



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# THE BELL

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

VOLUME 21, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2019

### *Sundays at FUMC:*

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

### *Also on Sundays:*

- ♦ Service at Hawthorne  
Ridge - 1:00 pm

### *We are on the Web:*

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

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Fax: 518-477-4336

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### *BELL/Bulletin (only)*

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Rev. Sundar R. Samuel,  
*Pastor*

Gail Welkley,  
*Administrative Assistant*

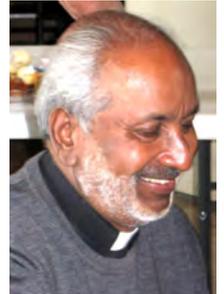
*Dear Members and friends,*

I wish you and yours a wonderful and a blessed New Year!

At the beginning of a new year it is customary for us to greet each other with "Happy New Year!" Do we mean "day" rather than "year"? We give the greeting on New Year's Day, but on the seventh day of the New Year, do we still say it? Are we wishing friends to be happy for only a day or for a whole year? How can one be happy for a whole year when the forecast for the New Year may predict unhappy times? Can you be happy if in the coming year you may have less to eat, if you must make old clothes do for another year, if a vacation is out of the question, and if you must worry about the bills coming due?

Regardless of conditions, we do want to be happy. Is there anyone there who does not want to be happy in the coming year? A teacher of a young adult class asked the students to write their answers to the question, "What do you want most out of life?" Nine out of ten answered, "Happiness." Psychology Today Magazine took a poll of 40,000 readers. Eighty-three percent responded that their main question was, "How can I find real happiness?" I believe if anybody should be happy, it is a Christian. But, is the average Christian known for his/her joy? Many think of a Christian in terms of solemnity, seriousness, and severity. Some of us are like the country boy whose grandmother forbade him to engage in "worldly amusements" on Sunday. Dejected and lonely, he walked down to the barn fence and while he was there, a mule came up and put his head into the boys' hands. Patting the sad face of the mule, the boy commiserated, "Poor fellow, you must be a Christian, too."

I believe that Christians have good reason to be the happiest people in the world. Their happiness is not based upon the condition of the world but upon the condition of their relationship to God and neighbor. They are happy because of the assurance of God's unconditional love. This is brought out by Prophet Isaiah in chapter 61: 1-11: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God..." Be happy about what? Be happy in the Lord; rejoice "in my God." And this is no ordinary worldly happiness. The text says, "I will greatly



*(Continued on page 2)*

*A Reconciling Congregation*

(Continued from page 1)

rejoice....” Thus our scripture text assures us that we can be happy this year regardless of what comes. We can be happy, for one thing, because we are free. Prophet Isaiah sings, “He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness...” Prophet Isaiah and his people had a great reason to be happy. God had delivered them from the 50-year bondage of the Babylonians, and now they were back in their own country as a free people. They were saved from their enemies.

As Christians we, too, can be happy because God has set us free through Christ. Now we are free from having to earn acceptance with God. There is no longer any problem how to be good enough to be acceptable to God. In his great mercy God in Christ paid the price of our sins and we are set free. Because of being free, we should be the happiest people on earth. But are we?

A Christian should feel the happiness of a newly released prisoner, for daily he/she receives the forgiveness of sins and he/she is accepted by God. A Christian can be happy all the coming year, because we are in love. We are in love with Jesus. We are in love with him, because he first loved us. Because he loves us, he understands our problems. We do not have to suffer or walk alone in this world. He understands what we are going through and he promises to be with us at all times and will take care of us as his beloved children. This frees us from worry about the things we worry about on a regular basis. He promises to us that he will provide for all our essential needs. We are happy because we are secure and happy in his love, and he will provide what we need.

