



April 2025 Newsletter

***Our Mission:** The Presbytery of Geneva lives to support and equip congregations and leaders to be Christ in the Finger Lakes and the world.*

***Our Vision:** Radiating the light of Christ, the Presbytery of Geneva thrives as a community of servants, lifting up every congregation and leader in ministering together.*

The purpose of the newsletter is to announce upcoming events and opportunities sponsored by the Presbytery, its congregations, the Synod of the Northeast, the PC(USA), neighboring presbyteries, and partner agencies. If you have an item for the newsletter, please send the information to officeadmin@presbyteryofgeneva.org by **April 25, 2025**.



Happy Easter
To You All.

May this joyful season of **Easter** fill your heart with renewed hope, love, and peace.



Building Bridges Across Boundaries: Presbyterian Retreat for everyone



Friday May 9 – Saturday May 10, 2025, at
Camp Whitman

(150 Whitman Rd, Penn Yan, NY 14527)

Open for ministers and church members of the PC(USA)
in the seven presbyteries of the Upstate NY network

Objective is to have fun while getting to know each other
across the Presbyteries of Upstate NY

Overnight with 3 meals
with optional Friday lunch (\$12 extra)

Rustic cabins (no running water) **\$70 per person**

Cottage-style cabins (limited availability) **\$95 per person**

For more info on cabins, go to susvalpresby.org/2025retreat

Commuter option (includes 3 meals) **\$40 per person**

Register at susvalpresby.org/register from Feb. 1 to April 25

*Event organized by the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley's
Commission on Christian Leadership Formation (CCLeF)
and members of the Presbytery of Geneva's General Council.*

Registration & payment questions:

Scott Kindig, CCLeF Co-chair, Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley,
cclefchair@susvalpresby.org or 607-323-4477.

Want to help with program & worship planning?

Contact Connie Franks, Moderator, Presbytery of Geneva,
cfranks1128@aol.com or 315-589-2896.

Members of the Geneva Presbytery Commuter will have a special rate!
Please contact Connie Franks at cfranks1128@aol.com for information and to
register as a commuter.



Ovid Fire Relief Fund set up for residents, employees

OVID — The outpouring of support for those who lost their homes, businesses, and jobs as a result of the devastating fire that started the night of Jan. 21 and continued into the wee hours of the next morning has overwhelmed this tiny village — and, in some cases, in the best of ways.

The generosity has been staggering. There have been so many donations of clothing, furniture, and household goods, that the 11 families have taken what they need for now and for the future, and a plethora is left over — at the VFW, Seneca Community Church, and a few other locations where items were dropped off. So, to help out the rest of the community, the Arthur G. Depew VFW Post 6200 held a two-day bag sale Monday and Tuesday, at \$5 a bag.

“At first, when the fire happened, the post started a fundraiser for Kelsy Thorn, whose father is a lifetime member here,” said Kenny Fellers, quartermaster of the VFW, “but it just got about 100 times bigger than everyone — the other families too — needed. Our solution was the bag sale.”

Literally surrounded by donations of everything from toys to clothing and dozens of pairs of shoes, Fellers and other volunteers were sorting items frantically before the doors for the sale opened at noon Monday. They said there are posters all over the village, asking people to stop making donations because there is nowhere to store them.

“It’s been phenomenal,” said Lori Bennett, the events coordinator for the VFW. “People have come from all over. I had one lady come down from Sodus Point with money she had collected.”

The money from the bag sale, along with all the funds that have been collected for general relief, is going to the Ovid Fire Relief Fund that was created Jan. 25 in cooperation with the Ovid Federated Church, the village and town of Ovid, and Community Bank.

Fellers is distributing information about the fund, with an initial payout to the affected victims expected in late February using prepaid Visa cards. Those burned out of their apartments and employees of the lost businesses will be eligible to receive the money.

The church will use its 501(c)(3) status for the collection. **Donations may be made at the village office or at Community Bank, electronically, to the account (3555578240) through Venmo, Zell and Paypal. All checks and electronic donations are to be filled out to the “Ovid Fire Relief Fund.”**

“People who lost apartments will be paid per person, no matter their age,” said the document Fellers had. “Employees who lost jobs will be paid based on the number of hours they worked. Employees will include administrative staff.”

The village will distribute the cards during working hours. There will be another distribution in July, and then the fund will be closed. No money will be held for fees; 100% of what is collected will be distributed.

