

March 2009

Calvary Chatter

All the news that fits to print - and made it to the editor before deadline!

Calvary Presbyterian Church, 120 South Street, Newburgh, NY 12550
845-562-8730
www.calvarypresbychurch.org



REV. STEPHEN P. RUELKE ...

...was elected as pastor of Calvary Presbyterian Church on February 8 and begins his position on April 1, 2009.

Seeking to live his faith, hear God's call and help others searching to find meaning, Steve brings to us a life of faith most recently expressed in a street ministry to the homeless and disenfranchised in Newburgh along with a set of professional and personal experiences that ground his relationship to God and to all who encounter him.

Steve was ordained as a minister in the United Church of Christ in April of 2006. He earned his Master of Divinity degree magna cum laude from Drew University and his undergraduate degree in geography at the State University of New York at New Paltz.

In 2004, he and his wife Ruth moved to Newburgh. They began ministry work in 2005 and established Ecclesia Ministries of Newburgh in 2006. It provides outreach advocacy and worship on the streets to homeless and disenfranchised of the City. As well, he has served as Associate and Interim Pastor of North Congregational United Church of Christ in Middletown. During his time

there he launched "God Talk" a weekly spiritual journeying program at a local diner.

His "day job" is Newburgh's City Assessor, which draws upon his extensive experience in property appraisal. Prior to moving to Newburgh, Steve lived in New Paltz. There he founded and ran a weekly newspaper (Huguenot & Highland Herald), was Executive Director/Project Manager of the Wallkill Valley Land Trust which coordinated the effort to create the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail and served in several capacities on the New Paltz Town Board and School Board.



He was called as a part-time designated pastor, which means he will officially spend 25 hours per week with us for three years. After two years, we will all assess how the relationship is working and may decide to continue as is, to call him as a permanent pastor or make a change.

Steve has a passion for ministry and a vision

for building a faith community that serves, grows and prospers. We chose him as our minister because of this vision. When the Pastor Nominating Committee spoke with Steve, he asked us what we were excited about, what was working, what our recent Mission Study meant to us and how we were implementing it. As we shared ideas, we felt that all sorts of things were possible. He reminded us of why we're here: to do the work of the Lord that we are called to do, and he made us feel that we can do that while

holding on to many of the things we love about our past and present. All of a sudden, instead of focusing on the challenges we face, we were excited about the possibilities for our future and open to the possibilities that are out there for us.

We invite you to visit us, to meet Steve and to be inspired to join our journey as Calvary moves into the future to which God calls us.

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

April 5 -Palm Sunday - Worship at 10:30 am Procession of palms, and communion.

April 9 -Maundy Thursday - Special communion service at 7:30 pm

April 10 -Good Friday- Tenebrae service at 7:30 pm

April 12 -Easter Sunday- Celebrate the resurrection!

6:30 am-The Newburgh community gathers at the river to worship at sunrise on Easter morning. Rev. Ruelke will be speaking. Held at The River Grill, on the waterfront, rain or shine.

10:30 am-Worship at Calvary. Christ is risen! Alleluia! All are welcome as we come together to celebrate!

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

Copies of the Lenten devotional "Conversations with Jesus" are still available next to the door on your way to hospitality.

Brief daily scripture and reflections for your Lenten journey. Also discovered at the PCUSA website, a link to an online devotional that is interesting and challenging for students, adults, and families: www.d365.org

ORDER YOUR EASTER LILIES

The children of the church will "build" the traditional Lily Cross during the Easter Service. If you would like to donate to the Lily Fund, please send your check made payable to Calvary Presbyterian Church to 120 South Street, Newburgh, NY 12550. Be sure to include a message with your name and who or what you are celebrating, dedicating or remembering. Please put "Easter Lily" in the memo section of your check.



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

We are including an envelope for your ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING donation. Since 1949,

Presbyterians have joined with millions of other Christians through One Great Hour of Sharing to share God's love with people experiencing need. Our gifts support ministries of disaster response, refugee assistance and resettlement, and community development that help people find safe refuge, start new lives and work together to strengthen their families and communities. You can put your donation in the offering plate anytime through the Easter Season or mail it to 120 South St., Newburgh, NY 12550.



