Lent is a forty-day period of penance and grace when we children of God are invited to reflect on our sin and mortality and to receive from Jesus our Messiah, our Christ, the creative and re-creative power that can transform and save us. Following Jesus’s baptism, he spent forty days in the Judean wilderness (Matthew 4:1–11). During that time, Christ our transformer went head-to-head with the one who is our tempter. So when Jesus later taught his disciples to pray, “Lead us not into temptation,” he was fully aware of that about which he spoke. Still, though tempted in every way as we are, Jesus remained without sin and became for us our Christ, our Messiah, our source of grace and transformation.

In the novel The Picture of Dorian Gray, the 19th-century Irishman Oscar Wilde claimed that “The only way to get rid of a temptation is neither to give in to it nor to shrink from it but rather to face it down, trusting in God completely.”

In the “Garden of Eden” account, the woman and the man are given a vocation: to be stewards of the beauty and fruitfulness of God’s creation; and they are given a permission: to eat freely of the trees in the garden. Yet they are also given a prohibition: to eat freely of all the trees in the garden except one—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Now, the primal sin of the woman and the man in the garden is this: when push comes to shove, they do not trust in God and God’s word. They do not trust that God has established the rules of the game of life with the best interests of humankind at heart. And in the world of today the primal sin of you and me, I believe, is the very same as theirs: we still do not trust in God and God’s word. We still do not trust that God has established the rules of life with our best interests at heart.

So instead of trusting in God’s will that human life be bounded by certain limits, we, like the first man and woman, push the envelope. We go in quest of a freedom that is fully autonomous, denying our need to trust in God and to accept limits on life. We, too, are seduced by the serpents of this world—seduced into believing that we can live well apart from God and apart from fulfilling God’s will.

At the very end of Jesus’s forty-day sojourn in the Judean wilderness, he

(Continued on page 2)
Tempted

experienced precisely this same temptation, the temptation not to trust in God and God's word. This temptation assaulted him not just once, nor twice—but three times. And by holding fast to his trust in God, by rejecting each temptation completely, Jesus showed us how to do likewise.

Looking closely at these three temptations, we see that each of them invites Jesus to abandon his trust in God and in God's word, invites him instead to make his own star-like appeal to the people by dazzling them with bread, circuses, and political power. And in each case we see the strength of Jesus's trust in God. For in each case we see Jesus refusing to ask for any miraculous exception to the limitations on human life.

At the height of Jesus's hunger, he is invited in the first temptation (Matthew 4:3) to rely on his own power to provide bread from stone rather than to trust in God's promise to provide what is needed. But Jesus faces down this temptation by meditating on God's word and trusting in it. He focuses on the Book of Deuteronomy, chapter 8, verse 3, and he recites: "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." In saying this, Jesus expresses his trust that the vocation to which God has called him is not so much about performing miracles as it is about proclaiming God's word.

In the second temptation (Matthew 4:6–7), Jesus is urged to test whether God is truly with him—to test that by jumping off the highest tower of the temple and forcing God to have angels swoop down to save him. Jesus is tempted to renegotiate the terms of his trust in God by forcing God to provide a miraculous sign that God can really be trusted. Well, a second time, Jesus responds by meditating on God's word and trusting in it. Once again, he focuses on the Book of Deuteronomy, this time chapter 6, verse 16, and he recites: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." In saying this, Jesus affirms that he is beginning his ministry with such complete trust in God that no special sign of any kind is necessary.

Finally, in the third temptation (Matthew 4:8–9), Jesus is asked to become the Son of Satan rather than the Son of God. He is invited to trust in a source of power other than God. After all, Satan is offering the power and glory of ruling a vast empire while God is offering only the promise of suffering and a cross. Again, Jesus responds by meditating on God's word and trusting in it. For the third time, he focuses on the Book of Deuteronomy, again chapter 6, now verse 13: "Worship the Lord, and serve only God." In saying this, Jesus affirms his trust in God's future and chooses God's way of the cross rather than Satan's way of power and glory.

In the novel *The Last Temptation of Christ*, the 20th-century Greek author Nikos Kazantzakis imagines that the temptations Jesus experienced during his ministry were not confined to the wilderness. Like us, he faced temptation throughout his life. Even when Jesus mounted the cross on Golgotha, he had to struggle with temptation as well as with pain and death. For as Christ cried out "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46), one final temptation came into his fevered mind.

At the moment of that cry, the Evil One planted in Jesus's thoughts a deceptive vision, a vision of the calm and happy life he could have led had he avoided the call to walk with God, had he chosen the smoother, easier road that most people follow.

As Kazantzakis imagines this last temptation, Jesus saw himself in that vision as an old man, sitting on the threshold of his house and smiling with satisfaction as he recalled the longings of his youth, his happy marriage, his many children, and the love and respect of his neighbors. [Please note that all of the quoted material that follows comes from Kazantzakis's own Prologue to this novel of his] “How splendidly, how sensibly he had acted in choosing the road of [other] men!” What foolishness it would have been to engage in the Spirit's struggle with the flesh. “What insanity to have wanted to save the world! What joy to have escaped the privations, the tortures, and the Cross!

