

The Olive Branch



A Monthly Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2012

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Fat Tuesday Pancake Supper

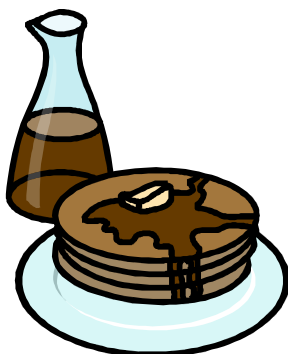
Tuesday February 21

5 PM to 7 PM

Cotter Hall

The day before the start of Lent is known by many names: Shrove Tuesday, Fat Tuesday, Fastnacht Day or Pancake Day. This was a way for people to use up rich foodstuffs such as eggs, milk, and sugar, before the fasting season of the 40 days of Lent. Pancake races were held in England where people would run flipping pancakes.

The Deacons once again will treat congregation members and their friends to a Pancake Supper on Tuesday, February 21st. Hank Jensen will be flipping pancakes and preparing sausage for anyone who would like to come. Scrambled eggs will also be available. Hope to see you all there! Bring a frying pan and we can have a race!



Encouragement from Alice

A Tale of Two Meetings (with apologies to Charles Dickens)

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times . . ."

Many members of churches, maybe all members of churches, would say that one of the worst times in the life of a congregation is the time when the pulpit was vacant. And some of us have experienced that.

Many members of churches, maybe all members of churches, would say that one of the worst times in the life of a congregation is the time when they realize that things have changed and that, for one reason or another, the church is in danger of closing and the congregation may cease to exist.

What makes the worst of times better is people – working together, worshipping together, caring for each other, and doing what they can to make the bad times good. We have been without a pastor for 16 months, but we have remained active and involved. We have had a number of successful mission events, have continued our regular activities and started some new ones. Our deacons have kept track of our homebound members, and have taken communion to many of them. Our session has carried on the work of the congregation, with continuous attention to how to make our Transformation Report recommendations become a reality. Our PNC has worked diligently to find just the right person to journey with us into an unknown future.

On Sunday, January 15, we held a congregational meeting and voted, unanimously, to extend the call to Rev. Blake Spencer. His ministry with us will begin on March 4.

On the following Sunday, January 22, we held a meeting of the congregation and corporation to approve an agreement to purchase the Painters' Union Hall in EHT and apply for a mortgage. The vote at the meeting was 46 in favor, 9 opposed, and 3 abstentions.

These two meetings were critical to determining our future direction, and I personally want to thank everyone who attended the meetings. I believe that it is because we can do our best and be our best at working together and listening to, and caring for each other that the worst of times can turn into something good and exciting.

I know that there is plenty of work to do, and more than a little apprehension about how that will all work out as we begin to plan to relocate our congregation to EHT. But I also know that there is a lot of excitement at the prospect of having a new pastor to go with us into the future.

At the meeting on January 22, I read a statement that Blake wrote specifically for that meeting. But I want to share it with everyone, and you will find it on the following page.

Peace,
Alice

A message from Blake Spencer.....your new pastor:



Ten months ago, I read the very first words of your story as shared in the Church Information Form. Though I was attracted initially to your commitment to openness and welcome, it was the Transformation Report that was most captivating. The dreams and vision outlined in the plan for transformation are right on target according to what many leaders across the country are saying is necessary for the survival and potential growth of congregations.

The bottom line for a high number of churches in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is the reality for closure. I've been a member of five presbyteries during my journey of ministry and I have witnessed the struggle, and sadly, the closure of more churches than I wish to acknowledge. Many of our congregations are only three to ten years away from having to close their doors.

My friends, this is the very story you have been facing. You have had the courage to ask hard questions as you have considered your future. I believe you have outlined a good and faithful plan for a future of stability and growth. These plans and the actions you have been taking in recent months are the very reasons I am excited to be your new pastor.

I come to you having personally experienced what it is like for a church to take hold of bold new decisions. My home church, where my family has had membership since the late 1940s, moved to a new location. I understand the emotional ties to places and buildings that, over time, feel sacred. I've also had the joy of watching my home church flourish in their new location when many other churches in that area struggle.

I come to you with hands-on experience, having had the blessing of leading a congregation through the steps of transformation. Prior to my arrival at the small church in South Texas, presbytery leaders had written the church off, anticipating their imminent closure. However, over an eight year journey, the church doubled in size and built a new addition to their facility. Today that congregation remains a healthy 280-member congregation.

