“...the Word of God is upon me like fire shut up in my bones and when God gets upon me, I’ve got to say it. I’ve got to tell it all over everywhere.”

Thus spoke one of the 20th century’s prophets of God, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He said it in a sermon preached to his own congregation on June 5, 1966, less than two years before he was assassinated.

That Sunday morning, Dr. King went on to tell his flock: “God has called me to deliver those in captivity. Some people are suffering,…hungry,… [and] still living in segregation and discrimination. I’m going to preach about it. I’m going to fight for them. I’ll die for them if necessary.” [quoted in James H. Cone, Martin & Malcolm & America (Orbis, 1991), p. 242] Those were “prophetic words”—in every sense of that term.

Martin King hated no one. He strove to love all people—whether black, white, red, yellow, or brown. But prophets who trouble the waters often do not live to become old. And at the age of 39, “Martin King was killed by the whites he loved and was seeking to set free of racism.” [Cone, p. 243]

In this season of political conventions and of a presidential election, it’s time to consider the role of prophets in the ongoing life of Christ’s Church, and the role of preaching as a voice of prophecy for our time.

The portrait of the prophet offered in Deuteronomy 18:15–22 is that of a person steeped in the tradition of the Ten Commandments and called by God to become for people the clarion voice of God’s moral will, speaking God’s demanding and discomforting words and standing as a strong moral center for the community of faith.

The book of Deuteronomy understands the office of prophet to be one that is essential if God’s people are to live faithfully. For it is only the warnings and admonitions offered by a prophet that enable a community to identify and resist the temptations placed before it by the world, the temptations to ignore and go against God’s will. Yes, if the community of faith is ever to fulfill its God-given destiny, it must be hospitable to the prophetic voices in its midst. And to succeed in that, it must face down the direst temptation of all—the temptation to tone down the prophetic word, or distort it, or co-opt it, or silence it altogether.

According to the Bible, that’s the temptation the people of ancient Israel too often did not resist, and sometime around the year 400 B.C.E. the prophetic voice disappeared from among them.

But the first chapter of the first gospel—the Gospel of Mark—tells us that that prophetic voice reappeared some 400 years later. First, John the Baptist cried out as a prophet in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism for the forgiveness of sins. And then, after John the Baptist had been arrested, Jesus came proclaiming with a prophetic voice the good news of God, saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.” The people were astounded at Jesus, for he taught them as one having authority. Jesus spoke like a prophet, not like an ordinary teacher—calling for repentance.

(Continued on page 2)
A “For-Prophet” Church

tance, reminding the people of their moral failures, and insisting that they must live up to a high moral standard. Yet at the same time, Jesus graciously brought them the good news of God’s mercy and forgiveness.

In the reading of Scripture and in the interpretation of that Scripture by preachers of all ages, Jesus’s prophetic voice has echoed throughout the last 2,000 years of history, calling the Church to repentance for our moral failures, bringing us the good news of forgiveness, and challenging us to do better—so that, following the example of Jesus, we can model, for all humankind, what it means to fulfill God’s will.

But, sadly, the history of the Church is filled with manifold failures to heed God’s Word in Christ, or to even be hospitable toward its proclamation.

Few failures by the Church have rivaled in magnitude the failure of most 19th-century white American Christians to oppose slavery and all its attendant and descendant evils. Rutgers Presbyterian Church existed throughout that period, for our first sanctuary was dedicated in 1798. Several years ago I asked myself this question: “In that era, where was the Rutgers Presbyterian Church on the slavery issue? Was there in this historic church a prophetic voice that decried slavery and called for abolition and emancipation?”

Having asked that question, I of course turned to our resident historian, Dr. Vera Roberts, who had recently read through our church records from the 19th century while preparing her history of this church for our Bicentennial in 1998. And she informed me that her thorough reading at that time had turned up no reference whatever to the slavery issue in the minutes of either the Session or the Board of Trustees, and what’s more, no reference at all in those records to the event of the Civil War. In 1863, in the very midst of that war, Rutgers Church moved from its first location at Rutgers and Henry Streets to its second location at 29th Street and Madison Avenue, and there was a wealth of self-absorbed data related to the move of the church’s physical structure, but there was no reflection at all on the Civil War or on the moral issue of slavery. The voice of prophecy seems to have been silent throughout that time at Rutgers Presbyterian Church.

Was that silence born out of unconsciousness, or out of indifference, or out of fear of controversy? I don’t know the answer to that, and the reasons for the silence probably can’t be reconstructed.

But I do know this. Show me a church that neither discusses from its pulpit nor debates in its classrooms and boardrooms the great social and moral issues of its time, and I’ll show you a church out of touch with the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament, and out of touch with the prophetic voice of its Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

If the Rutgers Church of the 1850’s and -60’s was unconscious of the slavery and warfare around it, then the early 20th-century psychologist Carl Jung warns today’s Rutgers Church that unconsciousness is the greatest sin that bedevils humankind.

If the Rutgers Church of the 1850’s and -60’s was indifferent to the slavery and warfare around it, then the Jewish philosopher Abraham Joshua Heschel admonishes today’s Rutgers Church that indifference is the greatest evil there is.

If the Rutgers Church of the 1850’s and -60’s was fearful of controversy over the slavery and warfare around it, then President Franklin Delano Roosevelt counsels today’s Rutgers Church that “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

To be a faithful church, a congregation must stand firmly in the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament, and it must proclaim clearly the prophetic voice of Jesus himself.

I pledge to you, the Rutgers Church of the early 2000’s, that the great social and moral issues of our time will be discussed from the pulpit and will be debated in our classrooms and boardrooms. And I charge you to join with me in forming a community of faith that is hospitable to hearing God’s prophetic word and to heeding it.

So in this ever-so-critical election year, I ask you to join with me in being a church that takes bold, prophetic stands on a broad array of contemporary moral issues.

