

# HEIRLOOM

of the Union Church of Bay Ridge  
Ridge Boulevard and 80th Street

email: [unionchurch@earthlink.net](mailto:unionchurch@earthlink.net)  
website: [www.ucbr.org](http://www.ucbr.org) (under construction)  
The Parish House/Office  
(718) 745-0438  
8101 Ridge Boulevard  
Brooklyn, New York 11209

October/November, 2008

Rev. Mary Barrett Speers, *Pastor*  
Jody Levine, *Administrator*



## **MESSAGE FROM OUR MINISTER**

Dearest Union Church family,

Do you share my sense that these are momentous times? Maybe it's the weather, the change of seasons, the election year, the mighty winds that are blowing through our nation, the Presbyterian General Assembly, the Presbytery of New York City, and our own Union Church—whatever it may be, and however you interpret these signs and wonders, God has great things in store for all of us, and no matter what joys or calamities may come, the more we are engaged with God's love in action, the more we are part of the life God has given us, the stronger our faith will be.

Last year, Union Church grew in numbers for the first time in twenty years, receiving seven new members, and this year is likely to grow even more, with eight of you so far and more to come...

But we all know that growth in numbers comes from the most important growth of all, the only growth that matters to God: the growth of the Spirit of joy and of love and of an outpouring of giving of all kinds. And, beloved Union Church family, you know you are doing all of these things, and it tells me you are growing in trust that you are very dear to the heart of God. What wonderful news that is, no matter what the future may hold.

Meanwhile, *While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest... shall not cease* [Genesis 8:22]. October and November are the "back to school" months, when the year really gets under way. In Biblical times, these were the months of the new rains that restored all the earth, and that is why the Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah, "the head of the year") marks the beginning of this season.

At Union Church, we look to the startup of BRUCA and Playgroup, an influx of new students in our rasa yoga classes, the new schedule of Taizé Evensong (first *Thursdays* beginning this October 2), the 2008-09 season of Union Church Concerts October 19 (Peter and the Wolf), November 9 (Bonus Concert with Erika Lloyd), and November 16 (Michael Kaminski), a new fortnightly Tuesday evening Bible study (Oct 7, 21; Nov 4, 18), Wednesday daytime Bible study, and the beginning of the Sunday School year. And every World Communion Sunday, October 5 this year, we celebrate another year together. Can you believe we are up to seven?

There are a couple of new things I'd like to draw your attention to. Isabel Morales's support group for parents of children with special needs meets first Mondays (with flexibility for schedules) in the Sanctuary. The Tuesday evening adult Bible study is focusing this fall on a spiritual reading (*lectio divina*) of the Psalms, and the Wednesday daytime Bible study is looking each week at the Gospel and Psalm for the following Sunday. Check the calendar in this newsletter and the calendar page of the website [www.ucbr.org](http://www.ucbr.org) for dates and times.

Our Sunday School room has a fresh coat of paint (and could use a second coat: volunteers, anyone?). We have been cross-pollinating ideas with Bay Ridge United Church, where they use the same curriculum, and have planned some fellowship and shared events around things we are used to doing together anyway. The first of these is an INTERNATIONAL POTLUCK LUNCH at Bay Ridge United Church, Bay Ridge Parkway (75<sup>th</sup> St) between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenues, to coincide with the SECOND ANNUAL PETER AND THE WOLF FAMILY CONCERT that afternoon at 4pm, to which Bay Ridge United families will be coming, back at Union Church.

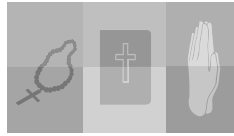
Further along, November 9 is Restoration Sunday, the opening of the stewardship planning season, during which we take stock of all God's blessings, tangible and intangible, in our lives, and which will culminate in our pledges on Gifts Sunday in Advent. Also in November, Lynn Penney will lead us in the first in a year-long series of Saturday "in-treats". What a perfect opportunity to engage in some discernment and connect with the Spirit through your creative self—and for those still young enough *always* to be in touch with their creative selves, *there will be child care*.

Yes, Advent really is just around the corner, where many blessings await you: watch the Union Church newsletter and our website [www.ucbr.org](http://www.ucbr.org) in the months to come.

