

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

FAITHFUL SERVICE TO GOD

Daniel: God Nourishes

Part II

Last month we looked at the Book of Daniel. Even though we had heard the story of Daniel in the lion's den, we hadn't really known a lot about Daniel or why this story is so important to us as a Christian community. Here is where it all began:

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles of the house of God; and he brought them into the land of ^[a]Shinar, to the house of his god, and brought the articles into the treasury of his god.

*³ And the [Babylonian] king told Ashpenaz, the chief of his ^[a]officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some from the royal family and from the nobles, ⁴ young men without blemish and handsome in appearance, skillful in all wisdom, endowed with intelligence and discernment, and quick to understand, competent to stand [in the presence of the king] and able to serve in the king's palace. He also ordered Ashpenaz to teach them the literature and language of the ^[a]Chaldeans. ⁵ The king assigned a daily ration for them from his finest food and from the wine which he drank. **They were to be educated and nourished this way for three years so that at the end of that time they were [prepared] to enter the king's service.**(Daniel 1:1-5 NIV)*

King Nebuchadnezzar took some of the vessels of the house of God into Babylon and some of the best and brightest among the nobility of Judah. Among those taken into captivity were Daniel, Chananya, Mishael, and Azaryia (from the tribe of Judah¹), all extraordinarily gifted young princes. Only Daniel's name is familiar to us here, because all of their names were changed.

In order to erase God, *Elohim*, Judah, and their culture from their hearts and minds, and assure their loyalty to King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian culture they were given new names. *"The commander of the officials gave them [Babylonian] names: Daniel he named Belteshazzar, Hananiah he named Shadrach, Mishael he named Meshach, and Azariah he named Abed-nego."* (Daniel 1:7) Daniel was given the name of the most prestigious Babylonian god, Belshazzar. **Daniel is a Hebrew name that means "God is my judge."**

The king's actions were not a kind gesture to those in captivity. Everything he did was meant to signal to Judah that they, *"God's chosen people, set apart by God, for God"*, no longer belonged to God. They now belonged to Babylon. Even the education, or might I say, the re-education of the captives was designed to assure their obedience to the king and to Babylon. Everything from this new language, literature and names signaled to them that their God was no longer their God. Their identity was Babylon, no longer Judah. Another important part of this assimilation process was their food.

The king provided non-kosher food for them. It was food from the royal table. It was royal cuisine.

This might seem like a dream come true for a foodie. Living among the king's court, being trained for the king's service, and even eating from the king's table. *"But Daniel determined that he would not defile himself by eating the king's food or drinking his wine..."* (Daniel 1:8 MSG)

Think about it! Nutritionists have long known that *'you are what you eat'* is not just an expression. Recent studies suggest that what you eat affects you and sometimes even your children and grandchildren. Recent **studies further suggest that the food you eat could modify your genes** and potentially your children's (Scientific American, June 2017).

King Nebuchadnezzar was determined to change them, their children, and their children's children, from the inside out, until Judah was only a faint memory. Despite the king's efforts, this was not a triumph of the Babylon empire over Israel. It was all still subject to the providence of God.

The scriptures teach us that from start to finish, there is no event, person or sphere that is outside of God's control. God works all things, not just some things, not just most things, God works all things according to the council of the Divine will (Ephesians 1:11 NIV) Even though Israel's descent was God's act of judgement upon them for their sin, God's love and grace endured. Cornelius Van Dam wrote, "God's hands are good hands. For God's people, when we are forced to face tragedy and even if that tragedy, like Israel, is the result of our own sin, God's providence teaches us that God is directing all things and working all things for his glory. Which also happens to be for our good." **Knowing this, trusting God in all things, allows us to look to God, regardless of the circumstances!**

Daniel chose God. Daniel chose God's judgement. Daniel chose to be nourished by God. He eat a diet of vegetables and water instead of the king's food, which he believed would be considered "defiled" according to God's laws. He chose to eat in a way that pleased God even when it meant going against the established norms of the Babylonian court. **Daniel and his friends were found to be healthier than the others, demonstrating that they could remain faithful to God while still being physically well. God nourishes, not only our souls, but also our bodies!**

Daniel put God first and foremost in all that he did. His decision teaches us to trust in God even when faced with societal pressure or potential consequences. **Daniel's unwavering commitment to God and God's will is a powerful example of living in faithful service to God.**

As we begin the 2025 Season of Lent, will you choose to live in faithful service to God? Remember, the Season of Lent begins a journey. It is a journey that we do not walk alone. God is with us!

