



THE PARK CHURCH

ELMIRA, NEW YORK

CROSS CURRENTS

August 2013

Felicitations

As we near the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, I am reminded of the powerful changes that happen when one person's dream can become a vision for many. Although the inequities of racism are still very real, we join with Dr. King (and the prophet Isaiah) in imagining a time and place where "every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."

We yearn for the day "when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, 'Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!'"

I believe in that dream from the very bottom of my heart. I believe in that dream for America, for Elmira, and for Park. The freedom that I yearn for is not just for racial equality but also for a place where faith trumps fear as much as freedom trumps subjection. I sometimes think that the issue of freedom or its lack becomes secondary for those with true faith. As we know from the life of Jesus and the saints, people of true life-giving faith can be shackled in chains but they are nonetheless free in spirit.

– Which is an important lesson for us. In this crazy-making world, it's natural to feel like victims of misfortune – too few jobs, too few members, too many demands on our time and checkbooks; the list goes on and on. It's easy to get trapped in thoughts of scarcity that permeate our community. We look for a potion that will melt all of our troubles away, forgetting that the only magic is called faith! It worked for Dr. King and all those present (physically or spiritually) at the March on Washington, and it will work for us. It's the only thing that has ever worked from the beginning of time.

Here's the Prayer of Thomas Merton, which is a great source of comfort and guidance for so many of us. As you read it, remember that it works – for individuals, churches, communities, and countries.

MY LORD GOD, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

We are not alone. God is present here. Let's share the good news!



Church Staff

Rev. Felicity Wright
Minister
Joe Barber, Organist &
Music Director
Mary Jane Eckel, Childrens
Music Director
Mimi Gridley, Office
Administrator
Cindy Rice, Sexton
Sue Weaver, Financial
Secretary
Amy Kick, Administrative
Assistant

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Visit Our Website

www.theparkchurch.org

"Like" our pages on Facebook:

*The Park Church Elmira
Youth Group
The Arts at Park*

Open and Affirming

As an "Open & Affirming" congregation we, the members of The Park Church, embrace people of every ethnic origin, race, class, age, ability, gender and sexual orientation. We Welcome into Christian worship, membership, leadership, friendship and employment all who covenant with us to seek God's truth and follow Christ's example.

Message from Council

Summer time and the living is easy---well not necessarily but Council and the committees are not as busy as usual. We have observed the high energy level of many members assisting with volunteer activities through "work" with the Park Café in Wisner Park, Spruce up the Church day, Spirit Café or a committee meeting such as the Pioneers or the Worship Planning.

People ask "what are the Pioneers?" They are a group of interested individuals both members and non members that are working to come up with innovative ways of making church be meaningful to ALL of us. Right now they are focusing on a question that was raised at the last Congregational Meeting about opening a Nursery. The Pioneers are asking the questions and meeting with folks that would have the answers to assist.

On Saturday, July 20th, a group of 25 came together to "Spruce Up Park Church". Tables were repaired, pictures re-hung, entranceways, bathrooms, balcony, sanctuary pews and kitchen cleaned. We had fun while we worked and we anticipate that this will happen again in the near future. We certainly gained an appreciation for the huge job our Sexton, Cindy has! Thanks Volunteers – you are very special! Thanks Mary Wynings for the initiative of this project.

Let me ask: "Have you increased your pledge to assist in removing the \$36,000 deficit from this years operating budget?" You can do that by simply e-mailing the office stating "I will increase my pledge for 2013 by \$xxxxx." Thank you!

Congregational Life

Message from Peg Kutchukian: Bill Knapp and his kitchen crew (Challis, Mimi, Judith, Michelle, Peg, Ron and John plus others) have had continued success at Wisner Market selling delicious lunches with the profit whittling down our roof expense. Additional help for prep and clean up is always appreciated; just call the church office to volunteer or just show up.

Congregational life is looking for teams to help carry out the many responsibilities included in this ministry. Communion is headed up by Midge, Jan Butts is responsible for greeters, Bill continues with our monthly meals, Mary Jane and Joe with music, Bertie and Mary Jane with rummage, Bertie with parking and Mary W. with "care of the worship", Rob, Al and others with worship planning, Nancy with flowers. Please speak to any of these people if you can assist them in some small way. We are not looking for a huge commitment but a number of people adding small commitments will ease the burden of the responsibilities. Think about Hanging of the Greens, Christmas dinner, Agape, Lenten booklet, Mothers Day, Fathers Day and all of the other events we host and decide how you can help. I have only mentioned a few of the ways you can help, please look within and see how you might help.

