

# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BUFFALO

## NEWSLETTER

Summer 2023

Title photo by Marilyn Smith

### Leslie's Musings

By Rev. Leslie Latham



As I write this, we're heading into a week of perfect Buffalo weather — what makes me love this region. **We are so blessed here**, with gorgeous plant life, an abundance of fresh water, urban and rural delights, multiple farms and markets, proximity to Canada and loads of parks and trails. **So many blessings!** It almost makes up for sometimes horrendous winters.

**Our church also has loads of potential.** Above all we have space. True, it's not being as well utilized as it could be, so we need to work on that. We have expertise. People are gifted with knowledge in many arenas. We have willing volunteers—but **I would love to have us start serving the neighborhood on a regular schedule, whether it's with another refugee family, our unhoused neighbors, or a cause close to my heart — offering a fun outlet for people with dementia or developmental disabilities.** Chair yoga to keep us flexible and active. Excellent advice and tangible help for people who need to move out of their homes — sometimes quickly. Game nights? Baseball games together! Concerts, workshops, seminars, parties...

Of course, that superb summer weather beckons, and it's tempting to forget about church for a few months. (Just make sure you're still sending in your tithe; I've set mine up on automatic deduction, so I never forget.) If you're having a family event, I'd love to come and get to know you better, and, of course, bring a dish to pass. I'd love to hear your ideas for regenerating our wonderful historic church.

Even if you're away, God always goes with you, and so do my prayers. **This part is important: if you have a crisis or emergency, please call me.** It's important for you to have pastoral support, especially before scary procedures or during life's big changes. My cell phone is **716-490-0420**, and I'll get back to you

**Meanwhile, we will continue to gather to worship** in the most beautiful sanctuary I've ever seen. More bells, more drama productions, more prayer, and excellent music and preaching (I hope). See you in church or on the screen.

*Love,*

*Pastor Leslie*

# Spiritual Inspiration

By Kurt Froese, Family Ministries Director

## FOLLOWING THE WAY OF CHRIST



ssnet.org

What does it mean to be someone that follows the way of Christ? It can be a confusing venture, filled with verses from the *Torah*, letters to ancient churches, and quotes from Jesus. The message, however, remains consistent.

It is easy to take verses out of context. Pulling random verses to validate insecurities can be a struggle, but we must look at the Bible as a complete story. One good way to study the Bible is by reading an entire letter in one sitting and then returning to it to read individual chapters week by week. A great letter to read over this summer is Paul's letter to the church at Colossae.



Goodsalt.com



Readingacts.com

In **Colossians 3:12-14**, Paul shares the following:

“12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, **clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.** 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. **Forgive as the Lord forgave you.** 14 **And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.**”

This Bible book is a reminder of God's overwhelming love, shown to the world through Jesus. Through this short passage, we can be reminded of what it means to follow in the way of Christ because we saw Him act out this way of life.



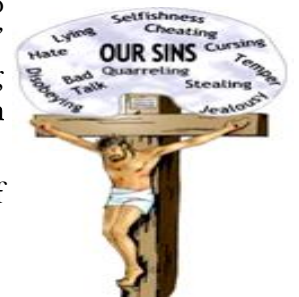
SermonCentral.com

**Jesus showed compassion**, weeping alongside the family and friends of Lazarus at his tomb (**John 11:33-35**). **Jesus showed kindness** by spending time with Zacchaeus, sharing a meal with him and his family, and not allowing Zacchaeus' opinion of himself to be how Jesus thought of him (**Luke 19:1-10**). **Jesus showed humility** by caring for others, not about ownership (**Matthew 8:20**). **Jesus was gentle**, even intervening in others' attempts to stone a woman (**John 8:7**). **Jesus was patient**, showing the holes in His hands and side to Thomas when he doubted (**John 20:24-29**). **Jesus forgave by taking on our sins** (**2 Corinthians 5:21**).

Jesus loved in these concrete and applicable ways. We can follow in His way and be part of God's restorative work in our world.



