



THE

Spire

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

603 State Street, Schenectady, NY 12305 (518) 374-4403 / (Fax) 374-6060

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



Accessible

Vol. 83 No. 11

The Reverend Sara E. Baron

March 2020

Future Sundays

- 8:30** Downtown Community Breakfast
9:00 Books for Children & Adults available
10:00 Sunday Morning Worship
—*Infant & Toddler Care available*
10:40 Sunday School Class
—*Children's Music Time (monthly)*
11:00 Coffee Fellowship
11:30 Second Hour programs:
—Adult Forums
—Luncheons
—Ministry Team Gatherings
—Intergenerational Activities
7:00 Sunday Night Study: *Living the Questions 2.0*

Worship Text:

- ar. 1 **1st Sunday in Lent / Family Sunday**
Genesis 2:15-7, 3:1-17; Romans 5:12-19
"The Garden of Eden in Context"
Mar. 8 **2nd Sunday in Lent**
Daylight Savings Time begins
Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121
"Journey and Stability"
Mar. 15 **3rd Sunday in Lent**
Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95
"A Time to Praise and A Time to Complain"
Mar. 22 **4th Sunday in Lent / UMCOR Sunday**
1 Samuel 16:1-13; Ephesians 5:8-14
"A Change of Plans, Maybe"
Mar. 29 **5th Sunday in Lent**
Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130
"When and Why Dry Bones Should Live"

Second Hour Programs:

- Mar. 1 **Labyrinth**
Mar. 8 **Annual Church Meeting**
Mar. 15 **Labyrinth**
Mar. 22 **Intersectional Justice Committee**

► Church Meeting

Sunday, March 8

Everyone is invited to gather after Worship Sunday, March 8, at 12:30 pm for our annual Church Meeting held in Fellowship Hall. We will celebrate the ministries of the past year and look to the future! Reports will be presented and the 2019 Annual Reports booklet will be available. The Rev. Holly Nye will preside.



► March's "Church Night"

Tuesday, March 10

All Ministry Teams can hold their monthly meetings on *Church Night*, held the 2nd Tuesday of each month. And all are invited to attend the Church Council meetings. The schedule is:

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



It's our 7th Annual Lenten Photo Show!

- Stoned Rolled Away
- The Women Were Silent
- Very Early in the Morning
- Do Not Be Afraid
- See and Believe

Can you picture these concepts? They are the five weekly themes of the 2020 Lenten Photo Show. This will be our 7th Annual Photo Show and you can help make it our best!

During Lent, you are encouraged to submit photos that relate to the weekly themes, and on Easter Sunday, April 12th, we will all have the opportunity to see how our photographers picture the themes. Photos, along with a theme and title, can be emailed to fumcphotoshow@gmail.com or sent to the office. For full details, please see the flyer on page 6. Happy picture taking!



LENT



From Our Pastor

In the early years, as Christianity was developing, it became traditional to baptize new Christians on Easter. The time of prayerful reflection in preparation for making a commitment to faith grew into the tradition of Lent. As time passed, it became normal for each Christian to spend the time of preparation for Easter in intentional reflection once again, re-committing to the faith and engaging in consideration of what was next on the faith journey.

As the Church continued to develop, more and more traditions got added onto Lent, some lovely, some heavy (in the middle ages there was a lot of requiring people already on the brink of starvation to fast). Today, within the culture at large, I think the most significant awareness of Lent comes from people being aware of the question, "What are you giving up for Lent?"

The question comes out of the idea that fasting is a spiritual practice that leads to good prayerful reflection, and that fasting comes in many forms. Fasting at its core is the idea that every time you want the thing you are fasting from, you allow that desire to be a call to prayer and a reminder to connect with the Divine. However, in practicality, the fasting I hear about often functions as a form of self-sacrifice or an attempt to force healthier habits rather.

I'm fine with healthy habits! However, I don't get the impression that most people fasting something for Lent are remembering the prayer part of fasting, and I get very worried that most of what is happening is just people beating up on themselves.

This year, I suggest an alternative spiritual practice for us all, one that is based in the idea that adding a spiritual practice for Lent is a good way to return to its roots. For anyone willing to go along, I suggest: A gratitude journal. That is, each day of Lent, write down 5 things you are grateful for. They can be anything, or you could write one for each of 5 categories:

1. Nature/The Created World
2. Beloveds (Family and/or Friends)
3. The Church
4. Community/Communities (as big as the nation, as small as you want)
5. An Unexpected Joy

Ideally, the answers for each day would be different, encouraging us all to prayerfully consider our days and identify what there is to be grateful for in them. (Those among us who find this too Pollyanna-ish are welcome to add ONE space for a daily difficulty or hardship. It is OK to acknowledge them, but the goal is to search for and find the good.)

