

The First Presbyterian Spirit

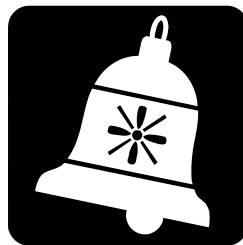


DECEMBER 2011

December Events and Dates

- | | |
|------|--|
| 4th | Meeting of the Congregation |
| 4th | Cookie Caper |
| 4th | Brockport Holiday Parade |
| 8th | Women's Christmas Dinner at Rizzo's |
| 9th | Youth Club Spaghetti Dinner & Game Night |
| 11th | Christmas Music Service |
| 11th | White Gifts |
| 17th | Rehearsal: Children's Christmas Service |
| 18th | Children's Christmas Service |
| 18th | Santa's Secret Shop |
| 24th | Christmas Eve Service |
| 25th | Christmas Day Service |

Christmas Music Service



Sunday, December 11 • 10 am

A special time of worship traditionally known as a service of Lessons and Carols. The story of Christ's birth will be told through Scripture readings, choir anthems, handbell ringing, and congregational singing as we meet together to celebrate this joyous season.

Children's Christmas Service

"The Lost Lamb and the Manger"

Sunday, December 18 • 10 am

Our Sunday School classes will bring this new twist on our beloved story to life. Come join us, and lend your voice and your heart to our celebration. There will be several instruments, custom artwork, lots of fun and who knows what else!



Christmas Eve Service

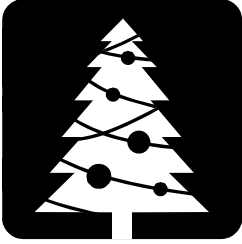
Saturday, December 24 • 7 pm

First Presbyterian Church

Christmas Day Service

Sunday, December 25 • 10 am

Informal worship service followed by cake and ice cream served in honor of Jesus' birthday!



Message from Pastor Aaron

Incarnation

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means, ‘God with us’).” Matthew 1:23

Incarnation theology talks about the embodiment (em-body-ment) of God. At Christmas we celebrate that the Christ child is God born among us, as one of us. What an amazing idea!

Jesus taught us to value and advocate for the full humanity of all people. He gave us his teaching and example of how to live, and then through his death, offers forgiveness to free us from the guilt which would hold us back from God and each other.

“For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body... Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” 1 Corinthians 12:13, 27

The Apostle Paul then teaches that we are now Christ’s body. The Church is now a significant incarnation of God’s presence on earth. Collectively then, we are Immanuel! The Church is “God with humanity.” As we show God’s love, we display the Image of Christ. As we neglect Christ’s teaching and example, we withhold Christ’s image to those around us. The Spirit of God is available to each person, creation proclaims God’s glory – yet God’s people are still called to be God’s hands and voice to the nations.

On November 9th I attended the event “NEXT Church, A Conversation for Presbyterians.” Members of 5 presbyteries (people from all over NY and PA) came together to talk about the future of the Presbyterian Church (USA). We looked frankly at declining statistics and church controversies. We learned how this is likely part of a pattern of reformation in the Christian Church which seems to happen about every 500 years. Very fascinating stuff! We also heard from and about congregations who have caught new visions, and creative leadership which is developing new ministries that embody the gospel in fresh ways.

One of the things that were recognized is that more and more people are reluctant to participate in bureaucratic structures, but still want to connect and have relationships in the church. They still want to serve, but in shorter, more focused “bursts.” This perfectly describes much of the feedback we get each year during our own officer nominating season. Another bit of wisdom I heard recently is that its not change we fear, (change is usually invigorating, actually) but rather, loss. Change sometimes produces loss, or is assumed to – and therefore we resist the grief we associate with it. So, how are we going to be “Immanuel” to our evolving post-modern culture? These are questions worthy of the Christmas season! Having the Christ Child born among us signals a renewal of creation. An investment by God in us. Our response does not need to be laced with fear, but rather one of wonder in following a star!

This small regional conference I attended is part of a larger conversation. [www.nextchurch.net] There is a large national version of this conversation happening in February. Maybe you would like to be a part of it? If you would like to attend and need scholarship help, please ask!

Seek Immanuel this season. Seek to express Immanuel through your life to others! Dream with us how the Church will continual to be faithful to that calling in each new age.

