



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# THE BELL

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

VOLUME 20, ISSUE 4

APRIL 2018

## 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](http://www.fumceg.org)

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**Church Office Hours:**  
9 am to 2:30 pm, M - F

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[UMYF@fumceg.org](mailto:UMYF@fumceg.org)

**Rev. Sundar R. Samuel,**  
*Pastor*

**Gail Welkley,**  
*Administrative Assistant*

## Dear Members and Friends,

The Purdue basketball team announced that their center Isaac Haas was probably out of the NCAA with a fractured right elbow. Every sport seems to come with occupational hazards. Take baseball. Baseball pitchers tend to end up with gimpy, arthritic elbows. Take football. Football players can end with rickety, rocky knees. Take ballet. Ballet dancers almost always end up with the most gnarled, knobbed, ugly stumpy feet you can imagine. In fact, once you've seen a dancer's unslipped foot, you can never watch the grace and beauty, the fluid movement across the floor into the air, in the same way. How can they move so seemingly effortlessly on such bandaged bunioned, blistered feet? But for the sake of the dance, the ballerina gladly submits to the gradual, torturous deformation of her foot.

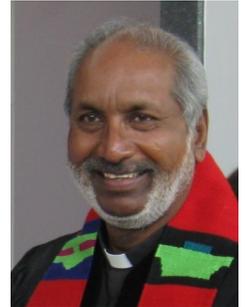
A few years before Mother Theresa died, Shane Claiborne, a social justice activist, had the opportunity to work and worship with the Sisters of Charity in Calcutta. In keeping with Eastern tradition, Mother Theresa and all the sisters ritually take their shoes off as they kneel and enter into the hallowed ground of prayer.

Shane was stunned to see that when Mother Theresa's feet were unshod, they were so gnarled and twisted they appeared to be crippled and deformed by some malady. After prayer Shane inquired of one sister, "What disease caused Mother Theresa's feet to look like that?"

"Oh, it's not a disease," the sister replied, "It's just that when the community receives a new donation of shoes, Mother always has everyone else choose first. She only wears whatever shoes are left over." A lifetime of wearing mismatched, undersized, broken out, crumpled-up shoes had transformed Mother Theresa's own feet into mismatched, undersized, broken and crumpled appendages. Mother Theresa's feet reflected her dedication, her complete submersion of self in mission, in witness, in love-for-neighbor. The grace-filled dance of her life was carried out on ugly, wounded feet.

When Jesus appeared before his disciples, they were both terrified and overjoyed. Their typical human reactions and expectations led them to rejoice that their master was alive and

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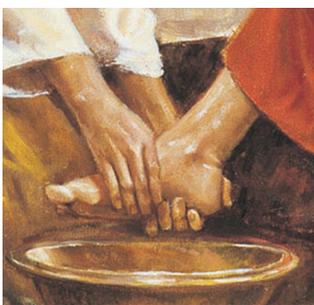
*A Reconciling Congregation*

(Continued from page 1)

yet recoil with horror because they knew that Jesus had been killed so brutally on the cross. To convince them that he is flesh and bone Jesus gets right down to the nitty-gritty, grubby reality of physical existence. He shows them his hands and his feet, before they think that he is some sort of ghost, an otherworldly apparition, unpredictable and dangerous.

This might not seem very dramatic to us. But in Eastern culture feet are considered the dirtiest, most uncouth and unclean part of the human body. By showing his hands and feet Jesus demonstrates not only the physical reality of his flesh and blood; not only reveals again the wounds from the nails that had held him on the cross until he died. But Jesus also shows his disciples the shockingly common, grubby and grungy realness of his resurrected self. Jesus' real-life feet are dusty and dirty, pierced and bloody. Like all human feet they're an affront to the eastern sense of decency and decorum.

Since throughout his ministry their Master had always been doing and saying things that shocked common sensibilities, it may have been this action, more than anything else, that helped convince the doubting disciples that it was in fact Jesus himself standing before them.



