



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE BELL

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

VOLUME 24, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2022

At Church on Sundays:

- ◆ 8:30 am in Fellowship Hall
- ◆ 9:30 am Sanctuary Service

Also streaming live on Facebook, available on YouTube same afternoon

- ◆ Sunday School
9:30 am—10:30 am
- ◆ Youth Group see inside

Visit us on the Web:

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◆
Rev. Sundar R. Samuel,
Pastor

◆
Gail Welkley,
Administrative Assistant

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

A minister wrote in the church newsletter that he was setting goals for the New Year. One of his goals was to clean up his desk. Another of his goals was to find last year's goals. Some of you keep desks like that... *not me, ha ha!* Some of you will remember the "Calvin and Hobbes" comic strip. In one strip Calvin and Hobbes are talking about the New Year. Calvin says, "I'm getting disillusioned with these New Years. They don't seem very new at all. Each New Year is just like the old year. Here another year has gone by and everything's still the same. There's still pollution, war, stupidity, and greed. Things haven't changed. I say what kind of future is this. I thought things were supposed to improve. I thought the future was supposed to be better." Hobbes replies with his usual keen insight, "the problem with the future is that it keeps turning into the present."



The New Year is traditionally a time for reflection. We look back over the year and assess our successes and failures. We gain some satisfaction over our successes, and we experience some grief and guilt over our failures. Each time we face a new beginning. We have hopes that things will be different and better. But as Hobbes says, the future just keeps turning into more of the present.

That may be why some of us come to church in the hopes that the Holy Spirit may fall afresh on us, and the future will be full of exciting new possibilities, positive change, and new growth. We tire of having the "same old, same old." Two men were talking about one of their colleagues. One said, "did you know he has 30 years of experience in his field" But his friend's response was, "Actually, he has not had thirty years of experience. He has had one year of experience thirty times." The future kept turning into the present for him. This is not God's plan and will for us.

Listen to our very upbeat lesson from Ephesians 1: 3-6

(Continued on page 2)

A Reconciling Congregation

(continued from page 1)

for this New Year: *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For God chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to be God's children through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves."*

What great good news! We are God's chosen ones. God's elect. God doesn't want our lives to be humdrum, meaning less, depressing routines. God wants something better for us than that. That is why there are some things we need to recognize as we begin 2022.

First, we need to see that God loves doing a new thing. That is the exciting thing about knowing God. God loves doing a new thing. You and I are often afraid of change. We long to be able to cling to the *status quo*. Someone has said that *status quo* is Latin for "the mess we're in." It's dangerous to stick to the *status quo*. God loves change, especially changed lives.

Resolutions are hard to keep, wouldn't you agree? How many of you have ever been determined to drop an old habit and begin a new one? How many of you have seen a resolution shattered the

same day you made it? Reforming is hard. What we need is not inspiration, but a transformation. Not a resolution, but a revolution. We need a change in our lives that comes from God. What every person needs are something that will permanently affect their life situation. What we need is something that will truly satisfy our longings, something that will bring true and lasting change. Our need is for God to do a new thing within us. And that can happen. God loves doing a new thing. Listen to these wonderful words of the Lord: *"The nations will see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow. You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God."* (Isaiah 62: 2-3).

I am amazed how many people think that God sees only the bad in them. They believe God is more aware of their failure than the good that is in them. They think that God is waiting to find something that they say or do wrong so that God can pounce on them and condemn them. Please know that God is much more concerned over the good in you than the bad. God is much more willing to reward your goodness than to punish your shortcomings. Many times, while we are condemning ourselves, God is trying to help us realize God's forgiveness.

One more thing we need to realize is that God's new name for us means a new beginning. It sounds unbelievable, but it seemed unbelievable when God changed Abram's name to Abraham: "Father of Multitudes." God made him a father of a nation. Sarai, he called Sarah; "Princess." What a marvelous and transforming imagination God has. How full of love God's heart is. How powerful God's spirit is, to take our failures and give us a future. How marvelous



(Continued on page 3)

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(Continued from page 2)

of God to take people who were headed nowhere and use them to fulfill God's plan for the world.

