



First Presbyterian Church Niagara Falls, NY Newsletter February 2022



Dear Friends,

This winter I decided to join a group of folks who are hiking in parks all over western New York. There is a great group of folks who have laid out trails for us, created maps, organized online information, and will give us a patch as a prize if we finish the challenge. It is an adventure. It is beautiful. It is peaceful. It is a reminder of God's intricate weaving together of creation.

Twice I have gone with one of my friends. Both times we managed to get lost, even though we were armed with paper maps, phone maps, and very well marked trails. Still we turned when we should have continued straight or we went left when we should have gone right. We would check our phones and they would show us where we were and where we wanted to be. We would plot an alternate route and get back on track. One of the days we wandered into one of the muddiest sections I have ever seen on a trail. I was glad to get out with both of my shoes still on.

In so many ways our hikes in the woods are like our journey in life and in faith. We think we are heading in one direction and then realize we have ended up somewhere else. When we take a moment to pause, get our bearings and start up again, we may be glad for the detour.

We are fortunate to have some instructions to help us along the way. The Hebrew scriptures and Gospels and other books of the New Testament give us guidance. The lives and writings of those who have gone before us in the faith give us some direction in our journey. Works that are being written today give us ideas about how we might read with new eyes the words we have seen so many times before. When we read through the eyes of those who have lived with oppression, who have navigated the barriers of racism their whole lives we may see something new in our scriptures. We may find a new way to be faithful.

This is a great time of year to launch a new adventure. Whether you are hiking or watching the winter weather from inside the house, crafting or reading or just relaxing, take a moment to challenge yourself to try something new. Try getting lost in your faith journey. And let the Spirit help you find your way again. Read something that challenges you. Listen to a speaker you have never listened to before. Find music that lifts up in a different way.

Faith is an adventure. Let's all step out and see what happens.

Cathy

- Please check out the Niagara Area Presbyterians (NAP) Facebook page for daily devotions. We are reading from the PC(USA) Mission Yearbook. The readings go live every morning around 6:00 AM.
- The next NAP dinner is on Ash Wednesday, March 2, at 5:00 PM. We are gathering at Island Presbyterian for a simple supper followed by a worship service to help us make our way into the Lenten season. If you would prefer a service earlier in the day. Riverside will have an Ash Wednesday service a noon.



Star Words

During worship service, January 2nd, stars with different words written on them were passed out to those at worship service. The word on the star that a person received is their star word. Pastor Cathy asked each person to reflect on their star word and how it affects their every day life. She suggested that they share their star word and thoughts through the church newsletter. Following are two star word letters that were submitted to the newsletter. You are still welcome to submit your star word letter to the newsletter. Names of those submitting their star words will not be published.

As part of worship on January 2nd, each of us, with Selina's help, were given the gift of a star—randomly chosen. My star proclaimed **STRENGTH**. What does this mean?

Strength in me?

Strength to share?

Strength from God?

Healing and return of physical and mental strength?

All of the above.

We need the strength of others, too. There is strength in togetherness

So thank you Jeanette, Demonte and Young Sook for your help and strength in this holiday season, decorating our place of worship with light and warmth and love.

Psalm 28:7 God is my strength and shield

What does your star proclaim?

Star Word—words to live by! Rev. Cathy and Selina passed out “Star Words” to everyone. My word was patience. I wrote it on the face of the star with a magic marker. It sits in a prominent place on my refrigerator. In the first three days I have repeated it out loud many times and in several situations. It is a perfect word for me! I hope everyone got their perfect word!

Thanks Rev. Cathy, a great idea.

Typos that appeared in Church Bulletins. Hope they give you a chuckle today.

Sermon Outline:
I. Delineate your fear
II. Disown your fear
III. Displace your fear

Women's Luncheon:
Each member bring a sandwich.
Polly Phillips will give the medication.

Karen's beautiful solo: "It is Well With My Solo."

Congratulations to Tim and Ronda on the birth of their daughter October 12 thru 17.

Hymn: "I Love Thee My Ford."

Sign-up sheet for anyone wishing to be water baptized on the table in the foyer.

Newsletters are not being sent to absentees because of their weight.

Helpers are needed! Please sign up on the information sheet.

The Advent Retreat will be held in the lower level of St. Mary's Cathedral.

Fifth Sunday is Lent.

Thank you, dead friends.

Diana and Don request your presents at their wedding.

Lent is a period for preparing for Holy Week and Easter.

We pray that our people will jumble themselves.

**Please Pray for Those Who
are Sick or Shut-in**



Shut-Ins

Dolores Coleman

Prayer List

Monique Wilson	Rev. Jon Rieley-Goddard
Margaret Smith	Robert Smith
Charlene Bush	Mark Tarbell
Bill Karches	Andrew Hinchliffe
Jillian Horner	Micheline Bevacqua



February Birthdays

February 11 - Johnathon Bush
14 - Rhoshe Jackson
14 - Margaret Smith

Happy Birthday!

What's Happening in February

Ground Hog Day	Heart Health Month
Black History Month	Super Bowl
Valentine Day	Presidents' Day
National Bird Feeding Month	
Children Dental Health Month	

Happy Valentine Day



February Volunteer Schedule

Lay Readers

February 6 - Lis Slenk
February 13 - Carol Dashineau
February 20 - Lis Slenk
February 27 - Carol Dashineau

Communion Servers

February 6 - Carol Dashineau, Lis Slenk

Sunday worship service is recorded and is on First Pres' YouTube channel after 4:00 pm on Sundays for your viewing. The YouTube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSk4U35pI2I>

Bell Ringing Circle

Hand Bell Ringing Circle is on Wednesdays at 5:30 pm. All are welcome. Come join the group for laughs, learning and fellowship.

