Color Advent purple! The color of Lent, the color of sorrow, the color of repentance.

Color Advent purple! The color of royalty, the color of sovereignty, the color of hope.

Color Advent purple!

And in the sanctuary of our church from November 28 to December 19 we will do just that—with flowers, and pulpit hangings, and stoles. For purple is the color that best captures the complexity of the multiple moods and times of the Advent season.

On the one hand, this season elicits in us quite a somber mood, one that comes from contemplating the injury and pain, the hatred and injustice, and the bleak political prospects that suffuse our world, despite our best efforts to the contrary. And purple is the color we associate with humankind’s deepest “blues,” our deepest bruises, our deepest troubles.

So color Advent purple for the injury and pain of the untold numbers of Iraqi and American families who have lost loved ones and friends to warfare and violence over the past year and a half; and for the injury and pain of the more than 35,000 adults and children who will spend Thanksgiving weekend, and every winter night thereafter, in a New York City homeless shelter.

Color Advent purple for the injury and pain of the countless women and children enslaved in the sweat shops where too many of our Christmas gifts have been manufactured; for the injury and pain of the 900 million people in our world who are enduring chronic hunger while we are experiencing a season of multiple feasts; for the injury and pain of the millions in our own country who are sick and have no health insurance or who will be sick because they can’t get flu shots now; for the injury and pain of the 30 million in Africa who are HIV+ and have no prospect of getting medicines.

And color Advent purple for the hatred and injustice seen in the murderous attacks by assassins and terrorists on innocent persons in Iraq, Israel, Russia, and around the world; for the hatred and injustice seen in the fomenting of ethnic tensions and the fanning of religious bigotry in places like the Sudan, Indonesia, Pakistan, and even our own country; and for the hatred and injustice seen in the withholding of autonomy from subjected peoples, like the Palestinians and the Kurds.

And color Advent purple for the bleak political prospects here at home in our own country and state, in Iraq, in Israel, among the Palestinians, in Colombia—indeed, in too many nations to mention.

Yes, color Advent purple for its somber, Lent-like mood, because we humans have so much to repent—the injury and pain we sanction, or tolerate; the hatred and injustice we inflict, or allow; the bleak political prospects we bring on ourselves, or have imposed upon us.

But this somber mood is not the only reason to color Advent purple. For Advent is also characterized... (Continued on page 2)
Color Advent Purple!

by a royal, hope-filled mood, a mood rooted in our faith in the goodness of God’s sovereign rule over the universe and in the certainty that arises from this faith that, despite every appearance to the contrary, in the fullness of God’s good time, all injury, pain, hatred, injustice, and divisive partisanship on earth will be vanquished.

The Old Testament offers vivid testimony to this sovereignty of God. First we see it in God’s creation of the world, then in God’s calling of Abraham and Sarah to newness of life, next in God’s freeing of ancient Israel from slavery in Egypt, and finally in God’s returning of the Jewish people to their homeland from exile in ancient Babylon.

And the New Testament proclaims the vanquishing of all pain and injustice first through the conception of Jesus in Mary’s womb, then through the resurrection of Jesus from the tomb, and, finally through the Risen Christ’s promise to come again, in the fullness of time, “with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:30).

So during Advent, we followers of Christ offer our repentance that, under our human stewardship, the world has gone wrong in the past and continues to go wrong in the present. Yet during Advent, we also renew our hope that just as amidst such bleak despair in the past God took flesh and came to humankind in the birth of Jesus, so, too, amidst the bleak despair of this present time the Crucified yet Risen Christ will come again to rule in our hearts and to set in motion through the likes of us the coming to earth of the perfect peace and full justice that is God’s reign.

So Advent looks backward to a time of earlier darkness, when, amidst the tragedy of ancient Israel’s history, it was nonetheless able to express its hope that God would send a Deliverer, the Messiah. And Advent looks forward to a future in which the promise and the potential manifest in the life of Jesus will indeed be fulfilled on earth such that justice and peace will come to reign.

Thus Advent embraces two different moods across three different times—and that’s what makes Advent so wonderfully complex. Advent embraces both remorse and hope, and it carries these two moods from the past, through the present, and into the future. Advent holds ancient Israel’s past remorse in creative tension with our own present remorse, and Advent holds ancient Israel’s past hope for the future in creative tension with our own present hope for the future.

So during the season of Advent-Present, we relive ancient Israel’s past, and we also relive into the future ancient Israel’s impatient waiting for the coming of the Messiah, whom we as Christians know to be Jesus.

Thus during our season of Advent-Present, we cry out to God using words from Israel’s past, words from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. We call out anew to God: “O that You would tear open the heavens and come down ... to make Your name known ... so that the nations might tremble at Your presence!” (64:1–2)

We utter these words today, some 2,500 years after they were first spoken in ancient Israel, and in our present context they take on new meaning. For, unlike ancient Israel, we know that God’s Messiah is Jesus, the Risen Christ. Yet, like ancient Israel, we see all around us the evidence that the Messiah’s reign on earth has not yet come in fullness.

