

**December
2024**

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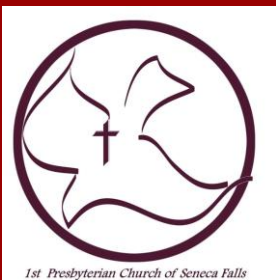
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1st Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls



January
Newsletter Articles
Are Due on December 26th

The First Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls Pastor's Corner



"Someday at Christmas there'll be no tears
When all are equal and no one has fears
One shining moment one prayer away
From our world today"
- Bryan Wells / Ronald Miller

Advent is a season of preparation for the birth of Christ, the Prince of Peace. How are you preparing? How are we pausing to ensure we are celebrating this season with hope, love, faith, joy, and peace? These are the candles of Advent. Every week we light a candle as we reflect on these words. This reflection helps us to prepare for the joy to enter in with the lighting of the Christ candle during the Christmas Eve Service.

Throughout December the church will be offering all kinds of ways to connect. The first is with an advent devotional by Kate Bowler called a Weary World Rejoices (more information in the newsletter and e-news). On December 8th at 2pm for the Community Advent Season Celebration which is a music concert featuring musicians from the Seneca Falls churches and the Finger Lakes. December 13th-15th as part of the It's a Wonderful Life Festival, the church will be the site to attend the production of the It's a Wonderful Life Radio Show and the Seneca Singers Concert. The Longest Night Service will be available for streaming on our YouTube channel on December 21st. The manse open house and caroling with the youth group will be held on December 22nd. Finally, we will have a Lessons and Carols Candlelight Service on December 24th at 7pm.

We really do hope you are able to attend as many of these events as possible. But if all of that seems daunting, here is the invitation for Advent, to ensure so peace during this season of hustle and bustle. As part of the Seneca County Youth Summit this fall hosted by the United Way, I was asked to help out with taking notes for one of the presenters. In the small groups the presenter spoke with the youth about mental health. They were given an invitation, which I am extending to you. I hope you choose to RSVP yes.

Invitation for Advent
5 minutes of meditation
10 minutes of movement
3 things you are grateful for
1 compliment to another person

Peace, Pastor Leah

Contact Us

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Seneca Falls, NY

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Laurie Weller- Office Manager
Kae Hoyle- Treasurer
Jim Clark-Sexton
Jen Braun- Music Director
Carol Millis- Bell Choir Director
Susan Sholar – Clerk of Session

Session

Session meets every
3rd Thursday at 10am

Presently serving
Ruling Elders:

Jim Clark, Marion Crull, Dick
Damaske, Susan Derr,
Jay Hoyle, Ginny Konz,
Anne Millis and Susan Sholar

Session Briefs

At its Thursday, November 21st Meeting, the Session discussed several issues. The following is a brief overview:

- Clerk read thank you note from House of Concern
- Treasurer's report for October was received from Treasurer Kae Hoyle, showing Total Revenue of \$142,072.75 and Total Expenditures of \$15,486.53; Dick D. made motion to move funds in new Lenora Johnson Fidelity investment account to Operating Account
- Per Capita for 2025 will be \$59.00 per person
- Pastor Leah reported that she will go to Pittsburgh for classes on January 5th, Marion will lead the service; Session voted to move Communion to January 12th; Session approved rolling Pastor Leah's remaining unused day of leave to 2025; December 29th service will be pre-recorded
- Pastor Leah met with Jackson Puylara on Town Board, to discuss housing/farmer's market; will also meet with Northeast College to talk about housing
- Three students could attend confirmation classes at Geneva Presbyterian Church from January to April
- Personnel Committee will choose date for annual employee reviews
- Work continuing to upgrade the playground at Day Care
- Leaves for members who recently passed away were added to the board in Social Hall
- Jay H. will call members who have not yet submitted pledges
- Discussed use of flame or electric candles for Advent; decoration of church will happen on November 24th
- Youth Group will go caroling on December 22nd from 2:00 to 4:00pm; adults are invited to go with them
- Operation Christmas Child as discussed and approved by Session via email will have to be tabled for this year

Submitted by Anne Millis, Clerk pro tem

**The next meeting of the Session will be held on Thursday,
December 19th at 10am**



Bea Jones - 12/02
Jean Morris - 12/06
Joanne Elysée - 12/11
Jay Hoyle - 12/18
Mary Beth Day - 12/22
Megan Derr - 12/27
Michelle Dugan - 12/27

Members and Friends to Keep in Our Thoughts

Joanne Elyseev
Living Center at Geneva
North
75 Mason Street, Room 138
Geneva, NY 14456

Jean Morris
5465 Upper Mountain Rd.
Lockport, NY 14094

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

Our Law Enforcement
Officers, Fire Fighters and
EMTs



Women's Circle

Meets on Monday, December 2nd at 12:30pm in the Hawley Room

November's meeting was opened with prayer and Barb read to us from an address given at a Blessing of the Pets event at an Episcopal church in Concord, New Hampshire. The officiating priest was a Haitian immigrant who made good-natured reference to false claims made about Haitians by some current political candidates.

