



The Highlander

The Presbyterian Church of Punxsutawney
106 East Union St., Punxsutawney PA 15767
www.punxsypc.net punxsychurch@comcast.net
(814) 938-5560

February 2021

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*Please stop in, call or email the office **by TUESDAY MARCH 2nd** with any information, announcements, updates, etc. that you would like to see in March's newsletter!*



This Lenten season, we will be diving into the theme of Again & Again. The materials for this Lenten season come from A Sanctified Art, a wonderful ministry based in North Carolina & the passion of four young women. They wrote the poetry, the devotional materials, the liturgy, created art for us to embrace as we explore the idea of how God comes to us again & again, sometimes in mysterious ways. The women of A Sanctified Art collaborated with T. Denise Anderson, a pastor, artist, former co-moderator of the PCUSA, & who currently works at the national office. Denise's words & art are weaved throughout & I am greatly looking forward to seeing where this season will take us as a church & as those seeking to deepen our faith.

On Ash Wednesday, I will be offering an opportunity to come to the church's parking lot to receive the imposition of ashes. I will be using all the appropriate COVID precautions (separate containers of ashes for each person/family, changing gloves, & masking). I will be available from 11:00am – 1:30pm & 5:00pm-6:30pm. All you need to do is pull into the parking lot & I will come out to you. The Lenten devotionals will be available at that time.

Beginning at 5:00pm, there will be a pre-filmed Ash Wednesday evening prayer service on the church's YouTube channel. You will receive this link in the weekly email communication.

The themes for the first two Sundays of Lent are as follows:

- Sunday, February 21st: Again & Again: God Meets Us
- Sunday, February 28th: Again & Again: We Are Called to Listen

As we enter 2021 and the typically harshest months of winter, please contact the office and/or Property Committee if you notice any issues with the heat, water pipes, etc. so they may be repaired promptly. Thank you!

FROM REV. ERIN KOBS

This month's letter from PCOP's Pastor!

As I am writing this, I'm looking out my window in my study at my house. There is lots of snow on the ground & more currently coming down. Winter is with us & the word from our dear friend Punxsutawney Phil is that we still have six more weeks of it. While I am sure we are all anxious for spring & the new life it brings to the earth, I want to take a moment to remind us that all things come in God's good time.

But, that is often hard to accept, because we want things to happen in the time frame in our minds. We want to see our families & friends without needing to wear a mask. We want to hug people again. We want to get our vaccines & for our loved ones to get them too. We want our lives to go back to normal. We want to come back to worship in our sanctuary, restart the community meals, to have Tuesdays @ 10 in person, be able to mingle in the Memorial parlor while munching on cookies after church. The list goes on & on & on.

I want you to know that I get it! I want these things too. I want to be able to get to know you better, not just seeing your faces on my computer screen. I want to grab coffee & chat. I also want to be able to safely see my family & visit my best friend in New York. It's a hard season we've been living in for nearly a year now. Sometimes seasons don't just last for a few months & while it can be hard, it can offer us some wisdom too.

Perhaps, this season of life has taught us the true value of family. Perhaps, we've had the opportunity to discover a new passion. Perhaps, we've learned some new skills or new ways to stay in touch with those we love. Perhaps, it's given us time to slow down & savor the quiet, calm, & peace away from the world of fast-paced, glorification of busyness.

Yes, we are growing weary of the season of COVID-19. But, I want to encourage us to continue to be patient in the midst of our weariness & desire for normalcy. God is doing a new thing. God is working & with us. God is with those who are trying to develop good vaccines & treatments for COVID. God is with those healthcare workers in hospitals & nursing homes, caring for those who are ill & recovering. God is with those who are trying to pass legislation to aid those greatly impacted by the current economic situation. God is with the church, even when we are doing things a little bit differently. God is with us.

Hold on, dear church. We will be back together soon. Until then, keep connecting with each other. Come to worship on Zoom. Join me for a Virtual Porch Conversation. Most of all, trust in God's good timing.

