



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE BELL

1 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, New York 12061



VOLUME 26 ISSUE 6 - JUNE 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

www.facebook.com/FUMCEG

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Rev. Danyal Mohammadzadeh

Pastor

Gail Welkley

Administrative Assistant



Three Views of the Fate of Non-Christians

There are three broad views held by Christians regarding the eternal fate of non-Christians: Christian Exclusivism, Christian Universalism, and Christian Inclusivism.

A. Christian Exclusivism (five percent of our congregation identify themselves as Christian Exclusivists.)

This position is held by a significant number of Christian fundamentalists, conservatives, and many evangelicals. Christian Exclusivism holds that unless someone personally accepts Christ and the salvation he offers, they continue to be “dead in their sins,” and, of necessity, alienated from God. Sin is part of the human condition. Jesus came to address and atone for human sin, but like an inoculation, Exclusivists believe, his atonement is only effective for an individual if they accept it by faith.

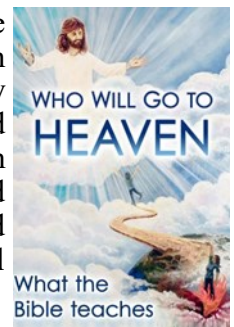
It is here that the Exclusivists' position regarding the eternal fate of non-Christians takes its stand: The saving grace of Jesus must be received or accepted by faith. No one can be saved apart from repenting of their sin and calling upon Christ to save them.

There are nuances to the Exclusivist position. The most extreme position says that children, the mentally disabled, and people who never heard the gospel of Christ will perish, even though they had no real opportunity to receive the gospel.

B. Christian Universalism (eleven percent of our congregation identify themselves as Christian Universalists.)

Christian Universalists are often associated with more liberal expressions of Christianity, but there are evangelicals who hold this view as well. There is an opposite view held by some in the Christian community called Christian Universalism. This is not to be confused with Unitarian Universalism. Christian Universalism claims that Christ is the only Savior of the world, and that God's intention is to save all people. And since God intends to save all people, God ultimately will save all people.

Again, as with Exclusivism, there are nuances to this position. Some believe that there will be people who may be subject to judgment for a time, but that, ultimately, all will be reconciled to God. They note that there are many scriptures that point to the fact that Christ



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died for all, that God “so loves the world,” and that God cares about “the nations” despite the fact that they worship other gods.

C. Christian Inclusivism (seventy seven percent of our congregation identify themselves as Christian Inclusivists.)

This position is held by a large number of mainline Protestants, the Roman Catholic Church, and many evangelicals as well. Like the other two views, it affirms that Christ is the only Savior of the world. Salvation is found in no one else. Like Christian Universalism, it emphasizes God’s desire that all should be saved, and that Christ’s redeeming work was for all people. It believes, with John 14:6, that no one comes to the Father except through Jesus, and with Acts 4:12, that there is no other name—no other savior—by which the world can be saved but Jesus. All who ultimately enter heaven will do so because of the work and grace of Jesus. All will meet Christ at their death and most will recognize him as the Savior.

With moderate Christian Exclusivists, Christian Inclusivists believe that God can show mercy to children who were too young to understand the gospel, as well as persons with cognitive disabilities, and that God will judge those who never heard the gospel according to their hearts and how they responded to what they could know of God through nature and their consciences. The Christian Inclusivist embraces this idea that a just, merciful, loving, and compassionate God would not condemn to hell those who had no real ability to hear, understand, and respond to the good news of Jesus, to accept his saving grace. But they would go beyond the moderate Exclusivist.



The Inclusivist notes that there are billions of people who were raised in another faith and culture, or with no faith at all, who, even if they heard the Christian gospel, might have a difficult time embracing it. Imagine from the time you were small having your faith and ideas about God lovingly shared by your grandparents, parents, and religious leaders. Their faith is the defining story of their lives.

Might God see the faith of those of other religions, and the way they sought to live their lives, and understand that their prayers, worship, trust, and actions were intended for him even if the individual did not understand or embrace the Christian gospel? I have met Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and others whose lives reflected a deeper love of God and neighbor than some Christians that I have known.

(7% of our congregation did not fall into any of the above three categories.)

Jesus spent most of his ministry with people who, for whatever reason, had turned away from God. I believe God is still seeking these folks out. Unlike the Christian Universalist, however, the Inclusivist believes that God will not force anyone to heaven, and that Christ gives us the freedom to reject his grace to the end. They may say, “I am not interested in living in your realm; I don’t want to dwell in a place where I’m expected to live a life of selfless love, to let go of my resentments, to give up my desires and to no longer do things my way.” Perhaps, in God’s mercy, he created a place for those who reject him, his love, his kingdom. The Christian Inclusivist trusts that God knows the heart of each person, that God judges in the light of his mercy and love, and that God can apply the saving work of Jesus to anyone God chooses. And, Christian Inclusivists reject the idea that all people who do not personally accept Christ will be eternally tormented in hell.

