



# CHAPEL CHIMES

*Newsletter of*  
**FOREST HOME CHAPEL**  
**United Methodist Church**

222 Forest Home Drive, Ithaca, New York 14850

SEPTEMBER 2013: PASTOR REBECCA DOLCH

EDITOR: Elizabeth Mount

PHOTOS: Susan Spear



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL WAS A HIT!

**EACH MORNING DURING THE WEEK OF AUGUST 26,** 24 bright and enthusiastic children - ages preschool through sixth grade - walked through the doors of Forest Home Chapel to experience this Chapel's first ever Vacation Bible School - *Under the Acacia Tree: African Adventure*.

Each day, the children were treated to a curriculum written by Upper New York Methodist Conference educators and greatly enhanced by our own talented staff. Days opened to the antics of our puppet mascot, Tinashe, the loving lion of Zimbabwe, with Pastor Rebecca and Elizabeth McMahon, professional puppeteer. Bible stories were told by Pastor Rebecca and Carolyn McPherson and performed with huge energy by the children!

*There was magic under this tent when it was transformed into a "Mission Schoolhouse." This was where Sue Reid gave the daily lesson to each of the three age groups of campers, lessons which connected each day's bible stories with degree programs at Africa University. Sue also read from the stories of famous African leaders whose lives have inspired people everywhere.*

Routine is comforting, and each day, Pastor Rebecca led the singing accompanied by Jack Reid; Sue Reid presented daily lessons; Wendy Millroy (a native of South Africa) and two of her daughters, Katherine and Christina, taught crafts with African themes, a different one each day; and Susan Spear brought delicious snacks using foods enjoyed by the children in Zimbabwe. Susan also provided the impetus for undertaking this school, and took all these wonderful photographs!

Five bible stories—*Young Jesus in the Temple, The Woman at the Well, The Healing of Jarius' Daughter and the Sick Woman, Jesus Sends out the Disciples,* and *The Good Samaritan*—and songs—*Kum Ba Ya, Thank you Jesus Amen, We Are Marching In the Light of God, Jesus We are Here,* and *What a Mighty God We Serve*—helped the children identify Jesus as their guide.

Our goal was to help our children learn more about him, the Jesus of many colors, who teaches us to help our neighbors, both here and around the world. Mission lessons helped the children learn more about the life of students in Zimbabwe, and what the Methodist Church has done to found and support Africa University, "an institution that is 'pan-African' by design. AU accepts



*Gracie & Eva loved weaving with tongue depressors; Bethany made a mouse puppet; Eva made this puppet, Jesus the Healer, and more.*

*cont. on p 4*

## WORSHIP/EVENT SCHEDULE: *Fall 2013*

### SEPTEMBER

**Sept 2013-August 2014** Road work will stop traffic over the upstream bridge for nearly a year. Contact Sally Grubb (257-6017, [sally.grubb@gmail.com](mailto:sally.grubb@gmail.com)) to join a Chapel working group to find parking alternatives. *Emergency contact during bridge rehabilitation: Joe Gdovin, Engineer in Charge; C) 607-206-4718*

**19. 7pm** Admin Council meeting, including presentation by Janie Breedlove and Diana Crouch, trained as Reconciling Congregation guides. This will be an ongoing conversation re “mobilizing United Methodists of all sexual orientations and gender identities to transform our Church and world into the full expression of Christ’s inclusive love.” <http://www.rmnetwork.org>

**22** Pastor Rebecca Dolch begins a series of sermons on the Gospel of John.

**Sept 26-Nov 7. 10-11:30am** Bible Study for anyone who would like to learn more about the Gospel of John, to be held downstairs on Thursday mornings. Rebecca Dolch will lead the study based on the DVD series by Dr. Mickey Eifirt, New Testament professor emeritus from Duke University. The group who studied his series on the book of Acts found him inspiring and delightful.

