



# ***First Presbyterian Church of Cazenovia***

## **November 2016 Newsletter**

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As I've grown older, I've discovered that Christmas is increasingly a rather bitter-sweet proposition for many of us. For, as we gather to celebrate the holiday season as family and friends, we also inevitably become poignantly aware of the growing number of loved ones who are missing from our midst. Each year, at this time, I tend to think a good deal about my own mother. Mom passed away on December 9, 2008; and I must confess that the holiday season has never been quite the same since she's been gone.

You see, Mom was always kind of the heart of Christmas for our family.

Mom had this practice—it was a principle really—with regard to buying Christmas presents for the family. It was always the same: Pop would give Mom a budget, and she would do all the shopping. Mom was a generous soul and just loved to buy special presents for her family, and in fact, did so right up until the very last year of her life. And Mom's Christmas Principle was that her budget would be divided evenly on everyone in the family.

In other words, everyone got the same amount of money spent on them for Christmas presents. In fact, we used chuckle a little lit bit because Mom was so devoted to her principle that she would parse out her Christmas funds almost down to the last penny; and it got to be a challenge sometimes to fit one's Christmas list into her schematic. But, not to worry, if you came up a little short on ideas for your Christmas list, you'd get a little extra money in your stocking.

When grand kids came along, Mom's Christmas Principle held true, albeit the budget was stretched a little thinner. And when Cathy got remarried to a fella with three grown boys of his own—each of whom subsequently got married and started having their own babies—everyone in the extended, and now blended, family got exactly the same consideration when it came to Christmas. Even those who couldn't return in kind, which was pretty much all of us.

Indeed, as the years went by and our family kept growing, we all got just a bit less for Christmas; but, you know, nobody minded that fact one little bit. It truly didn't matter how many presents we received or how much money was spent. And maybe we didn't care because we all knew that we were being equally included, and equally loved.

Over the ensuing years, in her absence, I've come to realize that *that* was the real significance – and beauty – behind Mom's Christmas Principle.

It was never about the gifts themselves, or how much money was spent. It was about the all-embracing, all-inclusive love and the unmerited grace that we all knew Mom's Christmas Principle represented. One that I believe reflects the very Heart of the Christmas Spirit itself. For, it was her way of saying that she loved us all equally.

Indeed, while I used to think the whole thing a bit materialistic, I now believe that there was a rather grand theology behind Mom's Christmas Principle all along. And, while he doesn't shop and therefore hands out checks every year, Popa keeps the Spirit of Mom's Christmas Principle alive in our family.

"For unto us a Child is born," the prophet Isaiah proclaims, "Unto us a Son is given..." But the real power of Christmas isn't that yet another human baby had come into the world. Babies are born every minute of everyday. Rather it was the truth that Infinite, Unmerited Love had been poured into that Wee Gift to God's human family, so that now God's Unlimited Grace is made equally available to each and to all of God's children. For: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to *all* people."

God plays no favorites. Neither did Mom.

"Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth, Peace, and Goodwill toward All People."

In Christ,

*Tom*

# *Come Celebrate The Christmas Season*

## *A time of Expectation and Hope*

**First Presbyterian Church of Cazenovia**  
**27 ALBANY STREET**

**The Rev. Dr. Thomas C. Oak, Pastor Vincent Guarneiri, Director of Music/Organist**  
**Sunday Morning Worship 10:00am Fully Staffed Nursery**

### **Sunday November 27th**

First Sunday in Advent ~ The Wonder of the Season candle lit

### **Friday Dec 2nd, 5:00 pm Soup and Dessert Cafe After the Tree Lighting Christmas Carols**

Caz High School String Ensemble Under the direction of Mary Coburn

### **Sunday December 4th**

Second Sunday in Advent ~ The Wonder of the Promise candle lit

### **Sunday December 11th**

Third Sunday in Advent ~ The Wonder of the Message candle lit Christmas Pageant: Grandpa's Tradition

### **Sunday December 18th**

Fourth Sunday in Advent ~ The Wonder of Hope candle lit A Traditional Service of Lessons and Carols

With Trumpeters Nathan Kaercher and Aaron Velardi

### **Saturday December 24th,**

8:00 pm **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service The Christ Candle lit**

For more information contact us at: [www.cazpres.org](http://www.cazpres.org) or call: **655-3191**

### **Sunday, December 25th**

Christmas Morning Service, 10:00 A.M.

