

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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MARCH 2015 NEWSLETTER

From the Pastor's Heart: **Fasting**

Here is a challenge for those of us who wish to engage a spiritual venture during this Lenten season. In addition to giving up one of our favorite food-items on our menu, there are many other things we can choose to abstain from: Reducing television time for example. We can substitute some of our television or computer time with the option of reading one of the many great devotional guides that can help us focus through the season of Lent. If we wish to broaden our spiritual scope even further, plan an act of kindness for a neighbor. True Fasting has in mind the idea of doing something for others, and suspending our own cravings and appetite in order to bring relief and satisfaction to others who may require help or support.

Set out to look for opportunities to do small favors for others as we fast. Be intentional. It could be with someone we know, or a stranger. Let us be sure we have the time and the ability, and the resources to respond. Always bear in mind that we are committing this time of fasting and prayer to God. This makes our activity spiritual and sacred. In Scripture Jesus encouraged his disciples to be secretive when they fast. The Lord instructed his disciples that, instead of displaying a gloomy appearance for all to see, and announcing to everyone that they are fasting, let it be a secret between themselves and God. In other words we should plan to look our best though we may be feeling the withdrawal symptoms of fasting. Our secret doesn't have to be limited to fasting only. We can also keep our prayers a secret with God. Prayer and fasting naturally go together because, biblically, fasting is more than just a physical activity. It is very much a spiritual quest of our choosing to conform more to what God desires of us and this requires prayer. Scholars agree that there are no injunctions found in the Old or New Testament that required the Jewish community or the early Christians to fast. Therefore, fasting was not given as a command from God, nor was it laid upon the Church as an obligation. Fasting was regarded as a privilege as people desired to deepen their spiritual walk. Ultimately, fasting does not change God, it changes us. Fasting is a way of adjusting ourselves to God to refine our spiritual capacity to serve others. Fasting is also a way of humbling ourselves before God and rendering our body, mind, and spirit to serve Him literally.

When we decide to commit to a fast, start small and simple. Starting out small and simple with our fast is beneficial. If we eat three meals a day – breakfast, lunch, and dinner - we may choose to abstain from one of those meals, or as we have mentioned before, one item from the menu can be omitted for a period of time. It could be pretty overwhelming to imagine what it must have felt like for Jesus to fast forty days without food. In the Jewish culture in ancient times fasting was a common practice rendered twice a week. So, children of this era were born and raised with this custom. In our day and especially in our culture, we rarely speak of fasting, much less it being a way of life. We therefore must exercise caution when we decide to engage a fast. It would be better to consult a doctor given various factors that may affect us medically – our age, the condition of our body, and perhaps other limitations. The good news is we do not have to limit our fast to abstaining from food alone. We can choose to abstain from other kinds of habits that might be a bit excessive in our life, and redirect our energy, time, and effort to helping others. What a wonderful way to spend our time fasting.

Lastly, a simple fast is recommended if we have never engaged such an activity. But, let me caution you; whatever we choose to fast from, usually, it will be the very thing we will crave the most. It will also seem to be the most convenient thing at our disposal. Perhaps this has something to do with our psychology. But, through simplicity, we can advance to a deeper and richer experience. Let the text below be a guiding principle to follow whenever we choose to fast during this season of Lent and beyond. Peace.

Isaiah 58:6-10 (NIV)

⁶“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?

⁷Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

⁸Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;
then your righteousness^[a] will go before you,
and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.

⁹Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

“If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
¹⁰and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday.



FROM THE STAFF/PASTOR PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE (S/PPRC)

We discovered at our last meeting that people who have come into our congregation since Spring of 2011 may not know that our Pastor is a half-time pastor. This was decided when it was apparent we could no longer support a full time pastor. A half time pastor, under the guidelines from the Annual Conference works 20-24 hours per week.

So, some have been wondering when he is in the office and how to contact him. We are currently working with him on coming up with some guidelines for our particular church. If you want to talk to him and want to be sure he's available, it would be best to call ahead and ask for an appointment. While he welcomes folks dropping by, with an appointment, you'll have his full attention. If you need to reach him after church office hours, his cell phone is 897-6078, his e-mail is: wgamble@s.paulsmiths.edu. Do not hesitate to call him if you need him. If you live in the 327 exchange (Paul Smiths/Rainbow Lake, etc) your call may not go through because of a problem with Frontier. If you have an emergency, please call a friend or church member with another exchange (891) and have them contact him and he will call you back. A church member is working on this problem. You may always try Mitch and Cindy Smith at 891-3915.



