

THE

Spire

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Website: www.fumcschenectady.org E-mail: fumcschenectady@gmail.com



Accessible

Vol. 82 No. 8

The Reverend Sara E. Baron

December 2018

SUNDAYS

- 8:30 Community Breakfast Fellowship
- 9:00 Books for Children and Adults
- 9:00 Sunday School for Children
- 9:30 Second Cup Café
- 10:00 Sunday Morning Worship
Infant & Toddler Care available
- 11:00 Coffee Fellowship
- 11:30 Second Hour Programs
- 7:00 Young Adult Bible Study: *Book of Luke*

Worship Text:

- Dec. 2 **1st Sunday of Advent:**
"Opening Our Hearts to Gratitude"
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13
- Dec. 9 **2nd Sunday of Advent:**
"Opening Our Souls to Joy"
Philippians 1:3-11
- Dec. 16 **3rd Sunday of Advent**
Service of Lessons & Carols
- Dec. 23 **4th Sunday of Advent:**
"Opening Our Lives to God at Play"
Luke 1:39-55
- Dec. 25 **Christmas Day (Tuesday)**
— **6:30 AM Dawn Service @ FUMC**
Luke 2:1-16
- Dec. 30 **1st Sunday after Christmas**
Rev. Jane Baker, *preaching*

Second Hour Events/Programs:

- Dec. 2 Annual Church Conference
Orff Instrument Playing
- Dec. 9 Luncheon & Caroling to Shut-ins
- Dec. 16 Extended Coffee Fellowship
- Dec. 23 Carol Sing around the Fireplace



Let's go Christmas Caroling Sunday, December 9

Young and old alike - come gather to bring some joy and Christmas music to those members of our church family who are not able to get out often.

After church on Sunday, December 9th, we will get together for lunch then go out to visit and sing carols with the homebound. If you have ever had the pleasure of being visited by our church carolers, or if you have been one of the carolers in previous years, you'll know what a wonderful experience this can be. If you have never sung with us before, come try it. You'll be filled with the Christmas spirit!

In order that we may know how many carolers we'll have and to plan for lunch, please sign-up on a Sunday using the bulletin slip or contact the church office.



*We wish you a blessed and
joyous holiday season!*

From the Staff

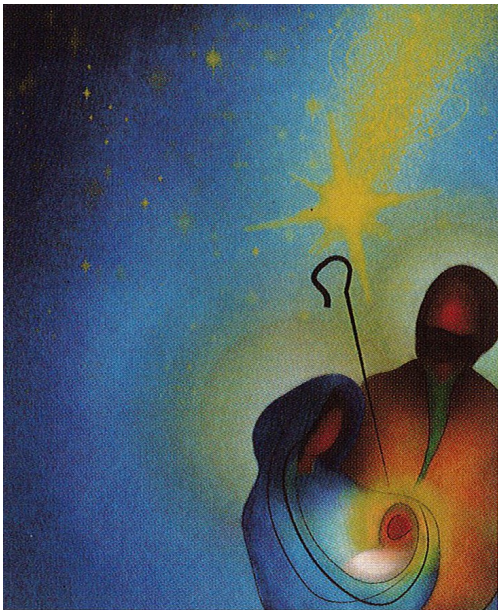
Dominick

Sara

Linda

Martin





The PRINCE *of* PEACE

FROM OUR PASTOR

Last year we created our own Advent Devotional booklets. To the best of my knowledge, it was the first time we'd done so. I read mine over and over, shocked and awed at the wisdom and insight of this congregation. It felt like a breath of fresh air, a beacon of hope, to read your words. Because they were such a hit, we're making them again this year, and this year the theme is "Openings." It was great fun choosing scriptures that made space for consideration of openings and openness.

The idea has taken up residence within me. Openness: space, light, autonomy, movement, newness, creation, liberation, becoming, being, growth, hope, rest, de-burdening, welcome. These are things I yearn for. They are things humans need. They may be things we've not been getting enough of. We may be experiencing too much of entirely the opposite stuff.

Advent is a time for yearning, perhaps most concretely it is a time of yearning for hope. We re-enter the history of our faith, and re-member the yearning of our ancestors in faith for God to act to bring hope, justice, and restoration to the people. This can be done, today, without the need for a particularly vivid imagination. Advent is a time to express and live into our yearnings, complete with an expectation that they will be fulfilled.

In worship, we're going to play with themes of openness too: opening our hearts to gratitude, opening our souls to joy, opening our lives to God at play. Advent isn't only a time for yearning, it is a time for preparation – to get ready to see the wondrous ways God's love impacts the world. Opening our hearts, souls, and lives to gratitude, joy, and God at play seem like helpful ways to prepare ourselves to take note and celebrate what God is up to.

Each week of Advent we light a candle, building up to the day when we can light the Christ candle. While we know that God is present in the darkness as well as in the light, the symbolism of adding light becomes the symbolism of building up our hope in what God will do.

