

HEIRLOOM

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

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February/March, 2008

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



MESSAGE FROM OUR 2007 PASTOR'S REPORT

Pastor's Report for the year 2007, for the Annual Meeting February 3, 2008

Dear Union Church Family,

2007 was a milestone year! For the first time since 1987, we had a net gain in membership. We also went from \$14,000 in pledges (2007) to \$25,000 (2008)—that's 190% of last year.

You are all something to boast about! And this momentum is something for all of us to continue to join in and encourage, supporting one another as we enjoy the excitement—and yes, cope with the stress—of growth.

Recently I wrote to John Wimberly, whom some of you remember from my installation service six years ago. When he arrived at Western Church in D.C. twenty years ago, the church was very small and about ready to give up hope (now they have several hundred). You remember he said, give it five years before you even start to look for change.

So here we are, right on schedule. And here we are GROWING...and so I wrote to ask him:

1. How did they stay ahead of the curve, enjoy and encourage the momentum of growth?
2. What did they do when some felt "growing pains"?
3. How did they handle the increased demands on their time and energy?

And John wrote back (I'm abridging a bit):

1. The momentum will build on itself. Do affirm it by saying often in worship things like, "We are a growing church!" or "Welcome to Union Church, where there are lots of new people getting involved!"
2. There will be times when the change is stressful. Remind yourselves, "remember when we wished we'd have a lot of new people/kids/things going on?" and "we can grow or we can shrink. We didn't like shrinking. Now we're growing!" We just remind ourselves, and each other, of how much we wanted what is now happening.
3. John says, "you are just going to have to work more. There's no way around it, in the

beginning." But stressful as it is, it's good work, the kind that gives you more energy in the long run instead of depleting it. (And I say, think how hard we worked for *Peter and the Wolf*, and how great we felt! The trick is remembering to be kind to one another no matter what, and forgiving one another when we forget to be kind, to nourish those tender shoots, that Spirit of Life God is growing in our church.)

Lent couldn't come at a better time. This time of year, we're all disposed to a little "askesis", which is Greek for "working out" and the real root of "asceticism". That's right, before it got gloomy and hair-shirt-ish, askesis (one of the Apostle Paul's favorite words) was a kind of spiritual pumping iron, to get ready for what life was going to throw at us: to get ready for the Big Game, as it were, or dare I say the Big Superbowl of Eternity.

We are going to have plenty of opportunities this Lent for both inner and outer journey. You can see the Lent schedule, the excerpt from Vincent Gallagher's book, and hear from our guest preachers and Lenten Supper speakers...but the main thing is to try it yourself, and talk about it in church—where you can *talk* about your spiritual life and not worry about seeming weird!

The great thing about being a small church is that every person's contribution—of talents, time, and treasure—is vital to the health and growth of the body. Keep on finding ways for God to use you...You—all of you, "old" and "new"—*are* the momentum, and the life, of the Spirit of the Lord here at Union Church! Isn't it exciting? "Ain't-a-that *GOOD NEWS!*"

Blessings,

Calendar for Lent and Easter

(Tues Feb 5 7pm Shrove Tues service Taizé at Union Church)

Wed Feb 6 7:30pm Ash Wednesday service at Union Church; Offering for Fourth Avenue Church Food Pantry.

Sun Feb 10 11am first of Lynn Penney's four-week Lenten series for youth; also Mystery Pal drawing, Rev. Dr. James Speer preaching

Tues Feb 12 6:30pm Lenten Supper at Union Church—Vince Peterson speaking

Sun Feb 17 11am youth series; Candidate Melodee Bottari, intern at Gethsemane Church, preaching

Tues Feb 19 6:30pm Lenten Supper at Union Church—Mary Cusack speaking

Sun Feb 24 11am youth series

Tues Feb 26 7:30 pm Mid-Lent service at Bay Ridge United Church

Sun March 2 11am last of youth series with Lynn Penney

Tues March 4 7pm Taizé service Union Church

Tues March 11 6:30 pm Lenten Supper at Union Church—Carmelo DiBartolo and/or Lynn Penney, speakers (the last of these; March 16-22 is Holy Week)

Thursday March 20 7:30 pm Maundy Thursday service at Ft Hamilton Church

Friday March 21 7:30 pm Good Friday service at Fourth Ave Church

Sunday March 23 EASTER in all our respective churches.

There is something every week of Lent, including 3 Lenten suppers in weeks where there isn't already something else. We are not going to try to serve food and clean up afterwards on Taizé nights: it seemed to the committee that trying to fit both into the hour-and-a-half 6:30-8pm time slot wouldn't do justice to either.

