

First Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls

Toward a Church as **GENEROUS**
and **JUST** as God's Grace....



January Newsletter 2015

Pastor's Corner



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My new years resolution is to not be a silent friend this year. I know you are thinking, "When has Leah ever been silent?" But I have. I have as I turned off a news program because I didn't want to hear about the suffering in the world. I have when I have turned up some music to drown out the sounds of others sufferings. I have been silent when I closed my eyes or turned a back on issues of justice. Well not in 2015. In 2015, I will make noise in the name of God.

This will be my mantra. Psalm 150: 3-6 "Praise God with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise her with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise her with clanging cymbals; praise God with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that breathes praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

I am inviting you to join me in making noise, to also not be a silent friend. Jesus' friends made a lot of noise, until the day he was arrested and then....silence. His friends made no noise, because they were afraid. They were afraid for their lives, what would happen to them? I did not know him they said.

So here is your 1st opportunity to make some noise. Please join me on Jan 19th for the Martin Luther King, Jr Parade in Geneva, NY. Bring warm coats, comfortable shoes and a friend. Please contact me for further details. Happy New Year!

Peace, Pastor Leah

Session Briefs

Meeting of Mon., December 15, 2014
prepared by Joyce Lohr, Clerk to the Session

- Received note of appreciation for church participation in Salvation Army Kettle Drive during which, our volunteers raised well over \$300
- Heard 2015 Budget projections; awaiting remainder of pledges
- "It's a Wonderful Life" weekend reported to be fun and successful with baked goods and Wine Raffle money still coming in
- Learned of Pastor's invitation and her acceptance to Credo Conference at Presbyterian Conference Center, Little Rock AK, October 2015
- Tee and Polo shirts with church logo order awaits further interest in order to get bulk order prices
- On-line 90 Second Sermons [authored by Pastor Leah] continue to raise interest each week
- Heard praise for new Christian Ed director, Sabrina Hoster and program
- Heard "Phase One" report for new internet and phone service with Time/Warner
- Heard news of steeple work completed to solve/avert possible leaking issues
- Acknowledged receipt of vacuum cleaner from Ginny Konz and its grateful use by Sexton, Kyle Bruzda
- Caroling groups are sought to deliver poinsettias and sing to shut-ins on Dec. 21 following Manse Open House
- Committee/Ministry chairs are asked to have annual reports to church office Jan 4 or as early in the month as possible so that entire Annual Report is available ahead of the Annual Meeting which is on Jan. 25, 2015

Next meeting of the Session is Mon., January 26, 2015



Handbells/Handchimes Report

Thanks to our vocal soloist Donna Montgomery who added a beautiful sound to the bells as they played "*Lamb of God*" on Dec. 7.

The six bell ringers who volunteered to ring at West Fayette's celebration performed again at our coffee hour on Dec. 14. They have been practicing ringing bells that are not usually theirs and finding it a challenge. Thank you *Claire and Dick Damaske, Hedra Harrison, Carolyn and Bob Seem, and Nancy Shuster*.

Thanks also to the Youth Bell Choir who performed on Dec. 14 and will rehearse again in May.

Carol Millis will be directing the Bell Choir while I am away. Carol is an exceptional bell ringer and rings in her church bell choir as well as performs with the Finger Lakes Bronze Ensemble. She is also an accomplished soloist.

I wish everyone a Happy New Year!

Marge



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Iva Lay-1/1

Barbara Lohr-1/5

Kyle Bruzda- 1/6

Leah Ntuala-1/6

Kiersten Dunbar Fitzgerald-1/12

George Becker-1/19

Barb Van Kirk- 1/20

Peter Snyder- 1/22

Jean Stenlake-1/22

Karen Beals-1/28

Nancy Rutz- 1/28

Ben Jessop-1/29

Joan Olmstead- 1/31

Happy Birthday everyone!



February Newsletter
articles are due on
January 22nd.

Newsletter will be
sent out
On January 29th.

Women's Circle

The Potluck Luncheon on Dec. 1 truly demonstrated the meaning of church family. Everyone contributed not only food but the work of the setting up, serving and cleaning up. Once again we know Presbyterian women are great cooks!

Diapers were collected for The House of Concern. We didn't count but there were many. They are used up so quickly.

The next meeting, Jan. 5 will be the usual sandwich lunch at 12:30pm. We will be covering lessons 4 and 5.

Our thanks to all who contribute through the Communion offering and assist us in other ways.

**3rd Sunday House of Concern item is:
SOUP**

-Jean Morris



Vanderkamp Winter Retreat **Feb. 6 – Feb. 8, 2015**

Our Vanderkamp retreat weekend is only a little more than a month away. Several people have signed up on the sheet in the church basement, including some new people! However, there is room for more! Remember, family and friends are always welcome. The more, the merrier! We will be asking for firm commitments by January 18th. The estimated price for the weekend, which includes 2 nights and 3 meals, is approximately \$100 per adult, but the exact amount can not be calculated until we know how many people are going. Children ages 6-12 only have to pay for their meals (\$12.25) and children under 6 are free. We will not need payment until the end of January.