When people talk about other people, they sometimes say: "that person will always be that way. People never change. They are hopeless." But God knows better. One of the benefits of being in the ministry is the opportunity to see people change, often quite dramatically. Never underestimate the power of God in your life or anyone else's

A New Year is also a suitable time to give other people a new chance. It is a time to also expect the best from them; to realize that with a little help and trust from you they could be different. Give people a chance to begin over again with you. You and I are to forgive those who have hurt us. If we cannot even forgive each other, how can we ever hope to experience the unconditional love and forgiveness of God. God wants something better for us in this New Year than we have experienced in the past. Listen as God gives you a new name for this New Year, and then go out and live as blessed, chosen, holy, blameless, adopted children of God. I wish you and yours and wonderful New Year.

Peace and Grace,
Pastor Sundar

SOME NOTES ABOUT WORSHIP FOR JANUARY

**We saw the star in the East, and we came
to worship Him.**
(Matthew 2:2)

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2022 Theme



Here are some details about **four important dates in January**.

The organization **CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND** shares this information about the week of prayer.

"The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally celebrated between **January 18 and January 25** – the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul.

The story of the Magi visiting the Holy Family in Bethlehem is a very familiar one. The Magi have sometimes been seen as a symbol of the world's diversity – different religions and cultures – that come to pay homage to the Christ-child. The story might therefore represent the unity of all created that God desires.

The materials for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2022 [have] been prepared by the churches of the Middle East, the history of which was, and still is, characterized by conflict and strife, tainted with blood and darkened by injustice and oppression. The Christians of the Middle East offer these resources conscious that the world shares many of the travails and much of the difficulties that it experiences, and yearns for a light to lead the way to the Saviour who is the light that overcomes darkness."

There will be copies of a "Daily Scripture & Prayer Guide" for the Week of Prayer on the table in the church foyer and at the worship service on **January 16**.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

There is a special offering on **January 16** for **Human Relations Day**. "One of the wonderful aspects of The United Methodist Church is that we can do so much more together than we ever could do on our own. On Human Relations Day, we join other UMC congregations in a special offering to support neighborhood ministries through Community Developers, community advocacy through United Methodist Voluntary Services and work with at-risk youth through the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Programs."

January 17 is Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday observance on the Methodist calendar. **The Capital Area Council of Churches** will hold a *virtual celebration* that will take place on his birthday, Saturday, **January 15**. It will include music, prayer and thoughts from the keynote speaker, Rev. Michael Poindexter, Pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church. There will be an appeal for donations to support the CACC MLK Scholarship Fund. See their website, <https://www.capareacc.org> for more details.

Troy Area United Ministries will have a Community Breakfast on Monday, **January 17** at 8:00 am. It will celebrate the life and work of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The speaker for the event will be Lisa Good, founder of Urban Grief and community activist. The event will be livestreamed for those wishing to participate remotely. Details at the TAUMS website at www.taum.org.

On **January 23** The United Methodist Church will celebrate **Ecumenical Sunday**. Take less than four minutes to check what you know about ecumenism against what Chuck tells us in Chuck Knows Church at: <https://chuckknowschurch.com/archive/90ecumenical-sunday>

Pastor Sundar will be in the pulpit for each of the five Sundays of January.

HERE IS THE LECTIONARY FOR JANUARY



January 2 Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 147:12-20; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:(1-9), 10-18

January 9 Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 16 Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

January 23 Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21

January 30 Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Throughout the month of January Sunday School will continue to meet in person at 9:30 am. We ask that all families and children wear masks. The second and fourth Sunday of the month students should go to church first for a young disciples message. Additionally, on the first of the month, students will finish Sunday School in the sanctuary taking communion.



Sunday School will be working with Youth Group to begin collecting items for Love Kits for the homeless shelter again this year.

If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to reach out to me, EGChristianEdFUMC@gmail.com.

Blessings,
Amanda Trainor

UNITED METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Happy New Year! I hope you and your family had a great Christmas!

Youth Group will be kicking off the new year with collecting items for Love Kits for the Homeless Shelter.

Youth Group will be looking for the following items (anyone can donate):

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Shampoo & Conditioner | Body Wash /Bar of Soap | Make up | Tooth Brushes |
| Tooth Paste | Hair Brushes | Hair Ties | Deodorant |
| Razors | Shaving Cream | Lotion | Face Wash |
| Socks | Underwear | Wash Clothes | |
| | Candy treats (no nuts) | | |



Youth Group Activities

Senior Youth Group (grades 6 -12)

January 9 we will host a regular youth group meeting. Lunch will be provided. We will be having a fun hands on lesson, lunch and of course games. Please join us from 10:45 -12:45pm

January 14 from 7:00-9:00 Will be **FRIDAY NIGHT ALIVE!** An Alternative worship service, then a Game Night.

