



# THE RED DOOR

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH – BIG FLATS, NY --- DEC. 2013 / JAN. 2014  
(607) 562-8048 ----- /www.bigflatsfirstpres.org/  
Founded 1827 ----- “Pride In Our Past – Faith In Our Future”

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Before anything else existed, there was Christ, with God. He has always been alive and is himself God. He created everything there is—nothing exists that he didn't make. Eternal life is in him, and this life gives light to all humankind. His life is the light that shines through the darkness—and the darkness can never extinguish it.

John 1:1-5

The gospel writer of John narrates that the cosmic Christ was birthed from the beginning of time and is constantly being birthed throughout all time and place. The quote, “The creative adult is the child who survived...” (Ursula K. LeGuin) sprang out from the internet. The inner child of Christ is constantly longing for creation in and through us. The historical birth of Jesus is a wonderful story and commemoration. Christ came so that we might make room in our lives for his Spirit. Allowing the birth of Christ in our own lives is an *adventitious* presence that is continually developing. We live in a busy world. Advent allows us to pause and wait on God's being to come alive in us. Advent after Advent we are reminded that the Christ-child's coming is something we must open ourselves up to. It is our commitment to bear Christ's light of love in our souls.

Joan Chittister reminds us that “Christmas is only the culmination of an Advent that sets us on a road to new life, new insight, new awareness, and new energy of heart.” I ask, “Are we welcoming the child within? Are we nurturing the child within? Are we allowing the child within to survive?”

Christmas blessings, light, love and peace ~

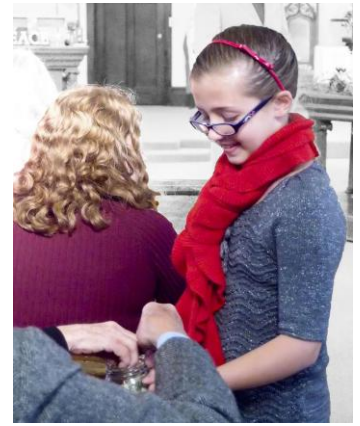
# Circle of Love

## JOYS AND CONCERNS

Our little church is always busy, and November was no exception! Wonderful worship services, warm fellowship, and many blessings combined to make for a very special month.

We are especially thankful for these November highlights:

- We are pleased to have two new members in our congregation. A warm welcome goes to **Ed and Cindy Leisenring**, who joined our church this month!
- Our second Pancake Breakfast, on November 2, was very successful. Thanks to the many hands that pitched in!
- Thanks to all who worked to make "Scouting for Food" so successful again this year.
- On Sunday, November 10, we honored our veterans with a special Veterans Day color guard ceremony. **Sam Dean (US Navy)**, **Neal Gummoe (US Army)**, **Jack Horn (USMC)**, and **Dave Silvernail (US Army)** helped us to remember those who have served our nation in the past, as well as those who are currently serving.
- Our youth choir, **Praising Voices**, has returned to bless our worship services. Thank you, **Mary Ellen Rudnick**, and our dedicated young singers!
- Our communion table looked especially beautiful during Thanksgiving week. The harvest theme added a great deal to our holiday celebration. A big thank you goes to **Joyce Dean!!!**
- On Thanksgiving morning, some forty members of our family of faith came together for a wonderful Thanksgiving breakfast and fellowship time. Many thanks go to our chief cook, **Mark Slowik**, to the rest of the kitchen crew, to those who donated muffins, and to those who worked to set up, cook, serve, and clean up. Sincere thanks go to **Paul Holland**, who provided special music.



As we approach this very special time of year, let us reach out to those in our faith community who need our help and support. In our concerns this month, we ask for prayers for: **Greg Page's father**, **Ann Slowik's brother (Rob Vanderbrand)**, **Marilyn Jenkins' daughter (Beth)**, **Hank Schurr**, **Barb & Jack Horn**, **Nick Rudnick**, **Emma Gardner**, **Flora Berke**, **Art Devenport**, **Glen Bates**, **Irene Hooley**, **Art Jenkins**, **Hank Fitzsimmons**, **Lydia Middaugh**, **Jackie McMann**, **Ginnie Schweizer**, **Dudley & Marie Shea**, **Dick & Peg Shockner**, **Ruth Price (Rev. Rick's mother)**, **Marge Larocque (Gigi's mother)**, and others who are dealing with ill health, surgery, loss, or life changes. Please continue to pray for our servicemen and women and their families and for peace in our troubled world.

