

NewsBrief

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

December 2005

From the Pastor's Pen-Cell

HOME FOR CHRISTMAS I

Best wishes for an environmentally conscious, socially responsible, low stress, non-addictive, gender neutral, winter solstice holiday, practiced within the most joyous traditions of the religious persuasion of your choice, but with respect for the religious persuasion of others who choose to practice their own religion as well as those who choose not to practice a religion at all;

Additionally,

a fiscally successful, personally fulfilling, and medically uncomplicated recognition of the generally accepted calendar year 2006, but not without due respect for the calendars of choice of other cultures whose contributions have helped make our society great, without regard to the race, creed, color, religious, or sexual preferences of the wishes.

Wouldn't it be nice to feel genuinely free to offer "Merry Christmas" as a greeting rather than "Happy Holidays?" In this era of politically correct sensitivity when we are so guided by commercial carefulness it feels that we also abdicate our opportunity to declare God's incarnation in Christ Jesus. Since I value Ted Pollock's opinion that we should preach Jesus Christ and when necessary use words, let's get out all the non-verbal images that have something to say to us – poinsettias, Advent wreaths, candles, holly, carols and Advent hymns. Let's decorate trees with family memories and put out crèches to tell the Christmas story. In the challenge to keep the significance of God in human form the message, to make the main thing the main thing, let's get to the hearth and home of our faith and use the borrowing of Christian images by the commercial world to prompt our celebration of the incarnation, not replace it.

Cross-Cultural sensitivity doesn't have to dull our joy nor displace our elation. A few politically correct versions of the Christmas Story from Luke and from Clement Clarke Moore are on the bookshelves in the study. With a tilt to Moore let me offer this contemporized version:

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, except Papa's mouse.
The computer was humming, the icons were hopping,
As Papa did last minute Internet shopping.

Moore was the son of Dr. Benjamin Moore, Episcopal Bishop of New York, Rector of Trinity Church, and President of Columbia College. Clement also studied theology and at age 30 wrote a Hebrew Lexicon, the first book of its kind in America. Then in 1822, at the age of 43 he penned *A Visit from St. Nicholas*. But, it was not until 1844 at the age of 65 that the reluctant mythmaker acknowledged that he had composed the poem. Few know that Moore also wrote *Observations Upon Certain Passages in Mr. Jefferson's Notes on Virginia, Which Appear to Have a Tendency to Subvert Religion and Establish a False Philosophy* that was really an attack on our third president, Thomas Jefferson. He was a prolific theological writer and political commentator, but it is Moore's magical poem about the mystical Christmas Eve visitor that vaulted him into prominence (a work that he considered frivolous in comparison to his scholarly writing).

We will encounter other "frivolous" expressions as we move toward Christmas Eve when the quiet themes of Silent Night and O Little Town of Bethlehem call us to worship God and the peace that God offers. But rather than bemoan these elevator music intrusions and sale flyer announcements as I have a tendency to do, let's see them as an opportunity to tell the genuine story, to come Home for Christmas, and to greet one another other with Blessed Advent Greetings and Merry Christmas.

If this seems insensitive, then be comforted and embrace this potential disclaimer -

(Disclaimer: This greeting is subject to clarification or withdrawal. It implies no promise by the wisher to actually implement any of the wishes for her/himself or others and no responsibility for any unintended emotional stress these greetings may bring to those not caught up in the holiday spirit.)

Merry Christmas, *Bruce*

Prayerfully Pondering for what we wish and wait...

Perhaps you have heard the expression, “be careful what you wish for...” We have all been wishing, praying, hoping and dreaming of returning to our home sanctuary. Now the time is imminent. As I write this in early November, it looks as if we are on track to return to our sanctuary Sunday, November 27th for a shakedown worship service and a more widely publicized service on Sunday, December 4th.

As part of our efforts to let the Pittsford community know of our return to the church home, we will open our doors and offer light refreshments and tours during the Pittsford Candlelight Night of Tuesday, December 6th between 4 and 9pm. Tell your friends and neighbors they are welcome!

One of my frequent prayers to God is for the gift of patience. My prayer usually starts out like this: “God, please grant me patience, and be quick about it!” I find myself impatiently wanting all the minor inconveniences we have experienced while worshiping at Nazareth to magically disappear. I want everyone in our community to know what a marvelous congregation this is and for them to want to join us in worship and ministry. I want us to realize the hopes and dreams of exponential new growth expressed by members of our Session, Deacon, and Trustee boards during the October leadership retreat. And I fervently believe God listens to my prayers. But God’s answer to these prayers takes discernment or faithful attentiveness to God’s living spirit among us all.

