

*The Pioneer*  
*'preparing for others to follow'*

Newsletter of the Preble Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
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*...from the Pastor's Pen...*

Dear Friends,

It's been said by many that there is nothing new in the world, and so instead of being wowed by new ideas, we keep learning the same things – or variations of them – over and over again. Well, maybe that's not so bad – second chances are always good things, and God knows we are grateful for them.



I've always wanted to help adults learn to read, and I am learning to do that through Literary Volunteers, a service of CAPCO, the Community Action Program of Cortland County. If there were ever a program that offers second chances, this is it.

For all sorts of reasons, some men and women miss out on vital learning experiences during their early years. Why this happened isn't nearly as important to these folks as making up for lost time when it's possible.

The UCC initiated a national literacy mission a couple of years ago, which provided the impetus for a few of us here in our church to look into becoming involved. We decided to partner with CAPCO after discovering that we needed a way to find adults who wanted help.

I was paired with a woman from CNY who needed help with homework and testing related to a class she took to improve her chances for better employment. Enrolled in a college-level course that she found online, she learned through her classes (held locally) that she could not read, write, and comprehend at the level the course required, and so she sought public assistance.

She and I met weekly at the Cortland Library for several months. It's not a simple process, as I found out, because – guess what – life keeps happening during the best laid plans. She read her text, attended classes, and took notes, and then we worked on her

homework together each week. As her special needs became evident, her professor and my CAPCO mentor helped to plan our weekly discipline. You've heard the phrase, "It takes a village"? I came to understand the profound meaning of that idea.

When it came time for my learner to take her test and complete her final assignment, I needed to step away from our partnership. She tested and passed, and now she is working on her last assignment. Our time together is finished, and I hope she achieves the goal she set out to reach.

I was mightily blessed to be a part of her effort, and I learned at least as much as she did.

What did I learn? That she and I came from very different life experiences, and that acceptance and curiosity, not judgment, made it possible for us to partner as she sought her goal. As our own individual abilities meshed with the patience and focus needed for learning, she gradually moved in the direction she had chosen. We brought to our partnership an attitude of willingness, and so a rapport developed which made listening and learning possible.



I am very grateful. I see the value of second chances, and I understand that had I been judgmental, the open door – her vulnerability and her desire to be taught – would have closed on me. I see that our work together needed both of us to suspend our differences in order to be able to work together.

And isn't this the case in our lives, generally? Especially in this troubled world today, isn't it through love and forgiveness and acceptance that we nurture peaceful and caring relationships with one another?

I know that God calls for us to do so, and I am grateful that we are given so many second chances to get it right. In the opportunity area of adult literacy, tutors offer themselves to help men and women learn to read at a level that opens doors to places they want to go. To that end, we are looking for learners.

It is difficult to ask for help; we all know that, and so if you know of someone who is interested, please let me know. Often it's easier to ask for help from a friend than a stranger.

In faith and love,  
*Pastor Becky*

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*Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.*  
*Abraham Lincoln*

## Harvest of Faith Update



By acclamation, we chose to continue the third season of our "Harvest of Faith." This fund raiser replaces the time and effort needed to make, bake, and serve our Fall Chicken n' Biscuits meal.

These tasks are now just memories: cooking and deboning chicken; making gravy; peeling, cooking, and mashing potatoes and winter squash; baking biscuits, pies, and fruit breads; chopping cabbage and carrots; setting up and tearing down the heavy dining tables and chairs, selling and taking tickets, serving beverages and trying not to spill them...etc., etc., etc.

Today, the "Harvest of Faith" involves sliding ten dollars into your colorful envelope each month from May to September. Because you don't have to cook and bake, you can enjoy your leisure time with other friends and members of Preble Congregational UCC as you support the church budget and missions.

May...June...July...and now, August. We hope your garden is growing as we anticipate a bountiful harvest in October!

Thank you!  
Your PCUCC  
Church Council



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## Birthday Wishes

August 18<sup>th</sup> is a BIG day for Jane Hill, Anne Henderson's mother. She will turn 99 years old on that day!



Jane would love to receive some cards for her birthday. If you would like to congratulate her, please send your cards to:

Jane Hill  
41 South Main Street  
Homer, NY, 13077

## Graduates



We celebrated our graduates again this year during a service in June, when Steve Wilson and Pastor Becky West offered the Rev. Loren House's 1965 Graduation Sermon called "The Parable of the Umpires."

We are proud of all our graduates:

James Davenport, Tully HS,  
grandson of Pat Wilcox  
Jennifer Hilts, Morrisville-Eaten HS,  
granddaughter of Anne Henderson  
Ross Brown, Homer HS,  
son of Cindy and Steve Brown  
Nicholas Bongiovi, Pennsylvania HS,  
grandson of Dwayne and Sue Whiteman

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## Deacons' Speakin'

The Board of Deacons blesses the congregation through assisting the pastor in providing for the worship and spiritual needs of the church. Our job description includes the duties as set forth in the New Testament.

