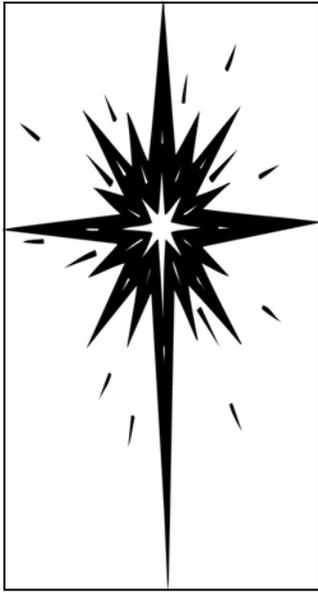


MISSION STATEMENT "As followers of Jesus Christ, we rejoice in God's plan for a just, loving, and peaceful world, and we commit ourselves to making it a reality for all people everywhere."



RUTGERS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Renewal

From the Interim Pastor

The Reverend David D. Prince

At a certain point in my life I had to accept the fact that winters were difficult for me. As the gray days of November brought less and less sunlight, I realized I was affected by the shortening of daylight hours that marked the beginning of winter. It helped to read about Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), a condition recognized by the medical community as a widespread cause of the winter "blues" or, in more serious cases, clinical depression. I came to understand that my attitude toward winter was not a figment of my imagination, something I could overcome by will power alone. I also came to understand that there were things I could do to change my negative feelings about December, January, and February.

At the practical level, I made it a point to plan things I would especially enjoy during the winter. For several years, our family took ski vacations in January, and we made day trips to the Poconos for fun on the slopes. I also made sure there was plenty of light in our home, light provided by fluorescent bulbs that give a helpful glow.

At the spiritual level I came across some words by the French existentialist author Albert Camus, who wrote, "In the midst of winter, I discovered there was within me an invincible summer." In response to Camus's words, I deepened my practice of reading devotional literature daily. I grew in my appreciation of Advent, the four weeks before

Christmas, when Christians prepare to celebrate Christmas.

Much of the Bible readings suggested for Advent use the image of *light* in speaking about Jesus' birth. The first three verses in the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah show the prophet saying to Israel, and to us:

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. (Language unchanged from the New Revised Standard Version)

On at least two occasions Jesus referred to himself as "the light of the world." For me, he is that and more. He is the one who has helped me know that nothing stays the same for very long. Times of depression, times of gloom, as well as times of joy, times of celebration come and go. What remains the same is our assurance that we matter to God, our awareness of God's comforting presence in all the seasons of life.

As we enter the winter of 2006-2007, I extend you my prayer that the truth of Christmas will fill your life with light that will not be dependent on the length of daylight hours. May the light of God's unfailing love illumine your spirit and lift up your heart.



Carols, Choral Music and Candlelight



On Sunday, December 24, we will have two worship services, one at 11 am and the other at 6:30 pm. The *earlier* service marks the fourth Sunday of Advent and completes our spiritual and liturgical preparation to celebrate the birth of Jesus. We will light the fourth candle in our Advent wreath and focus on joy, which is the last of our four seasonal themes (the others being hope, love, and peace). The *latter* will be a Christmas Eve candlelight service, during which we will sing familiar carols, hear special music, and hold candles while we sing "Silent Night" in a darkened sanctuary. Which service to attend? The obvious answer is "both," but if that is not possible, either one will help prepare to receive again God's Christmas gift of majesty in a manger, the baby born in Bethlehem. As the familiar carol says, "Let every heart prepare to make him room."

What Does It Mean to Be a Church in the 21st Century?

by Christine Gorman

Rutgers members lived up to our reputation as independent thinkers at an after-church book discussion on Sunday, November 12, 2006. About 22 of us gathered in the Daniel Russell room to talk about *A New and Right Spirit* by Rick Barger. Our interim pastor Dave Prince suggested we read the book as a way of getting a discussion going on where we see ourselves headed as a church in the 21st century. Some of us liked the book a lot. Others said it wasn't relevant to our urban setting, and several actively disliked the book.

On the positive side, we liked the book's emphasis on the church as a

countercultural force that is in opposition to the empty priorities of a consumer society. On the negative side, many of us were uncomfortable with Barger's repeated emphasis on Jesus and the Resurrection. It reminded folks of the way the right-wing segment of the American church seems to beat people up with the Bible—if you don't believe as they do, then you're not a Christian.

