



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# THE BELL

1 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, New York 12061-1715

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 1      FEBRUARY 2009

*From our Lay Leader —*

I feel life is always trying to teach us, sometimes we have to take the opportunity to learn

This past June our family and Ken literally got “hit over the head” by life. As many of you know on June 25<sup>th</sup> Ken was driving down Rte. 4, on a beautiful afternoon and a tree out of nowhere fell on his car. I know God was with him and he only broke his neck. I don’t think life was teaching us anything but it was an opportunity to learn.

I did learn many things... the importance of family—bonds were reformed ... learning to say ‘yes’ to help ( I will admit, this is a work in progress),... and my faith grew. I could feel God holding my hand all summer – tightly, very tightly. Thank you God!

I also found myself waiting, wanting the winter months to come so we could heal and rest. So we could slow down and breathe. Now its winter. We are healing and resting – its nice. But I also find myself uneasy. We learned last summer that life can end, change on the most beautiful of days. Learning this, being comfortable again, trusting our lives with this, I am finding difficult. I am not as naïve as I was only a short year ago.

I have learned we can’t always plan. So much of our life we are planning, and to those of you who know me, know I am a planner, a detailed planner at that! We need to look at what we truly want in our life. Or as Dr. Phil asks, “If you died tonight what do you wish you would have accomplished?”

What’s in the back of your mind that you think about doing but always end up saying “someday, I can’t right now” Is it possibly reconnecting with someone from your past, traveling to a special place, starting or finishing something...saying something special to someone but always found the words too difficult... you know what it is for you.

I challenge everyone not to just plan but Do It! No Excuses. No - But ifs. No – I can’t now. Start doing that one thing you want to accomplish in your precious life and know that God is with you every step of the way, cheering you on and smiling with pride!

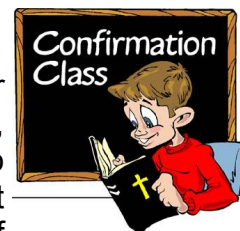
In God’s Love,

*Kris Johnson*

## SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

### Confirmation Class Begun

On January 27<sup>th</sup> our new Confirmation Class held its first meeting. At that time, our Coordinator of Children's Christian Education, Heidi Gran distributed schedules, information packets and review materials. Any youth eighth grade or above who would like to participate but did not attend the January meeting should contact Heidi to express your interest. We will plan to meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month through April. On May 9<sup>th</sup> we will have a one day retreat and Confirmation will take place on May 17<sup>th</sup>. If you would like more information, please contact Heidi Gran at 477-9693.



## OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO THE YOUTH

### A Busy Month for the Youth

The senior high youth started the month of December by delivering the knot blankets to Burmese refugees in Rensselaer. They returned to the church to make very creative gingerbread ornaments to give as gifts to individuals at nursing homes. Unfortunately, due to the weather on the 21st our youth was unable to deliver these ornaments. However, a few daring carolers braved the storm and made the delivery for them. Thank you. Both the Jr. High and Sr. High Youth enjoyed a Christmas celebration where they competed in a Christmas light decoration scavenger hunt and enjoyed a Christmas celebration in the youth lounge.

### Superbowl Subs are Back!

Superbowl subs will be sold after the service on Feb. 1st. If you did not have a chance to order your subs ahead of time, that's OK! We will be making extra subs that will be available for sale. You will have your choice of Turkey, Ham, Italian Mix and Cheese. Prices are \$5.00 for 1, \$9.00 for 2, \$12.00 for 3, \$15.00 for 4, and \$3.00 for each additional sub. Subs sell quickly so get them while you can and support your UMYF!

### UMYF Fun in January

The UMYF started the new year with a more relaxed atmosphere of meetings and discussing upcoming events. The Jr. high had the opportunity to participate in the first "tator night". Youth had a potato chip tasting contest, played games with potatoes, and we learned that if we let our stress get the best of us, we could feel like a smashed up bag of potato chips. The end of January both Jr. and Sr. high enjoyed a sledding trip. The day was cold but the sun was bright and trudging up the hills kept everyone warm. A fun time was had by all, some youth said it was the best sledding trip ever! A big thanks to Ellen who made us some delicious hot cocoa to warm up after sledding.

