

The Bellringer



FEBRUARY 2012

Nicolls Memorial Presbyterian Church

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Mountain Meditations *by Rev. Lawrence Bartel*

To prepare for the road ahead, I've been looking back on the road behind. Over the past few weeks, I've been reading through many of my journals. Recently, I read the following words in a journal from India:

I walked around the streets of every city I visited.

I walked, refusing every taxi and rickshaw driver because I wanted to see the neighborhoods at my own pace.

I walked and got lost time after time, only to find myself again.



Personally and as a congregation, we are about to embark on two new seasons. Both seasons offer a profound opportunity of discovery, of finding ourselves, our place, and our mission. Both seasons will begin within a few short days of one another.

Lent is the first season and begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22. On this day, the ash from the palms we waved in triumphant procession last Palm Sunday will be pressed into our hands and onto our foreheads in the sign of the cross. The Lenten journey takes us through the wilderness to what truly matters in this one, precious life. It is the very point where we encounter our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That destination is the very place of our **rebirth**.

Sabbatical is the second season ahead and begins on March 1st. After many months of careful and faithful preparation, we will fully engage our sabbatical theme Walking with God on Holy Ground. The Sabbatical journey beckons our congregation to discern how walking in the transformative presence of God here in the Adirondacks will guide our future ministry. That destination is the very place of our **renewal**.

The Rev. Joanne Bartel will be our Sabbatical Pastor leading us in worship, pastoral care, and moderating the Session. As Pastor Joanne transitions into our congregation, I will shift from the demands of pastoral ministry to the rhythms of sabbatical through a personal retreat on Cape Cod. I will begin this time by journaling and walking along the shore where the land and water meet in ever changing ways. A week later, Amy, Jens, Lydia and I will depart for places of renewal both new and familiar.

The Sabbatical Team continues to diligently prepare for this season. In late February, look for a special sabbatical edition of the Bellringer in your mailboxes. This edition will highlight sabbatical opportunities for the congregation, contain a greeting from Pastor Joanne, describe our families' sabbatical itinerary, and much more.

On Sunday, February 19th, Pastor Joanne and I will have the privilege of leading worship together. Then after the 10 a.m. worship service, please extend a warm and gracious Adirondack welcome to Pastor Joanne and her husband Don during our fellowship time.

Journaling will be one of the primary practices during our sabbatical. Star Livingstone, a member of our Sabbatical Team, has created a meditation guide/journal for our entire congregation to begin both seasons of Lent and Sabbatical. Join me in prayerfully using the enclosed guide for the week between February 19th and 26th.

Please turn the page and read a bit of Pastor Joanne's life story and more about the meditation guide/journal, and the Leave Taking / Welcoming Celebration.

Now let us walk step by careful step.

We may feel a bit uncertain by the unfamiliar journey ahead.

I may even take a wrong turn on the Camino.

Yet I deeply believe we will find ourselves, our place and our mission again.

Transformation awaits us as we walk with God on Holy Ground.

Meet Joanne Bartel

The Sabbatical Team has asked Joanne Bartel, who will fill in for Lawrence while he is on sabbatical leave, to tell us, and thereby you, a bit about her background, her family, and her views on ministry. Here are her responses to our questions:



I was born in China of missionary parents and grew up in China, Yakima Washington, and Wheaton Illinois. I attended the University of Illinois where I studied Music Education with a major in voice. While I was being a mom to four children I sang in the Cornell Chamber Singers and once soloed with the Cornell orchestra and chorus, and for a few years worked with the Ithaca Opera Workshop and sang the part of the witch in Hansel and Gretel. What fun! I worked as a substitute teacher, was Associate Staff for Inter-Varsity at Cornell University (where my husband Don was a Professor in Mechanical Engineering), directed five choirs at our local Presbyterian Church (both children and older adults.) I loved working with the people, and knew I cared more about them knowing how much God loved them than about the actual music itself.

After our four children graduated from high school, I received my Master of Divinity degree in 1995 from Colgate Rochester Divinity School in Rochester NY. I began pastoring in 1994, and became an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA) in 1995. Because of being “geographically challenged” my ministry has focused on being an Interim Pastor. I have served in this capacity to several congregations within an hour of Ithaca. These are the Cayuga-Syracuse Presbytery at Onondaga Hill Presbyterian Church from '94-'96, Susquehanna Valley Presbytery at Christ Presbyterian Church in Cortlandville (just outside Cortland) from '97-2000, Geneva Presbytery at a yoked parish of Bellona Presbyterian Church, and Seneca Presbyterian Church (Old number Nine) from 2000-2002, and back in Susquehanna Valley Presbytery at Bainbridge from 2003-2005. Twice in between serving these churches I was stated supply pastor at Scipioville Presbyterian Church in the Cayuga-Syracuse Presbytery for a few months before I retired in 2005.