So when we reuse these ancient words of Isaiah, these words of longing for God to come down to earth, we use them to express our own longing, expressed in the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:10), that God’s will may yet “be done on earth as it is in heaven”; our own longing that the justice and peace of Christ may yet come to earth in fullness; our own longing that with the coming again of Christ the age of perfect justice and peace may yet dawn.

During Advent, we relive ancient Israel’s longing for the coming of the Messiah, whose identity it did not know, and we give voice to our present longing for the coming again in power and glory of the Messiah, whose identity we now know to be Jesus.

This concept of the Second Coming of Christ is difficult for us modern Christians to comprehend and talk about. It’s difficult to talk about the coming to earth at last, in the fullness of time, of Christ’s reign of perfect justice and peace. Yet the concept of the church’s expectant waiting for Christ to come in power and glory is central to the Advent Season—as the lectionary makes clear when it chooses Matthew 24:36–44 as the Gospel Lesson for November 28, the First Sunday of Advent.

Earlier, Matthew has described Jesus’s ministry in first-century Palestine as just a sample of what God’s reign will be like in the future, in the fullness of time, when the Risen Christ comes again. Matthew understands Jesus’s ministry in first-century Palestine to have embodied in microcosm the qualities of justice and peace that will be experienced in macrocosm—throughout the world—only in the fullness of time.

(Continued on page 12)
The Industrial Areas Foundation, of which our Upper Manhattan Together is an affiliate, is something I have been looking for, in a sense, all of my life in the ministry. It aims to make things better at the grassroots, to affect government directly, especially local government, where people live. Individuals can't join; churches and neighborhood groups join together. Then they have power, the power of organized people and organized money. Officials then listen, and we cooperate with them to make things happen. Let me give you just two examples:

1. The 72nd Street subway station: Rutgers members were part of an effective demonstration of UMT to get station improvement moved higher up on the priority list, and action was at last taken by the subway authorities.

2. Narcotics: You may say that is not a problem here, but it is a problem as near as our neighboring church, West End Presbyterian at Amsterdam and 105th Street. Churches in that area have an ingenious way of reporting to the Narcotics Squad locations where illegal drugs are on sale. To save individuals from the danger of being identified as informers, drug location addresses can be put anonymously into the offering plate on Sunday.

But the latest news is perhaps the best of all. It concerns a very down-to-earth problem which is widespread in the city: the prevalence of asthma, especially among children. A full Assembly of UMT was held this fall in an uptown church, attended by city officials and addressed by Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, among other speakers. She referred to underlying causes of asthma (in some areas of the city one child in every 4 has the disease), namely the presence of rats and cockroaches. Senator Clinton gave an impassioned speech and said she would use examples from experiences of the problem shared at the Assembly when she met with Mayor Bloomberg the next day.

Rutgers Church is a founding member in Upper Manhattan Together, and our annual dues go to the work overseen by its excellent Lead Organizer, Kathy Maire. Rutgers turned out 10 members at this Assembly, including Cheryl Pyrch, who was in the overflow meeting in the garden of the church. The two leaders from our congregation are Suzanne Spears and Renee Lord, operating under our Peace and Social Justice Network.

This is the power of the people, and this is a modern, rational way to apply what we all believe in, to love our neighbor.

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(Lo)This is the power of the people, and this is a modern, rational way to apply what we all believe in, to love our neighbor.
Holy Fire!
by DeYan Jervis McCarthy and Isabelle Gale, October 31, 2004

(IG) In Sunday School, we have been learning about Moses and how God spoke to him through a burning bush.

(DJM) The burning bush symbolizes people who have been called by God to do right things.

We named people to receive the burning bush award: Rosa Parks, Abraham Lincoln, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

We cannot give the awards to Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King, Jr. because they are dead. And, Rosa Parks isn’t here, so we are going to send her a letter.

Today we are giving burning bush awards to people here who help others and make the world a better place.

We are going to call their names, and we want them to come up front here with us to receive their award.

Dermonte Alleyne because he helps homeless people by giving them a place to sleep.

Ruth Munson because she helps with the coffee after church and is a deacon.

Cheryl Pyrch because she is a great storyteller and we all learn good things through her stories.

Let us pray: Thank you, God, for all the people in the world and in our church who do what is right to help other people and make the world a better place.

Today we thank you for Dermonte, Ruth, Cheryl, Joyce and Byron and for all the good things they do.

Help us all to be inspired by the story of the burning bush to do good things too.

Amen.

Meet the Smiths
(Jon and Sheila joined Rutgers as part of our Spring 2004 crop of new members.)

The Smith family is so happy to have found themselves a home at Rutgers Church. They attended a service for the first time last February on Scout Sunday and joined both the congregation and the Scout pack just as soon as they could! They love the music, the sermons, the Sunday School, and the fellowship in this spiritually and intellectually stimulating community.

