

First Things



A Newsletter of the First Reformed Church, Schenectady, New York

January 1, 2008

Kerygma Bible Study Starts January 2

For the next six Wednesdays, 9:30-11 a.m., lively discussion and learning will resume in the Polling Conference Room. All are welcome to this shorter Kerygma course that will focus on the Lord's Prayer. The required Resource Books are available for purchase (\$13 new; \$10 used) in the Faith Bookshop.

Inquirers' Seminar

A three-session Inquirers' Seminar for those considering joining the congregation will be held January 6, 13, 20 from 9-9:50 a.m. The pastors and other congregational leaders will present our beliefs, organization, history, programs, and outreach. New members will be welcomed into the congregation on January 28.

WE @ FRC Continues in January

At 6 p.m. a tasty supper prepared by participants is served in Assembly Hall including two soups; one meaty and the other vegetarian, salad, bread, and dessert. At 7 p.m. Evening Prayer is held amidst candlelight in the sanctuary chancel. At 7:30 p.m. two adult educational opportunities are offered: Preacher's Preview with Bill Levering; Practicing Contemplative Prayer with Daniel Carlson.

Communities that Care Blood Drive, January 15

The American Red Cross and the City of Schenectady are asking you to support our upcoming "Communities that Care" Blood Drive taking place on Tuesday, January 15, 2008, from 11:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Holiday Inn located at 100 Nott Terrace.

Christmas Thanksgiving

Many thanks to the chancel guild and helpers who decorated the sanctuary so well. Among them were: Kathy Allen, Audrey Bain, Marilyn Beadle, Mary Carlson, Millie Casey, Nancy Della Pia, Gay Doolittle, Sara Erickson, Janet Gardner, Joyce Griggs, Betty Kleiber, Anne Middleton, Marlene Risseeuw, Elaine Springsted, Beth Taft, and Martha Winchester.

Stephen Ministry Laughter

Everyone is invited to hear Arleen Urell, operator of The Laughter Factor Club, on Wednesday, January 16th at 7:30PM in Assembly Hall. Urell who is also a member of the World Laughter tour, brings the benefits of laughter to people of all ages without telling a single joke! Her program of 30-40 minutes may include a laughter workout, discussions of the benefits of laughter and other activities that encourage playfulness, fun and mental balance. This program is being sponsored by The Stephen Ministry and is open to all. For more information, contact Ruthellen Phillips, 346-1791.

PSALM Retreat: Pause for Silence through Art, Literature, and Music, January 20-22

All musicians, storytellers, dancers, writers, painters, sculptors, and artists of any kind are invited to attend the PSALM Retreat: Pause for Silence Through Art, Literature, and Music, January 20-22, 2008, to be held at Chi-Rho House at Camp Fowler. The PSALM Retreat is for those who love to create and hold an appreciation for the Arts, to focus on the Voice of God speaking through the Adirondack winter silence, and to learn to better reflect and express with our art. You'll be encouraged to spend your free time creating by yourself, working with others, or just wandering in search of inspiration. The cost of \$100 includes the retreat, lodging and meals. For more details, please pick up a brochure in the rack by Assembly Hall, or you may e-mail Heather Moore Niver at bloodorangepoet@gmail.com.

Training Class for Children and Worship Volunteers

There will be a training class offered to those who wish to volunteer or just want to know more about being a leader and/or storyteller in Children and Worship. The class will be offered in the Schenectady area and usually is taught over a 1-1/2 day period. If you are interested contact Tani Breitenbach At 399-6116.

Jazz Vespers Forever!

We have evaluated the Jazz Vespers service and decided to have it on the third Sunday of every month from now until 2027. January 20th is our next one.

