

FROM THE PASTOR

*Praying Our Way Through Lent*

The forty days prior to Easter, excluding Sundays is the season of the church year we call Lent. This time of preparation for Holy Week and Easter is usually a time of introspection and personal spiritual growth. Sometimes people “give up” something for Lent, other times they “take on” a spiritual discipline to help them grow in their faith.

This year I invite you to pray every day during Lent. Some of you already pray every day, but some of you probably do not. Too often we think of prayer as a chore instead of something that can be incorporated into our daily lives.

If you read poems, thoughts for the day, scriptures or daily meditations that are inspirational, you are praying. If you take a walk every day and hold God in your heart as you do, you are praying. If you dance in gratitude for life, you are praying. If you taste and see that the Lord is good when you eat, you are praying. If you sit in quiet, being mindful of the One who created you, you are praying. If you sing spiritual songs or write inspirational poetry, you are praying. There are so many ways to pray!

This year many of you have submitted Lenten Devotions, inspirational quotes, stories, scriptures or poems that have helped you to see God in a new way. Your contribution will help others pray this Lent. We will email each of you the complete Lenten booklet on February 16. You are invited to read a new devotion each day and to pray for the person who offered that inspiration. It is tempting to just sit down and read through the whole booklet, but restrain yourself and plan to read just one a day. It is a beautiful way to pray your way through Lent!

If you would like to submit a Lenten Devotion and have not yet, it isn't too late. We will be accepting submissions until February 10th. Just click this link: <https://signup.com/go/MAdMtWv> and sign up for a day. Send your submission to Alicia at office@canandaiguachurch.org and tell her the date you signed up for as well as the author and we'll include it in the booklet. We will also be posting these Lenten inspirations on the website and Facebook during the season of Lent.

Last year I had a couple of people ask if we could hold an Ash Wednesday service. I told them that I promised my first year in ministry here to keep the schedule of services the same as it was the previous year. We talked about holding a small service the following year. Well, here we are a year later and we can't have an in-person services. Who would have anticipated that we would be in the midst of a global pandemic? I never imagined that we would be only live streaming worship.

So, we are going to do something just a little bit different to introduce you to Ash Wednesday. You are invited to drive your car up to the back door of the church for "Drive By Ashes."

I will be at the rear door between 12 noon and 1 pm on Ash Wednesday February 17th. Just pull up in your car and I'll bring the ashes to you. I will sanitize my hands and wear a mask and you'll receive the ashes outside. Perhaps next year we can have an in-person Ash Wednesday service, but let's give "Drive By Ashes" a try this year!

The ashes are made from last year's Palms and remind us that God made humanity from dust and that in the end we all return to dust. Receiving the ashes of forgiveness is a beautiful way to begin observing the season of Lent.

I hope that you will find Lent meaningful and inspirational this year! Here is another fun way to observe Lent: making Pretzel Prayers. There is a legend that medieval monks baked pretzels to teach people about prayer. Cross your arms over your chest, one hand on the opposite shoulder, look down and voila...it's the shape of a pretzel. The recipe for pretzels is simple and when the dough is twisted into the shape of a pretzel you find that there are three holes representing the Holy Trinity.

Here is the recipe for Lenten Pretzels reprinted from "Essential Lent."



Ingredients (Makes 12 pretzels)

Soda Solution:

1/3 cup baking soda

5 cups water

Pretzel dough:

1 ½ cups all-purpose flour

1 ½ cups wheat flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 cup buttermilk

¼ cup honey

2 Tablespoons kosher salt for tops of pretzels

Instructions:

*Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

*Dissolve soda and water in a stock pot and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and set aside.

*Sift together flour and soda. Add buttermilk and honey, stirring until dough pulls together.

*Pour dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead until firm.

*Divide dough into 12 equal pieces.

*Roll each into a long, snake-like piece and form traditional pretzel shape.

*Pinch the ends to seal it and dip pretzel in soda water solution.

*Place on lightly greased baking sheet and sprinkle with kosher salt

*Bake in the oven for 10 minutes or until golden brown.

*Move to a cooling rack for a few minutes before eating!

I hope that you find many different ways to pray this Lent! May God bless you, and all of us as we seek to deepen our faith and grow in the Spirit. Amen.

