

Grace Notes

VOLUME 77

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

DECEMBER 2007



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

My friends in faith,

The Gospel of Mark has a deceptively simple story. "In the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up and went to a lonely place, and there he prayed." Jesus knew that he needed times like this, time alone with himself and God, time to reflect on what is really important, time to pray, time to let God's love and care fill the well from which so much was taken every day. He needed (and we need) time to remember that our lives and the work of our minds and bodies are in the care of the Creator, the one who knows the number of hairs on our heads and the moment of a sparrow's fall.

Make this kind of time in your own life. Our lives are hectic and crowded, but there are always ways of shaking out some space. Try sliding into Crawford Chapel or our beautiful sanctuary first thing in the morning, alone or with a trusted friend. Take a long walk in the heart of the city, or if you can, slide away to the woods, or walk along the Sound on a cloudy morning. Keep a journal. Sing your favorite Advent or Christmas carol in the shower. Pick up a good book of prayers or daily meditations. Wrap yourself in a warm jacket and head outside on a frosty morning with those prayers, then take yourself out for a hot breakfast. Try saying this prayer to yourself every morning or every night: "Creator God, give us a heart for simple things: bread and wine, love and laughter, tales and dreams. Make us a people of green and growing hope, whose song is alleluia, whose name breathes love." And may the spirit of the Lord be upon you in this Holy Season, and draw you close forever.

Yours in faith and friendship,

Dr. Nancy A. De Vries ☩

Cantata Sunday

Benjamin Britten's cantata, "St. Nicolas," will be this year's very special offering on **Cantata Sunday, December 16**, at ten o'clock. In addition to our chancel choir and tenor soloist, David Gordon, depicting St. Nicolas, our children's choir will have a major role along with a women's choir in the gallery. Our superb orchestra, with players from the Metropolitan Opera, will again be conducted by David Jackson.

St. Nicolas was, of course, the original and real-life model for the much later mythological Santa Claus. Britten's cantata, with a marvelous libretto by the noted twentieth-century author and playwright Eric Crozier, tells part of the story of Nicolas's life. The cantata begins with an introductory movement, followed by scenes dealing with Nicolas's birth and early piety, and his calling to holy orders; there is a vivid depiction of a storm at sea and Nicolas's rescue of the drowning sailors while on his way to Palestine. The following movements relate his elevation to Bishop, his imprisonment, his bringing back to life of three murdered boys and other marvellous works. The final scene tells of his tranquil acceptance of death. Following the Reformation, there was a marked decline in the status of many saints, but the popularity of Nicolas continued undiminished. He is the 'patron saint' of Russia and Greece, sailors, and, most importantly, children.

Come hear the story of St. Nicolas and Benjamin Britten's colorful score at 10:00 a.m. on Cantata Sunday, December 16.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Monday, December 24

FAMILY SERVICE

4:00 p.m.

(Childcare will be available.)

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

with soloists and instruments

7:00 p.m.

FESTIVAL CHORAL COMMUNION SERVICE

with choir and instruments

11:00 p.m.

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 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.

Impact

December 2, 5:00 to 6:15 p.m., Youth Room. Regular meeting to plan for the holiday party at Seneca House

December 9, 5:00 to 6:15 p.m., Youth Room. Regular meeting to wrap gifts for the Seneca House holiday party.

December 16, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., Holiday Party at Seneca House.

Middle School Connection

Wednesday, December 12
5:30 – 6:45 p.m.

Having scaled the climbing walls at The Rock Club in New Rochelle with vigor and enthusiasm, the middle school youth group will gather just once this month. On **December 12** 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 have even thought about what they might want their own obituaries to say some day. This month they will be writing a reflection 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? And 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 crucifers and served as ushers.

In an effort to keep up the good work, there will be a regular class meeting on **Sunday, December 2** after church in the Westminster Room. On **December 16**, the class will be meeting 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 that day!

Calling all High Schoolers!

Are you ready to put your faith into action?

PLEASE COME TO THE HONDURAS MISSION TRIP INFO MEETING on **Sunday, December 9**, after the 10:00 a.m. service

Bring your parents and join us in the Library to meet David Goode and to find out more about the high school mission trip to Honduras planned for summer 2008. David is the Honduras trip coordinator for Team Effort, an organization that is running mission camps all over the United States and the Caribbean. The week-long trip is scheduled from June 28 to July 6 and is open to all RPC high schoolers. It will be a mixture of hard work, spiritual growth and adventurous fun! Check out their website: www.team-effort.org See you there!

For questions, call Kristin Jautz at 967-3833 or email kristinjautz@verizon.net

Wednesday Morning Bible Study

Wednesday, December 5 and 19, 9:15 a.m. in the Library. Our reading of First Samuel continues.

