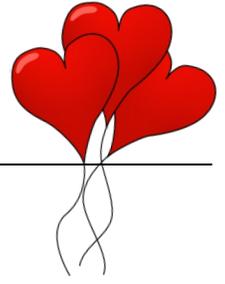


First Presbyterian Church of Cazenovia



THE PASTOR'S JOURNAL

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

John 14:15

Treva came into my office last week to say that she needed a newsletter article from the pastor for February. I asked her, “So, what’s going on in February that I might write about? What kind of theme?” Without hesitation, Treva answered definitively, “Well, Valentine’s Day.”

“Oh, yeah,” says I. “I guess that’s right.”

Hence the essential difference between men and women.

Take note, fellas: Tuesday, February 14. Be aware or beware.

Oh, yeah . . . Now I remember . . . Valentines’ Day: Those elementary days of exchanging Valentine cards, handmade with too much glue and glitter; then placed in decorated shoe boxes set on the classroom windowsill; waiting to see how the little girl with the red curls reacts to your heartfelt offering; kids counting their number of cards to see where they rank on the class popularity scale. Oh, yeah . . .

Valentine’s Day. Hearts, red roses and cupid. Love . . . right?

Taking your high school sweetie to an expensive restaurant and dropping a C-note on dinner. Plus another ten-spot on flowers and chocolates. If that’s not love, I don’t know what is.

The thing is, from the time we’re children, we are raised on a steady diet of romanticized ideas of what love is. It has, for eons, been the favored subject of poets, painters and songsters. In fact, probably no subject is heralded more in song by those who have the least real understanding of it than: Love.

In the 1970s, cute little books informed us that: “Love is . . . a warm blanket.” “Love is . . . a fuzzy puppy.”

And we are fed steady Hollywood fare of that kind of head-over-heels notion of love: “Love means never having to say you’re sorry.” Really? Give me a break.

In fact, the kind of romantic ‘love’ that we say we ‘fall into,’ that so often becomes the sole impulse upon which people base their decision to marry, psychologists and sociologists define as a sort of mild form of temporary psychosis.

But that state of emotional euphoria which creates a momentary delusion of the world as a ‘totally glorious and happy place’ in which to live, and which leads the individual to view their partner of choice as a ‘perfectly wonderful and beautiful person’ will eventually wear off. And for some Hollywood types in less time than it takes to get unpacked from the honeymoon.

So, let’s be clear here: The truth is that warm blankets get holes in them. And fuzzy puppies poop on the rug. And, it so happens – as I’ve discovered after nearly 30 years of marriage – that love does, indeed, mean having to say you’re sorry . . . a whole lot.

For those of us long steeped in such mushy, warm and fuzzy, romanticized ideals of love, Jesus comes at us with a radically counter-cultural definition of love. A revolutionarily pragmatic form of love.

Love, as Jesus tells it, is not something we fall into or stumble over. It is not just some vague feeling, like drunken butterflies in the pit of our stomach. You cannot command a feeling.

You can’t order someone to “Be happy” . . . can you?

But, in the strange logic of the Gospel, you *can* apparently command someone to: “Love!” and that’s just what Jesus does.

He totally surprises us hopeless-romantic-movie-goer-types by declaring, “If you really love me, you will keep my commandments. Because those who love me are those who are obedient to me.”

Continued on page 2

The Pastor's Journal Continued...

As Jesus defines it Love is Covenant. Not based on emotion, but rather on commitment.

One of the most important things that most of us learn, the longer we are married, is that love—truly deep and enduring love—happens as the result of marriage, rather than its cause.

It's for good reason that, starting with those first disciples and throughout the ages, the Church has spoken of itself as the bride of Christ. Because out of full obedience Jesus walked in complete fidelity to the object of his love—faithless those she may sometimes be.*

I will love you “until death do us part,” Jesus, in essence, proclaimed. And then *beyond*.

Being in a state of such covenantal love is a virtue which can be expressed towards anyone: spouse, lover, friend, or enemy. As well as with that person in your life who can, at time, seem like all four rolled up into one.

“God is love,” declares 1 John 4:16, “and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them... We love each other because he loved us first.” [1 John 4:19]

So, on February 14th, as we celebrate Valentine's Day, let's remember what true love is really all about. For Love is...obedience. Obedience *to* Love. Obedience *in* Love.

Obedience *for the enduring sake of* Love.

(Excerpts from my sermon “Love is . . .” with grateful acknowledgement to William Willimon for much inspiration.)

