

THE RAPPORTEUR

"Where Faith and Family Come Together"

First Presbyterian Church, Olean, NY

November, 2016

Pastor's Thoughts...

When I was at Chautauqua this summer, Rev. Tony Campolo issued a challenge to the people gathered for morning worship in the Amphitheatre. He said that each church should take steps to sponsor a refugee family. He reminded us that Jesus, too, was a refugee when he fled with his family to Egypt to escape Herod.

In an age when refugee bashing is so popular, the people of Jesus need to step up to the challenge to affirm these people and reach out in Christian love. This was highlighted in a book I am reading called *"Quest for the Living God"* by Elizabeth Johnson. She stated that 80% homeless refugees are women and children, making these folks doubly vulnerable. As we knew the vulnerable of society were of special concern to the prophets and to Jesus.

I believe we should accept Rev. Campolo's challenge. I have mentioned this mission possibility to a few people here and there seems to be some interest. I did some checking so that we did not reinvent the wheel or take on more than we could handle. I found an organization in Buffalo called Jericho Road Community Health Center. It does a lot of quality work with refugees. We have been supporters of VIVE, a part of Jericho Road, for many years. VIVE provides help to those seeking asylum in the Buffalo area. They provide legal services as well as basic human services to Buffalo area asylum seekers.

It seemed to me that since the Jericho Road program is already doing extensive, high-level work in the refugee area and while it may be too far for us to volunteer in person, we could support many of the needs of this organization.

There are all kinds of ways we can help. Items needed from their most recent brochure include: office supplies, crayons and coloring books, gently used toddler and preschool books, book store gift cards, pre-k back packs, new laptops, grocery and Wal-Mart gift cards, hygiene supplies, twin sheets and pillow cases, household cleaning supplies, academic computer software, books for 2nd

through 10th grade reading levels, school supplies, healthy snacks, iPod dock and speaker, useable laptops, collapsible soccer goals, Legos, cases of bottled water, pocket folders, pens and name tags, Pack and Play cribs, infant car seats, diapers (sizes 1,2,3) baby wipes, maternity clothing, onesies, socks, hats, sleep sacks, receiving blanket, teething rings, pacifiers and educational infant toys.

As you can see there is a great need, but it is not beyond our ability to help. Perhaps we could focus on this for the Thanksgiving and Christmas season and then establish and ongoing relationship like we do for some of our other ministries.

I think this organization answers what I have felt is a great need for our congregation: A program to get behind and support as a mission project. I hope to find some likeminded folks with a passion for mission to help me spearhead this effort. If you would be interested in helping me, please let me know. Please step up to help with this humanitarian crisis in the name of Jesus Christ.

Peace, *Pastor Bruce*

Stewardship Committee

The Peace and Global Witness offering was October 9th with gifts being accepted throughout October. When the final count is in, 25% will be retained by our church for local missions, 25% will go to the Mid Councils, and 50% will go to our national organization to support programs addressing injustice both in this country and abroad.

Pledge cards are available in Fellowship Hall and on the table in the back of the sanctuary. Pledge cards for the 2017 budget will be formally received in the collection plates on November 13th.

PROPERTY

Many thanks to our custodian Don and Ryan Whitney for all of the accomplished painting: all hallways on 1st floor, entrance to gymnasium, gym itself, hallway from gym to kitchen, and hallway from kitchen to music room. Don also will be painting doorframes at a later date. Job well done.

We have a problem with our external thermostat to our boiler. It needs and will be replaced as soon as the part can be found. So if its cold or too hot, please bear with it for a short period.

MEF

On October 14, about 20 people attended a wonderful potluck dinner (Thanks, Diane Trippany and John Weinhold for the fabulous beef tenderloin and everyone else for the very tasty and satisfying accompaniments) followed by a travelogue by Punkie Sinesiou on the Danube cruise she and her family took in July 2015. There was lots of happy chatter during dinner and the questions the audience asked during the travelogue indicated interest and involvement.

Upcoming Events:

Nov. 6 - First Sunday potluck lunch in Fellowship Hall after worship.

Nov. 19 - Thankfest at 5:30 pm in the gym. MEF will provide beverages, turkey and gravy. Please provide your own table setting and a dish to share would be welcome if you wish bring one. If you would like to participate in our traditional gift exchange, bring a wrapped gift. Your gift may be an item from your home that someone would be happy to receive or an item purchased for under \$10. For those who are unfamiliar with our gift distribution process, there will be a detailed explanation before it begins.

Dec. 4 - Deck the Halls. We will work together to prepare Fellowship Hall and the sanctuary for our celebration of the birth of Christ. There are tasks for all helpers to do regardless of their physical ability. When the work is complete, MEF will serve a sandwich lunch.

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.

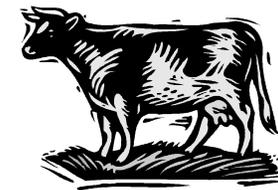
November Birthdays

- 3 ~ Gary Larson
- 9 ~ Louie McClure
- 10 ~ Ryan Carr
- 11 ~ Julie Barnes,
Lynn McClure
- 12 ~ Heather Hanners
- 17 ~ Elizabeth Lehman
- 19 ~ John Weinhold
- 20 ~ Bill DeArmitt
- 21 ~ Marie Comstock Johnson
- 23 ~ Betsy Cashing
- 25 ~ Ken Way
- 28 ~ Reilly Smith
- 29 ~ Craig Smith
- 30 ~ Heidi Sturdevant

November Anniversaries

- 6 ~ Barry & Marilyn Hurley
- 26 ~ Phil & Pat Smith

NOVEMBER CELEBRATIONS



CE and MEF are working on a new community project. For the next 6 weeks we will be collecting money for the Heifer Project. Heifer International is a charity that allows individuals to purchase various animals such as ducks, chickens, goats, heifers, etc. for people in need. These animals provide a way for the recipient to improve their life and self sufficiency. For instance, chickens will provide food to eat and/or sell as well as reproduce more chickens. There are various ways you can donate money: you can purchase a certain group of animals or you can donate a certain amount of money that will be collected and used to purchase many groups of animals. There will be catalogs in Fellowship Hall regarding what animals are available and the corresponding price for this animal. Checks must be made payable to Heifer International and can be placed in the offering plate or given to the church office. If you are doing this for Christmas gifts, please indicate how many honor cards you will need. The deadline to contribute will be Sunday, December 4th.



