



THE RED DOOR

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH – BIG FLATS, NY --- DEC. 2016 / JAN. 2017
(607) 562-8048 ----- /www.bigflatsfirstpres.org/
Founded 1827 ----- “Pride In Our Past – Faith In Our Future”

Dear Friends,

As I am writing this, Thanksgiving is just two days away and the Christmas season is ready to burst onto the scene in all its green and red splendor. “To do” lists and “should do” lists are growing. Tension and anxiety are rising as we begin the countdown to Christmas morning.

It is time for us to step back for a moment and take a breath and remember that often repeated phrase, “Remember the reason for the season.”

As Christians, that reason is the remembrance of the birth of Jesus the Christ, an event which changed the world. We believe that God so loved the world that he sent his Son to be born into our world as one of us to teach us of God and of the ways we must live to insure heaven on earth and life everlasting.

That is the thread we must hold on to as the craziness of the season swirls around us. And then we can celebrate this awesome gift that has been given by sharing the joy with family and friends.

Here at First Presbyterian Church we can join in the spirit of anticipation as each Sunday we light a candle on our Advent wreath and sing those beloved hymns of which we never grow tired.

We can contribute gifts to the shower for Mary and Joseph which go to the Salvation Army Safe House and the Samaritan Center. They are truly gifts of compassion and caring.

We can attend the pot luck luncheon, silent auction, and quilt drawing, and spend time sharing and celebrating our memories and the rich history of this community of faith and of service.

We can support our special free pancake breakfast, our hearty and delicious Christmas gift to the greater community.

If for reasons, perhaps known only to you, celebrating in the usual way is difficult or painful, the Blue Christmas Service, contemplative and subdued, is offered.

And always there is the Christmas Eve Service of carols and candles when the anticipation of the birth of the beloved Savior is finally and forever realized. On Christmas morning, at a warm and casual 10:30 am service, you can continue the celebration.

It is just a short week later that we welcome in a brand new year with more opportunity to learn and to grow and to serve in the name of the One we welcome again and yet again.

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year to one and all!
Pastor Beth



JOYS AND CONCERNS

Rummage Sale – Scouting for Food – Pancake Breakfast – Thanksgiving Breakfast – Warm and Joyous Worship services – all combined to make Big Flats First Presbyterian Church a beehive of activity throughout November. We have so much for which to be thankful! We are especially thankful for these highlights:

Circle of Love

- Our Fall Rummage Sale did very well, raising **over \$1500!** Thank you to all who worked to make this one of our best sales!
- Thanks to all who worked to make "Scouting for Food" so successful again this year.
- Our Pancake Breakfast, on November 19, was a big hit. Thanks go to the many hands that pitched in!
- On Sunday, November 13, we honored our veterans with a special Veterans Day color guard ceremony. **Jack Horn (USMC)** and **Tom Halm (US Army)** helped us to remember those who have served our nation in the past, as well as those who are currently serving.
- Thanks to **Joyce Dean**, our communion table looked especially beautiful during Thanksgiving week.
- On Thanksgiving morning, some thirty members of our family came together for a wonderful Thanksgiving breakfast and fellowship time. Many thanks go to our chief cook, **Mark Slowik**, to the rest of the kitchen crew, to those who donated muffins, and to those who worked to set up, cook, serve, and clean up. Sincere thanks go to **Paul Holland**, who provided special music.
- Congratulations to proud grandmother **Donna Stevens** (and parents **Tyler and Lillian!**) on the birth of **Scarlett Stevens**, on November 25! Congratulations also, to **Dottie Hoos** on the arrival of great-granddaughter **Brinley Rose Mangel!**
- Thank you to **Chris Larrabee**, an adult leader of **Troop #87**, who raked the leaves from the front of our church.
- Thanks also, to our Property Committee decorating crew, headed by **Pat Seem and Pat Fitzgerald**, along with many volunteers, for their hard (and creative) work in getting our church ready for the Christmas season!
- Special thanks to the **Slowik family** for leading a drive to get a beautiful Christmas tree for our 'Church House' community room!



