

# Crosscurrents

March 2011



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

## From Pastor Pete

For the last month in worship we've been dwelling in the land of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount from the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew's gospel. It has been a strange and challenging journey! It began with the beatitudes, all those "blesseds" that Jesus confers on those who, by the world's standards, are anything but blessed (the poor in spirit, the mournful and the meek, the persecuted), or tend to get chewed up by the world (those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful and pure in heart, the peacemakers).



Then he moves on to declare that these "blessed" ones are the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world." According to Jesus, God does his best work through folks like this.

This is followed by those teachings that would have us look inward to the motivations for our actions, and acknowledge that carrying around feelings of anger, lust, envy and greed – even if they aren't put into action – make our light burn dimmer and prevent us from adding a holy flavor to the world.

This part of his sermon concludes with those teachings that push our buttons the hardest – turning the cheek, loving the enemy, going the extra mile, etc. – culminating in that lovely but impossible admonition to "Be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect."

When someone doesn't seem to be "tracking" what is really going on around them, or seems oblivious to the significance of some event, or unable to realize the full impact of their actions, we might say they seem as if they are in a "different world." In the same way, we may be inclined to see these attitudes, attributes, and behaviors that Jesus encourages in his Sermon on the Mount as impossible ideals, helpful perhaps for guidance, but hardly applicable in the "real world." But Jesus wasn't talking about a different world from the one we live in, and we are called as his followers to live very much in the real world – but to live in it in a different way.

Jesus calls us to love as God loves, which is impossible to do on our own, by a sheer force of will – just by trying harder. Only as we open ourselves to God's embrace do we begin to see our world in a different way. Jesus, John's gospel tells us, is "the way, the truth, and the life." Staying close to him leads to great adventures, adventures that we will miss otherwise. It leads to a different kind of living, not just believing.

It's been quite a journey, and the journey continues. I'm glad to be on it with you.

God's Blessings,

*Peter*

## **The Church at Worship March/April 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.*

### **March 6**

Transfiguration of the Lord

Matthew 17:1-9

“Too Much to Take in”

Sacrament of Communion

### **Worship in Lent**

*At the center of our lives as Christians are the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. At the center of our worship together, spiritually, and very often physically, is the cross; the cross on which Jesus willingly gave his life that we all might have life and have it abundantly. The passion, death, and resurrection are also at the center of the church year. Every Sunday is a little Easter, and the organization of the worship year focuses around the retelling of the Passion narrative and surprising good news of the Easter acclamation, “Christ is risen; the Lord is risen indeed!” Therefore, each year during Lent, we join Jesus on the journey to the cross, and it is a journey into which we all have been invited. “Pick up your cross,” commands Jesus, “and follow me.” It is the cross of love and discipleship, faithfulness and devotion, repentance and renewal.*

### **March 9**

Ash Wednesday

Worship at 7:00 p.m.

*Based on some great discussions we’ve been having on Anthony Robinson’s book, “What’s Theology got to do with it?”, this Lenten sermon series and Wednesday evening study will explore some of the paradoxes of Christian belief and practice – and how holding them in fruitful and faithful tension leads to a vital faith and a vital church.*

### **March 13**

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent

The Wisdom of the Cross: Life in the Balance

“Scripture – God’s Word and Human Words?”

Brief Congregational Meeting follows worship for the purpose of electing new church officers.

### **March 20**

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent

The Wisdom of the Cross: Life in the Balance

“Sin - Living in Hope and Realism”

### **March 27**

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent

The Wisdom of the Cross: Life in the Balance

“Jesus – Fully Human, Fully Divine”

### **April 3**

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent

The Wisdom of the Cross: Life in the Balance

“Grace – Free but not Cheap”

Sacrament of Communion

### **April 10**

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent

The Wisdom of the Cross: Life in the Balance

“Death and Life”

## **Session Notes February**

Received a letter from member Gary Quirk, proposing that a study group be formed to explore the possibility of installing photo voltaic cells on the south facing roof of our sanctuary. As we are in the process of exploring options for replacing the roof, the session enthusiastically endorsed Gary’s proposal. As Gary stated in his letter, “If it is not for us to find better ways to live in God’s creation, then who?”

