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From the Interim Pastor

The Reverend David D. Prince

This is one of those years when the first Sunday of Advent falls at the end of the Thanksgiving holiday weekend. Our culture has made that weekend a link between Thanksgiving and Christmas shopping, and in the church we can tweak that link to make it a connection between gratitude and hope.

For me Thanksgiving Day has long been an occasion for updating my gratitude list, something I look at weekly to remind myself of the blessings in my life. One of my spiritual disciplines is keeping a list of the people, events, or circumstances for which I am particularly thankful. It's interesting to look back over the years and see how the list has changed. People have come and gone in my life, while some people have been part of my life for decades. Doors have closed in my life, sometimes leading to disappointment, but almost always other doors have opened afterward, bringing unexpected joy and satisfaction.

My life has had its share of pleasure and pain. It's been helpful for me to discern that neither of them lasts forever. I'm learning to see my life through a long lens rather than through a close-up lens—although there are times when it's good to zoom in and revel in a particular moment. When I see the big picture, I'm aware of God's unfailing presence throughout my journey. I am grateful for that, and because of God's faithfulness, I am hopeful for the world and for my life.

I look forward to celebrating Advent with you as we prepare for Christmas, when we revel in the truth that God is love.

Dave Prince

What Do You Think?

1. Can you be prepared in advance for all possible emergencies?
2. Used to be is gone. Deal with what is.
3. Do you have trouble saying what you want to say when you don't know what you want to say?
4. If you can't do something over, why say it?
5. It feels great when you get your confidence back.
6. When you're working a survival job, make a game of trying to learn something new each day.
7. Are you getting ahead or just rearranging payments?
8. Why can't you go on a budget before you're broke?
9. Stop yelling! The person on the other end of your cell phone conversation can't hear the truck or the ambulance or the jack hammer while you're talking to them.
10. Stare at someone who's yawning and not covering their mouth and they'll loose the yawn and close their mouth.

'Til next time,
Jacquelyn M. Carpenter

Why I Pledge

continued from front cover

Then something bad happened. Our congregation began to divide over the selection a new minister. As Clerk of Session, I was in the middle of it. I got tongue-lashings in church and nasty letters at home. It was a terrible time.

My term on the Session eventually expired, and when it did, for the first time in years I ignored my fall pledge card. I had let go of my mooring lines. My weekly attendance dwindled to once a month. Then I stopped going all together.

It was four years before I set foot in church again. Well into my exile I sought advice from a wise woman, who happened to be the pastor of a Presbyterian Church. She told me to take my time. "Churches," she said, "are like families. They can sometimes damage their members."

WOW. Still, I'd gone to her because my heart was longing to worship in community. I wanted to hear the music, to listen to the sermons, and be part of a family. It's hard to be spiritual alone.

I walked into Rutgers because it was in the neighborhood, and because I knew our recently retired minister, Byron Shafer, from Presbyterian meetings. It felt good to be at worship again. I joined the church, and when I did, I made a pledge within the week. Ignoring my last pledge card had led into the wilderness, but my first pledge to Rutgers was an act of homecoming and commitment. With one simple act, I felt part of a family again, and as a single man, it felt good.

Today, I calculate my pledge as a percentage of my anticipated income, and, of course, it's subject to amendment. Rutgers isn't my only benevolence, but it is the first commitment I make, and the first I make good on. I make my pledge happily and in gratitude to the Glory of God in Christ, and in fellowship with all of you. Thank you. *ω*

RUTGERS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Renewal

Why I Pledge

A Moment for Mission given by Elder Bill Donnell on Sunday, November 2, 2008

Good Morning. I'm Bill Donnell. If you haven't already, you will shortly be hearing from the Stewardship Committee inviting you to make your pledge of support for 2009. Over the next three weeks including Pledge Sunday on November 16, members of the committee will be offering our personal stories of pledging.

Today, it's my turn. This is my experience, and I don't speak for anyone but myself. Economically, this is a scary time for all of us. But for me it's as important to pledge in tough times as it is in good times. That may seem counter-intuitive, so let me try to explain why it's true for me.

First of all, let me say I have learned over the years there is a difference between giving and pledging. Most of us – even those visiting the Rutgers family for the first time – will put something in the collection plate this morning. Scripture and social pressure tell us it's the right thing to do, and most of us will feel good about it after it's done.

