



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# THE BELL

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

VOLUME 25 ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2023

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

[www.facebook.com/FUMCEG](https://www.facebook.com/FUMCEG)

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Danyal Mohammadzadeh  
*Pastor*

Gail Welkley  
*Administrative Assistant*



## '1873 to 2023'

150 years ago a group of people came together to form the first Methodist church in East Greenbush. Plans are being made to celebrate in a big way. Watch The BELL for upcoming events.



## FROM OUR PASTOR'S DESK



January: the month of revelation and breath prayer!

Yes, in the beginning of a new year, let the Breath of God breathe on you and fill you with life anew. January is the month of breathing. And God reveals Godself through breathing.

God's revelation is not only a historical event that happened about 2000 years ago and we celebrate it as Epiphany. No, God's revelation is an ongoing reality. January begins with Epiphany or the revelation of God incarnate as Jesus Christ. It results in the dissolving of existing boundaries. It dissolves

the boundaries between the divine and human. God reaches out to us by breaking through the divide between the divine and human. God is the very manifestation of a love that is so extreme that it dissolves existing boundaries, including the traditional divide between the divine and the human. God reveals Godself to us because God loves us and wants to share

*(Continued on page 2)*

*A Reconciling Congregation*

Godself with us. “Indeed, without revelation, God would remain an abstract mystery to us—that is, “out there” as opposed to being Emmanuel, or “God-with-us,” right here,” says Father Patrick Cheng, an Episcopal priest, lawyer, and theologian in New York City. God is not an abstract and God still reveals Godself to us.

Revelation is an ongoing reality. To be felt in each moment, God is revealed to us as the only vital source of life, our very breath. In the eyes of a Hindu, God is “the sole king of the breathing,” according to the Sacred Books of the East. In the eyes of a Muslim, God is the one who breathed God’s spirit into us, according to Quran 38:72. In the eyes of a Hebrew and a Christian, God is the one who “breathed the breath of life” into us, according to Genesis 2:7.

In the eyes of believers, God is the One who is the source of all life. But we often forget we are breathing while we are breathing. Hence, we may forget that God and God’s grace are always with us, and we may become discouraged or depressed. When that happens, a spiritual practice called breath prayer may save us as believers. To begin your breath prayer, close your eyes and recall a line from scripture. Be still, calm, peaceful, and open to the presence of God. Breathe in and out, with the first part of your prayer coming to mind on the inward breath and the latter half connecting with the outward breath. Continue your prayer for a set period of time or until you feel you have reached a sense of inner stillness as you dwell in the presence of God. You might use one of the following verses:

- God, have mercy on me (This breath prayer is rooted in Psalm 123:3, Luke 18:13, and Luke 18:38).
- Speak, God, for your servant is listening (1 Samuel 3:9).
- My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth (Psalm 121:2).
- Here I am (Isaiah 6:8).
- Show your power (Psalm 68:28).
- When I am afraid, I will trust you (Psalm 56:3).
- Not my will, but yours (Luke 22:42).
- Come, my savior God (Revelation 22:20).



Scientists say that 12 minutes of deep breathing each day is enough to transform the mind. We call God “Emmanuel” by doing breath prayer. Breath prayer can be a powerful reminder that God is with us and God’s grace accompanies us in each moment of life. Would you like to join me and sing with me hymn 420?

Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew, that I may love the way you love, and do what you would do.

*Pastor Danyal*



The Upper New York Conference’s March 2023 Special Session of Annual Conference to consider disaffiliation requests will take place remotely on March 25 from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon.

**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. January 2023, Volume 25, Issue 1. **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; **Steven Green**, 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 JANUARY

Take a look at the picture on the right. This line of scripture from the January 29 lectionary, what a great way to start a New Year. In it, we are asked the question, “what does the Lord require of you?” and we are given an answer in six words, “act justly”, “love mercy” and “walk humbly”. In a time of climate extremes, political divisions and unrest, social divisions – all these point to a year of great challenges. 2023 may be a year of some tough decisions for all of us, including decisions that may have a tremendous impact on our own United Methodist Church.



Here are some more specifics about worship in January.

