

**MISSION STATEMENT** "As followers of Jesus Christ, we rejoice in God's plan for a just, loving, and peaceful world, and we commit ourselves to making it a reality for all people everywhere."



## From the Pastor's Desk

The Reverend David D. Prince, Interim Pastor

**A**s we together explore what God is calling Rutgers Presbyterian Church to be and do in the years ahead, we can use various resources available to us. I have already suggested the book *A New and Right Spirit*, which many of you have picked up at the church. I also recommend the first five chapters of the *Book of Order*, which is part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s constitution. Chapter I tells us, "In affirming with the earliest Christians that Jesus is Lord, the Church confesses that he is its hope and that the Church, as Christ's body, is bound to his authority and thus free to live in the lively, joyous reality of the grace of God."

Some questions that occur to me as helpful for our self-study are, *What does it mean to confess in 2006 that Jesus Christ is our hope?* And, *What would it look like in 2006 for a congregation to live in the "lively, joyous reality of the grace of*

*God*?" Questions like those lead me to wonder, *How do we use "God language" in our culture without sounding like naïve fundamentalists and without alienating people who acknowledge a spiritual hunger but don't know where to find appropriate nourishment?*

I invite you to do some focused reflection on those questions and others that might occur to you as we go through this interim period in the life of our congregation. There will be several "open forums" where we can discuss our various thoughts and feelings about being a faith-community in New York City in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Our goal is to develop clarity about the kind of installed pastor Rutgers Presbyterian Church will call in a year or two. It feels good to be your interim pastor for this phase of the journey.

Dave Prince

## Giving Thanks for a Meal Shared in a Church Basement

by Mary Beth Coudal

**L**ast night, I asked my third grader, Hayden, to help me write something about Thanksgiving. Here's what he wrote:

"I'm thankful for my mom, my dad, my friends, all my relatives, and food. I think giving thanks is giving someone a new home or starting someone on a new life. It's like sacrificing yourself for someone else. Most people are lucky to have a home. Imagine having to sleep in the street with all the dust and noise. I probably couldn't sleep. Once me and my sisters went to a homeless shelter. Sure, they look old and raggedy but deep inside, they are nice."

Hayden was remembering the night several months ago when we volunteered at the women's shelter at the Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew, a United Methodist Church on 86th Street.

I had planned to hire a babysitter for my three kids, Hayden, eight, Catherine, six, and Charlotte, six, while I helped serve dinner. "Why don't you bring the kids?" asked Julia, a friend. I worried that the experience might be too intense for them or too difficult for me to explain. After all, "Why ARE there homeless people?" What if they asked me that? How

would I answer? But, with Julia's suggestion (and the prospect of saving \$10 an hour for a few hours), I decided to bring the kids.

The kids just accepted all the women, whether they served or were served, as friends. They ran around the table where we all shared a warm meal and laughter. Yes, at several points, they did get a little too rambunctious. But their enthusiasm added to the family feeling in the church basement that night.

And the thing is—the kids didn't really ask me that larger question for which my answer is complicated and full of disappointment. That question of Why? Why is there homelessness?

However, there was a question on the way home. A block or two from church, Hayden saw a homeless man with a shopping cart setting up a bed for the night on the sidewalk. Hayden got very excited, "Hey, Mom, can we go tell that guy there's a place for him to sleep at the church?" "No," I said. "The shelter at church is just for the women tonight."

But his desire to connect the man to the church was an AHA! moment. The church is

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## What Do I Do with That Pledge Card?

**T**he Stewardship campaign for 2007 is underway. In past years, the weeks before pledge Sunday have been used to lift up the many programs of the church—from the Thursday night meal, the homeless shelter, and the Body & Spirit program to the many organizations we support through our benevolence (mission) giving. In short, we've told you about the need and described your pledge dollars at work.

Those wonderful programs are still there. However, this year the Stewardship Committee is focusing on a different aspect of giving: what does it mean for us to be stewards, and how do we make decisions about the use of our money, time and talents? To this end, during worship, three brave Rutgers members will share some of their process in the next few weeks. We believe their testimony will help all of us think more clearly and deeply about stewardship.

