

## Travelling

Andrew and I are celebrating our 15th wedding anniversary this summer. We have been considering how we might want to mark this special occasion since just past our 10 year anniversary-- Joseph's imminent arrival was about all we could handle that year. We finally settled on a trip and the destination: a three day hike in and out of the Grand Canyon and then a few nights in Sedona to recover. A few days ago we received the maps and trail guides and hotel information and lists of what to bring (including worn in hiking boots!) and what not to bring (make-up?). There are also health forms we need to fill in and return. It is very exciting. In July I will remind you that we are about to be off on this adventure with hopes that you will keep us in your prayers as there are repeated warnings in our materials that people can and do die in the Grand Canyon... I wonder if you are remembering trips you have planned and taken and enjoyed?

Here at Christ Church we are planning a great trip this upcoming Lenten season. We are going to set out on an exploration of other religious traditions watching for where there are points of connection and intersection with Christianity and noting where there are unique views and attractions. Journey is not an unusual theme for Lent, but we think this is an important time and place for us to recognize that we take our discipleship journey following Jesus' Way when the map of the world offers many paths to come and know the Holy One. When we choose to follow Jesus, we do, in fact, choose.

Please plan to be in worship on the first Sunday of March when you will receive your passport and travel documents. There will be opportunities for you to take in all kinds of experiences on this journey of exploration. The Sundays of Lent we will talk about the one God who created and loves us all. We will travel a bit of the path that we see in Eastern Religions, Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism before we arrive at the familiar Palm/Passion walk that is a significant part of our Christian story. Perhaps you will get your passport stamped when you arrive to walk the Labyrinth, or join Christ Church friends in a visit to Berith Sholom, or take a yoga class, or experience Buddhist style meditation, or enjoy a meal from Ali Baba as we learn something about Islam. Perhaps you know something about one or more of these traditions and want to suggest an idea for our exploration. If so, please contact Pastor Janet or me so we can include it as an optional stop on the itinerary.

I will pray for you. Pray for me as we set out on this adventure. There is always risk and reward when we earnestly seek after the Holy.

Grace and Peace, Pastor Nina

### Welcome Habitat for Humanity

As of February 1st the Rensselaer chapter of Habitat for Humanity will move their offices to Christ Church. We are happy to be able to donate space for this and for their monthly meetings so they can continue their important work of providing housing for those who would not normally be able to own their own home.

We look forward to partnering with them, not only in fund-raising, but in helping them build homes.

### Enjoy the City:

#### *last chance to buy and help church funds!*

The Enjoy the City books, which are a generous fundraiser for us, will be returned by mid-February. So this is a last call for buyers! The books cost \$20 - and we get to keep half of that. The coupons usually come in multiples so if there is favorite restaurant or venue in there, you will probably be able to go several times. The Greenes tell me one ski trip more than pays for a book. Other multiples include the Pig Pit over in Cohoes, IHOP, fast food places and pizza, Sitar Indian Restaurant, Spiaks, NYSTI, Dick's Sports, UPS and more. Check one out in the Office -- but buy it soon!

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### The Person in the Pew: Theresa Manciocchi

You may have noticed Theresa Manciocchi lately, doing the children's moment during worship services. That comes naturally to her: Theresa has a B.S. in Elementary Education, from SUNY Plattsburgh, and an M.S. in Literacy Education.

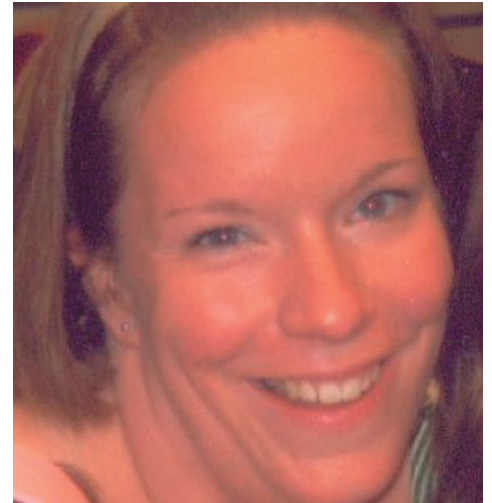
Graduate school is what brought Theresa to Troy; she did her degree at Sage. A Central New York native — she's from Marcellus, a suburb of Syracuse — her work at Samaritan Rensselaer Children's Center led to her meeting Pastor Nina, and the rest is history. A lifelong churchgoer with a non-practicing Catholic dad and a Presbyterian mom, she was active in the First Presbyterian Church in Marcellus while growing up, while attending Mass with various of her dad's relatives from time to time. Along with her favorite hymn, Here I Am, Lord, which "brings tears to my eyes," Theresa is still fond of what, as a child in Youth Choir, she knew as Gladly the Cross-Eyed Bear, though she sings it properly as an adult.