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## Children's Ministry



We are so grateful for the families in our church and for the new life that has reminded us all of God's love for the world.

If you are interested in serving our church family by volunteering in our nursery/toddler area, please speak with Kurt or Maria.

*Kurt*

# Christian Apologetics Class Recordings

For anyone who could not attend the Christian Apologetics classes taught by **Deacon Eli Van Brunt**, please use the following link to see the playlist of recordings:

<https://tinyurl.com/58cn3ewa>



## A Message from Deacon Eli Van Brunt

Hello Everyone,

If you are like me, you have trouble remembering names... At some point, perhaps years later, you become too embarrassed to ask. During the last Deacon's meeting, we discussed the idea of adding photos and birthdays to the First Church Directory. We hereby petition anyone interested to email to me a family or individual photo of your choice, along with date(s) of birthday(s).

Note: this is completely optional!

If you do not have a digital copy of a photo, or need a new one, please let me know, and we can make other arrangements. If you are interested, please email me at [etvanbrunt@gmail.com](mailto:etvanbrunt@gmail.com)

Blessings,

*Eli*

## A Note from Elder Kailee Van Brunt

Eli, Jensen, and I thank you for allowing us to borrow 6 toddler chairs from First Church's Nursery/Toddler area to use for Jensen's 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

Jensen and his daycare friends had a great time!

Blessings,

*~Kailee*





## CLERK'S CORNER

By Elder Janet Hill

The following actions were taken by Session at regular meetings in January, February, March, and April, at a special meeting on January 30, and by the congregation at the Annual Meeting in February.

- ✓ Approved the request of One Symphony Circle to serve champagne on December 20 at the reception of the new carillon that had been donated by a local family.
- ✓ Allowed Pastor Alexis and the El Shaddai congregation to use First Church chapel on Sunday afternoons at 3:00 until repairs are finished on their church building.
- ✓ Approved the baptism of Robert Rand Amo, son of Lauren (active member) and Robert Amo, on April 30, 2023.
- ✓ Agreed to hold the Annual Meeting on February 5, 2023.
- ✓ Called a Special Meeting of Session on January 30, 2023 to consider the extension of the contract with Rev. Leslie Latham.
- ✓ Approved the One Great Hour of Sharing collection February 22-April 9.
- ✓ Cancelled service on February 22, Ash Wednesday, due to weather conditions.
- ✓ Approved the motion from the Corporate Board to (1) bifurcate the Administration Committee into Personnel and Lands & Buildings and (2) to delegate oversight of the Lands & Buildings, Finance, Investments, Personnel, the bookkeeper and the facilities to the Corporate Board.
- ✓ Elected Janet Hill as the Session representative to the Nominating Committee.
- ✓ Agreed to extend the contract of Rev. Leslie Latham through December 31, 2023 on the same terms as her terms of call.
- ✓ Authorized the Clerk to cast a single, unanimous ballot to elect Olga Rico Armesto (2), Nikia Jenkins (1), and Lou Ann Luther Riegle (1) to the Board of Deacons, Class of 2025.
- ✓ Elected Mark Armesto (1) to the Board of Deacons, Class of 2023.
- ✓ Authorized the Clerk to cast a single, unanimous ballot to elect Pat Harmon (1), Pat Frey (1), and Suzanne Pilon (1) to Session, Class of 2025.
- ✓ Reelected the Corporate Board: James Gardner, President; Don Houck, Vice President; Mark Armesto, Treasurer, and Janet Hill, Secretary.
- ✓ Elected Jonathan Cox to the 2023 Nominating Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

**Janet Hill**  
Clerk of Session

## FIRST CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

By Elder Jean Hess

### Kalonda Family Update



The Kalonda family will be moving to a house in South Buffalo in June. It'll be one home for the entire 3-generation family, rather than separate apartments in a busy Niagara Street neighborhood. They look forward to settling in and

having green space where the children can play.

They've also purchased a car to make commuting to work and shopping easier.

