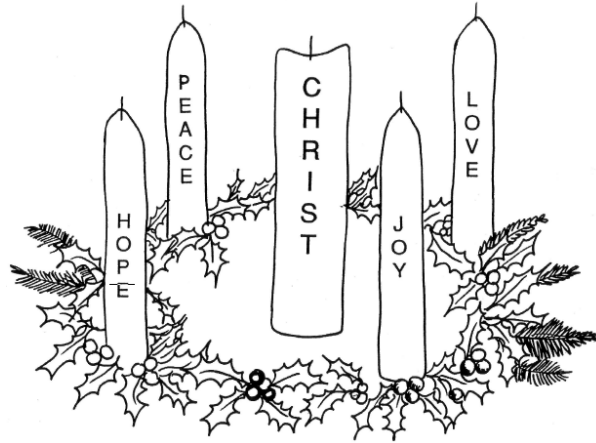




THE RED DOOR

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH – BIG FLATS, NY --- DEC. 2014 / JAN. 2015
(607) 562-8048 ----- /www.bigflatsfirstpres.org/
Founded 1827 ----- “Pride In Our Past – Faith In Our Future”



"Advent is the perfect time to clear and prepare the Way. Advent is a winter training camp for those who desire peace. By reflection and prayer, by reading and meditation, we can make our hearts a place where a blessing of peace would desire to abide and where the birth of the Prince of Peace might take place...."

Daily we can make an Advent examination. Are there any feelings of discrimination toward race, sex, or religion? Is there a lingering resentment, an unforgiven injury living in our hearts? Do we look down upon others of lesser social standing or educational achievement? Are we generous with the gifts that have been given to us, seeing ourselves as their stewards and not their owners? Are we reverent of others, their ideas and needs, and of creation? These and other questions become Advent lights by which we may search the deep, dark corners of our hearts."

An Advent Examination -- Edward Hays

Dear friends,

Christmas brings with it many festive activities. There are some who will be celebrating without loved ones and all of the cheer. Our prayer this Christmas and throughout the new year is that our rooms and hearts will be open to others in a renewed sense of love and peace. We are called to share our gifts of love and compassion with our neighbors in need. In this season we celebrate the revelation of God to us in Jesus Christ. May this Advent season be a special one for our church community. May we grow in our faith and seek peace. Let us think of ways we can inspire someone else by lending a hand or an empathetic listening ear. Let us wrap others in the love we have to share. Have a Blessed Christmas and a Happy Healthy New Year.

JANICE RUTHANN RHODES (1937 – 2014)

Ruthann Rhodes passed away on November 7. She was seventy-seven years old (born July 30, 1937). Ruthann was the sister of Joyce Dean. A resident of Bloomington, Illinois, Ruthann stayed for a number of months with the Deans last winter and spring. While here, she became very active in our church and grew very attached to our community of faith. She became a member of our church in February. Ruthann was an avid Green Bay Packers fan and enjoyed crocheting, quilting and sewing. She was a loving mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and sister. We were truly blessed to have Ruthann as part of our faith community.

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. While we celebrated our many blessings, we also mourned the loss of one of our members, and we had prayer concerns for many in our church family.

We are especially thankful for these November highlights:

- Our Pancake Breakfast, on November 15, 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 9, we honored our veterans with a special Veterans Day color guard ceremony. **Jack Horn (USMC)** and **Tom Halm (US Navy)** along with all the veterans in attendance helped us to remember those who have served our nation in the past, as well as those who are currently serving.
- 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 thirty members of our family 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.
- Special thanks to **Ann Hayes** and to the many volunteers who pitched in to provide transportation, meals, and support to the **Leisenrings** while Cindy was recovering from a broken hip.



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. The sympathy of our church family is extended to **Joyce Dean** and family on the passing of **Janice Ruthann Rhodes**. In our concerns this month, we ask for prayers for: **Reva Soutar, Helen Sawyer, Nick Rudnick, Emma Gardner, Flora Berke, Glen Bates, Irene Hooey, 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 7



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 7**. 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 7 -- HANGING OF THE GREENS -- Our annual "Hanging of the Greens" celebration will be held on Sunday, December 7. We will decorate our sanctuary for the holidays, and we will join together to sing Christmas Carols. It would be great if we all could bring a special ornament to hang on our tree!



DECEMBER 24 (Wednesday) -- 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.

IMPORTANT CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS ANNOUNCED

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

Sunday, December 21 -- 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 18 -- Our new elders will be ordained/installed during our worship service.

Sunday, January 25 -- 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 **"Celebrating . . . Love, Faith, Hope . . . in Stewardship."** Our theme serves to express how our stewardship is a reflection of the gifts of love – both monetary and spiritually heart-felt – that continue to nourish our souls and the communities, local and global, in which the First Presbyterian Church of Big Flats' beacon continues to burn. 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 2015 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. Pledges can be made via e-mail to Barb Horn -- blhorn@stny.rr.com

SOUP SALE STARTS IN JANUARY

Mm-Mm-Good! Delicious and nutritious homemade soup will be available after church each Sunday, **January 4 – March 29**. 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 8**, 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!



