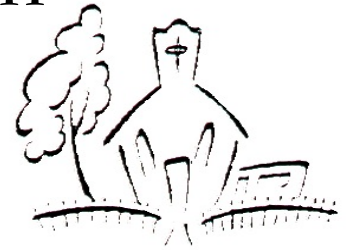


313 Tenth Street - Troy, NY 12180 -- www.oakwoodpresbyterian.com



Acorns from Oakwood

PASTOR'S CORNER

(Many of the thoughts I share with you this month are not mine. But an experience I recently had is very similar to the one that John G. Hamilton wrote about in "The Presbyterian Outlook" last September. I hope John does not mind a little "borrowing".)

During our stay at a Marriot Hotel in Tucson, AZ last October (attending the Presbyterian "Retired Ministers, Spouses or Survivors Conference"- (ARMSS for short)- I was intrigued with the Electric Player Grand Piano in the hotel lobby. It seemed that all day music would flow from the piano- classic love songs and light classical pieces. Most of the time I hardly noticed the music- it was just "there," in the background.

One afternoon as I was coming down from my fifth floor room, the music from the piano felt different. The music seemed to have a passion and personality; it was not mechanical. I noticed variations in the melody and even an imperfection or two. I looked down five flights over the banister to see the piano and my suspicions were confirmed. The player piano had a player. A real person was seated on the bench, caressing the keys. And it made all the difference in the world.

There, seated at the keyboard, was one of our convention group, a woman named Elizabeth, from Baltimore. She was playing her heart out; playing with passion and personality all without music- all by memory or by ear.

The lesson from this was very clear- Nothing takes the place of the Personal Touch. We can do church mechanically or passionately. We can set the timer for worship or come hungering after the Spirit. We can maintain an institution or be the body of Christ. We can argue theology and morality, or *hunger and thirst for righteousness*. We can gaze across the pew at a stranger, or *rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep*. We can coolly analyze the sermon or passionately personalize it, asking what God has to say to me.

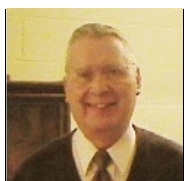
Simply put, we can do church like a player piano or like a player at the piano.

No wonder God came to be with us in the flesh. No wonder Jesus promised the Holy Spirit's presence and power. No wonder Paul wrote to his beloved Philippians, *How I long for you with the compassion of Christ Jesus*. For Nothing take the place of the **Personal**.

As you think of the church, as you come to worship, as you consider your giving and your serving, as you look at those in the church and those who need to be, remember- nothing takes the place of the **Personal Touch**. Everything else is just background.

Have a happy and meaningful Advent/Christmas Season

In Christian Love,
- Pastor Al



Alfred O. Siegel
37 Aspen Road, Latham, NY 12110
tel: 518-785-0116
e-mail: alfred.siegel@verizon.net

People and Events at Oakwood

Have you made your Stewardship Commitment for 2010? During worship on Stewardship Commitment Sunday people came forward and prayerfully placed their 2010 Pledge Card on the communion table. We are very grateful for the support given by our members and friends. If you have not brought or mailed your pledge card, please do so at your earliest convenience. We have already started preparing our financial budget for 2010.

Help the Deacons Decorate the Sanctuary on the First Sunday of Advent after worship. They can use a few more hands and it will be fun and fellowship as we put out the Nativity Scenes, Greens etc. Join us!

Joyous Noise Sunday – Christmas Joy Offering December 20th - Again this year we will be dedicating our denominations "Christmas Joy Offering" the Sunday before Christmas. This offering is distributed by our Board of Pensions for assistance to retired and needy Presbyterian ministers, spouses and church workers. It helps them in emergencies and difficult times. The offering is also divided for Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges. Please give generously.

Also on December 20th you are asked to bring a bell (any size) to worship as we Ring Them during the singing of "Joy To the World".

Advent Devotional Guides will be given out during our Nov. 29th Worship Service (First Sunday in Advent). You are urged to use this guide for your Daily Advent Devotions. Call Pastor Siegel if you are unable to be with us for worship during Advent and would like a guide mailed to you.

Using Our Church Facilities for Community Organization Needs - The Brunswick Center Services, RENARC, Inc (work with Retarded Children) is using our Sunday School Room and Kitchen area on Fridays for their Visual Arts program. We are happy to have them aboard.