Blessings,
Erin

AT-HOME WORSHIP FOR FEBRUARY

Adapted by Debra Dinsmore from lectionary resources

FEBRUARY 7, 2021 Readings: Isaiah 40:21–31 ☩ Psalm 147:1-11, 20c ☩ 1 Corinthians 9:16–23 ☩ Mark 1:29–39

Opening or Morning Prayer: In the morning, while it was still very dark, Jesus got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. As I turn to you in prayer this morning, God, bless me with a sense of purpose. As I go out into this day, show me what I am to do. Your understanding is beyond measure and I place my hope in your steadfast love. Amen.

Read about "Praise for God's Care for Jerusalem": Psalm 147:1–11, 20c

Prayer for Illumination: Holy God, speak to me what has been told from the beginning, your Word that is the foundation of the world. Amen. **Read about "The Rights of an Apostle" 1 Corinthians 9:16-23**

Question for Reflection: What does Paul mean when he says that he became all things to all people so that he could save some?

Prayer After Reflection: Gracious God, you call me to follow Christ and spread the good news of your love for all people. Help me to become all things to all people so that I might reach many with your good news. Amen.

Gospel Reading: Read about "Jesus Healing Many at Simon's House": **Mark 1:29-39**

Prayer of Intercession God of the universe, as I offer my prayers to you, I am reminded that the earth is overflowing with bounties including oceans and mountains, forests and deserts, inland waters and breathable air. I take pleasure in the company of furry, four-legged friends and I marvel at creatures of all sorts that share this planet with me. Help me to do my part to save and protect all the wonders that you created. I pray for the people of the world as well, for those near and far, for those like me and for those not like me. Help me to be a friend to all. I pray for this country and its leaders. Help me to be a contributing citizen, a generous neighbor. I pray for your church, here and around the world. Help me to proclaim the message of Christ. As I strive to be an ambassador of Christ, may the Spirit of Jesus take my hand and lift me up so that I may be of service to all who share this bountiful, wonderful earth with me. Amen. **Read about "The Everlasting God, the Creator of the Ends of the Earth": Isaiah 40:21-31**

Closing or Evening Prayer: Creator God, you have been here from the foundations of the earth. I give to you this day, with all its gifts and failings. When the time for rest approaches, renew my strength and, in my dreams, lift me up on the wings of eagles. Amen.

FEBRUARY 14, 2021 Readings: 2 Kings 2:1–12 ☩ Psalm 50:1-6 ☩ 2 Corinthians 4:3–6 ☩ Mark 9:2-9

Opening or Morning Prayer: Holy One, who greets me in the morning and gives me rest at night, let me see you in the people I meet today. Let me hear your voice in the sounds that surround me. Let me heed your call to breathe deeply when I am confused or distressed. Be my guide and shield, in the name of Christ Jesus, who goes before my every step. Amen.

Read about "The Acceptable Sacrifice": Psalm 50:1-6 **Read about "Ministers of the New Covenant": 2 Corinthians 4:3-6**

Prayer for Illumination: Speak to me, O Lord my God, and let the fire of your Spirit burn brightly in my heart. Open my mind to receive the wisdom of the law, the hope of the prophets, and the life of the gospel: Jesus Christ, your living Word. Amen.

Read about "Elijah Ascends to Heaven" 2 Kings 2:1-12 **Gospel Reading:** Read about "The Transfiguration": **Mark 9:2-9**

Questions for Reflection: The Old Testament reading for today presents Elijah as a "new Moses"—striking the Jordan with his mantle and causing its waters to part so that he and Elisha could pass through on dry ground (2 Kgs. 2:8). The Gospel reading builds on this comparison by placing Moses and Elijah together at Jesus' transfiguration (Mark 9:4). There is also a parent-child dynamic in each of these passages. Elisha asks to receive a "double share" of Elijah's spirit (2 Kgs. 2:9)—the appointed inheritance of a firstborn son (see Deut. 21:17). At the transfiguration, God's voice from the cloud bestows on Jesus the mantle of divine authority: "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" What do these constellations of relationships suggest to you? How do they help you to understand the transfiguration of Jesus? How is Jesus a fulfillment of the law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah)? (See also Luke 24:44.) How is Jesus revealed to be God's Son, and what does that mean for us? (See also Luke 3:22, 38.)

