



pulse

June 2008

First Presbyterian Church
34 Brinkerhoff Street
Plattsburgh, NY 12901
518.561.3140

Pastor
Rev. Paul Heller
Pulse Editor
Jennifer Booth

Dear Friend in Christ,

"It was the best celebration of someone's ministry I have ever been to.", commented my colleague, The Rev. Bob Svenson. *"And believe me; I've been to a lot."*

Well, personally, all I know is that I could not have been more pleased. From the inspirational worship service with music that brought tears to my eyes and joy to my heart; to the words of remembrance and the loving gifts for us and the Crisis Nursery; through the delicious, nutritious, and incredibly efficient luncheon followed by lump-in-the-throat goodbyes; Sunday's farewell celebration was unforgettable. As Darlene and I fly to Africa, your faith, your generosity, your love, and your prayers are "the wind beneath our wings." Thanks to each of you and all of you, our move to Malawi feels like a family affair.

As your pastor, one of my great privileges has been to be involved in baptisms, weddings, and funerals. Now, as you prepare your hearts and minds to search for and to welcome a new pastor, it is important that I be clear about the professional boundaries that need to be honored. Our Presbyterian Book of Order states that *"Former pastors and associate pastors may officiate at services for members of a particular church, or at services within its properties, only upon invitation from the moderator of the session"*

Of course, since I will be living on another continent, that shouldn't be a concern for the next three years. However, it needs to be said that, even when we return to Plattsburgh, I will no longer agree to officiate at such services, even if asked. I have watched too many a faithful minister have her or his work be undercut by well meaning, but clueless former pastors. Therefore my motto is "just say no".

So, when I finally return to retire in Plattsburgh, my relationship to each of you and all of you will be born again. Instead of being professional and personal, it will simply be personal. Instead of minister and friend, I will simply be friend. Instead of being Pastor Paul, I will simply be Paul—your well intentioned, bumbling, and forgiven fellow-follower of Christ.

Come to think of it, that will not be so different after all.

Love & Peace,

Paul Heller

Celebration of Pastor Paul Heller's Ministry

For those of you unable to attend the celebration of Pastor Paul Heller's ministry at First Presbyterian Church, it was absolutely the most wonderful celebration of love.

It started with a church service led by the Rev. Clint McCoy, Executive for the Partnerships of the Synod of the Northeast. His sermon, "Marking for Remembrance: Raising an Ebenezer", was inspirational. During the service, the Rev. Carol Drew, Chairperson of the Committee on Ministry, led the dissolution of Paul's pastoral call, effective June 30. She then proceeded to commission Paul and Darlene as PCUSA Missionaries as Coordinators of the Crisis Nursery in Mzuzu, Malawi. It was a beautiful service that was very meaningful.

Next on the agenda was the actual "Celebration of Pastor Paul's Ministry". The Master of Ceremonies was Jack Myers. Music was provided by the Praise Band, several selections by the children of the Sunday School and a solo by Rachel Fuller, as well as one by Courtland Wood. Nancy Collin provided a wonderful "Tapestry of Memories". Tom McKinnon shared many humorous stories of his time with Paul. A magnificent quilt was presented to Paul and Darlene from the women of the Church. It included patches of cross country skiing, canoeing, a saxophone, a flute, and many other meaningful scenes. It was truly a labor of love. The Deacons presented them with a monetary gift. The Session presented a hand carved cross. The library looked like a baby store with all the gifts that congregation individuals gave the nursery. There were too many things to name them all. The congregation also gave a memory book with memories and sentiments from individual members.

A delicious luncheon of grilled chicken breast on a bed of greens with raspberry dressing, a mousse salad, a roll and a cupcake for dessert followed the services. The fellowship hall was decorated in an African theme. It was very festive. There was a time for sharing following the meal. Many individuals stood to share how much Paul's ministry has meant to them. The "frozen chosen" thawed that day for there were many eyes filled as people shared their love for Paul and Darlene.

While we are all certainly sorry to see Paul and Darlene leave, we certainly sent them off in a celebration of love.

Thank you, Paul and Darlene, for 17 wonderful years!!

A Heartfelt Thanks

At our party a few weeks ago, Kay Haupt asked me to go into the library to look at "a few things" the women's association had organized. There were not a few things. There was a whole room full of baby sweaters, sleepers, onesies, diapers, plastic pants, blankets, hats and booties of every description, in every size from preemie to 2 toddler! It was all beautiful. It looked like a baby boutique. And it was all for the nursery. How can I ever thank you?