PANCAKE BREAKFAST UPDATE -- FREE DECEMBER 13 BREAKFAST ANNOUNCED

Our 2014-2015 "Breakfast Season" is well underway. During our November 15 kickoff breakfast, discriminating diners 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 enjoyed the opportunity to socialize with others. The Membership Committee (event organizers) reports that the breakfast was also financially successful. Thanks to all who helped!

Our next breakfast is slated for **Saturday, December 13, from 8:00 - 10:00 AM**. This breakfast will be free of charge and is open to the public. ***Santa Claus will be making a special appearance!***



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 10, February 14, March 14, and April 11**. The cost for each meal has been set at \$6.00. 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. If you would like to assist members of the congregation who are in need of a meal, a visit, or a ride, please call, **Ann Hayes, 562-8523**.



NOTES



FROM THE CHOIR LOFT

The **ADULT CHOIR** is now preparing for the Advent and Christmas season. If you would like to join us for the season, please feel welcome. You are most welcome to join us permanently, or just for the season, as you wish. We rehearse on Sunday mornings at 9:30 sharp. Some of our members will be away for some of the Christmas festivities, so a few extra voices would be very welcome, especially for Christmas Eve. Come join us. We'll save you a seat.



The **HANDBELL CHOIR** is also preparing for the Advent and Christmas season. After Christmas some of our members would like to be replaced. If you had wanted to play, but missed the organizational meetings, please let the director (Nancy Compton) know. When the group re-organizes in late January, you will be notified. This group has been meeting on Friday afternoons at 1:00, which works well, because there are no night rehearsals in bad weather, but, if necessary, alternate arrangements can be made.

DONATE TO OUR CHURCH ELECTRONICALLY!

Our church now has an easy and safe way to donate electronically using your smartphone. All you need is one of the many free QR (quick response) code reader Apps available for your smartphone equipped with a camera.



To donate, first print this page (works best if nothing is printed on the back side). Then, just open the camera and point it at the QR code below. The APP will read the code and take you to the First Presbyterian Church donation page on the Presbyterian Mission Exchange website. You may have to navigate through a few prompts but it's worth the effort!

Once you reach the church's page, click the **GIVE NOW** button. You'll see a dropdown menu to choose which fund you would like your donation to go to along with options for one-time or recurring gifts. You can donate using your credit card or direct transfer from your bank (you'll need your bank account number and routing number).

Use this easy way to donate when you can't make the service, forget your donation envelope or don't have cash or checks handy. Also friends and family can contribute when they visit our church.

Mark Slowik



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

For the past thirteen 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**.



Three 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 (**November 30 - December 21**).

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.

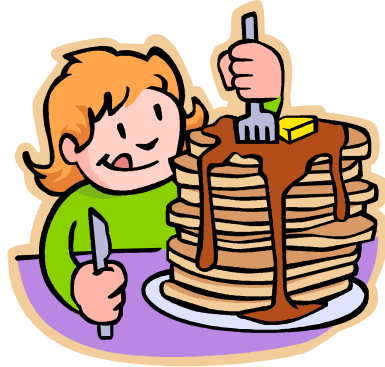
Needs for the Samaritan Center ("Gifts for Joseph"):

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 Presbyterian Church of Big Flats on the following Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. throughout the winter months!
The price is \$6.00. (Children under five – no charge)

December 13, 2014 (free -- public invited)

January 10, 2015

February 14, 2015

March 14, 2015

April 11, 2015

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
FRIDAY	1:00 PM	Bell Choir Rehearsal

SPECIAL EVENTS

December 7	'Hanging of the Greens' -- decorating our sanctuary and singing Christmas Carols
December 7	Silent Auction & Luncheon (following morning worship)
December 13 (Sat.)	(Free to the public) Pancake Breakfast – 8:00 - 10:00 AM
December 21	Election of Elders (following morning worship)
December 24 (Wed.)	Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service – 7:00 PM
December 28	Rev. Rick away – Bill Powell will lead morning worship service
January 4	Celebration of Epiphany
January 4	Holy Communion
January 4	Taking down of Christmas tree and decorations
January 10 (Sat.)	(Fundraiser) Pancake Breakfast – 8:00 - 10:00 AM
January 18	Installation/Ordination of Elders
January 25	“Pennies from Heaven” collection during morning worship
January 25	Annual Congregation Meeting (following morning worship)
January 25	Information due for the February <u>RED DOOR</u>

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Worship Committee	Meets following church service on December 14 & January 18
Property Committee	(Wednesday) December 17 & January 21 – 6:00 PM
Session	(Wednesday) December 17 & January 21 – 7:00 PM