



Gouverneur First United Methodist Church

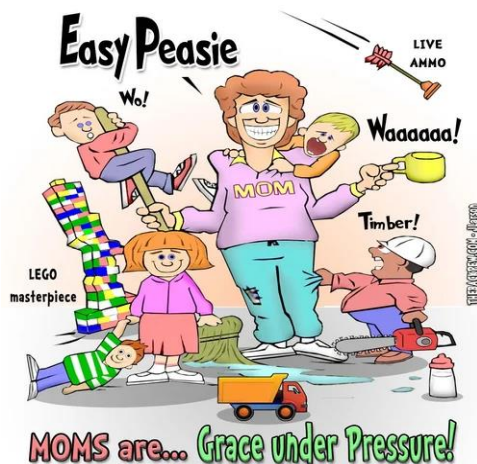
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Meet Jesus ~ Follow Jesus ~ Serve Jesus  
Love Boldly ~ Serve Joyfully ~ Lead Courageously

# First UMC of Gouverneur Keeping Connected

Monthly Newsletter May and June of 2026



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THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT ALWAYS  
PICK UP THE CHECK ON FATHER'S DAY

# PASTOR'S MESSAGE

"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." (John 3:17)

*Beloved of God,*

*Happy Easter! This amazing season we are in is called Eastertide, a fifty-day season that extends from the joyous day of Easter until the Church's birthday at Pentecost. We are called to continue celebrating the risen Lord while proclaiming this good news to the world.*

*For several weeks, we have been journeying and will continue to journey through the Epistle of 1 Peter alongside the Psalms. Both of these sacred texts help reshape where our hearts are leaning. The Apostle Peter wrote to encourage the early followers of Christ, and he continues to encourage us today, to keep living in the way of Christ even when it brings us into conflict with the social norms of the world. This is a holy way of living a life shaped so deeply by Christ that others may see the risen Lord above all other things. The Psalmists shared this same pattern long before Peter. When the world around us crumbles, when our hearts are breaking, and when we are uncertain of what to do next, we can cry out and trust in the living God who is with us.*

*As we journey onward through Eastertide, may you remember the Good News:  
Christ is risen, and He is risen indeed!*

*Blessings and Peace,  
Pastor Benjamin Lalka*

**We are currently in the season of Eastertide.  
How do you show God's love to others?  
What gifts of the spirit do you recognize in others?**

## **Announcements:**

- ~ **Ongoing Book Study**, hosted by Dr. Don Schuessler every Monday from 7-8:30pm at One More Chapter Book Store. Join us for "Letters of John".
- ~ **COS Meeting May 20<sup>th</sup> at 6pm**
- ~ **Trustee Meeting May 21<sup>st</sup> at 6pm**
- ~ **Summer Worship Hours & location change will begin on June 7<sup>th</sup>**. 10am in Brown Chapel. If you worship at North Gouverneur, worship will start at 8:30am.

### **Attention Parishioners! Fundraising Indoor Sale!**

**Saturday, July 18<sup>th</sup> 9am-5pm**

(last day of the village wide sales)

Donate \$10 per spot for each church person to sell their items.

Donate the \$10 and make money for yourself selling your unwanted items. You must accompany your table, provide your own check out, clean up and take your unsold items.

Set up will be Friday 7/17 at 6-8pm.

Contact Libby (315-276-0667) if interested.

## **This Month's Special Envelopes:**

You have received 2 pre-labeled envelopes for specific ministry donations:

May- Camping Scholarships

June - VBS

**Please give as your heart calls you to!**

## **Recent Happenings:**

- ~ **Journeyed through the season of Lent**
- ~ **Easter Season began**
- ~ **Welcomed Bridgette LaPierre as our new Administrative Assistant.** Bridgette has held many roles at St. James Church and School and is currently the Director of Advancement for the school. She has been involved in our VBS for years and has family ties to FUMC.
- ~ **We celebrated Holy Humor Sunday.**



# Foodness for The Soul

## Baker's Recipe:

### Sunshine Cake

submitted by Bridgette LaPierre

- 1 box of yellow cake mix
- ½ cup of vegetable oil
- 1 can of mandarin oranges / drained
- 4 eggs

Mix the cake mix, oil, drained oranges, eggs.  
Bake according to the directions on the box for a 9x13" pan. Cool completely.

