



# Shenendehowa UMC Connections

Connecting People to Christ and Community

April/May 2022

## Pastor Lee Carlson

### In This Issue

In this issue you will find many opportunities to continue your "Walk" with Jesus through the five essential practices of Christian Life.

- Worship & Prayer
  - Study
  - Serve
  - Give
  - Share

You will also read about some of the amazing ways we have been implementing these practices together as a congregation.



### "Jesus is On the Loose"

Greetings in the name of Lord and Risen Savior, Jesus Christ!

Are you an outside-the-box thinker, or are you an inside-the-box person? Most of us would probably like to be an outside-the-box person because it suggests innovation, imagination, and fresh ideas. A few years ago, when a group of archeologists announced that they had unearthed a box possibly containing the bones of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and other family members, I didn't buy it. In the first place, Jesus is our *resurrected* and *living Savior*, so his bones went the way of his pierced hands and feet...Godward! In the second place, Jesus was an outside-the-box kind of guy if there ever was one. He may have started out in a feed box, but even then, as the King of kings, he couldn't be contained. And of course, on the first Easter morning he blew the doors off the stone tomb. No creed can contain Christ, no doctrine can limit him, and no law can restrain him.

However, with as much confidence as I proclaim these truths, there have been times in my life and ministry where I have knowingly or unknowingly limited what I believed God could do, or at least what God would do. What was necessary seemed well beyond the confines of my God-box, a box where God is a



Pastor Lee Carlson

projection of my limited beliefs and biases. I wonder if you can relate. Maybe during this season in your life, you find yourself where I did...limiting God...knowingly or unknowingly? If so, let me encourage you to read a book which I find especially helpful when I am tempted to place God back in my self-imposed box. *Blowing the Lid off the God-Box: Opening up to a Limitless Faith* was written by Rev. Anne Robertson, a United Methodist clergywoman from the New England Annual Conference. I can promise you that if you read it, it will both *encourage* and *challenge* your faith!

As we approach Easter, let me pose this one question: What's in *your* God-box? Robertson says, "*Each of us builds our own way of understanding God—our "God-box"—and fills it up with bits of scripture, wisdom, and our experiences of God at work in our lives.*" I believe this is a perfectly good and reasonable way to figure out who God is and what God means to each one of us. However, to say that our experience of God is the only valid one is to put a lid on the box and potentially create an idol. *Blowing the Lid Off the God-Box* starts with the ministry of Jesus—the One who blew the lid off *everyone's* God-box by constantly challenging his followers with the unexpected. Here's just a little excerpt from Robertson appropriate to the season of Easter: "*A God who won't stay in his tomb is most annoying. First, he appears here, then there. One minute he's eating fish and the next he's*

walking through walls. You can never really be sure where he's going to be or what he's going to be up to. Which is exactly the point of this book. Try if you like to seal the tomb, but he'll simply put the guards to sleep and blow the stone from the door and walk out. I've put it in terms of blowing the lid off the God-box, but the New Testament puts it more simply; 'He's not here, but has risen.' Jesus is on the loose."

Friends, Jesus is certainly on the loose and hopefully running all over our lives, not just on Sunday morning, but on Monday morning, Wednesday afternoon, Friday night, and every moment in every situation. Jesus is on the loose and standing in the midst as we gather at the table, at

the supermarket, at the hospital, and whenever we turn our hearts God-ward. Jesus is always with us but never bound by us. He is the Teacher, our Example, our Brother, our Friend, and our Savior. He loves every one of us. He is the Servant and the Master. He is ours to hold on to but not to hold down. This Easter season remember: Jesus is on the loose!

The most amazing thing happens when we begin to think outside-our-box...we find God!

Happy Easter!

## **Upcoming Sermon Series...**

### **Pathway to Peace**

We are about to celebrate Easter - the day of Christ's resurrection. Before the death of Jesus, he commanded his followers to NOT do some things. As a matter of fact, those commands were so extreme his followers were tempted to NOT even TRY. But then Jesus ROSE from the dead and everything changed. They were about to discover that what Jesus had commanded them NOT to do, was right, achievable, and worth pursuing. In this series we will examine how the "Do Not" commands of Jesus, when embraced, can transform our lives, and bring us PEACE.

