



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE BELL

1 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, New York 12061

We Are A Reconciling Congregation



VOLUME 28 ISSUE 6 - JUNE 2026

WORSHIP AT FUMC IN JUNE

June 7: 2nd Sunday after Pentecost; Holy Communion

Preacher: Rev. Jen Williamson

Sermon: "What Just Happened?"

Scripture: Genesis 12:1-9; Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

June 14: 3rd Sunday after Pentecost; Children's Sunday!

Preacher: Rev. Mary Beth Blinn

Sermon: "The Basics"

Scripture: Romans 5:1-8

June 21 and 28: (Moving to the Fellowship Hall for worship)

Preacher: The Rev. Jeff Matthews

Rev. Matthews is the gifted and well-loved pastor who served as your interim last summer. We welcome Pastor Jeff back into the pulpit.

◆ **8:30 am** Outdoor Chapel Service
July & August

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

This service is also available live on
YouTube using the links on the
Church's website.

Visit us on the Web:

www.fumceg.org

www.facebook.com/FUMCEG

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Rev. Mary Beth Blinn

Pastormarybeth@fumceg.org

Rev. Jennifer Williamson

Pastorjennifer@fumceg.org

Katelyn Flintrop,

Administrative Assistant

Lauren Lehmann,

Sunday School Coordinator

LLehmann@fumceg.org

Martha Deyo, **Organist**

Robert Thomsen, **Choir Director**

Steve Green and Bob Rumsey

Custodians

Farewell from Mary Beth and Jen

What an amazing ten months this has been! Since we began as your interim pastors last fall, we have been blessed to be partners with you in ministry here in East Greenbush. Our lives are changed because we have known you. We have been uplifted by your encouragement, your generosity in sharing your gifts and talents in the church and beyond, your leadership in carrying on during some difficult days, and your hope for the future.

While June 14 will be our last Sunday leading worship, we are appointed through June 30 and will be caring for administrative and pastoral needs.

As in all pastoral transitions, we will be saying farewell to all of our pastoral responsibilities at that time, including conducting any services such as funerals or weddings. We will be leaving space, including in our relationships with you, for your new pastor, the Rev. Debbie Earthrowl, to begin her ministry among you. Pastor Debbie is a gifted, passionate and experienced leader who will lead you into a vision-filled life together with your community.

We will be praying for you as we say farewell in worship on June 14 and in the days beyond. May the peace of Christ be with you.

Mary Beth and Jen

MEET OUR NEW PASTOR

We are excited to welcome Pastor Debbie Earthrowl to our church family! Pastor Debbie will officially begin her appointment with us on July 1, 2026, and her first worship service will be Sunday, July 5, 2026.



Pastor Debbie brings a wealth of knowledge, experience, and faithful leadership to our congregation. Most recently, she has served as our District Superintendent for the past eight years. Prior to her appointment as District Superintendent, she served in pastoral ministry for more than 30 years.

There will be many opportunities in the coming months for our congregation to meet Pastor Debbie, get to know her personally, and share more about ourselves and our church community.

The first of these gatherings is called Quick Connect. This conference initiative is designed to encourage positive and effective communication between a newly appointed pastor and the congregation. **The event will be held on Tuesday, July 14, from 5:30 pm–8:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.** Pastor Nick Bufano of Newtonville United Methodist Church will serve as facilitator alongside SPRC Chair Deb Rubenstein.

During the evening, Pastor Debbie will share her goals and vision for the coming year. Congregation members will also have the opportunity to ask questions and share their experiences, hopes, and gifts for ministry.

All are welcome to attend! **A light meal** will be served during the Quick Connect gathering. You do not need to register for this event. Please join us as we warmly welcome Pastor Debbie and begin this new chapter together.

Submitted by:
Deb Rubenstein

LOOKING FOR HOSTS!

Would you be interested in hosting a small gathering to welcome and meet our new pastor? The Transition Team is seeking volunteers to host small groups of parishioners, neighbors, family, and friends to spend time getting to know Pastor Debbie. These gatherings are intended to complement — not replace — the larger congregation-wide “Quick Connect” event on July 14.

