

Steeple Views

First Presbyterian Church
209 Union Street
Schenectady, NY 12305

Pastor Larry Roff

www.1stpreshurch.org

518 374-4546

February 2011

Pastor's Points

Senior Pastor Larry Roff

The Fruit of the Spirit – Part I Introduction

Several of our home groups this season are studying Galatians 5, “The Fruit of the Spirit.” I want to share some of the valuable insights from these studies with the entire congregation over the next ten months, beginning this month with an introduction to the concept of spiritual fruit.

In Galatians 5, Paul sets these qualities in stark contrast to “the deeds of the flesh,” our old sinful nature. The dominance of those old characteristics (“sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like”) betrays a heart that has never been changed, and which prevents such a person from ever having any hope of heaven.

This is a sobering list, and even more so when we see some of those attitudes present in those who claim to belong to Christ! We would be shocked to find a member of the church, professing faith in Christ, who is regularly engaging in



promiscuous sex. But how many who are singing hymns in church pews on Sunday morning are staring at pornography on their computer on Monday evening? We would be appalled by a church member who yells in a furious rage at someone who offends him or her. But why aren't we just as appalled when members of a church stir up dissensions and factions within the body of Christ through phone calls and emails?

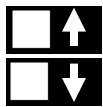
The fruit of the Spirit (“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control”) is the inevitable result of the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life. If someone has been saved, they've received not only forgiveness of sin, but they've also received a new heart. By the way, notice that it is fruit (singular), not fruits (plural). It's not that some Christians will have love and others will have joy and others peace. Every true Christian will see an increasing

prominence of every dimension (all nine!) of this one fruit.

These are not qualities that we cultivate by ourselves as the result of our efforts to become “better” persons; these are clearly described as the fruit of the Holy Spirit. They are the result of the presence and progressively life-changing impact of the third person of the Trinity within us. They require sustained, disciplined effort on our part, as we are called to hard spiritual work in our sanctification (“Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling”), and we can only do this as He works in and through us (“for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose”).

The result of this increasing maturity of spiritual fruitfulness will be a marvelous harvest: a harvest of godliness within the church family, a harvest that humbles us at what God has done, a harvest that attracts unbelievers, and, best of all, a harvest that delights God. Wouldn't it be wonderful to be a part of a church family in which the fruit of the Spirit dominates the attitudes, conversations, prayers, and desires of every member? Especially if it happens on this side of heaven?!

Blessings!
Pastor Roff



Going Up!

The elevator in Mekeel Hall is expected to be in operation by the end of February. It is completely installed, in running order, and the doors (very complex multiple sliding doors on all three levels) are close to being finished. As soon as the wood barricade comes down, Jim Nally and Tim Kahler will do the final patching and painting. However, until the basement is finished and the new outside stairway complete, the elevator will be locked out of descending to the basement level.

Lord of the Rings

The entire DVD series will be shown over three successive Saturday evenings

Jan. 22, 29, and Feb 5
6-10 pm in Mekeel Parlor

Bring your own comfortable chair!
Includes discussion about the Christian world-and-life view that permeates this epic by J.R.R.Tolkien.

Praying our Theme Verse Throughout 2011

I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord (Phil. 3:8).

Commit this verse to memory—and then commit this goal to action—throughout the year ahead. Pastor Roff recently preached two sermons based on this verse and its theme: “Treasuring Christ.” (Audio and manuscript copies of the sermons are available at the church website: www.1stpreshurch.org)

In addition, pick up one of the bookmarks on a table in the church narthex. It contains this verse and a series of six prayer goals for us as the people of God this year. Make one the focus of prayer on each successive day of the week. Pray that God will make you—and all of us—people who are increasingly recognizable by each of these characteristics.

Dollars and Sense

Submitted by Bob Holt

Praise the Lord for His abundant provision this past year—especially in the month of December! God again has worked through His faithful stewards at First Pres to turn the negative cash-flow situation for 2010 into a positive \$21,200 cash-flow, putting us in a very good position for 2011. Here are the final statistics for 2010:

Giving was 84% of Budget and 6% below 2009
 Spending was 82% of Budget and 12% below 2009
 Cash-flow was +\$21,158; much better than the -\$3,000 estimate at the Annual Meeting.
 2010 year-end balance for the Church Support account was \$115,592

The budget is not a goal in itself. These statistics are only an indicator of the health of our church. The challenges to our church in 2011 make it especially important for all of us to focus on our relationship with Christ and His will for our congregation. Prayer—both personal and corporate—is essential for us to discern His will.

