

# Renewal

## Them Bones

From the Pastor’s Desk: The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer

What kind of church do *you* want Rutgers to be and become?

That’s the question I addressed to the worshiping congregation on March 13 in “Them Bones,” my sermon based on Ezekiel 37:1-14. That’s also the question I invited the Session to start discussing at its most recent meeting on April 4. And that’s the question I’m now addressing to you, the wider audience of *Renewal*, as I here reprint that sermon. I hope to catalyze conversations that will help us more fully define who we are and what our mission as part of Christ’s church is.

Them bones, them bones, them dry bones!

When was it that old-style mainline Protestantism died in America—you know, the Protestantism that’s been embodied historically by such denominations as Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopal? Well, it’s hard to say precisely when this old-style mainline Protestantism died, but the dry bones of its largely empty 100-year old church buildings certainly do lie strewn in the “valleys” around us, like our own Upper West Side.

I’m inquiring, of course, about the demise of the triumphalist style of mainline Protestantism that was the established, if unofficial, religion of America for our nation’s first several centuries—the triumphalist

Protestantism into which the nation’s elite were born and to which society conformed; the mainline Protestantism to whose colleges and universities one needed to go to receive a first-class education; the triumphalist Protestantism that dominated public school prayers, curricula, and baccalaureate ceremonies; the mainline Protestantism of board rooms and blue laws and political power; the triumphalist Protestantism that seemed to reach such great heights during the 1950’s—the era of President Dwight David Eisenhower, that heyday of the National Council of Churches and of the confident building of that skyscraping Interchurch Center at 475 Riverside Drive; the mainline Protestantism into whose sanctuaries people used to crowd, filling even the balconies; the triumphalist mainline Protestantism that understood church and home and school and state to form a kind of national network for the instilling of “Christian values.”

When did this triumphalist mainline Protestantism die in America?

Well, each of us may well have our own story about when the demise of this style of Protestantism is to be dated. But I rather fancy the story told by the southern Methodist preacher William Willimon. He has written, with humor [in Willimon and Stanley Hauerwas, *Resident Aliens* (Abingdon, 1990), pp. 15-16], that it died

one particular Sunday night in 1963 in Greenville, South Carolina. That night in Greenville—a city Willimon describes, with his tongue only partially in cheek, as the Western world’s last pocket of resistance to secularity—that night in Greenville the Fox Theater openly defied the state’s blue laws by daring to show its movie on a Sunday. That night Willimon and six other Methodist youth, all otherwise regular attenders of the Youth Fellowship at the Buncombe Street Church, made a pact. They would enter the front door of their church, be seen and noticed, but then slip out the back door to join John Wayne at the Fox. Yes, that night the Fox Theater went head to head with mainline Protestant Christianity over who would provide the worldview for the city’s youth, and the theater won.

Now this morning, I believe God’s taking us by the hand, like Ezekiel, and setting us down in the middle

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## Tempted

of this West Side “valley” of ours, and demanding of us that we survey our “dry bones.” And I believe God’s asking us this question, “O ye Protestants, can these bones live? Can these churches of yours be brought back to life?”

Well one thing’s for sure! Our brothers and sisters who are *evangelical* Protestants, sure are busy trying to resurrect the bones of triumphalist Protestantism. They certainly are working hard, all on their own, to reattach to “them bones” some sinews, muscles, and skin, so as to recreate an old-style triumphalist Protestantism as the unofficial established religion of America, one with the full ear and attention of every branch and office of government.

Take, for example, the Florida TV evangelist D. James Kennedy, who heads an organization whose goal is to convert every legislator in Washington into a born-again Christian! Or consider such evangelical Protestant leaders as James Dobson and Douglas Coe and Diane Knippers, whose organizations, taken together, appear to hold much of the Republican Party in their debt.

But I believe that these persons—trying all on their own to reattach to the old dry bones of triumphalist Protestantism their new sinews, muscles, and flesh—I believe that they’ve succeeded only in transforming the Protestant skeleton into a Protestant mummy. For what they’ve created, I believe, still lacks the very thing that Ezekiel 37:10 tells us these bones *most* need—not the fossilized heart of that old-time religion but the transforming breath of the living God.

So I believe that the challenge God is addressing to us today goes something like this: “O ye Protestants, what in

My name are you doing? For that old-style *triumphalist* version of your religion is one that’s best left dead. No,” says God, “the Protestantism I want to raise to new life is of a different kind altogether.”

So I believe that the question God’s posing to us this morning is this: “Can the bones of Presbyterian and other mainline Protestant churches be revived for a new and more faithful style of serving and witnessing? Can this set of dry bones right here at 73rd and Broadway live? Can these stones and windows and pews, dating to the 1920’s, be brought to life by the breath of God for the 21st century?”

And you’ll not be surprised to learn that the answer I believe God is waiting to hear coming back from us is a firm and resounding, “With Your help, O God, with Your help, these bones can indeed live!”

So what kind of a Protestantism, what kind of a Presbyterianism, is it that God wants to bring to new life here, in this place. What is the vision God wants to share with us? What is God’s vision for a Rutgers Church revived for the 21st century?

Well here come the eight points of today’s “vision thing” from your pastor, and it’s my prayer that they’re also coming from God!

**First**, I believe God wants to bring Rutgers to life for the 21st century as “**an undogmatic church**,” as one that is deeply rooted in the past yet growing into a different kind of future—a church that gladly proclaims the good news of Christ and is unmistakably Christian, and yet a church that’s constantly in search of “more light,” that’s constantly seeking to grow in God’s truth through promptings by the Holy Spirit,

through dialogue with other religions, and through conversations with the secular sciences. For we all have so very much to learn from one another. “An undogmatic church.”