There is another reason why you as a Christian can be happy throughout the coming year. It is because you can say in Christ, “I shall overcome.” A Christian lives with a sense of victory over the world. God’s cause of righteousness is sure to prevail just as each spring, nature comes to life again after the barren winter. This simply means to say that a Christian is happy even when things are bad, when life is in the winter season. Like every other person in the world, a Christian experiences the seamy side of life with disappointments, sorrows, tragedies, injustices, and misunderstandings. Suffering and death come to a Christian as well as to the non-Christian. The difference is that a Christian lives with a spirit of “I shall overcome,” just as our Lord has overcome death on the cross. Therefore, our happiness comes from a confidence in God’s overruling providence. We go through life with trust in these words, “All things work together for good to them that love God...” God can take the worst that comes to us and change it into the best for us.

In his mercy God takes the unfortunate things that befall us and make us better persons out of them. True Christians go through life with joy in their hearts, no matter what happens. They can even laugh at death, even when their dearest one dies. It is because as Christians we see beyond death and the grave to life, resurrection and return of Christ. Christ conquered death, and because Christ lives, those in Christ live, too. You know, if you and I follow the guidance of our text from the prophet Isaiah, we can have the happiest year of our lives. This is based on the fact that God is with us and for us. In the coming year God is going to do something good for us. Because of the “happy Day” when Jesus came into our lives, we can have a “happy New Year.” As Christians we enter the New Year with joyful anticipation, excitement and with high hopes for the very best!

Joy and Peace be with you,  
*Pastor Sundar*



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## WORSHIP AT FUMC IN JANUARY

Starting on the first day of the month, **January 1**, one of the lectionary readings is Ecclesiastes 3:1-13, with these lines familiar to many:

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:  
a time to be born, and a time to die;  
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;  
a time to kill, and a time to heal;  
a time to break down, and a time to build up. . ."

The first Sunday in **January, the 6<sup>th</sup>**, we celebrate the Epiphany of the Lord. Not too sure what that all means? Check out *Chuck Knows Church* at <https://chuckknowschurch.com/archive/59epiphany>.

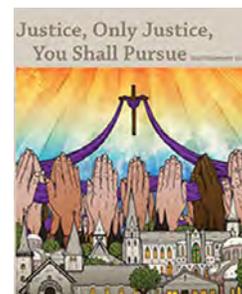
On **January 13**, the Baptism of the Lord includes this line in the gospel reading, John the Baptist speaking, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany is **January 20** which is also Human Relations Day. See page 6 of this BELL for more information about this day. The next day, **January 21** is Martin Luther King, Jr's birthday.

The last Sunday in the month, **January 27** is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany and is also Ecumenical Sunday. It follows this year's *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January 18-25)*.

'...this year's theme was chosen in order to explore the biblical text of Deuteronomy 16:20. "Justice, Only Justice, You Shall Pursue." ...The preparatory work on the theme for this year's week of prayer material was undertaken by a group of representatives of different Christian communities in Indonesia.'

Excerpted from [www.geii.org](http://www.geii.org)



Pastor Sundar will be in the pulpit for each of the four Sundays in January. In addition to our regular Sunday morning worship service at 9:30 am, we continue to have our early worship service at 8:30 am and a service at Hawthorne Ridge at 1:00 pm. A monthly service will be held at Riverside Nursing Home on **Sunday, January 6** and at Rosewood Rehabilitation Center on **Tuesday, January 22**. The youth-led contemporary service, *Friday Night Alive* is **Friday, January 25** at 7:00 pm.

Looking ahead, **Black History Month** begins **February 1** and Lent will begin with **Ash Wednesday** on **March 6**.

Here is the lectionary for January (all in the Year C):

January 6 **Epiphany Sunday** Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12;  
Matthew 2:1-12

January 13 **Baptism of the Lord/First Sunday After the Epiphany** Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29;  
Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 20 **Second Sunday After the Epiphany** Psalm 36:1-10; Isaiah 62:1-5;  
1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

January 27 **Third Sunday After the Epiphany** Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19;  
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21

## EDUCATION MINISTRY



Learning and exploring new thoughts was alive and well in 2018 and will continue into 2019. Sunday school and the Youth programs under the leadership of Heidi and Amber perk along with wonderful programs and experiences planned for the children and youth of our church. Bible study here and at Hawthorne Ridge continue with focus on challenging topics and sharing of ideas that help grow our Christian faith. The Tuesday Morning study group continues to challenge the minds, hearts and souls of those who attend. The first SOS (Supper On Sunday) in November was well attended and the topic of *Travel with a Focus*, this time the focus on mission activities, was very successful. Two more are planned in 2019. And finally, trainings on use of the defibrillators, active shooter training and the establishment of workable and knowable church safety plans are in the works to be unveiled soon. We would love to hear from you regarding topics or ideas for future Christian education programs.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

