

First Notes

*The First
Presbyterian Church
in the City of New York*

Volume XIV Issue 9

September 2006

Report from Birmingham

I preached in a lovely outdoor chapel one Sunday in August this summer in New Hampshire, a chapel which follows the rite of the Episcopal Church in America. Many of the worship leaders who speak there are Episcopal bishops and clergy. So I was interested to hear one of the regular attendees tell me, "I hope you are going to preach the gospel today. We are pretty sick of hearing about the General Convention!" He was referring to the biennial gathering of clergy and laity which, like our Presbyterian General Assembly, decides on policy, faith, and practice in the Episcopal Church. Evidently, many of the clergy assumed that the burning issues in the lives of the chapelgoer's would be centered on the activities of the denomination. Evidently they were wrong.

At the risk of addressing issues which are hardly at the burning core of your life, I will give a brief update on this year's biennial General Assembly and hope that there is something of interest in its actions. In June I did attend the meeting of General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, which met in Birmingham, Alabama. It represented ten days of living in a hotel and convention center at the edge of a downtown area that is hardly the garden spot of Alabama. Over the course of the Assembly days Presbyterians from around the nation studied, worshipped, prayed and learned about, and debated the issues that are shaping the church. Commissioners discussed the theological doctrine of the Trinity and searched for contemporary and inclusive ways to describe the indescribable complexity of God. They elected a minister from Atlanta, the Rev. Joan Gray, as Moderator for the next two years. They heard the testimony of Jewish and Palestinian representatives and groups who described the way in which the action of the previous Assembly affected their communities and how the recom-

mended divestment of portfolio investment in Israel would affect them in the future. They worked hard to comprehend and approve a report from the Theological Task Force to maintain national standards for ordination but to apply them locally, opening the door to presbyteries and sessions to ordain those whom they know best, the men and women who are qualified and called to the ministries of the church. It is no secret that this action will open the door allowing qualified gay and lesbian persons to be ordained to the offices of the church.

Some ultra-conservative voices in the church have called for much more rigorous examinations of candidates for ordination, including extensive inquisitions on theology, Biblical understanding, sexual behavior, moral values, and the essential tenets of the faith (tenets which the Assemblies of the church have consistently refused to describe, with the exception of a period when the Westminster Confession of Faith was the gold standard required of all). Other voices on the right have declared that the Assembly's endorsement of the Theological Task Force Report marks the end of Presbyterianism as we know it and are threatening to leave, fight a court battle to take their local church property away from the denomination, and stop supporting the PCUSA financially.

It was not an Assembly without controversy, and I have to be honest and say that there were moments when I wondered whether all this effort and struggle was worth it, but then I realized that the church has never been without controversy or struggle. The letters of Paul to the early churches in Thessalonica, Galatia, Colossae, and others are nothing if not a record of the patient and pastoral concern of Paul correcting the heresies and

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Learning Through the Ages

Adult Education Programs



Sunday, September 10

9:30 a.m. Adult Education

12:30 p.m. Calling and Meaning in Vocation and the Everyday — Brad Miller

Sunday, September 17

9:30 a.m. Adult Education

Tuesday, September 19

7:00 p.m. Third Tuesdays at First

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. Sign up is required for supper. Please email education@fpcnyc.org or sign up in the church house lobby. This year's speaker will be from Union Theological Seminary's Poverty Initiative and will speak in relation to the group's work in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Sunday, September 24

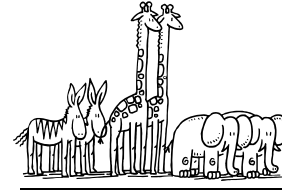
9:30 a.m. Adult Education

**ALSO SAVE THESE DATES AND WATCH FOR THE FALL
ADULT EDUCATION BROCHURE**
(available in late September)

Sunday, October 8 — Kick-off the Adult Education year! Our theme for the year is "For the Living of these Days." Special programs will be held before and after worship, and Adult Education will be the theme for worship on this day.

Saturday, October 21, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. — Third Annual Spa for the Soul Retreat. Watch for details and sign up for this year's chance to relax, meditate, and hear great speakers—all to help you nourish your spirit!

