



## 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.”**

**Pentecost 2004**

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RUTGERS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# Renewal

## From the Pastor’s Desk: One Nation, Under God

The Reverend Byron E. Shafer

The United States of America—“Superpower of the World!”

The title “Superpower of the World” seems to fill most Americans with a feeling of pride and satisfaction. But I don’t share that feeling at all. No, the title “Superpower of the World” fills me with a feeling of fear and trembling for our souls.

It was a little over a century ago that the British historian Lord Acton observed: “Power tends to corrupt; and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” And throughout my adult life, I’ve taken Lord Acton’s warning with utmost seriousness, for he was a scholar who knew not only his history but also his Bible.

The New Testament depicts a truly corrupt superpower, the Roman Empire, over against the people of the early Christian church, who were politically powerless. In that situation, apostles could justifiably counsel Christians to be “in the world but not of it,” for how could God hold disenfranchised persons such as the early Christian community accountable for the political and economic systems of their day? Such systems were far beyond Christians’ influence, let alone their control.

But the same counsel—to be “in the world but not of it”—cannot in good conscience be given to modern American Christians. For the worldly circum-

stances of the early Christian church were far different from ours today. Christians within the Roman Empire might have been politically and economically powerless, but Christians within America are politically and economically powerful. Early Christians might not have been held accountable by God for the political and economic systems of their time, but the same cannot be true for us today. Surely we who do have political and economic power are held accountable by God for the political and economic systems of our time, for these systems lie within our influence and control.

So we American Christians bear the burden of having to exercise our political and economic power in ways that are morally responsible.

Now, it is the Old Testament that narrates the story of a people’s struggle to exercise political and economic power responsibly, the story of ancient Israel’s centuries-long attempt to wrestle with what it means to live as “one nation under God.”

Take, for example, I Kings 21:1–21a, which is set in the 9th-century B.C. It describes a textbook example of power’s corrupting influence. Ahab and Jezebel are the king and queen of Israel, a nation striving to exist under the law of God, a nation in which God has established the role of the prophet as a

check-and-balance to the political and economic power of the king, so that whenever power becomes corrupt the prophet can call upon the king and the nation to repent and to return to acts of justice, to deeds of righteousness.

Yet within the space of just 15 verses, Ahab and Jezebel break not just one or two of the Ten Commandments, but *five* of them: they *covet* their neighbor Naboth’s field and then suborn perjury (that is, *false witness*) against him, inducing a *wrongful use of the name of the Lord* in order to bring about the judicial *murder* of Naboth, after which they expropriate (that is to say, *steal*) the property they have been coveting.

To counter this blatantly corrupt use of the monarchs’ power, God sends the prophet Elijah to confront, accuse, and pronounce

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## One Nation, Under God

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judgment upon the king, and Elijah proceeds to do just that.

Turning next to Amos 8:4–8, which is set 100 years later in the Israel of the 8th-century B.C., we find there a prophetic indictment focused not so much on the corrupt political power of Israel's monarchs as on the corrupt economic power of Israel's upper and middle classes. Through corrupt business practices, the wealthy have been trampling on the needy and bringing the poor of the land to economic ruin. Indeed the well-to-do have been so greedy that they spend even their days of sabbath rest dreaming up how *profit* can be gained from the next day's extortionary practices.

Well, a *prophet* does come, but not the kind spelled with an “P” but rather the kind spelled with a “ph.” For God wants to pronounce judgment on these peoples' abuse of power and sends the prophet Amos to announce to them that soon the land will be mourning for those who have dwelled in it. And sure enough, fewer than thirty years after Amos speaks these words, the nation of Israel is, in fact, destroyed by an invading army.

Israel tried to live as “one nation under God,” and the temptations confronting it were not even those of a superpower, for Israel had no such status in the world of its time. But still Israel's elite were corrupted by the relatively small amount of power that they did have.

“Superpower of the world”—now, as I said, that's a title that should strike fear and trembling into our hearts. For if “*power* tends to corrupt,” how much more corrupting must “*superpower*” be?

Is it possible for American Christians to avoid

the corrupting influence of political and economic power, or at least to keep that corrupting influence to a minimum, so that at the end of our lifetime we can report to God that the measure of justice and righteousness in the land increased on our watch?

There is, I think, no simple answer to this all-important question. Part of the way to be able to chart a course of justice and righteousness through the midst of exercising power certainly lies in entrusting ourselves to the grace and mercy of God. And a *second* part of the way lies in drawing actively on the resources of the only power that is beyond all corruption—the power of the Holy Spirit, the power bestowed on us in baptism and renewed in us each Day of Pentecost. And a *third* part of the way lies in governing all our actions by the moral principle of “equal justice for all.”

It was the great American Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971) who reminded us of this third aspect of the path for using power responsibly. (Niebuhr taught at Union Theological Seminary, right here in New York City.) In his book *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, published in 1932, Niebuhr argued that there's one moral principle above all others that needs to be kept at the heart of American politics and economics, one principle above all others that needs to be kept as both the point of orientation and the firmly fixed goal of American politics and economics. And that's the principle of equal justice for all of God's children.

That principle was enunciated at the very beginning of our nation's existence in the Declaration of Independence, whose passage by the Continental Congress we will soon again be celebrating.

That Declaration of July 4, 1776, states: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men...”

But here we are some 228 years later, and our nation is still not close to success in institutionalizing the self-evident truths stated in the Declaration, still not close to institutionalizing the fundamental moral principle for American politics and economics lifted up for us by Reinhold Niebuhr, still not close to institutionalizing the principle of equal justice for all of God's children.

