

First Notes

*The First
Presbyterian Church
in the City of New York*

Volume XVI Issue 9

September 2008

A Vision

Michael Phelps has become the most medallioned Olympian in history. Gold medallions, that is. His is an inspiring display of human determination and discipline pushing the limits of physical endurance. Michael Phelps says that what has inspired him has been a vision for himself that he has had since he was eleven years old. In a television interview he told a reporter that it was then that he decided he wanted to be a swimmer, and he wanted to compete in the Olympics, winning medals and setting world records. It is a vision that has kept him going all these years and now one that he has achieved.

Swimmers who compete in national and world competitions have grueling training schedules. They train twice or more a day, rise at 5:00 in the morning, devote themselves to proper diet, exercise, weight training, and relentless self-control. As is the case in all athletic hopes, without a vision of what they want to accomplish lesser competitors leave the fray once they see what is required and what it costs.

One of the most familiar of the proverbs in the Bible is Proverbs 29:18, "Where there is no vision, the people perish..." As you may know, the proverbs are not always universally applicable, some even contradict themselves, but a few are appropriate in almost any season, and Proverbs 29:18 is one of them. "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

I suspect that for most of the Olympic medal winners—no, for all Olympic competitors—a vision of standing on that gold medal platform, receiving the award, and hearing your national anthem being played has been a sustaining vision, whether the sport be swimming or volleyball, equestrian riding or gymnastics. To see yourself in a positive situation and wearing a medal of honor is an inspiring motivation.

What is your best vision for yourself? To succeed in business, to enjoy retirement, to savor good health, to be as fit as possible, to share life with a valued partner, to enjoy peace of mind? Whatever your vision may be, it is probably only a fraction of the high hope God has for you. After all, God is our best fan, our most loyal supporter, our proudest sponsor.

In the stands at every race, Michael Phelps' mother and sisters stood by, cheering him on, admiring his accomplishments, wishing him well. I believe God is like that, cheering us on, wishing us well, admiring our accomplishments. I have no doubt that Michael's family would love him every bit as much even if he had failed in trying to reach his goal. Love is like that; it thinks not of its own gain. I am confident that the one who gave us birth, and knew us at our first breath, will take us win or lose into his loving embrace. No matter our vision for ourselves, God sees us with a perfect love that knows no disappointment, which is why we strive for our best.

Jon M. Walton

“To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive.” – Robert Louis Stevenson

Why not use your Friday lunch hour to get something more nourishing than your standby sandwich at the corner deli? This year the popular Lunch ‘n Learn program will be utilizing the DVD series “Living the Questions” to explore the theme Invitation to Journey. No arrival destination is planned, but wonderful conversations are anticipated on the following topics:

An Invitation to Journey—September 26 **Lives of Jesus—November 21**
Taking the Bible Seriously—October 10 **A Passion for Christ: Paul—January 9**
Thinking Theologically—October 24 **Out into the World: Challenges Facing Progressive Christians—January 23**
Stories of Creation—November 7

Please bring your own lunch and join us in the library from 12 to 1 p.m. for these hopeful discussions.

Gospel Talk

Have you wondered what makes Mark’s gospel different from Luke’s? Or have you thought about if John’s account of Jesus’ life is the same as Matthew’s? What makes the gospels so much the same and yet so strikingly different on certain points? Starting in September at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings the Adult Education Committee is excited to offer GOSPEL TALK, a year-long examination of the four gospels. Take this opportunity to read through each of these amazing perspectives on Jesus’ life. Built into the program are opportunities to learn more about how we interpret the Bible, when and why the Bible was written, and several seasonal interludes. This all-new program is great for Bible beginners and pros alike!

