



## **First Presbyterian Church, Niagara Falls, NY January 2023 Newsletter**



Dear Friends,

Over the past few weeks I have been getting to know more about Niagara Falls. Not just the beautiful and plentiful water as it flows through our community, but the community itself. I was amazed to find out that there are over 250 children attending the public school who are homeless. Many of them are sheltered in some of the motels along Niagara Falls Boulevard. The problem will become worse in 2023 as places like Community Mission are no longer able to provide temporary shelter for families with children. The law is changing with the coming of the new year. Families may no longer be mixed with single individuals. While the law is well-meaning in its effort to protect children, the unintended consequence will be more families out on the street.

I spent a couple of hours with Jockline (one of our members) riding through the neighborhoods not far from us. The number of boarded up houses was so discouraging. She pointed out an area the city is hoping to acquire through Eminent Domain to create a new destination park. The city has plans to fund the acquisition of the park property by using federal funds meant to fight poverty. It is an allowable expense under the guidelines, but with so many people in such desperate need, is it a wise investment?

Niagara Falls has faced tough times over the years. The Urban Renewal of the 70s and 80s destroyed much of the character of the downtown neighborhood. Developers have come in with ideas and received public support and then left with a trail of broken promises.

With a new year upon us and as we look forward to our 200th anniversary next year, perhaps we are being called to shine our light in a new direction. Perhaps these crises in our community are an opportunity for us to step forward and use our position to build up our community. We might even consider challenging the status quo and consider how to support our community in becoming a community where everyone's needs are met. When no one wonders where they will sleep this week or next month, where everyone who want to be in school is in school, where people have access to the healthcare they need, where food is accessible and affordable. We cannot do any of this alone, but we could find partners. We could enlist the people in the effort it takes to build a community where everyone counts.

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First Presbyterian has been fortunate over the years to have had members and friends who have provided well for the future of this congregation. Perhaps it is time for us to be generous and consider ways in which we can provide for the future of this community of which we are a part.

John Pavlovitz is a pastor and theologian. He wrote a book called "A Bigger Table." Here is a short excerpt from his website:

Friend, the heart of the bigger table is the realization that we don't have to share someone's experience to respect their road. As we move beyond the lazy theology and easy caricatures that seek to remove any gray from people's lives, we can meet them in that grayness, right where they are without demanding that they become something else in order to earn proximity to us or to a God who loves them dearly. Just as was true in the life and ministry of Jesus, real love is not contingent upon alteration, it simply is. There is no earning of fellowship or deserving of closeness; there is only the invitation itself and the joy that comes when you are fully seen and fully heard.

Maybe this is the year for First Presbyterian to work on building that table and extending it as far as we can see! Blessings to you for 2023.

Blessings

Cathy

### Big News

Congratulations!

As most of you know, a grant writing team met weekly for much of June and July to prepare an application for partial funding for the restoration and repair of our bell tower. The awards were announced at the end of December. There were 22 awards made in the preservation category and only one in Niagara County. It was ours! We are now working on getting the details together for the actual contract.

Congratulations and many thanks to the team members: John Goddard, Carol Dashineau, Carl Slenk, and Cathy Rieley-Goddard.

### Stamp Fund

We have a really nice ministry of sending cards to members and friends who need a friendly greeting. Carol Dashineau and Lis Slenk are faithful in their efforts with the very personalized cards. We are so grateful to them. As you know, the price of postage has increased over the years. If you would like to help support this ministry, please consider an extra donation for the Stamp Fund! Just be sure and mark it -- Stamps! Thank you!



As always First Pres members made Christmas a little brighter for two families. Thank you for taking a snowflake from the tree, shopping for gifts, and wrapping the gifts. Your generosity was evident by the number of gifts under the snowflake tree.

First Pres will host the Niagara Area Presbyterian Dinner, Wednesday, January 4th, at 5:00 PM

Please come and help welcome our friends from area Presbyterian Churches.

Fellowship, good conversation and a meal will be enjoyed by all. Everyone is welcome



Bell Ringing Circle will resume in January. Day and time will soon be announced.  
No musical talent needed,  
All are welcome.

A service of Healing and Wholeness  
Sunday, January 29th



Martin Luther King Jr Day  
Monday, January 16

Federal, state, and local offices will be closed. Banks, the post office and most schools will also be closed in honor of Martin Luther King Jr and for a day of service



First Pres was on the go again. On December 9, First Pres made a trip to see the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra's annual Christmas Concert. Thank you Pastor Cathy for driving the van and taking care of the tickets. It was a wonderful day. It was a great way for members to share the start of the Christmas Season together.

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



### Shut-Ins

Dolores Coleman  
Abraham McLarahmore  
Dom DeFazio

### Prayer List

Margaret Smith      Bill Karches  
Mark Tarbell        Jockline Pryor  
Micheline Bevacqua   Christine King

### January Birthdays

January 13-Carol Restivo  
January 28-Young Sook Kim



## January Volunteer Schedule

### Lay Readers

January 1 - John Goddard  
January 8 - Lis Slenk  
January 15 - Carol Dashineau  
January 22 - John Goddard  
January 29 - Lis Slenk,

### Communion Servers

January 1 - Jeanette Lamorie and  
Dori Parry

### Sunday Worship on You Tube

Each week the Sunday morning worship service is video-recorded. The video is uploaded to First Pres Niagara Falls early in the week. Check it out. The link to You Tube is [youtube.com/channel/UCV8PmvV\\_gWm7wiggyl-q03g](https://youtube.com/channel/UCV8PmvV_gWm7wiggyl-q03g).

The office will be closed Monday, January 2, for the New Year holiday.

## Budget Report for November 2022

	Actual \$	Year to Date \$	Budget YTD \$
GIVING	1,313	31,669	40,326
Investment Income, Other	258	23,225	25,663
TOTAL INCOME	1,571	54,894	65,989
EXPENSES	8,390	102,824	122,661
NET (Deficit)	( 6,819)	(47,930)	(56,672)

Investment income from the L.T. Marshall trust. Expenses included \$1592 for gas, \$340 for cleaning and 249 for phone and internet.





# 2023

Sun

Mon

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Sat

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*Office Closed*

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*Dinner  
First Pres  
5:00 PM*

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16 *Martin  
Luther King  
Jr Day*

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*Session  
7:00 PM*

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*Healing and  
Wholeness  
Service*

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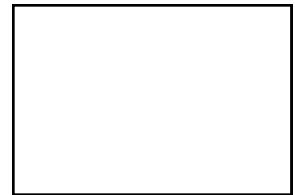
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The Newsletter of First Presbyterian  
Church of Niagara Falls, N.Y.

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Return Service Requested



**We're on the Web:**

[www.firstpresnfny.org](http://www.firstpresnfny.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 10:00 am  
to 2:00 pm

Telephone: 716-285-3555

Sunday Worship 11:15 AM

Communion First Sunday of Month

Christmas Eve Service 7:00 PM  
(No Christmas Day Service)

Rev. Cathy Rieley-Goddard office hours are Tuesday  
10:00 am to 1:00 pm and by appointment on other  
days.

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](mailto: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.**

  
**2023**