

The Messenger

The Monthly Newsletter of Saugerties UMC
"Your Community Church"

September 2020

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**In-Person Worship Every Sunday at
10:30 AM**

**Worship will still be broadcast on
Facebook live**

“What A Long Strange Trip It’s Been!”

(And it’s not over yet)

The above words were sung by the Grateful Dead back in 1972 in their hit song “Truckin.” It chronicled their career from their beginnings in 1965, and the reactions of the people they met as they lived a decidedly counter-culture life style. Yes, the members of the band dressed, spoke, and acted differently than society of the time found acceptable. They were, of course, emblematic of the change that was taking place during the decade of the 1960’s. That cultural change became permanent and our society came to see there was more than one way for people to express themselves in fashion, music, media, and through technological innovations. Now, we too are going through another cultural change as we live under the specter of Covid-19 on a daily basis.

A virus cannot be seen or felt or tasted, yet we have come to be hostages to this invisible enemy. It has invaded our lives and changed the way we live, eat, travel, work and go to church. Yes, even our spiritual lives have been interrupted, but not broken. Our faith in God can overcome any obstacle, even one as diabolical as the corona virus.

During this time, we have the opportunity to reflect on our lives, as they were and as they will be. Yes, we have had the time, and I do pray that everyone has looked at themselves, their priorities and how they will think, speak and act in the post-corona world. I understand that is a lot to ask for but it is well worth the effort to recognize that life as we knew it will not return. There is a new reality – what is it? That depends on us and how we decide to make it.

A wise man once said, “Many of the truths we cling to, depend entirely upon our point of view.” So what is our point of view? Do we pine for days long past, the proverbial ‘Happy Days’ to shape our view of the world with nostalgia for a time that in reality, may not have been all that ‘Happy.’ Yes we can all remember a simpler time when we were children and lived relatively care-free, but all that changed when we became adults. How many of us would truly like to return to the time we were in our twenties or thirties? Not!! The lessons I have learned over the decades have shaped the way I view the world and life in it quite differently than I did when I was still wet behind the ears. I have paid my dues and now wish to look forward not backwards.

So what does the church look like going forward? Honestly, I do not know. We in SUMC are actually positioned quite well for the road ahead. I am so proud of this congregation for its faithfulness and steadfast support for the church, and its ministries. We are in far better shape than many others – and that is indeed sad. But while we can empathize with our sister churches, we must really concentrate on our own path forward – how best to serve our members, our community here in Saugerties, and what we can do make the world a better place.

The road ahead does not look like an easy one, but I can guarantee you, that working with God, we will not fail in our efforts to rebuild, renew, and to realize that we are a part of the Kingdom of God and

as such, we will always strive to please God by doing all we can to help and to never hinder the mission of Jesus Christ. And what is that mission? To bring the Good News to the ends of the world that Jesus Christ is the promised Savior and all who look to Him will see the future filled with hope, justice and peace. So, as a good captain would say, set the sails to the wind, and lets' move forward into the new world!

May God bless you all richly,
Pastor Tony

We are very much aware that there are people who have medical conditions that preclude them from coming to church at this time. There are also some who are not yet comfortable venturing out into the world. Please know that God appreciates your desire to stay well and safe, and so do we. When you feel truly comfortable, your space will be waiting for you. And yes, we will remember your name and welcome you back with hearts full of love and kindness.



A New Bible Study! Starting Monday, September 14 and every Monday thereafter, Pastor Tony will offer Bible Study from 7:00-8:00 PM on Zoom. (Yes, we are still not able to meet in-person and may not be for a while). The study will focus on the lectionary readings for the coming week. We will explore the Gospel, a Psalm, and passages from the Old and New Testament writers. If you are interested, please email me at rev.tonymecca@hvc.rr.com and I will send you a link to the meeting. Please have a Bible with you, and if you do not have one, just ask and we will provide one for you.

UMW News (United Methodist Women)

The UMW is meeting on Tuesday, September 15, at Ryder Park, at the same spot as our last meeting. When you drive down the entry to the park, go to the left (near the rest rooms). Each person is invited to bring something to eat. We cannot share food yet. Wear a mask and bring a lawn chair. The program for the evening is called, "Carling for Each Other in Community," and it comes from the new program book for UMW. Since we cannot share food, each member is invited to bring a favorite recipe that can be shared. Diane and Joan can plan to be in front of the church at 4:30 for anyone who needs a ride or doesn't know how to get to Ryder Park. In case of rain, we will plan to meet the following Tuesday, September 22.



SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH TO BEGIN ON OCTOBER 4!

We are waiting direction from the Bishop as to whether or not we can have in person Sunday School; but whether in person or through Zoom we will begin our program on Sunday, October 4.

If in person we will most likely have all the children and youth meet in Fellowship Hall where we can safely distance everyone. All attendees would have their temperatures checked and wear masks. Each participant will be provided markers, pens, glue, scissors, etc. for their own use, kept in their own individual containers. Other safety measures may be put into effect depending on the Bishop's directives. If by Zoom call, age appropriate materials for our weekly lessons will be sent home for each family. These materials may include worksheets, coloring pages, pieces for art projects and more. The Zoom calls will be held on Sunday mornings and would last 20-30 minutes. There would be two separate Zoom calls—one for students in grade 6 and younger and one for those in grades 7-12. Both would end by 10:00AM so that families have time to attend in-person or on-line worship.

Once we have clear direction from The Bishop and our DS, information will be sent out to let you know which model we will be using. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work our way through these unusual times.

BFF Kids, our youth group for kids in grades 4-6, as of now, does not have permission to meet. We are hoping to hold a modified version once we are given the go ahead. Notice will be sent out when and if we are allowed to meet.

ONLINE WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Debbie Mecca is leading a Zoom Bible Study for Women on Thursday evenings at 7:00PM. The group has read through several books of the Bible and is now starting the book of 1 Peter. There has been much lively and insightful discussion and sharing and has turned out to be quite a bonding experience for those involved. If you would be interested in joining this study please contact Debbie and she will gladly include you.

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY GROUP PLANNED!

As some young adults have decided to postpone their college plans, attend local colleges, or join the local work force, we have a request to form a group for 18-22 (ish) year olds. We are awaiting word as to when this can begin but are anxious to get going. Do you know anyone in this age group who might like to join? Please have them contact Debbie Mecca and she will be sure to notify them once the group is underway.

YOUTH GROUP HAS BEGUN!

We are very grateful that we have received permission to begin our program for youth in grades 7-12!! We had thought to split into two groups to keep the numbers down, but not as many youth have attended as we had hoped. So, we have decided to go back to our usual meeting day and time. Youth in grades 7-12 will meet each Sunday from 6-8PM. All attendees must have their parent or guardian sign a form and provide contact information before they can attend. Face coverings are mandatory and temperatures will be taken at the door. If you know someone who would like to attend our Youth Group or have lost the materials sent to your youth, please contact Debbie Mecca and she will provide you with the forms and information. There will be no Haunted House this year because of the pandemic but we are being optimistic and are planning to hold a Mission Trip in the summer of 2021. We are brainstorming alternative fundraisers as well.

Please note: The Messenger is certainly not as packed full of information as it was before corona. We have to seek permission from the District Superintendent for any and all activities, ministries, and programs. We have requested permission for a number of events and when we do receive information, we will make you all aware of what will be happening at SUMC!