

**Message from our Pastor**

When our Worship Team began planning our upcoming series for Lent, I asked them what the word “Lent” brings to mind. Here are some of their responses: “tweaking my awareness”; “a buildup to Easter”; “presence of love”; “a more intense, compressed life cycle”; “mortality.”

Our word “Lent” comes from the Old English for “lengthening.” The days are getting longer; every day there’s a little more light. Even in these dark and uncertain times as a nation and as a denomination, we trust and pray that more light will shine on our path, day by day, as we walk together toward Easter and spring.

This Lent, we will invite each other to stop all our frenetic activity for awhile; to rest back into God’s everlasting arms and enjoy some moments of quiet. I will be teaching a five-week study on Tuesday evenings from 7 – 8:15 p.m., starting the week of Ash Wednesday. Working around meetings, the dates and topics will be:

March 5<sup>th</sup>: Finding Your Cave: Listening Spaces with Bishop Yvette Flunder

March 12<sup>th</sup>: TBA

March 19<sup>th</sup>: Finding Your Breath: Listening to our Bodies –with Jack Levinson

March 26<sup>th</sup>: Finding a Word: Listening to the Texts – “Contemplation: Centering Prayer” with Phileena Heuertz

April 2<sup>nd</sup>: Finding Your Power: Listening for Healing – “Prayer and Healing” with Bruce Epperly

April 16<sup>th</sup>: Finding Your Mystic: Listening Beyond the Voices – “Meet the Committee” with Carl McColman

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In addition, I will offer a Lenten Sampler series, Saturdays at 10 a.m. on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, and April 6<sup>th</sup>. Each week a different spiritual practice will be explored: Week 1 — Bible journaling; Week 2 — Prayer beads; Week 3 — Centering prayer; Week 4 — Praying in Color; Week 5 — Walking prayer. Feel free to come to one or to all, but it’s most helpful if you sign up so I’ll have enough materials for everyone: text me at 315-569-9156, or email me at [pastor@firstumc-oneonta.com](mailto:pastor@firstumc-oneonta.com), or call the church office to register. Yours, listening

Peace, love, and blessings,  
Rev. Marti Swords-Horrell  
Pastor

**Worship Themes for March**

Our Lenten Worship will center in a series written by Dr. Marcia McFee of Worship Design Studio. Here is how she describes it:

”Have you ever misplaced your phone—which is on vibrate of course—and then asked someone to call it? We get really still and really quiet. Our ears perk up in all directions in order to be ready to hear that little buzz. It is a quieting down and high alert all at the same time. This Lent we will quiet things down and heighten our attention to the “still, small voice” of God and our own True Self. Listening through prayer as well as meditation on holy texts is an ancient Lenten practice. Come and rest, come and listen.

**Ash Wednesday Service** - Finding your Life: Listening Deeply. Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 pm and 7:30 pm  
“...Repent and believe in the Good News.” - Luke 1: 9-15

As we prepare for our 40-day journey of Lent, we “turn around” (the root meaning of the word “repent”) from the distractions of daily noise and focus our attention on listening in a deeper way. Writer Parker Palmer suggests we must listen “to what our life is telling us”—in other words, to listen to the deep wisdom God gave to us as a birthright, connecting to God’s purpose once again.

**First Sunday in Lent: March 10<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Finding Your Cave: Listening Spaces** ...he went into a cave and spent the night... The Lord said, “Go out and stand at the mountain before the Lord. The Lord is passing by.” A very strong wind tore through the mountains and broke apart the stones before the Lord. But the Lord wasn’t in the wind. After the wind, there was an earthquake. But the Lord wasn’t in the earthquake. After the earthquake, there was a fire. But the Lord wasn’t in the fire. After the fire, there was a sound. Thin. Quiet... - 1 Kings 19: 11-12

Sometimes we just need to get away in order to hear from that “still small voice” within. This quiet voice is an attribute of the Holy Living God, as Elijah found out in a cave where he expected to experience God in big wind and earthquake and fire. What is your “cave” equivalent? What place (a park, a path, a rocking chair, a shoreline) and practice (walking, journaling, reading, making art) helps you get quiet enough for long enough so you can hear past the chaos and into the depths of your life?

**Second Sunday in Lent: March 17<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Finding Your Breath: Listening to our Bodies**

*Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.* - Romans 8: 26-30; 38-39

Our sacred texts connect the breath of God with our own aliveness—God blew breath into us at creation and we continue to breathe all of creation in and out of our bodies constantly. The early church also believed that breath and Spirit were one in the same. How might the meditative practice of paying attention to our breath be, in and of itself, a prayer of connection to God? When we embrace our bodies as the holy vessel of God, we become even more our True Self—which has been there all along.

