



The Fredonia Presbyterian

December 2023
Newsletter of the
Fredonia
Presbyterian
Church

From Our Pastor

Turkey leftovers are dwindling down. The snow paints a pretty picture. And, Giving Tuesday has come and gone. These might be things we just brush aside, but as a person who has many, many friends working for non-profit organizations, there's some lurking trouble in our start to Advent.

My friends and non-profits are reporting a terrible, awful, no good Giving Tuesday. People have giving fatigue. There are articles about it. People have been giving so much of themselves since Covid that people are feeling the need to be a little more withholding, and we're taking it out on non-profits. We've given our time, our energy, our emotions, our creativity, and yes, our money. And, money is oddly easier to recoup than time, energy, and emotions. It's the tangible item we know how to control. I get it.

It makes me more and more aware that the Church is called to remind people how to recoup. Traci Smith, a Presbyterian minister, wants to help us all do just that this Advent Season and maybe, just maybe every Tuesday can be a reminder to give because we've learned to give our selves time, energy, and emotions. She writes:

Here are five other spiritual practices for this season to help you nurture yourself.

1. **Let *decorations/your surroundings* be a cue to practice mindfulness:**

a.) "Every time I see Christmas lights, I will remember how Christ is the light of the world."

b) "Every time I see a wreath, I will remember God's love, which has no beginning and no end, just like a circle."

c) "Every time I see a Christmas bird, I will say a prayer for peace."

2. To know me is to know that I love to ***light a candle*** and sit in its light and scent. For me, the moment of lighting the candle, along with extinguishing it, is the practice. As I extinguish a candle, I try to remember that the smoke that rises is all the prayer energy that I've put into the candle rising up to God.

3. ***Five minutes*** in the morning is all I need to center myself and start the day off right. I love the five-minute journal app and have been enjoying playing the NYT game "connections" as a little moment of Zen.

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The Fence

By Joe Calarco



“Prison is hell on Earth!” The three inmates at my table all nodded in agreement. One continued, “Joe, God may be real outside beyond the walls, but He’s not in here.” I replied that “God is everywhere.” Another retorted, “Oh, we have our gods here, but we call them COs (Correctional Officers).”

Thus, was the setting of our Christian retreat at a local prison. 20 team members and 45 inmates in a gym from 8am to 9pm talking and discussing the forgiveness and mercy of God. As I listened to our team’s talk after talk, all I could think of were words and more words. We talk the talk, but it is all merely words. Yes, we can tell them of God’s love, but they want to see real evidence. It was a long day of words, with no action. Until...the Fence.

At the end of the day, we hold a forgiveness ceremony and a closing. Everyone is tired and talked out. It is then that we take the men outside into the yard, into the dark and the cold. “Joe, what are we doing outside?” Their questions are soon silenced when they peer through the barbed wire fence and see a line of lighted candles on the other side. The silence is broken when guitars begin to strum and 75 voices sing the familiar hymn, “Amazing Grace.” We respond with a song and so it goes back and forth. After 15 minutes, the line of lights begins to walk away and only the darkness, and cold, and silence remain.

Back inside the gym, the men’s comments revealed their innermost feelings. “I have not received a visit in 15 years. My family and friends have abandoned me. I thought no one cared for me. Tonight, strangers, people who don’t even know me, who could be home, warm and with their family, came out in the dark and cold to show me that they cared. They came to visit me!” “They were like Angels.” “Truly, this is a sign of God’s love.” “This is love in action.”

Indeed, actions speak louder than words. Some talk the talk, while others walk the walk.

“For I was in prison, ... and you visited me.” (Matthew 25:36)



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Over the Coffee Cups

Tom and Betsy White recently flew to Copenhagen, Denmark, then boarded a cruise ship which took us through the English Channel then to the Mediterranean Sea. One of the highlights was seeing the White Cliffs of Dover in England. They are kind of awe inspiring as you cruise by them. We then made stops in Portugal, Spain, Greece, Turkey and Egypt. Greece presented us with Mount Olympus, the highest mountain in Greece and the place where they first began keeping Olympic records as far back as 776 B.C. We also visited Athens where we toured the Acropolis, built in the 5th century B.C. and the stadium used for the first modern Olympics in 1896. As typical Bills' fans we had to find a local tavern to watch the game and the amazing thing was how many other Bills' fans showed up! There were about 20-25 of us there. Bills fans are everywhere!

