

First Notes

The First
Presbyterian Church
in the City of New York

Volume XIV Issue 5

May 2006

What We Shall Be

Just about all of us of a certain age have at one time or another stood beside the open grave at the cemetery and asked, "Is that all there is?" Or visiting at the funeral home looked at the lifeless body in the casket and wondered, "So this is how it ends?" The scriptures handle the question of the resurrection body in differing ways. In First Corinthians 15, St. Paul asks, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" He then goes on to say that the old body must die, but that the new body is raised as a "spiritual body." It is, of course, a contradiction in terms, a juxtaposition that negates itself unless understood in the same poetic imagery with which it is expressed.

Luke tries to address the same issue in his gospel when he describes the resurrection appearance recorded in chapter 24, verses 36-48. The setting is Easter night. The disciples are gathered in a room, still unsure of what to make of the news flashes that have been filtering in which say that Jesus has been raised from the dead. While the disciples gathered in one place discussing the report that Jesus has appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, the risen Lord stands among them. First Luke tells us that the disciples thought he was a ghost because of Jesus' unexplained and sudden appearance in their midst. But then Luke says that Jesus asks them for something to eat. Interestingly, Jesus while dying on the cross said he was thirsty and the centurion gave him vinegar to drink. Here Jesus simply asks if he can have something to eat. He does not say that he is hungry. My hunch is that he asks for food not because he is hungry so much as to demonstrate the physical nature of his body. He is not all spirit. He is also corporeal in some mysterious way, a way that does not preclude the mistaken impression among the disciples that he is a ghost. Luke is trying to dispel the idea that he is only a spirit in the sense in which the Greeks understood the immortality of the soul, a soul disembodied from flesh. The risen Lord is neither ghost nor flesh. He is a mysterious and inexplicable amalgam of both.

It is especially interesting that the disciples do not really see (and understand) clearly until Jesus "opens" their minds to full recognition by teaching them the meaning of the scriptures. Luke says he explained everything to them from "the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms." It is a Sunday School class that most of us would give anything to have audited!

So what does all this tell us about *our* resurrection, the resurrection we say we believe in when we recite the Apostle's Creed? Not just Jesus' resurrection mind you, as awe-inspiring as that may be, but our own hope of resurrection?

One thing we learn from this sampling of the texts is that words fail. We cannot adequately describe in human language what we will look like, whether we will be recognizable, whether we will "see Aunt Minnie" in heaven, or how to specify the dimensions of those "mansions" the King James translators have promised will be our inheritance in the next life. Contradictions may be the best way to capture what that life and that presence will be like, the juxtaposition of images and phrases like "spiritual body," the poetry of language, may say more than prose, and only as it is expressive of what we will *not* look and *not* be.

Perhaps the best way to express what we shall be like is to take seriously and hopefully the promise of I John 3:2, when the old scribe, or one of his disciples writes, "Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is." Whatever our "eyes" may be like at that time, and with whatever ability we have to see, we will be like Jesus, and near Jesus, for then, in that place where God is, we will see him as he is.

Jon M. Walton

Learning for All Ages

Sundays at 12:30 p.m.

- May 7:** *First Press Conference* with the Rev. Chuck Henderson
- May 14:** *Faces of Faith: Religious Celebrities* with the Rev. Mark Hostetter
- May 21:** *Medical Ethics and Judeo-Christian Ethics (Part 1)* with Pietro Aparicio



THIRD TUESDAYS AT FIRST EXPERIENCES OF A JOURNEY TO NICARAGUA

Members from a recent mission trip to Nicaragua will host panel

Tuesday, May 16 at 7:00 p.m.

Third Tuesdays at First is a monthly event beginning at 7 p.m. with a light supper (sandwiches, salads, and beverages) followed by a program from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. We do ask that you RSVP for these programs so we will know how much food to provide; please sign up in the lobby of the Mellin-Macnab Building on Sundays or email education@fpcnyc.org.

