

NewsBrief

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

December, 2002

From the Pastor's Pen-Cell

Anyone who doesn't think Christmas lasts all year doesn't have a MasterCard. New letters will no doubt arrive this month postmarked to Santa saying things like: "Dear Santa, My folks are getting the toys; you just bring the batteries...Matt."

Perhaps you heard that Santa Claus and an elf were having an argument. Santa said there were 49 states, and the elf said there were 50. Finally the elf went through Santa's list of states and found the one that was missing. With a big smile, he said to Santa, "Yes, Santa Claus, there is a Virginia!"

We've got loads of fables and stories to tell this time of year and they seem to take front and center stage in the market place, but the one that captures our imagination the most is the simple Biblical account of the birth of Jesus. The child wasn't unexpected. Isaiah had prophesied "For unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given. And the government will be upon his shoulders and his name will be called 'Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.'

George Frederick Handel utilized these familiar words from Isaiah in his famous oratorio, *Messiah*. It is a piece that is performed throughout the world. There is even a gospel version of *Messiah* titled "Too Hot to Handel."

I once pastored a congregation with a magnificent choir. There were some paid soloists and they performed Handel's *Messiah* magnificently. One of the choir members said, "You know there are many *Messiahs* in our city, but I think critics would agree that our Messiah is the best *Messiah* here." Now that is an idea over which to brood. For is it not true that in Rochester there are many messiahs? Monroe County is filled with them – but not just filled with the strains of Handel's *Messiah*. We're looking for messiahs because we're looking for direction. We want fulfillment, success, significance, and security. We're looking for someone to meet our needs.

Messiah is a Hebrew word meaning, "the anointed one of God." The word Christ derives from the Greek word *christos*, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word *messiah*. Israel had harbored a messianic hope that One would come who would defeat her enemies.

This Advent we are again in search of a messiah to give us hope, to alter our perspective, to alter our altars. We may encounter this messiah most any place, but it is in Advent worship, in carol humming, in our cards and wishes that hearts are prepared to receive the anointed One.

May the very best Messiah – anywhere - bring you peace. A

Bruce

PRAYERFULLY PONDERING...

Ponder...

When the angel Gabriel cryptically greeted Mary as "favored one" and told her, "The Lord is with you" she rightfully expected something unexpected. In her perplexity, she "pondered what sort of greeting this might be." (Luke 1:29)

She *pondered* it - what does that mean? Did she whimsically muse about this one angel becoming a multitude of angels that would all give her flattering complements? Did she pause briefly to consider whether or not she considered herself to be favored? No, in pondering Gabriel's abrupt news, Mary gave it the full weight it deserved. After all, the word "ponder" comes from the Latin word meaning "weight." This soon-to-be-married teenager had just been told she would bear the son of God. Imagine the changes this would bring to her life!

Gabriel picked up on her measured response. Before repeating that God really did favor her, Gabriel reassured her, "do not be afraid." (Luke 1:30)

We have all been struck by unexpected announcements. Sometimes they are joyous. Other times they are not. Because we do not anticipate them, these announcements change our expectations. "Pondering them in our heart" (Luke 2:19) gives us the space and time to ascertain what this change might mean for us. And then we also allow the space for God to reassure us "do not be afraid."

Advent is a great time for pondering. Both Advent and Lent are penitential seasons of spiritual preparation, meaning that they call us to repent – to turn our life around – and turn back to a more faithful walk with God.

But much of our focus in Advent is upon musing what we will buy everyone or considering how we are going to see all our relatives during the packed holidays.

Why not ponder what the birth of our Lord means for our lives today? How are we changed in knowing that Christ is with us and for us? What changes can we make in our attitude or circumstances to be more fully aware of the presence of God in our lives, and the influence of God upon our lives?

Perhaps you can use the symbolism attached to our four Advent candles to lend focus to your pondering. The candles represent God's gifts of hope, peace, joy and love.

Hope for a world that is just and hospitable for all. God transforms life's dead ends into new beginnings.

Peace is not just the absence of conflict; rather, it is the presence of God's Spirit of reconciliation and mutual respect.

Joy is deeper and more secure than mere happiness. Joy is grounded in God's promises, not the world's whimsies.

Love is stronger than affection because it is rooted in covenant commitment rather than our changing feelings.

