



**WELCOME TO THE
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF BIG FLATS
Sunday Morning Worship
January 26, 2025 at 10:30 AM**

Joys and Concerns

Welcome and Announcements

(Facebook Live)

GATHERING

PRELUDE

*** CALL TO WORSHIP**

The Spirit of God calls us to listen, to seek, and to follow.

Speak, Lord, for Your servants are listening.

From visions on rooftops to whispers in the night, God’s voice breaks through.

Speak, Lord, for Your servants are listening.

God speaks through scripture, through creation, and through one another.

Speak, Lord, for Your servants are listening.

Let us worship the God who is still speaking and calling us today.

Speak, Lord, for Your servants are listening and ready to follow.

*** OPENING HYMN:**

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

GTG #611

1 Joyful, joyful, we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love! Hearts unfold like flowers before thee, opening to the sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; drive the dark of doubt away. Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.	2 All thy works with joy surround thee; earth and heaven reflect thy rays; stars and angels sing around thee, center of unbroken praise. Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea, chanting bird and flowing fountain, call us to rejoice in thee.	3 Mortals, join the happy chorus which the morning stars began. Love divine is reigning o'er us, joining all in heaven's plan. Ever singing, march we onward, victors in the midst of strife. Joyful music leads us sunward in the triumph song of life.
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*** OPENING PRAYER**

Gracious and eternal God, we gather in Your presence, thankful that You are a God who speaks. As we reflect on Your Word today, may we be attuned to Your voice, ready to respond with faith and obedience. Guide us as we look to the future, trusting in Your plans and Your promises. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Call to Confession

God is still speaking—calling us, guiding us, and challenging us to listen with open hearts. But often, we fail to recognize His voice amid the noise of our lives. We resist the uncomfortable truths He brings to light and close our ears to the messages that call us to change.

Like Samuel, we sometimes miss God’s call, distracted by the busyness of life. Like Peter, we may be slow to respond to God’s invitation to break down the walls that divide us and embrace the fullness of His love for all people.

Let us come before God now, confessing our failures to listen, our resistance to change, and our hesitation to act in faith. Together, let us seek God's forgiveness and the courage to hear and respond to His still-speaking voice.

Let us pray.

Prayer of Confession:

God of boundless love, You call us to listen for Your voice in the unexpected places, yet we often fail to hear.

Forgive us, Lord, for our distracted hearts and closed minds.

You speak through visions and whispers, through neighbors and strangers, yet we cling to what is comfortable and familiar.

Forgive us, Lord, for ignoring Your call to love beyond boundaries.

You invite us to share in Your work of justice and mercy, yet we hesitate, afraid of change or challenge.

Forgive us, Lord, for resisting Your Spirit and trusting in our own ways.

Speak again, Lord, and awaken us to Your voice. Shape us into vessels of Your grace and courage, that we may respond faithfully to Your call. Amen.

Moment of Silence for Personal Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news! God is still speaking, and God's word is one of forgiveness and renewal. In Jesus Christ, barriers are broken, sins are forgiven, and lives are transformed.

Thanks be to God, who calls us by name and claims us as beloved children.

Friends, believe the gospel: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Passing of the Peace * *When directed, share a word or sign of peace with those near you.*

May the peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

*** Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me**

Glory to God,
whose goodness shines on me,
and to the Son,
whose grace has pardoned me,
and to the Spirit,
whose love has set me free.
As it was in the beginning,

is now and ever shall be. Amen.
World without end, without end. Amen.
World without end, without end. Amen.
World without end,
without end. Amen.
As it was in the beginning,
is now and ever shall be. Amen.

GTG #582

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Please respond to "Lord in Your Mercy," by saying, "Hear our Prayer."

Loving and Gracious God,

We come before You today with open hearts, ready to listen, for we know that You are still speaking in this world. As You called to Samuel in the night, calling him by name, we, too, hear Your voice in the quiet moments of our lives. May we be ever attentive to Your words, seeking Your guidance and wisdom in all that we do.

