

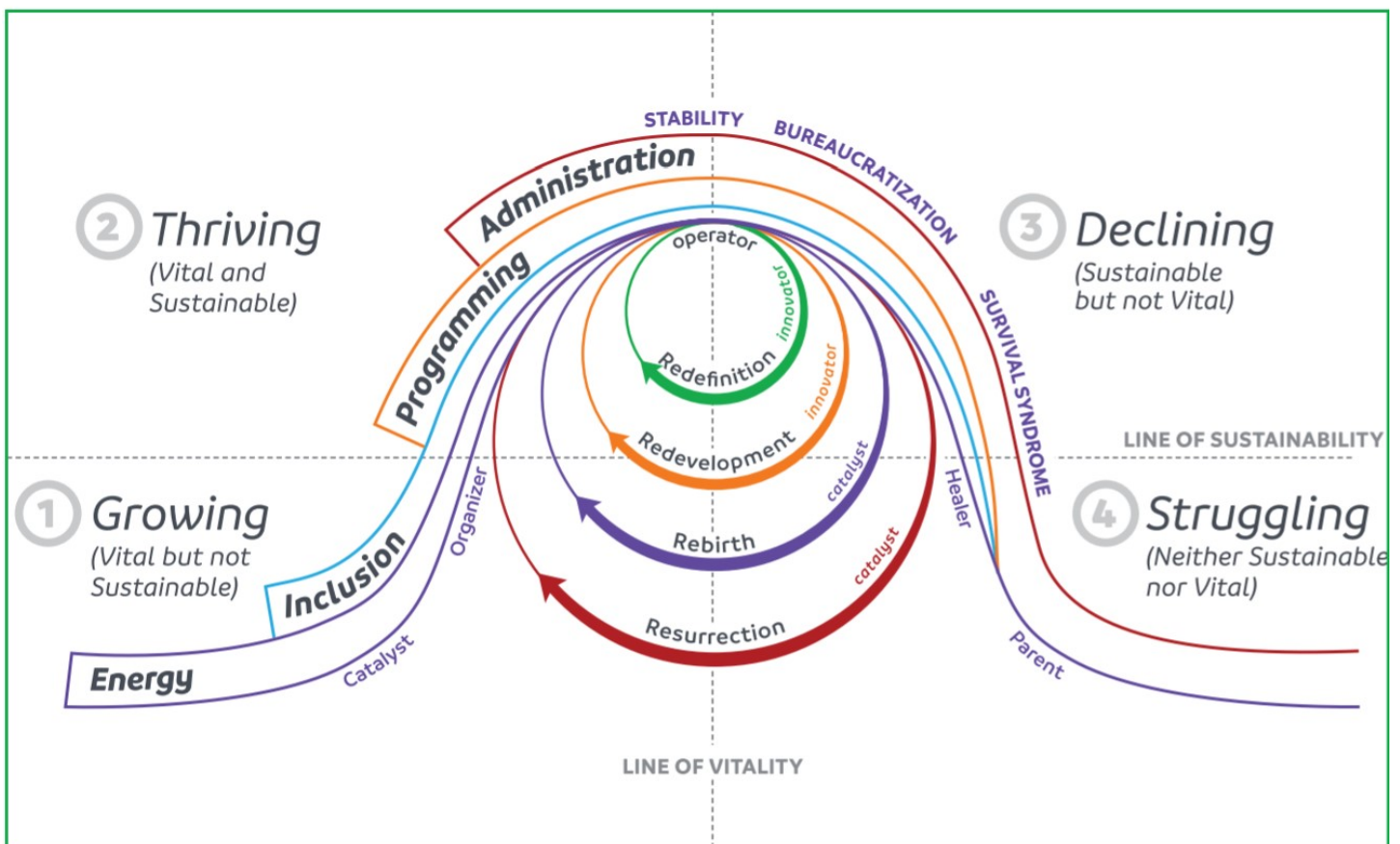
# The Good News

May 2021

**First Presbyterian Church of Pittsford**  
*Embracing and Sharing Christ's Love*

## CHARTING THE COURSE WITH PASTOR AARON

The image below is from the Vital Congregations Initiative (VCI) workbook. It's called **The Church Life-Cycle**. The bell curve runs through a matrix showing both **vitality** and **sustainability**. Along the bell curve, a church is either vital but not sustainable (i.e., growing), vital and sustainable (i.e., thriving), sustainable but not vital (i.e., declining), or neither vital nor sustainable (i.e., struggling). The "sweet spot" is obviously in the top-left quadrant, where a church is growing, full of energy, financially healthy, and organizationally stream-lined. However, at no place in the life-cycle is a church ever without hope so long as its people are willing to reimagine their life and purpose as a congregation.