As we approach this very special time of year, let us reach out to those in our faith community who need our help and support. Among our concerns this month, we ask for prayers for: **Bob and Rose Byland, Blake Manuel (eye surgery), Brandon Davis (nephew of Sheila French and Lisa McGill), Denise Wiskowski (sister of Debbie French), Peter Middaugh, Alan Giglio (Pat Fitzgerald's nephew), Heinz Weissenbuehler, Reva Soutar, Nick Rudnick, Emma Gardner, Flora Berke, Irene Hooey, Ginnie Schweizer, Dudley & Marie Shea, Marge Larocque (Gigi Price's mother),** and others who are dealing with ill health, surgery, loss, or life changes. Please remember our shut-ins, and please continue to pray for our servicemen and women and their families and for peace in our troubled world.

Do you have a special joy or concern that you would like to share with our faith community? See Pastor Beth or Bill Howells, and we will include your news in our Joys/Concerns column.

'BLUE CHRISTMAS' SERVICE SET FOR DECEMBER 18

On Sunday afternoon, **December 18, starting at 4:00**, our church will host a 'Blue Christmas' service. Open to our entire community, our 'Blue Christmas' service will be a time of Hope and Healing and a time to remember with others who are also experiencing pain or loss when remembering alone is too painful.

For some, Christmas is not the happy and joyous holiday it is for others. Many are suffering loss of some kind and find that trying to stay upbeat for the sake of others is just not working for them. Join us for a peaceful time of worship, reflection, and meditation which will help us all face the difficulties of the season.

Come alone, or with a caring friend. **ALL ARE WELCOME!**

EDITOR'S NOTE: This edition of THE RED DOOR covers two months – December 2016 & January 2017. Our next issue will be published in late January. Happy Holidays!

CHRISTMAS EVENTS AT BIG FLATS PRESBYTERIAN

A very special holiday season is in store for our community of faith. Events include:

DECEMBER 4 – POT LUCK LUNCHEON AND SILENT AUCTION

DECEMBER 11 – HANGING OF THE GREENS -- Our annual "Hanging of the Greens" celebration will be held on Sunday, December 11. We will decorate our Christmas tree, and we will join together to sing Christmas Carols. **It would be great if each person could bring a special ornament to hang on our tree!**



DECEMBER 18 – 'BLUE CHRISTMAS' – Service of Hope and Healing to be held in our sanctuary at **4:00 PM**.

DECEMBER 24 (Saturday) – CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE – Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service will be held at **7:30 PM**, on **Saturday, December 24**. **(Please note the time change from previous years.)** There will be special music throughout the service. It will be a truly joyful evening for all!



DECEMBER 25 – An informal Christmas Day service/gathering will be held in our 'Church House' community room, starting at our usual worship time of **10:30 AM**.

The Christmas season is always special at Big Flats First Presbyterian Church! Please plan to share this wonderful time with us. All are welcome.



POINSETTIAS: Those who wish to place Christmas poinsettias in our church "in honor of" or "in memory of" should contact Dean's at 562-8120. The price is \$15.

POT LUCK LUNCHEON - SILENT AUCTION - HERITAGE PROGRAM SET FOR DECEMBER 4

Sunday, **December 4**, will be a day to remember at our church. After a very special Advent service with Holy Communion and beautiful music, we will move to our 'Church House' community room for a Pot Luck luncheon *(If possible, please bring a dish to pass and table settings)*. Our annual Silent Auction will take place during this time, and we will be announcing the winner in this year's quilt raffle. During our luncheon, **Pastor Beth** will lead us in a time of sharing and celebrating our memories and the rich history of this community of faith and of service. What a wonderful time to come together to worship and celebrate! Please join us on December 4 – **ALL ARE WELCOME!**

SILENT AUCTION – DECEMBER 4

Here's a chance to do some holiday shopping and help our church budget. This year's **Silent Auction** will take place on **Sunday, December 4**. Please prepare your baked goods, holiday treats, crafts, etc. for sale at our auction, which will follow our morning worship service. We will also be drawing the name of our 2016 quilt winner during the auction. **Ann Slowik** is coordinating this year's sale. Please join us!