Family Ministries Programs



Child Care

Sunday, September 10

10:15 a.m. Welcome Back Reception with Parents on Third Floor

11 a.m. Child Care in Third Floor Classrooms
Child care resumes and continues on all Sundays through the fall

Church School

Saturday, September 16

9:30 a.m. Church School Teacher Training

Sunday, September 17

10:15 a.m. Church School Registration & Open House in the Classrooms
11:20 a.m. Church School Classes Begin

Children & Youth Music

Sunday, September 17

12:00 p.m. Brief Children's Choir Orientation

Sunday, September 24

12 p.m. Full Children's Choir Rehearsal Begins

All parents who have registered in child care and in Church School should receive a mailing during the week following Labor Day with further details about plans for child care and Church School for the upcoming year.

Parents of children in child care should note that child care is staffed by paid professionals, but we also count on your help to volunteer on a regular basis.

Youth in grades 8 through 12 and their parents will also be receiving a separate mailing outlining this year's youth program.

DID YOU MISS THE APRIL TRIP TO HOLMES? Then don't miss this one! The Membership/Fellowship Committee is sponsoring another get-away to Holmes on Saturday, September 30, 2006. The bus will leave the church at 9 a.m., arriving in Holmes in time for a hike around the grounds or a ball game before lunch. After lunch the adults will share a time of devotions while the kids go off with one of the counselors. Then the afternoon is yours. We will be back at First Church by 5 p.m. The cost for the bus plus lunch is \$15 per adult. Children are free.

Mark your calendar for this wonderful chance to get away to the great outdoors — good sports, good worship, good food, and good friends from our church family. Sign ups for the outing begin on Sunday, September 10, in the lobby. Do you have a question? Call Dave Garlow at (718) 237-5128.

After 250 Years, A Service of Reconciliation

"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation." II Corinthians 5:18

On Sunday, September 24, First Presbyterian and Second Presbyterian Church will have a combined service in our sanctuary, reconciling a split that goes back some 250 years. Second Presbyterian traces its history to 1756 at Old First on Wall Street, when an internal schism prompted a group of members to leave. The basic dispute centered on what psalmody to use for the singing of psalms, the only music of the service at the time. The members that left the church formed what eventually became Second Presbyterian.

The split within Old First had its roots in the Great Awakening, and in particular between immigrants from Scotland and Northern Ireland versus those from South Britain and New England. The latter were more liberal in that they preferred a more Congregational form of church polity and worship, rather than the more rigid Scots form. The divide pitted what was termed "New Side" against "Old Side" Presbyterians, and it mirrored a similar dispute within the church in the 1720's. In terms of worship however, Old First was firmly in the New Side camp, as were the Presbytery and Synod in which it was associated. In 1738, for instance, it was the only church in the city to invite George Whitefield, the dynamic English evangelist of the Great Awakening, to preach.

About 1749 the Trustees of Old First voted to have the congregation use as a Psalm book Isaac Watts' more contemporary version to sing from, rather than Rouse's "Old Scott's Version" from 1650. Two groups formed within the congregation, one wanting to use the Watts version and the other the Rouse version. The controversy was eventually referred to the Presbytery and then the Synod. The Watts book was kept, but the Trustees were criticized by the Synod for making this choice without consulting the congregation. (At the time we did not have a Session). The group that had wanted to stay with the Rouse version broke away in 1756 and formed a separate congregation with membership in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia. This congregation, though small at first, survived and prospered. It was called the First Associate Presbyterian Church. By 1761 the congregation was worshiping in a small frame building on Cedar Street, where it remained for some 70 years. In 1822 the church rejoined the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. From its beginnings in 1756 until its name was officially changed to Second Presbyterian in 1917, the church was popularly known as The Scotch Presbyterian Church, or simply The Scotch Church. As time went on it was referred to as The Old Scotch Church.

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Welcome Home Picnic & Potluck

Sunday, September 17, 2006

Following the Church Service

Reservations Required

Sign-up sheet and tickets are available during coffee hour after Sunday services and in the lobby of the Mellin-Macnab building
(Please sign up by September 12)

A free-will donation will be collected.

Suggested donation:
\$5 for adults & children over 12

The North Lawn will be reserved for families with small children.

