



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE BELL

1 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, New York 12061

We Are A Reconciling Congregation

VOLUME 27 ISSUE 8 - SEPTEMBER 2025



UPPER NEW YORK AREA
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Appointment Announcement

We are so very thankful for the pastoral leadership that Rev. Jeff Matthews brings to us this summer and early fall. His leadership is both a comfort and an inspiration!

It is my joy to share with you today that Bishop Héctor A. Burgos-Núñez has appointed a team of interim pastors to lead us through the remainder of this appointment year. Rev. Mary Beth Blinn will be the lead interim pastor, serving half-time, and Rev. Jennifer Williamson will also be appointed to this team, serving quarter-time. Reverends Blinn and Williamson will begin their new responsibilities this fall, and will continue through June of 2026.

Some of you had the opportunity to meet Rev. Mary Beth Blinn when she preached here last month, but to introduce her again to some of you, and for the first time to those who were not with us that Sunday, here is a brief bio. Rev. Blinn is an ordained elder and member of the Virginia Annual Conference. She retired in 2019, after 38 years of ministry in Virginia and in the Red Bird Missionary Conference, and she also served as a District Superintendent. Albany became her home in 2021. Her daughter, Anna Blinn Cole, is the pastor at Cobleskill UMC, and her son, Christopher Blinn, is a Special Education Teacher near Philadelphia. She has three grandchildren: Charles, June, and Calder.

Rev. Jennifer Williamson is a lifelong United Methodist and has been ordained since 2006. She has served as an Associate Pastor at a large suburban church, head pastor at a mid-sized small town church and pastor of youth ministries and visitation at an urban church. She currently serves as a chaplain with St. Peter's Health. She has served in churches in East Ohio, West Ohio and Colorado. She values relationship building and places a high value on pastoral care. She is very involved in the Episcopal Diocese of Albany where her husband is the Bishop and has preached at and visited several Episcopal churches in the Northeastern part of New York, as well as in some of our area United Methodist Churches.

♦ **8:30 am** Early Informal outdoor Service ends August 31

♦ **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

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Church Office Hours:

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

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Pastor

Vacant

Gail Welkley,

Administrative Assistant

Lauren Lehmann,

Sunday School Coordinator

LLehmann@fumceg.org

Martha Deyo, Organist

Robert Thomsen, Choir Director

Director of Bell Choirs

Vacant

Steve Green, Custodian

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Our new pastors will work with us and the conference so that we continue to nurture disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Bishop Burgos-Núñez, our district superintendent, Rev. Debbie Earthrowl, and the Upper New York Conference leaders will work with us to continue growing as a congregation, and growing deeper in our discipleship. I know you will join our bishop, our District Superintendent, our new pastors, and me in helping to make new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Deb Rubenstein

HERE IS THE LECTIONARY FOR SEPTEMBER

September 1 – 15th Sunday after Pentecost : James 1:17-27; Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

September 8 – 16th Sunday after Pentecost : James 2:1-10 (11-13), 14-17; Mark 7:24-37

September 15 – 17th Sunday after Pentecost: James 3:1-12; Mark 8:27-38

September 22 – 18th Sunday after Pentecost: James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a; Mark 9:30-37

September 29 – 19th Sunday after Pentecost: James 5:13-20; Mark 9:38-50



UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH



Our next business meeting is **September 8 at 2:00 pm**. We will be discussing the district meeting and the Brooks Barbecue.

September 27, from 9:00 am - 2:00 pm, The Albany District United Women in Faith fall meeting will be held at the East Greenbush UMC. The topic is "*Understanding and Supporting Refugees and Asylum Seekers in New York State*." The speaker will be Kristine Flanders Morelli, NYS Director Bureau of Refugee Services. She is

scheduled to speak around 11:00 am. We would like to have as many women in our congregation attend since we are hosting. If you are interested in attending the fall meeting contact Patty Chartrand at pjdc560@gmail.com by September 20. It promises to be an informative and fun meeting.

MADE BY HAND WITH LOVE MISSION

Fall is a great time to start new projects. Our Knitting/ Crocheting group meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month (**September 9 and 23**) at 10:00 am to 11:30 am in Rooms 5/6. We will continue to make Soft Hats for kids with cancer for hatsgiving.org. Hats can be any size, shape, color.

They will be delivered locally the week before Thanksgiving. There is yarn available to anyone. We do appreciate any donations of yarn. If you would like to learn to knit/crochet please contact us and we will arrange a time to meet. We are using our time talent and treasures to provide Care Shawls for ALS Patients, Afghans-48"x48" for Hospice and the VA, Hats and Mittens for Red Bird Mission and other needs. For more info contact: aschweigert@fumceg.org or rwheeler@fumceg.org.

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. September, 2025 Volume 26, Issue 8. **George Herrick**, Editor Emeritus; **Kathy Van Buren & Shawna Lambert**, Editing and Production Team; **Dave Caneen and Paul Deming**, Photographers; **Marian Smith**, Envelope Labeler.

