

The Reporter

November 2025

First United Methodist Church
66 Chestnut Street,
Oneonta, New York
www.firstumc-oneonta.org



Pastor's Article

Over the last few months, a small group of us at the church has been gathering weekly for Selah Circle, a time to open up unstructured space to pause and reflect. Together, we've shared joys and worries, anxieties and triumphs. The goal of Selah Circle isn't to fix problems but to create sacred space to share the tensions of life.

Recently, our conversation turned to how exhausting it can feel to be constantly connected to the world through modern media. Social media and news updates seem to fill every quiet moment, leaving little room to breathe. We are always connected, but we don't always realize how draining that connectedness can be for us.

Out of that conversation came an idea: what if we each chose one day a week to *disconnect*? Don't watch the news. Put away your phone or tablet. Stay off social media. Instead, pick up a book, listen to a favorite album, paint something, take a walk, rake your pastor's leaves, go on a mini adventure. Do something that intentionally separates you from the endless stream of information we've grown so accustomed to. Trust that the world will keep spinning without you for a day. Call it an "Information Sabbath."

Abraham Joshua Heschel described the Sabbath as "a day in which we learn the art of surpassing civilization." Imagine what it might look like for you to surpass civilization for a day—to step away, be fully present, and rediscover the quiet beauty of your own life.

Worship

We concluded our *Countercultural Stewardship & Generosity* series on November 2, which was also observed as All Saints Sunday, a time to remember and give thanks for those who have gone before us in faith. On November 9, we will welcome our Oneonta District Superintendent as our guest preacher. Looking ahead, Advent begins on November 30. We invite you to watch for upcoming opportunities to prepare for this sacred season as we seek to make Advent a special and holy time for you and your family.

Stewardship Campaign

The Stewardship mailing was sent out in late October. It included information about our pledge goal for 2026 and the proposed 2026 budget, as well as an Estimated Giving (pledge) card and return envelope. If for some reason you did not receive a copy of the mailing and wish to get one, please contact the church office (secretary@firstumc-oneonta.org or 607-432-4102). If you have not yet submitted your pledge, please do so as soon possible. Extra pledge slips are available on the tables just inside the sanctuary if you need one.

To submit your pledge you can: put it in the offering plate, email secretary@firstumc-oneonta.org, or mail it to us (First United Methodist Church, 66 Chestnut St., Oneonta, NY 13820).

We appreciate your commitment to supporting the ministries of FUMC.

Charge Conference

Charge Conference for First United Methodist Church will be held at Elm Park United Methodist Church on Sunday, November 9 at 4:00 pm. All are welcome to attend.

Safe Sanctuaries

Safe Sanctuaries training is for anyone invested in making all vulnerable populations of our congregation safer. In the past we have thought of this as being for people who work with the children and youth. However, there are many other vulnerable populations such as people who are disabled and elderly, that we need to ensure feel and are safe in our midst. Even if you have done the training in the past, you will find new elements have been added to move use towards "Safer Sanctuaries".

Training will be available on Sunday, November 23 following the 10:30 am worship service and a light lunch from 1pm to 4pm. Please contact Lori DePauw at mldepauw@stny.rr.com or text (607) 287-7140

Christmas Caroling – Save the Date!

On December 21 there will be an opportunity to go caroling around Oneonta, including at some of our local nursing home and care facilities. This will be in partnership with some of the other United Methodist Churches in the area. We will begin with a lunch at Elm Park and end up with hot chocolate around the fire pit at FUMC. We are hoping to get some kids, youths, and young adults involved for this event so reach out and let people know that we are going to be out sharing some Christmas cheer. More details will be available as we get closer to December.

November is Staff Appreciation Month.

Please take time to express your appreciation to our wonderful staff. There will be a fellowship hour after the 10:30 worship service on Sunday November 16. Our Staff includes:

- Randall Wilson: Technology and Facilities Manager
- Chris Brashear: Volunteer Caretaker
- Amy Rockwell: Communications Coordinator
- Carolyn McMaster: Choir Director
- Leslie Bauer: Organist
- Rick Fischer - Office Finance Manager
- Kieran Andrews: Church Secretary
- Lynda Benz - Childcare

Third Thursday Dinners

In our busy world it is hard to find time to build community. We are now having dinners on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Come and take a night off from cooking and cleaning for some good healthy food and share in good conversation. All are invited!