Who else but Jesus would stick his feet up in the faces of his friends and ask them to take a good look, even to touch them!

Feet and shoes have deep significance in the East, a significance lost on Westerners. As one commentator raised with the proper Eastern perspective explains it: "The foot occupies the lowest rung in the bodily hierarchy and the shoe, in addition to being something in which the foot is placed, is in constant contact with dirt, soil and worse. The sole of the shoe is the most unclean part of an unclean object. In northern India, where I grew up, the exhortation 'Jote maro!' ('Hit him with shoes!') was invoked when one sought to administer the most demeaning punishment... In the Muslim world, according to Hume Horan, a former U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia, 'to have the sole of the shoe directed toward one is pretty much the equivalent of someone in our culture giving you the finger.' Matthew Gordon, a historian of Islam, says that since one takes one's shoes off before entering a mosque -- as a way of maintaining the purity of the place of worship -- 'the use of a shoe as something to hit you with is an inversion, directing impurity and pollution at the object of the beating.'" (Tunku Vardarajan, "Expressive Soles: Footloose, Tyranny-Free," *The Wall Street Journal*, 11 April 2003, W13.)

The feet were seen as the dirtiest part of the human body. Bar none. When Jesus knelt down to wash his disciples' feet, when the resurrected Jesus invited his disciples to touch his feet, he was teaching all his followers not to lose their footing.

The church wants the world at its feet. But the place for the church is at the feet of Jesus, who sends his people out to work at the feet of the world. Have you lost your footing? Do you want people sitting at your feet? Or are you willing to get down and dirty and kneel at the feet of the world's need?

Have a blessed spring!

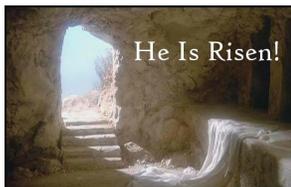
Grace and Peace,  
*Pastor Sundar*

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## WORSHIP AT FUMC IN APRIL

Let's begin this month and this first day of April with music. To participate in a "Random Act of Culture", click on [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wp\\_RHnQ-jgU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wp_RHnQ-jgU). According to *Sacred Classics*, the organ music you are hearing is coming from the *world's* largest pipe organ, the Wanamaker organ in Macy's Department Store in Philadelphia. It's 28,765 pipes big. And do you know where the *world's next largest* pipe organ is located, in a very prominent place less than 120 miles from our church?



**April 1** is Easter Day. Instead of Early Worship this Sunday we will have an Easter Sunrise Service at 6:30 am in the Chapel in the Woods, weather permitting. There will be two morning worship services this Sunday, one at 9:30 am and one at 11:00 am.

**April 8** is the Second Sunday of Easter

**April 12** - This Thursday is Yom HaShoah or, in English, Holocaust Remembrance Day, observed as Israel's day to commemorate the loss of the approximately six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

**April 15** is the Third Sunday of Easter. It is Native American Ministries Sunday, one of the six special Sundays with offerings all across The United Methodist Church. See page 4 for more information.

**April 22** is the Fourth Sunday of Easter. This is the day to observe Earth Day which celebrates God's gift of the earth, our planetary home. This special Sunday is an annual event programed under the leadership of Creation Justice Ministries. This year they tell us, "Our 2018 theme is "Sense of Place" and offers insights about living in harmony with local ecosystems and watersheds, rightly sharing places with a diversity of peoples, and respecting the history of your place."



**April 29** is the Fifth Sunday of Easter.

Pastor Sundar is planning on preaching each Sunday in April. Early worship continues at 8:30am each Sunday except Easter. Worship at Riverside this month will be on **Sunday, April 8**, and at Rosewood on **Tuesday, April 24**.

