

Faith Formation

Early registration: Stop in the office -- cost: \$15.

Catechists are needed at both Parishes for the upcoming year so please consider helping with our programs. Helpers are always welcome. Training, teacher's guides are provided as well as personal support. Pass on your faith to future generations!

Parenting Pointers by Susan Vogt

All you who are thirsty, come to the water! ... Come receive grain and eat ... wine and milk! Isaiah 55:1

What is your family's favorite drink or food? Pick a day this week for each person to have one favorite food or drink.

Bereavement Seminar August 15/16

First Presbyterian Church at 296 Main Street in Oneonta is presenting a bereavement seminar by Dr. Alfred Liota, "From Piercing Pain to a Cherished Memory: An Effective Guide to Bereavement."

The seminar begins Friday (2-4 pm) and continues Saturday (10 am to 3 pm) August 15 and 16. For more information: First Presbyterian, 432.4286 or Shirley Fioravanti 432.8397.

Retreats

Dominican Retreat Conference Center 518.393.4169

September 19-21: Women's Weekend Retreat ~ "All You Who Are Thirsty, Come to the Water" Take 44 hours away from your daily routines for rest, quiet, learning and reflection, inner healing, growth, prayer, and sharing. Schedule is varied and flexible to meet individual needs and includes conferences, worship services, opportunity for private consultation/ companioning with any of the staff as well as free time. Director: Sr. Lois Barton, CSJ

Cost: **\$195** (65 & over - \$180)

Marriage Moments by Susan Vogt

Memory Lane #3: As your relationship developed and you started to grow fonder of each other, what is one of the first endearing qualities you can remember that attracted you to your beloved?

Ministry Help

There is need for additional ministry team members to assist with our Masses (training and mentor provided): decorate the Churches, \$ counting, coffee hour volunteers, lectoring, etc. Can you help?

First Reading Background } Isaiah 55:1-3

The prophet Isaiah, living among the Jewish exiles in Babylon, utters words of consolation for the despairing telling them that Yahweh is inviting them to a banquet, which He freely gives them. Yahweh alone can provide for their real needs; they are foolish to look elsewhere for consolation or help.

It was their own sins, their own disloyalty to Yahweh that brought the Babylonian Exile on them. In their exile many of them lost all faith and trust in Him. Thus, we cannot but be amazed at the infinite forgiveness and mercy of Yahweh. The Jews deserved to be abandoned to the fate they had earned for themselves, but Yahweh did not. He sent His prophets. Ezekiel, Isaiah, Haggai and Zechariah, to console and comfort them with the promise that they would return to their native land and survive until the coming of the Messiah. He would establish an everlasting kingdom and pact or covenant.

His infinite mercy and forgiveness towards the exiles were not only for the Jews of that time but especially for us Christians. The return of the exiles, their re-establishment in Palestine, were all necessary parts of God's plan in preparation for the coming of Christ, and because of the mercy shown to these rebellious Jews we are Christians today. We partake of the banquet, which God offered to the Jews in Babylon. It is with us, His Church, that He has made the new and everlasting covenant. He has made a pact with us: if we follow Christ and His teaching on earth we shall have the eternal possession of the promised land of heaven.

Today we must look on these words of Isaiah as the words of God spoken to us. He tells us to come to Him, trust Him, and He will provide for our needs. He has an eternal banquet prepared for us. He warns us not to waste our lives on perishable things: the things of this life, which will not and cannot, satisfy our real needs. Let us "hear, that our soul may live"; let us pay heed to His request. We want to live happily, not for seventy or even a hundred years, but forever; this we can do only by listening to God's word and by putting it into daily practice.