



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# THE BELL

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

VOLUME 20, ISSUE 6

JUNE 2018

### **At Church on Sundays:**

- ◆ Early Informal Service in Outdoor Chapel 8:30 am
- ◆ Regular Service 9:30 am
- ◆ Sunday School 9:30 am through June 10

### **We are on the Web:**

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

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### **Church Office Hours:**

Through June 8:

9 am to 2:30 pm M - F

June 11 through August 24:

9:00 am to 1:00 pm M - F

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Rev. Sundar R. Samuel,  
Pastor

Gail Welkley,  
Administrative Assistant

### *Dear Members and Friends,*

It is hard to believe looking at the green grass, beautiful budding flowers and green trees that the ankle deep snow slush and the howling and biting wintry winds have gone from our lives for another season! The sun is shining warm and days are getting longer and people are out of their winter hibernation taking walks, and outdoor sporting activities are happening all over the place. What a beautiful time for us to breathe fresh air and feel the warmth of the sun and even enjoy our cooking grills!!

In the Christian Church we have also moved from Eastertide to Kingdom time. Our altar paraments say it all, from Advent-Blue, to Lent-Purple, to Easter-White, to Pentecost-Red, to Trinity-White and now Kingdom-Green! (Whew!).

Kingdom-Green is the Ordinary Time for Christian disciples where we are called to live out our Christian faith in daily ordinary-routine times.

During these ordinary times many of us dream of visiting exotic places. Maybe we'd like to see the magnificent castles or cathedrals of Europe, or the unparalleled beauty of Hawaii (in spite of flowing molten lava). Or perhaps the mysterious orient, with its unique culture. When we're there, we might even start dreaming about what it would be like to live there permanently. Would it be as beautiful or as impressive if I saw it every day, or would I begin to take it for granted, just as I do my present surroundings?

A scribe hearing Jesus describe the two great commandments of loving God and loving neighbor, said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have... spoken the truth that loving God and loving one's neighbor as oneself is indeed 'much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.'" "When Jesus saw that [this scribe] answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God.'" (NRSV, Mark 12)

What did Jesus mean by that? We know that the kingdom was at the very center of Jesus' teaching, because so many of his parables are about this kingdom. But nowhere in scripture is the kingdom defined. We know that it has to do with the reign of God in human hearts. But what does that mean?

Is it possible that the kingdom of God is not so much a place as it is a state of mind? This makes sense, doesn't it? The kingdom of God is not something that we enter. The kingdom of

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*A Reconciling Congregation*

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God enters us. Jesus told this scribe that he was not far from the kingdom of God. The scribe had indeed found the key to harmonious living in this world and the next: Love God and your neighbor as you love yourself.



Jesus teaching

Want to live a truly fulfilled life? Some people think you must have just the right job in order to live a fulfilled life. Others think it comes from having just the right marriage. Some seek fulfillment in their relationships with their children. All of these things are important. But what if you have a bad job? What if you have a bad marriage? What if your children hate you? Is your life over? No, not if you love God and love your neighbor as you love yourself, it's really very simple.

The truth is that God gives us an amazing amount of freedom. Our lives are pretty much what we have made of them. Sure, some of us had lucky breaks along the way—some good breaks, some bad breaks—but mostly the choices we made were the determining factors in our successes or failures. Some people are uncomfortable with that idea. They want God to look after every detail.

Steven Wrage, a professor teaching American politics in Singapore, wrote about his experience in Singaporean society. One day two Singaporean police officers knocked at the door and told him politely but firmly that his Fern was a public danger. Evidently, his over-watering had left standing water in the flowerpot. Pregnant mosquitoes thrive on standing water, and mosquitoes can spread dengue hemorrhagic fever. So the extra water in the flowerpot created a health hazard to the neighborhood. Steven quickly emptied out the extra water. As he did so, he marveled at Singapore's social policies. He had watered the Fern a little over an hour ago. Evidently, one of his neighbors had reported him to the police. This episode sounds very foreign to us mind-your-own-business Americans, but it demonstrates one way that another country maintains social order and harmony at all times. How would you like to live under such restrictions? Some of us would be in trouble for something just about all the time. That's how many Christians view their relationship with God. God determines when a patrolman on the interstate will write a speeding ticket. God determines whether I get to play golf this afternoon or whether or not I will win the lottery. Poor God-- gets the blame for all our misfortunes? No wonder it's difficult for us to love God.

Here is how God works. God is always there when we call upon God to give us strength for the journey, to heal our hurts and refresh our spirits, but for the most part God allows us to make of our lives what we will, be it a mess or a masterpiece. God is not a policeman, a matchmaker, or a meteorologist. But God is the best friend you will ever have. Relax and love God for who God is.

