

Parish Registry

DISMISSED

Janet R. Whitman
To: Brick Presbyterian Church New York City

Anita Duncan
To: Marble Collegiate Church New York City

BAPTISMS

Adult

Annie Jeffrey
 Jennifer Minerva Gatti

Child

Yulu Sun Brown
Daughter of Ines Sun and Chris Noel Brown

Tuesday Lili Hadden
Daughter of Amy Martha Olson Hadden and Michael Shane Hadden

Samuel Frisch Magill
Son of Amy Elise Frisch and Robert Timlin Magill

Jonathan Warren Massey
Son of Julia Elizabeth Dean Massey and William Everett Massey

Ella Caswell Marriott
Daughter of Susannah Taylor Marriott and Phillip W. Marriott

Louis Thomas Mullarkey
Son of Lara Steensland Mullarkey and Thomas Francis Xavier Mullarkey, Jr.

James Francis Wilmot
Son of Nicole Francis and John Wilmot

Lydia Catherine Burke
Daughter of Erin Suzanne Kelly and Justin John Burke

Raffaella Rae Rubenstein
Daughter of Sara Fitzmaurice Rubenstein and Perry Roy Rubenstein

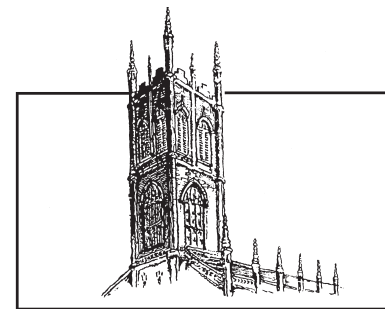
Ellen McBride Hetfield
Daughter of Sarah Curtis Hetfield and Lee Matthew Hetfield

Sarah Patricia McCaffrey Hatchett
Daughter of Cynthia Lillian McCaffrey and Michael Eric Hatchett

John Kenneth Roemischer
Son of Julia Anne Glazer and Thomas Andreas Roemischer

MARRIAGES

Jennifer Weighart and David Chin
 Jennifer Elizabeth Richey and Kevin Joseph Votel
 Margo Elizabeth Moulton and David Bruce Pereyra
 Amy Leigh Schnauffer and Robert J. Brennan
 Lisa Marie Blas and William John Latimer
 Amy Beth Wertheimer and William Thomas Elkins
 Kathleen Dunlop and Jason Kofman



The Church Tower

The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York

The Word about Christmas

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

John 1:14

So writes the evangelist John in his gospel's prologue, John 1:1-14. The "Word" in John's vocabulary is a way of identifying not simply the basic unit of syntax but a much larger concept, an Idea, Thought, or Essence so inseparable from God that John says this Word was with God in the beginning of all time. In fact, this Word *was* God. Most importantly, this Word was embodied, *enfleshed* in Jesus.

John is making the case that before all time the Word was a part of the essential nature of God. We might never have known of this Word except perhaps as a theological abstraction were it not for the fact that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us in Jesus Christ. This is the central claim of Christianity and the truth that we celebrate at Christmas, that God who is ineffable, eternal, and unchangeable became finite, particular, and human in the person of Jesus. The ten-dollar word for this *enfleshment* of God is Incarnation, and because of it we, as Christians, understand that the tangible, real, and physical world is a world that God has pronounced not only good (in Genesis 1), but has also loved so much as to take on its earthly, physical substance and become human.

Because God has embraced humanity by taking on human flesh we can no longer make an arbitrary division between the spiritual and the physical worlds. God is not removed from the tactile, sensory, *enfleshed* world of everyday life. God is present even there. The psalmist said it this way, "If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there." (Ps. 139:8)

Christianity's unique and outrageous claim is that God came in human form in the person of Jesus Christ. Behind the story of the announcement of a miraculous pregnancy, within the story of the humble birth of a child in a manger, under-

girding the story of shepherds who hear an angel chorus, and embedded in the story of Magi who follow a star is the story of a God who so loved the *world* in all its earthy, fleshly, material reality that he took on human flesh and lived a life and died a death.

