

Pastor's Corner

I'm Glad I'm a Presbyterian



Our Denomination, the Presbyterian Church (USA), held its General Assembly two weeks ago. I want to report on some of the actions taken, but that is going to come a little later in this Pastor's Corner.

There are many reasons why I am glad to say that I am a Presbyterian.

First of all it has to do with our theology, our basic beliefs. We believe in the Sovereignty of God over all of life. We don't divide the sacred and the secular. God is over our political life, economic life, social life: every facet of life is to be placed under the rule of God. That is the reason why it is inevitable and necessary to speak out against all forms of injustice.

Secondly we believe in *solo scriptura* (that's Latin for saying that the Scriptures are the guideline we use for both our beliefs and our actions.) We are a people of the Book and thus it is necessary for us to continually study that book and discover the relevance of its message for us today.

Thirdly we believe that we are saved (healed) by God's grace alone which we receive through faith (trust). Our good deeds do not win God's favor; rather, because we have received God's good favor, his love for us, that we do our good deeds. They are our response to God's love for us.

Fourthly we believe in the priesthood of all believers. A priest serves as an intermediary between God and humankind. The priest's role is to bring God's message to the people and to bring the people's concerns to God: it is two way communication. And this task is not limited to those we ordain as clergy. All of us can and need to fulfill that role.

And we believe *Ecclesia reformata sed semper reformanda* (that's another one of those great Latin phrases!) -- The Church reformed is always in need of reforming. The Church hasn't made it yet in being all that it is meant to be. Constantly we need to strip away all that which keeps us from being what we should be, and constantly we should seek what God is calling us to be and do in this particular place at this particular time.

Our theology is one reason I am glad to be a Presbyterian.



Reflections of a Member

by Bill Scott

My name is Bill Scott. I joined the Old South Haven Church in the early 80's as a Sunday school teacher. Over a ten year period I worked with each group of students from second grade to preparation for confirmation class.

During that time, I was invited to participate in the New Members's Class. Shortly after joining, I was nominated as a Session member working on the Building and Grounds Committee. This January, I was installed as a Deacon.

Here are some thoughts on what a church symbolizes:

God's great plan to restore his people was fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ. When Jesus was ready to begin his work, he called a group of people to be his disciples (his church) and prepared them to carry on his work.

Can you begin to see why the church is more than a building and why a group of people gather together as a church is different from any other group? We have learned that the church is not man-made. God made it. The Christian church is Christ's church and its members are called to be his disciples. Christ is the Head of the church and every member has a relationship through him to one another. They are called to hear his Word, to worship, to sit at the Lord's Table, to partake of his living Spirit and to carry on his work in the world. Someone has said that the church is the theater of Christ's glory. He does not choose to occupy the stage alone. He invites us to take our parts in the greatest of all drama – the spreading of His saving love.



Pastor Tom to Speak at Hiroshima Day Observance

Hiroshima Day, Sunday, August 6th, will mark 61 years since the atomic devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This year, as in the past 23 years, the South Country Peace Group will sponsor a vigil. Participants, wearing traditional white for mourning, will meet at 5:30 pm on the sidewalk adjacent to the Woodland Cemetery located on Station Road, Bellport Village, and silently walk to the Great South Bay for a program at the Marina.

All are invited to join the vigil. This memorial will include the following speakers: Rev. Tom Philipp, Camillo Bica and Ray Zbikowski, Veterans for Peace.

In addition, the following artists will contribute their talents: Catherine Synan Green, singer, Susan McKeon, poet and South Country Peace Group Co-chair, Sonny Meadows, singer, Michael Bonti and the Kairos Singers

For more information call Dennis at 631-475-0045.

Pastor's Corner

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I like our polity, or our way of governing ourselves. Clergy do not control. In the governing bodies of the church, above the Session -- the presbytery, the synod, and the General Assembly -- there is always equal representation between clergy and laity. I like our Book of Order for its principles are sound, and, if its procedures are followed we are on the right track.

I am thrilled by our mission program. Presbyterian missions have always been more than "preaching the good word" It has involved putting the message into action. Thus around the world we have helped to build schools and educated, we have built hospitals and sought to heal, we have addressed the particular social and political problems of an area and sought to bring about change to make life more humane I am thrilled that the monies we give through our Benevolence meet human need quickly, not subject to the bureaucratic entanglements of governmental and other agencies. We have been there at once when disaster has hit any place in the world including right here at home.