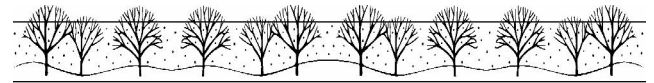
Think about Mary and Joseph journeying to Bethlehem in order to be enrolled. They traveled about 100 miles to comply with the survey required by Caesar. The journey was arduous and required planning on their part. Traveling while pregnant also required faith in the God who had spoken with both of them about this tremendous change coming into their lives. Like Mary and Joseph, we must be willing to both plan for the journey and welcome the inevitable changes the journey back to our church home will bring. Are we willing to see the beauty in our new home? Will we embrace the

improvements and make use of them for God’s ministry? Will we truly welcome others into the space and make allowances for ways they want to use it?

The faithful response of Mary and Joseph to God’s calling them to be parents of Jesus opened up a magnificent ministry by Jesus to the twelve apostles and many disciples for generations to follow. We too have a chance to faithfully respond by creatively listening to God’s prompting. As we prepare for this year’s celebration of the coming of the Christ child, may we each ask ourselves how we can welcome others to our restored church home and reach out to a world that badly needs to know of the gift of the Christ child.

Go with God,

Carrie



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.

**Week of Dec 4 – Isa. 40:1-11; Ps. 85:1-2, 8-13
Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8**

**Week of Dec 11 – Isa. 61:1-4, 8-11; Ps. 126 or
Luke 1:47-55; 1 Thess. 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28**

**Week of Dec 18 – 2 Sam. 7:1-11; Luke 1:47-55 or
Ps. 89:1-4, 19-26; Rom. 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38**

**Week of Dec 25 – Dawn: Isa. 62:6-12; Ps. 97;
Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2 (1-7) 8-20
Day: Isa. 52:7-10; Ps. 98
Heb. 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14**

BIBLE STUDY? “Who me?”

There was a time, when many of those who now regularly participate in some of our study/discussion groups were not so inclined. A recent interesting discussion revealed that for some they were not sure they were familiar enough with the Bible to join a discussion. Others were reluctant to be thought of as a “religious nut” by doing anything more than worship on Sunday. A couple were even worried that getting more into the ideas in the Bible might cause them to change their entire lifestyle and they couldn’t imagine what that might be like. Others admitted that they just didn’t see how they could find time. Isn’t it amazing just how many reasons we can come up with in order to avoid trying something that we know is really for our own good?

My Weight-watchers coach recently used a phrase that caught me up short. Discussing how difficult it is to exercise and how necessary it is to do it, she said “...it is really more simple than you want to know. The secret is JUST DO IT! Move, keep moving, move more. JUST DO IT! And don’t accept any of those suggestions in your mind that might get in the way!”

Using the Bible to help strengthen you as a Christian is just as simple. It may be so simple that we overlook its value. You don’t need to be a studied theologian or to have a wise and educated guide. There is no special knowledge that anyone else has that makes them more able to receive the gifts of God’s word. It is very often the most straightforward pondering that is the only key you need to understanding and benefiting from the message written as God’s Word.

There is real power when a few come together, each with a new understanding of a portion of Scripture, and share what each has heard. What might God want us to hear? How might God intend each one of us to use this? What in this reading can we use, as the Body of Christ, to make a difference to others?

...from Sandy’s desk

...to Ponder, to wonder, to act

A recent appointed Sunday reading, *Matthew 25:14-30*, caught me by surprise. This familiar parable taught by Jesus, (the wealthy master gives out portions of his wealth to three servants, expecting them to wisely produce more riches with the ‘talents’) had a word in the text that I had never paid attention to before. Often used text to guide good personal stewardship, I found myself wondering about the use of the word “ability” in the passage. Jesus said to those listening, that each servant was given an amount according to his own “ability”. Five, two, one... This would indicate that each person had a differing aptitude for financial success. The person who had the least, seemed also, as later he admitted, to have been seized with fear that he could not measure up to the master’s success. He did not do well because he did not know how **and** he was therefore afraid.

I began to see the scene differently. Wasn’t Jesus preaching to a larger group? Was his message intended only for one silly, simple, reluctant man? Or was this meant for the larger community? As people in community, each with different gifts, might it be interpreted that the community had some responsibility for the success of the individual?

