

THE

Spire

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Accessible

Vol. 82 No. 2

The Reverend Sara E. Baron, Pastor

June 2018

FUTURE SUNDAYS

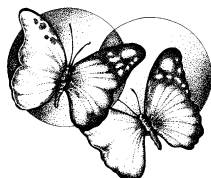
- 8:30 Community Breakfast
9:00 Books for Children & Adults
9:30 Second Cup Café
10:00 Sunday Morning Worship
Infant & Toddler Care available
11:00 Coffee Fellowship
11:30 Second Hour Programs:
—Adult Forum
—Sermon 'Talk-Back'
—Luncheons
—Ministry Team meetings
7:00 Bible Study: Book of Luke

Worship Text:

- June 3 **Christian Education Sunday w/ Youth Leading Worship**
Micah 6:1-8; Romans 12:9-18
June 10 1 Samuel 8:4-20; Mark 3:20-35
June 17 **Father's Day**
1 Samuel 15:34-16:13; Mark 4:26-34
June 24 **Graduation Sunday**
1 Samuel 17:32-49; Mark 4:35-41

Second Hour Events:

- June 3 Church-Wide Potluck Picnic Luncheon
Children and Youth Ministries, sponsor
June 10 Sermon 'Talk-Back'
UMW Forum: *National Assembly*
Car Wash—Youth Fundraiser
Pride Parade & Festival in Albany
June 17 UMW Forum: *Recycling*
Strategic Planning Ad-Hoc Committee
June 24 Intersectional Justice Committee
Car Wash—Youth Fundraiser



Celebration on June 3— Christian Education Sunday

Potluck Picnic Luncheon

We'll celebrate Christian Education Sunday on June 3rd, which marks the end of our church school year. Everyone is invited to come enjoy this special event, sponsored by our Children and Youth Ministries Team.

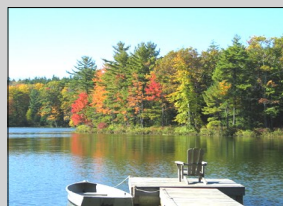
After the youth-led Worship Service, plan to stay to enjoy a potluck lunch. Please plan to bring a dish to share (salads, casseroles, etc.) Watermelon and beverages will be supplied. Signups are helpful so please sign-up on a Sunday or contact the church office. We hope everyone can join our children and youth for this annual fellowship event.



Car Need Washing?

Our Youth Group will hold Car Wash fundraisers to help support a mission trip to Hogansburg in August. The car washes will be held after Worship on June 10 and June 24 in our parking lot. Cost is \$5 for exterior wash; \$10 exterior wash and vacuuming. Your support is appreciated... and please let your friends and neighbors know!

Coming in August...



CHURCH WIDE RETREAT!

details on page 12



From our Pastor

I'm finding it discouraging to be a United Methodist right now. In the past week, three new pieces of information have come out that have not helped. First came news about work of the Commission on the Way Forward, who was charged by the 2016 General Conference "to do a complete examination and possible revision of every paragraph of the Book of Discipline concerning human sexuality and explore options that help to maintain and strengthen the unity of the church."¹ They sent their report to the Council of Bishops including two possible "ways forward" and one they'd already disregarded as unacceptable. The Council has now passed on one of those proposals to the 2019 General Conference, with the other two left as historical addendum.

Unfortunately, of the three plans, NONE OF THEM eliminated discrimination against LGBTQIA+ persons in The United Methodist Church. One of them strengthened discrimination (this was the plan the Commission did not pass onto the Bishops), one of them allowed the question of including LGBTQIA+ persons in the church to split the church, and the final one (the one that had majority support and was passed on) allows churches, pastors, and annual conferences the right to make their own choices about the ordination and marriages of LGBTQIA+ people. That one is called the "One Church Plan" and they use the word "context" to justify localized discrimination. We're still waiting on further details that will come out in early July. We did know that this was likely to happen, but it still stung a bit when it did happen. The Commission of the Way Forward nor the Council of Bishops used their authority to keep the "unity" of the church at the cost of dehumanizing people who are already vulnerable.

The second piece of news was that 2 constitutional amendments meant to support the full participation of women and girls in The United Methodist Church failed to be supported by membership of the Annual Conferences. (More information in a letter from the Women Bishops later in the Spire.) In particular, I was sad to notice that I wasn't surprised. I have been active in many levels of The United Methodist Church for many years, and the votes affirmed the sexism and misogyny I've seen.

Finally, there came news that in order to "balance the budget" for General Conference 2019, there will be a registration fee. It won't apply to delegates though, only to observers and advocates. That is, for the most part, LGBTQIA+ and their allies will be financially burdened if they show up to advocate in their church.

