

# Simsbury United Methodist Church

## The Messenger

April 2018

*Open hearts, open minds, open doors*

## All Hands on Deck for Clean-Up Day

Each April, we gather to spruce up the church campus at the annual Spring Clean-Up Day. Many hands make light work! Please join us beginning at 7:30 a.m. on **Saturday, April 14**. Bring rakes, leaf blowers, wheelbarrows, etc.!

## Conversation Cafés Postponed

After prayerful discernment and discussion, the Conversation Cafe Design Team decided to postpone the upcoming Conversation Cafés. We look forward to scheduling them at a time that is more convenient for all and hope to engage our new pastor in the process. Thank you to all who showed interest and to Woody for the thought provoking Lenten sermon series. Stay tuned for new dates and times in the Fall of 2018.

## Holocaust Remembrance

The Farmington Valley Jewish Congregation-Emek Shalom will continue its annual tradition of remembering those who perished in the Holocaust by reading names of victims nonstop for a 24-hour vigil outside of Eno Hall. This year the event begins on **Wednesday, April 11**, at 7:00 p.m. We will begin with a brief memorial service, then commence with the reading of names, with participants taking turns in 15-minute increments. We will continue reading names throughout the night and the following day, concluding at 7:00 p.m. **Thursday, April 12**, with a closing ritual.

SUMC is invited to lend our voices as we recall the names of those who perished during these dark times. Your support will help show the world that this sort of ignorance and bigotry has left deep scars on the world's collective psyche and will not soon be forgotten.

Please sign up to join us to remember those whose lives and legacies were cut short: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/2ofob44a4ae28aofa7-yomhashoah2>

*With Blessings,  
Rabbi Rebekah Goldman Mag  
Farmington Valley Jewish Congregation-Emek Shalom*

## Important Dates

**April 1:** Easter Sunday

**April 3:** South Park Inn;  
Men's book club

**April 8:** Greeting card sale

**April 11-12:** Holocaust remembrance

**April 14:** Church Spring Clean-Up Day, 7:30 a.m.;  
Days for Girls, 9:00 a.m.

**April 15:** Deadline to submit items for the May *Messenger*

**April 21:** Rake and Roll yard clean up (afternoon)

**April 28:** Wesley Ringers at Wadsworth

**April 29:** Insigni Ringers at Willimantic Bell Festival

**May 1:** South Park Inn

**May 5:** Days for Girls, 9:00 a.m.; Walk Against Hunger (Foodshare/Gifts of Love)

**May 6:** Greeting card sale

**May 11-13:** Confirmation class retreat

**May 13:** Mothers Day

**May 25-29:** LLI Art Show

## Pastor's Page

"I envy you." Those words were spoken to me some 40 years ago by a retired Lutheran pastor who just happened to be in the congregation when I began serving as an assistant pastor on Long Island. His words stuck in my mind, I believe, because I did not think he had any idea how I felt at that time—unsure of what lay ahead, unsure of my ability to do the job I felt I was called to do, unsure that I wanted to do it. "I envy you; you have an exciting journey ahead of you."

It has taken me 40 years to say this, but I think he was right. Right, that is, that I had an exciting journey that has taken me to six churches on both sides of the Long Island Sound. There have been times when I wanted to quit, times when I wondered if what I was doing made any difference in the world or in the church. I think I got better at what I did but I never lost that sense of uncertainty about this most unusual calling. It has been quite a ride and I leave with few regrets.

But I do have a sense of envy, envy of those who will take up the challenge of ministry and go forward. Because from my vantage point there are exciting times ahead for the church. There will change, God's Spirit will emerge in new and unpredictable ways. The church of the future will speak with a clearer voice as it embraces science more fully and speaks to global concerns. The church will be a bridge builder not only between faith groups but between peoples of the world. The church will challenge the status quo that allows for such great inequality.

SUMC, thankfully, is moving forward in embracing this new Spiritual revolution. This church is making a conscious effort to remove boundaries and barriers that have kept people out and the church is opening itself up to new possibilities. Only God knows what lies ahead. To embrace the future is to have faith that Christ does go before us and prepares a way for us.

