

Good News

First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca



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Worship Schedule for April 2018:

Sunday, April 1, 10am: *Easter Sunday!*

Scripture: Genesis 1-2:4a and Mark 16:1-8

Sermon: "God will Always Create Anew."

Monday, April 2, 3pm: Easter Communion Service at Kendal

Wednesday, April 4, 2pm: Easter Communion Service at Longview

Sunday, April 8, 10am: The Second Sunday of Easter, with Communion and the Reception of New Members

Scripture: John 20: 19-31

Sermon: "Receive the Holy Spirit."

Sunday, April 15, 10am: Third Sunday of Easter.

Scriptures of the day: Acts 3: 12-9; Psalm 4; 1 John 3: 1-7; and Luke 24: 36b-48

Sunday, April 22, 10am: The Fourth Sunday of Easter.

Scripture: 1 John 3: 16-23

Sermon: "In Truth and Deed."

Sunday, April 29, 10am: The Fifth Sunday of Easter:

SPECIAL MUSIC SUNDAY!



Dear friends,

I have been remarking to myself far too often that we never know the stories our lives will hold. As it turns out, life is more surprising, its adventures more unusual, than we think it will be!

I remember one morning waiting in the left-hand lane to turn into the driveway of the Second Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis where I was a Fellow. With two lanes of traffic in each direction, there was always a bit of a wait involved, but traffic on Meridian Street was not overly heavy.

That particular morning, as I waited to turn, a truck coming up behind me did not seem to be slowing down. I watched it in my rear-view mirror as it came toward me; my response was something halfway in-between instinct and reflex, as though the thought that this car wasn't stopping had only made it so far as my spinal ganglia and not all the way to consciousness. Whatever push it was made me step on the gas hard. The truck, at the last minute, saw me and headed into oncoming traffic to avoid the crash. Cars moved out of the way, the truck swayed and slipped back into the correct lane in front of me, and the crisis was averted.

Here were my thoughts that day, after I'd turned around and headed back to the church, taking the nice, safe right hand turn that an approach from the North afforded:

1. We never know what the next moment in life will bring. (People who realize this also run the risk of becoming addicted to the 24-hour news cycle.)

What's Inside:

- **Easter Egg Hunt**
- **Welcome to Laura Wilks, Our New Youth Choir Director**
- **Special Music Sunday, April 29**
- **One Great Hour of Sharing**
- **31 Years of International Hunger Grants**

2. We always think the big decisions that we make in life—like where we'll go to school, what we'll study, who we marry, which job we choose—are the things that determine the course of our lives. But even though it will never make the obituary, little tiny unnoticeable decisions—like whether we stopped for gas one day, or whether we happened to look out our rear-view mirror while waiting to take a left turn—these miniscule decisions shape our lives as completely as the big ones we stew over.

3. Life is so perilous, and not at all safe. It is so important to focus on the part of us that isn't going to turn to dust.

In this Easter season, as we bask in resurrection joy (and what I'm hoping will be a bit of warmer, gardening-type weather), remember that third thought. We all have to invest in the part of us that will never die: doing what is right and good unflinchingly, even when there is no external reward or thanks, and even at great personal risk. This is the story of Holy Week that we are asked to follow.

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

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

Adult Education

APRIL 1—(EASTER) There will be no adult education class.

APRIL 8—"Restaurants and Churches You Would Wait in Line for"—Join us for a lively discussion and see if there are any similarities in what attracts you to the two of them. Led by Elder Don Scott, Retired Mission Councilor for the Synod of the Northeast, and a member of our church choir.

APRIL 15—In a class postponed because of our congregational meeting, Maury Tigner will lead us in considering what burdens we can give up, and the resulting freedom we can take on.

APRIL 22—This year our observance of Bread for the World Sunday falls on Earth Day. Our congregation is a long-time member of BFW--a non-profit, non-partisan, Christian organization that advocates for poor and hungry peoples around the world. BFW is alarmed that the Federal Administration's budget would make massive cuts to programs that help people who are experiencing hunger and poverty. This includes domestic nutrition programs such as SNAP, as well as aid programs to countries on the brink of famine. Learn more about what this would mean for poor and hungry people in our country and abroad, and what we can do about it.

Elmer Ewing will lead the class.

APRIL 29—To be announced.



