

THE TOWER TIE

The Newsletter of the
First Presbyterian Church of Goshen

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January 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Not long ago, I was listening to a keynote address about the perception of Christianity from the perspective of postmodern teenagers and young adults. The talk was eye-opening. From this perspective, we were told that Christianity is often seen as a violent, uncaring, narrow-minded, parochial religion having little relevance to the world. This was said to a group of committed Christians who view themselves as loving, caring, peaceful people who seek to change the world toward good.

The speaker then went on to tell us about some major changes in perception about life and the world that these young people now take for granted. Here are some examples of modern perceptions: there is no single Truth with a capital T; authority has little value, but relationship is crucial; spirituality is vital but not necessarily believing in God; traditional teaching and hierarchy within the church is of almost no value, but getting out into the world and doing something to make it better is very important.

It doesn't take long before anyone older than thirty realizes that the differences between this new religious view and all that has come before it will be in great tension. Like the curve of a parabola, which is the arc formed between two opposing points, the new views and the old views are connected by their tension of difference.

Religious worldviews aren't the only things changing these days, as we all know. Today we face enormous changes in economic markets, international politics, world population, world ecology, the housing market, education, and even presidential elections. In many cases, what is happening is causing us to realize that there are many ways of being and doing things that have been around for a long time that are no longer going to be the way things are done. There has been a tremendous shift that is still evolving and showing us a new point in our world, a point that stands in tension with what has gone before. It is a new kind of parabola in time and, someday, history.

As followers of Christ, tension isn't new to us. We know that Jesus often used parables to teach his listeners about his radical, new vision of God and faith. Our word *parable* comes from the Greek word *parabolē*, meaning "to juxtapose" or "to set beside." It is the same word that is used in geometry for *parabola*.

A parable juxtaposes a number of things, but primarily, it sets at tension two very different ways of seeing the world and comprehending it with faith. Take, for instance, the parable of the Good Samaritan. This parable presented Jesus' listeners with a terrible tension for their faith. Here is a story of a man who is robbed, stripped naked, and almost beaten to death. All of the supposedly good and just people in the story do the wrong thing. The hero turns out to be someone who is the "enemy" and who doesn't look like, talk like, or believe the same as those who listen to the parable.

This parable puts Jesus' followers in a difficult tension because it makes clear and real the very practical ways that they and we limit our belief and faith based upon biases, prejudices, comfort levels, and unchallenged assumptions. The parable becomes a tension between the old, comfortable ways Jesus' listeners knew and the new path Jesus was showing to them. And Jesus doesn't give them an easy way to relieve this tension either; there is no quick answer. In fact, Jesus doesn't give a clear answer as to what to do or how things should be. Rather, at the end of the parable, he tells his audience to go and figure out how to live as neighbors to the ones they think are their enemies. He sends them, and us, on a journey of faith along this parable path, a path with tension, difficulty, and adjustment. We journey from the old point and way of seeing to the new way of seeing that Jesus was teaching.

So many other examples of this are throughout the Bible: Abraham and Sarah being asked to leave comfort and home to go out into strange and difficult territory; Jacob being asked to leave his old ways and travel to a new relationship with

Esau and with God; Ruth leaving home and familiarity to risk a new and unknown life with Naomi; and the disciples leaving their families and jobs to follow a strange, radical teacher named Jesus. Parables are about learning new ways of seeing God's path in the world. They're also about the tension between where we are now and where we are going.

Parabolic faith is alive faith. It holds the tension without jumping to easy answers. It allows for differences even in the midst of our discomfort, and it believes that, no matter what, God is on the journey with us, different as we all may be.

Peace be in you,
Pastor Kingsley

JANUARY ALLOWS THE LIGHT OF CHRIST TO GROW IN OUR HEARTS

It was a snowy, stormy Advent in 2008. Mother Nature often has plans that do not coincide with ours, so we yield and do our best under whatever circumstances in which we find ourselves.

