



The Pathway

Newsletter of the Webster Presbyterian Church
Webster, New York

December 2025

Vol. LV No. 10

News from the Stated Supply Pastor:

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Proverbs 3:5-6

When I stepped down from being Park Presbyterian's Interim Pastor last November, I didn't know what God had in store for me. It was a leap of faith. All I knew was that God had told me that three years was enough. It was time for me to leave. Leaving is not easy. It wasn't easy leaving Park Newark, and leaving Webster will not be easy either. You have been a wonderful congregation. So many of you live remarkable lives; you give so much of yourselves and your resources. It has been special to learn some of your stories, to walk along beside you in your journey these past few months, and to support you in your spiritual life journeys. Thank you for allowing me to share this sacred space and time with all of you.

I was hired as your temporary pastor on February 5, 2025. This was just three years to the day from when I was originally ordained! It is hard to believe that almost eleven months have passed. During that time, I have shared so much with your church family. I was here to help celebrate your 200th Anniversary. What a joy! I have also been here to share in your heartaches and sadness—and have performed funerals for beloved members of WPC. I was able to participate in many of your activities—Steve enjoyed being in your Talent Show last spring; we enjoyed the Palm Sunday Brunch; I was able to participate in Vacation Bible School; I attended one of Kat's organ recitals; I have enjoyed singing with the choir; and I was invited to attend a choir picnic. These and more are all a part of the life of your church—and it has been a privilege to participate with you.

You adapted to my changes in the worship service. I added some new song responses, added Stu's Corner, and added a "youth" day on the fourth Sunday of the month. I was asked to do a presentation for Naomi's Circle during Lent; it was fun teaching about the use of Protestant Prayer Beads. I taught a special July series addressing inclusion; I think I learned as much preparing the sermons as you hopefully learned from them. I attempted to attend most committee meetings, which both allowed me to get to know individuals better and to witness the passion with which those on different committees feel toward their "mission." I was also able to attend some of the Saturday morning prayer times. I have been asked to do and create some things that have stretched me—like forming the long-range planning committee and creating a new policy. I have mediated discussions between committees. I have been able to visit hospitalized congregational members—and to pray with family as they faced the loss of a loved one.

Know that I leave with fond memories and wish WPC only the best as you continue to faithfully live out your call here and now in this time and place, continuing to honor Jesus Christ's commission and to continue his mission until he comes again. Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

In Christ, Pastor Susan

December

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**We are followers of
Jesus Christ,
living and sharing
the love of God
through faith
and action,
welcoming all.**

**Church Office
Holiday Hours**

Christmas Week:

9:00 - 3:00 on Monday 12/22 and
Tuesday 12/23.

New Year's Week:

9:00 - noon on Tuesday 12/30 and
Wednesday 12/31.

Dates to Remember

- 11/30 Advent Begins
- 12/6 Webster Parade of Lights in the village at 6:30 pm
- 12/12 ROC City Ringers Concert 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary
- 12/14 Children's Pageant during the 9:30 Worship Service
- 12/14 Genesee Valley Orchestra and Choir concert 3:00 pm in the Sanctuary
- 12/24 Christmas Eve Service 5:00 pm

Advent Devotionals

This year, Advent devotionals will come to you by way of a digital download on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. It is entitled "Draw Near: Lighting the Advent Path with Hope, Peace, Joy and Love," written by Teri McDowell Ott, editor and publisher at Presbyterian Outlook. It includes daily reflections, Scripture, prayers, and children's artwork. Watch for this to arrive in your inbox! We hope you enjoy this as we all prepare our hearts for this meaningful season.

If you do not receive the email or need a hard copy printed out for you, please email or call the church office.

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A Note from Session

Welcome to the second most glorious month of the church year! It's December, and we celebrate the birth of a baby boy who changed our world forever. Even the calendar revolves around His birth. BC and AD... wow... think about it. To label our planet's path around the sun in honor of the Son of God. He is our path to the glory of eternal life, and we measure our journey in time from the birthday of that baby boy in Bethlehem.

Please join us on December 14th when our children perform their pageant for us. It is so wonderful to return to old traditions, isn't it? Enjoy the children's choir when they share their special music with us. And be sure to join in the fun at Webster's Parade of Lights on Saturday, December 6th.

Share the joys of Christmas with our neighbors by choosing from the Angel Tree. Donate a couple of gift cards for fast food for the men of Grace House. Do what you can. Every donation brings joy to the giver and receiver.

