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Sunday School via Zoom at 4pm
Sunday Online Worship at 10am
Coffee Hour via Zoom at 11am

Rev. Leah Ntuala-Pastor
 Rev. Dr. Peter J. Crego-Pastor Emeritus
 Marion Crull-Treasurer
 Laurie Weller-Office Manager
 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: Matthew Crull, Susan Derr, Susan Harkey, Jay Hoyle,
 Ginny Konz, Wayne Lohr, Marc Smith, Peter Snyder.
 Joyce Lohr, Clerk to the Session and Rev. Leah Ntuala, Moderator.

First Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls
 P.O. Box 383
 23 Cayuga St
 Seneca Falls, NY 13148



Wishing a Happy Fall to:

October Newsletter 2020

First Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls

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



October Newsletter 2020



1st Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls

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Pastor's Corner



Let me start by saying how much I miss gathering together with you in this space. I wish I had answers to your questions. I wish I knew when we were going to gather in this sanctuary again.

The COVID Task Force is working on answering these questions. We are looking at the numbers in Seneca County, recommendations from the PCUSA, and science. There are many unknowns. I thank you for walking alongside us as we make these tough choices together.

We have found other ways to engage each other. Many of you call one another, write cards and send emails. We have gathered in person with masks and social distance. We have engaged one another with communion kits and weekly Zoom check-ins. We have offered a few online Bible Studies, Coffee Hours and Sunday School. Building and Property projects have continued to prepare the space for our return. The church has never been closed and our work together has always been essential.

I am working on ways as a community of faith to name our grief. This is a stage where we find ourselves in this moment. We are grieving the loss of this sacred space, the fellowship, the communion. We are grieving not seeing family and friends. We are grieving vacations we did not take and holidays that may look different. We are grieving the way we used to shop for groceries.

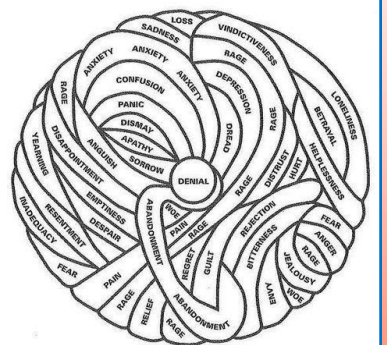
I am trying to find ways we can untangle this ball of emotion. Church provides us with ritual and ceremonies. I am looking to introduce a ritual that will allow us in healthy and faithful ways to give these griefs to God and let them go. God is with us in this process.

Maybe this time apart has provided you with a much needed rest. Maybe it has given you the opportunity to reprioritize or finish a project. Maybe you have said yes to something you would have turned down. Or no to something that would have usually received a yes. Maybe you have developed a new ritual or practice in your own life. Maybe this time has allowed you to dig deeper.

Whatever blessings God has given to you in this collective global pause—let us offer a prayer of thanksgiving.

Peace, Pastor Leah

BALL OF GRIEF
 A TANGLED "BALL" OF EMOTIONS



Session Briefs

At its Meeting (via Zoom) on Monday, September 28, 2020 the Session:

- Received notes of thanks from Peter Snyder and George & Joanne Elysée for dinner gifts.
- Received invitation from Presbyterian Historical Society via Geneva Presbytery committee to send church historical documents to Philadelphia for copying and storage, and moved to send Session minutes.
- Looked at Budget report for August showing Income \$14,927 (grants, pledges and non-pledges, investments, rentals, plate offerings, special events) and Expenses totaling \$22,065 and discussed discrepancies.
- Heard Pastor’s report for Camp Whitman, Council and Presbytery meetings and of her attendance at Seneca Falls Community Center program on police reforms on September 23rd.
- Learned of changes made to church Facebook page and of new links to Coffee Hour programs (now taped, if presenter(s) permit) and heard reminder to read weekly church ENews.
- Heard recommendations from Pastor for new books to read; she will lend, including *Jesus: A New Vision*, by Marcus Borg.
- Discussed upcoming programs for Coffee Hour and possible presenters.
- Learned of questionnaire on Seneca County Sheriff website for expressing community concerns.
- Heard report that Geneva Presbytery recommends for church employees a salary increase of 1.6% in 2021.
- Heard reports from some church ministries (committees) of meetings and from those not meeting, and heard encouragement from Pastor to meet in person in church building or out-of-doors, taking precautionary measures.
- Learned that Property people replaced thermostat in social rooms and added lighting to Alice Paul bust, and contracted to seal radiator leak in documents closet; also top soil and grass seed have been applied at church front.
- Heard of quest from Presbytery for new office space(s) and moved to explore possibilities for our spaces.
- Stewardship and Finance people are planning annual Stewardship letter for this Fall.
- Took no further action on proposed Session/congregational letter, “A Call to Action” regarding Race, agreeing to further prayerful study and discussion.



