

NewsBrief

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

December 2006

From the Pastor's Pen-Cell

Middle age, prior notice and imagination. These are things with which I have had some experience. How shall we take the tabloid declarations that "60" is the new "40"? Wishful thinking of a baby-boomer generation that finds on a dusty closet floor a scrap of clothing that had trudged through the fields at Woodstock and nostalgically believes that those days could return? We have the notion that middle age means maturity and completeness and then when we get there we think that it is merely one of Gail Sheehy's passages. I first read her book, *Passages*, when middle age was only a distant anticipation. Now middle age is beginning to become a passing memory. I have reached that point in the parenting of adult children where I have become a "consultant." Middle is age is something I clutchingly comprehend.

Imagination is something to be enjoyed. We see it in children. Perhaps if you take some of that anti-malaria medication as you head off on a mission trip to Africa you too will discover that it can enliven your sleeping with more imagination than you had heretofore experienced. Some say it makes them hallucinate. It introduces some new creativity and for the time that you are ingesting this stuff, should make you a more interesting preacher, if only for the stimulation of your imagination.

Missed prior notice is rather the adult excuse equivalent to "The dog ate my homework." Experience teaches us this.

On Veterans Day Martha and I walked through Valley Forge Park, a field of remembrance for our first veterans of The Revolutionary War. Nearby we later slipped into the excesses of the King of Prussia Mall. As Martha spoke to a clerk in a small shop, I caught a glimpse of Santa School where the visages of Christmas hope were being instructed in picture taking, lap sitting and ho-ho-ho-ing. Fall decorations were being exchanged for glitter, green, and red. All though the commercial world shifts directly from Veterans Day sales to the Black Friday of Christmas, the church will morph from Thanksgiving to Christ the King, to Advent and for those whose spirits are in touch with Advent, middle age, prior notice and imagination will come front and center.

Once upon a time, in 4th- and 5th-century Gaul and Spain, "Advent" was a preparation not for Christmas but for Epiphany. That's the early-January celebration of such diverse events in Jesus' life as his Baptism, the miracle at Cana, and the visit of the Magi. In those days, Epiphany was set aside as an opportunity for new Christians to be baptized and welcomed into the church. So believers spent Advent's forty days examining their hearts and doing penance.

It was not until the 6th century that Christians in Rome began linking this season explicitly to the coming of Christ. But at that time, and for centuries after, the "coming" that was celebrated was not the birth of Jesus, but his Second Coming. "It was not until the **Middle Ages** that the church began using the Advent season to prepare to celebrate Christ's birth. And even then, this newer sense of the Lord's "advent" or coming did not supplant the older sense—the Second Coming. And the muted, Lent-like mood of penitential preparation remained alongside the joyous anticipation of Jesus' birthday," writes Chris Armstrong, managing editor of *Christian History Magazine*.

So, our modern liturgy starts with sobering passages and prayers about the apocalyptic return of the Lord in judgment. Then it moves to Old Testament passages foretelling the birth of a messiah and New Testament passages trumpeting John the Baptist's exhortations and the angels' announcements. The world tries to take us directly from turkeys to Wiseman, but the more theological reflective are aware that the heart needs to be prepared, that waiting is to be explored, and that the effects of prophetic **prior notice** requires prayerful rumination.

Every year these rich Scriptural reminders and the traditional prayers that accompany them set our blood rushing a little faster and bring a rising excitement: Christ came with plenty of **prior notice**! Prophets and angels joined to proclaim his coming! And now I can join too, with the cloud of witnesses stretching back to apostolic times, in the same proclamation!

And in the protected, quiet times of meditation, I can respond as I **imagine** believers have done on every Advent since the tradition began: I can bow my head and prepare my heart to receive the One who is always present, but who seems distant in the busyness of the season. I can mourn for my hardness of heart. I can hope in divine grace. I can rejoice that in answer to the cry, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," he came.

Are we truly able to do this—in the midst of December's rush of lights, decorations, and piped-in carols—without a gently insistent, weekly preparation? Maybe.

Bruce

Prayerfully Pondering the Blessed Bucket Brigade...

Rachel has been babbling different B sounds for several months but now sends us into gales of laughter when she sings Ba, Ba, Ba, Ba to the tune of Ba Ba Black Sheep. She also says ball and blue. She is nowhere near being able to say baptism, but I am looking forward to helping her remember the one-year anniversary of her baptism on December 4th. You might recall what a special time that was not just for the Mitchell family, but our entire church family. After a year and a half of wandering in God's wilderness and worshipping at Nazareth College, we returned to our home sanctuary for Advent of 2005.