You are all in my thoughts and prayers in these momentous times.  
Blessings,

**SESSION** meets the fourth Monday of every month, at 7pm in the Parish House. The next stated meeting is Monday, October 27 (that is the fourth Monday in October), and the November meeting is Monday the 24th.

**CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR PEACE** and for all people living in poverty, war, natural and economic disaster, especially survivors of the attacks of September 11, 2001; for prisoners and all who watch and pray for them, especially the Church of Gethsemane. Also we pray for and stay in touch with: Dolores Cleary, Bill Louisa, Iris Norstrand, Evelyn Riccio, Carolyn Ramsay, Emile Serposs, Nazik David, Milford Anderson, Barbara Briggs, Amanda Silverman, Helen Kretiv; Bud, Jon, Kevin, Jo, Kim, and Cody.



### **ROSTER OF ELDERS TO SERVE COMMUNION**



Communion "bishop": Mary Cusack 718.680.3441. If the date or dates you have been given does not suit you, please exchange them with a fellow elder, or if a replacement can not be found, please call "Mary Q".

### **AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER FLOWERS**

Chancel flowers were dedicated to the glory of God and given by. September 14<sup>th</sup> IMO James C. MacIntyre father of Bruce MacIntyre; September 21<sup>st</sup> IMO Ernest V. Skoldberg Sr. from Eleanore Skoldberg



### **THE BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE** is located at the back



of the sanctuary to remember dear departed members of Union Church: 10/5 - Nancy Gatto; 10/12 - Bernice Reid; 10/19 - Thomas J. Ferretti; 10/26 - May Crawford 11/2 - William Reppke; 11/9 - Ernest Skoldberg, Jr.; 11/16 - Rev. William Gray Tolley; 11/23 Dorothy May and Frances Freeman; 10/30 - Beatrice Goddard.

### **UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS**

If you worship with us and would like your birthday listed in our newsletter, fill in the birthday calendar at the back of the sanctuary with your name and birth date or call the office.

#### **October**

2 - Tyler Gamaliy  
4 - Marek Kurek  
11 - Ruth Boll  
22 - Bill Cleary  
27 - Kate Lynch  
29 - Elizan Morales

#### **November**

3 - Kora Lynch  
7 - Tommy Green  
16 - Maria Kurek  
21 - Iris Norstrand

### **DEAR BASKETBALL PLAYERS**

If you would like to rent our Parish House gym, we have 2-hour time slots open evenings during the week, and on weekends. Call the office for details at 718.745.0438 ask for Jody.



### **NOTARY PUBLIC SERVICE**

Notary Public services are available at the Union Church Parish House located at 8101 Ridge Blvd. Monday - Thursday 12:00 - 2:00. Calling first is recommended: 718.745.0438 and ask for Jody. This service is free to all Union Church members.



**DEADLINES** - The newsletter belongs to the church community. What you want in it must be submitted. The next newsletter deadline is Monday, November 17 2008. The deadline for items to be included in any Sunday bulletin is the previous Monday at 12 noon.

### **TAIZÉ EVENSONG FIRST THURSDAYS AT 7PM**

The Taizé community was founded in 1940 in wartime France, and has given rise to a unique style of musical worship that reflects the community's contemplative nature and international peacemaking ideals. Taizé music is based on simple phrases, usually lines from the Psalms or other Scripture, repeated and sometimes also sung in canon. The repetition is intended to aid meditation and prayer. Much of the Taizé community music was conceived and composed by Jacques Berthier. No matter what your faith tradition, come and explore this very special experience of meditation through music.

### **UNION CHURCH PLAY GROUP**

The Union Church playgroup has begun with Session I Fall classes there is still some room available. Play Group is a spacious place with lots of interesting things for a child to do, such as blocks, trains, housekeeping, and doll house, dress-up, puzzles, books, puppets, crafts, etc. A snack is provided along with a story read by the director. There is also Music Time with songs, instruments and marching.



Playgroup is for toddlers and a caretaker, and meets Monday and Wednesdays from 10:00 to 12:00 pm and Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30 - 11:30 am and in the basement of the church (7915 Ridge Blvd. corner of 80<sup>th</sup> Street and Ridge Blvd). The cost is \$175.00 - \$210.00 depending on a 10, 11 or 12 week class based on the calendar schedule. There are three sessions per calendar year.

If you are interested in joining or would like an application

sent to you please call the church office at 718.745.0438.

