



LISTEN to *The ChurchMouse*

New Scotland Presbyterian Church

October 2023

"Original Landlord Still Offering Sanctuary"



Moving Forward Together by Rev. Holly Cameron

Because Dreams Can Become Results!

As we emerge from the pandemic, every church is thinking about its next chapter, and at our church we are glad to pick up a process we began before COVID. In 2019, we met a few times with the Rev. David Bennett, Clerk of Albany Presbytery, to think about our best future together. At the time we were thinking about how to do ministry in the 21st century, and so we began the "Moving Forward Together" process with David as our guide through three meetings.

At our initial gathering, we considered why we first came to New Scotland, what made us stay, and what are the things we love about our church that we would never want to lose. Here are some of the things we decided are valuable to us and that we want to continue:

- Meaningful worship with good preaching, good liturgy, and good music
- Community outreach (dinners, etc.)
- Mission work
- Welcoming "family" feeling
- Honoring our past and building on it

In the second conversation, we talked about changes in the culture around us, and considered how those changes have affected church life. Some of the changes mentioned were:

- There are more people who did not grow up going to church, so they do not really know what church is about.
- There is declining trust in institutions and authority. People need reasons to trust an institution – proof that it will actually help them.
- There is a desire for meaning and purpose. People need a clear and

compelling vision and will not stay if they feel they are not serving a greater purpose.

- People access more and more information from outside sources, like user reviews on the internet, and tend to believe what other people say about you, more than what you say about yourself.
- People are more aware of diversity in culture, gender, religion, and traditions.
- People still need community and connection. The rise in social media means we may have electronic contact with many people, but developing deeper in-person relationships is lacking. Loneliness is an epidemic in our society.

These changes affect us individually and in the way we connect to one another as families, as neighbors, as churches, and as communities. As we plan our church's future, we want to be aware of these trends and discern how God is calling us to serve in ways that are both meaningful and faithful.

In the third meeting, we envisioned our church in five years. We imagined it as a thriving community and made a list of all the good things that would be happening, and what challenges would have been faced in the years in between. I remember one of my dreams was that by 2024 our parking lot would be paved, and that dream actually became a reality later that same year! It's a powerful thing to dream together about what God has in mind for our community.

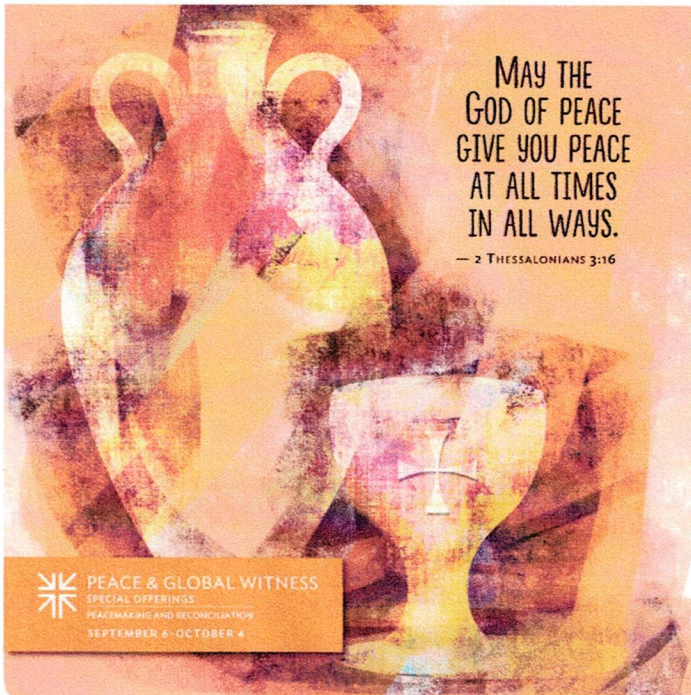
A few months after our three meetings, David came back with some action steps. We were

(continued on page 10)



Our October Mission . . .

Peace & Global Witness



Barbecue Delights Catering

October 4, 4-6:00 pm



It's **BBQ** time!

We're taking pre-orders until noon on **Wed., October 4.**

Drive Ups Welcome!