Pastoral Care Committee

To serve our church members, the following are available:

Medical Transportation:

Ronnie Bartholic – 393-7679
Inge-Lise Pangburn – 399-1027
Ann Walraven – 374-4646

Prayer Chain:

Rachel Hewitt – 456-8716
Ann Gotwals – 372-5089
Vernetta Thuener – 355-2543

Meal Assistance:

Kim Burgoyne – 399-1337

Stephen Ministry:

Linda Ward – 377-2377
Ruthellen Phillips – 346-1791
Daniel Carlson – 377-2201

The coordinators listed above have names of members eager to help. Feel free to call them, or speak to Daniel if you know of a need. (Of course, it's always helpful to give as much notice as possible to ensure we can accommodate your schedule.) If you would like to offer a little of your time to be involved with providing any of these services, please call Sue Zeltmann, 383-1969, or speak to one of the coordinators.

Need Help?

We have equipment that anyone is welcome to check out for use if they are ill: 2 Wheelchairs; 1 Transport Chair; 11 Sets of Crutches; 13 Walkers; 4 Quad-Tipped Canes
Call the office at 377-2201 if you are need of any of these items.

Faith Bookshop News

When winter weather tempts you to settle down with a new book, check out the Faith Bookshop at church. Books of considerable variety are already on the shelves, and orders (promptly filled) can be placed -- most at a 30% discount. Paperback copies of "Original Blessing" by Matthew Fox are on sale for people attending the church book group and for anyone else who would like a copy. The bookshop committee appreciates recommendations that can be posted on the bulletin board outside the shop.

Stories of Epiphany and Wonder, January 13

Join two of the region's most whimsical and irrepressible storytellers, Joe Dolittle and Kent Busman, as they spin tales of wonder and grace to benefit Camp Fowler. It's a whole dinner from 5-8 pm at the Glen Sanders Mansion. Cost is \$27 and reservations may be

Chili Cook-off and Auction January 19

Please join us on January 19 at 4 p.m. in Friendship Hall for a wild evening of chili tasting, silent and live auctions. All proceeds will benefit the Senior High Youth Group's mission trip to Oaxaca, Mexico in February. Invite your neighbors, bring your friends. See Hans Mueller or Mary Carlson if you have items to donate.

Winter Hike to Vroomans' Nose, January 27

Following worship on Sunday, January 27, hale and hearty members and friends will pile into our church van and drive less than an hour to Vroomans' Nose, a moderate hill in Schoharie Valley with a beautiful view from the top. The round trip is under two miles though given recent snowfalls, this may be a bit challenging and call for snowshoes, skis, or high-top hiking boots. Mark it down, sign up soon, and join us happy First Church wanderers.

Mission Trip Appeal

Hello, my name is Kayla Herrington. I am a 16 year-old student at Niskayuna High School. I work as a baby sitter to raise money for the trips I've been on. I have been on five trips to over five different continents and have felt that Youth Group helped me want to achieve this. Youth Group consists of all my friends, from other schools and my own, including my best friend, Rachael. In our Youth Group you meet life long friends that are so important. Mexico will be a new experience for all of us that will open our eyes and hearts in a new way to the horrible tragedy of poverty and homelessness. We need your help to make this trip happen. Thank you.

If the Stockade Walls Could Talk?

FRC will host the opening program for the 2008 Schenectady Colonial Festival Friday, February 8, 7:30 PM in the sanctuary. It will review what's known of the Schenectady Massacre 316 years later. Refreshments and items of interest in Assembly Hall.

2008 Schenectady - Nijkerk Adult Exchange April 27- May 6

An adult trip to Nijkerk, the Netherlands will depart Albany Airport April 27. This year's exchange will end May 6 and participants may return directly to Albany; or on May 10 via Paris with an optional tour to D-Day sites at Normandy. If interested in joining this year's exchange, please contact Ellen McNett (372-1270) right

away

Senior Moments

This was the first Christmas season Abby and I have spent here and we were so impressed. I want to thank folks for their graciousness and hard work. Every note and cookie, every light set up and every costume put on contributed to a bright season. Daniel and I will be talking together with the Worship Committee and looking at next year. I'd like to make the season a little easier on parents somehow. There has also been some interest in an additional midnight service on Christmas Eve.

January will be an exciting month as you can see from this newsletter. In addition to the educational opportunities listed, we will be preparing for the youth mission trip that is so important to our congregation and we are getting ready for the arrival of our new Associate, the Rev. Stacey Midge.

