



THE RED DOOR

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH – BIG FLATS, NY --- MARCH 2017

Founded 1827 ----- “Pride In Our Past – Faith In Our Future”

(607) 562-8048 ----- /www.bigflatsfirstpres.org/

Friends, during this season of Lent I want to invite you to give yourself the gift of slowing down, as with “ears of your hearts” we attend to our own lives, and listen for God’s tangible presence.

Some people complain that traditional church is boring. Maybe we should consider the possibility that we have unintentionally made it so by substituting religious tradition for spiritual encounter. Perhaps the church’s role is to create space for people to experience the wonder and mystery of God and God’s love.

It is with this in mind that I am inviting you into the spiritual practice known as Lectio Divina, which is simply a slow, contemplative praying of the Scriptures. It is a quiet, intentional time which enables us to explore in our daily lives an underlying spiritual rhythm.

This “Divine Reading” involves listening in a meditative way to a short passage or a few verses of Scripture. Those participating are encouraged to set aside analysis, and what they “know” already about the passage, seeking instead to open themselves to God’s word, listen with their hearts, and receive it expectantly and passively.

First we will open with a prayer, then a participant will slowly read aloud the chosen passage. After one minute of silence each person will write down an answer to the question, “What word/phrase caught my attention?” Everyone will then share his/her word or phrase without comment.

Then someone will read aloud the same passage and after three to five minutes of silence, each person will write down an answer to the question, “Where does this passage touch my life experience?” Each participant will then share his/her answer in turn, without comment.

A third person will then read the passage aloud and for three to five minutes everyone will write an answer to the question, “From what I have heard and shared, what is God inviting me to be? How is God inviting me to change?” Each one then shares, beginning, “I believe God wants me to ...”

We will then end in prayer, or if the group feels so moved, each person will pray aloud for the person on his/her right, praying only for what that person expressed in the prior step.

As is true with all forms of praying, the purpose of Lectio Divina is to open ourselves to God so that God may bring us and the world into harmony with God’s purposes. The first step is simply to begin.

Please join me at 11:00 AM every Thursday in Lent beginning March 2. At noon we will have lunch. Bring a sandwich; soup and beverages will be provided.

Blessings,
Pastor Beth



Circle of Love

JOYS AND CONCERNS

This winter's temperatures have been up and down, but they can never match the warm love and fellowship in our community of faith. As we worshiped together we also opened our hearts to help those in need of food, comfort, and better housing. We are truly a community of faith!

Recent highlights included:

- Our church family showed its generous nature during the month of February. Thanks to all for the successful drive for soup and money to help fight hunger on **Souper Bowl Sunday**, February 5, and then on **Blanket Sunday**, February 12 & 19, as we donated to Church World Services for blankets for people around the world in disaster areas. On Sunday, February 26, we continued our "**Pennies from Heaven**" tradition of support for Habitat for Humanity.
- Our fund-raising pancake breakfasts have proven to be a big hit! Our patrons have enjoyed terrific food and a chance for fellowship with other diners. Thank you, **Sarah Cory**, and many hard-working volunteers!
- Thank you to our super snow shoveling crew! **Mary Churchill, John Farr, Pat Fitzgerald, Scott French, Bill Howells, and Steve Johnston** have kept our parking areas and sidewalks clear of snow and ice throughout the winter months.



Many in our faith community need our help and support. Among our concerns this month, we ask for prayers for: **Jean Uszenski (Joe Pangia's mother), Phil Hubbard, John Horn (son of Jack and Barb), Bob and Rose Byland, Brandon Davis (nephew of Sheila French and Lisa McGill), Wendy Fought (niece of Sheila French and Lisa McGill), John Elder (brother-in-law of Bill Powell), Denise Wiskowski (sister of Debbie French), Peter Middaugh, Alan Giglio (Pat Fitzgerald's nephew), Heinz Weissenbuehler, Reva Soutar, Nick Rudnick, Emma Gardner, Irene Hooley, 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.



