



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE BELL

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

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 4 May 2009

From the Pastor's Desk. . .

Dying from the Cold Within *(by James Patrick Kinney)*

Six humans trapped by happenstance, in bleak and bitter cold.
Each one possessed a stick of wood. Or so the story's told.
Their dying fire in need of logs, the first woman held hers back,
For on the faces around the fire, she noticed one was black.
The next man looking cross the way, saw one not of his church,
and couldn't bring himself to give, the fire his stick of birch.
The third one sat in tattered clothes, He gave his coat a hitch,
Why should his log be put to use, to warm the idle rich?
The rich man just sat back and thought, of the wealth he had in store.
and how to keep what he had earned, from the lazy poor.
The black man's face bespoke revenge, as the fire passed from his sight,
For all he saw in his stick of wood, was a chance to spite the white.
and the last man of this forlorn group, did naught except for gain.
Giving only to those who gave, was how he played the game.
The logs held tight in death's still hands, was proof of human sin.
They didn't die from the cold without, they died from the cold within.

Ever notice the symbol for United Methodists? It's a cross and a flame. It relates The United Methodist Church to God through Christ (cross) and the Holy Spirit (flame). The flame is a reminder of Pentecost when witnesses were unified by the power of the Holy Spirit and saw "tongues, as of fire." (Acts 2:3). The elements of the emblem also remind us of a transforming moment in the life of Methodism's founder, John Wesley, when he sensed God's presence and felt his heart "strangely warmed." The two tongues of a single flame may also be understood to represent the union of two denominations, The United Brethren and The Methodist Church.

Beyond the "official" explanation, the flame reminds me of what can happen when we, as individual United Methodists refuse to give to the community our "logs" of energy, gifts, and spirit. Like the community in this poem, we too risk death from the "cold within". If we can resist the urge to think only of ourselves and our individual needs, we can become a living flame of the Holy Spirit. This is our call, as United Methodists; to be alive and active in the world, bringing the warmth and love of that Spirit to all. This will only happen however, when each of us bring our "logs" to the fire. I urge each of you to look into ways that you might share your God-given gifts with this community. Let us work together so that the flame glows and grows and we fulfill our purpose of being God's body at work in the world.

Blessings!

Pastor Mari

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Garden Party

Sunday School missions is having a garden party after services in the courtyard on May 17th. There will be a plant sale, garden crafts created by the Sunday School children, chocolate fountains, and snacks. We are hoping for a beautiful day! We hope to see you there.

Confirmation Dates

Our eighth graders have been hard at work learning all about the workings of our church and the United Methodist religion. Our time with them is nearly over. Please mark the following dates on your calendar:

Saturday May 9th- Retreat day; we will be taking a spiritual hike at 5 Rivers Environmental Center in Delmar. We will be meeting at the church at 10:00 and carpooling to 5 Rivers. Students need to bring a bag lunch, we will return to the church around 1:00.

If it is raining, we will still have the retreat, it will be held in the youth lounge.

Sunday May 17th - Confirmation Sunday. The students will be confirmed during church services.



The end of our Sunday School year is quickly approaching! Children's Day is Sunday June 7th. The Sunday School children are hard at work planning a beautiful service. We need more parent volunteers to help on this day. If you are interested please contact Heidi. hjgran68@gmail.com.

OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO THE YOUTH

United Methodist Youth Fellowship News

On April 5 the youth had an amazing time at Zero Gravity playing games of laser tag. Two teams searched through the dark to locate others and tag them with their lasers. After the fun, we returned to the church to surprise our leader Laura with a party to wish her well on her surgery. We are happy to say that all went well and Laura is having a successful recovery. We look forward to her return and ask for prayers for her continued healing.

On April 24-26 a number of the youth are attending the 4WORD conference in Syracuse. This exciting event offers the youth an opportunity to meet new friends, play games, learn more about the bible and grow closer to God. We are excited to have 3 youth members from North Chatham UMC join us on this adventure.

Upcoming Youth Group Events

On May 1 and 2 the youth will organize their spring mission program, "Alex's Lemonade Stand." They are raising money for childhood cancer research during the UMW's spring thrift sale. We still need youth and parents to sign up to help with this exciting event.