In 2009, our church had an average worship attendance of 264 people. A steady decline over the following 10 years resulted in an average worship attendance of 190 people in 2019. While a drop by 74 people coming to worship may catch your attention, I'm sure it is no surprise to you that worship attendance has been declining over time. That decline was through no lack of effort! What we have experienced is as much (if not more) the result of cultural forces at work in society as it has been the result of specific strategies for ministry. Ask any church about their experience, and most of them will tell you

they are also in decline. Society is increasingly disinterested in institutionalized religion and that is affecting people's habits in attending worship with a church.

I'm not convinced that worship attendance is the *only* metric for measuring church vitality or even the most important one. Unhealthy churches can also be very large. However, I do think worship attendance is one metric to notice and track, and our numbers indicate that, according to the church life-cycle, we are in the top-right quadrant (i.e., declining). As I said, there is more to measure that speaks to a church's vitality than worship attendance averages alone. VCI is, in part, trying to help us discover those other metrics. While VCI has been interrupted by COVID, our VCI Team at FPC Pittsford is working hard to get us back on track to help us diagnose our own vitality.

One response to finding ourselves in the declining quadrant is resignation, to set our expectations lower and say, "Oh well, I guess this is the way it is now." However, I don't think resignation is the answer. I don't believe declining churches inevitably become struggling churches. If you look at the church life-cycle, you can see that declining churches can find their way back to becoming thriving churches. In order to get there, you and I must go on a journey of innovation. That is, in part, the focus of my sermons throughout Easter. We are reading through passages in Acts, the Gospel of John, and 1 John and looking at what it means to follow the Holy Spirit's leading in order to discover new life. Let's open our minds and hearts during Eastertide and ask the Lord: how would You like us to change and grow? The journey to becoming a thriving church lies in answering that question.

~ Aaron



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PITTSFORD

*Our prayers are with you*

While Rev. Erin Jacobson is out on medical leave, please contact Rev. Aaron Neff (aaron.neff@pittsfordpres.org) and Rev. Carol Anne Strawbridge (cas@pittsfordpres.org) with any pastoral care concerns or prayer requests.

## Lectionary for May

**May 2**  
**5th Sunday of Easter**  
Acts 8:26–40  
Psalms 22:25–31  
1 John 4:7–21  
John 15:1–8

**May 9**  
**6th Sunday of Easter**  
Acts 10:44–48  
Psalm 98  
1 John 5:1–6  
John 15:9–17

**May 13**  
**Ascension of the Lord**  
Acts 1:1–11  
Psalm 47 or Psalm 93  
Ephesians 1:15–23  
Luke 24:44–53

**May 16**  
**7th Sunday of Easter**  
Acts 1:15–17, 21–26  
Psalm 1  
1 John 5:9–13  
John 17:6–19

**May 23**  
**Day of Pentecost**  
Acts 2:1–21 or  
Ezekiel 37:1–14  
Psalm 104:24–34,  
35b  
Romans 8:22–27  
or Acts 2:1–21  
John 15:26–27;  
16:4b–15

**May 30**  
**Trinity Sunday**  
Isaiah 6:1–8  
Psalm 29  
Romans 8:12–17  
John 3:1–17



## Members with May Birthdays

Henry Ash  
Martha Boak  
Ray Brown  
Rob Dunn  
Allie Finkbeiner  
Ben Gartland  
Jack Holzwarth  
Hannah Marsh

Margaret Mecredy  
Robert Mehalso  
Charles Messenger  
Maxwell Murray  
JoBeth Nichols  
Ed Rummler  
Walt Scott  
Tony Seacat

Frederick Stehler  
Stephen Stott  
Erin Thompson  
Paige Thompson  
Olivia Valenti  
Gretchen Wolk

*Wishing you a birthday full of love and gratitude!*

(if we missed you—please let the office know)

### Changes at 19 Church Street

The property immediately adjacent to the administrative building, known as 19 Church St. , has been owned by the church since Civil War times.

It was the church manse until the 1960's, and after that has been used as church offices, Sunday School meeting rooms, a teen center and most recently an ARC group home. Some of the residents have been regulars at our Sunday services. At this time the space no longer meets the needs of ARC, so the lease has been terminated as of October, and the residents are moving out.

A committee of Trustees and Session has been formed to consider the future use of the property, and this includes Charlie Francis, Bob Collins, Jeff Wright, Lee Fox, Andrea Wright, Jim Weick and Rev. Neff. We have been meeting to review legal and regulatory issues with the property and imagine new uses that would support the mission of the church.

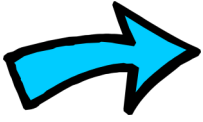
We are very interested in input from the congregation about this. If you have any suggestion about how 19 Church St. could be used in the future, please contact a member of the committee.