**Second**, I believe God wants to bring Rutgers to life for the 21st century as “**a purposeful church**,” as one to which we belong not because of convenience or habit or having been born into it, but because we purposefully choose and actively affirm the mission and goals of this particular congregation and because we purposefully commit ourselves to the work of tending to the needs of this particular “family” of persons. To become this kind of “purposeful” community, all other reasons for belonging—such as convenience, habit, birth—all these must be kept secondary. “A purposeful church.”

**Third**, I believe God wants to bring Rutgers to life for the 21st century as “**a wildly inclusive church**.” The apostle Paul has said that in Christ “there is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female.” (Galatians 3:28) And I believe God would have us add to Paul’s list, “In Christ there is no longer black or white, rich or poor, gay or straight.” Now I know we certainly have a lot of work yet to do here at this More Light Church on welcoming people of color and the poor. And I believe God is further prompting us to go on to say, “In Christ there is neither Methodist nor Presbyterian nor Baptist nor Catholic.” And, wow, there’s just a whole lot more work to be done on that before we can truly declare that in Christ we are indeed “all one.” “A wildly inclusive church.”

**Fourth**, I believe God wants to bring Rutgers to life for the 21st century as “**a Spirit-led**

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Can the bones of Presbyterian and other mainline Protestant churches be revived for a new and more faithful style of serving and witnessing?

## Step by Step the Organ Comes Home

by Joy Wyatt, Chair, Capital Campaign Committee

**Organ Dedication:**

**Sunday, May 22**

**at 11:00 am**

**Dedicatory Recital:**

**Sunday, May 22**

**at 4:00 pm**

Four and more years ago, members of Rutgers Church contemplated the real possibility of restoring the church organ. The prospect was a daunting one—taking the organ out of commission for a period of time (how WOULD we sing those hymns?) and raising the necessary extra funds on top of sustaining the day-to-day mission of the church seemed beyond reach. And yet, as with so many difficult tasks, once we broke this one down into individual steps, it didn't seem so hard.

First, a committee evaluated organ builders and considered proposals. Then committee members visited the sites where organs had been restored by the finalists. Then, an organ builder—Southfield Organ Builders, in Pittsfield, MA—was selected, using as inputs a combination of knowledge gained from research, confirmation from references, consideration of how much money we thought we could raise and afford, and a certain amount of prayerful consideration.

Then a committee was appointed to plan and launch a capital campaign. This committee's charge was to inspire the congregation to contribute funds above and beyond the

regular annual giving already being captured through the Stewardship Campaign. It would not have been possible to raid the coffers that support the critical mission of Rutgers to restore a musical instrument. A different demonstration of commitment was required, one that signaled support from a broad swath of the Rutgers community.

So a capital campaign was born, and from it the people of Rutgers Church contributed and raised nearly \$200,000 to underwrite this project. In response to a challenge grant by longstanding friends of Rutgers, Edward Alley and Nancy Williams, we launched a series of concerts. Musicians of all kinds contributed their gifts, providing performances, here in our space, that reinforced yet again how lucky we are to be living in this cultural capital of the world. Our own choir soloists delighted us with their art, and others—musical members of the congregation and friends of congregants—blessed us with their gifts. These concerts alone generated more than \$15,000 in proceeds to support the organ restoration.

We were able to enjoy portions of the organ throughout the project except for a brief period of *a cappella* and piano-accompanied music in the summer of 2004. Now, with the completion just before Easter of the Marshall Williamson Antiphonal Organ and *en chamade* trumpets (up in the balcony), apart from periodic tunings and adjustments, we're done! From

week to week, a congregant may notice that our organist is experimenting with the stops and the pedals, trying new sounds, and playing his favorites more than once. (Some of us kind of miss the errant and discordant bleats, and the soulful wheezing, of the unreconstructed instrument, but we'll get over that.)

Those of us who can't figure out how to walk and chew gum at the same time, much less play a large, multi-keyboard, multi-pedal instrument with our hands and feet simultaneously, take simple pleasure in the sounds we hear (and we bless our organist for his coordination). During the restoration, some of us climbed into the chambers where the organ pipes are housed, and were amazed to discover just how large a space it is. The dusty, forgotten contents of that space told the tale of just how long it had been since the organ had received the tender loving care it required. Old, broken pipes lying about, duct tape wrapped around parts that weren't supposed to move, and the dust!

On May 22 at 4:00 pm, we will cap our efforts with a dedicatory concert. This event, featuring organist Ken Cowen, is offered to the community of and around Rutgers Church as a "thank you" for their patience and their participation in this challenging undertaking. Following this performance, all should plan to join us for a reception to honor those who made this project a success.



Thrilling audiences from coast to coast, Ken Cowan is one of the most sought-after young organists in North America. A native of Thorold, Ontario, Mr. Cowan received his Masters degree and Artist diploma from the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, and a Bachelor of Music degree from the Curtis Institute. A first-prize winner of the Royal Canadian College of Organists National Competition, Mr. Cowan has already performed solo recitals across the United States and Canada and has been featured at conventions of the American Guild of Organists, the Organ Historical Society, and the Royal Canadian College of Organists.

## New Member Joy Rose Chooses Goodness

by Susan Scherer, Chair, Membership Committee

“Render your heart, not your garment” is a favorite expression of one of our newest members, Joy Rose. She remembers hearing it often in her native country of Jamaica, so it was no surprise to those who know her when she chose a rock inscribed with the word GOODNESS at Rutgers’ new members luncheon on October 17.

Born in the parish of St. Mary, Jamaica, Joy lost her mother at age two and was then raised by her maternal grandparents, Alexander and Charlotte Robinson. She attended primary school in Port Maria, where she also began her journey as a Presbyterian at Port Maria Kirk, with the Reverend James Davis. She continued her education with private tutoring, while living on several acres of “fruitful land” with lots of animals: cows, goats, pigs, chickens, dogs, and cats. She enjoyed learning to work with her hands, sewing, crocheting, needlepoint, and embroidery. When she was a teenager, Joy was the soprano in a trio with two of her cousins, entertaining at the university hospital, churches, schools, and family and community gatherings.

