



## FIRST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF TROY, NY

### PASTOR'S NOTE

#### On 'Becoming a New Creation'

Dear friends on the journey,

Can you believe it has been a year?

Wow!

I have been so grateful to the session and the congregation for the way you have welcomed me, cared for me, and supported me in our first year of ministry together. From the big 'thank yous' of time and space to make a major cross-country move and establish a personal support system in a new city, to the smaller 'thank yous' of notes and messages and meals, it has been just wonderful to feel the warm embrace of this beautiful community of faith.

In our first year, we have also addressed major challenges together. From reducing our annual budget by \$60,000, to figuring out 'home-grown' children's ministry, to accepting the painful realities of our current inability to manage the facility.

And of course we will have more challenges to come. It will not be easy, but if we focus first and foremost on the call of God in our ministry together, we cannot help but 'succeed.'

Much of our attitude about the adjustments we must make will depend on where we focus.

Yes, we have lost staff. Yes, we are struggling to figure out how to manage our property more faithfully. Yes, we are mourning the loss of 'the way we used to be'?

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#### CONTACT US

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 1915 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
 Troy, NY 12180

#### WORSHIP SCHEDULE

10:00am worship with nursery care available.

But the great news is that we have increased our average worship attendance in the past year by 20%!

The great news is that we have increased our official membership in the past year by 5%!

The great news is that we have increased our congregation giving in the past year by 5%! (Even in the midst of truly difficult economic times.)

In the coming months and years, I hope you will join me in celebrating this great news! I hope you will join me in the opportunity to thrive as a community, when we 'let go and let God' do a new thing with and through us. I hope you will join me in celebrating the gifts of the Spirit poured out on us as we seek to be the Body of Christ for our time and place. And I hope you will join me in trusting the Spirit of God to lead us through whatever 'valley of the shadow' comes with the sense of loss we feel in letting go of what no longer works for us as a congregation.

If we focus our attitude in these ways, I cannot help but believe the best days for First United are yet to come. And that we will live them out with great joy, 'together ... we ...'

With gratitude for the journey,

*Gusti.*



## OFFICE SCHEDULE

The Church Office is open Monday - Friday 9:00-12:00 AM.

## OUR MISSION

Together

We worship God through Christ and explore all dimensions of life in the Spirit.

We demonstrate God's inclusive love as we work for peace and justice.

We serve God in the world As we seek to heal wounds and care for God's creation.

## OUR INCLUSIVE MINISTRY

We invite all people of every background, condition and orientation into the full fellowship, ministry and mission of God's Good News in Jesus Christ.

All who join the church are extended the full privileges of Membership, are challenged to lead lives of Christian discipleship and are eligible to be considered for church office.

## CHURCH STAFF

The Reverend Gusti Linnea Newquist  
Pastor

Joey Fala  
Interim Choir Director, Organist

Carlie D'Annunzio  
Financial Analyst

Sue Braymer  
Administrative Assistant

Kevin Aubin, Sharon Duke  
MCW Solutions

Shirley Hinkamp  
Copy Editor

## WORSHIP THEMES IN APRIL

### **'Becoming A New Creation'**

#### **Together ... We ... Care for God's Creation**

##### **Fifth Sunday of Easter (communion)**

**May 3, 2015**

*John 15:1-8*

'I am the vine,' Jesus says. 'You are the branches.' In a guided meditation on what it means to be 'God's creation,' we reflect on our call to care for God's creation.

Children's Time: Is There a Difference?

Children remain in worship to receive communion

Intergenerational Activity: celebrating a year of new members!

Confirmation: Communion; Bible Study

#### **Spiritual Friendship in a Facebook World**

##### **Sixth Sunday of Easter/Mother's Day (communion)**

**May 10, 2015**

*Based on John 15:9-17*

'I do not call you servants any longer,' Jesus says in our Gospel lesson for the day, 'but I have called you friends.' In the social media culture of today, how are we in the church offering the deep soul connections that sustain individuals and communities? Can we do better? Should we do it differently?

Children's Time: Finding God in our Friends

Children's Church: led by Claudia Schwendeman

Intergenerational Activity: The Dzikunu Family celebrates their first year with us!

Confirmation: On Scripture; Bible Study

#### **Carried Away**

##### **Ascension Sunday (communion)**

**May 17, 2015**

*Based on Acts 1:1-11*

'Christ has no hands but ours ... no feet but ours ...'

