



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ORONOCO

A SMALL CHURCH WITH A BIG MISSION

August 2022

Prayer Project

In September, we'll be embarking on a prayer journey together. For four months – September through December – I'm going to introduce two different prayer practices each month. There will be prayer cards/booklets available at church to help you try these new prayer practices as well as write-ups in the newsletter (for anyone who can't make it in person but would still like to try them). With each prayer practice, there will also be an adaptation for trying that practice with kids. This project will also include weekly Wednesday night prayer times as well as a prayer retreat in January 2023. *For a more in-depth description of this, read my "From the Pastor" for this month.*



Full disclosure: This project is a part of my doctoral studies, so I will also be looking for people willing to participate in the project as well as the study part of my research. This will include 3 short surveys – one at the beginning, one in the middle, and one at the end of the project – and I am looking for at least **12 people** to participate in the surveys. In addition to that, I'd like to interview a handful of people (**5-6 people**) twice – once at the beginning and once at the end of the project – for further information and anecdotal testimony that I can use (anonymously) in my dissertation.

But this is important: *You don't have to participate in the surveys/interviews to participate in the prayer project. My main goal is to facilitate ways for us all to explore some different forms of prayer in hopes that it will feed our spirits as individuals and as a congregation – that it will renew our souls and bring us closer to one another and closer to God.*

That being said, *I will need your help with this, friends. If you are willing to be one of those filling out surveys, participating in interviews, or both, please let me know. My paperwork for the doctoral part of this is in process with the university's Institutional Review Board as we speak, so I should have more information soon.*

Church Staff

Pastor: Rev. Lisa Johnson

Secretary: Brianna Clement

Musicians: Raquel "Rocky" Nisbit
Zara Boon

Church Leadership

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

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



From the Pastor ...

A quick search reveals 471 hits for the word “pray” or derivations of it in 441 verses scattered throughout Scripture. Some are directive to pray: Paul’s words from Philippians, “Don’t be anxious about anything; rather, bring up all of your requests to God in your prayers and petitions, along with giving thanks” (Philippians 4:6); Jesus’ words scattered throughout the gospels, “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you” (John 15:7) and “Ask and you will receive. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you” (Luke 11:9); and the words of God through the prophet Jeremiah, “Call to me and I will answer and reveal to you wondrous secrets that you haven’t known” (Jeremiah 33:3). Others are prayers in and of themselves: the entire book of Psalms, for example, or the prayer Jesus gives the disciples – the well-known, well-loved words that we pray today as the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). Still other Scriptural references to prayer are concrete examples of Biblical characters going off themselves to pray: the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 4:33); the prophet Daniel (Daniel 6:10); and, of course, Jesus (Luke 4:1-15; Matthew 14:1-13; Luke 6:12-13; Luke 5:16; and Luke 22:39-44). Some of these instances of prayer in Scripture include detail about how prayer should be done while others remain vague, simply stating that prayer *should be done without giving much directive as to the “how” of it.*

Despite this wide variety of ways that Scripture addresses prayer, however, it is abundantly clear that prayer is an undeniably essential part of our relationship with God. It is how we maintain and deepen our relationship with the One who created us for the love and purpose and joy of that relationship in the first place. It is how we share our lives with God, not just in what we choose to *say to God but even more importantly in the way we open our hearts and minds to listen to what God has to say to us. It is how we spend time in the loving, grace-filled presence of the Triune God – the One to Whom, the One by Whom, and the One in Whom we offer our whole selves in praise, thanksgiving, supplication, and adoration.*

In my doctoral research over the past 2.5 years, I’ve spent significant time researching a variety of different prayer practices and have delineated four separate categories of practices: contemplative, Scripture-based, movement, and creative. For each of those categories, I’ve chosen two different prayer practices. For contemplative prayer, we will explore praying through the day and praying with icons. For movement prayer, we will explore prayer walks and prayer beads. For Scripture-led prayer, we will explore praying the office and *lectio divina*. *For creative prayer, we will explore praying in color and prayer journaling. I’ve chosen two prayer practices per category because I want you all to have enough time to explore the practices and try them out without feeling overwhelmed while also giving you a variety. For each broad category, I’ve also create a list of other practices for those wishing to explore any category that seemed to resonate with them later on.*

For the months of September through December 2022, each month will have a different prayer category focus. For example, since we live in the Midwest, we will start with movement prayer in order to be able to learn about prayer walks together before the weather makes that both difficult and unpleasant. For each prayer practice, we will explore it in a number of different ways. Each Sunday, I will host a “prayer workshop” time following worship – a time that coincides with our fellowship time which will hopefully give these workshops a collegial, inviting feeling as opposed to them feeling formal or intimidating. These workshops will be a time to learn about the practices highlighted that month, ask questions, and share experiences with one another. I will have reflection questions that can initiate conversation if need be, but the primary goal will be to follow wherever the group takes

the discussion on any given Sunday.

