

FIRST NEWS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | UTICA ~ WHITESBORO
JULY & AUGUST | 2025

SOMETHING NEW THIS WAY COMES

As a teenager, I loved reading Science Fiction. I enjoyed the works of Arthur C. Clark (2001: A Space Odyssey), J.R.R. Tolkien (The Lord of the Rings), Frank Herbert (Dune), George Orwell (1984, War of the Worlds, and The Time Machine), Isaac Asimov (The Foundation Trilogy), Robert Heinlein (Stranger in a Strange Land and Starship Troopers), Jules Verne (20,000 Leagues Under the Sea and A Journey to the Center of the Earth) and many others. In the off-season in Chautauqua, there was not a lot to do except shovel snow, rake leaves, and read books.

One of the authors was Ray Bradbury, who wrote Fahrenheit 451 and The Martian Chronicles. He also wrote Something Wicked This Way Comes. The author masterfully combined horror and fantasy in such that it was hard to put the book down once it started. It was also a movie in 1983.

In the history of Christianity, leaders have frequently tried to take the secular, even in its darkest hours, and make it sacred. Great preachers came from a dark beginning. Great hymns of the church were bar tunes put to words of faith. Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses contributed to the Reformation. Even simple men like me have had moments of inspiration. When I first read Isaiah 43:18-19, I thought of Ray Bradbury's novel, Something Wicked This Way Comes. In my Bible, I have these two verses circled, and I wrote in the margin, "Something New This Way Comes." The passage states,

¹⁸ "Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.

¹⁹ See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland." — Isaiah 43:18-19

First Presbyterian has moved on to something new. We are "not dwelling on the past." The curse of the church, "We've always done it this way," is nonexistent. There is a new location. A new pastor. New initiatives like Disciple Bible Study, and a renewal of past ministries like the Prayer Chain, Congregational Care, and Molly's House. The Lenten Series was a tremendous success in introducing members and friends to nonprofits serving the community. We honored and dedicated the Whitesboro Fire Department during the worship service. There is an intentional focus on serving the elderly in our community.

Something New will continue to come this way. This Summer, the Session is evaluating the First Presbyterian Church's Mission and Vision that will lead to additional new ways to serve the neighborhood and community. Plentiful Gifts identified strengths and will soon have recommendations for training for members in ministry opportunities. Creative ideas are being explored. Please pray for your First Presbyterian leaders as we look to the future.

Summer is a time for vacations, travel, picnics, and renewal. Behind the scenes, **the Holy Spirit is preparing us for Something New This Way Comes.**

-Pastor George

JOIN US FOR A...

CHURCH PICNIC

JULY 27 TH 2025

KIRKLAND TOWN PARK

3314 Post Street | Clinton

WORSHIP SERVICE | 10 AM

Pot Luck following worship

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

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 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 27th at 10 am at the Kirkland Town Park in Clinton, follow the signs to Pavilion #3.

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

SESSION

take note

Mission and Vision

Evening Retreat – July 16th

Open to Everyone!

We invite you to join us for a special Mission and Vision Evening Retreat on Tuesday, July 16th, beginning at 6:30 PM. This important gathering will take the place of the regular Session meeting and is open to everyone in the congregation.

The retreat is a time for listening, dreaming, and discerning together as we reflect on who we are as a church, who God is calling us to be, and how we can faithfully live out our mission through conversation, prayer, and shared visioning.

Light refreshments will be served. Please mark your calendars and plan to be part of this important evening!

PER CAPITA - 2025

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 to the Presbytery of Utica. 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 2025 each church member is assessed \$46. If you are able to pay your own *per capita*, it will have a positive impact on our cash flow.

JUST A LITTLE
Reminder

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



Don't
Forget
Your
Pledge
This Summer

MISSION NEWS

Christmas in July Collection Drive

We're collecting (new and in original packaging—not used) comforters, blankets, and pillows throughout the month of July to benefit **Sleep in Heavenly Peace**, a nonprofit dedicated to ensuring that no child sleeps on the floor in our town.

christmas
in July

Your donation of **new bedding items** will help give a child a warm and cozy place to sleep.

Items needed: **ONLY NEW!**

- **BOYS twin sheet sets**
- **Pillows**
- **Comforters—Twin size**
- **Blankets — Twin size**

Please bring your donations to the church no later than **Sunday, July 27th**. All donations will be loaded up and delivered to SHP! Let's spread Christmas cheer in the middle of summer—and make a difference that lasts all year long!

CHRISTMAS IN JULY FOR SHP!

PILLOW & BLANKET DRIVE

THE MONTH OF JULY!

PLEASE DONATE ONLY NEW PILLOWS, BLANKETS AND COMFORTERS TO HELP US SHARE THE LOVE WITH SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE!



