

HURLEY REFORMED CHURCH

THE SPIRE

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I spent another education study week at Princeton Seminary, an Alma Mater, as I had done last November. I'm enrolled in its Science and Ministry program, which will end this June. The course of studies has been underwritten by the Templeton Foundation, a very wealthy trust, which encourages universities and seminaries to offer subjects which encourage dialogue between science and religion. For students in the Science and Ministry program, tuition is nominal. Twenty five dollars a day gets you room and board at Princeton Seminary along with lectures, and free books. It's a terrific deal, and the programs last year and this have quickened my faith because the thrust of what is taught shows that science and Christianity need not be at odds. Throughout most of Christian history, theologians were on good terms with the sciences of their respective eras. In fact, both Christianity and Islam copied many scientific texts through the period, wrongly named the Dark Ages, and kept the intellectual lights burning. By the 12th Century technological advances were being implemented because scientific documents had diffused beyond the monasteries which provided for their centuries long incuba-

tion. Monks and theologians were very interested in understanding the natural world. They were the ones looking through telescopes, and microscopes when these wonderful instruments were first invented. By the 16th Century, the Jesuits, in particular were interested in astronomy. It is easy to overlook that Copernicus (1473-1543), who first proposed the heliocentric nature of the solar system, along with his great successor Galileo (1564-1642), were Christians. That goes for Issac Newton (1642-1727), the discoverer of gravity, although Newton was far from orthodox in his Christian understanding.

It should also be noted that some of the greatest and earliest theologians of the Christian era made room for science in their biblical understanding. Terrific thinkers like Augustine of Hippo (354-430) practiced theological accommodation. Augustine felt the Bible could accommodate new facts from science because Scripture, as God's word, was not confined to literalist understandings--the types of fundamentalism we see today are relatively new, stemming from the late 19th Century. Someone like Augustine could allow that the seven days in which God created heavens and earth could symbolize a greater stretch of time. Suf-

fice it to say that the brightest minds of the first five centuries of the Christian era had eyes and ears open to new disclosures which God might reveal about our wonderful creation. This trajectory has continued in the present. In my last stint at Princeton, we studied the great 20th Century theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg, who suggested that we conceive of God as a 'force field' which encompasses

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all reality. Thus Pannenberg is open to an understanding of God which uses concepts drawn from 20th Century physics. Throughout our history, Christians have tried to understand the Trinity, say, or other profound theological concepts using the philosophies of the day. For the first 5 Centuries, the Gospels were interpreted through the lens of Plato (427?-347). By the 13th Century the great Doctor of the Church, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), explored the nature of faith through the Greek philoso-

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pher Aristotle (384-322). In fact Aquinas proved the existence of God, at least along Aristotelian lines, although his Five fold method would hardly convince the non-Aristotelian atheist today. If we have trouble in our understanding of God, or even the concept of God, it may well be that we are operating from anachronistic modes of thought. I find, for example, that people on spiritual quests find it difficult to conceive of God as a great mind as Thomas did. God seems too much like us in this model. God has simply more intellect than we do, an idea which atheists like Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872) ran with in the 19th Century. The spiritual father of atheists Freud and Marx, Feuerbach wrote that theology is simply anthropology 'writ large'. We project onto an imaginary deity all of our human attributes, and call it God. It seems to me that our understanding of divinity grows with our understanding of the complexity of life, and our human lives, something which physics reminds us. The transcendent God of the universe needs to be refigured because the old 'mind concept' of Aquinas may not work pragmatically today.

On my most recent Princeton outing last month, our class discussed what science has in common with Christianity vis a vis the subject of authority. This discussion was meaningful for me because it has practical and pastoral implications. Often we forget that science like our faith appeals to authority. Both scientists and theologians ground their work in bedrock assertions which cannot be proven. For the Christian our faith is grounded in Scripture: creedal formulations (Nicene and Apostles' Creed); historic Reforma-

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"The best BBQ ever!"
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The Hurley Reformed Church Youth Group is sponsoring

The Famous Brook's BBQ of Oneonta, NY!