As a result of that *enfleshment* there is nothing about our lives that does not bear something of the essence and goodness of God's grace. The physical world is the particular locus of God's eminent and transcendent love, so that everything declares God's glory. The smell of the pumpkin pie in the oven, the piney scent of the Christmas tree in the living room decorated for the season, the taste of the peppermint candy cane dissolving on the tongue, the sound of a glorious aria from *Messiah* sung by the choir, your daughter dressed as an angel for the Christmas pageant, and the feel of the heartbeat of your beloved under your hand as you lie curled next to one another through the night—these are all expressions of the nearness of God and the blessedness of everything that God has made.

The lines between heaven and earth are blurred by this Incarnation. Every tree is refuge for a burning bush. Every star may guide a Wise One. And every human flesh bears the mark of heaven's image. Because God so loved the world.

In a world bent on war in this Advent season, as we as a nation stand prepared to inflict suffering on another, this season of the Incarnation comes not only as a hopeful reminder of the magnitude of God's love but also as a reminder of the weight of our accountability to love and care for this world that is the object of God's enduring affection. The Word has become flesh, and still dwells among us.

JON WALTON

The Church Tower

The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York

CHURCH HOUSE

12 WEST 12 STREET NEW YORK NY 10011

Return Service Requested



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Presbyterians for Peace

On October 13, as war drums beat steadily louder, I preached a sermon in opposition to a pre-emptive, unilateral attack by the United States on Iraq. While conceding that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's regime is evil, oppressive, cruel, and a threat to the rest of the world, I held that we Christians see war as an absolute last resort. In my view, President George W. Bush simply hasn't made the case that we are yet there with regard to Iraq.

More than any other sermon I've given at First Church, this one moved many of you to speak with me about your reactions to it. We are a diverse congregation, comprising veterans as well as students, bankers as well as artists. While individual opinions differ, I sense that nearly everyone is torn. Having lived through the horrors of 9/11, few dismiss the threat posed by Saddam Hussein, and there is a widespread patriotism that has been missing for many since the Vietnam years. Yet most appear uncomfortable with Bush's call for war to forcibly disarm Iraq and change its ruling regime, sensing in our hearts that this course of action simply isn't just.

Some of our newer members were surprised to learn that First Presbyterian is not alone in wrestling with these issues. We are but one of more than 11,000 congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). We elect presbyters (elders and ministers) to participate in higher governing bodies beyond this particular church: the Presbytery of New York City, the Synod of the Northeast, and the national General Assembly. The Presbyterian News Service reported on October 22 that Presbyterian peace activists at all levels of the church are responding to the threat of military action against Iraq:

Answering the Biblical call to be peacemakers, droves of Presbyterians have signed statements and letters voicing opposition to the contemplated U.S. attack...Calls for restraint have come from the PC(USA)'s General Assembly, the General Assembly Council (GAC), and denominational officials. Presbyterians have taken part in peace marches on Washington, lobbying missions in Congress, and forums inviting people to share their personal views. Some have sent messages to Capitol Hill or submitted stories to newspapers urging that peace be given a chance.

The Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, the stated clerk of the General Assembly, recently joined other U.S. religious leaders in "statements of concern" about the confrontation with Iraq. Last summer, the Assembly itself urged caution, and in September the General Assembly Council did the same in a "call to prayer and action" in which it said United Nations weapons inspections should resume and be allowed to run their course. It said the United States should avoid acting alone or in a way that perpetuates the perception that "might makes right."

At the council's urging, Kirkpatrick and the Rev. Fahed Abu-Akel, a Palestinian-American from Atlanta who is currently serving as General Assembly moderator, wrote letters to President Bush and other government leaders, urging restraint.

Presbyterians have strongly favored the GAC's statement. Some middle governing bodies have endorsed it and encouraged church sessions to do the same. Some presbyteries, including our own Presbytery of New York City, have drafted their own antiwar resolutions. Other presbyteries have endorsed statements and letters issued by various ecumenical faith groups and peace and justice organizations, among them the National Council of Churches and Churches for Middle East Peace.

To help Iraqi civilians, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) recently announced that 33,250 "Gift of the Heart" school kits are being sent to Iraq through its partner Church World Service (CWS). That effort, a collaboration of several church-related groups, is a follow-up to an emergency and humanitarian relief program PDA has been involved in since the end of the Gulf War. Last year, it provided \$160,000 worth of sewing and health kits, as well as \$10,000 to help buy bed sheets for hospitals.

