



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE BELL

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

VOLUME 22 ISSUE 6

JUNE 2020

♦ **All services are temporarily cancelled until further notice. Due to Corvid-19**

♦ **Join us on Facebook at 9:30 am each Sunday through the link below**

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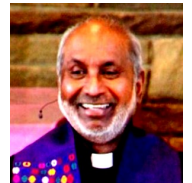
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Rev. Sundar R. Samuel,
Pastor

Gail Welkley,
Administrative Assistant

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

US citizens spend more on weight-loss programs, pills, and panaceas than any other people in the world. US citizens also spend more on greasy, high-calorie, nutritionally-free, fast foods than any other people in the world. No wonder we are so often pilloried in the press as being two-faced or wishy-washy in our priorities and commitments. The problem is that as privileged citizens of this remarkably gifted country, we have so many choices available to us that limiting ourselves to one road, one set of options, seems almost Un-American.



We want "Super-size:" and Lo-Cal/Low-Carb/Lo-Fat" at the same time. We want to drive gas guzzling huge SUV's and trucks and we want to drive small, fuel-efficient hybrid vehicles. We want the privacy and anonymity of computerized e-mail relationships, and yet we desperately want to feel a sense of belonging and community in that virtual world of the Web. At some point all of us make definitive life choices.

Each of us has four choices in life. These are basically the only choices we have in life. And we're told to pick one. We can choose to DO MORE of certain things. We can choose to DO LESS of certain things. We can choose STOP doing old things. We can choose to start doing new things. (I adapt this from Brian Tracy's Focal Point (New York: AMACOM, 2002), 4-5.)

We can do more: more good; more exercise; more for our family; more for our community; more for our schools, more for the environment. We can do less; less consuming; less complaining; less needing; less demanding. We can stop; stop hating; stop being afraid; stop focusing on ourselves; stop rejecting all who differ from ourselves; stop hiding. We can start; start to care; start to feel; start to empathize; start to open up; start to see our unity; start to love again.

In the Book of Acts 2: 14-41 apostle Peter called upon his audience to make changes. This wasn't a friendly crowd. This was a hostile crowd. Those listening to Peter were also those who had accused the Spirit-filled apostle of being drunk and out-of-control. Yet in his new Pentecost power and his new Spirit-filled voice, Peter had the audacity to ask this hostile audience to make a choice.

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A Reconciling Congregation

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Choose to remain as you are-unhappy, unfulfilled, uncertain, and unopened to the Spirit and the mission of God or choose a new path, choose something else entirely. Peter called upon those gathered, those who had heard amazing, multi-lingual calls to faith respond with definitive actions. As we enter the season of Pentecost, I am calling you to make all four choices in your life.

First, Do More: Do more listening to your life. Most of the time we rush through life without ever listening to life. Here are the words of Frederick Buechner describing his life on Rupert Mountain: "Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery that it is. In the boredom and in the pain of it, no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch and taste your way to the holy and hidden heart of it because in the last analysis all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace." –as quoted by Kenneth I. Pargament in "Tapping the Power of the Future," *Spirituality & Health*, January/February 2005, 38.

Second, Do Less: Do less majoring in minors, and minoring in majors. The Trenton Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church declared invalid the first communion of a 12-year old because she ate rice, not wheat wafer because she's allergic to wheat. The mother (Elizabeth Pelly-Wildman) asked the bishop in charge: "How does it corrupt the tradition of the Last Supper? It's just rice versus wheat?" we shake our heads. But how many of us are also getting hung up on the small stuff, fighting battles of wheat versus rice. Can we do less judging, do less critiquing and more celebrating?

Third, Stop: Stop wasting time and wasting life. I read somewhere these words: "How would you respond if someone came up to you offering you a bank account so fully stocked that every day you had to spend \$86,400? You didn't have to do a thing, just spend that much money every day of every week of every year. What would you do with it? I'm sure there are a myriad of things you could and would do, but you sure wouldn't waste it by leaving it in the account. First thing every morning, there you'd be standing in front of a teller withdrawing your \$86,400, looking forward to a great day of shopping. "Every day, you are given 86,400 golden seconds to use. And guess what-if you don't use them, you will definitely lose them. Remember once again, time can be wasted, but it can never be recycled." (I think it's from Glen Martin, *Beyond the Rat Race* (Bradman & Holman, 1995), 95).

