



Danby Church News

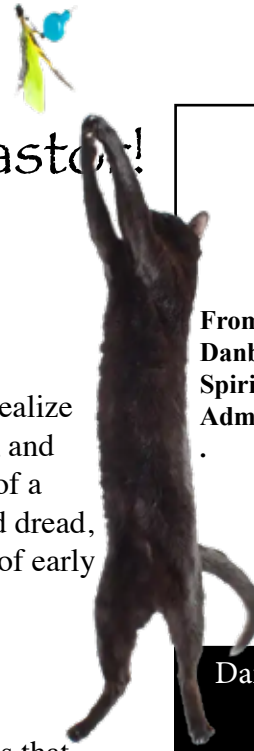
“Adding to and Building up the Kingdom of God”

May 2024





From Our Pastor!



I wake just before 5 a.m. and realize I've been thinking, rehearsing, and changing the parts and pieces of a

seminar I will present in Orlando, Florida. I feel desperation and dread, mixed with apprehension, a terror that comes with the dim light of early morning.

In a few more days this will be past, praise God!

But as I slowly waken, still holding onto the thoughts and dreams that disrupted a good night's sleep, I vividly remember the most important thing to present is based on a cat toy!

Ah, something bizarre and good from a restless night's work.

If you know me, you know I view reality from a somewhat odd angle. As a pastor you might expect I'd be subject to revelations from the throne of God, not aisle five in Pet Smart. You would have a point, but that is not me and my riot of a subconscious.

As I've prepared, researched, and turned over the subject of "Strategies for Post-pandemic Church Growth", something has become clear. There is too much material available, too many statistics, too many novel ideas, and too many personal anecdotes—positive and negative. Worse than the overwhelming amount of information are the inconsistencies across the board. How can there be so many successful churches using programs employed by so many other failing churches?

And then it came to me—before my morning coffee—I might add. A cat toy has many characteristics similar to a number of church growth strategies.

A cat toy is among the most useless things invented by humankind. Specifically, it's a feathered ball of cloth on the end of a string stapled to a stick. It's worthless, but almost every pet cat has one.

It is not alive. It will not move by itself, fly, chirp or do anything without somebody expending energy. A cat may or may not respond to it, de-

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Danby Church Officers and Leaders 2024

Pastor:	Ed Enstine eenstine@aol.com 607.592.8276
Administrative Aide	Lynn Kingston-Harris office@danbychurch.org 607.272.1687
Administrative Council	
Co-Chairpersons:	Paula Nelson sfcnelson@aol.com Sheila Enstine ssenstine@gmail.com
Secretary:	Dave McDermitt davidmcdermitt@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Paula Nelson sfcnelson@aol.com
Financial Secretary:	Dave McDermitt davidmcdermitt@gmail.com
Trustees Chair:	Charlene Testut ctestut55@yahoo.com
Area Coordinators	
Hospitality:	Charlene Testut
Spiritual Development:	Sheila Enstine
Missions:	Suzanne Walker suzrwalker@yahoo.com
Staff, Pastor Oversight Committee SPOC:	
Chair:	Katy Prince
Praise Team Leaders:	Katy & Tommy Prince
Webmaster:	Janet Gray jsg4@cornell.edu
Newsletter Editor:	Janet Gray
Facebook:	Janet Gray

On the Cover

Erika & Mauricio Medina

pending on the cat and its particular mood. A simple length of string is more often a far better toy.

But we spend time picking out that special toy with the best feathers and brightest colors, even if our cats can't see colors. The shape of the feathered cloth must be considered; does it look like a bird? The length of string and the feel of the stick are important considerations. We convince ourselves that the toy will be a great joy and provide hours of entertainment for us—I mean the cat. How dumb must our cat be to think it's real? I wonder if we're just exploiting our cat's natural urge to hunt while we enjoy our natural urge to play.



Thinking through strategies for church growth can be like shopping for a cat toy. We can spend enormous amounts of time on style as a substitute for substance. God forbid that we do church without faith and obedience to Jesus Christ, as God intended, but it can be easier that way. I think this happens all too often. Crowds will gather to play toy religion without obligation. Frequently other churches see that and successfully imitate it for a while. In truth, without Jesus Christ, a Christian Church really is a social club with few benefits and doomed to failure.

