



# PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ORONOCO

A SMALL CHURCH WITH A BIG MISSION

July 2023

## Construction Update

You've probably noticed that the road construction connected to the Oronoco City Wastewater/Water Distribution project has made its way to the church's doorstep. The Session is working on taking care of the church's requirements for this project, but we wanted to share some of the pertinent information from the latest update letter:



"Utility Constructions crews from Fitzgerald Excavating will be installing sanitary sewer forcemain and gravity sewer piping across Minnesota Avenue South at 2nd Street South, 3rd Street South, 5th Street South and 6th Street South (150-foot north Oronoco Self Storage driveway) **[This] will require Minnesota Avenue South to be closed from July 5 to approximately July 19 to through traffic.** The contractor plans to stagger construction of the utility crossings and will facilitate local resident traffic access via 2nd Avenue SE, 3rd Street SE and 5th Street SE. Detour signage will be erected to direct through traffic around the Minnesota Avenue S closure via the Lake Shady Avenue (West Frontage Road) and the use of the 100th Street / TH 52 bridge and the 5th Street NW / TH 52 overpass bridge. Fitzgerald Excavating will continue installing sanitary sewer forcemain and service piping mostly in the boulevards along 2nd Avenue SW and 3rd Street SW thereafter. The contractor will maintain at least one lane of traffic for resident access on 3rd Street SW and 2nd Avenue SW. Please drive with caution through the construction zone, follow the route delineated by the traffic control cones, and be prepared to stop as directed by contractor flagmen. Access for adjacent property owners may be restricted between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM (Monday through Saturday). Please plan to park vehicles at a location out of the construction area if you need to leave home during working hours. The contractor will maintain access to roadway and driveways outside of construction hours and all day on Sunday."

### Church Staff

Pastor: Rev. Lisa Johnson

Pianist: Rocky Nisbit

### Church Leadership

Mike Rand, Clerk of Session, Ruling Elder  
Ellen Warner, Treasurer, Ruling Elder  
Todd Wickre, Ruling Elder  
Brenda Longman, Ruling Elder

Geoff Warner, Ruling Elder  
Cindy Luhman, Ruling Elder

Ellen Simon, Deacon  
Joanne Schenck, Deacon  
Karen Peterson-Rucker, Deacon  
Jenny Rand, Deacon



## From the Pastor ...

*<sup>11</sup> I, I am the LORD,  
and there is no savior besides me.  
<sup>12</sup> I announced, I saved, I proclaimed,  
not some stranger among you.  
You are my witnesses, says the LORD,  
and I am God.  
<sup>13</sup> From the dawn of time, I am the one.  
No one can escape my power.*

*I act, and who can undo it? ...*

*<sup>18</sup> Don't remember the prior things;  
don't ponder ancient history.*

*<sup>19</sup> Look! I'm doing a new thing;  
now it sprouts up; don't you recognize it?  
I'm making a way in the desert,  
paths in the wilderness.*

*~ Isaiah 43:11-13, 18-19*

In a way, it feels like the whole world is in a bit of a time of renewal. After the global COVID-19 pandemic, people, businesses, and institutions have been and are still being forced to look at all of their “regular” practices to determine whether or not they’re important ... whether or not those practices are still effective. And on the flipside, we’re also encouraged to explore new things—things we maybe never would have thought of before.

And in our beloved little white church here on the hill, we are no different. There are some things we’ve decided to let go of. There are other things we’ve decided to hang onto—things we’ve decided are important to us. But what about the new things?

What about the new things?

This is a question we’re going to have to start thinking about as a congregation. This is a question we’re going to have to start exploring in lots of different ways together. And this is a question that no single person is going to have the answer to. It’s a question that’s going to take input and insight from everyone as we explore what it looks like and what it means to be the body of Christ today ... and tomorrow ... and the next day ... and the next day ...

So if you have an idea, we’d love to hear it. It could be an idea for something in worship.

It could be an idea for a congregational activity—some sort of fellowship gathering or congregational field trip. It could be an outreach idea, either a way to reach out into the community or a way to engage in some mission together. It could be an idea for some sort of study or some sort of small group. There are all sorts of different ways that we can explore doing and being Church together!

