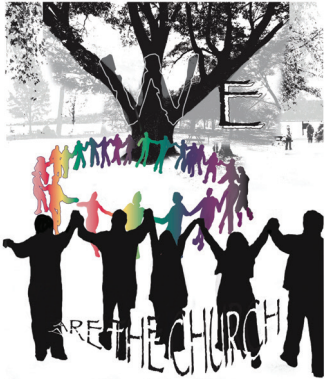


607-273-5800; www.firstbaptistithaca.org; email: fbithaca@gmail.com



Playing Vaccine Whack-a-Mole

Submitted by Andrea Mooney

Most of us have had the unhappy experience in the last several months of trying to find an appointment to receive the COVID vaccine. Websites are tricky, appointments open up and then quickly close, confusion and frustration abound. Our Moderator, Judy Kennison, developed her own ministry of finding vaccine appointments for those of us who were unable or unwilling to fight the computer demons. After she procured appointments for herself and Marlene, Judy then volunteered to find appointments for many First Baptist and other friends. Not only did she make appointments, she then coordinated rides for some who were unable to transport themselves.

In the bulletin each week, the ministers of the church are listed as "All members of the church." Judy has demonstrated this First Baptist approach to ministry: identify a need and then do your best to meet it. Thank you, Judy, for your leadership and your compassion, not to mention your patience in helping us all to remain healthy.

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What does the Lord require of you?

To do justice,
Love mercy and
Walk humbly with our God

Micah 6:8

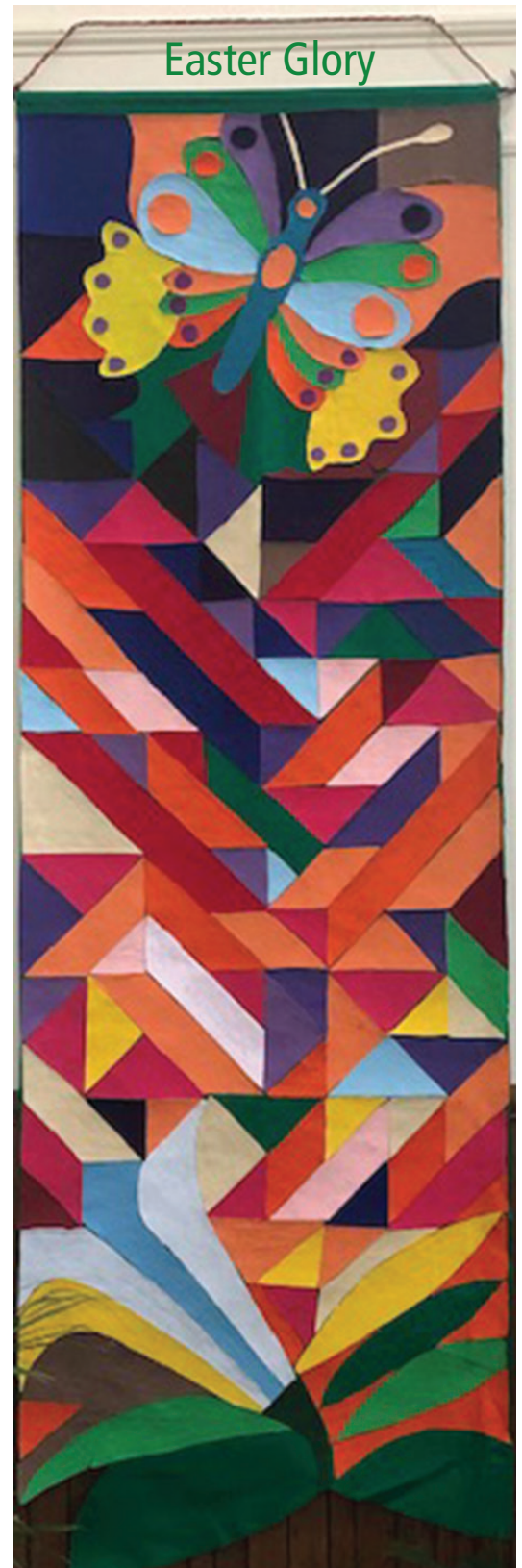
First Baptist Church in Ithaca is a nurturing and inclusive community. Guided by Jesus' Teachings, we strive for Social & Ecological Justice; and embrace the Baptist tradition of Bible, Soul, Church and Religious Freedoms.