Although she was interested in nursing as a young girl, Joy deferred attending nursing

school and became a math and English teacher to young girls. In 1965, after her grandmother passed away and at the insistence of her father in New York, Joy immigrated on a student visa to the Bronx, where she enrolled at New York Technical College in Brooklyn, studying math and English. While there, she was recruited into the college’s very first nursing program and graduated as an R.N. in 1970.

Morrisania Hospital was the first to snag the young and promising Ms. Rose, and she worked there until 1976, when she transferred to the new facilities at North Central Bronx Hospital where she covered medicine, emergency room, surgery, and recovery rotations, reporting for day, evening, and night shifts. She eventually settled into the evening shift and especially enjoyed her work with the patients in the post-anesthesia care unit (a.k.a. the recovery room). She left in 1995 for a two-year stint at the infirmary at Rikers Island—and a two-hour commute—before retiring in 1997.



Meanwhile, Joy attended a few churches in the area: Williamsbridge Presbyterian on White Plains Road, as well as Abyssinian Baptist and Convent Baptist from time to time. She became an avid listener of Dr. Shafer’s weekly radio program “Religion on the Line” and decided to come to Rutgers during the summer of 1999. Unfortunately, she first came on a Sunday in August when he was on vacation, but she kept attending, inspired by the “warmth and coziness” she felt here.

It was then that Joy recalled the oft-quoted line that begins this article. She looked around and saw that it did not matter what anyone was wearing or whether we all sported the current fashion trends. Joy gets great pleasure from one-on-one random acts of goodness, whether it means buying an extra dozen eggs to give away to a neighbor or supplying a “do-nut” to a patient in need. Our hearts were clearly the prize she sought, and it is clear to me that she has won them.

## Helping Hands by Kim Hodges, Moderator of the Board of Deacons



At one of our recent Deacons meetings, Frances Manners had a fantastic idea to create a structure that will provide an avenue for Deacons and others to reach out to those in need in our Rutgers family.

Often people within our community are in need of a home visit, a hospital visit, a meal, a card, prayers, or child care while a parent, spouse, or partner is sick or hospitalized. We often see people listed on the

prayer bulletin but don’t know their individual needs or how to reach out to them, thus the Helping Hands ministry.

You will be hearing more about Helping Hands during the Moment for Mission on April 17 and find out how to be a Helping Hand.

## Spring Adult Education

Child care is available for Sunday morning classes! If you leave children on the 2nd floor at 9:30, we'll be responsible for bringing them to children's choir at 10:00.

**Prospects for Peace in the Middle East**, Sundays, April 10, 17, 24 and May 1, 9:30 am in the Session Room. Led by Byron Shafer. *Please note starting time of 9:30 for this class.*

Is peace breaking out in the Middle East? Is there hope for finding a just solution to the dispute between Israel and the Palestinians? Have Jewish/Presbyterian relations been irreparably harmed by last summer's General Assembly ac-

tion to set in motion a process of "phased, selective divestment" from corporations involved with Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza? And what is the positive role that religion can play in all of this? These are the questions we'll explore together for four Sunday mornings at 9:30 am, beginning April 10, and maybe by May 1 we'll even have come up with some answers!

**Isaiah: Chapters 40-66**, Wednesdays, April 20, 27 and May 4, 11, and 18, 10:00 am in the Session Room. Led by Margaret Shafer through FAPC's Center for Christian Studies.

Second Isaiah (chapters 40-55) spoke during the Exile in Babylon and gave great words of consolation and hope. Third Isaiah (chapters 56-66) lived in

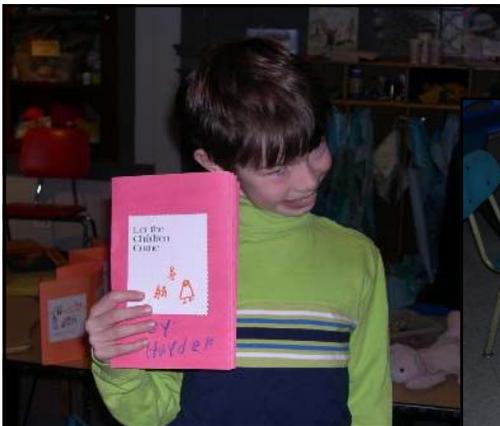
Jerusalem in the 6th century BC after the return from exile. In the face of despair, in some of the most beautiful poetry in the Bible, the prophets promise the righteous that God's glorious deliverance will soon be realized. Taught in a seminar format with guided discussion by participants.

**Paul's Letter to the Philippians**, Sundays, May 8, 15, and 22, 9:45 am in the Session Room. Led by Cheryl Pyrch.

A close reading of one of Paul's most beautiful and accessible letters. Paul has a bad reputation among liberal Christians, only some of it deserved! We'll use the *Interpretation Bible Study Guide* as our companion. Please RSVP if you are interested, so Cheryl can order you a book.

**Gay (and Other) Marriage**, Sundays, June 5, 12, and 19, 9:45 am in the Session Room. Led by Cheryl Pyrch with participation by the Pastoral Staff.

During this traditional month for weddings, a chance to look at theological and historical aspects of marriage as we consider the advent of marriage for GLBT people and the role of the church.



## Getting to Know Our Neighbors

by Cheryl Pyrch, Associate for Educational Ministries

It began with a phone call last summer and is turning into a new and exciting relationship. Rabbi Yael Ridberg of West End Synagogue (Reconstructionist) called Rutgers to see if the two congregations might be interested in collaborating on social action projects together – perhaps a blood drive, or a forum. The Social Action Committee at West End and the Peace and Social Justice Network at Rutgers then met to brainstorm.