**January 6** is a **Super Sunday** for the Sunday School. It is PJ DAY!! It is the day that we get to wear our jammies to church! So roll out of bed and come to church! Breakfast will be served. Also, bring a favorite blanket or throw so we can be comfy cozy while listening to stories and singing.

**January 20** is a **SOUP AND BREAD fundraiser** for the Confirmation Class. It has been very popular in the past. The Confirmation Class will be serving soup and bread after church in the Fellowship Hall; take out will also be available. Donations will go toward their spring trip to New York City.



## UNITED METHODIST WOMEN



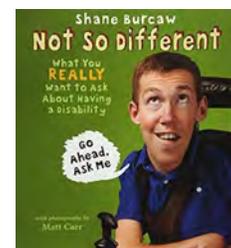
The UMW Bulletin Board has a new theme for 2019. Remember last year the theme was *What We Are Grateful For*. This year the theme is: "*What is your favorite Bible Verse(s)?*" There are many verses that come to mind. Write the one(s) you like best. There is pen and paper on the Bulletin Board. Have fun looking through the Bible.

The UMW's next meeting is **Monday, January 7** at 7:00pm in room 16. We are going over our budget for 2019. All are welcome.

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCH LIBRARY

The library has a challenge for everyone. Read a book in the library, other than one for a study group you might have attended and then write a critique about it. Put your critique in the library wall pocket in the church office. Our librarian will collect them and print them up for everyone to see.

What's new in our church library? How about Not So Different: what you really want to ask about having a disability, written by Shane Burcaw. The dust jacket introduces the book with, "My name is Shane, and I was born with a disease that makes my body grow smaller and weaker as I get older instead of bigger and stronger." Written for children ages 6 to 9, the book is an upbeat answer to many questions about living with a disability. All of us are unique individuals and everyone is welcome in our church, even young men like Shane.



## UNITED METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP



I can't believe its 2019. There is so much planned for this upcoming year; I can't wait for the fun we will have.

**January 6**, 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm at Jonesville UMC (plan to meet at our church around 3:00 pm). They are hosting their Winter Beach Party!!! And We GOT INVITED TO COME! We went a few years ago and it was so much fun. They had marshmallow dodge ball, sit down volleyball, and other fun summer games. They will also be providing a summer picnic style (hot dogs and hamburgers). Please wear colorful summer shirts (Hawaiian shirts would be best) and bring a beach towel. RSVP no later than **December 30**.

**January 11** -- Senior High Game Night -- 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Come play some fun new games and eat the best lollipops around!

**January 13** -- All Youth Group Meeting -- 11:00 am - 12:30 pm. During this meeting we will be planning the themes for *Friday Night Alive*.

Anyone who wants to go to **YOUTH 2019 in Kansas City** must be at this meeting. We will be planning our fundraisers. It will also be your last chance to bring your deposit in of \$100.00 to hold your spot. Lunch will be served at this meeting.

**January 25** -- *Friday Night Alive* -- 7:00 pm - 7:30 pm. We encourage all of you to attend this Youth Inspired worship service. Hope to see you there. Game Night follows, 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm.

**January 27** -- Junior High meeting -- 11:00 am - 12:30 pm. Please watch for the agenda. Lunch will be served.

For questions or comments, please email me at [youthleaderamber@gmail.com](mailto:youthleaderamber@gmail.com).



## CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS MUSICAL

This year's musical production by the Sunday School of *The Secret of Snowflake County—Hope In A Humble Stall* was a huge success. There were two shows, one on Saturday, December 15 and the other on Sunday, December 16. After the Sunday evening show, the United Methodist Women provided dinner for the cast and their families. A big thank you goes out to all the parents and children who made this production possible.