The “Living the Mission” task force report by Tim Frazee at the February 6 annual meeting was well received, and a calendar of gatherings with different ministry groups in the church is being prepared to bring Pebble Hill’s statement of mission more fully into the life of our church and our members individually.

Set the date for a brief congregational meeting to be held on Sunday, March 13, immediately after worship, to receive the report from our Nominating Committee, and to vote on the slate of new officers the committee will bring.

## **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



### **Pebble Hill Men in Mission**

In January a few men from the congregation gathered with Pastor Pete to discuss ways in which men of the church might come together in faith and fellowship and to support one another in our Christian life. It was decided that a good way to start would be for men and boys of the church to share in some service and mission projects. We've set a time for a brief meeting to decide on these projects, to which all men of the church who are interested are invited to come. It will be on Wednesday, March 2, from 6:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m. at the church. If you can't make it but have ideas you'd like to share, please speak with Earl Arnold, Scott Chaffee or Bill Byrne.

### **Clearing up the Presbyterian Women's Bulletin Board**

The bulletin board by the administration office entitled "Presbyterian Women" will be cleared up soon for current interesting articles. The majority of the articles or newspaper clippings which are posted up there now are outdated. For those who put the materials on the bulletin board, please take them back by March 9th (Ash Wednesday). Otherwise, the PHPC Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team will take those materials down and store them in a box placed in the area where the mailboxes are for the deacons and elders. Those unclaimed articles and newspaper clippings will be discarded a month after Ash Wednesday. Thank you for your attention and cooperation. — *PHPC Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team*

### **Name-Tag Holder**

The Membership Committee understands that some of our church members would like to have a different style of name-tag holders. The Committee has put some spare clip-on and string style of name tag holders in a basket on the cabinet next to the name-tag holder kiosk. For those who want to exchange the current name-tag holders, please put your existing name-tag inserts in the holders that you prefer to exchange and put the former ones back to the basket. Thank you for your attention and cooperation.

### **Legos and Designers Wanted**

Our kid's room has received sizable Lego donations from Matt Frazee and Paul Soper, and now we are undertaking two projects during Children's Workshop (Sundays 11-12). During Lent we will be creating the city of Jerusalem, highlighting the places of Holy Week. Darlene Vinyard's grandson is creating a plan for this based on maps from our curriculum.



After Easter we will build a lego church as we study the epistles and the early church. Can you help us? We seek a lego church design for use in May and June, at least 10 12"x12" lego bases, more building bricks, new or used, and adults interested in helping. If you plan to purchase bricks, please look for plain bricks, house kits, or building kits from school supply companies (available online) rather than movie-themed kits. No weapons, please.

### **Fabric Remnants**

Do you have colorful fabric left over from projects? We will be constructing a number of stained glass-look banners during Lent, both on Wednesday evening and Sundays at 11:00. Please bring in your donations by March 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **Family Ministries Wish List**

- New or used legos, especially building block pieces and 12" square bases (no weapons, please)
- Gently used soft furnishings (sofas and chairs)
- Fabrics for use in stained-glass look banners
- Fabrics for use in creating more large Christmas pageant costumes
- 1 Used Windows XP computer, not too old

### **Connecting With Others**

I recently stumbled upon a blog article titled "Learning From a Lego: Connect with Others." This article by Belinda Jolley made me smile. She writes to Sunday School leaders using the image of this timeless favorite toy.



You'll see we're soliciting more LEGOs to foster hands-on learning for our Pebble Hill children. We expect kids will build stronger relationships as they learn through play, and adults who help will build connections with our kids. But this article suggests that we are all like Legos: we are created to build meaningful connections with other people. "LEGO toys are dependent on their connecting with one another. Just as these toys allow people of all ages to learn and develop through play, Sunday School is a great way for people of all ages to learn and develop through relationships."

Our programs may be fostering such connections if people are: "sharing prayer-concerns on behalf of others, gathering beyond the session, and serving together in the community." As you watch our City of Jerusalem take shape throughout Lent and consider contributing your time or bricks to our project, perhaps you'll also look for more ways you can learn, share, and serve with others through your connections here at Pebble Hill.

*Rebecca Chaffee  
Program Director of  
Educational and Family Ministries*

## **Souper Bowl of Caring**

Thanks for all your generous contributions! Our Youth Group raised \$161.00 which was donated to the Samaritan Center.