Clearly, if we are ever to achieve the goal of equal justice for all, then, at the very minimum, we must be constantly engaged, first, in identifying those things that perpetuate the privileges of powerful persons like ourselves, and, second, in identifying those ways by which we ourselves can *eliminate our own privileges* so as to advance our nation toward political and economic justice for *all*.

To prompt us to the elimination of our own privileges, we must, among other things, encourage prophetic voices in the church to speak critically and persuasively to our power—challenging our status quo, naming our sins, calling on us to take a stand against evil, and calling on us to turn that which is moral into that which actually happens.

To prompt us to the elimination of our own privileges, what are some of the things that a modern Elijah or Amos would say to us today?

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Niebuhr argued that there's one moral principle above all others that needs to be kept at the heart of American politics and economics...the principle of equal justice for all of God's children.

## Building the Blessed City Together

by Elder Cheryl Pyrch, Associate for Educational Ministries

38,000

That's the number of people who sleep in the city shelters each night: over 16,000 children, 13,000 adults in families, and 9,000 single adults. That number does not include homeless people who sleep outside of the shelters, nor does it indicate the total number of people who will experience homelessness this year. It does not include the many men, women, and children who live precariously, only one paycheck or one misfortune away from losing their homes.

That number came up often on Thursday and Friday, May 14 and 15, as representatives from many faiths gathered together to worship, pray, and protest (politely) the lack of affordable housing in New York City at the 20th Annual Convocation on Homelessness and Housing, called "Building the Blessed City Together." Sponsored by the Interfaith Assembly of the Homeless, participants also had constructive suggestions for ending homelessness and built a small "house" in City Hall Park to illustrate the Assembly's public policy platform. One wall of the house was made of panels listing ways to increase permanent housing; a second wall listed policies needed to

prevent homelessness; a third wall illustrated the need for human rights, emergency and support services; and the fourth wall showed ways to provide employment and income support. On top of the house were beautiful glass tiles representing each member of the Interfaith Assembly—including Rutgers Church. Along with our glass tile, Byron Shafer, Suzanne Spears, Laura Jervis, DeYan Jervis McCarthy, Lynne Morris, Gladys Morris, and Cheryl Pyrch represented Rutgers at the convocation. It was an informative and spiritual experience.



(Pictures by The Reverend Lisa Hill)

Now that the convocation is over, what is Rutgers doing, and what can you do?

- **Volunteer in our shelter or cook at our Thursday dinner program.** The shelter is one of those emergency and support services—the third wall—needed so desperately by people struggling out of homelessness. It's not hard, and we can find you a partner! Please speak to Jeremiah Rosario (Moderator of the Board of Deacons) or Dermonte Alleyne (Shelter Coordinator). On

Thursday evenings, we offer dinner and a movie to our neighbors, some who are without homes. Talk to Ulla Farmer for details.

- **Give generously to Broadway Community.** Money or food that you put in the large baskets during the offering provides food for those in need, many of whom are homeless.

- **Learn more about our benevolence (mission) commitments.** In addition to belonging to the Assembly, Rutgers

has committed \$30,000 over three years to the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren project, an apartment building being developed specifically for these important (and vulnerable) families. Presbyterian Senior Services is spearheading that project—Dave Taylor is the Executive Director of PSS. We are also a founding organization and continued supporter of the Michalski Residence for people with AIDS, run by the West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing. Laura Jervis can tell you more.

- **Write a letter** to your city councilperson or the mayor supporting one of the Public Policy Priorities suggested by the Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing ([www.iahnyc.org](http://www.iahnyc.org)).

- **Come to a Peace & Social Justice Network meeting** and help think of creative ways we can work to end homelessness. We meet on the second Sunday of most months, after church. Pizza provided.



## Another Total Triumph!

by Marshall Williamson, Minister of Music *emeritus* and lecturer and coach at the Juilliard School



Dr. Shafer as  
"The Leader";  
picture by Robert  
Chang

The annual concert by R. Wellington Jones to benefit the Christopher Roberts Homeless Shelter took place on Sunday, May 2. Once again, the Rutgers sanctuary was filled to capacity. Metropolitan Opera diva Lucine Amara was in attendance. Lynne Morris presided with her customary aplomb.

Mr. Jones played works by Bach/Silotti and Albéniz with lovely tone and flair for the Spanish style. Mr. Jones seems to play less each year; he should play more.

Anna Maria Mackey gave a rousing account of

"Ocean, Thou Mighty Monster" from *Oberon* by von Weber. Not since the young Kirsten Flagstad have I heard this great aria sung with such virtuosic grandeur; it was thrilling.

After the intermission, Dr. Vera Mowry Roberts introduced special guest narrator, the Honorable C. Virginia Fields, Manhattan Borough President. Ms. Fields read the entire plot of Gounod's *Faust* (based on Goethe's drama). The prison scene and final trio was splendidly sung by Marguerite Sutherland, Alburtt Rhodes, and William Himmelbauer (who sounded like The Devil).

Excerpts from Verdi's *Rigoletto* comprised the bulk of the program. Veteran baritone Abe Polakoff sang brilliantly and gave a moving portrayal of the title role. Kathryn Thompson was a silvery-voiced Gilda, and Edward Bruce Stevenson sang a stylish Duke. All three sang their big arias superbly. Louise Mike showed her contralto's voice to advantage as Giovanna, and Ladie Whitaker added a bit of spice as Maddalena. Stephen

I. Whitley gave a sturdy performance as Marullo.

The Reverend Charles A. Amstein narrated highlights from Kurt Weill's *Down in the Valley*. Our pastor, the Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer, looking just like Lil' Abner, sang the role of the leader with firm tone and good diction; his legato continues to improve. Sharon Folkes and Clarence McMillan were expressive as the pantomime dancers. The chorus (superbly prepared by Alburtt Rhodes) sang with great excitement. R. Wellington Jones conducted with vigor and spirit.

