

Pastor's Corner

“Weeding, Cultivating or Replanting”

Pastor Tom Philipp



As I have driven around our area the past few weeks (or walked, because your Pastor is on an exercise and diet kick to lose weight!), I have taken special notice of my neighbors who are into gardening. I marvel when I see individuals, my age or older, down on their knees pulling up weeds and digging around plants that have been in hibernation. If I got on my knees I would have to call for help getting back up!

I see delight on faces, after weeds have been pulled, dead flowers and plants removed and dead leaves and limbs from shrubbery clipped, as they witness new life springing forth. In some cases it has meant digging up a plant and putting it in new soil. In most cases, no life was even seen before the weeding and pruning has taken place. This is only the initial effort for this season. Tending the garden is a continual task.

Knowing the significance of this chore at the manse, I have given strict instructions to Danny, the young man who cuts my grass, to take time to do this additional task as well. He gets excited, as do I, when a few days after the work is done, we can see the results: all that was hidden because of being covered is now springing forth with vitality. It's a law of nature that this weeding and pruning is both necessary and rewarding.

I find a lesson in this for our spiritual growth as well. I believe the biggest problem we face in our spiritual life is “suffocation.” Growth and hidden beauty is suffocated by both weeds and dead foliage. I will use the term “weeds” to describe untrue ideas, misguided commitments, and sterile religious practices. They need to be weeded out to find the genuine, the beautiful, the life-giving, and permit that to grow into flowers, and sometimes fruit. Weeds and dead foliage represent practices, theories and commitments that once served us well, but are dead. It is wasted effort to attempt to resuscitate them for there is no longer life. Alongside weeds and dead plants, however, are those shoots which are ready to spring forth into something beautiful if they are nurtured. They need space, (sometimes by replanting), proper nourishment: light from above (which is out of our hands) and watering and weeding which IS our task.

An article in this NEWS describes a class which will be held in the Gallery on Thursday nights beginning May 6. A subtitle for that class might be “Weeding, cultivating or replanting in our spiritual garden which permits new life.”

All are welcome to join.

Adult Study and Discussion Group

Thursday Nights, Beginning May 6, 7 p.m.

Brian McLaren was named in 2004 by Time Magazine as “One of the 25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America.” His message, however, sounds very different from that of other “evangelicals.” I first became familiar with his work when I was in a Clergy Book Study Group two years ago and attention was given to his book: “Everything Must Change” (2007). He argued that “status-quo Christianity had traded the revolutionary story of Jesus for familiar clichés, pat answers, and domesticated programs.” Though he was not the first to raise this challenge to present day Christianity, his writing was most thought provoking as he argued that we need to find a way to apply the “core message of Jesus” to today's global problems. I, and my clergy colleagues, thought his ideas to be a good jumping off place for questioning what the Church is about and how, in many ways, it is not relevant to men and women today. Particularly those concerned with the lack of direction or misdirection we find in so many areas of present day life, where the rich prosper with the poor left behind, the addiction to consumerism, neglect of environmental concerns, and our commitment to developing more destructive weapons.

Brian McLaren in the past two or three years has carried his message all across the land, speaking to groups both large and small, at universities and at churches, as well as in public issue forums. I have just finished reading his recent book: “A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions That Are Transforming The Faith” (2010). I find his arguments here to be even more challenging than those raised in his earlier book, and, I would say, get to the heart of the problem of why the changes he proposed in that earlier book left one with a “yes...but.” His new book raises, for me, some of the most important theological questions for our time, questions that, as they are being explored, have and will transform the Christian Faith for our time.

I invited you to join me on Thursday nights at 7:00 p.m., beginning May 6 in the Gallery. The study includes presentations on McLaren's arguments and a “free wheeling, open discussion” on them.

(You need not purchase the book. For those who wish to do so, it has been available at Borders and Barnes and Noble. List price \$24.)

