



Good News

First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca

315 N. Cayuga Street • Ithaca, NY, 14850 • 607-272-2800 • Rev. Kirianne Weaver Riehl, Senior Pastor • Rev. Cynthia A. Weaver, Pastoral Supply

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Due Date for the Advent Issue: Friday, November 9

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Worship Schedule for November 2018:

Sunday, November 4, 10am:

All Saint's Sunday and Communion

(the 31st Sunday of Ordinary Time)

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6: 1-9 and

Ephesians 4: 1-6

Sermon: "One among Many."

Scripture: Matthew 6: 1-21

Sermon: "Building Love."

This Sunday, we will bring our tithes and offerings to God, as gifts of love.

Monday, November 5, 3pm:

Communion service at Kendal:

Remembering All Saint's Day.

Sunday, November 18, 10am:

Deacons Sunday.

(the 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time)

Scripture: Micah 6: 3-8

Sermon: "Service Through Engagement"

Wednesday, November 7, 2pm:

Communion service at Longview chapel.

Remembering All Saint's Day.

Sunday, November 25, 10am:

Reign of Christ Sunday

and the Sunday of Thanksgiving Weekend

(this Sunday marks the end of the liturgical year, which begins again with Advent.)

Scripture: John 18: 33-37

Sermon: "More than King."

Sunday, November 11, 10am:

Stewardship Sunday

(the 32nd Sunday of Ordinary Time)

Dear friends,

There is a wallop of new things going on these days here at First Presbyterian, so this is a newsletter full of juicy Christian fruit. The faithfulness of this congregation, the hope we, past and present, have placed in the future, and dedicated envisioning has brought us almost more than we can write in a single issue! At least the December Good News is soon to be on its way.

It's not just the beautiful and newly paved parking lot about which we are happy—though it is beautiful, and we are. It's not only the pew-back speaker demo we are enjoying that makes us hopeful for tomorrow—read more about that within. Though we are looking forward to planning a Seminar on Wheels in February to the National Lynching Monument in Alabama — and though we are planning to help with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance in serving our neighbors in the USA— and though we have dreams of future international missions that we hope to present in due course — these things alone are not the sole sources of this season's delight and anticipation. We are excited for these and more.

In these pages, you will read about how our DCE Search Committee has selected and called a new full-time Director of Christian Education for our church, and found in the process that God has been preparing this individual for us for a long time. You will hear our excitement in seeding a new ministry, and our gratitude for the

What's Inside:

- **December Save the Dates**
- **Meet Our New Director of Christian Education**
- **Hands on Mission Project**
- **Deacons Sunday**
- **Friendship Callers Ministry**

magnanimous generosity of the church of the past in gifting us hope for our future.

We have been handed so many gifts from those who came before that we can quail at the prospect of meeting their challenge. But the truth is this: we each, in every age, have to discover for ourselves what we are capable of giving away. It is not what we think, initially, we can do—it is more than that. It is not what we imagine, in wild fancy, we might aspire to; it is probably, in reality, less. So as we search for our balance we find, as we confront the reality of sharing, that we are able to do far more than a little, but much less than all—that we are granted more than what is needful in order to be able to serve with our excess. We find that identifying that excess is a process of discovering our freedom, all over again.

Please join us, this stewardship season, in loving our freedom by giving loving gifts; and may we all, hearts in hand, be present to one another in Christ.

Be well, pray often, and do it all with love.

Higher Education: becoming knowledgeable about God's Word and Work.

We Present... our new Director of Christian Education!

In May of this year, Session made the bold and brave decision to look for a full-time Director of Christian Education for children birth to grade 12 and their families. A DCE Search Committee was formed, with Christina Mead as Chair, and members Angie Chen, Gavin Dowell, and Deb Streeter.

With Session and Personnel, the DCE Search Committee completed a job description. We wanted to look for a person with a strong faith, a proven track record with children, educational credentials, and the ability and energy to connect with both youth and the young. A key word that emerged from our work was "entrepreneurial"—someone who can have good ideas and also make those ideas become a reality.

