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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

**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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### Worship Schedule: March 2025

**March 2: Transfiguration Sunday**

**Worship with Communion**

Scripture: Luke 4: 21-30

Sermon: “An Experience.”

**March 5: Ash Wednesday Service, 7pm**

**March 9: The First Sunday of Lent**

*Join us to hear from visiting preacher Dr. Ken Clarke, who will also lead Adult Education!*

**March 16: Second Sunday of Lent**

Scripture: Luke 6: 17-26

Sermon: “A Level Place”

**March 23: Third Sunday of Lent**

Scripture: Luke 16: 1-9

Sermon: “A Bit of Manure”

**March 30: Fourth Sunday of Lent**

Scripture: Luke 6: 27-38

Sermon: “Do Unto Others...”

Dear friends,

If you ever catch me weeping in my office in February or early March, chances are I’m working on the service for Ash Wednesday.

In our service, we follow the Old Testament custom of expressing grief. Like most churches, during the service we put a mark of ashes on our foreheads. More unusually, we also follow the ancient tradition of rending the cloth in grief—in our case, a banner we bring in for the service.

It is my job, in preparing for the service, to select sources from which we read. These come from the Bible primarily, but also from our shared world events of the preceding year; we read about famines and earthquakes, wars and extremism, die-offs of species and deadly heatwaves.

Poring through these natural disasters for first-hand accounts is a grim business. I learn of things of which I had only been mildly aware: mudslides in India, the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, of course the ongoing violence and disaster in Haiti. I read again about the earthquake in Noto, Japan that lifted some parts of the earth 4 meters, creating an additional 4.4 km<sup>2</sup> of land and killing over 500 people. I learned that an avalanche of garbage from a landfill in Uganda killed at least 60 in 2024, with desperate neighbors digging through the refuse to find possible survivors. This year we will hear instead from Darfur, Sudan; Cedar Creek, North Carolina; from the front in Ukraine; and from Los Angeles, California—but every story deserves to be told.

The act of cutting these stories down to a reasonable text is painful. Which part should be

left out—which part doesn’t need to be told? Whose story do I choose, from all the material we have over which to grieve? I find myself caught, as I read, by old words from a favorite movie. Stockard Channing, *Six Degrees*: “Are you sure these are the worst off? We didn’t come all this way to see people only *mildly* victimized by apartheid...”

But this year, I have decided that—while we can’t read people’s full stories, nor read all the stories—I can make the full stories of at least some available. For the four texts we will hear, wildly abridged, we will also make the full texts available in the service and on the website. Each comes to us at least in part in their own words; each comes from a lived experience of what it means to be human in this past year. Each gives us more than enough to grieve, in sackcloth and ashes.

As we grieve for our world, we must not forget to repent, also, for our own part in it. None of the stories is without a human element of wrong, and it is our penitence that Joel asks of us, in calling for this service:

*“Yet even now,” says the Lord,  
 “return to me with all your heart,  
 with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.  
 Rend your hearts, and not your garments.  
 Return to the Lord your God:  
 for God is gracious and merciful,  
 slow to anger, and  
 abounding in steadfast love.”*

## From Pastor Cindy

Dear Friends,

Last week I heard someone refer to a friend of theirs named Reginald. Immediately, memories of my childhood pastor, the Rev. Reginald McInroy came to mind. I don't remember his sermons or his Youth Fellowship prayers; I remember his kindness. During his time with us our junior high (that term dates me a bit) Sunday School teacher challenged us to read one whole book of the Hebrew Testament and one whole book of the New Testament. Being the good student I was, I completed the assignment and read the prophet Obadiah and Paul's letter to Philemon. In other words, I read the shortest book in each testament.

Even though they were short, each book was quite challenging. Obadiah in particular left me with many questions. God sounded very judgmental and mean, and I didn't remember who most of the people mentioned were. But most of all, God sounded very different than the God Rev. McInroy spoke of and embodied. I kept my doubts to myself, but they prompted me to dive into the story more than I might have otherwise. I looked up who Esau was and where Sepharad was on the map and just what was meant by "the exiles" Now, I understand that not everyone may enjoy sitting on the floor in the library stacks (another term which dates me) researching a question, but there was something about Rev. McInroy's kindness that made me want to understand more, and the more I read, the more I appreciated the complexity of the Bible.

This experience is probably why I like Bible study so much. There is much I don't understand or even like, but when I wrestle with the Bible, it draws me in more and more deeply, and I am reminded of a man who lived his faith with such gentleness and kindness. I encourage you all to open the Bible onto an unfamiliar page and be surprised, pleased, unsettled, amused, puzzled, and moved deeply by what you find.

## Adult Education in March

*Adult Education classes generally take place after Fellowship time, in Dodds Hall on the lower level of the church. There is no knowledge we expect anyone to have ahead of time—all are welcome to join!*

**March 2:** Providing legal aid services for estate planning and incapacity planning. Valery Paul, Esq., from Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York, will introduce planning for the afterlife and illness. The Pauls are frequent attendees to our worship services. Please join us in Dodds Hall at 11:30.