And love your neighbor as you love yourself. It's assumed that you love yourself. Except, we know now that this is not always the case. Some people loathe themselves and are, as a result, unable to love others. That's extremely sad, but it happens.

These are the keys to living in the kingdom of God. The Bible is our travel brochure. The price of the voyage is simply to love God and love your neighbor as you love yourself. But you

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**THE BELL** is published monthly (with the exception of August) by the First United Methodist Church, 1 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, New York 12061-1780. June 2018, Volume 20, Issue 6. G. Herrick, **Editor**; S. Samuel, G. Welkley, **Editing Team**; J. Van Ornam, **Proofreader**; K. Van Buren, B. Van Ornam, **Production Team**; R. Reineke, **Photographer**; L. Heyer, **Mailing Coordinator**

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knew that all along, didn't you? Sometimes we need to be reminded.

I do thank God for my citizenship. I am thankful for my citizenship in this country, but I am even more thankful for my citizenship in the kingdom of God.

"You are not far from the kingdom," Jesus told the scribe. I suspect that most of us are in that state. We're still standing just outside. But it takes only a baby step for admittance. Love God, and love your neighbor as you love yourself.

Peace and joy,  
*Pastor Sundar*

## WORSHIP AT FIRST UMC IN JUNE



We are at the month of June, the time when many of our church programs take a break until, once refreshed, they restart a new program year in September. We are now in Ordinary Time, the Sundays after Pentecost and before Advent and the start of a new church year.

**June 3** – The second Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Communion. This Sunday we will celebrate with our confirmands as they make their personal profession of faith during Sunday morning worship. There was a schedule change since last month and we will now celebrate Peace with Justice Sunday on this date.

**June 10** - Children's Day. Pastor Sundar will be out in the pews with the rest of us as our children and youth take over leadership of morning worship. Sunday School ends for the season on this Sunday.

**June 17** – We will celebrate all the fathers in our church family. This is Father's Day. Also on this Sunday we will have our annual Reconciling Ministry "no reservation, no ticket" brunch, celebrating our June 2011 action to become a Reconciling Congregation. See **PAGE 6** for more information about the brunch. On Tuesday of this week, **June 19** we celebrate Juneteenth, the oldest of all African American celebrations.

**June 24** – The last Sunday of the month. On **Thursday, June 28** of this week we will celebrate the birthday of John Wesley (b. 1703). Pastor Sundar will be preaching **June 24** and also on **June 3 and 17**.

Early worship services continue at 8:30 am in the Chapel in the Woods, weather permitting.

Here is the lectionary for June:

June 3	<b>Second Sunday After Pentecost</b>	1 Samuel 3:1-20; Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 2 Corinthians 4:5-12; Mark 2:23-3:6
June 10	<b>Third Sunday After Pentecost</b>	1 Samuel 8:4-20 (11:14-15); Psalm 138; 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1; Mark 3:20-35
June 17	<b>Fourth Sunday After Pentecost</b>	1 Samuel 15:34-16:13; Psalm 20 or Psalm 72; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 (11-13), 14-17; Mark 4:26-34
June 24	<b>Fifth Sunday After Pentecost</b>	1 Samuel 17:(1a, 4-11, 19-23) 32-49; Psalm 9:9-20; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41

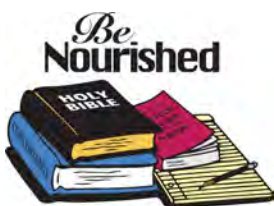
## SEEKING SUMMER MUSICIANS



On **June 17<sup>th</sup>**, our Sanctuary Choir will be singing for the last time this season. They get a break before returning for our morning worship services in September. While they are on their break, organist Jackie Krahforst and choir director Herb Lamb are looking for people and/or small groups who would like to share their singing and/or playing talents for our summer services. See Jackie or Herb ([ha.lamb@verizon.net](mailto:ha.lamb@verizon.net)) for more details and to sign up.

## EDUCATION MINISTRY

We come to the close of our first full year as the Education Ministry ... teams of people working together to provide the best Christian education opportunities to people of all ages in our Church family. Our teams are 1) Sunday school and Confirmation program, 2) Youth programs, 3) Vacation Bible School, 4) Adult Christian Education Opportunities, 5) Bible study evening courses, 6) Hawthorne Ridge Monday Bible Study Group, 7) The Tuesday Morning Study Group, and 8) the Mom's Group. Each team has a leader who meets with their respective teams and they bring programs to children, youth and adults that are hopefully interesting, challenging and fun. Our Education Ministry meets about every 8 weeks to review programs, brainstorm together about new ideas and support each other in our efforts to bring consistently strong programs to you. We welcome your input...please join a team...attend a Ministry meeting or share ideas with an Education Ministry member. Contact Carrie Larson, EM Coordinator for information.