The committee received resumes and applications, and interviewed two candidates in person. At Session on Monday, October 22, they returned to report that the candidate we have been hoping for has been found.

Suzanne Scholten has been coming to our church for several years with her husband Joe Tonzola. They had been living lives split between here and New York City, where Suzanne owned a yoga studio. Suzanne joined our church and has been active in teaching Sunday School, leading the youth group, Vacation Bible School, and small groups. She has helped with special worship services and is co-leading this year's "A Christmas Carol" effort.

When Suzanne met with the DCE Search Committee, she came with amazing material that shows how deeply she has considered what this work will entail. She is organized and flexible, outgoing and introspective, a natural collaborator with others and highly capable. Her references were glowing about her ability to reach out and engage volunteers and community groups.

This Sunday, October 28, we will introduce Suzanne and welcome her to the leadership of our church in worship. Please join us, and support her as she seeks to serve!

Adult Education

In November Adult Education classes include a book study, Bible study and a presentation concerning local issues.

For the first two Sundays, the adult education class will be discussing the book *Waking Up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debby Irving. The author writes, "Until I began to examine how racism had shaped me, I had little to contribute to the movement of righting racial wrongs." In reading and discussing this book together, our hope is that we will gain a clearer understanding of the impact racism has had on all our lives no matter the color of our skin. It is an eye-opening book which gently but insistently makes us aware of the unrecognized privileges given to those of us who are white, and in doing so gives us the ability to be more effective in our efforts to address the shame and sin that is racism.



The books will be available in the church office beginning Oct. 26th. The discussions will be led by Lorraine Maxwell and Cindy Weaver. Please come with open minds and hearts. The book does not shame, but it does ask us to do more. Discussion material is provided by the Presbyterian Church USA.

Later in the month Phil Courtney will lead a Bible study discussion and a community member will lead a class on a timely topic. More information on the latter two classes will be provided shortly. As usual classes are an hour beginning at 11:25. Please join us.

Announcements and Reminders

Birthdays in November



- 1 – Kyounghee Han
- 6 – John Weiss
- 8 – Don Holcomb
- 9 – Carl Closs
- 10 – A. Ruth Breen
- 13 – Joshua Yoon
- 19 – Lisa Everts
- 19 – Robert Kohut
- 22 – Kate Hubbs
- 25 – Maurice Haltom
- 26 – Glen Dowell
- 28 – Jan Favaro

How to Use Our New Parking Lot!

Now that we have a wonderful new parking lot, we want to ask all our parking lot users to sign in and out of their space as they park. Here's how to do it:

Inside the Park door, there will be a white board and a marker. The parking lot will be permanently gridded onto the board so you will see all the numbered spots there.

When you arrive at church for your function (worship, volunteer, playing the organ, attending a meeting), please sign your car in with your name. As you are leaving, erase it.

This board will help us to understand better how our lot is being used, and will also help us find a driver if we need to contact a car's owner for any reason.

Thank you for helping us in this effort, and thank you to Buildings and Properties for all the work that went into our beautiful new lot. We hope you and your car enjoy it!

Like Us on Facebook!



We are "First Presbyterian Church, Ithaca NY." We post pictures, reflections, and announcements. Stop by!

Christmas Crèche Display

Last year, Phil Courtney shared his fabulous Christmas crèche display in the Narthex. This year, we would love it if members of the congregation shared their own crèches. If you have a crèche that has a special story you would like



(maybe it comes from another country, or is unique and artistic, or just has a special meaning to your family) please contact Phil Courtney to participate (cphilipcourtney@gmail.com). We would like to display the crèches all through Advent (starting Dec. 2).

Cares & Concerns



In the Hospital? LET US KNOW!

Local hospitals do not call us if you are in the hospital—but we would dearly like to know. If you have an emergency, please have someone in your family or a friend call the church (272-2800) or office@firstpresithaca.org to inform us. Also, if you know of something we don't, please pass the word our way. Thank you for helping us with our pastoral care.