I am taking a survey to find out who would like an emailed monthly newsletter instead of a paper copy. Please place a response in the offering plate, email the office, or mail back the below form in response. Thank you ~ Treva

Name _____

I would prefer an emailed newsletter

I would prefer a mailed newsletter

I would prefer both mailed and emailed

My email address is: _____

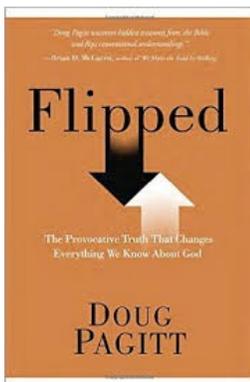
Adapted from the newsletter of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Auburn regarding the upcoming Presbytery book-read...

Flipped: Understanding God's Nearness

How would your life change if you changed the way you understood God's nearness? Members and friends of the Presbytery are invited to join a presbytery-wide book read of Doug Pagitt's new book, *Flipped*.

In his book, the author challenges us to turn our thinking about God around. How does the biblical claim that God fills the universe with his presence influence our understanding of God's greatness, his power, and his wisdom for living? Insistently biblical in his writing, Pagitt uses the words of Paul, Jesus, and other biblical figures to help us live more intentionally as we learn to experience God's immediate presence.

Doug will be guest speaker at the May 20, 2017 Presbytery meeting. Individuals are invited to read *Flipped* and participate in regional in-person gatherings or on-line discussion forums prior to May 20. Watch for spring schedule details. Books are available from [Nancy Wind](#) at a discounted price of \$10.00 while supplies last.



Coming Soon!

*Spring Into..
Health and Wellness Expo
1st Presbyterian Church
April 1st, 2017
10- a.m. - 2 p.m.*

variety of vendors
Demonstrations
Food
Raffles

Upcoming Events

<u>Alice Edwards Circle</u>	Meeting: February 15th @ noon	~ Board Room
<u>Board of Deacons:</u>	Meeting: February 19th @ 11:15	~ Library
<u>Board of Trustees:</u>	Meeting: February 20th @ 6:30 p.m.	~Work Room
<u>Christian Education:</u>	Meeting: February 5th @ 11:15 a.m.	~Wendell House
<u>Evangelism & Fellowship:</u>	Meeting: February 26th @ 11:15 p.m.	~Work Room
<u>Men's Breakfast</u>	Gathering: February 8th @ 7:30 a.m.	~ Meeting House
<u>Newsletter Deadline:</u>	February 20th!	
<u>Session:</u>	Meeting: February 20th @ 7:15 p.m.	~ Meeting House
<u>Worship & Music Committee:</u>	Meeting: February 14th @ 6:00 p.m.	~ Work Room

Alice Edwards Circle

**Next Meeting:
February 15th @ Noon
Meeting House**

Hostesses ~ Roseanne Courtade
Diane Phillips

Presentation- "Cooking with Janet McCobb"

Please bring a sandwich, a smile, and a personal care product for CazCares.

Men's Breakfast

7:30 a.m. February 11th

Meeting House

**All men are welcome to gather for
breakfast and discussion!**





Sunday School News

Sunday School Schedule

February 5- Regular Sunday School
February 12- Regular Sunday School
February 19- Regular Sunday School
February 26- Regular Sunday School



Souper Bowl of Caring

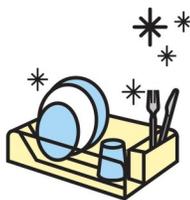
This year the Sunday school is once again participating in the Souper Bowl of Caring. This national program is to support local food cupboards. We will collect non-perishable items until February 5th and donate to CazCares. Collection Pots are in the narthex and the Meeting House.

Whirl

We are excited about our new curriculum. This year we are enjoying Whirl Lectionary Curriculum from Spark House. February lessons include Worship and Justice, Life with God, Love Your Enemies and Glory on the Mountain. The congregation is invited to preview these at <http://wearesparkhouse.org/kids/spark/lectionary/>

Missing a Dish?

Please check the kitchen as there are many extra plates, dishes and serving platters there.



DID YOU KNOW?

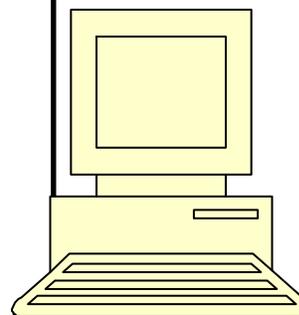
Reverend Oak's Sermons are uploaded on our website each week.!

<http://cazpres.org/>

There are various items located in the Work Room available for a donation.

Such as:

Computer, printer, laptop, desk, various Christmas décor, Silverware, and many other misc. useful things.



Call Treva at the office for more information or stop by the work room and take a look.



Great News! Choir attendance is on the upswing! The Caz Pres Ringers once again have a full complement of people to ring our three octaves of hand bells and tone chimes. We were elated to have some new folks join during the Christmas season to get us back to ringing the music we love with all our bells. We've also had a few new faces in the Senior Choir to help keep our numbers up. Let's keep it up!

We're still always looking for more senior choir members though. Please come and give it a try!

