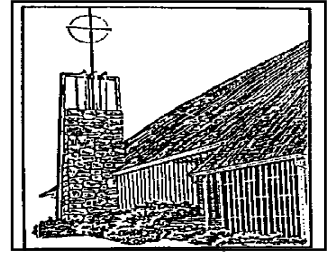


The Pulse



Volume 38, Issue 5
May 2006

MAY WORSHIP TOPICS

Sunday, May 7

Communion
Graduation and Teacher
Recognition
Psalm 23
John 10:11-18
“Comfort at Great Price”

Sunday, May 14

Music Sunday
Mother’s Day
Psalm 22:25-31
Acts 8:26-40
“The Fences Come Down”

Sunday May 21

The Rev. Dick Madden

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR MARY ROBINSON-MOHR

I heard a great story when I was in Louisville last February for a consultation with the Institute that awarded the grant for my upcoming sabbatical. One of the speakers related how she had been waiting for a colleague to keep an appointment with her, but the colleague had never before been to the meeting place. Twenty minutes went by the appointed time. No colleague. Then thirty minutes became forty-five, and then one hour. Shortly after a wait of one hour, the friend appeared. She had gotten a ticket for speeding. “Oh no!” her waiting friend said. “But surely that didn’t delay you for an entire hour?”

“Well, no, I got lost,” the friend replied sheepishly. “I couldn’t make sense of the directions you had given to me. It got later and later, and I drove up first one street, and then the next, looking for your address. I also knew I was late, so I drove faster and faster, the later it got.”

“I was pulled over for speeding after being lost for about forty-five minutes. When the police officer approached me, I tried to explain by saying, ‘I’m sorry for speeding officer, but I’m lost.’ He replied, ‘Ma’am, I’m sorry too, but whatever made you think that driving faster would help?!’”

Everyone who heard the story laughed. We each saw ourselves in the story. Perhaps you see yourself, too, flying around with a zillion demands on your time and energy, and having only a fatigued, crabby self as a result.

The speaker in Louisville tried to make the point that a sabbatical time should be a time for each one of us to refocus and renew and retool our skills, instead of zooming from one task to another with no time for reflection, creativity, and vision. I covet your prayers for me that I will be a good steward of the gift of a sabbatical time, listening and watching for the things that God would show me.

But pastors and university professors are not the only persons who need sabbatical time. One of the most neglected tenets of our faith these days is Sabbath keeping. “Oh,” you may think, “Doesn’t Sabbath keeping mean that we can harangue our neighbors for mowing their lawn and working on a Sunday, or feel really guilty if we do that?” Well, no. Sabbath keeping is a gift that is part of God’s creative

continued on page 2...

St James Presbyterian Church

910 14th Street ~ Bellingham, Washington 98225

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process in Genesis. Sabbath keeping is so important to the overall well being of people, animals, and even land that it is part of the Ten Commandments. Jesus had to clarify the meaning of Sabbath several times in his ministry, stating that the Sabbath is meant to be a gift for us, not some kind of ritual done only to test our faithfulness. Jesus chose to heal a man on a Sabbath day, but was challenged by religious officials watching for any mistakes he might make. “Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save life or to destroy it?” he responded.

I hope you will use Sabbath time in your life to deepen your faith, and to take care of the gifts God has given to you. Recognize you are mortal and finite, and that your energy and strength and time have limits. You are not God, but even God who is limitless saw joy and goodness in using Sabbath time as part of the process of creating, and as a time to savor and consider the beauty of the creation, to literally “stop and smell the roses.”

Use Sabbath time as a very necessary opportunity to renew yourself. Think of the commandment to honor the holiness of the Sabbath, and see it as something like one of the first labor laws. Be a good steward of the body, the land, and the creatures that God has created and loves. Some people need “permission” to care for themselves. Well, there you have it. The Ten Commandments are probably the strongest forms of permission you can get. Care for yourself with adequate rest and “thinking time,” seeing this as a discipline that is just as important as good nutrition, exercise, hygiene, and medical care.