*Here is the lectionary for April:*

April 1 **Easter Day** Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; I Corinthians 15:1-11; John 20:1-18 or Mark 16:1-8

April 8 **Second Sunday of Easter** Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 133; 1 John 1:1-2:2; John 20:19-31

April 15 **Third Sunday of Easter** Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48

April 22 **Fourth Sunday of Easter** Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18

April 29 **Fifth Sunday of Easter** Acts 8:26-40; Psalm 22:25-31; 1 John 4:7-21; John 15:1-8



### HANDBELL SCHEDULE CHANGES

Change in music rehearsal schedule: **no** CHIMettes on **Monday, April 2nd** and **no** EmbELLishments on **Tuesday, April 3rd**.

## NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY IS APRIL 15



Together, we empower local spiritual development and educate Native American seminary students to serve God faithfully. One tribe in North America has told this story for centuries: when people "pale as birch" crossed the great water in large canoes, they brought with them "The Black Book".

However, the bringers of the physical Book could not have known what it would mean and look like to be Native and a follower of Jesus. Today Native Americans – with many unique languages, many unique cultures – honor their heritage, and live as Jesus-followers, led by a rotation of primarily Native American pastors. As members of UMC, your gift, on this day, equips Native congregations – like New York's Onondaga Native UMC and Nebraska's Native American Sacred Wings Congregation – to worship and serve as only they can. Our giving allows Native Americans to Encounter, Worship and Serve Jesus.

-- adapted from [www.umcgiving.org](http://www.umcgiving.org)

## EDUCATION MINISTRY

The Education Ministry is working to bring a variety of learning experiences and opportunities to children, youth and adults in our church. There are 5 teams: Sunday School, Youth Program, Vacation Bible School, Bible Study/Discussion groups and Special Topics, each with a team leader and team members. Lots of ideas for the remainder of this year and goals for next year are being developed. We need a volunteer Team Leader for two special topic, one-time programs, one program for the fall and one for the spring of 2019. Please contact Carrie Larson if you would like to help with this component of the Christian Education Ministry.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Spring is here! Mark your calendars! The Sunday school children and youth will soon begin preparing for **Children's Day!** Children's Day is **Sunday, June 10th**, with the picnic immediately following the service.

The **CONFIRMATION CLASS** only has about 2 months left of classes! It seems like we just began! One of the things still on our program is a visit to John Street UMC in New York City, "The Oldest Methodist Congregation in America". That trip will be **Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup>**. Then, on **Sunday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>** we will have our Confirmation Service. Please come and support our confirmation students on this very special day. They have worked hard all year. There will be a Garden Party after the service in honor of the confirmation class; all are welcome to attend.

This is a model of the rigging loft where the Methodist society of New York City met in 1767-1768, before building their church on John Street.



## UNITED METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Wow, it's Spring of 2018 and I am more excited than ever. Part of why I love spring is because of my Birthday but now I love spring even more because there are so many exciting Youth activities planned, and the weather is usually nicer. Fingers crossed that the snow is done until Next Year.

### APRIL

#### Sr. High

**April 22**, 11:00am - 1:00pm, Youth Group and Lunch. This youth group we will be having a competition to see who can get the most for their budget. We will be splitting up into

*(Continued on page 5)*

(Continued from page 4)

two teams (I do need a parent chaperone who also can drive). Each team will have a list of items to get for the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society; each team will have the same time and budget to get the items. We will then return to the church where each team will then come up with a display to be judged. Lunch will be pizza.

**April 27** - Game night, 7:00pm - 9:00pm.



Planning our Budget

### **Jr. High (All 5th grade are invited to youth group starting April 29th)**

**April 8th**, 10:45 am -12:30 pm, Youth Group and Lunch. We will be going over the rules of **Outword!** and what is expected from the Youth. We will also be playing Games, and other youth meeting agenda items.

**April 29th**, 10:45 am -12:30 pm, Youth Group and Lunch, inviting all 5th graders to stay for Youth Group. This youth group we will be having a competition to see who can get the most for their budget. We will be splitting up into two teams (I do need a parent chaperone who also can drive). Each team will have a list of items to get for the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society; each team will have the same time and budget to get the items. We will then return to the church where each team will then come up with a display to be judged. Lunch will be pizza.

