

# **NORTH STAR**

## **June 2023**

### **Making Disciples...Making a Difference**



**Worship: Sunday at 9:30 am**  
**North Presbyterian Church**  
**921 College Avenue**  
**Elmira, NY 14901-2048**  
**[www.northpres.church](http://www.northpres.church)**  
**Phone: 607-734-2977**

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Until the summer between my junior and senior year, whether it was Fall Break, Winter Break, Spring Break, or Summer Break, I would go home and work as a temp worker for various businesses. I assembled video poker machines, shoveled gravel, bagged seeds, bagged sawdust, set up tables for a snowmobile convention, bagged and loaded freshly made plastic gallon containers that would soon be filled with milk or juice. I did all kinds of stuff.

My favorite temp job was working for Jim Heisel. Jim owned Heisel Springhill Nursery located on Springhill Road outside of Bozeman, Montana.

As I recall, with only a few exceptions, every shrub and every tree his business sold came from the acres and acres of trees and shrubs that Jim had planted and replanted each year. Jim wanted to be able to say that each plant he sold had already managed to survive the harsh, cold Montana winters and the summers where it often did not rain for months at a time.

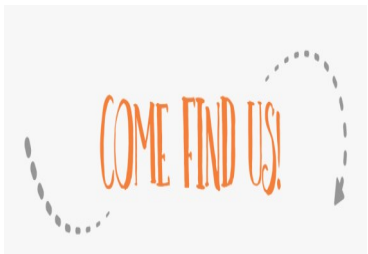
On one job, when he learned that there was a sizeable elk population that wintered in the area, he had us pull up a number of the plants we had just planted. The elk would have decimated the evergreens we had planted. Rather than allow the landowner to pay for plants that the elk would destroy, he pulled them up and refunded the owners their money. Another time, when we realized that one of the giant blue spruces had an active bird nest in it, Jim told the buyers that they had to find another tree. He would rather pass up on a sale than disturb the birds. As I worked with him, he passed on to me his love for trees and shrubs and his respect for the soil they grow in and the wildlife that relied on the plants for food and shelter.

In Genesis, it says that God placed Adam in the garden “to till it and to keep it.” (Gen. 2:15). The Hebrew text can also be translated as “to serve it and to preserve it.” Either way, we are tasked with taking care of creation, the birds, the fish, the soil, the waters, the air, so that when we do till the soil, what we sow and plant will grow. So often we take for granted the miracle of creation and we act as if we are not somehow absolutely dependent on creation for our lives. And yet, a careful reading of the creation stories in Genesis reveals that we were created to be dependent on creation and that for us to thrive, creation must also thrive.

As followers of Christ, part of loving our neighbor is understanding that we are interdependent on one another. No one person is an island unto themselves. We were and are made to be interreliant on one another and the creation God made for our wellbeing.

When we take care of one another, when we take care of those in need, when we plant trees that provide shade and benefit local wildlife, grow shrubs that feed the birds and butterflies, or clean up the riverbanks, we are living out our faith and our hope in the promise of a God who brings life out of what is dead. By whose grace, we were made to be a part of a creation so beautiful and wonderful that it, in turn, reminds of God’s grace and gives us hope for tomorrow.

Warmly in Christ,  
Pastor Evan



<https://www.facebook.com/North-Presbyterian-Church>



<https://www.northpres.church/>



## JUST A LITTLE *Reminder*

**If you would like to donate Chancel flowers (suggested donation of \$42),  
please contact Lori Lee at 607-739-3176.**

**Available Sundays for June and July 2023 are:**

**June 18 & 25 and July 9, 16, 23 & 30.**

*Please take the flowers home to enjoy after the service.*

If you are not in the sanctuary on  
your chosen date,  
we will be in touch with you to make a plan.

## June Worship Volunteers

### Tech Booth

June 4 Bill Furnas  
June 11 Steve Allison  
June 18 Steve Allison  
June 25 Bill Furnas

### Counters

June 4 Phil Carpentier, Jeff Richards  
June 11 Cindy & Kurt Kalweit  
June 18 Annette Stevens, Jim Mosher  
June 25 Janice Williams, Dolores Cummings

### Ushers

June 4 George Batrowny, Jeff Richards  
June 11 Janice Williams, Phil Carpentier  
June 18 Jerry Russell, Joe Rolls, Bob Russell  
June 25 Wendy Swatling, Barb Duryea

### Wee Worship

June 4 Allie & Scott Sevey  
June 11 Karen Wilson, Barb Duryea  
June 18 Liz Wilson, Wally Ferriter  
June 25 Deb Stamp, Payton Hoskins-Thomas

### Communion

June 4 Barb Duryea, Lori Lee, Tim Allison,  
Cheryl Allison, Kate Hansen  
June 18 Suzie Hoskins, Jim Mosher, Cheryl Allison  
Sylvia Tuller, Cindy Kalweit

### Worship Assistant

June 4 Jim Mosher  
June 11 Tim Allison  
June 18 Suzie Hoskins  
June 25 George Batrowny

### Greeters

June 4 Allie & Scott Sevey  
June 11 Janice Williams  
June 18 Linda Palmer  
June 25 Jerry Harding

### Coffee Hour

June 4 Cheryl Allison, Barb Duryea  
June 11 TBD  
June 18 Ann Motley, Glenda Solowiej  
June 25 Karen Wilson, Liz Wilson

### Youth Reader

June 11 David Hansen

### Youth Usher

June 4 Paityn Perry  
June 11 Payton Hoskins-Thomas  
June 18 Annalyse Ferriter  
June 25 Alexii Hoskins-Thomas

