

# NewsBrief

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

## February 2008

### From the Pastor's Pen-Cell

I'm still behind. I thought that by the beginning of the new year, I'd be able to say goodbye to 2007, but no, there are still notes to write to people I love and Christmas decorations to put away. It wouldn't feel so challenging, I suppose, if Lent didn't come early this year. We'll get to have an encounter with Bill Jones, Storyteller on February 2 (Ground Hog Day – no connection to Bill Jones) and then bingo, February 6 is Ash Wednesday.

I did get the lights off the tree last night, but there are still garlands and angels and snowmen around which to dust. As I shelved a new book that I just finished, I spied an old one and had to thumb through it to find that story that Chuck Swindol tells.

The book is *Strengthening Your Grip* and there he tells about a minister who wanted a dark suit to look appropriate at a funeral where he was to officiate. His resources were at the low part of the month and he went to the local pawnshop in search of a bargain. Much to his amazement they had a solid black suit that fit him exquisitely at a very reasonable price. As he paid for the suit, he inquired how they could possibly sell such nice suits so cheaply. The pawnbroker smiled and said that the suits had once been owned by the local mortuary. They had used them on deceased persons for viewings and then removed them prior to cremation.

The pastor squirmed uncomfortably as he wore the suit that had at one time been the last outer garment for someone, but he justified himself back into confidence in the security of the secret that no one else would know. Everything went fine until about midway through his sermon. While he was talking he casually put his hands in the pockets of his new suit. It was then that he discovered that his pants had no pockets. Truth came home. Why would the deceased need pockets? We leave it all behind.

Now I don't want to suggest that we should pay no attention to unfinished tasks, that we can actually forget things from 2007 that still need our attention. But the story does seem to suggest that there are priorities in our lives that need focus and surely the Lenten season is a time for that. There are sins and behaviors to leave behind. There is stuff to leave.

January lectionary texts will take us to the call of the disciples. They were really ordinary people challenged with an extraordinary mission. They were challenged to go with Jesus and to grow with Jesus. So often they really didn't grasp the meaning of what the Master taught. But there did come a day when they were no longer called disciples but apostles.

If I could distinguish the two, I'd say that disciples are those called to come. Apostles are those called to go. There should come a time when we move from being learners about Jesus to becoming ambassadors for our Lord. There comes a time when mature Christian believers move from being 'ministered to' to the work of ministry itself.

I wear 9s. That is my shoe size. Those are the only shoes I am called to fill. This time of year Martha and I wear our "Rochester shoes." That's just the name we have given to them. They are available at Land's Inlet for \$19.95. They have rubber soles you can easily slip them on and off. We normally leave ours wet and dripping with winter in the garage. But of course there are lots of other shoes that can be worn. There are cowboy boots, wing tips, Italian loafers, spike heels, flats, and sensible shoes. Shoes reveal a lot about us. We even have phrases built around them.

"He'll never fill his daddy's shoes!" "She's going to follow in my shoes." "I wouldn't want to be in his shoes now!" "I haven't walked a mile in her shoes." "If the shoe fits, wear it."

Jesus wants disciples of all kinds to put on shoes of apostleship. I think that the variety of our Lord's expectation would put Imelda Marcos to shame.

- Jesus calls masons in their steel-toed boots to build.
- Jesus calls farmers in their big green Wellies to plant.
- Jesus calls nurses in their white crepe soles to heal.
- Jesus calls CEOs in their Gucci loafers to lead.
- Jesus calls moms and dads in their fuzzy slippers to nurture.
- Jesus calls children in their cartoon-character sneakers to skip and jump and dance.

Rather than Lent being a time to "give up" something, I believe it should be a time for us to do something. At the least, it is a time to plan and purpose to do ministry and to move from discipleship to apostleship. And if you haven't yet become a disciple, it is time to respond to God's call. When you suit up for ministry, your own shoes will work. But, you may be surprised by the pockets.