### Black History Month

February is Black History Month. The observance grew from Negro History Week, which was established in 1926. By increasing understanding of the black experience and teaching younger generations this rich heritage, we begin to actively overcome the ignorance and bigotry that fuel racism.

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## MORE FOR YOUTH

### Upcoming UMYF Events for February

Feb. 1st is Superbowl Sunday! Youth will be putting together subs during Sunday School and selling them after service. There will be no youth group that evening, enjoy the superbowl!

Feb. 8th is our next SOS. Youth will have the opportunity to participate in a presentation led by the group Gospel Train.

Feb. 15th will be a Sr. High meeting night

Feb. 22nd will be a Jr. high meeting night.

### Thinking ahead:

April 24th - 26th. 4word will take place in Syracuse, NY for youth in grades 7-12. As soon as final bus arrangements are announced, we will be looking for a final head count for this trip. So check your calendar and mark it down, you don't want to miss out!!

For more information on this or any other youth event, please see Laura Clark or Rachel Giso.

## UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

**Church Women United** – World Day of Prayer, Friday March 6, 2009

Place – Community Congregational Church of Clinton Heights.

Time – 10:00am – Registration \$1.00.

Celebration Service – 10:30am by the women of the Dutch Reformed Church of Muitzeskill.

Lunch – bring a bag lunch. Beverage and desert will be provided by the host church.

Annual Meeting\* will follow lunch.

Program will follow the Annual Meeting – by Women Clergy

\*Annual Meeting – This will be the last “World Day of Prayer” that will be celebrated in our area. It was voted at the “World Community Day” meeting in November 2008 that the Rensselaer Southern Tier Unit will disband at the end of the “May Friendship Day” Celebration 2009.

- Ruth H. Ostrander, Key Woman



## CHURCH NEWS

### Stewardship and Finance Plans Fundraiser

“Krause’s Homemade Candy Fundraiser just in time for Easter!! We are asking everyone to help us by taking orders for chocolates, jelly beans, peeps and more. The Krause company produces their delicious, high quality candies locally, in Colonie, and they generously participate in this fundraiser.

It’s easy-

1. Get an order form and colored photo sheet of 34 items for sale. Our committee will be passing them out after the service on February 8 and 15. Contact the office if you need one mailed to you.
2. Ask your family, friends and co-workers to purchase this special candy for Easter gifting.
3. Return the supplied envelope with the completed form and a check for the total amount made payable to First United Methodist Church with “Candy” in the memo. Return by March 1 to the office or to a committee member.
4. Pick up your candy order after the service on March 29 or April 5.

We look forward to a successful sale with a little help from each of you.

(The following was intended for the January issue of the BELL. Because of the information it contains, it is being printed this month even though our Pastor will have returned from her spiritual renewal leave about the same time you read this. Ed.)

### *From the Pastor's Desk*

#### **Riptide Strategies**

Many years ago, I had an opportunity to go to Hawaii. It was an incredible experience. The beauty of the ocean, the extravagant colors of the flowers and birds, and the warm, sultry breezes were spectacular. We saw hula dancers, Don Ho singing "Tiny Bubbles", and the now extinct, Diamond Head volcano. One of the events that remains vividly impressed in my mind, was when I was snorkeling in Hanauma Bay, and got caught in a riptide. It seemed the harder I tried to swim for shore, the more exhausted I got and the more I kept losing ground. Then I remembered that the thing to do was not panic, but relax and swim in another direction. That worked.

Sometimes, in ministry, particularly when one is feeling exhausted, it feels like being caught in a riptide. The harder we try to stay on course, the further we get from shore. That's when we ministers need to remember the lessons of surviving a riptide. We too need to take some time, relax, and swim in another direction for awhile.

By the time you read this I will be starting a one month spiritual renewal leave from pastoral duties at First. This time is intended to be a time for reflection, rekindling the spirit, and deepening my own spiritual life. Our United Methodist Book of Discipline encourages pastors to take a one month leave every four years. Since it has been fifteen years since I have done this, my heart, soul and mind tell me it is long overdue!