In a land short on supplies, I feel supplied. On a journey full of anticipation and not a little uncertainty, I feel certain of one thing: God has called us and you are supporting us in every way. Without your support would we be? As I get out each article you gave, I will think of you and gain strength in the knowledge that you continue to pray for us. I'll be reminded every day. And I'll thank God for all of you and all your caring.

Towanga chomeni from the babies and me,

Darlene Heller, Matron
Mzuzu Crisis Nursery

...and more thanks

.....to all who contributed and all who participated in the Celebration of Ministry on May 18. From the very youngest members who led us in the "Alleluias," to the kitchen crew behind the scenes, to those whose hands and hearts crafted beautiful gifts and those whose words and music expressed deep love and appreciation of Pastor Paul's ministry, the entire morning was filled with a "Tapestry of Memories," to borrow Nancy Collin's phrase. Each and every tribute was a reflection of the grace and compassion and wisdom that Pastor Paul has brought to us, his very fortunate congregation in Plattsburgh. "May God hold you in the palm of His hand," as you and Darlene travel to Malawi, to work for the Ministry of Hope.

Anne Bailey, Nancy Collin, Linda Voss, Sally Pendleton, Peg and Jack Myers

(A very big thank you should go to this committee who worked very hard on this celebration!!!)

Historical Display Case

The Historical Display Case in the Narthex has been changed to reflect on the 17 years that Paul and Darlene have spent with us. Take time to stop by and see the display.

Session Highlights

The Session meeting of May 19, 2008, was Pastor Heller's last meeting as Moderator. Mike Deeb reported on behalf of the Worship and Music Council. The new Sunday schedule, with two services, was discussed at a recent meeting, and comments were positive. The Session approved the purchase of a lap top computer, to be used for the second service and for special programs. The Session approved new fees for all who use the church for special events, like a wedding. Members do not pay for the use of the building, but will be expected to pay the Sexton \$50 per day and the Organist \$75 per day, the same as non-members. Teacher Appreciation Day is scheduled for June 8, and Choir Appreciation Day is scheduled for June 15.

Bob Davis, reporting for the Building and Grounds Council, thanked all who participated in the Spring Clean-up Day on May 10. Family Promise will be planting a small herb garden in a raised bed near their entrance. Vacation Bible School is scheduled from July 14 to 18, with Carla Hausrath as the Coordinator. Materials for the Christian Education curriculum were circulated for consideration for the fall. Pastor Heller offered thanks to the Fellowship Council for their efforts in presenting a beautiful and delicious Luncheon for the Celebration of Ministry on May 18.

Nominees for the Pastor Nominating Committee have been received, and a slate will be presented for the Congregational meeting on June 29, 2008. This Committee will search for a new permanent Pastor, and will begin its work this summer with a Mission Study. The Session moved that all Councils be encouraged to use the Vision Plan in their meetings and in their work. The next Community Meal is on Wednesday, June 4, and Elders will help at the meal. Thanks to Judy Bunnell and her faithful crew, who have been presenting the meal on the first Wednesday of every month, on behalf of our church, for many years.

All members are welcome to attend Session meetings. The next meeting is on Wednesday, June 25, at 7 p.m., with the Rev. Joanne White, as Moderator.

Your Clerk of Session,
Anne Bailey

Interim Pastor Search

As we reported in May, over 15 candidates for the Interim Pastor's position expressed interest. The job of the Interim Pastor is very specialized. The Interim cannot be called to the church as the permanent pastor. The Interim will help us through the natural grieving process which we all feel as Pastor Heller moves into the mission field, and help us discover, with the Spirit's leading, a new identity and clarity for our purpose.

Of the 15 or so potential candidates for the position of Interim Pastor, the Presbytery COM (Committee on Ministry) chose four which were most suitable for our consideration. We narrowed that down to two candidates. Throughout May the Interim Search Committee has been conducting telephone interviews and calling references to discern which between these two well qualified candidates will best fit our needs. We are happy to report we are much closer to "being there" (ready to recommend a candidate to Session) than we were just a month ago.

We continue to appreciate (and feel) your prayers at this crucial time in the life of our church. Thank-you for your support and encouragement.

Margaret Searing, Interim Pastor Search Committee Member

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 current focus is on the Corporate discipline of Worship. The next topic is Guidance.

In order our next readings will be:

June 1, Gerald Manley Hopkins, "God's Grandeur" and "Pied Beauty."

June 8, Andrew Murray, "The Glory of God."