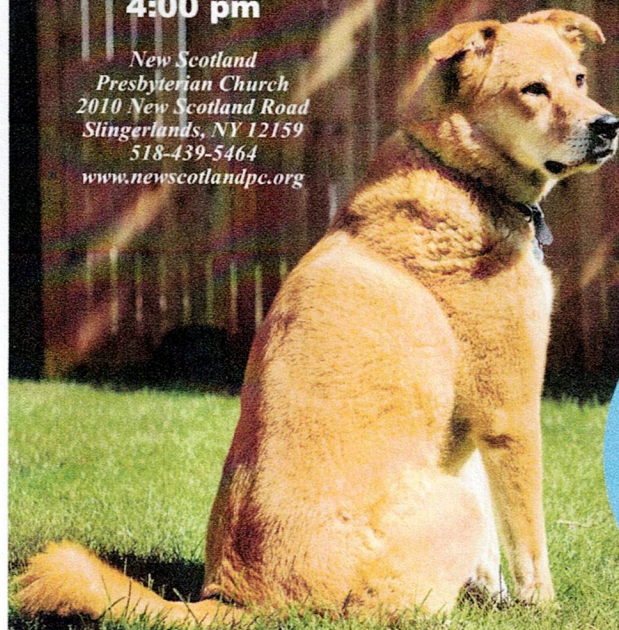
The Mission Collection for October is for Peace and Global Witness. This Offering encourages the church of our time to cast off anxiety and fear, discord and division, and embrace our reconciling God's mission with those around the corner and around the world, as active peacemakers, at all times in all ways.

The 2023 theme for the offering and the devotions is from the book of Isaiah: You shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace (55:12 ESV). This year's devotions cover four areas of peace work: climate change, non-violence, the intersection between race and poverty and issues of immigration and migration.

Our congregation keeps 25% of the monies collected, which we will be giving to Five Rivers Environmental Education Center.

**Sunday, October 1
4:00 pm**

New Scotland
Presbyterian Church
2010 New Scotland Road
Slingerlands, NY 12159
518-439-5464
www.newscotlandpc.org



Bring your pets, or photographs of your pets if transporting them is a challenge, and join us for a short outdoor service followed by light refreshments.





Earth Care Events coming up in October and November

The Earth Care Teams of Westminster, New Scotland and Delmar Presbyterian Churches invite you to two upcoming events:

We Gather Together: Support & Inspiration for Earth Care *Saturday, October 14, 10-3:00 pm*

We're stronger together! Please join members of some local churches who have made caring for the earth a priority for their work together and their witness to the world. You are welcome to join us if you've been working for a while to make your congregation greener or if you're just getting started. You'll leave our time together with some great ideas for specific actions your church can take this year and some new friends

to support you. Our time together will include lunch and plenty of time for a walk in the woods or time by the fire. Children are most welcome to join us for all or part of our time together.

The event will be held at the Kelly Adirondack Center, 897 St. David's Lane, Niskayuna. Suggested donation \$10 per person, or \$20 for an entire family. The price includes lunch and refreshments. Please register online at wpcalbany.org by October 7.

The Climate Change Challenge *Saturday, November 4, 5:00 pm (free dinner included)*

We will have fun role-playing exercises to explore climate dynamics over the next 75 years. We will find hope, identifying climate change policies to meet the 1.5 degree Celsius goal. We will work with the EN-ROADS online climate change simulator.

In Genesis 1:26 God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

The Dominion Reading from the first chapter of Genesis makes it clear that God wants us to take responsibility for the Global Climate Crisis that we as a species have brought into existence. How should we respond to the current climate crisis? One response is to wish for the invention of some magic new technology (such as carbon sequestering technologies) that will save the day. A more common response is resignation. What can I, one small person, do about such a global crisis?

The Climate Change Challenge provides a third way to approach climate change — a



pathway of Hope. The Challenge is a one evening hands-on exercise supported by a state-of-the-art, online science-based simulation. The En-Roads simulation (En-Roads Simulator) was developed by a team at Climate Interactive and MIT

and it projects the outcomes of policy choices through the year 2100. In this session you will explore concrete science-based strategies that have the potential to halt and even reverse our current dangerous trajectory. There is hope out there and this session shows the way.

