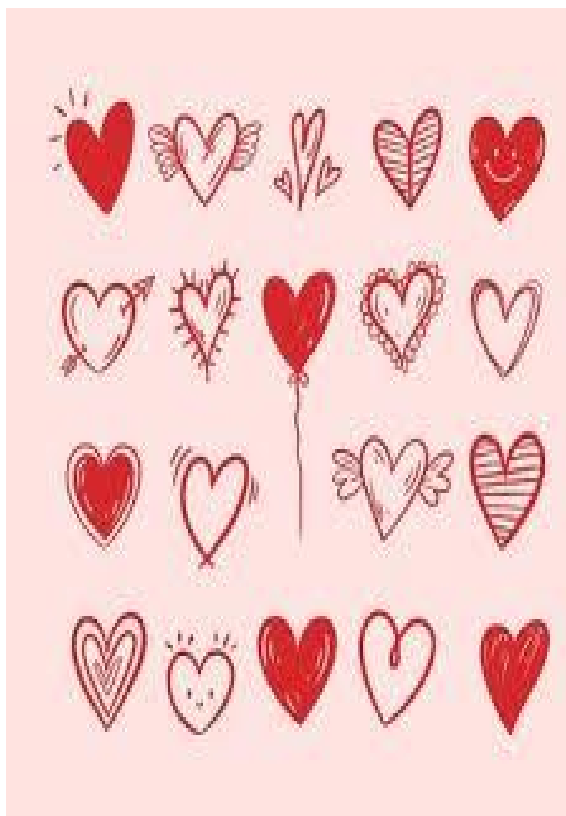


The First Presbyterian Church of Washingtonville The *Good News-Letter*

February 2025

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7



From The Pastor

Dear friends,

In case you missed the annual meeting of the congregation, we had a good time, thanked and appreciated a lot of people, heard some good ideas, and adjourned to a delicious brunch. Copies of the annual report are available in the church office.

Meanwhile, 2025 has started. The Food for Kids team has already packed for January. Scouts are invited to church on February 2. Souper Bowl publicity is in full swing, with the offering to be dedicated February 9. Lent doesn't begin until March, but 2025 has brought with it some new issues and challenges. The Bible study is studying our stewardship of the environment based on Scripture passages from several books of the Bible. And the Session is working on an issue from the regional news, which I want to bring to your attention.

When Sodom was destroyed in Genesis, God spared Lot and his family because he protected the strangers who were visiting his house. Lot didn't realize at the time that the strangers were angels. With the Bible as our guide and in light of recent government action, the Session has decided to adopt a policy so that we are not unprepared if immigration control officers visit our church to detain or question any participant of any group that meets in our building. We have not asked any of our groups to tell us whether any of their participants are likely to be interesting to ICE officers. We feel called to help the helpless who are our guests while we also plan on following all applicable laws.

Here are the things our members and guests need to know. Anyone on the church grounds who notices any type of presence of ICE or cooperating agencies should immediately notify one of these designated FPCW staff or officers: Pastor Martha Carlson, Clerk of Session Deborah Chedister, or Session Representative / Chair of Buildings and Grounds Committee Nancy Brusino. We will be spokespeople for the church, be aware of what to look for in a legal warrant, take notes on any encounters and decide whether to involve legal counsel. This way there will be no need to train every member and guest how to represent the church. If you are questioned about the church, tell the officer that the church is private property, that there are people designated to speak for the church, and call one of us. You are not required by law to take any action before we get there, such as let officers into the building or answer any questions.

A complete copy of the policy and procedures will be kept in the office in case anyone wants to read it, and all members of the Session have a copy.

I don't mean to worry you. All of Washingtonville might not seem big enough to attract ICE's attention, and all of the users of our building and grounds are few people compared to the population of Washingtonville. Worship, mission and studying God's word with an eye to using it in our daily lives are still our priorities. But if we don't prepare to act on the basis of conscience, we will end up acting on the basis of what is happening at the moment.