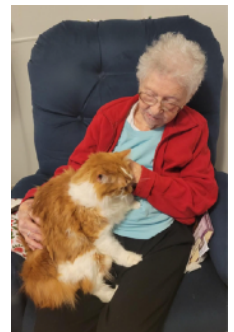


In Turkey, we visited ruins of the ancient city of Ephesus, The Virgin Mary's home and the ruins of St. John's Basilica. The unearthed city of Ephesus is amazing and what has been unearthed so far is believed to be only 25% of the entire city. As a result, there are constant excavations taking place. We also spent 2 days in Istanbul where we visited the Blue Mosque, the Hagia Sophia Mosque, which was built about 1600 years ago. We also took an evening dinner cruise along the Bosphorus River, the lights of the city were amazing. Ephesus and part of Istanbul, Turkey are in Asia so we can now claim we have visited all 7 continents, something we never thought we'd do.

Finally, we visited Egypt and went to Cairo to see the Step Pyramid, the Giza Pyramids and the Sphinx. This was another highlight. The Step Pyramid was built in the 27th century B.C. and is the oldest monumental structure made of stone still in existence on earth. We got to sit on and walk around on a camel. The pyramids are really an amazing thing when you think about how difficult it must have been to build them without the use of all the modern equipment we have. So, from the White Cliffs of Dover to the Pyramids of Egypt, we had an amazing cruise.

Marge Benton, always the cat lover, is enjoying a visit from her granddaughter and her granddaughter's cat. She looks pretty festive in her Christmas red.

Marge enjoys hearing from friends in Fredonia. Her contact information is
Marge Benton
Forest Hills of DC
4901 Connecticut Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20008
202-777-3327





From Our Pastor (Continued from page 1)

4. **Walking/Swimming** are two spiritual practices of mine. I might try to adopt these practices during Advent. I find that tacking on a specific *time* to my practices helps keep them consistent.
5. **Nightly Mocktail** This one on the list helps if you could use refreshing, healthy hydration in the evening. Sip slowly and reflect on the blessings of the day.



5,275 pounds

of food were collected during this year's Feeding Fredonia Challenge. Of that total, 1,835.2 pounds came from the Fredonia School System families. Amazing!

On behalf of the Food Pantry staff and all their clients, thank you for making this year's challenge such a success. It is wonderful to see our pantry so well stocked.



Merry Christmas to Neriah, our sponsored child, and all the children being educated through the Presbyterian

Education Board in Pakistan.



Don't forget to take cans with a deposit to Can King (just tell them to donate the money to the Food Pantry). We were in the church office the other day when Ellen opened an envelope with over **\$100** in it from Can King. **Keep up the good work!**

Also, those empty ink cartridges Ellen recycles generate revenue for the church. The box to collect them is in the Penfold Room.



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December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
					Christmas Festival 3:30-6	Christmas Festival 9-3
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Worship 10:30 Communion Christmas Festival 12-1	Art Discovery 6-8	Girl Scouts 5-7		Putnam Insurance 8-4		Lake Shore Fellowship 12-5
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Worship 10:30 Pancake Breakfast after worship	Art Discovery 6-8	Underwear collection ends		Rotary 12-1 Session 6		Food Pantry 10-12 Farmer's Market 10-1 Masonic Temple
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Worship 10:30		Girl Scouts 5-7				
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Worship 10:30 Christmas Eve Service 7 pm						
31						

Images and photographs are from Bing and Carol Groat.