## **MARATHON OF PRAYER AND PRAISE NOVEMBER**

### **2**

Taking worship to the Marathon—the fifth year in a row...

***Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight...and run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith...***(Heb 12:1)

Session invites the Union Church family to join with Bay Ridge churches (Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist, etc.!) for a joint worship “happening” in the front yard (and inside) Bethlehem Lutheran Church, which is kitty-corner from the previous location, right where the two streams of runners rejoin each other after coming over the Verrazano Bridge. As always, it’ll be mostly music and celebration and welcoming runners from all over the world to Brooklyn, City of Churches...AND a way for all of us to be PART of the Marathon. Once again, we’ll rock to Caribbean steel band music from the Young Apostles, plus a panoply of Bay Ridge church choirs: an Exaltation of Angels.

The event begins with breakfast at 8:30 in the Methodist Church parish house, and continues outdoors (or under a tent, depending on the weather) until we go inside for a more traditional worship with ecumenical communion after the runners have passed by, around 12 noon. This year there is **no parking lot, so arrive early!** Please note that **this will be the Union Church worship service with first-Sunday communion on November 2.**

## **UNION CHURCH CONCERTS OCT-NOV:**

### **Sunday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008, 4pm**

The Academy of Union Church: Peter and the Wolf and Franz Schubert: Symphony No. 5 in B-Flat (D.484)

### **Sunday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008, 4pm**

Erika Lloyd, our Union Church soprano section leader, brings us an afternoon of American song: works by Barber, Moore, Sondheim and Bernstein.

### **Sunday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008, 4pm**

Michael Kaminski, Organist: works by Franck, Widor, Guilmant, Saint-Saëns, Dupré, and featuring Vierre’s Organ Symphony No. 2

## **GOING FOR THE GOLD** by: Ruth Ward

I had decided no to become addicted to the Olympics; then in little time succumbed to its lures. True, the opening ceremony of four hours of dazzle seemed over the top and did not keep my attention. I then watched every possible moment seeing what Olympics means to me: the world’s greatest athletes performing magnificently.

I thrilled to the perfection of high dives, or the amazing Jamaican runner who breezed easily ahead of all his competitors. Suspense grew as swimmer. Michael Phelps (thought a modest young man) confidently announced he was there to achieve 8 golds (previous record was 7) and then proceeded to do just that.

But there is another side, separate from the glamour of gold. Only three can win medals. The anguish

of the fourth runner, swimmer gymnast is palpable. Four years of hard work just to be there; is it for nothing? I would like to think that they compete knowing there is pride in being there at all, and that they have done their best. Surely all one can ask of oneself. To be fourth or even tenth in the world is a fine thing too.

Still I rail inwardly at what becomes a daily mantra; “the medal count”. “We have 6 gold, Russia has 10, China 15”. Facts that I feel overshadow the integrity of what Olympics should mean. Those countries compete without rancor, striving to present perfection and dedication, with sportsmanship and patriotism as an ultimate goal. It is young men and women performing at the highest level giving of themselves for their country and, at the least accepting the outcome graciously.

I don’t care who gets more medals. There is no need for any country to be diminished – they (we) are there and that in this sometime troubled world is a good thing.

Over all, the experience was s good one; the embodiment of ethics and strife combined well. The medalists being honored as the flags were raised presented a memorable example of tearful/joyful patriotic fervor. Uplifting.

At Union church we, as Christians in support of our church, are in our own way. “going for the gold”. We try, though unlike the Olympians, may not succeed as well, much as we might like to be faith-bearing example in our country. Our best performance? Serving church and thus Christ, as we worship. Our wins may not be medals, but actually more: Our gains could be found in Paul’s fruits of the spirit-peace, love, joy. There are, as with the athletes, bumps along the way. It is hoped we conquer them with faith in ourselves and the spirit. And so earn not a 10, but a higher reward.

**CORRECECTION FROM LAST NEWSLETTER:** There was a mistake in the Random Kindness article, a slip between transfers from ink to print mentioned because the point was lost. Where it said “need less hi-faith” it should have read, “We need less hi-tech, and more hi-faith.” (editor’s note: thank you, Ruth, for this clarification!)

