



R E A C H I N G O U T
First Congregational Church of Berkshire, NY
State Route 38 & Glen Road
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Flood Relief:

Many have asked about helping out with flood victims. At a meeting held after church, I was asked to call the Open Door Mission in Owego to see what they needed.

- money to help people with housing issues
- dry goods
- cleaning supplies
- blankets
- baby stuff, from food to Pampers
- clothes for babies & children, including warm clothes: these "little ones" seem to be left out of the major supply efforts
- socks & underwear for adults: they have outer wear but this is another gap in the system
- camping cots & folding beds: many are staying with others and need beds that can be put away during the day
- dog & cat food: another overlooked group

Reaching Out

NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BERKSHIRE, NY

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Why Should I Join a Church? by Pastor Chuck

This series started with a common misunderstanding about Christianity: that being a believer is not enough. Christ calls for *disciples*, not believers! Then we talked about another misunderstanding: that the church is a building. The church is *people* who come together as the Body of Christ. Church is a *we*, not a *me*.

Now we come to a third misunderstanding: that church is Sunday morning worship. To understand why this is wrong, we need to look at our next image of the congregation: that we are the family of God.

Think of how important it was to have parents and brothers and sisters when you were little. You depended on them for food, clothes, fellowship. You learned to read and write and right from wrong. You shared in special times like birthdays and dinners together. As you grew, you began to contribute to the family life. You helped with the cooking. You bought gifts for others where before you just got them. And, if you're older, you became the provider for your own sons & daughters, nieces & nephews.

You are born into your natural family. There is a built-in commitment there. You must choose to commit to your church family. (Or, to use the image of John 3.3, you must be "born again.") Becoming a member is a choice you make. Jesus made this family connection very directly:

Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." (Matthew 12.49-50)

As you read through the New Testament, you can see how we are called brothers or sisters. In Galatians 6.10, he says "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." We are Christian brothers & sisters when we obey the will of our Father and love (*agapē*) one another.

Okay, so let's come back to Sunday morning worship. For most Protestant groups, this hour breaks down into three main areas: singing,

praying, and preaching. All three have a place in the family. Singing is fun. It can bring us closer to God even as we praise Him through song. David tells us in Psalm 39.3 that: "He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the LORD." We are told to pray, both in private and as the people of God. And in the earliest Christian services, people met to learn about Christ from the apostles (Acts 16.13). This pattern has been preserved through the years in the sermon.

The worship service is like the Sunday dinner or a holiday gathering in a family. It is a time to celebrate what God has done in our lives and encourage us for what He will do in the future. This Sunday celebration, though, is not just about you. Many people think the choir sings to entertain them and the pastor prays and preaches just to make them feel good. Actually, we gather to worship God. The singing is for Him and the preaching is what He wants us to hear from Him. We should feel good as we come close to God, but that is just the by-product of being His children. As His children, we come to serve, not to be served. Paul gives a wonderful prayer about the church in Ephesians 3.14-21. It ends with this: "to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

Church is much more than Sunday worship. It is Sunday school. It is sitting with fellow Christians to comfort them when they hurt. It is reaching out to your community. It is meeting together to discuss what God our Father wants us to do next. It is all the ups and downs of family life. The church is not some "extra" that gets in the way of our relationship with Jesus Christ. It is at the heart of that relationship. After all, as we read in I John 4.20: "If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen."

Joining a church is a very natural choice when you have a correct understanding of just what "church" really means. In Him, Pastor Chuck

Monthly Memory Verse:

A great deal has happened in our Congregation over the past year. There are those who are excited and those who are concerned about these changes and what comes next. This verse has two conditions-- that we (truly) love God and that we are indeed serving His purposes. If we're right with Him, we have the most wonderful promise in this world or the next: that He will work it all out!

Romans 8.28: And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

Women's Fellowship:

The women's fellowship met on September 17. The school supplies have been delivered to our schools. Thank you for your most generous donations! We discussed plans for coming month's gatherings. We will be meeting on Friday evenings for a while

Trustee Update:

As you all know we had 18" of water in the basement during the great flood of '11. The pantry lost a large amount of food and the basement is now not useable. We had several volunteers come and remove the paneling and wet items. Waits, Kemmerers, Horvaths, Friebels, Stoughtons, Sheldons, Lil Hoffmier, Scott Albrecht, and "little" Johnny Armstrong (with 1000 questions) all got together and made short work of the demolition. The adjuster came and we are awaiting his assessment. Saturday October 1st we will have a dumpster and remove the sheetrock and non burnable materials from the basement. Any help will be much appreciated. If I missed anyone who was there for the first phase of demo, please forgive me. Thanks to all who helped, and more news will follow. Scott Albrecht

Church Cleanup: This coming Saturday, we'll have a large dumpster in our parking lot. That's when we'll come together at 9 a.m. to tear out the drywall that has been wrecked by the water we had in the basement. When that's all out, we'll be cleaning the walls and floors. We hope to be done by noon if we have enough help.

instead of Thursdays. There will be information given in the church bulletin as time goes on.

God Bless! Darlene Wait

High School Workshops:

On the first Sunday of every month, we're going to have a special workshop for our youth. We'll provide pizza and drinks, then move on to the topic of the month. For October 2nd, we'll see how a worship service is planned. Pastor Chuck will show us how he chooses a sermon and fits together all the parts of the service. We'll even get to help him start his next sermon series!

Men's Game Night: Next Saturday night, come out for pizza and fun. We'll have the ping-pong table set up. Bring your favorite game or just play ours. All men are welcome.

Sunday School:

Welcome back to Sunday School!! We're looking forward to another great year together learning about God's Word and having loads of fun doing it! Our teachers this year are: Nursery-PreK/K: Becky Horvath; 1st-4th grade: Jenn Willard; 5th-7th grade: Rhonda Moulton; High School: John & Joan Stoughton. We'll be starting our year with another exciting HighPoint travel adventure to London, England where we'll learn all about Respect - Sunday School will begin a bit earlier - 9:00am - for the first 5 weeks so that we have more time to utilize all of the great HighPoint resources. Each week we gather together for songs, games, skits, and inspiring messages before splitting up into our classes - in classes we explore God's Word even deeper through Bible reading, crafts, object lessons, games and more. We hope to see our classes filled with even more smiling faces this year - please let us know if you have any ideas/suggestions for encouraging this! :-)

Thanks so much for all of your prayers & support,
Jenn Willard - Sunday School Superintendent

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES:

Anniversaries:

Brian & Tami Payne	10/11
Dan & Victoria Thomas	10/14

Birthdays:

Julie Michaud	10/02
Andy Friebel	10/03
Alexis Mount	10/04
Clayton Barrows	10/09
Charles Underwood	10/15
Maria Crispell	10/24
Joanne Dimon	10/25
Marian Vroman	10/25
Wally Morris	10/29
John Adams	10/30
Bob Maynard	10/30

We are trying to get all of our birthday and anniversary information in one place. If you see an error or omission, please let our church secretary know. Thank you

OCTOBER WORSHIP SUPPORT:

Greeters:

October 2 nd	-	Dot Klinge Sandy Kasmarcik
October 9 th	-	John Adams Ede Adams
October 16 th	-	Charlotte Alexander Betty Payne
October 23 rd	-	Amanda Wait Dave Michaud
October 30 th	-	Mike Wells Mike Kemmerer

Ushers:

October 2 nd	-	John Adams Paul Kunik
October 9 th	-	Mike Kemmerer Scott Albrecht
October 16 th	-	Mike Moulton Mark Friebel
October 23 rd	-	Bob Wait Bob Maynard
October 30 th	-	Dave Michaud Jim Willard

Junior Church:

October 2 nd	-	Jenn Willard Breanna Kunik
October 9 th	-	Jenn Willard Ashley Kunik
October 16 th	-	Jenn Willard Julie Michaud
October 23 rd	-	Jenn Willard Jessie Kemmerer
October 30 th	-	Prayer & Praise

Junior Church II

October	-	John Stoughton
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Nursery:

October 2 nd	-	Renee Kozak
October 9 th	-	Barb Jordan
October 16 th	-	Tessie Smith
October 23 rd	-	Sandy Kasmarcik
October 30 th	-	Judy Loeffler

Youth Group:

Back in the winter of 2011 some of the youth of the church started working toward putting together a youth worship team. With their debut performance at the talent show they seemed to be well received and have since played a number of times for a few different venues. Most recently they led worship at the Berkshire Heritage Day community worship service at the community hall in Berkshire on September 11Th. Currently the members of the band are as follows: AbBea Longo and Becky Horvath are our vocalists while Becky also plays an auto harp, Breanna Kunik plays keyboards, Emma

Willard is the drummer, Ashley Kunik plays the bass guitar and Mike Kunik plays an acoustic guitar. Currently they know a handful of songs and are trying to learn more. There is nothing planned, as of now, to play again in the immediate future (they haven't been asked) but are ready and have a desire to do so soon.

Remembering Our Neighbors in Prayer: So many people in our area and throughout the Eastern U.S. have been devastated by the recent flooding. Please keep them in prayer.

Congregational Church Events - October 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Children's Sunday School starts early for most of this month (9 AM) because they have a special segment. We'll have coffee for those adults who bring their kids then stay for the regular adult courses at 9:30 (or you can sit and watch what they're doing in the Sanctuary)						1 9-noon- Church Clean-up 7 PM- Men's Game Night
2 9:30 AM- Sunday School 11 AM- Worship 12:30-1:30 Worship Planning Workshop (for youth) 6 PM Youth Group	3 7 PM- Trustees Meeting 7 PM- Ladies Bible Study	4 1:30PM- Ladies Bible Study	5 7:30 PM- Choir Practice	6	7 7 PM- Youth Group Band	8
9 9 AM- Sunday School 11 AM- Worship (Communion) 6 PM Youth Group	10 7 PM- Ladies Bible Study 7 PM- Men in Ministry	11 1:30PM- Ladies Bible Study 7 PM- Deacons Meeting	12 7:30 PM- Choir Practice	13 7 PM- Quarterly Meeting	14 7 PM- Youth Group Band	15 10 AM- Senior Pantry
16 9 AM- Sunday School 11 AM- Worship 6 PM Youth Group	17 7 PM- Ladies Bible Study 7 PM- Men in Ministry	18 1:30PM- Ladies Bible Study	19 7:30 PM- Choir Practice	20	21 7 PM- Youth Group Band	22
23 9 AM- Sunday School 11 AM- Worship 6 PM Youth Group	24 7 PM- Ladies Bible Study 7 PM- Men in Ministry	25 1:30PM- Ladies Bible Study	26	27 2 PM- Ladies Tea	28	29
30 9:30 AM- Sunday School 11 AM- Worship 6 PM Youth Group	31 7 PM- Ladies Bible Study 7 PM- Men in Ministry		7:30 PM- Choir Practice	7 PM- Transition Team meeting	7 PM- Youth Group Band	