On August 6, 1967, eight short months before Dr. King’s assassination, he addressed his own congregation and said, “On some positions, cowardice asks the question, ‘is it safe?’ Expediency asks the question, ‘is it popular?’ Vanity asks the question, ‘is it popular?’ But conscience asks the question, ‘is it right?’ And there comes a time when a true follower of Jesus Christ must take a stand that’s neither safe nor polite nor popular but must take that stand because it is right…. “ And to one of his advisers, Dr. King also said, “…the time has come for real prophecy. And I am willing to go that road.” [Cone, pp. 242–243]

Thirty-seven years later, I believe the time has once again come for real prophecy. And I pray that the Rutgers Church of today is willing to go that road, that the Rutgers Church of today is willing to be a “for-prophet” church!
I Am Colombian and This Is My Voice
by Patricia Pastás, Communications Coordinator

It was a fact that I would travel to Colombia!

I am Colombian, and I joined a delegation concerned about Colombia, named the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, on a trip to Colombia last May 17, 2004. The delegation was sponsored by Witness for Peace, and I was supported in this mission by the Presbytery of New York City, the Presbyterian Church of Ridgefield Park in New Jersey, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, Rutgers Presbyterian Church, and Presbyterian Welcome.

I felt a mixture of joy, expectation, and fear. Not for myself, but perhaps a little bit for the other delegates’ security. I knew very well where I was going: the hospitality of Colombia’s people, its cultural richness, its different climates, its paradiacal landscapes. What I did not know very clearly was why God had prompted me to accompany a North American delegation that would visit and learn about the other face of my country. That reality was difficult for me to share because not even I understood the magnitude of Colombia’s problems.

What do you feel when you are surrounded by conflict? When you confront the risk of death? When suddenly a bomb explodes just a few blocks away from your hotel and kills many innocent people? When you listen to the frustration and helplessness of refugees? When you feel anger, and blood boils in your veins because you find out about people who freely do terrible things and then go unpunished? Is there justice? Is there still hope? Where is God in this country? Is God the same we love and praise here in North America?

The stories I listened to and the images I discovered in my country were inspiring but also terrible and sad. However, in the middle of violence, a warm air of hope filled my soul. It was not the optimistic cliché that goes, “OK, everything is going to be all right,” but rather a deep peace and confidence in Jesus Christ, who redeems, heals, and transforms. I felt it in the confessions of the women longing for their children and husbands snatched by a war that they still do not understand. I felt it in the hands of displaced people building their homes once, twice, and all over again, always in a different spot. I shared it in songs of praise and the endless prayers of leaders and pastors rebuilding church houses from ashes and preaching about faith despite hunger and frustration. Voices, feelings, hopes that cannot be silenced. Christ is the only One who can bring peace to this land full of grace.

There is a terrible conflict of civil war between different forces, and drugs and corruption that conspire against Colombia. Nevertheless, these Latin American brothers and sisters are illuminated by the same sun that illuminates you and me, and they do not lose hope for a better future. This is the testimony from people with names and faces and families like you and me: young people like Maria Isabel in Apartadó; women like Margarita in Medellín and members of Ruta Pacífica (Peace Path of Women); pastors like Bernardino, German, and Hernando Padilla; Afro-Colombians like Eusebio Mosquera; professionals like Felix Posada and “Diego”; and a hundred or so people displaced from the land of their origin, all building a new Colombia.

Let me tell you, dear brothers and sisters here in North America, I’m also rebuilding a new Colombia. Do you understand now what I’m trying to say with my Latin American accent? Colombia needs your support. It is good to know that you pray for us now that you are witness through my voice. It is good to know that you pray for a country in that other America, South America. It is good to know that we are now sharing our struggle. We are not alone.
Thank You, Rutgers!
from David Taylor, Executive Director, Presbyterian Senior Services

Just one year ago, Presbyterian Senior Services and the West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing began construction of the PSS GrandParent Family Apartments in the South Bronx—New York State’s first residence for grandparents raising grandchildren. As of this date, over 70% of the project is complete, and we are anticipating opening in November.

While most Rutgers members are aware that the Reverend Laura Jervis and I and the two agencies we lead are building this residence, what you might not know is that there are several members and longtime friends of Rutgers Church also working on this project: the Reverend Lisa Hill, Lily Bohan, Maureen Knapp, Cliff Flanders, the Reverend Kate Dunn, and Martin McCarthy. So, on behalf of all of us, thank you, Rutgers, for contributing $30,000 to PSS GrandParent Family Apartments.

PSS GrandParent Family Apartments has also received support from several other New York City Presbyterian churches: Madison Avenue, Fifth Avenue, House of Hope, Church of the Master, and Featherbed Lane. Nationally, the residence has received support from Presbyterian Women U.S.A. and the General Assembly. Truly this is a Presbyterian-led initiative, one for which Presbyterians can give thanks.

Once the building is completed and opened, the greatest challenge before us will be providing a safe and supportive environment that will empower the grandparents and ensure that the children will reach their full potential. To accomplish that, we will need your continued support and prayers.

Thank you, Rutgers, for helping to make this dream become reality.

Habitat for Humanity Partnership Pledge 2004

On the recommendation at the Peace and Social Justice Network, the Session voted on July 13 to sign the Habitat for Humanity Partnership Pledge 2004.

Rutgers has already supported Habitat for Humanity—New York City for many years through our benevolence giving, through our advocacy for affordable housing (such as our participation last spring in the “Building the Blessed City Together” event), and by providing temporary housing in our men’s homeless shelter.

With this pledge, we continue to discern how best to work with others on these issues.

Look for more information soon about volunteer opportunities and a covenant event in October.

“We believe that New York City’s housing crisis affects all New Yorkers. We believe that having access to decent, affordable housing is a fundamental matter of faith and conscience. We believe that the housing crisis can only be solved through the efforts—large and small—of all New Yorkers.

“We hereby pledge our commitment to work together...to advocate and take action to ensure that all New Yorkers have a decent and affordable place to live.

“Habitat for Humanity will:

◊ Build decent, affordable housing opportunities for New Yorkers in need
◊ Create volunteer opportunities for our partners to put their faith into action
◊ Provide resources to raise awareness and train advocates for decent, affordable housing...