# TOGETHER WE MAKE A FAMILY



**June 4:**  
Phil Carpentier

**June 11:**  
James Casselberry

**June 18:**  
Sarah Ciccotti (Rolls)

**June 25:**  
Dolores Cummings

**Jesus tells us  
to pray without ceasing  
for the good of God's people.**

## Our Homebound Friends

**June 4:**  
Jim & Carol Gualiaro  
1210 W. Water St.  
Apt. 110  
Elmira, NY 14905

**June 11:**  
Melanie Fitzpatrick  
308 W. First St.  
Elmira, NY 14901

**June 18:**  
Mrs. Margaret Densberger  
660 W. Washington Ave.  
Elmira, NY 14901

**June 25:**  
Cynthia Klungle  
111 Schuyler St.  
Montour Falls, NY 14865

*Please send a  
card to our  
Homebound  
Friends  
today!*



# Welcome!

**We would like to remind everyone  
that they are welcome to attend  
Session Meetings.**

**If you are interested in attending one,  
please contact the church office.**



### Weekly Prayer Chain Email

Did you know that you can pray or be  
prayed for? You are invited to let the church  
office know how you would like to be  
involved.

**We are stronger together.**





## Children and Youth Ministry June 2023

The birds are singing, flowers and trees are blooming and Mother Nature is still playing a few tricks on us. May certainly was a mix of warm and cold weather and a lot of uncertainty as to when to begin planting the vegetable gardens and flowers. I'm hoping June will be a little more settled.

We are planning a cookout for the Youth group towards the end of June and hope the weather will cooperate. June is always a little crazy as we wrap up Sunday School for the calendar year and start to turn our full focus on VBS.

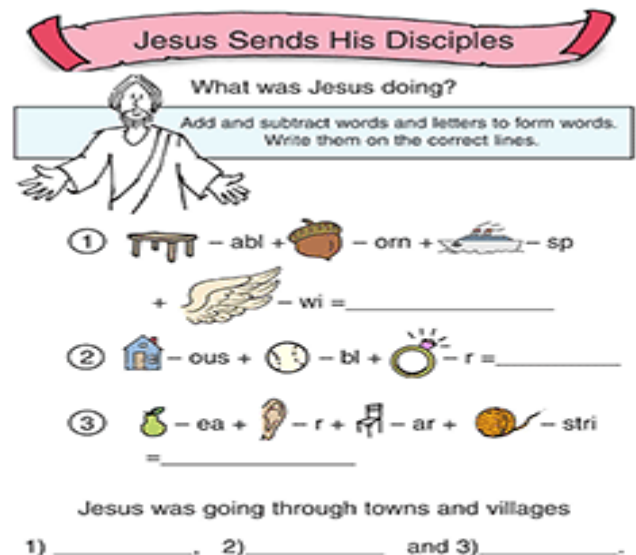
Getting the VBS ad in the paper, working on background decorations, seeking out volunteers, getting all the appropriate paper work finished up, and tackling the decorating of the church will be our goals for June and early July. Our theme this year is "Food Truck Party" On a roll with God! It is such a fun concept and one I think the kids will get a big kick out of. I have all these great decorating ideas swirling in my head, so let's hope we can make them come to fruition.

If anyone would be interested in helping out, from serving food to helping with Crafts, Bible or Recreation, or (if you're feeling brave) helping with the opening and closing each night, please let myself, Susie Hoskins, or any of the C.E. committee members know that you are interested in volunteering. I am always ready to listen to any ideas you might have to make this a great week of fun and learning for all of the kids. Also, if anyone would be interested in helping to decorate all of the different rooms in the church the week before VBS, please let me know. We can also use volunteers to help tear down and put things back to right after VBS ends. I am always grateful for the help! Lastly, I am looking for a few, small, picnic tables to use in the sanctuary as background items. If you would be willing to let us borrow one or more, please contact me at the church.

I'm very excited to say we have four of our youth headed to Camp Whitman the first part of July. I have such fond memories of Camp Whitman and I'm so pleased we have youth who want to experience all the fun Camp Whitman has to offer. All donations to the Campership fund are gratefully accepted.

We have such a loving, caring, and nurturing congregation and every day I thank God for how blessed we are.

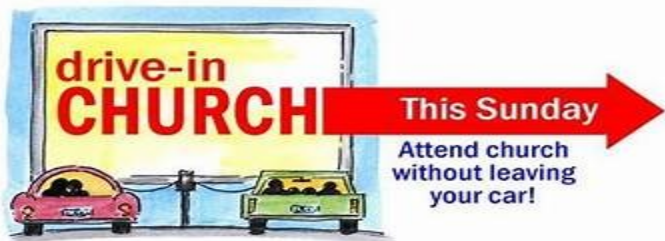
Blessings in Christ,  
Deb Stamp  
Dir. of Children and Youth Min.



## Did You Know?

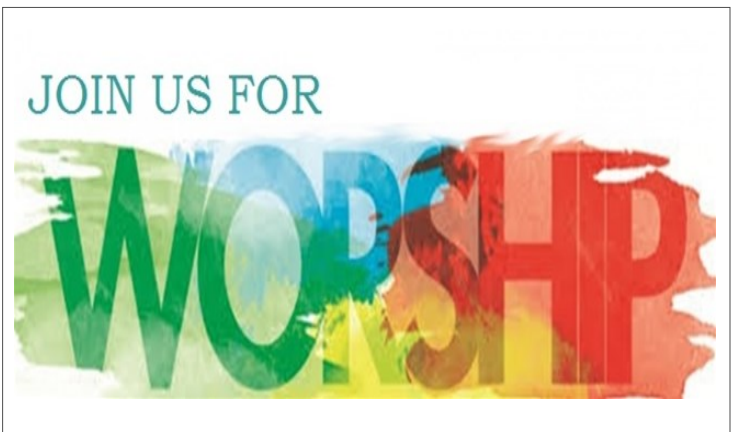


- If you would like to be prayed for or know someone who would like to be prayed for, please contact the church office. A prayer request will be sent to our prayer partners. If you would like someone to pray with you, a request can be sent to one of our prayer partners or Pastor Evan and someone will connect with you.
- Remember to check our bulletin board for NPC and Community Announcements/Information.
- Lost something? Be sure to check the lost-and-found bin in the church office.