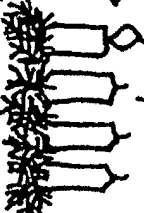



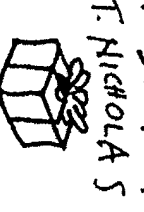






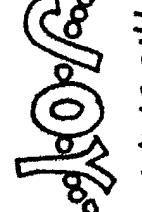

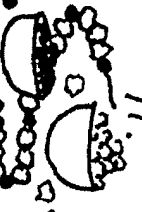


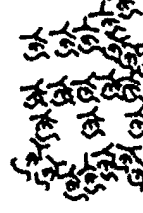




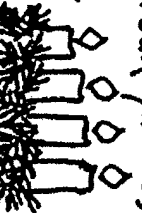

Every week, we make a little bit more space inside for God to be at work, and for ourselves to be at peace. Every week, we allow for a little bit more openness. Every week, we make space.

There is, of course, a very big difference between the quiet and contemplative season of Advent and the hyper (and loud!) consumerist season of Christmas surrounding the church. I've heard the latter referred to as "Consumerist," which I find helpful as a differentiation. Consumerist runs from late October until December 25th, encompassing Advent. Christian Christmas, on the other hand, runs from December 25th to January 6th. It seems helpful that they don't overlap more, it helps us keep them separate. The hyper, loud, red and green one can be a whole lot of merry fun – and I'm a fan of fun. Enjoy the enjoyable parts!

However, I hope you won't lose Advent in the midst of it. The quiet season of preparation has a lot going for it too – the contemplation of openness for one. If you need some help entering fully into Advent, we have some devotionals to help you out. ;)

In God's Peace, Sara

ADVENT

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p>2 LIGHT ONE CANDLE.</p>  <p>LK. 3:1-6</p>	<p>3 LEND A HAND.</p>  <p>ISA. 35:3-6</p>	<p>4 BE PATIENT.</p>  <p>ROM. 8:24,25</p>	<p>5 PRAY FOR PEACE.</p>  <p>PS. 122</p>	<p>6 GIVE IN SECRET.</p> <p>ST. NICOLA'S</p>  <p>MT. 6:3,4</p>	<p>7 SEE THE GROWTH.</p>  <p>ISA. 11:1-3</p>	<p>8 KEEP HOPING.</p>  <p>HEB. 11:1</p>
<p>9 LIGHT TWO CANDLES.</p>  <p>MAL. 3:1-4</p>	<p>10 EAT WITH CARE.</p>  <p>MK. 1:1-8</p>	<p>11 WITNESS.</p>  <p>JN. 1:6-8</p>	<p>12 WATCH FOR ANGELS.</p>  <p>PS. 91</p>	<p>13 SEE THE LIGHT.</p>  <p>ISA. 9:2,3</p>	<p>14 CHOOSE YOUR PATH.</p>  <p>PS. 25:4,5</p>	<p>15 FINISH IT.</p>  <p>PHIL. 1:3-6</p>
<p>16 LIGHT THREE CANDLES.</p>  <p>ZEPH. 3:14-20</p>	<p>17 REMEMBER REFUGEES.</p>  <p>PS. 137:4</p>	<p>18 SAY YES</p>  <p>LK. 1:26-38</p>	<p>19 REJOICE.</p>  <p>LK. 1:46-55</p>	<p>20 SEE WHAT'S NEW.</p>  <p>ISA. 43:19</p>	<p>21 FEEL SECURE.</p>  <p>MIC. 5:2-4</p>	<p>22 MAKE ROOM.</p>  <p>LK. 2:1-7</p>
<p>23 LIGHT FOUR CANDLES.</p>  <p>ISA. 7:10-14</p>	<p>24</p>  <p>JN. 1:14</p>	<p>WHEN DOUBT OR SORROW FILLS THE SOUL, COME, O LONGED FOR PROMISED WORD. WHEN LIES AND FALSCHOODS TAKE THEIR HOLD, COME, O TRUTH THAT MUST BE HEARD. WHEN FEAR IS STIRRED WITH WORDS OF HATE, COME, O PERFECT LOVE TO REIGN. OUR HEARTS WITH FERVENT HOPE AWAIT: COME, O CHRIST, BE BORN AGAIN.</p>				



Christmas season provides a great opportunity to remember FUMC members and friends who can not be as actively involved in our church as they once were. They're listed below and would love to hear from their church family! Addresses are in the Membership Directory or listed below:

Janis Butts

Capstone Center for Rehab. & Nursing
302 Swart Hill Road
Amsterdam, NY 12010

Emily Hart

Stewart Hettig

Mary Neville

Shirley Rivest

Fran Summerville

Joan Townsend

Stephen Ministry Program

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, divorce, hospitalization, loneliness. 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 express and understand your feelings, and to help you find solutions or come to terms with your problem (s). If you are facing a crisis and might want a Stephen Minister or know of someone who might benefit from this program, contact the office.