I believe with my whole heart that God's Spirit is moving in your midst. I've felt the evidence of God's presence as I've journeyed with the Pastor Nominating Committee, just as I felt grace and hope while with you last week. I am thrilled to be part of your community. I also offer you encouragement and the charge to continue looking at the bigger picture of God's story for our life as a congregation.

Remember your history with pride and joy! God has long been with you.

Recognize God in the present moment. God is with you in this moment and in this decision.

Look before you. God is preparing a future for us.

I'm coming a long way to live with you because I believe in your story and in your future. Continue this day to be bold in your faith and in your decision.



Meet Your New Officers

On January 22nd, three long time members of the church were ordained and installed as officers for the Class of 2014. Kathy Doerr and Jon Griffiths have joined session as elders, while Sandy Purinton has become a deacon.

This year will mark Kathy Doerr's 40th year of membership with the church. She is married to Allan Doerr, her husband of 28 years. Together they are the parents of three sons, Jeffrey, Mark and John. After many dedicated and busy years of raising a family, Kathy's youngest son, John, will be going off to college this year. In anticipation of some free time, Kathy has graciously agreed to serve on session. She is also thinking about resuming a career as a registered nurse. Kathy currently volunteers at Gilda's Club and helps to make and deliver sandwiches for the Eastern Service Workers. She enjoys quilting, knitting and cross-stitching, and has been involved in scouting for many years.

Jon Griffiths has been a member of the Pleasantville Presbyterian Church for 36 years. He has previously served as an elder, a member of two PNCs, and sings tenor in our choir. Jon and his wife Betsy have three children, all of whom were raised in this church. Christopher is a veterinarian in Frederick, MD, where he lives with his wife, Janie, and children Sophie and Elliot. Megan is an ecologist working with her husband David at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa and mother of Gemma and Liam. Sarah recently received her DMA in voice performance and lives in Denton, TX (near Dallas) where she teaches and sings. Jon is now Professor Emeritus of Chemistry at Stockton College, having recently retired after teaching there for 38 years. Jon still has some ongoing laboratory projects at Stockton. Travel to visit family, decades of deferred household projects, and a lifetime of photos and papers to organize are keeping him busy.

Sandy Purinton and her husband of 39 years, Ed, have been members of the church since 1973. She is the proud and devoted mother of Matt and Renae. Matt currently resides in Philadelphia where he works as a social worker psychotherapist. He has spoken publicly on bullying and disability, and recently gave a sermon at our church on the topic. Renae is the mother of Sandy's granddaughter, Kaliah. She is also expecting a son in February. Sandy recently retired as an elementary school counselor in the Egg Harbor Township School District. She is now finding time to sing in the choir and volunteer at the Alcove Center for Grieving Children. She is also looking forward to being a deacon so she can give back to the church.

PNC Report

The work of the PNC concluded with the approval by the congregation on January 15th of Rev. Blake Spencer as our new pastor.

Now that the committee's work is done, we ask that you welcome Blake into our church family. Invite him into your home for a cup of coffee or a meal so that he gets to know you and you get to know him.

Included in the newsletter is a biographical introduction paper for you to fill out for Blake. This will help Blake get to know the names of the members and friends of the church and a little bit about each of us. Please fill it out and return it to the church office by March 1st.

Thank you for your support of the PNC during this process.

February Adult Study

The adult study class, led by Dan Campbell, will resume on February 5. The discussions will focus on the writings and ideas of the retired American bishop of the Episcopal Church, Bishop John Shelby Spong. Bishop Spong is a liberal Christian theologian, religion commentator, and author. He has appeared on numerous television broadcasts, written many books and articles and lectures around the world. Dan is attending one of his lectures on January 29 and will be able to bring current information to the class. The class will meet each Sunday morning throughout February at 11:15 in the Ball Room.

REAL PARTNERS UGANDA NEWS BRIEF

Mustard Seed Academy now has two campuses and its first permanent classroom. In one of the biggest steps to date Tree of Life Ministries, with the support of RPU, purchased 7.3 acres of land near to Lukaya town center and the homes of students we currently serve. It will be the site of the permanent Mustard Seed Academy Primary School and a variety of related activities. The land is high and well-drained, perfect for the classrooms, a campus life center, student dormitories and other buildings that will occupy the site.

