



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ORONOCO

A SMALL CHURCH WITH A BIG MISSION

May 2021

Re-Gathering for Worship

As I'm sure you know by now, the Session has decided that we will be returning to in-person worship on **Sunday, June 6th!** I know that many of you are excited to be re-gathering for worship., and I am so looking forward to *not* being the only one in the building on Sunday mornings anymore!!

Of course, things won't be quite the same as they used to be. You got the details about the changes in the congregational letter that went out, but the main requirements for coming back to worship in the building are:

- Wear your mask in the building in the CDC- recommended way (covering your nose and mouth)
- Sanitize your hands upon coming into the building
- Maintain social distancing in the building, both in the sanctuary and the fellowship area



We will not be having refreshments during fellowship time after worship, and while Katha will be blessing us with her beautiful musical gifts, we will not be singing along with her for a while. Communion will look different. Offering will look different. Prayer requests and community prayer time will look different. But these elements will still be a part of our worship.

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 directly on our website. *More information about how you can continue to worship from home will come in the next month.*

Pastor: Rev. Lisa Johnson

Church Staff
Secretary: Brianna Clement

Organist: Katha 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 Leadership

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



From the Pastor ...

*Rejoice in the Lord and be glad!
All you whose hearts are right,
sing out in joy!
~ Psalm 32:11*

A little bit of bright, colorful paper.
A length of ribbon, yarn, or string.
A pop of something decorative – stickers, glitter, maybe a fun little drawing.
And something inside to brighten someone else's day.

May baskets.

I grew up making them with friends and at daycare. Our tended materials of choice were Dixie cups and pipe cleaners for the baskets themselves, then some flower or some candy and a happy little note to fill them up. We'd walk around the neighborhood, walk up to people's doors, hang the basket on their front door, knock or ring the bell, and dash away as we giggled furiously. I mean, the whole idea was to *not get caught, right? My friend, Leah, always said that if you got caught, whoever did the catching got to kiss you, so when I was with Leah, we ran doubly fast!*

Believe it or not, May baskets are a centuries-old tradition. The celebration of May Day on the whole goes all the way back to the ancient Celtic pagan celebration of Beltane – a day to rejoice in the height of spring and the coming of summer. And while no one knows exactly when that celebration morphed into the more familiar practice of sharing baskets full of bright things meant to bring joy, there are references to May baskets in newspapers and other writing dating as far back as the late 1800s. In her 1880 children's book *Jack and Jill*, Louisa May Alcott writes:

"Such a twanging of bells and rapping of knockers; such a scampering of feet in the dark; such droll collisions as boys came racing round corners, or girls ran into one another's arms as they crept up and down steps on the sly; such laughing, whistling, flying about of flowers and friendly feeling—it was almost a pity that May-day did not come oftener."

That's the whole point of the tradition of May baskets right there: bringing joy. Sharing joy. Splashing a little joy in the form of flowers and sweet treats and a little "hello!" into the lives of those around you. It's innocent. It's fun. It's truly and wholeheartedly delightful.

And in the throes of a year like the one we've had, what a blessing this simple, age-old tradition can be. As Christians, we carry a joy with us that outshines even the most beautiful flowers, the most sumptuous sweets, the most touchingly-decorated May baskets: we carry the hope and joy and good news of a risen Savior. We carry the hope and joy and good news of a God who loves us beyond mistakes, beyond misunderstandings, and beyond measure. We carry the hope and joy and good news of a Christ who was and is and is to come – a Christ who's grace and mercy extend far beyond even the greatest joy that we could ever imagine.

A Savior that knew pain and isolation.

Yes.

A Savior that knew fear and frustration.

Yes.

A Savior that knew sorrow and even death.

Yes.

A Savior who can meet us in the midst of all the hurtful, harmful, harrowing experiences of our whole lives because having lived and love and taught and died as a human, he's been there, too.

Yes.

But a Savior who can splash a little joy in the form of God's grace, God's hope, and God's love into our lives.

Yesterday.

Today.

May Day.

Everyday.

Pastor Gira



Scripture readings for March

Sunday, May 2– Acts 15:1-18

Sunday, May 9– Galatians 1:13-17; 2:11-21

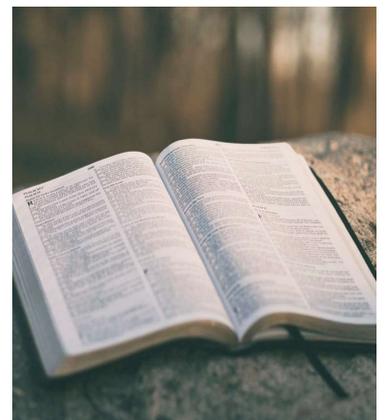
Sunday, May 16– Galatians 3:1-9, 23-29

Sunday, May 23– Acts 2:1-21

Pentecost

Sunday, May 30– Galatians 16; 21:8-21

Women of the Bible series #1– Hagar



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 2nd 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.

