Date for Thursday evening service nears; two ‘soft openings’ followed by launch

After months of planning, UUMC will have a Thursday evening worship service at 6 p.m. in The Gathering Room. We’ll have a two-week “soft opening” of the service Feb. 22 and March 1, with the “grand opening” March 8.

A conversation with Pastor Alicia fills in the background and details:

Why is UUMC starting a second service?

PA (Pastor Alicia): We are starting a second service because we heard the statistic that one-third of Syracuse residents work on Sundays. We thought it’d be nice to have another style or way of worship but also think about folks who cannot get to church on Sunday because they’re working.

We’re hoping for church growth, but the ultimate reason is for more people to be touched by God and grow in faith.

Where has the funding come from for this service?

PA: We got two grants from the New Faith Communities Fund of the Upper New York Annual Conference. They paid a portion of my salary ($8,000), $4,000 toward our music director’s salary and it paid for the new chairs in The Gathering Room, all of our equipment we’ll be using for media and projections (TVs and computer), a fresh coat of paint in The Gathering Room and hospitality (drinks and snacks).

This Lenten season will have time to stop and listen for God

This year our Lenten season will have a lot of quiet time.

The overall worship theme is “Listen,” and to listen you have to be still.

Here’s how it’s described:

Have you ever misplaced your phone—which is on vibrate of course— and then asked someone to call it?

We get really still and really quiet.

Our ears perk up in all directions in order to be ready to hear that little buzz.

It is a quieting down and high alert all at the same time.

This Lent we will quiet things down and heighten our attention to the “still, small voice” of God and our own true self.

Listening through prayer as well

See SILENT, Page 2
Take a turn offering hospitality and God’s love as a greeter

Greetings!

Have you ever been to a big, unfamiliar store like Home Depot, Lowe’s or the DeWitt Wegmans and wandered around trying to read signs but have not been able to find the item you are really looking for?

OR maybe you just don’t go to the big stores because you don’t want to experience the wandering with no direction for the item needed.

Have you ever thought this may be the experience of our visitors to the church on Sunday morning?

They may be wondering, where do I park, East Genesee Street or University Avenue? Which door do I enter? Once inside, which way do I go to worship? Does anyone know that I am here?

Many big stores have people at the entrance to answer questions. Churches need to welcome guests and friends in the same way.

Robert Schnase says radical hospitality is the first practice of fruitful living! We don’t offer hospitality out of guilt or obligation but to share God’s love.

St. Benedict urged his monastery to treat every visitor as if Jesus Christ had arrived.

Welcoming the stranger and friend seems so simple, yet we are challenged to find greeters for each week.

I know not everyone is an extrovert like me. I understand greeting is uncomfortable for some. I also know it comes quite easily to many. Especially, when most who enter are friends.

This month, I challenge us to sign up to become greeters for the church. So that when a visitor arrives we can welcome them and answer any questions they may have as they enter the building.

It only takes arriving about 10:10 a.m. on Sunday morning. We need greeters at the Peale Entrance and in the Narthex.

If you feel you can greet a few Sundays each year please email me (pastoraliciawood@gmail.com) to sign up!

Revelation 3:20 (CEV) says, “Listen! I am standing and knocking at your door. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and we will eat together.”

Let’s not miss the opportunity to greet the visitor of our church as we would Jesus Christ, with warm hospitality and love.

Peace,

— Pastor Alicia

Silent prayer time will be extended; Lenten video, book studies planned

CONTINUED from Page 1

as meditation on holy texts is an ancient Lenten practice. Come and rest; come and listen.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14, with a 6 p.m. service in The Gathering Room. You may receive ashes if you desire.

Starting Sunday, Feb. 18, worship will be a bit different. Meditative music will start at 10:15 a.m., and worshipers are asked to enter the sanctuary quietly leading up to the 10:30 a.m. service.

Announcements will be moved from the beginning to later in the service.

Silent prayer time will be much longer, during which people can stay in their seat or go to different stations in the Sanctuary to light a candle, ring a chime, write a prayer or other meditation on dissolving paper or write a prayer request and put it on the Communion table in front of the cross.

The Ash Wednesday theme is “Listening Deeply.” The weekly themes are as follows: “Listening Spaces,” “Listening to Our Bodies,” “Listening to the Texts,” “Listening for Healing,” “Listening Beyond the Voices” and “Listening to Your Heart.”

To deepen our understanding of this worship series, two study opportunities that will have videos but no reading will start at 9:30 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 18, and 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22, at the church, and last for six weeks.

A book study on John Ortberg’s “Who Is This Man? The Unpredictable Impact of the Inescapable Jesus” will start at 12:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 23, at the church and have five sessions.