Special mention must be made of pianist/conductor Nicholas Fox, who held the entire program together with his skillful playing and superb musicianship. Bravo!

The performers in this concert ranged in age from 17 to 82—rather amazing. When 17-year-old Briana McDew played those four cymbal crashes as the finale, I had to say: another total triumph!

You can revisit the opera anthology, or watch it for the first time, Wednesdays in June from 12:30—1:00 pm on *New Ventures* (Time Warner Cable 56 or RCN 108).

## Wellington Jones 'Anthology' Superb in Song

by Raoul Abdul, reproduced from the May 6-12, 2004, issue of *The New York Amsterdam News*

On Sunday afternoon, R. Wellington Jones brought a program entitled "An Anthology of Opera" to Rutgers Presbyterian Church on 73rd Street near Broadway. This benefit event was for the Christopher Roberts Homeless Shelter. It attracted a large and wildly enthusiastic audience.

Born in Harlem, Jones is a retired public school teacher holding both a Bachelor and Master of Arts degree from New York University. He is also a distinguished concert pianist. He is the recipient of many honors, including the Mayor's Citation for Achievement in Art and Music.

As a prelude to Sunday's concert, he played piano solos by Bach and Albéniz with highly refined musicianship. This was followed by a magnificent performance of the aria "Ocean, Thou Mighty Monster" from von Weber's *Oberon* by Soprano Anna Marie Mackey and pianist Nicholas Fox.



The chorus in Kurt Weill's  
"Down in the Valley";  
picture by Robert Chang

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## Notes from the March for Women's Lives

[On Sunday, April 25, 2004, Rutgers member Alice Hudson traveled to Washington, D.C., to participate in the March for Women's Lives, in which organizers estimate 1.15 million people marched. Alice shared these thoughts with us:]

The march was terrific—I am very pleased to have gone.

I was impressed with the number of men supporting wives, daughters, and girlfriends. And the number of daughters and moms together. And the number of older women who said they were here 30 years ago for Roe vs. Wade. Some said they were marching for friends or relatives who had had back alley abortions and were then never able to have children. Some were there because of the cancellation of US funds to UN organizations teaching sex education and birth control, called the “global gag order.” Some were there because of the potential 5/4 vote on the Supreme Court re: Roe vs. Wade. Lots of reasons, lots of women.

We found a bench, sat on the sidelines in the shade, and had a blast watching everyone else walking, talking, cheering, and sitting on the grass.

(Continued from page 4)

The balance of the program included excerpts from Gounod's *Faust*, Verdi's *Rigoletto*, and Kurt Weill's *Down in the Valley*. These were enhanced by narrations by Lynne Morris, the Honorable C. Virginia Fields, and the Reverend Charles A. Amstein. The accompanist was Nicholas Fox.

The quality of the singing was equal to what one might hear in any given evening at the New York City Opera at Lincoln Center. Opera buffs know that this is indeed high praise. As to

It was amazing to see how a demonstration like this is organized. Thousands of signs, placards, ribbons, and tee shirts are pre-printed and handed out all morning. Groups line up in assigned locations on the mall. Religious groups, seemingly mostly Hadassah!, were in sec-



Picture from Planned Parenthood:  
<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/march/photos.asp>

tion C-15-16. Groups gathered all morning, and at 1:00 pm the march started. Group A-1 marched off, followed by A-2, etc. By the time group A-1 had finished the march and returned to the Capitol end of the Mall, the final groups had yet to leave the west end of the Mall! 3 hours later!

the acting, which had to be minimal in such a small space, there were a few awkward moments.

In the final trio from *Faust*, the singers gave a fine account of the tricky score. Marguerite Sutherland sang Marguerite's music with clarity. Alburtt Rhodes' Faust displayed a well-focused Echt lyric tenor sound. Bass Bill Himmelbauer was a rich-voiced Mephistopheles, and the evil nuances were clearly accented.

The unusually large chunks of *Rigoletto* were extremely well-sung by Kathryn Thompson (Gilda), Edward Bruce Stevenson

I looked and looked for a PC(USA) delegation but never found them. The Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights was there with wonderful posters. The Unitarians were all over this issue, hundreds of them. And Hadassah! was there in the hundreds. Also, Congregation Rodeph Sholom must have had 50 women there. It was very moving to see our neighbors on the spot and very sad and disappointing not to see the Presbyterians. (However, I only looked for them on the mall

where all the contingents were gathering in place. If they joined the march from another locale, then I did not see them.)

We finished the day at a crafts fair in the Building Museum, which highlighted the terrific creative talent of so many artists. Weavers, glassmakers, tapestry artists, quilters, and jewelry makers: the creative energy in the place was a wonder to behold.

(Duke of Mantua), and Abe Polakoff (*Rigoletto*). Louise Mike, Stephen I. Whitley, and Ladie Whitaker were fine as Giovanna, Marullo, and Maddalena, respectively.

The chorus, conducted by Wellington Jones, handled Weill's music with style and accuracy. There were several dance sequences handled quite well by Sharon Folkes and Clarence McMillan. Altogether, it was a wonderful presentation, and the many ovations were well-deserved.