## Christmas Flower Dedications

In loving memory of... In honor of... In celebration of Christmas!

You are invited to make a contribution toward the Christmas poinsettias by filling out the form below. A complete list of contributors and those being remembered and honored will be included in the December 25th bulletin.

I would like to make a Christmas flower contribution...

In loving memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

In celebration of Christmas \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donor's name \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to **First Presbyterian Church** and mail to:

P.O. Box 306, Cazenovia, NY 13035



Please join us for the 2nd Biannual St. Jude's Christmas Benefit concert, featuring instrumentalists and vocalists from the Cazenovia Community, including our own senior choir! The concert is taking place Dec. 18th at 1:00pm in the Sanctuary. If you cannot make the concert, you can donate at :

[http://fundraising.stjude.org/site/TR/Events/Events?fr\\_id=65844&pg=entry](http://fundraising.stjude.org/site/TR/Events/Events?fr_id=65844&pg=entry).

Thank you for your support!



**EVENTS**  
FOR ST. JUDE

# Upcoming Events

<u>Alice Edwards Circle</u>	Meeting: December 21st @ noon	~ Board Room
<u>Board of Deacons:</u>	No Meeting	
<u>Board of Trustees:</u>	Meeting: December 12th @ 6:30 p.m.	~Work Room
<u>Christian Education:</u>	Meeting:	~Wendell House
<u>Evangelism &amp; Fellowship:</u>	Meeting:	~ Work Room
<u>Men's Breakfast</u>	Gathering: December 14th @ 7:30 a.m.	~ Meeting House
<u>Newsletter Deadline:</u>	December 20th!	
<u>Session:</u>	Meeting: December 12th @ 7:15 p.m.	~ Meeting House
<u>Worship &amp; Music Committee:</u>	Meeting: December 13th @ 6:00 p.m.	~ Work Room



## Alice Edwards Circle

Next Meeting:

**December 21st @ Noon  
Meeting House**

Hostesses ~ Diane Campbell  
Christmas Party!  
Presenter ~ Readers Theatre with Circle  
Members  
Music and Singing with Reverend Tom Oak  
No Need to bring a sandwich!  
Please bring a smile and a personal care  
product for CazCares.

The First Presbyterian Church in Cazenovia will host a Soup and Dessert Café on Friday December 2<sup>nd</sup> beginning at 5:00 pm in the Meeting House of the Church. Entrance to the Meeting House is on Sullivan Street. Gourmet soups include a Loaded Potato Soup, a Seafood Frogmore Stew, Cheddar Broccoli, Shrimp Bisque, Buffalo Chicken Wing. Come early the soup goes quickly! And the desserts are wonderful.

Immediately following the Cazenovia Village Tree Lighting in the front yard of the church there will be a Carol Sing in the sanctuary of the church sanctuary featuring Christmas Music from the Caz High School String Ensemble under the direction of Mary Coburn.

So stop by the Cazenovia Presbyterian Church for some warm soup, tasty desserts and wonderful Christmas music on Friday December 2nd . Then go on the streets and enjoy the Christmas Walk in downtown Cazenovia. For more information, contact the church at 655-3191 or visit the website [www.cazpres.org](http://www.cazpres.org).



## Sunday School News

### Sunday School Calendar

December 4-Practice for pageant during and after Sunday School

December 10-Dress Rehearsal for pageant at 10:00 AM

December 11-Pageant

December 24- Christmas Eve Service at 8:00 PM...Nursery care available

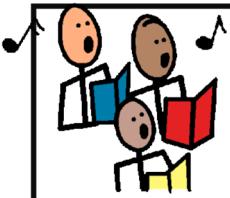
December 25- Family Christmas Service at 10:00... no Sunday School or nursery

Many thanks to everyone for their support for "Operation Christmas Child". We collected 40 shoeboxes that will be sent to children around the world.