We soon realized that we also wanted to learn more

about each other's faith and culture, and the idea of a "worship exchange" was born. Twenty people from Rutgers were welcomed to Shabbat Service at West End on February 5, and we welcomed many from West End for Sunday Worship at Rutgers on February 27. Both times we enjoyed a delicious (Kosher) luncheon and fellowship afterwards.

At the end of March we met at West End to share our impressions and questions from our worship experiences and to

plan next steps. We began the evening with short presentations by Rabbi Ridberg and Dr. Shafer on the understanding of the Sabbath in our respective traditions and then had a fascinating discussion about the meaning of the Sabbath for us now. We also shared ideas for future collaboration, which included further workshops exchanges and bible studies, an educational program on Darfur, a blood drive, staffing the homeless shelter together, and many other exciting possibilities!



## Opera Anthology

Sunday, May 1 at 2:30 pm

On the first Sunday in May, the Special Events Committee will present its annual benefit fundraising event for the Christopher Roberts Memorial Homeless Shelter with a triple bill of staged and costumed excerpts from Massenet's *Manon*, Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and

Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio*, featuring Dr. Shafer in the role of Pasha Selim and an international cast. Tax-deductible tickets are \$20 and include a post-recital reception given by the Board of Deacons. For ticket information, please contact fundraising coordinator Ms. Ethel Knight at (212) 582-2016.



### Thursday Noon Concerts Return in May

Come for a musical interlude during your lunch hour!  
All concerts are free. School groups are welcome.

**May 12** *Lois Bellamy* and *Vernelle Holly Smith*, in a program of original musical comedy skits & dramatic presentations.

**May 19** A presentation of vocal selections from Broadway musical theatre, starring *Alburt Rhodes* and *Ladie Whitaker*, accompanied by R. *Wellington Jones*.

**May 26** Highlights from Ponchielli's "La Gioconda," featuring *Salvatore Motisi*, tenor, *Wesley Garrison*, baritone, and *Paula Poulafearh*, soprano, in the title role.

**June 2** *Colleen Kennedy*, soprano, a crowd-pleaser with children of all ages, with *Lois Bellamy* and *Vernelle Holly Smith*, in a varied program of music.

## Sacred Oceans Seas

### EARTH DAY SUNDAY

April 24, 2005



- The living oceans cover more than 70 percent of our planet, have mountains taller than Mt. Everest and canyons deeper than the Grand Canyon, and contain 97 percent of all living matter.
- The diverse and fragile marine ecosystems have an impact on people, since oceans help determine weather patterns, serve as the Earth's lungs, and produce food.
- Marine ecosystems around the world are being threatened by coastal development, pollution, overfishing, tourism, and a host of other human endeavors.
- Coastal marshes, which filter pollutants and serve as wildlife nurseries, are disappearing at a rate of 20,000 acres per year. Louisiana alone has lost half a million acres of wetlands since the 1950s.
- The December 26 tsunami in the Indian Ocean had a severe impact on coral reefs, wetlands, and mangroves (the cradle of life for many marine species) where there was pre-existing environmental degradation. Conversely, healthy reefs and coastal vegetation tended to moderate the effects of the tsunami. (*Learn more at <http://www.unep.org/tsunami/>.*)

When God created the oceans, God declared them "good." As God's stewards, we are called not only to enjoy the oceans, but also to care for them as a sacred gift. We are to maintain the bounty of the oceans' waters and the integrity of oceanic systems that contain beauty and support an abundance of life.

### Welsh Festival of Song

#### Gymanfa Ganu

Sunday, May 15 at 3:00 pm

The Welsh are a nation of singers. Welsh immigrants to America brought their vocal traditions with them, and the *Gymanfa Ganu* remains significant to the Welsh. Come and sing traditional melodies with us here in the Rutgers sanctuary. We will be joined by the award-winning Rehoboth Welsh Choir and accompanied by Marshall Williamson. Followed by a traditional Welsh tea (*te bach*).

# Easter Season 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>April 10</i> 9:30 am Adult Class: "Middle East" through May 1 12:45 pm Peace & Social Justice Network	<i>11</i> 6:00 pm Scout Meeting Every Monday	<i>12</i> 6:00 pm Scout Meeting; Men's Support Group (HIV+) Every Tuesday	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i> 6:00 pm Meal Program & 7:00 pm Movie Series Every Thursday	<i>15</i> 11:00 am Mothers' Bible Study Every Friday	<i>16</i> 1:30 pm Opera Rehearsal through April 30
<i>17</i>	<i>18</i> 6:00 pm Christian Education Committee	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i> 10:00 am Adult Class: "Isaiah" through May 18	<i>21</i>	<b>Rutgers staffs the shelter (Fridays and most Sunday nights)</b>	
<i>24</i> Earth Day Sunday; Jewish Passover, Day 1	<b>Spring Break for Child's Play, Body &amp; Spirit →</b>				<i>29</i> 6:00 pm Acting Class Performance: All are invited!!	<i>30</i> 1:00 pm Acting Class Performance: All are invited!!
<i>May 1</i> 12:45 pm Board of Deacons 2:30 pm Opera Anthology Benefit	<i>2</i> 2:30 pm Worship Comm. 6:30 pm Benevolence Committee	<i>3</i> 6:30 pm Session Meeting	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i> Peace & Social Justice Network Retreat (Brooklyn)
<i>8</i> 9:45 am Adult Class: "Philippians"	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i> 12:00 pm Thursday Noon Concerts begin	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>