Lord, In Your Mercy, **Hear our Prayer.**

We pray for Your Church,

That we may recognize the call to serve You faithfully, just as Peter did when You opened his eyes to the truth that Your love is for all people. Help us to break down the walls that divide us, and to welcome every person, regardless of their background, race, or past, into Your loving embrace. Empower us to be a beacon of hope and inclusion, reaching out to those who need to hear that You are still speaking to them.

Lord, In Your Mercy, **Hear our Prayer.**

We pray for our leaders,

That they may be inspired by Your voice, discerning Your will as they make decisions for our communities and our world. May they listen for the voice of justice, peace, and truth that echoes in Your Word, and may they be guided by Your wisdom in their actions.

Lord, In Your Mercy, **Hear our Prayer.**

We pray for those who are struggling,

Those who feel forgotten or unheard, those who are suffering in silence. We lift up to You the sick, the weary, the

broken-hearted, and the lost. May they hear Your voice calling them to healing, comfort, and peace. May we, as Your Church, be the hands and feet that respond to their needs, sharing Your love in practical and compassionate ways. Lord, In Your Mercy, **Hear our Prayer.**

We pray for the world,
That it may hear and heed Your call to peace, reconciliation, and justice. In the face of division, may Your voice be a reminder that You are still speaking, offering hope to the hopeless and peace to the troubled. Guide the leaders of all nations to act with mercy, humility, and a commitment to the common good.
Lord, In Your Mercy, **Hear our Prayer.**

And we pray for ourselves,
That we may always listen with open hearts to Your call, and that we may respond with courage, obedience, and love. Help us to discern Your voice above the noise of the world, and to follow Your leading with faith and trust. May we always remember that You are still speaking, and may our lives be a reflection of the message You are calling us to share.
Lord, In Your Mercy, **Hear our Prayer.**

We offer these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray, saying:

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

*** HYMN:** *Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise*

GTG #12

1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

3 To all, life thou givest, to both great and small.
In all life thou livest, the true life of all.
We blossom and flourish like leaves on the tree,
then wither and perish; but naught changeth thee.

2 Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might:
thy justice, like mountains high soaring above;
thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

4 Thou reignest in glory; thou dwellest in light.
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight.
All praise we would render; O help us to see
'tis only the splendor of light hideth thee!

CHOIR ANTHEM:

THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of wisdom and revelation, as Your Word is read and proclaimed, open our hearts to hear Your voice anew. Speak to us as You spoke to Samuel in the quiet of the night. Reveal to us Your truth, as You revealed it to Peter in the midst of his doubt. By the power of Your Spirit, grant us clarity to see Your vision, courage to respond to Your call, and faith to follow where You lead. In the name of Jesus Christ, the Living Word, we pray. Amen.

SERMON

God Is Still Speaking

Pastor Denise Stone

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

1 Samuel 3:1-20

Pew Bible, OT, pg. 247

¹ Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

² At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; ³ the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. ⁴ Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" ⁵ and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. ⁶ The LORD called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again."⁷

* Indicates Standing is Optional

Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.⁸ The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy.⁹ Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."¹¹ Then the LORD said to Samuel, "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle.¹² On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end.¹³ For I have told him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them.¹⁴ Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever."

¹⁵ Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli.¹⁶ But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." He said, "Here I am."¹⁷ Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you."

¹⁸ So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, "It is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him."

¹⁹ As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground.²⁰ And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the LORD.

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

Acts 7:1-19

Pew Bible, NT, pp. 124-125

⁹ About noon the next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray.¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat; and while it was being prepared, he fell into a trance.¹¹ He saw the heaven opened and something like a large sheet coming down, being lowered to the ground by its four corners.¹² In it were all kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds of the air.¹³ Then he heard a voice saying, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat."¹⁴ But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean."¹⁵ The voice said to him again, a second time, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane."¹⁶ This happened three times, and the thing was suddenly taken up to heaven.

¹⁷ Now while Peter was greatly puzzled about what to make of the vision that he had seen, suddenly the men sent by Cornelius appeared. They were asking for Simon's house and were standing by the gate.¹⁸ They called out to ask whether Simon, who was called Peter, was staying there.¹⁹ While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Look, three men are searching for you."²⁰ Now get up, go down, and go with them without hesitation; for I have sent them."²¹ So Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for your coming?"²² They answered, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say."²³ So Peter invited them in and gave them lodging.