Our Annual Christmas Pageant is on December 11th during the church service. This year's original script is "Grandpa's Tradition". The story of our savior's birth will be re-enacted by members of the Sunday School. Music will be performed by the children. The Christian Education Committee will host Coffee Hour following the service.

The Christmas Joy Offering celebrates the coming of Jesus Christ, the “wondrous gift” of God with us. Jesus arrived in a humble stable in small and insignificant Bethlehem, to lead and teach in truth and love, and bring about God’s salvation to the world. What a “wondrous gift” indeed! This was a gift so profound that the only response was the bringing of more gifts; the Magi arrived with gold, frankincense, and myrrh to honor the Christ child. Devoted and caring leaders have led many of us in the way of Christ. They have been church workers equipping us to respond to the grace we have known in Jesus Christ, and they have been God’s gifts among us. As we celebrate Christ’s coming, and think of the profound impact these individuals have had on us, the Christmas Joy Offering provides a way for us to offer a gift in response. Gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering will raise up leaders from small places that are too often overlooked by the church. The historically Presbyterian racial ethnic schools were founded to educate emerging leaders from underrepresented groups so leadership in the church would better reflect the diversity of God’s people. Half of the Christmas Joy Offering supports the continued ministry of educating and forming Christian leaders. The other half of the Offering honors those leaders who serve and have served us well. Through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, current and retired church workers who experience need because of tragedy, health concerns, or financial hardship can receive assistance from the church they have served so well. In gratitude to God for the wondrous gift of Jesus, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) invites congregations to join this celebration of God’s presence with us by supporting those in need of help and hope.





## Advent and Christmas Greetings!

I'm always taken aback at how quickly the Advent and Christmas season approaches every year. I'm positive that I'm not alone in that feeling. Because of the early start of Advent this year, we're pushing most of our festivities to later Sundays in the month. Despite the rush to get ready, we have an exciting Advent and Christmas season planned this year!

Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup> will bring our annual Children's Christmas Pageant. This year, Shelly Brooks is directing and organizing both the pageant, and the music. Along with the traditional Christmas story, we'll have carols and a few student bell ringers to remind us of the reason for the season.

Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup> will be a jam-packed musical day! The normal 10:00 gathering will be our Lessons and Carols service *and* 'Christmas in Brass'. Nate Kearcher and Aaron Velardi will join us again on trumpet. The Caz Pres Ringers have been brushing up on a few carols to share with the congregation.

At 1:00 on the 18<sup>th</sup>, Katie McGinnis (Ball) will be presenting a Christmas concert and fund raiser for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Katie, myself, select senior choir members, instrumental soloists, and ringers have been preparing a selection of Christmas music for your enjoyment and to support a great cause! Realizing it's a very busy day in Caz, please try to stop in and offer your support. We promise it will be less than an hour!

On the 24<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 we will have our Candlelight Christmas Celebration. Mary Coburn and her string quartet will join us for the prelude with the 'Corelli Christmas Concerto'. The service will be filled with familiar carols and hymns to really ring in the holiday!

Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM, we'll have a lower key service. Some of our student musicians, Michael and Nathan Guarneiri along with Nathan Schierer will have some seasonal selections to share.

Please be sure to join us!

Like our page on facebook and find us on Instagram and twitter (@cazpresby) for weekly updates, photos, news, and discussions. Reverend Oak's sermons will be posted in full each week on Facebook!



## Outreach Update

During this holy season, we are grateful to all of the First Presbyterian Church of Cazenovia's Congregation who have so generously donated to worthy causes and organizations this year.

We are now, as we have done in the past, collecting for our final cause of 2016. The box that is in the narthex is where you can deposit cereal and toys for the CazCares' Annual Food and Toys Giveaway. CazCares usually distributes the toys early in December and the cereal a few days before Christmas, so please get your donations in as soon as possible. Let us be generous to those who have so much less than we do!

The Outreach Committee is having its final meeting of the year on December 11<sup>th</sup>, so if you know of any projects, charities, etc. that you would like discussed at the meeting, please contact us. Also, if you are interested in becoming a member of the committee, please notify one of us.

