The Corner Stone



Stone Church ~ The Church on the Green

The purpose of Stone Church is to be an inviting, spiritual community of Christ, engaging in worship that inspires and challenges us to learn and grow as we reach out in caring and service, trusting in the love of God.

NOVEMBER 2025

WORSHIP AT STONE IN NOVEMBER

November 2, 2025 - All Saints / All Souls - The Lord's Supper



Habakkuk 1:1–4, 2:1–4 There is a vision for the end. Psalm 149 Let the faithful exult in glory; let them sing for joy! Ephesians 1:11-23 The immeasurable greatness of our inheritance. Luke 6:20-31 Blessings, curses and the love of enemies.

Sermon: "Sermon in the Plain" – Pastor Scott Leonard preaching



November 9, 2025 – 22nd Sunday after Pentecost



Haggai 1:15b—2:9 The future of the temple will be glorious.

Psalm 98 Sing to the Lord a New Song.

2 Thessalonians 2:1–5, 13–17 You were chosen by God; stand fast.

Luke 20:27–38 *The Sadducees are asking the wrong question.*

Sermon: "Get Busy Living" – Pastor Scott Leonard preaching

November 16, 2025 – 23rd Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 65:17-25 A vision of God's new creation.

Isaiah 12 God is our salvation.

2 Thessalonians 3:6–13 Do not be weary in doing what is right.

Luke 21:5-19 *The destruction of the temple is foretold.*

Sermon: "Good Times" – Pastor Scott Leonard preaching



November 23, 2025 – Reign of Christ / Christ the King – The Lord's Supper



Jeremiah 23:1–6 God will raise up a righteous branch from David. Luke 1:68–79 The Song of Zechariah.

Colossians 1:11–20 God reconciled all things through the cross of Christ. Luke 23:33–43 A crucified criminal asks Jesus to remember him. Michelle Dolan preaching

November 30, 2025 – First Sunday of Advent – HOPE

Isaiah 2:1–5 *The word of the Lord will go out from Zion.*

Psalm 122 A song for ascending to the temple.

Romans 13:11–14 Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 24:36–44 The necessity for watchfulness.

Sermon: "On My Honor" - Pastor Scott Leonard preaching



THE PASTOR'S

CORNE

Reign of Christ.

November. The end of our liturgical (worship) year. We begin the month with All Saints Day. For our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters, All Saints' Day (celebrated on November 1 since the year 835) honors all the Saints (with a capital S) in heaven, while All Souls' Day (November 2) is a day to pray for the souls of all the departed, especially those in purgatory undergoing purification before entering heaven. Protestants, having neither canonized Saints nor a belief in purgatory, observe All Saints' Day as honoring all "saints" (i.e., all believers in Christ, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:2 and Philippians 1:1) that have gone before us. The emphasis is on the ongoing sanctification of the



whole people of God. We give glory to God for the ordinary, holy lives of the believers in this and every age. It is a time to give thanks to members of the community of faith who have died in the past year as well as pray that we may be counted among the company of the faithful in God's eternal realm.

And speaking of eternal realm, at the close of our Christian year (generally the fourth Sunday of November) the church gives thanks and praise for sovereignty of Christ, who is Lord of all creation and is coming again in glory to reign (see Revelation 1:4-8). This festival was established in 1925 by decree of Pope Pius XI after the upheavals resulting from the First World War, "the war to end all wars." It was meant to respond to the rise of atheism and secularization and to remind Christians that their allegiance was to their spiritual ruler in heaven as opposed to earthly supremacy. Accordingly, it was called "Christ the King" Sunday. The day centers on the crucified and risen Christ, whom God exalted to rule over the whole universe: King of kings and Lord of lords. And yet...

In 1 Samuel the people are pushing for the Samuel, a priest, the last judge, and first prophet, to anoint a king to rule over them, to be like other nations, to lead them in battle, to make them great. Samuel warns them: a King will take, take, and take. A king will conscript their sons for military service, take their daughters as servants, and seize their land and property for himself and his officials. Samuel prophesied that this would lead to heavy taxation, forced labor, and a loss of their freedom, and that they would eventually cry out to God for relief, but the Lord would not answer them. So, the people, of course, said, "Yeah, we still want a king." So, they did and it pretty much worked out as Samuel predicted.

