



# The Reporter

## Pastor's Note

*Last month I shared with you my letter to the bishop regarding the United Methodist stance on same-gender marriage in response to the complaint issued against Rev. Steve Heiss. Below is a summary of what has happened in this matter and what will be happening next.*

Rev. Steve Heiss of Tabernacle UMC in Binghamton, NY wrote an open letter to Bishop Mark Webb of our annual conference—the Upper New York Annual Conference—stating that he is actively officiating at same-gender weddings. This letter was published openly on Rev. Heiss’ blog and on many Facebook pages. Rev. Richard Barton, the District Superintendent of the Finger Lakes District, issued a letter of complaint against Rev. Heiss for a specific instance of a same-gender wedding, when Rev. Heiss officiated at his son’s wedding. Once Bishop Webb received the complaint letter, he then began mediation between Rev. Heiss and Rev. Barton seeking a just resolution—a resolution both could agree to. The mediation time lasts 90 days according to the United Methodist Book of Discipline, and can be extended by another 30 days. Bishop Webb did extend the process the additional 30 days. After meeting with both Rev. Heiss and Rev. Barton, it was determined that no just resolution could be reached.

Bishop Webb had to make a decision as the mediation process closed. He could dismiss the complaint or could forward the complaint for trial. Bishop Webb decided to forward the complaint. The complaint now becomes a chargeable offense against Rev. Steve Heiss and will go to trial here in our conference of Upper New York State. Bishop Webb now needs to make some selections of fully ordained clergy to serve in certain positions for the trial. The Bishop needs to appoint a counsel to represent the Upper NY Conference as a type of “prosecuting attorney.” The Bishop also needs to select a presiding officer who acts in some ways as a judge at the trial, moderating and making sure rules are followed. And the Bishop needs to select a location for the trial. Rev. Steve Heiss will be selecting a defense counsel for himself to act as a “defense attorney” on his behalf. Finally the trial must have a trial court—a jury of Rev. Heiss’ peers. From all of the districts across our conference 35 ordained clergy will be selected as the ‘jury pool.’ From those 35 individuals, 13 people will serve as the trial court or “jury.”

Bishop Webb has expressed his desire to see all this take place in a timely manner, but coordinating all these pieces will certainly mean the trial takes place well into 2014. Bishop Webb is also very aware of how painful this issue is for so many, First United Methodist of Oneonta included. Bishop Webb will be worshiping with us on Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>. On December 8<sup>th</sup> we will have one big service at 10:00 am followed by a potluck luncheon in the fellowship hall. Bishop Webb will be arriving early, however, in order to be available to our congregation for listening and conversation. You are all invited to gather in the Fellowship Hall at 9:00 am to spend time with Bishop Webb regarding the trial for Rev. Steve Heiss, the issue of inclusivity in the church, and as a chance to share your story, your thoughts, your concerns, and your heart with the Bishop. Light refreshments will be provided. Please mark your calendars and plan to spend time with our Bishop, here in the Upper NY Annual Conference.

Your Sister in Christ,  
Teressa M. Sivers



Open Hearts  
Open Minds  
Open Doors

First United Methodist Church  
66 Chestnut Street  
Oneonta NY 13820  
A Reconciling Congregation  
Rev. Teressa M. Sivers, pastor  
Rev. Emily Huyge, assoc. pastor

Phone: 607-432-4102  
Email: [fumc@firstumc-oneonta.org](mailto:fumc@firstumc-oneonta.org)  
Pastor: [pastor@firstumc-oneonta.org](mailto:pastor@firstumc-oneonta.org)

WE'RE ON THE WEB!  
[www.firstumc-oneonta.org](http://www.firstumc-oneonta.org)  
On Facebook at First UMC Oneonta



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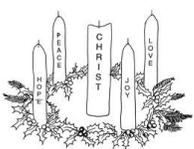
## Worship and Meeting Dates in November

**November 17:** Children's Sabbath Sunday! Our children will take several active roles in our worship services as we explore Isaiah's proclamation of the new creation God is bringing into our midst, and the turmoil and wonder such change can cause as it comes into being. Isaiah's promise will help us wrestle with Luke's message of suffering and perseverance, as we seek to shine God's light in all places.

**November 24:** This Sunday marks the end of the worship calendar year with the Reign of Christ Sunday. In anticipation of worshipping with our Bishop, Mark Webb, on Sunday, December 8th, we will spend time on the Reign of Christ Sunday exploring the way in which we will welcome the Bishop, extend the hand of reconciliation, and remain true to our witness as a people filled with grace and accountability.

Meeting Calendar:     Tuesday, Nov. 19: Staff/Parish Relations at 7:00 p.m. in the T. Coke room  
                                   Wednesday, Nov. 20: Cluster Church Conference at Elm Park UMC at 6:30 p.m.