Children's Time: Recognizing Teachers, Students, and Graduates

Children's Church: led by Sue Connolly

Intergenerational Activity: Walking the Labyrinth

Confirmation: 'The Church'; Bible Study

## CHURCH OFFICERS

### **THE SESSION**

Rev. Gusti Linnea Newquist-  
Moderator

Elder Bonnie Kerr, Clerk

### **Class of 2015**

Pat Carlson  
Rachel Dotson  
Peg Drew  
Bonnie Kerr

### **Class of 2016**

Debbie Brown  
David Lanoue  
Dana Parker  
Trudi Wybourn

### **Class of 2017**

Terry Durkee  
Peg Smith Savchik  
(Vacant)  
(Vacant)

Don Drew, Treasurer

### **THE BOARD OF DEACONS**

#### **Class of 2015**

Carol Harrington  
Shirley Hinkamp  
Don Lutz  
Claudia Schwendeman

#### **Class of 2016**

Steven Bowes  
Jane Husson  
Miriam Parmelee

#### **Class of 2017**

Betsy Belle Eadie  
Victor Zewou  
(Vacant)

**Confirmands' Title**  
**Pentecost Sunday (communion)**  
**May 24, 2015**  
*Based on Acts 2*

Worship designed and led by the confirmation class. Confirmands may join the church if they wish.

Children's Time: Welcoming Our Confirmands  
Children's Church: Children remain in worship to celebrate Pentecost and our confirmands  
Intergenerational Activity: Neighborhood BBQ

**On Being 'Sent'**  
**Trinity Sunday**  
**May 31, 2015**  
*Based on Isaiah 6:1-8*

The call to the prophet Isaiah begins in fear. All he can see is his inability to transform his way of life, in the midst of a culture that does not want transformation, either. But when the flaming Spirit of God refines Isaiah's speech and conduct, Isaiah can say with all boldness, 'Here I am God. Send me!'

Children's Time: Saying 'Yes' to God  
Children's Church: TBD  
Intergenerational Activity: 'Walking the Neighborhood' Discussions



**'Becoming a New Creation'**  
**Eastertide – Pentecost 2015**  
(April 5 – May 24)

In Eastertide we 'Become a New Creation'  
as we follow the Resurrected Christ into a whole new way of life.  
We conclude our study of our Mission Statement in exploring what it means to  
'serve God in the world as we seek to heal wounds and care for God's creation.'

Communion is served on every Sunday in Eastertide

**Sunday, April 5: 'Threatened With Resurrection?' (Easter Sunday). Easter Breakfast, 9am. Easter Egg Hunt, 9:30am.** New life is here! We join hands and walk together with celebration and commitment.

**Sunday, April 12: 'Together ... We ... Serve God in the World (Second Sunday of Easter).** Like the earliest apostles of the Risen Christ, we refuse to ignore the pain and suffering we see in the world. Open Conversation on FUPC Timeline in Adult Ed. (Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training for those who need it.)

**Sunday, April 19: Guest Preacher John Stanger, Presbyterian Parity (Third Sunday of Easter).** Adult Ed with John Stanger. Confirmation Class begins with the opportunity to ask 'Top Ten Questions.'

**Sunday, April 26: 'Together ... We ... Seek to Heal Wounds' (Fourth Sunday of Easter).** Reflecting on the 'Healing Wounds' piece of our mission statement. BFW 'Offering of Letters' in Adult Ed. Confirmation Class Continues with the theme of Baptism

**Sunday, May 3: 'Together ... We ... Care for God's Creation' (Fifth Sunday of Easter).** Reflecting on the last (but not least!) 'Caring for Creation' piece of our mission statement. Celebrating Our New Members in the Past Year, Intergenerational Event. Confirmation Class continues with the theme of Communion.

**Sunday, May 10: 'Spiritual Friendship in a Facebook World' (Sixth Sunday of Easter, Mother's Day).** What it means to be 'friends of Jesus.' Dzikunu Family One Year Celebration, Intergenerational Event. Confirmation Class continues with the theme of 'Why We Read the Bible'

**Sunday, May 17: 'Carried Away' (Ascension Sunday).** Christ now has no hands but ours ... no feet but ours ... how will we respond? Walking the Labyrinth in Adult Education. Confirmation class continues with the theme of 'Why We Go to Church.'

**Sunday, May 24: 'Title TBD by Confirmands.' (Pentecost Sunday, Memorial Day Weekend)** Worship designed and led by the confirmation class. Confirmands may join the church if they wish. **Neighborhood BBQ after worship!**

## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The Session will meet again on Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm.