Pastor Tom



Clerk of Session

Sean Moran

The 2009 minutes were submitted to the Presbytery on April 24, 2010 by the Clerk of Session in Westhampton. Every year the clerks meet to review and read the minutes of other sessions, offering their opinions and making notations on needed corrections. Starting in January, the clerks receive word from Shirley Russell, Clerk of the Presbytery of Long Island, as to dates the annual statistical reports are due and minutes are to be turned into the Presbytery for approval. Our statistical report was submitted in February. Thanks to Elder John Deitz for his assistance to the clerk in finishing that report. The minutes are usually due for submission by April.

A note on Old South Haven's statistical report: our congregation has grown a bit. We welcomed 2 new members and performed 2 baptisms.



Mission and Outreach

Sean Moran

As co-chair of the Mission and Outreach Committee, I would like to hear from members of the congregation with regards to groups Old South Haven should be involved with or aware of. For example, I volunteer with Little Shelter Animal Shelter in Huntington once a week. I help feed the cats and socialize, by petting them and giving attention they need. There are also opportunities in which you can sponsor a cat or dog, contributing to the upkeep of the animal during its duration at Little Shelter. Cost is as little as \$35 a month.

Old South Haven has continually been involved with the food pantry at St. Joseph the Worker Church and INN Friendship, along with Thursday's Child.

If you know of other groups that Old South Haven may want to outreach to, please e-mail me at chevymalibu97@yahoo.com.

1st Quarter Financial Report

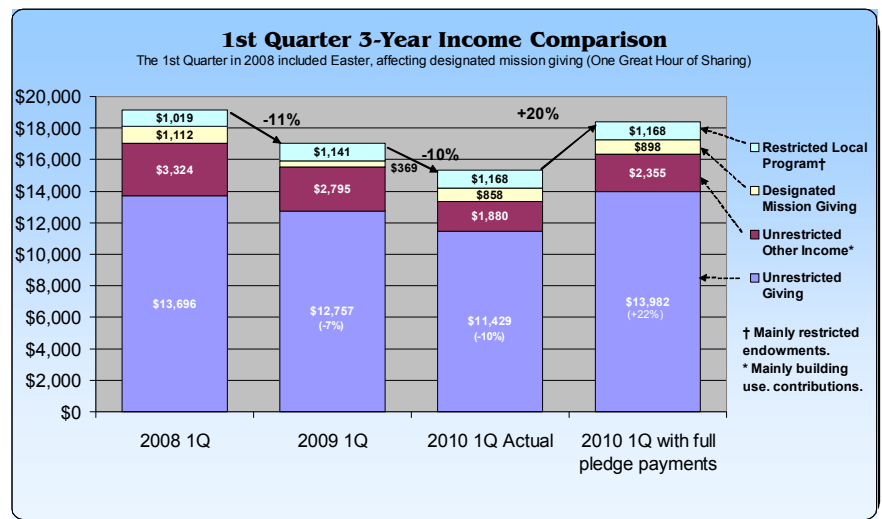
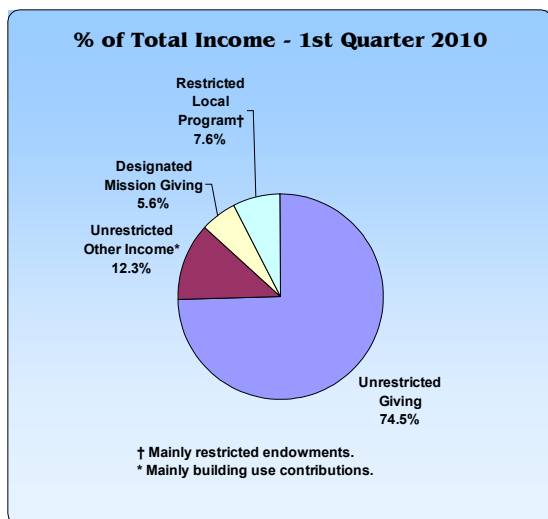
From the January 2007 to March 31, 2010, the "cash" assets of the church have declined from about \$108,000 to \$82,000, a decline of \$26,000 (24%). While important, a significant portion of this decline is the spending down of designated/ restricted funds such as the Kickerer Music fund and the Memorials fund. These funds can only be used for limited and specific expenditures. More important is the decline in the General fund. This unrestricted fund is the principal source of monies for most of the ongoing expenses of the church. This fund has declined from \$21,000 on Jan 1, 2007 to \$10,000 on March 31, 2010.