Women’s Bible Study

Saturdays, December 1 and 8, 9:15 a.m., in the Library.

Men’s Bible Study

Sunday evenings, December 2 and 9 at 8:00 p.m. in the Library. It’s the shortest gospel, and yes, a year later, the men are still reading the gospel of Mark. What we lack in speed, we make up for in thoughtful reflection. This month, with a touch of irony, we’ll be nearing the end of the gospel and the story of Jesus’ last days. It is often said that the wood of the manger is the wood of the cross. Whether you are a regular or just curious, all are invited and welcome to join in on this ongoing reading and time together.

Sundays in December



The Bulletin Board



December 2 — First Sunday of Advent

8:30 Holy Communion, Crawford Chapel.
10:00 Holy Communion Worship, Sanctuary.
Dr. De Vries preaching. Church School. Children go to Chapel after the children's message.
11:00 Confirmation Class, Westminster Room.
11:00 Women's Association Christmas Boutique and Narthex Christmas Tree Ornament Sale, Assembly Room.
5:00 IMPACT, Youth Room.
6:30 Tree Lighting, Assembly Room.
8:00 Men's Bible Study, Library.

December 9 — Second Sunday of Advent

8:30 Holy Communion, Crawford Chapel.
10:00 Morning Worship, Sanctuary.
Reverend Love preaching. Church School, Children attend worship through children's message.
11:00 Women's Association "Time for Trimming" Christmas Tree Ornament Sale, Assembly Room.
11:00 Nance Manse group, Westminster
5:00 IMPACT, Youth Room.
8:00 Men's Bible Study, Library.

December 16 — Third Sunday of Advent "Cantata Sunday"

8:30 Holy Communion, Crawford Chapel.
10:00 Morning Worship, Sanctuary. No Church School. Children may stay in church or go to the Westminster and Youth Rooms for movies.
11:00 Women's Association "Time for Trimming" Christmas Tree Ornament Sale, Assembly Room
11:00 Confirmation Class Service Project, Westminster Room.
3:00 IMPACT, Seneca House.
4:00 Manse Open House

December 23 — Fourth 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.
4:00 Christmas Pageant, Sanctuary.

December 30 — Christmas I

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.

The RPC Women's Association invites you to a

Holiday Jubilee and Optional Cookie Exchange

Monday, December 10, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
At the home of Andrea Stewart
5 Boxwood Lane, Rye

During the busy holiday season, this is a fun, relaxing opportunity to make a holiday craft for ourselves and for others in need. Leave the hustle and bustle behind, and come create a gift for 20 women who have loved ones who are incarcerated. They are known as the Sisters' Circle, which is part of the RPC prison outreach. This year Andrea will teach us how to make holiday bobeches — festive decorations for candlesticks. Greens will be provided but if you have any special ones in your garden that you would like to use, by all means bring them along. Also, you will need to bring some clippers.
A donation of \$10 would be greatly appreciated. Please sign up at the Reception Desk or RSVP to bptown@mindspring.com.

The RPC Women's Association

Time for New Trimmings

Sundays, December 2, 9 and 16
11:00 a.m. Assembly Room

This Christmas we hope to brighten the two Christmas trees which stand on either side of the Narthex doors leading into the Sanctuary. But we need your help. Please come to the coffee hour in the Assembly Room after morning worship on any of the given Sundays and buy an ornament (or two...or more) to donate to our trees. The cost is a nominal \$5/ornament, and the selection is wide and wonderful!

RPC ADVENT OFFERINGS

RPC Tree Lighting and Caroling
Sunday evening, December 2, at 6:30 p.m.

Cantata Sunday
Sunday, December 16, at 10:00 a.m.

**Christmas Pageant
and Manger Gift Offering**
Sunday, December 23, at 4:00 p.m.

December Schedule of Meetings, Events and Programs

BOARD MEETINGS

Deacons: TBA.

Session: Wednesday, December 19, 6:30 p.m., Paul and Cynthia Deen's home.

Trustees: Wednesday, December 12, 7:30 p.m., American Yacht Club.

WORSHIP AND STUDY

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

Christmas Eve Services: 4:00 p.m., Family Service; 7:00 p.m., Lessons and Carols; 11:00 p.m., Festival Choral Communion.

Church School: Sundays, December 9 and 23, 10:00 a.m., Regular Classes, children attend worship through the children's message; December 2, Church School classes and Children's Chapel; December 16, no Church School, welcome to stay in church go to Westminster and Youth Rooms for movies; December 30, Family Service, no Church School.

Confirmation: Sundays, December 2 and 16, 11:00 a.m., Westminster Room.

Men's Bible Study: Sundays, December 2 and 9, 8:00 p.m., Library.

Wednesday Morning Bible Study: December 5 and 19, 9:15 a.m., Library.

