



**FIRST PRES. PRESS**

MAY 2015

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**OVER 80 BIRTHDAYS**

- May 4  
Ralph Tallman
- May 13  
Donald Tillotson
- May 21  
Eileen Keely
- May 24  
Jim Jephson
- May 25  
Ede Sornberger
- May 28  
George Rynick



*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8*

**What does this mean for us?**

The Holy Spirit has come upon God’s people and is calling us to be His witnesses in the world. As we have delved into the book of Acts, we have begun studying what that looked like for the early Christians. The disciples fellowshiped together, ate together, prayed together, studied Scripture together, worshipped together, and most importantly, they had clarity and unity of purpose in spreading the Gospel through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. We would encourage you to continue thinking about the application of these passages to our lives today. How can we be witnesses to the truth of Christ? How can we be faithful to the calling of the Holy Spirit?

- How can we do it locally (Jerusalem)?
- Nationally (Judea/Samaria)?
- Internationally (the ends of the earth)?

In a world that is just as broken as when the Apostles were preaching, the need for Christ and His Gospel has not decreased. The question is, will we be as faithful as they were?

## PASTORS' PAGE

—JAN AND TIM DEVINE, CO-PASTORS

For the past 10 months, the Session has urged the congregation to engage in a process to discern the future direction of First Pres. At its April Session meeting, the elders came to the unanimous decision to recommend that the congregation seek dismissal from the PC(USA) to realign with ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians. The Presbytery Cabinet and its Discernment Team approved proposed terms of dismissal and the call for a congregational meeting. On May 17, the voice of the congregation will be heard. This is an unsettling, yet important and defining time in the life of our congregation. As we near the date of the congregational meeting, we think it is important to communicate these things:

1. Your participation on May 17 is essential: take this responsibility of membership seriously. To bring resolution to the discernment process, we must have 1/3 of those on the active membership roll present, which at this time would be 94 people.
2. Some people have asked why the Session is making the congregation go through the discernment process, because they believe it is the process that is dividing the church. The Session knew that the discernment process was necessary for at least two reasons:
  - The elders of FPC are called to “share in the discernment of God’s Spirit and governance of God’s people . . . to discern and measure [the congregation’s] fidelity to the Word of God, to strengthen and nurture its faith and life, and to exercise leadership” (PC(USA) *Book of Order*, G-2.03).
  - The congregation was already deeply and increasingly divided over the theological, missional and organizational shifts in our denomination. While knowing that any decision will result in losses, it was—and still is—the hope of the elders that the Holy Spirit is working through the discernment process to make a way for the congregation to hold together.
3. The elders did **not** know the results of the recent contacts that elders made with members before voting on whether or not to recommend dismissal and call for a congregational meeting. After months of prayer, studying God’s Word, engaging in the discernment process, and wrestling with options, the elders made their decision on what they believe is the right thing to do, not necessarily the easiest thing to do.
4. There will be a 48-hour prayer vigil preceding the congregational vote, beginning at 10am on Friday, May 15, through 10am on Sunday, May 17. Please commit to one 1/2 hour slot, and use the time to intentionally read Scripture and listen for God’s leading. You may sign up online at <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040e45afac2da31-48prayer> or call the church office to sign up.

The following was shared with us by a member of the congregation:

*I’ve been trying to make up my mind about this issue. What if, instead of making up my mind, I ask the Holy Spirit to help me discern the mind of Christ? (1 Cor. 2:16). Do we have the courage to pray as Jesus did, “... yet not my will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42)?*

**O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly.**

Psalm 63:1, NASB

## WHAT'S NEW AMONG OUR PEOPLE?

– NATHAN JACOBS

As I write this, spring seems to finally be here. Praise be to God for new life! This time of year seems to be a time of accelerating schedules, so I would encourage you to take the time to slow down just a bit and see God's incredible creation bloom in all its beauty. Literally stop and smell the roses, feel the sunshine on your skin, and send up a prayer thanking God that he brings us through the death of winter to new life in the spring! As you pray, please remember these particular people who have been brought to our attention in your prayers:

- Gloria and Jim Murphy's 13-year-old grandson, Devon, who has been declared "cancer-free" after 3+ years of treatments. Praise God!
- Alyssa Beck, who has been declared cancer-free after follow-up testing.
- Jan's niece, Erica, who professed her faith in Jesus Christ!
- Jason and Tina Mitchell and their children, during this time of separation.
- Sue Burchill, who was struggling with a lingering upper respiratory virus.
- John King, as he heals from an emergency catheterization and stent.
- William Gay, as he recovers from a recent hospitalization.
- Al Rundle, who had back surgery.
- Connie Stanton and Sheila Beblavy's sister, Pearl, that her seizures might be controlled or healed.
- Bev Conklin's daughter-in-law, who was hospitalized as she continues to fight cancer.
- Carole Cockrell's sister, Ellen, who was taken to Syracuse for emergency surgery to repair a tear in her intestines. Prayers also that she might come to faith in Jesus Christ, as her daughter did recently.
- Dawn Weber, who had foot surgery. Prayers also as she grieves for the death of her ex-sister-in-law, Cheryl, who passed away recently.
- Bev Conklin's family, as Bev's nephew Dave passed away after a battle with cancer.
- Mark Pellerito, as he grieves the sudden death of a close friend and ministers to the family.
- The family of Lans Jones, who passed away on March 29. A witness to the resurrection was held on April 4 at Hilltop.
- Doug and Pam Hamlin (former members), as Pam's youngest sister was killed in a car accident.

*My beloved speaks and says to me:  
"Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away.  
For behold, the winter is past;  
the rain is over and gone.  
The flowers appear on the earth,  
the time of singing has come,  
and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.  
The fig tree ripens its figs,  
and the vines are in blossom;  
they give forth fragrance.  
Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away.  
Song of Songs 2:10-13 ESV*

*For everything there is a season,  
and a time for every matter under heaven:  
a time to be born, and a time to die;  
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;  
a time to kill, and a time to heal;  
a time to break down, and a time to build up;  
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;  
a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;  
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;  
a time to seek, and a time to lose;  
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;  
a time to tear, and a time to sew;  
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;  
a time to love, and a time to hate;  
a time for war, and a time for peace.  
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 ESV*

## DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Thousands are dead or injured from the massive earthquake and aftershocks that shook Nepal and neighboring countries on April 25. The quake, the worst in more than 80 years, struck just west of the capital of Kathmandu and destroyed towns and mountainous villages. The government of Nepal has officially requested international assistance and declared a state of emergency.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) is providing emergency relief and short-term recovery in the impacted areas with our partner, ACT Alliance, and its members who are already on the ground. PDA will remain active through the long term recovery, accompanying our partners in the area as they determine long-term program needs and providing financial support for rebuilding and resilience.



**The needs for the response will be great. God's people are once again called on to stand in the "GAP" – Give. Act. Pray.**

**Give:** Financial support for relief efforts can be designated to DR999999 with reference to Nepal. Gifts can be made [online](#), by phone (800) 872-3283 weekdays between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. (EST), or checks can be mailed to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburg, PA 15264-3700.

**Act:** Learn how your congregation can help families who have lost everything in the devastation. Stay informed and [like](#) us on

Facebook, [download resources](#) and share updates with your congregation.

**Pray:** Pray for those who suffered loss of family or those who are working tirelessly to provide rescue, humanitarian aid, and spiritual and psychological support.

For more information, visit [www.pcusa.org/pda](http://www.pcusa.org/pda).

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## OUR NEWEST MEMBER



On Sunday, April 26, we welcomed Brian Dean as the newest member of FPC Endicott. Brian has been part of this faith community for many years, along with his wife and FPC member, Beth, and their daughter, Allie. It is a blessing to have him here and making a public commitment to this particular group of believers.

For the months of April and May, the kids are learning about what an awesome Savior we have! When God created in the beginning, His design was flawless. Then Adam and Eve chose to reject God's command and sin entered the world. Because of their disobedience, we are born with a sin issue and sin separates us from God.

In order to have a relationship with God and to be forgiven, we need to confess our sin and ask Christ to be our Lord and Savior. The Greatest Journey a person can take is the one from not knowing God to surrendering and becoming His lifelong disciple.

We pray that your family will join us in our desire to see Biblical transformation and Godly wisdom that stems from a relationship with Christ and a strong foundation of Biblical knowledge. Look for every opportunity to pray aloud, to point out what God has made, to read the Bible with your kids, and to be thankful in all things. Let your faith grow a sure foundation as you rely on God for your every breath. It is in the daily living of life that we flesh out what it means to be a disciple of Christ, so give your faith substance!