But without a pledge, this is giving without commitment. There's a kind of ambivalence about it. It's the kind of giving I prac-

ted when I came to New York after college. I joined a very large congregation. For the first few years I attended pretty regularly, but contributed only when I was there. I didn't pledge, nor did I really get to know anyone.

When I did make a pledge, three remarkable things happened: first I began to actually talk to the people I had only smiled at before. I felt like I was one of them . . . part of the family . . . that I belonged. The change was in me, not in them. I had owned my membership.

Second, I began to make contributions elsewhere: to the New York Times Neediest Cases Fund, The Healthcare Chaplaincy, GMHC and others.

And third, I got involved. I agreed to become a church officer and for the next twenty-three years I served as deacon, elder, and trustee. The church was home and family to me. At the same time, I focused my other giving and got involved in several non-profit organizations giving both time and money to their efforts.

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December 2008 at Rutgers Church, and Beyond

Advent Vesper Services and Advent Study

Wednesdays, December 3, 10, and 17

6:30 p.m., Sanctuary (Vespers)

7:15 p.m., Daniel Russell room (Advent Study)



Our Advent Vespers and study series will begin on Wednesday, December 3, with a service of Advent meditation, reflection and music at 6:30 p.m. Join us afterward at 7:15 p.m. in the Daniel Russell room as we explore the stories of faith and hope of those awaiting the birth of the Christ child using the study guide *Rejoicing in Hope*. We will explore the stories of Joseph, Mary, Elizabeth, Zechariah, and Anna, just to name a few.

S.K.A.T.E. Bring-a-Friend Movie Night

Friday, December 5 at 6:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall

The S.K.A.T.E youth will be meeting Friday, December 5 for *Bring a Friend Movie Night*. Youth are encouraged to invite a friend for some fun and laughter over pizza, popcorn and a movie. Please R.S.V.P. Jacqui Van Vliet, Interim Director of Educational Ministries, at the church office if you plan to attend at (212) 877-8227 x205.



Rutgers' Annual All-Church Christmas Social

Sunday, December 7, 12:45 p.m., Fellowship Hall

Rutgers' Annual All-Church Christmas Social will take place on Sunday, December 7 at 12:45 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall following the worship service. Come and worship with us this Second Sunday in Advent as we light the second Advent candle at 11:00 a.m. and join us for our social afterward. A light lunch will be served and there will be entertainment for children, as well as a grab bag for the children. A gift of under \$5 for the grab bag is suggested, but not necessary to attend. All are welcome.

The Letter to the Galatians

Sundays, December 7, 14 and 21, 9:45 a.m., Session room

Grace or the law, liberty or restriction. That was the dilemma facing the first century church in Galatia. Join us in the Adult Sunday school calls at 9:45 a.m. on Sundays through December 21 as we explore the Letter of Paul to the Galatians this Advent season. We will be using the Interpretation Bible Study series as our study book and study guide.

Hanging of the Greens

Friday, December 19, 6:00 p.m., Daniel Russell room

Come join us on Friday, December 19 at 6:00 p.m. in the Daniel Russell room for our annual Hanging of the Greens. It will be a time to create ornaments and decorate our tree in the Daniel Russell room. We will have some sweet and savory holiday treats. At 7:30 p.m. we will gather to sing some of our favorite carols in the sanctuary. R.S.V.P.'s would be appreciated but not necessary to attend. All are welcome from the very young to the young at heart.



82nd Annual Carol & Choral Service

Sunday, December 21, 4:00 p.m.



Childcare will be available.

The 82nd Annual Carol & Choral service will be held on Sunday, December 21 at 4:00 p.m. This will be a beautiful service of music and hymns, including excerpts from Handel's *Messiah*, sung by Rutgers Church choir, soloists, and instrumental musicians under the direction Rutgers' Organist/Choral Director, George Davey.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Wednesday, December 24, 7:00 p.m.

