



# The View From The Park

A Newsletter of Faith & Community

May 2021

1st Presbyterian Church on the Park  
17 Park Street  
Canton, NY 13617

Phone (315) 386-2570  
www.ChurchOnThePark.org  
Office@ChurchOnThePark.org

## The Way We Worship

The doors are open each Sunday for those who are comfortable in joining **in-person worship** and the **live-stream** begins at 10 a.m. for those joining online. It is a **joyful group** of people and we are thankful for each person. We strongly encourage you to do what it is best for you and what feels **comfortable**. Masks continue to be required and social distancing is still being followed in the church. You also can watch recording of the service afterward on our [YouTube channel](#). On Sundays, after worship, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., there is **Fellowship time via Zoom**.



**See Page 7 For Information About Virtual Worship & Fellowship.**

## eNewsletter?

If you received a hard copy of this newsletter in the mail but have an email address to which it could be sent, please contact [RevMike@ChurchOnThePark.org](mailto:RevMike@ChurchOnThePark.org)

- Rev. Michael P. Catanzaro**..... Pastor
- Donna Doig, CLP**..... Associate Pastor
- Karen Bailey**.....Office Coordinator
- Jarrett Larson**.....Choir Director
- Bob Duda**.....Assistant Choir Director
- Jarrett Larson**.....Organist
- Michael Walters**.....Handbell Choir Director
- TBD**.....Director of Christian Education
- Mary McGreevy**.....Treasurer
- Patience Boswell**..... Sexton
- Tom Dildine**.....Webmaster
- Linda Potter**.....Newsletter Editor

**Church Office Hrs: 1 - 4 p.m., Mon., Tues. & Thur.**

## Pentecost Offering

Giving to the Pentecost Offering makes it possible for the church to encourage, develop, and support its young people, and address the needs of at-risk children. **40%** of this offering is retained by congregation to be used to make an impact in the lives of **young people** within our own community and church. Through the Presbyterian Church (USA), 60% of our gifts to the Pentecost Offering helps support programs for Young Adult Volunteers, Ministries for Youth, and Child Advocacy.

**How can you give?** Mail your Pentecost Offering to the church office at 17 Park Street, Canton or place it in the offering basket if you attend in-person worship on or before **Pentecost Sunday, May 23rd**.

## Mother's Day

Due to continuing COVID precautions, we again this year will not be able to celebrate the moms in our lives with the Mothers & Others Brunch. Hopefully next year we can gather together!

Celebrate Mother's Day on **Sunday, May 9th** safely and with love.



## Table Of Contents

Family News.....	2
Guest Preacher.....	3
Treasurer's Report.....	4
Pastor's Report.....	5
Lectionary Readings.....	6
Birthdays & Anniversaries.....	6
Church Photos.....	7
Fountain Update.....	9
Riley Basford Homily.....	10

## Family News

Prayers for **Jean McGuire** (her husband **Pat**, their daughter Megan and son Ian) at home recovering from surgery and awaiting possible additional treatment. Cards appreciated: 604 Hull Road, Lisbon, NY 13658.

Prayers for **Galen Pletcher** who has recently begun treatment for Hodgkins Lymphoma (32 Judson Street, Canton, NY 13617); **Christa Lyon** recovering from knee replacement surgery and being treated for Melanoma, and her husband **Marty Lyon** under care of Hospice (43 Lincoln Street, Canton); and, **Ella Morter** being treated for cancer (1314 CR 25, Canton).

Prayers of comfort and healing for **Mary** and **Sean Rodee**, and the Basford/Rodee families, on the tragic death of **Riley Basford**. Let us continue to hold this family in love (8 Meade Rd., Canton, NY 13617).

Congratulations to **Tucker Catanzaro** (son of **Linda Potter** and **Rev. Mike**) graduating from Hampshire College on May 15th with a focus on Fisheries Management.



Congratulations to **Susan Akins** and her daughter Jess on the birth of their granddaughter and daughter, Amari Joelle. Mom and baby doing great...and will share the same birthday!