There are plenty of reasons to worry, to be concerned, to raise anxiety. However, they get all the press! This year for Lent, let's find the wonders, the mysteries, the joys. I suspect we all need it, and it will prepare us well for the season of Easter.

—Sara

Sunday Night Study: "Living the Questions 2.0"

The Sunday Night Study is entitled, "Living the Questions 2.0." LtQ2 is an open-minded alternative to studies that attempt to give participants all the answers and instead strives to create an environment where participants can interact with one another in exploring what's next for Christianity. Featuring thirty acclaimed scholars, theologians and other experts, LtQ2 consists of 21 sessions in 3 sections: "Invitation to Journey"; "Honoring Creation"; and "Call to Covenant." The course is truly full of great questions, and multiple potential answers. Meetings are held in the Conference Room, as the series includes a DVD with those acclaimed scholars, at 7pm Sunday nights. All are welcome. Participants are encouraged to come through the Administrative Building door, located on the porch behind the parking lot garage.



Daylight Savings Time


Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour before going to bed on Saturday, March 7th.

Daylight Savings Time begins at 2 am on March 8th.



March 2020 First United Methodist Church, Schenectady

Calendar updates on website: www.fumcschenectady.org

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 1st Sunday in Lent / Family Sunday 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 11:30 AM 2nd Hour Program —Labyrinth 7:00 PM Sunday Night Study	2 2:00 - 4:00 PM Pastor "Drop-in" Office Hours	3 <i>Council Reports due</i> 1:30 PM Staff Mtg.	4 11:00 AM-2:00 PM Labyrinth 4:00-6:00 PM Labyrinth 6:45 PM Handbell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Small Group Leaders	5 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	6	7 11:00 AM Youth Group
PrimeTimers Volunteers In Mission Trip: Tucson, Arizona						
8 <i>Daylight Savings Begins 2am —set clocks ahead 1 hour</i> 8:30 AM Breakfast 10:00 AM Worship 10:40 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 12:30 PM Annual Church Mtg. 7:00 PM Sunday Night Study	9 2:00 - 4:00 PM Pastor "Drop-in" Office Hours 1:00 PM Unused Space Committee 7:00 PM Staff Pastor / Parish Rel. Committee	10 1:30 PM Staff Mtg. Church Night 6:30 PM Ministry Teams Meet 7:30 PM Council	11 11:00 AM-2:00 PM Labyrinth 11:30 AM-1:30 PM SUSTAIN Ministry 4:00-6:00 PM Labyrinth 6:45 PM Handbell Choir Rehearsal	12 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	13 <i>Spire articles due</i>	14 10:00 AM Book Discussion 11:00 AM Youth Group
				Conference Youth Event: Outward2020		
15 8:30 AM Breakfast 10:00 AM Worship 10:40 AM Children's Music Time 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 11:30 AM 2nd Hour Program —Labyrinth 7:00 PM Sunday Night Study	16 2:00 - 4:00 PM Pastor "Drop-in" Office Hours	17 1:30 PM Staff Mtg. 7:00 PM Children & Youth Ministries Team	18 11:00 AM-2:00 PM Labyrinth 12:00 Women's Luncheon 4:00-6:00 PM Labyrinth 6:45 PM Handbell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Small Group Leaders	19 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	20	21 11:00 AM Youth Group
Youth Event: Outward2020						
22 UMCOR Sunday 8:30 AM Breakfast 10:00 AM Worship 10:40 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 11:45 am Intersectional Justice Committee 7:00 PM Sunday Night Study	23 2:00 - 4:00 PM Pastor "Drop-in" Office Hours	24 1:30 PM Staff Mtg. 7:00 PM Board of Trustees	25 8:30 AM Men's Breakfast Fellowship 11:00 AM-2:00 PM Labyrinth 4:00-6:00 PM Labyrinth 5:00 pm Serve Meal at City Mission 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	26	27	28 9:15 AM Youth: Serve Free Community Brunch 11:00 AM Youth Group
29 8:30 AM Breakfast 10:00 AM Worship 10:40 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 3:00 PM Concert: Elizabeth Pitcairn 7:00 PM Sunday Night Study	30 2:00 - 4:00 PM Pastor "Drop-in" Office Hours	31				

**We are in the season of LENT (purple) -
Lent is a time when we practice repentance—turning away from wrong and toward God.**

Notes of Thanks

Dear FUMC Friends,

I wish to thank the church members who called me to ask how I was doing and for the get-well card. I have just about fully recovered from my critical bout with the Flu, which required four days in the hospital. It felt so nice to receive well-wishes, and I miss everyone.