### **Parking Lot Worship:**

- Please use only the North Entrance (towards Roe Ave.)
- Please tune your radio to 1700AM.
- Please exit through the South Entrance (towards the college).



### **Sanctuary Worship:**

**Please join us for in person  
Worship on Sunday mornings  
at 9:30 am.**

**Check out our facebook page or  
church website for special services  
throughout the year, including  
Worship in the Park and weekly  
Lent and Advent services.**



### **Zoom Worship**

- Zoom service link will be emailed each week for those who would like to participate via Zoom.



Committee/Coordinator	Email Address
Audit	audit@northpres.church
Buildings & Grounds	campus@northpres.church
Building Use	building_use@northpres.church
Clerk of Session	session@northpres.church
Deacons	deacons@northpres.church
Education	education@northpres.church
Fellowship	fellowship@northpres.church
Finance	finance@northpres.church
Mission & Outreach	mission_outreach@northpres.church
Nominating	nominating@northpres.church
Staff Relations	staff_relations@northpres.church
Tech & Communications	tech_com@northpres.church
Treasurer	Financial_sec@northpres.church
Worship & Music	worship@northpres.church

Staff	Email Address
Church Administrator	office@northpres.church
Director of Youth Ministries	youth@northpres.church
Music Director	music@northpres.church
Organist	organist@northpres.church
Pastor	pastor@northpres.church



## Meet the Staff

Pastor Evan Hansen

Pastor

Open Door Office Hours: T & W 1:30-4pm

Paul Holland

Music Director

Sharon Reynolds

Organist

Randy Cornell

Pianist

Deb Stamp

Director of Children  
& Youth Ministry

Gretchen Duffy

Office Administrator

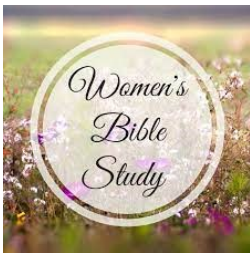
**NOTICE:** As CDC/NYS guidelines change, please stay tuned to our FB page & website for updates.



# Reminder

## Important Reminders:

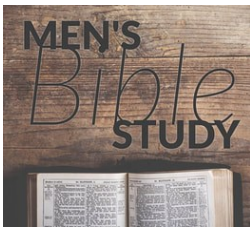
- The church office needs your contact information. Please let us know if anything has changed.
- If you need to contact the church office for any reason, please feel free to email [office@northpres.church](mailto:office@northpres.church) or call (607) 734-2977 Tues-Fri 9am to 3:30 pm.



**Women's Bible Study**  
meets Tuesdays  
at 6:00 pm in the library. Our last  
meeting for the summer will be June 6.  
For more information please contact  
Suzie Hoskins.



**Wednesday Noon Bible Study**  
Our last meeting for the summer  
will be June 14. We will resume  
on September 13 for an 8 week  
study on anxiety. If you need  
materials for this next section,  
please contact Bobbi Furnas.



**Men's Bible Study**  
meets on Wednesdays at  
6:00 pm in the Brisbane room.  
For more information please contact  
Kurt Kalweit.



Sunday School meets each week after  
worship. Our last week for the summer will  
be June 18. Sunday school will resume on  
September 10.



Praise Band rehearsals are  
on Wednesdays at 7:00  
pm.\*

The Good News  
Singers' practices  
are on Sundays at 10:45 am.  
The last rehearsal for summer  
is June 18. Rehearsals will  
resume September 10.



**\*Music rehearsals will suspend  
for the summer, with the last re-  
hearsal on June 14th. Rehearsals  
will resume on September 16th.**



Chancel Choir rehearsals are  
on Wednesdays at 7:30 pm.\*



Bell Choir rehearsals  
are on Wednesdays  
at 6:15 pm.\*





Our next Saturday breakfast will be on June 10 at 8 am, followed by the monthly Buildings and Grounds work day.

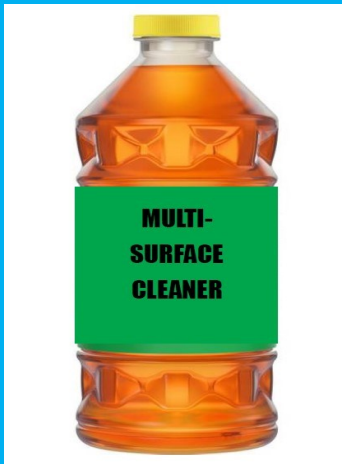


Our next Wednesday dinner is scheduled for June 7 at 5:30 pm. The menu will feature hot dogs, hamburgers, potato chips, a salad, and watermelon. Please call the church office for reservations by Monday, June 5. We hope you can join us for dinner before we head to Wednesday evening service in the sanctuary.

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**Second Place East, Inc.**



**June donation  
request**

**MULTI-PURPOSE  
CLEANER**

# From the Presbytery



Each season Camp Whitman creates a list of items that would help make the camper and staff experience better. You can contribute to Camp Whitman, by purchasing an item on our wish list (opposite) and sending it to camp, or through our Amazon wish list. Just go to [campwhitman.org/donate](http://campwhitman.org/donate) and click on the Amazon wish list link.



## Wish List

### **Items under \$25**

Boondoggle Embroidery Floss

Plastic Stackable Adirondack Chairs - 24 needed (cream, gray or dark blue preferred)

Coffee Pots

Multi-Purpose Lighters

Sharpies

White Cotton T-shirts for Tie-Dye (30 needed, sized Adult L - 4XL)

Fragrance-Free Laundry Detergent Pods (6 needed)

Broom & Dustpan Sets - (4 needed)

### **Items under \$50**

Campfire Grill (10 needed)

Toaster Ovens (4 needed)

Estwing 16 oz Hammers

White Folding Tables (with handles) (4 needed)

Box Fans (4 needed)

### **Items under \$100**

Microwaves (4 needed)

Vacuums (2 needed)

Space Heaters (4 needed)

### **Items under \$250**

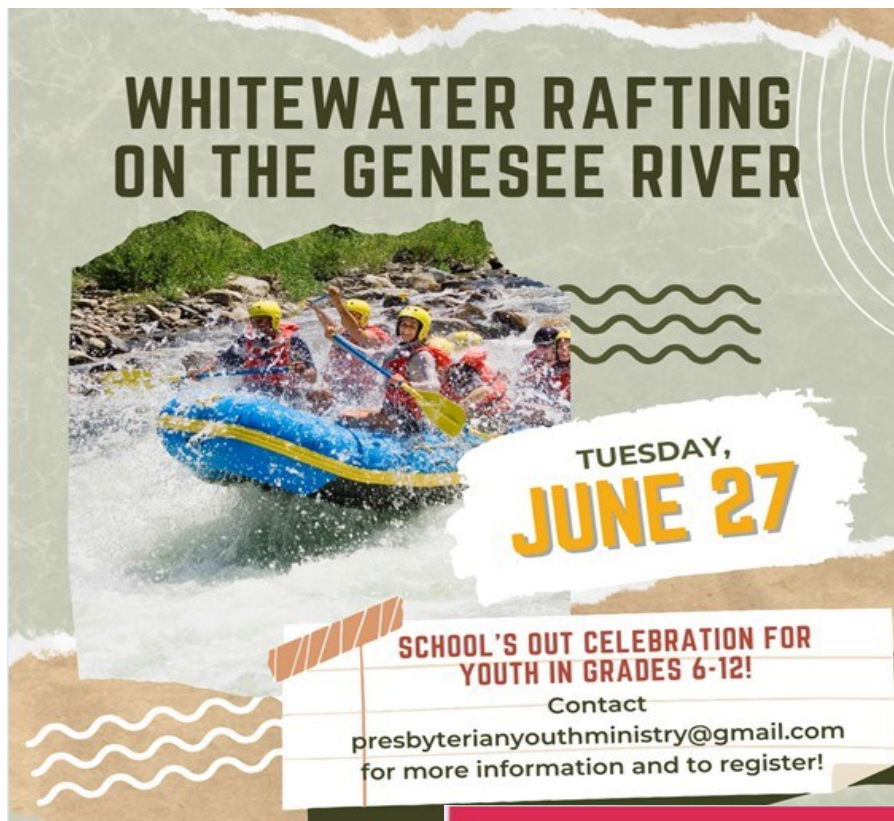
Propane Grills (4 needed)

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Snow-Cone Machine



# From the Presbytery



# Renovation house

TRANSFORMING THE LIVES OF MEN & WOMEN

Greetings Renovation House Family,

We survived the winter!! Spring actually arrived and it's glorious! As New life comes forth from the ground, we are seeing new life come forth from our men and women as they are set free from all manner of life controlling issues.

The topic of Purpose is hot right now at the Renovation House. So often our people don't have substance problems and emotional issues, as much as they have Purpose problems. Discovering and walking in God's purpose for our lives is key to living the Abundant Life Jesus purchased for us.

We receive people who are often at the lowest point of their lives having "lost it all", then we get to watch the rebuild, as they are saved, healed, delivered and set free. It never gets old!!

Updates: Gardens are about to go in, which is a highlight, students and staff are enjoying our extensive trail network, hiking and fishing have been good. Some of our alumni have returned from bible college to help us over the summer as interns... "which is nice!" We'll have a total of four graduates serving with us over the next year; Training for future ministry. We will also be hosting domestic missionaries, that are coming in to help out for a couple months.

The world has lost it's mind and things have gotten crazy stupid expensive. Which makes holding this all together tough. We are hoping, and looking for another financial boost to help get us through the summer.

It is impossible to adequately describe all that God has done and is doing here at the Renovation House. Please consider giving us a call and booking a tour. Come see for yourself. Thank you for your continued love, prayer and support for this ministry. We quite literally couldn't do it without you. Ya'll are awesome!!  
With much love and appreciation,



Rev. Dr. John P. Earley

Chapel in the woods



379 Dean Creek Road Spencer, NY 14883  
Tel (607) 589-4413 [renovationhouse777@gmail.com](mailto:renovationhouse777@gmail.com)  
[Renovationhouse.org](http://Renovationhouse.org)  
Mailing Address: PO Box 396 Spencer, NY 14883





Information to be included  
in the July North Star  
Newsletter is due to the  
Church Office by  
Thursday, June 23.







# June EVENTS



Our local chapter of TOPS meets on Mondays at 5:30 in Willits Hall. If you're interested, please call the church office for information.



Yoga meets Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 8:45 in Willits Hall. If you're interested, please contact the church office for more information.

Board of Session  
June 18  
6:00 pm

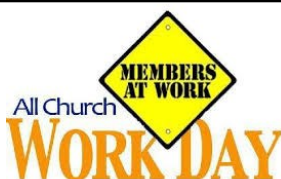


**American Red Cross  
BLOOD DRIVE**

**Give Blood • Give Life**

There will be a Red Cross Blood Drive on June 1 starting at noon. If you're interested in signing up to give blood, please visit [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) or call 1-800 RED CROSS.

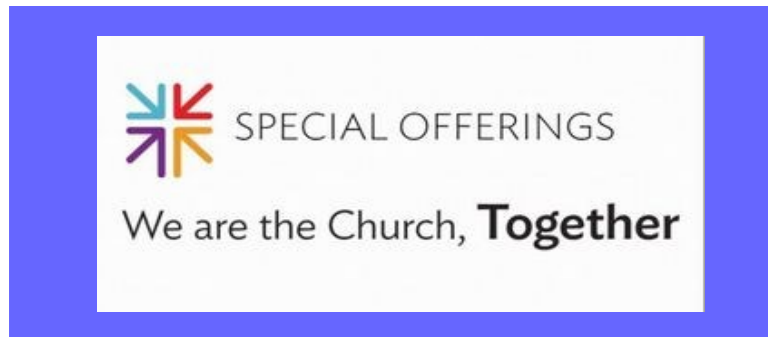
Our next Work Day  
will be June 10.  
Please join us!



**Kindermusik**



Kindermusik meets on Tuesdays at 3 pm and Thursdays at 10 am and 5:15 pm. For information on how your child can participate, please contact the church office.



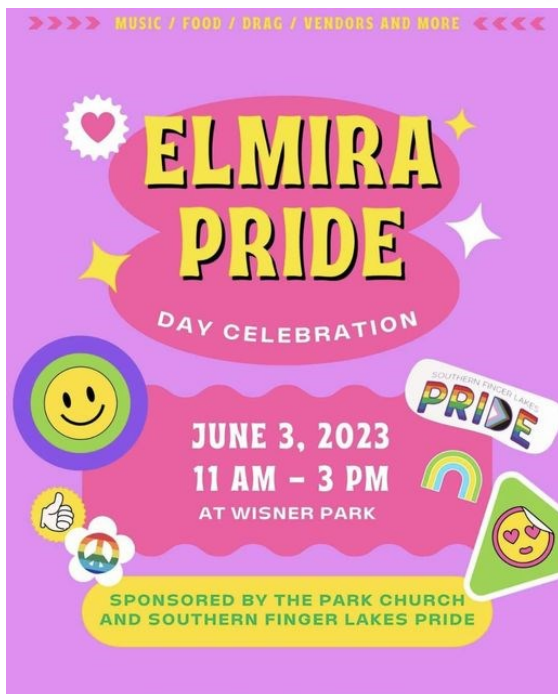
## Special Offerings for June:

- Piano Fund



We know you've been missing the special offering envelopes that are normally included in your envelope box.

We have obtained Special offerings envelopes for your use and will have them on the Welcome Desk each month for the remainder of the year.



## JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION

**Saturday, June 17, 2023**

**12—4p**

The Matthew 25 group invites your attendance to the Juneteenth Celebration that will occur on Saturday, June 17th at Ernie Davis Park, from 12pm - 4pm. There will be food trucks, music and entertainment, and information booths from various community organizations. The following statement is from an invitation letter sent from EOP, the sponsoring organization: "Juneteenth is a celebration in honor of the African American experience, where respect is paid to those who suffered through the institution of slavery. It is a celebration of pride and a rich heritage, particularly meaningful to Elmira. Our community was a destination stop for both the African American slaves traveling the Underground Railroad, and the Civil War soldiers who would determine the fate of slavery in this land. Such a history points to the great significance and poignancy of the Elmira Juneteenth commemoration." Please consider attending this special event.

# COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

## Light and reflection: a conversation with Ruth Faith Santana-Grace

*GA 225 Co-moderator discusses resourcing congregations, changing church leadership and shedding the 'invisibility cloak'*

*Fred Tangeman & Jayne Culp | Office of the General Assembly - May 23, 2023*

The week before the Rev. Ruth Faith Santana-Grace received a [2023 Distinguished Alumnus Award](#) from Princeton Theological Seminary, the Co-Moderator of the 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2022) spoke to the news service about her first year leading the assembly alongside the Rev. Shavon Starling-Louis. Santana-Grace lifted up the congregational heart of the denomination, the work of seminaries preparing students for new worship contexts and the friends and family who have supported her trailblazing career. She spoke with equal passion and frankness about hopes for the church and the challenges it faces — some new, some not so new.

Reluctant to give advice or impose solutions on others, Santana-Grace repeatedly recommended the renewable resource that is the wisdom and ingenuity of people engaging in ministry across the country and overseas — those she's met and those who work in the wider light and shadows of their communities.

"Trust your people," she said. "People will give you the benefit of the doubt if they feel you care about them." Santana-Grace, executive presbyter of the [Presbytery of Philadelphia](#), had just returned to Philadelphia from a co-moderator visit to the [Presbytery of Middle Tennessee](#). In Nashville, she learned about the mid council's 80 churches, including a host of new ministry initiatives. She said that listening is the most important part of her church travel.

The Plateau neighborhood in East Nashville was one place of special inspiration. "There are all these tiny churches being inclusive in every way imaginable," she said. "People are concerned about the health and food of people in their community who have only modest resources."



Ruth Santana-Grace at Princeton Theological Seminary, May 15, 2023. Photo by Brenton Thompson.

"The local places have always been the foundation of the church. Everything else we create is about resourcing congregations. The presbytery exists for the church, not the other way around. Without congregational witness I — as presbytery leader, as co-moderator — don't exist, nor should I. The heart of the church is local."

Stories of congregations using new resources to grow incubated and long-standing ministries have deep resonance for Santana-Grace. They inspire other ministry innovations and bring people together inside a worshipping community, providing a shared narrative of accomplishment to build on.

