



News From The Heart

APRIL 2018

First Presbyterian Church of Cazenovia, NY
In the Heart of the Village since 1799

Pastor's Journal

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Even now it springs up; do you not perceive it?” Isaiah 43: 18, 19a

We used to have a little garden in our backyard, under the kitchen window box. It's pretty much a dirt garden during the winter months. But about this time last year, Diane and I were doing some work around the yard, and suddenly she stopped by the back porch and cried, “Oh! Look!”

“What?! What?!” I said looking around.

“Right there in front of you,” Diane insisted, pointing down to the dirt, “LOOK!”

“Honey, I don't see anything but dirt.”

A bit exasperated at my blindness, Diane took my arm, pulled me down, closer to the ground, and with her finger pointing a few inches away, there I finally saw it; tiny, little green heads poking through the brown soil.

“Crocus!” she said triumphantly. I looked at her like, “Ok . . .”

But there was something else I heard in her voice . . . something beyond the mere procla-

mation of the end of winter and the promise of coming spring.

She said the word “Crocus” so emphatically that it seemed like an affirmation for the whole created nature of God's world. As if it was also meant to be the spoken assurance that after death always comes life. That brokenness, sooner or later, gives way to healing. That, even at the end of the long tunnel of despair – as sure as morning follows night – comes hope.

And that, perhaps, her faint exasperation at me was that I wasn't at the ready. I wasn't looking for it. I wasn't walking through the garden each and every day, like Diane had been, expecting any day, at any moment, to see the signs of new life.

My vision was still frozen over. And, perhaps, not just with winter, but by the absence of the proper modicum of hope. I looked down and all I saw was dirt, dirt, and more dirt.

And it occurred to me, then, that we largely determine our lives by what we tend to look for . . . what we expect to see. Just more dirt. Or budding new life.

When that first clear, warm sunny day heralding the potential of spring – when the infinitesimal

Pastor's Journal—Continued

signs of life begin to ride the currents of the wind – what do we expect? Do we look for the next day to just turn cold again; that warm day just another tease by Mother Nature to make the next harsh slap of winter sting the cheek all the more?

Or does that temperate promise of spring harken for us the potential of things to come? The herald of hope that strengthens us against any last barrage winter might have in store.

Do we wrap the cold mantle of despair around us like an old familiar, tattered blanket? Or search the dry, dusty ground for signs of hope?

Perhaps what we see mostly has to do with which direction we're ultimately facing: backwards or forwards. Do we perceive our best days lying behind us in the dust of the past; or are our best days yet looming on the dawning horizon?

And, for that matter – once we've answered that question for ourselves – I suppose it really doesn't matter, all that much, what the next day actually brings. At least not as much as what we are willing or able to see within that next day. Because the determining factor in the character and quality of our life has more to do with what it is we're looking for in life.

Do we live in fear of the next wintry blast life might throw at us? Or joyfully embrace the bright potential it has to offer? Do we walk through life just waiting for the next shoe to drop? Or expecting that next door to open wide before us?

In the apparent isolation and disjointedness of life's ambiguity, are we able to anticipate the healing of new life that is always possible as a natural principle of God's grace? Or do we linger in the phantom pains of yesterday?

What are you looking for, as you rise up out of bed and into new life each morning? Just one more heartache? Or another promising day? What do you expect to see when you look out upon the world? Just another handful of dirt? Or the hopeful promise of budding new life?

"It's been a long cold lonely winter," George Harrison sang in his well-known song Here Comes The Sun. And, indeed, it certainly has. But as sure as the sun will rise tomorrow, winter will give way to spring, and we'll see, once more, those little green sprouts of Crocus pushing their way up through the frozen dirt of our snow dusted garden.

And this time I'll be more than ready to see them!

Are you?

"For, behold! Even now . . . God is doing a new thing among us! Can you perceive it?!"

May you each see the promise of God's renewal blossom in your life this Easter season!

