

First Notes

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

Volume XVII Issue 6

June 2009

Stressed Out, Breathing In

As a part of my cardiac rehabilitation program I have been taking classes which provide helpful information on proper nutrition, the importance of exercise, and stress reduction. It's the stress reduction that I find most interesting of all the classes. In fact, since returning from surgery, it is stress more than anything else that I have come to realize is both an impediment to full recovery and an essential aspect of health. It is also one of the most difficult things to achieve in New York City, where adrenaline and stress are what keeps the city going.

The particular stress reduction class that I attended used techniques of visualization, relaxation, self-hypnosis, and breathing exercises. CDs with a soothing voice, leading the listener into a restful state of peaceful contemplation, are provided for home use. But the beginning place was breathing. Being conscious of the breath within the body, the essential oxygen that provides life to cells and blood, organs and tissue, is the first step toward relaxation. More and more I have realized that a deep breath reminds me of both the substance that sustains my body, and also the importance of slowing down.

It was the breath of life that God breathed into Adam according to the familiar story in Genesis. It was that first breath of life that brought the lifeless potential for life to realization. And from the

first gasp of life to the last, we are dependent on God's breath of life to sustain us. Prayer is a kind of breathing, and prayer can be a helpful form of not only stress reduction but also achieving inner peace. Perhaps we Christians have sold short the power of quiet prayer, inner reflection, and becoming more aware of the breath coming into us, and the breath flowing out of us, all God-given, as a healing agent always at work in our life. In fact, prayer can be an essential form of stress reduction, a means for lessening the inner tension of our life and connecting to the refreshment of God's spirit that renews and restores.

As my rehab program continues into the early summer, I am hoping not only to reduce stress, but also to catch my breath, the breath of life that God has given as a gift. Breath, after all, is such an elusive thing; so familiar to us that it comes and goes every second without our even noticing. Perhaps this summer we all can be more aware of the gifts available to us, like prayer, and rest. May the summer months bring you a second wind, in every way.

Jon M. Walton

For the Living of These Days

GOSPEL TALK

Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

Great for curious bible readers of all experience levels.

The Best of the Gospel Series We Didn't Discuss May 31; June 7, 14, & 21

Over the course of this year, each of the themes and theology of the four gospels have been studied in detail. However, there were passages from each gospel that we would have liked to discuss but did not have time to—join us as we explore these narratives as the final and “best” part of the our Gospel Series!

- May 31 **The Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20)**
 The Rev. Barbara E. Davis
- June 7 **The Parable of the Prodigal Son**
 (Luke 15:11-32)
 The Rev. Barbara E. Davis
- June 14 **The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12)**
 The Rev. Sarah S. McCaslin
- June 21 **The Woman at the Well (John 4:1-30)**

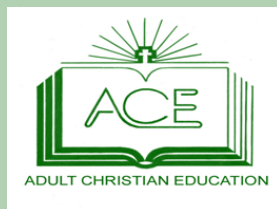
Celebration of Pride June 28

On this day, when the Heritage of Pride March will pass by our doors on 5th Avenue, join us for this Bible study on the spiritual importance of pride and confidence.

LUNCH 'N LEARN: INVITATION TO JOURNEY Fridays at 12:00 p.m.

Please bring your own lunch and join us for these conversations in response to the DVD series “Living the Questions.” Bring your questions and your spirit of curiosity and join us for these lively discussions.

Reclaiming the World June 5



EDUCATION ALERTS! To receive updates and reminders about programs from Education at First, email education@fpcnyc.org with “add me to the list” in the subject line.

SPRING FILM SERIES/PRIDE WEEK



A JIHAD FOR LOVE

Tuesday, June 23, at 6:30 p.m.

In this daring documentary, Muslim gay filmmaker Parvez Sharma explores the complex global intersections between Islam and homosexuality. In Western media, the concept of *jihād* is often narrowly equated with holy war. But *jihād* also has a deeper meaning, its literal Arabic translation being “struggle” or “to strive in the path of God.” The people in this film are engaged in their own very personal jihads for love, the pursuit of which has brought them in conflict with their countries, families, and selves as they negotiate a new relationship between their sexual identities and a cherished faith that sustains them.

