

THE RAPPORTEUR

"Where Faith and Family Come Together"
First Presbyterian Church, Olean, NY
October, 2016

Pastor's Thoughts...

On Sunday, September 18th, several of us met in the sanctuary to follow up on the retreat held last May. The first part of the discussion focused on the current trends in our community and our church. One of the major concerns about our church was the age and size of the congregation. We talked for a while about what it would take to attract more people, especially young people with children. We spoke of the generations beneath us as being very high-tech and the fact that our worship was about as low-tech as you can get. Someone suggested we should make it known that we offer traditional worship. I described us as a traditional church with a smile. I think there is something to that. In fact I have heard from two of our youngest families that they like that we are traditional. Interesting.

Then we transitioned to how we might attract members of the community to our church. Then there was a dramatic shift that reflects one of the great ideas that surfaced at our retreat. **We want to be the church that does things for others without thought of reward.** In other words we want to be a gracious church. Ideas surfaced like collecting things for the schools, maybe a food pantry related activity, and Halloween.

As a result several of us are going to pass out treats at Halloween in front of our church. We will attach a church information tag to the bag to let people know where the candy came from. The idea is just a fun thing. To this end if you could drop off a bag or two of candy for us to distribute it would be appreciated. I want to grill hot dogs as I remember that was my favorite stop, the house that served hot dogs when I trick or treated. If you would like to be involved let me know. This would be fun for those who have no people trick or treating at their houses.

It seemed as if there was some excitement in doing things for the community without needing anything in return. There will be more about these things as the take shape.

Peace, *Pastor Bruce*

Stewardship Committee

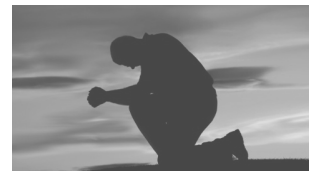
Our church participates in four special offerings sponsored by our national organization. Two occur in spring and will be discussed at a later date. The other two are collected during the fall and winter seasons.

October 9th is the formal day for collecting the Peace and Global Witness offering but gifts may be given any time in October. If you choose to participate, you may give in cash or as a check. If you give cash, place it in an envelope, label it for Peace and Global Witness and put it in the collection plate during worship. A general-purpose envelope from a pew rack may also be used if you label it as above. If you choose to use a check, write the name of the collection on the memo line. You may also simply write "Peace" on the memo line. The check may be put in the collection plate as is or first put in an envelope.

A gift to the Peace & Global Witness Offering enables the church to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of injustice across the world. Individual congregations are encouraged to utilize up to 25% of this Offering to connect with the global witness of Christ's peace. Mid councils retain an additional 25% for ministries of peace and reconciliation. The remaining 50% is used by the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate for peace and justice in cultures of violence, including our own, through collaborative projects of education and Christian witness.

The Christmas Joy offering is usually connected with Christmas Eve but gifts may be made anytime in December. More details will be in a later issue of The Rapporater.

Adult Discussion



October's discussions will revolve around the book *Contemplative Prayer* by Thomas Merton. Merton, a strong influence on St. Bonaventure has local connections to members of the Olean community. We

invite you all to join in the conversations each Sunday morning at 9:35am in Fellowship Hall.

MEF

Your MEF committee hosted our traditional Welcome Back Breakfast on September 11th. About 29 people enjoyed breakfast casseroles, fruit and beverages while chatting about summer events and anything else that came to mind and seemed to be important at the moment.

Upcoming Events:

- Oct. 2 - First Sunday potluck lunch. We have been having these lunches after worship on the first Sunday of most months for at least two years - maybe three - and they have been very popular. The food is always wonderful and the fellowship is just as great. To participate, simply stay after worship and get in line at the serving table in Fellowship Hall. If you would like to contribute to the lunch (this is NOT necessary), bring a dish to share or some item to be used at a future lunch. That could be sturdy paper plates, hot or cold paper cups, sturdy plastic forks, or a bag of sugar.
- Oct. 14 - At 5:30pm we will share a potluck dinner in Fellowship Hall followed by a travelogue in the chapel presented by Punkie Sinesiou. She will share photos and stories of her family's 2015 Danube River cruise with stops in major cities in four countries in Europe.
- Nov. 6 - First Sunday potluck lunch in Fellowship Hall after worship.
- Nov. 19 - Our traditional Thankfest at 5:30pm. Details will be announced later.
- Dec. 4 - Deck the Halls. After worship we will decorate the sanctuary and Fellowship Hall for the Christmas season. It is wonderful to work with each other to achieve a beautiful goal. There are important tasks for folks with all levels of physical ability, from unwrapping ornaments for the tree to climbing on ladders to place the ornaments and all sorts in between.

Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve Reception. Come to the Christmas Eve service and stay after to enjoy cookies and coffee while connecting with old friends who are visiting for the holiday.

Jan. 8 - Wreck the Halls after worship. Many hands will make light work as we take down our Christmas season decorations and prepare them for storage. Again, there are important tasks available for folks with all levels of physical ability.

Our next meeting will be October 12th at 7pm in Fellowship Hall. Join us to share ideas or to find out what we are up to.

SPECIAL CHALLENGE: Check the events above and count to see how many involve sharing food. Once you have a number, sit back and think about how wonderful it is to share food and conversation. We are blessed.

CE Corner

I'm so glad to see everyone back for the 2016-2017 Sunday School Year! I hope everyone had a wonderful summer and has started the new school year off right. Our family had a wonderful summertime, but I am glad to be enjoying the cool fall weather.

Our Sunday School class has begun their new unit in the Feasting on the Word curriculum. In September, our lessons focused on studying some of Jesus' parables. In October, we will be examining Paul's letter to Timothy. It's so nice to see the students becoming familiar with God's word!

The boys will hold another baking session for our mission project: Cookies for Cops. It will be the second Sunday in October. The students bake cookies and send them out to first responders in our community as a thank-you for their service. THANK YOU to all who sent in bottle slips over the summer so that we can purchase supplies for future baking projects.

SESSION UPDATE

Actions taken by Session during the September 19, 2016 meeting:

- Agreed to allow Tony Evans to conduct a wedding ceremony on May 28, 2017.
- Agreed to donate \$50 to Alexis Fisk for attending a youth retreat at Duffield.
- Received thank-you notes from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Olean Food Pantry, and Senior Care Foundation.
- Received thank-you notes for Burt Fund donations from Toys for Tots, Karino Wada, African American Cultural Center, Southern Tier Symphony, and Cattaraugus Region Community Foundation Scholarship recipients Morgan Carapellatti, Katelyn Powless, and McKenzie Skroback.
- Received a letter from Presbytery stating that our church is entitled to an additional elder for the September 24 meeting.
- Received a letter from Presbytery delineating our current pledge and what we have sent as of May '16. Outside door locks have been changed.
- Hallways by the office and gym need to be painted. Don will work with a young man who is doing community service to handle this task.
- Accepted August budget report.
- Funds from Peacemaking and One Great Hour of Sharing offerings have been sent to Presbytery.
- Rick Snyder will be off on October 2.
- Carol McClellan is happy with the new Sunday School curriculum.
- Alexis Fisk has volunteered to be the second Sunday School teacher.
- The Sunday School students will continue their Cookies for Cops for the fall.
- There will be no SERV V sale this year.
- The Christmas Pageant will be 12/18.
- There will be no Sunday School on 12/25.
- The Peace and Global Witness offering will be on October 9.
- See the MEF report for upcoming fellowship events.
- MEF will not sponsor ringing the bell for Salvation Army this year. Some other kind of drive at Christmas time will be held instead.

(Session Update continued)

- False rumors have been circulating regarding the status of OCDC and our use of the rooms used by OCDC. There has been no discussion by Session regarding either of these issues and therefore there have been no decisions.
- The Greater Olean Area Churches' Ecumenical Thanksgiving and Crèche Lighting Service will be 11/20 at Trinity United Methodist Church.
- There have been concerns expressed regarding liturgists reading from a variety of translations of the Bible, making it difficult for congregants to read along. It was suggested that as scripture is a prelude to the sermon, Bruce should choose if the translation is something other than the RSV, as in the pew Bibles, and an insert will be included in the bulletin for the use of the congregation. Liturgists will read from the RSV unless instructed to do otherwise.

