



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# THE BELL

1 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, New York 12061



VOLUME 26 ISSUE 5 - MAY 2024

## **At Church on Sundays:**

♦ 8:30 am Early Informal Service

♦ 9:30 am Regular Service. This service also 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](http://www.fumceg.org)  
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Rev. Danyal Mohammadzadeh  
**Pastor**

Gail Welkley  
**Administrative Assistant**

## **THE SPIRIT CHANGED THE WORLD THROUGH PENTECOST**



### **The theological basis for the Change The World Sunday**

The Holy Spirit forms my personal life and the life of church, not as a building but the body of Christ, through missional activities. That's why whenever I participate in a church missional activity, I feel I am a different person. The missional activities move me from one step to a higher level.

To be a child of God, the Holy Spirit leads all Christians toward perfection (Romans 8:14). The Holy Spirit is directly related to social reforms. God's intention concerns righteousness, justice, and peace for all the people on the earth. To realize God's intention, the Holy Spirit can help people to experience righteousness, justice, and peace on earth.

The Holy Spirit sustains people for righteous living. The Holy Spirit affects both the inner life or personal holiness and outward holiness or social holiness. In John Wesley's view, insisting on inner holiness leads to action or social holiness. We, as human beings, are interconnected and interrelated. Hence, our inner joy and peace depend on peace and joy in society. The Spirit calls all of us to be responsible for living in the community. The dynamic presence of the Holy Spirit motivates people to seek restorative justice and peace in society.

Wesley speaks about sanctifying grace that consists of the idea of holiness and good works.

Sanctifying grace, as an uplifted process, leads to growing maturity. The Spirit helps all people to respond in faith, regenerate themselves in Christ, and repent. Following the new birth, the Spirit enables humans to grow in grace through sanctification. To grow spiritually by grace through faith, human beings should work toward personal holiness through prayers, Bible study, and public worship and then, they must put into practice what they ought to do for themselves and others as moving toward the social holiness and Christian perfection.

Social holiness is the practice of obeying Jesus' commandments to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, loving your neighbor as yourself,

*(Continued on page 2)*

*A Reconciling Congregation*

(Continued from page 1)

and loving one another (fellow members of your local congregation) as Christ loves. When Christians “watch over one another in love” and help each other to grow in holiness of heart and life, they keep this new commandment. Congregations keep Jesus’ new commandment when they intentionally develop a path to discipleship that meets people where they are and provides guides along the way in the form of small groups and the guidance of seasoned disciples. This is what John Wesley meant when he wrote:



*Solitary religion is not to be found there. “Holy Solitaries” is a phrase no more consistent with the gospel than Holy Adulterers. The gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness. Faith working by love, is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection.*

When Wesley says that holiness is social, he means that the depth of your love for God is revealed by the way you love whom God loves. The writer of 1 John describes the social nature of holiness: We love because he first loved us. Those who say, ‘I love God’, and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also (1 John 4:19-21).

The General Rule of Discipleship is a practical guide for Christians to love God and neighbor together. It makes social holiness possible in that it helps Christians to center their life together in Jesus Christ. The rule points Christians, and the congregation, towards the risen Christ. It leads them to join in what he is up to in the world: bring the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. Join us on Pentecost to change the world together. Together we can change the world!

*Peace be with you,  
Pastor Danyal*

## SOME NOTES ABOUT WORSHIP FOR MAY

### May 5 – Sixth Sunday of Easter

**Pastor Danyal’s theme:** All four lectionaries speak to the greatest victory known on earth—not the defeat of an enemy but the power of love. Such love, and the presence of God’s very Spirit, are meant for all—Jews and Gentiles, those nearby and those faraway, and those who are as different from one another as they could be. God’s love and presence are a message for all creation, and they are a fitting message for the Easter season and for a Sunday closely following Earth Day. As we have been actively loved by God, so are we called to love, in word and action.

