



# PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ORONOCO

A SMALL CHURCH WITH A BIG MISSION

March 2024

## Holy Week 2024

This year, Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday on March 24 and will include Maundy Thursday on March 28, Good Friday on March 29, and Easter Sunday on March 31.

We'll be celebrating these Holy Days in the ways we have in the past, so here's the information you need to put on your calendars for Holy Week:



### **Maundy Thursday—Worship Around a Meal**

March 28

5:30 p.m.

*Pastor Lisa will provide soups, bread, and a dessert.*

*Come for an intimate meal, fellowship, and worship around the tables together.*

### **Good Friday Tenebrae Service**

March 29

7:00 p.m.

*The Tenebrae service is a service of darkness and shadow. We'll read through the story of Jesus' last days from his last supper with the disciples through his death on the cross.*

#### **Church Staff**

Pastor: Rev. Lisa Johnson

Pianist: Rocky Nisbit

#### **Church Leadership**

Mike Rand, Clerk of Session, Ruling Elder  
Ellen Warner, Treasurer  
Todd Wickre, Ruling Elder  
Brenda Longman, Ruling Elder

Geoff Warner, Ruling Elder  
Cindy Luhman, Ruling Elder  
Ron Peterson-Rucker, Ruling Elder

Gail Rucker, Deacon  
Joanne Schenck, Deacon  
Karen Peterson-Rucker, Deacon  
Jenny Rand, Deacon



## From the Pastor ...

Throughout our Lenten worship services for the last several years, we've incorporated readings and what we've called a "backwards Advent wreath." We extinguish one candle a week with each reading as we journey closer and closer to Holy Week, then re-light all the candles on Easter Sunday when the Light of the Risen Christ shines again. I always pull the readings from a different Lenten devotional book, pair them with a Scripture reading, and include a prayer.

This year, our readings are coming from the book *Pauses for Lent: 40 Words for 40 Days* by Trevor Hudson. Like many of the devotional books I've used in the past, this one is a lovely little book that assigns a particular word to each day of Lent (sort of like our Lenten Photo Challenge does) and pairs that word with a short Scripture passage, and a reflection. What's different about Hudson's book is that each day also includes a daily practice—a simple suggested activity meant to get you thinking about and interacting with your faith in a new way.

Y'all know me. You know that I love presenting new ways to explore and express your faith journey and your relationship with God.

One of the practices that was read in church over the last few weeks really struck me. This is what Hudson says in his book:

Make two lists today: "What brings me life?" and "What takes life from me?" Add to the lists throughout the day. At the end of the day, reflect on these two columns and ask God for guidance in choosing life. Give thanks to God for new life that comes through Jesus Christ.

So often, we find ourselves focusing on the things that take life from us. They're the fires we have to put out. They're the things that layer on the stress. They're the items on our to-do lists that perpetually hang out there because we're dreading them. They're the things we *have* to do ... but not the things that bring us joy. For me, that's laundry. (Sorry, Linda ♥) So often nowadays people talk about "self care," and this is a huge part

of self care—trying to balance your days with doing the things that need to be done but interspersing them with things that bring you life.

I really want to encourage you to try this practice this month. Try it every day. If that seems too overwhelming, try it once a week or even once every other week. Or try it just once this month. But try it. Make those two lists:

What brings me life?

What takes life from me?

As Paul wrote in Philippians:

*From now on, brothers and sisters, if anything is excellent and if anything is admirable, focus your thoughts on these things: all that is true, all that is holy, all that is just, all that is pure, all that is lovely, and all that is worthy of praise. Practice these things: whatever you learned, received, heard, or saw in us. The God of peace will be with you.  
~ Philippians 4:8-9*

For the sake of your heart, your spirit, your peace of mind, try this practice. Make the lists. Pray through the lists, thanking God for the things—the activities, the experiences, the people—that bring you life. Pray through the lists, asking for God’s strength and guidance for how to best handle the things that take life from you.

