

# NewsBrief

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

## March, 2006

From the Pastor's Pen-Cell

I am muscle bound. I am bound to have a muscle somewhere. That was my conclusion as I watched pre-Olympic news stories that highlighted the training and preparation of athletes for the games that will have expired by the time we get to March. However, by that time, I will have abandoned dreams of Olympic gold and begun the pursuit of "March Madness," filling in the brackets and guessing at the outcome of NCAA basketball. Doesn't it seem as if we move from one sports season into the next? Just about the time that college basketball draws to a close, newscasters will be bringing us the reports of spring training camps and the opening of baseball season and by July it will be the Tour de France.

So, I decided that I've been a couch potato long enough. I could almost see the spuds protruding. It isn't that I'm glued to the TV, but I do find that pastors can become fixed into sedentary pursuits – attending meetings, reading books, pushing paper from behind the desk, listening at Starbucks, meeting for lunch at Wegmans. The heaviest thing that gets lifted is a fork and we console ourselves that we are exercising our minds. But this is not the "real stuff" and having the Apostle Paul's comments pop up in the lectionary's Epistle reading in February didn't make me feel much better either.

**1 Corinthians 9:24 - 27 (NRSV)** <sup>24</sup>Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. <sup>25</sup>Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one. <sup>26</sup>So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; <sup>27</sup>but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.

This prompted a trip to Barnes and Noble and the purchase of Bill Phillips' *Body for Life*. It contains some similar information to the apostle. Paul says that it matters how you live your life! It matters how you run the race! *It matters how you prepare and train and conduct yourself*. You can't just get to the event and congratulate yourself for showing up. The hard part is just beginning.

In fact, the apostle points to factors that can influence the race. He suggests that Self-Control, Sense of Purpose, Efficiency and Discipline are what drive us toward victories. Eighty-seven percent of Americans own running shoes but don't run. Why? We may lack self-control, but more likely, we have no sense of purpose. We have *intentions*, but not purpose and so there is no agenda, no plan, no vision, no strategy, no follow-through. The shoes sit there. Gather dust. We sit there. We gather rust.

So, I write us all today pushing through Dunlaps Disease – (Which is what you get when your stomach done lapse over your belt). March 1 is the beginning of Lent and that gives us 6 weeks to Easter. What a great time to get into shape – physically, emotionally, spiritually! The first step is admitting that we have sinned (which is why Ash Wednesday focuses on Psalm 51). It is where we admit that we eat too many chips and not enough fruits and vegetables. It is where we recognize that we have not acted, said, or done the things that would be honoring to God and reflective of Jesus. It is at this point that we enter into the discipline of repentance and cleansing that we might receive the joy of the resurrected life.

Well, don't look for me on the pages of Fitness Magazine. But, hopefully the Lenten Disciplines of repentance, focus, prayer, and exercise will lead the way to a healthier everything. Chapter II in *Body for Life* begins by saying, "There is a world of difference between knowing what to do and actually doing it." The author challenges readers with the question: "When you look at yourself, do you honestly like what you see?" It is the question of Lent, isn't it?

Lent gives the opportunity to focus on three types of vision – historical, present, and future. When we are dominated by historical vision we reflect on "the good old days" and wish for a time that is past. This is informative but can keep us stuck on trying to recreate what used to be and missing what can be. We become reluctant to accept new ideas and opportunities. Although this helps us orient to our foundations, it can generate fear when we see others growing and we are not.

When we are focused in the present, we make decisions for today and that is good, but it is insufficient to keep us at things for long. People whose daily actions are governed by the future do not need to force themselves to set goals, each piece of progress is just the beginning to the next step.

In the meantime having observed several young families recently, I resolve to get started on this *Body for Life* thing with a new approach that we shall call "The Toddler Diet."

Breakfast: One scrambled egg, one piece of toast with grape jelly. Eat 2 bites of egg, using your fingers; dump the rest on the floor. Take 1 bite of toast, then smear the jelly over your face and clothes.

Lunch: Four crayons (any color), a handful of potato chips, and a glass of milk (3 sips only, then spill the rest).

Dinner: A dry stick, two pennies and a nickel, 4 sips of flat Pepsi.

Bedtime snack: Toast a piece of bread and toss it on the kitchen floor.

Bruce

## Prayerfully pondering Ashes and Alleluias...

Even with the mild winter we have had so far this year, Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow on Groundhog Day and predicted for us 6 more weeks of winter. Given Phil's prognosticating, I am expecting March to come in like a lion and go out like a lamb.