*Bruce*

## Prayerfully Pondering Priorities...

What am I to you? Norah Jones' song captures a feeling we have each had at one time or another.

What am I to you?  
Tell me darling true.  
To me you are the sea.  
Vast as you can be.  
Deep the shade of blue.

If I happen to make the gross error of passing by Ernie without giving him a huge hug, we laughingly look at each other and say, "What am I, chopped liver?" While we joke about it, each of us likes to know we matter to the other person. And when we are feeling stressed, tired, needy, sick, or despondent, we particularly need to know someone significantly cares and is willing to demonstrate that caring in some fashion.

We may even wonder if God cares about us in trying times. The Psalms are full of these wonderings as the Psalmist laments God's seeming absence (Psalms 6, 38, 41, 88). Ultimately, the Psalmist affirms God's consistent saving and healing presence with us, but the cathartic questioning is authentic and intrinsically human.

Ash Wednesday is particularly early this year and offers an excellent opportunity for each of us to ask God, "What am I to you?" At a special service in the sanctuary, ashes created from the burning of last year's Palm Sunday fronds will be available for imposition. Martin Luther offers a seasonally appropriate answer to this question we each might want to ask God at some time or another:

"For God so lo**V**ed the world,

That He g**A**ve

His on**L**y

Begott**E**n

So**N**

**T**hat whosoever

Believeth **I**n Him

Should **N**ot perish,

But have **E**verlasting life."

John 3:16 "Gospel in Miniature" –Luther

What are we to God? God thinks enough of each of us that God gives God's self, God's only son, to us with no strings attached. During Lent, that period after Ash Wednesday when the days lengthen and we are able to prepare for Holy Week culminating in Easter, we can each ponder a reciprocal question, "What is God to me?"

During our Lenten season of penitence and preparation, I invite us to examine our own priorities and discern what God is to us. How are we seeing God at work in our lives? How are we discerning God leading us? How are we sharing God's gifts to us with others?

May we each receive God's loving valentine and respond in kind.

Go With God,  
Carrie



Week of Feb. 6 – Exod. 24:12-18; Ps. 2 or Ps. 99  
2 Peter 1:16-21; Matt. 17:1-9

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent

Week of Feb. 10 – Gen. 2:15-17, 3:1-7; Ps. 32  
Rom. 5:12-19; Matt. 4:1-11

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent

Week of Feb. 17 – Gen. 12:1-4a; Ps. 121  
Rom. 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent

Week of Feb. 24 – Exod. 17:1-7; Ps. 95; Rom. 5:1-11  
John 4:5-42



## CONFIRMATION: COME CLAIM THE CREED!

The Confirmation Classes of 2007/2008 began in September with a great orientation and retreat. 8<sup>th</sup> grade confirmands and their mentors will continue meeting regularly the first Sunday afternoon of every month (2/3, 3/2, 4/6) in the Youth Forum room between 12:00pm and 1:30pm for faith-building exercises and fun! We look forward to a great class!

The fall appeal for more volunteers to serve at ASBURY SOUP KITCHEN was a success! Thank you to the new volunteers that have joined this local mission. The first date of the new year is March 16.



### Introducing: “God’s Handy Hands’

Are you in need of assistance and don’t know who to call? The need may include helping with routine household maintenance, repairing appliances, assisting with insurance claims, installing storm windows, fixing porches, and the list goes on... Our Church has a new mission – ourselves!

God’s Handy Hands is our local mission of God’s work with our own members. To volunteer to help with any talent, or to call requesting some helping hands, email to [Godshandyhands@aol.com](mailto:Godshandyhands@aol.com), call George Alger at 381-0893 or the Church office. We are members of our Church ready to help each other.



### Extra, Extra, Read all about it: Mozambique Mission 2008

Prestons, Pollocks, McFarlands, Towles, again invite you to join them in Mozambique to build another church to the glory of God. The sad part of this project is our father, Ted Pollock at the age of 95, has decided that he is getting too old to travel the world. However, his passion and desire to serve others lives on in us, his children. We would like to invite as many of you as possible to take part in this project with us. We would love to have 15 of you join us in Mozambique and work alongside the local church. Mark these dates on your calendar now: July 16—August 01, 2008.

