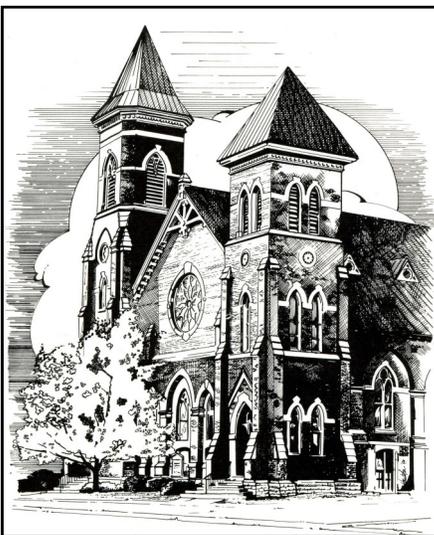


# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SENECA FALLS

## March Newsletter 2012



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### PASTOR'S CORNER

Rev. Leah Ntuala

One word that has been coming up time and time again in my conversations with people is hospitality. Hospitality is the friendly reception and treatment of guests or strangers and the quality or disposition of receiving and treating guests and strangers in a warm, friendly, generous way. Hospitality is the way in which we welcome people. So, how do we welcome people to our church? Recently, Membership and Parish Life have put together gift bags of welcoming. The ushers and greeters should encourage new faces to take a bag, by placing it in their hands. At the same time, Outreach is working on new ideas for how to welcome people into our church. They will not be able to do this without your help. Sunday, May 6th is "Bring a Friend to Church" Sunday. We are asking everyone to invite a friend or 6 to come to church and stay for a Pancake Breakfast. We will have tickets to sell, no worries. The hope is that with these efforts and more people will see what we already know, that the people who make up our church family are wonderful, energetic and loving people!

Reading is a dangerous practice and should come with a warning label: *Reading this book may cause you to expand your mind and see life from a whole new perspective.* A book I have been reading is called *Radical Welcome: Embracing God, the Other and Spiritual Transformation* by Stephanie Spellers. The rest of this article comes from Stephanie Spellers Study Guide.

So what is Radical Welcome? Radical welcome is first and foremost a spiritual practice. It combines the Christian ministry of welcome and hospitality with a faithful commitment to doing the theological, spiritual and *systemic* work to eliminate historic, systemic barriers that limit the genuine embrace of groups generally marginalized in mainline churches (young adults, the poor, LGBT people, people of color, people with disabilities).

What makes a church Radically Welcoming? Radically welcoming churches understand that each group brings gifts and perspectives that help the whole congregation to fulfill God's dream and purpose. These churches seek to embrace everyone's voices, presence and power, with a special commitment to embracing groups who have been defined as The Other.

Who is "The Other"? The Other is any group that is likely (or would reasonably expect) to experience patterns of historic, systemic oppression and marginalization in your congregation and/or denomination, especially given your church's dominant race, culture, language, generation, socioeconomic class, education level, sexual orientation and physical ability.

How is Radical Welcome practiced?

**Hospitable:** They seek to offer a gracious, warm space to all people, especially those who have been defined as "The Other".

**Reconciling:** They build mutually transforming relationships with their neighbors, their neighborhood, and with brothers and sisters beyond their neighborhood—wherever Christ calls them.

**Centered:** They possess a clear, compelling sense of Christian identity. It is based on their cultural/ denominational heritage, *and* in an unapologetic calling to live out the dream of God as they have discerned it in light of scripture, tradition, reason and their unique context.

**Open to conversion:** They attempt to listen carefully to, make room for, share power with, and learn from The Other, and they are open to genuine conversion and transformation based on this encounter.

**Intentional:** They engage in training, research, active listening and strategic planning, conscious, contextually appropriate efforts that address individual, congregational and systemic change.

I know we already practice being welcoming, but let us take it a step further. There has not a day that has gone by in Mason's life (even in the womb) that I haven't told him how much I love him. It is important because when he doesn't make the best choice I never want him to doubt that I love him. We need to do that for one another too. Let us be people who make God's message of love clear. God's love is Radical! Let us be radically welcoming too! Peace, Pastor Leah

## SESSION BRIEFS

The Session Meeting of Feb. 20, 2012 was a major discussion on the finances of our church. Repairs that need to be done at the Manse and Eastman Hall that basically have to be put on a health and safety first list due to our finances.