### May 12 – Seventh Sunday of Easter

**Pastor Danyal’s theme:** Ascension of the Lord/Mother’s Day: As the Easter season comes to a close, we are reminded that just as Christ was sent to earth with heavenly power to change lives and share God’s message,

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Christ's disciples are also sent with heavenly power to continue this call. The ascension of Christ opened the path for God's glory and power to descend upon those remaining behind. Throughout these various scriptures, Jesus commands the disciples to await the Spirit's power and then go forth in answer to this call. Paul prays for us to be enlightened with the hope of this call; and the psalmist calls us to pursue our inherited call as followers of God with patience and steadfast faithfulness.

### **May 19 –The Day of Pentecost**

**Pastor Danyal's theme:** As Jesus' disciples huddled together in fear, the Holy Spirit entered their dwelling in rushing wind and tongues of fire. From that event, the Church was born. Without Pentecost, the disciples would not have had the courage to go forth and spread the gospel. Without Pentecost, the Spirit promised to the prophet Joel would not be the active force it is in our world today—granting visions and dreams to old and young alike. God's power to create and renew life is the power of the Holy Spirit. We see this power in the psalmist's hymn of praise. We behold this power in Paul's discussion of adoption in Christ through the Spirit. And we see the promise of this power in Jesus, as he comforts his disciples before his death.

### **May 26 - Trinity Sunday**

**Pastor Danyal's theme:** Trinity Sunday is a time to celebrate the fullness of God in the persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The God Isaiah experiences face-to-face in the Temple is the same God that Paul proclaims as the Father of Jesus Christ—the One who adopts us as children of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. This triune God is the one revealed by Christ when he was lifted up to bring us eternal life. The inner life of God is so holy and awe inspiring that we are truly born from above when we are brought into communion with the Holy One.



## **HERE IS THE LECTIONARY FOR MAY**

**May 5** - Psalm 98; Acts 10:44-48; 1 John 5:1-6; John 15:9-17

**May 12** - Psalm 1; Acts 1:15-17, 21-26; 1 John 5:9-13; John 17:6-19

**May 19** - Psalm 104:24-34, 35b; Acts 2:1-21; Romans 8:22-27; John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

**May 26** - Isaiah 6:1-8; Psalm 29; Romans 8:12-17; John 3:1-17

## **OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEAM**

### **Lauren Lehmann- Sunday School Coordinator**



Lauren Lehmann will continue to work with our children as our new Sunday School Coordinator. She will also be leading our Youth Group beginning in the fall of 2024. Lauren has been instructing our youth in our Christian Education Program since October of 2023. SPRC is thrilled to have her on board for next year. Lauren can be reached at [llehmann@fumceg.org](mailto:llehmann@fumceg.org).

### **Amber Telford-Assistant Sunday School Coordinator**

Amber Telford will be our new Assistant Sunday School Coordinator. Amber will be working with our youngest disciples. She will be spending her time with our 3-5 year olds and overseeing our Nursery.



## SUNDAY SCHOOL

Happy May!

Spring has sprung around church! Have you seen all the new life? The children have noticed how beautiful God has made our Earth, just by simply taking a look out our classroom windows and seeing the colorful flowers in our courtyard. We have found a perfect location for our rock garden and the children did a wonderful job planting new flowers. Has your child told you about our butterflies? We had four orange butterflies that we nurtured, observed and then freed! The children LOVED this lesson, and learned about how God expects us to protect life on Earth. (Genesis 1:16)

May brings even more new life! We will be testing out a "new" routine for Sunday School.



**May 5:** Super Sunday - the first Sunday of every month we will be meeting in fellowship hall for music, movement, and hands-on activities. On this Super Sunday, we are going to practice taking communion!

**May 12:** Happy Mother's Day! Enjoy Chocolate Time in church. We have something extra special planned for the Mothers and Mother figures in our life!

**May 19:** The children love getting outdoors during class. We will be working on a project that reflects on our pledge to keep taking care of God's Earth.

**May 26:** Memorial Day Weekend- we do not have Sunday School, but please come to church and enjoy Pastor's sermon!

A quick note about snacks in Sunday School. We will also be trialing a change in May. Instead of handing out snacks during class time, we will be serving it after class/church in fellowship hall. Two child volunteers, along with an adult, will be serving food and drink. Our hope is this change will help the children focus during class and have something to look forward to after. It will also allow the children to show off to parents and church members what they learned in class that morning!