Jon is a professional musician with a Masters degree in Jazz Piano Performance from the Manhattan School of Music. He has most recently been involved in work on Broadway shows such as Thoroughly Modern Millie and Swing! When not playing or parenting, Jon is an amateur carpenter who is single-handedly renovating the family’s apartment in Washington Heights.

Sheila has been working for over a decade at the New York Philharmonic as the Assistant to the Chairman. She says the music pumped in from her office speakers is a lot better than muzak, though her concert-going is now most often Young People’s Concerts! A native of Massachusetts, Sheila is proud to call herself a “Massachusetts Liberal” and is working to heal after her foray into political activism during this year’s disappointing campaign.

Ian (8) and Emmet (5), to the surprise and delight of their suburban-raised parents, are both bona fide New Yorkers. Ian’s first word was literally “bagel,” and Emmet’s favorite food is sushi! A third-grader, Ian loves baseball, reading, Cub Scouts, building with Legos, and helping his dad in the workshop. Emmet is a kindergartner who loves trains, drawing, trains, Legos, trains, cooking, and above all, trains. They both attend Hunter College Elementary School.

New members Joy Rose and Bill Bailey contemplate their choice of rocks at the Invite-a-Friend Luncheon on Sunday, Oct. 17. Look for their introductions here, coming soon...
Upcoming Adult Education Offerings

Matthew in Depth,
November 28 to February 6,
Sunday mornings in the Session Room, 9:45–10:45 am, led by Cheryl Pyrch (no class meeting on December 26).

In this 10-week course, we’ll read the Gospel of Matthew from cover to cover and discover the joy, satisfaction – and surprises – that come from a close reading of a biblical book. We’ll be using a guide from the excellent Interpretation series and explore scholarly debates as well as share personal reflections on the text. Matthew will be the most-frequently-preached-on book in 2005, so join this study for a deeper appreciation of the coming year’s sermons! No grades or smiley-face stickers, but Cheryl is asking people to commit to consistent (not necessarily perfect) attendance and completion of reading assignments between sessions. Please RSVP by e-mail or (212) 877-8227, x205, so she can order the study guides.

Advent Vespers and Conversation, Wednesday evenings, December 1, 8, and 15, 6:30 pm (Vespers in the Sanctuary); 7:15 pm (Conversation in the Daniel Russell Room).

It’s now commonplace to note that in the midst of the lights, gaiety, and busyness of the Advent/Christmas season, many of us struggle with feelings of grief, anxiety, or depression. This reality can be hard to acknowledge amid the joy and excitement of the holidays, especially in church. This Advent, we are offering a chance to explore this “shadow side” of the season in the context of Christian faith and hope.

Paul Tillich once suggested that humankind has experienced three distinct “ages” of anxiety. The first involved a preoccupation with death; the second, with guilt; and the third – the modern era – with meaninglessness. The pastoral staff is quite certain most of us have struggled with all three “anxieties,” so we’ll explore each week of Advent. Byron Shafer will preach and lead a discussion on death the first week; Laura Jervis will focus on guilt December 8; and Charles Amstein will lead us in a consideration of meaninglessness on December 15. Cheryl Pyrch will make sure there are plenty of donuts, cider, and coffee to sustain us in our explorations.

Although there will be opportunity to share thoughts and experiences, these will not be therapy or support group sessions. Rather, we’ll look at the theological aspects of these spiritual and emotional challenges, in light of the Good News of the incarnation. We hope you will join us!

Coming on Wednesdays in January, Byron and Margaret Shafer will both be teaching classes through Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church’s Center for Christian Studies. Registration is required, and there is a modest fee. Go to www.christianstudies.org or look for brochures in the vestibule.

One Great Story – Part II, Wednesdays, January 12 to February 2, at 10:00 am in the Session Room, led by Margaret Shafer. A sequel to the course Margaret is currently teaching at Rutgers, part II focuses on the New Testament. The great biblical story unfolds like a drama which can be understood in acts and scenes replete with fascinating characters. Using a timeline and an array of pictures, participants can be introduced to or reminded of the whole salvation history in which we see God in relation to his covenant people. All the little stories of the Bible begin to make sense in the context of the one great story.


Old Testament Roots of the Gospel of Luke, Wednesdays, January 12 to February 2, 7:00 pm at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church (at 55th Street), led by Byron Shafer.

From the very first chapter of Luke to its last, the Old Testament images and allusions found there are rich and bountiful. The setting of the Jewish temple frames the whole gospel, and Jesus is constantly portrayed as fulfilling Jewish piety. Allusions to Old Testament themes fill the poetry of chapters 1–2, and Luke employs quotations from the Old Testament as keys for understanding Jesus’ baptism, his temptation in the wilderness, his first sermon, his entry into Jerusalem, his overturning of the tables of the money changers, and his crucifixion – to name just some of the major episodes.

You are invited to read the gospel with a greater depth of insight by coming to see more of what Luke’s earliest readers readily discerned – the many ways in which Luke builds on the rich religious and cultural background of the Old Testament and Judaism to portray the meaning and purpose of Jesus’ birth, life, death, and resurrection.