Fourth, Start: An Easter-evidenced faith starts some things new. Here are two new starts that you might want to incorporate in your life. In Lorraine Kisly's literal translation of this section of "The Lord's Prayer" (the Prayer of Fire: Experiencing the Lord's Prayer (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2004), 39-40). Instead of "Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will be done, On Earth, As it is in Heaven"... here's how it comes out in literal English: come, the kingdom of you, Be done, the will of you, Be manifest, the glory of you. Let us use this as a mantra throughout each day...and see what new spiritual energies don't start circulating in your life. Or here's another "start" I stole it from my favorite author Anne Lamott. Lamott has recently added a third prayer to her two favorite daily prayers: in the morning, "Help me, help me, and help me." In the evening, at bedtime "Thank you, thank you, and thank you." But she recently added a third, to be said many times throughout the day. "Wow!" Jesus is Lord!

Blessings-Pastor

Pastor Sundar



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LECTIONARY FOR JUNE

June 7 - Trinity Sunday - 1st Sunday after Pentecost - Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Psalm 8;
2 Corinthians 13:11-13;
Matthew 28:16-20



June 14 - FATHER'S DAY— 2nd Sunday after Pentecost - Genesis 18:1-15;
Psalms 116:1-2, 12-19; Romans 5:1-8; Matthew 9:35-10:8 (9-23)

June 21 - 3rd Sunday after Pentecost - Genesis 21:8-21; Psalms 86:1-10, 16-17 or Ps 17;
Romans 6:1b-11, Matthew 10:24-39

June 28 - 4th Sunday after Pentecost - Genesis 22:1-14; Psalm 13; Romans 6:12-23;
Matthew 10:40-42

PEACE WITH JUSTICE SUNDAY

Peace with Justice Sunday is the first Sunday after Pentecost. Join us on June 7, 2020, as we gather for our online worship service to celebrate this important churchwide ministry.



As a connectional church, we combine our resources so that we have a larger impact in the world. In 2019, United Methodist churches gave \$433,437 toward ministries funded by the Peace with Justice Sunday offering. Thank you for your generous gifts. Fifty percent of the offering remains in the annual conference to support local and regional justice efforts, and 50 percent supports justice ministries through the General

Board of Church and Society

We will worship together online and renew our commitment to resist evil, injustice and oppression on behalf of the vulnerable.

Online giving to Peace with Justice Sunday offering is available at :
www.umcsgiving.org/givepwjs. Thank you for your generous giving.

WORSHIP DURING TIME OF PANDEMIC

Worshipping during these trying times has found most of us watching Sunday morning services from our living rooms over the internet via Facebook. If a pandemic had to occur at all, these modern times with the availability of the internet has been a blessing so that we can still come together. While we have been quarantined a new group has taken over our church. Notice they are self-distancing while enjoying the wonderful music and sermons.



News from University at Albany Cornerstone Campus Ministry

Chaplain Sandy Damhof, Protestant Campus Minister at UAlbany reports, "This semester of Campus Ministry sure did end in a strange way." They offered online worship each Sunday as well as Zoom programs throughout the week, and they honored seniors with a special Zoom event and a "graduation in a box" package.



One of the graduating seniors that was honored was our Peer Minister, Brendan Murtagh. He tells us that his family had a celebration at home. Because of the pandemic his job situation is not what he had expected, but he is optimistic about his prospects.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Hello Families,

I hope everyone is well during these continually challenging times. This past month I have been researching better ways to continue Sunday School at home. Facebook and e-mail for Sunday School didn't meet all of the needs of our program. I have found that the best platform to do this will be SeeSaw going forward. SeeSaw is a free teacher based platform that allows students to interact with one another in their own time, complete and share their work if they wish to. Many students may already be using SeeSaw for school right now. If your student is interested, please send me an email (EGChristianEdFUMC@gmail.com) and I will gladly add them to the list and send you the instructions for how to login. One of my personal goals this year has been to give our children and teens resources to continue learning and interacting with each other at home. I believe that SeeSaw will allow our Sunday School program to be able accomplish this.