POTLUCK DINNER TO BEGIN OUR OBSERVANCE OF LENT – MARCH 1

On Ash Wednesday, **March 1, at 6:00 PM**, our church will mark the beginning of the season of Lent in a special way. We will have an informal gathering and potluck supper. Please bring a dish to pass and table service. There will be time for those attending to share favorite Bible verses and to tell why Lent has special meaning in their lives. Ashes will be distributed to those who wish to receive them. Don't have time to prepare a dish? Decide to come at the last minute? No problem! All are welcome!

OUR SESSION MEMBERS: Pastor Beth (Moderator), Joyce Dean (Clerk of Session), Sarah Cory, Jenny Dean, Pat Fitzgerald, Scott French, Luke Gromer, Barb Horn, Jill Knight, Stewart Potter, Bill Powell, and Mary Ellen Rudnick

IT'S PER CAPITA TIME!



Each year the church must pay a fee to our Presbytery for each member. This year that individual member fee is **\$50.00**. Our total per capita amount for 2017 is **\$6750**. These monies are used to fund outreach programs, disaster relief, the resource center for the churches, and Camp Whitman programs. In your offering envelopes box, you will find a "Per Capita" envelope. It would be great if we could all pay our individual per capita assessment and, if possible, a little more. Just ten cents a day would really help to meet our budgeted goal. If anyone would like to start a "matching" drive/challenge, please let the Finance Committee or Session know of your willingness. Thanks for your help in balancing our budget. By the way, contributions (money, stock, etc.) can be made directly to our church's Reserve Fund. If we can "grow" this fund it can generate enough interest each year to make a major impact on our budget. See **Mark Slowik** for more information.

PANCAKE BREAKFASTS CONTINUE -- NEXT SLATED FOR MARCH 18

Our fund-raising Pancake Breakfasts have proven to be a big hit! They have become a fixture in the Big Flats community. Eager diners have flocked to our Church House for gourmet breakfasts of pancakes, eggs, sausage, and beverages. We thank all who have helped to make these meals so successful.

Our next breakfast is slated for **Saturday, March 18, from 8:00 – 10:00 AM**. Our last breakfast for this season will be held on **April 15**. The cost for each meal has been set at \$5.00. There will be no charge for those under six years old. Your patronage at our breakfasts is most welcome!

This series of meals is an ambitious project for our little church, and it takes a lot of help to ensure success. Any donations to our Pancake breakfasts would help immensely. We would appreciate donations of time to come and help (sign-up sheets are posted before each breakfast). We would also welcome monetary donations to help offset the cost of eggs, sausage, etc. Those who would like to donate to our breakfast project should see **Sarah Cory**. Sarah can also answer any questions about our breakfast project.



LENTEN ECUMENICAL DINNER PROGRAMS ANNOUNCED

The Horseheads, Big Flats, Elmira Heights Ecumenical Council has announced plans for a series of Wednesday evening Lenten programs to be held at area churches. The program each evening will consist of dinner (**cost will be \$5.00**), prayer, and presentation. All profits will go to support the Food Bank's 'Backpack Program.' Gatherings will begin promptly at **6:00 p.m.** and will end at **7:00 p.m.**

Theme: **"Where Did I Come From? Who Am I? Where Am I Going? What Is My Legacy?"**

| <u>DATE</u> | <u>PLACE</u> | <u>SPEAKER</u> | <u>TOPIC</u> |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| March 8 | First Presbyterian – Big Flats | Rhonda Kouterick | Intro to Genealogy |
| March 15 | First United Methodist – HHDS | Wanda Copeland | Intro to Venogram |
| March 22 | St. Matthews Episcopalian – HHDS | Cheryl Ann Elfond | Personality Type |
| March 29 | St. Matthews Episcopalian – HHDS | Pastor Beth Frigard | Spiritual Gifts Inventory |
| April 5 | First Presbyterian – HHDS | Wanda Copeland | My Legacy |

NOTE: Volunteers will be needed to help as we host the dinner on **March 8**. Sign-up sheets have been posted – please pitch in. Many hands make light work! Questions?? – see **Ann Slowik**

NEWS NOTES

Interested In Membership? Everyone is always welcome here at the First Presbyterian Church of Big Flats, whether they be friends or members. But, if you are thinking about joining our church and would like to learn more about membership and what it means, please talk to **Pastor Beth**. All are welcome!

