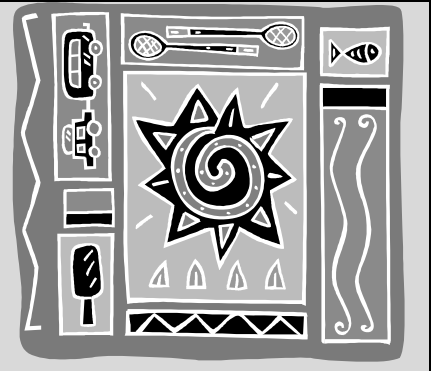


HEIRLOOM

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



Email: unionchurch@earthlink.net
Website: www.ucbr.org
The Parish House/Office
718.745.0438
8101 Ridge Boulevard
Brooklyn, New York 11209

June/July 2008

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

MESSAGE FROM OUR MINISTER

Dearest Union Church family,

Congratulations, graduates and families of graduates!

Summer is coming soon, and all of us are looking forward to special plans for June and July.

Tuesday, June 3 is the last Taizé evensong until the fall; many of our programs are in recess over the summer, but some of them continue; please see the attached new calendar page for details.

Thursday, June 5 is the first of four evenings with Lynn Penney, who is a trained spiritual director in addition to being an artist and a member of our Program and Mission committee. Look inside this newsletter for details; this is the next generation of our monthly Saturday spirituality gatherings.

Sunday, June 8 is the annual Union Church Strawberry Fields potluck picnic in the park (or the gym if it rains). We look forward again this year to fellowship with other Bay Ridge Presbyterian churches; see the article inside for more information. Don't forget to wear your Union Church strawberry-red T-shirt!

Sunday, June 15 is Fathers' Day and our last Sunday in the Sanctuary until Homecoming on Sunday, September 14. This year I will be attending the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., our national policymaking congress, and look forward to reporting back when I return in early July.

On Sunday, July 20, we are invited to worship outdoors in Owl's Head Park with Bay Ridge Protestant churches. Redeemer-St John's Lutheran Church Praise Band will provide the music, I will preach, and all we have to do is bring chairs and picnic lunches; drinks will be provided. It's at 10:30 instead of 10.

Joe and Evan Lynch are the 'Cyclones bishops' this year, and this year the excursion will be in August, for all who have never been able to go because it has always been in July! Watch your bulletins and the August-September newsletter for details, and expect a call from Joe or Evan in the weeks to come.

Please turn the page for more. I look forward to seeing you in church, and out and about in this beautiful world. Enjoy and restore creation this summer and always!

Blessings,

TAIZÉ EVENSONG 7pm this Tuesday, June 3: the last before summer recess.

ART AND SPIRITUALITY MINISERIES

This Thursday: Art and Spirituality miniseries begins: no experience or "talent" necessary! see Lynn Penney or call her at 917.538.9752 for this four-week evening miniseries, \$15 materials fee per week, pay as you go, 6:30-8:00 pm June 5, 12, 19, and 26 (come any day or all days).

STRAWBERRY FIELDS JUNE 8

Jane Fezell is 'bishop' for our annual picnic Sunday, June 8, 1-4pm. It's "potluck:" each household brings one dish, enough to serve 6, and sodas/juice for 6. Bring your own folding chairs, extras to share if you can. Plates, ice, cups, napkins provided. Where: Shore Road Park near the 79th Street playground; if it rains, we move inside to the Parish House gym. It's casual and fun and a great way to include family and friends in fellowship with our church and other local Presbyterians.

SUMMER WORSHIP

From June 22nd through September 7th, our Sunday worship service will be at 10AM in our air-conditioned Parish House Chapel at 8101 Ridge Blvd. There will be no Sunday School during this time, but childcare will be provided during the 10AM service.



On July 20 at 10:30AM, we join with other Bay Ridge Protestant churches for alfresco worship in Owl's Head Park. Bring folding chairs/blankets, extra to share if you can, and a picnic lunch; drinks will be provided. Music will be provided by the Redeemer-St John's Praise Band, and Rev Speers will preach. Enter the park at 67th St and Colonial Road and look for the group in the shade of the trees near the comfort station.

Services will return to the main sanctuary on Sunday, September 14, when the choir also returns. Members desiring to sing or play for summer offertories should let Vince Peterson, Bruce MacIntyre, or Rev. Speers know of their interest.

THE BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE is open to remember dear departed members of Union Church: June 1st John Ward; June 8th Laura Cramer; June 15th Ruth Cranstoun; June 22nd Madeline Stutz; June 29th Estelle McKay; July 6th Alice Johnston, July 13th Jennie Thompson, July 20th Warren Dean; July 27th David Alekel



ROSTER OF ELDERS TO SERVE COMMUNION

Coordinator: 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.



