



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ORONOCO

A SMALL CHURCH WITH A BIG MISSION

July 2022

150th Anniversary

Friends, in 2020, our beloved Presbyterian Church of Oronoco turned **150 yrs. old!!** (That's pretty amazing!) But because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to celebrate in person. The current plan is to celebrate 150+2 this year in July. (It actually sort of works out since the building was completed in 1872 ... which makes our **building** 150 yrs. old this summer.) The Session is working on the details right now, so if you have any ideas for ways to celebrate, please don't hesitate to share them with Pastor Lisa or any of our Session members.



We know that we'll be celebrating on
Sunday, July 10, 2022

- celebration during worship at 10:00 a.m. (including communion)
- lunch and dessert (hopefully on the lawn) following worship – Lunch will be catered by Charlies Eatery and Pub in Rochester. We will also celebrate with a cake and soft serve ice cream bar!

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Pastor: Rev. Lisa Johnson

Church Staff

Secretary: Brianna Clement

Musicians: Raquel "Rocky" Nisbit
Zara Boon

Mike Rand, Clerk of Session
Ellen Warner, Ruling Elder
Lance Sorensen, Ruling Elder
Ron Peterson-Rucker, Ruling Elder
Janice Ostrom, Ruling Elder
Todd Wickre, Ruling Elder
Brenda Longman, Ruling Elder

Church Leadership

Kim Stanton, Treasurer
Gail Rucker, Deacon
Ellen Simon, Deacon
Joanne Schenck, Deacon
Cindy Luhman, Deacon
Karen Peterson-Rucker, Deacon



From the Pastor ...

*Sing to the Lord a new song!
 Sing to the Lord, all the earth!
 Sing to the Lord! Bless his name!
 Share the news of his saving work
 every single day! ...
 Let heaven celebrate!
 Let the earth rejoice!
 Let the sea and everything in it roar!
 Let the countryside,
 and everything in it celebrate!
 Then all the trees of the forest too
 will shout out joyfully
 before the Lord because he is coming!
 ~ Psalm 96:1-2, 11-13a*

Throughout the summer, we're venturing into some of the most breath-taking places in our country with our National Parks sermon series. I have to admit, I'm **loving** hearing stories from those who've visited the parks after the sermon each Sunday!

And yet, while your memories and the reflections from *America's Holy Ground: 61 Faithful Reflections on Our National Parks (Brad Lyons and Bruce Barkhauer)* provide some beautiful and thrilling descriptions, we all know that being out there in God's incredible creation is always the best experience. A picture may be worth a thousand words, but an experience is truly priceless.

At the same time, I know that not everyone can go and visit all of these striking natural locales. But that doesn't mean that we can't all enjoy being out in God's creation this summer! Here are a few fun activities that could get you outside:

Make observations:

As you're out and about – walking around your neighborhood, walking in the woods, sitting by the lakeside, or even just sitting in your backyard – look for one particular thing that grabs your attention. It could be anything: a leaf, a bug, an animal, a fish, a cloud ... the possibilities are endless. If you're a digital person or a social media person, try to take a picture of whatever you find (as long as you can do it safely, of course). By the end of the summer, you could compile a photobook that can be your light of summer when we find ourselves in the throes of winter again. Or, if you'd rather skip the technology, you could get a little notebook and record whatever you observed, either in that moment or at the end of the day. Write a description. Sketch it. Write a poem. Write a prayer.

Geocaching:

Admittedly, this is a tech-only option. If you're not familiar with geocaching, it's basically a real-life treasure hunt facilitated by the GPS or maps app on your smartphone. It's exploring with a purpose! Geocaching is great because it's something you can actually do just about *anywhere*. *There are little geocaches hidden all over the world! All you have to do is download the app, allow it to use your location, then start your hunt! All you need is your phone, anyone adventuring with you, and a pen so that, when you find the geocache, you can write your name on the finders document inside the little container. Once*

you've found it and signed the document, you put the container back just the way you found it so whoever comes after you can have just as much fun as you did!

