

## PASTOR'S PONDERINGS



*“But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.’”*

(Matt. 28:1-10)

Not everyone loves a surprise or a joke! The gospel writer Matthew writes that the women who went to the tomb that first Easter Sunday were more than a little surprised. They were shocked and afraid. They wondered if the empty tomb was some kind of sinister joke. They came expecting to anoint Jesus’ body after he died. They came expecting to mourn. They didn’t expect an earthquake, an angel, and an empty tomb! What about us? We’ve all been through a long, hard winter. Easter this year comes very early and the chance of it being cold and possibly still having snow on the ground or actually snowing is a real possibility. While the calendar says it’s spring, as I write this, it doesn’t quite feel like it yet. We expect or at least hope that spring is filled with warmth and sunshine, but that isn’t always the case. Maybe it’s time we adjust our expectations just as we have adjusted our clocks.

Spring is the season of new birth and growth. Nature slowly emerges from the cold dark earth above the soil reaching for the sun. In the Church calendar, the season of Easter also emerges from the cold dark solemnness of Lent, reaching upward toward the Son of God, Jesus the crucified one, who the angel proclaimed “has been raised.” The women at the tomb expected death even though Jesus had said He would be raised. They were the first witnesses of that earth-shattering news, and we today have heard their testimony. Yet, there are times that we don’t live into this resurrection joy either. We are still not expecting resurrection to emerge from the dark and difficult shadows of life even though we believe Jesus is risen. The message from the angel is clear to us today too “Do not be afraid!”

This Easter and throughout the Easter season, let’s live into that promise with Resurrection and joy! The Sunday after Easter we will once again continue Celebrating the resurrection with Holy Humor Sunday. So wear your favorite costume and be prepared to laugh. Jesus did defeat death and is alive and that’s no April Fools joke!

Easter Blessings and Peace,  
Pastor Edwina



## Holy Week

**April 2nd-7 PM Maundy Thursday Worship Service  
With Holy Communion**

**April 3rd GOOD FRIDAY 2 JOINT SERVICES WITH ZION  
Noon-Stations of the Cross  
5 PM-Good Friday Tenebrae Service**

**April 4th-9 AM Decorate Zion sanctuary with Easter flowers  
April 4-CNY Ecumenical Easter Vigil Service 7 PM**

**April 5th-10:45 AM Easter Sunday-Worship Service with  
Holy Communion**

Come and join in worship!



**APRIL BIRTHDAYS**

Edmund Kolb.....04/01  
 Grace Huntzinger.....04/03  
 Paul Berger.....04/03  
 Patty Dunham.....04/03  
 Samantha Roush.....04/03  
 Gerry Storms.....04/08  
 Ron Owens.....04/11  
 Angela Spinelli-Alcaraz.....04/13  
 Monica Taylor.....04/14  
 Brenden Hatzinger.....04/14  
 Amy Garcia.....04/15  
 Sonepith Keoviengsamay.....04/16  
 Nancy Hester.....04/17  
 Donna Needham.....04/18  
 Roberta Bert.....04/19

**APRIL BIRTHDAYS CONTINUED**

Don Davidson.....04/19  
 John Nethaway.....04/20  
 Doug Davidson.....04/22  
 Erik O’Meara.....04/23  
 Brian Hickernell.....04/24  
 Mary Wrege.....04/25  
 Susan O’Meara.....04/27  
 Mellony Spinelli.....04/28  
 Charlie Sexton.....04/28  
 Kerry Furney.....04/28  
 Mike Little.....04/30

**APRIL ANNIVERSARIES**

Skip & Lenora Merithew.....04/16  
 Mike & Amy Garcia.....04/20  
 Paul & Suzie Abreu.....04/20  
 Josh & Jillian Olney.....04/21  
 Dan & Marcie Ferens.....04/28

**LAY READERS FOR APRIL**

<u>04/02</u>	<u>Marge Palmer</u>	<u>Maundy Thursday- Communion</u>
<u>04/03</u>	<u>Multiple Readers</u>	<u>Good Friday</u>
<u>04/05</u>	<u>Rob Tracy</u>	<u>Easter Sunday</u>
<u>04/12</u>	<u>Marge Palmer</u>	
<u>04/19</u>	<u>Mary Yates</u>	
<u>04/26</u>	<u>Jeff Evans</u>	



**Winter Weather Cancellation**-In the event of an extreme weather event causing us to cancel service, we will send out an e-mail announcement. It will be listed on the WKTV-2 news announcements. \*PLEASE NOTE: this announcement may go out from the pastor’s mail, so also check your spam folder.