When times are tough and the future seems bleak, people look to strong leaders to save them, partially out of frustration that the "system" isn't serving them. When the leaders look to serve the people and with integrity it can work out well, such as with our own George Washington or Abraham Lincoln. But when the leader looks to serve himself (we don't seem to let a lot of women have such a role) and does so with no integrity, then results can be disastrous, such as with Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler, fascists rulers of Italy and Germany, respectively, in the 1930s and 1940s.

Against that, "Christ the King" Sunday asserts the authority of Christ over all earthly powers, emphasizing triumphal kingship and divine sovereignty. But people can sometimes focus too much on the regal, the imagery of Christ enthroned in glory and majesty. Also, "king" can have hierarchical or imperial, gender, power, and class connotations. It can also lead some Christians to be looking (and waiting) for a "Conquering King" Jesus to descend from the clouds and wipe out all evil doers. (Curiously, not seeming concerned which side of the ledger they fall on in the book of life.)

But if Christians forget Jesus' example of humility, love, and forgiveness, we're not living out our faith. Helping other Christians, praying, and reading our Bibles are all important, but forgetting that all of this should point back to Jesus is the biggest mistake of all. As do others, Presbyterians believe the reign of Christ began with his resurrection and ascension. Thus, we can shift the focus from a monarchical imagery to Christ's reign of justice, peace, and reconciliation with a more inclusive and relational emphasis, highlighting Christ's cruciform leadership and servant kingship.

Thus, calling it the "Reign of Christ" Sunday is a fuller description. It also better aligns with scriptural themes like Colossians 1 and Luke 23, which portray Christ not as a dominating ruler but as one who reconciles and suffers with humanity. It's not changing the day but looking at it through a different lens, one that emphasizes not so much Christ's cosmic authority as Christ's transformative presence in the world. Let us then be transformed, serving as ambassadors of Christ, so that others may experience, as we do, the power and reconciliation of God's love <u>now</u>—and forever.

Shalom,

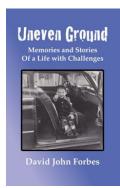


Historical Period Revisited---A Glimpse into Stone Church's Past

Book Review of:

"Uneven Ground--Memories and Stories of a Life with Challenges"

By David Forbes



Our own Dave Forbes recently published a book about life! I was reminded when reading it and talking with him that Dave was 3-½ years of age when he entered the Ithaca Reconstruction home to receive treatment and therapy for his "post-polio condition." He had to work hard at things and overcome obstacles that he had to face during his childhood. But then again, he was never one to let them get him down. "Push till it hurts and then push some more"—regardless of how much it hurt! One of his other thoughts that he emphasized



was to work hard at things and overcome obstacles you had to face from childhood—never let them let you down!

Ithaca was a three-hour trip from his home in Parish, NY. Dave did as he was asked to do during the time spent at the Ithaca Reconstruction home. His dad visited him every Sunday and his mom was pregnant with a new baby, so her time with him was limited. But soon Dave was wearing metal braces on both legs that came up to his waist and later he was able to use crutches.

In spite of his condition, when it was finally time to return home to the family, he found he was able to help with his Dad's gas station. There is much more but if you want to read a great book, I advise you to get a copy for yourself. You will not be able to put it down because of his many more accomplishments!

He went on to get his education at NYU, where he could take prosthetics and orthotics courses suggested by one of his doctors. He further found that he could get help from vocational rehabilitation to pay for everything he needed (in 1965—total of \$4,000) and his dad drove him to New York City.

If I write much more you will not get to enjoy reading his book and learning much, much more for yourselves. I was so impressed with his ways of improving because he could think things through and improvise because of his physical condition and find a way to complete the project that needed to be done. You will note this as you read through his story. When you get a chance, read "Uneven Ground" and you will be amazed. Enjoy! I recommend it highly! The book is available on https://lulu.com/shop. Just search for "Uneven Ground" by David Forbes.

