



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE BELL

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

VOLUME 22 ISSUE 5

MAY 2020

At Church on Sundays:

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

Also on Sundays:

- ◆ Worship at Hawthorne Ridge
1:00 pm

Visit us on the Web:

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www.facebook.com/FUMCEG

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Rev. Sundar R. Samuel,
Pastor

Gail Welkley,
Administrative Assistant

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Oh! How things have changed in just over seven weeks in our lives and our church life. The building was full of activities in our church to now, no activities. The stoppage of worship services and all other activities suddenly came to a grinding halt to keep us safe in order for us to practice social distancing. The phrase "Social Distancing" is such an oxymoron, yet it makes a huge sense in keeping all of us safe from contracting and giving the deadly virus.



As a church, we are all experiencing a tremendous loss of socially being with each other to enjoy each other's company, to support one another in so many wonderful ways. I do not know what serious social and health consequences we will all experience in the future, when we are done with social distancing. We are such social beings, our society thrives, because we bring and pool our strengths, gifts and graces each day at work, home, and places of worship to support and nurture one another. As for me the past couple of months, I have physically experienced a cloud of darkness over me and (us) by not being able to socialize with you, worship with you, and share a laugh with you. It feels like an eternity ago, since we have worshiped together, heard our choir sing, or we have sung our inspiring hymns of faith and best of all to have fellowship around coffee times and coffee house's, breakfasts and lunches, dinners and birthday parties or have that (billion dollar) hotdog at a ball-game!

However, just like you I am being sustained by God's love and grace each day as we go through this (pandemic) waiting period. Just like you, I am grieving for the thousands of our citizens becoming victims to this dreadful disease and just like you, daily I am on my knees praying for all of you for God's protection and care during these difficult times and especially for all those who have lost a loved one to this disease.

I want to thank all of you for joining me and the team of volunteers and staff over Facebook live for Sunday Morning worship services. I want to thank David, Amber, Amanda, Jean, Deb and a host of other volunteers who working the phones, writing letters of encouragement, sending



emails, shopping groceries for individuals who are unable to do so. I want to thank all for your faithful financial support without which we wouldn't be able continue to our ministries without a break. Thank you for being the heart, hands and feet of Christ, to share God's love with many people through our various ministries. I am grateful to you for all your letters and kind words and sentiments of encouragement you have sent us to keep us going! Take care of yourself and know that God is with you and yours at all times and in all places. I am eagerly waiting for the day when we will all meet together for worship and thanksgiving on the

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A Reconciling Congregation

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other side of this lockdown. I want to invite you to continue to have a share in this ministry of ours through your prayers, gifts and financial giving. Hope to see you on Facebook live next Sunday!

Peace and Grace

Pastor Sundar

Sunday Morning Services Continue

Our Sunday service is being live streamed through First United Methodist Church of East Greenbush Facebook Group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FUMCEG/>. Response to these services has been very positive, and on April 26 we had people watching from Oregon, North Carolina, Georgia, Minnesota, Virginia, Illinois, Florida, and Maine! The service starts about 9:20 a.m. with a musical prelude and lasts about 4 to 5 minutes.

To follow the service, log in to Facebook and search for First United Methodist Church of East Greenbush. Select that group. If you are already a member of that group you will get a notification that a Facebook Live session is starting and you will get an option to join the live session. If you are not yet a member of the group there is a button that will send a request to join the group. Follow that prompt and you will be added to the group. You probably should do that before the start of the service.



Thanks to everyone involved in making our Sunday services possible:

Facebook support: David Caneen, Colleen Rumsey, Deb Samuel

Worship service team: Pastor Sundar Samuel, Jean Sheviak, Jacqueline Krahforst

Sanctuary support: Patty Chartrand, Carrie Larson, Bob Reineke

March and April musicians: Bill Bronk, David Caneen, Christopher Chartrand, Fred and Kate Henson, Carrie Larson, Peter Larson, Cindy Reineke, Collen Rumsey, John Schmidt, Triskale (Sharon Wheeler, Jenn Killinski, Noleen Druckenmiller)



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Behind the Scenes

Did you know...