When we baptize a child, the congregation promises "to guide and nurture the child by work and deed, with love and prayer, encouraging him/her to know and follow Christ and to be a faithful member of His church." I have had the joy of witnessing the many ways this family of faith does just that for countless babies of all ages. We worship, fellowship, educate, praise and serve in always evolving and evocative expressions of faithfulness. As our baptized children of all ages grow, God shows us new ways "to guide and nurture [our children] by word and deed." This year we will begin one new way: bring on the Blessed Bucket Brigade!

Perhaps you remember the shiny faces and soulful voices of the impromptu choir from Wilson Commencement Park (WCP) during our October 1st World Communion/Peacemaking Sunday. Our guest preacher from WCP, Iris Banister, told us the children sing because they love to do so. Even though their parents have faced tough times learning how to make ends meet, these children showed us the hope in which their families now live because of the services they receive and the life lessons they are learning at WCP. We can help multiply their hope.

During the first three weeks of Advent, we will thankfully accept donations from you of new household goods such as buckets, mops, brooms, dustpans, paper towels, toilet paper, tissues, laundry and dish detergent, soap, and cleaning supplies. Feel free to leave these housewarming items in the labeled box in Fellowship Hall and we will deliver them as a Christmas gift to WCP for them to give to new resident families throughout the year. As we collectively look for ways "to guide and nurture our children by word

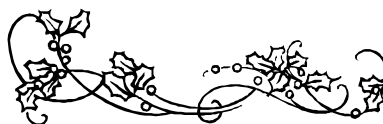
and deed," encourage your children to help select these items and explain the good they will be doing for other children and their families.

But wait! The blessings of our Bucket Brigade continue! Our new ministry to Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) will also be helping out. On December 20th, the MOPS mission project will be creatively decorating the Blessed Buckets and cleaning supplies you have donated. As these moms – some of whom are from this congregation and some who are not – do this hands-on mission project, they will also be learning how to "know and follow Christ." By easily practicing generosity to others, these moms will have another example they can pass on to their own children.

As we anticipate Advent and the birth of the Christ child, may we each find ways to pass on the blessings promised to us and by us in our baptisms.

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. 3 – Jer. 33:14-16; Ps. 25:1-10
1 Thess. 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36

Week of Dec. 10 – Mal. 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79
Phil. 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

Week of Dec. 17 – Zeph. 3:14-20; Isa. 12:2-6
Phil. 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

Week of Dec. 24 – Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:47-55 or
Ps. 80:1-7; Heb. 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-45 (46-55); Isa. 9:2-7
Ps. 96; Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

Week of Dec. 31 – 1 Sam. 2:18-20, 26; Ps. 148;
Col. 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52

LOGOS – 2006 - 2007

from Sylvia Fix
Putting God First!

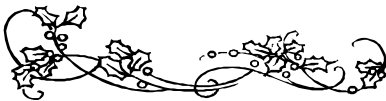
November 29 – Contagious Attitude – The word is *Reflection*.

December 6 – The Gift of Love – The word is *Caroling in Church*.

December 13 – Choir Rehearsal only

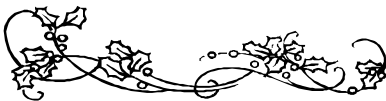
December 20 – Choir Rehearsal only

Merry Christmas
See you in the New Year



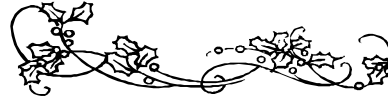
CONFIRMATION:
COME CLAIM THE CREED!

The Confirmation Classes of 2006/2007 began in September with a great orientation and retreat. 8th grade confirmands and their mentors will continue meeting regularly the first Sunday afternoon of every month (12/3, 1/7, 2/4, 3/4, 4/1) in the Youth Forum room between 11:30am and 1:00pm for faith-building exercises and fun! This December's 8th grade mentor class gets a real bonus! The class will be held concurrently with the Advent Brunch so we are asking our confirmands to each bring a coffee cake to share with those participating in the brunch. The confirmands can enjoy the brunch food instead of their customary pizza. We look forward to a great joint celebration and class!

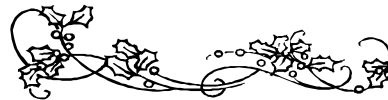


ENRICHMENT SERIES – Join us on the following dates, to hear some provocative presentations and widen your horizons.
CHAPEL 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM following coffee time in Fellowship Hall.

