



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ORONOCO

A SMALL CHURCH WITH A BIG MISSION

April 2024

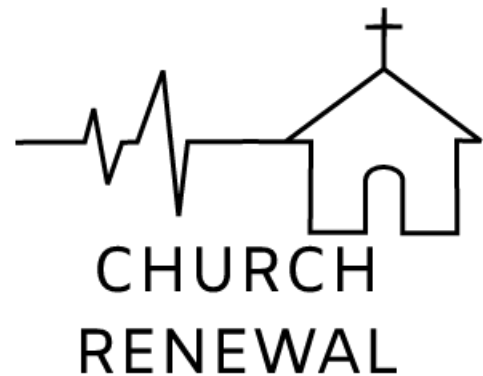
2024: Year of Renewal

It's no secret that we are a congregation in need of renewal right now. Our membership is down. Sunday attendance is down. Our 2024 budget is a severely deficit budget. Our Session recently crunched the numbers, and financially, we have roughly 3 years of funds left before the coffers are empty.

With that in mind, 2024 will be our Year of Renewal. There are three basic phases to this:

- ✚ **Phase 1: Congregational book study/discussion**—We're going to spend 6 weeks talking about renewal using the book *Your Church Can Thrive: Making the Connections that Built Healthy Congregations* by Harold Percy. These discussions will happen after worship on 6 Sundays in May and June. **Find more information about this in this newsletter.**
- ✚ **Phase 2: Congregational workshop with LeaderWise**—While Pastor Lisa is on sabbatical, some congregational consultants will come down from LeaderWise (located in the Twin Cities) to lead a day-long (9a-3p) workshop aimed at discerning who we are and who we want to be. This will be some Saturday in September (date TBD). It is crucial that as many people participate in this as possible.
- ✚ **Phase 3: Congregational reunion & reimagining**—After Pastor Lisa gets back from her sabbatical, our LeaderWise consultant will come down again so we can come back together and do some visioning and planning together. This will be a few hours on a Saturday in October (date TBD).

There will be more information about Phases 2 and 3 in upcoming newsletters. There will also be information in the weekly emails and Sunday announcements. We cannot emphasize enough: it is **crucial** that everyone participate in this.



Church Staff

Pastor: Rev. Lisa Johnson

Pianist: Rocky Nisbit

Church Leadership

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

Geoff Warner, Ruling Elder
Cindy Luhman, Ruling Elder
Ron Peterson-Rucker, Ruling Elder

Gail Rucker, Deacon
Joanne Schenck, Deacon
Karen Peterson-Rucker, Deacon
Jenny Rand, Deacon



From the Pastor ...

Paul said it, right?

¹³ We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body, whether Jew or Greek, or slave or free, and we all were given one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Certainly the body isn't one part but many. ¹⁵ If the foot says, "I'm not part of the body because I'm not a hand," does that mean it's not part of the body? ¹⁶ If the ear says, "I'm not part of the body because I'm not an eye," does that mean it's not part of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, what would happen to the hearing? And if the whole body were an ear, what would happen to the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God has placed each one of the parts in the body just like he wanted. ... ²⁶ If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part gets the glory, all the parts celebrate with it. ²⁷ You are the body of Christ and parts of each other. ~ 1 Corinthians 12:13-18, 26-27

We are all part of the body of Christ together—unique and different parts, each and every one of us, but all important.

All of us in the universal body of Christ—Christians around the world.
All of us in the local body of Christ here in Oronoco.

As I prepare to take my sabbatical, I need to call on the body of Christ and all the many and varied gifts out there to help cover a variety of tasks. For the preaching, I've called on various pastors, some who have preached here before and some who will bring new voices.

There are other, "in-house" tasks that I also need help with, and I'm calling on the local body of Christ. I need y'all's help:

- † **BULLETINS:** I need a few people who are willing to format, print, and fold the bulletins each week. I will send the document format to those who are doing pulpit supply, so you'll have everything you need. I'll show you how to turn that document into bulletins (regular and large print), and we can make a sign-up sheet for the various Sundays.
- † **STREAMING:** If we're going to continue streaming our worship, I need a few people willing to get all the streaming up and running throughout each service. Again, we can make a sign-up sheet for the various Sundays.
- † **GENERAL CHURCH CONTACT:** I already have someone covering pastoral care emergencies, but we need someone willing to be a general church contact for anyone

who wants to get a hold of someone at church for various facility-related things: food shelf questions, parking lot questions, building rental questions, etc. That person's phone number and/or email address (your choice) will go on the Facebook page and website for anyone seeking to contact the church while I'm gone.

- ✦ **FOOD SHELF BREAD DONATIONS EMAIL:** I need someone who can adjust the Google doc that we use for the bread sign-up sheet every few weeks and send it out. This literally takes about 5 minutes twice a month, and it's super easy.

If you think you can cover any of these tasks, please let me know.

Pastor Gina

Sunday of the Myrrhbearers

This is a Sunday that we celebrated during the pandemic but not since then, so I thought it would be nice to do it in person together this year.

The Sunday of the Myrrhbearers is a tradition that comes from the Eastern Orthodox Church. All of the gospels describe the women as being the first to approach Jesus' tomb on Easter morning to find it empty. Some name these women. Some just call them "the women." On Easter Sunday, we are focused on the empty tomb and the good news of a risen Savior and all that means for our lives and our world. Taking the following Sunday to celebrate the myrrh-bearers gives us a chance to focus on an element of that text that can often get overlooked in the face of folded graveclothes and hallelujahs: those who returned.