The next meeting of the Session is October 26, 2020



October Birthdays

- Kris (Lohr) Witherspoon- 10/2*
- Zachary Rescorl-10/10*
- Peter Crego-10/18*
- Bob Seem-10/22*
- Don Ritter-10/27*
- Sue Ellen Crego-10/28*
- Kae Hoyle—10/29*
- Matthew Walsh- 10/31*

Reminder

November Newsletter articles are due on **October 22nd**
Thank you!

It will be sent out **On October 29th**



Service Schedule



October 4th– World Communion- Psalm 18; Preaching text: 1 John 4:7-21; Gospel: John 15:9-11

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

Use your own cup and bread to join us for communion



October 11th—Psalm 19; Preaching text: Hebrews 1:1-4

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

October 18th—Psalm 20; Preaching text: Hebrews 2:10-18

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

October 25th—Reformation Sunday-Psalm 21; Preaching text: Hebrews 4:14-5:10

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

November 1st– All Saints- Psalm 22; Preaching text: Hebrews 9:1-14

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



- 4th— Marc Smith
- 11th— Ginny Konz
- 18th— Marion Crull
- 25th— Bob Seem
- 1st— Barry Porsch



October Coffee Hours

October 4: Matthew Cramer, Real Estate

Sunday at 11am: Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82474187958>

October 11: Robert Shields, Seneca County Addictions Program

Sunday at 11am: Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82474187958>

October 18: Sean Mullen, local 2nd grade teacher and author of a recently published children’s book

Sunday at 11am: Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82474187958>

October 25: Michele Edmundson, Prayer

Sunday at 11am: Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82474187958>





NPR issued a poetry challenge: submit lines describing how you've been affected by the

global coronavirus pandemic. NPR's poet-in-residence Kwame Alexander pointed to Nancy Cross Dunham's poem, "What I'm Learning About Grief," and asked that submissions begin with those same words. The responses were deeply emotional and vividly captured some of the ways you are coping with uncertainty and crisis. As he does with other crowdsourced poems for *Morning Edition*, Alexander compiled lines from some of the submissions and created a community poem. Contributors are credited at the bottom.

If The Trees Can Keep Dancing, So Can I

What I'm learning about grief is that it sits in the space between laughs comes in the dark steals the warmth from the bed covers threads sleep with thin tendrils is a hauntingly familiar song, yet I can't remember the words... What I'm learning about grief is that it rolls like a heavy mist settles into the crevices lingers on the skin. Visits, then visits again Lurking under my chair. And, when I'm not watching Reaches out her tiny claws And bats my ankles — Grief sneaks up on you. You find yourself on your couch with a well of rage living in the pit of your stomach and nowhere for it to go. And, It chokes you. What I'm learning about grief, is that it can come like a whisper or storm through loud as thunder it leaves a hollow, to be filled with a new planting. And, when you wake for another day that feels oddly the same as the last, It crawls right back into your lap. an ocean of tears So, you vary the crawl with the butterfly, the backstroke with breaststroke. At some point, drowning is no longer an

