

First Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls



1st Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls

Toward a Church as **GENEROUS**
and **JUST** as God's Grace...



February Newsletter 2021

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Pastor's Corner

"I'm looking forward to continuing to learn from my past, living in the present, and surrendering to the future." – Beyonce

Groundhog Day has always been a favorite holiday of mine. I love that we gather to see if this animal sees his shadow. We do it in order to know when spring will return and winter will cease. I love it, because winter melts away and spring returns every year when it wants to, no matter if this groundhog sees its shadow. Also, it isn't accurate, but we all agree to go along with it.

Going along with it sounds wonderful, but it isn't living. Going through the motions isn't living. We need to look no further than the movie *Groundhog Day*, to learn this lesson. Bill Murray, who plays the main character, repeats his day over and over again until... when?

Until he begins to live his authentic life. We honor the groundhog's authentic life and we celebrate it. The groundhog comes up from hibernation to know how much longer it should sleep. Why? Because that is what God decreed should happen with this animal. The groundhog doesn't do this charitable act for you and me. The groundhog is a horribly inaccurate weather person, but he does remind us to be ourselves. To live our authentic lives.

Are you living your best life? Are you living life, or going through the motions? Only you can answer this question; the groundhog can't tell you. My prayer is that as we continue to live in this pause of COVID, as days can always feel the same, that we are all spending time in prayer with God, asking ourselves these questions. Maybe, like Bill Murray, we try lots of ideas first- it is ok to stumble and bumble. Let us be present for the answers.

Peace, Pastor Leah





Session Briefs

At its Monday, January 25, 2021 meeting the Session:

- Reviewed the budget report for month of December, 2020. Income was \$13,148; Expenses \$17,064.19; YTD Fundraising Net Income \$2,848. Learned that Utilities registered higher because NYSEG had continued billing based on 2019 usage; it's billing system not yet reformatted to display solar energy, and credits in 2020 are currently being updated.
- Received Thank You note from Betty Geraghty for Christmas poinsettia.
- Elected Joyce Lohr to Session Clerk position.
- Heard good reports for Annual Meeting via Zoom, where 25 people along with Pastor participated.
- Expressed thanks to Elders, who phoned congregation members in December.
- Agreed to seek information from local businesses for donating refund bottles.
- Heard assignments and volunteers for ministries and church committees.
- Plans for Pi Day pie sale on March 14th with drive-by service at the church, and a pie sale along with Doug's Fish Fry on June 10th at Five Star Bank, Rtes. 5 & 20.
- Heard suggestion for doing prison ministry.
- Heard plans for upcoming Coffee Hour programs and of hopes for more ideas.
- Heard plans for continuing with race-related discussion, begun in Summer 2020.

The next meeting of Session is Monday, February 22, 2021

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Barb Wagener- 2/9

Liza Merriam-2/16

Elizabeth (Lohr) Olmstead-2/17

Susan Sholar- 2/20

Jan Day-2/29

Happy Birthday everyone!!



March Newsletter articles are due on

February 21st, and it

It will be sent out on February 28th!



“The church has left the building”

By Donna Frischknecht Jackson | Presbyterians Today

During the COVID-19 crisis, Lonce Bailey, a university professor and member of Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, discovered that the church building really does matter to many people.

As a mission-minded congregation, Shepherdstown Presbyterians can be seen serving the community with T-shirts stating that “the church has left the building.”

But when the coronavirus prevented people from gathering in the historic building, which once served as a hospital during the Civil War, Bailey, along with several other members, became aware of a growing disconnectedness that had some feeling lonely and isolated.

Online worship was working well, with many logging on, he says, but the one thing that kept coming up was that people missed being in the physical building.

“While the building isn’t the church, it still holds an important place in the hearts of worshipers,” said Bailey. The quandary, though, was how to make the building safely accessible.

It was time to see with fresh eyes how spaces in the building, which were often ignored, could be used. Case in point was the portico alongside the church building that no one ever used.

With space for chairs in front of a knee-high stone wall surmounted by columns, it was the perfect place to invite people to come to church safely and pray while connecting with the building.