Thanks to **Rich Grayson** for moving the pallet of snow-melt from in front of the church to summer storage.

Prayers for **Ellen Janack** now receiving additional support from the Advanced Illness Management (AIM) Program through Hospice of St. Lawrence Valley (35 Riverside Dr. #7E, Canton, NY 13617); **Jane Cable** facing health concerns; **Pat Mace** recovering from pneumonia; **Bev Findley** (and Jerry in support of her) recovering from a broken arm; and, **Carrie Whalen** rehabbing a fractured wrist; **Beth Hayes**; and **Bill Rodee** and for **Marilyn** in support of him.

## Family News - cont.

Prayers for **Sean Boutin** and **Kristine McKie** facing medical challenges.

Prayers for **Karen Parker** recovering from a fall and undergoing in-home therapy, and for **Bill** in support of her (17 State Street, Canton, NY 13617).

Prayers for **Nick Scelzi** being treated at St. Joe's in Syracuse for infection.

Renewed prayers for Glenn Erickson (**Ray's** twin) undergoing further treatment for bladder cancers. Prayers, also, for Greg Richard (father-in-law of Ray's daughter) being treated for a brain tumor, Josh Ashton (Ray's son-in-law) doing very well after his neck surgery and Maya Ashton (Ray's granddaughter).

Prayers for Al Solberg (brother-in-law to **Ellen Grayson**) who is recovering from a stroke; Loree MacNeill (**Karen Parker's** sister) recovering from shoulder surgery; Mike Murphy, husband of **Jim Franklin's** mother Bonnie Murphy, who is facing health issues (and prayers for Jim and his family in this challenging time).

Prayers for Josee Merlini, mother of **Patrick LaPierre**, facing significant health issues, and for Patrick in support of her; Jodie Upton, sister of **Susan Akins**, who is being treated for cancer; and, Marie MacMaster, and her sons **David** and Ron as they seek to provide appropriate care.

Prayers for Andrew Putman (friend of **Jean & Pat McGuire**) recovering from a stroke; Art Zanta (brother of **Carolyn Zanta**) being treated for esophageal cancer; Kathy Holbrook, (sister-in-law of **Josh Holbrook**) experiencing significant side-effects from treatment; John Mark Waldorf (brother of **Jane Cable**) being treated for cancer; and, premie twins, baby River and baby August, facing health challenges, and their parents.

## Thanks from Webb Family

I am writing on behalf of the Webb family to express our **sincere appreciation** for the **love** and **support** the church has provided over this past year due to the pandemic and the loss of our beloved **Lorna**.

You have all made a very difficult time in our lives much easier (and still are doing so) through your **boundless love** and **support** and your **gifts of food, cards, and time**. I can say with pride, and Lorna would say the same, that our church family has been a **blessing** and a **comfort**. Thank you all from the bottom of our hearts! - Sincerely, **Bill Webb & Family**

## Resources Comm. Update

Members of the church's Resources Committee (**Martha Cole, Janet Stitt, Mark Brackett, Jim Franklin** and **Rev. Mike** *ex officio*) have been, or soon will be, meeting with the **Presbyterian Foundation, Morgan Stanley** and the **Northern New York Community Foundation** to explore options to better utilize the church's restricted funds. We will continue to keep you updated on this very **important** work.

## Church Clean-Up Day

There will be a Church Clean-Up Day on **Saturday, May 22nd** from 9 a.m. to noon. Donuts will be provided!

## Way To Go Team Brownie!

Congratulations to Barb Brown who along with her "team" of supporters brought in a **3rd Place "Dollars Raised" Finish** in Lake Placid's "Sk8 To Eliminate Cancer" Virtual event. Barb also won 1st Place bragging rights in the "Endurance" category by logging 100km on her indoor bike for the event. Way to go Barb!