So, spend an evening. Do God's work as we learn a lot about a wide range of policy options available to us on this planet. Learn a bit more about climate science. Join a team that can find a policy package that works! Feel some hope around these issues. Learn what we all can do to make these hopeful vision come to be. Enjoy fellowship with like-minded Christians. Stay for dinner.

The event will be held at Delmar Presbyterian Church (585 Delaware Avenue, Delmar). All ages are welcome. Please register by Wednesday, November 1 by calling 518-439-9252. The event is free of charge, but donations will be gladly accepted!



PRAYER LIST

Susan & Tim Albright (friends of the church)

Sherry Back (Pat Klose Hammond's sister-in-law)

Frank Bailey (Tamara Shaw's father)

Laurel & Mark Beavers

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)

Gina Domermuth (Lexi Donovan's friend)

Mark Elmendorf (Carole Elmendorf's son)

Family of Mary Ewart

Evelyn Fuglein

Family of Irene Gilmore (Meredith Coons' kids' grandmother)

Aidan Lawson (Robin Shufelt's friend)

Stephanie Markus

Vickie Richeson (Mary-Jean Riley & Gene Urgento's sister)

Denise Riedy

Joe Rizzo (Pat Klose Hammond's friend)

Manny Sanchez (Sandy Warner's brother-in-law)

Brad Simon (Tim & Christine Gordon's family member)

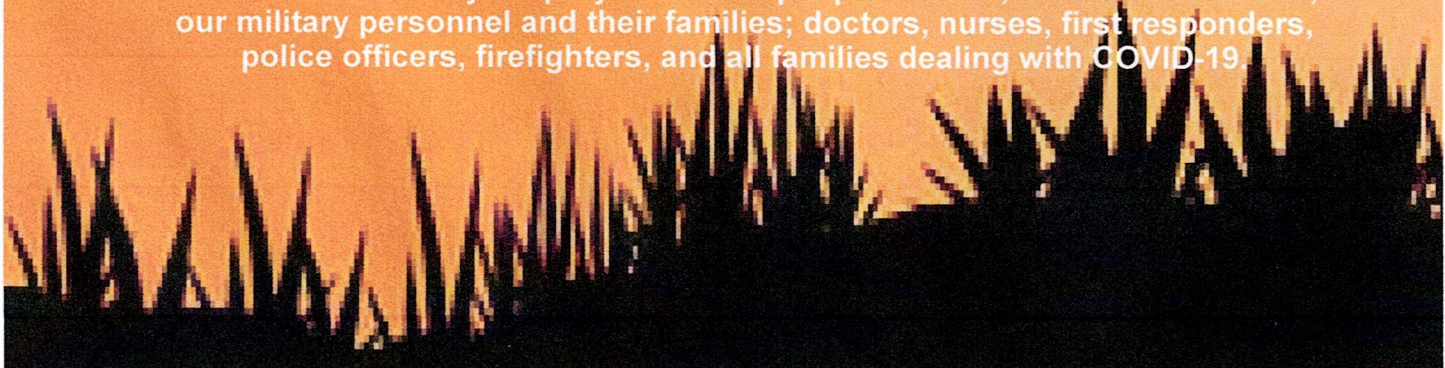
Gene Urgento

Bradley Wedge (Brian Nopper's cousin)

Euni Yang (Pastor Charlie Yang's wife)

Sharon Youmans (David Youmans' wife)

Please also extend your prayers for the people of Maui, Ukraine and Sudan; our military personnel and their families; doctors, nurses, first responders, police officers, firefighters, and all families dealing with COVID-19





September Session Notes

The Session met on September 21 and discussed the following:

- We began our meeting discussing the finances of the Church and possible sources of income with a few members from the Buildings and Grounds committee and the Finance committee. We consistently run a deficit budget, so each year we count on receiving money that is not pledged. Those moneys come from additional member donations, drawing down from the Endowment Fund, bequests, and the like. We are happy to say that we have not had to draw down from our Endowment Fund so far in 2023, but we are running an overall deficit in operations. The fact that we run a deficit budget is a factor in considering the second offer made by Archtop Fiber, LLC, an internet fiber optic company.



parking when we have large events. The number of parking spaces lost would depend on where the building is placed on the back lot, and that is part of what Archtop would be investigating in this first phase.

