

First Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls

Toward a Church as **GENEROUS**

and **JUST** as God's Grace....



1st Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls



April Newsletter 2021

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Pastor's Corner

Easter is just around the corner. There are so many things I love about Easter.

The first thing I love is the story of Easter. It makes me so happy! I love the empty tomb and grief turned to joy. I love the LOVE!

The second part of Easter I adore is the music. I like all the Hallelujahs, the joyful sounds of voices and instruments. I love the call and response of "Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!"

The third part of Easter that brings me both joy and comfort are the traditions. I love the food (not only the chocolate). I love making and hiding Easter baskets for our kids. I love dressing up in our Sunday best. I love decorating the eggs.



However, I am the type of egg decorator who will write a name on an egg with a crayon, and then dump it in one color. It isn't because this is my favorite egg design. It is because I don't like waiting. Waiting isn't a skill that comes naturally to me. I have to work on it. For me, the art of egg decorating isn't the part I enjoy. The part I love is the community of people I am decorating eggs with, it is about the relationships. The time and skill it takes to design eggs like the ones in this picture is not the way I enjoy spending my time, but sitting with someone while they do this- I can wait all day!

Sometimes, I think life is about changing our perspective. I am fully capable of waiting; but waiting for paint to dry isn't where I want to put my time and energy. I want everyone to think about a skill you don't think you possess. I want you to look at that skill from another angle. For instance, maybe you think you are a person who isn't very patient. Now, I want you to think about places in your life where you routinely use this skill, like playing an instrument, cooking, baking, art, knitting, or crocheting. It is sometimes a matter of changing our perspective.

The Easter story is a shift in perspective. An empty tomb isn't what anyone thought was going to happen that day. More time with Jesus was not something they thought was possible. God constantly shows us that what we think is impossible, may just mean we need to shift our viewpoint.

A year ago, we never thought we could celebrate Easter in new and different ways, but we can and we did. We innovated, we adapted and we shifted our perspectives. Nothing is impossible with God.

Peace, Pastor Leah

To learn about the ancient art of egg decorating: <https://blogs.loc.gov/folklife/2017/04/decorating-eggs/>



Session Briefs

At its Monday, March 22, 2021 meeting, the Session:

- Received the February budget report of Revenue: \$7,391.06; Expenditures: \$11,889.90 and YTD Fund Raising: \$175
- Heard of new Treasurer training for Kae Hoyle with Laurie (Office Manager) and Karen Beals by tele-conferencing on March 9 and March 19
- Read Thank You notes from Dorothy Dickieson for Christmas poinsettia; from Tom and Donna Montgomery for Get Well flowers; from Angela Carver (now living in Palmyra) for worship bulletins and pamphlets, along with a monetary donation from Angela
- Heard report of very successful PI Day pie sales on March 14, and of need for many more bakers for future sales
- Moved to pay 2021 church portion for Mission, as requested by Presbytery of Geneva
- Heard request from Pastor for Elders and congregation members and friends to sign up for YouTube channel; 100 sign-ups are required for a church channel on YouTube, with no cost to subscribe
- Heard request from Pastor for volunteer(s) to run Audio/Visual equipment for summer worship; two volunteers could share job and Pastor will train
- Heard of need for Coffee Hour programs for April; people with ideas should contact Pastor
- Learned of Maundy Thursday combined service with United Methodists using Zoom, and of in-church Good Friday noon time service at United Methodist Church on State Street, and of the need for volunteer readers
- Agreed to Saturday pick-up on April 3rd at church, of Easter Sunday Communion elements; communion bread being made by Hedra Harrison and Norma Fink
- Heard of successful church outreach in pandemic, with support of local businesses by church purchase of gift certificates for first responders, essential workers, ill, and people in need
- Moved to make application to Presbytery for money to run Summer Back Pack Program

The next meeting of Session is on Monday, April 26, 2021 at 7pm



Camp Whitman Will Be Open This Year!

Registrations are now open for Camp Whitman, and slots are filling up. Check out their website at www.campwhitman.org for the form and schedule. If you are looking for a summer job, you can find the counselor application form at www.campwhitman.org/employment.

Camp Whitman is always in need of craft supplies, garden gloves and tool sets, and other miscellaneous items. If you'd like to help, please take a look at their Wish List at <https://www.presbyteryofgeneva.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2021-Wish-List.pdf>

Women's Circle

Will meet on Monday, April 5th at 12:30pm in the Hawley Room at church.



