



Pres Clippings

First Presbyterian Church

www.firstpreselmira.org

October 7, 2020



SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES ARE IN THE SANCTUARY!



We are excited to announce that our Sunday Worship services are now in the Sanctuary. You will see in the insert explaining the COVID-19 procedures for attending Sunday services. If you have any questions please call Mark Ivanick (733-6255) or Marcia Metcalfe (857-1068). Please send your prayer requests to Tom Leslie's email at: TLeslie@stny.rr.com. Please come and join us!

THIS WEEK'S SUNDAY SERVICE

October 11, 2020 ~ 10:30 AM

19th Sunday after Pentecost

The Rev. Jane Winters will lead us in worship and preach. The Greeters and Ushers will be Norm and Alida Schamel. The liturgist will be Tom Leslie. The chancel flowers will be given by Barb Cacciotti, "The chancel flowers are given in loving memory of Bob Cacciotti." All are welcome to attend!

NEXT WEEK'S SUNDAY SERVICE

October 18, 2020 ~ 10:30 AM

20th Sunday after Pentecost

Cents-Ability Sunday

The Rev. Susan Frost will lead us in worship and preach. The Greeters and Ushers will be Barb Cacciotti and Pat Holmstrom. The liturgist will be Tom Leslie. All are welcome to attend!

SUNDAY WORSHIP ZOOM LINK FOR OCTOBER

Below is the Zoom link and passcode for the month of October. Please save this information because you will use the same meeting ID and passcode for all the Sundays in October.

Similar to the green cards, email your prayer requests to Tom Leslie at TLeslie@stny.rr.com. They will be read before the pastoral prayer. Tom will check for emailed "green cards" up to the start of the service. (continued —>)

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INSERT:

FPC Covid-19 Procedures for Sunday Service

Please Remember!

"FEED MY SHEEP"

CANNED CORN

CANNED PINEAPPLE

RAMEN NOODLES

Please indicate if you would like them added to the prayer chain just like checking the box on the cards. Also, remember that when joining by phone, the pound sign needs to be entered after the meeting ID number and again after the password. We look forward to seeing you this Sunday. Blessings, Tom

Recurring Zoom Link Information for Sunday Services on October 11, 18, and 25, 2020.

First Presbyterian Church Elmira is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting. Topic: Recurring Zoom Link Information for Sunday Services on October 11, 18, and 25, 2020.

Time: 10:30 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Every week on Sunday until Oct 25, 2020

- Oct 11, 2020 10:30 AM
- Oct 18, 2020 10:30 AM
- Oct 25, 2020 10:30 AM

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/join/https://us02web.zoom.us/join/https://us02web.zoom.us/join/tZcscuysrDMpE9QVv6gg_QSbiTlXpt38ao7j/ics?

icsToken=98tyKuGrrz4vHtadsxCHRpwqBY_4Z-

jzplxej_psqgmzBCdsUzD0P9ZOCqJrQ4DR

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83155428390>

Meeting ID: 831 5542 8390

Passcode: 927889

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,83155428390#,,,,,0#,,927889# US (New York)

+13017158592,,83155428390#,,,,,0#,,927889# US (Germantown)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 831 5542 8390

Passcode: 927889

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kezMy5pBrL>

THANK YOU to everyone who participated in the worship service on Sunday, September 27...**Elder Bob Sell** for leading and preaching...**Barb Cacciotti** and **Nan Peterson** for Greeting and Ushering...**Kay Stewart** for Lay Reading...**Paul Kingsbury** for giving the chancel flowers, *“The chancel flowers are given in loving memory of Eileen Kingsbury, by her family.”*

THANK YOU to everyone who participated in the worship service on Sunday, October 4...**Elder Bob Sell** for leading and preaching...**Marsha Turner** and **Alida Schamel** for Greeting and Ushering...**Rich Buchheimer** for Lay Reader...**Greg** and **Anne Lamb** for giving the chancel flowers, *“The chancel flowers are given in loving memory of our mothers; Alberta Lamb Rogers and Marian Loveland.”*

THE WORSHIP AND MUSIC COMMITTEE NEEDS YOUR HELP

Again, the Worship and Music Committee needs your help. At this time it has become more difficult to find someone to lead the Sunday service. With COVID still around, and starting in-person services, not all supply preachers want to do an in-person service.

We need you to help the Worship and Music Committee by stepping up and providing leadership for a Sunday service. One way is to be willing to tell your faith story like Rehana did in September. If you

are willing to do that, please contact Tom Leslie at TLeslie@stny.rr.com. If you know anyone whose story you think is worth hearing, ask them to help out and share.