May Sabbath time be for you a time of prayerful reflection, whether on Sundays or for fifteen minutes each day, or for some other time set aside for this purpose. Sabbath time can allow you to ponder why you are here, by the grace of God. You are here because you are blessed to be called into being by a God of justice, mercy, and love. That is a wonderful gift, and it is often swept to the side of our consciousness as we race around trying to accomplish way too much stuff that probably doesn’t matter in the long run anyway. Take time to ponder the wonder of God’s love and purpose for you. Recenter yourself in pursuing your discipleship.

If that happens, then you won’t be madly driving all over creation without really knowing where you are going!

Randy, Susannah, and I will last see you on Sunday, May 14. We look forward to returning to you in August, hopefully with many adventures and insights to share. God be with each one of you in our parting.

Grace and Peace, Pastor Mary

PAMPHLET DISCLAIMER

Many persons who attended the 10:30 a.m. Easter Sunday service here at St. James were surprised to find pamphlets left on their car windshields parked around the church. The pamphlet appears to be a product of “The White Rose Society.” Please note that this pamphlet was distributed on church property and in the surrounding neighborhood without the knowledge or permission of the Session or the staff of St. James. Whereas those who distributed the pamphlets had their heart in the right place to try to raise consciousness for peace-making efforts, their method of leafleting without permission is counterproductive and even harmful to peace-making efforts. Pictures and phrases that are chosen to manipulate the emotions of readers do not lead to education, to fact-finding, or to dialogue. If any of you know who chose to distribute these pamphlets, please ask them to use the official channels to gain permission to share their information with our members and visitors in the future. Thank you.

**MAY BIRTHDAYS
& ANNIVERSARIES**

May Birthdays
* * *

- 2 Dillon Griffith
- 2 Jenny Sue LeSchander
- 3 Elizabeth Crandall
- 5 Jacqueline Hellinga
- 8 Karen Morse
- 9 Fred Richardson
- 11 Helen Oliver-Leen
- 12 Janis Harnden Bayless
- 14 Peter van der Veen
- 17 Loren Frafford
- 18 Bob Pace
- 19 Leila Terry
- 19 Phoebe McGarry
- 25 Jim Hamstreet
- 29 Dorothy Brown
- 30 Mary Gloppen

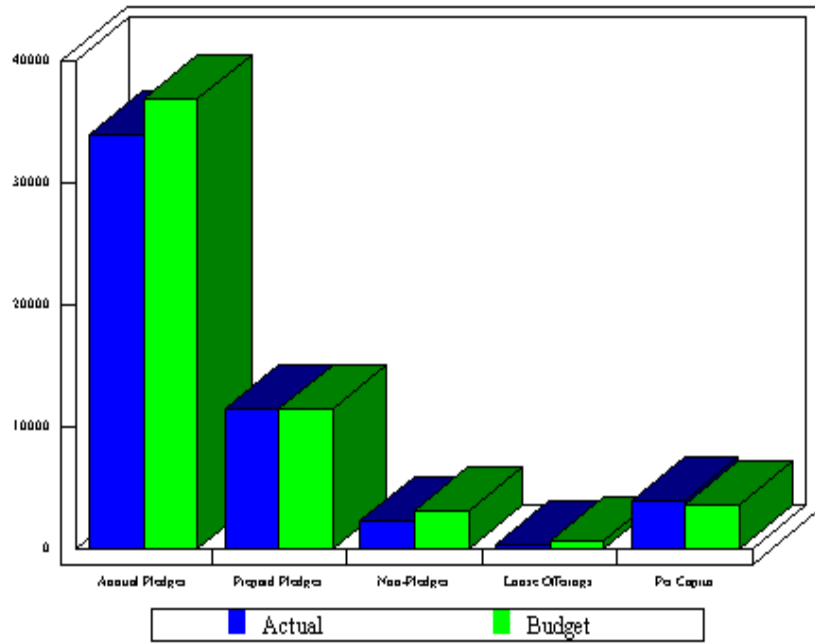
May Anniversaries
* * *

- 1 Denise & Roy Hoffman
- 3 Tony & Nancy Richter
- 12 Dave & Twyla Bader
- 13 Bruce & Marsha Lockhart
- 26 David & Renée Meyer
- 27 Marjorie & Don Thorson

TREASURER'S NOTE
SALLY ALBERS

On April 11, I mailed out "Pledge Statements" to everyone who had made pledges for 2006. Some of you told me you appreciated the information and others found them confusing. The biggest problem is that I included April dates to be "fully current". The report then expected everyone to have paid April pledges, though the month was still in progress. I'll be looking for a better form next time!