THANKSGIVING AT EUCLID HALL

There’s still time to volunteer: Thursday, November 25, from 12:00—3:00 pm. For the fourteenth year, friends and members of Rutgers Church will provide Thanksgiving dinner for residents of Euclid Hall, an affordable, supportive housing residence for senior citizens and for individuals coming out of the New York City shelter system. It is located at 2345 Broadway and 86th Street and operated by the West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing.

If you are unable to join us for the festivities, please call Sue Spears at (212) 724-7351 with your offering of food: rolls, stuffing, fruit, and desserts are needed.

"What life have you if you have not life together? There is no life that is not in community. And no community not lived in praise of God."
- T.S. Elliot

Advent Vesper Services

Wednesdays at 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary. These candlelit services of prayer and reflection include a meditation by one of the pastoral staff and piano music from George Davey. A conversation about the evening’s theme will follow (see page 5).

Dec. 1: Byron Shafer
Dec. 8: Laura Jervis
Dec. 15: Charles Amstein

Sunday, December 19 at 4:00 pm

The Rutgers Choir, soloists, and orchestra present Benjamin Britten’s A Ceremony of Carols and music by Anton Bruckner, G. F. Handel, and John Rutter.

Advent in Welsh

The Welsh Women’s Club of New York City invites you to a British Holiday Concert featuring soprano Colleen Kennedy and pianist Marshall Williamson. On Saturday, December 4, the program will begin at 2:00 pm in the Daniel Russell Room. Christmas caroling and a traditional Welsh tea (te bach) will follow. The concert is free, with a requested donation of $2 for tea and goodies. Please come and enjoy—even if you’re not officially Welsh! (The Welsh Church of New York worships at Rutgers on the second Sunday of every month.)

Thanksgiving at Euclid Hall

Sunday, December 12 at 12:30 pm

The Special Events Committee is planning an all-church Christmas luncheon with live entertainment for adults and kids. Bring your family and friends, and come to the fellowship hall following the worship service to meet our surprise guests. Please bring a grab-bag gift (under $5 value) to make the day even more festive.

Hanging the Greens

Come help us prepare the church for Christmas! On Friday evening, December 17, beginning at 7:00 pm, we will be hanging greens, decorating the tree in the Daniel Russell Room, making ornaments, drinking hot cocoa and cider, and singing together. This is a special event for families and all those who are young at heart.

Christmas Joy Offering

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light...You have multiplied the nation, and increased its joy.
- Isaiah 9:2-3a

As we await the coming of Christ’s light, the seasonal darkness of our world seems a consequence not only of the earth turned away from the sun but also of the soul turned away from the renewing light of God’s love. Jesus invites us to bask in the light of that love and to let it shine through us into others’ lives — please give generously on December 19 and 24 to support the unmet needs of families who have served the PC(USA) and to help students at Presbyterian racial ethnic institutions develop their gifts and calling.

Handmade

Artists’ Cooperative
Pottery, Jewelry, Crafts
Exhibition and Holiday Sale 2004

Saturday, December 4
10 am - 5 pm
Sunday, December 5
12:30 - 4 pm
## December 2004

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<td><strong>Nov 28</strong></td>
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<td>9:45 am “Matthew in Depth” through Feb 6</td>
<td>6:00 pm Scout Meeting Every Monday</td>
<td>6:00 pm Scout Meeting Every Tuesday</td>
<td>6:30 pm Advent Vespers 7:15 pm &amp; Conversation: “Death”</td>
<td>6:00 pm Meal Program 7:00 pm “The Lion King” Every Friday</td>
<td>10:30 am Mothers’ Bible Study Every Friday</td>
<td>10 am—5 pm Christmas Craft Fair 2:00 pm Welsh Women’s Holiday Concert</td>
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<td>12:30—4 pm Christmas Craft Fair</td>
<td>12:30—4 pm Christmas Craft Fair</td>
<td>6:00 pm Men’s Support Group (PLWA/HIV) Every Tuesday</td>
<td>6:30 pm Advent Vespers 7:15 pm &amp; Conversation: “Guilt”</td>
<td>11:00 am Staff Xmas Party 6:00 pm Meal Program &amp; Movie</td>
<td>3:00 pm Choir Rehearsal for Christmas Services (also previous Sat)</td>
<td>6:30 pm Meal Program 7:00 pm Christmas Movie &amp; Celebration</td>
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<td>12:00—4 pm Board of Deacons; Board of Trustees</td>
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<td>12:00—4 pm All-Church Christmas Social; Peace &amp; Social Justice Network</td>
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<td>6:00 pm Meal Program 7:00 pm Christmas Movie &amp; Celebration</td>
<td>7:00 pm Hanging of the Greens</td>
<td>1:30 pm Candlelight Service Dress Rehearsal</td>
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<td>11:00 am Caroling No adult class</td>
<td>11:00 am Caroling No adult class</td>
<td>12:30 pm Pastoral Staff 6:30 pm Session Meeting</td>
<td>6:30 pm Advent Vespers 7:15 pm &amp; Conversation: “Meaninglessness”</td>
<td>6:00 pm Meal Program 7:00 pm Christmas Movie &amp; Celebration</td>
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<td>11:00 am Caroling No adult class</td>
<td>4:00 pm Christmas Candlelight Service</td>
<td>6:00 pm Caroling on steps 6:30 pm Christmas Eve Service, reception</td>
<td>No Meal Program</td>
<td>6:00 pm Caroling on steps 6:30 pm Christmas Eve Service, reception</td>
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### Men’s Overnight Shelter Program:
6:30 pm, Fri–Sat–Sun
We need volunteers for Fridays & most Sundays.