“Rutgers Presbyterian Church will:

◊ Pray and perform good deeds for those who need affordable housing and those who fight for it
◊ Preach and teach about the need for decent, affordable housing
◊ Participate in the Habitat-NYC faith partner program by recruiting volunteers to work with us and raising funds to help us build.”
Stewardship

Autumn at Rutgers arrives with the eagerly anticipated Homecoming Sunday when we share our varied summer activities and look forward to all the wonderful, enlightening, and spiritual programs offered by Rutgers. These programs are possible because of the historical and continuing giving of our congregation.

The Stewardship Committee became very impressed with the vast and varied amount of programs and benevolence offered within the church, our community, and the world by Rutgers. It is our desire to share with you the full range of outreach and how we have helped others enrich their lives.

We will present, during the next two months, a series of scripture passages, moments for mission, informative articles, and discussion groups to explain the importance and ways of tithing.

We begin with Cheryl Pyrch’s “Pleasure and Joy” and culminate on November 14 with your opportunity to present your tithe for next year. The Stewardship Committee welcomes everyone home from summer, and we are looking forward to sharing with you all the wonderful programs that make us “Rutgers Presbyterian Church!”

The Stewardship Committee,
Bruce Bergquist
David Halstead
Renee Lord
Cheryl Pyrch
Robert Shelton, Chair
Joy Wyatt

Pleasure and Joy
by Elder Cheryl Pyrch, Associate for Educational Ministries

Are those the first words that come to mind when you think of stewardship? If not, you’re like most of the elders and deacons of Rutgers, who responded with generally positive but decidedly less effervescent words when asked the question, “What does stewardship mean to you?” We were asked as part of an education program (at the request of Session) to help us think more deeply about stewardship. Promised anonymity, we responded on index cards to questions about stewardship and pledging. This is a sampling:

“A necessary evil – since it is always difficult to talk about money?”

“The visible evidence of Christian commitment necessary for all professing Christians.”

“The time you donate to the church for deacon duties, Sunday School teaching, etc.”

“The good use of all our resources and creation: money, time, gifts of the earth.”

“Pledging is important since it forces you to carefully and thoughtfully consider what you can give and gives you a moral obligation to fulfill your pledge.”

“I dislike the idea [of pledging], but I understand why it is necessary – even for me – to not fall behind in my intentions.”

“I was raised in a family where the tithe was absolutely enforced. It’s a lifelong commitment.”

“Obligation; duty; feels more like paying a bill versus giving when I feel it.”

“Creation; money; care; concern; responsibility; sharing; pleasure and joy.”

Certainly, stewardship and pledging are all of those things – a responsibility, even an obligation, while also being an expression of Christian commitment and an opportunity for pleasure and joy. As we looked over the responses, however, we noticed that most of us seemed more attuned to the “obligation” side of giving than the “joy” side. Is there a way, we wondered, to think about stewardship that would help us better understand it as an opportunity for pleasure and joy?

In this year’s pledge campaign, the Stewardship Committee will be asking us to think prayerfully and seriously about our commitments to the church, but we also hope there will be an opportunity to build community and even laugh! The stewardship moments for mission will begin in October, culminating on Stewardship Sunday, November 14, with a short skit featuring Ebenezer Scrooge and other beloved characters (this skit toured the joint deacon/session meeting to generally positive reviews). You’ll receive letters that we hope will help in your discernment, and there will be an opportunity for candid – and safe – discussion of stewardship at the adult education class on Sunday, November 7, at 9:45 am in the Session Room. We hope you will join us in the spirit of the wise Rutgers elder who answered the question “What is stewardship?” with the following response:

“Hmmmm! Good question! I’ll get back to you on this!”
Our mornings together ended with prayer led by Cheryl Pyrch in the sanctuary. We prayed for brothers and sisters, grandparents, pets, homeless and hungry people, and friends who couldn’t come to Bible School.

Eating with Jesus:
Rutgers Vacation Bible School
August 23-27, 2004

All 27 kids gathered each morning in the fellowship hall to sing and hear stories about Jesus feeding the 5,000 and sharing meals with the disciples. “Thanks Be to God,” pictured here, was a favorite.

Accompanist Clif Fisher joined teachers Wanda Diaz, Richard Hill, Nora Lidell and Holly Nedelka, and interns Jeffrey Glendon, José Meléndez, and Angie Rodriguez, in a terrific VBS staff.

Our theme, “Eating with Jesus,” led to us making bread baskets...

...and fish cookies...

...and place mats.

Playtime: the younger kids used every block to build a wall taller than they are!

The closing program—thank you to all parents and friends who came to learn about our week.
Fall Adult Education Offerings

Writing the Stories of Your Life: An Exploration in Spiritual Autobiography. Homecoming weekend, September 18-19. We are delighted to welcome author Dan Wakefield, novelist and author of several non-fiction books on spirituality, including the memoirs Returning and How Do You Know It's God? On September 18, Mr. Wakefield will lead a workshop from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm where we'll be invited to explore our spiritual journeys through writing, drawing, and sharing in a supportive and respectful environment. On September 19, he will lead the adult education class at 9:45 am (for those who couldn’t make it on Saturday and for those who want more). He will also give the Moment for Mission. The workshop is designed so that people of different beliefs can participate, so we encourage you to invite friends, family, and neighbors.

Colombia—Why You Should Care. Sunday, September 26, 9:45 am in the Session Room. Patricia Pastás, Communications Coordinator at Rutgers Church, recently visited her home country with a delegation of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship and Witness for Peace. She will share impressions and experiences from her trip and give us background on the terrible violence that has wracked Colombia in recent years. Patricia will also give the Moment for Mission on September 12. (See companion article on page 3.)

Good News from Haiti, Sunday. October 3 and 17, 9:45 am in the Session Room. Find out what happens when a bunch of construction workers, priests, church women, and Haitian physicians get together with Dr. Paul Farmer to improve healthcare in rural Haiti. This is a class to help us see what's possible in a situation often portrayed as hopeless. Based on the book by Tracy Kidder, Mountains Beyond Mountains, easily available in local bookstores or through the web. Led by Christine Gorman.

