



The CLARENDON Connection

Late December 2011 – Early January 2012

clarendonhillchurch.org

Minister: Karl Gustafson
Music Director: John Adams
Sexton: Arnie James
Church phone: 617-625-4823

Sunday Worship
9:45 – Choir Rehearsal
10:30 – Worship
11:30 – Coffee Hour

Communion is taken
the first Sunday of the
month. **Childcare**
provided: let us know.

Clarendon Hill
welcomes all people
to our church:

Young or old, gay or
straight,
Faithful or seeking,
You are welcome to
join us on our shared
journey of faith.

We are a small but
growing
congregation seeking
to serve God, our
community, and our
world.

Our resources may
be limited, but our
imaginings and
desires are not. We
are constantly
seeking ways to
serve others and to
work for a more just
world.

**The standard of God is crystal clear: "Thou
shalt not**

hate

-- *Godlovespoetry.com* collects blackout poetry made from
the Westboro Baptist's most egregious press releases.



Friends of Sabeel—North America

Voice of the Palestinian Christians

SABEEL'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2011

Envisioning a world where peace with justice reigns

The message of the angel to the shepherds was one of liberation, "Fear not, for I bring you tidings of great joy which will be for all people..." As the company of angels joined the first messenger and gave glory to God, they emphasized the gift of peace and goodwill. The only possibility for peace and goodwill is through work for justice; work that moves the world in a direction away from empire, away from war, and toward God's vision of peace and reconciliation. The birth of Jesus in Bethlehem embodies this movement.

Sabeel started the year 2011 in a way that reflected this embodied movement with its 8th international conference. Titled "Challenging Empire: God, Faithfulness, and Resistance" we gathered over 300 participants from around the world to give glory to God, and analyze the situation of empire which makes the realization of peace with justice difficult in Palestine-Israel.

We continued throughout the year to examine the concept and reality of empire through Sabeel's grassroots programs (for the community, women, clergy, and youth). As 2011 approaches its end, we offer the following Christmas message:

The Christmas narrative according to the Gospels paints a realistic picture of the historical contexts in which Jesus was born. The greatest empire the ancient world had known, the Roman Empire, was in complete control. Caesar Augustus stood at the top of the hierarchy. Herod is named as a client king, and the text mentions religious leaders who collaborate with the imperial system. This system created an environment of total domination; many were oppressed and caught up in these damaging societal structures. Others rejected the system and engaged in occasional uprisings against the Romans; while others retreated into the desert to escape oppression. Into such a milieu, Jesus was born.

The message that the Gospels record about Jesus' birth include words that ordinary people living under occupation and oppression long to hear, "Do not fear! There is good news that

will give joy to all people, a savior is born!" God has sent a liberator, and he is born in a humble setting. Indeed, liberation will neither come from the king's palace nor from the courts of religious leaders but from among the people. In addition to being a message of comfort, it is a word of invigorating challenge: a strong invitation for each person to take part in and witness to the in-breaking of the Kingdom of God.

This message brings to mind the vision of a world transformed, without war, a world of peace and security. This vision was already articulated by some of the prophets in the Old Testament, a vision of a world without violent conflict in which people change their weapons into farming tools, and instead of bloodshed, a life of peace and security emerges (see Micah 4:1-5; Isaiah 2:2-5; Psalm 46:9-12).

The message of the angels at Jesus' birth and the vision of the prophets about peace, both reflect the accumulated experience of people through the journey of history: wars, violence, and corrupt economic systems fail to achieve an enduring peace.

How long will it be until we learn the lessons of history? How many more Christmas readings of the Gospels will occur before we jump out of our pews and run with the message?

Alas, the peace of empire is achieved by the crushing of the enemy; and it does not endure. The angels were shouting about a different kind of peace. Perhaps it sounded like the shouting of the millions around the world who have taken to the streets from Tahrir Square in Cairo to New York City to Brisbane to say "Khalas! Enough is enough!"?

