

THE

Spire

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Accessible

Vol. 81 No. 9

The Reverend Sara E. Baron

January 2018

FUTURE SUNDAYS

- 8:30** Community Breakfast Fellowship
9:00 Books available 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/Events
—Needlework Ministry
—Sunday School
—Forums
—Ministry Team Meetings (2nd Sun.)
7:00 Study: "Abundance Study"

Worship Text:

- Jan. 7 **Epiphany**
Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12
Jan. 14 **Baptism of the Lord**
Human Relations Day
Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11
Jan. 21 Psalm 62:5-10; Mark 1:14-20
Jan. 28 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

Second Hour Programs/Events:

- Jan. 7 **United Methodist Women (UMW)**
Jan. 14 **Intersectional Justice Committee**
Jan. 21 **Sunday School resumes**
Jan. 28 **Church Scavenger Hunt**

Young Adult Game Night Sunday, December 31

Join the young adults for an evening of fun! You may even leave learning something new about the Bible! We will be playing "A Game for Good Christians." Feel free to bring a snack to share. Bringing a snack is not a requirement to attend... a willingness to have fun and a sense of humor is. Come gather December 31 from 7:00-9 pm in Wesley Lounge!



Epiphany Sunday January 7, 2018

This year, our youth will lead the 10am Sunday Worship Service on Jan. 7th as we celebrate Epiphany together.

New Bible Study begins Sunday, January 7

Our Sunday Night Bible Study continues, now with a new theme: Abundance. For several months, in this church, and through Advent, we've been talking about "Enough." That theme allows us to distance ourselves from the myth of scarcity. In truth though, we are people of a God of Abundance. This study will continue to dispel the myth of scarcity, but more so will remind us of the abundance God gives us. This may lead to questions about where the abundance is hoarded, and where it is kept from being shared. Everyone is welcome. Gather in Wesley Lounge from 7-8:30 pm.

Enjoy Fellowship... before & after Worship



► **Downtown Community Breakfast** is served 8:30-9:30 AM in Fellowship Hall weekly except the first Sunday of each month, free of charge.

► **Books for Children & Adults** available during the breakfast from 9:00-9:30 AM in Fellowship Hall.

► **Second Cup Café** is held in the library at 9:30 AM and offers coffee and the newspaper.

► **Coffee Fellowship** is held in Wesley Lounge following Worship. Come gather among friends!



From Our Pastor



I once had a cool set up wherein I got to read to pre-school kids once a week. During one of those reading times, the staff asked me to read “Chicken Little” and had prepared the kids to ask me if I thought “Chicken Little” had acted appropriately. I hereby beg your forgiveness for removing all of the poetry and rhythm of the story in this retelling. The story is of a personified chicken who through foresight and hard work plants wheat, harvests it, has it ground into flour, and bakes bread. At each point in the story she asks other (personified) animals to help her in her work, but they don't. At the end of the story, they ask her to share her bread, and she doesn't.

The children asked me for my opinion, as a pastor, about if Chicken Little acted appropriately. Without hesitation, I responded, “Oh, yes! For sure! Anything else would be enabling.” The teachers gasped in response. Apparently this particular book and question had set up many a clergy person before me, and they'd given the opposite response. (I'm used to this.) Each of the others had suggested that the appropriate action was embodied grace, and that meant sharing.

Truth be told, I see their point. Furthermore, I've never seen any part of real life as simplistic as the “Chicken Little” story makes things out to be. At the same time, I think there is a difference between grace and enabling! Grace is unconditional love, reflecting God's own love for God's people. We are most certainly supposed to strive to live grace at all times and in all places. (See: sanctification.) Enabling, as I'm using it, means to act to resolve a particular problem (like hungry farm animals) in a way that actually does harm by exacerbating underlying problems.

Quite often one of the greatest struggles of families that have a family member who struggles with addiction is figuring out what constitutes grace and what constitutes enabling. Or, if we're honest, a lot of life raises that question. Parenting sure does! So do most acts of care-giving and even acts of charity. It is a wonderful thing whenever we can be sure that we're acting on the side of grace, with no accidental enabling happening outside of our awareness.

