



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE BELL

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

VOLUME 24 ISSUE 11

DECEMBER 2022

At Church on Sundays:

- ◆ 8:30 am Early Informal Service - Fellowship Hall
- ◆ 9:30 am Regular Service
Also streaming live on Facebook, available on YouTube same afternoon
- ◆ Sunday School & Youth Group—see inside for details

Visit us on the Web:

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Danyal Mohammadzadeh
Pastor

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FROM OUR PASTOR'S DESK



I follow the religion of Love: whatever way Love's camels take, that is my religion and my faith.

These are the words of Rumi, a medieval mystic and poet. Rumi believed that each human being has a Jesus within waiting to be born. Born in northern Afghanistan when it was part of Iran, Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207-1273) and his family fled the Mongol invasions and settled in the city of Konya, in what is now Turkey.

Rumi was a refugee child. Although he knew many languages, he wrote most of his poems in Farsi or Persian, his mother's language. In Rumi's time, Konya had a substantial Greek-speaking Christian population. His journey made him a Muslim with a Christian wife with a refreshing tolerance of non-Muslims. Hailed as "the poet of love," Rumi has gained the status of a universal icon.

"The miracle of Jesus is himself, not what he said or did about the future. Forget the future. I'd worship someone who could do that," wrote Rumi. Rumi's teaching touches on every dimension of the love relationship between God and Rumi himself. It is a religion of love. He says, Love for God has struck fire in the spirit's bush, burning away all derivative realities.

Rumi interpreted the birth of Jesus as an allegory of the soul. Rumi says we are like Jesus' mother, Mary. Mary is like a person's body, and each of us has a Jesus within us. When we experience pain, our Jesus is born. Each of us has a Jesus, but so long as no pain appears, our Jesus is not born. If pain never comes, our Jesus goes back to his place of origin on the same secret path he had come, and we remain behind, deprived and without a share of him.

Rumi believed that suffering was a gateway into spiritual insight. Rumi's mention of the pangs, the pain of childbirth is his starting point for considering the spiritual message of Christmas. So that is what Christmas means to Rumi and Sufis—it is a time to recall and show respect for the pains that Mother Mary suffered and the birth of something wondrous, which emerges from working through the agony of the soul—the realized, perfected self, the Jesus within each of us.

(Continued on page 2)

A Reconciling Congregation

(Continued from page 1)

Rumi never tires of describing the Beloved: “Glory be to God means this: O God, how pure and holy Thou art! For every contour of the houris and the black-eyed beauties, the loveliness of all kinds of animals, the freshness and sparkle of all flowers, herbs, sweet waters, and blowing winds, all joys, all hopes, are spots on the face of Thy unique Beauty, dust and debris in Thy lane.”



At the end of his earthly journey, Rumi gave his followers special instructions to treat the night of his death as they would a joyous wedding night. For Rumi, the presence of singers and dancers indicated that the deceased was both a Muslim and a lover. But the Jewish rabbis reciting psalms and Christian priests reading from the Gospels left some of his Muslim followers bewildered. They hadn't realized just how much Rumi had become a well-respected figure within other religious communities.

Pastor Danyal Mohammadzadeh

pastordanyal@fumceg.org

BLUE CHRISTMAS PRAYER

There's no room at Christmas for sadness,
There's no place for hearts that are blue.
All the world wants to hear
Is a word full of cheer,
Not a sigh, not a tear, not from you.

There's no room at Christmas for loneliness,
There's no place for your emptiness and grief.
All the world wants is peace,
Mistletoe and Christmas trees,
Not a heartache that mars its beliefs.

There's no room at Christmas for sickness,
There's no place or time to be ill.
All the world wants is health,
Prosperity and wealth,
Not a pain that can spoil its goodwill.

There's no room at Christmas for Jesus,
There's no place for His family, too,
All the world would not share,
No one seems to really care,
A stable will just have to do.

Silence.....

Yes, there's room at Christmas for sadness,
There's a place in God's heart for you.
For He knows pain and loss,
Which He felt on the Cross,
So this candle is lit here for you...

*For Christ knows what it's like to be blue.