June 1st Sanctuary, 11:00 am
Carmelo DiBartolo

July 6th, Parish House Chapel, 10:00 am
Ruth Ward

CONTINUE TO PRAY

Prayer List requests should come to the church office by telephone **718.745.0438**. Continue to pray for our planet and for peace; for all living in the midst of war, poverty, and natural and economic disaster, especially the people of Sichuan Province and Myanmar; for all who are



faithful even in danger, especially the Christians of Zimbabwe; for prisoners, those recently released from prison, and all who work and pray with them, especially the Church of Gethsemane. Also we pray for and stay in touch with Vince, his family, and especially Bud, Vince's father; Rachel, Bill and Dolores Cleary; Milford Anderson, Bill Louisa, Iris Norstrand, Evelyn Riccio, Carolyn Ramsay, Emile Serposs, Nazik David, Barbara Briggs, Amanda Silverman, Helen Kretiv; Luis, Suzanne, cancer survivors, Eleanor, Marion and David, Jenny, Barbara, Arabella, Lance, Craig and family, Lorrie and family, Steve, Cathy, James, Nick, Arthur, Sharon, Paul, Jon, Dan, Rick, and Kendra.

EASTER LILIES



Mary Chamberlain for Louise Chamberlain O'Connor; The Lynch Family for Loved Ones; Morales Family for Dominga Cruz; Esther & Carol; Morag Mossawir for Albert Mossawir and Dylan; Marie Nelson for Loved Ones; Tom and Iris Norstrand for Severin Norstrand, Virginia Villano and Edward Norstrand Sr.; David and Carolyn Ramsay Our Loved Ones; Arthur and Elizabeth Samuel Our Loved Ones; Rev. Mary Speers for Eleanor Speers; Alan and Joyce Smith Our Loved Ones; Ruth Ward for John Ward; Lillian Adamski Warren for Edward Adamski

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 or call the office.



June

13 – Morag Mossawir
17 – Lorrie Green
18 – Warren Gatto
24 – Iliana Morales
29 – Dolores Cleary

July

01 – Evelyn Riccio
06 – Christopher Gamaliy
14 – Alan Smith
16 – Sam Shoukralla
20 – Evan Lynch
23 – Betty Samuel
26 – Katherine Greissman
27 – Bill Louisa
29 – Barbara Briggs

MAY FLOWERS

May 18th In memory of Mary Nell Norstrand – from Eddie Norstrand



REPORT OF DEFLECTED PRAYERS

(from the Internet)



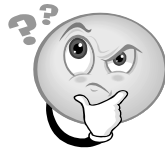
Report: 32% of Prayers deflected off passing satellites.

HOUSTON—According to an official NASA report released Saturday, nearly 32 percent of all prayers exiting Earth are deflected off satellites orbiting the planet—ultimately preventing the discharged requests for divine intervention from ever making it to the Gates of Heaven. “After impact with the satellite, these diverted prayers typically plummet back into the atmosphere, where they are either burn up or eventually land, unanswered, in a body of water,” the report read in part. “Of the remaining prayers, research confirms 64 percent fail to make it past the stratosphere because they aren’t prayed hard enough, 94 percent of those with enough momentum are swallowed by a super-massive black hole at the center of the Milky Way galaxy, and 43 percent are eaten by birds.” The report concluded that, of the 170 billion prayers issued last month, one made it to God, whose reply was intercepted by a hurricane and incorrectly delivered to a Nigerian man who reportedly did not know what to do with his brand-new Bowflex machine.

THE REALLY GOOD QUESTIONS

submitted by Rev Speers

Many members of the Union Church family have serious health concerns, are coping with major changes, and are at a point when, for the first time since your late teens, you are thinking about the meaning of life. I recently received a list of questions for all of us to ponder, really, and discuss with those close to us as we see fit.



The list comes from “Speers” cousins Marion and (Rev.) David Blackshear, who are also living with some serious health concerns. They write: “Becky (their daughter who is also a pastor) sent us a list of questions we were each to answer in writing so we could talk about them during her visit.”

They found it a wonderful experience to think about their answers, write them down, and discuss them with their adult children. Here are the questions:

So far:

Of what accomplishments are you most proud?
What are your most satisfying endeavors?

What have you cared about most deeply?

What have been your greatest disappointments?

What are your most significant learnings?

Something you wish you’d done?

Regrets?

Thread that has run through your life?

Happiest season?

Best work?

What have you contributed?

Describe yourself to someone who doesn’t know you. Who are you?

Recently I stumbled across the intriguing fact that David Blackshear—a Presbyterian minister—has another connection to Union Church. Before he was born or even thought of, his father, Robert Blackshear, was a young assistant pastor for Christian Education when Horace Leavitt was pastor. From our archives, it seems that Union Church had a new young person in this role every year or two back in the 1920s—it must have been a kind of internship after seminary. He and I were quite delighted to discover this history!

