



## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PITTSFORD

THE GOOD NEWS

JANUARY 2024

Embracing and Sharing Christ's Love

### CHARTING THE COURSE WITH PASTOR AARON

Do you know the context for the book of Deuteronomy? After the people of Israel had wandered in the desert for 40 years, they were about to - finally! - enter the Promised Land. Moses, an old man by this time, gathers the people of Israel together to give them one final speech before they cross over the Jordan River and into Canaan. The book of Deuteronomy is a collection of all the things Moses said to the people in that speech. What did Moses say to them? Well, he encouraged them to trust in God, to obey God, and to remain faithful to the covenant they had made with God. He also reiterates the Laws that God had given to them, and the book ends as Moses reminds them that following the ways of God is good for them.

In a way, it feels a little like First Presbyterian Church is in a situation like the people of Israel. Our Faith Forward initiative is about to reach its culmination at the third Vision Retreat on January 27-28 and the Congregational Debrief on February 11. We had planned to have the third retreat at the beginning of December, but we needed to delay it so our consultant Kevin could be with his mother who is receiving end-of-life care. We have been doing our own "desert wandering" since then as we await this final retreat to happen. The Vision Retreat is like the Jordan River, and on the other side of it, I believe we will be able to see more clearly the future that awaits us.

Like Moses did for the people of Israel, as we prepare to move forward in faith, allow me to encourage us to trust in God, to obey God, and to remain faithful to the covenant God has made with us in Christ. We're told in Ephesians 1:22-2:1, "God has put all things under Christ's feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all." The church is called "the body of Christ" and "the fullness of God." That is quite the description of the church—a high calling and purpose, indeed! How do we live into that calling? We have to allow God to fill us with the Holy Spirit. We have to look to the Head if we are to know what it means to be the Body. As it says later in Ephesians, "We must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love" (4:15-16).

The church's job is to look to Christ, to love him, and to ask for his help as we imitate him. That is, ultimately, what the purpose of Faith Forward is, too. So, as we wait on this side of the Jordan River, let us look to Christ to help us become more faithful and true.

*~Aaron*

## Lectionary for January

**January 6**

**Epiphany of the Lord**

Isaiah 60:1–6

Psalm 72:1–7, 10–14

Ephesians 3:1–12

Matthew 2:1–12

**January 7**

**Baptism of the Lord**

Genesis 1:1–5

Psalm 29

Acts 19:1–7

Mark 1:4–11

**January 14**

**2nd Sunday after**

**Epiphany**

1 Samuel 3:1–10 (11–20)

Psalm 139:1–6, 13–18

1 Corinthians 6:12–20

John 1:43–51

**January 21**

**3rd Sunday after**

**Epiphany**

Jonah 3:1–5, 10

Psalm 62:5–12

1 Corinthians 7:29–31

Mark 1:14–20

**January 28**

**4th Sunday after**

**Epiphany**

Deuteronomy 18:15–20

Psalm 111

1 Corinthians 8:1–13

Mark 1:21–28



## Thank you!

Thanks to the generosity of our members and friends, our 2024 pledges received so far have already exceeded our 2023 pledges! We are so grateful that you have decided to Share God's Blessings with our church and those we serve.

Your Generosity Committee



## Members with January Birthdays

Lew Becker

Jim Bishop

Bill Blackmon

Lauren Blowers

Peggy Burton

Josh Cordova

Chelsea Cunningham

Austen Fagan

Lilly Fantuzzo

Ashley Finkbeiner

Adina Flynn

Taylor Frank

Ann Kay Hotaling

Matthew Kilmer

Michael Labombarda

Jane Landsman

Karen Maher

Nina Oakley

Allison Ranslow

Madison Ranslow

Neil Richards

Colleen Rouse

Lucien Rouse

Colleen Rouse

Barbara Smith

Jan Smith

Ashley Stern

Joan Thomas Miller

Elena Travis

Zachary Travis

Elisabeth Tyler

Jane Vesling

Henry Walbaum

Garrett Wilson

Finley Yaekel

*May all of your birthday wishes come true!*

If we missed you, please let the office know.