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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. December 2022, Volume 24, Issue 11. **George Herrick**, Editor; **Shawna Lambert**, **Danyal Mohammadzadeh**, **Gail Welkley**, Editing Team; **Kathy Van Buren**, Production Leader; **Dave Caneen**, Photographer; The Church Staff: **Danyal Mohammadzadeh**, Pastor; **Gail Welkley**, Administrative Assistant; **Amanda Trainor**, Director of Children's Christian Education; **Amber Telford**, Youth Leader; **Jacqueline Krahforst**, Organist; **Robert Thomsen**, Choir Director; **Cynthia McLaughlin**, Director of Bell Choirs; **Christopher Chartrand**, Custodian; **Kevin Clark**, Part-time Custodian; **Laura Clark**, Lay Leader; **Rhoda Demanya**, Peer Minister, Cornerstone Protestant Campus Ministry, The University at Albany; **Helen de Leon Camarce**, Missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church, Treasurer of the agency's Cambodia and Southeast Asia Missions and part of the Cambodia Women's Livelihood Projects.

SOME NOTES ABOUT WORSHIP FOR DECEMBER

There are parts of two seasons in the Christian Year that occur during the month of December - Advent and Christmas. The Christian season of Advent, the beginning of the Christian year, actually began this year in November. November 27 to be exact. The season is four Sundays long and is the time we prepare for the birth of Jesus. Advent, the time when, in our worship services we light one candle each week, symbolizing the four virtues Jesus brings us, Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace. Also, as the Christian year begins, we start a new cycle in the Revised Common Lectionary. That means that this year, on November 27 we began "cycle C" of the lectionary. Have you ever thought of reading one portion of the lectionary through all the Sundays of the year? Now is the time to start.



From the blog of Carrie Ballenger

One of the very special times of worship this month will be for "Blue Christmas" on **Wednesday, December 21**. Look at page 2 and the center pages of 8 and 9 for more on this service. That center section has all the details for worship this month - dates, times, themes and sermon titles.

The month of December is also a time of celebration for two other groups of people.



Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights, begins at sundown on **Sunday, December 18, 2022**, and ends the evening of **Monday, December 26, 2022** (8 nights). Hanukkah is a Jewish festival that commemorates the Maccabean Jews regaining control of Jerusalem and the rededication of the Temple that was destroyed back in the 2nd century BCE.

A second group celebrates Kwanzaa. **Kwanzaa**, more of a cultural celebration, was created in 1966 as an African-American holiday designed to give African-Americans an alternative to the existing holiday of Christmas and to give them an opportunity to celebrate themselves and their history. It is celebrated each year from **December 26 to January 1**. Today many African Americans celebrate both Kwanzaa and they also celebrate Christmas.



Pastor Danyal will be in the pulpit for all four Sundays in December.

Our 9:30 am Sunday worship service is live streamed on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FUMCEG/. It is also available on You Tube later that same Sunday afternoon at Worship Service FUMCEG-YouTube.

Here is the lectionary for December

December 4 Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19; Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

December 11 Isaiah 35:1-10; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11; Luke 1:46b-55

December 18 Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

December 25 Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14



Photo by the Rev.
Thomas Kim, UM News

OUR NEW BISHOP

Rev. Hector Burgos was just elected as bishop of the Northeastern Jurisdiction on the third ballot during the afternoon plenary on Wednesday, November 2. Rev. Burgos, 48, is the first Hispanic elected bishop in the jurisdiction and the first Puerto Rican ever elected in the denomination. He was appointed to the Upper New York Conference and will begin on **January 1, 2023**.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Hello Families,

I hope everyone is well! It is unbelievable that Advent season is once again upon us. This is our first Christmas season with our new pastor, Danyal! We are all so excited to have him as part of our church family and are very excited to celebrate Christmas and the New Year with him!

Below is a list of our Advent activities for Sunday School this year.

Sunday, November 27 Sunday School will go to church first for **Chocolate Time** with Pastor Danyal. We will then be dismissed to class where we will learn about Isaiah 2:3-5 and make Advent wreaths. Older students, grades 8 and up, will work on the Hope Rekindled Bible study and work on a special manger project.



Sunday, December 4 Children will learn about Romans 15:4-13 and discuss week two of Advent, the week of Peace. Children will work on designing a church welcome statement. We will talk about how Jesus was welcomed into the manger and make our own manger scene to remind us of how Jesus was welcomed into the world. Older students will continue to work on the Hope Rekindled Bible study and the manger project. All students will be dismissed to take Communion with the church.

