



JANUARY 2026



Pastor's Corner

An unintentional life accepts everything and does nothing. An intentional life embraces only the things that will add to the mission of significance.

-John C Maxwell

Each year, I choose a theme song for the upcoming year and three goals. This helps me work on areas of growth, develop new strengths, and have a foundation of focus for the inevitable distractions, as life is lived in a vacuum. As of this writing a theme song, which guides the goals, has yet to be determined.

As we enter a new year, 2026 and prepare for the Annual Meeting, I wanted to talk about setting intentions. At the meeting we will have a space to set a communal intention - an overall 2026 Ministry Theme.

Below is the process we will be using, but I wanted to give prayerful discernment time. If you are unable to attend the meeting in person, feel free to send in your thoughts on what our intentions should be for 2026.

A Suggested Process for Setting Intentions

1. Brainstorm
2. Define a Theme
3. Break into Smaller Steps/Action Steps
4. Ground it in Scripture
5. Commit to the Goal and Trust the process.

-Peace, Pastor Leah

February
News Articles
are due by
01/22

Contact US

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of Seneca Falls, NY

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Rev. Dr. Peter J. Crego-

Pastor Emeritus

Laurie Weller- Office Manager

Kae Hoyle- Treasurer

Jim Clark-Sexton

Jen Braun- Music Director

Carol Millis- Bell Choir

Director

Anne Millis – Clerk of Session

Session

Session meets every
2nd Thursday at 10am

Presently serving
Ruling Elders:

Jim Clark, Marion Crull, Dick

Damaske, David Hall, Kae

Hoyle, Ginny Konz, Anne Millis
and Susan Sholar

SESSION BRIEFS

At its Thursday, December 18th Meeting, the Session discussed several issues. The following is a brief overview:

- Pastor Leah opened the meeting with a reading and a prayer. A quorum was present; the Agenda and the November meeting minutes were approved.
- Clerk reported that a Thank You card was received from Barb Lohr. Also received letter from the Office of the Sheriff, requesting donations for Child Safety Care. Kae H. moved to give \$240 from the Jewel Fund. Dick D. seconded and it was approved.
- Treasurer Kae H. provided an update on the Operating Account - reported that Pledges are up to date, but Per Capita is behind. Total Revenue \$218,525.10 and Total Expenditures \$19,013.03.
- Pastor Leah moved to have Lorenzo Kenneth Saunders baptized at Christmas Eve service - seconded and approved. Two female inmates requested to be baptized on December 24th, also approved. Pastor served communion twice and conducted service at Huntington on December 3rd. Community Advent concert scheduled and will go caroling on December 22nd. Annual Meeting to be held on January 25th and ordination for new Elders Jim Hinman and Carol Millis on January 4th. The December 28th service will be led by Carol Millis with reading by Anne Millis. All approved giving \$50 gift cards to some Mynderse graduates.
- Christian Education - gave Christmas cards to jail inmates for them to send.
- Outreach - nothing to report.
- Parish Life/Membership - cards sent to all on membership list.
- Personnel - reviews to be written up.
- Property – windows to be put back in sanctuary soon. Discussion re: painting and wood replacement outside of church. Initial bids of \$35,000 - \$40,000; asking for additional bids. Dick D. moved to accept bids of \$100,000 or less. Kae H. seconded motion for painting and repair for church and Eastman Hall. Talk followed about BOCES helping, for learning experience, all approved this will be looked into. Property will discuss re: use of church during It's A Wonderful Life in 2026.
- Stewardship/Finance – Kae H. moved to collect Per Capita in the amount of \$66.43 per person in 2026. This includes funds for Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly, to be sent separately. Annual 2026 funds for Mission to be \$4,850 - same as in 2025. Motion made, seconded and approved.
- Worship & Music - decorating to be finished. Will be having more music.
- Other Business - closing of 4 Seneca Lane coming up this month.

Submitted by Anne Millis, Clerk of the Session



The next Session meeting will be held on Thursday, January 8th at 10am

January Birthdays



Iva Lay 01/01

Honey Gilbert 01/04

Barbara Lohr 01/05

Leah Ntuala 01/06

David Hall 01/17

Barb Van Kirk 01/20

Amy Guarino 01/26



WOMEN'S CIRCLE

Will Meet on Monday, January 5th at 12:30pm
Please be sure to join us!

Our annual Holiday Luncheon took place on December 1st in the Hawley Room - all brought a dish to share and, as you can see in the photos below, a great time was had by all!