Midge Bakos

P.S. Because I wanted to promote the book listed above in the newsletter, I called Dave and Sue Forbes at their six-month winter home in Longs, N. Myrtle Beach So. Carolina, to get his permission. The warm weather is much better for Dave. Cold weather in recent years does not help his physical condition. The Forbes found that there are lots of people their age to enjoy their time with. In recent years, Dave has become completely wheelchair bound. Dave and Sue will return to their home on Kirkland Ave in April, assuming the weather will be warm enough.

NOVEMBER 2025 MISSION



Fall is a Doorway

The countdown has begun. Summer has ended. Shorts, sleeveless shirts, lightweight summery clothing is sitting in our closets awaiting the finale when such clothing is virtually ignored and then disappears until April or May. Outside something very similar is happening. The bushes and trees that were so fully cloaked with glossy leaves of various greens, are discarding those leaves quite naturally. As the wind blows, so do the leaves disappear from the trees and bushes and gather in haphazard piles throughout our yards.

As I have watched the leaves descend – sometimes in the soft movements of change that is almost a subdued farewell and other times in blustery gusts determined to make it to almost seem like an unrestrained screech, it has occurred to me that some natural order is being restored. Piles of leaves are cleared away, flower beds are tucked in with a covering of mulch and we start counting the days before Thanksgiving and Christmas.

I don't think we ever really count how many leaves have been displaced and blown to new locations in various shapes and clumps, but maybe we could start counting and use the leaves to help us count the many "good works" we could accomplish during this sometimes frantically busy time. Think of all the different tasks we can do when we are concentrating. The possibilities of cooperating to meet a big goal open us up to many new ideas and possibilities for really making a difference.

And if we were to think about this, we might begin to think of Fall as a doorway to delightful possibilities and new ways of fulfilling some promises we have made to God. I would guess that we each have a list of chores we would like to undertake or differences we would love to see happen. Maybe we could find someone who has had the same thoughts but know they could never do it alone. With focused intent, it would be possible for a group of people to think similarly and work together.

There is something quite positive about Fall as a doorway to possibilities and a change from being hemmed in by Thanksgiving and Christmas. It is so worthwhile to think of having a space for planning and working in a different way. Let the leaves, fall and winds blow. This can be a truly positive sign for us.

Mary Ann Stiefvater



BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

have animal companions who need food. Thanks to



On a warm, sunny afternoon on Sunday, October 5 in honor of St. Francis we had another ecumenical Blessing of the Animals in the Village of Clinton Green. We had about dozen people plus their companions (principally dogs and a few cats) many of whom thanked us for doing this every year. And as is our practice, we also collected some petfood and \$30 in cash for pet food for the Country Pantry because people who need food

the clergy from our Clinton Area Ministerium who participated: the Rev. Doctor Joanna Benskin (St. James Episcopal Church), the Rev. Janet Griffiths (LutheranCare chaplain), and Pastor Scott Leonard (Stone Presbyterian Church).





CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA'S

Poinsettias are available this year for those who wish to remember a loved one. Red, White, Pink or Ice Crystal (whitish-pink) colors are available for \$7.50. Please fill out the form below and put in the collection plate or send to the church with a check made out to the church. The plants can be picked up after the Christmas Eve service. The order deadline is **November 30th**. Questions? Call Judy LaGasse (315) 725-2217 or Janice LeFrois (315) 853-2933

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Name of donor (s)
Given in memory of
or Given in honor of
Choice of color
Amount enclosed Deacons to take NO YES
for shut-ins

HOPE HOUSE WISH LIST: Hope House continues its mission of serving three meals a day, and providing the opportunity for daytime shelter for the homeless and needy in the city of Utica. Volunteers from Stone Presbyterian serve dinner there once a month, and the average number we have served recently has been between 70 and 90. As you know, we have designated the 4th Sunday of the month for us to bring in items for Hope House. Their special needs for this month are coffee, sugar, rice, and cereal, as well as personal items like full-size shampoo, conditioner, and bar soap. Let's keep our support of this worthy organization going! Please contact Lora Schilder (315–7 90–1945) if you have any questions.