What might have been the outcome if the financially savvy individual, to whom had been given five talents, had gone to the man given one and had said “c’mon, come with me and I will show you how to invest the master’s money so that you too will succeed.” The more gifted person wouldn’t do it for the less able man. There would be no need to pool the resources or to be responsible for the other. But, sharing, encouraging and supporting the less able person could have made not only both men successful, but would have enhanced the entire household for the master. What we call a win/win situation. I believe there is a real message here for us a church community. What do you think? How could we encourage and support those who may be more reluctant?



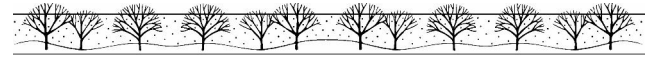
“A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...”

No, I'm not about to get into the Star Wars epic (though I have watched Episode 3: Revenge of the Sith a lot these days). In the beginning of November, I officially hit my 6-month mark of

being the youth director at First Presbyterian Church. In those six months, I have often caught myself reflecting on what life was like when I was a teenager. It was quite recent compared to some other members of our church, but the more I get to know teenagers, the more I realize that my high school experience was not nearly what theirs is. Oh sure, there are still the certain stereotypes that will always remain: the Jock, the Nerd, the Social Outcast, the Goth, the Skater. The overall importance of sports is also another thing that remains the central focus of many high schools. However, I do not remember being under as much pressure as the students I deal with each day. I do not remember the lengths that some teens these days will go to for relaxation and “cutting loose.” I do not remember how bitter some students can get about each other, and yet how accepting they are of others' actions, even when they are plainly wrong. The complacency, how hyper they are, and how inattentive they can get.

However, in all of these things where people may begin to despair and say that teens are a lost generation, I have been blessed with an amazing sight and opportunity these last six months. We have students who excel in areas that they love to participate in. I have witnessed incredible band and orchestra concerts, beautiful singing, exciting football games, stupendous runners, and so many more activities. I have been able to see how they are eager to help those around them. Participating in mission trips to New Jersey, assisting in Cameron Community, volunteering at area pantries and other related things. They are encouraging to one another, something I have witnessed over and over again. From cheering runners on at cross country sectionals to using teamwork to get out of a corn maze to pulling the disgusting pulp out of a pumpkin for someone who really doesn't want to touch that stuff. There are students in our church who are so excited to

keep learning and growing in their faith. They are dedicated to going to Sunday school, bringing their friends to church events, and telling me about an awesome passage of scripture they recently read. They are asking questions about the beliefs that they've grown up with, and truly remembering and reflecting on what they learn. In all the craziness of being a teenager, these students still shock and amaze me each day with the great things they're capable of. I am humbled and honored to be a part of their lives. So in the month of Thanksgiving and with Christmas soon upon us, I just wanted to pause and reflect on how thankful and blessed I am to be here doing what I love to do most and also to allow each one of you to be aware of how incredible the students in our congregation can be.



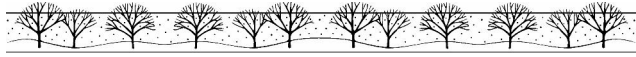
Calendar stuff:

- * There will be NO JYF/MTC on the following dates: Nov. 27, Dec. 4, Dec. 18, Dec. 25, Jan. 1
- * The times of JYF and MTC will be changing after the New Year. Starting Jan. 8 the new times will be as follows: JYF will meet every Sunday (with the exception of Mentor Night) from 6:00pm-7:30pm; MTC will meet every Sunday from 12:15pm-1:30pm.
- * **Dec. 2nd**- JYF Lock-In: 8:00pm-8:00am Bring snacks and friends! Cost- \$5 for food
- * **Dec. 9th**- “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe” opens. Cost- \$7 CALL OFFICE TO SIGN UP! (we need to know numbers to buy advance tickets!)
- * **Dec. 16th**- MTC Christmas Party 7pm-11pm. Meet at church and bring a “White Elephant” gift. (this will either be a progressive dinner or dinner at the Wahl's.) and DRESS UP!
- * **Dec. 17th**- JYF SCROOGE Christmas Party 5:30pm-9:30pm at the Werner's. Bring a Yankee Swap gift (\$10 or less)
- * **Dec. 28th**- “Stuck at Home” Trip to Swain Ski Resort. 8am-6pm. Cost to be determined.
- *FYI- Mission Trip packets and applications will be coming out for Jr. High and Sr. High trips in mid-December!! Keep an eye out for them!

