



# First news

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | UTICA  
JULY & AUGUST | 2023

## Recent Rainstorms & the Fruits of the Spirit

**.. the fruit of Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. – Galatians 5:22**

This has been a particularly dry spring in Central New York. When my wife and I left at the beginning of June for a couple of weeks of vacation in Canada our lawn was beginning to turn brown and climatologists were predicting that the hot, dry weather was rapidly leading to drought conditions. To our north, the hot, dry conditions sparked wildfires in Ontario and Quebec that dramatically impacted our air quality.

In the last week, the weather has turned cooler. The heavens have also opened. We have received several inches of rain, sometimes in the form of a gully whomper. Hopefully, half-empty reservoirs are being refilled and the depleted aquifer restored by our recent rainy weather.

Thanks to the sudden increase in rain levels, I am struggling to keep up with lawn chores at home. I just mowed the lawn three days ago and already it looks like it will need another trim tomorrow. The lawn is not the only challenge. The shrubs in front of our house seem to have suddenly grown several inches and can also benefit from a good trimming.

With the rain, plants and bulbs planted by the previous owner of our home in years gone by have produced the beautiful flowers we enjoy each year. Each spring we are treated to a gorgeous display of tulip, daffodil, and lilies of the valley blossoms. The peonies have already produced an impressive number of large blossoms with an alluring aroma. The day lilies that line the back of the house; the hydrangea, roses, and hosta by the garage; and lilacs along the other side of the house are all preparing to bloom.

As I have witnessed the drama of nature's awakening again this year, I am reminded of how often Jesus compared God's reign in our hearts and lives to the growth and care of plants. He talked about mustard seeds, fig trees, vineyards, and seeds sown in a variety of soils. I also reflect on how naturally the bulbs and plants around our house have come to life. With a little sunlight and water they quickly began to grow, come into flower, and will eventually produce seeds and fruit. They are doing what God intends them to do.

What does all this talk of rain and sun, plants and blossoms, have to do with us and our lives of faith? Perhaps, it is as simple as this: we too have been created to blossom and produce fruit. We have been fashioned by a loving creator to give glory to God as we live lives of beauty and purpose. We give glory to God when we allow God's Word to penetrate to our very roots and the living water of the Spirit to hydrate our lives. We give glory to God when we allow the sunshine of God's presence to shine into our lives through prayer and meditation. We give glory to God when we pluck up the weeds of negativity and despair that would choke out the fruits of the Spirit. We give glory to God as we reach out to heal the hurts of our neighbors near and far in acts of caring and compassion. We give glory to God as we bear fruit that produces a rich harvest of love, joy, and peace in our lives and world.

Grace and peace,  
Mark S. Caruana | Interim Pastor



FPC AND WMO

# CHURCH PICNIC

**JULY 30 TH 2023**

**KIRKLAND TOWN PARK**

3314 Post Street | Clinton

**Worship Service | 10:30 a.m.**  
**Pot Luck following worship**

Please RSVP 315-732-5111 or sign-up at church

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Directions from church to Kirkland Town Park - Follow route 12S (arterial) pass Utica Mutual make a left turn at light on to Route 12B to Clinton. Keep left at the fork to go on E. Park Row/Rt-12B. Turn right onto S. Park Row/Rt-12B. Turn left onto Franklin Ave./Rt-12B. Turn slight left onto Post St. The town park is on the left. We will be located at Pavilion #3.



This year First Presbyterian will be hosting our annual outdoor communion worship service and picnic. We appreciate another opportunity to get together outside for a annual church worship service and a picnic following, with games and relaxed conversation! The main entrée of hot dogs & hamburgers will be provided. Please RSVP and let us know what side dish, salad or dessert you will be bringing to this year our picnic. Held on Sunday, July 30th at 10:30 a.m. at the Kirkland Town Park in Clinton, follow the signs to Pavilion #3.

*Please excuse all errors and omission, slight mistakes and oversites.*



# SESSION NOTES

- The Session thanks Steve Best who paid for the tuning and repair of both the church organ and the sanctuary piano this spring.
- Thanks as well to all who continue to volunteer and cook in support of Your Neighbors who provide nutritious meals to shut-ins.
- The Session is committed to continue to actively support all the current and traditional partners in mission of the church (Seeds of Hope Food Pantry; Hope House; Clothes Closet, among them) even as we prepare for relocation of our place of worship.

take note

• All are encouraged to participate in the process of relocation. The Session seeks your input, your hopes, for the future of the church and life of the congregation. Look for coming opportunities to meet with the Session, gather together, and by all means communicate to us your thoughts and desires as we consider our options.

## PER CAPITA

We all work together to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ on many levels and in many places. The *per capita* is a financial assessment based on church membership which every congregation is responsible to pay. Our tradition is to include it as a line item in the budget. However, many congregations ask (never require) their members to pay their personal share in addition to their pledge. For 2023 each church member is assessed **\$45**. If you are able to pay your own *per capita*, it will have a positive impact on our cash flow.