Income through March 31, 2006



CORRECTION!

The St. James Office staff sincerely apologies for the mistake in last month's newsletter: **Sally Albers** is the Treasurer of the church, not Sally Crandall. Our apologies to both Sallys for the mistake!



MONTHLY CHURCH WORK PARTY

Summer is almost here... Please join us for the monthly all-church clean-up landscaping ~ fix-it ~ workday: Saturday

May 13, 9 am – 12 noon.

Bring your favorite tools, and join us in maintaining our lovely church!



ST. JAMES PRAYER CHAIN

If you have a prayer request for the St. James Prayer Chain/E-mail Team call **Linda Monroe** at **360-671-6594** or e-mail her at **Lidale@aol.com**.



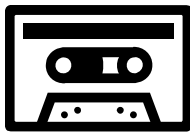
NEW MEMBERS ORIENTATION

Would you like to explore membership in St. James Presbyterian Church? A New Members Orientation will be held on **Sunday, May 7 at 4:30 p.m.** There will be an opportunity following the orientation to meet with the Session to request membership and share a light supper. It couldn't be any easier! Childcare is available upon request.

Questions? Need more information? Call the church office at 733-1325, or talk with Pastor Mary.

WORSHIP TAPES AVAILABLE FOR LOAN

Our morning worship service is audio-taped each Sunday. If you know of anyone who would like a copy of any recent service, please check one out in the church library.



SUNDAY MORNING PARKING

Four reserved (handicapped) parking spaces are designated in our front, 14th Street parking area. In addition to these designated spaces, we would like to save all of the 14th Street parking on Sunday mornings during the Worship Service for those who need level access and our first-time visitors. If you have no difficulty climbing stairs, please use the lower parking area or the Lowell playground lot. The Lowell lot is accessed off of Taylor between 14th and 15th. There is a stairway down to 14th at the south end of the area.



MUSIC FOR MISSION ~ MAY 12

St. James Church will be holding a "Music for Missions Event" on May 12 at 7:30 pm after the Prime Timers Potluck dinner. Everyone is invited. If you would like to attend the potluck dinner which starts at 6:00 pm, it would be appreciated if you would let us know that you plan to attend.

The Star Performers for the "Music for Missions" will be announced at a later time.

I want to support the extra fundraising of the MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE of St. James Presbyterian Church in Bellingham, Washington. I understand that this support is over and above my present budget commitment to St. James Presbyterian Church

Name _____

E-mail _____

Address _____

State/Zip _____

___ **Enclosed is my check/cash** for

\$5___ \$10___ \$15___ \$20___ \$25___ \$50___ \$100___ \$500___ \$1,000___

Other _____

Please make checks payable to the St. James Presbyterian Church

___ **I will pledge** and donate

\$5___ \$10___ \$15___ \$20___ \$25___ \$50___ \$100___ \$500___ \$1,000___

Other _____ weekly/monthly

Thank you!

With your support the Committee will try to match the Committee's support of last year to the following local Missions: Interfaith Coalition, Skagit Ministries, UMHE, Bellingham Food Bank, Lighthouse Mission, Salvation Army, Habitat for Humanity, Sheldon Jackson University and Peace and Justice Center.

The "Music for Missions" committee



AIDS IN AFRICA: IT'S A MATTER OF FAITH

“AFRICAN CHURCHES BRING UNIQUE STRENGTHS TO THE AIDS BATTLE”

(PART VI OF VI)

Heads of state, corporate CEOs, world-renowned entertainers, and famous philanthropists are calling attention to the AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa. They are talking about billions of dollars for anti-retroviral drugs, a worthy cause that promises to extend the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Meanwhile, African churches know this is only one piece of the battle against AIDS. They are at work every day promoting prevention efforts, holding the hands of dying patients, and caring for AIDS orphans.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s support of its African partners in these efforts demonstrates solidarity, helps some of the world's most marginalized and oppressed people, and models sound stewardship. "We support the effort to provide anti-retroviral drugs, but that's not where we are putting our focus and resources now," says Joy Raatz, international HIV/AIDS initiative facilitator for the PC(USA). "Churches in Africa are doing some amazing things in the fight against AIDS and we are privileged to be able to support them by sending people and resources and by praying for them."

