



# THE RED DOOR

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH – BIG FLATS, NY --- DEC. 2015 / JAN. 2016  
(607) 562-8048 ----- /www.bigflatsfirstpres.org/  
Founded 1827 ----- “Pride In Our Past – Faith In Our Future”

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“How can we possibly thank God enough for all the happiness you have brought us? Day and night we sincerely pray that we will see you again and help you to have an even stronger faith. We pray that God our Father and our Lord Jesus will let us visit you. May the Lord make your love for each other and for everyone else grow by leaps and bounds. That’s how our love for you has grown. And when our Lord comes with all of his people, I pray that he will make your hearts pure and innocent in the sight of God the Father.” 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 (CEV)



Dear Friends in Christ,

Paul was no longer present at the church in Thessalonica. Timothy had reassured Paul that the church was growing in faith and love. Paul writes to the church a blessing or benediction, ‘good words’, wishing they will love one another the same way they loved Paul, Timothy and others, through Christ’s example.

Recently I have had anxious feelings knowing that my time to leave my post at First Presbyterian draws near. It’s something that will take time to adjust to as we go through this together – I daresay there will be a grieving period.

At Christmas we celebrate the gift of Christ. In this gift we find unconditional love through God. Yet, this time of year especially, we do try to put gifts into boxes where they can be controlled and defined. However, the unconditional love God has given us is boundless, it cannot be boxed in, it will not be boxed in.

On March 22, 1992 I was given a gift as I was ordained to minister our little country church. I have cherished this gift as gifts must be so. I believe I remember someone once said that Christ needed to leave our world so that disciples would not hold onto him and worship him. Rather they had to let go and **live** him, and the tenets he taught, and the love he gave.

I am so thankful for the time I have had with the gift I was given in 1992. May this gift live on in my heart as the *Christmas Story* unfolds again for us this Advent.

It is important that this church love each other as Christ has loved us all.

Peaceful, Blessed, Merry Christmas.

# Circle of Love

## JOYS AND CONCERNS

Our little church is always busy, and November was no exception! Wonderful worship services, warm fellowship, and many blessings combined to make for a very special month. While we celebrated our many blessings, we had prayer concerns for many in our church family.

We are especially thankful for these November highlights:

- Our Pancake Breakfast, on November 7, was very successful. Thanks go to the many hands that pitched in!
- Thanks to all who worked to make "Scouting for Food" so successful again this year.
- On Sunday, November 8, we honored our veterans with a special Veterans Day color guard ceremony. **Jack Horn (USMC)** and **Galer Perrault (US Navy)** helped us to remember those who have served our nation in the past, as well as those who are currently serving.
- Our communion table looked especially beautiful during Thanksgiving week. The harvest theme added a great deal to our holiday celebration. A big thank you goes to **Joyce Dean!!!**
- Thanks to all who pitched in to make our floor refinishing project go "smoothly!"
- On Thanksgiving morning, some thirty members of our family came together for a wonderful Thanksgiving breakfast and fellowship time. Many thanks go to our chief cook, **Mark Slowik**, to the rest of the kitchen crew, to those who donated muffins, and to those who worked to set up, cook, serve, and clean up. Sincere thanks go to **Paul Holland**, who provided special music.
- On Sunday, November 29, 2015, we were blessed to have **Angela Early (daughter of Jean Tedrick)** share her wonderful violin virtuosity with us during our morning worship service. Wow!



As we approach this very special time of year, let us reach out to those in our faith community who need our help and support. In our concerns this month, we ask for prayers for: **Peter Middaugh, Dick Powell (Bill's brother), Joyce & Sam Dean, Larissa & Miranda Page, Alan Giglio (Pat Fitzgerald's nephew), Reva Soutar, Nick Rudnick, Emma Gardner, Flora Berke, Irene Hooley, Lydia Middaugh, Ginnie Schweizer, Dudley & Marie Shea, 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.***

## CHRISTMAS EVENTS AT BIG FLATS PRESBYTERIAN

A very special holiday season is in store for our community of faith. Events include:

**DECEMBER 13 -- HANGING OF THE GREENS --** Our annual "Hanging of the Greens" celebration will be held on Sunday, December 13. We will decorate our sanctuary for the holidays, and we will join together to sing Christmas Carols. It would be great if we all could bring a special ornament to hang on our tree!



