

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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~ February 2017 ~

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

Dear Friends,



Our Annual Meeting took place after worship on January 22, led by our organized and committed moderator, Kadene Limmer, who skillfully kept us on point as we discussed board and committee reports and other business.

Reports submitted early and emailed to the congregation gave people time to read them before the meeting. We raised and answered questions and considered information presented in the written reports. For the 2017 operating budget, three changes were suggested and passed: an increase in the CE and Music lines, and a correction to the insurance premium line.

Prior to the meeting, we enjoyed a dish-to-pass luncheon with good food and fellowship. By way of new business, we decided to host two dinners in 2017 for all of our church folks. We often gather and share luncheons around business meetings, but these two additional meals will give us a chance to have some fun together as neighbors and friends.

We unanimously approved the slate of committee and board members. An updated "back page" with all of the volunteers' names will be distributed shortly to add to your copies of the Annual Report.

All of the preparations and activities for the meeting lead me to appreciate the way we work together as a church family to make things happen. Paul, the apostle, in 1st Corinthians 12:4, said, "... *there are varieties of gifts...and there are varieties of services...and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.*" I find it wonderful that God's spirit moves in different ways in each one of us to accomplish God's purposes for the church. Each of us is uniquely special.

In the year ahead, as we live into the reality of a new administration in our nation, I pray that we continue to find special comfort and purpose in our church community and Christian values. We may need to make hard choices and take risky actions as we support the ideas that we hold dear, but we can do it just as we always have, by building on the trust we feel for God and God's guidance, love, and presence.

And, through our care and friendship for one another and our willingness to share our unique gifts both within and beyond the walls of our church, we will continue to build God's community. Let's use our gifts to for this purpose.

In faith and love, **Pastor Becky**

Community Food Pantry Gleanings

An elf listened one day as a group of volunteers worked together to prepare the shelves for Food Pantry patrons. Here are some of the comments that elf overheard as the volunteers talked about their various roles:



"You have a calming effect on what could be a stressful event for some, and you respectfully and kindly maintain fairness for all patrons."

"I really enjoy and am gratified by the work we all do. I was going to say that you are too kind but as a cog in the wheel that does this job, I would like to pay that forward to you all so we can remind ourselves that we all play a great part in the success of this Food Pantry."

"I feel honored to directly help God's children courageous enough to step forward. I pray it helps in some way."

"The pantry is a way to contribute and see the efforts help totally local. It's a chance to meet and visit with our neighbors, hear their stories and know they appreciate all the loving assistance."

"I enjoy taking part in the Food Pantry. There is a great need in our community for the extra help it provides. Also I love the sharing of the patrons that attend, many give back what they can! And the team of volunteers are truly inspirational!"

"What I like most about volunteering at the Pantry is the chance to get to know our neighbors. People come to shop on a regular basis, and over time, relationships develop. The shared dinners that we offer are another way to be together that breaks the ice."

CE News

Minutes from the Christian Education
Committee Meeting, January 29, 2017

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I think we had a great turnout for our first meeting of 2017, with Annette, Kadene, Sue, Pastor Becky, Kasandra and Jessica in attendance. Jessica brought an agenda for everyone to take a look at and we did a lot of brainstorming.

We have decided to have a Vacation Bible School this summer and hope to have a great turnout. Start thinking of ways you may be able to help with this! If anyone has addresses for children in the community that we can invite, please give the names and address to Christian Ed so we don't forget anyone

We are thinking with the Day Care and most families working, that evenings may be the best to hold it. We haven't picked a date yet but, are thinking Sunday-Thursday 6-8:30. We want to make sure our date's don't conflict with other local churches.

If you have any gifts you would like to share with the youth, please contact Christian Ed or Pastor Becky with your ideas (sewing, baking, gardening, master chess player, painting, building bird houses....) We hope to have some fun events for the youth, also, and gathering with the church and community.

Here are a few events we have planned:

PI Day: Bring your favorite pie to share after church for a luncheon. I'm sure we will have a wide variety of pies! Set aside the date of March 12, 2017 ( PI is 3.14159...)

