Federated Church

A Place to Belong

November

2026

John Partise,
Interim Pastor

Kevin Dixon
Organist &
Choir Director

Luanne Brooks
Church Secretary

Points of Interest

Pastor's Letter

Calendar

Diaper Dist.

Choirs

Wreath Sale

Tag Tree

Hanging of the Greens

Stewardship

Poinsettias

THE LOST HOLIDAY

It was a Wednesday in late November and getting dark early. I was sitting in my office with my feet up on the desk. If I tipped my desk chair back just right, I could look out my window and down to the street below, where the Christmas shoppers were bustling in and out of stores with blinking red and green lights in their windows.
"Third week in November and people are already Christmas shopping," I thought, "What's this world coming to?"

Before I could think up any answer to my question, I heard the door to the office creak slowly open like the lid on a casket. I'd gotten used to the squeak. Especially on nights like this, when my office was as dark as preacher's suit. I don't scare all that easy, but the reassuring squeak gave me time to prepare for whomever walked through the door to my office.

As it turned out, all the time in the world wouldn't have been enough to prepare me for the dame that stood backlit by the overhead lights out in the corridor. The shadow she cast on the floor was a tall one with a pair of legs that seemed to go on for the length of a quarter mile horse track.

"I'm looking for a Sam Diamond, the private detective," the lady asked.

"You're in luck," I said, "I happen to have one of those right here." There was a puzzled silence from the doorway, so I added, "I'm Sam Diamond, Private Detective."

I could tell from the way she slowly sauntered, almost slithered, into my office she was going to be trouble. And I could tell from the way her hands were shaking when she dropped into my client chair that she was in trouble, as well. Then I took a good look at her beautiful face and realized I didn't care one way or the other if she was trouble or in trouble.

"What seems to be the problem, Mrs..."

"Wonderland," she said, "Winter Wonderland. And it's Miss. Miss Wonder land."

The name she slipped me sounded phonier than a three-dollar bill, but I decided to let it slide. You don't stay in my line of business very long if you start weeding out the clients that lie to you.

"I'm missing something," the lady continuing while shifting nervously in the chair, "I've looked everywhere and then some, high and low. Everywhere."

"So, naturally after looking everywhere and not finding it, you decided to hire a private detective. Smart decision, Miss Wonderland, especially with Christmas coming up and me short on cash."

Continuing as if I hadn't spoken, she turned to me with tears spilling over the corner of her to form twin streaks running down her face and said, "You just have to help me, Mr. Diamond. I have no one else to turn to."

"What are you missing, Miss Wonderland?"

"A holiday," she replied.

I leaned back in my chair and pushed back my felt fedora, more shocked than a squirrel on a high voltage wire. From a class act like this, I'd expected missing money or jewels or maybe a fur coat...something fun to look for. But a missing holiday. That one left me wobbling like the last pin to fall in a bowling alley.

"A holiday," I repeated back to her, just to make sure I'd heard it right.

"A holiday," she confirmed and then, after a pause asked, "You know about Halloween, right?"

"Sure," I answered, "Dressing up in costumes. Trick-or-treating for candy. Jack O' Lanterns. Getting more scared than a field mouse at a cat convention."

"Of course, you know about Halloween, Mr. Diamond. Halloween is a big deal. People go all out for it. They start decorating their yards way back at the beginning of October."

"And the stores start selling all those Halloween decorations at least two months before that," I added, trying to be helpful.

Exactly," she said with a nod of her head on her narrow neck. She rose from the client chair and rose to look out the window down to the street below, "And, of course you know about Christmas, Mr. Diamond. Who could miss it? It's everywhere out there."

There was something sad about her face, reflected back to me in the dark window. Something wistful and nostalgic – like a nervous groom thinking back over his carefree bachelor days. Whatever holiday it was she was missing; it must have meant a lot to her.

"Christmas isn't for another forty-five days," she said, her voice barely above a whisper.

