

THE RAPPORTER

"Where Faith and Family Come Together"
First Presbyterian Church, Olean, NY
March, 2019

Pastor's Thoughts...

Like many Christians we observe a season called "Lent" that spans from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. It is a time for Christians to reflect upon Christ's passion, to repent for sin, to pray to deepen spirituality, and engage in service. Some people fast or give something up for the season. This season can be a profound time of self-reflection and faith renewal.

Lent is 40 days of remembering Jesus' forty days of being tempted in the wilderness (see Matthew 4:1-11), but if you look at a calendar you'll find there are more than forty days between Ash Wednesday and Easter. Why? Sundays are not counted.

Are you doing anything for the Lenten season? Lent begins Wednesday, March 6th. Why not find an activity to deepen our faith and make a life style change?

Why not even get a jump start on it? On March 5th at 7pm at the Meditation Center, there will be an interfaith gathering with presentations on "What in your faith brings you comfort?" This is part of an ongoing gathering by the emerging Interfaith Community, which seeks to deepen relationships among people on many sacred paths. Learning from others can deepen our own faith.

And the very next night we will have our traditional Ash Wednesday Service at 7pm in the Chapel to help us start our time of nurturing our faith during the Holy Season of Lent. As stated earlier, Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. We, like many other Christian fellowships, will hold a service to prepare our hearts minds and lives for our journey with Jesus through betrayal, denial, and death to resurrection. The service focuses on calling us to deeper reflection and repentance. Ashes, an ancient symbol of grief for sins, are placed on the foreheads of worshipers in the form of a cross.

(Pastor's Thoughts Cont.)

As you gaze over our calendar, you will see a myriad of events to participate in. I would urge you to add a Bible Study group to your regular activities for Lent. And perhaps if you want to give up something, give up ten minutes of social media or TV for a time of focused prayer. Maybe take one more step and find a way to free up one hour of your time to devote in some way to helping others through activities of personal compassion or social justice.

May this season be a time of deepening of your faith.

Peace, *Pastor Bruce*



Book Club

At the February meeting, the book club discussed The Child Next Door by Shalini Boland. A new mother, on maternity leave from her teaching job, hears on the baby monitor, a whispered conversation about taking the baby. She rushes upstairs to find her child sound asleep with no sign of intruders.

On March 25, we will discuss Anne of Green Gables by Lucy Maude Montgomery. This young adult classic about a high-spirited orphan who is accidentally adopted by an aging, brother and sister who run a family farm on Prince Edward Island. Anne presents many challenges to her conservative new family as she draws other children into her creative activities.

The book club meets on the fourth Monday of most months at Perkins at 6 pm. Each participant buys a dinner to enjoy as we discuss the selected book. Others who are interested are encouraged to go to a meeting. Reading the selected book is not a requirement for attendance.

MEF

Thanks to the MEF committee, there are fellowship activities every month. The activities give us a chance to enjoy each other's company in a variety of fun and interesting ways. In January, following the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. service, there was a community dinner hosted by MEF. This is a particularly wonderful event because the service attracts people from many ethnic and cultural backgrounds, faiths, careers, and socio-economic groups. After the service, many attendees choose to go downstairs for the dinner, giving all an opportunity to interact with each other while enjoying food that generally reflects the diversity of the participants. Our church is fortunate to be able to facilitate these connected events.

Our "Wreck the Halls" activity (taking down the Christmas decorations) gave the committee an opportunity to assess the condition of some of the items. The wreaths, pine garland, and tree are deteriorating and a decision was made to purchase replacements.

In February, there were two events that promoted fellowship within our church family: a First Sunday Potluck Lunch, and dinner out at Grand Slam later in the month. These two events have emerged as our most popular so they are repeated each month when possible.

Upcoming Events:

March:

3/3 – First Sunday Potluck Lunch after worship

3/6 - Ash Wednesday Service at 7 pm followed by a coffee and snacks reception

3/18 – Dinner out at Randy's at 6 pm.

April:

4/7 – First Sunday Potluck Lunch after worship

4/12 – Seder meal at 6pm followed by a potluck dinner. A Seder is a ceremonial meal during which the history and importance of Passover are related through narration and consumption of bits of foods that represent aspects of the historical events.

(MEF Cont.)

4/24 – Dinner out at Mirchi at 6 pm. Mirchi serves cultural food of India and is located on North Union Street across from New Life Christian School, formerly North Hill Elementary School.

The next MEF meeting will be 3/13/19 at 7 pm in Fellowship Hall. Anyone with ideas for future fellowship activities, anyone thinking about joining the committee and the merely curious are welcome to attend this and any future meeting.