Dr. Entriken Receives Alumni Award

On June 24, Dr. Entriken received the First Distinguished Organist Alumni Award from Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, which was presented at the Organists Alumni Conclave. The award was given in recognition for his work in organ performance, which includes church and concert work, as well as pedagogy. In addition to receiving the award, Dr. Entriken also played a recital for the conclave. Dr. Entriken graduated from Indiana University in 1971 with the Bachelor of Music Degree in Organ Performance with Distinction. Under the guidance of Dr. Oswald G. Ragatz, his organ professor at Indiana, Dr. Entriken came to New York to study at Union Theological Seminary with Dr. Robert S. Baker, former organist of this church.

Wednesday, September 7

Vespers—6:00 p.m.

Fellowship Supper—6:30 p.m. (all are invited)

September 2006

First Presbyterian Church

Sun	Mon	Tue
<p><i>The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York</i> <i>12 West 12th Street (at Fifth Avenue), New York, NY 10011</i> <i>Tel: (212) 675-6150 Fax: (212) 675-8674</i> www.fpcnyc.org All data subject to change without notice. Check with Church Receptionist at (212) 675-6150 for confirmation and details.</p> <p>♥ indicates <i>volunteer opportunities</i></p>		

September 2006

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat

After 250 Years, A Service of Reconciliation

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Led by Pastor Leslie Merlin, members of Second Presbyterian will march in procession with the choir and First Church clergy at the beginning of the September 24 service. As Rev. Merlin has said, "we thought marching in would be nicely symbolic, and subtle – in contrast to marching out," 250 years ago. Communion will also be served at the service, and, for the occasion First Church will be borrowing back its 18th century communion silver, which has been on permanent loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art since 1925. In addition, Music Director and First Church Organist Dr. William Entriken will be selecting period music to be sung and played throughout the service.

It is quite extraordinary - and historically momentous — that the First and Second Presbyterian Churches in the City of New York will finally and formally end what was a rancorous division so many generations ago.

David Pultz, FPC Archivist

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 **JOHN COX** at (212) 260-3094.
- ☛ **USHERS FOR WORSHIP SERVICES** – Volunteers are needed to usher for **Sunday morning services**. To volunteer, please call **JOAN RYAN** at (212) 765-2141, or **ELLIE GARLOW** at (718) 237-5128.
- ☛ **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 **TUESDAY, September 27**. 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 **Sunday, October 30th**.
- ☛ **LAY READERS** – Those interested in participating as lay readers in worship 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.
- ☛ **IN THE KITCHEN** – If you can help with these events, please call **JACKIE FIKE** at (914) 793-4017.
 - Wednesday, September 6—Vespers Fellowship Supper**
Sunday, September 3—12:30-3:30 p.m. Preparation.
Wednesday, September 6—3:00-8:00 p.m. Prep., Serve, Cleanup
 - Friday, September 15—Farewell Gathering**
Thursday, September 14—12:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Prep. Friday, September 15—2:00—5:00 p.m. Prep.
4:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m. Prep., Serve, Cleanup
 - Sunday, September 17—Welcome Home Picnic** Friday, September 15—12:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m. Prep. Saturday, September 16—11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Prep. Sunday, September 18—9:00-11:00 a.m. Preparation, 12:30-3:00 p.m. Prep., Serve, Cleanup

Stewardship Canvass News

Greetings! As Co-Chairs of the 2007 Stewardship Canvass, we would like to introduce ourselves. We are Douglas and Ingrid Ladendorf, and we joined First Presbyterian Church in 2000. We have two children, both of which have been baptized here. Our son Duncan continues to attend First Presbyterian Church Nursery School, and our daughter Camille, having attended for three years, moves along to Kindergarten this month. Doug is an Elder, and has served on Session as Chair of both the Communication and Space Use Committees. Ingrid has served on the Stewardship, Membership, Family Ministries, SCOFAM, and Design and Construction Committees. We both also serve on Committees for the Presbyterian Center at Holmes, New York. We have been blessed by this church in a myriad of ways, and are looking forward to celebrating our church's mission and outreach with you through Stewardship opportunities over the next few months. Please feel free to share your thoughts with us as we look to the future with joyous anticipation.

Douglas and Ingrid Ladendorf
2007 Stewardship Canvass Co-Chairs

Report from Birmingham

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squabbles of the first Christians as they worked out their faith and their life together. It was not always easy, and sometimes Paul sounds as much like a referee as a theologian in his words to these beloved communities. But that's the way it works. The church is a gathering of imperfect human beings, at times torn by disagreement, struggling with doubt, threatened by the culture's values, and burdened by fear and the worst of human misbehavior. Nonetheless, God shapes the church and molds from its imperfections something that is greater than the sum of its parts.

