

N e w s B r i e f

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

November 2008

From the Pastor's Pen-Cell

Jackie Papandrew asks:

What do you get when you take a dozen family members of varying ages and degrees of regularity, put them in the woods in a cabin with *one* low-flow toilet and then stuff them to the gills with Thanksgiving bounty? You get, of course, a calamitously clogged commode and enough tension to earn a spot on the Jerry Springer Show.

Apparently her family decided to have a closer "Pilgrim Experience" and gathered at a rustic cabin to celebrate the Thanksgiving Holiday. But her opening question suggests that before the end of the day they would have "plunged" into Thanksgiving.

Before we can really plunge into Thanksgiving, we'll probably plunge into lot of others things here at First Presbyterian. We'll plunge into Stewardship, plunge into Advent Planning, plunge into electing officers, and plunge into Bible Study. Actually plunging is something of which the Christian Church has done much over the years. You can't embark on new mission without plunging. You dive right in, uncertain of how to tackle a task, and along the way, if you are willing to risk failure, God seems to provide the necessary tools, people, and resources to do God's mission. But, you usually don't get started without being willing to plunge.

Surely, I have in mind the kind of plunging that involves diving into the water, not Jackie Papandrew's image, although the church has no doubt done a lot of that, too. Has it ever occurred to you to consider how Noah would have handled that "problem" aboard the ark? Now there wasn't only a plunging problem, but a scooping issue. Indeed, Martin Luther once commented on this and described the church as saying, "If the storm wasn't so bad on the outside, it would be hard to handle odor on the inside." All of which makes it sound like the church could really have needed "Joe, the plumber." Surely, before November is through we will have plunged into the poling booth and the early November days of wrapping up political campaigns may require a little plunging, too.

Surely God is pleased when we plunge (dive) into giving expressions of gratitude with our lives, plunging into heretofore uncharted territory for us, risking and trusting that God will provide for our needs with dreams and spiritual encouragement.

But, just so that you can have something over which to chuckle (for we all need that from time to time) let's plunge into a listing of events that have brought us to Thanksgiving time.

1492 - Christopher Columbus discovers America, unless you count the native peoples already living there. Columbus doesn't. Columbus and crew celebrate by holding a dinner, giving thanks for their safe arrival. Embarrassment ensues when every Indian brings maize, and nobody brings pumpkin pie.

1620 - Pilgrim men invent the sport of football to avoid helping clean up after Thanksgiving dinner.

1671 - First embarrassing drunken relatives at Thanksgiving dinner, as Captain John Smith's parents tell Pocahontas the "hilarious" old "I got lost in the maize" joke for the hundredth time.

1701 - At a historic Thanksgiving dinner, Dutch settlers unveil historic "Indians Give Us All Of Their Land Treaty." Due to an unfortunate oversight, the Native Americans are left off of the invite list, and the treaty is signed without them.

1776 - Excited that British in-laws finally agreed to meet him for Thanksgiving dinner, silversmith Paul Revere rides through Boston announcing the news. Unfortunately, many colonists misinterpret his cry "the British are coming!" as a warning, causing the Revolutionary War.

1812 - At an international Thanksgiving dinner, King George of England, still hurting from losing the Revolutionary War, challenges United States President James Madison to "best 2 out of 3."

1860 - At a Senate Thanksgiving dinner, the seven-year-old son of Alabama's Senator Richard Applebee insults the Senators from Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania, sparking the Civil War. The tradition of the "children's table" is instituted in 1861.

1903 - Canada steals idea of Thanksgiving holiday, placing it in October, so they can say it was their idea first.

1928 - To commemorate "our nation's greatest era of prosperity that will last forever and ever," President Herbert Hoover dumps ceremonial ten thousand turkeys into the Potomac River.

1929 - Following the Great Stock Market Crash, thousands of men go Turkey Diving in the Potomac River.

1957 - Declaring her spicy stuffing "a communist threat to undermine my health via heartburn," Senator Joe McCarthy has his wife placed under arrest as a Soviet saboteur.

1969 - The world's largest Eat-In event goes sour. Thousands of hippies hallucinogenic trips when bad "brown gravy" gets passed around.

1997 - Strong natural tranquilizer tryptophane is discovered in turkey. A Colombian cartel immediately starts selling "pure" turkey on the streets for \$500 an ounce. Turkey farmers get involved in drive-by shootings, and the U.S. government declares a national fowl emergency.

2008 - America remains on a terrorist alert. The color is yellow-orange-brown to look like autumn. It is now against the law to stuff a turkey, since everyone is now under suspicion of hiding explosives. President signs emergency legislation to permit banks to provide loans for those wishing to purchase cranberry sauce.