<p>Next Session meeting.:</p> <p>Wednesday, May 5</p> <p>6:30 p.m.</p> <p>(In-Person– Please bring your mask)</p>	<p>Next Presbytery mtg.:</p> <p>TBD</p>
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Summer Sermon Series

This summer, we're going to embark on a fun and fierce journey with the women of Scripture. I have a feeling there are more women in Scripture than most of us are even aware of, and while I may be a little biased in this opinion (since I'm the one that put this series together), I think the more obscure the women, the more interesting their stories. So as we spend our Sundays this summer jumping from one fabulously feminine Bible story to the next, we'll be journeying with some women I'm guessing (hoping!) you've never heard of before. Some will be stories you know. Some will be stories you *think you know*. *Some will be stories that are new. All have something to teach you about God and faith, mission and covenant, grit and grace.*

- May 30: Hagar
- June 6: *special service*
- June 13: Tamar
- June 20: Shiphrah and Puah
- June 27: Rahab
- July 4: Bathsheba
- July 11: Huldah
- July 18: Vashti
- August 8: the Syrophoenician woman
- August 22: Mary Magdalene
- August 29: Lydia
- September 6: Phoebe and the women of Rome



Hagar - Tamar - Shiphrah & Puah - Rahab - Bathsheba - Huldah - Vashti -
Syrophoenician woman - Mary Magdalene - Lydia - Phoebe

Women of the Bible series

Presbyterian Church of Oronoco

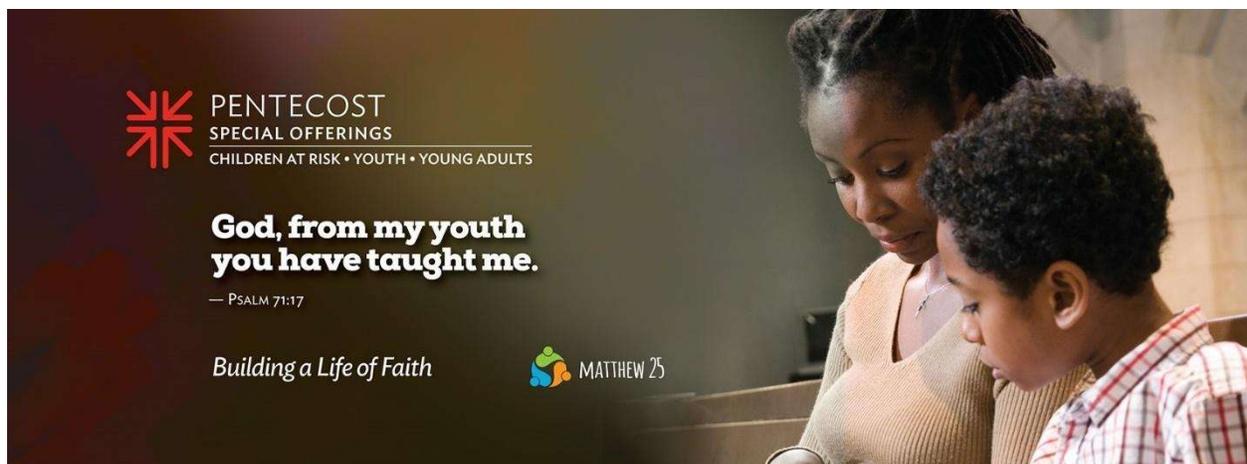
2021 Pentecost Offerings

The Pentecost Offering is one of the four denomination-wide special offerings that we take every year. Since Pentecost is the day on which we celebrate both the birthday of the church and the future mission and work of the church, this special offering goes to the present and future work of the church: youth ministries.

- 40% is kept by local congregations (that's us) for ministries with children at risk
- 60% goes to the Presbyterian Mission Agency for two separate projects:
 - 50% goes to ministries with youth and young adults
 - 10% goes to child advocacy and children at risk

I know we won't get together to collect this offering again this year, but I encourage you to consider contributing to it anyway (even post-Pentecost). You can either send a check to the church (c/o Ellen Warner) with "Pentecost offering" in the memo line of your check or you could give directly online:

- Go to <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/make-a-gift/gift-info/>.
- Make sure the "Give once" box is highlighted.
- Select "Pentecost" in the Designated Offering dropdown menu
- Fill out the donation information and click "next."
- On the next page, you will be able to fill out the payment information including which local congregation should receive a portion of your donation.



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. The Session **does** plan on celebrating 150+1 this year in July, though the plans and particulars for this celebration are still in the works. 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.

Pine Island Baby Closet

The Pine Island United Methodist Church has started a baby closet – a place for anyone needing help with the necessities for children ages 0-15 months. They are prepared to provide a wide range of baby items: diapers, formula, baby clothes (sizes: preemie to 24 months), outdoor clothing, blankets, bottles, pacifiers, sippy cups, baby thermometers, baby wipes, and baby-safe laundry soap.