From the March 24, 2025 edition of the Finger Lakes Times

By LOUISE HOFFMAN BROACH lbroach@fltimes.com

One church's dogged determination to construct a 174-unit affordable housing project right next door

The Rev. Patrick O'Connor, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, tells conference-goers the story

Mike Ferguson | Presbyterian News Service



NEW YORK — The Rev. Patrick O'Connor, the senior pastor of [First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica](#), which hosted the “Connection to Transformation” conference last weekend, is in his 33rd year serving the famed and historic church. “The members here will tell you we all work hard together for God,” he said on Friday. “I am proud to stand here and represent them.”

After completing studies at the University of the West Indies, United Theological College, Yale University and the Columbia Business School. O'Connor came to FPC in 1992 as “the first Black person to be in any kind of leadership.”

“I am Black and educated, but I was considered ‘less than,’” he said. “More than 30 years later, it’s still a work in progress. The people have been generous and we have grown together.”

Have they ever. O'Connor helped lead the development of the [Tree of Life project](#) adjacent to the church, a \$74 million affordable housing development offering 174 rental units, a Federally Qualified Health Center and other community spaces.

One-third of renters in the nation’s largest city spend more than half their income on rent. The Tree of Life project began with a seminary intern who created a survey for the neighborhood. Even though the survey took 12½ minutes to complete, 1,200 neighbors assented to doing just that. “Amazing!” O'Connor said.

“Then our folks started to dream. They had this idea that First Presbyterian Church should contribute something to the neighborhood,” O'Connor said. “If you leave the building, you’ll hear some of the stories you need to hear. If you’re in the building, you’ll never hear them.”

Many, many pieces fell in place to help the project to completion. O'Connor met Carol Rosenthal, a top land-use attorney “who in her heart and soul wants to make a difference,” O'Connor said. “She has never given us a bill in 18 years. She helped navigate the land-use for us.”

O'Connor serves on a board that includes several wealthy people. “I call myself ‘the conscience’” he said with a grin. He told one board colleague the project needed a \$2 million boost, “and to get there, I need your help.” Soon, three bankers came to O'Connor and said, “Mr. X’s business is important to us, and he asked us to speak to you.”

“This was 2008 [the depths of the Great Recession], when a church shouldn’t have gotten a loan,” O'Connor said. “God made a way.”

Then the people of FPC “did something remarkable,” he said. “We don’t have extremely wealthy people here, but our members pledged \$1 million to support Tree of Life. The largest pledge was \$20,000. It was a statement this vision meant something to them.”

Church members began taking prayer walks around the parking lot. “It was like walking around the walls of Jericho,” O'Connor recalled.

Tree of Life “is one of two really affordable buildings in the neighborhood because we fought for it,” O'Connor said. “Families need three bedrooms, and you can’t find those in the neighborhood.”

Completing the project “has taught me about partnerships and relating to people in the neighborhood and across the city. It’s taught me to work with others and how to pray,” he said. “When you pray, you can imagine that bigger things are possible because we serve a God who gives us big things.”

Excellence “is never an accident. It’s always a result of high intention, sincere effort and intelligent execution,” O'Connor said. “It represents the wise choice of many alternatives.”

“The contribution I’d like to make is to the other pastors who want to join the fight to ensure the church remains as the church, and we fight for the downtrodden, forsaken, the broken, those who need homes, health care and food — and a reminder that God loves them.”

During a question-and-answer session that followed his talk, O'Connor told the story of the last-minute discovery of the church’s incorporation papers, just two days before Tree of Life’s closing. “A lawyer who’s a history buff went to the Queens Hall of Records. He found a hand-scribbled note of our incorporation in 1748, and so we could close,” O'Connor said.

“Everyone has the chance to do something,” he told the 90 or so people who registered for the conference, offered by the [Synod of the Northeast](#). “It will look different in every neighborhood in every state.”

“If you believe in what God has called you to do,” he said, “go fight for it.”



The Rev. Patrick O'Connor

Creating a partnership culture in faith communities

Synod of the Northeast hosts a two-day event chock full of ideas and energy for getting God's work done
Mike Ferguson | Presbyterian News Service



NEW YORK — The subhead for last week's [Synod of the Northeast](#)'s "Connection to Transformation" conference was "Creating a Partnership Culture in Faith Communities." That's exactly what happened throughout the two-day conference, held at [First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica](#), which began its ministry in Queens, New York, in 1662, and is the oldest continuously serving Presbyterian church in the nation.

