

THE

Spire

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Accessible

Vol. 81 No. 12

The Reverend Sara E. Baron

April 2018

FUTURE SUNDAYS

- 8:30** Downtown Community Breakfast
9:00 Books for Children & Adults
9:30 Second Cup Café
10:00 Sunday Morning Worship
Infant & Toddler Care available
11:00 Coffee Fellowship
11:15 Sunday School
11:30 Second Hour Programs:
—Adult Forum
—Intergenerational Activity
—Sermon 'Talk-Back'
7:00 Bible Study: *Isaiah*

Worship Text:

- April 1 **Easter Sunday**
Isaiah 25:6-9; Mark 16:1-8
April 8 Sam Smith, *Guest Preacher*
April 15 **Native American Ministries Sunday**
Psalm 4; Luke 24:36b-48
April 22 Psalm 23; John 10:11-18
April 29 Rev. Dr. Barbara Thorington Green,
Guest Preacher

Second Hour Events/Programs:

- April 1 **Easter:** Creation of Floral Cross
Photo Show
April 8 Ministry Team Meeting
April 22 Spring Spectacular Potluck Luncheon
Sermon 'Talk-Back'

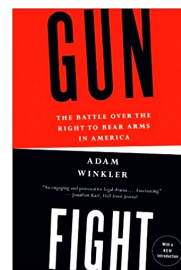
April's Book Study & Discussion

The April book study will be on *Gunfight: The Battle Over the Right to Bear Arms in America* by Adam Winkler.

Gunfight is a timely work examining America's four-centuries-long political battle over gun control and the right to bear arms. In this definitive and provocative history, Adam Winkler attempts to reveal how guns—rather than abortion, race, or religion—are at the heart of America's cultural divide. Using the landmark 2008 case *District of Columbia v. Heller*—which invalidated a law banning handguns in the nation's capital—as a springboard, Winkler brilliantly weaves together the dramatic stories of gun-rights advocates and gun-control lobbyists, providing often unexpected insights into the venomous debate that now cleaves our nation. 20 illustrations are included.

In the aftermath of the mass shootings at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas high school in Parkland, FL, the Las Vegas massacre, the Orlando massacre and countless other mass shootings, it is critical that we be more fully educated on this subject in order to more effectively engage in conversation and advocacy for effective changes to gun regulations.

You can get a copy of this book from your local library or bookstore, or see Kevin Nelson (kmichael07@yahoo.com), who will order a copy for you (\$15.) The discussion (TBA) will be near the end of April or early May, at the church.



**Spring
Spectacular
Luncheon**
Sunday, April 22
details on page 3!

Sermon Talk-Back

On Sunday, April 22, after Worship,
Pastor Sara will lead a Sermon
'Talk-Back.' All are welcome.

From Our Pastor



I have always really loved Holy Saturday. It is the quiet in between – after the horror and brokenness of Good Friday, but before the triumph of Easter Sunday. In churches, Holy Saturday is mostly a day of preparation. At FUMC Schenectady, the musicians will be at practice early in the day. Those who beautify our space will be moving, adjusting, considering, and perfecting so that when we walk in on Sunday the church itself will be prepared to fill our spirits! The same energy is happening in many homes. Food is prepared, tables are set, eggs are hardboiled and dyed, and for those with children Easter baskets are prepared.

Saturday is often a lot of work! The wonder of Easter Sunday doesn't just appear out of a vacuum, it is the result of much shared labor. Then, every year like a miracle, we gather in the sanctuary, with a cross decorated with flowers, the music starts, and along with magnificent brass and organ accompaniment, we sing “Christ the Lord is Risen Today.” Easter comes, and it is glorious.

Together, in April, we will be in the season of Easter. We will be focused on the stories of the Risen Christ, remembering time and time again that not even death can stop God's work in the world. (This is especially good news because systems of domination/oppression/violence have no greater threat than death, and yet that threat isn't sufficient to stop God!)

Yet, collectively and holistically, I think we are in an extended season of Holy Saturday. We live in an era of exhaustive change. The institutions and norms of our society are in major transition. What has seemed to be the steady, reliable parts of reality itself are in decay. This is particularly true in churches who, as a whole, have been in decline since the 1950s and no longer have the influence (or attendance) that they once thought they'd always keep! It is particularly true in The United Methodist Church, where anxiety over change has come to a tipping point and the future of the denomination is remarkably uncertain.

Some of the challenges in The United Methodist Church are related to our status as a global church, and the many different points of view that are held together in one body. That is a very good symbol for the changes in the world right now. Different points of view are now more powerful, more audible, and more imperative to our collective well-being. While most of the wealth and power in the world is still held by very few self-similar individuals; the transition is to much more diverse and complicated shared power. Women, people of color, the queer and trans communities, people living in poverty, immigrants, people with disabilities, and non-Christians (to name some) are finding voice and power. We are moving into an era of shared wisdom and profound growth, one that I think will result in a fuller humanity for us all.

