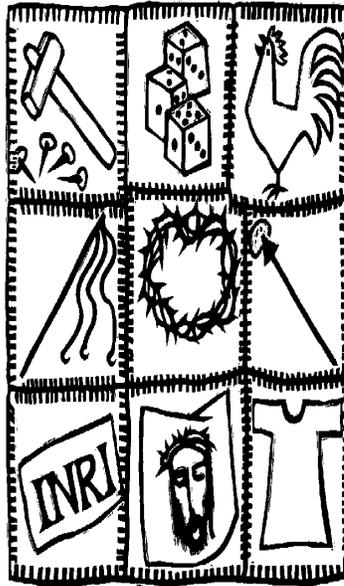


# Renewal

## From the Pastor’s Desk ... “The Church of the Prophetic Edge”



The Church of the Prophetic Edge.

I mean “Church” not as in “Presbyterians,” or “those with a particular denominational identity,” but as in “Christ-like community,” and “vigorous followers of Jesus.”

I mean “Prophetic” not as in “dreamy,” or “focused on the future,” but as in “confrontational,” and “contesting the current corrupt order of things in the name of God.”

And I mean “Edge” not as in “superiority,” or “holding the advantage,” but as in “sharpness,” and “cutting through the crap.”

The Church of the Prophetic Edge—vigorous followers of Jesus willing, in the name of God, to cut through the crap, in order to confront and contest the cur-

rent corrupt order of things. *That’s* what Christ is calling this community of faith to be.

In Deuteronomy 18:15-22, Moses promises his people that, in the future, God will continue to raise up prophets like him—who fearlessly speak the sharp-edged word of God and courageously perform the kind of acts that liberate others from the forces of evil, just as Moses himself had spoken and acted when he was leading the people of Israel out of their bondage and slavery in Egypt.

Well, among the many things that Jesus was, Jesus proved to be a prophet like that, a prophet in the mold of Moses, a person with a sharp prophetic edge, and we, his followers, are called to keep that sharp prophetic edge of Christ’s honed and active today.

Now, the setting for the episode in Mark 1:21-28, which inaugurates Jesus’s public ministry, is both a sacred time—the weekly sabbath, a day of rest from labor, when people are free to gather for prayer and study—and a sacred space—the synagogue, where persons engage in such communal prayer and study.

Jesus strides into the synagogue on this sabbath day, and the conflict is engaged. Through the presentation of his distinctive teachings, Jesus confronts

the established order of religious authority. And those assembled there are “astonished.” for the authority with which Jesus teaches is not at all like that of the scribes—that is, like that of the custodians of *traditional* biblical interpretation. The challenge to the scribes presented by Jesus’s teaching is more than just the challenge of differing content. It is fundamentally the challenge of differing authority. It raises the issue: “Who’s in charge here, anyway?”

Jesus’s teaching sets on edge the teeth of those

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## “Rutgers’s” Subway Station Is Historical NYC Landmark by Adam Keeble

“West 72nd Street in New York City was once an unpaved, picturesque boulevard and main carriage route from Central Park to Riverside Drive.”

Subway riders on the Upper West Side breathed a collective sigh of relief when the building work at 72nd and Broadway was finally completed.

The new masonry and glass building, situated on the north side of West 72nd Street adjacent to Verdi Park, is part of a \$59 million renovation project at the station. Some 31,000 people use the station each day.

But few will realize the significance of the original subway house, which is due to be renovated in the second phase of the station’s overhaul.

The subway station “control house” is one of only three left in New York City – the others are at 103rd and 116th Streets.

The architect team of Heins & Lafarge designed control houses such as this, as well as a number of spectacular stations, for the first portion of the subway system at the turn of the last century. They also laid out the initial plans for the Bronx Zoo and designed the original portions of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. The Cathedral, if it were ever completed, would be the largest Gothic structure in the world.

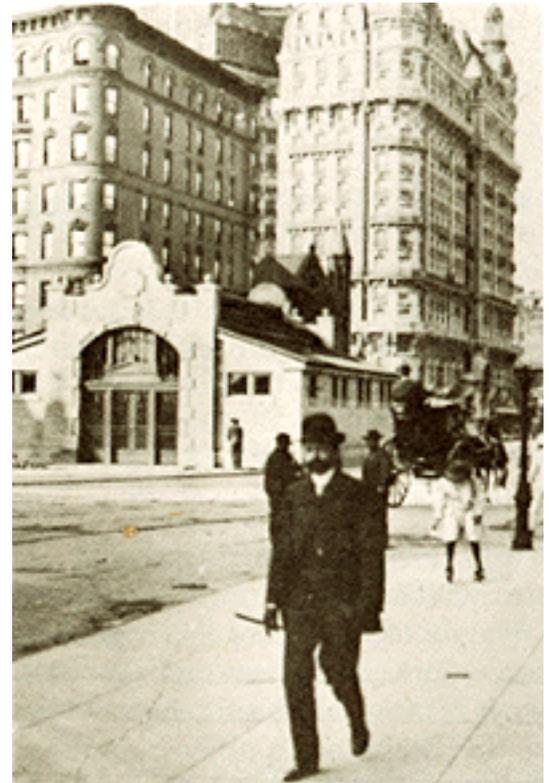
West 72nd Street in New York City was once an unpaved, picturesque boulevard and main carriage route from Central Park to Riverside Drive.

It traversed what was essentially countryside until June of 1879, when the New York Elevated Railroad began carrying passengers up Ninth Avenue (later named Columbus Avenue) to the Harlem River at 145th Street. The train brought an ever increasing number of people north.

The subway itself would dramatically change the future of the neighborhood. Private homes gave way to enormous apartment buildings, especially near the 72nd and 96th Street express stops. Broadway became a commercial thoroughfare.

Although New York modeled its subway on the London Underground, planners adopted the Budapest station plan; the subway in Budapest opened in 1896. The Hungarians, unlike the English, did not build surface structures that resembled railroad terminals. Instead, they borrowed a design from the gardens of ancient Persia and Turkey, where oddly shaped summer houses, called “kushks” abounded. New York’s subway engineers Americanized the word “kushks” to “kiosks.”

The first subway, under City Hall, consequently had strangely ornamental mosque-like kiosks, designed to be fabricated out of steel and wired glass instead of stone and tile. Kiosks also were believed to be functional; without such protection



1907: Rutgers Church can be seen in this shot, taken from where Grey’s Papaya stands today.

rain would pour in and platforms would become flooded.

