



Message from Rev. Hale

*“The Lord will keep your going out
and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore.”*

[Psalm 121:8]

The thought comes here in the midst of the sanctuary of this venerable old building we cherish, that we are not the first congregation to live through a pandemic. But even as we were Presbyterians then and rightly given to keeping records (*decently and in order*), not much was said about the state of affairs in 1918 when the Spanish Flu held the world in its deadly grip. That sickness affected one third of the world population at the time and was responsible for the death of between seventeen and fifty and maybe even as many as one hundred million people.

And here we are, a congregation still gathering in this time-tested place a bit over one hundred years later! Yes, mask-wearing was one of the strategies followed *back then* to control the spread of the disease, but we have no records showing what, if any special measures were taken as Sunday morning drew worshippers to come to church.

We’re not the first to deal with life so threatened and thrown out of kilter! We’re not the first to come seeking strength and consolation in a heavy time in our lives. And here, one of our Marys continues to look across the breadth of the sanctuary, Bible securely in hand, while the other lifts a pure white dove of peace into a clouded sky. The pulpit stands where it always has been, with its Bible open—that “Word” freely given to every gathering of God’s people. This “space” has remained the same and held the hopes and the fears of one generation after another.

Different as worship will be for us as we come together again, the steady, time-less truth of God’s presence is with us—here in this place—and significantly as we continue to support one another being apart—God *present with each one of us where we are*.

In whatever way you choose to nurture the gift of faith within you, here in the sanctuary, or gathered through a video or what is mailed, let us continue to *support one another*, in the fellowship we cherish and in the love of Christ that unites us. It is God who *keeps our going out and our coming in....it is God Almighty who keeps us wherever we are*.

Marilyn

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Lectionary for November / December 2020

Nov. 1 - All Saints Day
 Mathew 23:1-12
 Psalm 107:1-7
 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13
 Joshua 3:7-17

Nov. 8 - 32 Sunday in Ordinary Time
 Joshua 24: 1-3a, 14-25
 Psalm 78:1-7
 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
 Matthew 25:1-13

Nov. 15 - 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
 Judges 4:1-7
 Psalm 123
 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
 Matthew 25: 14-30

Nov. 22 - Christ the King Sunday
 Ezekiel 34:11-16; 20-24
 Psalm 100
 Ephesians 1:15 - 23
 Matthew 25:31- 46

Nov. 29 - First Sunday of Advent
 Isaiah 64:1-9
 Psalm 80:1-7; 17-19
 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
 Mark 13:24-37

Dec. 6 - 2nd Sunday of Advent
 Isaiah 40:1-11
 Psalm 85:1-2; 8-13
 2 Peter 3:8-15a
 Mark 1:1-8

Dec. 13 - 3rd Sunday of Advent
 Isaiah 61:1-4; 8-11
 Psalm 126
 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
 John 1:6-8; 19-28

Dec. 20 - 4th Sunday of Advent
 2 Samuel 7:1-11; 16 (***)
 Luke 1:46b - 55
 Romans 16:25-27
 Luke 1:26-38

Dec. 27 - 1st Sunday of Christmas
 Isaiah 61:10-62:3
 Psalm 148
 Galatians 4
 Luke 2:22 - 40



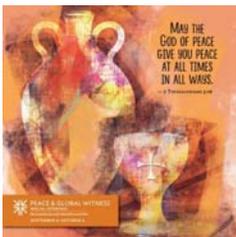
Thanking God for your continued health and wishing you
 God's Peace and abundant Blessings this Christmas Season.



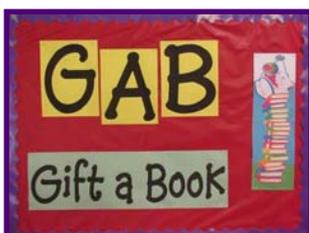
Mission Committee News

Cso Woodworth

PEACE AND GLOBAL WITNESS OFFERING: Thanks to your generous gifts of \$970 to the



Peace and Global Witness Offering, you helped the Mission Committee to exceed our goal of \$750. A check for \$375 was sent to the African American Center for Cultural Development in Olean, whose mission it is to value, promote and integrate the rich and diverse history and culture of the Southern Tier Region of New York State through the celebration of the talents, lives and history of the African Americans in our region.