*“I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.”
 Phil 3:8*

Questions or comments may be sent to
 Bob Holt at bobbevohlt@msn.com

SUNDAYS: 2011 THEME VERSE

I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. (Phil. 3:8)

* * * * *

Mondays: GOD’S LOVE FOR US

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God. (1 John 3:1)

Tuesdays: LOVE GOD

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. (Deut. 6:4)

Wednesdays: LOVE GOD’S SON

Jesus asked ... “Do you love Me?”
 He said, “Lord, you know that I love You.” (John 21:17)

Thursdays: LOVE GOD’S WORD

Oh, how I love Your law!
 I meditate on it all day long. (Ps. 119:97)

Fridays: LOVE GOD’S PEOPLE

By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another. (John 13:35)

Saturdays: LOVE GOD’S WORLD

When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them ... like sheep without a shepherd. (Matt. 9:37)

Picture Request

Does anyone have old Mom's Breakaway pictures from the mid to late 80s? My son Tim and his bride-to-be Stephanie Rodd originally met as toddlers many years ago at First Pres. If you have any old group pictures from that time, please e-mail us @ arcaptain3@aol.com

Thanks, Allan and Colleen Raney



This space is reserved for **YOUR NEWS!**

- new babies
- awards and recognitions (school honors, work achievements, etc.)
- special milestones (retirement, graduation, etc.)
- family celebrations (anniversaries, significant birthdays, weddings, etc.)

Send your information (don't forget those pictures!) to steeplenews@yahoo.com

Recall Notice

The number to call in all areas is
P-R-A-Y-E-R
Once connected, please follow
directions for the REPENTANCE and
ATONEMENT procedures.

The Maker of all human beings (GOD) is recalling all units manufactured, regardless of make or year, due to a serious defect in the primary and central component of the heart. This is due to a malfunction in the original prototype units code named Adam and Eve, resulting in the reproduction of the same defect in all subsequent units. This defect has been technically termed "Sub-sequential Internal Non-Morality," or more commonly known as S.I.N., as it is primarily expressed.

The Manufacturer, who is neither liable nor at fault for this defect, is providing factory-authorized repair and service free of charge to correct this defect.

The Repair Technician, JESUS, has most generously offered to bear the entire burden of the staggering cost of these repairs. There is no additional fee required.

Some of the symptoms include:

1. Loss of direction
2. Foul vocal emissions
3. Amnesia of origin
4. Lack of peace and joy
5. Selfish or violent behavior
6. Depression or confusion in the mental component
7. Fearfulness
8. Idolatry
9. Rebellion

No matter how big or small the SIN defect is, Jesus will replace it with:

1. Love
2. Joy
3. Peace
4. Patience
5. Kindness
6. Goodness
7. Faithfulness
8. Gentleness
9. Self control

Warning:

Continuing to operate the human being unit without correction voids any manufacturer warranties, exposing the unit to dangers and problems too numerous to list and will result in the human unit being permanently impounded.

Danger:

The human being units not responding to this recall action will have to be scrapped in the furnace. The SIN defect will not be permitted to enter Heaven so as to prevent contamination of that facility.

Please see the operating manual, the B.I.B.L.E. (Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth) for further details on the use of these fixes.

Thank you for your attention! - GOD

Cook's Corner

Kathleen Mancuso



Stuffed Chicken Breasts

This is a new feature in the First Pres newsletter: Cook's Corner. I'll be writing about the recipes we use at Wednesday Night Dinners.

One popular dish is stuffed chicken breasts. I try to keep the fillings seasonal which cuts down on the cost and allows me to use fresh ingredients when possible.

To feed 100 people, I buy 35 pounds of boneless chicken breasts. For four people at home, I buy about two pounds of chicken. The trick to keeping boneless chicken breasts from drying out is to first soak them in brine. At home, just put your chicken breast (or pork chops) in 1 gallon of cold water mixed with 1 ½ cups kosher salt or 1 cup of table salt. Soak them for 2 or 3 hours. Then rinse them quickly.