period were expenses far exceed income. In the first quarter of 2009, we lost \$1,000, but for the first quarter of 2010, we have lost over \$5,000. We are getting poorer more than five times faster than last year even though our expenses declined 5% compared to last year. This accelerated rate of decline began in the Fall of 2009, largely due to a harsh winter resulting in higher fuel and snow removal costs, and a slowing of contributions.

75% of the church's income is from individual giving. **The Stewardship drive for this year was successful. Pledges increased by 20% over the previous year. However, pledge income during the first quarter was 22% less than the pledged amount.** If full income from pledges had been achieved, much of the first quarter deficit would have been eliminated. Hopefully most of the pledged amount will be contributed. It is much easier to give in regular contributions than to try to make it up in one large payment.

The first quarter of every year is historically a



Peace Essay Contest

Nancy Best
Elder for Social Education and Action

We have received a number of Peace Essays from students at Bellport High School. They have been read by an English teacher at the high school, who is a member of our judging committee. Pastor Tom, Cathy Kellogg and I will be the committee members from Old South Haven Church. When we have all read them, we will pool our thoughts and come up with a winner. That winner will receive a \$200 U.S. savings bond. I'll keep you posted as things move along.

More Light Sunday: June 6

As a More Light congregation we will once again observe More Light Sunday falling on the first Sunday of June. More Light Presbyterians are "seeking the full participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people of faith in the life, ministry and witness of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Old South Haven Presbyterian Church became a More Light congregation, after a thorough discussion over several months, by a vote of the Session on July 10, 1980, thirty years ago. Though "full participation" has not yet been achieved, the thirty year period has seen ever increasing support for this mission.



Old South Haven has observed More Light Sunday each year since Pastor Tom has become our Pastor. The national theme this year is "Believe Out Loud." The service will include worship materials prepared for this observance.

Presbyterian Heritage Sunday - May 30

Once again we celebrate Presbyterian Heritage Sunday. It is a time when we look back at our Presbyterian history, celebrating persons and programs that have been part of our life together as a denomination. This year Pastor Tom plans to focus on John Witherspoon, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. He also is the one who called together Presbyterians in the new land for the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States on May 21, 1789. The text of the sermon will be I Corinthians 3:7, which reads in the lilting language of the King James Bible: "So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increaser." The sermon is titled: "Planting and Watering."



Board of Deacons

Kappy Tilney



During the past few months, several people have been hospitalized. Dorothy Jones, Joann Neal and Tom Philipp are all, thankfully, on the mend. While they were in the hospital and upon their return home, cards and flowers were sent as well as calls and visits. They were missed.

Easter flowers and cards were sent to those unable to worship with us on Easter Sunday. The practice of sending notes welcoming visitors continues. If you find yourself greeting a visitor, please encourage them to include their address when signing the guestbook in the Narthex.

Altar Flowers

If you wish to acknowledge a loved one or special occasion with altar flowers, there is a sign-up sheet in the Gallery. Nancy Best will include an announcement in the bulletin. Please indicate the name, relationship and whether the flowers are in "in memory or in honor."

Pentecost Sunday, May 23

Pentecost is celebrated by Christians as the coming of the Holy Spirit to the followers of Jesus. It is observed 50 days after Easter. The name Pentecost comes from a Greek word which means "fiftieth." It should be pointed out that for the Jewish community there is also the festival of Pentecost (coming 50 days after Passover), which originally was a harvest festival. Today it is observed as the Tablets of the Law given to Moses on Mount Sinai.