At our Stated Meeting on April 27<sup>th</sup>, the following items were addressed:

1. One year assessment from Pastor Gusti with the following reflections:
  - o We have a strong, vital, 60-member worshiping community that is on the cusp of 'becoming a new creation.'
    - i. We have increased our worship attendance by 20% in the first year. (from 50 in 2013 to 60 in 2014)
    - ii. We have increased our official membership by 5.5% in the first year. (from 127 in 2013 to 134 in 2014)
    - iii. We have increased our congregational giving by 4.5% in the first year. (from \$110,000 in 2013 to \$115,000 in 2014)
  - o We are struggling to adjust to the consequences of becoming a 'right-sized' Personal Size church.
    - i. We have made difficult but faithful choices to bring our endowment spending down to a sustainable 7% draw.
    - ii. We are offering 'home-grown' Children's Education ministry
    - iii. We are preparing to shift to 'home-grown' Music ministry
    - iv. We are assessing our options for sustaining our current facility or re-locating
    - v. We agree that we are in the 'breakdown/critical' stage of the Congregational Life Cycle
  - o We have some tough choices to make in the next several months about our property management and long-term facility options
  - o The next 2-3 years of our ministry together will require us to completely let go of the way we 'used to do church' and establish an entirely new foundation for ministry in the decades to come
2. Report from new property manager, Kevin Aubin, with the following reflections and decisions:
  - o Implement and strengthen financial protocols related to our apartment and commercial leases
  - o Authorize Kevin to negotiate with current and future tenants according to guidelines established by the Facility Committee, with the caveat that we are in a longer-term conversation about the sustainability of the building.
  - o Authorize Kevin to work closely with bookkeeper, Carlie D'Annunzio, to assess the true costs of managing our facility and make recommendations to the session for improvements
3. Decision to spend the summer re-locating as much as possible of the church's activity (offices, meeting rooms, etc.) to the sanctuary, in order to continue our move toward a 'right-sized' congregation and to free up space for potential rentals. Pastor Gusti and Kevin will work with a team of people to plan for and implement this move, with a tentative plan of 'purging our stuff' in June and physically re-locating in July.
4. Decision to reschedule our May Stated Session meeting from May 25<sup>th</sup> (Memorial Day) to May 18<sup>th</sup>. Session meetings are open to the public. All are encouraged to attend.



## IN THE LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

### May Birthdays

4	Jennifer Nelson
6	Mark Abbott
	Lois Jensen
7	Lynne Stevens
11	Trudi Wybourn
15	Ilana Harpe
20	Jane Husson
24	Heather Hallett
28	Lois Lanoue
29	Kylie Kerr
	Alice Kirstein



### Corrections/Additions to the Church Directory:

Our sincerest apologies to Trudi Wybourn for misspelling her first name in last month's VISION. The correct spelling of her name is TRUDI (with an i) and not TRUDY (with a y).

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWS

### Children's Ministry News

We are thrilled to announce plans to invite our very own Leslie Kelly back on a contract basis to lead **Vacation Bible School** this summer! We are looking at a late July or early August date.

**May 3: Children remain in worship to participate in the Sacrament of Communion**

**May 10: Children will focus on the theme of 'friendship' in celebration of the one year anniversary of the Dzikunu Family's arrival, led by Claudia Schwendeman**

**May 17: Children will walk the labyrinth, led by Sue Connolly**

**May 24: Children remain in worship to participate in the reception of confirmands as new members**

**May 31: TBD**

### **The Labyrinth Revisited**

"Need a break? Take some time out of your busy-ness to refresh! At Adult Faith Ed on May 17 we will learn a bit about what it means to experience a Labyrinth, some history of the Labyrinth, and the difference between Labyrinths and Mazes. You will have the opportunity to experience a reflective walk.

