



First news

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | WHITESBORO, NY

JUNE 2026

Growing Through the Chaos —

By Pastor George Cooper

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23)

We live in crazy times. There have been 158 mass shootings in the USA thus far in 2026. This includes hate crimes at Jewish synagogues and Islamic centers but also at universities, schools, residential areas, retail areas, and nightlife. Protest marches organized to be peaceful turn violent. We are frustrated with deep political polarization. Social media fuels hatred with false narratives and mean-spirited reactions to other posts. Wars keep happening and are hard to interpret as having a clear and beneficial purpose. Extremists dominate political parties and many civic organizations. The cost of living keeps climbing with no relief in sight. Trust has eroded for most professions. Forty-nine percent of Americans feel angry on any given day.

I could go on, but I am depressing myself, and I am certain you as well. Even as people of faith who worship a God of love, we find ourselves distraught by all the chaos around us. How can we experience the Christian faith to rise above the madness around us?

The “Fruits of the Spirit” passage above sounds idyllic and only possible for people living in isolation. In reality, Paul was writing to a church living in chaos. The region was a

melting pot of nationalities and religions at odds with each other. Anarchists wanted to overthrow Rome. The church was dealing with false information about how to be a follower of Christ. Freedom in Christ was leading to ungodly, disturbing, and immoral behavior. This is illustrated by a list Paul provided in 5:19-21. “The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Goodness! Written almost 2,000 years ago and yet, very descriptive of life around us today. For the next three months of Summer, the messages on Sunday will focus on finding and experiencing the “Fruits of the Spirit” amid all the distractions and chaos. Even in the craziness, there can be “love, joy, and peace.” Join us every Sunday at 10:00! Consider this your personal invitation.

First Presbyterian Church to Participate in a—

VILLAGE WIDE

Sale



Friday, June 19th & Saturday, June 20th

Friday, 9 - 4 & Saturday, 9 - 2

Donations Accepted

Drop-off times:

Mon. 6/15—Wed. 6/17

9-2 ONLY!

(please do not bring items during service times)

Calling all to Come, Sell, and Shop

@ FPC parking lot corner of

Hurry Space is Limited

2 day spaces \$25

1 day spaces \$15

for information 315.732.5111

Village-Wide Garage Sale & Church Parking Lot Sale

Get ready for a big event coming to our community — the Whitesboro Village-Wide Garage Sale! This year, our church will once again be hosting a special Parking Lot Sale, giving everyone a chance to participate, declutter, and make a little extra money.

There are two ways to participate:

1. Rent a Space and Sell Your Own Items

Reserve a space in the church parking lot and sell your treasures during the garage sale weekend! Whether you have clothing, furniture, toys, household items, décor, or hidden treasures tucked away, this is a great opportunity to clean out, connect with the community, and earn some extra cash.

Space Donation Fees:

\$25 donation for both days

\$15 donation for one day

Spaces are limited, so reserve your spot early!

2. Donate Items to the Church Sale

Would you rather donate than sell? We gladly welcome clean, gently used items for the church's sale table. Donations may be dropped off at the church **Monday, June 22 through Wednesday, June 24.**

Now is the perfect time to start sorting through closets, basements, attics, and garages. Join in the excitement of the village-wide festivities while supporting a fun community event at the church. Whether you choose to sell your own items or donate to the church sale, we hope you'll take part in this exciting opportunity!

Honoring Barb Schuck Through a Continuing Tradition

The Presbyterian Women (PW) group is pleased to share a special way we will continue to honor the memory and legacy of Barb Schuck.

For many years, Barb faithfully cared for the coffee ministry at church, helping create a warm and welcoming atmosphere of fellowship following worship and gatherings. Whether sharing a warm cup and conversation or simply helping people feel at home, Barb understood that Fair Trading was an important and shared that with the church. Equal Exchange is a pioneer and the largest worker-owned Fair Trade company in the United States. Founded in 1986, the organization was created to challenge traditional global trade models that favor large corporations, and instead empower small-scale farmers and connect them directly with consumers.

In loving memory of Barb and in recognition of her faithful service, the PW women have graciously committed to continuing the purchase of coffee for this year during fellowship time. This meaningful gesture honors Barb's dedication to the mission of the church.

A simple cup of coffee may seem like a small thing, but it often becomes the setting for friendship, encouragement, laughter, and caring conversations. Through this ministry, Barb's legacy of kindness lives on in the life of our church family.

We thank the PW women for this thoughtful tribute and for their support of the ministries that bring us together in fellowship.

"May every cup shared remind us of Barb's generous heart and faithful spirit."



Garage Sale Needs!