The Church and the AIDS Pandemic: A Conversation with PC(USA) Mission Worker Rev. Janet Guyer. Sunday, October 24, 9:45 am in the Session Room. Janet Guyer is HIV/AIDS Consultant for Presbyterian partner churches in southern and eastern Africa. Rev. Guyer will share her knowledge and experience of the work of our partner churches in Africa combating the AIDS pandemic.

Community Forum: The Church and the AIDS Pandemic. Monday evening, October 25, 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary. Come hear a representative from the United Nations AIDS office, the Reverend Janet Guyer, HIV/AIDS Consultant with the PC (USA), and other experts on the role of the church in combating the AIDS pandemic, with a special focus on Africa. We are finalizing our panel of speakers and are excited about this chance to learn more about the crisis and also how we can help. We'll be inviting the Presbytery and neighboring churches to this important forum.

Making a Home for Faith: Nurturing the Spiritual Life of Your Children. Sunday, October 31, 9:45 am in the Session Room. Led by Cheryl Pyrch. We've all seen the instructions on airplane emergency cards: if the oxygen masks drop down, put one on yourself, then attend to your child. The same holds for faith: we need to nurture our own spiritual lives in order to help our children. Fortunately, the two go hand-in-hand, so we'll explore ways that faith can be nurtured in the home for both children and adults. Based on the book Making a Home for Faith by Elizabeth F. Caldwell. Call Cheryl at x205 to obtain your copy.

Let's Talk About Those Pledge Letters.... Sunday, November 7, 9:45 am in the Session Room. Led by Cheryl Pyrch. Every year the Stewardship Committee sends out a list of suggested scripture passages to meditate on while thinking about our pledge. This year, we're setting aside time to share our reflections on these passages and other thoughts we may have on stewardship. There will be no guilt-tripping or arm-twisting, but rather a chance to share insights and questions about stewardship while respecting each other’s privacy.

Prayer and Reading the Bible: Discussions with Dr. Scott Morton. Sundays November 14 and 21, 9:45 am in the Session Room. As we end the liturgical year, join us for a discussion of these underpinnings of the Christian life. More detailed information on the classes will follow.
Inquirers

Considering church membership? You’ve always known worshiping God is good for your spirit; now doctors confirm that worshiping God is also good for your body!

If you are looking for a spiritual home in New York City, we invite you to our next Inquirers class, which will be held from 6:30—8:00 pm on Tuesday evenings, September 28 and October 5. Come with your questions about God and faith, family, current events, and how these all connect in the life of this church. Members are also invited to meet new folks, brush up on the life and doctrine of the Presbyterian Church, and revisit your own faith, hopes, beliefs, and experiences that led you to our family at Rutgers.

New members will be received at the service of worship on Sunday, October 17.

Thursday Night Meals...

Every Thursday night, from Labor Day through June, Rutgers opens its doors at 6:00 pm to an average of 45 people who need a meal. The majority of our diners are regulars, but there are always some new faces off the street. Preference is given to seniors, who usually make up about half the group. We are proud to be able to serve these people tasty, home-cooked food in a relaxed and caring atmosphere. We have a reputation as the best kitchen in the area.

Thursday night volunteers start showing up at 5 pm to prepare the meal. At 6 pm we serve; by 7 pm our diners are happy and well fed, and those of us who have remained to clean up are finished and out the door – a maximum of two hours! To volunteer, please contact Ulla Farmer (212) 744-5313 or Jeremiah Rosario (212) 675-7446.

…and Movies (sponsored by the Board of Deacons)

PART ONE
The Lion’s Roar
Sept. 9 at 7 pm

PART TWO
The Lion Reigns Supreme
Sept. 16 at 7 pm

PART THREE
The Lion in Winter
Sept. 23 at 7 pm

FREE ADMISSION
managed by Dr. Roger Franklin

Rutgers Shelter Returns Sept. 17

With the conclusion of renovations at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, their seven-nights-a-week shelter has returned home. Our own shelter will return on Friday, September 17, and we are looking for volunteers!

In collaboration with Christ & St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, we will house 10 homeless men each weekend (Fri-Sat-Sun nights), providing an evening meal, a safe place to sleep in the gym, and breakfast in the morning. Evening visitors as well as overnight hosts are encouraged. Please contact Dermonte at x203.

A special training session for prospective volunteers will be held on Saturday afternoon, September 4, from 1:00 to 3:00 pm.

MISSION REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

The Mission Review Sub-committee, appointed by the Session this spring, has been preparing the way for Rutgers to call a Designated Associate Pastor (DAP), someone who will have special responsibilities for education, outreach, and stewardship as well as general pastoral duties. Cheryl Pyrch will be among the candidates for this position.

As part of the process required by the Presbytery, the committee will be administering a questionnaire at the conclusion of the worship services on September 12 and 19. This well help us to better understand the needs and wants of the congregation, who we are, how we think about issues like stewardship or gay marriage, and what we’re looking for in a DAP.

All responses will be completely anonymous. Please plan to be in church on one of these two Sundays and to share your thoughtful responses with us. (But only fill out one questionnaire if you’re here twice!)
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6 Labor Day: Church and office building closed.

7 Child's Play Session begins; 6:00 pm Men's Support Group

8

9 6:00 pm Meal Program & 7:00 pm Movie Series Every Thursday

10 11:00 am Mothers' Bible Study Every Friday

11 10 am—5 pm Sanctuary open for private prayer in observance of 9/11 anniversary

12 12:45 pm Board of Deacons Meeting; Peace & Social Justice Network Meeting

13 Body & Spirit Session begins; 2:30 pm Worship Committee Meeting

14 12:30 pm Pastoral Staff Meeting 6:30 pm Session Meeting

15 7:00 pm Membership Committee Meeting

16 6:30 pm Rutgers Shelter resumes

17 10 am—4 pm Dan Wakefield Workshop: “Writing the Story of Your Life”

18

19 Homecoming; 9:45 am Adult Class: “Writing the Story of Your Life” 12:30 pm Potluck Luncheon

20 6:30 pm Sunday School Teacher Training/Parent Meeting

21 6:30 pm Mission Review Sub-committee Meeting

22

23

24 6:00 pm Cub Scout Recruitment Rally

25 9:30 am Presbytery of New York City Meeting

26 9:45 am Adult Class: “Colombia—Why You Should Care” 12:45 pm Ad-hoc Committee on Mission & Benevolence 2:30 pm Concert: “Three Ladies and a Baby Grand”

27 6:00 pm Cub Scout Meeting

28 6:00 pm Boy Scout Meeting; Men’s Support Group (PLWA/HIV) Every Tuesday 6:30 pm Inquirers Class

29

30

Men’s Overnight Shelter Program: 6:30 pm, Fri-Sat-Sun We need volunteers for Fridays and most Sundays.

