

## FROM THE PASTOR

The church traditionally begins the season of Lent by reflecting on Jesus' experience in the wilderness. The gospel of Mark is short and vivid on this topic: "He was in the wilderness 40 days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him." But usually we don't stop there. Matthew and Luke elaborate on the temptations or the situations where Jesus could have chosen to disconnect himself from God's intentions for his life. The experience of disconnection is a common Biblical theme of the wilderness. For the Israelite people, the wilderness was an experience of disconnect from the familiarity of home and from the meaning found in being rooted in a physical place. They were always on the move and never knew what was going to happen next. On a number of occasions they didn't know what or when they would eat next. Jesus and the Israelites were faced with the temptation to engage in behaviors, practices, and attitudes disconnecting them from God, their community and the world.

When I think about the "wilderness" today it doesn't take long to identify those places where we feel disconnected. That sounds like such an oxymoron in this age of technology when everyone is "connected" through the touch of a screen. While providing great ways for us to communicate and share information, technology has not replaced our need for human and spiritual connection. It may be convenient to demonize technology as the main temptation in our wilderness world, our experiences of disconnection are more complicated. Our lives are filled with schedules and appointments; caring for children and parents or spouses; work commitments and after school practices; weekend sports tournaments and family gatherings; church meeting nights and volunteering in our community. Moving from one place to another, we aren't always sure what is happening next. Like the Israelite people we might always be with other people in the wilderness of our lives, but we still feel terribly alone. Part of the 'wilderness' experience for many in our culture today is figuring how to connect to one another, God, and the world in meaningful ways.

Following the annual meeting and potluck lunch many of you stayed to share with the Vision and Strategy Team (God's Path Seekers) your thoughts about how God is calling us to be a community of faith. One of the words that stood out from those conversations was: **Connection.** We experience God's presence in the life of GPC when we are connecting in community through prayers, mission partnerships, and sharing the stories of our faith with children in Sunday school. We have best dealt with change by connecting to the Holy Spirit. Our core values of worship, mission, spiritual growth, and hospitality are best lived out when we are doing more than attending meetings and "being busy" but also by the connections we make with God and each other.

During the season of Lent our theme will be "Connecting in the Wilderness." Lent is not just about "giving something up," although that is OK too if it helps you find the time and energy to connect. Might you consider practicing a new way to connect in community? A few possibilities:

- This one seems obvious, but worship on Sunday morning! If you are feeling particularly adventurous invite a friend, neighbor or colleague to worship with you.
- If you aren't in the habit of attending coffee hour, commit to coming during Lent. It is a great way to make connections with other GPC-ers over coffee or punch.
- Connect with our partnership at the United Church in Jamaica in Green Island, Negril and Santoy. On March 1<sup>st</sup> hear the stories in worship and at Second Hour as the Jamaica Mission Team shares their experiences.
- Young Children will experience ways of "connecting" in the FUS!ON room. Thanks to Polly and Mike Moore (with Iowa!) for kicking this series off and sharing about connecting with persons who utilize service animals. Kecia Binko will talk more about how we connect with those who are visually impaired. Christine Fitzgerald will share her knowledge of how we connect with those who use sign language to communicate.
- The experience of death and grief can be very isolating. Connect with your GPC community as we learn more about how we can support one another. This issue of the Harbinger has more info from the Spiritual Journey Committee.
- Commit to connecting to God in prayer. Each day offer prayer for someone from church (get out your church directory!) and someone you encounter in your larger community (even if you don't know them by name "the woman struggling with her kids at Wegmans" or the "the man cleaning the floor at the hospital.")
- Serve in the community with us. First Monday of the month we head to Salem UCC to serve a hot meal. In April you might consider being part of the team that prepares and/or serves the meal for St. Joseph House of Hospitality.
- Intergenerational "Mission Madness" with the Presbytery in April (more info to come!)

One final radical thought ... connect with people at GPC you don't always talk to. Sit in a different pew and introduce yourself. While waiting to pick up kids after Jr. Choir, keep the technology in the car and talk to a few other parents. Consider inviting a few people you know from church over for dinner or out to a favorite restaurant. Make it your spiritual practice this Lent to "Connect in the Wilderness" of our everyday lives!