We are in need of 6-ft. or 8-ft. folding tables to use during the sale. If you are able to lend a table or two, please contact the church office. Thank you for helping make this event a success!

SESSION NOTES—

A heartfelt **thank you** to the Fellowship Team for generously donating the new fans in the Sanctuary. Your kindness and thoughtful contribution are greatly appreciated and will help provide added comfort for all who worship and gather in this sacred space. Thank you for your continued support and care for our church family!

Growing in Faith: June Sermon Series

Fruit of the Spirit

As we journey through the Sundays of June, we invite you to join us for an inspiring new sermon series, “**Fruit of the Spirit**,” centered on the transforming work of God within our lives. Rooted in Scripture and grounded in practical faith, this series will explore how the Holy Spirit cultivates spiritual fruit in believers—not through striving alone, but through intentional relationships with God, others, and ourselves.

June 7, 2026

Second Sunday After Pentecost

Scripture: Galatians 5:16-21; John 15:1-17

We begin our series with an introduction to the Fruit of the Spirit and what it means to live a Spirit-filled life. Jesus reminds us in John’s Gospel that we are called to remain connected to the vine so that spiritual fruit may naturally grow within us. This opening message will explore how the Fruit of the Spirit is not something we manufacture through effort or self-discipline alone, but something nurtured through intentional relationships—with God, with others, and within ourselves. Come discover the foundation for spiritual growth and faithful living.

June 14, 2026

Third Sunday After Pentecost

Sermon Title: *Upward Relationship with God – LOVE*

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13; 1 John 4:7-21

The first fruit we will explore is **Love**, the foundation upon which all other spiritual fruit grows. Scripture teaches us that God is love, and we are called to reflect that same unconditional, sacrificial, and serving love in our daily lives. This message will examine how love for God and love for neighbor are deeply connected, and why without love, the other fruits become weakened and less abundant. Together, we will reflect on how Christ calls us to love in ways that transform both ourselves and the world around us.

June 21, 2026

Fourth Sunday After Pentecost

Sermon Title: *Upward Relationship with God – JOY*

Scripture: Psalm 16; James 1:3-12

In a world often driven by circumstances, we will explore the deeper meaning of **Joy**—a supernatural gladness that comes not from what happens around us, but from God’s presence within us. Unlike happiness, which can fade with changing circumstances, joy remains steady even through hardships and trials. This sermon will encourage us to discover how faith in God provides strength, hope, and deep gladness even in life’s most difficult moments.

June 28, 2026

Fifth Sunday After Pentecost

Sermon Title: *Upward Relationship with God – PEACE*

Scripture: John 14:25-27; Philippians 4:4-9

We conclude the month by reflecting on the gift of **Peace**—**Shalom**, a peace that is far greater than the world can offer. Biblical peace is more than the absence of conflict; it is wholeness, calmness, and trust rooted in God’s presence. Through the Spirit, believers are empowered to face life’s challenges without fear, becoming peacemakers and living examples of God’s reconciling love. Join us as we learn how trusting God can bring peace that surpasses all understanding.

We invite you to worship with us each Sunday in June as together we seek to grow deeper in faith and bear the Fruit of the Spirit in our daily lives.

Meeting & Events

Worship & Prayer

Worship — June 21st - Father’s Day

Service & Outreach

Worship Team -- June 3rd @ 2 p.m.

Communications Team - June 3rd @ 3 pm

No Choir Practice—June 6th

Session Meeting—June 17th @ 1 p. m.

Faith Fundraising Team—June 17th @ 3 pm

Fellowship & Community

Craft Connection—June 15th @ 1:30 pm

Garage & Parking Lots Sale - June 19th & 20th

Prayer List

We trust in the power of prayer and in the comfort it brings, no matter what season of life we find ourselves in. Prayer connects us to God and to one another, especially in moments when words are hard to find. If you or someone you love would like to be included on our prayer list, please reach out to the church office. It would be our privilege to pray with you and for you. Let us continue to hold one another in love—lifting each other up with faithful, heartfelt prayer.

“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7

- Reid Simpson
- Tom Harrington
- Davis Family
- Capraro Family
- Morris Family
- Barb Wuest
- Mariana Tata
- Linda Weise
- Judy Westerhoff
- Jon Fuller
- Bill Smith
- Ruth Ward
- Helen Lynch
- Luke & Family
- Jessica Peters
- Jose Polanco
- Bev Ryan
- John Dimpleby
- David Coons
- Sabrina Misiaszek
- Mike Coluzzi
- Loraine Waterbury