For those of you who saw *Narnia* this year in the movie theaters, you know C.S. Lewis intentionally portrayed the lion, Aslan, to be a Christ figure who brings an end to winter's tyrannical reign in Narnia. Aslan/Christ is the protector of the four children who stumble into Narnia through the wardrobe in their guardian's home and Christ is our protector not just in our Lenten journey, but throughout our lives.

Jesus is not only represented as a lion, but also as a lamb. John the Baptist calls him the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). No matter the March weather, we can find ways to consider our representations of Christ throughout the lengthening days of late winter and spring. The formal time for this contemplation begins March 1<sup>st</sup> this year with Ash Wednesday.

Why do we celebrate Ash Wednesday on March 1<sup>st</sup> this year? Scholars believe we have celebrated Ash Wednesday since the eighth century when it became part of the Gregorian Sacramentary. Ash Wednesday follows Transfiguration Sunday (February 26<sup>th</sup> this year) and begins the 40-day period of Lent leading up to Easter Sunday and Christ's resurrection.

Lent is a time of penitence and preparation. On Ash Wednesday, we

will once again mark ourselves with ashes on our foreheads to remind ourselves of the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness and the many ways we can seek to be like Jesus. The ashes will come from last year's palm fronds used on Palm Sunday. Our 7pm Ash Wednesday service will take place in our sanctuary for the first time in two years. You might remember that last year, the Ash Wednesday service was our first worship service in our semi-restored space of the Fellowship Hall.

As we consider the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness being tempted by the devil and the 40 days leading up to Easter, it is traditional to refrain from saying "Alleluia" which means, "we praise you God." On Easter Sunday we will once again triumphantly lift our voices to praise the lion and the lamb who has protected us and taken away our sins. As you proceed through Lent, may you feel God shepherding you and preparing your heart to give God the glory.

Go with God,  
Carrie



These are the lectionary texts for the month of March. We welcome you to study in advance of their being incorporated into the Sunday worship services.

**Week of Mar. 5** – Gen. 9:8-17; Ps. 25:1-10  
1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15

**Week of Mar. 12** – Gen. 17:1-7, 15-16; Ps. 22:23-31  
Rom. 4:13-25; Mark 31-38

**Week of Mar. 19** – Exod. 20:1-17; Ps. 19  
1 Cor. 1:18-25; John 2:13-22

**Week of Mar. 26** – Num. 21:4-9; Ps. 107:1-3, 17-21  
Eph. 2:1-10; John 3:14-21



## ARE YOU INTERESTED IN JOINING THE CHURCH?

We at First Presbyterian Church invite you to learn about becoming a member of our Church. Our

upcoming Inquiry for New Member Class is designed to welcome families and individuals in Christian fellowship, to provide you with information about our Church, to explain what it means to be Presbyterian, and to assist you in becoming as active as you wish in the life of this Church.

Our class will be held Sunday March 12 at 4:30-7:00 PM in Room 201. A light dinner will be served.



## Camp Whitman on Seneca Lake

### Let's Help Them to Have Christmas in April

#### Wish List

Donation of Dollars \$\$ for:

- New roofs on lodges and staff cabins
- New Aqua Finn sailboat

Dollar \$\$ donations to help with the repair of golf carts

Frost-free refrigerators

Water shoes, for boys and girls: All sizes

Combs, toothbrushes, toothpaste (We don't need soap or shampoo) for campers who need such items

White tee-shirts (for tie-dying): All sizes especially ALL adult sizes. We use a LOT

Craft supplies: markers, Rit Dye, scissors, etc. (Please, no yarn)

Clean baby food jars with lids

Dollar \$\$ donations for 2 large size "Ox Carts", about \$215 each for campers to haul cookout supplies, etc.

Metal folding chairs for the Dining Hall

**Note:** Camp Whitman is a Presbyterian coed camp, which is supported by our Presbytery and also our Outreach dollars.

## ADULT EDUCATION SERIES

The series, initiated in February, continues in the second floor **CHAPEL**, following "coffee hour", from 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM. Come and benefit from a variety of topics. **FREE** – the only cost is your time, which we'll strive to use wisely!

**March 12 – The Elderhostel Program – presented by ED KINNEN.** Ed is an Elderhostel Ambassador. He, and his wife, Ellen, have participated in over 30 Elderhostel programs – both domestic and foreign. Learn how you can be a part of this extraordinary Elderhostel experience.

**April 9 – Estate Planning – presented by PATRICK SIMPSON of the Nixon, Peabody Law Firm.** Come and explore some of the practicalities of Estate Taxation, Probate Trusts, Tax Advantaged Charitable Giving, Estates, Health Care Proxies and more.

