



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE BELL

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

VOLUME 23, ISSUE 6

JUNE 2021

At Church on Sundays:

- ◆ **8:30 am** Early Informal Service - Outdoor Chapel weather permitting
- ◆ **9:30 am** Sanctuary Service
Also streaming live on Facebook, available on YouTube same afternoon
- ◆ Sunday School and Youth Group - see inside for details

Visit us on the Web:

www.fumceg.org
www.facebook.com/FUMCEG

Phone: (518) 477-9693

Fax: (518) 477-4336

Church Office Hours:

Through June 11:

9:00 am to 2:30 pm M - F

June 14 through August:

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

Email:

office@fumceg.org

BELL/Bulletin (only) Email:

editor@fumceg.org

Children's Education Email:

egchristianedfumc@gmail.com

Youth Ministries Email:

youthleaderamber@gmail.com

Rev. Sundar R. Samuel,

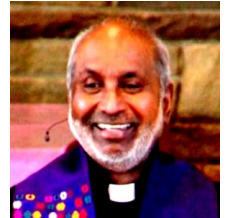
Pastor

Gail Welkley,

Administrative Assistant

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

There are certain human experiences that are universally annoying, but everyone must experience them at some time. Like waiting in lines. And in our rushed and privileged society, it seems like we have less and less capacity for waiting. A woman tells of trying to get a table at an extremely popular and remarkably busy restaurant. She approached the hostess and asked quite brusquely, "will it be long?" the hostess kept writing in her hostess book, so the woman leaned closer and asked again a little more firmly, "Will it be long?" Without looking up, the hostess said, "About ten minutes." A few minutes later, the woman heard this announcement over the speaker: "Willette B. Long, your table is ready. Willette B. Long, your table is ready."



Is that what Jesus' friends, the disciples, were thinking on the day of Pentecost when they gathered to pray and wait for the Holy Spirit? Will it be long? I read an interesting study this week that took place in Holland about awkward pauses in conversations. Have you ever been in a conversation, (friend, child, spouse or boss) and then the person you are chatting with suddenly goes silent? It is disconcerting, isn't it? Researchers in Holland ran a study to measure how long a conversational gap must last before it creates negative emotions in the people involved. They discovered that all it takes is four seconds of silence in a conversation to inspire feelings of anxiety, exclusion, incompatibility, and awkwardness. Just four seconds of silence makes us feel insecure and uncomfortable.

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Editor's Note: Changes in government protocols for COVID-19 may have an impact on our worship and/or other programs. Watch for any messages from our church.

A Reconciling Congregation

(Continued from page 1)

A member of the research team summarized the study in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology*: "Conversational flow is associated with positive emotions, and a heightened sense of belonging, self-esteem, social validation and consensus. Disrupting the flow by a brief silence produces feelings of rejection and negative emotions."

On May 23, 2021, our Lectionary Scripture passage (Acts 2: 1-21) ushers us into a long season of Pentecost, which runs for the next twenty-six Sundays ending on November 21, 2021. However, our Bible passage for today does not tell us how long Jesus' friends, the disciples, had to wait until they received the Holy Spirit, the gift promised by God. I am confident that it was longer than four seconds! Did they experience feelings of rejection and anxiety as they waited? Not. They had spent 40 days with the resurrected Jesus. They finally understood that Jesus truly was God in the flesh. And they finally trusted that his plans were trustworthy, and his promises were true. Ask yourself, when you read this newsletter: How would it change your life if you trusted that God's plans for you are trustworthy, and God's promises are completely true?

I think we see the answer in the courage and obedience of the disciples. They had no idea what God was going to do, but they went to Jerusalem and they gathered in prayer and they waited just as Christ told them to. Jesus' friends waited fifty days after Christ's ascension to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, but the payoff was worth it. Our Bible passage describes the moment the Holy Spirit came upon them like this: "Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them." (Acts 2: 2-4)



On the Day of Pentecost, the disciples of Jesus were gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem. All the original twelve were there, save one. Judas' place had been taken by Matthias, who had been chosen by the casting of lots, that this was an unreliable means of choosing officers for a church board is attested to by the fact that Mathias is never mentioned again. I guess that is why we do not cast lots today in order to choose church officers.

