

# News Brief

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

## December, 2004

### From the Pastor's Pen-Cell

“Where there is no faith in the future, there is no power in the present,” writes Dr. Halford Lucock. This was a quote that I uncovered among my Dad’s things when transferring his belongings from the nursing home to the car. It is contained in a story by Dr. Lucock as he related an observation from a man who had returned from his vacation in Maine. A village was doomed to extinction when the state was building a power dam on the river and purchased the surrounding property. When the dam was completed, the village would be under water, flooded when the new lake was formed. Word of the land purchase brought the village to a standstill. All building stopped and all improvement and repair ceased. What was the use of painting a house if, in a year or so, it would be covered with water? Why repair anything when the whole village was certain to be wiped out? So month by month, the town deteriorated, structures becoming dilapidated, bedraggled and ghostly, along with the people. A vacationer reflected, “Where there is no faith in the future, there is no power in the present.”

For us at First Presbyterian Church there is faith in the future and power in the present. You can see it in the work of our boards, in those who plan the reconstruction of our building, in choirs that rehearse and Sunday School teachers who teach. Fire has not slowed us nor has it taken our eye off the mission of God’s people. Even now, adults and students are preparing to help others in Florida throughout Christmastide and a few are setting in place preparations to return to Mozambique in 2006. This is the spirit that pervades this season. It is one of people who anticipate the gift of God in the birth of the Christ. It is rooted in people whose confidence in the future is assured by God’s faithfulness in the past and it gives them power to accomplish great things in the present.

At the memorial service for my Dad, this past month I cradled some of the memories that had motivated and shaped life decisions, and was sustained by relationships, some new and some quite old as we pondered Gordon Boak’s passing. In those memories and in a celebration of resurrection triumph was the faith that the future held a reunion in heavenly places. A faithful father left a legacy to his children. One who had trusted in God and sought to live for God now offered the power of comfort to those who grieved. It was power for the day, and faith for the future.

Thank you for your support to our family during these days wherein we have given back to God, what God so graciously loaned to us.

Now as we look forward to Christmastide, away from the sanctuary that we had come to love, we see that God gifted the world with a new approach to draw people to the divine. In human form, God would offer the gift of the penultimate future.

Perhaps you’ve read Henry Van Dyke, or a number of quotes from his writings – things like, “Time is too slow for those who wait, too swift for those who fear,” or “Use what talents you possess: the woods would be very silent if no birds sang there except those who sang best.” You may be familiar with his books or essays and probably his story, “The Other Wise Man,” which is frequently read at this time of year. But perhaps you never read his “God’s Message to Men.” There he says,

One Day God said, “I’m tired of kings!”  
But that was a long time ago,  
And man kept saying, “No!  
I like their looks in robes and rings. . .”  
So He crowned a few more,  
And the kings as before  
Kept fighting and spoiling things.  
But at last one said, “I’m tired of kings

They make me pay for their lust and their war.  
I am the puppet, they pull the strings!  
The blood of my heart is the wine they drink,  
I shall govern myself for a while, I think,  
And see what that brings.”  
Then God (who had made the first remark)  
Smiled in the dark  
And hope was born in a child.

Sons of the robber chiefs of yore,

## Prayerfully Pondering Continuous Conversion in Community...

One of the first invitations I received when I moved to Pittsford in August 2002 was to join a weekly prayer group formed by several of our Stephen Ministers and other interested congregants. The group had initially begun in order to pray for Kay Holzwarth. Since that time, I cannot begin to count how many times I have felt myself blessed amongst these faithful prayer warriors as we give thanks to God for everyday miracles and pray for the needs of the congregation, the world and our community, loved ones, and ourselves. We have since lifted more than 1200 concerns and gained additional weekly pray-ers. Through these pray-ers on Wednesdays at 4:15, God's love becomes an incarnational witness.

One of my Seminary professors, Dr. Darrell Guder, claims "the concept of 'witness' serves as the overarching definition of the church's calling."<sup>1</sup> Being or offering a witness can assume many forms. St. Francis is believed to have said, "preach the gospel – use words if necessary." In the same series of books our Session studied in November 2003, Guder calls individuals and the church to an incarnational witness.<sup>2</sup> As we enter the season of Advent and anticipate the word becoming flesh, we can contemplate as a community what it means to be an incarnational witness.