Finally, we prepare to say goodbye to Pastor Susan. It is not goodbye, though, but Aloha, for we will meet again. May God lead her and walk beside her.

And we prepare, in January, to welcome Reverend Russ Roth. May God guide him and lift him up as he learns about us and we about him.

Finally, we all wish you the most beautiful time through this glorious month.

Kathy Barbehenn, Clerk of Session



**The January Pathway
deadline for articles is
DECEMBER 17th.**

Email articles to
jchippero@websterpres.org
AND
ghubbard@websterpres.org



**Join us Sunday Mornings at 9:30
in the Sanctuary or on Live-stream.**

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzM5-thYxua2HQSPF6P71wA>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/Websterpres/>

ALL ARE WELCOME.

Deacons' Doings

Angel Tree

The Deacons will continue to collect gifts for the Angel Tree through Sunday, December 7th. Reminder that gifts are to be returned unwrapped. Thank you to all who have contributed. Williamson Come-Unity Center appreciates our continued support of their program.



Poinsettia Sale



The Deacons will soon be taking orders for beautiful poinsettias for display in the Sanctuary at Christmastime.

Sign up in person in the Narthex before and after the Sunday morning worship services on December 7th, and 14th.

The 6" poinsettias will be \$15 each and are available in red, white, pink and red/white. Pay by check or cash when ordering. Make checks payable to PWC with "Poinsettia" on the memo line.

Orders can also be placed by calling or emailing the church office.

Poinsettias can be brought home after the Christmas Eve service or donated to our Friends at Home. When ordering, you may include a dedication in memory or in honor of a loved one that will appear in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

All orders must be placed by Sunday, December 14th.

Food Barrel

Given the loss of SNAP benefits for people in early November, the Mission Committee and the Board of Deacons worked together to organize a special food drive to help supply food for Webster Hope and the Eastern Service Workers Association food cupboards. Members of the congregation contributed three carloads of nonperishables before worship on November 9th. The food was delivered to the food cupboards on the 10th. Remember that food collections are always accepted in the upper Narthex for delivery to local food cupboards by the Board of Deacons. Thanks to all who helped!



Webster HOPE, currently has a need for the following items:
Ground coffee, tea, crackers, canned fruits and vegetables, cake and brownie mixes, jarred applesauce, condiments, and toiletries

Trustees' Corner

Hello and Happy Thanksgiving from the Trustees! It seems that Mother Nature has decided to remind us that winter is right around the corner. She has already "blessed" us with cold temperatures, wind, rain, and yes, snow. Please remember that the parking lot may be slippery, especially because it is relatively new. We have a



very reliable plowing contractor who keeps our lot in great condition, but we all know that ice can occur on clean pavement. Be wary and take your time getting to the

building when the thermometer drops.

You may notice that we have a few new chairs in the Sanctuary. We have received positive feedback on them so far. Please continue to share your comments/opinions on the new additions.

As you know, we have all felt the pinch of tightening budgets, increased costs, and reduced pledging units in our congregation. It is said that in times like these, God will provide, and He did. During our recent contract negotiations with Heritage Christian Services, they asked the Trustees for more space. They have outgrown their current space in the downstairs classrooms. After much discussion, prayer, and discernment, we have been able to provide for their needs.

They will continue to occupy their current space. They will also occupy some of the rooms in the Christian Education wing. We extend our gratitude to the groups that agreed to relocate their programs to accommodate the needed space. This change will contribute extra funds to our annual income, reducing the budget gap we face in 2026. While we are increasing the rent, both sides recognize that HCS still pays far less than the current market rate. They greatly appreciate our commitment to the success of their program and look forward to a long and prosperous partnership with WPC.



Spiritual Nurture

BE (the) PRESENT – ADVENT IS HERE!

This is Bob Blakey from the Spiritual Nurture team with an Advent thought. Advent, the beginning of the Christian year, is a wonderful time for spiritual growth. However, Advent can be so busy that we get overwhelmed. I have a suggestion that may be helpful. Let's make a New Year's resolution early – at the start of the Christian new year!

The resolution is to **Be The Present** by **Being Present**. Let's be a present to our families, friends, and perhaps, even more so, to the strangers we encounter randomly throughout our day. The truth is that all of us want to be seen – to know that the person seeing them is present. I find that if I try a bit harder to be present to each person I meet, I am amazed by the diversity of faces, expressions, and in many cases, a smile or a nod of acknowledgement. And I typically have a smile as well. Try it at the grocery store or retail shop next time!

