

# Simsbury United Methodist Church

## The Messenger

February 2018

Open hearts, open minds, open doors

## Big Changes in Store at SUMC

*For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland. Isaiah 43:19*

There are some big changes coming for SUMC this year. While most of us do not welcome change, it can also be a time of opportunity. The year of 2018 may be a challenging one for us. I am grateful to be experiencing it with the support and love of my church family.

By now most of you have heard Pastor Woody's announcement. If not, it is with a sad heart that the SPR Committee informs you that Pastor Woody has decided to retire at the end of June. We will miss him greatly. We are happy that he will be able to enjoy his retirement and are grateful for all that he has given us.

In the United Methodist Church, pastoral appointments are made by the bishop with input from SPR. The bishop looks at the missional opportunities and needs of the congregation and then proceeds to find the most appropriate pastor available for the congregation. The role of the SPR Committee is to advise the bishop of local parish concerns and needs relative to appointment-making. The committee does not choose its pastor. Even though this is a collaborative versus a democratic process, we remind you that the bishop did a pretty good job with our last appointment.

With that in mind, we ask the congregation to give us feedback with the three most important hopes, needs, qualities and/or concerns that you would like us to relate to the bishop for his consideration in selecting our new pastor. With your help we will try our best to provide input that will allow for the selection of a candidate that has the flexibility to meet the broadest range of your feedback.

SPR has more news to share regarding our music ministries. There will be some changes to our music staff beginning next fall. Dorothy Cowles will focus her musical passion and gifts on the Come As You Are (CAYA) music team and will become the Contemporary Music Director. While we are sad to see her relinquish her responsibilities with the children's groups, we are thrilled to have her stay and lead this amazing group of musicians and singers.

Yves Venne, our SUMC Chancel Director, will be retiring at the end of July. We have been blessed with his glorious music and look forward to enjoying more of that through most of the summer.

We are already beginning to consider opportunities for filling the gaps left by these changes. We will move forward in restructuring our program to provide a wonderful musical experience for everyone.

"The best thing of all is God is with us." John Wesley

~ Your SPR Committee: Jennifer Acheson, Paul Douglas, Marianne Vanech, Bob Shea, Ed Morrison, Robin Stine, Beth Nelson, Greg Marco, and Susan Pribyson

## Important Dates

**February 3:** District Resource Day at SUMC

**February 4:** "Souper" Bowl/Youth Sunday; Greeting Card sale; Methodist Munch sale; VBS skating party with First Church 4:30 p.m.; Deadline to sign up for "Illuminated Faith"

**February 5:** Office closed 10:00 a.m. – noon for staff meeting

**February 10:** Men's Fellowship, 7:30 a.m.; Days for Girls, 9:00 a.m.

**February 11:** Scout Sunday; Illuminated Faith art class, 11:45 a.m.

**February 12:** Volunteers in Mission (VIM) Uganda Trip Kickoff Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

**February 14:** Ash Wednesday services at 10:00 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

**February 15:** March newsletter deadline

**February 17:** Memorial service for Julia Lambert, 11:00 a.m.; Lenten Study begins, 2:00 p.m. in Annex

**February 18:** First Sunday in Lent

**February 20:** Winter activities for youth at Winding Trails

## Pastor's Page

### *Leaving home*

Leaving a place and a people I have come to love is not an easy thing to do—there is a lot of grief involved all around. Knowing when it is time to leave is not an easy thing to determine either. But after a lot of prayerful reflection I do believe that it is time for me to go and for someone new to take my place here at SUMC.

It has been a wonderful 10 years and we have shared some wonderful experiences in ministry and in celebration. We have shared good times and sad times, we have felt discouraged and known the amazing elation of God's presence among us. I thank all of you for allowing me to try to be a minister for you. There is no better job anywhere.

Sometime in June, Florence and I will depart Simsbury for places yet unknown. We need to leave so that a new presence, with new ideas, can have space to begin. I hope that you will treat him or her as kindly as you have treated us since our arrival here in 2008.

Florence and I have found that with every ending, God offers a new beginning. We do not know yet what they will mean for us, but as Abram did, we go out on faith. I believe that your new beginning will be an exciting one in which SUMC will explore new ways of being the church in the world, of making disciples in ways that are beginning to come into focus.

