



# PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ORONOCO

A SMALL CHURCH WITH A BIG MISSION

June 2022

## In Memoriam

Linda Sorensen passed away on Friday, May 13, 2022. As we grieve in our community and in our hearts, we lift up Lance, Neal, Siri, and the rest of their family as well as Linda's friends and loved ones in our prayers.

There will be a Celebration of Life service for Linda on Friday, June 10 at 11:00 a.m. at Ranfranz and Vine Funeral Home in Rochester. Visitation at Ranfranz will be Thurs., June 9 from 5-8:00 p.m. as well as an hour prior to the service on Friday. There will also be a luncheon at Ranfranz's Remembrance and Reception Centre following the service.

Hug your loved ones, friends.



Pastor: Rev. Lisa Johnson

### Church Staff

Secretary: Brianna Clement

Organist: Katha Johnson

### 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 ...

Y'all know how much I love to read. A few years ago, I read a really beautiful, powerful book called *Everything Happens for a Reason and Other Lies I've Loved* by Kate Bowler. At age 35, Bowler, a professor at Duke University, was diagnosed with stage IV colon cancer. *Everything Happens for a Reason* is the result of her processing all of the thoughts, emotions, outside comments (helpful and less-than-helpful), and life changes that came with her diagnosis. Bowler's writing in *Everything Happens for a Reason* is authentic, poignant, sometimes raw, and always heart-rending. She writes in that way that speaks to both your mind and your heart similar to Brené Brown, Glennon Doyle, and Rachel Held Evans.

Recently, Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie came out with a new book called *Good Enough: 40ish Devotionals for a Life of Imperfection*. In it, there's a blessing that's been speaking deeply and profoundly to my heart lately. It's called "A Blessing for When You Realize Everyone is Struggling":

*Blessed are you who have realized that life is hard. And it's hard for everyone. Your awareness came at a cost. You lost something you can't get back. You were diagnosed with chronic pain or degenerative disease. Your family fell apart and things have never been the same.*

*Blessed are you who gave up the myth that the good life is one of happiness, success, perfection. The life that looks beautiful on Facebook, but isn't real. You who realize it is okay to not be okay. To not have a shiny life, because no one does.*

*Blessed are you who see things clearly, where struggle is everyone's normal. You walk among the fellowship of the afflicted, a club no one wants to join. And while this life isn't shiny, it does come with superpowers. Superpowers of ever-widening empathy and existential courage that get you back up after another fall and a deepened awe at the beauty and love that can be found amid life's rubble. Like flowers that grow from the cracks in the sidewalk. These virtues blossom in you. And thank God for you.*

*Blessed are all of us who struggle, for we are in good company, and we'll never walk alone.*

There are so many things a lot of us are carrying. We are carrying stress. We are carrying worry. We are carrying hectic schedules. We are carrying grief. We are carrying illness, our own as well as those of our loved ones. We are carrying responsibilities. We are carrying fear and frustration and fury over what is happening in the world around us. And we are carrying exhaustion. (Did you know you can carry exhaustion? It may be the heaviest of all.)

### **There are so many things a lot of us are carrying.**

When I write my newsletter articles every month, I try to find Scripture passages that speak to what's at hand but also maybe aren't always the most familiar passages. I figure everyone knows the Big Ones. Part of my job is to help you explore unfamiliar or less familiar parts of Scripture – to further open your mind and heart to the word of God.

But another part of my job is to come alongside you in the midst of whatever journey you're on, no

matter what you're carrying. And sometimes, that coming alongside involves not popping up new Scriptures but reminding you of the favorite passages that have stood the test of time; speaking those beloved passages into your hurt and into your heart, laying them anew on your memory and on your mind.

So in this season when we're all carrying so much, let me remind you of a Scripture that speaks words similar to Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie's blessing – a Scripture that reminds us that life isn't perfect ... that reminds us that even in that imperfection, there is beauty ... that reminds us that we'll never walk alone:

<sup>1</sup> The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters;  
<sup>3</sup> he restores my soul.  
He leads me in right paths  
for his name's sake.  
<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.  
<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.  
<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD  
my whole life long.

*~ Psalm 23, New Revised Standard Version*

*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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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, June 8, 2022 6:30 p.m.**

*\*\*Please note that this is **not** our normal Session week. It's the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month.\*\**

### Next Presbytery Meeting:

**Tuesday, September 13, 2022**

**TBD**

## Scripture readings for June

**Sunday, June 5**– Pentecost Testimony Worship

**Sunday, June 12**– Genesis 1:2-5; 2:1-4

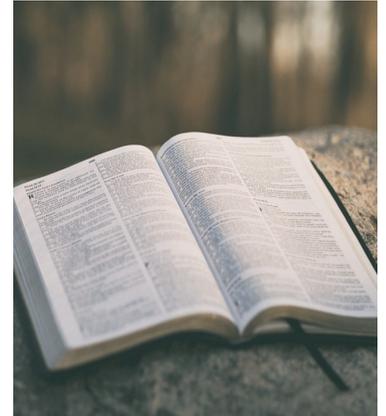
National Parks #1

**Sunday, June 19**– Romans 12:4-17

National Parks #2

**Sunday, June 26**– Matthew 18:21-35

National Parks #3



## Current Worship Requirements

It is such a joy to be back together for worship!! I love not being the only one in the building on Sunday mornings!