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

## Preaching Schedule

*April 10*—Third Sunday of Easter; Holy Communion; Dr. Shafer preaching

*April 17*—Fourth Sunday of Easter; Dr. Shafer preaching

*April 24*—Earth Sunday; Fifth Sunday of Easter; Dr. Shafer preaching

*May 1*—Sixth Sunday of Easter; Elder Cheryl Pynch preaching

*May 8*—Mothers' Day; Seventh Sunday of Easter; Dr. Shafer preaching

# Pentecost 2005 and Beyond

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat					
<i>May 15</i> Day of Pentecost Pentecost Offering 9:45 am "Philippians" through May 22 3:00 pm Welsh Song Fest	<i>16</i> 6:00 pm Scout Meeting Through June 13	<i>17</i> 1:30 pm Presbytery Annual Meeting (at Fifth Avenue Presb. Church) 6:00 pm Scout Meeting Through June 14	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i> 12:00 pm Noon Concert Through June 2 6:00 pm Meal Program & 7:00 pm Movie Series Every Thursday	<i>20</i> 11:00 am Mothers' Bible Study Every Friday 6:00 pm Musical Theatre Class Performance	<i>21</i>					
<i>22</i> 11:00 am Organ Dedication 4:00 pm Dedicatory Concert & Reception	<b>Spring Body &amp; Spirit and Child's Play Sessions End</b>					<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>29</i>	<i>30</i> Memorial Day Holiday Offices closed	<i>31</i>	<i>June 1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>					
<i>5</i> 12:45 pm Board of Deacons; Session Meeting 4:00 pm Ordination & Installation of Cheryl Pyrch	<i>6</i> 2:30 pm Worship Committee	<i>7</i> 6:00 pm Men's Support Group (PLWA) Every Tuesday	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<b>Rutgers staffs the shelter (Fridays and most Sunday nights)</b>						
<b>Summer Body &amp; Spirit and Child's Play Sessions Begin</b>											
<i>12</i> 12:45 pm Peace & Social Justice Network	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i> 6:00 pm Scout Graduation	<i>18</i>					

## Sundays

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

## Preaching Schedule

- May 15*—Pentecost; Holy Communion; Dr. Shafer preaching  
*May 22*—Trinity Sunday; Organ Dedication; Dr. Shafer preaching  
*May 29*—Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time; Charles Amstein preaching  
*June 5*—Gifts of Men Sunday; Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time; Dr. Shafer preaching  
*June 12*—Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time; Dr. Shafer preaching

## Summer Kids at Rutgers Church

**Body & Spirit:** Registration is now open for our summer kids and adults programs, taking place during the months of June and July. Again this year we are offering a two-day drop-off special for toddlers. Check out our brochures or visit the Body & Spirit page on the Rutgers web site. The fall schedule will be available at the end of May for those of you who wish to plan in advance!

**Child's Play:** Summer Child's Play groups, where parents attend with their children, will take place on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings from 10:00 am to noon. The baby play group meets Tuesdays at noon, and our Mothers' Bible Study continues Fridays at 11:00 am (child care provided). Remember the Child's Play program is free to Rutgers member families! Contact Holly Nedelka at x204 for more information or to register.

### Thursday Movie Series

Every Thursday at 7:00 pm following the meal program.  
Hosted by Dr. Roger Franklin.

**April 14: Ladder 49 (2004)**

Baltimore firefighter grows from an inexperienced rookie to a seasoned veteran with the men of "Ladder 49."

**April 21: Garfield: The Movie (2004)**

Everybody's favorite comic-strip fat cat comes to life in this family adventure that mixes live action with computer-generated imagery.

**April 28: The Terminal (2004)**

Landing at JFK, an Eastern European learns that a coup has taken over his country, making his passport useless.

**May 5: Maytime (1937)**

An opera star and a penniless singer fall in love, but face problems from her husband/ manager.

**May 12: Under the Tuscan Sun (2003)**

A recently divorced writer, urged to get away from her dreary existence, takes a trip to Italy.

**May 19: Top Gun (1986)**

A young man is determined to be the "best of the best" in an elite training program for U.S. Navy fighter pilots.

**May 26: My Cousin Vinny (1992)**

A streetwise but inexperienced New York lawyer defends his cousin accused of a crime in the Deep South.

**June 2: Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (1968)**

A musical car that can fly like a plane or float like a boat leads an eccentric inventor and his children into amazing adventures.

**June 9: The Toast of New Orleans (1950)**

A Louisiana fisherman is taken from the docks to center stage at the opera house.

**June 16: Stir Crazy (1981)**

Wannabe actor and playwright can't even get arrested until they sport woodpecker costumes on their way to Los Angeles and are mistaken for bank robbers.



...so I send you. John 20:21

The youngest member of the PC(USA) Special Offerings family, the Pentecost Offering was first received by congregations in 1998. It provides a way to directly meet the needs of children at risk, youth, and young adults. 40% of the offering is kept by Rutgers to support a local organization chosen each year by our Peace & Social Justice Network. Last year, the after-school program at Saint Matthew and Saint Timothy's Neighborhood Center received \$911.58 of the \$2,278.94 we gave. If you would like to nominate an organization to receive this year's local portion, please contact Cheryl Pynch or Sue Spears.



### april \* happy birthdays \* may/june

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 Hayden Coudal-Jones                                 | <b>may 10</b> Juliet Pritner              |
| 2 Laurel Brevoort, Nicole Byrns, Lily & Trey Santiago | 15 Clif Fisher                            |
| 4 Mary Beth Coudal                                    | 17 Beverly Thompson                       |
| 5 Massimo Maglione                                    | 19 Bill Bailey, Rashid Fawwaz             |
| 6 Muriel Knight                                       | 21 Nora Lidell                            |
| 9 Sean Nelson   | 27 Emmet Smith                            |
| 10 Joan Keener  | 30 Elinor Bowles, David Hill, Ruth Munson |
| 14 Bob Shelton  | 31 Tom Driver, Cynthia Gale               |
| 16 Khitan Das Galper, Gladys Morris                   | <b>June 1</b> Ed Alley                    |
| 17 Jennifer Finn                                      | 2 Colin & Zachary Nelson                  |
| 18 Cherise Ou Yang                                    | 4 Adele Ou Yang                           |
| 23 Sophia Graham-Kay                                  | 5 Robin Berry                             |
| 24 Austin Simpson                                     | 16 Susan Poliacik                         |
| 27 Charles Platt                                      | 22 Anne Barstow                           |
|   | 26 Alan Robinson                          |
|   | 27 Cullen Dunn-Ellis                      |

## What Happened at Session?

by Elder Christine Gorman, Clerk of Session

Here are some highlights from the regularly scheduled Session meeting of **February 6, 2005**. You can always get the full Session minutes by sending an email to Jennifer (jhanson@rutgerschurch.com).

