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.”

Winter 2009
Volume 26, Issue 1

From the Interim Pastor
The Reverend David D. Prince

O n Sunday, January 25, we will have our Annual Congregational Meeting. This is an opportunity for the congregation to elect officers—elders, deacons, and trustees, and at-large members of the Congregational Nominating Committee. It is also a time when the written reports from individuals and organizations within the church are circulated. Included in these reports are financial statements and a review of activities. The reports are not subject to action by the congregation, but questions are welcome. All reports are submitted to the Session, which is the governing body of a Presbyterian Church. The Session consists of the elders in active service who have been elected by the congregation, and the moderator, who is either the installed pastor or the moderator approved by the presbytery.

The meeting on January 25 will be held in Fellowship Hall on the fifth floor of our building. A luncheon will be served free of charge, hosted by the Board of Deacons. Church members are encouraged to attend if possible. Non-members are welcome at this meeting, even though they can’t vote. I look forward to seeing you Sunday, January 25, 2009, for our 11 a.m. worship service and for the Congregational Meeting that follows.

Dave Prince

Helping Hands from Rutgers to Malawi
By Christine Gorman

What does success look like? That’s a question I asked myself a lot while I was in Malawi for three months in 2008. Going straight from one of the richest countries in the world to one of the poorest, it was easy to focus on the things that were missing—paved roads, reliable electricity, soap in one of the hospitals I visited in the capital. It took a lot more effort and a gentle nudge in the right direction from Dr. Martha Sommers (PC USA) medical missionary who lives in Malawi and visited Rutgers in 2007, for me to see what was already there. Nowadays when I think about success in Malawi, I think of 9-year old Miriam (pictured above). A few days before I arrived at Embangweni Mission Hospital, which is located in a rural part of northern Malawi, Miriam had to be debrided, which means the dead tissue is removed. And then every day after that the nurses changed the bandages and cleaned the wounds. They didn’t have the latest and greatest burn treatments but the silver-based medication they did have kept infection at bay. The tent-frame that kept the sheets away from her exposed abdomen was covered with a homemade quilt.

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There was some pain medication available but not a lot. Sometimes Miriam whimpered plaintively. It was too hard to watch and so I left. But then, gradually, the crying stopped. Miriam started to smile. And by the time I left Embangweni she was laughing heartily with both her mother and the nurses and ward maids. Her burns were healing.

Miriam ended up spending six weeks in the hospital. Six weeks is which the nursing staff made sure she got her open wounds never became infected.

Six weeks in which the clinical officers gave her the very best care available in a poor rural community at the end of a road dirt miles from the country’s main paved highway.

So nowadays, when I think about what success looks like in Malawi, I see Miriam and hear her laughing. Her severe abdominal burns healed and she was able to reunite her family and go back to school. And I think about many other successes that the staff at Embangweni Mission Hospital have accomplished—in fighting malaria, measles and malnutrition and in making sure childbirth is not a death sentence for the mothers.

And I am thankful that Rutgers was able to play a part in Miriam’s successful treatment. In 2007, Rutgers, through the Benevolence Committee sent $5,000 in PC (U.S.A.) to help support the highly dedicated but not well paid nurses at Embangweni Mission Hospital. In 2008, we were able to increase that amount to $6,000. I can assure you the money is well spent.

What’s Happening at Child’s Play

Holly Nedelka, founder and director of the longstanding Child’s Play program here at Rutgers, is pleased to announce that Linda Kuo has been named coordinator of the Child’s Play Mandarin program.

Linda has been a vital part of the Mandarin program for two years, overseeing and developing curriculum. In addition to a wealth of classes and playgroups for babies, toddlers, and school age children up to the age of 7, the Child’s Play Mandarin program offers classes for parents and caregivers who aren’t native Mandarin speakers.

Linda’s energy and warmth make her beloved by the children and the children who attend the program, and it will continue to be an important source of joyful learning and outreach to the community under her guidance. Linda will continue in her role as lead teacher for several Mandarin playgroups and classes in addition to her duties as program coordinator.

Linda holds a Bachelor’s degree in Communications and Economics from Boston College and will begin working toward a dual master’s degree at New York University in teaching English as a second language and foreign language instruction this month. She began her teaching career in high school, as an instructor in Mommy-and-Me dance classes and creative movement for older toddlers at a studio she helped run in Hawaii. Linda is also a professional dancer and choreographer, a hula dancer, and, brings those talents to bear in the Mandarin program.

Holly in congratulating Linda in her expanded role.

Holly and Linda would also like to invite Rutgers families to a Chinese New Year celebration on Friday, January 30 from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. The celebration will feature a showing of Nicklodeon’s popular character Kai-Lan, and also include Chinese lantern crafts, dance demonstrations, writing/painting, and much more. This celebration will take place on the 4th Floor of Child’s Play room and is free of charge. Families must RSVP as space is limited and available on a first come, first served basis. Please e-mail Linda at lkuo@rutgerschurch.com.

