

The Bellringer



JANUARY 2012

Nicolls Memorial Presbyterian Church

PO Box 605, 228 Crosby Blvd., Old Forge, NY 13420

Phone: 369-3475 email: nicolls@frontiernet.net web site: www.nicolls.org

Mountain Reflections *by Rev. Lawrence Bartel*

At the dawn of this New Year, there is a place so rooted in tradition that a new year is greeted with no more fanfare than any other day. It is a place home to a tradition that has remained largely unchanged for well over a thousand years. It is a place that claims to offer praise and prayer in the same words traced all the way back to the very earliest followers of Christ – even Immanuel himself.

This place is called the Holy Mountain or Mount Athos. It is a peninsula that juts out from northeastern Greece facing Turkey across the Aegean Sea. Two thousand monks live among the twenty monastic communities on the Holy Mountain. The communities are accessible to the outside world by water only. The monks walk everywhere.

The tradition is what draws many of these Christians to choose to live in that place. This continuity of tradition is also in constant tension with change from the outside world. Electricity and plumbing are very recent arrivals that moved in with no small amount of baggage. The latest sources of turmoil are mobile phones and the internet.

For all of their differences however, the monks agree on what to eat. They eat two meals a day prepared from home-grown vegetables and occasional seafood. They fast regularly. Oh, and they have a glass of red wine with their first meal at nine in the morning.

A study in 2008 identified the monks of Mount Athos as the “world’s healthiest people.” There is remarkably little cancer and virtually no Alzheimer’s or heart disease. Is it the exercise or the rigorous schedule or their intentional focus on the spiritual life?

Perhaps it is because they experience a bit of heaven every time they sit down to a meal together. These monks continue a Christian tradition that believes we savor a foretaste of heaven every time we gather around a table. Formative first century communities of Christians grew up in Thessalonica and Philippi just over 100 miles away. Jews and Greeks, rich and poor, slave and free who were all followers of Jesus sat down at full meals in these cities. This was nothing short of revolutionary and that was exactly the point. These diverse followers of Christ revealed to the world a glimpse of heaven on earth.

Fellowship around the table remains vitally important for followers of Christ two thousand years later whether on Mount Athos or in Old Forge. In worship, we gather around the table and celebrate the joyful feast of the people of God in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. In the Social Room, we gather for fellowship every Sunday to reconnect after as little as a week or as much as a season apart. In the Fellowship Hall, we sit down for feasts that range from the simple to the adventurous.

The New Year offers our congregation and community two great opportunities to rekindle the spirit of the early church around tables filled with food. Returning again this year is the Loaves and Fishes Café. The first café will be hosted by Nicolls in the Fellowship Hall on Thursday, January 26 at noon. With our partners from St. Bartholomew and St. Anthony’s Churches as well as the Inlet Community Church, we offer a free and hearty lunch that fortifies the spirit as well as the body.

The good news is that we don’t have to wait until the end of the month to join together for great food and fellowship! On Saturday, January 21 at 5:30 p.m., Jordan and Polly Yesuras will host a feast called *A Taste of Greece*. The menu begins with Greek delicacies such as Dolmathes, Spanokopita, and Greek Salad before moving onto the entrée of Pastichio. All this is topped off with mouthwatering Baklava and Kouloulakia. Rounding out the evening will be stories of Greek food and culture interwoven with scripture readings from St. Paul’s letters to the churches in Greece.

A Taste of Greece is a fundraiser for the Parkinson’s Unit at the Presbyterian Home in New Hartford. Since all proceeds will go to the Parkinson’s Unit, the suggested donation is \$15 per person. Please call the church office by Wednesday, January 18th to make your reservation.

Nurture your spiritual and physical health in 2012 – join us at the table!