We love seeing our class grow each week! Please continue to bring your little (and big) ones to Sunday School. We encourage them to love learning about God, the church, and the beautiful Earth God has created for us!

Many Blessings,  
Lauren Lehmann—[llehmann@fumceg.org](mailto:llehmann@fumceg.org)

## UNITED METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

As we get ready for summer our Youth Group 2023-2024 comes to an end. I hope we can celebrate all that we accomplished this year with so many positive mission projects we have participated in in the community. As the year comes to a close, it is also time for me to hang up my Youth Leader hat, as I get ready for a new position in our church.

For the next few Youth Group events we are including the 4th graders as the youth group has been just 5th-12th grade.

**May 5:** We will be having a Cinco De Mayo party. We will be having different prayer stations (to celebrate National Day of Prayer), we will be putting together Red Bird Mission boxes to donate for Change the World and we will be playing some games. We will meet 11:00 am -12:30 pm



**May 19:** Change the World Sunday! After church there will be a variety of Change the World Projects. Our change the world project that we will be hosting is to plant the trees that we discussed with Fred. ( Please see the Change the World section for other activities). After we plant the trees everyone participating will enjoy lunch together.



**June 2:** 11:00 am The Junior High Youth Group will be going to Fun Plex to enjoy an end of year celebration for all the hard work that you have done supporting all the mission work this year .

**June 8:** Senior Youth Group. At 5:30 pm we will be having a special celebration for being involved with youth group. Congrats on graduating and helping with all the mission projects. The Senior Youth Group will be picking their special event.

Friends are always welcome to come to any youth event!

God Bless, *Amber Telford*  
[Youthleaderamber@gmail.com](mailto:Youthleaderamber@gmail.com)



**FOOD TRUCK FESTIVAL** - Mark your Calendar. Our Food Truck Festival and Community Fair is May 18 from 11:30 am -3:30 pm. We will have delicious food, fresh lemonade, the biggest fried dough ever seen, face painting, live music, vendors to shop from, Women of Faith bake sale, and more ! Come on out, enjoy all that we have to offer and bring a lawn chair.

## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

United Women in Faith has given the Special Recognition Mission Pins to Susie Calyer and John Schmidt. Both are on the Mission Team. Susie also serves on the Board of Trustees and is head gardener with the endless task of caring for the Island Garden. John has served on Caring Ministries and chairs Change The World Sunday. Both of these recipients just help people.



The pie sale went well as did Thrift Sale. A big thanks goes to everyone who helped with the setup, sorting, sale Friday and Saturday and cleanup. Yes most of us are 60+. The Women In Faith really appreciate everyone's support. The Thrift Sale totaled \$2,360. The leftovers went to The Anchor, East Greenbush Kiwanis for the Rensselaer Street Soldiers, ACR Trading who recycle clothing.

Our next meeting is **May 6** at 2:00 pm in room 16. We will start with a devotion, then evaluate the Thrift Sale and get a kitchen update, so come to the meeting and find out what other fun activities we can plan.

## THE ECO TEAM

Did you know that you can bring alkaline and other small rechargeable batteries, as well as electronic equipment, to Staples or up to five paint cans to Sherwin Williams for REcycling? Did you know you can donate eyeglasses and hearing aids to Lions Club drop-off locations or computer equipment to GE Elfun Computer Rehab for REuse? Did you know that free Repair Cafes will attend to your broken appliances, ripped clothing and dull tools? These and other places to help you REDuce, REuse and REcycle can be found on Recycleplaces ([sites.google.com/view/recycleplaces](https://sites.google.com/view/recycleplaces)), a website maintained by our EcoTeam. For easy reference, bookmark the page or find the link on the EcoTeam page of our church website.