Peace by with you, Danyal

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. June 2024, Volume 26, Issue 6. **George Herrick**, Editor; **Shawna Lambert**, **Danyal Mohammadzadeh**, **Gail Welkley**, Editing Team; **Kathy Van Buren**, Production Leader; **Dave Caneen** and **Paul Deming**, Photographers; **Marian Smith**, Envelope Labeler; The Church Staff: **Danyal Mohammadzadeh**, Pastor; **Gail Welkley**, Administrative Assistant; **Lauren Lehmann**, Substitute 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; **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.

HERE IS THE LECTIONARY FOR JUNE

June 2 - Second Sunday after Pentecost

1 Samuel 3:1-20; Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 2 Corinthians 4:5-12; Mark 2:23-3:6

DANYAL'S THEME: God is full of surprises. Samuel is surprised to find himself called at such a young age. The psalmist is surprised to be known so completely and to be so fearfully and wonderfully made. The epistle writer is surprised that the power to shine God's light resides within us. And Jesus is surprised that the gift of the Sabbath is used as a weapon against God's own people. May we continue to be surprised, and may we use this surprise to continue God's work in the world.



June 9 - Third Sunday after Pentecost

1 Samuel 8:4-20, (11:14-15); Psalm 138; 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1; Mark 3:20-35

DANYAL'S THEME: How do we build something that will endure? Do we put our trust in human families, in human ingenuity and cleverness, or do we put our faith in God? God came to the boy Samuel, pronouncing judgment against the house of Eli because his sons had blasphemed against the Lord. In today's reading, the elders of Israel ask Samuel to appoint a king to govern them since Samuel is old and his own sons do not follow the ways of the Lord. Yet, God yearned to be Israel's only ruler and King. Jesus' mother and siblings seek to reign in his ministry, but Jesus has a larger vision and defines family as those who do the will of God. Paul reminds the church in Corinth that while our earthly bodies age and decline, our spiritual temple is being renewed daily and will last into eternity. God calls us to build things that truly last, to look beyond simple biology to find our true families, and to look beyond the outward nature of things to see God's renewal of our inner nature.

June 16: Fourth Sunday after Pentecost; Father's Day



1 Samuel 15:34-16:13; Psalm 20; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, (11-13), 14-17; Mark 4:26-34

DANYAL'S THEME: Today's scriptures invite us to observe the work of our Covenant God—the One who sees the king inside the child David, the greatest of all the shrubs inside the smallest of seeds, and the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. The Gospel reading reminds us that the mystery of growth and transformation unfolds over time. Paul reminds us that death makes way for the birth of God's new creation for all who live for Christ. When we experience trouble along the way, the shepherd-boy-turned-king, David, invites us to place our trust in God.

June 23: Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

1 Samuel 17:(1a, 4-11, 19-23), 32-49; Psalm 9:9-20; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41

DANYAL'S THEME: In Mark's Gospel, Jesus uses the command: "Peace! Be still" (4:39 RSV). Whether we have anxious hearts, tumultuous situations in our families, adversaries that seem to be set against us, tests of our endurance, or responsibilities to care for our neighbors, peace is craved by all.

June 30: Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27; Psalm 130; 2 Corinthians 8:7-15; Mark 5:21-43

DANYAL'S THEME: Where do we turn in times of trial? The psalmist invites us to wait for the Lord, more than those who wait for the morning, for God is faithful and true. In Mark's Gospel, both the leader of the synagogue and the woman with the issue of blood turn to Jesus for healing. And since the Christian Community is the body of Christ, Paul invites us to turn to one another in our need. When others turn to us, Paul urges us to respond with love and generosity. The reading from 2 Samuel does not fit this theme but does depict a beautiful response to the death of a loved one.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

The end of the Sunday School year is upon us! I want to say a big THANK YOU for all of the support and the warm welcome. I had a great time meeting all of the kids and their families this year, and look forward to seeing you all in September.

For June, we will have class on the first and second Sundays. June 9th will be our last day of Sunday School! We will be participating in the church service, handing out achievement certifications and celebrating with an end of the year celebration.

Do not forget! Vacation Bible School will be **July 22-26**, right here at church! Sponsorships are still available! Please see me to register your children for VBS- it is going to be so much fun!

Enjoy your summer!



