



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE BELL

1 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, New York 12061

We Are A Reconciling Congregation



VOLUME 27 ISSUE 1 - JANUARY 2025

◆ **8:30 am** Early Informal Service suspended until May, 2025

◆ **9:30 am** Regular Service and Sunday School

This service also available live on Facebook and YouTube. The Church's website has the links.

Visit us on the Web:

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www.facebook.com/FUMCEG

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EPIPHANY'S MESSAGE OF INCLUSION

As we enter the month of January, we celebrate Epiphany, a significant event in the Christian calendar that commemorates the visit of the Magi to the Christ child. This momentous occasion, observed on January

6th, marks the revelation of Jesus to the Gentiles and highlights the universal nature of His mission. Epiphany is a powerful reminder that Jesus came for all people, regardless of their background or status. The Magi, who were outsiders, symbolize the inclusion of all nations in God's plan of salvation. This message of inclusivity calls us to embrace and welcome everyone into our faith community, reflecting God's love and grace.

As we celebrate Epiphany, let's reflect on how we can live out its message in our daily lives. Here are a few ways to do so:

- Seek Jesus:** Make time for prayer, worship, and reading Scripture to deepen your relationship with Christ.
- Embrace Diversity:** Welcome and celebrate the diversity within our church and community, recognizing that we are all part of God's family.
- Share the Light:** Be a source of encouragement and support to others, sharing the love and hope of Christ through your actions and words.
- Offer Your Gifts:** Use your talents and resources to serve others and glorify God, just as the Magi offered their gifts to Jesus.



May this Epiphany season inspire us to seek Jesus with renewed faith, embrace the inclusivity of His message, and shine His light brightly in our lives.

Blessings, Pastor Danyal

(Continued from page 1)

HERE IS THE LECTIONARY FOR JANUARY

January 5: Epiphany Sunday - Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

January 12: Baptism of the Lord - Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 2; Acts 8:14-17;

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 19: 2nd Sunday After The Epiphany - Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10;
1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

January 26: 3rd Sunday After The Epiphany - Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19;
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21



WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY - This special week is held each year from **January 18 to January 25**. The theme for this year is "Do You Believe?". Printed materials to support this week are supplied by the Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute and can be found on the internet at www.geii.org.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. INTERFAITH SERVICE - Each year the Council of Churches holds a service of celebration on this special day. This year's service will be held at 7:00 pm on **January 15th** at Congregation Beth Emeth, 100 Academy Road, Albany, New York. All are welcome.

ECUMENICAL WITNESS FOR BAPTISM RENEWAL SERVICE - If you are interested in becoming a witness for baptism for our Capital Area Council of Churches, you should attend the Renewal Service on Sunday, **January 12** at 2pm. The service will be held at St. Matthew's Roman Catholic Church in Voorheesville, 25 Mountain Street, Voorheesville, NY

Cookies and Carols...a chance to relax and enjoy the lovely Christmas Carols with joy and comfort in Fellowship Hall. Come Sunday afternoon, **January 12th**, from 2:00-3:30 to hear the Choir, solos, duets, Coffee House performers and readers celebrate the beautiful and funny music and readings of Christmas. Delicious cookies and drinks are available. This event is free but donations will go to the Family Assistance Ministry to help families in crisis.


**Cookies &
CAROLS**

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SUNDAY SCHOOL

Happy New Year!

In January, our Sunday School class will be diving back into curriculum after a busy Advent season. This month, we will focus on the book of Corinthians and Isaiah, and learn about the people of those books, and what important things Jesus wanted us to know about them. The children will also be working on a new mission project, collecting used (but good condition) coats, hats and gloves to donate, more information to follow.

Remember to keep checking the Google Classroom to keep up to date on what is happening in and out of the classroom. Thanks for your support as always.



YOUTH GROUP

We will be meeting **January 13 @ 6:00 pm** and **January 23rd @ 6:00 pm**. We will also be diving back into our Bible study curriculum, and community work. It is our goal to plan another day or evening with our friends at Hawthorne Ridge, we are thinking a game night!

We hope everyone had a blessed holiday season, and the new year brings joy, health, and relaxation.

