



1st Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls

First Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls

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



May Newsletter 2021

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Pastor's Corner

"Bethlehem was god with us, Calvary was God for us, and Pentecost is God in us." -Robert Baer



Friends,

Pentecost is the day Jesus ascended to heaven and the Holy Spirit remained. Praise be to God.

Pentecost: *pentēkoste* — properly *fiftieth*, referring to the festival of *Pentecost*— a one day festival celebrated at the end of the barley harvest. This was a joyous time of giving great thanks to God.

Pentecost was the day of understanding. I think a day where all people understood one another is a day worth celebrating and praising God.

This year, we are celebrating not only the wonderful gift of The Holy Spirit, but also worshipping face to face once more. Friends, we will begin our in-person worship services again on Pentecost, Sunday, May 23rd at 10 am, outside with masks. We ask that you bring your own chair, and masks are required. We will continue to record and post the services, but there may be glitches on the way.

It has been well over a year since we had a full service together. No, it will not yet look or be the same. We will gather, but it will be outside. We will have music, but there will be no touching. We will collect offering, but won't pass the plate. We will share in communion, but it will come individually wrapped. We will remain seated instead of sitting and standing. We will be face to face, but we will wear masks. Like Pentecost, it will be a joyous time of giving great thanks to God.

We will celebrate! I look forward to seeing the ways the Holy Spirit will guide us. Thank you for celebrating with me.

Peace, Pastor Leah

Session Briefs

At its Monday, April 26, 2020 meeting, via Zoom, the Session:

- Received March financial report for the church showing Net Revenue: \$14,750.62; Total Expenditures: \$20,037.20 and YTD Fundraising: \$1,275 (TOPS cards, Amazon, Pi Day pies)
- Heard a presentation by Bill Kunda describing church investment portfolios, past and current yields and market trends; followed by a question/answer time
- Received notes of thanks from Jean Morris, Gerry Gray, and The House of Concern
- Heard invitation by letter from House of Concern for joining sponsor list of “NEED TO FEED” campaign, which gets underway May 1st
- Learned our church will provide worship service for Geneva Presbytery meeting on May 25th
- Learned of Pastor’s acceptance to NYS Chaplain training for emergency situations, and of her receipt of a monetary grant from PC(USA) for use during her Sabbatical leave
- Heard more good reports and praise for last month’s outreach project (gift certificates) in support of local business and community residents
- Learned that Dave Sklair and Bob Seem volunteered to run audio/visual equipment for summer worship
- Moved to contract with Parsons for pipe organ repair/replacement of leather and cloth hinges in blower room (requiring removal to their workshop)
- Moved to accept offer from Upstate Paving for sealing and re-stripping church parking lot
- Moved to contract with Lakeside Kanga Roofing for steeple and bell tower seam, flashing, and copper valley replacement
- Discussed manse window replacement for energy-efficient windows in manse second floor and attic, and approved installation to take place this summer by South Seneca Vinyl
- Moved August Communion date to August 15th
- Heard plans for outdoor worship on Sunday, May 23rd

Prepared by Joyce Lohr, Clerk to the Session

The next meeting of Session is on Monday, May 24, 2021 at 7pm



“How a Japanese antidote for stress can engage our senses”

By Nancy Hall-Berens | *Presbyterians Today*



When the unit next door to ours was being renovated, we could hear all sorts of pounding, drilling and demolition. One day when it felt like a giant dentist drill inside my head, I headed out to a public garden for a little peace and quiet. On the drive there, I heard a piece on public radio about forest bathing or, as it is sometimes called, forest therapy.

Forest bathing began in Japan in the 1980s as a response to a spike in stress-related illnesses due to overwork. Nature trails were created for respite. But forest bathing isn't just a walk in the park. Forest bathing often relies on trained guides, who set a deliberately slow pace and invite people to experience the pleasures of nature through all of their senses. The practice has been growing globally, especially as the pandemic has made being outdoors more enticing. In the United States, the number of forest bathing clubs has also been on the rise.

When I finally arrived at the garden, I decided to explore the forest bathing I had just learned about on the radio. With the idea of being there to “soak” in nature, I found a secluded bench under a tree. I could hear all sorts of sounds, so I decided to decipher exactly what I was hearing. I divided the sounds into human and nature — from babies to bumblebees and from cars to crickets. I was beginning to experience the outdoor space with all of my senses. I was enjoying the sight of the trees. I was hearing a myriad of human and natural sounds mingling together. I was smelling the flowers that were so sweet I could taste them. I could feel the warmth of the sun touching my skin. Eventually, I could feel the wooden bench slats I sat upon getting harder!

I began thinking a better term for forest bathing might be “soul bathing” — a cleansing of the mind and spirit by being immersed in the natural world. Naturalist John Muir once wrote, “Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.” I've known this quotation since high school and only now realize that I have been practicing forest bathing without knowing it was a thing.

