

FEBRUARY 2016



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/)

"...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things." Galatians 5:22-23



"I'm being followed by a moonshadow; leaping and hopping on a moonshadow. And, if I ever lose my hands, lose my plough, lose my land, oh, if I ever lose my hands, oh, if... I won't have to work no more. And, if I ever lose my eyes, if my colors all run dry. Yes, if I ever lose my eyes, oh, if... I won't have to cry no more. And, if I ever lose my legs, I won't moan and I won't beg, oh, if... I won't have to walk no more. And, if I ever lose my mouth, all my teeth, north and south, oh, if... I won't have to talk... Did it take long to find me? I ask the faithful light. I'm being followed by a moonshadow."

Cat Stevens

Dear friends,

I led my last Session Meeting on January 20th. I believe that change is difficult but it creates growth and strength. This transition will be difficult for all of us. It's all about loss. I suggest we will all journey through our grief, our loss. However, my prayer is that we all arrive at a place of acceptance and embrace our new existence. We have a most incredible church family – support and love one another by caring for this family on its new journey of faith.

I have been thinking a lot about Cat Stevens' song, "Moonshadow". The moonshadow for me is divine mystery. May God follow us through the next chapter of faith and hope.

Peace, and may God's love remain in your hearts.

Your friend,

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Circle of Love

Many people worked very hard to make Advent and Christmas a truly joyous time for our community of faith. We are very thankful to have such dedicated and caring friends in our congregation. Highlights of the last two months include:

- Thanks go to **Linda Lincoln, Donna Stevens, Sheila French, Ann Slowik and Gigi Price** for a successful Silent Auction on December 7.
- Our quilt raffle was a huge success, raising over **\$1000**. Thanks go to our wonderfully talented quilters and to all those who sold tickets and supported our fundraiser!
- Thanks to the **Prices and Deans**, who supplied our Christmas tree and to all who helped decorate.
- On Christmas Eve, many volunteers from our congregation manned the kettle and rang the bell at Miniers to raise funds for the Community Food Pantry. Thanks to all!
- **Jenny Dean** organized our church's donation of fruit for the Food Pantry. Thank you to all who pitched in.
- And thank you to **Rev. Rick, Nancy Compton, Mary Ellen Rudnick**, our vocal and bell choirs, and all those who made the Christmas Eve Service so joyous and so meaningful. Special thanks to **Joyce Dean** for the stunning display of poinsettias!
- Special thanks to **Scott French and Kyle McGill** for setting up our new outdoor nativity scene!
- On December 20, we celebrated the baptism of **Morgan Dean**, daughter of **Brian & Anne Dean**. Congratulations!
- A Christmas Eve baby! Congratulations to **Jill & Michael Knight** (proud Grandmother **Roxanne Arnold**, too!) on the birth of **Lucas Michael Knight**.
- On Sunday, January 10, we had a special luncheon (catered by **Ann Slowik**) to honor **Robin Fitzgerald**, who is stepping down after seventeen years of service as our church treasurer. Thank you, Robin, for all you have done! And thank you, **Hector Nayo**, for stepping forward to become our new treasurer!
- We installed our new Session elders on January 18. Congratulations to: **Barb Horn, Stewart Potter, Mary Ellen Rudnick, and Luke Gromer**. Thank you for being willing to serve our church in this way. A special thank you to those elders who are leaving Session: **John Farr, Jack Horn, Joe Pangia, and Rocky Peters** We appreciate your gifts of time and talent.



In our concerns this month, we ask for prayers for: **Peter Middaugh, Joyce & Sam Dean, Larissa & Miranda Page, Alan Giglio (Pat Fitzgerald's nephew), Reva Soutar, Nick Rudnick, Emma Gardner, Flora Berke, Irene Hooey, 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.

SESSION/PROPERTY MEETING NIGHTS CHANGED

Our Church Session will meet on Wednesday evening, February 24, at 7:00 PM. The Property Committee will meet that same evening at 6:00 PM.

Session will meet again on Wednesday, March 2, and will then meet on the first Wednesday of each month from that date forward. Since a number of session members serve on the Property Committee, that committee will also begin meeting on the first Wednesday of each month (starting in April).

SESSION UPDATE

February 14 will be our first Sunday following Rev. Rick's retirement. As we begin this period of transition toward finding a new minister, we certainly have a number of questions.