However, we aren't there yet! We're in the midst of the pain of transition. The brokenness of Good Friday is still with us, but the triumph of East isn't here quiet yet. We are living an extended Holy Saturday.

This is, mostly, good. Holy Saturday is a beautiful day. It is also really difficult. Holy Saturday lingers with the pain of Friday, sits in profound grief and sadness for what was, and only HOPES that Easter will come. In this Easter season (and beyond) I invite you to see the dismantling of what has been, and the confusion of what will be as a part of God's work of moving us to a fuller Easter, a better world, a fuller piece of the kingdom. It just might make the transition a little bit less anxiety ridden, and a lot more hopeful.

—Sara

In Memoriam

We extend our Christian support to the family and friends of:



† **Dominick J. DiNola**, a long-time friend & church member of over 60 years, who passed away on March 7th. Cards of condolence can be sent to his wife, Mary, and the family at: 17 Memory Lane, Schenectady, NY 12306.

Please keep Mary and the family in your prayers.

Friend on the Move

Warm wishes are extended to our dear friend and member, Shirley Rivest, as she settles into her new home in Washington. Cards and letters to Shirley can be sent to:

c/o Martha Stanton (Shirley's daughter)
5627 NE 204th Street
Kenmore, WA 98028

Spring Spectacular Potluck Luncheon



On Sunday, April 22nd, following Worship, our Welcoming Ministries Team will be hosting a Spring Spectacular! This celebration will be a potluck meal of soups, salads, breads, and desserts. Please sign-up in advance on a Sunday or contact the office so we can ensure that there is sufficient food. If you have questions, contact Kristen Johnson or Drew Vickery, co-chairs. We look forward to celebrating spring with our church community!

Letters of Gratitude



Dear Friends in Mission,

Thank you for your gift to support the following missionaries and ministries of the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM): Belinda Forbes in Nicaragua and Disaster Response in the U.S. When giving through The Advance....100% of your contribution is applied to the designated project (s) or to missionary support. Giving through The Advance enables United Methodists to partner with one another in mission and ministry around the world. Thank you for joining with us in God's mission....Your gift supports missionaries and projects focused on evangelism, church development, education, disaster relief and rehabilitation, health services, and programs for children and young people. We are grateful for your support of this life-giving work....May God grant you a sense of hope and joy as you continue your support for mission.

*Grace and Peace,
Roland Fernandes, General Treasurer, GBGM*

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generous gift to Heifer International. Your desire to help others will build hope for future generations. Families in countries where we work like Bangladesh, Guatemala and Malawi, who once struggled with hunger and poverty, now have the livestock and training they need to improve their farms....Thank you for choosing Heifer International and helping us make a better world, one family at a time.

Sincerely, Pierre U. Ferrari, President & CEO

CHURCH NIGHT Tuesday, April 10



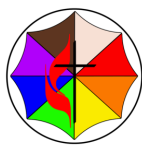
All Ministry Teams are invited to hold their monthly meetings on *Church Night*, held the second Tuesday of each month. After the team meetings, the Council will meet and is open to all. The schedule is: 6:30 pm Ministry Teams meet then at 7:30 pm, the Church Council meets.

Enjoy Fellowship before Worship

Come early on Sundays for these free programs:



- **Community Breakfast** —Served 8:30-9:30 am weekly except on the first Sunday of each month.
- **Books Available** —From 9-9:30 am, free books for children and adults are available
- **Second Cup Café** — Held 9:30-9:50 am; enjoy coffee and/or read the newspaper before Worship!