The book is available at the church for $12.
Outreach Ministry

Despite our efforts, people like Bridget still need help

Friday mornings are one of my busiest times in any week. About 9 a.m. I’m at UUMC greeting guests and volunteers to our Food Pantry.

At the same time, a Food Bank truck arrives with our “Grocery Rescue” delivery. We buy produce, breads, sometimes meat, cheeses and yogurt, which are unloaded, organized and staged by our wonderful volunteers in Pettengill Center.

Diapers, pet foods and additional frozen/refrigerated food items are brought out of Outreach’s storage room, readying them for guests.

In the Food Pantry, additional food items are being unpacked, processed and staged for the day.

In Fellowship Hall clothing racks are brought out. Received donations are sorted, hung and/or displayed.

Coffee and snacks are set up for guests and volunteers. Our “Intake volunteers” are organizing forms, binders and paperwork necessary to process all of our guests.

Information on community resources, policies and maps from the Food Bank are laid out.

Workshop leaders and professional guests are also arriving to set up a table to inform and educate guests and volunteers on various subjects.

Inevitably, a new volunteer, student or guest arrives who needs some support and guidance on “pantry mechanics and activities” at UUMC.

By 12:30 p.m. all of our guests have accessed the Food Pantry, the clothing, the diapers, the pet food and the literature. Visitors have spoken to whom they need and, largely, most are leaving content and ready for the weekend.

Volunteers are finished cleaning up UUMC’s basement and may be setting up for a weekend event. Remaining foods are reassessed for future use at UUMC or to be sent to Hendricks Chapel’s Food Pantry. Two volunteers arrive at this time to clean and restock the pantry for next Friday.

By 1 p.m. I am very ready for a break and lunch. Often I sit and review the numbers of guests we have serviced, met, engaged with and invited into UUMC.

I’m proud how our community has grown and I feel pleased with our work. I’m happy people are benefiting from our efforts at UUMC and that our guests will eat well for the weekend. But last Friday I met Bridget.

Bridget called UUMC after she and her husband drove by to drop a friend to the hospital. The friend was to have his leg removed (gangrene from a wound).

Bridget, her husband and their friend are from Red Creek, N.Y., about an hour away. Bridget called asking for food that she and her husband could keep in their car while they wait (in their car) for their friend to get surgery, recover and be discharged to go back to Red Creek. I invited Bridget to come see me.

Bridget shortly arrived. I met her in the parking lot with a full grocery bag of ready-to-eat foods. I also supplied her with a list of Syracuse’s meal sites, times and addresses included.

Bridget was quick to state that she and her husband do not live out of their van, that they have a home in Red Creek. They are in Syracuse to support a friend.

However, they didn’t have enough money for gas, a sufficient change of clothes, a place to shower or even a place to sleep.

Bridget requested blankets in order to sleep in their van or they’d have to keep the van running to have heat.

I listened to Bridget’s story then carefully replied that surgery of this level can take several days of recovery and even with a home in Red Creek she is living in her van tonight and into the immediate future.

I recommended that she, with her husband, explore some of the inexpensive hotels in Syracuse or the shelters.

Through tears she explained that they don’t have the money or understanding of Syracuse to stay in a hotel and they are not homeless so they will not stay in a shelter.

See LACK, Page 7
CONTINUED from Page 1

Why will it be in The Gathering Room and not the Sanctuary?
PA: We thought that some of the folks who come to breakfast and pantry, they seemed overwhelmed by our sanctuary, and we thought if we had a more intimate setting that it might be a way in which they felt comfortable just from the get-go. It’s also smart in the winter to not have to heat the sanctuary for another hour or two.

How is the service going to be similar or different from the Sunday service?
PA: We’re going to keep the same theme, but we’re going to change it up slightly because we won’t have the organ. We’ll have a piano or we’ll have guitar for accompaniment. We’ll probably use some of the same songs but some of the hymns might be different. Once we get to know our community and who’s attending, we’ll be able to tailor it more toward what they desire.

We’ll have a music leader who will be playing the instrument.

We won’t have a children’s time. Because we don’t have a choir we won’t have an anthem. The offertory will be instrumental music.

We’re moving passing of the peace to a different part of the service.

One thing that was requested by someone in the community is that we have time to get to know one another more. We’re going intentional about pair/shares or talking maybe about the sermon. We’ll give maybe a question for folks to break up into groups and talk about during the worship service.

We’re also making sure we have food and drinks so we can also build relationships over food.

We’re trying to keep this to 45 minutes.

We may include music from YouTube.

We won’t have prayer requests on slips, but we will have a time where people can make their requests known.

