

# Crosscurrents

February 2011



Pebble Hill Presbyterian Church | 5299 Jamesville Road | DeWitt, NY | 13214 | 315.446.0960 | [www.phpchurch.org](http://www.phpchurch.org)

## From Pastor Pete – *Sunday Morning Comes Alive*

I usually arrive somewhere around 8:00. Rebecca has been here for a while, setting up the rooms and spaces for children to learn about the love of God and the Christian life. I unlock the back door, flip on some hall lights, and the chancel lights in the sanctuary. I appreciate the silence. Just about then a few of the choir members start to arrive early. The voices begin to multiply. The coffee deacons arrive to get the coffee brewing and the tables set up in the atrium. Bette arrives and the choir chatter soon turns to song. The ushers come next and scurry about, following the printed usher instructions. Is the water up front? Are the microphones in place? Do we light the candles today? Are the acolytes here yet? Carol makes sure everything is in place on the chancel, and checks the oil in the candles.



The greeters come in time to welcome people as they arrive for worship, and Margaret readies the nursery. The bus from the Nottingham arrives early, and a few people take their seats in the sanctuary. The choir is usually still rehearsing when they arrive, so they get a preview of the day's anthem. The lay reader arrives, we review the service, and then we duck into the office to have some prayer with LarScenia before worship.

The prelude begins. An usher lights the acolyte candle sticks. I line up with the lay reader behind the acolytes, and we're off!

Over the holiday season a few of us noticed how this place comes alive on Sunday morning, with movement and voices preparing for the worship of God. It's almost cinematic – and the movie could be expanded in scope if it took in all the homes and lives and preparations that worshipers themselves make to arrive in our sanctuary on a Sunday morning: the people of God coming to the house of God – to be together in prayer and praise, in silence and song, in laughter and tears. By the time we scatter again, each to our own homes and lives, we have done something. We have done the work of God's people, and we continue that work out in the world, being salt and light as Jesus commanded.

Isn't it awesome?

Yours in Christ,

Peter

## The Church at Worship February 2011

*Worship begins Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. All who are interested are invited to gather in the Conference Room at 9:20 a.m. to pray for our church and pastor as we worship together.*

### **February 6**

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

Scout Sunday

1 Corinthians 2:1-12

Matthew 5:13-20

*“Being Salt and Light”*

Sacrament of Communion

***Annual Meeting follows Worship***

### **February 13**

6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Matthew 5:21-30

*“Life and Blessing”*

### **February 20**

7<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

Matthew 5:38-48

*“Christ-like Curriculum”*

### **February 27**

8<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

*Guest Preacher, Rev. Earl Arnold*

*Rev. Shidemantle will be on study*

*leave February 22-28.*

## Session Notes January

The Finance Committee presented a draft budget for 2011 in the amount of \$321,947, which was approved by the Session. Budget details will be presented at the congregational meeting on February 6.

A significant contribution has been made by the Brown family in Jack’s name, with the intention that it go toward the establishment of a fund to replace the roof over the sanctuary. We are almost finished with establishing the scope of that project.

The Session also discussed other capital needs, and agreed to complete a prioritized listing of those needs, with costs, by May 1. It was agreed that the roof replacement is the priority.

Approved a request from member Victoria King for Pebble Hill to sponsor the performance of a new jazz musical, “Fish,” with performances on June 10 and 11.

## Are You Being Called to Serve?

The Nominating Committee is beginning its work to seek God’s guidance in calling upon members of the congregation to serve as Deacons and Elders at Pebble Hill. Elders serve on the Session as the Spiritual leaders of the congregation. They are the governing body of the congregation responsible for the work and worship, mission and ministry of the local church. Deacons are ordained to serve

those in need – in a very direct and personal way. The mission of the Deacons of the church is “Together to be the family of God to all people in Christ’s community, ministering with compassion and serving with joy.”

If you would like to learn more about serving as an elder or deacon, speak with someone who is currently serving (their names are printed on the back of our Sunday morning bulletin on most Sundays). If you would like to suggest someone to serve in either of these ministries, or would like to suggest yourself, please contact any member of the Nominating Committee – Donna Pair, Deborah Mueller, Gary Quirk, Kathy Fanello, or Rev. Shidemantle (ex officio member). The term for new deacons and elders begins with the May meeting of the respective boards. Orientation and training are provided by Rev. Shidemantle and the moderator of Deacons.



## **February Forum Video and Conversations: Sundays at 11:00 in Forum Room**

**February 6** – Annual Meeting – no adult studies

### **February 13 and 20:**

#### **“Black Presbyterians” from the Legacy Series, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

Dr. Gene Turner will lead this two part video and discussion series on the legacy of Black Presbyterians.