As I move into the next phase of my life – retirement – I am unsure of what lies ahead and not sure that I am up to the task; I have no idea what the future holds, but I do know who holds the future—of that I am sure.

~ Grace and Peace, Pastor Woody

## Catastrophic Apartment Fire in Simsbury

On January 3, 2018, my son Robert Rue's apartment was in flames along with five other apartments in the Meadow View Apartment complex on Hopmeadow Street in Weatogue. Rob was the only one home in all six apartments ablaze. He worked late the night before and was asleep when he was awakened by smoke. He was on the second floor and looked out the window to find a high-rise fire truck carrying one or two firemen to the roof over his bedroom, or at least very close to his bedroom, to chop a hole in the roof for a hose to put out some of the fire. Rob got changed in record time and safely got out of the apartment. He then stood outside in the freezing cold air and watched the apartments burn. It was later determined that the fire began when the maintenance man attempted to thaw the frozen basement water pipes with a blowtorch, igniting the insulation.

Rob lost everything. He did not have renters insurance.

Pastor Woody asked if SUMC could help in any way. My answer is that all of you can help in a big way by thanking God that Rob is safe and not hurt. Rob does need a few things for the new apartment that he moved into in March.

1. A sofa/couch to seat three people
2. Two end tables for each end of the couch
3. A coffee table for in front of the couch
4. A kitchen table/chairs for two – preferably a tall table with two bar stool chairs. A regular-size table with regular chairs is more than welcomed!
5. A desk with drawers to hold a computer
6. Three or four patio chairs
7. Coffee mugs
8. A set of drinking glasses (eight to 12 glasses)
9. A nightstand
10. Bedding (sheets, comforter, pillows) for a king-size bed (king mattress donated by a local company)

God Bless you and all the members of SUMC.

~Bill Rue, 860.658.6655

Please contact Bill or Pastor Woody for amendments to this list /to see what has already been donated by press time.

## Giving Makes for Gladness

Giving doesn't begin with our financial resources; it begins with the offering of self, which encompasses our time and our talents as well as our treasures. Giving ourselves to God and others is one of the most fulfilling and rewarding expressions of our lives. Here are some thoughts by others about the profound effect it has on us.

- The apostle Paul says through the act of giving, "We are enriched in every way." [2 Corinthians 9:11]
  - David Livingstone once suggested that investments in kingdom values yield immeasurable results: "I place no value on anything I have or may possess, except in relation to the kingdom of God. If anything will advance the interests of the kingdom, it shall be given away or kept, only as by giving or keeping it I shall most promote the glory of Him to whom I owe all my hopes in time or eternity."
  - Carl Menninger of the Menninger institute published a report stating that generous people are happy people. He also said that giving is a criterion for mental health! I would go one step further. I would say it is a criterion for *spiritual* health as well. It produces spiritual fulfillment, satisfaction, felicity and gratitude.
  - "The happiest people on earth are the people who have discovered the joy of giving."—Unknown
- AND
- It's also been said that happiness isn't the goal in life; it is the by-product of right living.

So explore or rediscover the joy of giving in your life. It is there waiting for you. Like a treasure chest, waiting to be unburied and opened up. Like a bouquet of wild flowers in a field just waiting to be picked and gathered together in a beautiful bunch. Like a warm hug that you have been waiting for far too long.

Finally, don't forget to give thanks for this time of year – Easter is the herald of springtime and new life!

*Blessings!*  
Pastor Peter

## Men's Book Club

The men's next selection will be *American Gospel* by Jon Meacham. The American Gospel – literally, the good news about America – is that religion shapes our public life without controlling it. In this vivid book, *New York Times*-bestselling author Jon Meacham tells the human story of how the Founding Fathers viewed faith and how they ultimately created a nation in which belief in God is a matter of choice. All men are invited to join the group and discussion on April 3 at the home of Wayne Lambert.

April 3, at the home of Wayne Lambert.

## Walk Against Hunger

Foodshare's Walk Against Hunger is on May 5 this year, at the Yard Goats Stadium in Hartford. The walk begins at 9:00 a.m.