April 2018

First United Methodist Church, Schenectady

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 EASTER Family Sunday 8:30 AM Annual Photo Show 9:30 AM Second Cup Cafe 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 11:00 AM Floral Cross setup 11:00 AM Annual Photo Show	2  Reports due for Church Council	3 Reports due for Church Council	4	5	6	7
FUMC's Intergenerational VIM Trip to the UM Mission Central / Depot in Mechanicsburg, PA						
Public Schools Closed						
8 8:30 AM Breakfast 9:30 AM Second Cup Cafe 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 11:15 AM Sunday School 11:30 AM 2nd Hour Program —Investment Committee 7:00 PM Bible Study	9 2:00 - 4:00 PM Pastor "Drop-in" Office Hours 7:00 PM Staff Pastor / Parish Relations Committee	10 9:30 AM SUSTAIN Ministry: Sorting 2:00 PM Staff Mtg Church Night 6:30 PM Ministry Teams Meet 7:30 PM Council	11 12:00 - 1:00 PM SUSTAIN Ministry 6:00-8 PM Docu- mentary Film "At the River I Stand" 6:45 PM Handbell Choir Rehearsal	12 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	13	14 11 AM-3 PM Walk to End AIDS @ Albany's Washing- ton Park (formerly AIDS Walk)
15 Native American Ministries Sunday 8:30 AM Breakfast 9:30 AM Second Cup Cafe 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 11:15 AM Sunday School 11:30 AM 2nd Hour Program 7:00 PM Bible Study	16 Spire articles due 2:00 - 4:00 PM Pastor "Drop-in" Office Hours 6:30 PM Adult Education/Carl Lecture Team	17 2:00 PM Staff Mtg 3:30 PM Altar Guild Meeting 7:00 PM (The) Gathering	18 6:45 PM Handbell Choir Rehearsal	19 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	20	21 10 AM—3 PM Albany District UMW Spring Mtg. @ Calvary UMC, Latham 12:30—4 PM UNY Event: "Imagine No Racism" @ Shenendehowa UMC
22 8:30 AM Breakfast 9:30 AM Second Cup Cafe 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 11:30 AM 2nd Hour Programs —Spring Spectacular Lunch —Sermon 'Talk-Back' 11:45 AM Intersectional Jus- tice Committee 7:00 PM Bible Study	23 2:00 - 4:00 PM Pastor "Drop-in" Office Hours	24 9:30 AM SUSTAIN Ministry: Sorting 2:00 PM Staff Mtg 7:00 PM Trustees	25 8:30 AM Men's Fellowship Breakfast 9:00 am Stephen Ministers 12:00 - 1:00 PM SUSTAIN Ministry 6:45 PM Handbell Choir Rehearsal	26 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	27	28 9:30 AM Youth: Serve Free Com- munity Brunch @ Emmanuel Friedens
29 8:30 AM Breakfast 9:30 AM Second Cup Cafe 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 11:15 AM Sunday School 11:30 AM 2nd Hour Program 7:00 PM Bible Study	30 2:00 - 4:00 PM Pastor "Drop-in" Office Hours					

**We are in the season of EASTER (white or purple) -
 Easter and the Sundays following Easter are a time when we celebrate the new life we find through Jesus.**

Gathering

On Tuesday, April 17th, at 7:00 pm, we will have another "Gathering." Gatherings are developed to give us space to connect - to God, to ourselves, and to each other. The theme of this one is "How to trust God in a broken world." There are no preformed answers, instead we'll be in conversation about it. We will also have time to sort diapers for SUSTAIN ministry and experience contemplative practice together. If you are able to join us, please bring with you an object that signifies "a hard thing"- something that hurts you in the brokenness of the world that you struggle with.



Women's Fellowship

UMW News

On March 4th, we had an excellent Second Hour presentation on Human Trafficking. Debbie Fowler provided insights into the realities of trafficking in our own community. You can read further about Debbie and her work in her book, "Fragrance in the Desert;" there's a copy in the UMW section of the church library.

Moving on to future programs:

—April 21, the Albany District UMW will hold its Spring meeting at Calvary UM Church. The topic will be Outreach Coordinator of Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless. Registration and lunch is \$10. Registration can be made by calling 518-265-6187 by April 13th.

—May 18-20, First UMC will be represented at the National UMW Assembly in Columbus, OH, by three members.

—June 10, there will be a UMW presentation of reflections of the Assembly.

—September 7 to 9...looking to the fall, Albany District Mission U will be held at Silver Bay. More information to follow.



Documentary Film

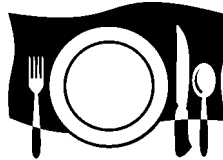
Wednesday, April 11

6:00-8 PM

Everyone is welcome to gather here at First UMC Wednesday, April 11th, 6:00-8 pm for a showing of the documentary movie entitled, "At the River I Stand." This movie recounts the two months leading to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s death 50 yrs. ago in 1968, coinciding with the 65-day strike of 1300 Memphis sanitation workers. After the film, there will be a discussion of how we can continue Dr. King's work today! This event is co-sponsored by: African American Cultural Center, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Citizen Action of NY, Albany NAACP, and Schenectady County Human Rights Commission.

Women's Luncheon

The initial Women's Fellowship Luncheon, held in March, was a big success. Eighteen women came and there was lots of conversation and laughter and a good time. We plan to continue to get together on the third Wednesday of every month and, for now at least, at the Glen Eddy in Niskayuna. Our next luncheon will be on Wednesday, April 18th – same time (noon), same place



Dinner

(Glen Eddy), same cost (\$16). All women of the church are invited. We hope you can come, but you will need to RSVP in advance so that we know how many to expect. Please sign-up by April 17 with Nancy Walden, (nwalden@gleneddy.com or 518-280-8065) or with Carolyn Micklas, (carolynmicklas@yahoo.com or 518-374-7742).

A Stephen Ministry Moment

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

Anne Frank

The Sunday School Scoop

April 2018



April 1	Easter Sunday — <i>No Sunday School</i> —Easter Photo Show held before and after Worship in the Gathering Room
April 8	11:15 am—Sunday School: Theme is <i>Story and Art</i> : “Watercolor Mural”
April 15	11:15 am—Sunday School: Theme is <i>Music</i> : “Déjà Vu”
April 22	11:15 am—Sunday School: Theme is <i>Science</i> : “Periscopes” (Earth Day)
April 29	11:15 am—Sunday School: Theme is <i>Cooking</i> : “Fish For Breakfast”

Signup for SUMMER CAMP!

