



# 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,

The year is fast coming to a close. Thanksgiving and Christmas are just around the corner.

At this writing I am hopeful that we will be able to present our Mission Study to Presbytery on Nov. 7. When approved we will be able to elect the Pastor Nominating Committee and begin the search for a new settled pastor.

This has been quite a year. One of turmoil, and dissention in both our country and throughout the world. The weather seemed to respond to the sense of upheaval and angst with fires and floods the likes of which were unknown in modern history.

We may wonder "What is going on?" Whatever it is, it is effecting the world "out there" and our world "in here" namely our church.

Several months ago Rocky Peters sent me an email proposing that we look at the church from a height of 30,000 feet. It was a lovely and insightful message suggesting that we look at the church from a business model perspective. (I have included it in our Mission Study.)

I think it is important that we look at the church, not just the church, but all faith communities, from a height of at least 30,000 feet, and with a broad historical perspective.

To this end I would like to mention two people who have given much time and thought to getting a handle on what is going on and what to do about it; one is British Rabbi, scholar and philosopher Jonathan Sachs, the other, Paul Nixon a United Methodist Minister and author of the book, "I Refuse to Lead a Dying Church."

I will briefly try to describe their perspectives, but I invite you to go to [rabbisacks.org/cultural-climate-change/](http://rabbisacks.org/cultural-climate-change/) to view Rabbi Sacks recent talk at the Chautauqua Institute, and I will have copies of Paul Nixon's article in the church office. If you do not have access to the Rabbi's talk, I would be pleased to have you view it in the office.

But very briefly, Sachs believes that "we are going through one of the most profound revolutions in all of human history and he summed that up as "Cultural Climate Change." As actual climate change alters weather conditions, cultural climate change is "causing a series of storms in the West" that will "upend conventional notions of faith and the role of religion in



society.” He says that religion is the great source of community in the contemporary world, and that without religion, the sense of collective responsibility, of sacrificing for one another in a covenantal relationship, all of which are necessary in a society, would be lost. And that history has shown that when a civilization becomes more secular, consumerist, and individualist, there is a decline in faith, and a subsequent decline in birthrate. Examples given include ancient Greece, Imperial Rome, and Renaissance Italy and even present day Europe. Thus he argues that when a civilization loses its religion it also loses its families, communities and its society. Sobering and thought provoking.

Paul Nixon on the other hand, looks at hundreds of churches in the United States in the last 20 years. We can see that we are not alone in the decline of membership and programs, and the increase in empty classrooms. And as Nixon writes and as we well know, we have gone beyond “the season for tweaking and quick fixes” and that “business as usual is not a viable option,” but there are resources for hope available.

Again, I urge you learn more about these broad 30,000 foot perspectives. The good news that both Rabbi Sachs and Rev. Paul Nixon leave us with, is that there is hope and endless possibility. And that is the same message that we as a church must broadcast to the world.

And in the meantime, come to worship, support one another and love one another. As you prepare for this busy time of year, keep moments for appreciation and gratitude. Call a friend you haven’t seen for a while and invite him or her to come to church with you. Discern your talents and your gifts and how they might best be used to serve this community and this world.

May the Peace of Christ be with you,

Pastor Beth

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### **MEN TO FIX THANKSGIVING BREAKFAST**

Calling all breakfast gourmets! It's time for that once-a-year culinary experience! That's right ---- the men of our church are getting ready to prepare and serve our annual **Thanksgiving Day breakfast (8:00 AM, November 23)**. Muffins will be supplied by the women of our congregation. **Paul Holland** (and his guitar) will join us. We are looking for (more than) a few good men to help set-up, prepare, serve, and clean up after our annual feast. Sign-up sheets will be posted in early November, and we could really use your help. All are welcome to attend as good food, fine fellowship, and music will make for a special Thanksgiving morning. Please sign up to pitch in! All are welcome to attend. This is one event that you do not want to miss!

**Let's reach out to others on this special day --please bring an item (or more) of canned food for our Food Pantry when you come for breakfast.**



### **STEWARDSHIP DRIVE TO START SOON**

**Stewardship Season 2017** will soon be here. Please keep an eye out for your pledge letter and give prayerful consideration to your response. In this, our 190th Anniversary year, let our stewardship – time, talent, and financial support toward the church – reflect our pride in our past and continued faith in our future.

# Circle of Love

## JOYS AND CONCERNS

As we approach Thanksgiving time and the beginning of Advent, we are reminded of all we have for which to be thankful in our church. We are surely blessed to be part of a warm, vibrant, and caring community of faith. As we give thanks for our many blessings, let us also take time to reach out and hold in our prayers those in our community who find the holiday season difficult because of issues of loss, loneliness, and stress.