Annual Church Conference

Sunday, December 2

Everyone is welcome to gather after Worship on December 2nd to attend our annual Church Conference. The Reverend Holly Nye will preside over this special meeting.

Gifts for Seniors Program



Diane Kingsland and Bob Long are once again coordinating this gifts program. A table top tree, with tags is in Wesley Lounge. Through this program, organized by the Schenectady Christmas Bureau, we're afforded the opportunity to reach out anonymously to older people in our community, especially those who are in nursing and residence homes with no local family members.

To participate, choose a tag(s) and indicate which tag(s) you have by signing the sheet which will be placed beneath the tree. Gifts, unwrapped, need to be returned to church no later than Sunday, Dec. 9th. The gifts, which can be dropped off to the church office during the week, are due to be delivered on December 9th so if you are able to bring your gift back sooner, that would greatly appreciated. Once again, many seniors are requesting gift cards. The Christmas Bureau asks that the gift cards be limited to \$15.00, only. Also, if you have difficulty finding the gift you signed up for, PLEASE do not substitute another item. Contact Diane Kingsland at 518.469-3271 and she'll find you another assignment or try to help you find the specific item. If you have any questions, contact Diane or Bob, or the church office. Thank you.



Altar Guild

We are grateful for the Thanksgiving arrangement given on:

Nov. 18 cornucopia of food given by Barbara Armstrong in thanks for the many blessings in her life

If you would like to give the altar flowers for Sunday Worship, please see the sign-up poster on the hallway bulletin board or contact the office.

Rose Window Reflections



Come one, come all to the Sanctuary between Wednesday, December 5th, and Friday, December 7th, from 2:00-3 pm to see the sunlight shine through the beautiful Rose Window and encircle the cross on the Altar. Everyone is welcome. For more information about the Rose Window, located above the balcony, including what each color symbolizes, see holiday flyer insert.

Gather for Church Night on December 11



Ministry work teams are invited to hold their monthly meetings on Church Night, held the 2nd Tuesday of the month. All are welcome to attend the council meetings. The schedule is:

6:30 pm Ministry Teams meet
7:30 pm Church Council meets

(Notices will go out to teams scheduled to meet.)



Enjoy Needlework?

Participate in our Needlework Ministry program (crocheting, knitting, sewing)! Handmade items are created then donated to those in need in our area. Generally, we work on hats and scarves as well as prayer shawls/blankets. Or, if you'd like to donate such handmade needlework, please bring it to the church office. To learn more, including how to do needlework, contact one of the coordinators, Eileen Deming or Alice Nash.



UMW Christmas Card Project

All women are invited to gather at church on Saturday, December 8th, from 10:00 am to 12 noon to make Christmas cards for our shut-ins. This event is sponsored by our United Methodist Women (UMW). If you have any questions, contact Shirley Readdean.

Men's Breakfast Fellowship

All men are invited to gather on Wednesday, December 26th, at 8:30 am for the Men's Breakfast Fellowship, held at Blue Ribbon Diner! This fellowship time is held on the 4th Wednesday of each month at the diner, which is located on upper State Street. For more information, contact Bob Coppola.



Greeting Cards

Do you get greeting cards – such as Christmas cards, Happy Birthday cards, Thank You cards or blank notes – in the mail which you don't need or don't want (and didn't order)? Or perhaps you have some extras which you bought but won't use after all? Rather than throw them away, bring them in to the church office. They will be made available in the church library for anyone who might like to use them.



December 2018

First United Methodist Church, Schenectady

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		<div>MERRY CHRISTMAS</div>				1 9:00 AM Safe Sanctuaries Training 12:00 noon Youth Group
2 1st Sunday of Advent Family Sunday 9:30 AM Second Cup Cafe 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 11:30 AM Orff Instruments 11:45 AM Pre-Conference 12:30 PM Church Conference 7:00 PM Bible Study	3	4 Council Reports due 9:00 AM Ad Hoc Committee	5 10:00 SPPRC Sub-Committee 6:45 PM Handbell Choir Rehearsal <div>2:00-3 PM Rose Window Reflections, Sanctuary</div>	6 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	7	8 10:00 UMW Project: Christmas Card making for shut-ins 12:00 noon Youth Group
9 2nd Sunday of Advent 8:30 AM Breakfast 9:00 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM Second Cup Cafe 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 11:30 AM 2nd Hour Programs 12:00 PM Lunch and Caroling to our Shut-ins 5:45 PM Confirmation Class 7:00 PM Bible Study	10 2:00 - 4 PM Pastor "Drop-in" Office Hours 7:00 pm Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee	11 2:00 PM Staff Meeting Church Night 6:30 PM Ministry Teams Meet 7:30 PM Council	12 9:00 am Stephen Ministers 6:45 PM Handbell Choir Rehearsal	13 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	14 Spire articles due	15 9:00 AM Choir & Guest Musicians Rehearsal 12:00 noon Youth Group
16 3rd Sunday of Advent 8:30 AM Breakfast 9:00 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM Second Cup Cafe 10:00 AM Service of Lessons & Carols 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 5:45 PM Confirmation Class 7:00 PM Bible Study	17 2:00 - 4 PM Pastor "Drop-in" Office Hours 4 - 8 PM SUSTAIN Ministry: Sorting	18 2:00 PM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM Trustees	19 11:30 AM-1:30 PM SUSTAIN Ministry 5:00 pm Serve Meal at City Mission 7:00 PM Long Night Advent Service	20 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	21	22 12:00 noon Youth Group
23 4th Sunday of Advent 8:30 AM Breakfast 9:00 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM Second Cup Cafe 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 11:30 AM Annual Carol Sing 5:45 PM Confirmation Class	24 Christmas Eve <div>Church Office Closed</div>	25 Merry Christmas! 6:30 AM Dawn Worship Service	26 8:30 AM Men's Fellowship Breakfast	27	28	29 9:30 AM Youth Service: Serve free Community Brunch @ Emmanuel Friedens 12:00 noon Youth Group
30 8:30 AM Breakfast 9:00 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM Second Cup Cafe 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 11:30 AM 2nd Hour Programs	31 Public Schools closed					
We are in the season of ADVENT (blue or purple) -						