Submitted by Anne Farrell

Easter baskets that included a Bible verse bookmark with matching pen, fridge magnet of an inspirational verse, chocolate bar, and egg filled with jelly beans along with a separate package of homemade cookies were delivered to 21 FBC members. Hugh and Helen Tucker in Oregon were remembered with a dish garden and gift cards went to Kendrick Kemp (Syracuse) and Ron Drummond (Tennessee).

Basket assemblers were Meg Gillard, Alice Grow, Andrea Staffeld, and Anne & Steve Farrell. Cookie bakers were Meg Gillard, Sue Eymann, Barb Fry, Tina Hilsdorf, Marge Hansel, and Anne Farrell and the delivery crew were Meg Gillard, Alice Grow, Andrea Staffeld, Debbie Bennett Reynolds, Tony Lister, Amy Chaffee & Craig Riecke, Josie Zanfordino & Adrienne McNair, Shella Chace, Mariana Morse, Anne & Steve Farrell.



Easter banner created by Joe Haines on loan to hang in FBC's sanctuary during Easter. Photo by Tony Lister

April 20th

Photos by Judy Kennison



Having a Snooze during Church: While the Deans were on vacation, Pastor Debbie took care of their dog Benny. Here Benny is taking a snooze as she preached.

Photo by Bill Phelan

From Your Pastor Debbie Bennett Reynolds

Dear Friends,

We are enjoying such a beautiful spring with signs of life and renewal all around us! This Easter season of 50 days until Pentecost invites us to be open and alert to all the ways resurrection is happening in our lives and in the world around us. The Easter season has been described as a time of heightened spiritual energy, a “thin place in time” when Christ’s Spirit is very close and available. Let’s be awake and alert to the possibilities of the earth’s seasons and the church year!



Reverend Debbie Bennett Reynolds

I shared in adult education on April 18 that I have been working with the Pastoral Relations Committee to plan for sabbatical leave in the summer of 2022 (May – August). When I came here in 2017 we agreed that after 4 years, I would plan with you for four months of renewal time. We are applying for a Clergy Renewal Grant from the Lilly Foundation. This grant would give me generous resources for my plans and provide funds for the congregation’s support and renewal activities as well. We will know in August of this year whether they will fund our grant proposal. Thanks to those who helped with the grant, especially Judy Kennison.

I want to focus on learning and exploring two aspects of our life together – our deepening commitment and practice of contemplative spirituality, and our growing emphasis on eco-justice and creation care and how science and Christian faith are coming together. My goal is to explore embodied spirituality and learning to be more present in my body, in this place, and in all my life.

My plans include personal retreats, spiritual direction, and hopefully a Wisdom School or conference (can’t plan for sure right now due to COVID shutdowns), as well as lots of embodied practices like hiking, camping, gardening, body massages and Tai Chi classes. I also want to learn more about this place and spend time in dialogue with our own biophysicist and mystic, Linda Nicholson, to make connections between quantum physics and molecular biology and the wisdom of faith and spirituality.

In addition, our daughter, Anna, is making plans to get married in Lebanon next summer! Lilly Foundation grants will pay for family travel, so we are asking for funds for Bill, Luke and I to go there. Going to Lebanon also is also a chance for me to return to one of the places I lived growing up as a missionary kid. I spent my 11th grade year in Beirut. This trip offers a chance for us to connect with my past and Anna’s future.

We are blessed with members who are able to provide worship leadership and pastoral care while I am away and know you will enjoy hearing from them. We hope members will join with me in reading two books, and we are making plans to have an all-church retreat in the fall of 2022 after I return. I am very grateful for your support of my learning and renewal as a pastor, and I am sure it will benefit not just me but all of you!

In other personal news - Bill and I are buying a house! It’s in a beautiful spot with great views! The house is an old barn that was totally rebuilt in 2005 with a bedroom added on. There’s even a fenced in area for the dog. We’ll be about 10 minutes further out - 13 Lang Rd in the country between Danby and Spencer. I am feeling very blessed with all this happening in our lives.