6TH ANNUAL QUILT WINNER TO BE CHOSEN DECEMBER 4

Our church is nearing the end of our sixth Quilt Fundraiser. The drawing for this beautiful quilt, made by the combined talents of our church's incredible quilters, will be held during our annual **Silent Auction on Sunday, December 4**. There is still time to purchase your ticket(s), as raffle tickets will be available during the Silent Auction – **\$2 per ticket or three for \$5**. Thank you to all who have worked on this project!

Questions? **Ann Hayes** or **Nancy Compton**.



IMPORTANT CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS ANNOUNCED

Please mark your calendars for a number of upcoming meetings/events for our church community.

Sunday, December 18 -- Congregational meeting following morning worship to hear the report of the Nominating Committee and to elect elders to serve on our Church Session.

Sunday, January 15 -- Our new elders will be ordained/installed during our worship service.

Sunday, January 29 -- Our annual Congregational Meeting will take place following our worship service. The Annual Report will be presented, and we will act on a number of items of important church business.

NOTE: Committee Chairs should submit end-of-year reports to Bill Howells as soon as possible.



SOUP SALE STARTS IN JANUARY

Mm-Mm-Good! Delicious and nutritious homemade soup will be available after church each Sunday, **January through March**. Just **\$4.00 per quart!** Volunteers are needed to provide soup, and a sign-up sheet will be posted in the Church House. **Questions? – See Barb Horn.**

STEWARDSHIP DRIVE UPDATE

Our annual Stewardship Drive is drawing to a close. Stewardship is our understanding that we are to utilize and manage all resources that God provides for the glory of God and for the betterment of all of God's Creation. It is good for each us to reflect upon our hopes and dreams for our church and to ask ourselves what we are able and willing to commitment of our time, our energy and our financial resources that those hopes and those dreams will become a reality.

We ask that you consider prayerfully how you can support the ongoing mission of our community of faith. **It would be very helpful in planning our 2017 church budget if all pledges could be turned in as soon as possible.** Pledges can be made via e-mail to Barb Horn -- blhorn@stny.rr.com. **When considering your pledge, please note that the Per Capita Assessment for our Geneva Presbytery has been increased to \$50 for 2017. This is the first increase in this per member charge in over five years.**



FROM THE CHOIR LOFT



Our "temporary" special guest artist, **Ariana Warren**, will be with us only one more Sunday - the 11th of December, and we plan to take full advantage of her. She will conduct the anthem, **Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming** and sing a beautiful solo called **Sweet Little Jesus Boy**. Ari has been student teaching in Watkins Glen and living with her grandmother, our own **Dottie Warren**. Ari's plans now include going home to Long Island to work for a semester and continuing to apply to graduate schools to begin her Master's Degree in the fall. We wish her Godspeed and know that her life will be both blessed and a blessing to all whose lives she touches. **Thank you, Ari**, for so graciously sharing your very considerable talent with us.

The choir is preparing anthems for Advent and Christmas. Some of our singers are going to be away for Christmas. We sure could use a few extra folks for a few weeks. The choir will be singing and the bells will be ringing for Christmas Eve service. Please consider joining us. We'll save you a seat.

"SCOUTING FOR FOOD" DRIVE A SUCCESS!

On **Saturday, November 12**, scouts from local troops and cub packs collected **nearly 2,500 food items** in this year's "Scouting for Food" drive. The items were donated to our Big Flats Community Food Pantry for the benefit of our patrons. In addition to the hard work of our scouts and their leaders, volunteers from the Big Flats Lions Club and a number of loyal Food Pantry helpers pitched in to count, sort, box, and store the donated items, as well as to restock shelves in the pantry. Thanks to all who helped to make this annual drive such a success!



PANCAKE BREAKFASTS A HUGE SUCCESS! DECEMBER 17 BREAKFAST FREE OF CHARGE!

Our sixth Pancake Breakfast season is proving to be an enormous hit! Eager patrons are raving about the wonderful food, the beautifully decorated tables, the fair prices, and the opportunity to visit with friends! Thank you to all who work so hard to make these Saturday mornings so special!



Our next breakfast, set for **Saturday, December 17, from 8:00 - 10:00 AM**, will be offered free of charge, as our gift to our community. In lieu of payment for this wonderful breakfast, we are asking for donations of cash and (non-perishable) food items for the Big Flats Community Food Pantry, which is housed in our church. (We will, of course, also be very grateful for any donations to help offset the cost of putting on this breakfast.) Please help us by spreading the word about this special morning.