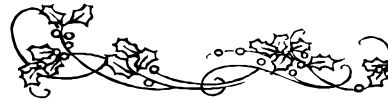
DECEMBER 10 – Nancy Nealon, former Director of Pittsford Youth Services and now Director of Clinical and Community Services for the Rochester Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Our eyesight is so valuable – have you taken you for granted lately? Part of the presentation will be a display of some innovative items that make life easier for those of us lacking 20:20 vision!



JANUARY 14, 2007 – Dr. Joan Miller, a member of First Presbyterian and from 1998 to the present, Director of Cardiac Rehabilitation and Noninvasive Cardiology for the Unity Health System. Joan is also a Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Rochester. She has been a speaker, particularly on women's heart disease, for 15 years – both locally and regionally. Don't miss the opportunity to hear this dynamic and knowledgeable professional.



ADULT ED. - ARE YOU A SHEPHERD, AN ANGEL, OR A WISE MAN? ~ Join the Messengers (John and Judy, that is) in "Advent Approaches," a three-week Adult Ed series beginning Sunday, November 19, at 8:30 AM, in Room 200, and find out!



THE OPTIMISTS will enjoy a musical "Walk Down Memory Lane" at their Friday, December 1 meeting. Edward Fredia will include music from 1890 to the present, as well as Christmas Carols. The evening will feature a holiday buffet, catered by Sandwich Works Café, at 6:15 PM in Fellowship Hall. Please bring your own table service. Tickets are \$9 per person and will be available after both services on November 19 and 26 and in the church office until the 27th deadline.



ANNUAL HAM SUPPER ON DEC. 17TH



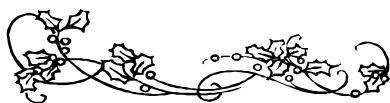
Join us for the Annual Ham Supper at 5 o'clock PM, following the Christmas Pageant presented by the youth of our church.

As always there will be fun and fellowship as well as a delicious meal served with a delectable assortment of homemade cookies and punch.

Tickets will be sold in the Fellowship Hall after both Sunday morning church services on Nov. 26, Dec. 4, and Dec. 11: \$5 (Adult) \$2 (Child)



SH-H-H-! This is a secret! There will be a surprise visit from an important someone from "way up North!"



Organ Notes

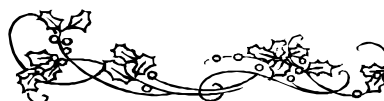
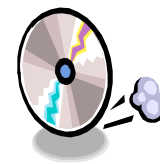
I would like to personally thank everyone who came to the Sunday afternoon organ benefit concert given by Harold, James, and Sanghwa, and the Chancel Choir. I think a comment that I eavesdropped on, at the reception in Fellowship Hall following the concert, kind of said it all. The gist of someone's comment was that there was a magic moment brought to life in our church that afternoon. Harold's voice remains as magnificent as ever. James and Sanghwa, individually and in four-hand arrangements, created instrumental music that reached the same heights. I'm sure that Harold, James, and Sanghwa agree that having an appreciative audience plays an important part in the success of a concert such as this one. My additional thanks to James for all of the extra effort he put into making this event such a success.

We are all looking forward to a follow-up concert in a little over a year when the accompaniment will be provided by the new organ!

Bob Peet

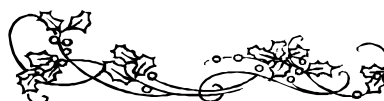
The "Sacred Favorites" Concert

On October 28 with Harold McAulliffe, James Douthit, Sanghwa Lee and the Chancel Choir was very moving and inspirational. Approximately 130 people attended; about one third of them were non-members. A CD of the concert was professionally produced. Over 100 CD's have been made and sold so far. You may order yours in Fellowship Hall after each church service or call the office (586-5688). Each CD is \$12 or two for \$20. It makes a wonderful Christmas gift!



"SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP" ~ One World Goods

has announced that it will give 20% of the evening's proceeds to The Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network on Monday, November 27 from 6-9 PM at Pittsford Plaza. Other stores participating in the evening's event are **Snow Country, blueground, Hands on and Beyond, Color Me Mine and The Lounge**. Dine first at **Applebee's** from 4 – 9 PM. Last year's event raised almost \$4,000 for RAIHN, Rochester's answer to compassionate shelter for homeless families. A coupon is needed for Applebee's, Snow Country and The Lounge. Coupon available on the RAIHN website www.raihn.org, and in the brochure from your RAIHN Coordinator.