For information: Email: [Ronpollock@aol.com](mailto:Ronpollock@aol.com) or call Ron at 455-0000

If you find you cannot come yourself, you can: Pray! Or donate toward the cost of supplies, food, lodging and transportation.

Donations may be sent to the Church office: marked for Pollock Church Project, Quelimane, Mozambique.

### NEW CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP BEING FORMED:

~ Could you use some caregiving? Are you torn by your responsibilities? Would it help to hear that you are not alone? This new, confidential group will be meeting on the last Tuesday of the month at 2:30 PM in the Library and already has a core of participation. We now invite you. If you are interested, please contact Carrie Mitchell. (586-5688 x32) or Barb Rarrick (586-8512).



**What happens** when you ask for Stephen Ministry for yourself or a friend? Someone will contact you to talk more about Stephen Ministry and what it can mean to you. Then, you will be matched with a Stephen Minister, who will listen and support you through this tough time.



This whole process is completely confidential. No one knows what you talk about with your Stephen Minister except the two of you.



### To the Deacons

Thank you for the GREAT ham dinner/lunch and all the hard work. J.D.



**BETHEL BIBLE STUDY** ~Bethel classes resumed on Thursday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, but note there will be no classes on January 10<sup>th</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup>. If you are looking for a way to fulfill that New Year’s resolution to get deeper into God’s Word, then you will want to check out the Bethel program. Thank you Pastor Bruce for all the work that goes into preparing for this study. It reaps grand dividends in many lives. Much like ripples on a pond.

## OPTIMISTS

The February meeting of the Optimists has been cancelled due to scheduling problems. See you in March!



### CROWN BIBLICAL FINANCIAL STUDY -

a 10-week in-depth study of what Scripture teaches about money and possessions.

Graduates have confirmed that marriages are being strengthened and individuals are finding their way out of debt. They are also becoming consistent savers, generous givers, and prudent consumers. Most importantly, people are entering into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ as they learn to apply His Word. Groups meet for 2 hours every week and meetings include Scripture memorization and interactive discussions.

Orientation for the Crown Biblical Financial Study Class at First Presbyterian will be on Monday, January 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00pm in room 203. Classes begin Monday, February 4<sup>th</sup> and will meet every Monday night for 10 weeks. For those interested, please contact Jeff Tyler at 415-5711 or email [Jeffrey.tyler@nmfn.com](mailto:Jeffrey.tyler@nmfn.com).



### **PITTSFORD COOPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL PLANS OPEN HOUSE ~**

The Pittsford Cooperative Nursery School hosts an open house 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 27, for families interested in 3- and 4-year-old preschool for the 2008-09 academic year. Parents of current students and the experienced teachers and staff will be on hand to talk with interested families about the school. Visitors can tour the classrooms, activity room and playground.

PCNS is located in the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsford, 25 Church St., in the heart of the village. The entrance to the school is on Locust Street. For more information, visit [www.pittsfordcooperativenurseryschool.org](http://www.pittsfordcooperativenurseryschool.org) or call 381-1390.

### COUPLES FELLOWSHIP EVENT ON

SATURDAY, JAN 26. ~ Please join us for snowshoeing or cross-country skiing at Tinker Nature Center and then dinner at the home of Tom and Louise Thompson. Plan to meet at the Nature Center at 3:30pm; bring snowshoes or skis or rent there for \$2 donation. Then join us for a casual dinner at 6:00pm at the Thompsons, 1 Tippet Way. Call 264-9233 or email at [tthompson5@aol.com](mailto:tthompson5@aol.com) to RSVP or for more info. All couples are welcome.



IMAGINE A MID-WINTER WEEKEND ~ of fun and food for the entire family -- here at church! Well, your friendly CE Committee has planned just such an opportunity, and YOU'RE invited (children & youth are free!).