When I am pastoring and leading worship I feel closer to God and more “myself” than any other time. I love leading worship, working with people, and emphasizing God’s amazing love and forgiveness for us. That’s hard to beat. I believe that ministry is a joint venture with the congregation. Because the Spirit of God is continually at work in the church of Jesus Christ, it is a privilege to affirm and lift up what God is doing in our life together. I love to encourage others to enjoy God’s grace, love and forgiveness. We are beloved children of God. As we read in the Heidelberg Catechism, I affirm that my only comfort in life and in death is that I belong body and soul to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There is no salvation in anything or anyone else. The God who is revealed in Jesus Christ is a God of mercy, continually reaching out to us in love and forgiveness.

Don and I have four children and nine grandchildren, all above average:

Michelle Bartel—Graduated from Calvin College and received her PhD from Princeton Theological Seminary. She is also an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA). She currently pastors in New Washington IN.

Bruce Bartel—Graduated from Cornell in Civil Engineering. He now lives with his wife and three children in Providence, RI, where he designs bridges. His wife, Trish, teaches in their parish parochial school.

Melissa LeGrand—Has masters degrees from the University of Chicago and Western Michigan University. She lives in Grand Rapids, MI, where she and her husband, David, manage the Wealthy Street Bakery and rental properties. She is a musician, a published author and chauffeurs their four children around.

Len Bartel—Graduated from Cornell with a degree in business. He lives in Lewiston, ME with his wife, Anna and is now commuting to Augusta where he works as a Program Officer at the Maine Health Access Foundation. They are proud parents of Ezra and, as of December 30, 2011, of Malachi.

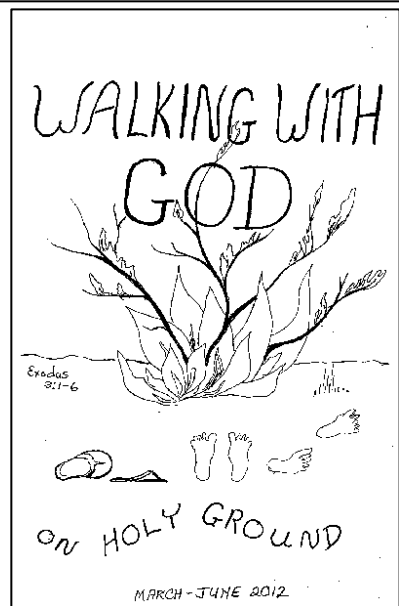
Don has worked as a Senior Scientist at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City, along with his work at Cornell. His research has been in orthopedic biomechanics, which involves the design and analysis of joint replacements. He retired from Cornell a few years ago and from the Hospital this January. Then he will be completely retired! Don will accompany me to Old Forge while I serve Niccolls.

Walking with God on Holy Ground - The Booklet

Included in this issue of the Bellringer is a booklet entitled Walking with God on Holy Ground. This is a meditation guide/journal offered for your use in preparing for Pastor Lawrence's impending sabbatical. Everyone in the Niccolls Church family is invited to share in this journal. Please consider using the guide during the week preceding the leave taking celebration on February 26th to prayerfully determine your own commitment to spiritual practice during these four months. Additional copies will be available at church.

For those who like the size and shape of the pages and wish to continue journaling your experiences in this format, folders will be offered at the February 26th celebration. Journal pages may be enclosed in the folders, which will be bound into booklets at the homecoming party on July 1st.

Note: The Sabbatical Team wishes to thank team member Star Livingstone for using her considerable talents in creating the booklet to share with all of you.



Leave Taking / Welcoming Celebration

On **Sunday, February 26th**, all are invited to join us for 10:00 a.m. worship and an afternoon of celebration and fellowship as we say farewell to Pastor Lawrence and family and welcome Rev. Joanne and Don Bartel to our fold for four months.

Pastor Joanne will lead us in worship with assistance from Pastor Lawrence that morning. Then, we will gather in the Fellowship Hall for a hearty lunch of lasagna (both meat and meatless), salad, bread, beverages and desserts. The party will carry on with some surprises for both pastors and for everyone else in attendance.

The afternoon will continue with a short walk together to the Strand Theater where we will be treated to a special showing of the movie, *The Way*, starring Martin Sheen. This film is a collaboration between Sheen and his real life son Emilio Estevez, to honor the Camino de Santiago and promote pilgrimage. It takes place along the same route Pastor Lawrence will travel to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Spain during his sabbatical. The sabbatical grant awarded to Niccolls Church included the cost of renting this movie so there will be no admission charge.

