

# Renewal

## From the Pastor’s Desk

The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer

Had not Rutgers Church been celebrating June 5th as “Gifts of Men Sunday,” the two scripture lessons for the morning service would have been Genesis 12:1–9 and Matthew 9:9–13, 18–26.

In Matthew 9:9–13, we hear religious leaders grumbling about the kind of people Jesus sees fit to invite to his table: Who’s fit to come to the table of the Lord? Who’s fit to be numbered among the people of God? Who’s fit to lead the people of God?

These questions are central to this passage from Matthew, the gospel that’s highlighted in this year’s lectionary texts. And our congregation deems the answers to these questions to be so important that every week our Sunday bulletin includes this statement of Rutgers’s mission: “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.” And in another bulletin paragraph, usually placed just above that mission statement, we proclaim each week: “Rutgers is a member of **More Light Presbyterians**, a network of inclusive churches that welcome individuals into full membership, including ordained offices, without regard to sexual orientation.”

It is with utmost joy that I report that at 4:00 pm on Sunday, June 5, at the

Presbytery of New York City’s service of ordination for Cheryl Pyrch and of her



Photo by Guillermo Lopez

installation as the Designated Associate Pastor for this congregation, we helped fulfill that mission statement of ours.

In the early seventeenth century, one of the leaders of English Puritanism was the Reverend John Robinson. He was pastor of a Puritan congregation that fled England in order to escape persecution and took refuge in Holland, in the city of Leyden. In 1620, a minority of the Leyden congregation set sail for the New World on a ship named the *Mayflower*. They were called the Pilgrims, and they established Plimouth Plantation—a colony well-known in American history. Robinson, however, remained behind in Holland, with the majority of his congregation, and he died there in 1625.

Robinson, together with all Puritans and Pilgrims, dissented from the existing theology and structure of the Church of England. And he argued the case for their dissent by using fresh interpretations of Scripture, interpretations they believed to be guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit. In explaining this, Robinson once said: “The Lord hath yet *more light* and truth to break forth out of his Holy Word through the Spirit.”

Robinson was saying that the Holy Spirit illumines our reading of Scripture in such a way as to grant us from time to time a clearer understanding of the Bible’s meaning, an understanding that differs from previous interpretations.

These words of Robinson were quoted by a Presbyterian General Assembly in 1976, some 29 years ago. That assembly quoted Robinson’s words when it authorized the appointment of a national Task Force that

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## From the Pastor's Desk

was to spend two years determining whether or not there *is* “more light” yet to break forth from Scripture on the issue of homosexuality and the ordination of homosexual persons.

The Moderator of the 1976 General Assembly, Elder Thelma Adair of New York City, appointed nineteen persons to that Task Force. I was one of them. So, too, was the Reverend Robert Davidson of the West-Park Presbyterian Church. Our task force made its report to the General Assembly of 1978.

Two of the voting delegates at that 1978 Assembly were the Reverend Cyril Jenkins, our Pastor Emeritus, and the Reverend Laura Jervis, now one of our parish associates.

What report did our Task Force make to the Assembly?

Well, fourteen of us, including Bob Davidson and me, concluded that on the subject of homosexuality there *is indeed* more light and truth to break forth from God's word through the Holy Spirit. So the report of the majority of our task force read: “May a self-affirming, practicing homosexual Christian be ordained? We believe so, if the person manifests such gifts as are required for ordination.... Spiritual maturity or the absence thereof is an attribute pertaining not to any *class* of people but only to *individual* persons. Thus, [spiritual maturity] must be distinctively identified and separately evaluated in each individual candidate for ordination as the church, led by the Spirit and guided by God's Word, seeks to discern and verify that particular candidate's gifts for ministry.”

That was the majority report of the task force. However, five of our nineteen mem-

bers presented a minority report to the General Assembly. They believed that there is *no* new light to break forth on the subject, and they repeated the old interpretation that homosexual behavior is always and under every condition sinful.

The minority of the task force therefore recommended that the constitution of the Presbyterian Church be interpreted as forbidding the ordination of “self-affirming, practicing homosexual persons ... to the professional ministry, or to the offices of ruling elder and deacon.”

I regret to say that although some voting delegates favored the report of the task force's majority, the General Assembly of 1978, by a large margin, followed the view of the task force's minority, the view that there is *no* new light to break forth from the Bible about homosexuality. The 1978 General Assembly, therefore, offered the “definitive guidance” that no “self-affirming, practicing homosexual person” should be ordained as a minister, elder, or deacon in our denomination. Shortly thereafter, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, William P. Thompson, ruled that the General Assembly's action was an authoritative interpretation of our denomination's Constitution and that the action was, therefore, more than “guidance.” It was, in fact, *binding* on every presbytery and on every Presbyterian congregation.

With that background, I can now explain more fully what a “More Light Church” is! A “More Light Church” is a Presbyterian congregation that believes that the 1978 General Assembly was in error when it concluded that all homosexual behavior, no matter how loving or committed, is sinful and that the 1978 General Assembly was

in error when it said that the constitution forbids the ordination of this or any entire class of people. A “More Light Church” is one that seeks to open its doors to all classes and categories of people. Specifically a “More Light Church” is one that extends to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons the full rights of membership in the church, including the right to be elected and ordained by a congregation as an elder or deacon or to be approved by a presbytery as a minister of word and sacrament. A “More Light Church” dissents from and seeks to overturn the current stance of our denomination, the stance that any homosexual person known to be sexually active—no matter how loving and committed his or her relationship may be—is automatically barred from ordination. And a “More Light Church” dissents from and seeks to overturn this stance precisely *because* of the Bible and of what we think it says.