Presbyterian minister and professional storyteller Bill Jones will be coming all the way from the Outer Banks to entertain and inspire our church family February 1-3. Bill's stories are for everyone -- mature kids, youth, adults, and seniors -- and touch on universal themes. Childcare and three meals (including a pancake breakfast and a spaghetti dinner) are provided. Visit our table in the Fellowship Hall to listen to Bill!



### **FAMILY FUN NIGHT**

Bingo and Karaoke! What more could you want on a cold, snowy March evening? Please come support our youth summer mission trips by joining us on the evening of March 2 in Fellowship Hall. Our youth will be hosting a family fun night, with Bingo and karaoke and other fun games, plus great food and fellowship. More information coming...check future Sunday bulletins!

## NOTES FROM JAMES

### WHAT'S NEW?

As I write the first "Notes" for the New Year of 2008, it seems that almost everything I that I need to communicate is **new and exciting!**

#### New Members

Just in time for the Christmas Season, Noel Nichols (what a great name for our December new member) joined the tenor section of the Chancel Choir, making a total of 5 new and returning members for 2007. This number is greater than the sum of all of the new members who have joined the choir during my entire tenure at First Presbyterian Church! It is very exciting to have this growth in the ensemble. We are always interested in new members singing with us. All of our ensembles at the church provide a great opportunity to learn about music, fellowship with other church friends and members, and a chance to utilize your talents as we lead our corporate service of worship. If you've been sitting in the pews thinking you'd like to sing with us, you'd like to have a better view of the service, or you want to be closer to one of the finest new organs in North America, consider joining the Chancel Choir or any of our musical ensembles. We have something for every age and ability level.

#### New Organ News

Speaking of our new organ, the Organ Committee has exciting news to share regarding the installation of our instrument. The installation is scheduled to begin sometime in the week following Easter! We are currently considering a number of ways to herald the arrival of the new instrument, but we have a general list of activities that will bring Taylor and Boody, Opus 57, into being at First Presbyterian Church.

Before the organ arrives, the local Chapter of the American Guild of Organists will visit our church on Saturday, March 1. They have asked me to speak on the fire, its effect on our music program, and the development of the organ project.

The week after Easter the truck will arrive. Members of the congregation may assist in unloading the various pipes and parts of the organ that will fill our church. In the first week, all of the parts will make their way from the various areas of the church to the Choir Balcony and the Chapel, where they will be assembled into the magnificent instrument that will serve our church for years to come.

It will take several weeks to assemble and voice the organ. We hope to have the "first sounds" of the organ during our May 4 Sacred Favorites II Concert with Harold McAulliffe, Eunyoung Kim, the Chancel Choir, and me. I can hardly wait for this moment when our choir and congregation raise their voices to

the accompaniment of this fantastic instrument, and I have the perfect piece in mind for us to sing together!

Later in May, or perhaps, June, we will have a Service of Dedication for the organ during one of our Sunday morning worship services. We will consecrate the organ for its use in our corporate service of worship, weddings, funerals, community events, and many other exciting possibilities.

In the summer, plans are being made to feature the organ in an organ improvisation workshop, which is one of the most exciting events in the organ world, held in Rochester each summer.

In the Fall of 2008, we will begin a series of recitals celebrating the arrival of the organ and inviting the community to hear our new instrument. Two other organs will be installed this year in the Rochester community, the new Fritz Organ at Sacred Heart Cathedral and the new Casparini Organ at Christ Church in downtown Rochester. Oct. 19, 2008, will be an international day of celebration, and a focal point of the 2008-2009 International Year of the Organ Celebration sponsored by the American Guild of Organists. We will celebrate in high style in Rochester, as we are making plans for a bus tour that will stop at all three of the new organs in Rochester for an exciting concert on each instrument!

