

Pastor's Corner

Together We Celebrate!



Pastor Tom Philipp

It is the most important celebration in the Church year. It is that Day when we pull out all stops to celebrate: we decorate the communion table with lilies, azaleas, and other plants; we await the sound of the trumpet; the choir and the congregation sing the hymns of Resurrection; we look for a sanctuary full or close to it; individuals are in a festive mood; the preacher ready to declare the Good News; the spirit of aliveness is in the air!

Yes, it is Easter once again. We celebrate this Day with our Christian brothers and sisters in every land, across every denomination, and we ask all of creation to celebrate with us. We wish to let the whole world know in one triumphant affirmation:

Christos anesti - alathos anesti, Christ is risen - risen indeed!

Yes, together we celebrate. Let's make it even extra special this year.

It is so easy to let an every year occurrence become simply a ritual we go through, lacking the initial joy and spirit with which it was first marked. We celebrate our birthdays every year but unless it is a special one (turning 30, 40, 50 etc) they are pretty routine. Not long ago I had dinner with a married couple. I asked them when their wedding anniversary is, and the husband (wouldn't you know it!) could remember neither the date nor the number of the upcoming anniversary. A gentleman at the coffee shop asked me the other day, "When is Easter this year?" I told him, and he said he really should buy something for the children.

Maybe it is only the commercial aspect of Easter that keeps us on our toes. I was amazed to discover in my web site search today that there are 1485 sites under "Easter". A couple drew attention to Easter Island and a few drew attention to the history of Easter celebrations in various countries. Most, however, were websites for commercial ventures that could offer everything from special greeting cards to unusual gifts. Has Easter lost its religious spiritual- significance for us? Will we simply go through the motions once again even as church people? Will it be simply a matter of "I have to remember to bring a plant to church that Sunday," or "we need to decide whether I should cook a special dinner or go out to eat", or "I wonder if I should buy a new suit (or dress, or hat, or a pair of shoes, etc.)"

Does not the world long for a message that is more life giving than that? What would it take to regain the enthusiasm of those original followers of Jesus who turned the world upside down with their proclamation: "He lives! He lives!"

So let this Pastor's Corner be an invitation to participate once again in Easter Sunday Worship at 10:00 am. Let it be an invitation to celebrate the greatest affirmation of our Christian Faith: He lives! He lives in me and through me. May it be a time when the whole world sees Christ alive in his new body the Church, alive for evermore! Amen.

Reflections of a Member

Kappy Tilney

When I moved to Suffolk County, twenty years ago, attending church was not uppermost on my mind. I happened to drive past Old South Haven Presbyterian Church. The church perched on a hill caught my attention. It brought to mind my childhood church perched on another hill. As I passed, I thought that someday I might stop. Though not an immediate occurrence, I did eventually attend. Due to the congregation's welcome, those tentative first steps lead me to church membership.

After joining, I became involved in the life of the church (i.e. teaching and serving on session) and friendships developed. Due to my willful and foolish choices, I found myself in a difficult and untenable situation. In my state of confusion, Old South Haven members rallied round and helped me through it. The love and charity they evinced enabled me to return to a place I had not known I had left. In the process, a faith that had been tentative, at best, began to grow. Though, certainly, gratitude for the kindness shown me is part of it, I think the lion's share comes from an awareness that God's spirit was working through good people. So, my burgeoning faith evolved (very slowly) through place (Old South Haven), people (wonderful members) and God's love as expressed through His people.



A Fluid Religious Life for Us Americans

The February 26 edition of the New York Times contained an article by Neela Banerjee which indicated that more than a quarter of adult Americans have left the faith of their childhood to join another religion or no religion (The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life). If we include shifts within the various Protestant denominations then it appears that 44 percent of Americans have switched religious affiliations. The Roman Catholic Church "has experienced the greatest losses as a result of affiliation changes". Groups that have gained the most are nondenominational churches which are largely evangelical and in many cases megachurches. "The trend is towards more personal religion and evangelicals offer that," said Professor Stephen Prothero, Chairman of the Religion Department at Boston University. He indicated further that evangelical churches tailored much of their activities toward youth.

It would be interesting to poll our Congregation to see how many have been Presbyterian all their life, or even Protestant all their life.

The full survey may be found at: <http://religions.pewforum.org/>

A Comment on the Death of Young Larry King

Pastor Tom

On Feb. 23 the New York Times carried an article on the death of Lawrence King, a 15 year old boy from Oxnard, California. Larry, an eighth grader, was shot to death inside a junior high school computer lab by a fellow student, Brandon McInerney, age 14. Prosecutors are calling it a hate crime. Larry, in recent weeks, had said publicly he was gay. He had started wearing mascara, lipstick and earrings to school and endured harassment from a group of schoolmates, including Brandon now charged in his death. If convicted this 14 year old faces a sentence of 52 years to life in prison.



