



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE BELL

1 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, New York 12061

We Are A Reconciling Congregation



VOLUME 27 ISSUE 2 - FEBRUARY 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:

www.fumceg.org

www.facebook.com/FUMCEG

Phone: (518) 477-9693

Fax: (518) 477-4336

Church Office Hours:

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

Email: office@fumceg.org

BELL (only) Email:

editor@fumceg.org

Announcements Email:

office@fumceg.org

Rev. Danyal Mohammadzadeh

Pastor

Pastordanyal@fumceg.org

Gail Welkley,

Administrative Assistant

Lauren Lehmann,

Sunday School Coordinator

LLehmann@fumceg.org

Jacqueline Krahforst, Organist

Robert Thomsen, Choir Director

Cynthia McLaughlin, Director of

Bell Choirs

Steve Green, Custodian



EMBRACING THE LIGHT OF CANDLEMAS

As we journey through the winter months, February brings us a moment of profound reflection and renewal with the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus, also known as Candlemas. Celebrated on February 2nd, this feast commemorates the presentation of Jesus at the Temple in Jerusalem, as described in the Gospel of Luke. It marks the end of the Christmas-Epiphany season, a time when we have celebrated the light of Christ coming into the world.

Candlemas is a beautiful reminder of the light that Jesus brings into our lives. In the temple, Simeon recognized Jesus as the light for revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of God's people Israel. This moment invites us to reflect on how we, too, can recognize and embrace the light of Christ in our daily lives.

In our United Methodist tradition, we are called to be bearers of this light, shining it into the corners of our world that need hope, justice, and love. Candlemas encourages us to renew our commitment to these values, to be a beacon of light in our communities, and to support one another in our spiritual journeys.

As we gather to celebrate Candlemas at our Sunday service on February 2nd, let us light candles not only in our sanctuaries but also in our hearts. Let these candles symbolize our dedication to living out the teachings of Jesus, to being a source of warmth and guidance for those around us.

May this feast inspire us to carry the light of Christ forward, illuminating the path of compassion, inclusivity, and peace.

Additionally, I am thrilled to announce that we will be holding an ecumenical service with our brothers and sisters from the Catholic Church on Sunday February 2nd from 9:30 am to 10:30 am.

This is a wonderful opportunity to come together in unity and shared faith. I encourage you to bring your Catholic friends to join us in this special celebration.

Blessings to you all as we embrace the light of Candlemas and continue our journey together in faith.



Mary offers us the Flame of Love

In Christ's love, Pastor Danyal

HERE IS THE LECTIONARY FOR FEBRUARY

February 2: 4th Sunday After The Epiphany - Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30

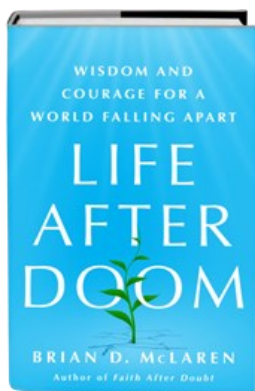
February 9: 5th Sunday After The Epiphany - Isaiah 6:1-8 (9-13); Psalm 138; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11

February 16: 6th Sunday After The Epiphany - Jeremiah 17:5-10; Psalm 1; 1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Luke 6:17-26

Lenten Adult Book Study: "Life After Doom"

Join us for a ZOOM book study from Tuesday, March 4th to April 8th at 7:00 pm (6 sessions). We will be exploring "Life After Doom: Wisdom and Courage for a World Falling Apart" by Brian McLaren. The study will be led by Pastor Danyal and Kevin Conley. Please register with the church office at (518) 477-9693.

About the Book: "Life After Doom" is a deeply insightful exploration of how to live with wisdom, resilience, and love in our turbulent times. For the last quarter-century, author and activist Brian D. McLaren has been writing at the intersection of religious faith and contemporary culture.



In this book, he addresses the catastrophic failure of both our religious and political leaders to tackle the dominant realities of our time: ecological overshoot, economic injustice, and the increasing likelihood of civilizational collapse. McLaren defines doom as the “unpeaceful, uneasy, unwanted feeling” that “we humans have made a mess of our civilization and our planet, and not enough of us seem to care enough to change deeply enough or quickly enough to save ourselves.”

Blending insights from philosophers, poets, scientists, and theologians, "Life After Doom" explores the complexity of hope, the necessity of grief, and the need for new ways of thinking, becoming, and belonging in turbulent times.

If you want to help yourself, your family, and your communities find courage and resilience for the deeply challenging times that are upon us — this is the book you need right now.

Reviews: "This book is a beacon of hope in dark times. McLaren's wisdom and courage inspire us to face our challenges head-on and find strength in community." - Jane Doe, Community Leader "A must-read for anyone seeking to navigate the complexities of our world with grace and resilience. McLaren's insights are both profound and practical." - John Smith, Educator

Exciting News! Scholarships are available to help cover the cost of the book for our upcoming book study. We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to join, so don't let anything hold you back. Come and be a part of our enriching discussions.

