

News Brief

♥For the members and friends of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsford ♥

April, 2005

From the Pastor's Pen-Cell

In its April 1985 edition, *Sports Illustrated* published a story about a new rookie pitcher who would play for the Mets. His name was Sidd Finch. He could reportedly throw a baseball with startling, pinpoint accuracy at 168 mph (65 mph faster than anyone else has ever been able to throw a ball). Having never played baseball before, Mr. Finch had mastered the "art of the pitch" in a Tibetan monastery under the guidance of the "great poet-saint Lama Milaraspa." Mets fans celebrated their team's good fortune at having found such a gifted player, and *Sports Illustrated* was flooded with requests for more information. But in reality this legendary player only existed in the imagination of the writer of the article, George Plimpton, who is credited with one of the best "April Fools" literary pranks of all time.

You have probably read about the prank report that Alabama had changed the value of Pi, or the Swiss spaghetti harvest, or Taco Bell's purchase of the Liberty Bell, or the eruption of Mount Edgecumbe. That was in 1974 when the residents of Sitka, Alaska were alarmed when the long-dormant volcano Mount Edgecumbe, suddenly began to belch out billows of black smoke. People spilled out of their homes onto the streets, terrified that it had become active and might soon erupt. However, the eruption was the work of Porky Bickar who had flown hundreds of old tires into the volcano's crater and then lit them on fire, all in a (successful) attempt to fool the city dwellers into believing that the volcano was stirring to life. According to local legend, when Mount St. Helens erupted six years later, a Sitka resident wrote to Bickar to tell him, "this time you've gone too far!"

Now on the threshold of April, we can only imagine what possible surprises will be in store for us. We are in the church season of Eastertide, those fifty days leading up to Pentecost. What did the Romans really think after the resurrection of Jesus? What went through the minds of those who had conspired against him and had stirred up crowds to demand his crucifixion? Is this an April Fool's joke?

In ancient cultures, including those as varied as the Romans and the Hindus, New Year's Day was celebrated on April 1. It closely followed the vernal equinox (March 20th or March 21st.) In medieval times, much of Europe celebrated March 25, the Feast of Annunciation, as the beginning of the New Year.

In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII ordered a new calendar (the Gregorian calendar) to replace the old Julian Calendar. This new calendar called for New Year's Day to be celebrated Jan. 1. Many

countries, however, resisted the change. In fact, Scotland resisted until 1660; Germany, Denmark, and Norway until 1700; and England until 1752.

In 1564 France officially adopted this reformed calendar but many people either refused to accept the new date, or did not learn about it, and continued to celebrate New Year's Day on April 1. Some began to make fun of these traditionalists, sending them on "fool's errands" or trying to trick them into believing something false. They were "April Fools."

How about some Old Testament wisdom from Proverbs as we wait for the April showers to bring May flowers:

(Prov 10:18 NRSV) Lying lips conceal hatred, and whoever utters slander is a fool.

(Prov 10:23 NRSV) Doing wrong is like sport to a fool, but wise conduct is pleasure to a person of understanding.

(Prov 14:16 NRSV) The wise are cautious and turn away from evil, but the fool throws off restraint and is careless.

(Prov 18:2 NRSV) A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing personal opinion.

(Prov 19:1 NRSV) Better the poor walking in integrity than one perverse of speech who is a fool.

Or if you want to meditate on New Testament thinking, you might try these verses:

(Mat 7:26 NRSV) And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

(1 Cor 1:20 NRSV) Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

(1 Cor 1:27 NRSV) But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;

(Eph 5:17 NRSV) So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

(Titus 3:3 NRSV) For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, despicable, hating one another.

(1 Pet 2:15 NRSV) For it is God's will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish. ♥

Bruce

Prayerfully Pondering the Presbytery of The Genesee Valley. . .

On Saturday, March 19, I had the privilege of introducing Elder Sylvia Fix to our presbytery as First Presbyterian Pittsford's newest Elder Commissioner. She joins Dianne Brown in this ministry. This was Sylvia's first experience at a presbytery meeting and she was excited to be able to participate! Who is our presbytery, what role does Sylvia play as an Elder Commissioner, what mission does the presbytery pursue, and how can we be a continuing active presence in our presbytery?