Eleanor Glauer; Alice Kelly; Martha Mapes; Don Scott; Connie Scott; Tom Scott; Virginia Semp; and John Shortle.

Mission

Hands On Mission Project! Volunteer to Help in Hurricane Disaster Relief

A small group of FPCI members met to respond to news of the devastation Gail Farnham reported from her visit to North Carolina in early October. Gail was part of a Presbyterian Disaster Assistance team that met in New Bern, NC soon after Hurricane Florence swept through. Initially PDA responds to requests from local Presbyterian ministers to assess the dimensions of the local crisis. This process results in designing work projects that Presbyterian congregations can organize volunteer teams to tackle on a weekly basis.

Our church is intending to recruit team members from churches in Geneva Presbytery, gathering up to 25 people with various skill levels, a span of ages, and lots of enthusiasm. Travel to and from the site usually takes a day each way, so specific tasks encompass the other 5 days. There are local facilities available for overnight accommodation and transportation will be arranged by the group. The date for the work trip will be selected when PDA has team leaders in place and the areas of greatest need are identified.

What are the first steps?

- Indicate interest in joining this mission project. Contact Phil Courtney (cphilipcourtney@gmail.com) or leave your name at the church office.
- Volunteer to be part of the steering committee to plan this mission project.
- Check your calendar to identify a time when you could join a team.
- Recruit your family, a friend, or a sponsor (to help share expenses).

Friendship Callers Ministry Set to Begin—Thursday, Jan 3!

Starting in January, Kirianne invites anyone who wishes to join her in calling on individuals in our area who would like visitors. We'll meet at church at 9am, group ourselves into pairs, and go to call on congregants, friends, and anyone else who would like us to come. After calling, we'll meet for lunch and touch base about how people are doing.

Starting on the 3rd, we will meet first and third Thursdays, weather permitting. Let Kirianne know if you plan to come or know someone who would like a visit from us. Thank you!

Food for the Ithaca Kitchen Cupboard

It isn't New Year's, but it's always a good time to make new resolutions...have you thought about buying an extra can of something every time you go to the grocery store? it's an easy and painless way to help support our church's commitment to the Ithaca Kitchen Cupboard. The next step is to remember to bring it to church when you come. The box in the narthex is always available. If you still have the blue bag to bring food to church, use that to remind yourself about sharing food with others. You don't have to wait until "Souper Sunday" to bring food to the Kitchen Cupboard!

Volunteers Still Needed!

We're still looking for volunteers to work at the Ithaca Kitchen Cupboard. Our church is responsible for the first and third Thursday of each month (1:30-3) We always need new workers and we can put you on a "sub" list. We serve in the Salvation Army as part of the ecumenical Ithaca community, Come see what we are doing to help those who need help with their daily bread.

Upcoming Events in the Life of the Church

SAVE THE DATES:



Hanging of the Greens November 30th at 3:00 p.m.

Believe it or not Advent is on its way, and one of our traditions in preparation for Advent has become the Hanging of the Greens. Advent begins on Sunday, Dec. 2nd, so we will gather on Friday, Nov. 30 beginning at 3:00 pm to hang our greens inside and out and then enjoy a warm meal together before we return to the sanctuary for a brief service of worship amidst our newly hung greens. This is a joyful time together with plenty of opportunity to sing Christmas carols as we work. All are welcome to join the party. Please contact Cindy Weaver if you are interested in helping with the greens, preparing a pot of soup or stew for the meal, serving the meal, and/or cleaning up.



A Christmas Carol Sunday, December 2nd at 3:00 p.m.

Join us for a live story telling interpretation with our very own First Presbyterian storytellers. The talented Michael Dixon has abridged A Christmas Carol to create a 2.5 hour show for your enjoyment. Its FREE so bring your friends and

family for an amazing afternoon of the arts. We will also have intermissions with time to enjoy homemade treats and tea. See you on Sunday, December 2nd, 2018 at Dodds Hall from 3:00 pm – 5:30 pm. Seating will be first come first serve, so please come early. If you have questions please reach out to Suzanne Scholten or Michael Dixon.