Games and Grub: Bring a dish to pass and a game you like to play. Fun for all ages on April 8, 2017, 4:30 pm!

Our next meeting is scheduled for March 5, 2017, after church. All are welcome!

*Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their opponents in court. — Psalm 127:3-5*

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica DeLia, Christian Ed

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### Upcoming Dates

2/12, 2:30 pm, Pastor Becky's Ecclesiastical Council (\*see below)

3/5, 11 am, CE meeting (and first Sunday of every month)

3/12, 11 am, "PI Luncheon," with all kinds of pies: chicken pot pie, quiche, dessert pies. Bring your pies and share!



4/8, 4:30 pm, "Games and Grub" fun gathering at church for all generations

\*A note about the Ecclesiastical Council: remember Brenda McCutcheon's council in December 3 years ago? These meetings are held to discern whether the person requesting ordination in the UCC is ready for the honor.

At the council, clergy and designated delegates from all the churches in the Susquehanna Association have the opportunity to ask the candidate questions, based upon their reading of the ordination paper.

A yea/nay vote is taken following the question and answer session, and then a date can be set for the ordination ceremony.

## MOM'S EMPTY CHAIR

*The following account was sent to me  
by one of our members.  
Often, people want to talk with me about  
prayer. If you have questions about  
your prayer life,  
I offer this story as a possibility for you to try.*

A woman's daughter had asked the local minister to come and pray with her mother.

When the minister arrived, he found the woman lying in bed with her head propped up on two pillows. An empty chair sat beside her bed.

The minister assumed that the woman had been informed of his visit. "I guess you were expecting me," he said.

"No, who are you?" said the mother. The minister told her his name and then said, "I saw the empty chair and I figured you knew I was going to show up."

"Oh yes, the chair," said the bedridden woman. "Would you mind closing the door?" Puzzled, the minister shut the door.

"I have never told anyone this, not even my daughter," said the woman. "But all of my life, I have never known how to pray. At church I used to hear the pastor talk about prayer, but it went right over my head.

"I abandoned any attempt at prayer," the old woman continued, "until one day four years ago, when my best friend said to me, 'Prayer is just a simple matter of having a conversation with Jesus. Here is what I suggest...

'...sit down in a chair. Place an empty chair in front of you, and in faith see Jesus on the chair. It's not spooky because he promised, "I will be with you always." Then just speak to him in the same way you're doing with me right now.'

"So, I tried it and I've liked it so much that I do it a couple of hours every day. I'm careful though. If my daughter saw me talking to an empty chair, she'd either have a nervous breakdown or send me off to the funny farm."

The minister was deeply moved by the story and encouraged the old woman to continue on the journey. Then he prayed with her,

anointed her with oil, and returned to the church.



Two nights later the daughter called to tell the minister that her mama had died that afternoon.

"Did she die in peace?" he asked.

"Yes, when I left the house about two o'clock, she called me over to her bedside, told me she loved me and kissed me on the cheek.

"When I got back from the store an hour later, I found her. But there was something strange about her death.

"Apparently, just before Mom died, she leaned over and rested her head on the chair beside the bed. What do you make of that?"

The minister wiped a tear from his eye and said, "I wish we could all go like that."

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### "As the Season Turns IV"

by Georgia Cates

*Always remember that you are absolutely  
unique. Just like everybody else.*

~ Margaret Mead

## Christian Education Committee Archives

*As our church is actively focused on our children and youth programs at present, it was interesting to find this report in a 1975 Pioneer.*

### *Christian Education Committee*

*The film on world hunger shown after the Bike-a-thon Walk-a-thon was obtained by the Christian Education Committee.*

*Vacation Bible School was directed by Marilyn Twentyman during the week of August 18. The curriculum, "Followers of Jesus," was described as excellent by the teachers and enjoyed by a steady attendance of 56 students. The offering received during the Vacation Bible School (\$45.25) was sent to Heifer Project to send 181 baby chicks to the Philippines.*

*The committee organized the family breakfast held for the opening of Sunday school in the fall. The Christian Leadership School held in Cortland was attended by all of our Sunday school teachers and funds were provided for their enrollment.*

*A Youth Fellowship for Junior and Senior Highs has been organized by Judy Riehlman and Elinor Currie.*

*The Diaconate questionnaire concerning study and sharing groups was discussed for adult education possibilities. The strongest responses were in the areas of Bible Study (Sunday school class), Bicentennial (youth fellowship), couples with growing children (weekly group meetings Thursdays, now), and sharing personal and family concerns.*

*Trudy Masters, Secretary*

## Question: What is Ordination?



Briefly and essentially, ordination is the process by which individuals are consecrated (set aside) as clergy to perform various sacraments and duties according to the design of the denomination which grants the designation.

