



THE PARK CHURCH

ELMIRA, NEW YORK

CROSS CURRENTS

February 2013

Felicitations-

Lent comes early this year – February 13 to be exact. We enjoy a pancake supper the night before and then welcome in this time of reflection with our Ash Wednesday ecumenical service, to be held at Westminster Presbyterian at 7:00 pm.

Named from the German for springtime because it comes just as the earth is waking up from winter, Lent offers each of us an opportunity to re-emerge from the winters of our self-absorption into a new birth of fruitfulness and joy.

With this in mind, I have always been perplexed by the fact that most of us confuse Lent with denial and deprivation when, in fact, it really is a catalyst to new growth. Neither the Israelites, nor Jesus, nor any of us, could reach the Promised Land (however we might define that) without first going through some time in the wilderness! It seems to me that Lent is grounded in God's hungering for a closer relationship with each of us, so that we might find new opportunities for growth and productivity.

Sometimes living faithfully feels relatively easy. Mostly though, it is challenging in the extreme. Our Lenten theme of "transformation" is designed to help us reconnect with the source of the Holy. We want to be mindful about what we put into our bodies and our spirits, *feasting* on what is important (God's love) and *fasting* from negative thoughts and material distractions.

And so I urge you to stretch yourselves physically, psychologically, and – above all – spiritually. Lent is about getting out of our comfort zones. Lent is about trying something new. If you haven't participated in Spirit Café, come check it out. If you have a yearning to be more musical, consider joining the choir or bell choir. If you think you don't like something, then breathe deeply, take a minute of reflection, and reconsider your response. Above all, open up! Like flowers spreading their petals to absorb the sun, let your heart open to the Spirit that yearns to connect you with God.

The great Jewish poet, Yehuda Amichai, said this far better than I:

From the place where we are right
Flowers will never grow
In the spring.

The place where we are right
Is hard and trampled
Like a yard.



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

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*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.

But doubts and loves
Dig up the world
Like a mole, a plough.

And a whisper will be heard in the place
Where the ruined
House once stood.

May you experience a holy, life-changing, and joy-bringing Lent.

Lent is a time to share our doubts and loves and watch the flowers that will grow in the spring. May you find many blessings to nourish your spirits, and many bouquets to share with those you love (and those you want to learn to love.)

Blessings,
Rev. Felicity

From The Missions Team

The "One Great Hour of Sharing" offering is planned for Feb. 10. Park Church volunteers continue to work regularly at the Community Kitchen. Anyone interested in joining them should contact Jan Butts. The AED is in place and working. Peg will conduct additional training at a future date. We will allocate the Easter offering at our February meeting. Ideas mentioned include Care First and Food Bank. If anyone has a suggestion, please inform Ralph Moore. We plan to start work at the Community Garden in Katy Leary Park again this spring. We invite anyone who would like to participate to contact Ralph.

Congregational Life

Congregational Life has had an active, successful year starting with Unhanging of the Greens in January 2012 and ending with the Agape meal in December 2012. In between was crammed with our traditional activities interspersed with some new ones that included the Todd Thomas events and Dinners for the Roof. The best part of our year is the number of people who continue to step up to make all of our events successful. More members of the church are becoming church and it is wonderful to see.

As Bill Knapp and I, along with all of the other faithful, have worked, we have become more aware of the breadth and the depth of the work of this ministry. We are making a recommendation to church council to evaluate this ministry and divide it to make it more manageable. With the support of the council and the congregation we can make this work.

Peg Kutchukian

Music at Park

Lent 2013: Our first of two Lenten Organ Recitals will be held on Tuesday, February 26. Here is part of the music agenda:

- * Panis Angelicus (C. Franck) – Organ, Violin, Carrie Hooper & Shayne Jones, soloists
- * Gethsemane (A.L. Webber) (from Jesus Christ Superstar) – Shayne Jones, soloist
- * Agnus Dei (Bizet) – Carrie Hooper, soloist
- * Two organ pieces (TBD) – Joe Barber, organ

Members Recital: May 18, 2013 at the Park Church, sponsored by the Chemung Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organist. Time TBA.

Adult Bell Choir: It is tradition in the liturgical year that the handbells are not heard during the Lenten season. However, we are hard at work learning new music for the arrival of Easter Sunday! What a beautiful sound we anticipate they will make after the somber, pensive feeling during Lent.