Our church will continue this series of fund-raising Pancake Breakfasts on Saturday mornings during the next few months. Subsequent breakfast dates are **January 21, February 18, March 18, and April 15**. The cost for each meal has been set at **\$5.00**. ***There will be no charge for those under five years old.***

This series of meals is an ambitious project for our little church, and we are going to need a lot of help to ensure success. Sign-up sheets will be posted for each meal. Please do your part by pitching in to help and also with your patronage. Questions?? Talk to **Sarah Cory**.

MARY CHURCHILL RECEIVES NATIONAL HONOR

AUTO REMARKETING, a national industry publication, has selected our own **Mary Churchill** to be one of its “**2016 Women in Remarketing**” honorees. Mary, a very active member of our congregation, is a Senior Remarketing Analyst with **ALLY Remarketing**. She was selected for this honor because of her leadership abilities and for exhibiting resourcefulness in business decision-making, taking initiative, and thriving in the face of obstacles. Congratulations Mary, for this well-deserved recognition!



FALL RUMMAGE SALE A HIT WITH ALL!

Our Fall Rummage Sale, held on Saturday, November 5, was very successful, raising **over \$1500!** Thank you, **Linda Lincoln, Nancy Pangia, Donna Stevens, Ann Slowik**, all our volunteers, those who donated items, our legendary Big Flats Bakers, and those who patronized our sale. A special thank you goes to the **scouts from Troop #87** who provided the “muscle” in moving sale items from the basement and helping to set up tables and other sale equipment!

MISSION TEAM UPDATE

The Mission team meets for its final quarterly meeting of 2016 on December 12th.

This year we have given to many of our regular recipients and a few new. All have expressed their sincere gratitude and have put the funds to excellent use. It should be a source of reflective comfort for both the Church and our congregation to know that your gifts have given such a significant level of support to those in need within our community and afar.

Thank you for your ongoing support and may God Bless you all.

On behalf of the mission team.

David J Stafford

"SHOWER FOR MARY" & "GIFTS FOR JOSEPH" MISSION EFFORT ANNOUNCED

For the past fifteen years, our congregation has generously supported our "Shower for Mary" local mission effort during the season of Advent. In this program we have collected a variety of items for personal care and other needs for women and children served by the **Salvation Army Safehouse**. The Salvation Army Safehouse provides a comprehensive program for victims of domestic violence. Services offered include emergency shelter, counseling, advocacy, information/referrals, hotline services, justice system information and accompaniments, support group, and community education. For information: call **732-1979**.



Five years ago we expanded our outreach efforts through a "Gifts for Joseph" program to help men served by the **Samaritan Center**. The Samaritan Center has been assisting individuals and families in need with emergency food, clothing, and prescription drug assistance for over thirty years. This program also facilitates enrollment to Medicaid, Family Health Plus & Child Health Plus and provides referrals to other resources and support services for longer term solutions. The Samaritan Center is located at **380 Main St., Elmira (734-4898)**.

We need your support! Your donated items (**unwrapped please**) can be placed in the collection bins located in the rear of our sanctuary and in the narthex each Sunday throughout the Advent season (**November 27 - December 18**).

Needs for the Safehouse ("Shower for Mary"):

These donations are for women/children and include the following:

- Gift sets for women (perfumes, soaps, lotions, etc.) ~ Watches for women
 - Radio Alarm Clocks
 - Craft items for teenagers (water color paints, bead sets, etc.)
 - Family and children board games ~ Activity books (children & adult)
 - Gift cards (\$10-\$20 recommended – grocery or general merchandise)
 - Paper towels, napkins, paper plates
 - Family oriented DVD's
 - Journals / pen sets ~ Stationary gift sets / stamps
 - Personal items such as hair brushes ~ deodorant ~ hairspray
 - Towels ~ Twin sheet sets ~ pillows (new)
 - New (packaged) underwear, bras & socks (all sizes – women and children)
 - Disposable diapers (size 3/ 4/ 5 / 6) ~ baby wipes ~ sippie cups ~ pacifiers
 - Cash or check donations (made payable to **Salvation Army Safehouse**)
- Due to limited space we cannot accept used household items, clothing or furniture.**
Please be assured our residents' needs are being met in this area.