If you or anyone you know is in need of any of these items *and lives within a 15 mile radius of Pine Island*, you can call 507-356-4553. Those seeking help will need to fill out an assistance request form. Items can be picked up in the front entry of the Pine Island UMC: 200 N. Main St. (just across the street from Kwik Trip). Clients are invited to visit the Baby Closet once a month.

If you or anyone you know would like to donate any of the items listed above or would like to make a monetary donation, you can contact the Pine Island UMC at the phone number listed above or via email: piumc@bevcomm.net. You can also find the Baby Closet and some needs/wish lists on Facebook: "Pine Island, MN United Methodist Church Baby Closet."



Pine Island Baby Closet

Pine Island Area Home Services

There's no denying that this past year has been difficult for a *lot* of people in a *lot* of different ways, so I just want to remind you all of the different services offered by Pine Island Area Home Services:

- **Volunteer services:** assistance with grocery shopping and errands; delivery of Meals-on-Wheels; exercise classes; friendly visits and phone calls; shopping trips and social outings; transportation; and yard work, chores, light housekeeping, and handyman services
- **Office services:** service coordination; home visits; information and referrals; reassurance checks; assistance with paperwork; educational classes; collaboration with other services
- **Nursing services:** blood pressure clinics; foot care clinics; hearing clinics; flu shot clinics

If you or anyone you know is in need of any of these free of charge services, please contact PIAHS:

109 3rd St. SW
P.O. Box 566
Pine Island, MN 55963
507-356-2999

www.pineislandareahomeservices.org
piahs@bevcomm.net

PIAHS is also always looking for people willing to be generous with either their volunteer time or their financial giving. You can contact them further if you're interested in helping out in any way.



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.



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 4th Sunday of June, July, August, and September (weather permitting). Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we weren't able to gather last year. This year, the session has decided that we **will** gather around the campfire again ... but with a few changes. If you would like to bring food and beverages for you/your household, you are welcome to do that. We will **not** be providing any food this year. Also, please do your best to space yourselves out appropriately around the firepit. Here are the 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.

Amazon Smile

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.

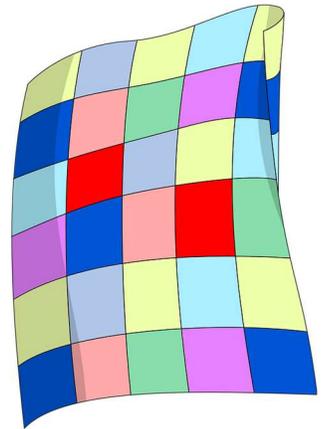


So come as you are in all your pajama-ed and coffee drinking, redeemed and beloved glory. For God will indeed meet us as we meet each other, gathered together literally *in every place* to celebrate at the table together.

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

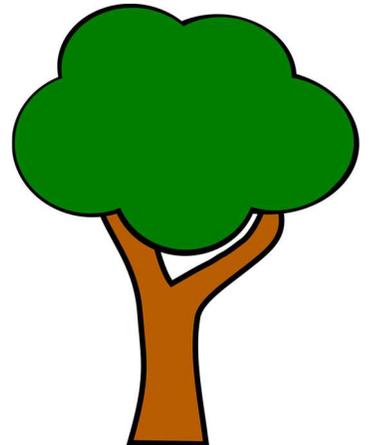


Stewardship Giving Tree

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!



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.



May Star Word Prompt

As we prepare for Pentecost, how has the Holy Spirit lit a fire in you in/through your star word? What new thing has inspired you to do?



May Birthdays & Anniversaries

- ♥ 5/2 Greg Huey
- ♥ 5/2 Rick Lohmann
- ♥ 5/3 Ian Johnson
- ♥ 5/3 Luke Johnson
- ♥ 5/4 Cash Johnson
- ♥ 5/12 Jenny Rand
- ♥ 5/14 Joy Bertsinger
- ♥ 5/14 Madelyn Rand
- ♥ 5/16 Clyde & Sue Johnson
- ♥ 5/18 Jane (Globe) Shanks
- ♥ 5/21 Geoff & Ellen Warner
- ♥ 5/23 Bob Larsen
- ♥ 5/28 Deb Larsen
- ♥ 5/31 Curt Bert



Pentecost

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

inspiration

Holy Spirit

individual

evangelize

all peoples

disciples

Pentecost

languages

not drunk

Jerusalem

together

gathered

good news

birthday

speaking

tongues

flames

prophet

confused

church

house

full

fire

Acts

preach

fierce

wind

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! Some of the classes will be in person, others will be online only, and other will be a hybrid- in person but also streamed for anyone who would prefer to attend virtually.

Registration is open now!

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 yet what housing for Synod School 2021 will look like. We will continue to update you as we hear more information from the committee itself.

Staying in Touch

Presbyterian Church of Oronoco

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Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

Office: 651-357-1150

Fax: 651-357-1141

Email: office@ptcaweb.org

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

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Office: 800-728-7228

Email: info@pcusa.org

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