option. What I'm learning about grief Is that it is a language. Suffering is its own speech it will not go away just because you won't look it in the eye He rides shotgun when you go by old familiar places Eventually, you will get closer and he will say "See, it's not so bad. I got your back." This pandemic, this tragedy, this fulcrum of life is a shovel unearthing secrets we wish would stay buried I learn that I am ashamed I love solitude. Hard times call for soft people. There is softness in stillness, in staying home, in distractions deleted, in a togetherness that stretches great distances. What I'm learning about grief is not found in mint leaves, floating in a glass of tears boiled thrice over. It is an acquired taste which we never crave It likes nachos Staying up late Watching Scandinavian murder shows Sleeping in And eating cake for breakfast. it drips, like water, It gets in everywhere through the small unseen fissures in the ceiling. You can ignore it like dust. Just keep yourself too busy with laundry and living. Grief shows up unannounced Like when your husband tells you last October That he's never loved you And wants permission to leave So you burrow the ache into carefully guarded well And wonder if that means the memories have to go there too What I'm learning about grief is that it can turn you into someone you don't want to be, can help you become someone you never thought you could be is that it transcends color, race, Religion, gender. is that it's an old lover that won't leave. trying to hold your hand again —

that it aches in the arches of feet that its mother is loss, its father, change Make room for it. Is that tiny losses add up The missed first party my son was to attend The school days he yearns for with his friends I tell him it will be over soon What I'm learning about grief I learned a long time ago. Knead grief, as you would bread. Weave grief, as you would thread. there is no vaccine against it — we can't develop antibodies against it, it is something I have and something you have — but in these times it is something we have It is anger and denial It is chaotic laughter from splintered memories It is jagged cries and single tears It is numb and indifferent It is the pinprick of light, promising A slow semblance of normality returned What I'm learning about grief Is to acknowledge its presence Its many forms and guises Then, to use it, while reaching out Connected To everyone who is braving this same storm What I'm learning about grief is that it is still learning about me Learning that I am strong and resilient If the trees can keep dancing, So can I.

This community poem was created using submissions by: Jim Binford, Louisville, Ky.; Holly Redmond, Dayton, Ohio; Jennifer Sharpe, Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Alicia Richarte, San Antonio; Destiny Gayz, Philadelphia; Ami Simpson, Montgomery, Ala.; Nikki Simchuk, Seattle; Helen O'Connor, Friday Harbor, Wash.; Molly Kelly, Chicago; Tim Stary, Wichita Falls, Texas; Paul Love, Austin, Texas; Michelle Nickol, Tucson, Ariz.; Michaela Esau, Hutchinson, Ka.; Elizabeth Greene, Wilmington, Del.; Elda Mengisto, Lynnwood, Wash.; Michael Hess, Albuquerque, N.M.; Melissa Blankenship, Cochran, Ga.; JoAnne Jensen, Phoenix; Patricia Mosco Holloway, Denver; Tracy Engle, Roseville, Calif.; Stephanie Hubble, Howell, Mich.; Heidi Armbruster, Brooklyn, N.Y.; Margaret Keir Berg, Grafton, Wis.; David Nelson, Des Moines, Iowa; Jasper (13 years old), Clinton, N.Y.; Delroy Roomes, Mishawaka, Ind.; Bailey Gartman, Asheville, N.C.; Angela Winfield, Auburn, N.Y.; Amy Diber, Klamath Falls, Ore.; Judy Chaet, Asheville, N.C.; Lisa Reeves, Buffalo, Mo.; Michael Ruffin, Yatesville, Ga.; Sonnet Medrano, Austin, Texas

Women's Circle



At our September meeting, three of us and Pastor Leah met at Joyce's house. The day was beautiful, sunny and warm, so we were able to meet out of doors. In discussing what we would study this fall and winter, everyone present preferred to read Scripture and books of interest to all, and each would search for some titles. There was also interest in further discussing the Book of Ruth, since we never finished where we started before the pandemic. Michele, who was unable to be with us, has completed one or more on-line Bible studies over the summer months. If we have some topics, she has promised to find materials, books etc. for us to consider. Ruby was also absent, having decided to stay sheltered until later on.