CHILDREN'S CHORUS

New Children's Chorus this fall! Kids entering 2nd grade and up are welcome to join the Kids' Chorus, a new group for kids to have fun learning and singing music. We will meet Sundays after church for a half hour or so starting on September 14. If your child is interested please contact Kaitlin Morton-Bentley kmortonbentley@gmail.com for more details!



FINANCE COMMITTEE

With summer coming to a close, the Finance Committee has turned their attention to our fall Stewardship Campaign. Giving is a spiritual discipline, and an important part of our personal relationship with God. We are called to be faithful stewards of the blessings we have received.

Last year we tried a new approach for our Stewardship Campaign. It was so successful in the increase of givers and giving amounts, that we will use the same format this year.



A letter will go out to the congregation with a 3x5 card and small envelope. After prayerfully considering your giving amount which could be weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually, you write your commitment on the card and seal it with your name on the back. These are not opened by the financial secretary, so no checks or cash should be put in the envelope. All envelopes will be given to us on Consecration Sunday, October 26. Our process will be shared again closer to the beginning of the Campaign.

We thank all of you for your generous support throughout the year.

FALL FESTIVAL COFFEE HOUSE

Fall is around the corner and we hope you **SAVE THE DATE...** Friday, **September 26th** from 7:00 pm to 8:00 ... and join us at our Fall Festival Coffee House. We have a wonderful roster of performers! There will be a free will collection basket for donations to benefit the Family Assistance Ministry. Come have a very wonderful evening of music, fun and laughter.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



This year our VBS campers were transported to the magical "True North. The VBS committee transformed the sanctuary and choir room into a wonderland of the "true north". Everyone had a wonderful time. Thanks to all the volunteers who help make this year's VBS an outstanding success. We are happy to report that our generous congregation donated \$960 to help make this event happen.



-----MISSIONS-----

The CROP Hunger Walk enables Church World Service (CWS) to provide just and sustainable responses



to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster. Last year, CWS provided hygiene and school kits, cleanup buckets and blankets to those impacted by flooding in California; child safe-guarding services in Latin America; training on sustainable vegetable farming and good nutritional practices in Africa; and flood-resistant household latrines, wells or water filtration systems in Asia.

Please plan to join the Castleton CROP Hunger Walk on Sunday, October 19th. One-quarter of all funds will be directed to the Anchor Food

Pantry. Three-quarters of the funds support the work of CWS and its partners. Walkers may register at www.crophungerwalk.org/castletonny. Walkers ask friends and families to support them with an on-line contribution or check payable to "CWS/CROP". The 1 mile walk and 3.3 mile walk each follow the same route for the first mile. If you cannot join the walk yourself, please support a walker. 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. Every contribution helps bring some relief to those in need. For more information, contact Kevin Conley (kconley@fumceg.org).

-----ECO TEAM-----

Recycling Our next Recycling Day is Sunday, **September 21st**. We will be collecting the following items at the parking lot garage for ½ hour before and after the 9:30 am service:

- ☐ Clean clear, green, blue and brown glass bottles and jars. Labels are okay.
- ☐ Clean Styrofoam, free of tape and staples. Items that were used for food or drink, no matter how clean, are not accepted.



INFORMAL SERVICE

The 8:30 am **informal outdoor service** will end with the August 31 service. At that time there will be the blessing of the animals.

The 8:30 am **informal service** will not be held indoors until further notice.



LIBRARY: There are books on the table in the library free for the taking. They will be there till the end of September.

Most Requested at CoNSERNS-U Food Pantry: Pasta, pork and beans, Manwich, canned fruit, Knorr side dishes, cereal, soup, laundry soap, dish soap. Add one to your shopping cart and drop it in the CoNSERNS-U bin at the church. Thank you!

SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

Meet our new organist!

MARTHA “MARTY” DEYO

Tell us about your family and pets.

I have a son who lives in RI, and he has 4 children. I have a daughter who is a teacher in Averill Park. I live with my 9-year-old rescue dog, Olive.

What career did you have before coming to the FUMC?

I was an Elementary Teacher at Green Meadow School in East Greenbush.

Where in the world would you like to visit?

I would love to ride the rails across the Canadian Rockies!

Do you have any hobbies?

I play bridge. I also play in 2 bands: The Yankee Doodle Band and the Pittsfield Eagles Concert Band.

Favorite foods? Ice cream: vanilla and chocolate.

What are you looking forward to at FUMCEG?

Meeting and getting to know the members of the congregation.

Favorite hymn? “On Eagle’s Wings”

Fun Fact: I played the piano for the Salvation Army services when I lived in Florida.

The next Spotlight on Staff is coming in October. Who will it be?





**Drive Thru
Saturday, October 4
4:15-6:15 p.m.
Treat your family to an easy, hearty meal
to celebrate Fall!**

Dinners include ½ chicken, baked potato, coleslaw,
dinner roll, and butter

Chicken Dinner for \$16*

Cash Only Please

Where:

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

Why:

To Benefit the United Women in Faith Mission Projects.