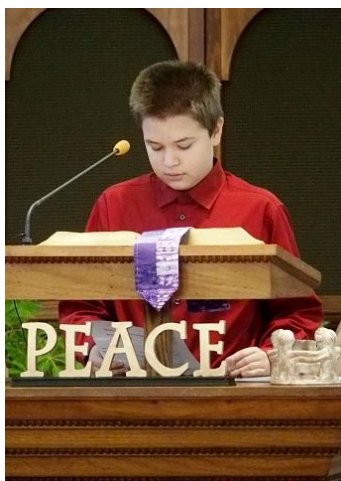
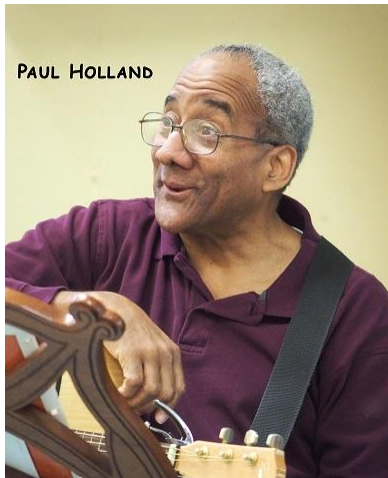
Needs for the Samaritan Center ("Gifts for Joseph"):

These donations are for men and families and include the following:

- Cleaning supplies (unopened)
- Can openers (non-electric)
- Diapers & baby items (unopened)
- Food (non-expired -- unopened)
- Linens -- blankets, pillows, towels, single/twin sheets, etc. (new)
- Men's personal care items -- razors, deodorant, shaving cream, etc. (unopened)
- Paper Products -- paper towels, toilet paper, etc. (unopened)
- Underwear, socks, hats (new) & Seasonal clothing -- all sizes (new or gently used)
- Cash or check donations (made payable to **The Samaritan Center**)

Thank you, in advance, for your generosity in supporting our Advent outreach mission. What a wonderful way to experience the true meaning of Christmas! **Bill Howells** is coordinating our "Shower for Mary" and "Gifts for Joseph" programs and can answer any questions (**962-1146**).

PHOTO GALLERY





WEEKLY EVENTS

SUNDAYS	9:30 AM	Choir Rehearsal
	10:30 AM	Morning Worship
TUESDAY	12:00 – 2:00 PM	Food Pantry is open
	6:30 PM	Boy Scout Troop #87

SPECIAL EVENTS

December 4	Holy Communion
December 4	Silent Auction & Pot Luck Luncheon (following morning worship)
December 17 (Sat.)	(Free of Charge) Pancake Breakfast – 8:00 - 10:00 AM
December 11	'Hanging of the Greens' -- decorating our Christmas tree and singing Christmas Carols
December 18	Election of Elders (following morning worship)
December 18	'Blue Christmas' service in our sanctuary – 4:00 PM
December 24 (Sat.)	Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service – 7:30 PM (note time change from prior years)
December 25	Informal Christmas Day service in our 'Church House'
January 8	Celebration of Epiphany
January 8	Holy Communion
January 8	Christmas tree and decorations taken down following morning worship
January 21 (Sat.)	(Fundraiser) Pancake Breakfast – 8:00 - 10:00 AM
January 29	Installation/Ordination of Elders
January 29	"Pennies from Heaven" collection during morning worship
January 29	Annual Congregation Meeting (following morning worship)
January 29	Information due for the February <u>RED DOOR</u>

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Worship Committee	Meets following church service on January 15
Property Committee	(Wednesday) December 21 & January 18 – 6:00 PM
Session	(Wednesday) December 21 & January 18 – 7:00 PM



DONATE TO OUR CHURCH ELECTRONICALLY!

Our church now has an easy and safe way to donate electronically using your smartphone. All you need is one of the many free QR (quick response) code reader Apps available for your smartphone or iPad camera. Just read the QR bar code (at right), click on the GIVE NOW button, and use the drop-downs to make a donation. (For those wishing to donate online, there is also a GIVE NOW link on our church website www.bigflatsfirstpres.org which is very easy to use.)