Once an individual is in covenant with a local church and a Committee on Ministry (our CAM is part of the Susquehanna Association), basic qualifications are discerned:

- acknowledgement of Jesus Christ as the sole head of the church;
- membership in a local UCC church; and,
- demonstrated knowledge and affirmation of the history, polity, and practices of the UCC.

Discernment includes assessment of the candidate's educational path relative to the study of preaching and leadership, theology, congregational life, and pastoral care and counseling.

Being ordained in the UCC means that one can serve if called to any church body within the denomination. Without being ordained, an authorized pastor can fully serve a particular church and offer all the duties and sacraments to that church. A lay minister is able to serve a church but is not authorized to perform the sacraments. All of these categories are overseen by the Committee on Ministry.

My upcoming Ecclesiastical Council is part of the process leading to ordination, and is explained elsewhere in this Pioneer. Ordination is one of the central events in a pastor's life, and a significant experience that one recalls with awe and gratitude, because it speaks of a commitment to a call from God and the effort needed to reach a spiritual goal.

~ Pastor Becky



Pioneer Survey of Sorts....

What would you like to see in our monthly Pioneer: a calendar? A sneak preview of the lectionary readings for the

month? An article from the archives?

We would like to include information that you'd like to read, so please let Sue or Becky know your choices. Some church newsletters include articles about local events outside the church, for example, and others are dedicated just to one church's activities.

On the same topic, please submit board and committee reports by the end of the second week in the month so that they can be included in the next newsletter.

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Easter Baptisms

Easter is coming up on April 16<sup>th</sup>, and this is a wonderful day to be baptized.

Some of you have asked about planning for a baptism, so if this date is right for you, please contact Pastor Becky.

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Financial Secretary Request

Often friends and family like to make donations to the church in memory of a loved one who has passed.

It would be helpful to designate on the check how you would like the donation to be used: Memorial Gift Fund, Endowment Fund, or General Operating Budget.

Thank you for your generosity!

Thank You

To Everyone at Preble Congregational UCC:

Thank you for all your support and prayers given to our family at Luke's unexpected passing. We appreciate all the delicious food prepared and delivered in the worst snowstorm!

Luke loved his small Preble community and was happy to help the church whenever he could.

"Never are we more aware of how much our friends and family mean that at the time of our sadness. Your thoughtfulness did so much to ease our sorrow.

The Family of Luke Searles

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Thoughts and Ideals

...offered by Annette Benson...

"How to Preserve a Partner"

**First**, use care and get one. **Not** too young and unhealthy of growth. **Make** your selection carefully and let it be final. **Otherwise** they will not keep.

**Like** wine, they improve with age. **Do not** pickle or put in hot water. **This** will make them sour.

**Prepare** as follows: **Sweeten** with smiles according to variety. **The** sour, bitter kind is improved by a pinch of the salt of common sense. **Spice** with patience.

**Wrap** well in a mantle of charity. **Preserve** over a good fire of steady devotion. **Serve** with peaches and cream.

**The** poorest variety may be improved by this process and keep for years in any climate.





***A Special Day of Worship  
February 12<sup>th</sup>***



**Joy in the  
Morning  
by Joy Niswender**

Join us Sunday morning, February 12<sup>th</sup> for a special worship service led by our youth. They will be taking on various duties to present the sermon, sing some special songs as well as candle lighting, playing the chimes, collecting the offering etc. Come and witness our youth in action.