As always, October was a very busy month in our little church. Some of the month's highlights included:

- Our first 2017-18 Pancake Breakfast was a big success! Thanks go to **Sarah Cory**, our chairperson, and to the many willing volunteers who made for a very special morning.
- A great deal of "behind the scenes" work is necessary to keep our church humming. Special thanks to **Pat Fitzgerald** and our Property Committee for all they do for all of us!
- Thanks to **Pastor Beth** and the many volunteers who have worked to prepare our church's Mission Study.
- Our choir continues to bless us each week with beautiful and inspiring music. Special thanks go to **Director Nancy Compton** and all our dedicated singers!



Among our concerns this month, we ask for prayers for: **Phil Hubbard, Brandon Davis (nephew of Sheila French and Lisa McGill), Denise Wiskowski (sister of Debbie French), Alan Giglio (Pat Fitzgerald's nephew), Heinz Weissenbuehler, Reva Soutar, Nick Rudnick, Emma Gardner, Irene Hooey, 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.

***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.***

## PANCAKE BREAKFASTS SET FOR NOVEMBER 18 & DECEMBER 16

Our seventh Pancake Breakfast season got off to a successful start on Saturday, October 21. We will be holding a series of these delicious fund-raisers on Saturday mornings during the next few months. In addition to our regular menu, each month will highlight a "specialty" pancake. The next breakfast is slated for **Saturday, November 18, from 8:00 - 10:00 AM**. Subsequent breakfast dates are tentatively scheduled for **December 16, January 20, February 17, March 17, and April 21**. The cost for each meal has been set at **\$6.00**. ***There will be no charge for those under five years old.***



Our December breakfast, set for **Saturday, December 16, from 8:00 - 10:00 AM**, will be offered free of charge, as our gift to our community. In lieu of payment for this wonderful breakfast, we are asking for donations of cash and (non-perishable) food items for the Big Flats Community Food Pantry, which is housed in our church. (We will, of course, also be very grateful for any donations to help offset the cost of putting on this breakfast.) Please help us by spreading the word about this special morning.

This series of meals is an ambitious project for our little church, and we are going to need 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 **Sarah Cory**.

## PROPERTY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Recent Property Committee projects have included:

- Wiring and re-lighting of our church sign and steeple light.
- Repair and replacement of west side fascia boards, fascia coverings, drip edge and gutters.
- Replacement of east side parking lot light fixture with cost-effective LED unit.
- Servicing our dishwasher
- Continued attention to our scheduled maintenance list items.



All property members: **Bill Howells, Pat Seem, Tom Seem, Mary Churchill, Scott French, Sheila French, Steve Johnston, Kathy Johnston, Jenny Dean and Pat Fitzgerald** have been instrumental in completing 14 projects this summer. In addition, **Sheila French** has courageously stepped in to be manager of our church copier. Not easy shoes to fill following years of superb management by **Duane Welch**. If you see these people say thanks. Also **please donate to our Parking Lot fund**. The estimate to redo the main church lot is \$11,000. We are nearing 25% so please be generous. This project will be done spring 2018.

## CHRISTMAS EVENTS AT BIG FLATS PRESBYTERIAN

A very special holiday season is in store for our community of faith. Events include:

**DECEMBER 10 – HANGING OF THE GREENS** -- Our annual “Hanging of the Greens” celebration will be held on Sunday, December 10. We will decorate our Christmas tree, and we will join together to sing Christmas Carols. **It would be great if each person could bring a special ornament to hang on our tree!**

**DECEMBER 17 – ‘BLUE CHRISTMAS’** – Service of Hope and Healing – details to be announced.

**DECEMBER 24 – MORNING SERVICE** – An informal Christmas Eve morning service/gathering will be held in our sanctuary starting at our usual worship time of **10:30 AM**.

**DECEMBER 24 – CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE** – Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service will be held at **7:00 PM**, on **Sunday, December 24**. There will be special music throughout the service. It will be a truly joyful evening for all!



The Christmas season is always special at Big Flats First Presbyterian Church! Please plan to share this wonderful time with us. All are welcome.



**POINSETTIAS: Those who wish to place Christmas poinsettias in our church “in honor of” or “in memory of” should contact Dean’s at 562-8120. The price is \$15.**

## FOOD PANTRY NEEDS DECEMBER VOLUNTEERS

The Big Flats Community Food Pantry, housed in our church, relies on the generous support of our local community to help fulfill its mission of service to those in need. This December, we will once again ask members of our church family to help. We will be seeking donations of fruit for holiday fruit baskets, and we will be also looking for volunteers to “Ring the Bell” at Miniars Supermarket during the day on **Sunday, December 24**. Please help our Big Flats Community Food Pantry. Sign-up sheets will be available in church on December for bell ringing and for fruit donations.

Need info? Call **Julie Spangenberg-Jolley** at **.524-6143**.



