

**Report from the
Lead Presbyter for Transformation**
To the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse
March 14, 2026

General Comments:

It has been a joy visiting churches in the presbytery, getting to know pastors and congregations, and working with PNC's. I continue to visit with congregations for worship, preach occasionally, and work with the committees of the Presbyteries. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need some assistance or help. leadpresbyter@cayugasyracuse.org Also you may contact the Assistant to the Lead Presbyter Rev. Mary Anderson at asst.presbyter@gmail.com

Activities: Jan 8 – March 4, 2026

- Meeting with PNC of Jamesville and Chittenango First via Zoom in C-S Presbytery on Jan. 8
- Meeting with CLC staff via Zoom on Jan. 9
- Meeting with immigration lawyer via Teams on Jan. 9
- Meeting in person with Session and PNC of Northminster Pres. Endwell on Jan. 9
- Attended in person Worship at First Presbyterian Church in Liverpool, NY (C-S Presbytery) on January 11(with lunch afterward with the pastor and his wife)
- Meeting with the Focus and Coordination Team via Zoom on Jan. 12
- Attended the Executive Team Meeting via Zoom of Sus Valley Presbytery on Jan. 12
- Phone call meeting with Pastor in Sus Valley Presbytery, Jan. 13
- Attended the COM of C-S Presbytery via Zoom on Jan. 13
- Attended meeting with Presbytery Leaders in the Synod of the Northeast on Jan. 15 via Zoom
- Preached at Northminster Presbyterian Church in Endwell, NY on Jan. 18
- Attended via Zoom the Presbytery meeting of C-S Presbytery on Jan. 21
- Met with members of several Presbyteries regarding the 6 Presbyteries gathering in September via Zoom on Jan. 22
- Attended via Zoom a webinar regarding the 2026 National Fund for Sacred Places
- Trained the PNC members of Jamesville and Chittenango Presbyterian Churches as they begin the search for a shared pastor via Zoom on Jan. 22
- Phone call meeting with Board of Pensions Church consultant Rev. Luke Choi regarding his connecting with both Presbyteries on Jan. 23
- Met with Ruling Elder of one of our Churches in person regarding a proposal he wants to offer to the Presbytery on Jan. 23
- Met with the Cabinet via Zoom on Jan. 27
- Met with C-CLeF via Zoom on Jan. 28
- Met with Sus-Val COM via Zoom on Feb. 3
- Met with a pastor of Sus-Val church via Zoom on Feb. 4
- Attended via Zoom the Presbytery Assembly meeting on Feb. 5
- Attended in-person worship at First United Church of East Syracuse (PCUSA/UMC) and met with a pastor after worship on Feb. 8
- Met with Sus-Val Personnel and C-S HR committee chairs Via Zoom on Feb. 9

- Met with Sus-Val Executive Committee via Zoom on Feb. 9
- Met with the Focus and Coordination Team and Synod Leader via Zoom on Feb. 10
- Met with C-S COM via Zoom on Feb. 10
- Met with Assistant to the Lead Presbytery and C-S pastor to discuss a church situation via Zoom on Feb. 11
- Met via Zoom with Sus-Val pastors to discuss a situation on Feb. 11
- Attended in person Worship at Sus-Val Christ Community Church in Cortland on Feb. 15
- Met with the Focus and Coordination Team via Zoom on Feb. 16
- Attended in person the Sus-Val and C-S COM's gathering at Cortland United on Feb. 17
- Met with 1001 New Worshipping Community Staff person and Jeremiah Pottery in Hancock folks via Zoom on Feb. 18
- Met with Synod of the NE Presbytery Leaders via Zoom via Zoom on Feb. 19
- Met with a joint meeting of Sus-Val C-CLeF and C-S CPM (Committee on preparation for Ministry) via Zoom on Feb. 19
- Met via the phone with another Presbytery colleague to discuss ministry on Feb. 19
- Attended in person a Sus-Val COM retreat/training at the Bainbridge Church on Feb. 21
- Attended in person the C-S congregation Sennett-Federated, Auburn (PCUSA/ABC) on Feb. 22
- Met with New Worshipping Community advisor with Sus Val New Worshipping Community upstart folks on Feb. 23 via Zoom
- Met with Sus Val COM chairs and Co-Stated Clerk to discuss a church situation via Zoom on Feb. 24
- Met with Sus Val Cabinet via Zoom on Feb. 24
- Met with Coach on Feb. 25 via Zoom
- Met with other mid council leaders and the Board of Pensions staff to review possible changes and possible programs/assistance via Zoom on Feb. 25
- Worshipped in person with First Presbyterian Church, Nichols, NY in Sus Val on March 1
- Met with staff of Sus Val via Zoom on March 2
- Met with the Focus and Coordination Team of both Presbyteries on March 2 via Zoom
- Met with the CORD of C-S Presbytery via Zoom on March 2
- Met with an Administrative Commission of Sus Val in person on March 3
- Met with Sus Val COM via Zoom on March 3
- Met with the Association of Mid Council Leaders to talk about merging congregations via Zoom on March 4

Committees working together:

- CPM (Committee on Preparation for Ministry) of C-S and C-CleF(Commission on Christian Leadership and Formation) of Sus Val
- Social Justice Committee of C-S and Justice in Mission of Sus Val
- Both COM gathered to discuss and hope to resource each other in the near future
- Finance Committees of both Presbyteries will meet soon
- HR of C-S and the Personnel Committee of Sus Val have worked together and want to become one Co.