The next day he got up and went with them, and some of the believers from Joppa accompanied him.²⁴ The following day they came to Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends.²⁵ On Peter's arrival Cornelius met him, and falling at his feet, worshiped him.²⁶ But Peter made him get up, saying, "Stand up; I am only a mortal."²⁷ And as he talked with him, he went in and found that many had assembled;²⁸ and he said to them, "You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile; but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean."²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without objection. Now may I ask why you sent for me?"

³⁰ Cornelius replied, "Four days ago at this very hour, at three o'clock, I was praying in my house when suddenly a man in dazzling clothes stood before me.³¹ He said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God.'³² Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon, who is called Peter; he is staying in the home of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.'³³ Therefore I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. So now all of us are here in the presence of God to listen to all that the Lord has commanded you to say."

Gentiles Hear the Good News

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality,³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.³⁶ You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all.³⁷ That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced:³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.³⁹ We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree;⁴⁰ but God raised him on

* Indicates Standing is Optional

the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

This is the Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSE

*** AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**We believe in a God who speaks,
who calls to us by name, as You called Samuel in the night,
who calls us to be Your witnesses in the world,
as You called Peter to proclaim the Gospel to all people.
We believe that Your voice is not silent,
but still speaks through prophets, scripture, and the whispers of our hearts.
Your message is for all people—
breaking down walls, tearing apart divisions,
and uniting us in the love and grace of Jesus Christ.
We believe that God is still speaking,
guiding us toward justice, peace, and reconciliation.
We are called to listen, to respond with open hearts,
and to share Your message of hope with the world.
We trust in the Holy Spirit,
who continues to move among us,
empowering us to hear Your call,
and to be Your hands and feet in a world that longs to hear Your voice.
We affirm that, in every moment,
God is still speaking to us,
and we, Your people, are still called to listen, to learn,
and to share the good news of Your love. Amen.**

*** HYMN:**

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

GTG #475

1 Come, thou Fount of every blessing; tune my heart to sing thy grace; streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise. Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above; praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it, mount of God's unchanging love!	2 Here I raise my Ebenezer; hither by thy help I'm come; and I hope, by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home. Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God; he, to rescue me from danger, interposed his precious blood.	3 O to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be! Let that grace now, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee. Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love; here's my heart; O take and seal it; seal it for thy courts above.
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A TIME OF GIVING

Invitation to the Offering and Pennies from Heaven

God speaks to us in many ways—through scripture, through prayer, through the needs of our neighbors, and through the nudges of the Spirit. When we respond to God's call, we become part of the unfolding story of grace and hope in the world.

Today, we are invited to bring our gifts, our talents, and our resources, so that God's love may continue to be proclaimed and God's work may be done. Let us give with joyful hearts, trusting that God is still speaking and still working through us.

We are also going to take our monthly *Pennies from Heaven* loose-change offering. This benefits the Chemung County Habitat for Humanity. There are jars on the Communion table for this offering.

* Indicates Standing is Optional

A Moment of Silence – Offertory

*** Doxology**

GTG #607

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

*** Offering Prayer**

God of abundance,
You call us to listen for Your voice and to respond with faithful hearts.
Bless these gifts we bring today. Use them to break down barriers, to share Your love, and to bring healing where it is needed most.
Just as You called Samuel and Peter into Your service, call us to use our lives and resources for Your glory.
May these offerings help proclaim Your message of grace,
for You are still speaking and still transforming the world.
In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

SENDING

*** CLOSING HYMN: *Be Thou My Vision***

GTG #450

1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art;
thou my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

3 Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;
thou, mine inheritance, now and always;
thou and thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my treasure thou art.