Guder asserts the establishment of the church from the time of Roman Emperor Constantine (4<sup>th</sup> century CE) dangerously reduced the gospel away from the missiological principal of Acts 1:8 ("be my witnesses") our own salvation, hierarchical structures trying to control the salvation of others, and works-righteousness. Our energy should instead focus upon our own continuous conversion – a constant willingness to examine our lives in light of the incarnational witness of Jesus Christ – that leads us to live life other-directed. Our 'selfish' attention ironically bears communal witness.

I must admit I struggle with continuous conversion. It is infinitely easier to hold fast to patterns, behaviors, emotional reactions and habits that have served me well in the past. The

instigation for my change is not some high-minded sense of the need to keep growing and changing. It is the very real awareness that many of my old coping mechanisms do not always serve me well. I am not strong enough to do this alone – it must take place in the context of community. My companions, literally those with whom I share bread, are those with whom I pray. And so I thank you for praying with me. When we pray together anytime of the week, we reinforce with one another the need for continuous conversion and support one another in our attempts to be the living flesh of the Good News. In this Advent Season, I invite you to join with others in prayer, open yourself to God's love for you, and become God's incarnational witness in this world.

Go with God,  
Carrie

Week of Dec. 5 – Isa. 11:1-10; Ps. 72:1-7, 18-19  
Rom. 15:4-13; Matt. 3:1-12

Week of Dec. 12 – Isa. 35:1-10; Ps. 146:5-10  
or Luke 1:47-55; James 5:7-10  
Matt. 11:2-11

Week of Dec. 19 – Isa. 7:10-16; Ps. 80:1-7, 17-19;  
Rom. 1:1-7; Matt 1:18-25

Week of Dec. 26 – 63:7-9; Ps. 148; Heb. 2:10-18  
Matt. 2:13-23



"These are the lectionary texts for the month of December. 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 the Masonic Lodge at 9:30am or in the Library at 7:00pm to discuss the upcoming Sunday's texts. No preparation is necessary – bring yourself, your Bible and your questions.

### Wednesday Bible Study Teacher Schedule:

11/24 Sandy Pacyga	2/2 Bruce Boak	3/30 Bruce Boak
12/1 Carrie Mitchell	2/9 Sandy Pacyga	4/6 Carrie Mitchell
12/8 Bruce Boak	2/16 Carrie Mitchell	4/13 Bruce Boak
12/15 Sandy Pacyga	3/2 Bruce Boak	4/20 Sandy Pacyga
1/5 Carrie Mitchell	3/9 Sandy Pacyga	4/27 Carrie Mitchell
1/12 Bruce Boak	3/16 Carrie Mitchell	5/4 Bruce Boak
1/19 Sandy Pacyga	3/23 Sandy Pacyga	5/11 Sandy Pacyga
1/26 Carrie Mitchell		

<sup>1</sup> Darrell Guder. "The Continuing Conversion of the Church" (Eerdmans, 2000), 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Guder, 202.

## Christian Ed. News...

November Christian Ed. Committee business began with a positive report by our PCNS Director that we have 39 three's and 42 four's in our parent cooperative school.

Lyn Wright, chair of the governing board for PCNS, who worked so long and tirelessly to support our necessary move has resigned looking forward to a long over due rest and quality attention to her own family. Chris Curtis, vice-chair has agreed to serve our Lynn's term.

Youth ministry is certainly alive and well at First Pres. Sites have been reserved for Kingdom Bound and decisions on reservations for a Group Work camp experience are in process. The work team preparing to assist with the Florida hurricane disaster is making great strides and MTC and JYF are doing very well. The November Coffee house is to be November 19. October's was a great success.

The Youth ministry search committee is in the process of interviewing candidates 20 and 21. The group is conscientiously searching out a fit that will both be comfortable for our congregation and an energizing Christian influence for our youth. A tough job is being done very well.