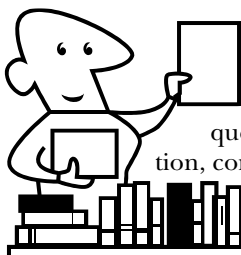
It may not be one of the ten most crucial proofs of faith that there is God, but it is right up there as number eleven, perhaps. In times when the church may seemingly be more of a hindrance to our faith than a support to it, it might be good to remember that. It's finally not our church, but God's.

God grant that whenever we try to make the church into our image, we be reminded that we are made in Yours, and so will the church be, too, if we allow You to lead us.

Jon M. Walton

Literary Group

The Literary Group meets monthly, September through June, on Sunday afternoons at 1:30 at the church, and everyone is welcome to attend these interesting and challenging book discussions. If you have questions or would like more information, contact Beth Godat at (212)929-6425, or email: vgodat@aol.com. The first book will be *Boswell's Life of Johnson* by James Boswell. Check the October issue of *First Notes* for the full list of books for this season along with scheduled discussion dates.



Experience Missions

Meeting on 2007 Missions Trips Sunday, October 8, 2006

The mission trips to Nicaragua in 2005 and 2006 were so rewarding for the participants that they decided to expand the opportunities offered to FPC members and their friends for 2007. Consequently, there will be three times to participate in a mission experience next year. So mark your calendars for October 8, right after worship, to learn all the details and pick up literature on all three trips.

January 13-20, 2007: Gulf Coast—Katrina Relief
Age range: 18+; Cost \$140 per person plus airfare
FPC Coordinator: Betty Jones

March 17-25, 2007: Nicaragua (*Bridges to Community*)
Age range: 14+; Cost \$1,075 per person plus airfare and inoculations (approx. total \$2,000)
FPC Coordinators: Dick & Georgia Pease

July 8-15, 2007: West Virginia (Appalachia) Work Camp
Age range: middle school+; Cost \$190 per person plus transportation and food
FPC Coordinator: Rich Korchak

It is
not too
early to think
about Xmas and
the Tartan Fair on
Dec. 1 & 2! Bring us
your gently used items
for the White Elephant sale
and also your antique, artistic
or jeweled treasures for our special
Silent Auction. If you want to share
your creative talents, join the crafters
on Monday evenings beginning September 18.
We'll also be pricing & sorting White Ele-
phants on those same Monday evenings. So
join us!!
Think
Xmas
Think
Tartan Fair!

Although the details of each trip differ, the focus of each one will be to improve housing conditions. In Nicaragua it will mean helping to build cinder block houses; on the Gulf Coast it may mean clearing away debris, painting, or simple carpentry; in West Virginia it may mean painting or various types of home repairs. **Come learn more on October 8th!** Refreshments will be provided.

A Month of Sundays

Worship This Month at First Presbyterian

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sermon: The Rev. Edee Chase Fenimore *AND Donny McCaslin* present "A New Song"

Music: Simple Song, from *Mass*, Bernstein, Cheryl Zilinyi, soloist

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time
9/11 Memorial Service

Sermon: Dr. Jon M. Walton preaching

Sacrament: Communion

Music: How Lovely is Thy Dwelling Place, from *A German Requiem*, Brahms Carillon, Vierende

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sermon: Dr. Jon M. Walton preaching

Pastoral Rite: Commissioning of Teachers

Music: Witness, spiritual, arr. Hall Johnson, Ellen Goff
Enriken, soprano. Jubilate Deo, Psalm 100:1-3,
Stanford

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Joint Service with Second Presbyterian

Sermon: Dr. Jon M. Walton preaching

Sacrament: Communion

Music: Music of Celebration including congregational hymns from the *Scottish Metrical Psalter of 1650* by Francis Rouse and metrical Psalm settings by Isaac Watts. (See David Pultz's article concerning 11:00 a.m. worship on Sept. 24 in this issue of *First Notes*.)

DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER

FIRST NOTES IS SEPTEMBER 18

DEACONS FOR SEPTEMBER

DAVID FELLOWS (212)460-8058

JEAN TSAI (212)460-9722



Return Service Requested

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