"This work is urgent, powerful and transformative," said the Rev. Dr. SanDawna Gaulman Ashley, the synod's transitional executive. "We hear enough bad news. Let's hear about what God can do" with willing vessels such as the 90 people who registered for the conference. Almost all were in attendance both days.

The first speaker on Friday was the [Rev. Dr. Samuel Cruz](#), Associate Professor of Religion and Society and director of the DMin program at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He also serves as senior pastor of [Trinity Lutheran Church](#) in Brooklyn. "I'm on sabbatical, but I felt called to answer SanDawna's email," he said. "I've decided that in the conditions we're living under, we need to use our bodies and ourselves as public ministry."

"We're all doing public ministry and theology," he said, "whether we acknowledge it or not."

While attending middle school, Cruz used to walk right by the church he's currently serving to get home every afternoon. "It's an imposing building. The churches on Fourth Avenue make public statements in the community," he said. "I don't remember [noticing] the church. The church is looked at a little differently now. Now the building is used — a lot, because the community doesn't have a lot of spaces."

He contrasted his memory with churches in small communities in Latin America and the Caribbean, where a midtown plaza often contains the church and the mayor's office. "That's the public ministry being espoused without saying anything," Cruz said. "Government and the church have always worked together, but on the side."

"From my perspective, nothing is neutral," he said. Cozying up to people in power is the opposite of being prophetic. "We may have a food pantry, but I want to know why we have a food pantry. That's where ministry becomes public ministry."

To dig into in public ministry, we must engage in what theologian [Gustavo Gutiérrez](#) said is "critical reflection on praxis." But often what we end up with, Cruz said, is "a theology that offers forgiveness and redemption to the powerful."

During a question-and-answer session that followed his talk, Cruz was asked how to be dedicated to public ministry without getting burned out. "Being engaged with activists, I see the burnout because people don't know how to have fun," he said.

And don't hesitate to fight for what people need.

"Why should we be shy about people wanting to have a home or health care? Just say what the gospel is," he recommended. "Public ministry is the gospel."

We do public ministry "because it's the moral thing to do," he said. A member of the host church told Cruz, "We don't stay in the pews. We are the church out there."

The "apparatus of oppression is so sophisticated," Cruz lamented. "We say, 'We are standing on [Lenape](#) land.' Do something real" to repair harm, he said, "not symbolic."

He was asked: What are the best ways to include youth in our churches?

"It's always been a challenge for the church," Cruz said. "There's been growth in my church," because "they're looking for spirituality and commitment. When I forget to pray for the Palestinians, they text me and I hear it — during worship!"

"Prayers are public statements that people are making, he said. The youth "constantly remind us that homelessness is a problem. Young people need to feel like we're addressing real problems."



The Rev. Dr. SanDawna Gaulman Ashley



The Rev. Dr. Samuel Cruz

Interfaith partnerships can bring about collective action

The Synod of the Northeast's 'Connection to Transformation' conference highlights two such Big Apple examples
Mike Ferguson | Presbyterian News Service



NEW YORK — The [Synod of the Northeast](#)'s "Connection to Transformation" conference held last week at [First Presbyterian Church of Jamaica](#) turned its attention Friday afternoon to using interfaith partnerships to achieve collective action.

The 90 or so attendees heard from the Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer, executive director of the [Interfaith Center of New York](#), and representatives from [Queens Power](#), which organizes that borough's nearly 2.2 million residents to fight for and win justice in their communities.

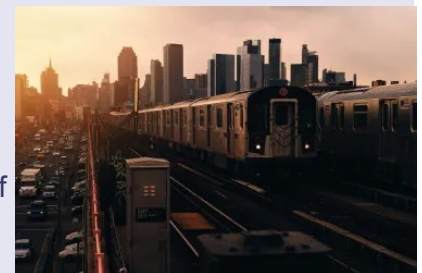
Interfaith Center of New York

ICNY describes itself as a "secular nonprofit organization with a mission to overcome prejudice, violence, and misunderstanding by activating the power of the city's grassroots religious and civic leaders and their communities." Breyer, an Episcopal priest in Harlem for more than 20 years, has led the organization since 2007.

