

Fourth Avenue Presbyterian Church

January 2009

Dear Church family,

The Christmas bells are no longer ringing. The ball has dropped at Times Square. The skies are gray. The air is frigid. And, the church sidewalk is beckoning me to rid it of snow.

I imagine this is a similar scene to the one that inspired Christina Rossetti to pen the classic *In the Bleak Midwinter*:

*In the bleak midwinter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen,
Snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter,
Long ago.*

*Our God, heaven cannot hold him,
Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When he comes to reign;
In the bleak midwinter
A stable place sufficed
The Lord God incarnate,
Jesus Christ. (verses 1&2)*

Just as the old beloved hymn points us back to the light in darkness that is Jesus, our church is trying to offer some winter light in the dreary winter weather.

We are akin to the Wise Men, now transformed having just visited with the baby. True the moment has passed, but

the journey is only beginning. The world is begging to know of the hope, peace, and the power present in that cooing child.

Peace,
Rev. David Aja-Sigmon

TWO EXCITING EVENTS

The Re-dedication of our Building

August 8, 2007 will be a date that this church will remember and flinch. It was on that day that a mighty wind ravaged our sanctuary. My hope, though, is when that date comes to mind another date will eventually pop in your mental calendar: February 22nd 2009 will be the day we celebrate the healing and rededication of our building.

This 4pm service should highlight not only the restored windows with the afternoon sun, but also the journey that God, the community, and countless craftspersons have brought our church through. With singing, prayers and stories we hope to celebrate our church building's restoration and convey our gratitude.

Free Concert of Local Artists

A collection of local talent led by Jessica Corbin (the pianist for our Brooklyn Children's Community Chorus) and Sara Paar (the music director for Bay Ridge United) will perform in our sanctuary on January 31 at 7:30pm.

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They will be performing a concert of new musical works by New York City composers titled *Sounds of Today*. The styles will range from popular jazz to more innovative works. There will be both solo and ensemble performances with vocals and a wide variety of instruments (violin, cello, harp, clarinet, guitar, vibraphone, etc.).

A free-will donation will be accepted at the door.

Upcoming Events

* Our Congregational meeting will take place on January 25th after the worship service. In this meeting we celebrate the year passed and plan for the year ahead.

* Soup-er Bowl Sunday is February 1st. This tradition stems from a Presbyterian youth group and Florida, and quite simply is that cans of soup (actually any non-perishable food--rice, cereal, peanut butter, etc) are collected.

* The Bay Ridge Presbyterian Churches are again participating in joint Lenten worship services. All services will begin at 7:00PM

Ash Wednesday February 25th
Bay Ridge United 636 Bay Ridge Pkwy
810

Taize Worship March 5th & April 2nd
Union Church 8101 Ridge blvd

Maundy Thursday April 9th
Union Church 8101 Ridge blvd

Good Friday April 10th
Fourth Avenue 6753 4th Avenue

* On March 4th the book club will gather to discuss House of Mirrh. All are welcome for coffee, snacks, and discussion. Please speak with Nif Cook for questions or more information.

Adult Education

Every third Sunday of the month, we will again begin having our adult education classes after worship. Starting in January we will be studying a three part series on Women in the Bible: Singing theologians, Old Testament Heroines, and Difficult Texts. Please join us.

Mission

Fourth Avenue Presbyterian has joined with at least four other churches to ensure that the Soup Kitchen has fresh, quality produce every week for 2009. The other churches are St. Mary Orthodox Church, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Union Church of Bay Ridge, and Redeemer-St. John Lutheran Church.

I am grateful that the church has also given a gift to my seminary, McCormick Theological Seminary of Chicago. This is a significant and relatively common practice among churches to support the education of future church leaders.

Next time

If you are interested in contributing to our church's upcoming newsletter, please contact Mona Johnson or David Aja-Sigmon by May1, 2009.

Prayer

In the Bleak Midwinter, verse five:

*What can I give him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb,
If I were a wise man
I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give Him —
Give my heart.*

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