



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE BELL

1 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, New York 12061



VOLUME 25 ISSUE 9 OCTOBER 2023

At Church on Sundays:

♦ **8:30 am** Early Informal Service - Chapel In The Woods
Beginning October 8 this service will move inside till Spring

♦ **9:30 am** Regular Service is available live on Facebook and YouTube. The Church's website has the links.

♦ Sunday School & Youth Group—see inside for details

Visit us on the Web:

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

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

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Danyal Mohammadzadeh
Pastor

Gail Welkley
Administrative Assistant

A practical faith!

As I continue my studies for the ordained ministry, I am particularly excited by the writings of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. Wesley's emphasis on practical theology urges us to put faith and love into practice. This is our distinctive heritage as United Methodists. In fact, the Book of Discipline declares, "the Spirit has brought the Church into existence for the healing of the nations."

In Wesleyan theology, living the full Christian life consists of two parts: first, seeking inward holiness through prayer, Scripture, Holy Communion, and faithful worship, and second, putting faith and these good works into practice.

John Wesley's theology is known as practical theology among theologians. Hence, Methodists can be identified as practical Christians. The starting point of salvation in Wesley's theology is prevenient grace, or "God's action" in human life. This "divine love" surrounds all people, Christians and non-Christians, sinners and righteous people. Wesley believes the conscience is a gift from God. He said conscience is the Holy Spirit at work in everyone. He says God's grace awakens the conscience in all humans, to move them from sin toward repentance and faith. Would this notion change our attitude towards others? Would recognizing God's presence in people who trespass against us help us to enter into the healing path of forgiveness? Prevenient grace is God's intention for forgiveness



and reconciling for all. And all means all. It is for the lost coin, lost sheep, and the prodigal child. God does not exclude anyone from His inclusive grace, someone even like a drunk driver who killed a four-year-old kid.

In addition, prevenient grace makes it possible for all persons to receive God's justifying grace.

Justification is God's accepting and forgiving love, which comes with assurance of our salvation. Wesley declares justifying and assuring grace occur when human beings yield their lives to God, in gratitude. It is the individual's faithful response to God's prevenient grace.



(Continued on page 2)

A Reconciling Congregation

(Continued from page 1)

The next step in the Christian's journey is sanctification. Sanctifying grace draws humans toward the gift of Christian perfection, which Wesley describes as "having the mind of Christ and walking as he walked." Sanctifying grace nurtures the Wesleyan passion for social holiness. Wesley's outdoor preaching, visiting of prisoners, and ministry among the poor are based on his understanding of prevenient grace as universal and available to all, regardless of social or economic status, religion, race, or gender. He wanted to reduce suffering and make the world a more just and compassionate place. Thus, he articulates a theology in which the church, as body of Christ, heals all nations regardless of differences in race, language, and beliefs. Are we in the mission of healing the nations? Are we in the business of forgiveness and practicing the art of letting go? Are we part of church, the body of Christ, or another entity? I pray we all are part of Jesus' second coming to the world. Amen!

Pastor Danyal



COGITATE ON A MAYBE FUTURE PROJECT

This picture was taken through the window in classroom #13 the early evening of September 8, 2023, looking out toward Hays Road. (The light strip at the center of the picture is the window reflection of the classroom door and hallway light. The little bright light to the right of the picture is near our church's Hays Road sign.) That is supposed to be grass out there, not a little lake. And inside, some serious leaks. Do we need to replace the flat roof areas on our church? You Betcha!



Our Annual Church Conference meeting will be held here at our church on Sunday, **November 12** beginning at 3:00 pm. This being a Church Conference, all members of our local church may vote at the meeting. Meeting with us, same time, same place, will be: St. Paul's UMC, Castleton; Niverville -Chatham Center UMC; North Chatham UMC; Grace UMC, Nassau; Grace UMC, Ravena; South Bethlehem UMC; and Stephentown Federated Church.

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SOME NOTES ABOUT WORSHIP FOR OCTOBER



Did you ever travel a road like the one in this picture, one where there is a bend and you can't see around that bend. You can't see where you are going, can't see what's coming. Then, just maybe, you go around that bend and, *WOW!* Maybe we will see an old grist mill with a working water wheel just off the side of the two-lane highway. It looks like an old Currier and Ives print. But no, the scene is more than that. The scene is spectacular. *Hard to describe.*

Sometimes church is like that. The words that are spoken, the music and singing, the fellowship with those around you and those in the opposite corner of the sanctuary, all together, something *spectacular.*

The Fall season began on Saturday, September 23. A time of crisp air temperatures, of shorter days, and a riot of color in all the deciduous trees covering the landscape. It's October, a good time to be in fellowship in our sanctuary, a good time to see what is around the bend.

Some years ago, Helen Keller, an American author, disability rights advocate, political activist and lecturer said, "*A bend in the road is not the end of the road... Unless you fail to make the turn.*" Come, let us follow the road together.