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. February, 2025, Volume 27, Issue 2. **George Herrick**, Editor Emeritus; **Kathy Van Buren & Shawna Lambert**, Editing and Production Team; **Dave Caneen and Paul Deming**, Photographers; **Marian Smith**, Envelope Labeler.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Hello Families! The new year is off to a great start! We spent the month of January learning about how to be followers of Jesus. The children enjoyed learning about the epiphany and the 3 Wise Men, Jesus' baptism, and the 12 disciples. We created a time-line of these events, ask your children to resight the events for you!



February brings lessons on love and kindness. We will continue to explore our Bibles, learning books of the new testament and adding some "people of the Bible"

to our ongoing list.

Thank you to those parents, grandparents and church members who have volunteered to help out in class for the months of February and March. If you would like to partake in helping our youth learn, please reach out to me, or sign up on the clipboard at church.

YOUTH GROUP

Our mission project for February will be collecting new sets of hats and gloves for children. We will also be collecting gently used winter coats for kids and adults. Both projects were thought of by the teens in the youth group- looking to help out local children in need. The youth group will be presenting this mission project to the members of the church during the month of February.

We will be meeting on Thursday February 13 from 6-7pm for our monthly meet up!

Also, check out our new family resource bulletin board located in the main hall of church. There you can find helpful information about both Sunday School and Youth Group including our Google Classroom code, a calendar of upcoming events, and brochures.



Many blessings, Lauren Lehmann

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH



The church kitchen is still getting a face lift. Please do not stow kitchen items in the cabinets as there is more to do when the countertops are installed. Labels will be put on the cabinets when they are completed so we can keep things organized. A HUGE thank you to David Caneen for all his work on the cabinets.

A few names were left off those who helped with the Roast Beef Dinner: Valerie Perrote and Becky and Pat Frament.

The United Women in Faith has a meeting set for **February 3** at 2:00 pm. Please join us.

ART SHOW COMMITTEE

The time has come to be creative and start working on your art project to display at our 3rd Annual Community Art show on Saturday, April 5th. Children and adults are encouraged to participate. Because of the growing interest and success of our first two years, it is now necessary to purchase our own tri-pod easels with telescopic legs. We need to purchase 48 at a total cost of \$720.

Please join us after church Sunday, **February 9th** for our Valentine themed social gathering. "We All Love Art" is an opportunity to help us raise funds for the easels. For a donation, Amber Telford will capture your loving family with digital photos at our "photo booth" designed by Beth Buckner, while Barbara Morse is offering her famous decorated heart-shaped cookies.

Other tasty goodies will be provided by committee members Carrie Larson, Nancy Keenholts, and Nicole Willbrant.

One other way you can support our efforts is to donate to our Sponsor an Easel basket. We will have that basket available after upcoming Sunday services too. **For more information email the committee at artshowfumceg@gmail.com**



ART SHOW

FAMILY ASSISTANCE MINISTRY (FAM)

“I got sick and had to go on unemployment. It’s not enough to pay the heat and phone bills. The medical bills piled up and then my wife lost her job. We don’t know where to turn.” “They tell me that I am part of the sandwich generation, I take care of the kids and my family. My Mom and Dad are in their 80’s and need more help than I can provide. I’m not sure what to do.”



These are just 2 stories similar to those of church families who participated in the FAM. Every Sunday, we sit in pews with people struggling to meet unasked for family crises. In 2014, when a family from Pakistan needed help, we started the Family Assistance Ministry (FAM) to assist with finding a place to live, with the rent, with medicine, food and the red tape of seeking asylum and safety from persecution in their homeland.

Over the past 11 years, FAM has assisted 13 families, 43 people, with; long term financial help, information and referral to community service in addition to emotional and spiritual support. These resources are provided in confidence so families can weather crises and stabilize to meet life’s challenges.

Recently, FAM has expanded assistance to families to include transportation, dinners to families when needed, consultants knowledgeable in community services, and financial help when all community programs have been accessed and there are still unmet critical needs.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

The church budget provides some funds but the majority comes from your donations, from the Church Christmas Card donations and from fundraising at Coffee Houses and other church events. If you have any questions, know of a family in need of support or want to learn more about the church’s Family Assistance Ministry, contact Carrie Larson (cjl Larson64@gmail.com); John Schmidt (jschmidt13050@gmail.com) or Pastor Danyal (church office).

HEY YOUTH! COME WALK ON WATER THIS SUMMER!

Conference Council on Youth Ministry (CCYM) is excited to announce our newest 4 day, 3 night youth event in Watertown this summer! Our theme is from Matthew 14:29 *"Come," he said. "Then Peter got out of the boat, walked on water and came toward Jesus"*.

Who: All youth entering 7th grade and up are welcome to attend.

When: **July 31-Aug 3, 2025**

Cost: : \$100 (adult \$75) Covers food, shelter, and lots of love.

Host churches: Asbury UMC of Watertown and FUMC Watertown

This is a mission based event, we will be volunteering our time in and around the Watertown area. There will also be tons of fun, and opportunities for worship with peers from Upper NY!

