



LISTEN to *The ChurchMouse*

New Scotland Presbyterian Church

September 2023

"Original Landlord Still Offering Sanctuary"



Catching God's Vision by *The Rev. Holly Cameron*

I have been thinking about how God is active in the world in ways that we never see. So often we think about God being present in situations that overwhelm us – a beautiful sunset, a full copper-colored moon, an enormous storm, the birth of a baby, a miracle of healing. Those things take our breath away and move us to awareness that there is a power greater than ourselves. But there are many stories in the Bible that remind us God is also working in ways beyond what we can see.

We've been reading through the gospel of Matthew this year, and I keep noticing how God is at work beyond human understanding. A few weeks ago, we heard the story of Jesus feeding more than 5,000 people. When the crowds have been with Jesus all day and his disciples come to him to say he really ought to send the people away so they can find some food, Jesus says that the disciples should give the crowds something to eat. They protest that there are only five loaves and two fish, and what good is that for such a large gathering? Jesus takes the food, and blesses it, and gives it to the disciples to distribute to the crowds. Everyone eats until they are full. And the disciples gather up 12 baskets of leftovers.

I wonder when the disciples realized a miracle was happening? I mean, they must have been the only ones to realize this was a miracle. Jesus did not hold up the food before the crowd and bless it so that 5,000 loaves were suddenly piled up before them. The crowd did not see the multiplication happening, they just passed the food one to another, and somehow there kept being enough. Only the disciples knew they started with a small amount that never seemed to get smaller.

It's like the first miracle told in the gospel of John, where Jesus turns water into wine. There

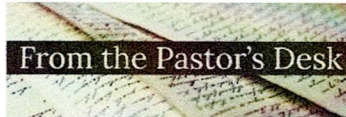
are six empty jars, and Jesus tells the servants to fill them with water. When they are filled to the brim, he tells the servants to draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet. The master drinks the fine wine but does not know where it came from. Only the servants know the miracle that has happened.

Jesus also tells a number of parables about the kingdom of Heaven such as: "The kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed; the kingdom of Heaven is like yeast in a loaf of bread." I wonder if they are about how things in this world accomplish their purpose in a way that is hidden from our eyes. A mustard seed goes about growing into a bush underneath the soil, where we cannot see it forming. Yeast causes the loaf to rise, even though we cannot see it at work. I wonder if God's vision is like that: working itself out all around us but hidden from our view.

The church is called to keep trying to catch a glimpse of God's vision – for ourselves, for our community, and for our world. It's a task that is always before us, and it is particularly relevant now, as all churches are wondering how to be the church in our post-pandemic world—what are we called to be and do in this particular time? At New Scotland, we started a visioning process in 2019 called "Moving Forward Together" that we never got to finish because of the pandemic. This fall, we will be bringing that back as we wonder together about God's vision. I am excited that we are coming back together and can share our dreams for our church.

Through it all, my prayer is that we are faithful servants, always rooted in God's Word and open to the leading of the Spirit, who get to see the miracles happening in our midst.
Faithfully, +Holly

From the Pastor's Desk





Welcome to the families and children who will be participating in Sunday School this year! Our first class session will be Sunday, September 10.

We have a wonderful curriculum that provides a complete resource of study information, suggestions, and printed materials that parents may look at ahead of time or at any point during the year.

As in previous years, we will gather together for worship at 10:00 a.m. in the sanctuary and then, following the children's sermon, the children will go the classroom where we will listen to the Bible stories and share creative ways to learn the lessons. We hope many of you will plan to join us as we grow in our relationship with our God who loves us so much.

We hope to see you on September 10th!
~Bonnie O'Shea

*As long as the earth endures,
seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat, summer and winter,
day and night will never cease.*

Genesis 8:22

The Mission Collection for September 2023

The Theological Education Fund of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)

The fund is the best hope of ensuring the church of Christ is prepared to serve long into the future. Gifts to this fund help ensure every church has a seminary-trained pastor.