DROP OFF:

BOX IS LOCATED IN THE SANCTUARY

sponsored by the missions team
first presbyterian church, whitesboro

Made with PosterMyWall.com



Collecting Non-Perishable Food Items
SEEDS OF HOPE food pantry is in need of non-perishable food items to support families and individuals facing food insecurity. We are calling on **FIRST CHURCH** during **JULY, AUG., and SEPT.**

ITEMS TO DONATE—

- Peanut Butter and Jelly
- Canned meats (chicken, tuna, vienna sausages, etc)
- Canned Vegetables
- Canned Fruit
- Canned soups and chili
- Bottles Juice
- Snacks
- Macaroni and cheese
- Pasta and Sauces
- Tuna and hamburger helper
- Mashed potatoes (Instant)
- Beans (one-pound bags or canned)
- Rice (one-pound bags)
- Breakfast cereal

Non-perishable food donations are crucial as they have a long shelf life and can be stored easily, ensuring a steady supply of nutritious food for those in need. Your contributions will help fill the pantry shelves and provide reliable meals to many in our community. Donations can be dropped off at church and place them in the box provided. Together, we can fight hunger and make a significant impact. Thank you for your support and generosity!

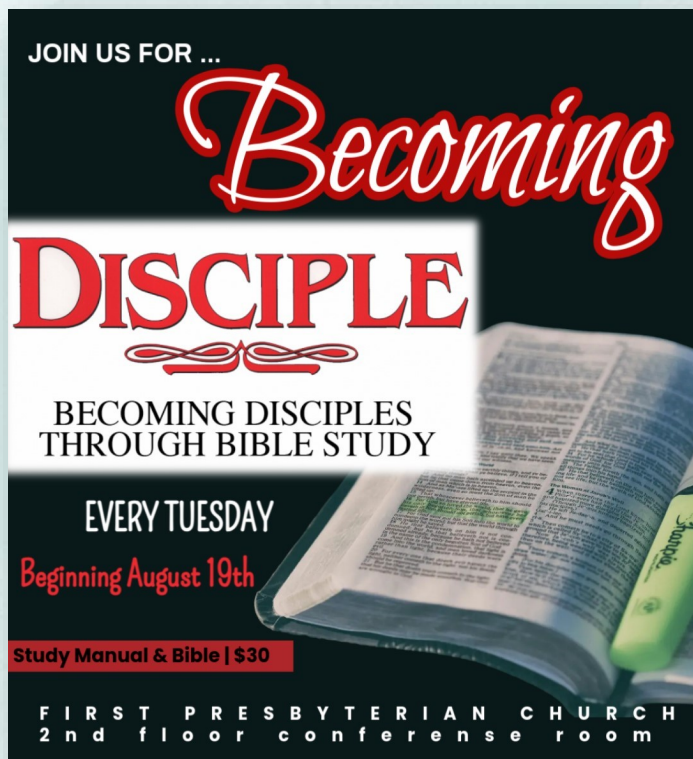


First Church Family! We need you —
 Our worship services are made more welcoming and meaningful thanks to the dedication of volunteers who serve as **Greeters, Ushers, and Liturgists**. We are currently looking for individuals who are willing to share their time and gifts in these important roles. **Greeters** provide a warm welcome at the door, **Ushers** assist with seating and offering, and **Liturgists** help lead the congregation in worship by reading scripture and prayers.

If you feel called to serve in any of these roles, please sign up on the **sheet located on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall**. Training and support will be provided if needed.

Your participation enriches our worship and helps create a spirit of hospitality and inclusion. Thank you for considering how you might be part of this vital ministry!





Disciple I - Becoming Disciples Through Bible Study

Starting **Tuesday, August 19th**. Pastor George will be facilitating the Bible Study. Starting in August allows the class to skip the week of Thanksgiving and complete the Old Testament before Christmas.

The entire study is 34 weeks. Each session is approximately 2 ½ hours. Prior Bible Study knowledge is not necessary. In addition to learning the Bible, the small group experience enhances learning and mutual support. The class is limited to 12 participants. **DISCIPLE** is a program of disciplined Bible study aimed at developing strong Christian leaders. The study gives the Old and New Testaments equal time, emphasizing the wholeness of the Bible as a revelation of God. DISCIPLE draws upon the work of scholars, the personal Bible reading and study of the participant, and dynamic group discussion to aid understanding of the Bible. The first study in the program is **DISCIPLE**:

Becoming Disciples Through Bible Study.

It serves as the basis for all other studies in the **DISCIPLE** family that follow. Over the course of 34 weeks, the study covers the entire Bible (Old & New Testaments) following the biblical story from Creation to the New Jerusalem. The cost per- person is \$30, which includes the Study Manual and Bible.

We will use the same Bible for everyone to make it easier to find passages by page number. Please sign up on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall so adequate materials can be ordered. Also, include e-mail address and indicate your time preference.

SPECIAL GUEST - SUNDAY, AUGUST 17TH

Welcoming Timothy Cooper – Sunday, August 17

We are delighted to announce that Timothy Cooper will be joining us on Sunday, August 17, bringing his exceptional talents and passion for music to our community.