In Christ's Love,

Tom

(*Excerpts chosen from my sermon "A Change in the Garden" May 2017)

Sunday School

Sunday School Calendar

April 1---Easter. Children remain in service. Nursery care for children 4 and younger
 April 8-- Communion, children in 4th grade and older remain in in the service
 April 15- Regular Sunday School
 April 22- Regular Sunday School
 April 29- Regular Sunday School

The Sunday School assembled 23 hygiene kits for Church World Services on March 18.

Annual Church Picnic

Make your calendar for the Annual Church Picnic. The picnic will take place on June 10 following the service on the side lawn. The Christian Education Committee will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, drinks and table service.

Outreach Update

The first quarter of 2018 has been busy for the Outreach Committee as we have sponsored two drives. In the month of February, we collected a variety of household items to benefit the local Ronald McDonald House. Thanks to the generosity of our congregation, the following was donated: 10 rolls of food wrap, 5 boxes dryer sheets, 2 laundry baskets, 8 boxes trash bags, 2 packages of paper towels, 10 containers of disinfectant wipes, 6 bathroom/kitchen cleaners, 4 packs printer paper, 8 packages of paper plates/bowls, 4 packs lidded coffee cups, 1 pack coffee filters, 4 packs of light bulbs. Wow!

In March, we followed up with our annual hygiene kit collection for Church World Services. As I write this, the drive is still underway, and we are thankful for your generosity.

Also, in February, the Outreach Committee made the following donations: \$500 to College Guild, \$1500 to the Madison County Office for the Aging, \$500 to MS Resources, \$1500 to Community Action Partnership, and \$500 to Interfaith Works.

We will meet again in early April, and we also look forward to our participation in assisting the immigrant family who will move into the Manse this year!

Hopefully, we've seen the last of the snow for this season, and we can all enjoy the warmth and renewal that spring brings. "Happy Easter" to our fellow congregants!

Patricia Johnson and Linda Peters
 Co-chairs

Fellowship Update

We enjoyed great food and fellowship during our annual Palm Sunday brunch after worship on March 25th. Thank you to everyone for bringing delicious sweet breads, fruit salads and other brunch items to supplement the scrambled eggs, pancakes, sausage, and ham provided by the fellowship committee.

On Saturday, March 17th, a group from our congregation met at the United Church of Fayetteville for hours of contra dancing fun. You might remember that several years ago we hosted a dance at our church - please let us know if we should consider hosting a Contra Dance at our church in the future!

Our next committee meeting is scheduled for Sunday, April 15th following worship in the Board Room in the Meeting House - if you are interested in the committee please join us!

Trustee Update

It has been a very busy couple of months but as you can see the first phase of the Pass-Through project is now complete! The handicap accessible passage way between the Sanctuary and Meeting House, the conversion of the Meeting House Ladies Restroom to a handicap accessible Uni-sex Restroom and the replacement of the flooring in the entrance area of the Meeting House are all open for business. We will be adding handrails on each side of the slight ramp in the Pass-Through in the next few weeks but otherwise this phase of the project is done. The next phase of the project will be improvements to the handicap accessible door way into the Meeting House from the side parking area. That work will be undertaken when the weather improves during the Spring.

Earth Day Potluck Dinner: The Fellowship committee invites you to join us for a pot luck dinner on Sunday April 22nd, at 5 p.m. in the Meeting House! A sign up sheet will be posted in the Meeting House, or you can contact the church office - please sign up to bring your favorite appetizer, casserole, side dish, salad, or dessert. The Fellowship Committee will provide a variety of beverages, including wine. We look forward to seeing you there! Prior to dinner we hope to meet for an earth day project - details to follow.

Your Fellowship Committee:

Nadine Bell, Julie Carr, Amanda Furco, Bob Horstmyer, Steve McEntee, Sue Perriello, Jim Perry, Sharye Skinner

In addition to the Pass-Through project, the painting and new carpeting in the Choir Room and entrance hallway has been completed. The last phase of this project involves the replacement of some of the old lighting with new LED fixtures to really brighten up the areas.

