



THE RED DOOR

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BIG FLATS, NY

Founded 1827 ----- "Pride In Our Past – Faith In Our Future"

[/www.bigflatsfirstpres.org/](http://www.bigflatsfirstpres.org/)

Dear Friends,

As I am writing this letter, I am thoroughly enjoying Tucson. When I was living here the reduction in traffic in the summer was an indicator of how many people would head north to escape desert summers. It is indeed hot, but there are some rewards for staying in town. One is the season of the monsoon, a blessed break from the over 100 degree temperatures and the mouth parching dryness. You can tell when the rain is on its way when suddenly the air becomes earthy and pungent. It is an iconic desert fragrance, a gift from the creosote bush, a plant which can be found on 35 to 46 million acres in the desert southwest. It is a visually unspectacular bush, though when in bloom, it does have lovely tiny yellow flowers with fuzzy blossoms, a favorite of pollinating bees and other insects. And its age is amazing, Estimates vary from a few thousand to more than 11,000 years, likely the oldest living organism on the earth. (These estimates refer not to the age of individual plant stems which live 100 to 150 years, but to clones stemming from a single root system.)



I believe that the creosote bush has a few lessons for us, lessons on life, and struggle and even thriving in the midst of challenge.

The plants longevity is due to evolutionary adaptations. It only breathes in the morning. The problem all plants face is that they must "breathe" in carbon dioxide through openings on the underside of their leaves called stomata, but doing so means they lose water. This becomes a big problem when it is especially hot and dry as it always is during the day in the desert. The creosote bush only opens its stomata in the mornings when the humidity is relatively high and the loss of water is the lowest. It is during this time that it undergoes photosynthesis, and shuts it down when the sun rises higher. This is also why it always faces southeast. Since the plant photosynthesizes only in the mornings when humidity is highest, it needs to maximize the amount of sunlight it receives during that time. Its branches and leaves grow in a shape meant to capture as much morning sunlight as possible. As the sun gets higher and the air drier, it will close its stomata and shut down its photosynthesis. While this may seem like not using the sunlight is wasted potential, it is in fact a smart move since it saves water. And in the desert it is always water, not sunlight that limits plant growth.

The first and overarching lesson is on adaptability, but besides being adaptable, its lessons for us as individuals and as a community may include taking it easy, taking care of one's self, knowing when to conserve energy, when to breathe and to always look toward the light.



Also, the creosote bush grows in different shapes depending on what it needs. A cone shape allows it to channel rain down its stems so that the water goes deeper into the soil and the roots have more time to absorb it. It can also grow into a hemisphere, an upside down bowl shape that allows leaf litter and other organic material to collect beneath its branches. And this adaptability creates an island of fertility that allows other plants and animals to live underneath, creating a rich soil that is full of nutrients for others and for the creosote bush itself. The creosote is considered a nurse plant that facilitates the growth and survival of surrounding vegetation. And so too it is considered by some to be the single most widely used and frequently employed medicinal herb in the Sonoran Desert.

So another lesson is to be adaptable with the potential of becoming an “island of fertility” where others also may thrive.

And its roots run both broad and deep. Most are shallow, to intercept any water that falls on the soil surface, but in deep sandy soils it can also produce tap roots to obtain water from deeper in the soil.

Another lesson: it is good to have deep roots, but also to be willing to branch out, to seek out opportunities for enrichment, for life and for service.

And the scent of the bush is not only an indicator of the blessed monsoon, its scent is also a warning to take cover, because that same monsoon may also prove deadly.

Perhaps that lesson is that we need to be awake and to pay attention to the world around us. How often the Bible reminds of that!

The creosote bush is one of my favorite desert teachers. But I have found that despite heat and drought, the desert is filled with survivors and thrivers, ranging from geckos to hummingbirds, saguaros to paloverdes, scorpions to bobcats.

I am reminded of the times that Jesus escaped to the desert and I wonder if it was not only to commune with God, but to learn some lessons only the desert can teach.

I invite you to consider how the lessons of the simple, unspectacular creosote might inspire you, and how it might point this church in the direction to which it is so surely being called.

Peace,
Pastor Beth

SHOE DRIVE FOR SHARED BLESSINGS

All sizes and kinds accepted

Drop off sites:

Miniers Grocery- Canal St

Big Flats Community Center – Maple Ave

Big Flats 1st Presbyterian Church – Main St

Southern Tier Chiropractic – Dr. Linda J. Lincoln – 142 Main St., Big Flats

Questions?? – **Donna Stevens** – 207-5740

Circle of Love

JOYS AND CONCERNS

This summer we were blessed with inspiring worship services, uplifting music, and a lot of hard work by willing volunteers as we continued to move forward as a community of faith through a time of transition.