I've also been excited to try some new ideas during worship with Rev. Tom. It's very easy to get into a rut and keep doing the same old routine week after week. Although I agree some degree of consistency is important, it's also vital that we stretch and grow into some new worship traditions. This can only keep our worship life moving forward and help the growth of the church. Please though, give us some feedback about what you like, what you don't like. Drop me a line at vincent@cnyroganist.com. We promise to keep your thoughts in mind when planning new things.

Finally, thanks to all for your continued support and positive reinforcement of our music program and worship every Sunday. It's great to know that what we do makes a difference in your church life, and hopefully beyond. I feel like we're not only on the upswing in choir, but in the church as a whole. How wonderful it is for the church to be through its winter of interim ministry and on to looking forward!

God Bless,
Vince Guarneiri

New Member Classes

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: **February 5th**, **February 12th**, and **February 19th**. Those subsequently wishing to unite with this congregation will be *brought into membership* during the Sunday Morning Worship Service on **February 26th**.

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!

Don't forget to click the icons below to like and follow 1st Presby online!



Outreach Update...

Thanks to the continued generosity of the Congregation, the following organizations, who represent a variety of needs, received financial support in 2016

After the Ball/Prom Parties of Cazenovia High School

CazCares

Church World Service (shipping of hygiene kits)

Clear Path for Veterans

College Guild

Community Action Partnership

CRIS/CAT

Friendship Inn (Summit Church)

Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation

Madison County Office for the Aging

Mustard Seed

MS Resources

Project Cafe

Rescue Mission

Return Ministries International (Uganda Orphanage)

Ronald McDonald House

Unity Acres

Vanderkamp

The Outreach Committee seeks new members. We meet 6 times per year and our responsibilities include deciding which need-based charitable organizations and endeavors our church funds will support. We also organize a few drives, such as cereal and toys for CazCares and health kits for Church World Service.

If you're interested in joining us, contact either Linda Peters (682-6714) or Patricia Johnson (701-3735.)



In addition, thanks to your generosity, 48 health and hygiene kits were collected and sent to Church World Service; school supplies were donated to Caz Cares; pillows, diapers and linens were distributed to the Mustard Seed; and toys and cereal were collected for clients of CazCares. This is in addition to the other worthy causes sponsored by our other church committees.

On behalf of the Outreach Committee we are extremely grateful for your generosity. The sum total of your contributions is wonderful. All recipients of the funds and donated items are extremely appreciative. Thanks for helping our church continue Christ's mission of helping those in need.



On Sunday, March 5th Donna Denison will be participating in the "Annual MS Walk" at Destiny USA to benefit MS Resources of CNY. Donna is seeking financial contributions for this very important event. Money raised will assist over 1500 clients throughout our Central NY area who are living with Multiple Sclerosis. Your support will be greatly appreciated. Please make checks payable to "MS Resources." Donna can be contacted at

coffee hour after church or by phone at 655-3517.

She will be accepting donations until April 1st.



Multiple Sclerosis Resources
of
Central New York, INC.®

Among Our People...



In our nation and around the world

People in Syria, Iraq, Turkey, the Philippines, and other nations torn by war and strife. Especially in Aleppo, and, recently, the Christmas Market attack in Germany.

The men and women stationed throughout the world in service to our country.

In the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse

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)
Evonne Jones (Friend of Patricia Johnson)
Friends and Family of Ann Elizabeth LaRose (Sister of Virginia LaRose)
Sheri-Anne Mitchell (daughter of Barbara & Raymond)
Charlie Poole (student of Shelly Brooks)
Nancy Rauh (family friend of Leigh Garbor)
Terese (Karl Monson's caregiver)
Annette Tuttle (Dick Tuttle's niece)
Jan Anthony Vinopal (grandson of Jana Laxa)
Sally Scribner, Marion York, Chuck Lewis



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



Kevin Curtis, Kristin Curtis, Tom Leone, Darlene McEntee, Roseanne Courtade, and Susie Grills for all of your help cleaning and organizing the work room, various closets, and the music room. They look wonderful! All of your hard work is appreciated!

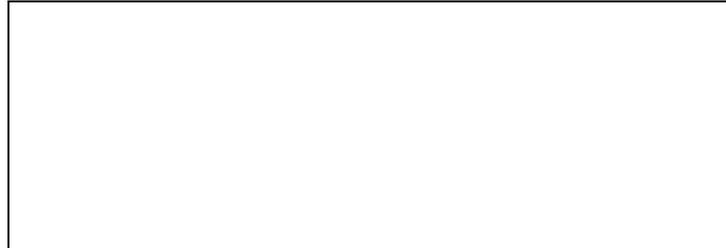


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First Presbyterian Church
27 Albany St.
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Please deliver
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First Presbyterian Church of Cazenovia

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<http://cazpres.org/>

Sermons posted each week



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Newsletter