Gifts of Love is a Foodshare partner, and last year a team of walkers from SUMC walked in support of Gifts of Love. We are hoping to have an even bigger team this year. Individuals can walk, donate, or both. Contact Susan Pribyson for more information/to join the SUMC walkers.

## Bell Choirs on the Move

### ***Wesley Ringers to ring at Wadsworth Atheneum***

On Saturday, April 28, the Wesley Ringers will load up bell tables, books, gloves and bell cases and travel into Hartford to ring at the Fine Art and Flowers Festival at the Wadsworth Atheneum. We will ring from 10:30-11:00 a.m. in Morgan Hall.

Here is what the Wadsworth Atheneum has to say about the festival:

*“Celebrate spring at the Wadsworth Atheneum’s 37th Annual Fine Art & Flowers! During this three-day museum fundraiser, floral arrangements and garden designs inspired by masterworks from the permanent collection are showcased throughout the galleries. Florists, garden clubs, and interior designers from throughout New England participate in this highly anticipated event, creating floral works of art for visitors to enjoy.” ~Wadsworth Atheneum website*

Please plan on coming to see us ring and to enjoy this beautiful and inspiring festival! There is a \$3 surcharge on tickets for this event – it is a fundraiser for the museum.

On the home front, we plan on ringing again on April 22 at the 10:30 service. And perhaps you noticed some new faces when this group rang on March 18? We have a mother and daughter (Sakura and Momo Miyake) from Japan who have joined our group. They moved here recently and were recruited by another mom – Lalitha Rajesh, who also rings in the group. Momo, now in third grade, has been ringing in bell choirs since she was in Kindergarten! We are delighted to add them to our multi-generational group!

### ***Insigni Ringers to ring in Willimantic***

The Insigni Ringers will load up bell equipment and travel to St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Church in Willimantic on Sunday, April 29, to participate in a bell festival held every other year. This Festival is sponsored by the AGO (American Guild of Organists) and benefits the AGO scholarship program for student organists. With bell choirs from First Church of Christ Glastonbury and Storrs Congregational, we will practice three pieces for the mass rings (where multiple bell choir ring together) and then all present a wonderful concert at 7:00 p.m., where we will ring two of our own pieces as well as the mass ring pieces. Although it is an hour’s drive, we would love to see some of our church family there!

On the home front, the Insigni Ringers have grown in membership as well. Cassandra and Naomi Garcia have joined our ranks. They were looking for a mother-daughter “thing” to do during this one semester before Naomi leaves for college. We were more than happy they chose to join us! We hope to ring again on Sunday, April 29, at the 10:30 service.

~ Dorothy Cowles

## Easter Special Offering

The Easter Special Offering is a tradition at SUMC. Each year we ask for donations to help those who are in need in our local, national, or global community. This year’s special offering will go to the following: Covenant to Care for Children, Pastors Discretionary Fund, and the Uganda VIM medical mission planned for this fall. As always, thank you for your generous Easter offerings.

## May Newsletter Deadline

Please email items for the May 2018 issue of the newsletter to [hryan@snet.net](mailto:hryan@snet.net) by April 15, 2018.

## Simsbury Team Days for Girls

Well, we've done it again! We filled our closets to overflowing with the sewn 700 shields, 621 bags, and 5,040 liners for Days for Girls kits in five months. We have packed up three barrels of our completed parts of kits to send to our partner enterprise in Winneba, Ghana, where the girls in Awombrew school will make up kits and Maame Nyambe (the sewing specialist and educator) will distribute the kits to nearby villages to allow girls to get to school every day of every month. They are planning to reach 500 girls, and are making regular distributions using the inventory we send along with what their students make too. We have also sent them the things they need to sew more kits on their own, like the flannels and waterproof material that goes into a kit. Churches from all over the conference have contributed the funds to pay the costs for outfitting and paying the expenses of the volunteers who teach, sew and help get kits to the girls that await them.