Let's resolve to grow our spiritual muscle starting now by lowering our busyness level, slowing down, being present, and becoming a present to all. Try it this week and come to church to refine being present with your sisters and brothers. I think we will find, just like the Grinch, that our hearts will grow much bigger.

December Bell Schedules

Glory Bells will be performing their Holiday Concert Series at three locations:

December 4th Holy Trinity Church, 12:30

December 11th Aaron Manor
Nursing Center, 10:30

December 18th Heathwood Assisted
Living Center, 10:30

Alleluia Bells rehearses on Thursday evenings from 6 to 7 pm on December 4th, 11th, and 18th.



Worship and Music

Webster Parade of Lights

Join us in the Webster Parade of Lights at 6:30 pm on Saturday, December 6th! Our theme this year is, *"Here is the church, here is the steeple, open the door and see all the people."* The float will feature the frame of a church with pews and decorations, all lit up for Christmas! There will be plenty of seats to ride in the parade, along with blankets, hot chocolate, and Christmas caroling. Transportation can be arranged to minimize walking and driving. You can also help build the float on Saturday, November 29th, starting at 1 pm. Please see Heather Hewlett or Elissa Burke for more information and to sign up!

Advent begins on November 30th

The Advent season is a special time of anticipation and preparation. We invite you and your family to join us as we journey through this season together, reflecting on themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Our Advent worship services will be filled with music, candle lighting, and inspiring messages that will prepare your heart for Christmas.

Sunday, December 14th Worship Service features the children! They will put on a pageant and delight us with songs.

Our Christmas Eve service is at 5 pm.

Holiday Concerts

December 12th at 7:00 pm - The ROC City Ringers present: *Harmonies of the Holidays*, a handbell performance that will take place in our Sanctuary. This community handbell choir uses our bells and space for rehearsal and would like to thank us with this performance. Bring your friends and family! The concert is free and open to all!

December 14th at 4:00 pm - The Genesee Valley Orchestra and Chorus presents: *Messiah, Rutter and Violin Virtuosity*. The GVOC has requested to use our Sanctuary for their holiday concert. Take advantage of this opportunity to enjoy this wonderful performance right here at WPC! Tickets are available at gvoc.org.

Heart and Hand



Heart & Hand is in the process of moving from Room 5 to Room 4. This move will give Heritage Christian Services additional space for the people in the day program that is housed at WPC. We had everything ready to sew fleece hats and neck warmers there on November 21st.

We are sending many thanks to all the volunteer seamstresses who stitched pillowcases for us. As a result, we will be delivering 33 pillowcases to "Ryan's Case for Smiles," a national organization that provides pillowcases to children with cancer. In Rochester, these donations go directly to Golisano Children's Hospital.

Additionally, 63 delightful surgical hats will also be delivered to Strong for the children at Golisano who will be undergoing surgery. The children are able to choose their own cap, giving them a chance to have a little control in their challenging lives.

Wishing you all a warm and meaningful Christmas season.

Learning for a Lifetime

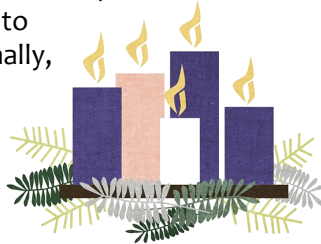
Adult Ed classes begin at 10:45 am and are in Room 9/10 unless otherwise indicated.

December 7 – Join us as we explore Advent using the videos from the Bible Project. We will start with Hope and discuss biblical hope and its relationship to the unchanging character of God. Second is Peace. We will discuss biblical peace, or shalom, and see how it leads us to Jesus.

December 14 – We continue with the Bible Project and discuss Joy. We will explore the unique types of joy to which God's people are called. Then finally, Love. What is the true New Testament meaning of love?

December 21 – No class

December 28 – No class



One in Christ

Creating Safe Spaces

John Kubiniec

We had a recent discussion in our ONEinChrist committee about possibly offering Safe Space Training for the congregation of Webster Presbyterian Church and possibly opening up this training to other churches and organizations in our community. So you may ask, what is Safe Space Training? This quote is taken from www.safesapcetraining.org:

"From the classroom bully to the unintentional exclusion by use of certain language, LGBTQIA people frequently find themselves excluded and uncomfortable in a variety of settings. This workshop aims to reduce the often unwelcoming and even hostile environments in which LGBTQIA people navigate in their daily lives."

You may ask why this is even necessary. I would like to share my personal experience as a gay male (aged 68 - I was born in 1957 - I figured I would save some of you from having to do the math), what being in a safe space means to me.

