

December
2022

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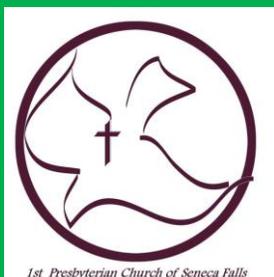
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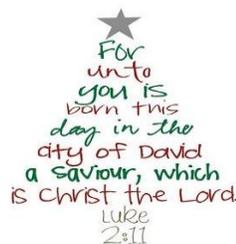


1st Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls



January Newsletter Articles
Are Due on December 26th

The First Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls Pastor's Corner



When I was a kid, one of my favorite Christmas books was Barbara Robinson's *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. I recently reread it with my sons and it is a book that stands the test of time. It is a story about a church Christmas program and this year, because there is food, The Herdman children decide to be in the play. They are poor, dirty, and wild. They use foul language, get into fights, and loads of trouble. But, *we hope*, the church is a place where all are welcome and so of course the kids can be in the play!

So much goes on, and you would never think a story about a church Christmas play would make you feel a roller coaster of emotions, but it does. "They looked like the people you see on the six o'clock news - refugees, sent to wait in some strange ugly place, with all their boxes and sacks around them. It suddenly occurred to me that this was just the way it must have been for the real Holy Family, stuck away in a barn by people who didn't much care what happened to them. They couldn't have been very neat and tidy either, but more like this Mary and Joseph."

It is *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, because it reminds everyone of what the story is about. I love the book because it reminds me of how funny God can be. God teaches the people about the true meaning of Christmas from the most unlikely source, The Herdman children.

As we have entered the season of Advent, a time of waiting, let us be reminded of what we are waiting for; of whom we are waiting for. We are waiting for the Savior to be born. Christ who was born in a strange, ugly place, where most people didn't care too much about what happened to him and his family. Maybe we can feel that way sometimes, too. Maybe we too can find ourselves in strange, ugly places, where it seems most people don't care much about what happens to us, but God cared. God cares.

God cared enough to have the angels deliver the news. God cared enough to herald the shepherds. God cared enough to make room in the Inn. God cared enough to bring the Wise Men, who told Mary and Joseph to flee to Egypt with Jesus. God cares about us, too. This story is a story of good news, the birth of a Savior who will teach us how to love. It is the story of the birth of a Savior who will teach us what it means to be in relationship with God, to love ourselves and our neighbors, and to be good stewards of the earth. The story of the birth of a Savior who will invite all of those who find themselves in strange, ugly places, even when it seems most people don't care much about what happens to us, and tell us "I care."

During this season we will burn a few cookies, forget a few presents, and break an ornament or two. Christ will still be born, and God loves us. God will remind us we are beloved, maybe through the most unlikely source. In this season of waiting may we use the time to make room for the strange, ugly places, and people we don't usually care so much about, and have The Best Christmas Ever.

Peace, Pastor Leah

Contact Us

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Hours:

Wednesday & Thursday
8am-3pm

Staff

Rev. Leah Ntuala-Pastor
Rev. Dr. Peter J. Crego-
Pastor Emeritus
Laurie Weller- Office Manager
Kae Hoyle- Treasurer
Peter Snyder-Sexton
Jen Braun- Music Director
Carol Millis- Bell Choir Director
Joyce Lohr- Clerk of Session

Session

Session meets every
3rd Thursday at 10am

Presently serving
Ruling Elders:

Jim Clark, Marion Crull, Dick
Damaske, Susan Derr,
Michele Edmondson,
Susan Harkey, Jay Hoyle, Ginny
Konz, and Susan Sholar

Session Briefs

At its Thursday, November 17, 2022 Meeting, the Session:

- Received the October Financial Report for the church showing Total Revenue of \$12,157.22; Total Expenditures of \$14,037.17; and Special Events Income (Tops cards, Amazon, Cards, Pecans, Pies, Bake/Rummage sales) of \$5,559 YTD
- Moved to remove the name of Jean Stenlake from church rolls due to her death on October 29th
- Received note of thanks from Susan Derr for prayers and congregational support, and for funeral service conducted by Pastor following the death of Susan’s father
- Discussed the many strengths present in our church and ways we may further use them
- Discussed the church promotional “trailer” (video) recently made by Pastor and possibility of training other congregations in the how-to-dos of trailer-making
- Heard praise for Bonfire hosted by Olsowskes on October 16th, and of hopes for another
- Learned of 63 Pledge letters sent for 2023 and of 20 returns to date; learned of Finance Committee’s plans to make follow-up calls
- Learned that Christmas wreaths for church front (outer) doors have been ordered from Boy Scout Troop #88
- Heard invitation for Elders to serve on Presbytery of Geneva committees
- Learned that church application made for matching grant funds to The Genesee Valley Rural Revitalization Program has been denied