**Sept–Oct** The School Kit campaign is taking a year off in deference to the collection for the UMCOR Health Kits, coordinating with the Vacation Bible School curriculum (*see p 3*). Ithaca Crop Hunger Walk is also on hiatus for 2013

### OCTOBER

**6** World Communion Sunday

**5, 12, 19 & 26. 9-10am** Exploring Membership Classes will be held before worship for anyone who would like to become a member of Forest Home Chapel. Those who are unable to meet at that time should speak with Rebecca.

**16. 7:30pm** Annual Church Charge Conference, this year with District Supt Dick Barton. We will be voting on the Nominating Report, the Pastor's salary, and continuation of our two Lay Speakers (now known as Lay Servants ministries). Rev. Barton will also update us on the work of the Upper New York Conference and our part in it. Everyone is invited.

**19. 6-8pm** Exploring Membership Dinner for all who would like to learn more about the Chapel’s history and how it operates, and talk to those who became members most recently.

### NOVEMBER

**3** All Saints’ Day and New Member Sunday

**6** VISION 100: Mini-Retreat until 1:45 pm

**17** Pledge Sunday, anticipating our 2015 Centennial Year

**24** Thanksgiving Sunday

### DECEMBER

**1** First Sunday in Advent; Advent Wreath & Communion

**7. 10am** Collecting the Greens at the Wollney’s home; *directions TBA*

**7. 5pm** Dish-to-pass dinner; annual Creation of Advent Decorations, and assembling “Goody Bags” for CU students in the Protestant Cooperative Community. *see Carol Hockett*

**7. 11am** Alternatives Gift Fair, offering holiday shoppers an opportunity to choose gifts of charitable donations, rather than more “stuff.” First Baptist & First Presbyterian Churches, Dewitt Park. <http://www.ithacaaltgiftfair.org/> or contact Anke Wessels [akw7@cornell.edu](mailto:akw7@cornell.edu)

**8** Hanging of the Greens, Annual ceremony to decorate the sanctuary;  
Play practice right after the worship service

**15** Annual Christmas Play by Kaye Wollney

**TBA** Christmas Caroling, *see Elizabeth Mount*

**22** Christmas Sunday

**24. 7pm** Christmas Eve Service & Pageant

**29** Christmastide Sunday: All About Christmas Carols



## “VISION 100 DAY”

**PLEASE JOIN US** on November 10 after Worship for a dish-to-pass luncheon and Mini-Retreat/Visioning Day. We’re calling it VISION 100 because our Chapel will be 100 years old in 2015!!

- *Everyone is invited to attend this brainstorming retreat, talking about what we have accomplished during this time and how we want to be known. We will be using fun group interaction techniques to explore how our buildings, programs, missions, care, worship, celebrations, population, goals, and energy reflect who we are in ministry.*
- *Vision days can have a powerful effect on our life together. Last year’s retreat was very productive, identifying handicapped access as an important focus. It resulted in a new exterior stairwell to the basement, an interior chair lift, and the major decision to refurbish and update the parsonage. We also declared ourselves to be an open and warm congregation, embracing people of all types who are seeking a faith community. Plus we re-affirmed our desire to be a child-friendly congregation, a decision that resulted in a growing Sunday School and an amazing Vacation Bible School! Please plan to stay until 1:45. Together in Ministry, Rebecca Dolch*

## It’s Not too Late to Help us with Our Growing Sunday School

- God has blessed us with 14+ children this fall, and in order to offer an effective Sunday School, we need at least two people, one teacher and one aide, for at least one Sunday each week. If this seems daunting, then you will be happy to know there are already complete lesson plans ready for 13 weeks as well as Christmas activities in December. There are also lots of supplemental materials amongst which you may pick and choose. Please sign up at church, or contact Paula Winner at [pj54winner@gmail.com](mailto:pj54winner@gmail.com), or 607-592-2390.

## Nominations Pending...

*The committees of FHC each meet about 4-6 times per year. Meetings are informal and never dull! Please think about where you could best serve. As the Nominating Team begins its work, the following should help you decide what suits you best. One added feature in serving is that you will quickly meet other people and enjoy becoming a part of the ongoing life of the Chapel.*

**Church Council:** handles financial matters, policies, and overall programs of the church.

**Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC):** supports and supervises pastor and other staff; communicates with District Superintendent.

