

Gates Presbyterian Church

February 2023
Harbinger

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The Season of Lent

A photograph of three wooden crosses of varying heights standing on a mound of dark soil. The background is a soft, out-of-focus sunset with warm orange and yellow light filtering through trees.

Pray Fast Give

From Rev. Laura Bachmann

¹⁸ As [Jesus] walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishers. ¹⁹ And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people.” ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. (Matthew 4:18-20)

This week, I have been thinking about this simple call story describing how Peter and Andrew begin following Jesus. Two things strike me about it – that Jesus initiates everything (the brothers are just minding their own business casting their nets into the sea) and that upon hearing Jesus’ words, the two follow him without hesitation. They don’t ask for more details. They don’t first make a backup plan. They don’t consult with anyone else. They just follow. And it changes their lives in every possible way.

In our own day and age, we don’t often hear about people responding to God’s call like this. I don’t know about you, but I am not even very good at dropping everything to answer the doorbell or respond to a request from my spouse – I want to finish what I am doing first! And, all too often, we seem to think that we are in charge of generating our own calls; we forget that it is God who places that call in our hearts and leads us to follow it.

As we begin a new year, it is an excellent time to ask ourselves – where is God initiating a new call to our GPC community? And how willing are we to drop what we are doing and follow?

This week, someone asked me how you know when God is calling you. I imagine we all experience that differently, but for me, I usually realize that God is calling me because God is insistent and pretty impossible to avoid. (I know, because I have tried!) There is a certain character to the Holy Spirit’s nudging (or pushing) that is hard to resist and hard to describe. Usually, God speaks to me through other people, through my own strong sense of the need or desire for something to change or be accomplished, through the energy that surrounds a given idea or the passion that I feel for a course of action. Often, I realize it is God’s plan because I start hearing about it from multiple different people in multiple different situations that are often completely independent from each other.

Following a call is not without challenge but, in my experience, even the challenges feel different when the Holy Spirit is the one inspiring us to act. The way may be winding, but it always becomes clear eventually and the momentum usually builds as the call is lived out and God’s purposes begin to be made manifest.

This year, our challenge as a faith community, is to listen well for God’s call to us; to determine how willing we are to leave things behind and how “immediately” we are willing to depart; and then to be courageous enough to step out without knowing the outcome and even without understanding all that will be required of us along the way. The one thing we *can* count on? That Jesus will accompany us on every step of the journey.

At our annual meeting last Sunday, our session asked each of you to write down what you feel we are called to focus on and what you are most excited about in our community right now. As you ponder those questions, now is the time to ask yourself the next one too – What am I willing to contribute to the work of following this call?

Each of us has a role to play. And, together, we will pool our answers to these questions, collaborating with one another to follow God’s call into the world using all the resources that each of us brings to the work. Where, I wonder, will God take us in this new day?

Peace,

Laura

Coming Soon ... Mid-day Worship Service

This is a pilot project starting February 23 and will continue each month on the fourth Thursday, through May. The service will begin at 12:10 p.m. and will be followed by a time of fellowship (bring-your-own lunch). More details will follow soon!

From the Office ...

- March Harbinger articles are due Wednesday, February 16.
- 2022 Giving Statements went out at the end of January to those that received one the previous year. If you need one sent to you, please email Karen, office@gatespres.org

PER CAPITA

Per Capita is a set amount of money (apportionment) per member that our congregation pays to the larger Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as a religious and moral commitment. It establishes a minimum level of financial participation in the vital work of our church. With this year's commitment of **\$36.45** per member, we work together with other Presbyterian Churches in our presbytery and across the country to further the mission of Jesus Christ around the world. We benefit from the gifts, skills, vision and ministry of each other when we come together. Your Per Capita pays for the programs, training and resources that help us work together to benefit all.

If you haven't yet contributed **\$36.45** per member, please consider doing so. You can put your check in a plain envelope marked Per Capita and place in the offering basket or mail it to the church office. Labeled envelopes are available at the church.

Want to make your Per Capita contribution online? You can do so by clicking here and choosing 'Give to Per Capita' from the dropdown.	Haven't yet submitted your 2023 giving intentions card? You can now do this online via the link below: 2023 GPC Giving Intentions Card	For those that prefer to print the giving intention card and drop it at the office, you can access a printable PDF here
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There will also be a limited quantity of each available on the literature rack just outside the sanctuary.

Bible Study

Whether you are new to Bible study or consider yourself well versed, we welcome you to our small group for a time of wondering about the word and sharing our wisdom and our lives together. This year we are following the Revised Common Lectionary, studying texts which will be used in worship on the following Sundays. Tuesdays at 4:00 p.m. in room 1.

Date	Scripture	
February 7	Deuteronomy 30:15-20 Psalm 119:1-8	1 Corinthians 3:1-9 Matthew 5:21-37
February 14	Exodus 24:12-18 AND Psalm 2 OR Psalm 99	2 Peter 1:16-21 Matthew 17:1-9
February 21	Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7 Psalm 32	Romans 5:12-19 Matthew 4:1-11
February 28	Genesis 12:1-4a Psalm 121	Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 John 3:1-17



Worship Services Schedule for February

Date	Liturgist	Elder Greeter	Usher Team	Trustee Lock-Up
February 5	Barb Snaith	Sheri MacFarlane	2	Ed Coons
February 12	Graham Wohlers	Betty Blystone	3	
February 19	Jan Beutner-Shirtz	Kathy Coons	4	
February 22	Paula Sousa	Sheri MacFarlane	5	
February 26	Mary Hadley	Mary Beth MacKenzie	6	

THE COFFEE HOUSE is coming back on March 11th, and GPC needs YOU to make it happen! If you have a talent to share on-stage, or would like to help behind the scenes, please email Katie Steinmiller at kathryn.steinmiller@gmail.com. Thank you!



From the Deacons

Please keep in thought & prayer ...

- Jan Brewer's cousin Jill and her husband Ronn. Ronn had back surgery and is having a difficult recovery. Prayers for Jill as the caregiver.
- Jan Beutner Shirtz's cousin Brian in rehab and her cousin Betty, recovering from a stroke.
- Roy Smith's grandparents, Hugh and Eleni Dudley, recovering in Strong Hospital after a serious car accident.
- Eric Paquin, a recent kidney transplant recipient, is now home recovering from Covid.
- Mary Beth MacKenzie brother, Tom, recovering at home.
- Barbara (Babbie) Mosher having trouble adjusting to her adult care facility at Wesley Gardens.
- Tom Ward's mom, Pat Tripoli, transitioning to a care facility from rehab.



Our sincere sympathy to ... the family of Rev. Bob Kaiser on his passing on January 3rd ... Ginny Smith and family on the passing of Ginny's brother, Bill Clark, on January 8th ... the family of Virginia Ryan who passed away on December 27th ... the family of Dorace Belknap who passed away on January 2nd ... the family and friends of Suzanne Waterman who passed away on November 27th.

Continued prayers for ... Buz Bauman, John Belt, Debbie Schnabel, Hannah Walker, Angelika Alvarez's brother, E.J., Janice Bilohlavek's niece, Tyanna, Peter & Irene Derry, Fran and Bob Paro's sister-in-law, Patricia Withrow, Whit Beckett's brother, Bob, Eric Paquin, Art Brooks, Julie Seide, Laura Nolan, Miss Carol Brown, Paula Sousa's sister-in-law, Maureen Munroe, and Robert Reynolds.



Do you or someone you know need a ride to church on Sundays? Contact Paula Sousa to get your name added to the list (748-1920 or psousa0728@gmail.com). Anyone willing to help with picking people up are also asked to contact Paula.

Prayer Shawls

Anyone who needs a prayer shawl for themselves or for a friend or family member, can contact Dorothy Mundt at 247-3782 or email quilter2@twc.com.

From Loreen Kaiser

On January 3, 2023 our wonderful dad and grandpa passed away at the age of 88. He will be greatly missed. A memorial service will be held early this spring. If you would like to share a memory, story, or photo that might be displayed at the memorial please send it to lkaiser106@gmail.com or Loreen Kaiser, 157 Maple Ave, Troy, NY 12180. A full obituary can be found at <https://www.jamesrgray.com/obituary/RobertBob-Kaiser>

Notes from GPC members

Dear Friends,

Thanks to those of you who have offered up prayers for my brother Bill over many years. His health issues were many but thankfully he is now at peace and safe in the arms of God. Prayerfully, Ginny Smith and family.

From the family of Sonia Davis,

Thank you for being steadfast in your support of our whole family as we walked this walk together. We have felt your caring all along the way. The many messages of love sent not only to Cottage Grove but to our family as well in these past years meant so much, as did the many expressions of sympathy in these last weeks. Mom and Dad were very proud of their long membership and involvement in this church and felt fortunate to have made so many good friends here. Thank you for the part you played in their lives.

MISSION NEWS

The Mission Team is grateful for our generous and caring congregation. As we move forward in 2023, we are excited to continue our outreach to those in need and appreciate your partnership! What's happening...



- Starting on Ash Wednesday, through the Lenten season, we will bring back the Lenten Wall of Food. We will build our wall of non-perishable food in the narthex, where the visual will remind us of our neighbors who are dealing with food insecurity, and a simple way we can contribute to help meeting their needs. Contributions will go to SWEM and supplement our other food ministries when needed.
- The February collection for non-perishable food items, toiletries and underwear for men/women/children will be Saturday, February 25. This collection is advertised and open to the community. We have seen some people return monthly with contributions, as well as our faithful church members.
- The Weekend Food Ministry continues to collect food for the school backpack program at Neil Armstrong. There is a bin for donations in the narthex with a list of suggested items. This has been well received and the need is increasing. The committee will meet on February 12th to review the pilot and make decisions going forward.
- Coats, hats, mittens and scarves have been delivered. Some were delivered to St Joseph's and others were delivered to the YWCA. We are so thankful for your contributions, especially with the harsh weather we experienced.
- And thanks to our "faithful group" who monthly pick up boxes of food from the People's Pantry and deliver to families in our community.
- The mission team is in conversation on budget line items for 2023, and how best to use the allotted 10% for mission. No expenses were approved in January. We will make decisions at our February meeting after a budget is approved.
- Our next meeting is Monday, February 6th at 7:00 via zoom. We'd love to have you join us! The office will be able to give you the link.

Share Your Story - Members of our congregation are making a difference through their volunteer work. Please contact Sally Christensen (703-6238 or sjmcc02300@gmail.com) to share your story.

From Sally Christensen

Steve, Carol Anne Strawbridge, and I joined a group of six folks from First Presbyterian Church of Pittsford for a week of hands-on mission work in New Bern, North Carolina. The work was coordinated by Craven County Disaster Recovery Alliance (<https://cravendra.org>), an organization dedicated to long-term disaster relief in this coastal area that experienced massive hurricane and flooding damage in 2016 and 2018. "CCDRA's vision is to continue assisting those still affected from Hurricane Matthew and Hurricane Florence with long-term recovery and unmet needs assistance and to be an ongoing resource for all future disasters that will happen again in Craven Country."

Our work focused on 4 different locations. CCDRA tries to repurpose building materials of all kinds – our first day was spent removing a whole medical clinic full of cabinets, counters, and sinks that will be put to use in homes and facilities where those items were damaged beyond repair. The rest of the week focused on work in 3 homes. Miss Barbara's home was flooded during Hurricane Florence, when water 6 feet deep washed through her street. Most of the repair work on her home was done, but we were able to complete some painting and electrical work. She is an elderly veteran, wheelchair bound with multiple health problems, yet striving to maintain a home for herself, her chronically ill daughter, and grandson.

We met Miss Mary, whose home received roof damage during the storm in 2018. She took out a loan and paid a contractor to repair the roof. She became the victim of contractor fraud – the work was never done, her entire home filled with black mold and had to be torn down. Through the efforts of CCDRA and other agencies, Miss Mary now has a

safe, brand-new home on the site of her old house. We were able to help her assemble some furniture, but most of our time with Miss Mary was spent enjoying each other's company and her beautiful, optimistic outlook on life.

Mr. Eddy is Miss Mary's next-door neighbor. His trailer home was damaged in 2018, and he qualified for disaster assistance. The trailer then burned down, and he no longer qualified for help. He accepted the offer of an old, dilapidated trailer and had it moved to the site of the burned-out one. CCDRA became aware of Mr. Eddy's situation when he asked if there were any plywood scraps at Miss Mary's building site that he could use to cover the holes in his floor. Other CCDRA volunteer groups already rebuilt and insulated part of the trailer floor, but there was still much to be done. In 4 days, our team ripped out and rebuilt the rest of the floor – new framing, insulation, subfloor, and vinyl plank flooring. The plumbing was redone so that the tub, sinks and washer no longer run from the trailer directly onto the ground. All of the electrical outlets are now functioning. Everything in Mr. Eddy's home, including the trailer itself, have been given to him by neighbors and friends, yet he has taken in his developmentally challenged cousin and given her a home. His sense of humor kept us all in good spirits as we worked!

Me personally? I became fast friends with the Pittsford Presbyterian team. I learned some new skills – floor installation, how to use a chop saw and a circular saw, how to install trim molding. Maybe I will use these skills again, maybe I won't. What I hope remains with me is the reawakening of interest in hands-on mission work. It is so inspiring to meet people who have been through so much, yet maintain their faith and optimism that life is good. "Go where God sends you, do what he wants you to do" – words to live by.

For pictures and more details about our week in New Bern, see Dan Harrison's daily posts on the [Pittsford Presbyterian Facebook page](#)



SWEM Donations

SWEM is grateful for any and all donations of non-perishable food items, right now they are in particular need of peanut butter, spaghetti sauce, fruit and canned chili & stew.

Thanks to all of you who are helping to keep the SWEM shelves stocked!



The Presbytery of Genesee Valley invites you to

Family Winter Fun Day

Saturday, February 4,
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Hazelwood Lodge at
Ellison Park



Who can predict the weather, but we are encouraging people to dress warmly and bring their winter gear for **skating, sledding, skiing, hiking, and snow play!** We have the lodge reserved, and we will be **servicing soup and bread, hot chocolate, and bottled water** throughout the day.

We will have a brief moment for **outdoor worship** at noon, but otherwise it's all play!

Price: Free

Value: Priceless

Anyone and everyone are welcome to come for 40 minutes or 4 hours, but **we do need you to make a reservation** if you plan to consume any of the free food or drinks.

[Register here](#)

Ellison Park is located on the east side of Rochester, reachable from the Blossom Road exit off of I-590. We will post signs that morning.

Questions, weather predictions, well-wishes from Cancun? Please call or text Rev. Jim Renfrew (585-813-2934).

Congregational Learning Day – March 4, 2023

**Offering 12 Workshops–5 of which are given twice–and
Worship Online**

**For New and Experienced Church Leaders and Church
Members**

Schedule:

- 9 – 10:45 a.m. Introduction & Class 1
- 10:45 – 11 Break
- 11 – 11:30 Worship
- 11:30 – 1 p.m. Class 2



Worship will be led by Rev. Laura Norris Buisch and members of the Presbytery of Western New York with a focus on the “Litany of Repentance” used in 225 GA worship in July 2022.

Workshop descriptions and registration form [here](#)

Registration deadline: 2/24/23

Flyer and worship descriptions also posted to the large bulletin at the end of the hallway.

February

Sunday, February 5	9:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m.	Choir Rehearsal (1) Worship, Communion Jr. Choir Rehearsal (2,3) Public Worship (1)
Monday, February 6	7:00 p.m.	Mission Team Meeting (Zoom)
Tuesday, February 7	1:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Prayer Shawl Group Bible Study (1) Deacons (1)
Thursday, February 9	7:00 p.m.	Generosity Team Meeting (Zoom)
Sunday, February 12	9:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m.	Choir Rehearsal (1) Worship Jr. Choir Rehearsal (2,3) Weekend Food Ministry Meeting (1)
Monday, February 13	1:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	Library Ministry Trustees (Zoom)
Tuesday, February 14	4:00 p.m.	Bible Study (1)
Wednesday, February 15	10:30 a.m.	March Harbinger Due Rebecca Circle (16)
Friday, February 17	9:00 a.m.	St. Joe's (quarterly) Meal Prep
Sunday, February 19	9:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m.	Choir Rehearsal (1) Worship Jr. Choir Rehearsal (2,3)
Tuesday, February 21	4:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Bible Study (1) Session (1)
Wednesday, February 22	7:00 p.m.	Ash Wednesday Service, <i>Communion</i>
Thursday, February 23	12:10 p.m.	Mid-Day Worship Service
Saturday, February 25	11:00 a.m.	Mission Collection
Sunday, February 26	9:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m.	Choir Rehearsal (1) Worship Jr. Choir Rehearsal (2,3)
Monday, February 27	1:00 p.m.	Library Ministry
Tuesday, February 28	4:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Bible Study (1) Personnel (Zoom)

