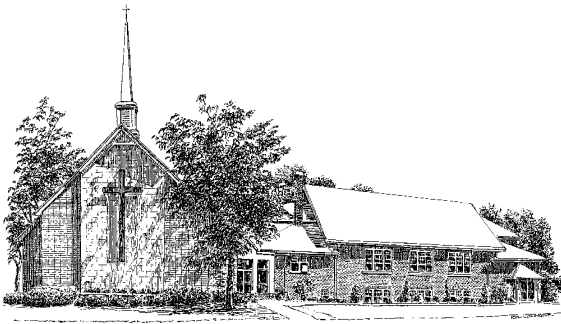


First Presbyterian Church of West Seneca

2085 Union Rd.

West Seneca, NY 14224

716-668-1115



The CELEBRATE February/March 2006

*"We humbly yet boldly step into the future, following
in the footsteps of Jesus on our journey of faith."*

February Highlights

February 5th ~ 10am

Boy Scout Sunday

February 12th ~ 10am

The Rev. Dr. Tim Rogers-Martin, Interim Transition Leader for Presbytery,
preacher

February 19th ~ 10am

Ordination & Installation of Elders & Deacons

March Highlights

March 1st ~ 7pm

Ash Wednesday Worship service

Wednesdays, March 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th ~ 7:30pm

Lenten Journey Services

PASTOR'S PLACE

Dear Friends:

I want to address a few issues that have been raised with me concerning *the Celebrate*, this church newsletter, and the new way we are now distributing it.

As for *the Celebrate*, only those people who want the newsletter emailed to them will receive it in that fashion. Obviously, if you do not own a computer, you will be able to pick up a copy of the newsletter at the church. If you are one of those people that own a computer, but doesn't consider yourself to be truly "computer literate," you do not have to receive the newsletter by email. If you don't check your email very often or if your email address is linked with your place of work, you can pick up a copy of the newsletter at the church on Sundays or some other time of the week when you are in the building. We will strive to have it ready in the back of the church by the last Sunday of the month. Please remember that we are now "publishing" double issues. There will be 6 editions of the newsletter now rather than 11. Therefore, in 2006, it will be available at the end of January, March, May, July, September, and November.

The Pastor and the Deacons will see to it that our friends at home continue to receive the newsletter. Those who "relocate" for a portion of the year and do not own a computer will receive theirs by mail. Bill Seifert will receive his by mail. However we expect to be mailing very few copies.

The Pastor will now write twelve articles a year rather than eleven. Every other month I will strive to write an article that will be only available on the church web site. Indeed, all of my articles are already available on the web site. Once again, a select few may be mailed or taken to the homes of members or made available in the back of the church.

I realize that change is difficult in the church, but it is not impossible. The Session approved these changes for all of the best reasons that I have discussed in a previous article. And it will take some time and some cooperation to work out all of the details of the changes. It will take some time for every one to get used to looking at two months at a time. It will take some time for people to get used to looking to the web site for the best information possible. I really think that we are all up to the task! The Session will stay on top of the matter, as will the staff. I can guarantee you that more changes are in store not only regarding the newsletter, but in other areas as well. Stay tuned for future developments! And please keep your Session, your Deacons, and your staff in prayer as we move forward in 2006!

God Bless!

Pastor Leeb

CHURCH & SOCIETY

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK

Hosting dates March 11th – 18th @ Orchard Park Presbyterian Church
Be sure to watch your Sunday bulletin for more information.

FOLLOW THE LECTIONARY

FEBRUARY 2006

<i>February 5th</i>	Isaiah 40:21-31 Psalm 147:1-11, 20c 1 Corinthians 9:16-23 Mark 1:29-39	<i>February 19th</i>	Isaiah 43:18-25 Psalm 41 2 Corinthians 1:18-22 Mark 2:1-12
<i>February 12th</i>	2 Kings 5:1-14 Psalm 30 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 Mark 1:40-45	<i>February 26th</i>	2 Kings 2:1-12 Psalm 50:1-6 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 Mark 9:2-9