**DECEMBER 24 (Thursday) -- CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE --** Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service will be held at **7:00 PM**, on **Thursday, December 24**. There will be special music throughout the service. It will be a truly joyful evening for all!



The Christmas season is always special at Big Flats First Presbyterian Church! Please plan to share this wonderful time with us. All are welcome.

**POINSETTIAS: Those who wish to place Christmas poinsettias in our church "in honor of" or "in memory of" should contact Dean's at 562-8120. The price is \$15.**





## SILENT AUCTION SET FOR DECEMBER 6

Here's a chance to do some holiday shopping and help our church budget. This year's **Silent Auction** will take place on **Sunday, December 6**. Please prepare your baked goods, holiday treats, crafts, etc. for sale at our auction, which will follow our morning worship service. We will also be drawing the name of our 2015 quilt winner during the auction. **Ann Slowik** has planned a special fellowship luncheon to coincide with this event. Please join us!

## IMPORTANT CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS ANNOUNCED

Please mark your calendars for a number of upcoming meetings/events for our church community.

**Sunday, December 20** -- Congregational meeting following morning worship to hear the report of the Nominating Committee and to elect elders to serve on our Church Session.

**Sunday, January 17** -- Our new elders will be ordained/installed during our worship service.

**Sunday, January 31** -- Our annual Congregational Meeting will take place following our worship service. The Annual Report will be presented and we will act on a number of items of important church business.

**NOTE: Committee Chairs should submit end-of-year reports to Bill Howells as soon as possible.**

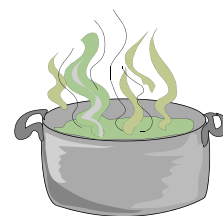


## STEWARDSHIP DRIVE UPDATE

Our annual Stewardship Drive is drawing to a close. This year's theme is "Faith in Our Future -- Stewardship 2015" Our theme serves to express our goal of letting the faith from our past guide us through our upcoming transition period with faith in the promise of our future. Our stewardship is a reflection of the gifts of love -- both monetary and spiritually heart-felt -- that continue to nourish our souls and the communities, local and global, in which the First Presbyterian Church of Big Flats' beacon continues to burn. We ask that you consider prayerfully how you can support the ongoing mission of our community of faith. **It would be very helpful in planning our 2016 church budget if all pledges could be turned in as soon as possible.** See **Gigi Price** if you would like a Pledge Form or for more information. Pledges can be made via e-mail to Barb Horn -- [blhorn@stny.rr.com](mailto:blhorn@stny.rr.com)

## SOUP SALE STARTS IN JANUARY

**Mm-Mm-Good!** Delicious and nutritious homemade soup will be available after church each Sunday, **January through March**. Just **\$4.00 per quart!** Volunteers are needed to provide soup, and a sign up sheet will be posted in the Church House. **Questions? -- See Barb Horn.**



## "SCOUTING FOR FOOD" DRIVE A SUCCESS!

On **Saturday, November 14**, scouts from local troops and cub packs collected **nearly 3,000 food items** in this year's "Scouting for Food" drive. The items were donated to our Big Flats Community Food Pantry for the benefit of our patrons. In addition to the hard work of our scouts and their leaders, volunteers from the Big Flats Lions Club and a number of loyal Food Pantry helpers pitched in to count, sort, box, and store the donated items, as well as to restock shelves in the pantry. Thanks to all who helped to make this annual drive such a success!



## THANK YOU

Boy Scout Troop 87 would like to thank the members of the First Presbyterian Church for all of its support over the last 50 Years. The boys have had fun with scouting for food which helps to fill the food pantry, cleaning up the grounds of the church in the spring and helping set up for the rummage sale. Thank you for allowing our boys to help out when they can.

Another huge thank you for allowing us to have our first “**Halloween Tent and Treat**” at the Church and the use of the field. Hopefully we will be able to do it again next year. Thank you so much again for being patient with our boys and allowing us to help out where we can.