"From the way they're acting out there," I said, "You'd think it was tomorrow."

"Exactly," she said, turning back from the window, "But I feel like there used to be something in between. Some holiday between Halloween and Christmas."

For a moment, I almost knew what she meant. I had a brief memory of a big roasted turkey and then it faded. Like the cream clouds on a cup of coffee. There one minute and gone the next.

Still, though, I found myself agreeing with her. There did used to be a holiday between Halloween and Christmas. And from the look she must have seen on my face through the shadows, she knew I was agreeing with her."

"You remember it, too."

Her mood had lightened considerably. Her face brightened like the sky after a rainstorm and she clapped her hands together several times in glee.

"Sure," I admitted, "But I can't remember what it was called, let alone where it's gone off to. Tell me what you remember about it, Sweetheart."

"I don't know. I'm not sure. I think I remember my whole family gathering at Grandma's house for a big meal. I'm thinking it was turkey and mashed potatoes and a lot of other stuff. And, oh yeah, pies. Pumpkin pies. I also seem to remember going around the table and having everyone there give something they were thankful for in the last year."

"Sure, you did," I snapped my fingers, "We all did that. Being thankful was a big part of the whole thing. Thankful might even have been in the name for the holiday."

"Like Thankful Day?" she suggested.

"No. That's not right. But we'll go with calling it Thankful Day until we figure out what happened to it."

She was smiling widely now and despite the fact that her smiling face made my lovesick heart beat several beats faster, I continued my detective work. 'Business before pleasure' is what's printed on my business cards.

"So, what happened to Thankful Day?" she asked.

"Halloween ballooned up on one side and Christmas did the same on the other. There's only so much room....so much space...so much time for people to do stuff...so Thankful Day got pushed out the way like a watermelon seed squeezed between two fingers."

"You mean, people weren't thankful anymore so it just went away?"

"No, I don't think that's it. People get all their Halloween decorations down and candy dealt with just in time to gear up for Christmas. There's no time for all the fussing and mussing of another holiday. They just starting letting slide. Slowly at first. So, slow no one noticed. Families didn't travel the big distances to see each other anymore or left early to get home before dark. More football games were added to the day. The stores opened for their, before Christmas sales earlier and earlier. Before you knew it, everything that people

used to enjoy about Thankful Day – and the stopping to be thankful – sort of got pushed into the background. People were just going through the motions and then they just kind of stopped doing it altogether. Which is too bad really, those things we lost were kind of important. We need to remember to give thanks almost as much as a door-to-door salesman needs new shoes all the time."

"So, Mr. Diamond," she asked, "How do we get Thankful Day back?"

"I'm not sure we can, Sweetheart. At least not the way it was. Not for everybody."

"Because most people don't remember the way it was?"

"Or don't care. Either way, I think it's up to people like us..."

"The ones who still remember and still care," she interrupted.

"Exactly. The ones like us to keep Thankful Day alive and kicking. We need to not let everything else get in the way and go right on being thankful together."

"Mr. Diamond," she said, smiling directly at me now, "Would you like to find the lost holiday and be thankful together with me?"

"It's a little late tonight, Sweetheart. My eyelids are starting to feel droopy, like Jersey Joe Walcott after a few too many rounds in the ring, and my jammies are calling me."

"How about tomorrow then?" she asked.

"What's tomorrow? Thursday. Yeah. That'd probably work."

"Then it's settled. You'll come over to my place tomorrow. We'll make a big turkey dinner with all the fixings and, before we eat, we'll say what we're thankful for and then pray our thanksgivings to God."

"That's it," I said, "You figured it out. The day was called Thanksgiving."

"Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving. Yes, it was. Oh, thank you, Mr. Diamond."

"That's me," I said, "The finder of all things lost...including holidays."

"So, dinner tomorrow? My place?"

"I can't wait."

She turned to go and, being a gentleman, I scooped up my trench coat from its place on the rack behind the office door.

"Here, Miss Wonderland, I'll walk you out."