At times like these, we are called, as individuals and as a church, to engage substantively in discussion on matters of war and peace as they relate to our faith. I hope many will take advantage of the resources our "connectional" church has assembled to support this effort at a special PC(USA) Web site: www.pcusa.org/iraq.

LINDLEY G. DEGARMO

Advent and Christmas Music at FPC

December 8, at 4:00 PM

A Ceremony of Carols, Britten
Aria in Classic Style for Harp and Organ, Grandjany
Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, (Sleepers, Wake), Cantata #140, Bach

December 22, at 4:00 PM

CANDLELIGHT CAROL SERVICE

Christmas Eve, at 11:00 PM

CHRISTMAS VESPERS

Since the introduction of organ and choral music in the reformed worship at First Presbyterian in 1888, Advent and Christmas music at First Presbyterian has been a special offering in New York City. For over a century, First Presbyterian has been presenting major choral and organ works from the seasonal repertoire along with familiar carols and Christmas songs in the context of inspirational worship. People travel far and wide to experience sacred music in the sacred space of First Presbyterian Church.

On December 8 at 4:00 PM, the soloists and choir, along with harp and orchestra, will present a musical feast of Advent and Christmas music. The service will begin with Benjamin Britten's unique setting of Old-English poetry about the birth of Jesus. Scored for women's chorus, soloists, and harp, this hauntingly beautiful composition combines both the joyous

ADVENT-CHRISTMAS CALENDAR 2002



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT
7 AM—WQXR (96.3) Broadcast
9:30 AM—Library: Adult Bible Study
led by Ms. Barbara E. Davis
11:00 AM—Worship with Communion
Rev. Lindley G. DeGarmo preaching

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6

A Tartan Christmas—4:00 PM to 8:00 PM

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7

A Tartan Christmas—10:00 AM to 5:00 PM

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT
9:30 AM—Library: Adult Bible Study
led by Dr. Jon M. Walton
11:00 AM—Worship
Dr. Jon M. Walton preaching
Tartan Fair open after Service

4:00 PM

Musical Vesper Service
A Ceremony of Carols, Britten
Sleeper's Wake, Cantata #140, Bach
First Church Choir, Soloists, and Orchestra
Dr. William F. Entriken, Choirmaster
Reception follows the service

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10

7:00 PM—"Peacemaking and the Biblical Story"
Adult Education Study led by Barbara E. Davis

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13

6:00 PM—Advent Family Dinner
(Please make a reservation.)
South Wing



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT
7 AM—WQXR (96.3) Radio Broadcast
9:30 AM—Library: Adult Bible Study
led by Dr. Walton
10:15 AM—Family Chapel Service
11:00 AM—Worship with Sacrament of Baptism
Dr. Jon M. Walton preaching
12:30 PM—"Dwelling Among Us: Exploring the
Doctrine of the Incarnation"
Adult Study led by Barbara E. Davis

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT
9:30 AM—Library: Adult Bible Study
led by Dr. Walton
11:00 AM Worship
Dr. Jon M. Walton preaching
No Church School
Special Class for 3, 4, 5 Year Olds
Child Care

4:00 PM

Candlelight Carol Service
Carols on the Lawn following service
Reception in the Parlor
Youth Party in the Library

CHRISTMAS EVE

5:00 PM

Family Christmas Eve Service
"The Living Nativity"

11:00 PM

Christmas Eve Worship
Dr. Jon M. Walton preaching
Candlelight Service

CHRISTMAS DAY

The Church House Is Closed.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29

9:30 AM—Adult Bible Study
"Flight to Egypt" led by Barbara E. Davis
11:00 AM—Worship
Rev. Lindley DeGarmo preaching
No Church School and No Child Care

for more than 13 incredibly difficult and crisis-filled months. Thank you, Betty. Thank you!”

The Caring Community was founded in 1973 by a coalition of Greenwich Village religious and educational institutions (of which First Church was one) to serve the needs of seniors in the Village and downtown Manhattan. One of its programs meets in the South Wing at First Church Mondays through Fridays, offering a full schedule of exercise, educational and recreational activities, and lunch.