We acknowledged having trouble talking about our lives as Christians, what we believe and, just as importantly, what we have questions about. What if you can't say for sure exactly what happened on that first Easter morning?

What if you think of Jesus more as a role model than the Son of God? Do we do good works as a way of avoiding having to talk about what we believe?

We see ourselves as a caring community. We like the fact that Rutgers is a safe place to explore issues of faith. We strongly believe that God's ultimate nature is one of unconditional love and respond to that message when we hear it.

We have a lot to celebrate. We are committed to each other and to trying to figure out what God wants us to do and to be. That seems like a good start for a church that wants to grow in the 21st century.

Meditative vespers and a study of *Advent Hope*

Wednesday evenings, December 6, 13, and 20

The Christmas Joy Offering by Cheryl Pyrch

Every year at Christmas we take up a special offering to support two mission areas: assistance for retired church workers and their families facing unexpected hardships, and "racial-ethnic," Presbyterian-related secondary schools and colleges. The schools and colleges were begun by Presbyterian missionaries and teachers and remain in covenant relationship with the Presbyterian Church (USA). Dedicated to serving students who might not otherwise have access to (quality) higher education, these institutions don't have large endowments or wealthy donor bases. To remain true to their mission, they need our continuing support. I did some research on these seven colleges and share some of what I learned below:

Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka, Alaska, is the oldest educational institution in Alaska in continuous existence. A small college on an island just off the coast, it's dedicated to serving the needs of the Alaskan Native community. If we were lucky enough to live nearby, at the foot of beautiful and majestic mountains,

this month we could have attended free community seminars on "Southeast Alaska's Signature Bird: The Marbled Murrelet" and "Monitoring Nocturnal Owls in Southeast Alaska." They have a large fisheries department, and tuition is less than half that of most private colleges.

Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, was ranked among the best of comprehensive southern liberal arts colleges by *US News and World Report* in 2006. Founded in the late 1800s to train Black male ministers, it's now a senior college with a distinguished teacher educational program; one graduate is currently a Fulbright teacher/scholar in Ireland. They recently eliminated the "digital divide" among their diverse student body by giving laptops to all students and are committed to making tech-

nology a democratizing force for their largely African American graduates.

Menaul School in Albuquerque, New Mexico, educates youth in grades 7-12. It was founded in 1896 for Spanish-speaking boys from New Mexico and is now multicultural, coeducational and ecumenical, with 60% of their students identifying themselves as Native American, Hispanic or from another ethnic minority. More than 90% of their graduates go to college, and in 2006 a group of students partnered with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to go to New Orleans for a Katrina clean-up mission trip.

It's easy to find more inspiring information through links at the Presbyterian Church web site (www.pcusa.org). Please give generously this year to our Christmas Joy Offering!



December 2006 at Rutgers Church, and Beyond

The Gospel of Luke

Sundays, October 29-December 17, at 9:45 am, Session Rm

Having studied Matthew and Mark the past two years, this study of Luke completes our "cycle" of the synoptic gospels and prepares us for the sermons of Year C in the lectionary, which begins on December 3. We are using study guides from the *Interpretation* series and hope you will join us for the rest of the class.

UNICEF Benefit Recital

Sunday, December 3 at 4 pm
in the Sanctuary

Rutgers' soprano section leader, Sherry Zanno, and baritone Clif Fisher will sing duets by Wagner and Verdi. Marshall Williamson accompanies on the piano; suggested donation \$15 for the United Nations Children's Fund.



Visit the South Street Seaport

this month, and maybe you'll run into a familiar face!

Advent Vespers

Wednesdays, Dec. 6, 13, 20 at 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary

On the three Wednesday evenings that fall within Advent, Rutgers will hold 30-minute vesper services in the chancel area of the sanctuary. These candlelit services of prayer and reflection include a meditation by one of the pastoral staff and music from George Davey.

Dec. 6: Cheryl Pyrch **Dec. 13:** Charles Amstein
Dec. 20: Dave Prince

Advent Study on Hope

Wednesdays, Dec. 6, 13, 20 at 7:15 pm, Daniel Russell Rm

Following the vesper services, our interim pastor, Dave Prince, will lead a study on the theme of Hope, based in part on the following Biblical passages: Jeremiah, chapters 29, 31 and 32; and I Thessalonians, chapters 3, 4 and 5. The studies will end by 8 pm.

