



# PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ORONOCO

A SMALL CHURCH WITH A BIG MISSION

April 2021

## Holy Week Schedule

### *Palm Sunday*

Sunday March 28, 2021

10:00 a.m. worship (online)



### *Maundy Thursday*

Soup & Bread Supper

Worship Around the Table

Thursday, April 1, 2021

\*Since we cannot gather around common tables at church again this year, there was a service that you can all participate in around your tables at your homes in the Lenten bags that went out last month. There was a table liturgy as well as a recipe for a simple no-knead bread (*which takes 12-18 hrs. for the first rise, so be sure you start it the day before!*) I encourage you to try to start your meals – whatever they may be – as close to 6:00 p.m. as possible. That way, even apart, we will be taking our meals together.\*

### *Good Friday Tenebrae Service*

A Service of Darkness and Shadow

Friday, April 2, 2021

7:30 p.m. (online)

Zoom ID: 899 4689 8720

Password: church

\* Please note that this Zoom ID is different than the regular Sunday morning worship one. I will send out an email on Friday morning with the worship write-up and Zoom link for that evening's worship. \*

### *Easter Sunday*

Sunday, April 4, 2021

10:00 a.m. worship (online)

Pastor: Rev. Lisa Johnson

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

### **Church Staff**

Secretary: Brianna Clement

### **Church Leadership**

Organist: Katha Johnson

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



## From the Pastor ...

What do I miss most about worshiping together?  
 Well, the *together part, of course.*  
 You all.  
 The laughter.  
 The connection.  
 The unity.  
 In worship, in celebrating communion, in fellowship time afterward.  
 That's an easy one.

What's the other thing I miss most?  
 Y'all know me.  
 I miss the music:  
 Katha's playing.  
 Singing.

My whole life, music has been a connecting force for me. It's connected me to people. It's connected me to experiences. It's connected me to phases of my life (oh, the soundtrack to my college years!). And above all, it's connected me to my faith.

Growing up, my favorite hymn was always "Here I am, Lord":

*Here I am, Lord.  
 Is it I, Lord?  
 I have heard you falling in the night.  
 I will go, Lord,  
 If you lead me.  
 I will hold your people in my heart.*

Hmmm. Foreshadowing, isn't it?

And then there were the holiest celebrations of the church – Christmas and Easter. Some of the most recognizable, favorite hymns are holiday hymns, right? Christmas carols are obvious ones – "Away in a Manger," "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," "O Come, All Ye Faithful," and of course, "Silent Night." [insert your favorite Christmas hymn here] And there are Easter ones, too: "Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain," "Jesus Christ is Risen Today," "Thine Is the Glory," and many others.

Out of pure nostalgia, I was flipping through the hymnal the other day as I was planning our Holy Week services, and I came across one that I've always loved: "Christ Is Alive!" And in the face of everything we've all gone through over the past year, the words resonated with me even more than they usually do:

*Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.  
 The cross stands empty to the sky.  
 Let streets and homes with praises rings.  
 Love, drowned in death, shall never die.*

*Christ is alive! No longer bound  
 To distant years in Palestine,*

*But saving, healing, here and now,  
And touching every place and time.*

*In every insult, rift, and war  
Where color, scorn, or wealth divide,  
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,  
And lives, where even hope has died.*

*Women and men, in age and youth,  
Can feel the Spirit, hear the call,  
And find the way, the life, the truth,  
Revealed in Jesus, freed for all.*

*Christ is alive, and comes to bring  
Good news to this and every age,  
Till earth and sky and ocean ring  
With joy, with justice, love, and praise.*

Truly, friends, Christ is alive and with us even to this day. Even the cold and seemingly-endless finality of death could not extinguish the blazing and brilliant embodied Love of God for good. The darkness didn't last forever. On the third day, a triumphant and risen Savior left that tomb and never looked back. He appeared to the women (the first to preach the good news!!) He appeared to the disciples. He spent time with those he loved – those who were devoted to him – before ascending to return to God's side. But before that, Jesus promised that "I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age." (Matthew 28:20).

