



May, 2008

# Fourth Avenue Presbyterian Church

CHURCH OFFICE: (718) 836-0681

The Rev. David Aja-Sigmon  
Pastor

Dear Church family,

For the last few weeks we have been firmly set in Eastertide (easily the silliest name for a liturgical season, simply meaning Easter season). This year in particular I have found the scripture passages personally rich and resonant.

The disciples were dedicated followers of Jesus; yet they seem equal parts passionate and hapless in the lifetime of Jesus. After Jesus' resurrection they are guided by the Holy Spirit, and they eventually become earnest leaders called to share the Gospel story of hope, salvation and peace. The incredible transformation starts taking place in the readings of Eastertide. Jesus followers are not always ready to be leaders of a movement.

It is as if their heads are spinning with all that is happening and they don't know what to make of it. In the end, they just try to keep it simple. They welcome a stranger (who turns out to be Jesus). They create a community committed to worshipping God through prayer and deeds centered around the communal meal. In the meantime, practical and theological questions of how to be faithful as followers of Jesus persist, and though they don't seem to have all the answers, they move forward as a community trusting God.

In this last year, much has happened at our church and much has happened in my family. I would have absolutely no integrity, if I told you I had control of it all. Through it all, the church I have come to love, much like the disciples, has shown forth its strength as a community of faith. I have been learning daily about trusting in the grace of God, using our gifts for the betterment of

others, and faith in a new century from Fourth Avenue Presbyterian. Here are some of the more prominent examples:

\* One of the true highlights of not only the season but also my time in Brooklyn has been this year's confirmation class. We have four young women who have committed themselves to studying more deeply the Christian faith and the life of the church. Marissa, Christina, Blanca, and Odette have truly engaged with the content of our biblical, theological, and liturgical traditions. In the midst of it all, they have not only demonstrated the courage to ask difficult questions and search prayerfully for God in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but they have also made clear to me that they are equipped with great qualities for leadership in the church and the world. Just as I have been fortunate to have them in this class, we will be more than fortunate, blessed in fact, to have this group of young adults as confirmed members of our church.

\*Of course, this winter and spring have been difficult economically for many around the city. This has been made increasingly clear to us at the church as many folks have regularly come to our doors looking for help. Consequently, we made a special push during Souper Bowl Sunday for our Food Pantry. Once again the church family was generous beyond any expectations. Additionally, the other Bay Ridge Presbyterian churches helped us supplement our stock through donations collected through the Lenten series. On top of that, Bay Ridge United Church has committed to an ongoing collection for our Pantry.

\*The news reporter visiting on Easter Sunday kept saying, 'Oh, how beautiful. . . now which of the side windows were replaced?' They then would continue by