MARCH 2006

<i>March 5th</i>	Genesis 9:8-17 Psalm 25:1-10 1 Peter 3:18-22 Mark 1:9-15	<i>March 19th</i>	Exodus 20:1-17 Psalm 19 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 John 2:13-22
<i>March 12th</i>	Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 Psalm 22:23-31 Romans 4:13-25 Mark 8:31-38	<i>March 26th</i>	Numbers 21:4-9 Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22 Ephesians 2:1-10 John 3:14-21

WORSHIP & MUSIC

- February 5th Boy Scout Sunday
- February 12th The Rev. Tim Rogers-Martin, preacher
- March 1st Ash Wednesday Service 7:00pm Communion Served
- March 5th Communion Served
- March 12th Girl Scout Sunday

Please mark your calendars for July 16th for the Annual Picnic at Chestnut Ridge Park. More information on this to follow later in Celebrate articles.
Edie Fischer Chair of Worship & Music

YOUNG AT HEART

As you have been informed, The Celebrate will now be coming out every other month. So the YAH'S article will be covering the months of February and March. We will be having two (2) lunches each month on the first and third Wednesdays. On February 15th we will have a person talking about meals on wheels explaining how to volunteer and how to get meals brought to your home. March 15th we will have a person from Habitat to explain how their organization functions. I will try to record who will be coming to the lunches each month so that we will not have to send postcards out since the price of mail has gone up. So keep February 1st and 15th as well as March 1st and 15th open so that you can come and enjoy fellowship and food.
The Happy Cooks: Dick & Edie

February 2006

Sui day	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
			1 Young at Heart lunch 12pm Church & Society Mtg. 7pm	2	3	4
5 10am Worship Boy Scout Sunday Faith Education 11:15am Fellowship Confirmation Class Choir Rehearsal	6 Monday Evening Adult Forum & Discussion 7pm	7 Faith Education Meeting 7pm	8 West Seneca Community of Churches @ St. John's Lutheran 11:30am	9	10	11
12 10am Worship Tim Rogers-Martin Faith Education 11:15am Fellowship Confirmation Class Choir Rehearsal	13 Monday Evening Adult Forum & Discussion 7pm	14 Session Meeting 7pm	15 Young at Heart Lunch 12pm	16	17	18 Officer Training 11am – 2pm
19 9am Special Session Meeting 10am Worship Ordination & Installation Faith Education 11:15am Fellowship Choir Rehearsal	20 Monday Evening Adult Forum & Discussion 7pm	21	22 Worship & Music Meeting 7pm	23	24	25
26 10am Worship Faith Education 11:15am Fellowship Choir Rehearsal	27 Monday Evening Adult Forum & Discussion 7pm	28				

March 2006

Sui day	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thur	Fri.	Sat.
			1 Young at Heart Lunch 12pm Worship Service 7pm <i>Ash Wednesday</i>	2	3	4
5 10am Worship with Communion Faith Education 11:15am Fellowship Confirmation Class Choir Rehearsal <i>1st Sunday in Lent</i>	6 Monday Evening Adult Forum & Discussion 7pm	7	8 West Seneca Community of Churches@ Queen of Heaven RC Church 11:30am Lenten Journey@ Seneca United Methodist 7:30pm	9	10	11
12 10am WorshipGirl Scout Sunday Faith Education 11:15am Fellowship Confirmation Class Choir Rehearsal <i>2nd Sunday in Lent</i>	13 Monday Evening Adult Forum & Discussion 7pm	14	15 Young at Heart Lunch 12pm Lenten Journey @ St. Williams 7:30pm	16	17	18
19 10am Worship Faith Education 11:15am Fellowship Confirmation Class Choir Rehearsal <i>3rd Sunday in Lent</i>	20 Monday Evening Adult Forum & Discussion 7pm	21 Session Meeting 7pm	22 Lenten Journey@ First Presbyterian Church 7:30pm	23	24	25
26 10am Worship Faith Education 11:15am Fellowship Confirmation Class Choir Rehearsal <i>4th Sunday in Lent</i>	27 Monday Evening Adult Forum & Discussion 7pm	28 Presbytery Meeting 1pm @ 1 st Presbyterian, Westfield	29 Lenten Journey @ 14 Holy Helpers 7:30pm	30	31	

ADULT FAITH EDUCATION

The Monday Evening Adult Forum is currently re-viewing a video series, *Testament*, with John Romer. This seven part video series will run from January 16 – February 27. All are invited to come and enjoy not only a wonderfully informative series, but also plenty of

animated conversation as well as warm coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and fellowship! Feel free to come at any point in the series.