Thankfest

Saturday, November 19th at 5:30pm

Join us for a traditional turkey dinner. MEF will provide the turkey, gravy and beverages. Please bring a dish to pass (if you are able) and your own place settings. Sign up sheet is located in Fellowship Hall.

The fun will continue after dinner with our traditional gift exchange! For those who wish to participate, please bring a wrapped gift. It can be an item from your home that someone would be happy to receive or a purchased item (please don't spend more than about \$10).

We will explain how the exchange will work when the time comes!

Saturday, December 3rd
at Noon
Hammer Back of Good Times



The Presbyterian Women's Association invites all women of the Church to join them for the annual Christmas luncheon.

A sign up sheet and menu are located in Fellowship Hall. Hammer Back would like to know the lunch choices ahead of time, so please sign up by Wednesday, November 16th.

CE Corner

Our Sunday School class has been studying a little church history this past month. We have examined Timothy and Paul's roles in the early church. We saw how they supported each other through hard times, and learned that we are also part of a church family. We have done a few activities that were designed to help us get to know our church family a little better. We have also volunteered to help our family with their work in the world as they do the will of Christ.

The students have been busy with stewardship this month as well. We baked 4 dozen cookies and donated them to the Olean Fire Department on Sunday, October 9th. This was part of our Cookies for Cops service project. We will hold one more baking session in November. We are also planning some projects to assist the Haitian people as they struggle to recover from the devastating Hurricane Matthew. Stay tuned for more information on ways that you can help us!

We are already beginning to plan our Sunday School Christmas Pageant. It is tentatively scheduled for Sunday December 18th. The kids will be busy throughout November and December creating some special artwork for the pageant. I can't wait to see how it turns out! Please plan on joining us for that Sunday.

Thanks to those adults who volunteered to be "on call" in case you are needed in the nursery or in Sunday School. A special thank-you to Alexis Fisk, who has become our regular Sunday School volunteer! She is very good with the kids and an excellent help. I am so glad to have her working with us!

As always, if you have any ideas or suggestions on how the children of our congregation can become more involved, enjoy some fellowship, or serve God, please let any CE committee member know!

Remember to give thanks to God for all he has given us! See you on Sunday!

Carol McClellan, CE Director



Book Club

In October, the book club read and discussed Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte. The book for November is Code Name Verity by Elizabeth Wein. It is about a British spy who is arrested by the Gestapo and given a choice of revealing her mission or facing a grisly execution. This book will be discussed on Monday, November 28 at 6 pm at Perkins.

Anyone interested in the book club is invited to attend a meeting. We meet on the fourth Monday of each month at 6 pm at Perkins. There is no expectation that everyone will have read the book for that month. We each purchase our own dinner to enjoy while we discuss the book and also mention other books we have read individually or that have been recommended to us.



Adult Discussion

In November, the first three Sunday's will be rooted in discussion of the Tim Downs book, *Finding Common Ground*. The subtitle, *How to*

Communicate with Those Outside the Christian Community, piqued our curiosity when in the planning stages last spring so we invite you to join with us in exploration. The fourth Sunday will begin our Advent discussions. We invite you all to join in the conversations each Sunday morning at 9:35 AM in Fellowship Hall.



Presbytery News and Notes

Updated information: No meetings are currently planned for the remainder of the year. Information from around the Presbytery can be explored at: <http://www.pbywny.org>

South/East Cluster Mtg: Exact details of the final meeting will be posted on the bulletin board, announced in church along with notification via email as available.

SESSION UPDATE

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

- A request by a person, not a member of our church, to use our facility for a family event, generated discussion on the need to develop an appropriate policy for such usage. Possible items to be covered in a policy include: liability release, refundable damage deposit, fee for use, and a list of cleanup responsibilities. Diane Trippany will work on that.
- Noted that there would be a memorial service for a former member. There will be a fee of \$100 that will go to Rick for playing.
- The Peace and Global Witness offering will be on 10/9 with gifts accepted throughout October.
- Occasionally, doors have been left unlocked when the building is empty. The most frequent incidents involve the door in the back room where the choir robes hang. Members will be reminded to check and lock all outside doors.
- The September budget report was accepted.
- Various benevolences have been suspended until further notice due to the loss of rent from OCDC.
- Received notice from a Florida lawyer that the church has been named in a will to receive 1/16 of an estate.
- Steps are being taken to secure our investments against possible financial changes due to the upcoming national election.
- The minimum wage will increase on December 31st and will affect some of our employees.
- In general, scripture readings during worship will be from the RSV, as in our pew Bibles, unless Bruce finds another translation to be more suited to his sermon.
- OCDC had a hearing with the state. They are waiting to hear the outcome, which will determine the future of the center.
- The next regular meeting will be 11/7/16 at 7 pm.