Gatherings may take place at the church, in your home, at a park, or at a café — evenings, weekends, or daytime, whatever works best for you. Pastor Debbie has requested that gatherings be kept to 5–7 people or up to 3 families with children.

We hope to schedule these gatherings throughout July, August, and September. Once we have a list of volunteers, we will coordinate dates and times with Pastor Debbie.

If you are interested in hosting, please contact Katelyn Flintrop, Administrative Assistant, by email at office@fumceg.org or by phone at 518-477-9693. Katelyn will work with you and Pastor Debbie to arrange a date and time. A sign-up sheet will also be available in the foyer during the summer months.

Thank you for helping us warmly welcome Pastor Debbie into our church community!

Submitted by: Transition Team: Deb Rubenstein, Justin Naef, Kaitlin Morton-Bentley, Jean Sheviak and Colleen Rumsey



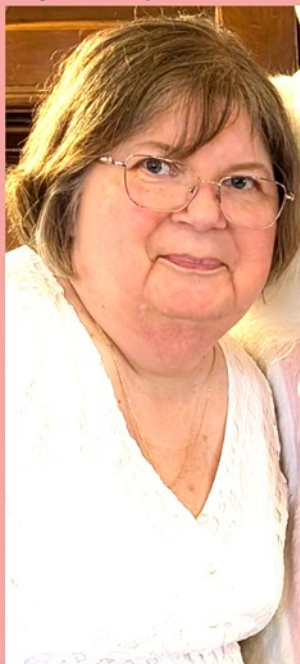
Storytelling Night

First United Methodist Church

1 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, NY

Wednesday, June 3 7:00 PM

After being diagnosed with multiple serious heart conditions, Tracey Haines felt compelled to share her journey, from the early misdiagnosis and overlooked symptoms to the treatment she received and the recovery that followed. Her hope is that by telling her story, she can raise awareness, encourage others to listen to their bodies, and help more people advocate for their own heart health. Learn about the steps necessary for a positive recovery.



All Are Welcome Door Prizes

Refreshments

CHANGE THE WORLD DAYS IN MAY

VAN RENSSELAER HEIGHTS

May 4 and 8, 2026

“I wear my flip flops and no gloves and work in the garden, that’s my church and I find God.” Renee



This is the 4th year of the “Potting and Plant Project” for CTW month in May at Van Rensselaer Heights. In year 1, a group of us brought 100 decorated potted plants for residents to keep in their apartments and the Choir to sing on a Sunday morning. Few people came...those in the Choir and the few who enjoyed hymn singing and the comradery had a good time. The backyard was empty, unused and a place to smoke.

In year 2, we brought 100 decorated potted flowers for resident apartments and donated some large, orange Home Depot buckets, placed them on cable spools and provided some soil and tomato and pepper plants. A couple of Church members visited with a few residents helping them plant flowers and

vegetables in the orange buckets.

In year 3, the model changed and a team of three residents at VRH requested specific vegetable plants, flower plants and soil. Thus began the transformation of the back yard and people’s lives. Two small flower gardens were wrestled from the hill side and lawn and planted with flowers. The gardens were creatively designed with artistic items from resident apartments, donated chairs and a couple of flowering trees. Raised beds for vegetables were added to the walkway entrance to the common room and to a small section on the back yard lawn; life at VRH was changed.



Residents took charge of the list of plants needed, especially vegetables and organized the planting, weeding and care of the gardens. All produce was shared with residents. As produce was brought to the common room, residents had their pick of fresh vegetables for dinner.

This is year 4 and the transformation is astounding. As in past years anywhere from 9 to 13 people help decorate and pot plants for VRH. On May 4th, 9 of us this year ranging in age from 9 to 83 years, met on the Larson’s porch and decorated 80 pots, some biodegradable for vegetables and some plastic for apartments. The residents gave us a list of desired vegetable plants and we potted Marigolds as companion plants to be either for resident apartments or donated to the communal gardens.