Meet the (other) Bartels

by Ken Strike for the Sabbatical Team



Rev. Joanne & Don Bartel

Reverend Joanne Bartel will be filling in for Lawrence while he is on Sabbatical leave this spring from March 1st through June 30th. Joanne is an experienced pastor who has specialized in taking on interim roles. She has served in this capacity for a number of churches in the Susquehanna Valley and Onondaga Presbyteries. Joanne is a graduate of Colgate Rochester Divinity School. Her husband, Don, is a mechanical engineer and is retired from Cornell University. Joanne and Don live in Ithaca, NY where Joanne is a Parish Associate at First Presbyterian Church. They have four children and

eight grandchildren with one more due soon. The Bartels (no relation to Lawrence and Amy) will be living in the manse while Joanne is with us.

Next month's *Bellringer* will have an article that will provide a fuller picture of Joanne's background and views on faith and ministry.

Transitions

Each month we share "transitional experiences" within the Nicolls family. Please call the church for more information or if you have an individual to add.



Compassion

Brandon Beal – from 1/8-1/23:
New York-Presbyterian Morgan
Stanley Children's Hospital
3959 Broadway
165th Street and Broadway
New York, NY 10032

Bob Decker – home
Dottie Hunkins – home
George Patterson – home

Condolences

Bess Folsom – Mother of Barb, Nancy,
Linda & Pat

Elders and Deacons

Elders serving on Session:

Judy Barker	Deb Langworthy
Jean Bird (winter)	Lois Lowenberg
Dave Durfee (summer)	Sue Mahoney
Olin Eddy	MaryAnn Nelson
Darwin Johnston (summer)	Tom Ryan (winter)
Mallory Kleps	Nadine Sanders
George Lapinsky	Polly Yesuras (winter)
Jeff Livingstone (winter)	

Deacons serving on the Board of Deacons:

Katie Boesché	Patty Mahardy
Mary Durfee (summer)	Ann Powley
Kristin Frymire (winter)	Kathy Riehle
Linda Hippisley	Lynda Ryan (summer)
Marilyn Hurlbutt (summer)	Nancy Venetz
Therá Levi (winter)	Jordan Yesuras (winter)

Please lift all of our church leaders up in prayer as they cultivate grace-filled ministry and mission throughout the entire Nicolls fellowship.

Pastor's Purse



How quickly 2011 passed! This year has overflowed with God's abundant grace. Your generosity through the pastor's purse is another amazing and undeserved blessing in an already full year. Thank you. It is a joy and privilege for us to be in ministry with you.

Lawrence and Amy Bartel

Stewardship Snapshot as of November 30th

Nov. 2011 Revenue	\$15,903.00
Nov. 2011 Expenses	<u>\$13,001.36</u>
Revenue less Expenses	\$ 2,901.64
Fiscal Year 2011-12 Revenue	\$52,379.16
Fiscal Year 2011-12 Expenses	<u>\$23,011.10</u>
Fiscal Year Revenue less Expenses	\$29,368.06

Food Sense Drivers Needed

The Deacons are looking for volunteers to pick up the monthly



Food Sense orders over the coming months. Volunteers need to drive to Ilion on a Friday morning (see dates below), arriving about 10:30, help load the grocery orders into their vehicle, drive back to Niccolls Church, and help unload the items into the kitchen. The Deacons can reimburse the driver \$25 to help toward gas expenses. Here are the dates drivers are needed in the next few months:

- January 20
- February 24
- March 23
- April 20

If you are able and willing to help out one or more of those days, or if you'd like more information, please call the church office at 369-3475. The Deacons will appreciate your help to keep this important food program going.

Deacon News *by Nancy Venetz*

The deacons distributed twenty Christmas packages full of food from our pantry, sweet breads that were baked by members of our congregation and handmade Christmas card crafted by our Sunday school children. Also included were Diorio's and Kinney's gift cards to help with additional holiday expenses. Thank you to our congregation and our community for your continued support of our food pantry.