Surprise Bonus Reading in Acknowledgement of Valentine's Day: Read about "The Gift of Love": **1 Corinthians 13:1-13**

Prayer of Intercession: Lord, on this St. Valentine's Day I rejoice in the wonder and power of your never ending love for me. I marvel at the love you have shown to every living being. As I reflect on Paul's words, I ask for your help in living love in my daily life.

Lord, because love is patient...help me to be slow to judge others, but always quick to listen. Make me hesitant to criticize, but always eager to encourage, remembering your endless patience with me. **Because love is kind...**help my words to be gentle and my actions to be thoughtful. Remind me to show courtesy to friends, to strangers and to say "Please" and "Thank You". **Because love does not envy or boast, and it is not proud...**help me to have a humble heart and encourage me to look for the good in others.

Because love is not rude or self-seeking...help me to speak words that are kind and easy on the ear and heart. **Teach me how to love without expecting it in return. Because love is not easily angered and keeps no record of wrongs...**help me to forgive others. When I hold onto a grudge, urge me to release it so that I can reach out instead with a hand of love and friendship. **Because love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth...**help me to stand up for what is right and good, give me courage to defend the defenseless, and help the helpless. **Because love always protects and always trusts...**help me to be a strong refuge for those around me. When the world outside is harsh and cold, keep my heart an open place of acceptance and warmth. **Finally, because love always hopes, always perseveres...**help me to see each new day as an opportunity to give myself to your service. Amen.

Closing or Evening Prayer: Holy One, thank you for the richness of this day: for the work I do, for the home that offers me a place to rest, for the friends and family who love me, and for the people of your church in every land whose prayers—unknown to me—are yet a part of my life through you. Bless and love your people everywhere, and bless and love me, too; in Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

AT-HOME WORSHIP FOR FEBRUARY

Adapted by Debra Dinsmore from lectionary resources

ASH WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 17, 2021 Readings: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 ☩ Psalm 51:1-17 ☩ 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10 ☩ Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Opening or Morning Prayer: O God, my heart has been stained with the sin of this world; my spirit is weary and my joy has grown dim. With the psalmist I pray: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Amen.

Read about "Prayer for Cleansing and Pardon": Psalm 51:1-17 **Read about "A Call to Repentance and Prayer": Joel 2:1-2, 12-17**

Prayer for Illumination: By the illumination of your Holy Spirit, O God, open my heart that I may hear your Word and amend my life; through Jesus Christ. Amen. **Read about "The Ministry of Reconciliation": 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10**

Gospel Reading: **Read about "Almsgiving, Prayer, Fasting and Treasures": Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

Question for Reflection: In today's Gospel reading from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches his disciples to do acts of piety in secret (Matt. 6:1-6, 16-21). However, in an earlier part of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus instructs his disciples, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). How do you manage this paradox in your life?

Prayer of Intercession: In your own words, offer a prayer. There are no wrong ways to pray. Plainspoken or wordy. General or specific. Long winded or short and to the point.

Closing or Evening Prayer: God of Righteousness, you see the secret acts of my devotion and know the hidden motives of my heart. Confirm in me a spirit of humble obedience, that without regard to earthly honor I may live as your faithful child and receive the treasure of eternal life with Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY 21, 2021 Readings: Genesis 9:8-17 ☩ Psalm 25:1-10 ☩ 1 Peter 3:18-22 ☩ Mark 1:9-15

Opening or Morning Prayer: God of ancient covenants, your steadfast love and faithfulness are still new every morning. I thank you that I can begin this day in the confidence of your abiding love and unending mercy. Help me to treat others—even strangers—with love and mercy in my encounters today. When I disappoint or am discordant, help me to show love to others. Open my eyes to the places, people, and circumstances in which your kingdom has come near. I pray in the name of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, my Savior. Amen. **Read about "Prayer for Guidance and for Deliverance": Psalm 25:1-10**

Read about "The Covenant with Noah": Genesis 9:8-17

Prayer for Illumination: Gracious God, in every season and circumstance, I need your sustaining word. By the power of your Holy Spirit, proclaim the good news so that I may repent and believe and see anew how the time is fulfilled and the kingdom has come near; in the name of Jesus Christ your Son, my Savior, I pray. Amen.