### Per Capita Contribution

As you know, our per capita contribution of \$35.14 per member provides administrative and mission support to the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Your contribution toward this expense allows us to use more of our budget for Outreach support and mission trips.

Included in our budget is a challenge: member contributions in excess of \$7,000 toward our per capita expense will be allocated to our Outreach program to further our mission work. We are nearing that amount and are grateful for those who have made a per capita contribution. For others, would you consider this giving opportunity to help others?





### WHAT IS THIS?

Can you identify what it is?

Hint—it is a church project. But what project? Where?

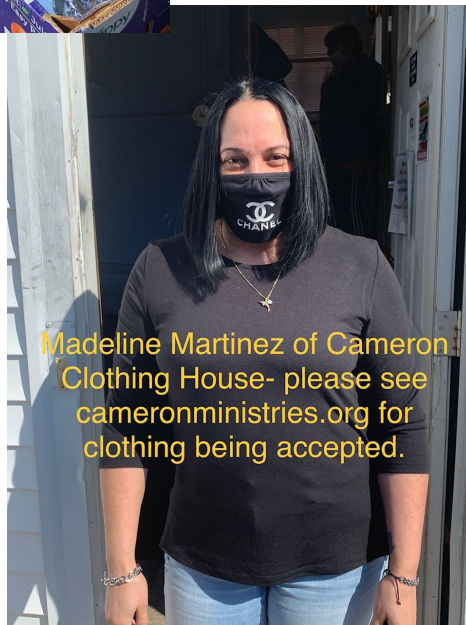
What for? What do you think? More to come...



Manuel loves seeing our Warm Meals food arrive!



We may look all business...but it's a party on Food Drop-off Day.

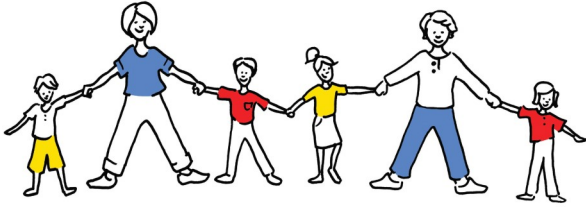


Madeline Martinez of Cameron Clothing House- please see [cameronministries.org](http://cameronministries.org) for clothing being accepted.

### Minute for Mission

#### Cameron Update

April brought showers... of wonderful food to Cameron with the help of 17 volunteers! Don't miss out on this worthy and satisfying mission! Contact Cindy Becker 703-4878 or [cindyleebecker74@gmail.com](mailto:cindyleebecker74@gmail.com)



## News from the Nursery School

Once again we are preparing to say goodbye. Such a bittersweet time, we are so proud of how far our children have come, yet we must let them go. May is the last month of the school year for our 2's, 3's and 4's. Our Young Kindergarten children end in June. For some it is good-bye until September, for others it could be good-bye until we meet again. We will celebrate our teachers on May 3 and 4 and have end of the year celebrations for all our classes. We continue to offer our very popular summer camp for all children. Thank you so much for all your support and encouragement! Happy Summer!

Teresa Zatyko, Director Pittsford Nursery School

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## Camp Whitman – Volunteer Day – May 15

***Calling all First Pres handy persons skilled and unskilled!***

You are invited to join Camp Whitman staff, alumni, parents, campers, and community members for a day of service at the camp as they prepare for the 2021 camping season. The 2021 Spring Volunteer Day is Saturday, May 15, from 9:30 am – 3:30 pm.

Families, youth groups, and adult groups are all welcome. Projects will include painting, gardening, tree trimming, trail maintenance, light construction, and cleaning. Lunch and snacks will be included for all those who participate. COVID regulations including distancing and masking will be enforced.

As we have done in the past, we will meet at the church parking lot and travel as a group for this great service project with fellowship for all. Please contact the church office to be included in the reservation and obtain additional information. This is an Outreach project supporting one of our regional missions.

ALSO NOTE: Camper openings remain available for the summer's sessions. The church office can forward information upon request.

## Deacon Events

**Game Night** - Friday, April 30, at 7pm - online at BoardGame Arena.com

**Hiking** - Saturday, May 1, at 2pm - Highland Park hike (Pre Lilac Festival). Meet at the church's Locust St. parking lot and caravan to the park to see the flowers before the crowds arrive.

**Cooking Club** - Sunday, May 2, at 6pm - Greek themed meal to celebrate the Eastern Orthodox Easter. Email [dtraina@rochester.rr.com](mailto:dtraina@rochester.rr.com) to get the recipes and the Zoom link. We prepare identical meals in the safety of our own homes and share fellowship time via zoom. Then we enjoy our creations with each other online.