The second of four children, Theresa has by all accounts a wonderful relationship with her parents, who are very supportive of her faith wherever she chooses to worship. She even lived in the family home for a while after leaving Plattsburgh, substitute teaching in the Marcellus area — even at her old elementary school. She is a sub now, too, all over Rensselaer County, though "there are two or three schools that specifically ask for me, so that keeps me plenty busy." She still babysits for some of the children she taught in preschool as well.

Having had trouble reading as a child, Theresa wanted to help others in the same predicament, saying "the people who helped me did me such a great service." Now she's a big reader, citing among her favorites both authors of adult and children's books, including Kurt Vonnegut, Douglas Adams, Gregory Maguire, J.K. Rowling, J.R.R. Tolkein, C.S. Lewis, Susan Cooper, Laura Ingalls Wilder, and Patricia Polacco. An avid theatergoer, she has notably seen *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, seen *Rent* several times, including on Broadway, and seen *Wicked* there as well. (This is why I became jealous of Theresa while talking with her the other day, ... even though I did see a great production of *Hamlet* in New York, by my reckoning, while she was in high school.) She's also a big fan of movies, with a very long Netflix queue. I am guessing there's a lot of overlap with my queue; I always enjoy talking with "the people in the next pew," and Theresa and I seem to have a lot in common.

Theresa is one of the newer members of Christ Church, and I'm guessing — and I'm glad — that she'll be an active part of our faith community for a long time to come.

— Mary Beth Blackmon



### Mission Watch      Debbie Byers

Mark your calendars – March Mission Madness is right around the corner. The Famous Annual Spaghetti Dinner to raise funds for local missions will be held on Saturday, April 4th, 2009. Takeouts start at 4:30pm with meals from 5pm to 8pm.

Once again, there will be an opportunity to sit down and enjoy fine food and company in a convivial atmosphere or order take out, all for an excellent cause. If you are willing to sell tickets these will be available during our March Mission Month. If you want to help prepare food before or on the day please talk to Paul Marano.

MMM this year will also feature a Mission Fair. Watch for more details in the next SPIRE.



## Music Notes

Did you know that the organ music that has been heard in the church is produced by an instrument which has three keyboards of 61 keys each (a piano has 88 keys) and a pedalboard of 32 keys?



The pedal board is actually a keyboard played with your feet, or more correctly, with the toes and heels of both feet. Each keyboard belongs to a separate division which has its own unique tones. The top-most keyboard is called the “Swell” because the tones from this section of the organ were originally characterized by the ability to be made gradually louder or softer, hence the term “swell”. The middle keyboard is the “Great” denoting the prominent, louder and more supportive tones of the organ. The bottom keyboard is the “Choir” since the original purpose was to accompany the choir. The pedal keyboard belongs appropriately to the “Pedal” division.

There are 57 separate and distinct tones available on this organ which can be played separately or in any number of combinations. There are 33 keyboard pistons which can be preset for any given combination of tones. There are 21 similar pistons which are operational by the foot.

Even though this instrument’s tones are produced digitally, the sound mimics that of a pipe organ closely in many respects. The tones range from those which would be produced by pipes 32 feet in length to those only a fraction of an inch.

There is an open invitation to anyone who would like to know more about the organ or would be interested in a demonstration. Just let me know.

Bob Acosta

## Miss church on Sunday?

Even if you miss church on Sunday, you can now get the week’s schedule and announcements on the church’s website. The first link under News and Events on the home page will take you to the Events page which begins with links to the announcements section of the Sunday bulletins - 2 clicks and you have the schedule of activities and the announcements for the week.

Karen Greene

## Coin Jars for Habitat!

How many tools can your coin jars lift, we’ll find out in the month of February. Help us by dumping your coins in our “contraption” to lift tools off the floor during the month of February as we raise money for Habitat for Humanity. Thanks for your help and support!