### Here are our upcoming Greatest Journey Stories...

Sunday, May 3 - Jesus, The Greatest Friend

Sunday, May 10 - The Great Change - Zacchaeus

Sunday, May 17 - The Great Trust - David

**Sunday, May 24** - NO CHILDREN'S PROGRAM - HAPPY MEMORIAL DAY!

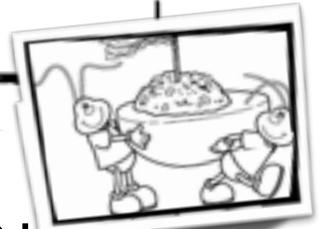
Sunday, May 31 - The Great Partnership (*God's People*) - feeding of 5000, the first disciples, the widow's offering

**Sunday, June 7** - WRAP UP FAMILY DAY CELEBRATION!

**IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO SIGN UP!**

## SUMMER CAMP @ ROCK MOUNTAIN

PICK UP your information packet for Rock Mountain Bible Camp MINI-CAMP (Ages 6-10 with parent - June 26-28) and JR. CAMP (Ages 8-12 - July 12-17) at the Registration Station today!



THANK YOU **CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEAM** FOR YOUR PASSION, PRAYER FILLED-PLANNING, and PROFOUND PATIENCE this 2014-2015 SEASON! We appreciate your love for our kids from infant to high school!

## CONNECTING THOUGHTS

— SHARON EARLY

Following Easter, our church community began studying the book of Acts, a narrative of the start of the early Christian Church, through the Sunday sermons and some of our small groups. To really study and examine the early church, and to question how it applies to the current, modern-day church has been a powerful complement to our ongoing discernment process. A question I have been struggling with is “What does it mean to be of **one heart and soul?**”

*The full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul. (Acts 4:32)*

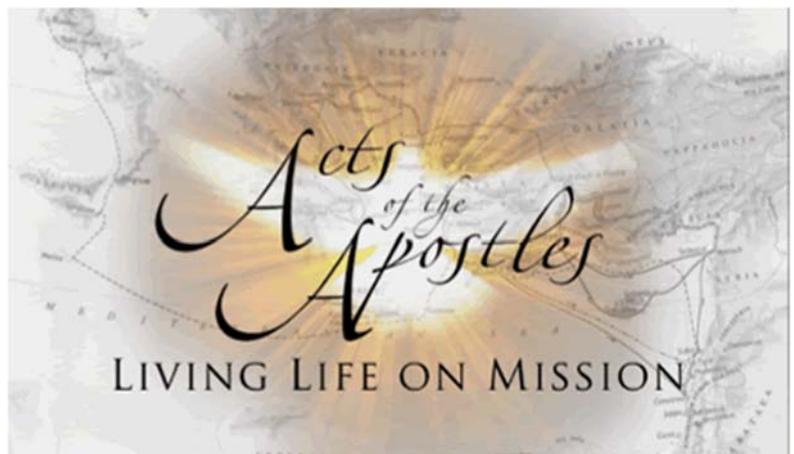
Can you remember a time where you were in complete accord with another?! What caused it?! Most likely, it was when a shared experience created a common purpose. For the disciples, the time of being mentored by Jesus, experiencing the death and resurrection of their Lord, and receiving the Holy Spirit had to have created an incredible bonding experience. They became bold in their faith and couldn't stop sharing.

*“...for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4:20)*

For myself, the closest times I have come to this have been on mission trips where we study Scripture together, have a common mission/work, and live communally. Unfortunately, once we come back home, I find myself very quickly becoming focused again on my needs (or perceived needs), my desires, and my wants. Each time I say I will be better, but the world is a very inviting place to live.

I still struggle quite a bit with this, but this spring I have been encouraged by having multiple touch points of being in community and seeing how that has helped me recreate a mission mindset regarding my community around me. So, what are these touch points? Small groups I am involved with, digging into the book of Acts during our staff times, viewing the A.D. series on TV (and actively questioning what is Biblical and what is creative license), and a newer method of connecting— an FPC women's group studying the book of Acts via Facebook. It may seem like a lot, but when they all are reinforcing the same section of Scripture each week, it has been an awesome learning experience that I truly hope and feel has been creating a spiritual heart change within me.