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**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

- September 5 — Labor Day Weekend; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching; Soloist Sherry Zannoth, soprano
- September 12 — 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time; Holy Communion; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching; The choir resumes
  - September 19 — Homecoming Sunday; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching
- September 26 — 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching
October 2004

**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

**Men’s Overnight Shelter Program:**
6:30 pm, Fri-Sat-Sun
We need volunteers for Fridays and most Sundays.

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**October 2004**

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**October 24**

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**Men’s Overnight Shelter Program:**
6:30 pm, Fri-Sat-Sun
We need volunteers for Fridays and most Sundays.
Listening into the Soul: Discerning God’s Presence and Will

If you are longing to feel more intimate in your relationship with God, or you are struggling to understand what God’s purpose is for your life, or your life is in the midst of transition and you long to know that God is present with you, come to this retreat organized by Presbyterian Welcome and Presbyterian Promise on Saturday, October 2 from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm in Stamford, CT.

Through Bible study, workshops, worship, prayer, meditation, journaling, fellowship, and more, there is something that will help you deepen and strengthen your spiritual life. Topics include:

◊ Listening to God with My Whole Heart
◊ How Can I Know I’m on the Right Path?
◊ Breaking Through the Silence
◊ Knowing God in the Transitions of My Life

This retreat promises to help you feel God’s presence more intimately and understand God’s will more clearly. This year’s retreat will be led by the Reverend Cari Jackson, executive director of The Center of Spiritual Light in New York City.

For a registration form call 917.441.8638 or visit www.presbyterianwelcome.org.

Here and Now: Invite a Friend to Your House of Worship

When you want to share your faith with new friends.
When you want to be part of a loving community.
When you want to feel welcome, we’re here.

Sunday, October 17
Special worship service followed by a meal on the fifth floor.

You may have noticed that the elevator in the Church House is working. At some point during the fall, it will be shut down again in order to install a new elevator and transition from an older, direct current (DC) motor to a more up-to-date, alternating current (AC) system. We’ll let you know the specific dates when they are confirmed. Once again, the elevator in the commercial building will be available as an alternative in many cases.

Peacemaking Offering

I will grant peace in the land... (Leviticus 26:6)

We are called as Christ’s people to be God’s peacemakers as agents of reconciliation in families, individual lives, communities, churches, the international arena, and the whole of creation. The Peacemaking Offering supports the peacemaking efforts of the church at every level and provides an opportunity to witness to God’s gift of peace in the world.

We will be receiving this offering on World Communion Sunday, October 3. 25 percent will support a local peacemaking ministry chosen by the Rutgers’ Peace & Social Justice Network; 50 percent will be forwarded to the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, which supports efforts such as those described on page 3 in “I Am Colombian…” Look for more information soon, and please give generously!

COMMUNITY FORUM

The Church and the AIDS Pandemic, Monday evening, October 25, 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary. Come hear a representative from the United Nations AIDS office, the Reverend Janet Guyer, HIV/AIDS Consultant with the PC(USA), and other experts on the role of the church in combating the AIDS pandemic, with a special focus on Africa. We are finalizing our panel of speakers and are excited about this chance to learn more about the crisis and also how we can help. We’ll be inviting the Presbytery and neighboring churches to this important forum.

September Birthdays

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<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>Bryce Stepaniuk</th>
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<td>Marisol Kaminski, Ana Ramos</td>
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October Birthdays

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<td>Charlotte &amp; Catherine Coudal-Jones</td>
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<td>Lisa Simpson</td>
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Here are some highlights from the regularly scheduled Session meeting of May 11, 2004. You can always get the full Session minutes by sending an email to Jennifer Hanson (jhanson@rutgerschurch.com).

1. We continued our mini-seminar on stewardship with a lively debate over whether all church officers should make a financial commitment to the church. At our next meeting, we'll be looking at several passages from the Bible to see what they have to say about our material resources and spirituality.

2. A motion passed to pay for the approximately $100,000 to $125,000 cost of putting in a new elevator (which includes converting from DC to AC electrical current) out of the Permanent Fund and to repay the amount within three years.

3. A motion passed to establish an Ad-hoc Committee (with members from Benevolence, Christian Education, Peace and Social Justice and interested members of the congregation) to create guidelines for all benevolence and mission giving.

4. A motion passed to approve the transfer of membership of Cynthia and Paul Reggio to the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church of Clifton Park, NY.

5. As directed by Session, Rutgers brought a motion to the Presbytery of New York City to write a letter to the President of the United States, George W. Bush, protesting the situation at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and calling for the resignation of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. (This was a follow-up to a similar letter that Rutgers Session has already sent.) The Presbytery approved the sending of such a letter, coming from the whole Presbytery, and it has been written and sent.

Here are some highlights from the regularly scheduled Session meeting of July 13, 2004.

1. We continued our mini-seminar on stewardship with a discussion of how we responded to the following passages: Proverbs 30:7-9; Psalm 112; Matthew 6:19-21; 1 Timothy 6:6-10 or Luke 16:19-31.

2. Bruce Bergquist reported that plaster and painting in the sanctuary for the organ will be completed by July 21. The organ console will be removed on August 2 and will be gone for the rest of the month of August. The organ should be back in service for Homecoming on September 19.

3. The preliminary paperwork for the elevator has been done, and now we're waiting for approval from the City of New York before the actual work can proceed. The design work for the second and third floor of the Wood Dolson Building is done, and work on the roof has started. We are exploring options for replacing the carpet in the Blue Room.