"Sweetheart," I thought as we walked arm in arm into the hallway, "I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship."

November

2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Communion Coffee Hour Bell Choir	2	3 6:00 am – 9:00 pm Election Day	4 WIC 9:30 am	5 7:00 pm Choir	6	7
8 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Hour Bell Choir	9 1:00 – 4:00 pm Food Dist.	10 5:30 pm Girl Scouts	11 Veterans Day	12 7:00 pm Choir	13	14
15 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee hour Bell Choir	16	17 5:30 pm Girl Scouts	18	19 7:00 pm Choir	20	21 10:00- Noon Diaper Distribution
22 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee hour Bell Choir Hanging of the Greens	23	24 5:30pm Girl Scouts	25	26 Thanksgiving Church Office Closes	27 Church Office Closed	28
29 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee hour Bell Choir	30	31 5:30pm Girl Scouts				

Applying Bible Principles

If you were to ask the average pastor, "How is your church doing?" the answer would probably focus on the ABCs of church growth: Attendance, Buildings and Cash.

Attendance is important. It's hard to carry on a ministry if no one is there or if the numbers dwindle so low that no one wants to be there.

Buildings are important. Many a church visitor has been turned off by an old, run-down building or by one that is dirty and in need of routine maintenance.

Cash is important. As Zig Ziglar said, "I've had money, and I've not had it. It's a lot more fun with it than without it." The same thing is true of churches.

But attendance alone has nothing to do with the health of a church. There can be thousands present who are a mile wide and an inch deep in their relationship to God. A building can be packed week after week, but that alone does not mean the church is spiritual. In fact, some of the largest churches in this country are made up of congregations who are spiritual pygmies.

Paul sent Timothy to check up on the Thessalonian church. He had been able to spend only three weeks with this new assembly before he was run out of town. Do you know what questions Paul gave Timothy to ask the leaders of that congregation? He didn't ask about attendance, buildings or cash. Instead, he wanted to take a temperature reading of their spiritual health. To do that, he mentions their **faith** five times in 1 Thessalonians chapter 3:

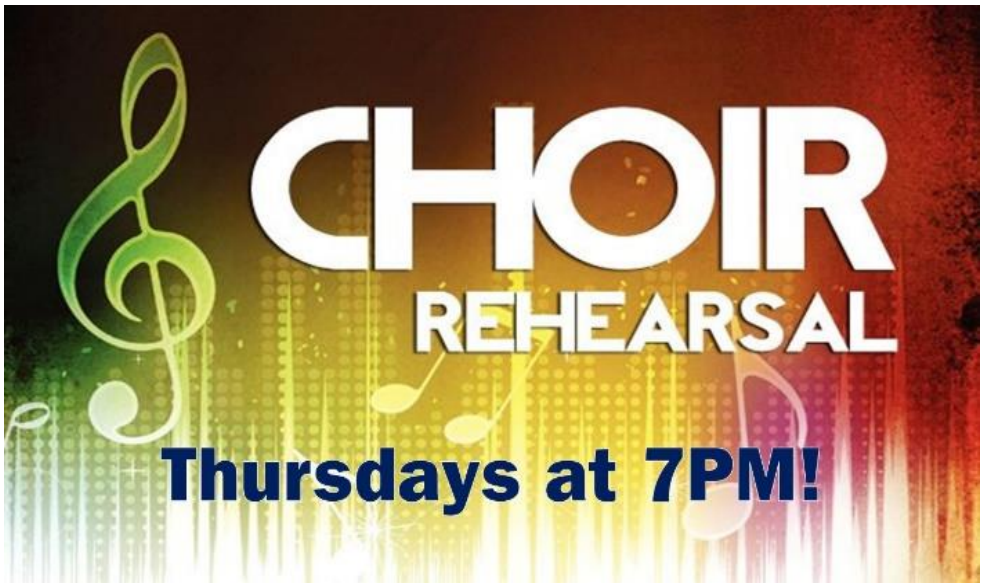
- We sent Timothy ... to strengthen and encourage you for the sake of your **faith** (v. 2).
- ...when I could bear it no longer, I sent [Timothy] to find out about your **faith** (v. 5).
- But Timothy has just now come to us from you, and has brought good news about your **faith** and love (v. 6).
- For this reason, brothers and sisters, during all our distress and persecution we have been encouraged about you through your **faith** (v. 7).
- Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your **faith** (v. 10).