The fund is housed at the Presbyterian Foundation and is the sole source of denomination-wide funding for seminaries in the PC(USA).

Seminaries are good stewards of the funds we provide. Research shows that 91 percent of Presbyterian seminary graduates are employed in the fields they've been called to serve in within one year. Presbyterian seminary graduates also have less debt than their peers at other seminaries, giving them more flexibility to follow the call of God, no matter where it might lead.

We need these graduates – and need more individuals to see a clear path to seminary. Out of the current clergy serving in Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations, 85 percent will likely retire in the next decade. The next generation of seminarians is energized, enthusiastic and ready to serve, and it is our vision to use the Theological Education Fund to buoy their service to the church.

The first Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) theological seminaries were founded in 1794 and 1812. Over the years, additional theological institutions were established, today there are twelve seminaries carrying on the Presbyterian tradition of providing educated leadership for congregations from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Rim.



Theological
EDUCATION FUND
Presbyterian Foundation

OUR CHURCH'S



FINANCIAL HEALTH

Summer is always a hard financial time for churches given that attendance drops off due to summer travel. As of August 9, 2023 the Operating Fund income and expense figures for the Presbyterian Church in New Scotland are as follows:

Income: \$98,610 (which includes "designated gifts")

Expenditures: \$106,666

Net (\$ 8,056) deficit

The Income figure includes \$5,641 in designated gifts which should be added to the \$8,056 deficit since this money cannot be used against ordinary operating expenses. Thus, there is a true operational deficit of \$13,697.

On a positive note, as of 8/9/23 the separate Endowment Fund has increased by \$3,591.

Your contributions are so important to supporting and sustaining our church. If you have any questions about this report please speak to Kevin Dwyer or Sarita Winchell.

Matching Gifts!

As noted above, summer giving to the church decreases as folks travel and are away. We now have three anonymous donors who will match all giving between now and Labor Day, up to \$4,800 to help offset some of our deficit.

If you can give an extra gift, this is a great time to do so! You can donate three ways, by:

- 1) placing offerings in the plates in the sanctuary,
- 2) mailing a check to the church at 2010 New Scotland Rd, Slingerlands NY 12159
- 3) or donating on our website newscotlandpc.org

Thanks for all you do to support our church community!

Late August Summer Reflections

By Larry Dyess, Pastor in the Pew

You may think that I am writing for you all, which I am, but I am also writing for me as I reflect on what seems to have been a rather odd summer. It seems that prior summers tended to be more low key, leisurely, and a time for renewal.



There were days this summer when one would not want to sit in the backyard because the pollution was coming down to us from the Canadian forest fires. When climate change becomes something you can taste, smell and feel in our eyes, nose and lungs, you know it is real.

This summer we also contend with increasing political rhetoric and anger in our national life. And on the world stage there is the continuing war in Ukraine with all the suffering displayed in the news. We can add to the list the disaster that stuck people in Hawaii.

All of this has an impact on us, increasing our stress levels. I think we see evidence of stress lived out on our highways. People also deal with their stress by going into silos, with their face in their cells phones even as they step out to cross the street.

It is important to be aware and informed of what is going on in our world, so we can respond in a responsible manner. It is also important to remember that the world is larger than the events of the day. To have healthy and balanced lives we need to see the larger world and the richness of Creation.

I was reminded of the larger picture when I went into the backyard to have my morning coffee and quiet time for contemplation. Seconds after I sat down a hummingbird came to the feeder twenty feet away. It was quite wonderful. The bird came several times stoking up on the sugar water to increase its energy supply for its long migration down into South America. Some will fly over the Gulf of Mexico,

(continued on page 8)

PRAYER LIST

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

Marie Bailey
(Tamara Shaw's mother)

Laurel & Mark Beavers

Family of Sally Burns
(Bonnie O'Shea's friend)

Eileen Cameron
(Christine Cameron's sister)

Melanie Thornton Capraro
(Karen & Tim Thornton's daughter)

Danny Carroll
(Chris Gordon's brother)