The Light of Christ has come to us; the incarnation is complete. Our task now is to allow this light to grow, to bring it forth into the world, and to illumine our path as we live each day. We are living into hope, into possibility, into a new future in 2009. Great change is in the air. There is potential for great upheaval on all fronts, as we are already experiencing. Yet, there is hope as we make changes in our lives and how we live in relation to others, our environment, and all of creation. We have received the light—the internal compass that guides us along our path no matter what may come our way. We move forward with our lives, always stopping to listen to that still small voice inside that speaks to us in moments of silence.



We move through January with the celebration of Epiphany on Sunday, January 4 (it actually falls on Tuesday, January 6—twelve days after Christmas), a feast day on which we commemorate the coming of the Wise Men to present their gifts to the Christ child. They recognized his divinity and responded with gifts of gratitude. Can we do no less in response to the birth of Christ in our hearts?

Our music ministry program continues as we live through the darkness and cold of winter. We will sing and ring our way through the winter, bringing joy and lifting spirits as we come together in our corporate worship on Sunday mornings. We hope you will be there to support the choirs with your presence as we lead the congregation in song and combine our voices in making a “joyful noise.”



Robert Clooney
Director of the Ministry of Music

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL



**SUPPORT OUR RECYCLING
FUNDRAISER TO RAISE FUNDS FOR
THE NICARAGUA TRIP**



Donate USED cell phones, laptops, digital cameras and video cameras, ink jet cartridges and ipods so we can raise funds for our trip and help protect the environment at the same time - EcoPhones Recycles up 95% of each item!

PLACE YOUR ITEMS IN THE BIN!

These donations are tax deductible - check out www.EcoPhones.com for more info OR
CONTACT: The Sproul Family (Elizabeth, Alan, Wesley and Mackenzie) 845-346-0013



BAKED POTATO LUNCHEON

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11

Join us during Coffee Hour (after the 10:30 worship service) for a baked potato and all the toppings – cheese, broccoli, chili, bacon, butter and sour cream

Just \$5 per person or \$15 per family

Proceeds to benefit the trip to Nicaragua

Can't stick around? – Take it to go!

Coffee, tea and dessert included.



PRAYER CORNER

The following members or friends are going through a time in which they have asked for prayer by the church.

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Vince Ahrens
Karen and Paige Brooks
Cheryl Campbell and Family
Susan Caslick
Grace Cook
Phyllis Cummings
Mary DeFreece
Joshua DePew
Steve Fischbein
Albert Gabella
Ann Graham
Kevin and Sara Hankins
Alan and Glynnis Jorgensen
Evelyn Kingsley
Margaretta Macica
Evelyn Mercado
Richard Mudrick and Family
Toni Neidel's mother
Patty Northrup
Amy Pemberton
Jack Richner
Dorothy Rose
Kevin Schuler
Valerie Simonian
Sandy Soons
Matthew Stewart
Judy Thompson
Gene Tucker
Kim Valentini and Family
Wendy Bynum-Wade and Family
Orra and Dale Wood

Linda Almeas
Haley Buckley
Mary Carr
Brandy Charles
Ethan Cox
Richard Damiani
Bob Dennis
Everyone serving in the Military
Ben Fisher
Fran Genovese
Mary Gray Griffith
Walter Jensen
Merriebeth Kennedy
Lyndsay Krutki
Helen Matthews
Jeff Monroe
Eileen Myslinski
Robert Neil
Janet Oberg
Peter
Trudi Roach
Kevin Ross
Fred Schwarz
Sue Sitler and Family
Walter and Louise Spencer
Bill and Jean Strong
Fannie and George Tietze
Lori Turner's friend
Kenya VanZandt
Jean Wade
Paul and Phyla Wright

Jefferson and Rich Billings
Sarah Burrows
Barbara Caruso
Nancy Chase
Jean Crandall
Sylvester Damiani
Amy DePew
Pat Farley
Mary Fulford
The George Family
Barbara and George Hankins
Jessica
Kim
Laura
The Family of Anita McCarthy
Lisa Montalbano
Richard Nash
Amy (Thompson) Nguyen
Ann Ott
The Family of Phil Pines
Robyn
Ted Sandstrom
Barbara Scott and Family
Ken Skyer and Family
Peggy Srirach
Braidon Thew
Brenda Travers
Jen Vitko
Isiah Warren and Family
Eugene Walters
Judy Yendall

(If you or someone you know would like to be on this list or if you would like to take a name off the list, please call the church office and the name(s) will be included/omitted next month.)