The Sunday School Scoop

December 2018



December 2	First Sunday in Advent <i>Family Sunday: No Sunday School</i> 11:30 am—Orff Instrument Playing after Worship
December 9	Second Sunday in Advent 9:00 am —Sunday School 12:00 pm —Lunch & Caroling to our Shut-ins
December 16	Third Sunday in Advent 9:00 am —Sunday School; Service of Lessons and Carols 10:00 am—Service of Lessons and Carols
December 23	Fourth Sunday in Advent 9:00 am — Sunday School 11:30 am—Annual Christmas Carol Sing Along
December 25	MERRY CHRISTMAS! 6:30 am —Christmas Dawn Service in the sanctuary with a live nativity!
December 30	First Sunday after Christmas Day 9:00 am —Sunday School

Youth News

All youth (ages 13-18) are invited to:

☉ Youth Group Fellowship—

Come enjoy fun and fellowship together each week in the Roof Lounge on Saturdays starting at 12:00 noon.

☉ Joint Youth Service Project—

On Saturday, December 29th, gather at 9:30 am to serve a free community brunch meal at Emmanuel Friedens Church.



Epiphany Sunday

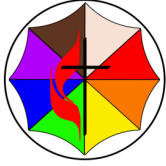
On January 6th, we'll celebrate Epiphany Sunday during the 10:00 AM Worship Service, led by our youth. Then following Worship, our celebration will continue during coffee hour with Traditional Epiphany cakes from several countries.

Orff instrument practice will not be held that day.



2018 Advent Devotional Booklets Available

We have made up our own Advent Devotional booklet again and they are available in the narthex! It was made up by FUMC members with reflections on select Scripture readings and on the theme "Openings." May they be a blessing for you this Advent season.



First United Methodist Church - Schenectady

Gather for these special ADVENT HOLIDAY SERVICES & EVENTS:



ROSE WINDOW REFLECTIONS - Wednesday-Friday, Dec. 5-7, 2:00-3:00 pm

The church Sanctuary will be open for all to have an opportunity to see the sunlight shine through the beautiful Rose Window and encircle the cross on the Altar.

CAROLING TO OUR HOMEBOUND & LUNCH - Sunday, Dec. 9, 12:00 noon

Young and old alike - come caroling to bring some joy and Christmas music to our church family members who are not able to get out often. Lunch will be provided prior to heading out. This event will fill both singers and the listeners with a full dose of Christmas Spirit!

ADVENT SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS - Sunday, Dec. 16, 10:00 AM

This year we will be presenting "Come Ye Faithful - A Service of Carols" by Hal Hopson. This work was given in memory of Fred Brumbaugh, the former organist and Director of Music Ministries. The story of the Birth of Jesus will be told in song and words by means of Christmas anthems and carols sung, and the Christmas story as told in the Scriptures. The Emery String Quartet will begin playing the prelude at 9:45. For more information, please see next page.

LONG NIGHT ADVENT SERVICE - Wednesday, Dec. 19, 7:00 PM

A Long Night Advent Service, held on or near the longest night of the year, is designed for those who find Christmas a difficult season. We hear constantly about the happiness of the season and about getting together with family and friends. Yet, grief, broken relationships, unemployment, illness, pain and isolation can make us feel very alone in the midst of the celebrating. This special service, which will include music, prayers and readings, is to help us reflect on God as Emmanuel, "God-with-us," who comes to us in times of struggle and reminds us of the true preciousness of the gift of Emmanuel and how we can gain comfort by knowing that we are never truly alone. Our Stephen Ministers, a care giving ministry, will provide light refreshments following the service.

ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICE - Sunday, Dec. 23, 10:00 AM

The Worship Service on the 4th Sunday of Advent will include Christmas Communion and the Chancel Choir for our Worship time together.

