



December Scripture

Readings

Sunday, December 1—

Jeremiah 33:14-18

Sunday, December 8—

Isaiah 40:1-11

Sunday, December 15—

Ezra 1:1-4; 3:1-4, 10-13

Sunday, December 22—

Luke 1:5-25, 57-80

Tuesday, December 25—

5:30 p.m. – Christmas *Eve Service*

Sunday, December 29—

A Look at the Year Behind and the Year Ahead

Next Session Meeting

Wednesday, December 4

6:30 p.m.

Next Presbytery Meeting

Saturday, January 25

9:00 a.m.

Presbyterian Church of the Way
Shoreview, MN



*Presbyterian
Church of
Oronoco*



**From the
Pastor**

*Then God said,
“Let us make HUMANITY in our image
to resemble us so that they may
take charge of the fish of the sea,
the birds of the sky, the livestock,
all the earth, and all the crawling things on earth.”
God created HUMANITY
in God’s own image,
in the divine image God created them,
MALE and FEMALE God created them.
~ Genesis 1:26-27*

Allow me to share 3 facts with you today:

1. More than 40 million people are enslaved in human trafficking around the world.
2. Roughly 1 in 4 of those people are children.
3. Human trafficking generates \$150 billion per year.

And for centuries, people have actually used passages from the Bible to justify slavery – the heinous, immoral subjugation of another human being. From a portion of Noah’s story in the Old Testament to Paul’s writings in the New Testament, throughout the centuries, flawed, corrupt, and greedy human beings have warped and twisted God’s message of love and redemption into a vindication for evil, violent, and dehumanizing acts.

As Christians, that is a portion of our history that we must acknowledge and own. We may want to say, “But that was so long ago. That was in the past. That wasn’t me. That isn’t today.” And yet those facts that I shared with you about human trafficking – about modern-day slavery – are facts not about the slave trade of the 17th century but the slave trade of *today*.

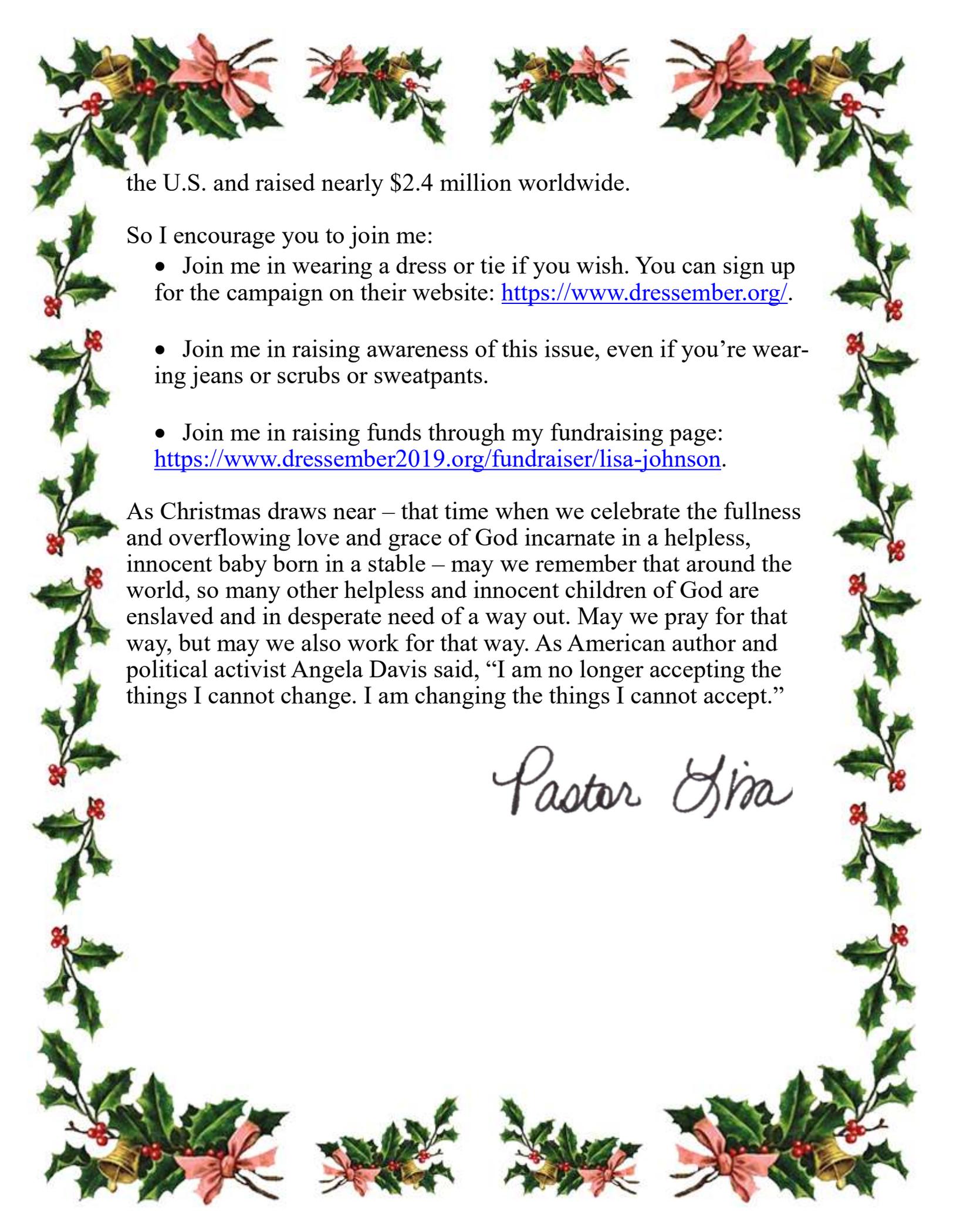
And yet, Scripture opens with this description of Creation and of God