This month's dinner (layered green enchiladas) will be provided by Max MacKenzie. If you have any dietary restrictions you'd like accommodated or if you'd like to contribute, please contact Max (740-833-5169) or the church office (secretary@firstumc-oneonta.org or 607-432-4102). Please contact the office if you'd like to RSVP (encouraged but not required).

Collection of Adult and Children's Shoeboxes for Red Bird Mission in Kentucky

We are once again looking for people to fill a clear plastic shoe box for either an adult or a child which will be sent to the Red Bird Mission in Kentucky. Like last year, the "shoe box" will be available in the church office or at the Sunday worship service. Small flashlights will be supplied for the children's shoe boxes. Winter hats will be supplied for ALL shoe boxes. (see list of items on next page)

Filled boxes need to be returned by **Sunday morning, November 9.** If you return your box during the week, bring it to the church office (Tuesday – Thursday 9 am – 3 pm; Friday 9 am – 1 pm).

Please indicate whether the box is for an adult or child. We have labels to put on them. When you take a box, please sign your name and phone number on the sheet provided.

The Mission also needs NEW pillows, NEW sheet sets and blankets for full and twin size beds, and NEW bath towels.

Questions? Contact Joyce at 607-432-8751 or millerumw@gmail.com. Thanks for being the hands & feet of Jesus.

[see next page for the lists of items]

RED BIRD MISSION – Adult Shoebox

Note: All items should be FULL size and in their original containers, as purchased. To help items fit in the box, purchase flat bottles of shampoo, hand lotion, etc. & small round cans of shaving cream.

- Comb and/or Hair Brush
- Hand Lotion
- Deodorant
- Toothpaste
- Chap Stick
- Full size Bar of Soap
- Washcloth
- Disposable Razors
- Shaving Cream
- Nail Care Items
- Socks
- Work gloves or Mittens
- Winter Stocking Hat (provided) or Scarf

**Labels for Shoeboxes
Please Check One:**

Man ____ **Woman** ____

Girl Age 2-4 ____ 5-9 ____ 10-14 ____

Boy Age 2-4 ____ 5-9 ____ 10-14 ____

RED BIRD MISSION – Child’s Shoebox

Note: All items should be FULL size and in their original containers, as purchased. To help items fit in the box, purchase flat bottles of shampoo, hand lotion, etc.

- Comb and/or Hair Brush
- Shampoo
- Hand Lotion
- Child’s Toothpaste
- Chap Stick
- Bar of Soap
- Washcloth
- Socks
- Mittens
- Winter Hat (provided)
- Small Flashlight (provided)
- 2 or 3 small toys
- 2 or 3 school items

Christian bookmarks, wristbands, and other spiritual items are also appreciated.

**Labels for Shoeboxes
Please Check One:**

Man ____ **Woman** ____

Girl Age 2-4 ____ 5-9 ____ 10-14 ____

Boy Age 2-4 ____ 5-9 ____ 10-14 ____



2025 BAZAAR: Saturday, November 15, 9 – 3



Needed: Reusable Bags of all sizes. (i.e. TJ Maxx, Bath & Body Works, etc. They can be left on the stage).

Jewelry Booth – Chair: Angela Eardley. Please bring your jewelry donations to the church office ASAP.

Grandma’s Attic – Chair: Helen Rees. Wanted: Items good for re-gifting, linens, good used Christmas items & decorations, artwork, like new puzzles, unusual glassware, and other unique items. Items can be left on the front of the stage until Wednesday, November 12 marked for “GM’s Attic”.

Naturally Yours – Co-Chairs: Marty Becker & Sharry Strait-Carey. Includes: Personal care products, soaps, shampoo bars, tick spray, dog biscuits, etc. Looking for a variety of house plants.

Sweets & Treats – Includes baked goods, jams, pickles, pies, muffins, etc. Bring food items to the church by Friday noon, November 14. Marty Becker will be soliciting pies and muffins, so be ready to say YES to her. Rada Knives and peelers, etc. will also be available.

Crafts Booth – Looking for unique craft items as well as the usual. Bring items to the church office by Wednesday, November 12.

Mary's Café – Back by popular demand will be an “eat in” or “take out” option of delicious soups or chili, and sliced homemade pie.