Just a reminder about the main requirements for coming back to worship in the building:

- Until further notice, masks are **optional** for those who have been fully COVID-19 vaccinated. *If you have not been vaccinated, please continue wearing a mask.*
- Sanitize your hands upon coming into the building
- Maintain social distancing in the building, both the sanctuary and the fellowship area

We returned to fellowship time after worship on Sunday, May 1. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board for fellowship treats for May through July. The deacons will also be returning to passing the communion elements via the trays.

And, of course, if you're not comfortable coming back to worship in person yet, we will continue to livestream our worship services on Sunday mornings via Facebook Live and directly on our website.



## Preparing for Pentecost: Sharing Our Stories



Throughout Lent this year, we've been working on our faith stories – our testimonies. Each week, we've worked through one question after another, each question designed to help us dig deeper and really get into writing our stories. Just in case you're missing your copy of what we've worked on throughout Lent, here are the questions:

- Choose a moment in your life when you know God was with you – holding you up, guiding you, encouraging you, etc. Maybe there's one particular point. Maybe you have many to choose from.
- Using that moment, spend time detailing the problem/challenge you were facing.
- To the best of your knowledge/remembrance, what were things like before that moment when God was with you? Your faith? Your life circumstances? Your spirit? Your relationship with God? Your relationships with others?
- Spend time detailing the way God was with you in the moment that you chose. What shed light on that intervention for you? Scripture? A hymn or song? Another person? A sign? A message from God?
- In that moment/in the midst of that situations, how did God's presence with you make a difference? What changed? What helped? (Stick to that particular moment as much as you can ... we'll get to the extended results later.)
- Where has God taken you since that moment? How as it affected your life? Your relationships? Your faith? Your spiritual journey? Your self?

Now it's time to take the next step with those stories: share them! The whole idea behind working on our faith stories is to help you get more comfortable talking about your faith with other people, and what better place to start practicing those conversations than here in church?

So here's the plan: during our Pentecost worship on June 5, I'm going to invite people to share their testimonies – their faith stories – throughout the worship service. If you'd like some help working on your testimony beforehand – if you have questions or if you would like to practice – please contact Pastor Lisa.

## Still Seeking Musicians

We are still seeking 1-2 more musicians willing to play for worship on a rotational basis. That could mean playing the organ or the piano or even a guitar! Pay is \$85 per Sunday. Anyone interested can contact Pastor Lisa via email ([pastorLisa@gmail.com](mailto:pastorLisa@gmail.com)) or on her cell phone (507-995-7310).



## 150th Anniversary

Friends, in 2020, our beloved Presbyterian Church of Oronoco turned **150 years 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.

# 150+2

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

- Celebration during worship at 10:00 a.m.
- Continue catered lunch and dessert (hopefully on the lawn) following worship

*If you plan on attending this celebration, please let Pastor Lisa know so we can have a rough headcount to give the catering company.*

## All Around the Campfire

It's that time again! Time to gather again on the church lawn for an evening campfire on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of June, 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:

- June 26: 5:30-8:00 p.m.
- July 24: 5:30-8:00 p.m.

*\*Note: This is the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday, not the last Sunday.\**

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



## June Star Word

Now that we're halfway through, revisit the initial thoughts, impressions, and prayers you first had with your star word. How have they changed? How have you grown?



# 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 – June 12
- 2) Arches National Park – June 19
- 3) Capitol Reef National Park – June 26
- 4) Grand Teton National Park – July 3
- 5) Glacier National Park – July 10
- 6) Great Smoky Mountain National Park – July 17
- 7) Isle Royale National Park – August 21
- 8) Sequoia National Park – August 28
- 9) 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:

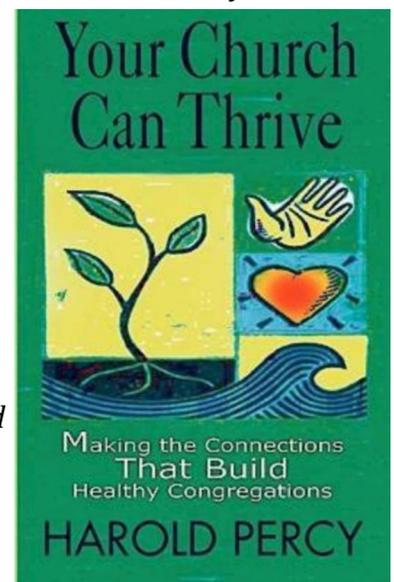
<https://www.lakesandprairies.org/SynodSchool>. If you're curious about Synod School, please talk to Pastor Lisa.

## 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, June 5.*





## 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!

## 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](http://www.oronocochurch.org) at the bottom of the homepage) or this QR code



## Pastor Lisa Out

Pastor Lisa will be out of the office in Dubuque, IA for doctoral work Wednesday, May 25- Thursday, June 2. Rev. Tammy Rider will be leading worship on Sunday, May 29, so there will be **no virtual worship stream** that day.

## 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 **Sandy Bowers, Curt Burt, Helen Craft, Janice Ostrom, Katha Johnson, Carol Tiede, and Linda Sorensen** in prayer.

## June Birthdays & Anniversaries



- ♥ 6/3 Ellen Warner
- ♥ 6/6 Mike Rand
- ♥ 6/6 Rachel Rand
- ♥ 6/7 Dianne Pinney
- ♥ 6/9 Kay Erdahl
- ♥ 6/6 Cindy Tiedeman
- ♥ 6/17 Tood and Melissa Wickre
- ♥ 6/25 Peter and Lisa Johnson

## Staying in Touch

### Presbyterian Church of Oronoco

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

### Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

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Fax: 651-357-1141

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

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

### Presbyterian Church (USA)

Office: 800-728-7228

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