In addition to the above major church renovation projects, the Trustees are assessing other needs of the Church campus and are working on various repairs to the Manse in anticipation of the Refugee Resettlement project which is schedule for the spring.

Cazenovia Welcomes Refugees Update

We trust you had an opportunity to read the article in the *Republican* titled "Cazenovia Welcomes Refugees initiative underway"if you haven't read the article, copies are available in the church office and on the bulletin board in the Meeting House. This initiative is community-wide and has multiple constituent groups dealing with issues of housing, employment, education, fund raising, etc.

Caz Pres's contribution will be to rent the Manse to a refugee family. Currently we are having touch-up painting and some safety features installed on stairways and windows in the Manse.

We are working with InterFaith Works and its Center for New Americans to identify a family to

live in the Manse. One potential family fled from Afghanistan where the father was an interpreter for the US Army. They arrived in Syracuse last May. The father obviously speaks English, but also owns a car and has a job. No final decision for selecting this family has been made. Potential date for a signed lease and move is early May.

Olive Sephuma, Director of the Center for New Americans, came to the March Session Meeting to give an update on the Cazenovia Welcome Refugees initiative.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact Carolyn Holmes, Diane Monger, Tom Oak or Sharye Skinner.

Cazenovia Welcomes Refugees

How did CWR begin?

Who is involved?

What is happening?

CWR is a community-based initiative working in partnership with Common Grounds and InterFaith Works

For more information, contact CWR at CazWelcomesRefugees@gmail.com



Thursday, April 5th, 2018

7pm to 8:30pm

Join us for a community discussion

American

Legion Post 88

26 Chenango Street / Cazenovia

Annual MS Walk—Thank you

Donna Denison wishes to thank everyone in our congregation for the wonderful response to her request for financial support of the Annual MS Walk held on March 4th at Destiny USA. Many generous donations were submitted to MS Resources, which will benefit over 1500 clients in the Central NY area. A wide range of services are provided by this organization which enrich the everyday lives of those living with Multiple Sclerosis. Your support was greatly appreciated. Donna will be accepting additional donations until April 4th.



From The Music Director



Christ is Risen! - Christ is Risen Indeed!

As I write this we're in the final stages of practicing and preparing for the end of the Lenten Season, Easter Sunday! This year Palm Sunday also turned into Bell Sunday, where both the Caz Pres

Ringers and the Jubilate Choir joined us for the start of worship. I'm super excited to have such an enthusiastic group of Kids (and Adults) to work with every week!

On Maundy Thursday, we will perform: "Tenebrae – A Service of Darkness" by Hal H. Hopson. We are happy to welcome back Mary Coburn on violin, and special thanks go to all the choir members and readers who make this service possible. I'm sure I'm not the only one moved by this special service every year!

On Easter Sunday this year, Robert Petrovitch who plays in the Caz Community Band will join us on trumpet. We also welcome back Samantha Kimber who has played with us in the past. We're trying out a new piece for trumpet and organ for the prelude by Raymond H. Haan- "Variations on OFilii et Filiae" or 'O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing'. Haan also wrote some of our favorite Christmas trumpet / organ duets, so I was thrilled to find this piece to share. Along with a rousing selection of hymns, for the offertory we will sing "Be Joyful Together" by J.S. Bach. I will close out the service with a piece by local composer Al Fedak from Albany, Toccata: "The Strife is O'er". This is one of my favorite Easter postludes and really punctuates the Joy of the day.

Happy Easter to All!

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Permit No. 2

Upcoming Events

Alice Edwards Circle

Noon, Wed., April 18, 2018
Meeting House
Hostesses: Diane Campbell,
Susie Grills
Program: Spring Cleaning
Presenter: Peg Moore from
Moore Organized
Quiche Day! Please bring a
smile and a personal care
product for CazCares.



**American
Red Cross**

Blood Drive

Thursday,
May 3rd,
1-6pm

Men's Breakfast

7:30 a.m. April 11th
Meeting House
All men are welcome to
gather for breakfast and
discussion