Linda Caruso
(Tamara Shaw's friend)

Randy & Debbie Craft

Gina Domermuth
(Lexi Donovan's friend)

Mark Elmendorf
(Carole Elmendorf's son)



Mary Ewart

Evelyn Fuglein

Aidan Lawson
(Robin Shufelt's friend)

Stephanie Markus

Gerald Minor
(Joyce Schork's brother)

New York Race Chaplaincy

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

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

Tamara Shaw

Gene Urgento

Bradley Wedge
(Brian Nopper's cousin)

Family of Shirley Wright

Euni Yang
(Pastor Charlie Yang's 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.

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.

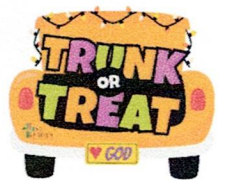
Who's Going to Get the Best Deal in Town?

We have a large supply of Hewlett Packard printer ink, both black and white and color cartridges, that are worth a small fortune. If you are the lucky person to have this printer, you are welcome to take the stockpile of ink from our office..



Fall Activities

It's that time of year when we begin to plan for our fall activities and the Congregational Life Committee would like to know how many families would be interested in participating in holding our Trunk-or-Treat this year. Bonnie O'Shea is in contact with the New Salem Fire Department to see if they are interested in co-hosting this year. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board, or you can let Bonnie know directly.



We are excited to again celebrate The Season of Creation, a time to remember that God is the Creator of all, and God made humanity to delight and care for all of creation. We will celebrate four Sundays, beginning when Sunday School resumes, starting with Forest Sunday on Sept. 10; Land Sunday on Sept. 17; Wilderness Sunday on Sept. 24; and River Sunday on Oct. 1. Also on Oct. 1, we will have "Blessing of the Animals" on the church lawn at 4:00 p.m. For more on The Season of Creation, we have reprinted Norman Habel's article below. Habel is a Professorial Fellow at Flinders University, actively involved in social justice and ecojustice issues.

Celebrating the Season of Creation *by Norm Habel*

The Season of Creation is an exciting new season of the church year, a season that is now being celebrated in a number of countries around the world. Around the year 2000, the Season of Creation was being developed in Australia, especially through the United Church.

At the very same time, a parallel season called the Time of Creation was being developed in Europe by the European Christian Environmental Network. Without knowledge of each other's work, both groups chose September as the appropriate time for celebrating with creation, following a Greek Orthodox tradition of declaring September 1 the Day of Creation and St. Francis of Assisi Day, October 4, as a fitting closure.

Why a Season of Creation?

There is a growing concern in Christian communities about the ecological crisis and the way we have been treating Earth. One of the most effective ways to focus this concern, we believe, is through worship. By concentrating our worship on God's creation and worshipping with creation, we are more likely to find ways to heal rather than exploit our planet.

Our aim in the Season of Creation is a joint celebration in which we not only give thanks *for* creation but also celebrate *with* creation. Our goal is a mutual ministry in which we are not only called to serve and sustain life, but recognize how creation serves and sustains life. Our vision is to celebrate Christ as personal redeemer and also as the cosmic power at work, renewing and healing a suffering creation.

How best might we celebrate the Season of Creation?

Traditional ways of naming the Sundays of a

season did not seem appropriate in the face of our ecological crisis. So it was decided to name the Sundays in terms that immediately evoked a connection with creation. We chose titles such as Forest Sunday, River Sunday, Ocean Sunday, and Cosmos Sunday.

Worshippers around the world are free to modify or expand the titles with names that fit their creation contexts. It is great to invite artists to transform the place of worship into a forest, a river, or the ocean.

A set of readings for the Season of Creation has been prepared for the proposed three-year lectionary cycle, corresponding to the liturgical sequence of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Each set of readings has a focus not only on the domain of creation given in the title of that Sunday but also on the spiritual agent or impulse involved in the continuing process of creation, namely, the Spirit in creation, the Word in creation, and Wisdom in creation.

