each week to housing 5 persons full time, which will increase the expected operating costs of the parsonage in the 2nd half of 2025.

What can individual givers do at this time? One way to help the Finance Team plan to fund anticipated expenses is to make an annual financial pledge to Baker Church. Over the past few years, the Finance Team has seen a reduction in the number of giving households that return pledge cards. And, as stated above, non-pledged income is no longer replacing all of the pledged income that Baker received in the past.

The other main way to help is for each individual giving household, even if you do not make a pledge, to prayerfully determine what amount you intend to give throughout 2025. Then keep careful records of what you have given each month, and if/when you get behind in your giving, attempt to catch up as soon as you are able. These efforts will assist in keeping Baker Church financially viable and healthy so Baker's ministries to its members and the community may continue uninterrupted in 2025.

I pray each Baker Member and Friend will prayerfully consider how you can help restore financial stability to Baker Church in 2025. Thank you for reading and considering this important information.

Pastor John

PASTORAL APPOINTMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

It is my joy to share with everyone that Bishop Hector A. Burgos-Nunez has appointed Rev. Robyn Hays as the new pastor of our congregation. Rev. Hays will begin her new responsibilities on July 1st of this year. As a United Methodist congregation, we are a part of an itinerant appointment system. Our congregation's staff parish relations committee has met with the district superintendent to identify our congregation's needs, and the skills needed in a pastor for our context. We have also met with Pastor Robyn to get to know her and ask questions.

Our new pastor will work with us and the conference so that we continue to nurture disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Bishop Burgos-Nunez, our district superintendent Mary Kelly, and the upper New York Conference leaders will work with us to continue growing as a congregation. I know you will join our bishop, our new pastor, and me in helping to make new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Rev. Robyn Hays holds a BA in Mathematics and Religion from Lynchburg College, and a Master of Divinity Degree from Brite Divinity School. She was ordained as an elder in full connection in the United Methodist Church in 2010, serving congregations Pennellville, Trumansburg, Amboy Center, and Dryden, among others. Since 2023 she has served as chaplain at the Ithaca Forest Home. Pastor Robyn is married to David, and they have two school-age children, Zach and Jo. Jo will be starting college in the fall, and Zach will be attending East Aurora High School. Pastor Robyn finds joy in leading worship and Bible studies, and she loves to hear how God is working in the lives of the congregation as well as its surrounding community.

If anyone has any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at rebeccakubanek@yahoo.com. Thank you!

Rebecca Kubanek, SPRC Chair

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The Deadline for the May 2025 issue of Baker News is Wednesday, April 23rd.

TOPS GIFT CARDS

Tops gift cards are available in the church office during the week and before and after worship service on Sunday mornings. Denominations are \$10, \$20, \$50, & \$100. The proceeds from this fundraiser go to the Tiffany Windows Fund. Thank you for your support.

PRAYER AND PRAISE

We will pray together on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Please plan to join us for Prayer & Praise on Tuesday, April 8th at 7pm in the Chapel.

EASTER FLOWERS

Help us to celebrate the Risen Lord. Easter flower order forms are available on the chancel rail and in the SAME entrance. Orders are due by **April 10th**. You can also receive an order form by calling the Church office, we can email or mail the form to you.

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH (UWF) NEWS

Ladies Wednesday Bible Study will meet April 9th at 9:30am in the **Parlor**. Please read and be ready to discuss Days 43-45 (pgs. 109-115) in the book *The Blessed Life* by Kelly Minter.

UWF Executive Committee will meet on Friday, April 4th at 9:30am in either the Chapel or Dinette.

Hands & Hearts are organizing the Mini Jumble Sale to be held Saturday, April 5th. (See article on page 4.)

NFD United Women in Faith **Communion Breakfast and Memorial Service** will be held **Saturday, April 12th** at Churchill Memorial UMC, 8019 Boston State Rd., Hamburg. Breakfast: 9:30am; Program: 10:30am. Speaker is Andy Cammarata and friends from Journey's End Refugee Services with the theme: "*Where Home Begins Again*." Offering will benefit Journey's End. Registration is \$10 per person. Please let Ruth know by Sunday, March 30th if you plan to attend. Anyone is welcome to attend.

Love & Learn will meet Monday, April 14th at noon in the Chapel to fill plastic Easter eggs with candy for Seneca Street UMC.

