



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ORONOCO

A SMALL CHURCH WITH A BIG MISSION

January 2023

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? In 2022, \$36.50 per member. And as per the vote during the November 11 presbytery meeting, the 2023 per capita will be increased slightly to \$37.50.

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.



Church Staff

Pastor: Rev. Lisa Johnson

Secretary: Brianna Clement

Organist: Raquel “Rocky” Nisbit

Church Leadership

Mike Rand, Clerk of Session
Ellen Warner, Ruling Elder
Brenda Longman, Ruling Elder
Ron Peterson-Rucker, Ruling Elder
Geoff Walker, Ruling Elder
Todd Wickre, Ruling Elder

Kim Stanton, Treasurer
Gail Rucker, Deacon
Ellen Simon, Deacon
Joanne Schenck, Deacon
Cindy Luhman, Deacon
Jen Rand, Deacon



From the Pastor ...

Last year, I read a book called *Broken (in the best possible way)* by Jenny Lawson. Lawson writes in a very real and raw way about living with both mental and physical illness. Her writing is often hilarious, but also sparkles with deeply poignant insights that can leave you both laughing and crying within the space of a single page. (Full disclosure: If you're someone who is offended by or doesn't like reading books with a lot of curse words in them, Jenny Lawson is not for you.)

Toward the end of *Broken*, Lawson includes a chapter that she calls "Souls" in which she talks about how she believes that we all have souls – "Glowing half orbs. Flat at our back and round at our chests, like glass paperweights with golden candy-button dots at the center." She goes on to describe that as we go through the ups and downs and ins and outs of life, sometimes our orbs crack and little shards fall out. And sometimes we come across things in life – other shards like songs or lines from books – that we can pick up and help fill the gaps left by our own lost shards. Sometimes we try to fill those gaps with other things – healthy and unhealthy. Sometimes our gaps line up with other people's gaps "and you can lean into someone else's emptiness and block out the empty for a bit." Sometimes we even try to pull out shards from our cracked-orb-souls to give to other people, but when we give indiscriminately, we can sometimes end up distressingly depleted: "You learn early that you don't always get a shard back in return. That's a good lesson though, because it reminds you of your own worth and of the worth of the shards that fit."

Truly, Lawson's entire chapter called "Souls" is a powerful one ... and one that (miraculously) contains little to no swearing, so if you'd like to read it, you can borrow my copy. But it's the ending of it that has really stuck with me is the end:

The world is shattered and we wander barefoot through one another's broken shards and glittering slivers. And some of us bleed from the cuts. And some of us heal. And if you're lucky, you do both. We are broken. We are healing. It never ends. And, if you look at it in just the right light, it is beautiful.

Friends, as this new year begins, remember that we are all carrying around brokenness in some way. No one's life is perfect, no matter what their social media feed or exuberant smile might seem to say. That doesn't mean that we're all suffering horribly every minute of every day. Sometimes – very often, even – we can be both broken and beautiful at the same time; we can be both laughing and crying within the space of a single page.

But rarely do we feel comfortable enough or even welcome enough to share our broken places with others. It's so often easier to plaster on a smile and simply say, "Fine" when someone tosses out a quick "How's it going?" What would happen, I wonder, if we stopped long enough to hear an actual answer to that question? What would happen if we worded it just a little bit differently: "How are you really doing?" My favorite way to ask people for a genuine assessment of their current situation is, "How is your world?"

Faith brings us into a relationship with a God who says to us, "How is your world?" and truly cares enough about us to listen to the answer. We don't have to pull our punches or craft our responses with God. The psalms teach us that God is a God big enough to handle the vast array of human emotions with steadfast love and grace:

*Let my whole being bless the Lord!
Let everything inside me
bless his holy name! ...
The Lord is compassionate
and merciful,
very patient, and full of faithful love. ...
He doesn't deal with us
according to our sin
or repay us
according to our wrongdoing,
because as high as heaven
is above the earth,
that's how large God's faithful love
is for those who honor him.
As far as the east is from the west –
that's how far God has removed
our sin from us.
~ Psalm 103: 1, 8, 10-12*

So go into the year before us looking for those broken places ...

In yourself,
In those you know,
And especially in those you don't know.