Where roomier “islands” on the city’s streets allowed, so-called “control houses” were built as entrances to the subway. The “house” at 72nd Street opened in 1904 as part of the original IRT line.

In the new north-side building, the construction upgrade work so far includes complete ADA accessibility through the construction of two new elevators, accessible token booths, toilet rooms, handrails, graphics, and platform warning strips. The exterior of the new building is crowned with a copper roof and

a vaulted center spine of mosaic glass panels by artist Robert Hickman commissioned by MTA Arts for Transit.

In addition, Verdi Park will be expanded to include a new pedestrian plaza in the northbound lanes of Broadway between 72nd and 73rd Streets.

The landmark headhouse will be restored to its original condition. Staircases in the south entrance will be widened and an up-town to downtown transfer will be provided.

The fully restored structure is due to be opened in the early Summer of this year.

## From the Pastor's Desk... continued from page 1 >>

scribes present and alarms all the others under their influence. But just then Jesus is himself confronted, confronted by an unclean spirit that has taken possession of a man, a spirit that, as Mark portrays it, represents all the powers and forces of the cosmos that are arrayed against Jesus, arrayed against the reign of God that he embodies and is bringing near.

The spirit cries out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: 'the holy one of God.'"

You see, this spirit is all too aware of the challenge posed to the corrupt order of things by Jesus, by this one who has come like a mighty prophet, like Elisha of old, who was also called "a holy man of God." (2 Kg 4:9).

As Mark understands it, the struggle between Jesus and the unclean spirit exposes for everyone to see what is really at stake here in the struggle for authority between Jesus and the scribes. For Jesus's subjugation of the unclean spirit, his freeing of this man from the grip of that which opposes God—this is a prophetic act, a sign that dramatizes Jesus's intent to liberate people from the false authority of any who misrepresent God.

Did Jesus heal this man? Yes, he certainly did. But did Jesus's action also go beyond that to have a much wider meaning, and purport, and consequence than simply the healing of a particular person in need? Yes, it certainly did that as well. For this exorcism signified Jesus's prophetic confronting of the corrupt social order and religious establishment of his day. It set in motion a mighty contest of powers and worldviews in which Jesus asserted his alter-

native authority over the powers of this world, and Jesus emerged ascendant.

This prophetic act by Jesus, this sign in which he cut through the crap and confronted the corrupt order of things in the name of God, had the same kind of larger-than-life symbolic power that other prophetic actions closer to us in time and culture have had.

Take, for example, Martin Luther, the founder of the Protestant Reformation. On one level, his posting in the town of Wittenberg of 95 theses for debate was simply the act of a monk posting a note on a door, just as Jesus's exorcism was on one level simply the act of a healer restoring wellness to a man. But on a far deeper level, Luther's deed was a prophetic act that asserted an alternative authority to the social order and religious establishment of his day, a sign on behalf of God that launched a revolution to liberate people from the false authority of those who were misrepresenting God. So, too, on a far deeper level, Jesus's healing of that spirit-possessed man was such a prophetic act, a sign on behalf of God, that launched a revolution challenging the social order and religious establishment of his day.

Or take, for another example, Martin Luther's namesake, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the fulfiller of 20th-century America's Civil Rights Movement. On one level, his kneeling and praying in the face of police dogs and water cannons was simply the act of a black person seeking justice. But on a far deeper level, Dr. King's deed was a prophetic act that asserted an alternative authority to the racist social order and corrupt religious establishment of his day, a sign on behalf of God that brought to fulfillment a revolution to liberate people from the false, oppressive authority of those who were mis-

representing God. Well, Jesus's healing of the spirit-possessed man had that same sort of deeper-level meaning.

The symbolic acts of Jesus and of his followers Martin Luther and Martin Luther King, Jr. challenged, in the name of God, the corrupt structures of their contemporary society in order to liberate persons from the false authority of those who were misrepresenting God. And it is to this same kind of sharp-edged prophetic action that Christ is calling you and me today, to this same kind of action that is not dulled by the complicity of accepting or acquiescing to a status quo that is corrupt.

And on what contemporary social issue is God calling the American church to speak out today with undulled prophetic edge? Well, is it not the issue of our government's desire to go to war?

It was on April 4, 1967, nearly 36 years ago, that the above-mentioned Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. proclaimed from the pulpit of Riverside Church, here in New York City, his evaluation of the government's ongoing war in Vietnam. He called America the "greatest purveyor of violence in the world today." (Quoted in James H. Cone, *Martin & Malcolm & America*, p. 237)

Many supporters of Dr. King's civil rights agenda told him to keep silent about the war, because he was alienating not only President Johnson but also his own financial supporters. But with a sharp prophetic edge, Dr. King replied: "I'm sorry, you don't know me. I don't determine what is right and wrong by looking at the budget of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, or by taking a Gallup Poll of the majority

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"Many supporters of Dr. King's civil rights agenda told him to keep silent about the war, because he was alienating not only President Johnson but also his own financial supporters."

## “Steaks” Are High for Rutgers’s Super “Bowl”

by Adam Keeble

The build-up to Christmas, as you may imagine, results in a lot of hard work for all working at Rutgers. But as the staff proved with their annual jaunt out of the office, they can play just as hard!

Negotiations began in late November for a venue or event which would bring the staff together out of the office ahead of the festive rush and its extra services, bulletins, and visitors.

A “Christmas Party Committee” was arranged, consisting of Bruce Bergquist, Adam Keeble, and Will Manzanet, with one mission to accomplish – identify a suitable afternoon of entertainment which could be enjoyed by all on the staff.

After trips to video arcades, batting cages, and Broadway shows were mulled over, it was decided we would take lunch somewhere on 42nd Street, then head to the bowling alley in Port Authority to let off steam (and work off the meal.)

Now, you would think people working at a church would maintain a high code of ethics, but when the voting took place on which venue we should lunch at – TexMex haven Chevy’s or traditional American fare at Applebees – a scandal erupted the likes of which has not been seen



Dr. Shafer ponders his Secret Santa gift, alongside his wife Margaret

since Florida in the last Presidential election! One respected member of staff took it upon himself to vote SIX times for Applebees, hoping to sway the vote and land a New York strip steak rather than risk a chilli and rice across the street. However, as with Florida, even when the votes were recounted, the winner was still Applebees, and those with a latino palate were left shrugging their shoulders.

Staff were allowed to bring guests, so the turn-out at the restaurant was boosted with the arrival of spouses and offspring. Gifts were exchanged in the Secret Santa program –

where staff had been assigned a person to buy a gift for anonymously. Dermonte is still confused over who bought him the safety goggles and ketchup bottle!