Biblical Interpretation 101
Sept. 7, 14, 21

When & Why the Bible Was Written
Sept. 28 & Oct. 5

The Gospel of Mark
Oct. 12, 19, 26, & Nov. 2

The Gospel of Luke
Nov. 9, 16, 23



**Advent: Who is the suffering servant?
or the servant songs of Isaiah**
Dec. 7, 14, 21

The Gospel of Matthew
January 4, 11, 18, & 25

The Gospel of John
February 1, 8, 15, & 22

The Gospel Readings for Lent

March 1—Mark 1:9-15
 March 8—Mark 8:31-38
 March 15—John 2:13-22
 March 22—John 3:14-21
 March 29—John 12:20-33

Palm Sunday
April 5

Resurrection Appearances in the Gospels
April 19, 26, & May 3

The Apocrypha
May 10 & 17

The Best of the Gospel Stories We Didn’t Discuss
May 31 & June 7, 14, 21



EDUCATION ALERTS! If you would like to be on the Education at First email list to receive updates and reminders about upcoming programs, please email education@fpcnyc.org and put “add me to the list” in the subject line.



Seasons of the Spirit

The Family Ministries Committee is proud to announce that the FPC Church School will be using Seasons of the Spirit as its church school curriculum this year. Seasons of the Spirit is a collaborative (including the Presbyterian Church USA), imaginative curriculum with a global perspective. The vision of Seasons of the Spirit is to provide God's people with lectionary-based, ecumenical resources that empower all ages to be transformed in Christ as they:

- explore meaning and mystery in the Bible;
- celebrate in worship, sacraments, education, and service;
- engage in ministries of love, justice, and witness; and
- live in inclusive communities of faith, shaped and led by the Holy Spirit.

Watch for more materials from this curriculum as church school begins, and join the Rev. Barbara E. Davis on Sept. 28 after worship in the Morrow Room for a Parent Information Session where you can pick up informational materials and ask questions about this important part of your child's faith formation.

Family Ministries IMPORTANT FALL DATES

Sunday, Sept. 7—Child Care Reception for Parents at 10:45 a.m.

Sunday, Sept. 21—First Day of Church School & Children's Choir Rehearsal
—Welcome Home Picnic

Sunday, Sept. 28—Parent Information Session (New Curriculum)

Welcome Home Picnic & Potluck Sunday, September 21



*Gardens and Walkways
immediately after the Service*

Reservations required. Sign-up sheets available in the Mellin-Macnab lobby starting September 7 or call the church at (212) 675-6150.

The North lawn will again be reserved for families with small children.

A free-will donation will be collected.
Suggested donation: \$5.

WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

6:00 p.m. in the Alexander Chapel, followed by a light supper in the Esther Morrow Room

FALL SCHEDULE:

September 3rd—Welcome Home Worship

October 1st—Blessing of the Animals

November 5th—Outside the Walls of the Church: Mission Experiences

December 3rd—The Church of Today and Tomorrow: Youth-Led Worship

Wednesday Worship is not just for committees anymore. All persons, of all ages, are invited to share in this midweek time of prayer and Scripture and song. Worship will be led by both clergy and laity and will highlight special themes each month. Please take an opportunity to attend these revamped and reenergized services.

First Presbyterian Church

Sun	Mon	Tue
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>DEACONS FOR THE MONTH</p> <p>Luke Gebhard (212) 842-0769</p> <p>Kurt Regush (646) 428-5180</p> </div>	<p>1</p> <p>LABOR DAY</p> <p><i>Staff Holiday</i></p>	<p>2</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Art Hanging</i></p> <p>6:15 A.A. Groups</p>
<p>7 <i>Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time</i></p> <p>9:30 Adult Education 10:45 Child Care Reception 11:00 Worship♥ <i>Communion</i> <i>Dr. Walton preaching</i></p> <p>12:15 Coffee Hour♥</p>	<p>8 <i>Nursery School Begins</i></p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>12:00 Sanctuary Open</p>	<p>9</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>6:15 A.A. Groups 6:30 Personnel (off-site) 6:30 Buildings & Grounds 7:00 House Committee</p>
<p>14 <i>Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time</i></p> <p>9:30 Adult Education 10:45 Child Care 11:00 Worship♥ <i>Dr. Walton preaching</i> 12:15 Coffee Hour Reception♥ Art Show 12:30 Pre-Baptism Meeting 12:30 Young Adult Brunch 12:30 Adult Education</p>	<p>15</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>12:00 Sanctuary Open</p>	<p>16</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>6:15 A.A. Groups 7:00 Justice Works</p>
<p>21 <i>Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time</i></p> <p>9:30 Adult Education 10:45 Child Care 11:00 Worship♥ <i>Baptism</i> <i>Dr. Walton preaching</i> 11:20 Church School and Children's Choirs Rehearsal (<i>first day</i>) 12:15 Coffee Hour♥</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>HOMECOMING PICNIC</p> </div>	<p>22</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>12:00 Sanctuary open</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Caring Community/Vocalise Joint Concert</p>	<p>23</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>6:15 A.A. Groups</p>
<p>28 <i>Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time</i></p> <p>9:30 Adult Education 10:45 Child Care 11:00 Worship♥ <i>Rev. McCaslin preaching</i> 11:20 Church School and Children's Choirs Rehearsal 12:15 Coffee Hour♥ <i>Photo Exhibit (Mission Trip Pictures)</i> 12:15 Parent Information Session (Curriculum) 12:30 Mission Trip Meeting</p>	<p>29</p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>12:00 Sanctuary open</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ohel Ayalah</p>	<p>30 <i>Rosh Hashanah begins</i> <i>N.S./P.S. 226 closed</i></p> <p>9 to 5 Caring Community♥</p> <p>6:15 A.A. Groups</p> <p>Ohel Ayalah</p>