While I was seeking quiet that day, I instead began intentionally listening to the sounds around me rather than trying to block them out. I began wondering, “How well do we really hear everything going on around us.”

Sometimes in life we need to stop what we are doing, what we are thinking and what we are saying, and listen. I imagine that this world would be a better place if we paid more attention to what others were saying. We can practice by slowing down, listening to the natural world and doing a little forest bathing, forest therapy or, what I like to call this spiritual practice, soul bathing. For when we do, maybe, just maybe, we will learn to listen better to one another as well.

Nancy Hall-Berens is the director of Congregational Life, Singles and Women's Ministries at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Alexandria, Virginia.

Put into practice

- Forest bathing is not restricted to being in a forest. It can be in your own backyard, at the beach, watching the sun set over a lake or even sitting atop a mesa as Nancy Hall-Berens experienced while at Ghost Ranch in New Mexico. Find a spot outside where you can sit without interruptions and listen to what's around you.
- Make time in your week to walk in nature. Stop along the way for a “bath” to steep yourself in nature. This is something Hall-Berens and her husband started doing during the pandemic.
- Empty yourself of what is weighing on you and soak in the beauty of God's Creation with all five senses. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell? What do you feel? What do you taste?
- Breathe deeply. Say a prayer. Give thanks to God for this beautiful world.
- The Association of Nature and Forest Therapy is a great place to learn more. Log on and start learning at natureandforesttherapy.org

Women's Circle

Will meet next on Monday, May 3rd at 12:30 PM in the Hawley Room

Following a short sandwich lunch in April and “catching up,” Kae opened our study time with prayer and read to us from *Hebrews 12:14: Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord...*

Joyce played a segment of a recording of Zora Neale Hurston's classic 1937 novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. We learned that Hurston wrote about “black folks” in Florida and Alabama using *their* language, which wasn't always considered “grammatically correct”. She liked, she said, “the way they sound”. Her family and her fictional characters loved sitting at the general store or on their front porches and swapping stories. It was the telling and sharing of stories that her people most enjoyed doing, “in our own skins,” following a day's work in “other people's kitchens or fields...”. She also searched out and recorded black songs and wrote essays and plays. Her works later became politically unfashionable and Zora Neale Hurston died in 1960, aged 79 and penniless. (On the recording we also enjoyed hearing the voices of Alice Walker and Ruby Dee.)

Kae reviewed with us Chapter 24, “Everyone is Different; Everyone Belongs,” in the Debby Irving book. This chapter took its title from the motto of the school where Irving's oldest child began kindergarten. Classrooms were made inclusive of children with special needs, instead of those children being assigned a “special ed.” room. Children in the classrooms came to appreciate this diversity as “normal”, and practiced caring for and nurturing others, rather than competition and rivalry.

Ginny discussed with us the ways in which we all have participated in “the culture of niceness,” where talk of serious subjects is often avoided for reasons of controversy, embarrassment or the possibility of someone suffering hurt feelings. Emotions, especially ones considered to be negative, must be controlled. Complaining or expressing negative feelings on anyone's part, in a middle class family or social situation, was considered to be rude and a sign of “poor breeding”... conflict in any form was to be avoided. People must “suppress their feelings” and “behave nicely”. Irving struggled to overcome these lessons taught from childhood and learned to listen, rather than dismiss, what she came to recognize as legitimate complaints, from people of color and others who had not enjoyed the privileged personal and community life she herself had experienced. She would, in her words, “...embrace the discomfort of conflict in the name of resolution...” in order to *change* the status quo, rather than maintain it. “Change requires tolerating the kind of emotions that arise when the constraints of nice conversations are lifted.”

For the May meeting, Barb will give an opening prayer and lead us in discussion of another reading in the Leaving My Comfort Zone section of the Irving book, Chapter 32, “Getting Over Myself” or, to paraphrase Debby Irving: *let go of worry about how good you are at anti-racist work, courageous conversations or life in general, and embrace humility.*

Everyone continue reading, and please read the chapter Barb is leading for the May meeting.



Women's Circle (cont.)

In our Circle mission work, we have learned the shelter in Waterloo is now housing six young women. Shelter personnel have told us they need cleaning supplies, as each woman has her own room and bath. Joyce will buy cans of cleanser and take them to the shelter office.

HOUSE OF CONCERN Special Item for May is: Breakfast Cereals

The House "NEED TO FEED" campaign begins May 1st.

Everyone is asked to help our church achieve its goal (to be announced) with monetary and/or food item donations!

HOUSE OF CONCERN 315-568-2433



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

See you in May!!



Happy birthday! Happy birthday! Happy birthday!

Happy birthday! Happy birthday! Happy birthday!