Some of these questions were addressed on January 20, during our last Church Session meeting. Here are some highlights of that meeting:

- **Kirk Allen**, Liaison from the Geneva Presbytery Committee on Ministry, will serve as our Moderator during this time. Kirk will work closely with our session and serve as our guide throughout the transition period.
- Our Worship Committee has been charged with the responsibility of finding worship service leaders/speakers, using members of our own congregation or outside resources. The committee has already been successful in securing pulpit coverage for most of February and March. More information concerning filling the pulpit will be given during morning worship services in the upcoming weeks.
- On February 14, the Geneva Presbytery will conduct our worship service. Following the service, Moderator **Kirk Allen** will hold an informal question/answer meeting – many of our concerns will be addressed at that time. All are urged to attend our service and meeting on February 14.
- Our Session is committed to doing all that is necessary to effect a smooth transition and to help move us forward as a vibrant community of faith. Communication with our congregation will be a critical part of the process, and Session has pledged to do everything possible to “keep us in the loop.”
- **OUR JOURNEY OF FAITH WILL CONTINUE!**

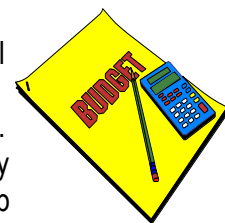


POT LUCK DINNER TO BEGIN OUR OBSERVANCE OF LENT – FEBRUARY 10

On Ash Wednesday, **February 10, at 6:00 PM**, our church will mark the beginning of the season of Lent in a special way. We will have an informal gathering and pot luck supper. Please bring a dish to pass -- place settings will be provided. There will be time for those attending to share, telling why Lent has special meaning in their lives. Don't have time to prepare a dish? Decide to come at the last minute? No problem! All are welcome!

IT'S PER CAPITA TIME!

Each year the church must pay a fee to our Presbytery for each member. This year that individual member fee is **\$44.00**. Our total per capita amount for 2016 is **\$5984**. These monies are used to fund outreach programs, disaster relief, the resource center for the churches, and Camp Whitman programs. In your offering envelopes box, you will find a "Per Capita" envelope. It would be great if we could all pay our individual per capita assessment and, if possible, a little more. Just ten cents a day would really help to meet our budgeted goal. If anyone would like to start a "matching" drive/challenge, please let the Finance Committee or Session know of your willingness. Thanks for your help in balancing our budget. By the way, contributions (money, stock, etc.) can be made directly to our church's Reserve Fund. If we can "grow" this fund it can generate enough interest each year to make a major impact on our budget. See **Mark Slowik** for more information.

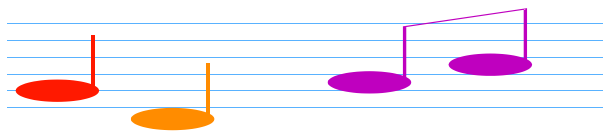


PANCAKE BREAKFASTS CONTINUE -- NEXT SLATED FOR FEBRUARY 13

Well into our fifth season, our fund-raising Pancake Breakfasts have proven to be a big hit! Enthusiastic patrons have flocked to our Church House for gourmet breakfasts of pancakes, eggs, sausage, fruit cup, and beverages. We thank all who have helped to make these meals so successful.

Our next breakfast is slated for **Saturday, February 13, from 8:00 - 10:00 AM. - bring your honey to have some pancakes!!** Subsequent breakfast dates are **March 12, and April 9.** The cost for each meal has been set at \$7.00. There is no charge for those under five years old.

This series of meals is an ambitious project for our little church, and it takes a lot of help to ensure success. Sign-up sheets will be posted for each meal. Please do your part by pitching in to help and also with your patronage. Questions?? Talk to **Jenny Dean.**



FROM THE CHOIR LOFT

Because of an overabundance of "snowbirds" in our ranks this year, we find ourselves with the unenviable task of recruiting singers for the upcoming Lent and Easter seasons. Please, please, please consider lending us a voice for the next three months. The "snowbirds" the "travelbirds" and the "sickbirds" should be ready to return to the ranks by the middle of April, but Easter is early this year - the last Sunday in March. Our choir has always been such a very strong part of our worship service. Help us praise our Maker as we follow Him through the most moving, humble and sacred part of our church year. You needn't be a soloist. Your only experience for the job is singing in the shower, or for the sheer joy of it.

We meet at 9:30 promptly on Sunday morning and we work a few weeks ahead, so if you have to miss a week, you won't be "hung out to dry." We have a good time and you'll even have time for a cup o' joe before service. Join us. We'll save you a seat.

ADVENT MISSION DRIVES VERY SUCCESSFUL



Our congregation responded with great generosity to our 2015 Advent mission drives. Our "**Shower for Mary**" is an important effort which helps victims of domestic abuse at the **Elmira Salvation Army's Safehouse**, and our "**Gifts for Joseph**" program helps men (and families) served by the **Catholic Charities Samaritan Center**. Both of these drives were extremely successful, overflowing a station wagon with donated items on delivery day! We also had a number of monetary donations.