Jesus' brothers were there. The resurrection had obviously healed some wounds because his brothers had been embarrassed earlier by Jesus' ministry. His mother was there, too. She was still pondering things in her heart. I imagine. Events too extraordinary for a simple Jewish mother to comprehend were far too commonplace in her life. The agony of the cross was her agony as well as his. His resurrection was joyous comfort. Still, though wounds heal, they leave scars. "The women" were there as well. We do not know their names. It was the cultural assumption of that day that women counted for less than men—women, slaves, children. A sad but common prejudice throughout the world. Yet the women proved themselves more courageous in the drama of his crucifixion than did the men. They were all there—still shaken by the evens of the past fifty days—saddened by the departure of their leader but willing to trust that Jesus would fulfill his promise and grant them the power to go on.

The disciples of Jesus were confronted with the task of replacing their CEO. Jesus had been crucified, resurrected and now had ascended to be with the father. He had spent three years training his disciples to carry on his message and his ministry after his death. But how do

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The Church Staff: Rev. Sundar R. Samuel, **Pastor**; Amanda Trainor, **Director of Children's Christian Education**; Amber Biechman, **Youth Leader**; Jacqueline Krahforst, **Organist**; Herb Lamb, **Choir Director**; Cynthia Reineke, **Coordinator of EmBELLishments & Children's Music Program**; Gail Welkley, **Administrative Assistant**; Christopher Chartrand, **Custodian**; Beth Duncan, **Lay Leader**; Scott Bogart, **Peer Minister, Cornerstone Protestant Campus Ministry, The University at Albany**; Mozart M. K. Adevu, **Missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries, based in Accra, Ghana, West Africa.**

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you take the place of the Messiah, God in the flesh? There is only one way: with the power of the Holy Spirit motivating and empowering his followers every step of the way. And that is what Pentecost is all about. Have a blessed walk with Jesus and in the power of His Spirit, during this Pentecost season. May God's grace and love surround you and yours today and always. May God bring joy, hope and healing to you and the entire human race.

Blessings, *Pastor Sundar*

SOME NOTES ABOUT WORSHIP FOR JUNE

Church is open for you!

Please join us for church services!

8:30 at the Chapel in the Woods **9:30** in the sanctuary

9:30 live streamed on Facebook

Anytime: recordings of the 9:30 am service on our Facebook page or YouTube.



We are planning coffee hour outside after the 9:30 service on Communion Sundays. Thanks to UMW for coordinating these! Watch church emails for additional coffee hours that might get scheduled on other Sundays.

Groups can meet! Contact the church office to schedule meetings. Organizers should consider room capacity and the ability to maintain adequate distance between attendees when planning meetings.

Remember, children under the age of 12 still cannot get vaccinated. In order to protect them and others who remain vulnerable to infection, **masks will still be required in the church building and outside if six foot distance can't be maintained.**

Special days that occur this month of June:

June 14 – Flag Day - This holiday commemorates the date in 1777 when the United States approved the design for its first national flag.

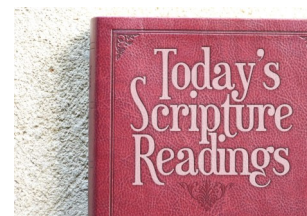


June 19 – Juneteenth - the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States.

June 20 – Father's Day - a day of honoring fatherhood and paternal bonds, as well as the influence of fathers in society.

June 20 – First Day of Summer - often called the "longest day of the year" for those living north of the equator.

June 28 – John Wesley's birthday (1703) (Gregorian) June 17 (Julian)



LECTIONARY FOR JUNE

June 6 - Second Sunday after Pentecost 1 Samuel 8:4-20 (11:14-15), Psalm 138, 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1, Mark 3:20-35

June 13 - Third Sunday After Pentecost 1 Samuel 15:34-16:13, Psalm 20 or Psalm 72, 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 (11-13), Mark 4:26-34

June 20 - Fourth Sunday After Pentecost 1 Samuel 17:(1a, 4-11, 19-23) 32-49, Psalm 9:9-20, 2 Corinthians 6:1-13, Mark 4:35-41

June 27 - Fifth Sunday After Pentecost 2 Samuel 1:1,17-27, Psalm 130, 2 Corinthians 8:7-15, Mark 5:21-43

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND YOUTH GROUP



Sunday School will meet **June 6** at 11:30 am -12:15 pm

Youth Group 3rd -12th grades will meet from 12:15 pm -1:15 pm for a light snack and time in the garden to plant flowers for the butterflies as the last part of our **Change the World Month**.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL UPDATE

Is your child in the grades ranging in K - 12th? Would you like your child to be part of vacation bible school? We will be hosting Vacation Bible School (VBS) every Wednesday from 5:15 pm - 7:30 pm with dinner included. The program will run from **June 23** through **July 28**. We will be providing a program for different age groups and you don't have to commit to each Wednesday, but please do sign up for the Wednesdays you'll be here.