Genesis 12:1–9 and Matthew 9:9–13, 18–26 are glorious examples of the many biblical texts that form the basis for our dissenting interpretation. These texts proclaim God's clear-cut purpose to include among God's people those whom society and even many religious leaders deem to be marginal, or unfit, or impure, or immoral.

When God chose a family to reverse the tide of human rebellion against the Creator, when God chose a family to model what it is to live in faithful relationship to God, God chose Abram and Sarai. God did not choose an elite family; God did not even choose a family widely approved of in society. No, Abram and Sarai were a marginal family; they were resi-

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**Witness Your  
Welcome!  
Join Presbyterian  
Welcome in the  
2005 NYC GLBT  
Pride March, on  
Sunday, June 26.**

## Woman of Conscience

An E-mail Interview of New Member Anne Barstow by Patricia Pastás

Greetings Anne,

Patricia here, hope you are doing fine. In order to continue our series of new member profiles, we would like to include one of you in our next newsletter. Let me ask you first if you would like to share with us some of your exciting experiences as a member of Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, as an activist for peace and justice, as a woman, as a wife, as a friend. What do you do during your free time? Why did you join Rutgers? (I know, so many questions—you don't have to answer if you don't feel like it. Just let us know a little bit about the special human being you are.)

Grace and Peace,  
Patricia

—

Dear Pat,

I am so pleased to be interviewed for *Renewal*. You already know me well—traveling together does that for folks. [Anne and Patricia traveled to Colombia together in May 2004.] But maybe you don't know about my past. So I will ruminate on how I got to where I am, a 75-year-old grandmother of four.

When I was 56 I started my family by becoming a political activist. In the almost twenty years since, that change has meant endless hours of dull e-mail networking but also seventeen trips to Latin America and four arrests. The cause of this was a study trip to Nicaragua in 1986 sponsored by the New York City Presbytery, and I am eternally grateful for it. While what I learned about Third World poverty was important, I was struck hardest by what happened at the US Embassy there: when asked about US involvement in the Contra War, the officer told us that he knew nothing about civilian casualties caused by US arms,

even though we had just returned from the conflict zone and knew that he was lying. I came home knowing that just writing letters to Congress would no longer be enough to exorcise my anger at our government.

But one can't be a movement of one. I was lucky to find Witness for Peace, an inter-faith group that "enables ordinary people to do extraordinary things" (Noam Chomsky's description of us), by taking us into zones of armed conflict while educating us on US policy. Since 1986 I have traveled to Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, southern Mexico, Haiti, and now Colombia, with Witness. In 1991 I took early retirement from my job teaching European history at SUNY College in Old Westbury in order to chair the board of Witness.

With my work there finished I found another home in the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, whose role as a voice for peace in our denomination I had long admired. I am currently writing about our seeming addiction to war and alternatives to war and pondering the role of the church in a time of war. I supervise the intern of the Peace Fellowship, a young woman who goes to campuses and churches to tell about the present suffering of the Colombian church and to get people thinking about alternatives to war. And I have the privilege of being co-trainer of those who volunteer to be companions (protectors) of Presbyterians in Colombia who receive arrest and

death threats. I am meeting a bunch of very brave people.

If accompanying people marked by death squads is not your thing, you can still accompany Colombians in a very meaningful way—by joining a delegation to Colombia sponsored by the Peace Fellowship and Witness for Peace. We visit displaced persons camps, worship in Colombian churches, comfort survivors of massacres, and hear the stories of refugees from all kinds of violence. We are planning two delegations for 2006. Consider it; pray about it.

I was born a Presbyterian in Palatka, Florida. I became an elder at Good Shepherd Church, NYC. Both my husband, Tom Driver, and I like small churches where members can pray for each other. We are drawn to Rutgers by many things, not least the way its members seem to care for each other.

FEMINISM: three of my four books are about violence against women: *Witchcraze*, a history of the witch hunts in Europe; *Joan of Arc: Heretic, Mystic, Shaman*; and *War's Dirty Secret: Rape, Prostitution, and Other Crimes Against Women*, which I edited.

Leisure time: WHAT LEISURE TIME?!

I consider myself lucky because I live during the Women's Movement; because in retirement I have the time and health to volunteer in the peace movement; because we have three wonderful adult children; and because I can join a church like Rutgers that offers so much.

Anne



See page 11 for a companion article on the Colombia Accompaniment Program.

## Grand Opera Tradition Continues

by Raoul Abdul, from the *New York Amsterdam News*, May 5-11, 2005, page 21

This year's benefit concert grossed \$6,787.60 for the Christopher Roberts Memorial Men's Shelter.

A notable phenomenon in our community is the unquenchable thirst for Grand Opera. On any given Sunday afternoon, there are excellent performances of works from the international repertory by opera companies small and large in our churches and other venues. Even more remarkable is the large number of highly trained young singers to step into the principal roles.

On Sunday afternoon, such a group offered *An Opera Anthology* as part of the Music from Rutgers series at Rutgers Presbyterian Church on West 73rd Street in Manhattan. The producer-director of this event was R. Wellington Jones, a distinguished educator, concert pianist, and host of a weekly TV program on Time-Warner 57.