Some residents and an aid assisted us in bringing plants and soil to the back yard.

Here is what we heard and saw as we looked at the transformed back yard:

-“We ripped out all the industrial bushes and lawn to make a large garden bed. We had to learn where the buried electrical wires are and work our garden around them while not disturbing them.”

-The small gardens we planted last year are now designed for pumpkins and squashes and maybe some corn.

- The large, expanded garden is for herbs, tomatoes, cucumbers and other vegetables, annuals, perennials and more vegetables. A Red Bud tree blooms in the garden center along with other areas of interest and beauty. Residents sit on donated chairs and benches allowing people to visit with neighbors or sit in silence noting beauty



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and feeling connected to the earth.

-In a small area of the large garden there is a designated burial section for beloved pets. On a sign close to the burial site is the invitation, "Sit, Stay, Smile."

-There is a religious area with a statue of Mary and religious artifacts that help one visualize being in a sanctuary.

-The list of thoughtful and whimsical theme areas to the garden is extensive. A favorite of many is the wine tree...a cleverly structured pole with a variety of wine bottles attached to limbs protruding from the core of the tree.



Finally, we were told that the transformation of the back yard has brought joy, a sense of gratitude and purpose to many residents. Residents now donate whatever they can to help defray the cost of the garden and even the new owners have set aside \$200 for residents to use in the gardens. Many volunteer to help, those in wheelchairs work in the raised vegetable beds and all who visit find a place of growth, change, connection and beauty.

Hugs and "thank you" as we left had us saying "thank you" in return. We, those who decorated and potted plants and brought them to the residents literally helped "CHANGE THE WORLD for the better at VRH." We, too, are humbled and changed by the resident's commitment and talent to creating gardens of beauty, joy, connection to the earth, home grown vegetables and a spiritual sanctuary to where they live.

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH



All women of our church are invited to join the United Women in Faith's last meeting till September, on Monday, **June 1**, 2:00 pm at Lorraine Beals residence. We'll have cake and lite fare. The theme this year is of course the semi quincentennial (250) anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Please contact Lorraine, Isbeals@nycap.rr.com or text 518-961-4050 for the address and to let her know that you're coming. Hope to see you then!

MADE BY HAND WITH LOVE

The Made By Hand With Love group will meet in the Multipurpose Room for the summer. Its Air Conditioning!! The dates are: June 9, 23 July14, 28 Aug 11, 25 10:00 am-11:30 am.

We have been very busy making hats and mittens, shawls and pillowcases. About 20 beautiful Afghans 48" by 48" were created so far this year for the VA Veterans and Hospice Patients. With the cost of yarn always increasing we invite you to be a "sponsor" of an afghan by donating the yarn or money to buy it. It takes 4-5 skeins (7 oz each) of acrylic yarn @ about \$5-\$7 per skein for one afghan. It takes ###Hours to make !!!! Join us for conversation, to learn a new skill or to try a new pattern. It is always fun. If you have an idea for our talents let us know.



Aleta Schweigert aschweigert@fumceg.org Regina Wheeler rwheeler@fumceg.org

HONORING OUR GRADUATES



Do you have a child graduating for kindergarten, middle school, high school or college this year? We would like to honor them in our next issue of the Church Bell-the Summer Bell. Please submit a picture and a short bio of their accomplishments.

FROM THE ECO TEAM

Our Methodist Social Principles remind us of “our sacred calling to be responsible stewards, and to lovingly tend all that God has wrought. We recognize the inherent worth of God’s creation, celebrate earth’s abundance and diversity, and, along with the entirety of the cosmos, give praise to its Creator.” The United Methodist Creation Justice Movement offers us the following tips for celebrating creation and providing responsible stewardship this summer:



- Immerse yourself in nature. Try forest bathing (using all your senses to connect to your environment), hiking, enjoying a park, hunting for waterfalls and wildflowers, going to a botanical garden or arboretum, getting out on the water in a sailboat, kayak, or canoe. Renew your commitment to care for the nature that renews you.

