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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: April 2025

April 6: The Fifth Sunday of Lent

Scripture: John 12: 1-8
 Sermon: “Treachery.”

April 13: Palm Sunday!

Scripture: Luke 19: 28-40
 Sermon: “Exuberance.”

Bring your fish banks and envelopes as we gather the One Great Hour of Sharing offering!

April 17, 7pm: Maundy Thursday

April 18, 7pm: Good Friday

April 20: Easter Sunday!

Scripture: Acts 10: 34-43
 Sermon: “How Far God Goes”

April 27: The Second Sunday of Easter

Scripture: John 20: 19-31
 Sermon: “Receive the Holy Spirit”

Dear friends,

I need tell none of you that these are strange times we are living through, and frightening to those who have seen much of history. Many of the institutions of our nation meant to uphold our democracy are failing or falling: non-political positions are becoming political appointments; organizations such as the Institute for Peace are being disbanded; deportations are targeting those who exercise their free speech; the legal system is being attacked, as law offices are forced to pay bribes to maintain their security clearance and judges who adjudicate against the administration are targeted for impeachment.

In this climate, people are losing their faith in the humanist pillars of society. Humanism depends upon people thinking that their fellow humans are basically good, and that the natural arc of society will lead to justice. In today’s fractured communities, and the disintegration of our support systems, there is no basis for that faith.

I mention this because we, as followers of Jesus, have something to offer today’s world. As Christians, our faith is not in rulers, principalities, or a general belief that humans will do what is right on their own. Instead, we look to Christ as our standard, and to God as our judge. Right and wrong are not determined by the changing winds of culture, they are encoded in the words of Jesus.

Jesus teaches us compassion. He calls on us to welcome the stranger (Matt. 25); to feed the hungry (John 21); to heal (Mark 3); to promote peace (Matt. 5); to be humble (Luke 14); not to

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- Elders Guessing Game (p. 3)
- Obituary: Mischa Dixon (p. 5)
- Youth Ministry Page (p. 6)

take what isn’t yours (Mark 10); and much, much more. We are planning a rally for this in June, about which you will hear more: **what Jesus really taught** is very different from what we are hearing today, and we must stand up for it. But not only this: in addition, we have a faith in something higher that does not disappoint, and which calls us to a greater measure of goodness and righteousness.

In a gathering of the Session of a fellow (and quite healthy) Presbyterian church, the meeting centered around a discussion of the long-term financial health of the congregation. After talking through the matter, the Session came quickly to realize that financial stability was dependent upon people: attendance, church affiliation, the growth of the congregation. “We need our whole church to be inviting friends,” the Session concluded.

They came at the matter differently, but arrived at the same impact of what I want to say here. This is the time to reach out and invite people to come. We have something to say, and it is vital to keeping hope alive in those who want the world to be a peaceful, loving place. Start conversations; stand on the bedrock of God’s justice; offer the world Christ’s love. For it is what the world truly needs, now.

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

From Pastor Cindy

Dear Friends,

Recently I have had to decide to cut down the two entwined black willow trees just off the corner of my back deck. They were there when I bought the house 30 years ago, and they have given me much entertainment through the years. I know spring has truly arrived when I hear the yellow warblers in the willows, and one large broken off branch provided a perch for a northern goshawk. The two trees have slightly different branching patterns, and their leaves are different in color and size. It was sitting and studying the tree and seeing these differences that made me realize they were two different trees that had become entwined rather than a single tree with a split trunk.

Why am I removing them you may ask? Well, for 30 years they grew next to the septic system without bothering it, but these water-seeking trees are now intruding and have necessitated two visits from the plumber. I truly hate to see them go, but it is time. In general, it can be hard for me to let go of things, and I find myself already missing the warblers, the goshawk, the wrens and the chickadees, the woodpeckers, and even the year-round cardinals that play about just a few feet in front of me.

Throughout my life there are some lessons I have trouble learning, and it seems it is time for me to have one repeated – yet again. The lesson is that it is time to let go and be ready for something new – maybe even something more. I think of Isaiah 43:19 where the LORD says, “I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” I am grateful for my willow trees, but now it is time to see the view they blocked – to see what is happening in the wilderness beyond.

With curiosity and hope,

Cindy

Adult Education in April:

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!

April 6: Lent through the Lens of Luke – Part 4 – In our last week of this Bible study we will spend time with some of the most powerful verses in the Gospel. We will sit at the Last Supper, hear Jesus’s pain in Gethsemane, watch him be arrested, and hear Peter’s denials of him. Join us as we continue to prepare for the joy of Easter. All are welcome!

April 13: Denice Karamardian, local author of the Odar Trilogy series of three books, will lead the class. She has written an account of the life of her father, Joe Peter, an Armenian from Syria who later moved here to Ithaca. One moving story includes our church’s minister of many years, Rev. Walter Dodds—class to be held in Dodds Hall!