In Christ's service with you.

Shalom,

Dr. N. C. Wimberly

PRESIDENT'S REPORT- March

As I sit here looking out at the high snowbanks covered with ice, I find it hard to believe that the first day of Spring is less than a month away. My hope is that you all have been warm and safe during our cold February days.

Before the last Council meeting **some of our church membership met to discuss the future of Harrisena. A major concern was our financial future.** With rising expenses, decline in attendance, and our aging population, we decided that we had to make some serious plans for our future. Some of the areas we have looked at were the cost of our buildings and staffing salaries.

At the Council Meeting that followed we continued the discussion, and a motion was made and seconded. After more discussion it was **voted and passed that a committee would be formed to explore the possibility of moving to a part-time Minister.** The committee was formed by the following volunteers: **Pam Lobe, Doris O'Rourke, Ed Szmul, Bonnie Nadig** and myself. The committee is **looking for additional members**, if you are interested, please contact one of the members listed above. As always, we welcome any input from the congregation!

Now that we have decided to explore this possibility, please pray with us that God will help and show us ways to make the right discussions for Harrisena's future!

President,
Susan Ogden



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS ON MARCH 9TH, 2025!

Turn Your Clocks Ahead as we SPRING forward one Hour on Saturday night, March 8th!

HCC Committee to Explore having a Part time Pastor
February 25, 2025

Dear Members of HCC,

On February 11th there was a **one-hour discussion regarding moving to a part time pastor. At the Council Meeting that followed there was additional discussion.** The Council voted to form a committee to explore moving to a part time pastor.

Since then, the committee has researched the issue, watched helpful and pertinent videos from the American Baptist Church and had further discussion.

The committee is moving forward to having a part time minister for the following reasons:

- Declining membership
- Deficit budget resulting in taking from the savings account – we estimate that there is money to continue for 5-8 years

Our next steps:

- Recommend to the Council at the March Meeting to move to a part time pastor
- Reach out to Dr. James Huguenot of the ABC to speak to the congregation regarding moving to a part time minister
- Have a congregational meeting
- Decide what having a part time pastor would look like (hours, duties etc.)

This is an important and emotional decision. Please give us your feedback, suggestions and comments. If you would like to join this committee, please contact one of the committee members.

Thank you for your thoughts, consideration and prayers.

Committee to move to a part time pastor,

Bonnie Nadig nadig@aol.com

Susan Ogden ogden64@roadrunner.com

Doris O'Rourke dorisorourke55@gmail.com

Pam Loeb pamelajloeb@gmail.com

Ed Szmul eszmul@roadrunner.com

OUTREACH REPORT- March

We **continue to send cards monthly to those who are on our Long-Term list**. We also continue to visit those who are shut in and those who are in nursing facilities.

We are *able and willing to visit anyone who might like to see a friendly face*. So let us know if you are aware of anyone (or you yourself) would **like a visit by calling 518 832-7325**.

Also, **if you know someone who would like a “Thinking of You” – “Birthday,” or “Get Well” card** we would be happy to mail one out for you!

Shirley Harney and Joanne Beck

MEMBERSHIP REPORT- March

As the chair of your Membership committee, I think I speak for all of us how nice it is to see the same happy faces each & every Sunday morning in the sanctuary. (However few, we are even MORE of a close-knit family this way). Since the last writing here, there have been just a handful of new visitors, all of our guests seem to come from "up or down the road".

I am very gleeful how we have all enthusiastically **welcomed the Oneida Church family**; this enthusiasm continues EVERY Sunday! Fellowshiping with them is a wondrous time with many smiles, laughter & conversations galore! (The treats are great too, of course.)

Membership intends to promote a love note to God from YOU, plus a Biblically love themed bookmark at our upcoming & postponed Valentine's brunch. (Continuing the February theme of love, church & our Father God.)

Please help yourselves to a quote in the glass bowl under bulletin board in Ed building. If so moved, please add one or many of your own!

Lastly, **Melissa Healy** and the WORSHIP committee and I are sharing ideas for what we'll call "*Prayer Partners @Harrisena*." We are thrilled by what we're learning of the glorious benefits both organizationally and personally of the benefits of prayer. (Just think of knowing... a person existing in your life... who is ALWAYS praying for you and for all you care about, and for having the privilege of doing the same.)

As warmer weather and later sunsets are surely coming....

Yours, in the service of Jesus Christ,
Christine Burke

MISSION'S REPORT-March

We continue to **support the much-needed Open Door CODE BLUE Program** during the winter months.