**January 1** Epiphany of the Lord. David Haase will lead us in worship this Sunday. To get a better understanding of the meaning of Epiphany, look at this short video of **Chuck Knows Church** at, <https://chuckknowschurch.com/archive/59epiphany>.

**January 8** Baptism of the Lord

**January 15** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany, Human Relations Day

**January 16** Monday—observance of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday

The Capital Area Council of Churches Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Interfaith Celebration will be held on Sunday, January 15, 2023 at 7:00 pm at Macedonia Baptist Church, 26 Wilson Avenue, Albany NY, and it will feature Rev. Jamel K. Robinson of Mt. Zion Baptist Church.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins Wednesday, **January 18** See page 6 for more information on this special week.

**January 22** 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany

**January 29** 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany



Looking ahead, Black History Month begins **February 1**. Lent will begin with Ash Wednesday, **February 22**.

Pastor Danyal will be preaching each Sunday in January except for **January 1**. On that Sunday, David Haase will be filling our pulpit. Our 9:30 am Sunday worship service is live streamed on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/FUMCEG](http://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 January

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

**January 8** - Isaiah 42:1-9, Psalm 29, Acts 10:34-43, Matthew 3:13-17

**January 15** - Isaiah 49:1-7, Psalm 40:1-11, 1 Corinthians 1:1-9, John 1:29-42

**January 22** – Isaiah 9:1-4, Psalm 27:1, 4-9, 1 Corinthians 1:10-18, Matthew 4:12-23

**January 29** - Micah 6:1-8, Psalm 15, 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, Matthew 5:1-12

### A JOB THAT NEEDS DOING



As we enjoy the winter season it also brings about a need to shovel and clean the walks here at Church. The Trustees are looking for someone to handle those duties on weekends. If you are interested please contact John Peterson or Peter Larson. This is a great job for those with young backs and it’s a way to earn some spending money.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL

Dear Sunday School Families,



Thank you to everyone who participated in Advent and/or the Christmas Eve family service. It was an absolute joy teaching about the birth of Christ and sharing a part of the season together.

**January 1**, Sunday School we will be learning about the Wise Men visiting Jesus (Micah 5:2). There will be no Confirmation class on New Year Day.

**January 8**, we will be learning about the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17).

The remainder of the month is TBD and will be sent out via email and posted in the bulletin.

Last, but not least, we will be planning dates soon for the Confirmation outings. All previous Confirmands will be welcome to join us. More details will be sent out soon.

Blessings,  
*Amanda Trainor*  
[EGChristianEdFUMC@gmail.com](mailto:EGChristianEdFUMC@gmail.com)

## UNITED METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Happy New Year! Hopefully this is the best year yet! We have so much planned for the youth group and are looking forward to the new year!

**January 8** Junior high will meet 11:00 am—12:30 pm. We will be discussing the upcoming year, playing games, and having snacks. We will start a new series of questions for the pastor and write down a goal we have with our faith journey.



**January 15** Will be an all youth, youth group outing. The youth will determine the outing at the Christmas Party.

**January 22** Will be a senior high meeting. We will be starting a series of ask the pastor, writing anonymous questions for him to answer, writing down a goal for our faith journey, we will, of course, have snacks and enjoying fellowship.

Youth Group will be collecting items for Love kits for the Homeless Shelter for the month of January until February 19. Please drop off any items to the donation box in the lobby. The goal is to make 45 love kit bags for the residents.

Items include:

- |               |                |           |               |
|---------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|
| SHAMPOO       | CONDITIONER    | BODY SOAP | DEODORANT     |
| TOOTH BRUSHES | TOOTH PASTE    | FLOSS     | HAIR BRUSHES  |
| HAIR TIES     | HAND WARMERS   | NEW SOCKS | NEW UNDERWEAR |
| GLOVES        | SCARVES        | RAZOR     | SHAVING CREAM |
| NEW TOWELS    | NEW WASHCLOTHS | LOTION    |               |

If you have any questions please reach out to *Amber Telford* [youthleaderamber@gmail.com](mailto:youthleaderamber@gmail.com).

**COMING SOON**—Our First United Methodist Church in East Greenbush **150th Anniversary Celebration Commemorative Calendar**. Watch for more information in future announcements.