*Pastor Lisa*

## Scripture readings for March

- **March 3**—John 2:13-22, *Lent #3*
- **March 10**—John 3:14-22, *Lent #4*
- **March 17**—John 12:20-33, *Lent #5*
- **March 24**—Mark 11:1-11, *Palm Sunday*
- **March 31**—Mark 16:1-8, *Easter Sunday*



## Prayer Requests



*“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” ~ Philippians 4:6-7*

And so we lift up **Helen Craft, Curt Burt, Keanan Peterson-Rucker, Kamyn PR-Nielsen, and Hadley Thompson** in prayer.

## Keeping Up with the Smith-Mathers

We continue to receive (roughly) quarterly updates from Shelvis and Nancy about their life and work and mission in Uganda and South Sudan. And we continue to donate our 2nd Sunday Spare Change offering to the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) in honor of that work.



Donations can still be made in honor of specific mission co-workers – Shelvis and Nancy, in our case. And of course, we can always pray for them and their family in all times and places. But if you can’t be here in person to contribute to our Spare Change offering, you can still help. Visit their PMA page:

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/shelvis-and-nancy-smith-mather/>. From there, you can click on the green box under their (completely adorable) family picture that says, “Give in honor of the ministry of Shelvis and Nancy Smith-Mather.” This will redirect you to the PMA donation page.

You can also click on the blue box that says “Subscribe to our letters” to start receiving Shelvis and Nancy’s occasional updates in your inbox. They send a wonderful, entertaining, touchingly personal update roughly quarterly.

**Next Session mtg.:**

**Monday, Mar. 4  
6:30 p.m.**

**Next Presbytery mtg.:**

**Saturday, Apr. 20, 2024  
morning  
(hybrid—location TBA)**

## Lenten Photo Challenge

The Lenten Photo Challenge is back! Each day of Lent is assigned a different word – something to get us thinking and praying and digging deeper into our faith in some way. Sometime throughout the day, take a picture that makes you think of that word. For example, if the word was “light,” you could take a picture of a candle or the sun rays or the smile of a friend (as it LIGHTS up your day), etc.

There are copies of this year’s word list in this newsletter (last page). There will also be copies of the word list at church, on the websites, and on our Facebook and Instagram pages.

To participate, you can take a picture and post it to Facebook, Twitter, and/or Instagram. Include the word of the day with your post as well as **#PCOLentPhoto** so we can all find and enjoy each other’s photos. (Actually, if you search the hashtag on any of those social media platforms, you’ll even be able to find photos from previous years.)

If social media is not your forte, you can still participate. Take the pictures with your phone or your regular camera and keep track of which pictures go with which words. You can either share them with others on Sunday mornings, or if you want, get them to Pastor Lisa and she can post them on the church’s Facebook page for you (either credited to you or anonymously, whichever you choose).



## Star Word Prompts

**In this season of Lent, what repentance or self-examination has come from your star word so far?**







## Daylight Saving **BEGINS**

Just a reminder that Daylight Saving Time begins on

**Sunday, March 10**

so remember to turn your clocks 1 hour AHEAD!

## Per Capita—The “Glue” That Holds Presbyterians Together

**What is it?** The Presbyterian Church is a connectional church. We worship, serve, and govern together. Per capita contributions fund the shared governing responsibilities for the whole church (Presbytery, Synod, General Assembly), no matter the size of an individual church.

**How old is it?** It is mentioned in the Synod of Philadelphia minutes in 1738!

**How much is it?** As per the vote during the Nov. 2023 presbytery mtg., the 2024 per capita will be \$38.50.

**Where does the money go?** 66% to our Presbytery; 17% to our Synod; 17% to the General Assembly (national office).

**Why is it important?** Per capita monies support the work of the church globally to nationally to locally, including the technology grant we received earlier this year to worship remotely.

**What is our church’s policy?** It is, and has been, the policy of the Presbyterian Church of Oronoco to pay our per capita every year, whether individual members have contributed their portion or not.

**Have I paid this year?** If you are not sure, please contact Ellen Warner ([ellenjwarner@gmail.com](mailto:ellenjwarner@gmail.com)) to find out.

**How do I pay?** You can write a check to the Presbyterian Church of Oronoco and simply write “per capita” on the memo line.