<b>April 24:</b>	The New Covenant	1 Corinthians 15:1-5; Acts 15:1-31	
<b>May 1:</b>	Do Not...Fear	Matthew 8:23-27; 10:28-31; 14:22-27	*UMCOR Sunday
<b>May 8:</b>	Do Not...Judge	Matthew 7:1-5	*Mother's Day
<b>May 15:</b>	Do Not...Worry	Matthew 6:25-34; John 14:1, 27; Philippians 4:5-7	
<b>May 22:</b>	To Be Determined		
<b>May 29:</b>	Do Not...Sin	John 8:2-11	*Memorial Sunday
<b>June 5:</b>	Do Not...Doubt	Matthew 14:30-31, 21:21; John 6:60-70	*Confirmation

There is a phrase in the Wesley covenant that has a very important message for me. It is "I am no longer my own, but Thine." This statement originally was attributed to Richard Alleine (a Puritan) and was published in 1663. It was part of a larger prayer entitled *Vindiciae Pietatis*. John Wesley was very much influenced by the Puritan movement and adapted and incorporated this in his covenant prayer. It was first published in 1753 (however this was lost) and officially republished in 1780. The basis for this idea comes from Luke 9:33, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves, take up their cross daily and follow me."

So, what's the big deal? Why are we asked to do something that seems counter intuitive- like denying ourselves? I believe the answer is plain and simple! It begins by affirming a basic truth: We Are



Not Alone, And We Never Have Been!!! John Wesley's life was transformed when he recognized God was with him, and by faith chose to take up his cross daily and follow the LORD. God is the creator and sustainer of all that is-everything. God told us who God is, Yahweh (I am who I am). That's it-God is

God. But wait, there's more. Because God is the Creator and Sustainer, the LORD is also transcendent and yet immanent. This means that God is above us and in us (Holy Spirit). Once this is realized, we are not giving up our autonomy but actually living with and in the LORD.

What is the point of all this? It is really clear and right before your eyes. 1 John 14:16 says it all: "God is love, and all who live in love live in God and God lives in them." Matthew 22:36-40 tells us how to live --- love the lord and love thy neighbor. So-this is what I have to say - I love you. Thanks for letting me pray with and for you.



**"Where Love and Learning Blossom"**

SUMC Preschool is a New York State Department of Education Registered Preschool. We have limited openings available for Little Explorers Summer Camp program. This will be a wonderful opportunity for your preschooler to create, imagine and explore! We are also enrolling for the 2022 – 2023 school year.

For inquiries please email [preschooldirector@shenumc.org](mailto:preschooldirector@shenumc.org) and check out our webpage [shenumcpreschool.org](http://shenumcpreschool.org).

Are you an Amazon shopper? If so, you might want to consider making your purchases from Amazon Smile. Amazon Smile donates a small percentage of every purchase to an eligible charity of your choosing!



All you have to do is login to Amazon Smile and choose **Shenendehowa United**

**Methodist Church** as your charity!

~Happy Shopping~

## ***Worship and Prayer...***

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### **Holy Week Services: *Come as you are and bring your friends!***

Because of Jesus, our story can be one of healing, hope, joy, and peace. There will be several services during Holy Week to worship our risen Lord together as we remember His death and celebrate His glorious resurrection.

**Palm Sunday:** April 10 at 9:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

**Maundy Thursday (Communion):** April 14 at 7:00 p.m.

**Good Friday:** April 15 at 7:00 p.m.

**Saturday Easter Prayer Vigil:** 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

(Self-Guided Prayer, Reflection and Candle Lighting)

**Easter Sunday (Communion):** April 17 at 9:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.



### **Communion Elements Available for Holy Week**

We will be sharing in communion at the Maundy Thursday and both Easter services. Pastor Lee will be handing out communion elements during Holy Week at the dates and times below at Door F. Elements will also be available in the brown mission bin outside Door B at your convenience.