## WHO IS HÉCTOR A. BURGOS NÚÑEZ



The Rev. Héctor A. Burgos Núñez was elected Bishop on November 4, 2022, at the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference of the United Methodist Church held in College Park, Maryland. He is the first Hispanic-Latino bishop in the Northeastern Jurisdiction.

Bishop Burgos was assigned to serve as the Episcopal leader of the Upper New York Area effective January 1, 2023.

Bishop Héctor A. Burgos Núñez holds an M.Div. from the School of Theology at Drew University in Madison, NJ, a bachelor's in business administration with a concentration in Management and Strategic Marketing from the University of Puerto Rico, and a graduate certificate in Information Systems Technology. At the time of his election to the episcopacy, Bishop Burgos was serving as District Superintendent of the Central District of the Greater New Jersey Conference. Bishop Burgos served pastorates at West Creek United Methodist Church 2004-2005, First United Methodist Church, Iglesia Casa de Esperanza 2005-2009, and Oasis United Methodist Church 2009-2014. He also served as Director of Worship and Urban Ministries 2014, Executive Director of NextGen Ministries of GNJ 2016-2018, and Director of Connectional Ministries 2015-2019 for the Greater New Jersey Conference.

Bishop Héctor A. Burgos, a Community Leadership Fellow from the Lewis Center for Church Leadership, a certified ICA coach, and an Outward Mindset facilitator, also served as Director of Communications for MARCHA, the National Hispanic/Latino caucus within the United Methodist Church, 2010-2022.

Bishop Burgos envisions the United Methodist Church and the Upper New York Conference being a Holy Spirit-led global movement that is:

- Thriving and united in the mission of transforming the world by nurturing disciples of Jesus Christ who share faith, hope, and justice
- Spiritually alive and culturally relevant
- Committed to personal and social holiness, celebrating its rich diversity as a gift from God
- A multi-generational network of faith communities that embrace all people as beloved children of God and allow them to live to their full God-given potential.
- An organization that is agile, innovative, and creative, and while global in its nature and impact, it is local and contextual in its ministry so that it can reach as many people as possible with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Bishop Burgos' interests include racial and organizational equity, leadership development, contextual evangelism and worship, and strategic communications in a digital era. He finds joy in cooking for his family and friends and is known for his famous meat marinades and BBQ ribs. Bishop Burgos also enjoys blogging. His blog, Mensajes de Esperanza has more than 150,000 followers throughout Latin America. He shares life with his spouse, Jazelis Adorno, and their children, Fabián, Joel, Marcos, and Valeria.

Bishop Hector has recorded a welcome message for our Conference. If you have not already watched it, go to the link <https://vimeo.com/772136124> to view his presentation.

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW CUSTODIAN



Mr. Steven Green has joined us as our new Custodian. Steven comes to us from the Kinderhook Reformed Church where he worked for 4 years as their Sexton. You may also see Steven at Home Depot in East Greenbush as he is the supervisor in the millwork and window department. Please give Steven a warm welcome to our church community.

## UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Thanks to all of you. The Giving Tree was a big success. Mary McIntosh and Patty Chartrand took the donated gifts to the store at Concerns-U and were able to see all the donations from other sources. There were handcrafted toys also donated. Concerns-U was really thankful for our help.



The UMW will not meet at our usual first Monday of the month during the winter. If anything comes up we can meet after church or via emails. January we prepare our budget for the coming year. If you want a copy of the budget email Kathy Van Buren. Her email is [jvanbur1@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jvanbur1@nycap.rr.com).

## THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY



The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity [January 18 – January 25] “is sponsored by the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Dicastery for the Promotion of Christian Unity. The materials for 2023, along with the scriptural theme, **“Do good; seek justice”** (Isaiah 1:17), were prepared by the Minnesota Council of Churches (USA) and edited and approved by the joint Week of Prayer committee of the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity. The theme expresses the national and international grief in light of the murder of George Floyd in 2020 in Minneapolis, MN and the call to action for justice, equity and inclusion that followed.”

The theme is from Isaiah 1:17, “Do good; seek justice.” The entire scriptural passage for the theme is Isaiah 1:12-18, lamenting a lack of justice among the People of God. Yet, it also promises redemption by encouraging acts of justice.