If you do not feel comfortable sharing your faith walk we propose the following. Tom is willing to collect your favorite bible passages with a note, long or short, as to why it is important to you. By collecting several from multiple people, they can be put together to create a Sunday message. One person can be the leader sharing several of those passages and why they are important with the congregation as the message. This would be for those members that are not comfortable speaking to the congregation but want to share their favorite bible passage. Or alternatively, several people that are comfortable speaking can share their passage and why it is important to them. Tom Leslie is willing to collect them and help people do this.

Do any of you have alternative ideas for a Sunday service other than the standard style with a leader up front and everyone else in the pews? Let's try other ways to hold a service where it is not just a few people that put it all together so we can spread out the work.

If you have ideas or are willing to step up and help out with the weekly need for planning Sunday services, please let Tom know. Thank you. Tom Leslie

PER CAPITA INFORMATION

Dear First Presbyterians,

In order to receive the services and benefits of the Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly, each church contributes an annual "per capita" amount to support the missions, programs and administrative costs of the larger church organizations. Church membership includes young people who have been

confirmed, but not younger children who have been baptized but not confirmed. That includes members away at college, in the military or elsewhere.

The per capita amount is \$50.00 for each church member. If you multiply the per capita amount by the number of church members in your family, the resulting amount represents the contribution that would help us meet our 2020 per capita obligation of \$12,600.00.

First Presbyterian has adopted a strategy which attempts to remove from the operating budget the per capita obligation. Success depends on your response to this appeal. Shortfalls are made up by the operating budget of the church, thus reducing the funds available for the operation of our church. Clearly, your response in helping us meet our 2020 per capita obligation is important. Any amount from a small proportion of the \$50.00 to more than your fair share is appreciated. We understand the financial stresses that many in our congregation may be experiencing due to the COVID pandemic. For those of us who can contribute, please do so.

Please note: our goal is to complete this campaign by the end of September.

We thank you for all that you do to make First Presbyterian a wonderful place to worship. Yours in Christ, Mike Stanley, on behalf of the Stewardship Committee

PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY AND GIVE

As Session prays and works through the plan for reopening our building, please continue to pray for the needs of our financial budget. As of the June 2020 report, Finance Committee projects an approximate \$10,000 shortfall. For those

who are still able to make pledges and contributions, we need help to cover that deficit. Here are some alternate ways to deliver them:

1) Writing a paper check and mailing it to: First Pres Church, 1054 West Clinton St, Elmira NY 14905.

2) Use the church's outside Mail Box (it's locked) to drop off your giving. The outside mail box is located on the back side of the right side brick pillar, just outside the church entry doors. You will see signs on the pillar.

3) If you use an online banking system, you may want to start paying bills through that system. Many banks have their own systems and the information you will need is also our name and address given above.

Thank you for remembering us during this difficult time.

SILENT AUCTION FOR POTTER'S HANDS

The Potter's Hands Foundation operates a program locally for women who are recovering from trauma and human trafficking. The recent newsletter tells the story of a resident who was adopted by a couple for the sole purpose of exploitation. Because of the Potter's Hands Foundation, she is now safe and beginning to learn that there are people in this world who want the best for her.

We have an opportunity to help this woman and others like her. This month we are hosting a **Silent Auction Basket**. Many of the fundraisers for Potter's Hands have been cancelled due to Covid-19 this year. These include the Dinner and Dessert Auction in April, Golf Tournament in August, and the upcoming Gala in November. Churches and organizations have been asked to host a basket for a silent auction.

Our basket will be on display starting October 11th in the Mission Walkway with a

clear list of the basket contents to avoid crowding and encourage social distancing. Photos of the basket and the list of contents will also be on the church Facebook Page and hopefully attached to this newsletter. Bidding will close on November 8th. Barb Fitzsimmons will be the point of contact to make a bid. The high bid will be posted with the basket and online. Bid increments need to be in whole dollar amounts please.

If you are the high bidder, Barb will contact you and ask you to write a check to the church marking Potter's Hands Basket in the note line. Sue will then forward the money to Potter's Hands. Barb will arrange for basket pick up or delivery. If you would like to make a bid on the basket please contact Barb Fitzsimmons at b2fitz@yahoo.com or 607-562-8095. Please do not bid on the Facebook page as that may become confusing. Bids may also be placed with Barb on Sunday mornings (either live or during zoom coffee hour).

Other opportunities to donate including a virtual Hands of Hope Gala may be found at ThePottersHandsFoundation.org. Thank you for supporting Potter's Hands.