Who is Timothy Cooper?

A proud alumnus of the University of Colorado, Timothy holds a Master of Music in organ performance. He's amassed decades of experience as a composer, producer, and music director—ranging from his groundbreaking work on Las Vegas hotel-spectaculars to leading music in diverse faith-based communities colorado.edu.

Community Connection: After the service, we invite everyone to a casual meet-and-greet during coffee hour. This is a wonderful opportunity to welcome Timothy personally and hear about his journey—from CU Boulder to Vegas productions and beyond.

Mark your calendars for Sunday, August 17, and join us in giving Timothy a warm and enthusiastic welcome. His presence promises to elevate our community's music and inspire us all.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ♦ **Admin Team -**
~ Wednesday, July 16th @ 11 a.m.
- ♦ **Mission & Vision Retreat**
~ Wednesday, July 16th @ 6:30 p.m.
- ♦ **Worship Team -**
~ Wednesday, August 13th @ 6:30 p.m.
- ♦ **Session Meeting**
~ Wednesday, August 30th @ 1 p. m.

JUNE'S HIGHLIGHTS!



A Historic Visit: Sir Lafayette Comes to Whitesboro *June 10th Event Celebrated with Community Pride*

On **June 10th**, the Village of Whitesboro welcomed a special and memorable visit from **Sir Lafayette**, the renowned reenactor and historian portraying **General Marquis de Lafayette**, the French hero of the American Revolutionary War.

The visit was part of a larger celebration honoring Lafayette's historical journey through the United States 200 years ago during his grand tour of the nation in 1824–1825. His original journey included stops in many towns and villages to thank the people of America for their fight for liberty—and now, two centuries later, Whitesboro was honored to take part in the commemorative tour.

Sir Lafayette was met with great enthusiasm by community members, local officials, and history enthusiasts. Dressed in full period attire, he delivered an inspiring and engaging presentation, sharing stories of the Revolution, his close relationship with George Washington, and his admiration for the American people's pursuit of freedom.

The event included a formal welcome, music, refreshments, and opportunities for attendees to ask questions and take photos with Sir Lafayette. It was a day filled with education, reflection, and celebration of our shared heritage.

A heartfelt thank you to **Sue Lorraine** (Village Historian) all the volunteers, organizers, and guests who helped make this visit such a success. Moments like these remind us of the deep roots of liberty and friendship that continue to shape our nation's story.

JUNE'S HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED!

The recent Molly's House Coffee house event held on June 6th proved to be an well attended 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.

MOHAWK VALLEY GIVES -- SEPTEMBER 19TH

Supporting Seeds of Hope Food Pantry

Mark your calendars for **Thursday, September 19th**, as our church proudly participates in the **Mohawk Valley Gives** campaign—a 24-hour online giving event that brings the community together to support local nonprofits making a difference.



This year, our focus is on raising funds for the **Seeds of Hope Food Pantry**, a vital ministry that serves individuals and

families facing food insecurity in our area. The pantry continues to grow in both reach and impact, and your support helps ensure that shelves stay stocked and hearts stay nourished.

Our goal as a church is to **rally support and raise funds** to sustain and expand the good work of Seeds of Hope. Every gift—large or small—helps us move closer to a future where no one in our community has to wonder where their next meal will come from.



We'll be sharing more details as the day approaches, including how to give and how to help spread the word. Thank you in advance for being part of this important effort to plant seeds of compassion, dignity, and hope. Let's make **September 19th** a day of generosity and impact—**together!**

COOK-IN

Join us for our next Cook-In for Your-Neighbors which will take place on **Wednesday, July 23rd at 10 AM**. This event is a wonderful opportunity for us all to come together, share meals for those who are shut-in, and enjoy each other's company. As usual we want to make this event a success, we need your help! **Please sign up on the bulletin board** to bring specific items listed on the sheet. Your contributions are greatly appreciated and ensure that we have what we need for everyone to enjoy.



WITH SYMPATHY

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the family and friends of **Bradley Evans**, who passed away unexpectedly at his home in New York Mills on **Monday, June 23, 2025**, at the age of 67.

Brad made his home in New York Mills. He was a friend of our church community and was faithfully brought to worship at the Genesee Street church by **Mike McHale**, who shared his friendship and care with Brad over the years.

THANKS

A heartfelt thank you goes out to Cindy Molesky and Judy Miller who tirelessly coordinate and cook each month for our Hope House Mission. Your dedication and hard work make a significant difference in our community, and we are incredibly grateful for your continued support.



Firstnews

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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 | www.fpcutica.net | Follow us at www.facebook.com/fpcutica

Birthdays

JULY

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

AUGUST

- 2 Valerie Phillips



Anniversaries

JULY

- 12 John & Mary Wilde



The church office has start its summer hours on Tuesday through Friday from 9am-2 pm until Labor Day.

Holiday



The church office will be closed on **July 4th**, in recognition of Independence Day!