For many years, Breyer has offered religious diversity training for educators, law enforcement and social workers. Another critical part of ICNY's work involves hosting social justice retreats, "where we focus on a single concern and bring in experts," she said.

She labeled advocacy, service and dialogue as three "important components of interfaith work, three ways people can gather. If you have the ability, do all three," she said. "Everything rests on relationships. You meet people where they are. You are patient and polite, which are not values being held up right now."

Ever since [the Oct. 7, 2023 Hamas attacks against Israel](#), the staff at ICNY has felt "there had never been a time when our services were more needed, and yet we felt unable to deliver them." Since the organization is near Jewish Theological Seminary, Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University and Barnard College,



ICNY decided to welcome students in the fall with food that was either halal or kosher. “It wasn’t very glamorous, but it was beautiful,” Breyer said. “It worked well because of the simplicity.”

“If you show you know someone’s holiday, language and culture, that goes a long way,” Breyer said. “Those personal calls after Oct. 7 were all we could do without getting people mad.”

Queens Power

The organization “is comprised of faith communities, nonprofit organizations, schools and unions. The reason we organize is that we have a burning passion for justice and a moral calling to create the power to demand the resources required so that all residents of Queens can live with dignity and have equal access to opportunity,” Queens Power states on its website.



The Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer

The Rev. Patrick O’Connor, the pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica and one of the founders of Queens Power, recalled a rally five years ago held outside of City Hall that drew 6,500 people. Those who showed up didn’t get what they were asking for, but they organized to obtain what they needed the most — more power, according to O’Connor.

“Organizing for me is a way to create real change and effectuate the compassion I wasn’t able to experience in my neighborhood,” said Hanif Parker, Queens Power’s member organizer.

“To me, to nurse is to advocate,” said Dr. Barbara Campbell, who taught nursing for decades before coming out of retirement to work for Queens Power. “I am knee-deep in this fight.”

Rob English of [East Brooklyn Congregations](#), a sister organization of Queens Power, asked conference participants to break into small groups to talk about what’s currently giving them the most anger. “I’m going to take a risk and disagree with you,” he said at the end of their three minutes. “We would argue the most pressing issue is the lack of power, the ability to act on the issues most important to you.” He invited those gathered in the sanctuary to “take 35 minutes to see if we can take some steps to organize our power. We believe people of faith can use power well.”

Before its launch, Queens Power gathered 43 congregations “to build the organization first before moving into action,” English said. Organizers talked in small groups to 5,000 people, asking what was most important to them. Then as now, affordable housing topped the list. With help from elected officials including U.S. Senator Charles Schumer, the Minority Leader from New York, the site of a former psychiatric hospital has been secured for development.

“It was one of the most exhilarating actions I’ve been involved in,” Campbell said. “There has been a huge brain drain. Lots of people are leaving [New York City] because they can’t afford housing, and we’ve identified land in Queens and Brooklyn” to construct housing units. “We’re going to fight. We have righteous anger over what’s going on. We believe that we deserve better here in New York City.”

According to English, about 10 congregations have said they have enough land to develop affordable housing, “if the mayor and governor step up.” Across the nation’s largest city, there are 1,100 city-owned parcels “ready to develop now,” he said.

“In these moments, we need to find issues where we can win,” said Parker. “Right now, people need a win.”

“A single congregation has limited power,” O’Connor said. “But when we build relationships across the town, the people on the other side who have power will respect organized action.”



2025
PASTORS' RETREAT
Athenaeum Hotel,
Chautauqua, NY

Wed. May 7 - Fri. May 9

Single room \$500 pp
Double room \$358 pp



All packages are for a two-night stay and include all meals and gratuities

This retreat is offered to clergy and commissioned pastors, including the retired, in the Presbyteries of Cayuga/Syracuse, Genesee Valley, Geneva, Lake Erie, and Western New York.

Guest Speaker, Rev. Dr. Glen Bell
"The Gift of One's Self: Identity, Belonging, and Purpose"

Join us as we talk about identity, belonging, and purpose in ways that will invite participants toward their own reflection and spiritual growth.



Rev. Dr. Glen Bell is Senior VP of Development at the Presbyterian Foundation. Before serving the Foundation, he dedicated 30 years as a pastor in a wide variety of Presbyterian congregations in North Carolina, Indiana and Florida. His roles and duties included preaching, teaching, and pastoral care; leadership, management, and operations; stewardship and funds development. Glen received his Doctor of Ministry from McCormick Theological Seminary and his Master of Divinity from Union Presbyterian Seminary.