At its March meeting, the Women's Circle heard a reading of the *MLK Day Affirmation*, from the writings of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the 1960s. The *Affirmation* proclaims what Dr. King refused to believe about racism. "I refuse to believe that we are unable to influence events around us." And, "I refuse to believe we are bound by racism, war, and injustice," along with what he did believe, among these: "I believe those around me are my sister and brother" and "I believe we can overcome oppression and violence, without resorting to it." In our discussion, we tried to think what these words must have meant for his followers in that time. They most certainly struggled to abide by these beliefs and the others in Dr. King's statement and to act accordingly, while at the same time much of White society held itself to other rules, and throughout American history had exercised little or no restraint in raining violence - economic, psychological and physical - on Black individuals and on Black communities. For Black, Brown, Asian, and Native or Tribal Americans, it continues to be a daily struggle.

In Chapter 22 of Debby Irving's book *Waking Up White...and Finding Myself in the Story of Race*, she talks about rejecting a move to the suburbs (for good schools, clean air, close neighbors with kids, etc.) in favor of staying in their present city, which is culturally diverse. There, she found that even at the playground, white parents separated themselves into groups based on incomes, education, and child-rearing attitudes and rarely, if ever, interacted with each others. Irving tried visiting other playgrounds and found much the same situation, and asked herself, "Where are all the Black moms and children?" She found them only three blocks away, in subsidized apartment buildings. Why weren't these parents coming to the same playground? There appeared to be **fear, discomfort, and avoidance** across the racial spectrum. In our Circle discussion, we considered that unlike the "stay-at-home" moms in Irving's neighborhood, the women of color in the apartment buildings also very likely had jobs and had to put their children in child care. All of the conditions listed here serve to keep people apart, in spite of good intentions.

In **April**, Kae will lead us in talking about Chapter 24, "Everyone is Different, Everyone Belongs," and Ginny will do Chapter 30, "Feelings and the Culture of Niceness." Please re-read these chapters, everybody!

The shelter in Waterloo is presently housing six young women. They need household cleaning supplies. Please bring a can of cleanser or window/mirror cleaner.

**Bring this along with your items for the HOUSE OF CONCERN for April:
Non-food items (detergent, bath soap, paper products, etc.)**

All food items and diapers are also always welcomed
(The House can take donations Mon-Fri, 9am to 3:30pm)



Kae will give the opening prayer and scripture reading in April, and **Joyce** will provide a "diversity" experience.



*May the Lord watch between thee and me
While we are apart, One from the Other . . .*

See you in April!!

Seneca Falls Restaurant Gift Certificate Project - Pandemic Action!!

For the past several Session meetings, Pastor Ntuala has challenged members to come up with creative ideas related to the church's mission that "couldn't fail" if we tried to turn concepts into reality. One such idea during the dark days of the global pandemic was to demonstrate, in a practical, meaningful way, FPCSF's support for our community, those who need some help and others who have been called to respond to the devastating blows the pandemic has dealt to families and local economies around the world. With the Session's support, we turned this idea into a project to purchase \$2,000 worth of gift certificates from each of 12 restaurants in Seneca Falls, and give them to front line workers in health care, law enforcement and education; and to others who just might need some good cheer and nourishment in our town during hard times. This small gesture became a chance for us to learn more about our local economy and to let the community know that all of us at FPCSF truly care about the present and future well-being of Seneca Falls. We gratefully planted small seeds of hope, and believe that God will see to the rest.

-Submitted by Marc Smith-



Marc and Ginny begin church outreach project in support of local businesses



Joyce, displaying "Sunshine Basket" gift certificate

April Birthdays

Carolyn Seem-4/5

John Damaske-4/15

Carolyn Jessop-4/16

Atticus Ntuala- 4/18

Ginny Konz- 4/22

Simon Ntuala-4/24

Gary Ippolito -4/24

Abigail Rescorl-4/29

Romona Lobdell-4/30



May Newsletter
Articles are due by
Thursday, April 22nd

Newsletters will be sent out
April 29th

Hang in There

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.” Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened. — Luke 24:1–12

“You’re not much of a morning person, are you, pastor?” The chiding was coming from the big, bald, burly farmer standing next to me in the slushy snow. I smiled. Inside, though, I was cursing the idea of an Easter sunrise service. Why couldn’t the women in Scripture set their alarm for 9am to get to the tomb? It wasn’t because I didn’t function till my third cup of coffee; getting up before the crack of dawn in the New England community I served meant enduring still-frigid temperatures.

My toes were numb with cold. I wished my throbbing knee was numb, too. I had smacked it on a headstone as I made my way to the area in the cemetery where the service was being held. This was an ecumenical gathering and, being the new Presbyterian pastor, I was happy to let the Methodist minister plan and take the lead. And take the lead she did. She gave a perky greeting that made the big, bald, burly farmer look at me slyly. She recited Scripture, gave a homily and broke the communion bread with nimble fingers. Fingers? I couldn’t feel mine. She did all of this without reading from notes. My turn came. I fumbled with the paper my closing prayer was written on and the flashlight in which to see the words. With my less than enthusiastic “Amen,” the service was over, and folks scurried back to their warm homes.