## March Birthdays & Anniversaries

- ♫ 3/3—Lance Sorensen
- ♫ 3/4—Geoff Warner
- ♫ 3/9—Deb Schmitz-Huey
- ♫ 3/13—Mark Pinney
- ♫ 3/19—Ron Peterson-Rucker
- ♫ 3/24—Kim Stanton
- ♥ 3/11—Dick & Janice Ostrom



## Clothes Closet

Some of the regular helpers with the Oronoco Food Shelf have started a clothes closet for food shelf clients— a chance for them to take whatever clothing they need. As the weather gets colder, this is a vital ministry and one for which the food shelf clients have already expressed great appreciation. We've made space for them in the closet area on the landing on the north end of the building (near the food shelf volunteer entrance). If you have any clothing you'd like to donate (new or gently used), please bring it to church. All sizes are appreciated, especially larger adult sizes.



## Staying in Touch

### **Presbyterian Church of Oronoco**

Office: 507-367-4711

Email: [oronocopc@bevcomm.net](mailto:oronocopc@bevcomm.net)

Website: <http://www.oronocochurch.org>

### **Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area**

Office: 651-357-1150

Email: [office@ptcaweb.org](mailto:office@ptcaweb.org)

Website: <http://www.ptcaweb.org>

### **Presbyterian Church (USA)**

Office: 800-728-7228

Email: [info@pcusa.org](mailto:info@pcusa.org)

Website: <http://www.pcusa.org>



## Winter Weather Procedures

As the winter months are once again upon us, just a reminder that occasionally, we do have to close church due to weather and road conditions. The following are our procedures when this happens:



- Pastor Lisa and the Session member assigned to open and close the church for the month will decide whether it is appropriate to close
- Pastor Lisa will send out an all-church email alerting people of the closing. It will also be posted to our Facebook page (Presbyterian Church of Oronoco) and our website.
- Session members will call people to let them know of the closing using the calling list that we have established. *If you think your contact information may need to be updated, please let Pastor Lisa know.*
- Pastor Lisa will contact KAAL, KTTC, KIMT, and Fox 47 to put the cancellation on the local “Closing and Delays” lists as well.



## Spouse Grief Group

We’ve started hosting a congregational spouse grief group. It’s a very informal group—just a safe, supportive space to talk about beloved spouses that have passed, the ways that we deal with grief, and anything else. We meet:

**3rd Monday of the month—5:30 p.m.**



## Food Shelf: Item of the Month

We’ve got a new monthly piece that will be showing up in the newsletter! The OFS volunteer responsible for ordering has given us a list of monthly needs – a specific item that the Food Shelf could use that month. This monthly item will also be posted on our church Facebook page, so feel free to find it every month and share the image!



## Lenten sermon series: Power of Sacrifice

Lent is a time of reflection and repentance—a time to examine our own hearts and minds, to dig deeper into the rhythms of our daily lives to find the holy amidst the normal. The tradition of “giving up” something during Lent is a long-standing one that many people participate in during this season. The idea is that, by giving up something (chocolate, alcohol, caffeine, social media, swearing, etc.), we choose to sacrifice to prepare our spirits for the ultimate sacrifice that Christ made on the cross.

This year, throughout Lent, we’ll be exploring the power of sacrifice. Our sermon series, roughed out by Rev. Brandan J. Robertson, lead pastor at Missiongathering Christian Church in San Diego, is one that digs deeply into how Jesus shows us how subversive radical self-sacrifice can be. “In this Lenten series, we will examine the tangible ways that Jesus demonstrated sacrificial living in his day and age, and the powerful, world-shaking ramifications that his sacrificial life had on his society in his day, while posturing ourselves to imitate Jesus in our day.”