**Third Sunday in Lent: March 24<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Finding a Word: Listening to the Texts**

*Wisdom shouts in the street; in the public square she raises her voice. Above the noisy crowd, she calls out. At the entrances of the city gates, she has her say: “How long will you clueless people love your naïveté, mockers hold their mocking dear, and fools hate knowledge? You should respond when I correct you. Look, I’ll pour out my spirit on you. I’ll reveal my words to you.”* - Proverbs 1: 20-23

The Wisdom tradition within Christianity invites us to love knowledge, especially the self-knowledge that comes from examining ourselves in relationship to the liberating Word of God. Lectio divina (“divine reading”) is an ancient tradition of mixing the reading of scripture with prayer and meditation. Rather than an analytical approach to the words of scripture, it is a way for the words to simply be present and live in us. What will we hear when we let go of what it all is “supposed to” mean and simply let it reside within us?

**Fourth Sunday in Lent: March 31<sup>st</sup>, 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Finding Your Power: Listening for Healing**

*Because she had heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his clothes. She was thinking, If I can just touch his clothes, I’ll be healed.* - Mark 5: 24-34

Prayer as a spiritual practice may come easily for you and maybe it doesn’t. Even the most devout among us has doubts about prayer’s power at times. What is it? How does it work? This week we will consider that the mechanics of what happens in prayer is not as important as that we do it. Because whether or not the outcome for ourselves or others is an actual healing, the very act of being entangled with God and with others through prayer has healing and power-bestowing benefits.

**Fifth Sunday in Lent: April 7<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Finding Your Mystic: Listening Beyond the Voices**

*Don’t be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God’s will is—what is good and pleasing and mature. Because of the grace that God gave me, I can say to each one of you: don’t think of yourself more highly than you ought to think... Be happy in your hope, stand your ground when you’re in trouble, and devote yourselves to prayer.* - Romans 12: 2-12

We often have a “cast of characters” living inside our heads that love to carry on endless conversations—each from their own perspective. The chatter of our minds can sometimes keep us from a deeper listening and it is often difficult to decipher exactly what constitutes a mystical connection to God. Getting our True Self into the

chairperson's seat in the committee meeting does not mean ignoring those voices of pessimism, people-pleasing or accusation, but instead listening intently to them and not letting them bully us into action based on fear. Letting them in and letting them go is the prayer of the mystic within.

**Palm/Passion Sunday: April 14<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Finding Your Purpose: Listening to Your Heart**  
*Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane... And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." - Matthew 26: 36-46*

Jesus' prayer life was described most often in the scriptures as something he did "away" from the crowds or disciples. And as we come to the last week of this Lent journey, we have experienced the blessings of turning away from the noise of the world in order to turn inward to hear that "still small voice" of God and finding our own voice of wisdom there as well. This Sunday begins the story of the end of Jesus' human life and the scripture contains one of the rare examples of how Jesus prayed. It was honest, it was gut-wrenching, and it finally was a letting-go of expectations about life and a turn toward the acceptance that gives the courage to move onward.

Watch for the April Reporter for news of Holy Week and Easter Services! Stay tuned!

### **Financial Update**

Jeff Gardner, Business Manager

Throughout the year, FUMC takes offerings on special Sundays that are recognized by the United Methodist Church. The next special Sunday will be UMCOR Sunday formerly known as One Great Hour of Sharing Sunday. There will be special envelopes in the bulletins on March 31st as well as the April newsletter. The money collected will be used for administrative costs at UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) which assist people affected by crisis or chronic need with programs and projects in disaster response, health, sustainable agriculture, food security, relief supplies and more.

Each month, FUMC collects a "jingle" or loose change for a specific cause. In January it was for Family Services towards cold and flu remedies. A total of \$40.66 was collected. The jingle for February was the "Hunger Coalition" and \$293.12 was collected. The March jingle will be for Caring Connections and the April jingle will be for the Oneonta High School SADD after prom party.

A big fundraiser that happens in January is our Annual Fruit Sale. This raises money to assist church families who wish to send their children to one of the many camps affiliated with the United Methodist Church. This year we had net sales thus far of over \$971. Please see Dick Powell if you didn't get any or would like a few more as we have a few leftovers. Thank you to Dick Powell for overseeing this fundraiser as well as all his volunteers who make this fundraiser a success every year.

On January 25th we had our annual Roast Pork dinner to benefit the church mission and ministry programs. When the \$75 still to come in for advertising on the placement ad is received, we anticipate the net income from this fundraiser to be over \$1,527.

In addition to the fundraising that has been going on, we had several donations in memory of Virginia Wilson who passed away on January 6th. At the family's request the money donated, \$1,840, was credit to the Pastor's Discretionary fund. An additional \$50 was donated towards the window restoration fund as requested by the donor.

FUMC also received an undesignated bequest of \$5,000 from the will of Harriet Cipriani. As per policy, 10% or \$500 was deposited to the Heritage Fund and the remaining to the main endowment.