GIFT-A-BOOK: We will continue with our book collection for the Southern Tier Child Advocacy Center. Thus far we have 115 books collected. If you bought books and have not yet brought them to the church, please note that the church is now open from 9 am to noon Monday through Thursdays. The collection bin is conveniently located just down the steps as you enter through the back door. Thank you for helping in this

hands on mission project.

Pfeiffer Nature Center Woods Walk: The Presby Pacers do it again! There were 8 members of our congregation who participated in this year's Woods Walk. The Pfeiffer Nature Center changed how participants in the Woods Walk could complete their walk by having them choose which site they walked (Lillibridge or Eshelman) and gave them a span of 17 days, September 26 through October 12, to complete their walk. Our thanks goes out to Vicki Schmidt for getting the Presby Pacers registered for the walk.

Harvest Sunday Basket: You've heard this a million times before that things will look/work differently but here goes! We are asking you to participate in our annual Harvest Sunday Collection differently this year. Our Harvest Sunday collection of food items typically occurs during the first two weeks of November. Because our congregation will not be back in the sanctuary until November 15, the Mission Committee has opted to change what we collect and how we will do, it all with your safety in mind.

The Mission Committee is asking members of our congregation to consider making a \$2 to \$3 (or any amount of your choosing) towards the purchase of gift cards to Aldi's or gift certificates to Park and Shop for the families under consideration to be Harvest Basket recipients.

Please mail your Harvest Basket donations to Barb Fairbanks (P.O. Box 53) or the church (P.O. Box 765; 19 North Main St.) If you send cash, it would be a good idea to tuck the cash into a folded piece of paper. Please be certain to include a note that it is for the Harvest Basket Collection. Thank you for helping to provide a Thanksgiving dinner for two Portville families.

DONATIONS : The following donations were approved by Session from the Jack Shepard Memorial Mission Fund in October: \$740 for Margie and Steve Doty, Wycliffe Bible Translators; \$500 for Leah Doty, Wycliffe Bible Translators; \$500 for Janet Guyer, Presbyterian Mission Support, \$750 to Wings Flights of Hope; \$500 to Miriam Center for Hope and Healing in Olean; and \$500 to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, to assist with the Beirut Explosion. Session also approved a donation of \$300 from the Rummage Sale Mission Fund to N.E.I.G.H., a program that uses horses to assist veterans with Post-traumatic stress. From Hunger Fund the following donations were approved: \$500 each for the Warming House and Genesis House, and \$300 to the Salvation Army.

Sunday School News - Diana Dunbar

Dear Church Family,

Each year I look forward to creating a time for us to celebrate the Advent season together. This year was not different. I knew that the normal program that I put together in the past was not going to happen. But as He always does, God revealed His plan for me.

Therefore, I invite you to go on another Advent journey with me. We will learn what God has for us. And we listen for His voice in the midst of the holiday regardless of what that will look like this year.

I know that part of the appeal of our past programs has been the fellowship and the time we shared with our church family. This year will be different. I will produce a video with a lesson for you. You will sit in the privacy of your own home and listen to God's word. I have also come up with a craft that you will be able to do using things that you can find around your home. I will record a second tutorial to help you to do the craft. I, then, charge you to reach out and share with your church family, friends, and neighbors through calls, emails, and cards to feel the warmth of fellowship.

These will be sent out beginning November 29th, the first Sunday in Advent.

Advent is a time of waiting...a time to prepare for the coming of our Lord. It is good for us to find ways to open our hearts and our minds to the messages of Advent. I hope that you will join me on another journey this holiday season.