**April 10:** After 9am Worship

**April 11:** 5:30 - 6:30

**April 12:** 12:00 - 1:00pm



### **Sunday Worship Services**

**Traditional Service at 9 a.m.**

**Shen Kids Church School Begins at 9:00 a.m.**

**Coffee Hour 10:00 a.m.**

**Contemporary Service at 10:45 a.m.**

**(Services Live Streamed at [Shenumc.org](http://Shenumc.org))**

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Please pray for those listed below. If you have any prayer requests email [prayerrequest@shenumc.org](mailto:prayerrequest@shenumc.org).

Russell & Joyce Smith

Ginny Tracey

Joanne and Jim Chambers

Bob and Linda Rice

The People of Ukraine

Georgianna Polite

Bill and Claire Kohler

Paul and Maxene Mills

Mary and Jerry Newell



# Give...

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## Did You Know??

With the country turning the corner after the last two years of the pandemic, things are continuing to return to normal. This is true in our family and professional lives as well as in our church life. With reduced in-person gatherings because of COVID, many members had been reluctant to attend Sunday Services, and we experienced a drop-off in attendance and giving. However, your faithful giving and a Federal PPP loan enabled us to weather the pandemic without serious disruptions to our programs and mission efforts.

We are called to give generously in response to the grace, love and mercy God has shown us through his son Jesus Christ. In 2021, through your contributions, we gave over \$100,000 to local and global missions. These included the Living Well project, Backpack Program, Food Pantry donations, Community Dinners, Easter Baskets of Love, and Adopt-a-Family at Christmas!! ***Pretty impressive what we can accomplish when we work together.***

As we look forward to the rest of 2022 and beyond, we have established a Stewardship Team whose focus will be to provide updates on our 2022 church budget (\$558,000), our ongoing mission and ministry efforts, and valuable insights and principles which will help us better reflect the generosity of God in our living and giving. This is the first in a series of articles which we hope you will find informative, interesting, and thought provoking. Our church brings the promise of Jesus to people of many age groups, interests, and backgrounds. We hope these messages will appeal to you. Please stay tuned and see where you fit into our church mission of ***Connecting People to Christ and Community.***

**Stewardship Team:** Pastor Lee Carlson, Denise Gottung, Brian Mitchell, Brian Nealon, John Orton, Amy Pressley , Ginny Spickerman

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Giving can be done on Sunday during Worship or via the options below...

A black rectangular graphic with white text and icons. At the top, it says "3 Ways to Give". Below this are three columns, each with an icon and text. The first column has a green envelope icon with a heart, "Online Giving (Check or Debit/Credit)", and "www.shenumc.org click 'online giving'". The second column has an orange speech bubble icon with a heart, "Text Giving (Debit/Credit)", and "Text 'Give' to (833) 403-6341". The third column has a yellow envelope icon with a heart, "Give By Mail (Check)", and "Shenendehowa UMC 971 Route 146 Clifton Park, NY 12065". At the bottom, it says "The spirit in which we give is the spirit in which we will receive. Luke 6:38".



Online Giving

## Study and Share...

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### ShenKids

#### Sunday During Both Services

9:00 & 10:45 a.m.

Preschool - Grade 5

Learn Bible Stories, Play Games, Make Crafts



Shenendehowa UMC

"Connecting Kids to Christ & Community"

#### ShenKids Weekly News

A weekly email includes announcements, a brief overview of the weekly lesson for church school, and information about ways to incorporate lessons into meaningful activities at home.

#### ShenKids Church School

Each week during both the 9:00 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. services, ShenKids will get together to learn Bible stories, play games, make crafts, watch videos, and fellowship with one another. We are currently offering two classes: Preschool - Grade 1 and Grades 2 - 5. ShenKids start in the Sanctuary and then they will be escorted to their classroom by their church school teacher. Please come to your child's classroom as soon as service is over to pick up your child/children.

**If you would like to receive the ShenKids email or have any questions, please email Anna Savino at [asavino@shenumc.org](mailto:asavino@shenumc.org).**

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### ShenYouth

#### Wednesdays 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Middle School & High School Students

Grades 6 - 12

Friends are always welcome!