I am thankful that we Presbyterians have never been afraid to tackle the big issues though we may differ among ourselves on practically every issue, and particularly in our day on the following: war and peace, human sexuality concerns including the rights of gay-lesbian-bi-transgender folk, human rights, etc. etc. With this agenda there is strain on our life together despite our commitment to "peace, unity, and purity".

Having said all this, I want to reflect on this most recent General Assembly and convey to you some of the actions taken (particularly those subject to a lot of debate and controversy.



General Assembly Actions

The "Divestment" Dispute

You will remember that at the last Assembly (two years ago) an action was taken to study our investments in Israel that could eventually lead to phased, selective divestment from multinational corporations that contribute to the construction of the "separation barrier" between Israel and the West Bank, or profit from the Israel occupation of the West Bank or contribute to Palestinian violence. The Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (a long standing committee of the GA) was directed to start the process and report back to the 2006 Assembly. Though this matter was only to be studied, and a report given now, all hell broke loose, particularly in the Jewish community. The popular God Squad carried a column indicating that Presbyterians were anti-semitic in this action; some Presbyterian congregations were threatened (including here on Long Island) and our Presbytery asked a team of five of its members to meet with Jewish leaders from the area to interpret the GA action, become sensitized to feelings , and seek mutual understanding. I have been privileged to be a member of that team but I can report little progress being made in the past year and a half.

During this past year and a half some presbyteries urged the GA to "repeal, suspend, or modify" the 2004 resolution. Others encouraged investing in projects that would encourage peace and mutual

development between Israelis and Palestinians.

The action of this year's GA was to affirm the Presbyterian commitment to both the state of Israel and a Palestinian state, and reaffirm the language of "corporate engagement" (with divestment seen as only the last and least desired stage in a long process. It is my personal opinion that the resolution which was passed was more a response to Jewish criticism than anything else!

The Report of the Theological Task Force on the Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church.

This task force was formed back in 2001 with the mandate "to lead the Presbyterian Church (USA) in spiritual discernment of our Christian identity in and for the 21st century, using a process which includes conferring with synods, presbyteries, and congregations seeking the peace, unity, and purity of the church. This discernment shall include but not be limited to issues of Christology, biblical authority and interpretation, ordination standards, and power." The task force released its report for study in congregations earlier this year. Most individuals and congregations that studied the report found it had much merit. It was also acknowledged that this report had received the unanimous support of the

Task Force which was made up of a very diverse group of people (liberals and conservatives alike) who had learned to listen to one another, and learn from one another. Neither liberal nor conservative felt that it went as far as they would have liked, but it was seen as a compromise which permitted our living together with our differences for the good of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

The Report passed the GA by a vote of 298 to 221. One reporter stated "The GA has voted to try something new to try an approach of balancing freedom of conscience while applying national ordination standards." This quote acknowledges that though the Report covered a wide range of concerns, most people were looking for a solution to the matter of ordaining gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people to the offices of deacon,

elder, and clergy. Many will say that the Task Force and the GA in its vote dodged this issue. Some media reports said the denomination has closed the door to gay people being ordained, and other media sources reported that the denomination had opened the door to ordination. So what is the position today of our denomination? The language in the ordination standards that prohibit ordination (fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman or chastity in singleness) stands, and is not altered. However it has been reaffirmed that congregations ordain and install deacons and elders and presbyteries ordain and install ministers. If a candidate for any of these offices declares an objection or a "scruple" the local governing board (congregation or presbytery) would then decide whether the departure from the denomination's constitutional standards "constitutes a failure to adhere to the essentials of Reformed faith and polity" or can be tolerated. (Your Pastor would note that though the term "essentials of faith" is used often and consistently within the Book of Order and elsewhere, no where is it clearly spelled out what are the basic "essentials" and that has been good to us all!!)

If anyone wants to speak to me further on any of the above actions or my personal comments, do not hesitate to do so

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Church School, Adult Study, Starts September

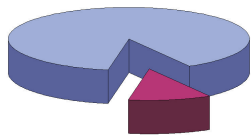
Sunday School will be back in session by mid September. Since our class will probably be small in number, age, and time frame, we'll keep it simple, special and fun: stories, crafts and sharing time. Please consider volunteering as a teacher (for a month or three) and enjoy some time with our little ones. Talk to Darcy.