We extend our heartfelt wishes to you and your families for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Linda Peters and Patricia Johnson  
Co-Chairs, Outreach Committee



Dear Friends,

We have some exciting news! We're scheduling a **New Member Orientation** for those who are interested in joining – or simply learning more about – First Presbyterian Church, Cazenovia. The class will be an interactive experience designed to: 1) explore and share our understandings of *faith and faith journey*; 2) learn about the *history of First Presbyterian Church*, as well as the essential beliefs of our *Reformed tradition*, and 3) hear about the numerous opportunities to grow in *discipleship* by serving God through the *programs and ministries* of this community of faith.

Our New Member Class will gather in the **Sanctuary** of First Presbyterian Church at 11:00 a.m. after the Sunday morning worship at **11:00 a.m.** on three consecutive Sunday mornings: **January 29<sup>th</sup>, February 5<sup>th</sup>, and February 12<sup>th</sup>**. Those subsequently wishing to unite with this congregation will be *brought into membership* during the Sunday Morning Worship Service on **February 19<sup>th</sup>**.

There are many exciting things happening here at First Presbyterian Church! And you are part of that excitement! We joyfully welcome your enthusiastic interest in First Church, and look forward to you becoming an active part of this growing community of faith!

Hope to see you on January 29<sup>th</sup>!

Yours In Christ,

Rev. Dr. Tom C. Oak

# Among Our People...



In our nation and around the world



If you have a name to share, please contact the church office (655-3191).

Those affected by the recent fires in the Smokey Mountains.

Those who have lost lives and loved ones during the Ohio State shooting.

People in Syria, Iraq, Turkey, the Philippines, and other nations torn by war and strife.

The men and women stationed throughout the world in service to our country; especially Fritz Koennecke III (son of Fritz Jr. & Elizabeth) and Matt Shane (son of Janet Furco).

In the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse

Roger Martin and Lester Staton, recovering from surgeries.

The congregations and faith communities of: Isaiah's Table, Syracuse; Korean Church of Syracuse; Park Central, Syracuse; Robinson Memorial, Syracuse; South Valley, Syracuse.

In our Congregation

Bonnie Arnold (sister of Nancy Sagar Loffredo)

Brian Ball (brother of Bruce Ball)

Laura F. Brown (daughter of Shirley Falkner-Davies)

Margery Caywood (mother of Shelly Brooks)

Norm Gibbon (father of Sue Perriello)

Helen Ifflander (mother of Nancy Sagar Loffredo)

Evronne Jones (Friend of Patricia Johnson)

Jenn Miehl (Friend of the Isot and Rose families)

Sheri-Anne Mitchell (daughter of Barbara & Raymond)

Charlie Poole (student of Shelly Brooks)

Jan Anthony Vinopal (grandson of Jana Laxa)

Sally Scribner, Marion York, Chuck Lewis, Barbara & Gerry Favro

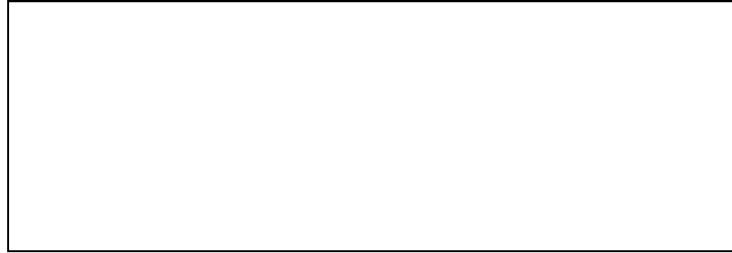
From Treva @ The Church Office!

A publication of the  
**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
of Cazenovia, New York  
**Worship Services** 10:00 a.m.  
**Nursery care** provided 3 yrs. & under  
**Sunday School** at 10:15 a.m. in the Wendell House  
for children Pre-Kindergarten thru 12th grade.  
**Office Hours:** Monday thru Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.  
**Phone:** 315-655-3191 **FAX:** 315-655-4285  
**Website:** [www.cazpres.org](http://www.cazpres.org)  
**email:** [caz1stpresby@windstream.net](mailto:caz1stpresby@windstream.net)  
27 Albany Street P.O. Box 306 Cazenovia, NY 13035  
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*Newsletter*