God bless you,
Martha

Prayer for February

Holy God, give us the power of Your Holy Spirit to follow
Your Son's loving example. Help us to see His love as our strength.
We pray in His name. Amen.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR CHURCH SPACE USERS

1. Are not churches, schools and hospitals "protected spaces" where immigration agents are prohibited from enforcement actions?

a. **NO. Federal immigration authorities are now permitted to target schools and church.** On Tuesday, January 21, 2025 President Donald Trump revoked a 2011 directive that allowed for schools, houses of worship hospitals, funerals, weddings, essential services providers and public demonstrations to be off-limits to immigration enforcement action as safe and "protected spaces". A statement from the Department of Homeland Security touting the move Tuesday said: "Criminals will no longer be able to hide in America's schools and churches to avoid arrest. The Trump Administration will not tie the hands of our brave law enforcement, and instead trusts them to use common sense."

2. Can President Donald Trump change the Constitution by his January 20, 2025 Executive Order and end the 14th Amendment guaranteeing "birthright citizenship"?

a. **NO. Neither the President nor the Supreme Court can eliminate an amendment from the Constitution without Congressional and states' approval.** The process for repealing or changing an Amendment is outlined in Article V of the Constitution, and basically requires at least 2/3 of both Houses of Congress to agree on the change, which must then be ratified (approved) by no less than 3/4 of all the states.

3. If agents arrive on campus, do I need to confront them?

a. NO. Upon initial contact, you should call one of the designated staff to interact on FPCW's behalf, in keeping with this policy:

Martha Carlson, Pastor, Cell: 845-260-2273

Nancy Bruscano, Session Member, Chair Buildings and Grounds, Cell: 845-781-6607

Deborah Chedister, Session Member, Clerk of Session, cell: 845-325-0324

4. Does this policy mean that police officers or other agents are never allowed on campus?

a. NO. It means that when officers and / or agents are in uniform and come on campus acting in an official capacity to carry out immigration enforcement, this policy applies. FPCW welcomes all to participate in our worship, programs, ministries and activities.

5. Does this policy require us to know the legal / documented status of participants in worship, programs, ministries, activities that take place at FPCW?

a. NO. This policy respects the privacy of individuals who come to the FPCW campus for any reason, and does not require or encourage any staff member, volunteer, space user or campus partner to ask for or obtain the legal documentation status of anyone on our campus.

6. Does implementation of this policy mean that FPCW would be breaking the law?

a. NO. Implementation of this policy is in keeping with current federal, state and local laws.

Worship Ministry

We still have to take care of ourselves, since Covid, RSV and the Flu are still around. We continue to go Live on Facebook (First Presbyterian Church of Washingtonville Facebook page) for our friends who want to watch from home during the service or watch the recording later.

February at FPCW looks like this:

- February 2 is Scout Sunday, our traditional recognition of our scouts each year. We may also have a visit from our No Strings Attached Puppets.
- February 9 -- the Lord's Supper will be celebrated.
- February 16 is President's Weekend, and Pastor Martha will be away. We are happy to have our good friend Lynn Costa in the pulpit again that Sunday.

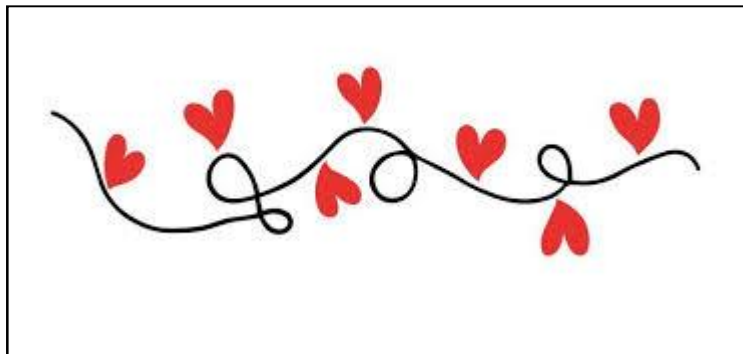
Looking ahead to the first week in March:

- March 2 is the Transfiguration of the Lord. We will also be having Communion.
- March 5 is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. Bethlehem and Hamptonburgh Churches are invited to join us at our worship service at 7:00 p.m.

