

# N e w s B r i e f

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

## November, 2003

### From the Pastor's Pen-Cell

Honking has been on my mind as we enter November. Surely this is the result of cascading flocks of Canadian geese that have been winging their way over Pittsford and our house, searching for just the right winter quarters. Perhaps you find the "Honk if you love Jesus" bumper stickers annoying. There is another that has found its way to the back of at least one SUV in Rochester that says, "If you love Jesus, tithe. Any fool can honk!"

How about this bumper message, "If your cup runneth over, spill a little." Where in your life do you have so many blessings that your cup is literally running over with them. A Jewish rabbi tells his congregation that if they can't think of a hundred things in their life for which they are grateful every day, they are ingrates. "Every one of us ought to have at least that many things every single day," he tells his people. "What is on your list of one hundred things today for which you're thankful – breath, eyesight, hearing, smell, taste, touch? Are you thankful for a good hot cup of coffee, a sunrise, a sunset, a delicious meal, an illness that has been cured, a friendship that means the world to you?"

Last November I learned about Karen, a blind Presbyterian living in New York. One of her favorite restaurants is Mickey Mantle's on Central Park South. She continually tells others about the blessings in her life. She was not born blind, but a degenerative illness led to her loss of sight. That would probably be devastating for you and me, but not for Karen. She is thankful. Sometimes she tells her friends, "The people next to us are having roast chicken, it smells so wonderful." And there in the next booth, people are having roast chicken. Karen had smelled it, and sensed it. She is so aware of what is going on all around her.

Karen remembers baseball and she announced to her friends at Mickey Mantle's "I watched the World Series." Actually she went to a place where others were watching the game, and she heard the sounds and envisioned it all in her mind. She is thankful that God had given her sight so that now when she doesn't have it she can envision things in her mind, play back scenes on the retina of her memory. Karen never focuses on what she does not have. She always focuses on what she has, by the Grace of God.

Do you do like I sometimes do – focus on a problem and what we don't have instead of remembering, as Karen does, to focus on what we do have, by the Grace of God? One of the great things God wants to teach us is that when our cup runneth over and there are so many blessings in our life, we should spill a little. For many of us this may require a shift in thinking.

Author G. K. Chesterton claims that you can learn all the most vital information about person's basic world view and approach to life by asking them this question: "Do you think the universe is friendly?" Chesterton used the word "universe," but really he is asking the question, "Are you a spill-over kind of person? Are you one that sees your cup full or empty?" Perhaps you have discovered that those who see the world negatively are more challenging to be around.

Yes, there are times when our good humor, optimism and gratitude are a tad challenged, like the poor woman who was planning a weekend of entertaining guests. She made a list of things she needed to do, including taking food out of the freezer and grocery shopping. As it happened, a friend whom she had been promising to take to lunch asked if they could make it that Friday. So, hopping into the car, this woman taped her to-do list to the dashboard and picked up her friend. As her friend settled into the car her face dropped. "Thanks a lot!" she sulked. Then the woman glanced at the to-do list and saw the first item: "Take out the turkey."

As we approach Thanksgiving, we offer these thoughts:

God cares about turkeys like us, and loves us.

God has blessed us, let us count the ways.

Let us decide to alter egos on the altar of hope.

Let us permit our cups to spill over and

Let us spill goodness and grace on others.

Let us give thanks. Any turkey can honk?

## Prayerfully Pondering Labyrinths of life...

Have you ever walked a labyrinth? Or have you heard of the serpentine shapes with only one route to the center and back? Labyrinths differ from mazes like the Corn Maze in which our youth had great fun losing themselves last month: mazes are meant to disorient you.

Labyrinths, by contrast, have been adopted in our Christian tradition as a method for recreating spiritual pilgrimages. By walking the only path to the center, we symbolically walk the way toward inner knowledge and knowledge of God. As we move out of the labyrinth, we pilgrims share that knowledge in the world.

Labyrinths are gaining popularity across the nation as Christians seek to move against the culture's norm for constantly rushing somewhere



(anywhere); however, they are far from new. Most religious traditions of the world have some form of labyrinth and humans have made labyrinths for at least four thousand years.<sup>1</sup> The oldest

existing labyrinth in a church was designed between 1194 and 1220 and resides in the central body of Chartres Cathedral in France.<sup>2</sup> Its classic 11 concentric circuits lead to the 12<sup>th</sup> center circle.

I first encountered labyrinths during my years at Princeton Theological Seminary. During a recent class reunion, I walked the labyrinth that my class had gifted the seminary. Praying along the path and walking the way was a revitalizing, holy, and sacred experience.

