

NewsBrief

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

June 2007

From the Pastor's Pen-Cell

Text: By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

John 13:35

"In Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet and had never walked, for he had been crippled from birth." Now I can't say that I have been crippled from birth or unable to walk. But I have known pain in walking. One Friday years ago, I had surgery on my knee. The surgery itself went well. It was the preparation for it that caused some embarrassment. I read the physician's preparatory instructions:

Before your surgery, you are required to remove body hair. Do not shave to remove hair. Purchase a hair remover from a drug store. On the evening before your surgery apply the hair remover from thigh to ankle. Follow label directions, using twice if necessary. Be sure all visible hair is removed.

So it was off to a drug store to find Nair. This depilatory is not a product I frequently purchase. I must have appeared uncomfortably lost searching the aisles for this stuff because a lady restocking the shelves kindly inquired, "Can I help you? For what are you looking?" A little hesitant and chagrined I blurted, "I've a little operation tomorrow and I need one quart of Nair and two quarts of Liquid Plumber." This was the 2nd time surgery was tried on this knee. I was already wary of this procedure.

When Billy Martin was hired for the fourth time as manager of the New York Yankees, replacing Yogi Berra, Yogi added to his well-deserved reputation as an amusing user of the English language when he said, "It's déjà vu all over again."

I thought to myself when I read this text that Paul must have had that déjà vu all over again feeling. Each time he preached the gospel with Barnabas at his side he was met with opposition, ridicule, and

persecution. They must have thought something like "It's deja vu all over again." Perhaps it never got to be any easier as they went along, but surprisingly after such rejection verse 52 says that the "disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit."

More than deja vu there is a yearning in the church for a return to some golden age, to bring back things as they once were. We yearn for a time of greater simplicity, a time of purer innocence, - a time when people were closer to God. We remember our childhood periods when the streets seemed to be safer and respect was expected, and choices were limited so that there was time to go fishing.

Yearn as we might for the past, things are always changing. We can see it even in the life of our church. Sanghwa Lee will be leaving for a new adventure of marriage and mission near Washington D.C. We wish her God's grace and give thanks for her ministry with us. Sandy Pacyga is embarking on a new vision for ministry. We pray God's blessing on her as a new chapter unfolds in her life. Sandy has introduced teachers to Godly Play, prayed consistently for this congregation, and encouraged members to discover opportunities through APCE (Association of Presbyterian Church Educators).

We aren't the first to reflect on the good ol' days. The prophet Micah saw the seasons of the wilderness as the perfect time when Israel was like a child in her obedience to God. Others looked back to the time of David and hoped that the nation would be restored to the glory of that era. Each age has hoped for deja vu all over again.

Yes, our God has dwelt with people in the past. But, God's voice continues to say to us from the scriptures, "behold I will make all things new." God also dwells in our future, beckoning us to become what God intends. The disciples may have heard Jesus quote Leviticus 19:18 and said, "it's deja vu all over again" as Jesus uttered the command, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." But, Jesus refreshed the words saying that we ought to love one another, "as I have loved you."

He even went on to say, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." By this? The charge to us is momentous; the credibility of the gospel is contingent upon our love for each other. In living out this command, Martha and I have witnessed your faithfulness, your amazing response to those within our fellowship, to the city of Rochester, and to the people of Pearlinton, MS and Ribaué, Mozambique. You have lived it out in relationship to us and will soon express this love through Habitat, Wilson Commencement Park, and Kingston, Jamaica. God bless you all.

Bruce

Prayerfully Pondering Profession and Confession...

On Memorial Day weekend, the eighth grade confirmation class will profess their faith in our Pentecost worship service having confessed to the Session what they believe about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, sin and forgiveness, the church, sacraments, prayer, and personal mission in the world.

Both profession and confession have multiple meanings that can lead to confusion. When any of us professes our faith, we publicly confess what we believe. Our confession is the content of what we are professing.

During the Pentecost worship service, the confirmands will be asked the same questions posed at baptisms and the admission of new members in our congregation: Who is your Lord and Savior? Do you trust in him? Will you seek to be Christ's faithful disciple in prayer and in action, obeying God's word and showing God's love? By answering these questions affirmatively, a person professes his or her faith.

Being a professing Christian in any day and age is not easy. How do we know we are being Christ's faithful disciple? What happens if we have occasional difficulties trusting his love? Spiritual giants like Martin Luther have wrestled with these questions and concluded by affirming that it is only by God's grace we can be assured that our professions are acceptable. When we gather on Sundays, we regularly include a prayer of confession when we can publicly acknowledge the content of those places we feel we are falling short. And we receive God's assurance that our sins and shortcomings are forgiven. In gratitude, we then have the opportunity to profess our faith again and keep growing into the people God created us to be.