Women's Bible Study: Saturdays, December 1 and 8, 9:15 a.m., Library.

YOUTH

Boy Scouts: Troop #2, Tuesdays (except December 25), 7:00 p.m., Assembly Room.

Connection: Wednesday, December 12, 5:30 p.m., Westminster Room.

Cub Scout Den Leaders: Wednesday, December 5, 7:30 p.m., Youth Room.

Girl Scout Leaders: Wednesday, December 12, 1:00 p.m., Youth Room.

Impact: Sundays, 5:00 p.m., December 2 and 9, Youth Room; December 16, 3:30 p.m., Seneca House.

Nanse Manse: Sunday, December 9, 11 a.m., Westminster Room.

MUSIC

Cantata Sunday: Sunday, December 16, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary.

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

Thursdays (except December 27 and January 3), 7:45 p.m., Choir Room.

Children's Choir Rehearsal: Tuesdays, December 4, 11, and 18, 3:45 p.m., Chapel.

Christmas Pageant: Rehearsals, December 8, 15 and 23, Assembly Room; Performance, Sunday, December 23, 4:00 p.m., Sanctuary.

PLEASE NOTE: THE REGISTRATION FORM AND REHEARSAL SCHEDULE DETAILS MAY BE ACCESSED ON THE RPC WEBSITE AND ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT THE RECEPTION DESK.

OTHER CHURCH MEETINGS, EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

Christian Education Committee: TBA.

Greening the Kirk: Thursday, December 6, 9:30 a.m., Sanctuary.

Homeless Overnight: Saturday, December 15, 5:00 p.m., Assembly Room.

Manse Open House: Sunday, December 16, 4:00 p.m.

Mission and Outreach Committee: Wednesday, December 5, 6:30 p.m., Wayne Atwell's home.

Personnel Committee: TBA.

Sandwichmakers: Thursday, December 20, 11:00 a.m., Kitchen and Assembly Room.

Stephen Ministry: Stephen Leader Team: Tuesdays, December 11 and 18, 9:00 a.m., Library;

Continuing Education, Tuesdays, December 4 and 18, 7:00 p.m. and 18, Westminster Room.

Stephen Minister in Training (SMIT) Tuesdays, December 4 and 11, 7:00 p.m., Library.

Worship and Music Committee: Tuesday, December 4, 7:30 p.m., Location TBA.

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

Tree Lighting and Caroling: Sunday, December 2, 6:30 p.m.

Women's Association: Monday, December 3, 9:15 a.m., Library; Christmas Boutique, Sunday, December 2, 11:00 a.m., Assembly Room;

"Time for New Trimmings" — Narthex Tree Ornament Sale, Sundays, December 2, 9, and 16, 11:00 a.m., Assembly Room;

Holiday Craft and Cookie Exchange, Monday, December 10, 10:00 a.m., Andrea Stewart's home, 5 Boxwood Lane.

OUTREACH AND SUPPORT GROUPS

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

AA Rye Harrison Group: Mondays (except December 24), 7:30 p.m., Assembly Room.

Mr. Westchester/AlAnon Group: Mondays (except December 24), 7:30 p.m., Library.

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

PLEASE NOTE: The church offices will be closed Tuesdays, December 25 and January 1, and Wednesday, December 26.

PHONE: 914 967-0842

Email: RPC@ryepc.com

FAX: 914 967-0267

Website: www.ryepc.com

Be an Angel

Won't you be an angel and help the church defray the cost of our Christmas decorations and music? Call the church office with your thoughtful donation or use the envelopes in this issue of *Grace Notes*.

Tree Lighting and Caroling Party

The new tradition continues! All are invited to this special event that ushers in the Christmas season! Bring a favorite Christmas dessert to share in the Assembly Room, **Sunday, December 2**, at 6:30 p.m. After some holiday sweets, hot chocolate or coffee, a little Christmas craft, and some songs by the Children's Choir, we'll gather by the tree on the front lawn to sing and welcome the season.

Art of the Nativity at the Met

Sunday, December 16, 2:00 pm.

This guided tour by a Metropolitan Museum docent promises to be a great event for the entire family. The charge is \$24 which will cover the entrance fee and the tour guide. Students and seniors pay only \$16. Preregistration is requested by calling the church office at 967-0842.

Carpools will be available leaving from RPC to the Met. Those wishing a ride, or offering a ride, please convene at the church parking lot at 12:45 p.m.

Please note that the event will need to be cancelled if we have fewer than the minimum 15 people required by the Met to warrant our customized tour, so sign up early!

Any questions? Please contact Bob Clyatt at 921-4379 or email him at robertclyatt@yahoo.com.

