

# Grace Notes

VOLUME 67

RYE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH • 882 BOSTON POST ROAD • RYE • NY • 10580

DECEMBER 2006



THE REVEREND DR. NAN DE VRIES

On November 19 the pews at Rye Presbyterian Church were full and there was a palpable air of anticipation, as the congregation gathered to hear the Rev. Dr. Nancy De Vries lead the worship service and to consider calling her to be RPC's thirty-second pastor. The service was a time of extraordinary power and grace, with especially inspiring music and the presence of our burgeoning youth choir. Dr. De Vries's sermon, on "Thanksgiving of the Heart," spoke with passion and energy of the abiding gratitude we owe to God and one another.

After the service, the terms of Nan's call (after meeting her, almost everyone immediately calls her Nan), which had been unanimously approved by Session and Trustees, were reviewed by Jim Schoff, Chair of the Personnel Committee of Session. The motion to call Nan was then put to the congregation by Paul Deen, Clerk of Session, and seconded by Don Weld, President of the Trustees. The call was approved by an overwhelming majority of the almost 350 members present—and Nan returned to the sanctuary to a rousing standing ovation.

The worship service and call on November 19 were the culmination of an

exciting weekend in the life of the church. On Friday morning, the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) hosted a coffee in the library to enable a number of people in the congregation to meet Nan and get to know her as the engaging, thoughtful, spiritual, and lively person she is. Over 50 people attended that event, which was organized by Kristin Jautz. As one person said after meeting Nan, "I'm very impressed by her sensitivity, warmth, spirituality, and the human connection she seems to make with everyone she meets."

Then, on Saturday evening, the PNC hosted another reception in the library so others in the congregation could have the same opportunity to connect with the woman who is now our senior pastor. Over 75 members attended this reception, and had an opportunity to meet and talk with Nan. Various people described her as "genuine," "human," "spiritual," "real," "thoughtful," "energetic."

At that time, Nan shared some of her prior connections with RPC. Her father was the pastor at Larchmont Avenue Presbyterian in the 1970's and often told her what a wonderful church RPC was, and she participated in the ordination of Penny Newall, a previous associate pastor at RPC, and thought at the time that this was, indeed, a very special church. Then, this spring, her father noticed the ad for a senior pastor that we placed in one of the Presbyterian journals—and said she should consider this church. We are very grateful for his suggestion!

The call of Nan De Vries is the end of one process—in which the Pastor Nominating Committee, appointed by the congregation, spent 11 months reviewing over 200 dossiers of prospective pastors, interviewing many of them in depth, and meeting with some in their churches to hear them preach and conduct further interviews. The PNC unanimously and enthusiastically recommended Nan as the right pastor for this time in the life of our church.

## A NEW DAY DAWNS

The call is also the start of a vital new process, as our church unites under the leadership of Nan and our extraordinary staff, together with Session, Trustees, and Deacons, to address the key opportunities we have for the future of RPC. As Nan noted at the Saturday reception, "God opens the future for us and accompanies us there". With great confidence RPC looks forward to that future and to seizing these and other opportunities, with Nan De Vries as our senior pastor.

## Cantata Sunday

"Cantata Sunday" this year probably should be renamed Opera Sunday. This annual music Sunday on the Third Sunday of Advent will feature a concert version (non-staged, that is) of Gian-Carlo Menotti's "Amahl and the Night Visitors." Composed in 1951, this one-act opera received its televised premiere on Christmas Eve of that year. Menotti's take on the Christmas story focuses on Amahl, a young handicapped boy, and his widowed mother, who are visited by three kings - Balthazar, Melchior, and Kaspar - who are on their way to find Jesus. The kings stay the night, during which Amahl's mother tries to steal some of the kings' gold and is caught in the act. Melchior suggests that she keep the gold, because the child they are visiting will rule his kingdom with love, not riches. Amahl's mother returns the gold, wishing she had something to give of her own. Amahl offers his crutch as a gift and suddenly discovers that he is able to walk. Amahl decides to follow the kings so that he himself may give his crutch to the Christ Child.

The performance with our choir and soloists will include the full orchestra as originally composed by Menotti. Once again we are indebted to Susan and Dod Fraser for their generous gift to the Memorial Music Fund which supports this Advent service of music.