Annual Christmas Social

Sunday, December 10 at 12:45 pm on the fifth floor

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

Order Poinsettias Now!

You are invited to purchase one or more poinsettias in honor or memory of a loved one to grace the sanctuary for our Christmas Eve service, and you are welcome to take them home at the end of the service. The price is \$25 per plant. Please contact Jennifer by Monday, December 18 (ext. 213 or jhanson@rutgerschurch.com) with the number of plants, your name and dedication; checks may be sent ATTN: Tina Forman, Rutgers Church, 236 W 73rd St, NYC 10023.

Hanging the Greens and Making Ornaments

Friday, December 15 at 6:00 pm

Come help us prepare the church for Christmas! We will be hanging greens, decorating the tree in the Daniel Russell Room, making ornaments, drinking hot cocoa and cider, and singing together. This is a special event for families and all those who are young at heart.

Christmas Craft Fair

Saturday and Sunday, December 16 and 17

Sue Spears and friends will be holding their annual Christmas Craft Fair at the Mud, Sweat and Tears Studio at 46th Street and 10th Avenue. Come check out their handmade pottery, jewelry and other crafts, and support a community of local artisans. Handknits from our Body & Spirit knitting class may also be available.

Music Notes: Christmas Eve Candlelight Carol Service

Sunday, December 24 at 6:30 pm

From George Davey: The musical highlight of the Christmas Eve service will be a setting of the *Magnificat* in b-flat sung by the Rutgers Church Choir and soloists, accompanied by chamber orchestra. There are some who feel that Francesco Durante was the composer of this piece, while others attribute it to Giovanni B. Pergolesi. Be that as it may, I am drawn to the music itself. I think it will be musically appealing to our congregation and that all who listen will be greatly inspired and uplifted (and of course, the text, Mary's song, is especially appropriate for the service).



Coming in January

Week of January 2-4

Body & Spirit and Child's Play
Open House

Friday evening, January 5

SKATE Youth trip to the Met
with Anne Leader

Week of January 8-12

Winter sessions begin for
Body & Spirit and Child's Play

Sunday, Jan. 28 at 12:45 pm

Annual Meeting of the
Congregation

December 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
9:45 am Adult Class: <i>Gospel of Luke</i> thru Dec. 17	6:00 pm Cub Scouts Every Monday	6:00 pm Boy Scouts; Men's Support Group (HIV+/PLWA) Every Tuesday		6:00 pm Meal Program 7:00 pm Movie Every Thursday	1 10:30 am Mothers' Bible Study Fridays 6 pm SKATE	2
3 12:45 pm Board of Deacons 4 pm UNICEF Recital	4 3:00 pm Worship Committee	5	6 6:30 pm Advent Vespers 7:15 pm Hope Study	7 7:00 pm <i>Falling in Love</i>	8 12:00 pm Staff Christmas Party 6:00 pm Memorial Service	9
10 12:45 pm Christmas Social; <i>No Peace & Social Justice Network</i>	11 4:30 pm Congregational Nominating Committee	12 6:30 pm Session Meeting	13 6:30 pm Advent Vespers 7:15 pm Hope Study	14 7:00 pm <i>Home Alone 2</i>	15 6:00 pm Hanging the Greens/Ornament Making Party	16 2:00 pm Wedding
17	18 Poinsettia orders due	19	20 6:30 pm Advent Vespers 7:15 pm Hope Study	21 Deadline for January Renewal; 7:00 pm <i>Holiday Inn</i>	Men's Overnight Shelter: Every Fri • Sat • Sun	
24 6:30 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Carol Service	25 Christmas Day Church and office buildings closed	No Body & Spirit or Child's Play this week			29 Holiday Church and office buildings closed	30
31 <i>No Sunday School</i>						

Sundays

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

Preaching Schedule

<i>December 3</i>	First Sunday of Advent; World AIDS Day Observed; The Reverend David D. Prince preaching
<i>December 10</i>	Second Sunday of Advent; Communion; The Reverend David D. Prince preaching
<i>December 17</i>	Third Sunday of Advent; The Reverend Cheryl Pynch preaching
<i>December 24</i>	Fourth Sunday of Advent; The Reverend David D. Prince preaching
<i>December 31</i>	Epiphany Observed; The Rev. Charles A. Amstein preaching

Birthdays!

