



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ORONOCO

A SMALL CHURCH WITH A BIG MISSION

July 2021

Current Worship Requirements

It is such a joy to be back together for worship!! I love not being the only one in the building on Sunday mornings!

Just a reminder about the main requirements for coming back to worship in the building:

- Wear your mask in the building in the CDC-recommended way (covering your nose and your mouth)
- Sanitize your hands upon coming into the building
- Maintain social distancing in the building, both the sanctuary and the fellowship area



We will not be having refreshments during fellowship time after worship, and while Katha will be blessing us with her beautiful musical gifts, we will not be singing along with her for a while. Communion will look different. Offering will look different. Prayer requests and community prayer time will look different (*see further details in "Virtual Worship Going Forward"*). *But these elements will still be a part of our worship.*

And, of course, if you're not comfortable coming back to worship in person yet, we will continue to livestream our worship services on Sunday mornings directly on our website.

Pastor: Rev. Lisa Johnson

Church Staff

Secretary: Brianna Clement

Organist: Katha Johnson

Church Leadership

Mike Rand, Clerk of Session
Ellen Warner, Ruling Elder
Lance Sorensen, Ruling Elder
Ron Peterson-Rucker, Ruling Elder
Janice Ostrom, Ruling Elder
Todd Wickre, Ruling Elder
Brenda Longman, Ruling Elder

Kim Stanton, Treasurer
Gail Rucker, Deacon
Ellen Simon, Deacon
Joanne Schenck, Deacon
Cindy Luhman, Deacon
Karen Peterson-Rucker, Deacon



From the Pastor ...

How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?

Admit it.

You just read that out loud.

And tried to say it a few times.

Fast.

How many did you get through before your twisted tongue tripped you up?

My kids have recently discovered the joy of tongue twisters.

You can imagine what life in our house is like right now!

I was listening to Ian and Luke trying to scramble their way through yet another tongue twister the other morning while I was getting ready to go to work (they were even trying to make up a few of their own ... I'm sure you can imagine!), and I started thinking about what it is about tongue twisters that draws us, that intrigues us so much.

She sells seashells by the seashore.

You see, there's something both frustrating and hilarious about trying to say one thing yet having something else entirely come out of our mouths.

Six slick snakes slid down the slippery slough.

It's silly. It's fun. It's the same reason that the game Telephone is so much fun in elementary school: the distortion of an original message into something trivial and nonsensical.

A freezy breeze made these three trees freeze.

Sure, it's fun when it's a bunch of crazy phrases that we try to say as fast as possible. It's fun when, really, the ultimate goal is to say it wrong.

But what about when it comes to the message of our faith?

What about the good news of the gospel?

I think that often we find it difficult to put words to our faith. Part of that has to do with the mysterious nature of faith. We worship a God who we cannot see or hear or touch – a God who we cannot empirically prove. We can't explain how Jesus rose from the dead. We can't explain nor can we prove the efficacy of prayer ... and yet, we pray. And don't even ask about the Holy Spirit and the whole Trinity thing!

At the same time, we know that we are called to not only believe but to share our belief through our actions and our words. We're called to witness to the good news of the gospel: that through his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus Christ made God's unmerited and unconditional love available to all. This is the central truth of our faith. Trusting in this is at the heart of who we are and what we believe as Christians.

Sure, there are other aspects of what and how we believe, but that's the essence.

Throughout the centuries – and especially over the last 100 yrs. – the message of the gospel has become muddled. It's become tongue tied and tethered to a whole load of other people's ideals and interpretations and distinctly human agendas. It's been twisted and weighed down by other people's prejudices and deep-seated hatred.

But in truth, the good news of the gospel is bigger than that.

It's bigger than the little, culturally-familiar box we try to force it into.

It's bigger than the little, nation-centric box we try to force it into.

It's bigger than the little, politically-manipulated box we try to force it into.

It's bigger than us and our dreams. It's bigger than us and our fears. It's bigger than us and our misunderstandings. It's bigger than us and our twisted tongues.