boldly and irrefutably declaring that humanity – **all humanity** – is created in God’s own image. “In the **divine image** God created them, **male and female** God created them.” So to subjugate another is to deny that divine spark of God within them. To enslave another is to shackle the movement of the Holy Spirit through the life and work of another. To buy and sell another human being is to buy and sell a beloved child molded and shaped by the God who not only chose to create humans in God’s own image but loved and cherished us so much that God took on that form that God created and came down to live among us. God took on humanity so that we might experience grace, yet there are those in this world today who do everything in their power to strip others of their humanity and grace for one thing: money.

It is appalling.
It is infuriating.
It is heartbreaking.
And it’s time to stand against it.
To be honest, friends, it is **well past** time.

So this December, I’m participating in something called the Dressemer Campaign. Those participating pledge to wear a dress or a tie every day in December to raise both awareness and funds to combat the horror that is human trafficking today. Dressemer is truly a grassroots movement that was started by one person – Blythe Hill. In 2005, Blythe began hearing about human trafficking. As a fashion trend analyst and blogger, she didn’t think there was much she could actually do to combat this global humanitarian crisis, but in 2009, Blythe made a decision. She challenged herself to wear a dress every day in December and blog about it. She chose a dress because she wanted to intentionally repurpose an article of clothing that had been so often used to objectify and even subjugate women in the past. Year after year, more people joined Blythe in her endeavor. Last year, the Dressemer Campaign added 9 new corporate grant partners across



the U.S. and raised nearly \$2.4 million worldwide.

So I encourage you to join me:

- Join me in wearing a dress or tie if you wish. You can sign up for the campaign on their website: <https://www.dressembler.org/>.
- Join me in raising awareness of this issue, even if you're wearing jeans or scrubs or sweatpants.
- Join me in raising funds through my fundraising page: <https://www.dressembler2019.org/fundraiser/lisa-johnson>.

As Christmas draws near – that time when we celebrate the fullness and overflowing love and grace of God incarnate in a helpless, innocent baby born in a stable – may we remember that around the world, so many other helpless and innocent children of God are enslaved and in desperate need of a way out. May we pray for that way, but may we also work for that way. As American author and political activist Angela Davis said, “I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept.”

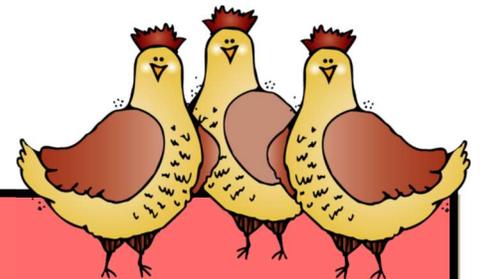
Pastor Lisa



Update from Revs. Shelvis and Nancy Smith-Mather

Revs. Shelvis and Nancy Smith-Mather are the missionaries serving in South Sudan and Uganda who we support with our 2nd Sunday Spare Change Sunday funds. Shelvis, Nancy, Jordan, and Adalyn welcomed another daughter/sister into their lives in October – baby Nicole. If you would like an update on the incredible work that Shelvis and Nancy are doing with RECONCILE International and how their family is doing, please go to <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/shelvis-and-nancy-smith-mather/>.

Shelvis has also recently begun research with Oxford University's School of Anthropology and Theology as well as Africa Studies Centre. In the top right portion of the screen you will find a box with link to their 10 most recent update letters. Also on this page, you can find links to contact both Shelvis and Nancy as well as information on how to contribute financially as an individual to their mission.