### **Oakwood Food Pantry Needs your HELP!**

**Volunteers are needed!** If you can help with **any** of the tasks below, please contact Linda O'Malley e-mail: [omall50@aol.com](mailto:omall50@aol.com) or ph: 273-5199 or Rebecca Rector e-mail: [rebecca.rector@yahoo.com](mailto:rebecca.rector@yahoo.com); ph: 271-6512

**Volunteer tasks** (require training and orientation)

**Pantry director:** Linda O'Malley

**Experienced long term volunteers:** Edna McCauley, Pat Carley

**Saturday mornings, early:** 2 or 3 volunteers

**currently 7 to 9 a.m. Saturday:** unpack and shelve food supplies; prepare bags of groceries (**2 people**); transfer packed grocery bags from pantry to hallway near fellowship hall (**1 person**)

**11am: as or after pantry closes:** prepare list of depleted pantry supplies to be ordered (**1 person**)

**Saturday mornings 9 – 11 a.m.** 2 volunteers

greet patrons, receive and check intake form and ID; record statistics

**first three Fridays of each month:** 1 volunteer each Friday

**drive van** to pick up order at Regional Food Bank

**last Wednesday of each month:** 1 volunteer

**receive and offload** Regional Food Bank delivery

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### **Confirmation Class Concludes on Pentecost!**

Our Confirmation Class has begun!

Our Confirmands are meeting with Pastor Gusti, Sue Connolly, and John Husson to reflect on the meaning of membership in this faith community and to consider what it means to claim the promises of God bestowed upon us in our baptism.

Through and exploration of Scripture and Sacraments, our confirmands will prepare our worship experience for Pentecost Sunday, May 24.

Please take the time to encourage Akossiwa Dzikunu, Melissa Dzikunu, Brendan Lanoue, and Casey Lanoue in this special time of their lives.



## **A Dzikunu Family 'Thank You' Celebration May 10<sup>th</sup> After Worship**

Come join the Dzikunu Family in the Fellowship Hall  
for a celebration of their first year with us!  
They will teach us some of their famous dance moves,  
offer some reflections on what they have learned in the past year,  
and invite us to share what we have learned from them.

### **'First United On the Move!'**

#### **Let's Re-Claim the Sanctuary Space and See How Much Church Activity We Can Re-Locate**

Did you know that the property of First United  
comprises roughly 40,000 square feet?

That comes out to roughly 660 square feet per worshipping member!

Surely, we do not need so much physical space for the activities of  
60 people on a Sunday and throughout the week. And, as we know, we are in a longer-term  
process of assessing our options for the overall sustainability of our building.

So, as an opportunity for a 'test run' of what it means  
to become 'right-sized' as a congregation,  
the Session has approved taking the summer months of 2015 to  
're-locate' as much church activity as possible to the sanctuary.'

This broad language is designed to encourage us to downsize  
as much as possible without forcing us to make longer-term  
(irrevocable) changes before we are ready.

Pastor Gusti and Kevin Aubin are working the Welcoming and Enhancing Current Space Options  
Sub-Team of the Building Visionaries Group (i.e. John Husson and Trudi Wybourn) to develop a  
plan for the move that reflects the needs of all the 'stakeholders' in 'church activity.'  
(Choir/Music; Children/Youth; Offices/Work Space/Meeting Rooms; Fellowship; Adult Education)

We have a lot to do to get ready for the move and will need to sort through a lot of stuff to see  
what we need to keep and what we can 'let go.' So ... let's embrace this exciting 'new' venture!

(Together ... We ...)



## **Building Visionaries Continue Their Work**

After several months of assessing the needs of our facility, the mission of the congregation, and the trends of church (re-)development, the Building Visionaries continue our work in four areas:

### **Church Building Options Sub-Group** (Peg Smith and Fred Miller):

This group has begun meeting with the following 'Thinking Partners' in the community: Bill Dunne (City of Troy), Columbus Bush (local business manager), Ken Applegate (local pastor), Marie Gavazzi (neighbor), Padraic Hegan (architectural designer), Ratna Randive (YWCA Board), Theresa Setzer (Russell Sage). This group reflects a variety of 'outside, but invested perspectives' on what our options might be, both in terms seeking long-term investment and/or in terms of selling part or all of the facility.

This group will invite developers to 'make a pitch' to us in the next several months, so we have a sense of what is possible.

### **Enhancing Our Current Facility Sub-Group** (John Husson and Trudi Wybourn)

This group will work closely with Pastor Gusti and Kevin in our 're-location of church activities' to the sanctuary in the summer of 2015 and continue to assess our options for improving our church home 'in the meantime.'

### **Neighborhood Outreach Sub-Group** (Nora McDowell and Gusti Newquist)

This group has hosted two 'Walking the Neighborhood' activities and will lead a congregational conversation in May on what we have learned by paying attention to our neighbors.

### **Re-locating Options Sub-Group** (Judy Moyer, Bill Moyer):

This group has researched multiple options for re-locating and will begin a series of tours to explore what our needs and options for re-locating might be.