## Adult Education in June

“The Biblical Image of Jesus as Wisdom-Sophia,” **Sundays, June 6 and 13, 9:30 am in the Session Room (note earlier time)**, led by Dr. Shafer. Wisdom, or Sophia, is spoken of in the Bible as a feminine personification of God, and the gospels refer to Jesus as the Wisdom of God. An exploration both of Jesus as the prophet and embodiment of this feminine image of God and of the importance of this image for contemporary Christian thought and interreligious dialogue.

“Children in Iraq,” **Sunday, June 20, 9:45 am in the Session Room.** Mel Lehman, journalist and former Director of Constituency Information for the Church World Service, has traveled to Iraq many times over the past 13 years. Although his planned trip with a group of medical personnel in May was cancelled due to the upsurge in violence, Mel will speak to the current situation in Iraq with a focus on children. He will also give the Moment for Mission. Sponsored by the Peace and Social Justice Network.

### Informal Church Picnic Central Park

after the coffee hour on **Sunday, June 20.**

Please remember to bring your own food and picnic and recreational equipment to church with you on June 20. A special space will be staked out for us in Central Park.

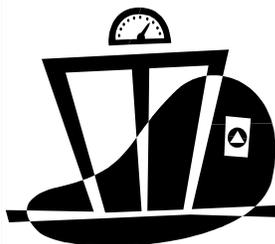


## Theatre Outing

Come join us on **Tuesday, June 22** to see the new musical *Love according to Luc* by Alicia Mathewson at the Greenwich Street Theatre. *Love according to Luc* is the story of Lucretia Crowell, a lesbian seminarian struggling to find her voice in a Christian Church that won't ordain her. Folks from Rutgers have been involved in the development of *Luc* since its inception—it's truly wonderful, with lots and lots of beautiful music.

Presbyterian Welcome is “hosting” the performance on June 22 at 8:00 pm, and after the show, the Reverend Cari Jackson will lead us in what is sure to be a spirited and interesting conversation. **We have held 15 tickets for Rutgers members and friends—so reserve yours early!** Call Cheryl Pyrch (x205) or send her an e-mail (cheryl@rutgerschurch.com). Tickets will also be on sale during coffee hour on Sundays. For more about the show, go to [www.lucives.com](http://www.lucives.com).

## Elevator Safety



As of the end of May, we will be taking the elevator in the church house out of use except for freight transfer. Due to recent electrical surges, we are no longer confident that it is safe. Throughout the summer, the children's Sunday school will meet on the second floor. Those attending Child's Play or Body & Spirit classes on upper floors during the week, or visiting the church office, will have the choice of climbing the stairs or using the elevator in the 2095 Broadway building. Stay tuned for more news about the elevator conversion coming soon!

## Pride Events

### Celebrate 25 Years of Welcome in New York City!

In 1978, West Park Presbyterian Church sparked the “More Light” Movement in New York City, officially extending God's hospitality to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. Come to celebrate, to learn about the roots of the Presbyterian Welcoming Movement in NYC, and to reflect on how far we have come (several Rutgers members will be participating!). **On Saturday, June 12**, all events will be at **West Park Presbyterian Church**, located at 86th St. & Amsterdam Ave.:

- 9—12:00 pm Multimedia presentation and worship service
- Noon Lunch
- 1—5:00 pm Critical reflection and discussion on the question: How welcoming is our movement?
- 5—6:00 pm Closing worship

Please pre-register if you can by e-mail ([info@presbyterianwelcome.org](mailto:info@presbyterianwelcome.org)) or by phone (917.441.8638).

And don't forget the **Gay Pride March 2004 on Sunday, June 27**. We will gather following the worship service to travel down to the march, joining other Presbyterian Welcome congregations and friends.



prophets among us presents

Love according to Luc  
a new musical

by Alicia Mathewson

# June 2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 6:00 pm <b>Men's Support Group</b> (PLWA/HIV) Every Tuesday	2	3 12:00 pm Free Noon Concert	4 10:30 am <b>Mothers' Bible Study</b> Every Friday	5
6 9:30 am Adult Class: "The Biblical Image of Christ as Wisdom-Sophia" 12:45 pm Board of Deacons Meeting	7 2:30 pm Worship Committee Meeting	8 12:30 pm Pastoral Staff Meeting 6:30 pm Session Meeting	9	10 6:00 pm/7:00 pm <b>Senior Meal Program and Movie Series</b> Every Thursday	11 6:30 pm <b>Rutgers staffs the shelter</b> Every Friday	12 9 am—6 pm Celebrating 25 Years of Welcome in New York City (at West Park Presbyterian Church)
<b>Body &amp; Spirit and Child's Play Summer Sessions Begin</b>						
13 9:30 am Adult Class: "Sophia" 12:45 pm Peace & Social Justice Network	14 6:00 pm Last Cub Scout Meeting	15 6:00 pm Last Cub Scout Meeting 6:30 pm Mission Review Sub-committee	16	17	18 6:00 pm Cub Scout Graduation	19
20 9:45 am Adult Class: "Children in Iraq" 12:45 pm Church Picnic in Central Park	21 6:30 pm Christian Education Committee Meeting	22 7:00 pm Leave from Rutgers for <i>Love according to Luc</i>	23	24 6:00/7:00 pm Last Meal Program and Movie before summer break	25	26 PC(USA) <b>General Assembly</b> convenes in Richmond, VA (through July 3)
27 1:00 pm March in the 2004 Gay Pride Parade	28	29	30	<b>Men's Overnight Shelter Program:</b> 6:30 pm, seven days a week		

## Sunday Worship Schedule

Worship Service at 11:00 am — Coffee Hour at 12:15 pm

Sunday School for Adults at 9:45 am — Infant and Child Care from 9:30 am — Sunday School (ages 3-10) at 11:15 am