The purchase was made possible, in part, by a generous grand in May 2011 from the *William C. Bullitt Foundation* of New York city. We are delighted that the Bullitt Foundation has supported RPU's work for the third straight year.

Now we face the challenge of raising about \$250,000 to actually construct the campus that will feature many environmentally sustainable features. Interlocking stabilized soil blocks fabricated without the pollution and deforestation caused by firing bricks will be the main structural material. Buildings will be outfitted with water collecting gutters leading to storage tanks where water can be purified and distributed around the campus, and a network of ecotoilets that collect human waste for composting and fertilizer. Plantings of Moringa ("the miracle tree") as a living fence will produce not only a barrier around the compound, but an ongoing supply of leaves that are loaded with protein and healthful nutrients. The campus will be powered with solar arrays, making it largely independent of the unreliable hydro-power grid.

A big boost for our campaign for a permanent home, came from the Presbyterian Church of Pleasantville that held a fund-raising auction on behalf of Real Partners Uganda and Mustard Seed Academy. Much of the congregation contributed to organizing the event that included four different types of auctions, and gathering an amazing collection of goods and services that went up for bid. Over \$6000 dollars was raised, far beyond the original goal. The donation is earmarked to outfit classrooms at Mustard Seed, and represents another major step in our progress.



First permanent classroom building on the "America" campus of Mustard Seed.
Built with interlocking stabilized soil blocks molded on the site

SPECIAL PERSON BEHIND SPECIAL OFFERINGS

Anne Snyder has been the quiet, behind the scenes volunteer coordinator of Pleasantville Presbyterian's Special Offerings for **ELEVEN** years. She orders the resources, distributes the materials including bulletin inserts and posters (and placemats back in the day), writes the support letter to the congregants and sees that it is mailed along with the offering envelopes. She has developed a schedule that is followed for each offering. While it is true that automation of the process developed with the arrival of Wendy, Anne has provided constancy of mission amid our church's many changes over the years.

Anne retired from this long service at the end of 2011. While Anne has always been an active volunteer out and about the church and her community, her dedication to Special Offerings is especially and immensely appreciated. **THANK YOU, ANNE, AND CONGRATUALTIONS ON A WELL DESERVED BREAK!**



In the next *Olive Branch*, look for an article that explains the purpose of the four Special Offerings of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Find out where the contributions go from here, how much our church gets to keep and what we do with it.

Faces in the crowd.....

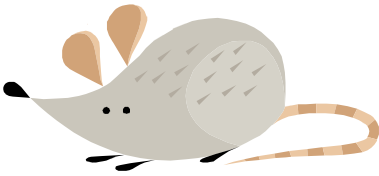
Much appreciation and gratitude to the members of the Pastor Nominating Committee: **Charlotte Jensen, (chair), Gary Cresse, Paul Palugod, Ann Seel, Meredith Smith, Lee Whitton, Kristen Williams, and youth consultants: A. J. Fortunato and Kailey Stangle** (and their respective families). The committee spent many hours together, read volumes of data, and sacrificed personal time to fulfill their commitment to our congregation. We thank you for a job well done!

Lisa Willows, who has completed her term on session, has been the coordinator of the Christian Education program for several years. She and **Kristen Williams** had the foresight to inaugurate computers into the program for our children. In fact, **Phil and Billy Willows** were both involved in setting up the computers. Thank you for your dedication to the children of our church.

Meredith Smith has just completed her responsibility with the PNC and continues to schedule and organize the helpers in the Nursery. Thank you for your dedication to our congregation as you balance your personal responsibilities of parenting and working full time.

Vicky Helsabeck has been a quiet, "behind the scenes" consultant to the beautification of our worship and spaces. Vicky created the floral arrangements for the reception for Rev. Spencer in Cotter Hall. The splash of color from the primroses and the beautiful arrangement on the mantel certainly enhanced the buffet tables. She also creates the special displays we see in worship at certain times during the church year. Thank you for creating such lovely visuals.

Andrew Everett spent the fall semester of his junior year in Grenoble, France where he completed his credits for his French minor. He not only thoroughly embraced his time with the French, he also traveled all over Europe and became adept at figuring out the European train schedules. Kathy and Michael visited him in Grenoble and spent a few weeks in Paris at the end of October. After his enriching experience abroad, Andrew is back on campus at the University of Tampa, Florida completing his junior year.