We love having you all in worship, either in person or watching via Facebook. Stay safe.

Blessings,

The Worship Committee



February 2025

First Presbyterian Church

						1 Josef Cleaning Service 7:00 PM Dr. Bob Group
2 Scout Sunday 9:30 Worship 11:30 LCWM 8:00 PM A.A.	3 7:30 PM Dr. Bob Group	4 7:00 Troop 416	5 7:00 PM Cemetery Committee Meeting 8:00 PM A.A.	6 9:30 AM Bible Study 3:30 Session 7:00 N.A.	7	8 Josef Cleaning Book Club- Mary Thomas home 1:30 PM FPC Potluck Luncheon 7:00 PM Dr. Bob Group
9 9:30 Worship, Lord Supper 11:30 LCWM 8:00 PM A.A.	10 7:30 PM Dr. Bob Group	11 7:00 Troop 416	12 8:00 PM A.A.	13 9:30 AM Bible Study 7:00 N.A.	14 Happy Valentine's Day	15 Josef Cleaning Service 7:00 PM Dr. Bob Group
16 9:30 Worship Preaching - Elder Lynn Costa 11:30 LCWM 8:00 PM A.A.	17 7:30 PM Dr. Bob Group	18	19 8:00 PM A.A.	20 9:30 AM Bible Study 7:00 N.A.	21	22 Josef Cleaning Service 7:00 PM Dr. Bob Group
23 9:30 Worship 11:30 LCWM 8:00 PM A.A.	24 7:30 PM Dr. Bob Group	25 7:00 Troop 416	26 8:00 PM A.A.	27 9:30 AM Bible Study 7:00 N.A.	28	

First Presbyterian Church
of Washingtonville

Session Moderator
Rev. Martha Carlson

Clerk of Session
Deborah Chedister

The Session
Nancy Bruscano 2025
Mark Chedister 2025
Bobbie Trager 2026*
Debra Van Regenmortel 2026

Board of Deacons
Jorus Beasley 2025
Mo Moss 2026
Hanora Sullivan 2026
Peggy Wright 2026*

*indicates second term

Pastor
Rev. Martha Carlson

Organist
Bill Hooper

Office Manager
Cynthia Carey

30 Goshen Avenue
Washingtonville NY
845-496-3814

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Rev. Martha Carlson
revmpc86@yahoo.com

First Presbyterian Church
www.fpcw.makeswebsites.com

Presbytery of Hudson River
www.hudrivpres.org

February Birthdays



24 Bobbie Trager



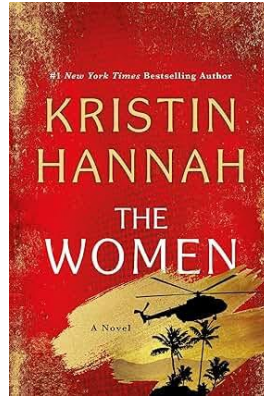
FOOD FOR KIDS

We are collecting Mac&Cheese microwaveable cups and Chef Boyardee microwaveable cups to donate to the FOOD FOR KIDS program between now and Super Bowl Sunday. We are also collecting DOLLARS FOR DAIRY to purchase shelf-stable milk for children in food insecure homes in the Washingtonville Central School District. Thank you for caring!



THE SAVVY SOULS SISTERS OF SYNTAX

“The Women” by Kristin Hannah



A #1 bestseller on The New York Times, USA Today, Washington Post, and Los Angeles Times!

From the celebrated author of *The Nightingale* and *The Four Winds* comes Kristin Hannah's *The Women*—at once an intimate portrait of coming of age in a dangerous time and an epic tale of a nation divided.