**Trustees:** oversee buildings, grounds, insurance and legal matters.

**Spiritual Life:** a new team which works with the pastor on issues surrounding worship and adult education/spiritual growth.

**Short term project groups:** meet as long as it takes to accomplish specific projects. *Think 15 minutes?*

**Ad Hoc Helpers:** such as for newsletter articles and mailings, photography, coffee hour, Sunday morning readings, garden maintenance and altar flowers don’t even meet, but can always use extra hands.



**VBS CHILDREN** gave over \$120, to the Scholarship Fund at Africa University. The congregation supplied enough items (1 each hand towel, wash cloth, bar of soap, toothbrush, comb, fingernail file and nail clipper) for 28 full Health Kits plus leftovers. Kits, assembled by the children, will be sent to disaster areas all over the world by UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief). Thanks also to our congregation for donations which covered toothpaste and shipping. Making up the kits was suggested in the Bible School Curriculum as a hands-on way for the children to help their neighbors around the world.

*cont from p 1*

students from throughout the continent without regard for race, ethnicity, social class or political or religious affiliation." see [www.africanu.edu](http://www.africanu.edu)

Enrichment Times were well named. Elizabeth McMahon taught children how to make colorful puppets. Carol Hockett showed off a Chi Wara planting headdress from the Bamana people in Mali. Dr Ed Mabaya of Cornell's Dyson School, spoke about growing up in Zimbabwe and also about Africa University. Dr Emily Walker used her professional collection of tools to show how health care works in Africa, keeping people well and healing the sick – all parts of Jesus' message. Debbie Novelli and Paula Winner supported us all by helping the children during their daily activities.

Young Christians from the Chapel met and made

new friends. Together, they worked to deepen their faith in God. And several developed their own leadership skills, such as when fifth grader, Eva, made all of the puppets used in a performance of the Bible story of Jarius (replayed in a recent worship service) and sixth grader, Abbie, helped the kindergarteners navigate their mornings. Third grader Dobbs wants to return next year to be a leader with the youngest group!

We will never know the impact of this time together, but our prayer is that these youngsters, as they grow in their faith, will remember this week as one that supported them on their journey. This experience for the young children of our faith community could have only happened because of the dedication of this Chapel, its members, contributions and support for the past 98 years. Thank you all!

*Sue Reid, Director, Vacation Bible School, 2013*

*Photos: Dr. Ed Mabaya, an animated speaker, explained what it was like to grow up in Zimbabwe. Pastor Rebecca Dolch and Calmila talked about Africa with Tinashe, the friendly lion. Director Sue Reid got a mouse kiss from grandson*

*Charles' puppet. Dr. Emily brought in gowns, masks, surgical hairnets, drawing medicine, and bandages, talking about health care technology, one of the degree programs at Africa University. Spencer & Owen played with the thumb piano, or kalimba, a plucked instrument common in most of Africa.*



*If you miss a Sunday, or need to plan ahead, check our incredible website for that day's sermon, bulletin, events, Chapel history, & even more photos of Vacation Bible School! [www.foresthomechapelumc.org](http://www.foresthomechapelumc.org).*



*ANNIE BASS came to Forest Home Chapel about 4 years ago - a vibrant young woman who was fully engaged in her life as a student and in her Jewish identity. She wore her kippah (cloth cap) and her tzitzit (ritual fringes tied to each of the four corners of her discrete tallit prayer shawl) - clothing typically worn by Jewish men. We quickly realized she was unusual - and strong - in many ways! She enriched our worship though some of us wondered why she stayed, and worried that some of our hymns and prayers would offend. An observer in the beginning, by the end she couldn't resist the music and sang right along with the rest of us! We were sorry to see Annie leave for Boston (graduate work in special ed and English as a Second Language). We grew from her presence, and believe she grew too, according to what she said on her last day here:*

TODAY'S READING is made up of verses from two of my favorite psalms, both of which remind me of Forest Home Chapel. As I was looking for a selection, the first thing that struck me was all of the nature language at the beginning of Psalm 19. The sky, the days, the night, the land, and the sun are all involved in spreading God's message. I'm drawn to the joyful worldly parts of religion, like the sound of the creek outside the Chapel windows during silent prayer, and the birds singing in the branches, that seem ready to hop into Merilee's shoulder.

