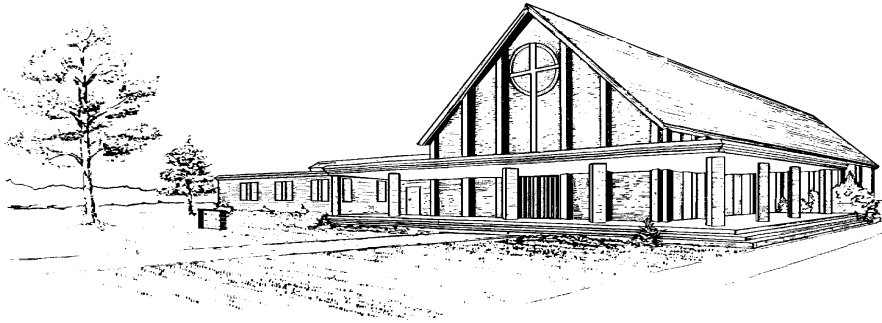


# STEEPLE CHIMES

Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Greenlawn

ISSUE: Two Hundred Twenty-Five

SEPTEMBER 2019



## Pastor's Message

In John's Gospel Jesus makes various statements about the Father. For those seeking to rally around Him, a short list of such sayings would include the following:

- (1) "The Father is greater than I" (John 14:28);
- (2) "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (John 14:11); and
- (3) "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30).

If Jesus prayed to the Father regarding his disciples that "they may all be one as You and I are one" (John 17:21), and if Paul prayed for us is that we have the same mind in us that was in Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5), then it stands to reason that we are called into the same consciousness of and relationship with God that Jesus had. In other words, we are to experience God as Jesus experienced God: God as *greater* than us, God as *within* us, and God as being *one with* us. All three are facets of the relationship we are to have with the God in whose image we are made, and into whose likeness we are meant to increasingly grow through Jesus Christ, who shows us not only who God is but also who we truly are.

That God is greater than we are counsels every one of us in humility. All of us are tempted to make ourselves our own higher power which yields predictably bad results for ourselves as well as our world. Jesus modeled surrender to the Father who is *greater* than us when he prayed in the Garden, "not my will, but thine."

But if our relationship with God is defined only hierarchically, our spirituality can become fear-based and disabling. It can encourage a false dependence upon God that effectively prevents our growing up to our full stature in Jesus Christ.

If then we also experience ourselves, as Jesus did, *in* the Father and the Father *in* us, we know an intimacy not available in an up-down relationship. That intimacy is well attested in John's Gospel which describes Jesus as being at the very breast of God the Father (John 1:18), just as beloved disciple is at the breast of Jesus (John 13:23). Here is a relationship between a lover and the Beloved. Here we hear the words, "With you I am well pleased" not only at Jesus' baptism, but also at our own. Here we not only trust in God, but are increasingly confident in God's trust in us. As we experience not only the otherness of God, but also God's indwelling, our sanctification is no longer largely theoretical.

But even these two dimensions of human-divine relationship do not express the deepest experience of unity, the ultimate truth of oneness for which we so long and of which we may have but occasional glimpses. But when we do, all separation between ourselves and God and ourselves and the rest of God's creation seems to dissolve. At such moments, we may say along with contemplative and mystic James Finley, "Although I am not the earth, I am not other than the earth. Although I am not you, I am not other than you. Although I am not God, I am not other than God."

(continued on page 2)

To Western Christians, this may seem almost blasphemous. But scripture says of Jesus that “his divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them *you may participate in the divine nature...*” (2 Peter 1:3-4). Irenaeus (c. 130- 202) picked up this theme when he urged that Jesus became what we are in order to make us what he himself is. Gregory of Nazianzen (c. 306-391) sounded this same theme of divinization when he said, “Let us seek to be like Christ, because Christ also became like us: to become gods through him since he himself, through us, became a man.”

Making the connection between these later facets of indwelling and higher unity, Julian of Norwich (c. 1343-1416) would later say “So greatly ought we to rejoice that God dwells within us, and more greatly ought we to rejoice that our soul dwells in God... In fact I saw no difference between God and my substance. But as it were we were all one... Our substance is in God.”

While there is perhaps no greater danger than when our inflated ego proclaims, “I am God” – or even, “I am God’s chosen one”- mystics like Julian declare not what they have done, but what love has done in undoing them. And so for a faith that we can rally around, all three facets of Divine-human relationship are needed: the God who is greater; the God with whom we inter-abide; and the God in whom every hint of separation is lost.

For those of us who rally around Jesus Christ, this is our destiny. For as James Finley has also put it, “little by little, breath by breath, love dissolves the illusions and fears born of our estrangement from the infinite love that is our very life... There’s nothing left but God’s intimate love giving itself to me as me.” May it be so for us all.

See you in church,

Pastor Fred

## Rally Day

As summer comes to an end, we look ahead to Rally Day (September 8<sup>th</sup>), which we will celebrate with balloons, special worship and an afternoon picnic. Rally Day, a great Sunday to invite our friends to church, is also the first Sunday that we return to our 10:30 a.m. worship time.

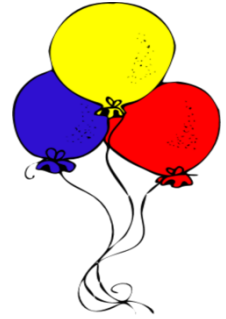
Rally Day has a long and proud history in American Protestantism, and was early recognized as a time to rally Christian youth beneath the banner of our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of our salvation. A hundred years ago, our Sunday schools were regarded as a division of the army of the Church universal. The members of that division were its pupils, and its officers, its church school teachers.

Today we tend to shrink from applying militaristic metaphors to Christ’s church, and with good reason. It is all too easy to confuse the power of love with the love of power, our own power and authority with that of God, all too easy, in other words, to smugly identify the kingdom or reign of God with the church, with us! God alone brings God’s reign; we are simply its heralds.

May this Rally Day be a time for all of us to follow Christ as he leads us, a time to deepen our trust that Christ really has called the church into being and really is faithful in his promise never to abandon it.

Submitted by Pastor Fred





JOIN US AS WE KICK OFF A NEW YEAR

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2019**

**WORSHIP and SUNDAY SCHOOL ~ 10:30 AM**  
BALLOONS, SONGS, AND FELLOWSHIP

**CHURCH PICNIC ~ 3:00 PM**  
RAIN OR SHINE  
HAMBURGERS, HOT DOGS AND DRINKS PROVIDED

LAST NAME A TO M: PLEASE BRING A LARGE SALAD  
LAST NAME N TO Z: PLEASE BRING A DESSERT

**Welcome Back to a year of fellowship and growth**  
**As we continue on our Christian journey**



## **“Your Church as an Asset to the Community”**

On Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, the Long Island Presbytery and the Practical Resources of Churches Center is sponsoring a presentation by author Joy Skjegstad between 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., at the First Presbyterian Church of Babylon, 79 East Main Street, Babylon, NY 11702 (church phone: 631-893-5838). Among topics to be considered are asset-based thinking for churches that bless the community with their buildings; assessing the space in the church building; choosing community partners and building collaboration; asset mapping exercises; documenting assets in your congregation and in the community. Registration and breakfast begins at 8:30 AM. There will also be a lunch. Preregistration is \$10 and \$20 at the door. Call the presbytery office (631-499-7171) or ask Pastor Fred for further details.

### **“Now Is The Time”**

*Now is the time to know  
That all that you do is sacred.  
Now, why not consider  
A lasting truce with yourself and God?  
Now is the time to understand  
That all your ideas of right and wrong  
Were just a child's training wheels  
To be laid aside.  
When you can finally live  
With veracity  
And love...  
My dear, please tell me,  
Why do you still  
Throw sticks at your heart  
And God?  
What is it in that sweet voice inside  
That incites you to fear?  
Now is the time for the world to know  
That every thought and action is sacred.  
This is the time  
For you to deeply compute the impossibility  
That there is anything  
But Grace.  
Now is the season to know  
That every thing you do  
Is sacred. (Hafiz)*

Submitted by Pastor Fred

# Church Flea Market

Saturday September 28th 2019

9AM – 4PM

First Presbyterian Church

497 Pulaski Road

Greenlawn, NY 11740

\*All proceeds to benefit the onsite church  
food pantry & deacon outreach ministries



Clothes, furniture, electronics, toys, jewelry,  
various sundries, something for everyone!

