

# The Reporter

## June 2026

First United Methodist Church  
66 Chestnut Street  
Oneonta, New York  
[www.firstumc-oneonta.org](http://www.firstumc-oneonta.org)



### Pastor's Article

Throughout this year, we have been exploring together what it means to be United Methodist — our theology, our history, our distinctive ways of practicing faith. I want to reflect on one of the most defining and beautiful features of our tradition: connectionalism. From the very beginning, John Wesley refused to let faith become a purely private affair. He organized his early followers into societies, classes, and bands — structures designed to ensure that no one traveled the road of discipleship alone. That same instinct for community and mutual accountability gave birth to what we now call the connectional church. We are not a loose gathering of independent congregations who happen to share a name. We are, by conviction and design, bound to one another — congregation to congregation, conference to conference, across the country and around the world.

What does that mean in practice? It means that when you give to the ministries of this church, your generosity extends far beyond our walls here in Oneonta. It flows through our annual conference to support clergy training, campus ministries, and churches in communities that could not otherwise sustain a pastor. It reaches through our general church to fund missionaries, disaster relief, and theological education around the world. The United Methodist Church operates as a single, interdependent body — which means that a small congregation in upstate New York is genuinely connected to a growing congregation in Zimbabwe or the Philippines. We share resources, share accountability, and share a common mission. That is not bureaucracy for its own sake; it is the Body of Christ made visible in institutional form.

I also want to name something that connectionalism asks of us personally: humility. To be a connectional church means that we do not simply do whatever we want, whenever we want, however we want. We make decisions together. We submit our local preferences to the wisdom of the wider body. We trust that the Spirit is not only at work here, in our particular corner of the kingdom, but across the

whole church. This can feel inconvenient, even frustrating at times — and I will not pretend otherwise. But it is also a profound theological statement: we believe that Christ's church is bigger than any one of us. As we continue learning what it means to be United Methodist, I pray that connectionalism becomes not just a word we know, but a reality we feel — in the relationships we build, the resources we share, and the mission we pursue together.

## Worship

This June, we turn our attention to the theology of holiness in the Wesleyan tradition — the conviction that faith is lived out in both personal piety and love of neighbor. On June 21, we will celebrate Celebration Sunday, a special time to recognize the ministry and accomplishments of our church family. Then, beginning June 28, we launch our summer series, *Faith, Doubt, and Good Questions*.

Sunday	Scripture	Sermon
June 7	Ezekiel 36:24-26, 33-36 1 Peter 1:13-16, 22-25	A Heart Strangely Warmed (and changed)
June 14	Micah 6:1-8 James 2:14-26	A Living Faith
June 21 Celebration Sunday	1 John 4:16b-21 Matthew 5:43-48	Perfected in Love

## Celebration Sunday

Celebration Sunday is on June 21. We will be recognizing our graduates that day. If you know of any students who are members or constituents of FUMC who are moving from Elementary to Middle School; Middle School to High School; or graduating from High School, Trade School, or College, we want to know so we can recognize and celebrate their achievement.

Please contact the church office by June 14 ([secretary@firstumc-oneonta.org](mailto:secretary@firstumc-oneonta.org) or 607-432-4102) with their names, the school they graduated from, and the degree they are receiving if applicable. You can also share names of graduates with us online at <https://firstumc-oneonta.org/news/celebration-sunday-2026>. Pictures of graduating High School Seniors will be much appreciated so we may celebrate them during worship.

## Upcoming Reporter Schedule & Deadlines

Our newsletter publication schedule will change for the summer – here’s what you need to know!

- **Summer Issue (July/August)**    Deadline: Monday, June 15.
- **“Back to School” Issue (late August/September)**    Deadline: Friday, July 31.

Reporter submissions should be sent to Amy at [communications@firstumc-oneonta.org](mailto:communications@firstumc-oneonta.org).

## STAP in the Park

The Southern Tier Aids Program (STAP) will be coming to Huntington Park every Tuesday this summer from 11 am – 2 pm. On the first Tuesday of each month, they will have a Narcan training tent. If anyone needs sharps containers, Narcan, or similar resources, you can stop by and visit them. They'll be in the upper area of the park behind the church.

On Tuesday, June 2, they will also be providing testing for HIV, Hepatitis C, and STIs.

STAP's mobile van brings essential harm reduction services directly to rural and underserved areas that lack a local Syringe Exchange Program (SEP). This "syringe exchange on wheels" provides safer use supplies, overdose prevention tools like naloxone, HIV/HCV testing, and referrals to care and support. By traveling to where people are, we help reduce barriers and meet individuals with compassion, dignity, and respect."

## June Jingle – Habitat for Humanity

Each month, the "jingle" of loose change in the offering plate goes to a different organization or cause that serves the local community. In addition to putting loose coins in the plate, you can also give via check or cash – just write "Jingle" on the memo line or envelope.

The June Jingle will go to Habitat for Humanity of Otsego County (HFHOC), a nonprofit housing organization working in communities within Otsego County, NY. HFHOC strives to give families "a hand-up, not a hand-out." Habitat partners with individuals and families to build simple, safe houses, and assists with the purchasing process. Building costs are minimized by dedicated volunteers who contribute hours of labor. Due to the generous donations of labor and money, the actual cost of building each house is considerably lower than the appraised (sale price) value. While they do receive money from the closing when a sale is finalized, it is not a full reimbursement for the cost of building the house. More information is available on their website at <https://habitatotsego.org/>.