Sign-up Sheets Posted: A number of sign-up sheets have been posted on the bulletin board in our Church House. Please consider pitching in to prepare soup, host coffee hour, provide bulletins or flowers for Sunday services, volunteer to work on a church dinner, volunteer to help with a pancake breakfast, etc.

Cookie Suppliers Needed: It happens – there are Sundays when no one has signed up to host our Coffee Hour. Our Worship Committee would like to ensure that refreshments are still available on those Sundays. We would be very appreciative of donations of bags of cookies and other Coffee Hour treats. We will then store these and use them as needed. Cookies may be left in our kitchen. Questions?? – See **Barb Horn, Ann Hayes, or Barb Gilbert**

Sunday Soup -- Simply Superb! Delicious and nutritious homemade soup will be available after church each Sunday, through the end of March. A donation of just **\$4.00** will bring a quart of our world-famous Big Flats goodness right to your table. Find out what good is – you won't be sorry!



Sign-up sheets for those willing to serve as "Soup Chefs" are posted on the Church House bulletin board. Volunteers would be most appreciated. Questions?? – See **Barb Horn**

Congregation responds to February Drives: Our 'Souper' Bowl Sunday collection resulted in the donation of some **thirty-seven food items** and **\$205** in cash for our Food Pantry. Our Blanket Sunday drives netted **\$369** to provide warmth and comfort for disaster victims. Thanks to all who contributed so generously!





WEEKLY EVENTS

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

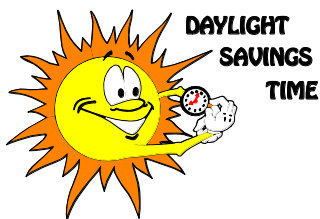
ASH WEDNESDAY POTLUCK DINNER
MARCH 1 – 6:00 PM
ALL ARE WELCOME
BRING A DISH TO PASS

SPECIAL EVENTS

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| March 1 (Wed.) | Ash Wednesday – Potluck Dinner – 6:00 PM |
| March 2 (Thurs.) | Lectio Divina group to meet – 11:00 AM |
| March 5 | First Sunday of Lent -- Holy Communion |
| March 8 (Wed.) | Lenten Ecumenical dinner at our church – 6:00 PM |
| March 9 (Thurs.) | Lectio Divina group to meet – 11:00 AM |
| March 15 (Wed.) | Lenten Ecumenical dinner United Methodist Church (Horseheads) – 6:00 PM |
| March 16 (Thurs.) | Lectio Divina group to meet – 11:00 AM |
| March 18 (Sat.) | Pancake Breakfast – 8:00 – 10:00 AM |
| March 22 (Wed.) | Lenten Ecumenical dinner St. Matthews Episcopalian Church (Horseheads) – 6:00 PM (Pastor Beth will be the speaker) |
| March 23 (Thurs.) | Lectio Divina group to meet – 11:00 AM |
| March 26 | Pennies from Heaven collection |
| March 26 | Deadline for articles for April Red Door |
| March 29 (Wed.) | Lenten Ecumenical dinner St. Matthews Episcopalian Church (Horseheads) – 6:00 PM |
| March 30 (Thurs.) | Lectio Divina group to meet – 11:00 AM |

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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|--------------------|--|
| Worship Committee | Meets following church service on March 12 |
| Property Committee | Wednesday, March 15 – 6:00 PM |
| Session | Wednesday, March 15 – 7:00 PM |



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS ON SUNDAY, MARCH 12. BE SURE TO SET YOUR CLOCKS AHEAD ONE HOUR BEFORE YOU GO TO BED ON SATURDAY NIGHT, MARCH 11 – WE KNOW THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO BE LATE FOR CHURCH!