DID YOU KNOW... Your church can be found on Facebook. Just go to First United Methodist Saranac Lake. (complete with capital letters and spaces.) When the page comes up, click on “like.”

ADDED INCOME – ONLINE SHOPPING

The General Board of Administration and Finance of the UMC has given us a new way to bring some more income into our church. It's called umcmarket.org

This program is for online shopping and a large number of stores including Sears, Land's End, Staples, Best Buy, The Disney Store and many, many more. When you purchase through UMCmarket, which is quite easy, a percentage which depending on what that store has set, will be sent to umcmarket in our church's name. When the amount reaches \$100, a check will be sent to the church. Every little bit helps and if we work together, we can really make a difference.

So, with the holiday shopping season looming, if you're ordering online, please set up an account, select Saranac Lake as your church and get the little cross and flame button on your computer - in the upper right hand corner. When you are ready to shop, click on that button first and then when their site opens, click on the store you are shopping from.

NOTE: If you are shopping at Amazon.com, please be sure to read the special instructions just for that site to be sure your donation is recorded!

So, just go to the site, follow the instructions to set up your account and happy shopping while helping the church at the same time.

If you have any questions, please contact Cindy Smith at 891-3915.

FUEL FUND

We're into the winter heating season once again and even with moving downstairs and the help from the Lutherans, we fall short of reaching our goal. Our fuel costs have increased over \$1,000 compared to this time last year. In order to help keep us on track, we are asking our church family to contribute to a Fuel Fund.

To do so, envelopes will be made available in the pews or just write Fuel Fund on your check in the memo line and place it in the offering place. Prayerfully consider how you can help and whatever the amount, do it with love and remember, "God Loves a Cheerful Giver!"

COMING !

Have you come to church and noticed folks you don't recognize? Do you see people you haven't seen in a while and can't put a name with the face? Would you like to be able to find contact information for someone in the church? Well, help is on the way!

We will be working with Lifetouch Studios to produce a new pictorial Directory. And, of course, you will be able to purchase photos as you wish. This is a free service to the church and there is no pressure or obligation to buy.

DETAILS: The photographers will be here June 17 & 18 from 2 – 9 pm. More information will be forthcoming.

CHURCH COUNCIL The February meeting was cancelled due to the below zero temperatures and the wind chill factor. There was no pressing business and everyone was able to stay home and stay warm.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

A second victim of the recent cold weather. The meeting scheduled for February 19 was cancelled. The next meeting is March 12 at which time the February meeting agenda will be discussed.

TRUSTEES HIGHLIGHTS

The third victim of the cold weather, the February meeting was cancelled. The most recent improvement at the church is that Adams Glass has replaced the pivot points on both outside doors.

NOTE: Sunday services will be in the Fellowship Hall through the end of March.

WINTER SNOW REMOVAL

As always, the sidewalks need to be shoveled so that our worshippers do not track too much snow into the sanctuary. If you can help, there is a sign-up sheet on the table in the back of the sanctuary. The time slots are for a week at a time. The responsibilities are listed at the top of the sheet. PLEASE help us out. Thank you.

NOTES ON OUR VARIOUS FUNDS

These funds are all ongoing, and are in constant need of contributions.

As of January 31, 2015 the **ORGAN FUND** had a balance of \$6,448.00.

As of January 31, 2015, the **ROOF FUND** had a balance of \$36,375.34 owed to NBT Bank. We are paying \$1550.72 monthly toward that mortgage. Of late, several people have made contributions toward the principal on that loan. Doing this will reduce the overall amount owed.

TOWER ROOM

The fourth victim of the cold weather. Our contractor has not been able to begin work because dry wall needs warmer temperatures to cure. During this time, we ask that our members NOT check on what is happening as we don't want the dust and dirt tracked around the building.