We are looking for meal sponsors for VBS this summer. We are looking for families/ individuals that would like to either sponsor or make a dinner for the children, youth and volunteers. VBS is also looking for Adult Volunteers that might want to help with running the VBS program by either doing the art and crafts, games or story time.



To register your child, sponsor a meal or volunteer please contact Amber at (youthleaderamber@gmail.com) or Amanda (egchristianedfmc@gmail.com)

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN



June 7 at 6:30 our annual pre-summer party at Lorraine Beals, 527 Miller Road, East Greenbush. We will dine on cheese pizza; bring a dish to pass or dessert. This year's theme is *Animal Prints*. See you there.

Yes, there is going to be a Thrift Sale this fall on **September 17-18**. Watch for details.

"ONWARD, CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS"

Discipleship Ministries of the United Methodist Church publishes a resource, **History of Hymns**. One of their commentaries talks about the hymn, "Onward, Christian Soldiers" (UMC Hymnal #575). "Perhaps one of the most controversial hymns ever written, "Onward, Christian Soldiers" began its life as no more than a simple processional song, something for children to sing as they crossed the village of Horbury Bridge to the parish church". [Because of the controversy] "It comes as little surprise, then, to learn that "Onward, Christian Soldiers" was initially to be excluded from *The United Methodist Hymnal* (1989)," ... "The restoration of the hymn resulted from a course of healthy debate over the use of military imagery, recognizing its biblical and early Christian origins as well as its changing perception after the horror of modern warfare during Korea, Vietnam, and the First and Second World Wars."



Here are links to two different presentations of the hymn. Look at a bit of each to note the contrast in their presentations. The first is from the Fountainview Academy in British Columbia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhiHoqp0neU>

In the second, Dean Hopper, Ann Downing, Kim Hopper sing the hymn in a church setting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Vua7LwiAQ0>

CASTING STONES ACROSS THE WATER



Do you remember skipping stones as a kid? According to the Internet, the record is 88 skips back in 2013. (I was lucky if I could get 2). Last month, quite a few ripples were created during our eighth *Change the World* event. The full effect of all those ripples is yet to be felt. So, what did you do last month? You put together a picnic table for residents of St. Paul's Women's and Children's Shelter in Rensselaer. It has already received a lot of use and will be appreciated for years to come.



Over one-hundred plants were potted and delivered to residents of Rosewood Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. Residents were thrilled to receive an extra bit of sunshine. In a few weeks the plants will be moved outside to their gardens. Our zinnias may not be flowering yet, but they are growing bigger every day.



Soon they will produce the nectar for the beautiful Monarch Butterflies which will enable them to return to their winter home in Mexico.

You remembered others who are struggling during this especially difficult pandemic. A very successful food-drive was held on May 16 to benefit area food pantries and our Veterans. You also filled over fifty shoeboxes with personal toiletries for needy families in Kentucky as part of the *Redbird Mission*



Shoebox Project. Our Youth and Sunday School children used their creative skills to paint *Kindness Rocks* and artwork for nursing home residents. *Thinking of You cards* were created for our Veterans to remind them of how much they are cared about. *Comfort Blankets* were made for terminally ill patients at Albany Medical Center. You also took the *Share the Love Challenge*. For thirty-one days, you reminded thirty-one people that Jesus loves them and you may never know how meaningful that was to them. Just imagine if each person passed that message along to someone else. Can't we all use a reminder like that?



May has been a busy and productive month. I would like to thank our project coordinators for their time and effort: Lorraine Beals, Aleta Schweigert, Carrie Larson, Amanda Trainor, Amber Telford and Kevin Conley. Also, thanks to

Pastor Sundar and our entire congregation for their support. **Thank YOU for continuing to Share the Love!**

John Schmidt

"ME, MY CHURCH AND THE PANDEMIC"

How's this as a church project and not just for the church archives, but also spiritual growth: **share your pandemic stories, poems, pictures with the church congregation.** A copy of the collection will be put in the church archives. A personal example, when the lock-down happened in March 2020 all of a sudden not only did my son, Christopher, have to start working from home, but my husband started a new job as an essential employee for the State Of New York. Big adjustments had to be made quickly. Church also changed. I no longer was coordinating ushers, I was the *only* usher and on an re-opening task force. We had to make adjustments, changes, difficult decisions and sometimes we felt this would never end. BUT it is.