Although we each face unexpected news, God is always ready to transform that news into an occasion for hope, peace, joy and love. May these be yours in abundance as you ponder God's blessings this Advent season. A

Carrie



Youth Christian Education News and Notes

First Presbyterian Church Pageant 2002

This September we began our program year with no director for the pageant. A plan was put forth that would make it possible for the children to tell the Christmas story supported by the adults of their community.

During the Middle Ages, Christians practiced many different ways of telling the stories of Jesus Christ to each other to keep the faith alive. One popular way to enliven the great mysteries that encouraged the faith, was to annually relive events in the Life of Christ. The "mystery plays", the wisest among us even now, understand to be the very best way to learn about our faith. To hear a story is immediate understanding, to retell the story to someone else is to commit it to memory for a brief while BUT to relive the story is to make it a part of your life experience.

The tradition of the "mystery plays" has come down to us in Protestant America as "the children's pageant". Although it has at times taken on the monstrous look of an epic production, in reality the purpose of it is still to let the children tell the story of the birth of Christ so that they will know it, remember it and grow up to believe in the mysteries of our God.

Simple, enjoyable, speaking to the heart, this joyous story is wondrously uncomplicated. When we let the imagination participate in this great event the spirit soars.

The Apostle Paul refers to the church as "the body of Christ". WE, the called ministry of Jesus. The church is called to minister to the rest of the broken world. The church does not exist to be ministered to. Community that ministers is blessed

beyond measure. Those who demand to be served never know the joy of giving; never receive ten fold in return. To tell the stories of our faith: the birth, life, death, ministry, teaching and resurrection of our Lord to our children and to help them tell the world is what is required of us. Each time we do not grasp an offered chance WE have lost an opportunity

This year the parents and other adults of this congregation have the opportunity to work shoulder to shoulder with our children on a project. The end result will be a gift to the entire community. Please step up and help the children tell the story of Jesus' birth. Our children, wonderful as they are, cannot do it by themselves. This can be joyous and festive. It can be a wonderful lesson to our children not only reinforcing the extraordinary event of the Birth of Christ. BUT it can be an adult witness to our children of CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY. A

EXTREME DAYS

Extreme everything is all the rage today. Think about it. Not only do we have extreme sports like riding off a cliff with a dirt bike and pulling a ripcord at the very last possible second to be saved by a parachute, we even have extreme tacos at Taco Bell!

Your kids are constantly being called out of their comfort zones in a variety of ways ranging from the ridiculous (MTV's Jack Ass) to the stupid (uh, ok, MTV's Jack Ass). They are assaulted on a daily basis by a barrage of extreme clothing to extreme music. In some cases it's both at the same time (Brittany Spears and Marilyn Manson). Really, if jeans get any lower, and shirts any higher, we won't need them.

"Reality" television puts bachelors on a desert island to be tempted, locks total strangers up in a house for several weeks, sends people on cruises for a date, and makes contestants eat the most grotesque and bizarre "food" possible.

These are truly extreme days. Now, how about having extreme faith? The kind of faith that puts Christ first in every circumstance. The kind that isn't afraid to "contend for the faith". Living in a way that could quite possibly make your neighbors, friends and family uncomfortable. Offending others with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Identifying garbage for what it is. Putting restrictions on our children in regards to what they watch, listen to, go to, and what time to be home.

In a world of extreme everything, are we ready for extreme faith? God is. A

LOGOS

from Sylvia Fix

**This is our up-coming schedule.
Looks like fun:**

November 27 – No LOGOS

Happy Thanksgiving

December 4 – Fantastic Family (Fotos)

Word is: ***memories***

December 11 – Lift up your Voice (Caroling)

Word is: ***rejoice***

December 18 – LOGOS Choir Rehearsal Only

December 25 – No LOGOS

January 1 – No LOGOS

See you January 8

Merry Christmas

December Youth Events

from Dan Kulp

Sunday, December 8

JYF Semi-Formal Dinner and Christmas party in Fellowship Hall 6:15-9:00 PM.

You must sign up by Saturday, November 30.