Nursery School Registration 2008 - 2009

The Rye Presbyterian Nursery School is in its 49th year of educating little ones from the church and community. We are currently serving 320 preschool children between the ages of 2 and 5, from 9:00-11:30 a.m. or 12:15-2:45 p.m. Registration for current students, church members, and siblings will be held in the Assembly Room on January 2 and 3, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Church members that enroll during this week are guaranteed entrance. (Church members are those families that have formally joined, or will be joining the church during the "New Member Seminars" in March, 2008, and who are current contributors to the church.)

We are pleased to announce that through the efforts of our parent organization, friends, the RPC Women's Association and the RPC Mission and Outreach Committee, we are able to offer full and partial scholarships to families in need of assistance. This year, more than \$70,000 has been awarded to 35 students currently attending the nursery school. Our application process is totally confidential, and we hope that parents will make use of this wonderful opportunity, if necessary.

At RPNS the message of caring is evident through the dedicated actions of all of the parents. The many contributions from our parents provide a model for their children. Everywhere we turn at the nursery school, we see opportunities to work together for our community. Parents can be seen organizing and setting up our stu-

dent art show, donating baskets for the holiday raffle, preparing food for the bake sale, flipping and serving pancakes at the annual "Pancake Breakfast," or spending time selling or buying books at the book fair. The children see their parents giving to others through these activities that support our scholarship fund. Contributing food, birthday gifts and holiday gifts to the New Rochelle Center for Learning, which serves local homeless children and families, conveys the same message of "sharing and caring." Our children learn empathy toward others as a direct result of watching their parents involved in these outreach projects.

There are other messages that the children receive through their parents' outreach. When one volunteers, there are benefits in return. Certainly there is the dimension of socialization and networking. Working together on a project is stimulating and creativity is fostered. New ideas flow as people work toward a common goal. The children witness the importance of being a contributing member of a community. This expectation is carried into the classroom, as the children practice working together toward common group goals and projects. The value of this experiential learning reinforces the goals of our nursery school: to empower children to "Respect, Participate, Nurture and Share." When they see their parents' positive acts, they gain invaluable insight into Christian caring.

As our families currently gather food for the Carver Center, our 4s demonstrate "caring" by creating a Soup Kitchen in their classroom, as shown in this photo.



DEADLINE
for the January issue
of
Grace Notes
is Monday
December 10

Christmas Joy Offering

“There is nothing worse than being completely neglected and forgotten.”

As we start now to think of the holidays, to write Christmas cards, to reestablish ties with friends near and far, and to prepare shopping lists and holiday festivities, it might be a good time to extend our thoughts beyond the demands and excitement of our own plans and to consider the situations of others in our troubled world. Mission and Outreach asks your special consideration of the Christmas Joy Offering, which has been a tradition at RPC for many years.

The above quote comes from Nicolas de Torrente, Executive Director of Doctors Without Borders. Again this year, as in 2006, we are asking that the congregation responds to the needs of two organizations, one international and one local. These organizations are devoted to providing medical care to, and indeed rescuing, people who have been weighed down by illness, violence and tragedy, sometimes to the point of complete despair. Doctors Without Borders, which operates

around the world to relieve suffering caused largely by conflicts well beyond the control of the inhabitants, continues to remedy the condition of being “neglected and forgotten.”

The second organization which we are supporting this year is the Open Door Family Medical Center in Port Chester which offers “quality health care and human services at affordable prices to the community, particularly the economically disadvantaged.”

Both of these organizations are leaders in their field and provide solid value for the dollars expended. Contributions to Christmas Joy will be divided equally between the two. Please reflect upon what it means to be without help or hope and give as generously as your heart allows. Christmas Joy envelopes will be placed in the pews during the month of December, or regular envelopes can be designated “Christmas Joy” for this offering. We also encourage those who wish to bring layette sets for infants, wrapped in clear plastic, to put under the sanctuary Christmas tree for delivery to new mothers at Open Door. Together, let’s bring as much Christmas joy as we can during this sacred season!

‘Tis the Season To Be Jolly...

But What If You Don’t Feel Anything Like It?

Christmas and New Year’s can be a time of painful loneliness and emptiness for those who have suffered a loss, or who are going through a difficult time. Single people in particular often feel isolated. And even if you are surrounded by family and friends, this season can bring stress, anxiety and conflicts. Statistics show that calls to phone help-lines rise by nearly ten percent around this time of year.

But help is available. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to provide confidential, one-to-one, Christian care. They will listen, care, encourage, pray with and for you, and support you through the holidays and as long as your need persists. If you, or someone you know, is hurting, please find out more about Stephen Ministry by contacting RPC’s Stephen Leaders: Patti Adimari, Marilyn Clague, Becky Ruegger, Gabby McCree, Jannie Gerrish or Kristin Jautz.

December 2007 Newsletter
Dated material
Address correction requested