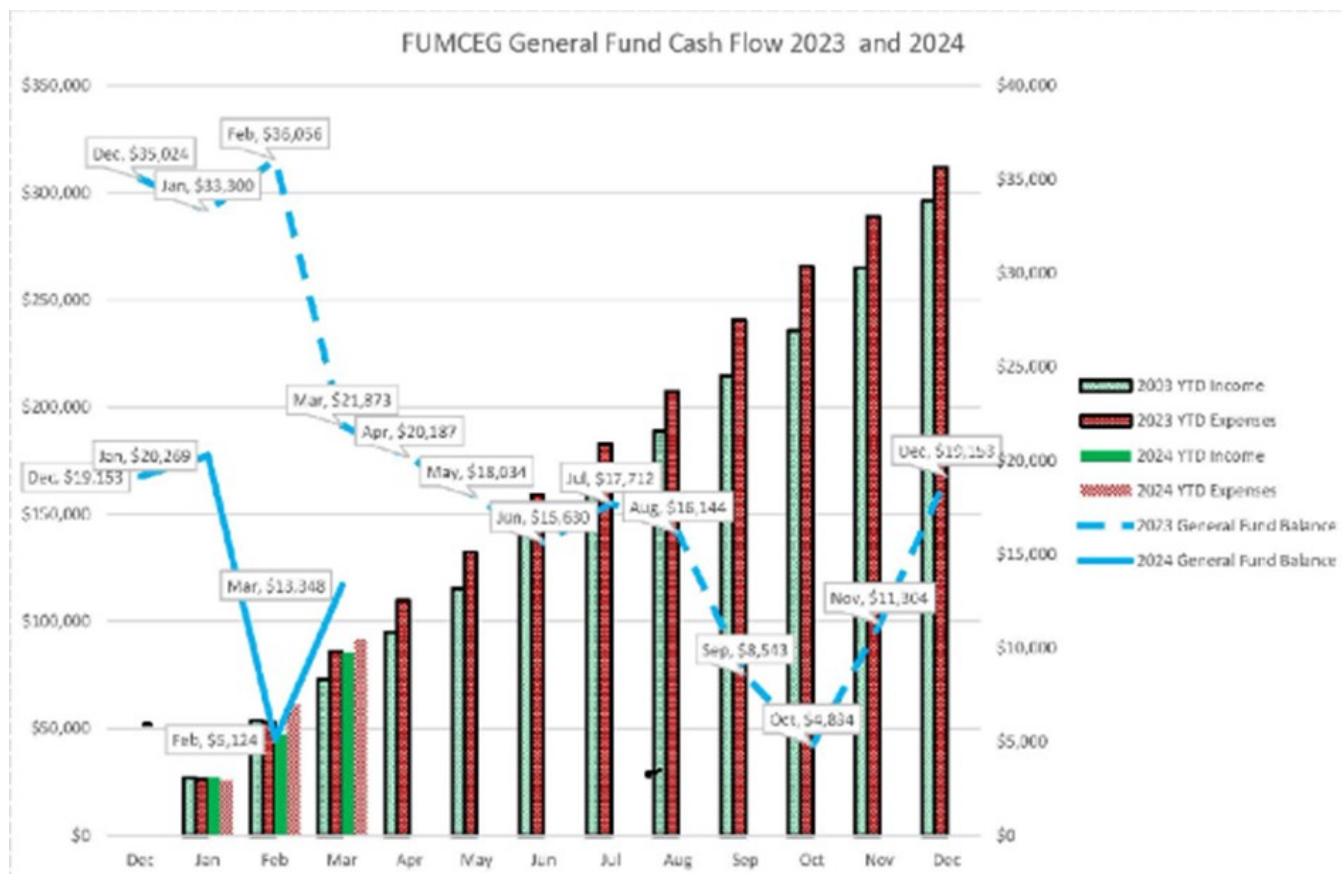
**Battery Recycling:** Staples is now recycling small batteries like the kinds that we have been collecting at church and paying to recycle. With no purchase necessary, you can receive a 4- inch Call2recycle box that includes instructions. When you turn it in, you will receive Staples Rewards. EcoTeam will transition to using Staples rather than the Big Green Box, thus saving money in our budget. We encourage you to bring batteries to Staples, but will continue to collect batteries at the church for your convenience.