Shelter Opened —

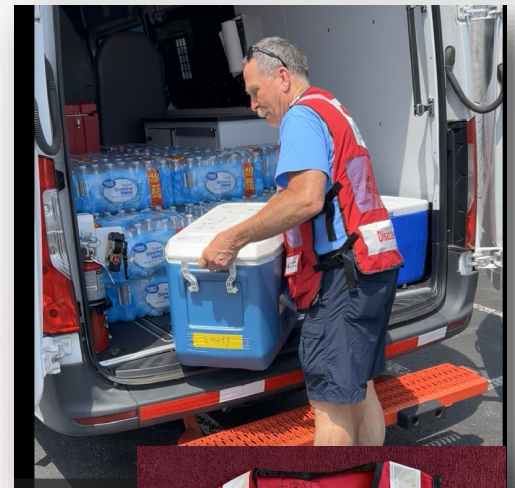
On Friday, May 22, a coordinated emergency response was put into action when a temporary shelter was opened by the American Red Cross here at First Church to support families displaced by the John Street Fire. Four families were welcomed into the shelter, which was quickly established to provide safety, warmth, and stability during a difficult and uncertain time. What might normally take days of preparation was organized in a matter of hours, reflecting both urgency and compassion in action.

American Red Cross

reflecting both urgency and compassion in action.

Anna and her team played a central role in making the shelter operational. Every detail was carefully coordinated—from intake and registration to arranging sleeping accommodations, meals, and essential supplies. Their steady leadership ensured that each family arriving on site was met with care, dignity, and a sense of calm in the midst of disruption.

First Church also played a meaningful part in the response effort. We for years have had an agreement with the Red Cross to be an emergency shelter. Staff and volunteers worked behind the scenes and on the ground to ensure needs were met quickly and efficiently. In recognition of this commitment, the church's Office Manager, Beth Decker, was presented with an honorary disaster relief vest, symbolizing her dedication and readiness to respond when the call came. The gesture reflected not only individual effort, but the broader spirit of service shared across the congregation. The response to the John Street Fire highlighted what can happen when organizations and individuals work together with purpose. In a moment of crisis, coordination, compassion, and willingness to serve made a tangible difference in the lives of those affected. As the shelter transitions out of active use, the impact of this response remains clear: four families were given immediate refuge, and a community demonstrated once again its capacity to care for its neighbors in times of need.



Thank You for Supporting Community Outreach

Our church family continues to be a shining example of compassion and generosity through our ongoing community outreach efforts. As another school year comes to a close, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported our mission of caring for neighbors in need.

A special thank you to those who have contributed snacks for students and staff at **West Road Elementary School**. With approximately 50% of students coming from underserved households, these simple donations provide meaningful support during the school day. Your generosity helps ensure that children have access to snacks that can offer comfort, nourishment, and encouragement when they need it most.

We also extend sincere appreciation to everyone who continues to support the **Seeds of Hope Food Pantry** through donations of food and essential supplies. Because of your faithful giving, this important ministry remains a source of hope and assistance for individuals and families throughout our community facing food insecurity and hardship.

Your kindness reflects the love and compassion of Christ in tangible ways. Thank you for helping us continue to extend care, nourishment, and hope to our neighbors. Together, we are making a difference—one act of generosity at a time.

Donations for both ministries may still be brought to the church at your convenience. Thank you for your continued support and servant hearts.

National Letter Carrier Drive on
May 9th,
Over 900 pounds of non-perishable
food was donated to Seeds of Hope

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

SPREAD GOOD VIBES THIS JUNE



Good vibes grow when we share them. Every \$2.50 reusable Fight Hunger Bag purchased during June at our selected Hannaford location gives back \$1 to our organization. That's how we can spread good vibes that truly make a difference!

Seeds of Hope News —

We are so excited to share that, for the entire month of JUNE, Seeds of Hope has been selected by store leadership at the Kellogg Ave., New Hartford Hannaford to receive a \$1 donation from every purchase of the \$2.50 Community Bag. This is a great way to broaden awareness and help our cause. The Community Bag Program facilitates community support with the goal of making a difference where shoppers live and work. Over \$2.2 million has been donated to more than 6,000 nonprofit organizations since the program launched in October 2015. Let's get started! Share the news with friends and family. Call, send emails, and post on social media. The more people who purchase the Community Bag in JUNE, the greater the donation we will receive from Hannaford.



50 Kellogg Road, New Hartford NY

Why Church Still Matters

In today's fast-paced and ever-changing world, many people wonder: *Does church still matter?* With busy schedules, endless distractions, and worship services available online, it can be tempting to think church attendance is no longer important. Yet now, perhaps more than ever, the church continues to play a vital role in our lives and communities.

Church is much more than a building or a Sunday morning tradition. It is a place where people gather to worship, pray, grow in faith, and support one another through life's joys and struggles. It is a place where friendships are formed, burdens are shared, and hope is renewed.

