

**PASTOR'S PONDERINGS**  
**FAITHFUL SERVICE TO GOD**  
**"Daniel in the lion's den"**  
**Part I**

Have you heard the story about Daniel in the lion's den? Most have, but do you know much more about Daniel and his story? **Daniel was a faithful servant of God, even in tough times.**

The book of Daniel is written when Judah had been taken into captivity by the Babylonian Empire. Daniel, a Judean, along with others were taken and forced to live in Babylon, far from home and far from the land their Lord had promised them. Daniel and the other captives were forced to assimilate to this foreign culture, made to wear its clothing, eat its food, speak its language, and answer to the names they gave them. They changed Daniel's name to Beltshazzar, which means Prince of Bel. Bel was the name of one of the Babylonian gods. But this did not change Daniel's identity. **Daniel, a Hebrew name, means "God is my judge."**

The young Daniel found himself in the midst of a strongly polytheistic religious culture. He had every opportunity to take on the ways of the Babylonians, but he didn't. **Daniel stood firm in his faith, even though he lived among the Babylonian people and under Babylonian rule.** So, why was Daniel in the lion's den?

After years in captivity, Daniel was raised to a high office in King Darius of Mede's service. King Darius thought highly of Daniel. **Daniel was well liked and trusted by the king. He was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.** The king had plans to eventually put him in charge of the whole kingdom. This did not sit well with the other administrators and court of King Darius. They were jealous of him and thought he had too much privilege and power as an outsider. **Daniel was not one of them.** He was not Medean or Persian. In retaliation, they all got together as a group and came up with an idea to get rid of him.

They convinced the king that they had a great idea that would honor him and acknowledge his sovereignty. They told him that he should issue a decree that for thirty days no prayers should be addressed to any god or man but only Darius, the king himself. If anyone disobeyed the decree, they would be thrown into the lion's den. They knew Daniel was faithful to God and would not stop praying to God. **Daniel proved himself faithful to God!**

When Daniel found out about the decree he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he knelt and prayed always giving thanks to his God, just as he had always done. The group reported Daniel's prayers

---

to the king and insisted that the decree be honored. Even though the king did not want to harm Daniel, he crumbled under pressure from this group. Darius honored the decree. He ordered that Daniel be thrown into the lion's den. Before Daniel was thrown in, the king went to Daniel and said, *"May you God, who you continually serve, rescue you!"* Then Daniel was thrown into the den of lions. **BUT GOD! Read for yourself what happened next!**

*"At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"*

*Daniel answered, "May the king live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty."*

*The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. (Daniel 6:19-23 NIV)*

#### **Daniel continued in faithful service to God!**

**Daniel continued in faithful service to God** by saying no to the intentional actions of others to end life. Daniel continued to trust the God who gives life. **Daniel continued in faithful service to God** by saying no to the social and political decrees of the day. **Daniel continued in faithful service to God** by trusting in God and living a trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent life. **Daniel continued in faithful service to God** by saying no to anything and everything that stood against his faith in the sovereignty of God. **Daniel continued in faithful service to God** who is powerful and never leaves us or forsakes us...even in a lion's den. **Daniel continued in faithful service to God! Daniel continued to trust in God!**

I often wonder what lion's dens we find ourselves in today. I wonder if we will continue in faithful service to God. I wonder if we are faithfully serving God now. I wonder when we are asked to make choices, do we choose God's will and God's way. I wonder...

Wherever we are today. No matter where we were yesterday or what we have done, today we can begin our journey of faithful service to God.

It is my hope and prayer that we will.

In Christ's service with you.

Shalom,

Dr. N. C. Wimberly

---

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As your church president, ***I want to welcome you to the New Year***. The year 2025 comes with many challenges for our church. The church Council continues to work hard to meet these challenges so Harrisena can move on into the future.

**I especially want to thank the Finance Committee.** They worked very hard to present us with a budget for the coming year. Now we must work hard to find ways to support it. I want to thank **Ed Szmul for agreeing to become our new Financial Secretary!**

**I want to thank ALL of you**, whether a member or a friend of Harrisena, for your support in the past. Please continue this support of our church so we can have a good year in 2025.

I wish you all a Happy and Healthy New Year!

