



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE BELL

1 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, New York 12061-1780

VOLUME 18, ISSUE 3

MARCH 2016

At Church on Sundays:

- ◆ Early Informal Service
8:30 am
- ◆ Regular Service 9:30am
- ◆ Sunday School 9:30 am

We are on the Web:

www.fumceg.org

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9 am to 2:30 pm M - F

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Pastor

Gail Welkley,
Administrative Assistant

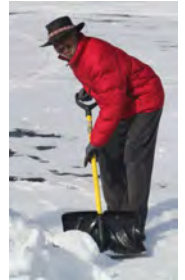
Dear Members and Friends,

I believe ministers must be on the mailing list of every conceivable organization and charity in the United States of America. Much of the mail I receive (about 50%) is what is commonly called "junk mail." Dr. Schaller, a professor of mine and a church consultant, urges ministers to review their mail over an open garbage can. Check the upper left hand corner or backside of the mail and look to see where it came from. This week as I was thumbing through the "bulk mail," I received two pieces, one of which offered the captivating guarantee of providing me all the insights I would need to make 2017 "the best year ever. Take advantage of the New Year." The other promised to make a new "me, or "a new you in the New Year." I thought I'll put together these words from these two pieces of junk mail to make positive use of useless junk mail!

Apostle Paul, writing to the church at Philippi, gives a time-honored principle that worked in 63 A.D. and will work for us in 2017. He writes urging the Christian disciples that to make every day count, you must have a priority. We miss great opportunities of life because we get sidetracked. The Apostle Paul knew his number-one priority was to live his life to the honor and glory of God by sharing the Gospel. Even when he was in prison, he would not allow anything to cross his path that would deter him from his priority. He knew that his new life in Christ was a gift from God, and wanted to live his life for his master. Nothing would deter him from that priority!

Now, Paul was a great time manager because he knew we can't do three or four things at once or move in two or three different directions. This is why Paul writes, "this one thing I do." This is why Jesus taught us in the Sermon on the Mount that we are to seek his kingdom first, and then the rest of our lives and our priorities will fall into order. Dr. Stanley Menking, when he taught at Drew Seminary, used to say in order to manage time in a much more fruitful way make sure you prevent the minor things from crowding out the "MAJORS."

Do not lose your priority in life! You are living for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Spend your time in 2017 doing one thing best for Christ and his church and then let all the other items fall into place. I believe Christ's spirit lives best in his disciples who



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A Reconciling Congregation

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say, "This I will do," rather than, "Something ought to be done around this place." Pick a priority and then perform it to the best of your ability in 2017.

In closing I want to share a prayer with you written by Rev. K.G. Phifer. I hope you will be inspired by it and make it your prayer, as well, for 2017:

"Eternal God, before whom we are creatures of the day and children of the hours, I lift my prayers to you as I stand in the shadow of the waning year. I am aware once more of the fleetingness of time, and the transiency of my being. So much has happened to me during the year now so rapidly slipping away, so much of hurt and happiness, of loss and gain, of hope and fear. I did not expect the sorrow that was thrust upon me. I was surprised by the turn of events that changed my life. I look back. I remember how different life a year ago was. The slow, quiet erosion of the days has gone on, and I am not quite the same person I was, for better or worse. I have had a whole year to grow in love or to fall out of love, to turn my hands to constructive tasks, or to turn away in idleness. I have had a whole year, and now it is almost gone. No matter what I have done or failed to do, O Lord, keep me from dwelling on it too much. If I have failed, help me put my failure behind me. If I have done well, help me to be glad but not complacent. There are other hills to climb and new hopes to be realized. I know, O God, you understand my need to look back for a while, wistfully peering at the past. But start me looking forward. I do not know what events are ahead, but I do know you are there and I am grateful. Amen.

This is not junk mail to be discarded. It is the Truth, and it awaits your discovery. It is a 100% guarantee! Yes, because the Lord is faithful, there can be a NEW YOU in a NEW YEAR.

I wish you and all of your loves and blessed and healthy New Year.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Sundar

WORSHIP AT FUMC FOR WATCH NIGHT AND IN JANUARY

December 31 New Year's Eve This will be our Watch Night Service as we venture from 2016 into the new year of 2017. A **Covenant Renewal Service**, we will begin at 11:00 p.m. and will celebrate Holy Communion together as part of this service.