In this same late spring season of Pentecost, many graduations are taking place and our students are preparing themselves to enter professions of all kinds. Historically, professions were limited to clergy, medical and legal. Persons in these fields were required to say an oath adhering to high ethical standards and subjecting themselves to rigorous training on behalf of others who could not advocate for

themselves. Today, professions are more widely understood to be any discipline for which a person receives specific training and in which a person holds him/herself to a high ethical standard. This broader understanding of professions lends itself well to our Reformed Theological understanding of all of us being ministers of Christ and God's children actively participating in the world.

As we witness our confirmands' profession of faith or attend a loved one's graduation this season, we can remind ourselves of our own roles as professing Christians. Being Christ's faithful disciple, obeying God's word and showing God's love will look different for each one of us so we can rejoice that God created us with this wonderful multitude of gifts to share!

Go With God,

Carrie

Week of June 3 – Prov. 8:1-4, 22-31; Ps. 8; Rom. 5:1-5
John 16:12-15

Week of June 10 – 1 Kings 17:8-16 (17-24); Ps. 146;
Gal. 1:11-24; Luke 7:11-17

Week of June 17 – 1 Kings 21:1-10 (11-14) 15-21a;
Ps. 5:1-8; Gal. 2:15-21; Luke 7:36-8:3

Week of June 24 – 1 Kings 19:1-4 (5-7) 8-15a
Ps. 42 and 43; Gal. 3:23-29; Luke 8:26-39

CONFIRMATION: COME CLAIM THE CREED!

Many thanks to all the mentors and teachers of the confirmation classes this year! Thanks also to the parents and confirmands from last year's class who made the banquet such a memorable and tasty experience! Once again, we had a phenomenal two-year cycle that would not have been possible without all of you. Kudos to our newest group of confirmands who affirmed their faith on May 27th: Amy Adams, Amanda Bradstreet, Brandon Cooper, Caitlin Craigie, Jennifer Peet, Cameron Rossington, Colleen Rouse, Joanne Stiles, Kelsey Swetman, Paige Thompson, Jamie Tyler, John Watt III.



ALOHA to everyone who's catching up with our First Presbyterian Youth Ministry this month! I hope you're all enjoying the great weather and

loving the extra sunlight to spend with family and friends outdoors. I know I am. ☺

Things are keeping pace in our youth ministry. Our junior highers are getting ready for their trek down to Pittsburgh, PA in mid-July. They'll be running Vacation Bible School, hanging out with the elderly at nursing homes, and loving everyone with the love God has blessed us with. Our senior highers are preparing heartily for the flight to Jamaica to run the Jamaican Advantage thru Sports for Youth. We'll be teaching kids about teamwork, persistence, and the awesomeness of God.

At the end of this month, 12 of our 8th graders will be confirmed on Pentecost Sunday and become official adult members of our church. This has been an incredible class to work with. Many thanks in the midst of all the celebration to Janette Henderson and Dan Harrison. These two have been teaching our confirmands for almost a decade. They are an amazing team and will be missed! Thanks for all your hard work!

Here's the schedule for youth ministry happenings for the next few weeks...Hope to see you there! ☺

Coming up for Sr. High...

June 1st...4pm-9am...All Guys Campout!...Capture the Flag & S'mores! Bring a sleeping bag and join the fun! (Don't worry, you CAN show up late! Call Matt Wahl for directions!) Cost \$5
June 2nd...5pm-9ishpm...Sr. High End of Year Bash! At the home of Anders Wahl (19 Golf Ave. Pittsford)...open to upcoming 9th graders and college kids! Bring bathing suit, towel, & yourself!
June 17th...Senior Recognition Sunday...10am Worship

Coming up for Jr. High...

June 1st...8am-8am...Jr. High Girls Sleepover...Hair, Nails, Chick Flicks, and Ice Cream! Bring a friend and join the fun! Cost is \$5
June 10th...5:30pm-9pm...Jr. High End of Year Bash! At the home of Alyssa Herge (16 Lancashire Way, Pittsford)...open to upcoming 7th & 8th graders! Bring bathing suit, towel, & yourself!



Youth Musical – ***It's Cool in the Furnace*** will be presented during the Children's Worship service, June 10. Come and enjoy this energetic portrayal of Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego as they uphold their faith under very heated circumstances! Our cast is small but boy do they deliver. Daniel is being played by Emma Goldrick, Shadrach by Erin Thompson, Meshach by Emmalie Drake and Abednego by Brenna Swetman. Support chorus members include, Mary and Matt Crowley, Eva and Martijn Appelo, Connor Goldrick and Philip Tinder. Hope to see you there!

STEPHEN MINISTRY

A Training Session will begin the third week in September at St. John's of Rochester.

We will have a shared program with Stephen Minister leaders from our congregation and St. John's. Please talk with any of the following Stephen Ministry Leaders if you have an interest in learning more about the training and serving in our congregation: Rev. Bruce Boak, Rev. Carrie Mitchell, Jane Hunter, Alice O'Dwyer, Kay Saxum (385-9807), Barbara Smith, Dick Sprenkle or Carol Tiemann.