Children's Choir: By popular request, the children will perform The Tale of the Three Trees on Palm Sunday. We have performed it for our congregation in recent years, but it is even more important for the children to cycle it again. The story leads us through Christ's life, ending with the events of Holy Week. What better way for the children to experience this than through music and drama! We will do our best to keep the presentation fresh and alive for all!

Combined Ash Wednesday Service: A combined Ash Wednesday Service will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 13 at 7:00 PM and will be at the Westminster Presbyterian Church on Maple Avenue. Area choirs are invited to participate. Joe Barber will be the organist and Helen Vincent the choir director.

Dinners At Home

Dinners At Home on March 15! These are hosted dinners at private homes around town from 6-8pm, with everyone gathering together at Felicity's home for dessert at 8:00. We need hostesses or hosts, probably 5 or 6, depending on the sign ups. The host provides the home and the main entrée. Guests provide a side dish, a salad or vegetable, whatever they agree to with the host. One guest will provide a

dessert which can be taken to Felicity's before or after the dinner.

The dinners are casual and a very nice way to meet new church friends. There will be sign up sheets in Beecher Hall in February for those who would like to attend a dinner. If you would like to host a dinner, please call Lynda Brand at 732-8010 or email her at lbrand@stny.rr.com.

Meaningful Movies

Meaningful Movies screen at 7 PM at The Park Church in Beecher Hall on the second Thursday of the month. Movies are free and open to all. A potluck supper at 6:30 precedes each movie. Here's the schedule for the next few months.

February – Thursday, February 14

The Dark Side of Chocolate

The Dark Side of Chocolate is a documentary film about the exploitation and slave trading of African children to harvest chocolate still occurring nearly ten years after the cocoa industry pledged to end it.

March – Thursday, March 14

Last Call at the Oasis

Last Call at the Oasis, a documentary about the global water crisis, sheds light on the vital role water plays in our lives, exposes the defects in the current system, shows communities already struggling with its ill-effects and introduces us to individuals who are championing revolutionary solutions. It also presents a convincing argument for why the global water crisis will be the central issue facing our world this century. We see how because of overuse, population burdens and climate change, our water supplies are no longer being replenished. It is also revealed how the issue of water cannot be approached without understanding its connection to everything else, from the food we eat to the clothes we wear to the electricity we depend on.

April – Thursday, April 11

Paper Clips

Whitwell Middle School in rural Tennessee is the setting for Paper Clips, a documentary about an extraordinary experiment in Holocaust education. Struggling to grasp the concept of six-million Holocaust victims, the students decide to collect six-

million paper clips to better understand the extent of this crime against humanity. The film details how the students met Holocaust survivors from around the world and how the experience transformed them and their community

Raising the Roof!

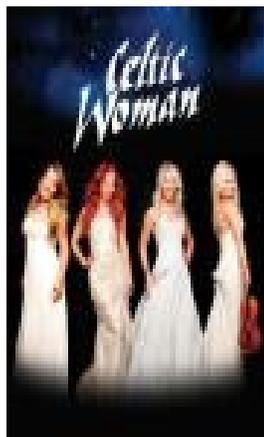
Dinners for the Roof: The Spaghetti and Meatball dinner on Saturday, January 19th was more successful than previous dinners for the roof. There were many new faces and drew nearly 100 diners. We started out on Thursday evening with a meatball party in the kitchen and it was great fun. My grandchildren hung out with me for a while Saturday morning and I put them to work wrapping silverware, they hated to leave. Thanks to the increased level of publicity from the office (our girl Amy is doing a great job), we drew new folks who hopefully will be back for the next dinner with friends in tow. I had hoped for 200 people so we have meatballs and sauce for our next Spaghetti Dinner already to go. I've decided to slip another Spaghetti Dinner into the schedule for the roof. It will be held on Sunday, February 17th from 4-7pm.

Our profit for the Spaghetti Dinner was around \$184 but we are all ready for the next one which will be almost total profit.

It's truly a challenge getting the public used to the idea of regular dinners at Park but it is happening. Patience, time and perseverance are all we need.

Bill Knapp

Celtic Woman Raffle: Ed Tompkins has generously donated a FRONT-ROW TICKET to this show to raffle off for the roof! Raffle tickets are just \$3 each or 2 for \$5. This is a \$99 ticket for an amazing show. All proceeds for the raffle will benefit the roof fund. Call or stop in to the office if you would like to purchase tickets.