Peace be with you,

*Melissa*

## WE HAVE THE TIME AND THE TALENTS!

The 2014 Time and Talent Survey information has been compiled into an Excel spreadsheet. This information can help you or your committee find GPC people that are interested in helping you as you do the work of the Lord. The main subjects that were presented in the survey were Boards and Committees, Hospitality, Mission and Outreach, Music and Worship, Fellowship and Events, Spiritual Growth, Facility, Grounds and Operations. To obtain a copy of the spreadsheet and help on sorting for the information you need, contact Linda Beattie, [Linda.Btt@gmail.com](mailto:Linda.Btt@gmail.com) or 247-6742. The Stewardship and Budget Committee

## THE REASON WHY

“Per Capita” – maybe this will help you understand why we ask you for it. Our church does not stand alone when we confront our difficulties and triumphs. We are a part of the larger Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with its arms around all of us. Presbyterians have a form of government built upon shared power and mutual accountability as we seek together to find and represent the will of Christ. As so, we participate with churches across the country to share equitably in those things that make us Presbyterian and further the mission of Jesus Christ here and around the world. PC(USA) moves our religion forward by bringing a larger group of us together in mission projects, publications, leadership development, working for peace and justice, and many other associated shared costs.

Based on our membership, our church will contribute \$15,924 from our 2015 budget as our commitment to participate as part of the Presbytery of Genesee Valley, the Synod of the Northeast and the General Assembly. To be a Presbyterian is to be part of this commitment. This is why we have asked each GPC member to offer a “Per Capita” of \$29.38 for this year. If possible, if you have not done so, please offer your share in an envelope labeled “Per Capita” on Sunday or send it to the church office. The Stewardship & Budget Committee

## PUBLIC WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR MARCH

Date	Lay Reader	Front Door Greeter	Ushers	Deacons
March 1	Jamaica Team	Bridget Wohlers	4	1
March 8	Andrea Unson	Kris Ohman	5	2
March 15	Sue Birkbeck	Gladstone Crosdale	6	3
March 22	Bill Walence	Linda Beattie	1	4
March 29	Rachel Molina	Jocelyn Pimm	2	5

Communion: March 1 – Communion Team B; Communion on March 29 - Intinction

### Left

1. Tami Pignone
2. Jocelyn Pimm
3. J.C. Rouchon
4. Rodney Knowles

### Right

1. Cathy Goodykoontz
2. Heather Pimm
3. Velta Rouchon
4. Bonnie Beckett

## CONNECTING IN COMMUNITY THROUGH BIBLE STUDY

Every Wednesday evening 6:30-7:30pm in the Jr. High Lounge (Room 16) a community gathers to nurture one another through spiritual formation, prayer, and Biblical exploration. Whether you have been reading the Bible your whole life or this is your first time, you are welcome!

You don't have to but if you would like to read ahead for that week, here is a look at what the scripture text will be. A great website to find the scripture texts in different versions:

[www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

During March we will reflect on the following texts:

**Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>** Exodus 20:1-17 and John 2:13-22

**Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>** Numbers 21:4-9

**Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>** Jeremiah 31:31-34

**Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>** John 12:20-33



## MISSION NEWS:

### WALL OF FOOD – Lenten Food Drive for Southwest Ecumenical Ministries

People in Monroe County continue to be challenged by the economy. We can help!! Please bring a can of food each time you come to GPC during Lent.



The collection for SWEM will continue through Palm Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>. SWEM provides people living in the southwest quadrant of Rochester with emergency food supplies.

Suggestions: Canned fruit, vegetables, and/or meat, oatmeal and/or cereal, powdered milk, Cans of soup

### ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING:



The fish coin boxes for One Great Hour of Sharing were handed out to the children on the first Sunday of Lent (February 22). We hope they will fill these boxes with loose change and bring them back on Palm Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>.

Since 1949, Presbyterians have joined with millions of other Christians through this offering to share God's love with people experiencing need. Our gifts support disaster response, refugee assistance, safe refuge for people in need, community development plus much more.

The One Great Hour of Sharing Offering will be taken on Palm Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>. An envelope is included in this Harbinger.

## DEACONS' PAGE

Please keep in thought and prayer:

**Randy Mosher**, recovering from eye surgery.

**Clarene Cress**, recovering from knee surgery.

**Don Bernhart**, now recovering from surgery at home.

**Mary DiGennaro** in the transitional unit at Unity Hospital.

**Doris Falke** dealing with health issues.

**Charlie Szczepanski**, infant son of Jay and Katie Szczepanski, doing well after hernia surgery.

**Hannah Walker** dealing with health issues.



Our sympathy to:

**Rick and Catherine Howe and family** on the recent death of Rick's mother.

Congratulations to:

**Janice Phillips** on receiving her Master's Degree in Service Leadership and Innovation from RIT.

We just wanted to let our church family know that Don is now home. He will continue to recover at home and he's very happy to be home! Thank you for all your prayers, cards, and visits!

Louise and Don Bernhart

**REMINDER TO DEACONS** – Next Deacons' meeting is Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

**REBECCA CIRCLE** will not be meeting in March. Next meeting is April 13.

**TABITHA CIRCLE** meets on Wednesday, March 11 at 1:00 p.m. Bring your lunch.

**THE PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY** meeting is on March 3 at 2:00 p.m. in Room 16.

## MEMBERSHIP & HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

The Committee is focusing on having new members become part of our church family. We are diligently reviewing our Hospitality Register and documenting the list of visitors who have been attending frequently. If you know of anyone who has expressed an interest in joining our church community, please contact Glad Crosdale.

## MEN 2 MEN

Men 2 Men will have breakfast Sunday, March 22 at 8:00 am in the Fellowship Hall. Suggested donation for the breakfast is \$5.00. A sign up sheet is on the Kiosk.

## PALM SUNDAY

This year Palm Sunday falls on a Fusion Sunday, giving us a chance to celebrate with our entire church family. As part of this special day, we'll be having communion via intinction, so that families can take part in the sacrament together. Every child is welcome to take communion once their parents believe they are ready. If you would like to prepare your child, see the "Children and Communion: pamphlet near the sanctuary or talk with a pastor. Traditional communion will also be served on the first Sunday of the month.

## FLEA MARKET & CRAFT SALE PLANNING

As most of you have heard, the Yard Sale of the past will be transformed this year into a Community Flea Market and Craft Sale, taking place on **Saturday, June 6<sup>th</sup>**.

To briefly describe the plan, the event will have four parts:

First, a Flea Market will take place out on the front lawn (rain or shine). We will sell space to community vendors who sign up for a specific amount of space, the same way we run the Church Mouse sale. We make our money by selling space and renting tables.

Second, an open-to-the-community Craft Sale will be held in the narthex area and north classrooms. Due to space allowance, this sale will need to be limited to 30 crafters. Similarly, we will make our money by selling space and renting tables.

The third part of the event will be held in the main hallway past the offices, Fellowship Hall, RAP and Sr. High classrooms and will be the "slightly scaled down" Yard Sale. The plan is to divide the areas into "departments" that have been our best sellers in the past. This will include a baked food sale as in previous years. Proceeds from these three parts of this event will go toward the church operating budget.

Last, but not least, the Youth Groups will sell lunch food and beverages, starting with donuts and coffee in the morning, then transitioning to hamburgers, hotdogs, Italian sausages, along with chips and beverages. This year this area will also feature a Popcorn Machine!! Proceeds from the sale of food will go toward supporting students who participate in Mission trips.

A "Team" of six eager members will participate in planning this event, but we can always benefit from your help! Contact Ginny Barley if you would like to participate, either in a small or grand way. We are recruiting "Team Leaders" for Yard Sale departments. That could be YOU! Thank You!

**MUSTARD SEED SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS** are available in the church office. This scholarship is for graduating 2015 high school seniors.

**EXPERIENCE EARLY CHRISTIAN WORSHIP WITH THE SENIOR HIGHS**

Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup> the Senior High Sunday School class will be exploring how the early Christians worshipped. The role play is being designed and produced by Jim Mossgraber. The class will be held in the sanctuary during second hour and the congregation is invited to attend.

**CONFIRMATION CLASS**

Our March meeting will be Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup> from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Our topic is “Faith in the World.” See you there!

**SUMMER WORK PROJECT DATES:**

**JUNIOR HIGHS: July 20-24 – Rochester**

**SENIOR HIGHS: August 2-7**

**Grand announcement!!! This year the Senior High work Project will be at (drum roll, please) ... MINC (Ministry in the North Country)!!!! Get ready to head upstate and do some awesome rehab work! More details to come.**

**YOUTH GROUP IN MARCH** (Be aware..... different times and different dates)

**JUNIOR HIGHS:**

Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup> from 6:00 – 8:00pm at Sky Zone. Bring Sky Zone socks, \$15, and get ready to jump!

Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup> – Meet at GPC at 12:30. It’s golfing time! We will head out to Glow Golf at Greece Ridge Mall and be back by 2:00. Bring \$8 and wear your craziest outfit for the black lights.

Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup> – Mall Scavenger Hunt – We’ll grab some pizza after church and head to Greece Ridge Mall for a photo scavenger hunt. See you from 11:30 – 2.

**SENIOR HIGHS:**

Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup> – Senior High Coffee and Chat. We’ll grab coffee (or hot chocolate, etc.) from 6-8pm and hear stories from our freshly-tanned Jamaica mission team. Meet at GPC before we head out to our destination. See you there!

Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> – 6 -8pm - We got snowed out in February, so it’s time for take two. Bring \$8 for bowling and shoes and meet at GPC.

**YOUTH CALENDAR**

Sunday, March 1

- 9:30am Youth Choir rehearsal
- 10:00am Worship
- 11:15am Junior and Senior High Sunday School
- 6:00-8:00pm Junior High Youth Group – Sky Zone

Tuesday, March 3

Sunday, March 8

- 7:00pm Youth Committee meeting
- 9:30am Youth Choir rehearsal
- 10:00am Worship
- 11:15am Junior and Senior High Sunday School
- 6:00-8:00pm Senior High Youth Group Coffee and Chats

Sunday, March 15

- 9:30am Youth Choir rehearsal
- 10:00am Worship
- 11:15am Junior and Senior High Sunday School
- 12:30-2:00pm Junior High Youth Group – Glow Golf

Sunday, March 22

- 9:30am Youth Choir rehearsal
- 10:00am Worship
- 11:15am Junior and Senior High Sunday School
- 6:00-8:00pm Senior High Youth Group – Bowling

Sunday, March 29

- 9:30am Youth Choir rehearsal
- 10:00am Worship
- 11:30am Junior High Mall Scavenger Hunt
- 11:30am Confirmation Class

**EASTER TULIPS**

If you would like to order a plant for display in the Sanctuary for Easter and/or donate to the Sanctuary Village in honor or memory of a loved one, please fill out the form below and send it with a check to the church office (1049 Wegman Road, Rochester, NY 14624). Orders due March 1<sup>st</sup>. Make checks payable to Gates Presbyterian Church. This year tulips will be available for \$10.00.



NAME OF DONOR (S)

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

IN HONOR OF or IN MEMORY OF (please circle appropriate phrase)

Please check appropriate donation:

Tulips \_\_\_\_\_ Sanctuary Village \_\_\_\_\_



## SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS COMMITTEE

The next Spiritual Journey will be called, “**End of Life Issues**” and will be comprised of the following three separate, but inter-connected topics or Legs, beginning in March. Ticket sales and registration will be announced in Sunday bulletins.

### **Leg One:**

Sunday, March 8 from 1:00-2:30pm in the GPC Adult Lounge

#### **Panel discussion of Helpful & Practical Tips regarding; Funerals, Memorial Services, and Finances**

Three different professionals will address one of the above topics for approximately 20 minutes, each followed with 10 minutes for Q & A.

### **Leg Two:**

Sunday, March 15, 11:30am -1:00pm, GPC Adult Lounge, Light lunch provided

#### **Workshop on Death & Grieving: Grief, Palliative Care, and Hospice**

- 1) Learn from professionals, *“What is Grief, and how Grief is unique, yet often predictable in the kinds of reactions one may go through, as they experience a loss or death.”* Gain an understanding of why these reactions are beneficial to know.
- 2) Professional expertise on: *Palliative Care and Hospice – What are they, how are they similar yet different, and when might they be necessary for some people in pain or in the end of life stage.*

This will be an educational, interactive discussion and other resources will be mentioned within GPC and our community.

### **Leg Three:**

Sunday, April 12, Rev. Melissa DeRosia, Room 2, Second Hour 11:15am

#### **Promise of Life After Death**

Faith, Heaven, After-Life. Practicing Christians vary in opinions, but a common core is we are all going to die, but heaven is for real!