April 20: Easter Sunday—no class!

April 27: Elder Jan Morgan will lead a discussion on creating an Ethical Will.

PEG HAMPSON: 1928-2024

We are very sad to announce the death of member Margaret “Peg” Hampson, December 20, 2024. An obituary is not yet available to publish, but you may remember her humble, gentle, always-smiling presence. Godspeed, Peg, with all our love.

News and Notes for April:

Announcing the 2025 Deacons’ Student Grants

For many years, the Deacons of FPCI have offered grants to assist the children of members and friends of our church family who wish to pursue their education beyond high school. The scope encompassed by these educational goals is broad, including trade schools or other job-related education, community college or university studies, as well as any other studies that support the applicant’s transition to adulthood and independence. The Deacons’ grants are typically in the amount of \$500 to \$1000 (depending on the number of applicants and the funds available) and are intended to supplement the primary monetary resources supporting post-secondary education.

The application process involves a simple two-page information form and an interview with Mylika and two of our current Deacons. Applications are available via email from Tom Owens at tgo2@cornell.edu. If you have any questions or would like to suggest a potential applicant, please contact either Tom Owens or John Weiss (jhw4@cornell.edu). The deadline for applications is May 16th, 2025.

It is our hope that these grants will help to maintain connections between our youth and our church as they both evolve into their respective futures.

Holy Week Services:

Maundy Thursday: 7pm

On this day we recognize the first “Lord’s Supper” – when Jesus, before being betrayed and arrested, sat at table with his disciples. Hear the story of that evening which followed, as they gathered in the Garden of Gethsemane, as Jesus prayed that the cup of sorrow might be removed from him, as he is betrayed with a kiss, arrested, and taken before the High Priests. We leave the scene for the evening as Peter denies him three times and weeps.

Thursday Night Easter Vigil: till midnight.

Good Friday: 7pm

In this service we read excerpts from novelists, poets and scripture, evoking the continuation of the story: Jesus’ appearance before Pontius Pilate, his beating, the carrying of the cross, and his death. Our banner from Ash Wednesday re-emerges as God rends the curtain in the temple, from top to bottom, symbolizing God’s grief. Jesus’ body is taken from the cross and laid in the tomb.

Birthdays in April:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| 8—Vivial Russell | 25—Nancy Whitmore |
| 9—William Chen | 26—Janet Mara |
| 11—Martha Mapes | |
| 13—Micah Beck | <i>To add your birthday,</i> |
| 18—Carl Crispell | <i>email the office:</i> |
| 24—Judy Vaughan | <i>church.fpci@gmail.com!</i> |

We hold in our daily prayer:

David Brown; Jennifer Carlson; Harris Faulkner; Vivian and Jim Russell; and Marj Smart; and the Dauria family on the loss of grandmother Donna; and all Mischa Dixon’s friends, family and the people who loved him.



CHILDREN & YOUTH

HEADING: TITLE



Happy Easter! HE IS RISEN!



Easter Egg Hunt!

Children will hunt for eggs during Sunday School. Parents are welcome!

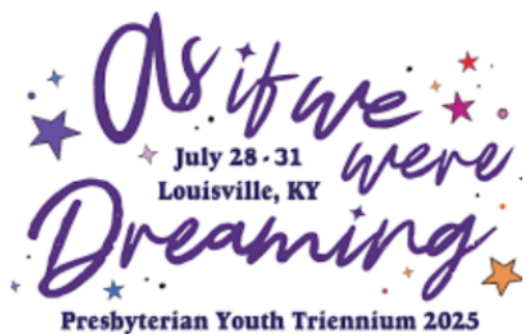
WHAT'S NEXT?

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 by emailing with your Name, and phone number at mylika.fpci@gmail.com

Learn More about Triennium See: "Youth"



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Easter Egg Hunt

- Join us during Sunday school in the Sunday School Room for a fun Easter egg hunt for children grades 0-5th.

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.

YOUTH

Easter Helpers:

Youth who wish to help hide eggs should arrive by 9am on Easter Sunday 4/20.

Youth Outing:

Next event will be a group trip to Greek Peak. Keep an eye out for more information and registration information.

No Youth Group:

- April 20 (Easter)

Triennium Registration due on April 10.

The PCUSA grand gathering of youth is happening this summer! July 26– August 1. Youth grades 8 and up. Email for more details.

A Game of Guess Who with the Session!

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! Last month you heard from the Deacons—here are the things written by the Elders who were present!