## Advent and Christmas



As we journey through Advent into the beautiful season of Christmas, we will have many opportunities for devotion, spiritual growth, and reflection. We will have wonderful times for fellowship and community. In the midst of busy lives filled with full calendars and many obligations, let us make sure to create holy space, Sabbath space, for time with God.

Starting November 24 there will be many devotional booklets available for daily time in prayer and reflection. Booklets are available for children and adults. Below is a schedule of worship and events where you can spend time with your church family and the larger Oneonta community. First UMC also has a blog where you can go for daily devotions. See the description of our Advent on-line journey on page 3.

**December 1**—First Sunday in Advent & World AIDS Day “Waiting”

**December 4**—Hartwick College's Madrigal Dinner in Fellowship Hall (6:00 p.m. seating, dinner at 6:30)

**December 6 & 7**—Catskill Choral Society Concert (7:30 p.m. Friday; 3:30 p.m. Saturday)

**December 8**—Second Sunday in Advent “Mystery” ONE SERVICE AT 10:00 A.M. followed by a luncheon. Bishop Webb will be visiting and bringing the message that day. You will be receiving an invitation and an RSVP card. The church will be providing Brooks' chicken for the meal and asking people to sign up to bring a dish to share under different categories: a starch side dish, a vegetable or fruit side dish, or dessert. Mark your calendar now! It should be a wonderful day! Come at 9:00 a.m. for some time with our Bishop talking about LGBTQ inclusivity in the church.

**December 10**—United Methodist Women's Christmas Dinner (6:00 p.m.)

**December 13**—Youth Café Cookie Decorating (7:00 p.m.)

**December 15**—Third Sunday of Advent “Redemption”  
                                   Community Christmas Carol concert at 2:00 p.m.

**December 20**—Youth Café Christmas Party

**December 22**—Fourth Sunday of Advent “Incarnation”

**December 24**—Christmas Eve  
                                   Pageant and Worship at 7:00 p.m.  
                                   Christmas Tea at 8:00 p.m.  
                                   Christmas Eve Worship and Holy Communion at 10:00 p.m.

**December 25**—Friends of Christmas Dinner in Fellowship Hall

**December 29**—First Sunday of Christmas. Worship at 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. No Sunday Evening Ministries

## Helping Hands at Christmastime

There are many wonderful ways to give of your time and talent in service during the Advent and Christmas Season.



- \* Help Decorate the church for the season. Sign up on the Sunday clipboards or at the church office for one of the teams decorating trees and hanging garlands.
- \* Volunteer to light the candles of the Advent Wreath for one of the services during the four Sundays of Advent or Christmas Eve.
- \* Bring in food for the Christmas Tea or help serve on Christmas Eve.
- \* Adopt a child on our Gingerbread Giving Tree. Select one of the children on the tree, sign up on the corresponding clipboard, and then purchase items suggested on the gingerbread boy or girl. Wrap the gifts and bring them in no later than Sunday, December 15.
- \* Choose an “alternative gift” for loved ones this year by making donations to some wonderful charities and ministries. Each donation comes with a card to give to your loved one letting them know that a donation was made in their honor. Cards are available each Sunday during the season of Advent in the Fellowship Hall.
- \* Keep children warm in the holiday season by bringing clothing donations to the 7:00 pm Christmas Eve service and placing them in the manger when directed during the service. Suggested donations: hats, gloves/mittens, scarves, and socks.

## God is in the Manger: Reflections on Advent and Christmas by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

First United Methodist Church now has an online blog where daily devotions are posted for prayer and reflection. You may find the online devotions through our Facebook page [First UMC Oneonta] or by visiting [firstumconeonta.blog.com](http://firstumconeonta.blog.com). For the seasons of Advent and Christmas the online devotions will come from the thoughts and reflections of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Here is an excerpt from the introduction.

This devotional brings together daily reflections from one of the twentieth century’s most beloved theologians, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945). These reflections have been chosen especially for the seasons of Advent and Christmas, a time when the liturgical calendar highlights several themes of Bonhoeffer’s beliefs and teachings: that Christ expresses strength best through weakness, that faith is more important than the beguiling trappings of religion, and that God is often heard most clearly by those in poverty and distress.

Although he came from a well-to-do family, by the time he wrote most of the content of this book, Bonhoeffer was well acquainted with both poverty and distress. Just two days after Adolf Hitler had seized control of Germany in early 1933, Bonhoeffer delivered a radio sermon in which he criticized the new regime and warned Germans that “the Fuhrer concept” was dangerous and wrong. His microphone was switched off mid-transmission. This began a twelve-year struggle against Nazism in Germany, with Bonhoeffer running afoul of authorities and being arrested in 1943. Much of the content of this book was written during the two years he spent in prison.

If you do not have access to the online devotion and would like a copy of the book, please let the office know as soon as possible. Bonhoeffer’s deep spirituality and beautiful theology will be a powerful way to mark the season of Emmanuel, God with us. Through November the blog will feature reflections from Henri Nouwen, “The Dance of Life: Weaving Sorrows and Blessings into One Joyful Step.”