With several casualties taken after the order of hot wings (“Make them really hot!” was the foolish appeal to the waitress taking the order), it was off to bowl.

Within the first few frames, it was evident there were several degrees of skill among those who played.

There were the pros – Dr. Shafer, Will, Bruce, and Patricia Pastas’s husband Guillermo.

There were those who lacked subtlety, but still made a fair showing through their brute strength – Dermonte Alleyne’s son Tristan, and yours truly.

Then there were... those who have never bowled before.

Bowling being the great leveler that it is, scores were soon a by-product of uproarious laughter and friendly support and friendly mocking in equal measure.

Despite some early reservations from some fearful of embarrassing themselves on the lanes, a truly fun time was had by all. (And Dr. Shafer won.)



An enthralled crowd watch as Cheryl Pynch (not pictured) scores her 8th successive strike...

## Presbyterian Welcome Evangelist Sentenced to Six Months

compiled by Adam Keeble

“Hearing the testimonies of my co-defendants was an extraordinary experience

The Reverend Cliff Frasier, evangelist with Presbyterian Welcome (based at Rutgers Church) has been sentenced to six months in a minimum security prison for protesting at a U.S. military base in Columbus, Georgia.

He was also fined \$500. His sentence will begin on May 22 – the date he requested.

On November 17, Reverend Frasier, along with 90 other protestors, performed a “funeral march” onto the Fort Benning Army Base, which houses the controversial Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. He was arrested, and along with the other “second-time crossers”, given his six month sentence.

Upon his request, Cliff will “self-report” to the yet-to-be-named prison facility in the Northeastern U.S.

November 17 was chosen as a significant date by the protestors, as it marks the anniversary of the killing, linked to graduates of the Army's former School of the Americas, of six Jesuit priests in El Salvador.

U.S. Magistrate G. Mallon Faircloth told Cliff and the 40 protestors being sentenced over two days that their court-protected right to demonstrate, protest and express their grievances against their government stops at the Fort Benning boundary line. Crossing that line, as many did during the annual protest when entry is forbidden is criminal trespass. The courts are bound to enforce that law, especially after Sept. 11, 2001, the judge said.

“Times have changed,” he said. “The entry onto a military base is no longer what it used to be.”

The Reverend Frasier suggested Faircloth should be handing down “token sentences for



the token nature of the violations.”

He told the court he chose to cross the boundary in an attempt to walk to the steps of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, where Latin American students continue to “learn the arts of war” as they did when the building housed the School of the Americas (SOA).

He added that the name has changed, but the institution is “doomed to foster the same types of cycles of violence” as its predecessor.

Faircloth suggested terrorist groups could take advantage of opportunities such as the annual SOA Watch protests to gain access to critical areas of Fort Benning and inflict serious damage to vital equipment, soldiers or employees. That's why no one has been allowed to enter the post without stopping for a search since 9/11, he said.

Faircloth also has repeatedly pointed out to the protestors that the School of the Americas was abolished in 2000.

However, he made no acknowledgement that he had

been giving maximum prison sentences to peaceful protestors even prior to 9/11.

Some defendants thanked the judge for their prison sentence, because it helps publicize their cause.

Cliff himself said in an e-mail: “I enjoyed my time in the courtroom!

“It was very rich for me: telling the judge why I had participated in the civil disobedience and having the chance to engage the federal attorney when he chose to cross-examine me.

“Hearing the testimonies of my co-defendants was an extraordinary experience – their stories and arguments were deeply moving and compelling.”

Cliff returned to New York in early February, giving him nearly four months to “live and work while preparing for the next leg of this journey.”

**For the complete transcript of Cliff's statement to the court, see p. 9.**

## Eugene Onegin Coming to Rutgers

Rehearsals are underway for this spring's opera at Rutgers Church – Eugene Onegin.

The play by A.S. Pushkin was first performed in Moscow in 1879. Its romantic tale has been compared in its greatness to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and it has been made into a feature film starring Liv Tyler and Ralph Fiennes. It was set to music by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky in 1878.

In the opulent St. Petersburg of the Empire period, Eugene Onegin is a jaded but dashing aristocrat - a man often lacking in empathy, who suffers from restlessness, melancholy and, finally, regret. Through his best friend Lensky, Onegin is introduced to the young Tatiana. A passionate and virtuous girl, she soon falls hopelessly under the spell of the aloof newcomer and professes her love for him. His refusal of her (in addition to his other amorous intrigues) sets in motion a series of events which culminate in tragedy and thwarted love.

Alexander Sergeyvich Pushkin was born on June 6, 1799. He was a Black Russian poet and the great-grandson of

Abraham Hannibal, an African general and friend of Peter the Great.

As a child, Pushkin displayed a talent for writing poetry. In 1818, he was appointed to Russia's ministry of foreign affairs. By day, he worked for the government; at night, he wrote poetry. Pushkin eventually became Russia's poet laureate. He was the first Russian to earn a living as a poet, writing many controversial works which angered the Russian authorities.

In 1824, he received a pardon (for causing political unrest) from Alexander the First on the condition that his future writings would not provoke any more. A continuous theme throughout his works was his obvious pride in his African heritage.

In 1837 at the age of 38, Pushkin died in a duel over the woman he married.

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born on May 7, 1840 in Vyatka, Russia. At the age of five, he began to study piano, but it wasn't until he was 21, that he began to study music seriously.



Claudia Muzio as Tatiana and Giuseppe de Luca in the title role of the Met's first *Eugene Onegin* in 1919-

While recovering from a suicide attempt he began to write his greatest works: the opera *Eugene Onegin*, the *Violin Concerto*, and the *Fourth Symphony*.

Tchaikovsky drank an unfiltered (unboiled) glass of water, contracted cholera, and died on November 6, 1893.

**R. Wellington Jones will present Eugene Onegin at Rutgers on May 4.**

## A Message of Thanks from Jacquelyn Carpenter

After the annual meeting on Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, I felt I should ask anyone interested in joining the Membership Committee to speak to me, Susan Scherer (soon to be the new chairperson), Alexandra Yu (current member) or Dr. Shafer.

I've been chairperson of this committee for the past three years and found it to be a lot of fun while learning about the diverse religious backgrounds of the many members that joined during that time. I got hooked on the Inquirers Classes and hated to miss any of them.