March 6, 2012
4:00 pm – 7:00 pm
at the Hurley Reformed Church

Dinners include:

1/2 Brook's famous chicken or rib,
baked potato, coleslaw, dinner roll,
butter, dessert & beverage.

Adult Chicken: \$11.00

Child Chicken: \$10.00

Adult Ribs: \$12.00

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(don't be afraid to leave a message!)

tion confessions, i.e., Heidelberg Catechism; the worship life of the church; and doctrinal issues. The scientist, too, appeals to bedrock authority which may be based more on faith than on what he or she can know. Although we can appeal to various reasons, eventually we are driven beyond that to admit, if we are honest, that we don't fully know why we believe what we believe. We are reduced, in other words, to shoulder shrugging. I believe, what I believe, even though I cannot prove it--which, from a Christian perspective, makes all the sense in the world. Do you list

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eSpire: In order to save money and reduce our impact on the environment, you may now receive The Spire by Email. Please request electronic distribution by sending your request to TheSpire@HurleyReformedChurch.org. If you no longer wish to receive the Spire please let us know at the same email address and we will remove you from our mailing list.

S T I C K L E Y G A R D E N S

A time of transition... waiting between winter and spring. In a hushed silence the patio is quiet, the fountain is covered, and yet, there is a beauty in transition for those who wait for the coming of Spring and the New Life in Christ... hushed... quiet... waiting... Stickley Gardens... a place of serene waiting....

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE COLUMBARIUM, PLEASE CONTACT ANY OF THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS.
LISA LONGTO (331-1438) CHAIRPERSON • JIM PIRRO (383-0079) TREASURER • ESTHER STICKLEY (331-2919)
JERRY FINK (246-6567) SECRETARY • DIANA CLINE (338-7276) CONSISTORY LIAISON

A SACRED PLACE OF BEAUTY AND CONTEMPLATION. (LOCATED ON THE SOUTH LAWN OF THE CHURCH)

Open Dates for Coffee Fellowship

If you can provide refreshments for our Sunday Coffee Hour please sign up on the calendar on the bulletin board next to the Kitchen door. For more information, contact Terry Gaffken at 331-4096.



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

February

Tanner Sirni	6, '99
Alex Sirni	7, '95
Morgan Schaffrick	7, '96
Avery Davenport	13, '96
Amanda Horvers	19, '90
Drew Soshensky	22, '03
Chris Decker	2
Dean Baker	2
Drew Wonderly	3
Robert Kindt, Sr.	4
Ron Burns	7
Molly Nicholas	8
Shannon Butler	8
Betty Pirro	8
Elsie Kemble	9
Christie Prentice	10
John Mizel	12

Steve Helm
Colette Woodard
Eugene Groelle
Todd Rubino
Sherman Richards
Friedel Borst
Matt Sirni
John Tucker
Leslie Shambo
Donna Horvers

Lisa Longto

12 Rick Salzmann	22
13 Shirley Ruth	27
13 Leanne Warren	28
13 Jake Croswell	28
13 Nikki Cline	29
14 Lisa Rowdycz	29

March

19 Lily Gram Collins	1, '96
19 Ireland Sirni	6, '97
20 Terry Read	2
Craig Jansen	2
Linda Bognar	3
Jack Gill	5
Dennis Horvers	5
Dr. Bob Gram	6

ANNIVERSARIES

February

Doris & Bob Alden	17
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Youth Group

Once again a huge THANK YOU for the support you showed us in regard to the Giving Tree. With all of your gifts we were able to brighten Christmas for seven families this past year. We couldn't have done it without you. Thank you so very much.

In December we also went caroling. We visited many homes and shared some holiday cheer. We ended our night at the Stickley's with hot coco and we thank them.

Brooks BBQ is back on 3/6/12. Please see or call Alyson Rafferty at

338-4469 to place your order. This fund raiser will assist us in our upcoming retreat to Camp Warwick in April. Hope to see you there.

Our January/February food pantry collection is soup. Please drop off your donations and we will get them to Queens Galley for you. Thank you for your support.

Any child who is in the 5th grade & above is welcome to join the Youth Group at anytime. Please come & check us out.

