

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

FAITH: CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN GOD

"A pencil in the hand of God"

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible."

Hebrews 11:1-3 NIV

We have talked about faith so often in sermons, Bible studies, prayers, daily devotions, and everyday conversations. So, what is the reality of faith? In the New King James Version of Hebrews 11:1, we read this working definition of faith: **"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."** In this verse and throughout the Bible, we learn that the central feature of faith is confidence or trust in God. **Faith is not a substance that you can measure or count.** It is not something you can add to, subtract from, or in any way quantify. **Faith is relational.**

I have always loved the quote attributed to Mother Theresa. She said, "I am but a pencil in the hand of God." To say this and to live accordingly, exhibits the lived experience of having confidence and trust in God. Mother Teresa's story evolved from her identity in Christ, from her obedience to a still small voice she heard on a train one day. The voice said, *"Go to India and the world with the poor and the hungry."* She never heard the voice again, but she worked over 60 years with the poor and hungry. She started in an orphanage with unwanted children. Years later she took on the AIDS patients that no one wanted. A reporter asked her a question one day after many years of service. He asked, *"How does it feel to fail? You have worked over 60 years in India and there are more hungry -poor people than when you started."* Mother Teresa bowed her head low and responded, ***"I am but a pencil in the hand of the Lord. God never called me to be successful. God called me to be faithful to my post of duty."*** She continued, *"By blood, I am Albanian. By citizenship, an Indian. By faith, I am a Catholic nun. As to my calling, I belong to the world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to the Heart of Jesus."* Mother Theresa's identity in Christ shaped her life. It guided the way she lived and loved and cared for the poverty stricken, the unwanted, and those with leprosy. Her relationship with God through Jesus Christ defined her relationship with the world around her. **This is faith.**

Faith is not always easy. Every life is shaped by a story. We don't all take the time or the energy to write it down, but our human condition leads us to try to make sense of our lives by fitting our situations and circumstances into an ongoing narrative – not just the narrative of our individual lives, but the ongoing story of the whole world. We ask questions like, "Why do bad things happen to good people? and Why do good things

happen to bad people?” Both questions show the inner struggles we have when faced with the reality that sometimes our stories don’t match our expectations. They simply don’t make sense to us, especially when our stories are no longer neat, predictable, and comfortable. So we wait.?? **Faith is trusting God even when circumstances don’t inspire confidence.** Faith inspires patience!

Faith is patient. Even when it we can ‘t see any evidence of what we are waiting for but faith reminds us that our promises are sometimes delayed. During these times of delay, we learn that faith is not the opposite of doubt.

We live in a religious culture that tends to pose faith and doubt as polar opposites. But just as courage, according to Plato, isn’t the absence of fear but rather the ability to do one’s duty precisely when one is afraid, faith is not an absence of doubt but rather a tenacious commitment to keep believing even when surrounded by doubt. **Faith is being caught up in the character of God and the promises of God that are sure.**

“Perfect love casts out all fear.” (I John 4:18 NIV)

The life of faith is a life in relationship with God and our relationship with God defines our relationship with each other. **Faith is not something we can do alone.**

One of the primary reasons we come together in worship each week is to encourage each other in faith by sharing the blessing we have received from God. Take the time to read and reread some of the entries you have placed in your Blessings Journal. I invite you to share a blessing or two with the congregation during the month of April. Sharing our faith with each other is a wonderful offering and gift of encouragement.

Faith is a gift given to us by Christ and mediated through all the people in our lives that have shared their faith with us. In this way, **faith is always communal, even borrowed**, as we stand and depend as much on the faith of those around us as we do on our own lived experiences, seeing God with us, in us, and through us.

In Christ’s service with you.

Shalom,
Dr. N. C. Wimberly



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to Spring! The ice on the lake has disappeared, the days are getting warmer and many birds are back. I look forward to all these changes that Spring brings to us! Our church is facing some possible changes too. As I wrote in March's Harbinger, at the February Council meeting a committee was formed to explore the possibility of a part-time pastor.

On Saturday, March 29th, the committee gave a report on the possible need for us to look forward to having a part-time pastor. A presentation by Rev. Jerrod Hugenot was given in the afternoon. Rev. Hugenot was able to give us information about other churches, who have also faced this change, and how many of them have gone to a part-time pastor.

After viewing this information, it will be **up to the congregation** to make this important discussion as to whether to go ahead and look for a part-time pastor. It is very important that you become involved in this discussion for the future of our church. I personally want to **thank Ed Szmul and Bonnie Nadig** for all the many hours they spent in providing us with financial information which will help us make decision.

At our March Council meeting **Rachel and Jessica, two teachers from the co-op Home School program, presented a report on how the program was going.** They spoke about how happy they and the children are to be able to have classes in our Sunday School rooms! The program will be ending in May. They will be having an Open House at that time, and have invited us all to attend. We will be renewing their contract for the 2025-2026 school year. It is so wonderful to see such happy children enjoying our classrooms.

