



THE MESSENGER

JANUARY 2014



INTERIM CO-PASTORS' MESSAGE

The New Year is a time of contemplation. It is a time where we look back at what has gone before and we look forward to what is to come. That is why it is so worthwhile to look at Isaiah 43 at the beginning of the year. Isaiah 43 shares with us a promise that God made to his people, Israel—one that we can see applies to us as well. The promise is that God will be with us.

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.”

Water, especially open water, was dangerous. People feared it. They believed in great sea monsters, like the leviathan, that would destroy them in the deeps. In the scripture, we see the leviathan presented metaphorically as a creature so fierce that humans cannot stand against it. Yet, the promise is that God would destroy the leviathan. The promise is that everything that the leviathan represents will be put to an end by God.

What it is that the leviathan represented to the ancient people of the scripture and what does the leviathan represent for us today?

The leviathan represented the ocean, the water that it ruled over. And that ocean, that water, represented chaos and destruction. And it wasn't just the ocean that the people feared, the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee, the two bodies of water that were in the land of Israel, were known for the great storms that came upon them. They were known to be extremely dangerous. Even the people who made their living on the water knew the wisdom of fearing the water. They knew the dangers of passing through the waters. Water represented chaos, and it represented their own lack of control over their circumstances.

Isaiah 43 goes on and gives us another example, one different than the water. “When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.”

Fire, in many ways is the other extreme. Water, the floods, can sweep us away. Water can take us to places we aren't ready to go. We can drown in water. Fire does something much different. It burns us.

Most of us at some point or another in our lives have been physically burned. It is not fun! It is quite painful. Yet God tells us in Isaiah that when we do walk through the fire, he will be with us.

In its simplicity, the promise will see us through the different kinds of fires we have to make in order to travel to safety. Think of the three young men in the Book of Daniel who walk through literal fire. As people look at them in the fire, they see that they are not alone, that there is someone with them. When they come out, the fire has not done anything to them.

If God is there with three Hebrew boys known as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah) in a literal furnace, God will be with us in whatever fire we face.

We enter the New Year not knowing what lies ahead. We hope for great things and we fear horrible things. We hold onto this great promise that God gives us: God will be with us. No matter what we face, be it fire or flood, God will be with us.

The sovereign Lord of the universe will give us the strength we need to make it through. God is greater than the chaos of the sea. In Psalm 29, we read that God's voice lies over the chaos of the waters. If water represents the absolute worst chaos, if it represents everything that we do not have control over; God sits enthroned over it. God has control over it. We can trust God to be with us in the midst of it.

And if fire represents the pain and suffering that we all face at different times in our lives, God will bring us through it. God will be there with us in the fire, and we will come through it.

God's promise isn't that life is going to be roses. It isn't that life is going to be peachy-keen. His promise is to be with us and be that rudder that we need when we are out of control. His promise is to suffer alongside of us and take that suffering that we cannot bear upon himself for our sake.

Take this promise from God: I will be with you. I love you. I will not abandon you. I am in control. Believe it, accept it, know it in your heart of hearts. It will bring you peace in this New Year. It will bring you strength.

May we all live in the strength of the Lord. Happy and a blessed New Year to all.

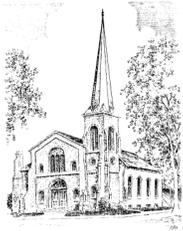
Pastors James and Banu

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Special note regarding officers' classes:

Since the nomination process will be influenced by the outcome of the bicameral-unicameral decision, we ask that all of those in the class of 2013 remain in place. (Anyone who would prefer not to do that is free to resign at the end of your regular term.) Following bylaw revisions, which we would need to do anyway, we will begin the new terms in February.

Thank you very much,
Pastor James, Moderator of Session



CORNERS AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PARISH LIFE & MEMBERSHIP

Fellowship Time

If you would like to host a Fellowship Time some Sunday, please call Rose Houper, Susan Sheldon, or the church office. It is not difficult. Help is available and expenses are covered.

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Congregational Dinner

Please join us on Sunday, January 26th, following worship for our annual congregational meeting and dinner. Bring your favorite dish to pass and your own table service and enjoy a terrific meal and great fellowship.



MISSION & OUTREACH

Food Pantry

As we continue to experience the Season of Giving, Joy, and Caring, we would like to acknowledge all those who helped to make our 2013 Thanksgiving Distribution a success. Your generosity has enabled many to experience a bountiful and healthy Thanksgiving dinner. A group of 30-plus community volunteers helped to distribute over 360 baskets to those in our area who deal with food insecurity.

During the month of November, the Pantry served: 920 households, 1,142 children, 2,014 adults, and 263 elderly.

This month the Pantry could use canned tuna,

canned fruits, and diced tomatoes. Please check your closets for new or gently used coats and winter clothing, especially for children. Our clothing closet is a busy place.

May the spirit of the holidays continue to permeate the community so that all who suffer may benefit.



PRAYER CORNER

Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords! - Psalm 136:3

January, according to many US calendars, is National Thank You Month. In order to make the best use of this celebration of gratitude, let's begin by seeing what Scripture says about thankfulness. One place to start is Psalm 136, which begins and ends with the words, "Oh, give thanks."