PLANNING OUR FUTURE

SAVE THE FENCE PROJECT

The ornamental wrought iron fence that graces our Sanctuary and Educational buildings on Grand and South streets is showing its age and is in dire need of refurbishing. We have two church members and a husband of a member (a retired iron worker) who have volunteered to take on this major project. The three volunteers are all retired and have the time and expertise to accomplish this task. A preliminary review of the materials needed shows that a minimum of 22 sections of various lengths of fencing along with several hundred feet of support railing will have to be replaced. Samples



of the sections have been taken to a supplier in Milford Penn., near Port Jervis, for an estimate of cost. When the estimate of cost is obtained a final determination will be made as to the expected start date. Besides the fence repairs it will also be necessary to construct a new foundation to support the fence. This is an initial report with more specific information to follow when the exact costs will be known. As this will be more than a weekend project (possibly completed in phases over a several year time span) all volunteers will be welcome to assist by any means they deem appropriate. Any questions contact Jim Ferguson, Roy Ploss or Sue Young. Phone numbers in the church directory.

COMMUNICATION TEAM FORMING

One of the goals of our Mission Study was to improve communication within the congregation and to reach out to the wider community to let them know what we're about at Calvary. We're forming a team to brainstorm ideas about various forms of communication, advertising and getting the word out, including the newsletter. If you're interested in getting together to share ideas and come up with a plan, contact Deb Gould (561-5462 or debgould@fastmail.fm).

NAME THIS NEWSLETTER CONTEST

Have any ideas about what you'd like to see Calvary's newsletter called? We hope so! To improve communication within the congregation and increase our audience, we're developing this newsletter and trying out some other communication methods, including email and Facebook. We'd like a catchy name for the newsletter that captures the attention of those reading it and expresses our desire to both inspire and inform those who read it. Ideas? Suggestions? Email them to newsletter@calvarypresbychurch.org or drop them in the specially-marked box in Fellowship Hall. Voting on the name will take place after we get enough suggestions, and the grand prize for the contest winner has yet to be determined, but will be suitably amazing! We hope both kids and adults will submit suggestions.

MISSION STUDY . . . AGAIN

Ready for our new pastor to begin? As we have talked about several times during worship, the basis for our pastor search and the articulation of the direction in which we see ourselves moving is all in the Mission Study. Based on numerous conversations both within the congregation and with community members, a congregational survey, and obtaining data about our community and its needs, the document was written by the Mission Study Team to reflect the varied input. It seems like a good time to review it as we begin to generate ideas and work together and move forward with our goals. Here they are:

To continue to nurture and engage our congregation and community through dynamic worship, learning, and fellowship, in light of God's persistent love in Jesus

1. Welcome all people to a place of seeking, celebration, mourning, equipping for discipleship, artistic performance, and affirmation of God's persistent love.
2. Maintain and diversify our "traditional" worship with, for example, newer music, healing and wholeness, increased use of the congregation's musical and speaking skills, additional service times.
3. Provide spiritual, intellectual, and moral nurture and enrichment for all ages, through preaching, teaching, and mission.
4. Strengthen and equip our membership to lead and contribute, resulting in improved and increased stewardship of time, talent, commitment and resources.

To establish The Center for Community Life at Calvary Church:

A place in which to welcome, listen, comfort, and encourage our neighbors and ourselves in seeking for faith and purpose, and struggling with the obstacles and opportunities of our individual lives and families, and of our common life.

1. Rename the Educational Building "The Center for Community Life at Calvary Church"
2. Continue our church's tradition of being a hospitable place, by using this building as "common ground" for our congregation and for the various components of our neighborhood and the wider community
 - a. Sponsor (monthly) community dinners, beginning with the constituencies of the congregation, the Nora Cronin Academy, Youth Arts Group, Best Temple, Ecclesia

Ministries, and Living in Jesus Ministry

- b. Publicize the availability of Fellowship Hall ("Common Ground") for community meetings and other events
- c. Continue to welcome musical and other artistic performances
- d. Encourage entities of the presbytery to find periodic meeting space at Calvary Church
- e. Explore establishing the Center as a 501c.3 organization

To value and celebrate our roots and our history in the City of Newburgh.

1. Based on a Building Conditions Study completed by Marilyn Kaplan, Preservation Architect, develop and begin to implement a long-term building maintenance plan; write grants to support this plan.
2. Continue efforts to restore the Skinner pipe organ
3. Explore the purposes and feasibility of a Capital Campaign. Encourage gifts and bequests to Calvary Church.
4. Host events in conjunction with the Historical Society of Newburgh Bay and the Highlands.