Choir Rehearsals at 10:00 am and 12:30 pm

- June 6—Trinity Sunday; Teacher Recognition Sunday; Pentecost Offering Received; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching
- June 13—11th Sunday in Ordinary Time; Holy Communion; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching
  - June 20—Youth Sunday; 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time; Jeffrey Glendon preaching
  - June 27—Gay Pride Sunday; 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time; Elder Cheryl Pyrch preaching

# July 2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
					10:30 am Mothers' Bible Study Every Friday	
<b>Men's Overnight Shelter Program:</b> 6:30 pm, seven days a week						
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Independence Day	Independence Day Holiday: Church and office buildings closed.	6:30 pm Mission Review Sub-committee Meeting			6:30 pm Rutgers volunteers staff the shelter Every Friday	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9:45 am Adult Class: "Poverty in South Africa"	2:30 pm Worship Committee Meeting	6:30 pm Session Meeting				
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	Dr. Shafer leaves on vacation	6:00 pm Men's Support Group (PLWA/ HIV) Every Tuesday				
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Last week of summer Body & Spirit classes

## Sunday Worship Schedule

Worship Service at 11:00 am — Coffee Hour at 12:15 pm

Infant and Child Care from 10:30 am — Sunday School (ages 3-10) at 11:15 am

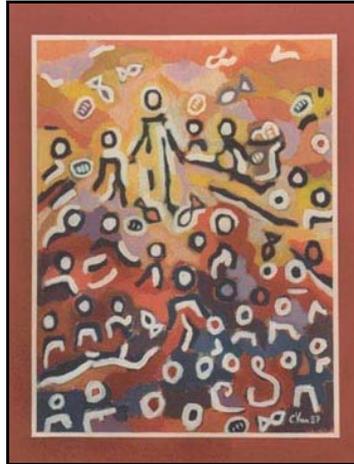
- July 4—Independence Day; 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time; The Reverend Charles Amstein preaching; last Sunday for the choir
- July 11—15th Sunday in Ordinary Time; Holy Communion; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching; Bronwyn Thomas, soloist
  - July 18—16th Sunday in Ordinary Time; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching; Bronwyn Thomas, soloist
  - July 25—17th Sunday in Ordinary Time; The Reverend Laura R. Jervis preaching; Faith Esham, soloist

## Vacation Bible School

by Cheryl Pyrch

A parent of a boy – not from Rutgers – called me to say that when the weather turned warm her son said, “I don’t need my coat. It must be time for Vacation Bible School!”

Vacation Bible School is a summer highlight for both teachers and children at Rutgers. This year it will be held from **August 23 – August 27**, from 9:00 am to noon, and our theme will be “Eating with Jesus.” We’ll look at the wonderful stories where Jesus invites all people to the table: the feeding of the five thousand, the post-resurrection picnic on the beach (John 21), the invitation to Zaccheus, and others. We’ll sing, tell stories, paint and sculpt, play games (“Sheep, Sheep, Camel”



“The Multiplication of the Bread”  
by Corinne Vonaesch

being the all time favorite), and worship. We’re also planning a trip to the Broadway Community food pantry. Holly

Nedelka, Wanda Diaz, Richard Hill, and Cheryl Pyrch will be teaching, along with experienced interns Jeffrey Glendon, Angelika Rodriguez, Jose Melendez . . . and maybe others. Clif Fisher will again help us make music.

Please call Cheryl Pyrch (x205) if you would like to register your child or if you would like to help. In addition to working with children, we need help with decorating, providing snacks, registering families, and other behind-the-scenes jobs – those with artistic talent especially welcome. We’ve included a hot-pink flyer for you to pass on to neighbors and friends or to post in your building. Please pass the word!

### SUMMER ORGAN CHRONOLOGY

As Phase 2 (of 3) of the organ restoration project begins, here is what to look for:

#### Week of June 7:

Removal of the remaining windchests and pipes from the swell division (visit us mid-week to take a look at the pipes spread throughout the sanctuary).

#### During the summer:

Electrical work and plastering in the newly empty part of the organ chamber.

#### August:

The console will be removed, refitted, and then returned; we will be unable to use the organ for about 4 weeks.

#### Christmas:

Phase Two will be complete!  
On to Phase Three...

### Adult Education in July

“Poverty in South Africa: Economic Justice and the Poor People’s Budget,” **Sunday, July 11, 9:45 am in the Session Room.** Earlier this spring, we learned more about HIV/AIDS in South Africa from Rutgers member, Nancy Muirhead. An interrelated and persistent problem is poverty, something that Dr. Douglas Tilton, a PC(USA) mission worker in South Africa, knows much about. Doug’s expertise is in public policy and encouraging people of faith to become active, political advocates. He’ll give us an overview of the economic situation in South Africa and then speak to policy strategies for combating poverty, such as the People’s Budget Campaign, which proposes specific steps government can take to encourage sustainable development.

Doug has been a mission worker with the PC (USA) since June 1992. He began his current position in 1998—Associate for Communication and Research for the South Africa Council of Churches’ Parliamentary Office in Cape Town. The SACC was one of the bodies at the forefront of the struggle against apartheid and for democracy in South Africa. With the historic democratic election of 1994, the battle for political rights was won. Now the church faces the challenge of helping South Africans *use* their political rights to transform society and to secure social and economic justice. The SACC’s Public Policy Liaison office was established in mid-1996 to help churches pursue these objectives in the public policy arena.

To learn more about Doug’s work at SACC, see their web site: <http://www.sacc.org.za/>.