Sunday School

## Devotional

Nancy Burgin

I was getting back to my crocheting after a bit of a break. I picked up my work, and the instructions I read were for the fourth round: “Chain 4, turn...” Turn? I don’t remember turning when I did the back and these two pieces are supposed to be the same. I check again. Sure enough, it says turn. Then I look at round three. I should have 40 double crochets, it says. Nope, I have 35. But so does the back. What’s going on here? I KNOW I have the right instruction book! Then I look at the top of the page. It’s the right instruction book, but not the right project. I had flipped the instruction sheet over and tried to keep going. Needless to say, it didn’t work.

Now, I’m sure we can all agree that the Bible makes a good instruction book. But there are lines in there that go to former “projects” – former ways of looking at things. The verse from Ps.139:21 comes to mind; “Oh Lord, how I hate those who hate you!” Wait a second. Hate? I should hate those who hate God? Sorry, that doesn’t fit in with my idea of a loving God. Right book, wrong project. God has been revealed to us in a new way. John puts it well: “The command I now write you is new, because its truth is seen in Christ and also in you. For the darkness is passing away and the real light is already shining. If we say that we are in the light, yet hate others, we are in the darkness to this very hour. If we love others, we live in the light...” (1 John 2: 8-10)

## Conference Nominations

Troy Annual Conference is looking for not just a few, but quite a few good people who are ready to imagine the possibilities for ministry in a new way in our churches, our communities, and the newly emerging Upstate New York Conference. The Conference Nominations Committee will be developing a pool of people to fill both current and future leadership positions within Troy Conference and the new Conference. If you are interested, please speak with Debbie Byers about the self-nomination process.

### Dr. Walter Brueggemann coming to the area

If you have taken part in any recent study groups at the church, you will be familiar with this name. Dr. Brueggemann will give a lecture on the Union College Campus, Thursday evening, February 26, at 7 p.m. at Memorial Chapel entitled "Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: Journey to the Common Good." This will be a free lecture open to the public in which he will consider how the "master narrative" of the Hebrew Bible serves as a guide and summons toward the common good. A walk through that narrative will reflect on the crises points and seductions in the narrative, and the way in which Jews, Christians, and other people of good will are together along the way to a world of well-being. No registration is required for this event.

Then on Saturday, February 28, 9a.m.-1 p.m. he will present a workshop at the Delmar Reformed Church, an event which is sponsored by the Capital Region Theological Center. Dr. Brueggemann says, "The work of the morning will consist in forays into the Books of Isaiah and Jeremiah, and their pertinence to our contemporary crisis of anxiety and humaneness." An hour reception is included and will follow the lecture. Cost: \$60 OR \$50 if registered by the Early Bird Deadline of February 6, 2009 (space permitting) - and some are already planning to attend, so we may be able to car pool. Speak to Pastor Janet if this interests you or sign up with the CRTC ([www.capitalrtc.org](http://www.capitalrtc.org)).

Brueggemann has authored more than 58 books, hundreds of articles, and several commentaries on books of the Bible. He is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ.

### Ash Wednesday: February 25th

Once again we will offer an opportunity for Holy Communion and the Imposition of Ashes on Ash Wednesday both in the lunch-time hour and before the choirs begin their rehearsals.

This is available on a drop-in basis.

Please check the bulletins for details.



ASH WEDNESDAY



Each child of God is important! Everyone has been given different gifts and talents. Some are musicians; some are athletes; some are good listeners; some are peacemakers.

Here are some other gifts listed in Romans 12:6-8:

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Regular Sunday Schedule 9.30am: Church School (All ages) 10:30am: Worship 11:30am Coffee fellowship		Choirs: Each Wednesday: 7pm Handbells 8pm Adult voice		
1	2	3 6pm Wshp planning? 7.30pm Disciple	4 10:30 Bible Study	5 7pm Finance	6	7
8	9 7pm Helping hands	10 6pm Wshp planning 7.30pm Disciple	11 10:30 Bible Study	12 7pm Trustees	13	14
15 9:30am Abraham Lincoln class	16	17 6pm Wshp planning 7.30pm Disciple	18 10:30 Bible Study	19 7pm Church Council	20	21
22 Spire Deadline	23 7pm Helping hands	24 7.30pm Disciple	25 Ash Wed 9am Wshp planning 10:30 Bible Study	26 Brueggemann event	27	28 Brueggemann event