June 15, Martin Luther King Jr., "On Love and Non-Violence."

July 13, John Ruusbroec, "Christ Guides us to Seeing."

August 10, Ignatius Loyola, "Rules for the Discernment of Spirits."

Future readings will include: G.K. Chesterton, John Wesley and Christina Rossetti. If one or more of these spiritual writers pique your interest please join us for a unique series of religious works. With the new worship format you may be able to fit this interesting study group into your spiritual life and our life together. Please join with us on Sunday. Bring your coffee and a friend.

Family Promises

(Formerly IHN-the Interfaith Hospitality Network)

Our church will again be the host congregation for homeless families during the week of July 7th to July 12th. Yes, that is the week right after the July 4th weekend, and our hosting session starts on Monday the 7th, not Sunday the 6th, per current plans by Family Promise of Clinton County.

Whether you haven't had a chance to serve yet in this on-going mission, or are an experienced "veteran", we encourage you to volunteer for this important ministry. You'll be able to sign up starting Sunday, June 15th, so start checking your schedules and be ready with dates you'll be available. Watch for a NEW sign-up POSTER in the fellowship area that day.

There are a variety of opportunities and times. We will need supper meals for an evening of your choice. Or, you could be a host for an evening and interact with the families. Sometimes it turns out that the families retire early, so bring a good book or take advantage of our library. We also need two members, male and female; to spend the night each evening our guests stay with us. Finally, laundry always needs doing at the end of the week, and can be returned at your convenience one of the following Sundays.

These are all easy tasks, but they all need willing volunteers. We hope you will consider serving in one or more of these capacities. If you have any questions about how the program works, what a particular opportunity is like, or want to be teamed up with someone with more experience, please call Frank or Sandy at 561-4265. We're looking forward to hearing from you!

Frank and Sandy Baehre
Family Promises Coordinators

Multiple requests have been made for the recipe for the mousse served at the luncheon. The recipe is shared by Sally Pendleton and serves 8:

Cranberry Mousse

1 cup cranberry cocktail juice
1 3-oz package of raspberry jello
1 16-oz can jellied cranberries
2 cups non-dairy whipped topping

1. Boil cranberry cocktail juice and dissolve package of raspberry jello in juice.
2. In another bowl, beat jellied cranberries on medium for one minute.
3. Combine both juice and cranberries and chill.
4. When firm, fold in whipped topping.

SPRING WORKDAY A BIG SUCCESS

Once again the annual Church cleanup took place on Saturday, May 10th. Numerous jobs were completed including, but limited to, the sweeping of the parking lot, raking and mowing the lawns, preparing the flower beds, sweeping the roof of the Education Building, cleaning the drains and cleaning the garage. Kathe Fairweather coordinated the effort and kept the following individuals busy: Stuart Voss, Kathe and Malcolm Fairweather, Marilee and Roger Patnode, Michelle and TJ McKinnon, Stephanie, Reese and Quinn; Brent Germain, Rolli McGee, Jim Fox, Rob Meisenheimer, Mark Malchoff, Stephanie, Luke, Caleb, and Hailey Moore, Joanne Weiss, Barbara Doh, Brad Rovito and Bob Davis. The Building and Grounds Council appreciates all their hard work.

More Volunteers Needed.....

Have you ever helped out at Vacation Bible School? If you haven't, you have missed a good time! Volunteers are needed again this summer. Anyone high school age and up is welcome to help out with this enjoyable event. Many hands are needed to bring together this annual event. Note the following list to see what works best for you:

- Monday daytime - help is needed to decorate Fellowship Hall for the week long beach party
- One night of the week - provide a child friendly meal or be a story teller for the opening program
- Work from home - advertising in the community, prepare craft kits for use by the classes or coordinate an iron-on T-shirt application for the children
- Share a job - find a partner to coordinate recreation time with and you can take turns attending
- Jobs for 4 nights include teachers and music - the music will be patterned after the Beach Boys style and is available on a CD

If you know what job fits your schedule best, sign up now. Call Carla Hausrath at 563-2394 or email her at hausraths@aol.com.

Youth Activities

Church Family Softball Game **June 8th South Park Ball Fields 3pm**

Bring a dish to pass. Hamburgers and hot dogs will be provided. While helpful, no athletic skills are necessary. Those who are not athletically blessed can cheer, chase stray balls, bat boy/girl, or help with cooking. Must be willing to have fun and join in fellowship.