## Volunteering at Elderberry Express

Are you thinking about making a New Year resolution to volunteer and do good in our community? Here is just the ticket! Our church was one of the founders of this service many years ago and it continues to provide a great service to our seniors!

Elderberry Express, a transportation service for Pittsford Senior Citizens, is in need of volunteer drivers to take senior residents to medical appointments, haircuts, grocery shopping, and other errands. Volunteers must complete a 3-hour training class through LifeSpan, and then can drive once a week, once a month, or whatever suits your schedule. We will work around your seasonal snowbird schedules, golf leagues, etc.! This is a fun, meaningful way to give back to the community—you will meet some wonderful people, have great conversations, and do a good deed, all at the same time. Please contact Suzanne at Elderberry Express for information. (585) 248-6237 or [ElderberryExpressPittsford@gmail.com](mailto:ElderberryExpressPittsford@gmail.com).



## News from the Nursery School

Happy 2024! We wish you many blessings in the coming year. Open enrollment is underway for the 2024-2025 school year. Please spread the word to friends and family if you know of someone looking for a preschool next year. January highlights around the school include our annual ice sculpture making, a field trip to TYKES theater, and conferences for our 2s and 4s families. Thank you for your continued support!

Kathy Woodruff, Director Pittsford Nursery School

## Anthony Circle

Anthony Circle will meet to write Valentine's. We will meet on Tuesday, January 9, at 10 am in room 200. Rev. Erin has given us lots of Valentines.



## Needle Nellies

Needle Nellies will meet on Tuesday, January 30, from 11 am to 1:30 pm. We'll meet upstairs in room 204. Please bring your lunch, drink, and a smile!



## OPTIMISTS—Save the Date

OPTIMISTS will meet on January 12, 2024. We will start the new year with discussion and sharing a meal together. Save the date and watch for details as the date gets closer.

## Year End Contributions

If you wish an end-of-year contribution to appear on your December membership statement, it must be received in the church office no later than Thursday, January 4, 2024. The check must be dated in 2023, and indicate "2023 Contribution" in the memo line. Your support allows us to fulfill our mission, and we are exceedingly grateful.

## Welcome to Our New Members

**Linda Badger Becker** – A retired presbytery leader and Ruling Elder in the PCUSA, Linda has served five different presbyteries nationally. She continues to support the life of our congregational church as the Presbytery of the Genesee Valley’s photographer. She also serves as a volunteer docent at the Susan B. Anthony House and Museum.



**Kathy Blezard** – A retired early childhood teacher, Kathy enjoys music, reading, knitting and crocheting, and has done a lot of traveling. In addition, her adult children and grandchildren play an important role in her life.

**Dan Clayton** – Originally from Iowa, Dan and his wife Melissa moved to the Rochester area in 2021. Dan worked as a pipe organ builder, Broadway sound technician, and acoustics consultant for performance spaces. For the past 30 years, his consulting firm has specialized in acoustics for churches and synagogues. Sadly Melissa passed away in July of 2023.



**Cindy Gilman** – “I am happy to be ‘home’ again at FPC where my boys were raised,” says Cindy. She enjoys music and crafts.

**Ellen Hall** - Ellen, who grew up in Detroit, met her husband Ryan, a Brighton native, at the University of Michigan. They spent time in San Diego and Washington DC before settling in Pittsford in 2019. They have three kids between the ages of seven and one and enjoy games, Legos, playing outside, and watching Michigan football.



# 2023 Happenings in and around FPC





## Youth Group Fellowship in January

Sunday, January 21, from 6-8 pm

Sunday, January 28, from 6-8 pm

Join us for dinner, games, prayer  
and reflection - all are welcome!

Drop off and pick up your student  
at the Locust Street doors.

Questions? Text or call Pastor  
Jacobson at 204-2012.

## Youth Sunday is February 4, 2024

Our 6th-12th graders will be leading an Intergenerational Communion Worship Service on February 4 with Pastor Neff and Pastor Jacobson.