COUNTRY PANTRY continues to meet the needs of our community by providing a variety of food. 505 families were provided food at August's distribution plus an additional 70 families by transport volunteers. The pantry is accepting \$10 donations to sponsor a Thanksgiving meal for one family. Checks should state "sponsor a family" and may be left at church or mailed to The Country Pantry at PO Box 76 Clinton. They also are collecting NEW BLANKETS for their December food drive. As always, all unopened food items are appreciated. Help me fill my car on the 3rd Sunday of every month.

THE FAIR TRADE SHOPPE: Life is good! Pumpkin spice and everything nice. Find your fall favorites here! Spice up your life. May your home be filled with laughter, your table with favorites, and your hearts with gratitude.

- Create perfect salsas and rubs every time with our Smoky Tomato Spice Blend from the Women's Bean Project in Denver, Colorado. It features tomato, onion, chipotle and paprika. All WBP spice blends come in a reusable aluminum tin that includes a card with our recipes.
- Smoky, spicy, and so delicious! Our Smoked Hot Rocks Spice from South Africa featuring smoked chili and paprika lends a complex and unique flavor to this spicy chili salt. It is great on meats, pizza, and pasta. It comes in a recycled glass bottle.
- Use our extraordinary savory Seaweed Salt Blend, also from South Africa, in place of standard salt as a table condiment to flavor fish, salads, vegetables, rice, pasta, couscous, sauces, dressings, soups, stews, casseroles and eggs. It comes in a recycled glass bottle topped with a built-in grinder to unlock the freshest flavor.

These and MANY, MANY MORE uniquely handcrafted gift items from 38 different countries can be found at our **FAIR TRADE SHOP**, **STONE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**, **8 SO. PARK ROW**, **CLINTON**. Our regular hours are 10am to 4pm every Thursday, **SECOND SATURDAYS** and by appointment by calling 315-853-1070. Purchasing fair trade items ensures artisans and small farmers fair wages and healthy working conditions, providing dignity, sustainable development and hope for marginalized people. **LET US BE YOUR GO-TO GIFT SHOP!** Visit us at https://buildingstonesshoppe.square.site or www.facebook.com/buildingstonesfairtradeshoppe.







Stone Church has an online giving tool called Givelify that is also available as an app on your smart mobile device. Check it out on our web page.

PRAYER REQUEST

Midge Bakos

Helen Leonard

Mary Ann Stiefvater

John Stiefvater

Skip Beardsall and Family

Bev Miller

Sue Max

Peggy Weldon

Michael Britton & Julie Milograno

Richard Raitt & Family

Tom & Ewa Lawrence

Phil Conley

Nancy & Will Eisenhower

Ruth Hughes

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

4 - Tom Copfer

Linell Machold

9 - Betzy Joseph-Harrison

10 - Mary Johnson

11 - Laura Stiefvater

12 - Olivia Rogers

16 - Shannon LaFont

18 - Scott McDonough

19 - Sarah Menard

22 - Judy LaGasse

23 - Jeff Machold



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS

It's time to fall back. Don't forget to set you clocks back one hour on Sunday, November 2nd at 2:00 a.m.





Yes, it's almost that time of year again ...Christmas!! It is time to start thinking about "The Hanging Of The Greens". As you all know we decorate the Sanctuary and Narthex the Sunday before Thanksgiving. The Shopper's Stroll is the day after Thanksgiving, and we need to have our church look beautiful and festive. Many people come to our church that day to go to The Fair Trade Shoppe and the musical events we hold in our sanctuary. So, mark your calendar for November 23rd. The Deacons will provide lunch for everyone after worship and then we will get to work. And, we will have a brand new Christmas tree this year. It is going to be beautiful. I can't wait!! Remember, many hands make light work!! I hope you all come and participate!! See you there!!!



SESSION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS – OCTOBER 13, 2025

• Session approved a special worship service on September 27, 2025 to baptize Sebastian Blancovich son of Mathew and Brianna Blancovich. They have been active members of First Presbyterian Church of Utica and Moriah-Olivet but after consolidation and movement they were currently without a church home.