Prepared by Joyce Lohr, Clerk to the Session

The next meeting of the Session is Thursday, December 15th at 10am



Bea Jones - 12/2	Neil Walsh - 12/3
Jean Morris - 12/6	Joanne Elyseev - 12/11
Jay Hoyle - 12/18	Ericka Walsh - 12/19
Mary Beth Day - 12/22	Megan Derr - 12/27
Michele Dugan - 12/27	



Women's Circle

Holiday Luncheon on Monday, December 5th

At its November meeting Circle discussed Chapter 7 in *The Women of the Bible Speak*, led by Barb and Ginny. This chapter was titled Mary and Martha of Bethany: Two Pathways. The story of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42) has always put us in a conflicted state of mind. Mary sits at the feet of their visitor Jesus, totally absorbed in what he is saying, while Martha scurries about alone, preparing and serving refreshments. Martha too, would like to hear what this wonderful man is saying, but feels duty bound to be hospitable and to finish her tasks. When she complains to Jesus and asks him to admonish Mary to help, Jesus responds sympathetically but disagrees, advising Martha that "...you are troubled about many things, but one thing (only) is needed and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." We can't know what Jesus's exact words were that so fascinated Mary but we implicitly understand they would be spiritually informing and inspiring. We talked about "need" and "want" and for the necessity of satisfying basic needs to maintain life, by asking ourselves, "Do I really need this; or is it an 'extra'?" One is essential; the other is not. Author, Shannon Bream tells us a Christian life calls us to find a balance between "...cultivating a relationship with Jesus and also serving him."

As we finished discussion, we moved on to planning the Holiday Luncheon and began volunteering names to call and invite. Joyce will prepare a list for each of us. We plan to set up the Hawley Room after worship on Sunday, December 4th. At today's meeting, we also welcomed a possible new Circle member, Mary. She came to the church to return items to Pastor Leah and chatted with us for a while.

We had planned to assemble 10 Personal Care Kits for the Women's Shelter, today. Instead, we agreed to "do mission" after the luncheon and to invite whoever we can, to stay longer and help with the kits. Kae and Joyce attended the Fall Gathering of Presbyterian Women on October 28th at Ovid Federated Church and we postponed their report, but both were enthusiastic about that meeting. By email and phone call, Circle members agreed to send a donation to the United Methodist Church Youth Group (includes Presbyterian kids) for their fundraising Game-a-Thon on November 11th at the Manse. Our donation brought the total raised to over \$1,000 to be sent to a children's hospital in Puerto Rico.

**HOUSE OF CONCERN SPECIAL ITEM FOR DECEMBER IS:
INFANT AND TODDLER DIAPERS**

We sincerely THANK everyone who helps to fill the NEIGHBORS IN NEED baskets each month and those who make generous offerings on Communion Sundays.

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

Will take place on **Monday, December 5th at 12:30 pm in the Hawley Room.**

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

*All women of the church are invited!!
Please also bring a package of Infant or Toddler diapers.*