On March 6, the first Monday of Lent, the Forum will begin discussing the book, *The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions*, co-authored by Marcus Borg, a leading liberal Jesus scholar, and N.T. Wright, a leading conservative Jesus scholar. Those who have been attending the Forum are already familiar with Marcus Borg and his views of the historical Jesus debate. And those of you who were in worship on Christmas Eve might recall that Pastor Deb used a reference from N.T. Wright in her sermon. This study will continue through the months of March and April and most likely into early May as well.

Additional information about Lenten study and worship opportunities will be shared in the weekly bulletins. A surprise or two are in the planning for Lent and involve the viewing of at least two movies that deal with Lenten themes. Be on the lookout either in the Sunday bulletins and/or on line for more information about these films!

NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

I have been mentioning Natural Church Development off and on ever since I went to a meeting last year with the sole intent of learning more about the process – and ended up being so impressed with it that I became a coach for the Presbytery of Western New York.

Though I have written about it, preached a little on it, talked to the Session and the Deacons about it, made pamphlets available, and have made a power point presentation to the Joint Boards, I really haven't made an intentional effort to present my case.

I state my case directly and clearly – the First Presbyterian Church of West Seneca would benefit enormously from entering into a round of Natural Church Development. Why? Let me start at the beginning. And please understand that this is just the beginning of a “conversation” that will be continued.

Natural Church Development is a process, a set of principles that is designed to help a church grow healthier. In other words, it is first and foremost concerned with growing and improving the quality of a church. As a church becomes healthier, numerical growth also begins to increase. But the initial focus is not specifically on improving numbers, such as average weekly worship attendance. The focus is on improving the health of a church – on promoting healthy growth.

In the time that I have been here serving as your Pastor, we have witnessed many examples of “unhealthy” growth. For example, the church was able to increase the number of segments that I work from 6.5 to 10 in about a two-year time span. In that same time span, the number of pledging units reached a high of about 80 and the average weekly worship attendance also increased. Conventional wisdom about measuring church growth would say that the church was “healthy.”

But, in fact, in none of these cases were we experiencing healthy growth. Growth is not healthy if it cannot be sustained. A mere year after raising the Pastor's segments to 10, the congregation voted to reduce them to 8 because of budget issues. Even recently it remained unclear as to whether the church would be able to maintain 8 segments for another year. It appears that we will be able to do so, at least for now.

Over the past two years we have seen a decline in the number of pledging units. At last count I believe that we had 62 pledging units for 2006. That's quite a drop from the 80 of two years ago! And there has been a slight decline in the average weekly worship attendance.

These are but a few of the many examples I could offer of unhealthy growth in the church, in which growth was unable to be maintained and there was too great an emphasis on “mere numbers.” We must keep track of statistics, but numbers do not tell the entire story.

Natural Church Development offers a way of “measuring” the quality of a church. Those who have done research in this area and strongly support this process have arrived at eight quality characteristics that can be “measured” by using a survey and arriving at a church profile. The survey is taken by at least 30 members of the congregation. If more than 30 take the survey, the computer randomly selects 30 surveys and the data from those surveys are entered into a program. From this a church profile emerges that identifies what is called the “minimum factor” for a particular congregation. Every congregation has a minimum factor! It determines which of the eight quality characteristics is the “lowest” and is the area in which a congregation must focus its efforts and ministry. The theory is that the minimum factor is what is truly holding a church back from being a healthy church and thereby inhibiting overall growth in the church.

The eight quality characteristics are: **empowering** leadership, **gift-oriented (based)** ministry, **passionate** spirituality, **functional (effective)** structures, **inspiring** worship services, **holistic** small groups, **need-oriented** evangelism, and **loving** relationships. The adjective is in bold because it is the adjective that matters and is measured. For example, all churches have structures, but not all structures function well. All churches have leadership, but not all leadership is empowering.