Thankfully, in the face of all that, Paul both reminds and reassures us:

Offer prayers and petitions in the Spirit all the time. Stay alert by hanging in there and praying for all believers. As for me, pray that when I open my mouth, I'll get a message that confidently makes this secret plan of the gospel known. I'm an ambassador in chains for the sake of the gospel. Pray so that the Lord will give me the confidence to say what I have to say. – Ephesians 6:18-20

We may not get it right all the time.

We may end up with unsure words and twisted tongues.

But if we hold close to the message of God's love lived and taught and resurrected in Christ Jesus, God can speak to us and through us still – a message that is pure and holy and comes out right every time:

God loves you.

God loves you.

God loves you.

Toy boat. Toy boat. Toy boat.

Pastor Gina

Scripture readings for June

Sunday, July – Samuel 11

Women of the Bible #5– Bathsheba

Sunday, July 11– 2 Kings 22:11-20a

Women of the Bible #6– Huldah

Sunday, July 18– Esther 1:1-21

Woman of the Bible #7– Vashti

Sunday, July 25– Guest Preacher



Keeping Up with the Smith-Mathers



We've been helping to support Shelvis and Nancy and their family for a few years now. We've been collecting our 2nd Sunday Spare Change offering and lifting them up in prayer. We need to lift them up even more in prayer right now, friends. The COVID-19 pandemic has rocked their world as well. In their most recent update letter, they shared that Nancy is pregnant again (another girl: Alice) but there is a problem with the baby's heart that will require surgical intervention when she is a year old. In addition to this concern, ahead of the U.S. borders closing this past March, they decided to leave Great Britain and come home to be with family in the U.S. As they have attempted to find some semblance of being settled, they have moved their entire family a number of times this year already: 4 different homes in the last 6 months, according to their letter. Like many overseas missions organizations, the PC(USA) has extended their travel ban for mission personnel to June 30, 2021, so they know they aren't headed back to Africa anytime soon. And because of choices and restrictions put in place by Oxford University, Shelvis is unable to continue his doctoral program at this time and has had to take a temporary leave of absence.

It is a lot, friends. In this time of uncertainty and upheaval, Shelvis and Nancy and their family clearly still need our prayers, and they still need our support. I know that we're not gathering our spare change offering as we continue to meet virtually, but you can still help support Shelvis and Nancy. Visit their Presbyterian Mission Agency page:

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/shelvis-and-nancy-smith-mather/>. From there, you can click on the green box under their (completely adorable) family picture that says, "Give to the ministry of Shelvis and Nancy Smith-Mather." This will redirect you to a page that describes RECONCILE, the organization that Shelvis and Nancy continue to work with in South Sudan and Uganda. If you click the yellow "Give" box on that page, you'll be redirected to the PMA donation page.

You can also click on the blue box that says "Subscribe to our letters" to start receiving Shelvis and Nancy's occasional updates in your inbox. They send a wonderful, entertaining, touchingly personal update roughly quarterly.

Next Session meeting.:

Wednesday, July 7
6:30 p.m.
(In-Person)

Next Presbytery mtg.:

September 10 & 11, 2021
(via Zoom?)

Summer Sermon Series

This summer, we're going to embark on a fun and fierce journey with the women of Scripture. I have a feeling there are more women in Scripture than most of us are even aware of, and while I may be a little biased in this opinion (since I'm the one that put this series together), I think the more obscure the women, the more interesting their stories. So as we spend our Sundays this summer jumping from one fabulously feminine Bible story to the next, we'll be journeying with some women I'm guessing (hoping!) you've never heard of before. Some will be stories you know. Some will be stories you *think you know*. *Some will be stories that are new. All have something to teach you about God and faith, mission and covenant, grit and grace.*

- May 30: Hagar
- June 6: *special service*
- June 13: Tamar
- June 20: Shiphrah and Puah
- June 27: Rahab
- July 4: Bathsheba
- July 11: Huldah
- July 18: Vashti
- August 8: the Syrophenician woman
- August 22: Mary Magdalene
- August 29: Lydia
- September 6: Phoebe and the women of Rome



Hagar - Tamar - Shiphrah & Puah - Rahab - Bathsheba - Huldah - Vashti -
Syrophenician woman - Mary Magdalene - Lydia - Phoebe