Churches are effective in the fight against AIDS because they are trusted and because they proclaim hope amid death and despair. African churches believe behavior can be transformed because the gospel can change hearts. They call people to responsible sexual behavior not just to avoid HIV/AIDS but also to urge them toward more faithful living. Hearts changed by the gospel extend welcome and acceptance to AIDS patients, a population often stigmatized, and raise the status of women, who often are consigned to a life of abject poverty and limited choices.

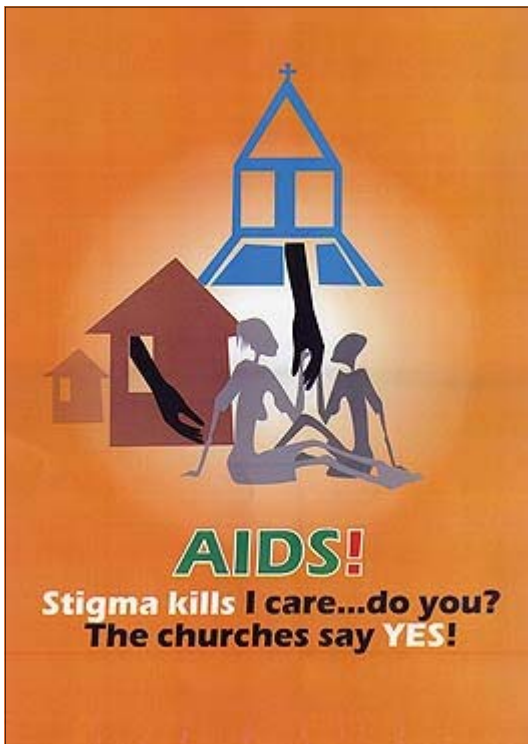


African churches' AIDS ministries reach from urban centers to rural villages. Photo: David P. Young.

"I've been impressed with the leadership role women in Africa are taking in Africa," Raatz says. "They are involved in every aspect of the fight against AIDS."

Part of that effort, she says, is women helping women move toward economic self-sufficiency by teaching them skills that generate income. Women are better able to avoid lifestyles and life situations that put them at risk for HIV/AIDS if they have some economic independence, says Raatz, who is completing a doctorate in health behavior at Indiana University. "I used to work at a health department in the States with women who were at high risk for AIDS," she explains. "I would visit homeless shelters and see how poverty is a contributing factor for AIDS because these women saw their life as hopeless and without choices. This is even more true in Africa."

In this context African churches are working to bring hope, and contributions from U.S. Presbyterians are helping their efforts. For African churches this is not just about fighting AIDS or improving society. It's a Matter of Faith.



Poster from Sudan. Courtesy of Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance.

This is the sixth and final part in a series of articles from the publication "AIDS in Africa: It's a Matter of Faith".

HELP PASTOR MARY PACK!

When Pastor Mary leaves for her sabbatical, she will take a suitcase with her to carry donations from members of St. James to programs for Palestinian children and youth. The Arab Orthodox Society in Jerusalem provides education and development programs for people of all ages, as well as other human services such as meals and health-care. Their primary concern is to care for refugees and other underprivileged persons caught in a very troubled area of the world.

The Arab Orthodox women have suggested to Mary that school supplies and children's books would be much appreciated. Watch for Mary's suitcase after Easter. The suitcase will be open for packing until Sunday May 14.

WHAT EXACTLY IS OUR PASTOR DOING?

Pastor Mary will be on sabbatical from May 15 until August 15. We are delighted that The Rev. Richard Madden will be on duty part-time for pastoral duties and preaching during that time. Dick Madden and his wife Marilyn worship regularly at St. James, ever since they moved to nearby Blaine for their retirement.