### Frosting:

- 1 can of crushed pineapple
- 1 can of crushed pineapple (undrained)
- Cool Whip-thawed

Sprinkle the dry vanilla pudding mix into the crushed pineapple (do not drain). Mix thoroughly.  
Fold in the Cool Whip.

## Blessing Box Suggestions:

Cereal, oatmeal, pasta, shelf stable milk, bread, peanut butter, canned meats, fresh fruit and vegetables



## Healthy Habits:

**BODY:** Don't forget to use your sunscreen!

Protect your skin with a broad-spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen.

Goals: Take advantage of longer days with a morning or evening walk or bike ride.

**HOME:** -Re-organize your wardrobe

using the 80/20 Rule. Fill only 80% of your space, leaving 20% empty and available.

This allows your closet to be functional, allows you to find your items, and decreases the visual clutter. Visual clutter can create mental clutter.

## Chef's Recipe

### Chicken Casserole

submitted by Judy Bush

- 2 cans of Cream of Chicken or Cream of Celery soup
- ½ cup milk
- 1 box of stuffing mix
- 1 ½ cups of chicken broth

Preheat oven to 375. Spray a 9x13 pan with cooking spray.

Spread the cubed chicken in the pan (Optional: Add a bag of frozen vegetables)  
Salt and pepper the chicken.

In a mixing bowl, whisk together the cream of chicken soups and milk.

Spread this mixture over the chicken and then top with the stuffing mix evenly on top.

Then, pour the chicken broth over the stuffing mix.

Cover the baking dish with foil and bake for 30 minutes.

Remove the foil and bake uncovered for 15 more minutes.

Remove from the oven and rest for 10 minutes before serving.

## News from the North:

Thank you to all who assisted and shopped at our Soup Sale. We raised over \$1,100. We are grateful for our "town church" for hosting this event.

Our May Yard Sale is coming up! If you have any items to donate to our sale they can be dropped off in the church basement at the back entrance of the North Gouverneur church.

# UMC Happenings ( You Should Probably Know )

## Ript Fitness Ministry Update 2026 *submitted by Amber Ormasen*

As we enter the final month of our current Ript challenge, we're excited to share that nearly 60 participants are still going strong. It has been an incredible season of growth, commitment, and community, and we are so proud of everyone who has stayed dedicated to their wellness journey.

To celebrate, we will host an end-of-year Karaoke Night on Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>—a fun evening of music, laughter, and fellowship as we honor both progress and the relationships built along the way.

Our **Goldies Fitness Ministry**, held **Tuesdays** and led by Pat Williams, continues to grow with new participants joining regularly. These sessions focus on mobility, flexibility, and functional movement in a welcoming environment for all ability levels. As we head into warmer months, we invite others to join us.

This April, Ript is also partnering in the Ryan's Wish 100-Mile Walking Challenge, with about 20 teams participating from both our church and the wider community. Many have secured sponsors to support this meaningful cause. We will gather on April 30<sup>th</sup> to walk the final mile together. All proceeds benefit Ryan's Wish Foundation. To contribute or join us, please contact Amber Ormasen.

We also celebrated our first-ever **Worship Workout** to close the Lenten season. With over 10 leaders stepping out in faith to guide worship through movement, the event focused on praising God rather than performance. It was a powerful experience, drawing a full and diverse group of participants, and we are excited to make this an annual event.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support as this ministry grows and serves our church and community.