Though justice, peace, and security for all continue to be elusive, we live in hope and act in confidence. To be sure, peace for the state of Israel will not come through eliminating the Palestinians, denying their political rights, and stripping them of their human dignity and land. Peace will not come by building the separation wall or expanding Israeli-only settlements and bypass roads in Palestine. Peace will come when the government of Israel implements the demands of international law and shows respect for the humanity of the Palestinians.

In a gesture for peace and reconciliation, the Palestinians have recognized the state of Israel and accepted a much smaller share of historic Palestine. It is time for the government of Israel to recognize the people of Palestine and their right to sovereignty and statehood. It is then that people can sit under their vine and fig trees and not be afraid. The message of the angels at the birth of Jesus Christ will be realized and peace on earth can become a possibility.

The challenge of the Christmas message for this year is to envision a world without empire, without war, without nuclear weapons, and without destructive arms. We must envisage a different world where peace is built on justice.

Sabeel wishes all of our friends a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Sincerely, Naim Ateek Sabeel, Jerusalem 5 December 2011

What's Happening at Clarendon Hill

Guest preachers for January:

Katie Cole, a student at B.U. School of Theology, will be preaching on Sunday, January 15th.

Dr. Mark S. Burrows, Professor of the History of Christianity at Andover Newton Theological School, will be preaching on Sunday, January 22nd. He is an ordained minister of the United Christ of Christ, and he also directs the program in Worship, Theology, and Arts at Andover Newton

Annual Meeting

Please join us right after the service on Sunday, January 29th (snow date February 5th) for a potluck meal and the annual meeting. At the annual meeting we will elect officers for the coming year, hear reports from our committees and the pastor about the activities that have occurred in the past year, discuss ideas for the upcoming year, vote on the annual budget for 2012 and conduct other necessary business. Everyone is invited to attend – only members of Clarendon Hill are allowed to vote. Bring a dish to share (appetizer, main dish, side dish, dessert or beverage), enjoy some great food, and let your voice be heard!

Per Capita and Initial Envelopes

Offering envelopes for 2012 are available on the table at the back of the sanctuary. They are in numerical order. If you don't currently have offering envelopes, and would like a set, please contact Ellen (ellends@verizon.net). The per capita amount for 2012 will be announced at church and via email once that number has been determined. (That's the blue envelope in the offering envelope set.) The initial offering envelope amount (which is yellow, and helps to cover the cost of printing the envelopes) will also be calculated shortly, and announced as well.

Presbyterian Coffee Project

Orders for Equal Exchange coffee and tea are taken on the first Sunday of each month, during coffee hour, for delivery on the 2nd Sunday. Part of the proceeds goes to the hunger and self-development mission projects of the Presbyterian Church, USA.

Questions or need some coffee or tea? Contact Katherine at kath.gustavson@gmail.com

Adult Education

We are excited to announce that our winter through spring adult education classes will feature a guest speaker. Dr. Mark S. Burrows, who is Professor of Christianity at Andover Newton Theological School, will be leading us in classes looking at the writings and works of some of the poets and mystics of our tradition.

In addition, Rev. Burrows will be preaching on January 22nd, which coincides with the first class. We will be meeting once a month, from January through April, after church. Please mark your calendars, and make an effort to come to every session! More information below:

Marginal Christianity: Witness to the Gospel For and Against the Church

With Dr. Mark S. Burrows, Ph. D.