Photo by Ted White

The eighteenth annual R. Wellington Jones concert to benefit the Christopher Roberts Memorial Homeless Shelter took place on May 1, 2005. The usual full house was in attendance. Elder Lynne Morris presided with her customary aplomb and gave a lovely tribute to Elder Vera Mowry Roberts for her years of dedicated service to our church.

Mr. Jones opened the program with a stylish performance of Schuman's *Waldszenen*. The poetry readings by the Reverend Charles Amstein added

The program included staged excerpts from Massenet's *Manon*, Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. It opened with a performance of Schumann's piano set of *Waldszenen* (Village Scenes), inspired by poetry of German Romantic writers. The last featured R. Wellington Jones at the piano.

As his followers know, Jones brings to his task as an interpreter a marvelous sense of style, a sound technique, and meticulous preparation. After graduation from the High School of Music and Art, this Harlem-born musician earned his Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees from New York University. Now retired from teaching at JHS 99 in District 4 (now Region 9), he is active at Rutgers Church.

Of the operatic part of the program, I was only able to witness the excerpts from *Manon* featuring Helen Fousteris in the title role, Alburtt Rhodes (*Chevalier des Grioux*), John Taylor Thomas (*Le Comte des Grioux*), and an ensemble including Sarah

Hoepfner, John T. Pinner, and Susan Thomas. The narrator was Lynne Morris, and the excellent pianist was Nicholas Fox.

The principals were really first-rate singing-actors. Fousteris displayed a full and rich soprano. Rhodes' lovely lyric tenor gave great pleasure. Thomas poured out rich, full tones. The Abbey Singers were a fine ensemble. The carefully chosen excerpts gave us a nicely etched portrait of each of the opera's principal characters.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the fine readings which introduced each section of the opening Schumann piano work. These featured the Reverend Charles Amstein. I am sorry to have missed the excerpts from the Donizetti and Mozart operas. The large audience rewarded the performers with enthusiastic applause. It was well-deserved.

## Review

by Marshall Williamson, Minister of Music emeritus

greatly to understanding this seldom performed work.

Scenes from *Manon*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *Abduction from the Seraglio* were superbly performed by a large group of talented singers. Special kudos to Helen Fousteris and Alburtt Rhodes in *Manon*, Kathryn Thompson and Edward Bruce Stevenson in *Lucia*, and Douglas McCormick, Jr., Anna Marie Mackey, Francesca Angiuoli, and Matthew Pelliccia in the *Abduction*. William Himmelbauer was a stand-out in *Lucia* and the *Abduction*. Our Pastor, the Rever-

end Dr. Byron E. Shafer, deserves an Academy Award for his spoken role as the Pasha Selim.

The hero of the afternoon was pianist/conductor Nicholas Fox who played with flair, excellent tempi, and wonderful dynamic balance. He understands the acoustics of our church! This program was a total triumph but a half-hour too long. Try to shorten the program for next year, Wellington.

## Benevolence Giving: The Bronx Arts Ensemble

by Susan Poliacik



The Benevolence Committee at Rutgers Church is divided into three subcommittees responsible for distributing funds to international, national, and local organizations serving a balance of Presbyterian and other causes.

I serve on the local subcommittee with Massimo Maglione (local chair), Charles Platt (chair of the full committee), and Rick Reece. Following is a description of one of the non-Presbyterian organizations that we decided to support this spring so that you, our church members, know what we are doing.

The Bronx Arts Ensemble was founded 30 years ago by musician William Scribner. Their Performing Division sponsors concerts all over the Bronx in a variety of venues including parks, schools, and private homes.

Their Education Division underwrites and manages school enrichment programs during and after school in dozens of public schools from elementary through high school in the Bronx. The wide range of programs includes drama, drawing, painting, clay, bookmaking, collage, modern dance, tap dance, hip-hop, chorus, song flute, recorder, clarinet, trumpet, violin, keyboards, ukulele, guitar, African drumming, Latin drumming, and circus arts. Professional artist-teachers are brought in to teach children and mentor public school teachers.

I worked as an artist-teacher in strings in six different schools from 1999-2004. I helped schools buy instruments, set up and taught programs, mentored teachers, and produced concerts. The children I knew

from Bosnia, Africa, the Middle East, Russia, Latin and South America as well as Bronx-born, were frequently the only English-speaking members of their households. Almost all were poor; 25% had asthma; few lived in a two-parent home. Many of mine had their first visible school successes as participants in the strings program. The exultant exclamations of "I got it!" while working on beginning songs like "Hot Cross Buns" and "Twinkle" will stay with me always. The affection shown to me and other teachers in this program was moving and a measure of how desperate these children are to latch onto anything which has life and creativity.

It is a Good Thing to support programs like this! Our local committee, with Session approval, is sending \$650 to the Education Division of the Bronx Arts Ensemble.

Thank you, and bless you all. (The full list of benevolence recipients is available from Jennifer Hanson in the church office.)

## 2005 Spring Noonday Concert Series a Success by R. Wellington Jones

On Thursday, May 12, Ms. Lois E. Bellamy and Verdelle Holly Smith, ably accompanied by Mrs. Beverley Mohamad McDew at the keyboard plus a rhythm section, presented an enthusiastically received recital of original songs and sketches for a large audience of attentive schoolchildren from public elementary schools in the Bronx and Brooklyn.