Deacons are caregivers and we would like to inform you of a caregiver organization called RCIL – Resource Center for Independent Living. They offer a respite care program in the Inlet Community Center from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. every Wednesday. This program is designed to give caregivers a few hours of respite from the demands of caring for an aging or ill person. To enroll in this program, you can contact RCIL at 866-7245.

Do you like to send cards? We could use your help. Every month, the deacon of the month sends many cards to all different people for all different reasons. Some months, it gets too overwhelming for just one person. It would be wonderful to have some assistance. We have the cards and the stamps, you would just need to write a short note and address the envelopes. This outreach is a fulfilling way to share God's love and compassion with others. Please contact the deacon of the month or the church office to share in this ministry.



JANUARY Birthdays:

Lucy Ferrick	1/6	Anna Ferrick	1/16	Bob Liddle	1/24
Liz McDowell	1/11	Adam Josephson	1/19	Penny Smedley	1/30
Stephen Parent	1/11	Kristopher Burke	1/20	Carrol Turner	1/31
Damon Kull	1/12	Nancy Venetz	1/21		
Pam Parent	1/15	Char Pylman	1/23		

Our Christmas Presentation



Creating art for the Christmas Story slide show.

The Holy Family, Angels, Shepherds, Wise People, and stable animals all took shape at Niccolls this Christmas through the artistic gifts of the congregation. The Worship Committee wishes to thank you all.

Special thanks seem to be in order for those who spent much time as well as particular talents to make this happen:

OUR LEAD ARTISTS: Sue Freese, who encouraged our creativity, along with Amy Bartel, Star and Jeff Livingstone, and Polly Yesuras. Polly gifted the church with the six beautiful angels hanging in the fellowship hall around the wreath. Sue Freese matted each of the over eighty art works done by the congregation and she prepared the gallery in the Fellowship Hall.

OUR PHOTOGRAPHER: Penny Smedley, who photographed and edited each piece of art (several times) for our video.



OUR VIDEOGRAPHER: David Langworthy, who produced the video and the power point.

OUR NARRATOR: Jeff Livingstone, who volunteered to tell the story.

THE SOUP MAKERS AND THE SERVERS: The Women's Fellowship and the Nicc's Chicks, who provided the luncheon to get this project started.

OUR PASTOR: Pastor Lawrence, who not only allows but encourages the risk of trying something new.

THANK YOU ALL AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!
Your Worship Committee



Niccolls Women's Fellowship *by Ruth Brussel & Ginny Milton*

We had our annual Christmas luncheon at the Proper's beautifully decorated home with 12 delighted attendees enjoying the fine food that was the specialty of each one who came. Thank you, Reed and Barb, for hosting the party again this year.

We are encouraging all who like good fellowship to come to our first meeting of 2012 on January 2nd at 10 a.m. We are planning our activities and probably installing officers. Ginny and Ruth have been co-moderators for 8 years. If anyone would like to be an officer please come and be our guests. We have had such fantastic support from the Nicc's Chicks and the whole church through the years and now it is appreciated more than ever.

We can't believe this year is almost over. We hope you all had a wonderful Christmas. We wish you a very Happy and Healthy New Year. Please come and enjoy coffee and goodies with us.

Thrift Shop News

by Deborah Elmer for the Thrift Shop Team

It's been a busy year in the Niccolls Thrift Shop! The number and assortment of donated items set new records. To keep the shelves and racks stocked and to staff the shop on Fridays and Saturdays, as well as on Wednesdays during the summer, it takes many volunteers who contribute countless hours of their time. Whether sorting, cheerfully assisting shoppers, or transporting excess items to a variety of other mission programs, these dedicated people quietly serve the Lord week after week.

To show our appreciation for our volunteers, the Thrift Shop Leadership Team is sponsoring a *Thank You!* luncheon on Monday, January 16th at noon in the Social Room. Jim Ulrich will provide his famous soup and Nadine Sanders, Linda Hippisley, Mary Moore and Deb Elmer will provide bread and desserts. Anyone who works in the "boutique" in any capacity is welcome to join us for this time of food and fellowship, so mark your calendars!