For more information or to register for the event, please contact Laura Clark, Conference Youth Coordinator at 518-396-7778 or lclark@fumc.org

EDITOR’S NOTE: A MEMORIAL SERVICE CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF **MATIE FLOWERS** IS PLANNED FOR 11:00 AM ON **FEBRUARY 8** AT OUR CHURCH.

COMING SOON!



**Vivian Kornegay, Housing Coordinator,
Albany County Sheriff's Homeless
Improvement Program (S.H.I.P)**

Storytelling Night

Wednesday, February 5 7 PM

First United Methodist Church

1 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, NY

**Join us for an uplifting story about
assisting residents with job and
housing searches.**

All Are Welcome Refreshments

First United Methodist Church of East Greenbush

3rd ANNUAL ART SHOW

Calling all Artists of Any Age!

We are looking for your Artwork to be displayed in our community art show!
Please see the form for more details by scanning the QR code, clicking the link or the paper version of the form.



SCAN ME



**THEME: ART MAKES
YOUR HEART BLOOM**

THE ART SHOW WILL BE:

April 5th, 2025

From 2:00pm -4:00pm

At 1 Gilligan Rd East Greenbush, NY

**\$10 ADULT PLACEMENT FEE- CHILDREN'S ART FREE
YOU MAY SELL YOUR ART**

Food Crisis Needs Your Help

Qholaqhoe Mountain Connections (QMC), is a nonprofit organization that works with a population of villagers in a remote mountain region of Lesotho, southern Africa. It has provided financial grants to fund education, cultivate sustainable farming practices, and alleviate hunger among a population of orphans. Our church has been supporting QMC for approximately 15 years, and we have developed a close relationship with Lynn Minderman, the founder of QMC.

Lynn is a former Peace Corps volunteer and educator who fell in love with the people of Lesotho and returned to the country determined to help. QMC has been a labor of love. Thanks to Lynn, we have been kept informed about the challenges and successes of the Program. Recently, Lynn has made us aware of a dire food shortage that is affecting the population. Lesotho’s Prime Minister, Sam Matekane, has declared a national state of food insecurity disaster. This comes in response to the severe El Niño-induced drought affecting the country and the broader Southern Africa region. The government reports that up to 700,000 people, nearly one-third of the population, are now facing severe food insecurity.

Our Missions Team is asking for your support to assist in this food shortage. Your kind donation will help families survive this current crisis. If you would like to lend a hand, donations may be made with a check made out to the church.

Please write “QMC” in the memo section. Thank you on behalf of Lynn and the Missions Team for continuing to be the hands, the feet and the compassionate heart of Jesus.



The final total is in! The Missions Team would like to thank all those who participated in the recent Church-Wide Christmas Card Appeal. Every year we choose a few of the missions that we support to receive an additional gift from our congregation. This year, \$693 was donated. The amount will be split among our local food pantry, CoNSERNS-U, NAMI, (National Alliance on Mental Illness), and our Family Assistance Ministry, which supports members of our congregation in need. On behalf of these fine organizations, we express our appreciation.



COOKIES AND CAROLS



On a sunny Sunday afternoon, January 12th, while the temperature was a warm 36 degrees, musicians and audience members from Church and the surrounding communities gathered in Fellowship Hall for the 10th annual Cookies and Carols show. All enjoyed an afternoon of original, varied and familiar Christmas carols, humming, clapping and singing along with a roster of talented and entertaining musicians. In addition to food for the soul, the mountains of delicious cookies diminished to low lying hills. A grand and wonderful afternoon was spent and the spirit, message and joy of Christmas permeated our gathering.



**Special Message from Bishop Héctor:
The ongoing California wildfires**

Editor's Note: The following message was sent to United Methodists of Upper New York on behalf of Bishop Héctor A. Burgos Núñez on Friday, January 10, 2025 in response to the ongoing wildfires in California.

Dear siblings in Christ,

As United Methodists, we are called to love and serve our neighbors in times of joy and sorrow. Today, I write with a heavy heart as we witness the devastating wildfires in Southern California. Entire communities have been displaced, homes destroyed, and lives upended, including many United Methodists who live in the impacted areas.

In this tragedy, countless acts of courage and compassion shine. Brave firefighters risk their lives to battle the flames, neighbors open their doors to those in need, and churches become sanctuaries of hope and healing.

Please join me in praying for all those affected—the families mourning losses, individuals facing uncertainty, and dedicated first responders. Also, please pray for Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank and the United Methodists in the California-Pacific Conference as they tirelessly work to be the hands and feet of Christ in their communities. May God's grace provide comfort and strength.

As a church of faith in action, The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is providing essential aid. If you feel called to help, please contribute to UMCOR's disaster response efforts. Your generosity brings hope and relief to those in need. Also, I encourage SUS/UNY congregations to collect a special offering to support the relief efforts in Los Angeles.

You can give through the UMCOR website or by designating a gift to Advance #901670, U.S. Disaster Response and Recovery, and send it to the corresponding Conference Treasurer office. Every gift, no matter the size, makes a difference.

Thank you for living the gospel and embodying the love of Christ as we extend compassion and care to our siblings in California.

Together in the mission, **Bishop Héctor A. Burgos Núñez**,
Serving the Susquehanna & Upper New York Area The United Methodist Church