LECTIONARY for MARCH

March 1

Second Sunday in Lent
Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16
Psalm 22:23-31
Romans 4:13-25
Mark 8:31-38

March 22

Fifth Sunday in Lent
Jeremiah 31:31-34
Psalm 51:1-12
Hebrews 5:5-10
John 12:20-33

March 8

Third Sunday in Lent
Exodus 20:1-17
Psalm 19
1 Corinthians 1:18-25
John 2:13-22

March 29

Passion/Palm Sunday
Isaiah 50:4-9a
Psalm 31:9-16
Philippians 2:5-11
Mark 14:1-15, 47

March 15

Fourth Sunday in Lent
Numbers 21:4-9
Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
Ephesians 2:1-10
John 3:14-21

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

2 Hailey Dell
Jon Leavitt
3 Logan Ploof
Angie James
4 Brandon Clark
5 Linda Charette
Eugene Wood
6 Margaret Turnbull
7 Bruce Barnard
Clemos Tanzini
8 Minnie Beguin
Evie Hunt
Dillon Wilson
10 Aiden Hesseltine
11 Mathew Martin
13 Soo Hanley
15 John Santy
17 Keri Walp
18 Barb Halla
18 Jim Griebusch
21 Marlene Martin
22 Christine Leavitt
23 Nicole Sells
25 Joe Pickreign, Jr.
26 Rachel Hannon
29 Kerry King
Bill Rich
Eva Stinson
30 Paula D'Ambrisi
Samuel Stringer
31 Marshall Moore

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES**-0-****APRIL BIRTHDAYS**

2 Mary Sue Dalton
3 Ruth Mader
5 Richard Lawrence
Scott Leavitt
Joe Fisher
6 Louise Harris
7 Austin Barry
9 Virginia Daniels
Merry Watters
12 Diane Kelting
14 Bob Donaldson, Sr.
Howard R. Myatt, Jr.
15 Megan White
16 Joe Pickreign, III
Jeannette Sheppard
17 Eileen Leavitt
Robert Smith
18 Jacob Heverly
25 Lucas Donaldson
27 Arthur Besio
30 Devon Bandru
Trevor Fravor

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

1 Grant & Cindy Besio
2 Joe & Shirley Pickreign
55 Yrs. 2015

First United Methodist Church**SUNDAY WORSHIP**

Sunday 8:30am Contemporary Service

Coffee and Fellowship 9:20 am

10:00 am Traditional Service

10:00 am **Sunday School**

ALL ARE WELCOME

DAY	DATE	TIME	EVENT	PLACE
Mon.	Mar. 9	7:30 pm	Worship Committee	Fellowship Hall
Mon.	Mar. 16	7:00 pm	Church Council	Tellers Room
Tue.	Mar. 17	all day	Girl Scout cookie delivery and pick-up	Fellowship Hall
Thur.	Mar. 19	6:00 pm	Girl Scout Leader's meeting	Tellers Room
Sat.	Feb. 21	8:00 am	Men's Breakfast	Fellowship Hall
Mon.	Feb. 23	7:00 pm	Trustees	Teller's Room
<u>WEEKLY EVENTS</u>				
*Sun.	Mar.. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	3 - 4 pm	Zumba	Fellowship Hall
*Mon.	Mar.. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	5:00 - 6:00 pm	Zumba	Fellowship Hall
*Wed.	Mar.. 4, 11, 18, 25	12 noon	Pastor Wilbert Noon Devotional	DeChantel Apts.
*Wed.	Mar.. 4, 11, 18, 25	5-6 pm	Community Supper	Fellowship Hall
*Wed.	Mar. 4, 11, 18, 25	7:00 pm	AA	Heidi Rich Room
*Thurs.	Mar. 5, 12, 19, 26	7:00 pm	Choir Rehearsal	Choir Room
*Fri.	Mar. 6, 13, 20, 27	7:00 pm	Bible Study	Lounge
*Sat.	Mar. 7, 14, 21, 28	9:30 - 10:30	Zumba	Fellowship Hall
*Sat..	Mar. 7, 14, 21, 28	5:00 pm	Lutheran Services	Fellowship Hall .

First United Methodist Church of Saranac Lake
63 Church Street
Saranac Lake, NY 12983



**For Those of You Who Are
Receiving This by Mail**

**PLEASE HELP US BY
GIVING US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS**

The best way would be to send an
email to Claudia at:

firstumcsl@centralny.twcbc.com