On March 25 of this year, nineteen friends and members of FPC flew to Nicaragua for nine days as volunteers to work along side of the local people to build decent housing for themselves and their neighbors. Under the auspices of Bridges to Community, they participated in this year-round program to educate Americans about the realities of life in a third-world country and to build connections between people from such disparate backgrounds. The volunteers spent five nights living in a community center on a farming commune while helping to build cinder block, hurricane-resistant houses. Come hear all about it – what they saw, heard, and felt; how it relates to their faith; how it affected their world view; whether they would do it again.

There are many on-going education programs at First Presbyterian Church. Please see the *Adult Education Brochure, April 2006—June 2006*, for more information.



BIBLICAL POLITICS

The Rev. Barbara E. Davis
Sundays, May 7, 14, and 21
9:30 a.m.

Everyone knows that the two most dangerous topics around the dinner table with relatives are religion and politics. Many people are also tentative about the relationship in church between faith and politics. How has the conversation between these two often volatile subjects been negotiated over the course of biblical history? In this series, three religious and political struggles from the biblical text will be considered as a way to explore the complicated and intricate relationship between faith and politics. This series will examine the transition of power between Samuel and Saul, when ancient Israel shifted from having a judge as a leader to having a king; Jesus' teaching a radical discipleship that encouraged people to "give unto Caesar what was Caesar's"; and Paul addressing the issue of respecting and fearing governing authorities.



First Kids Event **Spring Planting in the Park!**

Look for details in the upcoming week on our final *First Kids* event for this church school season. Parents and kids will meet at church and walk over to Union Square Park to help park staff get the park ready for a busy summer!

After the planting, families will return to First Church for pizza and goodies—a great opportunity to share fellowship as we say goodbye to this season's *First Kids* program and reflect on some of the ways we've made a difference in our community and the world around us. Look for details coming up and we hope to see you there!

First Kids offers faith, fellowship, and service opportunities for FPC kids and their parents throughout the church school year. This program is for kindergarteners through 6th graders and allows families to share their faith through community service and discussion—and pizza! This year, *First Kids* will be focusing on the biblical principles of Micah 6:8—*This is what the Lord requires: to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.*

For more information about *First Kids* or any of our ministries to families and children, contact the Rev. Barbara Davis at bdavis@fpcnyc.org.

Come hear the
First Church Children's Choir
sing with over 100 children from
NYC churches.

Choir Festival "We See an Alleluia!"

Saturday, May 20, 3 PM

Concluding Festival Service
for the Public
Brick Presbyterian Church
91st Street and Park Avenue

Festival Clinician: Sue Ellen Page
Westminster Choir College and
Nassau Presbyterian Church
Princeton, NJ

*Sponsored by Choristers Guild
New York City Chapter*

Women's Retreat

The Practice of Prayer

Saturday, May 6, 2006—9:30 to 3:00 p.m.

The Church of St. Luke in the Fields

The Adult Christian Education Committee invites the women of our community to "retreat" for the day on Saturday, May 6, 2006. **The Practice of Prayer** will be the theme for the sixth annual FPC Women's Retreat which will be held at the Church of St. Luke in the Fields at Hudson and Christopher Street in the West Village. Just as we all have different personality types, so we all have different spiritual types. There are a variety of ways to pray, and some will be more conducive to increasing our awareness of God's presence than others.

Our facilitator will be the **Rev. Beverly Bartlett**, Associate Pastor for Congregational Life at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, and a former Parish Associate here at First Presbyterian.

There is still time to make your reservation to attend by calling the Rev. Barbara E. Davis at (212)675-6150 or email bdavis@fpcnyc.org. The cost is \$30 which includes a delicious lunch and ongoing coffee/tea breaks.

Taizé Prayer

Wednesday, May 17 6:00—6:40 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church - Great Hall

Taizé (pronounced "teh-ZAY") prayer is a quiet, meditative service designed for people of all Christian traditions. These meditative candlelit services include simple chants sung repeatedly; rich silence; scripture; and prayers of praise and intercession.