Women of the Bible series

Presbyterian Church of Oronoco

COVID– Safe Communion Practice

At least throughout the summer, our monthly communion procedure will be a little different. Instead of the deacons passing the plates with the bread and juice/wine from person to person, we'll have a table set up on your way into the sanctuary. On communion Sundays, you'll be invited to pick up a pre-packaged and sealed juice cup and a small package of crackers. When it comes time for communion, you'll be asked to open the crackers (as the bread) and the juice and partake where you are. There will be a couple garbage cans around the sanctuary that will give you a place to discard the packaging on your way out after worship.



Toward the end of the summer, the deacons will reevaluate where things are at with CDC recommendations, state requirements, etc. to determine what we'll do in the fall.

Virtual Worship Going Forward

We are continuing to stream our worship services for anyone who doesn't feel comfortable coming back into the building. The good news is we are still able to stream on Facebook Live. For those who don't use Facebook, we're also streaming our service right on the front page of the church website. ***I know that there have been some glitches with this, and I beg your patience and understanding as I orient myself to the ins and outs of the new technology.***



The challenge with all the planning for this has come with prayer time. I want to maintain the powerful, meaningful time of sharing our lives and prayers together that we've always enjoyed in the past. At the same time, I'm very cognizant of the privacy aspect and trying not to broadcast everyone's personal information out onto the internet. After doing this whole hybrid worship thing for a month, one thing has definitely become clear – juggling all the technology required for both streaming the services and attempting to Zoom our prayer time before worship is too much to handle. For this reason, ***we will be discontinuing the pre-worship Zoom prayer time.*** *If you're worshipping from home and have prayer requests you'd like to share, please feel free to email them to Pastor Lisa before Sunday morning or text them before 9:45 a.m. on Sunday morning.*

Amazon Smile



Good news! A while back, the Session discussed setting up an Amazon Smile account for the church. The first time I tried it, it was before Kim went through the incredible amount of work he did to re-establish our 501(c)3 status. I was recently reminded of this endeavor (thanks, Mom!), so I thought I'd try again. And it worked!

So how does Amazon Smile work? For your designated organization, Amazon donates 0.5% of eligible Amazon purchases to that organization. And now, you can officially designate the church as your organization! There are two ways that you can do this:

- 1) Type this link into your web browser and click the "Start shopping" button. <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/41-1434567>. Another page will pop up with a checkbox that says, "Yes, I understand that I must always start at smile.amazon.com to support Presbyterian Church of ORONOCO." Click the checkbox, then click the "Start shopping" button. Anytime that you shop with Amazon after that, you need to do so by going to <http://smile.amazon.com>, not the regular Amazon homepage.
- 2) Go to the Amazon homepage and type "Amazon Smile" into the search bar. If you've already got a charity that you've been donating a portion of your Amazon purchases to and would like to switch to the church, simply click on the "Change my organization" link. If not, search for "Presbyterian Church of Oronoco" and select us as your designated organization.



All Around the Campfire

It's that time again! For the past few years, we've gathered on the church lawn for an evening campfire on the 4th Sunday of June, July, August, and September (weather permitting). Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we weren't able to gather last year. This year, the session has decided that we **will** gather around the campfire again ... but with a few changes. If you would like to bring food and beverages for you/your household, you are welcome to do that. We will **not** be providing any food this year. Also, please do your best to space yourselves out appropriately around the firepit. Here are the dates for 2021:

- ~~June 27: 5:30-8:00 p.m.~~
- July 25: 5:30-8:00 p.m.
- August 29: 5:30-8:00 p.m.
- September 26: 5:30-8:00 p.m.

Pine Island Baby Closet

The Pine Island United Methodist Church has started a baby closet – a place for anyone needing help with the necessities for children ages 0-15 months. They are prepared to provide a wide range of baby items: diapers, formula, baby clothes (sizes: preemie to 24 months), outdoor clothing, blankets, bottles, pacifiers, sippy cups, baby thermometers, baby wipes, and baby-safe laundry soap.

