

N e w s b r i e f

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

May, 2002

From the Pastor's Pen-Cell

Lou Jacquet, gifted writer, editor and columnist for religious publications has "updated" the 23rd Psalm:

The Lord is my external-internal integrative mechanism. I shall not be deprived of gratifications for my viscogeneric hungers or my need of disposition. He motivated me to orient myself towards a non-social object with affective significance. He positions me in a non-decisional situation. He maximizes my judgment.

It doesn't sound all that poetic to me . . . and seems hard to remember. Well, this might be a good place to wax along on Bible passage memorization or the loss of meaning in some of our politically correct speech. But that is not the target of this column today. No, this is a call for us to know our Bible better. It is a call for Bruce Boak to know the Bible better and for the church membership to know significant passages, too. Before we get through April, we'll introduce you to the unpronounceable names of 1 Chronicles where a single verse has been exploited by the entire "Prayer of Jabez" phenomena. But, what are significant Bible passages in a Christian's quiver? That is where we are pointed. But, before we aim that direction, let's ruminant on this vignette about a pastor who was the object of a textual prank.

Loyal Jones and Billy Edd Wheeler in their book, *Laughter In Appalachia*, (New York: Ivy Books, 1987) tell a great story about a country preacher who announced that he would preach on Noah and the Ark the following Sunday. He gave the scriptural reference ahead of time so the congregation could prepare. A pair of young malevolent males noticed something interesting about the placement of the story of the flood in the Bible. They slipped into the church and glued two pages of the pulpit Bible together. On the next Sunday the preacher got up to read his text. "Noah took himself a wife," he began, "and she was..." He turned the page to continue, "...300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high." He paused, scratched his head, turned the page back and read it silently, turned the page and continued reading. Then he looked up at the congregation and said, "I've been reading this old Bible for nigh on to fifty years, but there are some things that are hard to believe."

A few people have asked me for guidance about what translation to buy or read. Others have inquired about which order for general Bible reading: Old Testament and then the New, or as Christians should we begin with the New Testament. Others have asked, "Which are the most important passages of the Bible to know?" Well, as one who learned through the catechism that all scripture is God-breathed, it is hard to isolate the most important passages for us. However, even with some favorites like Luke 2 (the Christmas story) removed, here is a listing of 50 significant passages for Christians. You might try to focus on one each week. Make it an object of family devotions, personal reflection, or private meditation. Let's begin with 50 . . . 50 passages from the Bible, great passages that would be good for us to have at our fingertips.

Genesis 50:15-21; Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 6:4-23; Joshua 24:1-28; 1 Kings 18:1-39; 2 Chronicles 7:11-20; Psalm 1; Psalm 23; Psalm 46; Psalm 56; Psalm 73; Psalm 100; Psalm 118:21-24; Psalm 121; Psalm 139; Proverbs 3:5-6; Ecclesiastes 3:1-8; Isaiah 6:1-8; Isaiah 40:27-31; Isaiah 55:1-13; Jeremiah 18:1-6; Jeremiah 31:31-39; Micah 6:6-8; Matthew 5:1-16; Matthew 6:19-34; Matthew 11:28; Luke 15:1-32; John 3:16-21; John 6; John 11:1-44; John 14; John 15; John 17; John 21:1-17; John 21:1-17; Romans 8; Romans 10:9-11; Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 13; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 4:4-13; Hebrews 11:1-12:2; Hebrews 13:1-8; James 1:2-15; Revelation 3:20; Revelation 21:1-7.

I hope that this is helpful. A
Bruce



STU'S SPOT

Several years ago a church member and I went with our Presbytery to Chetumal, Mexico. We were on an adult mission work trip. However our task was only cosmetic in a community where there seemed to be much more necessary needs.

I can only begin to tell you how excited I was when I heard Jim Taylor tell about building homes so the orphans of AIDS victims could grow up in family groups. If it is possible I am more excited to tell you that I will be assisting them with the construction for half of their two-week trip. In addition, I will provide devotional times, music for the team to share as needed and any assistance required at any worship services we attend. When I return, I will have participated in the broader work of the Church on five continents in some small way. More than that, I will have the pleasure of meeting and working with fellow Christians in all these places. Pray for us as we go. A

Peace,

What's Up with Youth Ministry

from Dan Kulp

Our topics at SYF this year have been loads of fun. This is probably because the teens have actually chosen them. We have dealt with issues such as divorce, partying, drugs and alcohol, peer groups, choices, and many more. Upcoming themes are evolution vs. creation, sex and appearance vs. personality.

