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# THE MESSENGER

## From the Pastor's Desk

Spring is springing all around us bringing with it new life and new birth. At the parsonages, in our front gardens the tulip bulbs are popping through the topsoil and beginning to bud. The vibrant colors of spring not only remind us of Christ's resurrection on Easter but also the possibility for new birth within each one of us.

John Wesley, the founding father of Methodism, names new birth as one of the fundamental doctrines of his theology. Wesley defines new birth as the work God does within us to offer reconciliation and spiritual renewal. He teaches that those who have experienced new birth are marked by faith, hope, and love. We invite you to take time this season to deepen your relationship with the Divine to discover your own spiritual renewal. As Easter people, may the blooms blossoming within our hearts be faith, hope, and love.

At SSUMC there are so many reasons for excitement because of the ways God is birthing new ministries through our community. One of those ministries is developing an alternative worship experience to reach new people. This will be a courageous step forward for our congregation, to begin something new and different. Our hope is to develop this new worship experience at a west side location on a weeknight. Our vision team has been in conversation with property owners on Beekman Street to seek out possibilities for partnerships in that area of the city. A presence on that side of town allows us to return to our roots, near where our first building was on Washington Street. It also allows us to build relationships with individuals who may not have the means or desires to travel to our current location.

To make this dream a possibility SSUMC has applied for financial support from the annual conference and other grant programs to minimize any potential financial impact on the congregation. The conference has awarded us a matching grant of up to \$10,000 to begin this venture. Our hope is to raise the \$10,000 match through outside sources. If you feel moved to support this vision, you can

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contribute by designating your gift to the "Alternative Worship Project." The funds will be used to employ a young seminarian to help us develop this new ministry, and with our youth ministry. In addition, our congregation will get to help him or her grow in their leadership and call to becoming a Methodist Pastor.

The ultimate hope for this alternative worship experience is to grow our ministry by fifty new members within the first year. This will bring new energy and life to our congregation as well as reaching out in faith to bring life and energy to something new for those we are not currently ministering with. It is our hope to launch this alternative worship experience this coming autumn. We are developing a team that will help us bring the dream to life.

As SSUMC begins this exciting new opportunity, the amazing ministry that is already happening at SSUMC will continue. The alternative worship site will be a tremendous boost to what is already happening here. Let us work together to bring reconciliation and spiritual renewal to the world. May the colors of our lives and our work together be as vibrant as the followers of spring, offering to all those we encounter faith, hope, and love.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastors Heather and Drew

## SSUMC Makes a Difference in Nicaragua

In February, I had the privilege to accompany members of the Genesee Valley District on their annual mission trip to Nicaragua. Pastor Ted Anderson and his wife, Mary, have organized a delegation every year (and sometimes twice a year) since 2003. Working in conjunction with Project Chacocente, we traveled to Masaya, Nicaragua to help the carry out the Project's mission of advancing the dignity, freedom, health, and joy of people in rural Nicaragua through education, faith, infrastructure, and relationships within the foundation of the Gospel.

Project Chacocente began by Cheryl Avery as a way to move families who were living out of the dump in the capital of Managua to the rural village of Masaya. Cheryl believed transformation could only occur if the families were held accountable for their future. Accordingly, the families signed a contract to live in Christian community, to learn to read and write, to build their own homes, to farm the land, and to attend parenting classes. With God's help, eight families were successful! In January of 2014, they were presented with the deeds to their property.

Based on the belief that education is the key to end poverty, the Chacocente Christian School was built in 2005. The students who attend the school are members of the Project and the surrounding community. Today the school provides a tuition-free full-day program, including a nutritious lunch, to approximately 150 children. Expanding each year by adding a grade level, students can now attend from Pre-K through Grade 11, the final year of a high school education in Nicaragua. So, what did we do while we were there? Our project was to work alongside the people of Project Chacocente to help build a fence around the school (approximately 200 yards) for security purposes. This entailed removing trees, digging a ditch four feet deep for the foundation blocks, cementing the blocks together, then adding another four feet of cement blocks above ground. We also painted the poles for the chain link fence and welded the fence on top. This would have been a relatively easy task here in the U.S., but in rural Nicaragua there are no backhoes or cement mixers; just



man and woman power, shovels, picks, and some tool I'm not sure what it's called but it was long and heavy and able to break through the ground that was mostly clay!

Each aspect of the project was a major task, but the one that amazed me most was watching the men of Nicaragua clear the trees without a chain saw! To do this, the men used an ax to cut away the roots of the tree and tied a rope to the top of the tree. Some men pushed on the tree and some men pulled on the rope about 30 feet away from it to get it to fall. It sounds hard, but the men of Nicaragua made it look easy!