Dawn

Message From Our Moderator

Hugs... I miss them.

OK, I confess, I can be a hugger. So this past year has been hard. When Rhonda delivered my annual report I wanted to hug her! I've wanted to hug people at Wegman's too.

I think about all the people I'll never be able to hug again. And then I think of all the people I look forward to seeing and hugging when that becomes possible and it makes me smile.

On the rare occasions when I leave my house, I find myself fixated on the eyes above the masks of the people I see. I watch closely, looking for signs that they may be smiling. I pay closer attention to the body language of masked people too. Looking for any clues about how they are feeling. I hope I continue to evaluate people closely even after the masks are gone. It's like developing a new sense.

I think about all the people, places and things I've missed this year. But then I remember the special family dinners, games and moments with my family. Those precious moments became the light, the spark of good, that came from being shut in.

There's a yin and yang about this past year – the bad and the good play back and forth. I am both saddened and encouraged by how people have been responding to their situations. I am both mad and thrilled about the ways our lives have shifted.

I miss those casual get-togethers and moments with my friends. But then I think - we'll be hugging again soon!

Hannah Morgan
Church Moderator

Prayer List

Steve Beck (Heidi Schwarz's brother); **Brad Bliss**; **Guy Burns**; **Marjorie Case**; **Cheryl** (Jennifer Maxfield's sister-in-law); **Don & Judy Clark** (Jessica & Dan Casellas' friends); **Cathy Coots**; **Den, Paris, and Kira** (Friends of Fred Henry); **Bob DeSantis** (Dorice & Don Raw, Sr.'s friend); **Julie English** (Janet & Kim Tenreiro's friend); **Brian Fuscaldo** (Mara Huberlie's nephew); **Jerry Gomez** (Kathi Nacca's friend); **Carin Herren**; **Jim and Carolyn** (Amy Ogden's friends); **Jim Kolesar** (George & Carin Herren's friend); **Sue Kotalik**; **Jan Larsen** (Dawn's mother); **Michelle List** (JoAnn Reed's friend); **Loren** (Meg & Jack Radley's friend); **Lynn** (Joan Ryan's friend); **Eileen McCarthy** (Carla DeMeco & Betsy Dresser's friend); **Sally Mueller**; **Liz Nelson** (Kathy Ward's friend); **Norman** (Jennifer Maxfield's uncle); **Margaret Page** (Bonnie Maguire's mother); **Pia** (Jim & Connie Malone's friend); **Chris Pritchard** (Rick, Cindy Mullen & George Herren's friend); **Jack and Meg Radley**; **Don Raw, Sr.**; **Sara** (Meg & Jack Radley's granddaughter); **Smith/Dworesky Family** (Okke & Kathy Postma's friends); **Pat Smith**; **Dr. Steven Smith & Family** (Jessica & Dan Casellas' friends); **Sally Stowell** (Alice Berry's mother); **Walker** (Don & Dorice Raw's friend); **Tom Wallace** (Jackie Lowe's significant other); **Kathy Ward**; **Gordon Wenner** (George & Carin Herren's friend); **Robin Wisniewski** (Alicia's mom); **Josh Yeo** (Barb Stahl's friend); **Jason Zeller** (Kathy Ward's son); **Linda Zeller** (Kathy Ward's daughter in law)

Happy Birthday!

2/1 Sally Mueller
2/1 Justin Maxfield
2/3 Doug Alling
2/5 Ann Scheetz
2/7 Dave Sauter
2/7 Laurie Cleveland
2/8 Tom Mees
2/8 Jane Ogden
2/10 Jim Davis
2/11 Dot Blanck
2/13 Olivia Casella
2/14 Sue Hawkes
2/16 Laura McAlpin
2/17 Claude Peters
2/20 Annie Garrett-Larsen

2/20 Sandi Hinett
2/20 Jonathan Logan
2/20 Rebecca Rice
2/21 Nancy Gilbert
2/23 Linda Orrell-Fair
2/23 Laurie Stoutz
2/24 Norma Barton
2/24 Mariena Schneider
2/24 Silas McAlpin
2/26 Louise Pool
2/26 Jack Wheeler
2/27 Linda Case
2/28 Steve Brooks

Weathervane Deadline for March issue is Feb. 15th.