Members and Friends
to Keep in Our
Thoughts

Jean Morris
3094 Andrews Road
Ransomville, NY 14131

Carol Rook
2878 Hopewell-
Manchester
Townline
Clifton Springs, NY 14432

Bea Jones
Living Center at Geneva -
North
75 Mason Street
Geneva, NY 14456
Room #239



Please remember
(personal care items,
dish & laundry
detergents, paper
napkins, bathroom
paper, cleaning
supplies, etc.)
as you shop



HOUSE OF CONCERN special item for JANUARY
IS PASTA & SAUCES

Personal care, household cleaning and paper product items are always needed and Canned Packaged Food is welcomed every month. Thanks to all who made monetary donations and to those who brought DIAPERS, food and other items in December.



CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

- It's a Wonderful Life Weekend: First Pres hosted many popular events at the church again this year, making for a fun-filled weekend with many guests attending. The "It's A Wonderful Life Festival" showed several short movies and a participation version of IAWL in the Social Hall, the Seneca Community Players put on their radio show in the sanctuary, and of course we were treated to a wonderful concert on Sunday by the Seneca Singers. It was a "wonderful" start to the holiday season and believe it or not, we already have competing requests to use the building again in 2026 for the 80th Anniversary of the movie.
- The Youth Group celebrated the season by going caroling at Huntington, making Christmas cards and of course meeting at First Pres for games and snacks. On Friday, January 9th they'll be at "The Hangout" again for their monthly Arcade Party - Middle School from 6pm to 8pm and High Schoolers from 8pm to 10pm. Youth Group will also get together on January 19th at 9am at the UMC to carpool to Geneva, NY for the Annual MLK, Jr. March.
- Christmas Eve was beautiful as always, with a Lessons and Carols Service and lovely live performances. Thanks to all who joined us!



- Our Coffee and Conversation group will meet on Tuesday, January 27th at Café 19, after taking a month off in December. Come by, order your favorite beverage, and chat with with your church friends.
- The Annual Meeting and Luncheon will be held on Sunday, January 25th after the worship service to approve the 2026 budget, renew the Pastor's contract, and discuss other business. Please be sure to bring a dessert to share. See you there!



WORSHIP



Join us online: www.fpressf.com on our YouTube Channel

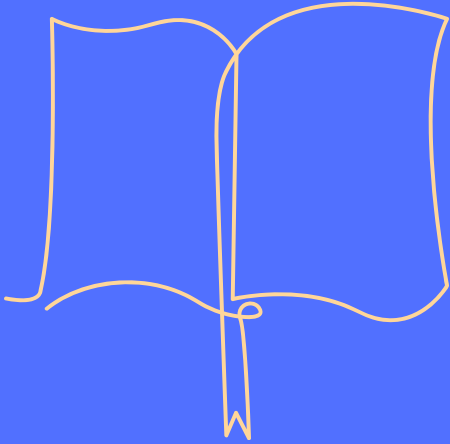
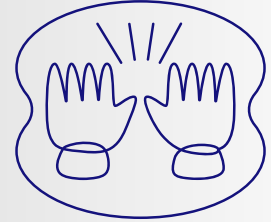
January 4 - Communion - Psalm 66:1-5; John 1:35-51

January 11 - Psalm 104:14-16; John 2:1-11

January 18 - Psalm 127:1-2; John 2:13-25

January 25 - Psalm 139:13-18; John 3:1-21

February 1 - Psalm 42:1-3; John 4:1-42



LITURGISTS



January 4 - Michele Edmondson

January 11 - Carol Millis

January 18 - Dick Damaske

January 25 - Susan Sholar

February 1 - Ginny Konz

GREETERS



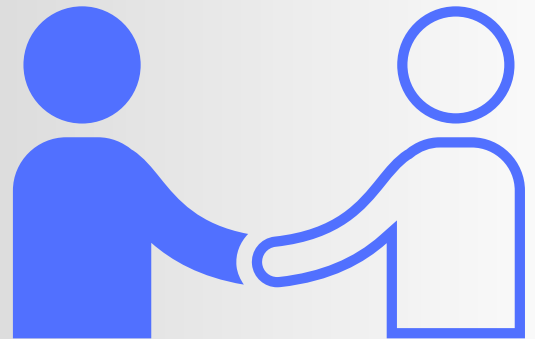
January 4 - Anne Millis & Susan Sholar

January 11 - To Be Determined

January 18 - To Be Determined

January 25 - To Be Determined

February 1 - David Hall & Jim Hinman



NURSERY



January 4 - Zoe Van Kirk

January 11 - Anne Millis

January 18 - Marion Crull

January 25 - Ginny Konz

February 1 - Carol Millis

COFFEE HOURS



January 4th - No Coffee Hour - Committee Meetings

January 11th - To Be Determined

January 18th - To Be Determined

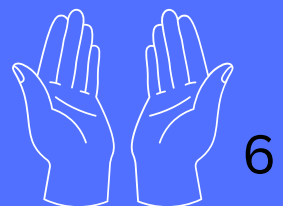
January 25th - No Coffee Hour - Annual Meeting and Luncheon

Please let us know if you have any suggestions for Coffee Hour Programs!