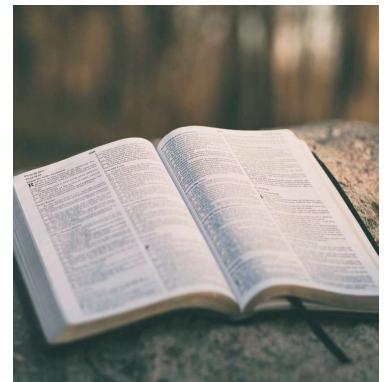
As the hymn says, as our Scripture says, as our hearts tell us, as our Christian community reassures us, Christ is with us: before this time, through this time, and beyond this time. This is the hope of a risen Savior. This is the promise of a risen Savior.

Christ is alive!

Pastor Oja

## Scripture readings for March

- **Sunday, April 4-** Luke 24:1-12  
Easter Sunday
  - **Sunday, April 11-** Guest Preacher, Rev. Dr. Raj Nadella
  - **Sunday, April 18-** Luke 24:13-35
- Sunday, April 25-** Acts 8:26-39



## Keeping Up with the Smith-Mathers



We've been helping to support Shelvis and Nancy and their family for a few years now. We've been collecting our 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Spare Change offering and lifting them up in prayer. We need to lift them up even more in prayer right now, friends. The COVID-19 pandemic has rocked their world as well. In their most recent update letter, they shared that Nancy is pregnant again (another girl: Alice) but there is a problem with the baby's heart that will require surgical intervention when she is a year old. In addition to this concern, ahead of the U.S. borders closing this past March, they decided to leave Great Britain and come home to be with family in the U.S. As they have attempted to find some semblance of being settled, they have moved their entire family a number of times this year already: 4 different homes in the last 6 months, according to their letter. Like many overseas missions organizations, the PC(USA) has extended their travel ban for mission personnel to June 30, 2021, so they know they aren't headed back to Africa anytime soon. And because of choices and restrictions put in place by Oxford University, Shelvis is unable to continue his doctoral program at this time and has had to take a temporary leave of absence.

It is a lot, friends. In this time of uncertainty and upheaval, Shelvis and Nancy and their family clearly still need our prayers, and they still need our support. I know that we're not gathering our spare change offering as we continue to meet virtually, but 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 to the ministry of Shelvis and Nancy Smith-Mather." This will redirect you to a page that describes RECONCILE, the organization that Shelvis and Nancy continue to work with in South Sudan and Uganda. If you click the yellow "Give" box on that page, you'll be redirected 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.:**

**Wednesday, April 6  
6:30 p.m. via Zoom**

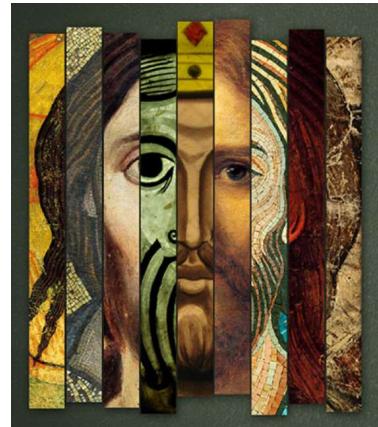
**Next Presbytery mtg.:**

**TBD**

## Lenten Sermon Series

This Lent, we'll be walking through the gospel of Luke and taking a look at who Jesus is to us – the timeless and eternal roles that Jesus plays in the lives of those around him and those around us. It will remind us that the lessons Jesus taught millennia ago are lessons that we still need to hear and learn day in and day out. We'll engage with:

- *Jesus Who Shows Compassion – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent*
- *Jesus Who Calls Us to Repent – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent*
- *Jesus Who Finds Us – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent*
- *Jesus Who Brings Justice – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent*
- *Jesus Who Lifts Us Up – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent*
- *Jesus Who Comes – Palm Sunday*
- *Jesus Who Mystifies – Easter Sunday*



## Zoom Worship

I'm making a slight change in the mechanics of our Zoom worship, all – probably a change I should have figured out a long time ago. Remember, I'm learning this technology alongside all of you! Up to this point, I've been scheduling a different Zoom meeting for every single worship service.