February 13 – “Stories of Oppression” and “The Movement”

February 20 – “Lives of Legacy”

### **February 27**

#### **“Rhythm” – Rob Bell video and discussion**

What does it mean to have a relationship with God? What does it look like? For a lot of us it's a hard thing to fully understand. If God is an infinite spirit with no shape or form, how can we possibly relate to that? And what about Jesus? He said he came to give everyone life in its fullest. He came to show us how to live. Maybe it's through trusting Jesus and living the kind of life he taught us to live -- a life of truth, love, justice, compassion, forgiveness, and sacrifice -- that we have a relationship with God. Maybe the way we live every day, every single choice we make, determines how in tune with God we are.

## **Fig Tree Follow-up Continues**

The Fig Tree Follow-up book study on Anthony Robinson's book, “What's Theology Got to do With it – Convictions, Vitality and the Church,” which began in the fall, meeting on Wednesday evenings from 6:30-7:30, and will continue through February. These have been excellent discussions focusing on ways in which the church comes more fully alive by being clear in what it believes and says.

We hope to stay with Wednesday evenings as times to gather for nurture, fellowship and study after our mid-week Lenten program (which will also meet on Wednesday evenings during Lent). Please share any ideas you might have for Wednesday evening fellowship, study, and fun with Rebecca Chaffee or Pastor Pete.

## **Pebble Hill “Males in Mission” (working title!) – Wednesday, March 2 6:30-7:30 p.m.**

A group of Pebble Hill men gathered with Pastor Pete at an early morning (6:30 AM!) breakfast on January 20 to discuss and share ways that we, as men of faith, seek to be faithful to God in our lives, work and relationships. As a way of starting to build that fellowship and support among the men and boys of the congregation, we thought that we'd plan some mission and service projects that we might do together over the next year. We'll bring some initial ideas to a second gathering, to which men of the congregation are invited – not at 6:30 in the morning, but from 6:30-7:30 in the evening – Wednesday, March 2. Please bring thoughts and ideas of your own – or speak with Bill Byrne, Scott Chaffee, or Earl Arnold.

## **I Know My Bible**

How much do you know about the Bible? Can you remember the names of the books, in order? Could you locate the major stories, name the key people, and get the basic stories in order? Kids in grades 5-9 who would like to be confirmed next year are invited to join a new Bible study, "I Know My Bible." This overview of the Bible covers Genesis through Revelation, providing a basic understanding of the stories and sequence, and building important skills they will need for the work of confirmation class, scheduled to begin next fall.

This class happens on Sundays at 11:00 in the Confirmation classroom (near the Conference room). Students may also use the workbook as a home study course, joining the group for end-of-section game show reviews. Come on Sunday, or contact Rebecca Chaffee if you would like to register your young person for this course.

I've heard adults say this course might be helpful to them—consider joining us on this journey! Teachers and mentors are needed to partner with these kids for about 18 months as they journey to confirmation. Contact Rebecca Chaffee if you would like to participate.

## **Hands In**

Consider our mission of open hands. Do we generally think of our hands extended to meet the need out there, in the community? That's certainly a wonderful way to serve. Another way is to offer our hands *in* service—meeting needs inside our own church program and building.

If you have hands to use in service, join Rebecca in our first monthly "Hands In" morning on Monday, February 7, from 10 to 1. Each month we'll work on projects that might include cutting out shapes for preschool projects, copying and assembling student notebooks, creating a bulletin board display or posters, organizing or cataloging resources, trying out computer games, preparing samples of craft projects, and teachers, consider coming in to prepare supplies or locate alternate resources for your lessons. I'll have coffee and donuts—you bring a lunch if you'd like, and come put your Hands in Service.

## **Souper Bowl of Caring**

On Sunday February 6th, 140 million Americans will tune in to the Super Bowl football game. There will be parties with abundant food, friendship and fellowship. At the same time, there will be people worrying about staying warm, finding shelter and a warm meal. Please join young people around the country as they demonstrate God's love by loving their neighbors through the Souper Bowl of Caring. It's a simple, yet significant act of caring for others. Drop \$1 (or more) in the soup pot as you leave worship on February 6th. Our young people are developing hearts for giving that can last a lifetime. Please support their efforts. Proceeds will go towards Samaritan Center.

## **Family Ministries Movie Night**

Join us for our next Family Ministries Movie Night on Friday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 PM. Enjoy snacks and fellowship as we view the movie "Up!" This event is open to everyone—and feel free to bring friends and relatives.

This 2009 animated movie by Disney-Pixar tells the story of 78-year-old Carl Fredricksen, who sets out to fulfill his lifelong dream to see the wilds of South America by tying thousands of balloons to his home. Right after lifting off, however, he learns he isn't alone on his journey, since Russell, a wilderness explorer 70 years his junior, has inadvertently become a stowaway on the trip.