So, it is not too late if you haven't invested yet in the ongoing study of Acts. Your small group can still jump in, or create a 'micro-group' with a couple of friends to dig in. For women, the Facebook group is an awesome way to stay connected if you are in a season of life where you are feeling pulled in many different directions. Please contact me if you need any assistance in figuring out how to connect through Scripture and prayer with others in our community!



## NURSERY SCHOOL UPDATE

### - RONNE SISCO, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Once again, I had the privilege of attending this year's **New York State Association for the Education of Young Children (NYSAEYC) Conference** in Verona, NY. Last month, hundreds of early childhood professionals from all walks of life and experiences gathered to share, listen, learn, laugh, and, oh, yes, eat! Attendees, while from very different backgrounds, shared one commonality: our compassion for children and their development. It was an affirming and enlightening two-and-a-half day encounter...one that applauded early childhood advocates for our allegiance to one of the most crucial fields in today's challenging society. Author and keynote speaker Gigi Schweikert echoed this by awarding our dedicated educators here at Endicott First Pres. Nursery School a more accurate suffix:

“Neurodevelopmental Specialists” (NDS)

And why not? A doctor merits “M.D.” A lawyer “Esq.” Yes, I like that.

“Hi, I’m Ronne Sisco, NDS.” (Hmm, when’s my next cocktail party...)



## BARK-9 VISITS OUR FOUR YEAR OLDS!

On March 27, the Bark-9 Therapy Dogs trotted into our playroom along with Miss Gina and Miss Maureen to share in our company and listen to us read! These therapy dogs enjoy listening to young readers work on their comprehension and communication skills. BARK-9's mission is to enhance children's love of literature through the use of therapy dogs. It is hoped this interaction will lay the foundation for a lifetime of learning and a higher quality of life. The dogs enjoy the attention and good books while providing a non-judgmental, safe, comfortable environment.

Visit their **Bark9AfterHours** Facebook page to learn about this wonderful opportunity for children. Better yet – see them in person! BARK-9 Therapy Dogs alternate Saturday mornings (10am-12pm) between these two libraries: **Broome County Public Library**, Youth Services Dept., Binghamton, 607-778-6456 and **George F. Johnson Memorial Library**, Children's Dept., Endicott, 607-757-5350. On Monday evenings from 6 - 8pm they can be found at the **Vestal Library Children's Department**, Vestal, 607-754-4243. They made a fantastic audience!

## SESSION UPDATE

-JANET FREDERICK, CLERK OF SESSION

On April 8 the Session met in its regular monthly meeting and dealt mostly with matters related to the discernment process. However, we did take action during the regular business meeting to update the Active Membership Roll by moving one person from the Active to the Inactive Roll after more than a decade of inactivity and removing one person from the Active Roll who moved out of state a number of years ago.

After meeting with the Presbytery Discernment Team to review the Resolution for Dismissal, including the Terms for Dismissal for First Pres., the elders then met as a team to pray and share the conclusions that each of us reached as we have been going through the discernment process. There were some powerful testimonies shared, and at the conclusion when a vote was taken, we unanimously voted to recommend to the congregation that we seek dismissal from PC(USA) and join ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians.

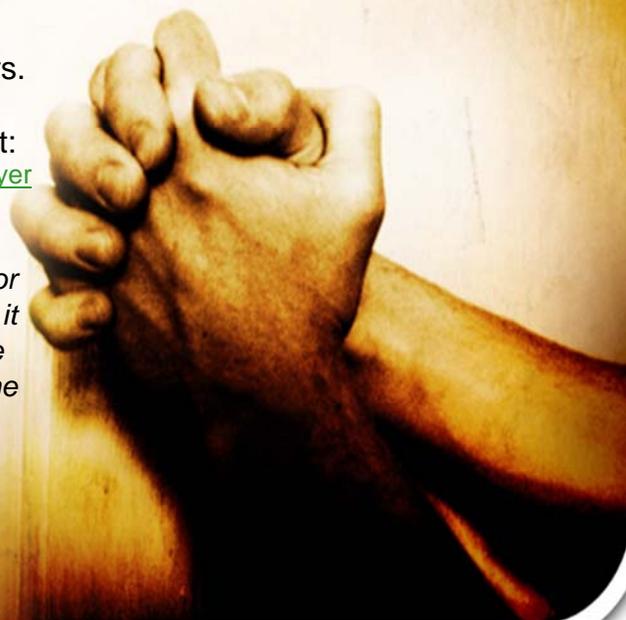
In order to give the congregation another opportunity for questions and conversation, we decided to reserve a portion of the congregational education session on May 3 for an open dialogue. The first part of the meeting will be used to review the Terms of Dismissal, including the financial and property determinations. Then we will open the floor to your comments and questions.