Here are more of the details for each Sunday in October:

- October 1** – 18th Sunday after Pentecost – Holy Communion, **The Blessing of the Animals, World Communion Sunday**—Pastor Danyal's sermon theme – *Reconciliation and Unity.*
- October 8** – 19th Sunday after Pentecost - **Pastor Appreciation Day.** Pastor Danyal's sermon theme - *The mysteries of God reveal themselves in so many ways.*
- October 15** – 20th Sunday after Pentecost – **Laity Sunday,** Pastor Danyal's sermon theme - *God's Faithful Love Endures Forever*
- October 22** – 21st Sunday after Pentecost - Children's Sabbath, **Staff Appreciation Sunday**
Pastor Danyal's sermon theme - *A glimpse of the divine reality.*
- October 29** – 22nd Sunday after Pentecost – Reformation Sunday—Pastor Danyal's sermon theme – *Challenging experiences of answering God's call.*

HERE IS THE LECTIONARY FOR OCTOBER

- October 1** - Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16; Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:23-32
- October 8** - Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20; Psalm 119; Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46
- October 15** – Exodus 32:1-14; Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23; Philippians 4:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14
- October 22** – Exodus 33:12-23; Psalm 99; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:15-22
- October 29** - Deuteronomy 34:1-12; Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8; Matthew 22:34-46

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Hello Sunday School Families,

It is hard to believe we are already a month into the school year. The students and I have had a fantastic time learning about the environment through the Bible. Please see the dates below and as always, let me know if you have any questions.

October 1: Ezekiel 37:1-14, Replenishing Hope

October 8: Super Sunday, Bring a Friend for Waffles.

October 15: Matthew 22:1-14

October 22: TBD

October 29: TBD

We still need volunteer teachers and classroom helpers. Please let me know if anyone is interested. I would like to split the classrooms up this year by age if possible! We have gotten quite big and have many various ages of students.

Confirmation class will be starting on November 1. If your student is interested, please contact me.

Last but not least, the classroom cleanup project has been postponed in September due to a lack of volunteers. Please be on the lookout for a new date in October.

Blessings, *Amanda Trainor* — EGChristianEdFUMC@gmail.com



UNITED METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Youth group is in full swing and we have so much to look forward to, one being our Trunk or Treat community event!

October 1 will be a 9th grade -12th grade meeting. We will start our meeting during Sunday School at 9:30 am in the OG youth lounge. We will be making vision boards, eating donuts (just like I did as a youth) and taking a break for communion. We will then meet until 12:00 noon.

October 8 is bring your friend to church Sunday! We will also be helping in the kitchen with the waffle breakfast during the 9:30 am service, we will then clean up and we should be done by 11:30 am if we have a lot of help with clean up. If any parents want to help with making breakfast we would love your help as well. Please bring a topping for waffles to share with everyone. Sign up with Amber.

October 15 will be a 5th grade -8th grade meeting. We will start our meeting during Sunday School at 9:30 am in the OG youth lounge. We will be making vision boards, and eating donuts (just like I did as a youth). The meeting will last until 12:00 noon.

October 28 Calling all youth to help to prep for the Trunk or Treat Event. We will be putting together goodie bags with candy, stickers and flyers for Trunk or Treat. We will be making trophies for winners of the decoration and costume contest and making other signs. We will meet from 1:00 pm—3:00 pm to put everything together.

October 29 will be our Trunk or Treat Community Event! Set up will start 11:00 am - 11:45 am. The event is from 12:00 noon until 2:00 pm. We are looking for people to decorate their trunks and pass out candy. We will be having a trunk decoration competition, costume contest (1:30 pm) and pizza for volunteers. Ask your friends if they would like to join our awesome event and decorate their trunk! Come be part of an event!



UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

On **October 28** from 9:00 am -12:00 noon we will be cleaning the church kitchen. Our kitchen is a very busy place and in full use by many groups. We could use the help from other committees who use the kitchen too with this deep cleaning of the kitchen. Just show up, we will have a job for you. See you then.



Our next meeting is October 2 at 7:00 pm. We will have a devotional first and then discuss the Christmas season: giving tree and party. Don't forget our Brooks' Barbecue on **October 7**.

SENIOR LUNCH FOR OCTOBER



You are all invited to our Autumn "Senior Lunch" on Wednesday, **October 18** at 12:00 noon in Fellowship Hall. Let's celebrate the cooler weather and fall colors together and bring a friend. We had about 40 at the summer lunch. Can we get 50 this month? Menu is a surprise (we have not decided yet!) We need an estimate of numbers, so please contact the office 518-477-9693 or Mary Smith mes39@nycap.rr.com if you do not receive a call by October 13.