We discussed the needs of the House of Concern, Victim Resource Center, Safe Harbors and the C.A.P. program (Waterloo site). We learned that the House of Concern has a room set aside for people to get non-food items and that shampoo, hair conditioner and other personal items are always in short supply; also men's deodorants. Infant formula (Enfamil) is a frequently sought item for House clients and is usually in short supply. Those of us present agreed to buy a case and Barb volunteered to find a source with the best price.

Joyce talked with the Victim Resource Center (in Newark and serving several counties). They do not need Personal Care Kits at present, but also always need more hair conditioner. We made a note to include that in our requests for donations from the congregation. We hope everyone remembers that the basket labeled "Victim Resource Center" is next to the bottle return box in the social rooms. We are still asking for children's underwear, pajamas, diapers, etc.

Before closing, we assembled 10 more Personal Care Kits. Pastor Leah suggested we contact the C.A.P. people to ask if they need kits or other donations. Joyce will also contact Safe Harbors for their needs. We wrote cards to some of our absent Circle members and ended with our prayer:

*May the Lord watch between me and thee,
While we are apart, one from the other. Amen*

The next Circle meeting is on Monday, October 7th at 12:30 pm in the Hawley Room at the Church. We invite interested others to join us. Bring a lunch and your mask!

Items may be taken directly to the **House of Concern** between the hours of 9 am and 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday. In addition to its regular clientele, the House now serves 15-20 additional families each month due to the pandemic!

**House of Concern Special item in October:
CANNED SOUPS & STEWS** [crates in social rooms; baskets in narthex & upstairs back hallway]



Know someone ill or hospitalized?

This month, please call: Kae Hoyle 585.330.0904

To Keep in Our Prayers : Frank Bocek; Gloria Chandler; Kathy Cole; Jennifer Colbert; Matthew Cramer; Sue Ellen and Peter Crego; Norine Crull; Cindy Danielson; Susan Derr; Chesterdaniel Freeman; Joanna Fuller; Betty Geraghty; Marvin Gordon; Pat Gordon; Tori Guerina; Crystal Hanes; Greta Hauser & Family; Gary Ippolito; Al Johnson; Bea Jones; Debra Kemp; Timothy Kent; our Law Enforcement Officers; Carson Lankford; LewAnn Backus Lawhorn; Bruce Levine; Lucy and Nancy Lopez; Liza Merriam; Tyler Morgan; Patsy Mott; Cheri Murphy; the family of Kathy Nelson; Dean Potter; Shirley Sage; Jean Stenlake; Linda Warner; Darryl Wells; Paul Wenderlich; Gretchen Whittacre; Linda Zona; and all those suffering in the world.



“Time for More Prayer, Less Talk”

N. Graham Standish, *Presbyterians Today*, September 16, 2020

Six months had passed since our elders transitioned to more prayerful session meetings. I was checking in with Vic, one of our crustier members who had resisted the change. “So, how are you dealing with the new meeting style?” I asked.

“I don’t like it. I don’t like this ‘listening for God stuff,” he said. I asked if he wanted to revert to the old way. He replied “no,” but admitted that it was just “really hard to ask what God wants.”

Vic captured the dilemma of most sessions or committees that adapt a more prayerful meeting process. As Presbyterians, we’ve conformed so thoroughly to decision making by motions, debates and votes of “All in favor say ‘yes’” that it feels like we’re violating the natural order by intentionally listening for what God wants, and then voting, “All who sense this may be God’s will, say ‘yes.’”

I first became aware of how necessary intentional group discernment was as an associate pastor. While sitting in a session meeting, a vivid image popped into my head as I realized what we were really saying to God was: “Glad you’re here, God. Please sit while we read to you this psalm and then pray. Afterward, if you don’t mind, feel free to wander around our lovely sanctuary until we call you back to bless what we’ve decided.”