I remained frozen in place, but not from the cold. I was frozen with dismay. It was still dark. I thought the idea of an Easter sunrise service was to see the sun rise. I didn’t risk frostbite not to see the dawn’s first rays. It was more than just seeing the sun, though. I needed to see the Son. I had been questioning my call to this community. How did a former fashion editor from Manhattan wind up in a little struggling community, freezing in a dark cemetery on Easter? Should I leave? Where was God calling me next?

Just then I realized not everyone left the cemetery. The big, bald, burly farmer was still by my side. He didn’t chide me. “I’ll wait with you to see the sunrise,” he said softly. He motioned to his pick-up truck and we drove to the highest hill of the cemetery, which offered the most amazing view of the little village below. We got out and stood in silence. I wasn’t sure what the farmer’s prayers were, but I knew mine: “God, let this Easter be a new beginning.”

The black sky began turning light gray. Soon pinks and oranges appeared on the horizon. My heavy heart lightened along with the sky. When the bright ball appeared with its rays stretching out like heavenly arms ready for an embrace, I felt my eyes water. I heard a voice, not from heaven, but from the farmer: “I hope you hang in there with us.” All I could do was nod “yes.”

Later that morning, after the traditional worship service was over, I thanked the farmer for waiting with me to see the sunrise and wondered out loud why no one else hung around. He didn’t have an answer, but just laughed and shrugged.

It’s been years since that cold Easter morning and I still remember how everyone left when it was still dark out. It got me thinking about how many times I have turned around too soon before seeing God’s light shine in my life. After all, if I had not hung in there during the dark days of a struggling congregation, I never would have been able to experience the moments of resurrection in people’s lives — those moments when the light shines and we realize, yes, death does not have the last word.

This Easter, hang in there when the sun’s rays seem to take forever to break through. For Easter is a promise that a new day does dawn. Hope does shine. And if you’re tempted to turn back into the darkness before the light breaks through, then may there be a big, bald, burly angel waiting beside you, whispering, “Hang in there. Easter hope is dawning.”


God of resurrection hope, thank you for the promise that death never has the last word. Thank you for how darkness always gives way to light. But most of all, thank you for the light of your Son, Jesus, that shines brightly in our lives. As we begin this season of Eastertide, may we hear our Risen Lord greet us with “Shalom” and may that wish for peace become a reality in our lives. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/today/lent2021/lent-holyweek/>



Church Family News



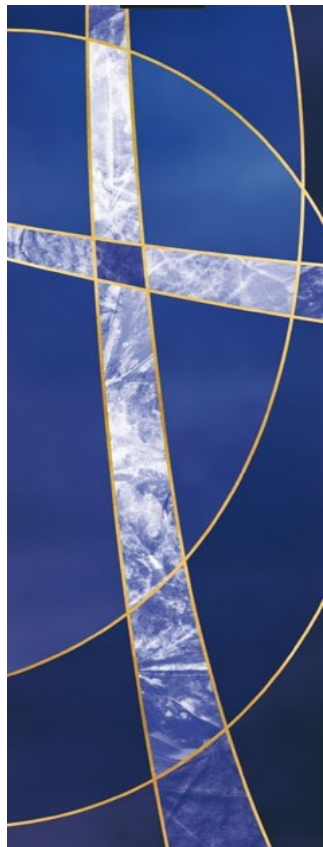
- ◆ **Another “Sold Out” PI Day Sale** - PI Day was again held on March 14th (when else??), with pies baked by members of the congregation. On Monday morning, with checks and cash, the total was \$875 (the odd \$5 came by way of Donna Montgomery, who sent a check for \$25). Thank you to Laurie Weller in the office, who tweaked the sandwich boards and posters to represent the year’s times. Thank you to Peter Snyder for putting out the three sandwich boards, which we noticed we have to modify for next year. Thanks to Bark Van Kirk and Sue Derr, who were in the church to accept pies as they came in, and to Muriel Horle and Joyce Lohr for selling them all by 2pm - an hour earlier than the scheduled closing! Getting the information into the *Finger Lakes Times* and onto the radio was definitely worth it; apparently people made trips from Auburn and Geneva, as well as Waterloo and Seneca Falls. Besides the tweaks to the sandwich boards, it’s worth mentioning that more requests were for apple and pecan pies, which we had some of, and also for lemon meringue that we didn’t have. Something to keep in mind when baking for next year. *-Submitted by Ginny Konz-*
- ◆ **Communion Pick-Up** - We will be offering Communion Pick-Up in the church parking lot on **Saturday, April 3rd from 11am until 1pm**. Please come by!
- ◆ **“Hello” from Honey Gilbert** - “Dear Friends: Happy Spring to all...I was writing to see about some ideas for things to do outside, now that it’s nice and getting nicer out. Please email or write to me about your new year, and plans for the rest of the year 2021. Hope to hear from you all soon at: 8342 North Main Street, PO 419, Interlaken, NY 14847 or h.gilbert691913@gmail.com!”
- ◆ **Pledges** - Even though we are still not holding services right now, and staff are working from home on a part-time basis, we do continue to have ongoing expenses. Please consider paying your pledges by check (mail-PO Box 383, Seneca Falls, NY), PayPal, VANCO, or through your bank bill paying service. Let us know if you have questions or need any assistance with setting up these various payment methods. Much appreciated! 