CAROL SING AROUND THE FIREPLACE - Sunday, Dec. 23, 11:30 AM

Following worship and Coffee Fellowship, everyone is invited to gather around the fireplace in Fellowship Hall for our annual carol sing, led by Dominick Giaquinto, our Music Director.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES - Monday, Dec. 24

Our neighbors at Emmanuel Friedens Church on Nott Terr. and at Eastern Parkway United Methodist Church, 943 Palmer Ave., will both hold a Christmas Eve Service at 7:00 PM, if of interest.

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE - Tuesday, Dec. 25

6:30 AM — Dawn Service

This unique service will feature a live Nativity! For over 70 years, FUMC has welcomed Christmas with a Dawn Service. Families and friends gather in the sanctuary by 6:30 am for carols and the Christmas story. The church is lit only by candles as the worshipers enter silently into the sanctuary to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Come as you are!





The Christmas Service of Lessons & Carols

As is our tradition at FUMC, we will have our annual worship service of Lessons and Carols on Sunday, December 16 at 10 am. In a Service of Lessons and Carols, the story of the Nativity of Jesus is told through scripture and song. This year we will be presenting "Come Ye Faithful - A Service of Carols" by Hal Hopson. This work was given in memory of Fred Brumbaugh, the former organist and Director of Music Ministries.

We will welcome the Emery String Quartet, harpist Karlinda Caldicott, flutist Jacqueline Wright, as well as members of our Chancel Choir and Handbell Choir for this service. Dominick Giaquinto will serve as organist and Mitch Haverly will be the conductor. The congregation will be invited to sing familiar carols and hymns, and the Chancel Choir will sing several anthems.

This service is a wonderful way to experience the true meaning and spirit of the Christmas season. You are encouraged to invite family and friends to join us for this yearly tradition. The prelude will begin at 9:50.

Everyone is welcome!



The Rose Window

The rose window was installed sometime around 1874, during the time the church building was constructed. In 1981, it was removed for cleaning and repairs, then reinstalled and covered with Lexan.

As with all rose windows, its shape is that of a wheel, with a hub and spokes, a reminder that rose windows were originally called wheel windows. A rose window is also referred to as a marigold window, for the rose is a symbol of Mary. In FUMC's rose window, the twelve spokes are a reminder of the twelve Apostles. At the end of each spoke is a quatrefoil, which resembles a four-petaled flower. A quatrefoil indicates any fourfold group of objects or attributes, such as the Four Evangelists or the Four Gospels.



Each of the four colors in the window—red, blue, green, gold—has its own symbolism. From a distance, some of the glass appears to be white, a color which stands for purity, light and joy. Red symbolizes blood, fire, Christian zeal and the Holy Spirit; blue represents heaven, truth and constancy. The red and blue combines to form violet, a symbol of penitence, mourning and royalty. Green symbolizes life, hope, nature and growth, while gold adds the qualities of glory and splendor to the meanings of white. The different colored lights in stained glass have different properties: white is piercing, blue is luminous and expansive, red contracts at a distance and gold remains stable. As daylight fades, red will turn black but blue will remain until all the light is gone.

Many years ago, the Rev. Leon Adkins, Sr., pastor at the time, preached a sermon on the rose window. His concluding remarks still hold today: "It (Rose Window) testifies to the central mystery of life - the union of God and man. It radiates the reality of constancy and truth. It radiates the glory of love and suffering which shall bring the Gospel of our Lord into the fulfillment of humanity's direst need and highest hope!"



Volunteers Needed to Serve City Mission Meal

It's our turn to serve a meal at the City Mission of Schenectady on Wednesday, December 19th. Volunteers are needed. The City Mission has a software signup process where each individual volunteering to serve at the mission is asked to create an account and sign-up in advance for each meal they'll attend.

To signup 5 days or more in advance, go to:

<http://www.firstumc.citymissionofschenectady.volunteerhub.com>

To signup within 5 days prior to serving, go to:

<http://www.schenectadycitymission.com>; click "volunteer" and find FUMC's date to serve, e.g., Wed., Dec. 19. Other volunteers may be solicited to sign-up during this time too.

If you do not have a computer or have a problem signing up, please call Lori at 518-346-2275 ext. 301; give your name and date you want to serve.

In 2019, we are scheduled to serve on the fourth Wednesdays of the odd months throughout the year...the dates are:

January 23; March 27;

May 22; July 22;

Sept. 25; and Nov. 27



Must arrive by 5 pm. You'll be required to wear a hair net if you're not wearing a hat. Please let Lois

Atkinson (518-377-8249) know if you've signed-up for the December meal. Thank you.

A Stephen Ministry Moment

"The soul should always stand ajar, ready to welcome the ecstatic experience."

Emily Dickenson
(1830—1886)

From the Finance Committee

♦ 2019 Offering Envelopes

Boxed Offering Envelopes for 2019 will be available in the Narthex beginning Sunday, December 9th. If you do not find a box with your name on it and want envelopes, please use the signup sheet on a Sunday or contact the office.

