

Stephentown Federated Church Newsletter

Fall 2024

“A man’s got to know his limitations.” It’s an iconic line muttered by rogue cop Dirty Harry in the 1973 movie, Magnum Force. I may not be fighting corruption within the criminal justice system, but I still believe such sage advice applies to me.

I am now completing my third year as pastor of the Stephentown Federated Church. That means, I just finished an entire three-year cycle of Lectionary preaching texts. It’s three years of you hearing my voice. There is a certain challenge to finding something relevant to say each week. That challenge—along with the rigors of my online coaching and consulting jobs—have all led me to face my own limitations.

There’s a danger of this preacher facing burnout. In the past three years, I have enjoyed the benefits of having 4 Sundays off a year. But my other jobs do not have paid vacation, which has meant that I still needed to work during those weeks. As it stands, it’s rare for me to have one day a week without any work. I do know that many farmers and laborers in our community don’t get a day off either. But for my part, I believe those Sundays off will help me continue to have something to say from the pulpit for a fourth year running.

For that reason, I asked the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (PPR) for my next contract to have another preacher fill the pulpit once a month. They graciously responded with giving me 12 Sundays off in the next contract year—which was approved by the General Committee. The contract comes with the following clarifications: all 12 Sunday cannot be taken consecutively (nor can any more than 2 be taken consecutively); if 2 Sundays are taken consecutively, PPR and the worship committee will be notified a month in advance for planning purposes; PPR will hold accountability for tracking how many Sundays I’ve taken off.

Technically, it is 12 Sundays off which includes 4 weeks of vacation. It’s not 12 weeks of vacation. I will still be available for pastoral calls, emergencies and attending meetings for the other 8 weeks. I’ll let the congregation know when it’s a vacation week, but you can still call me in the event of emergency.

You may be wondering, “Who will fill the pulpit those 12 Sundays?” That’s a good question. I didn’t want to leave the congregation with a grab-bag of voices—never knowing what you’ll get. For that reason, I asked Bob Lowenthal to be our preacher those Sundays. I greatly respect Bob, and appreciate the rapport he has with the congregation.

It was a bit uncomfortable for me to make the request for extra Sundays off. I’ve never advocated for my needs in such a way. I have usually sacrificed or ignored my needs—which typically ended up putting me in a situation that wasn’t good for anyone involved. Changing that dynamic has been a lesson I’ve been working on.

If you have any questions or want to talk to me about it, please reach out to me to chat. I thank the PPR and General Committee for their continued support of me. I have always felt well-supported by this congregation. I am grateful to be part of this community. You have given me a home.

Gratefully,

Chris

End-of Summer B-B-Q Bash

You are cordially invited to join your “church family” and many friends and neighbors for fellowship and a delicious **Pork & Turkey B-B-Q** with all the fixin’s!!! Baked beans, coleslaw, corn-on-the-cob and delicious ice cold watermelon for dessert. Last big bash before the “snowbirds” fly south for the Winter. Enjoy some great, home-cooked grub, see your neighbors and friends and enjoy the bounty of God’s great earth.

When: Saturday September 14th, 2024

Time: 4:30 pm – 7:00 pm

Where: Stephentown Federated Church

If the weather is nice, we might eat outside!

Who: You, our church family and all our friends

How much: Goodwill offering only!!

Proceeds will go towards our Manse siding project.

This dinner is hosted by the Community Breakfast Group and the Sonshiners Group of the Stephentown Federated Church.

For Additional Information call:

Larry Eckhardt 518-573-2565 or Paul McMillan 518-733-5110 or Ted Bears 518-728-9326 or Kate Beach 518-935-8536

Would you like to have your meal with someone who can’t be with us on Saturday? Grab a take-out meal for them and yourself and deliver it, so they can enjoy the B-B-Q and your company!

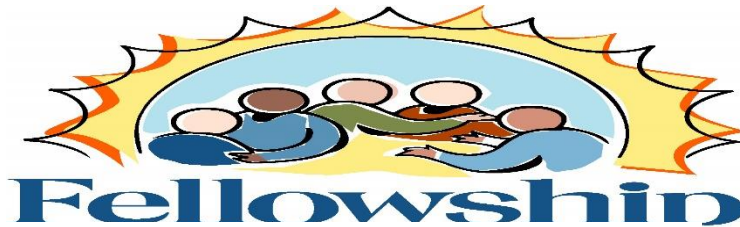
Take-Outs are available starting at 4:00 pm Let us know early so we can have them ready!

MANSE SIDING PROJECT

The General Committee has selected a vender, Graves Brothers, to side the whole manse and the garage. The project will hopefully start around the end of September. The siding will match what we put on the church. This is our last big project for maintenance on our buildings and hopefully all of the work will last for a good many years to come. We've had many of you donate to this cause since our Christmas letter last year and throughout this year and we appreciate all those gifts. It's a good start but we are still in need of more donations. This project will cost us around \$36,000 barring any issues that are found when installation is being done. We are planning on volunteers to paint the porch. Are you willing to help? Talk to Doug. If you look hard at the picnic photos you can see the work is very necessary.

If you need to take a Required Minimum Distribution from your IRAs, think about having the funds sent directly to the church with the church's name on the check. This way you will not have to pay income tax on that income. Need more information? Contact Barbara at 518-527-0182 or babst3@verizon.net.

Thank you for your generosity!!!



Connecting with Other Churches

Reverend Frank Lockhart reached out to the area churches to see if we could get together to share about our own ministries--and to see if there are any opportunities to share ministry together. Frank is rector of the Church of Our Savior in New Lebanon. We've met twice already with an elder from the Canaan Congregational Church. We're sharing our newsletters with one another. All are welcome to the following weekly events.

- Potluck / Bible Study - Wednesdays at 5:30 pm at Church of Our Savior. They have been working through the Bible book by book. This Fall, they pick up with the Book of Habakkuk. Everyone and every viewpoint is welcome in this open discussion.
- Book Group - Tuesdays at 10 am at Canaan Congregational Church. They are currently reading, "The Path: What Chinese Philosophers Can Teach Us About the Good Life."



Sanctuary Bookshelf

Did you know there was a bookshelf at the entrance or vestibule of the Sanctuary? It has books that are available for you to borrow, read, and return. In the next couple weeks, we'll be updating resources on the shelf. Take a look to see if there's anything helpful there for you.

CHOIR

Choir returns from their summer off on Thursday, Sept. 5th from 6:30- 7:45pm All are welcome to join us.

Thursday Sept 12th we will rehearse from 6:30-7:00 for Don French Memorial Service, 7:00-8:00 regular rehearsal

Thursday, Sept. 19th 6:30-7:00 rehearsal for memorial service, 7:00-8:00 regular rehearsal

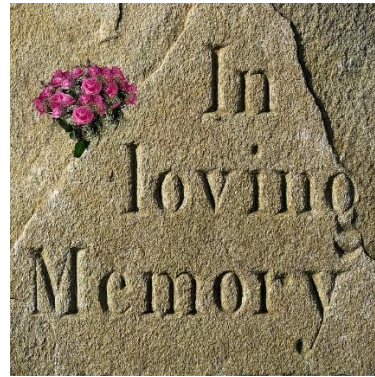
Sat., Sept 21st 3:15 meet to rehearse before memorial service which is at 4pm

Looking forward to seeing everyone,

Bev

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Our next meeting is on Wednesday, Sept. 11th 7pm on ZOOM



MEMORIAL SERVICE

Don French Memorial Service – will be held in the church on Saturday, September 21st at 4pm

Long – term Prayer Concerns:

Holly Wheeler, Carol, June Ross, Rusty Melancon, Makayla & Julie, Kathy Carringer, Sean Northrup, Georgie, Kelly, Joey, Peggy, Mike, & Greg, Lance, 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, 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, Michael Monyahan, Judy & Joe Leland, Geralyn, Pat B., Joy & Bob 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, Tom Foody, Sally Guimarra, Jerry (AZ), Stephanie & Devin, Dan & Nancy, Dennis L., Eckhardt's friend going through depression, Terrienne Koepp, Lori, Trygve Tomlinson, Nancy & Malcom Beal, Linda P., 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, Bonnie & Rick, Barbara (Leland's daughter), Dottie Meppan, Larry Eckardt's cousins in NM, Gene Sawin, Joe & Arlene Longo, Tony Longo & his partner Dana (praying for the blessing of a baby), Sal Longo, Liane, Liam (Beal's grandson), 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, Beth, Kathy, Zack Hanson, Gladys (Nancy Beal's sister), Carol Baker, Edna May, Peter Hamilton, Tom & family, Leo & family, Karen, Peter, Jackie Eckhardt, Kathryn & the twins, Betty Ann Hanlon, Mike, Rev. Betsy, Carter La Casse,

Doris & Arnold Sours, Rick Monyahan, Jodie Doherty, Craig (Ellie's Uncle in MT), Ella (Beal's Granddaughter), Nancy Machler, Nancy & her brother John, Mary Hamilton, Tammy Madden, Baby Gus, Rick Fosby, Dwight & Devon Peterson, Martha Lagerwahl, Karen Volpi, Kathi Jones, Raymond (Marianne Smith's brother), Becca Fenander, Margie Fenander, Theresa Terpening, Ed Mullett, the LGBTQ community, Santo, Ronnie, Ella, Alex, Kathryn, Sam & Ben, & Kathy Norton

As always . . .we pray for:

Our farmers, Pastor Chris & family, those with emotional/mental/physical illnesses, the unknown addict, those being cared for & the caregiver, those in transition, those suffering from addiction(s), Emergency Responders, youth of today, those in weather ravaged places, those who don't get where they are going who are cold/alone, the Military and their families, our Veterans, & our elected leaders, those imprisoned, Citizens of Lesothos & the student we sponsor, organ donors, those who mourn, those persecuted for their faith, those who have no one to pray for them, those not mentioned out loud, the unemployed, all refugees and the nations locked in conflict

Safe travel for all

THANK YOU GOD FOR OUR MANY BLESSINGS!

JULY CHURCH PICNIC

We had a great time!! Good food, games and sharing of music and conversation!!!

It was a picture perfect day even if a bit too hot!