“This was the Last Temptation which came in the space of a lightning flash to trouble the Saviour's final moments.

“But all at once Christ shook his head violently, opened his eyes"... and snapped out of this deceptive vision, returning in his consciousness to the reality of Golgotha. “[Ah], he was not [after all a coward,] ... a deserter. He had [indeed] accomplished the mission which the Lord had entrusted to him....

"Content he closed his eyes. And then there was a great triumphant cry: It is accomplished!

“In other words: I have accomplished my duty, ... I did not fall into temptation...."

It is in the example of Jesus's life-long struggle with temptation and his life-long
A Night in the Rutgers Homeless Shelter
A Moment for Mission presented by Jon and Sheila Smith on December 12, 2004

Jon: This morning Sheila and I are here to share some personal reflections on what we did this past Friday night. We served as overnight hosts for the Men's Shelter, right here in the comfortably appointed basement directly under the sanctuary. For both of us, this was our first experience serving in an overnight shelter, and the first thing that I should say is a huge thank you to Der-monte for setting us up and leading us through the process so smoothly.

According to the Coalition for the Homeless, in New York City there are 36,930 adults and children sleeping each night in shelters and welfare hotels. Over this year, that represents the highest level of homelessness in New York City's history. The Rutgers shelter only serves single men, and out of the 6,444 men who bathe, sleep, and eat dinner and breakfast each night in some type of shelter, our church building has space for 10. We actually only ended up with 7 guests on Friday.

This sounds like such a drop in the bucket. But I've been thinking about it from a different point of view. I grew up in Auburn, Alabama, which is a little college town between Montgomery and Atlanta, and in Auburn we might have had between zero and 5 people visibly living on the streets on any given day. (This is from my admittedly limited perspective as a kid). So when I think about it that way, Sheila and I were able to welcome the equivalent to the entire homeless population of both Auburn AND Opelika, Alabama, last Friday.

They're a diverse group of men, some of whom are here regularly, and they expressed a heartfelt appreciation for what we do. At least one of the guys is about the age I was when I got my first apartment, and from what I gathered talking to him, he's bright, sweet, and trying to get his act together. He just had a need that we were able to meet, if only for a little while.

Sheila: When Jon and I agreed to do this Moment for Mission, we were both enthusiastic, but when we sat down to write, we found that we couldn't settle on a single approach, a single voice. He has given you some of the statistics, more of which can be found on the Coalition for the Homeless web site.

So, with the same spirit of levity as the Letterman show (but unfortunately without the staff of talented writers), here are my top ten reasons to volunteer at the Rutgers Shelter:

Reason #9: If you have young children (whom you've left at home with a relative), it's really just a nice quiet night out with your partner!

The Blue Room, looking into the Gym

The Top 10 Reasons to Volunteer

#10 Unless you are a professional chef, it is the biggest stove you will ever get a chance to cook dinner on in your life.

#9 If you have young children (whom you've left at home with a relative), it's really just a nice quiet night out with your partner.

#8 Despite what he may tell you, Dermonte really does deserve to sleep in his own home on a Friday or Sunday night, at least once in a while.

#7 The roll-a-way beds are surprisingly comfortable.

#6 The cell phone reception is just fine.

#5 The window glass in the Blue Room is surprisingly sound-proof. (I only heard Jon snoring.)

#4 In Real Estate terms, there is more marble in the private Blue Room bathroom suite than in mine at home.

#3 With the 5:30 wake-up call on Saturday morning, this feels like a three-day weekend!

#2 Now that I've done it, I won't suffer those nasty pangs of guilt when Dr. Shafer asks for volunteers.

#1 And the Number One reason why I worked at the Rutgers Shelter: I really wanted to! Seriously, it is so easy to do and there was no real reason not to do it. So after the second time that Dr. Shafer implored us to volunteer from the pulpit, I finally spoke to Dermonte that week to get a little orientation and see what was really involved. Then I recruited my father to come stay with the kids and signed up for a night. Now that we've done it, I see that my reservations, maybe some of the same reservations you may have, were really not fear of the experience, but fear of the unknown.

So I encourage you to sign up for a night, that first one. If you are like us, you'll be glad you did. We plan to volunteer again very soon.
You are cordially invited to a Rutgers family retreat at the Presbyterian Center in Stony Point, NY, from Friday evening, April 8, through Saturday afternoon, April 9, 2005, sponsored by the Christian Education Committee. Our theme will be *The Power of God at Home: Nurturing our Children in Love and Grace*, based (loosely) on a book of the same title by J. Bradley Wigger. Our retreat leader is the Reverend Anne Conroy, who has worked with families and children as a social worker, youth minister, and most recently as the Associate Pastor for Christian Education and Discipleship at Brick Presbyterian Church. A graduate of Union Seminary, Anne will bring both expertise and a wonderful spirit to our conversation. Children will have their own retreat led by Cheryl Pyrch and Holly Nedelka, allowing them to explore their relationship with God and with one another. Childcare will be provided for the youngest ones during the program time, and we will eat and worship together. There will also be time for families to hang out together and take walks around the Stony Point campus. We hope this will be a time for you to experience spiritual renewal and to connect with other Rutgers families. You do not need to have children of your own to attend; all who care for children and want to learn more about their spiritual nurture are welcome.