Circle members discussed Chapter One in *Breathing Under Water; Spirituality and the Twelve Steps*, by Richard Rohr; St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati OH, 2011. Step 1 of the Twelve Steps is titled *Powerlessness*...people with addictions to substances, unhealthy behaviors or compulsions must first admit to their own powerlessness to overcome their addictions. There were scripture references to Isaiah 38; Romans 7; and Matthew 9. Chapter Two, *Desperate Desiring* and Step 2 ...a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity "...the God of old is still your refuge. This God has everlasting arms than can drive out the enemy before you."
-Deuteronomy 33:27

Following the book discussion, we talked about donations to **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance** and **World Food Kitchen**. Joyce was waiting to hear from Fr. Gregory Murphy at St. Michael's Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church in Geneva (she later heard we could send a donation for **Lebanon and Syrian refugee relief** to the Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of All North America office in Englewood NJ; they provided assurance that "all donations will go directly to those in need.") "*The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch*"
Acts 11:26

Circle next made plans for our annual **Holiday Luncheon** to take place on **Monday, December 2nd beginning at 12:30 pm**. Kae and Barb will call all the women in the church family. Husbands are invited, as well. We'll set tables in the Hawley Room on Sunday, after worship. **See special announcement below!**

We closed the meeting with prayer, including asking for God's loving presence with the people of Paiporta, Spain, that day during heavy rains and flooding.

*Wishing a Blessed Holiday Season to Everyone in Our
Church Family*

Holiday Luncheon

*Will take place on Monday, December 2nd at 12:30 PM
In the Hawley Room*

*Everyone is asked to bring a dish to share.
Coffee, Tea, & Cider will be furnished.*

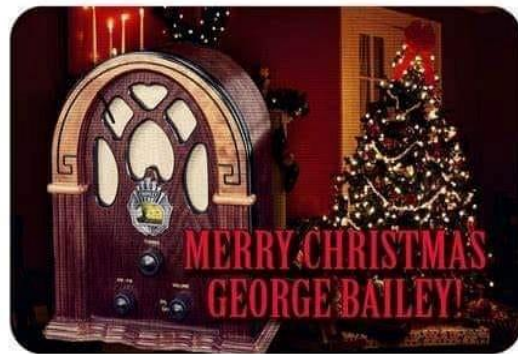
All women of the church are invited, spouses as well!

*Please also bring a package of Infant or Toddler Diapers
for the House of Concern*

*And if you have a favorite Advent or Christmas
Story, Poem, or Inspirational Reading
To share, please do bring it along!*

Church Family News

- **Youth Group:** will get together in “The Hangout” on **Sunday, December 1st** to watch a movie and have snacks.
- **The annual Congregational Meeting** was held on Sunday, November 17th - the Congregation voted to change the By-Laws from 9 Ruling Elders to serve on Session to 6 Ruling Elders. Kae Hoyle and David Hall were elected to serve as Ruling Elders, and a new Nominating Committee was chosen.
- **Community Advent Season Celebration:** please plan to be here at the church on **Sunday, December 8th at 2:30pm**, to celebrate the season of Advent with a concert. Many incredible FLX musicians will perform, including brass musicians, chorus singers and an organist. There will also be a community Christmas Carol Sing, so don't miss it!
- **Cookies for Advent Season Celebration:** if you are able, please plan to bring some cookies with you for all to share - singing can make you work up an appetite!
- ***Merry Christmas, George Bailey!***: enjoy the Seneca Community Players here at the church, with performances on **December 12th, December 13th and December 14th at 7pm** and **Sunday, December 15th at 1pm**. Add this to your calendars.



- **Seneca Singers Annual Holiday Concert** will take place at First Pres on **Sunday, December 15th at 5:00pm**. Admission is free, but donations are always appreciated.
- **Youth Group Game Night** will be held at “The Hangout” on **Friday, December 20th**; Middle Schoolers will be there from 6pm to 8pm, and High School students from 8:30pm to 10pm. Play games, eat snacks and hang out with your pals. Youth Group will also be doing some **Caroling** in the neighborhood on **Sunday, December 22nd at 2:00pm**. Come and help spread the Christmas spirit.



**COMMUNITY
ADVENT
SEASON
CELEBRATION**

Sunday
**DECEMBER 8, 2024
2PM-3:30PM**

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
23 CAYUGA ST. SENECA FALLS, NY

Join us to celebrate the Season of Advent with a concert
featuring our incredible FLX musicians!

Concert will feature brass musicians, bell choir, chorus singers, organist,
and a community Christmas Carol Sing!

Free Will donations will be accepted to benefit
Mynderse Academy Spring Trip to perform at Carnegie Hall!

Building is handicap accessible





Worship Schedule

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

December 1st - Communion - First Sunday of Advent - Jeremiah 33:14-18; Mark 8:27-29.

December 8th - Second Sunday of Advent - Isaiah 40:1-11; Mark 1:1-4.

December 15th - Third Sunday of Advent - Ezra 1:1-4, 3:1-4, 10-13; Luke 2:25-32.