## SUNDAY SCHOOL

**June 3** is the **CONFIRMATION SERVICE**. We have an amazing group of 8th & 9th graders confirming! They have worked hard all year; it is a very special day for them. Please come and support our confirmands. There will be a **GARDEN PARTY** in honor of the confirmands immediately following the service. All are welcome!

**June 10** is **CHILDREN'S DAY!** It is the day that the Sunday school plans and leads the worship service. We have some amazing things planned! Please come and worship with us.

There will be a **CHILDREN'S DAY PICNIC** immediately following the Children's Day service. There will be fun, food and games for everyone! Hope to see you there!

## UNITED METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Youth Group only has a few more activities left before the end of June. Time really flies when you're having fun. I have so many ideas for next year that I am bursting with excitement.

**Senior High** game night is **June 1** from 7:00 pm—9:00 pm.

**Junior High** will be meeting **June 3** after church from 11:30 am -1:30 pm. A lunch will be provided. We will also be discussing goals for next year and coming up with ideas for service projects. We will also be playing a few games.

**All Youth: June 9-10** Lock-in. We will be turning the church into a big Mystery Room. Solve the riddles and clues to unlock the secrets of the church. Please bring \$5.00 to help cover the cost of pizza, also bring your overnight items (bedding - there aren't enough couches and there is no guarantee who will get a couch - and clothes for Children's Day on Sunday morning). This event will start at 3:00 pm and go through Children's Day. The youth will be going to bed on the earlier side to be well rested for Children's Day.

**Everyone: June 15** - Youth Group end of the year Bash. Come for a BBQ to help celebrate a successful year in Youth Group. This is open to all who helped with Youth Group, those who came to youth group or volunteered. The BBQ starts at 6:30 pm. If you would like to bring a dish to share you're more than welcome to do so.

**Mark your Calendars:** We will be having a planning meeting in August of 2018 for a new project. The youth will be helping plan a Youth-Run Worship Service, (Contemporary Service) much like the one at Outward or Inward. I will let you know when the first meeting is, so come and help finalize the plans. All youth who would like to help plan are welcomed. If a youth doesn't want to help plan the service, we invite them to attend the service. The services will be youth-lead but all are welcome to attend. Services will start in September and we are hoping to hold the service on the 4th Friday night of every month from September to June.

Thank you for a great year!

-- Amber Biechman, Youth Leader, [UMYF@fumceg.org](mailto:UMYF@fumceg.org)



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Registration is now open for **SHIPWRECKED** Vacation Bible School being held **July 30-August 3**, from 8:30 am—12:00 noon. Children entering grades K-5 are invited to participate. Middle and High School students are encouraged to volunteer as Crew Leaders and Assistant Crew Leaders. We also need adult volunteers, even one day can be helpful. This program is offered free to anyone interested in participating. You can find the registration form and photo release form online at [fumceg.org](http://fumceg.org) or on the desk in the narthex. Come join the fun and learn how we are **RESCUED BY JESUS**.



### HELP - NAMES OF GRADUATES NEEDED

Our church is requesting information on both our **High School and College** graduates, to be listed in the bulletin and The Summer BELL. To make this happen, please send the graduate's name(s), school(s) and information about future plans to Gail Welkley, our Administrative Assistant as soon as possible. So that we don't miss anyone, if you have just a name, pass it on and we will collect the other information.

### CONFIRMANDS SEE NEW YORK (A LITTLE BIT)

May 5th was the date for this year's confirmands trip to New York City and a visit to John Street UMC. They took the early train to the city and the subway downtown to the financial district. Then it was taking the first step of being a New Yorker, grab the map (that each one had) and find the way from the subway to the church. At the church they were met by Rev. Stefanie L. Bennett, the pastor and another group of mostly teens from New Jersey. Pastor Bennett spent the next hour plus telling and showing them some of the history of Methodism in the United States. Her very informative presentation included a number of times that she stopped to ask everyone a question about Methodist history. After soaking up a whole bunch of information and perusing many of the artifacts at the church it was time for lunch, pizza and more. Finish that and head for Trinity Church. They took a few moments for some Q and A before going into that church. For example, what tie is there among Jews, Muslims and Christians? Confirmands had time to get a good look at the Trinity Church building and both the north and south parts of the cemetery surrounding Trinity, including the grave of Alexander Hamilton. Then a short stop at a little park just up the street where one of our confirmands had a lesson in playing chess. They left the park and moved on to the 9/11 World Trade Center site. There the group learned something of the life of NYC Fire Department Chaplain Mychal Judge, one of the most widely known people killed on 9/11. By then, it didn't seem possible but much of the time in the city was used up. So back on the subway toward Penn Station where the group ate before boarding the train for home.



