



The Presbyterian Church of New Rochelle

Year 3, Vol. IV

Christmas 2015

From the Pastor

Earlier this week I was at Carnegie Hall to hear Handel's Messiah. This is probably the 12th or 14th time I've heard the Oratorio Society of New York sing the Messiah but it's the first time I've heard the so-called Mozart Arrangement. Nearly 50 years after it was first performed it seems the leading lights of the music world decided Messiah needed to be "modernized". Orchestration was changed and arias reassigned but the differences seem relatively minor even to someone who has heard it many times. But the modern version proved very popular and it would be more than 100 years until Handel's arrangement reclaimed its prominence in the classical canon.

Messiah is surely an experience that disproves the proverb "Familiarity breeds contempt". Quite the opposite. The more often I hear Messiah the more I appreciate not only the music but the scriptural text compiled by Charles Jennens from the King James Bible. I think this year's performance may just be the best I've heard. I have been asking myself whether it might be because of the Mozart Arrangement and the relatively minor differences in orchestration that made me hear it in a new way. Or was it, more likely, exceptional performances from all involved. I'm not enough of a musician to make that statement on a conscious level but perhaps on an unconscious level there is some truth in it. Experiencing the familiar from a slightly different vantage point often allows us to gain new insight.

The Nativity of Jesus also defies familiarity even though it might well be said to be the most important and often told story in human history. (Jesus could not have been resurrected had he not first been born!) Even today with the rapid rise of Islam and the decline in those who self-describe as Christian, the birth of Jesus Christ shaped the world in which we live more than any other single event. The Nativity is a story that we can hear over and over without ever growing weary. It is a story whose relevance is "modernized" every time we hear it; it informs nearly every news story we read. The Nativity resonates at some level with all people in every age. But as Garrison Keillor wrote recently, you don't have to believe to believe in Christmas.

As we hear the story of the birth of Jesus Christ, let us listen to the Mozart Arrangement; the modernized version that unfolds before us each and every day. This is not a dated story from antiquity. It is today's story living before us, beside us and within us. If we will let the living Christ direct our lives, this ancient truth will direct us to Christmas future, to the new Jerusalem where God dwells among us and wipes every tear from our eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." (Revelation 21:3-4)

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

From the Clerk:

2015 has passed so fast that it is almost unbelievable. We have to consider ourselves blessed that we have been together as a congregation for another year. All in all 2015 has been a very good year for our congregation. We have grown in size and have acquired great friends.

On November 29 we received 5 new members. A certificate of membership together with a Bible was presented to each of them; some chose a study Bible others a large print edition!

Meet our new members:

Cherry Charlton returned to us after many years away. She is an Assistant Manager in a group home for severely challenged adults and is married to Frank Charlton. Cherry loves to sing and we are looking forward to her participation in the choir.

Julienne Hairston is Nona Hairston's daughter and spent many of her early years at PCNR but never joined the church. But here are two things you may not know about Julie: she was born in Morocco and is fulfilling her creative energies by writing and producing live theater.

Lonely Kachenjera is John Kachenjera's wife and is a math teacher at Westchester Community College. They are from Mali and John is serving his country at the United Nations. Lonely's work schedule prevented her from being in the new member class last spring. We have been charmed by their daughter Abigail who just may be a part of next new member class in the Spring?!

Onika and **Chris** Mahabal, are a delightful young couple who have been commuting from Queens. Their daughter, Maliya, was baptized in July along with Cherry's great-granddaughter, a

close friend! Chris emigrated from Guyana with his family and was baptized the Sunday before becoming a member. Onika, who is a financial consultant for non-profits, is just two courses away from completing her Masters degree! We are so blessed to have been a vital part of this young family's journey.



60 people attended bring a Friend/Name Tag Sunday in September. It was a success. Prepare to do it again next year around September 11.



The Women's Association held a tag sale on October 10. The sale made about \$710.00. From this money the group helps several charities and also contribute to the coffee hour, Thanksgiving and other activities as needed. The group is very active and meets every month in the church library. Also, a group of the women attend lunch once a month as an effort to solidify friendship and sense of community among them. If you are interested, please join us in the meetings and lunches. We will be delighted if you join us.

Remember to put some things aside for us when you do your spring cleaning for our next sale.

40 congregants participated in communion on **World Communion Sunday**. On this Sunday we collected a Peace offering of \$573.00 that was sent to OGA via Presbytery.

Madeline Mueller, a long time member of this church, died earlier this year. Ms. Mueller's estate left a bequest of \$20,000.00 to the

church. The money will be used to support local mission.

