

As most of you know, I was honored to be selected to participate in a research project sponsored by Luther Seminary. This project, *Compelling Preaching*, is designed to help pastors gain a deeper understanding of what congregations are looking for in faithful sermons.

The congregation has also been selected. Your participation and responses are vital to making this research successful. We can benefit the broader church and local congregations.

While I will not be aware of your responses as the project is anonymous, I will be privileged to discover its overall findings based on the compilation of all the responses from participating congregations. I will gladly share the results with you as they become available as the research is compiled sometime after mid-November.

Will Willimon's book *Listener Dare* offers some exciting ideas on the nature of preaching. He points out that listening is a skill that can be enhanced and developed. And is just as vital as speaking.

Here are some of the things that he suggests:

1. Read the Scripture for the sermon beforehand. My sermon text is posted on Facebook early each week, but I should also start sending it out by email and text.
2. Wonder what problem or issue does this text address
3. Expect to be surprised sometimes.
4. Be patient; don't expect everything all at once. Preaching is not one-and-done.
5. Be critical, positive or negative. It's more than I liked or didn't like, but what did you like or not like and why?
6. Don't expect every sermon to be helpful to you
7. Encourage the pastor.
8. Allow the preacher to fail sometimes.
9. Try to love the preacher you've got rather than the one you think you ought to have.

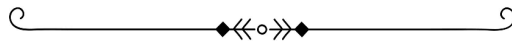
These ideas apply to most church situations. So, the next time one of your neighbors starts complaining about their church, share some of these thoughts with them.

I want to thank everyone who has participated in this research by responding to the seminar. If you haven't yet done so, I ask you to consider doing so prayerfully. You may respond by clicking on the link I send each week by text and email or using on the QR Code.

Thanks again for your help in this exciting project.

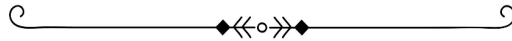
Peace and Blessings,
Pastor Bruce





Did you know...?

Did you know there are two Bible Studies? One meets Sunday mornings at 9:30am in the Conference Room and one meets Thursday evenings at 7pm in the Conference room. Everyone is welcome to attend these informal classes.



MEF Activities

10-13-25 ~ Potluck Lunch after Church

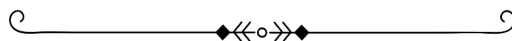
11-9-24 ~ Thankfest at 5pm

11-10-24 ~ Keynote Chorus Concert at 2:00pm Please plan to attend this concert. A free will offering will be taken.

We would like to encourage using ceramic cups instead of disposable cups during coffee hour and meals. This would decrease cost and trash. Current mugs that are on the mug trees will be placed on trays in Fellowship Hall. If you already have a mug please label it with your name, and hang it on one of the mug trees. If you don't have a mug, you can either bring one in and label it, or you can pick an unused cup, label it, and hang it on one of the mug trees. Disposable cups will remain available as needed.

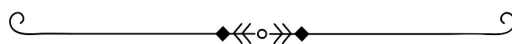
We are interested in resuming two volunteer advent activities. This includes Ringing the Bell for the Salvation Army and Christmas Caroling. Please let us know if you are interested.

We are in need of goodies for coffee hour. Thank you for your generosity.



Did you know...?

We have a coffee hour every Sunday after worship! Stay after the postlude and come into Fellowship Hall for coffee, a sweet treat of some sort and fellowship.



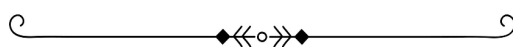
Flower Committee

If you would like to have flowers placed on the altar in memory of a loved one or to commemorate a special occasion, please notify a Flower Committee member below, or record your request on the flower chart at the back of the sanctuary and you will be contacted. If multiple requests are received for the same day, you may be contacted to establish another suitable date. Minimum two weeks notice requested.

We will place your order with Mandy's for delivery on the requested day. The charge for a basic arrangement is \$20; payment can be mailed to the church office (FPC PO Box 1608 Olean, NY 14760) or placed in the collection plate, labeled "flowers". Or, you may call Mandy's directly to order and pre-pay for the arrangement once the date is cleared with a committee member.