LOGOS had a great offsite event at Mendon Ponds and the program, while still adjusting to a different facility is doing very well.

The committee has agreed to take turns representing C.E. at Worship Committee meetings, which will continue to keep communications open and cooperation between the two committees flowing.

The Committee has begun a staff evaluation process. A feedback form has been developed for input into program, successes and needs, and Sandy submitted a list of goals for the coming year.

Adult Education is moving along well. Bill Gavett has agreed to be the Adult Ed. Liaison to C.E. from the A. Ed. Task Force. Jack Holzwarth will chair the task force for this program year, Dave Jenks will handle finances, Carol Tiemann and Lynn Huot are heading up the Sunday Morning Bible Basics classes, Margo Ward has agreed to continue supporting and encouraging our Covenant Groups.

## *Christ is our hope and strength –*

We request your prayers for comfort, strength, and wholeness for the Boak Family as they mourn the loss of Bruce's dad, Gordon, who passed away Friday, November 5th.

Bruce and his sisters, Betsy and Bonnie, are establishing a homiletics (preaching) prize at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary where their dad had taught. Memorial gifts can be sent to the seminary at 616 North Highland Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15206.

We give thanks to God for Gordon's life and all the wonders of God's love he was able to reflect. And we pray the family will know that love as they grieve.

We give thanks that several of our leadership were able to be with Bruce during the funeral. Your leadership, compassion, and generosity means so much in times like these.

Go with God,  
Carrie



THE CHICKADEES ARE BACK  
Christmas Cards to benefit our former organist Tom Harris are available. These cards were designed by Alan Singer, a local artist, teacher and friend of Tom's. There are 12 cards to a box and contain the message "Warmest Wishes for a New Year filled with happiness". The cards are available in the church office for a suggested donation of \$6 per box. For more information call Dede Holmes at 624-4157 or the church office at 586-5688.

Anyone wishing to send Tom holiday greetings can write to him at the following address:

Tom W. Harris  
#02B2363  
1000 Mt McGregor Road  
Wilton, New York 12831

**“Shop til You Drop”** Your holiday shopping can benefit HOMELESS families!

**How?** ONE WORLD GOODS and BLUEGROUND JEWELRY in Pittsford Plaza will donate 15% of one evening’s proceeds to The Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network (RAIHN). Light refreshments available in each store that evening. Our congregation is partnering with the newly-created RAIHN in the ongoing endeavor to minister to “the least of these.”

**When?** Monday, November 29 from 6:30-9:00 PM.

**Where?** One World Goods sell Ten Thousand Villages goods (as well as other hand crafted items) and is committed to providing vital, fair income to Third World people by marketing their handicrafts and telling their stories in North America. The store is located between Barnes & Noble and Applebees Restaurant. Blueground Jewelry is a contemporary jewelry boutique planning to have a drawing for a watch that evening. The store is located near the movie theater.

**Why?** Homelessness in Monroe County continues to rise. Several faith communities, including ours, have partnered together to provide overnight accommodations, hot meals, and social services to empower families to return to housing. Jesus calls us to care for those on the margins and in the Christmas season, this is an excellent opportunity to make our gifts count many times over. See you there!



**Winter Clothing for Cameron** – I will have a winter clothing drop-off at my home again on November 29 & 30. Please call for times and directions. This will be the last collection of winter clothing until early January, but socks, underwear, and hygiene items can always be laced in the box by the church office door. Thanks, Liz (223-3052)

## Local Mission – Christmas Gifts

From Elaine Johnson and Judy Messenger

Yes, folks, Christmas season is quickly approaching! We will continue our mission of providing gifts for the residents of Kirkhaven, and have already begun collecting them. We ask that you drop them into the drop boxes in the Narthex or in the church office. Kirkhaven gifts will be collected through December 6. Please do not wrap gift. Fliers for Kirkhaven gift suggestions are on the welcome Table in the Narthex.