Focus and Coordination Team

Please mark your calendars and plan on attending a gathering for both Presbyteries on **May 16 at First Presbyterian Church in Cazenovia**. It will begin at 10:30 am with snacks and refreshments and 11:00 am is the official start time. This will not be a business meeting but a gathering of members of both presbyteries to continue to build relationships, eat lunch together and hear from Rev. Bill Carter, who will share his experience of the merger of Lehigh/Lackawanna Presbyteries. Also, we will be asking questions regarding Future Mission Engagement and how a merged Presbytery can support congregations in new ways. There may be a donation asked for lunch for participants.

Continuing Education for the Lead Presbyter

“The Rise of the Nones” sponsored by Homebrewed Christianity with Dr. Ryan Burge and Dr. Tony Jones. They did the first major quantitative research project of all those who checked the box “none” regarding religious affiliation. They were able to identify 4 groups and highlighted some of their beliefs. Please see the **slides attached** to this report. In this 4-week (once a week) class it was interesting to hear their findings and reflect on this group of people. It is possible that between 28% to 30% of people in the United States are “nones.” The first category of Nones, called NiNOs, or Nones in Name Only, are those who may find their way into our churches. And in fact, these nones are more likely to pray more often than Protestants. You can find out more about “The None’s Project” by clicking this link: <https://www.thenonesproject.com/>

Activities I’m looking forward to:

- Synod Presbytery Leaders gathering April 19-22
- Virtual Regional Summit from the Board of Pensions for C-S and Sus Val Presbyteries on April 23
- Gathering of both Presbyteries on May 16 at First Presbyterian Church, Cazenovia

Continuing Education:

January 5, 12, 19 and 26 “The Rise of the Nones” livestream offered by Homebrewed Christianity

Vacation: Jan. 20, & Jan. 29-Feb. 2 = 6 days(maybe counted as 2025 unused vacation days)

Gratefully and Respectfully Submitted By
Rev. Dr. Greg Garis
Lead Presbyter for Transformation

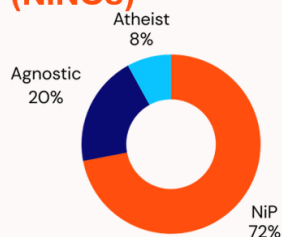


NiNOs
(Nones in name only)

**21% of all nones
are NiNOs**

THE NONES PROJECT

Nones in Name Only (NiNOs)



Religious
Importance **5.7**

Spiritual
Importance **8.7**

32% Attend religious services at least once a year

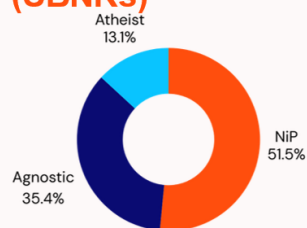
53% Pray at least once a day

47% Believe in God without a doubt

50% Trust Religion "Not at All"

04

Spiritual but not Religious (SBNRs)



Religious
Importance **1.8**

Spiritual
Importance **6.5**

93% Attend religious services seldom/never

87% Pray seldom or never

5% Believe in God without a doubt

76% Trust Religion "Not at All"

THE NONES PROJECT

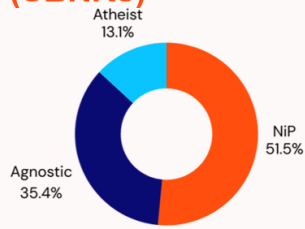


SBNRs
(Spiritual but not religious)

**36% of all nones
are SBNRs**

05

Spiritual but not Religious (SBNRs)



Religious
Importance **1.8**

Spiritual
Importance **6.5**

93% Attend religious services seldom/never

87% Pray seldom or never

5% Believe in God without a doubt

76% Trust Religion “Not at All”

THE NONES PROJECT



SBNRs
(Spiritual but not religious)

**36% of all nones
are SBNRs**

05

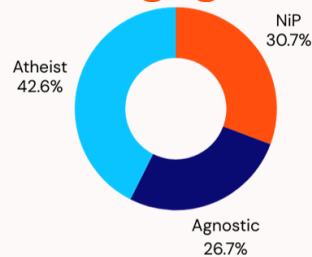


Disengaged

**33% of all nones
are Disengaged**

THE NONES PROJECT

Disengaged



Religious
Importance **0.2**

Spiritual
Importance **1.2**

98% Attend religious services seldom/never

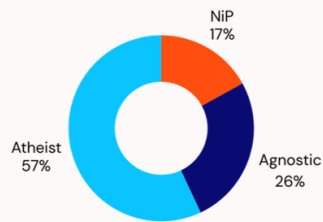
99% Pray seldom or never

0.2% Believe in God without a doubt

89% Trust Religion “Not at All”

06

Zealous Atheists



Religious Importance **1.7**

Spiritual Importance **4.2**

83% Attend religious services seldom/never

81% Pray seldom or never

4% Believe in God without a doubt

76% Tried to convince someone to leave religion

THE NONES PROJECT



**Zealous
Secularists**

11% of all nones
are Zealous Secularists

07

Comparing Prayer Frequency Between Christians and Nones

@ryanburge + @jonestony
Data: Making Meaning Survey, 2024