So, whether or not you knew all of these icky things, I want to tell you why I haven't left this denomination. There are, actually, quite a few reasons. The first, and by far the strongest is this: because I LOVE being your pastor with all of my being, and because your ways of being in the world and your ways of being God's love in the world inspire me every single day. The second is stubbornness: I will not give up my Church to people who want to use it to do harm. Third, the good we do in UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief), UMVIM (United Methodist Volunteers in Mission), and Africa University. The fourth reasons resonates with the first: because it is in The United Methodist Church that I have come to know many of the most wonderful and extraordinary people I have ever met, and I wish to keep working with them, and remain open to meeting more. Fifth, I really like our "polity": the way that clergy and laity are equal in all levels of church function, the connectionalism and shared ministry around the world, and the carefully designed systems that often work very well. Finally, I stay because of hope. My siblings in Christ in Africa and the Philippines tell me that they love being United Methodist because of all the good the church has done in their lives and for vulnerable people in their communities. I hope and I pray, that the UMC does more work for building the kin-dom of God than it does harm. I'll admit I'm not sure, and it hasn't been a good week in this direction, but I remain hopeful that God can work in us, through us, and often despite of us. May it be so.

—Sara

¹ <http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/commission-on-a-way-forward>

In Memoriam

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

† **Doris Clark**, our dear friend and longtime active member for over 60 years, who passed away on April 15. A Memorial Service celebrating her life will be held on Monday, June 4th, at 11:00 am in the church sanctuary. Please keep her family in your prayers. Cards / notes of sympathy can be sent to her niece, Mrs. Robert Rosenberger at 6499 Spring Plow Lane, Columbia, MD 21045; and/or to her nephew's widow, Ms. Brenda Kiger at 1680 Smith Ln., Glen Rock, PA 17327.

† **Shirley Thomas**, our dear friend and longtime member for over 60 years, who passed away on April 13. A Memorial Service celebrating her life was held on May 19th. Please keep her family in your prayers. Cards / notes of sympathy can be sent to her son, Alan Thomas, and the family at 5 Colleen Court, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590.



Hospital Visitation



Do you know someone who is or will be hospitalized or shut-in? If so, please notify the church office at 518-374-4403 or by email. Privacy policies many times do not provide notice so you need to specify that the church be contacted. Thank you.

Notes of Thanks

I want to say thank you to everyone for your prayers and support when I was laid up. Love each and everyone. You're my family, not just my church family.
—Bob Slater



I was surprised and delighted to receive a 'Thinking of You' card from The Caring Ministry of FUMC. My wrist is healing and my use of my wrist has improved. I never appreciated all that a wrist does: I can make a fist, wave from front to back, from side to side, and I can rotate my hand. All of these 7 motions are due to a functioning wrist. For people like Alice and me, and the other knitters of the world, we use and need many of the motions in our knitting. I am very thankful for a wonderful doctor, who did excellent surgery, listens well to questions, answers carefully, and has an office that is run like a precision instrument and a husband who makes great meals. Thank you for being so kind as to send me a card. It made me so happy and I appreciate it tremendously.

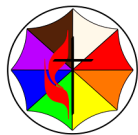
—Joan Carey, Sara Baron's mother

Thank you so much for living our mission as United Methodists, "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." Thank you, too, for your commitment and hard work toward payment of Ministry Shares in 2017...First United Methodist Church ended 2017 paying 100% of its Ministry Shares.... Your generosity represents our shared commitment to greater ministry and mission that none of us can do alone, like Camps & Conference Centers, Vital Congregations, New Faith Communities staff and resources, District Offices and staff to equip and support you, Conference staff, Pastoral Leadership Development,...and the many ways we organize ourselves...for national and international service and mission. Please invite me sometime to be present with you to celebrate this and other accomplishments in your life of faith and ministry....and how I can support, equip, or resource you for reaching your neighbors with the love of Christ. In grateful thanks for the work God has given us to share, and with my blessings.

—Peace & Grace, Rev. Rich Weihing, Albany DS


Thank you for supporting the 50th year Anniversary Celebration of Schenectady inner City Ministry on March 20th. We had nearly 250 people in attendance at the celebration and received support from your congregation through donations, reservations, and attendance. As a result, we were able to raise over \$35,000 in funds for the SICM programs and its continued service to our neighbors. It was with excitement that SICM announced the Schenectady Inner City Ministry has changed its logo and name. Moving forward, we will be known as Schenectady Community Ministries. It is through on-going dedication, effort, and support from all who give of themselves through donations and volunteering that reflects the mission of Schenectady Community Ministries. For those we serve, we thank you for your contribution to the success of the 50th celebration. Your generosity and support is greatly appreciated.