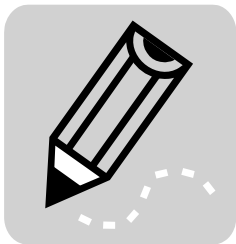
Have a Holy Advent, and a Merry Christmas!

Pastor Aaron



Winter Event Cancellation Policy

If there is a significant snow event, please tune into Channel 13 WHAM news on-line, on TV, or on the radio to find out if worship, rehearsals or other events will be happening. Decisions for cancellation fall upon the church staff, officers or committee chairs involved. During the week we generally follow the lead of Brockport Schools. So if day classes or evening events are canceled at school, we will do likewise. Generally if there is a travel advisory, we recommend that you stay safe and warm at home.



Time and Talent Form

All church families, please fill out your time and talent form and return it to the church. You can place it in the offering plate on Sunday, mail it back to the church, or drop it off at the church office. Thank you!

Contacting Pastor Aaron

My office hours will mostly coincide with Caitlin's availability in the church office. This way we can have the building unlocked more often with both of us there.

- **Monday and Wednesday:** 9 am - noon
- **Tuesday and Thursday:** 2 - 4 pm
- **Friday** is my day off. Please feel free to contact me in an emergency however.

Home Visits and Home Communion: Please let me know if you would like a visit, or to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at home.

I am also available by appointment as needed. Monday and Tuesday nights are good times to schedule with me in the early evenings before meetings. Saturday is often a meeting or special event day with Presbytery. The best ways to reach me Friday – Sunday is by cell phone, email, or in church on Sunday.

Please also call my cell phone **585-278-6365** to reach me any time. Please leave a message if I can't answer. I also "text" message, so feel free to exercise your thumbs if you choose!



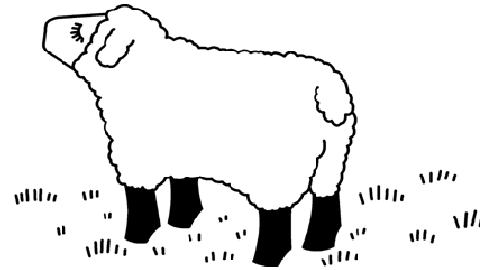
Cookie Caper: Sunday, Dec. 4

It's Christmas Cookie Time again... and the tradition of the Cookie Caper continues. As always, we need bakers and buyers to support this yummy and fun event. So grab those bowls and sprinkles and sign up on the Oak Table if you're willing and able to provide 2- 3 dozen cookies. We really appreciate your culinary efforts each year and look forward to tables laden with holiday goodies. Cookies may be brought to church that Sunday morning and will go on sale following the meeting immediately after church. If you have any questions, see a member of the Con Life committee. Many thanks for your help in making this event such a success each year.

~Submitted by Debbie Preston

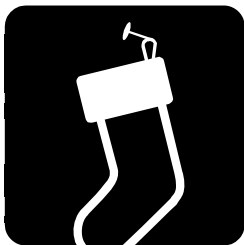
Children's Christmas Service: Sunday, Dec. 18

It's almost time! Come join us in worship as together we experience "**The Lost Lamb and the Manger.**" Our Sunday School classes (and lots of volunteers of all ages!) are working hard to bring this new twist on our beloved story to life. You can help! Come join us, and lend your voice and your heart to our celebration. There will be several instruments, custom artwork, lots of fun and who knows what else!



Children will be practicing during Sunday School, so please make every effort to be there. If you're older than Sunday School age (over 5th grade) and would like to be involved, through music or a speaking part, please contact Rachel Doll (576-9362) quickly so we can make sure there is room for everyone.

NOTE: There will also be a *final rehearsal on Saturday, December 17th, from 10:00am-11:30am.*



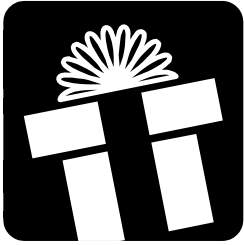
Santa's Secret Shop: Sunday, Dec. 18

Children of the church ages 1 through 8th grade will have the opportunity to "shop" for family gifts.

We need donations of new and slightly used items for small children, teens, mothers, fathers, and grandparents. Especially needed are items for men and boys.

If you can donate new or gently used items for Santa's Secret Shop, please place them in the box marked as such on the wire rack near the back door coat room. We also can use scotch tape, wrapping paper, tags, gift bags, Christmas stickers, bows and large bags to carry the items home.

Deacons say thank you 'elves' for helping to keep a favorite church tradition going strong.



White Gifts: Sunday, Dec. 11

White Gift Sunday represents an opportunity to make Christmas a little brighter for those going through tough times, for those who are lonely, or those who are homebound.

I have had the privilege and joy to deliver White Gifts several times in the past thirteen years and I look forward to doing so again this year. Some of the visits have been to the residences of migrant workers. The gifts we brought were the only Christmas gifts the family could afford that year. All the families I visited were extremely grateful for what we provided and often warmly invited us into their homes to open their gifts right away.

I am not proud to confess that I expected to only deliver gifts to migrant workers; it was an unfortunate bias I had that the only people with needs in our area would be poor farm workers. So I was really surprised one year by how many gifts we delivered within the Brockport village limits, just blocks from our church. We delivered to houses I had walked by and/or driven past literally hundreds of times and had no idea that the people inside had needs. The amount of poverty within the village was astounding to me and changed a lot of my biases. Again, the people I had the joy to visit were very friendly and thankful.

Not all the White Gift recipients are impoverished. Some, like a few people at Royal Gardens Apartments, are elderly and don't have family or friends in the area, or if they do, only see them rarely. I brought my thirteen-year-old daughter Alana with me last year and she was very moved by the women we met at Royal Gardens. One woman was 101-years-old and such a joy to talk to. She opened her gifts right away, one of which was a pair of pants. She planned to wear them when her family came to take her to dinner for Christmas Eve. Another woman had been losing her sight for some time and was very sad that she could no longer read, her favorite pastime. One of her gifts was a magnifying glass with a built-in light. You could see her mood instantly elevate! It was not a very expensive gift, but it was precious to her. And finally, another woman we visited there was not housebound at all, but couldn't afford much beyond her rent. She had owned a toaster oven when she was younger, but had sold it before moving into Royal Gardens. She had been longing for another one for quite some time. When she unwrapped a toaster oven, she broke down crying from joy right there in the building lobby. She gave Alana and I several hugs and before it was all over, there were several people standing there with tears in their eyes. And yes, one of them was me.

The names of families and seniors, along with some of their wishes, are posted in the Assembly Room. You may sign up to adopt a whole family, or a single person, or just donate a few gifts here and there. If you prefer, we will also be accepting money to pay for any un-purchased wants and for gift cards. (We will not be collecting gift cards this year.) We will have envelopes in the pews in which you can place your cash/check donation. (If you write a check, please write "White Gifts" on the "For" line.)

We Deacons hope you will once again be generous in your gifts and money to our ministry, as you always have been. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me. Thank you!



Why We Hang The Greens

Have you ever wondered why we hang the greens? Or why we use greens for Christmas decorations? Well, the color green stands for new life, for freshness, and new birth. Plants like pine trees, holly, and ivy are called evergreens because they never die. They always keep their green color. And we decorate our sanctuary with greens because God has promised that the church will never die. Advent is a time when we remember that death could not hold Jesus in his grave—and neither can it hold us either.

~Submitted by Dan May, Deacons



Women's Christmas Dinner Thursday, Dec. 8 at 5:30 pm at Carol Rizzo's

All women of the congregation are invited!
Please bring a dish or dessert to pass.



Youth Club: Friday, Dec. 9 at 6 pm Family Spaghetti Dinner and Game Night

Families with youth 6th grade and older and adults without kids or with grown kids who would like to help with our youth ministry, please attend our kick-off dinner. It will be a time of fun and planning.

**Invite your friends from school and the community
to join you for dinner and games.**

Please RSVP to Christina Lesniak at 278-7450.

A sign up sheet for food is located outside Lower Hays Hall on the bulletin board.



Youth Music Choirs: Cherubs and Carolers

- **Cherubs** in Pre-K - 1st grade practice Sunday morning from 11-11:15 am immediately following Sunday school.
- **Carolers** in 2nd grade - teens practice Sunday morning from 9:15 to 9:45 am.

Performing dates for Cherubs

December 18th
January 29th
April 8th
May 13th

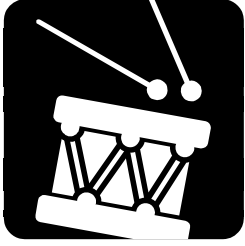
Performing dates for Carolers

December 18th
February 12th
March 11th
May 13th



Please be sure to arrive to church by 9:30 am on performance days.

~Submitted by Tricia Crissman, Youth Music Director



Growing Faith

CHILDREN

SUNDAY SCHOOL
10:15-11 am • Lower Hayes Hall
Pre-K to Grade 5

CHILDREN'S CHOIRS

Carolers (2nd grade to teens) practice Sunday at 9:15 am
Cherubs (Pre-K to 1st grade) practice Sunday 11-11:15 am
Contact: Tricia Crissman, Youth Music Director at 964-7926

TEENS

YOUTH CLUB

Friday, December 9 • Family Spaghetti Dinner and Game Night • 6 pm • Assembly Room
Contact: Christina Lesniak at 278-7450

WOMEN'S CIRCLE

BIBLE STUDY

Monday, December 12 • 9 am • Church Parlor • We'd love to have you join us as we view and discuss the video "The Earliest Traditions About Jesus." This is the fourth video relating to the New Testament.
Contact: Sandy Ritz at 352-1784

MEN

BREAKFAST & DEVOTIONS

Monday, December 12 • 8:30 am • 58 Main
Contact: Brian Richardson at 395-9476

ADULTS

BIBLE STUDY

Sundays • 11:15 am-Noon • Church Parlor
Contact: Rick Miner at 964-2081

THE "TUESDAY" LUNCH BUNCH

December 13 • Noon lunch and fellowship.
Contact: Jean Moore at 637-4357



The Symbolism of Light

Jesus is the light of the world. He brings hope to all those who are in darkness. Jesus' name is Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." Just like a candle gives of its wax to bring light to the darkness, so Jesus gave of himself to bring hope to us.



The Symbolism of Holly

Did you know that early Christians wore holly as they entered the church? They believed that the burning bush through which God spoke to Moses was the holly—or holy—tree. Many believed that Jesus' crown of thorn was also made from holly leaves. And that the berries that were white turned red and have stayed red ever since. Some even say that wherever Jesus walked on earth, holly sprang up in his footsteps.



Filling Your Blessing Basket

by Sheila Walsh

In her book ***Basket of Blessings: 31 Days to a More Grateful Heart***, Karen O'Connor shares her experience. "If you want to be

content, to experience peace," a friend had told Karen, "write down your blessings—the things you're grateful for—on slips of paper and put them in a container of some kind. A small basket or box or bag will do. Soon it will be full to overflowing. From time to time look at what you wrote. No one can be discontent for long with so much to be thankful for."

In addition to filling a "blessing basket" on a daily basis, we could write a letter to God once a year, listing all that pours out of our hearts for his extravagant grace to us. Think of what a joy it would be to keep our annual letters of gratitude to read through the years or to pass on to our children.

What a celebration we could have as we remind ourselves of the faithfulness of God.

Whether our thank-you moments are momentary, intentional pauses in the midst of a hectic day, thank you notes to God for his many blessings, or lengthy discourses of his grace, cultivating an attitude of gratitude will remind us of the truth that undergirds our lives: "For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations" (Psalm 100:5).

Holidays like Christmas can be joyful occasions, but I'm aware that they can be painful too. Perhaps you have lost a loved one and this is this first time you will face a particular birthday or anniversary with an empty place at your table. Perhaps family times make you feel lonely, remind you of what's not true for you at this moment. I pray that you might know deep in your spirit that you belong to an eternal family; you are loved by God, enough for him to send his precious Son to the Cross for you.

We have so much to celebrate as daughters of the King of Kings. I pray that you might find a quiet place today to stop and lift your heart up in gratitude to our Father.

~Submitted by Anita Mault



The Symbolism of Poinsettias

Poinsettias are used as Christmas decoration because their flowers are shaped like stars, which reminds us of the star that shone at the first Christmas. The flowers are red, which reminds us that the baby born in a manger became the Savior of the world. Jesus shed his blood on the cross so that our sins can be forgiven.



A CONVERSATION FOR PRESBYTERIANS

The 2012 Next Conference February 27 – 28, 2012

A continuing discussion about our church – PCUSA – will continue in person, in a big way, in Dallas in 2012. Join us for discussions, new ideas, and the start of new life for the Presbyterian churches. We need you and we need your energy. We need your ideas. And we need your prayers.

Registration information at: <http://nextchurch2012.org/>

Would you like to be a part of it? If you would like to attend and need scholarship help, please ask!



Zumba: Saturday, Dec. 10 and Dec. 17

4:30 pm in the Assembly room

Bring your friends and join the fun in the Assembly room!



Post-Tornado Rebuilding in Tuscaloosa, Alabama April 14-21, 2012

On April 27, 2011, a tornado devastated the heart of Tuscaloosa

The tornado took the lives of 43 citizens. Hundreds more were injured while thousands of homes and buildings were destroyed or severely damaged. Many of those whose homes and businesses were severely damaged or destroyed are without the insurance or financial means to clear their property, much less repair, restore or rebuild their structures. In the wake of that terrible day, thousands of people from all over the world have extended their prayers, sent aid and volunteered to work removing debris and assist in the rebuilding effort. Tuscaloosa offers mission groups a variety of opportunities for volunteer services including rebuilding and reconstruction under qualified supervision. The First Presbyterian Church of Tuscaloosa, in partnership with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), is hosting outside work groups to assist families in the area. Our work will be assigned to us based upon the need at the time of our arrival.



The Symbolism of Ivy

Ivy stands for love because it clings to the walls and trees when it grows. That's why Christians in the Middle Ages started to use it for Christmas decorations.

A **Mission Team** of up to 24 volunteers from congregations all around the Presbytery will head to Tuscaloosa April 14-21, 2012. All volunteers must be 16 years or older. Volunteers pay their own way or receive assistance from their churches. Every effort has been made to keep the cost as low as possible. Significant costs for this trip are underwritten by the Congregational Development Committee of the Presbytery of Genesee Valley. Housing and groceries are provided by the First Presbyterian Church of Tuscaloosa.

ALL SKILL LEVELS ARE NEEDED and APPRECIATED!

Those who have not had the experience of disaster recovery work are especially encouraged to participate! **Interested?** Find

more information at the Presbytery website: <http://www.pbygenva.org> If you have specific questions, contact Susan Orr at 242-0099 or sorr@pbygenva.org **Registration Form:** <http://www.pbygenva.org/documents/committees/ma/tuscaloosa-mission-trip-2012-04.pdf>

Cost: \$585

Includes airfare, ground transportation, housing, and group meals (does not include baggage fees)

Deposit Deadline: \$ 85 Deposit Due with Registration form by January 15, 2012 .

Would you like to be a part of it? If you would like to attend and need scholarship help, please ask!

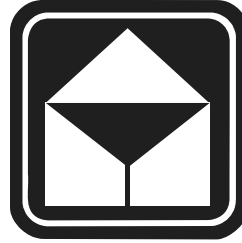
Thank You

Dear First Presbyterian Church Members,
Thank you very much for your generous contribution of \$50 to the Brockport Ecumenical Outreach Committee. It is appreciated. With support from the community we can continue to help those who need assistance.

Sincerely, Donna Laundry BEOC Treasurer

I just wanted to say thank you to the best loving and caring church family that anyone could ask for! On October 22nd, Pam Shillieto and I went down to the Hudson Valley region to bring the clothing down for flood victims in my home town. (Pam, thank you so much for being my co-pilot and being company on the journey!) I had rented a 10 foot Enterprise van to take all the love and donations down. On the 21st the Brockport Varsity Football Team helped load all the boxes and bags of donations in the van for me. (Thank you boys for being an inspiration off the field as well as on the field!) My other girl friend from Trinity Church on Rte. 31 in Gates met me at home with donations of food, dog food, cleaning supplies, masks, diapers, baby bottles, and many other needed items. (Thank you Trinity Church and Tracy Cornell) My girlfriend Sandi, that I spoke of during my faith statement one Sunday, met us there and she was very impressed that Brockport was reaching out and sending that much love down state! Sandi has contacted me through Facebook and wanted me to extend her sincere gratitude for all our congregation has done. Pam and I started out on Sunday after a much needed rest at my "Mom's Hotel", (Thank you mom for the warm bed and soft pillow!) we headed back to Monroe county. Along the way we had beautiful weather and enjoyed the colors of the changing foliage in the Catskill Mountains. God was with us every mile of the way. Thank you God for a truly blessed trip, your love was very evident everywhere.

Anita Mault



Please Forgive Us!

The mailing label list used to send out the estimate of giving cards for our "2012 Gifts of Gratitude" campaign were only addressed to one "head of household." It seems our intent of addressing families did not pan out, as we wished, when it came to the specifics of the database system. Please know that we value all the members of your family, and intended the letter and accompanying card to be addressed to both spouses, or all heads of household where appropriate.

Thanks for your understanding!

~Rev. Aaron Doll, Pastor

~Scott MacKenzie, Financial Secretary

~Caitlin McGrath, Administrative Assistant

E-LETTER NEWS

Subscribe to the E-Letter mailing list!

Send an email with **Subscribe** in the **Subject** field to: hastings@firstchurch14420.org

PRINTED CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Submit content to Beth Dickinson at bdickinson@rochester.rr.com; 391-3225; or in Newsletter mailbox at church

Church Office Hours

- **Monday, Wednesday, Friday:** 9 am - noon
- **Tuesday and Thursday:** 2 - 4 pm

The building may be locked if you visit during Friday hours. Use the doorbells or call ahead so Caitlin will know you are coming.

Pastoral Concerns

Prayer List: Occasionally we rotate names off the prayer list who have been on for awhile. Sometimes this is a hard call when there may be long-term conditions affecting a loved-one. We will gladly replace or add any new names. Please speak to Pastor Aaron or call the church office.

Members:

Health concerns: Ileen Preston, Ron and Millie Wiegand, Mary Miller, Betty and Joe LaManna, Betty Collins, Charlene Whipple, Beverly Bates, Andrea Rizzo, Priscilla Baglio.

Also, Sue and George Campbell – family health concerns, Holly and Ted Sheehan – adoption and travel to Russia, Marilyn Goodberlet – transition

Friends:

Tyler Banker and Ryan Zamiarski, Bruce and Shelly Thompson, Kevin Allison, Gail Behrens, Vicki Howell, father of Jim Hastings, David Schwartz, Steven Goodberlet, Heidi Banser, Holly Stewart's brother and family, the Crawford family, Ron Kruger, family of Tim Kimball, Joan Rands, Shirley Sroka, Alyssa Wilson, family and friends of Monika Andrews, Barb Sabatini, Chris and Laurie Winslow, Tom Faulkner, Lynette Bellow, Bob and Ken Strayer, Kalman Toth, Roger and Lynn Richardson, Diane Burritt, Karen Bigger, Gary Hayes, Mary Fessenden, Robin Malone, Graham Andrus, Rex Johnson, Ellen Ricks, family of Mary Ann Dames, Gary Zastrow, Paula Starling-Jones, Sharon and Carl Wheat, Ruth Burgess, Jack Humm, Jimmy Reader, Ken Bibby and family, Joe Gilbert, Beth Wadhams Petrino, Jamie Herrmann.

Active military duty:

Nick Ornt, Danny Tozer, Carl Williamson, Daric Barkee, Heidi Fyfe Stewart, Chad Brannon, Steven Hampshire, Joseph Storms, Cody Hill, David Hurn.



SOMETHING FUN: *Answers*

Text Messages from Above – Can you translate the following?

ROFL = **Rolling on Floor Laughing** (for those who asked...)

1. no1 b4 me. Srsly **No one before me. Seriously.**
2. dnt wrshp pix/idols **Don't worship idols.**
3. no OMGs **No Oh My God's**
4. no wrk on sbth **No work on Sabbath.**
5. pos ok - ur m&d r cool **Parent over shoulder OK - your mom and dad are cool.**
6. dnt kill ppl **Don't kill people.**
7. :/X only w/m8 **Sex only with mate.**
8. dnt stl **Don't steal.**
9. dnt lie re:bff **Don't lie regarding your best friend forever**
10. dnt ogle ur bff's m8 or stuff. Myob **Don't oogle your best friend forever mate or stuff. Mind your own business.**

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

35 State Street
Brockport, NY 14420

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #84
BROCKPORT, NY 14420



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 9 am - noon
Tuesday and Thursday: 2 - 4 pm

Phone: 585-637-3780

Fax: 585-637-5053

Office email: officefpc@frontiernet.net

Pastor email: aarondoll@frontiernet.net

Church website: www.firstchurch14420.org

Presbytery website: www.pbygenva.org

Presbyterian Church (USA) website: www.pcusa.org

OUR STAFF

Aaron R. Doll, Pastor

Caitlin McGrath, Administrative Assistant

Vicky Miner, Minister of Music

Tricia Crissman, Youth Music Director

Scott Maar, Bookkeeper

Roger Meiers, Sexton