This week we held SYF at Wendy's and talked about dating. Of all the topics, with the exception of sex, there is a good chance that this occupies your teenagers' mind more than almost anything. They live, eat, sleep, breath and fantasize about relationships. Who likes whom? Does he/she like me? What would it be like to go out with him/her? Am I good enough to be noticed by someone of the opposite sex? Etc. etc. etc.

The general question I like to ask when dealing with this or any of our topics at SYF is this: Can Jesus Christ be the Lord of my life in this area too? Or, have I shut him out. Am I trying to handle this one on my own? It is easy to be a Christian on Sunday mornings, but what about the other six days in the week? I believe that once we begin to find ways to hand over all aspects of our lives to Jesus, some of our

questions begin to disappear. I hope and pray that SYF becomes a place that your teenager has the most fun they will have all week, while at the same time being reminded that God loves us and wants to be involved in all areas of our being-24/7.

Dating God's way might be something that your teen (or you for that matter) has never thought about. Exciting stuff to think about, even more exciting to live out. A

SYF is on Sunday evenings from 7:30-9:00 *pm*.
Please urge your high schooler to attend.

From Sandy's Desk...

Teachers, teachers, teachers! Our Congregation has been so blessed this year with a teaching team that is dedicated and caring. Our enrollment is up and in the past month we have added four new students to our church school. Teacher recognition is right around the corner and this year, we are inviting the congregation to join us in a special effort to thank our teachers and lift up their ministry to our children. Please watch for more information in our May issue.

Spring planning time is when we prepare for our program year beginning in September. This year we need your help! Do you know someone who loves children and loves the Lord? Great. Now will you ask that person to pray about being part of the team who are a Christian presence in one of our classrooms? That's really what it's all about. Once your friend is open to the possibility of serving our Lord in this wonderful way, have them call Sandy at (586-5688 ext. 30). Many of our experienced teachers are returning and would love to have partners to assist them.

Our five year futuring process with the newly formed C.E. Task Force has met twice. Wouldn't you like to help build a vision for our C.E. program? What would you like our education offerings to look like five years from now? What should our children know as they move to a higher class level and what curriculum we will use for adults and our children, COME AND BE WITH US!!!

We meet on Wednesdays through May, from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. with childcare.

STANDING ON THE PLATE

from Cary Ratcliff

Young Susan had just been taught about offerings in church. The congregation was surprised when, as the plate came by, she set it on the floor and stood in it. Her explanation: we're to give not just our money, but our whole selves to God. When a discussion about the offertory recently came up at Session, I was reminded of this childhood story from my mother. Christian worship has two foci, the proclamation of the Word and the Lord's Supper. Between the two, lies the offering, and it forms a strong link.

Music, though not necessary to our worship, can illuminate it. The offertory (any music that sounds during the offering) can be a time to reflect on the gift of God's Word, and how we are to give back of ourselves. You may hear our organist Mr. Harris responding to the just-heard sermon by weaving into his improvisation well-known hymns that echo what was just preached.

On Communion Sundays, the offertory will sound with anticipation to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, as when our organ recently played 'The Celestial Banquet', or our choir has sung 'You satisfy the hungry heart'. Ever puzzle, as I do, why Christians bring their accumulated offerings forward, and sing so triumphantly while doing so, despite Jesus teaching not to trumpet our gift-giving in the temple (where the 'treasury' was in the rear)? Perhaps it really relates to the long-standing practice of celebrously bringing forward, offering, the bread and wine to the 'table of the Lord'. These presumably were grown and baked by the congregation, part of the 'first fruits' of our labor, but representing God's gift to us. A hymn by John Newton (Mr. Amazing Grace) draws these images of hearing, sowing and feasting together: On what has now been sown, your blessing Lord bestow: the power is yours alone to make it sprout and grow...

On Sundays when we don't celebrate the Lord's Supper it is still implied, as few join the worldwide communion of the church in prayer for the needs of the world. The offertory can be a time of individual prayer, as our prayer requests are collected with other offerings, before we are led together. You may notice the organ getting prayerfully quiet (there are other energy levels for prayer!) during these times. It almost seems an interruption sometimes that we stand to sing the Doxology or other hymn before we get back to prayer.

During the offertory we can each, in our hearts, 'stand on the plate'. A

Wanted...

...a work coordinator for our Mission Trip to Cumberland, MD this year.

...Everyone to buy tickets to the Mission: Possible fundraiser on Sunday, April 28, then buy lots of food.

...Parents interested in joining the Parent Advisory Board.