This retreat weekend is a wonderful 2 days of fellowship, fun and food. You do not have to be an outdoor enthusiast, as there are always plenty of activities going on in the lodges. However, the scenery and tranquility there are spectacular! Please contact us if you would like more information or have any questions or concerns. Claire can be reached at 568-6383 and Wendy at 568-0112 (eve.). Also, check out the Vanderkamp web site at www.vk.org

Claire Damaske and Wendy Kain



The Rise of the Dones

November 12, 2014 by Thom Schultz

John is every pastor's dream member. He's a life-long believer, well-studied in the Bible, gives generously, and leads others passionately. But last year he dropped out of church. He didn't switch to the other church down the road. He dropped out completely. His departure wasn't the result of an ugly encounter with a staff person or another member. It wasn't triggered by any single event. John had come to a long-considered, thoughtful decision. He said, "I'm just done. I'm done with church."

John is one in a growing multitude of ex-members. They're sometimes called the de-churched. They have not abandoned their faith. They have not joined the also-growing legion of those with no religious affiliation—often called the Nones. Rather, John has joined the Dones. At Group's recent Future of the Church conference, sociologist Josh Packard shared some of his groundbreaking research on the Dones. He explained these de-churched were among the most dedicated and active people in their congregations. To an increasing degree, the church is losing its best.

For the church, this phenomenon sets up a growing danger. The very people on whom a church relies for lay leadership, service and financial support, are going away. And the problem is compounded by the fact that younger people in the next generation, the Millennials, are not lining up to refill the emptying pews.

Why are the Dones done? Packard describes several factors in his upcoming book, Church Refugees (Group). Among the reasons: After sitting through countless sermons and Bible studies, they feel they've heard it all. One of Packard's interviewees said, "I'm tired of being lectured to. I'm just done with having some guy tell me what to do."

The Dones are fatigued with the Sunday routine of plop, pray and pay. They want to play. They want to participate. But they feel spurned at every turn. Will the Dones return? Not likely, according to the research. They're done. Packard says it would be more fruitful if churches would focus on not losing these people in the first place. Preventing an exodus is far easier than attempting to convince refugees to return.

Pastors and other ministry leaders would benefit from asking and listening to these long-time members, before they flee. This will require a change of habit. When it comes to listening, church leaders are too often in the habit of fawning over celebrity pastors for answers. It would be far more fruitful to take that time and spend it with real people nearby—existing members. Ask them some good questions, such as:

- Why are you a part of this church?
- What keeps you here?
- Have you ever contemplated stepping away from church? Why or why not?
- How would you describe your relationship with God right now?
- How has your relationship with God changed over the past few years?
- What effect, if any, has our church had on your relationship with God?
- What would need to change here to help you grow more toward Jesus' call to love God and love others?

It's time to listen. Even as I'm writing this today, another high-capacity lay leader emailed me with his decision to leave his church. He's done. Like many others I know, he's also a nationally known Christian leader. But he's done. Your church, even if it's one of the rare growing ones, is sitting on a ticking time bomb. The exodus of the Dones, the rise of the Nones, and the disappearance of the Millennials do not look good for a church afraid to listen.

It's not too late to start.

(Thom Schultz is the co-author of Why Nobody Wants to Go to Church Anymore.)

Church Family News

Annual Reports: The annual meeting is going to be held on Sunday, January 25th. If you are the head of a committee your annual report will be due by **Sunday January 4th**. If you are receiving this newsletter by email you will find "A Suggested Format for Annual Reports" attached. If you are receiving it by mail it is included inside as an insert. Your annual report will be in paragraph form but this format gives you an idea of things to include in your report. Please email them to the church if possible to save a lot of extra typing. Thank you!

Offering Envelopes: If you haven't picked up your offering envelope box, please check the Narthex. They are there with your last name on the box. If you don't find your name, there are extra boxes in the office. If you want to make other arrangements to get your box, please contact Chris.

Wine Raffle Winners—We had 3 winners for the wine raffle during the "It's a Wonderful Life" weekend. They were Barb Van Kirk, Michelle Dugan and Amy Loving. Congratulations to all of you! The wine raffle brought in \$1,145.00 and the bake sale brought in \$323.00. Thank you to all who donated wine and/or baked goods. Thank you also to all of you who worked in the tent that weekend! This fundraiser was a great success thanks to all of you!

Terracycling and Box Tops at Frank Knight— Want to recycle more waste and help the school at the same time? Frank Knight wants your plastic tape rolls, snack bags/chip bags, juice drink pouches, and personal hygiene products (shampoo/conditioner and lotion bottles). The school receives money for your donations and the money they receive is matched by Seneca Meadows. Box Tops are found on several products such as cereal boxes, soup labels, baked good packages, etc. Bring them to church and we will make sure they get to the school.