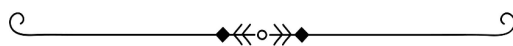
At the same time, we will ask you for the message/wording you would like printed in the bulletin.

Betsy Cashing 716-378-1634
Martha Nenno 716-474-8372
Joan McGonnell 716-307-9866



Did you know...?

We have a potluck luncheon once a month in Fellowship Hall on the 2nd Sunday of the month. Everyone is invited to attend. Table service and beverages are provided but we encourage people to bring something to share....cold or hot, sandwiches, casseroles, soups, veggies, chips, desserts, etc. And if you forget to bring something don't worry about it.....come anyway. There is always more than enough.



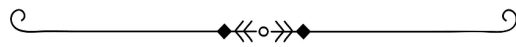
First Presbyterian Church of Olean
Regular Session Meeting Summary
September 9, 2024 @ 4PM

All Session members were present.

- The church will be used as a neutral pulpit for Jamestown on September 22.
- The church and Bruce will participate in the Compelling Preaching Program until November 14 when Bruce will attend the program's final retreat.
- Celebration of Andrea's 15th year of service was discussed.
- Roof: the down payment has been made. Almost \$40,000 has been donated and/or pledged toward the roof. Session is discussing other sources of funding.
- Bruce and Marlene have requested that \$1,000 be sent to Swizzy's Cause from the Mental Health Needs Fund which was set up in Amanda's name.
- A new copier will be bought for \$4,638. The old one is 7 years old and replacement parts are no longer being made.
- Bruce will organize a Zoom meeting with MEF committee, Session and John Fong, a consultant hired by Presbytery to help congregations grow.

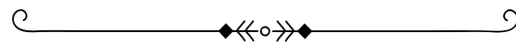
- The snow removal and check of boilers will be finalized this week.
- Railings in the Sanctuary will be installed this week.

Chris Norton, Clerk of Session



Did you know...?

Folks bring their own dinner to Fellowship Hall on Thursday evenings at 5:30pm (pick up some take out on the way to church) and just eat together? Then they stay for vespers in the chapel at 6:30pm or go to choir or Bible Study at 7pm or just go back home. It's just a relaxed time to be together. All are welcome.



Youth Corner

We are happy to be back in Sunday School for the 2024-2025 school year! We already have some big goals in mind and some fun projects planned.

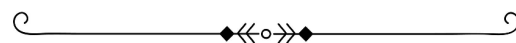
In the classroom, we will be studying the Gospel of Mark. We will be learning about what it really means to be a follower of Jesus. If you are a disciple of Jesus, it will be a hard road to travel. We learned that being a Christian can bring suffering, ridicule, isolation and pressure. We have to put all others first. And what we want may not be what Jesus wants, and we need to focus on Jesus' wishes instead of our own. We are learning all about what it means to be good and faithful servants!

This fall, we continue to support Literacy of Love- the charity founded by Cari Matejka to support orphans and disadvantaged children in Uganda. We are hoping to make another donation before the year's end. Help us to end this year on a positive note! They have recently opened a clinic and need all the help they can get. You have many ways to support them, including bringing in your bottle slips for Tops and Ried's. The students also continue to support the recipients of Meals on Wheels by making birthday cards to help them celebrate their special day.

We have also begun planning for our Christmas play! The class has decided to write their own play again this year, and already have a great idea for a story! We hope you will be able to attend our performance in December- better yet, we hope you can participate!

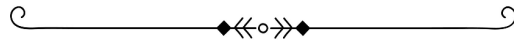
Enjoy the beauty of fall! See you on Sunday!

Carol McClellan, CE Director



Did you know...?

We have a vesper service every Thursday night at 6:30pm in the chapel. We have a very short worship, share in communion, sing a hymn, and light candles for anyone or anything we feel needs our prayers. By 7pm we are on our way but it's a nice, calm break in the week. Join us.



Do you know where the kids have Sunday school? Where the chapel is? Where the dining room is? If you'd like a tour of the church, let Pastor Bruce know and he will get a member of the MEF Committee to show you around!