Sunday, December 11 Children will go to church first for **Chocolate Time** with Pastor Danyal. After, all students will be dismissed to fellowship hall where we will make our traditional Christmas centerpieces out of branches, florist foam and decorations. After church, Youth Group is hosting a Shop and Drop.

*Confirmation Students are signed up to host coffee hour this week.

Sunday, December 18 Children will be reading *On The Way to Bethlehem* and we will be hosting our annual Christmas store. We are looking a few older teens and adult volunteers to help with the Christmas store.

Sunday, December 25 there will be no Sunday School.

*The Family Christmas Service details are in the works and will be sent out via email.

As always, if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

Blessings,
Amanda Trainor
EGChristianEdFUMC@gmail.com

UNITED METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Can you believe 2022 is coming to the end? There are a few more youth group meetings before we ring in the new year.

December 4 We will be lighting the Advent candle during the 9:30 am service. I have a few youth that have volunteered to read and light the candles. If you haven't volunteered and would like to, please let me know. If you would like to stand up front to be present to show the church you're there, that would be great too.

December 4 The Junior High group will also have a Youth Group. We will be working with Aleta on learning how to knit. There will be snacks as well. Youth group will be from 11:00 am -12:30 pm.

December 11 Senior High will be doing the Drop and Shop Fundraiser from 11:30 am - 2:30 pm . Any Junior High or Senior youth that are able to help run an activity please let me know. We will be making our own bagel pizza, crafts, games and decorating cookies.



December 18 This will be our Youth Group Christmas party, this is for both youth groups. Please bring a wrapped present to play the white elephant game. Presents should be around \$10.00. We will play other Christmas games as well, have Youth Fellowship and lunch. We will meet 11:00 am -1:00 pm. Friends are always welcome to come.

Best,
AmberTelford youthleaderamber@gmail.com

“DROP AND SHOP” CHILDREN’S ACTIVITIES

Are you a parent of children Pre-k - 5th grade and need some time to get Christmas shopping done? Sr. Youth group is hosting a “Drop and Shop” fundraiser. We are inviting all children to come play games, make and eat bagel pizza, decorate Christmas cookies, and do crafts while parents get some Christmas shopping done. This will be held on **December 11** from 11:30 am—2:30 pm. The cost is \$25.00 for one child, \$40.00 for two children and \$60.00 for three children. All adults have been background checked and have been through Safe Sanctuaries Training (which is training to prevent child abuse through the church). Please register your child by emailing Amber at Youthleaderamber@gmail.com

UMW/UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH



December 4 the UMW or Women in Faith is hosting the coffee hour. It is our Christmas cookie exchange. Bring in your favorite Christmas cookies with the recipe and take someone's cookies home with their recipes or just enjoy cookies at Coffee Hour.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee wishes to thank all who made a pledge to donate funds to the church for 2023. As of now we have 69 pledge cards returned. In addition we have 18 people who give through E-giving. Please remember, no matter how large or small your contribution, it all adds up to create our church budget.



MADE BY HAND WITH LOVE OUTREACH MISSIONS

We will be meeting every other Tuesday at 10:00 am on **December 6 and 20**.



Soft Hats of any size, color, or shape for hatsgiving.org and **Red Scarves** (5-8 inches by 60 inches long) for foster care kids in college fc2success.org. We are now making Care Shawls for patients with ALS about 24 inches by 48" (10 oz of yarn) Afghans 48" X 48" are ongoing projects for various organizations locally. If you need supplies or would like to meet evenings, contact the group. Everyone is invited to join us for creating and/or conversation Thanks. aleta.schweigert@gmail.com

SOME SHORT NOTES ON IMPORTANT NEWS ITEMS



A - **December 1st** is World AIDS Day. Our Bishop Julius Trimble, Chair of the United Methodist Global AIDS Committee (UMGAC) points to one of the reasons The United Methodist Church cares about HIV & AIDS. **Stigma**. It's true major strides have been made in HIV diagnosis and treatment, but the stigma attached to this disease is still a major problem. Consider supporting our church's efforts in this area with your dollars.



B - You can help someone have a Happy Christmas. Take a slip from the Giving Tree located in the foyer just outside the sanctuary door. Purchase the gift named on the slip and bring it to the church, *unwrapped*, by Sunday, **December 4th**.

C -Have your name included on this year's Church-Wide Christmas Card. Monday, **December 5th** is the deadline. There is a form for your information included with this issue of The Church BELL.