1. This was a joint meeting of Session and Deacons, at which Jeremiah Rosario reviewed various programs of the Deacons and talked about plans for a new Helping Hands project that would provide more support during the particular times of need of members of the congregation.

2. After due examination, a motion carried that we ordain and install William Bailey, Pamela Byrd, and Sheila Smith and install Kim Hodges and Alice Hudson as Deacons to the Class of 2008.

3. After due examination, a motion carried that we

ordain and install Juliet Pritner and install Ulla Farmer, Lynne Morris and Susan Scherer as Elders to the Class of 2008.

4. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has arrested Mr. Jeffrey A. Winters of Queens on suspicion of threatening arson against PCUSA churches.

5. A motion passed to draw up a formal list of members of the church who do not have email so that they can be more regularly contacted with congregation-wide news.

Here are some highlights from the regularly scheduled Session meeting of **March 1, 2005**.

1. Christine Gorman was elected as Clerk of Session, Warwick Busfield as Treasurer, and Lynne Morris as Rutgers' regular elder commissioner to the Presbytery of New York City. In addition, the Session approved Elder Vera Roberts as an "extra" commissioner to the presbytery since she serves on the General Council.

2. A motion passed to appoint Massimo Maglione and David Taylor to the Presbyterian Welcome Steering Committee.

3. Members were elected to the newly reorganized Benevolence Committee (see below).

4. A motion passed to announce a congregational

meeting for Sunday, April 3, if the way be clear, for the purpose of extending a call to the DAP candidate.

5. The Session had a general discussion about the issue of gay marriages as a result of a recent New York State court ruling that suggested that not allowing same-sex marriages might be unconstitutional. It was decided not to take conclusive action at this time.

Here are some highlights from the special Session meeting held on **March 20, 2005**.

After due examination, the Session voted to receive into full membership Anne Barstow by letter of transfer from Jan Hus Presbyterian Church; and into affiliate membership, Tom Driver, minister member of the United Methodist Church. Anne and Tom were welcomed publicly during the Easter Vigil service on Saturday, March 26.

Here are some highlights from the special congregational meeting held on **April 3, 2005**.

The Designated Associate Pastor Nominating Committee recommended that the congregation call Cheryl Pynch as its Designated Associate Pastor beginning June 1, 2005. The congregation voted to approve this call.

### What Do You Think?

1. How many important cell phone calls do you have to listen to daily?
2. Life equals the chances taken and choices made.
3. Don't give excuses that have practical solutions.
4. When you start wearing magnifying glasses and carrying flashlights to read menus at restaurants, you're in the 40+ age club.
5. You must give back to others to continue going forward.
6. What gives a person the right to judge others based on their appearance?
7. When is it appropriate to tell an elderly person they have a hygiene problem?
8. If Central Park doesn't have a gate counter, how do people come up with the number of visitors?
9. The older you get, the harder it gets to accept your limitations.
10. When the strong become weak, who's left to help them?

'Til next time, Jacquelyn M. Carpenter

### The New Benevolence Committee

2006

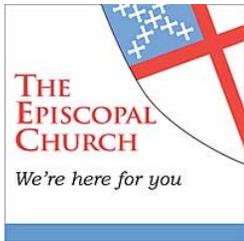
2007

2008

Elinor Bowles  
 Laurel Brevoort  
 Massimo Maglione  
 Vera Roberts

Susan Poliacik  
 Alan Robinson  
 Robert Shelton  
 Suzanne Spears

Christine Gorman  
 Charles Platt  
 Richard Reece  
 David Taylor



## Joint Ecumenical Statement on Bush's 2006 Federal Budget

March 8, 2005—We are preachers, and so, in explaining our opposition to the 2006 Federal Budget that President Bush has sent to Congress, it seems only fitting that we should begin with Scripture.

There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames."

The passage comes from 16th chapter of the Gospel according to Luke, and it contains a warning that should deeply trouble those of us who live in a wealthy nation. As the story continues, the rich man implores Abraham to raise Lazarus from the dead and send him to the house of his brothers so that they may be spared his torment.

"They have Moses and the prophets," Abraham replies. "They should listen to them." The rich man says, "No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent." And Abraham answers, "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."

In telling this story, Jesus makes clear that perpetrat-

ing economic injustice is among the gravest of sins. Yet self-interest is so deeply ingrained in each one of us, he says, that we will not renounce it, even should someone rise from the dead. Jesus was right about that. It was he who rose from the dead to save us from greed and myriad other sins. Yet those who have much continue feasting, even as those who have little remain at their gates.

Like many Americans, we read our daily newspaper through the lens of faith, and when we see injustice, it is our duty to say so. The 2006 Federal Budget that President Bush has sent to Capitol Hill is unjust. It has much for the rich man and little for Lazarus. According to the White House's own numbers, this budget would move 300,000 people off food stamps in the next five years. It would cut the funds that allow 300,000 children to receive day care. It would reduce funding for Medicaid by \$45 billion over the next ten years, and this at a time when 45 million Americans—the highest level on record—are already without health insurance.