COME TO THE LORD'S TABLE



Our worship services are every Sunday at 11am, followed by refreshments. Communion will be served on Sunday, February 3rd; Wednesday, February 6th (Ash Wednesday at Church at 7:30), and Sunday, March 2nd. Please join us!

DONATIONS FOR EASTER LILIES

can be made in memory of a loved one or in honor or celebration by contacting the church office at 718.745.0438 or giving your money on Sunday Service in the envelopes on the back table. Each plant costs \$10 and can be ordered February 17th through the deadline of March 16th.



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.



February 3rd Sunday 11:00am
Mary Cusack

February 6th Ash Wednesday 7:30pm
Mary Cusack

March 2nd Sunday 11:00am
Mary Chamberlain

March 16th Palm Sunday 11:00am
Bruce MacIntyre

March 23rd Easter Sunday 11:00am
Joe Lynch, Lorrie Green, Mary Cusack

CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR 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. Also we pray for and stay in touch with: Arabella Meadows-Rogers, her family, and the Presbytery of New York City; the family and friends of Elizabeth Nocerino; Olive Reich, Bill Louisa, Iris Norstrand, Warren Gatto, Dolores Cleary, Evelyn Riccio, Carolyn Ramsay, Emile Serposs, Nazik David, Milford Anderson, Barbara Briggs, Amanda Silverman, Helen Kretiv; Steve, Rachel, Cathy, James, Marilyn, Jenny, Nick, Andrea, Arthur, Sharon, Dale, Samuel, Joan, Dana, Paul, Jon, Bud, Jane, Rick, and Kendra.

THE BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE is open to remember dear departed members of Union Church: 2/3—Virginia Villano; 2/10—William Conklin; 2/17—Susan Ulliyette; 2/24—Emma Smith; 3/2—Alice Seely; 3/9—June Aram; 3/16—Severin Norstrand; 3/23—Janet Louisa; 3/30—Helene Ogurek.

POINSETTIAS

We thank all those who made donations for the lovely poinsettias that grace the front of the Sanctuary.



Arlene Ferretti - Tom Ferretti and Viola Ferretti; Lorrie Green and Charlie Scheffold - Loved Ones; Morag Mossawir - Albert Mossawir; Elizan Morales - Fellowship; Marie Nelson - Family; The Lynch Family - Loved Ones; Lynn Penney - Aileen Haley

and Buzz Penney; Olive and Dan Reich - Loved Ones; Samuel Family - Our Parents; The Alan Smith Family - Loved Ones; Eleanore Skoldberg -Signe Skoldberg & Leinda Mouacdie; Eleanore Skoldberg - Ernest Skoldberg Sr. & Ernest Skoldberg Jr.; Eleanor Speers - William Speers; Shirley Tuccillo - Loved Ones; Lillian Warren - Ed Adamski; Mary Ellen Yarshevitz - Nicole and Her Family

WREATH MAKING 2007

Union Church held its annual wreath-making event on Saturday, December 8th. We saw many familiar faces and a few new friends came to help out. In total 25 people turned out to decorate the church for the Advent season. Special thank you to: The Smiths and Samuels for picking up and delivering the greens to the church on Friday.



- The Smiths and Greissmans for bringing refreshments.
- Bruce for making sure we had holiday music.

- Mark for getting the space ready and cleaning up after we were done.
- To Joyce Smith for coordinating the clean-up done by Marek, Joyce, Ruby Moy and Mary Cusack.

DECEMBER AND JANUARY FLOWERS

Chancel flowers were dedicated to the glory of God and given by: January 6th In Memory of Olive Buerk from Olive Reich; January 20th In Memory of Edward J. Norstrand from Eddie Norstrand



A PRAYER FOR LENT AND BEYOND

submitted by Vince Peterson

Dearest Lord-

I thank you for days of clarity because they make memories for me to hold fast to during life's storms.

I thank you for days of uncertainty because they force me to remember you as the tree which my tiny arms could never fit around.

I thank you for pain because the deeper it is, the more my mind expands to make room for your holy lessons.

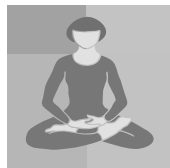
I thank you for calling me to the humble service of others because when I serve or speak in your name, I am your voice and hands in the world.

May your most holy ghost haunt me.
May your light follow me like fire wherever I go.
May I always remember that your shorter gifts of pain are balanced by your eternities of understanding.

Amen: may it be so.

