



The Good News

September 2020

For the members and friends of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsford

<https://www.pittsfordpres.org/live>

CHARTING THE COURSE WITH PASTOR AARON

I hope that you have heard the exciting news that the Session has hired Rev. Erin Schubmehl Jacobson as our new Temporary Supply Associate Pastor! It has been a long road for you all at FPC since there has been a full and consistent pastoral staff. Reverends Jeffrey Weenink, Steve Becker, Jim Widboom, Carol Anne Strawbridge, and Steve Michie have been instrumental in guiding the church through what would have been a difficult transition even without a global pandemic! Although our journey to the new normal is still a winding road, I am thrilled that we are soon going to be walking it alongside an excellent Associate Pastor. I have known Pastor Erin for six years, and I know her to be passionate, experienced, thoughtful, and empathetic. I fully believe that she will be a great asset to our church.

As you have read our communications about this exciting development, you may have wondered why the Session decided to make the associate position a “Temporary Supply Associate” for now and what that means. You may be aware that there are several (somewhat convoluted!) job titles that pastors in our denomination can hold, and each of them comes with its own hiring process and parameters for the possible duration of the call. The Session opted to seek a Temporary Supply Pastor because our need to replace Carol Anne, Steve, and Tyler is imminent, and this particular job title comes with a very expedited onboarding process compared to the arduous process of hiring a called and installed pastor. You all are familiar with that lengthier process, having just been through it to hire me. Transitioning the temporary position into a permanent one is something we can explore as time goes by.

Because we have so quickly been able to get things lined up with Pastor Erin, we will soon be in the great position of having two dedicated pastors ready to lead the church into this new era. Erin and I have known each other since going to seminary at Princeton. She and I were also in the same Presbytery neighborhood cluster while I was in Corfu, and we’ve had many opportunities to get to know each other. I am excited about the possibility of getting to work beside her. I believe she is a perfect match for the kind of position we were seeking to fill. She is a pastor who shares my same values of theology and pastoral leadership, yet is different from me in a way that I think adds a lot of complementary value. I feel God’s hand at work in bringing her to us for such a time as this, and I can hardly wait to start working together with her. I know you will be blessed by her gifts for ministry. Let’s give thanks for what God is doing in our church!

~ Aaron

From Carol Anne.....

Holy surprises are one of the joys of life! When Nancy Sprenkle called me last fall, indeed, it was just that—a holy surprise. I was happily retired and was not looking for a job. Yet, Nancy's proposal caught my attention...part-time, pastoral care, First Presbyterian Church Pittsford...maybe. No one was more surprised than I was, when I said, "Yes, that sounds like an opportunity I would enjoy!" Since the middle of October, I have been your Temporary Supply Pastor for Pastoral Care. What a blessing it has been to get to know you and to do God's work with you! Little did any of us know that we would carry out this ministry in the midst of a pandemic—a pandemic that has eliminated many traditional ways of expressing God's love to those who need care. Yet, the pastoral care arm of First Presbyterian went into overdrive. The Deacons, the Prayer Group, the Visiting Team, and the Membership and Evangelism Committee has cared for our church family with creativity and vigilance. It has been an honor to be part of this faithful pastoral care team and a privilege to be a member of your dedicated staff. Without a doubt, First Presbyterian, you are committed to doing God's work in whatever situation you find yourselves—even a pandemic. I will always be thankful for the time I shared with you. Yes! God's surprises are one of God's many gifts to us!

Yours in service,
Reverend Carol Anne Strawbridge

Living Through Giving

The Generosity Team is happy to announce this year's stewardship campaign theme: *Living Through Giving*. With Pastor Aaron Neff's call, the leadership of First Presbyterian Church is steady for the first time in almost three years. Although we have not worshiped in person since the beginning of New York State on Pause, we anticipate returning to our sanctuary in person before the year's end. In the meantime, we have been able to celebrate the Sabbath, and especially Sunday's installation of Pastor Neff, due to the talents of our full-time staff and volunteers through the use of 21st Century technology. The church foresees the continued use of the Internet to broadcast our services, allowing those who will be more comfortable being present virtually to continue doing so even after we return to in-person services.