Larry's funeral was conducted by The Rev. Dan Birchfield of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Port Hueneme, California. Hundreds of mourners gathered for the service at which Rev. Birchfield said: "God knit Larry together and made him wonderfully complex. Larry was a masterpiece." Larry lived at Casa Pacifica, a center for abused and neglected children in the foster care system. Larry joins Matthew Shepherd, another young gay man murdered for being gay.

Brandon is a victim, also, a victim of homophobia and hate. One report stated that Larry had teased Brandon recently saying he liked him. Brandon was from a family where domestic violence had led to a separation in 2000. Brandon split his time between his parents' homes. His mother a couple of years later ended up in a drug treatment facility.

Do I dare say it: the church is not blameless in these tragic situations.

The National Field Director of More Light Presbyterians, Dr. Michael Adey, in his email to us and other More Light congregations immediately after this murder, asked the questions: What are we teaching in our congregations, in our Christian education classes and in our homes about human sexuality, gender identity and gender expression? What are we teaching about same-gender love and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons? How do our church laws and mistranslations of Scripture contribute to homophobia; therefore, providing sanction for such fear and hate crimes?"

It was just a couple of days before this tragedy that a young man in his early twenties said to me: "I can't stand gay people. That is not the way God made us, don't you agree, Pastor Tom?" Yes, there is a lot that needs to be done. We must keep such tragedies as Matthew Shepherd's and Lawrence King's murders from taking place. We must affirm that God loves each of us as we are; each of us a "complex masterpiece" (to use Rev. Birchfield's wonderful term). All of us should see ourselves as complex masterpieces and be able to say the same for all of God's other masterpieces.



Music Department

Danny Corneliusen

Easter and spring are approaching and there is a lot happening. Our friend Rui Li the trumpet player is coming to play for us on Easter Sunday.

Another thing to be excited about is that the organ is due for a scheduled tuning. (And I'm hoping to get to meet the organ technician this time!)

An area we are working on is creating a choir anthem database. I've talked with Richard Thomas about this project, and we are hoping to be getting underway real soon. We have most of the choir music organized alphabetically by title. We will also categorize it by season, scripture, composer and lyricist. Since we will be using a computer, it will be easy to update this database when we add new music to our collection. Isn't life just wonderful?

I'm also planning on selecting service music based on composer's birthdays. I was thinking it would be a nice way to show appreciation for some of the people who have really made the world a better place through their music.

Here are some of my favorites from which I will choose:

Antonio Vivaldi: March 4, 1678

Georg Phillip Telemann: March 14, 1681

Johann Sebastian Bach: March 21, 1685

Franz Joseph Haydn: March 31, 1732

Johann Caspar Kerll: April 3, 1627

Jan Adam Reincken: April 23, 1623

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky: May 7, 1840

Gabriel Fauré: May 12, 1845

As always, if you are interested in joining the choir, please come on a Thursday night and give us a "test drive."

Looking forward to the coming Sunday mornings. Thanks so much.



Pastor Tom Travels

On Monday, March 24, the day after Easter, Pastor Tom flies to Brazil to spend 10 days with friends in Campanis. Upon his return he will attend a two day seminar (April 4 and 5) titled "New Testament and Roman Empire: Resistance and Reimagination" at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. On April 25 and 26 he plans to attend a conference titled "In Search of a Homeland: The Quest for Place and Peace in Israel and Palestine" sponsored by Friends of Sabeel, North America. Sabeel (Arabic for "The Way") is a Palestinian liberation theology center in Jerusalem. Pastor Tom is a member of Sabeel and attended one of their conferences in Boston last fall.

On June 6, 7 and 8 our pastor will be attending his 50th college reunion at Macalester college in St. Paul, Minnesota (he tells us he and classmates whom he has not seen in 50 years will perform a couple of skits they wrote at that time!) Then on June 30 through July 4 he will attend the International Campus Ministers Conference in Tampere Finland. Immediately after the conference he hopes to tour St. Petersburg, Russia.

Then Looking Ahead: Pastor Tom has been invited to participate in a seminar offered by the Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. The theme will be "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? Proclaiming the Gospel in a secular society. This will take place from April 27 to May 8, 2009.

Well, he should get some good sermon material from all those experiences!!

Personnel

Darcy Stevens

After getting the ok from the Presbytery, the Session voted to ask Pastor Tom to be our "temporary stated supply".