[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#)



Korea Peace Journey

한 강토 평화 여정



Seoul

DMZ

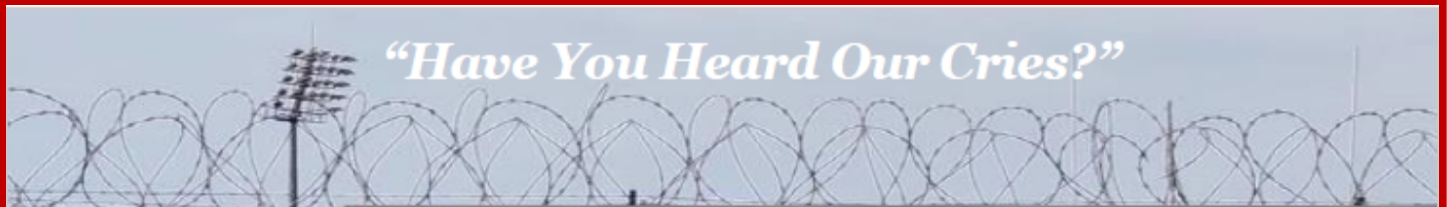
Jeju Island

PyeongTaek

Oct. 21 - 30, 2025



“Have You Heard Our Cries?”



“Have You Heard Our Cries?”

Korea Peace Journey:

October 21 – 30, 2025

Presbyterian Peace Network for Korea (PPNK)

Mission Network of PCUSA

Led by

Kurt Esslinger & Unzu Lee, Mission Co-Workers

Registration: May 1, 2025

Total Cost: \$2300 + Airfare

Participants: 20 – 25

Please contact for more information at

Email: peacenetorkorea@gmail.com

Phone: (562) 447-3575

On this journey people of faith will get to “Hear the Cries” of the Korean people, who have been divided and at war for over 70 years. Participants will learn about the barriers to peace that the United States and others have erected and maintained, and the efforts of peacemakers across the Pacific to overcome them.

The journey will build connections between Christians in Korea who are working for peace and peace-loving Presbyterians and others in the U.S., connections that will enhance the capability of all of us to promote peace on the Korean peninsula.

Participants and their counterparts in Korea will worship together, visit critical locations, meet with persons impacted by past and continuing violence, and engage in discussion about how Christ might be drawing them and their faith communities together in action for peace.

Join us on this Journey for Peace.

To learn more about the journey [click here](#).

To register [click here](#).

CAMP WHITMAN

Sign up by visiting us at <https://www.campwhitman.org/dates-rates>

➤➤ **Summer 2025 Registration is OPEN!!!**

Holiday Weekend Family & Community Camps—
Memorial, Independence and Labor Day weekends

Traditional Youth Summer Camps—Mini-Camp, Trail-
blazers, CITs & Trip Camp

Pathfinder Special Needs Adult Camps— 2 June & 2 July
sessions



*A place of belonging
and connection*

150 Whitman Rd
Penn Yan, NY 14527

Phone: 315-220-0084

Email: camp@campwhitman.org

For more information, please go to

campwhitman.org

Camp Whitman Fundraising Dinner

Saturday, May 10th, 6 pm

At Chili Presbyterian Church,
3600 Chili Ave, Rochester, NY

**\$25 per plate, provided by
Texas Bar-B-Q Joint.**

A fun night of dinner, music, raffle baskets, silent auction and camp updates to inform and support Camp Whitman!



Scan the code for tickets, or go to
<http://campwhitman.campbraingiving.com>

Make sure to designate your donation
payment "Fundraising Dinners"

Questions? Contact Adam Scoville
585-454-9939/ cpministerofmusic@gmail.com



MISSION AND WITNESS COMMITTEE NEWS

Presbytery Mission

The Presbytery of Geneva lives to support and equip congregations and leaders to be Christ in the Finger Lakes and in the world.

The 2025 Matthew 25 grant applications have been received. To date, there are 23 applications, 13 of which address food insecurity. The committee will meet in early April to evaluate applications, determine awards, and hopefully have checks written and sent by the end of June.

