

The Pioneer
'preparing for others to follow'

Newsletter of the Preble Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
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Preble, New York 13141

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~ April 2017 ~

...from the Pastor's Pen...

Dear Friends,



Writing my ordination paper, attending the Ecclesiastical Council (EC), and submitting to the qualifying examination have come and gone. All these years of study, reading, writing papers, attending classes and seminary summer sessions, going to retreats, convocations, and other required events – that's all behind me, and I am grateful to be approved for ordination.

Ordination is a significant event for someone called to serve God's church, very different from graduation, which is a milestone achieved when completing a course of study. Ordination acknowledges the religious aspect of consecrating a man or woman to ministry. In the UCC, a candidate who is called to a ministry setting and completes the educational requirements may qualify for ordination. Once ordained, the individual may preside at the order of sacraments in any UCC church.

In our denomination, a person who is not ordained but called to serve a local church is annually licensed by the local Association to pastor that church and offer the sacraments. I am licensed as a "Member in Discernment" since coming to Preble, which means that I have been studying for ordination under the supervision of the local Committee on Authorized Ministry while serving our church as its pastor.

Now that my studies are finished, we will establish a date to gather as our church and Association to observe the ordination ceremony. A UCC liturgy outlines the steps to follow, but we will have input, also. The Association Moderator, the Rev. Vicki Burtson, and the chairperson of the Committee on Ministry, Joann Ferguson, will lead the service. I am very much looking forward to it and am humbled by the prospect.

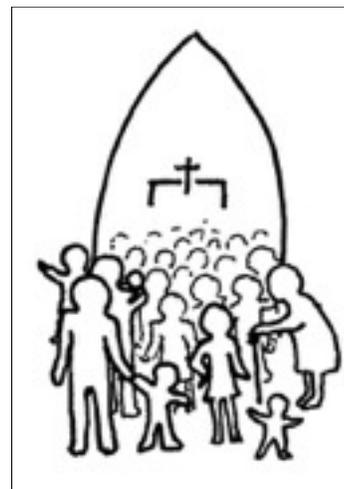
I'd like to offer a few comments about my Ecclesiastical Council. Questions asked of me during the examination were based upon one's reading of my ordination paper, and included matters relating to ministry in general. The candidate does not see them before the meeting.

I remember that Brenda took a few seconds to collect her thoughts before answering her questions, and I followed the same pattern. Trying to anticipate the questions is useful as an exercise, but when the first question was asked, I realized surprises were in store for me. My pastoral experience with our church gave me much to draw upon, and I am thankful.

I know this one thing for sure after my time in classrooms and with our church: *I don't know very much "for sure."* I certainly don't know what is "right" or "wrong" for someone else and wouldn't try to guess what is. We discover our way by walking together as companions on this spiritual journey - blessed, led by, and open to God's constant presence in our lives.

Thank you for calling me to be your pastor six years ago (well, on June 11th). I am looking forward to sharing this experience of ordination with all of you in our beautiful, historic, caring and loving country church.

In faith and love,
Pastor Becky



Preble Church Annual Easter Egg Hunt

Once again, we will hold a happy Easter Egg Hunt for children within the church and day care and throughout our community. Matt and Laura Swayze facilitate this event, and prepare hundreds of plastic eggs filled with treats for all the kids.

Posters with more information will soon pop up around town. Let your neighbors know, too. It's quite the riot when all the kids are here. Come and see at 10am on Saturday, 4/15!

Baby Shower for Samantha and Danielle and Baby Remy

Set aside the date of Sunday, April 30, after worship, to gather for a celebration of the birth of Remington Leigh, granddaughter of Lou and Cathy Scott, daughter of Samantha and Danielle Beebe-Scott.
Much more information to come!!!

First Annual Pi Day



We shared a lot of fun and a lot of pie at the Pi Day celebration on Sunday, March 19th, after worship. The buffet filled up with savory and sweet pies and tarts, enough for second helpings for everyone. We had a lot of kids in Sunday school that day – we've heard tell that one or two of them came for the pies!

Games and Grub Day

Our Church Council will host another get-together on Saturday, April 8th, at 4:30 in the afternoon, when families and folks can gather to share a dish-to-pass meal and games.