JEANETTE NINAS JOHNSON

First Church on the Web

The Communications Committee is pleased to announce the launch of a redesigned and updated version of First Church's Website, which can be viewed online at www.fpcnyc.org. We hope that the site will continue to serve as a valuable resource to current and prospective members of the First Church community.

The project of updating the Website began in the spring of 2001, when an outside designer, Elizabeth McAlpin, was retained by the Committee to assist Ben Maddox in developing a new look for the site. The Committee selected a new design in the fall of 2001 and has spent much of the past year implementing substantive revisions to the church's existing site, such as adding audio versions of our weekly sermons, while concurrently preparing a “new” site with the assistance of the church staff.

The new Website is composed of six major areas:

About First Church includes a welcome message from our Senior Pastor, Jon Walton, and provides information on who we are as a community, including information on how to become a member, church staff, officers and committee members, and our relationship with the larger Presbyterian Church (USA) denomination; the history and architecture of First Church, including several articles written by First Church's archivist,

David Pultz; and directions to the church for visitors.

Worship & Music describes the nature of the worship service at First Church and provides scheduling details for regular and special services, including information on our WQXR Radio broadcasts. This area also includes a welcome message from our Organist and Choirmaster, Bill Entriiken, and describes many facets of First Church's sacred music ministry, including information on musical events, cassette and CD recordings, First Church's choir, and some history on the Guilman Organ School and the organs that have animated our sanctuary.

Sermons provides text and audio files of recent First Church sermons in multiple formats.

Church Life includes details of the many programs and activities available to members and friends of First Church, including information on membership, volunteer opportunities, Christian education, fellowship, and stewardship. This area also includes a welcome message from our Director of Christian Education, Barbara Davis, and the beginnings of a First Church photo gallery that we hope will grow over time.

What's New is an area where a frequent visitor to the site can “check in” to view a printable version of the most recent calendar of events from *First Notes*, as well as any special announcements, and to find Daily Meditations via a link to the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s Website.

Publications provides online access to First Church's regular publications, *The Tower* and *First Notes* (including a printable version of the most recent calendar of events), as well as other in-house publications such as *Ways to Help*, prepared by the Church and Society Committee.

While all members of the Committee deserve credit for their hard work on this project, particular thanks should be extended to Ben Maddox, Sorrel Ann Alburger, Barbara Morrow, and Kathleen Dunlop for their extraordinary efforts.

Next time you're online, we hope you'll stop by for a visit.

LAUREL REIMAN HENNEMAN

DOUGLAS LADENDORF

On Greed and Leadership

The existence and persistence of human greed
Is something with which we all must reckon
Many find it an irresistible creed
Whenever the greedmongers beckon.
It destroys integrity, and honor and trust
And music and culture and art.
We resist it occasionally, as we must
But too often, we agree to take part.
The observers, silently and carefully, learn
With a demeanor curious and mild
And, unfortunately, no ability to discern
For who learns quicker than a child?

Thus we perpetuate and extend the attitudes
That slowly are destroying our nation
While we mouth hypocritical platitudes
And seek yet some new sensation
Which distracts us from looking inside our minds
To find some long-term solution
And courage to support a person who finds
The true intentions of our Constitution.
It will be a dreamer, strong but meek,
Not aggressive, using words to manipulate.
Someone Christ-like we need to seek
Who will teach and inspire; not just agitate.
With a simple manner—open and direct
Perhaps without charismatic charms
With reasoning with which we can quickly connect
Who will lead us back to God's arms.

EUGENE CANNAVA

and mysterious spirit of this most blessed season. Britten composed on board ship returning to England during the winter of 1942, and shortly before he composed his famous opera *Peter Grimes*. The choir, soloists, and orchestra will also present Bach's well-known Cantata #140 *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme!* (Sleepers, Wake), which is based on the chorale by the same name. This chorale is Hymn No. 17 in the Presbyterian Hymnal and one that is sung every Advent season. The famous fourth movement from this cantata was transcribed by Bach as an organ-chorale prelude and is played every first Sunday of Advent.