We often speak of Pentecost as the birth of the Christian Church. In the Book of Acts of the Apostles it is recorded that the Apostle Peter preached a sermon which resulted in 3,000 people becoming believers. The liturgical color is red, representing "tongues of fire" and we encourage worshippers to wear something red on that day. At different times in history Pentecost was also marked by lowering an effigy of a dove in church (or sometimes releasing a dove), or even a shower of rose is made to descend on the congregation. (We plan neither at Old South Haven!) This particular Sunday has also been a favorite day for baptisms and confirmations and is known as Whitsunday. It is thought that because it was the custom to dress the child in white, or have the confirmation class in white dresses and white shirts, that the day became known as "White Sunday" and then Whitsunday.





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**Film Night at Old South Haven:
"The Wind Journeys"**

Selected films, usually by independent film makers, focusing on contemporary issues or insights. All are welcome. These are usually shown the second Sunday of each month, in the Gallery (back room of the church, starting at 7 p.m.

May's film, May 16 (note date change): "The Wind Journeys," is a newly released highly acclaimed story of an aging itinerant accordion musician in northern Columbia, and his young apprentice. Suitable for teenagers. Spanish with English subtitles.

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Morning Worship Assignments

Date	Greeter	Lay Leader	Coffee Hour
09-May	S. Moran	S. Welgoss	P. Light
16-May	K. Tilney	D. Mayo	S. MacKay
23-May	J. Neal	F. Decker	G. LaFace
30-May	Morgans	D. Jones	L. Scott/J. Bird
06-Jun	W. Scott	J. Neal	C. Kellogg
13-Jun	K. Barry	B. Mullahy	A. Wiswall
20-Jun	H. Altomare	L. Majowka	L. Majowka
27-Jun	Morgans	A. Stevens	D. Stevens

A new schedule will be posted in June. Please check the bulletin Board.

If you have a conflict with your schedule, please call Kappy Tilney at 286-0024

"Opera and More... an afternoon recital"

Once again Old South Haven was chosen for staging an event sponsored by the Becker/Gambles Music Fund of the South Country Education Foundation. Proceeds from the event benefit the Summer Music Scholarship Fund for grades 4 through 11. This year the event was held on Saturday May 8th and featured Michael Douglas Jones, bass; Mihaela Buhaicine, soprano; Thomas Rowell, tenor; and Leon Livshin, piano. The sanctuary was filled and those who attended enjoyed the afternoon and were grateful to OSHPC for again making their facility available.

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Mid East Study Group

For the past two or three years a group of interested persons from Presbyterian congregations on Long Island have come together for a study group. It is an opportunity to study and discuss the ongoing crisis in the Middle East and the tension between Israel and the Palestinians. The group has had a particular concern for Christians in the area who have been subject to ostracism and often forced to flee. The group meets, usually the fourth Monday night of the month, in Patchogue at the E and R Tax Office of Rev. Ralph Wright. Pastor Tom recently became the convener of the group. Anyone interested in attending these discussions are welcome. For more information speak to Pastor Tom.

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Graduation Celebration

Tammy Skelly, daughter of Linda and Bill Scott, recently completed her MBA in Human Resource Management. A celebration of her accomplishment was celebrated with friends and family on Sunday, May 2. Congratulations from all Tammy!

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Excellence in Service Award

Jason Neal, son of Bill and Joann Neal, was recently nominated for the Excellence in Service Award at IIT. Best wishes are extended to you Jason!

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**The Shinnecock - Sewanika Society
3rd Annual Golf Tournament**

The Tournament honoring Native American Veterans will take place on May 10, 2010 at Bellport Country Club. Tee off is at 11 AM. Cost is \$175 per golfer. \$75 for people who would like to attend the brunch and program only. For more information or to reserve, please contact the society at 631-286-2262 or by e-mail at jetinroe@gmail.com.



Old South Haven Presbyterian Church

Rev. Thomas J. Philipp, Minister
Mark Quintana, organist & choir director

South Country and Beavertdam Roads
(Mail: PO Box 203)

Brookhaven, New York 11719
Telephone: 631-286-0542

Email: ContactUs@OldSouthHavenChurch.org

Web: <http://OldSouthHavenChurch.org>

Newsletter editor: Linda Scott, 631-286-2003

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