## "SHOWER FOR MARY" & "GIFTS FOR JOSEPH" MISSION EFFORT ANNOUNCED

For the past sixteen years, our congregation has generously supported our "Shower for Mary" local mission effort during the season of Advent. In this program we have collected a variety of items for personal care and other needs for women and children served by the **Salvation Army Safehouse**. The Salvation Army Safehouse provides a comprehensive program for victims of domestic violence. Services offered include emergency shelter, counseling, advocacy, information/referrals, hotline services, justice system information and accompaniments, support group, and community education. For information: call **732-1979**.



Six years ago we expanded our outreach efforts through a "Gifts for Joseph" program to help men served by the **Samaritan Center**. The Samaritan Center has been assisting individuals and families in need with emergency food, clothing, and prescription drug assistance for over thirty years. This program also facilitates enrollment to Medicaid, Family Health Plus & Child Health Plus and provides referrals to other resources and support services for longer term solutions. The Samaritan Center is located at **380 Main St., Elmira (734-4898)**.

We need your support! Your donated items (**unwrapped please**) can be placed in the collection bins located in the rear of our sanctuary and in the narthex each Sunday throughout the Advent season (**November 27 - December 18**).

### **Needs for the Safehouse ("Shower for Mary"):**

These donations are for women/children and include the following:

- Gift sets for women (perfumes, soaps, lotions, etc.) ~ Watches for women
- Radio Alarm Clocks
- Craft items for teenagers (water color paints, bead sets, etc.)
- Family and children board games ~ Activity books (children & adult)
- Gift cards (\$10-\$20 recommended – grocery or general merchandise)
- Paper towels, napkins, paper plates
- Family oriented DVD's
- Journals / pen sets ~ Stationary gift sets / stamps
- Personal items such as hair brushes ~ deodorant ~ hairspray
- Towels ~ Twin sheet sets ~ pillows (new)
- New (packaged) underwear, bras & socks (all sizes – women and children)
- Disposable diapers (size 3/ 4/ 5 / 6) ~ baby wipes ~ sippie cups ~ pacifiers
- Cash or check donations (made payable to **Salvation Army Safehouse**)

**Due to limited space we cannot accept used household items, clothing or furniture.**

**Please be assured our residents' needs are being met in this area.**

### **Needs for the Samaritan Center ("Gifts for Joseph"):**

These donations are for men and families and include the following:

- Cleaning supplies (unopened)
- Can openers (non-electric)
- Diapers & baby items (unopened)
- Food (non-expired -- unopened)
- Linens -- blankets, pillows, towels, single/twin sheets, etc. (new)
- Men's personal care items -- razors, deodorant, shaving cream, etc. (unopened)
- Paper Products -- paper towels, toilet paper, etc. (unopened)
- Underwear, socks, hats (new) & Seasonal clothing -- all sizes (new or gently used)
- Cash or check donations (made payable to **The Samaritan Center**)

Thank you, in advance, for your generosity in supporting our Advent outreach mission. What a wonderful way to experience the true meaning of Christmas! **Bill Howells** is coordinating our "Shower for Mary" and "Gifts for Joseph" programs and can answer any questions (**962-1146**).

# PHOTO GALLERY



We have had many compliments on our wonderful coffee hours this fall. Thanks to all who have provided these terrific treats! If you would like to bring a plate of cookies, doughnuts, or fruit, it would be most welcomed by all. Just let us know what Sunday you can best support us in this effort. Thanks again to all who have helped make this possible. Questions? – Talk with **Ann Hayes** -- 562-8523.



**WEEKLY EVENTS**

SUNDAYS	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**

November 5	Daylight Savings Time ends
November 5	Holy Communion
November 11 (Sat.)	Veterans Day
November 11 (Sat.)	"Scouting for Food" – benefits our Food Pantry
November 12	Worship Committee will meet
November 15 (Wed.)	Property Committee & Session will meet
November 18 (Sat.)	Pancake Breakfast – 8:00 - 10:00 AM
November 23 (Thurs.)	Thanksgiving Breakfast – 8:00 AM
November 26	"Pennies from Heaven"
December 3	First Sunday of Advent – Holy Communion
December 10	'Hanging of the Greens' – we will decorate our tree and sanctuary
December 16 (Sat.)	Pancake Breakfast – 8:00 – 10:00 AM
December 17	Congregational meeting to elect Session Elders (following morning service)
December 17	Worship Committee will meet
December 17	'Blue Christmas' service – details to be announced
December 20 (Wed.)	Property Committee & Session will meet
December 24	Informal morning service
December 24	Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion service – 7:00 PM
December 31	"Pennies from Heaven"
December 31	Deadline for articles for January/February <b><u>RED DOOR</u></b>

**COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Property Committee	November 15 (Wed.) & December 20 (Wed.) – 6:00 PM
Church Session	November 15 (Wed.) & December 20 (Wed.) – 7:00 PM
Worship Committee	November 12 – & December 17 — following morning worship