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Protestant Chapel Community
Interfaith Chapel
University of Rochester
Rochester, NY 14627

THE PROTESTANT PIECE

PROTESTANT CHAPEL COMMUNITY NEWS

University of Rochester Interfaith Chapel

Chaplain's Phone: 585-275-8522

Rochester, NY 14627

www.rochester.edu/chapel

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM PCC

You might think that the carol "God Rest You Merry Gentlemen" is particularly appropriate for the way our society prepares for Christmas, because with all of the running around we do in these hectic weeks, we could certainly use some rest!

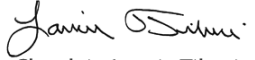
But actually, this beloved carol (one of my very favorites) has often been misunderstood – and the source of the confusion is simply a misplaced comma. The name of this hymn is not "God Rest You, Merry Gentlemen" – it is "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen." The carol isn't asking that merry people be given rest – it's asking that all people be kept merry.

But how can that be? How can we ask that God keep everyone merry, when there is so much to trouble us? Personal sorrows, economic downturns, political upheavals, wars, natural disasters, worries over the future of the mainline churches – all of these weigh on the minds of those of you who are alumni, or parents of current students, or are otherwise supporters of PCC. And here at the University of Rochester, the students of the Protestant Chapel Community have plenty of their own stresses and worries – about grades, about relationships, about illnesses in their families, about what careers to choose, about how they will pay for college or grad school. So how can we all be merry, in the midst of all that "may threaten to undo us"?

We can be merry by remembering the rest of the carol: "God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay: remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day." Despite nearly everything we see on television or hear on the radio or see in the malls at this time of year, what we celebrate in this season is no less than the coming of God among us. In the words of Zechariah, "The Dayspring from on high has visited us, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

And so I invite you to take a few moments, and read in these pages some of the good news of the ministry of the Protestant Chapel Community – this wonderful community of faith where young men and women are committed to following in the light of the Dayspring from on high.

And may God rest you merry – women, children, and gentlemen.


Chaplain Laurie Tiberi

Exploring Questions of Faith

Daniel Cochran, Class of 2008

Every Wednesday evening PCC students gather together at the chapel for **Dinner Dialogues**. As the name suggests, these meetings are a chance for students to ask questions of their peers and chaplain, engage in lively discussions, and to simply enjoy each other's company...all over a delicious home cooked meal provided by this year's cook, junior Andrew Spink. Each week's discussion is usually centered on a puzzling Bible verse or a question posed by our chaplain.

This semester, the PCC focused on interfaith dialogue by inviting **a rabbi, a Catholic priest, and a Mormon bishop** to each attend a dinner and answer student questions regarding their particular beliefs. These discussions were not only valuable in improving our understanding of the practices of these religions, but also in helping us define our own faith in relation to the other religions of the world; we can see better the unique and puzzling aspects of our own faith traditions only in light of other faiths.



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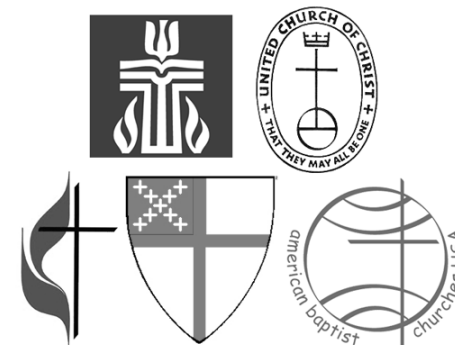
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Questions? Contact The Rev. Dr. Laurie Tiberi
at (585) 275-8522 or ltiberi@admin.rochester.edu
Visit us on the web at <http://sa.rochester.edu/pcc>



A Slap Across the Face

Dan Allan, Class of 2008

An hour spent sitting in a pew with no paper to write or theorems to memorize is a blessing to many of us and, knowing this, Chaplain Laurie is careful to warn us when one of her sermons will require some **extra thinking**. But when I hear this warning, I always get excited.

