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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."

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From the Interim Pastor

The Reverend David D. Prince

It is tempting to romanticize the birth of Jesus two thousand years ago. Artists have depicted "the holy family" clothed in flowing robes, halos around their heads, and winged angels hovering about them. What such paintings tell us is that the baby born to Mary and Joseph was a child of destiny, someone through whom the world could gain a clearer understanding of God.

For me it is important to appreciate such art and its message. It is also essential to keep in mind a more realistic picture of the Nativity. Whatever the accuracy of Luke's details, Jesus was born to a peasant family in a world that was in turmoil. The region where he spent his early years was dominated by a foreign power, and life for most people was a constant struggle.

That understanding of Christmas points to its great message: God is with us in the whole range of human experience, especially in those circumstances that make us sad or fearful. In Jesus God disclosed the nature of divine love—at home with the simple, ordinary aspects of human life, aware of the highs and lows of humanity's existence.

Wherever you are on your journey, I invite you to hear the truth of this holy season: God's love is not put off by human failure or by the day-to-day challenges of imperfect living. God is with us always and loving us.

May hope, peace, love, and joy be with you and in you now, and through the coming year.

Dave Prince

Protest at The School of the Americas

Ft. Benning, GA—November 16-18, 2007

by Elder Anne Barstow & Reverend Tom Driver

We have observed human rights abuses in Latin America during seventeen trips to that region. We have seen the desperation of people in refugee camps, civilians who were wounded during attacks in their own homes, and mass graves of villagers massacred "to teach the countryside a lesson." We don't sleep well in our comfortable New York home after these trips. But our unease became worse when we learned that many of the Latin American army officers responsible for these atrocities were trained right here in the U. S. A. - with our tax dollars. The military School of the Americas (and its successor, WHINSEC, The Western Hemispheric Institute for Security Training) at Ft. Benning, GA, has trained over 60,000 soldiers from this hemisphere in "counterinsurgency," sometimes including torture and "neutralization" (assassination). When we discovered that a peace group protests against the SOA every November at the gate of Ft. Benning, we decided that we should join them.

Over the last 17 years, this group has grown to a great crowd of over 20,000, who come from all over the country. It is the largest ongoing peace demonstration in the U. S. It takes the form of a powerful ritual: a memorial service for the unarmed civilians who have died from actions planned or carried out by the School's graduates. Some of the victims are famous, like Archbishop Romero of El Salvador (slain at the altar while saying Mass), the six Jesuit priests of San Salvador (gunned down in the courtyard of their residence), the four U. S. church women raped and murdered on the road outside the Salvadoran airport. Thousands of others are anonymous peasants: the 900, mostly children, killed at El Mozote, El Salvador; the 177, all women or children, killed at Rio Negro, Guatemala; and so on. One hundred army officers cited for war crimes in Colombia were trained at the school. The list goes on and on.

(continued on page 2)

What Do You Think?

1. Are you standing in cement?
2. Which do you empathize more with; a multi-millionaire who lost everything in a fire or a dirt-poor Katrina flood victim?
3. Why wait until your children are grown to pursue your dreams?
4. Don't give energy to the one person who will always find fault.
5. When is the truth a lie?
6. Does the clutter in your home represent your state of mind?
7. Is a terminal prognosis what you need to motivate living?
8. Have your payment ready when standing in a check-out line.
9. Do you have a private place to scream when your stress level is extreme?
10. How many names do you have?

11. Why are graphic scenes of violence allowed more by the censors on television and in film than foul language and racial slurs? Who is monitoring the censors?
12. Are your life passions innate or hereditary?
13. The older you get warmth is more important than fashion.
14. Why should speed readers be the only ones to enjoy subtitled movies and breaking news flashes on television?
15. Where does it say in the marriage vows "once married I will become your child"?
16. When do you know you have on too much perfume/ cologne/after shave?
17. Write or call a friend or family member that has offended or hurt you and say hello.
18. If you cook with love everything you make will be great.
19. Don't make a New Year's resolution that will defeat you.
20. When do you become content and accept who you are?

'Till next time,
Jacquelyn M. Carpenter

RUTGERS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Renewal

Protest at The School of the Americas

Ft. Benning, GA—November 16-18, 2007
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But the murdered civilians are no longer anonymous: at Ft. Benning their names and ages are sung out and we answer each name by chanting "Presente!" ("You are present here with us!"). It is a powerful service of remembrance, as well as a protest. And it is a totally nonviolent, self-disciplined throng that makes this witness.

Over half of the protesters are college age or younger, yet no one breaks the pledge of nonviolence that we take. The SOA protest has become the center point for religious-based antiwar statements in this country.