Look for them with God's compassion and mercy in your heart.
Look for them with ears and hearts and minds open to the story behind the brokenness.
Look for them not with the purpose of fixing them but with the purposes of honoring them and holding sacred space for them – space for God to live and move and heal.

And, if you look at them in just the right light, they can be beautiful.

Pastor Lisa

Scripture readings for January



Sunday, January 1- *A Look at the Year Behind a& the Year Ahead*

Sunday, January 8- Matthew 2:1-23

Sunday, January 15- Matthew 3:1-17

Sunday, January 22- Matthew 4:1-17

Sunday, January 29- *Pulpit swap with Rev. Paul Bauch*

Annual Meeting



Our 2023 Annual Meeting will be **Sunday, February 5** during worship with a potluck to follow.

*A reminder to all those responsible for committees/reports: Please have your reports to Bri by **Sunday, January 22, 2023** so she has a chance to assemble the annual meeting packet. Copies of reports can be emailed (oronocopc@bevcomm.net) or placed in the labeled file folder on her desk. Needed reports are:*

- Minutes from 2022 annual mtg.
- Pastor’s report
- Session annual report
- Nominating Committee
- 2022 Financial Statement
- 2023 Budget
- Deacon’s report
- Financial audit
- People of the Church annual report
- Food Shelf report
- Outreach Committee

Next Session meeting.:

**Wednesday, January 4, 2023
6:30 p.m.**

Next Presbytery Meeting:

**February 25, 2023
9:00 a.m. (via Zoom)**

Keeping Up with the Smith-Mathers



First, the update: According to their last newsletter, Shelvis, Nancy, and their kids have moved to Kampala, Uganda to continue their work in the mission field. We lift up prayers for their health and safety, for the period of adjustment that comes with a move like this (that comes with *any move, really ... let alone a move to a whole other continent*), and for their call and their mission.

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.

Due to changes that PMA has made to the way they distribute their mission funds, all contributions now go into a general fund and are 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. 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.

Pulpit Swap

On Sunday, January 29, Pastor Lisa will be participating in a pulpit swap with Rev. Paul Bauch from Peace United Church of Christ in Rochester. For that Sunday, Pastor Lisa will be preaching at Peace UCC while Pastor Paul will be preaching here.



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 code:



Busy Bags

We will be putting together busy bags again this year. We'll assemble the bags on **Sunday, January 22** after worship, but now is a good time to be on the lookout for anything that we could put in the bags: small toys, coloring things, books, games, etc. I'll put the box out at church. Feel free to drop donations off anytime.



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!

In addition to this month's highlight item, we've been told the Oronoco Food Shelf is also in need of toilet paper and paper towels.



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, and Katha Johnson**, in prayer.

Epiphany Star Word

A few times now, we have distributed star words throughout the congregation on the Sunday closest to Epiphany. This year, that will be **Sunday, Jan. 8**. A star word is a simple, star-shaped piece of paper with a word printed on it. We usually pass out the star words via the offering plates – the same offering plates we use in worship every Sunday to collect our gifts will instead be used to offer these star gifts to us.



You are invited to ponder what significance this word might have in your life and how God may be speaking to you through that simple message. You're encouraged to put your star word up somewhere in your home – someplace where you'll see it each and every day so you can keep your special word in the front of your mind and your heart. Then, throughout the year, you are encouraged to share thoughts and reflections about your star gift with the congregation, either publicly during worship or in your own individual conversations.

I've heard from a lot of people over the years about how significant their star words end up being for them, so we're going to do it again this year. If you cannot be in worship for some reason but would like a Star Word, contact Pastor Lisa. She'd be happy to get one to you either by mail or by dropping one off.

January Star Word

What initial thoughts, impressions, and prayers do you have for your star word?

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.

January Birthdays & Anniversaries



- ♥ 1/1 Lisa Johnson
- ♥ 1/1 Malachi Johnson
- ♥ 1/4 Robert Rueber
- ♥ 1/12 Jack Rucker
- ♥ 1/16 Hadley Thompson
- ♥ 1/28 Janice Ostrom
- ♥ 1/28 Malachi & Annie Johnson

Staying in Touch

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Presbyterian Church (USA)

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