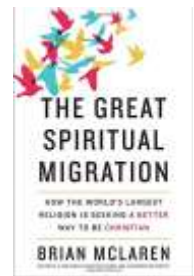
Exactly what this will be is not yet known, but go forth on faith, and trust that God will be with you as you journey on.

~ Grace and Peace, Pastor Woody

## Reimagine Church

### *A journey of spiritual migration for SUMC*

Those of you who participated in the church book read of Brian McLaren's *The Great Spiritual Migration* recall that he argues that— notwithstanding the dire headlines about the decline in participation in organized religion—the Christian faith is not dying. Rather, it is embarking on a once-in-an-era spiritual transformation. This journey has already begun. To participate more fully in this new Great Reawakening we at SUMC must re-evaluate the current state of our theology, our mission, and our vision.



Any cultural transformation takes time, leadership, commitment, and the broad participation of all members. Change first requires awareness, interest, and desire for something different. The first phase of the proposed journey creates awareness and education for the broader SUMC faith community.

Jesus tells us that the goal is for his followers to become of one heart and mind so that they might be unified and offer the world evidence of the love of God (John 17:20-23 MSG). Therefore, we, the SUMC community, need to look anew at our faith that shapes us into who we are and who we are becoming. That is, we need to examine our theology and reflect on its meaning in a changing world.

We must reconsider how we think about... talk about... God. We need to create an intentional dialogue among members for our own understanding and mutual support.



SUMC's spiritual migration will take strong leadership from pastors and laity. The journey requires developing a core team of spiritual leaders who model for the greater community what it looks like to love, learn and lead together. Team members must possess a passion for living deeply into purposeful outcomes for the sake of God's kingdom.

We hope to begin putting this plan in place as we move through the spring and as we begin our relationship with our new pastor. Please prayerfully consider this proposal, how you might want to help shape it, and what gifts and abilities you might be able to add as we move forward.

*In Christ,  
Deb Clifford, Church Council Chair, and Pastor Woody Eddins*

## CT District Resource Day Will Be Held at SUMC

CT District Resource Days are scheduled in Simsbury (February 3, 9:00 a.m. - noon) and Stratford (February 11, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.) this year. **SUMC will host the Saturday February 3 sessions.**

Workshops are designed to capture the interest of just about every United Methodist in our district. There are workshops for leaders of church committees, workshops exploring church revitalization through church ministries, and an exploration of cultural trends affecting the way churches do ministry. Just a sampling of the workshops to be held at SUMC:

- **SPR 101:** Led by CT District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Alpher Sylvester, this is a basic overview of the role of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee and an update on appointment-making procedures.
- **The Changing Face of Youth and Student Ministries:** Led by our own Pastor Peter and Herron Gaston, Pastor of Summerfield UMC in Bridgeport.
- **Six Thinking Hats:** Led by Deb Clifford, this workshop explores a technique of Edward de Bono for using different perspectives in complex situations or challenges.

Please see the flyers posted in Wesley Hall for more info about the CT District Resource Days workshops. Contact the office to sign up for either the Simsbury or Stratford date.

## There Aren't Enough Words

The year 2017 was somewhat unforgiving for many of us in many ways, but over the years I have come to understand “that every experience, no matter how bad, holds within it a blessing of some kind. The goal is to find it.” (Buddha) There may be some of you thinking “where have I seen that quote before?” If you find yourself thinking that, you are likely someone who has spent time in my office chair as a volunteer while I have been out of the office.

Most of those times were planned time away (mission trips, vacation time) where much of what needed to be done while I was away was prepared before my departure. So you might very well have found yourself gazing at the picture frame on my desk with that quote, along with my favorite animal ever – an elephant. But my unexpected surgery at the end of September was not planned and things weren't prepared, leaving those in my office chair in a lurch, gazing at that picture frame when they could only do so much.

One beautiful thing about elephants, similar to humans, is that they have a wonderful capacity to remember. I'm sure you've heard the phrase “an elephant never forgets” and for good reason. We have learned from these magnificent creatures that they can remember other elephants they haven't seen for years or even decades, like it was yesterday. Upon meeting again, they may trumpet loudly and touch each other gently with their trunks as if soaking in all the goodness and joy that this long lost “friend” brings to them. I imagine this to be like the hugs we humans give to others who bring us goodness and joy.