THE BELL is published monthly (with the exception of August) by the First United Methodist Church, 1 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, New York 12061-1715. May 2009, Volume 11, Issue 4. G. Herrick, M. Clark, H. Volke, M. Flowers, **Editing Team**. **The Church Staff**: Rev. Mari J. Clark, **Pastor**; Heidi Gran, **Coordinator of Children's Christian Education**; Laura Clark & Rachel Giso, **Youth Leaders**; Helen L. Gustafson, **Organist/Choir Director**; Hazel Volke, **Administrative Assistant**; Bob Ellis, **Custodian**; Kris Johnson, **Lay Leader**; Barbara White, **Child Care Provider**. Bishop John K. Yambasu, our **Regional Missionary**, Bishop of The UMC in Sierra Leone.

MORE FOR YOUTH

More Upcoming

On May 9 the youth will contribute to the spring fair by helping in the children's booth with face painting. We need youth to sign up for times throughout the day. Please e-mail Rachel at rgiso@fairpoint.net to communicate your availability.

There will be no meeting on May 10th. Happy Mother's Day! Come to the SOS dinner on May 17th for some fun outdoor games. There is no meeting on May 24th. Enjoy the Memorial Day weekend. There is a Sr. and Jr. High meeting on May 31st to continue planning the Mystery dinner scheduled for June 5th.

CHURCH NEWS

Parsonage Decision

A Special Church Conference was held on April 15, 2009, presided over by District Superintendent, the Rev. James Fenimore. The purpose of the Conference was to consider a request by the Board of Trustees for authorization to execute documents necessary for the sale of the current parsonage and for the purchase of another parsonage. The vote of the members of the congregation present was overwhelmingly in favor of the action. The Trustees have begun the process of searching for a new parsonage and listing for sale the current home. In order to finalize either a sale or purchase, additional Church Conferences will be called to present information to the congregation regarding the proposed transactions and to receive the authorization to proceed.

Pastor's Discretionary Fund

The Missions and Social Responsibility Commission wants to remind all of our parishioners about this fund set up to help members of our congregation and the local community. Periodically we hear about families left homeless because of fire, or individuals with serious illnesses or accidents. Many of the caring individuals in our congregation ask, "How can we help?" The Pastor's Discretionary Fund was set up as a discreet way to help such people.

There are a couple of ways to donate to the Fund. You may remember seeing small brown envelopes which appear periodically in the bulletin, usually the last Sunday of the month. Using these is an easy way to donate your loose change, bills, or checks via the collection plate. You may write a check to the First United Methodist Church, and write in the "memo" section "Pastor's Discretionary Fund" at any time.

Sometimes, you may hear or know of an individual or family in need. If you do, please let Pastor Mari know. The Missions & Social Responsibility Commission appreciates what an incredibly caring, giving congregation you are. Thank you!

When Did You Last Look?

When you get a free moment at your computer, check out our church website at www.gbqm-umc.org/egumc/ and see what a great job our webmaster, Valerie Perrotte, has been doing to keep us informed and to spread the word about First UMC EG. The CHURCH BELL is on the site, usually before it reaches you by mail. If you have looked before but it has been awhile, look it over now in its new form. Go to the bottom of the home page and try some of the links that Val has made for us. One example, the daily meditation from The Upper Room is there. One more suggestion, again at the bottom of the home page is a link to the webmaster. Click it and share your thoughts about the website with Val. Merci!



May 1st Begins Christian Home Month

The 2009 Christian Home Month theme is: "Families called to Love." Look at Deuteronomy 6:6-9. Here we are reminded to love God and to keep these words throughout the day in visible ways. Through Jesus' words in John 13:34, we hear the commandment to love one another. As we are called to show love individually, we are called as disciples to show love in our homes and with those we call family.

One resource you might consider using this month in your family is a "Family Covenant for Love", printed below. Another resource is a planning sheet for family devotional times. Copies of this sheet are on the table in the lobby.

Family Covenant for Love

This covenant will be in effect from _____ (beginning date) to _____ (ending date).