### **Both Youth Groups**

**Outword! April 13-15.** Stay tuned for more details (for the youth that are attending)

**May 4-6** Camping Trip

More youth dates and fun activities to come!

Please let me know if you're able to chaperone any of the youth group meetings. We are always looking for a chaperone.

God Bless,

*Amber Biechman*

### **UMYF BEYOND OUR LOCAL CHURCH - CORE**

Laura Clark, the Albany **District Council on Youth Ministry (DCYM)** leader, joined youth from both our church and other churches in the Albany District at a **CORE Event** at Skye Farm, March 23rd and 24th. The youth named this event **CORE**...it stands for **C**onnecting **O**ur **R**eligious **E**xperiences. Photos of attendees will be on the Education/Youth bulletin board...see who attended and ask them about their experiences at Skye Farm during the weekend.

### **CALLING ALL ACOLYTES**

We need acolytes for the remainder of the school year. If your child has taken the training and would like to serve as an acolyte, please check your e-mail for the sign-up notification and reserve your spot. Additionally we are in need of adult acolyte mentors to sign-up weekly to assist the acolyte.



Do you have a 4<sup>th</sup> grader who would like to be an acolyte? Is your child interested but hasn't had the training? There will be training during Sunday School on **April 8<sup>th</sup>** and **29<sup>th</sup>**. Please see Laura Flynn, Rachel Giso, or Diana Valenichis for more information.

**Acolyte.** Do you know what the word means? If you just want to be more informed about this ministry, click on this link, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZGUtqBDY7Q> to watch "Chuck Knows Church".

## NEWS ABOUT THE NEW SEASON AT SKYE FARM



Want to know more about Skye Farm? Trying to decide if you should have your boy or girl attend Skye Farm for a week this summer? Day Camp/Open House at Skye Farm gives families a chance to meet staff and experience some fun camp activities. The special day this year is **Saturday, May 26** from 10:00am to 3:00pm. Contact our church office to get on the list for a potential group to attend this one day event. The office also has information about similar programs at the other Upper New York Conference camp sites.

Registration for the summer programs at Skye Farm is now open. There is an Early Bird Discount if you register your camper before **Tuesday, May 1**. Go to the website [www.skyefarmcamp.org](http://www.skyefarmcamp.org) for complete information.

## UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Albany District UMW Spring Meeting is **Saturday, April 21** at Calvary United Methodist Church, 15 Ridge Place, Latham. Registration deadline is **Friday, April 13** (our UMW group provides the registration fee). The guest speaker will be from the Interfaith Rescue Mission in Albany. If you are interested in attending, please contact Kathy Van Buren or Cynthia Reineke.

Albany District UMW is collecting items for the *Haven of Hope Farm and Residence* in Fonda. You can bring your donations to the church before **Saturday, April 21** (so we can take them to the district meeting) and drop them off in the box in the foyer. Here is what we need: trash bags, diapers/wipes, toilet paper, paper towels, feminine hygiene items, plastic wrap, laundry and cleaning supplies, shampoo and conditioner, soap, disposable razors, toothpaste and brushes, dental floss.



Our Spring Thrift Sale setup begins on **Sunday, April 29th** after church. We need help with every aspect of setup and cleanup. You name it, we need it. Remember last fall, we cleaned up in record time. Let's have that happen again.

Things/donations we are looking for: all clothing, housewares, linens, books, CDs, toys, jewelry, crafts and small furniture. **No** construction materials, or old TVs.

The Thrift Sale dates and hours are **Friday, May 4<sup>th</sup>** from 5-8pm and **Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup>** (Bag Day) from 9am to 12noon.

UMW quick notes:

- **Monday, April 2** at 7:00 pm is our next regular meeting.
- We are hosting the Lee Pierce Memorial Luncheon on **Saturday, April 7<sup>th</sup>**.
- The UMW Bulletin Board is getting full. Check what people are grateful for.
- There are books from the Church Library that are getting discarded and will be placed in the Thrift Sale. If you would like to take a look and take your favorite, please do.