***Do you have a special joy or concern that you would like to share with our Big Flats Presbyterian Church community? See Rev. Rick or Bill Howells, and we will include your news in our Joys/Concerns column.***

## SILENT AUCTION SET FOR DECEMBER 8



Here's a chance to do some holiday shopping and help our church budget. This year's **Silent Auction** will take place on **Sunday, December 8**. Please prepare your baked goods, holiday treats, crafts, etc. for sale at our auction, which will follow our morning worship service. **Ann Slowik** has planned a special fellowship luncheon to coincide with this event. Please join us for a special event!

**POINSETTIAS: Those who wish to place Christmas poinsettias in our church "in honor of" or "in memory of" should contact Dean's at 562-8120. The price is \$15.**



## CHRISTMAS EVENTS AT BIG FLATS PRESBYTERIAN

A very special holiday season is in store for our community of faith. Events include:

**DECEMBER 8 -- HANGING OF THE GREENS** -- Our annual "Hanging of the Greens" celebration will be held on Sunday, December 8. We will decorate our sanctuary for the holidays, and we will join together to sing Christmas Carols. Our Sunday School youngsters have been busy making frames for photos of those in our congregation. These framed photos will be placed on our tree, giving it a very special look. Photos of individuals, families, etc. should be given to **Stacie Belosky** as soon as possible.



**DECEMBER 15 -- CHRISTMAS PAGEANT** -- Our children will present their annual Christmas Pageant during our worship time. They have been working very hard, and they are all very excited about their program. Come join us for a special service on December 15!



**DECEMBER 24 (Tuesday) -- CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE** -- Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service will be held at **7:00 PM**, on **Tuesday, December 24**. There will be special music throughout the service. It will be a truly joyful evening for all!

The Christmas season is always special at Big Flats First Presbyterian Church! Please plan to share this wonderful time with us. All are welcome.

## FOOD PANTRY NEEDS DECEMBER VOLUNTEERS

Once again we have the opportunity to share with the less fortunate in our community. We are asking people to bring in fruit (apples, oranges, bananas and grapefruit) on **Sunday, December 15th**, which will be distributed on Tuesday the 17th at the Food Pantry. We are also "Ringing the Bell" at Minier's on Christmas Eve, **December 24th**, to accept cash donations for the Pantry. Times are tough and many people are in need of a little help. There will be sign-up sheets in church on December 1st and 8th or you can call me at **562-8409**. Thanks in advance for giving your time and talents. **Pat Silvernail**



## CHRISTMAS PROGRAM SET FOR DECEMBER 15

Our annual Children's Christmas Pageant has been scheduled for **Sunday, December 15**, during morning worship. Our Sunday School children will be rehearsing for the program during Sunday School time each Sunday throughout December. Parents are urged to have their children in attendance as often as possible. We'd like this year's program to be one of our best ever! Thank you for your cooperation.

Questions? Talk To **Stacie Belosky**.



## IMPORTANT CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS ANNOUNCED

Please mark your calendars for a number of upcoming meetings/events for our church community.

**Sunday, December 22** -- Congregational meeting following morning worship to hear the report of the Nominating Committee and to elect elders to serve on our Church Session.

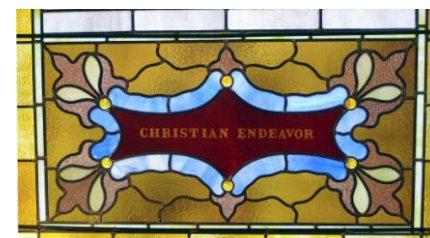
**Sunday, January 12** -- Our new elders will be ordained/installed during our worship service.