Scripture readings for April

- **April 7**—*Sunday of the Myrrhbearers*
- **April 14**—Luke 24:36b-48
- **April 21**—John 10:11-18
- **April 28**—*Earth Day Sunday*



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 **family of Helen Craft, Curt Burt, Keanan Peterson-Rucker, Kamyn PR-Nielsen, and Hadley Thompson** in prayer.

Spaghetti Feed

The Outreach Team decided to try something new this spring: a spaghetti feed! So here are the details:



Saturday, April 20
11:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.
free will offering

There are sign-up sheets on the bulletin board for bringing the spaghetti (both cooked and uncooked), both meat and meatLESS sauces, desserts, salads, water, and garlic bread. We also need helpers to set up on Friday, Apr. 19 and people to help serve on Saturday, Apr. 20.

There are fliers printed at church if you’d like to pick some up and post them around the area. You can also share our Facebook event: <https://fb.me/e/gXMGsbUmX>.

Next Session mtg.:

Monday, Apr. 1
6:30 p.m.

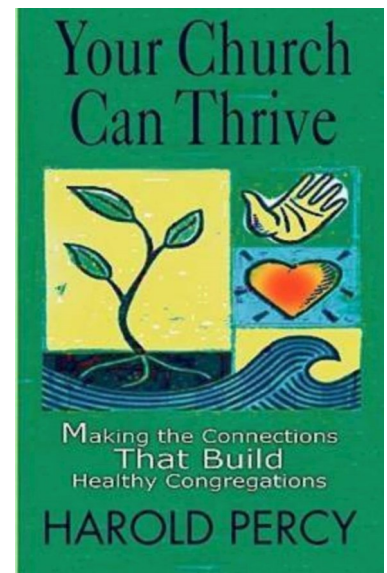
Next Presbytery mtg.:

Saturday, Apr. 20, 2024
morning
(hybrid—Spirit of Life, Apple Valley)

Year of Renewal: Phase 1 Congregational Book Study/Discussion

Pastor Lisa encountered this book through her doctorate work, and it's the perfect book for a congregational study and discussion setting. The description from the back of the books says: "How is your church going to grow? Will it grow by fine-tuning worship, the preaching, the Christian educations, and the like? Or will it grow by making strategic assessments of the people it is most likely to reach and focusing the ministries of the church on the goal of offering the gospel to those people? In this brief, practical book Harold Percy helps congregations answer these critical questions about their mission and ministry. ... He offers solid, easy-to-follow advice on how churches can understand the needs of these groups and reach out to them."

It would be **great** if others could read this book alongside Pastor Lisa. It can be found on Amazon, Barnes and Noble's website, and many other book distribution websites. However, the beauty of this book is that it can generate plenty of discussion even if you haven't read the book. **Bottom line: Please stay for these discussions, whether you've read the book or not.**



Discussion dates will be:

May 5	June 2
May 12	June 9
May 19	June 16

Food Shelf: Item of the Month

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 is also posted on our church Facebook page, so feel free to find it every month and share the image!



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.



Star Word Prompts

Where do you find the hope and good news of the resurrection in/through your star word?

April Birthdays & Anniversaries

- ☪ 4/5—Vivien Midthun
- ☪ 4/10—David Midthun
- ☪ 4/16—Will Midthun
- ☪ 4/17—Julia Johnson
- ☪ 4/22—Brian Luhman



All Around the Campfire

It's that time again! One Sunday a month, we'll be gathering in the evening on the church lawn. There will be a campfire. There will be lawn games. There will be s'mores. This is a chance for us to spend some fun, relaxed, un-structured time together, and to invite people who may not be as comfortable coming through the church doors for the first time. Bring your neighbors and friends. Bring kids. Let's have fun!

- June 23: 5:30-8:00 p.m.

Note: This is the 4th Sunday, NOT the last Sunday of June.

- July 28: 5:30-8:00 p.m.

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

- September 22: 5:30-8:00 p.m.

Note: This is the 4th Sunday, NOT the last Sunday of Sept.



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>





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.

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.

Synod School 2024

This year is a very special year. It's the 70th anniversary of Synod School!! This incredible gathering of Presbyterians from around the country has been blessing families and ministries and congregations and lives for 70 years! From the Synod School catalogue: "Synod School is a learning and personal enrichment experience for people of all ages. We seek to create an environment of hospitality, healing, and hope. The week is designed for laity, clergy, individuals and families with classes and activities for adults, youth, and children." This is truly a family-friendly experience. Everything about Synod School is doable whether you're bringing a 1-month-old or whether you yourself are 91 yrs. old!



This year's theme is "More Than We Can Imagine," based on Ephesians 3:20-21: *Now to God who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to the power that is at work within us, to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.*

Again, from the Synod School catalogue: "The group that gathered to plan for the first Synod School event seventy years ago could not have imagined what brings us to Synod School in 2024. It has become more than they could have imagined! Multi-generation families, tie dye, more classes proposed than we have room for, 'the best week of the entire year' ...

As we look to the future of the Church, what will it look like? What innovations are already happening? What is yet to come? As we think about the lives of the young people in our lives, what will their futures be? What innovations will renew their lives and ministries? God is already doing things we cannot even imagine. What difference can that make in our lives and ministries?"

Pastor Lisa won't be at Synod School this year because of her sabbatical, but she would love to talk to you about it if you're interested in going! For more information, visit <https://lakesandprairies.org/engaging-leaders/synod-school/>.

Registration opens April 1!

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>