As part of our Presbyterian heritage, we are a connectional church.¹ Our church, along with 72 other churches in the five-county area of Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Orleans, and Wyoming (+ the Victor church in Ontario County) comprise the more than 17,000 members of the Presbytery of the Genesee Valley (PGV). We are one of 173 presbyteries in the Presbyterian Church (USA). As a governing body of the PC(USA), the PGV meets five times a year and is responsible for the mission and government in the geographic district. The voting membership of the presbytery consists of all the ministers and an equal number of Elder Commissioners like Sylvia and Dianne.

Both Sylvia and Dianne were elected by our Session to serve as Elder Commissioners for an annually renewable term. Any ordained elder in our church is eligible to serve as an Elder Commissioner and we are apportioned three from our church. If you are an elder and are interested in learning more about the workings of the presbytery, let Bruce or me know.

Our presbytery is a faithful steward of our funds that come from the 73 member churches' annual mission giving, per capita payments, and other interest income funds managed by the presbytery. Elder Commissioners and minister-members vote on the annual budget prepared by the presbytery's Administration Committee and the recipients of these funds include such wonderful ministries as Advent House, Alternative for Battered Women, Church Women United, Camp Whitman, Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministry, and Cameron Community Ministries. For a full list of the ministries our presbytery supports and much more, see the website at <http://www.pbygenval.org/>

¹ The Presbyterian Church (USA) has approximately 2.5 million members in more than 11,000 churches, 173 presbyteries, and 16 synods. Delegates from the presbyteries meet bi-annually for our General Assembly (GA) and the Office of General Assembly is located in Louisville, Kentucky. Elder Ray Feasey attended the 2003 GA on behalf of our presbytery.

One of the many benefits of being a member of this connectional church and this particular presbytery is the economies of scale we can achieve when seeking the services of outside vendors such as insurance companies. We are blessed to be a part of the presbytery's \$96 million insurance policy with Utica Mutual from which we are currently negotiating a settlement for our fire damage.

Another benefit is the cooperative ministries made possible through various committees of the presbytery such as annual leadership training, Presbytery Resource Saturday gatherings, youth events like Movie and Mission Madness, and networking for both elders and ministers. For example, the presbytery assists in the nurturing, recruitment, selection and placement of ministers. Our congregation has historically been quite active in the presbytery: in fact, more than 50 of our current members have participated in presbytery events in recent years.

As another example of our current involvement in the presbytery, Nancy Sprenkle chairs the presbytery's Personnel Committee. Please notice her invitation to be more involved in the presbytery's volunteer efforts on the green page in this month's *Newsbrief*.

As would befit the geographical area that produced Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass, the PGV has a national reputation of prophetically listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit and leading others in reading the signs of the times. Our presbytery has the historical distinction of being the first to send up an overture to the General Assembly for the ordination of women in 1948. In 2006, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first woman being ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church.

On January 29, 2005, our presbytery adopted a new vision statement: The Presbytery of Genesee Valley glorifies God by Knowing Christ, Living Christ and Sharing Christ. The updated vision helps our Elder Commissioners and Ministers make more focused decisions, increase the fellowship of our presbytery, and better serve both our internal members, the body of Christ in our geographic region, and the world that needs to know God's Good News. If you are interested in learning more, ask me, Bruce, Sylvia, Dianne, Nancy or check out the presbytery website. And may your curiosity both be satisfied and lead to a clearer view of what God is calling us to do together in ministry. ♥

Go with God, *Carrie*

These are the lectionary texts for the month of April. We welcome you to study in advance of their being incorporated into the Sunday worship services. Please join us for Bible Study on Wednesdays in Fellowship Hall at 9:30 AM or in the Library at 7:00 PM to discuss the upcoming Sunday's texts. No preparation is necessary – bring yourself, your Bible and your questions.

**Week of Apr. 3 – Acts 2:14a, 22-32; Ps.16; 1 Peter 1:3-9
John 20:19-31**

**Week of Apr. 10 – Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Ps. 116:1-4, 12-19
1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35**

**Week of Apr. 17 – Acts 2:42-47; Ps. 23; 1 Peter 2:19-25
John 10:1-10**

**Week of Apr. 24 – Acts 7:55-60; Ps. 31:1-5, 15-16
1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14**



...from Sandy's desk

On the brink of blue skies, bright, shiny, new greens and gorgeous and fragrant spring blossoms, it behooves us as Christians to consider what kind of "Lazarus" we will be.