Several camps are owned and operated by the United Methodist Church and offer wonderful camping experiences for children, youth and adults. Skye Farm camp is located in the Adirondacks, off Northway Exit 24. Another nearby camp is Sky Lake, located in Windsor, NY. Pastor Sara serves as a camp counselor at a special needs camp at Sky Lake each summer. Both camps will hold an Open House: Sky Lake on May 20th and Skye Farm on May 26th.

If you have a child or grandchild, plan to enroll them for a week at a summer camp. There are several camps to select from including:

- Anglers
- Music & Visual Arts
- Campolodean: sport...tech...animals...etc.
- Slides and Rides;
- Adirondack Peaks
- Performing Arts
- Bike the Trail.

For a full list of camps and to register, go to: www.skyefarmcamp.org or www.skylakecenter.org. Discounts available if register by May 1st, and camp scholarships may be available.



Youth News



Our youth, along with several other church members, are participating in FUMC's Intergenerational Volunteers In Mission (VIM) Trip to Mission Central/Depot in Mechanicsburg, PA, for the week of April 2nd/Spring break. Most of the funds needed to cover this trip for our youth was generated by car washes and luncheons, thanks to the ongoing care and support by the congregation, which is very much appreciated.

When the weather warms up, watch for more car washes as the youth plan their next VIM Trip!

Supplies Needed

The Sunday School program needs supplies. If you have or would like to buy any of the supplies listed below, please place them in the narthex basket or bring to the office. Thank You!

Items needed for April:

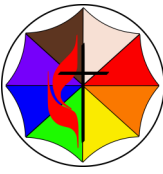
- 3½ inch pocket mirrors
- clean quart milk cartons

Items needed for May:

- compass draw tools
- posterboard
- pieces of 2'x3' wood lath cheesecloth



School Supplies Needed



MISSION MOMENTS

Delivered during Worship

► Needlework Ministry

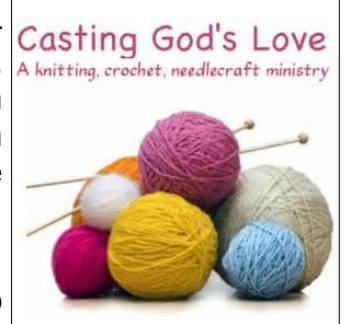
Delivered on Sunday, January 28, 2018, by Eileen Deming

The needlework ministry is now in its fifth year. During this time, we have distributed scores of hats, scarves, prayer squares, prayer shawls and blankets, baptism and confirmation shawls, and baby items. All to fulfill our mission to provide practical items of beauty to members of the community who might need them, and to offer items of comfort and celebration to those within our church family experiencing times of joy or sorrow. We have continued our custom of “blessing” items during worship before they are given, praying that the recipients experience the love and comfort with which they are offered, and of course blessings of the goodness of “bacon and chocolate.” (It doesn’t seem complete without them!) This time of blessing is a way for all of us to have a connection to these gifts.

One change this year is that we are not meeting regularly after worship because of changes in people’s schedules. If anyone would like to get together, either to learn or for fellowship, we will figure out a time. We have a new item this year – a prayer square. Their size makes them ideal for carrying with you, providing a tangible reminder of God’s love and comfort and that of the congregation. (And they fit much better in your pocket than a blanket!)

We are always in need of needlework items, such as prayer shawls/blankets, and hats and scarves for all ages, as well as prayer squares. We invite you to join with us in creating these items. We have an abundance of patterns, as well as a sizeable stash of yarn. If you want to take part but don’t know how to knit or crochet, we are willing to teach you. Feel free to contact either of us if wish to donate items, or if you have any questions.

Eileen Deming, Alice Nash, Co-Facilitators



► Volunteer In Mission Trip to Northern Ireland

Delivered on Sunday, February 11, 2018, by Pat & Mike Thomas, guest speakers

The Volunteers in Mission Belfast Peace Project started in 2006. Your church members Jan & Pete were on that first Team.



We work alongside the Peace Makers of Belfast Northern Ireland. We work side by side with both Methodist and Catholic Church organizations to continue their mission to foster peace and reconciliation between the Belfast communities. Our Belfast friends are committed to peace and our Volunteers In Mission Project supports their efforts.

Although “The Troubles” are over, there is much need for healing, understanding and forgiving. We have been in the facilities to insure the continuation of the work they are doing.

We also visit some of the beautiful countryside and historical sites in Northern Ireland including spending a few days at Corrymeela Peace and Reconciliation Center. We still have a few volunteer openings for this years trip.