The portico was transformed into a sacred space with four candlelit prayer stations, all safely distanced, where people could come to meditate and light a candle. Soft music playing in the background added to the ambience. The prayer portico was available from 6 to 8 p.m. on Wednesdays and Sundays last fall.

Bailey said many were grateful for the opportunity to be reconnected to the building. He even noticed members, who were supporting the church’s take-out dinner mission, bringing the food back to the portico to eat and socialize safely with one another. The takeout dinner mission was a way to support Shepherdstown local restaurants, with the church announcing a different restaurant each week to frequent.

“We were able to re-imagine a space that was never used before, and it opened us to a new opportunity to be the church in a time of change,” said Bailey.

Donna Frischknecht Jackson is editor of Presbyterians Today.



Women's Circle

We will meet on Monday, February 1st at 12:30pm in the Hawley Room



We opened the January meeting with prayer and scripture... *“for I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you, that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith...” Romans 1:12*

We'd all heard and used, the word “race” or “Race.” We'd checked “White” or “Caucasian” or “Non-Hispanic”...on forms, not really giving much, or any, thought to what we were saying. And then, we heard that “race” was historically, a “social construct” or “human invention;” made by those who considered Whites to be a superior group to peoples of different skin colors and cultures, different (and lesser) than that of white people.

In our school-days study of history, we saw that some countries expanded themselves into empires by moving into the lives of people on other continents. White shippers, mine owners and traders would enrich themselves with the natural resources of Africa, for example. Africa was to be plundered of many in its human population by a greedy and merciless Slave Trade. And at the same time, the invading countries would send White teachers, doctors, and missionaries to teach literacy, health, and Christianity; these latter not bad intentioned or wasting effort, per se, but still with the underlying assumption that Whites “knew best.” It is this foundation and its unquestioned acceptance that was taught to us as school children, and that we now must grapple with when we try to examine our own present day attitudes.

In Circle, we often stray from Irving's book and discuss examples of how each one's Whiteness influences so much of who we are and how we got here. We acknowledge that we usually prefer to “be comfortable,” and experiencing people or culture apart from our own can make us un-comfortable; or a certain kind of social interaction can make us feel we are being intrusive or stilted, or exhibiting a kind of racism because we initiated a contact with a person of a different color. Would that person resent our assuming we could speak first? But, we all agreed we have to try. And read. And study. And keep looking into ourselves and examining, sorting, and questioning. And if we have

opportunities to change public attitudes and policy, we want to do this and, most importantly, know we are obligated to do so.

Kae read to us from the poet Maya Angelou, “Beautiful Christian Sister;” the last lines instruct us:

“...When I say... “I am a Christian, I'm not holier than thou; I'm just a simple sinner who received God's good grace somehow! Pretty is as pretty does...but beautiful is just plain beautiful.”

We invite all women of the church to join us, if not in person, in spirit, as we continue our study. On February 1st, **please bring something for the House of Concern.** Joyce has started a box of food items, but personal care or paper, soap, etc. products are always needed.

Bring what you can - February's special item is SOUP

Pie on Pi Day

On March 14th, we will be holding our next fundraiser to support our church and our mission. We need YOUR assistance to make this successful:

1. We need your favorite pies to sell
2. Please make these in a 9” disposable pan
3. Tell your friends, family and neighbors to stop by on March 14th and **buy some PIE!**



Pie Sale on Pi Day March 14, 2021



**Who says Science and Religion aren't compatible?
Please join us for Pi Day on 3.14 for our
Homemade Pie Sale**


The First Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls
23 Cayuga Street | 315.568.6636 | www.fpressf.com

Church Family News

- ◆ Thank you to everyone who attended the **Annual Meeting** on Sunday, January 24th, either in person or via Zoom!
- ◆ Please remember to **shop Amazon Smile** and designate our church as the beneficiary of your online purchases. Anyone can help, so if you have a loved one who shops on Amazon, encourage them to purchase items through Amazon Smile.
- ◆ Please let us know in the church office **if anyone needs a card or flower basket**. We never want to miss sending a special prayer to our friends and members.
- ◆ **TOPS CARDS** are always available! If you would like to purchase cards, just leave a message on the answering machine in the Church Office, and Laurie will call you back. Let us know how many and what denominations you need (\$100, \$50 or \$25), and we will make arrangements.
- ◆ **Thank you to the Women's Circle and others** for donating diapers for local families who can't afford them!
- ◆ Do you enjoy Coffee Hour Zoom after the church service? What type programs do you like best? We are in need of programs, so let us know who, when and what subject. It's your turn to share your favorite topics...