My return to work around Thanksgiving, just in time for the busy holiday season was not easy, and even as we move into February, my healing continues. This has been one of the most challenging times in my life on many fronts, and yet as I look at that picture on my desk, I am reminded to look for the blessing. I don't have to look very far. It has been all of the people from SUMC who have brought me goodness and joy through cards, emails, texts, prayer, and phone calls, some more than once. Like the elephant, I will not easily forget your kindness and love, and wish I could give each and every one of you a hug like that of an old friend.

There are also those for whom I must “trumpet loudly” for whom the words “thank you” and even hugs do not seem to be enough and they are: Jane Erie, Heather Kaliden, Lucille Burke, Beth Nelson, Matt Jamieson, JoAnne Douglas, Jody Swan, Barbara Vasquenza, Mary & Dave Gridley, Med Colket, Nancy Ralston, Jon Webber, Amy Bobinski, Heather Ryan, Jan Bennett, Joyce Tullock, Joanne Maurer, and especially....Pastor Woody and Pastor Peter.

*~ Hakarat hatov (in gratitude), Michelle*

## Covenant to Care Update

Many thanks to the members of SUMC that provided over 50 gifts for children in the care of several area social workers. The gifts were much appreciated and certainly made the holiday a little bit brighter for all. In addition, parents of Little Lambs and Ivy came together and donated the infant items requested by Covenant to Care for two expectant mothers. The delivery cars were overflowing! Thank you all for your generous spirit.

~ Joanne Maurer

## Greeters 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, 860.658.2183 (home phone), 860.559.0861 (cell).

~ Angela Church

## Christmas Workshop Wrap Up

Thank you to all who contributed to the Children's Christmas Workshop. It was a huge success! Children were happy, parents were happy, and crafters were happy. To name a few donations: bracelets, neck pillows, chocolates, picture frames, ornaments, nut mix, even wrapping paper, ribbon, and boxes. A special thank you to all who volunteered and offered extra hands to help wrap. We raised around \$800 for Guiding Light Orphanage, Protectors of Animals, and Granby High School National Honor Society. All the young shoppers were gleeful with presents wrapped and ready to put under the tree. Thank you for everything!

~ Heather Kaliden



Photo by Jim Ray

## Mission Trip 2018

While all plans are preliminary, another adult international mission trip to Uganda in the fall (usually late September or early October) is being planned. An informational meeting will be held Monday, February 12 at 6:30 pm in the Barn. Those who have traveled with our previous trips are also welcome to attend to share their experiences. If you are unable to attend, but are wondering if the travel is right for you, please contact Michelle in the office. This is an exciting opportunity to share God's love.

## Cookie Caper a Success

The annual Cookie Caper sale, held on December 9, raised approximately \$1,400 for the summer youth mission trip.

Thank you to the youth volunteers who assembled cookie boxes, assisted cookie buyers, and helped clean up afterward. Thank you to the adults who helped out to make sure the event ran smoothly. Thanks to all the bakers – and buyers – too!



## What's Your Prediction?

Recently, the Religion News Service (an independent, nonprofit source of global news on religion, spirituality, culture, and ethics) released an article entitled, "Religion in 2018 – Predictions." They asked some of the country's top faith leaders, scholars, and activists to predict what changes the religious landscape will see in the New Year. Here are a few things that may bear scrutiny in the days ahead. As you read through them, consider what God might be leading us towards, as individual Christians and as the church of Jesus Christ, if these trends emerge and unfold as predicted.

**A time of interfaith mass movement:** Margari Aziza Hill, co-founder and programming director of Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative, says that this will be a year where interfaith work will be about recalibrating our nation's moral and ethical social agenda. She predicts that churches, mosques, temples, synagogues, and sacred spaces will work together to protect the most vulnerable. 2018 will be the year that faith-based organizing will no longer be an aberration, no longer the exception, but the rule.

**A time to talk about race, poverty, and justice:** Simone Campbell, an American Roman Catholic religious sister, lawyer, lobbyist, and executive director of NETWORK, predicts that in 2018, race and poverty will be front and center in the national dialogue as faith leaders step out into the public square to issue a cry for justice. This cry will galvanize people around the country with the truth that poverty and racism are structural in our society and that "We the People" can and will change that reality.