I pray that all of us will experience God’s blessings and renewal in this season!

Pastor Debbie Bennett Reynolds



Easter basket crew. Putting together the Easter baskets were, from left to right ,Andrea Staffeld, Alice Grow, Steve Farrell and Meg Gillard Not shown is Anne Farrell who took the picture.

Spring?



Flowering tree in DeWitt Park



April Fools



Polar Bear Plunge: Laura Ward takes a polar bear swim during February in Cayuga Lake.

Board of Trustees: Responsibilities & Current Projects



Anne Farrell



Josie Zanfordino



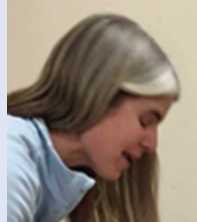
Kris Scott



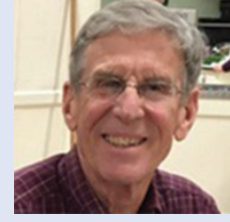
Baruch Whitehead



Rich Barron



Elizabeth Pia-Miller



Bill Fry



David Caughey



Hans Bump

Submitted by Anne Farrell, Convener of the Trustees

The First Baptist Board of Trustees is composed of nine members who are elected by the congregation to three-year terms. One-third of the trustees' terms end each year so that there are always experienced members continuing as new members are joining. Current members include Rich Barron, Hans Bump, Anne Farrell, Bill Fry, Bill Phelan, Biz Pia-Miller, Kris Scott, Baruch Whitehead, and Josie Zanfordino. Pastor Debbie and David Caughey, are ex-officio members. FBC trustees have a fiduciary duty to remain objective and unselfish in their deliberations and to act always in the best interest of the congregation, a duty the Board takes very seriously.

The trustees are specifically charged with watching over the church's financial health, as well as the stewardship of its physical assets and the safety our staff, congregants, and others who use our building. To fulfill its fiduciary responsibilities, the Board exercises great care in decision making and avoids taking unnecessary risks.

After the annual budget is adopted by the congregation, the Board monitors actual income and expenses and considers ways to deal with possible year-end shortfalls. Fortunately, such steps are usually unnecessary. First Baptist is truly blessed by the generosity of our people and the congregation's financial commitment to the church's ministries. The Board also establishes the policy for use of the building by outside groups. Due to COVID-19, the building is presently closed.

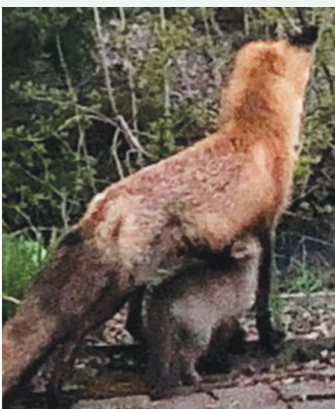
Taking care of our beautiful, historic building is central to the Board's work and what takes up much of the Board's time. With an aging building, there is always something that needs to be fixed or updated. The trustees oversee both routine repairs and capital improvement projects like the recent renovation of the women's restroom, acquisition of a security system, and installation of new flooring in the basement. The Board is currently investigating replacing the outdated, gas-driven boiler with something more efficient and environmentally friendly. As a participant in the Green Jobs New York Green Energy Study, Taitem Engineering recently toured the building to identify opportunities for reducing energy consumption, including options for a new heating system. Other projects in the works include installing a fire escape from the second floor to make this area safer for anyone using the upstairs when the building reopens, renovation of the men's restroom, and upgrades to the storage/janitor's room. In collaboration with members of the Green Team, the Board is also looking at a plan for new landscaping along the east side of the church.

Serving as a trustee is an honor and a privilege. It requires no special knowledge or skills, just an interest in the financial wellbeing of the church and a commitment to keeping our house of worship a safe and inviting place for all who enter our doors.