### JUNE BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Ed Alley
- 4 Adele Ou Yang
- 5 Robin Berry
- 14 Elyn Stern
- 16 Susan Poliacik
- 23 Ben Reggio
- 26 Alan Robinson
- 27 Cullen Dunn-Ellis

### JULY BIRTHDAYS

- 6 Bill Donnell
- 7 Kate Dunn, David Robinson
- 8 Rick Reece
- 9 John Williamson
- 13 David Hall
- 15 Natalie Wyatt, Cheryl Pyrch
- 16 Nancy Muirhead
- 18 Kaye London
- 19 Emilio Padilla, Jose Rugel
- 26 Ellen Caldwell,  
Shae Simpson
- 27 Jon Lembo
- 28 Maureen Knapp, Scott  
Morton, Nancy Williams
- 29 Nathan Matthews, Lloyd  
Spencer

## What Happened at Session?

by Elder Christine Gorman, Clerk of Session

Here are some highlights from the regularly scheduled Session meeting of **April 20, 2004**. You can always get the full Session minutes by sending an email to Jennifer Hanson (jhanson@rutgerschurch.com).

1. The Session voted to dedicate 15 minutes to Stewardship Education at the beginning of future Session meetings, starting with the May meeting and going through November. (*See more about this below.*)

2. A motion passed to approve the position of Designated Associate Pastor.

3. The Session interviewed and received Jennifer and James Finn as new members by reaffirmation of faith. Jennifer is an opera singer and violinist. James plays woodwinds.

4. A motion passed to approve a letter of transfer for Michael Vana to the Christ Episcopal Church in Ridgewood, New Jersey.

5. A motion passed to approve the recommended grants of the Benevolence Committee for the first half of 2004. The grants totaled \$10,000 for Presbyterian causes and \$10,000 for non-Presbyterian causes. (*For more information about the or-*

*ganizations our benevolence giving supports, see the Peace & Social Justice page of the Rutgers web site.*)

Here are some highlights from the regularly scheduled Session meeting of **May 11, 2004**.

1. Cheryl Pyrch led us in a 20-minute mini-seminar on stewardship. We began by writing down (anonymously, if so desired) our reactions to the words "stewardship" and "pledging" as well as our process for deciding whom to give money to and how much. Then we discussed how we responded to the exercise and shared our individual definitions of the word "pledge." Cheryl plans to tabulate the results and report back at our next meeting.

2. A motion passed to approve the selling of tickets at coffee hour for *Love According to Luc*, a musical about a theology student who discovers she is a lesbian while attending seminary. Massimo Maglione is organizing a group of Rutgers folks to attend on June 22, 2004. (*See p. 6.*)

3. A motion passed to send a letter to the President of the United States, George Bush, deploring the conditions at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and

asking that the prison facility be razed, that the Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld resign, and that the International Committee of the Red Cross be allowed access to all detainees, including enemy non-combatants, to determine their human-rights condition. A motion passed to ask the Presbytery of New York City to send a similar letter. (*Note: The Presbytery subsequently agreed to do this at its May 18 meeting.*)

4. A motion passed to name a sub-committee of the Session to conduct the necessary mission review for the calling a Designated Associate Pastor. The sub-committee consists of Renee Lord, Christine Gorman, Richard Reece, Vera Roberts, Sue Spears, Bob Shelton (for the first two months), and Massimo Maglione (for the second two months).

5. A motion passed to authorize up to \$2,000 for a guest organist to play a dedicatory concert for our re-built pipe organ in 2005.

The next regular meeting of the Session will be Tuesday, June 8 at 6:30 pm.

## Church Officers Study Stewardship

by Elder Cheryl Pyrch

It started as an impromptu conversation at Session. Someone wondered if folks at Rutgers could pledge even more. Someone else spoke about the importance of tithing. Another questioned our emphasis on giving money. The conversation became animated, impassioned, and even a tiny bit heated – as conversations about money usually are. So the Session decided it was time to talk more deeply about stewardship,

beginning with officers of the church – elders, deacons, and trustees.

To set just the right *tone* for the subject, we began with a skit featuring Ebenezer Scrooge, Emily Latella, Calvin & Hobbes, and Steve Allen (look for a reprise during a Moment for Mission this fall). We'll continue, at our respective board meetings, to talk about the place of money in our lives and the different ways we are called

upon to spend or use it. We'll also do some reading and take a look at biblical and theological perspectives. We hope these conversations will not only make us more faithful stewards of our own resources, but also more faithful stewards of church resources: resources of money, time, and people. Please keep us in your prayers as we explore this sensitive subject, and we will keep you informed of our progress!

## Summer Child's Play and Body & Spirit

The **Body & Spirit** program is offering an array of classes for the summer, **beginning the week of June 7** and continuing through the end of July. Offerings include:

- Computer** (27 different classes and times are available) •
- **Yoga • Feldenkrais •**
  - **Body Conditioning •**
  - **Senior Movement • Knitting •**
  - **Exercise with Your Child** (infant or toddler) •

Call Diane Nicole (x212) for more information, or check on the web: [www.rutgers-church.com/bodyandspirit](http://www.rutgers-church.com/bodyandspirit).