For the safety and well-being of everyone, masks covering nose and mouth are required at First Pres

Thank you Dale Roat for shoveling the Church walkways during the many January snowfalls.

Budget Report for December 2021

	<u>Actual \$</u>	<u>Year to Date \$</u>	<u>Budget YTD \$</u>
GIVING	2,474	33,239	29,500
Investment Income, Other	15,781	46,006	30,700
TOTAL INCOME	18,255	79,245	60,200
EXPENSES	9,172	106,142	123,936
NET (Deficit)	9,083	(26,897)	(63,736)

Income was from the 4th quarter Fidelity permanent endowment and Marshall Trusts, and the second half Special Funds. Expenses for Dec. included \$1884 for gas. We were positive for the month (\$9,083) with a deficit for the year of just under \$27,000.

Seeking to be an Anti-Racist: Living the Love of Jesus

The Bible and Anti-Racism

It is not hard to see how the Bible informs anti-racism work. As it says in *Facing Racism: A Vision of the Beloved Community* (a PCUSA curriculum: <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/facing-racism-vision-community/>), the bible provides believers with a clear foundation for anti-racism work. God created the variety of humankind so it must be good; made us all in the image of God; and the people of faith in Acts honor diversity throughout its stories.

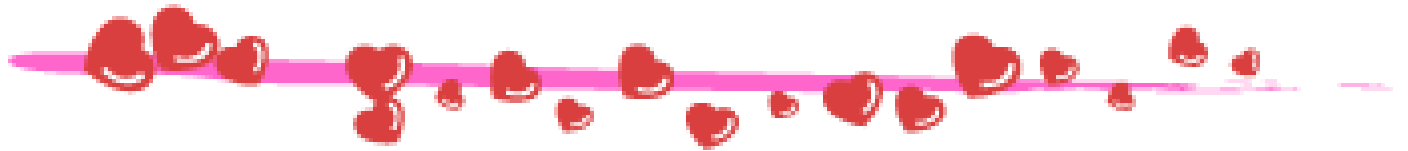
So, we can affirm that anti-racism work is rooted in the Bible. But can we expect to find specific guidance for this work in its stories and teachings?

One of the most challenging topics in anti-racism work is the issue of reparations. It has been talked of for years but only recently has it gained much traction. It is a challenging and emotional topic for many. A ground breaking work on this topic is Ta-Nehisi Coates' essay "The Case for Reparations" (Atlantic, June 2014, available on-line). But for people of faith, is there any scriptural guidance on this topic? Matthew Schlimm in his article "Saving the Egyptians" (Christian Century January 12, 2022, available on-line) suggests that there is. He highlights Exodus 12.35-36 proposing that it describes the Egyptians paying reparations to the Hebrews. Schlimm also mentions the example of the story of Zaccheus paying money to those he has cheated.

Wherever one may be on the issue of reparations, clearly the Word of God should be heard on this issue and so much more in the work of anti-racism. You are encouraged to read the discussion of the Biblical roots of anti-racism work in *Facing Racism* and/or Schlimm's article. Ask yourself, how does my faith inform my attitudes toward the debate on racism today? Am I guided by God's word, or other voices?

This is a weekly feature by the Presbytery of Western New York's Anti-Racism Task Group. This task group is made up of local Presbyterians who are seeking to grow in understanding of the issue of racism in our communities and churches. We seek to learn about the issues, listen to voices that need to be heard, and explore ways that we and others might respond to, and actively engage in the work of anti-racism. For more information contact Cynthia Wickwire Lundquist at cs112wickwire@gmail.com or Cathy Rieley-Goddard at cathriego@gmail.com.

This article is from the January 19, 2022, issue of the Western of New York Presbytery Newsletter. You can subscribe to the newsletter or read the newsletter on line by going to <https://www.pbywny.org/churches/church-newsletter>



February 2022

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

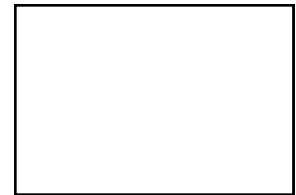
Sat

		1	2 Bell Ringing Circle Ground Hog Day 	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 Bell Ringing Circle 5:30 pm	10	11	12
13 Super Bowl	14 <i>Valentine's Day</i>	15 Session 7:30	16 Bell Ringing Circle 5:30 pm	17	18	19
20	21 Presidents' Day 	22	23 Bell Ringing Circle 5:30 pm	24	25	26
27 Transfigura- tion of the Lord	28		March 2nd NAP Dinner Service 5:00 pm <i>Ash Wednesday</i> 			

The Newsletter of First Presbyterian
Church of Niagara Falls, N.Y.

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Return Service Requested



We're on the Web:

www.firstpresny.org

You Tube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSk4U35pI2I>

Face Book <https://www.facebook.com/First-Presbyterian-Church-Niagara-Falls-117888153453785/>



CHURCH OFFICE

Hours: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 9:00 am
to 1:00 pm

Telephone: 716-285-3555

Sunday Worship 11:15 am
Communion First Sunday of Month

BOARD MEETINGS

Session — 3rd Tuesday of the month—7:00 p.m.

Rev. Cathy Rieley-Goddard office hours are Tuesday
9:30 am to 1:00 pm and Thursday by appointment.

Mask and social distancing are required at Worship
Service .

Visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/First-Presbyterian-Church-Niagara-Falls-117888153453785/>

News and letters may be submitted by mail to:
First Presbyterian Church, 311 First St., Niagara Falls,
NY 14303
ATTN: First Press



News may also be submitted via e-mail to the Church Secretary at
firstpres2@verzon.net or may be dropped through the mail slot of the church
office.

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Newsletter deadline is the 15th of the month.

Express love everyday



**February
2022**