**A time when religious liberties will continue to be challenged in court:** Patrick Hornbeck, associate professor of theology at Fordham University, suggests that the state of religious liberty today is changing – it is something no longer uncontroversial and largely unchallenged, but suddenly highly politicized. Look for more court cases examining the expression of religious freedoms as they relate to anti-discrimination laws.

**A time when productive civil discourse will emerge out of necessity:** Diane Randall, the executive secretary of the Quaker Friends Committee on National Legislation, says that the public is looking for leaders to articulate a direction for this country that is just and compassionate. She continues, "This means we will speak truth with love. In an atmosphere of anger and hateful rhetoric, we seek to fill the void of productive and civil discourse that people around the country are thirsting for. Our values and objectives remain the same regardless of who is in power or the political climate."

So what's *YOUR* prediction? How will the church respond to the challenges that we face in the coming year? I have a prediction of my own for the days ahead: The Church will have a year filled with an increase of truth, compassion, and boldness. As a result, we will increasingly find favor with the people around us. If we follow God's leading and seek to live in God's light, the result will be an increase in joy, prosperity, and peace. Perhaps more people than ever will be attracted to the Lord and drawn into closer relationship with the God of us all. This is a prediction that I hope and pray will be realized in the New Year...

*Blessings!*

*Pastor Peter*

## Men's Book Group

We had a great turnout and discussion for *The Devil in the White City*, and for our next selection we chose *American Gospel* by John 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.

## Prayers and Condolences

Our condolences are extended to **Carrie Johnson and Pastor Peter** and their family and friends, following the death of Carrie's first cousin, **Peter Johnson**, who died suddenly in a car accident in early December. A memorial service was held in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where he resided.

Our condolences are extended to **Wayne and Diane Lambert** and their family and friends, following the death of their daughter, **Julia Lambert**, on December 21, as a result of complications following heart surgery. A memorial service will be held at SUMC on February 17 at 11:00 a.m., with a reception following in Wesley Hall.

Our condolences are extended to **Bob and Judy Sturgis** and their family and friends, following the death of his sister, **Nancy Whitehouse**, on December 24. A Service was held in Manchester, New Hampshire, where she resided.

Our condolences are extended to **Michelle Ebert** and her family and friends, following the death of her grandfather, **Richard Kapanka**, on Christmas Day, from complications of a bad fall just before Thanksgiving. A service was held in Florida, where he resided.

Our condolences are extended to **Charlotte Ray** and her family and friends, following the death of her husband, **James "Jim" Ray**, on December 27, from a respiratory infection while they were traveling in Arkansas and Tennessee for the holidays. Jim was the church historian and regular photographer of most church activities. A Funeral service was held in Memphis in January; and a Celebration of Life service will be held at SUMC on Friday, March 9. More details will be shared when they become available.

Our condolences are extended to the family and friends of **Alice Evans**, following the death of her husband, **Rev. Dr. Robert A. "Bob" Evans**, on January 25. Bob died peacefully at home following a long illness, with his wife of 56 years by his side. A memorial service will be held at the Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2080 Boulevard, West Hartford, on Saturday, February 3, at 11:00 a.m. A reception at the church will follow the service.

## Big Life Changes: Words of Comfort from Stephen Ministry

The following was originally printed in the *Dayspring* newsletter.

Life is interesting, isn't it? We go through different stages of life in what seems like the blink of an eye. Big changes can come at any time, or season of life – when we least expect it. Each phase of our lives can contain stressful situations. Even new, exciting changes can cause stress and even fear. Those big life changes can take us away from what we've known in the past and cause worry about the future. Our concerns can consume us with dread – or bring us closer, in our desperate need, to the One who created us and knows us better than anyone else!

If you are going through one of "life's big changes" and desire someone to talk to, please contact one of the pastors or the Stephen Ministry Referrals Leader, Barbara Vasquenza, at 860.712.2710.

### March Newsletter Deadline

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

## Stewardship Update

We have reached the end of our 2018 Stewardship Campaign and, happily, the enthusiastic goal we set is in sight. Gifts to the church are made each year by hundreds of church members in the form of their prayers, their presence, their gifts, and their service. This year has been particularly exciting, as we have seen some exciting trends:

1. We have added pledges from 18 new church members.
2. Of those who pledged both last year and this year, 40% have increased their pledge.
3. The average pledge for the year is up.