Yuletide Feast Friday, December 7th at 6:00 p.m.

A feast it is! Come let our youth group serve you on Friday, December 7th at 6pm in Dodds Hall. Heather Lane will work her magic in the kitchen for another amazing year of: salad, pork loin, carrots, applesauce, rolls plus Apple Hill cake and Purity ice cream for dessert. My mouth is already watering! Stephen Spinelli will be conducting an incredible choral performance after the meal. The Yuletide Feast is the youth group's main fundraiser for our trip in February. The Tickets will go on sale beginning November 4th after church with Suzanne Scholten.

Prices are: Adults \$18, students (6 -11 years old) \$5 with 5 years old and under being free or a family of 5 is \$40. If you miss Suzanne at church, please call or text her at 712-212-4819. Invite all of your loved ones!

A Word from Cindy



As I sauntered through Dewitt Park last week, I neared a bench on which two people were having a conversation, and I could tell that one of them was relaying the details of some very difficult events – needing an unexpected and major roof repair and uncertainty about a nephew’s cancer diagnosis. The man who was telling his story to his friend moved abruptly and knocked a pile of his papers onto the sidewalk. This appeared to be the last straw for this wearied soul until out of nowhere a young girl started helping him pick up his papers.

By itself this is not an unusual event – neither the knocking over of the papers nor the help in picking them up – but in this instance when these small hands reached out to help, the man’s demeanor lifted and he offered her a sincere and loving thank you. It was clear she had no idea how much her reflex to help meant to this man, so she smiled, waved goodbye, and skipped away. I was struck with delight by his awareness, in spite of his weariness, of just how kind and helpful this small gesture had been. All of this happened in the a few seconds as I sauntered by.

In November the idea of service will be woven through the month perhaps in more direct and obvious ways than usual. We will be in stewardship season, and we will be hearing more from the deacons, so the idea of service will be front and center in our time together. So often, I fear, it can seem that service requires a lengthy or time-consuming commitment, but the opportunity to serve can be found in any action we take as illustrated by the thoughtful child above. So, as this season of focus on service nears, I ask you to give thought to the many ways, small and large, you may serve the church and serve the Lord. A kind word to a harried cashier, picking up stray paper coffee cups as you walk along, writing a note of thanks when it is unexpected, visiting a friend who is ill, and, of course, becoming involved in church activities are just a few possibilities for caring for God’s creation and for each other.

Wishing you many unexpected helpful hands,
Cindy

Deacons Sunday

The Deacons are preparing the service for November 18 and invite participation by the congregation. The theme is "service through engagement." Upon entering the church you will be invited to indicate on a leaf-shaped paper some act of service that you pledge to do. This follows the theme that even small acts can make a big difference. During the service these leaves will be attached to a symbolic tree in the front of the pews. The Deacons also invite you to engage another activity. Deacons call on people who cannot attend church, and the Deacons invite others to join in this outreach effort.

A Seminar on Wheels

There is an effort underway in our church to plan a "Seminar on Wheels" for this coming February 16-23, on the theme of the history of racial injustice. The idea is to charter a bus which will take us, over the course of eight days, down to Montgomery, Alabama and back again, with a destination visit of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice ("National Lynching Memorial") and the Legacy Museum: from Enslavement to Mass Incarceration. On the way down and back, other stops will be planned, including historic sites, live theater, and group activities. On the bus, we will be led by educators through the experience of film, discussion, and worship to a deeper understanding of racial experience within all our lives.

We welcome people to help us plan this experience—please join us! And, if you have interest, save the dates for this trip, appropriate for ages 14 and up (it’s ICSD winter break):

SAVE THE DATES:
Saturday, Feb. 16 –Saturday, Feb. 23

From Your Committees

Notes from Buildings and Properties

subtitled:

“Two Kinds of Demos.”