If you or anyone you know is in need of any of these items *and lives within a 15 mile radius of Pine Island*, you can call 507-356-4553. Those seeking help will need to fill out an assistance request form. Items can be picked up in the front entry of the Pine Island UMC: 200 N. Main St. (just across the street from Kwik Trip). Clients are invited to visit the Baby Closet once a month.

If you or anyone you know would like to donate any of the items listed above or would like to make a monetary donation, you can contact the Pine Island UMC at the phone number listed above or via email: piumc@bevcomm.net. You can also find the Baby Closet and some needs/wish lists on Facebook: "Pine Island, MN United Methodist Church Baby Closet."



Pine Island Baby Closet

Pine Island Area Home Services

There's no denying that this past year has been difficult for a *lot* of people in a *lot* of different ways, so I just want to remind you all of the different services offered by Pine Island Area Home Services:

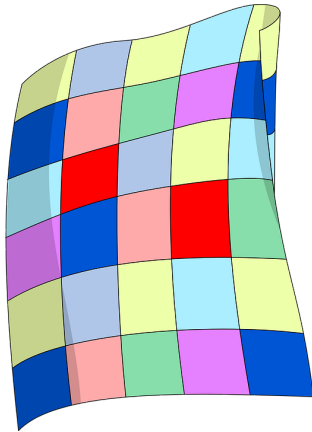
- **Volunteer services:** assistance with grocery shopping and errands; delivery of Meals-on-Wheels; exercise classes; friendly visits and phone calls; shopping trips and social outings; transportation; and yard work, chores, light housekeeping, and handyman services
- **Office services:** service coordination; home visits; information and referrals; reassurance checks; assistance with paperwork; educational classes; collaboration with other services
- **Nursing services:** blood pressure clinics; foot care clinics; hearing clinics; flu shot clinics

If you or anyone you know is in need of any of these free of charge services, please contact PIAHS:

109 3rd St. SW
P.O. Box 566
Pine Island, MN 55963
507-356-2999

www.pineislandareahomeservices.org
piahs@bevcomm.net

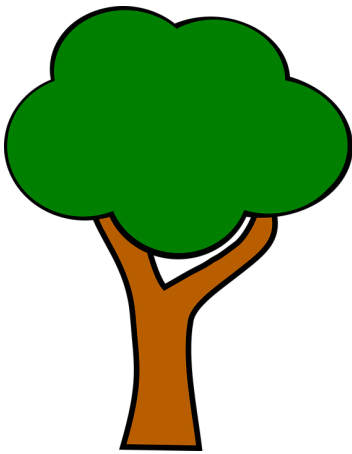
PIAHS is also always looking for people willing to be generous with either their volunteer time or their financial giving. You can contact them further if you're interested in helping out in any way.



Dorothy Day House Needs

The Dorothy Day House has some perpetual needs that we can fill anytime. Those items can be placed in the large Dorothy Day box in the fellowship room and are:

- Warm weather clothes (new or gently used)
- Adult clothing (new or gently used) – sweatshirts, sweatpants, etc.
- Adult socks
- Blankets (new or gently used)
- Tins of coffee



Stewardship Giving Tree

I know we haven't talked about it in a while, but ...

Our Giving Tree envelopes are still available, even from afar. You don't even need an envelope! If you'd like to contribute to one of the designations on the Giving Tree, you can send your check to the church with a note either in the "Memo" line or on a Post-It note or something indicating for Kim or Ellen what it's for. As a reminder, here are envelopes and amounts. (Some are half the monthly amount.):

- Snow removal: \$70/time
- City of Oronoco water: \$22/month
- The Upper Room: \$16/bi-monthly
- Bevcomm (phone/internet): \$45/month (half)
- Neuro Hospitality House: \$45/night
- Minnesota Energy Gas: \$71/month (half)
- Insurance: \$109/month (half)
- People's Energy Co-Op Electricity: \$119/month



Oronoco Food Shelf Monthly Item

We've got a new monthly piece that will be showing up in the newsletter! The OFS volunteer responsible for ordering has given us a list of monthly needs – a specific item that the Food Shelf could use that month. This monthly item will also be posted on our church Facebook page, so feel free to find it every month and share the image!