**February Celebrations**

- February 2: Daniel Hilts**  
**4: Kevin Baldwin**  
**7: Blaise Knapp**  
**8: Don Wright**  
Carolyn Riley  
Dale Aeschbacher  
**9: Jennifer Hilts**  
**11: Bil Fitch**  
**13: Chris and Karen White**  
Anniversary  
**14: Joy Niswender**  
Nancy Simister  
**17: Todd Shirley**  
Annette Benson  
**19: Anne Henderson**  
Paula Steger  
**21: Isabel Webb**  
**28: Scott Cook**

What a gift laughter is! It lifts the spirit and has the ability to turn a drab day into one rich with enjoyment.

When a Baby laughs it seems to laugh all over its diminutive body and with uninhibited glee that can't fail to bring a smile to any and all that see it.

Laughter is healthy, they say. Not surprising, when we observe how our mood can lift and things that had seemed shrouded in gloom suddenly seem not so bad after all.

We have all know people that had a funny story always ready to share and with that little quirk of personality that sees laughable in everyday, human situations.

I knew one such lady and it was always such a treat when we found time to share a cup of coffee or take a walk together. She died of cancer, long after she moved from our area and we had lost touch, except for long letters at Christmas time. I remember her for her sense of humor, but wonder if in the face of terminal illness, she still found things to joke about....

*“Praise God from whom all blessings flow...”*

**Preble Congregational Church, United Church of Christ  
Officers, Boards and Committees  
2017**

The following officers are elected for a one year renewable term.

**Moderator: Kadene Limmer  
Clerk: Trudy Masters  
Historian: Linda Underwood  
Financial Secretary: Susan Swayze  
Treasurer: Annette Benson  
Auditor: Anne Henderson  
Delegates to Cortland County Council of Churches:  
Millie Briggs and Lois Waffner  
Delegates to Susquehanna Association:  
Brenda McCutcheon, Renee Gates and Susan Swayze  
Delegates to New York Conference:  
Lee Benson and Annette Benson**

**Board of Trustees:** 6 Members  
(May serve 2 consecutive terms)  
Ellen Shirley 2019\*  
John Steger 2019\*\*  
Richard Martin 2018\*\*  
Marilyn Stoker 2018\*  
Linda Underwood 2017\*\*  
Wayne Swindon 2017\*\*  
Matthew Swayze (Pro-tem)

**Board of Deacons:** 8 Members-3 year terms  
Marion Stone 2019  
Mary Podsiedlik 2019  
Pat Twentyman 2018  
Lee Benson 2018  
Wesley Swayze 2018  
Chip McCutcheon 2017  
Lois Waffner 2017  
Lou Scott 2017

**Board of Christian Education:** 3 year terms  
Jessica DeLia 2019  
Pat Twentyman 2018  
Kassy DeLia 2017

**Music Committee**  
Stephen Wilson, organist/choir director  
Mary Podsiedlik  
Cathy Scott  
Richard Martin

**Memorial Gifts Committee:**  
Gail Brennan 2019  
Millie Briggs 2018  
Melanie Cook 2017

**Endowment Committee:**  
Anne Henderson 2019  
Trudy Masters 2019  
Lee Benson 2018  
Nick Brennan 2017  
Kadene Limmer 2017