Nature sketching:

If the last option was all tech, this option is no tech! And it's pretty self-explanatory. Find a beautiful place out in nature – someplace that captures your heart and your spirit as well as your eye. Sit down. Sketch! Sketch on a piece of paper. Sketch in a little book. Sketch on the back of that receipt that's been riding around in the passenger seat next to you for months. Use a pencil. Use a pen. Use charcoal or colored pencils or some of those fancy markers you can buy for adult coloring. This option is so great because it's *so versatile! You can sketch basically anywhere. You can sketch basically anything. You don't even have to be a "good artist" because you don't have to show your sketch to another living soul if you don't want to. If sitting down in nature and letting the beauty around you flow through your spirit and out your pen makes you happy, then do it.*

Building rock towers:

Yup. This is another one that is exactly what it sounds like! This one can take a little more effort in regard to finding the "right rocks" – rocks that will stack nicely, ones that are flat(ish) and appropriately sized. It can also take a little more planning regarding finding the right place for building your tower. That being said, both the finding and the building can be very intentional, prayerful activities. Maybe each rock you stack is a joy you're offering up to God. Maybe each rock is a worry or a concern that you're giving over to God as you stack them. Maybe as you stack your rocks, you count your blessings. Or maybe we each rock you stack, you simply breathe and appreciate the present moment.

Writing in nature:

Maybe you're not an artist – not even an aspiring one. If sketching doesn't appeal to you, you could basically do the same thing with a notebook and a pen instead. Find a beautiful spot out in the world. Sit. Breathe. Write. Write what you see. Write what you feel. Write a prayer. Write a poem. Write about a memory triggered by the spot you're in. Or just do some freeform writing – put your pen to the paper and simply write down whatever comes into your mind.

Having trouble coming up with some places nearby where you could spend some time in nature? Try one of these places:

- Quarry Hill Nature Center – Rochester
- Allis Park – Oronoco
- Douglas State Trail – Rochester/Pine Island
- River Park – Oronoco
- Indian Heights Park – Rochester
- Root River Park – Rochester
- River Bend Nature Center – Faribault
- Nerstrand Big Woods State Park
- Cannon River Wilderness Area – Faribault
- Cowling Arboretum – Northfield
- Cannon Valley Trail – Cannon Falls
- Miesville Ravine Park Reserve – Cannon Falls

This is the day that the Lord has made, friends. Let us go out and rejoice in it!

Pastor Gina

Keeping Up with the Smith-Mathers



First, the update: According to their last newsletter, Shelvis has finally been able to return to Oxford University in England to resume his doctoral work in peacebuilding strategies. Nancy and the kids – Jordan, Addie, Nicole, and Alice – remain here in the United States.

For the last few years, we’ve been helping to support Shelvis and Nancy and their family with our 2nd Sunday Spare Change offering and our prayers. A few times a year, our treasurer would deposit whatever had accumulated from that offering in the bank, then send the total as a donation directly to the Smith-Mathers’ Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) account.

Recently, however, PMA has decided to change the way they distribute their mission funds. Instead of individual people and/or congregations contributing directly to the accounts of specific mission co-workers, all contributions will go into a general fund and distributed to all mission co-workers from there. This change has been made in an attempt to make mission co-worker support more equitable, especially for those co-workers who may be serving in areas that are especially remote or even dangerous and therefore cannot easily relay updates or connect with supporting individuals/congregations.

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 support Shelvis and Nancy. Visit their Presbyterian Mission Agency 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 meeting.:

**Wednesday, August 3, 2022
6:30 p.m.**

***NO JULY MEETING*

Next Presbytery Meeting:

**Tuesday, September 13, 2022
TBD**

Scripture readings for July

Sunday, July 3– No Worship

Sunday, July 10– 2 Samuel 12:1-13

150th anniversary celebration

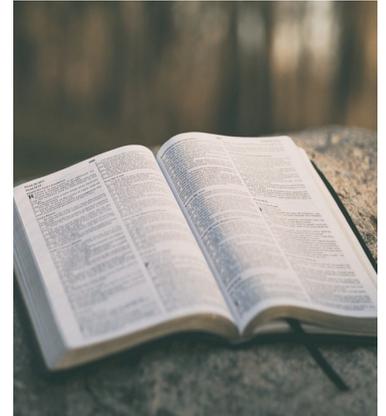
National Parks #4

Sunday, July 17– Genesis 11:1-9

National Parks #5

Sunday, July 24– Guest Preacher Reverend Cindy Ray

Sunday, July 31– Guest Preacher Reverend Carol Shaffer



Birthday Celebrations

Since we've returned to our fellowship time after worship, we'll also be returning to our practice of celebrating birthdays on the first Sunday of every month. Since our July is pretty busy, we'll be resuming this practice of cake and birthday celebrations starting in August. Thank you to Jen Rand for taking this on once again!!