A Jihad for Love is produced by Sandi DuBowski (Director/Producer of the award-winning *Trembling Before G-d*) and Parvez Sharma in association with ZDF-Arte, Channel 4, LOGO, SBS-Australia, The Sundance Documentary Fund and The Katahdin Foundation.

氣功
qi gong
at First

Qi Gong will continue through June 29 on Monday evenings from 5:45-6:30 p.m. In July, the class will be at the same time every Wednesday evening. The Membership/Fellowship Committee sponsors these classes. All are welcome. A donation of \$5 per class is appreciated.

For more information, please contact Meg Harper at (718) 624-1516 or harper-meg@hotmail.com.

STAFF APPRECIATION

The congregation of First Presbyterian Church is proud of the men and women on the church staff and grateful for their work. We appreciate the way in which they go about their work and their presence in our community. Each month *First Notes* will recognize and honor two members of our staff. This month we focus on Alfonso Cruz and Lydia Rodriguez, Custodians. Say hello to them when you see them!

Alfonso Cruz Custodian



Alfonso Cruz is a hard-working man who takes care of not one but two churches! Alfonso came to the U.S. from Oaxaca, Mexico, in 1989 and, after living briefly in California and Chicago, settled in Queens. The oldest of eleven, he joined two of his brothers already in New York. He quickly found a job at a restaurant, where he worked for the next seventeen years. During that time, Alfonso was hired part-time by the Caring Community. In 2002, Tony lured Alfonso to work full-time at First. Now, in addition to being with us, Alfonso has a part-time job at a Catholic church near Washington Square.

When Alfonso is not busy with work, he finds pleasure in time with his family. His father and most of his siblings are in this area, while his home is lively with his wife, children, and two dogs. If he could choose to do anything with his spare time, Alfonso would spend hours tinkering with cars, visit Chicago or Mexico, or just plain relax. For now, he enjoys taking care of our facilities, serving under Tony's leadership, helping Faye Timmer with her Spanish, and working with his friends here at First Church.

Lydia Rodriguez Custodian

Lydia Rodriguez is the staff member with the longest tenure at First Church. Moving from San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1963, Lydia has worked and raised her two girls and two boys for many years since. Around 1990, she began part-time employment at First with the primary responsibility of coffee setup on Sunday mornings. Lydia laughs as she explains that some things don't change very much. Soon afterward, a custodial position opened and the Rev. Jim Speer hired her full-time.



Lydia fondly recalls some of the members from her early years, including a young(er) Bill and Ellen Entriken with their baby, Catherine. She remembers by name the members from long ago who were kind to her. She especially enjoyed working with certain groups such as the Women's Association, and then as well as now likes arranging for programs and receptions, especially in the Parlor. The best part of her job is working with Tony, other leaders and members, and, most of all, with colleagues she considers friends.

When Lydia is not working, she spends time with family. She currently resides in the Bronx and is adjusting to the changes caused by the new Yankee Stadium. Lydia says her biggest challenge in living there now is the lengthy commute to church. But, she says, as long as we continue to need our Sunday morning coffee, she will continue to make sure we have it!

Wednesday Worship in June

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3

6:00 p.m. in the Alexander Chapel, followed by a light supper in the Esther Morrow Room