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE SURVEY – AN UPDATE

The Worship committee has collected the surveys that were submitted by December 16. The response has been tremendous! We want to thank everyone who took the time to reflect and write very thoughtful responses to each question. Information was gathered through Survey Monkey, on paper, at the October meeting and committee members' discussions with members of our congregation. Please know that we are working now and in the coming months to carefully compile the information that was given. Thank you again!



## THERE'S STILL TIME TO SHOW OUR SUPPORT!



Once again Pastor Mariana Rodriguez of Iglesia Cristiana Emmanuel has asked if we would donate new and gently used toys for children up to 12 years of age for their **Three Kings Celebration**, on **Sunday, January 6**. There is a box in the church foyer for donations of toys, books, stuffed animals, make-up, and games. Gift cards from Wal-Mart in \$10.00 or \$20.00 denominations can be turned directly into the office, or to John Schmidt for safekeeping. **Please do not wrap or tag the donations.** All are welcome to attend the service beginning at 3:00 pm at the Third Reformed Church, 20 Ten Eyck Avenue, Albany.

**iFeliz Navidad!**

-- Missions & Social Responsibility Ministry

## HUMAN RELATIONS DAY

Journey of Faith United Methodist Church in Humble, Texas, is making a difference in the lives of low-income families through a partnership with Head Start. With the help of a Human Relations Day grant, the church campus serves as home to the school-readiness program's center. Head Start is a federally funded program that prepares preschoolers from low-income families for kindergarten. In addition to educational instruction, the center serves meals and snacks, offers family and disability services and developmental screenings.



"We work on their social skills, their emotional skills, sometimes they have separation anxieties, listening skills. We just kind of work with them to give them the same advantage that some of the children would have if they're already in preschool programs or private programs," said Pamela Butler, senior manager for the program. Butler said she often hears from parents who are thankful for the program. She said they are amazed at the progress their kids show in such a short amount of time. "After being a part of our program, they're speaking, their social skills are ... much better. And they're ready for kindergarten ... What we offer here — we don't just look at the child, we look at the entire family. And, it really works. Head Start really works!"

Without Journey of Faith and United Methodists' generosity on Human Relations Day, many of these children would not have the same opportunities. When you give generously on Human Relations Day, **Sunday, January 20, 2019**, you encourage ordinary people to have a voice in changing the world. Give now.

Excerpted from <http://www.umcgiving.org>

## FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT FOR JANUARY 2019



The Stewardship and Finance Committee would like to thank everyone for their generous support, especially during the Financial Commitment Campaign for 2019. We were blessed to receive the responses showing your continued support for the ministries of our Church. The Finance Committee has been working hard to develop a budget for 2019 to support the ongoing ministries of our Church. While parts of the budget (i.e., staff salaries) have been approved by the Finance Committee and Church Council, the Finance Committee will be making revisions to the proposed 2019 budget based on feedback received from the Church Council. The Finance Committee will continue to work on the 2019 budget at its January meeting to present to the Church Council. We ask for your continued prayers as we work to ensure that we are good stewards of the gifts our Church has received.

## ECUMENICAL WITNESSES OF BAPTISM ANNUAL CELEBRATION

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!



Each time we have a baptism here at our church, among the participants are witnesses from other area Christian churches. They represent the Capital Area Council of Church's **Ecumenical Witness of Baptism** program. If you have an interest in being a witness or would just like to find out more about the program, you are invited to an annual celebration to be held **Sunday, January 13, 2019, 2:00 pm – 4:15 pm** at First Lutheran Church in Albany. Come gather in worship and fellowship and to learn about the Sacrament of Baptism from the Lutheran perspective.

## CORNERSTONE CAMPUS MINISTRY & CAPITAL AREA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES TEAM UP FOR -- "BOWLING FOR BEDS" BOWL-A-THON

Here's an opportunity for you to help make a difference! On **Saturday, February 9, 2019** members of our church will be participating in a "Bowling for Beds" Bowl-A-Thon to raise money for the Emergency Overflow Homeless Shelter in Albany. The event will be held at Del Lanes, 4 Bethlehem Court in Delmar. Homelessness and the need for additional shelter beds in Albany County continue to be a focus for the Capital Area Council of Churches (CACC). It is our belief that all people, regardless of a person's circumstances and behaviors, have a human right to obtain shelter from deadly weather and dangerous street-living. Since 2000 the CACC and First Lutheran Church of Albany have responded to this crisis by providing an Emergency Overflow Shelter with professionally trained staff, operating through the cold weather months, 7 days a week, 12 hours each day.