Bring something to eat and share, and some kind of game, and enjoy another great time of fellowship with our church community.



Women's Retreats



Two retreat opportunities are coming up soon, one in May, the second in June. The idea of several women attending together was suggested at the last church council meeting, and Trudy Masters can now offer more information. Registration information is tacked onto the bulletin board in the Riehlman Room.

If you would like to form a group to attend either of these Women's Retreats, let Trudy or Becky know and we will see who wants to go where. Of course, attending by oneself is always possible, too.

After the registration deadline, additional charges are added to the basic cost, so please look at the information and let us know. The deadline for the UCC retreat is first, but the late charge is minimal. The late charge for the second retreat is more substantial. *(continued)*

The church has some line-item money available to assist with the cost of the retreats, if needed.

#1: The NYUCC Women's Retreat is scheduled for May 4-6 at Watson Homestead Conference and Retreat Center, and is the annual gathering attended by women across the state. Brenda McCutcheon, Marilyn Stoker, and others have enjoyed this retreat in years past.

The keynote speaker will be the Rev. Loren McGrail, a UCC minister serving in East Jerusalem. The Rev. Jan Mahle will offer a Bible study on Luke 14:1-14, and a special discussion led by the Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams is titled "On Conquering Cancer & Caregiving."

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#2: The second retreat opportunity is offered by LYFE Women's Conference, a ministry of Clarks Summit University located just over the border in Pennsylvania. Clarks Summit is the new name for an established American Baptist seminary.

The keynote speaker for this retreat is Christine Lothamer, who will talk about a woman's identity and worth, and how we are redefined in

Amber Community Church women have attended this conference in past years and found it to be interesting and worthwhile. Trudy Master's sister, Gail Frary, a past attendee, can recommend this gathering.

This conference will be held at two consecutive times: June 1-3 or 8-10.

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## Lou Scott's Play

Our church sponsored Lou's powerful and important play during March, and many of us went to see it. After expenses were taken, over \$1000 was donated by the cast and crew to the Preble Community Food Pantry!

The play was not intended to be a fund raiser, but rather is the account of one man's journey through addiction.

McGrawville Sunday Night Alive!



We see on Facebook that McGrawville Baptist Church continues its Sunday Night Alive music program on the second and fourth Sunday evenings at 6 pm, and everyone is invited to join in this joyous praise and worship service.

Jessica Delia is a member of the band, and I, for one, would like to visit one of these Sundays. If you would like to go with me, let me know, and we will plan a date.

~ Pastor Becky

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Lost and Found

Ladies size 16 olive trench coat with leather buttons and collar, epaulets on shoulders. Found hanging on the clothes tree in the church office a while ago. It's still there. Is it yours?

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Baptism, Membership, Holy Communion

From time to time, folks inquire about these topics. We always want to respond to your questions and assist you as needed in any decisions you are considering.

Traditionally, many people choose Easter Sunday for their own or family baptisms. If you would like to talk about this possibility, please call Pastor Becky. Easter Sunday will be April 16, this year.

Membership is a celebration that is held year round. Are you wondering what it means to become a member of this church? If so, we welcome your interest but do not pressure you. Come and talk at any time. Whatever may be your personal journey, you are invited into fellowship with our church.

Holy Communion in the United Church of Christ denomination (we are a UCC church) is offered to any and all people who wish to receive this sacrament, including people of all ages. It is not necessary that you first be baptized or confirmed in order to receive this sacrament. Jesus would not turn you away from the table and neither do we.



Do you have any other concern or subject that you would like to talk about? You can call Pastor Becky or any of our church folk to find out more about our church and its people and practices. Your interest is most welcome!

*From the friends, members, and pastor of the Preble Congregational United Church of Christ*

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SUNY Cortland Gospel Choir

Before they take off on their Spring Concert Tour, SUNY Cortland Gospel Choir, directed by Deyquan Bowen, will have their Dress Rehearsal Concert at Christ Community Church, Wed. April 5th at 7:00 PM. Light refreshments to follow.

Admission is free, but donations to student scholarships are appreciated.