I started delegating the

classes more during my third year because I knew I would be stepping down as chairperson and member. The Inquirers Classes also let me know why the people in these classes had stepped away from church since high school, college, etc. and what interests the new members had in their need for spiritual growth and helping Rutgers grow.

This committee meets around three times a year to keep the membership list current and to make sure all members are active in the life of Rutgers. We make sure along with the dea-

cons that the sick and shut-in members and friends of Rutgers are taken care of.

We also have to plan the annual Invite-A-Friend Luncheon that has grown tremendously over the last three years. The committee members love meeting and greeting new people every Sunday in the Daniel Russell Room after services and on special occasions.

I want to thank all the members and friends that have worked with me over the past three years, which made this position easy for me.

"[A.S. Pushkin] was the first Russian to earn a living as a poet."

## Lent at Rutgers Church

### by Cheryl Pynch, Associate for Educational Ministries

Many of us think of the forty days of Lent as a time to begin daily private devotions of prayer, spiritual reading or Bible study. We draw up a schedule, buy a book or two, set our alarm clocks to ring half an hour earlier, and then find – like that time we joined the gym – we’re back to old habits by day nine or ten (if not day two or three!).

If that sounds like you, try something different this year. Think of Lent as a time to practice a *weekly* discipline in the company – and with the support – of other Rutgers folk. We’re offering three different opportunities, for different needs, temperaments and schedules. If you’re seeking a time for contemplation and prayer, consider the Sunday morning “mini-retreats.” If you’d welcome a more practical discussion of how to live out your Christian commitment, come to the Wednesday evening class on money and faith. If you’d like a deeper understanding of the Lenten Bible passages, come to the Wednesday noon study of the lectionary. Don’t forget the

Wednesday evening Vesper services at 6:30! (If even a weekly commitment is daunting, come to one or two Services, Bible classes or Sunday gatherings).

**Prayer and Meditation on Sunday Mornings, 9:45-10:45 in the Session Room.** On the first Sunday of Lent (March 9<sup>th</sup>) we’ll begin with a modest discussion of the mystery and practice of prayer -- “the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous person availeth much” (James 5:16) -- led by W. Scott Morton. On the following four Sundays (March 16, 23, 30 and April 6), Charles Amstein will lead us through the book *My Soul in Silence Waits: Meditations on Psalm 62* by Margaret Guenther. Each of these four gatherings will be structured as a brief time of retreat, with silence, prayer, consideration of the Psalm text and discussion. We’ll also consider some Celtic spiritual practices which can help us observe Lent. Each gathering will be independent, so come as you are able to do so.

**“Our Money and Our Faith,” Wednesday evenings, March 12, 19, 26 and April 2 and 9, at 7:15, in the Daniel Russell Room, following Ves-**

**pers.** If the title of this class fills you with feelings of guilt, shame, desire or mild dread, you are not alone! Money is one of the taboo subjects in our culture, yet it is of great importance in all of our lives and can be a powerful expression of our faith. We’ll look at questions such as: Is frugality a Christian virtue? How should I decide what to give to the church? Is it wrong to be “materialistic?” There are no easy answers to any of these questions, so honest (but gentle) discussion will be encouraged and shaming avoided. We’ll also do some reading. Because of the personal nature of the topic, a commitment to all (or nearly all) of the sessions is requested. Led by Cheryl Pynch. Please RSVP: [cheryl@rutgerschurch.com](mailto:cheryl@rutgerschurch.com) or (212) 877-8227, x205.

**Lenten Bible Study, Wednesdays at 12:15 in the Daniel Russell Room.** Come discuss the scripture readings for the following Sunday with the preacher of the week – and your experience of the sermon will be richer. Led by Dr. Shafer and other members of the pastoral staff.

## Meet the New Members of the Rutgers Choir

Marie Myhrberg is the new alto section leader.

Born in Sweden, where she had been a soloist for 7 years in the field of Opera, Operetta and Musical Theater Marie has appeared on the three major stages in Sweden – Stockholm, Gothenberg and Malmoe – before moving to New York City in 1999.

Jeremiah Griffin, the new tenor section leader, holds a Masters in Music from New England

C o n s e r v a t o r y . He has appeared at Carnegie Hall, but his debut came in Italy. He is currently in rehearsal as Mercury for a production of Dido (and Aeneas) beginning its run Feb. 8 at the West End Theatre, at the Church of St. Paul & St. Andrew.

Harry Thompson, Bass Baritone, is a new volunteer Chorister. A former member of the Met Opera, he has sung twice at the New York Pres-

bytery. Harry presented a solo recital at the Presbytery Interim Conference in North Carolina.

He has served for 29 years in the New York City School System. He will be presenting a solo recital here at Rutgers on May 11, 2003. Presently a Professor of Music (Voice) at Essex County College NJ, he is also a member of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra Community Chorus, among other choral institutions.

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opinion.” (Quoted in Cone, p. 238) “Before I was a civil rights leader, I answered a call, and when God speaks, who can but prophesy? I answered a call... to tell the truth as God revealed it to me. No matter how many people disagreed with me, I decided that I was going to tell the truth.” (Quoted in Cone, p. 240)

And the truth that Dr. King felt called to proclaim was that “a nation that spends \$500,000 to kill one enemy soldier in Vietnam and only \$50 to get one of its own citizens out of poverty is a nation that will be destroyed by its own moral contradictions.” (Cone, p. 240) Said Dr. King, “There is something strangely inconsistent about a nation and a press that [will] praise you when you say, ‘Be non-violent toward [a brutal white southern sheriff like] Jim Clark,’ but will curse you when you say, ‘Be non-violent toward little brown Vietnamese children!’” (Quoted in Cone, p. 238) “... cowardice asks the question, ‘is it safe?’ Expediency asks the question, ‘is it politic?’ Vanity asks the question, ‘is it popular?’ But conscience asks the question, ‘is it right?’ And there comes a time when a true follower of Jesus Christ must take a stand that’s neither safe nor politic nor popular but ... must take that stand because it is right.” (Quoted in Cone, pp. 242–243)

You don’t have to have an IQ of 180 to discern the applicability of Dr. King’s sharp-edged words from 1967 to the America of

2003.

Dr. King’s declaration that America is the “greatest purveyor of violence in the world today” finds an amazing resonance in the outcome of a website poll recently conducted by the European edition of *Time* magazine, a poll cited by Nicholas Kristof in his Op-Ed column for the January 31st *New York Times*. The question *Time* asked was this: “Which country poses the greatest danger to world peace in 2003?” And the resultant percentages for the first 318,000 responses were as follows: North Korea, 7%; Iraq, 8%, and the United States, 84%!