These visceral modes can engage us more fully than austere religious expressions, and they're also more fully communicative of our experiences. Even our psalm, following several verses of praise, acknowledges the inadequacy of verbal description with the line, "There is no saying, and there are no words, unless everything is heard."

I agree! For example, four years ago I found it pretty hard to explain why I'd started going to church. I found it hard to explain to other people, and to myself. Finding spiritual community in a foreign faith tradition was confusing, and it made me think more deeply about the role of religion and community in my life. Luckily, I followed my gut feeling and the rushing sound of the creek, and the stillness and openness that I found in these pews.

I still haven't found the right words to describe the deeply religious experience I had as an onlooker, watching for the first time as the congregation took communion. But eventually I found some words to describe what draws me to the Chapel community: the combination of emotional and intellectual engagement with religious tradition, the localized sense of mission, the tight-knit and caring community, and the integrative religious lens applied to the nitty-gritty of daily life. I came to Forest Home to support a friend who was looking for a church. A few days after our first visit, we were walking across the suspension bridge on campus, when a woman walking the other way stopped us and said, "Annie and Ellen, right?" "We had no idea who she was but she introduced herself as Carol from Forest Home Chapel. That warmth and welcome, and the willingness to engage pervaded the Chapel community. It was the right thing at the right time, completely serendipitous and surprising. So I started telling people. It's like coming out, the way any new acquaintance can tell from my kippah that I'm Jewish, but I have to consider carefully how to break the news that my local synagogue happens to be a Methodist church.

Psalm 19 reminds us of the importance of bearing witness. "There is no saying, and there are no words, unless everything is heard." Telling part of the story isn't enough—it doesn't create understanding in the way that a full and honest account can change hearts and minds. But that's not all—the psalm ends in a reminder, "May the utterances of my mouth and the logic of my heart be acceptable." Be careful how you say it. Telling our stories and standing up for the communities we are a part of, allows us to bear witness to the diversity of human life. Getting those stories right—not so that we look good, or the tally is even, or every last detail makes it in—but really right, so that the essence is clear, allows others to relate to our experiences, increasing the divine presence in the interaction and in the world. Like the psalm says, "God's guidance is fit, returning spirit.

The final verse in today's reading is from Psalm 27, which is recited by Jews around the world during the 40-day season of repentance, from early August through Yom Kippur. In the rabbinic tradition, repentance is not about sins. The Hebrew word, "*teshuvah*," literally means "returning." The rabbinic definition of complete repentance is when you find yourself in a similar situation to the problematic, or "sinful," one, and this time you choose the right actions. Repenting doesn't involve breaking new ground, attaining new heights of spirituality or righteousness—it's about retracing the familiar tangles in our own lives, and finding the way home.

The search for that Way can be circuitous and unpredictable, and our outcomes are heavily influenced by the company we keep en route. I am so grateful for the spiritual companionship I've found here at the Chapel. Thank you all for being the remarkable house of God that congregates inside this building, and for inviting me to dwell here.

*Annie Bass, August 2013*

Dear Friends,

Sept 12, 2013



You folks must be very happy and bursting your pride buttons – but maybe you do not know fully why you can be so proud. You are probably aware that Rev. Bob Hill has major responsibilities at Boston Seminary. What you may not know is that Rev. Tom Wolfe is now the new President of Illiff Seminary in Denver, Colorado as of August 1, 2013!! To have two former pastors with major responsibilities at two of our United Methodist Seminaries is something to be very prideful about! You might even do a little boasting about having helped them along the way. Tom Wolfe being at Illiff Seminary has a personal connection for me too, as the Chaplain there is my niece, Cathy, who was also on the committee that interviewed Tom. She greeted him by saying ‘the Methodist Connectional Grapevine is faster than the internet and I used it to contact Uncle Fred and get a low down on you!’ (I gave him an excellent recommendation!) I trust all is well with the congregation at Forest Home Chapel. **God Bless! Fred**