As I end my message, I ask you, as members and friends of Harrisena Church, to **please come and get involved in making the discussions for the future of our church.** There are a lot of great things happening here at Harrisena and we need your support to continue.

President, *Susan Ogden*

FLOWER COMMITTEE

We're enjoying watching the Amaryllis bulbs grow. We don't see any flowers yet, but we know they will appear. It reminds us of the Lenten Season. We know Easter will happen.

WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

At our March meeting it was decided to **donate certain original documents to the Folklore Center at Crandall Library** for safe keeping in their files. Mary Clickner spoke with Director Todd Degarmo who said we will receive digital copies to hang in their place in our History Corner.

You might have noticed the **newly painted ceiling** has made Robinson Hall brighter. Additionally, new light bulbs have enhanced the effect. It was voted that our association will **donate the cost of the bulbs to our church operations account.**

We also plan a fundraiser for the church in May. More info will follow.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Just a reminder, scholarship applications are available online and are **due Friday, June 6th**. If you have received one of our scholarships in the past, ***we encourage you to apply again.*** (Go to the Harrisena website at: www.harrisena.org)

Your Scholarship Committee

MISSIONS REPORT

We collected many hats and pairs of mittens for Family Services, who were very happy to receive them along with food and personal items. With the homeless population growing in our community, these items are in great demand. Remember when buying canned items, look for cans that have a flip top opening!

To date **we have delivered 3,221 meals on Tuesdays.** We have twelve people receiving our weekly meals. Many thanks to Ed Szmul for volunteering to help deliver these much-appreciated meals! **If you would like volunteer your help, please call Susan Ogden at 518 260-5337.**

As always, we thank you for your financial support.

Your Mission Committee:

Mary Alice Clickner, Pat Zacharias, Susan Ogden

EASTER FLOWERS

It is time to think about **ordering Flowers** to decorate the church for Easter. Please use the form below to let the **Flower Committee** know your wishes (*please enclose payment by check with your order*). *Thank you.*

I would like to order # ___ plant (s) **at \$15 each. Enclosed is my check for \$** _____.

Please list as follows:

"IN MEMORY" of _____

OR

"IN HONOR" of

YOUR Name & Phone # _____

(Please make your check payable to: *Harrisena Flower Fund.*)

Please place orders in the **COLLECTION PLATE** *on Sunday; in the* **FLOWER COMMITTEE MAILBOX** *downstairs in the Ed. Building; or mail to:* **HARRISENA COMMUNITY CHURCH**, 1616 Ridge Road, Queensbury, NY 12804.

DEADLINE FOR ALL ORDERS IS Friday, April 11, 2025!

With sincere Thanks from the Flower Committee for helping to decorate our church for the Easter Season!



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Membership is thrilled to report that I've been **busy keeping up with building our welcome bags**. In the last 6 weeks, we've welcomed new guests into our Sunday services. A family of 5 (3 young sons) attended 3 weeks in a row; so nice to see.

About what items are placed in those bags: I've come across an affordable option I'd personally like in a bag if I were to receive one. I've been thinking about the idea of returning to having an HCC T-shirt made available for each of us to help advertise and to also just strut around in!

Happiness was experienced by many during **ABC 's Rev. Huguenot's Presentation** (*re : Part Time Pastor for HCC*). Of the 18 of us who attended, there were many faces we hadn't seen in a very long time. Comforting to know you all still care about what goes on with your church family. And - It was a good reminder of how many members we do have. Maybe not Sunday attendees, but still a part of our church family nonetheless. New faces among the usual, were so nice to see. And on behalf of our collective church, thank you all for attending to listen & engage in some very vital information given on that day March 23rd.

"Beautiful tulips & daffodils" to you all!
Submitted by *Christine M. Burke*

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Submitted by Melissa Ferrie-Healy

Help we need at our weekly Worship Services:

- Reading Scripture
- Assisting with ushering
- Assisting with Communion
- Providing flowers
- Providing special music

Our **sign-up sheets** are located outside Robinson Hall, in the Education Building.

Thanks be to God for the opportunity to serve.