<http://www.clemenscenter.com/calendar/celticwoman.aspx>

Quilt for the Roof: Several of us are exploring the idea of making a group quilt that could be raffled over the summer at Wisner Market, proceeds towards the roof. If you have sewing skill and are interested in working on such a project, please speak to Bertie Hoffman or Mary Jane Eckel. If there is enough interest, we will have a brief meeting after worship in the near future, and get working on a quilt top that could be machine quilted and ready to display and sell raffle tickets over the summer.

Spirit Café



Food for body and spirit designed for those who are "spiritual but not necessarily religious"

Theme:

The Spirit Of Love

with discussion and readings from diverse secular & religious traditions

Optional gourmet dinner with meat and vegetarian choices
plus gourmet desserts

Music by Jose Gomez ("Jogo")

R.S.V.P.'s are helpful, but not required

office@theparkchurch.org or 733-9104

February 2013

Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																											
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Souper Bowl Sunday

Following worship Sunday, February 3, the children of Park Church will be serving Soup and Muffins that they have previously prepared. They will pass Soup Kettles for donations to be given to the Community Kitchen. The children deliver the money and sing at one of the dinners prepared and served by the Park Church team. We encourage everyone to stay after the church service and enjoy soup, bread and conversation!!

Why not donate your pennies to the children's Souper Bowl collection for the Community Kitchen? Irma Liddy has donated her pennies for the children to count, and they gladly will count yours as well! Bring them on Feb. 3 and we will assist in counting and wrapping!

Who are the “Pioneers”?

Perhaps you’re thinking of Christopher Columbus, of Daniel Boone, or Lewis and Clark. If so – you’re on the right track but need to focus on the here and now. The Park Church “Pioneers” are working with Paul Nixon, national consultant and author of several books including *We Refused to Lead a Dying Church*, to examine new ways for “being church” in the 21st century. You can find out more at <http://www.epicentergroup.org>.

Some members of the group participated in a day-long workshop in Binghamton, where they learned about some outside-the-box endeavors being taken by other churches. Since then, they have met to discuss ways to create partnerships with community groups that are mutually beneficial. One of the next steps will be to design and conduct a poll for people in the community to assess their thoughts for things we might be doing to better serve the neighborhood.

Current “Pioneers” include Judith Clovsky, Alan Gaylord, Mimi Gridley, Peg Kutchukian, Al Preucil, Linda Roessler, Midge Scott, Michael Sherman, and Michele Wolcott-Lovell. However there is always space for anyone else who has good ideas. Please contact Judith or Mimi if you are interested.

Message from the Legacy Committee

The thought for meditation at the Legacy Sunday worship service was “Where there’s no gardener, there’s no garden”. Those who have given to the Park Church Endowment Fund over the years, through bequests and lifetime gifts, are gardeners. They planted seeds and we are the beneficiaries of the harvest from that garden. The harvest has enabled us to maintain our historic building and to support our annual operating budget.

It is now our turn to plant seeds so there will be a harvest in the years ahead. We can sow seeds by including The Park Church in our wills and consider joining the Beecher Circle by making lifetime gifts to the Endowment Fund.

If you have included the church in your estate planning, please advise the church office or a member of the Legacy Committee, so we can record it as “a promised gift”. Thank you.

Dean Butts, Chair; Bill Benedict, Jan Eberhard, Robert Groff, Ron Hooper, James Kaffenbarger, Ann Paris, Steve Seaberg

Christian Education

Sunday School News: Come out of the cold and into the warm Park Church kitchen where Sunday School children and super chefs, Jan Butts, Carolyn Moore, Nita Seaberg and Chaliss Wolcott will be preparing and serving soup after church on “Souper Bowl Sunday” – Feb. 3. A soup kettle will be passed and proceeds collected will go to the Elmira Community Kitchen. Our Faith Practices curriculum will continue for the remaining Sundays in February. The choir will be singing on February 24 and because of President’s weekend there will be no Sunday School on February 17.

Adult Education: Meetings are held on the second and fourth Sundays of most months. Also, ask Ed, Bill, Al, or Kim about small group discussions in congregants’ homes.

Nursery: Ashley Rice, Sexton Cindy’s daughter, welcomes our youngest children to the Nursery Room. Walk up and sign in before worship.