## Some Joys & Concerns of March/April



- ♥ *Happy birthday to everyone in May and June!*
- ♥ *Sophie Hayden's healing*
- ♥ *Safely home from travels!*
- ♥ *Don and Glenda's travels*
- ♥ *Rip It*
- ♥ *Friends and Family*
- ♥ *Carter Baer's success*
- ♥ *Awe in what God is doing*

- ∞ *Healing of the sick*
- ∞ *Family of Angie Walsh*
- ∞ *Family of John Hunter*
- ∞ *Middle East*

## **Shout Outs for March and April:**

*Scripture Readers: Annetje G and Ashley B*

*Greeters: Ginny N and Pat W*

*Office help: Alyssa L: and JoAnne J*

*Finance Help: Vicky R & Kennedy M*

*Judy B: Friday Hot Lunch/Blessing Box*

## Easter Cantata 2026

### *Here is Love*

*submitted by Don Schuessler*



Once again, our church, with the help of lots of friends from other churches and throughout the community, presented a cantata to usher in Holy Week. After weeks of work, Palm Sunday afternoon was a time for singing and narrating accompanied by a wonderful consort orchestra presenting the passion story.

Our singers were: Karen Brungard, Connor Canell, Corryn Canell, Norma Gale, Brandon Griffin, Alexander Hall, Denise Halladay, Steve Jadlocki, Kristen Lamanteer, Amanda Marketon, Howard Maxson, Renee Mead, Audrey Ormasen, Donna Peck, Sid Peters, Chris Rediehs, Jackson Ritchie, Lori Ritchie, Ariyonna Savage, Glenda Schuessler, Brianna Scott, Dede Scozzafava, Marla Shampine, Harry Smithers, Sue Spilman, Gail Thomas, Donna Thorpe, April Walrath, Trudy Williams and Bob Zimmerman.

The consort orchestra was over the moon! They were: Olivia Dearbeck on French Horn, Chris Hosmer on violin, Beth Johnson on piano, Laura Rediehs on flute, Mallory Tully on Oboe and Michael Weil on cello. Ashley Barr and Henry Leader provided the narrations wonderfully, and the technical support of Alyssa Lalka, Naaman Lowry and Fred Scozzafava helped all go smoothly and to be able to be well heard by all present.

Pastor Maxson sent the chorus, instrumentalists and narrators in with a most gracious centering prayer of encouragement, and Pastor Ben welcomed audience and performers, and prayed for the time to be one in which Christ was lifted up and those present would feel His presence in a special way.

And then, there were the wonderful refreshments for everyone after the performance! Rip It hit a homerun providing a splendid banquet in a beautifully decorated Fellowship Hall with savories, sweets and drinks in abundance. For sure, no one went home hungry! What a special treat to be able to spend time together in fine fellowship with wonderful repast.

So ... thank you, thank you, thank you ... to so many who worked so hard and served so well to bring the cantata to the community. Know that I find it a special privilege to work with such lovely people to such good purpose. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

### **May Scriptures:**

May 3<sup>rd</sup> : 1 Peter 2:2-10      May 10<sup>th</sup> : Psalm 66:8-20      May 17<sup>th</sup> : 1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11  
May 24<sup>th</sup> : Psalm 104:24-34; John 7:37-39      May 31<sup>st</sup>: guest preacher

### **Bible Studies Update:**

Bible Study – Wednesdays at 10am. ALL are welcome to attend! *Covering the book of Acts.*  
Open Table: Questions of Faith - Thursdays at 7pm. ALL are welcome to attend! *Come & ask questions.*

### **Contact us!**

**Phone:** (315)287-2440    **Email:** firstumcgouverneur@gmail.com    **Website:** www.gouverneurumc.org



## Book/Bible Study

*submitted by Don Schuessler*

We'll be starting a new book/bible study looking at the New Testament letters of John. Our first meeting will be on Monday, May 4, 2026 at the "One More Chapter" bookstore at 7:00 PM. The book looks at the letters in 9 chapters, so the plan is to use the Mondays in May and June. We will be using a study guide by NT Wright