**THE WATERS OF LIFE:
REAFFIRMING OUR BAPTISMAL PROMISES**

First Presbyterian Church

Sun	Mon	Tue
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">DEADLINE FOR JULY/AUGUST <i>FIRST NOTES</i>: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">DEACONS FOR THE MONTH:</p> <p>David Kipin Rose Roberts (718) 457-7558 (212) 933-4469</p>	<p>1</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>12:00 Sanctuary Open</p> <p>5:45 Qi Gong</p>	<p>2</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>6:15 A.A. Groups</p>
<p>7 <i>Trinity Sunday</i></p> <p>9:30 Adult Education</p> <p>10:45 Child Care</p> <p>11:00 Worship♥ <i>Communion</i> <i>Dr. Walton preaching</i></p> <p>12:15 Coffee Hour♥</p> <p>12:30 Adult Education: Harry Potter and the Bible</p>	<p>8</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>12:00 Sanctuary Open</p> <p>5:45 Qi Gong</p>	<p>9</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>6:15 A.A. Groups</p> <p>6:30 Personnel Committee</p> <p>6:30 Buildings & Grounds</p> <p>7:00 House Committee</p>
<p>14 <i>Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time</i></p> <p>9:30 Adult Education</p> <p>10:45 Child Care</p> <p>11:00 Worship♥ <i>Dr. Walton preaching</i></p> <p>12:15 Coffee Hour♥ <i>Spring Garden Event</i></p> <p>12:30 Pre-Baptism Meeting</p> <p>1:30 Literary Group</p>	<p>15</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>12:00 Sanctuary Open</p> <p>5:45 Qi Gong</p>	<p>16</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>6:15 A.A. Groups</p>
<p>21 <i>Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time</i> <i>Father's Day—First Day of Summer</i></p> <p>9:30 Adult Education</p> <p>10:45 Child Care</p> <p>11:00 Worship♥ <i>Baptism</i> <i>Dr. Hostetter preaching</i></p> <p>12:15 Coffee Hour♥</p>	<p>22</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>12:00 Sanctuary Open</p> <p>5:45 Qi Gong</p>	<p>23</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>6:15 A.A. Groups</p> <p>6:30 Adult Education/ GLBT Film: <i>Jihad for Love</i></p>
<p>28 <i>Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time</i> <i>Gay Heritage of Pride Sunday</i></p> <p>9:30 Adult Education</p> <p>10:45 Child Care</p> <p>11:00 Worship♥ <i>Bishop Gene V. Robinson preaching</i></p> <p>12:15 Coffee Hour♥</p> <p>1:00 Evelyn Davidson Water Table Project♥</p>	<p>29</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>12:00 Sanctuary Open</p> <p>5:45 Qi Gong</p>	<p>30</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>6:15 A.A. Groups</p>

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>3 9 to 5 Caring Community</p> <p>9:30 Planning Meeting 10:00 Art Workshop 10:30 Staff Meeting 12:00 Midday Prayers <i>(last one for season)</i> 6:00 Wednesday Worship 6:30 Fellowship Supper Committees Meet</p>	<p>4 9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>12:15 Al-Anon</p> <p>3:30 N.S. Roof Party 8:00 NA Solutions</p>	<p>5 <i>World Environment Day</i></p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 12:00 Sanctuary Open 12:00 Lunch 'n Learn</p> <p>6:15 NA/DA Groups</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>10 9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>10:30 Staff Meeting 12:00 Sanctuary Open 6:30 Communications Committee</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> <p style="text-align: center;">First Notes and Calendar Due</p> </div>	<p>11 9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>12:15 Al-Anon</p> <p>6:00 N.S. Board Meeting 8:00 NA Solutions</p>	<p>12 9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>12:00 Sanctuary Open</p> <p>6:15 NA/D.A. Groups</p>	<p>13</p>
<p>17 9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>10:30 Staff Meeting 12:00 Sanctuary Open</p> <p>6:30 Deacons/Trustees</p>	<p>18 9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>12:15 Al-Anon</p> <p>8:00 NA Solutions</p>	<p>19 9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>12:00 Sanctuary Open</p> <p>6:15 NA/D.A. Groups</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>24 9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>10:30 Staff Meeting</p> <p>12:00 Sanctuary Open</p> <p>6:30 Session</p>	<p>25 9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>12:15 Al-Anon</p> <p>8:00 NA Solutions</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> <p style="text-align: center;">First Notes Mailing Team</p> </div>	<p>26 <i>P.S. 226 Half-Day Last Day of School</i></p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 12:00 Sanctuary Open 6:15 NA/DA Groups</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> <p style="text-align: center;">60+ Circle Day Trip Stony Point Center 9:30 a.m.—6:00 p.m.</p> </div>	<p>27</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*

All data subject to change without notice.

