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Good News

First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca

315 N. Cayuga Street • Ithaca, NY, 14850 • 607-272-2800 • Rev. Kirianne Weaver, Senior Pastor • Rev. Cynthia A. Weaver, Pastoral Supply

Dear friends,

Sometimes we choose not to talk about our great embarrassments, but today I am going to tell the story of one of mine. I was a pretty good student of Greek in Seminary, and registered for a high-level seminar translating the entire Gospel of Mark with Clifford C. Black, an excellent professor with great expectations of his students.

It was an exciting course! Each week a student presented their translation and the underlying scholarship of a chapter, essentially teaching the class for the two hour slot. My assigned chapter was Mark 13, which it turned out is known as the “Markan Apocalypse.”

It’s a strange chapter. Far from the sweet Beatitudes, in chapter 13 of Mark Jesus predicts earthquakes, famines, betrayal, and suffering. “The stars will be falling from the heavens, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken,” it predicts. I approached my presentation with as much fear as Jesus predicted.

I brought BOOKS—so many books—and I had consulted them all. I had notes on every verse, and variants to remark upon, and translational questions to raise. But, unfortunately, I did not actually understand the chapter one bit. Why was Jesus saying these things? What was the importance of telling us all this weird stuff?

Dr. Black let me go on for a while, but finally asked the burning question: “What is the real meaning of this chapter?” It was the moment of truth. “I don’t know,” I confessed. “I studied and studied this, and I have no idea what the

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meaning of it is.” So, as a good professor does, he answered what I could not. His explanation went something like this.

“People in Jesus’ time were going through hard stuff, and for the early church it would get harder still. Jesus’ followers were going to be mocked, banished, and scapegoated by Rome. They were going to be oppressed, persecuted, and killed for their faith. He needed them to know that when the world seems to be falling apart, that doesn’t mean we are lost or we have been abandoned by God. God is still there, and the end—the salvation, the perfection, the *teleos*—is still to come. That’s why this chapter is so important. It reminds us that even in hard times, God is still coming.”

I learned a lot that day: about my own fallibility, about the easy life and faith I had thus far lived, and about trusting the Bible to be important even when I couldn’t understand a text myself. And, I learned something in advance of hard times: God is still here.

These are hard times, too—thus a good time for me to share what I learned with you all.

Be well, pray often,
and do it all with love.

Need to Submit an Article? Please send it to the office: church.fpci@gmail.com by the due date. We print and mail the Good News on a monthly basis. Email subscriptions also available.
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Sunday Schedule: November 2025

November 2: All Saints Sunday

Scriptures: Psalm 149 and Luke 6: 20-31
Sermon: “Not for Today.”

November 9: 32nd Sunday of Ordinary Time

Scriptures: Haggai 2: 1-9 and Luke 20: 27-38
Sermon: “The Silver and the Gold”

November 10: Kendal Communion, 3pm

November 16: Stewardship Sunday

Scriptures: Isaiah 65: 17-25 and Luke 21: 5-19
Sermon: “A New Heaven and a New Earth”

November 23: Reign of Christ

Scriptures: Jeremiah 23: 1-6 and Luke 1: 68-79
Sermon: “God’s Shepherds”

November 30: The First Sunday of Advent

Join us after the service for decorating the church in the Hanging of the Greens!

From Pastor Cindy

Dear Friends,
Among my prized possessions (whether or not we should feel that strongly about a possession is a topic for another time) is a set of books, Every Moment Holy, which contains liturgies and prayers for just about any moment you might consider. In the liturgy for “Those Flooded by Too Much Information” is the following passage, Give us discernment
in the face of troubling news reports.
Give us discernment
to know when to pray,
when to speak out
when to act,
and when to simply
shut off our screens
and our devices,
and to sit quietly
in your presence,...

