



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 write this final letter to you, I am remembering these words from Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 NRSV:

- 3 For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
 - 2 a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
 - 3 a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
 - 4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
 - 5 a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
 - 6 a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
 - 7 a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
 - 8 a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

During our little over two years together we have experienced a number of the realities mentioned in this reading. We have had a baptism, a wedding, memorial services, Blue Christmases, Maundy Thursday services, community breakfasts and dinners and rummage sales, a Habitat weekend, Boy Scout Sunday, as well as other scouting events and the scout project resulting in a new crèche. There was the paving of the driveway, and a myriad of other Property Committee projects. There was a Bible study, singing, praying, preaching, fellowship, and friendship. There was also some tearing down of old ideas and planting of new ideas, some disagreements and some resolutions, some remembering and some forgiving. We have collected food and clothing, including hundreds of shoes for those in need. There was the continued thriving of the Food Pantry and the birth of Shared Blessings. We have laughed and cried, eaten many luscious meals and decadent desserts. We have said goodbye to beloved members who have moved on and welcomed others home. We have survived raging storms, ice, snow and endless rain.

Throughout it all, we have bonded and grown while experiencing a great deal of mercy, grace, joy and love! The Lord has blessed us in more ways than we can count. The Lord has certainly been with us and has shown us that what we think is impossible, God makes possible.

I have always believed that a pastor is called to a particular place, for a particular time, with a particular purpose to a particular group of people in a particular community. We may have not accomplished everything that I had hoped for, yet still much was accomplished. It was always my intention and my responsibility to serve you in a particular way which included preparing you for your next pastor. The new pastor has been chosen and so it is my time to exit.

When Jesus prepared to leave his disciples, he found three promises to share:

- **First**, Jesus promised to make a home in his disciples' hearts. (John 14:23),
- **Second**, Jesus promised to fill the disciples with a spirit of courage and comfort. "The Holy Spirit...will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you". (John 14:26).
- **Finally**, Jesus promised to sustain his disciples with a special kind of peace. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you" (John 14:27).



As Mary Lindberg writes in her book *The Graceful Exit*, "So we'll open the gifts Jesus gave us—a home in him, the courage to move on, the peace that will get us through many unknowns. And we'll trust that God is staying with those we love for many more seasons."

Please remember that you will always be a part of me. I thank you for the patience, kindness, mercy, grace, generosity and love that you have shown me! You are a lovely faith community of wonderful people and I wish you all the best in this new season that you are about to begin. May you continue to grow in faith, hope and love, worshipping the Lord with your whole heart, mind, body and soul, and caring for all God's people.

I thank God for you.

Blessings,
Pastor Beth

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Many people worked very hard to make Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas a truly joyous time for our community of faith. We are very thankful to have such dedicated and caring friends in our congregation. Highlights of the last two months include:

- Welcome **Jean and Bob Tedrick!** Jean is our new Director of Music, and Bob has added his rich voice to our wonderful choir.
- The annual **Scouting for Food** drive, held on November 10, was very successful. Nearly **2,500 food items** were donated for our Community Food Pantry! Thanks go to our local scout troops and adult volunteers from the Big Flats Lions Club and Food Pantry staff!
- We had a special color guard ceremony on Sunday, November 13, as Veterans **Sam Dean (US Navy), John Farr (US Navy), Jack Horn (US Marine Corps), Stewart Potter (US Air Force), and Ezra Wolcott (US Army)** helped us to remember those who have served our nation in the past, as well as those who are currently serving.
- Thanks to **Mark Slowik**, the kitchen crew, and all who pitched in to make our Thanksgiving breakfast so special! Special thanks go to **Paul Holland** for sharing his wonderful music with us!
- Thanks go to all who worked to make our December 2 Silent Auction and luncheon so successful.
- Special thanks to our Pastor Nominating Committee members for their hard work and dedication!
- On Christmas Eve, many volunteers from our congregation rang the bell at Miniers Supermarket to raise funds for the Big Flats Community Food Pantry. Thanks to all!
- Our "Super Suppers" and "Pancake Breakfast" fundraisers are off to a great start! Thanks to all who have helped!
- And thank you to **Pastor Beth, Jean Tedrick**, our wonderful choir, and all who made the Christmas Eve Service so joyous and so meaningful. Special thanks to **Joyce Dean** for the stunning display of poinsettias!

Circle of Love



Among our concerns this month, we ask for prayers for: **Judith Gilbert, Alissa Jolley, Cindy Smith (sister of Pat Seem), Henry and Joyce Schurr, Neal Gummoe, Martin Gromer, 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, 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.

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.

ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR JANUARY 27

Our Annual Congregational Meeting will take place following the worship service on January 27. The **Annual Report** will be presented, and we will act on a number of items of important church business.

NOTE: Committee Chairs should submit end-of-year reports to Bill Howells as soon as possible.



ELDERS ELECTED – CONGREGATION CALLS REV. DENISE STONE

On Sunday, December 16, our congregation met and elected members to our Church Session. We also voted to extend a Call to **Rev. Denise Stone** to serve as our next pastor.

John Farr, Sherri Kriel, and Donna Stevens were named to serve three-year terms as Elders on our Session. Congratulations and thank you for your willingness to serve! Thank you, also, to elders **Barb Horn, Mary Ellen Rudnick, and Stewart Potter** who will be leaving session following their terms of faithful service!

Our new elders will be installed/ordained during morning worship on Sunday, January 13, 2019. They will assume their new duties when our session meets on January 16.

Rev. Stone will begin her time with us on Sunday, February 24. In the morning, she will lead our worship service; her Ordination and Installation Service will be held later that day. *(see the PNC UPDATE on page 4 for details)*

TROOP 87 SCOUTS PROVIDE NEW MANGER!

From **JOHN FARR (LIASON TO BSA TROOP 87)**

Many thanks to BSA Troop #87 for the emergency replacement of our manger this year! As you may know, mold damage from the basement flooding in September forced us to discard the old manger we had used for years. The scouts also lost some equipment to that flood, but at our request they mounted a massive effort to build a new manger for the church. This effort was headed by Life Scout **Daine Butler**, who coordinated the planning, labor, and material donations for the project. Normally a large and complex project such as this would be counted towards the rank of Eagle, but this needed to be done quickly and there was no time for the approvals that would normally precede an Eagle project. Geography was another hardship, since Daine and his family live in Watkins Glen, and the workshop (courtesy of **Dan Williams**) was in Horseheads. Still and all, the Troop pulled together and made this happen for us! So, if you can think of an Eagle project for Daine or other scouts in need, please let us know! Pictured here from left to right are, **Theresa and Daine Butler, Dan Williams, Eric and Ryan Burns, Shane and Sean Lohmuller.**



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PNC UPDATE

Nearly a year after we began the discernment process on our journey to find a candidate to be our next minister, the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) called **Denise Stone** of Columbus, Ohio, to preach at our church on Sunday, December 16th. The service was followed by a special congregational meeting during which time members voted by secret ballot as to whether or not they wanted Denise to be our next minister.

For those of you who were unable to attend the service and the congregational meeting, I am pleased to announce that Denise was successfully voted in by a very strong majority vote! That morning, following the meeting, Denise signed the Pastoral Call Covenant (Terms of Call) which was also signed by **Joyce Dean** as Clerk of Session and **Rev. Beth Frigard** as Moderator of the Congregational Meeting.

A festive and delicious coffee hour/luncheon, which was put on by **Ann Slowik**, followed the meeting. During that special time of food, fun and fellowship, church members and friends had the opportunity to meet Denise and get to talk with her. Special thanks to Ann for providing this lovely meal...as always, it was wonderful!

The next step for Denise will be on Saturday, January 26th when she will appear before the Presbytery in Canandaigua in order to receive their approval. After that, the final step will be taken in the Call process. That will be the Ordination and Installation Service which (pending approval by Presbytery) will take place in the afternoon on Sunday, February 24th at the First Presbyterian Church of Big Flats. That morning, Denise plans to conduct our regular Sunday morning service for the first time.

During the Ordination and Installation Service, Denise will be ordained for the first time as a Presbyterian minister (she was previously ordained as an American Baptist minister) and installed as the minister of our church. This is a very important and special service which will be conducted by the Presbytery. All pastors in the Presbytery of Geneva will be invited to attend as well as our entire congregation. I encourage all of you to mark the date of February 24, 2019, on your calendars so you can be present for Denise's ordination and installation at our church.

I am very grateful for the wonderful members of the PNC who have served with me and gave many hours of their time, prayers, help and suggestions during the discernment process. We would not be where we are today without the efforts of all of those on the PNC. My heartfelt thanks go out to each and every one of them. They are: **Jenny Dean, Ann Hayes, Sheila French, Pat Fitzgerald, Rocky Peters and Mark Slowik.**

Special thanks also go to our Presbytery liaison, **Rehana Stanley**, for her guidance throughout the process. Others who helped us on this journey include: The **Rev. Dr. Betsey Crimmins, HPP, ACC, Pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Elmira, Meredith Tiftt, Retired Chaplain for Care First and Rev. Beth Frigard**, our Interim Pastor, all of whom served as references for our Minister Information Form (MIF).