Accommodations at Stony Point are simple but comfortable. Each family will have their own room (cots and cribs available), and Friday night dinner, Saturday breakfast, and Saturday lunch are included. We will make sure everyone is able to get there. The cost for the weekend is $54 per adult and $27 per child; a few partial scholarships are available. Reservations are due March 1, 2005; to get a form, learn more, or to order a book, please call Cheryl Pyrch at x205.

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**An Amazing Story**

*by Elder Chris Jones*

Hi, I’m Chris Jones, and I’m on the Committee for the Body & Spirit Program here at Rutgers. At our last meeting, I suggested that we, the committee members, sit in on a Body & Spirit class so that we might better be able to communicate to you, the congregation, what goes on here in this program. All my kids had participated and thrived in the children’s Body & Spirit classes, so I decided to check out one of the adult classes. Which one to observe, though. I glanced through the brochure: ACTING – no, PILATES – no, YOGA – no, KNITTING – no, SENIOR FITNESS … I’m a Senior … and Fitness: I could use some of that. SENIOR FITNESS, THAT’S THE ONE FOR ME!

I take you back in time now to 1961. I am 13 years old. And I love comic books. My favorite is Amazing Stories. There’s one issue that makes a huge impression on me. A scientist is searching for the key to longevity. After several abortive attempts, he seizes on the following: Question – What lives longer than anything else on earth? Answer – the Sequoia Tree. Somewhere within the “nature” of the sequoia lives the answer to the longevity problem. The scientist injects himself with cellular material from a sequoia, confident that he will live for centuries. Soon, however, he begins to SLOW DOWN and is horrified when his feet start to take root. "NOOOOOO!" he shouts, "I’m turning into a TREEEEE!" They don’t call them Amazing Stories for nothing.

Let’s jump forward now to April of 2004. My wife and I are in a neurologist’s office. Trying to find out what’s gone haywire with my motor skills. Why does it take so long to button my shirt, deal a hand of cards, write a check? After an hour and a half of tests, the doctor smiles and a little too cheerfully, I think, informs me, “Well, you have Parkinson’s.” “You’re kidding,” I hear myself inanely say. “No,” he replies. I am literally SLOWING DOWN. I am metaphorically TURNING INTO A TREE. Amazing Stories indeed.

Alright, come with me now to Senior Fitness. I decided not to observe the class but to take it. By most standards, it’s probably pretty gentle, but I find it to be RIGOROUS. The stretches and movements are geared toward flexibility. Good for Parkinson’s. Good for me. I feel so good after one class, I take five more. The overall fo-
The Psalms. Wednesday evening Vespers and Study, February 16 – March 16, 6:30 pm vespers in the Sanctuary, 7:00 pm reception and 7:15 pm class in the Daniel Russell Room.

Following the success of our Advent series, during Lent we are again going to connect the meditations during vespers with the study afterwards. This season we will be looking at the Psalms – one of the best loved (according to polls) but least studied books of the Bible. Each preacher will share a meditation based on a psalm of their choice, and the study afterwards will be based on the following themes:

February 16: “Praying the Psalms,” with Charles Amstein. To get us started off right.

February 23: “Introduction to the Psalter” with Byron Shafer. We’ve asked Byron to let his academic side loose.

March 2: “Sharing Our Favorite Psalms.” You’re also allowed to bring in your least favorite, and we can wrestle with the exegetical challenges. Led by Cheryl Pyrch.

March 9: “Writing a Psalm.” Margaret Shafer will lead us in this wonderful exercise.

March 16: “The Psalms and Jesus Christ.” In preparation for Holy Week, we’ll look at the psalms quoted in the passion narratives and think about their meaning in light of our Christian beliefs.

A guide from the Interpretation study series (which we used for Matthew) will be available for purchase ($10) on the first night. We will not be following the format of the guide, but participants may find it useful for individual study.

Lent 101. Sunday mornings, February 13 – March 13, 9:45 am in the Session Room.

What is the meaning of Lent and how can it become a time to deepen our spiritual life? We will let the lectionary readings guide us as we meditate on the life of Jesus the Christ and learn about spiritual disciplines we may begin during the season. Led by Cheryl Pyrch with guests.