## Church School and Youth Notes

*Pastor Emily*

Last summer Dana, Sarah, and I attended a wedding for some friends of ours. The invitation we received was indicative of how the wedding and reception themselves would go: carefully and thoughtfully crafted and really, really fun. My favorite part of the invitation was the RSVP card. There were a number of different options, and they were listed somewhat like this:

- will be there with bells on
- will be there without bells on
- will be there but will not take side in the bell controversy
- will not be able to attend



As cute and quirky as the RSVP card was, it has led me to reflect on the spirit with which we approach life in the church. Do you come to church “with bells on”, enthusiastic about engaging in ceremony and celebration? Do you come quietly or begrudgingly “without bells on”? Do you choose to stay below the radar, not taking a stance when it comes to controversial issues? Or do you simply not come?

Every week each of your children and youth makes a decision to check a box. Many come to church with bells on – excited, enthusiastic, and ready to learn and participate in the faith community. Some come quietly, whether because that’s a part of their personality or because they don’t wish to be there to begin with. Others come but are disengaged, and still others choose not to come at all.

Your participation in Church School, Credo Class, and Youth Café will serve our children and youth in a few ways. First, you’ll give reason for them to come to church with bells on. Second, you’ll make it possible for the programming we offer them to continue. Finally, you’ll be setting an example for our young people by participating enthusiastically in your faith community.

Please read through the list of scheduled events for children and youth. As you do so I encourage you to prayerfully consider supporting our children and youth programming with your presence. As always, feel free to contact me with questions.

Church School (every Sunday) 9:30-10:30am – Grades 1-6 (two classes); 4:00-4:45pm – All Grades

Youth Talks (every Sunday) 6:30-7:30pm – Grades 9-12

Youth Café (two Fridays each month) 7-10pm – Grades 6-12

Nov. 22 – Movie Night; Dec.13 – Christmas Cookie Decorating; Dec. 20 – Christmas Party

## Credo Class Adventures

*Pastor Teresa*



The Credo Class youth and their mentors recently visited St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Church for Saturday mass on November 16. They attended worship service and then met with their priest, Father David for some questions and answers. Their next adventure will be on Friday, December 6 for a visit to Temple Beth El, the Jewish house of worship just across Chestnut Street and half a block down from 1st UMC, next to the Twelve Tribes house. Due to a large concert at our church that night, we will meet at 7:15 p.m. outside the Temple. Worship begins at 7:30 p.m. and runs for about an hour. Following worship we will have a tour of the Temple and some time to ask questions. Mark your calendars.

## Food Pantry in Otego Needs Support—Can You Help?

*Pastor Emily*



Within the last year, our friends in faith at Otego UMC have been working with three other churches in Otego to support the Otego Community Food Pantry. The pantry had been a very small operation for some time, struggling just to stay open as it suffered a scarcity of people, food, and money. As of December 2012, the pantry was consistently serving 5 local families – not nearly enough to meet the extensive need in the area. Now the pantry is consistently serving 59 local families. Their capacity for ministry has increased more than 10-fold in less than a year! Currently the organization is in great need of food donations. They have the staff and the space, but not enough food for distribution. As we celebrate the work that our sisters and brothers are doing, let us support them with our prayers. May God make their loaves and fish enough that all may eat.

## Yearly Church Conference



Each year a United Methodist congregation is required to hold a Church Conference where we review the past year, make some important decisions for the coming year, and celebrate the present. The meeting is led by our District Superintendent, Jan Rowell, and it is her chance to hear our stories and see our visions. This year Rev. Rowell is asking us to do our annual work in conjunction with our siblings from neighboring congregations, a chance to get to know one another. On **Wednesday, November 20<sup>th</sup>** we will gather at 6:30 pm at Elm Park UMC for a Church Conference with congregation members from other churches in our immediate area. It will be a wonderful chance to get to know one another better while still sharing in what John Wesley called ‘holy conferencing.’ All church members have full vote. Check with Jeff if you are unsure of your membership status.

## “We Believe” Discussion Group

**We Believe Discussion Group** will meet on Thursday, November 21 at 6:30 p.m. when we will watch together Rev. Vicki Flippin’s sermon from the Reconciling Convocation over the Labor Day weekend in Washington DC. Rev. Flippin preached an amazing sermon from the text in the book of Acts detailing the arrest and beating of Paul and Silas, and the earthquake that freed them from imprisonment. Come and hear an amazing preacher and talk about her insights into this remarkable story. We Believe Discussion group will not meet in December but will resume in January.