RSVP to Rebecca Chaffee so we know how many to prepare for. Running time is 96 minutes. Rating is PG for some peril and action. 446-0960 or [kidsphpc@twcny.rr.com](mailto:kidsphpc@twcny.rr.com)

## Health Kits and School Kits Needed

It's that time of year to start thinking of our Health Kits and School Kits. Items needed for each kit include:

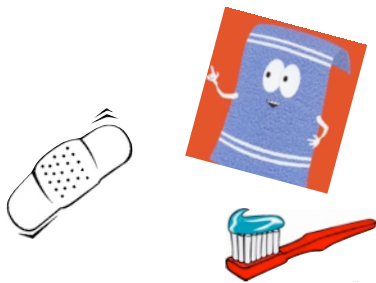
### For School Kits:

- 1 - 12 inch ruler
  - 1 - hand held pencil sharpener
  - 1 - large eraser
  - 1 - pair of **blunt** scissors
  - 1 - box of crayons - 24 count only
  - 3 - 70 page spiral notebooks
  - 6 - pencils
  - 1 - notebook-size bag to hold items (can be found at the Dollar store)
- \$2.00 per bag may also be donated



### For Health Kits:

- 1 - wash cloth
  - 1 - hand towel
  - 1 - nail clipper
  - 1 - tooth brush
  - 1 - large comb
  - 6 - band-aids, regular size
- Collect items separately or put all items in large zip-lock bags  
\$2.00 per bag may also be donated



**Collecting until April 1st. Items may be placed in containers right off the front entrance of the church.**

Any questions, call Shirley Weimar at 682-6586.

Thank you for your help!

## Deacon's Mardi Gras /"Fat Tuesday"/ Pancake Day/Dinner Tuesday, March 8, 5:00-7:30



### Menu:

- Jambalaya ( Rice, Chicken, Sausage, etc.)
  - Lettuce and Vegetable Salad
  - Corn Bread
  - Banana Pudding (a traditional southern dessert)
  - Pancakes au Gary: for the young at heart...
- Adult: \$8  
Youth (grades 7-12): \$6  
Child (grades 1-6): \$4  
K and under: Free



**LOOK FOR TICKETS BEING SOLD THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY!**

## **God's Call to Help Haiti:**

In January 2010, I was visiting Florida when Haiti's already delicate environment was devastated by an historic earthquake. God touched our hearts as we watched an already fragile country having to go through such a horrific event that affected millions of lives.

At that time, I knew that at some future date I would embrace an opportunity to travel there, and in some way, try to make a difference in the lives of a few. My skills were and are not of a medical nature, so I waited for God's call.

This past fall our Forum gathering was privileged to have as speakers Georgette Schmidt and Karen Dross from Park Central Presbyterian Church. Georgette and Karen are retired teachers who had traveled with Bob Hood to Thibeau, Haiti. Many of you will remember that it was Bob who escorted Ruth Colvin there a few years ago. In 2007, Ruth planted the seeds of a literacy program in Thibeau. The M&M team has continued to support adult literacy by funding an adult literacy program for 100 people in Thibeau run by the Diocesan Bureau of Education in Cap Haitian. Cholera prevention will be one of the topics addressed in the adult literacy program.

Bob had previously invited Georgette to visit the St. Joseph's School in Dubre. When Georgette and Karen visited there last April, they were able to share math and French methods and materials with the teachers at St. Joseph's School.

Well, after hearing about their experiences, it seemed like a good match for my skills. As previously mentioned my skills are not of a medical nature, but my background in teaching certainly would and will come in handy. I joined up, and with God's Grace we will be traveling to Thibeau and Dubre in April of this year. We had hoped to go in January, but due to the cholera outbreak and political unrest, we have waited until now to readjust our plans.

Our hope is to be able to extend our training to more of the teachers at St. Joseph's School. Along with Georgette's French and Karen's math teaching skills, I will be helping the pre school teachers to develop a more hands on approach for teaching their youngest students.

In addition to sharing our own teaching skills and methods, the M&M team has provided funds for 30 days of teacher training by a team of Haitian teacher trainers under the guidance of Father Gabriel Julmice, the Director of the Cap Haitian Bureau of Education. Most of the teachers at St. Joseph's School have never been trained as teachers and only have the equivalent of a 9th grade education. 79% of primary teachers in Haiti have had no training as teachers.

The Haiti Educational Ministry and Mission Team has been supported by the following eight churches in the Cayuga Syracuse Presbytery:

Park Central

Pebble Hill

First Presbyterian United

South Presbyterian

Westminister Presbyterian

Robinson Memorial Presbyterian

Onondaga Valley Presbyterian

United Church of Fayetteville

Funds that are contributed through individual donations, fundraisers, and through the support of the Presbytery are filtered back to support the Haitian economy by purchasing school supplies in Haiti and by hiring Haitian teacher trainers.