PER CAPITA ASSESSMENT

F.Y.I.

Every year the Presbytery of the Hudson Valley charges every member church an assessment according to the current active membership. Our recorded active membership number is currently **377** and *our assessment per member* (not per family) for **2009 is \$26.42**, which is a total of **\$9,960.34** to be taken from our operating budget. Please assist with this expense and write a check for your family assessment and either mail it to the church or place it in the Sunday offering plate. Thanks for doing your share.

EXTRA MILE GIVING TREE

Our Extra Mile Giving Tree still stands in the Narthex and continues to be a great source of giving opportunity for many of our members and friends. Check out the Giving Tree located on the table by the front entrance and make your donation toward a special project of your choice. There are envelopes beneath the tree and can be used to either mail back to the church or place in the offering plate. **Thanks for you support.**

Christian Issues Class

January–March

Pastor Kingsley will be teaching *From Christ to Constantine* from Sunday, January 11 through Sunday, March 29. This class will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. in the Bradner Room. Get a better understanding of how Christianity came to be by joining us in this enlightening class.

The Christian church has been, without a doubt, the most influential institution in the realm of religion, politics, economics, and culture from late antiquity to modern times. It didn't start out that way, however. It started in the backwaters of the Roman Empire as a small, lower to lower-middle-class group of followers of a Jewish preacher who ended up crucified as an enemy of the state. In the first century of its existence, hardly anyone knew or cared about this new movement. How did Christianity grow from such modest beginnings to an enormously influential institution?

We will look at its beginnings; we will consider Jewish-Christian relations, the early growth process, hostile reactions to the movement, divergent understandings within the faith, and the factors that led to the formation of traditional Christianity.

The first three centuries of Christianity were the most tumultuous, exciting, confusing, and effective years of the faith. You will leave this class understanding many of the dynamics that made it a world religion.

QUILTS OF THE CONGREGATION

I am very happy to report that our quilt show was an outstanding success. We gathered quite a lot of food for the food pantry and some nice cash donations. The sanctuary was beautiful. We displayed approximately fifty of your lovely heirlooms and treasures. The people who came in were very respectful of the quilts, as they “ooooohed” and “aaaaahed” over the workmanship of each of them.

So many of the visitors asked if we would do it again next year, so I agreed. We want to re-display your quilts and add to them some quilts from other members and friends. I know of several people who were very sorry that they missed our show. Next year will be “**Quilts of the Congregations and Friends.**” So if you happen upon a quilt at a friend's house during the next eleven months, please suggest that they let us add it to our show in 2009.

I have several photos of the quilts, taken from the balcony and around the room. I now wish I had taken so many more. A quilt appraiser just “happened” upon our show and said that most of the displayed pieces were of superb quality and that she admired many of them. I have her name and number and will invite her back in the future.

I want to thank each of you who let us display your treasure, helped me organize the event, came to set it up, sat with the quilts during the day, talked with our visitors, and helped take down and deliver quilts back to their owners. Also, thanks to Project Linus for their display. I couldn't have done it without all of your help. Know that you are deeply appreciated for all you did for this event. I hope I can count on each of you next year for a bigger show.

Thank you.

News & Notes

The annual holiday dinner meeting was held on Sunday, December 7, at LeBaron Restaurant across the street from the church. Congratulations to Carolyn Keller, who was honored as our Woman of the Year. She has contributed greatly to our church and our church family. A wonderful tribute to her from her husband, Bill, was read by Carol Gabella. We are all very impressed with all that Carolyn has accomplished.

The dinner was lovely, and close to sixty women were in attendance on a very cold Sunday afternoon. The table decorations and favors, made by Betty Lobb and our honored guest, couldn't have been lovelier. We enjoyed learning the history of the three carols and appreciated the talents of Gina Gruber, who played the organ while we sang along. President Barbara vonPentz and her committee did an excellent job, and we all thank her for her efforts. It was a great afternoon of fellowship and friendship. Too bad we only do it once a year.