—In gratitude, Rev. Phil Grigsby, Exec. Director



June 2018

First United Methodist Church, Schenectady

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
				Upper New York Annual Conference..		
3 Christian Education / Family Sunday 9:30 AM Second Cup Cafe 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 11:30 AM Annual Potluck Picnic Luncheon 7:00 PM Bible Study	4 11:00 AM Memorial Service for Doris Clark 2:00 - 4:00 PM Pastor "Drop-in" Office Hours	5 Reports due for Church Council 9:00 PM NY Health Campaign in Albany (<i>meet at 9 am in church parking lot</i>)	6	7	8	9
10 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 —Sermon 'Talk-Back' —UMW Forum: United Methodist Women's National Assembly —Car Wash; Youth Fundraiser 7:00 PM Bible Study	11 2:00 - 4:00 PM Pastor "Drop-in" Office Hours 7:00 PM Staff Pastor / Parish Relations Committee	12 9:30 AM SUSTAIN Ministry: Sorting 2:00 PM Staff Meeting <hr/> Church Night 6:30 PM Ministry Teams Meet 7:30 PM Council	13 12:00 - 1:00 PM SUSTAIN Ministry	14	15 Spire articles due	16 10:00 AM Book Discussion
17 Father's Day 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 —UMW Forum: Recycling —Strategic Planning Comm. 7:00 PM Bible Study	18 6:30 PM Adult Education / Carl Lecture Team	19 7:00 PM Children & Youth Ministries Team	20 12:00 Women's Luncheon @ the Glen Eddy	21 Public Schools last day	22	23
24 Graduation Sunday 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 —Intersectional Justice Comm. —Car Wash; Youth Fundraiser 7:00 PM Bible Study	25 2:00 - 4:00 PM Pastor "Drop-in" Office Hours	26 9:30 AM SUSTAIN Ministry: Sorting 2:00 PM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM Trustees	27 8:30 AM Men's Fellowship Breakfast 9:00 am Stephen Ministers 12:00 - 1:00 PM SUSTAIN Ministry	28	29	30 9:30—12 Joint Reconciling Event @ Unitarian Universal Society, Sch'dy 9:30 AM Youth Service: Serve Free Community Brunch @ Emmanuel Friedens

We are in the season of **PENTECOST (red) -**
The season which we celebrate the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit through the life of the church; sometimes referred to as the birthday of the church.

Exciting News from Trustees

The roof deck has been repaired and covered with a rubber membrane that will prevent leaking into the second floor classrooms and hallways in the education wing. This repair should last at least 25 years. Because a rubber roof can be punctured, the roof deck can no longer be used for recreation. It CAN NOT be walked on or played on. Possible enhancements to the space are being discussed.

FUMC Goes Green(er)! We have signed up for a share of Hope Solar Farm. This is a community solar farm which will be built on property owned by Hope United Methodist Church in Brunswick, NY and will supply us with virtual solar credits for 62000 kWh of electricity in the first year that the farm is in operation. The per kWh price is fixed for 5 years. Construction is expected to be completed within the next year.



Sermon 'Talk-Back' Sunday, June 10

led by Pastor Sara

Following Worship; All are welcome

NEW Bible Study

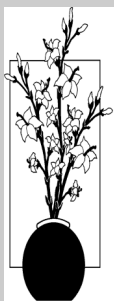
The Sunday evening Bible Study, led by Pastor Sara, is now focusing on the Book of Luke. Everyone is welcome to attend this weekly study, held Sundays from 7:00-8:30 pm in Wesley Lounge.



Enjoy Women's Luncheon

The next Women's Fellowship Luncheon will take place on Wednesday, June 20th, at 12:00 noon at the Glen Eddy in Niskayuna. All church women – friends as well as members - are encouraged to attend, so come and take this opportunity to get to know other church people better, make new friends, enjoy sparkling conversations and have another delicious lunch, priced at \$16. So that we can let the Glen Eddy dining staff know how many people to expect, please RSVP by Monday, June 18th, to Nancy Walden (nwalden@gleneddy.com or 518-280-8065). Be sure to put the date on your calendar and plan to come!

Altar Flower Notes



SUMMER FLOWERS

The Altar Guild plans to use garden flowers from the congregation during our Summer Worship season. If you have a flower garden and are willing to share your blooms, please contact Ann Farrell or Sue Learner.