A third concept is that of “empowerment.” It is a form of grace, and the good intention behind accidental enabling. Wikipedia says “The term empowerment refers to measures designed to increase the degree of autonomy and self-determination in people and in communities in order to enable them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way, acting on their own authority. It is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights”

For many centuries, likely even most of two millennia, the church's clergy have claimed authority and power for themselves. The result has been a series of misconceptions, including that clergy are “holier” than laity, that clergy SHOULD hold more power and authority than laity, or even that the role of clergy is to “correct” laity. This has done great harm to the kingdom of God and to God's beloved people.

I believe that the work of the church is to build the kingdom of God. I believe that the work of the clergy, at this time at least, is to empower the laity to build the kingdom of God. The only reason the laity need to be empowered is because their power has previously been taken from them! That is to say, my work is to build up, strengthen, and enable the work that all of you are called to do and passionate about getting done. So, if you are dreaming a dream, or feeling and urging from God, and you need some help finding out how to make it happen, let me know. That's what I'm here for.

— Sara

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empowerment> accessed 12/19/2017



Notes of Gratitude

Dear Friend,

On behalf of the Upper New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, we extend sincere thanks to you for your generous contribution of \$1605 towards the "UMCOR Disaster Response." It is because of donations like yours that the Conference is able to continue its ministry in reaching out with loving support to all neighbors in need both near and far. It is a blessing to have you working with us as we live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ each and every day....

—Grace & Peace, Bill Gottschalk-Fielding
Director of Connectional Ministries

Dear Friends of HFP,

On behalf of the Board of the Schenectady Home Furnishings Program, thank you for your financial gift in support of our program. Your support plays a vital role in our ability to fulfill our mission to provide basic home furnishings to families and individuals in transition and need throughout Schenectady County....Thank you again, for helping us help others.

—Sincerely, Wayne J. Brule, Treasurer

Dear Friends,

I am enclosing a check...for a copy of the DVD of the John Dominic Crossan program on September 23. I was not able to come to Sunday's service, but I heard his sermon was excellent....I have also enclosed a check...as a donation to the Carl Lecture Fund. The program on Sept. 23 was excellent, and I hope I will be able to attend further programs that the fund makes possible. Thank you also for your warm hospitality.

—Blessings, Edith Leet



Altar Flowers

We are grateful for the Sunday Altar Flowers given in December:

| | |
|-------|---|
| 12/3 | in memory of Don & Shirley Krauter |
| 12/17 | in celebration of Christmas |
| 12/24 | in celebration of Christmas |
| 12/25 | in celebration of the baptism of Leona Jeanne Kempf |

To give altar flowers, contact Ann Farrell at 518-867-7654 or by email: fumcflowers@gmail.com.

Membership News

Friends on the Move—

Warm wishes are extended to members of our church family, who recently moved:

Emily & Howard Hart

141 Glen Eddy Drive
Niskayuna, NY 12309

Rev. Lee & Bonnie Totten Adkins, Jr.
100 Eastview Terrace, Apt. 215
Middlebury, VT 05753

Unknown Addresses—

Please call the office if you know how we can contact the below members. Thank you.

Class of 2018: Douglas Disbrow
Y. Keen Lee

Class of 2019: Andrew Baker
Amy Ganje
Daniel Ganje

Class of 2020: Willie Balkum

A Stephen Ministry Moment

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen, nor touched...but are felt in the heart.

—Helen Keller
(1880-1968)



**Pick up your
Box!**

Boxed offering envelopes for 2018 are available for pickup from the table in the narthex/lobby. If you would like a box and don't find one with your name, please use the sign-up sheet or contact the church office.