Our Session sends an Overture to the Presbytery of Geneva:

On Directing the Board of Pensions and the Foundation to Divest from Fossil Fuel and Actively Invest in Securities that Focus in Renewable Energy

The Presbytery of Geneva overtures the 223rd General Assembly to:

1. Commend the Board of Pensions and Presbyterian Foundation for creating fossil free options for participants, and the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee for increased engagement with companies in the Fossil Fuel industry-- actions that embody the beginning of a faithful response to the devastating and urgent reality of climate change.
2. Recognize that by continuing to hold investments in the fossil-fuel companies that most egregiously contribute to the climate crisis, the PC(USA) is complicit in harming God's creation and "the least of these" who are disproportionately affected by climate change.
3. Direct the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation to divest from the fossil fuel industry.
4. Direct the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation to actively seek out and invest in securities of companies whose predominant focus is in renewable and/or energy efficiency.
5. Direct the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation to report to the 224th General Assembly (2020) about their progress in effecting recommendations 3 and 4.

If this overture were passed by our Presbytery, we would be adding our voice to the original call from the Presbytery of Hudson River. In 2014, the Presbytery of Boston sent a similar call, as did San Francisco in 2016. However, such measures have not yet been passed by the General Assembly as a whole. This summer's General Assembly has a chance to put this right. We'll keep you posted!

Announcements and Reminders

Easter Vigil: March 29—30

Journey with us from Maundy Thursday to Good Friday by participating in an Easter Vigil. Participants can sign up for an hour of prayer and contemplation in the sanctuary and wait with Jesus from approximately 8:00pm, Thursday through the night and day of Good Friday until the beginning of the Good Friday service at 7:00pm.

There will be multiple ways that one could pray and meditate as we wait: reading devotions, lighting a candle, or feeling the coarseness of sand or the refreshment of water. This time allows us to keep vigil, as we, like Jesus' disciples, stay awake with Jesus in Gethsemane, witness his betrayal by Judas and capture, and be present during Peter's denial. We continue to remain vigilant, as we stand with Jesus before the high priest and Pilate, hear the cries to crucify him, and led to Golgotha to be killed. And finally, we stay awake as we reflect and remember those initial hours of despair that were felt by his followers, following his death.

Consider signing up for an hour of watchful, prayerful silence in preparation for the joy of the resurrection. Your pew awaits.



Birthdays in April:

- 9 – William Chen
- 11 – Martha Mapes
- 13 – Micah Beck
- 14 – Amiya Patterson
- 15 – Gay Johnson
- 19 – Leni Mecnas
- 24 – Judy Vaughan
- 25 – Nancy Whitmore
- 26 – Janet Mara



Sign Up for Our Wednesday Weekly E-mail!



Did you know that we have a weekly e-mail? In it you will find updates about events that are happening at the church, upcoming committee meetings, prayer concerns, a reflection from one of our pastors, and more!

If you would like to receive the Wednesday Weekly E-mail, please e-mail either the Office (office@firstpresithaca.org) or Pastor John (mcdonaldjohnf@gmail.com) and ask to be added to the list.

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 email 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.

Prayer

Charlotte Bruce; Suzy Courtney; Dorothy Daetsch; Eleanor Glauer; Marybelle Gutenmann; Alice Kelly; Martha Mapes; Ruth Schaaf; Ruth Schlough; Connie Scott; Dix Wayman and Sandy Wilkins.

We pray for David and his family, as he faces a time of personal trial.

Special Music Sunday, April 29: Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem*

from Programme Notes by John Bawden

From the age of nine Fauré studied music at the École Niedermeyer, the 'École de musique religieuse et classique', where Saint-Saëns was a member of staff. Saint-Saëns was regarded as a progressive teacher, introducing his pupils not only to the music of Bach and Mozart but also to controversial composers such as Wagner and Liszt. Unlike most major French composers, Fauré did not attend the Paris Conservatoire but continued his studies with Saint-Saëns, who greatly encouraged him by putting work his way and helping him to be published. The two became lifelong friends and Fauré later said that he owed everything to Saint-Saëns.

Fauré was a fine organist and in 1896 was appointed to the prestigious Madeleine church in Paris. He was also an excellent teacher, and perhaps because of his renowned expertise as organist and teacher only slowly gained recognition as a composer. He eventually became professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire, and its Director from 1905 to 1920. Although he wrote several works involving a full orchestra, his particular talent lay within the more intimate musical forms – songs, piano music and chamber music. His somewhat austere style and highly individual, impressionistic harmonic language contrasts markedly with the music of the Austro-German tradition which dominated European music from the time of Beethoven until well into the twentieth century.