Gospel Reading: **Read about "The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus and The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry": Mark 1:9-15**

Question for Reflection: The phrase "kingdom of God" occurs fourteen times in the Gospel of Mark. Though Jesus is described at the Gospel's opening as being "from Nazareth of Galilee" (Mark 1:9), at Jesus' baptism it becomes clear whence he comes and to whom he belongs. Jesus is God's beloved Son, and his baptism signals the only realm to which he owes allegiance. His baptism, then, not only is a religious act, but also is a political and economic one. In what ways does your baptism into Christ make claims on your political, social, and economic practices as well as your religious practices?

Read about "Suffering for Doing Right" 1 Peter 3:18-22 **Prayer of Intercession:** In your own words, offer a prayer. There are no wrong ways to pray. Plainspoken or wordy. General or specific. Long winded or short and to the point.

Closing or Evening Prayer: God of peace, I think of the creatures of the earth that also seek rest in the hours of the night. You love them even as you love me, and your covenant faithfulness covers all of us. So, with the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, and the tiny ones who burrow in the ground, I offer you all thanks and praise: for your unending goodness; for the beauty of our home, the earth; for your gift of life instead of a deserved destruction. As your colorful bow now rests in the clouds, so may we color the earth with the ways of peace until all creation rests with you in completeness. In Christ's name I pray. Amen.

FEBRUARY 28, 2021 Readings: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 ☩ Psalm 22:23-31 ☩ Romans 4:13-25 ☩ Mark 8:31-38

Opening or Morning Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me walk with you this day. If you lead me where I fear to go, give me courage and keep me true, that I may bear my cross without shame and live in the promise of life eternal. Amen.

Read about "Sign of the Covenant": Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 **Read about "God's Promise Realized through Faith": Romans 4:13-25**

Prayer for Illumination: Holy Spirit, open my heart to receive your Word, reveal to me the good news, and enable me to trust in the promise of salvation in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Gospel Reading: **Read about "Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection": Mark 8:31-38** **Questions for Reflection:** Jesus asks his disciples to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. How do you practice self-denial for the sake of the gospel? Is every instance of self-denial an act of obedience to Jesus? Can some forms of self-denial foster oppression?

Prayer of Intercession: In your own words, offer a prayer. There are no wrong ways to pray. Plainspoken or wordy. General or specific. Long winded or short and to the point. **Read about "Plea for Deliverance from Suffering and Hostility": Psalm 22:23-31**

Closing or Evening Prayer: Jesus, if I stray, show me my fault, forgive my sin, and set me rightly on your path. Keep me on the way of the cross, and lead me to the eternal joy of Easter. Amen.

FINANCE & GENEROSITY

Thank you for donating funds, time, and energy to PCOP!

Date	Attendance in worship	Weekly offering	% to General Fund
December 31	N/A	\$20,285.80	45.43%
January 3	N/A (online)	\$5,360.00	92.63%
January 10	N/A (online)		
January 17	N/A (online)	\$2,595.00	98.84%
January 24	N/A (online)		
January 31	N/A (online)	\$ not given	% not given

DECEMBER 2020 FINANCIAL HEALTH

	Current	Year to Date	2020 Total Budget
Receipts	\$27,769.31	\$161,643.92	\$182,771.00
Expenses	\$27,194.14	\$175,791.37	
Excess or [Deficient]	\$575.17	[\$41,341.59]	

JANUARY 2021 FINANCIAL HEALTH

	Current	Year to Date	2021 Total Budget
Receipts	\$7,955.47	\$7,955.47	\$183,172.00
Expenses	\$13,863.81	\$13,863.81	
Excess or [Deficient]	[\$5,908.34]	[\$5,908.34]	

PLEASE MAIL your regular weekly offering envelopes to the office while worship services are virtual—DO NOT drop them off at the office.