On Thursday, May 19, we presented excerpts from the original score of Richard Rodgers' and Oscar Hammerstein II's 1948 Broadway musical *South Pacific*, sung by Ladie

Whitaker as *Bloody Mary*, Alburtt Rhodes as *Lieutenant Cable*, Juli Borst as *Nellie Forbush*, Jacquelyn Carpenter as *Liat*, and Albert Williams as *Émile deBecq*. Our own Dr. Shafer narrated and also sang in the spirited chorus of *Seabees* with Bruce Bergquist and R. Wellington Jones. Keyboard accompaniment was provided by Nicholas Fox. This presentation was warmly received by an audience of Manhattan junior high school children from Regions 2 and 3, many of whom later requested autographs from the featured soloists.

Thursday, May 26, brought a performance of extensive excerpts from Ponchielli's 1879 opera *La Gioconda* starring Paula K. Poulafearh in the title role, Jose Andrade as *Barnaba*, Katy Sumrow as *La Cieca*, Salvatore Motisi as *Enzo Grimaldi*, Maria Garza-Ortega as *Laura*, and Tommy Clifford as *Alvise*. Bob Wilson was music director, and Rhett Dennis opened the program with a brief narration of the tangled plot. There were numerous interruptions for applause from a large and appreciative audience.

## Water, Water Everywhere!

Rutgers Vacation Bible School, August 22-26, 2005

In the Bible, water is everywhere—in stories of redemption and creation, suffering and grace. The peoples of the Bible lived between the desert and the sea, and water plays a central role in their understanding of God.

At VBS this year, we'll look at some of the most wonderful, well-known, and theologically challenging stories in the Old Testament: the first creation story ("a wind from God swept over the face of the waters..."), Noah and the ark, and Jonah and the big fish. We'll approach them in different ways depending on the age of the children, but VBS will definitely involve a time machine, dramatic play with a cardboard boat, singing, sheep-

sheep-camel, snack, painting, and clay. As a mission project, we'll be assembling health kits for Church World Service, since even young children have learned that sometimes there can be *too* much water, and as Christians we are called to help.

Every year we welcome children from the church, from the neighborhood, and even from other boroughs. Our wonderful adult staff will be returning: Wanda Diaz, Richard Hill, and Holly Nedelka. Artist Nora Lidell (with assistant DeYan



Jervis McCarthy) and musician Clif Fisher will be creating sets and accompanying us on the piano, and we are always eager to include more adults. If you would like to teach a craft, make a snack, lead a game, or just be an extra pair of hands one morning, please talk to Cheryl Pynch.

We need your help to spread the word! In this Renewal is a flyer for Vacation Bible School—please hand it to a friend or post it in your laundry room. And of course, if you have children we hope they will be able to join us!

## Adult Education in June

### Gay (and Other) Marriage

*Concluding Sunday, June 19, 9:45 am in the Session Room*

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.

### HIV and AIDS: A Call to Transformation: Sunday, June 26, 9:30 am in the Session Room

"What is God's call to us—as Christian individuals and as the Church of Jesus Christ—to transformation and response?" Come hear **Cindy Easterday, a PC(USA) mission co-worker** who has been living and working in South Africa since 1998. She will share information about the pandemic, South Africa, and her work in response to HIV and

AIDS in her community. The Peace and Social Justice Network will be making the HIV pandemic the main focus of their work in the coming year, and we urge everyone to come to this important program! Ms. Easterday will also be giving the Moment for Mission on June 26. You can learn more about her and her work at: [http://www.pcusa.org/mission\\_connections/profiles/easterdayc.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/mission_connections/profiles/easterdayc.htm).

### july \* happy birthdays \* august

6	Bill Donnell	4	Ian Gale
7	Kate Dunn	9	Dave Taylor
8	Rick Reece	13	Alex Simpson
9	John Williamson	16	Philip Yu
13	David Hall	22	Isabelle Gale
15	Natalie Wyatt, Cheryl Pynch	24	Freida Logan
16	Nancy Muirhead		
19	Emilio Padilla		
26	Ellen Caldwell, Shae Simpson		
27	Jon Lembo		
28	Maureen Knapp, Scott Morton, Nancy Williams		
29	Nathan Matthews, Lloyd Spencer		

### Thursday Movie Series

hosted by Dr. Roger Franklin

#### June 23: *Cheaper by the Dozen* (2003)

Steve Martin and Bonnie Hunt bring home the laughs in this family comedy about two loving parents who balance careers, a household, and twelve rowdy children!

#### June 30: *Stars & Stripes Forever* (1952)

Lively, tuneful biography of march master John Philip Sousa, the former Marine Corps band leader who started his own band and wrote some of America's most beloved patriotic songs.