However, many other tasks needed to be done while we were there. One of them was to hand out sneakers. A church from Ohio asked Mary and Pastor Ted if they would deliver 150 pairs of sneakers to the students of Chacocente Christian School. Even though the church was provided with the measurements of each child in December, as we all know, kids grow fast and making sure they all had a pair that fit properly was no easy feat (no pun intended)! It took a few days to get everyone outfitted and after all was said and done we only needed to purchase two pairs while we were there. The children were all thrilled to have a new pair of shoes!

For me, to be given the opportunity to help others who so desperately need it is a gift and I am grateful to all who made it possible. To be able to work side by side with the men and women of the Project was both rewarding and exhausting! I am happy to say, I learned a lot from each member of the delegation and from the members of Project Chacocente.

Currently, Nicaragua is working to overcome the after-effects of dictatorship, civil war, and natural disasters. According to BBC News (2015), it is the poorest country in Central America. If you would like to sponsor a child, sponsor a teacher, help in any way, or would like more information about Project Chacocente, please visit [www.outofthedump.org](http://www.outofthedump.org)

-By Mary Ellsworth

## Church Life

### Friday, 4/8, and Saturday, 4/9 – Spring Rummage and Garage Sale!

OK – your New Year's resolution to lose a few pounds has been a success – but what to do with the clothes that no longer fit? Start setting your gently used clothing aside – you can begin dropping them off late Tuesday, 4/5, in the Fellowship Hall. We will be having a bake sale, so start getting those yummy recipes ready! Look for sign-up sheets in the Narthex – if you could spare 2 or 3 hours to help sort and fold clothing, it would be an immense help!

#### MUSIC BOX:

Bye, Bye, Miss American Pie! For those who remember Don McLean, he recorded a round called "Babylon" on the 1971 American Pie album (check it out online!). Plans are afoot to organize a men's ensemble at SSUMC to sing occasionally. Other songs for this group include "Alleluia," written by Larry Gatlin and performed by the Gatlin Brothers (A Gatlin Family Christmas album) and "It Is Well With My Soul" (2nd tenors sing melody throughout!). Music-reading is NOT necessary – only the desire to serve the Lord by singing His songs. Our motto is Psalm 98: "O sing to the Lord a new song, for God hath done marvelous things!"

We will rehearse between services for 3 or 4 Sundays prior to singing in worship. The first meeting will be April 3. If you have any questions, please email or call me (sweetpeasler@gmail.com; 518-223-0182 or cell # 828-595-0808). Come and bring a friend!

**Chicken Barbecue Dinner:** will be on Saturday, April 23rd from 4:30 – 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Cost: Free will donation. There will be delicious chicken, yummy sides, and ICE CREAM! Come join us!

**Frobenius Organ Concert:** The next concert will be Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm and will feature Caroline Robinson, an Eastman School of Music organ performance major. Assisting Caroline will be Eastman cellist, Matt Zucker, a graduate of Cleveland School of Music. Admission is free, but donations are appreciated. For more information see Pamela Easler or email sweetpeasler@gmail.com

**Summer Is Coming!** 10am worship time begins June 19, which will also be the day of the Church Picnic. June 26<sup>th</sup> will be Music Appreciation Sunday. Regular 9:00 and 10:45 worship times will resume Sunday, September 11.

## April

3<sup>rd</sup> 7:30pm – Methodism 101

12<sup>th</sup> 1pm – Quilters Group

11<sup>th</sup> 7pm – UMW Reads

15<sup>th</sup> 10am – Living Springs

21<sup>st</sup> 6pm – 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday  
Fellowship  
7pm – Finance Meeting

23<sup>rd</sup> 4pm – Church Dinner:  
Barbecue Chicken

### Finance Update

Finance Report: February		
	Income	Expenses
Operating Budget	\$ 78,151.44	\$ 73,670.70

Our Church finances are doing well at this time. This is largely because of gifts made in January to help with our projected deficit. We continue to face a deficit in our 2016 budget of around \$29,000. If you wish to contribute, please direct your gifts to the general operating budget. Thank you for your continued support!

### Our Vision:

*Embracing Everybody through deep meaningful connections  
To grow closer to God and transform lives*

## UMW NEWS

**UMW EVENT:** Tuesday, 4/19, 7:00 pm, in the Fellowship Hall – please note that this is a change in date! Wellspring (formerly known as DVRC Saratoga) will present our program and all of our church family and any members of the community that you would like to invite are welcome. We will be participating in an interactive program by portraying roles that convey the struggles that many victims in abusive relationship face. Then we will get a chance to see what our community is doing to address this important issue.

### LIVING SPRINGS CIRCLE

will meet April 15 at 10:00 AM  
in the kitchenette.

The program will focus on the social  
justice issue of human trafficking.

