



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ORONOCO

A SMALL CHURCH WITH A BIG MISSION

February 2024

Annual Meeting 2024

Our 2024 annual meeting will be

Sunday, February 4
during worship

This year, we're going to do things a little differently. In the past, we've always asked for written reports from various church committees and groups. While there are a few of those reports that we'll still need in written format, we're going to do most of the reports orally. The reports that we'll need **in writing** are:

- Minutes from 2023 annual mtg.
- Clerk's report
- Nominating Committee report
- 2023 financial statement
- 2024 budget
- Audit Committee report

The reports that we'll do **orally** include:

- Deacon's report
- Pastor's report
- People of the Church report
- Outreach Committee report
- Trustee report

If you have a **written** report, please get it to Pastor Lisa no later than **Wed., Jan. 24**. We'll also hold a potluck following worship, so bring your favorite dish to share.



Church Staff

Pastor: Rev. Lisa Johnson

Pianist: Rocky Nisbit

Church Leadership

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

Geoff Warner, Ruling Elder
Cindy Luhman, Ruling Elder

Ellen Simon, Deacon
Joanne Schenck, Deacon
Karen Peterson-Rucker, Deacon
Jenny Rand, Deacon



From the Pastor ...

For the last few years, I've made my February article a list of book recommendations in honor of February being, among other things, "I Love to Read" month. It will surprise no one that I thoroughly enjoy sharing some of my favorite book recommendations! It continues to be a fun way to shake things up a little bit and has hopefully given you some fun new reading options. So once again, if you're looking for a good book, check out

***Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again* by Rachel Held Evans**

Rachel Held Evans delivered words that remain both poignant and poetic in all of her books. In this particular book, she weaves in stories of growing up deep in the Bible belt and first encountering the Bible as a simple instruction manual to understanding it more as a complex, sometimes contradictory, forever-love-letter from God to God's children. She also examines a number of well-loved Bible stories with an open mind and open heart for things we may not have heard in those stories before. And she reinterprets a number of those stories in her own beautiful retellings through memoir, poetry, and more. Truly, this book will encourage you to encounter the Bible in a new way.

***A is for Alabaster: 52 Reflections on the Stories of Scripture* by Anna Carter Florence**

This is a lovely little book full of short reflections and meditations—2 essays for each letter of the alphabet, one for the First Testament and one for the New Testament. For example, "A" is for Abigail (First Testament) and "A" is for Alabaster (New Testament). No one can turn a phrase, tell a story, and flip your expectations soundly on their heads like Anna Carter Florence. She can surprise you with a new angle or insight on a story you've heard a thousand times before, and she can also introduce you to a Bible passage you may never have even encountered before. The short length of each of these reflections (just a few pages each) makes this book a great year-long devotional book—one essay per week.

***Still Laughing, Still Learning (Still Looking for a Good Title): Mostly True Stories of Family, Friends, Faith & Foibles* by Bill Chadwick**

This is a truly enjoyable memoir written by a local pastor! Rev. Bill Chadwick is a retired PC (USA) pastor who spent a significant portion of his ministry serving churches within the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area. Bill's stories are funny and touching. They are relatable to anyone and everyone. They aim to entertain, and if you learn something about yourself ... your faith ... your relationship with God along the way, all the better. It is definitely a joyful little read.

***The Amber Room* by Steve Berry**

This is the best book by one of my favorite authors of all time. I have read every book Steve Berry has written, but this one was the first. All of Berry's books are international thrillers—books that weave international intrigue in with the mysteries and legends surrounding a wide variety of historical sites and artifacts from around the globe. Many of those books (18 and counting!) feature

Cotton Malone, supposedly-retired operative from a government intelligence-gathering agency who seems to continue to find himself wrapped up in various world-altering, foreign affairs. However, this particular book—*The Amber Room*—is a stand-alone novel with different characters. This book features a Rachel Cutler and her ex-husband, Paul, who jet off to Germany in search of the long-lost Russian treasure, the Amber Room, after Rachel's late father leaves her a clue. The ploy synopsis from FantasticFiction.com says, "Locked into a treacherous game with professional killers, Rachel and Paul find themselves on a collision course with the forces of greed, power, and history itself."

***The Wishing Game* by Meg Shaffer**

Fiction recommendation #2: This book is fantastical and touching and fun. It's a story about Lucy, a woman trying desperately to adopt a wonderful little boy named Christopher. Just when it looks like all her efforts will fail, Lucy is given the opportunity to win a fortune. All she has to do is solve the puzzles set out by her favorite childhood author, Jack Masterson, on his own personal island, Clock Island. It's a lovely, fast-paced story with wonderful characters and fun puzzles.

***Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks* by Diana Butler Bass**

Diana Butler Bass is a powerful and forward-focused voice within the church world today. She's written 11 books on practical Christianity, spirituality, and culture. Bass has a way of saying things that is straightforward and challenging without being antagonistic.—a way that truly makes you think. In this book, Bass tackles the intentional practice of gratitude from four particular angles. She considers both emotion and ethics from the "me" vantage point and the "we" vantage point.

If you're interested in reading any of these books, you can find most of them on my shelf. (You'll have to find the two fiction books – *The Amber Room* and *The Wishing Game* – at the library.) Of the books I do have, I would love to loan them to you. Happy I Love to Read Month!

Pastor Lisa

Scripture readings for February

- **February 4**—2 Kings 5:1-14, *Created Anew* #5, Annual mtg. Sunday
- **February 11**—Mark 9:2-9, *Created Anew* #6
- **February 18**—Mark 1:9-15, *Lent* #1
- **February 25**—Mark 8:31-38, *Lent* #2



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, Feb. 5
6:30 p.m.**

Next Presbytery mtg.:

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



Electronic Donations

You can donate to the Presbyterian Church of Oronoco online anytime using either the link on our website (www.oronocochurch.org at the bottom of the homepage) or by using this QR code:

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) 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.