On Saturday, 8 March, Bath Presbyterian Church, under the leadership of Pastor John Woodring, and Christ the King Presbyterian Church in Spencer, under the leadership of Pastor Sabrina Slater, hosted the CWS/PCUSA assembly of personal hygiene and school supply kits. While the Mission and Witness Committee "sponsored" this event, it must be noted that Jeff Richards of North Presbyterian Church did the lion's share of organizing, purchasing, delivering, and facilitating the event. Several congregants from within the presbytery volunteered, from youth to adult. The committee wishes to thank all who participated, for their service.



CENTS-ABILITY

With the level of food insecurity in our presbytery, averaging almost 15% across 9 counties, we are in crisis mode. This is above the national average (12.4%). The 2025 Matthew 25 applications testify to this situation. As of this publication, the combined amount requested from 2025 applicants is \$46,000. With a proposed annual budget of \$55,000 for all grants, we need the support of all presbytery churches. In addition to the \$55,000, the committee receives the Cents-Ability offering from presbytery churches. In 2024, only about \$8,000 was collected, with almost \$70,000 requested. If each church could commit to receive a Cents-Ability offering once monthly, these "cents" would quickly total an impressive amount. If each of the 47 churches collected \$25 per month, this would amount to over \$14,000 for the calendar year and would help in addressing food insecurity.

Committee chair, Juana (Joanne) Tunison, is willing to visit churches on a given Sunday to explain the program to those churches who are not familiar with this PC USA Hunger Program initiative and answer any questions from the congregation.
Respectfully, Juana (Joanne) Tunison, chair

lalocat@aol.com
(607) 857-8312

<https://pcusa.org/resource/cents-abilityguide.>

A STRATEGY FOR RAISING AWARENESS — AND FUNDS — FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER

Cents-Ability is a small first step in the battle against hunger and poverty. Congregations invite every member — of all ages — to contribute a few cents at every meal. This simple act is an expression of thanks for what we have received. It is also a commitment to share with others in response to Jesus' command "You give them something to eat." When members bring their offerings to church on the appointed Sunday, all of those coins "make a joyful noise unto the Lord" as they are received and dedicated.

These small acts of faithfulness can add up: a congregation of 100 persons can offer \$2,160 dollars a year. A 30,000-member presbytery has the potential of raising over \$1.6 million annually at a nickle a meal.

Cents-Ability originated in 1976 as "Two-Cents-A-Meal," a project inspired by Rosellyn Calvert in prayer and begun by Presbyterian Women to involve individuals and families in a corporate response to world hunger. Over the years, presbyteries have developed similar programs entitled Pennies for Hunger, Nickle-A Meal, etc. Many of these programs benefit local hunger ministries as well as the national and international projects of the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP).

PHP has Cents-Ability resources to help presbyteries and congregations begin and expand hunger education and fund-raising programs. These include posters, labels for collection containers, prayer table tents, and a notebook with ideas and resources. Most resources are available for download, and you may print copies as needed.

"We will never see world peace until we wipe out hunger. Let's stick with what we started, doing it from the heart, remembering we are doing it because of the love our Christ has given to each of us, and letting this hunger action come from within and go out into all the world." —Rosellyn Calvert





Presbyterian Youth Triennium Even

Just a reminder! This summer is Triennium! Triennium this year goes from July 28 through July 31, and will be in Louisville, Kentucky. We will be leaving on Sunday, July 27, and be back by Friday, August 1.

Triennium is open to youth who are entering ninth grade or just graduated seniors in high school and who are active in their local congregation. This year, young adults, ages 19 to 23, who are active in their congregation can also attend Triennium as part of the Service Track or the Leader Lens Track. For more information, please visit [Presbyterian Youth Triennium](https://www.pcusa.org/triennium).

With the \$150 that the Synod of the Northeast has pledged to pay for each youth attending Triennium, the estimated cost for attending Triennium is \$720 per youth. This includes transportation, the cost of the PCUSA Triennium Participant Fee, food, lodging, and a T-Shirt. The Presbytery of Geneva has funds to help pay for each youth's participation.

There will be a retreat on May 2-3 for all youth and chaperones attending Triennium at Camp Whitman. There is no additional fee or cost to attend the retreat.

The Upstate NY Presbyteries Participation Application must be filled out no later than April 15, 2025. Here is a link to the application: <https://forms.gle/vsQDBntzL6V3Rnx57>

It is important that youth (and their families) who are interested in Triennium begin the application process as soon as possible so that we can start planning. Please talk to your youth about this really amazing event and opportunity.