Pledge cards and a letter from David Prince, our interim pastor, will arrive in the mail the week of November 5. We invite everyone—members and friends—to think and pray upon the information and testimonies you have heard, and to bring your pledge card to church on **November 12**, when we will receive them in the offering plates. Of course, pledges will be gratefully received both before and after that date.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact either of the pastors or a member of the Stewardship Committee—Mark Young, Bill Bailey and Bill Donnell. We wish you blessings as you consider how you will use your gifts in our worship and work together over the coming year.

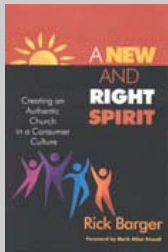
(Continued from page 1)

### Giving Thanks...

a place for homeless people. And for kids, too. I'm thankful we were all together.

So this Thanksgiving I'm grateful for all the women in churches like Saint Paul and Saint Andrew's and Rutgers Church, who feed people and are fed every night of the year, not just on Thanksgiving. And they do it with no fanfare or expectation of reward.

And I'm thankful for my kids who remind me every day that along with life's abundance come gratitude and sacrifice.



## *A New and Right Spirit*

forum/discussion on Sunday, November 12 at 12:45 pm

Copies of the book are available following the worship service or by request.

## The Body & Spirit Program: Tai Chi Chu'an

by Meg Harper

**I** have had the pleasure of teaching Tai Chi at Rutgers, within the context of the Body & Spirit Program, since January of 2006. Before I begin to talk about Tai Chi, let me express my joy and amazement for the extraordinary atmosphere throughout the church building. Working also as an Administrative Assistant for Presbyterian Welcome since October of 2004, I have been surrounded by a staff that works with respect and love for each other, and who maintain an energy and focus coordinated through beautiful leadership. When Diane gave me the opportunity to offer a class in Tai Chi, I was very happy to have another reason to spend time in this church.

Tai Chi is the physical expression of the ancient Chinese philosophy of Taoism. I say philosophy and not religion, because it originally was a philosophy and only later became a religious practice. Tai has a meaning equivalent to "moving," and Chi (also known as Qi) refers to the life force in all living things; the practice dates back at least to 1750 A.D.

As a Presbyterian, studying Tai Chi has enhanced my spiritual growth; it is a form of meditation that connects one to the universe—specifically, nature—and to one another. As in

prayer, one needs to empty the mind of thoughts, and in this emptying through breathing and internal focus, one can provide room for something mysterious to enter. Doing Tai Chi alone or in a class provides time to stop and be still, to empty and to listen, to connect non-verbally to the spirit of others. It can offer one a time of ceasing ambition and simply being.

We use the phrase, "take ambition out of the feet and the hands." This is a startling idea. What does it refer to? In this system of movement, which is a martial art, a form of defense, one is moving from a central place deep within the pelvis. The correct alignment of the head sitting on the neck, and in relation to the shoulders and pelvis, provides an open pathway for the circulation to reach all parts of the body. Tension is released as the breathing deepens; the Chi or life force is quickened. The health benefits of the simple circular movements, giving in to gravity and controlled by the breath, are astonishing. Through repetition, the mind has a chance to become one with the body. The spirit is given a little breathing room.

If you are interested in these classes, you may contact Diane Nicole at ext. 212.

## November 2006 at Rutgers Church, and Beyond

### The Gospel of Luke

Sundays, October 29-December 17, at 9:45 am, Session Rm

Having studied Matthew and Mark the past two years, this study of Luke will finish our "cycle" of the synoptic gospels and prepare us for the sermons of Year C in the lectionary, which begins on December 3. We'll be using study guides from the *Interpretation* series and hope you will join us. Please call Cheryl Pynch (x205) to request child care.

### All Saints' Day Gathering

Wednesday, November 1 at 6:30 pm in the Narthex

All Saints' is a day for remembering and celebrating the lives of our loved ones who have died, but whom we still hold in our hearts. This annual gathering has become a healing experience for many in our community. There will be time to pray and meditate together and to share remembrances.