♦ 2018 Contributions and Statements

2018 Contributions Statements will be distributed in January. However, if you'd like to know where you currently stand on your 2018 commitment, please call the office (374-4403) and a Contribution Statement will be mailed to you. If you are contributing shares of stock to satisfy your 2018 commitment or to make a prepayment for 2019 and you want the contribution to be credited in 2018, please allow sufficient time for FUMC to sell the stock before the end of December.

♦ Electronic Giving Available

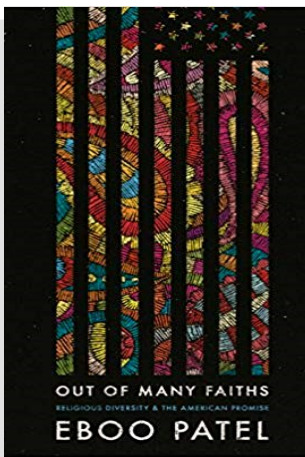
If you're interested in using the electronic donation system to make pledge payments, to make donations to church benevolences, to repay student loans or for other purposes, go to our church website or read the QR code here. Our website's address is www.fumcschenectady.org. The website contains a button that will take you to the electronic donations sign-up page. The signup page will walk you through the process of signing up. If you would prefer to sign up on a paper form, you may pick up an authorization form from Linda in the office.



—Chris Rambo, Sr.
FUMC Financial Secretary

E-Newsletter Available!

If you receive *The Spire* in hard-copy form and would prefer to get it by email, which does save valuable resources, please contact the church office to confirm we have your email address. Thank you.



Book Discussion

On Saturday, January 12th, from 10am -noon, we will be sharing our thoughts on our current book choice *Out of Many Faiths* by Eboo Patel. It is a book

that explores religious diversity and the American promise. Robert Wuthnow writes that it is "A passionate response to the anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, racist white nationalism that so deeply afflicts our nation." We are hoping the extra time over the holidays will allow more of us to pick up this book and read it, and join us as we gather to discuss this timely defense in support of religious diversity in our nation at a time when there is so much division between one another.

Bishop's Gathering on A Way Forward

Following the 2016 General Conference, the Commission on a Way Forward was formed to deliberate and help the General Conference address the issue of sexuality in The United Methodist Church. The Commission will present a report during a Special Session of the 2019 General Conference, which will be held February 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, Missouri.

Upper New York Area Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb is hosting six gatherings around the Conference in preparation for Special Session of General Conference to talk about the report of the Commission on a Way Forward. In our area, a gathering will be held Sunday, Dec. 2nd, at Shenendehowa UMC, 971 Route 146 in Clifton Park, and will include a presentation of the plan and process of General Conference, and Worship.



Celebration!!!

2019 is the 25th anniversary of FUMC's efforts to become a reconciling congregation. Two years later after activities, discussions, and education which increased the understanding of members of the congregation, FUMC accepted the following statement: "We will continue to seek and welcome persons of any age, gender, race, ethnic background, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability as full participants in our community of faith." We desire to do a year-long celebration of this decision with a variety of activities throughout the year.

Most importantly, since the special session of the General Conference 2019 is 3 months away, what do we want to do to celebrate our own entry into the struggle against discrimination of LGBTQIA+ persons while the UMC will be in the midst of struggling over whether to become a less discriminatory denomination? (Sunday Feb.24, 2019 will be the first full day of the special session of General Conference.)

Intersectional Justice Committee is inviting members of the congregation to share ideas and to participate in the planning of the celebration. If you have any suggestions or would like to be part of the special planning committee, contact Kevin Nelson at kmichael07@gmail.com.

Gather for Sunday Breakfast

Come early to church for the following:

► **Community Breakfast** served free 8:30-9:30 am in Fellowship Hall on all but the 1st Sundays.

► **Books available** for children and adults from 9-9:30 am in Fellowship Hall during the breakfast

► **Second Cup Café** is held in the Library 9:30-9:50 and offers coffee & the Sunday newspaper.

Alternative Giving Suggestions



The Intersectional Justice Committee is encouraging all to consider “alternative giving” for Christmas and other celebrations. Most of us have too much “stuff” while many in the world are suffering without the basic necessities. Alternative (or additional) giving allows us to honor others by giving a gift in their name to a cause or organization which seeks to improve the lives of others. This year we are focusing on 6 alternatives. Displays are at church. You can also learn more about each option by talking with a member of the Intersectional Justice Committee.

Babyfold and Pre-K Ministry—We are hoping to purchase some additional items and toys for this program within our church in response to all the new baby members within our congregation.

Church World Service: Blanket Program— A \$10 blanket supplies warmth to someone experiencing a crisis.

FUMC SUSTAIN (Soap) Ministry – Soap and other basic hygiene products are not covered by food stamps. Any size donation will help with the hygiene of needy Schenectadians.