(Continued from page 2)

Well, I believe the following would be on the prophet's list:

Woe to you who invest

### What Do You Think?

1. You can sum up all of your life experiences and accomplishments in two minutes or less.
2. Wouldn't the local bus or train be just as fast compared to the time spent walking the extra distance or waiting to catch an express?
3. Life will pass you by while you watch others fulfill their dreams.
4. How many times do you rationalize that it's O.K. for you to break rules, regulations, and law when it's convenient?
5. The smaller the apartment is, the larger the dog.
6. How do flowers get their unique color patterns?
7. Do you feel one up on someone when you've finished your workout and they're just beginning?
8. The difference between running on a treadmill and running outside is that you can't stop until you get back home.
9. Babies and senior citizens sleep the same amount of time.
10. Sometimes the past should stay in the past.

'Til next time, JMC

The Rutgers **Child's Play** program (**June 7—August 13**) is the perfect summer place for babies and children up to age 5 *with their parents*. Play groups will meet on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 10:00 am to noon. Our staff leader facilitates circle time with singing, puppetry, art, and story time in our air-conditioned nursery/play-room. Plus there's gym time with Cozy



Coupe cars, trampoline, a play house, and our all-time favorite: the water table! Everyone brings their own snacks and shares in the fun and conversation.

E a c h daily summer pass is good for your whole family—siblings too—for any day of the summer schedule. Books of 8 passes are on sale for \$140. Call Holly Nedelka for more information or to register: (212) 877-8227 x204.

so much more in armaments and military might than you do in peacemaking.

Woe to you who do things to persons of other nations that you wouldn't want done to you.

Woe to you who allow the income gap between the rich and the poor to increase.

Woe to you stockholders of corporations who allow the C.E.O. to earn \$500,000 a day while company workers in Haiti or the Dominican Republic earn \$1 to \$3 a day.

Woe to you who turn a blind eye to the "white privilege" that continues to perpetuate systemic racism.

Woe to you who tolerate the under-funding of public education in general and the unequal funding of public education between communities of differing races and social classes.

Woe to you who tolerate the purchasing of political influence by the wealthy and the gerrymandering of electoral districts to favor one group over another.

Woe to you who cut taxes for the rich and refuse to

plug tax loopholes for corporations while busily tearing down the social safety net for the poor.

Woe to you who profit from the exporting of jobs while working to reduce unemployment benefits and welfare assistance.

Woe to you who are too busy being a superpower to provide housing for the homeless in your midst.

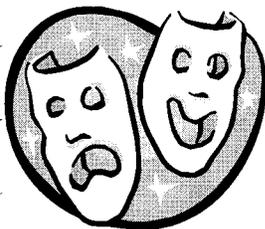
Woe to you who call yourselves "one nation under God" but heed not the needs of your neighbors.

And blessed are you who call yourselves "one nation under God" and diligently pursue equal justice for all.

May God grant us the grace to heed the prophetic voices raised in our own time and place. And may God grant us the wisdom to work toward equal justice for all by drawing on the one power that is beyond all corruption—the power of the Holy Spirit made manifest on the Day of Pentecost and made available to us each and every day.

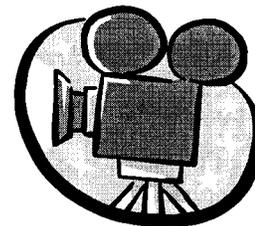
# June 2004 Movies at Rutgers

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**



**Produced by DR. ROGER FRANKLIN,  
Hosted by Ms. ALEXANDRA YU**

## JUDY GARLAND

*Retrospective*

### **June 3rd • The Harvey Girls (1946) Color, 101 mins.**

When America headed west, so did Fred Harvey's restaurant chain...and so did a lot of demure young waitresses who didn't know how wild the frontier was! **Judy Garland** and **Ray Bolger** star in this delightful musical that features "On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe." **John Hodiak** and **Angela Lansbury** co-star.

### **June 10th • In the Good Old Summertime (1949) Color, 102 mins.**

**Judy Garland** and **Van Johnson** are music shop clerks who have secret "pen pal" lovers, not knowing that it's each other in this charming musical version of "Shop Around the Corner." With **S. Z. Sakall**, **Spring Byington** and **Buster Keaton**. Look for a young **Liza Minelli** with her mother in the finale.

### **June 17th • Summer Stock (1950) Color, 110 mins.**

Forget your troubles by watching **Judy Garland** and **Gene Kelly** in this favorite MGM musical about a farm overrun by a summer theatre troupe. Features "Get Happy" with **Eddie Bracken**, **Marjorie Main** and **Phil Silvers**.

**And for our final movie of the season....**

### **June 24th • Yankee Doodle Dandy**

Based on the story of **George M. Cohan** and featuring the greatest of all his music. With **James Cagney**, **Joan Leslie**, **Walter Huston** and **Richard Whorf**—directed by **Michael Curtis**.

## Summer Reading Recommendations

from the Rutgers Community

### Charles Amstein

*Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth: Prayers of Walter Brueggemann*

This is a collection of prayers offered by Brueggemann at the beginning of classes he taught over more than forty years as a much admired Old Testament professor. He is a graduate of Union Seminary, NYC, and taught at Eden and then Columbia Theological Seminaries. I have only begun to enjoy the book, but the prayers are very beautiful.

*Credo* by William Sloane Coffin

This is a collection of words offered by Coffin in different circumstances and is a stimulating chronicle of his comments about the many things that have concerned him about life and faith. He was at one time the senior minister at the Riverside Church in NYC, and before that the Chaplain at Yale. What I find astonishing is that something Coffin may have said twenty years ago can still be so absolutely on target.

### Mary Birchard

Here are several books that I have enjoyed. All contain short stories or short pieces:

*Faith Stories: Short Fiction on the Varieties and Vagaries of Faith*, ed. C. Michael Curtis

*The Spiritual Gifts of Travel*, ed. James and Sean O'Reilly

*A Woman's Path: Women's Best Travel Writing*, ed. Lucy McCauley, Amy Carlson, and Jennifer Leo

### Jennifer Carnahan Finn

*The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd

This is the story of a young girl's journey into womanhood. She runs away from home and finds refuge with four beautiful black sisters who keep bees and teach her to find her own spiritual mother within herself.