We are grateful for the altar flowers given in May:

5/6 John Walden played an active role in both the selection of the current organ and the Concert Series from its very beginnings, and so the altar flowers are given in his memory by his wife, Nancy.

To give altar flowers for Sunday Worship, please contact Ann Farrell at 518-867-7654 or fumcflowers@gmail.com.

2018 Graduates



The office is collecting the names of members and friends of FUMC, who are graduating from high school and college this year. Call with your graduate!

On June 24th, a special recognition of our 2018 graduates will be held during Worship.



Council of Bishops

The United Methodist Church



A PASTORAL LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FROM THE WOMEN BISHOPS

May 7, 2018

Grace and peace! We, the active and retired women bishops of The United Methodist Church, are writing in response to the news release this week, announcing the results of five proposed amendments to our Constitution that were approved at the 2016 General Conference and then sent on to the annual conferences. We are deeply grieved that two of the amendments did not receive the necessary 2/3 aggregate vote of all the annual conferences in The United Methodist Church. Both are related to the right of girls, women, and other vulnerable groups to full access to a meaningful life.

Amendment #1, which added language that both men and women are made in the image of God and that we will confront and seek to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, received an aggregate vote of 66.5%, falling short of the necessary 2/3 majority by .2 % (less than 100 votes).

Amendment #2, which added this language, "... nor shall any member be denied access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church because of race, color, gender, national origin, ability, age, marital status, or economic condition," received an aggregate vote of 61.3%, again falling short of a 2/3 vote. The complete language of these two amendments is found below.

Like Rachel weeping for her children, so we as episcopal leaders weep for our church. We weep for the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harm that is inflicted upon women and girls because of this action. We weep for those who are denied the ability to use their gifts to make a difference in the world. We also weep for those who are not protected from exclusion in the church because of race, color, gender, national origin, ability, age, marital status, or economic condition.

We see you. We weep with you. We seek your healing. We work for the healing of our church. We strive for a church and world that honors every person as a beloved child of God, made in the image of our Creator.

The women of the Council of Bishops recognize that we have much work to do as leaders to foster inclusion in The United Methodist Church. At the same time as we lament the devaluation of and discrimination against many groups of people in our world, we renew our commitment as United Methodist women bishops to ensure that all people are treated with respect, compassion, and grace and that all doors of opportunity and leadership are open to them. We pledge to model healthy relationships ourselves and are committed to researching why these amendments failed and what actions we can take to create a world where all people are able to live in safety, justice, and love.

This pastoral letter has been unanimously affirmed by the entire Council of Bishops. We invite you to join

us in the journey of bringing God's shalom to all corners of The United Methodist Church and our world.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment – I

On May 16, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 746 Yes, 56 No (Calendar Item 121, DCA p. 2106).

In the 2012 Book of Discipline, Division One, add a new paragraph between current ¶¶ 5 and 6: As the Holy Scripture reveals, both men and women are made in the image of God and, therefore, men and women are of equal value in the eyes of God. The United Methodist Church recognizes it is contrary to Scripture and to logic to say that God is male or female, as maleness and femaleness are characteristics of human bodies and cultures, not characteristics of the divine. The United Methodist Church acknowledges the long history of discrimination against women and girls. The United Methodist Church shall confront and seek to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, whether in organizations or in individuals, in every facet of its life and in society at large. The United Methodist Church shall work collaboratively with others to address concerns that threaten the cause of women's and girl's equality and well-being. If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, this would become the new ¶6, and the current ¶¶ 6-61 would be renumbered as ¶¶ 7-62.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment – II

On May 20, 2016, at a session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in Portland, Oregon, the following Constitutional Amendment was adopted by a recorded vote of 509 Yes, 242 No (Calendar Item 429, DCA p. 2212).

In the 2012 Book of Discipline, Division One, ¶4, Article IV, amend by deletion and addition as follows: After "all persons" delete "without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition". After "because of race, color, national origin," delete "status," and add "ability". At the end of the paragraph, add "nor shall any member be denied access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church because of race, color, gender, national origin, ability, age, marital status, or economic condition." Page 2 of 4 If voted and so declared by the Council of Bishops, ¶ 4 would read: **The United Methodist Church is part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection. In the United Methodist church, no conference or other organizational unit of the Church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body of the Church because of race, color, national origin, ability, or economic condition, nor shall any member be denied access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church because of race, color, gender, national origin, ability, age, marital status, or economic condition.**

Signed by the female bishops
Council of Bishops

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Media Contact: *Rev. Dr. Maidstone Mulenga*
Director of Communications – Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church
mmulenga@umc-cob.org
202-748-5172

June Book Discussion

Saturday, June 16

The June book study will be on *Negroland: A Memoir* by Margo Jefferson.