Pastor Lisa Out

Pastor Lisa will be out of the office July 22-July 31 and August 5-14. For the July dates, I'll be at Synod School in Iowa, and for the August dates, we'll be in Le Sueur for Giant Days and then up at the cabin. This includes four Sundays – July 24, July 31, August 7, and August 14. Three of those four Sundays will be pulpit supply preachers that have never been here before (or haven't been here in more than a decade!), so I look forward to you getting to experience worship with some new voices. I will have my cell phone for both periods of time, but I will be checking email infrequently. Also, I will not be checking the church Facebook page/messages during this time. I'll catch up when I get back.



4th of July Weekend

Since so many people have plans to celebrate Independence Day with friends and family elsewhere, there will be no worship on Sunday, July 3. In lieu of worship, here's a 4th of July prayer from Rev. Dr. Jill Duffield:

God of all tribes and every nation, on this day of cookouts and fireworks, parades and pool parties, we pause to remember the best of our nation's aspirations and values.

We give thanks for those who made great sacrifices for the sake of the principles of equality and liberty, life and the pursuit of happiness.

We lament the many ways and countless times that we have fallen short of the hopes of not only the founders of this nation, but of you, Lord of all. Forgive us for not fulfilling the great aims this country sought to represent to the world. Send your Spirit to help us become the country you call us to be.

When we rest and play, eat and celebrate today, do not let us forget those unable to do likewise. Inspire in us a zeal for the equality in which you create all people, a passion to seek abundant life for all people, a relentless drive to provide liberty for all people, and a pursuit of happiness, not only for ourselves and those like us, but for all people. May our country truly be a refuge for the tired, the poor, and those yearning to be free — free from fear, free from poverty, free from oppression, free from exploitation, free from violence, free from war, free from suffering and hopelessness.

May our nation truly be a place of justice, tranquility and welfare for all people. Amen.



Summer Sermon Series

This summer, we're going to embark on a (hopefully!) really fun journey together. A year or so ago, I bought a really wonderful book: *America's Holy Ground: 61 Faithful Reflections on Our National Parks* by Brad Lyons and Bruce Barkhauer. As the title implies, it's a book of devotions (and beautiful photographs) based on 61 of America's National Parks. I have to tell you ... I'm **really** excited about this summer sermon series! I think it's going to be a lot of fun for all of us.

Throughout the end of April and beginning of May, many of you gave me your surveys filled out with your top 10 National Parks, and the top 10 favorites are

- 1) ~~Acadia National Park – July 12~~
- 2) ~~Arches National Park – July 19~~
- 3) ~~Capitol Reef National Park – July 26~~
- 4) Glacier National Park – July 10
- 5) Great Smoky Mountain National Park – July 17
- 6) Isle Royale National Park – August 21
- 7) Sequoia National Park – August 28
- 8) Voyageurs National Park – September 4

As part of this fun series, if you've been to any of these parks and have pictures or stories to share, each of our worship services will include a campfire storytime. And if you're not comfortable sharing during worship, the campfire will move out to one of the tables during our fellowship time for more story and picture sharing.

SUMMER ROAD TRIP
A Presbyterian Church of Oronoco Sermon Series

A faith journey through some of America's most beautiful national parks!

June 12: Acadia National Park	July 17: Great Smoky Mountain National Park	
June 19: Arches National Park	Aug. 21: Isle Royale National Park	
June 26: Capitol Reef National Park	Aug. 28: Sequoia National Park	
July 3: Grand Teton National Park	Sept. 4: Voyageurs National Park	
July 10: Glacier National Park		

Synod School 2022

This year's theme is "Experiencing Belonging." From the Synod School catalog: "What does it mean to be a part of the body of Christ and to belong to one another? In the spirit of Christ's community, we will walk through biblical experiences of belonging. Exploring the communities we find membership within, we will discover how we can belong to one another and to Christ more fully." This theme is based on Paul's words to the Christians in Rome: "... so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually, we are members one of another." (Romans 12:5, NRSV) Convocation speaker Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Hinson Hasty, chair of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Bellarmine University in Louisville, and worship leaders will be Rev. Sara Sutter (morning worship) and Rev. Tim Hughes Williams (evening worship). And Rev. Dr. Alonzo Johnson, the national coordinator for the PC(USA)'s Self-Development of People Program, is this year's youth convocation speaker. You could take classes in everything from Ukrainian egg decorating to ballroom and Latin dance, from Biblical Shakespeare to Presbyterian Theological Ethics of Peacemaking, from transforming congregational mission to a class on Rube Goldberg machines. There are **71 different classes** to choose from in all! And, as always, Synod School has classes and child care options for kids ages birth to high school (including the 3-5yo classroom designed and led by Dianne Pinney).