On December 22 at 4:00 PM is the annual Candlelight Carol Service. This is a very special service when the choir presents anthems and carols of the season and the congregation sings many carols as well. At this point in time, one has lost count as to how many years this annual tradition has been celebrated at First Presbyterian, but newspapers from the 30's give accounts of the congregation lined up on Fifth Avenue waiting to attend this popular service. The sanctuary aglow with candlelight, the beautiful strains of Christmas music filling the air, the congregation singing carols on the lawn followed by hot cider in the Church House, and the Gospel that Jesus Christ our Savior is born is a memorable time of worship.

In the New Year, February will be Organ Month at First Presbyterian with the third annual Guilman Organ Recital Series. This recital series is named after the famous Parisian organist, Alexandre Guilman, who along with First Presbyterian's first organist, Dr. William C. Carl, founded the first accredited American school of sacred music and organ playing at the church. The school opened in the fall of 1899 and remained at the church until the early 1960's. It was recognized as an important music institution, and students came from all over America to study at First Presbyterian. A series of three recitals will be presented by outstanding organists from the New York area. Please look in First Notes and the church bulletin for more information in the coming months.

WILLIAM ENTRIKEN

“In the Beginning...”

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:1

As this Advent season approaches, I have been tantalized by how our understanding of the Incarnation helps us enter into Advent. Advent is a season that embodies paradox; it points us forward with anticipation toward Christmas Day and, at the same time, it points us backward to the specific time and place when we as Christians believe that God became flesh and dwelt among us.

As a spiritual exercise for myself, I have been working through the book *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*. In drawing, an edge is a shared boundary. This idea practically jumped off the page when I read it, because I heard in it a parallel with the Incarnation. For example, in a drawing of a sailboat, there

will be a line that both defines the edge of the sail and the sightline of the sky. In that line, I believe, is a way to understand the Incarnation. The Incarnation is that sliver, which is both human and divine in the fullness of each. It is not easy to perceive the line working both of these boundaries at once, but with practice we can at least shift more quickly between the two perceptions.

At times like Advent, when our gaze is set toward that tiny infant Jesus, and we are confronted with a God who is so vulnerable and dependent on our humanness, I wonder if we are overconfident about knowing humanity and divinity well enough to know how they are separate. We draw the line so sharply and clearly, I can't help but wonder how our waiting and preparation during Advent might change if we saw, in Jesus' birth, God taking a thumb and rubbing it down that line, just enough to blur its boundaries.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us.

John 1:14a

BARBARA E. DAVIS
DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Waiting in Confidence

In September, I began commuting by train from Princeton into the city to begin my position as the seminary intern at First Church. And while I was excited about the opportunity to be a part of the life of this congregation, I have to admit I was not looking forward to the train commute. The idea of spending time waiting at the train station in Princeton, then again at Princeton Junction, and then waiting for the subway in Penn Station seemed like a lot of wasted time.

I have to admit that there are days when I don't have much patience for waiting. I would venture to say that most of you don't think too much of it either. Waiting seems like a passive waste of time for many of us. We would rather be doing something—making things happen. We want to be in control, and waiting means that someone else is likely dictating the schedule.

In this season of Advent, however, waiting is exactly what we are asked to do. But it is not a passive waiting for the train, but it is an active waiting for God. Henri Nouwen in his book, *Bread for the Journey*, puts it this way:

Waiting is essential to the spiritual life. But waiting as a disciple of Jesus is not an empty waiting. It is a waiting with a promise in our hearts that makes already present what we are waiting for. We wait during Advent for the birth of Jesus. We wait after Easter for the coming of the Spirit, and after the ascension of Jesus we wait for his coming again in glory. We are always waiting, but it is a waiting in the conviction that we have already seen God's footsteps.

Waiting is a spiritual discipline. When we wait, we acknowledge that it is God who is ultimately in control. Our waiting

during Advent should be joyful because it comes from knowing that we have already experienced God's presence among us. It is like waiting for a beloved family member to return home for the holidays. As the day approaches, our excitement level builds, because we know that at any minute they may come through the door and embrace us again. This is the joyful waiting that comes from knowing—from a long relationship where much has already been shared and many memories already exist. In this waiting there is confidence and expectation.