This concert is open to the community. In our smaller venue, the sound carries well and the atmosphere is more homey. Christ Community Church is handicapped accessible.

The Gospel Choir will be gone April 7th - 9th to the Washington DC area, where in addition to their bookings, they will also get to see the new Museum of African American History at the Smithsonian.

The regular end of year Gospel Choir Concert will be Sunday afternoon April 23rd at 3:00 PM at Brown Auditorium in Old Main. Christine Sinclair, an acclaimed Gospel singer and Cortland alumna, is returning to sing with the Choir and also sing two solos.



This Concert is open not only to campus but to the community.

## UCC Daily Devotional

### **How Goes Your Soul?**

*Talitha Arnold*

*"I know that it is well with your soul." 3 John, 2:8*

How is it with your soul today?

That's the question John Wesley used two centuries ago when he developed a new way of being Christian, eventually called Methodism. His followers met in "class meetings," small gatherings led by lay people that focused on the spiritual disciplines of prayer, support, study, and accountability. It was the 18<sup>th</sup> Century version of the small group, peer counseling session.

It was also a profound way to help people grow in their relationship with God. At the beginning of each meeting, every person in the group would be asked, "How is it with your soul?"

We measure our lives in all kinds of ways - the hours we work, the salary we earn, the grades we (or our children) make, the time we spend at the gym. Businesses and other organizations focus on "best practices" or "quality control."

But how do we assess the most important relationship of our lives, our relationship with God? John Wesley's question, based on this passage from the Third Letter of John, is a good place to start.

So how is it with your soul today? Your mind may be filled with lists of things to do or problems to solve. Your heart may be brimming with new life or breaking with sorrow. But how is it with your *soul*?



Whatever the day may bring or has brought, how are you experiencing God in this moment?

How can you deepen that experience?

How is it with your soul this day?

**Prayer:** *Strengthen my soul, O God, and make it well this day. Amen.*

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Talitha Arnold is Senior Minister of the United Church of Santa Fe (UCC), NM, and is the author of Bible and church studies for the UCC.

Fifth Grade Assignment

A fifth grade teacher in a Christian school asked her class to look at TV commercials and see if they could use them to communicate ideas about God.

Following are just some of the ideas they reported:

God is like Bayer Aspirin. He works miracles.

God is like a Ford. He's got a better idea.

God is like Coke. He's the real thing.

*God is like Hallmark Cards.
He cares enough to send the very best.*

*God is like General Electric.
He brings good things to life.*

God is like Alka-Seltzer. Try him; you'll like him.

God is like Delta. He's ready when you are.

*God is like Dial Soap. Aren't you glad you have him?
Don't you wish everybody did?*

God is like Chevrolet, the heartbeat of America.

God is like Bounty, the quicker picker upper.

*God is like Scotch Tape.
You can't see him but you know he's there.*

*God is like the Energizer Bunny.
He keeps going, going, and going.*

Church Directory

A reminder about the church directory: it's stored in the church computer and can easily be changed on the fly. Let Pastor Becky know via email or telephone message about changes that need to be made, and she will correct the directory.



Also, up-to-date copies can be sent via an email attachment, so if you would like a fresh copy at any time, just ask Becky. We will also print out a fresh hard copy for you, if you wish.

Mark Your Calendars!

Events in April

Adult Bible Study, every Tuesday at 6:30 pm in the Riehlman Room. All are welcome.

4/2, Worship and Holy Communion
11:15 am, CE meeting

4/4, Deadline for ordering Easter flowers

4/5, 6:30 pm, Church Council meeting

4/5-4/10, Pastor Becky at Continuing Education Seminar in New Mexico

4/9, 10 am, Palm Sunday, Lou Scott leads worship and preaches



11:15 am, Deacons meeting

4/13, 7 pm, Maundy Thursday
Worship with Tenebrae Service with Brenda McCutcheon

4/14, noon to 3 pm, individual prayer vigil in sanctuary for those interested.

4/16, Easter Sunday Worship!
Deacons offer continental breakfast
Flowers delivered to homebound

4/19, 6:30 pm, Trustees meeting

Events Coming in May

5/14, Mother's Day

5/29, Memorial Day



Emergency Meal Planning Meeting

Several people met on Saturday, 3/18, to talk about Emergency Meal planning, led by moderator Kadene Limmer.