Children's Center Thanksgiving boxes

For Thanksgiving we collected groceries to fill 2 boxes for 2 families of the Children's Center. The families were grateful and emotional. The Burke family donated the turkeys and several parishioners donated groceries to fill the boxes. Our heartfelt thanks to the Burke family and to all who helped make Thanksgiving a lovely experience for two families.

Notes from the Presbytery Meeting

The clerk of session attended the Hudson River Presbytery Meeting at Stony Point on September 22 as commissioner for a second time. At the meeting, the 2016 budget was presented for a first reading. Community conversations took place about topics that are of interest for the church.

Another meeting of the Presbytery was held on December 8 at the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown. At that meeting the budget was approved and our Pastor was thanked for his service as Treasurer especially in preparing the budgets and PowerPoint presentation. He will "retire" as Treasurer in January! We also approved an overture for the Discernment and Innovation in Peacemaking which calls on Presbyterians to work on preventing violence "through prayer, direct action and advocacy, and to address sexism, racism, and other patterns of oppression as tasks for peacemaking and justice seeking". The Fossil Fuel Divestment Overture was also approved which deals directly with the danger of fossil fuel use on the environment and "compels to action as a denomination to divest from the fossil fuel industry" and to reduce fossil fuel usage.

We also approved a 2% COLA increase for pastors and other church workers.

In early December the office was painted in cream and white and two weeks later a new carpet was installed. Next step: curtains.

Stewardship Sunday was November 15. We have received some pledges but if you have not pledged yet, you still can. The amount isn't important, it is the statement you make about how important the church is in your life and more practically, it helps us prepare our budget more accurately. Your contribution will help us continue worshiping in this beautiful and historic church. That is a good way to thank God for all He has given us.

Stewardship envelopes were distributed on December 6. If you have not received your box yet, let us know. Remember to use them next year.

Our friend of many years, **Irsa Giglio** had a mild stroke. She was released from the rehabilitation center and will be staying with her daughter Dorine: 8 Bates Court, Sewell, NJ 08080. (856) 582-9768 The doctors expect a full recovery. Our prayers and thoughts are with her and the family. We look forward to seeing her in the New Year.



Christmas Eve service is scheduled for Thursday, Dec.24, 2015 at 5:00. It will take place in the sanctuary instead of the chapel. Those of you that are on Facebook please advertise the service and invite friends.

Christmas is, like the song says, "the most wonderful time of the year". We celebrate the birth of Jesus, and we share time with family

and friends. But it can also be very stressful with the expectations and preparations. There are many things that you can do to simplify and be more relaxed so you can enjoy better the season.

1. Eliminate unnecessary things. Think about how necessary is to do certain things and simplify, replace or eliminate the stressor.
2. Put your energy on whatever gives you joy. Don't do anything because you think you have to, but because you really enjoy the activity.
3. Have members of your family share the responsibilities of planning, cooking and hosting.

Then, enjoy. Have a great 



Don't Miss

It is almost 2016. Pretty soon we will hear the count down to the New Year. Once more, we will receive the year in the hope that things will be better for all of us in the world. We will be wishing for Peace, Love and good health, ah! and money to cover our needs.

But there are many people who are not as fortunate as we are and need our help. We need to be charitable and help and love our neighbor. The Presbyterian church has several charities around the world to help those that are less fortunate. There is the [Cents- Ability](#) initiative of the [Presbyterian Food Hunger Program](#). For every member of your family you will deposit between 2 and five cents for every meal into a "Piggy Bank". Every three months we will collect all the money collected by all the participating families. This money

will be used to help a program like Meals-on-Wheels or any pre-selected program. We will like all of you to participate in this endeavor as of the start of 2016. It will be a great way to help and it won't be too onerous on you.



The Annual Meeting of the Congregation that is scheduled for January 24, 2016. In this meeting we will elect new elders and deacons and set the course for the new year. The elected officials must be ready and prepared to work for the betterment of the congregation. The positions are of extreme importance and need persons of leadership and willingness to work.

We are trying to send a **barrel** of goods to **Liberia** to the town where our friend Sam is from. We want to send it not later than the first week of 2016. Several of our members are already working on the project and several of them have been bringing goods. We still need many items to fill the barrel. Among the things we need are: toiletries (soap, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs, hair brushes, shampoo, hand sanitizer, etc.) canned goods and other non-perishable food, pen, pencils, coloring books, crayons, adhesive bandages,

We will also need manpower to help us fill the barrel. Please see the pastor for more information.



Children's Center
Christmas story



New Members (right to left):
Lonely Kachenjera, Juliene
Hairston, Cherry Charlton,
Chris and Onika Mahabal



Chris, daughter Maliya
and Onika Mahabal