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 Kristen at 718-745-6594 no pre-registration required.



CHURCH CLEANING



A BIG thank you to all the people who, on Saturday, January 26th, scrubbed, dusted, waxed, organized, and polished the church. It was a huge undertaking but, in 4 hours, you will see the group got a lot accomplished. Thanks go to Mary Cusack, Bruce MacIntyre, Mary Chamberlain,

Vince Peterson, Kristin Miller, Mary Speers, Michele DiBartolo, Ruth Ward and Ed Norstrand.

IF ONLY YOU KNEW By Vincent Gallagher

From *The True Cost of Low Prices: The Violence of Globalization* (Orbis, 2006) (abridged for the Union Church newsletter and submitted by Rev. Speers)

When I was hungry, I know you would have fed me if you knew where I was. But you didn't know me. How could you know me? You never held and fed a baby like me before. You never held a baby too hungry to cry.

When I was lonely, you didn't know where I was. I lived in a dangerous place. I know you are afraid to go where I live. It's not safe where I live.

When I was sick, you thought the doctors and hospitals wouldn't turn me away. How could you know?

...When I lost my little girl because we had no money for medicine, you didn't know what I needed. You didn't know where we were. We lived so far from you. They call it the Third World...

When we spoke for our land, our ancestors' land, they slaughtered us. They mutilated and tortured me so many times in so many ways. They smashed my children against the rocks. They raped and killed my wife and daughters. They did it for the landowners who sell you their food. They did it to me. But how could you know what they did? It wasn't on the news. None of your friends could tell you. We live so far from you.

When I pleaded for fair wages, they tortured me. We made your clothes. But you didn't know who we were. You didn't know what they did to those of us who spoke for fair wages and safe conditions. How could you know how far they'd go?

You were so busy. You had your children. You rocked them and sang to them and helped them with their homework and read them stories and tucked them in and taught them to pray. You took them to soccer practice and baseball games, to dance classes and music lessons. You were so busy.

You worshiped me often. You met with your friends and talked of your love for me. I heard your love songs. And I heard your praise and thanks. You thought I was in heaven. That's what they told you. You just didn't know.

You worked so hard. I know it wasn't easy. They'd fire you so quickly. So you had to work hard to provide for your family. I know you were afraid.

But you shouldn't have feared. I sent you food from the fields so you wouldn't go hungry. I sent you your clothes, and I sent you my love. Even when you didn't know it or believe it, I loved you always.

When you smashed my baby against the rocks, you didn't know it was me. You were so afraid of the sergeant. You didn't know what to do. You didn't want to kill me. He said he'd kill you if you didn't do it. You were so afraid.

When you beat me, you didn't know that I'd go to the streets and never come home. You didn't know what they'd do to me. I know you loved me. You just didn't know how much I loved you. I loved you when I was hungry and you had extra food. I know you would have fed me if you could—if you saw me, if you held me. I'm sure you wouldn't have left me to starve, if you knew who I was.

If only you knew. I come to you through the children. I come a million times a day. But look at what is done to me. I'm hungry and sick, beaten and abandoned. I'm tortured and mutilated, abused and battered.

I'm waiting in the children. Can you hear me? Listen. I'm in your heart...and you are always in my heart.

Come to me. Come to the children. Don't be afraid. I'll mend your heart.

Can you hear me? I love you. I love you. I love you. If only you knew.

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 birth date or call the office.



February

8 – Margaret Smith
12 – Marie Nelson
13 – Walter Boll
13 – Matthew Louisa

March

1 - Olive Reich
5 – Carolyn Gamaliy
6 – Bruce MacIntyre
22 – Isabel Morales

IS SPELLING IMPORTANT Submitted by John Speers
We just received this from a friend.

"fi yuo cna raed tihs, yuo hvae a sgrane mnid too Cna yuo raed tihs? Olny 55 plepoe out of 100 can. i cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacilty uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuam mnid, >aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it dseno't mtaetr in waht oerdr the ltteres in a wrod are, the olny iproamtnt tihng is taht the frsit and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it whotuit a pboerlm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mind deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Azanmig huh? yaeh and I awlyas tghuhot slpeling was ipmorantt! "

ONE BAG AT A TIME

1. The petroleum in 14 plastic bags could drive a car 1 mile.
2. Americans use over 14 billion plastic bags annually.
3. It takes 70% more global warming gasses to make a perper bag than a plastic bag.
4. Paper bags do not biodergrade in landfills.
5. Cities spend up to 17 cents per bage in disposal cost.



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