Our Tops cards not only bring income to our church but also provide you with a discount if you are over the age of 60. "Young at Heart" is a free

program that gives 60 and over customers a 6% discount on groceries on the first Tuesday of each month. All you need to do is sign up. I will have a brochure available following worship starting August 4 to give you the simple directions needed to become a participant. Purchasing one of these cards provides the church with 5% of the purchase price and gives you a 6% discount one day each month.

The Park Café: We finished our 6th Thursday in the park with a profit of about \$270 which brings us roughly to \$1450 for the roof. Traffic in the park last week was slower than we expected with the wonderful weather but we are attracting more and more new people with our 'different' menu.

We had a rather extensive visit from the Health Department just before serving, which really messed things up in the beginning. There were a couple of violations that were not fatal and have been corrected, with the exception of needing to have the sanitizing cycle on the dishwasher repaired because it was found that it doesn't work. It could be a blocked line and until it is repaired we just have to sanitize the water by hand with some chlorine.

Thanks to all who make this weekly event possible. It was a rather ambitious move but it is working out just great. ~ Bill Knapp

Church Fellowship

Rummage Sale: The Fall Rummage sale date has been set! The sale will be held on November 8th and 9th. We have received an enormous amount of rummage, and we very greatly appreciate everyone's donations. Please make sure to read through our list of items we do not accept before you bring anything in, and feel free to call the office if you are not sure about an item. The goal is for Church Fellowship to be able to make a roof payment from our profits, so mark your calendars and please contact Mary Jane or Bertie if you are able to help.

Card Mission: Mary Jane Eckel has set up a station with cards to send to our members as appropriate. Look for it in Beecher Hall.

Service Projects: If you know of a young adult who is interested in earning hours, please give the office a call or email. We have several ideas in mind – just need some “man” or “woman-power”!

Arts at Park

Arts at Park is in full swing every Thursday during Wisner Market! We are having a great turnout and the kids are having a blast. Please keep in mind we are always in need of volunteers to help out at Arts at Park on any Thursday you are available between now and the end of August. The hours needed are 9:00-2:00, or anytime within that time frame, and the duties include set up and tear down and helping out at the table in between. Please contact Kirsten VanAtta, Mary Jane Eckel, or the church office if you are able to help out at all. And please stop out and see the wonderful projects Kirsten and the kids are creating!

Music at Park

The Children's Choir will be together again on August 12 for our long-awaited family picnic. Keep your fingers crossed that the weather does not thwart us this time! Tentatively, our dates to sing for the congregation in the fall are September 22, October 27, and November 24. Rehearsal for the Children's Choirs will begin on September 8th. Please contact Mary Jane Eckel or the church office if your child would like to join us!

Rev. Felicity is collecting suggestions of favorite hymns that aren't in the New Century or Pilgrim Hymnals. Depending on your recommendations, we may decide to create a Park Church Supplement, similar to what was created many years ago by Thom Bohlert.

Pictorial Directory

At long last, the church office now has the pictorial church directory! Thanks to the efforts of Kirsten VanAtta and John Distefano, it is available by email, on disc for your computer or, for the people without computers, a printed copy. The office will be emailing the directory to all members on the church email list but if you would like to receive a copy any other way please let the office know.

A huge thank you to John Distefano for taking on this project when the printing costs became prohibitively expensive. He and Kirsten did all the picture taking and labor on a volunteer basis and we are so very grateful for all their hard work and expertise!

Worship Planning

We continue our summer theme of “How Other People Minister” every Sunday in Beecher Hall at 9:00 am. Local leaders share their stories of how faith has encouraged them to become involved in community service efforts. Here’s what we have planned for you this month:

- 8/4: Worship at 9:00 in Beecher Hall. Guest speaker: Natsue Kobayashi. Communion will also be served
- 8/11: Worship at 9:00 in Beecher Hall. Guest speaker: Seamus Kennedy
- 8/18: Worship at 9:00 in Beecher Hall. Guest speaker: Vanessa Myers-Dudley
- 8/25: Worship at 9:00 in Beecher Hall. Guest speaker: Martha Boland

Spirit Café is back in September with the theme “The Spirit of Music,” and on September 15, we return to Sanctuary with worship at 10:00 and a special blessing of the sanctuary.