Programs Resume

Here's some January program dates:

- **Handbell Choir Rehearsal**—Jan. 3
- **City Mission Meal** —Jan. 3
- **Chancel Choir Rehearsal**—Jan. 4
- **Youth Group**—Jan. 6
- **United Methodist Women**—Jan. 7
- **NEW Bible Study Series**—Jan. 7
- **Church Night**—Jan. 9
- **Sunday School**—Jan. 21

"Office Hours"

Pastor Sara and SPPRC are offering a new way to connect. We know that many church members want a moment to chat with Sara, but don't want to take up too much of her time. While people are welcome to contact the office and schedule particular times to chat as needed, we are also going to offer consistent "Office Hours" wherein people can drop by and know they can find the pastor in AND available. The plan is to offer this from 2-4PM on Mondays, although nothing is perfect and it is worth double checking the church calendar before heading over, just in case! The church calendar can be found in the bulletin, the Spire, or on the website.



Church Night resumes

Tuesday, January 9

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

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

Notices will go out to teams scheduled to meet.

Serve Meal at City Mission

It's our church's turn to serve a meal at the City Mission. They have a new software signup process. Each individual volunteering to serve at City Mission is asked to create an account and sign-up in advance for each meal date they will be attending.

To signup 5 days or more ahead, go to: <http://firstumc.citymissionofscheneectady.volunteerhub.com>.

To signup within the 5 days prior to serving, go to: <http://www.schenectadycitymission.com> then click "volunteer" and find FUMC's dates to serve, e.g., Wednesday, Jan. 3. Other volunteers may be solicited to sign-up during this time as well.

If you don't have a computer or have a problem signing up, please call Lori at 518-346-2275 ext. 301; give your name and date(s) you want to serve. The 2018 Wednesday dates assigned to our church to serve are: Jan. 3, May 30, Aug. 22, and Dec. 19.

Arrival time is no later than 5 p.m. You will be required to wear a hair net if you are not wearing a hat. Please let Lois Atkinson (518-377-8249) know if you have signed up for an upcoming meal. Thank you.



United Methodist Women (UMW) meet Sun., Jan. 7

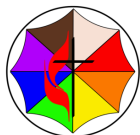
Recently, our United Methodist Women's group of First UMC Schenectady voted to donate \$1,000 of the Mary Carleton Bequest Fund to help assist relief efforts in Puerto Rico or US Virgin Islands. We're grateful for Mary Carleton and her family's compassion to want to help others through UMW mission work. In addition, arrangements are being made for a couple of guest-speaker events to inform the congregation about a couple of issues, including discussions on Water Sustainability in urban settings, and Human Trafficking. These events will be open and free to everyone.

The next UMW meeting and potential guest-speaker event will be Sunday, January 7, at 11:30 am. Consider joining in!

Our UMW officers for 2018 are: Shirley R.; Kristen J.; Alice N.; Sue L.; Kathy P.; Jan H.; and Amanda T.

Like to do Needlework?

The Needlework Ministry program (knitting, crocheting, sewing) creates hats and scarves for various causes as well as prayer shawls/blankets. If you wish to participate and want to learn more, please contact one of the coordinators, Eileen Deming or Alice Nash.