**Sunday, January 26** -- Our annual Congregational Meeting will take place following our worship service. The Annual Report will be presented and we will act on a number of items of important church business.

**NOTE: Committee Chairs should submit end-of-year reports to Bill Howells as soon as possible.**

## STEWARDSHIP DRIVE UPDATE

Our annual Stewardship Drive is drawing to a close. This year's theme is "Christian Endeavor." Our theme serves to express how our stewardship is a reflection of the many blessings – both spiritual and material – that we have been given by God. We ask that you consider prayerfully how you can support the ongoing mission of our community of faith. **It would be very helpful in planning our 2014 church budget if all pledges could be turned in as soon as possible.** See **Gigi Price** if you would like a Pledge Form or for more information.



## SOUP SALE STARTS IN JANUARY



**Mm-Mm-Good!** Delicious and nutritious homemade soup will be available after church each Sunday, **January 5 – March 30**. Just **\$4.00 per quart!** Volunteers are needed to provide soup, and a sign up sheet will be posted in the Church House. **Questions? – See Barb Horn.**

## "SCOUTING FOR FOOD" DRIVE A SUCCESS!

On **Saturday, November 9**, scouts from local troops and cub packs collected **over 3,000 food items** in this year's "Scouting for Food" drive. The items were donated to our Big Flats Community Food Pantry for the benefit of our patrons. In addition to the hard work of our scouts and their leaders, volunteers from the Big Flats Lions Club and a number of loyal Food Pantry helpers pitched in to count, sort, box, and store the donated items, as well as to restock shelves in the pantry. Thanks to all who helped to make this annual drive such a success!



## BUTTON CLUB PLANS HOLIDAY PARTY



The Elmira Button Club will meet Wednesday, **December 4th, from 11 AM until 2 PM** at the **Retirement Estates Clubhouse** for a Holiday Party. Bring a dish-to-pass and anything button related you would like to share with us. We will play some button games and exchange cards with a button in them and have a wonderful time. All are welcome to attend. We will not meet again until April. For more information, see **Pat Silvernail**.

## PANCAKE BREAKFAST UPDATE -- FREE DECEMBER 14 BREAKFAST ANNOUNCED

Our 2013-2014 "Breakfast Season" is well underway. Discriminating diners have enjoyed juice, beverages, eggs made to order, two kinds of pancakes, sausage, and fruit cup. In addition to a fine dining experience, our patrons also have enjoyed the opportunity to socialize with others. The Membership Committee (event organizers) reports that these breakfasts have also been financially successful. Thanks to all who helped!



Our next breakfast is slated for **Saturday, December 14, from 8:00 - 10:00 AM**. This breakfast will be free of charge and is open to the public. Chairperson **Jenny Dean** states that this free breakfast is one way that our church can thank the community for its support. It will also provide an opportunity to showcase our very special faith community and welcome others to join us. Please help us by spreading the word about this special morning.

Our church will continue this series of fund-raising Pancake Breakfasts on Saturday mornings during the next few months. Subsequent breakfast dates are **January 11, February 8, March 8, and April 12**. The cost for each meal has been set at \$6.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children. There will be no charge for those under five years old.

Please do your part by pitching in to help and also with your patronage. Questions?? Talk to **Jenny Dean**.

## SUNSHINE CLUB NEEDS MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

For a number of years, members of our "Sunshine Club" (name coined years ago by **Peg Halm**) and other willing and wonderful volunteers have provided meals and visits to members of our faith family during times of grieving, illness, recovery from surgery, and other such times of need.

So far, five people have signed up for the list of the Sunshine Club. If there are others who would like to assist members of the congregation who are in need of a meal, a visit, or a ride, please have them call me, **Ann Hayes, 562-8523**. I will get back to them early in the New Year.