Aren’t containment and the deterrence offered by weapons inspection a far more Christ-like response to the evil of Saddam Hussein than a war that would kill thousands of innocent Iraqi children and adults, as well as hundreds of U.S. soldiers?

Maybe you read the exchange in the *Times* occasioned by Joseph Loconte’s Op-Ed piece on January 28th. It bore the title “The Prince of Peace Was a Warrior, Too” and suggested that Jesus *would* be willing to condone violence against Iraq. But let me quote from two answering letters to the editor printed in the January 31st *Times*. First, from the Reverend Bob Edgar, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Christ: “Jesus would be tough.... [But] he sought to forgive and redeem his enemies, even in a time of brutal oppression, steadfastly refusing to lead an insurrection despite pressure from some

of his followers... Jesus, by his example, would call us to find a better way than war.” And then, from the Reverend Tom Reiber-Martinez of Summit, N.J.: “Much like the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Mohandas K. Gandhi, and Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, Jesus went to his death believing that the nonviolent power of love was the only way out of the cycle of violence.”

The Church of the Prophetic Edge is, I believe, one that speaks today as a peacemaker, not as a warmonger. It is one that is willing actively to challenge, in the name of Christ, the authority of all those, including the government, who misrepresent God. May we, the members of Rutgers Church, lift our voices and deploy our bodies in ways that call America to return to the column of “peacemaking nations!”

Our own Reverend Cliff Frasier, Executive Director of Presbyterian Welcome, housed on the third floor of our parish house, has certainly offered us an example of lifting his voice and deploying his body in stout prophetic witness to Christ the Peacemaker.

Last fall, Cliff joined those who spoke and acted in opposition to the training ground for violence operated by our government at Fort Benning, Georgia. It used to be called the School of the Americas, until that name became too infamous. Now it is called by a name so long, cumbersome, and misrepresentative—namely, Western Hemisphere Insti-

“A nation that spends \$500,000 to kill one enemy soldier in Vietnam and only \$50 to get one of its own citizens out of poverty is a nation that will be destroyed by its own moral contradictions.”

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## Dr. Shafer Cut from Religious Radio Show

by David Hinckley of the New York Daily News

The Protestant minister removed by radio station WABC as a co-host of the Sunday-morning program *Religion on the Line* said the decision was "lamentable," and some listeners are asking whether WABC is eliminating one of its relatively few liberal voices.

But the station and the two remaining hosts say *Religion on the Line*, heard 6-9 a.m., will work to remain inclusive.

The 20-year-old show's panel has always included a Protestant minister, a Catholic priest and a rabbi.

WABC program director Phil Boyce has now removed Dr. Byron Shafer of Rutgers Presbyterian Church, leaving Father Paul Keenan and Rabbi Joseph Potasnik as hosts.

Shafer has often taken a more liberal position on political, social and theological matters than the other two, and he suggested that with ratings consistently good, there weren't many other reasons for his removal.

Boyce said ideology is not the issue: "We just feel the show will be less crowded and more consistent with

two hosts."

Keenan said yesterday that "the show will remain as inclusive as possible. That is the challenge for the rabbi and me." He added that he will miss Shafer's "tremendous intellectual and spiritual depth."

Potasnik also wished Shafer well: "I enjoyed our dialogue, even when we disagreed." He said the show may have more guests now and called it "imperative that we report the views of all faiths."

Shafer said that will be harder without a Protestant voice.

"Protestants from the 'mainline' and African-American denominations constitute a large segment of the population," he said. "And in many important ways, our views differ greatly from those of our fellow Christians, the Roman Catholics - on abortion, women in ministry, vouchers and religion and the arts, to mention a very few.

"My views differ from those of Rabbi Potasnik on Israel and the Palestinians, environmental issues, affirmative action and the treatment of home-



Keenan (above) will miss Dr. Shafer's "spiritual depth" on the radio show *Religion on the Line*.

less persons."

Shafer suggested WABC consider increasing the panel by adding a Muslim representative.

"It's always been very difficult to represent every faith," Boyce said. "Even as it was, one person can't represent all Protestants. So now we'll have Father Keenan as a Christian and Rabbi Potasnik on the Jewish side - and of course, opportunities for everyone else to call in."

Shafer said he'll wait and see.

"WABC may find many listeners who think as I do turning away from *Religion on the Line*," he said. "Sadly, that may not upset Mr. Boyce."

## On a Lighter Note...

A tough old cowboy once told his grandson that if he wanted to live a long life, the secret was to sprinkle some gunpowder on his oatmeal every morning.

The grandson did this religiously and he lived to the age of 93.

When he died he left 14 children, 28 grandchildren, 35 great-grandchildren, and a fifteen foot hole in the wall of the crematorium.

\*\*\*\*\*

A little girl from Minnesota came home from Sunday School with a frown on her face.

"I'm not going back there anymore," she announced with finality. "I don't like the Bible they keep

teaching us."

"Why not?" asked her astonished mother.

"Because," said the little girl, "the Bible is always talking about St. Paul, and it never once mentions us in Minneapolis."

\*\*\*\*\*

A Christian couple felt it important to own an equally Christian pet. So, they went shopping. At a kennel specializing in this particular breed, they found a dog they liked quite a lot. When they asked the dog to fetch the Bible, he did it in a flash.

When they instructed him to look up Psalm 23, he complied equally fast, using his paws with dexterity. They were impressed, purchased the animal,

and went home.

That night they had friends over. They were so proud of their new dog and his major skills, they called the dog and showed off a little. The friends were impressed, and asked whether the dog was able to do any of the usual dog tricks, as well. This stopped the couple cold, as they hadn't thought about "normal" tricks.

Well, they said, "Let's try this out." Once more they called the dog, and they clearly pronounced the command, "Heel!"

Quick as a wink, the dog jumped up, put his paw on the man's forehead, closed his eyes in concentration, and bowed his head...

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Continued from page 8 >>

tute for Security Cooperation—that no one can ever remember it. Anyway, soldiers and militia still come there from Latin America for training and then return to their native countries to carry on more efficiently the reigns of violence there.