Sandy & Katie Emrich & Lisa Longto
YG Co-Leaders

Our upcoming events

- 2/12/12 Youth Group altar flowers
- 3/4/12 Youth Group sponsored coffee hour
- 3/6/12 Brooks BBQ from 4pm to 7pm
- 3/11/12 Youth Group meeting
- 3/23/12 Penny Social
- 4/7/12 Easter Dawn setup & prep
- 4/8/12 Easter Dawn service & breakfast
- 4/20-22/12
Retreat to Camp Warwick

Jim Craven has been named

Senior of the Year

by the Hurley
Senior Citizens.

Congratulations,
Jim!



© 2008 by the Hurley Senior Citizens

Grant Application for Lift Denied By Classis

The Mid-Hudson Classis has notified the Consistory that they cannot support our grant request for the elevator/lift for Schadewald Hall. "The grant monies of Classis and Synod are for projects which are necessary to or conducive to a church's viability and vitality, but which that congregation cannot fund." The Classis felt the Hurley congregation was in a position to borrow the funds. The Classis stated that Hurley's access project borrowing could be repaid through a fund-drive. "This approach allows both the Classis and Synod to use their limited funds to provide for the needier congregations in our midst". The Consistory will further study what options are available to us and report back once a possible plan has been developed.

Weekly Bible Study

Tuesday Evening @ 7:00pm

Wednesday Morning @ 7:30am



"Ecclesiastes"

Where: Dutch Room

Missions

"What you have done for the least of these you have done for me." Matthew 25:40

Monthly Mission offerings for February will go to People's Place in Kingston where people in need can go for food, clothing, household needs and children's items. They gladly accept donations at their storefront on St. James St. behind Michaels Candy Corner on Broadway, Monday through Friday, 10:00am - 1:00pm.

Thank you,
Linda Dux, Mission Committee Chair

penny social

Social - everything goes. We are also collecting gift certificates and new items for our more expensive tables. Contact Diana Cline if you have any questions, ideas or comments.

The Youth Group is putting on a Penny Social Friday, March 23. We are collecting new and gently used items for this event. Some examples would be: toys, collectable's, kitchen ware, DVDs, tapes, holiday decorations, home furnishings, knick knacks, hobby items, books, etc. We have space in the garage to store items. If you have never been to a Penny

The Significant Woman™

A Life Changing study that presents Life Principles through Life Coaching!

*Are you a busy mom who barely has time to breathe?
Or an empty-nester asking, "What's next?"
Maybe you're a woman seeking direction and purpose,
Or you're just plain ready for a change...*

God created you for a purpose and He has a unique plan for your life. No matter where you are or what challenges you face you can live a life of significance today.

In this 12-week Life-Coaching study you will:

- *Grow in your relationship with God.*
- *Discover your personal uniqueness.*
- *Reconnect with your inner passion.*
- *Activate your God-given personal mission.*
- *Refocus priorities and gain direction.*
- *Create a framework for making life decisions.*
- *Improve meaningful relationships.*
- *Take steps to achieve God's unique purpose in your life.*

If you are ready for a change, this may be just what you've been praying for. The Significant Woman course is for women of all ages and all seasons of life. Classes will begin on Monday February 27 and meet weekly from 7-9pm at Hurley Reformed Church. Cost is \$35 for participant book and materials. Group size is limited to 10.

Contact Carla Paton at 514-2682 or carla.paton@gmail.com for details.

*"For we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works,
which God prepared in advance for us to do." ~ Ephesians 2:10*

(Continued from page 2)

reasons why you love your child or spouse? Or does love extend beyond reasons? Can you offer reasons why there are aspects of your life which are so precious, so beautiful that words cannot describe the joy you feel? One of our professors noted that some of his best friends are astronomers and physicists at Princeton. He notes that they are more like Christian mystics than scientists, in that they understand that the most beautiful things in reality extend far beyond rationality and reason. To be a good scientist or Christian involves appreciating the aesthetics and wonder of all creation.