2	Jeannie Santiago
3	Margaret Williamson
5	Andy Ahsen, Lynne Morris
6	Graham Wyatt
7	Sarah Rundqvist
9	Warwick Busfield
13	Cliff Flanders, Richard Hill
15	Samantha Manners
18	Mark Young
21	Jon Smith
22	Pamela Byrd
23	Klarence Ou Yang, Marshall Williamson
24	Ruben Santiago
30	Audrey Hill
31	Joy Rose

Rutgers Members Take Part in Anti-Militarism Protest

by Anne Barstow and Tom Driver

Three members of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship—Phil Gates, a 70-year-old retired educator from Scottsdale, AZ; Julianne Oldfield, a British-born 69-year-old from Syracuse, NY; and Don Coleman of similar age, a campus minister in Chicago—were among 16 persons arrested on Sunday, November 19, for acts of civil disobedience during a massive gathering at Ft. Benning in Georgia.

Rutgers Church members Anne Barstow and Tom Driver were among the 30 or so Peace Fellowship members who took part in the mass demonstration. We attend almost every year to express our solidarity with victims of violence whom we have met in Colombia, Haiti, and Central America. Some 20,000 persons cheered the individuals who trespassed onto the military base in support of the national movement to close the institution formerly (and familiarly) known as the School of the Americas (SOA). Located within Ft. Benning, it is infamous for training Latin American army officers in brutal tactics, including torture, assassination, and massacre, for use against their own people.

The protests at Ft. Benning have been held annually since 1995 on the anniversary of the murder of 6 Jesuits, their housekeeper and her daughter at the University of Central America in El Salvador. Four of the perpetrators and the chief planner of the deed were graduates of the SOA. Atrocities in which SOA alumni have been involved throughout Latin America are legion. The annual protest concludes with a solemn liturgy of commemoration for the dead, a worshipful act that never fails to move us deeply. The silence of 20,000 people is awesome.



As the multitude processes toward the gate of Ft. Benning, carrying small white crosses, each bearing the name of a victim, the latter's names are sung out over a loud speaker. At the sound of each name, the protesters lift high their crosses and call out in reply: *Presente!* (Here!), punctuated by the single pound of a drum. This simple act is repeated thousands of times during the 3 hours that it takes for the procession to

move past the gate, where the processors affix many of the white crosses, along with flowers and pictures, to the chain-link fence that blocks off the entrance to the fort. It becomes a shrine.

Near the fence the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship held a short prayer service, during which 3 volunteers were commissioned to go to Colombia to accompany endangered Presbyterians. The Accompaniment Program is directed by Rutgers' own Anne Barstow and supported in part by gifts from

Rutgers Church. Colombia has the largest number of trainees at the SOA and receives massive amounts of US military aid, which is thought by many to increase the level of violence there.

Citizens can make a difference. Last year a bill in the US Congress to de-fund the SOA fell only 30 votes short of passage. In the 2006 elections, 34 House members who opposed that bill lost their seats. There is hope that the measure will pass next year. This would not in itself end US training of Latin American army leaders, but it would be an important step in the effort to shift US priorities away from militarism to social development in dealing with problems of social unrest the world over. We should let Congress know what we think.

Tom and Anne will be back at Ft. Benning next year—either to celebrate a victory in Congress or to keep up the pressure. We invite you to come with us.

For more information:

<http://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/>

<http://www.soaw.org/>

<http://www.house.gov/writerep/>

The Rutgers Peace & Social Justice Network meets on the second Sunday of the month at 12:45 pm in the Session Room. Please join us to learn about more opportunities for action together, and to share your ideas.



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What Do You Think?

1. Children are living their parents' marriage, too.
2. Have you ever felt like a stranger in your own house?
3. Can you read a person's face and know their life's journey?
4. There aren't any good liars.
5. You make a choice to be involved, connected, engaged, and committed in life.
6. How many times a day do you think about your diet?
7. When a person tells you, "I'm doing the best I can," and you know they aren't, what is your response?
8. Does a person become self-absorbed when they lack self-esteem and confidence?
9. (Unless you are hearing impaired,) do you talk loudly because you need to be seen?
10. When you visit elderly or shut-in people, see if they need their light bulbs changed.

'Til next time,
Jacquelyn M. Carpenter