## A Visit from Zimkids



On Sunday, November 24 we will again be blessed with a visit from Dennis Gaboury from Zimkids. Zimkids helps young people cope with life in a country ravaged by AIDS, corruption, and violence. They provide 200 orphans in Pumula North, Bulawayo, with educational opportunities, recreational activities, food, medical care, and skills training. Their day-to-day operations are largely self-funded, based on the work of the children themselves. The children make dolls and wire toys – as they do for their own pleasure – which Dennis takes to the U.S. Direct donations pay for special projects that include schoolbooks, outreach activities, medical aid, and caregiver self-sustainability.

In March 2011, they broke ground on the new center, with four of the 18-year-olds – two girls and two boys – receiving on-the-job training in all areas of construction. The site, which opened in July 2012, houses a Resource Center with a kitchen, clinic, library and sewing area; a Computer training center; a market garden complete with drip irrigation technology; and sports fields.

Dennis will be accompanied by Tinashe Basa, a leader in Bulawayo at the orphanage. They will again bring dolls to sell to raise funds for the children of Pumula North. Let us join together in welcoming Tinashe and Dennis to First UMC.

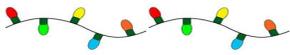
## Interfaith Thanksgiving Service—November 26 at 1st Baptist Church



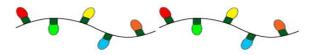
This year’s Oneonta Community Interfaith Thanksgiving Service will be held at 1st Baptist Church, 71 Chestnut Street—across the street from 1st UMC— on Tuesday, November 26. The service will begin at 7:30, with the choir rehearsal at 6:30. All are welcome to sing in the choir, which will be directed by Gail Baird. The choir will sing “My Grateful Spirit Sings” and “Anthem of Praise” both by Sally DeFord. John Colonna will play organ and/or piano. Choir robes will not be worn.

Rev. Randy Palada will host the service and Father Scott VanDerveer from St. Mary’s will deliver the message. Other participants will include Mayor Dick Miller, the Reverends Olu Harding and Craig Schwalenberg, the choir of Temple Beth El with Robin Seletsky and Barbara Roberts, Nancy New, Charlene Liddell, Jeane O’Dea, and our Muslim friends from the Naksh-I’bendi Sufi Center.

Donations of money and non-perishable food are requested. Donated food and money will be distributed to Oneonta food pantries. Refreshments will be served in the Social Hall following the service.



## United Methodist Women's Holiday Bazaar



Saturday, November 23

9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m



### "A Beary, Merry Christmas"

The bazaar is not only coming, it is very near! Bring your non-food items and preserves to the church by Wednesday, Nov 20. Bring cookies and other food items by Friday afternoon or 8 a.m. on Saturday morning.

- \* The "Crafts booth" is looking for homemade items of all sorts...including items for Christmas.
- \* The "Cookie booth" is looking for small/fancy cookies as these cookies are sold by the pound.
- \* "Sweets & Treats" is looking for jams, jellies, preserves of all sorts, pies, breads, candy and whatever satisfies the sweet tooth.
- \* "Grandma's Attic" has been collecting special items that were donated to the Rummage Sales...now Barbara is looking for "gift sets" that you would like to see re-gifted. (She says they are good sellers.)
- \* Angela is still in the market for jewelry for the "Jewelry booth"...please get the jewelry to Angela ASAP, (434-2435).
- \* "The Hungry Bear Café" will be serving 'beary delicious food' including our famous corn chowder and gluten-free chicken noodle soup, chili, hotdogs, sloppy joes, and of course, homemade pies. Muffins will be served with coffee from the opening bell.

To help in any way with the Bazaar, please contact Joyce Miller at 432-8751. It's a fun way to meet people. All women of the church are considered members of UMW...some are just more active than others. And some just help with special projects—like the bazaar.

### Camp Casowasco New Year's Eve Party

This winter, Casowasco campers will not want to miss the most amazing New Year's party this side of the equator! We will spend 3 jam-packed days cheering in the arrival of 2014 with the fire blazing and the snowplow ready. Play an intense game of Jack Frost, sled down the hill at Mt. Tabor, rock out to your favorite songs during worship, and count down to 2014 as the balloons fall from the sky. Plus get a sneak peek at Summer Camp 2014! Sign up for the most rockin' New Year's Eve celebration around before it's sold out! Camp is for ages 7-18. Cost is \$85.00. Questions? Call us at 315-364-8756. To register, visit [www.casowasco.org](http://www.casowasco.org)

### Free Smoking Cessation Hypnosis Workshop — November 20 or 21



There will be Free Smoking Cessation Hypnosis Workshops with Cheryl DeDecker, Consulting Hypnotist For the GREAT AMERICAN SMOKE OUT on Wednesday, November 20th at the Huntington Memorial Library (62 Chestnut Street in Oneonta) from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and Thursday, November 21st at the First United Methodist Church from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the Albright (Art) Room downstairs.

Cheryl will also be offering a Free Hypnosis Clinic on November 24th from 1:00-1:45 at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Oneonta, 12 Ford Avenue. The topic will be on Coping Effectively with Holiday Stress. Participants will receive a Free Hypnosis CD for relaxation during the holidays! No reservation necessary. We meet upstairs in the church loft. Light refreshments will be available following the group hypnosis clinic.