An appeal to authority which goes beyond proof is a "good thing" as Martha Stewart might opine. When our faith founders

because of tragedy; when we cannot hold ourselves up because of some emotional or spiritual pounding we've absorbed, we should appeal to tradition. In his deeply moving book, "Lament for a Son," theologian Nicholas Walterstorff writes about his 25 year old son, Eric, who died in a mountain climbing accident. The book is about how his faith no longer works in the wake of personal tragedy. Spiritually and emotionally he is a walking dead man and God seems nothing more than a terrible abstraction. And yet he doesn't abandon Christianity. What he holds on to is authority, the words of Christians before him; the faith articulated in Scripture and creed. He no longer believes, but counts on the authority of the church and the faith of others to pull him through. And it does.

I pray that we will grow in faith as we explore the beauty and wonder of our creation. May we be amateur sleuths, if not scientists, in our quest to understand the nature of reality. After all, Christ calls us to love God with all our mind, as well as our heart, and soul (Matthew 27:37). What better way than to see the magic of the stars above and the earth below. What science may help us do is to understand the complexity of the cosmos God has created. Indeed we are part, a grand part, of this mysterious, complicated, all encompassing matrix we call reality. We praise God, the Psalmist writes, because, "We are fearfully and wonderfully made (139:14). Indeed we are, thanks be to God.

In Christ's service,
Doc Bob

The Women to Women Mentoring ministry will have a meeting on Monday Feb. 13 at 7:00 p.m. and Monday Feb. 20 at 7:00 p.m. at Karen Schiff's house. If you are interested in participating in this ministry please contact Karen Schiff at 339-4908. For more information on this program, see Karen during coffee hour in Schadewald Hall at a table setup for this purpose.



"You are dust and to dust you shall return."
(Gen. 3:19)

Ash Wednesday Services . . .

February 22, 2012 @ 7:30 pm

The sanctuary will be open throughout the day for prayer and contemplation.

*If you have come to help me,
you are wasting your time.
But if you have come because your
liberation is bound up with mine,
then let us work together.*

Lilla Watson
Aboriginal elder, educator, and activist

This is the leap of faith, to wager that the search for meaning is in fact the meaning. God has created us for this, to create meaning in freedom with no deterministic programming to do so. Recall Augustine's words, in his Confessions: "You have created us for union with yourself, and our hearts are restless until we find our rest in you." Union may be the goal, union with meaning, union with God, but restlessness is the medium. Restlessness is as fundamental as meaning, because restlessness is the meaning. Our drive for self-transcendence is an expression of this restlessness. Technology is therefore also an expression of it.