She and Randy and Susannah will first be staying at Kibbutz Ginnosar for the first eleven nights of their adventure. This kibbutz is right on the shore of the Sea of Galilee and close to the site of ancient Magdala. For the entire month of June, Mary will be digging at the archaeological site of Yotvata, on the location of an ancient Roman fortress. Yotvata is very far south in Israel, half an hour north of the town of Eilat. Yotvata is definitely out in the sticks, if the desert has sticks, and its isolation makes it quite secure. Mary hopes to do some writing and research regarding the origins of Israel when she is not taking pictures or digging. Stay tuned for more of that next fall!

WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**May 30**

Women's Group Bible Study 10:30 am
2005-2006 Horizons Bible Study

Women's Association Luncheon 12 pm
Plans are to meet at the Lychee Buffet 12 noon (on Lakeway, across from Fred Meyer's)

All women are invited for food,
fun and fellowship!

*Questions?**Please call Phyllis Jones, 734-4504***YOUTH NEWS**

MEGAN STAMPFLI, YOUTH DIRECTOR

This month the youth group will be busy with our "chore" fundraiser. They will be volunteering for yard work, housework, cookie delivery, and more. Funds will go toward our summer mission activities with Interfaith and Habitat. Keep an eye out for more information if you need some chores done around your house! Sunday school will meet on the 7th and the 21st during worship. Youth Group will meet from 4:30-6:00 on the 7th, 21st, and 28th. We will not be meeting on the 14th (Mother's Day) so that you can spend the day pampering your mommy! Hope you all have a great month of May!

GULF COAST WORK TEAM

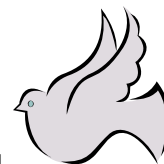
Thanks to everyone for attending the informational meeting on April 23. It is great to see so much interest in this project! We have enough people interested to form a work group, and people can still join if interested.

The work group will take place sometime between October and November.

If you would like more information, please contact Matt Hargleroad: 671-2646 or email: mhargler@hotmail.com

**PRAYER VIGIL FOR PEACE
IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

Please join in an ecumenical prayer vigil for the Christian communities in Jerusalem, for all those who are suffering in the Holy Land, for Palestinians and Israelis, and for peace in the Middle East. All are welcome.

**Tuesday, April 18, 5:30 pm**

Bellingham Friends

Exploration Academy, 1701 Ellis St., Tel. 312-8234

St. James Events Calendar

May 2006

Sunday schedule
 9 am Adult class
10:30 Worship
 12:30 pm Korean Worship
 4:30-6 pm Youth Group
 7 pm AA

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 12:45 pm Cub Scouts 6 Girl Scouts 6:30 Boy Scouts	2 8 am Prayer Group 5 pm Stewardship 5:30 pm Al Anon 7 Gender Group	3 5 pm Mission & Social Action 7 AA Men	4 2 pm Membership 5 Christian Ed. 6 Worship 6:30 Congregational Life 6:30 Bells 7:30 Chancel 7:30 AA	5	6 10 am OA
7 Communion Teacher & Grad. Recognition 12 pm Deacons 12 College Bible Study 4:30 New Members Class 7 Session	8 6 Girl Scouts 6:30 Boy Scouts	9 8 am Prayer Group 5:30 pm Al Anon 6 Girl Scouts 7 Gender Group	10 5:30 pm Weaver's Guild 7 AA Men	11 4 pm Staff 6:30 Bells 7:30 Chancel 7:30 AA	12 4:30 pm Girl Scouts 6 Prime Timers 7:30 "Music for Mission"	13 9-12 Church Work Party 10 OA
14 Mother's Day Music Sunday	15 6:30 Boy Scouts	16 8 am Prayer Group 5:30 pm Al Anon 7 Gender Group	17 <i>Pulse</i> Items Due! Presbytery 7 pm AA Men	18 5:30 pm Prayer Vigil 6:30 Bells 7:30 Chancel 7:30 AA	19 6:30 pm Women's Agapé Night	20 10 am OA
21 Last day of Sunday school	22 6 Girl Scouts 6:30 Boy Scouts	23 8 am Prayer Group 5:30 pm Al Anon 6 Girl Scouts 7 Gender Group	24 7 pm AA Men	25 6:30 Bells 7:30 Chancel 7:30 AA	26 4:30 pm Girl Scouts 6 Friday Night Social	27 10 am OA
Weaver's Guild Workshop						

