

# FIRST *year*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | WHITESBORO/UTICA, NY  
APRIL 2025

*Join Us...*



## EASTER *Sunday*

CELEBRATING THE RESURRECTION

04. 20. 2025

10:00 AM

JOIN US ON EASTER SUNDAY FROM 8:30 - 9:30 AM FOR A DELICIOUS BREAKFAST AND FELLOWSHIP BEFORE OUR EASTER CELEBRATION! BRING YOUR FAMILY, INVITE YOUR FRIENDS, AND START THIS JOYOUS DAY TOGETHER. ✨  
EVERYONE IS WELCOME—COME AS YOU ARE!

### JOIN US IN THE PLENTIFUL GIFTS PROGRAM!

We are joining six other churches in the Utica Presbytery for the **Plentiful Gifts Program**, initiated by the Dubuque Theological Seminary and funded by a Lilly Foundation grant. This program helps churches discover and strengthen the gifts of their people—not money or possessions, but the people themselves—to carry out the ministries God has called us to do.

**Plentiful Gifts** supports churches facing changing times—smaller congregations, less funding, and part-time or no pastors—by helping them clarify their identity, discover leadership, and equip those leaders through local training. Over the next 18 months, the program will offer training, mentorship, fully funded retreats, and resources tailored to our church's needs. Our mentor, **Michelle Dolan**, and Presbytery Catalyst **Rev. Sam Pendergrast** will guide us through this process. **Rick Kincaid, Rebecca Willsey, and John Faust** have already begun working with consultants from Dubuque Seminary to lay the foundation.

### WHAT'S NEXT?

◆ The program launches **this Sunday, March 30, during our worship service**, with Michelle Dolan joining us.

◆ A survey has been shared via e-blast or online at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/3P5JKR9](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3P5JKR9). Hard copies are available in the church office and are in the Sanctuary.

◆ Join us for a **brunch & discussion in the Fellowship Hall on Saturday, April 5 at noon.**

We're looking for **at least 6–12 people** to participate and be trained in key areas of church life. If you have questions or want to get involved, please contact **Rick, Becky, or John**.

**Thank you for your participation—let's strengthen our church together!**





## FROM THE DESK OF THE PASTOR...

April is a month filled with a wide range of experiences. Spring has begun, the crocus and lilies are sprouting through the ground with the promise of warmer weather, flowers, and green landscaping. But in the blink of an eye, the temperature gets cold, and surprise snowstorms can result in deep breaths of frustration, with the words, "When will it end?" This is especially true this year.

In April, we've been reminded in the Sermon Series on the Days of Holy Week, the path is filled with much hurt and disappointment. The religious leaders use treachery to arrest Jesus and set him up for execution. Jesus is betrayed by one of his own, most likely out of greed. False accusations by the religious leaders led Jesus before Pilate. Pilate abdicates leadership and lets the religious leaders force him to sentence Jesus to death. Peter and the Disciples deny even knowing Jesus. Jesus is beaten, whipped, and ultimately suffers one of the most painful means of execution known to humanity, crucifixion. The Disciples are now in fear for their own lives and wonder why they left their jobs and family to follow Jesus.

*But that is not the end of the Story.*

Easter, on April 20<sup>th</sup>, is the celebration of Christ's resurrection. It means sin and death are conquered and all who believe in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus have new life here on earth in the New Heaven and New Earth to come. This can sound like fantasy, idealistic and fanciful, but what about everyday life? The reality impacts everyday living. We know we are not alone with everyday struggles. We know we have power over temptation. We know we have direct access to God in prayer. We know we have greater potential for purposes greater than our own capabilities.

I truly hope you will join us this Easter Sunday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, for an Easter Breakfast at 8:30am provided by Tom and Claudia Wattles, and our Easter Celebration is going to follow at 10:00am Bring your family and friends. Invite your neighbors. Come as you are!