Clarifying pledge intentions is crucial so the finance committee can adequately plan our church resources to insure that SUMC remains a guiding light for our membership, our community, and those well beyond our borders who struggle with things we often take for granted.

Thank you to the many SUMC individuals and families who have submitted their 2018 pledge intentions. If perhaps you have not done so already, I ask you to prayerfully consider what your family can do this year and contact either myself or the church office with your pledge.

Thank you. And may 2018 be a year of personal, professional, and spiritual fulfillment.

~ Peter Gailey, Stewardship Chair

## Dinner for Eight

Join us for great food and great company!

Dinner for Eight is a great way to meet church members in a casual and comfortable setting. Four times over the next eight months, eight people will gather around the dinner table to laugh, tell stories, and get to know each other. The host prepares the main dish and the guests bring an appetizer, side dish, and dessert. Each household will host once and be a guest at others three times.

If you would like to join the fun but can't make the commitment to four dinners, you can be on the substitute list. When a guest is unable to attend, the host will contact a member on the sub list. If you have young children, let us know and we can arrange for complimentary babysitting.

This is a great way to get to know each other and meet new people and reconnect with those you know. There is room at the table for everyone! You can join as a single or a couple, you can join with a friend, you can invite your neighbors. Truly, every dinner is an enjoyable evening! Please contact Martie Kaczmarek at 860.217.1355 or [kaztrio2@att.net](mailto:kaztrio2@att.net) to join or for more information.

## Prayer Shawl Ministry

Happy Valentine's Day! Do you **LOVE** to knit or crochet? If so, let the Spirit move you to create a prayer shawl for our ministry. We supply the yarn and you provide the **LOVE** to make it.

What is a prayer shawl? A prayer shawl is a knitted or crocheted garment that is created by the talented members of our congregation for use by our pastors. The pastors bring prayer shawls to those who are recovering from illness or surgery or personal struggles. It is to help remind them that when they are wrapped in the shawl, they are also wrapped in God's love.

For more information, contact Carol Bressor at 860.653.3555 or [cbressor@gmail.com](mailto:cbressor@gmail.com), or Carrie Houghton at 860.651.1645 or [choughton123@yahoo.com](mailto:choughton123@yahoo.com).

## Junior and Senior High School Youth Activities at SUMC

### “Souper” Bowl/Youth Sunday

Not only is February 4 the big game day, it is also the “Souper” Bowl of Caring Sunday, when students across the nation work to fight hunger in their communities by taking up a collection for people in need. Please join our youth in tackling hunger by making a cash or check donation and dropping them in the collection “pots” as you exit the sanctuary after both the 9:00 and 10:30 services! All proceeds will benefit the local food pantry.

### Calling All Scouts!

Scout Sunday is February 11! Please remember to wear your full Scout uniform to church next week. If you are a Boy or Girl Scout and would like to help out with the 10:30 service on February 11 as a flag bearer, greeter, acolyte, reader, or usher, please email Joe and Jessica Bogdan at [joe.bogdan@comcast.net](mailto:joe.bogdan@comcast.net). Feel free to invite your troop members to attend the service with you!

### Teen Movie Night!

On Sunday, February 11 from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m., (right after confirmation class) come join us for movie with munchies! We’ll be watching the “The Adjustment Bureau” (2011, rated PG-13), a Mystery, Sci-Fi Romance Thriller! Following the movie, there will be a brief discussion about the relationship between fate, destiny, and free will. Parents are welcome too! See you there!

### Winter Fun on Winter Break!

Need something fun to do on February winter break? Calling all teens for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, sledding and ice skating at Winding Trails Ski Center in Farmington on Tuesday, February 20, from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.! Choose your activity, then we’ll gather around an outdoor bonfire for refreshments. This is a teen-focused event, but families are welcome too. Cost for equipment and facilities rental will be approximately \$25 per person. Contact Pastor Peter for more information or to let him know you’ll be coming! See you there!

### Snow Daze Sledding!

We’ll be sledding at Ethel Walker at 1:00pm on days when school is cancelled due to snowfall, so get those sleds ready for action! Call Pastor Peter for info.

### ASP Mission Trip Dates Set

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. Adult chaperones are needed as well. The deadline to signup is March 1.

Dates for this year’s project are June 30 - July 7. The first informational meeting was held on January 22; another will be announced soon. Contact Pastor Peter if you are interested in coming on the ASP trip this summer.



