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First UMC

The Reporter

April 2021

Message from our Pastor

I can't think of a time when we needed the message of Easter more than this year. How wonderful it will be: to hear again the good news that when the women came to the graveyard early on the first day of the week, to their great shock they found the stone that had been in front of Jesus' tomb had been rolled away! To hear these faithful women disciples brought up to date by the two young men all dressed in white: "He is not here! He is risen!" To realize that Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us, has looked death straight in the face and conquered it. This is the message we need this year, after more than 525,000 deaths in this country from a strange virus that a little over a year ago no one on earth had known. Jesus walked that lonesome valley all the way to the cross, walked alongside the dregs of the earth, the dispossessed, the forgotten, faced death and vanquished it. Hallelujah!

New Members: With joy, we will be receiving new members at the 10:00 a.m. service on Easter Sunday. Betty Lynch, a longtime and faithful participant in many of our programs and activities (especially the Rummage Sales!) will take her vows of membership by Zoom, with Bill and Angela

"Ours the Cross, the Grave, the Skies"

Even minus the huge crowds we have enjoyed on past Easters (we will be open for worship "in person" for both services, but taking reservations to be sure our sanctuary will be a safe place for all), I can smell the hyacinths and the tulips, and see the triumphant lilies trumpeting their good news for all. Whether you'll be joining us "in person" or virtually, at 8:15 am live on Facebook, or at 10 am by Zoom, I hope you will stand up as you are able when you hear the organ ring out, "Christ the Lord is risen today! Alleluia!" If you are at home, sing at the top of your lungs! Sing so your neighbors will hear. Sing so your dog puts both paws over his ears. Sing so your cat hides under the sofa. It's time to sing out our joy! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

Yours in Easter joy,
Rev. Marti Swords-Horrell, Pastor

Eardley as her sponsors. Owen Conklin began attending church and Sunday School with his two children, Herman and Aurora, a year ago last fall. Owen is an admissions counselor at the State University at Oneonta. He will be sponsored for membership by Randall Wilson. Welcome, Betty and Owen!

Zoom Workshop on Endowments: April 17th

A little over a year ago, February 29th – March 1st, 2020, our congregation held a “retreat” to do some long-range planning for our future. Rev. Paul Nixon of the General Board of Discipleship’s Path One was our guest leader. He met with five focus groups to facilitate discussions of questions that had been created by the Retreat Team out of the Readiness360 survey that most of the congregation filled out the previous fall. Then Rev. Nixon sent us seven recommendations to consider as together we discern our next faithful step. The implementation of most of these recommendations was understandably postponed by the pandemic. However, even before the shutdown is entirely over, we’re ready to move forward on some initiatives. One of Rev. Nixon’s recommendations was to work on growing our endowments so that we will be in better shape financially. In the future, we hope to offer workshops on planned giving. But we’re starting with a learning opportunity on Zoom, which will answer these questions: What is an

endowment? Why are endowments important for churches? What are some best practices in managing invested funds? What are some pitfalls to avoid? All are invited to join the Zoom workshop on Saturday, April 17th from 2 – 3:20 pm. Our presenter will be the Rev. Susan Ranous, CPA, who as a staff person of our Upper New York Conference is assigned to resource churches on money matters. Susan had been working at an accounting firm in East Syracuse when she felt a call from God several years ago to pursue a ministry focusing on stewardship and fund development for churches. She earned a seminary degree and was ordained a deacon, still keeping her day job as an accountant. To sign up for the workshop, please call or email our church office (607-432-4102 or secretary@firstumc-oneonta.org). When you sign up, you will be given the Zoom link. You may join by phone or by computer. We need at least ten persons to sign up in order to run the workshop. Hope to see you there! —Rev. Marti

Worship Themes for April

The Maundy Thursday and Good Friday evening services are both part of the “Holy Vessels: A Lenten Series of Healing and Recovery.” (*service descriptions below* © Marcia McFee, *Worship Design Studios LL.*)

Maundy Thursday, April 1st, 7:00 p.m.
“Healed and Still Healing” Matthew 10:1 – 8. In person in the sanctuary and by Zoom (use Sunday 10:00 a.m. link). If worshipping at home by Zoom, please have some oil ready for anointing (any oil will do).