We donated many **hats and mittens to Family Services and also, delivered many food and personal items to them as well!**

Tuesday Night Meals are going well and we have delivered 3,172 meals since we started. If you are **interested in helping with our Meal Project**, please let Susan Ogden know. Thank you for your continued support!

Mission Committee: *Mary Alice Clickner, Pat Zacharias, Susan Ogden*

SCHOLARSHIP REPORT

The **Application for the HARRISENA CHURCH SCHOLARSHIP** this year can be **found on our website, Harrisena.org**. Please fill out the form and return it by Friday, **June 6th**.

Remember if you have received a scholarship in the past, you can still apply again.

Scholarship Committee

WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Doris O'Rourke

The video of **Minnie Bidwell** story was enjoyed at our February 12TH gathering after a short business meeting.

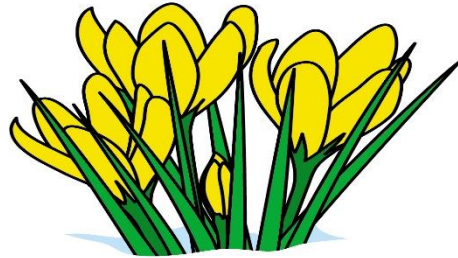
In March we will continue the discussion regarding the location of our original documents, and an expenditure for lighting supplies.

FLOWER COMMITTEE

Doris O'Rourke

March ushers in the Lenten Season.

As we move closer to Easter, the Flower Committee will be **taking your orders for Easter Flowers** (form in this issue). Stay posted for further information.



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 Monday, April 14th!

FINANCE REPORT for MARCH

I remember years ago, when Rev. Robinson was our pastor, there was serious discussion regarding finances and possibly needing to have a part-time pastor. I was shocked and thought “*absolutely no way.*” The majority of the Council had the same reaction. Rev. Robinson and the other employees at the time agreed to a cut in pay. We continued onward and were able to keep our staff and pastor.

As a financial officer, I am aware of how often we have to withdraw from our savings to pay our expenses. While we were able to construct a budget with minimal deficit for 2025, there have already been unforeseen expenses that will likely leave us with more of a deficit than we hoped for. Oneida Church and the home-school group have helped our income, but I do not think it will add enough to make a big difference.

It is after much prayer and research that I now agree with so many of you that we need to do something NOW to ensure we remain the beacon of light in our community and house of worship for all who love our Lord and Savior. **This will be a congregational decision. Information meetings will be held. Much needs to be considered and decided on.** Rev. Wimberly is praying about her options and will let us know her thoughts.

By taking action now, it is our hope that we could perhaps resume a full-time ministry in our future. Please keep Harrisena’s future in your prayers.

Faithfully,
Bonnie Nadig, Co-Treasurer

WORSHIP COMMITTEE - March

Submitted by Melissa Ferrie-Healy

Nearer, My God, to Thee

Nearer, My God, to Thee is a well-known Christian hymn. It was written in 1841 by the English poet, Sarah Flower Adams. Her pastor had asked her to write a hymn to accompany a sermon on Jacob's dream. The resulting lyrics are a prayer, asking God for merciful deliverance during life's hardships:

*Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee! E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me,
Still all my song shall be, nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!
Though like the wanderer, the sun gone down, Darkness be over me, my rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams I'd be, nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!
There let the way appear, steps unto heav'n; All that thou sendest me, in mercy giv'n;
Angels to beckon me, nearer, my God, to thee, Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!*

This famous hymn was allegedly the last song played by the band aboard the sinking Titanic, and it remains a favorite at memorial services today.

But prayer and dreamy remembrances aside, the title *Nearer, My God, to Thee*, seems a perfect focus for the season of Lent. As we strive to follow the example set by the living Christ, through fasting, prayer, confession, and repentance, we cannot HELP but draw nearer to God! We invite you to add this hymn to your prayerful meditation this Lenten season and see how much nearer YOU can draw to God over the next six weeks!

Important Dates for Lent and Holy Week

March 5th Ash Wednesday - The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, a day we remember "*For you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*" (Genesis 3:19) Please join us for worship at 6:00-7:00 p.m.

March 9th – April 6th "Little Easters:" - Each Sunday that falls during the season of Lent is considered a "*Little Easter.*" These Sundays are NOT counted as part of the 40 days of Lent! Come worship with us from 9:30-10:30 a.m. and celebrate the good news!