Our Organ Committee is now working to plan all of the elements of the dedication and installation of the organ. We will soon be sending a communication to those of you who contributed to the organ, confirming your listing for the dedication booklet published for the service of installation. We want to make sure that all who donated are recognized, so please look for your mailing from the Organ Committee and promptly return the information that is requested. We currently have a balance of approximately \$10,000.00 left to raise to complete our funding efforts. If you would like to give a gift in honor or memory of a loved one, it's not too late to have your gift recognized in the dedication booklet, published for the service of installation of Opus 57!

#### New Organ

While you can't hear the new organ just yet, you can hear the new organist, as she presents a recital on Tuesday, January 29, 2008 at 8:00 PM at Asbury United Methodist Church on East Avenue. Eunyoung Kim will be presenting one of the two solo recitals required for completion of the Doctor of Musical Arts in Organ Performance and Literature from the Eastman School of Music. Admission is free. Watch the Sunday bulletins for any updates prior to the recital! I am sure you won't want to miss this exciting event!

## Christian Education News:

**Sunday School** –In preparation for the Heifer Fair, the children are focusing on mission, and about sharing the gifts and resources that God has given to them. Throughout this unit, called Sharing and Kindness, the children will be making crafts associated with an animal their class has adopted. These crafts are then sold at the fair to raise funds for Heifer International.

Feb 17<sup>th</sup> will feature Paradise Pictures.

On February 24<sup>th</sup>, we start the fifth unit of the school year, titled Journey to the Cross, which leads us to Easter.

**Heifer Fair** – February 10, immediately following the 10am service, our children are excited to present their crafts for purchase in order to support Heifer International. “Heifer International provides livestock and training, so that families can improve nutrition and earn extra income for health care, shelter and education for children. Each gift multiplies because every family that receives a Heifer animal promises to ‘pass on the gift’ by giving one or more of their animal’s offspring and knowledge to another family in need.” [www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org)

### **All-Congregation Weekend Retreat:**

**Faith, Food , and FUN!** – “Rev. Dr. Bill Jones will lead a series of dynamic workshops as we explore the roots of our faith as well as the power of our collective story. All ages are encouraged to attend!” Fill out a registration form and notify Doris for childcare needs. Check out [www.BillJonesStoryteller.com](http://www.BillJonesStoryteller.com)

### **Adult Education** –

Thank you Phil Tinder for leading a multi-media presentation and discussion about the Star of Bethlehem on Epiphany Sunday.

Our current 8:30 class is studying the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, lead by Dick Sprenkle, and will be completed on Sunday, January 27.

February topics for Adult Education:

- Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> Origin of the Universe – Big Bang and the Case for a Creator.

- Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> Origin of Life – Creator or Chance?
- Feb. 17<sup>th</sup> Fact or Fiction? – Reliability of the Bible, Part 1.
- Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> Fact or Fiction? – Reliability of the Bible, Part 2.

### **Educational Offerings at a Glance:**

Call the church office or email Nathan Zampella (Nathan.zampella@pittsfordpres.org ) for details about the following regular events.

#### **Sunday**

- 7:00am Men’s Fellowship and Prayer – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month. Next one is scheduled for February 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- 8:30am Adult Education
- 10:00am Serendipity Bible Study
- 10:00am Nursery and children’s program for ages birth through 4 years old.
- 10:00am Senior High Forum
- Mouse Report during 10am service will release K-8<sup>th</sup> grades to Sunday School.

#### **Monday**

- Crown Biblical Financial Study

#### **Wednesday**

- 9:30am Bible Study
- Logos Children’s Program
- 7:15pm Bible Study

#### **Thursday**

- Men’s Breakfast and Bible Study
- Bethel Bible Study

### **LOGOS - 2008**

from Sylvia Fix

#### **We Want You! We Welcome You!**

**February 6** – Bible Stories. We will create movies. The word is *Biblical*. Please join us as we move from Logos to the Ash Wednesday Service at 7:00 PM.

**February 13** – Valentine – Fill your heart with - ? The word is *love*.

**February 20** – President’s Break – NO LOGOS

**February 27** – SURPRISE NIGHT. Winter fun. The word is *invite*.