In a previous article I stated that I needed to see some things happen before I would recommend to the Session that this church enter into a round of NCD. I also said that the Session would have to make a decision within the next few months in order for this church to be one of the next ones selected to enter into the process. I reiterate that there is no hurry. I do not have a firm timetable in mind. It may be that this church is not yet ready to begin such a process and that we will have to wait until 2007.

The pastor alone cannot set this process in motion. The pastor alone cannot “run” the process. I need to see some interested people from the congregation. There is a need for people to be intentionally in prayer about all of this. There is a need for people to become part of what is known as the Church Health Team. For lack of a better word, the Church Health Team is akin to a steering committee. The Session cannot be that team, though it can recommend people who might be good candidates to serve. The Pastor is a member of the Health team. And there is a need for people to become as informed about this process as I am. If and when I see this, we might be ready as soon as this year.

Allow me to add a thing or two more. As a small church, the Small Church Committee of the Presbytery will pay for taking the survey for the first round and most of the expense of processing the data. I think we can handle \$10 or \$15 dollars for printing costs! The results of the survey can often be returned to us within 10 days or less. The Presbytery also offers a team of coaches to us at no expense. In some places, coaches are paid. We do this for free! I cannot serve as your coach because the Pastor also needs the encouragement of a coach.

It seems to me that there is virtually nothing to lose in giving this a try and potentially a great deal to be gained from it. The only thing that could stop us is fear of the truth and/or an unwillingness to put forth the effort. It is hard work! It is not magic! Think about it! Better yet, pray about it! I'll be in touch!

Pastor Deb

FISCAL FACTS

Church Assets as of January 1		\$81,255.85	
Church Assets December 31		\$86,926.67	
Operating Budget	Year to Date	Budgeted to Date	Difference
Pledges	\$94,858.10	\$96,693.00	-\$1,834.90
Loose Offering	\$4,747.84	\$5,500.00	-\$752.16
Initial Offering	\$127.00	\$300.00	-\$173.00
Per Capita Offering	\$1,150.95	\$1,500.00	-\$349.05
Miscellaneous	\$5,390.00	\$4,940.00	\$450.00
Total Income	\$106,273.89	\$108,933.00	-\$2,659.11
Presbytery Related Mission	\$7,127.04	\$7,042.00	
Per Capita Apportionment	\$4,072.08	\$4,325.00	
Salaries & Session Misc.	\$33,140.44	\$33,740.01	
Pastor Related	\$36,031.20	\$36,304.69	
Faith Education	\$490.70	\$550.00	
Young at Heart	\$41.85	\$0.00	
Worship & Music	\$644.26	\$520.84	
Church & Society	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Membership & Evangelism	\$0.00	\$124.00	
Stewardship Expenses	\$174.49	\$250.00	
Office Expenses	\$4,684.04	\$5,400.00	
Building Costs	\$15,536.80	\$17,241.67	
Total Expenses	\$101,942.90	\$105,374.21	
Difference	\$4,330.99		
XX		Per Capita 2005 \$26.74	
Non Budgeted Items	Year to Date		
Income	\$14,148.88		
Memorials	\$6,606.76	New Per Capita 2006 \$35.00	
Missions	\$3,086.71		
Faith Ed. Offering Expenses	\$151.00		
Youth Fellowships	\$189.50		
Miscellaneous	\$3,333.52		
Total Expenses	\$13,367.49		
Difference	\$781.39		
XX			
Yearly Savings Gain or Loss	\$4,621.35		
XX			
Capital Fund Drive Income	\$558.44		
Capital Fund Drive Expenses	\$0.00		
Capital Fund Drive Balance	\$4,016.48		

In The Life of The Church

FEBRUARY & MARCH BIRTHDAYS

February	4 th	Bill Seifert
		Mettie Wagner
	7 th	John Christmann
		Nancy Kester
	8 th	Evan Reed
	13 th	Myrt Halligan
	15 th	Helen Sommer
	18 th	Lindsay Hanna
	19 th	Tom Vaughan
	21 st	Ron Piersa
	22 nd	Karen Sadovsky
	24 th	Richard Sommer
	26 th	Crystal Giammarise
	28 th	Wendy Warren
	29 th	Sandy Fiegl