Each year we see many friends from the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, the group that first led the PC(U.S.A.)'s General Assembly to condemn the School in 1993. Each year some protesters perform civil disobedience by "crossing the line"—peacefully trespassing onto the base. For this they serve terms in federal prison (Anne was arrested for trespass in 1997 but not sentenced to prison).

This year we added a new experience: we accepted the invitation of the



Anne Barstow taking communion with others of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship during the liturgical protest against the School of the Americas. In the background, is the fence at the gate of Ft. Benning, GA, into which protesters have placed crosses bearing the names of unarmed persons killed through actions of the school's graduates.

WHINSEC to visit its campus on the base and to hear 3 colonels and 3 civilian employees of the school defend its role. We were told that its purpose is "to spread democracy in Latin America" (have we heard that somewhere else recently?) and to cure the U. S. drug problem. We heard that it is not responsible for what its graduates do, that

it does not do any evaluation or follow-up of them; and that things are better now in Latin America because of its work. Well . . . in the six countries that we keep visiting, things in fact are worse, and we believe that U. S. military aid and training contribute to the problem.

If you are feeling frustrated about our country's dependence on militarism, consider protesting this year at Ft. Benning. It takes time and money to go to Columbus, GA for 2 1/2 days, but we promise you a very moving experience and a lot of learning. For those who do not do civil disobedience, the protests are entirely legal. The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

will help with housing arrangements and ground transportation. But hurry - this year may be the last protest. Last year the House of Representatives came within 6 votes of defunding the SOA/WHINSEC. Its bad reputation has reached the halls of Congress, and with your help we may soon shut it down. ω

Your Benevolence Committee

By Elder Charles Platt

We would like you to be more familiar with the individual groups you are helping. We felt one way to do this would be to describe some individual groups in a bit more detail than you get in the list distributed at the annual meeting.

The first organization we are highlighting is in this issue of Renewal. One of the areas we feel is important to support is religious education of ministers and others. Charles Amstein has written about Union Seminary, which is one of 4 seminaries we support. (The others are Auburn Seminary, McCormack Seminary and Princeton Seminary.)

We will be highlighting different groups in future issues. If you have any questions about any groups on our list, please talk to me or any member of the Benevolence Committee. ω

Union Theological Seminary

By The Reverend Charles A. Amstein

As Union Seminary, at 120th Street and Broadway, begins to celebrate 100 years in that location (1908 - 2008) I am pleased to write about Union and what it continues to mean to me.

Most of you have heard me chatter on about growing up in Kansas. All of my schooling through college took place there. So, beginning to study at Union in the Fall of 1958 was, well, a radical departure for me. But what an exciting adventure in learning! And what an exciting community the seminary was then, and is now. I think there were about 50 denominational groups represented at Union in my years there.

This very diversity, and the fact that Union is not linked to any particular denomination, while one of the semi-

nary's glories, is also the basis of its ongoing financial challenge. Union continues to throw itself on the side of love and justice. And it is in the best financial condition it had been for a long time. This is true because of agreements to lease space to Columbia University, and the willingness of Union's Board and others to support the seminary generously.

I am very pleased that Rutgers has given generously to Union in recent years. Such church gifts are particularly important in providing scholarship assistance to students.

There may be more Union graduates (or retired faculty, in the person of Tom Driver) in the Rutgers community than you realize. But we are a grateful, loyal and committed group, and we are grateful that Rutgers supports Union as it prepares to celebrate its first 100 years in Morningside Heights. ω

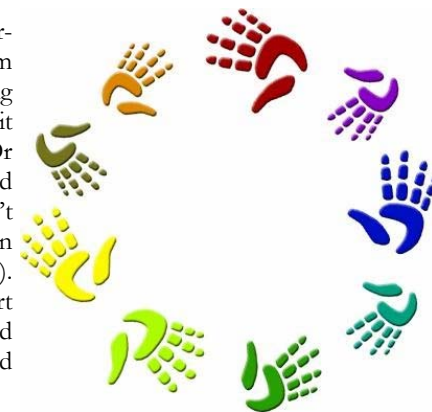
What Do I Do if I Need Prayer or a Helping Hand?

All of us, from time to time, find ourselves in need of nurture and support from our church family. Perhaps you're expecting surgery and would appreciate prayers, a visit from a deacon and a casserole or two. Or perhaps you're struggling with something and would like to be on the prayer list, but don't want to talk to anyone about your situation (much less find a lasagna on your doorstep!). Although we are all called to love and support each other, the Deacons, Pastors and "Helping Hands" are here to extend (and organize) such nurture.