The way or path is a common metaphor for the Christian journey of following Christ and seeking to be more like him. This way was

<sup>1</sup> Bruce Morrill (ed.). *Bodies of Worship: Explorations in Theory and Practice*. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 124.

<sup>2</sup> Abigail Rian Evans. *Healing Liturgies for the Seasons of Life* (Louisville: Geneva Press, publication anticipated February 2004) chapter 3.

foreshadowed in the Hebrew scriptures (Proverbs 9:6 and Job 24:13) and is mentioned in places in the New Testament like Matthew 21:32 and Luke 24:35. Members of the Senior High Youth Forum are exploring this year one of the more well-known New Testament references to “the way” – John 14:6. Christ says, “I am the way, the truth and the life.” Linking the labyrinth to this quest for following Christ can be a powerful spiritual tool.

We are fortunate that we can experience labyrinths locally. Several churches have portable canvas labyrinths (Central Presbyterian in Geneseo, Union Presbyterian in Scottsville, and St. John Fisher College’s Chapel) and there are several permanent outdoor labyrinths (Labyrinth House on Westfall, First Presbyterian New Caledonia, and Tinker Homestead on Caulkins Road). Should your soul be crying out in these autumnal days for a deeper connection with God, a chance to slow down, ponder your life, and practice Sabbath, I invite you to investigate one of these maps to your journey along the way. Or if you would like to know more about this and other Sabbath-keeping practices, enroll for one or more sessions in this month’s “Remember the Sabbath” conference at Colgate Rochester Crozier Divinity School (CRCDS). See the enclosed green flyer and registration form. CRCDS’ new labyrinth will be used for the first time during that conference November 6-8.

Labyrinths need not be lonely. Many pilgrims can make the spiritual journey together simultaneously or in Spirit. A beautiful aspect of our being Presbyterian is our connection with one another. Labyrinths are perfectly in tune with that Presbyterian precept. The path of the labyrinth may seem intricate; however, it is dependably consistent and inspires trustworthiness. Walking the path with that calm assuredness allows us the space to notice how others’ journeys interact with our own. Perhaps the intersection of their path with our own signals some message from God. Or perhaps we are meant to be praying for someone else. Just as God is infinite, so are the possible encounters we might have as we journey along the way. May you delight in this spiritual tool and other Sabbath-keeping practices. *Carrie*

## Reading the Lectionary

Reading the Bible reminds us how God is faithful to us in all our meandering the labyrinths of our lives. Most of our readings in the Old Testament during November are in Ezekiel and Daniel. Ezekiel is a curious figure whose tendency to speak in symbolic language makes his prophetic work seem complicated. Remember, prophetic writings can be difficult to follow because they are not chronologically correct narratives. Ezekiel lived through the most devastating event in Israel's history: the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonian Empire in 587 BCE. Because of the depth of the tragedy, Ezekiel employs spiritually rich imagery to bolster the Israelites and prepare them for the new thing that God is preparing. We too can benefit from those amazing spiritual insights. In the New Testament, we read the general epistles. They offer a wealth of practical advice and exhortations to enhancing our labyrinthine life along the way of Christ. May you delight in the journey this month.

### November

- |                                 |                              |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Ezek. 2, 3/Ps. 119:97-120    | 17. Ezek. 34, 35/2 Peter 2   |
| 2. Ezek. 4, 5/James 1           | 18. Ezek. 36, 37/Ps. 126-128 |
| 3. Ezek. 6, 7/James 2           | 19. Ezek. 38/39/2 Peter 3    |
| 4. Ezek. 8, 9/Ps. 119:121-144   | 20. Ezek. 40, 41/1 John 1    |
| 5. Ezek. 10, 11/James 3         | 21. Ezek. 42, 43/1 John 2    |
| 6. Ezek. 12, 13/James 4         | 22. Ezek. 44, 45/Ps. 129-131 |
| 7. Ezek. 14, 15/James 5         | 23. Ezek. 46, 47/1 John 3    |
| 8. Ezek. 16, 17/Ps. 119:145-176 | 24. Ezek. 48/1 John 4        |
| 9. Ezek. 18, 19/1 Peter 1       | 25. Dan. 1-3/Ps. 132-134     |
| 10. Ezek. 20, 21/1 Peter 2      | 26. Dan. 4, 5/1 John 5       |
| 11. Ezek. 22, 23/Ps. 120-122    | 27. Dan. 6, 7/2 John 1       |
| 12. Ezek. 24, 25/1 Peter 3      | 28. Dan. 8, 9/3 John 1       |
| 13. Ezek. 26, 27/1 Peter 4      | 29. Dan. 10-11/Ps. 135, 136  |
| 14. Ezek. 28, 29/1 Peter 5      | 30. Hos. 1, 2/Jude           |
| 15. Ezek. 30, 31/Ps. 123-125    |                              |
| 16. Ezek. 32, 33/2 Peter 1      |                              |