We thank Barbara Hankins and Carol Coon for taking charge of the Christmas flowers for the sanctuary. The flowers always add so much to the Christmas services and are so nice for remembering loved ones who have passed or honoring people we love. Thank you, ladies.

On Monday, December 8, nine women met in the church parlor to discuss the future of PW. At the present time, it was decided to leave the current officers in place and try to work on a solution to hold the organization together.

We also decided that winter meetings are tough to get to and that we will hold the next meeting on Monday, March 9 (the first day of daylight savings), at 7:00 p.m. in the parlor. We invite all women of the church to come to this meeting and to mark it on your calendars now so you don't forget.

Thank you,

Wendy Lee Paffenroth
Secretary, PW

2009 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Please don't forget to pick up your 2009 offering envelopes on the table in the Narthex. If you don't find a box with your name and you would like envelopes, contact Nancy Smith at 360-5082.

Prayer Shawl Ministry (PSM) News

We are still quite busy filling the needs of many people with our "hugs." Many enjoyed the display at the quilt show. Several shawls were given out to people in the community that day. The local newspaper, The Goshen Independent, came and did a lovely story about the ministry. I heard from several people that they took the information back to their home churches and hope to get some interest going to start one of their own.

Julia Sullivan of Project Linus sent us a beautiful shawl to add to the ones we give away as a thank-you for letting her come with her display and for donating some lap robes and blankets to the organization. We have invited Project Linus to come back next year.

We also want to thank Pastor Kingsley for the lovely donation of plastic tubs with lids. These will be used to store our extra shawls, lap robes, and blankets. This way, they will stay clean and fresh. We also hope that they will deter any little church mice from deciding the shawls would be good winter nests.

As the winter progresses, we are hoping to get a few "meetings" going for the members of the ministry. Tell someone in the office if you would like to join us, and you will be put in touch with our group. If you need a shawl, please let us know so we can supply one for your needs.

Thanks again to everyone in the church for your continued support of our ministry.

Warmly,

Wendy Paffenroth
Journal Keeper, PSM

WORK OF CHRISTMAS BEGINS

“When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with the flocks,
then the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal those broken in spirit,
to feed the hungry,
to release the oppressed,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among all peoples,
to make a little music with the heart...

And to radiate the Light of Christ,
every day, in every way, in all that we do and in all that we say.
Then the work of Christmas begins.

~ Howard Thurman, adapted

The Breakfast with Santa was a wonderful success! We were sold out for both sessions, which went smoothly. We were blessed with MANY helpers, too!

I would like to thank the following people for all that they did to make our Breakfast with Santa go so well: Darlene Bartley, Grover vonPentz, Jim Chavalier, Cliff Bartley, Geri Garrison, Carolyn Keller, Diana Bowe, Cheryl Zis, Beth Laskoski, Maddie Laskoski, Sara Laskoski, Adam Boese, Katherine Boese, Robert Boardman, Linda Boardman, Michele Koury, David Kingsley, Betty Lobb, Helen Gardellis, Richard Paulus, Robin Paulus, Julia Paulus, Lori Turner, Darren Turner, Darren Baird, Gina Gruber, John Gruber, Barbara vonPentz, Barbara Skyer, Carl Johnson, Jack Richner, Michele White, Nancy Warner, Rachel White, and members of the Goshen High School Honor Society. A special thanks goes to Pat Schwetje for keeping track of all the responses that came into the church office!

Again, thanks to everyone who helped with this event!

Loretta Richner

YOUTH GROUP

January 4—The youth will meet at the church at 7:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall for team-building games, Pictionary, or board games. You decide! Snacks will be provided.