Spotlight: Rhonda & Mike Nyerges

Fifty years ago, Rhonda Mosher, a freshman from Buffalo and Mike Nyerges, a transfer student from Monroe Community College in Rochester met at Geneseo State College. He asked her where the Philosophy Department was (to impress her, he says). She must have been impressed, because five years later they were married.

They are the parents of two boys. Aaron, the oldest is a college professor in Sidney, Australia and Steven lives in Chicago where he is in engineering management, internal marketing and sales for a Japanese firm.

They came to Canandaigua in 1987, when Mike was named Administrator of Wood Library. He held that position for about six or seven years. When he was offered a position in Pittsford, the Administrator of the Canandaigua schools called and offered him the position of Department Head of the Canandaigua school libraries. This meant the family didn't need to consider moving or transplanting their children to new schools. He also spent time as Director for the Geneva and the Mid-Hudson Libraries.

When her children were young, Rhonda worked part time as a nurse in the F. F. Thompson Birthing Center. When the boys were in their teens, she enrolled in the University of Rochester and earned a Masters Degree in Nursing, graduating in 1995 as a Nurse Practitioner. She spent twenty years at Strong Women's Health Practice and Planned Parenthood. When her grandson, Miles was born in 2014, she retired and took care of him.

Because of COVID, they are staying close to home, but are still busy. Mike is involved in art photography when he isn't helping the Arts Counsel manage their

web site. His artwork has been shown in the Canandaigua area. Rhonda is President of the Canandaigua P.E.O. which involves planning zoom and social-distance meetings for thirty-one women, raising money to give as scholarships and searching out applicants for the scholarships. They take walks every day and maintain a wellness schedule.

They miss their two grandsons, seven year old Miles and three year old Asher and will likely head for Chicago to see them as soon as the COVID crisis allows. They hope to return to Australia in November of 2021, when their son turns forty.

They have travelled cross-country and seen the U.S. Next on their “to do” list are trips to Italy, where they have relatives in the agro business, Switzerland where Rhonda was an exchange student, and England to research her genealogy.

Rhonda grew up in the United Church of Christ in Buffalo and Mike, although he was baptized Catholic, grew up as a Lutheran. They moved around a lot when the children were small and found the Methodist Church to give the boys a Christian education. After they grew up, their son Aaron sent her a copy of Caroline Cowles Richards’ diary from Australia. That was what drew them to the First Congregational Church, where they felt “at home.” She says “I loved the people, the simple and elegant sanctuary and the openminded, non-hierarchical, action-oriented approach to daily faith practice.... It was a perfect fit.” Mike says his appreciation for our congregation is simply rooted in how it lives out his favorite scripture passage, Micah 6:8.

~ Submitted by Carla DeMeco



Rhonda, Mike and their grandchildren

222nd Annual Meeting

The 222nd Annual Congregational Meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, February 7, 2021, at 11:00 via Zoom**. Please join us for live stream worship beginning at 10:30. At 11 we will switch to zoom where we will spend a moment remembering all of our church family who have passed on during this past year. Last year's minutes, as well as Statistical Reports, Treasurer's Report, and Reports of Boards and Committees, Proposed Budget, and Nominations for 2021 are included in the Annual Report which was delivered to homes or mailed and is also available via email or pick-up in the church office. We will hold the election of church officers and committees and the adoption of the 2021 budget.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84861800562?pwd=SjdzZGw5Z2N2ZXk4RzVrMWdXV3pZUT09>

–Kelly Meath, Clerk

Thank you!

Thank you to my incredible crew of Annual Report “assemblers,”
to Mike Parsons who organized drivers,
and to all of our drivers who hand-delivered the reports to our members!
Teamwork! Our congregation defines that word! Thank you all! ~ Alicia





Virtual Soup Suppers

As we will not be able to meet in person to share in Soup Suppers this Lent, instead we will have two virtual soup suppers! Co-hosted by Social Action and Congregational Life, they will be held on two Thursdays in Lent (**February 18 and March 25**) from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. via Zoom. Each time we will have two speakers from our

regular local agencies update us on how they have managed to keep operations going during COVID. We will also sing a hymn and hear about a family tradition from someone in our church family. Then we will each have a minute or two to share with each other something that has been going on in our own lives. The Zoom link will be sent out the day before the event. So cook up some soup, and join your church family for a little Lenten socializing!