—Robert Ramonowski



Dear Friends,

Thank you for your recent donation and support of our Active Samaritan fund. Your thoughtful generosity will allow us to continue serving those who might not otherwise afford counseling. All monies received are used to subsidize fees for those who do not have adequate means to cover the cost of therapy. Your covenant partnership with us is extremely important. Thank you for your ongoing partnership in ministry! It is much appreciated and comes in the midst of challenging times.

—David C. Olsen, PhD, Executive Director
Samaritan counseling Center of the Capital region

Dear Friends,

Your kindness is warmly appreciated. Thank you for the flowers. They were beautiful. And thank you to Sue Learner for the delivery.

—With warm regards, Lynne

You just made a huge difference for people living with HIV and AIDs. At the Albany Damien Center, our goal is to end the AIDS epidemic in our community once and for all...thanks to supporters like you, we can continue to serve over 400 members each year to help reduce barriers and improve their physical, mental and spiritual health. Your donation will provide crucial services for people in our community. Thank you Rev. Sara and all our friends at the First United Methodist Church of Schenectady for your generous love and support. Gratefully,

—Perry Junjulas, Executive Director, Albany Damien Center

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your gift to 350.org! ...Your support is powering a global movement of people united to end the era of fossil fuels and create a just, renewable energy future for all. As 2020 begins, our global team is both taking stock of the tremendous victories we achieved last year, and also how much more there is to accomplish in this pivotal year....2020 must be the most vigorous concentrated, organized, well-resourced, year of climate change resistance ever. We know that, based on the 7.6 million people that took to the streets during September's Global Climate Strikes, that we CAN DO THIS! Thanks to you, we are empowered. Thanks to you, we are emboldened. Thanks to you, we are resourced. Please accept my warmest, most sincere thanks for your support.

Endowment Spending, Policy Change

Given the fact that the church is no longer being supported financially in a sustainable way, the Trustees and the Investment Committee have been studying relevant law and soliciting expert opinions on changing current church policy to begin taking a percentage of principal from endowments.

At the Church Conference on March 8, 2020, the Trustees will propose that FUMC changes its policies to allow limited spending from principal in certain selected Endowment Funds. Taking of principal will be limited to no more than 2.75%, per annum. If the policy change is approved, Trustees will limit action on the change to the years 2021 and 2022. The time limit will allow the church to pursue creative ways to increase revenue and/or realign property and staffing needs with the realities of our declining attendance and income. We need to balance our budget in order to insure the future of this congregation and its ministries. If you have questions, suggestions, concerns or information to share about this – please contact Elaine Troy at 518-356-2687 or Lanie600@nycap.rr.com. I will be happy to convey all communications to the Investment Committee.

SPPRC Sub Committee

The SPPRC Communications Sub Committee would like to offer the congregation another way to share their ideas, affirmations and concerns with the Pastor, Staff and Committee Chairs. We will be placing a locked Communications Box in the Narthex. You will be able to write your message (pens and paper will be available) and drop it in the box. The Chair of the SPPRC Committee will review each message and deliver it to the appropriate person.

Please note that in order for the message to be delivered and responded to, the message **MUST** include your name.

Thank you, in advance, for sharing your ideas, affirmations and concerns. We look forward to hearing from you.



Altar Flowers / Easter

To give altar flowers for Sunday Worship, please see the signup poster on the hallway bulletin board or contact the office. **Note:** Watch for Easter Flower signups; due early April.

From United Methodist Women

◆ Assembly Party: Hygiene Kits for UMCOR

The United Methodist Women of First UMC are having a party on May 16th! Everyone is invited to join us as we come together to share fellowship and assemble Hygiene Kits for UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief). We hope to bring many groups from our congregation together in this project which will help those forced from their homes by either natural disaster or human conflict. We would like to achieve our goal of 150 kits, in honor of the 150th anniversary of United Methodist Women.

We are looking for donations of Hygiene Kit items (or cash) in order to get the party started. Our collection campaign starts on Sunday, March 1st. There will be examples of needed items on a table in the Narthex, with baskets ready to receive your contributions. Any monetary donations need to be made out to First UM Church and marked "UMCOR Kits." These can be placed in the Sunday Offering.



◆ Northeast Jurisdiction Meeting UMW

The Northeast Jurisdiction Meeting of the United Methodist Women is April 24-26, 2020, in Baltimore MD. The cost of registration is \$375 (nejumw.org). In addition, the Upper New York UMW is offering a bus trip and lodging package. Application forms for this trip are available in the Narthex. The deadline is April 1, 2020.

◆ Help Celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Voting Rights for Women

The Northeast Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History (NJCAH) is holding its annual convention in Auburn, NY, May 19 – 21, 2020. NJCAH is offering an all-day bus tour on Wednesday, May 20th around Seneca Falls and Auburn. They will be stopping at Women's Hall of Fame, Women's Rights National Historic Park, Harriet Tubman National Historical Park, and other sites. Registration forms can be found in the Narthex.