A LETTER FROM BURMA

Submitted by Mary Chamberlain

Several of you have asked for a copy of the letter I read in worship on May 12, from my friend Cameron who was in Yangon/Rangoon for the Nargis cyclone. Here it is:

Hello family and friends,

I am writing just to check in with you after the terrible disaster which I am sure you are seeing in the news. I was in Myanmar, or Burma, during the cyclone. I was in Yangon (or Rangoon) the capital which got hit Saturday. I was there last week for an AIDS assessment for USAID - I am working at the regional program in Bangkok and Myanmar is one of the countries were manage - and I was staying at Trader’s on the 18th floor when the storm hit.

There had been heavy rain all week while I did my AIDS work and there was heavy flooding in the city capital on Friday as I went to meet with Shari Villarose, the chargé d’affaires at the US Embassy to brief her on my findings related to HIV/AIDS. Shari is the one you will see in the news reports now - she would be the Ambassador if the US, which doesn’t recognize the military dictatorship, allowed an Ambassador - which we don’t. Anyway, the Embassy knew the storm was coming. But no one in Myanmar alerted the common people - and so nobody worried much. Everyone just carried on business as usual -- I even had business meetings planned for Saturday. We all just thought there may

be flooding, bring annoying delays to flights --- but nobody knew what devastation would come or the extent of the damage, loss of life and suffering.

As I said, the Nargis cyclone hit after midnight on Saturday morning. I was in my room as the pounding began and the windows bent inwards. I stayed clear from these windows as the 150 mph winds lashed at the building. TV reception went out as the satellite dish must have overturned. Electricity went off and the generator started. Phone connections went dead in the hotel - now I was in total isolation. Rain streamed in through the crack in the window and the noise became deafening, interrupted regularly by huge crashes, bomb-like, out of the gloomy blackness. This went on for 12 hours until noon the next day.

The daylight about 8am brought only very slight visibility -- from the lobby you could see rain and wind and some mangled trees in the roads but it was not until after noon when the rain stopped that you could assess the incredible damage. About 100 refugees had been allowed to come inside and were huddled miserably in the lobby. Outside, huge old trees, some of them with 12 and 15 foot thick trunks were ripped out of the earth and hurled throughout the city. Windows were broken, luckily not mine, and billboards and city signs mounted on 2 foot thick rod iron foundations were bent over or broken like matchsticks. The streets were covered with debris. Slowly after noon people began to creep out of the makeshift shelters and the gloom, stunned and shocked - me among them. Everyone just sort of moved in slow motion - turning around to gawk at the aftermath. Slowly people began to look for family, friends and food - with no electricity or communications in the city and nothing open or any transport possible. The power lines were hanging like spaghetti along the roads, curled among the fallen trees and pieces of the roofs which were blown off the majority of the old buildings. But most of the buildings themselves held out. But this was in the city. I was incredibly fortunate to be in a good hotel with a generator and plenty of food and drinking water. The day passed without outside news.

Sunday brought the first news during my hotel breakfast - folks from the UN and international NGOs were there to eat as few places were open in the city with food. Some of these people included those whom I had met with earlier in the week related to my AIDS work, but now everyone was

entirely focused on the disaster -- they were pulling numbers together and assessing the situation. Apparently the population in the affected areas was 15 million and the Burmese government -- the military junta - had agreed to allow some foreign aid. This was unprecedented. It meant things must be dire. I should add that the week was already stressful because a national referendum was due to be held on May 10 and my own presence was actually under the radar - traveling on a tourist visa as nobody could get into the country.

The roads cleared slowly Sunday, mostly by monks and common folk. I didn't see a single soldier all weekend. I blackly half-joked to my UN friends that if one monk pulled out placard with a protesting remark about the government, a thousand soldiers would appear to arrest him. Needless to say all flights were canceled Saturday and Sunday while the airport was cleared. Then local phone lines began to return slowly. I even got a call in to Dale in Bangkok to tell him I was OK - he had been told by Clif at USAID of the situation but nobody had heard from me. A UN friend drove me around Sunday to see the city and it was like being in a jungle with electric wires like vines around the fallen trees -- still all the major streets were improving -- but very difficult to navigate. A line for the one open petrol shop spanned over a mile.

Monday, miraculously, I got another call out from hotel. Phone lines were available locally but constantly busy and very difficult. Thai Airways said they would send in their 2 scheduled planes from Bangkok plus an additional airbus to pick up the stranded folks. I talked to the US Embassy and they said that many of the Americans there were without electricity and water and that I should take the first flight available. And so I went through the obstacle course on the main artery road to the airport. I saw my first sign of soldiers clearing roadways in front of the ultra-rich mansions owned by the generals along the road. 20 soldiers would be sitting there watching as one or two cut down branches from the felled trees. But I made it to the airport, twisting through the wreckage.