We'll still work with the family as they continue to settle into life in Buffalo. Watch for opportunities to help in forthcoming bulletins.

### Liturgists Needed!

There is a sign-up sheet on the table in the narthex for those wishing to serve as liturgists in Sunday worship. No special skills are required. A script is provided ahead of time. It's an easy way to take part in worship.

**Contact Jean Hess at 716-713-4274 or Dr. David Bond at 716-884-7250, ext. 204, with any questions.**

### Coffee Hour Hosts/Hostesses Needed!

We are glad to have coffee hour back to visit with each other after worship. Please sign up at the table in the narthex to share hosting duties with someone. Directions and paper products are supplied. Simply provide a snack – sweet or savory – to share, and help set up. Questions? Call



**Ellen Henry at 716-863-8378 or Jean Hess at 716-713-4274.**

### Church Life

Looking forward to summer? We are, too! Church Life is planning some fun activities – attending a Bisons' baseball game, field trips, picnics – all your favorites! Stay tuned for details!!



Clipground.com



Icons-incons.com



Clipground.com

## Remembering Victims & Families Renewing Hope in The Lord



Courtesy of former First Church member, **Sandy Loudon Mundier**, is this photo of our **First Church Bell Choir** participating in a solemn and ponderous occasion. In the midst of joy over Christ Jesus' victory over death by His resurrection, we lovingly memorialized the innocent victims of a horrific shooting on **May 14, 2022**. Still with disbelief, and filled with compassion for loved ones of these victims, we mourn this tragedy. We honored them, senselessly stolen from our midst. Rekindled hope also filled us while welcoming new **Deacon Nikia Jenkins** during worship services that day. The Lord is a God of comfort and renewed strength.

The following is a prayer from **Rev. Leslie Latham, Pastor of First Church**, invoked in unison by her & the congregation:

Lord, we thank you for the unique and beautiful lives of our fellow Buffalonians: Celestine Chaney, Heyward Patterson, Pearl Young, Roberta Drury, Ruth Whitfield, Aaron Salter, Katherine Massey, Andre Mackniel, Geraldine Talley, and Margus Morrison. Lord, please comfort the families, friends, and community whose hearts are broken with grief. We grieve the knowledge that they were killed because they were Black. Lord, we know that you love all, no matter what their race, and so we pray you transform hearts to show love without prejudice. Help us to heal, comfort, and change for the good of all. In Jesus' saving name we pray, Amen.



## Newness Renewed. . .

Photos: Elder Kailee Van Brunt

**Robert Rand Amo**, known to loved ones as Robbie, represents God's hope for the future. On **Sunday, April 30, 2023**, family & friends gathered with First Church friends to celebrate Robbie's baptism by **Rev. Leslie Latham**. While Robbie won't be able to recall this event, he'll be filled with love anew as he someday views these and other photos attesting to the immense outpouring of love for him and Mom & Dad, **Lauren (Hill) & Rob Amo**.





# Sweet & Savory Summer Recipes



By Elder Liz Kamke

Bell Choir Director, Elder Pat Harmon, and Elder Jean Hess are this newsletter's featured *Circle 4 Cookbook* contributors.

**Pat Harmon** (*nee* Matteson at the time), submitted this sure-fire hit of a cool salad. While *Rosa Marina* pasta is specified as an ingredient, any orzo pasta should do nicely. Enjoy this fruit-juicy presentation at a family/friends picnic or your own backyard barbeque. Yummy variation of ambrosia, it's guaranteed to please sweet salad fanciers.

## Pat's "Kathy's Party Salad"

### Ingredients:

- 1 box Rosa Marina pasta - #37 or 35.
- 2 15-oz. cans chunk pineapple.
- 1 can of mandarin oranges
- 3/4 cups of sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons of flour
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- 1 (16-ounce) container of whipped topping



Pinterest.com

Directions: Drain juice from pineapple and oranges, and set aside fruit. Add sugar, eggs, flour, and salt to juices. Boil until thick. Add to cooked noodles and set overnight. Cut in half the pineapple chunks. Add 1/4 cup of chopped nuts or coconut, mandarin oranges, and 1/2 jar maraschino cherries. Add fruit to noodles. Mix with 1 medium container of Cool Whip™ or generic brand. Pat notes that a friend of a friend shared this recipe, which yields a large portion.