As individuals, if anyone feels called to financially support the work of the Haiti Educational Partnership Mission and Ministry Team, donations are needed for St. Joseph's School in the following areas:

- Students scholarships
- Classroom furniture
- Soccer uniforms
- Library books for children Pre K -6 (in French)
- Preventive Dental care for students
- Daily school lunches for students
- Swing set for the playground
- School Library shelves
- Water system for the school building and the kitchen
- Teacher salary supplements (teachers earn average of \$4 a day)
- Maps (in French)
- Teacher and Principal training

Checks may be made payable to Park Central Presbyterian Church. In the memo line, please write “Haiti M&M” and specify the item that you would like your donation to support. Checks may be given to Marilyn Cornell or mailed to:

Mr. Ken Sharkey, Finance Manager Haiti M&M  
Park Central Presbyterian Church  
504 East Fayette St.  
Syracuse, NY 13202

If you would like to become involved in the work of the Haiti M&M team please see me or Gloria Rasberry.

Books in good condition help in this project. Please let Gloria Hooper-Rasberry know if you can donate (culture-sensitive) books in English, French or Creole. Items suitable for children and French-English dictionaries are particularly desirable. [rasberry13224@yahoo.com](mailto:rasberry13224@yahoo.com) or call 445-0817.

— *Marilyn Cornell*

## Letter of Thanks From InterFaith Works Center for New Americans

Dear Congregation of Pebble Hill Presbyterian,

“In the Bleak Midwinter” is one of my favorite Christmas carols:

*Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.*

Sounds like the past month in Syracuse, doesn't it? When a refugee arrives at Hancock Airport during the winter we hand them a winter coat, hat and gloves. And when refugees who arrived here in July learn about the cold here we also give them warm coats.

When winter was approaching, the Center for New Americans put out a request for winter coats, boots, hats, and gloves. Your congregation was so generous in your response and I want to thank you on behalf of all of us here at the Center.

You should know that we collected close to 300 winter coats from over a dozen congregations from all over Central New York! I was touched by the generous nature of your contribution. Our mission is to welcome the stranger, and thank you for the part that you play in this.

Sincerely,

Deb Virgo,  
Sponsor Coordinator



## Pebble Hill Neighbor Elected to Head Syracuse Organization

Ona Cohn Bregman, a member of Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas, was elected President of the Board of Directors of Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse (ACTS) at their annual meeting late last month. Congregation Beth Sholom is our neighbor congregation. We have gotten together with them to celebrate Thanksgiving for many years. ACTS is a city-wide community action endeavor that Pebble Hill Church belongs to, addressing a variety of the problems that challenge the Syracuse area.

ACTS is “an inter-faith, multi-racial, urban-suburban, diverse coalition of faith communities throughout the greater Syracuse area that organizes with the mission to address the social, economic, educational and political concerns of our communities. Through a process of dialogue, education, training and action, ACTS seeks to empower member faith communities to act on the shared values of human worth, dignity and justice.” Current projects address issues of health care, food access, criminal justice, immigrants' rights, youth, and economic development and jobs.

For more information about ACTS and how you can get involved, working together with Mrs. Bregman and other members of Dewitt and other area congregations for justice and well-being for all God's children in our area, speak with Gloria Hooper-Rasberry or Earl Arnold.

## **Guideposts Prayer Quotes:**

***“Life is fragile; handle with prayer.”***

*Nicole Lorimer, Lanoka Harbor, New Jersey*

***“When you sing, you pray twice.”***

*Johnny Cash, quoted in daughter Rosanne s CD, Black Cadillac*

***“Not to employ prayer with my patients was the equivalent of deliberately withholding a potent drug or surgical procedure.”***

*Larry Dossey, physician and author*

***“God always answers prayers. Sometimes it’s ‘yes.’ Sometimes the answer is ‘no.’ Sometimes it’s ‘you gotta be kidding.’***

*Jimmy Carter, 39th U.S. President*

***“Prayer is the place where burdens change shoulders.”***

*Sherin D. Austin, Guideposts reader, Portage, Michigan*

***“I strongly suspect that if we saw all the difference even the tiniest of our prayers make, and all the people those prayers were destined to affect...we would be so paralyzed with awe that we would be unable to get up off our knees for the rest of our lives.”***

*Peter Kreeft, Author*





# Laughing Matters

## Kids and Sunday School

In Sunday School, the children were learning about how God created everything, including people. One little boy was especially interested in the part where God created Eve out of Adam's rib.

Later that week, his mother saw him lying on the sofa, looking ill. "What's the matter?" she asked.

"I have a pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife."

.....

A Sunday School teacher was reading Bible stories to the class. He read, "The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city, but his wife looked back and was turned to salt."

One wide-eyed little boy asked, "And what happened to the flea?"

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## Pebble Hill Presbyterian Church Staff

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