In addition, this month Marla Ludwig (who established a nonprofit called Bright Star Vision to help children in Ghana) will carry 64 kits that were made by volunteers from the North Canton UMC and Simsbury Teams. Marla has arranged with DFG educators in Ghana to help her educate and distribute these kits. Bright Star Vision, and is part of Sister Cities International and helps improve opportunities for children's health and education in the Volta region of Ghana. Marla learned about us through the Days for Girls website, as have many others from around the state who help us make these kits.

You would be surprised to learn how much effort goes into every piece of every kit, but you would be amazed at the fun we have doing it. Please come by and join us each month. You don't need to be a sewer, though we certainly value our great seamstresses who make the shields and bags and our sergers who zip around those shields at 100 mph. If nothing else, come visit our "factory." Next workshops are Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on April 14, May 5, and June 2.

*~ Jan Baker, team leader*

## Greeters Still Needed for 10:30 Service

I'm the new volunteer trying to arrange greeters for the 10:30 service and need your help! I'm looking for volunteers to add to the pool of those willing to greet our congregants, visitors, and other guests on Sundays. Please contact me if you would be willing to support this important ministry on a few Sundays throughout the church year: [jachurch@comcast.net](mailto:jachurch@comcast.net), 860.658.2183 (home phone), 860.559.0861 (cell).

*~ Angela Church*

## Circles

On April 10 the Susanna Circle will meet at 7:00 p.m. in the church parlor, where Johnnie Denton will introduce us to Godly Play, a program she is doing with the children during church school. We are a friendly group who would welcome any of the women of the church to join us. For information contact Rolene Johnson at [halandrolene@gmail.com](mailto:halandrolene@gmail.com) or 860.658.0634.

The **Rachel Circle** will meet on April 11 at 9:30 a.m. in the Annex.

The **Rebekah Circle** is scheduled to meet on April 19 at noon in the Annex living room. All are welcome! Questions? Call Jane Whelchel.

**Prayers and Squares Quilters** meet on April 3, 13, and 20, at 1:00 p.m. in the Annex Upper Room.

## Church School Updates

***Pizza and Paint!*** Thank you to Lori Burrous for leading our Pizza and Paint Night in March. What a fun night of food, friends, and creativity! Many thanks to all who came and participated.

***Thanks to the Volunteers!*** Also, many, many thanks to all who helped this past church school year. I must admit, when I opened my calendar in August 2017 and looked at our church school calendar through May 2018, I felt a bit overwhelmed at all the dates and classrooms that needed to be filled for the year. It wasn't always easy, but I began by asking (and thanking) God for providing for us each week. And each week he did! In fact, I have teachers and shepherds lined up through the end of May. Praise God! Thank you to all who have helped this year in our ministry. Each one of you contributed your time, talents, and heart. I cannot thank you enough for your support this past year.



Our 2017-18 church school volunteers are: **Kelsey Aldrich, Kathleen Arsenault, Jessica Barcomb, Debbie Beckius, Meg Bunz, Dorothy Cowles, Angela Church, Leslie Cunningham, Lesley Denhof, Johnnie Denton, Melissa Fearington, Mary Gridley, Melissa Hollander, Heather Kaliden, Becky Kelsey, Barry Kline, Jolie Kline, Cheryl Langin, Roanne LeClair, Sandy Lipscomb, Katie MacQuattie, Tyler Morrison, Gina Mueller, Marisa Murray, Kathryn-Ann O'Brien, Zia Pareek, Marina Serfes, Shannon Shea, Whitney Shea, Robin, Stine, and Marianne Vanech.**

Please extend a gracious "thank you" when you see these people.

~ *With much gratitude, Jody Swan*

## Farewell from Yves Venne

This is my last newsletter at SUMC. Or who knows?! I am a man full of surprises, so my father said. The Good Lord decides the course of life...not us. We only have to follow the course and it always leads to the truth. Life is full of good surprises!

The Lenten season was a time of reflection for us all. For me, as an artist, I feel great satisfaction in my life as a musician and director of many churches for over 35 years. That makes me sound old but I don't feel old. Numbers are only numbers.

You have always shown great love for my music and to our choirs for their expression during the offertories, each and every Sunday of the year. SUMC is special in my heart because you are special in my heart. Love to you all!