### Sunday Worship Schedule

- Worship Service at 11:00 am — Coffee Hour at 12:15 pm
- Sunday School for Adults at 9:45 am — Infant and Child Care from 9:30 am — Sunday School (ages 3-10) at 11:15 am
- Choir Rehearsals at 10:00 am and 12:30 pm — Children’s Choir Rehearsal at 10:00 am

- **November 28**—First Sunday of Advent; Elder Cheryl Pyrch preaching
- **December 5**—Second Sunday of Advent; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching
- **December 12**—Third Sunday of Advent; Holy Communion; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching
- **December 19**—Fourth Sunday of Advent; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching
- **December 26**—First Sunday after Christmas; Caroling

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- December 26—First Sunday after Christmas; Caroling
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<td>9:45 am</td>
<td>Adult Class: “Matthew in Depth” through Feb 6</td>
<td>2:30 pm</td>
<td>Worship Committee</td>
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<td>Mothers of Color Discussion</td>
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<td>12:45 pm</td>
<td>Board of Deacons; Peace &amp; Social Justice Network</td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>Scout Meeting Every Monday</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Mothers’ Bible Study Every Friday</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday</td>
<td>Church &amp; office buildings closed</td>
<td>12:30 pm</td>
<td>Pastoral Staff</td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>Meal Program &amp; Movie Series Every Thursday</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>2:30 pm</td>
<td>Organ Benefit Concert: “Nordica Trio”</td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>Scout Meeting Every Tuesday</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>“OT Roots of Luke” Jan 12—Feb 2</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>12:30 pm</td>
<td>Annual Congregational Meeting &amp; Luncheon</td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>Scout Meeting Every Tuesday</td>
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<td>Nordica Trio Dress Rehearsal</td>
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**January 2005**

**Sunday Worship Schedule**

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

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

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

- January 2 — Observance of Epiphany; The Reverend Charles Amstein preaching
- January 9 — Baptism of the Lord; Holy Communion; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching
- January 16 — Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching
- January 23 — Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity; West Side Pulpit Rotation (preacher to be determined)
- January 30 — Annual Meeting Sunday; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching
- February 6 — Black History Month; Scout Sunday; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching

**Body & Spirit and Child’s Play**

winter/spring sessions begin this week

**Men’s Overnight Shelter Program:**

6:30 pm, Fri-Sat-Sun

We need volunteers for Fridays and most Sundays.
The Body & Spirit Program

Brochures for the winter/spring Body & Spirit session will be going out concurrently with this newsletter, so check your mailboxes soon. In addition to our movement and dance classes for young ones, we are now offering indoor soccer for 3-5 year olds.

Registration for all children’s and adult programs will begin on November 29 and continue into the New Year. Children’s classes begin the week of January 3, and adult classes begin during the first two weeks of the month.

Thank you to everyone for a great year, and we hope you enjoy the Christmas season!

and Child’s Play

Our winter/spring session will begin right after the new year, the week of January 3. Brochures will be out soon, or visit us online through the Body & Spirit page. In addition to our weekly play groups, the Mothers of Color Support Group now meets on Saturdays from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm in the play room. Also, the Friday Mothers’ Bible Study is planning an overnight retreat at Stony Point in February; anyone interested may contact Holly Nedelka at x204. More information will be forthcoming.

Movies in January

Every Thursday at 7:00 pm following the meal program.

Sponsored by the Board of Deacons and hosted by Dr. Roger Franklin.

January 6: Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Cinderella, starring Ginger Rogers as the fairy godmother

January 13 & 20: Acts I and II of My Fair Lady

A N N U A L  M E E T I N G

The 208th Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held on Sunday, January 30, 2005.

We will begin with a luncheon on the fifth floor at 12:30 pm. All are welcome to reflect on the year’s events, elect new officers, learn about the results from the mission review survey, and perhaps vote on a candidate for the Designated Associate Pastor.

To all committee chairs: Please submit your annual reports to Jennifer Hanson no later than Thursday, January 20. (Early submissions are welcome!)

Bell Choir

We’re exploring the idea of forming a bell choir. If you are 18 or older and musically inclined, and you have two hours available for weekly rehearsal, please contact choir member Ted White at (212) 254-6652.

december * happy birthdays * january

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<td>Jivan Das Galper</td>
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What Happened at Session?
by Elder Christine Gorman, Clerk of Session

Here are some highlights from the regularly scheduled Session meeting of September 14, 2004. You can always get the full Session minutes by sending an email to Jennifer (jhanson@rutgerschurch.com).