Serve Meal at City Mission

It's our church's turn to serve a meal at the City Mission on Wednesday, March 25th. Volunteers are needed! The City Mission has a signup process and asks volunteers 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., March 25.

If you don't have a computer or have a problem signing up, call Lori at 518-346-2275 ext. 301.

2020 dates assigned to our church to serve are: Mar. 25, May 27, July 22, Sept. 23, Nov. 25. Volunteers must arrive by 5 pm. You'll be given a hair net if you're not wearing a hat. Please let Mary Ann Marshall (518-355-1733) know if you've signed-up to help at a meal. Thank you.

Stephen Ministry now dead

It is with deep sadness that we announce that The Stephen Ministry Program at FUMC, which was initiated in August 1992, is now dead and not now functioning in any manner.

Stephen Ministry is an incredible program designed to be an ongoing, confidential, regular (generally once a week) contact of one-on-one caring to members of the congregation or community who are experiencing a serious life transition. The lengths of these relationships have ranged from three to thirty-two months depending upon the particular circumstances. Over the years dozens of care receivers were served through the Stephen Ministry Program at FUMC.

If any FUMC member now feels called to become a part of this very worthy and fulfilling program, please examine your own gifts and consider becoming either a Stephen Leader or a Stephen Minister. The rewards are enormous for all who participate. You may contact Pastor Sara Baron to discuss such a possibility.

We are very grateful and wish to express our deepest gratitude to the many dedicated persons who have served as Stephen Ministers or Leaders, giving freely of their gifts, time, energy, and caring through this program over the years.

Ministry Moment

**You must be the change
you want to see in the world.**

Mahatma Gandhi



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF SCHENECTADY 2020 LENTEN PHOTO SHOW

First United Methodist Church of Schenectady invites you to participate in its 2020 Lenten Photo Show.

You can participate in any or all of three ways:

1. SUBMIT PHOTOS THAT YOU HAVE TAKEN
2. VOTE FOR THE PHOTOS YOU THINK BEST REFLECT THE THEMES OF THE SHOW
3. VISIT THE SHOW ON EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 12 (8:30 - 10 AM and 11:00 - 12 NOON)

1. SUBMIT PHOTOS THAT YOU HAVE TAKEN

For each of five weeks during Lent, First United Methodist Church of Schenectady has chosen a different Lenten theme. During each of these weeks we will be accepting one to three photos that you have taken that reflect the weekly theme. The themes are:

Feb. 26-March 3: STONE ROLLED AWAY
March 4-10: THE WOMEN WERE SILENT
March 11-17: VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING
March 18-24: DO NOT BE AFRAID
March 25-31: SEE AND BELIEVE



Photo by Barbara Armstrong

You may submit your photos either electronically or in hard copy.

- To submit your photos electronically, save them as JPG files of between 300bpi and 3MB, attach them to an email, enter 'Photo Show' as the subject of the email, type your name, address, phone #, a title for the photo, and the theme your photos represent in the body of the email, and send to fumcphotoshow@gmail.com.
- To submit your photos in hard copy, print them out on 8x10 photo paper, enclose them and a completed copy of this form in an envelope, and send the envelope to FUMC Lenten Photo Show, 603 State Street, Schenectady, NY 12305. Copies of this form may be downloaded from the church's website at www.fumcschenectady.org or may be obtained by calling the church office at 518-374-4403.

First United Methodist Church of Schenectady Lenten Photo Show: ENTRY FORM

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Theme that the photo represents (choose one per entry):

- ☐ Stone Rolled Away ☐ The Women Were Silent ☐ Very Early in the Morning
☐ Do Not Be Afraid ☐ See and Believe

TITLE OF THE PHOTO: _____

Email to: fumcphotoshow@gmail.com

Mail to: **FUMC LENTEN PHOTO SHOW, 603 State Street, Schenectady, NY 12305**

By submitting a photo the photographer gives FUMC copyright privileges to display the photo.

Photos will not be returned.

2. VOTE FOR THE PHOTOS YOU THINK BEST REFLECT THE THEMES OF THE SHOW

On a weekly basis, the photos submitted for each of the themes will be posted on First United Methodist Church's website (www.fumcschenectady.org) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/fumcschenectady). You may go to either of these sites to vote for the photo or photos that you think best reflect the themes. You may also vote if you visit the show in person. Please vote only once for any given photo.

3. VISIT THE SHOW on EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 12 (8:30 - 10 AM and 11:00 - 12 NOON)

On Easter Sunday, April 12, as many of the photos as possible will be on display at First United Methodist Church of Schenectady. You are invited to view the photos from 8:30 to 10 am and from 11:00 am to 12 noon on Easter. Voting will be open during viewing hours. Light refreshments will be served.