Additionally, the Child’s Play English-language playgroups continue to flourish. In fact, to meet rising demand, Child’s Play has added a new playgroup on Tuesday mornings at 11:00 a.m. for 2 ½ to 3 ½ year olds. Holly has also added a new group on Fridays at 10:30 a.m. for young toddlers aged 14 to 24 months. The Child’s Play English-language playgroup program is unique in that it is specifically designed for parents to attend with their children (no sitters or nannies attend).

The winter/spring term for Child’s Play programs begins on Monday, January 26. Please feel free to call (212) 877-8227 x204 for more information or lkuo@rutgerschurch.com for more information.

FYI by Elder Jeremiah, Clerk of Session

2009 began with a blast of arctic temperatures in January and in February. But then, gradually, the crying stopped. Miriam started to smile. And by the time I left Embangweni she was able to play a part in Miriam’s successful treatment. In 2007, Rutgers, through the Benevolence Committee sent $5,000 in PC (U.S.A.) to help support the highly dedicated but not well paid nurses at Embangeni Mission Hospital. In 2008, we were able to increase that amount to $6,000. I can assure you the money is well spent.

2. After long and lengthy discussions on balancing the needs of the church in maintaining the facilities for members and the church’s outreach mission through benevolence support, a motion passed to proceed with outward mission and energy costs over and above initial costs due to water damage and installation of double paned glass on damaged windows (providing an approach to reducing energy costs annually over the life of the windows), which is now nearing completion.

4. After a year of hard work by the Mission Review Steering Committee, the Session approved the Mission Review Report, as presented by the committee, with grateful thanks. The Mission Review Report was subsequently approved by the Presbytery of New York City and the Presbytery of New York Committee on Ministry, and then reviewed by more than 100 Pastoral Information Forms (PIFs).

7. The Session called a Congregational Meeting, in which the Congregational Nominating Committee presented a slate of 9 nominees to the Pastor and the Presbytery. The nominees were approved by the congregation and the committee has been asked to complete work, first preparing the Church Information Form (CIF), which was approved by both the Session and the Presbytery of New York Committee on Ministry, and then reviewing more than 100 Pastoral Information Forms (PIFs).

9. Session enthusiastically approved a motion to extend the contract with a nurse practitioner, David D. Prince, as Interim Pastor, for an additional year, ending September 24, 2009, subject to notification with 90 days notice (in light of the work of the PNC).

10. To help foster civic responsibility, the Session voted to renew a contract with the Board of Elders where Rutgers Church once again acted as a voting site during the presidential election year.

11. The Session moved to re-place the chairs in the narthex, which were badly stained and on the verge of collapse, with Kathryn style chairs, which more closely resembled the existing chairs with a Falling Leaves pattern of upholstery.

12. A Congregational Meeting was called by the Session, where the congregation joined with the Reverend Cheryl Pyn in requesting that the Committee on Ministry discharge the relationship between Cheryl and Rutgers, in order for Cheryl to accept a solo pastorate position at Summit Presbyterian Church in the city of Philadelphia. Cheryl was honored with a lunchroom reception where she was thanked for her many years of faithful service to Rutgers Church and community.

13. The Session approved a recommendation by the Personnel Committee, to employ Jacqui Van Vliet as Interim Director of Educational Ministries.

14. After an extensive interview, review and questioning based of the completed Application for Enrollment as an Inquire (Form 1), a motion unanimously passed to approve member Douglas Grace as an Inquire in the Presbytery of New York City and under the care of the Session, for the first, in a long series of steps toward ordination. Douglas was later approved by the Presbytery as an Inquire at its regularly stated meeting.

Well, maybe it wasn’t so brief, but as you can gather, the Session has been hard at work. We are humbled and honored to be able to be of service to such a diverse and dynamic congrega- tion and to be able to call it our spiritual home.

WINTER 2009
February 2009

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Sun: 12:15 p.m. Al-Anon
Mon: 6:00 p.m. Men’s Support Group (HIV+/PLWA)
Tues: 8:00 p.m. Expand Our Horizons
Wed: 5:30 p.m. AA Meeting
Thur: 6:00 p.m. Mothers’ Bible Study
Fri: 10:30 a.m. Men’s Shelter
Sat: 1:00 p.m. Opera Rehearsal

February Birthdays!

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Preaching Schedule

February 1___4th Sunday in Ordinary Time; David D. Prince preaching
February 8___5th Sunday in Ordinary Time, David D. Prince preaching
February 15__Presidents’ Day Weekend; Jacqui Van Vliet preaching
February 22___Transfiguration of the Lord; David D. Prince preaching

Word of Mouth

If you have something personal to advertise such as a lead for employment or looking for employment, need a roommate to split rent or sublease, have a performance coming up or trying to sell/give away a pair of blue suede shoes, etc., submit your information to jeremiah@rutgerschurch.com or call (212) 877-8227.

*Please don’t send resumes or pictures of your car or furniture, etc.