TO KEEP IN OUR PRAYERS

Kathleen Albert; Reatha Bishop; Robin Blundon; Lori and Steve Clayton; Jennifer Colbert; Peter Crego; Cindy Danielson; Joanie Duval; Michele Edmondson; Carl Feltus; Rita Frankenfield; Joanna Fuller; Diane and Cal Goodman; Cary Gordon and Family; Pat Gordon; Gerry Gray; Amy Guarino; Tori Guerina; Crystal Hanes; Jim Hinman; Cindy Hinman-Cosola; Susan Horton; Bea Jones; our Law Enforcement Officers, Firefighters and EMTs; Bob Lamphere; Josh Lenard; Stephanie Lesinski; the Lobdell family; Wayne and Joyce Lohr; the Lopez family; the Mack family; Kim Martin; Ken Mell; Kathy Minnier; Tyler Morgan; Roger Morin; Timothy Mosher; Joy Novack; Paul Novack; Linda Parker; Paula Paxton; Gene and Dean Potter; Justine Saunders; Ken Saunders; Bob Seem; Susan Sholar; Nora Sibley; Shelley Vanderbogart; Lori Varallo; Barb and Jack Wagener; Robert Wagner; Linda Warner; Gretchen Whittacre; the Wilson family; and all those suffering in the world.

Know someone ill or hospitalized?
Please call Anne Millis 315-246-6264



IN OTHER NEWS....

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders, and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Isaiah 9:6, NRSVUE

Dear Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Siblings in Christ,

As we begin another church year in this season of Advent, these words of the prophet Isaiah and immortalized in Handel's "Messiah" call us to remember who God is and who we have been called to follow as disciples of Christ Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Jesus came into the world in the shadow of empire, in a time when many felt hopeless against normalized violence and inequities, and powerless in the face of unjust laws and self-serving leaders. Jesus was born in a time when many religious leaders and institutions were neglecting the call of the prophets to work for peace and establish justice. Jesus entered into a world that believed that the powers and principalities and the ways of the world could save them.

For those who know the rest of the story, we know that Jesus' life and ministry countered the false logic of the times into which he was born:

The story of God-with-us, born as a helpless baby, not descending from on high ready to take control
The story of the Son of God and his family living as refugees in another land, and in Galilee outside the centers of religious, social and political power

The story of a Savior who, despite all hopes and expectations, did not come with armies and horses and weapons, but came with open arms and hosted open tables, where he ate with sinners and outcasts

The story of the Lord, who, although he was God, served others while teaching of and living out the love and justice of God
The story of the Mighty God who became human and eschewed violence, and instead healed, restored, forgave and reconciled, even as he died on a cross.

These stories proclaim that the logic of violence will not save us. Military might will not save us. Creating inequities so that we might have more while others have less will not save us. Perpetrating or supporting injustice and harm to others will not save us. Dividing the world into us and them and seeking to destroy everyone who is not "us" will not save us. None of these things will save us or keep us safe.

These stories remind us that we are saved, not by power and privilege, but by the love and grace of God.

The Advent vision of God's peaceful reign invites us to be peacemakers, disciples working toward wholeness with God and with one another. Those who belong to Christ Jesus are called to:

Create and hold spaces for all people to belong, regardless of who they are or how they are embodied, and for their voices and experiences to matter

Work toward a world in which everyone has enough to eat

Speak out against violence and the systems that support violence in our communities, in our nation, and in the world

Tend to the emotional, spiritual and physical wholeness of all those in our communities

Advocate for fellow human beings to be treated with dignity and for the rights of all human beings to be safeguarded

Steward Creation with faithfulness and care

Speak truthfully in love

Our Christian witness must be one that is consistent with the one who has come and will come again, consistent with his life, death and resurrection, consistent with what he did and underwent for the sake of the world God loves. Our Christian witness must stand in contrast to those who continue to co-opt Christianity toward nation-building and power consolidation that is antithetical to the God whom we know in the Prince of Peace.

Image

The Rev. Jihyun Oh

As we worship with pageants and hymns that proclaim the coming of the Prince of Peace into the world, may we all be strengthened in our faith as disciples of Jesus, in our resolve to follow Christ, and in our perseverance in working with God for wholeness.

May it be so for you and for me.

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

Luke 2:10-14, NRSVUE

The Rev. Jihyun Oh is Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Executive Director of the Unified Agency. Learn more about Presbyterians and peacemaking [here](#).



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HAPPY 2026 to you, a fearfully and wonderfully made child of God:

