

## Bird Songs

By Dr. David Bond

Many of you know that I visited my family at our place in Montana several weeks ago. My brother, Alan, is a retired professor from the University of Nebraska Lincoln, where he did extensive animal behavior research on pinyon jays. He has a continued interest in anything avian, and as our property is basically a bird sanctuary, he got a wonderful app on his phone called Merlin (it's free). It could identify a bird simply by its call, so I got it on my phone when I got back to Buffalo. Hearing a bird call I didn't recognize, I quickly got out the phone, but by that time there was silence – no chirping. Nothing. Oh well! Next time.

I thought about that after Stan's Sunday sermon in which he quoted Jesus' comments to his disciples after they were not welcomed in a Samaritan village. They went on to the next village instead. (In my case, the next bird song!) Stan related this to the work of the Network of Religious Communities in trying to bring people of all faiths together to work on common areas of concern. Sometimes they're willing to dialogue, sometimes not, and sometimes even refuse the invitation. So, it's on to the next village so to speak – to keep trying the dialogue and offering it to anyone. His point was that our willingness to dialogue respectfully with each other is what we need to do to keep democracy alive in this country whether it's about abortion rights, gun control, election fraud, or dissatisfaction with our elected officials. How each of us does that is up to us.

So it is with First Church. The transition team has done a terrific job in laying the groundwork for our next direction, whatever that will be. Session members have stayed in touch with the congregation to dialogue with everyone, so that everyone gets heard.

In some sense, Session functions as your elected officials. If you haven't been contacted yet, reach out to me and I will be sure to get someone to call you. The need for dialogue is always there and your opinions are welcome. We are moving into new territory and need your input.

Hmm ...I think I hear another bird call!!

Peace,

David

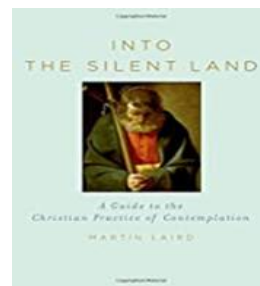
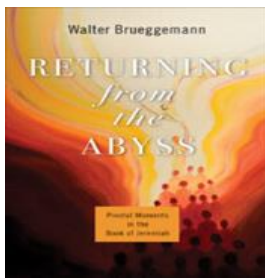


## Message from Kurt Froese, Family Ministries Director Christian Education

We have reasons to celebrate and to which to look forward in terms of Christian Education at First Church.

First, we now have available a functioning weekly Sunday nursery for children to attend during worship service. This blessing mainly is due to Maria Patrick-Roberts' service and commitment to Christian Education. We would like to have more people serve in our nursery as often or as little as preferred. Please speak with me at church or feel free to email me ([kfroese@firstchurchbuffalo.org](mailto:kfroese@firstchurchbuffalo.org)) at any time if you are interested in helping Christian Education grow in our church community.

Second, there are two upcoming Adult Christian Education studies. Books for both can be ordered on Amazon. Each class will take place on **Wednesday evenings, 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.** You can attend on **Zoom or in-person in the Pastor's Study at church.**



In our first study, to take place this summer, we'll be reading and studying key points from Walter Brueggemann's book **"Returning from the Abyss"**. Focus will be on the prophetic voice of Jeremiah, whose wisdom is equally applicable today.

Wednesday dates for this Old Testament class are as follow:

June 29th  
July 6th  
July 20th  
July 27th

**Please note:** NO CLASS on Wednesday, July 13th.

In our second study, to take place this fall, we'll be reading **"Into the Silent Land"** by Martin Laird. Focus will be on contemplative prayer and its importance in the different worlds in which we live. This book also will serve as a guide for ways to practice stillness.

Wednesday dates for this class are as follow:

September 7th  
September 14th  
September 21st  
September 28th

Thank you all for your encouragement and your support for Christian Education!

*Kurt*

## Transition Team Update

By Elder Jean Hess

The Transition Team continues to work for the future of our church. Please remember us and First Church in your prayers. These are some of our recent developments:

1.) The Mission Statement and Ministry Information Form have been approved by Session and sent on for approval by the Committee on Ministry at their July meeting. These are steps that must happen before the congregation is able to call a pastor.

2.) The Team has spoken with several ministers regarding the temporary position. Due to their current family situations or pastoral positions, they are not able to accept our position at this time.

3.) We have pulpit supply covered through the end of August.

4.) Liturgists are still needed for July 24 and August 21. A script will be provided. Contact Jean Hess at (716) 713-4274 or [hessjb290@yahoo.com](mailto:hessjb290@yahoo.com) if you are able to help out.

Any questions, please see one of the committee members listed in the bulletin.



## CHURCH LIFE AND MISSION NEWS

### REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT NEWS

By Elders Jean Hess, Tim Hess and Quinton Meyer

Thank you all for monetary and household donations for resettlement of the refugee family. We did well working in conjunction with First Presbyterian Church of East Aurora, and we will continue our partnership!

We recently heard from Journey's End that we've been matched with a Congolese family of 10. They've been in Buffalo since March. They spent 22 years in a refugee camp! Finding housing for the extended family has been the main issue in resettling them.

We will need more household goods since the family is larger than originally planned for. If you'd like to help out, please check this link to see what is still needed.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F44AFAB23A0F5CE9-home1>

If there are items not on the list that you have and think will help the family, let me know - I'm sure they will be welcome. Thank you in advance for helping to welcome a new family to Buffalo!



## Lyon Food Pantry Grocery List

Cereal



Pasta

Pasta sauce

Tuna fish



Macaroni and cheese

Rice



Beans

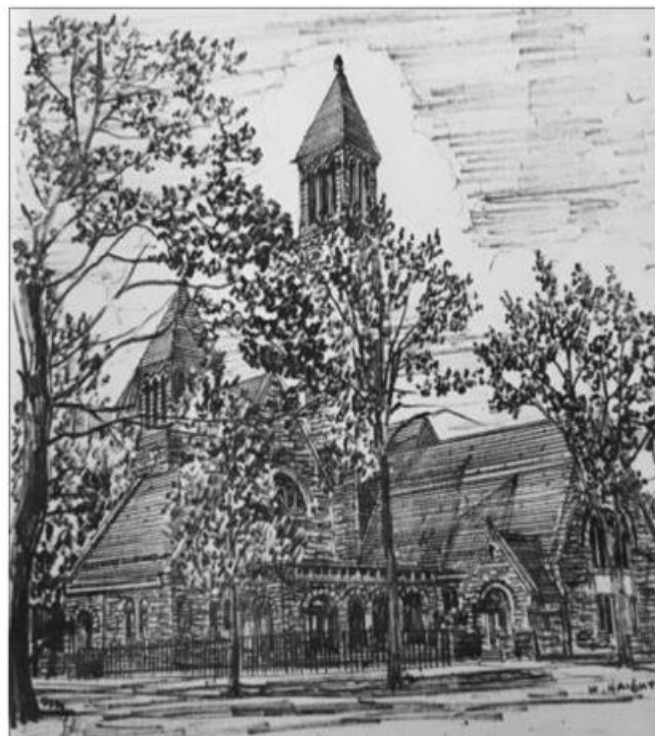
Canned vegetables

Canned soup



Ramen Noodles

Toilet paper



Sketch by W. Haight, 1955



# CLERK'S CORNER

By Elder Janet Hill



The following actions were taken by Session at regular meetings in April and May of 2022:

- ✓ Approved the payment of \$5,804 to install air conditioning for the Explore Buffalo rental space.
- ✓ Approved the rental of the chapel by Sylvia Johnson subject to proof of insurance, and approved serving wine and beer.
- ✓ Approved the Transition Team to recommend a half-time temporary pastor.
- ✓ Recorded the installation of Class of 2024 Elders James Gardner (2), Jean Hess (2), and Maria Patrick-Roberts (1) and Deacons Gail McKeel (1), Jim McKeel (2), Madeline Mason-Brandon (1), and Christina Banas (1) on March 13, 2022.
- ✓ Approved the request for a memorial service for Betty Kinnen to be held on May 21, 2022 at 11:00A.M. followed by a reception in the chapel.
- ✓ Approved the request for Rev. Dr. Geri Lyon to officiate at the memorial service for Betty Kinnen.
- ✓ Received Constance Lloyd into membership through letter of transfer from Community Mennonite Church, Corning, NY.
- ✓ Approved the request from Elder Hill to host a baby shower on August 28, 2022 in the chapel with wine to be served.
- ✓ Approved the recommitment to another two-year term for OSC Board members Niscah Koessler, Jonathan White, Beth Kauffman, Karna Holmes, Jayne Rand and Jonathan Cox, and approved the proposed Officers of OSC for a two-year term: President – Jonathan Cox; VP – Tim Hess; Treasurer – Jonathan White, and Secretary – Daniel Culross.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Hill  
Clerk of Session

## Garden-Fresh Recipes

By Elder Liz Kamke

2 super-summery recipes—1 from Joan Close & another from *Women's Circle 4 Cookbook*, as contributed by Deacon Ilsa Cooper.

Get ready for a tastebud feast with Joan's mouth-watering recipe!

### Joan's Festive Salad

#### Salad ingredients:

Romaine lettuce	1 pear, chopped
3/4 c. dried cranberries	1 apple, chopped
3/4 c. shredded Swiss cheese	1/2 c. cashews

#### Dressing ingredients::

1/2 cup sugar	1/3 c. cider vinegar
2 tbsp lemon juice	1/2 tsp salt

Put in blender and blend. Add 2/3 cup vegetable oil and blend well. Toss. Serves 10.



Photo courtesy of *Tablespoon.com*

Ilsa's "tout sweet" and simple dessert is equally sure to delight your tastebuds.

### Ilsa's Version of Shoney's Strawberry Pie

1 cooked pie shell  
1 qt. fresh strawberries\*  
1 c. water  
Red food coloring  
1 c. sugar  
6 tbsps. cornstarch  
4 tbsps. strawberry-flavor Jell-O  
Whipped cream (homemade or store-bought)  
Cook together water, sugar & cornstarch until thick & clear. Add to Jell-O to the mixture and then cool. Next add food coloring. Mix in strawberries. Lightly pour completed mixture into pie shell.

**\*NOTE:** If using frozen strawberries, use 1 c. juice, instead of water and 3/4 c. sugar, instead of 1 c.



Photo courtesy of *The Country Cook*



## NOTES



## NEWS OF THE CHURCH FAMILY

By Elder Liz Kamke



Rev. John Long, Connie Lucas, Liz Kamke

What a joy it was to welcome **Connie Lloyd** into our membership family on Sunday, June 12, 2022. Many of you probably thought Connie was already a member because she has been a part of our congregation since she started dating Lucas. Their wedding was a highlight, and the arrival of Zoe has been a wonderful blessing.

Connie grew up in Corning, NY, attended undergraduate studies at Houghton College, and went on to graduate studies at Syracuse University. There she achieved her Masters in Social Work. She is a school counselor at Our Lady of Victory residential high school. She loves the people of First Church who make it a family. She has pitched right in to our church life, and we celebrate her presence.

**Kurt Froese**, Family Ministries Director will wed **Tara Loucks**, on July 8, 2022. They will be here at First Church on Sunday, July 31, 2022, when Kurt preaches the sermon at our worship service. We will celebrate with cake and Presbyterian Punch directly afterward.

We are looking forward to welcoming **Jesse Larson**, who will be lead us in worship on August 7. He was a powerful influence on our youth group and our outreach work when he worked at First Church about twenty years ago! He has gone on to be a Presbyterian Minister, and we will celebrate his “homecoming” with a reception after the service. I can’t wait to hear what he has to say!

In other news of the family, **Judith Paradzai’s** mother died in Zimbabwe, after an illness of a couple of years. She was laid to rest in Buluwayo.

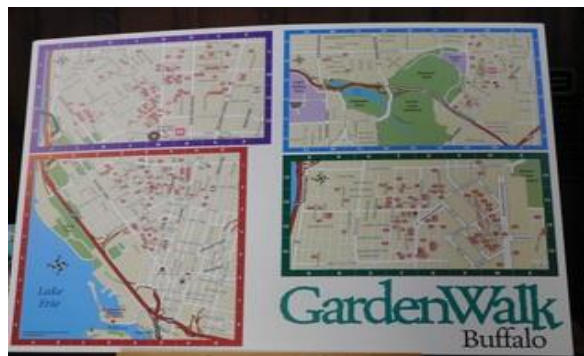
In such a time as this it has become even more important that we stick together in support of our church family. It feels like the whole world is in a shaking jar, and everything is topsy turvy! Our forbearers at First Church prayed that we could enter our sanctuary and find our God-given purpose. We have so much work to do.

### GARDEN WALK 2022

Garden Walk Buffalo is one of the best events in Buffalo. It is our pleasure to once again be a hub where people pick up maps, have access to our restrooms, and, best of all, step inside our beautiful sanctuary.

Garden Walk visitors love the tours we’ve offered in the past, and tours are dependent upon volunteers. If you’d like to help in this regard, please call **Liz Kamke** at 716-400-3770 or email her at [Eksk476@gmail.com](mailto:Eksk476@gmail.com).

We will work up a schedule for **Saturday July 30** and **Sunday, July 31**.







Unknown author, licensed under CC BY-NC

Courtesy of Pinterest

## *A Reflection: Wisdom Rules*

By Marilyn Smith

We love a warm destination with sunny beach and breezy cruises on lake or sea. Apostle Paul once boarded a ship bound from Caesarea to Rome. The sail involved the beautiful Mediterranean. But the sea held unhappy surprises. And Rome was not to be a vacation spot. Paul and fellow prisoners were being herded from one jail to another. At a port in Lycea, they transferred to a second ship. After only a few hundred miles, bad weather impelled the crew to put into port on the Greek island of Crete. They were still over 1000 miles from Rome.

Ideally, a ship could cover up to 100 miles a day. As such, their passage would've taken about 2 weeks. But Paul forewarned Julius, centurion in charge of soldiers and prisoners. Paul observed that the already dangerous voyage could turn out disastrously. Wise advice. Yet Julius heeded the navigator, who happened to own the ship. Time was money. So the man at the helm commanded caution to bow to foolish risk. Then arose a raging storm. Zero visibility prevailed. Paul reminded the crew how reckless it was to sail in unruly conditions. Through the Holy Spirit, Paul predicted the ship soon would be destroyed but no man would perish.

After 2 weeks of wild weather, the sailors lost faith in Paul. They desperately lowered a lifeboat for themselves. But Paul commanded them to stay aboard or else perish. This time they listened. Just like it is for us, wise decision-making was a work in progress for them.

Paul then broke bread and gave thanks, as was the custom of his Captain, Christ Jesus. Enough was multiplied to satisfy all 276 men. God's favor is evident within this miracle.

Next day, amid pounding surf near a beach where the crew tried to guide the ship, it struck a reef and broke apart. The soldiers rashly planned to kill the prisoners. This, to prevent escape, as if wisdom dictated any doable means. To spare Paul's life, the centurion intervened. Julius ordered swimmers to jump overboard first and the rest to float ashore on ship fragments. As promised, all safely landed on the subtropical island of Malta.

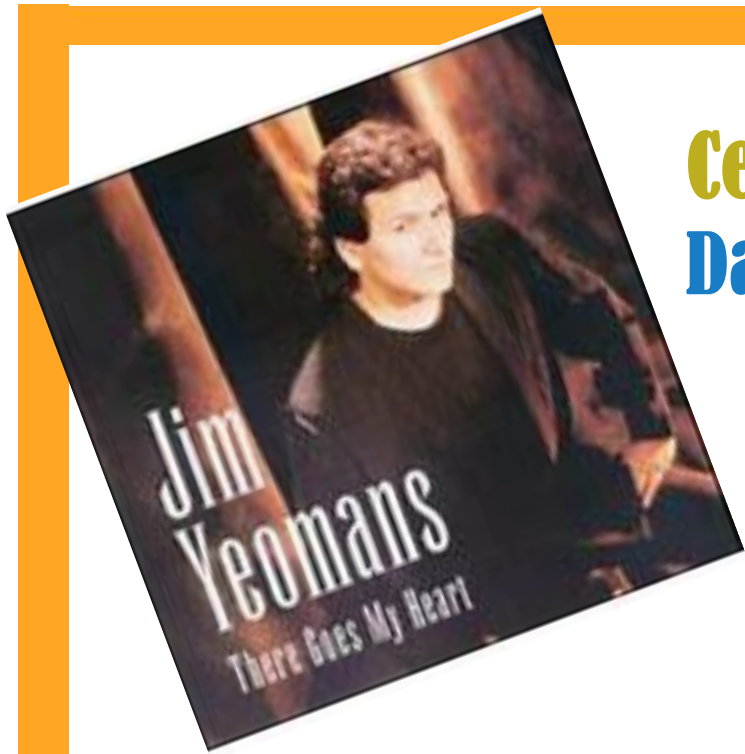
It was ironic that a deadly poisonous snake then landed on Paul's arm. The islanders presumed Paul was about to meet a just fate for crimes they imagined he'd committed. Since The Lord had previously ordered Paul to preach the gospel in Rome, he knew the serpent couldn't harm him. He casually flipped it off into a fire. The same crowd who, seconds earlier, had deemed Paul a murderer, now idolized him. Not surprising. Wavering human nature tries to make sense of confusing events by drawing its own conclusions. Even flipping switches in the process. It's why we must navigate our minds with God's wisdom as our compass. **Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, Who gives generously to all, without finding fault, and wisdom will be given to him. But he must ask in faith, without doubting, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. - James 1:5-6.**

After 3 months, all boarded a third ship. After past delays of many months, the final stage likely lasted many additional weeks. We pause to recall that Rome was not a holiday destination for Paul. And we stop to seriously consider this: no matter how comfortable our circumstances may be, this flawed earth is not our staycation spot. Besides, each of us is currently in one of 4 phases: (1) navigating rough waters of problems; (2) emerging from rough waters, (3) enjoying a respite, or (4) heading back into rough waters.

Our summer experiences likely will be pleasant ones. But we've all had upsetting encounters on the sea of life. And by the way the world is heading, Christ followers should know that pleasures we take for granted are quickly fading. Time is marching towards the great tribulation, as predicted in multiple Bible books. Our emotional journeys well may take stormy turns. Covid's travails will seem like a mere preview. And just as it's been throughout history, there are in present power many wayward captains. Like the owner of the second ship, they risk our well-being for money and self-glory. Their personal shipwrecks will turn out direly if they don't repent (turn away) from sinful habits. This is equally true of all people who continually cling to forbidden lifestyles. Putting oneself in charge of one's life, instead of trusting The Lord to lead, will lead to eternal regret. We should be preparing for The Lord's return (**1 Thess. 5:2**). If He comes during our lifetime, you'll be in a good place if you live for Him. Don't risk being left behind to face antichrist murdering the belatedly contrite or God pouring wrath on the stubbornly unrepentant.

We can't fully understand God. His ways and thoughts are higher. Despite our prideful nature, we know He's truthful. And He's Truth itself. So it's vital to plug into the Bible for His wisdom. It imparts spiritual visibility. It's the perfect compass for rough spiritual seas ahead. The big picture will unfold as God has foretold.