If interested in any of the above Youth Ministry Opportunities, please see or call Dan Kulp, 586-5688 ext. 31. A

Mary/Weller Circle's May 13 meeting will feature a talk by Halle Reed on her trip to Mozambique, where she joined Ted Pollock and worked on his current project. We are going to meet promptly at 11:00 in the church parking lot to carpool to Halle's home, The Gables of Palmyra, 223 West Main St., Palmyra. We MUST have reservations by Monday, May 6 in order to facilitate the carpooling. Bring your sandwich and Least Coin. Churchwomen who would like to join us may call Trudy Cayo [382-7284] or Betty Hancock [473-3928] for a reservation by May 6.

OPTIMISTS will hold their next meeting on Friday, May 3 at 6:15 PM in the Fellowship Hall. Our program titled "Seldom Seen Wildlife of New York State" will be presented by Dominic Sherony who is a retired Xerox Vice President and is presently a Co-regional Coordinator (Region 2) for the Breeding Bird Atlas.

If you are not already a member but would like to attend or want further information, please call Sue Suter at 381-5297. A

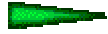
JOIN US IN HELPING AIDS ORPHANS IN MALAWI, AFRICA from Halle Reed

On Sunday, May 19, from 3-5 PM, enjoy a tour through the Gables of Palmyra Bed & Breakfast, a beautiful example of Queen Anne style Victorian architecture, homemade desserts and fellowship as we raise money for Jim Taylor's Mission Trip to Malawi, Africa. Dessert and ticket sign-up starts Sunday, April 21 in Fellowship Hall. Tickets are \$7.00 per person and \$20.00 per family. For more information or to see how you can help, please call Halle Reed @ 315-597-5977 or e-mail hreed2@rochester.rr.com.

UNDIES FOR AFRICA

Also starting April 21, we will be collecting new underwear, sizes children's small through adult small for the orphanage. No socks, please, underwear and undershirts only. Please bring new packages, for boys and girls and deposit them in the "Giant Shorts Receptacle" in Fellowship Hall. If you would also like to help with shipping and handling costs, please contact Halle Reed at 315-597-5977 or hreed2@rochester.rr.com.

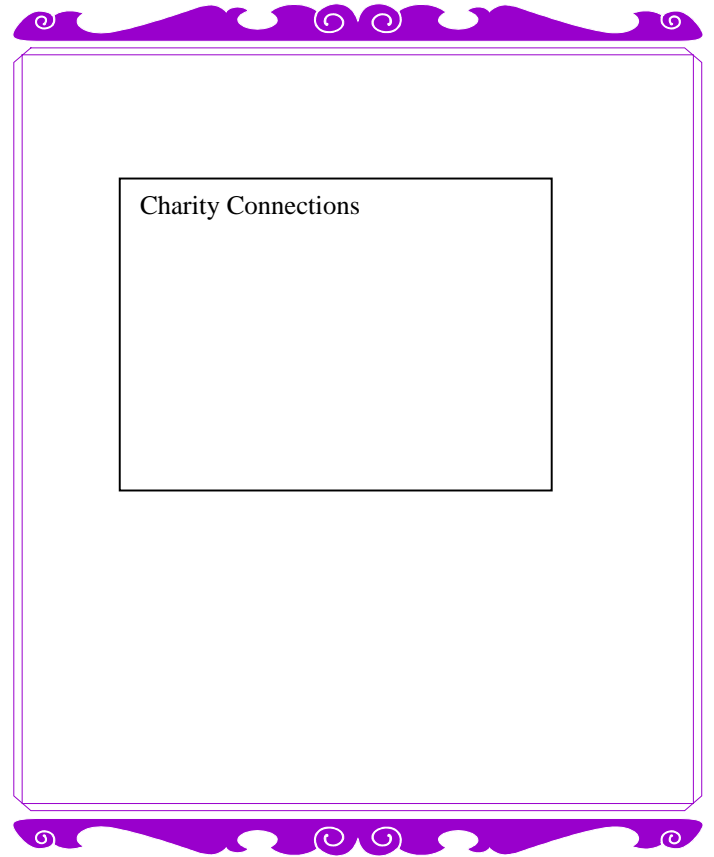
WHO WE ARE



Charity Connections, Ltd. Is a 501 (C) (3), IRS recognized charitable organization. Our mission is to provide donors with a fast, easy, legal way to donate salable items to their favorite charities; and to provide charities with a larger check and to relieve them of the hassles of handling and selling these items.

We have the expertise to maximize the value of donated items. We offer the best option for donors and charities—making the entire process fast, easy, legal and convenient for all involved.

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WORSHIP WITH US

Please join us for Sunday morning worship.
Services are 8:30 AM and 10:00 AM
Communion is offered the first Sunday of each month.

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