John, disciple of Jesus, recounts to us in Chapter 11, vs. 1-45, that in love and pity for the sorrow of Lazarus' sisters, Martha and Mary and his friends and indeed for the love of his friend Lazarus himself, Jesus goes to the grave of his friend and on his own spiritual authority and power, to the Glory of God, calls the dead and decaying corpse back to life. "Come out! Come from that dark, dank smelly inner cave. Come out into the world and live!"

Recently, our Wednesday study groups were called on to consider Lazarus' alternative. And, comparing Lazarus to our own congregation they considered, "What would have happened if, when Jesus called him forth (and Martha and Mary warned that he had been dead four days and there was the stench of death with him)... What if Lazarus had said NO!

What if Lazarus had called out "No, Lord. I have settled in here. I have become accustomed to this place just the way it is and I have grown used to the stinking rags I wear. It is dark and away from the world and I can no longer breathe fresh air but this is what I am used to now, so here I will remain."

Allowing Lazarus to make his own choice, as our God allows us as well, Jesus and the other mourners would probably have returned to brief mourning and then would have gone on with their lives. Jesus would have continued healing and teaching and Lazarus would have no longer been able to hear and grow. All would have been able to enjoy the relationships, fresh air and new ideas of the world and Lazarus would no longer be able to experience all that life has to offer. And, as others learned from Jesus and went out into the world to teach the Good News to others, Lazarus also could no longer be an instrument of God to spread the Word.

So there lies Lazarus. He is quite comfortable in his dark and stench-filled existence, choosing stagnation. Accustomed to the sights, sounds, smells and repetitive movements allowed within the cave, as a member of God's church, he is totally ineffective and actually a drain on the energies of those who would like to include him in their lives and love him. They miss him but can do nothing to get him to participate. They mourn the loss of feeling his love and presence and the loss of the gifts he has for the betterment of his community and the world. Their thoughts move to him in irritation for his lack of caring about more than himself and they become angry at the waste of the loss of one of their own because of the loved one's own choice.

Well, church, let us each revisit the request of Jesus to Lazarus. Let us each take up the challenge to meet Jesus out in the fresh air and follow him to spread God's Good News. We witness to the world by who we are and how we move in the world in which we have been planted. Which Lazarus are you? ♥

Thank You

Pittsford Food Cupboard staff and clients appreciate the generous support from our Church Family. You can designate any or all of your United Way contribution to Pittsford Food Cupboard – our donor number is 2387. Thanks for your continued support.

Confirmation: Come Claim the Creed! This is just a reminder to all mentors and confirmands that the date for our April gathering has been changed from April 3rd to April 10th. We'll still be at Christ Clarion between 6:30-8pm, but we will meet downstairs. And a reminder to confirmands, mentors, parents and Session members: we will have our end-of-year dinner banquet on Sunday, May 1st at Christ Clarion at 6:30pm. The confirmands will meet with Session to review their faith statements, be celebrated for their discernment, and everyone will have a chance to share excellent fellowship. Questions? Please contact Carrie Mitchell (586-5688x32) or Janette Henderson (248-9386).



Save the Dates! JYF and MTC are back in full swing this term and all 7th-12th graders are invited to join us at Christ Clarion Presbyterian Church on Thornell Road between 7-8:30pm on April 10 and May 15 and 22. All are welcome: bring your friends! Watch the bulletin and emails for details. If Carrie does not have your email, please send it to her at carrie.mitchell@pittsfordpres.org ♥



IT IS YOUR TURN!

Yep, especially for those of you who play tennis, volleyball or handball, look sharp the ball is in your court!

Most of us would react speedily and with determination to that ball on our side of the net or on our side. We would scramble to assist our team members to get the volleyball back over on the other side of the net. "Point! Match?"

We have before us a challenge to our 'team'. TEAMMATES! What will you do with this opportunity?