*1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent* – Feb. 18: Mark 1:9-15

“Expand Your Mind”

*2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent* – Feb. 25: Mark 8:31-38

“What Matters Most”

*3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent* – Mar. 3: John 2:13-22

“The Destruction That Brings Life”

*4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent* – Mar. 10: John 3:14-21

“The Spotlight of Grace”

*5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent* – Mar. 17: John 12:20-33

“Sacrificial Bravery”

*Palm Sunday* – Mar. 24: Mark 11:1-11

“Joy before Sorrow”



# 2024 Lenten Photo Challenge

<u>Ash Wed.</u> <u>Feb. 14</u> <b>love</b>	<u>Feb. 26</u> <b>give</b>	<u>Mar. 9</u> <b>speak</b>	<u>Mar. 21</u> <b>symbol</b>
<u>Feb. 15</u> <b>need</b>	<u>Feb. 27</u> <b>kindness</b>	<u>Mar. 10</u> <b>light</b>	<u>Mar. 22</u> <b>silence</b>
<u>Feb. 16</u> <b>time</b>	<u>Feb. 28</u> <b>follow</b>	<u>Mar. 11</u> <b>focus</b>	<u>Mar. 23</u> <b>people</b>
<u>Feb. 17</u> <b>embrace</b>	<u>Feb. 29</u> <b>empty/ness</b>	<u>Mar. 12</u> <b>sacred space</b>	<u>Palm Sun.</u> <u>Mar. 24</u> <b>serve</b>
<u>Feb. 18</u> <b>world</b>	<u>Mar. 1</u> <b>believe</b>	<u>Mar. 13</u> <b>peace</b>	<u>Mar. 25</u> <b>truth</b>
<u>Feb. 19</u> <b>valley</b>	<u>Mar. 2</u> <b>redeem</b>	<u>Mar. 14</u> <b>something I carry</b>	<u>Mar. 26</u> <b>direct</b>
<u>Feb. 20</u> <b>settle</b>	<u>Mar. 3</u> <b>but</b>	<u>Mar. 15</u> <b>night</b>	<u>Mar. 27</u> <b>push</b>
<u>Feb. 21</u> <b>adore</b>	<u>Mar. 4</u> <b>solidarity</b>	<u>Mar. 16</u> <b>leave</b>	<u>Maundy Thurs.</u> <u>Mar. 28</u> <b>hunger</b>
<u>Feb. 22</u> <b>surround</b>	<u>Mar. 5</u> <b>restored</b>	<u>Mar. 17</u> <b>die</b>	<u>Good Fri.</u> <u>Mar. 29</u> <b>suffering</b>
<u>Feb. 23</u> <b>road</b>	<u>Mar. 6</u> <b>rejected</b>	<u>Mar. 18</u> <b>covenant</b>	<u>Easter Vigil</u> <u>Mar. 30</u> <b>commitment</b>
<u>Feb. 24</u> <b>vulnerability</b>	<u>Mar. 7</u> <b>something known</b>	<u>Mar. 19</u> <b>water</b>	<u>Easter, Mar. 31</u> <b>PRAISE</b>
<u>Feb. 25</u> <b>choose</b>	<u>Mar. 8</u> <b>look</b>	<u>Mar. 20</u> <b>earthly</b>	

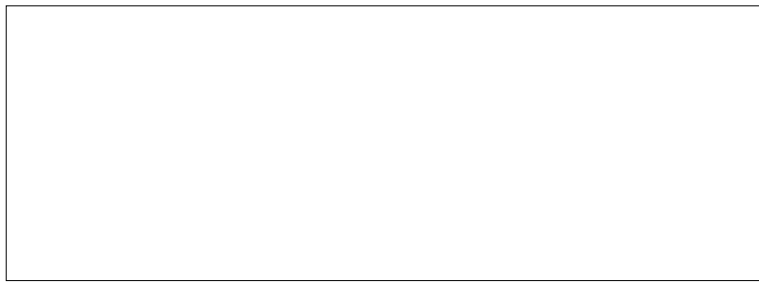
Post to Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram using #PCOLentPhoto  
or email your pictures to Pastor Lisa (if you're willing to share them) and she can post them.

**Presbyterian Church of Oronoco**

P.O. Box 118

Oronoco, MN 55960

507-367-4711



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## Basic Information

Website: <http://www.oronocochurch.org>

Facebook: Presbyterian Church of Oronoco

Instagram: @oronocochurch



**Worship—10:00 a.m.**  
**Communion—1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month**  
**Fellowship hour following worship**

**Rev. Lisa Johnson—contact information:**

Cell: 507-995-7310

Email: [PastorLisaJ@gmail.com](mailto:PastorLisaJ@gmail.com)

Blog: <http://pastorlisaj.com>