The subtlety of Fauré's music, and his concentration on the small-scale, led many to criticise him for lacking depth, a judgement based on the mistaken premise that the bigger and bolder a composer's music the more worthwhile it must be. Fauré deliberately avoided the grander kind of orchestral music that could easily have brought him fame and fortune. He preferred instead to embrace an elegant and subtle musical language

that has won him increasing numbers of admirers, particularly as a composer of songs, a genre in which he is now recognised as a master.

The *Requiem* was composed in 1888, when Fauré was in his forties, quite probably in response to the recent death of his father. Shortly after its first performance, Faure's mother also died, giving the work an added poignancy. In 1900, under some pressure from his publishers, he reluctantly agreed to the release of a revised version containing additional instrumental parts designed to broaden the work's appeal. Nowadays it is such a firm favourite that it comes as a surprise to learn that it did not gain widespread popularity until the nineteen-fifties.

In its sequence of movements the *Requiem* departs significantly from the standard liturgical text. Fauré included two new sections, the lyrical Pie Jesu and the transcendent In Paradisum, with its soaring vocal line and murmuring harp accompaniment. He also omitted the Dies Irae and Tuba Mirum – for most composers an opportunity to exploit to the full the dramatic possibilities of all the available choral and orchestral forces. Consequently the prevailing mood is one of peacefulness and serenity, and the work has often been described, quite justly, as a "Requiem without the Last Judgement".

Of the many settings of the *Requiem*, this is probably the most widely loved. In comparison with the large-scale masterpieces of Verdi, Brahms and Berlioz, Faure's setting seems gentle and unassuming, yet it is this very quality of understatement which contributes so eloquently to the work's universal appeal. Whether the *Requiem* is performed in one of its orchestral versions or simply with organ accompaniment, it is impossible not to be moved by the ethereal beauty of this humble masterpiece.

John Bawden generously makes his Programme Notes freely available online—thank you!

Children, Youth, & Families

BROUGHT TO YOU BY YMSS



Save the Dates:

March 25 at 9:30am:

Youth Choir meets to prepare for singing

March 25, Palm and Passion Sunday:

Join us for the Palm Procession!

March 25 after church: Youth are encouraged to attend the Congregational Meeting.

April 1, Easter:

No Sunday School but...

Easter Egg Hunt—see note to the right!

April 8—Youth group and conversation.



ATTENTION ALL MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH! We are doing something different for Sunday School after worship. Instead of having Sunday School every week, we will be meeting twice a month, which will allow us to have Youth Council, Sunday School lessons and Destination Unknown experiences. Check the calendar for dates!

Easter is right around the corner, which means...**Easter Egg Hunt!** Just as we have done in the past, the Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Easter Sunday after worship.

YOUTH—meet after Children's Time Easter Sunday to hide the eggs!

ALL: meet in Dodds Hall after church to start!

CHILDREN up to grade 2: hunt in the Meditation Room

CHILDREN from grades 3-4: hunt in the Choir Room

We welcome Laura Wilks as the new director of the youth choir! Kirianne is moving to work with the Youth after church, and is so happy that the choir will be under the superb leadership and experienced hand of Laura—who is also mom to great singers Sarah and Katelyn!

Parents of Nursery children: We have re-done the nursery sign-up sheet so that you can indicate whether you want your child(ren) to go to Children's Time and/or Sunday School. Our nursery workers will bring your children where you indicate they should go.

We know that losing John may be especially hard on our parents and youth. Following the congregational meeting, if anyone wants to speak with Kirianne, please feel free to contact her: church: 607-272-2800, cell: 607-882-1325, or kirianne@firstpresithaca.

Children's Sunday Morning Schedule

9:45-12:30pm - Nursery is open; silent pagers available for parents.

10:00-11:10am - Worship.

After Children's Time: Elementary students leave for Sunday School on the second floor opposite the nursery

11:10-11:30am - Fellowship Time — Narthex

11:20-12:30pm - Youth Choir (kids K and up)—Choir Room

11:20-12:30pm - Youth Group (middle and high school—check calendar)

Sunday, April 22: Earth Day One Great Hour of Sharing



In Seminary, as I worked in the library one summer, I re-shelved an old book called “All Creatures of Our God and King.” The author was a stern-looking gentleman wrapped in many layers of late 19th-century suiting, but his message was all gentleness.