In order that our family may be one that promotes love for one another, we promise one another to:

1. Seek God's presence through regular Bible study, reflection, and prayer together.
2. Love one another unconditionally -- loving each person, even while naming behaviors that might need to be changed.
3. Seek ways to praise and lift up actions of others in the family when they have shared God's love and shown love for others.
4. Learn about those places in our community that support families, such as: programs addressing abuse in the family; food pantries or home-building projects that show love to those who are without; hospitals and hospices that provide for families when loved ones are ill. As a family, we will decide on a way to offer service to one of these places.
5. Share at least one family meal per week. For those in our family who are not in the same location, we will decide on a common day for a meal each week and as we dine separately, pray for one another or call one another and pray together by phone.
6. Seek out stories of love at church, in the newspaper, on the internet, at school, at work, at home, and tell these stories to one another.

Signed by: _____

(All family members sign the covenant.)

"Copyright General Board of Discipleship. www.GBOD.org Used by permission."

United Methodist Women

A meeting will be held on Monday, May 4th at 7pm. The program for the evening is "Who Am I at the Table?". It will be a guided meditation and an opportunity for women to reflect on their gifts, graces, challenges and passions and what it means to be in community with a group of women in today's world. All are welcome.

MORE CHURCH NEWS

Conference Sessions in May and June



The District Conference for Albany District will be held Saturday, May 16th at the McKownville UMC. It is here that legislation that will be voted upon at Troy Annual Conference in June will be first discussed. Of particular interest are some proposed amendments to The United Methodist Constitution. These proposals came from The United Methodist Church General Conference last year. If you would like to make your thoughts known concerning these proposals, speak to Dave Smith, our Lay Member of Annual Conference, or to our Pastor prior to the May meeting. Then on June 10th to 13th, the 2009 session of Troy Annual Conference will meet in Saratoga.

A Week At Summer Camp This Year?

It's time to plan for the summer and a week at Skye Farm or Covenant Hills. Parents may want to check out www.troyac.org to see the full program schedule for your son or daughter's summer experience. Some financial support for a camper may be available. Check in the church office. **If you are an adult or a young adult**, this is especially for you. Volunteer opportunities for you to make a difference in a child's life abound at Skye Farm and Covenant Hills. We need directors to work with staff in providing organization and oversight for a week at camp, counselors to provide direct supervision for campers, and individuals willing to use their talents to do any of a number of jobs around camp (the possibilities are limited only by your imagination). If interested contact one of the Camp Executive Directors or call the Conference Camping and Retreat Office at 800-684-9377, ext 14. As an added bonus those who volunteer for a week at camp receive \$ 110.00 off the fee for a week at camp for their child.



Measures To Protect The Environment

According to David Gershon, founder and CEO of Empowerment Institute, and author of Low Carbon Diet, the average American household produces about 4.5 pounds of solid waste **per day**. About a third of it is packaging used only to get the item to your home. Producing this waste requires energy for extraction of the raw materials, manufacturing them into various goods, and transportation throughout the whole process. **Every pound of solid waste that goes to the landfill generates 2 pounds of greenhouse gases.** These come from the natural decomposition that occurs in an anaerobic environment. A copy of Gershon's helpful and informative book can be found in our church library.



To reduce the junk mail delivered to your home, you can easily request that your name be removed from all 3rd class mailing lists via the Internet at www.directmail.com/junk_mail or by writing to DirectMail.com, National Do Not Mail Registry, Prince Frederick, MD 20678. We hope that you are using your canvas/cloth bags for shopping. Thanks for helping our environment.

-- This monthly ecotip is being brought to you by the Ecoteam of First United Methodist Church of East Greenbush.

The Fifth Season of Coffeehouses Draws to a Close

As the days and grass grow longer, we rapidly approach the final Coffeehouse of the 2008-2009 season. Yes, the great Mothers Day Coffeehouse is the final one of this our fifth season of Coffeehouses. It is to be held in the Fellowship Hall from 7:00-9:30pm on May 8th, 2009. It will be a fantastic collection of performers once again regaling you with their incredible talent. Plus, we will once again serve the very tastiest of yummy snacks. Still, it is with wistfulness that we move on from here, this milestone year. Of course, the excitement about next year will soon replace that! But until September this is the final opportunity to partake of such entertainment. So bring everyone you know. As always, no cover charge, just a free will donation to help local charity meet the needs of the less fortunate among us.