- Lead the next generation to love nature. Create a scavenger hunt or play I Spy that is age-appropriate for your children, grandchildren, or neighborhood children. Invite them to observe and wonder. Add a sketch pad and colored pencils or allow them to use phone cameras to document their treasures from the day. Talk about God’s call to us to take care of creation.
- Pick up litter. Take a walk in a park. With a bag and gloves, where you see litter, pick it up and dump it in available trash cans. Other people may see your actions and be prompted to care for their own rubbish or perhaps join your efforts.
- Leave no trace. Have a picnic and then be sure to clean up all leftovers or debris. Pack it in/pack it out. Take your trash home with you. Before you leave, challenge children to see if they can find any indication that someone was there. Teach by example.
- Walk on established pathways—concrete, asphalt, wood chip trails. Staying on the path keeps green areas green. Remind children that the green spaces are home to critters who are God’s creation too and deserve our respect.
- Protect wildlife. Microplastics from degraded discards like plastic bottles and bags are ingested by birds and other animals, which endangers them. Prioritize removal of plastics from parks and other public areas.
- Adopt a park. Visit it frequently. Attend special events at the park, such as fairs, concerts, and play performances, and stay to help clean up after. Report any damage to nature, tripping hazards, or other dangerous conditions to the park office.
- Join a “Friends of [...]” group in support of your favorite park or trail. Work together to clean up or shore up the conditions, including trail building or repair, pulling invasive plants, removing trash. Or volunteer as a Sunday school class or congregation for a workday on behalf of God’s creation.
- Take advantage of nature on the church’s property. Create a space for outdoor worship or for exploring the environment close at hand. One church used their trail through the woods on their property as a special learning and prayer place.
- Advocate for more trees and pocket parks. No matter how small, as air temperatures rise, a green oasis can be a source of cool and community, keeping tempers down and bringing people together as neighbors. Speak up to local decision makers.

MEET OUR MISSIONARY!

Our Missions & Social Responsibility Ministry supports Helen Camarce, a UMCOR Missionary in Cambodia. We would like to share some information about the exciting work that Helen is doing. Please visit www.umccambodia.org to learn more.



MILLER'S



As we mark the 15th year of our participation in the Department of Transportation's Adopt-a-Highway Program, we thank our dedicated highway crew: Gary Klee, John Peterson, Kevin and Cindy Conley, Tom and Pastor Mary Beth Blinn, and John Schmidt. They continue to keep a 2-mile section of Routes 9 & 20 litter-free! Our next clean-up is scheduled for June 6 at 8 AM. Consider joining us. Contact John Schmidt or Kevin Conley for more information.

BACKYARD BBQ FUNDRAISER

On behalf of The United Women in Faith, I would like to thank the following volunteers of our Drive Thru Miller's Backyard BBQ Chicken Dinner fundraiser for mission projects held on April 25 : Jessica, James and Joseph Sweeney, Mary Smith, Kathy Garofal, John Peterson, Debi Arthur, Barbara Morse, Priscilla McCaughin, Cindy Conley, Janet and John Schmidt, Peter Lehmann, Gary Klee, and Steve Beals. Without their help, along with the brownie bakers, and supporters, this would not have happened. We sold 222 out of 225 dinners, giving us a profit of \$1,286.

Thanks again, Lorraine Beals



FAREWELL AND THANK YOU TO PASTOR JEN AND PASTOR MARY BETH

*Farewell
to our
Pastors*

With grateful hearts, we thank Pastor Jen and Pastor Mary Beth for their faithful leadership, compassion, and dedication to our church family. Their guidance, care, and ministry have blessed our congregation in countless ways.

JEWELRY-JEWELRY-JEWELRY

The United Women In Faith are no longer having thrift sales as our workforce is aging and no longer feel they can do the work to have a successful event.

We are in the process of selling clothes racks at a reasonable price. We also have jewelry that is displayed in our church library. Please come and see if there is anything you would like. One way to use the jewelry is in crafts. The jewelry could be taken apart and make something new.