Christmas Eve Worship - Oakwood has been invited to join in worship with the First United Church in Troy for their 7:00 Service. There will be a "Christmas Eve Festival Choir" that will rehearse Thursdays Dec. 3, 10 and 17 from 7-8:00 p.m. If you love to sing why not join them.

Session News. In order to keep everyone up to date, the Session will be posting a synopsis of actions taken at each Session meeting on the first floor bulletin board. Please direct your comments and questions to Session members or Pastor Al.

People and Events ...

Our *Prayers of Sympathy* and love go out to the family of Shirley Leer at the death of her brother, Dr. David T. Armitage of Silver Springs, MD, on November 17, 2009.

Food Collected During Worship at Avila (Independent Retirement Living Facility).

Pastor Al and Lois conduct Protestant Worship Services at Avila (off Washington Ave. Extension, Albany) each month. During their November worship they collected non-perishable food items for the TLP Food pantry. Many thanks!

Upper Room Devotional Available Every Two Months. Why not use the "Upper Room" for your private or family devotions every day. Try to set aside the same time each day for this important guide in your spiritual journey. Found in the back of the sanctuary.

Please keep in mind the **Clothes Drop Box** in Oakwood's parking lot for items you no longer need and/or want. Oakwood receives three cents for every one pound of clothing collected. Proceeds benefit the Capital Funds Campaign.



Noel Hains.	December 14
Shalana McCauley.	December 19
Jesus.	December 25
Alice Jackson.	December 27
Courtney Dayter.	December 31

Consider sending Alice Jackson a card for her 90th birthday.

Mailing Address: Albany Co. Nursing Home, Section E-45, Albany Shaker Road, Loudonville, NY 12211

Also let us remember our other homebound and nursing home members/friends: Charles Treece- Rensselaer Co. Nursing Home; David and Lillian Harrell at home.



The NEST schedule for December:

- Mt. McGregor, Washington, and Great Meadow Saturday, December 5 (\$30 adults, \$20 children),
- Coxsackie/Greene/Hudson Saturday, December 12 and December 19 (\$15 adults and \$10 children), from Oakwood Church parking lot, Troy at 7 AM, and Albany Greyhound bus station at 7:15.
- Sullivan (Ulster/Eastern/Woodbourne/Sullivan) Saturday, December 26 leaving at 6 AM (\$40 adults, \$25 children).

Call for reservations and information:
Linda O'Malley 518-273-5199.

Dates to Remember ...

November 29.	Worship Service, 11:00 a.m. First Sunday in Advent
November 29.	Church Decoration following Service
December 3.	Choir Rehearsal 1 st United Troy, 7 p.m.
December 6.	Communion Service, 11:00 a.m. Second Sunday in Advent. Sermon- "Advent Has Come"
December 13.	Worship Service, 11:00 a.m. Third Sunday in Advent. Sermon- "God's Two Promises"
December 13.	Meeting of Session, 12:00 noon
December 20.	Worship Service, 11:00 a.m. Fourth Sunday in Advent. Sermon- "Hy mn of Mary"
December 20. ...	Joyous Bell Sunday, Christmas Joy Offering
December 20.	Meeting of Deacons, 12:00 noon
December 24.	Worship at 1 st United, 7:00 p.m.

LET US REMEMBER IN PRAYER:

Rev. Brenda Brooks	Alice Jackson
Edward Connolly	Dorothy and Joe Krupski
Stanley Gordon	Family of Alma Kirkwood
Lulu Hamilton	Bob and Shirley Lear
David and Lillian Harrell	Edna McCauley and Family
William and Miriam Harrell	Kermit McCauley
Lionel Harris	Rev. Al Siegel and Family
Beth Illingworth	Charles Treece

The victims of hunger and injustice throughout the world; the sick, the poor the jobless, the lonely and the needy.

Our Troops, world peace, and the Troy Larger Parish

(Please contact Maryellen Reda with any information to be included in our newsletter prayer request list)

The Mount Pleasant Mixed Bowling League

is looking for a few good men and women.

Any and/or all skill levels are desired.

The only requirement is:

HAVING FUN!

Place:

Sunset Lanes, 1160 Central Ave., Albany

Time:

12:30pm

Date:

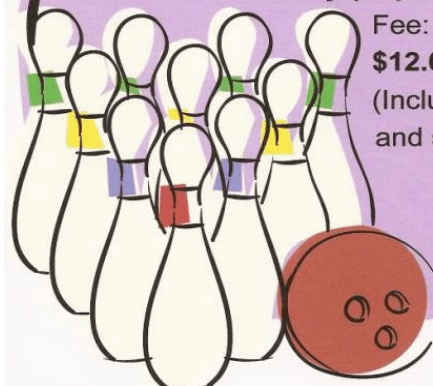
Saturday (September - April)

Fee:

\$12.00

(Includes ball and shoes)

COME AND JOIN US!