The Education Committee is also happy to announce that Pastor Tom will be leading an **adult education class "The Life ... Or Many Lives ... Of Jesus."** In the course we will look at the various 'portraits' of Jesus presented by the four Gospels and then by different writers through history right down to the present age. Pastor Tom has been collecting biographies of the life of Jesus for many years, and during the class will share some of these to illustrate the quite different pictures that emerge of the Man of Nazareth. The class will meet once a week for a six week period. The time(s) it will be offered will depend on the wishes of those attending.

Suggested times are Friday mornings or Tuesday evenings. Please let Darcy Stevens know if you are interested in attending, and indicate the following:-- Friday morning is available, Tuesday evening is available, I wish to attend, but neither of these two times works for me.

P.S. A second class will be offered later in the year titled "Our Christian Faith and the Natural Environment: A Pressing Challenge for us Today."

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Church Finances - Designated Gifts

Last month I discussed the principal funds for Old South Haven Church's day-to-day operations – unrestricted income. This month I will discuss "restricted or designated" income which accounts for approximately 10% of the annual budget (I am excluding for now the Capital Fund, and unusual gifts such as the Kickerer Bequest, because of their special character.) While a small fraction of Old South Haven Church's total program, designated income provides important support in several mission and outreach areas.

Once the session accepts a contribution designated for a particular purpose, the Church is obligated by custom, and church and State law, to use these funds according to the wishes of the donors.

One category of restricted contributions are the once-a-year special campaigns:

- **The One Great Hour of Sharing Offering**
- **Peace Offering**
- **Christmas Joy Offering**

The distribution of these contributions are in accordance with the policies of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

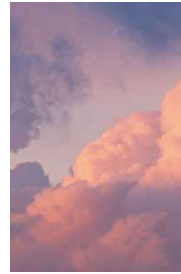
A second category are gifts for special purposes, including:

- **Deacons Fund** (contributions to the Board of Deacons for their work)
- **Organ Fund** (supports ongoing maintenance of the organ)
- **Memorial Fund** (contributions given to the church in memory of a deceased.)
- **Memorial Garden Fund** (assists in the maintenance of the Memorial Garden)
- **Food Fund** (supports the food shelf at St. Joseph the Worker R.C. Church)

Special collections may also be authorized by the session from time to time for emergency relief and other one-time causes.

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Prayers and Joys



Last week a woman took her children to a restaurant. Her six-year old son asked if he could say grace. As they bowed their heads he said, "God is good. God is great. Thank you for the food, and I would even thank you more if mom gets us ice cream for dessert. And Liberty and Justice for all!! Amen."

Along with the laughter from other customers nearby a woman was heard to remark, "That's what's wrong with this country. Kids today don't even know how to pray. Asking God for ice cream! Why, I never!"

Hearing this, the child burst into tears and asked, "Did I do it wrong? Is God mad at me?"

As his mother held him and assured him that he had done a terrific job and God was certainly not mad at him, an elderly gentleman approached the table. He winked at the boy and said, "I happen to know that God thought that was a great prayer." "Really?" the boy asked. "Cross my heart," the man replied. Then in a theatrical whisper he added (indicating the woman whose remark had started the whole thing), "Too bad she never asked God for ice cream. A little ice cream is good for the soul sometimes."

Naturally, the mother bought her kids ice cream at the end of the meal. The boy stared at his for a moment and then he did something she would remember the rest of her life. He picked up his sundae and without a word, walked over and placed it in front of the woman. With a big smile he told her, "Here, this is for you. Ice cream is good for the soul sometimes, and my soul is good already."

◊ July 22 - William Majowka (son of Linda Majowka) wedding ceremony in New Jersey.

◊ Seeing former members and friends on Sunday morning Worship is always a joy.

◊ Continued prayers for Jason Neal and his comrades in Afghanistan.

◊ Helen Starke and her family.

◊ For all who have been promised our prayers

Morning Worship Assignments

		<u>Greeter</u>	<u>Lay Leader</u>	<u>Coffee Hour Host</u>
July	30	S. Welgoss	J. Deitz	R. Thomas
Aug	6	B. Scott	G. Decker	F. Decker
	13	L. Porter	L. Majowka	L. Majowka
	20	C. Kellogg	S. Moran	C. Wiswall
	27	K&J Morgan	J. Neal	A. Wiswall
Sep	3	B. Scott	L. Scott	H. Altomare
	10	L. Porter	K. Tilney	K. Tilney
	17	C. Kellogg	N. Best	J. Neal
	24	K&J Morgan	J. Barry	S. Moran

Ann Wiswall
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Congregational Meeting - July 30

The Session has called a special congregational meeting to follow worship on Sunday, July 30, 2006 for the purpose of electing one elder and two deacons to fill vacancies in these offices. The Nominating Committee is proposing Joanne Neal as elder and Katherine Frankie and Peg Angus as Deacons.