January 1 New Year's Day The First Noel, Verse 3. "And by the light of that same star three Wise Men came from country far; to seek for a king was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went." This is Epiphany Sunday and that's what it is about. There is **no early worship** service planned for this Sunday.

January 8 It is the first Sunday after the Epiphany and is also the Sunday that marks the Baptism of the Lord. There is a baptism at our church scheduled for this Sunday. Early worship will be led by George Herrick speaking about "The Little Drummer Boy".

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January 15 Human Relations Day is celebrated this Sunday. More information on this important program is printed on page 6 in this BELL. Our early worship services will focus on a new theme starting this Sunday, a series of "What would Jesus say About..." questions. The first three weeks will look at "Me", "Modern Churches" and "the Marginalized". Lent follows this seven week series, beginning on **Ash Wednesday, March 1**. Special services are being planned for Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebrations on this Sunday in both Albany and Troy. See page 5 for more information.

January 22 Ecumenical Sunday, this Sunday, falls in the middle of **The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** (WPCU) which will have begun **Wednesday the 18th** and run through to **Wednesday the 25th**. In 2017 the WPCU falls on the occasion of the 500th anniversary year of the beginnings of the Reformation. This year the theme for WPCU is "Reconciliation – The Love Of Christ Compels Us". Initial work on the program for this year's theme was done by the Council of Churches in Germany. Background information suggests

"When the German national planning committee met in the autumn of 2014, it quickly became clear that the materials for this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity would need to have two accents: on the one hand, there should be a celebration of God's love and grace, the "justification of humanity through grace alone," reflecting the main concern of the churches marked by Martin Luther's Reformation. On the other hand, it should also recognize the pain of the subsequent deep divisions which afflicted the Church, openly name the guilt, and offer an opportunity to take steps toward reconciliation."

January 29 The lectionary for this Sunday includes an Old Testament reading from Micah 6:1-8 with the well know line, "...what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

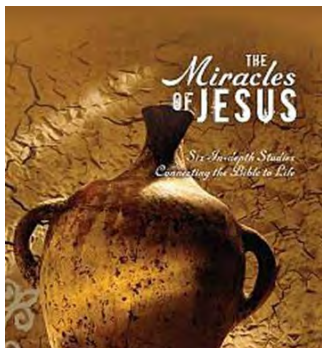
Pastor Sundar will be in the pulpit for each of the five Sundays in the month. Our Early Worship Service is at 8:30 a.m. each Sunday in January except January 1.

Black History Month will start on **Wednesday, February 1**.

Here is the lectionary for January:

- January 1 **Epiphany Sunday, Year A** Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7,10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12
- January 8 **First Sunday after the Epiphany** Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17
- January 15 **Second Sunday after the Epiphany** Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42
- January 22 **Third Sunday after the Epiphany** Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23
- January 29 **Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany** Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12

"MIRACLES OF JESUS" ADULT BIBLE STUDY



In **January**, we will begin a five week study based on the book and DVD "Miracles of Jesus." Each week, in a small-group setting, we will take an in-depth look at one of the miracles of Jesus. Each study will open your eyes to its impact on the lives he touched, what it reveals about God's heart, and its significance for us today. The study sessions are approximately 90 minutes long and are held in the youth lounge starting either **Monday, January 9** at 6:30 p.m., or **Tuesday, January 17** at 9:30 a.m. Please register for either session with the church office **by January 6** so that books may be ordered in advance. Please see Kevin Conley (253-4907) or Pastor Sundar for more information.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

I would like to thank everyone who helped to make the Christmas season memorable for the Sunday School children. We had several contributions for the advent centerpieces and the Christmas store, several people helped out in the Christmas store and for the Christmas musical. Thank you so much, it is heartwarming to see so many people care for our children!

Our Christmas musical, *3 Wise Men and a Baby*, was a huge success! It was a wonderful experience for all involved. The kids get to spread the word about the birth of baby Jesus, and they even help each other out during the show! We are super proud! Thank you to all who supported this ministry!