SEPTEMBER 2008

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 10:30 Staff Meeting 12:00 Midday Prayers 6:00 Vespers 6:30 Fellowship Supper Committees Meet	4 9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 12:15 Al-Anon 8:00 NA Solutions	5 9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 12:00 Sanctuary Open 6:15 NA/D.A. Groups	6
10 9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 10:30 Staff Meeting 12:00 Midday Prayers 6:30 Homeless Shelter Mtg. 6:30 Candidates Committee <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> First Notes and Calendar Due </div>	11 9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 12:15 Al-Anon 6:30 Nominating Committee 6:30 NA Solutions	12 9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 12:00 Sanctuary Open 6:00 Wedding Rehearsal Cho/Hess <i>Dr. Walton</i> 6:15 NA/DA Groups	13 9-12 Church School Teacher Training 4:00 Wedding Cho/Hess <i>Dr. Walton</i>
17 9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 10:30 Staff Meeting 12:00 Midday Prayers 6:30 Deacons/Trustees	18 9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 12:15 Al-Anon 5:00 Youth in Action 6:30 N.S. Information Night 6:30 NA Solutions	19 9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 12:00 Sanctuary Open 6:15 NA/D.A. Groups	20 Church and Society Retreat
24 9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 10:30 Staff Meeting 12:00 Midday Prayers 6:30 Session	25 9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 12:15 Al-Anon 6:00 "Aging Well" Series 6:30 Nominating Committee 6:30 NA Solutions <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> First Notes Mailing Team </div>	26 9 to 5 Caring Community♥ 12:00 Sanctuary Open 12:00 Lunch 'n Learn 4:30 Youth Worship 6:00 NA/D.A. Groups	27 Presbytery Meeting (off-site)

The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York
12 West 12th Street (at Fifth Avenue), New York, NY 10011
Tel: 212-675-6150 Fax: 212-675-8674

All data subject to change without notice. Check with Church Receptionist for confirmation and details.

Indicates Volunteer Opportunities ♥

Volunteer Opportunities

Welcome to the **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES CALENDAR**, published monthly to let you know of events where you can help.

- **COFFEE HOUR HOSTING** – Hosts, coffee pourers, and greeters are needed for Coffee Hour after church. To volunteer, call **CHARLOTTE WALLACE** at (973) 692-0541.
- **USHERS FOR WORSHIP SERVICES** – Volunteers are needed to usher for **Sunday morning services**. To volunteer, call **JOAN RYAN** at (212) 765-2141, or **SUZANNE FREEMAN** at (646) 827-4559.
- **FIRST NOTES** – Volunteers are needed to help assemble and label **FIRST NOTES** mailings. For the next mailing, volunteers will meet at the Church at 10:00 a.m. and work until about 1:00 p.m., on **Thursday, September 25**. Call **PAULETTE GRIEFEN** at (212) 226-2531 to help.