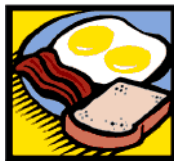
Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award (2016), A *New York Times* Notable Book, and one of the Best Books of the Year (2016) according to the Washington Post, LA Times, Time and others. Pulitzer Prize-winning cultural critic Margo Jefferson was born in 1947 into upper-crust black Chicago. Her father was head of pediatrics at Provident Hospital, while her

mother was a socialite. In these pages, Jefferson takes us into this insular and discerning society: “I call it Negroland,” she writes, “because I still find ‘Negro’ a word of wonders, glorious and terrible.”

Negroland’s pedigree dates back generations, having originated with antebellum free blacks who made their fortunes among the plantations of the South. It evolved into a world of exclusive sororities, fraternities, networks, and clubs—a world in which skin color and hair texture were relentlessly evaluated alongside scholarly and professional achievements, where the Talented Tenth positioned themselves as a third race between whites and “the masses of Negroes,” and where the motto was “Achievement. Invulnerability. Comportment.” At once incendiary and icy, mischievous and provocative, celebratory and elegiac, *Negroland* is a landmark work on privilege, discrimination, and the fallacy of post-racial America.

You can get a copy of this book from your local library or bookstore, or see Kevin Nelson (kmichael07@yahoo.com) and he will order a copy for you for \$11. The discussion will be on Saturday, June 16th, at 10 AM at the church.

Calling all Men: Gather for Breakfast



The next Men’s Breakfast Fellowship will be held Wednesday, June 27th, at 8:30 am at the Blue Ribbon Diner on State Street, Schenectady. The breakfast is held on the 4th Wednesday of each month. Join us!

UMW Presentation on Sunday, June 10

Our United Methodist Women will hold a presentation after Worship on Sunday, June 10th, and will be bringing the UMW Assembly to First UMC! Three of our members attended the National Assembly, held May 18-20 in Columbus, Ohio.

Everyone is invited to come and hear about their experience.

Enjoy Needlework?

The Needlework Ministry program (knitting, crocheting, sewing) welcomes all to participate. Through this program, handmade items are created for various causes including donating items to those in need in our community. To learn more, including how to knit or crochet, contact Eileen Deming or Alice Nash.

“CHURCH NIGHT” Tuesday, June 12



All Ministry Teams are invited to hold meetings on *Church Night*, held the second Tuesday of each month. After the team meetings, everyone is welcome to gather for the Church Council meeting. The schedule is:

6:30 pm Ministry Teams meet

7:30 pm Church Council meets

(Notices will go out to teams meeting.)

A Stephen Ministry Moment

“Whatever affects
one directly, affects
all indirectly.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Capital Pride Festival and Parade in Albany

Come join members of the Intersectional Justice committee when we march in the Capital Pride Parade on Sunday, June 10th! The parade steps off at noon from the State Street side of Washington Park and marches around to Madison Avenue. After the parade you can listen to the music or browse the many vendor tables and tents in the Capital Pride Festival that runs all afternoon. It's loads of fun, and as in the past, we've invited members of other Reconciling churches to join us; hope to see you there! For more information, talk to Michele Cole or Kevin Nelson.

From our Intersectional Justice Committee: NY Health Act Campaign

On Tuesday, June 5th, FUMC will join people from around the state in Albany in participating in the Campaign for a NY Health Act.

The work to pass universal, single-payer healthcare -- an improved Medicare for All plan -- in New York State has never been more important. It will protect New Yorkers from the federal threats to our care and will expand quality, comprehensive coverage to all New Yorkers regardless of income or employment situation.

Thanks to an incredible grassroots movement across the state, the New York Health Act (A4738/S4840) -- the bill to guarantee healthcare to all New Yorkers -- overwhelmingly passed the NYS Assembly in 2015, 2016, and 2017. Support in the Senate is back to 31 cosponsors (32 votes needed to pass). Unfortunately, the Senate leadership refuses to bring the bill to a vote.



A strong grassroots movement can change that, and that is why members of FUMC will be headed to Albany on June 5th. To join, please register by going to <https://goo.gl/QWAKnp>. Also let Kevin Nelson know so he can coordinate rides and presence. We will leave from the church parking lot at 9 AM and return mid to late afternoon, depending on the schedule of meetings with legislators.