Many Blessings,
Lauren Lehmann—llehmann@fumceg.org

UNITED METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Can we believe it is June already? We are ending our youth group year with a celebration. We have worked so hard on so many projects this year. To highlight some of them: we collected items for the Street Soldiers and the homeless, we fundraised over \$1,000 with a spaghetti dinner and bake sale, we went to Syracuse to work at Mission Hub and were able to verify 190 hygiene kits plus donate 40 kits, we planted two trees, and we did so much more!



These last two events will be my last two youth group meetings as your youth leader. I hope to see all the youth come out and celebrate another successful year in the youth group.

June 2nd from 11:00 am - 1:00 pm, we will be going to FunPlex and as always we will be getting ice cream! Lunch will be provided (It will be a make your own sandwich, please put in your request for your favorite sandwich) Friends are invited ! Please bring money for Ice Cream.

June 8th we will be celebrating our Seniors. Time will be sometime around 5:30 pm This will be the Senior High in youth group and parents that would like to come. More details to come.

I would like to take this time to congratulate our High School Seniors John Haase, Kevin Clark and Caroline Rumsey. As you take your next steps into the world, whatever it might be, always remember God loves you!

I will always hold the youth and youth group in a special place in my heart as we go on to new adventures. Remember one thing God Loves you!

Joshua 1:9: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

I hope everyone has a safe and fun summer ! I can't wait for the fall and all the new opportunities God has in store for us!

God Bless, *Amber Telford*
Youthleaderamber@gmail.com

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

The United Women in Faith will be having their next get together on Tuesday **June 4**, 12:00 noon at Samson's Bar and Restaurant, 1736 US 9, Castleton-on-Hudson. Let's have a hat party and wear the ones we made last June or any other hat you desire. All are welcome, but please let me know if you are coming by Saturday, June 1 so they'll have the correct seating. Text me, Lorraine Beals @ 518-961-4050 or lsbeals@nycap.rr.com. Thank you and hope to see you there!

We have made our first order for the kitchen cabinets. As funds allow, we will order the rest of the them in the near future. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this fundraiser.

We had a very successful bake sale at the Food Truck Festival. We earned \$700. Thank you to all who baked or bought the delicious goodies we had for sale.

The United Women In Faith have funds set aside for any youth who wish to attend Skye Farm or any other religious camp. Applications are in the church office.



SENIOR LUNCH



The Senior Lunch returns Wednesday, **June 12** at 12:00 noon in Fellowship Hall. It will be our Summer menu of burgers and hot dogs. You may receive a phone call to remind you. If not, please call the office to let us know you will be coming. It is helpful for planning. (You don't need to be a senior to attend).

FINANCE COMMITTEE NOTES



Cheerful Givers

We would like to thank everyone for their gifts to the church this year. All these gifts together allow us to provide the ministries of our church. Summer is typically a time when our income drops off due to people being away more frequently. Keeping your donations up to date over the summer will help us pay our bills in a timely manner. If you are going to be away during the summer, please consider mailing your donations before you leave or making a one- time or recurring online donation. Online donations can be made through the church's online giving page www.fumceg.org/giving. Thank you for your continued support.

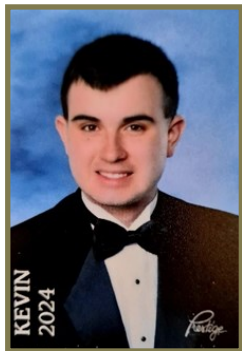
SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Recognizing our graduating seniors! If you have been involved in our church during your Sunday School career? If you were confirmed here? We want to recognize you!

Laura Clark

THIS YEAR'S GRADUATES

Kevin Clark will be graduating from Averill Park HS, #8 in his class! Kevin has had a very busy and productive HS career. He played the alto and bari sax in both the concert and jazz band. Kevin is president of the National Honor Society and participated in his school masterminds program. He is Vice President of his school's Robotic team, and works behind the scenes as the facility manager for his school's drama program, Off Broadway Players (OBP). To stay in shape, Kevin has played tennis all 4 years of high school.



On Sunday mornings, you can typically find Kevin running our church live stream. When he's not behind the camera, Kevin participates in the church tech group and is active with our youth group. On the conference level, Kevin has been a member of the Conference Council on Youth Ministry (CCYM) for 6 years. He served in a leadership role for the publicity team and submitted articles to our conference magazine, "The Advocate". Kevin is also a member of the NEJ Finance and Administration team. He recently participated in the NEJ, Mission of Peace (MOP) trip to Puerto Rico. Look for an upcoming date to hear of this blessed experience.

One of Kevin's favorite places is Skye Farm Camp. Kevin was a camper every year and is looking forward to working FT as a counselor this summer, his 3rd summer on staff.