While the date of May 20, 2004 will 'burned' into our history forever, here we are in March of 2005 and we have turned a corner! Our reconstruction has begun and we are **BEGINNING THE JOURNEY HOME**. Now we need to turn our energies to the very reason we are called to be the church. We come together for a reason. But typical of a gathered community of families and individuals, every individual's reason may be slightly different.

Your personal reason is part of your individual relationship with your God. But could we have been handed a better opportunity to ask ourselves as a community, "What are we being called to? How do we follow the Great Commission?"

"How will the world outside our proud and historic building at 21 Church Street, Pittsford, understand the community that gathers there?" ♥



APRIL 2, 2005 - BEGIN AT 10:00 AM - with a short gathering worship and an informative morning on the FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. FROM 12:30pm to 2:00pm, we will, as a Community, brainstorm our call, our direction, our possibilities AND...we will hear each others' hopes and ideas for OUR FUTURE.

The brainstorming results will be taken to YOUR SESSION where your chosen elders, on your behalf will examine the possibilities of implementation.

We will hear the INSPIRED words of DR. LEONARD SWEET (theologian, futurist, UMC preacher, teacher, pastor and not in the least author and Professor of Theology at Drew University). And then, THE BALL IS INDEED IN OUR COURT.

WILL YOU BE PLAYING FOR YOUR TEAM, OR HAVE YOU CONSIDERED BENCHING YOURSELF?

**Please sign up now!
Childcare will be provided.
Boxed lunches available.**

**Call Sandy Pacyga 586-5688 ext. 30
Email sandy.pacyga@pittsfordpres.org**

COME TO THE April 2 Event "CARPE MANANA" (seize tomorrow in Jesus Name!)

10:00 am for presentations
12:00 noon for boxed lunch
12:30pm to 2:00pm for program strategy planning

**St. Paul's Lutheran Church
28 Lincoln Avenue**

CHILDCARE PROVIDED

Stewardship Corner
from Lucien Rouse

“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:10 (NIV) “All of us must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent me, because there is little time left before the night falls and all work comes to an end.” (John 9:4 (NLT)).

We are called to serve God through our TIME, talents and treasure. In our busy lives it is easy to lose sight of our priorities in terms of where we spend our time. As we continue through this rebuilding year of our church, ask yourselves were can I better allocate my time to serve God’s purpose for my life. ♥

**Church Building Restoration on Track
for September Completion Date**
from Dave Irwin

The general contractor for the restoration is progressing quickly on the project and barring unforeseen obstacles, we should be moving back into the building in September.

The contractor, Frank Marianacci, Inc., provided a six-month timeline for completion of the project. His crew will be working simultaneously on the sanctuary and west wing, which includes Fellowship Hall and the classrooms on the lower level and 2nd floor. We anticipate having use of Fellowship Hall and the 2nd floor of the west wing by late April or early May. Priority also will be given to the lower level of the west wing to have it ready for the new fall school cycle of the Pittsford Cooperative Nursery School.

We have reached agreement with our insurance company for the value of the contents that were destroyed in the fire and are nearing a settlement for damage to the building. The contents settlement will provide the church with up to \$390,000 for purchasing replacement items of the same or similar nature that were destroyed (e.g., furniture, musical instruments, books, etc.). We estimate that the final settlement of the building will be about \$2.2 million. This amount will restore the building structure but will not be sufficient to correct some of the structural and operational deficiencies that the church has faced for years. The Session and Trustees have approved the Restoration Steering Committee’s recommendation to include many of these non-fire-related improvements in the restoration, which will be part of the church’s upcoming capital campaign.

Our thanks to those who helped Roxanne Skuse and Janette Henderson in moving the contents salvaged from the fire from a warehouse to the Store-to-Door facility. The turnout was so good that they

needed only two shifts instead of three to get the job done. Those who didn’t get to help will have another opportunity when we move the contents back to the church. Our thanks to Rick Taylor for his assistance in facilitating the move. ♥

ORGAN NOTES

Last fall, the Session asked the Organ Replacement Committee to recommend installing either an electronic organ or a pipe organ for the rebuilt sanctuary. In December, the Session approved our recommendation that a pipe organ be installed.

The Committee’s recommendation was based on the information gathered from many knowledgeable and informed individuals. We learned, for example, that both types of organs, when properly designed and installed, can provide quality sound in a sanctuary, but that the sound of a pipe organ is different in its richness and depth. This difference we were told is comparable to what one perceives when listening to a live performance as opposed to recorded music.