Check with Church Receptionist for confirmation and details.

Indicates Volunteer Opportunities ♥

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 **CHARLOTTE WALLACE** at (973) 692-0541.
- **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, June 25**. Call **PAULETTE GRIEFEN** at (212) 942-0620 to help.
- **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 contact **MEG HARPER** at (718) 624-1516 or harpermeg@hotmail.com.
- **IN THE KITCHEN** – If you can help with Fellowship Suppers after Wednesday Worship, please call **JAMES HOLLANDER** at (646) 335-2969 or e-mail hollander_james@yahoo.com. For all other events call **JACKIE FIKE** at (914) 793-4017 or e-mail jackiecf@verizon.net.

Wednesday, June 3—Wed. Worship Fellowship Supper
3:00 - 8:00 p.m. Prep, Serve, Cleanup

Bishop V. Gene Robinson Preaching June 28

The Session is pleased to welcome the Rt. Rev. V. Gene Robinson, 9th Bishop of New Hampshire, as the preacher for Pride Sunday, June 28. He will also lead an adult forum at 9:30 a.m. with an opportunity for congregational questions and discussion. All are invited.



Bishop Robinson's election and consecration as New Hampshire's bishop marked a milestone in church history as he became the first openly gay and self-affirming bishop in the Episcopal Church in the USA. A 1969 graduate of the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee, he has a B.A. in American Studies/History. In 1973, he completed the M.Div. degree at the General Theological Seminary here in New York City, was ordained deacon, and then priest, serving as Curate at Christ Church, Ridgewood, New Jersey. He moved to New Hampshire in 1975 and, after serving in positions in the diocese, became Assistant to the Bishop and served in that responsibility for eighteen years. He was invested as bishop in March 2004. Since that time, Bishop Robinson has become a vocal and visible supporter of gay marriage, gay ordination, and gay rights. Honored by numerous organizations such as the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the Human Rights Campaign, and the Equality Forum, Bishop Robinson is the father of two grown daughters and the proud grandfather of two granddaughters. He lives with his partner, Mark Andrew. We look forward to welcoming him as a teacher and preacher on Pride Sunday.

Special note: On June 28 at morning worship, 11:00 a.m., an independent documentary film crew will be filming during the service for a documentary on Bishop Robinson's life as it relates to the struggle for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender equality within the Church and the nation. The film crew will focus on the Rt. Rev. Robinson and his activities during his time at First Church. It is likely that the film crew will capture images of the congregation and attendees. While there is no certainty that these images will appear in the completed documentary, the possibility exists nonetheless. For those members of the congregation and visitors who prefer not to have their images captured on film, a section of the sanctuary will be reserved. Other "no filming" areas at First Church will be designated and clearly marked.

DAY TRIP TO STONY POINT CENTER

Friday, June 26

9:30 a.m.—6:00 p.m.



The 60+ Circle Committee is sponsoring a day trip to PC(USA)'s Conference Center in Stony Point, New York, on June 26. The outing includes a gourmet lunch at the Gilmor Sloane House and a matinee at the Penguin Rep Theater. There are 10 spaces for seniors; the per-person cost is \$32. The bus will leave FPC at 9:30 a.m. and return by approximately 6:00 p.m.

To sign up, please call Georgia Pease at (212) 477-1693 by Friday, June 19.

NEW SANCTUARY MOVEMENT



SUPPORT ROXROY SALMON AS JULY 7 COURT DATE LOOMS

“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’”

—Matthew 25:44-45

The immigration case of our New Sanctuary partner, Roxroy Salmon, is reaching a critical phase. Roxroy’s final court appearance is scheduled for July 7th, and is likely to result in an Order of Removal separating him from his wife, four children, and grandchild. Now is the time to build support so that Roxroy can stay with his family in New York, the only home he has known for over 30 years.