Christmas Poinsettias

Orders are being taken for Poinsettia plants to beautify the sanctuary at Christmas. If you would like to dedicate a plant (or plants) to the glory of God, in thankfulness, in memory or in honor of someone, please fill out the attached form and return it to the church. Be sure to fill in the name(s) of those you would like to have remembered or honored, and please place your order no later than Sunday, December 13. The cost is \$7.00 for each plant. Plant(s) may be taken home after the service on December 20, or can be donated for distribution to shut-ins. If you have any questions, please contact any of the Deacons.

I would like to order _____ Poinsettia plants, to be dedicated to: (indicate below)

Donated by: _____

My Name: _____ Tel: _____

Amount enclosed: \$ _____ (Please make checks payable to: "Susan Connolly")

I will take my plant(s) home after the service on Dec. 20. My plant(s) may be donated.

Sunday Worship – Winter Policy

If the weather on a Sunday morning is snowy or icy, a decision as to whether we will have worship will be made by 8:30 a.m.. It is sometimes difficult to make a decision because the weather conditions vary in the valleys and higher elevations. We will attempt to call everyone if church worship is cancelled. So, if you have any questions please call either Linda O'Malley, Marlene Conlan or Rev. Siegel (785-0116) Sunday Morning around 9 a.m. (When in doubt give us a call!)

Troy Larger Parish Food Pantry Report

- Linda O'Malley

The TLP Food Pantry, opened in May of 2007, has hours between 9 and 11 AM and serves the area bordering Hoosick St and 10th Streets. The clients mostly live in the neighborhood and come with push carts or carry bags.

	Average Clients : (MA = monthly average)					
	<i>1st Qtr. 08</i>	<i>2nd Qtr. 08</i>	<i>3rd Qtr. 08</i>	<i>4th Qtr. 08</i>	<i>1st Qtr. 09</i>	<i>2nd Qtr. 09</i>
Children	115 MA	151 MA	171 MA	105 MA	120 MA	146 MA
Adults	109 MA	133 MA	129 MA	126 MA	148 MA	188 MA
Elderly	17 MA	23 MA	24 MA	14 MA	21 MA	47 MA

What does this cost us to give people enough food for 3 days (or 9 meals)? The total expenses with the Regional Food Bank for Jan - Mar this year was \$1718.02. As participants of the Food Pantries of the Capital District, the free supplemental food we receive through them has cut down on overall expenses so our cash money (money from donations such as Empty Bowls) goes a little further. The monthly average I calculated from January through March 2009 is \$336.36. That is the average cost of \$1.97 per person/month. HPNAP (Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program) or government funding granted annually in July each year was \$5200, up from last year's \$2000. The numbers and age breakdown of clients are what I must provide to sustain HPNAP and Food Pantries of the Capital District supplementation. Note that there have been major increases in the number of elderly clients with the recession. We continue to receive canned good and monetary donations from the churches which are greatly appreciated. We are eligible for some free USDA items through the Regional Food Bank when in stock, such as boxed cereal, canned spaghetti sauce, peanut butter and canned beans. There has been more USDA poultry and some meat this year, and more milk (both powdered and fluid) donations, which helps immensely to provide our clients with better quality foods and keeps our expenses lower. I still pick up donated bread from Stewarts when available. We thought we might have to limit clients to once/month visits to the Pantry rather than every other week but fortunately we haven't had to do that. I believe people are very aware of the financial picture and the impact on poor families.

For Your Information

Copies of recent sermons are available on the table at the rear of the sanctuary. Copies of the Troy Larger Parish Newsletter and Council Minutes are posted on the bulletin board downstairs, along with the Oakwood Session Meeting Minutes.

We hope you enjoy this issue of our church newsletter. If you have any items of interest you'd like to see included in future issues or if you have any addresses to be put on our mailing list, please see Maryellen Reda; any items, articles, etc. should be forwarded by the 15th of the month, to appear in the next month's issue.

Tel: 528-272-78956 or e-mail: mereda@elections.state.ny.us or mreda@nycap.rr.com