CE Corner

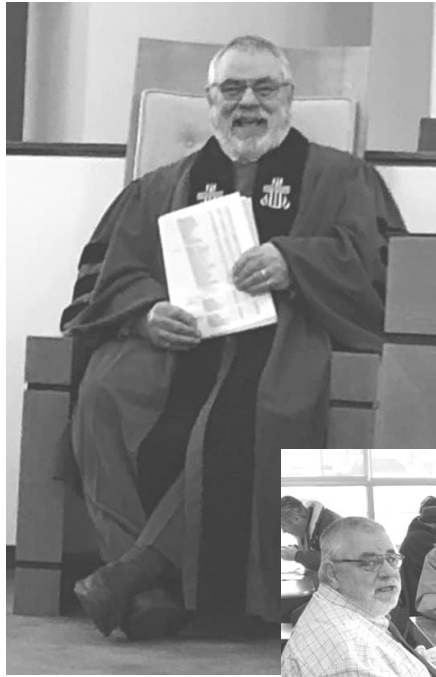
The students have been studying God's laws. We have been examining the Old and New Testaments for God's rules and guideposts on how to live our lives the way He wants. We saw that God and man do not always agree, and talked about having the courage to do what God wants us to do, even when society is telling us to do differently.

The boys are continuing to support Literacy of Love. They are starting up their hot chocolate sales after church. For \$1.00 you can enjoy a cup of gourmet hot chocolate, with all proceeds going to LOL. We continue to collect bottle receipts as well. Thanks to all who have supported the boys in their efforts. A thank-you also goes out to all those who donated food during the Souper Bowl of Caring food drive. You helped a lot of people in need!

We are planning to once again hold our annual Used Book Sale at the end of this month. If you are doing any spring cleaning, we would love your donations of any old books you may have. We are tentatively scheduling our sale for Sunday March 31 and Sunday April 7. We may be adding more items than just books- stay tuned for updates!

Happy Spring!

Carol McClellan, CE Director



January Session Meeting

Ed Bysiek, our financial auditor, distributed his audit report and explained the various categories that he examined and his findings. He confirmed that we have a good system in place for tracking our finances. He mentioned two very minor issues. He suggested that church employees be asked to complete the NYS withholding form. Although the information requested is on the federal form, having the state form would help make the personnel files more complete. He also noted that there are occasional small discrepancies in the Sunday collection totals that get fixed later. There was a brief discussion as to how those occur. Mr. Bysiek suggested a counting strategy that could help minimize such issues. We appreciate Mr. Bysiek's very professional work and his congenial manner.

PASTOR'S REPORT: There has been a request to have Winterbourne LaPucelle preach at the Martin Luther King service. It was moved, seconded and approved for that to happen.

CLERK'S REPORT: Thank you notes were received from the Gassman family for a donation and Cattaraugus County Department of the Aging for support for the blizzard bag project. It was moved, seconded and approved to accept the minutes of the December 3, 2018 Session minutes.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

PROPERTY: There has been some door damage to the wall in Fellowship Hall near the kitchenette. It will be repaired.

FINANCE/STEWARDSHIP: It was moved, seconded and approved to accept the December 2018 Budget Report. Doug Cashing mentioned that there was an error in benevolences payments. United Way received two payments and the Warming House did not receive one. Compensation will be in the 2019 budget. Doug presented the proposed budget for 2019 and highlighted the compensation for the benevolences payments. It was moved, seconded and approved to publish the proposed budget for 2019. It is recommended that the Roberts Fund disbursements for 2019 be \$9750 to the senior center, \$3670 to the Linwood Center, \$4900

(Session Meeting Cont.)

to Interfaith Caregivers, and \$1600 to Home Healthcare and Hospice.

WORSHIP: Communion was served on Christmas Eve, on January 6, and at Thursday evening vesper services. Communion servers for 2/3 will be Punkie, Lanna, Dave, John, and one other to be named. The new Bibles have been well received. Investigation into oil candles for the sanctuary continues. There was a discussion about locking outside doors when our service starts to help keep the church safe. It was pointed out that in case of a fire, there would be a problem in the old library as it takes a key to unlock the door. It was suggested that maybe the ushers could position themselves to watch the doors rather than locking them. It was decided that there should be an ushers' meeting to discuss the issue.

MEF/COMMUNICATIONS: It was a good season with caroling, deck the halls, wreck the halls, and the Christmas Eve reception. There will be no lunch served following the Annual Meeting as the meetings now tend to be short.

PRESBYTERY: Next meeting, 1/26 at 10 am at the Silver Creek Presbyterian Church.

GOAC: The Ecumenical Meeting will be on 1/27 with Della Moore and the Ba'hai Community being honored.



Dinner Out at
Randy's Up the River
Monday, March 18th,
6pm
Join us for food, fun,
and fellowship!

March Birthdays

- 4 ~ Chris Burton, Linda Kelly,
Jane Pitcher
- 8 ~ Ryan Evans
- 11 ~ Kara (McGonnell) Miller
- 13 ~ Marlene Levine
- 14 ~ John Linney
- 16 ~ Bob Busan
- 19 ~ Cole Sturdevant
- 21 ~ Carol McClellan
- 22 ~ Kim Whitney
- 28 ~ Craig Sinesiou
- 30 ~ William Burton, Sr.

March Anniversaries

- 22 ~ Mike & Judy Patton
- 28 ~ Rip & Sandi Smith



MARCH CELEBRATIONS

Ash
Wednesday

Join us at 7pm on March 6th
for an Ash Wednesday Service in
the Chapel. A coffee hour will
follow in Fellowship Hall.
All are welcome!