One could easily test the spirituality of Taizé through its prayer: "Jesus our peace, if our lips keep silence, our heart listens to you and also speaks to you. And you say to each one of us: Surrender yourself in all simplicity to the life of the Holy Spirit; for this, the little bit of faith you have is enough."

Sometimes we avoid silence, preferring noise, words, or distraction. It is because inner calmness is difficult to obtain. But, when we spend time in meditative singing and silent prayer together, we realize the emptiness and poorness of the world. Praying with simple songs and silence, our hearts embrace peace and unconditional understanding. Silent prayer and meditative singing are a humble way to secure our capacity to have compassion and love. We welcome you to Taizé prayer and meditative singing. Be curious and come.

Join Hwa Ryu, our Ministerial Intern, and Faye Timmer, Director of Children's and Youth Music, on Wednesday, May 17, for an enlightening and uplifting experience.

Deacons' Baby Shower



The Deacons of First Church are again sponsoring baby showers for the New York Foundling Hospital on May 14 (Mother's Day) and June 18 (Father's Day). Look for the baby carriage in the lobby of the Mellin-Macnab Building after church services on Sundays of May 7 and 14, and drop off your gifts of new infant/children's clothing, blankets, diapers, toys—almost anything for small children can be used. Gifts may be wrapped or unwrapped, but **must be new**. Your generosity made this a most successful project the last two years, and we ask for your support again on May 14 and June 18.

| Sun | Mon | Tue |
|--|--|---|
| <p align="center">INQUIRERS' CLASS for those interested in membership will be held on Saturday, May 13, 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Please register in the lobby of the Mellin-Macnab Building or telephone Pastor's Office for more information: (212) 675-6150. (Telephone for Child Care reservation by Thursday.)</p> | <p align="center">1 9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p align="center">8:00 Organ Recital</p> | <p align="center">2 9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 10:00 First Notes Mailing Team ♥</p> <p align="center">6:00 A.A. Groups 6:30 Personnel Comm. 6:30 Buildings and Grounds Comm.</p> |
| <p>7 <i>4th Sunday of Easter</i></p> <p>9:00 Adult Education-Biblical Politics (<i>Rev. Davis</i>) 10:00 Youth Breakfast and Dialog 10:45 Child Care 11:00 Worship♥ <i>Communion</i> <i>Dr. Walton preaching</i> 11:20 Church School and Children's Choirs 12:15 Coffee Hour♥ 12:30 Knitting Circle 12:30 Pre-Baptism Meeting</p> <p align="center">12:30 First Press Conf. with <i>Rev. Chuck Henderson</i></p> <p align="center">12:30 Confirmation Class</p> | <p align="center">8 9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> | <p align="center">9 9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p align="center">5:00 Rudin Lecture at Auburn Seminary by Gustav Niebuhr 6:00 A.A. Groups 7:00 House Committee</p> |
| <p>14 <i>5th Sunday of Easter/Mother's Day</i></p> <p>9:00 Adult Education-Biblical Politics (<i>Rev. Davis</i>) 10:45 Child Care 11:00 Worship♥ <i>Baptism</i> <i>Dr. Walton preaching</i> 11:20 Church School and Children's Choirs 12:15 Coffee Hour♥ Deacons' Baby Shower for Foundling Hospital</p> <p align="center">12:30 Adult Education (<i>Rev. Hostetter</i>)</p> | <p align="center">15 9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> | <p align="center">16 9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 1:00 Presbytery at Good Shepherd/Faith Presbyterian Church 6:00 A.A. Groups 7:00 Third Tuesday at First Supper and Program - <i>A Journey to Nicaragua</i></p> |
| <p>21 <i>6th Sunday of Easter</i></p> <p>9:30 Adult Education-Biblical Politics (<i>Rev. Davis</i>) 10:45 Child Care 11:00 Worship♥ <i>Receive New members</i> <i>Dr. Walton preaching</i> 11:20 Church School and Children's Choirs 12:30 Coffee Hour ♥ <i>Church School Teacher Recruitment</i> 12:30 Baby Gathering 1:30 Literary Group</p> <p align="center">12:30 Adult Ed. (<i>Dr. Aparicio</i>)</p> | <p align="center">22 9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> | <p align="center">23 9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p align="center">6:00 A.A. Groups</p> |
| <p>28 <i>7th Sunday of Easter</i></p> <p>NO Adult Education today. NO Church School today.</p> <p>10:45 Child Care 11:00 Worship♥ <i>Rev. Fenimore preaching</i> 12:30 Coffee Hour♥ 12:30 Stewardship Committee</p> | <p align="center">29 <i>Staff Holiday</i> <i>Memorial Day Observed</i></p> | <p align="center">30 9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p align="center">6:00 A.A. Groups</p> |

| Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>3</p> <p>8:00 APNC 9:00 Caring Community♥ 10:30 Staff Meeting 12:00 Midday Prayers 3:00 Kitchen Crew♥</p> <p>6:00 Vespers 6:30 Fellowship Supper Committees Meet</p> | <p>4</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>12:15 Al-Anon 2:00 Photo appointments in Library</p> <p>8:00 Organ Master Class</p> | <p>5</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>2:00 Photo Appointments in Library</p> <p>6:00 Nursery School Auction 7:00 D.A. Group</p> | <p>6</p> <p>8:30 Women's Retreat at Church of St. Luke in the Fields 9:30 Confirmation Class and Youth Service Project 9:30 Photo Appointments in Library</p> |
| <p>10</p> <p>8:00 APNC 9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 10:30 Staff Meeting 12:00 Midday Prayers</p> <p>6:00 Family Ministry Committee</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Dates Due for Planning Mtg)</p> | <p>11</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>12:15 Al-Anon</p> | <p>12</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>11:00 Kitchen Crew ♥</p> <p>7:00 D.A. Group</p> | <p>13</p> <p>8:30 Inquirers' Class 9:00 Kitchen Crew ♥ 9:30 Adult Education Retreat 12:00 Session Called Meeting</p> |
| <p>17</p> <p>8:00 APNC 9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 10:30 Staff Meeting</p> <p>12:00 Midday Prayers</p> <p>6:00 Vespers—Taizé Prayer (Hwa Ryu & Faye Timmer) 6:30 Deacons/Trustees</p> | <p>18</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(First Notes and Calendar Deadline)</p> <p>12:15 Al-Anon</p> | <p>19</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>6:00 Wedding Rehearsal in Chapel 7:00 D.A. Group</p> | <p>20</p> <p>11:00 Children's Choir Festival at Brick Church 3:00 Children's Concert at Brick Church 5:00 Wedding (Chapel) Penick/Thompson (Dr. Walton) 6:00 Youth Fellowship</p> |
| <p>24</p> <p>8:00 APNC</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 10:30 Staff Meeting 12:00 Midday Prayers</p> <p>6:00 Vespers with Confirmands 6:30 Session (Confirmands Examined)</p> | <p>25</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>10:00 First Notes Mailing Team♥ 12:15 Al-Anon</p> | <p>26</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>7:00 D.A. Group</p> | <p>27</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Closed.</p> |
| <p>31</p> <p>8:00 APNC 9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 10:30 Staff Meeting 12:00 Midday Prayers</p> | <p>The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York 12 West 12th Street (at Fifth Avenue), New York, NY 10011 Tel: (212) 675-6150 Fax: (212) 675-8674</p> <p>All data subject to change without notice. Check with Church Receptionist at (212) 675-6150 for confirmation and details. ♥ indicates volunteer opportunities.</p> | | |

Volunteer Opportunities

Welcome to the VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES CALENDAR, published monthly to let you know of events where you can help.