D - This year's mission trip for Cornerstone Campus Ministry, **January 8 – 14**, will be to Madisonville, Kentucky. They are anticipating 20-25 students will participate. They will be working with Fuller Disaster Rebuilders to help rebuild homes destroyed by tornadoes in 2021. We are being given the opportunity to “adopt-a-student” for the trip. The basic cost is \$200. Would you be interested in helping with this program? See George Herrick for more information.



SPECIAL HOLIDAY GREETINGS



Former pastors and those from our church who went on to become clergy were invited this year to share holiday greetings with our church family. I also suggested, “Name one wish for the new year – personal or wider group”. Here are the results of those who were able to respond to the invitation. *George Herrick*

Rev. Russell D. Smith was pastor of our church 1978 to 1983. He is now a retired member of our Upper New York Conference. I had a long conversation with Russell’s wife, Joyce. He was not available at the time. He was to get together with his daughter Becky and they, together, were going to tackle the computer. The computer won that round. But the Smiths still do send their very best for the holiday season for all here in our church.

Here is their contact information: phone: 518-373-5705, email: joyruss58@gmail.com

Address: Brookdale Senior Living, 1786 Union St., Apt 213, Niskayuna, NY 12309



Henry Frueh & grandchildren

Rev. Henry C. Frueh was pastor at our church from 2003 to 2006. He is now a retired member of our Upper New York Conference.

Here is his contact information: phone: 518-222-9330 email: henryfrueh@gmail.com

Address: 149 2nd Street, Apt 2F, Troy NY 12180

My hope for this year is for one ear upon the heartbeat of God; the other ear attentive to the cries of the impoverished, the scorned, the broken-hearted, the powerless – and to a wounded planet crying out for healing. A blessed and peaceful year to all of you in this beloved church!

Rev. Sundar Samuel, our most recent pastor prior to Danyal, is now serving as Senior Pastor at the Vestal United Methodist Church.

Here is his contact information: phone: 607-437-6474 email: sunsam52@yahoo.com

Address: 328 S. Main St., Vestal, NY 13850-1576

Our Dear Friends in Christ,

Nov. 23, 2022

Deb and I wish you and yours a blessed advent season and a wonderful Christmas. Our prayers are with all of you and your families as you enter a brand New Year—2023. We wish God’s abundant blessing upon you and your ministry through your wonderful church in East Greenbush. We both have a lot of fond memories of serving you and being in partnership-in-ministry with you. I personally want to thank all of you who have graciously remembered me in my (old age) sending your birthday wishes!

I am reminded of God becoming a human being—changes everything. Christianity is the only religion in which God enters history to solve humanity’s struggle with human brokenness. Jesus leaves God’s side to live the perfect life God’s holiness requires. Jesus takes our brokenness on himself and willingly suffers its consequences and punishment. He dies, and then he is raised, never to die again, making his footsteps a “way” for all who believe and follow him.

Oh, our recurring ups and downs of walking with God will continue. Imperfect people will live imperfectly. It’s what we do. And God will forgive. It’s what God does. Ups and downs, Downs and ups. Yet now, on the other side of Christmas and the cross, the other side of Jesus’ resurrection, we live with a certain victory. We come to the manger this advent season knowing the whole story and its end, not as a prayer or a prophetic dream for the



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future, but as truth, history and reality. We know why the baby came. We know what he has accomplished. In the words of the psalm writer (Ps. 85: 1-7), in Jesus, God's glory dwells in our world, "steadfast love and faithfulness meet," and "righteousness and peace kiss each other."

I love that Eugene Peterson's *The Message* paraphrases St. John 1:14 with these words: "the Word became flesh and moved into the neighborhood." For the wrappings around Christmas each year, we must not lose the wonder of the incarnation, that giant stoop from heaven to earth. Like a human being becoming a gnat, God moved into the neighborhood as one of us.



Henri Nouwen put it this way in *Letters to Marc About Jesus*, "I wanted to write to you about the love of God become visible in Jesus. How is that love made visible through Jesus? It is made visible in the descending way." That says it: "The descending way." Jesus came down to our level so that we can be lifted up to live with him forever. That's how we know his love. Jesus has not only moved into the neighborhood; he has made his home with us. They say home is where the heart is. In Jesus, we are all home for Christmas!