Throughout this chapter, Paul is concerned about one thing: **FAITH.** That's why he sent Timothy in the first place, i.e., to "strengthen and encourage" the people in their faith. Why does Paul give faith such a great emphasis to the exclusion of other worthy topics? Because Paul knew what we seem to have forgotten, that when people break down in their behavior, grow cold in the Lord, no longer desire to serve the Lord, are not consistent in their attendance, find other activities to occupy their time during the week and on the weekends, and reduce their giving or stop giving to the Lord's work, it is because their faith has broken down.

The writer of Hebrews said, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him" (Heb. 11:6).


November 21st
10am – Noon
Running low? We can help!
It Takes a Village Diaper Bank
West Winfield
VillageDiapers.FedChurch@gmail.com


Gently Used. Greatly Needed.
PASS IT ON
Community Closet for Baby
452 E. Main St., West Winfield, NY
VillageDiapers.FedChurch@gmail.com
An Outreach of the Federated Church of West Winfield


CHOIR
REHEARSAL
Thursdays at 7PM!


Bell Choir
after
Worship



Mt. Markham Optimist Club

"Benefit Community Your Projects"

CHRISTMAS WREATH SALE

Fresh Balsam with Red Velvet Bow

$20.00

Call Nancy Cooper at (315-855-4280)

By November 30th "To Order"

PICK UP
Saturday, December 5th
or
Or Sunday, December 6th
(12-5:00pm both Days)

(6970 County Highway 18, West Winfield)



Daylight Saving Time Ends

Don't forget to turn your clocks back one hour before bed on Saturday, October 31st (Halloween).

TAG TREE 2026

Letters have gone out to the families in the Mount Markham School District for gifts and food.

We anticipate having tags on our Tag Tree by Sunday, November 22nd.

Gifts must be wrapped, tagged, and returned to the church by December 13th for sorting and bagging, in order to be ready for the Optimists to deliver them on December 19th

If you want to sponsor an entire family, please see me prior to the 22nd.

If you have someone in our area who has a need and does not have children in school, please contact the church office.

Thank you for your anticipated generosity.

Gail Royce

Election Day

Tuesday, November 3rd

Voting for Districts 1 & 2 for the Town of Winfield is here

In the Fellowship Hall

Polls are open from 6:00am – 9:00 pm



Hanging of The Greens

Come one and all after church on Sunday, November 22nd.

Let's get the church decorated and beautiful for this Christmas Season.



John 3:16 tells us that God loved us so much that He gave his only Son for us; "so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." God's love for us is "ALL IN!" In turn, when we put our trust in God, our lives can be freed for unimaginable wonder.

November 2026 is Stewardship Month and, as we work our way towards Commitment Sunday on November 22, 2026, we will be looking at what it means to be "all in" for God with all that we have and all that we are.

Poinsettias

We will be adorning the sanctuary with poinsettias again this year. The Masons will once again be selling them. We don't have the details on that yet. You can contact Connie Pope (315-822-3482) for further information. You can purchase them from the Masons or buy your own.

Please let Luanne know if you would like your poinsettia in memory of a loved one.

Thank you.

FAX: 315-822-6321
CHURCH: 315-822-6321
WEBSITE:
WestWinfieldFederatedChurch.org
E-MAIL:
Fedchurch66@gmail.com



THE FEDERATED CHURCH
P.O. BOX 337
452 EAST MAIN STREET
WEST WINFIELD, NY 13491