You can't get more summery or flavorful than **Jean Hess's** barbeque sauce contribution. Get out your grill and go to town with this one. Conveniently easy to assemble, it renders delightfully delicious results!



servedfromscratch.com

## Jean's "Cornell BBQ Sauce" (for chicken)

### Ingredients:

- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup of cider vinegar
- 1/3 cup of salad oil
- 1-1/2 tablespoons of salt
- 1-1/2 teaspoons of poultry seasoning
- 1/4 teaspoons of pepper
- 1 bay leaf

Directions: Marinate chicken in sauce for an hour. Broil on grill, basting and turning chicken every 10 (ten) minutes. This recipe makes enough for 5 (five) broiler halves.



Cliparts.co

# VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP: LYON FOOD PANTRY MISSION



Donation baskets for canned or boxed dry food and paper products are in the narthex, under the large display table.

Toiletries, such as soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, mouthwash, and floss, are welcomed, too.

Monetary donations to the Lyon Food Fund are also appreciated as follows:

Online at First Church's website:  
[www.firstchurchbuffalo.org](http://www.firstchurchbuffalo.org)

Click the "Donation" button at bottom of screen and follow the instructions.

Check or money order made out to "First Presbyterian Church of Buffalo", clearly indicating "Lyon Food Fund" at bottom left, can be placed in offering plate or mailed to First Church.

Cash in an envelope, clearly marked for "Lyon Food Fund", can be placed in an offering plate.

Donation of your time: Marsha Baker so enjoys passing out bags, that she's begun volunteering to fill them, joining with Elder Jim McKeel and Elder Suzanne Pilon. As Jim notes, many hands make quicker work of bagging the groceries.

Amid inflation, financially struggling First Church neighbors, and those of surrounding areas, depend on our generosity.



## USEFUL ITEMS FOR LYON FOOD PANTRY

BEANS, all varieties – canned or dry packaged

CEREAL – boxed

CHICKEN – canned

FRUIT – canned

MAC & CHEESE – boxed

PAPER NAPKINS

PAPER TOWELS, individually wrapped for sanitary purposes

PASTA – canned or boxed

PASTA SAUCE – canned

RAMEN NOODLES – boxed

RICE – boxed or dry packaged

SOUP or CHILI – canned

TISSUES

TOILET PAPER, individually wrapped for sanitary purposes

TOILETRIES, such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, shampoo

TUNA or OTHER FISH – canned

VEGETABLES – canned



## FIRST CHURCH STAFF

The Reverend Leslie Latham, *Pastor, Head of Staff*

Revleslie@firstchurchbuffalo.org

Voicemail extension: 203

The Reverend John Long, D.D.

*Parish Associate for Community Outreach*

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

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Kurt Froese, *Family Ministries Director*

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Cory Connell, *Maintenance Coordinator*

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Marilyn Smith, *Receptionist*

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Voicemail extension: 201

## 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 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)

#### *Class of 2025*

Pat Frey (1)

Pat Harmon (1)

Suzanne Pilon (1)

### BOARD OF DEACONS

#### BY CLASS AND TERM

#### *Class of 2023*

Ilsa Cooper (1)

Mark Armesto (1)

Eli Van Brunt (1)

#### *Class of 2024*

Gail McKeel (1)

Jim McKeel (2)

Madeline Mason-Brandon(1)

#### *Class of 2025*

Olga Rico-Armesto (2)

Nikia Jenkins (1)

LouAnn Riegler (1)

## Transition Team

Mark Armesto

David Bond

Ilsa Cooper

Jean Hess

John Long

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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Fax: (716) 884-7253

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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.*