### What Do You Think?

1. Did you ever think you'd be your parents' parent?
2. Have you every thought while watching a dance recital that you've seen that same routine by another dance company?
3. What's the purpose of ordering a diet drink with your dinner when you're having a steak and potatoes?
4. Take your watch off for one day a week and see if your stress level and blood pressure go down.
5. Constantly staring up the street or train track doesn't make the bus or train come any faster.
6. When you get your luggage off the baggage claim turntable in the airport and you see some of the same luggage every flight, do you think it could be the same people going on the same trips you're on?
7. Who loves you the most? Your mother, father, husband, wife, siblings or children?
8. You can't have an emergency when you go to the hospital's emergency room.
9. Money can't make your health better nor your life longer.
10. Is a person born with compassion and nurturing or is it taught?

\*Til next time, JMC

Last fall, in protest of our government's operating of this war facility, Cliff and a number of other peace activists committed a non-violent act of trespass onto army property. On January 28th, Cliff was sentenced to six months in a federal minimum-security prison camp for his Christ-like challenge to established authority. His term of imprisonment will begin in May.

Were we as a congregation to display the same type of courage and conviction as Cliff Frasier has shown, then it might truthfully be said of us that we are vigorous followers of Jesus who are willing, in the name of God, to cut through the crap in order to confront and contest the current corrupt order of things. Then we might rightfully become known as a church with a prophetic edge.

There is still time to speak out on the war issue by e-mailing the President at: [president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov), or by writing him at: 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Zip 20500, or by calling his telephone "opinion" line at: 202-456-1111,

Monday through Friday from 9 to 5.

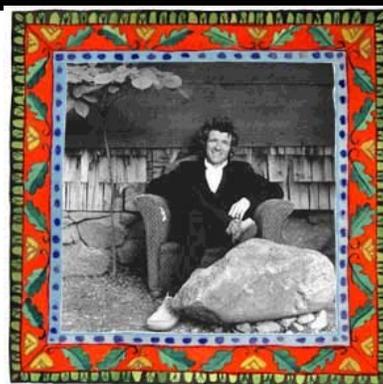
Various anti-war demonstrations are being organized for the near future. [The big one took place on Saturday, February 15th.] Speak to Cheryl Pynch for more information, and plan to attend one of these. Become an active part of Christ's Church of the Prophetic Edge.

Let us pray:

Gracious God, You have called us to speak Your Word and to act out Your truth.

Sometimes Your Word is like fire in our bones. But most times we find it difficult to speak and act with a prophetic edge.

Forgive the times we shut Your Word up within us. And help us both to tell forth Your truth in love and to heal the brokenness of our world. Through Christ we pray this. Amen.



**Dan Zanes In Concert  
at Rutgers Church  
Saturday, May 10th**

**2 performances 11:00 am and 2:00 pm  
Fliers and details will be available end of March  
Tickets: \$15 per person  
Children under 1 year free.**

## The Reverend Cliff Frasier's Statement to U.S. Magistrate G. Mallon Faircloth

I was ordained as a United Church of Christ minister in 1997, at The Riverside Church in New York City. Currently I serve 14 Presbyterian churches in New York City as their Director and Minister of Outreach and Inclusion for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons.

Your Honor, I have stipulated to the fact of crossing onto Ft. Benning last November 17, and I believe my non-violent act was not criminal in nature, and not to the degree worthy of incarceration or other penalty.

Compelled by my conscience, as well as by religious laws and international laws, under which we all stand, and consistent with WHINSEC's new mission statement which says its purpose is to "promote . . . knowledge and understanding of United States customs and traditions" (and with the understanding that non-violent civil disobedience is a cherished and time-honored United States tradition, and so wishing to embody this part of the school's mission statement), I chose to walk to the steps of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, "WHINSEC", in order to memorialize the thousands of civilians killed by soldiers who learn arts-of-war on that site.

I respect that it is your sworn duty, your Honor, to uphold U.S. law, which includes the class-B federal misdemeanor of trespass. However, my walking onto Ft. Benning was my best attempt to be a responsible citizen in troubling times. I was in New York City on the day of the terrorist attacks, and I witnessed its chaos and destruction, and I want our country and world to be safe from such horrible violence. I am troubled, your Honor, by knowing that my country and yours is the only nation in the world found-guilty by the World Court for international terrorism. In 1986 the United States was ordered to pay reparations for unlawful use of force in Latin America – reparations we still have not paid.

Human Rights Watch has just issued a report that says "Washington has waged war on terrorism as if human rights were not a constraint" and warns that international support for our anti-terrorism campaign is weakening because of U.S. human rights violations [NYT Jan 15, 2003]. My intent was and is to do everything within the American tradition to improve the human rights record of the United States, including voting, writing to my legislators, and, when necessary, participating in the highly regarded American tradition of non-violent civil disobedience.

Your honor, WHINSEC is a combat training school which instructs foreign military personnel in the use of lethal force and then releases these personnel to the command of foreign armies. WHINSEC trains soldiers who do not remain under American command. Even when Latin American armies are connected to human rights abuses of the poor, even then WHINSEC continues training these personnel. Even when the human rights abuses against civilians by these armies are well documented, as they are currently in Columbia, even then WHINSEC continues this policy of training-and-releasing foreign soldiers with no reliable way to track them or hold them accountable in courts of law.

We tax-payers support an institution that leads to human rights violations overseas.

Your Honor, I know WHINSEC claims, by pointing to its mission-statement and to some of its courses, that its purpose is to promote human rights. But if WHINSEC is actually a human-rights school, why are most of its courses in methods for the deployment of lethal force? If WHINSEC is actually a human-rights school, why does WHINSEC receive no recognition for being such by other human rights organizations, and why aren't there human rights groups rushing to WHINSEC's defense? If WHINSEC is a human rights school, why does WHINSEC approve (and here I assume its administration does approve, at least tacitly . . . ) of giving maximum penalties and prison sentences to peaceful, non-violent citizens who wish to hold a funeral service for the thousands who have been killed or tortured at the hands of persons who trained at that site? Would a human rights school support maximum prison sentences for class-B misdemeanors of non-violent trespassing? Would not a human rights school call for minimum sentences or no sentences?

Your Honor, I know you consider WHINSEC to be an improvement over its predecessor school, the School of the Americas, located on the same site. I agree with you, your honor, that WHINSEC has a better curriculum than the SOA. But if WHINSEC is now a human rights school, why has Amnesty International just recommended that WHINSEC be shut down while being investigated? If WHINSEC is a human rights school, why has WHINSEC not called for a full-scale investigation of its predecessor school, the SOA? Given the seriousness of the charges and well-documented connections between SOA graduates and human rights atrocities in Latin America, would not a credible human rights school at least embrace the idea of an investigation? Given the seriousness of the charges against its predecessor school, would not WHINSEC call for supervision entirely under the authority and guidance of Congress, rather than the Department of Defense?