**Pastoral Relations Committee:**  
Lee Benson  
John Steger  
Marilyn Stoker  
Pat Twentyman  
Lois Waffner

**Board of Missions:**  
Annette Benson  
Helpers (Young and Old)



|                                                 | Budget | 31-Dec-16 | 2017        |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------|-------------|
| <b>EXPENSES</b>                                 | 2016   |           | Prop Budget |
| <b>WIDER CHURCH SUPPORT</b>                     |        |           |             |
| A 1 Cortland Co. Council of Churches            | 500    | 600       | 500         |
| 2 Our Churches Wider Mission                    | 1720   | 1720      | 1750        |
| 3 NYUCC Women                                   | 75     | 75        | 75          |
| 4 Family Counseling Ministry Membership         | 1000   | 1000      | 1000        |
| 5 Susque. Assoc. (Per Capita @\$6 ea)           | 450    | 462       | 456         |
| 6 Covenant Share (\$10/member)                  |        | 770.05    | 760         |
| <b>PROGRAMS</b>                                 |        |           |             |
| B 1 Education & Youth Ministry                  | 1004   | 292.53    | 1000        |
| 2 Diaconate/Worship/Fellowship                  | 600    | 1221.91   | 1500        |
| 3 Conference Delegates                          | 300    | 210       | 300         |
| 4 Choir Music/Instrument Tuning/Repairs         | 500    | 682.8     | 800         |
| 5 Fundraiser Expenses                           | 200    | 106.1     | 200         |
| 6 Funeral meals/Receptions                      | 300    | 542.01    | 300         |
| <b>PASTOR'S SALARY &amp; BENEFITS</b>           |        |           |             |
| C 1 Salary (taxable)                            | 22750  | 24481.88  | 26420.96    |
| 2 Housing                                       | 10000  | 9999.96   | 8329        |
| 3 Medical/Dental Insurance                      | 2700   | 2700      | 2700        |
| 4 Life & Disability Insurance                   | 0      | 0         | 0           |
| 5 Social Security Tax (Emp Contribution)        | 2505   | 2505.36   | 2658.37     |
| Total Pastor's Salary & Benefits                |        |           |             |
| <b>PERSONNEL</b>                                |        |           |             |
| D 1 Organist/Choir Director Salary              | 4420   | 3745.92   | 5000        |
| 2 Cleaning Salary                               | 1920   | 1505.36   | 1920        |
| 3 Fed'l & State Taxes & Soc Sec Tax             | 1306   | 1317.07   | 1125        |
| 4 Guest Minister                                | 1000   | 794.28    | 1000        |
| 5 WebMaster                                     | 200    | 211.8     | 300         |
| <b>ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES</b>                  |        |           |             |
| E 1 Office Expenses (supplies, copier, postage) | 2000   | 2110.67   | 2000        |
| 2 Pastor's Discretionary Fund                   | 200    | 100       | 200         |
| A Contin Ed/Pro Exp Reinburse - Pastor's        | 2000   | 268.08    | 1000        |
| B Continuing Education - Others                 | 500    | 49.63     | 500         |
| 4 Pastor's Mileage Reinbursement @.54           | 2000   | 2000      | 2000        |
| <b>SAVINGS FUNDS</b>                            |        |           |             |
| F 1 Sabbatical Fund                             | 500    | 0         | 500         |
| 2 Building Fund                                 | 500    | 500       | 500         |
| <b>CHURCH PROPERTY</b>                          |        |           |             |
| G 1 Snow Removal                                | 400    | 100       | 400         |
| 2 Phone                                         | 600    | 646.3     | 700         |
| 3 Heating Fuel                                  | 6600   | 4495      | 4000        |
| 4 Electricity                                   | 2220   | 1961.88   | 2000        |
| 5 Church Maintenance                            | 1500   | 2274.01   | 1500        |
| 6 Internet                                      | 660    | 659.4     | 660         |
| <b>CHURCH INSURANCE</b>                         |        |           |             |
| H 1 Worker's Comp                               | 1060   | 1058      | 1058        |
| 2 Excess Liability                              | 550    | 550       | 550         |
| 3 Religious Instution Prop Ins                  | 3662   | 3697      | 3197        |
| 4 New York Disability                           | 160    | 0         | 160         |
| I Misc                                          | 500    | 81        | 500         |
| Totals                                          | 79062  | 75495     | 79519.33    |

*Revised*

Preble Congregational Church UCC  
 Treasurer's Report for 2016  
 and Proposed 2017 Budget

| <b>INCOME</b>              | 2016     |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Envelopes & Checks         | 64539.22 |
| Loose money                | 2201.11  |
| Preble Children's Center   | 14400    |
| Garage Sale                | 213      |
| Harvest of Faith           | 3480.72  |
| Free Coffee on 1/81        | 2088.01  |
| Flag/Pie Fundraiser        | 1082     |
| Donations                  | 325      |
| Coffee Mug Sales           | 0        |
| Book Cart                  | 29       |
| Special Meal Donations     | 340      |
| Misc                       | 238.87   |
| Use of Church, tables, etc | 200      |
| Raffle                     | 176      |
| Total                      | 89312.93 |