March	1 st	Sue Boulter
	3 rd	Cheryl Wilczak
	10 th	Ollie Hanna
	12 th	Sue Piersa
	12 th	Hillary Stoklosa
	14 th	Victoria Turvey
	15 th	Megan Barnhart
	16 th	Denny Bengert
	17 th	Karen Lindak
	20 th	Amber Messore
	22 nd	Ed Gutowski
	23 rd	Betty Rasp
	23 rd	Karen Malyszka
	26 th	Robin Miller
	28 th	Maureen George
		Tom Wilczak

NOTES OF THANKS

Thank you to the Young at Heart Senior group for my Christmas remembrance. I appreciate it and all your friendships! Happy Healthy 2006 to all.
Cheryl Wilczak

PRAYER CONCERNS

Bill Baco (Sandy Pakenham) ♦ Andrew Derrick (BJ Rustic) ♦ Clara Cieslinski ♦ Dan & Judy Cravotta (Janice Jones) ♦ Steve Dalin (Karen Cieslinski Dalin) ♦ Pauline Deletti (Sandy Fiegl) ♦ Jessica Grazen (The Fischers) ♦ James Groves (Nancy Lesakowski) ♦ Dorothy Gutowski (Ed Gutowski) ♦ Harold Hanna ♦ Esther Hiller (Sandy Pakenham) ♦ Melissa Howell (Sue Piersa) ♦ Jill Miller-Kisker, (Jane Lankes) ♦ Ben Klinshaw, (Rita Hanna) ♦ Marguerite Kobel (Dennis Fiegl) ♦ Nancy Lesakowski ♦ David Mariea (Sue Maciejewski) ♦ Norman Orzechowski (Janice Jones) ♦ BJ Rustic ♦ Bill Seifert ♦ The Weez (Dennis Fiegl) ♦ Bob Wilcoxson (The Christmanns) ♦ Joan Wilczak (Tom Wilczak)

Janice and Richard Jones and their family as they mourn the death of Janice's father, Norman Orzechowski



Chris Kalinowski ⊛ Matthew Jones ⊛ Bill Cenkner Jr. ⊛ Patrick Baskerville ⊛ Sammy Russo ⊛ Kimberly Trudeau ⊛ Steve Odebralski ⊛ Jason Zimmerman ⊛ Andrew Zalikowski ⊛ Jeremy Miller ⊛ Nick Turvey ⊛ Kristen Pelc ⊛ Ben Schauss ⊛ Phillip Schott ⊛ Josh Winkler ⊛ John Pirinelli ⊛ Kyle Ernst

The Celebrate
 is published by
First Presbyterian Church
 Celebrate Staff : Debbie Ball, Betty Sroczyk
 Myrt Halligan, Elisabeth Helman, Mary Cotter,
 Muriel Whieldon, George Shaffer

First Presbyterian Church
 2085 Union Rd., West Seneca, NY 14224
 Office hours: 9:00am-1:00pm
 Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri.
 Office: 668-1115
 Email: wspres@buffnet.net
 Web address: www.wspres.org

Rev. Debra Wright.....Pastor
 George Shaffer.....Clerk of Session
 Donna Cieslinski.....Church Treasurer
 Edie Fischer.....Financial Secretary
 Bob Barnhart.....Property Manager
 Corinne Northem.....Secretary
 Sue Maciejewski.....Organist/Choir Director
 Elizabeth Northem.....Custodian

Elders		
Class of 2006	Class of 2007	Class of 2008
Nancy Lesakowski	Edythe Fischer	Bob Barnhart
Richard Jones	Richard Fischer	Karen Malyszka
Debbie Ball	Cheryl Wilczak	Kathy Saeli

Deacons		
Class of 2006	Class of 2007	Class of 2008
Craig Wright	Judy Costa	Sandra Fiegl
Bruce Barrows	Leona Wojcik	Lisa Shriver