**March 9.** The Rev. Dr. Kenneth I. Clarke, Sr., recently retired Director of the Tompkins County Office of Human Rights, will address how Lent can serve as a centering moment amidst the turbulence of our current time. Dr. Clarke, who led Cornell United Religious Work from 2001-2017, has preached and taught numerous times at First Presbyterian. We always look forward to his classes, and he says he welcomes the opportunity to once again engage the congregation.

### March 16 through the end of March:

Lent through the Lens of Luke – March 16, 23, and 30 will be the first three weeks of a four-week Bible study of the Gospel of Luke. Lent is a time of preparation for Easter, and although we usually associate Luke with the Christmas story, we will take a look at how Luke presents Jesus's preparation for what awaited him in Jerusalem and on the cross. Please join Pastor Cindy for these classes.

"And what about Philemon," you may ask. I didn't dive into research about that book in junior high, but many, many years later it was the New Testament book I had to write about on one of my Presbyterian ordination exams. With faith and love,

Looking forward to soaring with you,

*Cindy*

## Lenten Fellowship and Devotions:

### Lenten Reading Experience: A Rhythm of Prayer

Starting March 5<sup>th</sup>, Ash Wednesday, please join our Lenten renewal reading experience, [A Rhythm of Prayer](#), by Sarah Bessey.

For the six weeks leading up to Easter, the entire congregation will be able to engage in a rhythm of reading, praying, meditating, learning, expressing, and connecting.

Read a poem and reflect on it for just a few minutes. Focus on a bible verse and let it speak to you before you start work in the morning. Carve out some family time and select a reading to discuss as a family. Proceed through the book at your own pace. Engage in the experience a little or a lot and - if you dare - share.

Center yourself with one of the prayers in the book as you stand amidst your preferred creative outlet - then create your own prayer, poem, dance, outfit, lullaby, sweater, needlepoint, short story, sculpture, photo, ceramic, video, game, craft, or ....

Each Sunday of Lent, if your renewal experience has inspired a new creation, you are invited to casually share it with others during the fellowship time. We just ask that you notify Worship Music and Spiritual Life (Sylvia, 860-810-8297, [wsla-dy@icloud.com](mailto:wsla-dy@icloud.com)) when you'd like to share your creation(s) so we can arrange a display table or a suitable space to share it.

The book is available at Barnes and Noble, on Amazon (print and electronic), and there are copies in the church library. WMSL will also buy a few copies of [A Rhythm of Prayer](#) to have them on hand in the Narthex - please make a donation towards the cost if you are able.

We hope you will join us on this journey toward the celebration of Easter.

### Lenten Suppers

This Lent, gather with us for food and fellowship at our series of Lenten suppers! Come join us for our first supper, a soup supper, held in Dodds Hall on Wednesday, March 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. After dinner, stay for discussions inspired by this year's Lenten devotional text, [A Rhythm of Prayer](#). If you'd be willing to help with this first event (setup, cleaning, bringing an item of food, or making a vegetarian soup), please sign up in the narthex at Fellowship Hour, or e-mail Sara Carpenter at [sc393@cornell.edu](mailto:sc393@cornell.edu).

The supper series will continue, week to week, in the more intimate setting of people's homes for further and deeper discussions inspired by [A Rhythm of Prayer](#), with the first in-home supper to be hosted the week of March 16<sup>th</sup> (more details to follow in future bulletins and announcements). Please let Sylvia Reeves know if you would be willing to host a supper at your home during lent (860-810-8297, [wsla-dy@icloud.com](mailto:wsla-dy@icloud.com))

### Birthdays in March:

3 – Linda McLean	20 – John Yoon
4 – Rick Vaughan	23 – Susan E. Wade
6 – River Reining	26 – Margaret Shackell
11 – Ann Owens	31 – Christina Mead
17 – Timothy Riley	
18 – Grace Htoo	

*We hold in our daily prayer:*

*David Brown; Jennifer Carlson; Mischa Dixon; Harris Faulkner;  
Vivian and Jim Russell; and Marj Smart.*







# CHILDREN & YOUTH

## HEADING: TITLE



Ash Wednesday is March 5!