January 23 Starts the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. We will look at different ways to pray, there will be lunch and of course games. We will also be discussing and finishing up the plans for our community dinner for **February 5**. We will meet from 10:45 am - 12:45 pm.

Junior Youth Group (grades 3 -5)

January 16 from 10:30 am -12:30 pm Junior Youth Group will meet. We will be doing a special activity, playing games and having lunch. An email will go out with details on that activity.

Youth Group will be Hosting a **Free Community Dinner on February 5**. Please be on the lookout for more details when we comes closer to that date.

Blessings,
Amber Telford

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Coffee Hour - The Church Council agreed to have more coffee hours after the church services on Sunday. Every two weeks instead of once a month. All the supplies are there: coffee, tea, sugar, cream, cups, spoons, napkins. All you need to do is come at 9:00 am to make the coffee and heat the water, set the tables in the Fellowship Hall and serve and clean up afterwards. There is a dishwasher that can be used so no one has to wash dishes. It is simple, you do not need to have snacks but they are always appreciated. If no one has signed up there will not be coffee hour, so **please sign up**.



The regular monthly UMW meeting is **January 3** at 7:00 pm. All women are invited. This is the time we will discuss our budget for 2022.

Patty Chartrand

A PLACE, ESPECIALLY FOR YOU

The next couple of issues of The BELL will contain detailed descriptions of ways you can help our church by volunteering to serve on various committees, teams, or ministries.

"The church is not a building, the church is not a steeple, the church is not a resting place, the church is a people."

This is a quote from the first stanza of the hymn "We are the church" written in 1972 with the words and music by Richard K. Avery and Donald S. Marsh. I agree with the quote; however, a people need a place to worship God and so we have a building which we call a church. The building needs to be maintained and so we have a Board of Trustees who take responsibility to maintain the building and the grounds around the building. The people need a worship leader, who we call a pastor, and staff to support the ministries of the church and so we have a Staff Parish Relations Committee who oversees, hires, and advises our staff. All of this takes money and so we have a Finance Committee to oversee the church's finances. And all of this takes people to volunteer to serve in these capacities. The next issue of The BELL will have a more detailed explanation of the work done by these groups and how you might be a volunteer in service to these groups.

Not handy at maintaining buildings and grounds and not an expert in either staff relations or finance; well, we still have a place for you to volunteer your service. There are three major ministries of our church (worship, education, and caring for others). Each ministry has a few teams, and all need some helpful volunteers. So, search your heart, find your passion, and step up to serve on one or more of the teams. Again, there will be more detailed descriptions of these ministries and their teams in subsequent issues of The BELL.

Still haven't found your niche? How about one of the other committees like Endowments, Memorials, Parsonage, or Records and History? Or one of the other teams like the Tech Team or the Memorial Church Gardens Team. All can use you!! See subsequent issues of The BELL.

THE ROLE and THE WHO OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church says that the Church Council is the executive agency of the Charge Conference (Para. #244) which means that between meetings of the Charge Conference, the Church Council is the group of leaders who guide and further the ministry of the congregation.

The work of the council is to envision, plan, implement, and annually evaluate our congregation's ministry and mission. The council meets monthly on the second Wednesday of the month. Len Finke is the chairperson. His email is len.finke@gmail.com.



"I hope that in this year to come, you make mistakes. Because if you are making mistakes, then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world. You're doing things you've never done before, and more importantly, you're doing something." - Neil Gaiman



MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

MEMBERS PER THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE

Pastor Church Council Chairperson Lay Leader Lay Member of Annual Conference Church Treasurer Assistant Church Treasurers Board of Trustees Chairperson/Rep Finance Committee Chairperson/Rep Staff Parish Relations Committee Chairperson/Rep United Methodist Women Representative United Methodist Youth Fellowship President/Rep Young Adult Representative	Rev. Sundar Samuel Leonard Finke Laura Clark POSITION VACANT Arthur Sanderson Linette Burnes, David Haase John Peterson POSITION VACANT Deborah Rubenstein Patricia Chartrand Kevin Clark Emily Clark
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MEMBERS PER CHARGE CONFERENCE