## Rev. Mike On Vacation

Rev. Mike will be on vacation **May 10th** to **16th** with **Rich** and **Ellen Grayson** graciously agreeing to preach and lead worship on Sunday, May 16th. He also will be on vacation **May 23rd** to **30th** with guest preacher **Chris Remick** in the pulpit on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend. (See below to learn more about Chris).

## Guest Preacher

**Chris Remick** has been living in the North Country since 1986 when he moved from Camillus NY to attend SUNY Potsdam. For the past 29 years, Chris has served local public schools as a public school teacher working with children and adolescents requiring special education services. Beginning in **2009**, Chris served as a part-time pastor in several **United Methodist Churches** in the area.



Chris' hobbies have included singing in community choirs or joining with his guitar, and now dabbling in fiddle playing. He also occasionally enjoys reenacting colonial periods. Chris is a member of the Quad Town Lions, The Sons of the American Legion, and the American Legion Riders. Chris is recently engaged and will be married in August. He looks forward to the opportunity to occasionally lead our worship services.

## Rodees Say Thank You

The **love** from our church family and Rev. Mike just never stops! Thank you for so many cards, email messages, personal and meaningful notes and visits. Mary and Elliott's family thank you especially for all the support and food for Riley's celebration of Life event. All food was enjoyed by family and friends.



## Church Attendance

	In-Person	Live Stream
April 4	56	44
April 11	17	42
April 18	22	48
April 25	17	50

Average In-Person Attendance: 28  
Average Live-Stream Attendance: 46

## Treasurer's Report

	Operating	Mission
March 28	\$1,212.00	\$ 30.00
April 4	\$1,557.00	\$ 68.00
April 11	<u>\$4,728.00</u>	<u>\$515.00</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$7,497.00</b>	<b>\$613.00</b>

**Thank you for all those who are able to make pledges and gifts to the church.**

**We are able to pay our bills & provide care to our community. Your generosity is appreciated.**

## Deacons' Offering

A reminder that though most folks are worshipping via the live-stream, we are still receiving the Deacons' Offering the **first Sunday** of every month. This is a vital component of our church's work and mission. Please remember to send along a contribution to the Deacons along with your pledge or regular offering. **Thank you!**

## Communion Cups

Self-contained **communion cups** are available for you to pick up anytime in the **foyer**.

## Vaccine Sites

All New Yorkers age 16 and older are now eligible for the vaccine. Along with the NYS site at [SUNY Potsdam](#), St. Lawrence County Public Health holds [vaccine clinics](#) at several locations. Local pharmacies also offer the vaccine. If you need help signing up, contact **Rev. Mike**.

## Officers & Committees

### Elders On Session

To strengthen and nurture the faith and the life of the congregation.

Rich Grayson	Patrick LaPierre	Martha Cole
Pat Mace	Barry Walch	Ellen MacMaster
Beth Hayes	Tom Dildine	Pat McGuire
Michelle Quinelle-Gayle		Bill Parker
Gordy Theisen	Janet Stitt - Clerk Of Session	

### Board of Deacons

Ministering to the sick, those in need, the friendless, and those in distress.

Christa Lyon	Georgia Vose	Marilyn Coir
Nancy Brown	Bob Duda	Michelle Theisen
Jane Cable	Stacie Olney-LaPierre	
Jean McGuire	Susan Akins	Ellen Grayson
Secretary		Moderator
	Ray Erickson, Treasurer	<i>Ex Officio</i>

### Committees

### Chairs

**Resources** Martha Cole & Jim Franklin  
Responsible for managing and dispensing funds to fulfill the mission & ministry of our church.

**Facilities** Barry Walch & Beth Hayes  
Responsible for the maintenance and use of all church property.

**Fellowship** Ellen Grayson, Pat Mace & Beth Hayes  
Responsible for all fellowship events.

**Nominating** Pat Mace, Ellen Grayson, Martha Cole, Rob Ewy & Barb Brown  
Responsible for filling Session, Deacons & Offices.