Are You Experiencing the Christmas Blues?

The joy of Christmas can turn into a time of painful loneliness and emptiness for those who have suffered a loss or who are going through a difficult time. But help is available. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to provide confidential, one-to-one, Christian care. They will listen, care, encourage, pray with and for you, and support you through the holidays and as long as your need persists. If you or someone you know is hurting, find out more about Stephen Ministry by talking with one of our Stephen Leaders: *Jane Hunter, Alice O'Dwyer, Kay Saxum (385-9807), Barbara Smith, Dick Sprenkle or Carol Tiemann*. **Our Stephen Ministers are there to care!**

... *From Sandy's desk*

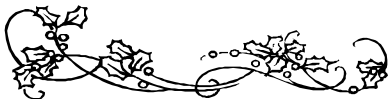
Advent is that ancient holy season set aside especially as an annual opportunity for we Christians to make sure we have a space in our hearts for the Christ-child.

Imagine the awe you would feel if coming around a corner, Mary with Joseph at her side greeted you and placed the tiny Christ-child in your arms! Are you ready?

Going about the "busy-ness" of preparing for the holidays, try to remember that it is that Christ-child in everyone around you that matters most. The now tired, trite cliché "Jesus is the Reason for the Season" came about because we are all too likely to forget that Jesus' birth is what we celebrate at this time of year, and that ADVENT is the time of getting ready for Jesus birthday party. Beginning Sunday December 3 and continuing to December 25 is our time to think about and pray and wonder at the greatness of our God who came and lived among us to show us his love and compassion and awesome glory.

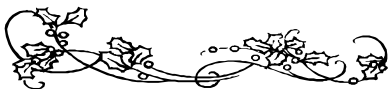
So, shopping for gifts? Give gifts to those you love as if you were giving gifts to Jesus. Celebrating? Enjoy those you gather with to have fun. Look for the Holy Spirit, our God, in the eyes of each.

Sending greetings? Write with the Peace of Christ and the hope of the promise of eternal life. Spread joy and healing with your holiday singing and embrace each other as Mary held that precious child. AMEN



ADVENT BRUNCH – December 3

Calling Young and Old – Have you signed up for the Advent Brunch yet? It will smell great here after Church on Sunday, December 3, so please sign up now to attend so we have enough food. Fun crafts, cookie exchange if you're interested, decorating the church, are all activities after you eat. \$1.00 per person or \$5.00 per family. Start the Holiday Season off with your Church family.

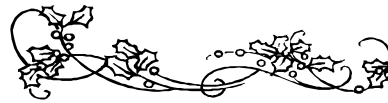


REMINDER

If you will be selling/donating stock to the Church to pay towards a pledge, please have it to Janet by early December. This will ensure it will be a 2006 contribution. We are using a different company to sell stock and it takes a little longer these days.

NEEDED, drivers for Sunday mornings to pick up our members at Valley Manor and possible other stops. We have been providing this service for over a year with about 7 drivers. Some of our drivers are "snowbirds" so we need additional help during the winter when we prefer not to drive the Elderberry Express Van. We try to line up a regular driver each Sunday and a "back up" in case we have more members needing a ride than will fit in one car or mini-van. Your help will be greatly appreciated! Also, if there is anyone who needs a ride on Sunday mornings please let us know and we will try to make arrangements to add you to our list.

Dianne Brown
Phone: 398-7083



RUN FOR CARL

Friday, Nov. 24, East Lodge (*new location*)
Mendon Ponds Park

5k Run or 3k Walking Track (No Officials or Timers!) Start at 10:00 AM. Show up early to stretch or warm-up.

Join us for the 2nd Annual run for Carl! 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. Over 200 people came out last year to hit the MPP trails he grew up loving as they ran/walked a few miles in his honor. Please join this new tradition and share one of Carl's favorite places with family and friends who want to continue his legacy.

No registration fee – however, donations will be accepted. Over \$2,000 was raised last year, which went to providing four scholarships to graduating seniors of Sutherland and Mendon High in Carl's honor. We hope to be able to do the same this coming June.

Donations can be sent to: The Carl Lane Metzler Memorial Fund, 2400 Chase Square, Rochester, NY 14604

Post-run refreshments provided. Contact run_for_carl@hotmail.com with any questions. See you there!!