Questions? Contact Cheryl DeDecker, Consulting Hypnotist and HypnoCoach® Compass Coaching and Hypnosis at 607-287-7907

## Art Ministry Happenings

*Kathy Chase, Art Ministry Coordinator*

### WEDNESDAY MORNING CLASS SCHEDULE

We look forward to working with our “resident” instructor, *Barbara Ardan* for the months of November and December. Classes will be November 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> working with oil pastels. Her classes will resume December 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 18<sup>th</sup> continuing with pastels in an area that the class chooses. All are welcome to experience the calm and relaxing atmosphere that Barbara creates in her classes. It’s a perfect respite during the holiday season. Material fee is \$20.



## Music Notes

*John Jurgensen, Director of Music Ministries*

**A**h, December! You are here again. Our change ringing band will ring for Bishop Webb on Dec. 8. There is only one service that day at 10:00 am.

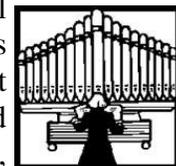


The annual Christmas Carol will be on Sunday, December 15 at 2:00 pm. This means that the Asbury Ringers will ring at the 11:00 am service and will serve as their warm-up for the concert. New to the concert will be our change ringing band and Father David from St. Mary’s. Fr. David’s undergraduate degree is in voice. If you attended the Nov. 17 concert at St. Mary’s, you heard his beautiful voice.

Wednesday, Dec. 11 will be the last rehearsal for Asbury, Buckingham, and Paradis ringing teams for 2013. We will resume rehearsals on January 8. Klangers will still rehearse in preparation for Christmas Eve, and regular rehearsals will resume on January 7.

## “Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord....”

**W**e Need Help! The antiphonal division (located in the tower) of FUMC’s organ is original to the 1925 installation, and has served faithfully for the past 88 years. Although the pipes still work, the chest has deteriorated beyond the point of repair. We now seek to have a new chest built and have repairs performed in the chamber. All the pipes will be removed to be cleaned and any necessary repairs performed, the old chest taken out, room properly insulated and repaired, new chest put in place and reinstallation of pipes. With the help of one anonymous donor and a few known donors we have been able to build a fund with a balance of \$20,000. We need another \$10,000 - \$15,000 to be able to begin and complete the necessary work. A gracious member of the congregation has stepped up and would be willing to give \$1 match for every \$2 given up to \$5000. In other words, if the rest of the congregation is willing to donate \$10,000 this person is willing to provide the other \$5,000. So far, \$220 has been given by individuals, matched by \$110 from the anonymous donor for a total of \$330 of the \$15,000 needed.



We believe this is the last major work the organ will need for many years as long as we continue the routine maintenance on it.

## Madrigal Dinner Returns to 1st UMC



**I**t’s back! The Musical Madrigal Dinner put on by Dr. Jason Leo Curley and the Hartwick College Music will take place in our Fellowship Hall on **Wednesday December 4<sup>th</sup>** with seating starting at 6:00 pm and dinner/show time beginning at 6:30pm. Ticket prices are Adults \$25, Seniors 65+ and high school students \$20, Children 12 and under \$12 and family four pack for just \$65. Please see Jeff in the main office at FUMC, by email at [jeff@firstumc-oneonta.org](mailto:jeff@firstumc-oneonta.org) or by phone at 432-4102. Don’t hesitate because tickets will go fast— every show has been a sell out. Checks should be payable to Hartwick College with *Madrigal Dinner* in memo.

## Facility and Financial Updates

*Business Manager, Jeff Gardner*

A time of Reflection, Thanksgiving, and preparation for the season of Advent is upon us—where has the year gone?



It seems like only yesterday that we putting away the decorations from Advent last year and putting the finishing touches on the youth room before we moved on to other areas. The other areas were the hallway, Dr. Dann Sunday School room and library. Although we weren't able to finish the library in 2013, it will get a new floor and door to the basement in 2014 along with some other work that still needs to be done around the church.

We as members of the FUMC have so many things to be thankful for. Friends and family, current and former members who are and have been financially generous, a beautiful, safe, warm, and dry worship space, music, art and children's programming to name a few. In addition, FUMC is blessed to have numerous talented individuals and groups who donate countless hours to assist the wonderful staff to carry out mission work, fundraising and programs throughout the year.

Financially I am pleased to announce several items this month. The Trustees met with the trust representatives from Community Bank and even with the amount of money that has been paid out to cover construction costs and the operating budget, we still have out-performed the financial index for the first three quarters. In addition, FUMC was the recipient of just under \$379,000 from the estate of Marguerite Cooke Bolton. The money was to be invested with the income to be used for whatever needs the Board of Trustees so desire on behalf of the Church.

