

First Presbyterian Church

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Tower Topics

VOLUME LVIII ISSUE 4
April 2025

SERVING WITH YOU

Pastor
Rev. John Woodring

Clerk of Session
Kathy Swan

Administrative Assistant
Valerie Brown

Treasurer
Velda Schmieg

Organist
Katie Klawitter

Senior Choir Director
Anne Romano

Bell Choir Director
Vacant

Custodial Staff
Sandy Robinson
Leslie Lyons
Gene Overton

Nursery Care
Alberta Nunn

Historian
Helen Brink

Newsletter Coordinator
Sandy Robinson



Worship Service
10:00am

Youth Worship/Church
During 10:00 am service

The tomb is empty.

We've known it all along. Every year as Easter approaches, as we go through the rituals and remembrances that mark the passion of Christ and Holy Week, we proceed confidently. Easter will come because the tomb is empty.

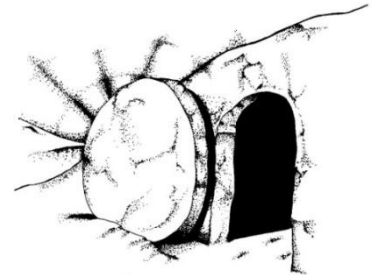
But what if Easter doesn't come....? What if we get to that glorious Easter morning and we discover that the tomb is not empty? Rather the tomb is full of our doubts and fears, of our deep longings, our painful sufferings, and our persistent grief. What if the day of resurrection is buried under the cold logic and brutal reality that death is inevitable, unavoidable, and decidedly FINAL? What if all our hope has been crucified with Christ?

I've met a few folks who feel this way; whose experience of life and love is one brought short by unending grief, sudden catastrophe, unexplained suffering, and bitter anger. They have lost loved ones who endured much suffering. Their children have died in the fullness of youth. The number of tragedies they've endured can only be explained by understanding themselves as cursed. They've died a thousand lifetimes.

The cross is empty. The tomb is silent. Their faith stillborn.

I remember what one of my seminary colleagues shared in our support group just prior to Holy Week. Her assignment was to provide a meditation for Good Friday on the death of Jesus. Tears flowed down her face as she voiced the impossibility of doing this when her own grief was overwhelming her. She had experienced 6 miscarriages. In the previous year she had finalized a bitter divorce. Her only son was headed off to college in a few months. She was alone and bereft.

Our supervisor gently wiped the woman's tears when she had finished and then invited her to do something that stunned me. "Martha," she said, "If you feel you're up to it, I invite you to go to Oak Grove Cemetery this afternoon and mourn for your children. I've found it to be helpful."



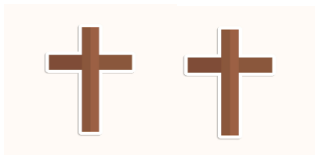
Martha's meditation on the cross that week was one of the most powerful I have ever witnessed.

She discovered that day in the cemetery that she had not needed to circumvent her grief in order to proclaim that Good Friday was good. She discovered that her deep anger and overwhelming frustration was that people love to move on to Easter and resurrection without acknowledging her pain. But, no, it was not Good Friday, but Friday of the Passion, or Long Friday, and she found herself kneeling with Mary and John contemplating the evil of crucifixion and the harrowing pain of grief and loss. Her service focused on lament.

She found the blessed assurance that Jesus knew her pain—that she was loved beyond her ability to imagine, that her Lord bore her grief, and that she would never be forsaken or alone.

Pastor John

Ps. The Moravian Church has a tradition of cleaning gravestones on Good Friday.



APRIL CONTACT PEOPLE

Elder: Kathy Walker
Deacon: Sue Gay



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

April 6- Luke 18:31-19:10
Zacchaeus-Communion

April 13-Luke 19:29-44
Palm Sunday

April 20-luke 24:1-12
Easter

April 27-Luke 24:13-35
The Road to Emmaus



APRIL

PLEASE BRING

**TUNA FISH
SALMON
CANNED MEAT**



PALM SUNDAY-
4/13/25



EASTER-
4/20/25

6:15a.m. Sun rise community service in Pulteney Park.

10:00a.m. Worship service in the sanctuary



Maundy Thursday

Communion
April 17, 2025
7:30 pm Lyon Hall



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

One Great Hour of Sharing enables the church to share God's love with our neighbors-in-need around the world by providing relief to those affected by natural disasters, provide food to the hungry, and helping to empower the poor and oppressed. Collection will be on Easter Sunday. Envelopes for giving are also attached with this newsletter.

stations of the cross



GOOD FRIDAY-
4/18/25

Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, at noon in Pulteney Park.