Adult Education News

We will be hosting a second-hour Adult Education event on Sunday, June 17th. Learn how each of us can do more to protect the earth in our own homes. Join us after worship for a presentation on Recycling, given by Debbie Jackson, at 11:30 am.

Barbara Thorington Green will be our presenter for our annual retreat, scheduled for August 24-26 at Sky Lake in Windsor, NY. Please consider setting aside time in August to join us. Registration forms will be available in the bulletin and in the July Spire.

A new study based on John Dominic Crossan's series, "The Challenge of Paul" will begin on Monday, October 1st, 2018. Jim Sprenger will lead this 6-week course examining the apostle Paul. Details to follow.

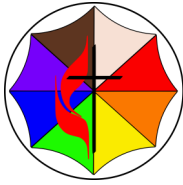
We're Welcoming; What's Next?



On Saturday, June 30th, our congregation will be joining with several other local church groups to discuss where we all are in the journey towards full inclusion of the LGBTQIA community. It will give us the opportunity to discuss some of our strengths, some of the challenges we have experienced and where we might go next to be fully welcoming to all. Please mark your calendars and consider joining our group to be part of this journey. We will be gathering at the Unitarian Universal Society of Schenectady on Saturday morning from 9:30 until noon.

E-Newsletter Available!

This monthly newsletter is available electronically, which means you can receive it sooner and save resources at the same time! If you'd prefer to receive it by email, please contact the office.



Mission Moments

Delivered during Worship

► Intergenerational VIM Trip to Mission Central

Delivered on April 22, 2018, by Virgia Phoenix and Cole Perry

Fifteen of us left FUMC on Easter Monday morning and arrived in Mechanicsburg, PA, to a beautiful 1800's retreat house, our home base for the next few days.

The youth started immediately preparing our meals and leading the daily devotions. Assignments that they performed immaculately.

Tuesday morning, following breakfast, we made our way to Mission Central where we were greeted and briefed by the staff. Following this short orientation, we were guided to the warehouse for our work on several assigned tasks.



Mission Central is a huge warehouse stacked from floor to ceiling with every kind of stock that one could imagine. There were supplies to fulfill any conceivable need for the local area as well as places around the country and abroad. There were flood buckets, furniture, diapers, housewares, medical equipment, food, computers, luggage and so many things too numerous to imagine.

Everything in the warehouse related to the many ministries that they fulfill. This exceeded our expectations and reinforced our appreciation for the range of services possible for any expressed need. Among them are their Computer Ministry, New Digs Ministry (similar to our Home Furnishings Ministry), Project Cure (I noticed some things packed for Honduras, Haiti and Redbird), Bethesda Mission (a form of food bank), a Diaper Bank and even new bikes stored for students who have reached a certain level of achievement.

Our tasks included sorting, packing and moving from Flood Buckets to phone chargers, books, school kits, health kits, napkins, plates, sports memorabilia and other items donated to the warehouse.



While counting out 50 clothespins and 4 masks and placing them in a ziplock bag may seem mundane, they are of great value when discovered in a flood bucket. Some of the flood buckets were bound for Houston and New Orleans. According to their statistics, over 11,000 buckets and 40,000 health kits have been sent in response to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria and the Warehouse has reached 4.1 million people.

Mission Central has 6 permanent staff persons. They rely on the visits of volunteers to assist in sustaining their many ministries and welcome any who stop for an hour, a day or more. Whoever goes will not be disappointed. We worked for 2 whole days at our tasks, taking a break for lunch and stopping at 4:00. On Thursday, we visited Gettysburg.

► CROP Hunger Walk

Delivered on April 29, 2018, by Carolyn Micklas

In **1946**, Church World Service began with 17 protestant denominations working together to help re-build Europe and feed hungry people after WWII. A year later in 1947 through CWS, Christian clergy and farmers in the US formed CROP (Christian Rural Overseas Program) as a way to send seed, grain, and livestock to war-torn Europe.

Gleaning, is the act of collecting leftover crops from farmers' fields after they have been commercially harvested or on fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest. It is a practice described in the Hebrew **Bible** that became an entitlement of the poor. Gleaning can be viewed as an expression of compassion or justice, but according to Leviticus, allowing others to glean on their property is the "fruit of holiness." Crop walks today can be viewed as "modern day gleaning" as one response to hunger locally and globally.



The focus of crop walks shifted from a rural agricultural focus to a suburban/urban base in the '70s. They have become vital, interfaith community-wide events -- an opportunity for people from throughout a community to come together to help neighbors in need around the block and around the world. CROP now stands for **Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty** -- a worthy name for our response to hunger and poverty in an ever-changing world.