# YOUTH GROUP BIKE RIDE



Saturday, May 15, 2021 // meet at the Locust St. lot @ llam

\*Please pack a lunch for the trip to Fairport and back (pick-up at church @ 2pm)

\*Please RSVP to Dan Harrison - - [danieljharrison@gmail.com](mailto:danieljharrison@gmail.com)

# Youth Group Picnic

hosted by Claudia Williams & Maria Smith

Youth and their families are welcome!

May 8, 2021 | 4 PM - 8 PM

@ the home of Claudia Williams

5 Rustic Pines

RSVP [claudiaw1949@gmail.com](mailto:claudiaw1949@gmail.com) OR [tbgsmith@frontiernet.net](mailto:tbgsmith@frontiernet.net)





# Christian Education

## Children and Youth Choir

Join children from across our Presbytery with a Virtual Children's Choir, celebrating the feast of Pentecost. Children (with or without choir experience) are invited to sing "Come Down O Love Divine." James Kealey (Associate Director of Music/Organist, Third Presbyterian Church, Rochester) will be collecting recordings until May 10 and then will compile them to create a virtual choir. The finished piece will be ready for us to use for worship on Pentecost. Contact Craig Kunkle in the office to participate.

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## Sunday School

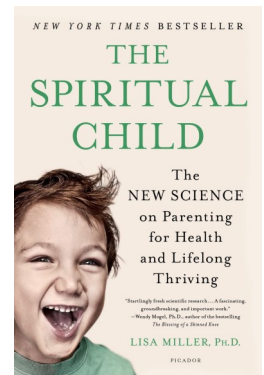
Sunday school for kids kindergarten through 5th grade is currently happening Sunday mornings at 11:45. We can accommodate up to 12 kids. We have been doing a lesson, a lesson based craft, and a lesson based game. If you would like your children to attend, please let Craig know and bring them at that time.

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## Book Review - THE SPIRITUAL CHILD: The New Science on Parenting for Health and Lifelong Thriving by Dr. Lisa Miller

Craig read this book several years ago and would like to recommend it. The church has a copy you can borrow. This is not a Christian book but effectively describes the benefit a child has growing up with any connection to spirituality. Here is a summary:

*New York Times* Bestseller - *USA TODAY* Bestseller - *Publishers Weekly* Bestseller



In *The Spiritual Child*, psychologist Lisa Miller presents the next big idea in psychology: the science and the power of spirituality. She explains the clear, scientific link between spirituality and health and shows that children who have a positive, active relationship to spirituality:

- \* are 40% less likely to use and abuse substances
- \* are 60% less likely to be depressed as teenagers
- \* are 80% less likely to have dangerous or unprotected sex
- \* have significantly more positive markers for thriving, including an increased sense of meaning and purpose, and high levels of academic success.



Combining cutting-edge research with broad anecdotal evidence from her work as a clinical psychologist to illustrate just how invaluable spirituality is to a child's mental and physical health, Miller translates these findings into practical advice for parents, giving them concrete ways to develop and encourage their children's—as well as their own—well-being. In this provocative, conversation-starting book, Dr. Miller presents us with a pioneering new way to think about parenting our modern youth. <https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250033833>

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ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

*Let's open our minds and  
hearts during Eastertide  
and ask the Lord: how  
would You like us to change  
and grow?*

<p>The Rev. Aaron Neff <i>Pastor and Head of Staff</i> Ext. 25 aaron.neff@pittsfordpres.org</p> <p>The Rev. Erin Jacobson <i>Temp. Supply Assoc. Pastor</i> Ext. 24 erin.jacobson@pittsfordpres.org</p> <p>Craig Kunkle <i>Director of Christian Education</i> Ext. 30 craig.kunkle@pittsfordpres.org</p> <p>Britta Konau <i>Office &amp; Communications Coord.</i> Ext. 21 britta.konau@pittsfordpres.org</p> <p>Maria DiGiambattista <i>Financial Administrator</i> Ext. 23 treasurer@pittsfordpres.org</p>	<p>Tim Carder <i>Custodian</i> Ext. 33; tim@pittsfordpres.org</p> <p>Dr. Jared Chase <i>Director of Music</i> musicdirector@pittsfordpres.org</p> <p>Dr. Bruce Frank <i>Associate Director of Music and Organist</i> bfrank345@gmail.com</p> <p>Dede Holmes <i>Director of Youth Choirs</i> dmh91654@frontiernet.net</p> <p>Joshua Burke <i>Livestreaming Technician</i> josh@pittsfordpres.org</p>	<p><b>First Presbyterian Church</b> 21 Church Street, Pittsford, NY 14534 Phone 585 586-5688, Fax 585 586-8090 connect@pittsfordpres.org www.pittsfordpres.org</p> <p><b>Worship Services:</b> <b>8:30 and 10:00 am in-person</b> <b>(reservation required)</b> <b>10:00 am live-streamed</b> Communion is offered on the first Sunday of each month.</p> <p></p> <p></p>
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