February 8—“Jesus Christ Superstar” is playing at 4:00 p.m. at Eisenhower Hall Theatre. Tickets are \$40 per person and must be paid for in advance. There may also be a service charge for purchasing the tickets online, so be prepared for an additional \$2 to \$3 per ticket; we won't know until the order is placed. Anyone interested in going must contact either Liese Boese or Barbara Lippert by January 4. Money for the tickets can be dropped off at the church office. Once you commit to buying the ticket, no refunds are available.

We are also planning to take a trip to Medieval Times sometime in January. The cost is \$56 per person (that is the group rate). An additional \$5 per person is necessary for gas since it is a long trip down to New Jersey. Please watch your e-mail for the date and time of this event. Anyone with ideas for youth activities is invited to e-mail Barbara or Liese.

2008 ANNUAL REPORTS ARE DUE IN THE CHURCH OFFICE BY JANUARY 11, 2009.

**THE ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 22, 2009.
THERE WILL BE A POTLUCK LUNCHEON. WATCH THE BULLETIN FOR MORE DETAILS.**

TIDBITS FROM THE TOWER

HAPPY JANUARY BIRTHDAYS TO:

1	<i>Steve Coon</i>	14	<i>Alexandra Cox</i>
	<i>Stephen Serkes</i>	17	<i>Samuel Fontana</i>
2	<i>Joan Schaeffer</i>	18	<i>Michael Brooks</i>
5	<i>Wayne George</i>	20	<i>Dan Conley</i>
	<i>Jeffrey Markel</i>		<i>Laura Pietropaolo</i>
6	<i>William Bush</i>	25	<i>Sam Boese</i>
	<i>Elise Esposito</i>	29	<i>Laura Bryson</i>
7	<i>Barbara Coville</i>		<i>Christopher Paulus</i>
8	<i>Susan Pierce</i>	30	<i>Jenna Bush</i>
	<i>Hannah Warner</i>	31	<i>Maddie Laskoski</i>
10	<i>Audra Cox</i>		<i>Sara Laskoski</i>
	<i>Nicholas Gati</i>		<i>Richard Paulus</i>
12	<i>Scott Roper</i>		
13	<i>Ryan Farley</i>		
	<i>Molly Farley</i>		

HAPPY JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES TO:

20	<i>Walter and Louise Spencer</i>
29	<i>Jane and Phil Pines</i>



If you are also celebrating a special day, we wish you much happiness.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

- *Bill and Susan Keller on the birth of their daughter, Madelyn Catherine Keller, on November 27, 2008. Bill and Carolyn Keller are the proud grandparents.*

Patty Northrup's address is below if you would like to send her a card.

**Northern Riverview Healthcare
87 South Route 9W
Haverstraw, NY 10927**

Phone: 845-429-5381

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we shall seek to use our gifts through worship, ministry, and mission, to gather the Church in from the world, to continue to nurture one another, to serve a world still broken, and to exemplify through common values and purposes Christian discipleship to the greater glory of God.

ELDERS

Class of 2009

**Bruce Crandall
Bill Keller
Karen Magee
Tom McDowell
Cathy Wade
Michele White**

Class of 2010

**Loretta Richner
Scott Roper
Barbara Skyer
Doug Wade
Rob Warner
Orra Wood**

Class of 2011

**John Bruno
Linda Clark
Geri Corey
Dominick Fontana
Bill Hodges
Kathy Stringer**

Clerk of Session: Sue Varden

BOARD OF DEACONS

Class of 2009

**Richard Ayres
Linda Boardman
Carolyn Keller
John Knox
Denise Quinn
Ray Ruckdeschel
John Snook**

Class of 2010

**Diana Bowe
Andrea Branson- Snook
Deb Hourahan
Jon Hourahan
Lisa Montalbano
Lori Turner
Cheryl Zis**

Class of 2011

**David Castellano
Jean Crandall
Patrick Farley
Helen Gardellis
Kelly Grob
Barbara Lippert
Ken Skyer**

Moderator of Deacons:

Richard Ayres

Presbyterian Women:

Barbara von Pentz, President

STAFF

**Robert J. Clooney, Director of the Ministry of Music
Pat Schwetje, Church Secretary
Barbara Skyer, Church Treasurer
Nancy Smith, Financial Secretary**