January 2018

First United Methodist Church, Schenectady

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|--|--|---|------------------|--|
|  <p>Epiphany</p> | <p>1</p> <p>Happy New Year!</p> <p>Church Office Closed Public Schools Closed</p> | <p>2</p> <p>7:00 PM Trustees</p> | <p>3</p> <p>1:00 PM Altar Guild 2:30 PM Lay Leaders 5:00 PM Serve Meal at City Mission 6:45 PM Handbell Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>4</p> <p>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>5</p> | <p>6</p> <p>10:30 AM Youth Group: Epiphany Service Rehearsal & Movie</p> |
| <p>7 Epiphany / Family Sunday</p> <p>9:30 AM Second Cup Cafe 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 11:30 AM 2nd Hour Program 12:00 PM UMW Meeting 7:00 PM NEW Bible Study</p> | <p>8</p> <p>2:00 - 4:00 PM Pastor—Office Hours</p> | <p>9</p> <p>9:30 AM SUSTAIN Ministry: Sorting 2:00 PM Staff Mtg.</p> <hr/> <p>Church Night 6:30 PM Ministry Teams Meet 7:30 PM Council</p> | <p>10</p> <p>12:00 - 1:00 PM SUSTAIN Ministry</p> <p>6:45 PM Handbell Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>11</p> <p>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>12</p> | <p>13</p> <p>10:30 AM Youth Service Project</p> |
| <p>14 Baptism of the Lord / Human Relations Day</p> <p>8:30 AM Breakfast 9:30 AM Second Cup Cafe 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 11:30 AM 2nd Hour Program 11:45 AM Intersectional Justice Committee 7:00 PM Bible Study</p> | <p>15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Observance</p> <p>Church Office Closed Public Schools Closed</p> <p>7:00 PM Staff Pastor / Parish Relations Committee</p> | <p>16</p> <p>2:00 PM Staff Mtg.</p> | <p>17</p> <p>6:45 PM Handbell Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>18</p> <p>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>19</p> | <p>20</p> <p>10:30 AM Youth Group & Parents Meeting</p> |
| <p>21</p> <p>8:30 AM Breakfast 9:30 AM Second Cup Cafe 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Fellowship 11:30 AM 2nd Hour Program —Sunday School 7:00 PM Bible Study</p> | <p>22</p> <p>2:00 - 4:00 PM Pastor—Office Hours</p> | <p>23</p> <p>9:30 AM SUSTAIN Ministry: Sorting 2:00 PM Staff Mtg.</p> | <p>24</p> <p>8:30 AM Men's Fellowship Breakfast 9:00 am Stephen Ministers 12:00 - 1:00 PM SUSTAIN Ministry 6:45 PM Handbell Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>25</p> <p>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>26</p> | <p>27</p> <p>9:15 AM Youth Service: Serve Free Community Brunch @ Emmanuel Friedens</p> |
| <p>28</p> <p>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 —Church Scavenger Hunt —Sunday School 7:00 PM Bible Study</p> | <p>29</p> <p>2:00 - 4:00 PM Pastor—Office Hours</p> | <p>30</p> <p>2:00 PM Staff Mtg. 7:00 PM Trustees</p> | <p>31</p> <p>6:45 PM Handbell Choir Rehearsal</p> |  | | |

**We are in the season of EPIPHANY (green) -
During Epiphany, we celebrate the ways God is revealed through Jesus.**

Youth News

The youth would like to thank everyone for their support with their first fundraiser....the Holiday Cookie bake, which totaled \$422! Thanks again to everyone who contributed to its success. The youth have several other fundraisers plan for the coming months. The money from the fundraisers goes towards their mission trips to help with the expenses for the trips.



The youth have started connecting and getting acquainted with the youth from Emmanuel Friedens Church. FUMC youth hosted Emmanuel Friedens youth at a Christmas Party at FUMC in the Youth Lounge on December 16. It was a great success and both youth groups are starting to explore ways to do combine service projects in

the very near future.

FUMC Youth are looking forward to their first Intergenerational VIM Trip coming up the first week in April of 2018. They are looking forward to sharing their enthusiasm and energy for service, and love of all God's people with adult members of our FUMC congregation.

FUMC Youth and Youth Leaders would like to express their gratitude for having the space, support and guidance of all the members of the congregation as they journey together to be a witness of God's love and acceptance for all His people in our community.

Youth Schedule for January 2018:

Saturday, January 6 @ 10:30 am: Rehearsal for Epiphany Service on January 7. Youth will meet in youth lounge. Youth meeting and movie afterwards.

Sunday, January 7 @ 10:00 am: Youth will lead the congregation at the worship service. Youth will meet at 9:00 in the youth lounge.

Saturday, January 13 @ 10:30 am: Youth service project: meet in the youth lounge

Saturday, January 20 @ 10:30 am: Youth and Parents meet in the youth lounge

Saturday, January 27 @ 9:15 am: Youth service project: Serving Community Brunch at Emmanuel Friedens. Meet in church parking lot at 9:15. Youth meeting afterwards.