**Education** Beth Hayes  
Responsible for growth, nurturing & learning.

**Worship** Michelle Quinelle-Gayle  
With pastor, responsible for worship.

**Communion** Pat Mace & Vicki McLain

**Stewardship** TBD  
Responsible for securing resources and energy to fulfill the mission & ministry of our church.

**Mission** Martha Cole  
Helping our church, community & world.

**Treasurer** Mary McGreevy

**Financial Secretary** Barry Walch

**C&C Program** JJ Jockel & Sean Boutin

**Personnel** Pat Mace & Tom Dildine

**Ad-Hoc Pulpit Supply** TBD

# The Pastor's Report

*"I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock." - Acts 20:29*

Folks, I would like to use this month's Pastor's Report to talk frankly about the dangers (savage wolves) that we are increasingly facing these days as parents and church members in specific, and decent human beings in general.

I'm sure many of us remember warnings from our parents about not stopping to talk to strangers on the way home from school. This was a recognition of the dangers which have always been present in the world but, also, an understanding that at one time the idea of "home" carried with it an expectation of a certain level of safety and protection.

While the dangers of the world still remain, that safety we once all assumed about the sanctity of our own home has been utterly erased. With the advent of the internet, online purchasing and banking, email, smart phones and, especially, social media, those dangers once confined to the world outside our homes have now been invited right in and given access to the most intimate aspects of our lives; often without our awareness.

There is no more tragic example of this than the death last month of Riley Basford. A beautiful, trusting and spirit-filled lad just on the cusp of maturity and only just beginning to embrace the wonderful life which surely awaited him. All of that changed within just the span of 24 hours. Beyond the prayers and support we offer to his mother, father and family, one thing

we can do which would be the greatest tribute and honor is to speak to our children about the savage wolves that lie hidden behind the guise of false photos and identities; those who are automatically termed "friends." On page 10 and 11 of this newsletter I've included the homily I spoke at the celebration of Riley's life. I offer it to you as both a starting place and an encouragement to speak the children and young adults in your life so they may come to understand and trust there is no situation so bad that, together, it cannot be overcome.

Less bitter, but just as poignant, is the recent email scam which was sent to many in our congregation by a person posing as your pastor (i.e., me) and seeking your help in providing gift cards for people in need. Please know that I have NEVER asked individuals for money, nor would I ever do so. There are plenty of avenues for the church and I to help people which provide a full accounting (Mission Budget, Deacons Fund, Pastor's Discretionary Fund, etc). Such a scam relies on two things to succeed: the goodness of the human heart (especially church goers) and the sense of urgency which the scammer hopes to create.

Some rules of thumb: SLOW DOWN, if you are feeling pushed to do something chances are there is bad intent. CONFIRM using a different source to determine true identity (call or text). DON'T GO IT ALONE, at first sign of fear, doubt or confusion, contact a friend or loved one.

Let's be good shepherds to each other,  
- Rev. Mike

*"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me." - John 10:14*

# MAY Birthdays

- 1 Mary Rexford
- 2 Rachel Syvertsen
- 4 Matthew Gibson,  
Beverly Findley,  
Janet Stitt
- 8 Melba Reinke, Edith Frazer,  
Bill Parker
- 10 Sue Dean; Mike Athanasakis,  
Katie Smith
- 11 Barry Walch
- 12 Claire Casey
- 13 Andrew Clearwater Johnson
- 14 Nikko Sheats
- 15 Martha Cole
- 16 Wesley Gayle
- 17 Tucker Catanzaro,  
Katelyn Grant, Anna Eller
- 18 Elias Paul Nelson
- 19 Chris Sutherland, Katie Bennett
- 20 Erica Cole
- 22 Alina Brown
- 21 Rebecca Alexander
- 23 Colleen Grant
- 24 Nicole Holbrook
- 26 Ashley Elliott
- 27 Dave Nelson, Olivia Bourdette,  
John Smith

# MAY Anniversaries

- 10 Kevin and Karen Bailey
- 21 Bill & Karen Parker
- 27 Michael & Edith Frazer
- 30 Sean Boutin & Kristin McKie

