



# LISTEN to *The ChurchMouse*

*New Scotland Presbyterian Church*

*February 2024*

*"Original Landlord Still Offering Sanctuary"*



## Observing Lent *by Rev. Holly Cameron*

Lent is the season of preparation for Easter. Traditionally, Christians give up something for Lent to more intentionally focus on God. The best-known Lenten tradition is to not eat meat on Fridays. This tradition dates back to the first century. I have always understood this practice to be about helping the poor – Christians gave up eating expensive meat and donated that money to the poor. It is an act of devotion to God, while also helping neighbors. Recently I learned there is another part to this tradition. In the 1500's, when the Church of England broke away from the Catholic Church, the tradition of eating fish on Fridays was avoided, which caused great economic hardship for fishermen! The practice of eating fish on Fridays came back into favor to support the fishermen in their work. This is also an act of devotion to God and helping neighbors.

So often as I was growing up, I heard about people giving up chocolate or beer for Lent. In doing so, the idea was to focus on God every time you thought about indulging. Spending more time thinking about God is a nice idea, but it seems to me this kind of "sacrifice" misses the mark. The greatest commandment is to love God with our heart, soul, mind, and spirit; and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mt 22, Mk 12, Lk 10). So, when we give up a treat, it may be good for our health and help us spend more time focusing on God, but is there a benefit to our neighbors?

For many years, I have given up some form of screens for Lent. Some years I just pull the

plug on my television, some years I have the TV on only in the morning as I'm getting ready to leave the house, but do not turn the TV on again until the next morning. My intention is to free up more time for reading, for music, for getting outside, and for connecting to far-away family members and friends.



This year I'm committing to the spiritual discipline of starting the day with 20 minutes of physical activity, 20 minutes of reading, and 20 minutes of meditation. Someone told me there is now a popular book about this, but I first learned about this practice in a prayer class I took while in Divinity School. I'm glad it is coming into popular conversation, because it is a lovely practice to begin each day with caring for our bodies, our minds, and our souls. Loving our neighbors as ourselves means we need to love and care for ourselves!

I'm happy that we have other opportunities to build community with our neighbors this Lenten season, as we begin a weekly conversation on our Lenten devotional booklet. We'll be meeting every Tuesday at 6:00 p.m., starting February 13, both in person and on Zoom. If you can come in person, we'll be in the Klohck Room at V'ville Methodist, and if you would like to join by Zoom, please let me know. Pastor Quincie and I will be leading the group through April 2, and we would love to have you join us.

May we all have a Holy Lent, with the intention to deepen our love for God, for ourselves, and for our neighbors.

~Faithfully, +Holly



*Our February mission is . . .*



**Opening Doors Every Day**

## **Pennies for Haven**

*(Homeless, not hopeless)*

**A**ll money collected will be given to IPH. IPH (formally known as Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless) is located on Sheridan Avenue in downtown Albany.

IPH was founded in 1984 as Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless by the Capital Area Council of Churches and is a designated 501c(3) non-profit organization.

Beginning as a provider of emergency shelter for single adults, IPH has expanded its non-denominational programming to include a continuum of services that assist over 2,500 homeless and at-risk individuals and families each year. IPH promotes life skills development and self-sufficiency.

"In recognition of the dignity and value of every human life, the mission of the IPH is to address the needs of the homeless and low-income community by providing a continuum of services to encourage self-sufficiency, empowerment, and stability."

"IPH builds stronger communities. We empower individuals and families who are homeless or facing homelessness, giving them the tools to be self-sufficient."

**HOMELESS** NOT  
**HELPLESS**

## **Worship Services During Lent**

**T**he Season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14. We are trying something a little different this year, with a weekly joint study with First United Methodist of Voorheesville, and a "drop-in" service at our church for Ash Wednesday.

Our weekly study will begin on Tuesday, February 13, at 6:00 pm, and we will meet each Tuesday through Holy Week, March 26. Each week is an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the Lenten devotional for "A Wandering Heart: Figuring out faith with Peter." Copies of the devotional are on the lobby table. We will meet in a hybrid format; we will be meeting in person at the Methodist Church and there will be a Zoom link for those who prefer to join virtually. Please contact the Rev. Cameron if you would like the Zoom link.

On Ash Wednesday, our sanctuary will be open for quiet reflection three times throughout the day. Pastor Holly will be on hand to offer prayer and impose ashes for those who wish as follows:

- 7:00 – 9:00 am
- noon – 2:00 pm
- and 4:00 – 6:00 pm



As you prepare your heart for the miracle of Easter, please join us for these Lenten rites and activities.





## CAN-struction:

### *A Fait Accompli*

Thanks go out to all who donated cans for Girl Scout Troop 5034's "Can-struction" project. With your help they were able to donate 450 canned goods to the Food Pantries of the Capital District!