As a church, we prepare for a different kind of Easter on April 6<sup>th</sup>. First Presbyterian took the courageous move to a new location and a new community. The Plentiful Gifts Initiative is an opportunity to explore the First Presbyterian Easter of New Life and New Beginnings at our Whitesboro location. On April 6<sup>th</sup> at noon, our Plentiful Gifts consultants, Loren and Becky Shellabarger, will listen to our hopes and dreams to help shape our future. Everyone is invited, members and friends.

*Pastor George*

## WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS -

We are overjoyed to welcome our newest members into our church family! Your presence brings fresh energy and joy to our community, and we look forward to growing in faith, love, and service together. Please take a moment to introduce yourself and help them feel at home.

**They are:**

- Lisa LaManque
- Marlena Vennette

**and transferred and reactivated:**

- Paul Franz
- Julia Coons
- Jeffery Hoffman
- David Coons
- Debi Hoffman

If anyone is interested in learning more about church membership, please call the church at 315-732-5111; email the church at [fpcutica@gmail.com](mailto:fpcutica@gmail.com) or Pastor George Cooper at [pastorgeorge1stpres@outlook.com](mailto:pastorgeorge1stpres@outlook.com)



# ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT

*In a world of disaster, hunger, and oppression ...*

*millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity.*

Through **One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)**, Presbyterians come together to share God's love and respond to those in need. This special offering supports three vital programs: **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and**

**Self-Development of People.** Each program plays a unique role in providing relief, rebuilding communities, and empowering individuals. From immediate disaster response to long-term development, OGHS brings **safety, sustenance, and hope** to those facing difficult circumstances.

## Repairing the breach

ISAIAH 58

Please give generously—  
for when we all do a little,  
it adds up to a lot.

We will receive our **One Great Hour of Sharing Offering on Palm Sunday, April 13th.** As part of our Lenten journey, we encourage weekly giving as you feel led. **Blue envelopes** marked "One Great Hour" are available for contributions. Additionally, we invite you to use **FISH BANKS** to collect loose change and

thankful offerings at home. Banks can be found in the basket at the front of the Sanctuary and should be returned on Palm Sunday.

Please give generously—**when we each do a little, it adds up to a lot!**



*One Great Hour of Sharing  
has been a catalyst for love  
for over 75 years.*

Every gift makes a difference in the life  
of the most vulnerable of God's people.

**WE ARE THE CHURCH,  
TOGETHER.**



**JOIN OUR PRAYER CHAIN!**—Would you like to be part of a meaningful ministry that lifts others up in prayer? We are seeking volunteers to join our **Prayer Chain**—a devoted group committed to praying for those in need. As a member, you will receive prayer requests and have the opportunity to intercede on behalf of others.

At our church, we believe in the power of prayer and the strength that comes from supporting one another in times of need. If you or someone you know would like to be included on our prayer list, please reach out to the church office. Together, in faith, we can offer comfort, hope, and encouragement through the gift of prayer.

*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." — Philippians 4:6*

**HOW TO SIGN UP**—Simply add your name to the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall or contact the church office

☎ 315-732-5111

✉ [fpcutica@gmail.com](mailto:fpcutica@gmail.com) or

Pastor George ✉ [pastorgeorge1stpres@outlook.com](mailto:pastorgeorge1stpres@outlook.com)

Thank you for being a blessing through prayer!

prayer  
**REQUEST**



*"For where two or three gather in my  
name, there am I with them."*

— Matthew 18:20

- Tabytha Davis & Family
- Doug and Joan Caparo
- Joyce Jones
- Patrick Pullen
- Greg Ward
- Jim & Peg Beaton
- Reid Simpson
- Jackie Gervin



# MIDWEEK LENTEN LUNCHEONS

wednesdays @ 11:30am

First Presbyterian Church  
1 Elm Street, Whitesboro



**SEEDS OF  
HOPE**  
[www.sohutica.wixsite.com](http://www.sohutica.wixsite.com)

**2nd**  
**April**  
**2025**



**THE  
CENTER**  
[www.thecenterutica.org](http://www.thecenterutica.org)

**9th**  
**April**  
**2025**

voluntary offering will be received to support presenters  
for more details | 315.732.5111

## MIDWEEK LENTEN LUNCH

Wednesdays during Lent  
11:30 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church  
1 Elm Street, Whitesboro  
(315) 732.5111

Seeing Christ in our  
Neighbors

*Lord, when was it that we  
saw you? Truly I tell you,  
just as you did it to one of  
these brothers and sisters  
of mine, you did it to me.*  
— Matthew 25

Join us for a light  
Lenten luncheon of soup  
and sandwiches. After  
lunch, stay and learn  
about an organization in  
our community that is  
ministering to the needs  
of our neighbors.