Bylaw Update

In an early April meeting, and under the dedicated and capable leadership of Bill Fry, the Bylaw committee made significant progress toward refining our existing bylaws to reflect current FBC practices, and envisioning and proposing constructive changes. The committee had solicited bylaws from a number of churches to read and noted aspects of each that they think are instructive. Anne Farrell proposed including the preamble in our next bylaws. It is wording that appeared in every bulletin years ago, and both she and Sue Eymann feel it captures the essence of First Baptist and should be preserved. It states:

"The First Baptist Church in Ithaca is a community centered in Christ, bound by grace, and called to model God's vision of inclusive love. Our purpose is to serve God by word, worship, and action both here and around the world, moving beyond all barriers of race, gender, sexual orientation, background, and creed. We will accomplish this by supporting and encouraging members and friends on their spiritual journey, fostering Christian teachings through education and action, proclaiming God's vision of justice and peace, and working for the betterment of the local and global community."



Mamma fox nursing pups on Debbie Allen's deck.

Church Life during COVID

Submitted by Linda Caughey (273-7864)

On March 13, 2021 we recognized the one-year anniversary of our last worship service in the Sanctuary. It is still unclear when we will gather again in the Sanctuary, but all of those who spoke on Sunday expressed gratitude for staying connected with each other through things like church meetings, Bible study, meditation, phone calls, getting-to-know-you noontime Zoom visits, continued work for the Friendship Center, Kitchen Cupboard, Enfield School, other programs while very physically distant,

and of course, Zoom Worship. We were also asked what moments stayed with us, the most difficult times, or anything we learned as we lived through the many months of the pandemic.

As the church historian, I would like to save your thoughts and feelings of life during the pandemic. Please jot them down, a phrase, sentence or much more, and send them to me via email. Or call if that is easier. I won't include names (unless you request it). Thank you!

Promote Equity and Fight Hate: Start Here

From the Southern Poverty Law Center, contributed by Rich Barron

- Work toward anti-racist allyship (the state or condition of being supportive with another person or group) by refusing to remain silent in the face of discrimination. Speak up when you hear slurs and biased speech.
 - Learn about the history of systemic racism in the US to better understand how we got to where we are today.
 - Simply denouncing racism isn't enough. Carefully consider how your "privilege" intersects with someone else's oppression.
 - Look inside yourself for hidden biases.
 - Take a test at www.tolerance.org/hiddenbias
- For more ideas, visit splcenter.org

Offering of Letters to Congress –

An Invitation from Area Congregations Together (ACT)

Hunger is reaching historic levels. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to devastate communities across the United States with a disproportionate impact on Black, Latino, Native American families, and immigrants, and worsening the effects of hunger and poverty around the globe.

BREAD FOR THE WORLD, a national advocacy organization, urges elected leaders in Washington, D.C., to support efforts that enable people in our nation and our world to feed their families and move out of poverty. You are encouraged to contact your Congressperson and ask for support these efforts. Your Participation in the Offering of Letters to Congress will help to improve the lives of millions experiencing hunger and malnutrition in the U.S. and abroad. This is an opportunity to change policies, programs, and conditions that allow hunger and poverty to persist here and abroad.

Here are two issues moving in Congress and/or in the Administration:

- Make the Child Tax Credit (CTC) in the American Rescue Plan permanent and available to all children regardless of immigration status. The CTC expansion would move millions of children

out of poverty, as well as help reduce hunger and narrow the racial wealth gap exacerbated by unemployment as a result of COVID-19.

- Increase U.S. leadership and funding for global nutrition programs without which an entire generation may be denied of their God-given right to flourish.

Now more than ever, our faith calls us to stand alongside those in our community and around the world who have been impacted the most by the global pandemic. Let us work together to ensure U.S. policies help people move out of poverty and feed their families in the U.S. and around the World. Here's what you can do:

- Write a personalized letter to your congressperson and mail before April 30.
- Want to learn more? Visit BREAD FOR THE WORLD website.