~ *Yves Venne*

## Junior and Senior High School Youth Activities at SUMC

*Please contact Pastor Peter at the church office or at 860.970.5695  
with any questions about the junior/senior high programming.*

### **Ongoing and Upcoming**

***Rake & Roll*** On Saturday afternoon, **April 21**, we'll form a spring clean-up team to help a few of our seniors get their yards looking nice after a hard winter. Let me know if you can assist. Many hands make light work!

***HARC at the Park*** Join us for this family-friendly walk on Saturday, **May 12**, beginning at 10:00 a.m. at Dunkin Donuts Stadium. We will be participating in this walkathon-type event to bring awareness and funding to help individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families enjoy lives of quality, inclusion, and dignity. Our youth will walk, and also help run some fun game booths that will be set up around the stadium. Let me know if you can come!

***ASP Mission Trip (Appalachian Service Project)*** It's exciting to be thinking about another trip to Appalachia this summer for an incredible week of helping others by working to improve their homes with much-needed repairs. The mission trip is for youth in high school (and those graduating from 8th grade this June). Adult chaperones are needed as well. Dates for this year's project are June 30 - July 7. The sign-up deadline has passed, so please let me know ASAP if you are interested!

***Our new senior high study group*** continues to gather each Sunday morning from 10:30-11:30 in the Barn. Come join lively discussions about current topics in our culture and in your life!

***Sunday evening fellowship for junior/senior high youth*** continues to meet with Pastor Peter, immediately following Confirmation Class. Youth in grades 6 – 12 are encouraged to attend (friends welcome!). The group meets from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. in the Barn on the Sundays that Confirmation Class is held. If Confirmation Class is not held on a particular Sunday, youth group will not meet either. Come join us!

### **Recent Events**

***The Annual Spaghetti Dinner and Talent Show*** was held March 10. We netted \$650 for the summer youth mission trip. A colorful cast of youth performers entertained the diners – as did Pastor Woody's memorable stand-up routine! Thanks to everyone who set up, cleaned up, performed, and helped out behind the scenes. Special thanks to chef Tim Boswell!

***Streetfire Saturday Service Project*** Partnering with friends in Middletown, Pastor James & Carla Woods, we served a meal, distributed clothing, and attended a revival style open-air meeting on March 24.

*~ Blessings! Pastor Peter*

## It's 2:00 a.m. – Why Am I Still Awake?

You've probably seen the TV ad for TurboTax, the one with a big slimy slug coming out from under the bed. This slug has been keeping someone awake at night in fear of doing their taxes. TurboTax to the rescue! No more sleepless nights, no more fears of how to pay the IRS bill, just use TurboTax and your problems are solved, slug gone!

Maybe doing taxes is not the issue robbing you of sleep. The slimy bug represents different things to different people. Maybe for you it's family relationships, post-partum blues, unemployment, moving, loneliness, an empty nest, depression, grief, or job-related issues. The good news is that there really is a way of resolving these issues. A Stephen Minister, with God's guidance, will walk by your side, listening to you and praying with you as you confront whatever is keeping you from enjoying the life that God wants you to have. God loves all of us, no matter what we are doing or have done that brings sadness. Don't try to do it alone, especially when help is only a phone call away.

There's no charge for a Stephen Minister. We are lay people trained to listen without judgment and with complete confidentiality. We want to banish your "slug" back outdoors, and let you find JOY in your life again. No more sleepless nights. Let God's love show you the way.

Please contact the pastor or Barbara Vasquenza, Referrals Coordinator, for additional information about Stephen Ministry.

~ *Barbara Vasquenza*

## Prayers and Condolences

Our condolences are extended to **Melissa and Aaron Hollander** and their family and friends following the death of Melissa's mother, **Charlotte Anne Mayberry**, on March 21. Services were held in Ozark, Missouri where she resided.

Our condolences are extended to **Robert Wolff** and his family and friends following the death of his wife, and former SUMC member, **E. Dolores (Wellman) Wolff**, on March 24.

Our condolences are extended to **Debbie and Bob Beckius** and their family and friends following the death of Debbie's mother, **Elise James**, on March 25, following complications from a fall. At the time of this printing, service arrangements had not yet been finalized.