When life becomes difficult, the church becomes a source of strength. In seasons of grief, illness, uncertainty, or loneliness, the church family often steps forward with meals, prayers, encouragement, and care. We are reminded that we are not meant to walk through life alone. If you know someone in need as they navigate the world around them reach out and contact the church, help, thoughtfulness and kindness will find its way.

Church also helps us stay grounded in a world that often feels chaotic and divided. Through scripture, worship, and fellowship, we are reminded of God's love, mercy, and purpose for our lives. We learn to love one another, forgive more freely, serve our neighbors, and grow deeper in faith.

Hebrews 10:24-25 reminds us:

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together... but encouraging one another."

Church is not perfect because people are not perfect. Yet despite its imperfections, it remains one of God's greatest gifts — a community of faith where we can worship together, encourage one another, and be reminded that God is always at work among us.

Whether you attend every week or have been away for some time, know this: there is a place for you here. Church still matters because people still matter, faith still matters, and God's love continues to bring us together.



Cook-In

for
YOUR NEIGHBOR

INC

Good Food
Strong Community
Caring Hearts

JUNE 3RD
@ **11 AM**

Let's cook together to make a difference!

CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE
OR
EMAIL CINDY MOLESKY @
cindymolesky35@gmail.com

Sign-up
today

JEWTICA
JEWISH CULTURAL FESTIVAL OF UTICA, NY
JUNE 7, 2026 | 12-4PM | UTICA JCC | WWW.JEWTICA.COM

Jewtica is an annual festival celebrating the rich heritage and traditions of the Jewish community in Utica, New York and around the world.

One June 7, 2026 this event will bring together people from many different backgrounds to experience music, food, art, and history of the Jewish people.

—Past performers on the Jewtica stage include Isle of Klezbos and Paul Shapiro's Ribs & Brisket Revue. We have also hosted delicious demonstrations from Jewish food experts like Beejhy Barhany and Jeffrey Yoskowitz. Join in, this June at the Utica Jewish Community Center for an unforgettable celebration of Jewish culture. All are welcome!

In Proverbs 20:7, it is written, *"The righteous man walks in his integrity; his children are blessed after him."* Embody this verse through daily acts of kindness and sacrifice, nurturing in faith and helping us grow in our relationship with God.

\$5.00 entrant fee due at arrival
Judging for Best of Show and Peoples Choice
register via email: ppotasiewicz@whitesboro.us

Annual Summer Solstice Car Show.
Wednesday, June 19th @ 5 PM to dusk

Community News

Come and enjoy the beautiful setting of showing off your car under the shade of the trees at the Ray Daviau Park at the Whitesboro Village Green.

You have probably heard **Ethan Lin**, a high school junior known throughout the area for his spirited performances on organ, piano, and violin! Yes, he plays all three instruments in a style that thrills us and makes us a little envious! On **Sunday, June 14, at 4:00**, he will open the season at the historic **1757 Old Palatine Church**, on Rt. 5, a few miles east of St. Johnsville, NY, with a "Triple Crown" recital featuring all three instruments. Even people who don't know they love classical music will love this concert. Ethan's mom, who gets to hear him practice every day, says it this way: **"I like every piece of music in the program!"**

The Old Palatine Church is about 45 minutes east of Utica, a few miles east of St. Johnsville. It's on the left side of the road, sitting in the middle of a field, seemingly by itself. Built of native stone, it has a remarkably high steeple topped by a golden rooster. It comes up quickly after St. Johnsville, so keep watching.

This is a great opportunity to show appreciation to one of the area's young musicians, recognizing how Ethan and other young people contribute so significantly to the arts! I invite you join the celebration!

ILIN LI
IN CONCERT
niioln bns ,nsgro
2nuh9 - 400 p.m.
Old Palatine Church
Rt. 5, Whitesboro, NY 13257

May Highlights



Memorial Day



Nice job FIRST CHURCH for reaching out to the community on parade day!

Thanks to all who organized and



Great Time!



Good Food!



SOLD OUT!



Spring Tea



Firstnews

"FIRSTnews" is published monthly.

NO SUBSCRIPTION FEE

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 | Pastor

E-Mail fpcutica@gmail.com | Follow us at www.facebook.com/fpcutica

June Birthdays

10 Barbara Hallenbeck
25 Paul Franz

Anniversaries

4 Jim & Peg Beaton



The church office will be closed the week of June 22–30. If you need pastoral care during this time, please call the office and your call will be returned or email pastorgeorge1stpres@outlook.com

On July 1st, the church office will start its summer hours on M-F from 9AM-1PM.

Regular hours will resume after Labor Day.