This culminating moment of our worship series invites us to consider a commission

from Christ to his disciples: to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, and cast out demons. These are very things his disciples have seen him do and that we have sought to witness for our own lives in this Lenten season of recovery. What will *we* do with this commission? What passion has been piqued in our church that we can offer to our community beyond this moment as we continue to participate in the revival of the spirit of humanity? How will we address ongoing pain, ourselves “healed and yet still healing?” This service will tell the story of Jesus’ last week on earth, up to and including Peter’s denial.

Good Friday, April 2nd, 12:10 p.m.: (in person in our sanctuary and on Zoom—use same link as for Sundays at 10:00 a.m.) Ecumenical service of scripture, poetry, and music, telling the story of Jesus’ arrest, trial, and crucifixion.

Good Friday, April 2nd, 7:00 p.m.: (in person in our sanctuary and on Zoom—use same link as for Sundays at 10:00 a.m.) The story of Jesus’ last earthly week continues as we seek to stay awake and watch with him; and fail at that. The arrest, the trial, the crucifixion; we will wait, and watch, and pray. If worshipping at home, please have some oil ready for anointing (any kind of oil will do).

Easter Sunday, April 4th: This is the day! Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia! Scripture: Acts 10:34-43; Mark 16:1-8. Easter Communion will be celebrated. Alleluia!

Youth Sunday, April 11th: Our Confirmation Class, which has been meeting each Thursday evening over Zoom, will present this service on “Helping / Being Kind to Others.” To prepare, please read Luke 10:25- 37, and 14:1-6. We are so proud of our budding disciples!

Third Sunday of Easter, April 18th: Has insomnia been a problem for you this COVID year? Treasure this verse from today’s Psalm: “I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety.” Please read: Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4; I John 3:1-7; and Luke 24:36-48.

Fourth Sunday of Easter, April 25th: Good Shepherd Sunday and Earth Day. God appointed humankind to till and keep the earth. How are we doing with our shepherding care of creation? Please read: Acts 4:5- 12; Psalm 23; I John 3:16-24; and John 10:11-18.

A Message from our District Superintendent, Nancy Adams

Dear Friends,

It doesn’t seem possible that Holy Week began this past Sunday. I urge all of us to truly consider all that Jesus went through for us. Please read through the entire Passion narrative (the events of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday) – in one sitting, if you can. It can be found in Matthew 26:14-27:66, Mark 14:1-15:47, Luke 22:1-23:56, or John 13:1-19:42.

I believe Easter will be far more meaningful – and joyful – if we don’t succumb to the temptation to jump right from Palm Sunday to Jesus’ resurrection on Easter. May we allow ourselves to walk with Jesus through the events of Thursday and Friday, for only

when we witness His betrayal by Judas, His denial by Peter, and consider how many times we have betrayed or denied Jesus ourselves, can we truly have a meaningful Holy Week. Only when we consider Jesus’ agony on the cross, and His willingness and ability to forgive those who nailed Him there, can we begin to grasp the depth of His love for us... When we truly consider what Jesus has done for us, only then we can truly celebrate the victory and joy of Easter.

Walk with Jesus through the events of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, and have a meaningful – and Holy week.

With You in the Journey with Jesus
towards the Cross, Nancy

How to Worship

We are now having all of our worship services in-person. You must have a reservation, wear a mask, and stay six feet from those not in your family group. Come to the Church Street door and follow instructions. To make a reservation, call the church office (607-432-4102) and leave a message on extension 101, saying how many will be attending. You can also put in a reservation through our web page or email the information to secretary@firstumc-oneonta.org.

The 8:15 a.m. service on Sundays is also by Facebook Live. You can find the bulletin in the “Files” section of our Facebook page. You need to be a member of FUMC’s Facebook Group in order to participate in the service. Just open Facebook, and search: First UMC Oneonta. Once you see our page, ask to “join” and one of our administrators will admit you.