I don't have time to brine the chicken on Wednesday so I buy chicken breasts that have been pre-brined at Price Rite or Hannaford. Price Chopper does not sell pre-brined chicken. Look on the label for "Salt solution added." Price Rite sells pre-brined boneless chicken breasts for just \$1.69 per pound.

Slice the chicken breasts lengthwise and fold it open, butterfly style. Then lay in your stuffing. You can use a slice of Swiss cheese, a slice of ham and fresh spinach; or provolone, fresh tomato and basil; or cheddar cheese, chopped broccoli and bacon. You can also brush the inside with Dijon mustard or a salad dressing if you like.

Fold the breast closed. Some of the stuffing will stick out and that's okay. Bake at 350° for about 25 minutes or until the center of the chicken is no longer pink. Do not overbake. Remove from oven, cover with foil and let sit for about 10 minutes. Slice crosswise and serve with any juices from the bottom of the pan.

Session Report - Submitted by Philip Schiesswohl

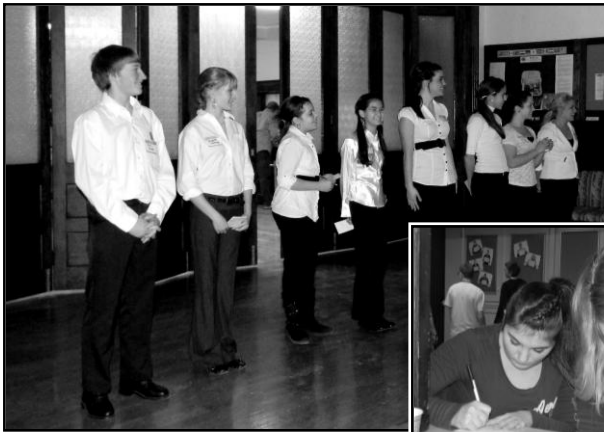
Since the regular January session meeting was postponed to 25 January, the Session actions will be reported next month.

At the evening service on 9 January, Session ordained the new class of Deacons and Elders:

- Ordained and Installed as Deacons - Ron Compo and David Howell
- Previously Ordained and Installed as Deacons - David McClelland (Ministry Board of Deacons) and John Magill, Jim Polenz and Ed Schaperjahn (Operations Board of Deacons)
- Ordained and Installed as Elder - David Vincent
- Previously Ordained and Installed as Elders - Giles Bullock and Keith Creasey
- Others Installed (non-ordained) as Deaconness - Nelsa Barnett, Claire Bylina, Carmen Mertens, Denise Sankowski and Ermilla Singh
- Others Installed (non-ordained) as at-large Operations Board of Deacons members - Glenn Baker, Dan Bibeau, Julia Holcomb, Mark Mertens, Anna Privitera and Errol Singh.



Teens Say Thank You



The teens and youth leaders would like to heartily thank the twenty-one couples who came to our Dinner & a Movie Date Night in January. The donations collected at the dinner will be used to help offset the cost of the winter retreat for the teens who were serving that evening.

We are all looking forward to our weekend of fun at Camp of the Woods, February 11-13. We appreciate your prayer, specifically for

- Steve Prettyman as he prepares to be the speaker
- Hearts of the teens to be open and ready to deepen their relationships with God
- Safety in travel and throughout entire weekend

Calling All Readers

If you like to read, you are invited to join a group (so far nameless...suggestions welcome) of likeminded souls (meeting every four to six weeks) who have all read a specific book (purchased individually). Selections will range through Christian classics (Owen, Ryle, Spurgeon, Warfield, Machen) and other more recent publications (Stott, Piper, Sproul, Packer, Keller, Mohler) Our first gathering will be on Friday evening, Feb. 18 at 7:00 pm around the fireplace in the Mancuso home. We will each have read by then John Piper's

newest book THINK: The Life of the Mind and the Love of God. You can order it at www.christianbook.com.