January 8 is a Super Sunday for the Sunday School! It is one of the favorites.....wear your jammies to church day!!! So roll out of bed and come on in to church! Breakfast will be served. You are welcome to bring pillows and blankets this year! Hope to see you then!!



Heidi Gran

UNITED METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

I hope that everyone had a great Christmas season and is looking forward to the New Year! With the New Year we're going to be making some programming changes and improvements. You will find the schedule below. As always, if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas please contact Nick at FUMCEG.youth@gmail.com or text at (518) 961-6133. You may also want to check out the District Council on Youth Ministries website where you may find other youth activities of interest. The DCYM website address is <http://albanydcym.weebly.com/>. For example, check out the UPPER NEW YORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE bit about our 2017 Annual Conference (they're looking for youth representatives!).

Nick Morrow

Friday, January 6 Jello Olympics at Mckownville UMC from 6:30pm-9pm
Cost is \$5 and a non-perishable food item.

Friday, January 13, 2017 Lock-in 7:00 p.m. - 9:30 a.m.

(This is the same night as Goff Activity Night for 6th grade. We welcome 6th graders attending Activity Night to come to the lock-in after Activity Night.)

Friday, January 27 UMYF Meeting/ Game Night 7:00 p.m.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN



Here we are starting a new year. The United Methodist Women of this church are active with more than just what the organization asks. We help with Mission Projects and Sunday School activities. The UMW provided the meal after the Sunday school's performance of *3 Wise Men and a Baby* on December 18, just as one example. We are a few women who lead all that we do. And when we ask for help we really appreciate all we receive. Whether it is a small task or a large one (setting up tables for dinners or the Thrift Sale) everyone that helps is greatly appreciated. We have a full calendar for 2017 so watch The BELL and bulletin for what we may be needing help with. Thank you in advance.

Our next meeting is **January 9** at 7:00 p.m. All women of the church are invited to attend. We meet in the multi-purpose room. Just show up, we will be glad to have you.

MOM'S MEETINGS

The January Moms' meeting dates are the **6th** and the **20th** at 9:20 a.m. in the youth lounge. We will begin a book study, *Before Amen: The Power of a Simple Prayer* by Max Lucado. Please contact the church office to reserve a copy and join us on a journey to the very heart of biblical prayer, offering hope and confidence in our prayer lives. We will discover prayer as a heartfelt conversation with God.



AFGHANS FOR VA HOSPITAL



Let's start the New Year creating afghans and quilts for the VA patients (women as well as men). Please consider donating a new washable 4' x 4' or 4' x 6' knitted, crocheted, or quilted blanket. If you prefer you may want to give our group 3-4 skeins of yarn for this mission project. Each new patient receives an afghan or quilt to use and then take home. This is a great way to give a little comfort to our veterans. We will be meeting occasionally to create together (watch the weekly bulletins). If you would like to learn to knit or crochet we have teachers willing to pass on our skills. We have other opportunities, also, such as hats or blankets for children with cancer, or premie babies... Handmade Prayer Shawls are now available for anyone needing a hug! Contact Aleta Schweigert with questions or ideas (call 479-3182).

HELP NEEDED - JOSEPH'S HOUSE SHELTER MEAL

Are you available to help prepare or serve dinner at the Joseph's House Homeless Shelter on **Sunday, January 22**? We will be preparing the meal in our church kitchen at 6:00 p.m. on **Thursday, January 19**. On the 22nd, we will meet at Joseph's House on Ferry Street in Troy at 5:45 p.m. to serve food and share dinner and conversation with shelter residents. Please contact Kevin Conley (253-4907, kconley1@nycap.rr.com) if you have questions or can help out.

YOU'RE INVITED!

Pastor Mariana Rodriguez of the Emmanuel Faith Community thanks you for your recent toy donations for their upcoming **Three Kings Celebration**. Emmanuel Faith Community ministers to the Hispanic/Latino population of our Capital Area Region. Pastor Mariana would like to invite everyone to join the Celebration on Sunday afternoon, beginning at **3:00 P.M. on January 8 at the Third Reformed Church**. Gifts will be distributed to children at that time. The church is located at Ten Eyck at Whitehall in Albany. Refreshments will be served. New and gently used toys may continue to be dropped off at our church **until January 6**.