5 hours later the Thai Airways jet landed to crowd applause and we eventually boarded and I was able to come home. I finally was able to see BBC and CNN coverage, which first reported 350 dead, then 4000, then 10,000, then 22,000. Now they are saying over 100,000 dead and many more likely to die. It's the same scale as the tsunami - floating

bodies in the flooded fields. People have no drinking water, shelter or food and help is not coming in time. While the capital of 7.5 million people is relatively intact, an equal number of people living outside were in villages and townships that were flattened. Villages are under water, which may take months to recede. The damage is so severe and there is such limited access for aid to arrive - but the aid is being thwarted by the paranoid government, afraid that their clamp of repressive control will be made vulnerable. And of course, political remarks coming at this time don't help. This whole disaster shines a huge light on the situation here and I only hope for the many who have died that their deaths will bring new hopes and light for the future of the rest of the country. Things need to change in Burma. I am glad to be out - but I am so deeply saddened and stunned not only for the plight of a lovely people, but also of the regime that chooses again and again to ignore them in their own selfish interests.

If you are so moved, you can donate or send a prayer for the people -- and send some light.
yours,
Cameron

JULIE ANDREWS'S 69TH BIRTHDAY

submitted by Mary Cusack
To commemorate her 69th birthday, actress/vocalist Julie Andrews made a special appearance at Radio City Music Hall, for the benefit of the AARP. One of the musical numbers she performed was 'My Favorite Things,' a song she made famous in the legendary movie The Sound of Music. Here are the lyrics she used for the AARP benefit:

(Sing It!)
Maalox and nose drops and needles for knitting,
Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings,
Bundles of magazines tied up in string,
These are a few of my favorite things.

Cadillacs and cataracts, and hearing aids and glasses,
Polident and Fixodent and false teeth in glasses,
Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings,
These are a few of my favorite things.

When the pipes leak, When the bones creak,
When the knees go bad,
I simply remember my favorite things,
And then I don't feel so bad.

Hot tea and crumpets and corn pads for bunions,
No spicy hot food or food cooked with onions,

Bathrobes and heating pads and hot meals they bring,
These are a few of my favorite things.

Back pain, confused brains and no need for sinnin',
Thin bones and fractures and hair that is thinnin',
And we won't mention our short shrunken frames,
When we remember our favorite things.

When the joints ache, When the hips break,
When the eyes grow dim,
Then I remember the great life I've had,
And then I don't feel so bad.
(Ms. Andrews received a standing ovation from the crowd that lasted over four minutes and repeated encores. Please share Ms. Andrews's clever wit and humor with others who would appreciate it.)

ZUCCHINI PIE OR MUFFINS by Shirley Tuccillo

- 3 cups zucchini sliced thin
- 1 onion chopped
- 4 eggs
- ½ cup parmesan cheese
- ½ cup olive oil
- 1 cup bisquick
- 1 tsp parsley chopped



Coat pan (9" round) or (6 large muffin pan) well with butter or margarine. Mix eggs and oil, stir in bisquick, cheese and parsley. Add onions and zucchini. Bake at 350 for ½ hour or until golden

brown.

YOGA by Kristin Miller

Yoga has begun again! Classes are every **MONDAYS and Wednesdays 6:45 - 8:15pm** downstairs in playgroup area: in the Union Church basement located on the corner of 80th 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 \$15.00 per session – call Kristin at 718-745-6594 no pre-registration required.



CHURCH PLAYGROUP

The Union Church playgroup will be ending for the summer months and will reopen in September 2008. Our fall, winter and spring session were a great success fill with fun and friends. Playgroup 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 and musical instruments, marching and dancing.

Playgroup is for toddlers and a caretaker, and meets Monday or Wednesdays from 10:00 to 12:00 pm and Tuesday or Thursday from 9:30 – 11:30 am located downstairs in the Union church (the corner of 80th Street and Ridge Blvd). The cost is \$175.00 – \$210.00 for a 10 or 12 week session, based on the chosen day of week. Please visit www.ucbr.org or call 718.745.0438 to sign up.

DEADLINES - The newsletter belongs to the church community. What you want in it must be submitted. The next newsletter deadline is Monday, July 14th, 2008. The deadline for items to be included in any Sunday bulletin is the previous Monday at 12 noon.



DEAR BASKETBALL PLAYERS:



The summer season is upon us – along with ***reduced rates*** starting July 1st! If you would like to rent our Parish House gym, we have time slots during the week and weekends, for only \$30 per hour or \$240.00 per month. Call the office for details at 718.745.0438.

NOTARY PUBLIC

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