The novel "Prayers for the Stolen" by  
Jennifer Clement and UMW  
resources will be used.

All are invited to join us!

### UMW READS CIRCLE

will meet Monday April 11 at 7:00 PM in  
the lounge to discuss the novel "Prayers for  
the Stolen" by Jennifer Clement. Set in  
Guerrero, Mexico, Ladydi Garcia Martinez  
and her friends struggle to reach adulthood  
in a land of drug trafficking and violence.

May's selection is "The Nature of the Beast"  
by Louise Penny.

All are welcome! For more information  
contact Natalie Bollerud at 584-1192.

## TRUSTEE NEWS

You may have recently seen that SSUMC sold a piece of property for development on Perry Road. A late SSUMC church member, who due to his generous nature would like to remain unnamed, gave the property to the church as a bequest. His gifts to the church throughout his living years were through his love of God, all people, and especially those who were not as fortunate as others. His family believes he would not want attention for what he gave, but would have preferred to quietly see his gifts benefitting those who needed it.

The property was sold for just about 1.2 million dollars and those proceeds according to the donors wishes are to given to various organizations to help make the world a safer, happier, and more loving place. Those organizations include: Skye Farm, Upper NY Conference's Africa 360 Fund, Habitat for Humanity, and this church. As per his wishes, 80% of his designated proceeds will go toward improving Skye Farm camps to make possible a year round adult retreat center, 5% will go towards establishing a scholarship for students at Africa University to become ministerial leaders, 5% will go towards the local Habitat for Humanity to help make home ownership possible despite financial constraints, and 10% will go towards creating a global mission scholarship fund for all members of SSUMC regardless of financial ability. The church is truly blessed to have such generous members who help us make a true impact in the world.

On April 17, we will celebrate the announcement and disbursement of these funds at both worship services with the Guest Preacher Bishop Mark Webb and representatives from each recipient organization will also be present. Please join us as we celebrate God's abundance and human generosity toward one another.

## Saratoga Springs UMC kicks-off support for new UMCOR South Sudan development project

The more Rev. Drew Sperry and his congregation learned about the world's youngest country — South Sudan — the more they wanted to help people in war-torn communities as they restored their everyday lives after decades of violence. "We knew UMCOR [United Methodist Committee on Relief] was starting a new project, and people we talked to were passionate about trying to get it started," explained Sperry, associate pastor at Saratoga Springs United Methodist Church (UMC) in New York.

Though UMCOR has been working for a decade in parts of what is now South Sudan, a new project, "Yei's Voice," is underway. The Yei River County in South Sudan has nominal infrastructure and social services due to years of civil war and continued conflict. UMCOR has embarked on a new community engagement and development project in South Sudan that will help Lasu Payam, a district of the county, identify its needs, make a plan to meet them, and sustain the community.

As members of Saratoga Springs UMC learned more about the needs in South Sudan, they felt moved to become the first donor to kick off the project. "Our mission chair came up to me and said she'd like to raise \$1,000 to give to UMCOR's work in South Sudan," said Sperry. The congregation ended up surpassing its goal, raising \$1,500. Then they donated the money during a time when UMCOR pledged to "match" donations with an equal contribution, so \$3,000 went directly to South Sudan's most vulnerable people. "When I look at what our funds are accomplishing, I believe all our churches need to be doing this," said Sperry.

The project in South Sudan is a great example of how UMCOR doesn't just sweep in and take over a community but, instead, asks a community what it needs, explained Cephaz Munjeri, head of mission for UMCOR's country office in South Sudan. "We are asking communities to help develop their own development plans," he explained. UMCOR is not only helping residents of South Sudan today, it is ensuring that communities can take the lead



Women gather with their children and wait to be seen by a doctor at the Nyori Primary Health Care Unit in Yei River County, South Sudan. Photo: Hannah Hanson

in sustaining their own development by choosing to focus on any of these sectors: agriculture and food security; economic recovery and livelihoods; water, sanitation, and hygiene; education; or disaster risk reduction. "This is a response to the actual community needs, and not an imposition on the community," said Munjeri. "If the community is the one that develops these plans, it can then carry out the whole project and sustain the project effectively."

Church support critical for success UMCOR continues to seek churches to help fund its latest efforts in the world's youngest nation. "When I visited South Sudan last year, I was inspired by the hope and energy for the country's future that I witnessed at the grassroots level," said Hannah Hanson, UMCOR gifts and church relations manager. "Yei's Voice is plugged into that energy. But it can't launch without the prayers and gifts of United Methodist churches," she continued. Hanson detailed that the project still needs to raise \$83,000 this year to get started, and then will need additional support over the next three years to see it through.