Roxroy’s defense team is pursuing two strategies. The first is to persuade Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to grant deferred action, under which ICE would agree to delay acting on Roxroy’s order of deportation. ICE Field Director Christopher Shanahan may approve deferred action if we make him aware of our congregation’s mobilized and steadfast of Roxroy and his family. In addition to our petition campaign (thanks to everyone who signed!), we are now pursuing press articles, blogs and links to listservs as ways of getting Mr. Shanahan’s attention. If you have contacts or suggestions that might help in this effort, please contact Rita Rochford at ritarochford@earthlink.net.

The second strategy is to seek a “private bill” in Congress. A member of Congress would sponsor a bill specifically making an exception for Roxroy. We are reaching out to Roxroy’s Representative, Edolphus Towns, who has stood with Roxroy in the past, for help. Grania Marcus will be organizing a delegation to meet with Rep. Towns (NY-10). If you would like to be part of that delegation (and especially if you live in his district in Brooklyn), please contact her at grania_marcus@yahoo.com.

We must also prepare for Roxroy’s court appearance on July 7. We will be gathering at 8:00 a.m. for a rally, and will remain outside the building until Roxroy’s case has been heard (probably before 10:00 a.m.). For more about the court date, please contact David Wilson at neildiamondruz@hotmail.com.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY: Saturday, June 6.

The Mission Service Committee announces another opportunity to work on a Habitat project in the Bronx. Seven spaces are available; call Kurt Regush at (646) 428-5180 to sign up.

FENCE PAINTING: Saturdays, June 13 and 27.

The Church’s fence has been wire-brushed to remove rust, chewing gum, and other strange substances. Now we need to apply one or two coats of shiny black paint to complete the transformation. Anyone who would like to help should sign up on the display board in the lobby of the Mellin-Macnab Building. Don’t miss this opportunity to be the object of strange looks and comments from New Yorkers and tourists alike! Work will start at 10:00 a.m. and wrap up by 4:00 p.m. Help any time during that period will be appreciated, so if you can spare an hour or two, sign up!

Harry Potter AND THE BIBLE

SUNDAY, JUNE 7, AT 12:30 P.M.

Bring your favorite Harry Potter book and we’ll supply the Bibles for a fun discussion of the many parallels this best-selling series has with Christian themes. Author J.K. Rowling worships at a reformed church in Scotland and once remarked, “If anyone asked me about my faith, they would know how this series will end.” The Harry Potter series has been banned by some Christian organizations, so we’ll talk about how we agree or disagree with this. This fun class is for all ages, young and old and Muggles alike! Pizza will be served.

Spring Garden Event during Coffee Hour Sunday, June 14

The Membership Committee invites you to a special coffee hour on Sunday, June 14, on the South Lawn following the service. Refreshments will be provided by Jackie Fike and the kitchen committee, and we hope you will join us for this opportunity to greet one another in our beautiful gardens, weather permitting. The North Lawn will be reserved for the activities of children and their families.

A Month of Sundays

Worship This Month at First Presbyterian

SUNDAY, JUNE 7

Trinity Sunday

Sermon: The Rev. Dr. Jon M. Walton preaching

Sacrament: Communion

SUNDAY, JUNE 14

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sermon: The Rev. Dr. Jon M. Walton preaching

SUNDAY, JUNE 21

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Father's Day—First Day of Summer

Sermon: The Rev. Dr. Mark D. Hostetter preaching

Sacrament: Baptism

SUNDAY, JUNE 28

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Gay Heritage of Pride Sunday

Sermon: Bishop V. Gene Robinson preaching



Gazing Up Toward Heaven: Saying Goodbye for the Summer

Sunday, May 31
11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

**All Youth (6th-12th grade) are invited
to join the Rev. Barbara E. Davis in the
Library.**

First Notes

*The First
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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

**The First Presbyterian Church
in the City of New York**
12 West 12th Street, New York, NY 10011
Tel: (212) 675-6150 Fax: (212) 675-8674
<http://www.fpcnyc.org>

Jon M. Walton, Pastor
Sarah Segal McCaslin, Associate Pastor
Barbara E. Davis, Minister of Christian Education
Mark D. Hostetter, Associate Pastor
William F. Entriken, Organist and Choirmaster
Mia Alvar, Communications Supervisor