Women can be heroes. When twenty-year-old nursing student Frances "Frankie" McGrath hears these words, it is a revelation. Raised in the sun-drenched, idyllic world of Southern California and sheltered by her conservative parents, she has always prided herself on doing the right thing. But in 1965, the world is changing, and she suddenly dares to imagine a different future for herself. When her brother ships out to serve in Vietnam, she joins the Army Nurse Corps and follows his path.

As green and inexperienced as the men sent to Vietnam to fight, Frankie is over-whelmed by the chaos and destruction of war. Each day is a gamble of life and death, hope and betrayal; friendships run deep and can be shattered in an instant. In war, she meets—and becomes one of—the lucky, the brave, the broken, and the lost.

But war is just the beginning for Frankie and her veteran friends. The real battle lies in coming home to a changed and divided America, to angry protesters, and to a country that wants to forget Vietnam.

The Women is the story of one woman gone to war, but it shines a light on all women who put themselves in harm's way and whose sacrifice and commitment to their country has too often been forgotten. A novel about deep friendships and bold patriotism, *The Women* is a richly drawn story with a memorable heroine whose idealism and courage under fire will come to define an era.

The Savvy Soul Sisters of Syntax are reading this book after *The Rent Collector* by Cameron Wright.

“Our Plans and God’s Plans”

Read: Leviticus 13; Matthew 26:26-50

Many years ago, my husband decided to take a trip to Africa with a group of people from his church. At the last minute, the group was prevented from going on its journey. Everyone was disappointed, but the money they’d collected for airfare, lodging, and food was donated to the people they’d tried to visit. The people used it to construct a building that would shelter victims of abuse.

Recently, at a prayer breakfast, my husband met someone who lived in the village he’d almost traveled to so many years ago. This person was a teacher who said he walked by the building every day. He confirmed that God had used it to provide for the most vulnerable people in the area.

Our plans and desires don’t always match what God has in mind. For His thoughts are not [our] thoughts, neither are [our] ways [His] ways (Isaiah 55:8). God’s ways aren’t just different from ours; His ways are higher and **better** because what He does is consistent with who He is (v. 9). This truth gives us hope when our efforts to serve Him don’t turn out the way we’d planned.

It might be years before we’re able to look back and trace God’s influence through certain situations. For now, though, as we continue to reach out to the world in His name, we can remember that God is always powerfully at work (v. 11).

Insights

The book of Isaiah is the first of the five books referred to as the Major Prophets, so named because of their length, not their importance. The other Major Prophets are Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Isaiah is the sixth longest book of the Bible, and two other prophetic books—Jeremiah and Ezekiel—are even longer. Isaiah contains many prophecies related to divine judgment and many others about the coming Messiah. J. A. Martin in The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out: “Isaiah had a lofty view of God. The Lord is seen as the Initiator of events in history. He is apart from and greater than His Creation; yet He is involved in the affairs of that Creation. Whether in his dealings with sin or his promise of redemption, Isaiah portrays God’s greatness as above all that he has created.”

Reflect & Pray

When have you felt disappointed with an experience?
How might God use this to teach you something about Himself?

*Dear God, you’re the all-knowing one.
When I don’t understand what’s happening, please help me to trust You.*

Calendar of Prayer for our Congregations and Leadership

The endorsed calendar of prayer is a way for us to be united. It's an awesome responsibility and gift to pray for one another. To make our offering on behalf of one another. Each member congregation, staff member, elected servant leader, ministry team, and mission commitment of our Presbytery is represented:

Gilead PC Carmel, Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies, First Church Chester, First of Philipstown PC Cold Spring, Camp & Retreat Ministries, Cornwall-on-Hudson PC, PresbyBuild Partnership, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, South PC Dobbs Ferry, Emily Monk-Finance Manager-Assistant Treasurer-Presbytery.



Newsletter articles for the
March 2025 issue is due
before **February 20!**

Call Cynthia at 845-496-3814 or send an email to firstpres@frontiernet.net
to share your news with our church family.



First Presbyterian Church
30 Goshen Avenue
Washingtonville NY 10992