Members and Friends to Keep in Our Thoughts

Dorothy Dickieson
303 Ferris Hills
Canandaigua, NY 14424

Betty Geraghty
8 Iroquois Lane
Waterloo, NY 13165

Carson Lankford
3120 Patton Road
Seneca Falls, NY 13148

Jean Morris
5465 Upper Mountain Rd.
Lockport, NY 14094





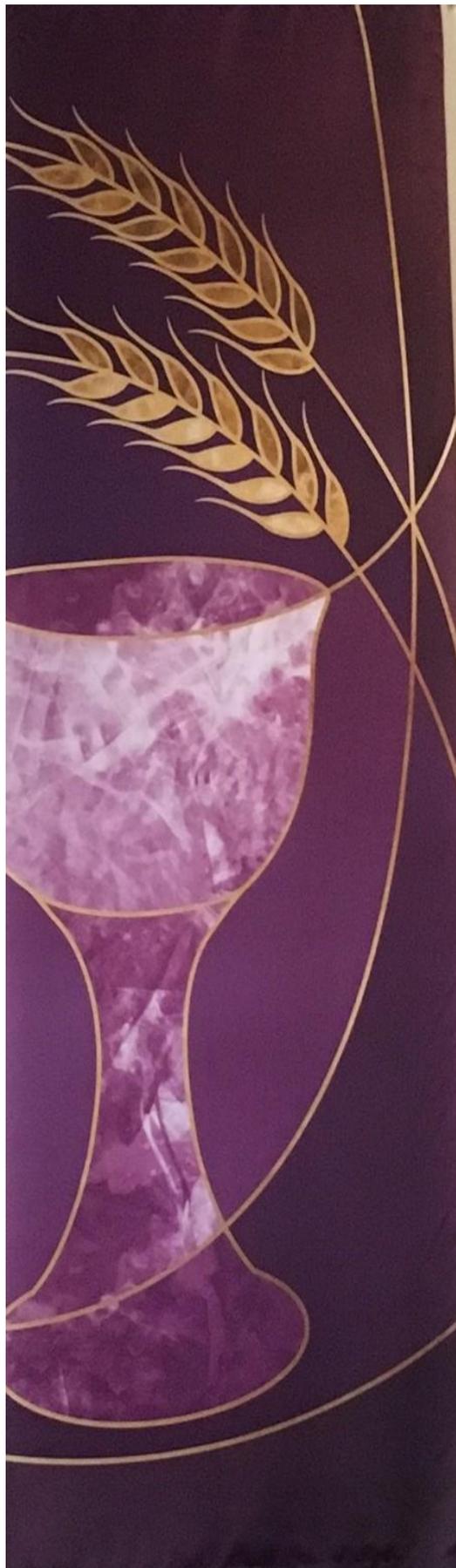
Church Family News



- **Advent Workshop on Sunday, December 4th:** join us in the Social Hall following worship for a time of fellowship and festivities, as we create crafts for the Advent season.
- **Anne Morse - Coffee Hour on Sunday, December 11th:** Anne Morse is the author or co-author of ten books, including four with the late Chuck Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship Ministries; three with radio host and New York Times bestselling author Eric Metaxas; and one with former Congressman Frank Wolf. Morse is also the author of a novel, *Bedford Falls: The Story Continues*. Her new book, *It's a Wonderful Life Advent Devotional: How to Find Your Own Wonderful Life with Help from George Bailey, the Angel Clarence, Uncle Billy, and Old Man Potter*, was released by Crosslink Publishing in September. Morse lives in Brookeville, MD with her husband. The couple - huge fans of the film - have attended the Wonderful Life Festival several times. Don't miss this!
- **Coffee Hour Programs:** while we are on the subject, we are in need of programs for Coffee Hour for the New Year. If you have a program or any ideas or suggestions, please let us know.
- **Caroling in Downtown Seneca Falls:** on **Wednesday, December 22nd** beginning at 5:00pm, First Pres will be treating our town to a special serenade of our favorite Christmas carols. We will meet at the church - join us and add your voice to the chorus.
- **2023 Per Capita and Estimate of Giving:** our church must pay \$50.00 for each member on the rolls - the amount is remaining the same as the last two years. Early payment of this Per Capita Apportionment will enable us to meet this obligation due during the first six months of 2023. Also, if you haven't already done so, please be sure to return your completed Estimate of Giving form. ***Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 2 Corinthians 9:6-8***
- **Doug's Fish Fry:** on November 2nd, we hosted another successful Doug's Fish Fry and Bake Sale event at Five Star Bank on Route 5/20. As always, those FAMOUS First Pres Pies were a big hit! Bake Sale proceeds were \$382, and we are still waiting for Doug's to send us a total for dinners sold. Stay tuned.

MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR to all!





Worship Schedule

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

December 4th - 2nd Sunday in Advent: Peace - Communion
 Ezekiel 37:1-14; John 11:25-26; Ezekiel prophesies to the dry bones and they are raised to new life.

December 11th - 3rd Sunday in Advent: Joy - Isaiah 55:1-13;
 John 4:13-14; Anyone who is thirsty, come drink; the word accomplishes God's purpose.

December 18th - 4th Sunday in Advent: Love - John 1:1-18;
 Psalm 130:5-8; The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

December 24th- Christmas Eve - Lessons and Carols Service
 at 7pm, featuring Special Music.