So, we pray, "Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation. O holy child of Bethlehem, be born in us today. Amen."

Sundar Samuel

Rev. Dr. Wayne Albertson. Wayne grew up in our church before he was off to college to become a minister. Wayne is now a retired member of the West Ohio Conference.



Here is his contact information: phone: 612-214-4521

email: wfalbertson@gmail.com

Address: 6326 12th Ave S, Richfield, Minnesota 55423

My greetings to the people of FUMC East Greenbush –

I thank George Herrick for this invitation to send greetings for this sacred season. I have a memory of Rev. Stan Moore who strongly influenced me towards ordained ministry. We kept a correspondence after I left East Greenbush. His letters close to Christmas would for years end with the line derivative of the magi after visiting the infant Jesus and also influenced by the news of the day. He would write, "We must go back another way after seeing Jesus." In that light, I send you a poem of mine, no doubt prompted by Stan's spirit and memory, and the news of the day. To wit:

MANGERS ETERNAL

*There are times like these
we need a manger to visit;
Harsh times, conflicted, tense and
taxing times, enveloping
our work, our news, our play, our
humor, our dinners, our souls –*

*Our Souls!
We need a manger to visit, a
place we can honestly kneel,
can humbly give a gift
and not expect return,
can renew our lives with innocence,
the origin of our humanity –
Our Souls!*

Christmas Season

Worship Services and Activities

Advent Passage – Isaiah 60:2 - Though darkness covers the earth and gloom the nations, the Lord will shine upon you; God's glory will appear over you.

Sunday, November 27 – First Sunday of Advent – “Hope”

8:30 am – Early Service – “A Meditation on Ave Maria”

9:30 am – Morning Worship – “A Meditation on Ave Maria”

Sunday, December 4 - Second Sunday of Advent – “Peace”

8:30 am – Early Service, sermon – “Who did get the word of God?”

9:30 am – Morning Worship, sermon – “Who did get the word of God?”

The sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated at both services.

Sunday, December 11: Third Sunday of Advent – “Joy”

8:30 am – Early Service– “To be or not to be; Happiness or Joy – that is the question.”

9:30 am – Morning Worship – “To be or not to be; Happiness or Joy – that is the question.”

The CHIMettes will be playing, "O Come, All Ye Faithful."

**11:30 am – 2:30 pm “Drop and Shop Children’s Activities
(see page --- for details)**

Sunday, December 18: Fourth Sunday of Advent – “Love”

8:30 am – Early Service– “A Joseph Kind of Love!”

9:30 am – Morning Worship – “A Joseph Kind of Love!”

The EmBELLishments will be playing "Angels We Have Heard on High"

Wednesday, December 21: Blue Christmas

7:00 pm - With a bit of special music the FUMC will be hosting a "Longest Night" service on this night – the longest night of the year – as an opportunity to acknowledge our sadness in the midst of a season of hope, to remind us that we are not alone, and to reassure us that the light grows every day forward from here.



Saturday, December 24: Christmas Eve – “The Spirit of Christmas; hope, peace, joy, and love!”

5:00 pm - Family Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service

7:00 pm – Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service – “A Barn Life!”

9:00 pm – Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service – “A Barn Life!”

Sunday, December 25: Christmas Day – “A New Year resolution!”

8:30 am – NO EARLY SERVICE THIS WEEK

9:30 am – Morning Worship – “Rejoice! The Savior is Born”

Sunday, January 1: New Year’s Day

8:30 am – NO EARLY SERVICE THIS WEEK

9:30 am – Morning Worship – “In the name of Jesus” - David Haase preaching
The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated at this service

Sunday, January 8: Coffee House with Choir, Cookies and Carols
Time to be announced





The Upper New York delegation to NEJC. That's the Bishop's son kneeling in front.
Can you find Rachel in the picture?

THOUGHTS ON THE NEJ CONFERENCE (NORTH EAST JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE)

Exhilaratingly exhausting; that is how I feel about the intense work of a jurisdictional delegate. Mental focus and clarity, along with the ability to sit for extreme extended periods of time are necessary. Holy conferencing offers a space for worship and praise, conducting business and elections if required, and discernment of one's purpose and call. The Holy Spirit abounds in these spaces and there is an ability to connect with the Holy Spirit in a profound manner that differs from daily connection.