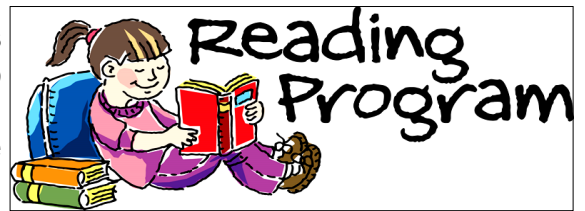
We will be talking more about this project following this service in the Fellowship Hall. Please join us.

► Reading Is Fun Program

Delivered on Sunday, February 4, 2018, by Barbara Armstrong

A little over a year ago, I retired from my work and have missed the many opportunities that come with working with children. In searching for a way to keep my connections with kids, I became aware of the Reading is Fun Program, commonly referred to as the RIF program. This program has its base right here within our church building on the second floor in the superintendent's office. Currently they have approximately 60 adults who provide support to 130 children from the city of Schenectady. The program's goals are to teach readiness and reading skills, and to support vocabulary development and conversational skills. Students are identified by their teachers of needing some additional support and assistance and are referred to the program. There are only a few requirements necessary for adults to participate within the program. Every participant must pass a background clearance as the initial step. Each participant must have a consistent day and time available to work with the student as the student looks forward to the time together and expects you to show up. The last requirement includes your ability to enjoy children and have a desire to make a difference in the life of a child.

The RIF Program supports each adult who is interested in becoming a reading partner. They provide some basic training, making suggestions on how to structure the lessons, including dos and don'ts so that the time together is fun and beneficial for both the adult and the student. They provide materials to use within the lessons including books and games that can be played with the student to enhance the learning experience. I am currently working with two 2nd grade boys that attend Zollar Elementary School. I see each student individually, right outside of their classroom in a quiet hallway where there is a desk and chairs for us to use. The individual time allows me time to get to know each student, see their strengths and areas of need and what their interests are so that I can bring the appropriate reading materials to the session.



I am currently committing approximately two hours a week to this program, spending 40 minutes a week with each of the two boys and additional time preparing for the sessions. The prep for the session is simply making sure that I have books that are of interest to my students. As part of the gifts the program offers, each child leaves the session with a book of his own to take home with him. An additional goal of the program is to make sure that children develop their own library at home, allowing them opportunities to read at home with their families.

Let me share a little about each one of my students. Alex is a beautiful young boy who loves a variety of topics, including dinosaurs, science, animal stories and funny books. His favorite author at this time is Mo Willems who writes books about the friendship between unlikely friends, Pigeon, Elephant and Piggy. He has made some nice progress in both reading skill level, pace of reading and in his ability to anticipate what may happen next. He often tells me that the book he selects to take home with him will be something that he will read to his younger brother. He loves writing his name on the peel away sticker, so that he can place it on the inside cover and identify this book as his very own.

My other student, Kaidon loves stories about owls and dogs as well as other animals that live in the ocean. Initially, Kaidon had a tendency to use a very quiet voice when we first started reading together. He was very shy and lacked confidence in his reading skills, however over the past several months he has made great progress in his comfort with reading, showing less hesitancy when sounding out words and an increased ability to recognize many more sight words that are appropriate for his age level. He is beginning to be able to recognize when he makes a mistake in reading, coming back and re-reading the sentence so that he is able to self-correct his mistake. Both boys show nice pleasure and enjoyment when reading and when given a choice to read or be read to, they often will opt to read to me.

I can't begin to tell you what I get from this time with these boys, but I enjoy and appreciate their

unique and wonderful nature, increasing confidence, and willingness to work with me in our time together. It is a great pleasure for me to hear and see them read and to see their individual expressions change as they have moments of insight, the *ooos* and *ahhs* that happen for kids as they learn to love the gift of reading.

I hope that anyone who is interested in supporting this program will consider the great gift it is to both oneself and to a little persons within our community. The program is continuing to seek out additional volunteer support for this program. For more information, you can contact Al Magid at Magid2@juno.com.

I would like to conclude with a quote by Frederick Douglas, "Once you learn to read, you will be forever free."

► Intersectional Justice Committee Legislative Concerns

Delivered on February 18, 2018, by Kevin Nelson & Jan Guzior (President's Day Weekend)

Why do we advocate?

- Because it is what Jesus would do. It is the counterpart to our ministries of service, which include the community breakfast program and SUSTAIN.
- In addition to addressing people's immediate needs, we must address the systems, the systemic injustices, that create those needs. Put another way, this means addressing the laws that prop up, and at times create, the systems that are perpetuating injustice. Which means that If we don't talk to the people making the laws, and advocate with them for creating the kind of just world for God's people that God wants, then we can't get that kind of world. And if people like us don't go to the table and speak with legislators and policy-makers, such individuals will only be hearing from people who want some other kind of world.
- Furthermore, we advocate because we work in coalitions with other partners to try to create a just world, and our partners are advocating with our legislators and asking us to join them.