Sample Letter:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/rt7w2rmdcwmt4o0/AAC81rK9XjA80lrDI7WWo2zva/2021OL%20Sample%20Template%20Letter.docx?dl=0>

NY District 23 Congressman is: Tom Reed,
2 East 2nd St., Suite 208, Jamestown, NY 14701



FBC Sanctuary during Lent



Lenten hanging courtesy of Joe Haines. His Easter hanging is on the front page



Food Friday tableau by Bill and Barb Fry



The communion hosts



FBC Ministers

1826 - 2021 to March 22, 2021

Early Ministers

1826 O. C. Comstock
1827 John Sears
1827-1864- many short pastores, many just a year
1864-1876 J. H. Harris
1876-1880 Harold F. Titus
1880-1915 Robert T. Jones
1915-1919 George R. Baker
1920-1928 James R. Gagnier
1929-1949 Alfred H. Boutwell
1949-1956 William S. Hicks
1957-1965 Christian B. Jensen

Recent Pastors

David Evans 1966- June, 1994
Wendy Fambro 1995-2005
Rich Rose, 2007 – 2015*
Debbie Bennett Reynolds, 2017 -

Interim Ministers

Sister Loreta Jordan, interim for David Evans Sabbatic, August 1974 to July 1975
Ivy Jeanne Merrill, Interim for David Evans Sabbatic, November 1988 to June 1989;
Various persons during David Evans' sick leave in November 1992-January 1993
Margie Latham, Interim, September 1994 to June, 1995
Nancy Given, Interim for Wendy Fambro sabbatic, August 2002 to October 2002
David Evans, Temporary Interim for Fambro sabbatic, May 2002 through July 2002
John W Laney, Interim, December 2005-January 2006 to January 2007
Rich Barron, periodic substitute for Rich Rose Sabbatic from January 2015 - March 2016
David Johnson, interim, March 2016 – July 2017



Celebrating 200 Years of First Baptist

Excerpt from *These are the Baptists* by Gene E. Bartlett, 1975

Our Baptist Beginnings

There is no consensus about who were the first Baptists. Some avow that they were the "New Testament church" with a direct line from John the Baptist. Others claim that Anabaptists and Mennonites of 15th century Europe were the first. However, the most widely held view is that Baptists emerged from Congregationalism in 17th century England.

In 1602, a congregation was formed in Gainsborough, England. It was based on the principle that, in contrast to the Puritan view which hoped for reform within the governing Church of England, the only hope for an authentic church was separation from the Church of England. Shortly thereafter, two groups went from this congregation to Holland in search of religious freedom. The first was in 1607, the second was in 1608. One of these groups came to America as the Pilgrims. The other group remained for a time in Holland. It was in this second group that began to give form to Baptists and their common life.

John Smyth & Believers/ Baptism

The leader of the group in Holland was John Smyth. He became convinced the Scriptures did not support infant baptism as was practiced by the Church of England, but instead showed that baptism was an act of faith for adults. His congregation in Holland in 1609 is widely recognized as the first church formed on the basic Baptist principle of adult (believers') baptism. When John Smyth began to seek out the Mennonites who already practiced adult baptism, a group within the congregation choose not to follow him and returned to England in 1611 under the leadership of Thomas Helwys. They formed the first Baptist church in England.

Baptist Tenets

These believers accepted the Scriptures as their authority and sought a church which had purity of doctrine and practice. For these first Baptists, Freedom of Soul expressed itself in three reactions to their historical situation and differentiated them from other Christians.

First, they insisted upon choosing believers' baptism rather than having infant baptism imposed. It was one form of freedom of the soul. Second, they believed that a person should be free to belong to a church based on his or her theology, not on his geography that mandated the he belong to the local parish church. Third, they insisted on complete separation of church and state, so that the state would not overpower the church.

Roger Williams gave these principles the first habitation and name in America. He had come to the Massachusetts Bay Colony to be a teaching minister in Boston. However, when he said that civil government did not have the right to decide matters of personal conscience, he was banished from the colony. Through his contact with and friendly relations with the Indians, he made his way south and formed another colony named Rhode Island. In 1639, he convened with others to form a church in Providence based upon the basic Baptist principles of believers' baptism and separation of church and state. In 1644, another church was formed in Newport, Rhode Island and in 1688, the Pennepack Baptist Church became the first Baptist church in the Philadelphia area.

Baptist Growth

During the 17th century, Baptists numbers increased in both England and America. In 1660, a General Assembly of Baptists was held in England. In 1707, there were five Baptist churches in Philadelphia which formed the Philadelphia Baptist Association. In the next 50 years, it became the parent trunk from which other Baptist churches in America emerged. It was through revivals and "great awakenings" that Baptist congregations formed, and gathered its converts into congregations. An especially important period was from 1750-1790 during which political freedom was the rallying cry of the new country. At that same time a number of Baptist congregations formed in New England and the South.