**Celebrate Independence Day with a FREE concert!!**



with Buffalo & WNY's own  
**Jim Yeomans**

**Where:** Parking lot area  
(on Pennsylvania Ave.) of historic  
**First Presbyterian Church**

1 Symphony Circle  
Buffalo NY 14201

**When:** Sat. July 2nd  
6 – 9 P.M.

**Details:** Freewill offerings and tips will be welcomed to maintain, and support the future of, this historic building.  
*Please bring lawn chairs.*





## A Parting Inspirational Spiritual Moment

By Kurt Froese



I have struggled in my life with some narratives in the Bible. One with which I have had to come to terms is the account of Jesus turning over tables in the temple (**Matthew 21:12-13**). I have always understood Christ to be a peacemaking, nonviolent Savior. After all, we see our Savior instruct Peter to put his sword away.

What happened on the cross has allowed my greatest understanding about who I believe God to be. As we work through our upcoming class on the prophet Jeremiah, we will be struck by how, at times, things need to be torn down to be rebuilt.



The prophet Jeremiah's very call was to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow... This seems to me to be antithetical to who Christ is. But Jeremiah's call does not end there, it ends with the words to *build and to plant* (**Jeremiah 1:10**).



Even on the cross, Jesus' death was concurrent with a holy foundation — the temple of God, and its curtain being torn from top to bottom (**Matthew 27:51**). Sometimes, in order to be able to build and plant, tearing down may need to happen. Difficult conversations may need to occur; confessions may need to take place. And outrage against injustice may lead to turning over tables. Particularly the tables of injustice we find in our churches.

What needs to happen in our own lives to be able to build and plant? It may take digging into the land of our lives and uprooting. This work is difficult. But it is our call as the church to do Christ's work of cultivating land that seems desolate, so that it will bring hope to hopeless situations (**Ezekiel 36:34**)



## FIRST CHURCH STAFF

The Reverend John Long, D.D.

*Parish Associate for Community Outreach*

JohnRLong17@verizon.net

Dr. David Bond, *Organist/Choirmaster, Bookkeeper, Facilities & Events Manager*

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Cory Connell, *Maintenance Coordinator*

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Marilyn Smith, *Receptionist*

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## OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION

James Gardner, President

Don Houck, Vice President

Mark Armesto, Treasurer

Janet Hill, Secretary

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OFFICERS

### SESSION AND TRUSTEES

#### BY CLASS AND TERM

#### *Class of 2022*

Mark Armesto (2)

Don Houck (2)

Liz Kamke (2)

#### *Class of 2023*

Janet Hill (2)

Quinton Meyer (1)

Tim Hess (1)

Kailee Van Brunt (1)

#### *Class of 2024*

James Gardner (2)

Jean Hess (2)

Maria Patrick-Roberts (1)

### BOARD OF DEACONS

#### BY CLASS AND TERM

#### *Class of 2022*

Russell Carlson (1)

Olga Rico-Armesto (1)

Denis Wettlaufer (2)

#### *Class of 2023*

Ilsa Cooper (1)

Suzanne Pilon (2)

Eli Van Brunt (1)

#### *Class of 2024*

Christina Banas (1)

Gail McKeel (1)

Jim McKeel (2)

Madeline Mason-Brandon(1)

## Transition Team

Mark Armesto

David Bond

Ilsa Cooper

Jean Hess

John Long

Connie Lloyd

Eli Van Brunt

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

One Symphony Circle, Buffalo, NY 14201-1213

(across from Kleinhans)

Sunday worship 10:30 am in person & via Zoom

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[Facebook.com/1stChurchBuffalo](https://www.facebook.com/1stChurchBuffalo)

Twitter & Instagram: @1stChurchBflo



*The mission of historic First Church is to bring diverse people of metropolitan Buffalo together to follow Jesus Christ through worshiping God, fostering spiritual growth and serving the community.*