*Saving Grace*

Feed me, O Lord, with needful food;  
I ask not wealth or fame:  
Give me an eye to see thy will,  
A heart to bless thy name.  
-The Philadelphia Hymn Book (1819)

## May Lectionary Readings

### May 2

Acts 8:26-40  
Psalms 22:25-31  
1 John 4:7-21  
John 15:1-8



### May 9

Acts 10:44-48  
Psalm 98 1  
John 5:1-6  
John 15:9-17

### Ascension of the Lord - May 13

Acts 1:1-11  
Psalm 47 or Psalm 93  
Ephesians 1:15-23  
Luke 24:44-53

### May 16

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26  
Psalm 1  
1 John 5:9-13  
John 17:6-19

### Day of Pentecost - May 23

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

### Trinity Sunday - May 30

Isaiah 6:1-8      Romans 8:12-17  
Psalm 29      John 3:1-17

Contact the church office with your birthday so we can keep our list current!

## Pastoral Care

Please know that Rev. Mike is available at *anytime* to talk about about matters both large or small; either virtually or in-person (he is fully vaccinated).

He can be reached on his cell phone at (716) 857-0111 for voice or FaceTime video chat, or through Skype at revmike70, or via a ZOOM chat in his "meeting room" accessed through this link <https://zoom.us/j/6360764407>, or email at [RevMike@ChurchOnThePark.org](mailto:RevMike@ChurchOnThePark.org)



## Church Photos

Thanks to **James Eller** and **Barry Walch** for getting up in the steeple to check out the leak, and to Barry for getting roofing contractor lined up the repair various leaks in the sanctuary roof, and replacing roof on Fellowship Hall. (We will keep you informed as more is known.) That is Barry's head and torso to the right of the middle spire.



Our own Dr. **J.J. Jockel** out for a stroll on an unseasonably warm spring day; and looking very professorial in an "old school" and well-earned "been around the block" kind of way.



Master **Sean Boutin** demonstrating Tai Chi technique to his on-line and in-person classes.

*If you have a photo that you would like to share with your church family, please send it to*



**Rev. Mike**, email at [RevMike@ChurchOnThePark.org](mailto:RevMike@ChurchOnThePark.org) or text 716-857-0111.

## Virtual Worship & Fellowship

For live-streaming, fellowship, bulletins, sermons newsletter and other resources, **begin by bookmarking the church website:** [www.ChurchOnThePark.org](http://www.ChurchOnThePark.org). "Click" on the relevant link at the top of the page.

A **live-stream** of the worship service is on the church's YouTube Channel. Go to [www.ChurchOnThePark.org](http://www.ChurchOnThePark.org) and click on "YouTube Channel." You can choose to subscribe to our channel or simply go to this link each week.

**Zoom Fellowship** calls each Sunday from **11:30 a.m. to Noon** for fellowship only with no format or moderator. If needed, download the ZOOM app ahead of time by clicking on this link (free):

<https://zoom.us/download>. One you have the Zoom app, go to [www.ChurchOnThePark.org](http://www.ChurchOnThePark.org) and click on "Sunday Zoom Meeting". You will be asked to enter a password which is **3862570** (the phone number of the church). The meeting will automatically begin at 11:30 a.m. & end at 12:45 p.m.

**Worship bulletins** are posted earlier in the week to the church website for those worshipping virtually through the stream on our YouTube channel. This will allow everyone the opportunity to follow the liturgy, and see the announcements and prayer requests. Go to [www.ChurchOnThePark.org](http://www.ChurchOnThePark.org) and click on "Sunday Bulletin."

**Written sermons** will continue to be emailed, or snail-mailed, on *Monday* to everyone each week; as well as being posted to the church website. Go to [www.ChurchOnThePark.org](http://www.ChurchOnThePark.org) and click on "Written Sermons."

The monthly **Newsletter** will continue to be emailed to most, and snail-mailed to a few; as well as being posted to the church website (click on "Newsletter").