December 25th- Christmas Day Breakfast and Worship in the Social Hall at 10am- Luke 2:8-20; Psalm 102:13-15; A Christmas Story.

January 1st- Online Service Only- Luke 2:1-20; Psalm 96; The Twelve Days of Christmas.



Liturgist List

- December 4th - Michele Edmondson
- December 11th- Ginny Konz
- December 18th- Barb Van Kirk
- December 25th- Susan Sholar
- January 1st - Online Service

Let

Coffee Hours

December 4th - Committee Meetings
Advent Workshop with Ginny Konz & Anne Millis

December 11th - Anne Morse
Author - *It's a Wonderful Life Advent Devotional*

December 18th - Manse Open House

December 25rd - Christmas Breakfast and Worship
10am



To Keep in Our Prayers: Kathleen Albert; Reatha Bishop; Rachele and Goskel Canscillar; Sue Charles; Jennifer Colbert; Michael Collinsworth; Sue Ellen and Peter Crego; Norine Crull; Dorothy Dickieson; Joanna Fuller; Betty Geraghty; Pat & Marvin Gordon; Amy Guarino; Tori Guerina; Crystal Hanes; Sue Harkey; Greta Hauser & family; Al Johnson; Bea Jones; our Law Enforcement Officers, Firefighters and EMTs; Bob Lamphere; Carson Lankford; David Lobdell; Ronald Lobdell Jr.; the Lowry family; Kim Martin; Eleanor Mirabito; Tom & Donna Montgomery; the family of Judy Moreau; Tyler Morgan; Roger Morin; Cheri Murphy; Jinny Noone; Joy Novack; Ramon; Barb Squires; Shelley Vanderbogart; Linda Warner; Darryl Wells; Gretchen Whittacre; and all those suffering in the world.

Know someone ill or hospitalized? Please call:

Church Office 315-568-6636

In Other Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) News...

Aging Gracefully
Ritual honors the richness of growing older
By Tracy Mehr-Muska - Presbyterians Today
June 20, 2022

In his book *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*, Richard Rohr acknowledges that “many, if not most, people and institutions remain stymied in the preoccupations of the first half of life.” Given that the 2022 PC (USA) membership statistics show that a majority of those sitting in pews are 56 and older, churches have both the obligation - and opportunity - to address the needs of those in the second half of life.

One powerful tool that the church can use is ritual. Ritual can be any activity that acknowledges and honors the joys, losses and hopes related to transitional moments. Developing rituals for people in mid and later life can help destigmatize aging, combat the epidemic of loneliness among older adults and deepen a sense of community connection. The following are some examples of what can be ritualized to honor the complexities and richness of aging.

Ritual for retirement - There are many expectations and hopes related to retirement, and a meaningful ritual can acknowledge and normalize the many different - and sometimes conflicting - feelings people might be experiencing. A ritual of this type might include honoring the grief related to saying goodbye to one’s identity tied to vocation, recognizing the anxiety related to the impending lack of routine, and inviting an exploration of one’s purpose and passions.

Ritual for downsizing - Downsizing to a more supportive living situation is also rife with mixed feelings. Even when these types of transitions are desired, there is a great deal of grief associated with changing one’s place of residence. There could be a blessing held at the former home that would invite the sharing of stories and memories. Similarly, a blessing could be done at the individual’s new residence.

Ritual for new love - Adults in mid and later life may find themselves in romantic relationships that they did not anticipate. There are occasions when marriage may not be an option because of family dynamics or one’s emotional sense of responsibility to a former partner. In these instances, a blessing could be done that acknowledges the joy of new love discovered, honors the families and former partners of everyone, and invites the couple to live into the next chapter with intention, integrity and joy.

Other rituals - Additional rituals that can help people feel seen, loved and supported include rituals related to experiencing menopause, paying off one’s mortgage and even giving up one’s driving privileges.

The church can play an important role in acknowledging the reality that change in the second half of life can be challenging. Ritual is an important means to create meaningful connection, hope and healing during times of transition for people - at any stage of life.

May your *Home* be warm,
your *Holidays* grand,
& may your *Heart* be
held gently in the Lord's hands.



The First Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls
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Merry Christmas to You, a fearfully and wonderfully made child of God:



Toward a Church as Generous
and Just as God's Grace