"That's the primary reason Shavon and I stood for co-moderators," she said. "We don't tell those stories enough as a church." Another Nashville example is the [Nueva Vida Church](#), "which is feeding 100 people a week, 400 to 500 a month, as well as providing [English as a second language] classes, community fund-raisers and working with a local medical team."

Santana-Grace shared other church stories from around the country, including an outreach effort in [San Jose Presbytery](#) where a boat captain sails people from the neurodivergent community around the Pacific while having devotional discussions. Closer to her home is the New River Presbyterian Church that began as the [West Philadelphia Presbyterian Partnership](#), a newly replanted congregation comprised of three pre-existing ministries, including First African American Presbyterian Church — the first Black Presbyterian church in the United States.

The partnership saw the presbytery working with church leaders and members to align resources and ministry goals, an effort that lasted five years, including pandemic delays and a building fire. The difficulties the partnership and presbytery overcame lend an extra brilliance to its accomplishment. When Santana-Grace talked about it on Zoom her eyes lit up.

The technology that launched so many newly imagined ministries during the pandemic is a tool she sees as important for connecting people and pointing them to the gospel. "But tech will never replace incarnation," Santana-Grace said. "God uses virtual people to invite people back together." Gatherings can be small or large, such as the last day of the 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly (2016), when the Rev. J. Herbert Nelson, II was elected stated clerk.

"I remember being in the room and feeling the spirit," Santana-Grace said about that day inside the Oregon Convention Center in Portland. "I remember his being elected and me crying."

As for Nelson's [upcoming retirement](#), she is immensely grateful "for him pivoting our focus to being a more



Continued...

faithful and relevant witness in the world. There's no turning back now. That is a gift." Santana-Grace added that the church should look for ways to bolster the church-wide administrative support available to the stated clerk, whose work as chief ecclesial officer is so demanding in these times, including [the commission effort](#) unifying the Presbyterian Mission Agency and Office of the General Assembly. Santana-Grace's congregation-first approach has her thinking about ways to form stronger connections between national agencies with councils at every level. In Tennessee, she talked with a pastor about "the cultural polarity we have now in the country" and how that dynamic is impacting local ministries. Whatever work is done to bridge initiatives and to resource congregations and mid councils, "the church must not water down our witness."

"We were asking many of the same cultural and political questions when I graduated from Princeton in '94," Santana-Grace said. "How do we break the assumptions that keep our churches paralyzed? Because assumptions are the terms of relationships. Assumptions keep us in bondage."

Asking the right questions is an important early step to solving problems in any ministry setting and avoiding cookie-cutter approaches in times of transition, such as quickly closing churches or forcing mergers. "I say trust the Spirit," she said. "You don't need a concrete plan but you do need a direction and you need to stay together."

Starling-Louis and Santana-Grace are asked to work quarter-time as co-moderators of the General Assembly, an allotment Santana-Grace acknowledges is not enough given the tasks at hand. They split recurring meetings (Starling-Louis attends those of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and Santana-Grace those of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly) and travel. This summer Santana-Grace will attend the Montreat Youth Conference and also visit the Pacific Islands, including the Marshall Islands and Kiribati. Starling-Louis is scheduled to visit Ghana and Liberia; earlier this year she traveled to [South Sudan](#). The international trips connect to actions by the 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly as well as the co-moderators' theme of "Unbounded We Thrive," a throughline from the assembly to last fall's [Moderator's Conference](#).

"We wanted to go to places that have been historically neglected," Santana-Grace said.

During Advent she hopes to visit Puerto Rico. "[I'm a child of diaspora](#). In the past decade I've had the opportunity to reconnect with the island of my ancestors. I'm excited to see how the church is responding to today's realities."

One of her favorite memories from her first year as co-moderator was [preaching together with Starling-Louis during an ecumenical service at the United Nations](#).



Shavon Starling-Louis (left) and Ruth Santana-Grace (right) during ecumenical worship at the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations, March 6, 2023. Photo courtesy of Ruth Santana-Grace

"Wherever we can be together it really works," Santana-Grace said. "When you think that before last year we didn't even know each other's names! God has done something profound putting us together."

Santana-Grace's own story was on her mind as she prepared to give a "This Is My Story" talk at Princeton Theological Seminary, scheduled for the day before she received her 2023 Distinguished Alumnus Award.

The Rev. Alex Evangelista, co-vice chair with the PTS Alumni Association Executive Council (AAEC) bestowing the honor, shared some of the reasons Santana-Grace stood out to the council, including "her being the first person of color and woman vice chair on the PTS board, her ministry and work in Philadelphia Presbytery and [San Gabriel Presbytery](#) before that and now serving as co-moderator." Evangelista called Santana-Grace "a mentor, trailblazer and friend. She has been able to persevere in her love for the church with her heart and her mind. God has blessed her with wisdom, discernment and leadership."

The Rev. Charles "Chip" Hardwick, AAEC Alumni Trustee, said that the group looks for honorees "who have both contributed a lot back to Princeton as well as to the greater church" and "are leading the church to have an im-

pact in the world.

"Ruth loves the church and loves God. She is such a joy to be around, a real gift who speaks the truth. She'll say hard things if required in a way that makes you listen and learn."

PTS President the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Lee Walton introduced Santana-Grace during the award ceremony, citing her achievements at the presbytery, seminary and national levels. He pinpointed her focus on "reinvesting resources into local congregations and breathing new life into communities facing new challenges and uncertainties," as well as her infectious spirit. "Whenever you meet young ministers who have had the privilege of working with Ruth, they light up!"

As Evangelista and Walton pointed out, Santana-Grace is widely known for breaking ground — in addition to her "first" service on the PTS board she was the first woman and person of color to be installed in the 300-plus year history of the Presbytery of Philadelphia. Such accomplishments are even more noteworthy given her late start to vocational ministry, which she describes as "my second career."

At the seminary Santana-Grace spoke about a theme she explored in "[Faith of our Mothers, Living Still: Princeton Seminary Women Redefining Ministry](#)" — "the light that defies darkness."



Friends, family and leaders from the Presbytery of Philadelphia attending Ruth Santana-Grace's "This is my story" talk, May 15. Photo by Brenton Thompson.

Continued...

"This light is not a white stagnant light but the light of the aurora borealis," Santana-Grace said. "A real light that dances, whispering, ebbing and flowing across a many-colored spectrum. It's the movement of the light of God that can't be contained."

"Even when there is a darkness that sends a message that we're not enough, physically we're compromised, we're feeling grief ... still God's light is more powerful and radiates hope."

"My joy is not a Pollyanna joy," Santana-Grace added. "I'm talking about a light that sustains us through the muck, a light that is relentless. I trust it will show up as long as I take care to be present."

The staff members, board directors and students at PTS and other seminaries glow with that refulgence.

"Our seminaries have been asking themselves questions about their role in the church," Santana-Grace said, with curriculum changes and more bi-vocational opportunities two ways they are responding to this moment in church history. "Seminaries are connecting with what the church needs in 2023, including the reality that most new churches will be smaller congregations. They are asking: how to we provide people with training for that?"

Starling-Louis and Santana-Grace attended [the recent inauguration of President José R. Irizarry at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary](#) and virtually sent greetings to President Victor Aloyo Jr. at [Columbia Theological Seminary](#) in Decatur, Georgia. Both co-

moderators plan to attend the inauguration ceremony of Walton in Princeton in the fall. He began his work as PTS president in January.

Santana-Grace called Walton "the right person for the job. He was trained by Princeton and has close connections to people in the area. In today's world a school president needs to be a vision caster, to convince alum that the institution is worthy of them. Jonathan has an uncanny capacity to be out in the world talking to people about who we are."

Moderating the plenary sessions of the 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly beside Starling-Louis, having seminary presidents as friends, keynoting events such as PTS's alumni reunion — Santana-Grace joked that her "invisibility cloak" has been removed. "It's all very humbling. For most of my career I've focused on presbytery work, Princeton Seminary and the board of the Presbyterian Foundation. I've tried to spend time loving my people. "I was 39 when I went to Princeton as a part of my second career. It was freeing and challenging. Later I joined the board as the first class with term limits. When I left 12 years later I thought, "This is a really cool group of people to work with."

In the days before the award Santana-Grace was thinking about her parents, the Rev. Felix Santana and Ruling Elder Carmen Santana, whose congregational service included leading the Hispanic Presbyterian Church in New York City.

"When I was in Tennessee, I preached about my parents' story," she said. "Wow! When I left the East Coast for the West East Coast years ago and needed to pull my son from his school I thought 'This is hard.' I don't know what made my mother leave her island when she was 22, and then bring over her sisters with money she earned from making paper party hats. And I don't know what made my father go to work in a steel mill and go to war in Korea. He studied in Maine and his first church call was in Ossining, New York. My foundation is these two people who said yes in the midst of a world that said no."



Ruth Santana-Grace (left) with Miriam Olivero, Princeton, May 2023. Photo courtesy of Ruth Santana-Grace.

Miriam Olivero, whom Santana-Grace calls her adopted mom, is an extended family member from New York City who attended the award reception in Princeton. Santana-Grace said she had also been thinking a lot about Olivero's husband, Jack, who passed away soon after the 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. They have both been present in every chapter of her life for the past 45 years, including her graduation from PTS in 1994. Santana-Grace has countless other stories to draw on from her time as presbytery leader, pastor and expert in public administration (her first career). The stories bridge the places she's worked and ministered and learned, going back to Princeton, Italy, California, Pennsylvania, New York, Tennessee. The places always bring her back to the people.

There's a lesson there that church leaders of every generation can learn from. "Love and respect the people that you are called to serve," she said. "Trust your people."

As she expressed her gratitude for the distinguished alumnus award, Santana-Grace offered up an ancient word from the Bantu languages of Africa she had learned from the people she serves: "Ubuntu."

It means, "I am because of who we are. / Yo soy porque nosotros somos." She said it was the only word that came to mind.



Ruth Santana-Grace with husband Edward (left), Jonathan Lee Walton (center-right), and son Dakota (right), May 16, 2023. Photo courtesy of Ruth Santana-Grace.

# NPC Board of Session

## Session Summary

May 21, 2023

The Clerk determined that a quorum was present.

Rev. Hansen called the meeting to order, and the meeting was opened with devotions and prayer led by Linda Palmer.

The agenda was approved as amended.

The minutes of the April 23, 2023 meeting were reviewed and approved as corrected.

Session reviewed the Financial Statements including the Profit and Loss Budget Performance for April 2023 and the Account Activity Summary for the Endowment Fund. The Treasurer's report was received, with thanks, by the Session.

Pastor Hansen reported that the May 3rd Wednesday evening worship service was well attended. On May 10<sup>th</sup> he attended a Presbytery Workshop on Congregational Grief and Legacy and plans on attending the Church Future Workshop on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Also, on May 10<sup>th</sup> he, Jeff and Pat Richards, and Annie LeFevre attended the Wednesday evening community dinner at Grace Episcopal. They helped set up, serve, and clean up. He noted that the second Tuesday group needs help and plans on participating again on June 14<sup>th</sup>. Pastor Hansen continues reaching out to our homebound/infirm members (and friends of NPC) via phone and in-person visitation when appropriate. Pastor Hansen has been working with the pastors from First Pres. Horseheads, First Pres. Elmira, and First Pres. Big Flats to coordinate events, noting the need to start sharing resources. Some of the activities/ideas being discussed include a joint Carol sing, pulpit swap, and (future) joint VBS.