And as we explore and do and be, friends, I hope that you will take both inspiration and encouragement from the many times throughout Scripture that we are promised God's presence in the midst of new things. God promises guidance. God promises grace. God promises energy, intelligence, imagination, and love (as our ordination vows remind us). God promises that when we go out to do God's work in the world, we do not go alone. Even when we're unsure of the way ahead ... even when we're discouraged by the obstacles that seem to loom large in front of us ... even when we are tempted to hesitate because the task ahead seems too hard, too big, too undefined, we must remember that God is with us.

On the whiteboard in my office is a question. It's a question that I wrote up there ages ago as my reminder for myself when I write my sermons. The question is: *What is God calling us to do and be?* It's a question I try to work into most of my sermons. (Am I successful 100% of the time? No ... but only God is perfect.) But it's also a question that should drive us as individuals and as a congregation:

## What is God calling us to do and be?

Pastor Lisa

### Scripture readings for June

- **July 2:** Luke 16:19-31—Beatitudes #3
- **July 9:** Isaiah 58:6-12—Beatitudes #4
- **July 16:** Luke 10:25-37—Beatitudes #5
- **July 23:** *guest preacher: Rev. Cindy Ray*
- **July 30:** *guest preacher: Rev. Carol Shaffer*



## Summer sermon series: The Beatitudes

This summer, we'll be taking a deeper dive into some of Jesus' most well-known teachings: the Beatitudes, those blessings that Jesus lays out at the beginning of his Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's gospel. They're lessons many of us have heard and read many, many times, but how often do we sit down and dissect them – really break them down and think about how to apply these ancient directives in our everyday lives?

So each Sunday this summer, we're going to dive into a different Beatitude using the text from Matthew as well as another Scripture to supplement that particular Beatitude and using a variety of contemporary sources.

Sun., June 11 – ~~John 21:1-14~~

*Blessed are the poor in spirit ...*

Sun., June 18 – ~~Psalm 30~~

*Blessed are those who mourn ...*

Sun., July 2 – Luke 16:19-31

*Blessed are the meek ...*

Sun., July 9 – Isaiah 58:6-12

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness*

Sun., July 16 – Luke 10:25-37

*Blessed are the merciful ...*

Sun., Aug. 13 – Daniel 3:14-27

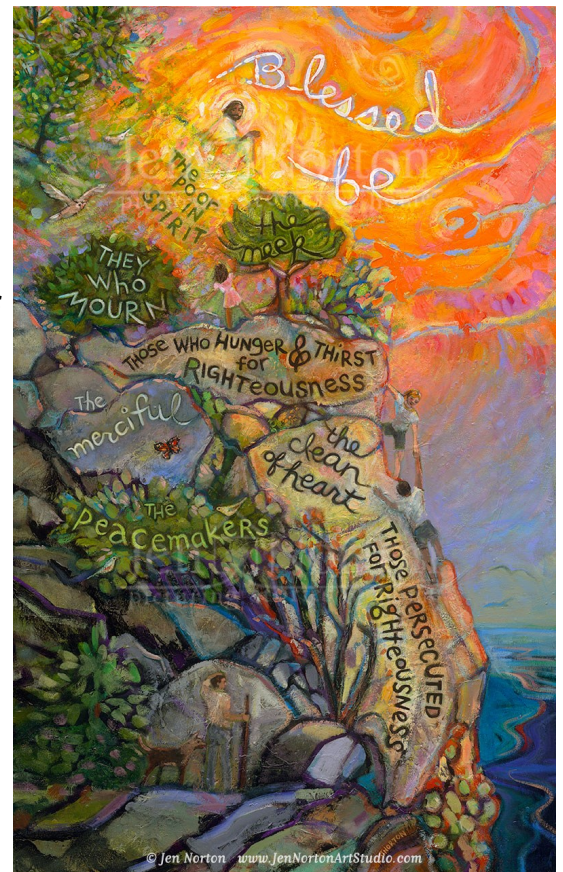
*Blessed are the pure in heart ...*

Sun., Aug. 27 – Ephesians 2:14-22

*Blessed are the peacemakers ...*

Sun., Sept. 3 – Acts 16:16-34

*Blessed are those who are persecuted for my sake ...*



**Next Session mtg.:**

**Wed., July 5  
6:30 p.m.**

**Next Presbytery mtg.:**

**Tues., Sept. 12  
Time, Location, & Format TBD**

## 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 **Helen Craft, Curt Burt, and Joanne Schenck** in prayer.



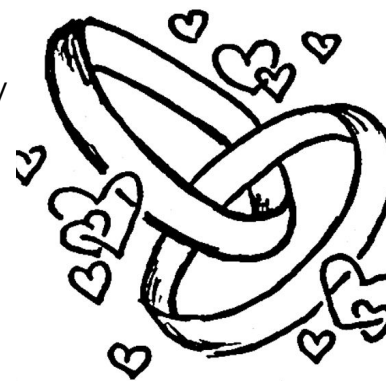
## Food Shelf: Item of the Month

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!