Our local mission commitment to the incarcerated boys and young men of what we have known as Haneayah Cottage at Industry and Oatka remain as it has been for many years. However, there have been changes in personnel and structure requiring adjustments on our part. What we knew as Oatka is renamed the Industry Secure Center. Tom Fox is now supervisor of Building #82, a maximum-security program for young men 15–20 years of age. We are very limited in the gifts we can provide, so please pick up a flier in the Narthex for gift suggestions. Haneayah Cottage remains as it has been. Fliers for gift suggestions for Haneayah are in the Narthex as well. Please do not wrap gifts. We will collect Industry gifts until December 21.

We are also ready to collect 2005 calendars and cards for the Industry boys and Kirkhaven residents. These include new Christmas cards and envelopes, greeting cards, blank note cards, etc. Please bring your Christmas cards by December 6, at which time they will be delivered to Kirkhaven residents and the boys at Industry with stamps for mailing provided by the Presbyterian Women’s Board. This is a good use for those unsolicited cards and calendars you receive by mail for the holidays.

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

## **PROJECT NEEDLEPOINT**

**Committee: Sally Day**--Chairperson since 1985. Organizational duties /teacher /stitcher /repairs and maintenance supervision. Mentor for new project.

**Lee Eldredge**---assistant to Sally since 1985. Teacher/stitcher/repairs Mentor/Teacher for new project.

**Georgia Trolley**--since 2003. In charge of Maintenance procedures & demonstration techniques, for members orientation sessions, for the Winter or Summer Teams.

**Judy Johnson**--October 2004 Judy accepted the role of Chairperson for the new Needlepoint Project where Member Volunteers will stitch 10 canvasses damaged or lost in the fire . She will be Mentored by Sally prior to the Program's start. During the program at Sit & Stitch hours her Mentors will be on tap. We are delighted to have Judy join us. She is a Retired School Teacher and one of our former Stitchers, we delight in her enthusiasm and her organizational skills. She has served our Church in many ways. THANKS JUDY !!!!!

## **NOW AN UPDATE ON THE NEW PROJECT-----**

We are waiting patiently for the go ahead on painting canvasses, ordering supplies and setting up a Member Volunteer List. In 2005 we hope to have this in place.

When the Volunteer List is available for you to sign up--we hope our members since 1997 when our last project was dedicated--will think about learning our procedure, do a sample and join us in working on these 10 Heritage Replacements. Some of you have been hoping we would stitch again. This is your chance. And all of our former stitchers can decide too--would you like to stitch again? The program will be run exactly as before. We have not set a number cut off. But we will try to have every one stitch--if only a small amount, at least you will learn a lot and will have some fun with us. After sign up with your phone number, one of us will be calling you to answer questions and for you to tell us about your stitching experiences. You need not be concerned if you have never done

needlepoint. It's our job to teach you. We only stitch in 'Basket weave' which is a hearty stitch with a 200 year expectancy if cared for.

## **SPECIAL REQUEST FROM FORMER STITCHERS:**

If you were one of those who bought the 2 dowels and 2 separators that made our frames,

may I borrow the longest of the these frames from you for this project? I need 3 sets.

Call Sally at 248-5480 Many Thanks



## **HOSPITAL VISITS**

A reminder to our members, that if you know you are going into the hospital for a procedure, or if you know of someone in our congregation who is going in or is in the hospital, the office would love a phone call. Because of HIPPA, it is harder and harder to find out if we have a member in the hospital and a lot of folks have been missed and we don't want any one falling through the cracks.



## **OPTIMISTS:**

Decking the Halls: Christmas in the Victorian Era" will be the slide presentation at the OPTIMIST'S meeting, December 3. Christopher Bensch, Director of Collections at the Strong Museum, will explore the origins of holiday traditions, and we will discover that many of our familiar holiday customs were established in the Victorian period.

This special Christmas program will be preceded by a catered chicken dinner served at 6:15 PM, December 3. It will be held at the United Church of Pittsford, corner of South Main and Sunset. The \$10 tickets will be available in the elevator alcove after church, Nov. 21 and Nov. 28, and in the church office. Your contribution of a 1#

DAK canned ham for the Pittsford Food  
Cupboard would be appreciated. Please call Ed  
Kinnen if you have questions, 586-9053.