*Council President,  
Susan Ogden*

## MISSION COMMITTEE'S REPORT

**We are collecting Hats and Mittens** (no scarfs please) for Family Services. They have also requested hand warmers.

We have also **delivered four large bags of food and two large bags of personal items** to Family Services.

We continue to support **Open Door's Code Blue programs** which are so important with our freezing cold temperatures.

**Plan International** keeps us updated on the progress of the three children we sponsor.

The Harrisena cooks are back **providing meals on Tuesdays**. We have delivered 3,120 meals so far. We average about 10 meals a week. **If you know of anyone who needs, or wants, a delicious meal** made by our cooks, please call Susan.

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

## FINANCE REPORT – January, 2025

At our last Council, **Ed Szmul** was unanimously voted in as our **new Financial Secretary**. Thank you, Ed, for volunteering and learning the details of the position. **Thank you also to Lin Brown and Janet Wilson** for always being available to answer our questions.

---

We are, of course, **still taking pledges for 2025**. Ed reported that in 2024 there were 22 pledges for a total of \$37,814. The total paid was \$30,687, or 81.1% of the amount pledged. If you are able, please bring your 2024 pledges up to date.

**For 2025, there are 19 pledges totaling \$39,000.** Our budget was hoping for \$40,000. We are so close! It would be wonderful to meet the actual goal for pledged income. **Thank you to all who have pledged.**

It is also time to start thinking about the **Ross Grant requests**. Should anyone have any suggestions, please let Rev. Wimberly know. The past couple of years we have requested operating expenses, but specific projects are also considered. We continue to thank God, the trustees of the grant, and Mr. & Mrs. Ross for this financial support.

To complete our Financial Officer team, we are still **looking for folks to serve as Assistant Treasurer and Assistant Financial Secretary**. Please feel free to ask me (Bonnie), Ed Szmul or Ken Zaccharias any questions about the responsibilities.

*Faithfully,*  
*Bonnie Nadig, Ken Zaccharias, (Co-Treasurers)*  
*Ed Szmul (Financial Secretary)*

## **OUTREACH COMMITTEE – January-February 2025**

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. **Since we are able and willing to visit**, please 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*

## **FELLOWSHIP**

*Shelley Durkee, Ron Henderson and Pam Loeb*

Come join us **on Sunday, February 16, 2025** for a celebration of Valentine's Day. There will be a **joyous luncheon immediately following Sunday Services** in Fellowship Hall.

**Harrisena and Oneida Churches have teamed up** to make it a very special occasion! Cordon Blu, Lasagna and Beef Stew are just some of the delicious foods on the menu. There is a **sign-up sheet to bring some treats to share in Fellowship Hall**.

***Bring family and friends to join in the gathering.***

---

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE – January/February

Submitted by Melissa Ferrie-Healy

### **Resolve to Thrive in 2025**

The start of a new calendar year is an excellent time for a “*Spiritual Reset*.” I’ve enjoyed using the following numerical guide each week for the past several years. Perhaps it will be as useful for you as it has been for me.

**Each week, *prayerfully* resolve to:**

**2 – do 2 things you know will have a positive impact in someone else’s life**  
(spend 1:1 quality time, visit, call, send a card, etc.)

**0 – demonstrate 0 (zero) tolerance for a certain negative attitude you are prone to** (frustration, irritation, despair, resentment, meanness, etc.)

**2 – do 2 things you know will have a positive impact on your own life**  
(breathe, exercise, get outside, drink more water, include more colorful fruits and veggies in your diet, etc.)

**5 – strive to demonstrate 5 positive character traits** (loving, joyful, patient, kind, caring, compassionate, steadfast, etc.)

*Not sure where to begin? Spend some time with God – His ideas are always the best!*

Ideally, these weekly resolutions should be written down, so you can keep track of how God is helping you “Thrive in 2025.”

### ***Heart Health Month***

February has been observed as **American Heart Health Month** since 1964 because the American Heart Association believes that raising awareness will ultimately enable people to live longer, healthier lives. We know that heart disease is largely preventable when people CHOOSE to live a healthier lifestyle: maintaining a healthy weight, controlling blood sugar, cholesterol, and high blood pressure, remaining physically active, and getting regular checkups with a physician.