The Discernment Update in this newsletter includes many details about the May 3 meeting, the mailing you received and the next steps that will bring us to the congregational meeting on May 17. **We are asking you to please make every effort to prayerfully be in attendance at that meeting.**

## 48-Hour Prayer Vigil

Preceding the May 17 congregational meeting, beginning at 10am on Friday, May 15, our congregation will pray without ceasing for 48 hours. We ask each person to commit to pray for a half hour timeslot. You may sign up online for a slot at: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040e45afac2da31-48prayer> or call the church office to sign up.

*If you indeed cry out for insight, and raise your voice for understanding; if you seek it like silver, and search for it as for hidden treasures—then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; (Proverbs 2:3-6)*



## DISCERNMENT PROCESS UPDATE

- JANET FREDERICK

### WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR FPC IN 2015?

*Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)*

At its April 8 meeting, the First Pres. Session members voted unanimously to recommend to the congregation that we seek dismissal from the PC(USA) to join ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians. Following the Presbytery Cabinet's approval on April 15, a letter went out to members and active non-members calling for a congregational meeting on Sunday, May 17 (following worship at approx. 11:20am) in order to give all members of First Pres. An opportunity to vote on Session's recommendation.

Only those on the active membership roll of First Pres., who are present that day, are eligible to vote at that meeting. However, active members who are unable to attend the meeting will have the option of requesting an absentee ballot, and active non-members may request an opinion ballot so that your "voices" may be heard. These ballots cannot count toward the quorum or the vote itself, but a summary of the ballots will be shared with the congregation before the vote. You may request one of these ballots from Janet Frederick, Clerk of Session, on Sundays between services in the Gathering Area or you may call her at 754-0587.

### Completed Discernment Sessions:

- ◇ **November 16:** *ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians*
- ◇ **December 14:** *Hermeneutics: Why we believe what we believe about Scripture*
- ◇ **January 18:** *Listening Session*
- ◇ **January 25:** *Annual Meeting and Discernment Overview*
- ◇ **February 1:** *Informal Q&A with Elders*
- ◇ **February 8:** *FPC's perspective on the biblical practice of our sexuality*
- ◇ **February 15:** *Informal Q&A with Elders*
- ◇ **March 8:** *The Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley/Gracious Dismissal Policy*
- ◇ **March 15:** *Informal Q&A with Elders*
- ◇ **April 19:** *Women in Church Leadership*

*For access to written and video recorded materials from the congregational presentations to date, contact Nathan in the church office (748-1544 or office@firstpresendicott.org).*

### Upcoming Discernment Sessions:

- ⇒ **May 3:** *An Examination of the Resolution for Dismissal (Including Terms)*  
There will be an opportunity for the congregation to discuss and ask questions about the upcoming vote.

***This session will be presented twice on May 3- Session 1 at 10:50 and Session 2 at 12:10. Light refreshments will be served prior to Session 2.***

***We urge all members to attend the congregational meeting on May 17 so that we can bring resolution to the discernment process.***

## COMMUNITY

### Samaritan Supper

The last Samaritan Supper for this school year will be May 19. The ministry will start up again after Labor Day. Thank you everyone who has volunteered this year!

### A New Opportunity

Andrea Wade has accepted a position as provost at Monroe Community College in Rochester. She will begin this new position in July. It will hold increased responsibility for her, and she looks forward to the challenge. We can still expect to see Andrea every once in a while as she will maintain a home and ties to this community, but we will miss her presence in the bell choir and within the congregation. Andrea, we wish you Godspeed in your transition and new job!

### Homebound? Traveling? Missed a Sunday?

Just a reminder that we livestream our services on Sunday morning. If you would like to view our services, contact Nathan at [office@firstpresendicott.org](mailto:office@firstpresendicott.org) to get set up. Also, if you missed a Sunday or would just like to view past sermons, they can be found online at: [www.vimeo.com/channels/fpcendicottsermons](http://www.vimeo.com/channels/fpcendicottsermons)



### For more information, please contact:

Bonnie Moyer– (607) 321-3726 or  
Barb Wilcox– (607) 754-3300

## Relay for Life of Western Broome

May 16-17, 2015

2:00pm-6:00am

Sammon Field, Vestal Central Schools

### *What is Relay for Life?*

As the signature event of the American Cancer Society, Relay For Life is a unique overnight nationwide fundraising movement that includes all types of participants, including patients, medical support staff, corporations, civic organizations, churches, synagogues, and community members joining together to fight cancer. Relay For Life participants of all ages come to the event to honor and celebrate those who have survived cancer, to remember those who are no longer with us, and to fight back against this horrible disease. Teams join together in the fight, raising money and awareness for the American Cancer Society's lifesaving efforts.