Be sure to mark your calendar and join us for this meaningful and fun-filled day. If you would like to be a part of the celebration's creation, please see the list below and call the office (369-3475) or sign up on the sheets in the Narthex with your choice of a way to help.

FOOD ITEMS NEEDED

Pan of lasagna
Salad makings
Salad dressing
Loaf of bread
Butter
Punch ingredients: soda, sherbet, juice
Bag of ice
Dessert
Half n Half

NON-FOOD ITEMS NEEDED:

Small paper plates (for desserts)
Warming trays (to borrow)
Music CD's to borrow: Scottish, Spanish, French

HELP WITH TASKS TO BE DONE

Set up on Saturday, Feb. 25

Before party:

Make salads
Cut bread & place in baskets
Make coffee & heat water for tea
Make punch
Heat & cut up lasagna
Cut and plate desserts
Take items into Fellowship Hall

During party:

Play and change CDs when needed
Replenish beverages
Help clear plates away

Clean up after movie

Stewardship Snapshot as of December 31st

Dec. 2011 Revenue	\$22,596.43
Dec. 2011 Expenses	<u>\$14,388.44</u>
Revenue less Expenses	\$ 8,207.99
Fiscal Year 2011-12 Revenue	\$74,975.59
Fiscal Year 2011-12 Expenses	<u>\$37,399.54</u>
Fiscal Year Revenue less Expenses	\$37,076.05

A Taste of Greece

Outside it was a January evening. Inside the Fellowship Hall was a glimmer of Mediterranean sunshine. *A Taste of Greece*, presented by Jordan and Polly Yesuras, greeted eager diners with tantalizing smells, mouthwatering tastes, and traditional Greek music. Interest in the event was so great that we squeezed in a few more over our reservation limit.

Together we raised over \$700 for the Parkinson's Unit at the Presbyterian Home in New Hartford! Thank you to all who supported this event. Also, we would like to extend a very special thank you to Jordan and Polly for all their hard work to make the evening such an enjoyable and memorable event.



Transitions

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

Birth

Marlena Kay O'Hara & Ryan Reid O'Hara – grandchildren of Bruce and Margie O'Hara

Compassion

Brandon Beal – home Stuart Nelson – home
 Bob Decker – home Philip Pepper – home
 Dottie Hunkins – home Dean Pohl – home
 Donna Myers – home

Condolences

Bonnie Bushman – mother of Kathy & Wally
 Emily Hurlbutt – mother of Carol, Susie & Diane
 Jocelyn Lindsay – daughter of Ginny, mother of Samantha, Kyle, & Tom

New Address

Ashley André
 SUNY Albany, Freedom Quad Box 3046
 1400 Washington Ave, Albany NY 12222

Fair Trade Sale

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5th and
 SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12th**



Following 10 a.m. worship, the Worship Committee will have Equal Exchange items available for sale:

▶ Coffee ▶ Tea ▶ Cocoa ▶ Chocolate

Also, the same items will be sold during the Victorian Tea Room luncheon on Saturday, February 18th from 12 noon to 2 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Stock up on these delicious items or purchase a gift for your valentine. At the same time, you'll be helping farmers and producers earn a living wage to support their families.

USHERS

February 5

Nancy & Roger Pratt
 Dave & Deb Langworthy

February 19

Ginny Milton
 Jean Gaudin
 Lynda & Tom Ryan

February 12

Kathy Riehle
 Mary Burke
 Kelly & Jason Pratt

February 26

Therá & John Levi
 Alex Levi
 Jordan Levi



Niccolls Women's Fellowship

by Ruth Brussel & Ginny Milton

Our first meeting in January was a planning meeting and it was a cold day. We managed to keep warm with the wonderful new heating system and there was not a clang or a bang from the cellar.

The same officers are doing their job again this year and we decided to hold the Victorian Tea with the help of the Nicc's Chicks. They will be in charge of the decorating of the Fellowship Hall with Steven Wicks' expertise. I can't wait 'til you see how they transform the room into a Victorian Garden. The Women's Fellowship will be making the food (same menu) and the Chicks will serve it and we will be able to attend the festivities. We could not do the tea without them. Thank you so much, ladies.

Our second meeting we made the tiny meatballs for the Italian wedding soup for the tea and were invited to share the thrift shop luncheon. Jim Ulrich made the chicken & corn soup, a recipe he brought from Pennsylvania and Mary M. made homemade bread and the desserts were made by Linda H. and Deb E. It was fun and many good ideas for the thrift shop were discussed.

Please come Feb 6th at 10 am and help swell our numbers as we will be planning the food and how we will be getting it prepared for the tea. It's always fun and there'll be goodies to eat. SEE YOU THERE. If you need a ride call Ruth Brussel at 369-6679.