The first step to church growth may be as simple as to stop playing games. Look for the places where style has overwhelmed substance. Examine how the past may hold a death grip on the present congregation and worse, may be keeping younger people from attending at all.

Let the “cat toy religion” gather dust and take steps forward in committed devotion to Jesus Christ with strength and courage. Leaders should lift up the value of Scripture and model the virtue that Christ expects in His children.

Prayer must be second-nature and ceaseless among the people in a Christian congregation. We are to be a communion of disciples moving deeper into a full life of service and purpose by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. A church should naturally add to and build up the Kingdom of God.

I pray every church that follows Jesus Christ will be a beacon of peace and light in a dark and turbulent world.

So I will go to Orlando and present. God help me to provide substance not style. May the Lord grant me wisdom. May the clergy I talk with have compassion. Amen

Welcome HOME

a place where you belong

Sunday Worship Celebration @ 10 am
Sunday Youth Church @ 10:30am
Sunday Adult Education Class @ 8:45am
Tuesdays, Prayer Meeting @ 5:30pm
Tuesdays “Sharing Our Faith with Others” @ 7pm
Wednesdays, Live Music & Conversation @ 7pm
Thursdays, Pastor’s Bible Study @ 7pm

DANBY COMMUNITY CHURCH GARDEN

It is such a blessing to see this garden coming together! Thanks to the wonderful support of our congregation, the fencing has been ordered and delivered. And thanks to the generous donation of boards from Got Wood, we can start building our raised beds.



The next steps will be to measure and stake out the garden location, start pounding fence posts, and get four 10'x4' beds built. Many hands make light work!

And then it's all about the soil, my favorite part! We'll need a couple loads of good topsoil and well composted, herbicide-free manure and we'll be ready to start filling the beds. If anyone has access to a truck or trailer for hauling compost/soil, wheelbarrows or garden tools, let's talk!

On this chilly morning, I'm looking at rows of happy seedlings growing inside under lights, and I'm picturing a blessed bounty of tomatoes, lettuce, cucumbers, parsley, basil....What would you like to grow?

:)
-Erika Medina



Do you have a question you would like to ask Pastor Ed? It can be about God, Jesus, the Bible, faith, the church, religion. Send your questions to Janet Gray at jsg4@cornell.edu and your question (and answer) may appear in the next Danby Church News

Spiritual Development Update

from Sheila Enstine

Important Dates for May 2024:

Christ's ascension into heaven is celebrated 40 days after Easter on Ascension Day. This year Ascension Day is Thursday, May 9th.

Because it is 40 days after Easter Sunday, Ascension Day is always on a Thursday. Many churches recognize this holy day on the following Sunday, which is May 12th this year.

Pentecost Sunday, also known as the birthday of the Christian Church, is May 19th in 2024.

Adult Small Groups:

The Sunday morning group will complete its study of the Book of Psalms and begin a short study of the New Testament letter to the Galatians during May. The class meets on Sundays at 8:45 am. Let Sheila Enstine know if you're interested.

Tuesday Evenings at 7 pm, Pastor Ed leads a study of John Kimball's "Low Hanging Fruit". Kimball offers practical advice on how to prepare for sharing our faith and how to build redemptive relationships.

The Wednesday night Praise and Fellowship gathers at 7 pm with the praise team. After worship, we have a time of fellowship and prayer.

The Thursday evening Bible Study begins at 7 pm. Pastor Ed is leading a study on the Gospel of Matthew.

The Friday afternoon Women's Bible Study meets at 1 pm.

Nursery: The nursery is available every Sunday for babies and children through age five.

Children's Church: After the first set of worship music on Sundays, children ages 6 through 10 (about 5th grade) are welcome to attend Children's Church

Prayer Opportunities:

- **In-person Prayer:** Tuesday afternoons from 5:30 to 6:30 PM.
- **Prayer Chain:** Contact Katy Prince at katyprince96@gmail.com.
- **Church Prayer Calendar:** The participation sheet for the May prayer calendar will be circulated on Sunday May 5th.

Congregational Care:

Thank you to Paula Nelson and Doug Nash for faithfully arranging for flower deliveries.

If you have other ideas for studies, prayer or congregational care, please contact Sheila Enstine.



This month's issue of the Danby Church News is on the web at <https://www.danbychurch.org/news.html>!