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. My hair used to be down to my shoulders. | A. Brad McFall |
| 2. As a young teen I was in a talent show with my sister. We wore lederhosen and sang in German. I totally forgot the words and sang "ich" and "och" all the way through. My sister thought I was nuts! | B. Linda "Mac" McLean |
| 3. I scuba-dived off of Catalina Island in the Pacific Ocean. | C. Sylvia Reeves |
| 4. I came in second place in every track meet. | D. Sara Carpenter |
| 5. In eighth grade I sang the part of Yum-Yum in "The Mikado" | E. Kevin Packard |
| 6. I have stood on the edge of a 2,000 foot cliff. | F. Rev. Kirianne Weaver |
| 7. I used to have hens in my backyard. | G. Glen Dowell |
| 8. I have three turtles! | H. Bruce Lane |
| 9. I have ridden a sled down from the Great Wall of China. | I. Kate Hubbs, Clerk |
| 10. I write weird song/poem parodies for educational/human connection reasons! | J. Tavie Flanagan |
| 11. Six days after getting my braces off, I knocked out my front tooth on a parked car serving as first base in street baseball. | K. Mylika Selah |
| 12. I once traveled to Poland and celebrated Christmas and New Years in Warsaw. | L. Jan Morgan |

Current Elders 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.

Last month we listed the Deacons of our church. Now, here is a list of our Elders!

2025 Elders:

Christine Bataille	Sylvia Reeves
Sara Carpenter	Margaret Shackell
Jessa Dauria	<i>Elder Mischa Dixon was starting his first term on Session as he went through his cancer treatments, and unexpectedly died March 11, 2025. His obituary is on page 5.</i>
Glen Dowell	
Tavie Flanagan	
Bruce Lane	
Brad McFall	
Christina Mead	
Jan Morgan	
Kevin Packard	

Our First Lenten Supper (And Another On the Way!)

Wednesday March 5 was Ash Wednesday—and a week later, on March 12, we had a supper at church and a chance to talk about Sarah Bessey’s wonderful book, “A Rhythm of Prayer.” Here are some photos from that night!



A second dish-to-pass Lenten Supper is coming up— Wednesday Ap. 2, at 6:30pm at Tom Owens and Deb Streeter’s: **46 Cornell Street, Ithaca, NY**
Space is limited, so sign up in fellowship time!



Mischa Stoddard Dixon: Active Elder



June 4, 1962 March 11, 2025.

Mischa (née Michael) Stoddard Dixon, 62, was killed in battle with cancer on the morning of March 11, 2025 at his Freeville, NY home. No “straw death,” this, nor the “red death” fighting injustice he’d hoped for, but an “orange death,” at the tail end of a brutal war he had been doggedly winning.

Mischa was born to Joan and James Dixon Jr. on June 4, 1962, and grew up in Schenectady loving the theatre, D&D, and the SCA. He went to Onondaga Community College and Fredonia, earned a degree in mass communication, and worked as a stagehand and electrician, went on the road with the Broadway touring company of *Singing in the Rain*, working as a lighting director, movie projectionist and theatre manager at Hoyt’s before going into insurance. Starting in his teens, Mischa was very active in the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA), where he was best known as the bard (Skald) “Toki Redbeard,” and where his highest honor was being made a member of the Order of the Laurel for artistic excellence – though his most treasured was the Consort’s Order of Courtesy, of which he continually strove to be worthy. Mischa was a skilled poet, a passionate performer and storyteller, a budding

fiddler, and he loved history, poetry, punk rock, gaming, and Beowulf. A continual and curious learner himself, he taught others what he knew and helped many people find, refine, and believe in their own gifts. His house was a hub of gameplay, stories, love and friendship. Though he was a “secret Episcopalian,” he was a Deacon and Elder at 1st Presbyterian Church of Ithaca, where he continually built a welcoming and inclusive community, and where, having experienced the power of gaming in building human connection, he founded Community Game Night (Thurs, 6:30pm). His faith was important to him, and he believed in resisting tyranny and the transformative power of universal love.

Mischa was buried on Sunday 3/16/25 at 1:30pm at Greensprings Natural Cemetery Preserve. A Celebration of his life followed at 3:30pm at the 1st Presbyterian Church, 315 N Cayuga Street, Ithaca, NY, where family, and friends shared memories, songs, poems, and stories. There was a reception afterward at the church.

Mischa is survived by his brothers, Chris and Jim Dixon, and a large and loving chosen family—among them, sisters Judy Dixon and Lori Drake, children Ves and Quince Baird, Robert Buchanan, the Tuesday night game crew, the community of Community Game Night, the people of 1st Prez of Ithaca, and numerous beloved SCAdians, including apprentices, Laurels, Grandlaurels, and Great-Grandlaurels, in whom he fiercely believed, and of whom he was immensely proud.

But - This is not the time to be dismayed; This is Punk Rock Time. Love yourself. Love your neighbor. Welcome the stranger. Build community. Speak out. Protest peacefully. Call your Senator and Representatives. Spread the positive ripples of Mischa’s life in and outside of yourself. Donate to a charity in his name -- Consider organizations fighting for human rights and health, like the ACLU, HRC, NAACP, AFSP, the American Cancer Society, and Planned Parenthood - and other causes close to your heart.

Written by Sara Carpenter