Children, Youth and Adults from around the capital region will be participating in the fund-raising event. The event is open to all ages, no previous experience necessary! Students from Cornerstone Campus Ministry at the University at Albany will be assisting the planning team with hosting the event. Participants will be encouraged to get pledges and work toward our common goal of raising at least \$10,000 toward the work of the shelter.

To sign up to bowl, to make a donation or for more information, see George Herrick.

## JANUARY BLOOD DRIVE



Mark your calendar for **Friday, January 25, 2019** if you are able to donate blood. The bloodmobile will be here from 2:00 pm - 7:00 pm. You can sign up online at the Red Cross website, or by calling me at 518-283-0130 or on a signup sheet at church which will be available in January. Donations of blood typically drop during the holidays so January is a month when donations are especially needed. We started these blood drives in honor of Lee Pierce when he had a blood disease which required regular transfusions. This year we will have the blood drive in Memory of Lee who passed away in January 2018. Let's set a goal of 30 units of blood!

---- Carrie Pierce

## AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

Back in 1990, New York State passed legislation to encourage individuals or groups to clean up highway roadsides. Our church has been involved in the Adopt-A-Highway program since 2012. Our Eco-Team, which coordinates the Program, has been fortunate to have had many volunteers to help with the clean-ups over the past seven years.



We appreciate the efforts of the following volunteers who helped keep our "adopted" section of Routes 9 & 20 beautiful in the warmer months of 2018: Carl Eno, Gary Klee, Rickey and Mike Lettrick, Cindy and Kevin Conley, Jessica Iorio, John Peterson, Rick Matters, Dave Caneen and John Schmidt.

## RECONCILING MINISTRY

Mark your calendar now to stay at church following morning worship on **January 27<sup>th</sup>**. The Reconciling Ministry team will be serving a **"no ticket, no reservation" brunch**. It will be a preparation step at our church to get ready for The United Methodist Church special session of General Conference to be held in St. Louis, Missouri on **February 23-26**. The purpose of the session will be to receive and act on a report from the [Commission on a Way Forward](#). The Commission was authorized by General Conference 2016 and appointed by the Council of Bishops to examine paragraphs in The Book of Discipline concerning [human sexuality](#) and exploring options to strengthen the unity of the church. Check now to find your Reconciling Ministry stole and wear it to church **each Sunday in January**. If you don't have a stole, some will be available for a donation later in the month. If you have questions about the report and/or the special session, please speak with Pastor Sundar, Rachel Giso or George Herrick. Also, our Bishop Webb has a series of presentations available at: <http://www.unyumc.org/events/special-session-resources#Videos%20from%20Bishop%20Webb>



## CABIN FEVER COFFEE HOUSE

A special thank you to those who continue to work hard making our Coffee Houses such a success...food, performances, set-up and take-down, posters and programs, functioning sound system and photography. "It takes a village to make a successful show" and our village is truly gifted.



So, come to the Cabin Fever Coffee House of **Friday, the 18<sup>th</sup> of January** at 7:00 pm. We already have the beginning of a list of great performers you don't want to miss. Contributions help local church families in crisis.

## 4-H ROAST BEEF DINNER



Treat yourself to a Hearty Family Meal! Join the Rensselaer County 4-H Teen Exchange on **Saturday, January 12, 2019, 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm** here at the church.

Adults 12 and older - \$13 w/ reservation, \$14 at the door; Children 5-11 - \$6 w/ reservation, \$7 at the door; children 4 and younger are free. Reservations are requested. Please call 518-421-2360.