Especially important for any Bible study, reflection, or preaching from the readings for a given Sunday is a willingness to read texts from the perspective of Earth, whether that be a domain or living creatures of Earth. We have, in the past, read only from the perspective of humans or God. But as Earth beings we are invited to read with a sensitivity to Earth or our Earth kin and seek to hear their voices in the text.

The Season of Creation is an opportunity to grow in faith, not only as servants of Christ but also as children of Earth. Through worship in this season we can also reorient our faith so that we unite with Earth and our kin on Earth in praising the Creator, discerning the presence of the cosmic Christ, and being genuine partners of the Spirit who groans with creation and renews all life on our planet.



Session held their first meeting since summer break on August 24, 2023. The following items were discussed:



- Session voted on whether or not to sign a Letter of Intent with Archtop Fiber, LLC, an internet fiber optic company. Archtop would like to investigate a potential easement that would allow for a structure on church property for a minimum of 40 years. Their proposal stated the size of the land parcel would be 35' x 55' though their representative said it could be as small as 25' x 25' and they are looking at our grassy field at the end of the parking lot as the location. An easement means we would sell them that parcel of land and they would have control of it. They would pour a concrete slab as foundation for the building, and the parcel would be enclosed by a chain-link fence with razor wire. They would pay us \$10,000 for the land. The Session discussed the proposal and determined that the look of such a building is not in keeping with our historic church, that having such fencing with razor wire would not be welcoming to those coming to our property, and that we would lose parking now available when we have large events. The Session also believes it is prudent for the church to maintain control over its own property for future generations and to preserve the legacy of our church. Therefore, the Session decided not to move forward with a Letter of Intent.
- The Clerk reported the passing of Shirley Wright on 8/8, with a service on 8/16 and burial on 8/18; and the marriage of Jaime Craft on Aug. 18.
- Mardell Steinkamp will be our delegate for the next Presbytery Meeting on September 9 at Hamilton Union Church.
- The Herzog Family will use the church dining room and kitchen on September 23 for a family luncheon.
- It is anticipated that plans/specs for the Steeple project will go out for bid in September 2023.
- The church has 118 new "Glory to God" hymnals now in use, all purchased and dedicated by members and friends of the congregation, including 3 in large print. The large-print hymnals are on the table under the bulletin board before you enter the sanctuary. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to getting new hymnals!
- New Eyes for the Needy is no longer accepting glasses or hearing aids for donations because these items are now tailored to the individual and difficult to pass along. They will however continue to accept monetary donations. We are looking into other entities that will accept donations of glasses and hearing aids, for example the Lions Club.

- The Earth Care team is working with Delmar and Westminster to host an event at Kelly Adirondack Center on October 14, 2023. The event is open to all in the presbytery who are thinking about Earth Care, and families are encouraged to attend. Delmar is hosting an Earth Care event on November 4, 2023, and they have asked us to help. More information to follow next month. If anyone is interested in this effort, see Holly Stefaniak or the Rev. Cameron.

- The Sunday School has a new curriculum titled Illustrated Ministry that they will start utilizing this fall. Sunday School for kids starts on September 10, 2023. The Rev. Cameron would like to have adult Bible Study and is looking for a time when people could come in person and/or by Zoom. If interested, please see her.

- Financial Report – Albany Presbytery Trustees approved our grant application and have given us \$15,000 to go toward our steeple project. Overall giving is down for the summer so we may need to take money out of our endowment fund to cover expenses. In response to our current deficit, some anonymous donors have offered to match all gifts given to the church August 20 through Labor Day. More details are elsewhere in this newsletter.

- The week of September 17, 2023, Albany Westminster is hosting a Presbyterian International Peacekeeper, Matilda Parker from Liberia. There are several opportunities to meet Matilda and hear her speak, hosted by different churches. All events are open to the public. We will post the schedule and hope that folks from our church can attend, and maybe carpool.

- In October 2023 the church would like to host a BBQ chicken and rib dinner, catered by Barbecue Delights. Details for pre-sales and date are being determined.