## Celebrating with Hadley & Connie

Just in case you haven’t heard the wonderful news, Hadley met a wonderful woman named Connie, and they’re getting married! Hadley and Connie will be making their home here in Oronoco, but they’ll be getting married at First Lutheran Church in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. You can watch the ceremony on Saturday, Aug. 5 at 6:30 p.m. on that church’s YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@firstlutherancr>.



Hadley and Connie will also be holding a reception in Rochester to celebrate and would love for you to come (no gifts per the bride and grooms’ request):

**Friday, Aug. 11, 2023**  
**5:00 p.m.**  
**6744 Gaillardia Dr. NW, Rochester**

## Star Word Prompts

**June: How has your star word surprised you so far?**





## Pastor Lisa at Synod School

Pastor Lisa will be at Synod School (part of her continuing education leave) from Fri., July 21-Sun., July 30. This includes two Sundays. Rev. Cindy Ray will be leading worship on Sun., July 23, and Rev. Carol Shaffer will be leading worship on Sun., July 30.

## Synod School 2023

This year's theme is "Our Family Story." From the Synod School catalogue: "As living and breathing entities of Christ, we are each natural storytellers – whether we believe so or not. ... In a time when biblical stories are picked apart to suit a particular message, we will gather and study familiar stories in new ways in hopes of gaining a new closeness with God, and each other."

This theme is based on a passage from Matthew's gospel: "... All Jesus did that day was tell stories – a long storytelling afternoon. His storytelling fulfilled the prophecy: I will open my mouth and tell stories; I will bring out into the open things hidden since the world's first day." (Matthew 13:34-35, The Message) The convocation speaker will be Rev. Jimmie Ray Hawkins, author and director of the advocacy offices of the PC(USA). Worship leaders will be Rev. Dr. Matt Sauer (morning worship) and Rev. DeEtte Decker (evening worship). And Abbi Long, teacher, writer, speaker, and PhD student, is this year's youth convocation speaker.



Our Family Story

You could take classes in everything from BioSpiritual Focusing to earring making, from Latin dance to pickleball, from preventing gun violence to Sibling Rivalries in Scripture, from restorative actions to a class on Joan of Arc. There are **72 different classes** to choose from in all (including one taught by Pastor Lisa and one taught by Peter Johnson)! And, as always, Synod School has classes and child care options for kids ages birth to high school (including the 3-5yo classroom designed and led by Dianne Pinney).

Registration opened **April 1!**

For more information, visit the Synod School website:

<https://lakesandprairies.org/engaging-leaders/synod-school/>. If you're curious about Synod School, please talk to Pastor Lisa.

## July Birthdays & Anniversaries

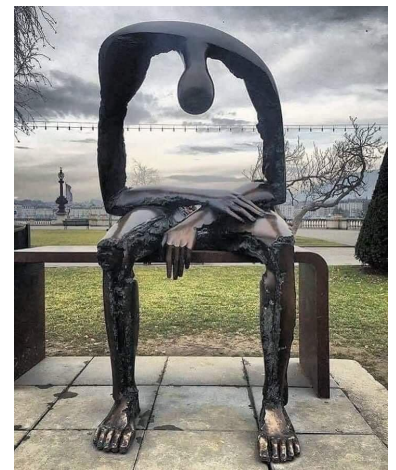
- ♫ 7/15—Kaedyn Peterson-Rucker
- ♫ 7/21—Gail Rucker
- ♫ 7/21—Cindy Luhman
- ♫ 7/28—Karen Peterson-Rucker
- ♥ 7/12—Robert & Jacky Rueber
- ♥ 7/19—Don & Ardith Ottman



## Spouse Grief Group

We've started hosting a congregational spouse grief group. It's a very informal group—just a safe, supportive space to talk about beloved spouses that have passed, the ways that we deal with grief, and anything else. We meet:

**3rd Monday of the month—5:30 p.m.**



## Staying in Touch

### Presbyterian Church of Oronoco

Office: 507-367-4711

Email: [oronocopc@bevcomm.net](mailto: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](mailto:office@ptcaweb.org)

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

### Presbyterian Church (USA)

Office: 800-728-7228

Email: [info@pcusa.org](mailto:info@pcusa.org)

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



## Keeping up with the Smith-Mathers

First, the update: According to their last newsletter, Shelvis, Nancy, and their kids have moved to Kampala, Uganda to continue their work in the mission field. We lift up prayers for their health and safety, for the period of adjustment that comes with a move like this (that comes with *any* move, really ... let alone a move to a whole other continent), and for their call and their mission.