In the past, February is the month we have our annual Chicken and Biscuit Musical Theater fundraiser. However, this year Nancy Bondurant-Couch directed a one night Cabaret with the Chicken and Biscuit dinner. This was held March 2. Total proceeds from the event were not available at the time this article was written, but will be included in next month's Reporter.

Please, stay tuned as we have many more fun events and fundraisers happening throughout the year. Thank you again to everyone for helping FUMC to be able to do the missions that we do.

### **Safe Sanctuaries**

The United Methodist Church holds that Reducing the Risk of Sexual Abuse: Safe Sanctuaries is one of the "social structures that are consistent with the gospel" (Book of Discipline, ¶122) allowing our sanctuaries, classrooms, mission encounters, camps, and retreats, and all spaces where we gather to worship and serve God to be places of trust. Safe Sanctuaries policies stress the importance of the Biblical mandate from Matthew 19:14, "Allow the children to come to me, don't forbid them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to people like these children." (CEB)

A Safe Sanctuaries training for FUMC will be led by Marty Van Lenten Becker in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, March 31, from 12:30-3:30 pm. This time frame has been chosen to accommodate members who attend both

the 10am and 5pm services. It is a time for fellowship as well as learning, and lunch will be served! As FUMC Safe Sanctuaries Task Force member Allison Bookhout stated in the last issue of The Reporter, "Ideally, every adult in the congregation would have the training."

To register for this important course, email Marty at [marty.vlb@gmail.com](mailto:marty.vlb@gmail.com) or Allison at [bookhoutajay@gmail.com](mailto:bookhoutajay@gmail.com), or call the church office at 432-4102 by Sunday, March 24.

### **Let's go to Camp!**



We have received brochures for each of our six Conference Camps. Online information is available for the many camping and retreat opportunities our Conference has to offer around the state. The website for Conference camps is [www.campsandretreats.org](http://www.campsandretreats.org) if you want to take a peek at what's available. There are lots of opportunities to choose from. Each camp has different programs scheduled throughout the summer. Camperships are available thanks to our annual fruit sale. If you wish to be considered for a share of the campership funds, registrations need to be into the church office by May 1. Please speak to Jeff in the church office for details.

### **Healing and Wholeness Retreat March 28-30**

Are you a pastor, therapist, social worker, personal caregiver, or anyone open to a healing process that incorporates Christian healing ministry? Are you burned out? Needing a break? Seeking a way to better care for yourself? Then, there is a retreat opportunity for you!

Co-sponsored by the Upper New York New Faith Communities, Deaconess Susan Silhan and licensed professional counselor Dave Janvier, invite you to a refreshing healing journey at a lake house in the Finger Lakes region March 28-30, 2019.

The retreat begins on Thursday March 28 with a focus on how Gestalt Pastoral Care ameliorates the effects of trauma and pain within a Christian spiritual healing context. Friday March 29<sup>th</sup> and Saturday March 30<sup>th</sup> offer opportunities for individuals to delve into their own personal healing. There are options to attend the seminar on Thursday (for \$75.00, includes dinner) or the entire weekend (for \$395, includes all meals, lodging, and healing work). For more information and/or to register, contact Susan Silhan at 607-703-0010 or [healing.wholenessministry@gmail.com](mailto:healing.wholenessministry@gmail.com).

### **The Oneonta District Mission Team Presents: CARAVAN Day Road Trip to Liverpool! Saturday, March 30**

We will:

- tour the Upper NY Conference Center and assist with a mission project at our Mission HUB in the morning.
- have lunch at the Center.
- visit other mission projects around Syracuse in the afternoon (optional).

This is a great opportunity for individuals, families, youth groups, whole congregations! Use this link to register: <https://goo.gl/forms/DNIEkp6qFXg2vyQP2>

You will have an opportunity to indicate:

- if you want to register for just the morning, or the full day.
- which carpool location you would prefer.
- whether you're willing to drive.

We will get back to you with a time to meet your carpool.

Please note that all children and youth must be supervised by an adult.

## **2019 Lenten Men's Communion and Breakfast, Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup>**

Location: Central UMC on Nanticoke Ave. in Endicott.

The schedule of activity is as follows;

7:15 am—Coffee Hour

8:00 am—Worship and Communion

After worship—Breakfast and Business/Program

This event has been in existence for over 60 years in Oneonta District and only a few years since our church was switched over to Binghamton District. The host church always wants to know how many to expect so the contact person is Knud Hansen. His phone number is 607-754-0882 and the email is khansen3@yahoo.com. You can use either method to let them know of your attendance at the event!