(CE Corner continued)

We are already beginning to plan our Sunday School Christmas Pageant. It is tentatively scheduled for Sunday December 18th. It will be here before you know it! We are also always looking for ideas for fellowship, fundraising, and service projects- do you have any activities you'd like to do with the kids? Please talk to anyone on the Christian Ed. Committee- we'd love to hear about it. We also want to make sure that, as this congregations moves forward with its plans to grow and change in the future, the youth of the congregation have a voice in what that future holds. If you are a Sunday School student, a parent, a grandparent, or just a concerned member of our church, I urge you to participate in the talks our church is having regarding its goals. The children are, after all, the future of our church.

Enjoy the beautiful autumn, and see you on Sunday!
Carol McClellan, CE Director



Book Club

After a casual schedule during the summer, the book club is happy to be back into our usual routine. That means we are now meeting on the fourth Monday of every month at 6pm at Perkins and that we will be discussing a selected book that all members have the option of reading.

We met on Monday, September 26th, to discuss Snow in August by Pete Hamill. Set in 1946 and 1947 in Brooklyn, it is the story of a young Irish Catholic boy who becomes friends with a lonely Jewish rabbi from Prague. The boy helps the rabbi improve his English and teaches him about baseball. The rabbi teaches the boy Yiddish. It is a heartwarming story in spite of trouble looming over them in the form of a gang of older boys who believe the boy “ratted” on one of their members when he attacked a store-keeper, seriously injuring him.

Our next meeting will be October 24th at 6pm at Perkins. We have decided to read at least one classic each year, so this month we will be reading Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte. The meeting is open to anyone interested in seeing what keeps us going; just go to the meeting. It is not necessary to have read the book to attend. Please feel free to join us to participate in the discussion or to observe. We each buy our dinner to enjoy while we chat about the book for the month and any other topic that comes up.

During the summer we added several books to the list we are maintaining. The list includes books we have read individually or that have been recommended to us. If you would like a copy of our updated list, several copies will be in Punkie Sinesiou’s mailbox in the church office by October 3rd. Help yourself.

	<p>Presbytery News and Notes</p> <p><u>Updated information:</u> The final meeting for 2016 of the <i>Sabbath</i> Year was held on Saturday, September 24th at Hamburg Presbyterian Church. A summary of the meeting will be posted on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.</p> <p><u>South/East Cluster Mtg:</u> Exact details of the final meeting will be posted on the bulletin board, announced in church along with notification via email as available.</p>
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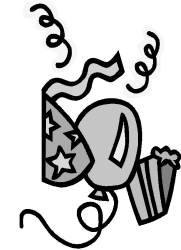
October Birthdays

- 3 ~ Frank Jester, Colleen Kelly
- 7 ~ Molly Petryszak
- 8 ~ Peg Darrow
- 14 ~ Punkie Sinesiou
- 20 ~ Bob Lehman, Donna Watson, Betsy Way
- 23 ~ Judi Blair, Ken Stebbins
- 25 ~ Kathy Gruver
- 28 ~ Jeff Bigley
- 29 ~ Nathan Petryszak
- 31 ~ Marilyn Hurley

October Anniversaries

- 12 ~ Mike Kalsman & Mary Kirk
- 20 ~ Bill & Chris Burton

OCTOBER CELEBRATIONS



Dear Friends,

Welcome to a new church year of Presbyterian Women (PW). We hope you will join us in fellowship as we pray, study God’s word, plan and decide how we can use our mission funds wisely, make new friends, and learn what we can do to help each other. Every woman member of the church is also a member of the women’s association.

Our local PW serves missions through volunteering, donations of articles (clothing or household items), or by direct donations of money. Each year we strive to help as many organizations as possible, but it cannot be done without your generosity.

We encourage you to make an annual pledge to help the women of this church to keep on doing the work they have been so graciously doing in the past. God has given us much and this is your way to give a little back.

Our bible study meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month at noon. We usually bring our lunch and study starts at 1pm. We hope to see you there. It’s interesting and I’m sure once you come, you’ll be glad that you did.

Checks should be made payable to Presbyterian Women and either mailed to Patricia Smith, treasurer, the church office, or put in the Sunday collection.