<b>March</b> <b>5</b>  Ash Wednesday Lent begins	<b>March</b> <b>15</b>  Youth Group Lock-In! 6th grade+	<b>March</b> <b>30</b>  No Sunday School.	<b>April</b> <b>20</b>  Easter Egg Hunt! No Sunday School
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Sunday School continues throughout Lent with the added excitement of experiencing communion every week. Join us upstairs as we walk through this important season.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

### NURSERY

#### Substitute Sign Up:

Sometimes our nursery staff person is ill and unable to come in. So we need a substitute. If you would be interested in volunteering you can sign up with mylika by emailing with your Name, and phone number at mylika.fpci@gmail.com

*Learn More about Triennium See: "Youth"*



July 28 - 31  
Louisville, KY

### SUNDAY SCHOOL

#### No Sunday School:

- March 30
- April 20 (Easter)

#### Volunteers:

- Sign up to be a helper or photographer during Sunday School. Helpers only need to be able to do basic tasks like open glue, tie a costume or color a picture.
- Photos are ALWAYS needed during Sunday School. If you want to help out in this way just sign up by email and on the day you sign up for a camera phone will be provided.

### YOUTH

#### 2025 Lock In:

Join us in Dodd's Hall on March 15 at 5pm for a fun sleep over full of games and adventure! We will be exploring the story of the book of Exodus! Youth should RSVP by March 12 via email or in person.

#### No Youth Group:

- March 15
- March 30
- April 20 (Easter)

#### Triennium:

The PCUSA grand gathering of youth is happening this summer! July 25– August 1. Youth grades 8 and up. Email for more details.

# A Game of Guess Who with the Deacons!

At our annual Joint Meeting of Session and the Deacons of the church, we tried to guess who among us had written each of these bits of trivia about themselves. Let's see if you can do it, too! Here are the things written by the Deacons who were present, and we'll share more next month!

- |                                                                                                     |                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. I am an "expert" on girls, having three daughters and five granddaughters.                       | A. Sebastian Vander Ploeg Fallon |
| 2. I (typically) have very small handwriting.                                                       | B. Bobbie Kohut                  |
| 3. I have lived in Florida, New Mexico, and Virginia, and spent many summers vacationing in Canada. | C. Becca Hilts                   |
| 4. I was a horseshoes champion in college.                                                          | D. Harris Faulkner               |
| 5. I swam in ocean water where a shark was caught the same day!                                     | E. Linda Sharpe                  |
| 6. I spent \$1,000,000 a year for repair material.                                                  | F. Nancy Lovell                  |
| 7. H. J. Heinz (yes, the ketchup king) proposed to my great-grandmother.                            | G. Rev. Cindy Weaver             |
| 8. I had my 9th birthday while crossing the Atlantic Ocean.                                         | H. Elizabeth Ofori               |
| 9. I was a choreographer and dance instructor from Junior High to College.                          | I. John Weiss                    |
| 10. I've been hit by a car two different times in my life, and wonder when #3 may be.               | J. Jeanette Miller               |

### Current Deacons of our Church:

*In January and February, we elected, ordained and installed new Deacons and Elders. Officers must be members of the church, are nominated by the Nominating Committee, and can serve one or two consecutive three-year terms.*

*Here is a current list of the Deacons of our church. See next month's issue for the same game and list of our Elders!*

### 2025 Deacons:

- Deb Streeter, Chair
- Harris Faulkner
- Michael George
- Becca Hilts
- Heather Lane
- Geoff Lightfoote
- Nancy Lovell
- Elizabeth Ofori
- Tom Owens
- E. Stuelke
- Sebastian Vander Ploeg Fallon
- John Weiss

# Our Church's Support for Aspiring Americans

On Sunday, February 2, a rally was held on Ithaca Commons to support our city's Sanctuary Policy following an ICE action in our community. Our church building is the home of Open Doors English, Ithaca's only adult English language classes that are open to everyone, and Ithaca Welcomes Refugees which was started in our congregation. Both these organizations have students and friends who have been affected by the heightened anxiety and fear ICE left in its wake. Our congregation has also historically been very involved in sponsoring refugees as they seek resettlement in safety.

Therefore, it was fitting that, following the rally, there was a forum held here in our sanctuary that filled every pew! Enjoy these images from Feb. 2, and please pray for our sisters and brothers who have been given cause for anxiety and fear.



Photo captions: **Top image**—the rally at the Commons. **Above:** As we arrive at the church, we head down to Dodds Hall for a forum—but soon outgrew that room, with many more people on the way. **Below left:** more people arrive and we start moving up to the sanctuary instead. **Opposite page:** more line up outside, and a sanctuary panoramic. **Bottom right:** The sanctuary filled and the forum commenced. Thank you to all of you who show love to *all* our neighbors, all the time!



# Extra Trimmings:



## It's the Go Joe Column!

Never think Joe lets any grass grow beneath his feet (even in summer!) Have you noticed how bright and cheery Dodds Hall has looked the last week or so? The old curtains are down and the windows are freshly painted—and soon to be cleaned! It's so lovely... Go, Joe!



## Tee's Travels:

Tee's travels this past month included a lovely long visit with Joy Mecenas! Here she is at home and with a big smile—and Joy, we miss seeing you every week but are so glad we can see you here. Tee is our intern for Congregational Life, and if you would like a visit from him please let him or the pastoral staff know!