Community Forum: The Church and AIDS in Africa

Monday, February 28, 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary

Come learn of the heroic struggles of churches and people in Africa as they battle the AIDS pandemic. Christine Gorman will moderate a panel of speakers who bring both first-hand experience and expertise in this important topic. The Reverend Janet Guyer is the HIV/AIDS consultant for Presbyterian partner churches in southern and east Africa, Worldwide Ministries Division. She has lived and worked in Africa and is now on furlough in the United States to share her experiences. Pauline Muchina, Ph.D., is a theologian from Kenya and the AIDS-MARK Faith-based Organizations Coordinator for Population Services International (and a classmate of Cheryl Pyrch at Union Seminary). The Reverend Jennifer Butler is the Presbyterian representative to the UN and will tell us about the work of the church and policy issues in this country.

We are inviting churches from throughout the Presbytery and hope to bring Presbyterians together from around the city who are interested in this issue. It promises to be an informative and inspiring evening.

Body & Spirit

Program. And find as I have a beneficent effect. To help you take the first step, our committee is pleased to offer you a free one-hour class. Pick up a brochure [or visit us online: www.rutgerchurch.com/bodyandspirit] and see for yourself what Rutgers is doing in this wonderful program.

(Continued from page 4)
Ash Wednesday

services of repentance with imposition of ashes will be held on February 9 at 12:15 pm and 6:30 pm. The evening service will include the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

Shrove Tuesday

Tuesday, February 8 at 6:00 pm
Come eat pancakes until you drop, and then join in the annual Musicale showcasing our talents—be they musical, literary, comic, physical… Or if you are shy of the stage, consider flipping a few pancakes and then joining our very appreciative audience. Thank you to Jon Smith for graciously agreeing to be our accompanist this year.

Lenten Vespers

Wednesdays at 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary
These candlelit services of prayer and reflection include a meditation on a psalm by one of the pastoral staff and piano music from George Davey. Our study series on The Psalms will follow in the Daniel Russell Room (see page 5).

February 16: Cheryl Pyrch
February 23: Charles Amstein
March 2: Byron Shafer
March 9: Laura Jervis
March 16: Cheryl Pyrch

Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women Elders—1930-2005

On Sunday, February 27, we will be ordaining one new woman elder at Rutgers Church and installing four women elders, 75 years after the General Assembly passed Resolution B, permitting women to be ordained as elders in the Presbyterian Church.

Gifts of Women Sunday (March 13, 2005) marks this anniversary and as well as International Women’s Day, which recalls two important events—the first demonstrations by women workers in the needle trades (NY, 1906), calling for improved working conditions and women’s right to vote in the United States; and the strike for bread and peace by Russian women (1917) that aided the subsequent abdication of the czar and of women’s right to vote in that country.

Building Bridges

At the gracious invitation of West End Synagogue, a Reconstructionist community on 69th Street and Amsterdam Avenue, the Peace and Social Justice Network met with the West End Social Concerns Committee to talk about ways we could work together. In the course of the conversation, we realized it would be lovely if our respective communities could experience together the thing that is most important to us and which we both have in common: religious worship. By the time you receive this newsletter, a group from Rutgers will have already visited West End on Saturday, February 5. We invite you to help us welcome Jewish visitors here on Sunday, February 27. We hope this will be the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship!

TSUNAMI BENEFIT

Friday, February 11 at 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary
An evening of music to raise money and, more importantly, consciousness and compassion for those affected by the tsunami in Southeast Asia. A diverse group of chamber works will end with Mahler’s affecting Adagietto from his Fifth Symphony. Musicians will include pianist Gilbert Kalish, cellist Wendy Warner, and students, alumni, and faculty of the Juilliard School. Suggested donations are $15 or $10 for students/seniors. All money raised will be given directly to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (see p. 13).

Remembering Your Spirit

An overnight Winter Retreat for Women at the Stony Point Presbyterian Retreat Center, Stony Point, NY
- Labyrinth Walks -
- Meditative Moments -
- Yoga - Story-Sharing - Snow Angels - Prayer -
- No Agenda - The Spirit will guide us

Leave - Saturday, February 26, 2005
Return - Sunday, February 27, 2005
Cost - $105 includes accommodations in the Center’s Gilmore Sloan House, meals, transportation

Sponsored by the Friday Mothers’ Spirit Group.
For reservations, call Holly Nedelka at (212) 877-8227 or (212) 879-2019.
### February 2005

#### Black History Month

#### 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
  - February 6 — Scout Sunday; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching
  - February 13 — First Sunday in Lent; Holy Communion; The Reverend Laura R. Jervis preaching
  - February 20 — Second Sunday in Lent; Elder Cheryl Pyrch preaching
  - February 27 — Third Sunday in Lent; Ordination & Installation of Officers; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching

#### Monthly Highlights

- **February 5**: Visit to West End Synagogue
- **February 6**: Scout Sunday; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching
- **February 13**: First Sunday in Lent; Holy Communion; The Reverend Laura R. Jervis preaching
- **February 20**: Second Sunday in Lent; Elder Cheryl Pyrch preaching
- **February 27**: Third Sunday in Lent; Ordination & Installation of Officers; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching
March 2005

Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat
---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----
1 6:30 pm  
   Session Meeting
2 6:30 pm  
   Vesper Service  
   7:15 pm  
   Adult Study:  
   “The Psalms”
3 6:00 pm  
   Meal Program &  
   7:00 pm  
   Movie Series  
   Every Thursday
4 6:00 pm  
   Cub Scout Blue &  
   Gold Banquet
5 1:30 pm  
   Opera  
   Rehearsal  
   Most Saturdays
6 9:45 am  
   Adult Class:  
   “Lent 101”
   12:45 pm  
   Board of Deacons  
   2:30 pm  
   Scout Meeting  
   Every Monday
7 2:30 pm  
   Worship Committee  
   6:00 pm  
   Scout Meeting  
   Every Monday
8 6:00 pm  
   Scout Meeting;  
   Men’s Support Group (HIV+)  
   Every Tuesday
9 6:30 pm  
   Vesper Service  
   7:15 pm  
   Adult Study:  
   “The Psalms”
10 7:00 pm  
   Inquirers Class
11 10:30 am  
   Mothers’ Bible Study  
   Every Friday
12

13 9:45 am  
   Adult Class:  
   “Lent 101”
   12:45 pm  
   Peace & Social Justice Network
14
15
16 6:30 pm  
   Vesper Service  
   7:15 pm  
   Adult Study:  
   “The Psalms”
17 7:00 pm  
   Inquirers Class
18
19
20 10:45 pm  
   Procession on  
   Broadway with Palms  
   12:45 pm  
   Special Session Mtg
21
22
23
24 7:00 pm  
   Maundy Thursday  
   Service of the Last Supper and  
   Tenebrae
25 12:00 pm  
   Good Friday  
   “The Seven Last Sayings of Jesus”
26 7:00 pm  
   The Great Vigil of Easter  
   (New Members Received)
27
28 9:00 am  
   Early Easter Service  
   9:30-10:30 am  
   Easter Breakfast
29
30
31

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

- March 6 — Gifts of Women Sunday; Fourth Sunday in Lent; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching
- March 13 — Fifth Sunday in Lent; Holy Communion; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching
- March 20 — Palm Sunday; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching
- March 27 — Easter; Holy Communion; The Reverend Dr. Byron E. Shafer preaching

Men’s Overnight Shelter Program:  
6:30 pm, Fri-Sat-Sun  
We need volunteers for Fridays and most Sundays.
HOLY WEEK 2005

Palm Sunday _ March 20
A procession on Broadway with palms will precede our morning service of worship.

Maundy Thursday _ March 24
The Vigil of Easter _ March 26
A procession on Broadway with palms will precede our morning service of worship.

Maundy Thursday _ March 24
Shadows descend on the service of the Last Supper and Tenebrae

Good Friday _ March 25
West Side clergy join us for meditations on the Seven Last Sayings of Jesus, with music provided by the Rutgers Church Choir
(Come when you can; leave when you must.)

Good Friday _ March 25
When NYC is threatened by a new menace, tentacled terror Dr. Octoplis, Spider-Man returns to save the day.

Easter Sunday _ March 27, 2005
9:00 am Brief Communion at the church entrance
9:30 am Breakfast for all the family
11:00 am Principal Service of Morning Worship with Holy Communion

Infant and child care will be available for all of the worship services and special events during Holy Week.

Thursday Movie Series

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

February 10: A Man Called Peter (1956)
Wonderful biodrama of Peter Marshall, the Scottish clergyman who became U.S. Senate Chaplain and the unofficial “conscience” of Washington, D.C.

February 17: The Desert Song (1953)
Lavish filming of the classic Sigmund Romberg operetta.

When NYC is threatened by a new menace, tentacled terror Dr. Octoplis, Spider-Man returns to save the day.

March 3: Captain Horatio Hornblower (1951)
Thrilling adventure saga starring Gregory Peck as a British naval officer during the Napoleonic Wars.

March 10: The Russians Are Coming (1966)
An irreverent, wacky “Cold War” comedy about a Russian submarine stranded outside a New England town.

March 17: Finian’s Rainbow (1968)
Finian McLongeran (Fred Astaire) thinks his magical pot-of-gold will make him a millionaire until a real leprechaun appears in this 1947 Broadway hit.

Self-Development of People

When was it that we saw you a stranger? Matthew 25:38
Gift by gift, brick by brick, we are helping to (re)build communities devastated by war, poverty and natural disaster. The One Great Hour of Sharing Offering, received at our Easter services, will benefit the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (see p. 13), and the Self-Development of People. Please give generously!

february * happy birthdays * march

7 Jim Ellis, Jarred Sturman
8 Ed Kennelly
9 Katherine Wyatt
14 Jeff Glendon
14 Kim Hodges, Ian Smith
16 Ethel Knight
17 Alice Hudson, De Yan Jervis—McCarthy
18 Umberto Fadani
19 Jack Vecsey
20 Debbie Gryte
21 Mary Burton
23 Marlo Knapp-Fadani
24 Valerie Kay
25 Carole Banninger, Ulla Farmer
27 Chris Jones

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 7:00—8:30 pm on Thursday evenings, March 10 and 17. 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 and experiences that led you to our family at Rutgers. New members will be received at the Easter Vigil service on Saturday evening, March 26.
Here are some highlights from the regularly scheduled Session meeting of December 14, 2004. You can always get the full Session minutes by sending an email to Jennifer (jhanson@rutgerschurch.com).