28	29 Memorial Day	30 8 am Prayer Group 10:30 Women's Bible Study 12 Women's Association luncheon 5:30 pm Al Anon 7 Gender Group	31 7 pm AA Men			
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Church office
 Open Tuesday ~ Friday,
 9-12, 1-4
 733-1325
 E-mail: stjpres@msn.com

Research consistently emphasizes that young people want - and need - to be in relationships with many caring responsible adults.

The People of the Promise

A Celebration of Excellence in Christian Education
The 4th Sunday of Easter
May 7, 2006

Join the St. James Community as we thank faithful "people of the promise," those disciples we can "see, hear and hug." These faith heroes share leadership through stories, active teaching roles and friendship.

During Lent, the children in the multi-age class learned a simple chorus, a reminder that the promises of God are for all who have faith.

I Will Be Your God
I will be your God and you will be the people of the promise.
Forever I will bless and give my life for you.
-Words and music: Roddy Hamilton, 2003, "Seasons of the Spirit"

We have been challenged by leaders and learners to widen the circle of "traditional Sunday School programming." We have been blessed with avid readers, and most importantly, individuals and small groups reading, discussing and praying the scriptures in their personal and corporate lives. You have practiced shared leadership across the generations. Thank you.

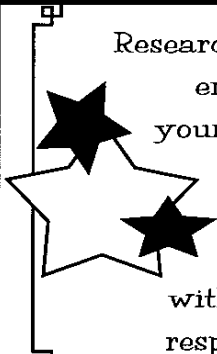
The Christian Education Committee

Elder and Chairperson: Rook Van Halm
Laura Crandall, Mark Danielson, Mary Robinson-Mohr, Gretchen Pfueller,
Megan Stampfli, Margaret VanZanten and Peg Wilke

Growing Together

Special thanks to Outstanding Faith Heroes!

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Librarian
Ramona Villani
Assistant
Fern Wibbens</p> | <p>Computers
Tim Crandall</p> | <p>Vacation Church School
Ann Lary & Rex Lary
Staff Support
Margaret VanZanten</p> |
| <p>Friday Social
Patti Cromarty
Mark Danielson • Gus & Rosy</p> | <p>Building & Grounds Committee</p> | <p>Lenten Devotional Editor
Carla Shafer
Randy Mohr <i>Visual Arts</i></p> |
| <p>Multi-Age Teachers & Assistants
Preschool to 5th Grade • "Seasons of the Spirit"
Akiko Anderson • Jennifer Capouilliez
Sally Crandall • Wendy Crandall • Patti Cromarty
Eva Landis • Linda Landis • Margaret VanZanten
Margaret Landis</p> | <p>Hospitality for C. Ed Events
Gretchen Pfueller</p> | <p>Multi-Age Bible Presentation
Kuni Anderson • Yoshi Anderson
Megan Bayless • Gus Danielson • Rosy Danielson
Katie Jackson • Chris Snyder</p> |





Discipleship Project Graduates

Educational opportunities offering credits as a way to strengthen our relationship with God and become more mature, informed Christians through adult education.



Saturday Live: Fall 2005

Leaders

Renee Meyer & Jan Resick
*A Study of the "Borderlinks Seminars"
 to US/Mexico Border*
 Gary Culbertson
 Carla Shafer
 Bev Stewart
 Karen Summers
 Margaret VanZanten

Sunday Adult Class

9AM Lounge

Leaders

Shared Leadership from Class
Seasons of the Spirit
Elder Support: Peg Wilke
 Ann Culbertson
 Gary Culbertson
 Margaret deMaine
 Bev Stewart
 Barb Kilpatrick
 Tom Kilpatrick
 Bob Monahan
 Nancy Richter
 Tony Richter
 Wayne Terry
 Peter VanderVeen
 Peg Wilke