## Huntington Memorial Children's Library

The May issue included a report from the grand opening celebration for the new children's library on Dietz St. Since then, the library has added a plaque to their donor wall recognizing FUMC's Patrick Committee for supporting creation of the children's library.



## **Peace with Justice Special Offering**

On June 14 we will be collecting a special offering for Peace with Justice Sunday. The world is full of conflict, division, and injustice. Peace with Justice Sunday reminds us that the church has a role to play in making things right. United Methodists believe that working for peace means addressing the deeper causes of conflict – like poverty, racism, and oppression. It's not just about ending war, but about building a world where everyone is treated with dignity.

Half of the funds collected go to the local Annual Conference and support ministries that promote peace, fairness, and education where you live. Many areas also have a Peace with Justice Coordinator who helps lead local advocacy and learning opportunities. The other half supports United Methodist efforts across the U.S. and beyond. Grants are available to churches and organizations working on initiatives that promote peace, challenge injustice, and empower underrepresented communities – especially Ethnic and Minority Local Churches.

## **From UWF – Tick Prevention**

New York State consistently ranks among the top 3 states in the U.S. for the highest volume of tick-borne diseases! The state is a major hub for deer ticks (transmitting Lyme, babesiosis, and anaplasmosis) and has a growing population of the aggressive Lone Star tick. 2026 looks to be the worst year for ticks in the past decade. CDC reports already show an uptick (oops!) in ED visits for tick bites.

Consider trying our lemongrass/eucalyptus tick spray, a botanical repellent proven effective enough to use instead of DEET per the Upstate Tick Testing Lab. Safe for children as young as 6 months and for dogs, a 4 oz. bottle costs \$5; refill it next year for \$3. To order, call or text Marty Becker, 607-435-8551. Our profits go to local, regional, national and global programs that are designed to improve the lives of women, children, and youth.

It's better to use prevention than to have to seek treatment!

## **More from UWF – Water Walk & Constitution Pipeline**

A 2-week-long Women's Water Walk covering 113 miles starts on August 8 in Windsor, NY on the banks of the Susquehanna River on the road to Damascus (NY). This is a women-led prayer walk along the proposed route of the Constitution pipeline; this pipeline would carry fracked gas from Pennsylvania along the I-88 corridor to the Iroquois Compressor Station in the Town of Wright, NY. Walkers, including men, are invited to participate for a few hours, a day, or a week until the destination is reached on August 23.

Information about the environmental threats the Constitution Pipeline poses to our area can be found at <https://stoptheconstitutionpipeline.org/>.

Information about the walk can be found at <https://www.womenswaterwalk.org/>.

## Creation Care Team Update

Our Creation Care team facilitates our congregation’s honoring of our Environmental Pledge. Karen Palmer, a new FUMC member with a passion for promoting environmental sustainability and justice, is now the team leader. She is grateful for the mentoring and assistance available to her from the team’s long-time members and Pastor Casey, as well as many other environmental stewards in our congregation!

Recently, Sharry Strait-Carey and Karen met with Pastor Casey to seek his wisdom on the continuation of our team’s journey. He recalled a message he had heard that resonated with him to the effect that we do this work not just because it is necessary, but even more so because our personal experiences with the beauty of creation move us to action.

The Creation Care team will meet to discuss plans moving forward as we are moved by the beauty of nature and called by the Holy Spirit to action. We will be coordinating a worship service during the September “Season of Creation” as FUMC participates in this month-long international interfaith collaboration. The theme this year is “Living Water”. In preparation, we invite everyone in the congregation to consider the many ways we are dependent upon water for life, how it renews and refreshes us, and how we might better steward this precious life-sustaining gift for the benefit of all of creation. We will be sharing resources with you in the upcoming months!

If you have any questions or suggestions, or would like to join this team, please let Kieran know and he will pass your information to the team. You can also e-mail Karen Palmer at [greenspeech3278@gmail.com](mailto:greenspeech3278@gmail.com). We will welcome your energy and ideas with open arms and gratitude!

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### First United Methodist Church, Oneonta

Church Address.....	66 Chestnut Street, Oneonta, NY 13820
Church Office Phone.....	(607) 432-4102
Church Email .....	<a href="mailto:secretary@firstumc-oneonta.org">secretary@firstumc-oneonta.org</a>
Pastor, Casey Bradley .....	<a href="mailto:pastor@firstumc-oneonta.org">pastor@firstumc-oneonta.org</a>
Choir Director, Carolyn McMaster.....	<a href="mailto:makemusic24@frontiernet.net">makemusic24@frontiernet.net</a>
Organist, Leslie Bauer .....	<a href="mailto:lgbauer144@gmail.com">lgbauer144@gmail.com</a>
Communications Coordinator, Amy Rockwell.....	<a href="mailto:communications@firstumc-oneonta.org">communications@firstumc-oneonta.org</a>
Secretary, Kieran Andrews .....	<a href="mailto:secretary@firstumc-oneonta.org">secretary@firstumc-oneonta.org</a>
Technology & Facilities Coordinator, Randall Wilson .....	<a href="mailto:wilson_randall_@hotmail.com">wilson_randall_@hotmail.com</a>
Treasurer, Carol Halter .....	<a href="mailto:finance@firstumc-oneonta.org">finance@firstumc-oneonta.org</a>
Nursery Care & Hospitality Assistant.....	Danielle DeLuca
Volunteer Caretaker .....	Christopher Brashear