

SEPTEMBER 2014



THE RED DOOR

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BIG FLATS, NY

Founded 1827 ----- "Pride In Our Past – Faith In Our Future"

[/www.bigflatsfirstpres.org/](http://www.bigflatsfirstpres.org/)

*"He told them another parable:
"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."
Matthew 13: 31- 32 NIV*



Dear Friends,

We live in a world that promotes enterprise, global movements through power and authority. Even the Christian church, under Constantine in 303AD, was an empire. Surely, Jesus preached the kingdom, yet I don't think he envisioned it as an authoritarian, imperialistic, powerful empire.

Do we ever feel insignificant in this world? When Jesus talked of the mustard seed parable he wasn't just talking about how little things turn into larger things. Perhaps he was speaking more about how insignificant things can actually have an extraordinary effect or presence. The mustard seed was actually a "weed seed" in Palestine. The Jewish Mishnah forbids sowing these seeds because they are useless annoying weeds that take over the fields. Yes, in some ways we are rejected, insignificant outcasts in the world's eyes. Loving the loveless and hopeless, feeding the hungry, welcoming and respecting the unwanted are NOT insignificant actions in the world. If God sows you in a field you will make a difference whether you or anyone else believes it. Being like Christ is surely not impressive to some, but it will transform the world one of us at a time. We, like the mustard seed, must realize our ability to do little things with great love.

Keep the faith.

See you in church.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Rick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

GEORGE HENRY (HANK) FITZSIMMONS (1914 – 2014)

Hank Fitzsimmons passed away on July 1, 2014, at the age of one hundred (born April 26, 1914). He was a good, decent man, and a loving husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather. Hank and wife Juanita, who passed away in 2010, were married for almost seventy-three years. He was a Corning Glass Works (now Corning Inc.) retiree and had recently received a seventy-five year service pin. For many years Hank was active in our church and in the Big Flats Historical Society. Hank will certainly be missed by all who knew him.

ARTHUR DEVENPORT (1924 – 2014)

Art Devenport passed away on July 19, 2014. He was ninety years old (born May 5, 1924). He was a loving husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. A World War II veteran, Art served with the United States Marine Corps in the Pacific theater. He went on to a forty year career as an engineer with Corning Glass Works (now Corning Inc.). In addition to membership in our church, Art was very active in in such organizations as the ASPCA, the Big Flats Historical Society, the Horseheads Board of Education, and the Big Flats American Legion. We were truly blessed to have Art as part of our faith community.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Circle of Love

Summer 2014 was a time of both joy and sadness in our little church. We were blessed with inspiring worship services, uplifting music, a successful Vacation Bible School program, and a lot of hard work by willing volunteers; at the same time we grieved the loss of a number of members and friends in our faith community.

Rev. Rick made each Sunday service special. His messages this summer allowed us to travel through the Gospel of Matthew with Jesus and his disciples. **Cathy Neally, Bill Howells, Dave Stafford,** and **Bill Powell** led us in morning worship when Rev. Rick was on vacation. While our choir enjoyed a much-deserved summer respite, **Nancy Compton, Mary Ellen Rudnick,** and a variety of talented guest artists gave us music to make our spirits soar each week. Thanks to **Kallie Buffington, Olivia Fontana, Carrie Hooper, Paul Holland, Dana Warren,** and all those who made summer worship so meaningful!

In late July, some fifteen children, along with youth and adult volunteers, experienced four evenings of celebrations, crafts, food, and fun as they spent time in a Workshop of Wonders. Our VBS youngsters were able to learn how to imagine and build with God. Thanks to **Stacie Belosky** and all our helpers for your hard work and commitment to making this such a special experience for our youngsters.

Special thanks go to **Scott and Sheila French**, who spend many hours keeping our church lawn and our Welles property groomed to perfection! Thanks, also, to **Pat and Tom Seem** for rebuilding and repainting the bench and table which accentuate the "Mavis Rhodes Posie Garden" on the west side of our church.

Our Food Pantry benefitted from the generosity of our Islamic neighbors. Members of the **Islamic Association** donated **over \$750 in cash and also many food items** during their July observance of Ramadan. Their gifts to help those served by our pantry are greatly appreciated!

The sympathy of our faith community is extended to the families of **Hank Fitzsimmons, Art Devenport, Bob Norris,** and **Dora Nelson (Barb Powell's mother)**. Among our other concerns this month, we ask for prayers for: **Stewart and Ann Potter, Gene Drinkwine (Barb Horn's brother), Pat Seem, Jan Stone, Ruthann Rhodes (Joyce Dean's sister), Rob Vanderbrand (Ann Slowik's brother), Nick Rudnick, Emma Gardner, Flora Berke, Glen Bates, Irene Hooley, Lydia Middaugh, Jackie McMann, Ginnie Schweizer, Dudley & Marie Shea, Dick & Peg Shockner, Ruth Price (Rev. Rick's mother), Marge Larocque (Gigi's mother),** and others who are dealing with ill health, surgery, loss, or life changes. Please continue to pray for our servicemen and women and their families and for peace in our troubled world.