If you're in need of help, please don't hesitate to call a Pastor or Deacon. Aside from offering a listening ear, we'll make sure your needs are communicated: for practical, concrete, help; to receive a card of encouragement; or to simply be put on the prayer list, no questions asked. What you say to a pastor is held in confidence unless you tell us otherwise (or if keeping the confidence would endanger you or others). So please speak with us. We may not have the resources or expertise to help with every need, but we also refer and can always pray with you.

Names and Contact Information:

The pastoral staff are: David Prince (Interim pastor), Cheryl Pynch (Designated Associate Pastor) and Charles Amstein (Parish Consultant, part time). They can be reached through the church or at home in emergencies.



The Deacons are officers of the church, elected by the congregation to "minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress both within and beyond the community of faith," (Book of Order, G-5.0402). The Deacons pray for people, write cards, pay hospital visits, and - in keeping with their mandate - oversee the Thursday night dinner program and our weekend homeless shelter (among other duties!). The Moderator of the Deacons is Kim Hodges and her contact information is: emailhodges@yahoo.com and cell phone (917) 991-3661.

The Helping Hands are members of the congregation who have volunteered to help the Deacons with their ministry of support and nurture. Anyone can be a Helping Hand! If you would like to occasionally write cards, shop for someone who is homebound, pray, accompany someone to church or perhaps cook, please contact Kim Hodges (see contact information above) or one of the pastors. Also contact Kim if you would like to help with the dinner program (Thursday nights) or the Shelter program.

Do you need a church directory? If you're a member or friend of Rutgers and would like the contact information for others in our community, please call Jeremiah in the church office, (212) 877-8227, x213. ω

Sundays	
9:45 a.m.	Confirmation Class
10:00	Adult Choir Rehearsal
10:45	Infant & Child Care
11:00	Worship Service
11:15	Sunday School (ages 3-12)
12:15 p.m.	Coffee Hour
12:45	Choir Rehearsal
6:00	Men's Shelter

Preaching Schedule

- January 6 ___ Epiphany Sunday; Cheryl Pynch preaching
- January 13 ___ Baptism of the Lord; Tom Driver preaching
- January 20 ___ Pulpit Exchange; Leslie Merlin preaching
- January 27 ___ Annual Business Meeting; David Prince preaching

Birthdays!

- 1 Lucy Dunn-Ellis
- 8 Laura Jervis
- 9 So Young Lee & Philip Patrick
- 13 Katie Berko
- 20 Christine Gorman & Mark Thompson
- 23 Harold Manners & Suzanne Spears
- 25 Josh Galper & Sheila Smith
- 27 Joy Wyatt
- 31 Christian Pritner-Gonzalez

January 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 New Year's Day Church & Office Building Closed	2 5:30 p.m. AA Meeting Every Wednesday	3 6:00 p.m. Meal Program 7:00 p.m. Movie Series Every Thursday	4 10:30 a.m. Mothers' Bible Study 6:00 p.m. Men's Shelter Every Friday S.K.A.T.E.	5 5:30 p.m. AA Meeting 6:00 p.m. Men's Shelter Every Saturday
6 12:45 p.m. Deacons Meeting 6:00 p.m. Men's Shelter Every Sunday	7 12:15 p.m. Al-Anon 6:00 p.m. Cub Scouts Every Monday	8 12:15 p.m. Al-Anon 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts 6:00 p.m. Men's Support Group (HIV+/ PLWA) 8:00 p.m. Men's Al-Anon Every Tuesday	9	10	11 12:30 p.m. "Say NO to Torture" prayer vigil (see page 3)	12 9:30 a.m. P&SJM Retreat
13 Baptism of the Lord Sunday 11:00 a.m. Worship Service (renewal of baptismal vows)	14 3:30 p.m. Worship Com- mittee	15 6:30 p.m. Session Meeting	16 6:00 p.m. "For the Sake of our Families" (see page 3)	17	18	19
20 11:00 a.m. Worship Service (Upper West Side Pulpit Exchange— Leslie Merlin preach- ing)	21 Martin Luther King, Jr. Birth- day Observed Church & Of- fice Building Closed 2:00 p.m. March for Peace (see page 3)	22	23	24	25	26
27 12:45 p.m. 211th Annual Con- gregational Busi- ness Meeting	28 6:30 p.m. Christian Edu- cation Commit- tee	29	30	31		

January 2008 at Rutgers Church, and Beyond

Adult Education Class

The Adult Education Class will be taking a break in January. We'll let you know soon about upcoming programs; in the meantime, save the date of **Sunday, February 17, from 2-4 p.m.**, for a presentation and discussion on Jewish/Christian relations by Professor Mary Boys of Union Theological Seminary. Dr. Boys' has written widely on this subject, and she is also a terrific speaker and teacher (Cheryl and Jacqui have both been students!).