### **Our (Tentative) Timeline for Action is:**

Summer:	incorporate congregational feedback, perhaps settle on a particular option
September – November:	additional reports to congregation, incorporate feedback
December – January 2016: (tentative)	prepare for congregational vote at 2016 annual meeting

**Our Neighborhood Connection**  
**5<sup>th</sup> and Grand Creative Crosswalks Project Meeting**  
**Thursday, May 14, 6:15pm**  
**FUPC Rose Room**

A planning meeting for the 5<sup>th</sup> and Grand Creative Crosswalks Project has been scheduled for Thursday, May 14 at 6:15 pm. A Neighborhood Improvement Grant was received from the city for the project. Support will also be provided by Transport Troy under a Community Arts grant. The application proposed that the neighborhood would paint as many of the three crosswalks at our Grand Street intersections as funding allows. The crosswalk painting not only beautifies the area, but also calms traffic. If you want to be part of the design and planning for this project, please attend the meeting.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Marie Gavazzi at 272-8201.



## CALENDER

### **Sat May 2**

9:30 am Labyrinth Walk (3)  
RR, FH, K, Stage  
10 am Rummage Sale,  
Carriage House  
NO AA Meeting today

### **Sun May 3**

9 am Choir Rehearsal  
10 am Worship - Sanctuary  
10 am Nursery Care  
11 am Fellowship – RR  
11:30 am Adult Ed., RR  
2 pm Carol Harrington's Event,  
RR  
7:30pm NA – SHL

### **Mon May 4**

9:30 am Matt's Music

### **Tue May 5**

2 pm Piano Lessons, RR  
4pm Troy Children's Chorus,  
RR, FH, K  
5:30pm TCC Potluck Fiesta, RR,  
FH, K

### **Wed May 6**

4 pm "Teach the Preacher"/  
Bible Study-RR

### **Thu May 7**

7 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal

### **Sat May 9**

9 am Albany Presby Peer  
Review Minutes, RR  
10 am AA - SHL

### **Sun May 10**

9 am Choir Rehearsal  
10 am Worship  
10 am Nursery Care  
11 am Fellowship – RR  
11:30 am Adult Ed., RR  
7:30pm NA – SHL

### **Mon May 11**

9:30 am Matt's Music

### **Tue May 12**

2 pm Piano Lessons-RR  
4 pm Troy Children's Chorus,  
RR, FH, K

### **Wed May 13**

4 pm "Teach the Preacher"/  
Bible Study-RR

### **Thu May 14**

7 pm Chancel Choir- RR, FH

### **Sat May 16**

10 am AA – SHL

### **Sun May 17**

9 am Choir Rehearsal  
10 am Worship  
10 am Nursery Care  
11 am Fellowship – RR  
11:30 am Adult Ed., RR  
7:30pm NA – SHL

### **Mon May 18**

9:30 am Matt's Music  
6:30pm Session Meeting, RR

### **Tue May 19**

2 pm Piano Lessons-RR  
4 pm Troy Children's Chorus,  
RR, FH, K

### **Wed May 20**

2 pm Worship at The Eddy  
4 pm "Teach the Preacher"/  
Bible Study-RR

### **Thu May 21**

7 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal

### **Sat May 23**

10 am AA - SHL

### **Sun May 24**

9 am Choir Rehearsal  
10 am Worship  
10 am Nursery Care  
11 am Fellowship – RR  
11:30 am Adult Ed., RR  
7:30pm NA – SHL

### **Mon May 25**

2 pm Piano Lessons-RR  
4pm Troy Children's Chorus  
RR, FH, K

### **Tue May 26**

2 pm Piano Lessons, RR  
4pm Troy Children's Chorus,  
RR, FH, K

### **Wed May 27**

4 pm "Teach the Preacher"/  
Bible Study-RR

### **Thu May 28**

7 pm Chancel Choir- RR, FH

### **Sat May 30**

9 am Albany Presby Peer  
Review Minutes, RR  
10 am AA – SHL

### **Sun May 31**

9 am Choir Rehearsal  
10 am Worship  
10 am Nursery Care  
11 am Fellowship – RR  
11:30 am Adult Ed., RR  
7:30pm NA – SHL

### **Room abbreviations:**

RR= Rose Room, CR= Copy  
Room WR= Wheeler Room  
FH = Fellowship Hall,  
SHL= Senior High Lounge  
K= Kitchen,  
CH= Carriage House  
CY= Court Yard  
PS = Pastor's study  
Sa= Sanctuary  
MC- McCarty  
BR= Bell room