As I came into a sense of my sexual orientation, there were not places where I could talk about it freely without the fear of being judged, shunned, or excluded. Yes, I managed to endure the onslaught of slurs and derogatory comments, which I can remember as far back as 8th grade. Yes, teens need a SAFE SPACE. I really had no one I could talk to about this.

I was in the seminary for the Roman Catholic Church (age 18-24), and I definitely couldn't be open with who I really was in that setting, not with the leadership of the seminary or diocese. Yes, there was a small group of classmates and clergy whom I could feel safe with - we were all gay - we supported and protected each other - we looked out for each other. We created our own SAFE SPACE in that environment. I ultimately decided I could not be in a safe space if I were ordained a priest and left the seminary, continuing to minister in Catholic settings where I had to master "don't ask, don't tell."

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Memory Verse

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

Luke 2:15-16

Lectionary Readings

December 7 - Second Sunday of Advent

Old Testament	Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm	Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
New Testament	Romans 15:4-13
Gospel	Matthew 3:1-12

December 14 - Third Sunday of Advent

Old Testament	Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm	Psalm 146:5-10
New Testament	James 5:7-10
Gospel	Matthew 11:2-11

December 21 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

Old Testament	Isaiah 7:10-16
Psalm	Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
New Testament	Romans 1:1-7
Gospel	Matthew 1:18-25

December 24 - Christmas Eve

Old Testament	Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm	Psalm 96
New Testament	Titus 2:11-14
Gospel	Luke 2:1-20

December 25 - Christmas Day

Old Testament	Isaiah 62:6-12
Psalm	Psalm 97
New Testament	Titus 3:4-7
Gospel	Luke 2:1-20

December 28

Old Testament	Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalm	Psalm 148
New Testament	Hebrews 2:10-18
Gospel	Matthew 2:13-23



Mission Update

A Visit with John and Grace Sankok of Kenya!



In early November, by the grace of God, Brad and Kathy Adams were able to see and talk to John and Grace Sankok of Kenya briefly in Williamsburg, VA, no less! The Sankoks were there visiting one of their primary sponsors, William and Mary College, and we were there to watch our granddaughter play volleyball near Williamsburg! They briefly updated us about how they have been able to increase their number of medical clinics in remote areas of Kenya from 10 to 14, and added hospital beds and maternity wards at several of the clinics in recent years. They sincerely thanked us for the support that we provide annually from our budget to them, which helps young Maasai girls with their high school and, in some cases, their college educations. While not sure yet, John hopes to be able to return to the US in February to visit more sponsors, include us in that visit, so stay tuned!

Winter Clothing for Cameron Community Ministries

We collected a VERY LARGE amount of winter clothing for Cameron from October 12th through November 16th and delivered it to them on Monday, November 17th. We collected a full minivan plus a full station wagon load! Thank you so much for your generous donations – Cameron was extremely grateful to receive them and almost overwhelmed by the amount!

Christmas Gift Cards for the Men at Grace House

We are collecting \$10 gift cards for the men at Grace House until Sunday, December 14th, for use at Walmart, Target, Chick-fil-A, Wendy's, Burger King, or McDonald's. Please place your donated cards in the box on the table in the Narthex on Sunday mornings or in the Church Office during the week (if the office is closed, put them through the office mail slot). The men at Grace House have been either homeless or in prison and typically get very little for Christmas. Please consider giving generously!



Extra Mission Gifts Given in November

At our November meeting, the Mission Committee was blessed to be able to distribute the remaining \$800 in the Discretionary portion of our Mission budget to special needs that we had recently become aware of:

- For Extra Gift Cards for Christmas for the Men at Grace House: \$200
- For Turkeys, Hams, etc., for Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets distributed by Eastern Service Workers to poor families and individuals in the city: \$300
- To Little Children of the Philippines to help alleviate their year-end budget deficit: \$300

Christmas Joy Offering

During December, we will once again be collecting donations for this Presbyterian-wide offering that is used to provide financial assistance to needy retired and current Presbyterian pastors, and to give aid to financially needy students at Presbyterian-sponsored colleges. Special envelopes will be in chair racks from early December until January 4th for donations, or you can send a payment to the church office.



Trinity Emmanuel Adult Ed

Please join the Mission Committee when we host an Adult Ed class on Sunday, January 18th, 2026, in Room 9/10. We will welcome Donna Gipner from Trinity Emmanuel Presbyterian Church in Rochester, who will speak about their Saturday Morning Community Breakfasts and Person Care ministries that we help to support. We hope to see you there!