Kevin will be graduating from HS with approximately 30 college credits. He plans to pursue a degree in Biotechnology from HVCC. From there he plans to continue his education in the medical field and Forensics, possibly working toward becoming a medical examiner.



Caroline Rumsey is graduating from Columbia High School. In the fall, Caroline will be attending SUNY Geneseo, majoring in Biology. She plans on attending chiropractic school after finishing her undergraduate studies. Caroline is the daughter of Kevin and Colleen Rumsey.

Kevin and Colleen Rumsey.

Madeline Naef graduated Cum Laude from Siena College with a Bachelor of Science degree, with a major in biology. She will continue her education in the Fall, attending Russell Sage College, where she will pursue a Master's Degree in Nutrition and Dietetics with the goal of becoming a Registered Dietician. Madeline Naef is the granddaughter of Henry and Susan Naef, and niece of Justin Naef and Robert Thomsen.



Victor M. Giso is graduating from Avon Central High School in Avon, NY on June 22nd. Victor will receive an automotive mechanic certificate from the Genesee Valley BOCES and has been on merit and honor roll throughout his high school career. He also has



been inducted into the National Technical Honor Society. Victor has been active in Scouts, CCYM, and works at a local pizza shop in town. In the fall he plans to attend Monroe Community College to further his studies in Automotive Mechanics. Victor is the son of Rachel and Michael Giso.

John Glasheen-Haase is graduating from Maple Hill High School. He's been a soccer and lacrosse player for the varsity teams. His favorite subjects have been English and Photography. John is looking forward to marching in the Memorial Day Parade in Castleton.

He's a member of the Mission Committee and has helped with lunches for Joseph's House. John's going to attend Hudson Valley Community College in the Fall. He is the son of Valerie Glasheen and David Haase.



CHANGE THE WORLD

Thank you for Changing the World! May was a busy month, filled with activities designed to share God's Love. As of this writing, many of our activities haven't yet occurred but we are off to a great start. Our Food Drive to benefit CoNSERNS-U Food Pantry and the VA Center was very successful.

Several members of our church participated in the Addiction Awareness 5K Memorial Run in Guilderland. Many of us gathered at Carrie and Peter Larson's for a potting party to prepare plants for the residents of Van Rensselaer Heights. We are also busy filling shoeboxes with supplies for those in need living in rural Kentucky. Please check next month's Bell for a complete summary.



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY CAPITAL DISTRICT

Our church devotes some of its annual budget to support local, national and global organizations that minister to people's needs for food, shelter, education, medical care and community. One supported organization is Habitat for Humanity Capital District (habitated.org). Habitat's vision is for everyone to have a decent place to live--it aims not just to build homes but to build community, and it prioritizes construction within focus neighborhoods to maximize its impact. For example, during the last several years, dozens of homes were built on Orange Street and Sheridan Avenue in Albany. Habitat homeowners contribute "sweat equity" and pay an affordable mortgage and other regular expenses that come with owning a home. To keep the mortgage affordable, Habitat raises funds through grants, donations and sales at the Habitat Restore.



The Habitat mission depends on volunteer support at the Restore and on the build sites. Kevin Conley is one of the 10-12 "regulars" on the current build site. Each volunteer commits a day a week to help with framing, insulating, finish work and clean-up. Some of the "regulars" have volunteered with Habitat for over 20 years. The houses are well-constructed and well-insulated so homeowners' utility costs will be kept low. In fact, the houses

H4H will soon finish on Manning Boulevard are heated and cooled with high-efficiency heat pumps. For information about volunteering on the build site, contact Kevin (e.kevin.conley@gmail.com).

NOTICE: The last Zumba Gold Class before the summer break will be on Thursday, **May 30, 2024** at 10:30 am. Have a good summer!



OUR STORYTELLING NIGHTS CONTINUE WITH
HOME EARTH ALLIANCE

On **June 5** at 7:00 pm Home Earth Alliance (HEA) co-founder Pam Skripak will share a bit about her organization's work, as well as just some of the items from her PowerPoint "50 Things You Can Do Tomorrow to Help Heal the Earth." . See insert for details



Our editor, George Herrick, is on hiatus for the next few months, taking care of some personal issues. In the meantime, Kathy and Shawna are trying to fill his shoes. And they are pretty big shoes to fill.

Storytelling Night

Wednesday, June 5 7:00 PM

First United Methodist Church

1 Gilligan Road, E. Greenbush, NY

Presenting:

Pam Skripak

of the Home Earth Alliance



“50 Things You Can Do Tomorrow to Help Heal the Earth”

Educate, Inspire, and Empower People to Cultivate Their
Homes and Outdoor Spaces to Support Biodiversity,
Mitigate Climate Change and Promote Environmental
Justice



All Are Welcome! Refreshments Served