# June/July 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
19 9:45 am "Gay (and Other) Marriage"	20 6:30 pm Christian Ed Committee; Scout Awards	21 6:00 pm Last Scouts meeting until fall	22	23 6:00 pm Meal Program & 7:00 pm Movie Series	<b>The shelter will be closed until Sept. 16</b>	
26 9:30 am "HIV & AIDS: A Call for Transformation" 1:00 pm 2005 Gay Pride Parade	27	28 6:00 pm <b>Men's Support Group (PLWA)</b> Every Tuesday	29	30 6:00 pm Last meal and movie until Sept. 8	July 1 11:00 am <b>Mothers' Bible Study</b> Every Friday	2
3 Last Sunday for the choir until September	4 <b>Independence Day:</b> Church & offices closed	5	6	7	8	9
10 12:45 pm Peace & Social Justice Network	11 3:00 pm Worship Committee	12 6:30 pm Session Meeting	13 6:30 pm Board of Trustees Meeting	14 1:00 pm Farewell Barebuc for Sharon Kelly	15	16
17	18 Dr. Shafer begins vacation/study lv	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>Summer Body &amp; Spirit Sessions End</b>						

## Sundays

9:45 am	Sunday School for Adults (through June 26)
10:00	Choir Rehearsal (thru 7/3)
10:30	Infant and Child Care
11:00	Worship Service
11:15	Sunday School (ages 3-10)
12:15 pm	Coffee Hour
12:30	Choir Rehearsal (thru June)

## Preaching Schedule

June 19	Youth Sunday; Father's Day; Recognition of Teachers and Graduates
June 26	Gay Pride Sunday; the Rev. Cheryl Pyrch preaching
July 3	14th Sunday in Ordinary Time; Dr. Shafer preaching
July 10	15th Sunday in Ordinary Time; Holy Communion; Dr. Shafer preaching
July 17	16th Sunday in Ordinary Time; Dr. Shafer preaching
July 24	17th Sunday in Ordinary Time; the Rev. Cheryl Pyrch preaching
July 31	18th Sunday in Ordinary Time; the Rev. Cheryl Pyrch preaching

# August 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 6:00 pm Men's Support Group (PLWA) Every Tuesday	3	4	5 11:00 am Mothers' Bible Study Thru Aug. 12	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<b>Summer Child's Play Sessions End</b>						
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 Dr. Shafer returns	25 Renewal Deadline	26	27
<b>Water, Water Everywhere: Vacation Bible School!</b>						
28	29	30	31	Sept. 1	2	3
4	5 Labor Day: Church & offices closed	6 Holiday: Church & offices closed	7	8 6:00 pm Meal Program & 7:00 pm Movie Series	9	10

## Sundays

10:30 am	Infant and Child Care
11:00	Worship Service
11:15	Sunday School (ages 3-10)
12:15 pm	Coffee Hour

**The shelter will resume on Friday, September 16.**

### Preaching Schedule

August 7	19th Sunday in Ordinary Time; the Rev. Laura Jervis preaching
August 14	20th Sunday in Ordinary Time; Holy Communion; the Rev. Cheryl Pynch preaching
August 21	21st Sunday in Ordinary Time; the Rev. Charles Amstein preaching
August 28	22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time; Hymnsing with Dr. Shafer
September 4	23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time; Dr. Shafer preaching

## Drawing the Line Between Churches and Politics

A Letter to the Editor of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Tuesday, May 31, 2005

A member of my church gave to me a copy of the Ohio Restoration Project. This project is led by so-called Christians who have a plan for Ohio. The project will target 2,000 pastors throughout the state to become "patriot pastors." These patriot pastors will be briefed on a specific political agenda and asked to submit names of their parishioners in order to increase a database to 300,000 names. These pastors will be asked to place voter guides in their church pews.

Ken Blackwell, Ohio's secretary of state and a governor hopeful, is named throughout the document. Blackwell will be fea-

tured on 30-second radio ads promoting this group's agenda and supporting the "Ohio for Jesus" rally set for the spring of 2006. At the end of the document are the words, "America has a mission to share a living savior with a dying world."

This is not America's mission. This is frightening, diabolical stuff for non-Christians and Christians alike. It is blasphemous to claim that any earthly kingdom is God's kingdom. The theological foundations of this movement are vacuous. They are set on the sands of opportunism, self-righteousness and greed.

It is time for the citizens of Ohio to wake up. This group and those like it will stop at nothing in making America a theocracy shaped by one very limited interpretation of scripture.

The media must investigate and show this movement for what it is. Courageous preachers must help their congregations understand what is at stake. Silence is not an option.

The Rev. Dr. John Lentz, Pastor of the Forest Hills Presbyterian Church, Cleveland Heights, Ohio

## Survey Finds 4 Out of 10 People in the US Say They Are 'Born Again'

by Chris Herlinger for Ecumenical News International, ENI-05-0423

**NEW YORK**—More than four out of 10 people in the United States call themselves evangelical Christians, but a much smaller proportion hold to "core evangelical" doctrine, according to data from two recent surveys.

A poll of 1,000 US adults conducted in mid-April

by the Gallup Organization found that 42 per cent of those surveyed labeled themselves "born-again" or evangelical, Religion News Service (RNS) reported.

But a subsequent survey, conducted in early May, also of 1,000 adults, found that just under a quarter—22 per cent—of those surveyed hold to all three beliefs identified by Gallup as being widely accepted to represent core evangelical doctrine.

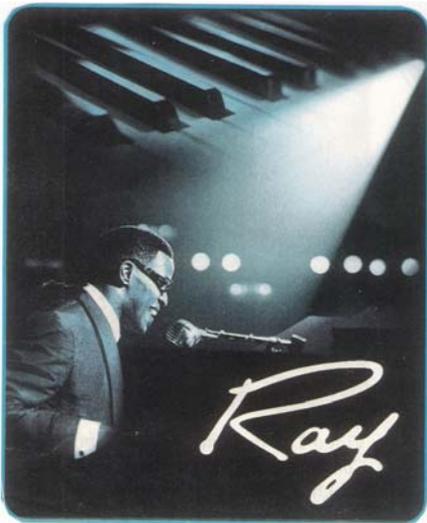
These are: believing that the Bible "is the actual word of God" (held by 32 per cent of the respondents); engaging in evangelism by encouraging a friend or relative to "believe in Jesus" (something done by 52 per cent); and having had "a born-again experience" (experienced by 48 per cent).