## Christian Education, Mission and Fellowship

### Church School

The word Advent means “coming.” For Christians, the season of Advent marks the four weeks before Christmas when we prepare and reflect on Christ’s coming into the world.

Advent is still observed as the beginning of the church year. In the midst of this hectic, commercial season, we often forget to take the time to quiet our hearts and our minds. It is easy to miss this opportunity for prayer and reflection. In order to help our young people focus on this sacred time, we will begin each class period with the lighting of the Advent wreath. Each of the four candles symbolizes one of the four Sundays in Advent and includes a special prayer. Young people will also make use of their Advent calendars which tell the story of the events leading up to the birth of Jesus. Finally, all classrooms will receive a nativity set for their room. Particularly for our younger children, these wonderful wooden managers encourage play and familiarity with the birth story of Jesus.

We will collect newborn baby clothing and blankets for newborns again this year. Layettes should be new and wrapped in clear plastic. Enclose a Christmas greeting from your family if you wish, and place your gift under the Christmas tree in the sanctuary. These gifts will be received throughout the Christmas season.

It has been our custom to give gifts to the children at Carver Center. However, this season they have asked that our donation be in the form of gift cards for their teenagers. We will be using money from the Children’s Mission and Outreach Fund for this gift. Please do not bring gifts this year for the Carver Center.

### Wednesday Morning Bible Study

Wednesday, December 13 at 9:15 a.m. in the library.

**Grace Notes deadline  
is December 12**

### Stewardship 2006 Reminder

As the Advent season approaches, please accept this reminder to complete your 2006 pledges. RPC is on track to have a balanced budget this year and your stewardship contributions are needed to ensure our ongoing financial health.

### Men’s Bible Study

We meet this month on **Sunday evenings, December 3 and 10, at 8:00 p.m.** in the library. It’s short and sweet and to the point – Mark’s Gospel. Join us for this ongoing reading of the earliest version of the “good news” of Jesus’ story.

### Christmas Pageant

The Christmas Pageant will take place on **Sunday, December 17, at 4:00 p.m.** in the sanctuary! If your child would like to participate in the pageant, please pick up a participation form at the reception desk after Thanksgiving. **Rehearsals will be held on Saturdays, December 2 and 9 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, and December 16 from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon.** If you have any questions, or need additional information, please call Amanda Hanzlik at 646-228-9613.

### IMPACT

Save these dates: **Sundays, December 3, 10, and 17, and January 7.** All meetings are at 5:00 p.m. in the youth rooms downstairs.

**December 3:** We will be planning the Don Bosco Holiday Party, signing up to bring gifts, and working on designs for the IMPACT logo.

**December 10:** We meet to wrap gifts for the Don Bosco Holiday Party and to vote on the IMPACT logo.

**December 17:** Today is our holiday party, *Breakfast with Santa*, at the Don Bosco Center in Port Chester. There will be no meetings on December 24 or 31, but plan to be at our January 7 meeting for t-shirt tie-dyeing and pizza.

### ExtremeOne8T

December 3, 10, and 17.

### Middle School Connection

Having scaled the climbing walls at Go Vertical with vigor and enthusiasm, the middle school youth group will gather just once this month. On **Wednesday, December 6, from 5:30 to 6:45 p.m.**, we will have our annual Christmas party. There will be pizza, fun, and a little reminder of the true meaning of Christmas. All sixth to eighth graders are welcome.

### Confirmation

This year’s ninth graders have been working hard on the process of confirmation. They have written papers reflecting on who they are, and will soon be writing a paper on a passage from Luke’s gospel. They have been assigned readings from the bible as well as authors like Douglas Miller (*Blue Like Jazz*), and Bill Bryson. Through quizzes and discussion they have begun exploring the key questions of faith: Are we all here simply by accident, or are we a part of some more intentional plan? If God made the world and declared it good, what happened? What has God done to set things right? Most importantly, where do I fit in this whole scheme?

But this is not just a mental exercise. You have seen them serving God in the church in a variety of ways. They have carried the cross in worship as crucifer and served as ushers. Many of them assisted at the Women’s Association Halloween Party.