These are two stories that I could write to put into a collection of our stories of the pandemic. Some may write poems, if you like that. The old saying, "A Picture paints a thousand words." Add photos with a caption of an event or what the picture means to you. We can all share our joys, because many have grief, pain, loss.

Let us do this as a church. Please send me your stories, poems, pictures this summer. Get them in by **August 15** to Patty Chartrand. I have a folder in the UMW box in the church office. I'll have a basket in the church library or send me by email: pjdc560@gmail.com or snail mail :18 Van Buren Ave, Castleton, NY 12033

FINANCE UPDATE As of 4/30/2021



Annual Budget for 2021—\$289,360

Received to date— \$91,881

Spent to date—\$102,580



RECONCILING MINISTRIES

As we think about our United Methodist Church and our history of the groups of people who make up the church, let's look back at our history and the question of inclusion. "Every step of the way, American Methodism has become more inclusive of people over time, not less." That's a line from a video presentation prepared by the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference. Find a half hour to set aside to look at the video, "**An Impulse to Include: A Brief History of American Methodism's Tendency to Embrace and Empower More People!**", they have prepared to discuss inclusion. Here is the link for the video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svWr1yf2c_U

Now, ask the question, what should happen next year at our next General Conference?

HELP – NAMES OF GRADUATES NEEDED



Our church needs information on both our **High School and College 2021 graduates**, to be listed in the Sunday bulletin and the next BELL, The Summer BELL. To help make this happen, please send all friend and/or family 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 and it will be published in the Summer Bell. Email to office@fumceg.org or call 518-477-9693.

TRANSFORMING LIVES

Each of our Upper New York camping and retreat centers serves a diverse population, including rural, urban and suburban, while offering opportunities to connect with God's creation, with a loving Christian community, and with friends, new and old. **Prayerfully consider how you might be able to help Upper NY Camp & Retreat Ministries provide a quality experience to all within the Upper NY Conference and beyond.**



When the ancient Hebrew people fled from Egypt, they were faced with a real need for daily sustenance in the desert. The manna sent from God was intended to be used right away and helped them survive until they could thrive once again.

TODAY, you have an opportunity to provide *manna* for **Skye Farm**. We hope you will prayerfully consider giving generously to the **Skye Farm Annual Fund** as part of this *Manna in the Wilderness* Campaign. You can write a check to our church and put "**Skye Farm Fund**" on the memo line. All gifts will be put to immediate use sustaining the ministry during this *wilderness* time.

SAVE THE BEES



It is the season of bounty and harvest for us in upstate New York. We are truly blessed with an abundance of food to nourish us and sustain us through the colder months. For this blessing, thank God and thank pollinators. According to the [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#), about 35 percent of the world's food crops depend on animal pollinators to reproduce. More than 3,500 species of native bees help increase crop yields. Some scientists estimate that one out of every three bites of food we eat exists because of animal pollinators like bees, butterflies and moths, birds and bats, and beetles and other insects. Yet, some pollinators are in trouble due to pesticides, herbicides, and insecticides. Invasive parasites, poor diet and climate change, which has diminished their habitats, are factors as well.

The [Bee Conservancy](#) lists ten ways that you can help safeguard bee populations. Two are described below. You can help #beethesolution!

- * You can plant a Bee Garden. One of the largest threats to bees is a lack of safe habitat where they can build homes and find a variety of nutritious food sources. By planting a bee garden, you can create a habitat corridor with plants that are rich in pollen and nectar. You don't need a ton of space to grow bee-friendly plants — gardens can be established across yards and in window boxes, flower pots, and planters. You can also get involved with local organizations and governments to find opportunities to enrich public and shared spaces.
- * You can go chemical-free for bees. Avoid treating your garden and green spaces with synthetics. Instead, use organic products and natural solutions such as compost to aid soil health and adding beneficial insects that keep pests away like ladybugs and praying mantises.

The Eco-team

NEWS FROM CONNERSTONE CAMPUS MINISTRY

The big news is graduation. This year in the Cornerstone family, eighteen undergraduate students and one Master degree recipient were honored at a very moving Cornerstone celebration for the event, **Closing Worship and Senior Salute**. (That's them in the picture below) Chaplain Sandy Damhof shared a very fitting line from Jeremiah, with those gathered, "For surely I know the plans I have for you, . . . plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope".