## PLANT SALE TO BENEFIT GOFF GARDEN MISSION MAY 4



Indoor and outdoor plants, bulbs and seedlings are needed for the Plant Sale during the Thrift Sale **Friday, May 4**. Do you have any extras to share? All proceeds of the sale are used for Vegetable Plants and Seeds and Supplies for our church garden at the Goff Middle School. Fresh, nutritious, delicious vegetables are grown and delivered all summer to CoNSERNS-U Food Pantry, serving Southern Rensselaer County. **Sunday, May 20** will be our official planting morning (watch for more info). If you are interested in planting, weeding, harvesting, or delivering please contact us. Thank you.

*Aleta Schweigert, Linda Marschner, Ricky Lettrick*

# CHANGE THE WORLD *Sunday*

**On Sunday, May 20, our church will be observing our fifth Change the World Sunday.** In today's world filled with fear, worry, poverty, crime and corruption, it's especially important to be involved in helping to make a difference. Change the World Sunday is a world-wide event which seems to be gaining momentum. Congregations leave their pews, put on their work clothes and go out to share Christ's love.

We will meet at church as usual at 9:30. Following a brief worship service, we will head out into the community and then return for a delicious lunch and fellowship at Noon. What projects will we be involved in this year?

- Visiting our Veterans at the VA Center in Albany
- Helping with cleaning at St. Paul's Women's and Children's Shelter in Rensselaer
- Preparing and delivering lunches to the Homeless at Interfaith Partnership in Albany
- Preparing cards and May Baskets for residents of Riverside Nursing Home in Castleton
- Working in the Goff and Luke Gardens
- Visiting the elderly and shut-ins
- Preparing lunch for all of our volunteers
- Bringing donations to and touring the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society
- Make Your Own Sunday - Reach out to someone who needs to experience Christ's love

**How will you get involved this year?** We encourage participants to sign-up in advance on the Missions bulletin board at church to help us in planning. Please feel free to call the church office for more information at 518-477-9693. We look forward to seeing you!



A Helping Hand  
Can Change the World

## STYROFOAM RECYCLING

By popular demand, Styrofoam recycling will return on Earth Day, **Sunday, April 22nd**. Please bring your Styrofoam peanuts and blocks to the garage at the far end of the church parking lot before or after the 9:30 am service. 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.

## KNITTING/CROCHETING MISSION

Do you know someone or a group looking for a wonderful community service project? How about joining our Knitting/Crocheting group? Their mission: To create soft, warm, handmade gifts to show that we care and support others. Afghans for the VA Hospital, Tiny Blankets and Hats for preemie babies at Albany Med, Red Scarves for foster care college kids ([fc2success.org](http://fc2success.org)), Hats for children with cancer ([hatsgiving.org](http://hatsgiving.org)), Blankets for children who are ill ([projectlinus.org](http://projectlinus.org)) and....



We can teach you the basics of making any of these gifts. We can also provide yarn for anyone who wants to help with any of these projects. Donations of yarn would be appreciated, too. We also have a supply of knitted shawls available for anyone to give or receive. If you know someone who may need a snuggle, please take one. Contact Aleta Schweigert 518-479-3182 with any questions or suggestions (specific sizes needed by these organizations, etc.).

## FINDING JOY IN SERVICE



Last fall, the Missions Ministry received a request for assistance from a member of the Emmaus United Methodist Church. Rachel John, a high school junior, was interested in participating in the Mission of Peace trip to Cuba sponsored by the Northeastern Jurisdiction Council on Youth Ministries. Our ministry team was very willing to support Rachel. We invited Rachel to come and speak to the congregation about her experience which she gladly did in February. Rachel was eager to thank us for our support and was also interested in sharing some highlights of her trip. Please read the short interview below to find out more about this energetic and enthusiastic young disciple.

