



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
34 Brinkerhoff Street
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

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pulse

February 2008

First Presbyterian Church
34 Brinkerhoff Street
Plattsburgh, NY 12901
518.561.3140

Pastor
Rev. Paul Heller
Pulse Editor
Jennifer Booth



ADDRESS SERVICE
REQUESTED

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

(Please note correction in time)

The Congregation of the First Presbyterian Church of Plattsburgh will meet at **12:15 p.m.** on Sunday morning February 3, 2008 in the Church Sanctuary. There will be **one service only on Sunday, February 3rd and will be held at 11:30 a.m.** Church School for all ages will begin at 10:30 a.m.

Schedule for Sunday February 3rd

- 10:30 a.m. Church School**
- 11:30 a.m. Worship**
- 12:15 p.m. Annual Meeting**

Dear friend in Christ,

Three kinds of souls, three prayers:

- *I am a bow in your hands, Lord. Draw me, lest I rot.*
- *Do not overdraw me, Lord. I shall break.*
- *Overdraw me, Lord, and who cares if I break.*

(Nikos Kazantzakis, "Report to Greco")

At some point, in the course of 2007, I experienced a shift in my soul from the above first prayer, to the second prayer, toward the third prayer. In fact, I believe the entire congregation has experienced a similar shift.

Last spring, after our Vision Team had completed its process, an informal group of church members made a passionate plea to the session. They requested that the church establish an alternative Sunday worship service that would be less formal. In deciding to establish the second service, the session seemed to be praying "Draw us, lest we rot."

Session also began serious discussions about re-configuring the front of the sanctuary. What ultimately emerged was a proposal to remove some additional front pews and extend the chancel platform in order to provide a more spacious area for music, dance and drama. But this will not be easy. That's when our prayer seemed to shift to: "Do not overdraw us, Lord. We shall break."

Meanwhile, in May our congregation received a visit from Frank Dimmock. Frank is the Presbyterian Church's medical coordinator for all of South and East Africa and has lived in Malawi for the last 14 years. Based on his experience visiting churches across this country, he encouraged us to think of a second service as a way to multiply our congregation, not divide it. According to our records from September through December, Frank was right. Attendance is up!

What's more, Frank's visit renewed my awareness of Africa's irresistible pull on my life. This feeling was heightened during July when I spent several weeks helping to

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coordinate the Mzuzu Youth Choir's amazing tour of our Northern New York churches. I was being stretched and loved it. With Malawi on my mind I too began to pray: *"I am a bow in your hands, Lord. Draw me, lest I rot."*

In mid-August, we received a copy of an e-mail putting our names forward as possible directors for the struggling Infant Crisis Nursery in Mzuzu. What had been a faint whisper from God for years, was now being spoken plainly: **"I want you to serve me in Malawi."** That's when I began to fervently pray: *"Do not overdraw me, Lord. I shall break,"*

By mid-October, the call to Malawi seemed loud and clear. But there are still so many unanswered questions, so many legitimate concerns. What about the funding? What about our beloved Plattsburgh Congregation? What about our house? What about leaving our grandson? I don't remember praying the prayer. To be honest, I'm not sure that I have fully accepted the prayer. In fact, it is with fear and trembling that I even dare to write this down where others can read it. Nevertheless, I don't know how else to move into the future with out praying: *"Overdraw me, Lord, and who cares if I break."*

The Lord bless you and keep you,

CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

The Children's Library has a new home. It is located in the Praise Time Room adjacent to the Pre-K Classroom/Toddler Room. There are lots of wonderful resources there for your family to enjoy. Please take time to check it out.

Editor's Corner:

Thanks to each of you who dropped me a note last month regarding the January Pulse. The response has been very positive and I thank everyone who took time to write, call or otherwise give me encouragement.

We were sorry to hear of Ray Peterson's death on January 8th. He was a member of our church for many years. You might remember him by his bushy eyebrows and warm smile. He moved to Albuquerque, N.M. several years ago to be close to his daughter.

Nancy Collin had surgery on her knees in January. She is home and doing well. We wish her well in her recovery.

George Chaney was in the hospital again, but is back out and feeling well enough that he and Sharon are planning to head south soon. Praise God for continued miracles!

We are sorry to say good-bye to Adelle Weightman who is moving to Orchard Park, NY to be near to her two brothers. She will be leaving us on February 10th. Please be sure to wish her well in her new home before she goes.

I remember as a young girl my mom calling a 24 hour prayer hotline at Silent Unity in Unity Village, Missouri whenever our family experienced a crisis. She was always comforted knowing that people were praying along with us. Did you know that our church has it's own prayer tree? Whenever you experience the need for prayer support, one phone call to your Deacon, Pastor Paul or the church office will produce a series of phone calls to other people who will also pray for you. Won't it be comforting to know that many people will be providing prayer support during your crisis?