However, starting in February, I've started scheduling our Sunday morning worship as a recurring meeting. That means that the Zoom ID will be *the same for every worship meeting. This will make it easier to continue streaming our worship service from now on, even after we've returned to in-person worship.*



**\*Please note: This is only for regular Sunday morning services. Any special services (Ash Wednesday, for example) will have a different ID and link\***

So from now on, here's the Zoom information you'll need for worship:

**Zoom ID:** 835 1191 8878

**Password:** church

If you're someone that prefers using the link, I will continue to email that out every Sunday morning as I have been doing until we return to in-person worship. Once we do come back together in the building, the link to each morning's worship will be on our website.

## Lenten Sermon Series

Good news! A while back, the Session discussed setting up an Amazon Smile account for the church. The first time I tried it, it was before Kim went through the incredible amount of work he did to re-establish our 501(c)3 status. I was recently reminded of this endeavor (thanks, Mom!), so I thought I'd try again. And it worked!



So how does Amazon Smile work? For your designated organization, Amazon donates .5% of eligible Amazon purchases to that organization. And now, you can officially designate the church as your organization! There are two ways that you can do this:

- 1) Type this link into your web browser and click the “Start shopping” button. <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/41-1434567>. Another page will pop up with a checkbox that says, “Yes, I understand that I must always start at smile.amazon.com to support Presbyterian Church of ORONOCO.” Click the checkbox, then click the “Start shopping” button. Anytime that you shop with Amazon after that, you need to do so by going to <http://smile.amazon.com>, not the regular Amazon homepage.
- 2) Go to the Amazon homepage and type “Amazon Smile” into the search bar. If you’ve already got a charity that you’ve been donating a portion of your Amazon purchases to and would like to switch to the church, simply click on the “Change my organization” link. If not, search for “Presbyterian Church of Oronoco” and select us as your designated organization.

## Communion During Distancing

I think that one of the hardest things to be apart for is communion. However, we remain the body of Christ wherever we are, and we will continue to celebrate a shortened communion service together on the first Sundays of the month just like we would if we were together.



For the elements of this, I encourage you to bring whatever you have to our virtual table. Bring crackers. Bring bread. Bring bagels. Bring cookies. Bring Goldfish. Bring juice. Bring wine. Bring water. Bring tea. These are truly the elements of our daily lives right now ... just like the elements that Jesus first used were.

So come as you are in all your pajama-ed and coffee drinking, redeemed and beloved glory. For God will indeed meet us as we meet each other, gathered together literally *in every place* to celebrate at the table together.

## Dorothy Day House Needs

The Dorothy Day House has some perpetual needs that we can fill anytime. Those items can be placed in the large Dorothy Day box in the fellowship room and are:

- Warm weather clothes (new or gently used)
- Adult clothing (new or gently used) – sweatshirts, sweatpants, etc.
- Adult socks
- Blankets (new or gently used)
- Tins of coffee

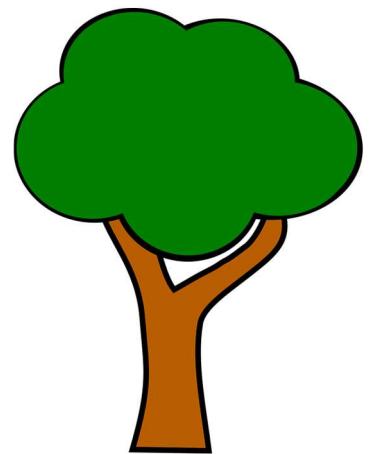


## Stewardship Giving Tree

I know we haven't talked about it in a while, but ...

Our Giving Tree envelopes are still available, even from afar. You don't even need an envelope! If you'd like to contribute to one of the designations on the Giving Tree, you can send your check to the church with a note either in the "Memo" line or on a Post-It note or something indicating for Kim or Ellen what it's for. As a reminder, here are envelopes and amounts. (Some are half the monthly amount.):

- Snow removal: \$70/time
- City of Oronoco water: \$22/month
- The Upper Room: \$16/bi-monthly
- Bevcomm (phone/internet): \$45/month (half)
- Neuro Hospitality House: \$45/night
- Minnesota Energy Gas: \$71/month (half)
- Insurance: \$109/month (half)
- People's Energy Co-Op Electricity: \$119/month



## 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!



April OFS Item:

Hams

## Together Again?

I know that various businesses around the state and around the country have started cautiously opening up again. And I know a lot of us are wondering when our beloved church will do the same. The quick answer is: we don't know yet. Pastor Lisa and the Session continue to have conversations about this and look into the latest recommendations and resources that are available – CDC, Minnesota Department of Health, Olmsted and Goodhue County resources. Of course, we want to be back together again because we know we all miss one another, but we also want to make sure we're doing what's best and safest for one another's health.