Major strides have been made by the "Needlepoint Stitching Group" since the Church Fire. In a brief review for those of you who may not be aware that 10 pieces of our Needlepoint are being re-stitched to replace damage too great for them to be used. All cushions seen on the Chancel, in the Narthex and Lobby had water and debris as well. Their backs were removed, they were refurbished and washed by a professional then sent to the upholsterer for stretching and new upholstery. Those that did not make the grade were: 1 Chancel cushion behind the Communion table with our church logo--lost in the clean up; the 2 white petit point candle drops--one found in dumpster but could not be used. the other lost; and the white bookmark--lost. Remember the "Saints" bench? Now empty in the Narthex? The fronts of Matthew and Mark were burned and Luke has a charcoal smudge. On a smaller deacons bench--also empty in the Narthex, the yellow "Bethlehem Star" and "Jerusalem Crawfoot" cushions were faded badly and are being re-stitched. This means 7 cushions and the 3 white Chancel pieces are still not available.

It was early February 2005 when I decided to train 2 new helpers for the Project Needlepoint Committee. By April 20, 2005 we were ready to begin, at the Pittsford Sr. Center where the light was excellent as well as the parking. It was spread by word of mouth as best we could within the congregation and by phoning stitchers from the previous 3 Phases of the Needlework done between 1986 and 1997. We have been meeting every Wednesday from 1-3pm since then. Of course there were several times we cancelled due to Holidays or not enough people able to come. But not many. All teaching and stitching is done at the Center by appointment as our team must know ahead what to prepare for at the next sit and stitch. Once a sample piece is done on a small frame, and the stitcher is comfortable with our technique in basket weave, the larger canvas is assigned. Designs must be done first and require an experienced stitcher. Our canvasses are painted, on frames and stitched with Persian wool. The cushions have a life of 200 years if properly cared for--and we had done that for years before the fire. All the damaged canvasses have been framed and eventually will hang in Fellowship Hall.

You've seen our offer for members who would like to be a part of this project and do some stitching, in the Sunday Bulletin. If not, we encourage all who are interested to phone Sally Day or Judy Johnson for more information and to talk about a convenient time for you to join us. We have fellowship and fun as you return by app't to show us what you have done and stitch with the group. We don't want to leave anyone out of this last Project. Sally 248-5480 Judy 586-9224 Dec., Jan., Feb, March etc.

Committee:

Sally Day--Mentor/Teacher
 Lee Eldredge--Mentor/stitcher
 Mary Jo Hultz--Mentor assistant/stitcher
 Judy Johnson--Chairperson/teacher/stitcher
 Martha Crawford--Co-chair/teacher/stitcher

Liz Bynum Drake--Church Logo outlines Sue Humes--fleur-de-lis on church logo
 Martha Crawford--gold, white and navy backgrounds/church logo
 Sylvia Fix--design side boxings, church logo
 Liz Drake--circles surrounding flower designs
 Liz Drake--Jerusalem Crawfoot/flower and its background
 Chris Longyear--red corners/Jerusalem Crawfoot
 Karen McNamara--Bethlehem Star/flower and its background
 Chris Longyear--red corners/Bethlehem Crawfoot

Design Stitchers:

Lee Eldredge--Rose on 2 white candelrops and 1 bookmark
 Judy Johnson--white background/bookmark
 Sue Humes--white background/1 candelrop
 Anne Gardner--large circles around Saint designs
 Gini Allen--Angel--St. Matthew
 Maura Rouse--Lion--St. Mark
 Anne Gardner--Ox--St. Luke
 Mary Jo Hultz--Eagle--St. John
 Bert Sabia--navy background/Eagle

Trained for background:
 Muriel Nothhard

In training: We have 4 indicated for January.
 Lynne Huot Sign up now so we can form our new
 Rita Alger class schedules in 2007.

Many thanks for reading about us since 2005!!!!!! Sally Day

NAME TAG ORDER FORM

To order a new church nametag with *bigger* print or to replace a lost or damaged name tag, please fill out the form below, enclose a check to cover costs (payable to Norma Ryther) and mail both the check and form to:



Norma Ryther
 22 Cambric Circle
 Pittsford, New York 14534
 Questions? Call Norma at 385-6952.)

1. Please PRINT name to be on name tag:

_____ (First Name) _____ (Last Name)

2. Circle type of nametag: PIN (\$4.80) CLIP (\$4.80) MAGNET (\$6.60)

NOTE: Name tags should be here in less than two weeks and will be available at the name tag table as you enter church unless other arrangements have been made.