Pollinator Garden Sprouts Life

Trees

Submitted by Linda Caughey
From Arbor Day Foundation

There are 850 species of trees in the United States.

One hundred eighty million people rely on forests for clean drinking water.

The average American uses 7 trees (!) every year in paper products.

A sugar maple tree can produce up to 60 gallons of sap a year, which yields two gallons of syrup.

The biggest tree in the world is the giant sequoia in California named General Sherman. It is 102 inches in circumference and 207 feet tall.

~~~~~  
"Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago."

Quote by Warren Buffett  
~~~~~



Mertensia (Virginia Bluebells)

Reverence brings courage.
Reverence brings knowledge.
Reverence brings skill. Reverence brings healing. It is the fulcrum of the great turning of civilization toward reunion with nature.

CHARLES EISENSTEIN

~~~~~  
The care of the Earth is our most ancient and most worthy, and after all, our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it and to foster its renewal is our only hope.

WENDELL BERRY  
~~~~~



Marge Hansel preparing the soil for planting.



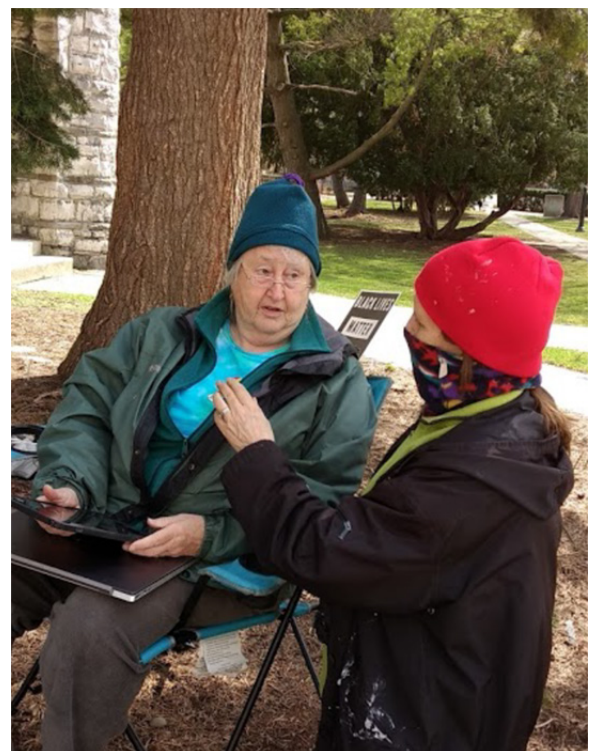
Jacob's Ladder in bud



Aronia (Chokeberry) buds,



Amelanchier (Serviceberry) in bloom



Louise Mudrak in consultation with Lisa Kilgore.



Please keep in your prayers:

- John Gross
- Suzanne Kilgore
- Naomi Hollister
- Laurel Lawshae
- Joan Yarborough
- Pastor André Thera & family
- Ron Drummond
- Barbie Lister
- Cristian Pia-Miller
- The Phelan family
- Anthony Halman & family

Perhaps the most radical act of resistance in the face of adversity is to live joyfully.
ARI HONARVAR

Everything that is good in the world comes from love, land, and labor.
VAN JONES

Grateful living is the awareness that we stand on holy ground—always—in touch with Mystery.
BR. DAVID STEINDL-RAST



Daffodils in pollinator garden

The Visitor - April, 2021

Editor, publisher: Susan Eymann
Proofers: Judy Kennison, Tony Lister
Contributors: Andrea Mooney, Debbie Bennett Reynolds, Anne Farrell, Linda Caughey
Photos: Bill Phelan, Tony Lister, Judy Kennison, Alice Grow, Bill Fry

Contribute to the Visitor

In the Baptist tradition each of us are called to be ministers. Therefore, each of you is invited and encouraged to contribute to our *Visitor*. Please send announcements, articles, features, pictures to: susan.eymann@transonic.com



Spectacular early spring sunset.