Friday, December 13

The "Live Out Loud" Coffeehouse
9-11:00 PM (after the Community Carol Sing) in Fellowship Hall

With "Coping Method" and Jim Drew

Saturday, December 14

The Senior High Progressive Dinner and Christmas Party

Begins at the Church 6-11:00 PM

ATTENTION MEN

from Ron Pollock



Starting the first Sunday in December, the men's prayer breakfast will be starting up again. It will be the first Sunday of each month. We will meet at 7:00 AM in room 202. We look forward to seeing you there. A

LOCAL MISSION – CHRISTMAS GIFTS

from Sally Day and Elaine Johnson

Gifts for the boys at Oatka and Haneayah Cottages, as well as for the residents of Kirkhaven, will begin to be collected October 27. Flyers listing approved gifts for the boys at Oatka and Haneayah Cottages are on the Welcome Table. Drop boxes for the gifts are labeled and in the rear of Fellowship Hall. Please bring your gifts wrapped and labeled for Oatka and unwrapped for industry. (Please include paper and ribbon for wrapping.) You can use the colored flyers as labels for your bags of gifts, or simply label each gift. Oatka boys are 10 to 14 years of age, and Haneayah boys, 15 to 18. We will collect these gifts until mid-December.

Kirkhaven gifts will be collected through December 1. Please gift-wrap and label each gift with the name of the item (e.g., men's socks).

Thank you for your generous contributions to these local mission recipients.

MISSION PROJECTS

from Tish Paddock and Greta Garman



The nursery school children at Calvary St. Andrews Church will be very thankful for the 44 pairs of mittens delivered recently, thanks to all who have provided them.

At Cameron Community, the folks will be very thankful for all the hats, scarves and mittens for all ages, delivered by the team from our church on the day they help in the kitchen.

These many acts of kindness help others who need support. Keep up the good work!

YOUTH OUTREACH FALL CLEAN-UP

On Sunday, November 10, teens from First Presbyterian dodged the raindrops to rake leaves at the homes of two of our elderly members. Many thanks to Liz Frey, Julie Purpura, Charles Messenger (Youth Elder), Colleen Hutchinson, Kim Peters, Matt Ferris, Joe Kurnath, Paul Metzler, Jamie Harrison (Youth Deacon) and Greg Irwin (Youth Elder). While the homeowners were pleased to have the help, they also enjoyed the company of the youth. In return, the teens received delicious refreshments! Thanks also to David Irwin and Bill

Gavett, who chaperoned and to Greg Irwin and Alison Wahl (Youth Deacon) who worked on recruitment. If you know of a member who may need some assistance on a special project from our youth, please let the Outreach Committee know by calling Nadine Wahl at 381-4146. A

Music Notes

from Cary Ratcliff, Music Director

Carols by Candlelight: A Christmas Carol Sing-along.

Invite your neighbors to this magical and fun event for the whole community. Mitzie Collins, Roxanne Ziegler and Glenda Dove will again be our guests, leading us with dulcimer, harp and flute in an hour of favorite carols. Please bring a donation of food for the Pittsford food Cupboard! Friday, December 13, 7:30 PM

Choral Worship, Sunday, December 22 at the 10:00 AM Service, will be a program of Christmas Carols and celebratory music combining all of our singing choirs, driven by the 4-handed piano team of Beverly Smoker and James Douthit. Our choir room Steinway will pay a visit to the sanctuary. A

OPTIMISTS will hold their Christmas meeting on Friday, December 6 at 6:15 PM in the Fellowship Hall. Our entertainment will be "Music and Comedy" by Denny and the Escorts.

Dinner will be fully catered by the Log Cabin Restaurant, so it is only necessary to bring your table service. Tickets at \$9.00 apiece will be on sale in the Fellowship Hall, Sunday, November 24 and December 1, following each service.

If you are not a regular member and would like further information, please call Sue Suter at 381-5297. We welcome all newcomers!!

ANNUAL HAM SUPPER

from Your Deacons and the Confirmation Class

Sunday, December 15, 5:30 PM, following the pageant. Reserve the date for this church wide fellowship event. Bring the whole family and enjoy the season with your fellow church members.

Tickets available in Fellowship Hall from November 24 - December 8.

Price: Children 8 and under: \$2., Adults: \$5.

Anyone wishing to bake cookies or help with preparations please call Jim Taylor at 586-1041.

CHURCH ENVELOPES

If you did not receive a box of giving envelopes this year, and would like a box for 2003, please call and let me know.

Janet Travis, 586-5688, ext. 23.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

From Trudy Bartleson

We are pleased to greet our new members Dong-Gi Hong and his wife Ae-Soon Hong who are from South Korea. They are transferring from Pittsford's Transfiguration Church. They have grown children and now very much enjoy classical music, reading and golf. Dong-Gi is an internist at Rochester General's Wayne Medical Group. Ae-Soon is a business woman who has had several businesses and now does internet work with the stock market. They reside at 16 Sunset Drive, Lyons.