- ◆ 10 people are making weekly phone calls and/or sending notes to 55-60 members of the congregation to keep in touch. Some comments from callers: "Even if they didn't need anything, they were happy to know somebody was reaching out." "I love that many of my people want to know if everyone else on my list is doing well." "When I didn't call on the usual day, people were worried that I was sick."
- ◆ 4 people are doing 40 notes each week to keep in touch with the residents of Rosewood and Riverside nursing homes who attend our monthly services at those facilities. Pastor Sundar is doing a weekly message for delivery to our Hawthorne Ridge congregation as well as by email to Rosewood and Riverside. From Riverside: "Alicia and I [Activities Director Frank Fortino] read the sermon at different times on the unit, both one-to-one, and small groups. The residents enjoyed it!"
- ◆ Deb Samuel is doing a weekly Bible study for delivery to our Hawthorne Ridge congregation as well as by email to Rosewood and Riverside and to CARES@fumceg.org.
- ◆ Kate Henson is sewing masks for people in our congregation and our community. She tells us, "With each mask, I thought, this mask can keep one more person safe; it can free up a hospital bed; it can relieve the burden on an emergency worker; it can spare a family from illness or grief."



Thanks to Susie Calyer, Cindy Conley, Fred Henson, Kate Henson, Lois Heyer, Shawna Lambert, Mary McIntosh, Cindy McLaughlin, Carrie Pierce, Deb Samuel, Pastor Sundar Samuel, Jean Sheviak, Mary Smith, and Carol Walkley for these ministries to our community.

EDITOR and CARES emails:

If you are not yet receiving emails from Editor@fumceg.org and Cares@fumceg.org you are missing lots of church information. Two or three emails go out each week with prayer concerns and joys, service information, and news. Signing up to receive these emails does not mean you won't get a printed BELL if that's what you prefer, but it will keep you in touch with the church at a time when email is the easiest way to maintain contact. To sign up, send an email to Editor@fumceg.org and ask us to add you to the list.

Community Solar

Now you can go solar and help the earth. Common Energy has provided a [link for you to enroll in community solar](#) as the Church Council has already done for the church and parsonage. You won't need to install panels on your roof, pay an up-front cost or lock yourself into a long-term contract. Yet, you will be able to derive clean, pure energy from the sun and combat greenhouse gas emissions and you will see savings in your monthly electrical bills. National Grid will continue to provide back-up electricity when needed. As an incentive for enrolling, when you are successfully linked to the solar farm, Common Energy will award both you and the church a \$50 credit on future solar bills. If you have questions, please contact eco-team@fumceg.org.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Amanda Trainor, Director of Children's Christian Education, reports that the Sunday School program has been staying connected through various electronic communication vehicles. In addition to posting Facebook videos with Sunday School lessons, Sunday School has also been reaching out to parents via e-mail to provide material, apps and project suggestions for students to try at home. So far, we have received positive feedback from Sunday School students and families. As always, if anyone has any suggestions they are welcome to reach out to Amanda via phone or e-mail. 518-368-5724 or egchristianedfmc@gmail.com



UNITED METHODIST YOUTH

When you can't meet in person the youth group meets virtually! Youth Leader, Amber Biechman, tells us that the group has been playing scavenger hunt games and trivia. They took a half hour prayer block and prayed together on Zoom. They also leave inspirational quotes, scriptures and pictures on the youth group Instagram. Just because we can't be together doesn't mean we can't connect. Follow the FUMCEG youth group on Instagram [fumcyouthgroup518](https://www.instagram.com/fumcyouthgroup518).



Amber says she is counting down the days to have a youth group meeting/party. She hopes everyone stays safe, healthy and keeps on praying!