Special Prayer Request

In church on September 22, Lance and Linda Sorensen shared with the congregation that Linda has recently been diagnosed with lung cancer. She began both chemotherapy and immunotherapy treatments a few days later. Any and all prayers, support, and positive vibes are welcome! If you'd like to follow Linda's journey, visit her Caring Bridge website:

<http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/lindasorensen>.

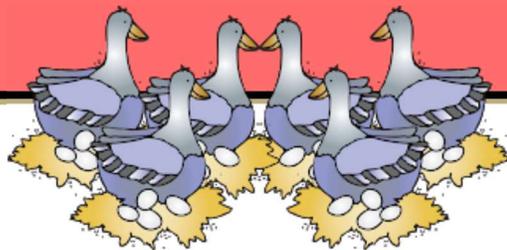
Note: Linda will need to approve you to view the site, so you'll have to put your email address in and wait for her to okay it.



Church Merch!

We've got a great new logo (thanks to Geoff and Ellen Warner!), and with this logo, we're looking to get some church merchandise so we can start promoting our congregation while we're out on the town! Is there something particular that you'd like to see our name and logo on? Clothing? Office items (pens, notepads, etc.)? Fun items (Frisbees, golf balls, etc.)?

Let us know! We're looking for feedback, and we'd love to hear from you.



Winter Weather Procedure

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 make the decision
- 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 set calling lists that we have established
- Pastor Lisa will contact KAAL, KTTC, KIMT, and Fox 47 to put the cancellation on to local "Closings and Delays" lists as well

Please be sure we have your accurate contact information in case of a weather-related closing. We want to be sure everyone remains safe during this frigid season.



About Per Capita

As 2019 comes to a close, I wanted to give you a reminder about per capita payments. Here's a brief rundown of what per capita is and how it works.

“One of the great strengths of our denomination is its connectionism. Presbyterians in Minnesota and Wisconsin are tied to the larger church in ministry. One concrete form of that connection is through our per-capita. Every Presbyterian church in the country is required to pay a certain amount for each active member on its rolls. This money goes to support the work and ministry of our church throughout the country.”

– *from the website of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area*

This year's per capita payment is \$35.70 per member. Of that \$35.70, the largest portion (66%) is used by our presbytery while the rest is shared equally (17% each) between our synod (the Synod of Lakes and Prairies) and the General Assembly (national office).

It is and has been the policy of the Presbyterian Church of Oronoco to pay our per capita by the end of every year, whether individual members have contributed their apportionment or not. If you haven't paid your per capita for this year, please consider doing so. You can make a check out to the O church and simply write “per capita” in the memo. If you're not sure whether you've paid your per capita this year, please contact Kim Stanton or Hadley Thompson.

And, since the new year is right around the corner, here is the per capita for 2020: \$36.50.

Advent Readers

Believe it or not, Advent is just around the corner! The first Sunday of Advent is Sunday, December 1. If you're interested in being one of our Advent readers/candle lighters, please add your name to the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. Readings are already ready and will be in a labeled envelope hanging below the sign-up sheet, so you can take them with you for practice that day. In advance, thank you!



Christmas Cookie Sale

Date: **Saturday, December 7**

Time: **9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

Cost: **\$5 per pound**

We ran out of cookies so quickly last year that this year, we're asking people to bring at least **12-15 dozen** cookies to sell. We're also asking you to label your cookies this year and to take special care to let us know which cookies contain nuts. *Please note: As our cookies all come from different households, we cannot guarantee that they will be allergen-free. However, it **is** our plan to designate a special table for cookies that definitely contain nuts. We will also need a few people to help set up on Friday, December 6 and 5-6 helpers during the sale on Saturday, December 7. There's a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board at church if you're able to help with any of these things (including bringing cookies).*

We've got full-sized fliers as well as ¼-sheet mini-fliers that need to be distributed around the area. We've also got a Facebook event (search for "Oronoco Christmas Cookie Sale") that you can share on your own Facebook pages. Help us get the word out!