Themes for this year's event:

Monday, July 28th

Born to Dream

Joel 2:28-32

Acts 2

Tuesday, July 29th

Collective Dreaming

Joshua 1:9

Genesis – Jacob's Ladder, Wrestling

Wednesday, July 30th

Facing the Nightmares

Genesis 37 – Joseph

Exodus 2 – Moses

Thursday, July 31st

Wake Up and Dream

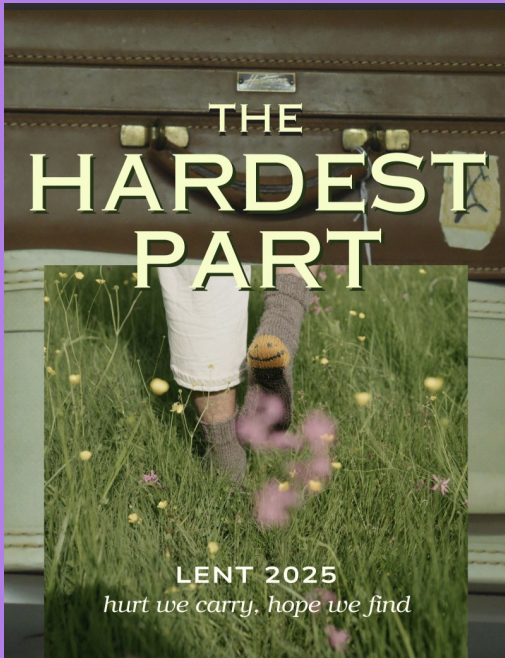
Matthew 2

Isaiah 55:12-13



Share Your PHOTOS

Send us your pics! If your church has photos of recent events to share, please email them to the presbytery office at: officeadmin@presbyteryofgeneva.org before the monthly deadline (found each month on page 1) and they'll be added to the next newsletter.



First Presbyterian Seneca Falls

This Lent join us for the Study, *The Hardest Part*. We will meet on Tuesdays, from 12-1 (please, bring your lunch) from March 4- April 15, in the Social Hall. All are welcome.

From Kate Bowler: Lent is a season of truth-telling—a time to stop pretending everything is fine and admit how hard life can be. Lent invites us to sit in the wilderness, to confront the heartbreak, the waiting, and the fragile hope that lives in the tension. And yet, it's also where God meets us—in the mess, in the ache, in the strange, beautiful way love sneaks in when everything feels like it's falling apart.

These Lent guides are designed to be a companion through this season as you pause, reflect, and find the courage to stay with the hard part, trusting that the good part is still coming. Life is this strange, tender mix, isn't it? Joy and sorrow, love and loss, heartbreak and hope, all tangled together. This year, we invite you to embrace Lent as it is—raw, honest, and tender. This is the season that asks us to stop pretending we're holding it all together. It's a time to pause, sit with what's fragile and unfinished, and let God meet us in the hardest parts of our lives.

For the Daily Guide, Click [Here](#)

PRC-Practical Resources for Churches

What's
NEXT

PRC's Winter 2025 Online events

[Legal and Tax Considerations for Space Sharing Agreements](#)

Tuesday, April 22, 2025

2:00 – 3:00 pm EDT

Leader – Renato Matos & Alexandra Columbo

This webinar will explore important legal provisions to consider when negotiating Lease Agreements and Use and Occupancy Agreements. Special attention will be given to understanding potential tax consequences when churches share their space with third parties.

Alexandra Columbo practices in the area of Real Estate, Corporate and Commercial Transactions, and Religious and Charitable Organizations. Alexandra represents religious and not-for-profit clients in various types of real estate transactions including sales and acquisitions of properties, long-term leases and other types of use agreements.

Alexandra regularly advises religious corporations and not-for-profit corporations on navigating the statutory approval process for the sale and other disposition of real property assets, including the submission of applications to the Office of the New York State Attorney General and the Supreme Court of the State of New York, pursuant to Not-For-Profit Corporation Law Sections 510, 511 and 511-a, and Religious Corporations Law Sections 12 and 18.

Renato Matos is the Managing Partner of the firm. Since joining the firm in 2009, Renato has primarily focused on the Real Estate and Religious and Charitable Organizations areas of our practice. Renato routinely represents religious and not-for-profit corporations on complex real estate transactions including purchases and sales, long-term ground leases, air rights transfers, joint ventures and affordable housing development projects.