—Sylvester Doyer, Youth Leader

50th ANNIVERSARY Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Service Sunday, January 14, 2018



Sch'dy County Community College
78 Washington Ave.

2018 Theme:

"Together We Win Love for Humanity"

This special celebration service of Dr. King's birthday, sponsored by the Schenectady County Human Rights Commission, will take place at 2:30 pm Sunday, January 14—*Human Relations Day*—at SCCC. The keynote speaker will be Michael A. Blake, State Assembly Member and DNC Vice Chair. All are welcome. For more details, including singing in the King Choir, contact the Commission at 518-377-3823.

Back by Popular Demand (Save the date!)

Our second hour program on Sunday, **January 28, 2018**, will be a church-wide scavenger hunt! You do not need to be able to walk the building to participate. But the knowledge you can provide to your team might just help your team to complete the hunt in the least amount of time.

Welcoming Ministries and the Archives & History Team have put together some great clues to help your team explore our building and our United Methodist heritage.

Come and show us what you know! Come and learn something new!

We will meet in Fellowship Hall at 11:30 a.m. and begin locking down the building for the event.

Please bring a snack to share.

MEN: Enjoy Breakfast!

The Men's Breakfast Fellowship meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at the Blue Ribbon Diner on upper State Street. The next gathering will be held on January 24th at 8:30 am. All men welcome.

The Sunday School Scoop

January 2018



| | |
|------------|---|
| January 7 | Epiphany Celebration 10:00 am —Our youth will lead Worship as we celebrate Epiphany together —Children remain for the service to Worship with their families |
| January 14 | Baptism of the Lord / Human Relations Day 10:00 am —Children remain for the full service to Worship with their families |
| January 21 | 10:00 am —Children remain for the service to Worship with their families 11:30 am — Sunday School |
| January 28 | 10:00 am —Children remain for the service to Worship with their families 11:30 am — Sunday School |



Sunday School News

For Worship, our children and youth remain for the full service to worship with their families. Sunday School will resume on January 21st.

We are so grateful for the work of Ally Clunn to support and teach our Sunday School for the past few years. She did great work! Now that Ally is on leave, we need some additional help! We are lucky enough to have a core group of teachers that can take the lead, but we need some extra loving and supportive adults who are willing to be the "second teacher" in the classroom. We're also going to change the time of Sunday School to after worship (during 2nd Hour), so teachers and students will be able to worship. If you are willing to teach, please let Pastor Sara know! Thanks!

Supplies needed

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

Items needed for January:

- Color Wheel
- Glue Sticks
- 3x3x1" squares of wood or Styrofoam
- sheets of craft foam
- cardboard or plastic tubes: 30, 26½, 22½, 20, 18 & 15" in length
- magnets
- red and green sticker dots
- "A picture book of Louis Braille" by David Adler

Items needed for February:

- 8x10 plexiglass sheets
- colored tissue paper



Volunteer Needed!

We need a volunteer to work with our Sunday School Teachers as the "Scheduler" for January to June. This would involve using the already existing Church School schedule, making calls to line up a second teacher to work with Amanda or Elaine (lead teachers, working out their own schedule), updating the current schedule with the new names, calling each teacher on Thursday to remind them of their teaching job on Sunday. Can you be this person for us? Talk to Sara!

Next Book Discussion

Saturday, January 29

The December/January book study will be on *Crazy Love* by Leslie Morgan Steiner. UMW and the Intersectional Justice Committee have teamed up to pick this book on abusive love out of Steiner's own life.



At 22, Leslie Morgan Steiner seemed to have it all: a Harvard diploma, a glamorous job at *Seventeen* magazine, a downtown New York City apartment. Plus a handsome, funny, street-smart boyfriend who adored her. But behind her façade of success, this golden girl hid a dark secret. She'd made a mistake shared by millions: she fell in love with the wrong person. Gripping and utterly compelling, *Crazy Love* takes you inside the violent, devastating world of abusive love. Conor said he'd been abused since he was a young boy, and love and rage danced intimately together in his psyche. Why didn't Leslie leave? She stayed because she loved him. Find out for yourself if she had fallen truly in love – or into a psychological trap. *Crazy Love* will draw you in -- and never let go.