Technology and Human Becoming, Philip Hefner

Hurley Reformed Church, US Holidays

Feb 2012 (Eastern Time)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
10am - Baptism ☺ 10am - Worship ☺ 11am - Kitchen 11am - Stone House	10am - Badminton ☺ 12:30pm - Baskets 5pm - Dog Training 7:30pm - AI-Anon ☺	9am - Quilters ☺ 6:30pm - Tiger 7pm - Bible Study ☺ 7pm - Boy Scouts	7:30am - Bible 9am - Quilting ☺ 10am - Badminton ☺ 5:30pm - Dog	Groundhog Day 1:30pm - Hurley 4:30pm - Dog 7:30pm - Choir ☺	10am - Badminton ☺	9am - Youth Group
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
10am - Worship ☺ 11am - Chili Sale 11am - Prayer Chain 11am - Youth Group	10am - Badminton ☺ 10am - Tax Aide ☺ 12:30pm - Baskets 5pm - Dog Training 7pm - Little League 7:30pm - 1st Capitol 7:30pm - AI-Anon ☺	9am - Quilters ☺ 4:30pm - PC 101 ☺ 6:30pm - Old 6:30pm - Tiger 6:30pm - US Power 7pm - Bible Study ☺ 7pm - Boy Scouts	7:30am - Bible 9am - Quilting ☺ 10am - Badminton ☺ 6pm - Baskets ☺ 7pm - Men's Group	8:30pm - Half Moon 7pm - Half Moon 7:30pm - Choir ☺	10am - Badminton ☺	9am - Brandon 10am - Genealogy ☺ 5pm - Chinese New
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Lincoln's Birthday 7:30am - Troop 20 10am - Worship ☺ 11:30am - Parent 5pm - Chinese New	10am - Badminton ☺ 10am - Tax Aide ☺ 11am - VFW ☺ 6pm - Foundation 7pm - Consistory ☺ 7pm - Hudson Valley 7:30pm - AI-Anon ☺	Valentine's Day 8:30am - Hillside 9am - Quilters ☺ 6:30pm - Tiger 6:30pm - US Power 7pm - Bible Study ☺ 7pm - Boy Scouts	7:30am - Bible 9am - Quilting ☺ 10am - Badminton ☺ 5:30pm - Dog 6pm - Baskets ☺ 7pm - Hurley Lions 7pm - Men's Group	4:30pm - Dog 7pm - NE 7:30pm - Choir ☺	10am - Badminton ☺	9am - Brandon
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
10am - Worship ☺	Presidents Day 10am - Badminton ☺ 10am - Genealogy ☺ 10am - Tax Aide ☺ 5pm - Dog Training 6:30pm - Significant	9am - Quilters ☺ 6:30pm - Old 6:30pm - Tiger 6:30pm - US Power 7pm - Bible Study ☺ 7pm - Boy Scouts	7:30am - Bible 9am - Quilting ☺ 10am - Badminton ☺ 5:30pm - Dog 6pm - Baskets ☺ 7pm - Men's Group	4:30pm - Dog 7:30pm - Choir ☺	10am - Badminton ☺	10am - Dog Training 12:30pm - Girl
26	27	28	29	1	2	3
10am - Worship ☺	10am - Badminton ☺ 10am - Tax Aide ☺ 10:30am - Genealog 5pm - Dog Training 5:30pm - Significant 7:30pm - AI-Anon ☺	9am - Quilters ☺ 6:30pm - Old 6:30pm - Tiger 6:30pm - US Power 7pm - Bible Study ☺ 7pm - Boy Scouts	7:30am - Bible 9am - Quilting ☺ 10am - Badminton ☺ 5:30pm - Dog 6pm - Baskets ☺ 7pm - Men's Group	1:30pm - Hurley 4:30pm - Dog 7:30pm - Choir ☺	10am - Badminton ☺ 7pm - BS Venture	

HURLEY REFORMED
CHURCH

PO Box 328
11 Main Street
Hurley NY 12443

Phone: 845-331-4121
Fax: 845-331-4153

E-mail: admin@HurleyReformedChurch.org

The Rev. Dr. Robert L. Gram, LCSW
Pastor

WE'RE ON THE WEB:

WWW.HURLEYREFORMEDCHURCH.ORG

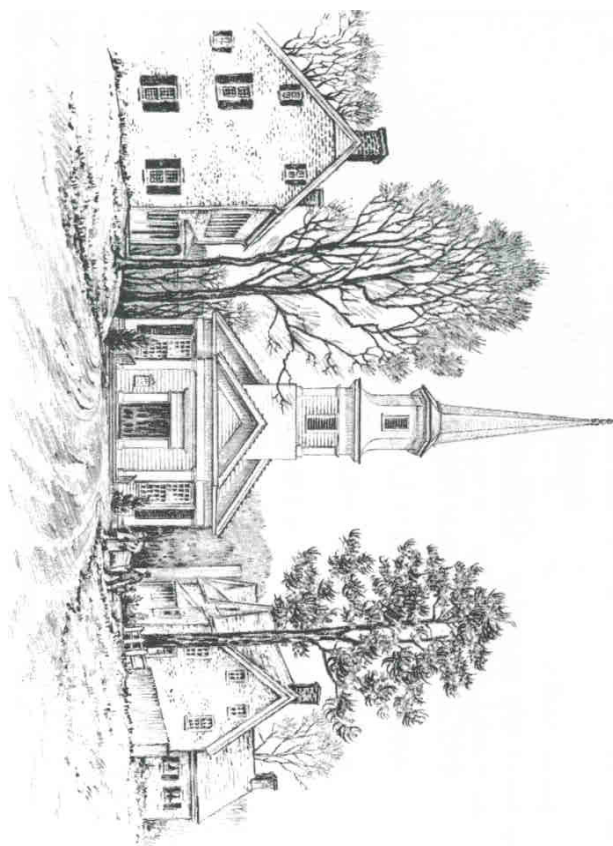
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