- The Rev. Cameron reported that she officiated at the memorial service for Marilyn Bauer, the funeral for Shirley Wright, the wedding of Jaime Craft and Matt Macri, and a vow renewal for the 50th anniversary of Dorothy and Mike Matthews. At the presbytery level, she helped to host the Retired Pastors' Luncheon in June, participated in the mission for Saratoga backstretch workers in June and July, attend required clergy boundary training, continues to coordinate a weekly Zoom call for clergy, and has been asked to serve on the Presbytery's Committee for Ministers and Congregations. She completed the annual NYS anti-harassment training. She has also enrolled to audit the Bennington College class "Beyond Plastics" in September and October.

The next Session Meeting will be Thursday, September 21, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Heldeberg Workshop Dedicating New Theater Building to Influential Teacher Richard Weeks

(reprinted and condensed for space from *The Altamont Enterprise* 8/2/23)

Although English and drama teacher Richard K. “Dick” Weeks died in 1977, students of theater at the Heldeberg Workshop in Voorheesville will continue to learn in his long shadow at the workshop’s newly built theater building, which will bear his name. The building replaces an older theater building that was also named after Weeks following his death in 1977.

Weeks had created the Heldeberg Workshop Theater Program in 1962, as a passionate advocate for the various skills he felt that students could get from drama.

“He had a special way of thinking where drama wasn’t, ‘Let’s put on a play,’” Weeks’ widow, **Corinne Weeks**, told *The Enterprise*. “It’s actually a part of life. And a lot of things we do during our lives — for instance, good conversation and so forth — are all based on the same skills that actors use for acting.” Now retired, Mrs. Weeks was a long-time Voorheesville Elementary School teacher.

Dick Weeks was also critical of what Mrs. Weeks called the “star system” that existed in other theater environments, where the most outgoing kids with the best memories would inevitably pick up the largest parts play after play.

“A lot of times, some of the younger ones got left out,” Mrs. Weeks said of the system. “Whereas, if you do it with an idea of working together on it, sometimes you give the shyer kids a real chance, and sometimes the best people for acting anyway.”

Along with directing, Weeks taught playwriting and radio broadcasting at the Heldeberg Workshop, and he was chair of the English Department at Burnt Hills and at The Milne School. Weeks was also involved with other local theater groups, and had showcased an original play he wrote in New York City, they said.

Former student Steven King said, “It wasn’t just the people in his classroom who understood him to be an extraordinary and engaging person, who was also very good at his craft. I think he was generally recognized that way within the larger educational community as well.”

In the mid-’70s, with help from his wife and 25 students at the Heldeberg Workshop, Weeks wrote and directed a play about the Anti-Rent Wars called “When the Bough Breaks,” based on the book “Tin Horns and Calico” by Henry Christman.

The play was inspired in part by the American Bicentennial and Weeks’s own love for history. Sadly, he died before he could complete the third act. However, performances of the first and

second acts were enough to draw commendations from the Albany County Legislature; the towns of Berne, Knox, Rensselaerville, and Westerlo; and also the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, Wallingford and Matthews said.

Because the Heldeberg Workshop didn’t have a stage or anywhere to perform, Act I was performed at Voorheesville’s high school and Act II at the Five Rivers Amphitheatre. However, Weeks felt there was a location at the workshop that was perfect for an outdoor stage.

Corinne Weeks said that the troupe began fundraising to build the stage. After Dick Weeks died, the Heldeberg Workshop used the money to build their first theater building, and named it after Weeks in his honor.

The new building will also feature a plaque that summarizes Weeks’s contribution to the workshop and the region as a whole, noting him as a “legendary champion of theater and integrative teaching methods at the Heldeberg Workshop.”



Richard Weeks (right) with writer Henry Christman in 1975.