A Demonstration: Pew-Back Speakers.

Since its renovation in 2004, our sanctuary has been a wonderful space for music. We enjoy concert-hall acoustics for congregational hymnody, organ performance, and choral singing, and it was for these effects that the walls and surfaces were carefully designed. At present we have a 3.1 second reverberation for upper tonal sounds, and a six second reverb for deep tones.

For the same reason, however, we face tremendous challenges when it comes to the spoken word. We will never know how many visitors do not return to our church because they couldn’t hear the sermon. Our current speaker system was expensive to install and expensive to improve, and still has certainly not solved our issues. Throughout the sanctuary, in some areas more extremely than in others, spoken words have little clarity and are very difficult to understand.

Along the way, various solutions have been proposed that involve compromising our musical acoustic in order to support clarity of speech. Rugs, banners and dampening panels have all been discussed, but each would help at the expense of our musical programming. Was there any solution, we wondered, that could result in the best of both worlds?

A handful of churches nationwide have installed what are called “Pew-Back Speakers,” a system in which small, very localized speakers amplify a few sets of seats at a time. Because the sound does not travel far, there are few speech echoes; yet the natural acoustics of the room do not have to be artificially dampened, leaving choral and organ music beautiful and full in their sound.

We are currently offering the congregation

time to experience pew-back speakers as an option. The cost of such a system is between \$32,000 and \$35,000—not insignificant, but less than half the cost of the current speaker arrangements in our sanctuary.

This demo period will extend at least through November 18, the Sunday before Thanksgiving. We will gather responses each Sunday and collate them for your reading. Please take your turn and record your own feedback with us, as we move forward in resolving this long-standing challenge for our church!

A Demolition: the old Tompkins Public Library Building.

On to a more difficult matter: we expect that this November will see the commencement of demolition and the start of rebuilding the old Tompkins Public Library building at 310-314 N Cayuga Street, just across the street from us. We look forward to the new building when it is here, but the process of getting there will be long and difficult for us as a neighbor.

Of particular concern is that demolition and pile driving, which will take potentially two months of work, will involve shock waves that could potentially do damage to our sensitive plaster ceiling. We have had an inspector come and take a full record of our ceilings, foundations, walls and other sensitive areas, and we have spoken with Travis Hyde about the specific fragilities of our structure, which they will hold a conversation about.

During the demolition, however, the sanctuary will be off-limits to everyone during the day from Monday through Friday. We want to exercise an abundance of caution in keeping everyone safe. We have other contingencies in place that Kirianne would be happy to explain to you in more detail, if you have additional questions. We look forward to new neighbors across the street!

NOVEMBER 2018

First Presbyterian Church * 315 N Cayuga St, Ithaca, NY 14850 * (607) 272-2800 * www.firstpresithaca.org