## Prayer Warriors

Would you like to help your neighbor, stretch spiritually and be a part of the mystical movement of the church? We are always looking for new prayer warriors to join the church

**Prayer Chain** to offer prayers for folks who are ill, troubled or in need.

If you want to learn more about the prayer chain, call **Rev. Mike** at 386-2570 or **Wanda Renick** at 386-3474.



## Photo Directory

A newly up-dated Photo Directory is available online through the church website <https://churchonthepark.org>. From the Home Page click on the link to **Church Photo Directory** in the menu at the top. This will take you to a new page which will prompt you to type in the password. Type in **PeopleonthePark17** and the photo directory will appear. We will endeavor to keep this online version as up-to-date as possible. If you have been inadvertently omitted, would like to be included or would like a retake, please contact **Rev. Mike** or **Keli Hollis**.

## Presbyterian Worship

The monthly service at Partridge Knoll are **on hold until further notice**. Though the residents have received their vaccines, services will not be held until it is determined that is safe for all. Please continue to keep our friends there in your prayers.



## Like Us On Facebook!

The Church On The Park has a **Facebook page** which changes regularly - <https://www.facebook.com/TheFirstPresbyterianChurchonthePark>

## Church Website



Our Website is updated each month and is a great way to stay a part of the life of the church. If you have questions about, or contributions for the website please email our Webmaster Tom Dildine: [tdildine@gmail.com](mailto:tdildine@gmail.com)

The Church's email address:

[office@ChurchOnThePark.org](mailto:office@ChurchOnThePark.org)

Reverend Mike's email address:

[RevMike@ChurchOnThePark.org](mailto:RevMike@ChurchOnThePark.org)

## Sermons & Services

**Written Sermons** in PDF format are now available for viewing or downloading on Monday at [www.ChurchOnThePark.org](http://www.ChurchOnThePark.org) then click on "Written Sermons."

If you'd like to have a copy of the weekly sermon emailed or snail-mailed to you directly, please contact [RevMike@ChurchOnThePark.Org](mailto:RevMike@ChurchOnThePark.Org).

A **video recording** of the Sunday worship service will be available for viewing the week following broadcast. Go to [www.ChurchOnThePark.org](http://www.ChurchOnThePark.org) and click "YouTube Channel."

## Newsletter Deadline Is The 15th Of The Month

We are still sending out the monthly newsletter! Please submit articles (emailed preferably) to the church office, or directly to the News letter Editor, Linda Potter, at:

[nautilus@twcny.rr.com](mailto:nautilus@twcny.rr.com)

## Hello, my name is...

Name Tag Sunday is on hold for now but you can still get to know your church friends.

Use the **church Photo Directory** and send a note to say **hello!**



## Fountain Update

After many months, and too many years, the **metal fountain** in the park has been **completely refurbished, returned and installed** (April 29th) on the **new concrete / stone base**. Many were on hand to witness this **“watershed”** moment, and celebrate the milestone. There is still a bit of work to be done to create **benches** (repurposing some of the original stone), grade surrounding **lawn** and replant **grass** and, of course, connecting the plumbing and electrical services already in place. It is hoped that the fountain might be turned back on and flowing by **Memorial Day**; or, if not, by early June.



Also, we are currently undertaking a separate fundraising appeal to raise **\$14k** to provide **8 new park benches, 4 wheelchair accessible picnic tables, two single garbage cans and two double garbage/recycling cans** (\$6,100 raised to date). Further, we await final word on **grant funding for tree removal** (we’ve received encouraging indications). God continues to work in wonderfully mysterious ways to bring this important endeavor to fruition. **Thanks to all who have supported the effort!**



# **Riley Basford Homily**

## **Matthew 18:1-6**

*At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles themselves as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child, in my name, welcomes me. But whoever causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.”*

## **Riley K. Basford**

Monday April 5, 2021; The Stables, Potsdam NY

Early this morning I was having my coffee, trying to wake up, and to face this day, and this very moment right now, which I have been dreading. I looked over to my wife and said, “This is about the *last* thing I want to do today.” She said, “I’m sure you’re not alone in that feeling.” There are so many things to be said in suffering such a loss as Riley’s death; so many and yet, at the same time, what could possibly be said to ease this searing pain and soul shaking loss? Especially for Riley’s parents, his siblings, his grandparents, his aunts and uncles; but, also, for all of you who are his friends, classmates, and peers so new to this world. And, yet, there is more to be found here this day than the pain and loss which is so evident. There is also truth, and love, and, finally, there is hope.