TRUNK OR TREAT CANDY DONATIONS NEEDED

The youth are looking for candy donations for their Trunk or Treat event. We want everyone to come decorate a trunk, but not everyone can afford candy. If you're willing to donate, please drop off the candy in the lobby. Last year we had over 350 children come through with 20 cars - we once again ran out of candy.

We are looking for volunteers to decorate their trunk and help pass out candy. We will have a trunk decoration contest again with viewers' choice. We will also have a costume contest at 1:30 pm. Sign up in the lobby if you would like to join.



Community Event!! Come trunk or treat here at church bring your littlest children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, neighbors or the whole town from 12:00 noon -2:00 pm on Sunday, **October 29**. At 1:30 pm we will have a costume contest. We will have winners for Most Unique, Most Creative, The Scariest, The Prettiest and The Funniest. Contestants can speak on how they came up with their costume idea. They will parade like they are in a fashion show.

October 11 at 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm we will be having our first Art Show Committee Meeting. Please bring all your ideas on the 2024 Art Show. Possible dates, fundraisers and other ideas.

VOLUNTEER FOR COFFEE HOUR

Don't forget Coffee Hour still needs you to volunteer! Coffee hour is only possible by the volunteers that take time out to make it happen. Coffee hour is appreciated by everyone! Make or buy a special treat, bring juice for the kids and everything else is provided. You just need to make the coffee, set the table and clean up. You can sign up as an individual, a committee or as friends. If you have questions see Amber.

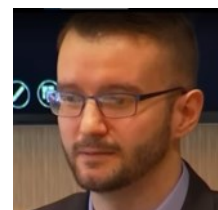
VISION BOARD PROJECT NEEDS

Do you have any magazines collecting dust? The youth are looking for them for **October 1 and 15** for their vision board projects. Please donate in the bin in the lobby (Do not leave in the office). Thank you ,

STORYTELLING SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

At our Storytelling Event on September 6, State Entomologist Dr. Timothy McCabe talked about a trip that he and six other biologists made in the mid-1980's to Neblina, the Mountain of the Mists, in Southern Venezuela. He showed slides illustrating the challenges of getting to and working in this remote area, which is a preserve of the Yanomami people. As it turned out, the group was trapped on the mountain and unable to get out for more than a month because the helicopter transporting them couldn't fly. Despite the fact they had almost no food, their scientific collections and studies continued (they were, after all, biologists!), and Tim had slides with examples of the orchids, snakes, and caterpillars they observed. Fortunately, they were eventually rescued, though it took many months to recover physically. The experience has not stopped Tim from continuing his scientific expeditions to remote regions around the world.

The October "Storytelling Night" has been cancelled. In lieu of this, Pastor Danyal is inviting the congregation for a night of reconciliation and healing with Jon Romano. We will gather on Wednesday, **October 4** in the fellowship hall at 7:00 pm. All are welcome to join us for praying, listening and sharing either in person or remotely. Please email Pastor Danyal if you want to receive the Zoom link at pastordanyal@fumceg.org.



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI INVITES YOU TO A BLESSING

The Franciscans tell us, "This time of year, people in various places may notice something odd. A procession of animals, everything from dogs and cats to hamsters and even horses, is led to churches for a special ceremony called the Blessing of [Animals]. This custom is [celebrated] in remembrance of Saint Francis of Assisi's love for all creatures." We are having a special blessing at our Early Worship service on October 1. Our United Methodist Book of Worship cautions us to make allowances for larger animals such as horses or other livestock. We don't have many large animal farms in our area anymore. But someone bringing a pet goat or a little lamb would be just great. All, with or without a pet animal, are invited to join us in the Chapel in the Woods for this special service.



So, to all our church family, "Come! Bring your pets."

CASTLETON CROP WALK—HELP BEAT HUNGER

The United Nations World Food Program estimates that due to conflict, economic risks and extreme climate events, acute food insecurity now impacts 345 million people. This is more than twice the number of people than in 2020. Aid programs cannot keep up. You can help by joining the Castleton CROP Walk on Sunday, **October 15** or by supporting a walker with your donation. To join the walk, please register at www.crophungerwalk.org/castletonny. Donations may be made on-line at the above address or by check payable to "CWS/CROP" given to a walker or in the offertory collection. One-quarter of all funds will be directed to the Anchor Food Pantry and Thrift Store in Castleton. Three-quarters of the funds help support the work of Church World Service (CWS) and its partners for hunger relief and development projects in the U.S and around the world. Every contribution helps bring some relief to those in need. For more information, contact Kevin Conley (518-253-4907).



MAJOR ECUMENICAL DINNERS ON THE FALL AGENDA

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

All are invited to attend our Eighth Annual Awards and Fundraising Dinner to be held on Wednesday, **November 1, 2023**, from 5:30 – 9:00 PM at The Desmond Hotel, 660 Albany Shaker Road, Albany. Tickets for the reception and dinner are \$85 each. Among their responsibilities, the State Council vets all Protestant clergy applicants seeking to serve in the New York State prison system. Please contact The Reverend Peter Cook at 508-380-8289 or Pcook@Nyscoc.org if you have any questions.