"It has been difficult for experts to get an accurate read on the percentage of evangelicals in the United States, and estimates can vary widely," Albert L. Winseman, Gallup's religion and social trends editor,

said in announcing the polling data. "Looking only at the basic Gallup Poll self-identification question, it would appear that evangelical Christians make up a sizeable portion of Americans."

He added: "However, when analysing respondents' answers to three questions that most evangelical leaders would say are core evangelical doctrine, the percentage is much smaller."

Results of another recent poll, released on 6 June, conducted for The Associated Press by Ipsos, a global survey research firm, found that unquestioning belief in God is far higher in the US than in nine other countries. The poll, conducted in May, also found that people were least devout in western Europe, the agency reported. The polling of 1,000 people was conducted in the US and countries closely allied with it. They included Australia, Great Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, South Korea and Spain.



Coming September 8: Movie Nites at Rutgers resumes with *Ray*, the remarkable story of one of America's musical legends: Ray Charles.

## What Happened at Session?

by Elder Christine Gorman, Clerk of Session

Here are some highlights from the regularly scheduled Session meeting of **April 4, 2005**. You can always get the full Session minutes by sending an email to Jennifer (jhanson@rutgerschurch.com).

1. Dr. Shafer reported receiving a thank you letter from UNICEF for our contribution of \$1,439 for tsunami relief (the other two thirds of our special offering went to Presbyterian Disaster Relief).

2. Church Treasurer Warwick Busfield presented recommendations for a new investment counselor along with changes to our investment guidelines. Motions passed to approve these (details available from the church office).

3. The Session voted to send \$50,000 to Shared Mission Support of the PCUSA and \$5,000 each to three seminaries:

Union Theological and Auburn Theological Seminaries in New York City and McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago.

4. A motion passed to nominate Elder Ulla Farmer for one of this year's local Women of Faith awards in recognition of her faithful leadership of the Thursday Nighters meal program. The award will be presented at the Presbyterian Women of New York City luncheon on Saturday, June 18.

5. The Session undertook a discussion of "Them Bones, Them Bones," the sermon preached by Dr. Shafer at Sunday service on March 13, 2005. The consensus was to direct the Christian Education Committee and Cheryl Pyrch to plan a retreat for Session, Deacons, and Trustees that will explore who we are as a church and where we are going.

Here are some highlights from the regularly scheduled Session meeting of **May 3, 2005**.

1. Elder Lynne Morris reported that Presbytery approved the ordination and installation of Cheryl Pyrch as our Designated Associate Pastor. There was general discussion and rejoicing in this news.

2. A motion passed to designate the 40% local portion of the Pentecost Offering to Hour Children, a multi-faceted local mission that seeks to provide support to incarcerated mothers and their children.

3. A motion passed to ask the maintenance staff to provide clearly marked recycling receptacles (paper, metals, and trash) on every floor of the church house building.

4. Scoutmaster Louisa Berry presented Richard Johnson, a former Eagle Scout, who is now head of the parent committee for the Boy Scout troop at Rutgers. Also present were Kyung Lee, who heads the parent committee for Cub Scouts, and Kermit Devoe, Assistant Scoutmaster. There are now five registered Boy Scouts. Five or six Webelos will transfer over to join the troop in February of next year. There are about fifteen Cub Scouts.

5. We scheduled a retreat for church officers (Session, Deacons, and Trustees) on October 1, 2005 at the House of the Redeemer from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

6. Homecoming will be September 18 and Invite-a-Friend Sunday October 23.

### What Do You Think?

1. Body language can tell the status of a relationship.
2. You find out more about a person at a funeral than when they're living.
3. The older you get, the more secure you become with who you are.
4. Have you ever reached a destination and then can't remember how you got there?
5. Why do people leave call back numbers too quickly to understand them?
6. A family member's death is just as tragic to a non-celebrity.
7. When you ask for directions from a subway attendant, are you afraid someone might follow you when your destination is announced on the loud speaker?
8. How can you be concerned without becoming nosy?
9. How do you rationalize giving advice to a child that you wouldn't want given to your own child?
10. Do you ever outgrow jealousy?

'Til next time, Jacquelyn M. Carpenter



We welcome the newest addition to the Rutgers community: Luke Tai Shun Chang, son of Deacon So Young Lee. He was born in May.

## Five Presbyterian 'Accompaniers' Being Sent to Barranquilla

by Alexa Smith, Presbyterian News Service Release #05264 (Excerpts)

**CHICAGO**—Five more Presbyterians have been commissioned by the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s Colombia Network to accompany Colombian church, union and displaced leaders who are threatened by death squads for their work in human rights.

At its May 9-11 meeting here the network set eight different goals for its work, some intended to directly assist churches in Colombia, others targeting U.S. corporations for study.

Continuing accompaniment—and stepped-up recruitment—were high on the agenda, as well as debate about how to address labor practices in Coca-Cola's bottling facilities in Colombia, where some union organizers reportedly have been intimidated or killed.