Your Honor, it appears as if WHINSEC is not a human rights school. It appears as if WHINSEC is a combat school for Latin American soldiers who are then released to serve under the command of foreign armies. It appears as if WHINSEC is determined to continue this policy and so it seems as if WHINSEC is doomed to foster the same cycles of violence that have been well-connected to the graduates of the SOA.

My prayer is that, because of the non-violent actions of my sisters and brothers, in which I join, and the actions of those in the past and in years to come, that WHINSEC will become a human rights school. My prayer is that when it does it will act like a human rights school by investigating its predecessor school and embracing complete congressional oversight. My prayer is that, the chain-of-non-violence that processes every year onto Ft. Benning will inspire WHINSEC to become a human rights school, and that doing so will create greater security for ourselves, our children and grandchildren.

When WHINSEC finally makes the transition to becoming a human rights school, one clue, one sign, will be when it stops giving its tacit support to maximum prison sentences on non-violent persons for misdemeanors of trespass. Your honor, you could help make the case that WHINSEC has become a human rights school by dismissing all of the cases before you this week, or by giving token sentences that reflect the token nature of the action. WHINSEC could then issue a public statement affirming your leniency which, I believe, more than anything, would send a message and establish its credentials as a human rights school.

Your honor, the denomination in which I now serve, the Presbyterian Church, voted in 1994 to call for an end to U.S. military training of Latin American military personnel. I am responding to that call, and ask that you and others join with me.

## Rutgers Gives More For Fight Against AIDS

### by Cheryl Pyrch

Last October, Laurel Brevoort, Renee Lord and Cheryl Pyrch attended a seminar on AIDS sponsored by the Presbyterian UN Office. At that conference, we learned that the General Assembly has called on congregations to give 0.7% of their income to fight diseases of poverty in developing countries: AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

The 0.7% figure comes from a goal set by the United Nations in 1970 – before the AIDS crisis – that urged industrialized nations to give 0.7% of their Gross National Product (GNP) to developing countries in need of aid. The General Assembly called upon the US government to honor that 0.7% goal, as the US now gives only 0.1% of its GNP to overseas development, the smallest percentage of any developed country. The GA called on us, as congregations, to lead by example.

In November, the Session decided to meet the challenge. Voting on a joint proposal of the Peace and Social Justice Network and the Christian Education and Benevolence Committees, the Session agreed, beginning in 2003, to set aside 1.0% of the church budget for PC (USA) sponsored projects addressing the AIDS crisis in Africa. The Session felt Rutgers should give more than 0.7% because we have been blessed with more resources than most congregations: who else can count Chase Bank as a tenant?

In January, again voting on a motion by the three committees, the Session decided to give to the following “Extra Commitment Opportunities” of the PC(USA). These projects are sponsored by our denomination in partnership with churches in Africa, and the church can be confident that the



Former South African President Nelson Mandela addresses guests at the unveiling of the second series of his art works on Robben Island, Cape Town, South Africa, Friday, Feb. 7, 2003. The work at left shows the imprints of the hands of children affected by HIV surrounding a print of his left hand.

money is going to those who are in need. One percent of the 2003 church budget is \$13,500.

#### **\$10,000 to the project “AIDS Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Africa.”**

Gifts to this account go to projects working with children who have lost one or both parents to AIDS to help provide for their basic needs including food, clothing, education and medical care. People who work with children are also trained in ways to best support them.

**\$3,500 to AIDS Mother-to-Child Transmission Prevention.** Gifts to this account are used for programs to educate women about MTCT prevention as well as voluntary counseling and testing and Niverapine intervention. Donations will support programs in Christian hospitals and congre-

gation-based programs in Zambia and other countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

*A note on the “Namitome Children’s Project.”* You may remember from previous articles in Renewal that two years ago the congregation began exploring a project to provide scholarships for children to attend elementary school in Namitome, Zambia. This project was brought to our attention by Mbumwae Suba, a former nursery staff person at Rutgers. Ms. Suba and the Namitome Children’s Committee, headed by Elinor Bowles under the auspices of the Peace and Social Justice Network, worked diligently to find a way to channel the money. Unfortunately, because of logistical problems and

“We have been blessed with more resources than most congregations: who else can count Chase Bank as a tenant?”

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## News from the Annual Meeting . . . .

*Hellos and Goodbyes to Elders and Deacons.*

The congregation elected, by unanimous ballot, Laurel Brevoort, Umberto Fadani (re-election), So Young Lee, Frances Manners and Beverly Thompson to the Board of Deacons, class 2006. Umberto and Laurel – who served as a deacon at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church – will be installed on February 23rd. We look forward to the ordination of So Young, Frances and Beverly, who have been called as church officers for the first time. We said good-bye (temporarily, we hope) and thank you to Deacons Rodine “Bobby” Wallace, Joan Keener, Ruth Munson and Lisa Pinto. Joan, Ruth and Lisa were promptly elected for at-large positions on the next nominating committee! Richard Reece will also serve on that committee, with William Donnell and Jeannie Santiago as alternates.

The congregation also elected, by unanimous ballot, Nora Lidell, Massimo Maglione (re-election), Vera Roberts and David Robinson to the Session, class of 2006. Nora, Massimo and Vera are Session veterans who will be installed on February 23rd; David Robinson, a relatively new member who hails from North Carolina, will be ordained. The congregation said thank you to three very active

members who will be retiring from Session in March: Jacqueline Carpenter, Lynne Morris and Richard Reece. Richard has taken on the job of choir librarian; Jackie and Lynne will also continue to be active in many areas of church life. Lynne Morris was presented with flowers and a special note of appreciation for her many, many years on Session and for serving as the Clerk – 8 years as Clerk, and 13 attending Session meetings.

The congregation voted, again by unanimous ballot, to elect R. Wellington Jones (for his second term) and Maureen Knapp to the Board of Trustees. We said good-bye with thanks to Juliet Pritner for her faithful work on the Board.

Thank you also to the nominating committee: Nora Lidell, Berit Ou Yang, Vera Mowry Roberts, Susan Scherer, David Taylor, Mark Young and Christine Gorman (chair).

**Dr. Shafer Granted Sabbatical.**

On the recommendation of the Personnel Committee, the congregation voted to grant Dr. Shafer an eight-week sabbatical in 2003. Dr. Shafer will be spending four weeks in India. He and Margaret Shafer will be serving the Church of North India for much of that time. He is also looking forward to catching up on reading. He will be taking two weeks in August, and

the other six weeks in October/November. Arrangements have been made for the staff to handle administrative matters during his absence, and the Rev. Charles Amstein will be taking on additional hours (with compensation) to handle pastoral needs. The pastoral staff will be preaching during those weeks.