### February Birthdays.

3 <sup>rd</sup>	Norman Fletcher	4 <sup>th</sup>	Fred Baumback	9 <sup>th</sup>	David MacDonald
9 <sup>th</sup>	Brandon Pryor	10 <sup>th</sup>	John Tinkler	12 <sup>th</sup>	Bennett Turk
14 <sup>th</sup>	Ryan Valentine	15 <sup>th</sup>	Adam Hill	15 <sup>th</sup>	Stephanie Fitzgerald
16 <sup>th</sup>	Barry Greene	17 <sup>th</sup>	Marcia Esser	17 <sup>th</sup>	Mandy Jean Strock
18 <sup>th</sup>	Alison Douglass Cape	21 <sup>st</sup>	Chris Greagan	21 <sup>st</sup>	Edward Changa
24 <sup>th</sup>	Amy Corona	27 <sup>th</sup>	Marilyn Blom	27 <sup>th</sup>	Caitlin LaMere
27 <sup>th</sup>	Helen Bassett	27 <sup>th</sup>	Jennifer Elliott	28 <sup>th</sup>	Donald Facticeau

### February Anniversaries.

12 <sup>th</sup>	Ken & Patricia Large
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Barry & Kim Pryor

### Apologies:

The Blackmons anniversary was January 18th.  
Bryan Feidens birthday was January 29th.

### January Flowers

4 <sup>th</sup>	Some memorial poinsettias
11 <sup>th</sup>	Given by Sue Blom & family in loving memory of Bill Blom
18 <sup>th</sup>	Given in memory of James W. Smith (1885-1943) & Helen Ewing Smith (1892-1978) by their grandchildren, David H. Smith & Elizabeth Smith-Eisenhauer
25 <sup>th</sup>	Given by the Farrell Family in memory of loved ones.

## Thank you from Pastor Janet

Thank you for the many ways you celebrated my 25th anniversary as a Methodist preacher. Your kind words, cards and gifts touched me greatly. During worship on January 4th I was presented with a symbolic basket of yarn to represent the part share in a knitting kit purchased in honor of the anniversary from Heifer International, as well as presented with a book dedicated in my name, for Troy Public Library, *Bitter Chocolate, the dark side of the world's most seductive sweet*. The book deals with the international chocolate and cocoa market which is so exploitative and unfair... and as you know, fair trade has been a part of my life almost as long as knitting! Another gift - of fair trade soap and a donation to Habitat - the balloon in worship which adorned my seat for 2 weeks and the cake at our Church Conference Luncheon made for a wonderful celebration - thank you all! (And I preached, of course, twice in a row!)

### Offering Envelopes

If you would like to have offering envelopes for your regular giving please ask in the office.

If you give cash, this is the only way we can provide you with a tax donation form at the end of the year.

### Conference booklets

If you were not at the church conference and would like one of the booklets, which summed up 2008 and include the church budget for 2009, please ask in the office and we'll get one made up for you.

## Christ Church United Methodist

35 State Street, Troy, New York 12180

Return Service Requested

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Troy, NY 12180  
Permit #496

### Buy a book for the Library

Would you like a unique way to honor someone? You can give a book to the Troy Public Library in their name. If you have a specific title in mind, you can request that. The library will be happy to notify the recipient. They will also place a bookplate with your recipient's name (and yours, if you want). This is what we did to honor Janet. Now everyone has the chance to read about Fair Trade chocolate, so her ministry continues...

### Fair-Trade Tea, Coffee and Chocolate

Check out the tea (bags, regular, green and a naturally decaffeinate red Rooibos), the coffees, beans and ground, flavored, regular and decaffeinated and, currently, four types of fairly traded, non-child labor chocolate bars: a sweet Valentine's gift that also helps producers attain fair wages and decent living conditions. A selection can be viewed in the Office window or contact Janet.

### Classes happening right now

Disciple Old Testament short course with Pastor Nina started at the end of January.

Countering Pharaoh's Production-Consumption Society started late January in the adult Sunday School class. Drop in to one or more classes. Will continue through March

1st with the exception below, Pastor Janet leading..

Abraham Lincoln: man of faith: from his own words: February 15th - a special class led by Ron Drummond.

Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. This group is about to choose a new topic/book of the Bible to work through. If there is something you would like to do and can join us, then let us know and the group will choose one of the ideas. Drop in whenever you can and come with us to lunch afterwards if you are able.

### Next Spire

The next Spire deadline is Sunday February 22nd

Office phone 272-8392, Fax 273-8042, URL <http://www.ChristChurchTroy.org>

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The Rev. C. Joseph Ingraham, Pastor Emeritus