- **COFFEE HOUR HOSTING** – Hosts, coffee pourers, and greeters are needed for Coffee Hour after church. To volunteer, call **JOAN RYAN** at (212) 765-2141.
- **USHERS FOR WORSHIP SERVICES** – Volunteers are needed to usher for **Sunday morning services and special services**. To volunteer, call **JOAN RYAN** at (212) 765-2141, or **SUZANNE FREEMAN** at (646) 827-4559.
- **FIRST NOTES** – Volunteers are needed to help assemble and label **FIRST NOTES** mailings. For the next mailing, volunteers will meet at the church at 10:00 a.m. and work until about 1:00 p.m., on **Thursday, May 25**. Call **PAULETTE GRIEFEN** (212) 226-2531 to help.
- **BAILEY HOUSE** – Volunteers are needed to prepare and serve the evening meal to residents of Bailey House on the 5th Sunday of the month. Call **LIZ HUBBELL-RIGGS** to help (212) 247-0355. (Next date is July 30.)
- **LAY READERS** – Those interested in participating as lay readers are asked to call **DENISE JACKSON** at (212) 675-4366.

- **CROSS BEARER** – To explore the possibility of carrying the processional cross at worship, please call **PAT PENICK** at (212) 242-6916.
- **CARING COMMUNITY SENIOR GROUP AT FPC** – *Escorts needed to accompany seniors to medical appointments, stores, etc. Volunteer needed to edit and coordinate monthly newsletter for senior group. Call HAZEL IVEY, Exec. Dir., 212-924-2810*
- **IN THE KITCHEN** – If you can help with these events, please call **JACKIE FIKE** at (914) 793-4017.

Wednesday, May 3—Vespers Fellowship Supper

Sunday, April 30—12:30-3:30 p.m. Preparation
Wednesday, May 3—3:00-8:00 p.m. Prep., Serve, Cleanup

Saturday, May 13—Inquirers' Class

Friday, May 12—11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Prep.
Saturday, May 13—9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Prep, Serve, Cleanup

Wednesday, June 7—Vespers Fellowship Supper

Sunday, June 4—12:30-3:30 p.m. Preparation
Wednesday, June 7—3:00-8:00 p.m. Prep., Serve, Cleanup

Teachers Needed

On Sunday, May 21, during coffee hour, be sure to take your cup of coffee over to the teacher sign-up tables for Church School next year. As you witness on Sunday mornings, the number of children in our program continues to grow! We are looking for new teachers who would like to join our team of volunteers. Teachers teach on a rotational basis, with two to four teachers per class. (*This allows teachers to attend worship regularly.*) Current teachers will be on hand on May 21 to tell you about their experiences, answer your questions, and talk about your concerns. If you can't join us on May 21, contact the Rev. Barbara Davis, Minister of Education, at (212)675-6150 or bdavis@fpcnyc.org, or Elder Beth Iskander, Chair of the Family Ministries Committee, to inquire about teaching. We hope to hear from you.



Inquirers' Class

For those of you who are interested in learning more about the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in general, or The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York, in particular, and are perhaps thinking about making First Church your church home, we invite you to a half-day Inquirers' Class on Saturday, May 13.

Dr. Walton and Rev. Fenimore will lead a seminar for potential members in the South Wing from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on that Saturday. The session is an introduction to the beliefs, commitments, organization, staff, life, and activities of First Church. It begins with a continental breakfast and ends with a light lunch. Those who decide that they wish to join First Church will be received into membership by the Session at the close of the seminar. They will then be welcomed by the congregation during the 11:00 a.m. worship service on Sunday, May 21.

Please sign up in the lobby of the Mellin-Macnab Building if you are interested in attending the seminar. We will be providing **child care by reservation only**. Contact Kathryn Ketcham at (212)675-6150 or email her at kketcham@fpcnyc.org by Thursday, May 11, if you will be needing this service.

It's Spring—Think Christmas!!