To let our light shine

1. Each person share the Calvary Church story whenever we have the opportunity
2. Purchase new signs for the front of the church and for the Center for Community Life. Install clear, consistent signage in the building interior and at the South St. entrance.
3. Identify person(s) who will help remove the covering from our light by:
 - a. Updating and keeping current our newspaper and cable listings and the church website.
 - b. Creating flyers, brochures, and exterior signage for special events.
 - c. Improving internal communication via Glad Tidings, email, telephone chains, and other means
 - d. Shining our light in the blocks around the church via mailings, flyers, etc.
4. Encourage members and friends of the congregation to continue their participation in other community groups, and sponsor occasions for them to share their concerns and experience with the congregation

CURRENT HAPPENINGS

SOUPER BOWL

The youth of Calvary kicked-off their year of community outreach by participating in the "Souper Bowl," an annual, national youth effort that has transformed the Super Bowl, usually in February, into the nation's largest youth effort to give and serve. The effort brought in 26 cans of soup to be donated to St. George's food pantry and over \$200 in loose change which will be donated to a local soup kitchen.

WHITE SOCKS MARCH

March continues the year-long program of outreach with a new monthly theme. This month the youth are collecting men's white athletic socks to donate primarily to those serving the homeless in our community. The kids will be collecting the socks after service each Sunday in March.



BIBLES FOR HOPE

When Rev. Ricardo "Shep" Shephard preaches at Calvary on Sunday, March 28, we will have a gift for him: Bibles. When Jim Ferguson attended the last Presbytery meeting, he discovered that bibles were needed for Rev. Shephard's prison ministry. Since many of us have extra bibles around the house, why not donate them to be used in this ministry? The collection box is in Fellowship Hall, and new and used Bibles are welcome, as is money to purchase them. We look forward to hearing about Rev. Shephard's prison ministry and to contributing to support his message of hope.



HELP THE CALVARY CHOIR FILL IN THE EMPTY SPACES!

With the Lent upon us and Palm Sunday and Easter fast approaching, Gordon has selected some new and wonderful pieces of music to enhance our worship service. The Choir invites any interested singers to join us for this special season of the church year. All ages welcome. Warm-ups are at 10:00 every Sunday and there will be more complete rehearsals immediately following Fellowship Hour on Sunday's throughout March. You can reach Gordon at 845-649-9402 if you have any questions. Please join us.

Please submit any articles for the next newsletter to Deb Gould or Sue Young by April 1st - or email it to newsletter@calvarypresbychurch.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

NURSERY SERVICE AVAILABLE

Beginning April 19, nursery care will be available during worship for children below Sunday School age. Dawn Schoonmaker and Maggie Stillman have volunteered to set up the space (in progress) and begin to staff the nursery as needed. We will need additional volunteers, so if you'd be willing to give an hour on Sunday morning to help out when child care is needed, please sign-up in the sheet in Fellowship Hall.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

A new Sunday School class is beginning on April 19th for children aged 6-12! We have a teacher candidate in elementary education at SUNY New Paltz School of Education has agreed to teach the class. We're working out the schedule, so let us know if you'd like your children to attend (contact Deb Gould at 561-5462 or deb Gould@fastmail.fm). Several of our children already know Jackie from her fieldwork in their school, and they are very excited to have her with them on Sundays as well!



TASTEMAKERS OF AN ERA SYMPOSIUM

On Saturday, April 25, 2009 from 9am-12 noon Calvary will be the host for Historical Society of Newburgh Bay and the Highlands' Tastemakers of an Era Symposium. This is a symposium of authors, historians, scholars and authorities on the biographies, examples and ideas of America's first architectural firm, Andrew Jackson Downing, Calvert Vaux and Frederick Clarke Withers.

For more information on the entire event visit http://www.newburghhistoricalsociety.com/2009_symposium.html



HANDBELL FESTIVAL

Mark your calendar: Saturday, April 25th at 7:30pm the Calvary Ringers will be participating in the Hudson Valley Handbell Festival at Nyack College in Nyack, NY. The registrations so far include 19 choirs, who will be performing about 10 pieces, all together. AND Calvary Ringers will be performing a solo of Overture to Carmen. Plan on attending this exciting event and supporting your bell choir.

HELPING HOMELESS FAMILIES IN NEWBURGH

Last Sunday's Times-Herald Record included a front-page story about homeless children. It quoted the latest figures available, that show 488 students just in the Newburgh School district being classified as "homeless". Nationwide, families make up 40 percent of the homeless population. One out of every four homeless people is a child. Last week representatives from Calvary and a dozen other Newburgh area churches gathered to hear about one way to help.

Interfaith Hospitality Network brings the faith community together to help families regain their housing, their independence, and their dignity. IHN is a partnership of congregations within a community helping families who are facing homelessness. It offers an opportunity for volunteers of all faiths to reduce homelessness and transform lives.