These days when so much of what we hear and read are tales of the misuse of the gift of creativity to invent more and more subtle and obvious ways to hurt our fellow human beings, we can be overwhelmed by how much work there is to do to bring about God’s reign on earth. The liturgy above echoes the Prayer of Confession we having been using recently which includes these words, “we have become thoughtless viewers of others’ lives, rather than being the subjects of our own story. We are passive beings in a world that needs us desperately to be the People of God.” These are thoughts which I have shared with you before, but I find I need to be reminded of them often, and so just in case it is true for you also, I encourage you to turn off the screens from time to time and sit quietly in God’s presence. It calms our overwrought minds and then fuels our desire to serve, so that we are ready to breathe in the Spirit’s presence and go out into the world to do the work Jesus has taught us to do – and there is so much to do.

Keeping you all in my prayers, *Cindy*

Adult Education in November:

Adult Education classes take place in Dodds Hall following fellowship time after the service, from 11:30-12:30. The room is accessible via the lift, found in the front of the sanctuary. We welcome all to come and join!

November 2: “How Shall We Pray?” Join us for this class on prayer, led by practitioner and church member Elmer Ewing. There are many ways to pray, but practices that can focus us. Should we pray for things for ourselves, for others, for the world—or should we pray for nothing, and let God do good in God’s own divine way? Expect a lively discussion and some times of quiet, too.

November 9: Stewardship. Next Sunday is Stewardship Sunday, and this time will be about looking at the church budget, our giving, and what we hope to accomplish in the coming year. Join Elder Christine Bataille, chair of Stewardship, and others to learn more about how and what we support with our gifts.

November 16: Christian Nationalism, Part 2: Join Dr. John and Rev. Barbara Schwartz in the second part of their two-part series on Christian Nationalism. The rise of this philosophy, which seeks to knit God’s favor with national and racial supremacy, is a danger to us as a country and as a people of faith. What is being done in Jesus’ name?

November 23: A Peek Inside Batavia: The Buffalo Federal Detention Facility. We welcome two students from the Cornell Law School who were part of a group that visited the Buffalo Federal Detention Facility: Paige Hoss and Adriana Gonzalez. Hear their first-hand experience of going within the walls and what they found about conditions there.

November 30: *Hanging of the Greens!* It’s the weekend after Thanksgiving, and the start of the Season of Advent. Join us in decorating the building for the holidays—a pizza lunch is provided!

Stewardship Sunday

Stewardship Sunday will be Sunday, November 16th !

The Stewardship Committee is delighted to announce that Stewardship Sunday is November 16th and the theme for this year’s steward campaign is, *For Everyone Born, A place at the Table*. Over the coming weeks, you will hear more from the committee about the spiritual feast we hope to provide as a church in this next year as we respond to the challenges of being God’s house in this time and place. You will soon receive a letter and a pledge card in the mail, and we hope everyone will join in committing to our collective stewardship for 2026.



Thanks! *Christine*

Birthdays in November:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1-Kyounghee Han | 22-Kate Hubs |
| 1-Nancy Jerkins | 25-Maurice Haltom |
| 6-John Weiss | 26-Glen Dowell |
| 11-David Brown | 26-Bruce Lane |
| 13-Joshua Yoon | 28-Jan Favaro |
| 19-Robert Kohut | |

*If you would like to be added to our list email the office:
Churchfpci@gmail.com*



Sing in the chorus of “Amahl”!

Rehearsals for this December’s production of “Amahl and the Night Visitors” is in full swing! Would you like to take part? There is a great chorus of shepherds and shepherdesses, and we need voices! You can choose to sing only (seated), sing and act, or just act—a group runs onto stage bearing food for the kings, and some will also get the chance to dance!