**Durable Medical Equipment:** For a short while, we have a small supply of medical aids available if you need them: walkers, shower chair, secure lock bathtub grips (lock to tub for person to hold on while entering and exiting the tub), portable toilet, raised toilet seat, large knee immobilizer brace and adult diapers. Contact Kevin Conley by email at [e.kevin.conley@gmail.com](mailto:e.kevin.conley@gmail.com) or phone 518-253-4907.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Finance Committee would like to thank you for the support of our church this year. The chart below shows the year-to-date (YTD) income and expenses for the General Fund in 2023 and 2024. The General Fund is used to pay our day-to-day expenses. The end of monthly General Fund Balance is shown for 2023 and 2024 and is current as of March 31, 2024.

Although YTD income is higher than last year, our YTD expenditures are also higher. Your continued support is needed to enable us to pay our staff, program expenses, and building upkeep for the remainder of the year. If you are able, please prayerfully consider an increase in your giving to support our ministry together this year.



## HAWTHORNE RIDGE GOOD NEWS GROUP MAY 2024

Our Hawthorne Ridge Good News Group continues to meet every Tuesday afternoon from 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm with visiting time before and after the meetings. Jean Sheviak, Pastor Danyal and Carrie Larson share leadership with approximately 20 participants.

During Lent and Easter we had discussions on a variety of topics challenging us to think about our former and current beliefs of the Easter message and share memories of early Easter experiences. We had a particularly interesting session where we each belonged to one of 6 groups facing the decision of what to do with Jesus...the criminal, the Messiah, the usurper? And we began to view the Easter story with new insights and feelings.

We've held a post-Christmas service attended by approximately 45 people from Hawthorne Ridge and a post-Easter service for 25. All attending appreciated Pastor Danyal's message and we sang familiar and beloved hymns with gusto and joy.



*We would like to thank Peter Larson and the Endowments Committee for underwriting the cost of 205 T-shirts that will feature our new church logo. Youth and Adult size shirts will be available for a small donation beginning the last Sunday of April. Proceeds from the sale will be set aside to replenish our supply of T-shirts. We encourage everyone to wear their shirts on May 19 for Change the World Sunday.*

<sup>36</sup> ‘...I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?’ <sup>38</sup> And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?’ <sup>39</sup> And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ <sup>40</sup> And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, [a] you did it to me.’

Matthew 25: 36-40

This May our church will be observing the eleventh year of Change the World. What began in 2014 as a single day in May of sharing God’s love, has grown into a month-long list of activities. The original plan was to get church-goers out of their pews, and into the community. Our church has a rich history of reaching out through many ministries over 150 years.



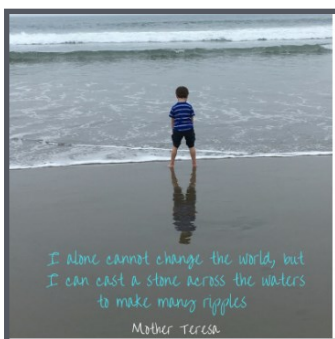
When Jeremy Wernick was eight years old, he did something few eight- year-olds would consider: he shaved his head as winter was approaching.

The Colonie youth did it with noble intentions. He wanted to raise money and awareness for childhood cancer research. In the process, he discovered how cold it was without any hair! His project of providing hats for young cancer patients was born. Jeremy could not have predicted that twelve years later, over 51,000 hats have been donated by generous and caring folks.

The hats have reached young patients in California, Nebraska, New Jersey, Louisiana, Michigan and New York among other states in the country. Our own Made by Hand With Love group alone donated 300 hats last year.



When we share God’s Love with others, we have no idea where that love will end up or what effects it will have on others. Like the ripples sent out across the water when we cast a stone.



*I alone cannot change the world, but  
I can cast a stone across the waters  
to make many ripples  
Mother Teresa*

Over the past 10 years, how have we attempted to make the world a better place? When we began in 2014, the Goff Middle School next door had a vegetable garden. Volunteers, adults and children alike, prepared the soil and planted crops. They helped weed the garden and harvest the crops later that year. Vegetables were donated to local food pantries. We have kept our seniors in mind by visiting them in their homes or in nursing homes, often bringing them potted plants to help brighten their world.