THANK YOU

Blanket Sunday Offering on February 23rd brought in \$460 for Church World Service. Thank you to everyone for your generous commitment to "blanket the world with love."

World Day of Prayer Service held at Baker Church on March 7th was a successful community event. Thank you to those who participated, to those who attended, and to those who provided the wonderful reception following the service. The Offering brought in totaled \$361 for World Day of Prayer USA.

PASTOR DAVID LUBBA

Former Reverend David Lubba will be celebrating his 90th birthday on April 12th! His family is encouraging friends to send cards with birthday wishes to 534 Willowgate Dr, Webster, NY 14580. The card wall at the SAME entrance has cards for just \$1 donation, please send a card or note if you are able, to help him celebrate.

PRAYER CHANGES THINGS

To add your prayer requests to the Baker Prayer Chain, please email Sue McFeely at: smcfeely@live.com or call at 716-870-1972.



Meditation and Yoga as Christian Spiritual Practice

Breathe, stretch, and reflect. Mind, body, and spirit come together in meditation and yoga as Christian spiritual practice.

For April, we will meet in the Youth room on the first and third Thursday: April 3rd and April 17th at 10am. Join us! For more information, contact Connie Tsujimoto at 714-5486.



Our next "Table for All" will be on Thursday, April 17th from 6-6:45pm. **We will be serving Lasagna, Salad, Bread, and Homemade Chocolate Chip Cookies for dessert.** Come join us for food and fellowship!!! Please share about our meal with your friends, neighbors or anyone you feel would enjoy this special time of fellowship. Contact Mary Ann Kopp at 716-482-0044 or at maryann-kopp@icloud.com if you have any questions and/or would like to volunteer.

We would love to have a permanent or rotating Greeter for the dinner as Mary Doyle is no longer able to serve. You would greet all the guests and keep count of the guests, Church members and volunteers. Please see Mary Ann if interested.

PEACEMAKERS

Peacemakers: Seeking Wisdom and Grace in Troubled Times: Some have expressed how disturbing the world has become. We want to understand how to live out our Christian faith in the marketplace. We believe it begins with prayer, searching the Scriptures, and listening to voices that can equip us with correct teaching. We desire to be faithful witnesses of Jesus, what He taught, and how He lived.

Our meetings are held Thursdays at noon. This is not a Baker group (and not a formal Bible study)--it's an open invitation to anyone who desires a connection with others who want to live out Jesus' command to love God and to love our neighbor. Join us! Bring a friend.



SAVE THE DATE

The annual Easter Eggstravaganza will be held on Saturday, April 12th 11:30am-1pm. Indoor, free community event with egg hunt, "balloon guy", games, photos, and crafts for the kids. Open to all.

We are asking for wrapped candy donations, to fit in the plastic Easter eggs, **no nuts please.** Place donations in the large green basket located in the Chapel

HANDS & HEARTS JUMBLE SALE

The Hands & Hearts committee is in charge of the mini Jumble Sale which will be held on Saturday, April 5th. Sale will be held from 9am - Noon in Frantz Hall; with a Bag Sale from 12 -1pm. Sale is Cash Only.

We will be setting up and accepting donations Tuesday, April 1st from 6:30-8pm.

Also accepting donations on Wednesday, April 2nd & Thursday, April 3rd; times to be announced. Please hold on to your donations until those dates.

We **CANNOT** accept baby/infant items, clothing, books / CD's, stuffed animals, electronics, or large exercise or ski equipment.

Set-up for the Jumble sale will begin Tuesday, April 1st at 6:30pm in Frantz Hall. Help is always needed and appreciated.

Thank you for your support!!

CITY MISSION NEWS

The men at City Mission are in urgent need of T-shirts. So, for the next 2 months we will be collecting men's t-shirts, sizes large and extra-large. If you are willing, please consider giving to this cause. Your donations are always appreciated. Please put your contributions in the wooden box in the SAME entrance. Thanks for making a homeless man feel like someone cares.



FISH OF EAST AURORA

The food items for April is:

COLD CEREAL

Please leave your donations on the shelf in the SAME entrance to be delivered to FISH.