Silent Auction – If you are making or have a relatively expensive item that would be better sold at the Silent Auction Table, please let Joyce know.

Joyce Miller and some Booth Chairs will be contacting helpers. If you want to help and haven't been contacted by November 5, please call 607-432-8751 or email millerumw@gmail.com and talk to Joyce. It's a fun, festive day! New people always welcome!



Cookie Booth Requests for the Bazaar



All of the bakers in our church are being asked to donate one batch (or more) of their favorite small, decorated holiday cookies.

Due to the continuing appearance of COVID, please bag your cookies in clear snack and/or sandwich size bags – 4-6 cookies per bag will enable folks to purchase a variety of cookies. Labels on the bags should include name of cookie and the names of any allergen-producing ingredients (e.g. contains nuts).

Please bring your bagged and labeled cookies to the Cookie Booth between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Friday, November 14.

Thank you from the Cookie Booth Co-Chairs Rosalie Higgins & Adelaide Van Buren. If you have questions, contact Rosalie at 607-287-8930 or rosalie.higgins58@gmail.com.

And don't forget to come and shop on November 15 from 9 – 3!!!

Boomerang Sales

Delicious Boomerang confections will be available for Thanksgiving and Christmas this year. Our Boomerangs are gluten free. Boomerangs are still \$8.00 a dozen, and you may pay by cash or check made out to UWF.

Boomerangs will be available at the UWF Bazaar on November 15. Clipboards will be available in the Sanctuary for orders. Orders may also be placed with:

Irene Morrissey – imorrissey1936@gmail.com or 607-432-7932

Dottie Lawson – dorothylawson05@yahoo.com or 607-432-0904

All orders must be made by Sunday, December 7.

Boomerangs contain: GF Rice Krispies, Confectioner's Sugar, Chunky Peanut Butter, Butter, dipped in melted Semi-Sweet Chocolate Chips (with a small amount of Paraffin Wax).



Oneonta Interfaith Thanksgiving Service Tuesday, November 25 at 7:30 pm Elm Park United Methodist Church



The Oneonta Community Interfaith Thanksgiving Service will be held at Elm Park United Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut St., on Tuesday, November 25 at 7:30 pm.

Pastor John Buddle of Elm Park UMC will host the service. The message will be delivered by Gianluca Avanzato, student engagement coordinator at SUNY Oneonta. Other participants will include Roger Chauveron, Dr. Mohamed Egal, Dr. Blaine Jones, and keyboard player Kyle LaFever.

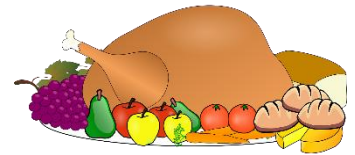
An interfaith choir will sing “God of Our Fathers” with trumpets under the direction of Frederic (Ric) Chrislip. All are welcome to sing in the choir, with a rehearsal at 6:30 pm. Robes will not be worn.

Donations of money and non-perishable food are requested. No collection plate will be passed – monetary donations should be placed in the donation box at the entrance to the sanctuary, with checks made out to the *Oneonta Interfaith Committee*. Donated food and money will be distributed to the Oneonta food pantries: St. James, St. Mary’s, and the Salvation Army.

A reception with refreshments will follow the service.



Thanksgiving Community Dinner Thursday, November 27, 2025 at the Elks Lodge



Help Us Help Others...

The 50th Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner is again being prepared for the greater Oneonta Community.

Saint Mary’s Catholic Church, which sponsors the annual Thanksgiving Community Dinner, invites you to join with us. We are planning for 950 meals to be prepared.

Meals will be dine-in (we hope to have more this year and are going to have a free raffle for those who dine-in), take-out, and delivery for the **homebound** this year.

We are unable to accept any homemade food donations such as pies and cakes.

Dinner Pick-up: 12 Noon to 1:00 pm at Your Safe Haven, 18 Elm St., Oneonta.

Dine-in: 12:30 to 2:00 pm at the **Elks Lodge**, 84 Chestnut St., Oneonta.

Monetary donations: Checks made payable to *St. Mary’s Catholic Church* with *Thanksgiving* on memo line may be sent to St Mary’s Catholic Church, 39 Walnut St., Oneonta, NY 13820.

Volunteers:

- Work 2-hour shifts.
- Will be assigned one of three places to help (Your Safe Haven, First United Methodist Church, or the Elks Lodge).