We will celebrate Communion as we do on Sundays.

Is this going to be a “contemporary service”?
PA: We’re going to just stay authentic. The things we have in the order of worship will still be on Thursday. We might have a little bit different songs. There will not be a praise band with electric guitars and drums. We’re going to intermix the music, just like we do on Sundays.

You’ve said you want a commitment from congregation members to come to this service. What does that look like?
PA: What we’re asking is for 25 people to worship Sunday mornings and Thursday evenings for, I’d love to say, six months, but if you can give only three months, that’s good too.

The reason is that if someone new comes in we want someone to be in the room, so that new person isn’t the only one there.

What other ways can congregation members help with this new service?
PA: We are going to be very intentional about our Facebook posts about this service. So we’re asking the congregation — whenever there’s something posted on UUMC’s Facebook page — to share it with their friends or, at least like it, or both.

The other way is when you’re out and about, like grocery shopping or retail or something to do with the medical field, mention that University Church now has a Thursday night worship service.

I’ve been doing this in my daily tasks when I’ve been at Lowe’s or Wegmans, wherever I go, and people are very excited to know they have another opportunity to worship when they know they can’t make it most of the time on Sundays.

We’re looking for greeters at the door, the top of the stairs and in The Gathering Room. (Contact Ann Owens at annowens1134@gmail) We’re also looking for people to advance the PowerPoint slides and bring snacks. (See Pastor Alicia)

What about the graphics used on the big screen on Sundays?
PA: We’re going to have TVs, so the images will be on the TVs.

How will you make sure you don’t end up with “two congregations” that never see each other?
PA: We don’t want this to be a congregation that’s separate from Sunday morning. So one way in which we are being very intentional in merging these two groups of people is — we’ll be handing them information on how to become involved in University Church.

You may run into people you don’t know yet at small-group Bible study or book studies. You might meet them at Outreach events that they can attend.

Will anything else be happening at UUMC Thursday evenings?
PA: The Young & Talented Dance Program will be having classes. And, of course, our choir will rehearse after the service as usual.
Church & Society works to support Syracuse man arrested by ICE

In following its mission, Living FAITH, Seeking JUSTICE, Pursuing PEACE, the Church & Society Team has been primarily focused upon the very difficult activity concerning undocumented persons.

UUMC is a supporting sanctuary congregation for undocumented persons.

A Syracuse resident, Hector Navarro, was arrested by Immigration & Customs Enforcement and taken to Batavia to be processed.

Hector has lived in Syracuse for 10 years with his wife, and they have three young children who attend Syracuse schools. The children are U.S. citizens.

A petition, signed by many UUMC members, has been provided to Hector’s lawyer for presentation to the presiding judge.

It asks that Hector be reunited with his family and allowed to remain in this country.

Hector grew up in Guatemala and came to the U.S. to escape the brutal violence that prevails in that country.

There are members of the UUMC congregation who have intimate knowledge of the Guatemalan violence and are keenly understanding of Hector’s position.

Support is needed for his wife and children in terms of cash and transportation. Hector’s hearing has been scheduled for Feb. 20 in Batavia. Volunteers will be leaving Syracuse at 6 a.m. to drive to Batavia to be in the courtroom and outside in support of Hector.

If interested, contact Harry Miller at harrymiller@gmail.com; Peter Swords at pswords71144@gmail.com; or Nelson Price at nprice@twcny.rr.com.

To keep up-to-date, you may go http://workerscny.org.

How did a fountain spring up in our sanctuary?

How did we end up with a fountain for our “Known and Called” worship series for the Epiphany season?

Pastor Alicia and Ted Finlayson-Schueler were reviewing the Epiphany scriptures and noticed the theme of water: Jesus’ baptism, Jesus calling his disciples from their boats in the sea of Galilee and healings in and with water.

How did it happen? With the help of Ted’s cousin Delos, who owns Phoenix Flower Farm. Ted went up there to dig out rocks and bluestone from under the snow.

The dove was found online and fabric came from the waterfall for our “Roll Down, Justice” series. Pastor Alicia had a Hula Hoop in her garage, and Ted grabbed the reading light off his piano. The white poinsettias donated by the Altar Guild are usually around for only two weeks, but were kept to add greenery to the fountain arrangement.

People have found the fountain a meaningful focal point for meditation, Ted said, and some suggested we have a permanent water feature for that purpose.

During 2017, membership in the United Methodist Church worldwide increased to a total of 12,557,214, up from about 12.4 million in 2013. Giving increased for a total of over $888 million.

Most of the dollars, 85 percent, remain in the local church for its ministries and operation. Fifteen percent, about $133.2 million, supports the ministries, mission and administrative costs beyond the local church — the annual conference, the nation and the world.