2 Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true Word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tower;
raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

4 High King of Heaven, my victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

*** BENEDICTION**

As we go from this place, may we open our hearts and ears to the still-speaking God, who calls us by name, just as God called Samuel in the silence of the night. May we hear with clarity and respond with faith, knowing that God's message continues to guide us today, just as it did for Peter in his vision.
May we be a people who recognize that God's love and grace are for all, as we are reminded in the story of Peter's vision, breaking boundaries and offering salvation to everyone. Let us walk in the light of this divine calling, reaching out in love, compassion, and acceptance to all people, everywhere.
Go in peace, knowing that God is still speaking, still leading, still calling. Amen.

POSTLUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR THE BULLETIN

Any announcements that you wish to include in the Worship Bulletin, please send it to bigflatspresbyterian@gmail.com, no later than the Wednesday prior to the Sunday on which you wish the announcement to be included.

NOTES FOR SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

For Online Worship: Please use the comment section of Facebook to share your Joys or Concerns.
You may also email Pastor Denise at pastordenisestone@gmail.com.

* Indicates Standing is Optional

PENNIES FROM HEAVEN

This Sunday we will collect our loose change offering, Pennies from Heaven, benefiting the Chemung County Habitat for Humanity.

The jars will be on the Communion Table for you to give at the time noted in the Service or after this Morning's Service.

TODAY IS PASTOR DENISE'S LAST SUNDAY

Today we share in a special time of worship as we bid farewell to Pastor Denise. It is a time of reflection, gratitude, and celebration for the years of ministry and service.



COFFEE HOUR AFTER WORSHIP

After the service and Annual Meeting, please stay for a coffee hour in Fellowship Hall to share in fellowship and offer your well wishes to Pastor Denise. Let us come together to celebrate this moment in the life of our church.

WELCOME GUEST MINISTERS IN FEBRUARY

Rev. Glenn Kennedy, a former pastor and Moderator of Presbytery will be preaching at Big Flats February 2, and 9.

Rev. Jane Winters will be preaching on February 16, and 23.

Judy Harriman-Carlson will be providing music February 2, 16, and 23.

Please welcome them with your attendance and support!

"SOUPER" BOWL SUNDAY – FEBRUARY 9

Go AFC! Go NFC! It doesn't matter which team you are supporting. Each year our church participates in "**Souper**" Bowl of Caring Sunday. Plan to wear your favorite team apparel and bring cans of soup (other canned goods and cash are also gratefully accepted) for the benefit of those who are served by our Food Pantry.



BLANKET SUNDAY IS FEBRUARY 16

For some fifty years, the Church World Service Blanket Program has helped in making life more bearable for those who have been affected by a disaster, such as flooding or fire. We will be taking a special collection on **Sunday, February 16**. Every \$15.00 that we give can provide a good wool or cotton blend blanket (quantity purchase keeps costs down).



Please support our church's participation by donating to this very worthy cause during morning worship on February 16.

CALENDAR

Sunday, Jan. 26	Worship	10:30 a.m.
	Annual Meeting	Following the Morning Worship Service.
	Coffee Hour	Following the Annual Meeting
Tuesday, Jan. 28	Food Pantry	10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (Serving guests from 12 to 2 p.m.)
	Scouts	6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Sunday, Feb. 2	Worship (Communion)	10:30 a.m.
	Coffee Hour	11:30 a.m.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BIG FLATS, NEW YORK

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Director of Music, Valerie Stone

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CCLI License Numbers: for music – 20207114; for streaming – 20207121. OneLicense Number: A-738210.

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Author: Henry Van Dyke (1907)

Tune Information Title: HYMN TO JOY

Composer: Ludwig van Beethoven (1824)

Adapter: Edward Hodges

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Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me

Adapter: Paul M. Vasile (2008)

Copyright: Text adapt. © 2008 Paul M. Vasile

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

Author: Walter C. Smith (1867)

Tune Information Title: ST. DENIO

Copyright: Public Domain

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Author: Robert Robinson (1758)

Alterer: Martin Madan (1760)

Tune Information Title: NETTLETON

Composer: Anonymous

Copyright: Public Domain

Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow

Author: Thomas Ken (1674)

Copyright: Public Domain

Be Thou My Vision

Translator: Mary E. Byrne (1927)

Versifier: Eleanor H. Hull

Tune Information Title: SLANE

Composer: Anonymous

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