**Q. Rachel, what can you tell us about your recent trip to Cuba?**

A. Mission of Peace partnered with the Cuban Connection Ministries (CCM). Through them we were able to work with a handicapped children's ministry and work on the CCM pineapple farm. We were also able to learn Cuban history in order to break Cuban stereotypes. One thing that surprised me was how safe I felt in a communist country.

**Q. You have also been involved in Project Chacocente in Nicaragua. Tell us about that.**

A. I went there with the Genesee Valley District. We focused more on building relationships and forming connections with the families who were moved out of the city dump.

**Q. Your next trip will be to South Africa. What are your plans there?**

A. This **July** I will be going to South Africa for Global Young People's Convocation. I am the only youth from Upper New York going. While at GYPC I intend to worship with youth from around the world, develop as a leader while learning from other young people who come from different countries and cultures, and participate in a legislative forum where issues being faced by the church will be discussed (any legislation produced will go directly to the General Conference of the UMC).

**Q. What motivated you to get involved in helping others?**

A. I was motivated to help others from a young age. I was surrounded by family members who would go out of their way to support others and I saw how that made



them feel good inside and the effect they had on others. After seeing this, I decided to try it out myself. I became a supportive figure to many who knew me. I find joy in helping others in need, and it gives me a sense of fulfillment. I can't imagine not helping people when I can. There have been a multitude of people who have encouraged me to pursue the opportunities that have given me these experiences.

**Q. You are presently finishing up your junior year in high school. What are your plans after graduation?**

A. After high school I plan to attend nursing school. From there I will decide whether I should attend med school or get my masters in nursing. My overall goal is to set up a charity that provides medical care to places around the world that don't necessarily have access to medical aid. In short, missionary medicine is what I plan to do in the future.

**Q. How can we encourage other young people to get involved in spreading God's love?**

A. One way is to open their eyes to all of the opportunities our Conference has to offer. Many times, young people all around our jurisdiction don't know about all of the good they can do through their Conference. I feel we don't do a very good job spreading information of the youth-related programs that we have. Many might also think that they can't do it. So, they need someone to constantly encourage them and guide them. A good way to get started is to join the District Council on Youth Ministries (DCYM).



We thank Rachel for providing us with some food for thought as we try to prepare more leaders to do very important and necessary work. We wish Rachel all the best as she continues to be the hands, feet and compassionate heart of Christ. May God continue to bless her.

### THE INTERFAITH CENTER IS CLOSING



For the last **50+** years the Interfaith Center at the University at Albany has served as the home for Interfaith Work, and the home of Cornerstone Campus Ministry, Hillel, and Newman Catholic Ministry. In December 2016, the building was sold to the University and now UAlbany has made the decision to close the building. Please join us **Saturday, May 19** from 6:00 pm–9:00 pm as we share the end of an era, as we honor the work that has been done and mark the closing of the building. The event is open to all students, alumni and congregational partners who have been at the center of our work. Watch the Sunday bulletin for more details and specifics. See George Herrick if you have any questions.

### LEE PIERCE MEMORIAL SERVICE

Carrie Pierce and her family want to extend our thanks for all who offered support following the death of Lee Pierce. At times like these, we find out what it means to be a part of a Church Family. We received many beautiful cards with thoughtful messages and also shared hugs with our church friends. So many of you wrote of how much Lee's music has meant to you over the 54 years that he was a part of the church music ministry. We are having a Memorial Service to celebrate Lee's life of music on **Saturday, April 7<sup>th</sup>** at 11:00 am, with lunch to follow in Fellowship Hall. We hope you will be able to join us for this time for sharing memories.

## **FAMILY SUPPORT MINISTRY (Formerly the Long Term Family Assistance Fund)**

"You are not alone" writes a family who participated in our church's Family Support Ministry. The family writes "...prior to our most unfortunate situation...things were going very well for us financially and [we] thought nothing like what we were about to face would ever happen to us." The family worked hard with a total of 3 part time jobs and 2 full time jobs. When the unexpected and unexplainable happened, they were reduced to 1 full time job to meet all expenses.