The September jingle was for the Habitat for Humanity. With the generous donations of our congregation, FUMC was able to send them \$222.70. In October, the jingle was for the Family Services Thanksgiving Basket campaign and brought in \$115. The November jingle is for the 1st UMC Emergency Energy Fund.

The fall rummage sale was held on Thursday and Friday, September 26 and 27. The net proceeds from the rummage and bake sale was \$1,762.96. The RMN book sale brought in \$286.77.

Also, in October was a Murder Mystery Dinner Theater fundraiser for Theotokos which raised \$787.29 to help with the costs of sending a group of our youth and adults to Jamaica in July of 2014 to continue the work that previous teams have started at the Moses Baker School and the Isaac Barrant clinic in Golden Grove, Jamaica.

Each year as we reflect on the accomplishments, we know that it would not be possible without the outpouring of financial support of this congregation.

On Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>, members, friends and visitors came together for one worship service and a potluck luncheon. After inspirational songs, prayer and readings, we received 87 pledge cards. The total pledged thus far for the 2014 operating budget is \$149,387, this does not include any pledges towards the Associate Pastor position. If you are able and have not turned in your pledge card, please do so or drop me an email as soon as possible. The finance team has begun working on the budget and your pledges are a significant part of determining the final budget.

Until next time, may the sun be warm on your cheeks and may the snow stay away until Christmas Eve. 😊

## "Giving Tuesday" - December 3, 2013 \$ = \$\$

The General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church invites you to participate in UMC #GivingTuesday, when gifts made online through The Advance will be matched dollar for dollar. Building on the recent US shopping traditions of Black Friday, Local Business Saturday, and Cyber Monday, UMC #GivingTuesday offers an opportunity to start off the holiday season by giving instead of getting through supporting organizations that are transforming the world.

This is a great opportunity to build awareness and maximize support for a project or missionary that is meaningful to you. - See more at [www.umcmmission.org/Giving](http://www.umcmmission.org/Giving) where you will find out how to donate and access all of the Advance projects which include UMCOR. Once in the category you are exploring you will find other links to projects.

## Estate Giving to the Church

*Tom Trelease, Trustee's Treasurer*

**R**ecently our church received a sizable bequest from the estate of a deceased member of our congregation. Our church is truly grateful for this generous gift and we all extend a sincere "thank you" to this member and her family.

To leave a portion of your estate to your church family helps your church continue its mission of helping others. A bequest is an ongoing gift as the donated funds continue to earn money every year to help fund all of our church programs. Leaving some of your estate to your church is also one of the best ways to help guarantee that the church survives financially in the future and is able to continue all of its worthwhile programs.

A gift from your estate can also save estate taxes for the donor. Charitable contributions are subtracted dollar for dollar from a decedent's taxable estate before the tax is calculated. This can mean a sizable tax savings, especially in New York where our New York State estate tax has a much lower "standard deduction" than the federal estate tax.

## Reaching Out in Love

*Joyce Miller*

**J**esus said, "In as much as you have done it unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me." **In October, First UMC served/gave in these ways:**

- \* Brought food for the local food pantries when they came for pictures for the new Church Directory.
- \* Helped local families in need through the Pastor's Discretionary Fund (Offering the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month)
- \* Church school children collected quarters to buy mosquito nets in the "Imagine No Malaria" campaign.
- \* Put on "Mystery Dinner Theater" to raise money for Theotokos (our Jamaica Mission Team).
- \* Gave loose change on Sunday for the Family Service Association's Thanksgiving Basket Program.
- \* Brought in bath towels, washcloths and sheet sets for Opportunity House, our local homeless shelter.
- \* Gave to the special offering for scholarships on World Communion Sunday.

### How Can One Give This Month:

- \* Bring non-perishable food items for the local food pantries and add them to the display in the Sanctuary.
- \* Bring Campbell's Soup and other "Education Labels" to the church office for the benefit of Red Bird Mission in KY. They buy their vehicles with these labels.
- \* Give to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund on December 1 (or any other Sunday, clearly marked)
- \* Contribute loose change to the Sunday Jingle for 1st UMC Energy Fund (Nov.) and "Secret Santa" in Dec.
- \* Donate items (food, crafts, etc) to the United Methodist Women's "Beary, Merry" Holiday Bazaar. All money goes to their local, national and international ministries to Women, Children & Youth.

## Community Thanksgiving Dinner



**T**he Oneonta Community Thanksgiving Dinner will again be at the Elks Club (84 Chestnut St.) from 12:30 - 2 p.m. on Thanksgiving Day. The food is prepared on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> at the Elks Club by St. Mary's Church and The Lord's Table with lots of volunteers needed. There are lots of ways to help. To volunteer time (set-up, cooking, serving, delivering meals, clean-up) call *Judy Pierce* at 263-5440 before Nov. 26. To donate specific foods and /or to make homemade pies or breads, also call *Judy Pierce*. Items need to be brought to the Elks Club or the Lord's Table on Elm St. By Wednesday, Nov. 27 between 9am and 4pm. If you know someone who needs a ride to the dinner or needs to have a meal delivered, call *Aileen Fargo* at 433-1571 before Nov. 26. Questions? Call *Chris Carpenter* at 435-7987 or *Judy Pierce* at 263-5440.