United Methodists in 2017 gave about $133.2 million to support the general church’s national and international ministries — about $1.8 million more than the previous year.

University Church and the Upper New York Conference gave 100 percent of our “shared ministries asking” for these ministries.

— Nelson Price
People and Prayers

THANK YOU
I want to thank the Altar Guild for the lovely poinsettia at Christmas. The display on Dec. 24 was so beautiful with the variety of colors.

But most of all I want to say thank you to so many UUMC friends who have phoned, sent cards and visited the funeral home on that terrible weather day Saturday with the loss of Camer- on, my grandson on January 3.

Also, my nephew Doug Hough in Nebraska died on the 7th from ALS, so I have appreciated all your thoughts and prayers these last weeks.

Thank you so much! Nancy Hough

CONTINUING PRAYERS
- Prayer that the second and third floors of our building be rented.
- Sue: My family and all those struggling with health issues

PRAYERS REQUESTED:
- For those in military service: Matt Fischer

Sunday, January 14
- Healing for Ann Price
- May we all send healing prayers to Adam Smith, grandson of Marg McDivitt
- Mamie: I just received a call from my son and his wife in the hospital after injuries from a drunk cab driver. Please pray for my son.
- Please pray for all those with medical problems
- Keep Jim Tallman in prayer as he competes in a floor hockey competition next Saturday in Rochester
- Please keep Nancy Hough in your prayers
- Audrey — chemo

Sunday, January 21
- Mark McDivitt: Blessings to cousin Melody Drew who died this week to move onto her new journey with God.
- Peter: For families of workers detained by ICE and for due process rights to be maintained especially for their kids.
- Alice and Ronald: Audrey will tolerate chemo
- Prayers for David Grosso, Patti Fasulo, Kathy Dewey, Jeanne and Shane
- Mary Gale, who fell and broke her hip. Surgery successful. Prayer for a positive recovery.
- Prayers for Pete Yuhas, Merilyn Krackhardt, the family of Rev. Doug Mackey, whose mother died Jan. 17, and all those who have lost family members as a result of the flu
- Morgan: Prayers for Laureen Mastronardi as she gets a heart monitor put in on Wednesday.
- Pastor Alicia: Keep Mary Slack, our secretary, in your prayers as she recovers from foot surgery.
- For Joyce, who is suffering from cancer and for a tenant for our building
- Kathy: Prayers for support for the beginning of a new chapter. Prayers for Logan.
- Don and Margo Koten: The family of Larry Van Druff. Larry died this past week.

Sunday, January 28
- For oppressed people everywhere, that they may soon taste freedom
- For cousin Joyce, who is struggling with end stages of cancer
- People in need in Appalachia
- Alice & Ronald: For Mike and Sue as they navigate serious illness; for Audrey as she goes through chemo
- Angela Palmieri: Happy Birthday, Ann Owens
- The family of David Grosso, who died on Wednesday. Patti Fasulo, Kathy Dewey, Jeanne and Shane
- Peter: For the chance to contact legislators, meet with movement groups, march, sing and demonstrate for justice and human rights
- Barb Cargo: Healing prayers for my good friend Gloria Noble, who is having a procedure Jan. 30.
- Dean Moyer: For patience as I move through the healing of a broken elbow
- Pray for Susie, Linda and family. All those having medical issues

Sunday, February 4
- Peter: For a foreign policy that sees the humanity in every nation and society, rather than threatening each other with more weapons.
- Kellie Wood: Prayers for a speedy recovery for my mom, who is having hand surgery tomorrow.
- Ralph Best: Prayers and healing for Beverly Schmidt, who is sick
- Dave, who is battling health issues
- Please pray for Pastor Alicia as she prepares for her all-day See PEOPLE, Page 7
People/Prayers

CONTINUED from page 6

interviews with the Board of Ordained Ministry on March 3.

• For those being held in detention centers by Immigration and families living in fear of losing loved ones.

• Alice and Ronald: Audrey, that she will tolerate chemo better. Mike: That his health issues will be resolved.

THANKS & PRAISE
Sunday, January 14

• Dean Moyer: Thankful that I am doing well after the implant of a Watchman device in my heart on Tuesday.

• Prayers of thanks for the many contributions that people from African, Caribbean and South American countries have brought and made after they have come to this country

Sunday, January 28

• Terry: Thank you for my mom’s surgery and her strong recovery. I’m so grateful to be there for her and share the time together.

Sunday, February 4

• Thanks be to God for my new job!