Copies of the “Daily Scripture & Prayer Guide” for this year’s Week of Prayer will be included with the Sunday morning worship bulletin on January 15. Extra copies will be available on the table in the church foyer.

## COMMUNITY ART SHOW

The youth will be hosting a community-wide art show on March 25. We are looking for artwork on the theme, “fruit of the spirit” (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control). Art can be one of these topics or all of the topics. We are looking for all types of art, from anyone in the community, church, other churches, etc. Artwork won't be collected until March 11. Questions – contact Amber ----- [youthleaderamber@gmail.com](mailto:youthleaderamber@gmail.com).



## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A UNITED METHODIST?

United Methodist Communications’ research team wants to hear from you about what it means to be a United Methodist. The denomination’s communications agency is looking for feedback on a variety of topics in an effort to listen and learn from church members to inform UMCom’s work. The survey will take about 10 minutes and all of the information provided will be kept strictly confidential. Here is the link for our church to take the survey. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZZK7QNL>



## RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE



On January 20, 2023 from 2:00 pm to 7:00 pm The Red Cross will be at our church for the January drive in memory of Lee Pierce. The link to sign up is <http://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/donation-time>. Walk-ins are welcome.

## PROFESSIONAL AND SERVICES DIRECTORY

Here are the first couple of lines from an article titled, “**Church Bell Speaking**”, in the very first issue of **The BELL in October 1949**.

*“I am your “Church Bell”. It is my business to bring into your home, news of your church program. Read me and you will be well informed on Methodist church projects. My editor’s slogan (sic) is “An informed church is a growing church” and I operate on that principle.”*



Then the article went on to introduce the last page of that issue of the BELL, a professional and business services directory. In the February issue of the current BELL, we are going to introduce an up-to-date listing similar to that first one, except this time those listed are not going to be asked to financially support the BELL.

**Are you a doctor, lawyer or other professional? Or do you provide a trade-related service to the community?** We are planning to include a listing of people in these two groups in the February issue of The Church BELL. It is good to know who in our church can provide a specific service when you need it. A couple of examples: Who in our church family can replace your kitchen sink with a new model when the time comes. Or, when it comes time to sell the family homestead, who can handle the real estate transaction, and who in our church can do the legal work for the sale. **If you are interested in having your name or your business name, the type of service you provide and your contact information included in the February issue, please send an email message to editor@fumceg.org and put “Service Directory Listing” on the subject line.**

## HOSPITALITY



Thank you to all who have volunteered from September-December for coffee hour. We have many more Sundays in 2023 for anyone who would like to volunteer or volunteer again for coffee hour. Coffee hour is very much appreciated by all who attend. Please sign up for 2023 coffee hour in the lobby. If you have any questions about coffee hour, please reach out to Amber Telford.

## CHRISTMAS CARD COLLECTION 2022

The note-writing group would like to thank everyone who donated and signed Christmas cards over the past year. We collected at least 1,400 cards. To date these are the number of signed cards delivered: 100 given to the VA, 150 to Concerns-U food pantry, 300 to Hawthorne Ridge Nursing Home, 250 to Rosewood Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, 200 to Riverside Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing and 100 to Pastor Danyal for the Blue Christmas Service. We will use the rest for next year. Thanks again!



Thank you and Merry Christmas,

*Lorraine Beals*

## RECONCILING MINISTRIES

Reconciling Ministries is one of our Caring Ministries. The Reconciling Ministries Network is an organization seeking the inclusion of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in both the policy and practices of the United Methodist Church. It is one of the many Welcoming Congregation organizations to emerge in American Christianity in the 1980’s. Our church has been a reconciling congregation for several years now. George Herrick is our team leader. Please see George for more information about this valuable ministry.



## HELP SHARE THE WARMTH!



The men's shelves are bare at the Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless (IPH). They are asking for our help to **collect gently used men's winter clothing**. This much-needed collection is **in honor of Jon Romano**, who was viciously attacked while working at the Center. Jon is slowly recovering but his passion and dedication to assist the homeless continues despite his devastating injuries. **Donations can be placed in the marked bin in the church foyer until January 15.** Please see John Schmidt with any questions. The Missions Ministry thanks you for all of your support during the past year and we wish you a safe and joyous 2023.

## 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.

