

*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

## *I Advent*



## *November 30, 2008*

Union Church Chapel, Parish House and Office  
8101 Ridge Boulevard at Eighty-First Street, Brooklyn, NY 11209  
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The Reverend Mary Barrett Speers, Pastor ❖ Vince Peterson, Minister of Music  
Ed Huml, BRUCA Program Director ❖ Jody Levine, Playgroup Director and Administrator

# First Sunday in Advent



*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.*

### FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

The Van Royen Family

*The leader says:* This year, on the four Sundays of Advent, we give thanks to God, maker of all things, for the four Elements: Fire, Earth, Air, Water.

Fire is a powerful force in nature and can be inconceivably destructive. Without fire we would have no light from the sun or the stars or the moon, no light from lightbulbs or candles or campfires. Fire warms us, cooks our food, and without its combustion there would be no life. In the Bible, we think of Moses and the Burning Bush, Daniel's Fiery Furnace, and Jesus' warning of the fires of Gehenna, as we pray in silence...*(silence)*

*After the silence, the leader lights one candle on the ring, then says:*

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down! (Isaiah 64:1-2)

That the mountains would tremble in your presence

As when fire kindles brushwood, and the fire causes water to boil:

*The people respond:* **Come, Lord Jesus.**

*after a brief prayerful silence, all sing...*

### ✚HYMN IN PROCESSION no. 551

***Come, Ye Thankful People, Come***

### PRAYER OF PREPARATION

**God of the future, you are coming in glory to fill your world with goodness. We confess that in all our preparations for another Christmas, we are still unprepared for you. Where we might be opening our hearts and our lives to receive you, we are busy filling them up, as though we did not really believe you were coming. Help our unbelief: give us grace to leave open our unfilled places, so that when our guest comes, they become places of honor, and we are ready with a joyful welcome in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord...**

## SILENT PRAYER

### ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

...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** *please remain standing and offer the Peace of Christ to your neighbors*

### GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

**SUNG PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION** *verse 5 from no. 325 (NUN DANKET ALL')*

*Spirit divine, attend our prayers; make a lost world Your home;*

*Descend with all your gracious powers; O come, great Spirit, come!*

**FIRST LESSON** **I Corinthians 1:3-9**

**ANTHEM** *Grateful* Erika Lloyd, soprano John Bucchino

**SECOND LESSON** **Isaiah 64:1-12**

**SERMON** **The Ultimate Re-Gift** Rev. Speers

**✚ADVENT HYMN** no. 11 ***O Lord, How Shall I Meet You?***

**OFFERTORY** *Rorate Caeli* Craig Phillips

**✚DOXOLOGY** no. 592 and **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**Holy One, you who are complete in Yourself and the source of all power and grace, place within us the spirit of your holy child Jesus, fill us with such love and awe and delight that we become a blessing to everyone we meet, and send into your world through us the abundant life we have through the one who was, and is, and is to come, Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.**

**GATHERING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS** and **PASTORAL PRAYER**

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 IN RECESSION** no. 12

***People, Look East!***

**✚CHARGE AND BLESSING**

...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.*

## 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 NRSV

**G**race to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup>I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup>for in every way you have been enriched in Christ, in speech and knowledge of every kind; <sup>6</sup>just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you <sup>7</sup>so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>God will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>God is faithful; by God you were called into the fellowship of the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord.

## Isaiah 64:1-9 NRSV

**O** that you would tear open the heavens and come down,  
so that the mountains would quake at your presence  
2as when fire kindles brushwood  
and the fire causes water to boil?  
to make your name known to your adversaries,  
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!  
3When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,  
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.  
4From ages past no one has heard,  
no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any God besides you,  
who works for those who wait for him.  
5You meet those who gladly do right,  
those who remember you in your ways.  
But you were angry, and we sinned;  
because you hid yourself we transgressed.  
6We have all become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.  
We all fade like a leaf,  
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.  
7There is no one who calls on your name,  
or attempts to take hold of you;  
for you have hidden your face from us,  
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.  
8Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;  
we are the clay, and you are our potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.  
9Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,  
and do not remember iniquity forever.  
Now consider, we are all your people.

### **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; Maryellen Van Royen for Advent lighting and today's refreshments; Malcolm Tannahill and ushers; 'bishops' Mary Cusack (Communion) Kristin Miller-Lynch (coffee hour), and Michele Di Bartolo (Sunday School).

**The Book of Remembrance** is open to remember: 11/30—Beatrice Goddard; 12/7—Jean Dangman; 12/14—Andrew Stutz; 12/21—Josephine Coury; 12/28—Friends of Union Church; 1/4--Olive Buerk; 1/11—Emma Kirk Beck; 1/18—Edward Norstrand; 1/25—Leinda Mouacdie.

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

**Continue to pray for peace;** for all living in the midst of war, poverty, natural and economic disaster; for prisoners and all who watch and pray for them, especially the Church of Gethsemane. Continue to pray for/stay in touch with: Paul Douglass and the Van Royen family; Diget and Ginny and the Moore family, Theresa and the Attara family, Vince and the Peterson family, the Cleary family, Art Samuel and Mary Chamberlain, Iris Norstrand, Emile Serposs, Milford Anderson, Nazik David, Barbara Briggs, Amanda Silverman, Bill Louisa, Helen Kretiv; also Mark and Audrey, Helen, Wendy, Sally, Michelle, Kevin. Please call the office to make changes to the prayer list.

**Danny Forger is engaged!** Letters of congratulation may be sent to him and Rev. Deborah Knott, in care of Daniel and Chantal Forger, 2336 East 29<sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn, NY 11229.

**Give food for free on line:** [www.freerice.com](http://www.freerice.com) and [www.thehungersite.com](http://www.thehungersite.com) are fun, interactive sites where you can take a vocabulary quiz and donate rice for each correct answer (no charge), or just keep clicking repeatedly, not even a quiz, and give food for free that way. Any other sites like that please email [unionchurch@earthlink.net](mailto:unionchurch@earthlink.net) and if we can we'll publish them!

**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). The food collection box is on the table in the Sanctuary vestibule.

### **This Week and Ongoing**

**Nominating Committee meets Sunday December 7 after worship in the Sanctuary.**

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

**Tuesday evening fortnightly Bible study** 7pm every other Tuesday: December 2, December 17, (skip December 30), January 13, January 27, in Rev. Speers's study, Union Church Parish House, one block south at 8101 Ridge Boulevard.

**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: December 1 and January 5 are the planned dates in the period of this newsletter, or check online at [www.ucbr.org/calendar](http://www.ucbr.org/calendar).

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

### **Advent at Union Church**

The first Sunday in Advent is 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 with carols after worship Dec 21, and our "midnight" Christmas Eve Communion service with carols, candles, and choir, 10:30pm Dec 24.