The proposal is for an easement of a portion of our property to them. The Rev. Cameron spoke with a lawyer who has done work for Albany Presbytery to get information on the proposal and to get further information on easements. The attorney explained that an easement is a sale that places a forever commitment on that property. The purchaser has the right to do whatever they like with that property, including selling it to someone else. Losing control over the property is a concern that was raised by the Session, as we would be tying the hands of future generations of our church and affecting the legacy of our church. It was suggested if we move forward with exploring this offer that we have legal representation to see if we are able to negotiate limitations on the terms of the easement, including the time the land is out of our control (does it have to be the 40 years suggested) and whether we would have any say in a future sale. The attorney also suggested that we ask Archtop to cover attorney fees, and pointed out that in New York State, any sale of religious property has to go before the presbytery, as well as the state's Attorney General or a court for approval.

Archtop originally approached us in June about investigating a potential easement that would allow for a structure on church property; they have suggested a minimum of 40 years. Their original offer was to pay us \$5,000. After John Griffin spoke with their representative, the offer increased to \$10,000, which was the proposal the Session reviewed last month. The Session rejected that proposal, and the offer is now increased to \$20,000 plus free phone and internet services.

Archtop's written proposal states the size of the land parcel on which the building would sit would be 35' x 55' though their representative said it could be as small as 25' x 25'. They sent us a photo of a current site which is enclosed by chain link fence with barbed wire on top (last month we incorrectly said razor wire on top). One of the concerns raised when Session reviewed this proposal last month was the look of such a site. In this second proposal, Archtop has said they are willing to work with us to build the site without barbed wire, and to provide privacy fencing around their structure along with landscaping to better conceal the site. Another concern mentioned is losing some of our overflow

At this point, what is being asked is if our church will sign a Letter of Intent to allow Archtop "to investigate the suitability for use for the placement of telecommunications facilities." This Letter of Intent does not obligate Archtop or our church to proceed with the project. As mentioned above, they are offering us \$20,000 for the land, along with free phone and internet service. Our 2023 budget estimates it will cost us just over \$2,000 for phone and internet this year.

(continued on Page 6)



September Session Notes *(continued from page 5)*

- The Buildings and Grounds and Finance Committee unanimously recommended that the Session sign the updated Letter of Intent because the Letter of Intent does not bind either party. It was also suggested that we have some conversations with the whole congregation to hear more questions and other feedback. The Session voted to approve signing the Letter of Intent with a vote of five in favor and one against.
- We discussed the upcoming BBQ on October 4 from 4-6 pm. Online or phone orders are being taken – invite your friends and neighbors! The New Salem Firehouse will provide traffic cones and help on New Scotland Road in managing the traffic flow during the BBQ.
 - We are happy to report that our end-of-summer matching challenge was a great success! Three anonymous donors offered to match up to \$4,800 for all giving between August 20 and September 4. Members and friends stepped up with \$8,287.34 in giving, so we got all \$4,800 of the matching money. Thanks to everyone for supporting our church!!
 - We are expecting details on the steeple project any day now. The Deacons have identified memorial monies that families have agreed could go to that project. We have already received some money from the members without us asking them to support a fund drive for this special project. We are looking into contacting Neil Breslin to see if there may be some State funding for an historical building project like this one. Once we know what our monetary goal is for the steeple project, the Church will initiate a fund-raising drive. Stay tuned!
 - Mardell was our representative at the last Presbytery meeting and she reported back that our own Reverend Cameron was elected to serve on Albany Presbytery's Committee on Ministers and Congregations. We are looking for a delegate to represent us at the next meeting in Mayfield, Thursday, November 16.
 - The Earth Care Team, headed up by Holly Stefaniak for our church, is hosting two events. October 14, 10-3:00, will be a family event hosted at the Kelly Adirondack Center in Niskayuna. Lunch, nature trails, and children's activities will be available. Then, on November 4, at 5:00 p.m., Delmar Presbyterian Church is hosting a dinner and climate game. See page 3 for details on both events.
 - We have been asked to host the now annual Community Thanksgiving Service, Sunday, November 19 at 7:00 pm. Volunteers will be needed to be readers and to host a small fellowship afterwards. Please see the Rev. Cameron or Bonnie O'Shea if you're interested.
 - Our current bylaws require 9 elders to serve on the Session, and we began discussing whether we should reduce that number. Any change to the bylaws requires approval by the congregation, so this is just a beginning of the conversation.
 - The pastor reported she continues to coordinate a weekly Zoom meeting for Albany Presbytery Clergy, and she is taking a class called "Beyond Plastics" from Bennington College.
- The next Session meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 26, 5:30 p.m. by Zoom.