This Advent season let your waiting be active. As you wait for the coming of Jesus, as you prepare for the Word to become flesh and dwell among us, do so knowing that you have already seen his footsteps, you have already felt his love, and "we have all received, grace upon grace." (John 1:16)

PETER HAZELRIGG
SEMINARY INTERN

Church and Society Benevolence

As a committee of Session, Church and Society is responsible for:

1. being aware of and educating and motivating the congregation on matters of social concern;
2. recommending to Session the distribution of a portion of restricted benevolence funds.

These two charges are interdependent, and the committee works with other committees and individuals within the church community to fulfill them.

Guided by the principles written in the Book of Order, and approved by the Session and Church and Society Committee, the benevolence budget allows us to participate in the broader Presbyterian Church, from local to worldwide, pay attention to issues of particular importance to First Church as a congregation, include controversial or unpopular issues, and also give attention to organizations which offer volunteer and/or advocacy opportunities to First Church members. Grants are given for one year in amounts, with one exception, of \$1,000 or more. A complete listing of activities and grant-making will be included in the church's Annual Report.

From the 2002 Church and Society Benevolence Budget total of \$133,855, the following grants have been made to date:

1. **Shared Mission: \$55,700**—Money sent to the General Church to support theological education, church development, disaster relief, salary supplements, camps, senior centers, etc.
2. **Church of Gethsemane: \$10,000** general support, **\$2,500** for camp scholarships—a congregation of prisoners, ex-prisoners, families, and community
3. **Lower Manhattan Together: \$4,000**—our membership fee to belong to this "organization of organizations"
4. **Auburn Seminary: \$3,500**—our most local Presbyterian Seminary
5. **Presbyterians for Restoring Creation: \$1,000**—a national organization bringing environmental concerns before the church

6. **Presbyterian Senior Services: \$5,000**—an agency serving approximately 3,000 older adults

7. **First Presbyterian Church in Astoria Queens: \$1,500**—for a specialized computer to help equip the office of the pastor who has recently become legally blind

8. **Covenant Network: \$5,000**—a national organization committed to removing G.601065 from the Book of Order

9. **Supportive Care at St. Vincent's: \$1,000**—a program of volunteers providing support for patients with advanced/terminal illnesses, and also to their families

10. **John Heuss House: \$1,000**—drop-in center for the homeless and mentally frail

11. **Beyond Charity – SEED New York: \$3,000**—an organization committed to ending poverty through access to education

12. **Bailey House: \$500**—fund to purchase food for cooking meals at Bailey House on 5th Sundays

13. **Presbyterian Welcome: \$5,000**—a New York City organization committed to inclusiveness in the church

The committee will make grants again at the end of November and December, which are expected to include the Presbyterian Camp at Holmes, First Church nursery school scholarships, and local seminaries.

In addition to grant-making, the committee has participated in the annual Health Fair and Blood Drive, held a Mission Fair to encourage members of the congregation to volunteer in organizations we have funded, and organized a Housing Forum to begin to address our frustrations over the housing situation in New York City. We post notices of current social issues and activities on the bulletin board, and maintain a booklet, recently updated, called "Ways to Help," which lists volunteer opportunities at the church and in the community. Copies are available in the lobby of the Mellin-Macnab Building.

MYRLE WALL, CHAIR
CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMITTEE

Buildings and Grounds

Dollars at Work

We hope you took notice of the work completed during the summer:

- The Morrow Room is a new color, and a chair rail was added to protect the wall paint.
- The water-damaged plaster outside the Alexander Chapel, in the Mezzanine Room, and the second-floor balconies was repaired and the rooms were painted.
- The lower portion of the South Wing's Great Hall and the lobby of the Mellin-Macnab Building were painted.

Thanks to the House Committee for selecting the colors, and thanks to Tony Feliciano, our sexton, who had a busy summer supervising workmen.

Replacement of the service area floor in the Morrow Room was required. There was work in the Brick Room to seal the stone walls and repair the windows. We replaced the South

Wing kitchen windows, as needed, to prevent dirt from 11th Street entering the building.