Heifer International – “The gift that multiplies.” Animals and training in their care are given worldwide. Recipients give the first offspring to someone else, thereby spreading the gift. Any donation is helpful, but you have the option of “buying” specific animals.

Home Furnishings Program of Schenectady County – This organization recycles furniture by giving donated furniture and other household items to people in need, who have been referred by agencies in the county.

Community Breakfast Program — This program is held at our church each Sunday except on the first Sunday of each month to provide a good breakfast and hospitality to the people of Schenectady.

Checks can be made out to FUMC with a notation of the agency to which you are donating. Or you can donate directly to the agency for GE or other matching. Cards, which you can give to the person you are honoring, are available in narthex/lobby.

We hope you will consider this meaningful way to share love at Christmas.



Christmas Poinsettias 2018



Each year at Christmas time we brighten our worship spaces with live poinsettia plants. You are invited to participate by ordering one or more poinsettias for our Christmas season worship services.

Please fill out the form below and return it with payment by Friday, December 7th.

Completed forms with payment may be placed in the offering plate or mailed to the church at 603 State St., Schenectady, NY 12305, Attn: Altar Guild (please make check payable to First UMC.)

*** Please indicate your choices:**

Name of Donor _____ Phone No. _____

In Memory of _____

and/or In Celebration of Christmas _____

* Number of Plants _____ Red _____ White _____ Donation Only

* Donation \$ _____ (Church cost is \$12 per plant)

* _____ Will pick up plant(s) after 10 a.m. service on December 23

* _____ Will not pick up plant(s); please take to a shut-in or leave on altar for the following Sunday

* _____ Would be willing to deliver a plant to shut-in after a service

KEEPING OUR COVENANT PROMISES - OCTOBER 2018

PRAYERS - PRESENCE - GIFTS - SERVICE

Our Prayers

Christian support is extended to:

The family & friends of David Smith, who passed away unexpectedly on November 9th (Dick Smith's son)

The family & friends of Madeline Erdmann, who passed away November 8th (Janet Collis' close friend)

The family & friends of the Rev. Lee Adkins, Jr., our former Pastor and dear friend, who passed on October 25th

Our Christian support is also extended to:

Andrea Bailey	Liz Fogle	Claire Racicot
Jan Butts	Jen & Merrick Fuller	Shirley Rivest
Ross Corbett	Jan Guzior	Rev. Bill Rowe
Ron Cromer	Emily Hart	Rev. Janice
Shirley Daniels	Courtney & Jack	McClary Rowell
June Dieffenbach	McEwan	Bob Slater

We celebrate with:

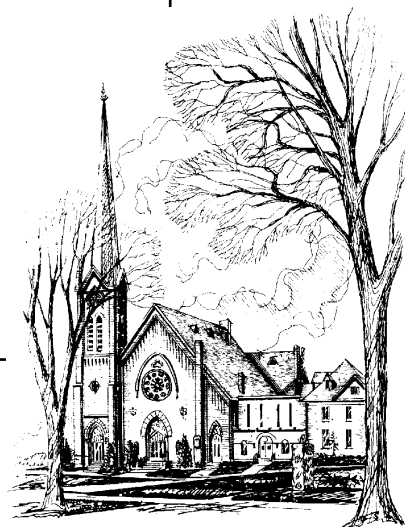
Greg & Janine Phillips, parents, and Terry & Anne Phillips, grandparents, on the birth of Griffin Alexander on Nov. 27. Congratulations!

Our Presence

Date	Worship
October 7	63
October 14	89
October 21	127
October 28	90

Our Gifts

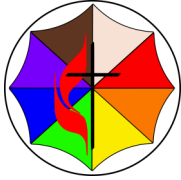
Date	Amount
October 7	\$4,194.00
October 14	9,828.00
October 21	1,843.00
October 28	4,091.00



Our Service

- | Date | |
|-------|---|
| 10/4 | —New weekly Confirmation Class began |
| 10/8 | —5-week Video Study held entitled “The Challenge of Paul”; open to all, free of charge |
| 10/13 | —Sponsored by our UM Women, created cards for our Caring Ministry program |
| 10/14 | —Celebrated the Sacrament of Baptism during Worship |
| | —New Sunday School began with all children and their parents/guardians welcome |
| | —Book discussion on “The Color of Law: The Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America” |
| 10/21 | —Celebrated the Sacrament of Baptism during Worship |
| 10/23 | —Offered Informative Meeting on Special Session of General Conference; open to all |
| 10/27 | —Hosted the UM Volunteers In Mission (VIM) Leadership Training |
| | —Youth Service: Served free Community Brunch |
| 10/28 | —Hosted community Reconciling event entitled, “We’re Welcoming; What’s Next?” |
| | —Youth Service: collected canned foods and participated in SiCM’s CAN-Do Sculpture competition |
| | —Participated in the SiCM Harvest for the Pantry dinner with proceeds going to SiCM Food Pantry |
| Oct. | —Distributed personal care items to those in need through our SUSTAIN Ministry |
| | —Held collection for UMCOR for relief efforts after the devastation by Hurricane Michael (\$225) |
| | —Continue to prepare and serve the free Sunday Community Breakfast. Total served=194; 12 volunteers each week |
| | —2nd hour events/programs offered: Sacrificial Meal; Book Discussion; and Forum: “Clean Water in Peril” |