In an effort to keep up the good work, there will be a regular class meeting on **Sunday, December 3** (after church and the subsequent congregational meeting), in the Westminster Room.

On **Sunday, December 17**, the class will meet after church to do some creative and artistic preparation for the Christmas Eve family service. Best to wear clothes you don’t mind getting messy! We will share a pizza lunch as well. Reflection papers on a passage from the gospel of Luke are due then.

# Sundays in December



## The Bulletin Board



### December 3 — First Sunday of Advent

**8:30** Holy Communion, Crawford Chapel.  
**10:00** Holy Communion Worship, Sanctuary.  
Dr. De Vries preaching, Church School.  
Children go directly to Chapel.  
**11:00** Congregational Meeting: Election of Officers, Sanctuary  
**11:00** Confirmation Class, Westminster Room.  
**11:00** Women's Association Christmas Sale, Assembly Room.  
**5:00** IMPACT, Youth Room.  
**5:30** ExtremeOne8T, Westminster Room.  
**6:30** Tree Lighting, Assembly Room.  
**8:00** Men's Bible Study, Library.

### December 10 — Second Sunday of Advent

**8:30** Holy Communion, Crawford Chapel.  
**10:00** Morning Worship, Sanctuary.  
Dr. De Vries preaching  
**10:00** Church School, Children attend worship through children's message.  
**11:00** Farewell Reception for the Brasels, Assembly Room.  
**5:00** IMPACT, Youth Room.  
**5:30** ExtremeOne8T, Westminster Room.  
**8:00** Men's Bible Study, Library.

### December 17 — Third Sunday of Advent "Cantata Sunday"

**8:30** Holy Communion, Crawford Chapel.  
**10:00** Morning Worship, Sanctuary. Children go directly to the Assembly Room. No Church School.  
**11:00** Confirmation Class Service Project, Westminster Room.  
**4:00** Christmas Pageant, Sanctuary.  
**5:00** IMPACT "Breakfast with Santa," Don Bosco Center, Port Chester.  
**5:30** ExtremeOne8T, Westminster Room.

### December 24 — Fourth Sunday of Advent Christmas Eve

**8:30** Holy Communion, Crawford Chapel.  
**10:00** Morning Worship, Sanctuary, Reverend Love preaching. No Church School.  
**4:00** Family Worship, Sanctuary  
**7:00** Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols, Sanctuary.  
**11:00** Candlelight Communion Service, Sanctuary.

### December 31 — Christmas I New Year's Eve

**8:30** Holy Communion, Crawford Chapel.  
**10:00** Family Worship, Sanctuary, Reverend Love preaching. No Church School.  
**Please join us for coffee hour in the Assembly Room after ten o'clock worship.**

## RPC TREE LIGHTING AND CAROLING

**Sunday evening, December 3 at 6:30 p.m.**

Dessert followed by tree lighting and carol singing

## Women's Association HOLIDAY JUBILEE

### HOLIDAY CRAFT AND COOKIE EXCHANGE

Monday, December 4, 9:30a.m. — 12:30 p.m.  
Westminster Room & Kitchen

## CANTATA SUNDAY

**DECEMBER 17 10:00 a.m.**

Music by Gian-Carlo Menotti

### "AM AHL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS"

*with Chancel Choir, Soloists, and Orchestra*

## CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

### and Manger Gift Offering

Sunday, December 17

4:00 p.m.

## CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

**Sunday, December 24**

### FAMILY SERVICE

**4:00 p.m.**

*(This service is appropriate for young children.)*

### CANDLELIGHT SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

**with soloists and instruments**

**7:00 p.m.**

*(This service is appropriate for older children.)*

## CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION SERVICE

**with choir and instruments**

**11:00 p.m.**

*(Childcare is not provided.)*

# December Schedule of Meetings, Events and Programs

## BOARD MEETINGS

**Deacons:** Monday, December 11, 6:30 p.m., The Love's.

**Session:** TBA.

**Trustees:** Wednesday, December 20, Location TBA.

## WORSHIP AND STUDY

**Worship:** Sundays 8:30 a.m., Crawford Chapel; 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary.

**Church School:** Sundays, December 3 and 10, 10:00 a.m., Regular Classes, children attend worship through the children's message; December 17, no Church School, children go directly to Assembly Room.