However, before any of that, there is the matter of our anger; and lots of it. A teeth grinding, bone crushing and seemingly bottomless pit of righteous anger. There is nothing wrong with such an anger, but this is not a hole to inhabit for very long, and certainly not a place we should wish to make our home. Though it is certainly easy to allow ourselves to get comfortable with our anger, such a road leads us to nowhere; and, worse, prevents us from arriving at the destination we most deserve, which is a place of peace. Instead, let us take our comfort in holding God to the promise that for those who would cause one of these little ones, like Riley, to stumble, it would be better for them to have a millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. *(continued)*

That today's celebration of Riley's life should follow so quickly on the heels of Easter is, I'm sure, lost on no one. The promise of new life in Christ which Easter brings with it is, perhaps, too quick a turn-around for those of us gathered here. But, it is a gift that can be kept to open later, when it will most assuredly be needed. On this day, then, it is enough to recall this story of Jesus answering the question posed to him by the disciples of who is greatest in the Kingdom of God? Though each of them almost certainly and secretly expected and wished to hear their own name spoken, it is not the pious who come first in the Kingdom of God; neither is it the devout, or the powerful, or the famous, or the rich. Instead, it is the child in their midst who is understood to be first and greatest. And, unless we, ourselves, become as children we will never enter the Kingdom of God to which Christ, at Easter, bids us welcome.

I'm sure that for all of us gathered here today who are of a certain age, the message we want to impart to each of our children, grandchildren, students, nieces and nephews and neighbor-kids, is that for us, *you* are first and greatest in our lives. There is nothing we would not do for you. We love you more than you can *possibly* imagine; and, we *need* you to imagine all of the the love we have for you. If you *ever* find yourself in a situation which makes you feel you are about at the last thing you'd want to do, *stop* and remember that you are *not* alone. There is nothing wrong with making foolish decisions, but find the wisdom to realize there is *nothing* in this world which we cannot overcome *together*.

In a few minutes, as we end this service, you will be invited to head down to the river and release a balloon in honor and in celebration of the life of Riley Basford. As you do so, I would also invite each of you to take a deep breath, exhale and to release even just a little bit of your sadness and grief, as you allow your love for Riley, and your wonderful memories of him, to lighten the load you are carrying if only ever so slightly. And, tomorrow, find a way to support each other in doing so again, and again, and again. In the days ahead and the time to come, the journey we will need to take together will not be made in leaps and bounds but, most probably, in the inches measured by hugs, laughter and the gentleness we offer to each other and, especially, to ourselves. And Jesus said, "*Let the little children come unto me, and suffer them not, for to such as these belong the Kingdom of God.*" Amen.

The 1st Presbyterian Church, on the Park  
17 Park Street  
Canton, NY 13617

Address Service Requested

The Church is charged for every returned Newsletter. If you have moved, or changed a seasonal address,  
please notify the church office. Thank you.

**Pentecost Offering**  
**Church Photos**  
**Guest Preachers in May**  
**Family News**  
**Fountain Update**  
**Church Clean-Up Day - May 22nd**



The Mission of the First Presbyterian Church of Canton to reach out to all people  
and welcome them in celebrating truly the joys, freedoms and responsibilities  
that come with our faith in God, Christ's unconditional love for us,  
and the power of the Holy Spirit to transform our world.  
Through this nurturing Christian Community  
we will fully recognize the value of each believer,  
humbly forgive ourselves and others, and lovingly embrace God's Grace.