From the Church Council Chair

Church Council continues to make progress towards healing while simultaneously ensuring that the missions and ministries of the church function. Rev. Jane Baker has graciously devoted her time and talent by leading the body in meaningful discernment towards the future. I want to take this opportunity to remind everyone that the Church Council does not meet in executive session and is open for all to attend. While only members will have a vote, all are welcome and are encouraged to attend and exercise their voice. If you wish to bring a certain matter or motion forward, please reach out to me at least two weeks prior to the session so that I can ensure it is placed on the agenda for action. This is to allow members of the Council time to review the item being presented.

On February 11th, the Church Council met and took several actions that I wish to draw to your attention. The first and most important was to pass the Current Expense budget referred from Finance. The final step in the 2020 budget process will be the Church Conference on Sunday, March 8th, at 12:30. The budget is very detailed and took months to compile. The Church Council thanked the Finance Committee for its hard work. It is notable that the budget contains no cuts to employed staff time or pay.

The Investment Committee, a sub-committee of the Trustees, brought a matter through the Trustees concerning the accessing of investment principal to balance the deficit as a stop-gap measure. At the time of publication, this committee will have held a second hour presentation detailing more fully the motion that will be brought forward on March 8th at Church Conference. I will leave out the details of the motion and instead mention that Church Council affirmed this work and supports the committee in its continuation of the work.

In December 2019, the Church Council formed an ad hoc sub committee after the Charge Conference referred a motion regarding the withholding of apportionments back to Church Council. The Council placed the Financial Secretary, Finance Chair, Pastor, Lay Leaders, and a Trustee on the committee and decided it was to be chaired by the Church Council Chair. In its February 2020 meeting, the Council passed a motion from Intersectional Justice that was affirmed by the ad hoc committee to postpone future action of the ad hoc committee due to the large changes that have been made at the Annual Conference and to the potential for large changes that may result from the May 2020 General Conference. While the ad hoc committee was not dissolved, its work will be on hold temporarily.

As mentioned earlier, on Sunday, March 8th, at 12:30 we will be holding a Church Conference. By discipline a Church Conference can be called by the Church Council, its Chair, or the Pastor and must be approved by the District Superintendent. In the process of its approval, an agenda must be submitted. The purpose of a church conference is to handle matters that Church Council feels require full congregational vote and that have not been handled at the Charge Conference. This year we have not been granted the typical "open agenda" that we have been in years past. The agenda that was approved by the District Superintendent is to include the presentation of the 2020 budget, the proposed change to investment policy from the Trustees as regarding its use in the budget process, and relevant committee reports. The Chairs of all committees will continue to give reports from 2019, however they will be unable to bring forward any motions or matters for discussion to the floor. This limitation is also extended to members of the congregation in attendance. If you have a matter that you were planning on bringing forward from the floor, please reach out to me and I will work with you on the best course of action. While this cannot be the inclusion of your concern in the agenda, I will do everything in my power given the limitations specified by the District Superintendent to handle the addressing of the concern.

Your Church Council is dedicated to serving you, this church, and this community. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns regarding its action. Our next meeting is on March 10 at 7:30 pm and I hope to see many of you in attendance.

—John Daniel Falotico, Church Council Chair



Women's Luncheon

The next Women's Fellowship Luncheon will be on Wed., March 18th, at 12 noon at the Glen Eddy in Niskayuna. All church women – friends as well as members – are welcomed, so come if you can and let's enjoy time together. Lunch is \$17; no tax or tip. So that we can let the Glen Eddy staff know how many people to expect, please try to RSVP by March 16th (although last minute is ok) to Carolyn Micklas at cmicklas@twc.com or 518-374-7742. Mark your calendar...hope to see you there!



The next Men's Breakfast Fellowship will be held on Wednesday, March 25th, at 8:30 am at the Blue Ribbon Diner on upper State St. All men are welcome.

The Sunday School Scoop

March 2020



March 1	Family Sunday— No Sunday School.
March 8	10:40 am—Sunday School
March 15	10:40 am—Children's Music Time: <i>Singing and Orff!</i>
March 22	10:40 am—Sunday School
March 29	10:40 am—Sunday School



Youth Fellowship

All youth (ages 13-18) are welcome to gather on Saturdays at 11:00 am to enjoy fun fellowship together in the Roof Lounge.

On Saturday, March 28th, we'll meet at 9:15 am to help serve a free Community Brunch at our neighbors at Emmanuel Friedens Church.