A big thank you also goes to **Bill Howells** for his great help in disseminating our PNC candidate information packet via e-mail to members and friends of the church.

Two non-members who provided help during the congregational meeting on December 16th were **Barb Powell and Mary Churchill**. Barb escorted Denise out of the sanctuary and sat with her in Fellowship Hall during the congregational meeting, and Mary helped count the votes with me in the church office. A big thank you to both of them!

Many thanks also to my husband, **Tom Seem**, who assisted me in a variety of ways throughout the process. His patience and understanding during this time consuming and often difficult journey was greatly appreciated.

I will keep all of you updated following Denise's appearance before Presbytery in January and also on the details leading up to her Ordination and Installation Service on February 24th.

Please continue to keep Denise in your prayers, and also remember that it was always "God's own choice" who would be our next pastor. He held us in His arms and led us to Denise, and we are very blessed.

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**



SUPER SUPPERS AND PANCAKE BREAKFASTS ARE A HIT!

SUPER SUPPERS: This is the first year for a series of fund-raising meals which endeavors to provide a delicious meal each month (Dec. – Feb.) at a reasonable price. Meals are served from **5:00-7:00 PM on the second Wednesday** of each month, with the cost set at **\$8.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children**. Take-out meals are also available. Our kickoff meal in November was a Spaghetti Supper, followed by a Chicken Pot-Pie Dinner in December. Our next dinner, set for **January 9**, will feature Meat Loaf, and we will close our season with Roast Turkey on **February 13**.



PANCAKE BREAKFASTS: Well into our eighth season, our fund-raising Pancake Breakfasts continue to be a big hit! Enthusiastic patrons have flocked to our Church House for gourmet breakfasts of pancakes, eggs, sausage, fruit cup, and beverages. Our next two breakfasts are scheduled for **Saturday, January 12, and Saturday, February 16, from 8:00 - 10:00 AM**. The cost for each meal has been set at **\$6.00**. There is no charge for those under six years old.

WE NEED YOU! Providing these wonderful, high-quality meals is an ambitious project for our little church, and it takes a lot of help to ensure success. Sign-up sheets will be posted for each meal. Please do your part by pitching in to help and also with your patronage. Questions?? Talk to **Donna Stevens (Pancake Breakfasts)** or **Ann Slowik (Super Suppers)**.

“SOUPER” BOWL SUNDAY – FEBRUARY 3

Go AFC! Go NFC! It doesn't matter which team you are supporting. Here's a way that everyone can be a champion! Each year our church participates in **“Souper” Bowl of Caring Sunday**. Wear your favorite team apparel and bring cans of soup (other canned goods and cash are also gratefully accepted) for the benefit of those who are served by our Food Pantry. We will be passing around the soup kettle on **Sunday, February 3**, and we hope that you will join us in helping those in need.



BLANKET SUNDAY SET FOR FEBRUARY 10

For some fifty years, the Church World Service Blanket Program has helped in making life more bearable for those who have been affected by a disaster, such as flooding or fire. We will be taking a special collection on **Sunday, February 10**. Every \$10.00 that we give can provide a good wool or cotton blend blanket (quantity purchase keeps costs down). Please support our church's participation by donating to this very worthy cause during morning worship on February 10.



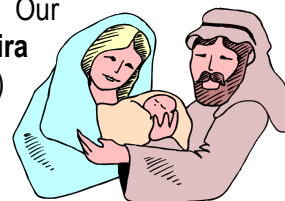
IT'S PER CAPITA TIME!

Each year the church must pay a fee to our Presbytery for each member. This year that individual member fee is **\$55.00**. These monies are used to fund outreach programs, disaster relief, the resource center for the churches, and Camp Whitman programs. In your offering envelopes box, you will find a "Per Capita" envelope. It would be great if we could all pay our individual per capita assessment and, if possible, a little more.



ADVENT MISSION DRIVES VERY SUCCESSFUL

Our congregation responded with great generosity to our 2018 Advent mission drives. Our **"Shower for Mary"** is an important effort which helps victims of domestic abuse at the **Elmira Salvation Army's Safehouse**, and our **"Gifts for Joseph"** program helps men (and families) served by the **Catholic Charities Samaritan Center**. Both of these drives were extremely successful, overflowing a station wagon with donated items on delivery day! We also had a number of monetary donations.