It's a perfect time of year to enjoy the Garden Tour offered at the last Tartan Fair. Robin Key, the church gardens' designer, will give us a tour of the gardens followed by tea on the lawn on Saturday, June 3. And on July 7, come to Margaret Scott's picnic in her backyard—either one for only \$25. Contact Sanford Goin at (212) 222-7186 or sanfordgoin@usa.net to join either.

And remember to bring your gently used treasures for White Elephants or the Silent Auction to the church any weekday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. or on Sundays until 4:00 p.m. Think personal services when you think of the Silent Auction: like computer lessons, a home-cooked dinner for 6, tickets to the Knicks or Yankees or the opera or a Broadway show or...you name it.

*A Tartan
Christmas*



Vespers Fellowship Suppers

Wednesday, May 3 &

Wednesday, June 7

6:20 p.m.—following Vespers

Esther Morrow Room—All Invited

Free-will offering—Suggested donation \$5.00

DEACONS FOR MAY

Rita Rochford

(212) 254-2697

Aurora Jones-Owens

(212) 219-1484

Evacuees Need Help!

There are an estimated 2,000 Katrina Evacuee households living in the five boroughs. Some need housing, some need jobs, some need furniture and household items. **The Katrina Evacuee Family Assistance Program**, formed by the New York Disaster Interfaith Services and the Episcopal Migration Ministries, is asking for help in providing assistance in these areas.

If you wish to learn more about the Katrina Evacuee Family Assistance Program and the work that it is doing, you may contact the people listed below:

Gili Chupak, Director, Katrina Evacuee Recovery, NYDIS
(212) 669-6108 or email gchupak@nydis.org

Mondie Tharp, Project Associate, Katrina Renewal Program, EMM
800-334-7626, ext. 6345 toll free
mtharp@episcopalchurch.org

Summer Camp 2006

Looking for a summer camp experience for your child? You might want to consider the Presbyterian Center at Holmes which is located 55 miles north of New York City at Holmes, NY. The camp is on 550 wooded acres which include four lakes for swimming, boating, and fishing, over 7 miles of trails, 5 year-round buildings, tent and cabin camping areas, and fields for games and other activities. There are camping opportunities for children from 1st grade through senior high.

On Sunday, May 21, from 2:00 to 5:30 p.m. there will be an Open House at the campsite to provide parents and prospective campers an opportunity to see what camp is all about and, if weather permits, sample some of the varied activities at the Presbyterian Center at Holmes. Pick up a brochure in the lobby of the Mellin-Macnab Building and learn all about the many programs that are available.

A Month of Sundays

Worship This Month at First Presbyterian

SUNDAY, MAY 7

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Sermon: Dr. Jon M. Walton preaching
Sacrament: Communion
Music: Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether, Friedell
Prelude and Fugue in C, Bach

SUNDAY, MAY 14

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Mother's Day

Sermon: Dr. Jon M. Walton preaching
Sacrament: Baptism
Music: O Come, Everyone that Thirsteth,
from *Elijah*, Mendelssohn
Organ Sonata No. 6, Mendelssohn

SUNDAY, MAY 21

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Sermon: Dr. Jon M. Walton preaching
Pastoral Rite: Reception of New Members

Music: Greater Love Hath No Man, John Ireland
Aria, Flor Peeters

SUNDAY, MAY 28

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Scripture: Psalm 133 John 20:19-31
Sermon: The Rev. Fenimore preaching
Music: O Clap Your Hands, Vaughan Williams
L' Ascension, Olivier Messiaen

(This is the Memorial Day weekend and there will be no Church School or Children's Choir. Child care will be provided as usual.)

DEADLINE FOR JUNE
***First Notes* IS MAY 18.**

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in the City of New York*

Calendar of Events

CHURCH HOUSE
12 WEST 12TH STREET NEW YORK, NY 10011

Return Service Requested

FIRST NOTES is published monthly by
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