

You can't fish for people without

BAW

www.uccny.org/CastingYourNets/ December 2009

Welcome to your monthly CYN support guide. Each issue offers direction to help you grow CYN in your church. Topics come from you, so don't be shy! Contact Rev. Lex Liberatore at stpaulunited@verizon.net.

Dusting Off Christmas

Don't change what you do. Change how you think!

When it comes to getting my local congregation to “buy into” the principles of CYN, the hardest sell involves the old bugaboo of change. This isn't just my churches problem, but it's a problem all over the Conference. Many of our churches want to grow, but when it comes to changing things in order to realize growth—forget it! “Because we've always done it that way” may as well be tattooed onto our forearms. Here's a thought. Rather than bang your head against the age old wall of change, take a fresh approach. Rather than pouring energy into changing what you do as a local church, why not consider changing how you think instead. Seasonal events and activities can gather a whole new life when filtered through the lens of CYN.

At the *CYN Annual Meeting* (this past October in Newark Valley and Owego), when asked about unique ways CYN could be used this Fall and Winter season, one of our plenary session participants said, “Why not dust off Christmas?” Why not indeed. There's no better time like the present and no better seasons to begin than Advent and Christmas. Good thing I have talented CYN'ers to work with on the statewide steering committee. Lets' see what they have for us.

When it comes to rethinking an old standby, the Christmas season offers many options. At **Scarsdale Congregational Church** they took a winter staple, the movie night and reimaged it. In an effort to “attract people who are looking for community during the day” **Scarsdale** serves up invitation and fellowship, along with a noon movie and lunch. Dubbed “Movie Monday,” this movie event happens when it's still light out and uses the CYN approach to draw from the population of older, shut-in and homebound folks. Community is built, fun is had and it only took a change in thought to do it. At **Pilgrim-St. Luke's UCC** in Buffalo, my wife and I reinvented the holiday tradition of caroling. But, instead of going out, we stayed in. The “Christmas Jam” began with one simple thought. With all the focus on giving, we shouldn't forget the persons most in need of gifts—the givers. Christmas Jam was a time to get together, invite friends and be silly, sing our favorite carols, laugh, enjoy our musical talents, have a potluck meal and build community. It makes Christmas more meaningful when you stop to re-member Gospel fellowship, invitation and generosity. In **Scarsdale** they do something like this called “Bringing In Christmas.” On a Sunday afternoon before Christmas, community gets together to sing carols, do crafts, write letters to military service members (and perhaps their families) and collect gifts for seasonal outreach efforts. The afternoon ends with a simple meal together. But the crown goes to **Chatterton Hill Church, UCC**. Rev. Bonnie Miller explains, “We have jammed our calendar with neighborhood friendly activities, and the deacons have taken the role of Invitation Team. We put together packets that included a flyer on Christmas paper, the new church brochure, a flyer for our Advent concert, and a buy one, get one free coupon for the Christmas potluck supper. Then, the deacons went out in twos and rang doorbells, inviting everyone.” The church also identified a growing Hispanic presence in their service area and invited the children to join in the pageant. Bonnie says, “This was a huge success last year (church was jam packed).” To add joy, wonder and a sense of the divine moment, the Worship Team added drama and African drumming to the menu.

I think you get the idea. Take what you do, give it an “extreme *thought* make over,” and *get fishing!*

SAVE THE DATE

Regional CYN Meetings Winter 2010

Southeast: Jan. 23rd, 9-3pm, Wantagh Cong. UCC
Upstate: Feb. 13th, 10-4:30pm, Emmanuel Friedens
Western: Feb. 27th, 10-3pm, Church o/t Nativity
GVA: Yet To Be Determined
Look for more details in future



Stuck or in need of help? Ask your CYN Consultant.

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Upstate: Marcia Tolman (518-374-4114), dcentolman@nycap.rr.com

Or check out the *new* CYN Resource Page:

http://www.uccmetrosuffolk.org/revit_church/revit_church-casting_your_nets_resources.htm