During the season of Lent as Presbyterians focus on aligning our lives with God's calling for us, the **One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)** special offering through the Presbyterian Mission Agency culminates on Easter Sunday. As stated by PCUSA, "Presbyterians have joined together in this ecumenical effort to share God's love through ministries that provide relief to those affected by disasters, food for the hungry, and support toward the self-development of poor and oppressed communities."

Donations received during OGHS are split into three areas:

32% goes to Restoring Hope via Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, helping communities as they recover and find hope after natural or human-caused disasters.

36% goes to Reducing Hunger via Presbyterian Hunger Program, supporting initiatives that create sustainable food systems and alleviate root causes of poverty so that all may be fed.

32% goes to Partnering in Progress via Self-Development of People, providing resources and education to oppressed and disadvantaged communities working to overcome poverty and injustice through initiatives they own and directly benefit from.

Traditionally, the OGHS special offering is received on Easter Sunday—in 2021, this Sunday falls on April 4th; please mail your offering!

More information can be found at presbyterianmission.org/OGHS

***Monthly Giving
Spotlight:
One Great Hour
of Sharing
Special Offering***

MEMBERSHIP & PCOP UPDATES

Birthdays, prayer requests, moving and more!



Please remember to contact the office if you have any changes in mailing address, email address, or phone number to ensure you are still receiving PCOP updates!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY
TO . . .



Those Needing Our Prayers

Marge Brennan	Duane & Pam Carr	Betty Cessna
Kate Doverspike	The Graham Family	Martha Irvin
	Kathy Kopp	

*Please contact the office to add a name to the newsletter/bulletin "Needing Our Prayers" list. Please contact **Rex Lettie** at pcop.prayer.chain@gmail.com to join or to add a name to the PCOP Prayer Chain.*

February 2	Donna Anderson
February 3	Laura Craig John Hodgson
February 7	Robert Barrett
February 18	Max Roberts
February 20	Loni Studebaker
February 24	Richard Nesbitt
February 27	Flo West

Virtual Porch Conversations Continue in February



I have really loved being able to connect with you during the Virtual Porch Conversations in the month of January. I wanted to add a few more opportunities for folks to connect with me. There is no real agenda for these, but just a time for connection & for you to get to know me better. Join me with a cup of your favorite winter beverage! The links for these opportunities will be in the weekly email communication.

Wednesday, February 3rd at 7:00pm
 Tuesday, February 9th at 7:00pm
 Monday, February 15th at 11:00am
 Thursday, February 25th at 11:00am

SESSION & THE BOARD OF DEACONS

Keeping up with the committees and officers of PCOP!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The next meeting of the Board of Deacons will be:
SUNDAY FEBRUARY TBD
9:30 a.m.
Memorial Parlor

The next meeting of Session (Unicameral Board)
will be:
MONDAY FEBRUARY 22nd
7:00 p.m.
Lester Seminar Room

“Thank You!” to the outgoing Class of 2020:

Elders:

**William Cooper
Dana Hartman
Rex Lettie**

Deacons:

**Lee Blose
Kathi Cessna
Jean Hughes**

And “Welcome!” to the Class of 2023:

Elders:

**Harry Philliber (Class of 2022)
Dana Hartman
Keith Hughes
Rex Lettie**

Deacons:

**Lee Blose
Kathi Cessna
Jean Hughes**

From a card received 1/4/21:

Thank you! Our congregation gives thanks for your kindness in assisting one of the members of our church family, Mr. Robert Salsgiver. We would like to contribute to your efforts by giving a donation to your Life Flight [Flight Bags] fund.