These cuts would be alarming in any circumstances, but in the context of the 2006 budget, they are especially troubling. For even as it reduces aid to those in poverty, this budget showers presents on the rich. If passed in its current form, it would make permanent tax cuts that have bestowed nearly three-quarters of the "relief" on one-fifth of the county. If passed in its current form, it would include whopping new cuts that would benefit, almost exclusively, those with household incomes of more than \$200,000 per year. If passed in its current form, it would take Jesus' teaching on economic justice and stands it on its head.

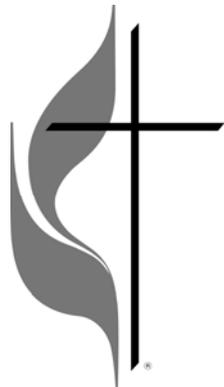
Some contend that these cuts will stimulate the economy and improve life for all Americans, but we believe that stocking the rich man's larder is a peculiar strategy for getting Lazarus more food. Not only does this policy rest on dubious economic assumptions, but it asks the poor to pay the cost for a prosperity in which they may never share.

Some contend that works of mercy are not the business of the government but of private citizens. But in what other area of our national life do we formulate policies uninformed by our deepest values?

Some contend that with the proper support faith-based charities will step forward to fill the gap created by the government's retreat. But this flies in the face of the lessons that we, as religious leaders, have learned first hand. Our churches operate thousands of charities from the parochial to the international. Believe us when we tell you that neither we, nor our Evangelical brothers and sisters, nor our friends of other faiths have anywhere near the resources to turn back the rising tide of poverty in this country. We know that programs, whether governmental or non-profit, can change people's lives for the better. New situations challenge us to respond to new conditions and to support those who are in transition out of poverty. Sadly, the 2006 budget will send more people searching for food in cupboards that, quite frequently, are bare.

Our churches will continue their ameliorative ministries. But it is not enough for us as a Church or a society to be merciful. We must remember the admonition of the prophet Micah. "And what does the

*(Continued on page 12)*



*Living in God's amazing grace*

## Joint Ecumenical Statement

*(Continued from page 11)*

Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?" Micah's choice of verbs is instructive. We are not to love justice or preach justice, we are to do justice—to act, and, when necessary, to struggle.

We urge the members of our churches, of other churches and other faiths, and all whose conscience compels them to do justice to join us in opposing this budget. Write to your representatives. Write to your local newspaper. Join the organizations working to obtain justice for the 36 million Ameri-

cans living below the poverty line, the 45 million without health insurance and the unknown millions struggling to keep their families from slipping into these ever increasing ranks. Together, let us pledge ourselves to creating a nation in which economic policies are infused with the spirit of the man who began his public ministry almost 2,000 years ago by proclaiming that God had anointed him "to bring good news to the poor."

Signed by:

**The Most Reverend Frank T. Griswold**, Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church, USA

**The Right Reverend Mark Hanson**, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American

**The Reverend Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick**, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church, (U.S.A.)

**The Reverend John H. Thomas**, General Minister and President, United Church of Christ

**Mr. James Winkler**, General Secretary, General Board of Church and Society, United Methodist Church

## From the Pastor's Desk...

*(Continued from page 2)*

**church,**" as one that places a high priority on nurturing a person's relationship with God's Spirit through song and prayer and meditation and the study of scripture—a church whose energy and joy and laughter offer continuous testimony to God's intention that the Holy Spirit lead congregations beyond caution and prudence and common sense to risky dreams and startling innovations. "A Spirit-led church."

**Fifth**, I believe God wants to bring Rutgers to life for the 21st century as "**a prophetic church,**" as one that cries out against social ills, no matter how deeply entrenched or widely accepted they may be—a church actively at work for peace and for justice for the poor, a church willing to take stands over against government and society in order to hold these accountable to the standards of God. "A prophetic church."

**Sixth**, I believe God wants to bring Rutgers to life for the 21st century as "**a servant church,**" as one that's committed to using its talents, skills, energy, knowledge, and re-

sources not for advancing ourselves but rather for furthering the well-being of all humankind. "A servant church."

**Seventh**, I believe God wants to bring Rutgers to life for the 21st century as "**an equipping church,**" as one focused on providing to you the laity the resources you need in order to witness to God and do God's will both in your work and in your play. For if the world is ever to be transformed into becoming more and more like what God intended for us to be, then that work will need to happen outside the walls of this church through your lay ministries out there in the "real" world, where the forces of light and darkness encounter and engage each other daily. And for this task, you need a Rutgers Church that will "equip" you.

**Eighth** and, at least for today, last, I believe God wants to bring Rutgers to life for the 21st century as "**a hope-filled church,**" as one that sees resurrection not only as an individual's rising from the dead but also as a people's coming back to life after being moribund in order ever more faithfully to

serve both God and neighbor. Ezekiel assures us that this can happen, that there is "hope."

So can these bones of ours really be raised to new life?

Yes! With God's help, they really can. With God's help, Rutgers can indeed be raised to life in the 21st century as "an undogmatic church," "a purposeful church," "a wildly inclusive church," "a Spirit-led church," "a prophetic church," "a servant church," "an equipping church," "a hope-filled church."

Through the Holy Spirit, through God's enlivening breath, "them dry bones" of ours can indeed be raised to newness of life and vitality.

Let us pray (employing a hymn text by Edwin Hatch, 1886, altered to use plural pronouns).

Breathe on us, Breath of God, fill us with life anew, that we may love what Thou dost love, and do what Thou wouldst do. Breathe on us, Breath of God, till we are wholly Thine, until this earthly part of us glows with Thy fire divine. Amen.