From Our Library

On display is our collection of Advent and Christmas-themed books. We have novels, Bible studies, and devotionals. Browse the display and see what you can find to enrich your Advent season.

Some of the more recent additions are:

7 Days of Christmas: A Season of Generosity by Jen Hatmaker

The author discusses generosity and restraint to make Christmas more about Christ than consumerism.

In a previous book, Hatmaker discusses social experiments in seven key areas—food, clothes, spending, media, possessions, waste, and stress. She revises them into a thoughtful and practical generosity that captures the true spirit of Christmas.

Names for the Messiah by Walter Bueggermann

In a short 4-week Advent Devotional, Brueggermann uses the names for Christ in Isaiah 9:6 - Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. He provides a discussion on how these titles for Jesus were thought of in the early days of the church and how they apply to today.

Christmas in Bethel by Richard Paul Evans

Here is another lovely story by Richard Paul Evans. It's a story of loss, hurt, love, redemption, and hope. If you are a fan of *The Christmas Box* or other of Evans' novels, you won't be disappointed in this story.



SHINE - Church School Update

Children's Christian Education Mission Statement

To equip and nurture the children of God with Biblical knowledge and spiritual development in order to begin their faith journey and become disciples of Jesus Christ.

Not only did God choose ordinary people to be Jesus' parents on earth, but God also chooses ordinary people to be Jesus' spiritual brothers and sisters. Jesus was born on earth so that any ordinary person could become a child of God and have a relationship with him. Jesus loves ordinary me and ordinary you!



- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| December 7 | God uses ordinary people.
An angel appears to Mary. |
| December 14 | NO SHINE. Kids will be singing in church.
Christmas pageant during worship. |
| December 21 | Jesus is Born in Bethlehem. |
| December 28 | God wants us to learn and grow.
Jesus asks questions in the temple. |

Church School Stewardship

Crackerbox Palace – Farm Animal Rescue Center (Alton, NY)

Maxinne Amigo – Little Children of the World (Philippines)

100% of the children's offering is given to these two projects.

Women's Bible Study

"THE GIFTS OF CHRISTMAS" will be the theme of Advent for the Women's Bible Study. As we give gifts to family, friends, and those in need, God gives, through his grace, many gifts to us, the ultimate gift being the Babe of Bethlehem, Jesus the Christ. Come for the first three Tuesdays in December as we "unwrap" God's gifts. All are welcome for this short season of preparation for Christmas. Prepare your heart as well as your home.



Women's Circles

Naomi Circle will meet on Wednesday, December 10th at 1:00 pm at the home of Diane Cole for their Christmas Party/Recipe Exchange.

King Circle King Circle will be gathering on Thursday, December 11th at 10:00 am for our meeting and our annual Christmas luncheon. Barbara Coleman will be hosting this gathering in her lovely home at 5966 Trillium Trail in Ontario.

Rachel Circle will meet on December 15th at 6:00 pm for their Annual Christmas Party at the home of Doreen Clark.

Church Family News

In October, we prayed for:

Darlene Schreiner and
the Stewart/Daigle family

We Welcome a New Member:

Doug Williams joined the church on November 23rd. Doug is the husband of Melanie Williams. Welcome!



Creating Safe Spaces, continued

I kept my orientation from my family for far too long. Why? Fear of rejection. Fear of being unloved. I didn't officially "come out" to my family until I was in my mid-30s. I had been contemplating finally telling my family shortly after my brother died, and I was planning to move back home to help with my mother. I thought I had to do this because I didn't want to be living a double life. Well, unfortunately, my mother died shortly after my brother, so coming out was put on the back burner.

I met my present partner, Ray, and we have had a committed relationship (29 years now), and I finally decided at that point that it's now or never. I wrote a letter to all of my family (sisters, nieces, and nephews) and told them my story. I wanted the news to get out to everyone at the same time so that everyone knew-who-knew and could talk about it amongst themselves if they wanted. What a relief. Responses were from rejoicing to "We were wondering when you were going to tell us." What a relief to have a place with family where I could be accepted for who I was. Ray was part of the family. I didn't need to hide. He could come home with me and visit, and not just "be a friend". Instead, he began to be called Uncle Ray. I can't tell you how liberating that felt. My family was now a SAFE SPACE.