How could we get better at including God? I had already been reflecting on how to create a more prayerful, discerning way of meeting while working on my doctorate in formative spirituality. So, shortly after becoming pastor of Calvin Presbyterian Church in Zelienople, Pennsylvania — where I served from 1996 to 2017 — I led a task force to intentionally invite God back into our meetings. The seemingly “radical” changes made were transformative. They included:

- Extended prayer and study time — For Calvin Presbyterian, this meant 45 minutes spent praying and studying at the start of the meeting.
- Discarding busy work — The reading of reports and other busy work that fatigued people during meetings was done away with, giving elders time for prayer, which led to renewed energy.
- Silent prayer before voting — Silent prayer prior to voting was encouraged to allow elders to let go of their own thoughts and make room for God’s ways.
- A search for unity — When voting, we sought unity. When there was disagreement, we postponed for more prayer, believing God may be leading us to other options.

We also began prioritizing spiritual qualities over skill sets when seeking new leaders. Over time, this helped prayerful discernment become the ethos for the whole church. There are always arguments against creating prayerful meetings, with the most popular one being that it makes meetings longer. That’s not the case because we let go of time-consuming requirements such as reading reports and minutes. We expected elders to read these ahead of time. Also, this more prayerful, discerning style tended to push elders to a higher standard, so they argued less, collaborated more and made decisions more quickly.

We never truly know what God wants, but my experience is that churches that intentionally invite God into their meetings end up with a subtle but profound spiritual revival. Graham Standish is executive director of Samaritan Counseling, Guidance, Consulting in Sewickley, Pennsylvania, and directs their Caring for Clergy and Congregations program. He is the author of several books on spirituality and congregational transformation, with a new one, “.... And the Church Actually Changed,” due this month (ngrahamstandish.org).

Put into practice:

- Open meetings with an extended time of prayer and study.
- Don’t underestimate the power of silent prayer before votes or during a difficult discussion.
- Review meeting agendas and omit practices that are time-consuming.
- Seek spirituality over functionality in leaders. For example, a prayer warrior on a building committee might be more useful than a member whose profession is a building contractor. You just never know.



Church Family News



- ♦ **Stewardship** is an ethic that embodies the responsible planning and management of resources. The concepts of **stewardship** can be applied to the environment and nature, economics, health, property, information, theology, etc. Wikipedia. Yes, it is Stewardship time again, keep an eye out for your letter and pledge the form.



Gary phoned this week to let everyone know he is doing well, but misses the church so much. He likes where he is, but he misses handing out candies during the passing of the peace, sitting with his pew partner K.K. and being with everyone on Sunday morning. He loves getting he newsletters, bulletins and sermon booklets. Gary also wanted me to tell you that he hasn’t smoked a cigarette in over a year. He wants you to know he thinks of you often and prayers for you daily. He loves receiving mail, if you are able .

Thoughts on Stewardship

- ♦ Based on the gift each one has received, use it to serve others, as good managers of the varied grace of God. — *1 Peter 4:10*
- ♦ The reality is that many people today, including lots of Christians, don’t understand the true meaning of stewardship. And that’s a tragedy. Why? Because stewardship is our **ultimate calling as Christ followers**.
- ♦ **Stewardship is managing God’s blessings God’s ways for God’s glory.** See, the Bible tells us in Psalm 24:1 that He owns it all: “The earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof” (KJV). And if He’s the owner, that means we’re not. Instead, we’re His stewards—His managers. God commands us to be stewards over everything He blesses us with. *Everything. That means our time, talents, treasure, relationships, jobs and, yes, stuff.* It’s all God’s, and He trusts us with it. Did you catch that? *We get* to manage all of the *Creator’s* stuff. How awesome is that? It’s both an honor and a serious responsibility! When we get that in our spirit, well, it changes things. It changes our perspective on our family budgets, our daily decisions, even our purpose in life. When we understand true, biblical stewardship, the trajectories of our lives change with every decision we make. We begin to build a legacy of stewardship in our families. We treat our spouses and kids differently. We approach our work with a new sense of purpose. We become grateful for everything we have. We live within our means. We have more money to give. And we have hope for the future.

Chris Brown

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
Liza Merriam	Heritage Hall 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
Gary Ippolito	DeMays Living Center, 100 Sunset Drive—c/o Wolf Unit, Newark, NY, 14513