December 22nd - Fourth Sunday of Advent - Luke 1:5-13, 14-25, 57-80; Psalm 113.

December 24th - Christmas Eve - Lessons and Carols service - Luke 2:1-14, 15-20; Psalm 146:5-10, Luke 1:46-55

December 29th - Service will be pre-recorded - Luke 2:8-20; Psalm 108:1-4.



December 1st - Carol Millis

December 8th - Dick Damaske

December 15th - Barry Porsch

December 22nd - Anne Millis

December 29th - None - Recorded Service

January 5th - Barb Van Kirk



December 1st - Susan Sholar

December 8th - Marion Crull

December 15th - Zoe Van Kirk

December 22nd - Ginny Konz

December 29th - None - Recorded Service

January 5th - To Be Determined



Coffee Hours



December 1st: No Coffee Hour - Committee Meetings

December 8th: No Coffee Hour - Community Advent Singing at 2pm

December 15th: No Coffee Hour - Seneca Community Players "*Merry Christmas George Bailey!*" at 1pm, and Seneca Singers at 5pm

December 22nd: No Coffee Hour - Manse Open House

December 29th: No Coffee Hour - Service will be pre-recorded



To Keep in Our Prayers: Kathleen Albert; Reatha Bishop; Robin Blundon; Jennifer Colbert; Peter Crego; Cindy Danielson; Joanne Elyseev; Carl Feltus; Joanna Fuller; Diane and Cal Goodman; Pat Gordon; Gerry Gray; Rev. Deborah Grohman; Amy Guarino; Tori Guerina; Crystal Hanes; Cindy Hinman-Cosola; Susan Horton; Walt Hoyle; Bea Jones; the Jopek family; our Law Enforcement Officers, Firefighters and EMTs; Bob Lamphere; Josh Lenard; Stephanie Lesinski; the Lobdell family; the Lopez family; Kim Martin; Ken Mell; Tyler Morgan; Roger Morin; Timothy Mosher; Joy Novack; Linda Parker; Paula Paxton; Gene and Dean Potter; Justine Saunders; Mary Sceney; Susan Sholar; Nora Sibley; Shelley Vanderbogart; Linda Warner; Robert Wagner; Gretchen Whittacre; the Wilson family; and all those suffering in the world.

Know someone ill or hospitalized? Please call:

Anne Millis 315-246-6264



Building Congregational Vitality

Dismantling Structural Racism

Eradicating Systemic Poverty

FIRST PRES OF SENECA FALLS
A MATTHEW 25 CHURCH!

Advent Devotional Kate Bowler

Have you been looking at the jaw-dropping new images that are coming in from the James Webb Space Telescope? These photos of deep space are wild and surreal. Pillars of gas and dust. Clouds of yellows, oranges and blues that capture the mystery and dazzling beauty of the universe. You are immediately struck by the sense that there is so much out there, but it's not here. Not yet anyway. The days leading up to Christmas (we call this season Advent) is kind of like that. It's a promise that is coming, as surely and steadily as light traveling from a distant star. It is the promise of a return - a restoration of all things to their true being, a goodness which was conceived from the beginning of time, a realized hope we've been longing for. For the "days are coming," say the prophets of old. "The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will fulfill the good promise." The promise of truth, compassion, restoration, and justice. These four promises are how we will orient this daily devotional guide. They will serve as our guiding themes - pulling us toward a future that we can only glimpse. But it is a future that will turn everything upside-down (or maybe right-side up). Everything wrong will be made right; everything bad will be made good; everything empty and devoid of love will be filled. The season of Advent marks the beginning of the Christian calendar, and it's about 22-28 days depending on the year. And one of my favorite things about this time of preparation for Christmas is the tone. We don't cruise into Christmas with triumph and a rah-rah certainty that all is well. We begin by waiting - tired waiting. A feeling I know you know too well. Waiting for the test results. Waiting for the phone call. Waiting for your kid to come back or the job offer to come through. Waiting for your parents to get better or finally apologize. Waiting for the family you longed for or that financial relief you desperately need. Waiting for prayers to be answered or community to be found. We are very familiar with waiting. But, this Advent, we don't wait in vain. Christmas brings us right to the moment of the birth of Jesus - our joy realized, first in a tiny baby born and laid down in a hay stall in a backwater town. A Savior who will someday make all things right. This Advent, may we squint at the light that is afar and say, "Come, Lord Jesus! We're tired of waiting."

WHAT YOU NEED TO GET STARTED:

- 20 minutes each day leading up to Christmas (In 2024, Advent begins on Sunday, December 1st)
- Access to this daily devotional using the option that best suits you:
- A downloadable and interactive PDF (you are welcome to print it out or save and open it on your computer)
- Online at <https://courses.katebowler.com/courses/advent-devotional-2024/> (we recommend bookmarking the page in your browser to make it easy to return to)

OPTIONAL: On each Sunday of Advent, we will invite you to light a candle.



The First Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls
P.O. Box 383 Cayuga Street
Seneca Falls, NY 13148

Merry Christmas to you, a fearfully and wonderfully made child of God:

