

NORTH STAR

October 2024 - Making Disciples...
Making a Difference.

Worship: Sunday at 9:30 am
North Presbyterian Church
921 College Avenue
Elmira, NY 14901-2048
www.northpres.church
Phone: 607-734-2977

In This Issue

- Letter from Pastor Hansen: Page 2
- Worship Volunteers: Page 3
- Chancel Flower Orders: Page 3
- We Are Family: Page 4
 - In Our Thoughts & Prayers, Send a Card*
- Children & Youth: Page 5
 - Letter from our Director of Children & Youth Ministries*
- Worship Information: Pages 6-7
 - Special Reminders: Page 6*
 - Contact information: Page 7*
 - Special Offerings: Page 7*
 - Food Pantry: Page 7*
- Reminders: Page 8
 - Bible Study & Sunday School*
 - Music Rehearsals*
- Missions, Fellowship: Page 9
- Come to the Table: Page 10
- Trunk or Treat: Page 11
- Caregiving Tools: Page 12
- Meyer Scholarship, Food Pantry: Page 13
- "The Chosen": Page 14
- Thomas Keesecker Concert, Congrats!: Page 15
- Border Buddies: Pages 16 - 17
- Communications: Pages 18 - 21
- October Events: Pages 22 - 23
- Board of Session: Pages 24 - 25
- Calendar: Page 26

October, 2024
A Letter from Pastor Hansen

As I am writing this, we are in the midst of hosting the Matsiko World Orphan Choir; I am also thinking about hymns and sermons, a worship service at Woodbrook, and everything else, and I am thanking God that I do not do any of this alone. To host the choir this time around, we have partnered with (in alphabetical order): Elmira College, First Presbyterian Elmira, Monumental Baptist Church, New Beginnings UMC, Ray of Hope Church, and the Solidarity Committee of the Roman Catholic Parish of In the Most Holy Name of Jesus. In addition, the Elmira-Corning Chapter of the NAACP will be making a donation to the choir and the Mayor of Elmira will be issuing a proclamation.

None of this would have happened without all of you and a lot of other people in other congregations and organizations making connections, asking for help, and donating time, energy, and money. It is my hope that this is just the beginning of future collaborations to do really cool stuff for Elmira and the surrounding communities.

One of the questions that I have heard asked more than once is: “if your congregation closed tomorrow, would anyone in the community miss you?” Another version of the question is a bit harsher; it asks whether anyone in the community would notice. As many of you know, our building is incredibly busy. From September through May, our building is in use every day of the week. Kindermusik, Alcoholics Anonymous, Red Cross Blood Drives, TOPS (Taking Off Pounds Sensibly), Yoga, BOCES, Thursday Morning Musicales, the Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes, and others use our building. We are definitely part of our community and all of you make our participation and presence in the community possible.

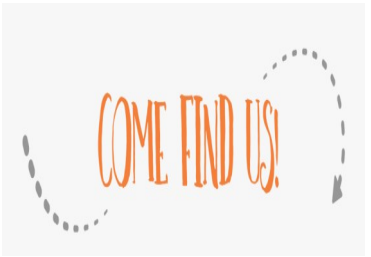
It is when we come together and work together that we are at our best. When we talk about being part of the body of Christ, this is what we are talking about. It is the communion of the Holy Spirit, the community whose members respond to the Holy Spirit by coming together, that creates and sustains the body of which neither you nor I are the head of, but that Christ is the head of.

To be a Christian is to have faith in Christ Jesus; that is absolutely true. It is also to follow Christ by living out that faith by joining together with others to serve our communities, to collaborate with others to make life easier for those in need, to collaborate to provide space for others to use and thrive in, and to come together to encourage and support one another in our efforts to follow Christ in our lives.

We do none of this by ourselves. Not only is it simply not possible, but it would also deny the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit and our calling to do this together. As the words on the wall behind our welcome center read: “So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” (Romans 12:5). Because when we, through Christ and the Holy Spirit, become one body and join with others in our communities, we are able to do some pretty cool things that make a big difference in the lives of others, and making that difference is the coolest thing of all.

Warmly in Christ,

Pastor Evan



<https://www.facebook.com/North-Presbyterian-Church>



<https://www.northpres.church/>



Chancel Flower Orders

If you would like to donate Chancel flowers (suggested donation of \$42), please contact Lori Lee at 607-739-3176.

Available Sundays for October and November 2024 are:

October 13 and November 3, 17 & 24.

Please take the flowers home to enjoy after the service.

If you are not in the sanctuary on your chosen date, we will be in touch with you to make a plan.



October Worship Volunteers

Tech Booth

October 6	Worship at First Pres., Elm.
October 13	Steve Allison
October 20	Bill Furnas
October 27	Bill Furnas

Ushers

October 6	Worship at First Pres., Elm.
October 13	Tim & Cheryl Allison
October 20	Nancy Isaacs, Kate Hansen
October 27	Kurt & Cindy Kalweit

Communion

October 6	Worship at First Pres., Elm.
October 20	Steve Allison, Linda Palmer, Jim Mosher Nancy Isaacs, Lori Lee

Greeters

October 6	Worship at First Pres., Elm.
October 13	Janice Williams
October 20	Linda Palmer
October 27	Gerry Harding

Youth Usher

October 6	Worship at First Pres., Elm.
October 13	Payton Hoskins-Thomas
October 20	Paityn Perry
October 27	Annalyse Ferriter

Counters

October 6	Worship at First Pres., Elm.
October 13	Dolores Cummings, Janice Williams
October 20	Allie Sevey, Wendy Swatling
October 27	Annette Stevens, Jim Mosher

Wee Worship

October 6	Worship at First Pres., Elm.
October 13	Karen Wilson, Barb Duryea
October 20	Liz Wilson, Wally Ferriter
October 27	Ann Motley, Payton Hoskins-Thomas

Worship Assistant

October 6	Worship at First Pres., Elm.
October 13	Suzie Hoskins
October 20	Linda Palmer
October 27	Tim Allison

Coffee Hour

October 6	Worship at First Pres., Elm.
October 13	Karen Wilson, Liz Wilson
October 20	Cindy Kalweit, Annette Stevens
October 27	Barb Duryea, Cheryl Allison

Youth Reader

October 13	David Hansen
------------	--------------

Together we make a Family



October 6:
Anne Beattie

October 13:
Brenda & William Bobby

October 20:
Alexander Bottcher

October 27:
Laurie Burdick

**Jesus tells us
to pray without ceasing
for the good of God's people.**

Our Homebound Friends

October 6:
Nancy Varnum
2111 Grand Central Ave.
Horseheads, NY 14845

October 13:
Maxine Burroughs
Chemung County Nursing Facility
Rm. #425
103 Washington St.
Elmira, NY 14901

October 20:
Alice Kain
Gardner Rd., Apt. 366D
Horseheads, NY 14845

October 27:
Joan Barneski
1008 Lincoln St.
Elmira, NY 14901

*Please send
a card to
our
Homebound
Friends*



**We would like to remind everyone
that they are welcome to attend
Session Meetings.**

**If you are interested in attending one,
please contact the church office.**



Weekly Prayer Chain Email

Did you know that you can pray or be
prayed for? You are invited to let the church
office know how you would like to be
involved.

We are stronger together.

Children & Youth Ministry



Children and Youth Ministry October 2024

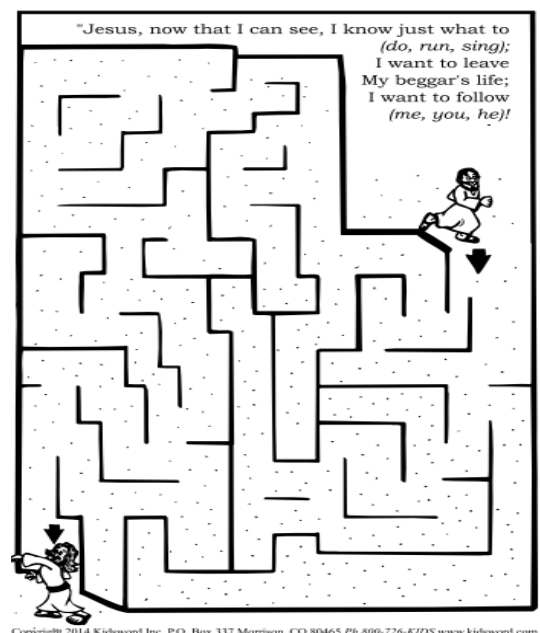
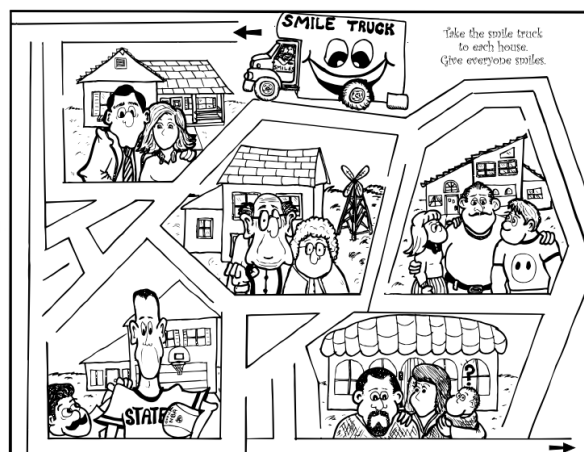
Happy Fall Everyone! September proved to be a busy month with getting back into our routine attending Sunday School and everyday craziness. We had a great time at Rally Day kicking off the new season. Thank you to everyone who made Rally Day and the start of Sunday School a success. With kids being back in school and attending extra-curricular activities, such as dance, sports, Kindermusik, etc., we know that extra days are few and far between. We hope that you are able to find some time in your busy schedule to join us for a few fun, upcoming, October activities.

On October 27th, we will be combining Sunday School classes to spread a little Halloween cheer. We will have snacks, games, and a craft. Elmira First Presbyterian is also hosting a Trunk or Treat that afternoon from 12:30-2:30. Kids are invited to wear their Halloween costumes and enjoy an afternoon of Trunk or Treating.

We are also gearing up for the holiday season. Youth Ministry will be partnering with the NPC food pantry, along with First Pres., to bring a little cheer during the Christmas season to children of our food pantry clients. We will be assembling Christmas stockings, as we have done in years past. We will be collecting donations from October 13th- November 10th. We will have a list of items that are needed to help fill the stockings. Please be on the lookout for this information in the bulletin if you are interested in donating. The stockings will be for children, ages 1-12.

Here's to hoping for a great October filled with wonderful Fall activities and memories made.

Warm Wishes,
Allie Sevey & Liz Wilson



Copyright 2014 Kidsword Inc. P.O. Box 337 Morrison, CO 80465 Ph 800-726-KIDS www.kidsword.com

Worship INFORMATION

- If you would like to be prayed for or know someone who would like to be prayed for, please contact the church office. A prayer request will be sent to our prayer partners. If you would like someone to pray with you, a request can be sent to one of our prayer partners or Pastor Evan and someone will connect with you.
- Remember to check our bulletin board for NPC and Community Announcements/Information.
- Lost something? Be sure to check the lost-and-found bin in the church office.



Parking Lot Worship:

- Please use only the North Entrance (towards Roe Ave.)
- Please tune your radio to 1700AM.
- Please exit through the South Entrance (towards the college).



Sanctuary Worship:

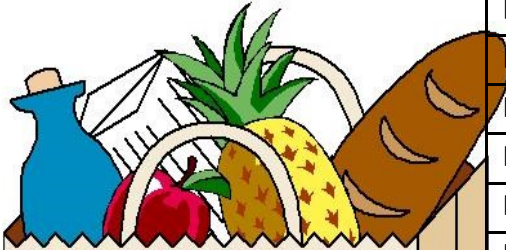
Please join us for Worship on Sunday mornings at 9:30 am.

Check out our facebook page or church website for special services throughout the year, including Monthly Wednesday evening services and weekly Lent and Advent services.

Worship
WITH US ONLINE

Zoom Worship

- Zoom service link will be emailed each week for those who would like to participate via Zoom.



SHOPPING LIST

October Food Pantry

Shopping List:

The following items are needed this month for the Food Pantry:

Instant Mashed Potatoes

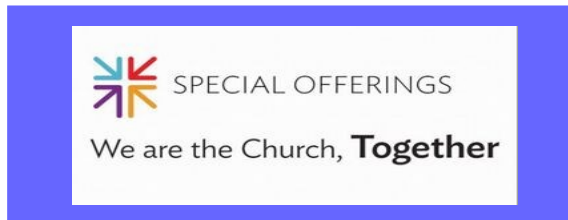
Stuffing Mix

Canned Gravy

In addition, if your dentist gives you toothbrushes, floss, or toothpaste, and you don't need it, the pantry does! Monetary donations are also welcome.

Committee/Coordinator	Email Address
Audit	audit@northpres.church
Buildings & Grounds	campus@northpres.church
Building Use	building_use@northpres.church
Clerk of Session	session@northpres.church
Deacons	deacons@northpres.church
Education	education@northpres.church
Fellowship	fellowship@northpres.church
Finance	finance@northpres.church
Mission & Outreach	mission_outreach@northpres.church
Nominating	nominating@northpres.church
Staff Relations	staff_relations@northpres.church
Tech & Communications	tech_com@northpres.church
Treasurer	Financial_sec@northpres.church
Worship & Music	worship@northpres.church

Staff	Email Address
Church Administrator	office@northpres.church
Director of Youth Ministries	youth@northpres.church
Music Director	music@northpres.church
Organist	organist@northpres.church
Pastor	pastor@northpres.church



Special Offering for October:
Congregational Care Fund

Meet the Staff

Pastor Evan Hansen

Pastor

Open Door Office Hours: T & W 1:30-4pm

Paul Holland

Music Director

Sharon Reynolds

Organist

Randy Cornell

Pianist

Deb Stamp

Director of Children
& Youth Ministry

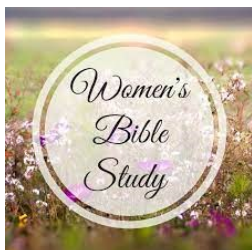
Gretchen Duffy

Office Administrator

Reminder

Important Reminders:

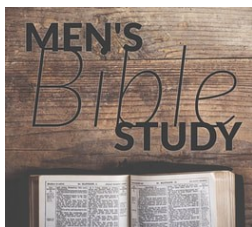
- The church office needs your contact information. Please let us know if anything has changed.
- If you need to contact the church office for any reason, please feel free to email office@northpres.church or call (607) 734-2977 Tues-Fri 9 am to 3:30 pm.



Women's Bible Study
will resume in October and meet Tuesday evenings at 6:00 pm. For more information, please contact Suzie Hoskins or the church office.



Wednesday Noon Bible Study
is studying the Book of Acts 13-28. If you would like more information or study materials, please contact Bobbi Furnas or the church office.



Men's Bible Study
meets Thursday afternoons at 4:00 pm. If you would like more info, please contact Kurt Kalweit, Steve Allison or the church office.



Sunday SCHOOL
ROOTED IN GOD'S WORD
Growing in Faith Together



Adult Sunday School

Sunday School for all ages meets at 11:00 am weekly.



Praise Band
Praise Band rehearsals are on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm.



Music MINISTRY
Chancel Choir rehearsals are on Wednesdays at 7:30 pm.



CHILDREN'S CHOIR
The Good News Singers' practices are on Sundays at 10:45 am.

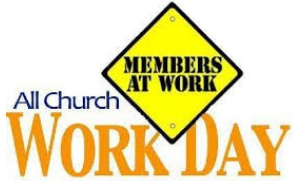


Bell Choir rehearsals are on Wednesdays at 6:15 pm.





Fellowship



There will be a Church Work Day on
Saturday, October 12 at 9:00 am.

There will be a Saturday breakfast on October 12 at
8:00 am.



There will be a Fellowship Dinner on Wednesday, October
2, at 5:30 pm. Dinner will include:

- *Pulled Pork
- *Baked Beans
- *Cole Slaw
- *Ginger Cookies
- *Coffee/Water

A sign-up sheet is on the Welcome Desk. Please sign up to
reserve your spot by noon on October 1.



Second Place East, Inc.



**October donation
Request:**

Paper Towels



with special guest
Rev. Dr. Marielis
Barreto-Hernández



This World Communion Sunday join us as
Rev. Dr. Marielis Barreto-Hernández,
PCUSA's International Peacemaker from
Puerto Rico, leads us in worship.

First Presbyterian Church of Elmira
Sunday, October 6 - 10:30 a.m.

Light luncheon to follow. Reservations
required by October 1. Please RSVP to
office@firstpreselmira.org or 607-734-1614.



First Presbyterian Church
Elmira

1054 West Clinton Street, Elmira NY 14905
607-734-1614 - firstpreselmira.org





CALLING ALL TRUNKSTERS!

It's that time of year again, and YCE needs your trunks. We need a minimum of 6 trunks to schedule this event.

When: October 27 - 12:30 - 2:30 PM

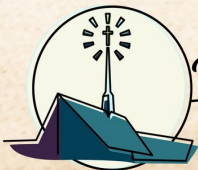
What: Any child friendly themed trunk

Who: First Pres Family and Friends

Where: First Pres Elmira

Lunch: Hot dogs for all volunteers

Contact: Allison Sevey or Liz Wilson



First Presbyterian Church
Elmira

1054 West Clinton Street, Elmira NY 14905
607-734-1614 - firstpreselmira.org



Powerful Tools FOR Caregivers

Sponsored by
Chemung County Department of Aging and Long Term Care

Caregiving can be a challenge, but it's easier when you're prepared.



This six-week class series gives you the confidence and support to better care for your loved one – and yourself.

The Chemung County Department of Aging and Long Term Care Presents:

Powerful Tools for Caregivers classes

Fridays In-person

September 20
September 27
October 4
October 11
October 18
October 24
2024

2:30pm-4:00pm
425 Pennsylvania Ave
Room 122
Elmira, NY

The training is free however pre-registration is required. Seats are limited. Please call (607) 737-5520 No later than September 18, 2024

Are you a caregiver?

Caregiving takes on many forms. You may help a relative or friend with:

- Financial concerns
- Legal or insurance issues
- Transportation
- Housekeeping
- Grocery shopping
- Personal care
- Medications
- Emotional support
- Doctor appointments
- Social activities
- Living arrangements

Whether you provide care for a spouse, partner, parent or friend either at home or in a care facility; whether down the block or miles away, yours is an important role. This course is for caregivers like you!

What is Powerful Tools for Caregivers?

The class will give you tools to help:

- Reduce Stress
- Improve Self Confidence
- Manage time, set goals, and solve problems
- Communicate in challenging situations
- Make tough decisions
- Locate helpful resources

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a class series that supports caregivers in taking care of yourself while caring for someone else. By taking care of your own health and well-being, you become a better caregiver.

Six classes held once a week are led by experienced class leaders.

Class participants are given *The Caregiver Helpbook* to accompany the class and provide additional caregiver resources.



When you take care of yourself, everyone benefits.



This program is funded by the Chemung County Department of Mental Hygiene & Department of Aging and Long Term Care, the New York State Office for the Aging, and the Older Americans Act.



www.powerfultoolsforcaregivers.org

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is owned and managed by Iowa State University of Science and Technology.



2024 Meyer Scholarship

Brenna Wilson has been named as the recipient of this year's Meyer Scholarship from North Presbyterian Church.

Brenna is the daughter of Karen and Ed Wilson, and the granddaughter of Barb Duryea. She graduated from Horseheads High School and is attending Corning Community College, majoring in liberal arts. She hopes to attend SUNY Canton to study mortuary science.

During high school, Brenna participated in NPC youth group activities and Camp Whitman, was a Wee Worship volunteer, and worked at youth-sponsored church dinners. Both during and after her graduation, Brenna volunteered to work in the Food Pantry numerous times.

In her scholarship application, Brenna noted that she has been a member of NPC since birth, and that "grandma Barb inspires me" and makes her volunteer activities more meaningful.

Please join with the Meyer Scholarship Committee and the NPC Session in congratulating Brenna and supporting her as she moves forward.



Once again, the Food Pantry is planning to hand out Thanksgiving turkeys (donated through the Food Bank) to as many of our customers as possible. And again, we want folks to have the full holiday meal -- mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing, yams, green beans and cranberry sauce.

As you shop over the next few months, please look for these items and, if possible, grab a few to donate to our Thanksgiving Dinner Bags.

As always, thank you for your generosity to the hungry living in our community.

Pat



SHOW TIME ELMIRA

PRESENTS

The CHOSEN

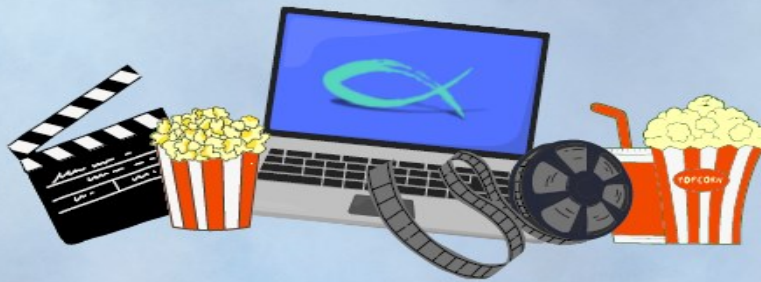
📍 **Location:** First Presbyterian Church of Elmira
1054 W. Clinton St. Elmira, NY 14905

📅 **Dates:** Saturday afternoons, Oct 5 - Nov 23

🕒 **Time:** 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM

Get ready to dive into the epic saga of "The Chosen" with our first screening on Saturday, October 5th at 4:30 PM! Join us every Saturday at this time to catch all of Season One, ending on November 23rd. That's 8 chances to get together to enjoy, explore and discuss this fantastic, ground-breaking series.

Gather your friends and family and mark your calendars for this unforgettable adventure of friendship and faith.
Can't wait to see you there!



**The First Presbyterian Church
North Presbyterian Church
And Elmira Community Leaders**

*are embarking on an exciting journey together,
and we'd love for you to join us!*

What?

We're diving into the acclaimed series "**The Chosen.**" This groundbreaking show beautifully portrays the life of Jesus and those around Him.

**But here's the best part:
it's not just for one faith—it's for everyone.**

Why?

Because we believe that stories have the power to unite us.

Whether you're a person of faith, curious about spirituality, or simply appreciate compelling narratives, "The Chosen" invites us all to explore universal themes like forgiveness, friendship, and transformation.

How?

Join us for weekly discussions, where we'll watch episodes together, share insights, and learn from each other. No pressure, —just an open-hearted exploration.

Thomas Keesecker
in Concert



First Presbyterian of Big Flats
95 Main St., Big Flats, NY
Friday, October 4, 2024
7:00 PM | Freewill offering

Thomas Keesecker will share music from his bestselling piano collections in a 75-minute concert. Keesecker, a composer and church musician as well as performer, is known around the country for his sensitive, delightful, and meditative piano arrangements of hymns. At this concert, we'll be able to sing some of them together, as well as listen to his interpretations. The hymns will be interspersed with poetry by Mary Oliver and Wendell Berry, two of the most beloved and profound poets of the 20th and 21st centuries. CDs of his music will be available for purchase after the concert.

Tom retired in 2019 after serving as a church musician for over 40 years in Lutheran and Roman Catholic parishes in Virginia, Montana, and Maryland. His sacred music is published by MorningStar, Augsburg Fortress, Choristers Guild, Concordia, and GIA. He studied at the Berklee College of Music in Boston and the Catholic University School of Music in Washington, D.C. He mixes classical technique, jazz improvisation, Celtic and folk music influences in his arrangements. His music may be listened to on Amazon Music and YouTube.



Please congratulate Payton Hoskins-Thomas for being selected to play in the Region 15 Area All-State Band this Fall. This is a huge honor and speaks to how well she plays the clarinet. She is one of only three Elmira School District 7-9th graders who were selected.

If interested, the concert is November 2 at 2:00 pm at the Genesee Valley Central School in Belmont, NY. Tickets may be purchased at the door.

Way to go Payton!





**BORDER BUDDIES
MINISTRIES**

*Bringing the heart of Christ to
the heart of Honduras.*

3rd Annual Run Like A Rhino 5K/10K Walk/Run



*Border Buddies Ministries
Fundraiser*



Saturday October 26, 2024
10K: 9:00AM, 5K 9:30 AM
\$30 Adults, Kids 12 under \$10
Register at borderbuddies5k.com

Catherine Valley Trail
170 Huck Finn Rd
Horseheads, NY 14845

Fundraising for the construction efforts by Border Buddies Ministries, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to continue rebuilding classrooms in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.



So many of you have written to me and are praising the Lord Jesus for all the work that has been accomplished at the new School. We are Praising Jesus as well for all that He has provided for us to get this far. The project has come to a stop until we receive more donations towards the work that needs to be done like roofing, wiring, plastering, furnishing the kitchen so the children can have daily lunches, windows, doors and so much more.

One way since Covid-19 hit back in 2020 to support the construction and moving forward in helping the public schools in Honduras is supporting the 5k/10k.

We hope and pray that you can sign up and walk or run the 5k or 10k to help support the building projects that we are involved in.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**BORDER BUDDIES
Annual Run Like A Rhino**

Date: October 26
Time: 9:30am

COMPLIMENTARY PRIZE PACKAGE GIVEAWAY!

All registered Adult Participants will receive an entry into these 2 drawings.
Winners Do Not need to be Present to Win!

First is a 2-night stay in beautiful Lake Placid. Scenic Views of Mirror Lake in the heart of downtown.

Second is Upstate NY Fitness, online coaching, and race experience package.

Both sponsored by Confluence Running.

Please go to links below to register.

Run Like A Rhino (runsignup.com)

<https://www.borderbuddies5k.com/>

Michael and Glenda Miller
Missionaries for Border Buddies Ministries Inc.
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
<http://www.borderbuddies.org>

COMMUNICATION

Grace to You

By Ethan Raath

One day a young mother wanted to talk about her reawakening faith. In the course of the conversation, I suggested that God's Spirit was at work in her life, trying to get her attention, trying to "woo" her.

Reflecting on this image later, she said, "I was really tickled by the idea of God courting me. I have this image of God sitting patiently on the swing bench on the porch, while I'm upstairs trying to fix my hair and finish my makeup. I guess it's time I came downstairs and invited God in."



Grace is God's goodwill and favor reaching out to redeem us.

God's grace is like that — God "woos" us, calls us into a relationship of love. God's grace *draws* us to God, *justifies* us by faith in Jesus Christ, and *sanctifies* and empowers us by the Holy Spirit.

Grace is defined as favor, blessing, or goodwill offered by one who does not need to do so. It is unearned and undeserved favor. In our sinful condition as humans, undeserving as we are of God's love, it is God's goodwill and favor reaching out to redeem us.

Covenant grace — God's pursuing love

Covenant grace is God's love pursuing us and calling us into a relationship of love. The early Reformers spoke of *predestination* as God's grace selecting those who would be saved. But predestination in this sense does not take into account our free will, our freedom to accept or reject God's offer of a relationship, or the fact that grace is freely offered to all. Scripture must be interpreted in the overall light of God's love, and we affirm that "the Lord is not slow about his promise, ... but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

The *Westminster Confession of Faith* also affirms this:

Concerning those who are saved in Christ, the doctrine of God's eternal decree is held in harmony with the doctrine of [God's] love for all [humankind], [God's] gift of [God's] Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and [God's] readiness to bestow [God's] saving grace on all who seek it; that concerning those who perish, the doctrine of God's eternal decree is held in harmony with the doctrine that God desires not the death of any sinner, but has provided in Christ a salvation sufficient for all, adapted to all, and freely offered in the gospel to all; that men [and women] are fully responsible for their treatment of God's gracious offer; that [God's] decree hinders no [one] from accepting that offer; and that no [one] is condemned except on the ground of his [or her] sin.

With this understanding of grace, we are *all* predestined to be saved if we repent of our sins and accept by faith the relationship of love that God offers to us.

A covenant is a binding agreement between two parties. In the covenant God established with the people of Israel, we see God calling, rescuing and pursuing the Israelites in order to establish a covenant relationship with them. The basis of this covenant is spelled out in Exodus 19:4-6: "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples ... You shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation."

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s "Brief Statement of Faith" affirms this promise:



COMMUNICATION

*In sovereign love God created the world good
and makes everyone equally in God's image,
male and female, of every race and people,
to live as one community.
But we rebel against God;
we hide from our Creator. . . .
Yet God acts with justice and mercy
to redeem creation.
In everlasting love,
the God of Abraham and Sarah
chose a covenant people
to bless all families of the earth.*

There are a number of illustrations of covenant grace in the Bible: Noah (Genesis 9:8-13), Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3), Moses (Exodus 19:3-6), David (2 Samuel 23:5). To the prophet Jeremiah, God declared that the day would come when a new covenant would be established, and the purposes of God would be imprinted on the hearts and minds of people (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Jesus fulfilled this covenant promise, declaring that his death would be the fulfillment of the new covenant, by which all people can freely enter into a relationship with God, a covenant built on faith rather than law.

I remember seeing, as a young boy, a familiar picture of Christ knocking at a door in a garden wall. On the door was the symbol of a heart. It wasn't until many years later that I realized that the door did not have a handle. It had to be opened from the inside. Covenant grace is God's persistent knocking at our heart's door until we open it to receive God.

Covenant grace is God's action and presence in our lives from the earliest moments of our life, pursuing us in love until the moment that the covenant relationship is confirmed at our spiritual rebirth.

Justifying grace — God's saving love

The God who pursues us is also the God who saves us. Covenant grace is the work of God calling us into a relationship prior to the moment of salvation. Justifying grace is the work of God at the moment of salvation.

To justify means to put right, to vindicate. When we feel we have been wrongfully accused, we may try to "justify our actions." We want to set the record straight, to put things right.

We experience justifying grace when we are restored to a right relationship with God. This does not happen by our own effort, but through God's favor revealed in Jesus Christ, in the death of Christ on the cross. Scripture reminds us of the total inability of humankind to prove acceptable to God. In the Old Testament we read about repeated rituals of atonement for sin and attempts to keep the Law of God by following religious custom and teachings. But human effort was never enough.

The prophet Isaiah declared: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (53:6). And the Apostle Paul says the Law simply made people more aware of sin and of the powerlessness of human effort to remain sinless (Romans 7:7-13).

We are justified, or brought into a right relationship with God, through the grace of a loving God. Because of God's love for us, Jesus Christ took sin upon himself—became the full and final sacrifice for the sins of the world. We are saved by God's justifying grace.

*Jesus was crucified,
suffering the depths of human pain
and giving his life for the sins of the world.*



(continued)



*God raised this Jesus from the dead,
vindicating his sinless life,
breaking the power of sin and evil,
delivering us from death to life eternal.*
— A Brief Statement of Faith

This saving grace is powerfully expressed in the simple, familiar statement of John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

A friend of mine, a very committed Christian, lives his faith every day. He is faithful to the church through good times and bad. He goes to the church every morning to have his devotions alone before he goes to work, and each Wednesday morning he stops work in his small manufacturing plant to share a time of worship with his workers. They are like a family, bringing their needs and concerns before the group to be prayed for and to be supported in practical ways.

But for all the evidence of my friend’s faith, he still struggles with the question of his own worthiness before God. His worship and service is as much an attempt to keep earning God’s favor as it is a genuine expression of love for his Lord and Savior. “Stop trying to earn God’s favor by your own efforts,” I tell him. “God loves you. Just rest in the grace of the Lord.”

It is God in Christ who does the transforming work of salvation. We cannot do it. “By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — not the result of works, so that no one may boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

In faith and trust we respond to the relationship of love that God offers to us. But even that faith is not ours, it is the *gift of God*, Paul said, so that no one can boast of having earned God’s favor. God does it all. That is why we call it “amazing grace.”

It was the reality of justifying grace that gave birth to the Protestant Reformation, the foundation of so much that we believe as Presbyterians. The Reformers recognized that no religious practices could earn salvation for anyone. God offers a covenant relationship of love in Jesus Christ, which we receive by God’s gift of faith.

But aren’t we supposed to please God by the way we live our lives and practice our faith? Yes, but not in order to earn God’s favor. We are the products of God’s handiwork, “created in Christ Jesus for good works” (Ephesians 2:10). The life of faith and the good we do are a loving response to God’s love for us. This response is the product of sanctifying grace.

Sanctifying grace — God’s empowering love

Sanctifying grace is the work of the Spirit in our lives after we have committed our lives to God, enabling us to grow in holiness and to be strengthened for service.

We might think of God’s grace in terms similar to marriage. *Covenant grace* is the period of courtship prior to the commitment to marriage. *Justifying grace* is the marriage ceremony — the moment when the commitment is made and the relationship is sealed. *Sanctifying grace* is life after the marriage — the way we live out the covenant relationship.

To sanctify means to make holy and to set apart for holy use. After our salvation, we continue to experience God’s grace in our lives through the work of the Holy Spirit.

*We trust in God the Holy Spirit,
everywhere the giver and renewer of life.
The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,
sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor,
and binds us together with all believers
In the one body of Christ, the Church.*
— A Brief Statement of Faith



COMMUNICATION

Just as we are unable to earn God's favor by our own effort, we are unable to do the good work God has called us to in our own strength. We need the sanctifying and purifying work of the Holy Spirit to sustain and empower us.

Using again the image of marriage: Falling in love is a heady experience. The marriage is a magnificent celebration. But what then? Learning to live together is an awesome challenge. Each partner brings a set of expectations from their own experiences of family life that do not necessarily match. Making adjustments can often stretch love to the limit. And there will always have to be adjustments and compromises, which enable the relationship to grow richer and stronger.

So it is with the experience of sanctifying grace. Although our salvation through Christ grants us forgiveness of sin, there is an ongoing process in which freedom from sin is lived out in our lives. We can say with the Apostle Paul: "When I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. . . . Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:21-25).

*The same Spirit
who inspired the prophets and apostles
rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture,
engages us through the Word proclaimed,
claims us in the waters of baptism,
feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation,
and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.*
— A Brief Statement of Faith

At his baptism Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit to empower his ministry. At Pentecost the disciples were also anointed and empowered by the Spirit for service. We too stand in need of the Spirit's anointing power if we are to be effective disciples of Christ. As individuals and as the Church we need to be energized by the Spirit in our ministry of love and service.

*In a broken and fearful world
the Spirit gives us courage
to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of people long silenced,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.*
— A Brief Statement of Faith

The young woman who came to inquire about her awakening faith wrote some time later: "For me that day was a new beginning as I opened myself to God. . . . My life will never be the same." Over the years I have watched this person grow in sanctifying grace as she has dealt with some painful childhood memories. She has been sustained as a member of a small group of women who gather regularly for prayer, study and sharing. And in the strength of the Spirit she has shared her gifts in ministry to youth and in mission activities in South America. She exemplifies God's sanctifying grace.

*In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth,
praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"*
— A Brief Statement of Faith

The Rev. Ethan Raath is an honorably retired member of the Presbytery of Denver. This article originally appeared in the May 1996 issue of Presbyterians Today.

October Events




Communications & Technology
Committee Meeting
October 8 at 10:00 am




October 12
**SATURDAY
BREAKFAST**
at 8:00 am

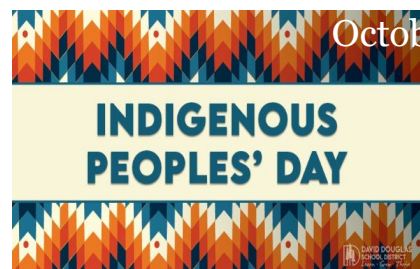


Finance Committee Meeting
October 9 at 9:30 am

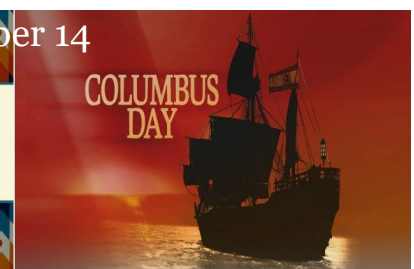
There will be no
Wednesday Night
SERVICE
We look forward to seeing you then!
in October.



Buildings & Grounds
Comm Mtg
October 8
at 7:00 pm



October 14
**INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES' DAY**



**COLUMBUS
DAY**



NewsLetter
Information to be included
in the November North
Star Newsletter is due to
the Church Office by
Friday, October 25.

Staff Relations Meeting
October 1
at 9:00 am




**Community Meal at
Grace Episcopal
Church**
Wednesday, October 2
Set up at 3:00 pm
Dinner at 5:00 pm

October Events

Border Buddies Ministries
Fundraiser
Walk/Run like a Rhino



October 26, 9:00 am


October 27, 12:00 - 2:30 pm
NPC and First Pres., Elm. Youth




World Communion Sunday
October 6, 2024
Worship Service will be at First Pres, Elmira at 10:30 am.



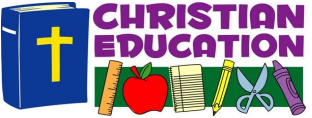
Music & Worship Committee Meeting
October 9 at 3:00 pm.




Our local chapter of TOPS meets on Mondays at 5:30 in Willits Hall. If you're interested, please call the church office for information.



Fellowship Dinner
FELLOWSHIP -Meal-
October 2 at 5:30 pm




CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
Christian Ed Comm Mtg
October 8 at 5:30 pm.



American Red Cross BLOOD DRIVE
Give Blood • Give Life


There will be a Red Cross Blood Drive on October 3, starting at 2 pm. If you're interested in signing up to give blood, please visit redcrossblood.org or call 1-800 RED CROSS.

Board of Session will meet on October 20 at 6:00 pm.

Yoga meets Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 8:45 in Willits Hall. If you're interested, please contact the church office for more information.

There will be a church workday on Saturday, October 12, at 9:00 am.





Kindermusik meets on Tuesdays at 3 pm and Thursdays at 10 am and 5:15 pm. For information on how your child can participate, please contact the church office.

NPC Board of Session

SESSION MEETING
CHURCH

Sept. 15, 2024

NORTH PRESBYTERIAN

Willits Hall

Elders Present: Steve Allison, Tim Allison, David Hansen, Nancy Isaacs, Kurt Kalweit, Lori, Lee, Annie LeFevre, Jim Mosher, Linda Palmer, Wendy Swatling, Liz Wilson

Elders excused: Allie Sevey

Moderator: Evan Hansen

Clerk: Cindy Kalweit (excused)

Treasurer: Pat Richards

A quorum was determined and the meeting was opened with devotions and prayer led by Pastor Hansen.

Motion made by Tim Allison to appoint Pat Richards as secretary pro tem; seconded by Steve Allison. Approved.

The minutes of the August 18, 2024, Stated Session Meeting were reviewed. Motion to approve made by Annie LeFevre, seconded by Tim Allison. Minutes approved as submitted.

Session reviewed the financial statements for August. The report was received, with thanks, by the Session.

A motion was forwarded from the Finance Committee to approve the annual corporate resolution from the Chemung Canal Wealth Management Group. No second necessary; motion approved.

Budget worksheets were distributed and discussed. Worksheets are due NLT 10/31/2024; if available earlier, draft budget to be reviewed at Oct. 20 Session meeting.

On behalf of the Christian Education Committee, Liz Wilson brought two items to Session:

There will not be a bake sale on election day, due to lack of volunteers during the week.

A request was made to allow the sale of Girl Scout cookies at that time. Motion made by Steve Allison to approve the sale, unless prohibited by the Board of Elections; seconded by Nancy Isaacs. Approved.