2024-2025 Worship Committee Members: Christine Burke, Melissa Ferrie-Healy, and Diane Henderson. **We are here to serve!**



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

**Join us for our joint services as well as services held here at
Harrisena Community Church! ALL ARE WELCOME!**

**April 13th: PALM SUNDAY
Harrisena Community Church**

**April 17th: MAUNDY THURSDAY Service –
Meal and Foot Washing
Harrisena Community Church
Meal at 5:30 pm, Service at 7:00 pm**

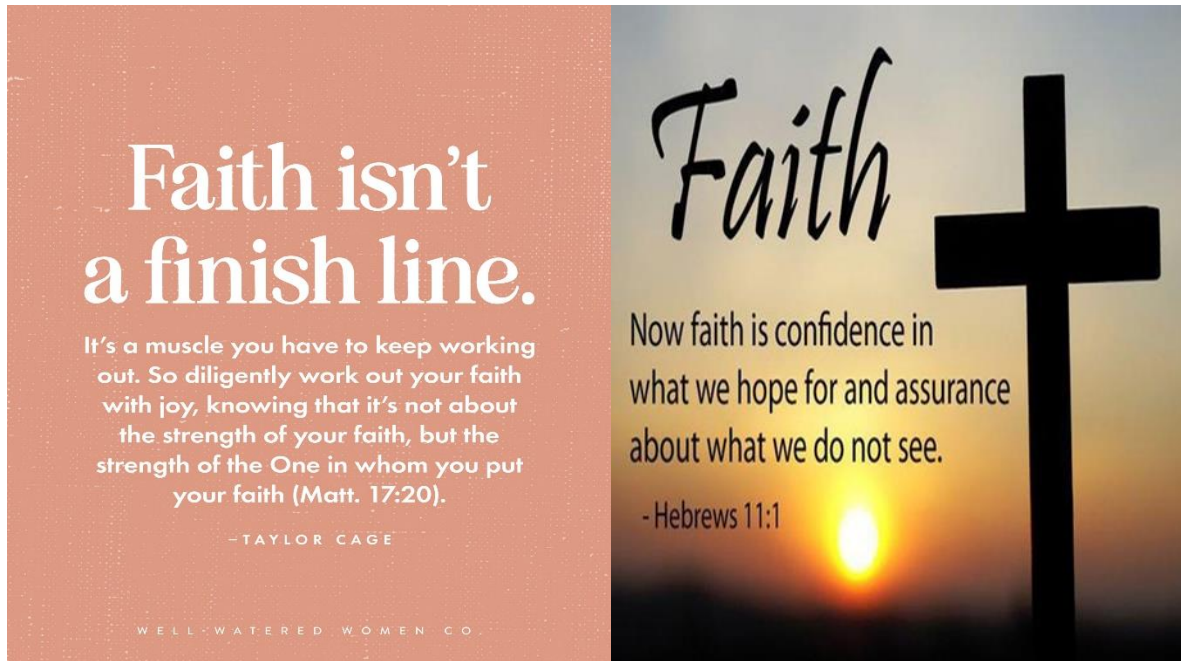
**April 18th: GOOD FRIDAY Service - 7 Last Words
Faith Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
Service 6:00 pm**

**April 19th: PRAYER VIGIL - Saturday
Online via Zoom hosted by First Baptist Glens Falls
9:00 am**

**April 20th: RESURRECTION SUNDAY/EASTER SUNDAY
SUNRISE SERVICE: Harrisena Community Church @ 6:00 a.m.
Brunch following the Sunrise Service**

**HCC WORSHIP SERVICE at 9:30 A.M.
Each church will worship together as usual at their own church
home.
FAITH**

OUR APRIL CHALLENGE!



Research has repeatedly shown that people of faith report feeling better and healthier. One of the most striking findings in social epidemiology, Luhrmann notes, is that religious involvement with God is better for your body in terms of immune functions and reducing loneliness. One explanation for this, Luhrmann writes, is that for those with an intense faith, God becomes a social relationship. MRI results indicate that in terms of brain function, talking to God resembles conversing with a friend.

WHEN SCIENCE GETS A LITTLE CLOSER TO UNDERSTANDING BIBLICAL TRUTHS

Research suggests a positive correlation between faith, spirituality, and various aspects of health, including potentially longer lifespans, reduced stress and anxiety, and improved coping mechanisms during illness.

Here's a more detailed look at the potential effects of faith on health:

Mental and Emotional Health:

- **Reduced Stress and Anxiety:**

Faith practices like prayer, meditation, and seeking spiritual support can help individuals cope with stress and anxiety.

- **Improved Coping Mechanisms:**

Faith can provide a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope, which can be beneficial when facing difficult situations or illnesses.

- **Sense of Community:**

Religious communities often offer social support and belonging, which can positively impact mental health.

- **Positive Outlook:**

Belief in a higher power or divine plan can foster optimism and a more positive outlook on life, which can contribute to better mental well-being.

- **Lower Depression Levels:**

Studies have shown that regular attendance at religious services and strong spiritual support can be associated with lower levels of depression.

Physical Health:

- **Longevity:**

Some studies suggest that individuals who are religiously active may live longer.

- **Reduced Risk of Certain Diseases:**

Faith can encourage healthy behaviors and lifestyle choices, potentially leading to a reduced risk of certain diseases.

- **Improved Immune Function:**

Some research suggests that faith practices may have a positive impact on the immune system.