For the last few years, we've been helping to support Shelvis and Nancy and their family with our 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Spare Change offering and our prayers. A few times a year, our treasurer would deposit whatever had accumulated from that offering in the bank, then send the total as a donation directly to the Smith-Mathers' Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) account.



Due to changes that PMA has made to the way they distribute their mission funds, all contributions no go into a general fund and are distributed to all mission co-workers from there. This change has been made in an attempt to make mission co-worker support more equitable, especially for those co-workers who may be serving in areas that are especially remote or even dangerous and therefore cannot easily relay updates or connect with supporting individuals/congregations.

Donations can still be made in honor of specific mission co-workers – Shelvis and Nancy, in our case. And of course, we can always pray for them and their family in all times and places. But if you can't be here in person to contribute to our Spare Change offering, you can still help. Visit their PMA 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 in honor of the ministry of Shelvis and Nancy Smith-Mather." This will redirect you 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.



## Electronic Donations

You can donate to the Presbyterian Church of Oronoco online anytime using either the link on our website ([www.oronocochurch.org](http://www.oronocochurch.org)) at the bottom of the homepage) or by using this QR code:



## Blessing of the Animals

This fall, we’re going to try something really fun—a Blessing of the Animals service! It’s a service that’s exactly what it sounds like: a chance to bring your beloved animals to church so we can bless them. They bless us so often with their love, their devotion, their cuddles, and their presence. This is our chance to thank God specifically for them and give them a special blessing.

We’ll be holding this service on

**Sunday, Sept. 10, 2023**

**10:00 a.m.**

It will be our regular worship service for the morning. Weather permitting, we’ll be holding the service outside on the lawn. (Rocky even has an electronic piano that we can bring outside!) Afterward, we’ll be having an ice cream fellowship (also out on the lawn, assuming the weather cooperates).

All animals are welcome! Dogs must be on a leash and up-to-date on all their vaccinations. All other animals must be in carriers of some kind. After all, we want to make sure everyone’s treasured animals stay safe as we bless them.



## All Around the Campfire

It’s that time again! Time to gather again on the church lawn for an evening campfire on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of June, July, August, and September (weather permitting). As before, there will be hot dogs, brats, buns, and s’mores material provided. Bring some sort of food to share (chips, a salad, fruit, etc.), a chair, a drink, and a friend! ☑ Here are the dates for 2023:

~~- June 25: 5:30-8:00 p.m.~~

- July 23: 5:30-8:00 p.m.

*\*Note: This is the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday, not the last Sunday.\**

- Aug. 27: 5:30-8:00 p.m.

- Sept. 24: 5:30-8:00 p.m.

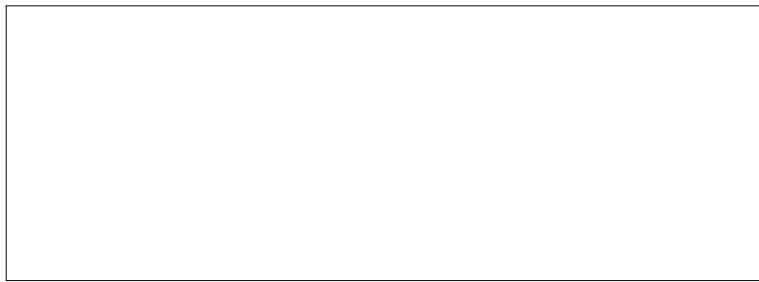


**Presbyterian Church of Oronoco**

P.O. Box 118

Oronoco, MN 55960

507-367-4711



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## Basic Information

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

Facebook: Presbyterian Church of Oronoco

Instagram: @oronocochurch



**Worship—10:00 a.m.**  
**Communion—1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month**  
**Fellowship hour following worship**

**Rev. Lisa Johnson—contact information:**

Cell: 507-995-7310

Email: [PastorLisaJ@gmail.com](mailto:PastorLisaJ@gmail.com)

Blog: <http://pastorlisaj.com>