USHERS

THIS MONTH

January 1

Ellen Dreja

Jeremy Dreja

January 22

Amy Bartel

Amy Eddy

January 8

Linda Hippisley

Diane Kull

Star Livingstone

Trinity Liddle

Katie Boesché

Sue Mahoney

January 29

Katie Kelly

Betty Stem

January 15

Ruth & Al Brussel

Kathy Riehle

Barb Proper

Howard Quimby

Char Pylman

CE Survey

Over the past several years, Joanne Strike has followed the inspiration of the Spirit as our Adult Christian Education (CE) coordinator. One of the new ministries Joanne facilitated was the formation of our Faith and Fellowship Groups. This fall, Joanne has stepped away from her role in CE to focus more time and energy on her passions within the Mission Committee at Niccolls Church and the Presbyterian Women. Thank you, Joanne, for all your time, energy and dedication to faith formation of all ages!

At this time, the CE Committee is asking for your input so that together we may explore your questions and concerns of faith. What topics or studies interest you and when are good meeting times. Please complete the following short survey and return it to the office by January 31st.

Adult Faith and Fellowship Groups

What studies or topics interest you? _____

Also, please rate the following topical areas on a 1-5 scale (1 being the highest)

_____ Core Christian Beliefs & Practices

_____ Social Justice Issues

_____ Bible Study

_____ Exploration of Spiritual Disciplines

_____ Christian Living and Ethics

_____ Creativity and the Life of the Spirit

_____ Book Discussion: type of book (or name of book) _____

Which days do you prefer? _____

How often would you like to meet? _____

Do you need child care? _____

Are you available to be a leader or host a group in your home? _____

Name & phone number _____

Other suggestions or ideas _____

A Message of Thanks

by Mary Moore, Church Secretary

As this new year dawns and I reflect on the year past, I am filled with gratitude for the many blessings I've received. While faced with a serious health challenge and difficult issues of aging with my dear parents, I found my strength bolstered and renewed at every turn.

I am deeply humbled by the generosity of the Niccolls congregation as a whole and the loving support and kindness of so many individuals. It's one thing to know in your head that a group of people is special. It's quite another for your heart to feel the abundance of that group's gifts. The gifts have included copious prayers, many good wishes, a wonderful prayer blanket that covered me with God's healing warmth given by the most loving group of women I've ever had the privilege of knowing, another beautiful blanket of faith and comfort made by strangers and given to me with love and hope by a thoughtful friend, delicious and nutritious meals to take some of the burden off my amazing caretaker husband, cheerful little gifts of candles and inspirational readings of faith and hope to raise my spirits, rides to treatment when my energy starting wearing thin, the willingness of some special people to fill in for me in the office when I wasn't up to working, the tremendous grace and encouragement of Niccolls' wonderful pastor, the ability to work flexible hours as needed suggested by the Personnel Committee and granted by Session.

God has given us a tremendous capacity for love and generosity – the Niccolls Church family has certainly proven that! One of the lessons I've learned this year is to open my heart to whatever is given even if I feel undeserving. I am forever grateful for your gifts of love and care.

2012 Church Directory

If you would like a copy of the updated church directory, please contact the office.



HAVE A BLESSED NEW YEAR!

Memorial Sunday

Consider partnering with the Worship Committee in providing flowers in honor or memory of a loved one, on the first Sunday of the month. You may send a donation of \$15.00 for one arrangement or \$30.00 for two with the form below to: Niccolls Memorial Church, PO Box 605, Old Forge NY 13420, marked "flower fund." Your gift will be recognized in the bulletin unless you ask otherwise.



For more information please contact Mary the church office at 369-3475.

Memorial Flower Gift

Please accept my donation of
\$15__ \$30__ (check one) Other \$_____

for the Memorial Flower Fund
in memory / honor (circle one) of:

Given by: _____