The 10:00 a.m. service over Zoom. To access the 10:00 a.m. service via computer, highlight, copy, and paste (or type) the following link into your browser:
<https://zoom.us/j/195736049?pwd=Y2ZuL1pJSiswMnA2V2pRS1Y5T2NwZz09>

To listen to the 10:00 a.m. service on your phone (any kind of phone — land line, flip phone, or smart phone) — call 1-646-558-8656 at 10:00 a.m. or a few minutes before. You will be asked for a Meeting ID; key in 195 736 049 into the keypad of your phone. Then you may announce yourself if you want to. When it seems like everyone who wants to has joined, Pastor Marti will welcome all and you will hear the prelude beginning. To mute yourself, press *6.

After the 10:00 a.m. service, we join in a Virtual Coffee Hour, to which all are invited, no matter which service you’ve worshipped in. Just connect to Zoom at around 11:00 a.m. using the above methods.

If you have problems connecting, feel free to call Gail Niles and she will try to talk you through connecting. Her phone number is: 607-287-0232.

A bulletin for each service is emailed with our Weekly Update list so that you can download it and follow along; you can also find it in the Files on the left-hand column of our Facebook group page or on the church website. Please call the church office at 607-432-4102 and leave a message if you want the bulletin to be mailed to you.

Bible Studies and Small Groups

Imagine No Racism Class: We at FUMC are seeking faithful ways to deepen our commitment to eradicating the sin of racism. This class offers experiential tools that help define racism, explain white privilege, white fragility, and other concepts. It provides a clear understanding of microaggressions such as tone policing and whitesplaining, and offers ways to interrupt them. Pastor Marti and Margaret Parish were trained some time ago to teach the second version of the UM curriculum “Imagine No Racism.”

Even if you already experienced INR 1.0, you will still benefit from the insights of this second version. The class has six weekly sessions and is open to all, even outside of any faith community. The next sessions of the INR class will be: Sundays 1:00-2:30 starting 4/11 and Thursdays 2:00-3:30 starting 4/15. If you are interested in being in one of these classes, contact the church office at 607-432-4102 or email secretary@firstumc-oneonta.org

Tuesday Spiritual Study: Tuesdays, 2:00 – 3:15 p.m. Pastor Marti and Margaret Parish will again facilitate an offering from The Work of The People: *To Stand Again: Practices of Resurrected Life. Jesus is resurrected! Now What?* “If the resurrection did happen, then there must be some difference not only in our lives, but also for the world. What is the hope when faced with death, decay and brokenness?” This seven week series will start on Tuesday April 13. Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/864787949> You will be admitted from the waiting room.

The United Methodist Women’s Book Group is meeting every Thursday at 10:00

a.m. over Zoom. Our next book is *Girl Gone Missing* (Cash Blackbear Mystery) by Marcie Rendon. This book explores the history of Native American communities and the danger of forcing assimilation by outside mainstream American culture. Please join us for fellowship and lively discussion. Contact Sharry Strait-Carey at 434-5234 or sharrysc9@hotmail.com

Lectio Divina is on Thursdays, 12:00 noon. This is a time of praying through the words of the weekly Scripture readings that will be the foundation for worship the next Sunday. If you are interested, call Margaret Parish at 435-4001.

Financial Updates.....Jeff Gardner, Business Manager

As we approach April and Easter, I would like to thank everyone who donates their financial resources and/or volunteers their time to make it possible to do the mission and ministry work that FUMC does locally and globally. I know that it has been a difficult year for many of us, and the COVID restrictions have affected everyone in different ways, but we are all getting through it. Hopefully, we will be able to experience the joy of seeing each other face to face in person in our beautiful and safe facility before too long. See the Trustee article on page 7 for changes and improvements that are being made in the coming weeks.

On the fundraising side, we are off to a great start with the annual fruit sale. We grossed over \$3,400 before expenses which was the third highest ever. We netted nearly \$920 for the budget to help FUMC continue our mission and ministry work. Also, FUMC received \$169 in additional donations toward our youth fund and \$19 to the summer campership funds. Stay tuned as we hope to be able to have some of our other

annual fundraisers throughout the coming months.