During Lent:

Labyrinth in Fellowship Hall

The Labyrinth: We have a wonderful opportunity to share the benefits of an ancient art form with those within our church and city community. We will be providing space and time for folks to explore and move through a series of circular paths that help to encourage one to center and balance energy forces within our mind, body and soul. It is a series of concentric paths that lead us into the center for a meditative journey and then allow one to travel outwards, bringing our thoughts out into the consciousness of life. There is no wrong way to travel and no one will get lost along the journey. There is only one way in to the heart of the labyrinth and one way out. The traveler is encouraged to focus in on a thought or prayer as a way on clearing one's mind for the journey. The labyrinth has been attributed to helping to decrease stress, increase focus and improve energy levels.

This opportunity will be available through lent on Wednesdays from 11am to 2pm and 4pm to 6pm in the late afternoon starting on the 4th of March. The

labyrinth will also be available after services on Sunday, March 1st and 15th. Entering First UMC from Chapel Street entrance will help you find and access the labyrinth which will be available in fellowship hall during the weeks of lent.



Signup for Summer Camp!

The 2020 United Methodist Church Summer Camp colored brochures will soon arrive, which lists all the wonderful camps available for children, youth, and families. Keep an eye out for them in the narthex/lobby, or view it on-line: www.campsandretreats.org.

Lenten Services: Candlelight Gatherings

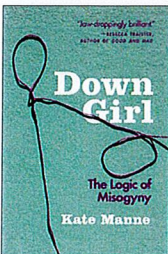
During Lent, everyone is invited to gather with our neighbors at Emmanuel Frieden's Church just up the street on Nott Terrace for these Wednesday Lenten Services:

Dates: **March 11, 18, 25 and April 1**
Time: **7:00 PM**
Service: **Prayerful times of quiet; shared music; Readings; and reflection**

Gather for Book Discussion Saturday, March 14

Our February/March recommended book is entitled, **"Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny"** by Kate Manne. All are welcome to pick up a copy of the book, read it and join the book discussion held on March 14 at 10:00am.

Online description: Misogyny is a hot topic, yet it's often misunderstood. This book is an exploration of misogyny in public life and politics by the moral philosopher and writer Kate Manne. It argues that misogyny should not be understood primarily in terms of the hatred or hostility some men feel toward all or most women. Rather, it's primarily about controlling, policing, punishing, and exiling the "bad" women who challenge male dominance. Manne examines events that set the stage for the 2016 US presidential election. Not only was the misogyny leveled against Hillary Clinton predictable in both quantity and quality, Manne argues it was predictable that many people



would be prepared to forgive and forget regarding Donald Trump's history of sexual assault and harassment. For this, Manne argues, is misogyny's oft-overlooked and equally pernicious underbelly: exonerating or showing "himpathy" for the comparatively privileged men who dominate, threaten, and silence women.

In Our Community...

► Interfaith Community of Schenectady—

The IFC invites all to gather Wednesday, Mar. 25, at the Islamic Center, 21 Lansing Rd. N. in Colonie for dinner (6:30pm; \$15) and a program (7:30; free) entitled "Marriage from Our Sources & What Makes It Work." For dinner reservation, call 518-370-2150.

► Home Furnishings Program—

The HFP, which operates within our church and provides good used household items to those in need in Schenectady, is especially in need of: loveseats, living room chairs, flatware, saucepans (medium & large), toasters, dish towels. Call 518-346-2444 to arrange for pickup or drop off.

► GCORR Offers Free Online Course—

Based off of the popular *Implicit Bias Workbook*, General Conference on Religion and Race has created an online course for anyone who is interested in learning and teaching others about implicit bias. This course is designed for you to take at your own pace and offers individual work or group work. The course provides entry points for learning about, thinking through, and transforming action regarding implicit bias. It is a completely self-paced online course - you decide when to start and when to finish. To take the course and/or learn more, go to: <http://www.gcorr.org/online-course-implicit-bias/>.

Concert: Violin Virtuoso ELIZABETH PITCAIRN Sunday, March 29 - 3:00 PM

On Sunday, March 29 at 3:00, First United Methodist Church will present a very special concert when we welcome concert violinist, Elizabeth Pitcairn along with her accompanist, Louise Thomas. Ms. Pitcairn has earned a stunning reputation as one of America's most beloved soloists.