# WELCOME!!



**Ed & Cindy Leisenring**  
Our new members

## MISSING -- THREE TABLES

The Big Flats Lions Club recently purchased three new white folding tables and stored them in our Church House. The tables were available for us to use when not needed by the Lions Club. Unfortunately, these three tables seem to have disappeared from our large social room. The underside of each table is clearly marked "LIONS." It would be most appreciated if the borrower(s) of these tables would return them ASAP (or at least let us know where they are). Please see **Rev. Rick or Property Chairman Steve Johnston.**

## PRAISING VOICES UPDATE

**Praising Voices**, our youth choir, lifts our spirits with their enthusiasm and dedication. More singers (ages four and up) are welcome to join us. We rehearse in our church sanctuary each Thursday evening from 6:15 to 7:00. If you enjoy music, fun and friends, you will really enjoy joining your voice to ours!

NOTE: **Praising Voices** will not be rehearsing during the school break. The group will return in January.



## WINTER 2013 MISSION TEAM UPDATE

As we enter that time of year where Thanksgiving and giving is most prevalent in our minds I thought it may be beneficial to reflect upon what we have done as a Church around Mission this past year.

The mission team meets every month, apart from a cessation of one month during peak summer. In this last year we have supported many causes, some of which, but not all, are detailed below.

- The Empty Bowl luncheon
- The Buddy walk in memory of Renee Jones
- Saving Grace foundation
- UNICEF
- "Back pack" program
- CASA
- The "Blanket Fund"
- "2nd Place East"
- Make a wish foundation
- Hygeine kits
- Christmas/Easter plants for housebound members

Thank you to everyone involved in our Church mission, whether by giving of funds, time, effort or good will. We have made a difference in people's lives.

God Bless you all.

**David J Stafford – Chairman Mission team**

## **"SHOWER FOR MARY" & "GIFTS FOR JOSEPH" MISSION EFFORT ANNOUNCED**

For the past twelve years, our congregation has generously supported our "Shower for Mary" local mission effort during the season of Advent. In this program we have collected a variety of items for personal care and other needs for women and children served by the **Salvation Army Safehouse**. The Salvation Army Safehouse provides a comprehensive program for victims of domestic violence. Services offered include emergency shelter, counseling, advocacy, information/referrals, hotline services, justice system information and accompaniments, support group, and community education. For information: call **732-1979**.



Two years ago we expanded our outreach efforts through a "Gifts for Joseph" program to help men served by the **Samaritan Center**. The Samaritan Center has been assisting individuals and families in need with emergency food, clothing, and prescription drug assistance for over thirty years. This program also facilitates enrollment to Medicaid, Family Health Plus & Child Health Plus and provides referrals to other resources and support services for longer term solutions. The Samaritan Center is located at **380 Main St., Elmira (734-4898)**.

We need your support! Your donated items (**unwrapped please**) can be placed in the collection bins located in the rear of our sanctuary and in the narthex each Sunday throughout the Advent season (**December 1 - December 22**).

### **Needs for the Safehouse ( "Shower for Mary"):**

These donations are for women/children and include the following:

- Gift sets for women (perfumes, soaps, lotions, etc) ~ Watches for women
  - Radio Alarm Clocks
  - Craft items for teenagers (water color paints, bead sets, etc.)
  - Family and children board games ~Activity books (children & adult)
  - Gift cards (\$10-\$20 recommended – grocery or general merchandise)
  - Paper towels, napkins, paper plates
  - Family oriented DVD's
  - Journals / pen sets ~Stationary gift sets / stamps
  - Personal items such as hair brushes ~ deodorant ~ hairspray
  - Towels ~ Twin sheet sets ~ pillows (new)
  - New (packaged) underwear, bras & socks (all sizes – women and children)
  - Disposable diapers (size 3/ 4/ 5 / 6) ~ baby wipes ~ sippie cups ~ pacifiers
  - Cash or check donations (made payable to **Salvation Army Safehouse**)
- Due to limited space we cannot accept used household items, clothing or furniture.**  
**Please be assured our residents' needs are being met in this area.**