### CONFIRMATION – COME CLAIM THE CREED!

The Confirmation Class of 2003/2004 is in full swing thanks to tremendous enthusiasm from parents, mentors, teachers, and - of course - the 21 confirmands themselves. Special thanks and Kudos go to those parents who gave an extra helping hand with the phenomenal weekend retreat in September: Sean McBride, Anne Wolkin, Louise Thompson, Claudia Williams, and Karin Stuart. Without them, the confirmands would not have bonded as well, eaten so sensationally, or had such a good time.

Our next mentor/confirmand night is Sunday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> between 6:30 and 8:00pm in Fellowship Hall. We will be exploring "Who is Christ?" and what that means for our walking together the labyrinth of life.

## THE AMAZING

The door is locked. Dead bolted. Maybe even a chair under the doorknob. Inside sits ten knee-knocking itinerants who are astraddle the fence between faith and fear. As you look around the room, you wouldn't take them for a bunch who is about to put the kettle of history on high boil. Uneducated. Confused. Calloused hands. Heavy accents. Few social graces. Limited knowledge of the world. No money. Undefined leadership. And on and on.

No, as you look at this motley crew, you wouldn't wager too many paychecks on their future. But something happens to a man when he witnesses someone who has risen from the dead. Something stirs within the soul of a man who has stood within inches of God. Something stirs that is hotter than gold fever and more permanent than passion.

It all started with ten stammering, stuttering men. Though the door was locked, he still stood in their midst. "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And send them he did. Ports. Courtyards. Boats. Synagogues. Prisons. Palaces. They went everywhere.

Their message of the Nazarene dominoed across the civilized world. They were an infectious fever. They were a moving organism. They refused to be stopped. Uneducated drifters who shook history like a housewife shakes a rug.

My, wouldn't it be great to see it happen again?

.....My, wouldn't it be AMAZING?

Please save the dates of January 22-25.. Come to "THE AMAZING", and let God's grace lead you home. Worship in a variety of ways during this special weekend, and be a part of the continuing vitality of our church family. Look for more information in the coming weeks. Come, Rejoice in God's AMAZING Love!!!

Text taken from: "No Wonder They Call Him the Savior" by Max Lucado.



Clean the Guest Room, put out the towels and hang out the welcome sign. We need housing 3 or 4 nights for our Renewal Leaders. January 22 through 24.

Please contact Kay Saxum (385-9807).

## Local Mission – Christmas Gifts

from Elaine Johnson

Gifts for the boys at Oatka and Haneayah Cottages, as well as for the residents of Kirkhaven, will begin to be collected October 26. Flyers listing approved gifts for the boys at Oatka and Haneayah Cottages are on the Welcome Table. Drop boxes for the gifts are labeled and in the rear of Fellowship Hall. Please bring your gifts **unwrapped and labeled**. You can use the colored flyers as labels for your bags or gifts, or simply label each gift. Oatka boys are 10 to 14 years of age, and Haneayah boys, 15 to 18. We will collect these gifts until mid-December.

Kirkhaven gifts will be collected through December 1. **Please gift-wrap and label each gift with the name of the item (e.g., “men’s socks”).**

We are also ready to collect 2003 calendars and cards for the Oatka and Haneayah boys. These include new Christmas cards and envelopes, greeting cards, blank note cards, etc. Please bring your Christmas cards by November 17, at which time they will be delivered to the boys with stamps for mailing from the Presbyterian Women’s Board. This is a good use for those unsolicited cards you receive by mail for the holidays.

Thank you for your generous contributions to these local mission recipients.

### CAMERON COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

Cameron’s latest Wish List is on the table in the lobby. We are starting collection of good used winter clothing now, and as usual, you may place it in the container in fellowship Hall for delivery on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturdays of the month. Also, please notice the request for new underwear on the Wish List. Questions? Call Liz at 223-3052. Thanks for all that you do for Cameron.

### Iraqischools.com

In mid-September, the Presbyterian Women circles were asked to purchase and donate school supplies to help in a nationwide program to equip and re-open the schools in Iraq. My sister-in-law’s brother, Maj. Gregg Softy, initiated this program where he is stationed in Baghdad. By now, you may have heard about his work on the evening news or heard Laura Bush speak about it at the UNESCO meeting in France. I already have three large boxes to send out and will continue to collect items until the end of

October. I thought that the rest of the congregation might also want to contribute to this important mission. You can learn more at the website above, but basically any typical school item will be much appreciated. I will make a final shipment in early November. Items may be placed in the Iraqi Schools container in Fellowship Hall. Please call me with any questions. Liz (223-3052). Thanks!