Pastor Out of Office

Pastor Lisa will be out of the office July 25-August 1. This includes two Sundays – July 25 and August 1. I will have my cell phone but will be out of state. I will also not be checking email or the church Facebook page/messages during this time. I'll catch up when I get back.



Prayer Requests

“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” ~ Philippians 4:6-7

And so we lift up **Sandy Bowers, Eunice Markham, Helen Craft, Janice Ostrom, Joyce Rucker, Carol Tiede, and Linda Sorensen** in prayer.



July Star Word Prompt

How has your star word surprised you so far?



150th Anniversary

Friends, last year our beloved Presbyterian Church of Oronoco turned **150 years old!!** (That's pretty amazing!) But because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to celebrate in person. After talking about it at our May meeting, the Session has decided that we'd rather wait a year and be able to really celebrate fully and safely than try to push a celebration this year. We're also concerned that, if we end up with inclement weather, we'll have to move inside which we're not sure we could do safely yet with the number of people and the size of our space.



July Birthdays & Anniversaries



- ♥ 7/11 Sue Johnson
- ♥ 7/12 Robert & Jacky Rueber
- ♥ 7/15 Kaedyn Peterson-Rucker
- ♥ 7/19 Don & Ardith Ottman
- ♥ 7/21 Cindy Luhman
- ♥ 7/21 Gail Rucker
- ♥ 7/28 Karen Peterson-Rucker

Staying in Touch

Presbyterian Church of Oronoco

Office: 507-367-4711

Email: oronocopc@bevcomm.net

Website: <http://www.oronocochurch.org>

Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

Office: 651-357-1150

Fax: 651-357-1141

Email: office@ptcaweb.org

Website: <http://www.presbyterytwincities.org>

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Office: 800-728-7228

Email: info@pcusa.org

Website: <http://www.pcusa.org>



Prophets of the Bible

A T J F B G G B O D O X L B T S C D U E Z N S W O
 K I T J A C N Z H S I M E O N G C X N G S Q O N E
 X Q K C X E E Z E K I E L X N A T H A N I H M X C
 I L W C G W Q T N E A L Y B P O S O W I Z A P U E
 X Z X M Q J N P V T P V W D Y A A D J B E T B X L
 D G I Z Q Z J W Y R E L O K X Z M N O H C Q L V I
 D B F O F Q Q V T F J E B Z B S U E N F H M O W J
 P E B O X J P M S C S F D B J M E D A D A W R H A
 I J M M A I H H O N U I J N Z L L D H W R X V H H
 S H E S S Z V A A T J Y S B T M U F W B I C O I O
 K D U R W X F N E G O Z E P H A N I A H A M R B B
 D Y U E E K P V E C G X D Z Y L Y T N A H M V I A
 V D R O Y M P O Z T M A C G P A O I S A I A H G D
 Z F J E I P I K V U H Q I U H C J I A R F U O R I
 V O O I L V D A V F N R H L A H H A M O S L A B A
 A F E U R I B J H Z J H Z Q B I H C Q S A Z B Q H
 H I L P H F S K N T C X S B A W S V M I E W X C B
 M Y Z A U H L H N K O D B A K N C N J I Y Q Q A H
 Y I V P L E A L A V B A K N K L O F A H P U K F K
 F I C X D Q B N W Z K N B N U W Y P U H J Z G K O
 N J S A A H D S N C E I T A K D H M B A U A H N I
 A Z O N H O U U O A L E Y L T H A A B Y M M T O X
 E G J I L S U Y Z X H L P G R Q L Q X P Z I W H Y
 J L S L P E N J P O Y W C S R C U Y N Z V W B M L
 D K P V X A X W R R C T K O S L M W E S H J W X O

Zephaniah
 Ezekiel
 Simeon
 Huldah
 Daniel
 Joel

Zechariah
 Obadiah
 Elisha
 Haggai
 Nahum
 Jonah

Habakkuk
 Malachi
 Elijah
 Isaiah
 Micah
 Hosea

Jeremiah
 Samuel
 Nathan
 Hannah
 Amos
 Anna