2020 Luncheons

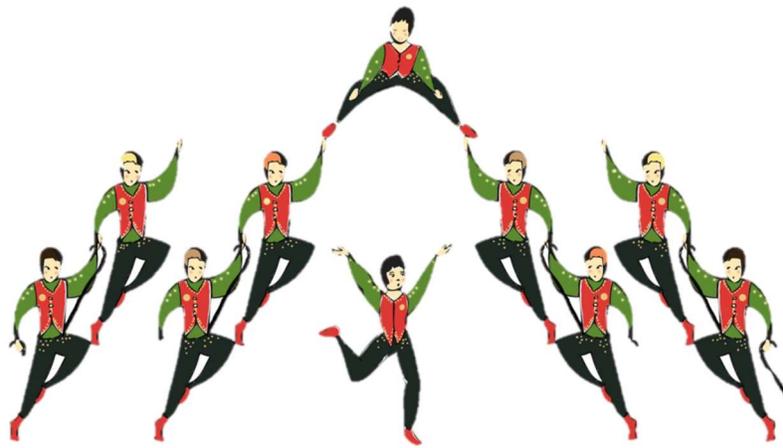
Let's get them on your calendar now: LUNCHEONS! Here are the dates:

Wednesday, January 15

Wednesday, February 19

Wednesday, March 18

Keep an eye out for luncheon sign-up sheets on the bulletin board. Up first: casseroles. YUM!!



Nominating Committee

We're coming up on that time of year when the nominating committee will be contacting people to fill some of our open positions in church leadership for next year. We will be looking for session members, deacons, and members for a few committees for next year (budget, audit, and, of course, nominating committee).

Please prayerfully consider how God may be calling you to help serve and lead this congregation that we love so much.



Food Shelf Hours

Our food shelf provides individuals and families with a variety of nutritional foods and the opportunity to stretch limited household budgets. The food shelf is sustained by donations of dollars, food and personal care items, and volunteer hours. As always, your support in whatever way you can give it is greatly appreciated.

Please note: The food shelf will be open from 5:00-6:30 p.m. starting Wednesday, November 13 to accommodate those who have difficulty driving in the dark.

Filling Busy Bags

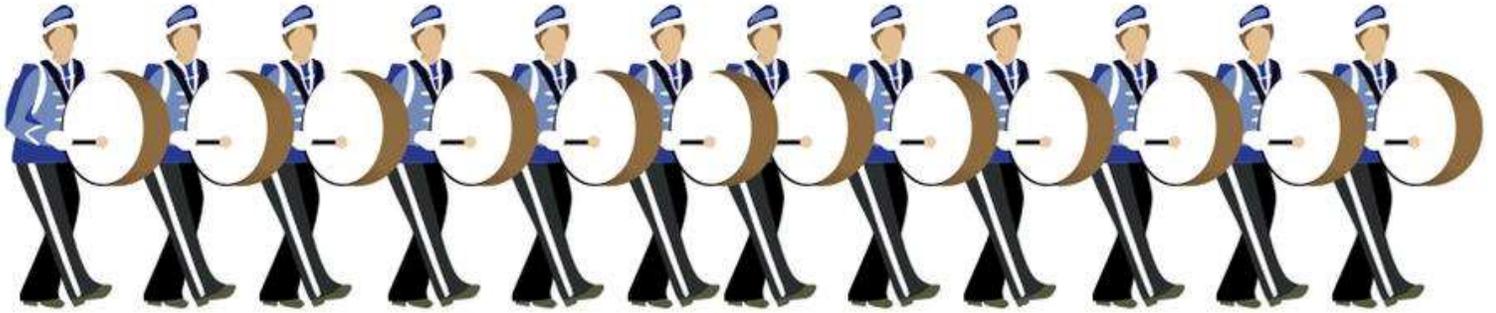
We are continuing to collect items for busy bags – small toys, games, arts & crafts supplies, stickers, etc. Joanne Schenck has already made all the busy bags themselves. Once again this year, we have decided to wait until after the holiday season to fill and distribute the busy bags. There's a box in the fellowship area to start collecting donations. Thanks for your support!

Stewardship Giving Tree

I know we haven't talked about it in a while, but

While our Giving Tree has been taken down (and resurrected as the Christmas tree in our sanctuary), the envelopes are still available. We will keep them in a basket on the table next to the bulletins throughout the year. Yes, we emphasize stewardship in the church once a year, but the truth is that we have a responsibility to be good stewards of our time, talents, resources, and devotion all day every day – 24/7/365. So if you perhaps missed your opportunity to pick up a few envelopes or would like to continue that giving into 2018, feel free to pick up more envelopes. Thank you!





Facebook Following

I've heard a number of comments from people recently that they think we should post something or another on Facebook, and more often than not, those things have actually already been posted. So if you're missing some of our church Facebook posts, here's a tip:

- Go to our church Facebook page ("Presbyterian Church of Oronoco")
- Click on "Following"
- Make sure that "see first" is selected
- Also make sure that notifications are on

Want to make sure you
don't miss a post?



On our
Facebook page:

← Click "following"

← Make sure that "see first" is selected

← Check that notifications are on