OUR STORYTELLING CONTINUES

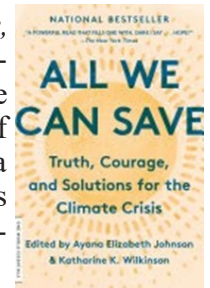
Storytelling Night, September 3, 7:00 pm



Laurel Kelley, Executive Director of the Capital District Center for Independence, will join us for an informative session regarding Center services, including Social Security disability benefits with tips for navigating the application process and accessing helpful resources. All are invited!

BOOK STUDY STARTING SEPTEMBER 8, 7:00 PM-8 PM ON ZOOM

Jessica Kestens and Kevin Conley will lead a book study on *All We Can Save: Truth, Courage, and Solutions for the Climate Crisis*. The curriculum will be 10 weeks and will follow the outline provided by *All We Can Save Circles*, a small-group experience created by Dr. Katharine K. Wilkinson and enjoyed by thousands. The book illuminates the expertise and insights of dozens of diverse women leading on climate issues in the United States. These women offer a spectrum of ideas and insights for how we can rapidly, radically reshape society. The book is offered on several new and used book sites. To register and receive the Zoom link, please contact Kevin (kconley@fumceg.org).



CHURCH OFFICE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



The SPPRC is searching for additional volunteers who would be willing to assist covering the church office. We have a dedicated list of people willing to help but would like to widen the pool of individuals we can contact when coverage is needed. Our office volunteers do not need any computer skills. Office coverage duties are typically limited to answering the phones or folding bulletins when necessary. If you are willing to be added to the volunteer list, please email Justin Naef - jonxt@yahoo.com.

TECH REQUESTS

Do you have tech needs for your church event? It could be using the sound system in the Fellowship Hall or Sanctuary or setting up the TV for a presentation. Please send your requests to fumceadmin@fumceg.org one to two weeks in advance of the event. The Tech Team will check our availability, as we are a volunteer team, and get back to you.

JOIN THE TECH TEAM

The Tech Team is looking for a few people to help with some of the technology we use at church. You could help with the slides during Sunday service or with our livestream. We want to grow our team so we can help support our church's ministries! Contact Dave Caneen at live@fumceg.org for more information.

Navigating Change



Change is a natural part of life, but often we find ourselves at a loss when we are confronted by it.

Please join us for the first in a potential series as we examine the topic through the lens of **guest speaker, Keli Rugenstein**. Keli has worked in the mental health field for almost 30 years. She works with individuals, families and groups as a psychotherapist and marriage and family therapist.

**THIS EVENT IS SPONSORED BY THE CHURCH'S
"MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS" MINISTRY.**

Wednesday, September 17, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

First United Methodist Church
1 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, N.Y.

All Are Welcome! Refreshments

CARING MINISTRIES NEEDS YOU!

As many of you know, George Herrick, who has been one of our valued church leaders since forever, is stepping aside to enjoy the next season of his life. (Like feeding the birds and squirrels at his new residence in Niskayuna!) George was instrumental in so many of our ministries over the years and we are doing our best trying to fill his shoes. A very challenging task! There are four areas that we are looking for people to assist in: Capital Area Council of Churches, Reconciling Ministries, Kairos Prison Ministry and Cornerstone Campus Ministry. We ask you to prayerfully consider becoming involved in one or more of these valuable ministries. Please contact John Schmidt, (jschmidt@fumceg.org) Caring Ministries Coordinator for more information or to become involved.



Capital Area Council of Churches (CACC) was founded in 1941 to foster ecumenism and faithful Christian witness through service, advocacy and celebration. Current membership includes ninety faith communities and several community partners in the Capital Region of New York. Our church has been involved with CACC for many years.

Our church voted to become a Reconciling Congregation in 2011, fourteen years ago. Our statement includes the words: “We celebrate our diversity of faith history, physical and mental ability, race, ethnic background, sexual orientation, marital status, gender, gender identity, age, economic status and education...” The full statement is available next to the bulletin boards in the hallway outside the kitchen.

Our Kairos Prison Ministry serves those incarcerated in Green and Coxsackie Prisons. Volunteers bring compassion, fellowship and a breath of fresh air to those behind bars. We recall the words of Jesus: I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. Matthew 25:36

Cornerstone Campus Ministry: Our church has long supported Cornerstone Protestant Ministry. From its website: “BRINGING STUDENTS TOGETHER AT UALBANY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD.”

Join us for a variety of activities and great adventures; volunteer for a local community service project or be part of our annual mission trip; gather with our vibrant and relevant worshipping community; learn together in a Bible study or reflection group; meet new friends and establish relationships that are real. Come and join us as we journey in faith together!” ualbanycornerstone.org If you would like to see this program continue to be supported by our church, please let us know.

George misses his church family and would appreciate visits. He is now at Brookdale Senior Living, 1786 Union Street in Niskayuna, NY. Drop him a line or give him a call or text at 518-944-7170.