4. A motion passed to use the basement area to shelter up to 19 homeless people (the maximum allowed by law) during the time leading up to and just after the Republican Convention, from August 27 to September 3. The screening of our guests and the volunteers to staff the shelter will be provided by the West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing.

5. A motion passed to endorse a worship service on August 31 at the St. Francis of Assisi Church (near Madison Square Garden) by Bread for the World and the Alliance to End Hunger. A motion passed to participate in the Riverside Church "Ring of Hope" project. They hope to have 30,000 to 40,000 folks flashing flashlights around the island of Manhattan on the evening of August 31.

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E-mail Sent to 8 Presbyterian Churches in Iraq on 8/9/04:

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, our shared and risen Lord.

We have recently learned that it is possible to e-mail our fellow Presbyterians in Iraq and wanted to take this chance to let you know how much your country and your people have been in our thoughts and prayers.

We cannot imagine what is going on in your community now. Everything we hear and see in our television and newspaper reports sounds so chaotic and dangerous. We mourn the loss of so many lives.

We hope and pray that the political and security outlook for Iraq improve soon.

If you have the time and inclination, please let us know about your congregation and how you are doing.

We continue to keep you and our country in our thoughts, hearts and prayers.

Sincerely,

Members of the Session of Rutgers Presbyterian Church, New York City, USA
Christian Principles in an Election Year
from the National Council of Churches USA (www.ncccusa.org)

(As the election approaches, we hope these principles will help you to formulate questions for candidates and guide your decision-making.)

Our Christian faith compels us to address the world through the lens of our relationship to God and to one another. Public discourse is enhanced as we engage civic leaders on the values and ethics affirmed by our faith. At the same time, religious liberty and the integrity of our democracy will be protected as candidates refrain from using faith-based organizations and institutions for partisan gain. We offer these ten principles to those seeking to accept the responsibility that comes with holding public office.

1. War is contrary to the will of God. While the use of violent force may, at times, be a necessity of last resort, Christ pronounces his blessing on the peacemakers. We look for political leaders who will make peace with justice a top priority and who will actively seek non-violent solutions to conflict.

2. God calls us to live in communities shaped by peace and cooperation. We reject policies that abandon large segments of our inner city and rural populations to hopelessness. We look for political leaders who will re-build our communities and bring an end to the cycles of violence and killing.

3. God created us for each other, and thus our security depends on the well-being of our global neighbors. We look for political leaders for whom a foreign policy based on cooperation and global justice is an urgent concern.

4. God calls us to be advocates for those who are most vulnerable in our society. We look for political leaders who yearn for economic justice and who will seek to reduce the growing disparity between rich and poor.

5. Each human being is created in the image of God and is of infinite worth. We look for political leaders who actively promote racial justice and equal opportunity for everyone.

6. The earth belongs to God and is intrinsically good. We look for political leaders who recognize the earth’s goodness, champion environmental justice, and uphold our responsibility to be stewards of God’s creation.

7. Christians have a biblical mandate to welcome strangers. We look for political leaders who will pursue fair immigration policies and speak out against xenophobia.

8. Those who follow Christ are called to heal the sick. We look for political leaders who will support adequate, affordable, and accessible health care for all.

9. Because of the transforming power of God’s grace, all humans are called to be in right relationship with each other. We look for political leaders who seek a restorative, not retributive, approach to the criminal justice system and the individuals within it.

10. Providing enriched learning environments for all of God’s children is a moral imperative. We look for political leaders who will advocate for equal educational opportunity and abundant funding for children’s services.

Finally, our religious tradition admonishes us not to bear false witness against our neighbor and to love our enemies. We ask that the campaigns of political candidates and the coverage of the media in this election season be conducted according to principles of fairness, honesty, and integrity.

What Do You Think?

1. Who named God?
2. Why don't we embrace the waiting time in a doctor’s office with and appreciate having to be still?
3. Why do final decisions get changed?
4. Homeless people have junk too.
5. What would happen if no one died and reproduction continued?
6. Everyone needs a compliment, approval, and praise.
7. Can you walk a whole block without looking at your reflection in a store window?
8. Why do people around you have to participate in your bad day?
9. You shouldn't be satisfied with someone else controlling your life.
10. Have you ever listened to all the different languages that pass you by while sitting on a park bench?

'Til next time, Jacquelyn M. Carpenter
Organ Update: After One Year
from Bill Donnell, member of the Capital Campaign Committee

Music holds a special place in the Presbyterian tradition, offered in praise to the glory of God as an integral part of worship. Rutgers Church has a long history of superlative music, and our officers are committed to passing on to future generations the best possible musical facility.

Twelve months ago we launched a special campaign to help finance the long-overdue refurbishment of our circa 1925 organ. The Capital Campaign Committee, chaired by an indefatigable Joy Wyatt, faced the daunting task of trying to offset a part of the estimated $400,000 cost of the project. (Whatever we do not raise will have to be drawn from the church’s current income.)

What a difference a year makes! To date, Rutgers members and friends have pledged $179,253 toward the campaign. A crucial component of this total is a generous challenge grant of $15,000 pledged in honor of our beloved former Minister of Music, Marshall Williamson, by Edward Alley and Nancy Williams.

We are well on our way toward meeting this challenge, and three fall benefit concerts have been scheduled to complete the funding of this grant. (See facing page.)

Meanwhile, Southfield Organ Builders has redesigned the console shell and outfitted it with all new components. It has been installed on a moveable platform, so we will be able to locate it in any part of the chancel. The organ console will return on September 8. As of now, more than half of the organ pipework has been rebuilt and installed in newly plastered and painted organ chambers above the choir. The remaining pipework, known as the swell division, will return to the southernmost chamber in time for Christmas.

The antiphonal division in the balcony will be restored and renamed in honor of Marshall Williamson in time for Easter 2005.

On May 22, 2005, we are planning a very special concert for members and friends of Rutgers Church. Please plan to join us as we celebrate, give thanks for the hard work and generous contributions of so many, and dedicate this new organ to the glory of God.