OUR COMMUNITY AND BEYOND

Emmanuel Reformed Hosts Dinner

The Emmanuel Reformed Church in Castleton is holding its Annual Ham Dinner on Saturday, May 16 at 5:30 p.m. The menu includes baked ham, mashed potatoes, green beans, apple sauce, corn muffins, apple cake and beverage. The price for adults is \$9.00, children 6 - 12 is \$4.00, under 6 - free. To make reservations or for takeout orders, please call the church office at 732-7766.

“Have you ever Considered.....”



From the

CITY

Fresh Air is a program that gives New York City children a chance to see another way of life. They get to leave the city and become a part of your family. They get to escape the dangers, noise and pollution. You would be giving a child (ages 6-12 for first time visit) a chance to enjoy the small things we take for granted each day. Many of these children don't get to sit and see the stars, play outside in the yard, swim, bike, or just have a picnic in the park. Please consider hosting a child for a few weeks this summer and experience this truly rewarding experience. This program can change a child's life forever. Contact Deb L'Amoureux at 348-1018 or freshair@nycap.rr.com for more information.

Capital Community Voices in Concert

Capital Community Voices, a fifty voice mixed chorus directed by Julie Panke, will present “The Earth is Song and Spirit” on Saturday, May 9th at 7:30pm at Columbia High School. Songs celebrating the earth and its beauty will be drawn from the classical, contemporary and popular genres. Selections will include “Song of the Earth Spirit” by David L. Brunner, “Calypso” by John Denver and “On a Clear Day” by Burton Lane. A select ensemble from the chorus will present “Sure on This Shining Night” by Samuel Barber and “Wondrous Cool, Through Woodland Quiet” by Johannes Brahms. Accompanying the chorus are John Norton, piano, Mark Frederick, bass and Nathan Brew-

Tying Up Loose Ends

- ◆ A reminder to the **Cherub and Chancel Choirs** that they are done for this school year. Rehearsals will start up again in September.
- ◆ **Pre-School open house** is on Saturday, May 9th at 10am.
- ◆ **Pre-School registration** is still open for both the 3 year olds and 4 year olds for September 2009. Call 477-5484 for more information.
- ◆ **Church Women United May Friendship Day** is Friday, May 1st at St. Paul's Castleton. Details are in last months CHURCH BELL.



Special Mission Recognition

One of the United Methodist Women's undesignated gifts to mission is a Special Mission Recognition. The honorary is presented to someone who has participated in mission work and/or ministry. The recipient for 2009 is Olive Felio. The following people were also considered through the ballots for the Mission Recognition Pin: Andy Clark, Steve Berger, Fran Berger, Matie Flowers, Carrie Pierce, Lee Pierce, David Smith, Mary Smith, Jean Sheviak, Ardelle Sandhoff, Lorraine Barde, Linda Gronostaj, Yvonne DeBellis, Fred Neaf, Heidi Gran, Carrie Larson, Peter Larson. Congratulations to all for being outstanding missionaries.

SPRING FAIR COMING SOON!!!

Here are some things to remember as we get ready for the big day. Any items you are bringing to the fair can be left at the church after Thursday, May 7th. **The Fair is May 9th.**

What you can do to help make this event a success:

- ** Bring some cuttings or plants for the Plant Sale
- ** Donate an item that could be offered at our Silent Auction. Give us an idea of the value of the item and your phone number
- ** Bring your kids for crafts, story telling, music, and more!



Spring Fair

- ** Check on the signup sheets for items needed for Snack Bar and Dinner
- ** Sign up to help at a booth on Saturday afternoon
- ** Tell your friends and neighbors about our Fair
- ** Reserve your place in the buffet line for a shrimp or chicken dinner (check in Fellowship Hall for tickets or call the church office)



Shrimp/Chicken
Buffet

SILENT AUCTION



Plant
Sale