The session is not obligated to accept designated contributions. There are several reasons why the church might not accept a designated gift, such as that the gift does not fit into the church's mission, or that the effort of administering the funds would be excessive.

John Deitz



From The Music Department

Get ready folks. The date to begin removal of the organ is scheduled for August 7th.

The removal, cataloging and packing of all the parts should take two to three days. Then it will be trucked to the Odell Organ Shop in East Hampton, Connecticut, where the repair work will take place. This will take approximately five months.

In the meantime, we will be using the piano and the small electronic keyboard.

Many beautiful sounds we have not heard in 10-15 years will be brought back to us. The annoying hissing and banging from worn felt, leather and wood parts will be eliminated when all the non-working parts are restored.

You will be utterly amazed at the sound which will emanate from our lovely old pipe organ. It is truly a great asset for the church and well worth the cost to restore and maintain. I am excited about the project and hope you are too.

Our choir is taking the summer off; I will let you know when rehearsals will resume. Watch for schedule in future bulletins.

*Peg Angus
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For those of you who drive, you may wish to refresh your memory on these hymns:

- 45MPH....."God Will Take Care of You."
- 55MPH....."Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah."
- 65MPH....."Nearer My God to Thee."
- 75MPH....."Nearer Still Nearer."
- 85MPH....."This World Is Not My Home."
- 95MPH....."Lord, I'm Coming Home."
- Over 100MPH....."Precious Memories."



Deacons

The Deacons, under the guidance of Cathy Kellogg, continue to send items to Jason Neal and his comrades in Afghanistan. One package has already been mailed. We will

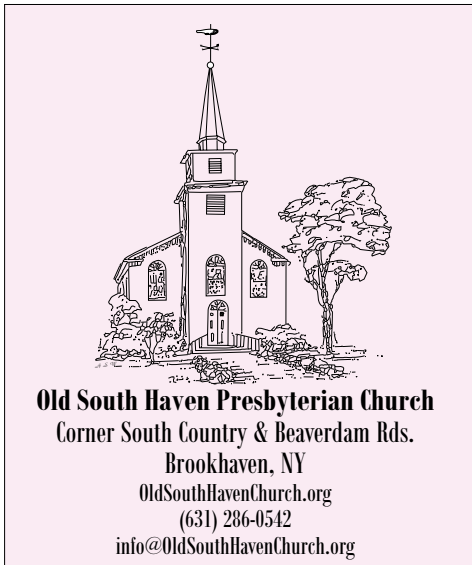
continue to send items as contributions are received. Jason's list follows.

The first week of every month, a food is brought to St. Joseph the Worker Church for the community Food Shelf. The Deacons would like to remind everyone that by giving non-perishables on Communion Sunday, it is a way to reach out to those in need.

A pot luck dinner is being planned for September. It is a great time to get to know each other, have some fun, and of course enjoy a wonderful meal. If you have ideas for a theme, please contact Kappy Tilney at 281-1864. Date to be announced.

Here is Jason's List

- Cartoons (i.e. the Sunday comics)
- liquid body wash
- Tinactin foot spray
- Old Spice Wipes
- Purell Sanitizer wipes
- popcorn (natural or 99% fat free)
- heavy duty black socks (for boots)
- dried fruit; beef jerky, magazines, music (CD),
- disposable cameras
- prepaid phone cards (domestic okay)
- Hydroxycut
- MetRx protein powder
- Gatorade powder
- black gel pens
- blank CD's
- microwaveable bowls for soup/oatmeal
- PowerBars (banana, chocolate, apple cinnamon,
- berry... not the "Harvest" kind)
- Nutrigrain Bars, chewy granola bars
- Gum (we give it to kids we see during convoys and patrols)
- caffeine gum (for troops, not kids)
- banana chips, apple chips
- baby aspirin (for me)
- white athletic socks
- Gatorade powder
- Gummy Bears, Gummy Worms
- Ritz crackers, Graham crackers,
- weightlifting gloves
- earbud headphones
- gel insoles for boots
- fly swatters and fly paper
- book: The Kite Runner
- colored pencils



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