**MUSIC NEWS**

Our musicians have been preparing beautiful music for our Easter service on April 5<sup>th</sup>. Join us as we ring and sing to celebrate the Risen Lord.

We are looking forward to Holy Humor Sunday on April 12<sup>th</sup>, when we will be making a joyful noise...with lots of smiles! There will be a fun sing-along, and lots of audience participation on percussion instruments. Who says we cannot have fun in worship?

**CREATION CARE**

“The heavens are telling the glory to God, and the firmament proclaims God’s handiwork (Psalm 19:1) God has created a beautiful world and has commanded us to be god stewards of it.

Creation reveals God’s creative and loving nature. Join us for a special worship service that focuses on Creation Care.

Creation Care Sunday will be April 26<sup>th</sup> and Senior Choir will present a special song celebrating nature and all of God’s creation.

If you or anyone you know would like to join our merry musicians, let us hear from you! ([knethaway@twcny.rr.com](mailto:knethaway@twcny.rr.com) 315-725-8096)

**FREE PIANO LOOKING FOR A HOME**

As our building restoration continues, part of that process is cleaning out rooms for repair. This beautiful piano is no longer being used and is in need of a good home. If you, or someone you know, would like this piano, you may have it at no cost. You would need to make arrangements to have it moved.



the person who tunes our pianos would be able to do this for free. Please get in touch with the office if you are interested. 315-336-1380/315-570-1880.



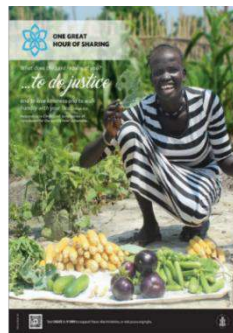
**The Mission Committee**, together with our partners at Trinity Church, has decided to separate our “Blessings in a Backpack” program from the national organization and continue as a totally local effort. We are now operating with a new name: “Weekend Blessings.” We feel this will allow us to maximize the food items we can send home on weekends to the 100 students at Gansevoort School that we are assisting.

**Thank you** for your amazing response to our Lenten challenge for Weekend Blessings. More than one hundred food items were donated each week. Check the totals posted on the bulletin board in Clark Hall.

**Weekend Blessings**-We send bags home each week until the close of school. We will continue to accept donations of food items. We are also looking for new or “gently used: books suitable for grades K – 6. We send a book home with each child in the last bag of the school year.

**Rescue Mission Cooking** in April is scheduled for April 23 and April 30. We do the cooking Wednesday mornings at 10 in the kitchen at Zion. Call Liz Clough if you have questions or would like to help in any way.

**Hygiene Kits** Sarah Briggs has been coordinating the assembly of Hygiene Kits for Church World Service. A big thank you to members of our Youth Group who helped put them together. They will be shipped during the last week of April. We pay \$2 per kit toward the shipping cost. If can make a donation to help with this expense, see or contact Sarah.



**Current Special Offerings-One Great Hour of Sharing**, ends on Easter Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>. Please return your Special Offer envelopes and Fish Banks on Easter. The offering supports three programs (Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self Development of People), which are organized to help individuals and communities in need here in the US and around the world. Our church received \$5000 in Disaster relief funds following the 2024 tornado.

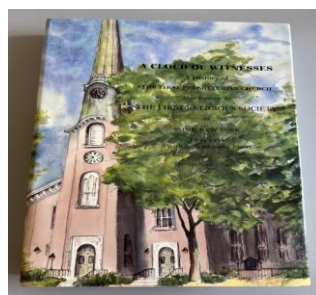
### Relay For Life

On **Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>**, at 6:00 pm at Zion Church the team of Rainbows or Faith and Hope will host **Songbyrd Street Studio for an evening of fused**



**glass**, light refreshments, and fun. The admission fee is \$10.00 which will be donated to the American Cancer Society. The Songbyrd Street Studio will have many items that you can make for around \$25.00. They will collect the

money for the fused glass item or items that you make. Many of you have made some very lovely crafts. Your talents are amazing!!!