A voluntary offering  
will be received each  
week to support the or-  
ganization presenting its  
work with our neighbors.



## WHAT A BLESSING

We are more than halfway through the season, we want to extend our gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the success of our Lenten Luncheons. Attendance has steadily grown each week, and for the past three Wednesdays, we've averaged about forty participants. So far, we have collected over \$1,000 to support the three agencies that have shared their missions with us—providing beds for children, nutritious food, housing for women and children, spiritual care, and mental health support for those in need.

The luncheons have truly been a team effort, and we are especially thankful for our dedicated volunteers who have cooked soup, prepared sandwiches, baked desserts, set tables, and handled cleanup. Your generosity and hard work have made this possible. Thank you!



# JOIN US FOR LENTEN SERVICES—



**PALM SUNDAY**  
*Worship Service*

**SUNDAY  
APRIL 13TH**

AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
1 ELM STREET, WHITESBORO

**10 am**

Made with PosterMyWall.com



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH INVITES YOU TO

**MAUNDY THURSDAY**  
*Service*

**17TH  
APRIL**

**6 pm** MEAL **7 pm** SERVICE

FIRST CHURCH  
1 Elm Street  
Whitesboro, NY 13492

## EASTER FLOWERS

*Deadline  
Sun., April 6th*

It's time to order your Easter flowers. Plants are \$10 each this year. You can order flowers using the flyer from the back page.



*Easter Sunday*

**BREAKFAST**

APRIL **20** SUNDAY

**STICKY BUNS | EGG BAKE**

**8:30 - 9:30**  
am

Juice | Coffee | Tea

fellowship hall  
Donations welcome



# EACH SUNDAY ...

## Following Worship

Fellowship Hall

Join in for coffee, refreshments and conversation!

### FAIR TRADE COFFEE & TEA

Did you know that the coffee and tea we enjoy at church are Fair Trade? This means the farmers who produce them receive a fair price through a nonprofit cooperative, ensuring better livelihoods for their families and communities. Every cup you drink supports justice and fairness—thank you for being part of this mission!



## SESSION NOTES—

- ◆ Session has voted to change the meeting time to **1 PM**. Everyone is welcome to attend.
- ◆ **Bible Study Update:** Pastor George is currently finalizing details—more information to come soon.
- ◆ **Seeds of Hope Update:** Seeds of Hope is in the process of obtaining its own **501(c)(3) status** as it continues to expand its mission of feeding the hungry.

## GIVING!

Who would have imagined that three months of the year have already passed? Time moves quickly, and as we step into the next quarter of 2025, we take a moment to reflect on the commitments we have made in faith and generosity. In the coming weeks, a record of your pledge contributions so far for 2025 will be available for your review.

When we reflect on the boundless love that God has for us, how can we not respond with joy and gratitude? One of the most tangible ways we express our love for God is through our giving. Our financial commitment to Christ's church is not just an obligation—it is a reflection of our faith, a declaration of trust, and an act of worship. Could it be that the way we give speaks more powerfully about our

devotion to God than any other expression of our faith?



We extend our heartfelt thanks to each of you for your generous gifts to the church thus far. Your contributions make a meaningful difference in the life and ministry of our congregation. As we continue forward into the next three months, we encourage you to remain faithful in fulfilling your pledges, which we have made it more convenient with online giving that allows the church to

thrive and continue its mission of sharing God's love with the world.