Heavy rains manifested a leaking roof that had to be replaced over the South Wing vestibule. Other emergencies occurred with the Mellin-Macnab heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) system. A compressor was replaced in order to have air conditioning in either the Parlor or in the Assembly Hall. Leaking and corroded pipes leading to the cooling tower on the roof had to be replaced. The HVAC system is over 40 years old, so eventually a new system will be a priority capital expenditure.

The Alexander Chapel was re-opened in October following a cleaning and refurbishing of its interior, pews, and furniture. Restoration of the ceiling and walls was necessitated by water damage that occurred during the South Wing construction.

A new reception desk for the Mellin-Macnab Building arrived and was installed in late September. A new sign, replacing the one on the north lawn destroyed by an April windstorm, was installed in early November.

Your Building and Grounds Committee has endeavored to be good stewards in maintaining First Church's facilities with the funds available. The list of outstanding projects far exceeds our financial budget, so each year a concerted effort is made to maximize our expenditures for the overall maintenance of the church.

MYRA L. TOBIN, CHAIR
BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE

News from the Nursery School

We've been meeting with teachers and parents for fall conferences, writing reports for children applying to kindergarten, and planning curriculum for the intensely focused winter months coming up. It's clear that many kinds of learning are taking place at the Nursery School.

During the first few months of school, the children have been learning to be in school, internalizing the knowledge that their parents will return for them, and that they can trust their teachers to take care of them. They are learning that being part of a group includes both pleasures and demands—and that the pleasures are worth the demands. They are learning that other people have feelings like they do, and that a friend's idea can be different from theirs. They are learning to listen to others and to adjust their own concepts to include new information and points of view. They are learning specific skills. They are also establishing attitudes toward other people that are respectful and caring, and they are developing a disposition towards school that is eager, open, and full of anticipation. Their "first round" as students offers pride in accomplishment as well as a captivating social environment and a daily succession of interesting, age-appropriate experiences that challenge their minds and bodies.

But children aren't the only learners! Parents go through a process of self-discovery as they learn to be better parents. It begins as they seek schools that reflect their own values, and

continues as they observe their child's development in school, confer with teachers, and take part in parent education workshops. They engage in a variety of volunteer activities that enlist (and enlarge) their skills and interests for the benefit of the school.

And those of us who work with the children and parents are on a never-ending learning curve! Each child is seeing the world for the first time, so there are infinite variations on how to support their growth and discovery. Over half of our teachers are in college or graduate programs. The others enroll in courses, participate in workshops, and attend conferences—under the sponsorship of the school. The school is committed to ongoing learning for teachers. The whole staff just attended a huge national conference for several days. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) met in New York in November, providing an unprecedented opportunity for all of us to learn together.

Our commitment to a learning environment is an inclusive one—everyone participates, everyone learns.

As we begin a new calendar year, we resolve anew to continue to build a community that learns together, and embodies the values our world needs most: listening to and respecting one another, and viewing differences as opportunities for more profound understanding. All of us at the Nursery School wish you a deeply satisfying holiday season and a peaceful year to come.

ELLEN ZIMAN
DIRECTOR, NURSERY SCHOOL

The Caring Community

Honors Betty Jones

Congratulations to Betty Jones, Clerk of Session and First Church member since 1955, who was awarded The Caring Community's 2002 Community Service Award at a gala dinner-dance on November 4 at the Tribeca Rooftop in Greenwich Village. Mistress of Ceremonies was Julie Chen, news anchor of the CBS-TV Early Show.

Also honored was the Rev. Roger A. Ferlo, Rector of the Church of St. Luke in the Fields, who received The Caring Community's 2002 Leadership Award.

Betty's award was presented by Eleanor Z. Korman, Chairperson of The Caring Community's Board of Directors. Ms. Korman said of Betty, "(She) has been a professional social worker since 1955...and has worked in a variety of settings...eventually becoming Executive Director of Brookwood Child Care Services in Brooklyn. Her demonstrated compassion for seniors dates back to 1972, when she and the Rev. John Mellin of First Presbyterian Church were among those who worked to save the Village Nursing Home...."

"Shortly after she retired as Executive Director of Brookwood, Betty joined the Board of The Caring Community. A stroke of luck for us! Because in May 2001, Betty volunteered to serve as the interim executive director of The Caring Community until a new director could be found. 'Interim' lasted