As for annual giving through pledging, non-pledging, and loose plate, we are off to a very solid start for the year. For the year, we budgeted \$17,028.50 monthly or \$51,085.50 quarterly for these three revenue streams. We are up slightly with \$59,388.50 given thus far in the first quarter. About 44% of the revenue we need to cover monthly expenses comes in through these three sources. The FUMC monthly expense budget average is \$38,928 per month or \$116,784 quarterly.

Last month we shared with you a variety of ways that you can make your contribution to FUMC. Some include: cash, check, ACH-electronic funds transfer, PayPal, and using Tithe.ly. In addition, for those of you who are 70½ and are IRA owners, you can make Qualified Charitable Donations (QCD). As you are may or may not be aware, if you have an IRA and meet the age requirement, you have minimum distribution requirements. Your distribution must go directly to the church from the Custodian (Financial Advisor) not to you and then you

to the church. There may be significant tax benefits to make your donations to the church using a QCD. If you are going to make a QVD, please contact Jeff beforehand. See your financial advisor for more guidance.

Thank you to everyone who has made an Easter alternate gift thus far. There is an envelope included in this Reporter for an Easter donation to the church. For those who receive this Newsletter by email, please indicate on your check or online gift that it is for Easter or regular offering. We have a goal of receiving \$750 in Easter gifts for FUMC this year. Let's all work together and make this happen, I know we can do it.

Each year the United Methodist Church designates six Special Sundays that they suggest the local churches to take collections for. In January, we celebrate Human Relations Sunday, this year we collected \$105. On March 14th we celebrated UMCOR Sunday, formerly One Great Hour of Sharing, and to date we have collected \$377.

This helps with some of the administrative cost of running UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief). UMCOR is the global humanitarian aid and development organization of the United Methodist Church. One hundred percent of donations are directed to an earmarked project or relief effort. The third of these Special Sundays is May 30th, Peace with Justice Sunday, Memorial Day weekend. Remember all of those friends and family members who strive for peace and freedom around the world with a donation on this Sunday.

In February, in between these United Methodist Church Sundays, FUMC took special offerings for the New Community Warming Station here in Oneonta. The warming station is a place for Men and Women 18 and older to come and rest with free overnight accommodations. To get more information go to:
www.facebook.com/oneontawarmingstation/
To date, FUMC has collected over \$558 for them.

Giving Policy..... Peter Paluch, Council Chair

In the latter half of 2020, the Finance Committee of First United Methodist Church formed a subcommittee to review and further develop a gift acceptance policy. The purpose of the policy is to spell out the ways that individuals and their families can enhance the endowment. This also led to forming a program to educate members and supporters about the church's endowment. Look for a presentation on Zoom this April on the purpose and use of endowments. (See Rev. Marti's announcement about this on page 2.)

Why consider a planned gift or bequest to FUMC? It provides FUMC with the means to achieve its goals as well as security for the future. In addition to a number of tax

benefits for the donor, it creates a lasting legacy. If you believe in continuing the mission of FUMC and assuring its future, you are invited to consider leaving a "legacy gift." A legacy gift is distinct from regular giving to the church and can take many forms.

The newly revised Gift Acceptance policy developed by the Finance Committee and adopted by the Church Council categorizes the many types of gifts and the process of receiving them by FUMC. The policy can be found on the church's web site. You are encouraged to read it and see how you can form a legacy that contributes to the endowment of FUMC and its future.

Trustees Report.....Lorrie Wolverton, Chairperson

Good things have been happening, even though we have not been able to gather! We are pleased that the new automatic door at the Church Street entrance is complete. For all our congregants, entering the church will be much easier and carrying in all that rummage will be a cinch!

During a repair of a leaking pipe, contractors discovered asbestos in the area of the pipe. Further inspection disclosed that asbestos was present in many areas of the church including, but not limited to, both nurseries, the pastor's office, and the music room. Starting April 12th, crews from Sunstream Asbestos Company will begin work. At different times over the weeks, rooms will be "tented" to confine any asbestos dust from circulating while work is being completed.