In addition to thinking about the physical health of our hearts this month, perhaps we should also consider paying some extra attention to the **spiritual health of our hearts**. Just as high blood sugar, cholesterol and blood pressure levels can damage the physical heart, the spiritual heart can be damaged by sadness, despair, anger, resentment, and frustration. Yet, it’s possible for us to heal our emotionally broken hearts when we CHOOSE to live a healthier spiritual lifestyle: practicing gratitude, sharing love, building relationships, helping others, spending quality time with God, and checking in regularly with fellow Christians during worship and fellowship.

So, as the AHA reminds you to care for your physical heart this month, **please remember to tend to the spiritual health of your heart as well!**

---

***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 at the Education Building.**

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

~~~~~

***Belated January Birthday Acknowledgements:*** 5) Debbie Cartier; **9)** Roy Urrico; 12) Jay Petrequin; 14) Donna Gelder-Bigelow; 15) Danielle Nadig-Cooper, Sandy Jabaut; 16) Matthew Romanowski; 17) Kyle Irving; 18) William Brown, Richard Kline, Dan Donovan; 19) Cameron Brown, Matthew Healy; 21) Andrea Nadig-Wilson; 22) Ajani Wimbley; 24) Shelley Durkee; 27) Rev. Dr. Wimberly.

~~~~~

## FEBRUARY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 Prayer @12 noon
2 Prayer @12 noon Worship @9:30	3 Prayer @12 noon	4 Prayer @12 noon Conversations @1	5 Prayer @ 12 noon  AA@7:30	6 Prayer @ 12 noon	7 Prayer @ 12 noon	8 Prayer @12 noon
9 Prayer @12 noon Worship @9:30 am	10 Prayer @12 noon	11 Prayer @12 noon Conversations @1; <b>Council @7</b>	12 Prayer @12 noon; <b>Women's Mtg @12 AA @7:30</b>	13 Prayer @12 noon	14 Prayer @12 noon	15 Prayer @ 12 noon
16 Prayer @ 12 noon Worship @9:30 am	17 Prayer @ 12 noon <b>President's Day</b>	18 Prayer @12 noon Conversations @1	19 Prayer @12 noon; <b>LGGC @12 AA @7:30</b>	20 Prayer @ 12 noon	21 Prayer @12 noon	22 Prayer @12 noon
23 Prayer @12 noon Worship @9:30 am	24 Prayer @12 noon	25 Prayer @ 12 noon Conversations @1	26 Prayer @12 noon; AA @7:30	27 Prayer @12 noon	28 Prayer @12 noon	

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](http://Harrisena.org). Click on the FACEBOOK link at the top right-hand side of the website to the livestream of the service.

**FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS:** 2) LINDA RICHARDSON; 4) DAN BLANCHARD; 5) MAXINE EINZIG, JIM FERRIS; 6) JEREMY CARTIER, MARILYN SOMERVILLE; 17) KAYLA ROMANOWSKI; 18) PHIL NADIG, LINDA BROWN, CINDY HUBER; 19) SHIRLEY HARNEY; 21) DAVID FARBANIEC; 22) DAVID HELFFRICH, DONNEAN THRALL; 27) ANDREA LIPINSKI, JODI LOONAN, VICTOR URRICO.

### **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 – January/ February 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 Smith - Member  
Fran Tucker – Mother of Robert Tucker  
~

*Our Condolences to the Families & Friends of **Sharon Sturdevant** and **Stella Gaudio** who passed away recently. Sharon was the daughter of member, Marilyn Somerville; Stella was the sister of Roy Urrico.*





---

## MEMBERS AND FRIENDS IN THE MILITARY

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

**Derek Dumas**—stateside

**Michael Gusek**, son of Kathleen & Timothy Gusek is serving stateside

**Joseph Hubbard** (*Army*) – stateside

**Wes McQueen**, nephew of Dodi/Rev. Robinson- serving stateside

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

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

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

**Griffith Parry** (*Army*), nephew of Griffith Parry- serving in Poland

**James Pearson** (*USAF*)

**Brian Schneider** (*Army*) – serving in Afghanistan

**Braden Stormer** – serving stateside

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

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