Property Committee News Norm King

Things have been quiet in terms of the Property Committee the past few months, but we have been taking care of things as they arise. One big thing has been the repair of the main boiler for the sanctuary. In getting the annual check-up, it was discovered that it was not up to code as to modern standards. We had some of the main components replaced and brought it up to code. It was a bit cool in the church while it was being repaired.

Now that the possibility of the church reopening to services is nearing, we are hoping that those people that were on the "Adopt-A-Room" Cleaning List and those who were helping by serving on the Sanctuary Cleaning Schedule would continue to serve. If you are uncertain about serving due to the current situation in our area, you may decline until you are comfortable with coming into the church.

Re-Opening Letter

First Presbyterian Church
(716) 933-6426
Rev. Marilyn K. Hale

October 27, 2020

I hope this letter finds you well and keeping safe as we all continue to seek “shelter” from the effects of COVID-19. This church family took refuge seven months ago when all activities here at the church, apart from the community food pantry ministry, came to a halt during Lent. Since that time, we have all had the opportunity to experience Sunday worship *and* fellowship in new ways! Since that time, we have all had the opportunity to experience the way we live our lives each day in new ways!

In August, Session began considering the issue of safely coming back together for Sunday morning worship here in our sanctuary. We completed the NYS Department of Health Re-opening Safety Plan every public entity must do. We have considered our Presbytery and General Assembly guidelines for worship, meetings and every activity here at church.

We have worked together, and most importantly we *listened together*, to one another, and I believe, to the Spirit in our midst. At last Thursday’s meeting, the Session voted as one, to come back to this house, for “in-person” worship on Sunday, November 15th.

It’s a move we’ve been longing for since March. Yet for every one of us, it has to be a move we take cautiously as we continue to be committed to the health and welfare of *one and all!* We are each one encouraged to make the decision that we are most comfortable with. We will continue to provide worship opportunities that seek to meet all our needs.

The virtual worship services will continue to be available on You-tube. The sermon and bulletin will continue to be mailed to those who do not have computer access. Worship life as we have found it to be these past few months *will continue!* And the worship service here in the sanctuary *as we knew it to be* will be *different!*

Self-screening health questions relative to COVID 19 will be posted on the rear entrance and lift doors, to be read by any entering the building. A list of those questions is enclosed. We will be wearing masks and observing social distancing protocols when entering and leaving the building and while seated in the sanctuary. We will not be singing the hymns or collecting the offering as we used to do. The sanctuary will be cooler—keep your coats on. If you get too warm, you can put them on the back of the pew in front of you! We will be keeping a weekly attendance log for any possible contact tracing that may arise. The list of our “new” worship procedures is at the end of this letter. Please take some time and read it carefully. Every protocol we are following when coming together is for the *good of the body—everybody’s health and well-being held in one another’s hands and hearts!*

Our in-person worship procedure is another “new step” we are taking together these days as we continue discovering ways to be faithful to our commitment to God and one another. If you have any questions or need more information, feel free to call me. And know that I continue to thank God for our life together and our dedication to support the “good” in life for all others!

Blessings to all, Marilyn

FOR WORSHIP:

- ◆ All persons over 2 years of age will wear a mask.
A mask will be provided if you forgot to bring yours
- ◆ Attendance will be kept for each service and activity (i.e. meetings).
- ◆ Self-checking health screening questions will be posted outside the entrance doors.
- ◆ The pews will be clearly marked according to the 6 feet distancing protocol.
- ◆ Families may sit together.
Children must sit with their families.
- ◆ Pews with their hymnals and Bibles become the worshipper's place to sit each Sunday.
Names will be noted and placed in the pew, *reserving* that space
- ◆ We will not sing. Take heart...we can hum and follow the words and *sing* inside our heads! (and swing and sway as the music moves us)!
- ◆ The offering plates will be placed at the two entrances at the back of the sanctuary to receive our offering. *We will not be passing the offering plates.*
- ◆ At the close of worship, we will exit the sanctuary beginning with the back rows, and then row-by-row, back to front, keeping the 6 feet social distancing between us as we exit the building.
- ◆ Make use of the hand sanitizers upon entering *and* when exiting the building.
Pump sanitizer will be available at all entrances & many common areas.
- ◆ When greeting others before or after worship, maintain safe social distances.
- ◆ On-line worship services will continue to be available.
You are able to continue to worship at home
- ◆ We will continue to mail the sermon/bulletin to those who do not have the on-line option
- ◆ Celebration of communion (1st Sunday of the month & special services) will be done with individually wrapped elements placed in the reserved pews. Guests (not assigned a reserved pew) will be individually provided communion elements by ushers.