On the recommendation of the Worship and Music Committee, Session approved Wednesday evening worship, with communion, one Wednesday per month in May, June, September, October, and November (2023) to coincide with Wednesday night fellowship dinners where appropriate and convenient.

Pat Richards reported that the Food Pantry has received a grant from the Food Bank of the Southern Tier to purchase a new commercial freezer. Session approved hiring an electrician to examine the circuitry and make sure that all appliances are on the correct circuitry. (Funds for this will come out of the Food Pantry account).



# NPC Board of Session

Session reviewed the report of the Ad Hoc Building Usage Committee. Session agreed that the committee's findings/recommendations should be considered more closely. A cross-section of the staff and committees need to be included before a final recommendation is submitted to Session for approval. The Nominating Committee will reach out to "shareholders" to see if they would be interested in serving on the Ad Hoc Committee. Pastor Evan has agreed to Chair the committee going forward.

Session approved referring the Food Box Mission to the Mission Committee to develop guidelines as to how to handle donations other than non-perishable food (i.e. clothing, diapers, shoes).

Session approved a bid from Balland Fence Company for the supply and installation of fencing and gates for the Manse property.

Session approved a waiver of the no-alcohol policy for a toast at an upcoming event.

Session approved the use of the Sanctuary for the wedding of Kim Mosher on Saturday, October 7, 2023.

A discussion regarding the locking of the Narthex doors on Sunday mornings conclude with Session agreeing that ushers should lock the doors at 9:45 but remain in the Narthex (at least one usher) to open the door for late arrivals.

The meeting adjourned in prayer at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cindy Kalweit,  
Clerk of Session





Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1  8:45 am -Yoga 10:00 am -Kindermusik 12:00 pm -Blood drive 5:15 pm - Kindermusik  	2  10:00 am -Food Pantry 5:15 pm -AA	3
4 Children & Youth Sunday Trinity Sunday  9:30am -Worship Service 9:30am -Communion 10:30am-Coffee Hour 11:00 am-Sunday School  	5  5:30 pm -TOPS	6  8:45 am -Yoga 9:00 am -Staff Relations Mtg 1:30 pm -Pastor's Office Hours 3:00 pm - Kindermusik 6:00 pm - Women's Bible Study	7 Bulletin Info Due  10:00 am -Food Pantry 12:00 pm -Bible Study 1:30-4:00 pm -Pastor's Office Hours 5:30 pm -Fellowship Dinner 6:00 pm - Men's Bible Study 6:15 pm-Bell Choir 7:00 pm - Wed. Worship Svc 7:00 pm-Praise Band 7:30 pm -Chancel Choir	8  8:45 am -Yoga 10:00 am -Kindermusik 1:00 pm - Mission & Outreach Mtg 5:15 pm - Kindermusik	9  10:00 am -Food Pantry 5:15 pm -AA	10  8:00 am Saturday Breakfast Saturday Workday
11  9:30 am -Worship Service 10:30am-Coffee Hour 10:45 am-Good news Singers' Practice 11:00 am-Sunday School	12  5:30 pm -TOPS	13  8:45 am -Yoga 10:00 am - Comm & Tech 1:30 pm -Pastor's Office Hours 3:00 pm - Kindermusik 6:00 pm -Women's Bible Study 7:00 pm - B & G Mtg	14 Bulletin Info Due  9:30 am - Finance Mtg 10:00 am -Food Pantry 12:00 pm -Bible Study 1:30-4:00 pm -Pastor's Office Hours 3:00 pm-Worship & Music Meeting 6:00 pm - Men's Bible Study 6:15pm-Bell Choir 7:00 pm-Praise Band 7:30 pm -Chancel Choir	15  8:45 am -Yoga 10:00 am -Kindermusik 5:15 pm - Kindermusik	16  10:00 am -Food Pantry 5:15 pm -AA	17
18 Father's Day  9:30 am -Worship Service 9:30 am -Communion 10:30am-Coffee Hour 11:00 am-Sunday School 6:00 pm - Board of Session  	19  5:30 pm -TOPS	20  8:45 am -Yoga 1:30 pm -Pastor's Office Hours 3:00 pm - Kindermusik 6:00 pm - Women's Bible Study	21 Bulletin Info Due  10:00 am -Food Pantry 1:30-4:00 pm -Pastor's Office Hours 4:00 pm - Christian Ed Mtg 6:00 pm - Men's Bible Study 6:15 pm-Bell Choir 7:00 pm-Praise Band 7:30 pm -Chancel Choir	22  8:45 am -Yoga 10:00 am -Kindermusik 5:15 pm - Kindermusik	23 Newsletter Info Due  10:00 am - Food Pantry 5:15 pm - AA  	24
25  9:30 am -Worship Service 10:30am-Coffee Hour	26  5:30 pm -TOPS	27  5:15 am - voting in Narthex 8:45 am -Yoga 1:30 pm - Pastor's Office Hours 3:00 pm - Kindermusik 6:00 pm - Women's Bible Study	28  10:00 am -Food Pantry 1:30-4:00 pm -Pastor's Office Hours 6:00 pm - Men's Bible Study 6:15 pm-Bell Choir 7:00 pm-Praise Band 7:30 pm -Chancel Choir	29  8:45 am -Yoga 10:00 am -Kindermusik 5:15 pm - Kindermusik	30  10:00 am - Food Pantry 5:15 pm - AA	