Volunteers for food preparation, delivery, take-out, dine-in service, and cleanup will be needed on November 24, 25 & 26 starting at 9:00 am and going to approximately 3:00 pm. Thanksgiving Day volunteers will be needed from 8:00 am through about 4:00 pm. Volunteers need to sign up in advance, not just show up, which helps us be more organized and efficient on Thanksgiving Day.

Drivers are needed for deliveries on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 27, starting at 10:30 am behind the Elks Lodge. Younger children may accompany drivers of the meals being delivered.

To volunteer: Contact Cindy Korb by Friday, November 21 at thanksgivingvolunteer2025@gmail.com or by phone at 607-267-0539.

To reserve a dinner – delivered or take-out: Contact Deb Bruce by Monday, November 23 at 607-433-0356 or oneontathanksgiving@gmail.com.

For general questions: Contact John Korb at 607-267-0527 or geog13@gmail.com

Thank you for your support and cooperation in this community event.

Food for Thought

Margaret Parish, Lay Leader

From “Church Giving and Worship Attendance” by Joe Park from Lewis Center for Church Leadership

A. Church Giving and Worship Attendance Trends

1. After a period of recovery and growth, post-COVID attendance is declining.
 - i. Attendance includes in-person, live online, and on-demand.
 - ii. For every 100 in-person, 60 are online.
2. Annual giving in larger churches saw the most increase in giving.

B. Financial trends.

1. Larger churches faring better.
2. Share of disposable income remains flat over decades even during economic swings.
3. Giving still mostly motivated by spiritual and religious reasons, yet the local church only receives about 24%.

C. Recommendations.

1. Adaptive leadership and flexibility
2. Strong discipleship pathway.
3. Invest in digital engagement
4. Clear theology and consistent message re: giving.
5. Relationship building and transparency
6. Vision and strategic planning.
7. Integrated funding strategy

Be Green, Be Just

All of us – men, women, young and old – want to look our best, especially for the holidays. Looking good and healthy begins with our skin and can be accomplished in environmentally friendly ways.

Using sustainable products and eco-friendly packaging is important, but reducing overall consumption is even more so. Downsize! Cut out complicated routines. Look at labels and you will probably find upwards of 21 active ingredients in these routines when, according to Dr. Molly Hales (leading dermatologist at the University of Chicago), only a few are needed. There is rarely genuine scientific evidence supporting the use of so many active ingredients. Dermatologists seem to agree that sunscreen, retinol, and vitamin C have shown positive results protecting and nourishing our skin. Whereas topical estrogen and collagen, though commonly promoted to be good for their anti-aging benefits, are lacking scientific support.

More skincare products are being sold in glass and aluminum rather than plastics; however, “the use of petroleum-based substances goes beyond packaging” (NYT Climate). Synthetic polymers that are often used in moisturizers, face washes, and other daily used products contain what some refer to as *liquid plastics*. “When we wash products off our bodies, we essentially send a form of pollution called nano plastics down the drain, experts say” (NYT Climate). These nano plastics will accumulate in our food and move through our bodies differently as we try to metabolize them. Check labels for ingredients such as nylons and acrylates, and any ingredients you can’t pronounce. Also, even though you may want to look festive, avoid using anything with glitter (plastics) in it.

Avoid using single-use products, such as make-up removers. Also, decline individual sample packets in single-use sachets that you may be offered as you walk through the mall. Follow these tips and enjoy your holiday while feeling good, both inside and out.

The UWF Cream Team has lots of products to sell that are good for your skin and the environment; you can be assured that the Cream Team has both top of mind as they craft their products.

First United Methodist Church, Oneonta

Church Address	66 Chestnut Street, Oneonta, NY 13820
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Church Email	secretary@firstumc-oneonta.org
Pastor, Casey Bradley	pastor@firstumc-oneonta.org
Choir Director, Carolyn McMaster	makemusic24@frontiernet.net
Organist, Leslie Bauer	lgbauer144@gmail.com
Communications Coordinator, Amy Rockwell	communications@firstumc-oneonta.org
Secretary, Kieran Andrews.....	secretary@firstumc-oneonta.org
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Treasurer, Carol Halter.....	finance@firstumc-oneonta.org
Volunteer Caretaker	Christopher Brashear