### REMEMBERING PASTOR DICK SEARS

"Rev. Richard L. "Dick" Sears, age 79, of Gloversville, went to be with the Lord on Tuesday, December 11, 2018 at his residence with his loving wife Janice by his side." That's the first line of the obituary for our former pastor Dick Sears. He served our church from 1983 to 1986. Joe Collins has written the following reflection about Dick.

Reverend Dick Sears was not only one of the best ministers we have had at the East Greenbush United Methodist Church, he was also one of the most avid sportsmen. He loved the out-of-doors. One of his favorite ways of worshiping was to be in the woods or on a lake. As a young man in the Adirondacks on Lake Placid, he spent many hours fishing on lakes and streams. He approached fishing and hunting in the same relaxed but persistent manner that he approached his ministry. On one fishing trip with Dick on Lake Placid, we left the dock before sun-up, trolled constantly all day until 6:00 pm (when we had to take a break for you know what), then on into the evening when we had to use lights to see the dock. He caught 8 keeper trout; put them in wet newspapers to keep them fresh (rather than a cooler or stringer). I caught leaves and weeds. He set my line precisely as his and we switched positions periodically. He said the difference was the way we were holding our mouths. That was because he was smiling every time he caught a fish and every time I caught a weed. He was a terrific minister, friend and sportsman. Gone too soon but with his Father.

-- Joe Collins

### THANK YOU TO ALL

Thanksgiving and Christmas are now over but the sense of good will and friendship in our church continue. We thank all who helped make our Thanksgiving dinner successful and make us feel like we shared a meal with extended family. We hope the feelings of sharing and friendship felt during the holidays continue in 2019.  
-- Carrie and Peter Larson

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\* A special Thank You goes out to Becky \*  
\* and Pat Frament, Linda Frodyma, Cindy \*  
\* McLoughlin, Mary McIntosh, Sue and \*  
\* Henry Naef, Mary Smith and Hazel Volke \*  
\* who assisted in the folding and actual \*  
\* mailing preparations of The BELL in 2018. \*  
\* -- Lois Heyer \*  
\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

I wish to thank all of the special people who have given their time to be the liturgists on Sunday mornings. It is a special gift to be able to serve our God and church members, too. If anyone would like to be a liturgist please call me at 518-203-7011. There will always be a place for you!

Thank you all!

-- Karen Terwilliger



**From the Editor**

• **Cleaning Kits** (Flood Buckets) will be packed on **Sunday, January 6** following morning worship. Stay after church, grab a cup of coffee, then help get the buckets ready for shipment to Syracuse.

• The next collection day for clean, tape- and staple-free **Styrofoam** (polystyrene) is **Sunday, January 6, 2019**. Drop it off by the church garage at the far end of the parking lot before or right after morning worship. If you have questions, please contact Kevin Conley ([e.kevin.conley@gmail.com](mailto:e.kevin.conley@gmail.com), 518-253-4907).



• Update on painting the **Brainard Steeple**: we are planning to do preparation and painting on **Saturday, May 4, 2019**. Will that fit in your schedule? More information next month...

• Our Trustees are looking to hire someone to **shovel snow** on weekends this winter. If interested, please contact John Peterson at 518-283-4685.

• Be on the lookout for more information about the **choir fundraiser** happening **Saturday, February 9, 2019, 5:30 pm**. An authentic German meal is planned, including Sauerbraten with gingersnap gravy, kartoffelklässe (potato dumplings), red cabbage, Black Forest cake, "beer" and German music. Tickets will cost \$25 and only 100 can be sold.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Interfaith Worship Services**

The Capital Area Council of Churches will present their 47th Annual MLK Celebration on **Tuesday, January 15** at 7 :00 pm at Metropolitan New Testament Mission Baptist Church, 105 Second Street, Albany NY.



"THE TIME IS ALWAYS RIGHT TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT."

*Martin Luther King Jr.*



The Troy Area United Ministries will present their MLK Worship Service on **Sunday, January 20** at 4:00 pm at Bethel Baptist Church, 2165 Fifth Avenue, Troy NY. Rev. George William Whitfield of 5th Avenue AME Zion Church will be preaching.

**Offerings at both programs will benefit their respective scholarship programs**