Game Night— In January, Game Night and Potluck Supper will be held on Friday, January 9th at our usual time of 5:30pm

90 Second Sermons— Every week Pastor Leah posts a 90 second version of her sermons online at the church website, www.fpressf.com, the facebook site and in a church-wide email. Please view these sermons and share them with people you know. Maybe the message doesn't speak to you, but it may speak to someone else. It also extends the boundaries of our church.



Members and Friends who are shut-in or in special need:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
Ed and Bobbi Chase	1 Leland Drive, Seneca Falls NY 13148
Luanna Day	2705 Lower Lake Road, Seneca Falls, NY 13148
Dottie Lorenz	Huntington Living Center, Room 121, 369 E Main Street, Waterloo NY 13165
Liza Merriam	114 Ashton Court, Clifton Springs NY 14432
Jean Stenlake	Steuben County Healthcare Facility, Room 194, 7009 Rumsey Street Ext. Bath NY 14810
Robert Stenlake	18 Carol Avenue, Seneca Falls, NY 13148
Dorothy Tuthill	c/o Mary Jane Tuthill, 30 Wycliffe Road, Waterloo NY 13165
Fran Webb	c/o Parr's Springhurst Pines Box 215B 3001 N Hurstbourne, Louisville KY 40241

Ushers, Nursery and Candle Lighters

January 4th– Communion

Ushers: Bob and Carolyn Seem
Nursery: Susan Derr and Ericka Walsh
Candle Lighter: Matthew Walsh



January 11th– Baptism of the Lord

Ushers: Paul and Connie Richardson
Nursery: Neil Walsh and Sarah Walsh
Candle Lighter: Keara Dugan

January 18th– Ordination of Officers

Ushers: Becky and Scott Jessop
Nursery: Marion Crull and Carolyn Jessop
Candle Lighter: Gary Ippolito

January 25th– Annual Meeting

Ushers: Jim and Cherie Clark
Nursery: Marion Crull and Ericka Walsh
Candle Lighter: Mason Ntuala

February 1st– Communion

Ushers: Iva and Marvin Lay
Nursery: Sarah and Neil Walsh
Candle Lighter: Ben Jessop



Please trade dates with someone if you are unable to serve on your designated Sunday. Thank you for serving.

Liturgist List



4th– Nancy Shuster
11th– Ginny Konz
18th– Marion Crull
25th– Karen Kelley
Feb 1st– Nancy Shuster

Coffee Hour and Prayer List

Jan 4th: Fellowship Hour in the Social Hall; Hosts: Marion and Matt Crull
Jan 11th: Topic TBD; Hosts: Dick and Claire Damaske
Jan 18th: The Speakers (Israel) by Pastor Leah; Hosts: George and Joanne Elyséev
Jan 25th: No Coffee Hour- Annual Meeting and Brunch hosted by Membership/Parish Life



Know someone ill or hospitalized? This month, please call: Barb Van Kirk– 568-9908

To Keep in our prayers: Dorothy Baker, Diana and Jeb Becker, Bobbi and Ed Chase, Debbie Chase (Wendy Kain's sister), Diane Draheim, Nelson and Neena Hansen, Debbie Lockett, Dottie Lorenz, Liza Merriam, Jannette Monterville, Sally Porsch, Larry Scesney Jr., Bob and Jean Stenlake, Dorothy Tuthill, Fran Webb, EthelMae Wright and Margaret Yells.

Church Office: 315-568-6636
Hours: Tuesday-Thursday 7:30am-12:30pm
Manse: 315-257-0028
E-mail: firstpres13148@gmail.com
Website: www.fpressf.com

Scan this code
with your smart
phone to visit
our website



Sunday School (K-4th grade) and Youth Group (5th-12th grade)- 9-9:45am
Sunday Worship at 10am. Nursery Care available
Coffee Hour following worship.

Rev. Leah Ntuala-Pastor
Rev. Dr. Peter J. Crego-Pastor Emeritus
Chris Sweet-Office Manager
Karen Beals-Treasurer
J. Carl Vollbracht- Director of Music & Organist
Marjorie Fahrenholz- Hand Bell Choir Director
Kyle Bruzda- Sexton
Joyce Lohr- Clerk to the Session

Session meetings are on the 4th Monday of each month at 7pm.

Presently serving Elders: Andy Batty, Jim Clark, Marion Crull, Matthew Crull, Susan Derr,
Scott Jessop, Ginny Konz, Wayne Lohr, Bob Seem, Nancy Shuster, Ericka Walsh and Neil Walsh.
Clerk to the Session: Joyce Lohr, Rev. Leah Ntuala, Moderator.

First Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls
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HAPPY NEW YEAR TO

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