Aren't you glad to be a member of our church? I am!

St Theresa's Prayer

May today there be peace within. May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you. May you be content knowing that you are a child of God. Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and every one of us.

Adult Christian Education

The ***Spiritual Classics*** group is meeting according to our new schedule at 10:40 am following Fellowship time. We focus on a different writer each week and new participants are always welcome. The weekly readings are 4-5 pages of text by a religious or spiritual writer followed by 2 or 3 discussion questions. Nancy Groves will make 2 or 3 copies of the current selection and these may be picked up in the church office or at the class. Additional books can be ordered for a nominal cost. Our next focus will be on the outward discipline of Submission.

In order our next readings will be:

- Thomas R. Kelly "The Shepherd in Search of Lost Obedience"
- Richard of St. Victor "Wait and Wait Again"
- Alan Paton "God's Instrument"
- Hadewijch of Antwerp "Give All for All"

There is going to be a Lenten series. The dates have not been determined. It will supplant our class as the Advent series did. Feb 3 is the congregation meeting so no class.

Ray Peterson

The church mourns the death in January of Ray Peterson. Ray and his wife Marge had moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico to be near their daughter and her family. The Petersons came to Plattsburgh in 1964, Ray joining the faculty of SUNY, Plattsburgh. Ray had previously been a teacher and administrator in schools in Grand Rapids, Michigan and had received his Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Michigan.

Ray served this church as an Elder and an adult church school teacher and he led and delivered sermons for the worship service. He was long active in the Men's Prayer Breakfast group. He and his wife were often officers in T.G.I.F. and they served as leaders for adult retreats. Perhaps, more than any other contribution, because he thought deeply about Christianity and was well-read on the subject, Ray was a mentor to many other church members.

Submitted by Jack Myers

COTTAGE COMMUNIONS

In observing the Lenten season this year, a Cottage Communion series will be offered this year on different days of the week in different homes of congregation members. The evening will include a brief presentation on the Hellers' call to ministry in Malawi, communion and fellowship with friends. The evening starts at 7:00 pm each week. The following is the schedule of dates and places:

Mon, Feb 11th	Alan & Jennie Booth	9 Flaglar Dr., Plattsburgh
Tues, Feb 19th	Ed & Amanda Smart	22 Concord Ave., Plattsburgh
Wed, Feb 27th	Howard & Sara Black	1 Gravelly Point Rd. Plattsburgh
Thurs, Mar 6th	Audrey Petrie	410 A Route 3, Plattsburgh
Mon, Mar 10th	Frank & Sandy Baehre	216 Champlain Drive, Plattsburgh

Please call the church office if you plan to attend a communion, in order for the hostess to know the number expected.

THANKING GOD IN FELLOWSHIP

TGIF will be held on Friday, February 15th. Please consult the bulletin in the next couple of weeks to determine the program for February. TGIF begins at 6:30 p.m. with a potluck supper. Please bring your own place setting. Current members will be contacted about a week before the even. If you are new the church, or would like to join us that evening, guests are always welcome! Please call Kathe Fairweather at 563-2680 or contact the church office. See you there!

NEW PARKING STICKERS

Beginning February 1, all cars parked in the Marion Street lot are at risk of being towed if they do not display a red FPC sticker in the rear window on the driver's side.

You should have received a sticker in the mail recently. If you need another sticker for a second vehicle, please inquire at the church office. If you only have the old DEC sticker on your window, you are at risk of being towed.

There is no towing on Sundays, therefore all visitors have no fear of being towed

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The session met three times in January. On January 21, Elders spent an hour with the Rev. Fred Garry from the Watertown Presbyterian Church to learn more about the Presbytery's support of the Malawi Ministry of Hope. Paul and Darlene Heller gave the history of their involvement with the Mzuzu Nursery and spoke of their plans for the future. The funding of the mission partnership will largely be a Presbytery effort. The second hour of the meeting was devoted to a review of the 2008 Budget. Cuts were made to reduce the deficit, and a few items were prioritized for purchase in 2009. At the January 27 meeting, Elders met and approved the new members. We are pleased to welcome Steve Bailey, Joanne Weiss, Catharine Weiss, and Josh Weiss into our church family.

The Stated Session meeting of January 28 began with a report from Zaidee Laughlin concerning the search for a Director of Youth and Family Ministry. The position is advertised for up to 40 hours, leaving the door open for a part-time director. Three local candidates have responded to the ad in the Press-Republican, and ads are going out in the Presbyterian Church network this week. The Youth Council sponsored a successful ski night at Beartown on January 20, and young people have a number of local activities, including a trip to Meadowbrook each month. The Nurture Council noted that attendance in Junior and High Christian Education classes is down. Senior High students will be encouraged to join the ongoing adult education classes.