Photo: Courtesy of Tony Lister

Time and Talent Ministries

First Baptist Staff

Pastor: Rev. Debbie Bennett-Reynolds
Secretary: Shella Chace
Organist: Christopher Morgan Loy
Choir Director: Belinda Adams
Youth and Children's Ministries Coordinator: Laura Ward
Nursery Caregiver: Carol Fleming
Sunday School Aide: Sarah Zipfel
Custodian: David Hopkins

Elected Leaders

Moderator: Judy Kennison
Vice Moderator: Mark Lawrence
Membership Clerk: Tina Hilsdorf
Recording Clerks: Rich Barron/Susan Eymann
Treasurer: David Caughey
Assistant Treasurer: Bill Fry
Financial Secretary: Marlene Sack

Board of Trustees

Josie Zanfordino, Baruch Whitehead, Bill Phelan (2023); Anne Farrell, Kris Scott, Rich Barron (2022); Hans Bump, Elizabeth Pia-Miller (2021), Bill Fry (2021); David Caughey (ex officio)

Trustees' Subgroups

Finance & Endowment
David Caughey, chair, Marlene Sack, Janet Cotraccia, Andrea Mooney, Curt Ufford

Interior Decoration: Barbara Fry, Julie Dean, Tina Hilsdorf, Bill Abeles, Anne Farrell, Andrea Staffeld, Susan Eymann

Church Archivist: Linda Caughey

Lay Delegates:

Affiliate Organizations

Two Delegates each for **Rochester Genesee Region** & **ABC-USA** Rich and

Lil Barron, Co-chairs; Anne & Steve Farrell, Bill Reynolds

AWAB: Josie Zanfordino, Shella Chace

Baptist Peace Fellowship: Meg Gillard,

Cornell Campus Ministry: Julia Dean, Linda Nicholson, Anne Farrell

Kitchen Cupboard: Amanda Ufford, Sue Hemsath

Tompkins County Workers Center: Bill Abeles

Sanctuary Alliance:

Leslie Schultz, Bill Abeles, Bill Fry

Pastoral Relations

Tony Lister, Regi Carpenter (2023); Barbara Fry, Bronwyn Evans (2022); Bill Abeles, Lou Carlucci (2021)

Nominating Committee

Josie Zanfordino, Adrienne McNair, Linda Caughey, Marge Hansel

Personnel Committee

Beth Wolfer, chair, Julia Dean

Constitution/By-Law Committee

Bill Fry, Linda Nicholson, Susan Eymann, Anne Farrell, Judy Kennison, Pastor Debbie Bennett Reynolds

Ministry Teams

Worship & Spiritual Life:

Barbara Fry, Amy Chaffee, Co-chairs; Bill Abeles, Tony Lister, Kris Scott, Edie Reagan, Alice Grow

Worship/Spiritual Life Subgroups

Flower Committee: Barbara Fry, Mariana Morse, Tina Hilsdorf, Andrea Staffeld

Myra's Ministry: Tina Hilsdorf, Lou Carlucci, Bill Reynolds

Labyrinth: Kris Scott, Liz Wilkinson

Sound/Audio Ministry: David Caughey, Curt Ufford, Bill Fry, Bill Phelan

Education

Children's and Youth:

Carol Fleming, Tim Dean, Leslie Schultz
Christian Ed Teachers: Baruch Whitehead, Lou Carlucci, Sarah Zipfel, Lil Barron

Christian Concern

Steve Farrell, Bill Phelan, Co-chairs;

Christian Concern Subgroups

Circle of Care: Coordinators: Amanda Ufford, Sue Hemsath, Linda Caughey

Hospitality Ministry:

Anne Farrell: chair; Shella Chace, Meg Gillard, Tina Hilsdorf, Adrienne McNair, Andrea Staffeld, Greta Cotraccia, Ella Dean, Bay Ward/Aittama, Alice Grow

Communications Ministry

Shella Chace (convener), David Caughey, Mark Lawrence, Craig Riecke, Susan Eymann, Amy Bean, Lisa Kilgore

Green Team

Louise Mudrak, Lisa Kilgore (Co-convener), Lynn Glase, Tony Lister, and others

Ad Hoc Reopening Committee

Pastor Debbie Bennett Reynolds, David Caughey, Craig Reike, Amy Chaffee, Ann Farrell, Judy Kennison, Josie Zanfordino.