The complete report of the ORC is available in the church office or on the church’s website. More Organ Notes to follow. ♥

From the Organ Selection Committee

YOUTH MUSICAL

The Troubbable of Zerubbabel
By William Anderson

- Will be presented during worship on June 12
- Rehearsals begin March 30 and will be held in the Linehan Chapel at Nazareth from 4:40-6:00 PM
- Youth from 2nd grade and up are encouraged to participate
- This is a great post Logos musical opportunity

This musical was first presented to our congregation in 1993. It is a charming tale of a descendant of King David named Zerubbabel who leads the Israelites back from exile to Jerusalem. Once there, he is expected to begin the daunting task of rebuilding the temple. Sounds familiar doesn’t it? I hope many of our youth will be excited to join us in this timely drama of a story we can so readily identify with.

Yours in Christ,

Dede Holmes

(For more information feel free to call or e mail me at 624-4157 or dmh91654@aol.com).

OPTIMISTS

It may be April's Fool Day, but it's no joke that the OPTIMISTS will be meeting April 1 for their monthly meeting. It will be held at the United Church of Pittsford, 123 South Main Street in Pittsford, at 6:15 PM. We are asked to bring canned meats for the Pittsford Food Cupboard this month, in addition to your covered dish and place setting. Call Sue Suter, 383-5297, with questions.

"Cobblestones Along the Ridge" will be the topic of Mariana Rhodes presentation for our program. She will show slides of the architecture of cobblestone buildings on Ridge Road and in New York. Her talk will include the geology of the cobblestones, which dates back thousands of years. Join us for this early spring meeting. ♥



Historian's Corner

from Dick Crawford

Probably the most frequently asked question about our church's history concerns the stained glass windows. I've come upon a transcript by Lorraine Chamberlain of a talk given by the Town of Pittsford Historian concerning the people behind the names on the windows. We can make copies available to those of you who wish one. Please call Doris (586-5688) or me (381-6383) to reserve a copy. ♥



Good News Jail and Prison Ministry

Friday April 1, 2005

Annual Sheriff's Appreciation Banquet
Featuring Dr. Harry Fletcher, Vice President of
GNJ & PM

Celebrating 30 years of ministry in Monroe
County

Dinner 7:00 PM

Diplomat Party House
1956 Lyell Avenue, Rochester NY
Exit 21 off Rte. 390

A Love Offering will be received.
Contact Doris Goodemote
for Free Dinner Tickets

LEONARD SWEET ~ Author, Professor, and futurist will be speaking Friday April 8 (6:00 – 9:00 PM) and Saturday April 9 (9:00 AM – 1:00 PM) at the First Presbyterian Church of Batavia. "What the Church Can Learn from NASCAR, Reality TV and Blue Man Group" is the subject of Dr. Sweet's lectures. Dr. Sweet has been one of the most popular speakers at the Chautauqua Institute. You can learn more about Dr. Sweet at www.leonardsweet.com.



ATTENTION ALL HANDBELL LOVERS!!!!



The Music Staff of our Church has been invited to host the bell choir from the Ladue Chapel Presbyterian Church out of St. Louis, Missouri as part of their 2005 Bell Ringers Tour. They would arrive in Pittsford on Tuesday, June 14 and present an evening of about fourteen numbers. Ringers range in age from 15 to 17 years of age.

If we were to accept the invitation, we would need to provide overnight housing with dinner and a breakfast. We already have found accommodations for six of the twenty members of the choir and are looking for seven more church members to offer their hospitality for pairs of young people. Sleeping accommodations can be two to a double bed.

Please tell your friends and neighbors to come and enjoy a festive evening of ringing on Tuesday, June 14. Time and place to be determined. Watch for details.

If you are interested, please call the office at 586-5688.

WEB CLUB NEWS

Wednesday Evening Book Club
Discussion begins at 7:30 PM

April 13 - Mystic River by Dennis Lehane
Home of Rosemary Sidor, 16 Charter Oaks,
586-5129

May 11 - Servant of the Map by Andrea Barrett.
This is the Rochester Reads selection for this
year.