Thank you to all who participated in this vital outreach. **Special thanks to our Mission Committee for a generous cash donation to both these programs.**



SOUP SALE STARTS IN JANUARY

Mm-Mm-Good! Delicious and nutritious homemade soup will be available after church each Sunday, **January through March**. Just **\$5.00 per quart!** Volunteers are needed to provide soup, and a sign-up sheet will be posted in the Church House. **Questions? – See Barb Horn.**

PRAYER CHAIN: Our Prayer Chain is a way for our congregation and friends to communicate needs and to give support and prayer. We are in the process of revising and updating our Prayer Chain. To be part of this mission of caring, place your name, phone, and e-mail information in the offering plate or give the information to **Nancy Compton**. **Nancy (562-3903)** can answer any questions you may have about the Prayer Chain.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPORT

Recent Property Committee projects have included:

- A new manger was contributed by **Boy Scout Troop 87** and a new Nativity scene was purchased by the church.
- **Pat and Tom Seem** coordinated Christmas decorations and lighting.
- Meal preparation has been enhanced and energy saved with professional calibration of our gas stove.
- Our sanctuary floor was reinsulated with spray foam on 11/29 after completion of the ServPro mold mitigation project in the basement. Total cost of both projects (after \$10,000 in insurance money) was \$21,364.71.
- A dehumidifier was donated by **Hank and Joyce Schurr** and retrofitted for basement use by **Rocky Peters**.
- We contracted for a new gutter on parking lot side of church to prevent ground water saturation at the foundation: GutterPro to install 1/2/19.
- We contracted with **Ed Rhodes** to construct window well covers to prevent ground water saturation in the basement.
- Ballasts and fluorescent tubes were replaced in our social room.
- Property members periodically check the roof and ceiling of fellowship hall to pinpoint and fix a persistent leak.
- Committee members are working to install a motion sensor light outside the pastor's study.
- We made two required (minor) modifications to our boiler and passed inspection.
- We took the necessary steps to pass our annual Town of Big Flats Fire inspection.
- We continue to take care of our outside property –leaf cleanup and snow removal.
- Each month we give continued attention to our scheduled maintenance list items.

Your help and financial support are always welcome. See **Pat Fitzgerald** or any committee member to find out how you can become involved.

SHARED BLESSINGS UPDATE

Shared Blessings is a community-based giving and sharing program sponsored by our church. Recent programs have included a number of financial donations to people in need and a shoe drive which collected some **2,108 pairs of shoes, filling 84 bags, and earning \$557.60** to further the Shared Blessings outreach. In December, Shared Blessings supported our church's Advent drive by decorating a tree with donated hats, mittens, gloves, etc. and then adding these items to the "Shower for Mary" collection.

In January, Shared Blessing will be collecting stuffed animals. Details about this program will be announced during morning worship services.



PHOTO GALLERY



EDITOR'S NOTE: This edition of **THE RED DOOR** covers two months – January & February. Our next issue will be published in late February. Updates will be sent via e-mail.

January



WEEKLY EVENTS

| | | |
|---------|--------------|---------------------|
| SUNDAY | 9:30 AM | Choir Rehearsal |
| | 10:30 AM | Morning Worship |
| TUESDAY | 12:00 – 2:00 | Food Pantry is open |
| | 6:30 | Boy Scout Troop #87 |

SPECIAL EVENTS

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| January 6 | Epiphany Sunday – Holy Communion |
| January 6 | We will put away Christmas decorations |
| January 9 (Wed.) | Meat Loaf Dinner (fundraiser) – 5:00 – 7:00 PM |
| January 12 (Sat.) | Pancake Breakfast – 8:00 – 10:00 AM |
| January 13 | Ordination/Installation of Elders |
| January 13 | Worship Committee will meet |
| January 16 (Wed.) | Property Committee & Session will each meet |
| January 27 | Pennies from Heaven |
| January 27 | Annual Congregational Meeting following morning worship service |
| February 3 | “Souper” Bowl Sunday – collection for Food Pantry |
| February 3 | Boy Scout Sunday – scouts may be involved in our worship service |
| February 10 | Holy Communion |
| February 10 | Blanket Sunday collection for Church World Services |
| February 13 (Wed.) | Roast Turkey Dinner (fundraiser) – 5:00 – 7:00 PM |
| February 16 (Sat.) | Pancake Breakfast – 8:00 – 10:00 AM |
| February 17 | Worship Committee will meet |
| February 20 (Wed.) | Property Committee & Session will each meet |
| February 24 | Rev. Denise Stone will begin her tenure as our pastor (see PNC UPDATE – page 4) |
| February 24 | Pennies from Heaven |
| February 24 | Deadline for articles for March/April <u>RED DOOR</u> |

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Worship Committee | Meets following church service on January 13 & February 17 |
| Property Committee | Wednesdays, January 16 & February 20 – 6:00 PM |
| Session | Wednesdays, January 16 & February 20 – 7:00 PM |