Message from Malachi

Greetings to my Presbyterian friends and an enormous thank you to the **Pastor Nominating Committee** for a job well done. Y'all must be mighty proud of yourselves. My whole family greatly anticipated the weekend of Pastor Spencer's arrival into South Jersey. I am sure that most of you have met him by now. From our secret vantage points, we were able to watch all the activities, and learn some information about Pastor Spencer. We heard that he has two dogs, and NO CATS. What a relief!

We thought the reception was outstanding, and we thank **Joanne Phillips, Betsy Phillips, Lee Whitton, and Sharon Cresse** for the festive buffet and for coordinating with the **ATOW circle** to create a variety of sumptuous food. Of course, we did notice that some trays were all cheese. It was difficult to wait for clean up time because our young ones were ready to charge into the kitchen. As always we enjoyed watching everyone gathered together. It looked like a celebratory family reunion.

On Sunday morning we settled into our most favorite viewing areas and were inspired by **Pastor Spencer's** message of rejoicing in our blessings, and of inspiration in meeting the new challenges not only in our lives but also in our church family. We were comforted with the thought that as we look ahead, we can find support in our achievements, and find reassurance from those around us. He called it a panoramic view, and we think of it as a positive approach to our future together. It wasn't until his children's sermon, when he sat on the floor with the kids, that we realized that he might see us! Maybe you heard us cheering when the congregation approved him unanimously.

Then on Monday we actually braved the cold and were able to slip into the former Painters' Union building. From a rodent's point of view, we are probably considering some of the same concerns as the congregation. We certainly see unlimited opportunity for new settlement and will need to consider where we can relocate all our essentials. However, we were most interested in hearing the endless chatter among all our dear friends. I was so happy to hear that **Heera** located the perfect spot for the grand piano, and **Wendy** was envisioning a comfortable office right in the front where she can use the "buzzers". And, she will no longer have to share a bathroom with a whole school of children! Once my two good friends were satisfied, we all concentrated on the many discussions among the folks who stopped by. We noticed that Gary had his clipboard and was discussing the mechanics of operation with the real estate agent. **Gary, Hank, Ernie, and Ambrose** had already examined the premises very carefully. We were pleased to hear many ideas from **Pastor Spencer** who talked about different configurations in a sanctuary without the use of fixed pews. We also sneaked into the different rooms and could imagine more creative uses of existing spaces. We could not help but notice an enthusiasm among our friends. After we checked out the kitchen, just to make sure there was one, we were contented to know that decisions will be made prayerfully and responsibly by folks who have a long commitment to the well being of this congregation.

And so my good friends, we are loyal to you because you are our family. Change is difficult for everyone, but we cherish your community and join in your hopes for the future.

Your friend,
Malachi





Thank you for your support of Equal Exchange fair trade products. The committee is pleased with your encouragement. We will continue to buy the products you favor and intend to add more organic products as are available.

This year, after we replenish our stock and evaluate our resources, we will make a donation to the **Panzi Foundation**. One dollar from the purchase of each bag of Congo coffee is donated to the Panzi Foundation which supports women of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



Our products are always assessable to you if you need to fill your own pantry or if you need to give a gift. We feel that a Fair Trade product offers you an opportunity to give a gift which helps others. We have gift bags and pamphlets for you.

Recent **Equal Exchange** news:

- The United Nations has declared 2012 the International Year of the Cooperative. It is a great opportunity to raise awareness about a co-ops' unique business model.
- Starting in **February**, there will be a tasty new **Geo Bar** which will be available in 3 flavors: Apricot, Chocolate and Berries. They will be made with South African raisins, Pakistani apricots and Indian rice.
- In time for **Easter**, there will be special limited edition packaging for our mini Chocolates. These miniature chocolates are perfect for Easter baskets and candy hunts.

Our next sale will be **February 12, 2012** and there will be lots of chocolate for that special Valentine in your life.