The postponed Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference met at the University of Maryland in Baltimore from October 31 through November 4, 2022. Interviews of the nine endorsed candidates were conducted on Tuesday. It was agreed upon by the body that two bishops would be elected, and that process began on Wednesday. The Rev. Héctor A. Burgos-Núñez was elected bishop on the 3rd ballot with 94 votes. Cheers and celebration filled the conference hall, along with praise and thanksgiving to our God.

Thursday however, was very different. It is clear that the people of the United Methodist Church are deeply hurting. Space was provided for opportunities of personal privilege for individuals to lament and share stories of pain. It is also evident that this church is divided. The Rev. Alyce Weaver Dunn, the first female endorsed candidate of the Western Pennsylvania Conference, received much of the traditionalist votes. The Rev. Jay Williams of the New England Conference, raised from the floor (meaning he received enough votes to submit a bio and be considered for election, but did not receive interviews) gained much support from more inclusive voters. The two candidates received close to equal votes until after the 18th ballot when a motion was made to suspend the rules and postpone the election of the second bishop to the 2024 NEJ Conference. It passed, and therefore only one bishop was elected.

On Friday morning we received the information that bishop elect Héctor Burgos would be assigned to the Upper New York Annual Conference, while the New England Conference would await a decision for episcopal coverage at a later time. The UNY delegates were able to meet briefly with the bishop elect and his family. During this meeting we presented him with a unicorn hat. When the delegates met earlier in the week to discuss what qualities we would like to see in a bishop, we quickly realized we had created a pretty unattainable list; a unicorn. We agreed that where our bishop might fall short, we will do our very best to step up and work alongside our bishop. Together we can be that unicorn. The Rev. Hector encouraged us with these words, "I know there will be challenges ahead of us, but no challenge is bigger or greater than our God." The conference concluded with the consecration of Bishop Burgos at the stunning Memorial Chapel on the hill of the university campus.

It is a privilege and honor to serve one's conference as a delegate. It should not be taken lightly. I am grateful for all the support I received from mentors and fellow delegates. The work of these jurisdictional conferences is intense; it is important, and it is done, completed; for the next 18 months anyway. Praise God. —*Rachel Giso*

CHURCH CHARGE CONFERENCE

First United Methodist Church East Greenbush

November 8, 2022



District Superintendent Debbie Earthrowl presided over our annual Church Charge Conference held in the Sanctuary. Here are some brief notes about the meeting. All typical business items were smoothly reviewed and passed. Peter Larson, Susie Calyer and Kurt Schlachter were voted to serve on the Trustees in the class of 2025. David Haase was unanimously approved to become a candidate for the Ministry. Laura Clarke and George Herrick are Certified Lay Servants and Rachel Giso is a Certified Lay speaker. Our church received a commendation for paying 100% of our conference donations. If you have question about this meeting, please speak with our pastor.

JOBS THAT NEED DOING

COFFEE HOUR—We are looking for a host for Coffee Hour. You don't have to host it alone, you can host with a friend, or have your committee host it. We all enjoy coffee and fellowship. Let's volunteer to help continue coffee hour.

No host means no coffee. We currently have no volunteers from December through June.

USHERING—We are in need of ushers. Patty Chartrand has been the Coordinator of Ushers for the past three years and wants to retire from the position. If you are interested and want details contact Pastor Danyal.

CUSTODIAN—*Chris Chartrand will be retiring in a couple weeks. We will be needing a new custodian.* A part-time Custodian is needed for our church. The work entails twenty (20) plus hours per week and the candidate must be able to perform medium to heavy physical labor and have a good working knowledge of building cleaning and maintenance. The candidate must be able to work independently with minimal supervision. Flexible work schedule. Must pass background check. Work and personal references required. For more information contact Tom at 518-477-9837.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED—Our new Hospitality Ministry is in need of volunteers. Can you help planning/coordinating meals for members of our congregation who are going through a difficult time? It may be a recent surgery or family emergency. Your help would be greatly appreciated. Please see Amber Telford, Carrie Larson or John Schmidt.

BLOOD DRIVE

On November 15 our church sponsored an American Red Cross Blood Drive. Nineteen (19) units of blood were collected. Three of the people who participated in the drive are shown in the picture to the left, Deb Rubenstein, Melissa Dupont and Red Cross worker Matt Glithero. If you missed this opportunity to give, get ready. The Red Cross will be back again on **January 20, 2023**. Come, give in memory of a former longtime member of our church, Lee Pierce. Lee was very active in our music ministry and a recipient of the largesse of the Blood Drives.