## **Scout Sunday**

Thank you to all of the scouts, scout leaders, and parents who participated in this year's Scout Sunday on February 13<sup>th</sup>. We had Girl Scouts representing Troop 371, Cub Scouts representing Packs 68, 152, and 248, and a Boy Scout representing Troop 244. Four scout/parent teams served as ushers, including Kate and Jillian Byrne, Susan and Lina Abu-Absi, Scott and Conrad Chaffee, and Jamie and Brennan Gruppe. Our Eagle Scout Eric Sognefest served as Lay Reader. Scout Leader Donna Sognefest and 9 boy and girl scouts including Ethan Miller led the Call to Worship. Two scouts in uniform served as acolytes, Andrew Dingel and Quinn Gruppe, and Jamie Gruppe, a scout Den Leader, delivered the Time with Children. Jamie prepared a set of knots to explain to the children that one of our duties to God is to remain "square with God and with each other," as our Gospel reading in Matthew 5:23-24 tells us. Thank you for your service, scouts!

## **Lenten Education and Family Ministries Offerings**

This year, our Lenten activities are kicked off by the Deacon's Mardi Gras dinner on March 8<sup>th</sup>, with Family Ministries craft and game activities for kids and families to enjoy. Hope you already have your tickets for this!

During this season our education programs focus on the events and symbols of Holy Week and how various cross symbols define our faith. Here are some ways you can participate:

- PreK/K and Children's Worship/Workshop gain an understanding of the chronology and places of Holy Week through the We Believe curriculum and projects that include:
  - Maps and a LEGO model of the city
  - Different cross projects each week
  - A symbol for each event, crafted into worship banners
  - Computer programs featuring tours of the city and a timeline of events
  - "Jesus in Jerusalem," a take-home sticker activity devotional with a pop-up Jerusalem table display for each child, including daily readings that families can use to reinforce the events and city of Jerusalem
- Teens will explore 6 variations of the Cross symbol through The Thoughtful Christian's youth study, "Take Up Your Cross and Follow Me: A Lenten Study on 6 Crosses for Youth"
- The adult study "Being Reformed: 7 Days to Glory" is offered as our Lenten Forum program
- Wednesday night supper and workshops follow through on these themes. See our Lenten Discovery: Pathway to the Cross schedule for details.



Thanks to a recent donation by Zetta and John Fayos, we also have two beautiful framed posters of the City of Jerusalem to enhance this year's program theme!

## **Lenten Discovery: Pathway to the Cross**

Deepen your faith and friendships through shared meals and a variety of intergenerational activities on Wednesday evenings during Lent. Join us 3/16, 3/23, 3/30, 4/6, and 4/13. Childcare provided. Supper at 5:30, workshops at 6:30, closing worship at 7:30.

### **Symbols of Faith Worship Banners**

Crafters of all ages join together to study symbols of faith as they create colorful stained-glass look banners for use in the Sanctuary and in Children's Worship.

### **Children's Chime Choir**

Children will learn the basics of ringing and rehearse several musical numbers for use in worship during the Easter season.

### **Were You There?**

Rehearse a series of first-person accounts of the Holy Week events for use in worship.

### **Pathway to the Cross Adult Study**

Join Pastor Pete for an adult Bible study, "The Wisdom of the Cross: Life in the Balance." Each Wednesday's Study will be based on the theme of the previous Sunday's sermon. Study guides provided.

### **What's For Supper?**

Soup and Salad, Casseroles and Veggies, Chili and Mac & Cheese, Spaghetti and Meatballs and Salad, Quiche and Salad. See the weekly menu and sign up sheets in the atrium, or contact Rebecca Chaffee (446-0960, [kidsphpc@twcny.rr.com](mailto:kidsphpc@twcny.rr.com)) or Jean Soper (446-7588, [jsoper@twcny.rr.com](mailto:jsoper@twcny.rr.com)).

## **Addressing Hunger in CNY**

There are children living in Syracuse who are hungry today! There are families here in central New York who worry if there will be nutritional food on their table this evening.

Pebble Hill Presbyterian Church helps feed some of these children through contributions to the New Jerusalem food pantry and provides wholesome food for some of these families when we serve a meal at the Samaritan Center.

