

Fourth Avenue Presbyterian Church

June 2009

Dear Church family,

Helping Hands is a term I use to identify folk who go out of their way to help others without seeking or expecting anything in return. With a smile, with a hug, with a kiss, with a kind word or eyes that say “I care about you” or carving time out of their busy schedules to help improve the quality of life for others.

There are not many places in the world nowadays where one is surrounded by this kind of genuine warmth. People are too busy clamoring about to just make ends meet during our current economic crises by working two and possibly three jobs or either they’re too stressed out trying to meet the deadlines of projects that have somehow mysteriously appeared stacked up high on their desks.

I’ve recently met folk who have had or are now coping with life threatening illnesses either their own or someone else’s perhaps a family member, friend or maybe even a stranger. In addition some of the people I’ve met are also dealing with the loss of those dear to them, or have reached the age where their mobility is noticeably declining or have medical conditions that will get worse not better.

And yet these very same folk I’ve mentioned do not let those obstacles stop them from reaching out to others. If there is such an award for the hands that help others, I would name it the *Helping Hands Award*.

And after my short time witnessing the life and ministry of this church, I am comfortable and proud to say a *Helping Hands Award* should be given to Fourth Avenue Presbyterian Church. Congratulations.

Rosemarie Napoli
Pastoral Intern

Mission

After hearing Maruzella Abboud, a PCUSA International Peacemaker, speak at Fourth Avenue Presbyterian about her church’s ministries in Beirut, Lebanon, the session voted to send a donation supporting the National Evangelical Church of Beirut’s Philemon Project in 2008. This church in Beirut has both an international, English-speaking congregation and a Lebanese, Arabic-speaking congregation, and they created this project in 2002. The Philemon Project is meant to be a project of humble service, modeled after Paul who allowed the slave Onesimus into his home (see the Epistle to Philemon) and served him.

The National Evangelical Church of Beirut has sent us a report (available in the office) detailing their mission and informing us of their progress. In brief, the church found that the most vulnerable people in their midst were the refugees and migrant workers. In the telling of the story of a Sudanese woman, it becomes clear that many people came to Lebanon for its relative peace and prosperity, but they have since struggled to find enough work to support their families and sometimes even pay for the substantial and necessary residency fees. People are

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coming to their door, especially in the poor global economy and after the war between Hezbollah and Israel, forced to make impossible choices between food and medicine and legal residency expenses.

The church calls this program a diaconal ministry following the model set by the deacons in Acts. Inspired by their faith, they have endeavored to reach out in the following ways: counseling, financial aid, used clothes, and food parcels. Care is extended to all with the intention of conveying the inviting love of Christ.

Last year they aided 70 families from countries as diverse as “Sudan, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Eritrea, Iraq, Egypt, Congo, Nigeria, Somalia, and (very rarely—for this is not the scope of the project) Lebanese.”

Our church has historic ties with this church and its pastor, the Rev. Habib Badr. Here in another ethnically diverse church with a large Lebanese background, this project has provided for many of us a model for service.

Maruzella Abboud, personally, wanted to thank us for partnering with them in mission. She asked for an update about our church, sent her greetings, and said she keeps us in her prayers.

Upcoming Events

*On **May 31st** we will be having a new members' class. Please speak with David Aja-Sigmon if you are interested.

* On the **10th of June** the book club will gather to discuss John Adams. All are welcome for coffee, snacks, and discussion. Please speak with Nif Cook for questions or more information.

* On **June 3rd** the Men's Group will be meeting at Three Star Restaurant at 6:45pm. The restaurant is located at 1611 Avenue U. If you are interested please speak to Charlie Tirrito or George Banat.

* On **June 7th**, we will have our next session meeting.

* On **June 14th**, the Sunday School will lead us in worship.

* Sunday, **August 9th**, will be the church's annual outing to Keyspan Park to see the Brooklyn Cyclones. The Cyclones will be taking on the Jamestown Jammers. Fifty tickets were ordered. Tickets are \$13 each. To reserve your seat see Bill Costello or call 718-836-8375. All who attend will receive a free Cyclone hat. It is also Sundae Sunday, so the first 2500 fans will get a gift certificate for a Carvel Sundae.

* On **July 5th**, we will begin to worship downstairs in the fellowship hall fleeing the summer heat. We will remain downstairs until **September 13th**.

Quote

Crime committed in the name of religion is the greatest crime against religion.

-The Berne Declaration, signed by Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Muslim leaders from former Yugoslavia in 1992

Prayer

From the Church in Hungary:

Gather us or scatter us, O Lord, according to your will. Build us into one Church: a Church with open doors and large windows, a Church which takes the world seriously, is ready to work and to suffer, and even to bleed for it. Amen.

Next time

If you are interested in contributing to our church's upcoming newsletter, please contact David Aja-Sigmon by September 1, 2009.