The Outreach Ministry Team had a discussion about this issue at their meeting on the 13th and they sent a Motion to the Session that we need to establish a Fund Raising Task Force. Anyone interested in being on this Task Force needs to let Pastor Leah know.

Session has established an Audit Task Force. They will be looking through the church financial records and will be making recommendations for improvements. The task force will consist of Kathy Gee, Marion Crull, and Jan Day.

The next Session meeting has been changed to March 29th.

Reported by Clerk of Session-Elaine G. Ritter



### MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Mary Headley-3/02  
 Jeb Becker-3/03  
 Carol Rook-3/08  
 Virginia [Lay] Brady-3/10  
 George Elyseev-3/11  
 James Clark-3/13  
 Marjorie Fahrenholz-3/23  
 Betty Geraghty-3/25  
 Tim Geraghty-3/25  
 Chris Sweet-3/25  
 Susan Derr-3/28  
 Elaine Ritter-3/30



April Newsletter  
 articles due on  
**March 22nd.**  
 It will be mailed  
 On **March 29th.**

## WOMEN'S CIRCLE

The Women's Circle met Feb 6th. We greatly miss Liz Brown. Liz contributed much to the circle in discussion and enthusiasm.



The lesson from the Beatitudes was: "Greatly Honored are the Pure In Heart". The Biblical word considered the heart the seat of important decisions of thought. In today's world we tend to think of the heart medically.

We counted and made assignments for supplies to complete the personal care kits. We always receive most grateful thank you notes from the Crisis Center so know the need is ongoing. The knitted, crocheted items find a welcome home too.

### **The 3rd Sunday House of Concern items are:**

**March: Canned vegetables and fruit**

**April: Cereal**

**May: Peanut butter and Jelly**

The next meeting is March 5th at 12:30. Bring a sandwich and join us.

Jean Morris

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

### **Easter Egg Hunt and Craft Day at 9:30am-11:30, Saturday, April 6, 2012.**

Easter is fast approaching! Even though Lent just began on Feb. 22nd, Easter will arrive before we know it. Christian Education will need your help again this year to make this Easter Egg Hunt once again a success. We will need people to donate plastic eggs, bags of candy to fill eggs, and hard-boiled eggs for coloring. Last year we had 40 children, so we need 100's of eggs stuffed with candy!



Also, it is not too early to begin to think about how you can help with Vacation Bible School. Our theme this year is Dr. Seuss and the Bible. We have all the activities and snacks planned, but we need help in preparing the snacks, running the activities and spreading the word about our amazing VBS. It will be July 16th-20th, 9am-Noon with a concert and luncheon at noon on Friday, July 20th. Please contact Marion Crull if you wish to help out with these events!

## NEWS FROM THE PRESBYTERY

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s highest court has upheld the censure of the Rev. Jane Spahr for performing 16 same-gender marriages in California during a time that such rites were legal in the state. The General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission's (GAPJC) vote was 9-6, indicating the denomination's continuing struggle to decide the limits of "pastoral care" as more states legalize same-sex marriage.

The PC(USA)'s *Book of Order* defines marriage as "between a man and a woman," but several overtures to the upcoming 220<sup>th</sup> General Assembly call for that definition to be changed.

"I feel sad for the church because I think it's such a right and loving thing to be with couples on this journey of marriage and deep intimacy with one another," Spahr told Reuters after the decision was announced.

Spahr, 69, is a retired PC(USA) pastor and grandmother. She was originally censured in Redwoods Presbytery for officiating at 16 same-gender weddings between May 2008, when the California Supreme Court struck down a ban on same-sex matrimony, and November of that year, when voters approved a state constitutional amendment reinstating it. The Redwoods decision was upheld by the Synod of the Pacific's PJC.

