



The Clarendon Connection

News of Clarendon Hill Presbyterian Church April 2007

Sunday Schedule

Choir rehearsal **9:45 a.m.**

Worship **10:30 a.m.**

Christian Education (for children) **10:45 a.m.**

Refreshments and fellowship **11:30 a.m.**

Christian Education (for adults) **12:00 p.m.**

(please see schedule on page 4)

Communion will be celebrated on April 1st.

April Calendar

Happy Birthday, Rose Selavy! runs at the Nave Gallery, March 30th through April 15th (for more info, see page 4)

Sunday, April 1st, Palm Sunday Parade, 9:00 a.m. begins at the College Avenue side of Powderhouse Park, and ends at Davis Square with prayers for the community

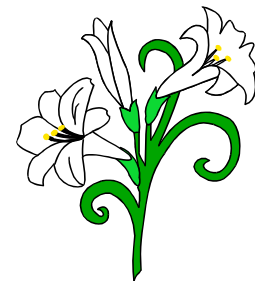
We will collect the One Great Hour of Sharing offering during the service on Sunday, April 1st.

Orders for Equal Exchange coffee, tea and cocoa will be taken at church on April 1st (for more info, see page 2)

Adult Ed., after the service on April 1st (for more info, see page 4)

There will be a joint meeting for Session and Deacons on Wednesday, April 4th at 7:30 p.m.

Maundy Thursday worship service, on Thursday, April 5th at 7:00 p.m. (for more info, see page 5)



Sunday, April 8th: Easter worship service at 6:00 a.m., on the top of the hill in Powderhouse Park, right by the stone structure; OUR service at 10:30 a.m. at the church

Thursday, April 12th, Peace, Justice and Mission committee meets at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 14th – Step It Up – Somerville rally in Davis Square (for more info, see page 6)

Yoga, after the service on April 15th (for more info, see page 6)

Saturday, April 21st, Night on the Town – save the date and watch for more details

On Sunday, April 22nd, Kristy Graf will be preaching. There will be a potluck after the service to celebrate Earth Day.

Yoga, after the service on April 22nd (for more info, see page 6)

Book group meets on Wednesday, April 25th, at 7:00 p.m. to discuss "Walking on Water: Reflections on Art and Faith" by Madeleine L'Engle (for more info, see page 8)

'The Green Line' at The Nave Gallery runs from Friday, April 27th through Sunday, May 27th. The opening reception will be on Friday, April 27th from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. (for more info, see page 4)

Saturday, April 28th 2007, 8:00 p.m.: The Bill Horvitz Band - Jazz at The Nave Gallery (for more info, see page 4)

Adult Ed., after the service on April 29^h (for more info, see page 4)

Sunday, April 29th at 7:00 p.m., Sunday Night Forum. TENTATIVE: We will be showing the documentary about climate change, "An Inconvenient Truth", followed by a question and answer session. (for more info, see page 8)

COMING: May 5th and 6th the Nave Gallery hosts SOS (Somerville Open Studios). We will be hosting the Art Café in the basement. Help needed! (for more info, see page 9)

Sunday, May 6th – Walk for Hunger (for more info, see page 9)

The Presbyterian Coffee Project

Orders will be taken for Equal Exchange COFFEE (drip or whole bean) and TEA (English Breakfast, Earl Grey or Green), cocoa mix, baking cocoa, and chocolate bars at church on April 1st. You can send orders to Katherine no later, than April 1st by phone (617-628-6716) or email (kgkg@gis.net).

Katherine has coffee, tea, cocoa mix, baking cocoa and some chocolate bars on hand for anyone needing some before the delivery date. We will be adding some new products (see below) and there will be some rooibos tea to try on the 1st. Katherine also has lots of mini chocolate bars in case you are looking for a source of Easter goodies. Remember that for

all products we purchase through the Presbyterian Coffee project, Equal Exchange makes a contribution to the Presbyterian Hunger Program.

NEW THIS MONTH: ORGANIC, DRIED, SWEETENED CRANBERRIES AND ORGANIC ROOIBOS TEA

Bringing Fair Trade Home

With the continuing loss of family farms eroding rural communities, small farmers in the US face challenges that are similar in many ways to those of farmers in the developing world. Farmers around the world are caught between declining prices for their products, the consolidation of markets and distribution, and tightening control over inputs such as seed. For 20 years, Equal Exchange had been building Fair Trade by partnering with small farmer co-ops in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Now we are extending our model to family farmers, farm workers, and farmer co-operatives here in North America. With your help, we're Bringing Fair Trade Home.