September Birthdays

Debbie Perez	9/7
Jaclyn Kohler	9/8
Evelyn Fuglein	9/10
Shari Edwards	9/15
Christine Gordon	9/16
Frank Bode	9/17
Van Kohler	9/18
Dawn Scaccia	9/19
Laurel Beavers	9/22
Donna Wittig	9/22
McKinley Riedy	9/27

September Anniversaries

Tamara & Stephen Shaw	9/3/18
Shari & William Edwards	9/4/93
Sarita & John Winchell	9/9/72
Patricia & Daniel Joyce.....	9/11/81
Albert & Judee Miller	9/18/76
Christine & Tim Gordon	9/20/97



Reed and Sean Gordon in Belfast in July, pointing to the street sign, "Gordon St. "!



Summer Reflections

(continued from page 3)

which of course has to be a non-stop flight.

It is this kind of experience that can shift ones thinking from focusing just on the folly of the world to being aware of the incredible richness and wonder that is part of Creation. The morning continued for me with writing in my journal and reading Morning Prayer.

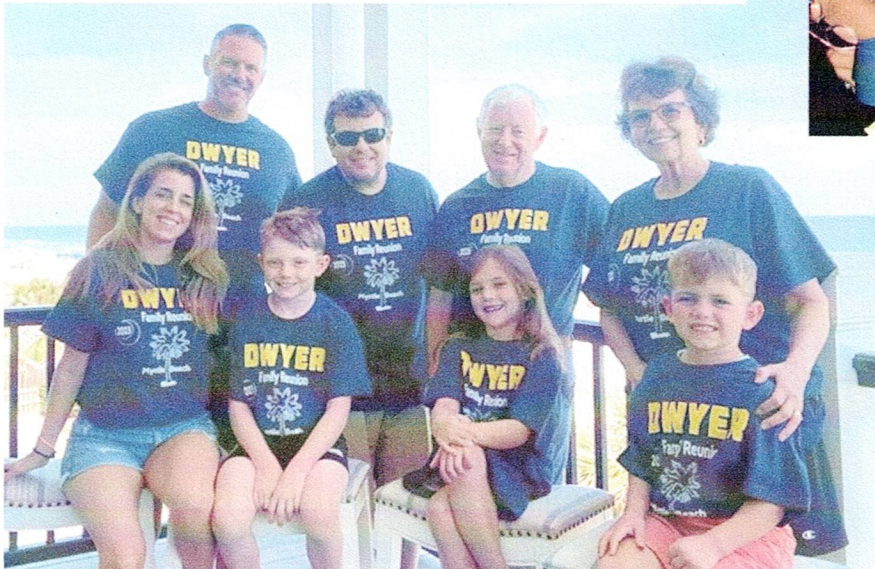
My late August summer reflection reminds me once again to see the reality of the world and also to remember that reality is much broader, deeper and more rich and wonderful than what we read the morning paper.



Pull Tops Yes; Lids No

Our church continues to collect pull tabs for recycling to benefit Ronald McDonald House. Pull tabs are easy to remove and store, and they're much cleaner to collect than can lids. Plus, with pull tabs they can handle large volumes of donations with much less storage space. Please continue to save your pull tabs for donation.

SUMMER FUN!



Kevin and Brenda Dwyer vacationed in Surfside Beach, SC where they had a family reunion. Back row from left: Garrett Roberts, Ryan, Kevin, and Brenda Dwyer. Front row from left: Brie, Colin, Kelsey and Cody Roberts



Corinne Weeks and office manager Carolyn Barrett declared it a summer of opera fun, taking in spectacular live performances of *Candide* (Bernstein) and *Rinaldo* (Hayden) at Glimmerglass Opera in Cooperstown and then attending a Metropolitan Opera re-run of *Eugene Onegin* (Tchaikovsky) at Crossgates Mall.



Mariah Miller's cow, Mini, won Champion and Grand Champion for Commercial Breeds at The Altamont Fair.



Jordyn Miller's rooster, Stormy, won Champion and Best of Fair this summer at The Altamont Fair. You may recall that Stormy was blessed by the Rev. Cameron last fall during The Blessing of the Animals. Coincidence or divine intervention? You decide!