Members and Friends to Keep in Our Thoughts:

Name	Address
Dorothy Dickieson	303 Ferris Hills, Canandaigua, NY 14424
Betty Geraghty	8 Iroquois Lane, Waterloo, NY 13165
Gary Ippolito	Clifton Springs Hospital & Clinic, Nursing Home, 2 Coulter Road, Clifton Springs, NY 14432
Liza Merriam	Heritage Hill West, 61 Cooper Street, Agawam, MA 01001
Jean Morris	Lockport Presbyterian Home, 305-327 High Street, Lockport, NY 14094
Jean Stenlake	Steuben Center, Room 125, 7009 Rumsey St Ext, Bath NY 14810



Service Schedule



April 4th– Easter Sunday-Communion-Psalm 43; John 20:1-18
At the empty tomb, the risen Lord appears to Mary Magdalene.

Join us <https://fpressf.com/online-worship>



April 11th– Psalm 44; Matthew 28:1-10
Women find Jesus’ tomb empty; he has been raised from the dead.

Join us <https://fpressf.com/online-worship>

April 18th– Psalm 45; Matthew 15:29-39
Jesus heals crowds and feeds a multitude.

Join us <https://fpressf.com/online-worship>

April 25th– Psalm 46; Luke 24:13-35
On the road to Emmaus, two disciples meet the risen Lord.

Join us <https://fpressf.com/online-worship>



May 2nd– Communion-Psalm 47; John 10:1-10
Jesus says: I am the gate for the sheep; enter by me and be saved.

Liturgist List



April 4th– Marc Smith

April 25th– Dick Damaske

April 11th– Barb Van Kirk

May 2nd– Ginny Konz

April 18th– Joyce Lohr

Coffee Hour and Prayer List

April 4th: Coffee Hour: No Coffee Hour - Easter

April 11th: Coffee Hour: A Brief Statement of Faith - Theoacademy

April 18th: Coffee Hour: The Word in Worship - Theoacademy

April 25th: Coffee Hour: The Sacraments of Worship - Theoacademy



Know someone ill or hospitalized? This month, please call: Carol Rook - 315.539.9192

To Keep in Our Prayers: Frank Bocek; Jennifer Colbert; Matthew Cramer; Sue Ellen and Peter Crego; Norine Crull; Cindy Danielson; Susan Derr; George Elyseev; Chesterdaniel Freeman; Joanna Fuller; Betty Geraghty; Pat Gordon; Tori Guerina; Crystal Hanes; family and friends of Ron Hauf; Greta Hauser & Family; Rick Hendricks; Gary Ippolito; Al Johnson; Bea Jones; Timothy Kent; our Law Enforcement Officers; Carson Lankford; Ross Leland & Family; Lucy and Nancy Lopez; Liza Merriam; Tyler Morgan; Patsy Mott; Cheri Murphy; Jinny Noone; Jolene Olsowske; Dean Potter; Shirley Sage; Jean Stenlake; Linda Warner; Darryl Wells; Gretchen Whittacre; Linda Zona; and all those suffering in the world.

Church Office: 315-568-6636
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Manse: 315-398-4356
E-mail: firstpres13148@gmail.com
Website: www.fpressf.com

Scan this code
to learn more
about us!



**Sunday Online Worship at 10am.
Coffee Hour via Zoom at 11am.**

Rev. Leah Ntuala-Pastor
Rev. Dr. Peter J. Crego-Pastor Emeritus
Laurie Weller- Office Manager
Kae Hoyle-Treasurer
Peter Snyder- Sexton
Hedra Harrison- Music Director
Joyce Lohr-Clerk to the Session



Session meets on the 4th Monday of each month at 7pm
Presently serving Elders: Jim Clark, Marion Crull, Dick Damaske, Susan Derr,
Michele Edmonson, Susan Harkey, Jay Hoyle, Ginny Konz, Marc Smith
Joyce Lohr, Clerk to the Session and with Pastor Leah as Moderator

First Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls
P.O. Box 383
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Happy Easter to:



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