This AMAZING ministry has been in place for close to fifty years, according to Marilyn Stoker, who remembers that June Knapp introduced it to our church after seeing a similar system in place in a local Methodist church.



Here is how the ministry works: volunteers serve as a point person for each month during the year. When a need for a meal arises, that person

coordinates with others in the church to provide food for the family who requests the meal.

Most often, we are called to serve families and friends of loved ones who have passed. Other times, we schedule meal delivery for families who are homebound due to surgery or illness. We occasionally serve at weddings or baptisms, although usually families take care of the food at those times.

The point person talks with the family to help define a menu, and then other people in the church supply mains, sides, and desserts.

Some volunteers are experienced in this ministry and some are new, so the meeting helped to share information about how to accomplish the tasks. New volunteers are paired with experienced ones. The result has been a church recognized for its hospitality, good food, and friendliness.



The lists of names and tips will be added to the church computer so that they are readily available as needed and easily edited as volunteers come and go.

After fifty years, we still offer this ministry with love and care to those in need. Thank you, June Knapp!

Astonishing! Everything is intelligent!
Pythagoras



PLEASE JOIN US AT CHURCH FOR A GATHERING
SUNDAY,
APRIL 30, 2017 AT 11 30 AM.

FOR REMINGTON (REMY) BEEBE-SCOTT, BORN JANUARY 22,
2017, DAUGHTER OF SAMY & DANIELLE BEEBE-SCOTT &
GRANDDAUGHTER OF LOU & CATHY.

THE MOMS SAY THERE IS NOT MUCH THEY NEED; INSTEAD OF GIFTS
THEY WOULD APPRECIATE DONATIONS TO:

CROUSE HOSPITAL NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT
736 IRVING AVENUE
SYRACUSE, NY 13210

OR

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE
1100 EAST GENESEE STREET
SYRACUSE, NY 13210

PLEASE RSVP BY APRIL 20 TO ellenshirley1@hotmail.com
OR 315-696-5659.

LOOKING FORWARD TO FELLOWSHIP & REFRESHMENTS



Joy In the Morning

By Joy Niswender

April Celebrations

- April 1: Lou Scott
5: Shirley Coffin
12: Gabe Gilfilian
16: Kevin and Julie Baldwin
Anniversary
19: Brian Masters
20: Susan Swayze
22: Bailey Baldwin



Easter Love

**On Easter we celebrate love,
love coming down from heaven,
love blanketing the earth
in a transforming embrace;
unique and infinite love,
giving more than we can imagine
for us, to cleanse our sin,
a perfect sacrifice, Lamb of God,
the walking, talking Word.
He is teacher, role model, friend,
this God in human form,
dying, then rising from the dead,
proving all who believe
will also rise
to have eternal life, with Him,
Lord of all.
Oh, Happy, Happy Easter!**

By Joanna Fuchs

Several years ago I read Walter Wangerin's account of the crucifixion and I have never been able to view the cross of Christ in the same way. The book treats the Bible stories as a novel, yet the truth concerning the horror of this form of torturous death surely was based on fact. It was a slow agonizing death, and often accused were crucified upside down. You have to wonder who was evil enough to want to put a person, whatever the crime, through such a death, and to devise such a punishment.

Wangerin's retelling what Christ went through... what others killed by crucifixion were forced to endure... was so graphically told that I can hardly think of the event without overwhelming grief. It changed me forever and more than ever caused me to want to scream "WHY?".

Yet we know why, even as we recoil that Jesus, wholly without sin or fault, was so misunderstood by the government of his day that this was allowed to happen.

This event, evil and horrific as it was, gave way to our Easter Morning, and the unbelievable truth that Christ did it all for us fallible, often erring people. We can hardly comprehend love like that and yet are commanded by God's Holy Spirit to look at the perfect pattern of how life should be lived and urged to "go and do likewise".



Come worship with us on Sunday
mornings at 10 am.

Share Kids' Time, Fellowship,
Praise, Music, and
the Word of God.

**Everyone is welcome in this church, wherever
you may be on life's journey!**