Do you have a special joy or concern that you would like to share with our Big Flats Presbyterian Church community? See Rev. Rick or Bill Howells, and we will include your news in our Joys/Concerns column.

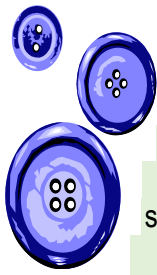
SUNDAY SCHOOL RESUMES SEPTEMBER 7

Our Christian Education Committee has announced that regular Sunday School classes will resume on Sunday, September 7. All are welcome and encouraged to join us. Classes are held during morning worship and are open to youths from pre-K through grade eight.

The Christian Ed Committee needs volunteers to help with Sunday school, nursery, and upcoming events. Please see **Stacie Belosky** or call her at **857-2210**.



BUTTON CLUB TO MEET



The Elmira Button Club will meet **Wednesday, September 10th, from 11 AM until 2 PM** in the church hall. Bring a lunch -- we will provide dessert. We will be recapping the Western NY Button Clubs' Picnic we hosted in July at the Patterson Inn in Corning -- it was a wonderful day!

Our Program will be Disney and Cartoon characters and Nursery Rhymes on buttons. We'll have some poke boxes and a short business meeting. All are invited.

For more info, call **Pat Silvernail at 562-8409**.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE PLANS "SAINTS IN OUR LIVES" CHAIN

Our Worship Committee has announced plans for a "Saints In Our Lives" project to take place in October and which will culminate on All Saints Sunday, November 2. During the month of October we will be asking those in the congregation to make chain links honoring those special persons who have been "Saints" in their own lives. These links will then be assembled and displayed in our sanctuary. Full details will be announced during morning worship services in September and October.

STEWARDSHIP DRIVE TO START SOON

Stewardship Season will soon be here. Please keep an eye out for your pledge letter and give prayerful consideration to your response. As we approach our 187th Anniversary, let our stewardship – time, talent, and financial support, toward the church reflect our pride in our past and continued faith in our future.

PROVIDERS NEEDED FOR FLOWERS, BULLETINS AND COFFEE HOUR

Our new church year starts on Sunday, September 7. Worship time resumes at 10:30, our choir returns, and our Sunday School kicks off a new year! Some of the things that make for special Sundays at our church include: flowers for our sanctuary, special bulletins for our worship services, and our wonderful coffee hours. **Sign-up sheets** have been posted on the bulletin board in our Church House – please help keep Sundays special at Big Flats First Presbyterian.

SUNSHINE CLUB NEEDS MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

For a number of years, members of our "Sunshine Club" (name coined years ago by **Peg Halm**) and other willing and wonderful volunteers have provided meals and visits to members of our faith family during times of grieving, illness, recovery from surgery, and other such times of need.

Ann Hayes serves as coordinator of these efforts. We are called upon for help quite often, and we need reinforcements! If you are willing to be listed as a meal provider or can help in any other way, please contact Ann (**562-8523**) or put your name on the sign-up sheet on our church bulletin board. Thanks so much to those who have helped in the past. It is so appreciated when illness is overwhelming one's daily life.



FALL RUMMAGE SALE PLANNING SESSION ANNOUNCED

An organizational meeting will be held following morning worship on **Sunday, September 7**, to plan our Fall Rummage Sale. We will be assessing interest in holding the sale and setting the dates for the sale and for the work sessions which proceed it. All who wish to be part of this important fundraising event are urged to attend.

NOTES



FROM THE CHOIR LOFT

All right! The first meeting of the choir will take place on **Sunday, September 7, precisely at 9:30 AM**. Our anthem for that week is one with which we are familiar - *Make Me Channel of Thy Peace* - which was suggested by the lectionary. So if you can't get to church by 9:30, plan to sing with the choir anyway, if you know the anthem.

Thereafter, rehearsals will be at 9:30 every Sunday morning. If you have sung with us before, we expect that you will want to join us again. If you have never sung with the choir, and wish to do so now, please consider this a personal invitation to join us. You don't have to be a soloist to sing in the choir. Few of us are. The best choirs are those that consist of people who do not think of themselves as soloists, but rather ordinary folks who just love to sing. We have purchased three additional new robes, which will freshly be pressed and available for new folks. Any other excuses? Phone **562-3903** and try to make them fly!

Remember - "The forests would be quiet indeed, if the only birds who sang there were those who sang best."