4th Sundays January – April, 2012

This course will explore the witness of four “marginal” theologians, those who voiced their obedience to God in forms that were often in conflict with established traditions as these developed over the centuries. At each session, we will sample their writings, situated in historical context, and ask what larger and deeper questions they articulated which might have enduring significance for us as citizens in a quite different world. We will begin with the writings of a radical Jew whom we know simply as Jesus of Nazareth, examining the witness of several Gnostic texts that emerged alongside the canonical Gospels. Subsequent sessions will explore a variety of what I call “marginal” voices, those whose radical articulation of what they understood it to mean to follow in the “way” of Jesus was often at odds with what became the authoritative – and “authorized” – tradition. We’ll read selections from these rebels – poets, mystics and visionaries – whose world were “chosen out of their desire,” to recall a line from the modern American poet Wallace Stevens. What abiding relevance do their desires have, set alongside ours? Join us as we explore the wisdom of these witnesses from the margins of the broad religious tradition we have come to call Christianity.

January 22: Jesus vs. Religion: Love and Power at the Margins

February 26: Hadewijch: Poet of the Paradoxes

March 25: Meister Eckhart: “One seeing, one knowledge, one love”

April 22: Julian of Norwich: The “All” of God

Got items for the letter? Stories, events, poetry, pictures?

Send them to newsletter@clarendonhillchurch.org by January 23!

And now for something *completely Different...*

A Rabbi, a Sadducee and a Pharisee went into a bar. After a few flagons of Galilee Lite, and once the talk of the current fate of their favoured sports teams - the Ephesus Eagles, the Colossians Colts and the (somewhat puzzlingly named) Nehemiah "Niners" - died down, the conversation naturally turned to religion. Being very competitive men, they started trying to outdo each other to belittle a new upstart movement surrounding a little-known prophet from Bethlehem who was enjoying some local celebrity at the time, to see who could come up with the most outrageous claim about him to put him in his place.

Translated from the original Aramaic, and allowing for a little artistic license as their speech became increasingly blurred as the evening progressed and occasionally obscured by the bleating of the passing camel traffic, this is the conversation that was overheard:

- His coming was predicted by a homeless madman with dreadlocks and a sandal fetish who ate locusts and tried to drown people in the river
 - He was born in a garden shed
 - He was born out of wedlock to a single mother who claimed she was still a virgin
 - Even the girl's boyfriend didn't know who the father was, except that it wasn't him
 - His mother claimed she had talked to aliens, which was how she found out she was pregnant
 - Even worse, she claimed she had been impregnated by an extra terrestrial
 - The first people to be told were migrant agrarian workers
 - The first people to acknowledge him were not only foreigners but practiced some kind of magic and brought inappropriate non child friendly 'gifts', including a substance not approved by the GDA
 - He would become a carpenter, and ironically, his name would be invoked by wood workers ever afterwards when their hammer missed its intended target and located the thumb or finger instead
 - He would advocate peaceful non-compliance and civil disobedience
 - He would be against the current banking system
 - He would not only advocate for the 99% but actually consort with the lowest of the low, even tax collectors and prostitutes and claim that it was in fact the 1% who will have a hard time making the grade at the celestial check-out
 - After a kangaroo trial he would eventually be executed on the order of a figurehead puppet governor put in place by the army of occupation
- Little did they know.

(Thanks for the story, Ellen!)

What happens in Bethlehem doesn't stay in Bethlehem.
-- the monks at Unvirtuous Abbey

Church Assignments

※ – Communion Sunday

DATE	Coffee Hour	Scripture	Mission	Greeter	Nursery
1/1/12※	Milanesi/ Kumpa	R. Allen	P. Beran	B. Pickens	V. Donovan
1/8/12	Augers	S. Chambers	L. Cavano	C. Milanesi	Schemer- horn
1/15/12	E. Schemer- horn	C. Milanesi	J. Auger	R. Allen	S. Donovan
1/22/12	Donovan	H. Rantisi	M. Jirmanus	J. Auger	K. Gustafson
1/29/12	POTLUCK	B. Pickens	R. Liberace	V. Donovan	R. Allen
2/5/12※	Pickens	L. Cavano	C. Milanesi	Schemer- horn	V. Donovan
2/12/12	Arce/Fish	W. Chambers	R. Allen	J. Kumpa	Schemer- horn
2/19/12	Allen/ Rhoads	S. Donovan	Schemer- horn	R. Liberace	S. Donovan
2/26/12	Herzigs	P. Beran	S. Donovan	L. Cavano	K. Gustafson
3/4/12※	Camelio/ Braga	M. Jirmanus	B. Pickens	B. Pickens	R. Allen
3/11/12	Santiagos	P. Auger	J. Kumpa	C. Milanesi	V. Donovan
3/18/12	Gustson/ Cavano	E. Schemer- horn	A. Camelio	R. Allen	Schemer- horn
3/25/12	Milanesi/ Kumpa	D. Santiago	R. Winchester	J. Auger	S. Donovan