Registration is **OPEN!**

For more information, visit the Synod School website:

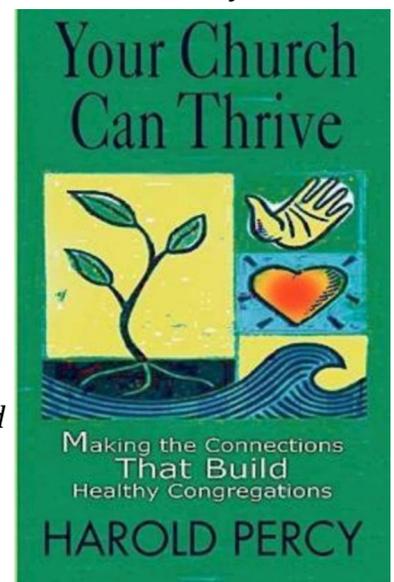
<https://www.lakesandprairies.org/SynodSchool>. If you're curious about Synod School, please talk to Pastor Lisa.

Embarking on Renewal

The Session is starting to have some extensive discussions about congregational renewal – both as a whole and individually. We know that the last 2 yrs. have been incredibly difficult for everyone on a personal level, and we recognize that it's been difficult for us as a congregation, too.

This renewal journey is going to include a lot of different steps, and the first step is a congregational engagement survey that was sent out in early April. While there isn't a deadline for that response, we hope that you will get it back to us as soon as you can.

We're also going to try a book study together starting in the fall. After worship on the **first Sunday of the month**, we'll be going through the book *Your Church Can Thrive: Making the Connections That Build Healthy Congregations* by Harold Percy. *This is a book that is short and easy to read but is also packed with practical ideas and suggestions. If you'd like to participate, we're going to put in an order for the books at the end of May which would give you the summer to read it before we tackle it in the fall. Please let Pastor Lisa know if you'd like a book by Sunday, July 5.*



All Around the Campfire

It's that time again! Time to gather again on the church lawn for an evening campfire on the 4th Sunday of July, July, August, and September (weather permitting). Because of both inclement weather and the COVID-19 pandemic, we weren't able to gather much last year. But this year, we are overjoyed to be able to reimplement these monthly get-togethers. As before, there will be hot dogs, brats, buns, and s'mores material provided. Bring some sort of food to share (chips, a salad, fruit, etc.), a chair, a drink, and a friend! Here are the dates for 2022:

- ~~July 26: 5:30-8:00 p.m.~~
- July 24: 5:30-8:00 p.m.
- *Note: This is the 4th Sunday, not the last Sunday.*
- August 28: 5:30-8:00 p.m.
- September 25: 5:30-8:00 p.m.



Unconventional Ways to Give

- Designate "Presbyterian Church of ORONOCO" as your Amazon Smile organization, and 0.5% of all your eligible Amazon purchases will come back to the church on a quarterly basis.
- Give online through our Presbyterian Foundation account using either the link on our website (www.oronocochurch.org at the bottom of the homepage) or this QR code.



July Star Word

How has your star word surprised you so far?





Oronoco Food Shelf Monthly Item

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!



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 **Curt Burt, Helen Craft, Janice Ostrom, Katha and Carlyle Johnson, and the family of Linda Sorensen** in prayer.



July Birthdays & Anniversaries

- ♥ 7/11 Sue Johnson
- ♥ 7/12 Robert & Jacky Rueber
- ♥ 7/15 Kaedyn Peterson-Rucker
- ♥ 7/19 Don & Ardith Ottman
- ♥ 7/21 Cindy Luhman
- ♥ 7/21 Gail Rucker
- ♥ 7/28 Karen Peterson-Rucker

Staying in Touch

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