### HELP PROVIDE MEAL FOR JOSEPH'S HOUSE

Our church will be providing the evening meal at Joseph's House homeless shelter in Troy on **Sunday, June 24**. We may be feeding 50 people. We are seeking volunteers to help prepare the meal in our church kitchen following the morning service, make cookies or help serve the meal in the evening. Please contact Kevin (518-253-4907, [e.kevin.conley@gmail.com](mailto:e.kevin.conley@gmail.com)) if you have questions or would like to help.





## UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

You are invited to a potluck dinner, fun and games Monday, **June 4** at 6:30 p.m. Held at Lorraine Beals' house, 527 Miller Road East Greenbush. Her phone number is 518-650-6695 or lsbeals@nycap.rr.com if you have any questions. Hope to see you there! This will be our last get together for the Summer.

WE HAVE POSTPONED CLEANING THE CHURCH KITCHEN LONG ENOUGH!! **June 16** from 9:00 am -12:00 noon is the date. We need many cleaning elves to help. Many hands makes light work. The mice invaded this past winter and are now on vacation, so insides as well as outsides of all the cabinets need cleaning. Please help. Everyone uses the kitchen.



## A BIG THANKS TO YOU

A big "Thank You" to all who participated in our fifth **Change the World Sunday** on May 20. Again this year we had a variety of projects, all with opportunities to share the love of Jesus Christ. Look for a complete summary in the summer issue of The BELL next month. Special thanks to our project coordinators for their planning and organizing. Please mark your calendars now for CTWS number 6 on **May 19, 2019**. -- *John Schmidt*, Event Coordinator



## RECONCILING MINISTRY BRUNCH

**NO RESERVATION OR TICKET NEEDED**

**You are invited!**

**Sunday June 17 after church**

Immediately following worship on June 17 our Reconciling Ministry Team will host a "no ticket, no reservation" brunch in the Fellowship Hall. Come, enjoy a good meal, take part in a time of fellowship and help celebrate the 7th anniversary of our church's becoming a Reconciling Congregation. You are invited even if you just want a cup of coffee.



### Help make this special event happen!

We need people:

- ◆ To sew more stoles so that we have enough for all
- ◆ To plan the brunch
- ◆ To help with meal preparation
- ◆ To set up the Fellowship Hall for the brunch
- ◆ To serve brunch
- ◆ To pick up the pieces when all is done



There is a clip board on the table in the church foyer to sign-up to help. Add your name today. For more information and questions, see George Herrick (518-477-9693) or John Schmidt.

**For Father's Day, June 17, come to church  
for worship and brunch to start your day!**

## GOFF GARDEN MISSION

On Change the World Sunday, we were able to plant tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, kale, onions, cucumbers, squash and more. All of the produce will be delivered to the CoNSERNS-U (for southern Rensselaer County) food pantry in Rensselaer and other local pantries. Consider taking an **hour over the summer** to work in the garden with family, friends, scouts etc. You can weed, harvest, deliver, at **any time convenient for you**. We will be at the garden on Sunday mornings, and usually Wednesday evenings. We are thankful to the school for allowing us to use the 3 plots in the back of the garden. Students are using the other areas. There are two handicap accessible raised beds also for your convenience. Please contact us with any questions.



-- Aleta Schweigert, Rickey Lettrick, Linda Marschner

## REACHING OUT TO CHILDREN IN NEED

### A SPECIAL MISSIONS' APPEAL

Our Change the World Sunday event has demonstrated that there are always many opportunities all around us to make a difference in the lives of others. I would like to share another opportunity and ask for your support. Pastor Mariana Rodriguez, who leads a Hispanic and Latino congregation in Albany has dedicated her life to helping the poor and needy. You generously supported the children in her congregation by providing gifts for their Three Kings Celebration for the past several years. She is concerned about **a group of young children in the Dominican Republic who will be starting their next school year in August without school supplies for their Bible Study Program**. Our Missions team has decided to partner with other Methodists in Delmar and Averill Park to provide basic school supplies to these children.



A Helping Hand  
Can Change the World

More than a third of the Dominican Republic people live on less than \$1.25 a day and over 20 percent of the country lives in extreme poverty. Most of the poverty in the Dominican Republic is concentrated in the rural areas. The rural poverty rate is about three times as high as the urban poverty rate. This is a country where only 30 percent of children finish primary school. Half of the country does not have access to clean water, and over half of the country does not have sanitary toilets. Healthcare is expensive and hard to find in rural areas. The government spends very little on education.