## Response to Response Magazine

*United Methodist Women's Voice of Women in Mission*

### Caring for the Mentally Ill, Are We Doing Enough?

While reading my November 2013 "Response", the magazine of women in mission, I was surprised to see an article "Utica's Lifeline to Mental Health". This is a national magazine and nearby Utica is featured because it has a Mobile Crisis Assessment Team or MCAT. MCAT responds to mental health crises in Oneida and Herkimer counties and is supported by United Methodist Women. Crises vary from suicide attempts, threats of harm to other community tragedies, etc. Members of MCAT, which include counselors, are available by phone 24/7 to respond to any emergency.

It struck me as more than a coincidence that the following day in the Oneonta Star was the headline "Mental Health calls on rise for Oneonta police." The Oneonta Police has had 197 mental health calls so far this year, last year the number was 185. That is over one call every 2 days! The article continued to say how the police need more training in order to appropriately deal with these calls. Nationally, according to National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI), 1 in 4 adults and 20% of youth ages 13 to 18 will experience a mental illness in a given year. This result in an estimated 193 million dollars in lost earning. Suicide is the 10 leading cause of death and third leading cause of death for the 15 to 24 age group. More needs to be done!

#### What is being done locally?

- \* The Oneonta Police will have a workshop to further train the officers to respond crisis mental health situations. If an adult requires a certified crisis center, he or she is taken to Bassett Hospital in Cooperstown.
- \* During weekday hours, the Otsego County Mental Health Department is available for crisis counseling. Counseling is available for on a non-crisis basis by appointment at the County Mental Health or with local mental health professions, e.g. MSW, psychologist, psychiatrist. (Unfortunately, we have very few psychiatrists in the area.) NAMI is a national organization with a local chapter whose goal is to support the mentally ill and their friends and family. They also advocate for the mentally ill and educate about mental illness. They run support groups in the area. Also, the Mountain View Social Club offers transitional employment opportunities for those coping with mental illness and Residential Supplemental Services assist with housing for the mentally ill.

#### What can we all do?

- \* Learn more about mental illness.
- \* Join NAMI. The group holds support groups in the area for the mentally ill and their friends and family. NAMI also provides education about mental illnesses. They also strongly advocate for this population group. Their contact number is 547-1347. Website is [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org).
- \* Contact your legislators and tell them to increase funding for mental health services. In NYS funding has been cut by over 200 million dollars since 2009. The inpatient hospitals in New York State for the mentally ill are being cut from 24 from 15. The Binghamton Psychiatric Center is slated to close in 2014. At present, there are no nearby inpatient centers for children and adolescents.
- \* Join walks that support NAMI and continue to write letters supporting legislation that funds mental health services. The needs are great both nationally and locally.

This large section of the population needs all of us to speak for them. All of us have been affected either directly or indirectly by someone with mental illness and now is time to act!

*Sharry Strait-Carey    Education and Interpretation coordinator*

## You Can Help...And It Won't Cost a Cent!

Kay Cronk

If you aren't clipping Box Tops for Education, Campbell's Labels for Education and/or Tyson A+ products labels for area elementary schools, will you join members of FUMC who clip and save them for Red Bird Mission in Beverly, Kentucky?

What labels can you collect?

- \* General Mills products with this Box Tops for Education labels
- \* Campbell's labels with UPC Code and Labels for Education signage:
- \* Tyson A+ products labels



Too extensive to print here, the full list of products carrying these labels can be found on-line at [www.rbmission.org](http://www.rbmission.org). In the "Search" box, type in *Labels for Education*; next click on *Collectibles*. At that page, you can choose to view and/or print lists for General Mills, Campbell's and Tyson products. You can also check the lists in the church office, or just keep an eagle eye out for the labels on all of the products you use in your home.

Clip and save up a bunch of labels, then take them to the church office. A few times a year they are packaged and sent to Red Bird Mission. Churches from more than 35 states contribute labels to Red Bird throughout the year. There, volunteers sort, count and prepare the labels for redemption. Each spring the labels are boxed in groups of 70,000, placed on wrapped pallets and shipped to the redemption center.

What comes next? Red Bird Mission receives 10 cents for every General Mills Box Tops for Education label; Campbell's Labels for Education are exchanged for vehicles, equipment and supplies that help support the Mission's ministries; each Tyson A+ label is redeemed for 24 cents.