**And the Organ . . . .**

Although this may be news to some members, due to the skill of George Davey and Marshall Williamson in “covering,” our venerable organ is in sore need of repair. We have been told by both organ companies and impartial experts that if the organ is not fixed soon, we will lose it – indeed, every week brings a new problem with the instrument. Byron Shafer, George Davey and Bruce Berquist – all quick studies – have been learning the ins and outs of organ restoration, as they have listened to bids and assessments from different companies. They have been keeping the Session informed of their research, and will be presenting formal proposals to the Session shortly. The one constant, in these assessments, is that organ restoration is expensive – in the hundreds of thousands of dollars for the restorations.

The Pastor and Session will be reporting more to the congregation soon!

We have been told by both organ companies and impartial experts that if the organ is not fixed soon, we will lose it.

## AIDS ... Continued from page 15 >>

lack of structural support in Zambia, the Committee - in consultation with Ms. Suba - came to the conclusion that the money could not be channeled in a way that would be in keep-

ing with denominational guidelines. Therefore, on the recommendation of the Namitome Children's Committee, the \$1,400 set aside for the project was added to the \$10,000 com-

mitment to the ECO “Aids and Vulnerable Children in Africa.” Please continue to keep the children of Namitome (and all of Zambia) in your prayers.

# Lenten 2003 movies at Rutgers

236 West 73<sup>rd</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor (212) 877-8227

## Thursday Evenings at 7:00pm

sponsored by the Board of Deacons

**Free Admission**

**Hosted by**

**DR. ROGER FRANKLIN**



### Mar. 13th • Houdini (1953) Color, 107 mins.

Tony Curtis gives a winning performance as the great **Houdini**, who from his beginnings to his international famous feat of escaping from a locked trunk in an ice-jammed river, emerged as the world's most captivating magician and escape artist. **Janet Leigh** co-stars.

### Mar. 20th • The Big Broadcast of 1938 B&W, 91 mins.

## 200th Film

Movies at Rutgers celebrates its 200th film since its inception on July 3, 1997, with tonight's 4-star musical. The story of ocean liners involved in a race on the high seas showcases the artists as they entertain the passengers. **W.C. Fields, Bob Hope, Martha Raye, Dorothy Lamour**, Met Opera Wagnerian soprano **Kirsten Flagstad**, and **Leif Erickson** are featured.

### Mar 27th • The Great Waltz (1938) B&W, 102 mins

Lavish cinematic rhapsody based on the life of Viennese composer **Johann Strauss**, details "The Waltz King's" rise from *biertentens* to ornate palaces. Starring **Luise Rainer, Fernand Gravet, Miliza Korjus** with **Hugh Herbert** and **Lionel Atwill**.

### April 3rd and 10th • Jesus (2000) Color, 174 mins.

The life and times of **Jesus of Nazareth**, from His humble beginnings as a carpenter to His destiny as the Son of God, are vividly retold in this two-part epic mini-series. *Shown over two nights.*

## Rutgers Church Says: Give the UN More Time!

At the Annual Meeting of the Congregation in January, the following motion passed: "*that the Congregation refer to the Session our concern about war and peace in the world, particularly between the United States and Iraq, and that the Session be asked to recommend appropriate action.*" On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Session voted to send the following letter to the President, with copies to Senators Schumer and Clinton, Representative Nadler and the Presbytery of New York City:

*Dear Mr. President,*

Recognizing that weapons of mass destruction are a menace to peace on earth, and that the violence of war is rarely an equitable solution to conflict, the Session of Rutgers Presbyterian Church in New York City calls on the President of the United States to work through the United Nations and the current inspection process to rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction.

*Sincerely,*

*Lynne Morris  
Clerk of Session*

In addition, the Session asked that the signboard outside the church display the message "Give the UN More Time on Iraq." It instructed the Worship Committee to provide for appropriate services in the event of a declaration of war. It commissioned the Peace and Social Justice Network to organize members for the February 15<sup>th</sup> march in NYC, and to join with other groups who are working to have the City Council of New York pass a resolution against war in Iraq (something done by numerous City Councils already, including Chicago).

### **Rutgers Church has taken a stand!**

(If you are interested in the polity lesson behind this, read on):

Dr. Shafer can say whatever he wants from the pulpit. Members can exercise their rights as citizens to demonstrate, write letters, etc., and may identify themselves as members of Rutgers Church. The Peace and Social Justice Network can endorse events or take stands as a committee of the church. But the only body authorized to speak *on behalf* of the church is the Session, just as the General Assembly is the only body authorized to speak on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Of course, when the Session takes a stand it's understood that not every single person in the church may agree with it, just as when the GA passes a resolution there are always folks who differ. But by empowering the Session to speak on behalf of the congregation, the church is able to speak out during extraordinary times like these, and to lend its collective voice to the call for peace.

## Rutgers Presbyterian Church

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## Rutgers Raises Benevolence Commitment (and what is benevolence giving anyway?) by Cheryl Pyrch

“Benevolence” is the money that Rutgers gives to people and causes outside of its walls: the Broadway Food Pantry, the Children’s Defense Fund, Vellore Medical College in India, One Great Hour of Sharing, the More Light Network, Presbyterian Welcome, and the General Mission Fund of the PC (USA) --- among others. Benevolence giving is the way we help people in need whom we cannot touch directly with our programs. It’s the way we support movements for justice within the Church and work in partnership with congregations around the world. It’s the

way we live out the belief that our money is not our own. It belongs to God, and we are called to use it for the good of the larger church and the world, not only for the witness that we do from 73<sup>rd</sup> Street and Broadway (important as that is!).

This fall, the Christian Education Committee, the Peace and Social Justice Network, and the Benevolence Committee came together to talk about ways the church could address the urgent needs in our world. Educational forums, letter writing campaigns, and Moments for Mission were some obvious ways – and giving more

money was another. The three committees decided to propose to Session a yearly increase in benevolence giving: from 15% of the church budget in 2002 (up from 10% in 1997), to 31% by the year 2010. It was suggested that one percent of the total church budget go to projects that address the crisis of AIDS in Africa. (*To learn more, see the article on the 0.7% Commitment*). After discussion, the Session voted unanimously for the proposal: Rutgers will be putting more of its treasure – and therefore its heart - towards the needs of others.