Our Sunday services were very special this summer. **Pastor Beth** and **guest speakers Rahena and Michael Stanley** and **Rev. "Chip" Possee** shared wonderful messages with us. **Nancy Compton, Mary Ellen Rudnick, Robin Fitzgerald, and special soloists Paul Holland, Carrie Hooper, and Ty Gromer** lifted our spirits with their beautiful music! Thanks to all those who made summer worship so meaningful!

Our **Property Committee** continues its tradition of hard work and selfless services. Thanks to all who help!

Our Worship Committee is planning an exciting Rally Day Sunday for September 9. Be sure to join us for a special Sunday!

Thanks to **Pastor Beth**, our **Church Session** and many volunteers for their leadership and hard work to keep our church an active and vibrant part of our community! Special thanks to our PNC for the many hours they have devoted to the important process of finding a new minister.

The sympathy of our church is extended to **Donna Stevens** and her family on the passing of Donna's sister, **Betty "Suzie" Porter**. Among our concerns this month, we ask for prayers for: **Judith Gilbert, Alissa Jolley, Steve French, Cindy & Ed Leisenring, Brandon Davis (nephew of Sheila French and Lisa McGill), Denise Wiskowski (sister of Debbie French), Alan Giglio (Pat Fitzgerald's nephew), Reva Soutar, Nick Rudnick, Ginnie Schweizer, Dudley & Marie Shea, Dorothy Bartlett**, and others who are dealing with ill health, surgery, loss, or life changes. Please remember our shut-ins, and please continue to pray for our servicemen and women and their families and for peace in our troubled world. Please remember our shut-ins, and please continue to pray for our servicemen and women and their families and for peace in our troubled world.

*Do you have a special joy or concern that you would like to share with our faith community? See **Pastor Beth or Bill Howells**, and we will include your news in our Joys/Concerns column.*

NO RUMMAGE DONATIONS PLEASE!!

Water entered our church basement during the recent period of heavy rainfall. As a result, the entire basement will need to be cleaned and the damage will need to be repaired. The basement area will be sealed off during this time.

Most items now stored in the basement will be discarded.

There will be no Fall 2018 Rummage Sale. Please keep any rummage items that you wish to donate at home until the next sale (Spring 2019?) is announced. Any items brought to the church before then will need to be discarded by our property crew (average age 68).

Thank you, in advance, for your understanding and for your cooperation!

.. NEWS NOTES ..

SHARED BLESSINGS

We are working on getting the Shared Blessings room cleaned up and ready, and we are hoping to open by October. In the meantime, any donations of clothing, health and beauty aids, or cash would be gladly accepted!

Also, if you know of someone in need at this point (and moving forward) please tell them to call

Ann Slowik at 607-739-3769.

PROVIDERS NEEDED FOR FLOWERS, BULLETINS AND COFFEE HOUR

Our new church year starts on Sunday, September 9. Worship time resumes at 10:30, our choir returns, and we will once again look forward to our social time after each Sunday's service. Some of the things that make for special Sundays at our church include: flowers for our sanctuary, special bulletins for our worship services, and our wonderful coffee hours. **Sign-up sheets** have been posted on the bulletin board in our Church House – please help keep Sundays special at Big Flats First Presbyterian.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Our Property Committee has worked throughout the summer to continue to keep our building and grounds in tip-top shape! Projects during the summer of 2018 include:

Weekly mowing and weeding

Refurbishing and painting of our lawnmower sheds

Repair of steps leading into our kitchen

Cutting tree branches which were rubbing against the exterior wall on the west side of the office

Regular inspections of our roof

Coordinating with our blacktopping contractor for repaving our Main Street parking lot


Planning for repair of basement water damage

Contracted for installation of ceiling fan in food pantry, for installation of surge protector for our electric system, and for refurbishing of ramp running along east side of the kitchen

We would like to thank all our hard-working volunteers and supporters!

CHOIR REHEARSAL – SEPTEMBER 9 !!

Choir rehearsals begin on September 9th. For that day we will sing a familiar anthem. Just please TRY to be ready to begin at 9:30 sharp. We'll need every minute! New singers are always welcome. There are even incentives. More

about that later. 