Since next Sunday the CROP Walk in Schenectady will take place, I encourage you to walk, or to donate to someone else who is walking as your act of gleaning. 25 percent of the money raised will be used locally in food pantries and other feeding programs. Elaine Troy has the forms that need to be completed. The walk begins at Friedens Emmanuel Church at 1:30 pm.

► Court Ordered Community Service

Delivered on May 20, 2018, by Martin Manley and Maxwell Heron

Over 200 Court Referred Volunteers (CRV) have come to First United Methodist Church through the Center for Community Justice organization. Community Service is an alternative to fines and jail time. The CRV's are usually young, mostly working class individuals who are often in crisis.

The courts have assigned between 5 to 300 hours of CRV's with the average being between 10-40 hours. The goal of each CRV is to complete the assigned hours, which are recorded on time sheets then faxed to Center for Community Justice. About 1/3 fail to complete their service hours. Failures usually are due to lack of: transportation, support at home/domestic violence, working phone, demands of job, school, child care, elderly, commitment to process, physical disabilities, and/or drug, alcohol, mental health issues.



Thousands of community service hours have been completed here at First United Methodist Church. Some CRV's are unable to do even simply tasks, such as: vacuum carpets, mop floors, pull weeds, mow lawns. But over the years, CRV's have done the following work here: mowed lawns, trimmed hedges, shoveled snow, vacuumed carpets, swept and mopped floors, steam cleaned carpets, clerical work, and, with a couple of CRV's trained as an electrician and plumber, did electrical and plumbing repairs.

Following Martin's presentation, former Court Referred Volunteer, Maxwell Heron, spoke about his experience working here at the church.

Enjoy Summer Camp



Several Christian camps are owned by our conference of the United Methodist Church, and offer wonderful camping and retreat experiences for children, youth, adults and families.

Skye Farm camp is located in the Adirondacks and another nearby camp is Sky Lake, located in Windsor, NY, which is where we'll return for our 3rd annual church retreat in August! If you have a child or grandchild, plan to enroll them for a week at one of these camps! For a full list of the camps and to register, see a brochure at church or go to: www.skyefarmcamp.org or www.skylakecenter.org.

Summer Camps to choose from include:

Aquasphere
Adirondack Pikes
Bike the Trail
Campolodean:
Animals...Extreme...Tech...Sports, etc.
Hook, Line and Sinker
Music & Visual Arts
Rocks, Ropes & Rivers
Unplugged... and many others.

Fellowship before Worship!

Come early on Sundays for these programs:

- **Community Breakfast** - Served 8:30-9:30 am weekly except on the 1st Sunday of each month
- **Books Available** - At the Breakfast program, books are available for children & adults 9:00-9:30.
- **Second Cup Café** - Held in Library 9:30-9:50 am. Stop in for coffee and/or to read the newspaper!



Summer Lunch Program

Volunteer for a Few Hours of Fun

July 9-13

Schenectady Community Ministries (SCM; formerly Schenectady Inner City Ministries) will again be coordinating summer lunches for Schenectady children. Without this program many kids would not have a midday meal throughout the summer. Lunches are served at sites specifically targeted to reach the largest number of children. At the sites, nearly 100% of the children qualify for free or reduced price lunches when they are in school. The NYS Education Department and the US Department of Agriculture fund SCM's summer lunch program by reimbursing SCM for each meal served. Lunch is available to youth 18 years old and under. SCM expects to feed more than 1000 children per day at 18 different sites throughout the city. Last summer, over 34,000 meals were served.

The food is prepared at a central location and then brought to the distribution sites where it is given to the children by volunteers. FUMC's week to serve this year will be July 9-13. We will be at Schenectady's Central Library. Schedule is not available yet, but hours to volunteer will be about 1.5 hours between 11:30 and 2:00. We will have 3 to 5 volunteers each day. Please sign-up for one or more days by contacting Jan Huston at 518-399-0919 or at hustonjp24@gmail.com.

Church Retreat in August

Please consider joining us Friday, August 24, to Sunday, August 26, for a weekend retreat at Sky Lake Camp and Retreat Center. It will be a time of rest, focus and dialogue with intergenerational activities for all. Dr. Barbara Thorington Green will be our guest presenter. The theme is being negotiated. Sky Lake is located in Windsor, NY. Financial assistance through FUMC is available; please speak to Pastor Sara. To check out room accommodations and the Underwood Lodge, go to: www.skylakecenter.org.