### Celebrating the Life and Artistry of Nancy Williams

Sunday, November 5 at 3:00 pm in the Sanctuary

Nancy Williams was soprano soloist at Rutgers for nearly 30 years and a member of the Rutgers Church Quartet. Please join her husband, Ed Alley, and her New York City family and friends for a memorial service featuring recordings of Nancy singing. A reception will follow in the Daniel Russell Room.

### Honoring Doug Nave

Monday, November 13, 6 pm at Fifth Ave. Presb. Church

Come honor Doug Nave and enjoy *hors d'oeuvres* and drinks at a fundraiser for Presbyterian Welcome and the Covenant Network. A brilliant lawyer (and very nice person), Doug has been instrumental in helping Presbyterians navigate and fight against church laws which would deny gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people full participation and leadership in the church.

Rutgers is a member congregation of Presbyterian Welcome and donates office space and benevolence money to the organization. Charles Amstein and Cheryl Pynch are on the Board and encourage members and friends from Rutgers to join them at this event! There is no admission, but everyone is invited to bring their checkbook and give to the extent they are able. If you'd like more information or would like to leave with a group from Rutgers, call Cheryl at ext. 205.

### Benevolence Symposium

Saturday, November 18, 10 am to noon on the 5th floor

What ethical issues are at stake when we decide how to distribute our benevolence (mission) money? How do we develop criteria for deciding who to fund? Is it better to give more money to fewer organizations or less money to many? How do we know if our money is used wisely?

On Saturday, November 18, the Council for Witness to Society and the World is sponsoring a workshop for Benevolence/Mission Committees and Councils across the Presbytery to explore these questions. The workshop will be led by Fran

Barrett, founder and director of Community Resource Exchange, a 25-year organization that has worked to strengthen and advocate for non-profits in New York City.

Members of the Rutgers Benevolence Committee (and other interested folks) are encouraged to attend. This will be a workshop about on how to *give* money, not get it! Please call Cheryl Pynch at ext. 205 for details.

### Organ Recital by George Davey

Sunday, November 19 at 4:00 pm in the Sanctuary

George is still finalizing selections for his upcoming recital on our Southfield organ and plans to include a wide range of music by Buxtehude, Bach, Walond, Willan, Franck, Elgar, Messiaen, Vierne, Mulet and possibly Weaver. Two of the pieces are very popular in both the UK and the US, but have taken on different roles in each country and have different nicknames: Max Reger's "God Save the Queen" (UK)/"My Country 'Tis of Thee" (US) and Edward Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance Military March No. 1 in D*.

### Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

Wednesday, November 22 at 7:30 pm

This year's West Side Thanksgiving Eve Service will be held at **Ascension Roman Catholic Church**, 221 West 107th Street (between Broadway and Amsterdam). It will be a **bilin-gual, interfaith** service, followed by a reception. All are welcome! Rabbi Felicia Sol of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun will be the main speaker, and donations of non-perishable food items together with money donations will benefit the West Side Campaign Against Hunger.

### Thanksgiving at Euclid Hall

Thursday, November 23 from 12:00—3:00 pm

For the sixteenth year, friends and members of Rutgers Church will provide Thanksgiving dinner for residents of Euclid Hall, an affordable, supportive housing residence for senior citizens and for individuals coming out of the New York City shelter system. Located at **2345 Broadway and 86th Street**, it is operated by the West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing.

Please call Sue Spears at (212) 724-7351 to volunteer your time on the 23rd and/or with your offering of food, which can be delivered in advance: rolls, stuffing, fruit, and desserts are needed.