To donate electronically to our church, go to our website –

<http://www.bigflatsfirstpres.org>

and hit the “give now” button

PNC UPDATE

The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) has the ultimate responsibility for nominating a minister to the congregation for election as our next pastor. The work of the PNC involves many different tasks and responsibilities as we work our way through the call process.

Your PNC has been meeting weekly and examining the Personal Information Forms (PIFs) which have been matched by the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) to our Minister Information Form (MIF).

To date, our MIF has been matched to sixteen PIFs, some of which have come from potential candidates as far away as Alaska, Washington and California. Others have been received from nearby Pennsylvania and even from our own New York State. We have been carefully reading through these PIFs to discern how good a potential match these candidates might be. Many have impressive credentials as well as interesting and varied backgrounds.

Due to confidentiality restrictions, I am unable to go into more specific details about potential candidates at this time. However, please remember that your PNC always has our church's best interests in mind as we work through this process.

As a note of interest, our Minister Information Form (MIF) has received 48 hits to it on the CLC website.

I have asked John Farr to please post both our MIF and our 2017 Mission Study Report on our church website. This way they will both be available to any person visiting our website and who just might be interested in being a candidate.

In addition, I have posted a copy of our MIF on the display boards in the church house so that you can all view what potential candidates view on the CLC.

Our committee has just decided that in order to reach a broader pool of perspective candidates, we are going to place a classified ad in the bi-monthly magazine, "Presbyterians Today." This is in addition to having our MIF posted on the CLC. We are looking to attract possible self-referring candidates who read our ad and are drawn to this area and more specifically, to our church.

I have been assured by our Presbytery that we are right where we should be at this point in the search process.

We strongly encourage all members of the congregation to look at the enlarged flow chart for the call process which is posted on our church house bulletin board. This chart will help you to better understand how the call process works. It is a lengthy process.

As we proceed through the various required tasks on the chart, we will mark a large X through each box once that task has been completed. This will allow all of you to see what the PNC has already accomplished while at the same time allowing you to see what we still have ahead of us to complete.

Please keep the PNC in your prayers, and also remember that it is "God's own choice" who will be our next pastor.

With faith and hope,

Pat Seem

PNC Chairperson

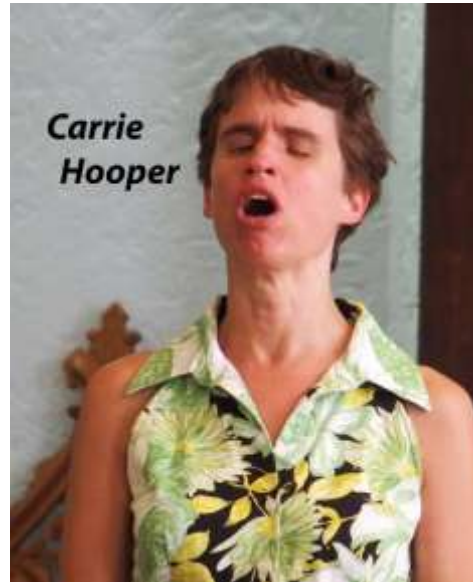
PNC Committee Members: **Jenny Dean, Pat Fitzgerald, Sheila French, Ann Hayes, Rocky Peters, Mark Slowik**
COM Liaison: **Rehana Stanley**



**S
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Paul Holland



*Carrie
Hooper*



Michael Stanley



Rehana Stanley



*They'll be back
on September 9 !!*

September & October

WEEKLY EVENTS

SUNDAY, September 2	Worship at 9:30
SUNDAY (beginning September 9)	
9:30 AM	Choir Rehearsal
10:30 AM	Morning Worship
TUESDAY	
12:00 – 2:00 PM	Food Pantry is open
6:30 PM	Boy Scout Troop #87



SPECIAL EVENTS

September 3 (Mon.)	Labor Day
September 9	Rally Day Sunday
September 9	Holy Communion
September 16	Worship Committee will meet
September 19 (Wed.)	Property Committee & Session will meet
September 21 (Fri.)	First day of autumn
September 30	"Pennies from Heaven"
October 7	Holy Communion (World Communion Sunday)
October 14	Worship Committee will meet
October 17 (Wed.)	Property Committee & Session will meet
October 28	"Pennies from Heaven"
October 28	Information due for the November/December RED DOOR

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Property Committee	Wednesday, September 19 & October 17 – 6:00 PM
Session	Wednesday, September 19 & October 17 – 7:00 PM
Worship Committee	Sunday, September 16 & October 14 – following morning worship

SEPTEMBER 2 – worship at 9:30 AM

SEPTEMBER 9 – worship at 10:30 AM