Meeting in Fellowship Hall

Games, Fun, Fellowship & Devotional

**Please contact Anna at [asavino@shenumc.org](mailto:asavino@shenumc.org) with any questions.**

**Follow Shen Youth on Instagram [@shenlighthouse](https://www.instagram.com/shenlighthouse).**

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## Pray, Serve, Give and Share...

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### Honoring the Mothers of Ukraine A Different Way to Celebrate Mother's Day

Imagine giving birth to a baby in a bunker. That is just one of the horrors the mothers of Ukraine have faced. As of this writing, eleven million Ukrainians have been displaced, either inside their country or by fleeing as refugees to other nations. The majority of refugees are women and children.

Thousands of Russian soldiers have been killed since the war began. Their mothers' hearts ache with grief. Likewise, mothers of Ukraine have met with unspeakable pain in loss of loved ones, homes, and everyday security.

As we prepare to celebrate Mother's Day, consider paying honor to the Mothers of Ukraine.

On Mother's Day, May 8, at Shenendehowa United Methodist Church, we will pack UMCOR Relief kits — hygiene kits and school kits — as a sign of solidarity with the mothers of Ukraine. There are several ways you can participate in this mission.

1. Pray. Pray for peace in Ukraine and in Russia. Pray for the safety of people of Ukraine; the mothers and children and men left to defend the country. Pray especially for the children's mental and physical health.

2. Choose what you might donate from this list <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0c4fabae2ba1fb6-umcor>

When signing up, after you select your item, please scroll to the bottom of the page to click the button "Submit & Sign Up."



Donations may be brought to church beginning Easter Sunday or any time before May 8. During the week, donations may be left in the mission bin outside Door "B."

3. Help with set-up and/or kit assembly on Mother's Day, May 8, between services (10:15-10:45) and after the end of the second service.

4. Help with logistics of packing cartons and transporting the kits to Schenectady May 9-10.

**This is a mission project of Small Groups Ministries. The entire congregation and church community is invited. For more information or questions, please contact Denise Walling [dwalling@shenumc.org](mailto:dwalling@shenumc.org).**

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### "Live Well, Love Well" Water Well in Uganda Completed

Our water well in Uganda is complete and in use! Praise the Lord! This project was funded through our "Live Well, Love Well" campaign where we raised over \$20,000 to make this gift possible. The well serves a community of 350 people plus many others who travel great distances to get fresh, clean water. A huge thank you to all who *gave* and *served* in the process and *prayed* over this mission so we could *share* the gift of not only clean water but of hope and faith. Stay tuned for more updates in the coming weeks including the GPS coordinates of the well.



## Serve and Give...

### St. Pauly's Shed at Shen UMC

Let's give a shout out to the volunteers who have been managing the St. Pauly Shed during the cold winter days (and the rest of the year). Bob Atkinson, Jane Alessandrini, Suzy and Lynn Calvin, Phil Cortese, Jay and Cathie Dunkleberger, Sandy Eberle, Denise Gottung, J.J. and Jodie McMahon, Brian Mitchell, Liz Moran, Chad Niemeyer, Becky Nold, Donna Rischbieter, Norma Snyder, and Jim Todd.

In 2021 we raised \$5,765 toward our Mission budget at Shen UMC. In addition, we have helped our community recycle clothing, etc. that is needed elsewhere in NY State, the US, and the World. We are free to use donations for people in need in our local community so if you are aware of a need, please let us know.

What to Drop-off: clothing, shoes, sneakers, belts purses linens, pillowcases, blankets, curtains, and stuffed animals.

What **NOT** to Drop-off: furniture, electronics, household items, books, toys, garbage, pillows, rags, and fabric scraps.

**If you have any questions or if you would like to volunteer, please contact Jay or Cathie Dunkleberger at (518) 371-7071.**



April's Community Drive-Thru Dinner for those in need is scheduled for Tuesday, April 26, 2022 from 5:30 to 6:30 pm. The April meal is chicken and biscuits with tossed salad, fresh fruit and dessert. Reservations are required and can be made by calling 518-371-7964.