Members and Friends to Keep in Our Thoughts

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Address</u> |  |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Dorothy Dickieson | 303 Ferris Hills, Canandaigua, NY 14424 | |
| Betty Geraghty | 8 Iroquois Lane, Waterloo, NY 13165 | |
| Gary Ippolito | DeMay Living Center, 100 Sunset Drive - c/o Wolf Unit, Newark, NY 14513 | |
| 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 County Healthcare Facility, Room 194, 7009 Rumsey Street Ext., Bath, NY 14810 | |

Service Schedule



February 7th– Communion-Psalm 35; Matthew 5:13-20
Jesus says: You are salt and light; I have come to fulfil the law.



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

February 14th– Transfiguration Sunday-Psalm 36; Matthew 17:1-23
On a high mountain with Moses and Elijah, Jesus is transfigured.

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

February 21st– Psalm 37; Matthew 4:1-11
Jesus spends 40 days in the wilderness and is tested by the devil.

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

February 28th– Psalm 38; Matthew 12:38-50
The sign of Jonah. Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?

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

March 7th– Communion-Psalm 39; John 4:5-42
Those who seek God's kingdom must be born of water and Spirit.



7th– Barb Van Kirk
14th– Dick Damaske
21st– Ginny Konz
28th– Susan Sholar
March 7th– Bob Seem

Coffee Hour and Prayer List

Feb. 7th: Coffee Hour - Solar Project Update - Jim Clark

Feb. 14th: Coffee Hour - Valentine Sunday - Rev. Leah Ntuala

Feb. 21st: Coffee Hour - The Underground Railroad in Seneca County - Walt Gable

Feb. 28th: Coffee Hour - Vulnerability - Rev. Leah Ntuala

Know someone ill or hospitalized?

This month, please call: Kae Hoyle, 585-330-0904

To Keep in our prayers: To Keep in Our Prayers: Frank Bocek; Jennifer Colbert; Matthew Cramer; Sue Ellen and Peter Crego; Marion Crull; Norine Crull; Cindy Danielson; Susan Derr; Chester-daniel Freeman; Joanna Fuller; Betty Geraghty; Pat Gordon; Tori Guerina; Crystal Hanes; Greta Hauser & Family; Rick Hendricks; Gary Ippolito; Al Johnson; Bea Jones; Debra Kemp; Timothy Kent; our Law Enforcement Officers; Carson Lankford; Ross Leland & Family; Bruce Levine; Louis Lobdell; Lucy and Nancy Lopez; Liza Merriam; Tyler Morgan; Patsy Mott; Cheri Murphy; Jolene Olsowske; Dean Potter; Shirley Sage; Jean Stenlake; Linda Warner; Darryl Wells; Gretchen Whittacre; Hope Wilson; Linda Zona; and all those suffering in the world.



Church Office: 315-568-6636
Hours: Thursday 7-12pm
Manse: 315-398-4356
E-mail: firstpres13148@gmail.com
Website: www.fpressf.com

Scan this code with
your smart phone
to visit our website



**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
Marion Crull–Treasurer
Peter Snyder-Sexton
Hedra Harrison-Music Director
Joyce Lohr-Clerk to the Session



Session meetings are held on the 4th Monday of each month at 7pm
Presently serving Elders: Jim Clark, Marion Crull, Dick Damaske, Susan Derr, Michele Edmondson,
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
23 Cayuga St
Seneca Falls, NY 13148



Happy Valentine's Day to

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