Church Fellowship

Notes from Our Church Community

Spring Rummage Sale: May 2 and 3, 2013
 Church Fellowship paid the December roof mortgage from the proceeds of the Fall Rummage Sale – another example of how your rummage donations have been put to work! We have begun to take items for the Spring Sale, and hope you have written the dates on your calendar. It takes many hands to make this happen! We are hopeful that we can pay the June mortgage as well. Please drop off your clean, gently-used items in the office lobby. From there, we will sort and store until late April. One man’s junk is another man’s treasure! All of it adds up to helping to keep our treasure, The Park Church, safe and dry!

Fellowship Hour: Please remember to sign up in Beecher Hall if you would like to provide the baked goods for our Fellowship Hour after worship service!

Park Church ~~11/11~~ 11/11
 Thank you all for the lovely card and best wishes.
 Hope you all have a good year.
 Sincerely,
 Jim Procknow

Notes for Our Church Community

The Fund for Women provides grants to girls and women in support of their education. Each individual applicant is eligible for a \$500 grant. Grant applicants must reside in Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben or Yates Counties in NYS. The deadline for the annual grant application cycle is March 1. For more information about qualifying and to obtain an application, visit www.communityfund.org/grants-for-women or call [607-739-3900](tel:607-739-3900).

Dear Park Church Flower Ladies,
 Thank you very much for sending me a bouquet from Sunday's flowers. The yellow lilies have brightened this dark Monday and the aroma greets me every time I pass by them.
 Thank you for your thoughtfulness.
 Sincerely, Lois

February Birthdays

- 1 Alan Gaylord
- 6 Brent Stermer
- 9 Ralph (Baldy) Moore
- 10 George Barringer
 Roberta Hoffman
 Adeline Worner
- 11 Scott Moore
 John Sutton
- 12 Peter Marks
- 16 Jon Homuth
- 18 Janet Winfield
- 19 Betsy Morss
- 21 Bill Hungerford
- 25 Rich Gridley
- 28 Bill Benedict

Worship Happenings

February brings wonderful variety to our worship offerings. The Worship Planning team met three times in January to develop our Lenten theme, which is “Eyes on the Prize,” focusing on the courage of our Elmira and Park Church pioneers in translating the gospel of Jesus into everyday life. There are still many details to be worked out, but we will use the image of a three-legged stool as guidance for our living. The three legs are: our Biblical heritage, our Park/Elmira heritage, and our ever-present yearning and need for transformation. Here are some specifics of the happenings in February:

- Friday 2/1 – Spirit Café at 6:00 with the theme “The Spirit of Love.” If you haven’t joined us before, please come. This is going to be great fun.
- Sunday 2/3 – The sermons topic is the fickleness of God. Worship will include communion and will be followed by the SOUPer Bowl Lunch.
- Sunday 2/10 – Mark Twain returns to The Park Church! Jim Ketcham, a Baptism minister and celebrated Mark Twain impersonator, will talk about some “mountaintop” experiences in honor of Transfiguration Day (the last Sunday before Lent), when three of Jesus’ disciples saw him bathed in light along with Moses and Elijah. He will remain after the service for a Q&A.
- Wednesday 2/13 at 7:00 pm – Ash Wednesday service at Westminster Presbyterian Church
- Sunday 2/17 – This is the first Sunday in Lent and it will be a meditative service with music by the youth and the Grace Notes. Kim Hanna is still working on the details but it may include “stations of the senses,” on the five ways that we experience God through our eyes, ears, noses, taste, and touch.
- Sunday 2/24 – This is Lent 2 and it will begin the “Eyes on the Prize” series. The children will sing and Bill Saxbury and Sheila Reed will use the Children’s message time to teach some important sign language messages.

The Worship Planning team is always happy to welcome new participants. We’re especially interested in working out new ways to involve our youth in planning and participating in worship.

The Arts at Park

We are excited to announce that we have received a \$1,275 grant from the ARTS of the Southern Finger Lakes to continue next summer’s art tent program in Wisner Market! The grant will allow us to hire local artists, as well as cover some of the other fees. In addition, we need volunteers each Thursday to help with the tent and activities throughout the day. Stay tuned as we wait for Spring!

Notes from the Office

We are grateful to be able to say that we have received enough requests to change to electronic receipt of the Cross Currents that we went ahead and made the change for this month rather than waiting until March. If you did not receive this month’s newsletter via email and you are able to, please let the office know. This is a large savings for the church!

Do you have a joy or concern you would like to share with the congregation? Please call or email the office and we will run it in the Cross Currents. Joys might include the birth or impending birth of a new baby, or a school or community accomplishment, and concerns can be anything you feel could be helped along with thoughts or prayers, such as a hospital stay. (If reporting for someone else, please make sure you have their permission to share their story.)