Contact Kevin Nelson (kmichael07@yahoo.com) for a book (\$13) or you can get your own through a library or other source.

The discussion on this book will take place Saturday, January 27th at 10 AM at the church.

Book Discussion ALERT!

At our last Saturday book discussion (Intersectional Justice group) we reviewed the book entitled *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson. Our group found this book to be very thought provoking and enlightening. Some found it to be depressing and sad, while others saw the book as hopeful. Author John Grisham saw Bryan's work as 'fighting for the poor, the oppressed, the voiceless and the vulnerable.' We all felt the pull to respond to this book in some way. We are calling on others in our church family to speak with Kevin Nelson to loan you a copy of the book to read for yourself. We are hoping that when more of our church community has read the book we will have an opportunity for a larger group discussion. Our hope is that this can help move us towards a greater understanding of what *Justice for All* truly means.

Volunteers in Mission team to Northern Ireland!!

We have received the following letter from Pat and Mike Thomas of the Burnt Hills UMC with an invitation:

We are seeking volunteers to join our 2018 Belfast Peace Project Team. The project will last from May 7-19. The cost is \$2,700, leaving from and returning to Boston. This opportunity is sponsored by the Burnt Hills United Methodist Church. For information contact Pat or Mike Thomas at pmthomas6@mac.com or call 518-885-5889.

We work alongside the Peace makers of Belfast, Northern Ireland. We work side by side with 3 organizations and several church groups to continue their mission to foster peace and reconciliation between Belfast Communities. Our Belfast friends are committed to peace and our VIM project supports their efforts. We do some simple construction, gardening, helping disabled and/or elderly maintain their homes or apartments, work in soup kitchens, and work with the homeless. We also work with youth groups and community groups to support cross community activities.



Although "The Troubles" over there is in much need for healing, understanding and forgiving. Our activities help to support community organizations to insure the continuation of the work they are doing.

We also visit some of the beautiful countryside and historical sites in Northern Ireland to better understand "the Irish."

*Peace, Pat & Mike Thomas
VIM Leaders, Belfast Peace Project*

E-Newsletter available!

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



FUMC Intergenerational Volunteers in Mission Trip!!

People of all ages are welcome to be part of this team. There will be a variety of tasks so that everyone can participate!

Don't wait...applications are due February 11th!

Partial information was in last month's Spire. More details have been worked out. See below for more information.

When? Monday, April 2—Friday, April 6, 2018

Where? Mission Central, Mechanicsburg, PA. Mission Central is a United Methodist depot where disaster recovery supplies are collected from the Northeast before they are sent to those in need. See missioncentral.org.



What will the team do? There are a variety of tasks which include sorting and checking kits like the flood buckets and hygiene kits we have sent. The volunteer coordinator knows that our youth are enthused about the construction skills they have learned and says that springtime will offer an opportunity to use some of those skills. There might be needs in the community of Mechanicsburg. The coordinator suggested that we might want to take ½ day to sight see in the area. We plan to go to Gettysburg National Battlefield one afternoon.

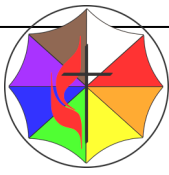
Where will the team stay? We will stay in the Silver Spring Retreat Center (silverspring.org), a beautiful facility 1.5 miles from Mission Central. It has 19 beds, another mattress, a full kitchen, a pleasant room with a TV, and meeting rooms. It can accommodate up to 30 people.

What will we eat? We will prepare most of our meals in the retreat center and make bag lunches to take for our work times.

How will we get there? Driving takes about 6 hours. Mechanicsburg is near Harrisburg. After we know who is going, we will decide whether we need to rent a van or whether we have enough cars and drivers.