Pastor Neff will be addressing the seven marks of a vital congregation during the stewardship campaign beginning on September 27. The campaign will culminate on Consecration Sunday, November 8, at which time we will ask all members to submit their pledges for 2021. During the campaign, the Generosity Team will be presenting video vignettes from some of our members talking about their relationship with and support of our church. Our Treasurer, Rob Rhodes, whose meticulous explanations of our financial picture are always well received, will give presentations on that topic, and we will have a visual display of our generous giving as the campaign progresses.

We are grateful to our Temporary Supply Pastors for carrying the torch during the period following Pastor Boak's retirement and Associate Pastor Mitchell's departure. Our search team performed tirelessly and found in Pastor Neff an excellent fit for our church's future. Remember the joy we all felt when the congregation voted "yay," and Aaron and his family entered the sanctuary to accept the call? With your support, we are poised for a great future. ⁶Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:5-7 (NIV). Your Generosity Team: Steve Mizelle, Chair; Faye Casey, Charlie Francis, Pastor Michie, Pastor Neff, Rob Rhodes, and William Rieth.

Outdoor and Indoor Sunday Service Announcement

We are pleased to formally announce that we will be beginning to have Sunday Service again at First Presbyterian Church. We have already begun to hold an 8:30 am service outdoors on Sunday, and will be having an 8:30 am indoor service beginning in the middle of September. We as a Session and Re-Opening Task Force are excited to bring the congregation back together in person. That being said, we will also continue to have a 10:00 am streaming service for those members who prefer to worship with us in the comfort of their own homes. Over multiple meetings, the Re-Opening Task Force developed guidelines to re-open the church and have a Sunday Service safely, and Session approved these guidelines. These were made with the sole intent to protect our fellow congregant. This pandemic has changed the way we live and engage with one another, and unfortunately will also change the way we worship together for some time. We truly and deeply appreciate your compliance in the following expectations when returning to in person worship.

- Masks must be worn over the nose and mouth at all times (sitting, standing, and especially singing)
- Sit with your family unit and six feet from other congregants during our outdoor and indoor worship
- Singing hymns at this time is allowed outdoors, only if masked appropriately and with a softer voice
- After the service, please refrain from lingering to fellowship at this time

Thank you! The Reopening Task Force

Minute for Mission

Outreach Update: Judicial Process Commission (JPC) has been busy during these last 6 months

JPC has joined forces with a coalition of not-for-profits who support women. The coalition is energized by Joy Bergfalk, the founder and CEO of the Coffee Connection. Other coalition members include the YWCA, the Center for Employment Opportunity (CEO) and Exercise Express. The coalition is further energized by WISH, the Women's Initiative Supporting Health, a part of URM's mental health and wellness program. Look for some exciting new possibilities as the coalition coalesces around some key action items.

JPC was awarded a \$10,000 small grant by the Wilson Foundation and the new program director of the Foundation in Rochester, Junior Dillion, is reported to be a "fan" of JPC's mission and work. They were also awarded some small Covid-19 related grants to assist clients with housing.

Social Media Photos

From time to time we take pictures for the purpose of posting to our website and/or social media accounts. Individuals are never identified, by name. And, generally pictures are of groups of people. If you or your family have concerns about appearing in any First Presbyterian Church photos please notify any staff member or contact the church office at 586-5688.

Lectionary for September

September 6 14th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 12:1-14
Psalm 149
Romans 13:8-14
Matthew 18:15-20

September 13 15th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 14:19-31
Psalm 114 or Exodus 15:1b-11, 20-21
Romans 14:1-12
Matthew 18:21-35

September 20 16th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 16:2-15
Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45
Philippians 1:21-30
Matthew 20:1-16

September 27 17th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 17:1-7
Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16
Philippians 2:1-13
Matthew 21:23-32

We did it, TOGETHER!



First Pres and Christ Episcopal churches came together once again for Outreach. A pickup truck and carload of school supplies along with 122 backpacks were donated for Cameron Community Ministries, Judicial Process Commission and other Rochester area kids in need! Plus cash and checks totaling over \$700 will help fill financial gaps created by new programs at Cameron. Thank you, thank you, thank you!