Next Issue Deadline

The deadline for the March issue of Cross Currents is **Monday, February 18, 2012**. Please email your submissions, including birthdays, anniversaries, joys, and concerns to the office **no later than noon** to: office@theparkchurch.org.

Seminary Update

Wow time has passed so quickly! I can't believe I have made it through the first semester and moving on to the second. I had meant to write more updates during the semester, Rev. Felicity & Rev. Marraine (from Corning UCC) weren't lying when they told me seminary is a lot of reading! I have been trying to keep up with things going on at

the church through emails and Facebook, while at the same time working on accepting that I cannot play the same role that I have played at The Park Church in the past. Please know however, I am forever grateful to The Park Church and all it has done for me. Thanks again to everyone who came to my reception, donated money, signed my book, helped Jerad and I move, and supported me with thoughts and prayers. I wouldn't be here in St. Louis writing this update without all of you.

This past fall I took 3 required classes, 1 elective, and did 10 hours a week in a diaconal placement setting. My required classes were Biblical Studies 1, Theology of Pastoral Care, and Theology and Practices of Ministry. In Biblical Studies we learned more about the history and context of the Torah and the Former Prophets, and techniques for reading and interpreting the Bible. Pastoral Care was the most challenging class, as it dealt a lot with exploring myself and beliefs in order to better help others. It included role playing with other class members to help prepare us for pastoral care in the future with some highly emotional topics. One of the most helpful topics of my Practices of Ministry class was to learn more congregations and how to study and evaluate them, some of which I hope to share with Staff and Council down the road. My elective class was Religion & Political Uses of the Past, a very interesting and eye-opening class, especially during the 2012 election season.

Eden also requires all M. Div students to do "contextual education," much like teachers do observations, field work, and student teaching. The first year placement is called a diaconal placement with most people doing some type of chaplain type work. I am working with Lydia's House, a transitional housing program for victims of domestic violence, where the residents can remain for up to 2 years, have their own living space, and get personal help with anything from buying a car to divorce trials. I work with the chaplain to help plan and run programs for the teens and women weekly, attend community meals, and work out with various other fundraisers and parties for the residents. It has been a great learning and eye-opening experience, and perfect timing as I was able to help a friend deal with a domestic violence situation this past fall.

Jerad found a new job in October and has been traveling between St. Louis and Oklahoma City 1-2 times a month. Originally the plan was for him to lead the company into PA, but after some talking, will now be working at the OKC office semi-permanently, with a trip once a month to St. Louis. While the time away is frustrating, we are grateful to have an income and health insurance. I had hoped to make it back to Elmira in January, but time did not allow. My plan is to definitely come back for a couple weeks this summer, though at this time I don't know when.

I will conclude this update with some fun facts about Eden: Reinhold Niebuhr (author of the Serenity Prayer) and his brother H. Richard Niebuhr along with Walter Brueggemann are all graduates of Eden Theological Seminary. Some of the conversations held about the formation of the United Church of Christ were held here at Eden. Dr. Christopher Grundy, a current professor of worship and an excellent composer/guitar player, has several songs in the UCC "Sing! Prayer & Praise" Songbook. My class this year includes 45 men and women, with 45% of us being UCC students. The rest range from United Methodist to Unitarian Universalist to Baptist to Christian Scientists. Eden calls itself an "ecumenically diverse" school, and our class alone shows how diverse it is!

If anyone has specific questions about what I have studied or learned, feel free to contact me through email (myers.vanessaj@gmail.com) or Facebook!

Blessings in the new year!

Vanessa Myers-Dudley

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Upcoming Events

Friday, February 1	Spirit Café 6:00 pm
Sunday, February 3	Souper Bowl 11:30 am
Tuesday, February 12	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 5:00 pm
Wednesday, February 13	Seeker's Lunch 12:10 pm Ash Wednesday 7:00 pm (Westminster Presbyterian)
Thursday, February 14	Meaningful Movie and Potluck Supper 6:30 pm
Sunday, February 17	Taize Worship Service 10:00 am Spaghetti Dinner for the Roof 4:00 pm
Wednesday, February 20	Missions Meeting 4:00 pm
Thursday, February 21	Council Meeting 5:30 pm
Tuesday, February 26	Lenten Recital 12:00 pm
Wednesday, February 27	Seeker's Lunch 12:10 pm

The Park Church

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