HAND BELL CHOIRS TO FORM

Our new hand bells have arrived! We will be forming a hand bell choir to perform at some time in the fall, a second to perform at Advent/Christmas time, and in the late winter we will form a third to perform during the Lenten/Easter season. We will be holding an informational/practice session (date to be announced) where we will learn to ring the bells, some special ringing techniques, and how to clean and store the bells and ringing accoutrements when rehearsal and performances are over. It is helpful if you can read music, but not absolutely necessary. We'll teach you as we go. Full details will be announced during morning worship.

ARTISANS GROUP UPDATE

Our Presbyterian Artisans group was formed last spring and met with an enthusiastic response. Following a summer hiatus, the group will soon resume meeting. Meetings had been held on Friday mornings, but that is likely to change this year. **Cathy Neally (562-8001)** will be announcing details about meeting times and dates during morning worship in September. All are welcome!!

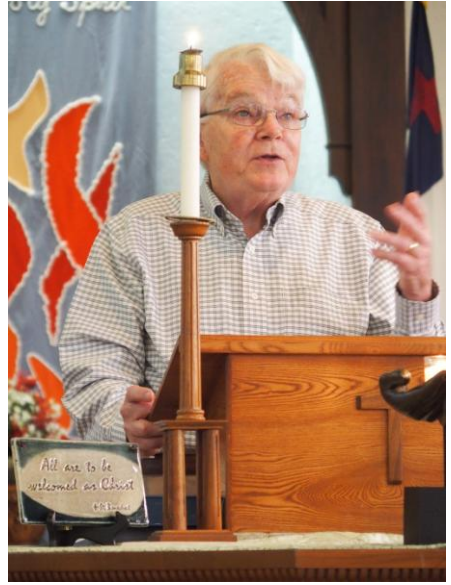
PRAISING VOICES SETS FALL REHEARSALS

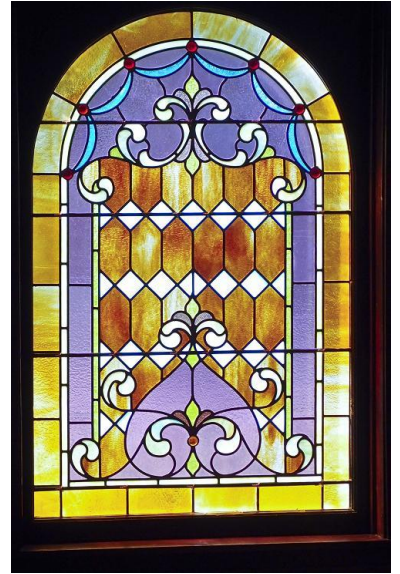
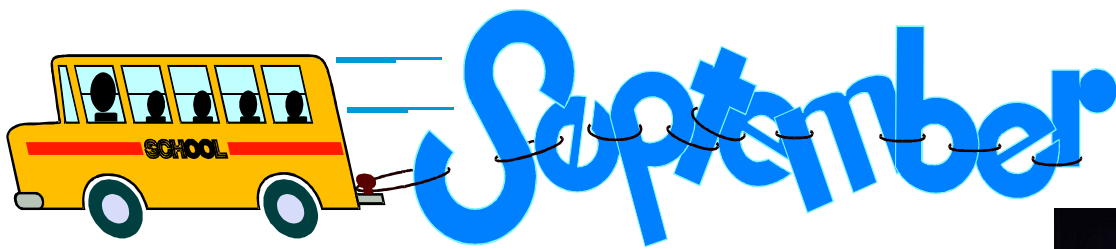
Children who like to sing and are at least four years of age are invited to participate in *PraiSING Voices*, our children's choir. We will meet in the sanctuary each Wednesday evening from **6:15 to 7:00 PM**. The first rehearsal will be **Thursday, September 17th**. If you have any questions regarding *PraiSING Voices*, please call **Mary Ellen Rudnick** at **562-3757**.



AUGUST 31 – worship at 9:30 AM
SEPTEMBER 7 – worship at 10:30 AM

PHOTO GALLERY





WEEKLY EVENTS

SUNDAY, August 31	Worship at 9:30
SUNDAY (beginning September 7)	
9:30 AM	Choir Rehearsal
10:30 AM	Morning Worship with Sunday School and Nursery Care
TUESDAY	
12:00 – 2:00 PM	Food Pantry is open
6:30 PM	Boy Scout Troop #87
WEDNESDAY	
6:15 – 7:00 PM	<i>PraiSING Voices</i> Rehearsal (starts Sept. 17)

SPECIAL EVENTS

September 7	Holy Communion
September 7	Sunday School Rally Day
September 7	Rummage Sale Organizational Meeting following morning worship
September 10 (Wed.)	Button Club meeting -- 11:00 AM
September 28	Information due for the October RED DOOR
September 28	"Pennies from Heaven"

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Worship Committee	September 14 – following morning worship
Property Committee (Wed)	September 17 – 6:00 PM
Session (Wed)	September 17 – 7:00 PM

Be sure to visit us on the web: www.bigflatsfirstpres.org