## AIDS and the Church in Africa: Whose Christian Values?

Ms. Pauline Wichina, Faith-based Organizations Coordinator for Population Services International

The Reverend Janet Guyer, HIV/AIDS Consultant for Presbyterian partner churches in southern/east Africa

The Reverend Jennifer Butler, Presbyterian Representative to the United Nations

On the snowy last evening of February, these three extraordinary women came to Rutgers to share their thoughts on "AIDS and the Church in Africa" in a panel moderated by Rutgers' Christine Gorman.

The evening began with a brief review of the extent of the pandemic: over 40 million people are infected with the HIV virus world-wide, 60% of whom live in sub-Saharan Africa. Of these 28 million individuals, 60% or 18 million are women or girls.

Pauline Wichina described some of the factors that contribute to HIV/AIDS becoming increasingly a women's disease. Widespread gender discrimination and poverty lead to institutions such as cross-generational marriage, where young girls are powerless to refuse unprotected sexual relations with their older husbands.

The record of African churches responding to the epidemic is a mixed one: many are banning anyone infected with AIDS and often fail to teach about sexuality or promote fidel-

ity in relationships. On the other hand, churches are also providing critically needed care to orphans and families, and pioneers such as the Reverend Gideon Byamugisha of Uganda (who is infected with HIV) have led the way in combating stigma.

The Reverend Janet Guyer shared examples of how the PCUSA is supporting the work of partner churches in Malawi. She told of one home care volunteer whose simple act of visiting a man with AIDS demonstrated to neighbors who had shunned him that it was safe to visit and take care of him. She spoke about community-based orphan care, where centers provide meals, activities, and respite for caregivers, so that orphaned children are able to remain in their home villages. And she described a church curriculum being developed to help women learn how to prevent mother-child transmission of the HIV virus.

Finally, the Reverend Jennifer Butler shared her efforts to communicate these stories to global leaders, connecting

them to what is happening on the ground and showing them what is possible.

All of the speakers posed a powerful moral dilemma: if AIDS is a preventable disease, how come millions continue to die? And yet they also communicated a sense of energy, great possibility, and hope.

The first of the questions to follow the presentations addressed Christian values: how is it possible to be a prophetic voice for progressive Christianity and at the same time work with people whose deeply held convictions may be very different from our own? Pauline responded in this way: "When a house is on fire, everyone in the community runs with whatever they have to put the fire out." Everyone's priority in this pandemic is to save lives.

The audience was also eager to hear ideas about what we should be doing; see the brainstorm results below.

Videotapes of this forum are available from Patricia ([pastas@rutgerschurch.com](mailto:pastas@rutgerschurch.com)).

**"If we as a church have nothing to say in the midst of this crisis, then when it is over, we will have nothing to say."**

### Question: What can we in this presbytery be doing?

#### Advocacy:

- Challenge US economic policies that hamper Africans' efforts to help themselves.
- Fight for restored US funding to the UN Population Fund and the Global Fund; this multilateral aid goes further than what a single country can do.
- Fight for unbiased distribution of US aid, which currently cannot be used to purchase generic drugs. It is also withheld from organizations that provide counseling about abortion.
- Fight for debt forgiveness so African countries can invest in health care instead.

#### Giving:

- We have enormous resources; it would take only a fraction to really make an impact.
- Match Rutgers' commitment to give 1% of your income to address the AIDS pandemic.
- Learn more about and give to the PCUSA Extra Commitment Opportunities, such as community-based orphan care.
- As a congregation or presbytery, help sponsor an AIDS speaker tour from Africa or a workshop on gender for African church workers.

#### Other:

- Pray.
- During worship services, share messages about gender equality and AIDS in the world.
- Put together home-based care kits (simple supplies for volunteers to use when visiting AIDS patients in their homes).
- Develop a partnership with a church in Africa on the front lines of the fight.
- Take your congregation to the people — both in Africa and here in Harlem, Newark...

## Rutgers Presbyterian Church

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We're on the web!  
[www.rutgerschurch.com](http://www.rutgerschurch.com)

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### Put Sunday, June 5, 4:00 pm on Your Calendar

On Sunday, April 3, the congregation of Rutgers Presbyterian Church voted to extend a call to Cheryl Pynch to become our new Designated Associate Pastor, effective June 1, for a period of two years (renewable). Cheryl will become the first installed woman pastor in the history of the Rutgers Church.

Cheryl is a graduate of Union Theological Seminary, New York City, and has been serving Rutgers Church for the past five years as Associate for Educational Ministries. She is, therefore, quite well known to all of us!

On Saturday, April 9, the Presbytery of New York City voted to approve both Cheryl's ordination to the Ministry of Word and

Sacrament and her call to the position of Designated Associate Pastor here at Rutgers Church. In fact, her wonderful opening comments and written statement of faith managed to stun the presbytery into such respectful silence that, uniquely, the members of the presbytery addressed no questions to her at all!



The service of Cheryl's ordination and installation will be conducted by the Presbytery of New York City at Rutgers Church on Sunday, June 5, at 4:00 pm. As implied by the title "Ministry of Word and Sacrament," Cheryl will be able from that time onward to officiate both at the sacraments of the church and at weddings and funerals and also to moderate the meetings of the Session.

Among the participants in the service of ordination and installation will be Cheryl's pastor, the Rev. Dr. Paul Smith, First Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn Heights, and the Rev. Diane Lacey Winley, Pastor, Good Shepherd-Faith Presbyterian Church, plus Rutgers' own Laura Jervis, Byron Shafer, and Lynne Morris (chair of the congregations' DAP Nominating Committee). Also from the Rutgers staff, our Communications Coordinator Patricia Pastás will be reading one of the scripture lessons.

A gala reception will follow the service of worship.

Cheryl will take up residence in the manse of the Rutgers Church, at 96th and Broadway, on June 1.

**CONGRATULATIONS,  
RUTGERS, and WELCOME TO  
THIS NEW MINISTRY, CHERYL!**