PP legislative issues: reproductive health, rights and justice on Tuesday, March 13th

Campaign for a NY Health Act on Tuesday, June 5th

NYCLU Legislative Issues: Immigrants' rights, LGBTQIA+ rights, racial justice, reproductive rights, rights of people with disabilities, voting rights -- date TBA

If interested, talk to Kevin about opportunities, or keep an eye out in the newsletter, for details and information about how to register.

From Jan Guzior:

I went with Kevin and a few other church members to a meeting with legislators because I felt I should voice my opinion and feelings about issues that concern me and my fellow citizens, LGBT, healthcare, environment etc. This was a first for me and I found it fascinating how things were run in Albany. We met with a couple staff members of the representatives from our area and voiced our opinions. We also joined a rally outside. Since the first time I went we have joined other rallies including the Women's March and will be attending the March For Life on March 24. I like being part of these demonstrations, it is always heartening to see so many people with such passion for their beliefs. Getting involved is about the only way I can show I care about the issues that are effecting our country today.

► FUMC's Music Ministry

Delivered on March 11, 2018, by Nancy Walden

Good Morning. I am Nancy Walden and I am going to talk about our church's music ministry for a few minutes.

As you know, FUMC has several ministries. Church volunteers are involved in helping to meet some of the basic needs of our local community, as with the community breakfasts, the sustain ministry and the needlework ministry. Some people also volunteer through the Volunteers in Mission program helping with projects elsewhere in the US and abroad. We also minister to each other with caring, compassion and friendship.

Most of us are aware of these ministries. How about the music of the church. Do you realize that is one of our ministries, as well? I think of our music ministry as having two parts. One is that which you see and hear every Sunday at our worship service. As you can certainly tell, we have a very fine organist and choir director – one of the best! - and overall, full-time, minister of music, Dominick. We have our Chancel Choir, seated here in the chancel. The Chancel Choir sings almost every Sunday during the regular season, offering two anthems and leading the congregation in the singing of the hymns. On special occasions we have guest vocal soloists and instrumentalists. We have a Handbell Choir, which plays the prelude and/or the postlude once every month or two months. That doesn't give Dominick a break, by the way, because he is in front of the Handbell choir, directing it and sometimes also playing some of the bells. The choirs' members are all volunteers. We rehearse one evening a week during the regular



season and take a "vacation" during the summer. Participating in a choir is a commitment the members take very seriously. Our singing and bell ringing are viewed not as performances but as prayers to God and as aids to your worship experiences as well as our own.



The other part of FUMC's music ministry is the Concert Series. This series is a program of concerts performed by outstanding musicians – organists, singers, brass players, hymn festivals, bell ringers, as examples – here in the sanctuary. The series was begun 40 years ago, when the church had a new organ, one of the best in the area, and the financial means to share it with others as well as our own congregation. A special feature of these concerts is that they are offered free to you, the congregation, and also to the public. People have come from miles around to enjoy the music and we can expect anywhere from several hundred people in the audience to standing room only when the Harmonic Brass plays. The concerts are not free to the church, of course, but they are paid for through an endowment fund, known as the Ida Hill Dalton Fund, through the contributions of patrons, and often with advertisers. As with our other ministries, these concerts would not be possible without the help of many volunteers. They assist with the publicity, with mailing information to the hundreds of people on the mailing list, soliciting patrons, obtaining advertisers, planning and doing the reception which follows each concert. A lot of work behind the scenes. With all of this, the church is providing a ministry that brings joy and beauty to its listeners and nourishes the soul.

I couldn't possibly close without reminding you that one of the concerts will be here this afternoon, in just a few hours. Cantus is coming – it's a group of eight men who sing, without accompaniment and without a director, and they are considered to be one of the best, if not the best, choral groups in the country. They'll be singing a wide range of beautiful music and we hope you will come back this afternoon to hear them.

Thank you.



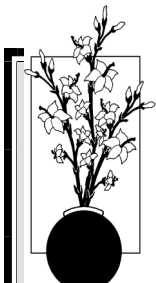
The next Men's Breakfast Fellowship will be held on Wednesday, April 25th, at 8:30 am at the Blue Ribbon Diner on State St. All men are welcome to gather on the fourth Wednesday of each month! Contact Bob Coppola with any questions.

Adult Education News

The Lenten Study, "Simplicity: The Freedom of Letting Go" by R. Rohr was well attended. Thanks to Pastor Sara and Bob Long for leading the class. Plans are underway for a study in October, concentrating on J.D. Crossan's "The Challenge of Paul." Look for details to be posted at a later date.

Guest preacher, Barbara Thorington Green, will be leading worship on April 29th as a precursor to our annual Church Retreat. Barbara Thorington Green will be our presenter for the retreat, scheduled for Aug. 24-26 at Sky Lake in Windsor, NY. Please consider setting aside time in August to join us.

The Al-Hidayah Islamic Community in Latham has extended an invitation to members and friends of First UMC to be their guests at an Open House at the Mosque Saturday, May 5, from 9:00a- 11:30am. The focus of the Open House will be an explanation of Ramadan. Ramadan lasts from May 16 - June 16 for 2018. We will carpool from the First UMC parking lot at 9:45am. Please respond to the office, 518-374-4403, or to Bob Long, 518-372-1083, if you plan to attend.