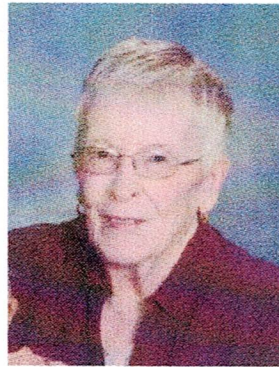
In Loving Memory of Shirley Wright, 1934 — 2023

Shirley J. Wright, age 88 of Voorheesville, passed away on August 8, 2023, peacefully at home after a long illness.

She was born on September 18, 1934, in Schenectady, to the late Lester and Hattie Oliver Empie. Shirley had a fulfilling career that spanned many years. She worked for the New York State Police from 1954 to 1962, where she played a vital role in setting up New York State inspection stations. Later, she joined Guilderland High School as a hall monitor, dedicating her time and efforts from 1979 to 2000.

Outside of her professional life, Shirley had many passions and hobbies. She found joy in being an active member of her church's Ladies Group, where she enjoyed helping with dinners and spending time with fellow members. She also cherished her time with the Hilltown Seniors, where she formed lasting friendships.

Shirley's family was incredibly important to her. She leaves behind her loving husband of 63 years, Leland "Scott" Wright; and her sons, Jeffery (Denise), Randy (Randi), and Roger (Nanci). She was a proud grandmother to Elisa Hammersmith (Tony), Rachel Wright, Megan Wright, and Samantha Longhi (James). Shirley was also blessed with great-grandchildren, Raymond and James Hammersmith, Anayah,



Joshua, and Gabriella Longhi. Shirley was predeceased by her brother, Randall Empie.

Contributions to our church will help continue the meaningful work that Shirley held dear.

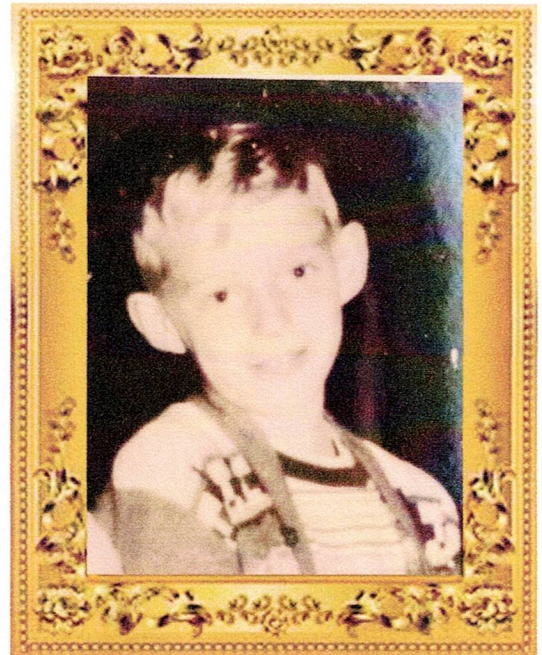
Shirley Wright will be remembered for her dedication to her family, her commitment to her community, and her unwavering faith. She will be deeply missed by all who

had the pleasure of knowing her.

History Cabinet Theme for This Fall

Let the Children Come to Me is the theme for the Fall history cabinet. September means back to school and the start of Sunday School at our church, so children will be the focus of the display. With the coming of autumn, apples and colored leaves will accompany images of Jesus with children. We thank Brenda Dwyer for beautifully maintaining and updating our history cabinet displays.

Can you guess who I am?!



LISTEN to *The ChurchMouse*

New Scotland Presbyterian Church
September 2023



"Original Landlord Still Offering Sanctuary"

The Rev. Holly S. Cameron..... Pastor
Pastor's office phone number:..... 518-478-0796
Pastor's email address..... Pastor@NewScotlandPC.org
Church office phone number 518-439-6454
Office email address: Office@NewScotlandPC.org
Newsletter Managing Editor Dorothy Kohler



2010 New Scotland Avenue, Slingerlands, NY 12159