JOYS
Sunday, January 28

• Rita Soufleris: We have a new great-granddaughter, Anna Catherine

Lack of resources leads to unreasonable plans

CONTINUED from Page 3

She also indicated that if they leave Syracuse they will not have the gas money to get back to collect their friend.

After an exasperating conversation, Bridget was happy with the resources, the directions and addresses I shared.

I followed Bridget and her husband up University Avenue and watched them find a parking place near Crouse Hospital.

Afterward, I went on to Hendricks Chapel with my food donation but felt very grim.

Bridget reminds me there is still a lot of work to do. People fall through the cracks every day.

People get very committed to ideas and plans that cannot be successful because they have no other resources.

People are misinformed, misunderstand, are not supported and move through this life grasping at whatever they can to get through a day, a night, a life.

In the end, Bridget did not want to be in Syracuse, but she did want to support her friend. This is a common story and one that motivates me to keep working. Maybe one day no one will fall through the cracks.

— Galyn Murphy-Stanley Outreach Coordinator

March birthdays

2 – Jerry Cargo, Emelia Weah
3 – Julia Ross
4 – Grace Bradshaw
5 – Doug Hemphill, Bob Coutts
6 – Aimie Sarkodie-Mensah Best
9 – Kirsten Magowan, Keith Wellner
11 – Rita Soufleris
13 – Alicia Wood
16 – Nichola Weah
17 – Johnathan Weah
19 – Stuart Hosler
20 – Donald Koten, Vito Sciscioli
22 – Craig Myers
23 – Bill Potter
24 – Lisa Weah
25 – Michael Fay
26 – Barbara Nunn
27 – Rosemary DeHoog, Denise Marshall, Jeanne Finlayson-Schueler
29 – Renee McKay

Altar flowers

Altar flowers were given:
By Bob and Ginny Dewey in memory of their parents.
By Don and Margo Koten in loving memory of their parents, Dr. Irvin and Dora Koten and the Rev. George and Margaret Schnabel.
By Pastor Alicia Wood and Angela Palmieri in honor of the January birthdays of their mothers, Peg Leonard and Ann Owens.
In memory of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Sneddon by their daughters.
Altar flowers were given to Lois Lum, John Indick, Ramon Rolle, Ann Owens, Roger MacDonald, Jim Tallman, Mary Klepper and Lois McTarnaghan. Flowers were delivered by Ann Owens and Bobbie and Ernie Hemphill.
**Finance Corner**

**Pledging Update**

Pledges for 2018 are $215,388, which exceeds 2017’s pledge giving of $209,572 by almost $6,000. There were 11 new pledges for a total of 66 pledging units.

However in 2017 there were 70 pledging units that totaled $222,968 in pledges. Please keep your pledges up to date, and if you have not made a pledge, you may do so.

**WEEK OF FEBRUARY 11**

**Sunday the 11th**
9 a.m. Community Breakfast, Fellowship Hall
9:30 a.m. Christian Education for K-12th, Pettengill Center
10:30 a.m. Worship.
10:45 a.m. Christian Education for adults with disabilities
11:45 a.m. Fellowship, Gathering Room
Noon Soup & Sermon Chat, Chappell Room

**Monday the 12th**
7 p.m. Handbell Choir
5:30 p.m. Governing Board

**Ash Wednesday the 14th**
9 a.m. Staff Meeting
6 p.m. Ash Wednesday service
7 p.m. Handbell Choir
5:30 p.m. Governing Board

**Tuesday the 13th**
9 a.m. Staff Meeting
6 p.m. Worship, The Gathering Room
7:30 p.m. Choir rehearsal
10 a.m. Friday Community

**WEEK OF FEBRUARY 18**

**Sunday the 18th**
9:30 a.m. Bagels & coffee, The Gathering Room
9:30 a.m. Christian Education for K-12th, Pettengill Center
10:30 a.m. Worship.
10:45 a.m. Christian Education for adults with disabilities
11:45 a.m. Fellowship, Gathering Room
Noon Soup & Sermon Chat, Chappell Room

**Monday the 26th**
7 p.m. Handbell Choir

**Wednesday the 28th**
9 a.m. Staff Meeting
10 a.m. Friday Community

**WEEK OF MARCH 4**

**Sunday the 4th**
9:30 a.m. Bagels & coffee, The Gathering Room
10:30 a.m. Worship. Communion.
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**Women’s Guild meeting**

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Sunday, Jan. 21, 2018
Snapshots from the Day
(9 photos)
THE TEN

1. WORSHIP ONLY GOD
Sunday, Jan. 28, 2018
(6 photos)
Sunday, Feb. 4, 2018

(4 photos)

Children collect personal care items brought by the congregation for our pantry guests.