Danby Community Church
Administrative Council Meeting
April 8, 2024

Present. Pastor Ed Enstine, Sheila Enstine, Charlene Testut, Gloria Miller, Katy Prince, Paula Nelson, Suzanne Walker, and David McDermitt.

INVOCATION. Pastor Ed opened with prayer at 6:58 pm.

CLERK'S MINUTES. Motion to approve March's meeting minutes (Gloria), second (Katy), carried.

FINANCIAL SEC'Y REPORT: Motion to approve March income report (Katy), second (Gloria), carried.

TREASURER REPORT: Paula presented report. For NYSEG, we are now on their monthly budget plan for us. Motion to accept Treasurer's report (Dave), second (Sheila), carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Parsonage. The property now has tax-exempt status with no need to renew/reapply.
- The audit. Sheila will audit 2023.
- Community garden. Katy presented information for fencing from a company in PA. For a 20 x 30-foot plot, the total is \$1,058.27. Motion to have Katy order (Sheila), second (Charlene), motion approved. Since the wood for the beds is being provided gratis, what remains is finding a supplier for the fill and how much needed.

NEW BUSINESS: Sheila will order more pew bibles for the sanctuary to add to the red hardcover ones that are New International Version.

REPORTS.

Hospitality.

- The final chicken & biscuit dinner this spring will be held this Friday, 4/12.
- There will be a women's spring tea in May. Motion to provide \$250 to support (Dave), second (Katy), approved.
- People are welcome to share their ideas for events.

Spiritual Development. The church is in the Easter season also called Eastertide or Eastertime which lasts 50 days

Council Minutes continued on page 7

Did you know we are now on Facebook? You can access us from your Facebook page (just search for Danby Community Church) or press the Facebook link on our church website: WWW.DANBYCHURCH.ORG. You don't need to have a Facebook account to see our Facebook page, but you will need a Facebook account if you would want to "like" our page or post a comment.



until Pentecost Sunday.

Current Small Groups:

Sunday morning group 8:45-9:45am. Sheila is leading a series studying the Book of Psalms.

Tuesday night group. 7:00pm. Pastor Ed is leading a study of John Kimball’s “Low Hanging Fruit: Partnering with the Holy Spirit for Greater Ministry Impact”.

Thursday night Bible study. 7:00pm. Pastor Ed continues his study of the Gospel of Matthew.

Friday Women’s Bible Study: This group is studying the book, “Unveiling Mary Magdalene”.

Wednesday Night Praise and Fellowship. Informal weekly gathering at 7pm.

Nursery and Youth Church:

The nursery is available every Sunday for babies and children through age five, as needed.

Youth Church is available for ages 6-10 (1st – 5th grades) if there are students.

Copies of the volunteer schedule including greeters & ushers are on wall above the water cooler and emailed to participants.

Prayer Opportunities:

- Prayer Chain: Thanks to Katy Prince who can be contacted at “katyprince96@gmail.com”.
- Tuesday evenings at the church with Pastor Ed and Sheila, 5:30 – 6:30 pm
- A volunteer sign-up sheet was offered at church this past Sunday which Sheila will distribute.

Thank you to Doug Nash and Paula Nelson for donating and coordinating flower deliveries.

Food Pantry.

- No report for this past month because no new numbers were provided by the Food bank.

Trustees.

- Regarding the list of church facility needs, they are working on details for repairing the cupola; the cost of making the horizontal slats that compose the louvers is known but not the price of renting a lift since the work will be done from the outside.

Missions.

- Suzanne provided an update on the \$200 spent from the church’s Heifer Fund memorial to Judy Horton: 1 goat (\$120), 1 garden seeds (\$60), and 1 flock of chickens (\$20).

SPOC.

- No meeting yet.

SAP: Met and discussed aspects of how best to minister to and grow the congregation.

Motion to adjourn (Gloria), second (Katy). Meeting ended at 7:49 pm.





Danby Community Church
1859 Danby Road
Ithaca, NY 14850

www.danbychurch.org

Welcome Home!!

What's Happening?!? in May??

Free Coffee and Donuts

Mon. 5/20, 6/17 - 8am - 10:30am

COMMUNITY COFFEE CHAT

Spring Gala
A Blooming Spring Tea
Saturday, May 4, 2pm - 4pm