"We did what we could to help ourselves as our income drastically changed, our living expenses were the same and sometimes even needed more than what we had for resources....we reached out to apply for food stamps and we applied for HEAP. We were always denied...federal agencies didn't consider the deductions such as health insurance, taxes and social security [as they considered our need]." The family describes unrelenting stress for over 18 months, tears as they applied for food at food banks and then asked for help from the Church.

Help came in the form of meeting with a team leader from the church's Family Support Ministry where "...we allowed her to ask us many personal questions"...we developed a plan to meet their needs until their circumstances changed. With help from the Minister, our team leader and your contributions to the Family Support Ministry, "...we got help with food, gas, car repairs, rent, etc."...and support to go to food banks where the family describes receiving much needed food and emotional support. They continued that through this humbling and frightening experience, they "somehow managed to keep our Faith, we still prayed daily even if only at meals, and be present whenever possible...PLEASE KNOW THAT YOU ARE NOT ALONE...we were reminded that it is all in God's timing and that things would get better," and they did.

Our church community helped this family in their time of need...a set of circumstances unasked for and never before experienced...a humbling time in their wilderness. This family, in their testimony as to the much needed support they received from their Pastor, church friends and Family Support Ministry team, remind us all of how fragile our sense of security is, of how quickly unexpected circumstances change our lives, and how quickly the feeling of being abandoned and alone can leave us questioning our faith. This family shares that when you are in trouble due to unexpected and major losses and life changes, you can turn to your church family, especially the Family Support Ministry, and seek help.

..."Above all, please know you are not alone and it will get better...reach out to your team leader or a team member. They will be there for you...this scripture passage helped our family and let it help yours as well. We don't know who you are, or what your current situation is, but have prayed every day for those receiving help that they can get through their situation as we did and will be praying for you and your family as well with Grace and Dignity as it says in Matthew 25:40...Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."

We thank this family for their courage in sharing some of their experiences with our church's Family Support Ministry program. If you need help, please talk with Pastor Sundar, Carrie Larson, John Schmidt, Beth Berkun (our Lay Leader) or any one with whom you feel comfortable. Also, we gratefully THANK YOU for writing a check to the Family Support Ministry so we can continue this important program in our church.

## **ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER**



The New York State Council of Churches' Third Annual Awards Dinner will be held **Thursday, May 3 from 5:30 to 8:30 P.M.** at St. Sophia Orthodox Church in Albany. Please mark your calendars. Awards will be given to people who have distinguished

themselves in these areas: Chaplaincy, Christian formation and Liturgy, Ecumenism, and Social Witness. See George Herrick or contact our church office for more information.

## INVITATION TO NEW MEMBERS

Pastor Sundar and our Membership and Evangelism Committee will be holding a meeting for prospective new members on **Sunday, April 15** following morning worship. This meeting will be for all who would like to officially become members of The United Methodist Church and First UMC East Greenbush, people who would like to transfer their membership from another church, people who would like to join us on profession of faith, and people who would like to establish dual membership with their current church and with First UMC East Greenbush. Please speak with Pastor Sundar as soon as possible to get on the list for the meeting on **April 15<sup>th</sup>**. We anticipate new members will be received during morning worship on **Sunday, April 29<sup>th</sup>**.