- **LAYREADERS** – Those interested in participating as lay readers are asked to call **DENISE JACKSON** at (212) 675-4366.
- **CROSS BEARER** – To explore the possibility of carrying the processional cross at worship, please call **PAT PENICK THOMPSON** at (212) 242-6916.
- **IN THE KITCHEN** – If you can help with Vespers, please call **JAMES HOLLANDER** at (646) 335-2969 or e-mail hollander_james@yahoo.com. For all other events call **JACKIE FIKE** at (914) 793-4017 or e-mail jackiecf@verizon.net.

Wednesday, September 3—Fellowship Supper

Wednesday, Sept. 3—3:00 - 8:00 p.m. Pr, Sr, Clean-up

Sunday, Sept. 21—Homecoming Picnic

Thursday, Sept. 18—3:00 - 6:00 p.m. Set-up

Friday, Sept. 19—11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Prep.

Saturday, Sept. 20—11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Prep.

Sunday, Sept. 21—9:00 - 11:00 a.m. Prep.

Sunday, Sept. 21—12:30 - 3:30 p.m. Serve, Clean-up

Leslie and Eli Smith and the
Young Adult Committee of First Presbyterian Church
invite you to a:

Young Couples' Reception

Friday, October 3rd, 2008

6:30-8:00 p.m.

Mezzanine of the South Wing
Beer, wine and light appetizers

Child care available with RSVP
(212) 675-6150
smccaslin@fpcnyc.org



Whether you are married, partnered, engaged, or dating, don't miss this opportunity to meet other young couples from First Church. Come for a drink after work or before dinner, and relax!

YOUNG ADULT HAPPENINGS

(20s-30s Group of FPC)

Sunday, September 14th - Brunch!

We will be stretching our horizons and traveling across the street to Danal for brunch after worship.

Saturday, September 20th - American Littoral Society's 22nd Annual Coastal Cleanup

Join thousands of volunteers around the NYC area in an effort to clean the beaches and document what litters our shores, compile data to devise strategies to combat pollution, and increase public awareness and appreciation of the coastal environment.



FIRST Day-Away at Holmes!

All are invited to spend a fun-filled day-away at the Holmes Presbyterian Camp and Conference Center in Holmes, NY. The Membership/Fellowship and Family Ministries Committees are sponsoring a day trip on Saturday, October 18, to this beloved Center located approximately 55 miles north of New York City. A bus will leave from church and travel to the 550-acre camp, which provides a beautiful view of the lower Hudson River Valley, with forests, lakes, trails and lots of clean air, beautiful sky, and room to play!

The day will begin with bus departure around 9:30 a.m. Upon arrival, activities will include many choices of interest to children and adults alike: hiking, boating (depending on the weather!), pumpkin painting, scarecrow making, outdoor games, singing (perhaps a choir activity for children and their families), Bible study and topic discussion groups, worship, and, yes, leisure/quiet time for anyone who prefers to just be still and enjoy nature! Activities still being planned include a trip to a local farm with hayride, crop tour, and animals. Lunch and apple cider will be provided. Also, a napping location will be available for little ones. Return will be in the early evening.

Young and old, singles, couples and families are all invited. The bus is available for transportation or we will provide maps if you prefer to get there on your own. Sign-up will begin soon in the Mellin-Macnab lobby, so make your plans now! Look for more details in the October *First Notes*. Join us for this fun FIRST Day-Away!

The 2008 Nominating Committee Needs Your Help!

The Nominating Committee needs your input as we begin preparing a slate of new officers to present to the congregation at the Annual Meeting in January 2009. Please give us your suggestions for church members to serve on the three boards of the church, as elders, deacons, and trustees.

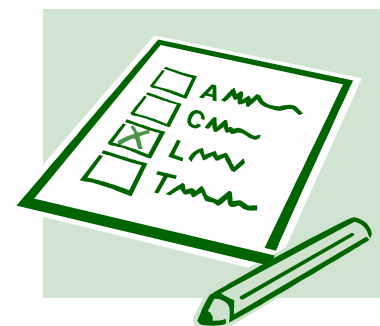
Here is a brief description of each of the three positions:

- **Elders:** Elders serve on the Session, the principal decision-making body of the church, responsible for the overall mission and government of the congregation.
- **Deacons:** The Board of Deacons has responsibility for ministering to “those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress.”
- **Trustees:** The Board of Trustees “holds and manages properties and, as authorized, conducts business for the church.”