### Coming in December

**Sunday, Dec. 3, 4:00 pm**  
UNICEF benefit recital by  
Sherry Zannoth & Clif Fisher

**Wednesdays, 6:30 pm**  
Advent Vesper Services

**Wednesdays, 7:15 pm**  
Advent Study

**Sunday, Dec. 10 at 12:45 pm**  
All-Church Christmas Social

**Friday evening, Dec. 15**  
Hanging the Greens

**Sunday, Dec. 24 at 6:00 pm**  
Christmas Eve Candlelight  
Carol Service

# November 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
9:45 am Adult Class: <i>Gospel of Luke</i> thru Dec. 17	6:00 pm Cub Scouts Every Monday	6:00 pm Boy Scouts; Men's Support Group (HIV+/PLWA) Every Tuesday	1 6:30 pm All Saints Gathering	2 6:00 pm Meal Program 7:00 pm Movie: <i>The Mikado</i>	3	4
5 NYC Marathon 12:45 pm Board of Deacons 3:00 pm Nancy Williams Memorial Service	6	7 6:30 pm Session Meeting	8 6:30 pm Prayer Circle	9 6:00 pm SKATE (Youth) 6:00 pm Meal Program 7:00 pm <i>Hansel &amp; Gretel</i>	10	11
12 12:45 pm Open Forum on <i>A New and Right Spirit</i>	13 3:00 pm Worship Comm. 6:00 pm Honor Doug Nave	14 1-7 pm Presbytery Meeting at 1st Spanish Presb Ch	15 6:30 pm Prayer Circle	16 6:00 pm Thanksgiving Meal 7:00 pm Movie: <i>Nutcracker</i>	17	18 10 am—noon Benevolence Symposium
19 12:45 pm Peace & Social Justice Network 4:00 pm G. Davey Recital	20 6:30 pm Christian Education Committee	21	22 Renewal Deadline 7:30 pm Interfaith Thanksgiving at Ascension RC Ch	23 Thanksgiving Church and office buildings closed 12-3 pm Meal @ Euclid Hall	24 Holiday Church and office buildings closed	25
26	27	28	29 6:30 pm Prayer Circle	30 6:00 pm Meal Program		

**Men's Overnight Shelter:  
Every Fri • Sat • Sun**

## Birthdays!

- 2 Jeannie Santiago
- 3 Margaret Williamson
- 5 Andy Ahsen,  
Lynne Morris
- 6 Graham Wyatt
- 7 Sarah Rundqvist
- 9 Warwick Busfield
- 13 Cliff Flanders, Richard Hill
- 15 Samantha Manners
- 18 Mark Young
- 21 Jon Smith
- 22 Pamela Byrd
- 23 Klarence Ou Yang,  
Marshall Williamson
- 24 Ruben Santiago
- 30 Audrey Hill

## Sundays

9:45 am	Sunday School for Adults
10:00	Adult Choir Rehearsal
10:15	Children's Choir Rehearsal
10:30	Infant & Child Care
11:00	Worship Service
11:15	Sunday School (ages 3-12)
12:15 pm	Coffee Hour
12:45	Choir Rehearsal

## Preaching Schedule

- November 5 All Saints Observed;  
The Reverend David D. Prince preaching
- November 12 Stewardship Commitment; Communion;  
The Reverend David D. Prince preaching
- November 19 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time;  
The Reverend David D. Prince preaching
- November 26 Reign of Christ Sunday;  
The Reverend Cheryl Pyrch preaching

## Helping Tim...In Life and Death

by Deacon Alan Robinson

In a recent meeting of the Board of Deacons, which administers the Helping Hands program, we discussed finding our own “comfort level” in the outreach we provide as members of the Rutgers congregation, as Helping Hands volunteers, and as deacons.

I found the conversation especially interesting as my recent participation as a Helping Hand had considerably shaken my comfort zone—not just as a member of Rutgers or as a resident of the Upper West Side but as a gay man whose entire adult life has been lived within a sphere of AIDS.

The request to help came in early summer. All I knew is that someone named Tim needed a visit. He was apparently the son of someone named Lenore, a Rutgers member, and he lived in the neighborhood.

I had no idea of Tim’s ailment. During the course of the year, the deacons and Helping Hand volunteers get a variety of requests. They can range from a long-time church member to an acquaintance of the pastor.

I found greater appeal in the anonymous request. I don’t know them; they don’t know me. Hence, the “Tim visit” seemed ideal. I did have some trepidation, though. First off, it’s easy to just discount the visit with a standard “I’m really just too busy.” Then, there is the gap between concept (“sure, I’ll do that”) and reality (picking up the phone, confirming the date and time, and actually making the visit).