We often pit thinking and feeling against each other, especially when it comes to Christian experience. Glorifying God with our minds and hearts, however, is not either-or, but both-and. This book will help you think about thinking, and about how the heart and mind glorify God together. (from the dust jacket)

February Birthdays and Anniversaries *

1	Steve Barnett
2	Ben Mancuso
4	Keith Creasey
5	David McKeon
6	Jacqueline Cummings Anniv: Mr. & Mrs. Bob Wickham
9	Debbie Goodridge, Dan Scribner, Larry Taft
10	Dan Horning, Dorothy Kahler
11	Diane DuBois, Kaela Mancini
12	Ross Meo
13	Dede Andersen, Robert Ramonowski
14	Katarina Mills Anniv: Mr. & Mrs. Philip Schiesswohl

15	Sam Bestvater, Bob Wickham
16	Carol Pearson
17	Mike Johnson, Ruth Kelly
19	Chuck Holtz, Michelle Simmons
20	Glenn Baker, Drew Bigham, Fran Kahler Anniv: Rev. & Mrs. Clyde Petrie
21	Chris Milian
23	Dale Fritz, Barry Relyea
24	Barb Himmelwright, Bob Naylor
25	Casey Simmons
26	Karen Cummings



*** Don't forget your missionaries! Check your Missionaries Handbook to find their birthdays.**



Missions Committee Update

Submitted by Philip Schiesswohl, Missions Committee

We continue to praise the Lord for allowing us to meet our missionary budget needs in 2010. The Lord generously provided 101.0 percent of the 2010 missions budget. We do not carry any surplus into the following year. We have \$18,543.43 to distribute because some line items were not completely spent (such as contingency) and giving was above the budget. This will be disbursed to provide needed additional support, reduce deficits, and meet special needs for many of our missionaries and mission organizations.

The generous gift of \$10,000 (that we reported last month), designated for mission work over and above the missions budget, was distributed as follows:

- \$2,000 combined with \$3,000 from the Debbie Kaufmann Memorial to fund a church planter in India
- \$2,000 for the Quito, Ecuador jail ministry
- \$1,000 for student assistance in Zihuatanejo, Mexico
- \$1,000 to assist the Butlers in setting up their home in Istanbul
- \$1,000 to encourage and help Caleb LaRue coming to IVCF staff at Union College
- \$1,000 to assist Bill and Cathy Sparks (NavMissions)
- \$1,000 to assist Les and Marge Eldeen (Sunbeam Solutions)
- \$1,000 to assist Roy and Joanne Schwarz (Chosen People Ministries).

Thank you for your support of our missionaries last year. They regularly tell us how grateful they are.

CHILDREN OF GOD: ADOPTED INTO THE FATHER'S LOVE

PHILADELPHIA, PA: APRIL 29 – MAY 1



PHILADELPHIA CONFERENCE ON REFORMED THEOLOGY 2011

For many decades, Philadelphia's historic Tenth Presbyterian Church has hosted the annual PCRT. Under the leadership of Dr. James Montgomery Boice and then Dr. Philip Ryken, it has attracted thousands to hear excellent teaching on great Biblical truths in a setting of glorious worship.

This year's theme will be the marvelous doctrine of Adoption, and will feature messages from Joel Beeke, Steven Lawson, Richard Phillips, and David Wells. Numbers attending from First Pres have increased the last few years, and it is hoped a sizeable contingent will take advantage of this conference this year. Registration and seating are limited, so please let the church office know by Feb. 15 if you are interested.

It is a Christian's adoption in Christ that holds together the categories of justification and sanctification. All who believe are made sons of God and partakers of the divine nature. No wonder John exclaimed: "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are" (1 Jn. 3:1). Adoption is what a Christian is saved to through faith in Christ, a personal, family bond of love, life, blessing, and calling. As children of God we have family privileges and family obligations: to know and embrace these is to enter into the fullness of vital Christian living. Indeed, so central is the idea of adoption to God's saving plan that the final glorification of the entire cosmos is bound up with our entering into the family inheritance: "the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19). Given the awesome biblical teaching on adoption, we are not wrong in stating that at the very heart of Christianity is the gathering of the children of God into the Father's love through the saving achievement of God's Son. What great truths for us to know and embrace! (from the conference brochure)

If We Knew

Anonymous

If I knew that a word of mine
A word not kind and true,
Might leave it's trace
On a loved one's face,
I'd never speak harshly, would you?



If I knew the light of a smile
Might linger the whole day through,
And lighten some heart
With a heavier part,
I wouldn't withhold it, would you?

Submitted by Jean Tomhave