In Loving Memory

Anyone who has been part of Albany Presbytery for a decade or more has very likely encountered Mary Jane Ewart, beloved wife, mother and friend, who served among us in many capacities. Last month, her tireless pursuit of justice and peace ended as she joined the Church Triumphant. Mary passed away in the early morning hours of Monday, September 11, 2023, with her children holding her hands. She was 102 years old.

Mary was preceded in death by her parents, The Reverend Robert Lewis and Mrs. Gwladys Rhyffith Williams, as well as her beloved husband, Dr. Mervyn Henry Ewart. Mary was also predeceased by her brother, Lewis John Williams. She is survived by her daughter, Margaret; son, Robert (Julie); and grandchildren, Melissa, Anne and Michael.

Mary was a woman ahead of her time. She was passionate and caring and influenced the lives of many people. Mary believed everyone deserved peace and justice, and throughout her life, she worked to support those in need. Mary was born in Slatington, Pennsylvania on January 5, 1921, the town to which her father emigrated from Wales. The family moved to Ohio to answer her father's ministry call when Mary was still a child. Then, when Mary was eight years old, her father was called to Carroll, Nebraska to minister to another community. It was a difficult transition for Mary because, in Ohio, they had running water and electricity, but in Nebraska, they had neither. Still, Mary came to love her new home, and her family lived in Carroll until she graduated from high school as valedictorian in 1938.



Mary Jane Ewart

Following high school, Mary attended Hastings College, graduating in 1942. After graduation, she taught for a year before enrolling at Case Western University to pursue a master's degree in nursing education. Specializing in Tuberculosis nursing, she worked in a TB Sanitarium and taught at Yale University and later at Albany Medical Center. Her career led her to work for the National League of Nursing and to rise to bureau chief in the NYS Department of

Education. In this role, Mary traveled all over the world to learn about the educational systems of other countries.

Mary was a Welsh speaker and was active in the Welsh Society. She was active in, and president of the PEO Sisterhood, an organization that supports and promotes education for women around the world. She was moderator of the Albany Presbytery, the governing body for all the Presbyterian Churches in the region, and clerk of session at the Presbyterian Church of New Scotland for many years.

She was a loving mother and wife, pursuing all she did with great passion. Mary will live on in the hearts and lives of the many people she loved, touched and supported.

Mary Jane's funeral was held here at the Presbyterian Church in New Scotland on Saturday, September 16.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the PEO Sisterhood International Peace Scholarship, at 288 New Road, Nassau, NY, 12123, or the Presbyterian Church in New Scotland.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

Matthew 11:28



Birthdays

Colin Roberts.....	10/1
James Bradley.....	10/1
Mardell Steinkamp.....	10/2
Reed Gordon.....	10/2
Jake Herzog.....	10/3
Jennifer Crawford.....	10/4
Rachel Crawford.....	10/6
Tara Joyce.....	10/8
Alexandra Donovan.....	10/8
Tim Gordon.....	10/9
Robin Shufelt.....	10/12
Tom Elmendorf.....	10/14
Randall Miller.....	10/15
Michele Von Hugg.....	10/22
Leah Nicholson.....	10/27
Jacob Norris.....	10/28
Sarita Winchell.....	10/31