1. Per the recommendation of the Personnel Committee, a motion passed to approve the annual cost of living increase of 3.5% for all full-time staff as well as other adjustments for individuals.

2. Per the recommendation of the Personnel Committee, a motion passed to approve the hiring of a part-time assistant director of the children's choir, the incumbent to be under the direction of Joy Wyatt, volunteer director, to be piano accompanist, and to function also as a musician to the Sunday School.

3. A motion passed to approve the following holiday schedule for 2005. The church and offices will be closed on these dates:
   - MLK Jr. Day, Jan. 17
   - Presidents' Day, Feb. 21
   - Monday after Easter, Mar. 28
   - Memorial Day, May 30
   - Independence Day, July 4
   - Labor Day Monday and Tuesday, Sept. 5 and 6
   - Columbus Day, Oct. 10
   - Thanksgiving Break, Nov. 24 and 25
   - Day after Christmas, Dec. 26
   - Day before New Year's, Jan. 30

4. After due examination, the Session voted to receive Catherine Currie as a member of the Rutgers Presbyterian Church by letter of transfer.

5. A motion passed to grant a letter of transfer to Robert and Emily Chang so that they may become members of the South Salem Presbyterian Church in South Salem, NY.

6. A motion passed to set aside 45 minutes at the next Session meeting to discuss the issue of church attendance.

Here are some highlights from the regularly scheduled Session meeting of January 10, 2005.

1. Year-end, on revenues of $1,485,002, we had expenses of $1,407,212, leaving a surplus of $77,230. Bruce Bergquist explained that the 2004 operating fund excess offsets a bit of the deficit in the real estate fund, incurred due to the organ project and elevator conversion.

2. Session members discussed the phenomenon of decreasing attendance at Sunday services while membership continues to expand. They shared ideas for unique and creative ways to build membership.

3. Cheryl Prych presented a collaboration with West End Synagogue and Rabbi Ridberg, including plans to visit one another’s worship services.

4. The Session approved 2005 dates for Holy Communion and four special offerings.

5. It was moved and approved to send Dr. Shafer to the Steps Toward Peace in Israel and Palestine PC(USA) conference in Louisville from February 10-12, 2005. [He will represent the Presbytery of New York City along with Annie Rawlings, Associate Presbyter for Witness to Society and the World.]

6. Elder Renee Lord announced she is moving to Durham, NC, around March 1 and that someone will need to assume her roles supporting the Church of Gethsemane and CROP Walk.

Welcome Class of 2008!

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<th>Elders</th>
<th>Deacons</th>
<th>Trustees</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ulla Farmer*</td>
<td>William Bailey</td>
<td>Nicole Byrns</td>
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<td>Lynne Morris</td>
<td>Pamela Byrd</td>
<td>Valerie Kay*</td>
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<td>Juliet Prinser</td>
<td>Kim Hodges*</td>
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<td>Susan Scherer*</td>
<td>Alice Hudson*</td>
<td>* Indicates a re-election.</td>
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*Til next time, Jacquelyn M. Carpenter
Moving Forward in Dialogue
by Elder Massimo Maglione

On December 6, 2004, Auburn Seminary hosted a meeting of Presbyterians and Jews to discuss relations between the two religions. 90 clergy and laypeople attended from New York City synagogues and Presbyterian churches. All were committed to listen to each other and honestly discuss the conflict between the two groups.

The meeting was organized in response to a resolution that was passed in July by the General Assembly of our church. The GA recommended that a special committee look into the “divestment and/or proscription of some corporations” operating in Israel that “are involved in military-related production.” In particular, the Presbyterian Church plans to explore the “selective divestment of church funds from those companies whose business in Israel is found to be directly or indirectly causing harm or suffering to innocent people, Palestinian or Israeli.” This decision was not meant to be a blanket disinvestment from corporations that do business in Israel, but it is a sweeping policy. In the past, the PC(USA) has only instituted this sort of measure against South Africa and the Sudan. It is certainly an indication of the Church’s critical stance toward Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

The American Jewish Committee responded rapidly to this recommendation. It said that our church was unfairly singling out Israel as a human rights violator, considering that we have taken no action against countries such as North Korea, Syria, and Iran who perpetrate egregious abuses against their people. This resolution, the AJC believes, would embolden Palestinian extremists to hold out for an uncompromising policy and thus hurt the peace process.