(Also recommended by **Peggy Scott**: I loved it. It tells a story of healing and how even when things seem hopeless, there are forces in the universe that can lead us to find our way. And it's very well written!)

### Cynthia Gale

*The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom

Definitely one of those books you can't put down—incredibly poignant with a perspective that shows how our lives are all inter-related. This is a book that supports the idea that each and every one of us is put here on this earth for a reason. Good for a short summer read where you walk away smiling... and thinking. (Also recommended by **Maureen Knapp**.)

### Christine Gorman

*Mountains Beyond Mountains* by Tracy Kidder

This is the book that I've been most passionate about the last couple of months. It's the story of Dr. Paul Farmer and his love affair with Haiti. Together with a Haitian Episcopal priest, Farmer sets out to bring basic medical care to a rural community in the central plateau of Haiti. In the process, he transforms the way multi-drug resistant tuberculosis is treated around the world. He and others have since used the model of that success to argue for the wider use of anti-retroviral therapy against HIV in the developing world. Read this book if you want to learn what's really going on in global health. Read this book if you want to be inspired about what is possible. But be warned: it will make you want to do something!

*Krakatoa* by Simon Winchester

This book will tell you almost everything you ever wanted to know about the explosion of the Krakatoa volcano in 1883—the full human drama as well as all the geology and fireworks physics. Beyond that, however, Winchester makes a compelling argument that the explosion helped pave the way for a more radical brand of Islam than had existed up to that point in Indonesia. I'm not quite sure I believe Winchester's premise, although I must admit that thinking that the world might end (as it certainly seemed that morning) has a powerful effect on folks.

### Laura Jervis

*The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy

This novel, set in India, contains exquisite writing.

*The Swallows of Kabul* by Yasmina Khadra

Another novel, this one set in Afghanistan under the Taliban. Not exactly a beach read but beautifully written.

### Maureen Knapp

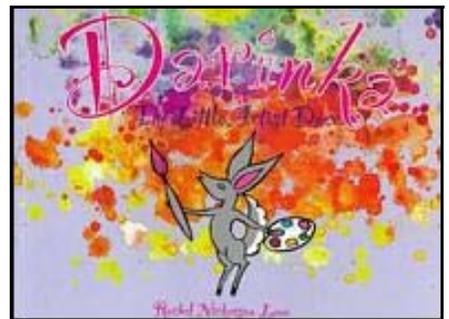
*Medical Care of the Soul* by Dr. Bruce Bartlow

A must-read for everyone! Inspirational re: the soul's journey through illness & death. You should read this NOW before anything happens to you or those you love.

Other recommendations: *My Grandfather's Blessings* and *Kitchen Table Wisdom* by Naomi Remen; *The Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold.

### Holly Nedelka

I don't have much time for adult reading but I can recommend two wonderful children's books:



*Darinka, The Little Artist Deer* by Rachel Luna (who participates in the Child's Play program with her daughter): The story of a young artist, her experience in New York, and her understanding of her own talent.

*Four Friends in Summer* by Tommie dePaola: Summer plans don't always turn out as you expect, but when you're with friends things work out.

(Continued on page 14)

## Rutgers Presbyterian Church

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Fax: 212-721-9154



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## Summer Reading Recommendations

(Continued from page 13)

### Cheryl Pynch

*The Bridge at No Gun Ri: A Hidden Nightmare from the Korean War* by Sang-Hun Choe, Martha Mendoza, and Charles J. Hanley

The story of civilian massacres by U.S. troops and a reminder that Abu-Ghraib is not the first American atrocity. Told with compassion for all sides and set in the context of the war (helpful for those of us who don't know much). Not exactly beach reading but clear and compelling, written by journalists who won the Pulitzer Prize for their work.

*Dry: A Memoir* by Augusten Burroughs

A very, very funny but also poignant account by a young (alcoholic) man entering recovery. R-rated but no gratuitous violence. Excellent beach reading unless you start sobbing at the end, as I did on the F train!

### Byron and Margaret Shafer

*Master and Commander* by Patrick O'Brian

If you liked the Academy Award-nominated movie with Russell Crowe that came out just last fall, you'll love the classic book. (Actually, the movie was not just a re-telling of this particular book's plot, so you'll find the novel fresh!) A rare example of a crackling-good sea tale, set in the context of the 19th-century British navy, that is also great literature, with complex character development. This is the first in a whole series, and if you get hooked, there are some 20 more volumes to go!

*The Bookseller of Kabul* by Asne Seierstad

Seierstad is an award-winning Norwegian journalist who takes you inside life in a contemporary Afghan family following the fall of the Taliban.

*The History of Hell* by Alice K. Turner

An art-historian's fascinating cross-cultural, interdisciplinary view of

"hell," with many illustrations.

*Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism* by Derrick Bell

A collection of essays on racism that will stimulate a new discussion of an enduring problem. If you haven't read it yet, now is the time.

*The Dream of God: A Call to Return* by Verna J. Dozier

An African-American Christian's inspirational and prophetic challenge to follow Jesus and live toward "the dream of God."

### Alexandra Yu

The Mitford Series by Jan Karon

There are seven books in the series plus several which pertain to the series. The protagonist is Father Tim, an Episcopal priest in a very small town (800 people) in the Appalachian Mountains. My very favorite books in all the world!