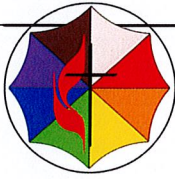


She performs with one of the world's most legendary instruments, the "Red Mendelssohn" Stradivarius violin of 1720, which is claimed to have inspired the Academy Award-winning film "The Red Violin." Ms. Pitcairn is featured on the 10th Anniversary edition of "The Red Violin" DVD in a special feature called "The Auction Block." The instrument, once owned by famed violinist Joseph Joachim appeared to vanish shortly after its creation. No one knows where the violin was or to whom it belonged for a period of two hundred years. The violin resurfaced in 1930s Berlin and was purchased by an heir to the great composer Felix Mendelssohn. In 1956 it was purchased by a New York industrialist who kept the instrument in impeccable condition. On Thanksgiving Day of 1990 the instrument went up for auction at Christie's in London and was won by her grandfather and given to Elizabeth as a gift. Her performance here at First UMC will include works by Saint-Saëns, Mozart, Beethoven and Clara Schumann as well as many virtuoso show pieces.

In conjunction with our concert, Proctors Theater will be hosting two showings of "The Red Violin" on Thursday, March 26, at 12 noon and at 7 pm. Elizabeth Pitcairn will be present only at the 7 pm showing for a brief Question and Answer period, and a demonstration of the instrument. Tickets can be purchased from Proctors Theater for \$9 adults, \$6 seniors/students for the 12:00 showing of the movie or \$9 for all tickets at 7:00 pm. Seating will be limited to 80 people per show so advance ticket sales are suggested. You can also reserve and purchase tickets from Shelley Frisoni at JustShelley@Yahoo.com or at 518-852-9962; or by talking to her at church.

For more information about the concert, please call the church office at 518-374-4403.

—Nancy Walden
For the Music Committee



Mission Moments

Delivered during Worship

► The Social Community—The Nurturing Community

Delivered on January 26, 2020 by Elaine Troy

C. Human Sexuality

We affirm human sexuality as a sacred gift and acknowledge that sexual intimacy contributes to fostering the emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being of individuals and to nurturing healthy sexual relationships that are grounded in love, care and respect.

Human sexuality is a healthy and natural part of life that is expressed in wonderfully diverse ways from birth to death. It is shaped by a combination of nature and nurture: heredity and genetic factors on the one hand, and childhood development and environment on the other. We further honor the diversity of choices and vocations in relation to sexuality such as celibacy, marriage and singleness.

We support the rights of all people to exercise personal consent in sexual relationships, to make decisions about their own bodies and be supported in those decisions, to receive comprehensive sexual education, to be free from sexual exploitation and violence, and to have access to adequate sexual health care.

D. Marriage

Within the church, we affirm marriage as a sacred, lifelong covenant that brings two people of faith into union with one another and into deeper relationship with God and the religious community.

While The United Methodist Church does not recognize marriage as a sacrament, we celebrate and cherish this union as an expression of the couple's faith, grounded in their relationship with God and one another. Marriage thus reflects a continued willingness to grow together in Christ and a commitment to cultivate a covenantal bond that encompasses intimacy, grace and love.

As members of the larger society, we also affirm the importance of civil marriage, the legal recognition of domestic unions by the state. Such legal recognition is vital for guaranteeing family stability and the orderly regulation of inheritances, and for providing assurance that spouses and children are afforded all the rights, benefits, and protections to which they are entitled.

Basic Rights and Freedoms

I. Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities

Because all people are of sacred worth and certain basic human rights are due to everyone, we are committed to supporting the equal rights, liberties and protections of all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. We see clear issues of equality and justice in protecting the rightful claims of those with shared material resources, pensions, guardian relationships, mutual powers of attorney, and other lawful claims typically attendant to contractual relationships that involve shared contributions, responsibilities and liabilities, and equal protection before the law. Moreover, because in many countries sexual and gender minorities are disproportionately impacted by social stigmas, discrimination, coercion and violence, we call on churches, governments, businesses, and civic organizations to do all in their power to combat such unjust treatment and to promote equal rights and protections for all.

<https://www.umcjustice.org/documents/124>



► News from Nicaragua

Delivered on February 16, 2020 by Jan Huston

Several members of this church donated to Acción Médica Cristiana as an alternative Christmas gift. Acción Médica Cristiana (AMC) is Christian Medical Action in Nicaragua – the agency with which our missionary friend, Belinda Forbes, is affiliated. Belinda has sent a thank you to the church as well as information about how the money will be used.



It will be used to update a health post in a village named La Pita Coyolar in the mountainous Matagalpa area. It is a rural community 9.3 miles northeast of the nearest town. There are 223 families for a total population of 1047 residents, almost a third under 15 years of age. The community covers a 3 mile radius and most families live from subsistence farming. The closest health post is 5 miles from the community where a doctor and nurse provide services 5 days a week. There is no other public or private health care available. There is no public transportation system; most people travel by foot or horseback, or on a minibus that enters the community once a day.

