



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ORONOCO

A SMALL CHURCH WITH A BIG MISSION

January 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 ...

The last book that I finished before the year turned from 2023 to 2024 was the third book in a series I've been savoring—the Sensible Shoes series by Sharon Garlough Brown. Now, I fully admit that Christian fiction is not generally by reading genre of choice. However, these Sensible Shoes books are about a group of women who meet at a retreat center in Michigan and how their faith and the friendships they form through that faith buoy them through the hardest challenges of their lives.

It's been a while since I read the first two books of the series, but as I read through this third one—entitled *Barefoot: A Story of Surrendering to God*—I found myself folding pages here and there, marking spots that felt like something I could use either in a sermon or a newsletter. There was one particular piece that felt very apropos for the turn of the year. It was a discussion between two of the characters about time.

You see, in the biblical Greek, there are two different words used for “time”: *chronos* and *kairos*. *Chronos* time is time as we tend to think of it—time that marches ever forward in the progression from past to present to future. But *kairos* time is different. It's more expansive. It's more nebulous. It's time more concerned with the cycles and seasons and rhythms of life. It's time that cannot be metered out and measured to the n-th degree—down to the second ... the millisecond ... the nanosecond. In this discussion, one of the characters says:

We don't have any control over chronos—time ticks away. But the clock set on Meg's life has given me fresh eyes to see the kairos moments, the opportunities to live life to the full, to be totally awake to the presence of God and to the invitations God is giving moment by moment, to glimpse the bushes burning in the midst of our ordinary, daily routines and to pay attention, to take off our shoes and worship because the Most High is near. That's how I want to live each day, Lord. Barefoot on holy ground.ⁱ

It's those *kairos* moments that bring us into the thin place—the sacred times and spaces in the midst of our days when whatever veil separates us from God's kingdom is the most permeable. That's where we encounter the glimpses of God in the people and circumstance and world around us. As Paul both encourages and blesses the church in Colossus:

The peace of Christ must control your hearts—a peace into which you were called in one body. And be thankful people. The word of Christ must live in you

richly. Teach and warn each other with all wisdom by singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing to God with gratitude in your hearts. Whatever you do, whether in speech or action, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus and give thanks to God the Father through him. ~ Colossians 3:15-17

So as the year turns again, that is my hope and my prayer for you all: that you find God in those *kairos* moments of your days—the peace of God and the richness of God’s Word in Christ Jesus as well as allowing that same peace and Word shine through you in all that you do, all that you say, and all that you are.

ⁱ Sharon Garlough Brown. *Barefoot: A Story of Surrendering to God*. (Downers Grover: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 250-251.

Pastor Gina

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!



Scripture readings for January

- **January 7**—Genesis 1:1-5, *Created Anew #1*
- **January 14**—Jonah 3:1-5, 10, *Created Anew #2*
- **January 21**—1 Corinthians 8:1-13, *Created Anew #3*
- **January 28**—Isaiah 40:21-31, *Created Anew #4*



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, Hadley Thompson, family of Karen Lohmann and family of Jack Rucker** 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, Jan. 8
6:30 p.m.**

Next Presbytery mtg.:

**Thurs., Jan. 25, 2024
12:00 p.m.
(hybrid—location TBA)**

Busy Bags Assembly

We will be putting together busy bags for Ronald McDonald House again this year. We'll assemble the bags sometime in January (date TBD), but now is a great 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.



Epiphany Star Words

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. 7**. 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.

Star Word Prompts

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



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.



January Birthdays & Anniversaries

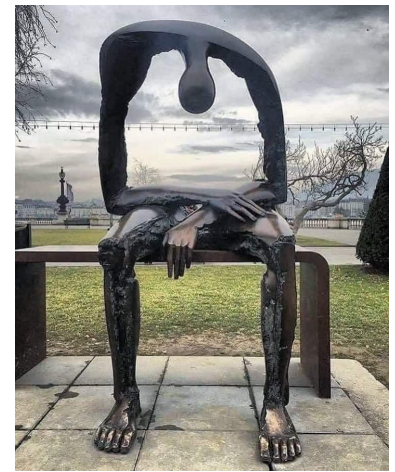
- ☪ 1/1—Lisa Johnson
- ☪ 1/4—Robert Rueber
- ☪ 1/16—Hadley Thompson
- ☪ 1/28—Janice Ostrom



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.



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

Fax: 651-357-1141

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.

Epiphany Star Words

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. 7**. 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.

Epiphany sermon series: Created Anew

In the rhythm of the liturgical calendar, Epiphany is more than just a single day. It's a whole season that follows Christmas. The focus of the Season of Epiphany—or Epiphanytide—extends from January 6 (Epiphany) to Ash Wednesday. The word “epiphany” means “to show,” “to make known,” or “to reveal,” so the season of Epiphany is focused on re-examining, re-evaluating, and re-imagining the ways we can make the Good News of Jesus Christ known in and through our own words, actions, and lives.

This year, we're going to dive into an Epiphanytide sermon series called “Created Anew.” It's another series from *A Preacher's Guide to Lectionary Sermon Series, vol. 2* (compiled by Jessica Miller Kelley) and another one laid out by Tuhina Verma Rasche. She describes the purpose of this series this way:

Celebrating God's creativity—and our own—in the season of new beginnings ... This series begins at the start of a new year, a time to start over and create the world anew through resolutions, hopes, and dreams. This is an opportunity for a community to explore what it means to be a follower of Jesus in a new calendar year and see Christian identity in a new way. Through Scriptures that span all sections of the Bible, let's discover new and creative ways to explore what it means to be a baptized Christian in the world today.

As part of this series, there will be weekly “Created to Create” challenges/spiritual prompts—a creativity exercise related to the theme for the week and your own spiritual journey. And for an extra challenge, if you manage to collect **all 6** “Created to Create” cards, Pastor Lisa will take you out for coffee!



CREATIVE

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.

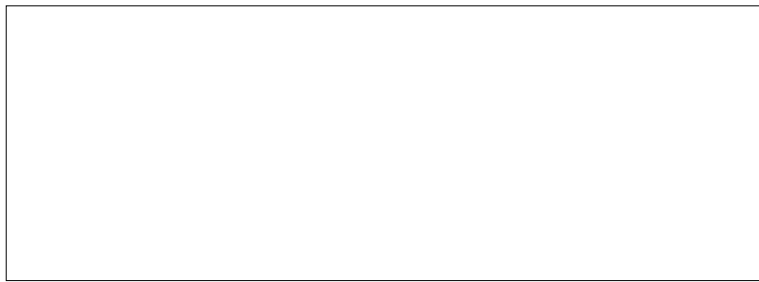
In an attempt to ease some of that worry, we're going to hold a funeral planning workshop on **Saturday, February 10** from **1:00-4:00 p.m.** This workshop will include a variety of discussions/topics that help get you thinking about and planning what you might want your own funeral service to look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

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>