I thank the Staff/Parish Relations Committee and the Administrative Council for supporting and approving my request. I shall be back in my office on February 1<sup>st</sup>. I covet your prayers during this time, and I promise that you will be continually in my prayers. I know that you are in good hands with the Rev. Bob Long, who will fill in for me while I am away.

God bless you my friends and I look forward to communion with you on February 1<sup>st</sup>.

Blessings,

*Mari*

## **CHURCH NEWS**

### **"Loucene Trueworthy's Rememberances" Now Available**



**Church  
Memories  
-- Trueworthy**

Louise Pearce's book of Loucene Trueworthy's Rememberances about our Church and East Greenbush from early in the 20th Century has been reprinted by the Church History Committee. The book, based on conversations between Mrs. Pearce and Mrs. Trueworthy, was written in 2003. It now has been out of print for several years. However, it does contain much interesting information of past days in our Church. During recent interviews and discussions of our History and after the presentation at the October SOS diner, several people have asked how they might obtain a copy. Thus the reprinting at this time.

Copies of the Rememberances book are available for \$10.00 per copy. Copies may be purchased at the Church Office or from Jerry Dunn. Proceeds will go to the History Committee for use in print the forthcoming History of Our Church. Jerry Dunn can be contacted at 477-9132.

## MORE CHURCH NEWS

### A Big Thank You!

As the year 2008 came to an end, it seemed only fitting that we take a moment to say thank you to all those servants who quietly go about their business doing thankless tasks around the church. Even though a month of the new year has already gone by, it is still a good thing that we pause for a minute to express our appreciation. So here it is –

*For all who have: folded Bells and bulletins, weeded, planted, dusted, organized, created, encouraged, made phone calls, served, visited, ushered, counted, tallied, taught, led, prayed, substituted, covered the office, mowed the lawns, watched children, participated in worship, decorated, arranged flowers, repaired, painted, made coffee, and volunteered for events or served on committees. (Who did we miss?)*



### February to June 2009 SOS Events

Please join us for fun/family/fellowship at these Supper on Sunday programs. All events are from 5-6pm and are followed by a pot-luck supper. Please bring your smiles, a dish or two to share and beverages. MARK YOUR CALENDARS BEFORE YOU FORGET

**February 8:** The Gospel Train: American spiritual and religious songs from the Civil War to the Civil Rights era performed by Tom Lindsay and Michael Eck.

A donation basket will be at the back of the church to help cover the costs on that night.

**March 15:** NATIVED; The History and Culture of the Native Americans presented by David Cornelius. David Cornelius is of Mohawk Descent. He has a BA in colonial and Native American studies. A Donation basket will be set out to help cover the cost of the presentation.

**April 19:** Ideas include having a professional photographer come in to share their photos. More info will be posted later for this date.

**May 17:** Ideas include a garden theme workshop, cooking theme workshop, Bible Study etc. More information will be posted later for this date.

**June 14 or 21:** Church picnic at Crooked Lake Methodist Farm. There is a pavilion and beach that is good for children. A church service is offered at 5pm that evening on the grounds. Picnic would start at 1pm. More information will be posted at a later date.

### Kairos at Cossackie

Most of our church family has heard Len Finke and George Herrick speak about the Kairos Prison Ministry program. If not, they are most willing to share the story with you if you ask. Next month, March 12-15, will be the next scheduled weekend program, #18, at Cossackie Correctional Facility. As in the past, the team of 42 men going into the facility to help build their Christian community can use your help. The prayer vigil sign up list will be in the church lobby. Would you be willing to sign-up for an hour or to split an hour with a friend or another family member? You don't have to go anywhere. Just take the selected time to pray for the weekend wherever you are. Also, both Len and George are asked to raise \$125 each to financially support the weekend. If you would like to help with dollars, make a check out to our church with "Kairos" clearly marked in the memo section and place it in the Sunday offering. Sorry, because of facility restrictions, we can no longer take the wonderful home made cookies in with us. Len and George appreciate your support.

## United Methodists Elect Bishop for Sierra Leone

(December 20, 2008 was a red letter day for our Regional Missionary, Rev. John K. Yambasu. The following extracts from a United Methodist News Service release explains.)