April 13th Palm Sunday- Palm/Passion Sunday marks the start of Holy Week, recounting Christ's triumphant procession into Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. Join us as we shout, "*Hosanna*" and wave our palms at our 9:30-10:30 a.m. worship service.

April 17th Maundy Thursday- Maundy Thursday marks the date of Christ's "*Last Supper,*" the night when he broke bread and shared wine with his disciples and asked them to "*Do this in remembrance of me.*" It was also the same night he was betrayed and condemned by his people to die. Join us for a simple supper from 5:00-6:00 p.m. followed by a worship service from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

April 18th Good Friday: Good Friday marks the day Christ was crucified and died for our sins. The Faith Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church will be hosting a service at TBD.

April 20th Easter Sunday - This is the joyous day we celebrate Christ's VICTORY over death—his resurrection! Join us for **Sunrise Service at 6:00 a.m.** and/or regular our **worship service from 9:30-10:30 a.m.**

Please consider sharing with us during Sunday Worship:

- Reading Scripture*
- Ushering/Greeting
- Providing flowers
- Walking the “*Light of Christ*” to and from the altar
- Serving Communion
- Leading the congregation in song
- Sharing special music

** Christine Burke has graciously offered to help anyone with a desire to approach the lectern with CONFIDENCE and SKILL. We would love to hear God’s word spoken with YOUR voice!*

Sign-up sheets are located in Robinson Hall in the Education Building.

2024-25 Worship Committee Members: Melissa Ferrie-Healy and Diane Henderson. Doris O’Rourke: Flowers.

March 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Women's History Month						1 5:30am PRAYER
2 5:30 prayer 9:30 Communion	3 5:30am PRAYER	4 5:30am PRAYER Conversations @1	5 5:30am PRAYER 10-Lectio Divina AA @7:30; Ash Wednesday Worship @6	6 5:30am PRAYER	7 5:30am Prayer	8 5:30am PRAYER
9 5:30 am Prayer 9:30 Worship: <u>1st Sunday in Lent</u> Daylight Savings Time Begins	10 5:30am PRAYER	11 5:30am PRAYER Conversations @1; Council @ 7	12 5:30am Prayer 10-Lectio Divina; AA @7:30 12-Women's Mtg	13 5:30am PRAYER	14 <i>5:30am Prayer</i>	15 5:30am PRAYER
16 5:30 am Prayer 9:30-Worship 2nd Sunday in Lent	17 5:30am PRAYER	18 5:30am PRAYER Conversations @1	19 5:30am Prayer; 10-Lectio Divina; 12-LGGC AA @7:30	20 5:30am PRAYER	21 5:30am Prayer	22 5:30am PRAYER
23 5:30 am Prayer 9:30- Worship 3rd Sunday in Lent 30 5:30 prayer 9:30 Worship 4th Sunday in Lent	24 5:30am PRAYER 31 5:30 Prayer	25 5:30am PRAYER Conversations @ 1	26 5:30am Prayer; 10-Lectio Divinia AA @7:30	27 5:30am PRAYER	28 5:30am Prayer	29 5:30 Prayer

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.

March Birthdays: 4) Liz Moon; 5) Casper Romanowski; 6) Thalia Matthews–Chase; 9) Walda Blanchard; 12) Patty Zacharias; 14) Brandy Madon, Griff Parry; 15) Natalie Robinson, Jamie Thrall; 16) Sue Ogden, Tyler Monroe; 17) Kathleen Gusek; 20) Jonathan Stauches; 21) Dennis Moon; 28) Bruce Lipinski; 30) Peter Aust

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 – March 2025

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

In Facilities

Cindy Farbaniec – Home of the Good Shepherd, Saratoga
Manu Malkani – Fort Hudson Health Center
Marilyn Somerville – Coburn Village

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 – Neighbor of Joanne Beck
Robert Marshall – Friend of the Straut family
Christopher Nobile – Son of Jim & Eleanor Nobile
Gay & Roger Smith - Members
Fran Tucker – Mother of Robert Tucker

~

*Our Heartfelt Condolences go out to the Family & Friends of **Jackie Bradly** who died this past month. Jackie was a friend of Joanne Beck.*



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

Michael Gusek, son of Kathleen & Tim Gusek –

Joseph Hubbard (*Army*) – stateside

Tony Mitchell (*USAF*) - serving in Afghanistan.

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*), relative of Griffith Parry- serving in Poland

James Pearson (*USAF*)

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

Braden Stormer – serving stateside