So you see, there was quite a lot to talk about at this December meeting. Amazingly, remarks were temperate and thoughtful. Many suggested that Presbyterians visit more Israelis as well as Palestinian Christians to get a balanced view of what is happening in the West Bank. Of course, the Jewish participants uniformly urged that Presbyterian not go through with the disinvestment policy. If there were to be such a policy, disinvestment of church stocks should be aimed at radical Palestinians as much as at Israelis. Finally, all agreed that more meetings like this one should follow.

I would like to end with a personal observation. As I write this article, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has cut off all ties with the newly elected, moderate Palestinian Authority President Abbas because of his inability to prevent terrorist attacks against Israel. Sharon’s impulsive responses to the atrocities of Palestinian radicals do not give me or anyone who wants genuine peace in this area much hope. Such a sane leader as Abbas should be cultivated by Sharon in spite of the difficult-to-control tactics of terrorists. I am not sure that the aforementioned disinvestment policy against Israel is desirable, but the Presbyterian Church has every right to pass resolutions critical of Sharon’s hard line toward the Palestinians, including moderates, at a crucial moment in the history of the Middle East.

The Christmas Party Social by R. Wellington Jones, Special Events Committee Chair

On Saturday, December 11, in the Rutgers kitchen, R. Wellington Jones and Paul Callahan prepared Cuban sandwiches, which now have become a staple of the annual Christmas celebration for parishioners and families. Special thanks to our building supervisor Frank Manzanet for preparing the pork shoulder in advance. In the outer room, gift wrappers Frieda Logan, Ethel Knight, Joy Rose, and Mariane Minasian, the newest member of the Special Events Committee, prepared Santa’s treasures for children and congregants of all ages.

Sunday morning began with our other helpers, Louisa Berry and her son Robin, concocting their famous fruit punch. As usual, we served a variety of Italian sandwiches, both meat and vegetarian; counterpersons included Ethel Knight, Louisa Berry, Joy Rose, Mariane Minasian, and yours truly. Paul Callahan made the potato salad, and for dessert an imported Italian Panettone fruitcake was purchased in Fresh Meadows by the late Elliott Trachtman, one of Wellington’s oldest friends. Table decorations were designed by Ms. Ellen Caldwell.

Facilities Manager Dermont Alleyne and Muriel Knight made their appearance as Santa and Mrs. Claus, distributing presents to the children.

Everyone awaited the appearance of our celebrated Ms. Dum-Dum the Clown, who entertained all of the children and guests, including Wellington’s three grandchildren, Conor, Hunter, and Samoa.

The next Committee project will be the Easter Breakfast on Sunday, March 27, at 9:30 am. We’re looking forward to seeing you all there with some new delights!
overcoming of it—yes, even on
the cross—that we can find the
strength to sustain us in our own
life-long struggle to resist temp-
tation.

In Kazantzakis's re-
markable prologue to this novel,
he describes something of his
own experience in writing the
book: “I never followed Christ’s
bloody journey to Golgotha
with such terror, I never relived
his Life and Passion with such
intensity, such understanding
and love, as during the days and
nights when I wrote The Last
Temptation of Christ. While set-
ding down this confession of the
anguish and the hope of [hu-]
mankind I was so moved that
my eyes filled with tears. I had
never felt the blood of Christ
fall drop by drop into my heart
with so much sweetness, so
much pain.

“In order to mount to
the Cross...and to God..., Christ
passed through all the stages
which [everyone] who struggles
passes through. That is why his
suffering is so familiar to us; that
is why we share it, and why his
final victory seems to us so
much our own future victory.
That part of Christ’s nature
which was profoundly human
helps us to understand him and
love him and to pursue his Pas-
sion as though it were our own.
If he had not within him this
warm human element, he would
never be able to touch our
hearts with such assurance and
tenderness; he would not be able
to become a model for our lives.
We struggle [with temptation],
we see him struggle also, and we
find strength. We see that we
are not all alone in the world: he
is...at our side.

“In every moment of
Christ’s life is a conflict and a
victory. He conquered the in-
vincible enchantment of simple
human pleasures; he conquered
temptations, continually tran-
substantiated flesh into spirit,
and ascended.”

In these words Kazant-
zkis expresses his own pro-
found reflections on the tempta-
tions of Christ, reflections born
of writing his novel.

Jesus—tempted as we
are, yet triumphant.

This Lent, as we jour-
ney toward the cross of Christ,
may we in some small measure
come to share in Jesus’s victory.
May we come to choose the
more difficult road—the road of
discipleship, of trusting in God
and of fulfilling God’s word and
will. This Lent, may we fulfill
our vocation as children of God,
our vocation to strive in every
thought, word, and deed for
unity with God in trust and love.
Presbyterians Respond to the Tsunami Disaster
Re-printed from the Presbyterian News Service

January 6, 2005—Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) has sent $320,000 to areas impacted by last month’s epic tsunami in Southeast Asia.... PDA officials have channeled the One Great Hour of Sharing money through faith-based agencies that are providing immediate relief to tsunami victims. The contribution includes funding to help ship health kits and medicine boxes to affected areas.