Contact David Neal: David.neal09@gmail.com
or Kirianne: kirianne.fpci@gmail.com

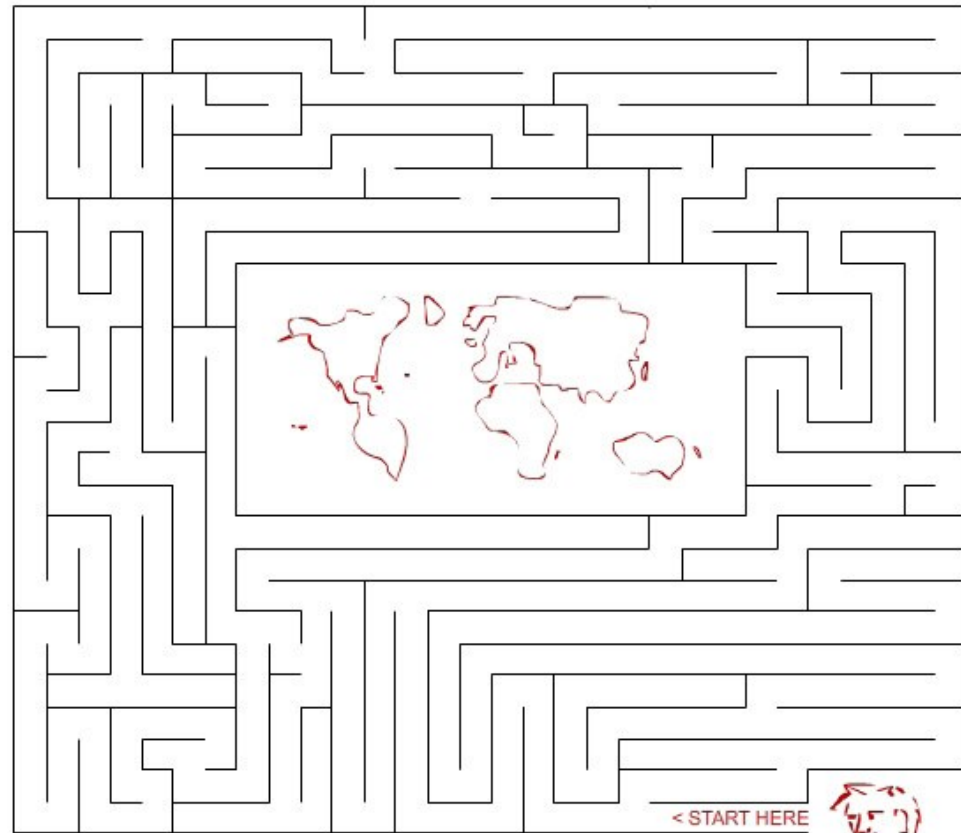
...and let us know what your interest might be!

We hold in our daily prayer:

David Brown; Brenda Dowell; Jennifer Carlson; Suzy Courtney;
Elmer Ewing; Harris Faulkner; Jeff Lovell; Martha Mapes;
Vivian and Jim Russell; and the
Presbyterian Church in Vladivostok.



*And I commend
joy, for man has
nothing better
under the sun but
to eat and drink
and be joyful, for
this will go with
him in his toil
through the days of
his life that God has
given him under
the sun.
Ecclesiastes 8:15*



Just for fun... Help our friend find his way in the mission field! Where is God calling him to go—and how in the world will he ever find his way? As you find the way, remember that God calls us all on many and diverse paths as we seek our home calling, where justice and truth meet our individual paths. Peace and joy be with you all! Kirianne



Ready for Winter? JPIC recommends a community resource

Citizen Emergency Preparedness Training

On Thursday, November 13, 2025, the NYS Citizen Preparedness Corp Training Program will hold a session in the Library Place at 105 W. Court Street. It is free and lasts from 4 to 5:30, including Q & A. Each participant will receive a backpack of supplies. To register, go to Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (<https://www.dhSES.ny.gov>). Recommended by JPIC, our committee on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.



