

Welcome to your spirit's home...

Union Church of Bay Ridge

of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

Eightieth Street and Ridge Boulevard, Brooklyn, New York

November 9, 2008



Union Church Chapel, Parish House and Office
8101 Ridge Boulevard at Eighty-First Street, Brooklyn, NY 11209
www.ucbr.org ❖ unionchurch@earthlink.net ❖ 718.745.0438

The Reverend Mary Barrett Speers, Pastor ❖ Vince Peterson, Minister of Music
Ed Huml, BRUCA Program Director ❖ Jody Levine, Playgroup Director and Administrator

*You will always be welcome here. This is God's house and a happy church home.
Let us be your church family, for we are all beloved children of God.
Join us regularly for Christian worship, nurture, and the doing of God's work in the world—
that you might have life, and that more abundantly.*

ORDER OF WORSHIP

GATHERING MUSIC

We use this time to make the transition between “getting here” and “being here”. Take these few minutes to find the still, deep places within you, where God's Spirit dwells. Relax the body; quiet the mind. Focus on breathing, feeling, being. Be receptive to your center—your reservoir of inner peace, strength, love. Be aware of being together in silence with others.

Feel the spirit of the community.

✦CALL TO WORSHIP

from **Psalm 150**

Praise the LORD! Praise God in the sanctuary;

Praise God in the mighty firmament!

Praise the greatness of God in the infinity of the heavens!

Praise God with trumpet sound; praise God with lute and harp!

Praise God with tambourine and dance; praise God with strings and pipes!

Let everything that breathes praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD!

✦HYMN no. 15

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

PRAYER OF THE DAY *(please be seated)*

God our Help, we thank you for those whose lives have lit our way, for only you know how many times we have counted on the strength and faith of others to pull us through. Merciful God, you know how short we fall of your glory, how ready we are to fall back on your forgiveness. Save us from our complacency: wake us from our slumber, and then, we beg you, do not allow us to snuggle back into our old ways. Renew and inspire us, direct our gaze beyond our own concerns, set our feet on the path of health and service; through Christ our Lord, who loves us and redeems us, and in whose strong name we pray...

SILENT PRAYER

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S GRACE

...Friends, believe the good news of the Gospel:

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

SUNG RESPONSE no. 576 *a sung Glory to God follows the Assurance. This one is from Taizé:*

Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest...Alleluia, Alleluia.

✚THE PEACE OF CHRIST

please exchange the Peace of Christ with your neighbors.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNG PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Hymnal #322 *Spirit of the Living God*

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me...melt me, mold me, fill me, use me...

FIRST LESSON: Joshua 24:1-3a,14-25

PSALM ANTHEM no. 17 *Sleepers, Wake*

J.S. Bach

SECOND LESSON: Matthew 25:1-13

SERMON Trimmed and Burning

Rev. Speers

✚HYMN no. 353

Great God, Your Love Has Called Us Here

OFFERTORY

Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning

African-American Spiritual

✚DOXOLOGY no. 592 and PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Blessing and honor and glory and power are yours, O God. Grant that we may praise and serve you with the songs of our lips, the service of our lives, and the gifts of our treasure. Bless all that we offer, that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream. AMEN.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord...

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Hymnal p. 16: "debts"

✚HYMN no. 530

O Lord of Life, Where'er They Be

✚CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

...and let the whole church say, **Alleluia! Amen.**

CLOSING MUSIC

please keep silence out of kindness to those who wish to listen or pray. Some of us like to applaud but this is not required; artists offer their work to the glory of God.

✚all who would like to may stand; **unison prayers are in bold.**

Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25

¹Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. ²And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods. ^{3a}Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many.

¹⁴"Now therefore revere the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. ¹⁵Now if you are unwilling to LORD serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

¹⁶Then the people answered, "Far be it from us th LORD at we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; ¹⁷for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of LORD the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; ¹⁸and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God."

¹⁹But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. ²⁰If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good." ²¹And the people said to Joshua, "No, we will serve the LORD!" ²²Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses." ²³He said, "Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel." ²⁴The people said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and him we will obey." ²⁵So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.

Matthew 25:1-13

¹"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; ⁴but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. ⁶But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' ⁷Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' ¹⁰And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. ¹¹Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' ¹²But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' ¹³Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

A note on today's psalm-anthem, *Sleepers, Wake (Wachet auf)*

From 1723 until 1750, J. S. Bach served as the leading musician at St. Thomas church in Leipzig. On attaining this position, Bach immediately took up a challenge he had outlined earlier in his career, that of composing a new cantata for every Sunday and feast day of the church year. This self-imposed exercise required the composition of no less than sixty cantatas a year. Remarkably, Bach succeeded in producing not just one such annual cycle but five of them. (Unfortunately, only the first three annual cycles survive in a relatively complete form.)