~ additional youth activities continued on next page ~



## Youth Activities at SUMC

~ *continued* ~

### Sunday Evening Fellowship for Junior/Senior High Youth

Pastor Peter continues to lead weekly youth group gatherings each Sunday evening, 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!

### New! Sunday Morning Class for 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders!

Senior High School students in grades 10-12 (or 9<sup>th</sup> graders not in confirmation class) are encouraged to meet in the Barn during the 10:30 service for a “study group” class just for them.

### Confirmation Class Schedule Change

There is a change in the schedule for confirmation class. **During February, we will meet only on the 11th and 25th.** Class members will be working on their Social Principles presentation.

## Births and Baptisms!

Our congratulations are extended to **Shannon and Rebecca Taber-Conover** on the birth of their daughter, **Grace Taber Conover**, on Friday, January 26.

**Gabriel Cary Marsele** was baptized on Sunday, January 28! His parents are Rebecca and Peter Marsele, siblings are Madison and Graeme, and godparents are Abigail and Trafford Underwood.

**Rudy Joseph LaCava** will be baptized on Sunday, February 4! His parents are Dana and Joe LaCava and grandparents are Joanne and Rudy Maurer.



## Circles

The **Susanna Circle** will gather for breakfast at Benny's at 9:00 a.m. on February 3, before heading over to the church kitchen to assemble Methodist Munch, which will be sold at the church on February 4 (Superbowl Sunday). The Susannas would like to thank all who purchase our Methodist Munch, the proceeds of which help support Interval House, a domestic violence shelter.

The Susannas will meet at 7:00 p.m. on March 6 in the church parlor. All women of the church are welcome. Please 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 February 14 at 9:30 a.m. in the Annex.

The **Rebekah Circle** is scheduled to meet on February 15 at noon in the Annex living room. All are welcome! Questions? Call Jane Whelchel.

## Welcome Back

**Dorothy Kramer-Kawakami** rejoins us at SUMC after an eight-year association with the Newtown (CT) United Methodist Church, where her husband Mel served as Senior Pastor. Prior to their time in Newtown, Dorothy and Mel spent over 20 years with us here at SUMC. Dorothy is the principal of Re:Sources and a special consultant to LIMRA International. Her career has taken her around the world on consulting engagements for the insurance industry. She holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of South Florida. Dorothy is connected to the United Methodist Women's programs here at SUMC. Mel and Dorothy have re-settled in Simsbury after Mel's retirement from Newtown UMC and we are thrilled to have them both back in fellowship with us!

## Year-End Tax Statements

The 2017 year-end tax statements will be issued on Thursday, February 1, and sent by email to the primary email address we have on file (or mailed to those who don't have an email address). If each adult family member has their own email address, our system has a unique way of assigning which family member is considered the "primary" email contact. If you are expecting a statement, but don't receive one, please take a moment to check all family email accounts before contacting the office. Should you have questions about your statement, please contact Michelle at [finance@simsburyumc.org](mailto:finance@simsburyumc.org). Thank you!

## Easter Flower Orders

Tulips and lilies are a beautiful way for our sanctuary to "bloom" on Easter Sunday, April 1! Easter is early this year! Be a part of this wonderful tradition by ordering your plant in memory, in honor, or in celebration of loved ones. The plants will once again be \$12. Order forms will be available at all entrances to the sanctuary in late February, or you may use the order form attached below. Forms with payment may be dropped in the plate or mailed to the office by no later than Monday, March 12. Thank you!



### Easter Flower Order Form

*You are invited to contribute to the floral display of tulips and lilies that will decorate the sanctuary for our Easter Services. Please complete the form below and place it in the offering plate with your payment or send the form and check to: SUMC, 799 Hopmeadow St. Simsbury, CT 06070. Your order must reach the office no later than **Monday, March 12**. The cost is \$12.00 per plant. Please make checks payable to "SUMC Flower Fund".*

I would like to order \_\_\_\_\_ tulip(s) \_\_\_\_\_ lily(s) Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

- I will pick up my plant(s) after the 11:00 a.m. service on Easter Sunday
- I will pick up my plants on Monday, April 2
- Please deliver my plant to a homebound member

# Church School News

Hello All Church School Families!

Below is a foreword found in one of the books in a church school classroom. I read it the other day and thought I would share....