**American
Red Cross**

POEMS AND PANDEMIC

One day, the global pandemic of 2020 will be just a distant memory for most people; but fortunately, the story of the COVID-19 virus and our church has been preserved for us. The booklet "Poems and Pandemic" was compiled by Patty Chartrand, Carrie Larson and Jean Sheviak using contributions from members of our congregation. Copies are available for only \$10 in the church office.



MISSIONS



The Missions Team would like to share with you a letter we received recently from a young man who attends Qholaqhoe High School in Lesotho. We have been supporting **Pusetso Lekunya** with scholarships for several years now and receive letters from him on a regular basis. He is a very appreciative student who is bound to go far in life.

11 October 2022

Dear First United Methodist Church,

I am writing this letter to tell you about me and my family and how we are still doing. Everything is still going well and I am preparing to write my final examination. My parents are healthy and my siblings too. In the past two weeks Molly (my dog) was pretty sick. I was nervous that he might leave me but luckily, he made it. He recovered and he is healthy again.

I enjoy playing the piano even though I am not genuinely good in playing it. My intention is to work pretty hard in this final examination so that I can open doors to make it to my destination. The only thing that I ever wanted was to live my dream with my family.

I thank you a lot for the Almanac. I enjoy reading it and I am learning a lot by reading it. There are numerous things that I never knew before, and I started learning them. I really enjoy it.

I am still busy in our garden planting vegetables and fruit trees. I do it occasionally in the afternoon when I have time or when I take a break from reading. Molly loves playing pretty much. I enjoy playing with him.

I hope that you are still doing very well too with your family, and I would like to hear again from you too.

Your student,

Pusetso



A BIG THANK YOU



A big thank you to Girl Scout Troop 5538, those who donated supplies and Missions team member Gary Klee for coordinating our latest project of flood buckets for UMCOR Disaster Relief. Fifteen buckets were filled on Sunday, November 13 by the young scouts. What a great way to learn about caring for others! The buckets will provide much-needed relief from natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes and floods.



MADE BY HAND WITH LOVE

During 2022 our group has been **very busy**. We meet every other Tuesday morning to knit, crochet, sew and **chat**. We now have 14 people who attend regularly and others who create from home. Some of us are experienced while others are learning a new skill. Together, using our Time, Talents, and Treasures, we have had the pleasure of sending the following items to bring joy to others in our community.

Community Hospice- Rensselaer 20 red white and blue afghans and 30 notecards

S.H.I.P.- Albany County "Sheriff Homeless Improvement Program" 28 afghans and fleece throws- 6 pillows
hatsgiving.org 75 soft hats for kids with cancer

Albany Med 8 afghans for dying patients

fc2success.org 40 Red Scarves for Foster Care Kids in College

R.I.S.S.E 6 blankets for Refugees

St. Paul's Center blankets, pillowcases, crocheted animals, pot holders and dish cloths

Rensselaer County Sr. Center 50 Pot Holders and Dish Cloths for Cooking Classes

ALS 12 Care Shawls

We welcome everyone to join us. If you need to meet in the evenings, we can arrange that too. Thank you for all the support.



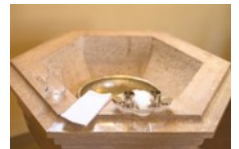
Aleta Schweigert

EVENTS BEYOND OUR LOCAL CHURCH



The New York State Council of Churches Seventh Annual Awards and Fundraising Dinner will be held on Friday, **December 9, 2022**, 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm. Reception, 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm Dinner. The festivities will be at The Desmond Hotel in Albany.

The Capital Area Council of Churches sponsored **Ecumenical Witness of Baptism Renewal Service** will be held **January 9, 2023** - 1:30 pm at The First Church in Albany. Each year, pastors and witnesses gather on the 2nd Sunday of January (Feast of the Baptism of The Lord), to share experiences and learn about baptism in one of our traditions. We warmly welcome new witnesses and participating congregations. For information, contact Coordinator Miranda Rand, at mirandarand411@gmail.com or 518-393-5047.



The Capital Area Council of Churches sponsored **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Interfaith Celebration** will be held on **January 15, 2023** at 7 PM at Macedonia Baptist Church, 26 Wilson Avenue, Albany, NY.