### World Community Day

Friday, November 7, 2003  
“Circles of Love”

11:30 am – Luncheon Meeting

Reservations \$8.00

Greece Baptist Church

1230 Long Pond Road

Rev. Gail Ricciuti, Associate Professor of Homiletics at Colgate Rochester Crozier Divinity School will be the guest speaker.

Reservation Deadline: Friday, October 31.

### Sunday A.M. Volunteer Escorts Needed

Each month, a different church Volunteer Escort Family brings to our 10:00 AM Church Services, John, Judy, and Kathy from the A.R.C. House next door at 19 Church Street. Our church owns and leases 19 Church Street to N.Y.S., for use by the Association for Retarded Citizens (A.R.C.) as part of our local mission program.

Nine church families are serving as A.R.C. Escorts. We need at least three more families or individuals to fill the 12 month calendar. We have print-out information about escorting. We are willing to accompany and assist new Escorts for as many of their initial month of Sundays as needed.

Some families and individuals have been escorting since 1990 when the program was started under pastor Dr. Johnson. We have learned how much our church services and the sociability of the coffee hours mean to our three Friends from the A.R.C. House. They choose church as their one permitted, extended weekly contact with the outside community.

To volunteer or inquire, call Diane Graziano (586-4466) or e-mail [coelhen2@frontiernet.net](mailto:coelhen2@frontiernet.net). And to our current Escorts we say again, “Thank you for serving.”

### Attention One and All!

Available on the welcome table in the lobby is a one page “directory” listing each church activity, its time of meeting and contact person. Check it out!

**OPTIMISTS** – will meet again on Friday, November 7 at 6:15 PM in the Fellowship Hall. We are looking forward to hearing Dr. Rollie Adams, a member of our church and Executive Director of the Strong Children’s Museum. His program will illustrate the history, development and new plans for the museum.

We welcome all visitors and newcomers. If you are not a regular member and would like further information, please call Sue Suter at 381-5297.

At our Christmas meeting on Friday, December 5, we will again enjoy “Music and Comedy” by Denny and the Escorts. The dinner will be fully catered by the Log Cabin Restaurant, so it will only be necessary to bring your table service. Tickets at \$10.00 per person will be on sale at the November 7 meeting and in the Fellowship hall following all services on November 9, 16, 23 and 30.

**Montreat Conference Center** is a mission center of the Presbyterian Church USA located in Montreat, NC. For more than a century, groups and individuals have come to Montreat Conference Center to enjoy its natural beauty and gracious hospitality. Elder Hostels, Retreats, Vacations, Rest – all are a part of the Montreat experience. It is a place available to you. If you would like to learn more about this wonderful place go to <http://www.montreat.org>.

**Interested in Joining first Presbyterian?  
There are three little steps.**

An inquirer’s class is being organized for Sunday, Nov. 9 from 4:30 –7:30 PM, including a light supper. Formal member action and acceptance will occur on the next Sunday, November 16, during a noon luncheon with Church leaders. New Members will be received into the congregation at the 10:00 AM worship service on November 23. Call the Church office to reserve your place (586-5688).

**Stock Sale**

If you are thinking of selling stock or mutual funds to pay your pledge, please call and let me know. Don’t assume your broker will do that. Please try to sell the stock by the beginning of December so it can be included for 2003.

Thank you,  
Janet Travis, Financial Secretary

**The Gift Corner**

Sponsored by the Endowment Committee

Gifts of \$1,000.00 or more may be endowed by the donor, with the income to be used as designated. All endowed gifts are invested in the Church’s Endowment Fund, with income only to be used as designated. Undesignated gifts are allocated as follows:

- ♥ 25% Ministry & Education
- ♥ 25% Mission and Outreach
- ♥ 25% Building, Grounds & Property Improvement
- ♥ 25% Emergency & Special Projects

Unrestricted gifts of any amount will be invested in our Restricted Fund, where both principal and income may be used. The donor may designate how the gift is to be used. Undesignated gifts are used where most needed.

**Restricted Fund**

Restricted gifts, where both principal and income are available for use, are always welcome. Restricted gifts may only be used for the purpose that the donor has designated. This could be for mission, choir, stained glass treatment, Christian Education, repairs and improvements, etc.

**Endowed Fund**

Endowed gifts may be made which are restricted as to use. Income only from the investment may be used as designated by the donor. This could be for mission, choir, stained glass window treatment, etc.