We have a lot of responsibility, but many hands make light work, and so does the "Green Book," which lists our tasks for each Sunday. Between times of worship, we keep in touch with our homebound and sick members and friends through visitations, cards, telephone calls, and hospital visits. All of these efforts are so rewarding to us as Deacons!

We also developed a monthly planning sheet, because the Christian Year includes many chances for celebration and observation, and we need to plan ahead for these events.



An update of the Church Directory is underway, and you will have a chance to check your information and make any needed changes.

Please help us with reading, greeting, fellowship hosting, and providing altar flowers! Signup sheets are in the Riehlman Room.

## UCC Daily Devotional

### **Desire Paths**

**Vince Amlin**

Associate Minister at the United Church of Gainesville,  
Gainesville, Florida.

*"I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?" - Galatians 3:2-3*

A desire path is the trail that pops up on a lawn when enough people take the same shortcut. If you've found yourself tracing a scar of hard-packed dirt across an otherwise green park or placing your boots in the snowy footprints of those who traveled this way before, you were on a desire path.

Despite designers' best intentions for a space, together, we always find these invisible walkways. It's as if they were there all along, just waiting for us to discover them.

For me, it's become a metaphor for grace. In my life I spend a lot of time designing the path to God, building the way of Jesus. I draw the layout, survey the land, pour the concrete...step by step. I am certain that if I labor hard enough, and long enough, and well enough, I will eventually reach my goal. I will work my way to God.



Like those foolish Galatians, having begun this journey in the Spirit, I look to my flesh to bring me across the finish line.

But the joke's on me. Because, if I will simply look up from wherever I am in my road-making work, there is already a path laid out for me: the shortest distance between God's heart and mine. It's as if it was there all along, just waiting for me to discover it.

### **Prayer**

My soul's desire, I lay down my way-making tools. Show me the shortcut to you.

## Pie and Flag Sale

Remember back before Memorial Day when we sold pies on the front porch and decorated our lawn with flags in memory of loved ones?

Well, the pies are consumed and the flags either taken home or saved for next year. Here is the interesting thing: many flags were left over from last year, and they were added to the current lawn display, making our lawn even more memorable. We will continue this tradition.



You will be interested to know that this fund raiser yielded not only a passel of fluttering flags and a lot of delicious desserts, but also a total sum of \$740.90 after expenses!

Thanks to all who volunteered to chair the effort, bake all the pies, letter yellow ribbons, and plant flags in our church yard. Everyone appreciated the results!

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### Coming Up...

Sunday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, is the date that many churches in Cortland County gather to worship together under the tent on the Homer Green. This is the last day of the Annual Chautauqua, and the Rev. Marsha Williams will be the guest minister.

A wonderful free picnic follows the service, with food given by Preble UCC and many other local churches. Pray for sunshine!

Sunday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, will be a day of celebration for Jonna and Heather Johnson when their three sons will be baptized during our worship service.

A Deacons meeting follows worship on that day, too.

The Board of Trustees meets on Wednesday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 pm.

The Food Pantry will offer a free picnic on this day for the Pantry patrons. All are invited to share in this meal.



Thank you!

Once again, Greg Gallup welcomed our congregation to his Song Lake home for our annual Worship on the Lake in July.

The day was beautiful all around! Great weather, delicious food, excellent conversation among the worshippers, fine music ala Steve Wilson, and a beautiful setting under Greg's white canopies. Thank you, Greg!

Some of you asked for the recipe for Leslie Smith's bean salad/salsa, so here it is:

- 1 can each of black beans, white corn, and black-eyed peas, drained and rinsed.
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 cup chopped green pepper
- 1 jar pimentos, chopped

Mix all together and dress with a mixture of 1 tsp salt, ¼ cup cider vinegar, 1 T water, and 1 c. sugar. (These amounts can be cut in half, if desired.) *Bon appetit!*

Chuck Goodwin is healing well from his recent hip surgery, and sends these greetings to our church:

*Dear friends,*

*Please find a check enclosed, intended for use with your refreshment committee.*

*This gift is to help convey my greatest thanks for the support that the Preble Church and its congregation has provided me prior to and following my recent hip replacement surgery.*

*It is just so very wonderful to have this special connection with the church and its members. I love and cherish the Preble Church for all that it provides! The church and its tremendous family reside in me, in the strongest of terms, throughout my life.*

*Special blessings to you all,  
Chuck Goodwin*

Special Note:

*Chuck Goodwin's special gift of \$100 for fellowship has been deposited and will be used for fellowship snacks and beverages in the near future. Thank you, Chuck!*

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Storage Closet Cleanup & Other Stuff

When you have a chance, take a look into the church storage closet in the downstairs foyer. Whereas a couple of weeks ago it was packed to the gills with stuff, it's been cleaned and arranged by a troupe of helpers who spent two hours together on a Friday night, going through the collection.