Prayers of the People

- ◆ For Jacque McFarlan with a reoccurrence of the disease that caused her to have a liver transplant, possibly facing future surgery
- ◆ For Elliot, recovering from pneumonia
- ◆ For Jonathan being treated for multiple myeloma, and for his family
- ◆ For the PNC
- ◆ For those traveling
- ◆ For Sally Gallena for an operation on her back, hoping to relieve her ongoing pain
- ◆ Healing prayers for Carol following knee surgery
- ◆ For Lynne who is traveling to Florida to be with her father who is ill
- ◆ For Kathy
- ◆ As we remember the legacy of Martin Luther King, prayers for equality & justice for all persons regardless of race, creed, or color
- ◆ For John Ford and his family as he deals with cancer
- ◆ For everyone in Afghanistan
- ◆ For Nessa Stauffer – child battling cancer
- ◆ Remembering Henry Boney
- ◆ For Romeo Martin & family, a high school friend of Paul Palugod, following his death from cancer














THE PRAYER
OF THE
RIGHTEOUS
IS POWERFUL
AND
EFFECTIVE.

J A M E S 5 : 1 6

FEBRUARY

The Presbyterian Church Of Pleasantville February 2012

SUNDAY	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 3:00 pm Rocket Learning Cotter Hall / Lounge 7:00 pm Living Word Church Cotter Hall / Lounge 7:45 pm Atlantic Korean P.C.	2 	3	4 
5  10:00 am <i>Worship Service / Communion</i> 11:00 am <i>Coffee Hour</i> 11:15 am <i>Adult Study with D. Campbell / Ball Room</i> 2:00 pm <i>Atlantic Korean P.C.</i>	6 3:00 pm Rocket Learning Cotter Hall / Lounge	7 3:00 pm Rocket Learning Cotter Hall / Lounge 7:00 pm A.T.O.W. Circle @ Alice Groome's	8 3:00 pm Rocket Learning Cotter Hall / Lounge 7:00 pm Living Word Church Cotter Hall 7:45 pm Atlantic Korean P.C./ Choir Room	9 2:00 pm PB&J Sandwich Making 	10	11
12 10:00 am <i>Worship Service</i> 11:00 am <i>Coffee Hour</i> 11:15 am <i>Adult Study with D. Campbell / Ball Room</i> 2:00 pm <i>Atlantic Korean P.C.</i>	13 3:00 pm Rocket Learning Cotter Hall / Lounge	14  1:00 pm AtlantiCare Family Workers Meeting / Lounge 3:00 pm Rocket Learning Cotter Hall / Lounge	15 3:00 pm Rocket Learning Cotter Hall / Lounge 7:00 pm Living Word Church Cotter Hall 7:45 pm Atlantic Korean P.C./ Choir Room	16 12:00 pm Sarah Lydia Circle 6:00 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:15 pm Choir Rehearsal	17 	18 
19 10:00 am <i>Worship Service</i> 11:00 am <i>Coffee Hour</i> 11:15 am <i>Adult Study with D. Campbell / Ball Room</i> 2:00 pm <i>Atlantic Korean P.C.</i>	20 	21  5:00 pm Pancake Dinner	22 7:00 pm Living Word Church Cotter Hall 7:45 pm Atlantic Korean P.C./ Choir Room	23 6:00 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:15 pm Choir Rehearsal	24 Friday Club Dinner	25
26  9:00 am <i>ESW Lunches</i> 10:00 am <i>Worship Service</i> 11:00 am <i>Coffee Hour</i> 11:15 am <i>Deacon's Meeting</i> 11:15 am <i>Adult Study with D. Campbell / Ball Room</i> 2:00 pm <i>Atlantic Korean P.C.</i>	27	28 7:00 pm Session Meeting  Session	29 7:00 pm Living Word Church Cotter Hall 7:45 pm Atlantic Korean P.C./ Choir Room	March 1	March 2	March 3 

Celebrating a



February Birthdays

6 th	Paula Allebaugh	20 th	Dan Williams
8 th	Amanda Schumacher	24 th	Immanuel Palugod
11 th	Avery James Fortunato	27 th	Marie Miller



Coffee Hour is one of the ways our congregation shares fellowship and socializing after church. If you enjoy this activity, to please sign up to host a Sunday of your choice. The sign-up sheet is on a table in Cotter Hall.

Questions—call Joanne Phillips—641-3758

The Presbyterian Church of Pleasantville

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Ministers - The entire congregation
Church Administrator - Alice Groome
Office Coordinator - Wendy Cacioppo
Director of Music - Bob Helsabeck
Organist - Heera Ghorashi
Organist Emeritus - Elton Corson
Clerk of Session - Betsy Phillips
President of Corporation - Bob Helsabeck

Proud member congregation of the
 Presbyterian Church (USA)