**A Reminder**

That the Ham supper is coming. The date is December 14. Tickets will be on sale Nov. 23, 30, Dec. 7 and Dec. 14 in Fellowship Hall.

Adults \$5

Children under 8 \$2

Come and join us for fun and fellowship to usher in the holiday season.

Your Deacons

## What's Up with Youth Ministry

Dear Friends,

The news is out! Most of you should know by now, but I just wanted to state for the record the final verdict. Two weeks ago on Tuesday night, October 7, I asked the most wonderful woman I have ever known if she would be my wife (I'm no fool). We have known each other for over three years. Her name is Elizabeth Button and she is a physical therapist. She said yes.

What moves faster than a speeding bullet? Can leap tall buildings in a single bound? Is more powerful than a locomotive? I believe it has to be a recently engaged female planning her wedding day. We, ok, she has already picked a date, found a reception hall, made a guest list, formed the bridal party, as well as a host of other things that I was completely unaware needed to be done. Here is an excerpt from a previous conversation:

Elizabeth: I need a list of addresses of everyone from your guest list as soon as you can.

Dan: Really? Why so soon? We don't get married until April.

Elizabeth: For the Save The Date Announcement,

Dan: The what?

Elizabeth: The Save The Date Announcement so people will save the date.

Dan: Won't they save the date when they receive the invitation?

Elizabeth: People may need a more advanced warning so they don't plan vacations and that kind of thing.

Dan: Can I just e-mail everyone?

See what I mean? I have a ton of things to do and I don't even know what they are yet. All I know now though, is that all of it, no matter what it is, will be completely worth it. After all, she is the greatest woman I have ever know.

So...on Saturday, April 17 I will marry Elizabeth Button. Save the date.

Sincerely,

## Christian Ed. News

The October meeting of the Christian Ed. Committee included brief updates in the progress of the Sunday Morning Church School, LOGOS, the Parent Cooperative Nursery School, the Youth programs JYF and MTC and our Adult Ed. Task Force. Reports revealed that Church School registration and LOGOS registrations are up and both programs are running well. We seem to have happy teachers, happy students and happy parents.

The new curriculum is developing nicely. Weekly evaluation forms will be made available to all teachers so that we can make changes and tweak our new program as we move along in the year. While the classroom format is a set "umbrella" structure, remaining the same from week to week, the content, and activity approach within that format is flexible. Materials are provided for the teachers, but they are also encouraged to adjust activities, and add learning games or other activities as the teachers wish. Pre-confirmation and confirmation classes and Mentor Nights are doing well. Theresa reported that PCNS registrations are healthy. PCNS has now a computer connection on the Internet and will soon have a Website up and running. The Adult Ed. Task Force has successfully completed the education survey and is studying the results for future planning. Meanwhile, there is a very successful Forum series in progress and a very active team working on all aspects of preparation for our AMAZING renewal event to be held in late January.

A proposal from Dan Kulp that we begin looking at the possibility of a part time Youth Assistant to be acquainted with the youth and to be able to provide program continuity when Dan is out of town. Dan's proposal was unanimously supported by the Christian Ed. Committee with the under-standing that Dan could be out of town for up to four months a year touring with his Christian Rock Band, DIG. There will be more discussion to finalize the proposal and include other concerned voices prior to submitting the proposal formally to Personnel and Session.

It was decided that next month's meeting will concentrate on the continuation of this discussion, the remainder of the 2003 budget and curriculum evaluation.

Respectfully submitted by Sandy Pacyga

## **LOGOS**

from Sylvia Fix

October 29 – Reverse Trick or Treat  
(Costume Night) - the word is: giving

November 5 – “You’ve got mail...”  
the word is: communicate

November 19 – Veterans/Military Night  
the word is: Memorial

November 26 – No LOGOS  
Happy Thanksgiving

### **“The Music Man”**

All Pittsford Presbyterian folks – Come and see Diana Peet and Emily Jensen in Pittsford Musicals’ production of “The Music Man”. Both of these young ladies are members of the teen chorus/townspersons in the show. You have seen Emily and Diana sing in our church’s Jubilate Choir and Diana also is in the Joyful Noise Bell Choir. Both have also participated in Senior High Forum. Show dates for “The Music Man” are November 15, 21 and 22 at 8:00 PM and November 16 and 22 at 2:00 PM. Tickets are available at the box office at Charter One Bank in Pittsford Plaza or by calling 586-1500 (box office) or at any area Wegmans’ video department (That’s the Ticket). For an evening of great entertainment, don’t miss seeing these two talented Pittsford Presbyterian teens (and the rest of the cast) sing, dance, and act in this wonderful show.