1. Bruce Bergquist reported that the carpeting in the Blue Room in the basement is being replaced with polyurethane wood flooring. The organ console is back in the sanctuary and is working well. We are in the process of experimenting with various furniture arrangements in the chancel to take best advantage of the new console. Members are encouraged to share their opinion with George Davey (Organist/Choral Director) or Dr. Shafer as to which arrangement sounds best.

2. A motion passed to designate the local portion of this year’s Peacemaking Offering to the second annual Brooklyn Peace Fair, a project of Brooklyn Parents for Peace. The event is designed to bring people together from across Brooklyn and New York to learn about peace and justice in a fun way. A second motion passed to endorse Brooklyn Parents for Peace.

3. Mark your calendars. We will have a formal dedication of the organ on May 22, 2005. The guest organist will be Kenneth Cowan, an up-and-coming concert organist who is currently serving as an artist-in-residence at St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church in New York City.

4. We received a thank you letter from the West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing that conveyed their gratitude for allowing them to operate a temporary shelter in the gym during the recent Republican National Convention. Four women were housed, and at the end of the week, three of these “service-resistant” guests visited WSFSSH’s Valley Lodge Transitional Shelter. That’s at least a beginning to a more permanent connection!

5. After due examination, the Session voted to receive Joy Rose as a member of the Rutgers Presbyterian Church by reaffirmation of faith. Joy first became a member of a Presbyterian church in Jamaica at the age of 17, having been raised as a Seventh Day Adventist. She learned about Rutgers by listening to Dr. Shafer on the radio.

6. After due examination, the Session voted to receive William Bailey as a member of the Rutgers Presbyterian Church by letter of transfer from the West Concord Union Church in Concord, MA. Bill grew up in the UCC (Congregationalist) church. He recently moved to New York to teach history in schools but also spends a lot of time in Vermont and Boston.

7. A motion passed to reorganize the Benevolence Committee to deal with our growing mission giving.

8. A motion passed to approve January 30, 2005 for the annual meeting of the congregation.

9. Here are some highlights from the regularly scheduled Session meeting of October 12, 2004.

1. The Clerk reported that we received a one-page response from the White House to our letter regarding the abuses at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. In it, Ms. Heidi Marquez, a special assistant to the President, writes that "President Bush has repeatedly affirmed our country’s commitment to the worldwide elimination of torture," and that "America stands against and will not tolerate torture." There was no mention of the Session’s call for the resignation of Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld or our expressed concern about similar abuses at Guantanamo Bay.

2. Bruce Bergquist presented the budget report for the year to date. As of September 30, 2004, total support and revenue were $1,038,062, and expenses were $946,794, leaving a net surplus of $91,268. Bruce expects the surplus will be used up by the end of the year.

3. After due examination, the Session voted to receive William Bailey as a member of the Rutgers Presbyterian Church by letter of transfer from the West Concord Union Church in Concord, MA. Bill grew up in the UCC (Congregationalist) church. He recently moved to New York to teach history in schools but also spends a lot of time in Vermont and Boston.

5. A motion passed to reorganize the Benevolence Committee to deal with our growing mission giving.

6. A motion passed to approve January 30, 2005 for the annual meeting of the congregation.

Here are some highlights from the regularly scheduled Session meeting of November 9, 2004.

(Continued on page 11)
Our New Benevolence Committee
by Charles Platt, Chair

One of the reasons for contributing to Rutgers is so that our gifts can be combined and directed to worthwhile organizations.

In 1997, the Session made a decision that we would increase benevolence to 15% of the total church budget. In 2002, having reached that goal, it was decided to increase the benevolence allocation over the next 8 years to 31% of the total church budget. At least 1% of this will be for AIDS-related mission. This year, the amount is 22% of the budget, or $290,627, and by 2010 it will be 31%.

In order to be sure these larger amounts are directed to where they will do the most good, the Session appointed an Ad-Hoc Committee to reconsider the make-up of the Benevolence Committee. Briefly, the committee will now have a minimum of 12 members including at least 2 from the Peace and Social Justice Network, 1 from Christian Education, 1 deacon, 1 trustee, 2 elders currently serving on Session and 4 at-large members.

The benevolence amounts will be divided 50% for Presbyterian causes and 50% for other causes. 30% will go to international organizations, 30% to national and 40% to local groups. The Benevolence Committee will be divided into 3 subcommittees for international, national, and local work. The subcommittees will obtain information about each organization, both those we have been contributing to and new groups. They will also evaluate them and obtain follow-up information as necessary on how the work is going and how our contribution is being used. We will use information supplied by our denomination on many organizations they have already vetted.

To give a few examples of groups to which we have already been contributing:

Internationally – Church World Service, with which you may be familiar through their Crop Walk. They provide food, medicines, tents, blankets and so on in countries where emergency relief is needed. Also Doctors Without Borders, who send volunteer doctors, nurses, and other professionals to join locally hired staff to provide medical aid in nearly 80 countries.