Beginning October 2, we will join four other nearby churches in a 6-week study series on Emergence Christianity that features Phyllis Tickle and her exploration of the church’s “500-year rummage sale.” The workshop series will begin at 6:00 with a potluck supper and will include the DVD-lectures and group discussion. Each Wednesday evening will be at a different church – Park, Bethany Lutheran, Trinity Episcopal, and Grace Episcopal. It’s our way of “living into the emergence,” rather than just being passive observers. Participants are asked to sign up in advance and purchase the \$12 workbook that accompanies the series. Let the office know if you’re interested.

Next Issue Deadline

The **deadline** for submissions to the September Cross Currents is **MONDAY, AUGUST 19**. Please send in committee news and reports by this date so we may begin putting the newsletter together as early as possible.

We welcome other submissions as well! Please email your contribution to the church office or drop it off during office hours.

Save the Date!

Vanessa Myers-Dudley is returning for a visit! She will be here from Sunday, Aug. 11 through Tuesday, Aug. 20, and will be staying with Felicity. In addition to her participating in worship on Aug. 18, we will have a potluck gathering to welcome her back directly after worship on August 11 in Beecher Hall. RSVPs would be helpful so we know what food we will have and how many will be joining us. Vanessa is excited to see everyone, as we are to see her!



Notes for our Church Community

Pastoral Availability: Rev. Felicity will be out of town at different periods during the month of August. Graciously, Rev. Mairaine Kettell will be available August 4-8 and Rev. Jane Winters will be available August 19-31 for any pastoral emergencies. Rev. Kettell’s phone number is 607-368-6131 and Rev. Winters’ preferred number is her home at 607-535-5584 with her cell as backup (607-425-3074).

Fundraising Opportunity: The Tops Grocery gift cards are now available! The cards are in denominations of \$100, \$50 and \$25, and will be available for sale on Sundays and during regular office hours. The church earns 5% back from each gift card sold, so when you are out shopping, please stop in and pick up a gift card first and use that for your regular groceries! If anyone is able to help out with this endeavor by manning a table for a short time during our regular Fellowship Hour, we would greatly appreciate it. Please contact the church office if you would like to volunteer. Thank you!

The “Why’s” of Church

Several weeks ago, Rev. Felicity described the “golden circle” of great leadership as identified by Simon Sinek, and asked people to answer the question: “Why are you here at The Park Church?”

This really says it all...

Why am I at The Park Church?



We look forward to receiving your “why’s!”

Notes from the Office

The carpets in the church office will be cleaned on Tuesday, August 6. Regular office activity is fine while this is going on, but we ask that no meetings or additional activity be scheduled for that time frame unless you plan to meet upstairs. Also, please do not drop off any rummage that day. Thank you!

We are always looking for photos of church events for the Weekly Email. If you attend any, please feel free to take photos with your smart phone and send them to the office. (office@theparkchurch.org)

Church Kitchen

An important message from Bill Knapp regarding the church kitchen:

I stopped by church on July 23 to check on items needed for this week at The Park Café in order to compile a shopping list. When I opened the freezer I found that it was defrosted and not running. Upon further inspection I found that someone had unplugged it, on Sunday most likely, to plug in the floor fan to help cool Beecher Hall. Everyone, including myself, needs to be more careful in the kitchen.

A couple of other items:

There should never be personal food items in the double-door refrigerator. This space is for food events taking place in our facility. The church can be fined for this.

Leaving a pot or two to soak overnight in the sink is ok. Leaving a pile of dirty plates etc. overnight is not. It is a breeding ground for bacteria and must be taken care of either by running through the dishwasher or washing by hand. Dishes cannot be left for someone to wash the next day. The church can be fined for this.

After using the counters for any purpose they must be wiped off with a cloth that has been in hot soapy water with bleach added to it.

The Health Department came in last Thursday for a scheduled inspection while we were working at The Park Café. So far they have made appointments for inspections, but they have the right to stop by anytime to inspect the kitchen and if they find one of these situations there will be fines and we could lose our license.

I pray that everyone takes this seriously. Our kitchen is very important to our church.

Spirit Café

There is no Spirit Café in August, but please join us in September as we return to our regular schedule of the first Friday of the month. Our theme will be “The Spirit of Music!”