If you would like to help out by making their upcoming school year more successful, please **make out a check to our church (FUMC-EG) and in the notation section, write "Hispanic Ministries" by June 25**. Cash may be placed in an envelope labeled "Hispanic Ministries". School begins in August, so we will be purchasing the supplies locally and shipping them at the beginning of July. Every dollar you give will go towards the purchase of school supplies. Thank you in advance for continuing to be the hands, the feet, and the compassionate heart of Jesus Christ.

-- John Schmidt, Missions co-chair

## "WARM PROJECTS"

Our church has many talented knitters, crocheters, and quilters that make afghans and quilts for Change the World Sunday which are given to the veterans at the VA. To find more ways to support the men and women at the VA, such as with visits and personal items, see [www.albany.va.gov/giving](http://www.albany.va.gov/giving). Smaller craft items to work on over the summer: Red scarves (5-8 inches wide by 60 inches) for foster care children in college ([www.fc2success.org](http://www.fc2success.org)); soft hats for children with cancer ([www.hatsgiving.org](http://www.hatsgiving.org)); small (15 inches x 15 inches to 20 inches x 20 inches) blankets and hats for NICU premie babies at Albany Med.; donate yarn for women in prison (specifics apply, contact me if you are interested in helping). Comments or Questions give me a call.



-- Aleta Schweigert, 518-479-3182



## ANNUAL CONFERENCE TIME

As we go from the month of May to the month of June, our Upper New York Annual Conference will be meeting in Syracuse **May 31 to June 2** at the SRC Arena at Onondaga Community College in Syracuse, NY. Attending for our church will be our Pastor, Sundar Samuel and our Lay Member to Annual Conference, Rachel Giso.

In Volume 1 of the 2018 Annual Conference Journal, our resident Bishop Mark J. Webb has written a letter of introduction; a few lines were quoted in our May 2018 Church BELL. Here are a couple more excerpts from his letter.

"Our theme this year is *"Together in Prayer – Boldly Living Our Call."*

"...what would Annual Conference session be without some reports, resolutions, and recommendations to read, surround in holy conversation, and act upon."

"God is accomplishing amazing things in us and through us and for everything God has called us to in the days ahead, God has promised all that we need! I know we are ready to allow God to use us in ways we have not yet dreamed or imagined. So, come prepared for an amazing experience of faith, community, and celebration, as we gather May 31 – June 2."

## COFFEE HOUSE

To all who performed at the 5 Coffee Houses this season, a very special THANK YOU. To all who worked to make the Coffee Houses such a grand success, a very special THANK YOU too (sound, Fellowship Hall set up and take down, food, programs, posters, accompanists, and decorations). To all who attended and formed the best audiences ever, we THANK YOU.

Our 15<sup>th</sup> season of music, dance, poems, stories, readings, and fine foods has come to a successful close. We shared 5 Friday evenings together, celebrating learning, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Love, St. Patrick's Day and Mother's and Other's Day...we celebrated each other's talents and success...we shared humor and even understood some of the jokes. Together we raised about \$1000 for those in need in our community. We continue to honor those who were such an integral part to the Coffee House experience...Dave Hopwood, Steve Berger, Lee Pierce, Grace Wheeler. We welcomed new acts and performers.



Coffeehouse

Come to the 16<sup>th</sup> season Coffee Houses...save these dates: Back to School CH **Friday, September 21, 2018**; St. Patrick's Day CH, **Friday, March 15, 2019** and Mother's and Others Day CH, **Friday, May 10, 2019**.

## 2018 CAPITAL PRIDE CELEBRATION

Come, be part of the largest PRIDE celebration in upstate New York! This year's Capital PRIDE Parade and Festival will be held on **Sunday, June 10**. Marchers will step-off from Washington Park at noon. The route takes them down State Street, over Lark and up Madison Avenue and back into Washington Park. Capital PRIDE Festival runs from 1pm-5pm in the Park and has some of the area's best food trucks, crafters, shops and merchants, as well as a number of community groups. This year's stage headliner will be British performer Estelle.



From the  
Editor

- **Scholarships** for our Upper New York Conference **summer camps** are available from our United Methodist Women. Forms to apply for this funding are available in the UMW mail pocket in the church office. No kid should be denied the camp experience because of the lack of funds. Call the church office for more information.
- Do remember our church needs the **continued financial support** of all its members through the summer months. Something to keep in mind when you are writing checks in the next few weeks.