IMAGINING Weekend: A sincere First Presbyterian "thank you" to those who were able to participate in our IMAGINING weekend – whether all or in part! The weekend was a long time in planning and passed quickly. It was our pleasure to host two of our prominent Presbyterian Theologians – Rev. Donald McKim and Rev. LindaJo McKim.

Through the several informal seminars, devotions and Sunday morning worship, we benefited from their messages and came away with renewed insights and a strengthened faith.

Copies of Rev. Donald McKim's book, "Presbyterian Questions-Presbyterian Answers", remain available for a nominal fee. Please call the office.

IMAGINING Committee:

Bruce, Carrie, Sandy, Niki, Kim
Tinder, Faye Casey, Barbara Coe,
Jeff Tyler and Jack Holzwarth

OPTIMISTS – It's Picnic Time! The site may be different, but a traditional picnic menu with hots and hamburgers, will be the Optimist finale for this season. It will be held at 6:15 PM on Friday, June 1, at the church. Please bring your own table service. The tickets are \$7 each, available in Fellowship Hall after services on May 13, 20 and 27. And there will be a special dessert! Ben and Jerry's make-your-own Sundaes! Sound good? See you there.



RESOURCE SATURDAY JUNE COURSES

First Presbyterian Church of Batavia
300 East Main Street, Batavia

Saturday, June 9, 9:30 – 11:00 AM – Becoming a More Welcoming Congregation

What do strangers experience upon arrival at your church? What do they learn about your congregation just by walking through the building? What really happens on Sunday morning? This hands-on workshop on biblical hospitality and church vitality is guaranteed to be a real eye-opener.

Saturday, June 9, 9:30 – 11:00 AM – A Nominating Committee Process...That Works!

Would you like to experience a nominating process that is energetic, spiritually-based, and leaves you with a desire to "do that again"? **Then This Event Is For You!**



SAVE THE DATE ~ The Deacons invite you to Annual Strawberry Festival Immediately following worship services on Sunday, June 17. Come and celebrate with your family of faith.

NOTES FROM JAMES

Generally, when a couple is planning a wedding, they come to the church to speak with Bruce and Carrie, and eventually make their way to Sanghwa to select the music for their wedding. This time, the wedding involves Sanghwa, as she prepares to make a big transition in her life, this time walking down the aisle, rather than sitting on the organ bench. On Saturday, May 26, Sanghwa, our organist for more than four years, will marry Joon Oh in a ceremony at the Korean Central Presbyterian Church in Vienna, Virginia, where he is one of the pastors.

Sometimes, I believe our music staff serves the church rather silently and quietly despite our weekly contribution of sound to the service. For those of you that might not know, Sanghwa was born in Seoul, Korea, in January of 1976. She began studying piano at age four and continued to study at the Conservatorio Nacional de Música after her family immigrated to Argentina due to her father's ministry. She returned to Korea for College and changed her major to organ. She attended the Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary (B.M.) in Seoul where she studied with Hae-Kyung Kim. In the United States, she studied with Fred Brumbaugh and Katharine Pardee. Sanghwa has completed a Master of Music degree program in Organ Performance and Literature at the Eastman School of Music and will graduate with her Doctor of Musical Arts in Organ Performance and Literature on May 18. She served as the Teaching Assistant for Dr. Hans Davidsson at the Eastman School of Music and also as an active member of the student committee for EROI (Eastman Rochester Organ Initiative). She has played for master classes of Catherine Crozier, George Baker, and Jacques van Oortmerssen and had many organ concerts in the US as well as in Buenos Aires, Argentina and Seoul, Korea. She was an Official competitor for National Young Artist Competition in Organ Performance 2002 and one of 18 competitors selected for the North American Selection Round of 2002 Calgary International Competition.

For the last four years, Sanghwa has served our church through some very happy and some very difficult times. Accompanying the choir during the lightning strike, three years ago this very month, Sanghwa suddenly found herself as an organist in a church without an organ. For three years, Sanghwa has put aside her skills on the instrument she had devoted many hours of her life to master. Giving of herself to all that was asked of her, Sanghwa served our church diligently, despite the formidable circumstances without a single complaint, and worked to the best of ability to help us acquire the best instrument possible for our remodeled sanctuary.

On Sunday, June 17, Sanghwa will play for our service in her official role as our "organist" for the last time. Though we hope that she will return to Pittsford to play a recital on our new organ once it is installed. You will have the opportunity to say good-bye and good luck to her at the Coffee Hour after the 10:00 service. Along with our Strawberry Social, we'll have a time to visit with Sanghwa and wish her well on her new adventures. If you would like to contribute to a gift for Sanghwa, please leave your contributions in the Church Office with Janet Travis.

Sanghwa, on behalf of the Music Ministry, I would like to thank you for your fine service to our church. It has been a pleasure to work with you, and though your leaving saddens us, we feel blessed to have known you and to have been the beneficiaries of your talent during our services of worship. We wish you the very best, and look forward to your return to our church when our new organ is installed!