"When I give food to the poor," said Dom Helder Camara, the popular Archbishop of Recife diocese in Brazil, "They call me a saint. But when I ask why the poor are hungry, they call me a communist." But addressing the causes of hunger in a region that produces as much food as central New York is a deeply Christian project. It is an important part of the mission that Christ sets before people like us, who enjoy the fruits of this land of plenty and participate actively in shaping our community.

PHPC has risen to that challenge by becoming a member congregation of the Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse (ACTS). ACTS is a coalition of over forty faith communities and community organizations throughout the greater Syracuse area. It has set up several issue-specific task forces, through which its members work together to address the social, economic, educational and political concerns of our communities. By pooling their efforts, its members can accomplish much more than those congregations and organizations could do working in isolation.

Occasional large gatherings give ACTS visibility as a significant force for promoting dignity and justice for all persons in Syracuse and central New York. One of these gatherings is an annual fund-raising banquet, to be held this year on April 28. PHPC hopes to fill a table of ten with our members and friends. Put the date on your calendar, and watch for more details. — *Submitted by Earl Arnold*

## **Solar Power for Pebble Hill**

At the February meeting of Session, approval was given to form a study group to explore solar power options for PHPC in connection with the project to put a new roof on the sanctuary. The group's findings will be reported to the Property Committee.

A re-roofing project presents the best time to consider a solar installation and many churches around the country have embraced roof replacement as the time to go solar. Testimonials of their experiences in this process can be found online. The most developed website found on the topic is from a church in Wilmington, Delaware. It, too, is a Presbyterian church. Take a look. The website is: <http://www.limestonepresbyterian.org/solar/index.htm>

Could this be done at Pebble Hill? What equipment options would work best for us? How would adopting a green technology affect our relationship with our community? How might the dollars saved in energy costs be allotted in the future? What financial arrangement must be implemented in the years before the equipment is paid off? These are questions to be explored. To help seek the answers, to ask additional questions or offer words of encouragement, contact Gary Quirk: [gglynn@earthlink.net](mailto:gglynn@earthlink.net) or 475-4188.

## **Oh, Deer!**

This beautiful deer was spotted last week looking through the church door. He retreated to the Memory Garden when startled.



## **Our Mission with the Samaritan Center**

Three or four times a year, Pebble Hill Church hosts a dinner meal at the Samaritan Center. We plan the menu, prepare and serve the meal, and clean up afterwards. We welcome about 200 guests at each meal and rely on many volunteers from our church family. You are invited to participate in this mission project – whether as a first-timer or a seasoned veteran! As each hosting date approaches, we'll call for volunteers to shop, bake, cook, and serve. Please review the descriptions below and consider helping out. If you're willing, there's a job for you!

Your PHPC/Samaritan Center coordinating team,

*Tim Frazee and Dixie Blackley*

### Menu (enough to serve 200+ meals)

Goulash, green salad, fruit, bread & butter, desserts, coffee, juice

### Hosting dates for remainder of 2011

Cook on Sat., March 19 and serve on Sun., March 20

Cook on Sat., Sep. 17 and serve on Sun., Sep. 18

### Shopping

Purchase all ingredients (except desserts – see below) for the meal and deliver to Pebble Hill. All ingredients must be at church by 9:00 am on cooking Saturday. Shopping could work as a family project, but keep in mind that the shopping carts fill with heavy items so it's probably best to include two able-bodied adults. Maine's in North Syracuse usually has the selection and large quantities we need. Total cost is about \$250 – paid by the shopper, who then submits receipt(s) and is reimbursed by our church.

### Baking

Samaritan Center guests enjoy home-baked goodies – just like we do during our fellowship time on Sunday mornings! Bakers prepare easy-to-serve desserts (e.g., cookies, brownies, quick breads) and deliver them to our church kitchen on Saturday or Sunday morning.