Interfaith Hospitality Networks are currently operating in 39 states and the District of Columbia, in large cities, suburbs, and rural counties. They mobilize community resources: houses of worship for lodging, congregations for volunteers, social service agencies for assessment and referrals, and existing facilities for day programs. This strategy enables networks to help homeless families achieve lasting independence at a third of the cost of traditional shelters. We have an opportunity to be a part of this ministry. If you are interested. There will be more information available at hospitality on Sunday, or you can ask John Schoonmaker or Jim Ferguson. The next area information and organization meeting will be held at 7pm on Tuesday, March 31 at the Union Presbyterian Church.



FROM RUSS MCDERMOTT

January 29, 2009

Hi,

Just a voice from the past... I was delighted to see that Calvary is close to calling a new pastor. I've been praying that the Lord would lead the right person to Calvary and that God would bless that wonderful congregation. I believe God has a continued mission for Calvary, and that, with the right pastor, another exciting chapter lies ahead in the church's story...

On my end, my family and I live in northern Alberta, where I serve on the staff of a local church. We're a very large church, which brings an assortment of blessings and challenges. Our building has all the warmth and charm of one built in 1973, so I often "return" (via the web) to Calvary to see what a church ought to look like. Jen and I now have five children (nothing like a baby in your 40s to keep you on your toes!), and we look forward to settling in Canada for many years. Our kids play hockey, use the emphatic "eh?!", etc.

Please greet the saints at Calvary. I look forward to the good news on February 9th!

And, if the new pastor is a Princeton grad from 1996 to 2000, I might just know him...

Yours,

Russ McDermott

FROM STEVE RUELKE

March 5, 2009

Greetings Campers!

Wishing you all well and lots of warmth there in the valley from us here in Jerusalem where Ruth and I continue our journey with Jesus.

We've been in the holy city since Saturday. We stayed Saturday and Sunday in the Muslim Quarter of the old city before moving on to St. George's College Monday afternoon where we began a two-week course called Jesus in Palestine. We've already done and seen and learned lotsa stuff including today when we visited the birthplace of John the Baptist before moving on to Bethlehem and a visit to the Church of the Nativity. . . . Tomorrow, we head for Galilee for three days of exploration while based at a monastery in Nazareth.

Each morning I've been up before dawn and made my way down Nablus Road to the Damascus Gate and along Ahwad Road to the Western (Wailing) Wall for prayers. The stones are cold. The chants and "wails" from the Ultra Orthodox Jews loud and discordant. But, there is something about the wall that has overwhelmed me to and beyond the point of tears each morning that I go. There is no explanation I can offer other than the overwhelming presence of the One who created us and calls us - especially during this time of Lent - to set our burdens down, to give them up to God,

to mourn, to wail, to know that we are loved no matter what. I will go again tomorrow morning [around 10 p.m. Thursday your time] and carry you with me.

Speaking of carrying. Ruth and I visited the Church of the Holy Sepulcher [a.k.a Church of the Resurrection] on Sunday and watched and listened to a Greek Orthodox service before entering to the little space they say was the tomb of Jesus. On an impulse, I reached into my pocket and took out the notes some of you wrote and paced on Calvary's altar during our Ash Wednesday service, said a prayer and stuck them in a crack in the stone. Whatever burdens we left on the altar that night, were left in the tomb.

Speaking of Lent . . . We [Ruth and I] have been enjoying Genia Gamble's "Conversations with Jesus" Lenten reflections in that little booklet I foisted on many of you [there may be some in Common Ground near the entrance to the sanctuary]. The thought-provoking meditations fit well with this week's lectionary gospel ready in which Jesus asks, "Who do you say I am?" Good question - Who is Jesus for you? I mean really? And, what does that mean for your life?

Tell me, if you will?

We ponder that as we continue our journey here in Israel. We pray you ponder it in your heart too.

Much joy to you!

Steve

A LITTLE HUMOR

THE BEST WAY TO PRAY

A priest, a minister and a guru sat discussing the best positions for prayer, while a telephone repairman worked nearby.

"Kneeling is definitely the best way to pray," the priest said.

"No," said the minister. "I get the best results standing with my hands outstretched to Heaven."

"You're both wrong," the guru said. "The most effective prayer position is lying down on the floor."

The repairman could contain himself no longer. "Hey, fellas," he interrupted. "The best prayin' I ever did was when I was hangin' upside down from a telephone pole."

YOU SHOULD GO TO CHURCH

One Sunday morning, a mother went in to wake her son and tell him it was time to get ready for church, to which he replied, "I'm not going."

"Why not?" she asked.

"I'll give you two good reasons," he said. "One, they don't like me, and two, I don't like them."

His mother replied, "I'll give YOU two good reasons why YOU SHOULD go to church. One, you're 59 years old, and two, you're the pastor!"

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