The girls' display simulated an Adirondack scene which fit with this year's theme, Evergreen. They created a lake flanked by towering trees, lean-tos and little campers, showcasing the Girl Scout motto of "leave no trace." Their display was featured at the Empire State Plaza over the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.



*We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.  
In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name.  
May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you.*

Psalm 33:20-22



## Congregational Life Committee Meeting

In January, the Committee discussed feedback from the Christmas Eve service, changes to our Lenten services and ordering a brass plate for the second bench we donated in Rev. Cameron's honor on the anniversary of her 25 years as our pastor.

People enjoyed the inclusion of the Sunday School children in the Christmas Eve worship this year. Some of the congregation let us know that they could attend the 2023 service because the earlier hour allowed them to do so while also meeting family obligations later that evening. And for others, the time change to 4:00 pm precluded them from attending. We had about 70 people in attendance, including some younger children.

We are combining with the First United Methodist Church this year for joint services for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Ash Wednesday is February 14, and both churches will be open throughout the day for receiving ashes and time for quiet reflection. Rev. Cameron is proposing an early morning

block from 7-9 am; a middle of the day block from 12-2 pm; and an evening time from 4-6 pm, rather than an evening service as we've done in the past. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday will be held in person at the First United Methodist Church, as they have the ability to live-stream to members of both churches who don't drive at night. Both pastors will oversee the services. They will also have joint Lenten study on Tuesdays at 6 pm for the six weeks of Lent. The study group will be hosted at the Methodist Church for people who want to meet in person, and it will also be streamed on Zoom for those who wish to participate from home.

We have money in our 25 Anniversary Celebration account in Rev. Cameron's honor. Since we ended up purchasing two benches in her honor, and ordered one brass plate to attach to one of the benches, we decided to purchase one more plate to be mounted on the second bench. This one will include the date of her anniversary.

~Bonnie O'Shea



# Prayer List

*The prayer list is maintained by the Deacons. If you have questions about anyone on the list, or would like to add or remove someone from the list, contact Tamara Shaw, [CliftonRun@gmail.com](mailto:CliftonRun@gmail.com).*

- Tim & Susan Albright ..... (friends of our church)
- Sherry Back ..... (Pat Hammond’s sister-in-law)
- Marie Bailey ..... (Tamara Shaw’s mom)
- Laurel and Mark Beavers
- Dana Burden ..... (Don Wagner’s family member)
- Melanie Thornton Capraro ..... (Karen & Tim Thornton’s daughter)
- Danny Carroll ..... (Chris Gordon’s brother)
- Linda Caruso ..... (Tamara Shaw’s friend)
- Randy Craft ..... (Debbie Craft’s husband)
- Phil Darcy ..... (John Relyea’s friend)
- Gina Domermuth ..... (Lexi Donovan’s friend)
- Mark Elmendorf ..... (Tom Elmendorf’s brother)
- Cheryl Foy ..... (Charles & Fran MacCulloch’s daughter-in-law)
- Evelyn Fuglein
- Jimmy Kelly ..... (Bill Kerr’s nephew)
- David Kinerson ..... (Larry Deysse’ brother-in-law)
- Steven Lampone ..... (Brian Nopper’s nephew)
- Aidan Lawson ..... (Robin Shufelt’s friend)
- Stephanie Markus ..... (Robin Shufelt’s friend)
- Family of Ron Meilinger ..... (Dan Coons’ friend)
- Martha Oden
- Family of Blair Sala ..... (Patti & Tom DeLorenzo’s family member)
- Debbie O’Shea ..... (Bonnie & Brendan O’Shea’s sister-in-law)
- Vickie Richeson ..... (Mary-Jean Riley & Gene Urgento’s sister)
- Manny Sanchez ..... (Sandy Warner’s brother-in-law)
- Brad Simon ..... (Tim & Christine Gordon’s family member)
- Gene Urgento
- Wayne Winchip ..... (Patty DeLorenzo’s cousin)
- Richard Winne ..... (Wayne Winne’s brother)



Please also extend your prayers for:

- the people of Lewiston, Maine
- the people of Israel, Gaza, & the Middle East
- the people of Ukraine
- our military personnel and their families.



# Above The Turbulence

by Larry Deys, *The Pastor in the Pew*

Some years ago while I was traveling by air, I recall a situation in flight when the “fasten your seat belt” sign went on. The captain said there was turbulence up ahead and that he would take us to a higher altitude so we would be flying above the turbulence. He did so and all was fine.

Turbulence is something that we also experience here on the ground. These are, to be sure, turbulent times. We see it in the wars taking place in Israel, Gaza, and Ukraine to mention a few. We see turbulence in our congress while those who are supposed be governing seem unable to govern themselves, to say nothing about governing the country. We see turbulence in the political campaigns with emotions and rhetoric running wild. We see turbulence too in the climate with very irregular weather patterns and nature sending us messages that many would rather ignore. This turbulence from many sectors impacts us so we feel tension, uncertainty, fear and anger. We feel bounced around. It raises a question: how do we cope with this turbulence and what can we do to keep from being constantly buffeted about?