*In Christ’s Love, we are
The 1st Baptist Church of Glen Campbell*

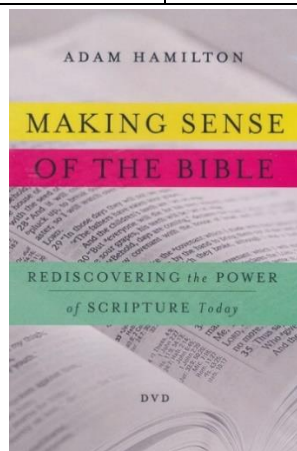
WHO DO I CONTACT?

“I have a question about . . .”

Schedules, quarterly financial statement, newsletter, ordering flowers, bulletin information, ordering church supplies, using church facilities, etc. <i>And anything else!</i>	Keri in PCOP office
Hospitalizations, Emergencies, Member Care	Keri in PCOP Office Board of Deacons
PCOP Property & Grounds, maintenance requests	Property Committee Co-Chairs Dana Hartman & Keith Hughes & Wick Divelbiss
Worship information, pulpit supply	Worship Committee Chair Roberta Dinsmore
Baptisms & Weddings	Clerk of Session Doug Chambers
Funerals & Memorial Services	Keri in PCOP Office Funeral Director
Mission & Fellowship Opportunities	Mission & Outreach Chair—Rex Lettie Fellowship Chair—Barbara Burkett
Youth Group & Children’s Sunday School	Youth Group—Dana Hartman Christian Education Chair—
Finances & Giving	Finance Committee Chair—Nick Suntheimer Stewardship Committee Chair—David Divelbiss
New Members (Joining PCOP)	Clerk of Session Doug Chambers
Choir & Music	Music Director Nancy Pearce
First Tuesday Community Meal	Donna Anderson
Current Members of Session	Barbara Burkett, Deborah Elder, Nick Suntheimer, Roberta Dinsmore, David Divelbiss, Harry Philliber, Dana Hartman, Keith Hughes, Rex Lettie
Current Board of Deacons	Debra Dinsmore, Carole Haire, Donna Grabany, Richard Cessna, Barbara Endress, Pam Hogan, Lee Blose, Kathi Cessna, Jean Hughes

FEBRUARY 2021 CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 Groundhog Day 10 A.M. Tuesdays @ 10	3 7 P.M. Virtual Porch w/Erin	4	5	6
7 Souper Bowl of Caring	8	9 10 A.M. Tuesdays @ 10 7 P.M. Virtual Porch w/Erin	10	11	12	13
14 Transfiguration of the Lord	15 President's Day 11 A.M. Virtual Porch w/Erin 5:30 P.M. Crosstown Food Pantry	16 10 A.M. Tuesdays @ 10	17 Ash Wednesday 11 A.M.-1:30 P.M. & 5 P.M.- 6:30 P.M. Imposition of Ashes 5 P.M. Prayer Service	18	19	20
21 1 st Sunday in Lent	22 7 P.M. Session Meeting	23 10 A.M. Tuesdays @ 10	24	25 11 A.M. Virtual Porch w/Erin	26	27
28 2 nd Sunday in Lent	March 1	March 2 March newsletter info deadline	<i>Worship and Tuesdays @ 10 have gone virtual! At time of publishing, all other activities remain suspended.</i>			



Tuesdays @ 10 A.M. Zoom Meetings

Making Sense of the Bible by Adam Hamilton

Links to the Zoom meeting will be emailed to the congregation when available. Please contact the office or Rev. Erin Kobs if you want to participate, but have not received the link.



106 East Union Street
Punxsutawney, PA 15767

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Monday thru Friday

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Email: punxsychurch@comcast.net

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Mildred Dacko's Never Alone

Sometimes, Oh Lord, when I cannot pray,
I sit very still with nothing to say
But nevertheless, I know you're there;
I whisper your name 'cause I know you care.
And you know I've been weak, so often unkind.
But, your Spirit is with me, right here in this home
And I know I am never walking alone.

By Mildred Dacko, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania

submitted by Dee Blose