Caring Ministry Coordinator/Rep Education Ministry Coordinator/Rep Endowments Committee Chairperson/Rep Financial Secretary Assistant Financial Secretary Membership Secretary Memorials Committee Chairperson/Rep Publicity Coordinator Records & History Committee Chairperson/Rep Reserve Lay Member of Annual Conference Recording Secretary Worship Ministry Coordinator/Rep	John Schmidt Carrie Larson Peter Larson Kathy Van Buren Nancy Keenholts Jean Sheviak Jean Sheviak Lorraine Beals Jean Sheviak Laura Clark Tracey Haines POSITION VACANT
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AT LARGE MEMBERS:

Suzanne Lemka
George Herrick



*“Act as if what you do
makes a difference. It does”
William James, the Father of
American psychology*



ENVELOPES FOR GIVING



Pledge envelopes have been mailed to those who have not picked them up at church. If you did not make a pledge but would still like to use the giving envelopes, we have some available. Please contact Kathy Van Buren at jvanbur1@nycap.rr.com.

SENIOR LUNCH – YOU'RE INVITED

The Membership Committee invites all seniors to the **January 19** Senior Lunch. Approximately the week before someone will call you to see if you are attending the lunch. If you do not get a call and wish to attend please call the church office at 518-477-9693. Don't miss out a delicious lunch and, of course, a wonderful dessert.



YOUNG ADULTS SEEK INPUT



Are you a Young Adult who would like to connect with other young adults across the Upper New York Conference Connection? Yes? The Young Adult Council would like to hear from you! The Council has prepared a [10 minutes survey for all young adults across the Connection](#) as an opportunity for them to express their spiritual and connectional needs.

Click on this link: <https://www.unyumc.org/ministries/young-adult-ministries>, then scroll down to "Tell us about You" and take the survey in that paragraph. You are helping to build a ministry of our Upper New York Connection.

GRATEFUL FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

On behalf of Pastor Mariana Rodriguez of Iglesia Cristiana Emmanuel and our Missions Ministry, We would like to thank everyone who donated to the upcoming Three Kings Celebration, El Dia de los Reyes, with gifts of toys and gift cards. Our church bin was overflowing with toys and \$200. worth of gift cards were given to those who are less-fortunate. Pastor Mariana serves the Hispanic community in the Albany area where many families are struggling to make ends meet. Your generosity helped to provide a brighter holiday for many children. ¡Muchas gracias amigos!



*John Schmidt & Kevin Conley,
Missions Ministry co-chairs*

MADE BY HAND WITH LOVE OUTREACH MISSIONS

Our Made by Hand group has been enjoying our get togethers to create and chat. So we will continue meeting through the winter. If you are feeling a little isolated or need an hour out of the house join us!!! We will continue to make hats and scarves and afghans for other organizations. If you would like a list of particulars, email me. In January we will begin an afghan and greeting card making project for Hospice . They have asked for red white and blue in some form. We welcome any other ideas you may have, or needs you may know of. Thank you to everyone creating love. Hope to see you Tuesdays 10:00 am **January 11 and 25.**



aleta.schweigert@gmail.com

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT – JANUARY 2022



We are so grateful for your continued support of our church! The Finance Committee presented the draft 2022 Church Budget at the Church Council meeting on Wednesday, December 8. A summary of the that budget, approved by Church Council, is below. We wanted to give you an idea of how your gifts are used at our church. Overall, we think that the church’s income will be about the same as it was for 2021. We also think that expenses will be slightly less than in 2021 (about 2% less). The expenses below show the most that we will spend for those items. Our church usually spends less than the expenses we estimate. For expenses in 2022, we considered increases in energy prices but also had some savings as our Ministry Shares to support Conference will be less in 2022 (about 5% less). The difference between our income and expenses is estimated to be less than what we anticipated in our 2021 budget (about 23% less). If you’d like a more detailed copy of the 2022 Church Budget, you can get a copy in the church office. Please keep the support for our church in your prayers.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your continued support of our church. I’m grateful that my family worships in a community that supports so many ministries and has continued to answer the call to share the Good News of God’s love in Jesus Christ during such an unprecedented time.