KEEPING OUR COVENANT PROMISES - APRIL 2018

PRAYERS - PRESENCE - GIFTS - SERVICE

OUR PRAYERS

Christian support is extended to:

The family & friends of Marilyn Poppino, who passed away on May 9th (Bill Poppino's sister)

The family & friends of Doris Clark, who passed away on April 15 (Memorial Service on June 4; see pg. 3 for details)

The family & friends of Shirley Thomas, who passed away on April 13 (see pg. 3 for details)

Liz Fogle & family, whose step-mother passed away

The family & friends of Peg Miller, who passed away

Christian support is also extended to:

Rev. Leon Adkins, Jr.

Grace Baker

Jan Butts

Michele Cole

Janet Collis

Ross Corbett

June Dieffenbach

Jen & Merrick Fuller

Emily Hart

Barbara Haverly

Courtney & Jack McEwan

Carolyn Micklas

Mary Neville

Anne Phillips

Clare Racicot

Lisa Read

Shirley Rivest

Bill Rowe

Rev. Jan McClary Rowell

Bob Slater

And to: Belinda Forbes, our Nicaraguan Missionary

OUR PRESENCE

Date	Worship
April 1	110
April 8	89
April 15	74
April 22	79
April 29	70

OUR GIFTS

Date	Amount
April 1	\$ 6,824.00
April 8	14,933.53
April 15	5,639.00
April 22	1,490.00
April 29	1,170.00

Community Breakfast

Those served this month:

Children (infant-17)	14
Adults (18-64)	137
Elderly (65+)	<u>106</u>
Total	257



OUR SERVICE

- Date
- 4/1 —Before & after Easter Worship, held 5th Lenten Photo Show on these themes: *Power, Light, Grace, Limitless, We*
- 4/2 —4/6 FUMC's Intergenerational VIM Trip to Mission Central, PA, took place
- 4/11 —Hosted showing of documentary film, "At the River I Stand"
- 4/14 —Participated in the Walk to End AIDS in Albany (formerly AIDS Walk)
- 4/15 —Celebrated Native American Ministries Sunday during Worship with special collection (\$145)
- 4/21 —Participated in Albany District's "Imagine No Racism" event held at Shenendehowa UMC
- FUMC women participated in Albany District's UMW Spring Gathering held at Calvary UMC
- 4/24 —4/28 Attended the Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA) event in Detroit, MI
- 4/28 —Youth Service: Served free community brunch
- New Committee formed: Strategic Planning Ad-Hoc Committee
- Apr. —Distributed items to those in need through our SUSTAIN Ministry program
- Presented *Mission Moments* during Worship on: Native American Ministries Sunday; Primetimers VIM Teams; FUMC's Intergenerational VIM Trip to Mission Central; and on the annual CROP Walk
- Continue to serve the Downtown Community Breakfast on Sundays, free and open to all
- 2nd Hour programs offered: Presentation of the Easter Floral Cross; Photo Show; Ministry Team Meetings; Spring Spectacular Luncheon; Sunday School; and Sermon 'Talk-Back'

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

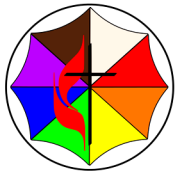


Happy Birthday!

Warm wishes are extended to our birthday celebrants: (Call with your birthday!)

JUNE

June 1	Andrew Haverly	7	Philip Bird	18	Genevieve Hendricks
2	Ross Corbett	7	Jean Gustafson	18	Matthew Kalasinski
2	Carmencita Muniz-Rodriquez	8	Courtney McEwan	19	Jennifer Van Strander
3	Chase Evans	11	Jamie Hancock	21	Bill Isles
4	Carol Brumbaugh	11	Selena McFarland	27	Pam Bird
4	Peter Frisoni	13	Mary Lynn Ragan Clunn	29	William Hendricks, Jr.
5	Joanna (Furbeck) Williams	17	Mary Neville	29	Kristen Hinkle



The Spire

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NEXT SPIRE MAILED:

June 28; articles due June 15

A Stephen Ministry Congregation



Our Stephen Ministers are trained to help provide the emotional and spiritual care we need when faced with a crisis or difficulty, such as the loss of a loved one, chronic illness, unemployment, separation or divorce, hospitalization, loneliness or discouragement. Stephen Ministers provide one-on-one caring for about an hour each week to those facing a life crisis. It is a ministry of presence and is strictly confidential. Their job is to listen to you, to help you talk about your concern(s), to help you express and understand your feelings, and to help you find solutions or come to terms with your problem(s). The congregation's role is to contact the pastor if you're facing a crisis and might want a Stephen Minister, you know of someone who might benefit from this program, or you'd like to be a Stephen Minister or Leader and go for training.



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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.**

Websites & 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.albanydistrict.org