As we anticipate what would be the typical end of the year, I have also been working on developing a contingency plan for Vacation Bible School as well should the current restrictions continue throughout the summer. There will be more information to come via e-mail and Facebook, so stay tuned.

As always, if you have any question or concerns please feel free to reach me either via the e-mail listed above or by phone (518) 368-5724.

Blessings,
Amanda Trainor

UNITED METHODIST YOUTH

As Summer rolls around, this is usually a busier time of the year. There is still so much we can look forward to. When groups get back together so will we. I hope everyone is well. I am here if you need anything.

I would also like to take this time to congratulate the seniors of Youth Group:
Grace Templeton
Kassandra Gran
Noah Milan



"What we learn with pleasure we never forget" - Alfred Merclet
Best of Wishes for the future, please remember to check in, say hi and remember; all things are possible through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

I would also like to congratulate the junior high youth that will now be joining the senior high Youth Group:
Caroline Rumsey
Kevin Clark
Victor Giso

Lastly, I would like to welcome all the 5th graders to Youth Group!

Junior Youth Group will still continue when groups are able to met. These are all big moments for the youth. I hope you all have a wonderful Summer. We will be in touch.

God Bless,
Amber

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN



After many e-mails flying back and forth, the UMW has decided we will need to cancel the annual Fall Thrift Sale. If you are unable to hold on to your donations until Spring, then please donate them to a worthy cause. We still plan to hold the Brooks Barbecue in October providing the company is allowed to bring the barbecue to us. At this time we are still anticipating holding the annual Roast Beef Dinner in November. We will keep you posted on any changes that may occur.

MISSIONS

SOLAR ENERGY

What do Dorothy and Ed Young, Neal Calvin, Art Sanderson and Tom and Cindy McLaughlin have in common? They have Common Energy community solar. They signed up through the church's [referral link](#) so not only do they get their electrical power from the sun and save 10% on energy, but both they and the church receive \$50 in solar credits for doing so. Yet they are not the only ones with clean energy. Patty and Chris Chartrand, David Caneen, the parsonage, Kevin and Cindy Conley, Fred and Kate Henson and (soon) Gary Klee all get their energy from the sun. If you have rooftop solar or another renewable energy source, please let us know at eco-team@fumceg.org so that we can track the growth of renewable energy in our church.

RECYCLING DROP-OFF

Please drop-off the Styrofoam, batteries and old sneakers that you've been saving to the church parking lot by the garage on Saturday, June 6 from 9:30 am - 11:00 am. We will be there at a suitable distance to put the items into bags. Please remove the laces from the sneakers. Styrofoam must be clean, free of tape and staples. Styrofoam food containers are not accepted.



FILM PLASTICS

The statewide ban on plastic bags will be enforced in June. Though stores will not use plastic bags, they will still recycle film plastics. These include garment bags, retail bags with string ties removed, newspaper bags, dry cleaning bags, produce bags, bread bags, cereal bags, over wrap from paper products (paper towels, toilet paper, etc), stretch/shrink wrap, zip top food storage bags, bubble wrap, air pillows found inside shipping packages (must be deflated), shipping envelopes (labels removed), furniture and electronic wrap and any film packaging or bag with the "How2Recycle" label indicating that it is plastic film. Note: All materials must be CLEAN and dry and ALL food residue should be removed. Receipts should also be removed. Source: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/50042.html>

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY

Our 9th season of participation in Adopt-a-Highway will begin on **Saturday, June 6.** We will plan on meeting at church at **8:00 AM** to pick up trash bags, vests, helmets and trash-grabbers. Our "adopted" two-mile section of highway is on Routes 9 & 20 between the Schodack Walgreen's and the Holy Spirit Catholic Church. If you can spare an hour, we would appreciate your help. (Rain date the following Saturday)