**Boomerangs:** Just in time for Easter, these yummy treats can be ordered through APRIL 7<sup>th</sup>. Regular and Gluten-Free Boomerangs are \$7.00 a dozen, and may be paid by check made out to UMW, or cash. IMPORTANT! PICK-UP TIMES ARE AFTER CHURCH SERVICES ON APRIL 7<sup>th</sup> OR 14<sup>th</sup>. You may order Boomerangs by calling IRENE AT 432-7932; DOTTIE AT 432-0904, OR SIGNING UP ON THE CLIPBOARD PASSED AT SUNDAY SERVICES.

**The United Methodist Women's Book Group** meets every 2nd and 4th Thursday at 10:00 am at the home of Lucy Ingalls. We now are discussing the book Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson, a book that brings to light the unfairness and racial bias within our criminal justice system. Our next book is The Newcomers: Finding Refuge, Friendship and Hope in an American Classroom by Helen Thorpe. This is a book that puts a human face on the immigration debate. Please join us for fellowship and lively discussion. If you have any questions call or email Sharry Strait-Carey at 432-4852 or email: sharrysc9@hotmail.com.

### **Reporter Deadline**

To all chairs of committees and teams: the deadline for articles for our monthly newsletter, *The Reporter*, is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month before it is published, at midnight. Please email any articles and announcements you would like included by that date and time each month to our secretary Leslie Bauer at: [secretary@firstumc-oneonta.org](mailto:secretary@firstumc-oneonta.org). Leslie will also accept hand written articles by that same date and time. If you miss the deadline, your article may be published in a shortened form in the worship bulletin, or included in the emailed weekly update.

Please let Leslie know if you would consent to receive your *Reporter* by email rather than in the U.S. mail, as we live into our Green Covenant. Save a tree!

--the Staff Parish Relations Committee

### **From the Art Team**

#### **Spring Art Classes (Wednesday mornings, 10-12, the Art Room)**

Monthly fees for most classes is \$30.00 inclusive of materials (note: some modifications, due to additional meeting days or special materials). Payment is due at registration. Class size is normally limited to 12 on a first come/first serve basis. Scholarship assistance is available through the Grace Seifert Memorial Art Fund. For application, contact Phil Young (607.433.1169) or Angela Eardley (607.434.2435). To register call the church office, 607-432-4102, and leave your name and contact information, – phone number and email address (if you have one).

March 6, 13, 20, 27 “**Exploring Words on Paper**” with Hope Von Stengel Class size limit: 12  
This multi-media class employs stamping, collage, hand lettering, journaling & bookbinding to marry the visual arts with language. Different recycled and handmade papers, gouache, stamps, ink, pencils, and other tools will be utilized to create small journals, stationary, hand written letters, postcards, and more.

Von Stengel is a lover of language & art. She received her B.A. in English from the University of Oregon and has taken several art classes at Hartwick College.

April 3, 10, 17, 24 “**A Feast in Stain, Sculpture and other acrylic extensions**”\_with Phil Young Class size limit: 12  
This is a “crossover” course in acrylics. It will expand work done in stain painting and other manipulations of canvas and other cloth. One option is turning them into solid 3 dimensional forms. A demonstration & stretching of canvases from the project will be included. Canvas stretchers can be brought and stretching will be demonstrated. Bring your sketchbooks!

Young is a local artist & retired art professor at Hartwick College, Oneonta. He leads the committee for this art program and has taught stain painting and sculptural extensions in the past

May 1, 8, 15, 22 “**Innovative Book Structures**” with Nancy Callahan Class size limit: 12  
Using playful exploration of simple book forms, Nancy will guide you through the construction of a variety of unique folding patterns & binding techniques to produce numerous innovative book structures. An ideal class for artists, scrap bookers & teachers. No previous book making experiences required. Book designs will differ from those taught in previous courses.

Callahan is retired Professor of Art at SU NY-Oneonta and has taught several book structure classes in the past. Based on her research and development of unique book & paper structures, she regularly lectures & teaches workshops to artists, teachers & graphic designers from across the nation.

### **Homemade Soup to Go**

Message from Elm Park UMC: Soup available each Wednesday from 4-5pm through-March 20<sup>th</sup>. It’s for everyone! There is no age, socio-economic, or church membership requirement. It’s just because you are our neighbor! Elm Park UMC is at the corner of Ceperley & Chestnut.



From St. Mary’s:

## **TAIZÉ PRAYER**

Winter—Lent—Easter—Spring 2019

A Prayer Service of SINGING—LISTENING—SILENCE—MEDITATION

Lent Tuesdays—March 12 & 26; April 2 & 16

Easter Tuesdays—April 30; May 14 & 28

7:00 pm in the Saint Mary’s Church proper

corner of Walnut and Elm Streets, Oneonta

[www.StMarysOneonta.org](http://www.StMarysOneonta.org)

(607) 432-3920



***NEXT REPORTER DEADLINE: MARCH 15!***