Nationally – We have contributed to That All May Freely Serve, which works for our denomination to be an inclusive church that honors diversity.

Locally – We help Presbyterian Senior Services and WSFSSH, both of which, among other things, have given special attention to helping grandparents raise grandchildren. Hour Children provides care and services for the children of women who are or were incarcerated.

We recognize the tremendous need in New York City and around the world and hope to use our resources for the maximum effect in helping others.

(Continued from page 10)

1. Bruce Bergquist presented the operating budget. Year to date, on revenues of $1,202,806, we had expenses of $1,105,307, leaving a surplus of $97,499. Most of this surplus will disappear once we disburse the remainder of the funds in the Mission Treasury line and for the Global Struggle Against AIDS (see items 4, 5, and 6).

2. A motion passed to elect Massimo Maglione (as chair) and Harold Manners to the Congregational Nominating Committee.

3. A motion passed to fulfill our 1% commitment in the global struggle against AIDS as follows: $3,625 to the Presbyterian Church USA’s Preventing Mother-to-Child Transmission program and $10,875 to the PC(USA)’s AIDS and Vulnerable Children of Africa program.

4. A motion passed to send $50,000 to Basic Mission Support of the PC(USA). This helps fund programs and mission at the Presbytery, Synod, General Assembly, and international levels.

5. A motion passed to send $15,390 to the West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing and another $15,390 to Doctors Without Borders. This completes the disbursement of the Mission Treasury line for 2004.
Doing Our Own Work: A Seminar for Anti-Racist White Presbyterians
A Project of That All May Freely Serve facilitated by Lisa Larges and Mieke Vandersall
February 25-27, April 1-3, and May 20-22, 2005 at Carmel Retreat Center, Mahwah, New Jersey

The Doing Our Own Work seminar is for those who seek to deepen their commitment to confronting and challenging white racism in the church and where they live and work. It is our experience and conviction that those of us who are white need to "do our own work"—educating ourselves, confronting white supremacy, holding each other accountable, and demonstrating good faith as we seek to build genuine and lasting coalitions with people of color.

This seminar empowers us to be more effective and responsible catalysts for transformation in the life of the Presbyterian Church and beyond. It gives us a starting place to address racial fractures and divisions within the movement for GLBT liberation. It equips us for healing, renewal, and working towards the actualized peace, purity and unity of the church.

Come join us in the spring of 2005 to explore the following topics and issues: Individual racism, institutional racism, and cultural racism—White privilege and unearned advantage—Claiming and shaping an anti-racist identity—How to be an effective anti-racist ally—Discerning our spiritual resources for change—Practicing the skills of interrupting racism—Strategies for institutional change.

Please contact Mieke Vandersall (miekepresbyterianwelcome.org) or Lisa Larges (llarges@tamfs.org) for an application. Cost is $500, but payment plans and scholarships are available. Attendance for all three weekends is required.

Registration deadline: December 31

(Continued from page 2)

For Matthew, the resurrection of Jesus prefigures this longed-for age and anchors our contemporary hope for its coming. For Matthew, the resurrection of Jesus is the sure and certain sign that God has both the will and the power to overcome even the worst injuries and injustices that humankind is able to inflict; the resurrection of Jesus is the sure and certain sign that God’s reign of justice and peace will indeed come on earth as it is in heaven.

Through the life and ministry of Jesus we have come to know that the groundwork for the reign of God has been laid. Through the resurrection of Jesus we have come to know that the requisite power for the reign of God does exist. Now only the consummation remains. But we in the church have been given no clue as to the time of that consummation. We can but await its coming—patiently, and alertly.

In the Gospel Lesson for the First Sunday of Advent, the Risen Christ delivers to the expectant, waiting church this straightforward imperative: “Keep awake!” (Matthew 24:42)

This imperative both foreshadows and plays off against the failure of Jesus’s inner circle of disciples to keep awake in the Garden of Gethsemane during the last night of his earthly life (Matthew 26:40–45).

Jesus came to Peter, James, and John in the Garden of Gethsemane in the midst of his time of agonized praying, and he found them asleep (Matthew 26:40), unable to keep alert, unable to keep awake. Jesus came a second time and also found them asleep (vs. 43), and yet a third time and again found them asleep (vs. 45). So as Advent begins, the Risen Christ is saying to us, the waiting church: Be different from Peter, James, and John. “Keep awake.”

It is also clear from this passage that, as the church awaits the coming of God’s reign in the fullness of time, our task is not to keep awake passively—by scanning the heavens, reading our horoscopes, and combing through obscure texts for signs of the coming time. Rather our task is to keep awake actively—by accomplishing during this interim period, between Jesus’s ministry and the coming fullness of God’s reign, the work that Christ has given us to do.