Niki

Adult Education

Ever have a hard time “keeping the faith?” Especially when the going gets tough (and the tough can’t go shopping?) Then join us for our next Adult Ed experience in the month of December! Niki Brodeur will be teaching/facilitating a time where we can discuss faith that perseveres, taking a dive into Scripture and more. If your faith has ever been tested, or it has stayed strong and you wish to share your experiences, please join us starting December 4:



LOGOS

from Sylvia Fix

Coming Home – Reaching Out

November 23 – NO LOGOS

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

November 30 – Sports Night

The word is *skill*.

December 7 – Neighbor to neighbor we sing.

The word is *harmony*.

December 14 – Choir Rehearsal Only

December 21 – NO LOGOS

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

Come join us in LIVING LOGOS!



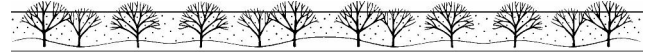
OPTIMISTS

from Marty Keller

The Optimists meeting will be December 2, at 6:15 P.M., in Fellowship Hall. “Christmas in Art Through the 20th Century” will be the topic presented by Susan Nurse, the Visual Resources Coordinator at the Memorial Art Gallery. Dinner will be catered by the Sandwich Works Café. Tickets are \$8 per person and will be available after both services. You are requested to bring your own table service.

A REMINDER ~ that the

Ham supper is coming. The date is December 18; the time is 6:00 PM. Tickets will be on sale on Nov. 27, Dec. 4 & Dec. 11. Adults \$5, Children under 8 yrs.\$2. Come and join us for fun and fellowship to usher in the holiday season. *Your Deacons*

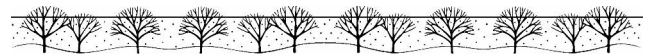


Men’s Breakfast will be at 7:00 AM, Sunday December 4 again in the Shelter on the corner of Canfield Rd. and Hopkins Pt. Road in Mendon Ponds Park.



Bible Studies

Sunday morning Bible Study remains the same but the Sunday evening Bible Study is now at 6:00 PM



Friends in Christ,

You are cordially invited to attend the opening of the Nazareth Graduate Art Exhibit which started on Friday November 11 from 5-7 PM, in the Lobby of the Arts Building. Participating in the show is one of my final requirements as I complete my Masters in Art Education. I want to thank all of you who have supported me over the years as I have juggled my jobs, my studies and my family. Please stop by at your leisure as the exhibit will be up through December 13.

Sincerely, Dede Homes



GENEROUS COOKIE BAKERS

from Betty Willert

Parish Life Committee of the Board of Deacons is asking you to bake cookies. We will be hosting Memorial receptions as we re-enter our church. Would you generously bake cookies to be used at receptions? Your contributions would be greatly appreciated. You may bring your baked cookies to the kitchen at your convenience. Anytime from now on will be convenient. Cookies will be frozen until needed.

Shop Til You Drop! A fundraiser for RAIHN! Monday, November 28th from 6-9 PM in Pittsford Plaza. Door prizes galore!

Blueground Jewelry - a contemporary jewelry gallery, specializing in unique sterling silver, 14K gold and platinum creations. Blueground offers a variety of price ranges and styles.

One World Goods – a fair trade gift store that sells quality handcrafted items from around the world. Your purchase provides vital income for our global neighbors.

The Lounge – the area’s best selection of Snowboard equipment accessories and clothing.

Snow Country - ski gear for downhill and cross-country skiing. There is winter clothing and accessories to keep you warm. Snow Country will set aside your selection of up to a week prior to Nov 28th for actual purchase on the 28th.

The stores will donate between 15% and 20% of the evening’s proceeds to RAIHN.

Come to **APPLEBEES** in Pittsford Plaza on Nov 28th between the hours of 4 and 9 PM. Present a voucher to your server and Applebees will give 10% of your check (excluding tax and tip) to RAIHN. The voucher can be found on the website, www.raihn.org, on a flyer in our building or from the RAIHN Coordinator.

Do holiday shopping and help RAIHN too. Last year RAIHN raised \$1100 from this evening alone!



REMINDER ~ If you are going to be selling stock to fulfill your pledge(s) please call me first. The Church has a new broker.

Also, it would be a big help if separate checks could be written for each fund you are paying.

Thank you,
Janet Travis
Financial Secretary

NEWSBRIEF DEADLINE ~ is **Sunday, December 11**. Please send your article by email to doris.goodemote@pittsfordpress.org or leave a hard copy in the NewsBrief mailbox in the workroom.



RUN FOR CARL

Friday, November 25 at Stewart Lodge at Mendon Ponds Park. Rain or Shine!!