JUST A LITTLE  
*Reminder*

**mailing or dropping their tithes and offerings in the plate. Please remember to continue fulfilling your pledges. You can mail your check to the church office at anytime.**

**Thank you to all who have been faithful in your pledge by**

## LAST MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS!

About 40 folks from the FPC and WMO gathered last month for a Middle Eastern feast catered by Zeina's Cafe, a great Utica Lebanese restaurant. After dinner Pastor



Mark shared images and commentary from his trip to the Holy Land earlier this year.

What a great time of sharing.



*Left to right: Bruce Smith, Ethan Lin, Ethan Lavallee, Dominic Fiacco at Grace Church, Utica*

What do these people have in common?  
See next page for the answers.



## COOK-IN

Cindy Molesky coordinated 100+ meals that were delivered to Your Neighbors to give to people who are not able to cook for themselves (hospital releases, other illness)...The meals go to the freezers at Zion Lutheran and will be distributed to people who need them by volunteers. There was a donation of food from Hamilton College and several church members also brought food. Thank you to all the volunteers who came out to package up the trays.

*Barb Shuck*



## ROAD RACE

The Boilermaker race will be held on Sunday, July 9th. Allow extra time in coming to church.



We are saddened to learn of the death of William "Bill" Evans, 63, on April 11, 2023. The son of the late Dr. Edward G. Evans and Theresa White Ibbotson, Bill loved the woods and wildlife, and he often came to church dressed in rugged camping gear, ready to talk about his Adirondack experiences to anyone who shared his interests. He was especially fond of Welsh hymns and major church festivals and rarely missed Christmas and Easter services. Bill is also remembered for being kind to everyone. The family asks that remembrances be posted at <https://www.johnmattfuneralhome.com/obituary/william-bill-a-evans>

## MISSION NEWS!

During July and August we will be partnering with The Center during their welcome kit drive. The drive is to provide new arrivals with essential items. The mission team is asking us to bring in items for a household cleaning starter box. Let's see how many starter boxes we can make. Collection box is located in the sanctuary.

### Household Cleaning Starter Box

- Dish soap
- Cleaning rags
- All-purpose cleaner
- Paper towels
- Toilet paper
- Broom and dustpan/ Mop
- Laundry detergent
- Package of light bulbs
- Garbage bags
- Trash can, with lid preferred

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

- ♦ Admin Team - July 12th @ 11 a.m.
- ♦ Session Meeting - July 19th @ 11 a.m.
- ♦ Session Meeting - August 16th @ 11 a.m.

There will be NO Coffee Hour during the months of July & August. Coffee Hour will resume in September



## ANSWERS:

1. All have studied organ with Steve Best at First Church.
2. Both Ethans study piano with WMO musician Fiona Peters.
3. All have played the organ as part of services at First Church.



# LAST MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED!

The recent Molly's House Coffee house event held on June 10th in the church house proved to be an overwhelming success, drawing a number of attendees and creating a vibrant atmosphere of community and connection. Coffee and food enthusiasts gathered to



celebrate their shared love for music and engage in meaningful conversations.



## DOZENS OF AREA GRADUATES RECEIVE SCHOLARSHIPS AT DOLLARS FOR SCHOLARS CEREMONY



*Dozens of students gather for the annual Utica Dollars for Scholars annual scholarship award ceremony on Thursday, June 15, at the First Presbyterian Church in Utica. More than \$166,000 in scholarships were awarded.*

The Utica Dollars for Scholars hosted its annual scholarship award ceremony on Thursday, June 15, at the First Presbyterian Church, recognizing and honoring exceptional individuals who have made remarkable achievements and talents across various categories, ranging from arts and entertainment to business and philanthropy.

This program is a locally controlled scholarship foundation which is a volunteer-driven nonprofit organization affiliated with Scholarship America. Since its inception, more than 2,200 students have received more than \$2 million in scholarships.

It serves as a platform to acknowledge the tireless efforts and groundbreaking work of individuals who have excelled in their chosen fields, leaving an indelible mark on society.

Throughout the event, a diverse array of awards were presented to students from 18 local school districts in Herkimer and Oneida counties wards.

This organization seeks and maintains relationships with local businesses, families, service organizations, The Community Foundation, and donors. Through this they have established annual awards and special funds recognizing excellence and future potential in students.



# Firstnews

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NO SUBSCRIPTION FEE



First Presbyterian Church | 1605 Genesee Street, Utica, NY 13501

315.732.5111

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

The Rev. Mark S. Caruana | Interim Pastor

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

## Birthdays

### JULY

- 4 Beverly Ryan
- 10 Charlene Zegarelli
- 13 Carol Colerick
- 28 John Faust
- 30 Betty Abel-Jellencich
- 31 Peggy Beaton

### AUGUST

- 1 Judy Blair
- 2 Valerie Phillips
- 10 George Abel

## Anniversaries

### JULY

- 12 John & Mary Wilde



On July 5th, the church office will start its summer hours on Tuesday through Friday from 9AM-1PM. Regular hours will resume after Labor Day.

## Holiday



The church office will be closed on July 3rd & 4th, recognition of Independence Day!