Very truly yours,
Colleen Rumsey

2022 BUDGET

CHURCH INCOME	CHURCH EXPENSES
Pledges \$206,000	Staff Salaries \$150,805
Other Offerings \$34,200	Other Salary Expenses \$7,746
Special Service Offerings \$9,200	Personnel Expenses \$31,527
Endowment Fund Income \$8,250	Property Maintenance & Insurance \$39,000
Building Use \$26,300	Utilities for Church & Parsonage \$18,930
Carryover & Other \$15,510	Office Supplies & Expenses \$10,900
TOTAL INCOME \$299,460	Committee & Program Expenses \$10,445
	Benevolences \$13,691
	Conference Support/Ministry Shares \$39,543
	TOTAL EXPENSES \$322,587
	DIFFERENCE (\$23,127)

LET’S GO BOWLING!

Cornerstone Campus Ministry is excited to announce the return of "Bowling for Beds" our annual fundraiser for the Emergency Homeless Shelter operated by the Capital Area Council of Churches.

We will host the event on **Saturday, February 19, 2022** from noon to 4:30 p.m. at Del Lanes in Delmar NY

We'll send out registration forms and detailed information including any COVID restrictions in the near future. In the meantime, save the date and start gathering your team.



JOIN US IN JANUARY TO MOBILIZE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

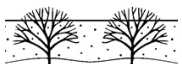


New York State has become a leader in the care of Creation by passage of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act in 2019. Join the Eco-Team and hundreds of other environmental advocates on **January 25, 2022**, at 11am to 3pm at the NYS Capitol underground concourse for the non-partisan **Climate Can't Wait Mobilization**

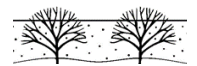
Rally. We are asking the Governor and Legislature to prioritize climate in the 2022 budget so that NYS can move forward in climate and environmental remediation. Lunch will also be provided. For more information and to register, go to the Events page of Capital Region Interfaith Creation Care Coalition www.capitalcreationcare.org.

Our United Methodist Church has expressed great concern for global climate change. Look at these lines from our Social Principles:

"We acknowledge the global impact of humanity's disregard for God's creation. Rampant industrialization and the corresponding increase in the use of fossil fuels have led to a buildup of pollutants in the earth's atmosphere. These "greenhouse gas" emissions threaten to alter dramatically the earth's climate for generations to come with severe environmental, economic, and social implications. The adverse impacts of global climate change disproportionately affect individuals and nations least responsible for the emissions. We therefore support efforts of all governments to require mandatory reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and call on individuals, congregations, businesses, industries, and communities to reduce their emissions." UMC Social Principles, ¶ 160, I The Natural World, D) Global Climate Stewardship.



Hope for the Future, and for the Preservation of the Earth!



◆ Interested in joining the **Wesley Pilgrimage in England 2022**? It's an 11 day immersion in Wesleyan spirituality running from July 9 to July 19, 2022. Learn, pray, worship, and explore places where the Wesley brothers encountered the living God. For more details, go to: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/calendar/event/wesley-pilgrimage-in-england-2022>

◆ Retired United Methodist pastor John Capen, now 84, competed in the 2021 TCS New York City Marathon, held November 7, 2021. Capen, who has run in more than 150 marathons, says **the lessons you learn in running marathons can be applied to life.** More of his story is at: <https://www.umc.org/en/content/life-is-a-marathon-lessons-from-a-retired-pastor>

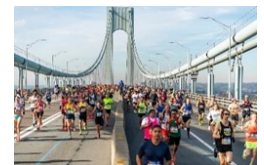


Photo courtesy of TCS New York City Marathon 2021

◆ The Living Waters Emmaus/Chrysalis Community have announced their annual meeting will be held on **Saturday, January 22, 2022** at 10:00 am at the Amsterdam UMC. All members and inquiring/prospective members are invited to attend. Questions? See George Herrick.

RED CROSS – BLOOD DRIVE



Put a big red circle around the date, **January 29**. That is the day the Red Cross will be back at our church for another blood drive. Their scheduled hours are 8am to 1pm. Their website says, "This is serious, The Red Cross is experiencing the worst blood shortage in over a decade. The dangerously low blood supply levels have forced some hospitals to defer patients from major surgery, including organ transplants." Donations are desperately needed..." You can schedule an appointment by calling 1-800-RED CROSS or by going to their website at: <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/donation-time>.