I wish all of you a deeply joyful 2008. Let us know if we can help in making this year more meaningful.

Bill Levering

Birthdays in January

- 1 Kayla Kerwin
- 1 Carol Molino
- 1 Heather Scribner
- 2 Bill Levering
- 3 Bill Hubbard
- 3 Helen Phillips
- 4 Carly Brooks
- 4 Elena Grande
- 4 Harvey Schadler
- 5 Inge-Lise Pangburn
- 5 Helen Willis
- 10 Kyle Cox
- 10 Bonnie DeFreest
- 11 Bill Mc Coll
- 12 Anne Hewitt
- 12 Sara Moore
- 14 Hannah Bachorik
- 14 Greg Matusic
- 14 Doug Todd, Jr.
- 15 Jeffrey Rickard
- 16 Sara Erickson
- 17 Jim Cesare, III
- 17 Jack Evans
- 17 John Norton
- 18 Elaine Thuener
- 18 John Zeltmann
- 20 Shaun Allen
- 20 Donna Fairlee
- 20 Mary Jane Fisher
- 20 Melissa Greskovich
- 20 Alden Ravenburgh-Brown
- 21 Katie Lnenicka
- 21 Brook Maliszewski
- 21 Richard Vandercar
- 23 Marilyn Beadle
- 24 Jean Collins
- 24 Charlotte Hubbard
- 24 Sally Knutson
- 25 Barbara Landon
- 27 Diana Mitsche
- 28 Julie Little
- 30 Abigail Bundy
- 30 Gwen Mitsche
- 30 Keith Muse
- 30 Terry Rickard
- 31 Darryl Wisniewski

Calendar

Every Sunday

- Youth Orchestra - 8:30 am
- Bible Study, Church School and Parents Group - 9 am
- Choir- 9:15 am
- Worship - 10 am
- Adult Forum & Kirk Singers - 11 am
- Sr. High Fellowship - 7 pm

Weekly

- Mon.:** Men's News Group- 9 am
Klokken Ringers 7 pm
- Tues.:** Tuesday Morning Mom's Group - 9 am
- Wed.:** Kerygma 9:30 am
Wednesday Dialogue 12 pm
WE @ FRC:
6 - Dinner
7 - Worship
7:30 - Classes
- Thurs.:** Chancel Choir 7:30 pm

January

- 4-6 Camp Fowler Retreat
- 6 Inquirer's Class - 9 am
- 7 Cancer Support Group - 11 am
- 7 Membership Comm. - 7:30 pm
- 8 Standing Committees - 7 pm
- 8 Consistory - 8 pm
- 10 Schenectady Art Society - 7 pm
- 13 Inquirer's Class - 9 am
- 14 Concerned for Hungry - 7:30 pm
- 15 Tuesday Evening Women's Group - 7:30 pm
- 16 Laughter Program
- 19 Chili Cook-Off & Auction - 5 pm
- 20 Inquirer's Class - 9 am
- 20 Jazz Vespers - 5 pm
- 27 New Members Join - 10 am
- 21 **M.L. King Day - Office Closed**

Alternative Christmas Fair Success

The December 2nd Alternative Christmas Fair sponsored by Mission and Benevolence Committee succeeded wonderfully in providing opportunities for holiday gift giving. Holiday shoppers benefited Haven Grief Counseling (\$600) and Schenectady Free clinic (\$300) as well as Fair Trade partners from Equal Exchange, Ten Thousand Villages, Mayan Hands and Mango Tree Imports. Our candle sales raised \$480 for South Africa. Stockade neighbors and the community participated in this first time event.

Through Heifer Project we "shared" honeybees, chicks, geese, sheep, goats and pigs and one Knitting Basket, a Flock of Hope and 12 Heifer shares. Many thanks to all volunteers who planned, decorated, set-up and were shopkeepers. The Mission and Benevolence Committee is looking for feedback on whether to make this a regular event.

Correction: The correct e-mail address for Mary Carlson is: maryescarlson@gmail.com