The most recent decision was that we would remain online-only through **May 2021**. We have a tentative hope that we'll be able to gather for in-person worship on Easter Sunday, April 4 ... but we're not. During our March meeting, the Session will again be discussing what our next steps will be, so please keep all of your Session members (Ron Peterson-Rucker, Ellen Warner, Brenda Longman, Janice Ostrom, Lance Sorensen, Todd Wickre, and myself) in your prayers as we think over, pray about, and discuss this decision. As always, helping one another stay safe and healthy is our number one priority.

As we continue to make these decisions, we ask for both your input and your prayers. Please feel free to contact any of the session members or Pastor Lisa with your input.



## All Around the Campfire

It's that time again! For the past few years, we've gathered 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 the COVID-19 pandemic, we weren't able to gather last year. We're hoping that we'll be able to gather this year (while continuing to maintain appropriate distance and other COVID-related safety practices). This is something the Session will be talking about in the coming months. If we feel like we're able to safely bring this joyful gathering back this year, we'll let you know. In hopeful anticipation of that, here are the potential dates for 2021:

- June 27: 5:30-8:00 p.m.
- July 25: 5:30-8:00 p.m.
- August 29: 5:30-8:00 p.m.
- September 26: 5:30-8:00 p.m.



## 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, Eunice Markham, Helen Craft, Dick Ostrom, Joyce Rucker, Carol Tiede, and Linda Sorensen** in prayer.



## April Star Word Prompt

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



## 150th Anniversary

Friends, last year our beloved Presbyterian Church of Oronoco turned **150 yrs. old!!** (That's pretty amazing!) But because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to celebrate in person. It is our hope that we will be able to celebrate 150+1 this year in July. Keep your eyes and ears open for more news, and 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.



## April Birthdays & Anniversaries

- ♥ 4/5 Vivien Midthun
- ♥ 4/6 Linda Sorensen
- ♥ 4/10 David Midthun
- ♥ 4/16 Will Midthun
- ♥ 4/17 Julia Johnson
- ♥ 4/22 Brian Luhman
- ♥ 4/25 Carlyle & Katha Johnson



## Lenten Photo Challenge

We're doing it again – our Lenten Photo Challenge. Actually, I feel like this Lent – when we continue to be the church apart from one another – makes this practice even more connected and soul-feeding than it may have ever been before. Each day of Lent is assigned a different word – something to get us thinking and praying and digging deeper into our faith in some way. Sometime throughout the day, take a picture that makes you think of that word. For example, if the word was "light," you could take a picture of a candle or the sun rays or the smile of a friend (as it LIGHTS up your day), etc.

There are copies of this year's word list in this newsletter. Lent doesn't begin until Wednesday, February 17. There will also be copies of the word list at church, on the websites, and on our Facebook and Instagram pages.

There are two ways to participate. First, you can take a picture and post it to Facebook, Twitter, and/or Instagram. Include the word of the day with your post as well as **#PCOLentPhoto** so we can all find and enjoy each other's photos. If social media is not your forte, you can still participate. Take the pictures with your phone or your regular camera and keep track of which pictures go with which words. You can either share them with others on Sunday morning during fellowship, or if you want, get them to Pastor Lisa and she can post them on the church's Facebook page for you (either credited to you or anonymously, whichever you choose).

# LENTEN PHOTO CHALLENGE 2021

Post to Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram using **#PCOLentPhoto**