Access to these areas will be temporarily limited while the work is going on. The ceiling in the preschool nursery has developed a series of cracks. To solve the problem a drop ceiling will be installed. New lighting using LED fixtures will also be installed, which will improve the lighting and help reduce our electric costs. The infant nursery has persistently had an odor which has been hard to eliminate. The rug has been removed and a new floor will be laid. The rooms will be ready for all the children we hope will be able to return come September. We are very grateful for the gifts of two anonymous donors who have contributed to cover the costs of the work in the two nurseries and the asbestos abatement. God is good!

From the Green Team

"With God's leading, Joseph used the seven years of plenty to store up food, preparing for the coming years of drought and famine (Genesis 40-43). His action served not only the Egyptians but also the surrounding foreigners, including his own family. How might you be a "Joseph," working now for a better future for all? What are you doing now to address issues around climate change?" (Creation Justice)

~ Caring and Sharing ~ from March

Please remember that if you or a member of your family is hospitalized, it is necessary for you to contact the church if you wish a visit or listing on our prayer lists as that information is not readily (or legally) shared by health care institutions.

Focus Rehab: Bill Pharr (1445 Kemble Street, Room 207, Utica, NY 13501)

Kathryn Roffe is at Fox Nursing Home for rehab (Room 318, 2 Norton Ave, Oneonta, NY 13820)

Doug Fielder is at Courtyard Unit, Robinson Terrace, 28652 State Hwy. 23, Stamford NY 12167

Sympathies

Our sympathies to Phyllis Becker on the death of her sister, June Butler, on March 17.

Letters of Appreciation

Karen and Sven Anderson would like to thank everyone who has sent them cards and would like to update you on their current mailing address: 5001 State Highway 23, Suite 3 Box 151, Oneonta, NY 13820.

MOTHER'S DAY AND GRADUATIONS ARE COMING!

Consider a gift for Mom or a Grad from UMW's collection of personal care products made from organic, sustainably-sourced ingredients without preservatives, artificial ingredients, or scents.

Take a minute to glance at all we have to offer! *For answers to questions, or to order, email Sharon McCarthy at skmccarthy@stny.rr.com or call 607-433-2185. Please note that orders for Mother's Day must be received by Saturday, April 24. We'll continue to take other orders at any time.*

Pink Frost Lip Gloss with beeswax and cocoa butter in a BPA-free tube for \$1.50

Goat's Milk Soap with *lemon* or *pink grapefruit* essential oil, your choice-a 4 oz. bar for \$4

UMW's Favorite Emollient Hand and Body Cream: My Baby's Bottom in a Jar-a 4 oz. jar of this luscious cream made with shea butter for \$5.50. Makes your skin feel as soft as a baby's bottom!

Sugar Scrub-to exfoliate face, body, or feet. Choose *rose* or *peach*, your choice-a 4 oz. jar for \$4

Foot Soak-a 4 oz. jar of a soothing treat for Mom's or a Grad's feet for \$3

In addition, UMW continues to offer:

Organic Hand Sanitizer-a 4 oz. spray bottle with 70% alcohol, aloe vera gel and Vitamin E for \$7

And back for Spring:

Tick Spray-a 4 oz. spray bottle that is safe for infants, kids, adults, and dogs for \$5

*United Methodist Women sell our popular items to support our pledges to many local entities, including ARC Otsego, Catholic Charities Caring Connections of Otsego, Delaware and Schoharie Counties, Family Services Association of Oneonta, Foster and Adoptive Program of New York, Oneonta Boys and Girls Club, Oneonta Community Health Center, OFO Women's Domestic Violence Shelter-The Purple Bag Project, Pathfinder Village Chaplaincy Program, Super Heroes in Ripped Blue Jeans Animal Rescue, and YMCA Children's Summer Scholarships. **Thank you for your support!***

Do you have any "thinking of you" or blank cards that you aren't going to use? We collect them at the church to be sent to members and friends. Let us know when you would like to drop them off. Thank you! ♥

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