Since the Campbell's Labels for Education initiative began, Red Bird Mission has acquired 28 vans (mini and 15-passenger), along with various school supplies and equipment. The 15 passenger vans currently in service are outfitted to transport supplies, tools and equipment to work sites where volunteers are repairing homes. The eight minivans now in use provide transportation for area residents who can't drive to medical and other appointments, medical caregivers who travel for home visits, volunteers delivering meals to senior citizens, teachers making home visits, administrative staff travel, carrying recyclable materials to a neighboring town for recycling. By redeeming one million, 600 thousand Campbell's labels, Red Bird will be soon be receiving another minivan!

TV-VCRs, an aquarium, library books, Physical Education equipment and videos are examples of supplies and equipment acquired for the School in the past. A projector and screen received through the Campbell's program are used during daily devotions to project the words of songs on a wall in the Chapel. It is anticipated that during the next redemption period points will be used to acquire I-Pads, smart boards and other electronics for the Red Bird Christian School.

General Mills labels are redeemed for cash, with a check sent to Red Bird Christian School annually. The money is used for a variety of needed school supplies and equipment, such as library books and technology and art supplies. The School's playground was rebuilt with one year's funds.



**Okay, you ask, just what is Red Bird Mission?** An institution of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church within the Red Bird Missionary Conference, Red Bird Mission is a non-profit agency located in the Appalachian mountains of Southeastern Kentucky. It serves approximately 14,000 persons living in rural-distressed, isolated communities in five counties

where lack of jobs, illiteracy, poor housing and rugged mountainous terrain provide obstacles to a fuller life for the residents. With only 1% of Red Bird Mission's budget funded through United Methodist appropriations, it relies heavily on the support of churches of various denominations and individuals to carry out its many and varied programs.

Begun in 1921, the Mission strives to meet the needs of these residents through ministry in five areas:

- \* **Education:** K-12 Christian School, Residential Dormitories, Early Childhood Development (each year the percentage of graduating seniors going on for further education rises)
- \* **Health & Wellness:** Medical Clinic, Dental Clinic, Pharmacy, Lab, X-Ray, Community Health Nurse
- \* **Community Outreach:** Community Aid, Elderly, Family, and Women and Children Ministries include Senior Citizens Center, Elderly Housing, Transitional Housing Assistance Program, Food Pantry, Meals On Wheels, Red Bird Farmers Project/Grow Appalachia
- \* **Economic Opportunities:** The Community Store offers gently used clothing, furniture, household items donated by churches across the country; through the Craft Marketing Ministry, locally-made crafts are offered for sale in the Red Bird Craft Store, on-line, through consignment sales to churches and organizations, and at churches that host an Appalachian Craft Fair. This program also teaches the artists about quality, pricing and marketing and provides a way for them to supplement their incomes
- \* **Community Housing Improvement:** Work Camp, Home Repair, Mission Facilities

Those in our congregation who were here during the 1990s may remember our connection with Red Bird. For nine years FUMC supported Red Bird Mission by sending mission teams to participate in its Work Camp program. As part of the Home Repair program, team members were assigned work projects in area homes and on campus that included rebuilding porches, re-shingling a roof, painting (inside and outside), lawn mowing, clipping labels, working on adding a room to a home. Throughout each week, one of the greatest privileges we had was spending time with the people we were working for, getting to know and share with each other.

Although it was some years ago that FUMC sponsored these trips, Red Bird Mission still holds a special place in my heart. John and I continue to support the Mission, and I hope you will join with us by participating in the label collection program. Tracy Nolan, Director of Red Bird's Community Outreach, has said "Each time someone sends in a label, he or she is helping provide transportation for a meal to a family, a homeless person to receive shelter, a sick person to see a doctor or pick up medications, an adult to get to GED classes, or a shut-in to find friendships at a senior center."

Read more about Red Bird Mission at [www.rbmission.org](http://www.rbmission.org).

### ~ *Caring and Sharing* ~

**O**ur prayers for comfort and healing to those that have been hospitalized or ill at home or are recovering or continuing in treatment. **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.**

#### IN SYMPATHY

Our sympathy is extended to those persons who have lost family and friends since our last newsletter.

To the family, friends and colleagues of *Wanda Perry* who died on September 28;

To the *Goodhue Family* on the death of *Michelle Goodhue* who died on Oct. 1;

To *Betty Greene* on the death of her son, *Tom Greene*; to his wife, *Laura* and their sons *Jason* and *Tim* and their families; and to this brothers, *Dan* and *Bill*;

To the family of *George Salvador* who died on October 9. George and his wife Eleanor were long-time members of 1st UMC and George did much carpentry and cabinet making for our building. Notes of sympathy and memorial gifts may be sent to his daughter, *Judy Salvador* at 2238 Toniwood Lane, Palm Harbor, FL 34685. Any memorial gifts will be used to purchase cabinets for her church in memory of her father.

#### BAPTISM

On October 20 *Lydia Ann Leader* daughter of Nathan & Kayla Leader was baptized at the 11 a.m. service.