**Confirmation:** Sundays, December 3 and 17, 11:00 a.m., Westminster Room.

**Mid-Week Devotion:** Wednesdays, December 6 and 20, 7:30 p.m., Chapel.

**Men's Bible Study:** Sundays, December 3 and 10, 8:00 p.m., Library.

**Wednesday Morning Bible Study:** December 13, 9:15 a.m., Library.

## YOUTH

**Boy Scouts:** Troop #2, Tuesdays (except December 26), 7:00 p.m., Assembly Room.

**Connection:** Wednesday, December 6, 5:30 p.m., Westminster Room.

**Cub Scout Den Leaders:** Wednesday, December 6, 7:30 p.m., Conference Room.

**ExtremeOne8T:** Sundays, (except December 24), 5:30 — 9:00 p.m.

**Girl Scout Leaders:** Wednesday, December 6, 1:00 p.m., Library.

**IMPACT:** Sundays, 5:00 p.m., December 3 and 10, Youth Room; Wednesday, December 13, 7:30 p.m., Library; Sunday, December 17, Don Bosco Center, Port Chester.

## MUSIC

**Cantata Sunday:** Sunday, December 17, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary.

**Chancel Choir Rehearsal:** Sundays, 9:15 and 11:15 a.m., Choir Room;

Thursdays (except December 28 and January 4), 7:45 p.m., Choir Room.

**Children's Choir Rehearsal:** Sunday, December 3, 9:30 a.m., Chapel; Tuesdays (except December 26), 3:45 p.m., Chapel.

**Christmas Pageant:** Rehearsals, December 2, 9 and 16, 9:00 a.m. — 12:00 p.m., Assembly Room;

Performance, Sunday, December 17, 4:00 p.m., Sanctuary.

## OTHER CHURCH MEETINGS, EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

**Christian Education Committee:** Wednesday, December 6, 7:30 p.m., Youth Room.

**Christian Meditation:** Thursdays, 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary.

**Congregational Meeting:** Sunday, December 3, 11:00 a.m., Sanctuary.

**Greening the Kirk:** Thursday, December 7, 9:30 a.m., Sanctuary.

**Mission and Outreach Committee:** Wednesday, December 6, 7:30 p.m., Westminster Room.

**Personnel Committee:** Wednesday, December 13, 8:00 a.m., Conference Room.

**Sandwichmakers:** Thursday, December 21, 11:00 a.m., Westminster Room and Kitchen.

**Stephen Ministry:** Stephen Leader Team: Tuesdays, December 12 and 19, 9:00 a.m., Library;

Continuing Education, Tuesdays, December 5 and 19, Westminster and Conference Rooms;

Stephen Minister in Training (SMIT) Tuesdays, December 5, 12 and 19, 7:00 p.m., Library.

**Worship and Music Committee:** Wednesday, December 6, 7:30 p.m., Library.

**Teacher Training:** Sunday, December 3, 11:30 a.m., Youth Room.

**Thrift Shop:** Thursdays, 10:00 a.m. — 1:00 p.m., Downstairs.

**Tree Lighting and Caroling:** Sunday, December 3, 6:30 p.m.

**Women's Association:** Christmas Sale, Sunday, December 3, 11:00 a.m., Assembly Room; Board Meeting, Monday, December 4, 9:15 a.m., S Library; Holiday Craft and Cookie Exchange, 9:30 a.m. — 12:30 p.m., Westminster Room and Kitchen.

## OUTREACH AND SUPPORT GROUPS

**AA Group:** Thursdays, 7:30 p.m., Westminster Room.

**AA Rye Harrison Group:** Mondays (except December 25), 7:30 p.m., Assembly Room.

**Mr. Westchester/AIAnon Group:** Mondays (except December 25), 7:30 p.m., Library.

**Rye Association for the Handicapped:** Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m., Youth Room.

**Rye Women's Interfaith Committee Board Meeting:** Friday, December 8, 9:00 a.m., Library.

**Church offices will be closed Monday and Tuesday, December 25 and 26, and January 1 and 2.**

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**Website:** [www.ryepc.com](http://www.ryepc.com)

## Stewardship Season is upon us!

In this season of joy and thanksgiving, let us remember that it is more blessed to give than to receive. RPC has responded enthusiastically to the need to increase our pledges over the past three years to support the growth of the congregation, the many new programs (Stephen Ministry, Children's Choir, Extreme One8T, and more), and to cure a chronic fiscal deficit.