*For those who don't know, "Uncle Fred" Kelsey was interim minister at the Chapel from 2007-2008. Fred is full of warmth and good humour, and we feel very fortunate to have had him and his wife Linda here for even a brief year. Bob and Tom came to us "wet behind the ears" (1979-81 and 1981-84) but bringing great enthusiasm and fresh ideas, and the congregation grew. They were both quick learners, but we do think we helped! Photo by Roy Wollney: Fred Kelsey on a surprise visit, 9/15*

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## FOREST HOME CHAPEL MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONS

*If you are interested in joining, please contact Rebecca Dolch. (rebadolch@gmail.com, 607-351-7416)*

**Q:** What do I need to do to prepare for membership?

**A:** Talk with Pastor Rebecca Dolch. She is prepared to offer training at whatever level is needed for each individual. Special training classes on Sunday mornings in October, and an “Exploring Forest Home Chapel” dinner are available for you to learn about the Chapel and receive an overview of United Methodism.

**Q:** Do I have to be re-baptized to join the church?

**A:** The United Methodist Church recognizes all baptisms. However, baptism is a prerequisite for Church Membership. In baptism, we join Christianity; in membership we join the Church!

**Q:** Why join? Why not just come?

**A:** There is no pressure to join Forest Home Chapel, and there is no time limit. Some reasons that people join are to have a sense of belonging to a Christian Community, and to make a commitment to grow spiritually. Of course we can grow spiritually without being a member of a congregation, but there is something about joining that creates a different type of dynamic in us. Also, technically, there are some offices in the church that require membership. This requirement was created by Methodists over a century ago to ensure that people didn't just “come in off the street” to vote on important matters in a congregation's life.

**Q:** Some religions have specific dues that have to be paid if you join. Do we have those?

**A:** Our Budget is about \$65,000 per year and comes almost completely from donations. That said, giving is completely at the discernment of the member. We do encourage people to make a financial pledge. Why? Part of the spiritual path is being aware of what we have, how God has given us our talents and resources, and how we share with others. Also, money is related to consciousness. A spirit of generosity and commitment always comes back to us. Committing part of our money to God, whether it is a dollar a month or two hundred dollars a week, does amazing things in our lives. Plus it impacts the life of the church and those we serve

**Q:** I don't want to give up my membership in my home church, or my family's religion. Can I make an official commitment to Forest Home Chapel without cutting other ties?

**A:** Yes, the United Methodist Church offers a membership status called “Affiliate Membership.” It is a way of saying: I want to officially affiliate with this congregation, although I retain my membership in (the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, my home church, etc.). Affiliate Membership also works well for a variety of people, including those who are only in Ithaca for a few years and intend to go back to their home congregation.

**Q:** I don't know if I will be in Ithaca forever, or if I would be a member for life. Should I still join?

**A:** Nobody knows where life will take them. Membership can be transferred or withdrawn at any time. Membership is about making a specific commitment to your spiritual path at this time and place, trusting that God will guide you now and in the future.



## Fourteen Years in Africa

by Margaret & David Robertshaw

**BLUE SKIES, SUNSHINE, AND PUFFY WHITE CLOUDS;** THESE ARE SOME OF OUR VIVID MEMORIES OF KENYA. In June of 1960, a few months after our marriage, we left the shores of Britain, and set sail for East Africa. We were young, and excited to be going on this adventure. It took two and a half weeks to reach Mombasa (the largest town on the Kenyan coast), via Gibraltar, Genoa, Port Said and Aden. There were many young families onboard, all going to take up positions in East Africa, so it was lots of fun!

Kenya was still a British colony, so the country was well-run, and had been developed from the end of the 19th century with roads, railways, hospitals, and a good educational system. One always hears the bad things about colonialism and rarely about the good things, of which there were many. But already there were stirrings among the indigenous people, clamoring for independence, and the Mau-Mau rebellion was about to come to an end. We were sympathetic to this; if we had been Kenyans we also would have wanted our independence from a foreign government.