Women's Bible Study: Last Tuesday • 10:30AM

Leaders

Shared Leadership from
 Congregation
*Horizons Bible Study,
 "For Everything, A Season."*
 Ann Culbertson
 Margaret deMaine
 Gladys Eckhart
 Mary Elmslie
 Dorothy Hermann
 Margaret Humble
 Margaret Humphrey
 Ann Lary
 Marilyn Madden
 Margaret McVie
 Nancy Richter
 Fern Wibbens
Guest Leaders
 Pastor Mary &
 Margaret VanZanten

Mission Yearbook

*For devotional reading and use as a
 leader of devotions for Session and
 Committee Meetings*
 John Dobbie
 Rook Van Halm

Lenten Study

The Heart of Christianity with Soup!

Ann Culbertson
 Gary Culbertson
 Barb Kilpatrick
 Tom Kilpatrick
 Mary Robinson-Mohr
 Randy Mohr
 Gretchen Pfueller
 Bill Read
 Katy Read
 Nancy Richter
 Tony Richter
 Bev Stewart
 Peter vanderVeen
 Julie Van Halm
 Rook Van Halm
 Margaret VanZanten
 Ramona Villani

Tuesday Prayer Group

St. James Participants
 Faye Hill
 Bob Monahan
 Gale Pfueller

Transforming Families

Fall 2005

1st Wed • 7PM Dessert

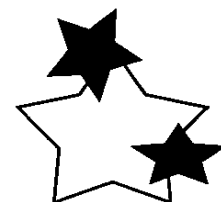
Leader

Mary Robinson-Mohr
 Margaret deMaine
 Randy Mohr
 Bill Read
 Katy Read
 Rook Van Halm
 Margaret VanZanten
 Peg Wilke

College Class Lunch & Bible Study

Leader

Pastor Mary
"Questions of Faith" video series
Youth Director/Class Member
 Megan Stampfli
 Sophie Burkland
 Cassie Nettle
 Nate Boshears



FROM THE MISSION & SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

- "WAR ON THE FAMILY: MOTHERS IN PRISON AND THE FAMILIES THEY LEAVE BEHIND". UMHE (United Ministries in Higher Education) is co-sponsoring a lecture by Renny Golden, Professor of Criminal Justice, Sociology and Social Work at NE Illinois University on Wednesday May 10 from noon to 1.30 at the Fairhaven College Auditorium.
- MIDDLE EAST PEACE QUILTS. The schedule for visits to the exhibit of Peace Quilts at the First Congregational Church on Cornwall during May is as follows:
 - Tuesday May 2,9,16 and 23 : 11-3
 - Wednesday My 3,10,17,24 : 7-9 p.m.
 - Thursday May 4,11,18,25 : 11-3
 - Sunday May 7,14,21,28 2-4 p.m.
 - Sunday May 28: 2. p.m. Presentation by Sima Elizabeth Shefrin, Peace Quilt initiator/coordinator.

St. James is among the exposition facilitators. Volunteers are needed to be at the exhibit during visiting hours. To help, please call Belle Shalom at 671-0631.

- FAMILY OF WOMAN. A photographic celebration of women around the world, May 2 - 30, Seattle Public Library. Open daily. No admission charge. Sponsor: Americans for United Nations Family Planning Association (UNFPA), www.americansforunfpa.org
-

GOSPEL OF JUDAS NEWS
FROM THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

The following links provide information on the lost Gospel of Judas, which has featured prominently in the news recently. Members of SBL involved in the coverage include Marvin Meyer (Chapman University), Elaine Pagels (Princeton University), and Craig Evans (Acadia Divinity College).