ReVision Elmira

Two Thursday afternoon programs are planned in conjunction with Wisner Market on August 15 and 29 in Beecher Hall. They are presentations by two Elmira treasures: Vicie Rolling and Tedd Arnold. On August 15th, Ms. Rolling, a professional storyteller, will portray Lear Green, a runaway slave who packed herself in a trunk to escape on the Underground Railroad. Her original one-woman play ends with Green connecting with John W, Jones in Elmira. Tedd Arnold, beloved children's book author and illustrator, will bring his life and characters to us on August 29 as he relays how his storytelling adventures have taken him on great adventures far away and back to his home in Elmira.

Both of these talented local artists have worked extensively in the schools over the years and will present for an intergenerational audience. The programs will begin at 1:00 pm flowing from the activities from Wisner Market. Presentations from the artists will be followed by a question and answer forum. Reservations are not required.

The programs are offered free of charge and made possible in part by the Quick-ARTS mini-grant program administered by the ARTS Council of the Southern Finger Lakes and funded by the Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes and a gift from the Sunrise Rotary Club of Chemung County.

Joy and Concerns

We are still receiving very generous donations in memory of Boyd McDowell. We thank you all for your kindness.

Mr. & Mrs. John Brand III	Lynda Brand
Mr. & Mrs. Dean Butts	Mimi Gridley
Jim & Elaine Henry	Mary Kemberling
Barbara Ramsdell	Joan F. Rogers
Eleanor Steele	Dale Sorenson/Carol Summers

August Birthdays

1	Judith Clovsky	23	Kirsten VanAtta
9	Karen Lesky	27	Aimee Lester
18	Jane Booth	28	Jack Moore
21	Rev. Felicity Wright	30	Clay Ambrose
22	Anita Seaberg		

My Credo

By Jenny Monroe

I believe that God is the energetic, positive force of the universe. All nature reflects this energy. God is not out there anywhere in space or in time, but is the sum total of everything. Therefore I am a speck of what God is. That is, all of us, all things, living, inert, throughout space and time, are part of an energy system that is God.

My connection to this loving energy system is through faith and works. I believe that I have a choice in each moment of action or thought to choose the highest serving, most compassionate, most loving choice. I believe that faith and gratitude are the handmaidens of joy in this life. I believe I came with a purpose to learn, love and help move the universal evolution of consciousness along its path. I believe I am a spiritual entity having a physical experience.

I am less concerned with how the universe began than I am hopeful that it continues to evolve towards higher levels of consciousness between species. The fact that this Earth, within this Universe exists at all is a miracle beyond understanding. I experience life as a gift of exploration and joyful expansion. I recognize the multitude of blessings I receive on a daily basis and accept them gratefully.

I believe that human evolution to date is magnificent. I believe I have a responsibility to expand personal consciousness towards loving kindness and justice for all. I can be mindful of this path through using resources appropriately, being impeccable with my words and thoughts, and replacing fearful thoughts or actions with loving ones.

I will not play my role as small, but open my heart and mind and experience to the widest interpretation of integrity that I can manifest. I will begin with loving kindness for myself and work diligently to be the fairest and most loving wife, mother, daughter, sister, grandmother, friend and co-worker possible. I will forgive others as soon and as widely as possible. I will talk less and listen more. I will choose sustenance carefully. I will engage in activities that bring me joy, clarity and greater understanding. I will let go of negative energies as soon as possible and work towards improving personal aspects that I find less than satisfactory. I will keep my opinions and my assumptions to myself. In this life, I wish to be of use, and to be fully used up in the loving and the living of it.

August 2013

The Park Church

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11 Breakfast Potluck for Vanessa (after worship)	12	13	14 Seeker's Lunch 12:10 pm	15	16	17																																																																																																		
18 Congregational Life meeting (after worship)	19 Cross Currents deadline	20	21 Missions Meeting 4:00 pm	22	23	24 Arena Event																																																																																																		
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The Park Church
208 West Gray St.
Elmira, NY 14901

Upcoming Events

Sunday, August 11	Potluck Brunch for Vanessa after worship
Wednesday, August 14	Seeker's Lunch 12:10 pm
Sunday, August 18	Congregational Life meeting after worship
Wednesday, August 21	Missions Meeting at 4:00 pm
Wednesday, August 28	Seeker's Lunch 12:10 pm

The Park Church

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www.theparkchurch.org