In keeping with our tradition of raising funds at the soup supper, please consider making a donation. Send in a check to the church office with “soup suppers” on the memo line. Soup supper funds collected will be split between Child Advocacy Center, Gleaner’s Kitchen, Family Promise, and Light Hill.

CHRISTIAN ED NEWS

Calendar

February 7: NO SUNDAY SCHOOL OR YOUTH!
Annual Meeting (11:00)

February 14: Hybrid Sunday School (10:50)
Youth Zoom (11:00)

February 21: Hybrid Sunday School; Youth Zoom

February 27: Youth hike at Onanda Park

February 28: Hybrid Sunday School; Youth Zoom

Mark 12:30
And thou shalt love the
Lord thy God with all thy
heart, and with all thy soul,
and with all thy mind, and
with all thy strength: this is
the first commandment.

Mask Sale

The youth will be selling masks to raise money for the Child Advocacy Center. This is planned to take the place of the loose change collection we typically have this time of year. Mask artwork is designed by Bella Piorkowski, and will be available in youth and adult sizes. Details on mask ordering and purchase are forthcoming. Add a stylish FCC mask to your collection, and together we will make a difference in some young lives!



Attention Youth: On Saturday, February 27, the youth will meet at Onanda Park for a winter hike, hot chocolate and snacks! Save the date. Details TBA.

Lay Readers

We are looking for Lay Readers for the March and April. If you are willing to come to the Church on Sunday morning to lead the live stream worship service, please contact Dawn and let her know your availability. Thank you!

Choir Videos

We need your help! We all miss hearing our wonderful Choir, and so we are looking for videos of the Choir to use during the livestreams of our services. If you have any videos on your phone or a social media account, please let us know so that we can arrange for you to send them by text or email. Call the church office (394-2184) to make arrangements for sharing your videos. Thank you in advance for your help in enhancing our worship services!

Spirituals and Gospel Hymn Sing



February is Black History month. There is such a rich tradition of spirituals and gospel music in the black church that we decided to dedicate our Music and Hymn Sing this month to Spirituals. Elaine and Jim Hilton will lead this month's musical event. Elaine will play spirituals on the organ and together Jim and Elaine will lead a hymn sing of gospel hymns and spiritual songs. This event will be live streamed on **Tuesday February 9 at 3:00**. We hope you'll join us!



WHAT IF?
FOUNDATION

2021 is an important year for us. This October will mark the 20th anniversary of the What If Foundation — the moment we became a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to supporting the children and families in Ti Plas Kazo.

Our founder, Margaret Trost shared a vision with the legendary Father Gerard Jean-Juste after her first trip to Haiti and took a leap of faith. She asked her friends at home for help, and with a single miraculous check, she and Father Jeri began a journey that changed the lives of thousands of Haitians, along with their own.

That first check funded a meal program, once a week. But the vision was so much bigger: fighting hunger and creating access to education as the path to a brighter future. As Father Jeri used to say “First we feed the children, we keep them alive. Then we focus on education.” And thanks to the compassion and support of our donors, their beautiful vision slowly became a reality. Once a week became two, then three, then four, and now 20 years later, our Haitian partners serve 800 children a nourishing meal five days a week.

Money was raised for scholarships to see talented students pursue their potential, while Margaret and Father Jeri dreamed of a campus of Na Rive's own.

Together, we built the Father Jeri School in 2016, and now over 375 students can access one of the best educations in Haiti in a nurturing environment.

And I'm thrilled to report that despite last year's challenges, Father Jeri School students are thriving — 95% graduated from high school last year and at least 30% of them received full state scholarships to the university of their choice, an incredible accomplishment given very few spots are awarded each year in Haiti.



Father Jeri School Graduating Class of 2020

I couldn't hope for anyone better to kick off our 20th anniversary celebration than our founder Margaret Trost. We asked Margaret to share her thoughts on this auspicious occasion: <https://youtu.be/ZVS8OXbj46k> (CLICK TO WATCH VIDEO)

Together, we have done so much. Your compassion and generosity have funded possibility and hope for generations of Haitians. Together, you and our entire family of donors and supporters, our partners at Na Rive and the What If Foundation have stood in solidarity and forged ahead one step at a time, no matter the challenges. That's how we've always done it and how we always will.