Altar Flowers

To give altar flowers for Sunday Worship, contact Ann Farrell at 867-7654.



Vincent Dubois in Concert

Sunday, May 6

Mark your calendar!

We at FUMC are delighted to announce yet another great concert here in just a few weeks, the third and final one of our 40th Concert Series. The esteemed organist Vincent Dubois will perform here on Sunday afternoon, May 6th, at 3 pm. Mr. Dubois is one of three titular organists at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, where the position of titular organist ("head" or "chief" organist) at Notre-Dame is considered one of the most prestigious organist posts in France. He is considered to be one of the finest concert organists to appear on the world stage in many years.

He is a graduate of the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique, where he earned First Prizes in Organ, Harmony, Counterpoint, Fugue and 20th-century composition. In 2002, he won two major prizes in organ competitions. As a result, he has performed in major concert venues around the world in numerous international music festivals and as guest soloist with several orchestras and ensembles, including the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Los Angeles Philharmonic in the United States, as well as others in Europe. His performances have been broadcast here and abroad; he has taught organ master classes at such prestigious institutions as Yale, the Curtis Institute and Oberlin. He is Continuing Guest Artist at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, teaching there each season. He has made several recordings of great organ music, including CDs of music by Liszt, Vierne and Dupré. All these accomplishments, and he is not even forty years old!

Mark your calendars and plan to come to his concert in May. Remember, it is free and open to the public.

—Nancy Walden
for the Music Committee



Save the date!!!

Schenectady's CROP Walk on May 6

Roughly 1000 CROP Hunger Walks happen every year in the United States. The 5K walk symbolizes the daily journey many others must make for clean water.

The walk kicks off at Emmanuel Friedens Church on Sunday, May 6th, at 1:30 after a brief opening ceremony (no long speeches!). Registration begins at 12:30. One quarter of the money raised supports local efforts to support hunger and poverty fighting programs. The rest is used by Church World Service, an ecumenical agency, to alleviate hunger throughout the world. More information and envelopes to use to raise money will be available from Elaine Troy. Let's have a good turnout this year! All ages are encouraged to participate. Sometimes dogs walk, too!

You will have time to enjoy the walk with friends and then relax at a concert at FUMC afterwards!

E-Newsletter

This newsletter is available electronically and in hardcopy. If you would prefer to receive it by email, which saves valuable resources, contact the church office with your email address.

PRIMETIMERS –

A VIM Opportunity for Older Adults

Primetimers is a program of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. It offers educational and mission service experience for older adults. Exciting 5-10 day events offer opportunities for educational forums, cross-cultural exposure, faith-filled reflection, and greater exposure to the work of the United Methodist Church and the church universal. Primetimers' events are designed with less strenuous events than the traditional UMVIM teams. They continue to include peace and poverty, history and sustainability of resources, and living with and loving those of different cultural backgrounds.

Several members of FUMC have enjoyed participating in some of these events in the past. Some have gone to St. Simons Island, GA, where John and Charles Wesley were very influential. The trip included packing oyster shells into bags which would then be placed on reefs to help produce more oysters. It also included a boat ride in the Okefenokee Swamp, biking opportunities, and enjoying the Atlantic Coast. Another group of FUMCers stayed at Gulfside, a United Methodist facility on the MS coast. This facility was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina and has not been rebuilt. That group visited Heifer International Headquarters and the Clinton library in AR as well as learning about the history of Gulfside, the only place on the Gulf coast where African-Americans were allowed to swim in the ocean at one time. Another group visited and learned about Gullah people on islands off the coast of SC. Another very educational Primetimers trip in which FUMC people participated was to Italy. Methodists and Waldensians work together in Italy in many service activities. The trip included visits to Rome, Milan, Naples, and more.

A new Primetimers trip is scheduled for Nicaragua Oct. 20-29, 2018. It is in partnership with El Porvenir (means "the future") and offers small group study-work experience as part of their 25-year-old program supporting self-help water and sanitation projects in rural communities in Nicaragua. Participants will work with local El Porvenir staff to assist a village in improving their school and neighborhood environment through hygiene and health education. In addition, participants will visit the historic city of Granada, relax at Laguna de Apoyo, visit a volcano, take a boat ride through tiny volcanic islands, visit museums and craft markets, and worship at 2 different Nicaraguan churches on Sunday mornings. Lodging will be in appropriate hotel settings with private bathrooms. The cost is \$1,250 plus airfare. More details and an application can be found at www.umcmmission.org/primetimers. This is an opportunity to see and experience a beautiful country and a different culture while providing service in a less physically demanding way than on a traditional Volunteers in Mission team.