Saying this, I am reminded of a soldier during the war in Iraq who was a Birder. He kept a birding journal which became a short book published by Sierra Club Books, titled, “Birding in Babylon.” The author is Jonathan Trouern-Trend. On one occasion while he was on duty the alarm was sounded to take cover. He did so under the belly of a tank. While laying on his stomach waiting out the danger he watched the birds running around and feeding not far away from his hiding place. His world was bigger than the war in Iraq and it was made larger by his interest in birds and birding. It is a delightful book and it has a happy ending with his return home after his duty time had been served.

I think there are many of us who delight in birds and in birding and see this larger world of awe, wonder and beauty which lifts us above the turbulence so it does not consume us.

*(continued on page 7)*

## February BIRTHDAYS

Jane Thornton.....	2-6
Holly Cameron.....	2-9
Lisa Allendorph.....	2-13
Chris Kirk.....	2-15
Kevin Dwyer.....	2-16
Wendy Kohler.....	2-18
Bonnie Griffin.....	2-21
Ann Putnam.....	2-22
Ray Youngman.....	2-25
Sharon Hildebrandt.....	2-28
Tamara Shaw.....	2-28

## ANNIVERSARIES

Debbie & Randall Craft.....	2-6
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But you,  
O Lord, are a  
shield about  
me, my glory,  
and the One  
who lifts my  
head.

Psalm 3:3



# Easter Flowers Order Form

**Deadline: Sunday, February 25**

*Help us beautify our Sanctuary for  
Easter Sunday Worship Service.*

Your Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Flowers are in memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Flowers are in honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please indicate how many of each desired.*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Azalea..... \$16.30 ea
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hyacinth (3 bulbs)..... \$11.25 ea
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hydrangea (pink or blue)..... \$21.25 ea
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lily..... \$14.50 ea
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tulip (6 bulbs)..... \$11.25 ea

**Total Amount Due: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check one of the following.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ *I will pick up plants(s) after service.*
- \_\_\_\_\_ *I will not pick up plant(s). You may take it to the church's homebound.*

*Please fill out this form and return it to Sandy or Homer Warner, along with your check made payable to New Scotland Presbyterian Church. Please write **Easter Flowers** in the memo line  
Questions: contact Sandy Warner, 518-765-4065.*



## Above The Turbulence *(continued from page 5)*

There are many ways that we can rise above the turbulence. The faith that we embrace and live out is certainly one of the ways. In our faith practices we are rooted and grounded in the Word of God. It is a means by which we are able to live above the chaos while still living and working in the world.

Music is another means to fill and nourish us in the midst of the turbulence of our world. Karl Barth, a world renowned theologian who lived and worked during the time of Hitler, was man deeply rooted in the Word and in the music of Mozart, which he listened to everyday. Those of us who love



Mozart, and other music as well, know the power of music to sustain and lift us above the fray while we go about living our lives in the real world.

There are many worlds of wonder, awe, and beauty which, if we embrace them and delight in them, can lift us above the discord; not so we can escape the world, but rather be able to live and work in the world without being consumed by its turbulence. I invite you to be good to yourselves, look about so you can see and embrace and delight in what can feed and sustain you so can live in the world and yet not be overcome by it.



Hamilton Union  
Presbyterian Church

presents . . .

## Woven Together: A Spiritual Retreat

Weaving is a powerful spiritual symbol that reminds us of the One who wove us together while calling us to be connected to others in relationship.

In a time when the Church is rapidly changing,  
what does it look like for us to be woven together?

*Join us Saturday & Sunday, April 13-14  
for a time of reflection, renewal, and art.*

Each participant will collaboratively create a meaningful art piece to take back to their home congregation as a tangible reminder of our interconnectedness.

Further details, including location and cost, are forthcoming.

Please RSVP by February 25: [elenatjg@gmail.com](mailto:elenatjg@gmail.com) or [r2paintfx@yahoo.com](mailto:r2paintfx@yahoo.com).



Surprise! God graced this world with two of these beautiful little girls!  
Did you know new member Diana Bremm is a twin?!

## Readings for February

**February 4:** Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-11, 20c; First Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39

**February 11:** Second Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6; Second Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9

**February 18:** Psalm 25:1-10; Luke 5:1-11

**February 25:** Psalm 22:23-31; Matthew 14:22-23



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February 2024



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**CHURCH OFFICE  
WILL BE CLOSED**

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**Our office will be closed  
on Monday and Tuesday,  
February 19-20, in  
observance of the  
Presidents' Day holiday.  
We will resume our normal  
office hours, Tuesday thru  
Friday, 9 to noon, on  
Wednesday,  
February 21.**