### From the Editor

- ◆ Help keep our **office records** up-to-date. If you will be away for an extended period, or you are returning home from being away, please leave a current/temporary address with our Administrative Assistant.
- ◆ **Florence Skiff** has a new address and phone number. She resides now at 713 24th Street, Apt. 2, Watervliet, NY 12189. Florence's new phone number is 518-560-1440.
- ◆ Did you mark your calendar for **Vacation Bible School**? VBS this year is being held **Monday, July 30 to Friday, August 3**. The program is **SHIPWRECKED Rescued by Jesus**. For more information, contact Jessica Kurimsky, Rachel Giso or Jessica Sweeney.
- ◆ We are again going to clean up! Our first **Adopt-A-Highway Program** day for the New Year is **Saturday, April 7**. We will be collecting trash along a two-mile section of Routes 9 & 20 from the Schodack Rite-Aid to Holy Spirit Catholic Church. DOT supplies the helmets, vests, bags and trash grabbers. We hope you will consider joining us. Meet at the church at 8:00 am. Bring work gloves!
- ◆ Join us for lunch if you are "of an age..." The Membership and Evangelism Committee will be hosting a **Senior Lunch** in the Fellowship Hall on **Wednesday, April 18** at 12 noon. Come and share in a refreshing meal, goodies for desert and a bit of entertainment. All are welcome. Please contact Mary McIntosh at 518-449-2746 or Sue Lemka at 518-477-9875 to let us know you will be attending.
- ◆ For some time our church has provided **worship leadership** once a month **at Riverside Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing Center in Castleton and at Rosewood Rehabilitation and Nursing Center on Route 4**. Both programs can use your support. Maybe you would like to plan and speak at a worship service, maybe you would like to lead some singing, or maybe you would like to attend and be a part of the worshipping group. Speak to Pastor Sundar or George Herrick for more information and to volunteer your services.



## NOTED EDUCATOR TO SPEAK



Dr. Mehnaz M. Afridi will deliver the 2018 Sidney Albert Interfaith spring lecture at The College of Saint Rose Hubbard Interfaith Sanctuary on **Tuesday, April 17** at 7:00pm. Her title is, "The Rise of Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Solutions and Challenges". Dr. Afridi is an Associate Professor of Religious studies and Director of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Interfaith Education Center at Manhattan College. The Hubbard Interfaith Sanctuary is located at 959 Madison Avenue in Albany. For questions and/or more information please call the Office of Spiritual Life at 518-454-5250.

## RECONCILING MINISTRIES

On a recent trip to New York City, these orange and white ribbons were spotted lining the fence in the front of Judson Memorial Church at Washington Square Park.



The church has this quote on its website, "Judson nurtures a common faith that, together, we'll reach the other side, and bring everyone along with us. We chart a deceptively obvious course for Christian practice, one that demands equality, sustainability, peace, and honest-to-God compassion. Our service never ends and finds its most potent realization in our commitment to justice, which includes LGBTQ, racial, immigrant, reproductive, climate, and many more concerns."

Our church has these lines in our Welcome Statement, "We proclaim this statement to welcome all who have known the pain of exclusion or discrimination in the church and society. We welcome the full inclusion of all people in the life and ministries of First United Methodist Church of East Greenbush. We invite all people to join us in our faith journey toward greater love, understanding, and mutual respect."

How similar are these two statements?

The Reconciling Ministry Team is planning a "**no reservation, no ticket brunch**" to follow morning worship on **Sunday, June 17<sup>th</sup>**, to celebrate the 11<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our church becoming a Reconciling Congregation. See George Herrick if you would like to help plan and/or prepare for this event. One thing, we do need people to make more Reconciling Ministry stoles for the Sundays in **June**.



The Reconciling Ministries Network has just announced that registration is now live for the 2018 Convocation of the LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR COALITION - **For Everyone Born!** It will be held in St. Louis, MO at the Hilton St. Louis Airport from **Thursday, July 26 - Sunday, 29, 2018**. The Early Bird discount only lasts until **Friday, April 20**, so be sure to register soon! See George Herrick for questions and more information.

## PRAYER FOR PEACE

May we do more than pray  
May we live into this hope [*of no more war*] by  
Teaching ourselves and our children  
How to live in peace with one another  
How to build peace between one another  
How to teach peace to others  
How to live Your peace in our world.

*Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell, <http://rev-o-lution.org>*

"And in the end, the love you take is  
Equal to the love you make."  
The Beatles

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*Pray For  
Peace*