Sixteen U.S. Christians have completed accompaniment training so far, and a third training program is planned in mid-July....

The accompaniers go to Colombia in teams of two for

month-long stints with the Presbyterian Church of Colombia, which is headquartered in Barranquilla, a port city on the northern coast. The church deploys the teams as needed, with union officials, displaced communities and churches under threat.

The accompaniers serve as international eyewitnesses and file reports with the church that are forwarded to human rights organizations.

The program has been under way since December 2004, coordinated by the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship (PPF), a pacifist group within the denomination that has long backed accompaniment as a strategy to deter violence....

PPF is seeking volunteers for its third training session, and will continue placing accompaniers until the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s Worldwide Ministries Division (WMD) completes its search for a full-time accompanier to live in Barranquilla and coordinate delegations of U.S. Presbyterians in Colombia.

Both Anne Barstow (annebarstow@peoplepc.com), who is handling PPF's recruitment efforts, and the Rev. Dick Junkin, who led PC(USA) delegations in Central America in the 1980s, said delegations are essential to reducing the fear of U.S. citizens traveling to Colombia. Junkin said delegations to Central America gave U.S. Presbyterian a history with the region—and when accompaniers were needed in the 1980s, the church was flooded with volunteers.

"Trying to build a base of concern takes years," said Barstow, noting that she has been trying to do two things at once—educate and recruit. "We've got to figure out a better strategy," she said. "We run into a stone wall with fear, and, I understand that.

"However, the accompaniers who come back don't feel that what they've done is irresponsible at all, but very reasonable. The question is: How to get through that barrier?"....

**Our international benevolence giving for spring 2005 included a \$2,000 donation to the Presbyterian Accompaniment Program.**

## Young Artists

by Lesley Countryman

The children of the Body and Spirit Program's "Art and Science Discovery" class welcomed family and friends to their very first art show and science celebration on Tuesday, May 26. The 4-year-olds had a great time this year meeting a variety of famous artists (Vincent Van Gogh, Edgar Degas [see right], Claude Monet, Auguste Rodin, Piet Mondrian, Faith Ringold, Georgia O'Keefe, and Jackson Pollock) through books and hands-on projects. The science portion of the class was of equal fun, ranging from bones and bodies, air and water, sound and light—to exploding volcanoes!

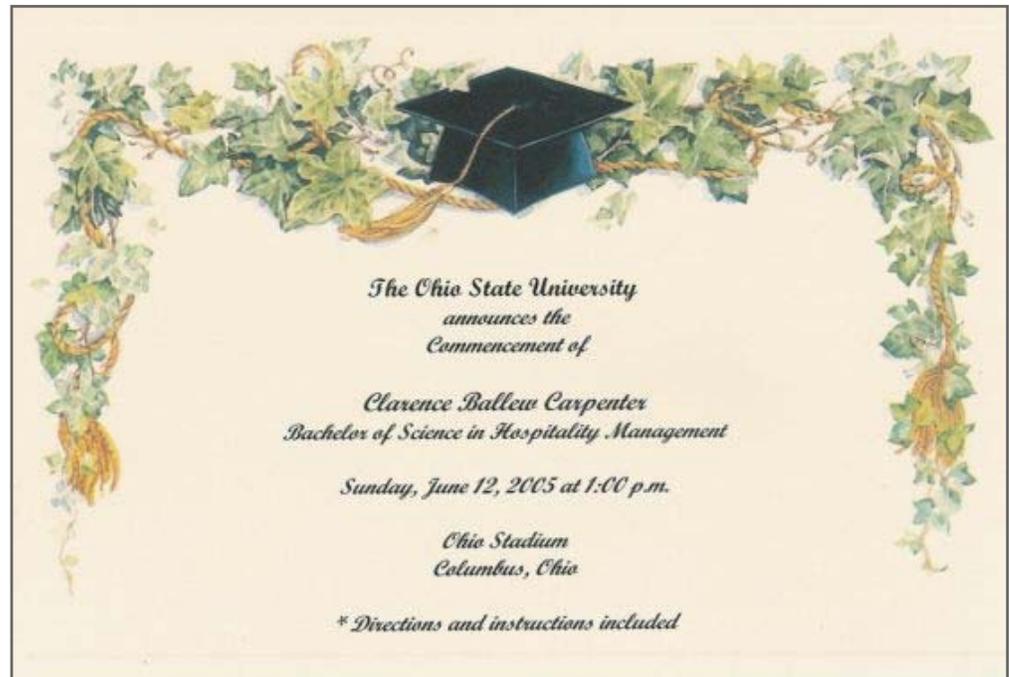
"Once Upon an Artist" will be offered again in the fall as part of the Body & Spirit drop-off series. Look for brochures soon!



*Angelika Rodriguez  
(daughter of Wanda  
Diaz) will be graduating  
from Beacon High  
School this June.*

*She will attend  
Marymount Manhattan  
College in the fall!*

*Angelika attended our  
confirmation class and  
has worked in our  
Vacation Bible School for  
the past 5 years.*



**Clarence is the son of Jacquelyn and Willie Carpenter.**

*(Continued from page 2)*

dent aliens without legal standing where they lived. The #1 Family of Faith was deemed by most of its contemporaries to be cultural riffraff. And in that age of unabashed patriarchy, God's choice of Sarai would have seemed particularly unpromising, for within her own extended family she was strongly stigmatized as "a barren woman." Genesis 12 teaches us that God chose to place at the center of the divine plan for saving the world persons whom the majority culture deemed "unfit."