In these letters, John expresses delight at believers who are "walking in the truth" ... behaving with an integrity reflecting the Gospel of Jesus. In his writing, John encourages believers that we really follow Jesus by showing a love for God and neighbor, *not* in memorizing correct doctrine or displaying 'proper' outward behavior. John conveys that it is this love that is the evidence that the Truth of the Gospel has brought about a change in us. Wright's insights into that Truth help us become believers who are more 'walking the walk' and not 'just talking the talk', that we are becoming people in whom God is present for all to see.

NT Wright Wright is a British Anglican clergyman who has written extensively about the New Testament. We will use our reading of the Scriptures and his insights as springboards to understanding God's call to our hearts in these three catholic letters.

I found it helpful to understand Wright when I read the following:

In a 2003 interview, Wright said that he could never remember a time when he was not aware of the presence and love of God. He shared an occasion when he was four or five, "when I was sitting by myself at Morpeth and I was completely overcome, coming to tears, by the fact that God loved me so much he died for me. Everything that has happened to me since has produced wave upon wave of the same."

If you've never come to a study like this, or if you've attended a gazillion ... or somewhere in between ... we'd be so pleased if you joined us for times of learning and fellowship. If you'd like to look at the book ahead, grab one from the church office or let me know and I'll get you a copy. Or, just show up on May 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM.

# 2026 events at Aldersgate



**MAY** 9  
**JUNE** 13  
**SEPT** 26  
**OCT** 31

## SITE WORK DAYS

9am - 3pm  
Work is available for all skill and ability levels, with lunch provided.

**MAY**  
**1 - 2**

## MEN'S RETREAT

Work with a home chef to learn about creating dinners at home. Devotionals lead by Rev. Nick Bufano.

**MAY**  
**15 - 16**

## WOMEN'S RETREAT

Join us at Aldersgate for a night of chocolate making, community, and diving into faith journeys together.

**JUNE**  
**6**

## OPEN HOUSE

1 - 4pm  
Bring the whole family for a beautiful afternoon in the Adirondacks.

**JULY**  
**17 - 19**

## FAMILY LIFE WEEKEND

Introduce your family to a Christian camping experience.

**SEPT**  
**5**

## ADIRONDOGS

Bring your pup to camp! This day long program will provide an opportunity to play and relax alongside other pet-friendly families.

**SEPT**  
**18 - 19**

## MEN'S RETREAT

Head to camp ahead of the holidays begins to find respite in nature and fellowship with peers.

**OCT**  
**2 - 4**

## ROOTED WELLNESS RETREAT

Discover unique crafts and gifts made by local artisans.

**OCT**  
**17 - 18**

## YARN RETREAT

Join Marianne Augenstein & Hannah Mudge for a weekend of quilting and knitting.

**NOV**  
**6 - 7**

## WOMEN'S RETREAT

Join us to learn a specialized technical baking skill. Spiritual formation lead by Rev. Dr. Pam Harris

**DEC**  
**12**

## FESTIVAL OF TREES

1 - 4pm  
Kick off the Christmas season at Aldersgate! Details to follow.

Learn More & Register here!



# SUMMER CAMP 2026



## ALDRSGATE

**JULY 5 - 10**

**SUMMER KICKSTART!  
HANGOUT TREK**

**JULY 12 - 17**

**'LIL GATORS MINI  
ALDRSGATORS**

**JULY 19 - 24**

**SPORTS & GAMES  
WET AND WILD**

**JULY 26 - 31**

**ALDRSGATE ADVENTURE JR  
ANIMAL EXPEDITION**

**AUG 2 - 7**

**ALDRSGATE ADVENTURE  
ANIMAL EXPEDITION JR**

**JUNE 29  
AUG 7**

**ONE DAY ADVENTURE**



**LEARN MORE AND  
REGISTER TODAY!**



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