PRES CLIPPINGS SCHEDULE

The next Pres Clippings will be published on Wednesday, **October 21st**. Please send all articles by 9 AM on the **Monday prior** to the publishing date to Kelly Stewart, at kespreselm@stny.rr.com. Thank you.

CHANCEL FLOWER CHART

The Chancel Flower chart is posted on the bulletin board in the hallway across from the kitchen. You are invited to sign-up for giving the Sunday Chancel Flowers. Upcoming available dates are **October 18 & 25**. Bouquets for the chancel are \$40 each. Unless otherwise indicated by the donor, the flowers then are separated into bouquets

after worship. The bouquets are then delivered to those who are sick or homebound, by the Deacons.

**SAVE THE DATE!
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2020
11:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M.**

They're back, by popular demand...**DOUG'S FISH FRY!** Stay tuned for more information as the date approaches.

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT
AUGUST-20**

Type	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Pledges	\$104,687.36	\$120,416.64
Other Contributions	\$8,660.73	\$14,918.03
Total Contributions	\$113,348.09	\$135,334.67
Total Income	\$121,884.16	\$143,458.15
Total Expenses	\$109,998.44	\$189,734.02
Income Over (Under)	\$11,885.72	(\$46,275.87)
Expenses Endowment Support	\$26,000.00	\$39,000.00

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**SUNDAY SERMON BY BOB SELL
OCTOBER 4, 2020
“HOW GREAT IS OUR FAITH?”
II TIMOTHY 1:1-14**

Christian faith can be incredibly discouraging, especially during this pandemic and the conflicts within our country. If you find that surprising, you may be shocked by this: the fact of the matter is that we're not the first Christians to experience this discouragement. Our Scripture lesson for today conveys Paul's response to the fact that Timothy and the believers in his care were discouraged. It would seem that they found themselves in a setting where it was getting increasingly difficult to live the Christian life. It's hard to

understand everything that may have gone into the situation, but for some reason, they were struggling with a sense of being ashamed of their faith. I don't know about you, but that surprises me. I wouldn't have expected Christians in the First Century to feel ashamed of their faith. It makes me wonder what made them feel ashamed.

I wonder if they felt ashamed because they found themselves feeling discouraged as a result of going against the grain all the time. Early Christians were clearly in the minority. Taking up a counter-cultural lifestyle can be energizing, especially at first. But after months and years of swimming upstream, it can get exhausting. I wonder if Timothy and the believers in Ephesus were feeling the pressure of the sacrifices and opposition that can be a part of what it means to be a Christian. Not just then, but today. We all want to be winners, to be regarded as successes. Few want to be known as renegades.

Last year, before COVID, a school had an end of year party. After pizza the students and parents played with bubble wands outside, drew pictures with sidewalk chalk. The teacher had made a video interviewing the kids about the year; the teacher was given some nice gifts as thanks. Then came the awards. Pretty early on, the over-achiever parents realized that every single kid was going to get one. Why can't we teach them how to do the hard things? Each child got their award, excited, as everyone else clapped. Each child gave the teacher's assistant a hug, shook the teacher's hand. And those darn kids kept clapping for everyone. They didn't get tired. They weren't being competitive. It was the parents' problem, not theirs. Then Miguel got an award, and you couldn't wipe the smile off his dad's face--he had gotten there just in time, sweaty, in jean shorts and a

t-shirt. And they clapped for Miguel. And they clapped for Shrinath. And they clapped for Addison. And they clapped for Christina, who crawled out from under a table to get out from where she had been hiding. Maybe some of these kids know how hard life is already. They get it. They understand the tough slog ahead that will be required for them to be faithful in this life.

It would also seem that Timothy and the band of struggling believers he was serving were feeling ashamed because they were losing out to some competitors preaching a different gospel. We don't know what all that these "impostors" stood for, but we do know that they imposed harsh demands on those who bought into their spiel, while indulging their own pleasures to their hearts delight. They wormed their way into congregations by creating conflict with the established leaders, and then used the influence they gained to milk the people for money (Some things never change!). It would seem Timothy and his flock felt ashamed of the gospel because these "impostors" were so successful at gaining converts, while they were struggling to survive. Things aren't all that different today. Some churches are still struggling to survive, and there are still "imposters" who are tempting believers that their church is better. On Sunday morning on TV you may find ministers who claim to have healing powers, and for a small contribution they will send you a pouch of healing water that you can use to heal all your pains. Or you can get an anointed prayer cloth, prayed over by the leader of a worship organization that you can carry with you and God will answer your prayers – just a small contribution is requested.