At that same celebration, the new leaders of the Cornerstone Ministry were commissioned. The group is headed by Luke Morello, President. The group also includes Scott Bogart (Bible Study Leader) our current Peer Minister here at FUMC East Greenbush. He will continue with us until his graduation in December.

Congratulations to our Student Leaders for winning a Purple & Gold Award for their collaboration on a program about sex trafficking last fall.

We may be looking for volunteers for our "traditional" slot for Food & Faith in the Fall. At least that is the current plan. The structure of the evening may be modified a bit.

Save The Date! The fall fundraiser is currently scheduled for Wednesday, September 22, in-person at First Lutheran Church in Albany or online via Zoom.

Got 7 and ½ minutes to watch a video? You can join the celebration by watching the **Cornerstone End-of-the-Year video**. Here's the link:

<https://youtu.be/TyJAJ-tPS5U>

(Note the vocals for the 2nd song are from our own worship band; we've been pre-recording music all semester. Our thanks to our Music Director, Doug Esmond) for making the music happen.)



ALBANY MARITIME MINISTRY

From the Capital Area Council of Churches comes this information about a very special ministry in our area.



Albany Maritime Ministry is an ecumenical group of volunteers who welcome seafarers who dock in the Capital District of upstate New York. There is a center at the port where seafarers come to use the computers there and relax off the ship. The ministry van takes them shopping to the malls or other places.

But when the pandemic hit, things had to change. According to Pr. Dave Preisinger, Albany Maritime Ministry Board Chair, the seafarers currently are not allowed off the ships when they are in port. This makes conducting the ministry more difficult.

Rising to the challenge, the Albany Maritime Ministry has begun providing Covid Vaccines for the seafarers. The Ministry is also making "Hospitality Bags" for the crews when they are in the port. The bags are filled with various items that the crew could use or would enjoy. Collecting items for the "Hospitality Bags", either individually or as a group, would be appreciated.

Some items might include: DVD's, playing cards, dice, dominoes, board games, boxes of greeting cards, postcards, hats and gloves, sweatshirts, any treats (cookies, popcorn, chips) that have expiration dates far into the future. During the month of June donations can be placed in the bin under the table in the church foyer.

Supporters can also donate cash for the Ministry. Make checks out to our church and put "Maritime Ministry" on the memo line. Collected funds will be sent to the Maritime Ministry at the end of June.

In addition to assembling bags and/or cash donations, volunteers are needed to go to the ship, deliver the "Hospitality Bags" and welcome the ship to the Port of Albany. This is a wonderful opportunity to be a visitor and to meet people from all over the world. To reach the Center to get more information or to arrange for a drop off call: 518-426-9153.



◆ The dates for the 12th Session of the **Upper New York** Annual Conference will be **June 17-19**. Conference leaders have decided to hold Annual Conference by remote means. Rev. Gottschalk-Fielding, Executive Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Connectional Ministries, said, "It is our intention to create an environment as similar to being in person as possible, with debate, amendments, and action being allowed on all the necessary and vital work that is before us."

◆ The Commission on the **General Conference** of The United Methodist Church has made a decision to further postpone the 2020 General Conference until **August 29 – September 6, 2022** in Minneapolis, Minn. as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect the safety of mass gatherings and travel.

◆ **Summer camp registration** is underway. Do you have any young people who would like to go to Skye Farm this summer? Our UMW has some scholarship funds to help make that possible. Check with our office for more information. ALSO, want to know what Skye Farm looks like? There is an **Open House** planned for **July 3 from 1:00 -5:00 pm**. The day will include a time for questions, some games and some camp treats. You need to register ahead of time. Go to skyefarmcamp.org for more information.



NOTES FROM A UM NEWS COMMENTARY

Rev. Mel West is a retired United Methodist pastor living in Columbia, Mo. He shared these ideas in April of this year..

"Faith is a verb. That is the answer I give when I am asked what I have learned in my 97 years of living. Faith is a verb. And there is an addendum to that: "The cross was not meant to be a piece of jewelry or an expensive top to a church. The cross is meant to be a lifestyle." He tells two stories to illustrate his meaning, the first a fable:



"A professional tightrope walker was preparing to walk a tight cable between two 40-story buildings, pushing a wheelbarrow and with no safety nets. A reporter was there beside him to get the story. He asked her, "Do you believe I can do this?" "Oh, yes, I believe you can do it" she replied. "Good," he said. "Get into the wheelbarrow!"

Want to read the rest of his commentary, go to:

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/faith-is-a-verb>