Anniversaries

Leah & James Nicholson.....	10/4/81
Pat & Ted Whitbeck.....	10/12/99
Francis & Robert McCormick...	10/18/57
Jane & Bruce Thornton.....	10/24/64
Bonnie & Brendan O'Shea.....	10-25-80
Pam & Harry Thornton.....	10/28/02

◆
Thanks for
your support
◆

As we approached the end of summer, we were looking at taking \$5,000 out of our Endowment Fund to cover our bills. Three anonymous donors stepped up with a matching challenge, to match all giving from August 20 - September 4, up to \$4,800.

We are thrilled to say that your generosity was extraordinary, and we received \$8,287.34! And then we got the \$4,800, too!

Thank you so much for supporting and caring for our church!!

We are getting ready for new member class. If you would like to know more, see the Rev. Cameron. There is no obligation to join!



Celebration Worthy Events!



Meghan McCarron (Meredith Coons' daughter) and Ryan Dueppengiesser were married on September 16. The ceremony was held at the groom's grandfather's property in Perry, NY (Finger Lakes Region) The couple will reside in Leicester, NY.



Alice Elizabeth May, Jane and John Norris' granddaughter, was born to parents Kristina Norris and Brendan May on September 8. She weighed 6 lbs 9 oz and measured 19.7 inches long.

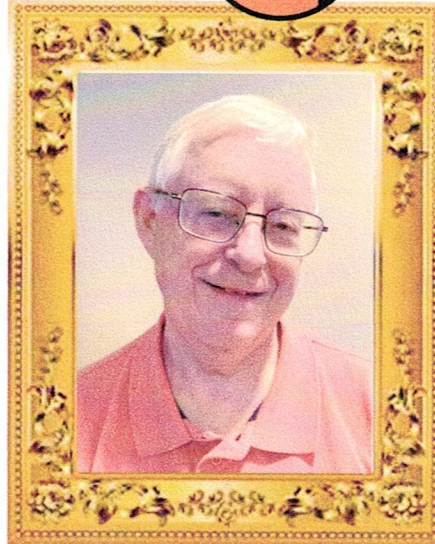
TRUNK or TREAT

Saturday, October 28

11:00 am to 2:00 pm

Please join us at the
New Salem Fire Department!





This adorable little boy is none other than our Treasurer, Kevin Dwyer! Thanks for playing along, Kevin! Who's next?!

Congregational Life Committee Report

At our recent meeting on September 17, we discussed a number of items. We finalized plans for Blessing of the Animals (Sunday, October 1 at 4:00 pm), Trunk or Treat (Saturday, October 28 from 11:00-2:00 pm at the New Salem Firehouse), and starting a new member class.

We also discussed removing the tape from the pews along the left side of the sanctuary, and leaving the right side for social distancing. We noticed many people still like the choice of social distancing.

We are in the beginning stages of planning a "milestone anniversary" celebration for members who are celebrating being a member of New Scotland Presbyterian Church for 20 years or more, in five year increments.

Plans are underway for a Laity Sunday on November 26th while the Rev. Cameron is visiting her family over Thanksgiving. Please let Dorothy Kohler or Bonnie O'Shea know if you would be interested in participating in our worship program that day. We can always use readers!

And finally, our very own Brenda Dwyer has volunteered to teach us how to create angels from hymnals on the day after Fellowship. Stay tuned for a date to be determined.

Pastor's Column *(continued from page 1)*

just starting to pull those together as 2020 began. And then the world turned upside down.

Now we are back to imagining what God has in mind for our next chapter, and David has agreed to come back for a "reboot" of where we left off in 2020. He will join us on Sunday, October 29. As in our past meetings, we will gather for conversation at coffee hour, so everyone has a chance to be part of the discussion. I hope to see all of you there so we can be "Moving Forward Together!"

Faithfully, +Holly



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October 2023*



"Original Landlord Still Offering Sanctuary"

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