How much will it cost? Cost will be \$200 for each team member. This will cover lodging, food, transportation, insurance, and admission to the Gettysburg Museum. The youth have been raising money which will be used for many of their expenses. If other people need financial help, talk with Sara Baron, or Sylvester Doyer or Jan Huston.

How can we learn more? Team leaders are Sylvester Doyer and Jan Huston. Applications can be obtained from either of them and are to be returned with a \$25 refundable deposit by Feb. 11, 2018. Full payment is due by March 11. A team meeting will be held in early March.



Alternative Giving Moments

► Church World Service and the Heifer Project

Delivered on December 3, 2017, by Elaine Troy

Let me begin by reminding you that these alternate ways to give money during the Holiday Season will have a greater impact on the lives of many than any gift of an ugly Christmas sweater.

Make your donation directly to CWS or Heifer, make the donation to FUMC designating your chosen charity – but make a donation. Cards honoring a person in whose name you make a gift are available in Fellowship Hall - starting today – you can pick one up when you come to attend the annual meeting at 12:30

CWS has worked for seven decades with one goal: building a world where there is enough for all. CWS affirms the power of individuals and communities to take ownership of their future.

CWS meets people where they are, helping them create solutions that can be maintained – and built on.

CWS believes that there is enough food, water and justice for everyone in our world. Their work to build alliances among faith groups, civil society, advocates and those in need, and provide programs and services that are impactful, is as critical now as it ever has been. In the past year alone, CWS made a positive difference in tens of thousands of lives in more than 30 countries.

We have already told you about the Flood buckets and Hygiene kits being provided by FUMC. And every May I talk to you about participating in the CROP walk, and supporting CWS and SICM in the effort to eradicate Hunger. At Christmas time, we choose to promote the CWS Blanket Program.

For only 10 dollars, you can give a blanket that will provide warmth but also provide **shelter**, **comfort** and **privacy**, and healing and hope wherever God's people may need care.



Another good agency to support is Heifer International

Heifer's mission is to work with communities to end world hunger and poverty, and to care for the Earth. Heifer links communities, and helps bring sustainable agriculture and commerce to areas with a long history of poverty. The gift of animals provides partners with both food and reliable income, as agricultural products such as milk, eggs and honey can be traded or sold at market.

Heifer's CORE model is Passing on the Gift. Families **share** the training they receive, and pass on the first female offspring of their livestock to another family. This extends the impact of the original gift, allowing a once impoverished family to become donors and full participants in improving their communities. The goal of every Heifer project is to help families achieve self-reliance.

Both these agencies have gift catalogs in hard copy and online. Please shop early and give generously. NO WRAPPING REQUIRED.

Alternative Giving Moments

► Home Furnishings Program

Delivered on December 10, 2017, by Lois Atkinson

As you know the Intersectional Justice Committee is encouraging all to consider “alternative giving” for Christmas and other celebrations. Today I’d like to talk about the Home Furnishings Program (HFP) of Schenectady County. Many of you are already aware of this organization since its office and small item distribution rooms are located in this building close to the Chapel Street door. They have been there for over 20 years.

Begun by a handful of Church Women United, the HFP has grown and this year is celebrating 50 years of service. Sadly the need continues and is increasing. The HFP accepts donations of good quality furniture and household items and gives them to low income Schenectady County residents free of charge who are transitioning due to emergency situations. Clients are assessed and referred by social services agencies. What is needed is what turns an empty apartment or room into a comfortable living space. In the last three years the HFP has delivered 1625 beds, one of the most needed items. Larger furniture is delivered by truck, smaller items for the kitchen, bedroom and bath are distributed to clients by appointment from FUMC.



The HFP has always been volunteer driven, depending totally on supporters among the Interfaith Community. Dozens of volunteers are involved in keeping this program running. We continue to need your furniture donations, your financial support, your volunteer time, and whatever talents you have to offer. Quilters are making and donating beautiful pot holders. Truck drivers are needed (lifting is not required). You may come and assemble or repair furniture, sort donations by unpacking and organizing.

We have persons that re-wire lamps. Groups organize sale items not appropriate for clients.