We now enter an exciting new phase in the life and history of this community of believers, with a new pastor/head of staff, enhanced governance, and important plans for the physical facilities coming out of the Comprehensive Campaign. Most noteworthy is a congregation which is engaged, welcoming, and committed to growing the spiritual life here at RPC.

Our trustees and treasurer have worked hard to control and monitor expenses, and report to the congregation the financial resources and requirements they forecast. For 2007, expect our expenditures to rise only around 5%. Accordingly, we are asking the congregation to increase pledging by that amount so that we can balance the budget again this year.

We know that the holidays are a busy time and that many important priorities compete for our attention. Let us make sure that our commitment to service and work in the name of Jesus Christ is high on our list!

Thanks to all of you from your Stewardship Committee.

## Christmas Joy Offering

Each year we embrace the spirit of Christmas by giving support to others less fortunate than ourselves through the Christmas Joy offering. The Mission and Outreach Committee has selected Open Door Medical Center and Doctors Without Borders (Darfur Project) as this year's recipients of our donations. All members of the church community are encouraged to participate in this special offering which will extend from **Sunday, December 3 through Sunday, December 24.**

The Open Door Family Medical Center in Port Chester provides comprehensive care to the disadvantaged population, through teams of medical professionals, with the goal of improving the long-term

health outcomes of its clients, in addition to providing short-term treatment. Open Door moved into its new facility on Grace Church Street in Port Chester last spring and has two school-based facilities in Port Chester as well.

Doctors Without Borders continues to provide medical and relief services in the west and south Darfur regions of Sudan to 200,000 refugees trapped in camps by marauding bands of rebels and government soldiers. We know from the news reports of the difficulty encountered by relief organizations there; Doctors Without Borders has continued its presence to the maximum extent possible.

Please use the envelope provided with this newsletter, or in your pew, to make your contribution. Undirected donations made at the Christmas Eve services also will go to the Christmas Joy offering.

## Stephen Ministry

Amy Liebman-Rapp, Stephen Ministry's guest speaker for our continuing education, spoke on Tuesday, September 19, at 7:00 p.m. in the Westminster Room. Ms. Liebman-Rapp spoke on "Grieving the Death of a Child." She is a practicing professional in Larchmont, with an MS in counseling, and specializes in bereavement and, in particular, children's bereavement. Ms. Liebman-Rapp spoke of her own loss of her husband at the age of 40. The dearth of counseling resources for her eight-year-old son prompted her to enter the field of family counseling, specializing in children's grief. She pointed out that siblings often are at risk because they may not be given "permission" to grieve by parents who are often unavailable due to their own emotions. She also educated us as to the different forms grief might take: some prefer to read and to gather as much concrete information as possible while others are more emotional. She told us that there is no "right way" to grieve — it is a highly individual process. The measure of mental health, in Ms. Liebman-Rapp's opinion, is whether or not those suffering loss can get out of bed, go to work, or otherwise tend to the necessities of life.

She also touched on community response plans to tragic loss. Discussion ensued as to whether or not RPC has such

a plan for our own faith community, and if we are in partnership with other resources in the greater community for larger-scale issues. Ms. Liebman-Rapp has worked with school districts in lower Westchester to develop such plans and was pleased to share her experience and expertise in giving us a written framework to follow to develop our own.

Ms. Liebman-Rapp suggested a variety of books and resources for those wishing to delve more deeply into the subject of children's grief. These resources include *Adapting to Loss: Ten Practical Steps* and *Do's and Don'ts When Reaching Out to a Mourner* from Robert A. Niemeyer's book, *Lessons of Loss, A Guide to Coping*. To request copies of these resources, or a list of other websites and books that address the topic, please contact one of the Stephen Leaders or Gabby McCree at [gabmccree1@aol.com](mailto:gabmccree1@aol.com). For additional information about the organization, The Sanctuary, please go to their website at [thesanctuaryforgrief.org](http://thesanctuaryforgrief.org) or call 834-4906.