Yours in Scouting,  
**Boy Scout Troop 87**



## NEWS FROM THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE



On Thursday, November 19, a crew from **The Night Shift**, a maintenance company from Endwell, NY, gave all the linoleum tile floors in our Church House a much-needed refinishing. This work could not have been done without the help of a large group of workers from our congregation. On Wednesday, November 18, nearly twenty volunteers cleared the floors of all furniture, equipment, rugs, classroom walls, etc. The group put everything back in place again after morning worship the following Sunday. The Property Committee is very appreciative of the wonderful volunteer turnout!

The Property Committee has also announced plans for a lighted outdoor manger display for this Christmas season.

## 5TH ANNUAL QUILT WINNER TO BE CHOSEN DEC. 6

Our church is nearing the end of our fifth Quilt Fundraiser. The drawing for this beautiful quilt, made by the combined talents of our church's incredible quilters, will be held during our annual **Silent Auction on Sunday, December 6**. There is still time to purchase your ticket(s), as raffle tickets will be available during the Silent Auction – **\$2 per ticket or three for \$5**. Thank you to all who have worked on this project!

Questions? See **Karen Perreault, Ann Hayes, Robin Fitzgerald, or Nancy Compton**.



## USHER DUTY THANK YOU

As many of you know, Janet and I maintain the role of arranging the Usher duty for our Sunday church services. With a reducing pool of those willing to perform this important task, it is not uncommon to find those who do this, to be asked more than once a year to do this vital church duty. We sincerely appreciate all who serve in this role and cordially invite new volunteers to please make themselves known to either Jan or myself.

Usher duty requires a one month commitment of Sundays for a single calendar month, and training/support is available should it be needed.

To all those who were Ushers this past year, we extend a sincere thank you from us both and more importantly, from your greater church family.

Thank you and God bless you all.

**Davy and Jan Stafford**

## **"SHOWER FOR MARY" & "GIFTS FOR JOSEPH" MISSION EFFORT ANNOUNCED**

For the past fourteen years, our congregation has generously supported our "**Shower for Mary**" local mission effort during the season of Advent. In this program we have collected a variety of items for personal care and other needs for women and children served by the **Salvation Army Safehouse**. The Salvation Army Safehouse provides a comprehensive program for victims of domestic violence. Services offered include emergency shelter, counseling, advocacy, information/referrals, hotline services, justice system information and accompaniments, support group, and community education. For information: call **732-1979**.



Four years ago we expanded our outreach efforts through a "**Gifts for Joseph**" program to help men served by the **Samaritan Center**. The Samaritan Center has been assisting individuals and families in need with emergency food, clothing, and prescription drug assistance for over thirty years. This program also facilitates enrollment to Medicaid, Family Health Plus & Child Health Plus and provides referrals to other resources and support services for longer term solutions. The Samaritan Center is located at **380 Main St., Elmira (734-4898)**.

We need your support! Your donated items (**unwrapped please**) can be placed in the collection bins located in the rear of our sanctuary and in the narthex each Sunday throughout the Advent season (**November 29 - December 20**).

### **Needs for the Safehouse ("Shower for Mary"):**

These donations are for women/children and include the following:

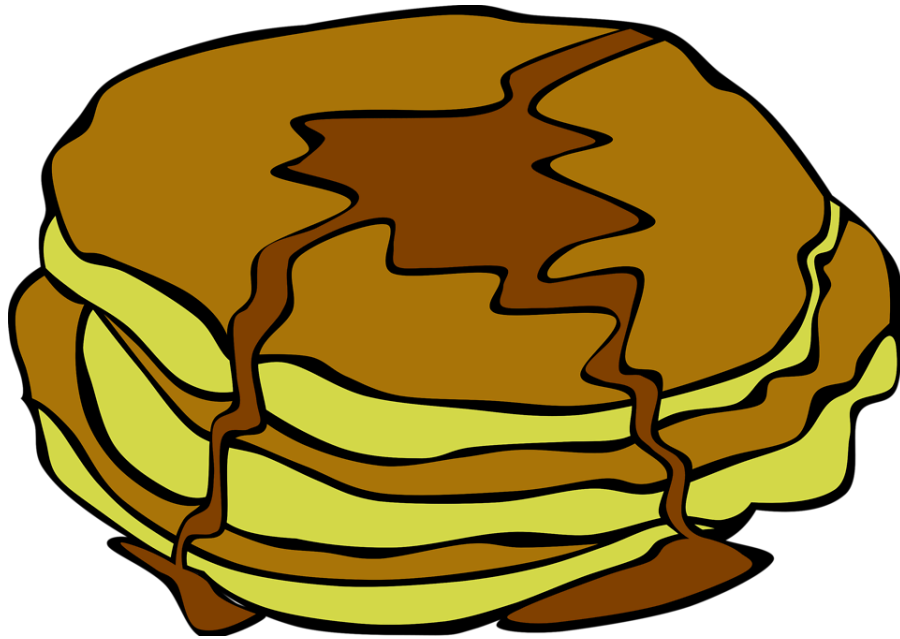
- Gift sets for women (perfumes, soaps, lotions, etc.) ~ Watches for women
  - Radio Alarm Clocks
  - Craft items for teenagers (water color paints, bead sets, etc.)
  - Family and children board games ~ Activity books (children & adult)
  - Gift cards (\$10-\$20 recommended – grocery or general merchandise)
  - Paper towels, napkins, paper plates
  - Family oriented DVD's
  - Journals / pen sets ~ Stationary gift sets / stamps
  - Personal items such as hair brushes ~ deodorant ~ hairspray
  - Towels ~ Twin sheet sets ~ pillows (new)
  - New (packaged) underwear, bras & socks (all sizes – women and children)
  - Disposable diapers (size 3/ 4/ 5 / 6) ~ baby wipes ~ sippie cups ~ pacifiers
  - Cash or check donations (made payable to **Salvation Army Safehouse**)
- Due to limited space we cannot accept used household items, clothing or furniture.**  
**Please be assured our residents' needs are being met in this area.**

### **Needs for the Samaritan Center ("Gifts for Joseph"):**

These donations are for men and families and include the following:

- Cleaning supplies (unopened)
- Can openers (non-electric)
- Diapers & baby items (unopened)
- Food (non-expired -- unopened)
- Linens -- blankets, pillows, towels, single/twin sheets, etc. (new)
- Men's personal care items -- razors, deodorant, shaving cream, etc. (unopened)
- Paper Products -- paper towels, toilet paper, etc. (unopened)
- Underwear, socks, hats (new)
- Seasonal clothing -- all sizes (new or gently used)

Thank you, in advance, for your generosity in supporting our Advent outreach mission. What a wonderful way to experience the true meaning of Christmas! **Bill Howells and Bev Miles** -- are coordinating our "Shower for Mary" and "Gifts for Joseph" programs and can answer any questions (**962-1146**).



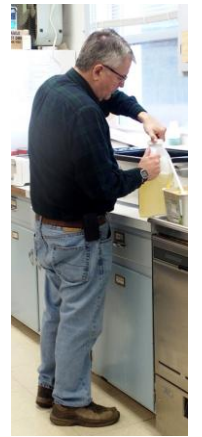
**Come and get those delicious pancakes  
from the famous Presbyterian Pancakers!!**

Dates: December 12  
January 9  
February 13  
March 12  
April 9

Time: 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Where: Big Flats First Presbyterian Church  
95 Main Street

Price: \$7.00, under 5 - free





### WEEKLY EVENTS

SUNDAYS	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

### SPECIAL EVENTS

December 6	Holy Communion
December 6	<b>Silent Auction &amp; Luncheon</b> (following morning worship)
December 12 (Sat.)	(Fundraiser) Pancake Breakfast – 8:00 - 10:00 AM
December 13	<b>'Hanging of the Greens'</b> -- decorating our sanctuary and singing Christmas Carols
December 20	Election of Elders (following morning worship)
December 24 (Thurs.)	Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service – 7:00 PM
January 3	Rev. Rick away – Bill Powell will lead morning worship service
January 3	Christmas tree and decorations taken down following morning worship
January 9 (Sat.)	(Fundraiser) Pancake Breakfast – 8:00 - 10:00 AM
January 10	Celebration of Epiphany
January 10	Holy Communion
January 17	Installation/Ordination of Elders
January 31	"Pennies from Heaven" collection during morning worship
January 31	Annual Congregation Meeting (following morning worship)
January 31	Information due for the February <b><u>RED DOOR</u></b>

### COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Worship Committee	Meets following church service on December 13 & January 17
Property Committee	(Wednesday) December 16 & January 20 – 6:00 PM
Session	(Wednesday) December 16 & January 20 – 7:00 PM