What better way to start off a new year than to concentrate on conveying gratitude to our Lord! "Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever." When you think of all that's good, give thanks to God.

Our Daily Bread



Bicameral/Unicameral Committee Update

A SURVEY has been developed for members and non-members (who are regular attenders) to provide the Session with feedback so a decision can be made very soon. You can expect to receive the survey by U. S. Mail shortly after January 1, 2014. It is brief and will take only several minutes to complete and return to the church office. A stamped and addressed envelope is provided for your use, so please participate in this activity. The survey needs to arrive in the church office by **Friday, January 10, 2014.**

SUPPERS OF EIGHT



Plan ahead to avoid those winter doldrums by joining others in our church to share fellowship. Join in

SUPPERS OF EIGHT is poised to offer another year of fun, food and fellowship for everyone. This program, sponsored by Parish Life, has become an event that many of us look forward to each winter. Suppers of Eight are small group social gatherings which provide an excellent opportunity to get to know other members of our church community and to form new friendships. As the name indicates, groups of eight people gather for dinner each month for four months, beginning in February. Each group of eight remains together throughout the series of dinners. *Suppers of Eight* is open to all adults including couples and singles. We would especially like to encourage those who are new or relatively new to the church to participate. This is one of our most enjoyable activities and a great way to meet the church family! Several times a group has continued to meet beyond the four dinners!

There will be Friday night and Saturday night groups. Each group will meet once each month in February, March, April and May on a date convenient for the members.

LOGISTICS

- (1) (1) You will be randomly assigned to a group in pairs. Married couples will be placed together. Singles are warmly welcomed. Expect to see new faces! Each couple and/or single will have the opportunity to host. Singles may host a dinner individually or together.
- (2) Everyone will be furnished with a list of the other members of the group including addresses & telephone numbers on February 2nd after Worship. At that time your group can choose the date of your first dinner.
- (3) (3) As previously stated, the dinner series will be held once each month in February, March, April, & May on dates convenient for the group members. If singles in a group host individually, extra dinners may be set up.
- (4) (4) Group members meet in the home of the host(s) for dinner. The first host(s) will be chosen on February 2nd. As the dinners progress, each couple will have a turn to host. The host(s) will contact each member prior to dinner to confirm the date, time, & the dish each is to bring (i.e. vegetable, salad, dessert, hors d'oeuvres.) The host(s) provides meat, potatoes, beverages, & table service.
- (5) The after dinner activity is the choice of the host(s). We would suggest conversation, games, etc.
- (6) If illness or unforeseen circumstances arise to change your plans, you can do one of two things:
 - a. Try to replace yourself as a couple (or single). The substitute would bring whatever dish you planned to bring. You should notify the host(s) of the change. You will be provided with a list of substitutes or feel free to ask friends or family.
 - b. If you are unable to find a substitute, call Kate Danforth, 962-4034, who will make arrangements for an alternate.

Fill out the sign up form below and join us for SUPPERS OF EIGHT!

SUPPERS OF EIGHT, 2014

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

E-MAIL _____ PHONE _____

I (WE) PREFER FRIDAY NIGHT _____ SATURDAY NIGHT _____

We will always need alternates. If you can't participate on a regular basis, but would like to be called as a substitute, please check. I (we) am (are) interested in substituting _____

I am allergic to ___cats, ___dogs ___birds I have a ___cat, ___dog, ___bird

Please return completed form to the church office or place in the offering plate **NO LATER THAN NOON ON JANUARY 26, 2014.** ALL LATE SIGN-UPS WILL BE PLACED ON THE SUBSTITUTE LIST.

MONTH OF JANUARY

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

- 5 Anna Jean Yoggy
- 11 Deborah Rice
- 15 Christopher Kelly
- 16 * Corey Reppert
- 19 Frances Backer
- 23 * Lydia Smith
- 24 * Robert J. Wilcox
- 25 Monica Meek
- 26 Carol Flook
- 27 Tracey Kelly
- 28 Barbara Young
Alice Moore
- 29 Stephanie Knutsen
- 30 Amita Neuner



If we miss your special day, please call the church office so we can get you entered on our calendar.

Members, *children under 18, and non-member participants for whom we have birthday and anniversary information.

THE MESSENGER

First Presbyterian Church

1 East First Street

Corning, New York 14830

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**Jesus Is
Our
Focus
In All
We Do**

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1 EAST FIRST STREET
CORNING, NEW YORK 14830**

Reverends James & Banu Moore, Interim Pastors
Home Phone: 607-654-7875
Pastor Banu's Cell Phone: 607-664-7876
Pastor James' Cell Phone: 607-542-6889

Interim Pastors' Office Hours:
Monday - Thursday 9:00 a.m. - noon

Church Phone: 607-937-5419
Church Fax: 607-937-9731

Church Hours: Monday - Friday
9:00 a.m. - noon & 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Church Email: office@corningpresby.org
Visit us on the web: www.corningpresby.org

Sunday School: 9:00 a.m.
Worship Service: 10:30 a.m.
Fellowship Time: 11:30 a.m.



2014

The Messenger is published monthly.

DEADLINE for February Messenger articles is January 15th. Articles may either be emailed to the church or left in the church office. Any information received after the 15th will appear in the March issue.