Going forward, we have much to do! Please read important updates from Cameron's Ex. Director, Jennifer Muniga:

We have decided that we will help by hosting student cohorts each day in the Cameron Learning and Enrichment Center. Just as we did successfully for summer programs, we will hold small groups and follow all CDC recommended guidelines....

Holding a full day program, instead of a couple hours after school as we typically do, comes with several associated needs and unintended costs that nobody could have prepared for. We are changing our model of service to essentially transform our spaces into temporary classrooms.

How you can help

- Donate funds to help us pay full-time youth staff and to purchase necessary supplies including desk dividers, white boards and easels etc. to facilitate effective small group instruction.
- Volunteer - **WE NEED YOU!** We're looking for regular and consistent (minimum once per week) volunteers to donate time helping the youth engage in learning. We are particularly looking for those with teaching experience! We honestly can't do it without you.
- Donate breakfast items for the students to eat (individual cereals, fruit, yogurt, granola bars etc...)
- Keep us in your thoughts and prayers and tell your friends about us, the more visibility, the better!



Vital Congregations Initiative

Vital Congregations Mark 3: Outward Incarnational Focus —Cindy Becker

In a nutshell, this Mark is about following the example Jesus sets for us of reaching out into the world in mission. In Luke chapter 6, verses 27–36, Jesus urges us to be called into new places of service and growth. He tells us, "Love your enemies, do good and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great."

What does Mark 3 look like at our church? We donate to the Good News Jail Ministry, Judicial Process Commission, South Pres Psych Center, St Joe's Neighborhood Center, and others serving those on the margins of society. We support breaking the poverty barrier and building self-sustenance through the Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network (RAIHN), Habitat for Humanity, Cameron Community Ministries, and missions here and abroad. We donate to over 25 organizations locally, in the U.S. and world-wide. Additionally, donations of labor, skills, mentoring, clothing, and so on, take place year-round.

So are we meeting Mark 3 as a Vital Congregation at First Pres? On the surface, it appears we do! A strong component of Mark 3 IS advocating for those in need through our dollars, words, and actions. However, an essential element and very foundation of Mark 3 is the individual. Is the call to serve and love woven into our daily lives, within our very souls? A Vital Congregation achieves Mark 3, as individual disciples first, and then together as one force.

Sometimes I am unsure what missions God is leading me to and struggle with how much time and energy to devote. I realize I'm not alone with that and now, witnessing the shift in my life and priorities from the pandemic's effect, I've gained clarity on what Mark 3 means to me. These are the questions that I will put to use in the days and months ahead:

1. What missions speak to me?
2. How can I serve in a way that is authentic and also allow myself to be vulnerable and to grow?
3. Who can I know by intentionally resisting judgment and inviting openness?
4. Where the outcome is uncertain or unseen, do I accept that giving my love is enough?

As a Vital Congregation, we strive to transform ourselves, church, community and the world with an Outward Incarnational Focus. Together, we can support and inspire and act; individually, we can live ready to serve in whatever capacity we are inspired. Let us pray we make it so. Be well, safe and spread only love!

Members with September Birthdays

Patricia Adams	Dede Holmes
George Adams	Elizabeth Johnson
Kelby Ash	Hannah Johnson
Alexa Ashworth	Grady McElveney
Alyssa Ashworth	John Mecredy
Carole Bell	Jackson Mooney
James Bouchard	Donna Osborne
Richard Burton	Kay Saxum
Elizabeth Bynum	Kenneth Shaffer
Beth Collins	AnnMarie Simmons
Drew Diekmann	Bradley Tome
Emmalie Drake	Daniel Wilborn
Grace Fox	Roger Wilson
Barbara Harper	



*Wishing you a birthday that is full of laughter,
love, and special moments!*

(if we missed you—please let the office know)