CAPITAL AREA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The Capital Area Council of Churches has announced their Annual Fall Dinner and Awards Celebration to be held at the Italian American Community Center, 257 Washington Avenue Ext, Albany, NY, on **October 11**. One of this year's award recipients is Rev. Bob Long who has presided at many meetings here at our church. Please contact the Council at capareacc@gmail.com if you have any questions.



BROOKS' BAR-B-Q

Take Out Only

Saturday, October 7

4:00-6:00 p.m.

**Treat your family to an easy, hearty meal
to celebrate Fall!**

Dinners include baked potato, coleslaw, dinner roll, butter, and dessert

*** Chicken Dinner for \$15 *Chicken Only \$7**

Where:

**First United Methodist Church
1 Gilligan Road
East Greenbush**

Why:

**To Benefit the United Women of Faith
Mission Projects.**

**Reservations PREFERRED
at 518-477-9693 by Friday, Oct. 6**

DAYTONA AND YOUTH 2023

More than 2,500 young people descended on the Ocean Center in Daytona Beach, Florida to attend the Discipleship Ministries' **Youth 2023**. Talk to many in that group and you will hear that it was an exhilarating experience. To set the stage, watch the first video in the following set:

<https://www.umcyoungpeople.org/lead/youth-2023-daily-recap-videos>.

Now that you have an introduction, read what John Glasheen-Haase has written about his experience:

During the weekend that we spent in Daytona, we made some new friends, met some new faces, and interacted with thousands of kids our age. We arrived at our hotel in Daytona around 12 AM, and we noticed the smell of the ocean nearby was very nice. During the week we had several activities, some repeating like the morning and evening concerts.

Our group met both bands and got some pictures with them, after one group stopped by our room around midnight on the last day we were there. There were a large variety of activities, ranging from getting instruction on methodist gaming or talking about our faith, to talking to people from ACD Guatemala (Association for creativity and development of Guatemalans) about their work and how we can get involved. On the beach each morning, we had communion; usually given out with a blessing by the staff running it that morning. The shops and restaurants around were also very friendly, when Victor and I stopped by just after they cleaned up, they gave us some fries and some milkshakes for free. (Victor loved getting 50 crowns in a trash bag a nice lady gave him.) Over all the other things, we loved how good the people who preached and taught us things throughout our sessions and sacrificing their own time for us to learn more about our faith. We all felt resonance with our faith and God; beyond the regular talk about God and his influence on our lives. We EXPERIENCED it at work, in our lives and used his actions to the fullest. We had some of the best fun we've had ever.

And one more experience. These are some brief thoughts from Victor Giso:

The youth 2023 event was held in Daytona Beach, Florida on July 25th-28th. Youth 2023 was amazing all around, from the beautiful sunrise over the ocean from our beachfront hotels, to the incredible worship band, Youth 2023 was a breathtaking event. We were invited to receive communion on the beach and participated in interactive workshops. The people there were so welcoming and so amped up on Jesus. It was very moving to see over 2,500 youth worshipping Jesus. There are so many youth out there who are on fire for God.

Thanks to all who donated to help support our youth on their trip to **Youth 2023**.



The Reverend Theon Johnson, III, Master of Ceremonies with a few of the youth at 2023



A NEW COLUMN FOR OUR CHURCH BELL

My beloved church family,

Ever so frequently, life has an interesting way of putting challenging, unavoidable situations in our paths. Perhaps, such challenges bring us the need for a new perspective in both our personal and professional lives. I am writing to you today to announce a new initiative in the FUMC East Greenbush, an anonymous advice column, to promote mental wellbeing and provide a safe anonymous space for our fellow friends and community to receive advice from me—your Pastor and Brother in Christ. If you have ever had a burning question and you were not sure who to turn to for a new perspective, then maybe this initiative is for you. Anyone may submit their questions to me via mail, e-mail, or my church mailbox; and I will post the question and a response in The Bell each month. I promise to never include the identity of the questioner.

Peace and Love, Pastor Danyal

KEEPING UP WITH WHAT'S HAPPENING

Are you up to date with United Methodist news? This story of The Pope and a John Wesley bobblehead were in the UM News – The Friday Digest, September 15, 2023. Keep up with the latest. Subscribe at:

<https://www.umnews.org/en/subscription-pages/umnews-daily-digest-subscribe> .



“(Pope Francis) was holding the bobblehead and shaking it so that its head would bobble, and was just cracking up.” — Ashley Boggan D., top executive of the United Methodist Commission on Archives and History, about giving the pontiff a bobblehead of John Wesley.