# FPC Calendar

# May 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Nursery School Bike Rodeo
<b>3</b> 9:09 am Communion Worship Service (Contemporary) 10:45 am Worship Service (Traditional) 10:50 am Discernment Session 6: Terms of Dismissal and Dialogue 12:10 pm Discernment Session 6: Terms of Dismissal and Dialogue 6:00 pm FPC Youth	<b>4</b> 2:30 pm Homework Café	<b>5</b> 12:30 pm Staff Meeting 5:30 pm Samaritan Supper 7:00 pm Deacons	<b>6</b> 6:00 am Men's Group 2:30 pm Homework Café 7:00 pm Session 7:00 pm Worship Team Rehearsal	<b>7</b> 2:30 pm CMS Homework Café 6:00 pm Mary-El Ringers 7:00 pm No Choir 8:30 pm BASICS	<b>8</b> CMS	<b>9</b> CMS
<b>10</b> 9:09 am Mother's Day Worship Service (Contemporary) 10:45 am Worship Service (Traditional) 6:00 pm FPC Youth	<b>11</b> 1:00 pm Women's Club Board Meeting 2:30 pm Homework Café 5:30 pm Personnel Committee	<b>12</b> 5:30 pm Samaritan Supper	<b>13</b> 6:00 am Men's Group 2:30 pm Homework Café 7:00 pm Worship Team Rehearsal	<b>14</b> 2:30 pm Homework Café 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 10:00 am United Worship Service 11:20 am Congregational Meeting and Vote 6:00 pm FPC Youth	<b>18</b> 1:00 pm Women's Club 2:30 pm Homework Café 6:30 pm Parent Council Meeting	<b>19</b> 12:30 pm Staff Meeting 5:30 pm Samaritan Supper 6:45 pm Small Group Leaders' Huddle	<b>20</b> 6:00 am Men's Group 12:00 pm House Meeting 1:00 pm Women's Circle III 2:30 pm Homework Café 7:00 pm Worship Team Rehearsal	<b>21</b> 10:00 am Nursery School Teacher Appreciation Luncheon 2:30 pm Homework Café 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> 9:09 am Pentecost No Children's Ministry Worship Service (Contemporary) 10:45 am Worship Service (Traditional) 6:00 pm FPC Youth	<b>25</b> Memorial Day Office Closed	<b>26</b> 5:30 pm NS Board Meeting 5:30 pm Samaritan Supper 7:00 pm Mission and Stewardship	<b>27</b> 6:00 am Men's Group 2:30 pm Homework Café 7:00 pm Worship Team Rehearsal	<b>28</b> 2:30 pm Homework Café 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> Presbytery Meeting- Unadilla
<b>31</b> 9:09 am Worship Service (Contemporary) 10:45 am Worship Service (Traditional) 6:00 pm FPC Youth						

## VISION STATEMENT

### (What God wants to do)

We believe God wants to transform our community through the saving love of Jesus Christ and calls us to share that hope with the world. To be an agent of hope, our congregation must work together and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to follow Christ, whatever the cost.<sup>1</sup> This commitment, which is grounded in a deep love of God and neighbor,<sup>2</sup> sends us out to share the Good News of Christ through our words<sup>3</sup> and our actions.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Great Commitment*, Matthew 16:24-26

<sup>2</sup> *The Great Commandment*, Luke 10:27

<sup>3</sup> *The Great Commission*, Matthew 28:18-20

<sup>4</sup> *The Great Compassion*, Matthew 25:31-40

## MISSION STATEMENT

### (What God wants us to do)

We believe God wants us to share the life-changing power and love of Jesus Christ in such compelling ways that more people become fully devoted followers of Christ.

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

### (The reason we exist)

To reach more people and together grow in Christ.



## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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[www.firstpresendicott.org](http://www.firstpresendicott.org)

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