To participate in preparing the service and be part of Youth Sunday on February 4, please plan on attending YOUTH FORUM (Sundays 10-11 am) at least two of these three weeks:

January 14

January 21

January 28

Sunday, January 7, is a Communion Sunday; please attend worship with your families; there is no 6-12 grade Sunday School that day.

Questions? Text or call Pastor Jacobson at 204-2012.



# Christian Education

## Make it Your New Year's Resolution

Here is a truth about most churches. If you choose to engage in one or more groups, you will build relationships where people know you and will notice if you don't come. At the same time, engaging in groups will kindle a passion for mission and worship. Call the church office to find the group for you.

You are invited to join several new opportunities offered by this church:

- **Monday Night Back to Basics Bible Study** with Lucien—The group will continue to meet in January working through the book of Luke. They meet by Zoom.
- **Tuesday Afternoon Fellowship at The Highlands**—This group is currently listening to and discussing old hymns. They meet in person in the Music Room at The Highlands.
- **Wednesday Evening Bible Study** with Rev. Aaron Neff—This group meets in a hybrid format - in person at church and online.
- **Thursday Women's Bible Study** with Rev. Erin Jacobson—This group meets weekly in the library starting back up on January 11 at noon.
- **Daily Upper Room and d365 Discussion by Email**—This group reads and emails about either *The Upper Room* or d365.

Adult Education Opportunities
Monday Night Bible Study 7 pm Zoom
Tuesday Highlands Bible Study 12:50 pm Highlands Music
Wednesday Bible Study 7:15 pm hybrid
Thursday Women's Bible Study noon library

## 4-Year-Olds Bibles

On February 4, the church will be presenting Bibles to 4-year-olds. If you know of a 4-year-old who would like a Bible designed for their age, please let the office know how the child's name should appear on the book plate. This will also be an Intergenerational Worship opportunity.

Sunday School Schedule



January 7	January 14	January 21	January 28
Theme: Jesus' Baptism	A Good Christian	Practice Prayer	Jesus in the Storm
Activity: Computers Kids will play a game to learn about Jesus' Bap-	Four Corners and a Center A game to learn to be a good Christian	Write and practice praying for others	Plan and perform puppet show

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ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

*The church's job is to look to  
Christ, to love him, and to  
ask for his help as we imitate  
him.*

<p>The Rev. Aaron Neff <i>Pastor and Head of Staff</i> 585.643.1240 aaron.neff@pittsfordpres.org</p> <p>The Rev. Erin Jacobson <i>Associate Pastor</i> 585.204.2012 erin.jacobson@pittsfordpres.org</p> <p>Craig Kunkle <i>Director of Christian Education</i> Ext. 30 craig.kunkle@pittsfordpres.org</p> <p>Britta Konau <i>Office &amp; Communications Coord.</i> Ext. 21 britta.konau@pittsfordpres.org</p> <p>Maria DiGiambattista <i>Financial Administrator</i> Ext. 23 treasurer@pittsfordpres.org</p>	<p>Leslie Harvey <i>Custodian</i> 585.364.2430 lharvey@pittsfordpres.org</p> <p>Dr. Jared Chase <i>Director of Music</i> musicdirector@pittsfordpres.org</p> <p>Dr. Bruce Frank <i>Associate Director of Music and Organist</i> bfrank345@gmail.com</p> <p>Dede Holmes <i>Director of Youth Choirs</i> dedeholmes1954@gmail.com</p> <p>Joshua Burke <i>Livestreaming Technician</i> josh@pittsfordpres.org</p>	<p><b>First Presbyterian Church</b> 21 Church Street, Pittsford, NY 14534 Phone 585.586.5688, Fax 585.586.8090 connect@pittsfordpres.org www.pittsfordpres.org</p> <p><b>Worship Service:</b></p> <p><b>8:30 am in-person</b> <b>10:00 am in-person and livestreamed</b></p> <p>Communion is offered on the first Sunday of each month.</p> <div data-bbox="1015 1577 1533 1990">A blue Facebook 'f' icon is positioned to the left of a red circular logo. The logo features a white silhouette of a church steeple with a cross on top, centered within the circle.</div>
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