If our eyes are open to the world around us, we have these options: we can ask for more faith, or we can return to the past,

clinging to our faith. But there is another option: we can give up. This is despair. Oddly, some Christians choose this option--it is the option underneath the Left Behind series of books. God is not going to fix the brokenness of this world, it's all going to come to an end, some are simply going to be "left behind."

Are you familiar with this saying of Mother Teresa? "Our calling is not to do great things, but to do small things with great love." The scripture might be saying something similar to us: we do not need more faith; we need to use the faith that we have! And if only for a moment, we could take advantage of the mustard seed of faith we have been given and authentically make space for another, then we will have done what we ought to have done....

I don't know about you, but part of what discourages me about the Christian faith these days is the way so many people seem to make it something trivial. I read about a study that said over 60% of people in the U.S. over 65 feel belief in God is important, but less than 30% of adults under 30 feel the same way. It seems like there are so many who approach the Christian faith in terms of gimmicks and cheap clichés. They do whatever it takes to "succeed" at church—even if it means stripping the guts out of the gospel. There is a church in our area that a couple of years ago sent out an advertisement about their Easter activities. They highlighted that a helicopter would fly over their church grounds and drop eggs for children to collect. There would be inflatable bounce houses for kids to play in. Several other activities were listed, trying to entice families to come to their church. My wife and I looked at the colorful advertisement, and in small print we finally found what time Easter worship would begin – in small print. What was the message this church was sending to the community? And

you may think I'm exaggerating, but one large group in Corpus Christi, Texas, actually gave away an estimated \$2 million worth of prizes on Easter Sunday to get people to come to church. Prizes included bikes, furniture, flat screen TVs, and 16 cars! On Easter Sunday! As appalling as that is, in my opinion, it is just the most blatant example of what happens every Sunday—selling people a Jesus who will make all their dreams come true. When it seems like the whole world is running to those who take such a “consumer-friendly approach,” it makes it hard for those of us who try to stay true to the path of the cross to continue to put that message out there, week in and week out. Sunday mornings are not a time to party; they are a time to worship. But in today's society Sundays are a time to get the kids to soccer or lacrosse games, get your fantasy football line-ups finalized, play golf, or sleep in.

But I think something Paul told Timothy might help us here. He reminded Timothy that “God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline”. In a very real sense, Paul reminds discouraged believers of all times and places that we are not called to “succeed,” but rather to keep the faith. And God's powerful and loving presence is always there to inspire us as we strive to present a compelling alternative to cheap tricks and silly slogans.

It would seem that from time to time we can all get discouraged about our faith. When that happens, I think we need to remember the lesson Jesus tried to teach his disciples. They came to him asking for “more faith” to be able to live up to the challenging demands of Christian discipleship, and he answered that they didn't need more faith but rather a sense of what faith is all about. Faith is not a matter of performing spectacular feats; rather it is

about continuing to speak the Gospel and live it out every day, regardless of the outcome. **When we struggle with discouragement in our day and time, we can remember that it is not our “success” but rather our perseverance that demonstrates God's powerful and loving presence among us.**

Today, many Protestant churches observe World Communion Sunday. On World Communion Sunday, we reflect on the faith that we have. Surely, this faith helps us to see a power that can overcome any obstacles. Surely this faith helps us to know a love that can overcome any divisions. Surely this faith helps us to discover an abundance that can overcome any scarcity.

The needs of the world are so vast, beginning right where we are, and yet the world extends beyond us, from wherever we live to those who are among the neediest of our brothers and sisters in Christ across this planet, from South Africa to Guatemala, from Pakistan to Iran. We think this morning of devastating fires in the west, hurricanes in the south, and conflicts in our cities. We think of those who suffer the ravages of warfare, on both sides of the conflict, and we think of families who mourn the deaths of their loved ones from this pandemic.

Somehow, on World Communion Sunday, we think more deeply about our connection with the church across the world, in cathedrals and house churches and persecuted congregations and state churches, Pentecostal and Catholic and Evangelical and Orthodox, all expressions of Christ's body, all the fruit of the great commission, that Jesus would be with us to the end of the earth. And so he is.

He is alive wherever Christians practice the faith that they already have. It is not so much that we need more! It is that we need to use what we already have!



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK...



*“Our calling is not to do great things,
but to do small things with great love.”*

~ Mother Teresa

Barb Squires, Clerk of Session

Gary Tucker, Organist

Melissa Moore, Director of Music

Fred Betschen, Church Treasurer

Paul Kingsbury, Assistant Church Treasurer

Susan Weaver, Financial Secretary

Kelly Stewart, Church Secretary

James Stewart Sr, Church Sexton

Church Office (607) 734-1614
Visit our website: www.firstpreselmira.org