Say NO to Torture

Friday, January 11 at 12:30 p.m., Foley Square

Say NO to Torture with an interfaith prayer vigil on **Friday, January 11**, the 6th anniversary of the opening of the Guantanamo Bay prison. The vigil is from 12:30-2:00 p.m. in Foley Square, downtown Manhattan just north of City Hall. The vigil will begin with Muslim prayers at 12:30 p.m., moving to an interfaith vigil and prayer service – with speakers – at 1:00 p.m. The Peace and Social Justice Network encourages all who are able to come to this important witness sponsored by the New York Religious Campaign Against Torture, the local chapter of a national organization. If you would like detailed directions (nearly all subways go nearby), or want to leave with group from Rutgers, contact Cheryl at x205.

For the Sake of our Families

Wednesday, January 16 at 6 p.m., Hanson Place U.M.C.

Commemorate the 35th Anniversary of Roe v. Wade by attending *For the Sake of Our Families: A Convocation on Reproductive Health*, **Wednesday, January 16, 6-8 p.m.** at Hanson Place United Methodist Church in Brooklyn. It will be an evening to look back on what's been accomplished and forward to what needs to be done; it will also be a tribute to the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the occasion of his 79th birthday. The Reverend Dr. James Forbes is Keynote Speaker. Sponsored by Planned Parenthood NYC and numerous faith communities, including Rutgers. Hanson Place UMC is at 144 Felix St. at Hanson Place, a short walk from the #2 or #3 Atlantic Avenue stop and about a ½ hour trip from 72nd Street. Call Cheryl Pynch for more information and/or directions.

March for Peace

Monday, January 21, 2:00 p.m., Church of the Holy Name

Honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther, King Jr. on the day his birthday is observed, **Monday, January 21**, with a **March for Peace** with neighbors from churches and synagogues on the Upper West Side. We begin at 2:00 p.m. at Church of the Holy Name on 96th Street and Amsterdam Avenue, and walk through the neighborhood, stopping at Trinity Lutheran and Second Presbyterian and returning to Holy Name for worship. It's an inspiring and much-needed witness for peace. Please call Cheryl Pynch if you'd like to know more or meet with a Rutgers group.

211th Annual Congregational Business Meeting

Sunday, January 27 at 12:45 p.m., Fellowship Hall

Rutgers' 211th Annual Congregational Business Meeting has been scheduled for Sunday, January 27, (it is *not* Super Bowl Sunday) immediately following the worship. We will elect a new class of officers and conduct church business. This is an important time in the life of Rutgers and all members are encouraged to participate. Your voice is important and your vote does matters.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Tuesday, February 5, 6:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall



A festive evening of maple syrup covered pancakes, tasty sausages, sugar loading and wonderful musical – and other – performances by our talented Rutgers Family. If you'd like to participate in our (very low key) talent show, or if you'd like to help flip pancakes, please call the church office by

phone at (212) 877-8227 or e-mail at jeremiah@rutgerschurch.com.

Open the Welcome Circle

Friday, February 8, 6:30 p.m., First Presbyterian Church

Presbyterian Welcome invites you to "Open the Welcome Circle" by attending the screening of the movie *Trans-America* at First Presbyterian Church in Manhattan (Fifth Avenue at 12th Street), **Friday, February 8, at 6:30 p.m.** *Trans-America* is a delightful movie in the American Road Trip genre, and it will be followed by a discussion led by Sara Herwig, candidate for ministry in Boston Presbytery. Ms. Herwig will help us better understand the meaning of transgender, and how we can be more welcoming to the T part of LGBT. Please RSVP to Cheryl Pynch at x205.

All Church Retreat – Save the Date – April 11-12

The Christian Education Committee is planning an all-church retreat from Friday evening April 11 through Saturday afternoon April 12 at the Stonypoint Center, approximately one hour north of the city. Families have enjoyed these over-night retreats for the past several years, and this time we thought we'd open it to the whole congregation, both members and friends. We'll have programming for children, adults, and all generations together, as well as time to relax, eat and have fun. Stonypoint will be beautiful at that time of year, and even when it's rained we've enjoyed being away together.

Would you like to be on the **Retreat Planning Committee?** We could use your ideas and expertise! Please contact Cheryl at x205 (or cheryl@rutgerschurch.com) if you can help. All are welcome.