The Capital Area Council of Churches **Annual Assembly** will be held **February 9, 2023** at St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church. Clergy and laity are encouraged to attend this event. The meeting will include a short business session followed by a program session which is under development.

The Commission on the General Conference has announced that the **2024 United Methodist General Conference will be held April 23—May 3, 2024** in Charlotte, North Carolina. The 11-day gathering is expected to attract about 5,500 to 7,500 people.

.CHURCH FACEBOOK PAGE POLICY



The Tech Committee encourages church ministries to share pictures and posts about their ministries. For example, groups are encouraged to post about upcoming events so that it can be shared with the wider community. The posts about Trunk and Treat and Brooks BBQ were both shared widely and reached people outside not just the members of our Facebook group.

The Tech Committee encourages church groups to share pictures of events. Examples include Sunday school or Youth events like delivering items to the homeless shelter and Change the World or other mission projects. We love seeing our ministries in action!

Personal posts not related to church should be shared on the person's own Facebook page, not the Church's page.

Hate Speech: The congregation of FUMC believes that God calls the church, as body of Christ, to engage in different platforms of social media, interrupt hate speech, and defend those who are bullied. Therefore, there will be zero tolerance policy for all forms of speech against religious and social minorities, ethnicities, all races, different genders and gender identities, and different sexual orientations. Any such speech will be removed from the church's Facebook page and group and the user will be blocked.

Fundraisings: Fundraising or collections posts should only be for church sponsored collections or fundraising. Examples include fundraising for Sunday School or Youth group activities (waffle breakfast, Super Bowl Sub Sunday) or collections for church mission projects like Red Bird Boxes.

Posts asking for money for outside activities, even though they can be for good causes, should not be on the church Facebook group.

TWO BIG NEWS STORIES FROM CORNERSTONE

First, about the bake sale. We have this note from Sandy Damhof, Cornerstone Chaplain:

"On behalf of Cornerstone Campus Ministry, I want to thank you for hosting a bake sale this weekend; and to Unity Lutheran for letting us use their kitchen to prepare all the baked goods.

"With your help, we raised \$2087!!! The funds raised will underwrite the cost of our Service Trip to Kentucky **January 8 - 14, 2023** where we will help rebuild homes destroyed by tornadoes." (FUMCEG buyers donated \$390.)



(L to r: Rhoda Demanya, Julie Jeong, Sophia Watts and Doug Reynolds)

Second, "Cornerstone Campus Ministry at the University at Albany is pleased to announce the decision to call a brand-new Campus Minister after the retirement of our beloved Rev. Sandy Damhof, who has served faithfully and will be stepping down in **May, 2023** after 20 years.



Grounded in mission work, table ministry and connection, Cornerstone has called Rev. Dr. Rebecca "Becca" Ehrlich to the position of Campus Minister to help meet students where they are in their spiritual lives and walk with them on their journey. Rev. Dr. "Becca" Ehrlich will begin her work on **January 1, 2023**. Sandy and Becca will be working together until Sandy's retirement in May. Rev. Dr. "Becca" Ehrlich serves as Adjunct Professor of Christian Spirituality at United Lutheran Seminary in Gettysburg and Philadelphia, PA. She has served as the Associate Dean for Community Life at the General Theological Seminary for The Episcopal Church in New York, and the Interim Director for Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop in Altoona, PA and in Upstate New York. She is also a gifted writer and author of Christian Minimalism:

Simple Steps for Abundant Living. Her breadth of experience in a variety of settings including her work with college students and people of all ages has prepared her well for this call. We look forward to her work with the wide variety of students that the University at Albany brings together."

A Special Church Service:
“Longest Night” – Blue Christmas
Wednesday, December 21, 7:00 pm

The Christmas season is one of excitement and joy, but for some people this time of year also comes with loneliness, grief, sorrow, personal pain, anxiety, or other struggles.



If you or someone you know is experiencing loss, grief, or worry – unrest of any kind – during this holiday season, please join us for a quiet service of prayer and meditation - Prayer and meditation for hope, inner peace, and a growing light in our lives. Share in our meditative worship of remembering, reflection, and encouragement.

Please remember this invitation is for all in our community. No need to be a member of our church or any particular faith community, or any faith community at all to attend.

All are welcome.