ASSEMBLY LINES FOR KIT PACKING



On March 8, 2025 approximately 20 people gathered in Lyon Hall and packed a combined total of over 90 hygiene kits and school supply kits. The kits were supplied by Church World Services. Behind the scene, earlier in the week, Eleata Mitchell opened and sorted all the boxes and marked each with how many to put in each kit. This definitely was a time saver. Pastor John then had all the supplies set out and organized on the tables, ready for packing. It was now time for packing. The packers worked diligently and all was completed in about 45 mins. Lunch followed with sandwiches and cookies. A good time was had by all.

Deacons provide care to our congregation and surrounding community in many ways.

Much of this care is hands on, through visits, phone calls, meal delivery, serving communion, supporting the prayer chain and working at Sara's Closet, or filling Bags of Hope. We also attempt to be good stewards of our Deacon Fund. Most of our funds are contributed periodically by church members and through memorial donations. Deacon Funds are spent in various ways. Assistance is provided in situations of special needs. Car repairs, moving assistance, and flood and fire relief have been some recent donations. We also help to support other ministries in our church. Sunday Supper expenses, study books for A New Day support group, olivewood crosses provided to first time visitors, glass memorial ornaments given to those who have lost a loved one are just some of the projects we have taken on to share God's love.

Your prayer and financial support are always welcome and very much appreciated. If you become aware of special needs, please feel free to contact any of the Deacons. Just a reminder of the private prayer cards which are available at both entrances to the sanctuary. These can be completed with as much or as little information as you wish and then placed in the offering plate. These will be kept private, unlike the prayer chain or those spoken during Joys and Concerns. The Deacon of the Month will respond to these requests in prayer throughout the week.

HISTORY



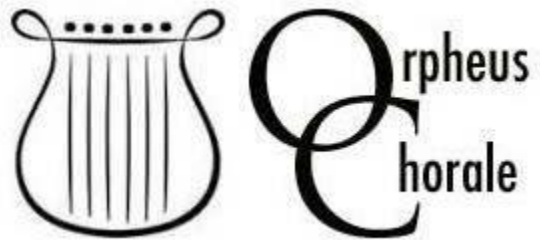
The Beginning of Our Church And The People Who Made It Happen

Helen Kelly Brink
Church Historian

Continuing our story, following is a brief biography of one of the people who played a role in the beginning of our church:

Dugald Cameron was one of the trustees of the Bath Religious Society in 1806. Born in Scotland in 1775, he followed his older brother Charles Cameron to Bath arriving here in 1795. Their father Ewen Cameron (1738-1832) came to Steuben County in 1805. When Dugald first arrived in Bath, he was employed as a clerk in the Pulteney Land Office but soon was appointed a sub-agent. Before he came to Bath, Dugald had arranged to purchase from the Pulteney Land Group a major tract of land south of the village of Bath. Much of this land included some of the town of Cameron named in his honor when it was established in 1822 as well as the southern portion of the town of Bath. In 1799 Dugald built a home at the corner of Pulteney Park and West Morris Street in the village of Bath (site of Taggart Insurance Office now). The same year he supervised the construction of Col. Williamson's Springfield Mansion. On 1 January 1800 he became Bath's first postmaster when the office was established. During that same year he married his first wife Elizabeth Taylor (1773-1822) at her father's home, known as the Halfway House, on Spaulding Drive. In 1803 he was appointed county treasurer, in 1804 he became sheriff of Steuben County, and, in 1810, he was named county clerk. During these years he continued to acquire more property throughout the county including mill sites in Bradford, Wheeler, Bath and Hornell. On 3 January 1825 Dugald married his second wife 19 year old Frances Purdy (1805-1884) in Elmira. Dugald and his bride along with members of the bridal party returned to Bath in a new and elegant stage coach expressly set up for the occasion by John Magee, the young and enterprising mail collector. They were met at

Savona by a well mounted cavalcade of 50 gentlemen who escorted them to Dugald's large mansion on Pulteney Square. In 1827 Dugald was elected to the State Legislature. In 1828 while in Albany attending to his duties, he became seriously ill. He died there on March 5th that year at the age of 53 leaving his wife of 3 years a widow at age 22. She never remarried. Dugald and his first wife were the parents of three sons and four daughters. Since Dugald's eldest daughter had married Ira Davenport, much of the land Dugald owned in the immediate area of Bath at the time of his death became Davenport property on which both the huge Riverside Mansion and the Davenport Home For Orphan Girls were built. Dugald, Elizabeth and Frances are buried in Grove Cemetery.



ORPHEUS CHORALE- 4/27/25

The Orpheus Chorale will be performing here on April 27, 2025 at 3p.m. Come spend your Sunday listening to some gifted performers from around the area.