Together in Service,
Dave Manson - Executive Director

Thank you

To My Church Family: It is with heartfelt appreciation that I thank you for your prayers, cards and flowers while I was facing surgery and during my recovery. I am blessed as a member of a caring and loving congregation and pastor and having a great cardiology and nurse team at my moment of need. All of you and my faith in God brought me through this moment and have me on the mend. I am sincerely grateful.

~ D. Guy Burns

Thank you to our Prayer Shawl Group:



Pictured is Joshua Weeks, son of Holley Ralston-Weeks, congregation member. Special thanks to the Prayer Shawl group and the congregation for their love and support to the Weeks family.

Congregational Life Talent Show

Our Christmas Party was so successful, we've decided it's time for another fun virtual event. We all know how talented our church family is – so – now is the time to start preparing for the first ever “Congregational Church Talent Show” to be held **March 18, 2021 at 7:00**. You can sing, dance, show how to arrange flowers, tell a joke, perform a skit; so many possibilities. Contact Jean Landes if you have questions or would like to perform (905-0540/jlandes15@yahoo.com).

Benefit Raffle!

Our church member, Jessica Casellas, and the staff of the Canandaigua Veterinary Hospital are hosting a virtual and in-person raffle to help support the family of Dr. Steve Smith. Dr. Smith is Jessica's boss and was diagnosed in December with brain cancer and is currently undergoing cancer treatments. The staff of the Canandaigua Veterinary Hospital are hosting a virtual raffle fundraiser with all proceeds going directly to the Smith family.

Dr. Smith has always shared his love and generosity with the Canandaigua community; all raffle items are donated from local businesses and community members and are valued from \$50-\$150 each. Let our community now give back to him.

The virtual raffle will be held January 25 through February 6. Raffle items will be posted on the Canandaigua Veterinary Hospital Facebook event page, on the fundraiser website, and on the foyer windows at the office. Tickets are available for purchase through the fundraiser website or by contacting the office staff. When purchasing tickets please include the raffle item number. We will have an in-person Covid-friendly display and final ticket sales on **February 6 from 3pm-6pm at the First Congregational Church in Canandaigua.**

Please contact Canandaigua Veterinary Hospital with any questions, concerns, or to purchase tickets. Thank you and Good Luck,

The staff at the Canandaigua Veterinary Hospital

To follow Dr. Smith's progress visit <https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/stevesmith12>

Fundraiser Website <https://beige-parrotfish-lbtw.squarespace.com/>

Facebook Page Event <https://fb.me/e/3kBP1bNFt>

February Calendar

Monday Feb 1 - Study Grp 9; 5:30 Study Grp; Sacred Conversation on Race 7 Zoom

Saturday Feb 6 – Steven Smith Benefit Raffle Fund raiser 3-6pm

Sunday Feb 7 - Worship Live Stream 10:30; Communion, Annual Meeting 11 Zoom

Monday Feb 8 - Study Grp 9; Trustees 4; 5:30 Study Grp

Tues., Feb 9 - 2:30 Spirituals and Hymn Sing Live Stream Jim & Elaine Hilton

Thursday Feb. 11 – Staff Meeting 4 in person

Sunday Feb 14 – Valentine's Day; Worship Live Stream 10:30; hybrid Sunday School;
11:45 Congregational Life zoom

Monday Feb 15 – President's Day; Study Grp 9; 5:30 Study Grp

Tuesday Feb. 16 – Church Council 7 zoom

Wednesday Feb. 17 – Ash Wednesday Drive By Ashes 12 noon – 1
at the rear door of the church

Thurs., Feb 18 – Zoom Soup Supper 6:30

Sunday Feb 21 - Worship Live Stream 10:30; hybrid Sunday School

Monday Feb 22 - Study Grp 9; 5:30 Study Grp

Fri. Feb. 26 – Prayer Shawl @ Sally Mueller's 2:00

Sunday Feb 28 - Worship Live Stream 10:30; hybrid Sunday School