UGANDA OUTREACH

For the next few months Baker would like to support the people in Lugala, Uganda with vital medications that have become unavailable through government aid programs. Pastor Bob Schooley spoke to us about how these drugs keep people alive. The little girl in the white dress in the slide show? Her name is Vanisha, and she, and others like her, will become very sick without medication. If you wish to contribute to this effort, see Connie Tsujimoto who will send Baker's financial support to Center-ville UMC, Pastor Schooley's church. Omukisa - blessings.

ANNUAL PASTRY AUCTION AND POT LUCK

A special Thank You to everyone for helping to make the pastry auction a rousing success Sunday, March 16th. To those who baked the goodies, to our auctioneer, Bob Sowyrda, and especially to those who generously bid high to purchase these specially made items.

The Seneca Street folks were also there to help set-up, clean-up and participate in the auction. They were so honored that Baker Church members were so willing to help them. The pot luck lunch helped us to celebrate St. Patrick's Day with both sweet and savory foodstuffs, everyone went home with full stomachs!



BAKER HANDBELLS IN OUR CONGREGATION AND OUR COMMUNITY

Now that Spring is here and Easter is right around the corner, it means that there are only a few more months left in our regular program year. We have tried to ring at least once per month, and I think with only a few exceptions, we have met that goal! As was the case last year we may also have some special small ensemble group selections to share over the summer months in Worship. If you have a favorite song or hymn, let me know and I'll see if I can find an appropriate arrangement!

This April a couple of our Baker ringers will be joining some peer ringers from the Buffalo Bells group to participate in a Spring Ring Event hosted by Area 2 of the Handbell Musicians of America (HMA). HMA is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to the mission of advancing the musical art of handbell/handchime ringing through education, community, and communication. Area 2 is comprised of members in NY, PA, and NJ.

The Spring Ring event will be held in the Rochester-area where it will be fun to ring some new music arrangements, learn some ringing techniques in the workshops, and connect with other handbell enthusiasts in the WNY area!

Additionally, I am very excited to announce that **Baker Memorial United Methodist will be hosting a Spring Concert for the Buffalo Bells on Monday, May 12th at 7pm.**

The theme for this concert is show tunes! The Buffalo Bells are an advanced group of ringers from many towns in the Buffalo area. Some of you may have seen one of their Christmas Concerts last December. They also rang some selections in Kleinhans Music Hall during the Dr. Martin Luther King Celebration on January 19th. Our own Baker Handbell group will also ring a selection during the May 12th concert!! There is no charge to attend the concert; however, donations are welcome and appreciated. There will be a reception held after the concert, to which all are invited. I hope to see you there!!

Respectfully Submitted,

- Jim York, Handbell Director

MARK THE DATE:

Buffalo Bell Concert at Baker Methodist Church
Monday, May 12th at 7pm



URGENT NEED!!

BAKER PRESCHOOL

One thing for sure is that change is inevitable! We have recently learned that the Baker Preschool program is experiencing major changes. In order to continue the program, which has had a long and proud history of serving our community, we are in need of new staff and Board of Directors which includes the following paid positions: Director, Certified Early Education Teacher, and teaching assistant as soon as possible. The current program runs three mornings a week, 9:30am to noon. Please help to spread the word, and reach out to us with any interest of your own or any potential, qualified candidates. In order to be ready for Fall enrollment, we need to fill this need ASAP.

Call the Church office at 716-652-0500 or reach out to Judy Baumgartner directly with any questions or recommendations. We need your help to continue with this very important community service.



**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
(VBS)**

Keep the first week in August open for our VBS this summer! Our theme will be "True North" which will help us explore the Great White North of Alaska! Tell your kids and grandkids, bring your friends and neighbors.

Volunteers are needed to ensure this is a successful adventure for the kids. Please see Judy Baumgartner if you are available and would like to help!

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

If you would like to place flowers at the front of the sanctuary for Sunday morning, you may sign up on the flower chart in the SAME entrance. Please let the church office know if you would like a dedication added to the Happenings Page by Wednesday of the week you are scheduled

Country Crossroads of Marilla has generously offered free delivery on any flowers ordered for Baker Church. Phone number: (716) 937-4407

**EA GSA (EAST AURORA GAY
/ STRAIGHT ALLIANCE)**

We received a Thank You card from the director of the EA GSA club, who meet monthly at Baker Church. **Excerpt:** "The EA GSA club would not exist without you and your continued support throughout the years. Please know how meaningful this is to us and how appreciative we all are! Thank you! EAHS GSA Club."