A building in La Pita was used up until 3 years ago by community health leaders who were trained by the Nicaraguan Ministry of Health. Community health leaders are often the first and only response to a primary health issue and are the general promoters and liaisons for health. The building fell into such disrepair that it can no longer be used in its current condition. The roof leaks, the dirt floor is cracked, and windows and doors do not provide security to the structure. There is no waiting area for patients and the wooden slats that serve as walls are deteriorating. Belinda sent photos that Eileen Deming has posted for us. Most community members must travel on foot and endure heavy rain or harsh sun. And the most vulnerable, women and children, are often subject to assault and harassment on the way.

The community met to agree that closer access to health care is a priority. They appealed to both AMC and the Dept. of Health for funding to renovate the building and create a space for clinical health care services as well as health education and promotion. The total cost of the project is \$7716. The donations from our alternative gift giving will be applied to this project.



AMC is currently carrying out a project in maternal and child health in La Pita. The reactivation of the health post will guarantee more successful and sustainable results of this project by providing a space where community health promoters can meet and work to offer health education information and carry out health awareness campaigns to the population. I've put detailed information about the building plans, costs, and anticipated results on the bulletin board outside the library.

Your alternative gift giving is making a difference in the health of people in Nicaragua!! Thank you!

KEEPING OUR COVENANT PROMISES - January 2020

PRAYERS - PRESENCE - GIFTS - SERVICE

OUR PRAYERS

Our Christian support is extended to:

Jan Butts	Robert Ramonowski
Eileen Deming	Rev. Bill Rowe
June Dieffenbach	Heather Phillips Sands
Liz Fogle	Dick Smith
Roark Frisoni	Marylois Tupper
Jen & Merrick Fuller	Joe & Barbara Waring
Jan Guzior	Doug Wood
Courtney & Jack McEwan	
Mary Neville	
Nancy Oldow	

And to: Belinda Forbes, our Nicaragua missionary; those who are grieving; and VIM Teams

We celebrate with:

The Frisoni Family as son, Roark, is now in maintenance Chemo.

OUR PRESENCE

Date	Worship
January 5	62
January 12	63
January 19	40
January 26	59

OUR GIFTS

Date	Amount
January 5	\$1,982.00
January 12	5,280.00
January 19	663.00
January 26	2,484.00



OUR SERVICE

Date

- 1/5 —Youth Service: Led Epiphany Worship Service
- 1/11—Book discussion: *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander
- 1/12—New ministry team formed & held first meeting: Unused Space Committee
 - New weekly study began, open to all, entitled, "Living the Questions 2.0"
- 1/14—Gathered for meeting of Welcoming/Reconciling UM Churches @ Alplaus UMC
- 1/15—Distributed personal care items to those in need through our SUSTIAN Ministry Program
- 1/19—Celebrated *Human Relations Day* during Worship, which included special collection (\$79)
- 1/22—Served supper at the City Mission of Schenectady
- 1/25—Youth Service: Served free Community Brunch
- Jan. —Continue to prepare & serve Sunday Community Breakfast, free to all: # served=137; # volunteers ea. week=13
 - Mission Moments during Worship: Pop Tops for Shriners Hospital; Human Relations Day; Intergenerational VIM Trip; and UMC Social Principles
 - Sunday 2nd Hour offered: Ministry Team meetings; and Forum: *Conversation on New Proposal*

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



The Spire

**First United Methodist Church
603 State Street
Schenectady, New York 12305**

Serving Schenectady for over 230 Years

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

U.S. Postage Paid
Albany, NY
PERMIT 773

NEXT SPIRE MAILED:

March 26; articles due Mar. 15

Holy Week Schedule

PALM SUNDAY—April 5

10:00 AM Worship

11:30 AM Flowering Plant Sale

MAUNDY THURSDAY—April 9

7:00 PM Worship @ FUMC

GOOD FRIDAY—April 10

HOLY SATURDAY—April 11

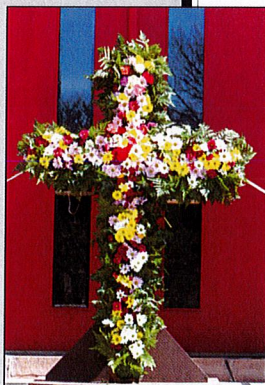
1:00 PM Worship

EASTER SUNDAY—April 12

10:00 AM Worship

Floral Cross Creation

Lenten Photo Show



'Like' us on Facebook

[http://www.facebook.com/
FUMCSchenectady](http://www.facebook.com/FUMCSchenectady)

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

E-Newsletter

To receive *The Spire* via email, please
contact the office with your email address.

WEBSITES AND E-MAIL ADDRESSES

First United Methodist Church—

E-Mail: fumcschenectady@yahoo.com

Website: www.fumcschenectady.org

Albany District Office—

E-Mail: albanydistrict@unyumc.org

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

Upper New York Annual Conference—

Website: www.unyumc.org