B&G BLOG

The Buildings and Grounds team is ready to get into action now that spring has arrived. Our first meeting included a facility tour to identify things needing attention. Some things can be done by in house personnel, who we are grateful for, and other things require outside entities for annual inspections or their expertise, such as the roof inspection company.

The change out of incandescent or blown bulbs continues in several areas such as Lyon Hall or the choir room. The Niles Hall lighting requires an electrician opinion. Several screens on the second floor were found off the windows and need to be repaired and then reinstalled. Request for an alternate hand drying method for the Ladies Restroom and a motion light at the top of stairs second floor have been made. Speakers in Lyon Hall will be moved for better sound distribution. This is an example of and partial list of things identified.

The gentleman who was recommended to clean our acorn lamps is unable to do it himself but advised us about the process and is willing to use his contacts to get someone that can accomplish this. It is our hope to have this done during the summer months as scaffolding will be required.

As our mission of maintenance continues, new members are encouraged. We welcomed Bob Robinson in this new year. And, as always, if any of you see something that might need attention, let a team member know. We have a very large facility that gets much use but we are blessed to have it in good condition and work diligently to keep it that way.

SEWING/CRAFT GROUP OUTREACH PROJECTS

The craft group recently finished up some fidget quilts. These items will be delivered to people throughout our community who are struggling with dementia.



NEXT PROJECT

For our next community outreach project, the crafting group will be creating quilts for anyone who is battling cancer. We will be offering, to anyone who is going through the cancer journey, a handmade lap quilt, a book that shares the cancer journeys of others and a beautiful handmade tote bag to carry both items in.

If you would like to be a part of the Quilts for Cancer activity, we have set aside May 15 & 16 to create the quilts. We need people who can cut, do basic sewing, etc., any help is so appreciated. We will be starting at 9:30 both days and plan to wrap up by 5:00. If you can spare any time to assist us with our goal of ten quilts, we would truly appreciate the help. Any questions, contact Kathy P. at kpartridge1@yahoo.com.



The monthly potluck coffee hours have been put on hold until further notice. We will post the date when they will be starting up again.



Gary's visit at the Palisades Presbyterian Church



There are just a couple of weeks left to get your delicious homemade lunches. The last day we will be serving is Wednesday, April 9th, don't miss out!



While I was visiting my daughter and son-in-law in Santa Monica, Emily and I attended worship at the Pacific Palisades Presbyterian Church. The congregation is meeting at another Presbyterian Church in Culver City CA. The PPPC holds their services on Sunday afternoons at 2:30. The worship was lovely and the sermon excellent. The congregation is a mixture of all ages and backgrounds. Em and I stayed for the coffee hour and met both pastors.

The church is still compiling the temporary addresses of their scattered congregation, and they may not stay at Culver City for the long run, but they seemed cohesive and upbeat. It was good to be with them!
Gary



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

April 2	Giovanni Romano Gregory Rougeux
April 3	Valerie Mitchell
April 4	Abigail Dickson Caleb Lyke
April 5	Seth Jones Patricia Seger
April 6	Ruth Moore Kathy Partridge
April 7	Onalee Newman Jeffrey McKinley
April 8	Rachel Oest
April 9	Joshua Sehm
April 10	Peg Inglis Michael Joint
April 13	Barbara Saler
April 16	Mary Jane Jones Nicole Thomas Jason Osmin
April 18	Bryant Conley
April 19	Philip Dickson
April 20	Alexander Shuart
April 21	Melissa Joint Michael Mishook Andrea Morse
April 22	Sandra Robinson
April 23	Susan Gay Sherman Lyke
April 26	Nicolas Tunison
April 29	Tina Shuart Judy Aho



Lois Warren, Andi Morse, June Bates,
Tim Forester, Melissa Joint, Diane Lathrop,
Sherry Parke, Forrest Clark, Susan Moore,
Barbara Saler, Sharon Ward, Bob Hujar,
Mary Jane Jones, Mary Ann Robinson,
Debi Crossman Singer, Bradley Mesler



GIFTS WERE GIVEN TO:

BURTON SCHOLARSHIP FUND
In Memory of
Larry & Brenda Burton
By: Gretchen VanGelder Casey