Meet the Finns

James and Jennifer Finn happily became members of Rutgers Presbyterian last May. Both James and Jennifer are musicians who live on West 74th Street.

James plays the tenor saxophone, along with all the other woodwind instruments, and has just come out with three CD’s of his own music (free jazz) on three different labels. His debut album, called Opening the Gates, is in Tower and Virgin stores. His second CD, called Faith in a Seed, is due out in August, and Plaza de Toros comes out in January.

Jennifer is a singer who primarily sings opera. She is also a violinist and song writer. Jennifer has been very active with Rutgers as she has been helping to organize and perform in a fall benefit series to help raise money to fund the Marshall Williamson Antiphonal Organ. Jennifer will perform with two of her colleagues in a concert called Three Ladies and a Baby Grand on Sunday, September 26 at 2:30 pm.

Both James and Jennifer were drawn to Rutgers after having recently moved to the neighborhood. Initially they liked the area, which is a step up from where they were. Something was missing, however—and that something was a church home.

They have a private teaching studio where they teach piano, violin, woodwinds, and voice to children of all ages. Last spring, they held a very successful spring concert at Rutgers. The parents could not say enough about how beautiful the sanctuary was.

James and Jennifer love finding ways to share their music with people. To them it feels like a spiritual vocation. Pursuing their dreams has its many challenges, but they are etching a life for themselves and enjoying the journey. They are glad to say that Rutgers is apart of that journey.
Rutgers Church announces the kick-off of its fall organ benefit concert series on Sunday, September 26 at 2:30 pm with Three Ladies and a Baby Grand. Featuring sopranos Jennifer Finn and Lise Lindstrom, mezzo-soprano Leslie Valentine, and (Rutgers’ own) pianist George Davey, this concert weaves a fantastic journey through some of opera's most memorable moments, from Mozart's Magic Flute and The Marriage of Figaro to Offenbach's Tales of Hoffman. The second half of the program promises a review of classic Broadway favorites from Company, Showboat, Westside Story, The Boys from Syracuse and more!!!

The series continues on Sunday, October 24 at 2:30 pm with a concert of duets and arias from bel canto favorites, Verdi’s Rigoletto and Donizetti’s Lucia di Lammermoor, sung by soprano Jennifer Finn and tenor Jeremy Little.

Rutgers’ long-time baritone soloist, Duncan Hartman, will be presenting the “grand finale” of the series on Sunday, November 21 at 4:00 pm in the sanctuary. The program will consist of songs and arias by Purcell, Handel, Beethoven, Verdi, Dupare, and Tchaikovsky, as well as selections from the Broadway hit Man of La Mancha.

Many of you may be unaware, but Duncan has sung leading roles with opera companies both here and abroad. In the United States, he has appeared with the Cincinnati Opera, Opera Colorado, Sarasota Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Virginia Opera, Orlando Opera, Nashville Opera, and many other opera companies. Across the Atlantic, he sang with the New Israeli Opera and toured with both the New Bulgarian Opera and Teatro Lirico di Milano. Duncan is an accomplished concert performer, having appeared as soloist with orchestras such as the Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional de Mexico, Tulsa Philharmonic, and the York Symphony. He has twice appeared at Carnegie Hall; once as the soloist in Vaughan-Williams’ Dona Nobis Pacem and again as the soloist in Handel’s Messiah, with John Rutter conducting. As a winner of the prestigious Artists International Audition, Duncan made his New York recital debut at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. At that recital, he was assisted by the wonderful pianist April Kuhr, who will once again accompany Duncan here in November.

Please join us for what promises to be three wonderful afternoons of music!
Rutgers Families on the Move and in the News

Rutgers members Michelle and Sean Nelson are delighted to announce the birth of twins, Zachary and Colin, on June 2. The family is thriving, and the boys will be baptized at Rutgers on October 10.

Harold Manners drove the Presbyterian Welcome van in the Gay Pride Parade on Sunday, June 27. Thanks Harold, as well as everyone who marched! (See Cliff Flanders and Dave Taylor in the picture at right, courtesy of PW.)

Over the summer, we bid Godspeed to several families who moved to new homes. We look forward to their visits; address updates are available upon request from the church office.

The Kaminski-Stepaniuk family (Marisol, Jordan, and Bryce) moved to Katonah, NY in June. The Chun-Vecsey family (Melissa and Jack) moved to Rye Brook, NY. And the Chang family (Emily, Robert, Aubrey, and Bobby) moved to South Salem, NY, on August 31.

In May, the Reverend Laura Jervis received a Distinguished Alumna Award from St. Olaf College in recognition of her many years of outstanding ministry through WSFSSH on such issues as housing, homelessness, and aging.

Elder Christine Gorman received the National Press Club Consumer Reporting Award, periodicals, for her Time cover story last fall on how to eat for good health. The menu at the July 12 awards dinner (not irrelevant) was: salad, two crab cakes, cole slaw, and cheesecake—NOT a healthy meal! Christine ate her salad, one crab cake, and just the end of her cheesecake. Obviously the planners of the meal had not read Christine’s article! The National Press Club is considered the most prestigious journalism society in the country.

On June 12, at the 110th Annual Convention of New York State Christian Endeavor, former Rutgers member Lansing Parker posthumously received the Francis E. Clark Award. It read as follows:

“Honoring D. Lansing Parker for his example of unfailing faith in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, his great love and concern for young people, his lifelong contribution to Christian Endeavor, and the joy he added to the lives of so many.”

At a breakfast on Tuesday, June 29, the Voices of Sophia honored Mieke Vander Balk for her years of service with the Sister of the Year Award. Just a few weeks later, Mieke was ordained as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament on Saturday, July 17, 2004. She is currently the Coordinator/Evangelist of Presbyterian Welcome.

Rutgers Families on the Move and in the News

In a leap across the Atlantic, Meredith Shirley relocated this spring to Copenhagen, Denmark to continue her work with UNICEF.

US Presbyterian to Head Reformed Family of Churches

by Noel Bruyns, Ecumenical News International, reprinted from the Presbyterian News Service

ACCRA—The Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick of the Presbyterian Church (USA), has been elected as the new president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC).

