

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I write a day after the inauguration of our 44th President. In his address, President Obama once again enumerated the challenges our nation faces. He did so with a sense of excitement. One might think the weight of presidential responsibility would blunt the hopeful timbre in his voice. His speech got me thinking about the hope found in the men and women who served in biblical times despite the daunting goals our Lord calls them to achieve. Noah constructs an ark for an impending flood, and creates a floating zoo. Moses delivers thousands from slavery to freedom. Deborah co-leads an army to victory. David defeats Goliath. The list goes on. As the great 20th Century theologian Karl Barth once wrote, everyone in Scripture seems to be figuratively, if not literally, looking up. In other words their optimistic embrace of God's heavenly plans overcomes the earthly trajectory of great challenge. For the most part, God's messengers are fulfilled. The prophet Isaiah seems nearly ecstatic when he volunteers for a most difficult prophetic task (Isaiah: 6). On occasion we find griping in Scripture. Moses complains that the tasks of leadership are too great (Numbers 11:10-17); God hears him, and delegates authority to 70 others. Jeremiah's case is tougher. He complains bitterly about his prophetic lot in life. Nevertheless even his profound negativity does not interfere with his calling. He becomes one of the greatest prophets. At one point he states that his prophetic work was like a "burning fire in his bones" (Jeremiah 20:9). He cannot renounce God's purpose for his life.

As I begin my ministry here, I want you to think of how our Lord may be calling you to leadership in the Hurley Reformed Church. After listening to that "still small voice", you may look at God's tasks, and challenges for you, believing they are greater than your 'skill sets'. Suspend this belief. Scripture teaches that God equips those whom He calls (Hebrews 13:21). I believe that wonderful things will happen when we join our gifts in service to God's kingdom.

In Christ's Service

Dr. Bob Gram



Youth Group

We sold chili for our Souper Bowl collection and we went tubing at Sawkill Family Ski on 2/1/09. We had a great time. Additional information on this will be in next months Spire.

We invite you and your friends to ice skate at the Hurley Rec Center on Feb. 20th at 6pm. We will roast hot dogs out on an open fire, ice skate outside (please dress warm) and have some hot cocoa. We ask that everyone bring an item to share, a folding chair and if you have a folding table bring that along as well. We are also collecting ice skates. If you have a pair or two that you haven't used or have out grown please bring them to church. This way the people that don't have ice skates can use them. We will then leave the ice skates at the ice rink for other people to use. Oh...did I mention this is a FREE activity. Sign up after church.

Our February collection will be t-shirts, underwear & socks for elementary & middle school kids that either don't have these items or soil them during the school day. Please put them in our collection bin.

On March 3rd Brooks BBQ will be back. We will be selling their famous chicken and rib dinners. Please call Alyson Rafferty at 338-4469 to reserve your dinner.

We will be holding a Penny Social on June 5, 2009. So, when you get to do spring cleaning hold onto those items for us. We will take asking for you to bring the items into church in March/April.

Our upcoming events:

2/8/09	Meeting
2/13 - 14	Setup and Serve at the Spaghetti Dinner
2/20/09	6pm Ice Skating at Hurley Rec
2/21-22/09	CT Aquarium trip
3/3/09	Brooks BBQ
3/8/09	Meeting - last one till September
3/29/09	Sponsor coffee hour
4/11/09	9am cooking, setup & rehearsal for Easter Dawn
4/12/09	Easter Dawn service and breakfast

Any child who is in grade 5 & above can be in the Youth Group. If you would like to join us please come to a meeting & get involved. Come & check us out.

Sandy & Katie Emrich, Lisa Longto, Youth Group Leaders

Empty Bottles/Can Return

Wanted---your bottle & can returns. Please bring them to church and will be return them for you. You then will be making a donation to the American Cancer Society & our Relay for Life team. Thanks for your help & support.



Meatball Amoré

The Women's Guild will be holding a spaghetti dinner on 2/14/09. We will be serving:

Antipasto: oven roasted tomato, grilled asparagus, marinated zucchini & roasting red peppers with a balsamic glaze & parmesan cheese.

Warm Garlic Bread

Dressed Italian salad

Spaghetti *with red sauce & Roma style meatballs*

Homemade old fashion apple crisp *with vanilla ice cream*



Serenading us with Italian love songs will be Dick Morone.

The cost of all of this wonderful food will be \$8 for adults and \$5 for children under 12.

There will be 2 seatings: 5pm & 6pm. Please call the church 331-4121 for reservations or sign up after church.

LOCAL MISSIONS

If you have a suggestion of a local charity for our monthly mission collection, please see Jim Macarille.

DAFFODILS in support of the American Cancer Society will adorn the sanctuary in March. You may order a bouquet or plant in honor or memory of someone who has battled cancer. A bouquet of 10 or a plant of miniature daffodils is \$10.00. Orders are due by February 22nd. Checks payable to the American Cancer Society may be sent to the church, attention Sheila Read.



Women's Guild

Thank you to everyone for coming out in the snow for our annual Church Birthday Party. Even with all of the snow the birthday cake was eaten and a good time was had by all. Thank you to everyone that decorated a table and to Ellen Richards for organizing the event.

We will be holding a Spaghetti Dinner on February 14th with servings at 5pm and 6pm; take out are available. Please call the church for reservations or sign up after church.

Below is our calendar of activities:

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| 2/14/09 | Sweetheart Spaghetti Dinner-fund raiser for the commercial refrigerator for the kitchen |
| 2/15/09 | Meeting |
| 3/15/09 | Meeting & butterfly exchange |
| 4/5/09 | Easter egg hunt for the kids |
| 4/19/09 | Meeting |
| 5/17/09 | Pot Luck Luncheon |

Please join us,
Sandy Emrich-President

COMMUNICANT AND ADULT MEMBERSHIP CLASSES are in the planning stages. A meeting will be held after worship on Sunday, February 8th, to set up meeting schedules. Two classes are being formed, one for communicants (youth) and one for adult membership.



Bouquets of Anemones for Mental Health Flower

Sale: This sale is in support of the Mental Health Association in Ulster County, adult and youth programs. You can place an order through the church (by Feb. 15) and pick up your flowers at the church; delivery on February 26th; \$12.50 for a bouquet of 10. Call the church office or see Debbie Decker to place an

order.

BIBLE STUDIES



The Wednesday morning session meets at 7am in the Dutch Room, looking at the Gospel of Mark. Start at 7, out by 8 – with time to make it to work.

If you're not an early riser, there is also a Tuesday evening session at 7pm, meeting in the parsonage for a thought provoking discussion of a chosen Bible passage.

Consider joining either, or both; there's always room for more.

FLOWER CALENDAR

There are still open dates in the upcoming months on the Flower Calendar. If you would like to place flowers in memory or in honor of someone special please see Sheila Read and she will schedule you on the calendar. Sanctuary flowers can be plants, or arrangements of your own making, as well as from your favorite florist. For further details see Sheila Read.

ASH WEDNESDAY



The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 25th. Each year we save a few palms from Palm Sunday. The Chancel Guild burns the palms and the ashes are used on Ash Wednesday. The sanctuary will be open throughout the day for prayer and contemplation. Ashes will be available for self-imposition throughout the day.

Please join us at 7:30pm for an Ash Wednesday worship service. The service will conclude with the imposition of ashes by Dr. Gram.

Property and Maintenance

Oh NO! Not another new furnace!!

A routine cleaning of the furnace in the parsonage turned out to be a warning that the furnace needs to be replaced due to a crack. We're getting estimates on how much it will cost.

An elevated seat:

There's a new elevated "seat" in the ladies rest room. Thanks go to Jim and Betty Pirro who donated the new seat and to Ron Chrisey who did the installation.

Who can fix a snowblower?? (Please):

The church's snowblower needs a tune-up and a repair. The gas line on the snowblower is broken. If you are handy with engines and would like to take a look at our snowblower please contact Joe Ulrich or pop into the church's garage and take a look. We're borrowing one for the time being.

Ceilings in the rest rooms:

We need to put ceilings in the rest rooms downstairs in Schadewald Hall. I'm looking to put a workday together soon to do this work. If you've worked with sheetrock installation in the past and can help us out please call the church or Joe and we'll get the day scheduled.

As always, contact Joe Ulrich if you see anything that needs to be repaired or If you see a repair that is needed that you'd like to do yourself.

Kitchen and new Refrigerator use a.k.a. "HEY! You gonna eat that?":

In an effort to keep the kitchen organized and the new refrigerator clean PLEASE do the following:

- 1) If you use dishes, silverware, pots, or other items in the kitchen please wash, dry, and put them away
- 2) If you use the refrigerator for a special event please take everything you brought with you
- 3) If items in the refrigerator belong to a group in the church please label the items appropriately
- 4) Please note how many times we said PLEASE!!