



“It sure beats the alternative.”

Have you ever heard someone say that? I’ve heard it quite a few times in the last couple weeks. It’s a good joke that makes me smile every time I hear it.

“It sure beats the alternative.”

The setup comes from the question, “*How are you?*” Next comes the litany of woes. “*My back aches, my knees don’t want to cooperate, I’m moving a little slower than I want.*” Then comes the punchline. “*But hey, it sure beats the alternative.*” We’ve defied the odds. It’s another day this side of the ground. It’s a sarcastic wink and a nod at the certainty of death.

This month, we’re rounding the corner toward the final stretch of Winter. Thank the Lord. It’s been a long, unpredictable wintertide—that season of death and darkness longing for life and rebirth. Before Winter ends, our Lenten season begins. It, too, obstinately reminds us of death longing for rebirth. To me, it just seems like bad timing. If I’m to be completely honest, I don’t really care for this season. Lent is known to be a time of discipline, austerity, contemplating that deadly alternative to life. After fighting the dwindling light and creeping cold, it’s the last thing I want to do. I’m rather itchy and eager for more warmth, light, joy, comfort, and celebration of life. But the church calendar doesn’t want to cooperate. It takes us on a Lenten journey before we reach the celebration and rebirth of Easter. We believe in the Resurrection and the Life. Death is the only way to Resurrection. If this is true, why do we fight so hard against its *alternative*?

Just as we burn the artificial light into dark Winter’s night. Just as we try to ignore the rhythms and nature of the seasons. We fight to retain complete control of our environment and fight the inevitability of death and the darkness.

This Lenten season, I’m beginning to contemplate whether it’s time to actually let some things go and die. To stop fighting so hard. Cease wrestling for control. Lay down our arms and surrender to the natural process of death that leads to health and new life. It may be the time to let some things die. It could be an unrealistic expectation of someone. Or it may be a desired outcome for a certain situation. It might be letting go of an expectation for a person to change their attitude or behavior, or maybe have a relationship restored. It might be to stop denying our own feelings of sadness or discomfort or fighting the losing cause that we can control everything that happens to us. When we let go our need to control or to fight against the inevitable, we allow for something new to emerge. Death leads to new life. We can find new life by letting some unhealthy things go.

So instead of giving up chocolate or meat, or engaging other traditional Lenten disciplines, maybe give up the fight. Give up fighting for unrealistic or unhealthy expectations. Give up fighting against the inevitable. Accept what this season brings. It sure beats the alternative.

Chris

Stephentown Federated Church Officers 2023

Members of Presbyterian Session

Heather Eckhardt (2024)
Paul McMillan (2024)
Marge Feathers (2025)
Larry Eckhardt (2025) – Clerk of Session
Judy Leland (2026)
Helen Wallbank (2026)

Members of Methodist Church Council

Janet Atwater (2024)
Georgi Bebee (2024)
Jean Bolen (2025)
Bonnie Bates (2025)
Donna Densing (2026)
Doug Mayen (2026) - Chair

Members of the General Committee

Chris Garrison, Pastor
Barbara Terpening, Treasurer, Chairperson
Kate Beach – SonShiners Rep.
Bonnie Bates – Christian Ed.
Jean Bolen – Council
Larry Eckhardt – Session, Co-Facility Chair

Arlene Longo, Secretary
Bev Westfall – Choir, Worship Comt.
Malcolm Bears – Comm. Breakfast Grp
Doug Mayen – Council, Co-Facility Chair
Heather Eckhardt – Session

Pastor- Parish Committee

Larry Eckhardt, Presb. - Chair
Malcolm Beal- Presb.
Doug Mayen – Meth.
Bev Westfall – Meth.

Community Breakfast Group

Larry Eckhardt - President
Kirk Kellogg - Secretary/ Scribe
Paul McMillan - Treasurer

SonShiners

Kate Beach, Pres.
Barbara Terpening, Treasurer
Joanne Hennig, Secretary

Worship/Tech Committee

Joanne Hennig Barb Terpening
Laurelyn Mayen Bonnie Bates
Bev Westfall - Chair Arlene Longo
Janet Atwater Pastor Chris Garrison

Denominational Treasurers

Paul McMillan- Presbyterian

Kate Beach- Methodist

Nominating Committee

Malcolm Beal, Presb. – Chair
Donna Densing, Meth.
Heather Eckhardt, Presb.
Mary French, Meth.
Kate Beach, Meth.

Treasurer's Report

Thank you to all who have supported our church this past year. If you are giving on the Tithely **GIVING NOW** button on the website, you can choose how often you give and to which fund you give to. We appreciate if you pick up the fees when doing so. You can give via your checking account or a charge card. The budget for this year is \$84,419 which means we need \$1623.44 a week to meet our expenses.

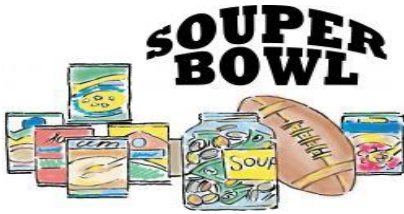
There are more giving envelopes available on the table in Pierce Hall. Please, sign in on the control sheet so I can record your giving. All the annual statements have been mailed. If you haven't gotten yours, contact me and I'll send you a copy.



This fall Arlene & Joe Longo challenged the church to meet the \$30,000 they have pledge towards our project of putting siding on the whole church building. We are so blessed that we are almost there. As of 1/25/23 you have donated \$22,092.69. Let's keep the ball rolling on the challenge.

Apportionments

We thank each person who have provided their part of our Apportionments for the Presbyterians and Methodists. They have been paid in full for 2022. That's the good news. Now the bad news is they are now due for 2023! We start all over again. The Methodist apportionment is \$94 per Methodist member for 2023. The Presbyterian apportionment is \$46 per registered Presbyterian for 2023. We so appreciate your help in paying our apportionments for both denominations.



This Photo by Unknown Author is

Sunday, February 12th we celebrate our version of the NFL's Super Bowl with our own "Souper Bowl" by bringing groceries and monies you would like to donate to the Stephentown Emergency Food Pantry which we house at our church.



CHOIR continues to rehearse each Thursday night from 6:30 to 7:45 pm. We are working on Lent and Easter music as well as weekly music for our congregation. If you are interested in singing see Bev.

stephentownfederatedchurch.org Website

As always should you miss a Sunday or just want to hear something a second time check into our website at www.stephentownfederatedchurch.org. We even have a button that you can donate your weekly offering for your convenience if you choose. There is also a monthly devotion that Bonnie Bates writes, and Bev Westfall provides music. Check

SonShiners

Meetings:

February 19th @ 8am in Pierce Hall

March 19th @ 8am

April 16th @ 8am

May 21st @ 8am

Bring a dish to share - All are welcome!

Reminder February 25th is the Turkey Dinner and volunteers are needed to help.

Events for 2023 are being planned now and updates will follow.

The Community Breakfast Group News

We are hosting the Nineteenth Annual Turkey Dinner, Saturday, February 25th, 2023. Mark your calendar, more details below. Watch your mail for a special flyer. Can't wait! Our first breakfast meeting of the New Year was held on January 8th. We had a great crowd with plenty of food for many more. Come and join us. Attending church after breakfast is not required but we'd love to have you for both! Breakfast dates for the remainder of the spring: February 5th, March 5th, April 2nd, May 7th, and last breakfast before summer break – June 4th. Breakfast starts at 8:00am sharp.

The Breakfast group contributed funds to the siding challenge for the church and will continue to provide support whenever we can. Volunteers are needed for the Turkey Dinner, February 25th.

If you'd like to be on our e-mail list, please reach out to Paul McMillan, Larry Eckhardt or Ted Bears. Everyone is invited to join us –come one, come all. Hope to see you at the February 5th, March 5th and April 2nd meals. We eat at 8:00am sharp. Now – for the big news... Turkey dinner!!! Back by popular demand for another great evening of food, fellowship and church community spirit.

Back, after the Covid Shutdown

It's the

Nineteenth Annual Church Turkey Dinner!!

Sponsored by the Community Breakfast Group

You are cordially invited to join your church friends and family for fellowship and a delicious Turkey Meal with all the trimmings!!! Mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, squash, peas and carrots, and our famous homemade pies!!

When: Saturday February 25, 2023

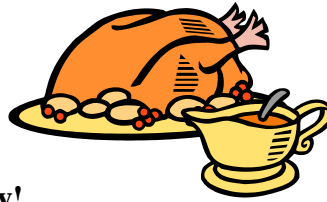
Time: Start Serving at 5:00 pm until 7:-- pm

Where: Stephentown Federated Church Hall

Who: You, bring your family and your friends

Goodwill offering only!!

For Information call: Larry Eckhardt 518-573-2565 or Paul McMillan 518-733-5110 or Ted Bears 518-728-9326



Would you like to have your meal with Saturday night? Grab a take-out meal for they can enjoy the dinner and your company! Take-Outs available starting at 4:30 pm the number above.

someone who can't be with us on them and yourself and deliver it, so

Time Change

The dreaded time change ... Time for the Spring ahead on March 12th. Unfortunately, we lose an hour but hopefully gain more sunshine. Mark your calendars!



Good Friday Service: Friday, April 7 12:00 noon -3:00 p.m.

There will be a special Good Friday service on the as a meditation for Good Friday. There will be music and words for thought as well as prayer time during this Special time. Please consider putting it on your calendar. Come for the whole time, come for 5 minutes. Whatever time you have we will be there between 12-3 Good Friday.



Sunrise Service April 9, 2023

On Easter Sunday very early when the sun rises, we will meet at the Garfield Cemetery to celebrate our risen Christ. It will begin at 6:30 a.m. with our Pastor Chris Garrison leading us in the early morning celebration. Come and join us for this special gathering. If by chance it is snowing or raining, the celebration will take place at the Stephentown Federated Church on Garfield Rd. We are hoping however for a beautiful sunny morning!



Easter Service April 9 at 9:30 a.m.

Our Easter service will share our joy in the risen Christ at 9:30 a.m. There will be special music, flowers, scriptures and food for thought as well as food from Coffee hour. Come and join us for this Easter celebration.

JANUARY/APRIL 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Choir 9:00 am Service 9:30 am Coffee Hour 10:30 am Sunrise Service Apr 9 6:30 am					Good Friday Service Apr 7 Doors open from 12-3	9:00-11:00 am Food Pantry
		7:00 pm Gen Com 4th week of month	6:00 pm AA	Choir 6:30 pm		Turkey Dinner 5-7 Feb 25

Each month: 1st Sunday ---Communion – Open to all, 2nd Sunday---Hymn Sing at beginning of service

Long – term Prayer Concerns:

Holly Wheeler, Carol, June Ross, Brendan Hoffman, Rusty Melancon, Makayla & Julie, Kathy Carringer, Sean Northrup, Georgie, Peggy, Mike, & Greg, Lance, Kelly, James & his family, Garrett, Brenda & Bob Mathew, Emma Richardson & her son Mike, Connie (FL), Pat Sample, Del Wise and his sister Vicki, John L., Bev & Jerry, Bob Vincent, John & Danielle, Julie Burdick-Snow, Melaney, Colleen P., Norm, Tanya Joyes, Tasha-Chris & family, Sal, Karen, Christina, Linda Lee, John Anello, Mary Martin, Sherry Ciliberti, Carolee, Toby, Kelly, Kevin, Angelica, Jim & Ann Peck, Radley family, Jenny, Rick Newton, Jim Chambers, David Berry, Michael Monyahan, Judy & Joe Leland, Geralyn, Pat B., Joy, Bob & Ben Lowenthal, Susan G., Peter, Samantha, Owen McGinnis, Shannon W., Pattie Lewis, Sahara, Cindy Hennig, Hal, Don Leab, Frank, Janice, Donnie, Sue, Bob & Deb, Dorothy Zuckerman, Sally Guimarra, Jerry (AZ), Stephanie & Devin, Dan & Nancy, Dennis L., Eckhardt’s friend going through depression, Jennie O., Terrienne Koepp, Lori, Trygve Tomlinson, Nancy & Malcom Beal, Linda P., Susan & family (Skip’s sister), Heidi L., Adrienne & family, Sandy & John, Tracy & family, Wanda, Kay Sessor, Isabella, Carter & family, Molly & family, Mary’s brother and his family, Sue Freihoffer & Hanley Palmer, Debbie Knapp, Lou Eckhardt, Bonnie & Rick, Barbara (Leland’s daughter), Dottie Meppan, Larry Eckardt’s cousins in NM, Gene Sawin, Denny Roberts, Joe Longo, Tony Longo & his partner Dana (praying for the blessing of a baby), Liane, Liam (Beal’s grandson), Sal, those from the Ukraine and all who are helping them, Shannon & Scott Adams, Perry, JoAnn (Pastor Chris’ mom), Joan (Ellie’s grandma) & Brittany (Ellie’s mom), Laurelyn & Doug’s daughter-in law’s mom

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|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| January | 14 | Malcolm Beal |
| | 17 | Mel Feathers |
| | 17 | Mary Schnyer |
| | 17 | Portia Westfall |
| | 24 | Richard Beckwith |
| | 25 | Stewart Pease |
| | 25 | Marge Feathers |
| | 27 | Jean Bolen |
| | 30 | Linda Secor |
| | February | 27 |
| March | 6 | Laurelyn Mayen |
| | 21 | Bill Whipple |
| | 23 | Barbara Terpening |
| | 24 | Arlene Longo |



Easter Flower Order Form 2023

It is time to place your orders for Easter Lilies and/or spring bulbs in memory of your loved ones. This year the Easter Lilies are \$15.00 each and Spring Bulbs \$10.00 each. We are asking that you have your order in by March 19th. Please send your check marked flowers and order form to: Stephentown Federated Church, Attn: Treasurer, PO Box 10, Stephentown, NY 12168. The flowers will be placed on the altar in time for our Easter service.

Your name or family name(s)	In memory of:	Specify your choice of Lily \$15 or Spring Bulbs \$10.00 each
Your name or family name(s)	In memory of:	Specify your choice of Lily \$15 or Spring Bulbs \$10.00 each
Your name or family name(s)	In memory of:	Specify your choice of Lily \$15 or Spring Bulbs \$10.00 each
Your name or family name(s)	In memory of:	Specify your choice of Lily \$15 or Spring Bulbs \$10.00 each



Total number of Lilies at \$15.00 each _____ + and/or



Spring Bulbs _____ ordered at \$10.00 each _____

Our total amount enclosed \$ _____