February Birthdays & Anniversaries

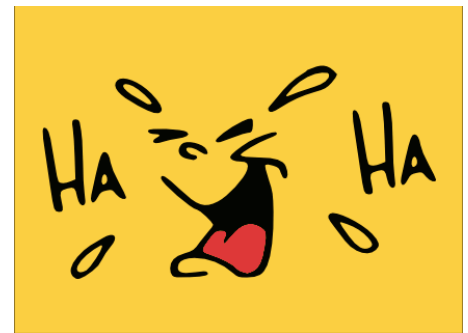
☞ 2/20—Jacky Rueber



Just a Little Something Funny ...

Ole & Lena's 10 Commandments:

1. Der's only one God, ya know.
2. Don't make that stuffed walleye on your mantle an idol.
3. Cussin ain't nice.
4. Go to church even when you're up nort.
5. Honor your folks.
6. Don't kill. Catch and release.
7. There's only one Lena for every Ole. No cheatin.
8. If it ain't your lutefisk, don't take it.
9. Don't be braggin bout how much snow ya shoveled.
10. Keep your mind off your neighbor's hot-dish.



Staying in Touch

Presbyterian Church of Oronoco

Office: 507-367-4711

Email: oronocopc@bevcomm.net

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

Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

Office: 651-357-1150

Email: office@ptcaweb.org

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

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Office: 800-728-7228

Email: 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.”

1st Sunday in Lent – Feb. 18: Mark 1:9-15

“Expand Your Mind”

2nd Sunday in Lent – Feb. 25: Mark 8:31-38

“What Matters Most”

3rd Sunday in Lent – Mar. 3: John 2:13-22

“The Destruction That Brings Life”

4th Sunday in Lent – Mar. 10: John 3:14-21

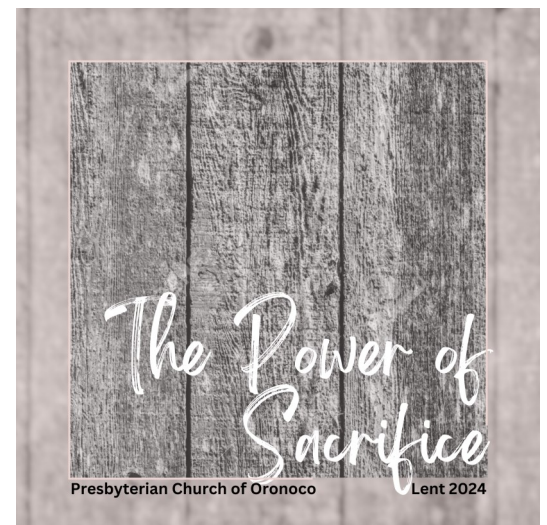
“The Spotlight of Grace”

5th Sunday in Lent – Mar. 17: John 12:20-33

“Sacrificial Bravery”

Palm Sunday – Mar. 24: Mark 11:1-11

“Joy before Sorrow”



Lent 2024—Special Services

Ash Wednesday service—Wed., Feb. 14, 6:30 p.m.

Maundy Thursday service—Thurs., Mar. 28, 5:30 p.m.

Good Friday Tenebrae service—Fri., Mar. 29, 7:00 p.m.



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.

Funeral Planning Workshop

*Remember that you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.*

These are the words with which we are blessed during our Ash Wednesday service—the words uttered as foreheads or the backs of hands are marked with the sign of the cross in ashes. It is a reminder that all life both comes from God and returns to God in the end.



It is no secret or surprise that someday, each of us will die. When we do, our faith reassures us that there is eternal joy waiting for us, and so we need not worry for ourselves. But a common thing that people express is a worry that they will leave their loved ones with “too much” —too many decisions to make, too much to do, too many loose ends.

In an attempt to ease some of that worry, we're going to hold a funeral planning workshop on **Saturday, February 10** from **1:00-4:00 p.m.** This workshop will include a variety of discussions/topics that help get you thinking about and planning what you might want your own funeral service to look like: readings, hymns, particular elements (military honors, etc.), people you would like involved, etc. as well as other related topics.

2024 Lenten Photo Challenge

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

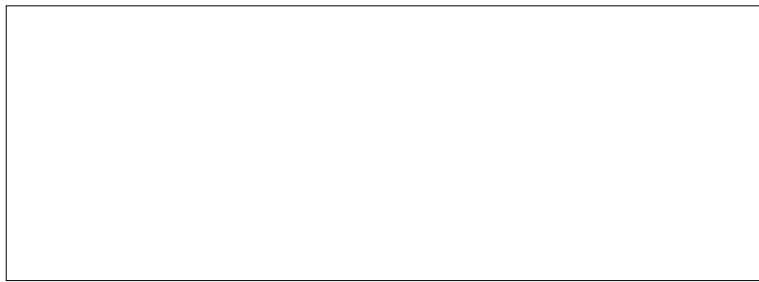
Post to Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram using #PCOLentPhoto
or email your pictures to Pastor Lisa (if you're willing to share them) and she can post them.

Presbyterian Church of Oronoco

P.O. Box 118

Oronoco, MN 55960

507-367-4711



Basic Information

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

Facebook: Presbyterian Church of Oronoco

Instagram: @oronocochurch



Worship—10:00 a.m.
Communion—1st Sunday of the month
Fellowship hour following worship

Rev. Lisa Johnson—contact information:

Cell: 507-995-7310

Email: PastorLisaJ@gmail.com

Blog: <http://pastorlisaj.com>