## Birth Announcement!

Our congratulations are extended to **Clayton and Julie Cutler** on the birth of their daughter, **Clara Cutler** at the end of February.



## Adult Spiritual Growth Opportunities

The Adult Spiritual Growth Committee encourages all members to take part in the Upcoming Conversation Cafes! Additional opportunities include:

### **SUNDAY, 10:30 a.m. in the Annex: The Book of Luke** (study guide TBD)

Beginning on Sunday, April 8, this group will embark on a Bible study focusing on Luke. Amy Kulig will serve as facilitator. All are welcome! Please contact Amy if you have questions.

### **MONDAY, 4:30 - 6:00 p.m. in the Annex: *The Story* by Zondervan Publishers**

Facilitated by Pastor Peter. This study has begun but newcomers are always welcome. The study will run through June 17. Weekly meetings consist of Video segments followed by group discussion.

“The greatest story ever told” is more than just a cliché. God goes to great lengths to rescue lost and hurting people. That is what *The Story* is about: the story of the Bible, God’s great love affair with humanity. Condensed into 31 accessible chapters, *The Story* reveals the God of grace – the God who speaks, the God who acts, the God who listens, the God whose loves. *The Story* is an abridged, chronological Bible that reads like a novel, seamlessly woven together with transition text into a single grand narrative. If you have always wanted to read through the Bible, but found the prospect a bit daunting, this study is for you!

### **TUESDAY, 10:30 a.m. - noon in the Annex**

This group is taking a break in April to encourage participation in the Conversation Cafes. We will resume in May with a book to be decided.

### **THURSDAY, 9:00 a.m. in the Annex: Women’s Bible Study**

Facilitated by Donna Motyl and Rolene Johnson, this group is currently studying the Gospel of Matthew. The women are reading it together and looking at what the verses meant to believers then and how they are still meaningful today, using study notes and commentaries on Matthew.

## Welcome New Members

**Penny and Frank Rawden** grew up in the same hometown of North Haven, CT, and met in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Both attended UConn, but from there they went their separate ways. Frank joined the Army, where he served two tours in Vietnam, and flew helicopters. His 30-year military career also took him to Panama and Germany. Along his way he married and had three sons. After UConn, Penny worked in the advertising department for a retail firm. Penny had a wonderful 18-year career working for Jefferson Radiology. She too married, and had a son and daughter.

Life has its many joys and yet some sorrows; both Penny and Frank ended up as single parents. But 45 years after they first met, they met each other again – at a North Haven High School class reunion! They started talking, making connections, and renewing their friendship, and the rest is history!

The Rawdens have already made connections here at SUMC. Penny is a quilter and is making quilts with our Prayers & Squares quilting group and is also attending Thursday morning women’s Bible Study. Frank is a history buff, and has met Mike Motyl and other gentlemen here who share his passion for designing model railroad displays.

Welcome to your new church home, Penny and Frank!



## Got Yardwork?

### ***Attention Seniors!***

The young people in our church would like to help you get your yard looking nice again this spring. If you would like to have us stop by on Saturday afternoon, April 21, to “spruce things up” around the outside of your home, please let Pastor Peter know.

**This newsletter is published 10 times a year by  
The Simsbury United Methodist Church  
799 Hopmeadow Street  
Simsbury, CT 06070  
860.651.3356  
www.simsburyumc.org**

**Rev. Woodrow Eddins, Senior Pastor  
Rev. Peter Preiser, Assistant Pastor  
and Youth Ministries Director**

**Office Manager and Church Secretary  
Webmaster and E-Blast Coordinator:  
Michelle Ebert**

**Adult Music Director: Yves Venne  
Children/Youth/CAYA Music Director: Dorothy Cowles  
Director, Little Lambs & Ivy: Joanne Maurer  
Church School Coordinator: Jody Swan  
Newsletter Editor: Heather Ryan**



Simsbury United Methodist Church  
799 Hopmeadow Street  
Simsbury, CT 06070

[Recipient]

Address Line 1  
Address Line 2  
Address Line 3  
Address Line 4