National Geographic's official website: <http://www9.nationalgeographic.com/channel/gospelofjudas/>

A PDF of the Coptic text at: http://www9.nationalgeographic.com/lostgospel/about_coptic_text.html

National Public Radio coverage: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5327692>

ABC News PrimeTime Coverage with video: <http://www.abcnews.go.com/Primetime/story?id=1810169>

Voice of America: <http://www.voanews.com/english/AmericanLife/2006-04-10-voa45.cfm>

Opinions: <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory?id=1680974>

Mark Goodacre has a good summary of what the blogs are saying:

<http://ntgateway.com/weblog/2006/04/gospel-of-judas-megapost.html>

Books on the Gospel of Judas by SBL members:

James M. Robinson, *The Secrets of Judas: The Story of the Misunderstood Disciple and His Lost Gospel*
http://www.harpercollins.com/global_scripts/product_catalog/book_xml.asp?isbn=0061170631

Bart D. Ehrman, *The Gospel of Judas* (National Geographic, 2006)
<http://shop.nationalgeographic.com/>

PC(USA) NEWS: MODERATOR VISITS ‘RESURRECTION CHURCH’

April 13, 2006 *Ufford-Chase finds vibrant, growing Presbyterian congregations in Cuba*
by Evan Silverstein

(Text excerpted, abbreviated from <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2006/06212.htm>)

HAVANA, Cuba — Greeted during a recent visit by enthusiastic worshippers and dancing children, the moderator of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) praised Cuban Presbyterians for enduring years of hardship to build a “resurrection church” in the Communist island nation. Elder Rick Ufford-Chase, the first PC(USA) General Assembly moderator in three years to visit Cuba, arrived on March 28 for six days of church visits and dialogue with religious leaders.

Ufford-Chase, who is fluent in Spanish, said he was impressed with the Cuban church’s lively worship, growing congregations and strong lay and clergy leadership. “The church here is vibrant and alive, that much is clear,” said Ufford-Chase, who toured congregations in all three presbyteries of the 13,000-member Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba (IPRC). “There’s growth in every



Rather than applauding, worshippers at First Presbyterian Church in Havana waved church bulletins in response to a message from PC (USA) Moderator Rick Ufford-Chase. Photos by Evan Silverstein

single church that we visited. They’re doing new buildings and constructions. They’re excited because they’re doing Bible studies in people’s homes, and new young people are coming in every week.”

Ufford-Chase, who presided over the PC(USA)’s 216th General Assembly, said he is encouraged by a recent increase in religious tolerance in Cuba, which until 1992 was officially deemed an “atheist” state by its revolutionary government. He said the Cuban Presbyterian church was “far more vibrant and growth-oriented than I expected,” but added that many economic and political challenges remain for Cubans suffering under Fidel Castro’s stagnating revolution and the U.S. embargo that for 45 years has failed to topple his regime.

While medical care, housing and education are free in Cuba, basic necessities are expensive, wages are paltry, and staple foods such as beans and rice are rationed. The average Cuban earns \$15 to \$20 a month, in Cuban pesos that have little buying power. Many professionals — doctors, lawyers, engineers and the like — drive taxis or work in other tourist industries for access to foreign exchange.

“This is not an open society,” Ufford-Chase said. “They can’t say just anything they want without worrying about what the impact might be. That is a challenge this church has to face. How are they going to create a voice for the church, in light of the political situation in their country where the political process often isn’t open to Christian values?” He said it’s crucial that the churches maintain contact despite limitations the U.S. government has imposed on religious visits to the island of 11 million people. “I spoke very specifically about the need for people at the base of our two cultures to get to know one another, and then, that way, to begin to break down some of the barriers that exist between our two countries,” Ufford-Chase said after preaching at First Presbyterian Church of Havana. He said the PC(USA) has joined other religious groups in protesting the U.S. government’s attempts to curtail church travel to Cuba. The moderator also preached at three other Presbyterian churches to packed sanctuaries filled with spirited parishioners, many attending from towns miles away....

This was Ufford-Chase’s last international visit as moderator before his term ends this summer at the PC(USA)’s 217th General Assembly in Birmingham, AL.

*Thanks to
the Pulse
Mailing
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Inside this issue:

<i>Pastor's Page</i>	1-2
<i>Treasurer's Note</i>	3
<i>Birthdays & Anniversaries</i>	3
<i>Music for Mission</i>	4
<i>AIDS in Africa</i>	5
<i>Youth News</i>	6
<i>Event Calendar</i>	7
<i>Christian Education</i>	8-9
<i>Mission & Social Action</i>	10
<i>Gospel of Judas resources</i>	10
<i>PC(USA) News</i>	11
<i>Easter Azalea Memorials</i>	insert

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