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 6:30pm—Community Game Night (Dodds Hall) 7:30pm—Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)	2	3
4 Communion Sunday 9am—Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 10am—Worship Service (Sanctuary) 10:30am—K-4 Sunday School 11am—Fellowship Time (Narthex) 11:15am—Youth Choir (Choir Room) 11:20am—Adult Ed (Dodds Hall)	5 3pm—Communion Service (Kendal) 7pm—Deacons Meeting (Dodds Hall)	6 10am—Staff Meeting (Pastor's Office) 5:30pm—Church Playgroup (contact Kirianne for location!)	7 2pm—Communion Service (Longview)	8 8:15am—B&P Meeting (Heritage Room) 3pm—Missioner's Meeting (Kendal) 6:30pm—Community Game Night (Dodds Hall) 7:30pm—Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)	9	10
11 Stewardship Sunday 9am—Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 10am—Worship Service (Sanctuary) 10:30am—K-4 Sunday School 11am—Fellowship Time (Narthex) 11:15am—Youth Choir (Choir Room) 11:20am—Adult Ed (Dodds Hall)	12 5pm—WMSL Meeting (Heritage Room)	13 5:30pm—Church Playgroup (contact Kirianne for location!) 7:40pm—Adult Ed Meeting (Heritage Room)	14 5:15pm—Personnel Meeting (Fireside Room)	15 6:30pm—Community Game Night (Dodds Hall) 7:30pm—JPIC Meeting (Heritage Room) 7:30pm—Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)	16	17 1pm—Community Game Day! (Dodds Hall)
18 Deacons Sunday 9am—Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 10am—Worship Service (Sanctuary) 10:30am—K-4 Sunday School 11am—Fellowship Time (Narthex) 11:15am—Youth Choir (Choir Room) 11:20am—Adult Ed (Dodds Hall)	19 12pm—Session Materials Due (via e-mail)	20 10am—Staff Meeting (Pastor's Office) 5pm—Turkey Tuesday (Dodds Hall)	21 7pm—Finance Committee (Heritage Room)	22 <i>Happy Thanksgiving!</i> CLOSED	23 CLOSED	24
25 Christ the King Sunday 9am—Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary) 10am—Worship Service (Sanctuary) 10:30am—K-4 Sunday School 11am—Fellowship Time (Narthex) 11:15am—Youth Choir (Choir Room) 11:20am—Adult Ed (Dodds Hall)	26 7pm—Session Meeting (Dodds Hall)	27 5:30pm—Church Playgroup (contact Kirianne for location!) 6:30pm—Tai Chi (Narthex)	28 6:30pm—YMSS Meeting (Heritage Room)	29 6:30pm—Community Game Night (Dodds Hall) 7:30pm—Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)	30 3pm—Hanging of the Greens (Sanctuary)	

Sunday, November 11, 2018: Stewardship Sunday.

How do you think about money, wealth, philanthropy and stewardship? How do you teach your children, or model for your family, a life of gift-giving, generosity, and service? These are enormous questions, but frowned upon in polite society; talking about money has the potential to shut us down. There may be some of you who wish to stop reading right now.

How we think about giving, however, is a theological question, and we are asked by God to be a people of theological meaning. Even among church traditions this question differs—therefore, what does our church teach about God’s desire for us each when it comes to giving of our monetary gifts?

In the Hebrew scriptures, we read about “tithing,” or the act of giving back to God’s work 1/10 of the produce of our fields. It was easy to assume, at that time, that most people’s wealth was measured in grain or cattle, though that may not be the truth today. Deuteronomy speaks of the tithe as a *command*—that we are to give our ten percent, and that this is a fairly unyielding rule. *Keep these commandments*, the scriptures warn. *Teach them to your children, and your children’s children.*

In the gospels, however, Jesus challenges an ethos that was overly behavioristic. The problems Jesus faced were manifold. Some were using the law for cruelty, such as punishing good deeds of service because they were done on the Sabbath. Some were trying to find loopholes in the law by which to escape it, such as acknowledging that one must

love one’s neighbor yet narrowly defining who one’s neighbor was. Jesus was very clear about his refusal to limit our understanding of this commandment.

Jesus did not come to reverse the laws of the Hebrew scriptures, nor to make them more lax or less important. Instead, Jesus wished us to make them laws of the heart—carried out because we understand and want to follow God’s way, and not because we have to check them off of a list of chores.

None of us wants to be loved by command. We want the people in our lives to love us with their hearts, not our rules—to show us their true and honest care, not their guilt-driven duty.

In our church, we teach this of God, too. We believe Jesus taught that the law should be kept by

its Spirit—a holy Spirit of love and truth, as Jesus said:

If you love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father; and he will give you [...] the Spirit of truth itself.

It is not so in all Christian teaching, but in our Reformed faith: we should aspire to the law, but we should meet it by the Spirit. This is true for all aspects of our lives: community, worship, holiness, prayer, sharing, kindness, nonviolence, humility, thoughtfulness, patience, truthfulness, love... and giving. In all these things, we must be willing givers of ourselves, thankful acknowledgers of all God’s gifts, and generous sharers of what we have first received. -Kirianna

Call to Sharing