- **Lower Blood Pressure**

Some studies have shown that individuals who engage in religious or spiritual practices tend to exhibit lower blood pressure.

- **Better Sleep Quality:**

Mindfulness practices, often intertwined with spiritual activities, have been linked to improved sleep quality.

- **Better Pain Management:**

Mindfulness practices have also been linked to better pain management.

Social Determinants of Health:

- **Social Support:**

Religious communities often provide a strong network of social support, which can be crucial for overall health and well-being.

- **Healthy Behaviors:**

Religious teachings and practices can encourage healthy behaviors, such as avoiding alcohol and tobacco, and promoting healthy eating and exercise.

- **Reduced Substance Abuse:**

Some studies suggest that faith can help individuals avoid unhealthy behaviors like smoking and excessive drinking.

APRIL 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 5:30am Prayer Conversations @1	2 5:30am Prayer Conversations@ 1; AA @7:30	3 5:30am Prayer	4 5:30am Prayer	5 5:30am Prayer
6 5:30 am Prayer Morning Worship @9:30 am <i>Holy Communion</i>	7 5:30am Prayer	8 5:30 Prayer Conversations @1; Council @7	9 5:30am PRAYER Women's Mtg @12 AA @7:30	10 5:30am Prayer	11 5:30am Prayer	12 5:30am Prayer
13 5:30 am Prayer Morning Worship @9:30 am Palm Sunday	14 5:30am PRAYER Income Taxes Due	15 5:30am Prayer Conversations @1	16 LGGC 5:30am Prayer AA @7:30	17 5:30am Prayer Maundy Thursday Meal & Worship @5 & 6:30	18 <i>5:30am Prayer</i> Good Friday Svc @ Faith Baptist	19 5:30am Prayer
20 5:30 am Prayer <i>Morning Worship @6 AM & 9:30 am</i> Easter Sunday	21 5:30 am Prayer	22 5:30am Prayer Conversations @1	23 5:30am Prayer AA @7:30	24 5:30am Prayer 12-	25 5:30am Prayer	26 5:30am Prayer
27 5:30 am Prayer <i>Morning Worship @9:30 am</i> Congregational Vote	28 5:30am Prayer	29 5:30am Prayer Conversations @ 1	30 5:30am Prayer AA @7:30			

JOIN US FOR SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP @ 9:30 a.m. in the Harrisena Community Church sanctuary. You can also join our worship service via livestream at Harrisena.org. Click on the FACEBOOK link at the top right-hand side of the website to the livestream of the service.

April Birthdays: 1) Carolyn Curren; 7) Katherine Gould, Lauren Gould, Donna Smith; 8) Jeremy Carte; 9) Lori Carte; 14) Ken Zacharias; 15) Kathy Herold, Doug Helffrich, Jr.; 20) April Beasley-Irving; 23) Blake McComsey; 25) Ralph Wilson; 26) Anne Kingsley, Sean Robinson; 30) Elizabeth Gusek, Mac Petrequin.

CELEBRATION FRIDAYS!!

Send your special events and celebrations to the church office for our CELEBRATION FRIDAY email publication. This is our way of sharing the blessings of God with each other as we live filled with gratitude for all that God is doing in our lives

Long-Term Prayer Requests – April 2025

Please remember the following members and friends who need our prayers of love and encouragement.

In Facilities

Pat Dallas- River Mead, Peterborough, NH
Cindy Farbaniec – Home of the Good Shepherd, Saratoga
Manu Malkani – Fort Hudson
Marilyn Somerville – Coburn Village, REXFORD

At Home

Laura Avent – member of Harrisena
Santina Bauer – friend of Roy Urrico
Walda Blanchard - Member
Kathleen Dumont – Niece of Brandy Madon
Rev. Patti Girard – Friend of Harrisena
Randy Huber – Husband of member, Cindy Huber
Douglas Jones – Son-in-law of Art Norton
Ann Malkani – Friend of Joanne Beck
Robert Marshall – friend of Phyllis Straut
Gay Smith – Member of Harrisena
Fran Tucker – Mother of Bob Tucker

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Members and Friends in the Military -

Please update the status of anyone you know on this list as soon as information is available.

Andrew Bigelow (*Army*), son of Karen Bigelow—serving stateside

Derek Dumas—stateside

Joseph Hubbard (*Army*) – stateside

Tyler Monroe (*USAF*), son of Cheryl Pagano – serving at Sheppard AFB

Kaleb Parker (*Army*), grandson of Rev. Dr. Wimberly – serving in Germany

Griffith Parry (*West Point Military Academy*), nephew of Griffith Parry- serving in Poland

James Pearson (*USAF*)

Daniel Urband (*USAF*), grandson of Alice Urband—serving stateside

Mark Wilson (*Army Special Forces/Reserves*), husband of Andrea—serving stateside

Braden Stormer – serving stateside