“When our children are young we secure them with seat belts and snap them into swimming vests. We schedule regular checkups, show them how to floss, and make sure they get plenty of rest. We teach them right from wrong, urge caution when crossing the street. Our job? Our job is their safety and well-being. We want our children to live healthy full lives.

When it comes to our children’s eternal lives we guide them to the anchor of our faith; God’s Word. We fill their young spirits with the stories of old: faithful Abraham, courageous Daniel, lyrical David, obedient Mary.

We do what generations of parents before us have done; pass down to our children the legacy of God’s Holy Word. In this collection of great Bible Stories, we continue that tradition while adding some interpretive thoughts to help children grasp God’s plan for their own lives. Our goal? Our goal is to show that each one of us has a unique place in a much larger story. We want your children to see that Scripture is more than a collection of fascinating characters, thrilling adventures and dramatic encounters. We want them to accept God’s purpose in creating them, his desire to reunite with them and his incomparable amazing love for them.”

“Our prayer is that these stories will compel your child’s fascination with Scripture, laying a foundation for a life of faith, and remind them: “The word of God is living and active.” Hebrews 4:12

“In the meantime, keep buckling, snapping, flossing.... and most of all keep praying for the little souls in your care.” ~ *Max Lucado, Randy Frazee, and Karen Hill*

**The Church School is always looking for new people to help in the ministry. Please contact me at [jody@simsburyumc.org](mailto:jody@simsburyumc.org) or 860.408.1478. We’d love to have you join us!**

~ *Blessings, Jody*

## Ice Skating!

Are you missing your friends – and the music – from this past summer’s Vacation Bible School? Then come skate with us on February 4 from 4:30-5:30 p.m. at the Simsbury Farms ice rink. SUMC families will gather with our First Church friends to enjoy skating, VBS music, and cocoa and cookies. For information, please contact Jody Swan.



## New Office Hours for 2018

As of January 1, the office will be open from 9:30 a.m. Monday – Friday, but will be **closed for lunch daily between 1:00 - 1:30 p.m.** Generally, someone will be in the office Mon-Thurs until 4:30 p.m. and until 2:30 p.m. on Fridays, but please call ahead if you need to come by later in the afternoon, as often times someone will be available later than either 4:30/2:30. Thank you!

## Adult Spiritual Growth Opportunities

Our committee meets on a monthly basis to ensure that SUMC is able to offer a varied schedule of study groups throughout the program year. Upcoming opportunities include:

### **ONGOING WEEKLY GROUPS**

**SUNDAY, 10:30 a.m. in the Annex: *Holy Habits*** by Andrew Roberts. Co-facilitated by Amy Kulig and Deb Clifford. *Holy Habits* has been recommended by the director of Congregational Development of the New York Annual Conference of the UMC. *Holy Habits* explores the nature of that adventure through a rich mix of biblical material and inspiring stories. The 10 habits are: biblical teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer, giving, service, eating together, gladness and generosity, worship, and making more disciples. Each chapter has suggestions for further reflection and action that can be used individually or by smaller or larger Christian communities.

*Holy Habits* will take us through the season of Lent. As always, the 10:30 Small Group study is open to all who are interested in joining us. Since Church School is offered for children during this time, it is ideal for parents who may not otherwise have an opportunity to participate in small group studies.

#### Reading schedule for *Holy Habits*

- Week One (Jan. 28): Acknowledgements - Chapter 2 (pgs. 1 - 51)
- Week Two (Feb. 4): Chapters 3 - 5 (pgs. 51 - 93)
- Week Three (Feb. 11): Chapters 6 - 9 (pgs. 93 - 141)
- Week Four (Feb. 18): Chapters 10 - 13 (pgs. 141 - 189)
- Week Five (Feb. 25): Chapters 14 - 15 (pgs. 189 - 209)
- Week Six (Mar. 4): Chapters 16 - 18 (pgs. 209 - 235)
- Week Seven (Mar. 11): Catch up and wrap up if we get behind along the way

**MONDAY, 4:30 - 6:00 p.m. in the Annex: *The Story*** by Zondervan Publishers. Facilitated by Pastor Peter. See [www.thestory.com](http://www.thestory.com).

“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, each 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!