### RESTORATION FUND RAISER

We are selling **The History of First Presbyterian Church** hardcover books for \$20.00 per book before and after worship on Sundays. All proceeds to benefit the Restoration Fund. Call the office at 315-336-1380 to reserve a copy and you may pick up the copy at your convenience.

## FAITH FORMATION

**Formerly known as Sunday School; because it's not just for Sundays!**

### CHILDREN/YOUTH FAITH FORMATION

Church School attendance is sporadic, but the students showing up are doing well. During Lent, Carrie has been teaching the symbols, like the crown of thorns. Look ahead, Carrie will present an Easter Concentration game.

### ADULT FORMATION

We will start Adult Faith Formation again on April 19<sup>th</sup>. After Easter the topic will be the women disciples of Jesus. Please join in the informative discussions in faith together.



### Youth Group

The next Youth Group will be on **Sunday April 26<sup>th</sup>** from 5:00-7:30 pm at Zion Church. We will begin with a pasta meal that we provide followed by a devotion, crafts and games. If you are able to help with providing a meal, or helping with games or crafts please let Pastor Edwins know. We want this to be a dynamic and fun time for the youth in our congregation and community. Please invite any youth you know.

## CONFIRMATION NEWS

Confirmation classes with Pastor Edwina and three of our youth – Brayton Olney, Jason Tucker, and Leah Sexton are going well. They will be confirmed on Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup>. Students have been studying Presbyterian History & Doctrine from the Collaborate curriculum and supplementing with Scripture resources. The students are engaging in lively discussions on these topics of church history and faith.

They have also been assigned mentors as of February and are scheduled to meet with them once a month. The first meeting or two has been getting to know each other. Subsequent meetings will revolve around chapters in their Old and New Testament curriculum books. Mentors and students both benefit from learning from each other on their faith journeys.

Part of the Confirmation program also involves integrating scriptural responsibilities with engaging in the world. As a result, community service projects are a big part of this. They have helped assemble Hygiene Kits for Sarah Briggs on two separate occasions (and did a great job!)

Below is a new ongoing service project they will be leading.

### Matthew 25 Pill Bottle Donation Program

Many poor countries do not have a way to distribute medicine to those in need. To address this problem, Matthew 25 Ministries accepts donations of clean, empty, recapped, label and residue-free plastic pill bottles for inclusion in shipments of medical supplies. Our pill bottle program fulfills the dual needs of improving medical care in developing countries and caring for our environment.

Starting in April and continuing throughout the year, confirmation students will start collecting empty prescription pill bottles. Please remove the labels before bringing them to the church.



There will be a donation bin for these. Students will then wash and prepare them for shipment. Thank you for your help in this new outreach ministry led by the Confirmation Students!

# MONTHLY FINANCIALS

## OFFERINGS/PLEDGES

Please prayerfully consider increasing your pledge this year as we have more expenses than usual due to rising costs and the restoration of the church building. Remember, your financial support can also be paid via Venmo.



## ENVELOPES



Plain envelopes, stamped with our address, are available for your offering. A box is on the table in Clark Hall each week. If you would like some to be sent to you, please let Susan Hatzinger know, and we will mail some to you.

## SPECIAL OFFERINGS

In addition to your regular pledge/giving, here are some Special Offering Opportunities:

- **Holidays** – Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve/Christmas, World Communion Offering.
- **PCUSA Specific Offerings** – One Great Hour of Sharing, World Communion Offering, Christmas Joy Offering (See [pcusa.org](http://pcusa.org) for more details on each).
- **Per Capita** – Used to support ministries of the Presbytery, Synod, and Wider Church, including grants, leadership & mission development (see [synodne.org](http://synodne.org) and [presbyteryofutica.org](http://presbyteryofutica.org) for more details). The Per Capita for 2026 is \$46 per member. It has not increased.
- **Capital Improvements.**
- **Restoration Fund.**

**GO GREEN!** Would you like to receive your quarterly financial statements via email and help save the environment? Contact Susan at [fpcfinancial@gmail.com](mailto:fpcfinancial@gmail.com), and she'll make that happen for you!