The 400 delegates at the 24th general council of WARC elected the 59-year-old Kirkpatrick to lead the Reformed family of churches worldwide until the next general council in seven years. He succeeds Dr. Choan-Seng Song, of Taiwan, who served since 1997.

“I look forward over these next seven years not only to give leadership but also to visit member churches and offer encouragement, particularly for those in situations of persecution and difficulties,” said Kirkpatrick after his election.

“I invite every one of our churches to support WARC and one another in points of needs, to be a community that truly covenants for justice in the economy and the earth; to be a community that works in our churches all over the world for gender justice, for full participation of youth in all our activities,” he said.

Kirkpatrick has been elected the stated clerk or chief executive of the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States since 1996....

Aubrey Chang with Dr. Shafer at her baptism on April 10 (photo by Robert Chang).
Fall for Your Body & Spirit
from Diane Nicole, Director

The Body & Spirit Program has so many new and exciting classes to offer this fall!

In addition to our ever popular Handprints, Playin’ the Sounds, and a variety of movement classes, our drop-off series will include our wonderful Once Upon... courses covering the areas of Science, Art, and Literature for our 3 and 4 year olds. These classes will continue to challenge our drop-off population as they discover the wonders of science, artists and their style, and literature, bringing it off the written page with art and drama.

In addition to our Tap and Creative Movement classes, we will now offer a class in beginning Dance and Eu-rhythmnics, introducing these children to musical theatre history. For children five years and older, we will be offering drama classes entitled Creating a Fa-ble or Two, giving them the ability to take a fable, rewrite it, and set it on stage.

Our after-school program will offer computer classes in Keyboarding and use of Microsoft Word, a Portfolio class to assist those preparing for high school art auditions, and a selection of art, drama, and dance classes for those in the younger grades.

We haven’t spared any creativity in our offerings for adults. Pilates now joins our selection of classes including Yoga, Feldenkrais, Basic Body Conditioning, Knitting, Acting, and Musical Theatre.

Please join us in celebrating the start of our fifth year by giving your Body and Spirit something to shout about.

See you all at the start of classes, September 13, 2004!

Danny Lapidus Returns to Rutgers for October Concert
Saturday, October 2, 2004 at 11:00 am www.hotpeasnbutter.com

Hot Peas ’N Butter was founded in 2000 by Danny Lapidus and Francisco (Frank) Cotto. Danny’s connection to kids’ music stretches back to his own childhood when his dad’s best friend Victor Lewis—a pioneering professional children’s musician—revealed to Danny the magical ability to reach kids, as young as two, through music. When the time came to plan his own children’s project, Danny immediately turned to best friend and acclaimed musician Frank for support. Danny and Frank melded their two eclectic styles, incorporating elements of Latin jazz, rhythm & blues, folk, and rock to become Hot Peas ’N Butter. By combining an interactive, invigorating approach to performance with mature, multicultural music, Hot Peas ’N Butter has developed a distinct way of inspiring care and creativity in kids and adults alike.

A New Year for Cub Scouts (from Louisa Berry)

September begins the third year for Cub Scout Pack 664 at Rutgers, and we are continuing to grow. The roster is almost 20, and for the first time includes both Cub Scouts (first to fifth grade) and Boy Scouts (ages 11 to 18). We’re still looking for more young men who want to learn leadership and camping skills, develop citizenship, and just have fun with other members of the unit.

We have an exciting year planned, beginning with a camp-out on Fire Island in October for Webelos (fourth and fifth grades) and Boy Scouts. Later in the month, the entire unit will spend a weekend at the Boy Scout Camp in Alpine, NJ. Other special activities include: ski trips, a sleepover on a battleship, a Pinewood Derby race, hiking a historic New York City trail, and a kite/model airplane event in Central Park.

There is also room for adults who would like to share their skills with young people. Whether you come for only a few meetings to pass on a special skill you have mastered, or you are able to come weekly, there is a place for you at 664. Contact Louisa Berry (212-249-1546) about leadership opportunities, or Hayden Jones, Ian Smith, or Robin Berry if you’d like to hear what Scouting is all about.

Child’s Play—The Place to Be

Child’s Play groups for parents and kids begin right after Labor Day, on Tuesday, September 7. Call Holly Nedelka for more information or to register (x204). And don’t forget our special groups for mothers and others:

Discussion and Support for Mothers of Color, Thursdays at 3:30 pm. This group is independently organized but uses our Child’s Play facilities. There is a suggested donation of $50 per term.

Mothers’ Bible Study, Fridays at 11:00 am. It’s free, and child care is provided. Leadership is shared, with a focus on the Bible and opportunity for prayer and support.
Sunday School News
by Cheryl Pyrch, Associate for Educational Ministries

We have Sunday School (almost) every Sunday of the year, but on September 12 we’re looking forward to seeing many children who have been away for the summer. Non-nursery children are back on the fourth floor (our elevators are again working, at least temporarily!). We will share our summer news, worship together, and enjoy an art project before going down for communion. On September 12, Communion Sunday, children should come to the fourth floor at 11:00.

On Homecoming Sunday, September 19, we begin our official “fall semester.” This year, children fourth grade and up will be together; we are considering this small group a “pre-confirmation” class and plan some serious study. The first through third graders will be another class and have many art and drama projects in store. The three- to five-year-olds will continue to be led by Joyce Mwanalushi-Sirls (with volunteer assistance), and it is a large and wonderful group this year.

Our Teacher Training/Parent Meeting is scheduled for Monday evening, September 20, at 6:30 pm in the Session Room (childcare and pizza for all is available beginning at 6:00; children will be on the fourth floor). In addition to looking at the curriculum and going over logistics, we will wrestle together with the knotty but interesting question, “What should we expect of children in Sunday School and church?” All parents are warmly welcomed, even if you are not teaching this year. Also, if you are curious about teaching, or thinking about it but not quite ready to commit, please come! We will not do any arm-twisting, and it will give you a sense of what teaching involves.

See page 6 for more pictures and news from Vacation Bible School.