Amber and Amanda have been working together to start organizing an electronic space for junior youth, so watch for that.

CONFIRMATION CONTINUES ON ZOOM

Deb Samuel has been 'zooming' with the Confirmands on Sundays at 1:00 pm. The group spent several weeks exploring the persons of the Trinity and now are looking at prayer using the A.C.T.S. model. (Acclamation, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication.) The confirmands are practicing this prayer technique this week and also exploring favorite prayers they find on the internet. They will be sharing favorite prayers next week during class.



UMCOR'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

UMCOR is expanding its response in the fight against COVID-19 by launching a new giving campaign, "Sheltering in Love." Join UMCOR, the relief and development arm of The United Methodist Church, as it expands its response in the fight against COVID-19. Gifts to the UMCOR COVID-19 Response Fund will address pressing needs in the areas of health, food insecurity, water, sanitation and hygiene, and economic instability in the U.S. and around the world. For more information, please see <https://www.umcmmission.org/>. To make a donation, please write a check to the church and enter "UMCOR COVID-19" in the memo field.



GIVE NOW

UPPER NEW YORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE UPDATE

The Eleventh Session of the Upper New York Annual Conference has been postponed due to concerns of the coronavirus pandemic. On October 3, 2020, there will be a one-day session to allow the necessary business of the Annual Conference, as outlined in the Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, to be cared for. In addition, the 2020 Clergy session will be held in the afternoon of Friday, October 2, 2020, followed by the Service of Commissioning and Ordination that evening at the Oncenter, Syracuse, New York.



MISSIONS



Joseph's House Meal

We are providing the dinner for Joseph's House homeless shelter on **Sunday, May 24** and are seeking volunteers to each prepare a pan of lasagna, a tossed salad and/or many cookies. We will need four of each because we are feeding 50 people. Bring your donation to the church parking lot at 1:00 pm so it can be dropped off for cooking at Joseph's House later in the day. If you can assist, please contact Kevin at 518.253.4907 or mission@fumceg.org.

Our first **Adopt-A-Highway clean up for the year is scheduled for Saturday morning, June 6.** This will be our ninth year of participation. If you can spare an hour, we will meet at church at 8:00 am. Bags, vests, helmets and trash grabbers will be provided. Our "adopted" highway section is between the Schodack Walgreen's and the Catholic Church on Routes 9 & 20. We would appreciate your help.



Change the World Sunday Update

Due to the continuing uncertainty about the present pandemic and the need for social distancing, we have decided to cancel our planned Change the World Sunday event scheduled for May 17. We ask that you consider reaching out to someone to share God's love in a personal and unique way on that day. Perhaps a phone call, email or text. Cards and letters are always appreciated.



NEWS FROM QMC

Qholoqhoe Mountain Connections board members Linda and Roger Gorham returned in early March from working with the Qholoqhoe community and staff at Qholoqhoe High School in Lesotho, Southern Africa. They report that the food crisis outlined by the United Nations and World Food Program is indeed affecting the students and villagers. While recent rain has enabled corn and sorghum to grow, these two staple crops require four months and warm weather to mature and as they were planted late and the weather is usually 40 degrees at night, there is little hope of a bountiful harvest. The rains have, however allowed green crops such as kale, swiss chard, beets and cabbage to do well.

The Emergency Food Fund now provides monthly food supplies for 60+ students, up from 22 students last year. Teachers refer students who appear to need food support and after being interviewed, they are added to the EFF. The donations from sponsors have enabled QMC to send \$4500. to purchase food for the next six months.

The Lesotho Nutrition Initiative (www.lesothonutritioninitiative.com) has also continued to donate nutritious pre-packaged meals which will be given to the students as well.

While in Lesotho, Roger and Linda were able to present scholarship recipients supported by our church members with t-shirts. We are hoping for a visit from QMC board member Lynn Minderman later this year. Please visit the QMC website for more information or to make a donation: www.qmconnect.org