## WHAT IS THE PER CAPITA?

The per capita expense is not what it costs to be a member of First Presbyterian Church! You do not have to pay to be a member! Per capita is money that each member contributes to support the wider mission of the Presbytery, Synod, and PCUSA. Work like grant funding, and guidance for leaders and congregations are all supported from the per capita giving. It is about joining together as a community and being one body, the body that is Christ's church in the world. If every member pays this fee it would save First Presbyterian Church almost \$7000.00 per year. This per capita really helps everyone!

## FINANCIALS

### 2025 YEAR-TO-DATE

<u>OPERATING BUDGET</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>2025 BUDGET</u>
Receipts	<u>\$14,164.00</u>	<u>\$96,700.05</u>	<u>\$62,781.42</u>	<u>\$292,152.43</u>
Expenditures	<u>\$(24,187.83)</u>	<u>\$(47,559.12)</u>	<u>\$(55,602.33)</u>	<u>\$(359,801.91)</u>
<b><u>Change in Net Assets</u></b>	<b><u>\$10,023.83</u></b>	<b><u>\$49,140.93</u></b>	<b><u>\$7,179.09</u></b>	<b><u>\$(67,649.48)</u></b>
<b><u>February Collections</u></b>				
One Great Hour of Sharing	<u>\$50.00</u>			
<b><u>February Fund Disbursements</u></b>				
Restoration Fund	<u>\$75,000.00</u>			
Founder's Fund	<u>\$42,775.00</u>			

**RESTORATION FUND NEWS...**Thanks to some generous contributions from people locally and across the country, we have received over \$370,000 toward our restoration goal of at least \$1,000,000.

## NURSERY SCHOOL NEWS

3/30-4/2: Easter Week  
 4/3: Good Friday- closed  
 4/6-10: Spring Recess-closed  
 4/13-17: Farm Week  
 4/20-24: Recycle and Keep Our Earth Clean  
 4/27-5/1: Transportation Week



## CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE UPDATES

Pastor Edwina has been working closely with our webhost to make new updates to our First Presbyterian Church website and has learned how to make web changes. She will be keeping this more up to date to keep you and our community informed on what is happening in our church.

New menu tabs have been added to make navigation easier and that highlight our various ministries. A separate Nursery School menu tab has also been added. New information is being added weekly.

One of the biggest accomplishments is the addition of a new Restoration Page on our website. This will include updates on the progress with pictures. Check our website at [firspresrome.com](http://firspresrome.com)



## STEWARDSHIP NEWS

**Stewardship is caretaking.** It is giving of our financial gifts, our time and our talents. We are restoring our church building so that we will have a place – a mission station – in which to continue to carry out the work Christ has given us to do.

**Financial** - The cost of this restoration is a lot and we need everyone's help. If you have pledged already – thank you so much. If you have not pledged or would like to increase the amount you've pledged it would be greatly appreciated.

**Time and Talents** – Even now, as we are worshipping in Zion's building thanks to their continued hospitality – there are many tasks we need help with to do the work we are called to do. If everyone does a little, then a few don't have to do it all. "Many hands make light work."

Please think about the things you love to do, what you are good at, and how you can use your God-given gifts to help the church. Below are some areas we really need help

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarships are available for members of First Presbyterian Church who desire further education in graduate school, college, junior college, trade school, or technical training. The amount of each scholarship is \$2000. Applications are on the table in Clarke Hall or by contacting the office.

Applications are due June 1<sup>st</sup> and will be awarded in June.

The First Presbyterian Church Educational Scholarship is intended to serve The First Presbyterian Church Community (teen, young adult and adult) in their desire to further formal educational opportunities to help offset the rising costs of continued education.

## O'MEARA SCHOLARSHIP

The Reverend Robert O'Meara dedicated his life to the betterment of people everywhere. This memorial scholarship reflects his expressed desire to help others improve the human condition. He wanted to help those adults who wished to enhance their current human services skills, to re-enter the human services, or to change their career to human services.

Applications are available on our website at [firspresrome.com](http://firspresrome.com) on the Scholarship tab under Mission and Outreach

Application Deadline is May 1st



### HOLY HUMOR SUNDAY-APRIL 12<sup>th</sup>

Come celebrate the joy of the resurrection on Holy Humor Sunday. Wear a funny hat, bright clothes, a costume, or even your pajamas! Be ready to tell jokes at different points in the service. You can bring your own and some will also be provided. Special uplifting sing-along-songs will take the place of the sermon. You don't have to miss this exciting fun-filled service!