Summer Camping Trips

Marianne will be leading up to three camping trips this summer for the youth and families of the church. All trips are limited to a total of 12 campers. Trips will include paddling a canoe each day, swimming, cooking meals, sleeping outdoors, group building, daily devotional and reflection time amid God's awesome Adirondack Wilderness. Sign up with Marianne to secure your spot.

Entering 9th and up- Thursday July 31 to Sunday August 3
Entering 4-8th- Tuesday August 12 to Thursday August 14
Spiritual renewal August 8-10th (need 5 to make it go)

Summer Mission Trip

The deposit has been sent in for our group to serve July 20-26 for MINC's summer housing rehabilitation project in Potsdam, NY. In good faith, we reserved space for 7 youth and three adults. At this time only 2 have sent in their money towards our group's deposit. Beyond the \$50 per participant being asked for now, is to share the food cost for the week because we will be preparing our own meals. Anyone interested beyond the Senior High Group is now welcome to step forward to join us to fill out the 10 reserved spots. We can take up to 15. See Marianne for a form.

Bottle Collection Box

The Youth Groups now have a bottle box for you to place your redeemable bottles and cans in to support various youth activities. It is located on the Brinkerhoff St. side of the church to the left of the door to the Alan H. Booth Youth Building next to the transformer. It should be in place by June 1

Paintball Sunday July 13th

Come for the 11:30 service and we will leave together to go to Tiger Stripe in Keeseville for a friendly game of paintball. No experience necessary but you must be at least 10 years old to play. Scott, owner of Play More Paintball, will lead the group through safety of the game, how to play, and a fun day shooting Marianne on her birthday. Rental package for the afternoon will be \$25. Let us know if you want to come. Friends and parents especially welcome. The more the merrier.



Save the Dates!! Vacation Bible School 2008 July 14-18, evenings

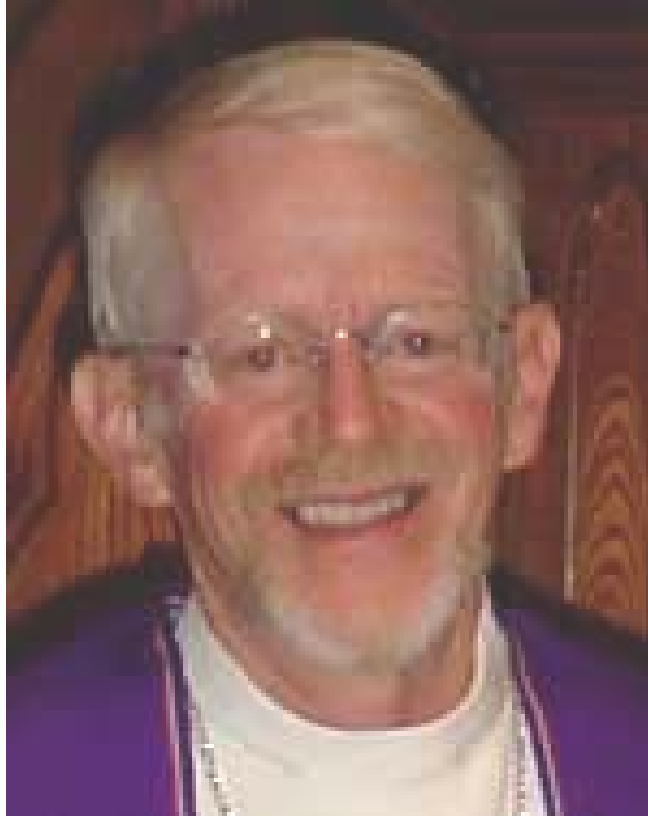
Come surf through the Scriptures with us!!

Thanks from our Director of Youth and Family Ministry

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for the warm welcome for myself and my family back to the church. It has been like coming back home after being away for too long. There are new faces among the many familiar ones. Youth once young and small, have blossomed into tall young adults of the church. I look forward to working with the youth and their families to provide support, encouragement, and guidance in their paths to becoming Christians. I am reviewing materials now for parent small groups in the fall. Please let me know if there is a topic you may be interested in. My office is always open to anyone who wants to stop by and chat or to meet with me. Right now I have been keeping office hours Monday through Thursday and Sunday afternoons when youth groups are meeting. You can get in touch with me through email mwilson@presbyplatt.org, by calling me at home 647-8469 or at the office.

In Christ,
Marianne Wilson



Pastor Paul Heller

Seventeen Wonderful Years

Hear Paul's last sermon as our Pastor

Sunday, June 1, 2008