Trash and treasures were sent to appropriate destinations, and we now have room to store necessities and actually be able to locate them easily. What a relief. Many thanks!

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Trustee Report

The Board of Trustees meet regularly on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm. Projects on the agenda lately include preparations for extensive repairs to the front porch, the replacement of the chandelier globe in the sanctuary and consideration of drop lights to replace the ceiling spotlights which don't provide enough illumination for the worshippers.

Also, the trustees interact with Day Care. Lee Benson and Millie Briggs are the church representatives to the Day Care, and they attend monthly board meetings and report back to Church Council.



Linda Underwood is chair and liaison with contractors, experts, and the Day Care director.

## A Very Special Letter

Dear Preble Friends,



Those of you who attended the service on June 26 heard me mention Preble Church's reputation as a charitable organization. If you weren't in church that day, here is a repetition of what I said.

On Friday, June 24, I played for an event given by the YWCA at the Alumni House in Cortland. One of those who attended was Paul Pitkin, whom most of you know. He was a supply pastor at Preble several times and he maintained a family counseling practice in Cortland.

He asked me if I were still playing at Preble, and I of course said yes. During our subsequent conversation he mentioned that despite the relatively small size of our church and congregation, Preble is held in high regard because of your generosity to many of the charitable organizations to which you give.

Paul continues to work with the Cortland County Council of Churches, and that is the source of his information.

I knew you'd be proud to hear that.

Steve Wilson

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## Preble Church Website



Wes Swayze has volunteered to email Michelle Landcastle, our website manager, any articles you would like posted on the church website. Please send your requests and articles (and reminders?) to Wes at [wesswayze@wildblue.net](mailto:wesswayze@wildblue.net) or to Pastor Becky at [bwest2323@hotmail.com](mailto:bwest2323@hotmail.com). Michelle is quick to respond to what we request, and skilled in designing the website.

We will email the Pioneer to her for monthly publication, as well. Since we do not have an in-church website manager, it helps when each of us remember to request that items be published.

One thing we'd like to do is add pictures to our website, showing our church doing mission work and sharing fellowship opportunities. We will ask permission before publishing snapshots, however, especially when they include pictures of our children and youth.

Thank you for your help on this project! All of us working together will create good results, as always.



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## Rte. 81 Fund Raisers



Time's a'passing, and two of our three 2016 Preble Rest Stop fund raisers are over. We should call them "friend" raisers, for all the fun we share with travelers and visitors!

Between the two dates thus far, many people have donated over \$1100 just by giving small donations in thanks for fresh coffee and other beverages, homemade baked goods, bagged chips, and fresh fruit. Kids, especially, love to see the array of goodies right at their eye level when they come into the Rest Stop building.

All volunteers would say they had a great time meeting people and talking with them, and also working together with other friends in our church community to make it happen.

Many thanks to Marilyn Stoker for introducing this possibility, to Annette Benson for facilitating it, and to all the volunteers who set up, take down, and staff the event!



## August Celebrations

- August 2: John Hilts  
8: Karen White  
13: Kara White  
18: Jane Hill  
19: Lucille Ripley  
20: Christopher Swanka  
21: Bernie Podsiedlik  
23: Wayne Swindon  
25: Dick Martin  
28: Gail Brennan  
31: Dominique Canton

### ***What are our kids up to this summer?***

*Our youth may be out of school and on summer break but we hope they are enjoying the summer. It has been a wonderful time for them to be outside and enjoying summer activities.*

*Our Sunday School classes are a little bit more relaxed but we continue to meet each week. The youth are involved in some of our mission projects, helping out our "Mission Specialist- Annette Benson". We are collecting boxes of tissues for a special back-to-school project. They have bunny banks to help collect spare change at home for Heifer International. We are saving for rabbits this year. They also participate in the "Mission Moment" each Sunday morning. The congregation is also keeping their eyes open for bargains on school supplies that we make in the spring. It may be summer but we are busy.*



### *Joy in the Morning*

*By Joy Niswender*

We often cheat ourselves of a feeling of contentment and peace with our world, however our life is being played out.

I happen on a definition of contentment years ago on a trip to New Hampshire to visit a friend that went:

"Contentment lives in the heart. The contented heart has the strength to resist self-pity. It can look ahead without fear for it is not dependent on outer conditions. Contentment is being satisfied with where you are, what you have, and what you are doing. Contentment is dependent on the acceptance of God's will for you .... whatever that may be..."

I don't think the author meant to sit with folded hands while the world and its problems flow past unseeing eyes. It seems to me it should be a quiet center where we "recharge our batteries" and become free to act out of Christ centered love. It's being patient with ourselves as we tackle each challenge. It's necessary to find a time each day to totally relax and get in touch with our God and let him speak to us in the quietness of surrender to his will. Not easy? Nope! But it's well worth the effort in serenity of soul.