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., CELEBRATIONS

MLK INTERFAITH SERVICE - TROY

A Martin Luther King Interfaith service will be held on **Sunday, January 15** from 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. at Bethel Baptist Church, 2165 5th Ave, Troy. The service includes persons from Christian, Muslim, Jewish traditions with a combined choir. A free-will offering will be taken up during the service to fund MLK scholarships that are awarded without bias toward faith tradition or racial background. To carpool to the service, please meet at our church at 3:00 p.m.



MLK INTERFAITH SERVICE - ALBANY

The 44th Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Interfaith Memorial Service will be held on **Sunday, January 15** at 3:00pm at Congregation Beth Emeth, 100 Academy Road in Albany. Keynote speaker Rev. Dr. Ward Greer, former Director of AUMS in Albany, will bring a message, "An Unfinished Agenda". A free-will offering will benefit the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship Fund of the Capital Area Council of Churches. Contact Capital Area Council of Churches at 462-5450 for more information.

HUMAN RELATIONS DAY

January 15th will be our celebration of Human Relation Day. Over the years, The United Methodist Church has come together to extend a helping hand to those in crisis so they can overcome formidable obstacles. When you give on Human Relations Day, you stand with the people of The United Methodist Church in our efforts to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ helping all God's children to realize their potential. Some amazing Ways your help makes a difference:

- The Juvenile Mediation Program, Jackson, Mississippi, works with the courts and human services to initiate peer-mediation practices for juvenile offenders.
- In Monrovia, Liberia, the Children Empowered for Sustainability Program rehabilitates poor children, including orphans, refugees and ex-combatant child soldiers.
- Exodus House: Hope and Community for the Lost and Vulnerable provides reentry assistance to ex-offenders and their families in Oklahoma City and Tulsa, Oklahoma.
- Lighthouse Promise's Boys 2 Men nurtures at-risk children in a Louisville, Kentucky, neighborhood who struggle with poverty, lack of education and high crime.



Human Relations Day calls all of our churches to strengthen outreach to communities, encouraging social justice and work with at-risk youth. Please join thousands of other United Methodists making a difference this year.

RECYCLE YOUR STYROFOAM PACKAGING!



The amount of trash Americans generate almost doubles right after the holidays. Styrofoam from packaging takes decades to decompose. Bring your Styrofoam peanuts and blocks from Christmas presents to the garage at the far end of the church parking lot before or after the 9:30 a.m. service on **January 8 or January 15**. The Eco-Team will be bringing the Styrofoam to Shelter Enterprises in Cohoes to be recycled. Your Styrofoam needs to be clean and free of debris such as tape, cardboard or wires.

Also, check out our new presence on our church website by clicking on the Eco-Team tab.

JANUARY BLOOD DRIVE

The Red Cross Bloodmobile has scheduled a blood drive at FUMC on **Friday, January 27** from 2:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. During the holiday season, blood donations are down and the blood bank needs to be refilled to meet ongoing needs. By donating a pint of blood, you may be helping more than one person since not all patients need whole blood. If you are over 18, you are eligible to give blood. It takes about an hour to complete a donation and you will be asked to remain for a few minutes after your blood has been drawn. There will be juice and snacks to get you started on replacing the blood you have given. Scientists may someday be able to create whole blood but right now, the only way to replace blood is with donations from you and your neighbors! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Carrie Pierce at 283-0130. A sign up sheet will be available in January for blood donors and people to help donors sign in and explain the process for donation. Thank you for considering this opportunity to help patients when recovery may depend on a blood transfusion.



GOT CABIN FEVER?

Got the January Blues...we have the perfect fix!!! Come to the **Cabin Fever Coffee House** on Friday, January 20 at 7:00 p.m. Music, stories, delicious munchies and much fun is guaranteed. Hope to see you there.



THANK YOU FROM NAMI



Paul Klein, President of Rensselaer County NAMI would like to express his thanks to our church for the opportunity to hold the recently completed Family to Family twelve week class here. We are pleased that the local NAMI affiliate has formed a relationship with First United Methodist Church. A support group continues to meet here on the third Wednesday of the month and all are welcome to attend.

NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

What started as a small group of families gathered around a kitchen table in 1979 has blossomed into the nation's leading voice on mental health. Today it is an association of hundreds of local affiliates, state organizations and volunteers who work in communities to raise awareness and provide support and education that was not previously available to those in need.

For more information, please visit <http://www.namirensco.org>

DOES SOMETHING UMC NEED TO CHANGE?



Do you see something in our United Methodist Church that needs to be different than it is today? Maybe it is some practice we use to do business in our local church. Maybe it's the position of The United Methodist Church on an important economic or political issue our country is facing today. How many "maybes" can you mention? To encourage/effect change, you can start by speaking to our own Administrative Council. Or, any clergy or lay person can take their concerns directly to The Upper New York Annual Conference in the form of a resolution or a petition. A **resolution** is a formal statement expressing the opinion, will or intent of the Annual Conference. A **petition** is a formal statement requesting the Annual Conference (through its staff, commissions, committees, teams, boards or agencies) to take a certain action. UNY Annual Conference has announced that the opportunity is here, once again, for UNY clergy and laity to offer petitions and resolutions for consideration at the 2017 session of the Upper New York Annual Conference, **June 1-3**. The deadline for submissions is **February 1, 2017**. For more

information contact our church office at 477-9693.

UMC VIA VIDEO

Earlier in the month of December, Fran Coode Walsh, Director, Member Communications at United Methodist Communications, wrote an article titled, "Editor's Choice: Top United Methodist Videos of 2016". She introduced her collection of videos with, "One way to hear and see the story of the people of The United Methodist Church is through video features. As we wrap up 2016, we wanted to look back at some of the highlights of the past 12 months as told through UMC.org videos." You can look over her list at:

<http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/editors-choice-top-united-methodist-videos-of-2016>

THANK YOU



I would like to thank all who dedicate so much time and effort sharing their gift of music with all of us. Anyone who feels as though God is leading them to sharing their gift of music in 2017, please make a move based on that nudge from our Lord.

Thank you Lord for all that step out in faith! Great joy is coming their way!

Jacqueline Krahforst, *Organist*

WELCOME BACK, LYNN MINDERMAN!

Lynn Minderman, of Qholoahoe Mountain Connections will be returning on **Sunday, January 29**. Lynn will update us on progress being made in Losotho, Africa and let us know how our scholarship recipients are doing. Please plan on joining us for Lynn's presentation following the 9:30 a.m. service in Fellowship Hall.



NEWS FROM THE CAPITAL AREA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The Annual Celebration of the CACC **WITNESS TO BAPTISM Program** will be held on **Sunday, January 10** at 3:00 p.m. at St. Matthew's Church, 25 Mountainview Street, Voorheesville. We have been blessed by having a number of members of this group participate in baptisms here at our church. If you have an interest in sharing in this ministry and visiting other churches in the capital region, you are welcome to attend this informational gathering.



The **Annual Meeting** of CACC will be held on **February 6** at 6:00 p.m. at St. Sophia's Greek Orthodox Church. We would like to see our pastor and two representatives from our church attend this important meeting. See

George Herrick for more information.

The annual **BOWLING FOR BEDS BOWL-A-THON** to support the Emergency Overflow Shelter will be held at Sunset Lanes on **Saturday, February 11**. Hosted by the Protestant Campus Ministry, there will be two scheduled bowling times, 12:30pm or 2:30pm. No age limits. No minimum skill level required. Everyone interested is welcome. It's a time of pizza, friendly conversations and bowling. See Heidi Gran or George Herrick for more information and to sign-up.



- ◆ **Snowbirds and others** who will be away from home for an extended period of time, please let the office know your temporary address so that our contact information is up to date.

- ◆ **IMPORTANT NOTE: Effective January 1, 2017** the current email addresses for the church will no longer be available. **The new email address are:** office@fumceg.org and editor@fumceg.org. Please switch over to using these new email addresses **BEFORE** January 1, 2017.
- ◆ With sadness we note the death on December 9 of our **Church Lay Leader Dave Smith**. According to The United Methodist Discipline, the Lay Leader is the person, "who shall function as the primary lay representative of the laity in [a] local church". We will be selecting a person to fill that position early in 2017.