The power of one versus the power of many certainly comes into play here. Fellow Rutgers member, Sue Scherer, who is an elder, choir member, and head of the Membership Committee, suggested in passing that we make the visit together. I liked that idea—less pressure, and we could spread around the forced conversation and good cheer a little more easily.

All Tim had requested for the visit was a “brownie with no nuts.” Not as easy as it sounds! Do you know how many food emporiums in the neighborhood sell brownies with nuts only? Finally, after striking out at Starbucks, a bakery, and two delis, I scored a nuts-free brownie and was able to meet Sue in front of Tim’s building at the appointed hour.

I had no expectations of Tim or his illness. It was clear he was quite frail. He was mostly bedridden, having just been released from the hospital.

But there was no forced conversation! Despite being predominantly horizontal, Tim proved to be a voluble and charming host. We soon learned that he had been hospitalized for some time but with no clear prognosis, and that he had a partner, who was at the gym to de-stress, and a dog, who snuggled with him on the bed.

Sue is also a dog owner, so a lively discussion of various breeds, sizes, eating preferences and other doggie stuff ensued. And Tim was a truly a bright spirit. Despite his medical situation, he remained positive and upbeat. He discussed an upcoming meeting with his employers to map out a return to work.

It was not to be. Sue told me a few weeks later she had scheduled a return visit, but Tim was not home. I took that as either very good news—he had returned to work—or not very good news. It was the latter.

We soon learned that Tim was in a hospice on the Upper East Side, and within a short time we were informed of his death. Later, we learned it was from AIDS. When a request came to help with Tim’s memorial service, I did not hesitate. I felt personally vested in his life and death.

Yet again that gap between concept and reality became apparent. Our duties as deacons were to coordinate the food for

the reception after the memorial service and the requisite cleanup. I had the reception part down, but hadn’t really factored in the memorial service. As the appointed Saturday drew closer, I was starting to really feel the emotion of meeting Tim, embracing his spirit, and coming to grips with his death.

All the struggle, and anger, and frustration of the AIDS crisis also came into the mix. Prayer, common sense and geography helped me remain HIV-negative through the years, but thousands of other gay men weren’t as fortunate. And here we were again—another AIDS death. “Get a grip,” I kept telling myself. “This isn’t about you. It’s about Tim. It’s a celebration of his life.”

Again the power of many came into play. Kim Hodges, moderator of the deacons, had gotten the wheels in motion early in the week by ordering the food. Fellow deacon Ed Kennelly stepped in to help with the reception, as did fellow deacon Joan Keener. Bev Thompson offered to help out if needed.

And it was a beautiful service. Tim’s relatives and friends from his childhood onward presented heartfelt, endearing remarks. I marveled at the music choices—“Here I Am, Lord,” “Wind Beneath My Wings,” and “Somewhere” from *West Side Story*—when I wasn’t brushing away the tears. These are songs I would have chosen!

The reception went well. Tim’s family and friends were able to come together, reminisce and console.

And I believe Tim truly passed on a gift to me that day. A gift to be able to step out of the comfort zone and be more helping. And to come together with other members of the congregation to offer solace and support in time of need.

That is the spirit of Rutgers...the power of one to reach out to others—with others—and offer a helping hand.





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## Rutgers Youth SKATE Trip to Godspell

Pictures (including front cover) from Kim Hodges



### What Do You Think?

1. How many times have you called on the Lord for the right words to help motivate someone?
2. How much time do you spend on vanity daily?
3. You can't pay your bills with pride.
4. Who do you call when you need a cheerleader?
5. It's nice to show someone how special they are to you.
6. When do you start doing what's important to you?
7. It's beautiful to see our elders continue to grow and experiment with the current products, trends, and technology.
8. If children aren't involved and a person is financially stable, why do they stay in an unhappy marriage or job?
9. Do you have acquaintances who talk only about themselves?
10. Who receives most of your attention?

'Til next time,  
Jacquelyn M. Carpenter