**By Phileas Jusu\***

Dec. 22, 2008 | MONROVIA, Liberia (UMNS)

The Rev. John K. Yambasu, 52, has been elected bishop of The United Methodist Church in Sierra Leone by delegates of the denomination's West Africa Central Conference.

During the Dec. 20 election in Monrovia, Yambasu was elected on the first ballot, garnering 45 of the 68 votes cast, or 66 percent of the votes. Yambasu, a regional missionary with the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, will succeed Bishop Joseph C. Humper on Jan. 1. Humper is retiring on Dec. 31 after 16 years of service.

Bishop Rosemarie Wenner of the Germany Annual Conference, who presided over the election, declared Yambasu the new bishop amid cheers and ululations from supporters.

Until his election, Yambasu was a regional missionary for sub-Saharan Africa for the Board of Global Ministries, with support from the Women's Division. His assignment included youth leadership development, education and training, with a particular focus on providing ministry to young people affected by war. Since August, he had been working in New York -- where the Women's Division and Board of Global Ministries is based -- on building a network in the denomination's African conferences related to ministries with children, including issues of child safety.

Born in Bo in southern Sierra Leone, Yambasu received his primary and secondary education at United Methodist mission schools. He was ordained a United Methodist deacon in 1987 and an elder in 1990. Yambasu holds a master of theology degree from Candler School of Theology, Emory University in Atlanta, and a bachelor's degree in agriculture from Njala University College in Sierra Leone. He and his wife, Millicent, have five children -- Rebecca, Adima, John, Emmanuel and Elizabeth.



### "Love Kits" For The Homeless

The Missions and Social Responsibility Commission requests that you fill a "Love Kit" for the Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless in Albany to distribute to homeless persons in the Capital District. Please bring the items in a paper bag to the church foyer by February 11. Here are the items to consider placing in the bag: Comb/brush, disposable razors, shaving cream, deodorant, shampoo, toothbrush & toothpaste, bar of soap, candy bar or candy kisses. Thank you for your generosity.

### Position Available

We are looking for an adult to be the Childcare Provider for the church nursery each Sunday. The hours are 9:15 to 10:45 and it is a paid position. A background check will be completed for the person selected for this position. If you are interested or know of someone who is, please send a letter to Len Finke, Chairman of Staff/Parish Relations Committee, First United Methodist Church, 1 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, NY 12061.

### Tying Up Loose Ends

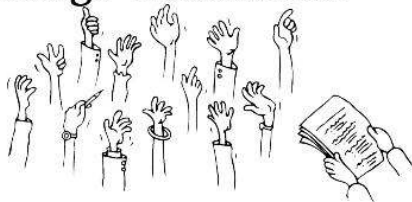
- The UMW and David Smith are really grateful for all the donations for the Giving Tree. All the donations were used to support the Concerns U Christmas Store. Thanks!
- Lenten worship and luncheon programs will begin on Wednesday, the first week in March. Mark you calendar to join us each Wednesday in Lent at noon here at the church.
- Didn't get your January issue of THE CHURCH BELL? No one did because technical problems prevented its publication. You'll note some of the items in this issue are a bit dated. They were supposed to be in the January issue and are important enough to print even though late.



### Pre-School

Registration for the 3 and 4 year old classes is now open for the 2009-2010 school year. Please call Joy Caola at 286-0220 for further information.

### All-Church Charge Conference



### Date Set For Charge Conference

The All-church Charge Conference for our church will be held on **Wednesday, March 11, 2009**. This meeting serves as the "annual meeting" for our congregation and it is open to all in our church family. If you chair an organization in the church, you should be putting the finishing touches on your annual report so that it can be in the church office by February 1, 2009.

Come, join us in worship. Ash Wednesday,  
February 25, 2009, 7pm.

In preparation for this very special day, reading the following portions of the Bible may prove helpful: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Psalm 51:1-17; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10; and Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21. These are the suggestions from the Revised Common Lectionary.



### A Celebration — An Invitation

Cynthia Becker and family, John Trueworthy and family and the UMW invite you to an open house on February 7<sup>th</sup> from 2 to 4 pm in the Fellowship Hall to honor Loucene Trueworthy's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Check Out  
February 7<sup>th</sup>