9:30 AM – Warm Up

10:00 AM – Hit the Trail

Carl Metzler, a 2000 SHS graduate, passed away suddenly of heart failure in June 2004. An easy-going guy who loved the outdoors, Carl clocked many miles for Pittsford as a XC runner and Nordic skier. On November 25, Carl’s birthday, those who knew and loved Carl invite you to join them as they honor him by running or walking his favorite trails at MPP.

NO registration fee – however, donations will be accepted. All proceeds will go towards a scholarship, to be received by a graduating senior of either Sutherland or Mendon High in Carl’s honor this coming June.

Post-run refreshments provided. Any questions contact Lindsey at lrkurnath@hotmail.com or Wendy_Kurnath@pittsford.monroe.edu.

See you there!!



Holiday Gift Donations For The Mentally Ill from Maria Smith

I will be setting up a booth again on Sundays during the Holiday season for the East House Angel Project and the DePaul Holiday Helpers Program. As an East House Angel, you will help provide a gift to the Client’s child/grandchild. As a DePaul Holiday Helper you will help provide from a wish list, needed clothing or personal care items or a gift to their child.

Any questions please telephone me at home (586-5735) or at work (464-8870) or email at tbgsmith@frontiernet.net.

Thanks again for making a difference to those in need.

Thanksgiving Worship

Tuesday, November 22 will be a time of special Thanksgiving Worship. At 7:30pm, First Presbyterian Church of Pittsford invites the Pittsford community to a Thanksgiving Service in the Linehan Chapel of Nazareth College.



Home for Christmas II

The Congregation returns to its home building - First Presbyterian Church of Pittsford will leave its temporary home at Nazareth College and return to its building between Church Street and Locust Street in the village on November 27, the Sunday after Thanksgiving. This Sunday is the 1st Sunday of Advent and St. Andrews Sunday (so tartans are encouraged on this day).

Although most of the work of reconstruction will be finished, there will be punch list items that will need completion. We see this as an opportunity to “work out the kinks” as we try to use a different lighting and sound system for the first time. Please be patient with us as we try to make the move and the adjustments necessary to make all of this happen.

There will be two services on the 27th – one at 8:30am and the second at 10:00am. Sunday School classes will take place at the normal time. Maps of reconfigured or reassigned rooms will be available in the vestibule and narthex.



Home For Christmas III

Advent II Worship - On Sunday, December 4, we encourage you to invite friends and neighbors to attend worship with you as we extend an invitation to the greater Pittsford community to share in our return to our rebuilt sanctuary and church building. Services will be at 8:30am and 10:00am. The sacrament of communion will be a part of this 2nd Sunday of Advent Celebration.



Home For Christmas IV

Candlelight Night - Tuesday, December 6 from 6:00pm – 9:00pm is Candlelight Night in the Village of Pittsford. First Presbyterian Church of Pittsford invites the community to an open house at the church to see the reconstruction of the church building. Refreshments will be available in the church that

evening. On that evening the village offers shopping, caroling, holiday treats, luminaries, and horse-drawn carriage rides. First Presbyterian Church will also be open that night.



AN INVITATION TO MEMBERS

A new plan, to use a team of 6 volunteers in the Winter, "November" thru April" and another 6 volunteers in the Summer, "May thru October" for the true mission of preparing candles for Sunday morning services and hanging of the special needlepoint pieces for individual Sunday Services. It is a special task!!!!

Each person would contribute their time by coming in on Saturday [I will provide a key if needed] so as to prepare for both 8:30 and 10:30 Services the next day. On Sunday, after the 11:00 Service, again, put candles and needlepoint away. 8:30 attendees may participate as one of us will put away for you after 11:00 o'clock on Sunday. Our Volunteers will be fully trained prior to assignments. You may even prefer doing a full month at a time and then go on our substitute list.

There will be a new procedure. Each person will have a thorough orientation and one of us will be with you the first Saturday and Sunday you do this alone. Our plan is to train in February.

In that we are not ready for you on November 27, Pierce and I will be doing this thru the Holidays while training current volunteers of the new system. Neither the candle filling spot nor the new cedar cupboard for needlepoint are yet made.

We have a new candle chairperson who has already accepted the challenge when I will be passing the scheduling on to her in May. That will be Bonnie Dunn. Margaret Mecredy, also a valued volunteer for the past Summer with Bonnie and 4 others, found the team effect to be very helpful. Talk to them or call me. Please consider a 2-year commitment on either the Winter or Summer teams. It is a pleasing task to prepare our beautiful Chancel for worship. Any questions??? please call me. Looking ahead, please volunteer shortly.

TO THE GLORY OF GOD

Sally Day—248-5480--Chairperson of Candles and Needlepoint