And Matthew 9:9-13 teaches us that Jesus chose to welcome at his table those whom other religious leaders deemed to be, as a class, immoral. These were the tax collectors, the most despised class of people in Palestine, as well as other classes of people who are described under the generic term "sinners." This latter grouping would have included persons whose religious practices were simply "unorthodox" or "untraditional." Jesus did not tolerate the exclusion of whole classes of peo-

ple from his table, and he even called one of the hated tax collectors, Matthew, to become a leader in his community.

Matthew 9:18-26 teaches us that Jesus reached out to persons whose physical condition led others to avoid them and to stigmatize them as unfit, impure, and defiling. Because we are not first-century Palestinian Jews, we can easily miss the shock and the scandal attending these accounts of Jesus's contact with a dead girl and a bleeding woman. No truly righteous person would welcome the impurity thought to be transmitted through contact with a menstrually hemorrhaging woman—an impurity specifically defined in the Bible itself, in Leviticus 15:25-31. Neither would any truly righteous person incur the impurity thought to be transmitted through contact with a corpse—an impurity identified in the Bible itself, in Numbers 5:2 and 19:13. But Jesus ignored those biblical taboos and welcomed the touch of so-called untouchables.

Genesis 12 and Mat-

thew 9 are stories of persons considered to be marginal, of persons considered to be impure, of persons considered to be immoral as a class. These stories put the church on notice: God intends to include those whom the world seeks to exclude, and to even raise such persons to leadership.

Who's fit to come to the table of the Lord? Who's fit to be numbered among the people of God? Who's fit to lead the people of God?

Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and stories like Genesis 12 and Matthew 9, more light does indeed break forth from God's word in such a way as to answer these questions.

We see that those whom the world marginalizes, stigmatizes, and excludes, God has chosen to welcome and include—as do we at the Rutgers Church. And so we most heartily welcome the Reverend Cheryl Pynch, a self-affirming Lesbian, as our Designated Associate Pastor.

# Who Needs a Health Care Proxy?

A Moment for Mission given by Elder Christine Gorman on Sunday, May 8, 2005

So here we are in church. It's the sixth Sunday after Easter—you know the day when Jesus was resurrected from the dead. As Christians we hold fast to the promise that nothing can separate us from the love of God. But as humans, we can't help sometimes but to be afraid of death and of dying.

The whole thing has gotten a lot more complicated as medical advances force more and more unfamiliar choices on us. No one wants to give up the second chances that come with successful cancer treatment, anti-retroviral therapy, or surgery for broken bones. And there's no reason why we should. But as recent stories in the news and our own experiences make all too clear, medical treatment doesn't always provide a winning solution.

That's why this morning I urge you, if you haven't already done so, to make out a living will and fill out a healthcare proxy form. Of the two, the healthcare proxy is the more important document because it designates someone to make medical decisions on your behalf if you are unable to do so. These include decisions that might ultimately save your life or give you a second chance at life as well as those that acknowledge the strife is o'er, the battle done.

But, of course, if you're going to ask someone to make

such a momentous decision for you, it's only fitting to give them at least some idea of what your values and wishes are. That's where the living will comes in. It sets down in writing what you would like to have done or not done if, in the best judgment of your doctors, there is no reasonable chance of your recovery.

Now living wills are not perfect documents. They cannot cover every contingency and they have a tendency to misplace themselves at crucial moments, which is why our church has started a program to keep living wills and memorial-service wishes on file here in the church office. And it's true living wills are easily ignored by both medical staff and family. Sometimes they seem more of a testament to our desire to want to control every aspect of our lives than anything else.

But they are guideposts that help us to understand our own values and dreams for dignity, and to share those with others. They relieve some of the burden on those who are called to make medical decisions on our behalf. And sometimes, although there's no guarantee, they help avoid family fights.

Copies of living wills and healthcare proxies are available in the church office for you to look at, take home, or sign. You can also download these documents at [www.health.state.ny.us](http://www.health.state.ny.us) (health care proxies) and

[www.palliativecare.org](http://www.palliativecare.org) (living wills). The healthcare proxies need to be witnessed, and although the state of New York doesn't require them to be notarized, doing so may make them seem more credible in the eyes of hospital staff. You can find notaries in many banks and some drugstores.

Designating a healthcare proxy makes a lot of sense for anyone who is at least eighteen. I know 18 sounds so young. But often the biggest family fights and legal struggles happen over folks in their teens and twenties, in part because they didn't have a living will.

Ultimately, of course, we put our lives in God's hands. We trust in the promise of the Resurrection. But I can tell you from personal experience that filling out a living will and healthcare proxy can, despite the legal terminology, be a very moving act of faith. It's a commitment to God to try to be a good steward of this body we have been given. And it's a promise not to be greedy about the great gift of Life.

Will you join me in prayer? Gracious God, we hold fast to Your living word written in Romans that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come ... will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Watch over us, we pray. Amen.

Living wills are guideposts that help us to understand our own values and dreams for dignity, and to share those with others.

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## Summer Child's Play at Rutgers Church

*Child's Play is the perfect summer place to get together for fun and friendship!*

Play groups, where parents attend *with* their children, will take place on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings from 10:00 am to noon, now through August 12th. 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! The air conditioning will be on!** Contact Holly Nedelka at x204 for more information or to register.

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