*Please excuse all errors, omissions, slight mistakes, and oversights.*

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

WORSHIP TEAM APRIL 9TH  
6:30 PM

SESSION MTG. APRIL 16TH  
1 PM

ADMIN TEAM MTG. APRIL 30TH  
11AM

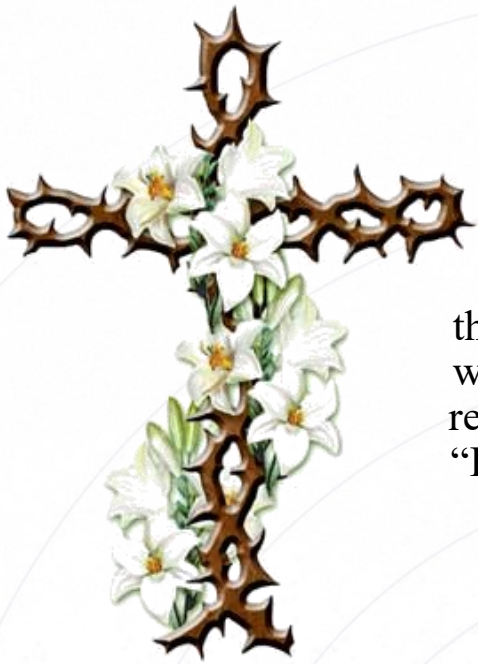
## REMINDER ABOUT PER CAPITA?

*The money contributed helps build up the Body of Christ.*

Per capita is an opportunity for all communicant members of the Presbyterian church to celebrate being a connectional part of church. In *1 Corinthians 12:12-31*, a reminder that all parts of the church are parts of one body. Doing your part takes both your contribution of gifts and per capita. Through our gifts we support the work of our congregation, our presbytery, our synod, our national church, and beyond. 2025 Per Capita is \$46 per member per year. **Your Per Capita is due as soon as you are able to add it to this year's pledge.**



HE IS RISEN!



# EASTER MEMORIAL

## ORDER FORM

Orders will be taken for memorial Easter flowers through the church office. You may fill out this order form with monies and place it in the offering plate. You may also return the order form, with your check made payable to "First Presbyterian Church" to:

**First Presbyterian Church**  
**Attention: Easter Flowers**  
**1 Elm Street | Whitesboro, NY 13492**

**Deadline for orders is Sunday, April 6th**

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\_\_\_\_\_ **Daffodils**      \_\_\_\_\_ **Tulips**      \_\_\_\_\_ **Lilies**

**NUMBER OF PLANTS @ \$10.00** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL ENCLOSED** \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE PRINT**

**GIVEN BY:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**IN MEMORY OF:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE SPECIFY IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE LISTED AS THE DONOR ON THE MEMORIAL LISTING** \_\_\_\_ **YES** \_\_\_\_ **NO**

Please Check One:

\_\_\_\_\_ After EASTER SUNDAY service, I would like my plant to be given to a shut-in.  
\_\_\_\_\_ I will pick up my plant after the EASTER SUNDAY service.

**IF THERE ARE EXTRA FUNDS RECEIVED, THEY  
WILL BE PLACED IN THE FLOWER FUND.**



# FIRST *year*

First Presbyterian Church | 1 Elm Street, Whitesboro, NY 13492 | 315.732.5111

*"Opening Doors, Minds, and Hearts: Serving Christ and Community."*

The Rev. George Cooper

E-Mail [fpcutica@gmail.com](mailto:fpcutica@gmail.com) | [www.fpcutica.net](http://www.fpcutica.net) | Follow us at [www.facebook.com/fpcutica](http://www.facebook.com/fpcutica)

## April Birthdays

- 2 Mike McHale
- 7 Matthew Blancovich
- 11 Beth Decker
- 24 Kayleigh Sturtevant
- 25 Marcia Bramhall
- 29 Gordon Evans



Coming next month



you are  
invited  
to...

Spring Tea

sat  
MAY 17 2025

at one o'clock in the afternoon

food - drink - raffle baskets

\$20 per person

reserve your seat at the table today!

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
1 Elm Street | Whitesboro, NY 13492

FOR TICKET INFORMATION CALL 315.732.5111