In addition to suggesting church members to be considered for these leadership positions, members should feel encouraged to propose themselves for positions in which they would be willing to serve. All officers serve three-year terms and should expect to meet at least once a month and often more frequently. Here are some general qualifications to consider when suggesting yourself or another person for office:

- **Church involvement:** regular attendance at worship, active participation in church activities, offices held and leadership rendered, evidence of commitment to the church and its mission, understanding of and commitment to Presbyterian polity.
- **Christian life:** evidence of grace and compassion in common life, evidence of maturity and effectiveness of ministry in the world.
- **Personal qualifications:** cooperativeness, willingness to listen, readiness to learn, ability to follow through on assignments, organizational ability, creativity, openness to new ideas, maturity of judgment, freedom to express ideas and thoughts.
- **Other factors:** occupational background and life experience, service in other organizations, interest in particular causes, offices held and quality of performance in them, education and training in the duties and responsibilities of the office.

In making your suggestions, please identify some of the above qualities that lead you to offer this person's name. Please remember that the Nominating Committee will consider many names; every suggestion is important, but not all those suggested will actually be nominated. You can help the committee by providing as much information as possible.



Please place your suggestions in the labeled box in the Mellin-Macnab Building lobby, or contact the committee members directly. Thank you for your input.

Committee chair: Mary O'Hara Smith (msmith@rcn.com or 212-260-3815).

Members: Barbara Sherman, David Richardson, Tad Van Norden, Sorrel Alburger, Amy Frisch, Larry Tallamy, Roger Leaf, David Kipin.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MISSION SERVICE COMMITTEE

The Mission Service Committee is pleased to announce that its activities for 2008-2009 have been expanded to include local weekend projects as well as the type of trips the Committee has facilitated since 2005.

Save the date: SUNDAY, SEPT. 28th

Photo exhibit of 2008 trips to Nicaragua & Ghost Ranch; during coffee hour in the Great Hall.

Save the date: SUNDAY, OCT. 5th

Videos and reports by participants in 2008 trips to Nicaragua & Ghost Ranch; in the Esther Morrow Room.
Announcement of the 2008-2009 program.
Sign-up begins for both local projects and trips.

A Month of Sundays

Worship This Month at First Presbyterian

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sermon: Dr. Jon M. Walton preaching
Sacrament: Communion

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sermon: Dr. Jon. M. Walton preaching

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sermon: Dr. Jon M. Walton preaching
Sacrament: Baptism

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sermon: The Rev. Sarah S. McCaslin preaching

DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER

FIRST NOTES:

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

“Aging Well” Series — Fall of 2008 Sponsored by The 60+ Circle Committee

As usual, the venue for this event is the Parlor
of the Mellin-Macnab Building.

A light supper (voluntary contribution appreciated) is
served at 6:00 p.m. The presentation begins at 6:45
p.m. and concludes by 8:15 p.m.

People of all ages are welcome.

Thursday, September 25, 2008

Topic: “Music Gives Life”

Speaker: Christina Britton Conroy

Director, Music Gives Life

**Former Director of The Caring Community’s
Senior Center at FPC.**

“Our mission is to help senior citizens recover lost
dreams of health and companionship by learning to
play (and sing) music with others.”

One of the singing groups will perform.

First Notes

*The First
Presbyterian Church
in the City of New York*

Calendar of Events

CHURCH HOUSE
12 WEST 12TH STREET NEW YORK, NY 10011

Return Service Requested

The First Presbyterian Church
in the City of New York

12 West 12th Street, New York, NY 10011
Tel: (212) 675-6150 Fax: (212) 675-8674
<http://www.fpcnyc.org>

Jon M. Walton, Pastor
Sarah Segal McCaslin, Associate Pastor
Barbara E. Davis, Minister of Christian Education
Mark D. Hostetter, Associate Pastor
William F. Entriken, Organist and Choirmaster
Mia Alvar, *First Notes* Editor