Thank you to all who participated in this vital outreach. **Special thanks to our Mission Committee for a generous cash donation to both these programs.**

BLANKET SUNDAY SET FOR FEBRUARY 14

For some fifty years, the Church World Service Blanket Program has helped in making life more bearable for those who have been affected by a disaster, such as flooding or fire. We will be taking a special collection on **Sunday, February 14.** Every \$10.00 that we give can provide a good wool or cotton blend blanket (quantity purchase keeps cost down). Please support our church's participation by donating to this very worthy cause during morning worship on February 14.



Friends,

Thank you so much for the prayers, kind thoughts, phone calls, and cards sent to me during my recent illness. I'm feeling much better and hope to be back in church very soon! Your support and love are greatly appreciated!

Love,

Bev Miles

REV. RICK PRICE - A CELEBRATION



February 7 will mark Rev. Rick's last Sunday as our pastor, a role he has filled with skill, faithfulness, compassion, and love (and many other positive adjectives) for nearly twenty-five years. It would be wonderful to have a large turnout for this last Sunday with Rick as our worship leader, and we urge you to be part of the congregation on February 7. It's Super Bowl Sunday, and, although certainly not required, you are welcome to wear sports team regalia (Rick roots for the NY Giants, Mets, and Knicks). **ALL ARE WELCOME - WE HOPE TO FILL THE CHURCH!**

Rick's last Sunday could be a time of sadness, and indeed many will feel the emotion that comes with parting on that day. We would like that day to also be a day of celebration, a celebration of the wonderful "Journey of Faith" on which he has led us over the past quarter century.

We will be having a special Celebration Luncheon (catered by Ann Slowik) following our worship service on February 7. This will be a time to smile, laugh, reminisce, and share the wonderful fellowship that has been the hallmark of Rick's ministry with us. It would be very helpful to those planning the luncheon if we had an idea of how many to expect. If possible, please send an RSVP e-mail to Bill Howells (whowells@stny.rr.com) or Ann Slowik (AMSlowik@stny.rr.com) with your name and number attending. If you don't get a chance to RSVP, don't worry - all are welcome!

We would like to set up a Power Point slideshow tribute, and we would appreciate having photos of Rick, Gigi, and the kids for this display. Please e-mail photos to Gigi Price (Gprice@stny.rr.com) ASAP.

Many folks have asked about written tributes, cards, gifts, etc. A place will be available for those items (certainly not a requirement!). If you cannot be with us on the 7th and still wish to send a note, card, etc., just send it to **Ann Slowik, 464 Belwood Drive, Horseheads, NY 14845.**

Please try to join with us on Sunday, February 7, as we honor and celebrate this very special man and his ministry!

PHOTO GALLERY



ANNUAL REPORT: Our “*Annual Report for 2015*” will be distributed during our Congregational Meeting on January 31. This booklet gives an overview of the past year at our church, including reports from committees, a financial report, a copy of our budget for 2016, and a listing of members and friends of our congregation. Additional copies are available on the tables in the back of our sanctuary. Our ushers will be happy to assist you.

FEBRUARY



WEEKLY EVENTS

SUNDAY	9:30 AM	Choir Rehearsal
	10:30 AM	Morning Worship
TUESDAY	12:00 – 2:00	Food Pantry is open
	6:30	Boy Scout Troop #87 (<i>note: scouts meet on the first Wednesday of each month and then on subsequent Tuesdays</i>)

SPECIAL EVENTS

January 31	Annual Congregation Meeting
January 31	“Pennies from Heaven” collection during morning worship
February 7	Holy Communion
February 7	“Souper Bowl” Sunday
February 7	Rev. Rick’s last Sunday – luncheon to honor him following morning worship
February 10 (Wed.)	Ash Wednesday – Potluck Dinner – 6:00 PM
February 13 (Sat.)	Pancake Breakfast – 8:00 - 10:00 AM
February 14	Question/answer meeting with Kirk Allen (Session Moderator) following worship service
February 14	Blanket Sunday – collection to help disaster victims
February 17 (Wed.)	Lenten Ecumenical Dinner at Horseheads UMC – 6:00 PM
February 21	Bill Howells will lead morning worship service
February 24 (Wed.)	Lenten Ecumenical Dinner at Horseheads 1 st Presbyterian – 6:00 PM
February 28	Worship leader to be announced
February 28	“Pennies from Heaven” collection during morning worship
February 28	Information due for the March RED DOOR

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Worship Committee	Meets following church service on February 21
Property Committee	Wednesday, February 24 – 6:00 PM
Session	Wednesday, February 24 – 7:00 PM

“SOUPER” BOWL SUNDAY – FEBRUARY 1



Go Broncos! Go Panthers! It doesn’t matter which team you are supporting. Here’s a way that everyone can be a champion! Each year our church participates in “Souper” Bowl of Caring Sunday. Wear your favorite team apparel and bring cans of soup (other canned goods and cash are also gratefully accepted) for the benefit of those who are served by our Food Pantry. We will be passing around the soup kettle on **Sunday, February 7**, and we hope that you will join us in helping those in need.