Ads now...a little about the history of Holy Humor Sunday.

"Many American churches are resurrecting an old EASTER custom begun by the Greeks in the early centuries of Christianity—"Holy Humor Sunday" celebrations of Jesus' resurrection on the Sunday after Easter.

For centuries in Easter Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant countries, the week following Easter Sunday, including "Bright Sunday" (the Sunday After Easter), was observed by the faithful as "days of joy and laughter" with parties and picnics to celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

Churchgoers and pastors played practical jokes on each other, drenched each other with water, told jokes, sang, and danced.

The custom was rooted in the musings of early church theologians (like Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom) that God played a practical joke on the devil by raising Jesus from the dead. "Risus paschalis-the Easter laugh," the early theologians called it.

Holy Humor Sunday services not only give Christians an opportunity for ongoing celebrations of the greatest miracle in human history-Jesus' resurrection – it also gives each of us an opportunity to celebrate, and give thanks, our own smaller resurrections in this world and this life." (From the Joyful Noiseletter)



## Caring for God's Creation



### CREATION CARE SUNDAY - April 26, 2026

"The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims God's handiwork.) (Psalm 19:1) God has created a beautiful world and has commanded us to be good stewards of it. Creation reveals God's creative and loving nature. Join us for a special worship service that focuses on Creation Care.

During Coffee Hour we will also have some Creation Care focused handouts and activities to do and take home.




Come and celebrate our amazing planet!



Have you been worshiping with us and would like to join our congregation? We would love to officially receive you as a new member to faithfully serve God together.

Please contact Pastor Edwina if you are interested. We are hoping to find a date in April or May that works for everyone.

# April 2026 First Presbyterian Church

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal at Zion	2 7:00 pm Maundy Thursday Service	3 Noon Stations of the Cross 5:00 pm Good Friday Tenebrae Service	4 7:00 pm Easter Vigil at Zion 
5 10:00 am Coffee/Fellowship Service  10:45 am Easter Worship 	6	7 10:00 am Crafty Ladies at Eunice's House  6-8 pm Songbyrd Glass Fusion Fundraiser in Zions Clarke Hall	8 7:00 pm Senior Choir Rehearsal at Zion	9 4:30 pm Relay for Life Mtg. at Zion  6:30 pm W & M Meeting on Zoom  7:00 pm Deacons meeting at Zion	10	11
12 9:45 am-Children/ Youth Faith Formation  10:00 am Coffee/Fellowship Service  10:30 am Holy Humor Sunday Worship Service	13 4:00 pm Serenity Circle on Zoom	14 10:00 am Crafty Ladies at Eunice's House	15 10:00 am-Rescue Mission Cooking 6:15 pm Adult Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Senior Choir Rehearsal at Zion	16	17	18
19 9:45 am-Children/ Youth Faith Formation  10:00 am Coffee/Fellowship Service 10:30 am Worship Service  11:30 am Adult Faith Formation  11:30 am Confirmation Class	20	21 10:00 am Crafty Ladies at Eunice's House  Noon-Mission Committee at Spressos	22 10:00 am-Rescue Mission Cooking 6:15 pm Adult Bell Choir Rehearsal at Zion 7:00 pm Senior Choir Rehearsal at	23	24 	25
26 9:45 am- Youth Faith Formation 10:00 am Coffee/Fellowship 10:30 am Worship Service/Creation Care Sunday 11:30 am Adult Faith Formation and Confirmation 5:00 pm Youth Group	27 4:00 pm Serenity Circle on Zoom  6:30 pm Session Meeting at Zion	28	29 10:00 am-Rescue Mission Cooking  6:15 pm Adult Bell Choir Rehearsal at Zion  7:00 pm Senior Choir Rehearsal at Zion	30	<p><b><u>First Presbyterian Church Vision Statement</u></b> The First Presbyterian Church exists to shine God's light in the world.</p> <p><b><u>First Presbyterian Church Mission Statement</u></b> We gather as God's People to deepen our relationship with Christ, to spread His word and teachings, and to reach out to our church family, our community, and the world through acts of compassion, kindness, and love.</p>	