Renato earned his Juris Doctor, magna cum laude, from the Hofstra University School of Law. In 2015, Renato was selected by the New York Law Journal as a Rising Star—one of 50 lawyers under the age of 40 who have established a record of accomplishments and demonstrated that they are top contributors to the practice of law and their communities. Renato is active in the community and regularly donates his time and expertise to numerous charitable organizations. He is president of the board of directors for the Council of Church Advisors.

PRC-Practical Resources for Churches

(continued)

[Imagining Good Futures on Church Property](#)

Tuesday May 6, 2025
2:00 – 3:00 pm EST

Leader - Mark Elsdon

The closure and repurposing of 100,000 church properties this decade presents both a crisis and an opportunity. What happens next is up to us. Churches often wonder how to better serve their neighbors and use buildings and land that is empty much of the week. Drawing upon stories from around the country and insights from his two books, Rev. Mark Elsdon, will help expand our imagination for what is possible using church buildings, land, and investment assets for housing and social enterprise projects that transform neighborhoods.

***Rev. Mark Elsdon** lives and works at the intersection of money and meaning as a serial social entrepreneur, strategic executive, and author. He is a national thought leader and speaker on subjects of faith-based impact investing, social enterprise, and property development. Mark is the author of *We Aren't Broke: Uncovering Hidden Resources for Mission and Ministry*. and editor of the book, *Gone for Good? Negotiating the Coming Wave of Church Property Transition*. Mark holds degrees from the University of California, Berkeley; Princeton Theological Seminary; and the University of Wisconsin School of Business. He is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church, USA and serves as co-founder of RootedGood and principal at Threshold Sacred Development. Mark lives in Madison, Wisconsin with his family.*

[Legacy Giving 101](#)

Thursday May 8, 2025
2:00 – 3:00 pm EDT

Leader – Cesie Scheuermann

Legacy giving is often called “low-hanging fruit.” People usually want to leave a gift to an organization they love – once they have gone to their great reward – but they don’t know how. Or worse, they aren’t asked. Universities, hospitals, and animal shelters do a great job of reminding and asking people to leave a gift in a will. But what about the church? In this one-hour webinar, you’ll learn how to start a basic legacy program for your congregation. It’s easier than you think..

Cesie Delve Schuermann** - As a consultant in stewardship, development, and grant writing, Cesie has helped raise more than three million dollars for numerous non-profit organizations. For more than 20 years, she’s been working with churches and non-profits to increase and celebrate generosity. **She is a Senior Ministry Strategist with Horizons Stewardship and her Inspiring Generosity blog helps clergy and lay people learn about fundraising and overcome their fear of asking for money, and she loves thanking donors



Marching in the Light of Christ



In celebration of Pentecost,
we shall gather to

Stand up for what Christ Taught; March with Jesus

on

Sunday, June 8, 2025, 2:30pm

at the Bicentennial Park in Geneva, NY.

Modeling the Ministry of Jesus, we:

- Feed the hungry food
- Give the thirsty a drink
- Welcome in the stranger
 - Clothe the naked
 - Care for the sick, and
 - Visit the prisoners.

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This march is an expression of God's diversity, equity, and inclusion.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because God has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; God has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord," - Luke 4: 18-19

Presbyterian Women of The Presbyterian Church in Geneva Mission Event

The congregation helped Presbyterian Women make No-sew fleece blankets for Baby Boxes on March 16 following and between services.

A Synod Mission grant in 2021 helped the church give Baby Boxes to needy mothers who did not have a safe place for their newborn to sleep. Engineers and sleep experts designed the boxes as a safe sleeping place for newborns. They originated in Finland after WWII to address the high infant mortality rate, where they still are given to every baby born.

The grant paid for the boxes, which come with a mattress and bottom sheet. It also pays for a second bottom sheet, thermometers, water thermometers, a sleeper, a toy, and a changing pad. The congregation has donated onesies, sleepers, hats, bibs, socks, diapers, and wipes. Members



have made quilted, knitted, and crocheted blankets. Geneva Reads donates two books for each box. Social service agencies and doctors' offices refer needy mothers in Geneva.

Presbyterian Women bought the pre-cut fleece.

Congregation members pinned and cut strips around the edges.

The two pieces are tied together.

Finished blankets. They can be used to play with baby on the floor or use them in a stroller or car seat. Warm sleepers are provided so that blankets are not used in the baby box.