Censure carries no further form of discipline in the PC(USA). "The issue is not simply the same-sex ceremony," the GAPJC majority wrote in its decision. "It is the misrepresentation that the Presbyterian Church ... recognizes the ceremony and the resulting relationship to be a marriage in the eyes of the church." The ruling cites a 1991 "authoritative interpretation" of the PC(USA) constitution, in which the GAPCC said that Presbyterian ministers should not perform same-sex union ceremonies "that the minister determines to be the same as a marriage ceremony."

The six dissenters said the censure of Spahr perpetuates the notion that gay couples "are children of a lesser God." They wrote: "As Christians, we claim the high goal of loving and including all, then seek to exclude the (gay) community. This second-class ... treatment proclaims the hypocrisy of our present interpretations."

Ordained in 1974, two years before coming to the self-realization she was a lesbian, Spahr was the first openly gay minister called to pastor a PC(USA) congregation. The GAPJC blocked her call to Downtown Presbyterian Church in Rochester, N.Y. The church responded by hiring to create and lead "That All May Freely Serve," a nationwide ministry that advocates full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered Presbyterians in the church, including service as church officers.

Last summer, the 173 PC(USA) presbyteries ratified an amendment to the church's constitution that allows, but doesn't require, the ordination of gay and lesbian Presbyterians in committed same-sex relationships.

## Worship and Music



Worship and Music Committee usually meets on Communion Sunday. We met February 5th with 8 members in attendance. We discussed the Lenten season. Leah wants to try a mid-week service on Wednesdays from 5:30 to 6pm beginning on March 7th. More on this will be coming up.

As Leah likes to have a liturgist, Diana Becker is going to continue to get people to do these readings. If you are willing to help by reading please call Diana at 568-6625. Marion Crull volunteered to do the lists for Greeters, Ushers and Nursery. If this is something you would like to help with please call Marion at 568-5918.

We have again been invited to join with the Methodists for Maundy Thursday service in their Sanctuary on State Street. There are plans to have an ecumenical Good Friday service at a time and place to be announced.

We hope that you will join us for these times of worship.

Yours in Christ,

Jannette Monterville, Co-Chair

Kathy Gee, Co-Chair





## HANDBELL REPORT

Since I will be in Florida for the months of January, February, March and April and since Carol Millis will be subbing for me, here is the schedule of rehearsal dates and performances:

**MARCH Rehearsals:** Wednesday March 7th and 14th. 7:30 – 8:30

Performance Sunday March 18

Performance for bells on Easter (April 8) will be without a director; an ensemble will play. If you would like to be a part of this ensemble please let me know as soon as possible. Carol has had much experience in ensemble playing and will be able to rehearse this group with a great bit of knowledge.

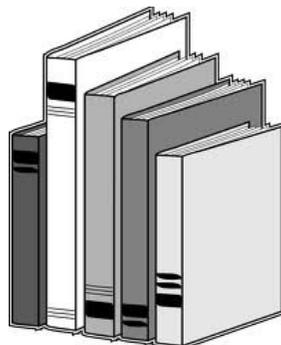
Rehearsals for Easter service will be March 21, 28, and April 4. I will be back for rehearsal on April 25. See you then!!

*-Marge*

## BOOK CLUB

The copies of the book, The Great Awakening by Jim Wallis, for the April 10th discussion, are all circulating. If you picked up a church copy, don't forget to circulate it with others. Either pass it on or share it by leaving it somewhere such as a restaurant or other gathering place to be found/picked up by someone. If you would like to read a copy and are unable to locate one, contact Carolyn Seem.

Thank you to all who took a copy and for sharing it in whatever way works for you. Hope to have several of you join us on April 10th at 7:00pm for the discussion.



## CHURCH FAMILY NEWS



**A BIG THANK YOU** to everyone who helped out during the Presbytery meeting and the Annual meeting.

**WEDNESDAY WORSHIP:** Beginning March 7th we will be having “Wednesday Worship”. It will be each Wednesday from 5:30-6pm in the Social Hall. It is a half hour family service with praise songs, and fun activities for children of all ages. It will be followed by dinner. If you can help set up before or clean up after, please call Susan Derr at 568-1918. We would love to have you there. Come join us!