"This is such a great opportunity for churches to learn about and help a country that, at the community level, has such tremendous excitement for the future," she said. "Churches that donate to Yei's Voice will be walking alongside our South Sudan sisters and brothers on an inspiring new path."

—by Susan Kim

## Christian Education

### Kids Corner is Fully Open!

You may have noticed a table near the Sanctuary that has books and coloring pages available. The purpose of this area is to provide hospitality to children and to families who need help and information. Starting in March there will be quiet toy bags for toddlers and friendship bracelet kits for tweens and teens available at this table. There will also be information on all the programs available to children and youth of the church. Please stop by soon to take a look at what is available for your children!

### Save the Date!

**April 15 Family Movie Night 6pm**

**April 22-24 Upword! District Youth Event**

**May 21 Small Wonders Kiddie Carnival**

**June 19 Children's Church Service & Church Picnic**

**July 11-15 Vacation Bible School**

### Family Movie Night

Friday April 15

6pm The Peanuts Movie 7:45pm

Grease: Live

Bring a snack to share with friends!



### Programs for kids at SSUMC

- Sunday School classes for preschool through 8th grade at 9:00 and 10:45 services
- Childcare available at Sunday morning services
- Youth group for grades 6-12 every Sunday evening
- Children's choir rehearses between services each Sunday morning



**Small Wonders**  
A ministry of Saratoga Springs UMC

Small Wonders Christian Preschool is seeking a teacher and teacher assistant to begin in September 2016. Small Wonders provides the environment, the activities, and the relationships that enable each child to develop a strong sense of self-worth and develop their own unique gifts as a child of God. Our staff is expected to provide the best possible learning environment for children of the school, and to work for the best interests of the church and the preschool through thoughtful and professional planning and preparation. Qualified applicants for teacher have a Bachelors or Masters degree in an appropriate subject area and have satisfactory experience in working with children. Applicants for teacher's assistant must have completed at least two years of college, possess good skills in working with children, and a willingness to work under the supervision of a professional teacher. Small Wonders is a ministry of Saratoga Springs United Methodist Church. To apply for a position, please send a resume and cover letter to Katie Iglar at [director@smallwondersps.org](mailto:director@smallwondersps.org)



**In Our Prayers** : Dr. Rachel Streit, Donna Bailey, Emery Miller (Lil Robertson's cousin), Patty Gandee (Rosie Spring's Aunt), Glen Flannagan, Betty Allen, Don and Linda Carpenter, Ray DeRidder, Thomas Family, Alden Barton, Ryan Vaughn, Sandy Mercaldi, Peggy Evans, Louise Hunter, Barbara Thomas, Linda Griffing, , Marti Ladue, Barbara Peck, Barbara O'Brien, Patricia Squailia, Frank Crouch, Sue Zutterling (at Sunnyview), Virginia Cooley, Ethel Clark, Shirley Bozony, Marge Bramhall, Helen Smead, Rev. Walter Taylor

**For Those Who Mourn the Loss of**: Carolyn Vallelunga, Robert Dake, Lori Bussing, Alice and Paul Jones, Edna Lloyd, Ruth Burton, Bob Allen, Charles and Jane Flannagan, Theron Robinson, Janet Woodcock, Marjorie Grout, Eric Baum, Richard Gerlach, William Schewe, Stu Hefter, Kay Runge, Sylvia Hoyer, Don Smith, Rosy Zinn

**For Those Around the World**: Those serving their country at home and abroad, victims and families involved in violence, victims of recent natural disasters, those listed on our Prayer Board in the Lobby.

## Fellowship Hosts

April 3<sup>rd</sup>

Missions, Joy in the Morning, and Church & Society

April 10<sup>th</sup>

Welcoming & Nurturing and "Birthday People"

April 17<sup>th</sup>

Music Teams

April 24<sup>th</sup>

SPRC, Trustees, and Finance

### We are updating our Newsletter Mailing List

Please Indicate below how you would like to receive your monthly newsletter

<input type="checkbox"/> A Paper Copy through the Mail	<input type="checkbox"/> A Electronic Copy through E-mail	<input type="checkbox"/> Both an Electronic and Paper copy
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To help us update our list please provide your current information

Mailing Address:

Email Address:

Thank you for your help. If we do not receive a returned form or email indicatng your interest, you will be removed from the Mailing list.

Saratoga Springs United Methodist Church  
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Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-3700

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Saratoga Springs, NY

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*We invite you to join us for Worship on Sundays at 9:00am & 10:45am,  
with Coffee Fellowship between the services.*

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The Mission of Saratoga Springs United Methodist Church is to spread God's word as we embrace persons of any age, gender, race, ethnic background, sexual orientation, economic condition, and physical or mental ability as full participants in a loving community of worship, fellowship, study, and outreach.