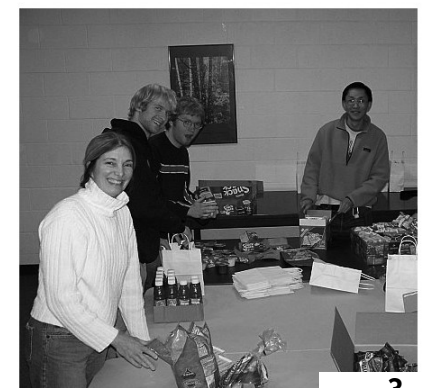
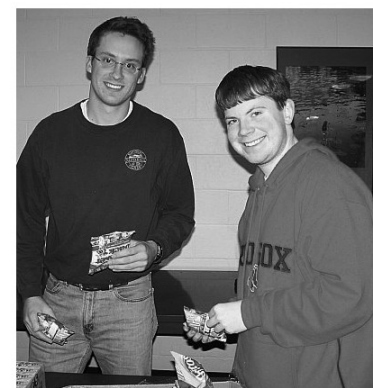
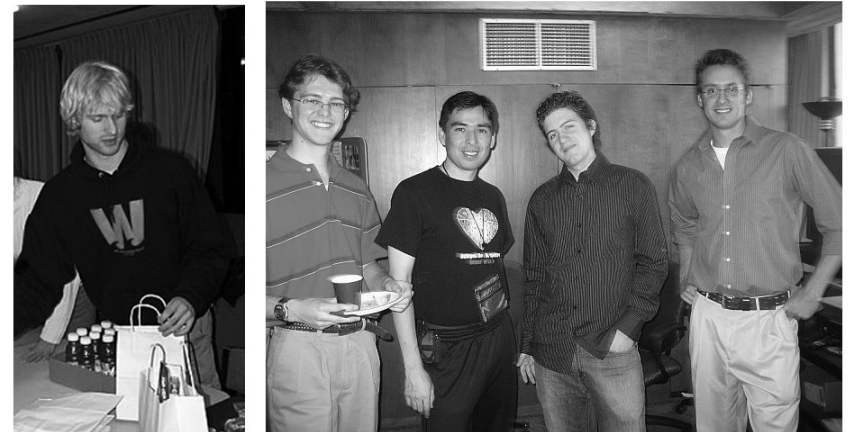
One such sermon - on the well-known “turn the other cheek” passage - completely surprised me. I, rather uncomfortably in hindsight, interpreted this to mean that an ideal Christian should tolerate and essentially welcome any abuse. When Chaplain Laurie explained some subtleties of cultural practice in Christ’s time and place, it became clear that Christ’s audience took his statements to be a call toward passive resistance, nonviolent protest. (For the curious, turning the other cheek prevents the aggressor from delivering another backhanded strike - as was customary toward “inferiors” - and it dares him to strike the victim as an “equal.”) Jesus’s other examples in this passage also carry a **defiant** edge that flies over the heads of most twenty-first century American readers. This is a critical change in perspective.

Chaplain Laurie has an especially scholarly, historically-grounded approach to biblical interpretation that is extremely appealing to us students who spend our weekdays supporting our conclusions with proofs and references. In both Sunday sermons and, often, the weekly Dinner Dialogues, I am excited to see how a well-informed approach can turn the basic “Sunday School” reading of a passage on its head and leave us with something much more meaningful.

Leadership Training

Blair Germain, Class of 2010

PCC has not only given me an outlet for my spiritual life, but has also given me **leadership experience** that will definitely serve me well after college. I never realized how much planning needed to go into a given activity – from advertising and generating enough funds for an event, to organizing people and supplies to make it happen. It all looks so easy from the outside; knowing now the amount of effort it takes from all of us at PCC, I’ve come to really appreciate everything that we do.



Music at PCC

Colin Corbett, Class of 2010

Music is a very important part of PCC. Every Sunday at worship, we sing many hymns and songs, and are treated to preludes, postludes, and offertories by our wonderful and talented organist Chris Petit, a doctoral student at Eastman School of Music. We recently received a collection of UCC **hymnals** from Spencerport UCC, which we use regularly. PCC is also blessed to have a very musical congregation. This is most apparent during the Christmas and Easter seasons, where we organize our **Christmas Choir and the Easter instrumental ensemble**. Students also often share their talents by providing offertories or other worship music.