Bruce

Prayerfully Pondering Practicing Praying...

November is a significant month in the life of civic-minded Christians. We begin the month with elections and we end it with the beginning of Advent, our preparation time for celebrating the birth of Christ.

The President of WXXI, Norm Silverstein, says in his October members' newsletter "With the election season heating up...the difference between the campaign coverage on the commercial channels and on WXXI [can be summed up as] *the difference between shouting and listening.*"

We are very good at shouting our opinions. Are we as good at listening to the opinions of others, and of God? I once heard that praying can be thought of as talking with God, while meditating can be thought of as listening for God. The etymology of the word *meditating* also gives us the basis for our modern understanding of the word *practicing*. Couldn't we all benefit from practicing our listening skills? And wouldn't it feel wonderful to know that someone is practicing listening to God on our behalf?

Our Tuesday Prayer Team wants to make that dream a reality. Beginning in Advent, we would like to have every family or person of the congregation pray for another family or person. You will shortly be receiving a letter from the Prayer Team giving you the name of your individual or family and giving you some suggestions for how to pray. Should you decide you do not want to participate, you need not. But somebody will still pray for you.

Imagine the possibilities from this ministry. As we each pray for another family or person, who knows what blessings God might grant? Who knows how God might change each of us as we are praying? If we are comfortable doing so, we might be in contact with the persons for whom we are praying. Imagine the connections that might be made. Imagine being contacted not because somebody wants something from us, but because somebody wants to do something for us.

As we begin the new church calendar year with the start of Advent, imagine what God might do with us as we pray with and for one another. And as we head into our 200th anniversary in May 2009, imagine what God might do with us in our third century of ministry.

As we each celebrate Thanksgiving this year, may we count our blessings, pray for our neighbors, and anticipate a year of miraculous transformation together.

Go with God (GWIG),
Carrie



Week of Nov. 2 – Josh. 3:7-17; Ps. 107:1-7, 33-37
1 Thess. 2:9-13; Matt. 23:1-12

Week of Nov. 9 – Josh. 24:1-3a, 14-25; Ps. 78:1-7
1 Thess. 4:13-18; Matt 25:1-13

Week of Nov. 16 – Judg. 4:1-7; Ps. 123
1 Thess. 5:1-11; Matt 25:14-30

Week of Nov. 23 – Ezek. 34:11-16, 20-24; Ps. 100
Eph. 1:15-23; Matt. 25:31-46

Week of Nov. 30 – Isa. 64:1-9; Ps. 80:1-7, 17-19
1 Cor. 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37

CONFIRMATION: COME CLAIM THE CREED!

The Confirmation Classes of 2008/2009 began in September with Sunday School classes, orientations for both the 7th and 8th grade classes and a retreat for the 8th graders. 8th grade confirmands and mentors will continue meeting the first Sunday afternoon of every month (11/2, 12/7, 1/4, 2/1, 3/1, 4/5) between 11:30am and 1:00pm for faith-building exercises and fun! In November, we will focus on God. Who is God? What does God do? What is God's providence? How can I be in relationship with God? Confirmands and mentors will discover the answers together.

LOGOS

from Sylvia Fix

**We're starting on a New Note
Come Join Us**

Oct. 29 - Is Wacky Hair Night. The word is Unique. Come with your own wacky do!

Nov. 5 - We are Proud to Be an American.
The word is Honor.

Nov. 12 - Tonight is Trivia Night. The words are Guess What?

Nov. 19 - Our Thanksgiving Celebration. The word is Gratitude.

Nov. 26 - NO LOGOS. Happy Thanksgiving!!!

Sylvia

The WEB Club will continue to meet on Wednesday evenings. Consider joining us at the home of Karin McNamara, on Wednesday, November 12 at 7:30 PM. **HALF OF A YELLOW SUN**, by Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichi, will be the book under discussion. Enjoy a little dessert and coffee as we talk about the violent period following Biafran independence seen with haunting intimacy through the eyes of a peasant houseboy. Call Karin if you can come.

Did you know... that after the loss of a loved one, it often takes two full years to recover from grief? And the first year can be all downhill. Stephen Ministers are trained and willing to care for others through this time of great loss.

Often as we experience the grief that comes with a great loss we feel as if we are the only ones who have ever gone through this terrible experience. Stephen Ministry training prepares people to sensitively care for others going through these difficult times. If you are interested or talk with one of our Stephen Ministry Leaders: *Jane Hunter, Alice O'Dwyer, Kay Saxum, Barbara Smith, Dick Sprenkle or Carol Tiemann.* **Our Stephen Ministers are there to care!**



RECYCLING FOR HABITAT

You may have noticed the Habitat recycling bin display near the Outreach bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. Bring in used printer cartridges (inkjets, lasers, maintenance kits, drums and fusers), cell phones & PDAs – both from home and work. The proceeds will go into our Habitat House Fund to help pay for the next house that we'll help build in the city. If we can raise enough money, we may be able to go to a two year building cycle, instead of our current three-year cycle.