Adopted by Session: 10/22/2020

Planning for what seating layout in the sanctuary could look like when we return to



in-person worship on November 15. The white papers on the pews indicate the number of people that could sit in a given area. Remember, that we need to maintain 6 feet between individuals or family units. Pews without a number on a piece of paper need to remain empty.



November / December Birthdates to Remember

November

Nov 3 Megan Pagett
 Nov 6 Leah Doty
 Nov 10 Anna Keeley
 Nov 10 Emma Keeley
 Nov 11 Tim Kloss
 Nov 14 Mary Ann Clark
 Nov 17 Connie King
 Nov 18 Mark Hendrix
 Nov 19 Bob Fischer
 Nov 21 Joyce Roulo
 Nov 24 Tom Clark
 Nov 25 Jess Wyant
 Nov 28 Mary Langworthy



December

Dec 6 Clara Hendrix
 Dec 7 Diana Dunbar
 Dec 7 Ron Longbothum
 Dec 10 McKenzie Gardner
 Dec 10 Cso Woodworth
 Dec 13 Norm King
 Dec 16 Holly Fischer
 Dec 16 Sophia Hendrix
 Dec 21 Kari Kloss

happy
 birthday!



Our heartfelt sympathy and prayers for God's comfort and peace to the Lauri and Sean Gardner family on the loss of Lauri's father:
 William Edward Hunter Jr.
 January 20, 1944 – September 25, 2020



Our Christmas Eve Service

is in the planning stages.

Stay tuned for more information.

Food Pantry News Stephanie Hill

Thank you for your donations to the food pantry! We continue to serve 30 families in the Portville community each month. Our distribution days will be November 18 and December 16. In addition to the regular food package, each family will also receive a gift card to help with their holiday meals. We are able to do this because of the generous support we receive from church members and the Portville community. Thank you.

SELF-SCREENING HEALTH QUESTIONS:
PLEASE DO NOT ENTER THE CHURCH BUILDING IF:
IN THE LAST 14 DAYS YOU...

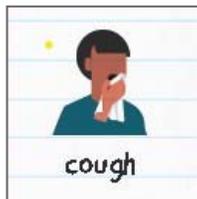
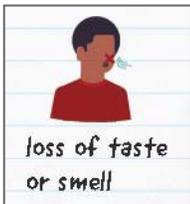
HAVE BEEN **DIAGNOSED** WITH **COVID 19** OR...

HAVE **BEEN IN CONTACT WITH** ANYONE WHO IS ILL, SHOWN SYMPTOMS OR HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH **COVID 19** OR...

YOU HAVE **TRAVELED** OUT OF THE COUNTRY OR TO ANY STATE THAT REQUIRES NYS RESIDENTS TO QUARANTINE OR...

YOU HAVE **BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT** WITH **ANYONE WHO HAS TRAVELED** TO THOSE AREAS OR...

IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING :



Other Symptoms Include:
 fever, runny nose, diarrhea, vomiting or nausea, headache, feeling tired, poor appetite

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH -
 PORTVILLE, NY**

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 Portville, NY 14770

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Sunday School: 9:00am
 ages 3 to adult
 Worship Service: 10:00 am

Website:
www.portville-presbyterian.org