Many blessings, Lauren Lehmann

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

The Roast Beef Dinner was a success. We made a profit of \$1,221. We will be giving the Trustees the money towards our kitchen upgrade. A big thanks goes out to Kathy and Jim Salisbury, Justin Naef, Robert Thomsen (our Maitre d'), Barbara Morse, Kathy Garofal, Lorraine Beals, Aleta Schweigert, Regina Wheeler, Chris Chartrand, Janet Schmidt, Sue and Henry Naef, and Beth and Russ Buckner. Thanks to Karen Terwilliger, Patty Chartrand, Kathy Van Buren, Mary McIntosh and Trudy Sorell who cut up the potatoes in record time on Friday. Also thank you to all who baked the delicious pies.



The last of the new cabinets have arrived and will be installed soon. We will then turn our attention to the countertops. We have decided to use quartz for the countertops as it is more durable than the formica we have now. The counter where the coffee maker is has begun to lift from the base. So we made the decision to put a little more money into the counters that will last much, much longer. The Trustees have loaned us money for the kitchen repairs and the United Women In Faith will repay them through fundraisers such as bake sales at the food truck event, roast beef dinners and chicken barbecues.

Our next monthly meeting is **January 6**. We will be going over our budget and plans for the new year. All are welcome, please join us.

MADE BY HAND WITH LOVE



Our Made By Hand With Love group will meet 10:00 am Tuesdays, **January 14, 28; February 11, 25**. If you would like to learn to knit or crochet, please join us. We would love to teach you. We are working on afghans/lap blankets for the VA hospital, hats and mittens and stuffed animals. We have yarn available for you to use.

Also we were asked by the Sunday School to make animal hats for the children's Christmas performance. So you see we are a versatile group.

Come join us even if only to chat.

Aleta Schweigert & Regina Wheeler

ECO TEAM

Climate anxiety is on the upswing as we experience and read about the increasing frequency of severe weather events. An antidote for climate anxiety is action. As Greta Thunberg, a climate activist, said, "Once we start to act, hope is everywhere." The United Methodist Creation Justice Movement (<https://umcreationjustice.org>) has provided a number of actions we can take. Some are listed below:

- WE CAN renew our commitment to be good stewards of our Earth. Choose one new thing to do throughout the year to care for creation.
- WE CAN make our homes more energy efficient. Fix the air leaks, use drapes to block the cold, change to LED lights, investigate possibilities for solar or Energy Star appliances. [To learn from others in our church, see the Resource Directory on the Eco Team bulletin board near Fellowship Hall.]
- WE CAN embrace zero waste and compost our food scraps.
- WE CAN clean up. Review your closets for items to donate for reuse, to repurpose, or to recycle. [See the Eco Team section of www.fumceg.org for a link to organizations that recycle or reuse goods.]
- WE CAN consume less meat. Explore the options for foods that are kinder to earth and to health. What we eat does have an impact on nature and climate change, as well as our own bodies.
- WE CAN speak up. Talk to your family, friends, and church members about what you are learning and doing. You are a trusted resource for them. Your example and your encouragement are key to spreading wider the circle of caring for God's planet and people.



On behalf of the **Mission and Social Responsibility team**, I'd like to thank everyone who donated winter outerwear for Van Rensselaer Heights residents. I dropped off 11 large bags during the month of November that was greatly appreciated by them.

Thanks again, Lorraine Beal

ARE YOU 73 OR OLDER?

If you are 73 or older and have an IRA, consider using the required minimum distribution to fund your Church pledge. Whatever you donate is deducted from your income before taxes. It does not affect your deductible. If your tax bracket is 10%, you save 10%. If your tax bracket is 12% or 22% that is what you save. Your financial company makes out the check and sends it to the Church. The Church sends you a receipt which you keep for your taxes. Now, you can spend the savings, you could use them to add to your pledge or consider donating them to the Church Endowment. If you have any questions, please contact Peter Larson at pflarson@nycap.rr.com.