We are cooperating with Imagine it... Fundraising through Recycling. Check out: www.imagineRECYCLING.com.



Optimists: Martin Luther was born 525 years ago on November 10. So we've invited him to be with us (aka The Reverend Chris Wisher) for an evening of light rumination on matters of the time. Join us for this interesting program at 6:15 PM on Friday, November 7 in Fellowship Hall. Bring your table service and covered dish as usual. For questions, please call Pat Campbell.



THE PENSION PROTECTION ACT OF 2006 IS BEING EXTENDED THROUGH 2009 as part of the Emergency Stabilization Act. It is an opportunity for church members age 70 1/2 and older who own an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to direct gifts of up to \$100,000 to the church from the IRA without reporting the transfer as income. The contribution must be transferred directly from the IRA to the church. Historically, any withdrawals from an IRA would be taxed prior to making a gift. Now a contribution can be made directly from the IRA without being taxed. This is just one more creative way, along with gifts of stock, that members can consider as a significant way to support their community of faith, particularly as the end of the year approaches. As always, consult your tax advisor.



EASY SUNDAY A.M. MISSION JOB

Volunteers needed to chaperone our ARC church members (next door to church) to 10:00 AM Sunday services and coffee afterwards in Fellowship Hall. The two ladies are faithful church service attendees and know church service routines. Volunteer for a month or a half month. **December, April, and September** are vacant. Help support his mission begun in 1990. Contact Outreach Chair John Valenti or Cal/Diane Graziano or Church Office 586-5688.



CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP

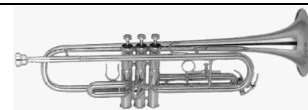
Are you caring for a loved one? It can be overwhelming at times. We have a group that meets the last Tuesday of each month at 2:30 – 3:30 PM in room 200 in the learning center. We find hope and help in confidential sharing. For more information call Barb Rarrick or Carrie Mitchell 586-5688.

NAOMI CIRCLE recently had the pleasure of hearing Dr. Betty Perkins-Carpenter of Penfield, an author, educator, and former Olympic diving coach give a presentation on balance and fall prevention. It was very pertinent seeing that over one third of adults 65 and older fall each year in the U.S. According to Dr. Carpenter (77 yrs. young), “poor balance can be improved by any one at any age.” Her book and CD, *How to Prevent Falls: Better Balance, Independence and Energy in Six Simple Steps* is available at www.senior-fitness.com or www.howtopreventfalls.com. Contact information 586-7548. With each book sold a donation of five dollars is made to First Presbyterian Church if you indicate you are a member. Also, a copy of the book was purchased for our church library. See Bev Reeve if interested.



MISSION FUND RAISER

Ever have a night where you just don't feel like cooking? Then check out Make and Take Gourmet. You can purchase meals (that are FREEZABLE) and eat them on one of those crazy busy evenings. Join a group attending a party at the East Rochester location at 7:00 POM on October 30 and part of your bill comes back to our youth mission trips! See Chris Zimmer for more details.



Brett Long, an Eastman doctoral candidate in Trumpet performance, has played for our services several times, most recently September 28th. The beautiful tone he produces simply soars in our sanctuary. On **Sunday November 2 at 3:00 pm** Brett will present our second concert of the Fall Concert Series. He will be accompanied by Eunyong Lee on the organ and the piano, and by Brett's own brass ensemble. Admission is free. Donations will be accepted.

FOURTH ANNUAL "RUN FOR CARL"

The 4th Annual ***RUN FOR CARL*** will be held on Friday, Nov 28th at 10am at Mendon Ponds Park, Steward Lodge. Last year over 225 people were on hand for the event, which raised more than \$5,000 in memory of Carl Metzler. Carl (SHS '00) passed away suddenly of heart failure in June 2004 at the age of 22.

Rain or shine - come out and join other PCSD alumni, family & friends of Carl. For the ambitious, a 5k trail run is set in the park, while 1k & 3k walking loop options are available for the more turkey-laden of our participants.

There is no registration fee, however, donations to the Carl Lane Metzler Memorial Fund are accepted. In addition to supporting college scholarships for SHS & MHS seniors who share Carl's much loved characteristics of teamwork and a passion for the outdoors, donations from the run will also support heart research at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Lindsey Kurnath
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