CHURCH ASSIGNMENTS

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO FILL YOUR COMMITMENT, PLEASE DO YOUR BEST TO SWITCH WITH SOMEONE. TO BE ADDED TO THIS LIST, PLEASE CONTACT ELLEN SCHEMERHORN (ELLEND@VERIZON.NET) OR VAL DONOVAN (MABEL312@AOL.COM).

Clarendon Hill Coffee Hour Instructions

1. Coffee/Tea – please prepare 1 pot of caffeinated coffee and one pot of decaf. You may set the coffee pots up before the service, or leave before the end of the service to prepare them. It's best to leave a little before the end of the service to turn the pots on so the coffee is ready when folks come downstairs. The coffee is in the door of the freezer. The coffee filters are on the counter behind where the coffee pots are located. $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup of coffee should go in each filter. There are one cup measures, either on the counter, or in the kitchen cabinets. Please plug one coffee pot in to the wall plug, and the extension cord in to the other wall plug. Plug the second coffee pot in to the extension cord. Make sure you turn the extension cord to "On" by flipping the switch. The tea pot is usually on the table on opposite side of the room from the coffee pot. Fill it with fresh water, and plug it in. (Plug is on the floor baseboard.) Turn it on. Please bring cream, half and half and/or milk for the coffee. These can be placed on the tray with the sugar. Make sure there are clean spoons for folks to use to stir in their sugar and/or dairy product.
2. Please bring some type of cold beverage for those who may not want coffee or tea. Any kind of fruit juice or just water is fine. (We tend to stay away from soda.) The cups for cold beverages are usually in the first glass fronted cupboard in the kitchen.
3. Place plates and the container with plastic ware on the table. Extra plates, cups, and plastic ware are in the first cupboard underneath the front counter.
4. Feel free to bring whatever you like for coffee hour. Please be aware that we have church members with SEVERE allergies to nuts, so please do not bring anything with nuts. (If you have to bring something with nuts, please mark it.) You may make/bake things to bring or buy them. If you buy items, please note that those with severe nut allergies will check the labels to be sure that they are safe to consume. If you make them, it's helpful to list the ingredients. When purchasing things, please note that even if they do not contain nuts, they may be made in a facility that processes nuts. Our members with nut allergies cannot eat those products that are made in facilities that process nuts. A few things that are nut safe (although always check the labels, as sometimes the ingredients used to make items change): Smart Food, Pirate Booty, Goldfish (Pepperidge Farm.) Sweets are trickier, as most aren't safe, but if you find one, please bring it! Some things that are always popular: hummus and pita (bread or crackers), fruit, bagels and cream cheese, cheese and crackers, salsa and corn chips, veggies and dip, cookies, pastries, doughnuts, sweet/quick bread.
5. After coffee hour is over with, please wash the coffee cups, coffee maker items and any other items that have been used (spoons, plates, cutting boards, knives, etc.). Dry them, and put them away. (Dish towels should be on the front counter.) Please wipe off the counters (both in the kitchen and where the coffee pots, cups and cold beverages are) and wipe down the plastic tablecloths on the food tables. Please sweep the area around the food tables.
6. If you have any questions about anything, feel free to ask!

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www.clarendonhillchurch.org