There will be a **Palm Sunday Brunch** on April 1st, following Worship.



**FUNDRAISING TASK FORCE:** We need a Task Force for Fund Raising and anyone interested in being on this Task Force should let Pastor Leah know. See Session Briefs for more information.

**DIRECTORY INFORMATION:** The Directory Task Force is gathering information to update the Church Directory. The information sheet was included in a Sunday bulletin recently. If you did not get one, Chris has extra copies in the office. There are boxes in the Narthex and Social Hall to drop them in when you are finished filling out the information you would like to include in the new updated directory that we will be putting together soon.

I would like to thank Joyce Lohr for helping me get the Annual Report put together. It was greatly appreciated.

We have a new 4 in one copier/printer/scanner/fax in the office and with that we have a new fax number. It is 315-568-6616

~ Chris ~



## **GREETERS, USHERS and NURSERY**

### **March 4th– Communion/2nd Sunday in Lent**

Greeters: Matt and Marion Crull  
 Ushers: Bob and Carolyn Seem  
 Nursery: Matt Crull and Scott Jessop



### **March 11th-3rd Sunday in Lent**

Greeters: Joanne and George Elyseev  
 Ushers: Jan and Mike Day  
 Nursery: Becky Jessop and Susan Derr

### **March 18th– 4th Sunday in Lent**

Greeters: Claire and Dick Damaske  
 Ushers: Kathy Gee and Lauren Gee  
 Nursery: Carolyn Seem and Elaine Ritter

### **March 25th– 5th Sunday in Lent**

Greeters: Diana and Jeb Becker  
 Ushers: Don and Elaine Ritter  
 Nursery: Matt Crull and Bob Seem

### **April 1st– Communion/ Palm Sunday**

Greeters: Sam and Dorothy Dickieson  
 Ushers: Matt Crull and George Elyseev  
 Nursery: Jim Clark and Barb Lohr



## **COFFEE HOUR AND PRAYER LIST**

- March 4th:** Fellowship Hour in Eastman Hall. Hosts-Howard & Barb Van Kirk
- March 11th:** Immigration & Farm Labor by Marc Smith (Courtesy of the Seems)  
Hosts– Mike and Jan Day
- March 18th:** Commission on the status of Women, UN -Rev Leah
- March 25th:** Mental Health Issues -Jo Ann Mason. Hosts-Wayne & Joyce Lohr



**Know someone ill or hospitalized?** This month, please call: Barb Lohr 568-8998

**To Keep in our prayers:** Alice Burgdorf, Keith Davis, Bob Didsbury, Paul Foote, Bob and Betty Geraghty, Mary Headley, Charlene Hooper, Crystal Jones, Margaret Marsh, Joan Olmstead, Bobbi Plummer, Sally Porsch, Don Proctor, Nancy Shuster, Alberta Stuck, Cpl. Geoffrey Tyler, Cathy Van Vechten, Fran Webb, Loraine Worthington and Margaret Yells.

Church Office: 315-568-6636  
Church Fax: 315-568-6616  
Hours: Tuesday-Thursday 8:30-2:30  
Manse: 315-257-0028

**Sunday Worship at 10am. Nursery Care available. Sunday School 10:15am.  
Coffee Hour in Eastman Hall following worship.**

Rev. Leah Ntuala-Pastor  
Rev. Dr. Peter J. Crego-Pastor Emeritus  
Mina Choi- Director of Music & Organist  
Elaine Ritter-Clerk of Session  
Karen Beals-Treasurer  
Marjorie Fahrenholz- Hand bell Choir Director  
Kyle Bruzda- Sexton  
Chris Sweet- Office Manager

*Session meeting for March will be held on March 29th at 7pm.*

Presently serving Elders: Jeb Becker, Jim Clark, Richard Damaske, Susan Derr, Scott Jessop, Karen Kelley, Barbara Lohr, Jannette Monterville, Paul Richardson, Bob Seem, Carolyn Seem, Elaine Ritter, Clerk of Session and Rev. Leah Ntuala, moderator.

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