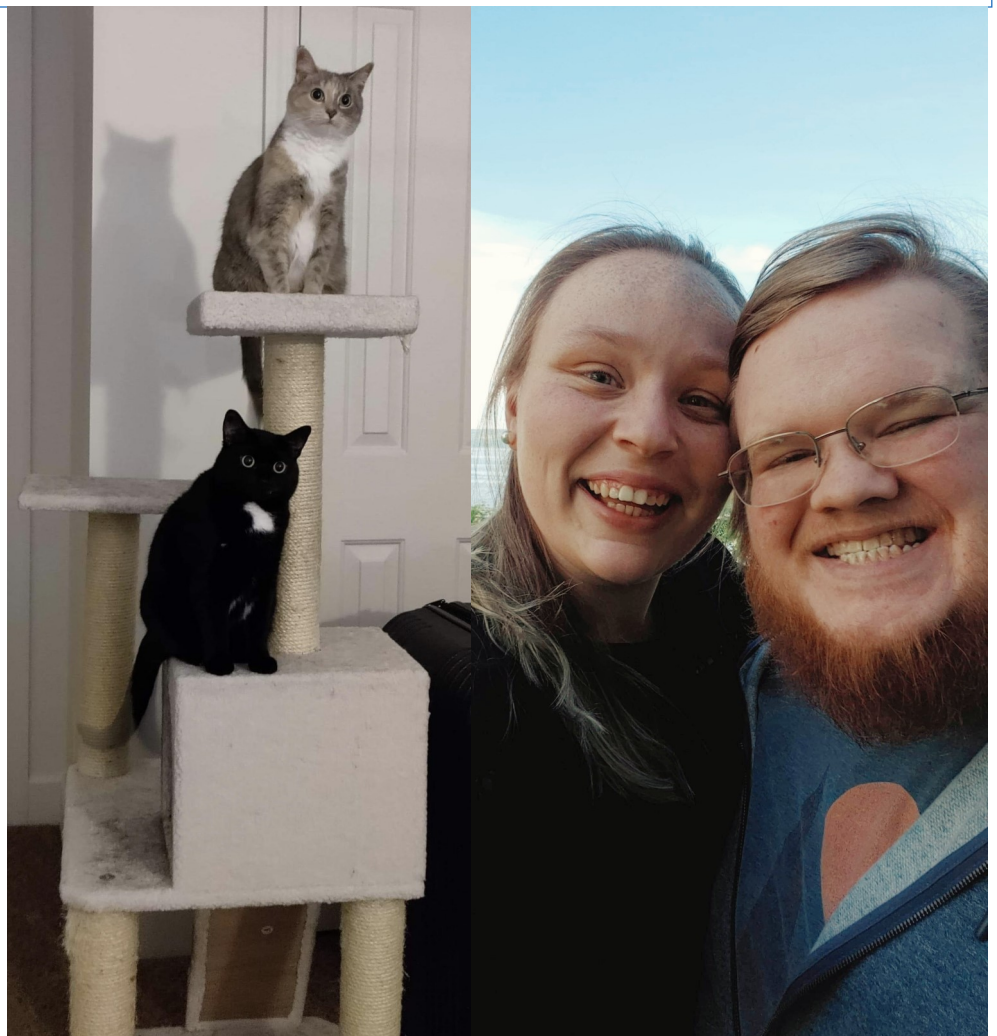
Hello Everyone!

As difficult as this is, it is finally time for me to say goodbye. But since this is the *good news* newsletter, we won't focus on that. Instead, I want to focus on all the good times the youth and I have had these past five years. I want to thank you all for being the most incredibly supportive community I could have asked for in my first "real" job. I can't thank you enough for being willing to take a chance on the recent college grad from a small town in East Tennessee. I have learned so much from working with this congregation and its incredible group of young people. I have seen dedication and perseverance personified in each of the youth as they pursue music, theater, sports, and academic excellence—often all at the same time! On top of all of this, having the opportunity to see our youth spiritually thrive throughout their different areas of life and pursue God in each of their own ways has been a wonderful experience. Thank you for introducing me to JASY, crew races, garbage plates, and everything else Pittsford and Rochester have to offer.

Tyler

As cliché as it is to say, this isn't really as much of a "goodbye" as it is a "see you later." Despite the fact that we are moving to New Jersey, I hope to stay connected with you all as you continue down your various paths in life. Again, I want to thank you all so very much for all the kindness and hospitality you have shown Sarah and me over the last few years. We are forever grateful for all of you!

The whole family! → → →





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ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

*“Let’s give thanks for what God
is doing in our church!”*

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