To keep awake actively is to fulfill faithfully our interim work of ending sorrow and pain as much as we possibly can, and of establishing justice and peace as much as we possibly can, and of improving the political prospects of our country and world as much as we possibly can.

To keep awake actively is to prepare the way—as best we can—for the coming of the One whom we continue anxiously to await.

Matthew writes to inspire us to keep alert and keep awake—actively, as we await Christ’s Second Coming. Matthew writes to inspire us to fulfill our interim task of preparing the way. Matthew writes to inspire us to live each moment of life as a preparation for Christ’s coming again.

So as we wait, let us color Advent purple because it is the color of Lent, the color of sorrow, the color of remorse and repentance.

But let us also color Advent purple because it is the color of royalty, the color of sovereignty, the color of our hope for justice and peace.
On Sunday, January 23, 2005, the Nordica Trio from Farmington, Maine, will perform the next concert in our series of organ benefits here at Rutgers Church.

The trio, consisting of clarinet, violin, and piano, comes to us by way of Rutgers member and cellist, Susan Poliacik. Sue is excited to welcome friends and colleagues Graybert and Karen Beacham, with Martin Perry, for their first New York City concert as a trio.

Formed in 1994, the group offers an unusual combination of instruments and musical literature. Their program here will consist of a clarinet concerto by Francis Poulenc and trios by Joseph Haydn, Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978), and Alexander Arutiunian (b. 1920). These final two Armenian works were composed sixty years apart, but both are harmonically rich, colorful, and rhythmically exciting.

Nordica Trio’s performances have been called “beautifully clear and fresh” and “virtually flawless in every work, no matter how difficult.” They have been heard in concert halls in the US and Mexico, on Maine Public Radio, and even in preschools!

Karen Beacham, clarinetist, is a member of the applied faculty at Colby College and the Portland Conservatory of Music. She serves as Principal Clarinetist with the Maine Chamber Ensemble and Portland Ballet Orchestra.

Graybert Beacham serves as Concertmaster with several orchestras based in Maine, teaches at the University of Maine at Farmington, and conducts their Community Orchestra. He is also Director of String Studies at the Emery Community Arts Center String Program, where he maintains a large studio of students.

In addition to being consummate musicians, Sue tells us that the Beachams are an “extremely nice, charming, adorable couple.” They live in Maine with three dogs, enjoying the closeness to nature and a deep attachment to the community in which they live.

Martin Perry joins the Trio for this performance, as their third member is unavailable on this date. Martin graduated from the Juilliard School and as part of the Lewis-Perry duo piano team, has appeared with the Boston Pops, in the Great Performances series in Portland, and elsewhere.

Karen Beacham, clarinetist
Graybert Beacham, violinist
Karen Beacham, clarinetist
Martin Perry, pianist

Sunday, Jan. 23, 2:30 pm
Suggested donation: $15 at the door

All Saints’ Day Gathering: A New Annual Tradition
from Elder Alice Hudson, Chair of the Worship Committee

On Monday, November 1, in the evening, a small group of Rutgers members and friends gathered quietly in the narthex by the columbarium. We were there to commemorate and celebrate the lives of loved ones who have died, but whom we still hold in our hearts. A small table held flowers, candles, and most importantly, pictures of fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, beloved pets, lovers, and friends. Byron Shafer and Laura Jervis led us in prayer and meditation, and those attending shared their memories with each other. There were tears and laughter, and a strong spirit bound us together. We felt love, and support, and strength and healing.

Kaye London (Deacon Charlene London-Cox) was among those whom we remembered. Her memorial service was held the previous day, with extraordinary music from the choir, a fitting tribute to such a lover of music. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the Kaye London fund to assist with her burial expenses.
The Mission Review is complete and our search for a Designated Associate Pastor under way—but wouldn’t you like to know more about what we learned? Here’s a taste, based on 121 of you (members and others) who completed surveys in September.

The length of time you have been attending Rutgers ranges from one week to 56 years. Your median age is 50 years. Your median personal income falls in the range $50-75,000.

About half of you are married or living with a domestic partner. 60% of you are heterosexual and 30% homosexual (most of the rest of you didn’t answer this question!).

7% of you don’t know what to think about God, while 60% experience God as a constant presence in the world, people, and events.

Most of you prefer a mixture of traditional and contemporary forms of worship that challenge you to relate the scriptures to the realities we face in today’s world.

On average, you spend an extra hour each week on church activities in addition to the worship service. 70% of you who are actively involved at Rutgers do so to be part of a community or to fulfill spiritual needs. Almost all of you feel that your contributions of time and talents are valued here, but about 15% of you feel overwhelmed by how much you are asked to do.

Your highest mission priority is to provide a warm, nurturing environment for the Rutgers family, followed by an interest in meaningful worship, programs for youth and elderly, and peace & social justice issues.

A majority of you believe that the church’s mission is best served when people reflect God’s grace through individual and group involvement in social, political, and economic activities.

Copies of the full survey results are available to consult in the church office. To find out more, come to the Annual Congregational Meeting on January 30, 2005, for a colorful audiovisual presentation of the results!