WATCH FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS OF MAY AND JUNE TOPICS IN THE "NEWSBRIEF", SUNDAY BULLETIN AND BULLETIN BOARD POSTING IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL CORRIDOR.

**"We'll See You In The Chapel"**

**11:30 AM – 12:30 PM**

**Questions encouraged – answers provided  
(Take elevator or stairs from lobby)**



## LOGOS

from Sylvia Fix

**February 22 - NO LOGOS – Happy Vacation**

**March 1 – Ash Wednesday – Plenty of Pennies**

The word is *donation*.

**March 8 – SURPRISE NIGHT**

**March 15 – Kid's Choice Awards.**

The word is *anticipation*.

**March 22 – Grand Finale (Pot-luck)**

The word is *celebrate*

**LIVING LOGOS – Rock Ventures – March 15**

**HAPPY Easter – HAPPY Summer**

**See you in September!**

## 5k Fun Run

Interest has been expressed to have a 5k fun run and one mile walk to raise funds for the new pipe organ. If you are interested in joining a committee to help with the run, please contact Ray Feasey at 585-582-2298.



## OPTIMISTS

The Optimists will resume their meeting in Fellowship Hall on Friday, March 3, at 6:15 PM. Besides bringing your covered dish and table service, it would be appreciated if you could bring an item for the Pittsford Food Cupboard. Questions? Please call Sue Suter (381-5297).

Bob Marcotte, the *Democrat and Chronicle's* assistant design editor and writer of the column *Just Ask*, will be our guest speaker. He will tell of the experiences of Rochester soldiers who saw heavy fighting during the Civil War while serving with the N.Y. Volunteer Infantry.



### **Food, Fun and Fellowship!** **All for a good cause**

Love spaghetti! Love dining with good friends? The

Chancel Choir is sponsoring a Spaghetti Supper on Friday, March 31 to benefit the Organ Fund. Dinner includes spaghetti with meatballs and sauce, salad, garlic bread, dessert and beverage. We'll be serving from 5 PM to 7 PM in Fellowship Hall. Come enjoy a great dinner, the company of your friends and neighbors and the joy of contributing to a great cause. Bring your family and bring your friends. All are welcome! Watch for ticket sales in the Fellowship Hall. See you there!

## Sometimes It's Hard to Ask for Help

We're brought up to be strong, self-sufficient, independent people. We tend to think that if we ask for help, it is a sign of weakness. So we try to keep our struggles hidden, stuffed deep inside. However, that's not God's plan. Galatians 6:2 says "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ". God wants us to care for others- and allow others to care for us in our time of need.

If you're sad or struggling inside, don't suffer alone. Ask for help. We've got a team of Stephen Ministers who are ready to listen, care, encourage, pray, and help you through a tough time. (It's confidential too!) Find out more about Stephen Ministry by talking with one of our Stephen Leaders: Jane Hunter, Alice O'Dwyer, Kay Saxum, Barbara Smith, Dick Sprengle and Carol Tiemann. **Our Stephen Ministers are there to care!**



## Spring into Flowers!

When you buy a gift from the Flower Shop, you are giving twice! Once to that special someone and once to the Youth of our community! They have all of your floral needs at The Flower Shop. Order online at [www.theflowershoprochester.com](http://www.theflowershoprochester.com) or stop in and see them at 1110 Hudson Avenue. The shop welcomes your business and that of your friends, neighbors and others in need of flowers. They will deliver as well. Spring into Flowers and Spread the Word. Thank you, Your friends at Rochester Landscape Technicians Program and The Flower Shop

The Flower Shop  
1110 Hudson Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14621  
(585) 342-2380  
[flowershop@landscapetech.com](mailto:flowershop@landscapetech.com)

Note: Rochester Landscape Technicians Program is a workforce program that serves adults and youth using the green industry as a catalyst to build transferable employment and life skills. Our congregation has supported this program for many years and our support is used to offset the tuition costs.



**HAVE THE EXPERIENCE OF A LIFE TIME  
JOIN 93 YEAR OLD CHRIST'S GLOBETROTTER  
TED POLLOCK  
FOR A SUMMER MISSION TRIP**

THERE ARE PLANS TO BUILD A CHURCH IN RIBAUE, MOZAMBIQUE FROM AUGUST 6 – SEPTEMBER 10, 2006. VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED FOR PART OF OR ALL OF THE FIVE WORK WEEKS. CONTACT RON POLLOCK 248-8096 OR [RONPOLLOCK@AOL.COM](mailto:RONPOLLOCK@AOL.COM) TO EXPRESS INTEREST OR FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.