The Building and Grounds Council reported that the lease on the Marion St. Parking lot is in the final stages. As soon as the contract is signed, stickers will be distributed to all members, for free 24/7 parking in that lot. The Worship and Music Council recommended to the Session that at least 4 services during the year be combined: the Annual Meeting, Easter, World Communion Sunday, and the Christmas pageant. The combined services will alternate between the 9:30 and the 11:30 worship time. The Local Mission Council recommended a donation of \$250 to Family Promise, the former Interfaith Hospitality Network.

Marjorie Mapstone noted that Presbyterian Women had a lively and enjoyable January meeting to start the New Year. Members bid adieu to Adele Wightman and learned more about the Malawi Mission from Darlene Heller.

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2008 ANNUAL ASSIGNMENTS

Clerk of Session: Anne Bailey

Moderators of Deacons: Susan Mikkelson and Linda Gonyo

Council Committee Chairs and Session Representatives:

Trustee Committee: Jim Fox, Chair; Barbara Doh and Howard Black, Session Reps

Nominating Committee: Bob Davis, Chair; Marjorie Mapstone, Session Rep

Personnel Committee: Tony Searing, Chair; Jim Snook, Session Rep

Finance Committee: Jim Fox, Chair; Jim Snook and Stuart Voss, Session Reps

Building and Grounds Council: Bob Davis and Herb Cottrell, Chairs; Bob Davis, Rep

Evangelism Council: Margaret Searing, Chair and Session Rep

Fellowship Council: Sally Pendleton, Chair

Nurture Council: Stephanie Moore, Chair; Joy Mazur, Session Rep

Local Mission Council: Betsy Honor, Chair

Stewardship Council: Kathie Fuller, Chair; Stuart Voss, Session Rep

Worship and Music Council: Mike Deeb, Chair and Session Rep

Youth Council: Matt Burgin, Chair; Howard Black, Session Rep

Other Assignments:

Treasurer: Alan Booth

Stewardship Secretary: Janora Stone

Presbytery Delegate: Vacant

Alternate Presbytery Delegate: Marjorie Mapstone

Protestant Campus Ministry: Jean Ouedraogo

ICPCC Representative: Marjorie Mapstone

Family Promise of Clinton County Coordinators: Frank and Sandy Baehre

Pulse Editor: Jennie Booth

WEB Master: Jon Duncan

ELDERS AND DEACONS

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On January 13, 2008 a new class of Elders and Deacons was installed during the church service. The following is a list of the current officers:

ELDERS

Class of 2008

Bob Davis
Barbara Doh
James Fox
Marjorie Mapstone

Class of 2009

Howard Black
Mike Deeb
Kathie Fuller
Stuart Voss

Class of 2010

Anne Bailey
Joy Mazur
Margaret Searing
Jim Snook

DEACONS

Class of 2008

Karen Dragon
Linda Gonyo
Susan Mikkelson
Sally Pendleton
Lynn Mulholland

Class of 2009

Sara Black
Diana Boysen
Dan Ladue
Kimberly Larsen
Amanda Smart

Class of 2010

Sandy Baehre
Jennie Booth
Molly Farrington
Audrey Petrie
Janora Stone

RETIRING OFFICERS

It is with thanks that we acknowledge the dedication and commitment of time and talent of the following officers that are retiring:

Elder—Jennifer Booth

Deacons—Joyce Fox, Stephanie Moore, Angela Snook, and Janet Young

The Deacons' Report was received, including a recommendation that all Deacons and Elders become part of the church wide prayer tree. Prayer concerns received in the church office will be communicated by telephone or email to all church officers.

The meeting ended with a discussion of the support of the Hellers for their Mission work. The Session agreed to designate \$18,000 per year for 3 years from the PCUSA Global Mission line item. Any monies donated by individuals to the Ministry of Hope will be placed in the Special Offering account and designated for the program of the Crisis Nursery.

Members are reminded that all Session meetings are open to the congregation.

Anne Bailey,
Clerk of Session



JESUS'S DEFINITION OF GREATNESS

Jesus gave us a new norm of greatness. If you want to be important—wonderful. If you want to be recognized—wonderful. If you want to be great—wonderful. But recognize that the one who is greatest among you shall be your servant. That a new definition of greatness.

By giving that definition of greatness, it means that everyone can be great, because everybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree. You don't have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve. You don't have to know Einstein's theory of relativity to serve. You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love. And you can be that servant.

Author unknown