KEEPING OUR COVENANT PROMISES - FEBRUARY 2018

PRAYERS - PRESENCE - GIFTS - SERVICE

Our PRAYERS

Christian support is extended to:

The family & friends of Dominick J. DiNola, a friend & longtime member, who passed away Mar. 7 (details on pg. 3)

The family & friends of Keith Pangman, who passed away recently (Dana Carroll's grandson)

The family & friends of the Rev. Nancy Townley, a friend & retired local UM Pastor, who passed away recently

The families & friends of Jeffrey Mallia, Joan Pamer Noonan, and Lorraine Williams, who passed away recently (Darlene Smith's boss, neighbor and cousin)

Our Christian support is also extended to:

Rev. Leon Adkins, Jr.	Leona Kempf & her parents
Jan Butts	Courtney & Jack McEwan
Michele Cole	Mary Neville
Janet Collis	Clare Racicot
Ross Corbett	Shirley Readdean
June Dieffenbach	Shirley Rivest
Jen & Merrick Fuller	Bob Slater
Jan Huston	Roy Stock

And to: Belinda Forbes, our missionary in Nicaragua; VIM teams; and Parkland, FL, and those dramatized.

We celebrate with:

Pastor Sara and Kevin Nelson, who celebrated their 1st wedding anniversary on March 18th. Happy Anniversary!

Our PRESENCE

Date	Worship
February 4	61
February 11	65
February 18	61
February 25	65

Our GIFTS

Date	Amount
February 4	\$4,694.79
February 11	1,217.00
February 18	1,059.00
February 25	2,379.00

COMMUNITY BREAKFAST

Those served this month:

Children (infant-17)	34
Adults (18-64)	125
Seniors (65+)	58
Total	217



Our SERVICE

- Date
- 2/4 —Special collection taken on *Souper Bowl* Sunday for area food pantries (\$145.10)
 - 2/6 —Hosted February's Schenectady Inner City Ministries' (SICM) Assembly
 - 2/14 —Joint Ash Wednesday Service held @ St. Joseph's Church with all welcome
 - 2/16-18—Youth Sleepover / Lockin with all youth welcome
 - 2/18 —New weekly Bible Study began on Isaiah
 - 2/19 —New Lenten Book Study series began on "Simplicity: The Freedom of Letting Go" by Richard Rohr
 - 2/24 —Youth Service Project: Served free community brunch
 - Feb. —Distributed items to those in need through our SUSTAIN Ministry program
 - Continue to prepare and serve the Community Breakfast on Sundays, free and open to all
 - Presented *Mission Moments* during Worship on: Reading Is Fun program; VIM Trip to Northern Ireland; and Intersectional Justice Committee's Legislative Concerns
 - Sunday 2nd hour offered: Youth Spaghetti Luncheon Fundraiser; VIM Trip to Northern Ireland; UMW Executive Meeting; Intersectional Justice Committee; and our Annual Church Meeting

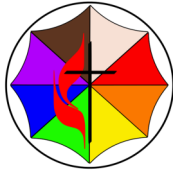
Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors — Be Invitational!



Happy Birthday!

Warm wishes are extended to our **APRIL** birthday celebrants: (Contact the office with your birthday!)

April	1 Jeff Hagadorn	16 Steve Rockwell	24 Tyler Drexel
	2 Jessica Minter	16 Elizabeth Launer-Sloan	24 Molly Hamlin
	4 Melissa McFarland	16 Hadia Young	28 Donna Price
	6 Lee Adkins, Jr.	19 Danielle Baratier	29 Shirley Thomas
	8 Elizabeth Anderson	21 Karen Giuzio	29 Jasmine Neil
	9 Kathy Moulder	21 Amanda Messick	
	13 Nathan Fasser	21 Beryl Rockwell	
	14 Matt Johnson	23 Donna Seyboth	



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NEXT SPIRE MAILED:

April 26; articles due Apr. 15



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<http://www.facebook.com/FUMCSchenectady>

*We are a church that loves to learn and yearns
to be a gift of God to our communities.*

**Sunday Bible
Study**

The Youthful Adults Bible Study, led by Pastor Sara, is on 2nd Isaiah (Isaiah 40-55) and held on Sundays from 7-8:30 pm. These 16 Chapters can be titled "The God of All Comfort," and are the prophets words of comfort, hope, and possibility to a people in turmoil. All are welcome.



Invitation

Would you simply enjoy a visit or like to talk and have someone listen to your concerns? If for any reason you would like a personal visit from the pastor or a lay caregiver, call 518-374-4403.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!

Coming in early May:

Saturday, May 5

Trip to Mosque

Sunday, May 6

**Family Sunday
CROP Walk**

Concert: Vincent Dubois

Tuesday, May 8

Church Night

WEBSITES AND E-MAIL ADDRESSES

First United Methodist Church

E-Mail: fumcschenectady@yahoo.com

Website: www.fumcschenectady.org

Upper New York Annual Conference

Website: www.unyumc.org

Albany District Office

E-Mail: albanydistrict@unyumc.org

Website: www.unyumc.org/districts/detail/2