- Session **VOTED** to agree on membership transfer for Matthew and Brianna Blancovich the parents of Sebastian (just baptized) and his older sister Kennedy, Kay Blancovich and Emily Blancovich.
- Rosalie Wadsworth would like to join as member.
- Donna Goodfriend and Scott Leonard will be storytelling for one hour Thursday 10/23/25 at Zion Episcopal Church in Rome NY at their Stewardship dinner.
- Scott Leonard organized and participated in the annual ecumenical blessing of the animals on 10/5/25 at 1:00 p.m. at the gazebo on the village green. They had about a dozen people plus their companions (dogs and a few cats). They also collected some pet food and cash for pet food for the Country Pantry.
- Scott Leonard has been commissioned as Presbytery of Utica commission to the Synod northeast, which meets 11/15/25 in Amsterdam, NY.
- Scott Leonard was appointed by Presbytery to be a reader for PC (USA) Northeast seminar exams (all online). After training the previous week, he evaluated exams October 6-7. Was fairly intense.
- Christine Menard has been shopping for a Christmas tree. Lowe's does donate to non-profit organizations but the tree has to be a demo tree on their floor.
- If our new folks do start to come, we need to work on Sunday school lessons.
- Donna Goodfriend worked with Mary Ann Stiefvater banners are up
- Stewardship Sundays are October 12th, 19th, and 26th, which will be Concentration Sunday when we will make our 2026 financial
- Nominating Committee Starting to prepare, John Menard and Sherry Robinson offered to go back on Session.
- Scott Leonard attended the 9/23/25 Presbytery meeting...plentiful gifts, an initiative for churches to eventually convert renewable energy.
- Pat Joseph has been asked to join the Mission-Interpretation-Stewardship (MIS) Committee.



Want to see what else is on the calendar? You don't have to call the office. Go to our home web page - stonepres.org, and click on the "Calendar" tab at the top or on the calendar icon.

DON'T FORGET THE DEACONS!

Please keep the Deacons in mind on the first Sunday of each month. All of the loose money collected on those Sundays will go to support the ministry of the Deacons.

Questions? Speak with any of the Deacons — Linda Rance, Judy LaGasse, Bev Miller, Mary Chamberlain, Trish Harris, Emily Hughes & Barbara Greene.

YOUR NEIGHBORS: On a Saturday morning October 11, in addition to others also



helping prepare the food, we had about 10 people put together 146 meals for Your Neighbors in about 1-1/2 hours! Lots of good homecooked food—including chocolate chip cookies! Your Neighbors Inc.is a volunteer-based nonprofit that provides service and support to vulnerable individuals in the Greater Utica Area, empowering them to maintain their health and independence. They offer friendly visits and supplemental frozen meals for those that need a helping hand. Thanks to all who helped!





"For I was hungry and you gave me food." Matthew 25:35







STONE STORYTELLERS STORYTELLING. A year ago, Sandi Lattimer



from Zion Episcopal Church in Rome invited our Stone Storytellers to come 10/23/2025 to tell an hour's worth of stories as part of their stewardship campaign dinner and as part of celebrating their 200th anniversary this year. So, after a hearty dinner catered by Georgio's, Scott Leonard and Donna Goodfriend regaled about 20 parishioners with 17 stories, mostly from the



gospels of Matthew and Luke but also Jonah, the call of Isaiah, and the valley of the dry bones with Elijah. Helen Leonard recorded it and you can found it on YouTube https://youtu.be/sNKfxrd2DGA or by searching for "251023 Storytelling at Rome Zion Episcopal Church."

HOSPITALITY—AND CELEBRATION—TIME! In addition to our regular hospitality time, after worship on October 12, we also celebrated Midge Bakos's 93rd birthday (the day before)! We also enjoyed seeing our retired former pastor, the Rev. Dennis Dewey who helped boost the tenors/basses in choir!













The Corner Stone

ALL SAINTS'/ALL SOULS' DAY: On November 2nd we will celebrate All Saints'/All Souls' Day with a candle-lighting ceremony for those who have gone before us. We would like to encourage people to bring photos of those they wish to honor in memoriam. If you cannot attend, please feel free to e-mail Pastor Scott Leonard (srleonard@roadrunner.com) with names and even pictures of those you would like us to remember as a community of faith.