## **GOD’S SHARE** from Bill Philippe’s *Stewardship Scrapbook*

The minister was giving a sermon on “total giving.” When it came time to take up the offering, the plate came to a pew where there was a very small boy. He looked up at the usher and said, “Could you lower the plate?” Thinking that the boy wanted to look into the plate, the usher held it down a bit. “No,” said the boy, “a little lower, please.” The usher lowered it a bit more. “More: could you just put it on the floor?” the boy asked. The usher was aghast but finally put it on the floor. The boy stepped into it, stood there, and said, “This is what I give to the Lord.”

## **YOGA** with Kristin Miller



Yoga classes are every Wednesday evening 6:45-8:15 in the Union Church basement located on the corner of 80<sup>th</sup> Street and Ridge Blvd. Please bring a

mat and a towel and arrive a few minutes early. NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED for the gentle, restorative class. Open to all; cost is \$12.00 per session – call Kristin at 718-745-6594.

### **PRESBYTERY MEETING A HUGE SUCCESS**

*late-breaking news submitted by Rev. Speers*

This fall we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Peggy Howland, the first woman ordained by Brooklyn-Nassau Presbytery and the twelfth in the whole Presbyterian Church USA, right here at Union Church with George Bonnell on October 19, 1958! At Session's invitation, the Presbytery of New York City met at Union Church on Saturday, September 27, opening with worship celebrating the ordination of women in general and Peggy Howland in particular.

All day long, presbyters sought me out to tell me how impressed they were with Union Church. Over and over they thanked me for the genuine hospitality, thoughtfulness, and cheerful adaptability of our staff and volunteers as more and more people arrived. We had about a third again as many people as estimated, and somehow fed and seated them all “with a gracious smile for everyone and never a hair out of place.” And all of them thought all of you were just wonderful. “What wonderful people you have here! What a great spirit Union Church has!”

These Wonderful People of Great Spirit, conjured up by Isabel Morales, Michele DiBartolo, and the Program and Mission Committee, included Ruth Ward, Selma Kelter, Morag Mossawir (our Presbytery elder-commissioner), the whole Morales family including Elizan's fiancée Areliz, Joyce Smith, Lorrie Green, Donna Haubrich, Ruby Moy, Thomas Norstrand, Bruce MacIntyre\*, Mary Cusack\*, Kristin Miller, Mary Chamberlain, Betty and Kristine Samuel, Michele DiBartolo, Lynn Penney (for all the signs and flyers), Shirley Tuccillo (for the zucchini muffins), and Olive Reich (for the Lisa Reich cake). All our staff—Jody Levine, Ed Huml, Vince Peterson, and especially Marek Kurek—deserve a huge round of applause for everything they did above and beyond the call of duty to make this meeting such a terrific success.

In opening worship, Bob Adamski, a son of Union Church and now an elder of Bay Ridge United Church, gave a wonderful tribute to Peggy. Peggy herself gave the Call to Worship and led a litany of prayers lifting up women of faith and Presbyterian women leaders. She was joined by Elder Dr. Thelma Adair, the first African-American woman Moderator of the General Assembly; Rev. Carmen Rosario, the first Latin-American woman ordained by Chicago Presbytery; Rev. Pauline Haynes, the first African-American woman ordained by New York Presbytery; Rev. Dr. Kum Ock Kim, the first Korean woman ordained by New York Presbytery; and the most recent woman to be received by our presbytery as an Inquirer: Elder Rosemarie Napoli of The Church of Gethsemane. Arabella Meadows-Rogers, Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of New York City, gave the sermon, Elder Emmanuel Goued-Njayick of the French Evangelical Church offered prayer, and Elder Fredita Walpin of Fort Hamilton Church led the closing charge and benediction. Fourth Avenue Church participated by lending hymnals and a big coffee pot, and Elder Lillian Adamski Warren was spotted in the pews. Union Church daughter Andrea Zarou was also present. Jo Tolley and George and Lois Bonnell were unable to attend but sent their heartfelt regrets and best wishes.

Vince Peterson rehearsed and led an enthusiastic pickup choir of presbyters and \*Union Church volunteers in Stevie Wonder's *Heaven Help Us All*, and Gorgas danced as she did so beautifully for us on Homecoming and last summer in Owl's Head Park. Elder Janis Russell of Lafayette Avenue Church, known to us as the director of the Lafayette Inspirational Ensemble, graciously came and sang the lead, and you should all know that many presbyters came to me afterwards and thanked me for “the best Presbytery worship ever.”