Save the date

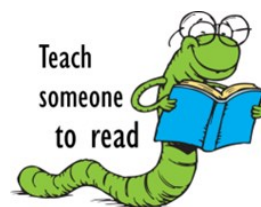


The 15th Annual January Red Cross Blood Drive honoring our own Sterling Lee Pierce will be held Friday, **January 17th** from 1:00-6:00 pm at the First United Methodist Church of East Greenbush. Lee and many others in our church community benefited enormously from blood donated by you.

BECOME A TUTOR TODAY

When most of us count our blessings, we probably don't include being able to read a sentence like this. Too often, reading and writing are just taken for granted. Working with adults who haven't yet mastered basic literacy skills has given me a new perspective that I am anxious to share. Nationwide, on average, 79% of U.S. adults were literate in 2022; 21% of adults in the US were illiterate; 54% of adults had a literacy below sixth-grade level.

Reading a newspaper, filling out a job application, helping a child with his/her homework. Think about the challenges that face about 1 in 5 adults in our advanced country. When I began volunteering for Literacy Volunteers about 20 years ago, I had no idea of the challenges facing many adults. I taught school for 30 years and saw children well on their way to becoming proficient readers and writers. Yes, there were those who struggled, but I was confident that by the time they graduated from high school, they would have the necessary literacy skills to succeed. I wasn't thinking about those who would drop out of school for various reasons. I wasn't thinking about those with serious learning disabilities. The reality is that there are many adults who face daily challenges with basic reading and writing skills.



When I became involved with Literacy Volunteers, I had no idea of how gratifying it would be knowing that my efforts were being appreciated and that I was helping to make a difference. As you can see, the need is great. The good news is that to become a tutor does not require a teaching degree. The requirements include being a caring individual with a listening ear, willing to offer assistance to someone in need. Brief training and support are available from a compassionate and professional staff.

I would strongly recommend getting involved. There are people out there waiting for you, eager to improve their literacy skills that we have been blessed to receive. Please consider visiting Literacy Volunteers at lvorc.org or calling 518.244.4650 to speak to Nancy Benz, Literacy Volunteers Director. I would also be happy to try to answer any questions that you may have.

John Schmidt, Literacy Volunteers Tutor

BUECHNER PROJECT - The deadline is **February 1, 2025**. The newest topic is "Gravity". Check the November issue of The Christian Century magazine, page 62 for details. It's in the church library, right across from the church lounge. Also, there was more information in the December BELL.

Storytelling Night

Thursday January 9 7 PM

First United Methodist Church
1 Gilligan Road East Greenbush, NY

Refreshments



All Are
Welcome!

THE MISSION OF PEACE IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUTH OF HIGH SCHOOL AGE TO VISIT ANOTHER PLACE IN THE WORLD, FOR THE PURPOSE OF BUILDING BRIDGES, GAINING KNOWLEDGE, AND SPREADING "SHALOM", THE PEACE AND LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST. KEVIN CLARK WAS JUST 17 YEARS OF AGE WHEN HE TRAVELED TO PUERTO RICO LAST FEBRUARY, 2024. COME HEAR OF HIS 10 DAY JOURNEY THROUGH PUERTO RICO, VISITING HOSPITALS, NEIGHBORHOODS IN RUINS, AND ALSO THE FUN TIMES THE GROUP HAD AS THEY BECAME CLOSER TO ONE ANOTHER, AND GREW IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. LAURA CLARK, WHO WORKS WITH YOUTH THROUGHOUT THE UPPER NY AREA, WILL THEN SPEAK ABOUT THE MANY OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO YOUTH, AND HOW THE YOUTH IN YOUR LIFE CAN BECOME INVOLVED.

BAPTISMS:

The following children were baptized on December 15, 2024: (picture below)

Raymond Stanley Kettlewood and Lillian Marie Kettlewood, parents Samantha and Charles Kettlewood

Brayden J. Leslie Russell, parents Tara Kim and Kevin Russell

Oliver D'Ambrosi, parents Jessica and Dominic D'Ambrosi

Elise Jane Liebman and Thomas Parker Blanchard, parents Jena and Matthew Liebman

Zachary, Colin, and Patrick Mastin, parents Kathleen and Matthew Mastin