The HFP budget runs in the low \$60K's covering insurance, gas, and maintenance on the truck, modest salaries for the Program Director and Truck Run Coordinator, warehouse and office expenses.

Please consider a donation to maintain this organization into the next 50 years



KEEPING OUR COVENANT PROMISES—NOVEMBER 2017

PRAYERS - PRESENCE - GIFTS - SERVICE

OUR PRAYERS

Christian support is extended to:

The family & friends of Dale Swift, who passed away recently (Stephanie Kempf's grandfather)

The family & friends of Richard A. Slater, who passed away on December 1st (Bob Slater's uncle)

The family & friends of Stan Brown, who passed away on November 28th (Janet Collis' close friend)

The family & friends of Pauline Truax, who passed away recently (member of the late Sandy Long's family)

Christian support is also extended to:

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Rev. Lee Adkins, Jr. | Robyn Lonergan |
| Jan Butts | Jack & Courtney McEwan |
| Ross Corbett | Mary Neville |
| June Dieffenbach | Claire Racicot |
| Jen & Merrick Fuller | Shirley Rivest |
| Sandy Buschak-Jackson | Bob Slater |

OUR PRESENCE

| Date | Worship |
|-------------|---------|
| November 5 | 66 |
| November 12 | 65 |
| November 19 | 89 |
| November 26 | 68 |

OUR GIFTS

| Date | Amount |
|-------------|------------|
| November 5 | \$2,239.00 |
| November 12 | 1,994.00 |
| November 19 | 8,771.00 |
| November 26 | 2,316.00 |

COMMUNITY BREAKFAST

Those served this month:

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| Children (infant-17) | 39 |
| Adults (18-64) | 135 |
| Seniors (65+) | <u>77</u> |
| Total | 251 |



OUR SERVICE

11/4 —Youth Service Project: Painting the Pine Room

11/5 —Participated in SICM's harvest fundraiser dinner for the food pantry

11/8 —UMCOR Flood Buckets and Hygiene Kits assembled

11/12 —Participated in SICM's Concert of Thanksgiving fundraiser held at Schenectady High School

11/18 —Youth Service Project: Packed Thanksgiving boxes for neighbors in need

—Offered hospitality and hot chocolate to the public at the downtown Christmas Parade

11/19 —Giving Hope Sunday included our 2018 pledges of prayers, presence, witness, service & gifts/monetary support

—Participated in Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at local Sikh Temple; \$1,260 collected for SICM food pantry

11/22 —Served a meal at the City Mission of Schenectady

11/25 —Youth Service Project: Served free community brunch

11/26 —United Methodist Student Day celebrated with special offering (\$25)

Nov. —Continue to prepare and serve the Downtown Community Breakfast on Sundays, free and open to all

—Distributed items through our SUSTAIN Ministry to those in need

—Mission Moments presented: Stewardship Campaign; Community Breakfast; and SUSTAIN Ministry program

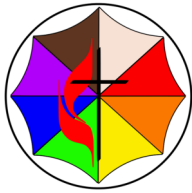
—Held collections for UMCOR towards relief efforts after the devastating hurricanes in the south (\$350)

—Collected Sunday School items for our children and youth

—Distributed books to children & adults on Sundays to help improve literacy in our community

—Sunday's 2nd hour offered: Needlework Ministry; United Methodist Women; and Ministry Team Meetings

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



The Spire

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

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NEXT SPIRE MAILED:

January 25; articles due Jan. 15

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



'Like' us on Facebook!

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

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Coming in early February:

Sunday, February 4

Family Sunday

**"Souper" Bowl Sunday
Spaghetti Luncheon**

Tuesday, February 6

SICM Assembly at FUMC

Sunday, February 11

Northern Ireland VIM Talk

Mark Your Calendar...

It's a Spaghetti Luncheon!

Sunday, February 4th

**after Worship
in Fellowship Hall**

Youth Fundraiser



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 of the United Methodist Church—

E-Mail: albanydistrict@unyumc.org

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