Our festive Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be held on Wednesday, December 24 at 7:00 p.m. We will sing traditional Christmas hymns, glorious anthems, listen to a Children's Sermon and receive a Christmas Eve message by the Reverend David Prince, as we celebrate the birth of the Christ, the Light of the World. Join us beforehand, at 6:30 p.m., on the church steps for Christmas caroling. Nursery care for ages 2 and under is available beginning at 6:30 p.m.; older children may join us on the 4th floor after the Children's Sermon for a time of crafts and story. Please join us in the Daniel Russell room for a Christmas Eve reception, hosted by the Board of Deacons, following the service.



212th Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Sunday, January 25, 12:45 p.m.

The 212th Annual Meeting of the Congregation of Rutgers Presbyterian Church will meet on Sunday, January 25, at 12:45 p.m., following the worship service. This will be a time to hear reports from church committees on the happenings of 2008 and the hopes for 2009. We will also elect a new class of officers for the Board of Trustees, the Board of Deacons, and Elders to serve on the Session; as well as conduct the usual church business as stated in the *Book of Order*. The Board of Deacons will host a lunch. All members are encouraged to attend.

December 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat																
	1 World AIDS Day 12:15 p.m. Al-Anon Every Monday 3:30 p.m. Worship Committee	2 12:15 p.m. Al-Anon Men's Support Group (HIV+/PLWA) Cub Scouts 8:00 p.m. Men's Al-Anon Every Tuesday	3 5:30 p.m. AA Meeting 6:30 p.m. Vesper Service 7:15 p.m. Advent Study Every Wednesday	4 6:00 p.m. Meal Program 7:00 p.m. Movie Series Every Thursday	5 10:30 a.m. Mothers' Bible Study 6:00 p.m. Men's Shelter Every Friday 6:30 p.m. S.K.A.T.E.	6 5:30 p.m. AA Meeting 6:00 p.m. Men's Shelter Every Saturday																
7 12:45 p.m. All Church Christmas Social Board of Deacons Personnel Committee 6:00 p.m. Men's Shelter Every Sunday	8	9 6:30 p.m. Session Meeting	<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <h3>Preaching Schedule</h3> <p>December 7 ___ Second Sunday in Advent; David D. Prince preaching</p> <p>December 14 ___ Third Sunday in Advent; David D. Prince preaching</p> <p>December 21 ___ Fourth Sunday in Advent; David D. Prince preaching</p> <p>December 28 ___ First Sunday after Christmas; Charles A. Amstein preaching</p> </div>																			
14 12:45 p.m. Peace & Social Justice Network 5:00 p.m. PNC	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <h3>Sundays</h3> <p>9:45 a.m. Adult Sunday School</p> <p>10:00 Adult Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>10:45 Infant & Child Care</p> <p>11:00 Worship Service</p> <p>11:15 Sunday School (ages 3-12)</p> <p>12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour</p> <p>12:30 Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>6:00 Men's Shelter</p> </div>						17	18	19 6:00 p.m. Hanging of the Greens	20												
21 4:00 p.m. 82nd Carol & Choral Service	24 11:00 Worship Service	25 11:15 Sunday School (ages 3-12)	26 12:15 p.m. Coffee Hour	27 12:30 Choir Rehearsal	28 6:00 Men's Shelter	29 6:30 p.m. Christmas Caroling 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	30 6:30 p.m. Christmas Day Church & Office Building Closed	31 6:00 p.m. Christmas Church & Office Building Closed														
28 5:00 p.m. PNC	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <h3>December Birthdays!</h3> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>1 Stacy Kim</td> <td>17 Cass Knox & Matthew Sturman</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 Michelle Nelson</td> <td>20 Taras Ou Yang</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4 Alexandra Yu</td> <td>21 Carl Lindskoog</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 James Finn</td> <td>23 Steve Phelps</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9 Kenneth Starger</td> <td>27 Lenore Karo</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11 Jordan Stephaniuk</td> <td>30 Jivan Galper</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13 Lisa Pinto</td> <td>31 Joy Rose</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16 Tara Dillon</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> </div>						1 Stacy Kim	17 Cass Knox & Matthew Sturman	3 Michelle Nelson	20 Taras Ou Yang	4 Alexandra Yu	21 Carl Lindskoog	6 James Finn	23 Steve Phelps	9 Kenneth Starger	27 Lenore Karo	11 Jordan Stephaniuk	30 Jivan Galper	13 Lisa Pinto	31 Joy Rose	16 Tara Dillon	
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