Presbyterian Women's Gathering Wednesday, February 8

The Presbyterian Women of the Utica Presbytery will meet for the 2012 Winter Gathering on Wednesday, February 8 at the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Utica. All women in the Niccolls community are invited! We will fellowship together and discuss a Dewitt Jones DVD. Mr. Jones is a top professional photographer who communicates well with the audience.

We will enjoy lunch together, so please bring a dish to share and your own place setting. Westminster Church is at 714 Washington St, Utica, and registration will begin at 10:00 AM. Let Joanne Strike (369-6077) know if you need a ride. Please RSVP to Vivian Brucker by calling 942-4251 or e-mail vivbrucker@yahoo.com. Come to fellowship with other Presbyterian women, to learn what women in other churches are doing, and enjoy the DVD and discussion. This is a good opportunity for something different in February when we need to get out.

Winter Renovations

At the January meeting, the Session approved the plan and financing of a unisex handicapped bathroom. Through the inspiration of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, this bathroom is taking shape with minor changes to existing space.

At press time, construction the bathroom is well underway. Our deep gratitude to the Buildings and Ground committee – David Langworthy, Jeff Livingstone, Al Brussel, George Lapinsky and friend of the committee, Carl Klossner, for your hard work and always improving the church facility as a tool for our ministry and mission.



Deacon News *by Nancy Venetz*

Calling all bakers! The deacons will be sending cookies to our college kids and those serving in the military. Please bring the cookies to church on Sunday February 5th and leave them in the kitchen marked ‘deacons.’



On February 6th, we will pack them up and send them to arrive just in time for Valentine’s Day. If you want a package sent to someone, please give us the name and address before February 6th.

Billy’s Italian Restaurant has scheduled a benefit dinner for the Niccolls Food Pantry on Thursday, February 9th. There are seatings at 5:00 and 7:00. Take-out is also available. Billy’s will generously donate 20% of the sales to the pantry. Please mark your calendar, enjoy a great meal at Billy’s and support a much needed community service.

One of our deacons, Jordan Yesuras, is very knowledgeable about veterans benefits. Jordan may be able to help you get assistance that you are entitled to. Veterans and widows of veterans can contact Jordan at 369-3644 for more information.

You or someone you know may qualify for a program administered by the Herkimer County Office for the Aging. Please see the article to the right.

In-Home Services for Elderly

Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP) offers in-home assistance with bathing, personal care, light housekeeping and errands to Herkimer County senior citizens aged 60 or older. In order to qualify for EISEP, a person must NOT be eligible for Medicaid and must be able to be maintained safely at a home. A person 60 or older must need assistance with at least one Activity of Daily Living (ADL) such as, eating, dressing, bathing or toileting and or two Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) such as meal preparation, housekeeping or shopping.

For more information, please contact a deacon or the Office for the Aging at 867-1415 or visit our website at www.herkimercounty.org; then Departments, then Office for the Aging.

A Brand New Year at the Thrift Shop

by Deborah Elmer for the Thrift Shop Team

How many ways can we say thank you to the dedicated volunteers who keep the Thrift Shop running efficiently? Well, we may not be able to answer that question with an exact number, but one way is to gather those very special people around a table for a simple meal on a cold winter day. On January 16th, the Thrift Shop Leadership Team (Jim Ulrich, Nadine Sanders, Linda Hippisley, Mary Moore, and Deb Elmer) hosted a luncheon for all who contribute their time, talents, ideas, and energy to this mission program. While we nourished our bodies with homemade soup, bread, and desserts, the happy sounds of stories and laughter nourished our hearts.

Great food, great fellowship, great thanks to all who make sure that every shopper finds a smile and God’s love in the Niccolls Boutique.

Midweek Faith and Fellowship Group

All are welcome to come to the Midweek Faith and Fellowship group beginning Tuesday, January 31st to discuss the book of Micah. This is one of the better known minor prophets in the Old Testament because of his verse which describes what God requires of us – doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God.

One guide says the theme of Micah is “A just and merciful God delivered His people from darkness. The lives of God’s covenant people should reflect God’s standards.” It will be interesting to see what was happening during Micah’s time and how we can relate that to our own time.

We will continue discussing Micah on Tuesdays through the month of February. Bring your own lunch for a gathering at **noon**, and the Bible study will begin at **12:30** until **2:00**.

FEBRUARY Birthdays:

Olin Eddy	2/4
Kaylin Parent	2/7
Bud Hippisley	2/10
Liam Pratt	2/10
Brian Mahardy	2/22
Tim Mills	2/28



Niccolls Travelers

When you travel, do you pick up sample size toiletries (soap, hand lotion, shampoo)? If you do, consider donating them to Hope House in Utica for their guests who need such items. Leave them in the church kitchen in the basket marked “Hope House.” We will see they are delivered for folks who will make good use of them.