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



Mission Moments

Delivered during Worship

► Union College Protestant Ministry

Delivered on November 11, 2018, by Rev. Heather Kirk-Davidoff, guest presenter

- Hi everyone, my name is Heather Kirk-Davidoff and I am currently serving as the Interim Campus Protestant Minister at Union College. Union College, as you may know, does not employ a chaplain. Instead, I am part of an interfaith group of seven chaplains who serve the religious and spiritual needs of students on campus. All of us are supported and funded by congregations, denominations and individuals, not by the college itself.
- That's where you come in! CPM has a long and strong connection to this congregation. For many years you have blessed us with funds from your outreach budget. In addition, two members of this congregation serve on our board: Bob Long, who has served our board for several decades, and Elaine Troy who serves as our Treasurer.
- My main purpose this morning is to say **thank you**. We quite simply could not do what we do without you.
- Some of you may have known my predecessor, Viki Brooks, who retired this past June after 20 years at Union. One of the pieces of advice that Viki gave me when I started was to be sure to read Pastor Sara's message in the First United Methodist newsletter. It was good advice! This past week, Sara wrote about the stages of theological thought as described by Marcus Borg. First comes pre-critical naivete, then comes critical thinking, and then comes post-critical naivete. (It makes me feel very academic just to say those terms out loud!)
- The work of campus ministry is basically to accompany students as they travel back and forth between these stages of theological thought. Our aim is not to push a student to get to a different stage--to question more, or to question less--but rather to be lovingly and enthusiastically present with them, wherever they may be.
- This past week, at our last Tuesday night Dinner and Discussion of the term, I asked the students why they keep showing up each week. Was it just the free food? They responded that our discussions, led by students, are unique on campus. "We have debates in class all the time," one student explained, "but they are always in response to other people's statements or findings or analysis. This is really the one place where *we can ask our own questions*."
- How fitting that this congregation supports that kind of conversation for Union students! Thank you for being my partner--and theirs--as we navigate the sometimes rocky road towards living a faithful life in this moment in history.



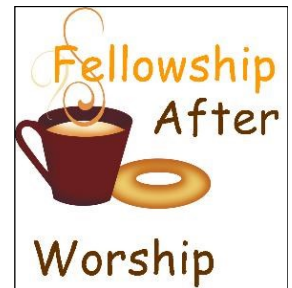
► Coffee Fellowship

Delivered on November 18, 2018, by Mary Ann Marshall

Good morning! Today I would like to tell you about one of the most important ministries of FUMC. It is our weekly Coffee Fellowship that happens each Sunday after the service. I learned many years ago that Coffee is Methodist Holy Water!

Why do we have this time together? Just for that reason. It gives us all an opportunity to chat with each other, greet visitors, and, for me, give Rudy a kiss on the cheek.

Why is this time important? Well, the sanctuary is very large. Personally, I find it tricky to greet people, as we are scattered about. As we learned from Pastor Sara at the Church Council meeting, our Limbic System is soothed by interpersonal relationships. This system of our bodies controls the basic emotions (fear, pleasure, anger). If we are feeling anxiety, loneliness, sadness, or grief, for instance, we can be soothed by being with our fellow parishioners. You see, we need each other! And, of course, a cup of coffee or tea!

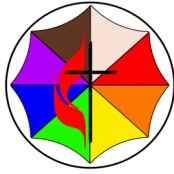


The group of people who prepare the Coffee Fellowship need more help. It is quite easy to set the refreshments up. There is a Bunn coffee maker in the kitchen, and a clear set of instructions on how to operate it. Kettles for heating water for tea are available. The supplies are stored in the cupboard in the coat closet in Wesley Lounge. Preparation takes about 30-35 minutes, with break down about the same amount of time. It works best with a team of 2.

If you are interested in joining this important ministry, please talk to me. We will train you! There will be a sign-up sheet on the table during the Coffee Fellowship time.

The big deal: if you join the group, you get your own little key to the coffee cupboard!!!!





The Spire

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NEXT SPIRE MAILED:

Dec. 27; articles due Dec. 15

**Sunday
Bible Study**

A weekly Bible Study on "The Book of Luke" is being held Sunday nights from 7:00-8:30 in Wesley Lounge, led by Pastor Sara. All are welcome to join our young adults for this study.



Invitation

Would you enjoy a visit or would you 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 374-4403.

**Coming in early
January...**

Watch for details!

Sunday, Jan. 6
Epiphany Celebration

Tuesday, Jan. 8
Church Night

Wednesday, Jan. 9
Women's Luncheon

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



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

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/2