In Go The Fall Bulbs

Our amazing troops on the Buildings and Properties Committee decided that in addition to their usual tasks of repairs and maintenance, they would take a morning and do some beautifying! Here are Rick Vaughan, Joe Bocchiaro, John Ullberg and Linda McLean digging up areas to fill with daffodil bulbs for the Spring. When you see the flowers next year in our memorial garden, remember the fantastic volunteers who do so many quiet services to bless us all. Asked if there was anything else we should know, Rick Vaughan said: “It was a beautiful fall day.”

Give Thanks!



Here are Rick Vaughan and Joe Bocchiaro, and Linda McLean and John Ullberg, planting new beds of daffodils and spring bulbs! Look for an “after” photo in the spring!

Meet The Akinniyis

Joseph Akinniyi was raised in Lagos, Nigeria, and currently resides in Ithaca with his wife, Grace, and their son, Josiah. He is a doctoral candidate at Cornell University, where his research focuses on the roles and experiences of women in African civil wars, with particular attention to narratives that are frequently neglected. Originally raised in the Anglican Church, he converted to Catholicism in the mid-2000s and now identifies as a Presbyterian. Omobolanle values the influence of faith, academic pursuit, and community in shaping his life. Outside of his academic commitments, he dedicates time to tending his garden and has developed an interest in learning the art of fishing. If you have any tips, he would be pleased to meet you after the service. Please feel free to introduce yourself or share your preferred local fishing location.



Grace Akinniyi is the wife of Joseph Akinniyi and mother to their son, Oluwaseyi Josiah Akinniyi. Though she enjoys life in Ithaca, she calls Accra, Ghana, home. A doctoral candidate in History at Cornell University, her research explores gender, land, and entrepreneurship in colonial Ghana, with a focus on women’s roles in the oil palm industries. Beyond her academic work, Grace enjoys visiting art galleries, cooking, and mentoring young women through her initiative, Polished Pearls. She is also introducing Closet-in-a-Box, a creative project empowering young people to build confidence and self esteem through fashion, and would love to connect with those who can guide her on this journey.



The Deacons

Brrr..... It’s getting cold outside! The Deacons have hung the **Clothesline of Warmth** to help us help our neighbors stay warm! The clothesline is hanging in the narthex and will be there through November 23. Please bring in your contributions - new or gently used hats, mittens, scarfs, jackets, boots and hang them on the clothesline (boots can go on the floor below). The items will be given to our neighbors at Open Doors English after November 23.

Here is another way we can help our neighbors - by supporting the Ithaca Kitchen Cupboard. The Kitchen Cupboard is a place they can come to get a variety of foods to take home. The

people fill out a form, circling the food items that they can use that week. These include canned goods, cereals, dairy products, frozen meats, fish and personal care items. Volunteers fill the order from the “kitchen cupboard” and our neighbor goes home with a bag or so of groceries.

It is more cost effective for the pantry to buy the items since they can buy in bulk, so our best way to support them is to make a check to the church, First Presbyterian Church, and make note on the memo line that it is a gift for the Ithaca Kitchen Cupboard. The church will make sure the gift gets to the right place.

A Congregational Advent Devotional!

Be a contributor to the 2025 First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca Advent Devotional! The Worship, Music, and Spiritual Life Committee (WMSL) is creating an Advent Devotional for the 2025 which is comprised of contributions from our congregation, and we are extending this invitation to participate to all our members and friends.

Each participant is given a Bible verse and asked to pray and think about it and then asked to write a brief commentary on what the passage stirred in you – just a few sentences. You are also asked to write a brief prayer prompted by the passage. There will be one Bible passage for each day in Advent, and beginning on the first day

of Advent, November 30, 2025, we will send the Bible verse and its commentary for that day by email to all who have signed up. We also hope to have paper copies available.

You do not need any special training to join our contributors. If you have ever wondered about the meaning of a Bible passage, you are qualified! We did this a few years ago, and it was so popular that we’ve had many requests to do it again, and so we are! Please contact Susan Van Sickle, stvansickle@aol.com or Beth Patton, e_patton@icloud.com if you would like to join in the festivities!

- The Worship, Music, and Spiritual Life Committee