We have conducted food drives to help fill the shelves at local food pantries, and built picnic tables for an area shelter. We have raked yards, made cards for Veterans and reminded our brave Veterans in person that they are not forgotten.



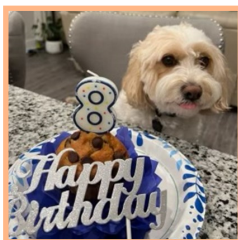
## RED BIRD MISSION SHOEBOX PROJECT

Help to make a difference in someone's life. One of several Change the World projects during the month of May is to participate in the Red Bird Mission Shoebox Project. Over the last three years we have donated over 150 shoeboxes! Fill a shoebox with personal hygiene items for needy adults and children living in the Appalachian Mountains of Kentucky. As an alternative to filling a shoebox, you may be interested in donating an item from the list such as a small flashlight or a bar of soap. These loose items may be placed in a bin in the church foyer.



Shoeboxes will be available at church before May 1 or feel free to use your own plastic or cardboard shoebox. Lists of needed items are included in this issue of The Bell and are also available at church. Please indicate on the top of the box if this is for an adult male, adult female, male or female child ages 2-4, 5-9 or 10-14. Please seal the box and return to church by May 31. We will see that the boxes are delivered. Thank you for helping us change the world!

RED BIRD MISSION – Adult Shoebox Mark box for: Man or Woman	RED BIRD MISSION – Child's Shoebox Mark box for: Boy or Girl, Ages 2-4 or 5-9 or 10-14
<p>Note: All items should be FULL size and in their original containers, as purchased. To help Items fit in the box, purchase flat bottles of shampoo, hand lotion, etc. &amp; small round cans of shaving cream.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comb and/or hairbrush</li> <li>Shampoo</li> <li>Hand lotion</li> <li>Deodorant</li> <li>Toothbrush and toothpaste</li> <li>Chap stick</li> <li>Full size bar of soap</li> <li>Washcloth</li> <li>Disposable razors</li> <li>Shaving cream</li> <li>Nail care items</li> <li>Socks</li> <li>Work gloves or mittens</li> <li>Winter stocking hat or scarf</li> </ul> <p>The mission is also accepting "gently used" and clean clothing items for men and women. All items must be sent in cardboard boxes. Plastic bags are not accepted. Thank you for your generosity!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box should be returned by May 31</b></p>	<p>Note: All items should be FULL size and in their original containers, as purchased. To help Items fit in the box, purchase flat bottles of shampoo, hand lotion, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comb and/or hairbrush</li> <li>Shampoo</li> <li>Hand lotion</li> <li>Child's toothbrush and toothpaste</li> <li>Chap stick</li> <li>Full size bar of soap</li> <li>Washcloth</li> <li>Socks</li> <li>Mittens</li> <li>Winter hat</li> <li>Small flashlight</li> <li>2 or 3 small toys</li> <li>2 or 3 school items</li> <li>Christian bookmarks, wristbands, and other spiritual items are also appreciated</li> </ul> <p>The mission is also accepting "gently used" and clean clothing items for boys and girls. All items must be sent in cardboard boxes. Plastic bags are not accepted. Thank you for your generosity!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box should be returned by May 31</b></p>



As most of you are aware, Sue Lemka, a longtime member of our church, passed away last month while visiting her daughter, Robin, in South Carolina. With her passing it left Cooper looking for a forever home. I received this picture and message from Robin. *Nino is the nurse who adopted Cooper. He took care of Sue when she was in the hospital and had met Cooper. The PR Department from the hospital reached out and they want to do a story on Nino's family adopting Cooper.* As you can see the family had a birthday party for Cooper's 8th birthday. He is very happy with his new family as they have children who keep him very busy. I'm sure Sue is looking down from heaven and approves of Cooper's new home.

Kathy Van Buren



## SHARE THE LOVE CHALLENGE MAY 2024

ADD A PERSON'S NAME IN EACH BOX. SEND EACH PERSON A PERSONAL REMINDER OF HOW MUCH HE OR SHE IS LOVED AND VALUED.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

*Take out this page and carry it with you as a reminder to Share The Love*