PDA, which coordinates the Presbyterian Church (USA)’s disaster-response operations in the United States and around the world, hopes to raise at least $2.5 million in relief funds though a churchwide appeal [see letter at right].

More than $500,000 has already been received by PDA in response to the crisis.... Some of the money dispatched so far has been used by relief agencies in such countries as:

**INDIA**—Church’s Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) is trying to help 50,000 families in three states: Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. CASA is a related agency of the National Council of Churches in India and includes 24 Protestant churches in its membership. Both the Church of North and South India are active in CASA.

Utilizing materials and food that were pre-stocked in CASA warehouses throughout the country, immediate food distribution has been set up through nine member church denominations located in the affected areas. Prepared meal programs are being implemented in 10 centers across three states.

Other assistance includes blankets, clothing, utensils, matches, candles, and plastic sheeting for immediate shelter.

**SRI LANKA**—The Council of Churches of Sri Lanka (CCSL) is providing dried ration food to 25,000 families. They are also constructing 100 temporary shelters for the worst hit regions. Each shelter will accommodate 10-15 families. They have also begun distribution of non-food items, such as blankets, plastic sheeting and other supplies.

PDA has provided $20,000 to Church World Service in support of a shipment of 500 family shelter kits and 75 disaster medicine boxes to Sri Lanka. The family shelter kits consist of a tent, plastic cover sheeting, and a ground sheet. The medicine boxes include medicine to support a community of 1,000 people for one month. Both medicine and shelter supplies are in critical shortage in Sri Lanka.

**INDONESIA**—PDA is responding through Yakkum Emergency Unit (the emergency arm of the Christian Foundation for Public Health), Yayasan Tanggul Bencana (the emergency program of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia), and Church World Service. All are focusing on the islands of Sumatra, Aceh, and Nias.

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January 3, 2005

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Like you, we have been deeply shocked and saddened by the horrific devastation from the earthquake and resulting tsunami in Southeast Asia. It is a disaster of unparalleled proportions, affecting the lives of literally millions of people and thousands of villages and towns. It is difficult for us to imagine how areas of that vast region will ever be the same.

At the same time, we are deeply moved and encouraged by the many, many ways Presbyterians are responding to this crisis. Yesterday, congregations in worship across the denomination included prayers for the victims and survivors left in the tsunami’s wake. Already, a number of you have donated or pledged nearly $300,000 to the relief effort. In a churchwide appeal that will be issued very soon, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) is hoping to achieve a goal of 2.5 million dollars....

While we have no answers for why a tragedy of this magnitude occurs, we believe with solid conviction the reality of God’s grace in the midst of such unspeakable pain and suffering. We affirm the beginning and ending lines of A Brief Statement of Faith: “In life and in death we belong to God,” and “With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Please continue to pray for all of those affected by this disaster, not only in these first few weeks, but also in the many months and years ahead.

In Christ’s service, Rick Ufford-Chase, Cliff Kirkpatrick, and John Detterick
Our Final Organ Benefit Concert—Songs for Lent
Sunday, March 6, 2005 at 4:00 pm

As we go to print, the last phase of our organ restoration project is under way. The antiphonal organ chamber in the balcony is being readied to receive our new “echo” organ, and engineers are preparing the street wall between the stained glass windows for mounting the trompette en chamade.

We are also entering the final year of our three-year capital campaign; thank you to everyone who has made a pledge and so faithfully kept up with us! Of the $173,456 pledged, we have received over $117,000, or 68% of the total. Your generosity continues to astound us.

And thank you also to everyone who has performed in or ushered for our organ benefit concert series. You helped us reach our goal for the Marshall Williamson Antiphonal Organ Matching Fund and contributed greatly to our listening pleasure with everything from spirituals to Armenian chamber music to classical opera.

During Lent and Women’s History Month, we are offering one final concert to benefit the organ project on Sunday afternoon, March 6 at 4:00 pm. As befits the season, the program will be a bit more introspective than previous concerts. An Afternoon of Songs and Arias features sopranos Julie Ness and Rutgers member Jennifer Finn singing Robert Schumann’s Frauenliebe und Leben and arias by Richard Strauss, Douglas Moore, Igor Stravinsky, and Gaetano Donizetti. Pianist Stephen Sulich will accompany with Dr. Shafer narrating. Classical guitarist Sean Carnahan will begin each section of the program with pieces by Bach and Villa Lobos.

Schumann’s song cycle lies at the heart of this concert. According to The Juilliard Journal Online,* “these eight songs written in 1840 depict seminal moments in a woman’s life: her first awakening to love, subsequent marriage, and the realization that she is pregnant. As in most song cycles, the audience comes to know the character without ever learning her name, or where, when, and how she lives. Instead, she reveals her inmost thoughts, offering a vivid emotional portrait ranging from poignant expressivity to breathless excitement. The cycle ends abruptly with the sudden death of her husband and the words, ‘If my heart breaks, what does it matter?’”—echoing the laments of the psalms and even Jesus on the cross.