If you are available to lend a hand, volunteers are always welcome! Preparation begins at 3:30 PM and typically wraps up by 6:45 p.m. Help is also needed to deliver meals to those who can't get out. Please contact Donna Rischbieter at [dlrisch@nycap.rr.com](mailto:dlrisch@nycap.rr.com) or 518-877-0553 if you are able to help or have any questions.



### Shen UMC Skye Farm Annual Clean-Up Day

Saturday, May 21  
9 a.m. - Noon  
Pizza Lunch to Follow  
Contact Becky Nold at [beckynold85@gmail.com](mailto:beckynold85@gmail.com) if you would like to sign up early!

## Study and Serve...

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The Shen UMC Book Club invites all readers to join us in reading *Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* by Francis S. Collins. It runs about \$6 on Amazon, and there are library copies. We plan to meet on Tuesday, May 31 at 7:00 pm to discuss the book. We are hoping for a balmy outdoor meeting!

More about the book: **An instant bestseller from Templeton Prize-winning author Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God* provides the best argument for the integration of faith and logic since C.S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*.** Written for believers, agnostics, and atheists alike, *The Language of God* provides a testament to the power of faith in the midst of suffering with-



out faltering from its logical stride. Readers will be inspired by Collin's personal story of struggling with doubt, as well as the many revelations of the wonder of God's creation that will forever shape the way they view the world around them.



**Come Serve with us! The Rise Against Hunger event is back!!** On May 1, all ages are welcome to join us in helping to package 10,000 meals for third world countries. Come share your time to support the global movement to end hunger by empowering communities, nourishing lives and responding to emergencies! We have had so much fun with this mission in the past and are looking forward to another successful event.

**Registration is required this year by Rise Against Hunger.** You can register to volunteer and learn more about Rise Against Hunger by clicking the button below. Contact Anna Savino at [asavino@shenumc.org](mailto:asavino@shenumc.org) if you have any questions.

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## Rise Against Hunger Sunday, May 1 Fellowship Hall

### Multiple shifts are available:

- 12:30 - 2:00 p.m. - Set Up
- 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. - Pack Meals
- 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. - Clean Up



**ShenUMC Connections**  
Shenendehowa United Methodist Church  
971 Route 146  
Clifton Park, NY 12065  
Phone 518-371-7964  
E-Mail: [office@shenumc.org](mailto:office@shenumc.org)

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
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Clifton Park, NY 12065

*Change Service Requested*



SUMC Online  
Giving QR Code

**SHENENDEHOWA UMC SUNDAY WORSHIP**  
9:00 a.m. Traditional  
10:45 a.m. Contemporary Music

**PASTORS & STAFF**  
Lead Pastor, *Rev. Leland Carlson* - [pastorlee@shenumc.org](mailto:pastorlee@shenumc.org)  
Visitation Minister, *Brother Paul McCue* - [brotherpaul@shenumc.org](mailto:brotherpaul@shenumc.org)  
Executive Pastor, *Denise Gottung* - [dgottung@shenumc.org](mailto:dgottung@shenumc.org)  
Deaconess, *Denise Walling* - [dwalling@shenumc.org](mailto:dwalling@shenumc.org)  
Interim Office Administrator, *Shelley Steves* - [secretary@shenumc.org](mailto:secretary@shenumc.org)  
Coordinator of Music Ministries, *Lauri Nair* - [laurinair@shenumc.org](mailto:laurinair@shenumc.org)  
Organist, *Jayne Dozois*  
Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministries, *Anna Savino* - [asavino@shenumc.org](mailto:asavino@shenumc.org)  
Financial Secretary, *Jennifer Degenhart* - [financialsecretary@shenumc.org](mailto:financialsecretary@shenumc.org)  
Director of Preschool - *Erin O'Meara* - [preschooldirector@shenumc.org](mailto:preschooldirector@shenumc.org)  
Head Custodian, *Peter Ryan*

**CONTACT US:**  
Phone: 518-371-7964  
E-mail: [office@shenumc.org](mailto:office@shenumc.org)  
Web Site: [www.shenumc.org](http://www.shenumc.org)  
"Like" us on Facebook and Instagram  
Office Hours: 9 am - 4 pm, Monday - Friday