## **PRAYER CORNER**

### **SEPTEMBER 2019**

#### **A PRAYER FOR A LITTLE HOME**

~Florence Bone

God send us a little home, to come back to, when we roam.  
Low walls and fluted tiles, wide windows, a view for miles.  
Red firelight and deep chairs, small white beds upstairs—  
Great talk in little nooks, dim colors, rows of books.  
One picture on each wall, not many things at all.  
God send us a little ground, tall trees stand around.  
Homely flowers in brown sod, overhead, thy stars, O God.  
God bless Thee, when winds blow, our home, and all we know.

What life means to us is determined not so much by what life brings to us  
as by the attitude we bring to life; not so much by what happens to us  
as by our reaction to what happens. ~Lewis L. Dunnington

*Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding  
in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*

~[1 Corinthians 15:58](#)

“Everyone can be great because everyone can serve. You don’t have to have a college degree to serve.  
You don’t even have to make your subject and verb agree to serve . . . you only need a heart full of  
grace.” ~Martin Luther King, Jr.

*Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue  
but with actions and in truth.*

1 John 3:18

#### **LABORS**

~Theodore Roosevelt

It is only through labor and prayerful effort, by grim energy  
and resolute courage, that we move on to better things.

FOR LAUGHS

~Anon

Six-year-old Angie and her four-year old brother Joel,  
were sitting together in church.  
Joel giggled, and talked out loud. Finally, his big sister had had enough.  
“You’re not supposed to talk out loud in church.”  
“Why? Who’s going to stop me?” Joel asked.  
Angie pointed to the back of the church and said,  
“See those two men standing by the door?  
They’re hushers.”

Submitted by Betty Chatfiel

**Butt Prints In the Sand (Anonymous)**

*One night I had a wondrous dream,  
One set of footprints there was seen,  
The footprints of my precious Lord,  
But mine were not along the shore*

*But then some stranger prints appeared...  
And I asked the Lord, “What have we here?  
Those prints are larger and round and neat,  
But Lord, they are too big for feet”*

*“My child,” He said in somber tones,  
“For miles I carried you alone.  
I challenged you to walk in faith,  
But you refused and made me wait.”*

*“You disobeyed, you would not grow,  
The walk of faith you would not know...  
So I got tired, I got fed up,  
And there I dropped you on your butt.”*

*“Because in life there comes a time  
When one must fight, and one must climb,  
When one must rise and take a stand,  
Or leave their butt prints in the sand.”*

Submitted by Pastor Fred

**FOR GREENLAWN MEMBERS ONLY**

HAVE SOME ITEMS YOU'D LIKE TO SELL BUT YOU DON'T WANT TO DO  
A SALE OF YOUR OWN?

RESERVE A TABLE AT OUR CHURCH FLEA MARKET ON SATURDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 28TH

\$40.00 FOR A 10 FOOT TABLE

CONTACT LARRY FORAY (516-313-9148)

OR THE CHURCH OFFICE





## *First Presbyterian Church of Greenlawn*



497 Pulaski Road  
Greenlawn, New York 11740  
Phone: 631-261-2150  
[www. greenlawnpresbyterianchurch.org](http://www.greenlawnpresbyterianchurch.org)  
[facebook.com/First-Presbyterian-Church-of-Greenlawn](https://facebook.com/First-Presbyterian-Church-of-Greenlawn)

### ***Sunday Worship***

**10:30 AM**

*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matt 19:14)*

#### **Pastor Fred's Office Hours**

are from 11:00am through 5:00 pm Monday through Thursday... unless visiting or attending meetings.  
Outside the above hours, please call (631) 626-3702  
for appointments and consultations.

### **OUR STAFF**

**Rev. Frederick H. Woodward**, Pastor  
**Linda Siegmann**, Administrative Assistant  
**Debbie Eitel**, Fellowship Director  
**Leonora Colletti**, Director of Music  
**Margaret Negrelli**, Clerk of Session  
**Jim Dean**, Treasurer  
**Betty Chatfield**, Financial Secretary  
**Susan Perrotta**, Benevolence Treasurer

#### **This is *Your Church***

Church is not something  
you go to,  
It is a family you belong to.

Ask yourself :  
*"How is God calling Me to His Service?"*