Pastor Tom has agreed to do so. Until now, he has officially been an "interim" pastor. Contrary to what might be expected from the word "temporary," under this arrangement Tom can stay indefinitely. He has requested, however, that we review this appointment each year. An interim pastor is limited to one or two years. So this is a VERY good change. Thank you, Tom!!



Deacons

Kappy Tilney

The Deacons continue to send cards, notes and flowers to members and friends. In the furtherance of this very important ministry, please call any of the Deacons if you know of a particular concern or need.

The Deacons are so appreciative to and for the generosity evinced by our small church. We are blessed with the many giving spirits that abound here.

In early April, we will be planning a potluck meal. Old South Haven's most recent gathering (the meal honoring Peg Angus) was on a Saturday evening. The Deacons thought they would appropriate the idea. Please give it some thought and let us know what you think. And, of course, that you would attend! After some congregational feedback, a date will be decided and announced.

Deacons: Janet Barry (281-4549), Katherine Frankie (286-6301), Catherine Kellogg (286-8892), Bill Scott (286-2003), Kappy Tilney (286-0024), and Steve Welgross (917-572-6667).



A History of the Carman's River

Marty Van Lith will be making a presentation titled "A History of Carman's River" at the Brookhaven Library on Wednesday, March 12 at 7 pm. There will be a second presentation on Saturday, March 29 at 2:00 pm.

Marty describes the presentation with these words "This is a human and cultural history that begins with Native Americans and land purchases during the early colonial period and will cover the building of the five mills along the river, land and river usage during the 19th century, and the conservation efforts during the 20th century."

We should note that John Deitz has moved his Brookhaven-South Haven website to a new address: <http://brookhavensouthhaven.org>.

Marty also has CDs available (free) for those who have PowerPoint software. One is on the history of Brookhaven Hamlet and the other is on "Our Historic Cemeteries" You can receive them by contacting him at vanlith@optonline.net



Coffee Hour Fellowship

Darcy Stevens

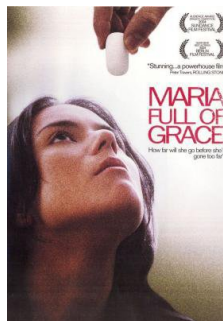
In keeping with our ecology minded policy, we are encouraging the use of ceramic mugs at coffee hour.

There have been some concerns and questions regarding the mugs. The current plan is to bring your own mug, one that is very distinctive so that you will recognize it. The mugs will be kept in the hutch in the gallery. Each person is responsible to wash and return it to the hutch. Supporting this plan will address any sanitary concerns.

Our goal is to decrease Styrofoam and paper waste. However, there will be disposable cups available for guests. The basket under the table is for paper recycling

Film Series

Monday, March 10 - "Maria Full of Grace"



In this 2004 film, Maria is a poor teenager, living in Columbia, and working in a sweatshop cutting roses to be shipped to America. When she discovers she is pregnant, she begins to think about the kind of life she has to offer her baby. Knowing her boyfriend is a deadbeat and will not support her, Maria begins to seek other ways to make money. She is persuaded to become a mule, smuggling cocaine into the USA for a good deal of money. She

swallows little tubes of cocaine until her stomach becomes too full to hold anymore. Maria and three other mules including Maria's best friend Blanca board a plane to the US. Once in New York, things get crazy as two of the mules are detained for possible drug smuggling, including Maria. All she can think about is her baby and what will happen next. Spanish with English subtitles. Rated R

Films for April, May and June have not yet been selected. If you have suggestions, contact John Deitz, (631) 286-3178, deitzj@optonline.net



Setting the Date for Easter

Easter is early this year. Easter is always the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox, which is March 20. This dating of Easter is based on the lunar calendar that the Hebrews used to identify Passover. This is the reason it moves around on our Roman calendar.

Based on the above information, Easter can actually be one day earlier, March 22, than it is this year. That is rare.

Here is some interesting information (or trivia). This year is the earliest Easter any of us will see for the rest of our lives! And only the most elderly of our population have ever seen it this early (95 years old or above). Furthermore, none of us have ever, or will ever, see it a day earlier! The next time Easter will be this early (March 23) will be the year 2228 (220 years from now). The next time it will be a day earlier, March 22, will be in the year 2285 (277 years from now). The last time it was on March 22 was 1818.

Submitted by Pastor Tom
(I bet you thought it was from Richard Thomas!)



Bobby's Photo Exhibit



Our own childlike Bobby Stirling, who takes his place with the children Sunday morning for the Talk with the Children, is an excellent photographer. Presently several of his photos, scenes in the Brookhaven/Bellport community, are on display in the Gallery. We are waiting for two or three more which

Bobby wants to add to the collection before we have a showing of his work open to the community.

As you know Bobby has many, many friends in the area. Riding his bicycle, often decorated to fit the season or any upcoming holiday or event, or taking dogs for their daily walk, Bobby is beloved.