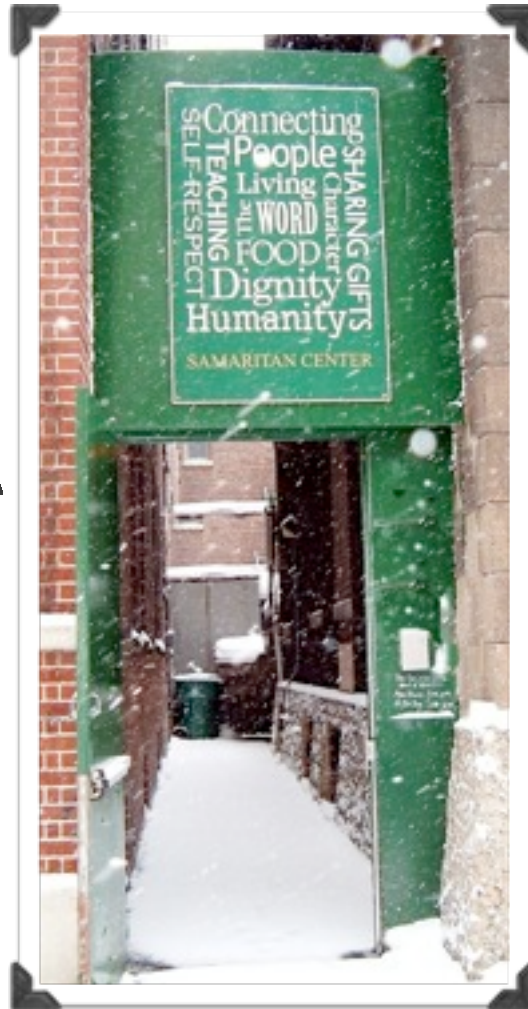
### Cooking

Prepare the goulash in two large batches and clean up afterwards. We cook on Saturday morning, beginning at 9:30 am and finishing around 11:30 am. We need 4 or 5 cooks and youth are welcome.

### Serving

We pack the meal into one or more vehicles for transport to the Samaritan Center after our Sunday worship. Servers should arrive at the Center (310 Montgomery St.) by 12:00 p.m.. We get the dining room and meal ready to serve when the doors open for guests at 1:30 p.m.. We clean up afterwards and finish around 3:00 p.m.. We need about 12 servers/volunteers – individuals, families and youth are welcome.

## Our Mission with the Samaritan Center



## **Bible Puzzle: Find the Books of the Bible**

This is tricky, challenging and fun! See if you can find 30 books of the Bible hidden in the paragraph below. Answers can be found by clicking the link at the bottom of the page. Enjoy!

### **Books Of The Bible:**

“There are 30 books of the Bible in this paragraph. Can you find them? This is a most remarkable puzzle. It was found by a gentleman in an airplane seat pocket, on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping him occupied for hours. He enjoyed it so much, he passed it on to some friends. One friend from Illinois worked on this while fishing from his john boat. Another friend studied it while playing his banjo. Elaine Taylor, a columnist friend, was so intrigued by it, she mentioned it in her weekly newspaper column. Another friend judges the job of solving this puzzle so involving, she brews a cup of tea to help her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot. That's a fact. Some people, however, will find themselves in a jam, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalized. Truthfully, from answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a minister or a scholar to see some of them at the worst. Research has shown that something in our genes is responsible for the difficulty we have in seeing the books in this paragraph. During a recent fund raising event, which featured this puzzle, the Alpha Delta Phi lemonade booth set a new record. The local paper, The Chronicle, surveyed over 200 patrons who reported that this puzzle was one of the most difficult they had ever seen. As Daniel Humana humbly puts it, "The books are all right here in plain view hidden from sight." Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown. One revelation that may help is that books like Timothy and Samuel may occur without their numbers. Also, keep in mind, that punctuation and spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete really well against those who claim to know the answers. Remember, there is no need for a mad exodus: there really are 30 books of the Bible lurking somewhere in this paragraph waiting to be found. God Bless.”

***Click here for answers to the puzzle:*** [answers to the puzzle](#)



# Laughing Matters

## Just for Laughs

A man went on a nature walk. A bear began to chase him, so he climbed a tree. As he was climbing he slipped down into the bear's arms. He prayed, "Lord, please let this be a Christian bear."

Just then the bear dropped to his knees and said, "Lord, thank you for this food you have provided."

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Billy Graham tells of a time during the early years of his preaching ministry when he was due to lead a crusade meeting in a town in South Carolina, and he needed to mail a letter. He asked a little boy on the main street how to get to the post office. After the boy had given him directions, Billy said, "If you come to the Baptist church tonight, I'll tell you how to get to heaven."

The boy replied, "No thanks, you don't even know how to get to the post office!"

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