May Birthdays

- Sue Charles-5/5
- Hope Wilson-5/10
- Marya (Lohr) Vigil-5/16
- David Lay-5/17
- Karen Kelley-5/18
- Shirley Sage-5/20
- Al Johnson-5/23
- Richard Damaske-5/28
- Jase Clark-5/29
- Gerry Gray-5/30

Happy birthday!

Happy birthday!

Church Family News

- ◆ **Communion Pick-Up** - We will be offering Communion Pick-Up in the church parking lot on **Saturday, May 1st from 11am until 1pm**. Please come by!
- ◆ **Request from Honey Gilbert** - “Dear Friends: we need more staff here at my group home, The Bixby Home in Interlaken, especially nurses who have knowledge of dementia, since four people here have that illness.” Please keep Honey’s concerns in your prayers, and drop her a note at 8342 North Main Street, PO 419, Interlaken, NY 14847 or h.gilbert691913@gmail.com.
- ◆ **Thanks from Marion Crull** - “I would like to thank all of you for the chocolate basket of goods when Ron died. It was just what I needed.”
- ◆ **Matthew Crull** completed his training for his CDL. He passed his driving test and received his license. He is going to start work at Casella Waste Systems in Geneva on Monday, April 26th. I am so proud of him for going after his dream and getting his CDL! *-Submitted by Marion Crull-*
- ◆ **Marvin and Iva Lay** - had TWO things to honor and celebrate on Earth Day this year; our great planet AND their 71st anniversary! Best wishes, Marvin and Iva!
- ◆ **June Newsletter articles** are due on Thursday, May 20th; the newsletter will be sent out on Thursday, May 27th.



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
Carson Lankford	3120 Patton Avenue, Seneca Falls, NY 13148
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 Street Ext. Bath NY 14810



Service Schedule



May 2nd– Psalm 47; John 10:1-10

Jesus says: I am the gate for the sheep; enter by me and be saved.

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



May 9th– Psalm 48; John 14:1-14

Jesus is the way, the truth and the life; he prepares a place for us.

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

May 16th– Psalm 49; John 14:15-21

Jesus says: the Father will send the Spirit, who will abide in you.

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

May 23rd– Pentecost Sunday- Psalm 50; John 20:19-23; John 7:37-39

The risen Lord appears to the disciples and gives them the Spirit; Jesus promises the Spirit: living water from the believer's heart.

Join us <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMY7YsXpd6ybud2LmWCoijA>

May 30th– Psalm 51; John 17:1-12

Jesus seeks the glory of God and prays for his disciples.

Join us <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMY7YsXpd6ybud2LmWCoijA>

June 6– Communion-Psalm 52; Matthew 5:21-37

Jesus interprets the laws on murder, adultery and making vows.

Join us <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMY7YsXpd6ybud2LmWCoijA>



Liturgist List

May 2nd– Ginny Konz

May 9th– Marion Crull

May 16th– Barry Porsch

May 23rd– Susan Sholar

May 30th– Bob Seem

June 6th– Marc Smith

Coffee Hour and Prayer List



May 2nd: Coffee Hour: Connie Amos-Parsons

May 9th: No Coffee Hour, Mother's Day

May 16th: Coffee Hour: Puerto Rico – Final Coffee Hour for the Summer– you in September!

Know someone ill or hospitalized? This month, please call: Iva Lay - 315.568.8562

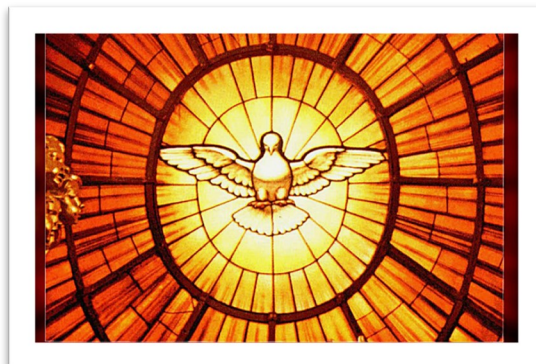
To Keep in Our Prayers: Frank Bocek; Jennifer Colbert; Matthew Cramer; Sue Ellen and Peter Crego; Norine Crull; Cindy Danielson; Susan Derr; family & friends of Ruth Doering; George Elyseev; Chesterdaniel Freeman; Joanna Fuller; Betty Geraghty; family & friends of Paul Goodman; Pat Gordon; Tori Guerina; Crystal Hanes; 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; Hope Wilson; Gretchen Whittacre; Linda Zona; nurses, especially those with knowledge of dementia, needed at the Bixby Home in Interlaken, NY; and all those suffering in the world.

Church Office: 315-568-6636
Hours: Tuesday-Thursday 7-12pm
Manse: 315-398.4356
E-mail: firstpres13148@gmail.com
Website: www.fpressf.com

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about us!



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 meetings are 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 and Marc Smith.
Joyce Lohr, Clerk to the Session and with Pastor Leah as Moderator

First Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls
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Wishing Warm Spring Weather to:

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