SHOPPERS STROLL EVENTS AT STONE CHURCH:

Friday – 11/28/25: 4:00 p.m. Carol Singing with Rob Kolb

Friday – 11/28/25: 5:00 p.m. St. Mary's Choir

Friday - 11/28/25: 6:00 p.m. "A Visit from St. Nicholas" at the Gazebo

(recited by Scott Leonard)





We once again, thank LaDana Clark for being our guest preacher on October 19 with a rousing sermon—and challenge—on "Operation: Spread Love." Definitely, what the world needs now and there's just too little of.

CONSECRATION SUNDAY: On October 26th (which also happened to be Reformation Sunday) we concluded our stewardship campaign with a commitment of our pledges for 2026 followed a wonderful celebratory lunch! We received 20 pledges that day in addition to 4 the previous week! We have an excellent start with more than the majority of the pledges we expect and will be following up with others this month. Thanks to all who pledged as it enables to plan for next year and how we can continue to do the missions we feel God is calling us to do!











DEACONS CORNER

"REMEMBER THE TEA KETTLE"

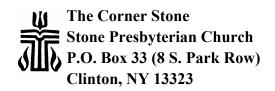
The phrase "Remember the tea kettle, it's always up to its neck in hot water, yet it still sings" is an inspirational saying that encourages resilience and optimism, suggesting that one can remain cheerful and productive even when facing difficult or overwhelming times. The Tea Kettle represents a person or entity enduring hardship. "Up to it's neck in hot water" symbolizes being surrounded by trouble, stress, or difficult situations. "Still sings" represents maintaining a positive attitude, a cheerful spirit or finding a way to express oneself joyfully even amidst problems.

This saying serves as a reminder to stay resilient and find ways to 'sing" through life's challenges, rather than letting them silence your spirit!!!!

Also, remember that your Deacons and Church family are always there to help you "sing" a little.

Hugs, Your Deacons

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29		31	November 1
10:30 am - 11:30 am Worship	3:30 pm - 5 pm Hope House			10 am - 4 pm Fair Trade Shoppe	Halloween	All Saints' Day
11:30 am - 12:30 pm Deacon's Meeting						
2 All Souls' Day Daylight Saving (End) 10:30 am - 11:30 am	3	4	5	10 am - 4 pm Fair Trade Shoppe	7	8 10 am - 4 pm Fair Trade Shoppe
<u>Worship</u>	10	11	12	13	14	15
10:30 am - 11:30 am Worship	7 pm - 9 pm Session Meeting	Veterans Day	12	10 am - 4 pm Fair Trade Shoppe	14	10
16 10:30 am - 11:30 am Worship	17	18	19	10 am - 4 pm Fair Trade Shoppe	21	22
10:30 am - 11:30 am Worship-Guest Preacher-Michelle Dolan 11:45 am - 12:45 pm Hanging of the Greens	330 om - 5 om Hope House	25	26	27 Thanksgiving Day Office Closed - A Blessed Thanksgiving to All	28 10 am - 4 pm Fair Trade Shoppe 4 pm - 5 pm Carol Singing with Rob Kolb 5 pm - 6 pm St. Mary's Choir 6 pm - 7 pm A visit From St, Nicholaus-Recited by Scott Leonard	29
30 First Sunday of Advent	1	2	3	10 am - 4 pm Fair Trade Shoppe	5	6



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Rev. Gerald R. Platz, Pastor Emeritus

Director of Music: G. Roberts Kolb Clerk of Session

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www.instagram.com/stonepresbyterian/

Clerk of Session: Sherry Robinson

Newsletter Editor: Midge Bakos Treasurer: Christine Menard Email: stonepres@stonepres.org www.facebook.com/stonepres

Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m. in person, streamed & recorded on Facebook Live Church Office hours: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. M,W,Th & F—Closed on Tuesday

Newsletter team:

Many thanks to Mary Chamberlain, Linda Rance, Barb Grene & Sonia Teuchert who have folded, taped and labeled this issue of *The Corner Stone* just for you!





Please note...

The deadline for the issue of the December newsletter is Friday, November 21st.

To see a color version of this newsletter in pdf format, visit stonepres.org.