Inside the front cover he stated his mission: that if Christians believed they would meet animals again in heaven, and share that place with them, it would impel them to be kinder to animals in this present life.

The easiest argument for creation care comes from the fact that creation is God’s artistry, the work of God’s hands. Surely, what God has made we should not defile! But some Christians point to the words that say we were given these things to use, and argue that nature itself is therefore a utility, here for us to dispose of.

The author of the book I found went further. He pointed out many verses that spoke of God’s creation as worshipers. “Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord,” he reminded us from Psalms. God did not consider a land barren if it still had cattle, we have learned in Jonah. Romans 8: “For the whole creation waits in eager longing” for God—which can also be translated “all creatures.”

In today’s world, we have come to understand that in the foundation of our care of any creature, and even of one another, lies our care of the earth which supports all our lives. We are learning, too slowly, that it is very near to being a closed system, and that we have not been careful with our refuse. Our carbon monoxide detectors are blaring, and we are ignoring them at our peril.

The Bible says, “If we did not praise [God], the very stones would cry out!” Thus I join that author from long ago in a desperate hope that we will acknowledge our role in earth care, and take it on with diligence.

The book was not shelved quickly, and I shudder to think that I cannot remember deducting that reading time from my pay; so I must pay it forward in ideas shared. Let our consciences grow, and our earth be loved in both word and deed.

-Kirianna

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing — Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People — all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope.

Each gift to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) helps to improve the lives of people in these challenging situations. The Offering provides us a way to share God’s love with our neighbors in need. In fact, OGHS is the single, largest way that Presbyterians come together every year to work for a better world.

PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (PDA)

- Works alongside communities as they recover and find hope after the devastation of natural or human-caused disasters, and support for refugees

PRESBYTERIAN HUNGER PROGRAM (PHP)

- Takes action to alleviate hunger, care for creation, and the systemic causes of poverty so all may be fed

SELF-DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE (SDOP)

- Invests in communities responding to their experiences of oppression, poverty and injustice and educates Presbyterians about the impact of these issues

Please visit the One Great Hour of Sharing website (www.presbyterianmission.org/oghs) to find more info on how your support of One Great Hour of Sharing helps people all over the world, and please offer prayers for the projects and the people whom they serve. You can make a contribution with one of the festive fish banks (extras will be in the Narthex), or in one of the special One Great Hour of Sharing offering envelopes found in the church pews.



The Missioners Committee Reports:

31 Years of International Hunger Grants

The United Nations estimates that 1 in 9 people in the world today are undernourished. Most of these people live in developing countries, and two-thirds of the total number of hungry people in the world now live in Asia. The problem of severe hunger in countries far from here can feel both distant and overwhelming, yet we are called to help those who suffer no matter how far away they might be. How can we in Ithaca affect the complicated systems and challenges that cause malnutrition, hunger, and suffering halfway around the globe?

In 1987, a small group of members of our church met to discuss this very question. With the encouragement of our pastor, Dan Little, and Professor Dan Sisler of Cornell, the group created a fund to support the work of international graduate students at Cornell who were doing research to address the root causes of hunger. They called it the International Hunger Student Field Support Program.

Although originally focused on Africa, the program has grown in scope over the past 31 years. Our congregation has funded research in more than 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, by more than 90 graduate students in the fields of sociology, nutrition, agriculture, soil science, atmospheric science, natural resources, and more. In doing this, not only have we supported important work to alleviate hunger, we also supported developing the next generation of leaders working to end poverty.

An additional benefit of the International Hunger grant program is that we as a congregation enjoy the privilege of getting to meet remarkable and

inspiring people from all over the world. Students funded by our grants agree to present their research in Adult Education, allowing us to learn about them, their home countries, and the many complicated issues that affect hunger. In addition to the knowledge gained and the interventions implemented in the field because of our funding, the first-hand reports we hear from the students give us a personal connection to the fight against hunger worldwide. When we attach a face, a name, a personal story, or a friendship to the work of alleviating hunger, it helps us recommit ourselves to this important work.

Please join us in the worship service on Sunday, April 29, to learn about this year’s International Hunger Grant recipient. Thank you for your enduring support of this important program.

The Maze at Bourn, Cambridgeshire

Printed below is a maze that is worked in black and red tile in the floor of the sacristy at the church in Bourn. At the center is now the baptismal font, though this is believed to be an afterthought. For us, it takes a mere 3.5” of space to enjoy it—may your journey be blessed!