I've also create a "how to" card or booklet that you can pick up during these workshops and take home with you. For those practices with cards, one side will detail the adult version of the practice while the other will give suggestions for how to adapt the practice for use with children. For those practices with booklets, the adult practice will be in the front of the book and the children's practice will follow. This information will also be available in a special prayer practice focus page in our monthly newsletter which will include the "how to" information from the prayer cards/booklets (adult practices and children's practices) as well as the reflection questions for anyone that cannot make it to the in-person workshops but would still like to explore these various forms of prayer.

In addition, I'll be hosting an open prayer time mid-week on Wednesday evenings for anyone who either cannot attend on Sunday mornings or feels like they would like a more dedicated time and space for prayer. These mid-week prayer times will be relatively freeform. They will be held in the sanctuary, and they will simply be a time to practice either (or both) of the prayer practices for the month. These times will be specifically aimed at practice as opposed to education, though I will of course be available for questions or clarification.

Finally, our exploration will culminate in a weekend-long "deep dive" prayer retreat in January 2023. This retreat will be held on a Saturday and Sunday in our building (both for the purpose of ease of access as well as financial reasons). Saturday will be a day to learn about and try out any of the practices that you maybe haven't had a chance to explore yet or to spend more dedicated time with a practice that you felt particularly drawn to. I will also have the lists of other practices for each prayer category for anyone who felt particularly drawn to one category or another and would like to explore other practices in that category. We'll begin the day with a brief worship, spend much of the day dedicated to prayer with processing/reflection time interspersed, and finish the day with prayer. On Sunday, our regular worship will be a special prayer service. Following that service, we will enjoy a meal together, engage in some final reflection and processing time, and finally conclude our retreat time by celebrating the Lord's Supper together.

I cannot begin to tell you all how much I'm looking forward to embarking on this journey with you all. I hope you're looking forward to it as well. As stated elsewhere in the newsletter, this project is a part of my doctoral research, so if you're interested in participating in the research part of it, you can find further information in the "Prayer Project" part of this month's newsletter. Or you can talk to me!

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**

August Scripture Readings

Sunday, August 7– Guest Preacher Reverend Scott Cartwright

Sunday, August 14– Guest Preacher Reverend Jerry Locula

Sunday, August 21– Mark 1:29-39

National Parks #7

Sunday, August 28– Mark 1:29-39

National Parks #8



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.



Rumor Clarification

Since I'm talking about my doctorate, all, I need to put a rumor to rest – one that's come back to me a number of different ways from a number of different people:

When I obtain my doctorate degree (hopefully in May 2024), I have no plans to leave this congregation and seek a call elsewhere.

I know that happens in plenty of other places and congregations, but I want to be 100% clear. I am **not** working toward this advanced degree for the purpose of finding another call.

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 August, August, 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:

- August 28: 5:30-8:00 p.m.
- September 25: 5:30-8:00 p.m.



National Night Out

Oronoco is once again hosting a National Night Out party on Tues., Aug. 2. This year, the NNO party will be held at the Oronoco Fire Hall, **not** at the Oronoco City Park as in previous years. *National Night Out was started as a way to heighten awareness about safety and crime prevention and to enhance community relations. Once again, we will have a table at National Night Out. We will be giving out small bags with candy and a church flier for anyone interested.*



Celebration starts at 5:00 p.m. If you'd like to come join us at our table, please contact Pastor Lisa.

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.

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 8 favorites are

- 1) ~~Acadia National Park – June 12~~
- 2) ~~Arches National Park – June 19~~
- 3) ~~Capitol Reef National Park – June 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 story time (which is proving to be a really fun element after the sermon!). And if you're not comfortable sharing during worship, stories and pictures can always be shared during our fellowship time as well.

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	



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!



August Star Word

Who have you shared your star word with? What have you shared? Have they given you any outside insight to how you interact with your star word?

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



New Address

Many of you are aware that Jack and Gail Rucker moved not too long ago. Gail would like to be sure you have their new address:

*Jack and Gail Rucker
423 7th St. SW
Pine Island, MN 55963*



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.



August Birthdays & Anniversaries

- ♥ 8/2 Sandy Bowers
- ♥ 8/3 Katha Johnson
- ♥ 8/7 Annette Glabe
- ♥ 8/7 Mackenzie Luhman
- ♥ 8/12 Ardith Ottmman
- ♥ 8/13 Nancy Tiedeman
- ♥ 8/15 David & Vivien Midthun
- ♥ 8/17 Todd Wickre
- ♥ 8/20 Brenda Longman
- ♥ 8/20 Joanne Schenck
- ♥ 8/27 Rachel Stanton
- ♥ 8/28 Joy Bertsinger

Staying in Touch

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Presbyterian Church (USA)

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