David had been hired by the East African Veterinary Research Organization, run by the federation of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika. His job was to understand how domestic animals—cattle, sheep and goats—and wild animals—camels, gazelles, wildebeest, oryx, rhinoceros and elephants (which came from a wild-life orphanage run by Game Warden, David and Daphne Sheldrick) adapt to the heat and aridity of the equatorial environment of East Africa. To this end, David examined and measured heat exchanges in hydrated and dehydrated animals. In our last 5 years in Kenya, David was head of the Physiology Department in the Veterinary School of the new University of Nairobi.

But in the beginning, we lived in a community called Muguga, 3 miles from Kikuyu Village, 17 miles from Nairobi and 1500' higher, at an altitude of 1700.' Although we were only 100 miles from the Equator we had a reasonably cool climate, with log fires in our homes 3 months of the year.

Margaret worked in the biochemistry lab in the same building as David, 3 miles from our home. We were given one afternoon a week to shop in Nairobi, so it was always a big rush, especially shopping for Christmas presents in September for family in the U.K.

One of the most exciting things Margaret did in her time there was climb Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa – 3 days up and 2 days down – going through different levels of vegetation and climate. Her group was assisted by porters from the local Chagga tribe. They ran up and down on bare feet, carrying 40-pound loads, whistling and singing effortlessly, while we labored along, carrying nothing and panting for breath. At night, when we retired to bed, we could hear them singing hymns in beautiful harmony. It was a perfect ending to the day.

Unfortunately, altitude sickness with heart palpitations at top hut (15,400') kept Margaret from getting to the top the first time, but she made it on a second attempt and that was wonderful! David did not have enough "local leave" to climb Kilimanjaro, but did climb Mount Kenya, which took much less time. That was a proper rock climb, and only experienced rock climbers could do it.

We were given 3 months home leave after a tour of 3 years, and before that did not get too much local leave. But with the time we did have, we took heavenly vacations at the coast, 300 miles from Nairobi, with white sandy beaches, palm trees, and the coral reef. We could walk out to the reef and snorkel, looking at the magnificent variety of tropical fish. Otherwise, we visited the many game parks in the country with their abundance of wild animals. In those times, one could come across wild animals anywhere in the country and we even had a leopard in our garden on one occasion. Two baby leopards, deserted by their mother, were found in the forest near the labs where we worked. In fact, one of our friends reared the babies and Southampton Zoo purchased them.

We left Kenya in 1974 to start a new life in the US at Indiana University. We have lived and worked on four continents, but Africa had the biggest impact on us, and we still miss the barking of the hyenas, and the chattering of monkeys at night.



*"Stroppy" - an orphaned black rhinoceros in Voi, part of the East Tsavo National Park – mostly wanted to play with David! 1971*



Caroline McPherson and Paula Winner were two of the volunteer staff who kept the camp running smoothly.

VBS had an enrollment of 24. Who wouldn't have been tempted with such an exciting sign out front!

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

**UNDER THE ACACIA TREE:  
AFRICAN ADVENTURE**

August 26-30  
9:00-noon each day  
here at Forest Home Chapel!

Details on flyers by ramp door,  
or at [www.foresthomechapelumc.org](http://www.foresthomechapelumc.org)



**You'll have a roaring good time!**



Camila's dad, Patricio, picks her up at the end of the last day.



So much of camp was visual, with bright fabrics, puppets, and colorful animal art such as on this fun bowl.

**WELCOME to Rebecca's TWIN grandchildren!! Greta Anne (6 lbs.3 oz) & Dowan William (7 lbs.5 oz), born very early on 9/13/13.**

[www.foresthomechapelumc.org](http://www.foresthomechapelumc.org)



**Forest Home Chapel  
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*Please join us in fellowship and prayer.*

*If you would rather receive this as a paper document, or not at all, please respond to [susan.spear@citlink.net](mailto:susan.spear@citlink.net)*

**"We come to church to be part of a higher collective group consciousness." Pastor Rebecca Dolch**