Weekly meetings consist of video segments followed by group discussion. Call Pastor Peter for more info at 860.970.5695. This study has begun, but newcomers are always welcome any time!

**TUESDAY, 10:30 a.m. - noon in the Annex: *Man’s Search for Meaning*** by Victor Frankl. This study began January 23 and concludes on February 13 (four sessions). If you need a book (\$9), or have any questions, please notify the convener, Dennis Winkleblack ([dwinkleblack5@gmail.com](mailto:dwinkleblack5@gmail.com) or 860.217.1043).

*Man’s Search for Meaning* is the classic book written in 1946 by Frankl, a neurologist and psychiatrist, who was held in a German concentration camp during the Second World War. His parents, wife, and unborn child died in the camps. Although he founded a school of psychology – Logotherapy, having to do with meaning – the deep spirituality reflected in this book is timeless and accessible to the average reader.

Frankl wrote: “We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms—to choose one’s own attitude in any given set of circumstances—to choose one’s own way.”

***Continued on the next page***



## Spiritual Growth Opportunities, *continued from previous page*

**THURSDAY, 9:00 a.m. in the Annex:** *Women's Bible Study*. Facilitated by Donna Motyl and Rolene Johnson. This group is finishing the book of Zechariah, and will soon begin reading the Gospels. All women are welcome to join at any time.

### SPECIAL CLASSES/GROUPS

#### **ILLUMINATED FAITH: Creative "Pop-up" Class**

**Sunday, February 11, 11:45 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.** in Wesley Hall. Facilitated by Lori Garcia. Please bring your own sandwich and a small side dish or a dessert to share. **Sign up by February 4! Class may be canceled if there are not enough participants.**

Illuminating a text, from the Latin verb *illuminare*, "to light up," opens one's eyes and provides deeper insight and meaning to the words. Come learn how to add simple lines, shapes and colors to create images that interact with a Bible verse or prayer, producing a meditative experience that can reduce stress and promote self-care. For this class, instruction will be offered on creative ways to enhance a word of faith with easy lettering techniques and embellishments. Those who wish to follow along will choose a single word (such as "Faith," "Hope," or "Love"), which will be turned into a small work of art.

No artistic ability is required! You are also welcome to come and "do your own thing." We have oodles of beautiful papers and art supplies, and we love to see them used! Hint: This project would make a great Valentine for a friend or loved one.

Please sign up on the bulletin board outside of Wesley Hall, or email Lori at [loricatlingarcia@icloud.com](mailto:loricatlingarcia@icloud.com).

#### **Lenten Study: "Animate Faith"**

**Saturdays in Lent**, beginning February 17, 9:30 a.m. in the Annex and facilitated by Pastor Woody. (Note: the study will meet at 2:00 p.m. on the first day, February 17. All other Saturdays begin at 9:30 a.m.)

Pastor Woody will again lead a Lenten Study throughout Lent on Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. in the Annex. Please let Pastor Woody know if you are planning to come (although drop-ins are welcome!). The study for Lent will be based on seven theological concepts: God, Religion, Jesus, Church, The Bible, The Cross, and Salvation. We will begin with a brief "Animate Faith" video and then have discussion of just what we mean by each of these theological terms and how they become relevant for us in faith and in daily life.

As we continue to peruse the questions raised in McLaren's *Great Spiritual Migration* study, we will be looking at these basic religious concepts during the Lenten Season with the hope that everyone will take these opportunities to do their own spiritual inventory and share their insights as SUMC moves forward. We will be using the "Animate Faith" DVD presentation not only during the Saturday morning Lenten Study but also in worship during Lent. Each week we will consider how we understand each of these seven concepts in our faith journey. By raising questions about beliefs, knowing that there are many differing answers, we can move into that future that God is preparing for this congregation.

#### **CARING FOR AGING PARENTS: Forum/Luncheon**

**Sunday, March 18**, at noon in Wesley Hall. Facilitated by Pastor Peter. This will be an informational forum to discuss how to care for aging family members. Area leaders in this ministry will participate and share resources. We hope you can join us!

#### **WOMEN'S RETREAT**

**October 5-6, 2018**

Back by popular demand this fall! The retreat will again be held at Mercy by the Sea. Stay tuned for more details.

## Ash Wednesday Services

February 14 is Ash Wednesday. There will be two short services at SUMC on that day: at 10:00 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Please join us if you are able.



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