## Your Charitable Deduction

Church financial records will close at the end of the business day on Friday, December 29. All checks and securities must be received by that date to qualify for a charitable deduction in the 2006 tax year. If you are transferring securities to the church, please contact Emily Irving in the business office at 967-0842, extension 12, with complete details of your transaction so that we may identify and credit the donor.

## Be an Angel

What would Christmas be at RPC without the beautiful array of wreaths, garlands, poinsettias and trees which adorn our historic church? And what would our Advent worship services be without the wonderful music so gloriously presented by our choir, soloists and instrumentalists? Won't you be an angel and help the church defray the cost of our Christmas decorations and music. Please use the enclosed envelope or call Trudi or HannahJane in the church office with your thoughtful donation. To be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin, your donation must be received **by December 13.**

**Welcome, New Members!**

Please welcome the following new members who have joined our church.

**Letter of Transfer**

Anne Martin  
Rena and Rob Pemble  
Ashley and Tobin Whamond

**Reaffirmation of Faith**

Eunie Han  
Caroline and Doug Logan  
Mona Phillips  
Pam Springer

A native of Pittsburgh, **Anne Martin** moved to New York after college and met her husband, Dick, at RPC when he was serving as Assistant Minister. Married in 1963, Anne and Dick later moved to Pottstown, PA, and then lived in Larchmont from 1978 to 1997 where Dick was pastor/head of staff at Larchmont Avenue PC. Anne was active with the Cancer Support Team and since retirement to South Kent, CT, she has enjoyed gardening, golf, making Nantucket baskets, traveling, and being with their family of three children and two little granddaughters.

**Rena and Rob Pemble** moved here from St. Petersburg, Florida two years ago. Rob, is a graduate of UNC, and an equity trader at Oppenheimer Funds in New York. Rena is a stay-at-home mom with a home-based stationery business. The Pemples, who have two daughters — Saylor (5) in kindergarten at Midland, and Gracie (4) — live on Horton Street in Rye.

**Ashley and Tobin Whamond** came to Rye from San Francisco. Ashley, who is expecting their first child in January, works for Unilever HPC in Greenwich; Rob is with Wachovia Capital Markets, LLC in the city. The Whamonds live in Larchmont.

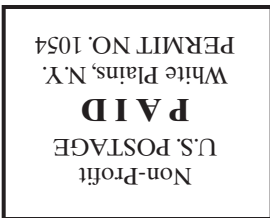
**Eunie Han** grew up in Port Chester and White Plains, is a graduate of Mt. Holyoke, and currently works part time as a freelance journalist, serving the five boroughs of New York, for WABC, NY One and CNN, reporting on business and financial news. She enjoys tennis, art and shopping. Eunie and her husband, Preter van Vredenburg, are the parents of two girls, Nina (5 1/2) and Sasha (3 1/2), and live on Eve Lane in Rye.

**Caroline and Doug Logan** grew up in Rye and were married at RPC in 1993. Doug works in NYC for a Bear Sterns hedge fund and Caroline is an elementary school teacher who is currently staying home with the children — Isabelle (6) and Nicholas (3). Caroline enjoys scrapbooking her family albums and baking; Doug is currently learning to play the guitar. The Logans live on Park Avenue.

**Mona Phillips** grew up in Rye and was confirmed at RPC. A graduate of Cedar Crest College in Allentown, PA, with an MA from Villanova, Mona worked for many years as a guidance counselor at Fox Lane Middle School. Her interests include travel, painting, sculpture, and golf. Mona and her husband, Malcolm Rizzuto, live in Hartsdale.

**Pam Springer** and her husband moved to Rye from NYC in 1994. She grew up in Minnesota, attended the state university there, and received her law degree from the University of Virginia. Daughter Alexandra is in this year's confirmation class and enjoys dance and soccer. Son Christopher is in 7th grade and loves sports. The family loves to travel, ski and read.

December 2006 Newsletter  
Dated material  
Address correction requested



# RPC WELCOMES OUR NEW PASTOR, NAN DE VRIES