Feb. 17: <b>purpose</b>	Mar. 3: <b>cover</b>	Mar. 17: <b>faithful</b>	Mar. 31: <b>humanity</b>
Feb. 18: <b>enter</b>	Mar. 4: <b>play</b>	Mar. 18: <b>memory</b>	Apr. 1: <b>feast</b>
Feb. 19: <b>talent</b>	Mar. 5: <b>trust</b>	Mar. 19: <b>mindful/ness</b>	Apr. 2: <b>to be still</b>
Feb. 20: <b>seeds</b>	Mar. 6: <b>wonder</b>	Mar. 20: <b>test</b>	Apr. 3: <b>far</b>
Feb. 21: <b>compassion</b>	Mar. 7: <b>find</b>	Mar. 21: <b>rise</b>	
Feb. 22: <b>sacrifice</b>	Mar. 8: <b>something treasured</b>	Mar. 22: <b>see</b>	
Feb. 23: <b>bless</b>	Mar. 9: <b>sunset</b>	Mar. 23: <b>warm</b>	
Feb. 24: <b>shadow</b>	Mar. 10: <b>journey</b>	Mar. 24: <b>cold</b>	
Feb. 25: <b>nature</b>	Mar. 11: <b>happiness</b>	Mar. 25: <b>community</b>	
Feb. 26: <b>Bible</b>	Mar. 12: <b>longing</b>	Mar. 26: <b>connection</b>	
Feb. 27: <b>fortitude</b>	Mar. 13: <b>wait</b>	Mar. 27: <b>a thought</b>	
Feb. 28: <b>repent</b>	Mar. 14: <b>justice</b>	Mar. 28: <b>witness</b>	
Mar. 1: <b>temper</b>	Mar. 15: <b>prosper/ity</b>	Mar. 29: <b>quiet</b>	
Mar. 2: <b>bloom</b>	Mar. 16: <b>land</b>	Mar. 30: <b>holy</b>	

Easter bonus:

**REJOICE**

## Synod School 2021

This year's theme is "Called Out!" From the Synod School catalogue: "Just as God called Lazarus out of the tomb, God calls us out of our slumber, out of our sleep, out of our complacency, out of our grief, out of our past, out of our comfort, out of our quarantines and more." This theme is based on Paul's words from Ephesians: "*Sleeper, awake. Rise from the dead. And Christ will shine on you.*" (Eph 5:14, NRSV) Convocation speaker Rev. Dr. Jill Duffield, the editor of *Presbyterian Outlook*, and worship leaders will be Revs. Greg and Heidi Bolt (morning worship) and Rev. Samuel Son (evening worship). You could take classes in everything from pickleball to bird watching, from mindful stitching to connections with other religions, from leadership in tumultuous times to a class on the TV comedy classic *All in the Family*, from a study on the book of Lamentations to a course on hospitality based on Henri Nouwen's book *Reaching Out*. There are 62 different classes to choose from in all!

Registration opens on April 1.

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.

*Due to continued health and safety concerns, the Synod School Committee isn't entirely sure what Synod School 2021 will look like, but they're hopeful that some sort of gathering will be able to take place. It will probably be a hybrid Synod School in some form. The committee is meeting again at the end of March to make a more sure decision. Stay tuned for further information regarding the specifics.*

## 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](mailto:office@ptcaweb.org)

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

### Presbyterian Church (USA)

Office: 800-728-7228

Email: [info@pcusa.org](mailto:info@pcusa.org)

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



# Easter

W X T T P A L I V E K H P S N G X C D O D K I A Q  
Y O A D J P R P K I I W F A N X C S O S S M L P Y  
J V F N F R I Y D T T E W V P T S N X N A L V T Z  
X V S T G X K B N I R M J I M P E T L C R G G U R  
V P N B H E F E O Z G G S O P T E L T X G G N G J  
A Y J Y H D L Z P J I I O R D L F A U A F R B M F  
W Y J N N Z D S W N Q L F N X Y B I R X O A O I G  
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P K Q T C V F I I H Q J V U N P J A B H O L E P U  
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V A L T H C F C D P W S J R W C E I S Z D Z S Y N  
Z L Q M P L T I Z E G R W E R C I G K H N W O H R  
G Z C K B O O P U N I S O C Q S A I V Z E O N J N  
C A L B E T M L S I T B M T X Z F W L B W Z U P H  
O K R M S H B E O W A Z E I V R J U U B S F W X L  
P R U D C E H S U S X E N O L O V E O X O N P D T  
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M N O H A X V D G E M L S U C E Q R Y T X P V O C  
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M A N D K A V N R H W F Y E B X T Z X P O Y X I Q

Graveclothes	Resurrection	Appearance	Disciples
Shining	Good News	Garden	Savior
Season	Christ	Grace	Alive
Angels	Jesus	Empty	Women
Risen	Love	Holy	Hope
Hope	Joy	Stone	Tomb