NPC Board of Session

Are there enough volunteers to hold the annual Harvest Dinner? Christian Ed would prefer to continue the dinner in order not to “lose our place” in the local fall calendar. Suggestion was made to push the dinner back to Nov. 9 (instead of Nov. 2) to allow for more planning time and turkey sales. Christian Ed will consider whether/when to hold the dinner.

Pastor Evan updated the Session on the plans for the Matsiko Choir. Elmira College has very generously donated housing for the choir and the use of Gibson Theater for a performance Friday night, Sept. 27. Others contributing support: The Most Holy Name of Jesus Parish Solidarity Committee, New Beginnings Church, First Presbyterian Church of Elmira. Finn Academy and Ridge Road School also are involved in hosting students.

NPC is responsible for choir breakfasts; Wendy Swatling and Pat Richards are organizing those efforts.

Pastor Evan led a discussion on Chapters 8 & 9 of “Loving the Church You Lead”.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by David Hansen; seconded by Annie LeFevre. Approved.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 8:45 am -Yoga 9:00 am - Staff Relations 1:15 pm - Staff Mtg 3:00 pm - Kindermusik	2 Bulletin Info Due 10:00 am -Food Pantry 12:00 pm - Bible Study 1:30-4:00 pm -Pastor's Office Hours 5:30 pm - Fellowship Dinner 7:00 pm - Praise Band Practice 7:30 pm - Chancel Choir Practice	3 8:45 am - Yoga 10:00am - Kindermusik 2:00 pm - Blood Drive 4:00 pm - Men's Bible Study 5:15pm - Kindermusik 	4 10:00 am -Food Pantry 5:15 pm -AA 7:00 pm - Thomas Keesecker concert at First Pres, Elmira	5 4:30 pm - "The Chosen" at First Pres., Elmira
6 World Communion Sunday 10:30 am - Worship Service at First Pres, Elm. 10:30 am - Communion 	7 10:00 am - Food Pantry 5:30 pm -TOPS	8 8:45 am -Yoga 10:00 am - Comm & Tech 1:15 pm - Staff Mtg 1:30 pm -Pastor's Office Hours 2:30 pm - Nominating Mtg 3:00 pm - Kindermusik 5:30 pm - CE Meeting 7:00 pm - B & G Mtg	9 Bulletin Info Due 9:30 am - Finance Mtg 10:00 am -Food Pantry 12:00 pm - Bible Study 1:30-4:00 pm -Pastor's Office Hours 3:00 pm - Worship & Music mtg 7:00 pm - Praise Band Practice 7:30 pm - Chancel Choir Practice	10 8:45 am -Yoga 10:00 am -Kindermusik 4:00 pm - Men's Bible Study 5:15 pm - Kindermusik	11 10:00 am -Food Pantry 5:15 pm -AA	12 8:00 am - Saturday Breakfast/Work Day 4:30 pm - "The Chosen" at First Pres., Elmira 
13 9:30 am -Worship Service 10:30 am - Coffee Hour 10:45 am - Good News Singers' Practice 11:00 am - Sunday School	14 Columbus Day/ Indigenous Peoples' Day 5:30 pm -TOPS	15 8:45 am -Yoga 1:15 pm - Staff Mtg 1:30 pm -Pastor's Office Hours 2:30 pm - Nominating Mtg 3:00 pm - Kindermusik	16 Bulletin Info Due 10:00 am -Food Pantry 12:00 pm - Bible Study 1:30-4:00 pm -Pastor's Office Hours 6:15 pm - Bell Choir Practice 7:00 pm - Praise Band Practice 7:30 pm - Chancel Choir Practice	17 8:45 am -Yoga 10:00 am -Kindermusik 4:00 pm - Men's Bible Study 5:15 pm - Kindermusik	18 10:00 am -Food Pantry 5:15 pm -AA	19 4:30 pm - "The Chosen" at First Pres., Elmira
20 9:30 am -Worship Service 9:30 am - Communion 10:30 am - Coffee Hour 10:45 am - Good News Singers' Practice 11:00 am - Sunday School 6:00 pm - Board of Session  	21 10:00 am -Food Pantry 5:30 pm -TOPS	22 8:45 am -Yoga 1:15 pm - Staff Mtg 1:30 pm -Pastor's Office Hours 2:30 pm - Nominating Mtg 3:00 pm - Kindermusik	23 Bulletin Info Due 10:00 am -Food Pantry 12:00 pm - Bible Study 1:30-4:00 pm -Pastor's Office Hours 6:15 pm - Bell Choir Practice 7:00 pm - Praise Band Practice 7:30 pm - Chancel Choir Practice	24 8:45 am -Yoga 10:00 am - Kindermusik 4:00 pm - Men's Bible Study 5:15 pm - Kindermusik	25 Newsletter Info Due 10:00 am -Food Pantry 5:15 pm - AA 	26 9:00 am - Border Buddies Walk/Run Like a Rhino 4:30 pm - "The Chosen" at First Pres., Elmira
27 9:30 am -Worship Service 10:30 am - Coffee Hour 10:45 am - Good News Singers' Practice 11:00 am - Sunday School 12:30 pm - Trunk or Treat at First Pres., Elm. 	28 10:00 am -Food Pantry 5:30 pm -TOPS	29 8:45 am -Yoga 1:15 pm - Staff Mtg 1:30 pm -Pastor's Office Hours 2:30 pm - Nominating Mtg 3:00 pm - Kindermusik	30 Bulletin Info Due 10:00 am -Food Pantry 12:00 pm - Bible Study 1:30-4:00 pm -Pastor's Office Hours 6:15 pm - Bell Choir Practice 7:00 pm - Praise Band Practice 7:30 pm - Chancel Choir Practice	31 Halloween 8:45 am -Yoga 10:00 am - Kindermusik 4:00 pm - Men's Bible Study 5:15 pm - Kindermusik 		