The office will be
Closed on April 18 in
observance of Good
Friday



TOWER TOPIC
ARTICLES IS
APRIL 21, 2025

IN MINISTRY WITH YOU – 2025

Session	Rev. John Woodring (Moderator), Kathy Forester, Susan Martin, Bob Mesler, Donna Montgomery, Steve Pospiech, Doug Schmieg, Barb Scudder, Kathy Swan (Clerk), Kathy Walker
Deacons	Sue Gay (Moderator), Emily Decker, Lee Dickson, Katie Johnson, Mary Jane Jones, Marge Mesler, Ruth Moore, Patricia Shuart, Debbie Vonderlin
Buildings & Grounds	Bob Mesler (Chair), Allan Gay, John Jones, Jim Mahnke, Rev. Jim Newman, Jim Robinson, Rev. John Woodring
Congregational Life	Donna Montgomery (Chair), (awaiting member list from Donna)
Finance	Barb Scudder (Chair), Susan Martin, Velda Schmieg (ex officio), Marc Shuart
Audit Team	Inactive until Fall 2025
Human Relations	Kathy Walker (Chair), Theresa Markham, Rev. John Woodring
Ministry w/Children & Youth	Kathy Forester (Chair), Bill Joint, Andrea Lyke, Eleata Mitchell
Mission/Stewardship	Doug Schmieg (Chair), Matt Lyke, Steve Pospiech, Russell Walters, Rev. John Woodring
Nominating Committee	Doug Schmieg (Chair) (additional members will be chosen)
Worship Team	Rev. John Woodring (Chair), Helen Brink, Rev. Gary Brown, Jim Robinson

Church Staff

Pastor	John Woodring
Clerk of Session	Kathy Swan
Moderator of Deacons	Sue Gay
Administrative Assistant	Valerie Brown
Treasurer	Velda Schmieg
Organist	Katie Klawitter
Choir Director	Anne Romano
Librarian	Kathy Walker
Custodians	Leslie Lyons, Gene Overton, Sandy Robinson
Office Volunteers	Sandy Robinson, Sandy Simonson
Archivist/Historian	Helen Brink
Columbarium Coordinator	Helen Brink
Tower Topics Production	Sandy Robinson



APRIL 2025



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
ALL SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES BEGIN AT 10:00 am *SUNDAY SUPPERS @ FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - 3:00 pm		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> 9:30 am Lenten Prayer, Chapel 5 th Lenten Lunch, 11:30 am - Lyon Hall 4:00 pm - B & G Mtg 5:30 pm - Finance Mtg	<u>3</u> 6:00 pm - Choir	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u> 10:00 am - 2:00 pm <i>Officer Retreat - Lyon Hall</i>
<u>6</u> Communion 5 th Sunday in Lent 11:30 am Coffee Hour - Lyon Hall *Sunday Supper	<u>7</u> 2:00 pm - Worship Team Sara's Closet 11:30 am-2:30 pm	<u>8</u> 4:00 pm - Deacons	<u>9</u> 9:30 am Lenten Prayer, Chapel 6 th Lenten Lunch, 11:30 am - Lyon Hall	<u>10</u> 10:00 am - 5:00 pm - Craft & Sewing Group 6:00 pm - Choir	<u>11</u> 10:00 am - 5:00 pm - Craft & Sewing Group	<u>12</u>
<u>13</u> Palm/Passion Sunday 11:30 am Coffee Hour - Lyon Hall *Sunday Supper	<u>14</u> Monday of Holy Week 6:00 pm - Session Sara's Closet 11:30 am-2:30 pm	<u>15</u> Tuesday of Holy Week	<u>16</u> Wednesday of Holy Week 6:00 pm - A New Day Mtg for Widows & Widowers	<u>17</u> Maundy Thursday 6:00 pm -Choir 7:00 pm - Worship - Communion, Lyon Hall	<u>18</u> <i>Good Friday</i> <i>Noon - Stations of the Cross, Pulteney Park</i> <i>Office Closed</i>	<u>19</u> Great Vigil of Easter
<u>20</u> <i>EASTER SUNDAY</i> <i>6:15 am Sunrise Service - Pulteney Park</i> 10:00 am Worship Service 11:30 am Coffee Hour-LH *Sunday Supper	<u>21</u> Sara's Closet 11:30 am-2:30 pm	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u> 6:00 pm -Choir	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>27</u> 2nd Sunday of Easter 11:30 am Coffee Hour - Lyon Hall 3:00 pm - Orpheus Chorale, Sanctuary *Sunday Supper	<u>28</u> 10:30 am - HR Mtg Sara's Closet 11:30 am-2:30 pm	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>			



TOWER TOPICS

April 2025

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
6 EAST MORRIS STREET
BATH, NY 14810

Non-Profit Org
U.S. postage

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Permit No. 121
Bath, NY

Address service requested



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

April 13- Palm Sunday

**April 17- Maundy Thursday- Communion-
7:00 p.m. Lyon Hall**

**April 18- Good Friday- Stations of the Cross-
Noon in Pulteney Park**

**April 20- Easter- Sunrise Service 6:15a.m. in Pulteney Park
Easter Service 10:00a.m. in the Sanctuary**