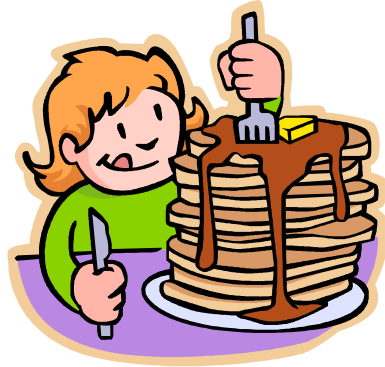
### **Needs for the Samaritan Center ("Gifts for Joseph"):**

These donations are for men and families and include the following:

- Cleaning supplies (unopened)
- Can openers (non-electric)
- Diapers & baby items (unopened)
- Food (non-expired -- unopened)
- Linens -- blankets, pillows, towels, single/twin sheets, etc. (new)
- Men's personal care items -- razors, deodorant, shaving cream, etc. (unopened)
- Paper Products -- paper towels, toilet paper, etc. (unopened)
- Underwear, socks, hats (new)
- Seasonal clothing -- all sizes (new or gently used)

Thank you, in advance, for your generosity in supporting our Advent outreach mission. What a wonderful way to experience the true meaning of Christmas! **Bill Howells and Bev Miles** -- are coordinating our "Shower for Mary" and "Gifts for Joseph" programs and can answer any questions (**962-1146**).

# BRING ON THE PANCAKE BREAKFASTS!



Join us at the First  
Flats on the following

10 a.m. throughout the winter months!

The price is \$6.00.

Presbyterian Church of Big  
Saturdays from 8 a.m. to

December 14, 2013 (free -- public invited)

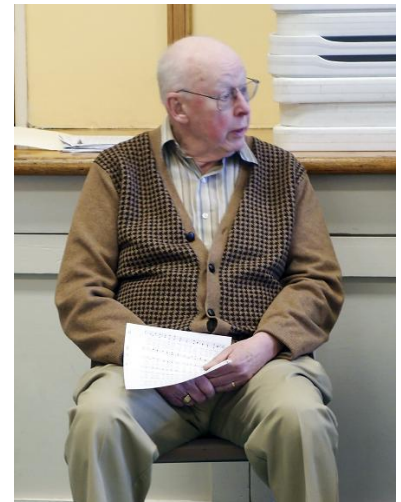
January 11, 2014

February 8, 2014

March 8, 2014

April 12, 2014

# PHOTO GALLERY



Happy Holidays





## WEEKLY EVENTS

SUNDAYS	9:30 AM	Choir Rehearsal
	10:30 AM	Morning Worship with Sunday School and Nursery Care
TUESDAY	12:00 – 2:00 PM	Food Pantry is open
	6:30 PM	Boy Scout Troop #87
THURSDAY	6:15 – 7:00 PM	<i>Praising Voices</i> rehearsal

## SPECIAL EVENTS

December 1	First Sunday of Advent -- Holy Communion
December 4 (Wed.)	(at Retirement Estates Clubhouse) Button Club Holiday Party – 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM
December 8	Hanging of the Greens -- decorating our sanctuary and singing Christmas Carols
December 8	<b>Silent Auction &amp; Luncheon</b> (following morning worship)
December 14 (Sat.)	(Free to the public) Pancake Breakfast – 8:00 - 10:00 AM
December 15	Sunday School Christmas Pageant
December 22	Election of Elders (following morning worship)
December 24 (Tues.)	Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service – 7:00 PM
December 29	Rev. Rick away -- Tom Seem will lead morning worship service
January 5	Celebration of Epiphany
January 5	Holy Communion
January 5	Taking down of Christmas tree and decorations -- soup/sandwich luncheon
January 11 (Sat.)	(Fundraiser) Pancake Breakfast – 8:00 - 10:00 AM
January 12	Installation/Ordination of Elders
January 26	“Pennies from Heaven” collection during morning worship
January 26	Annual Congregation Meeting (following morning worship)
January 26	Information due for the February <b><u>RED DOOR</u></b>

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Worship Committee	Meets following church service on December 15 & January 12
Property Committee	(Wednesday) December 18 & January 15 – 6:00 PM
Session	(Wednesday) December 18 & January 15 – 7:00 PM