Cantata 140, *Wachet auf* ("Sleepers, Wake"), based on Matthew 25:1-13, written in 1731, was a late addition to the cantata cycles, and was based on a chorale by Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608). Although the music is well known today, it was not performed very often in Bach's day, because the text on which it was based was the reading for the 27th Sunday after Trinity, a Sunday which occurred only in years when Easter fell relatively early.

A note on today's offertory anthem, *Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning*

This African American spiritual is based on today's reading from Matthew. In *The New Century Hymnal* there are four verses, however in the oral tradition of the African American people, a song leader would have called out substitutions to make up new verses. This spiritual is also thought to be one of many used for the Underground Railroad. It was a signal to "be ready, your time is coming." Would the leader have called out names of the congregation, the calling out disguised as part of congregational singing of the hymn, thereby signaling "for you, and you, and you, the long-delayed bridegroom is coming *this* midnight!" Try the verses written, and also make up in your imagination some that speak closest to the message you wish to give.

Announcements

Visitors, welcome! Please join us after worship for refreshments and conversation, and please sign the Union Church guest book (at the back) so that we may get to know you better.

Many thanks to all leaders: the Sunday School teachers; Vince Peterson and the choir; the Samuel family for today's refreshments; Malcolm Tannahill and the ushers; 'bishops' Mary Cusack (Communion) Kristin Miller-Lynch (coffee hour), and Michele Di Bartolo (Sunday School).

The Book of Remembrance is open to remember: today, 11/9—Ernest Skoldberg, Jr.; 11/16—Rev. William Gray Tolley; 11/23—Dorothy May and Frances Freeman; 11/30—Beatrice Goddard.

We note with sadness the death of Theresa Attara's sister-in-law, Catherine Attara, and of Vince Peterson's father, Clarence Oscar "Bud" Peterson. Condolences may be sent to Theresa at 110 80th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11209, and to Vince at 24-47 44th Street #3A, Astoria, NY 11103.

Prayer List requests should come to the church office by telephone **718.745.0438**.

Continue to pray for/stay in touch with: Theresa and the Attara family, Vince and his family, the Cleary family, Art Samuel, Iris Norstrand, Emile Serposs, Milford Anderson, Nazik David, Barbara Briggs, Amanda Silverman, Bill Louisa, Helen Kretiv; also Helen, Wendy, Sally, Michelle, Kevin. Please call the office to make changes to the prayer list.

Warren Gatto is engaged! Letters of congratulation may be sent to him and Shin Oh Kang, his fiancée, at 6614 17th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11204 or wgatto@aol.com.

MARATHON OF PRAYER AND PRAISE was a huge success. Thanks to all who took part, especially to Michele DiBartolo for serving on the ecumenical planning committee, and Vince Peterson and the Union Church Choir for providing the music for our community worship.

Holiday Food Bank: canned goods, especially tuna fish and plastic-jar peanut butter, are most welcome. Think portable, easy to store, not requiring pots and pans (or even can openers).

This Week and Ongoing

Union Church Concert 4pm TODAY, November 9: Erika Lloyd, soprano, with Brad Whitely, piano, in a program of twentieth-century American song including Barber, Bernstein, Sondheim.

Restoration Sunday, the opening of the stewardship season at Union Church, is next Sunday.

Program and Mission Committee second Mondays, next is **tomorrow**, 6:30pm, Parish House.

BRUCA has a special gift-making workshop Nov 17-Dec 16. Call today to sign up!

Bible study at Redeemer-St. John's Lutheran Church, 939 83rd St, every Wednesday at 11am.

Tuesday evening fortnightly Bible study next meeting 7pm Tuesday, November 18, in Rev.

Speers's study, Union Church Parish House, one block south at 8101 Ridge Boulevard. The group is concentrating on *lectio divina* of the Psalms.

Support group for parents of children with special needs first Mondays, 11-1: call Isabel Morales 800.405.8818 if you or a friend would be interested (the next one is December 1).

Yoga continues on Mondays and Wednesdays, 6:45-8:15 in the Sanctuary. No experience or advance registration is needed for this gentle, restorative class. Each evening is \$15, pay as you go; wear comfortable clothes and bring a towel and a yoga mat if you have one.

Session meeting fourth Mondays: next is Nov 24, at 7pm in the Parish House.

Looking to the Future

Advent is just around the corner! The first Sunday in Advent is Thanksgiving weekend, Nov 30.

Advent plans include wreathmaking Sat, Dec 6, Gifts Sunday with Stewardship Dedication Dec 14, Conrad Susa's chancel opera *The Wise Women* 4pm Dec 14, the Union Church Manger Service 11am Sunday, Dec 21, the Manse Christmas Party and carolling after worship Dec 21, and our "midnight" Christmas Eve Communion service with carols, candles, and choir, 10:30pm Wed, Dec 24.