We are happy to welcome as a new member, Ken Hu, married to Queenie, and their children Elliott, 11 and Clara age 14. They are from Dallas, Texas. Ken is a product manager for Frontier Corporation. They both enjoy tennis and traveling and reside at 121 Brittany Lane, Pittsford.

It is a pleasure to welcome new member Tomye Spears, married to Paul Milkman, coming from San Antonio, Texas. Their daughter, Samantha is 8. Tomye is seeking a position in human resources, while Paul is employed by IBM. Both enjoy boating, hiking, traveling and biking. They reside at 6 Chatham Woods, Pittsford.

We want to extend a warm welcome to our new member Petra Youngman, married to Todd, coming from Rochester, NY. Their children are son Toby, 4 years old and daughter Casey, 2 years old. Petra is a kindergarten teacher at the Clara Barton School #2 and Todd is a graphic designer for the Shopping Bag. They both enjoy running, child rearing and basketball. They reside at 540 Clover Street, Rochester.

We are happy to welcome David and Jill Szydowski and their three children, Jamie 14, Carly 11 and Matthew 8 months. They have lived in Rochester for 13 years where David is the owner of Clean-Way Disposal and Jill currently is a homemaker and has been a computer programmer. Both enjoy golf, tennis and paddle tennis. They reside at 9 Landmark Lane, Pittsford.

STOCK CONTRIBUTIONS

If you are going to sell stock to fulfill a current pledge or pre-pay a pledge, turn it into me or to your own broker as early in December as possible. This will ensure the contribution will be recorded for the year 2002.

Thank you,
Janet Travis,
Financial Secretary

A GOOD TIME TO PLAN

From the Endowment Committee

Looking at the great returns your portfolio had in 2000 and/or in 2001/2002?? Beginning to plan your finances for 2003?? Is your estate planning in order? Are your wills up to date? Have you reviewed your alternatives under the new estate taxes to provide for our Church?

There will be a seminar/learning session on Sunday, January 19 after our normal service. The session will start at 11:30 AM and will be about 45 minutes in duration. This is not a meeting to sell you something, but rather a seminar to provide you with information. The seminar will be in the Session room on the 2nd floor of the Church. This experience will be moderated by Dave Ferris. Dave will provide us with information that may be of value in re-thinking or re-confirming your estate planning.

Please call the office at 586-5688 if you wish to attend. A

'TIS THE SEASON ~ Yup it's coming, our annual Advent Supper will be Sunday, December 1 from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. Sign up in Fellowship Hall, after either service, to bring a pasta dish, a tossed salad, or two dozen cookies. A donation for the Pittsford Food Cupboard, and \$2.00 per person will get you in. Crafts and caroling will be in abundance! A



All items in Lost & Found will be donated to Cameron Community on December 1. If you are missing items left in the Church, please check Lost & Found in the telephone room off the Lobby.

Thank you,
Ernie



The Rev. Bruce G. Boak
Senior Pastor
Office Ext. #25
bgb@pittsfordpres.org

The Rev. Carrie Mitchell
Associate Pastor
Office Ext. #32
carrie.mitchell@pittsfordpres.org

Dan Kulp
Director of Youth Ministry
Ext. #31
dan.kulp@pittsfordpres.org

Sandra Pacyga,
*Christian Education Director/
Visiting Pastor*
Office Ext. #30
sandy.pacyga@pittsfordpres.org

Dede Holmes
Director of Youth Choirs

Sharon Peet
Director of Joyful Noise

Ruth Hugenbruch
Director of Kirkringers

Janet Travis
Financial Secretary
Ext. #23
janet.travis@pittsfordpres.org

Cary Ratcliff
Director of Music
cratcliff0@aol.com

Doris Goodemote, Editor
Administrative Assistant
Ext. #22
doris.goodemote@pittsfordpres.org

Ernest Bledsoe
Custodian
Ext. #33

John Sherman
Assist. Custodian

First Presbyterian Church
21 Church Street, Pittsford, NY 14534
Phone 716-586-5688, Fax #586-8090
E-mail pitpres@frontiernet.net
Web page www.pittsfordpres.org

WORSHIP WITH US

Please join us for Sunday morning worship.
Services are 8:30 AM and 10:00 AM
Communion is offered the first Sunday of each month.

First Presbyterian Church of Pittsford
21 Church Street
Pittsford, New York 14534

**Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Pittsford, NY
Permit No. 6**



-WINTER-