My work with the Roman Catholic Church continued to be a "don't ask, don't tell" situation. In one position, a pastor inquired with the diocese about what to do with me because I was gay. When I learned this, I realized I WAS NOT IN A SAFE SPACE. I found another position, but it was still only a "bit safer." Eventually, I came to the decision that I needed to leave my work with the Roman Catholic Church entirely because it was not a SAFE SPACE for me.

During the last few years in that work, I didn't consider myself a Roman Catholic. I considered myself a Christian - but didn't know where I fit. When I moved to Rochester from New York City, I didn't go to church anywhere that first year. I needed the dust to settle. God evaded me. God disappeared from my life. I wondered if there really was a God who still loves me.

I happened to be in Switzerland in the late spring of the first year we moved to Rochester. On a sunny Sunday afternoon, I was wandering around a small town and happened upon a church - a Swiss Reformed Church. Light streamed through the windows. I sat in silent meditation, and God returned to me and showed God's self to me. I remember writing in the guest register. "Thank you for letting me find God again."

When I returned to the US, I wanted to find a place to call my spiritual home. I needed to heal. I needed to find a place where I could be my authentic self. All-important was that I could find a place where, as a gay man, I could be in a SAFE SPACE. I began as an interim organist at Gates Presbyterian Church. A bit into my time there, the pastor prayed for LGBTQIA people during the prayers of the people. I started to cry sitting at the organ - I realized this was a SAFE SPACE. That day, as I played the next hymn with tears flowing down my face, I could hardly read the notes. I tested the waters at church when people asked me if I had a wife. I said no, I have a partner, and his name is Ray. No one recoiled, no one judged - they asked about him. He came to church (at my prodding) and people welcomed me. Can I tell you what a joy it was to have people from time to time come up and ask me about him and how he was doing? I could, for the first time in my ministry, talk openly about my same-sex partner.

(To put this in context, I was in my mid-50s when this finally was able to happen) I had found a SAFE SPACE in church.

The first time I thought we might finally be safe in the wider world was with the Supreme Court's marriage equality decision in 2015 (*Obergefell v. Hodges*). I was 58. That is a long time to wait to feel safe within our legal system. And with recent attempts to repeal such protections, the LGBTQIA community is worried that we might not remain in a SAFE SPACE. This makes the creation of SAFE SPACES even more critical.

After I finished serving as organist and worship coordinator at Gates Presbyterian Church, I wanted to find a church on this side of the river, someplace closer to our home in E. Irondequoit. Some people suggested Webster Presbyterian, others cautioned me, saying they thought it was a conservative church and not gay friendly. I searched the WPC website and saw that the ONEinChrist Committee existed and was offering some education. So I thought this "might" be a SAFE SPACE. I came to worship one Sunday and stayed for adult education, where there was a discussion of the book "Unclobber" by Colby Martin. I participated in a healthy discussion on LGBTQIA issues and scripture. People were enlightened, and people were challenged. Not everyone was on the same page, but they were civil with each other in this discussion. I later attended an adult ed after worship that was held in the Sanctuary to discuss the work of the ONEinCHRIST Committee. Again, I saw a community where people were very supportive of LGBTQIA+ folks. People shared stories about how their views have changed and evolved, and also shared how they still had questions and reservations. What I discerned was that Webster Presbyterian was a place where difficult discussions could take place in a SAFE SPACE with respect being shown for every Child of God. I saw a congregation not "there" yet, but on the way to expanding their loving embrace.

At Webster Presbyterian, I have felt very welcome. When I have preached, I have sometimes referred to LGBTQIA things. To be honest, I do this with a bit of wondering how the message will be received. I feel safe - but I feel like I am stepping out on a limb. At our congregational meeting when we chose our new pastor, I shared about my experience on the PNC. I shared a funny story about watching TV. In the moment, I thought - do I say: "I was watching TV and..." with no mention of Ray. But because I felt that I was in a SAFE SPACE, I could say "I was watching TV with Ray the other night and..."

This article is about SAFE SPACES for the LGBTQIA community. But it could have been easily been written from the viewpoint of the person with developmental disabilities, a person of color, a migrant farmer, a refugee, a person struggling with addiction, a _____. I invite you to fill in that blank with another person or group.

At Webster Presbyterian, we profess we are a Welcoming Community and Welcome All. In that welcoming, we are called to look at our implicit biases and find ways to address them so that we can truly be a community that creates a space where ALL PEOPLE FEEL SAFE.

John Kubiniec

By the way - I'm happy to talk with any of you about any of this - after church, over lunch, over coffee. Let's keep the conversation going.