Something for Every Age

Christmas Books

Aoki, Hisako. *Santa's Favorite Story*

Bergren, Lisa Dawn. *God Gave Us Christmas*

Brumbeau, Jeff. *The Quiltmaker's Gift*

The Christmas Story with Gennady Spirin's paintings

dePaola, Tomie. *The Friendly Beasts*
Joy to the World: Tomie's Christmas Stories
The Story of the Three Wise Men

Donovan, Jane Monroe. *Winter's Gift*

Dunbar, Joyce. *This is the Star*

L'Engle, Madeleine. *The Glorious Impossible*

Owen, Sally. *The Story of Christmas*

Paterson, Katherine. *A Midnight Clear: Stories for the Christmas Season*

Pienkowski, Jan. *Christmas*
The First Christmas

Sams, Carl. *First Snow in the Woods*

Schneider, Richard. *Why Christmas Trees Aren't Perfect*

Tazewell, Charles. *The Littlest Angel*

Waddell, Martin. *Room for a Little One: a Christmas Tale*

Wojciechowski, Susan. *The Christmas Miracle of Joathan Toomey*

Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year. The morning service will be a **Christmas Story Hour**.

The evening, candle light service, will be at 7 PM.

Underwear for Headstart

The collection of warm clothing and underwear for Head Start continues through December 12th.

This year there is especially a need for underwear: training pants, underpants, undershirts, and socks.

The Fredonia Agri-Business child Development Center is a Headstart program that works with the child and the child's family. Sizes 2-5 are the biggest need (think potty training) but larger sized items for older siblings and parents are always gladly accepted.



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Prayer List

Donna Heintzman
 Joe Dolce
 Dick Ackley
 Dick Watt
 Joy Hite
 Zachary Dloniak
 Deb Harris
 Sandy McBride
 Susie Harris
 Jordan Mendyk

Tracy
 Toni-Jo Mitchell
 Mick
 Jennifer O'Boyle
 Cheryl Connelly
 Kevin
 Lorraine & Joe
 PJ Meadows
 John LaMancuso
 Lucy Thomas

Elaina
 Jessie
 Larry & Sharon Kitty
 Nick
 Rebecca
 Jack Rudy
 Sujat Parikh
 Baby Julien
 Nikki Smalls
 The Siegle Family

Clara
 Dennis Paul
 Mark Thomas
 Diane Bell
 Nancy Dewitt
 Bill
 Rick Lundquist
 Gary Chwojdak



December Birthdays

7 Owen Lukach
 11 Wayne Jones
 14 Ron Scaccia
 Scott Foley
 Diane Bell
 15 Stephen Lucariello
 21 Carrie Divine
 23 Ryan Williams
 25 Jesus Christ



December Anniversaries

7	Rickey & Jennifer Miller	2001
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In Memoriam

Carolyn Wood	12/11/22
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Please Pray:

for the Keryx ministry, Joe and Carol Calarco, and the team as well as all the inmates they touch.

for our Global Partners in Ministry: Friends of the Presbyterian Education board in Pakistan.

for our Local Partners in Ministry, Compeer Chautauqua, Girl Scouts.

Fredonia Presbyterian Church
219 Central Avenue
Fredonia, NY 14063



*Nativities &
Alternative Christmas Market*
December 1, 2, & 3

FRIDAY, 3:30PM - 6:00PM,
SATURDAY, 9:00AM - 3:00PM
SUNDAY, 12:00PM - 1:00PM

The poster features a light beige background. At the top, the title "Nativities & Alternative Christmas Market" is written in a black, elegant cursive font. Below the title, the dates "December 1, 2, & 3" are written in a simple, black, sans-serif font. In the center, the event schedule is listed in a bold, black, sans-serif font: "FRIDAY, 3:30PM - 6:00PM," "SATURDAY, 9:00AM - 3:00PM," and "SUNDAY, 12:00PM - 1:00PM". On the left side, there are two stylized Christmas trees: a teal one with gold stars and a tan one with gold stars. On the right side, there is a pink Christmas tree with gold stars and a blue star on top.

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