When all is ready and a flier is prepared we will host a Bobby Stirling Photographs Exhibit complete with a wine and cheese social hour.

Holy Week Calendar

Sunday, March 16 10:00 am Palm Sunday
 Sermon "Who Is This Man?"
 Lessons Matthew 21:1-11; Philippians 2:5-11

Monday, March 17 7:00 pm Session Meeting

Thursday, March 20 7:30 pm Maundy Thursday
 Remembering the Last Supper

Friday, March 21 7:30 pm Good Friday
 Service at Bellport Methodist Church

Sunday, March 23 6:00 am
 Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service
 Bellport Dock with breakfast following at
 Bellport Methodist Church

10:00 am EASTER SERVICE

Sermon "No Tomb Can Hold Him"
 Lessons Matthew 28: 1-10; Acts 10: 34-43



Dear friends of Old South Haven Church,

Today I am writing to you about a cause that is important to me and a cause I know you will want to support. I have decided to take steps in the fight against multiple sclerosis (MS) by joining the 2008 Bike MS Ride and I am asking you to join me in this important fight by sponsoring me.

Why I am Riding? In November 2007, my best friend Donna was diagnosed with MS. A beautiful Mother of two young children with her whole life of adventures ahead of her. I am so inspired by Donna as I see her fight past the challenges of everyday life. She always puts the needs of others before her own, with a most gracious and hopeful heart. As a symbol of her courage, strength and dedication to the cause, Donna will be riding beside me in the 75 mile ride. I have made a commitment to finish this quest for her and all those with MS that may not be able to.

Your support will mean so much to me and the over 400,000 Americans living with MS. Additional information on my fund-raising goal will be posted in the Gallery.

Thank you all in advance,
 Tammy Skelly
 (Daughter of Linda and Bill Scott)

Adult Study

Plans are underway to hold another four to six week Adult Study, beginning (perhaps) around the third week in April and going into May. Jim Wallis, who wrote the bestseller "God's Politics: How the Religious Right Got It Wrong and the Left Didn't Get it," has just released a follow up book titled "The Great Awakening: Reviving Faith and Politics In A Post-Religious Right America."

Buildings and Grounds

Helen Altomare

It has been quiet this winter in my department. However, spring is just around the corner and things will begin to bustle.

In the meantime, has anyone noticed the strange looking device in the gallery? It's a backflow prevention device required by Suffolk County Water Authority. It will prevent us from contaminating Suffolk's water supply if anything happens at our church.

Think Spring!

Morning Worship Assignments

Date	Greeter	Lay Leader	Coffee Hour
March-08	S. Moran	L. Majowka	L. Majowka
Mar 16/Palm Sunday	C. Kellogg	K. Tilney	K. Tilney
Mar 23/Easter	A. Wiswall	J. Deitz	R. Thomas
March-08	K. Morgan	L. Scott	P. Light
April-08	W. Scott	S. Welgoss	N. Best
April-08	C. Kellogg	A. Stevens	D. Stevens
April-08	S. Moran	L. Scott	C. Kellogg
April-08	K. Morgan	D. Jones	A. Wiswall
May-08	W. Scott	J. Neal	H. Altomare
May-08	S. Moran	F. Decker	G. Decker
May-08	C. Kellogg	K. Tilney	K. Tilney
May-08	K. Morgan	L. Majowka	L. Majowka
June-08	W. Scott	L. Scott	P. Light
June-08	S. Moran	A. Stevens	D. Stevens
June-08	C. Kellogg	J. Deitz	A. Wiswall
June-08	K. Barry	J. Barry	N. Best
June-08	K. Morgan	S. Welgoss	H. Altomare

Assignments are also posted on the church's web site:
<http://oldsouthhavenchurch.org>



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One Great Hour of Sharing

Once again we have the opportunity to participate with other Presbyterians in receiving the One Great Hours of Sharing Offering. Inserts will be placed in our Sunday bulletins for three weeks describing various projects that are underwritten by money received in this offering. In addition there will be "Moments for Mission" given in these three Services, and envelopes will be available in the pews. The Offering will be dedicated on Palm Sunday. Contributions, however, will be received through Easter Sunday.

Donations are split between three

agencies of our denomination: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (32 percent), the Presbyterian Hunger Program (36 percent) and the Self development of people (32 percent). Annual donations in 2006 exceeded \$9 million. The median donation of contributing households was \$25 and the average was around \$50.



There is a new logo for OGHs. Note not only the heart (for all giving begins in the heart) but note also the two figures in solidarity with each other in a dance of sharing, for both figures are receivers as well as givers, a lesson for all of us to appreciate.