Cranberries

Whole, organic juicy berries are sliced, infused with organic sugar, and then slowly kiln-dried to preserve every last bit of flavor. The tartness of the cranberries is offset but not overpowered by sweetness. High in antioxidants, cranberries are also known for their anti-bacterial properties. Delicious by themselves, dried cranberries are also a great alternative to raisins in cookies and many other recipes, or added to a salad. Our very first cranberries were grown with care by the Mann family on their small farm in southeastern Massachusetts.

Monika and Keith Mann have been growing cranberries organically since shortly after they got married. In 1994 they began leasing 3 acres of cranberry bogs from Keith's father, a lifelong grower. One year they discovered antique equipment in a small processing facility on the property, and brought it back into use for sorting fresh cranberries. Currently the Manns have 27 acres in organic production, growing varieties including Early Black and Howes which are native to Massachusetts, as well as Stevens, a hybrid. Monika and Keith have one year-round employee, who has been on the farm longer than Monika, and a team of seasonal employees in the fall, all of whom are provided with housing. In addition to routine care of the farm, and long hours during the harvest season, Monika takes care of organic sales and marketing, and Keith is an inventor, focused on improving efficiency in every aspect of the farm operation. The Manns are proud of their work and also enjoy the flexibility it allows them to be with their young daughter. "We're organic heart and soul," they say.

Rooibos Tea

This tea has a fruity character with vanilla overtones. Rooibos is naturally caffeine-free and contains antioxidants which are known to promote good health. This organic rooibos comes from the small-scale farmers of the Wupperthal Tea Association in the Cederberg region of South Africa.

The Wupperthal Tea Association is a democratically organized group of small-scale farmers who have grown rooibos in South Africa for generations. Their land is situated to the east of the Cederberg Mountains in an area that is among the driest rooibos growing

regions, resulting in both lower production and higher quality. Pushed off their ancestral lands during the colonial and apartheid eras to make way for large-scale white-owned plantations, Fair Trade offers hope and a chance for these small-scale farmers to reach markets formerly accessible only to plantations. The rooibos is processed and packed by Fair Packers, a small-farmer initiative partly controlled by the Wupperthal Tea Association. "Our past connects us to the crop and now through Fair Trade to the possibilities of our future – we can live free and proud as a family in Wupperthal," said, Barend Salomo, a rooibos farmer and Wupperthal Chairperson.

What is EQUAL EXCHANGE? In 1991, Equal Exchange became the first U.S. company to adopt international fair trade standards as guiding principles on 100% of their products. By working with democratic farmer cooperatives around the world and paying a fair price, Equal Exchange supports efforts to improve local communities, putting more control and greater income in the hands of impoverished, small-scale farmers in developing nations. We also serve freshly made Equal Exchange coffee at Clarendon Hill's coffee hours!

Adult Education

Come and join our adult education group, which meets after coffee hour (around 12:00 noon). We began our group in November, with a 4 week Advent study of scriptures relating to the arrival of Jesus. We are now meeting to study scriptures related to Lent or other topics that members are interested in. During April, we will be meeting on 2 Sundays, April 1st and April 29th. We welcome all who are interested in exploring the scriptures and sharing their faith journey in a warm and welcoming environment.

The Nave Gallery

Happy Birthday, Rose Sélavy! is a group exhibition paying tribute to Marcel Duchamp. It runs from March 30th to April 15th. The Opening Reception is Friday, March 30th from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

The Nave Gallery is throwing an impromptu birthday party for Rose Sélavy. A celebration of one of the great creative minds of the 20th century art, Happy Birthday, Rose Sélavy is an exhibition of sculpture, installation, assemblage and video. The nine participating artists credit Rose, her alter-ego Marcel Duchamp and other Dadists for their inspiration.

American painter, Ed Ruscha said, "If Marcel Duchamp hadn't come along, we would have needed to invent him...He discovered common objects and showed you could make art of them...He played with materials that were taboo to other artists at the time; defying convention was one of his greatest accomplishments."

The show is an homage to Duchamp's playful and subversive attitude. It includes both artists whose work reveals a "classical" interpretation of Dada as well as artists whose use of new media and installation environs bring this early 20th century art movement into the 21st century. Happy Birthday, Rose Sélavy! celebrates Duchamp's infamous Ready Mades, the snow shovel, the urinal, the bicycle wheel, etc. - that mocked the very concept of artistic creation as well as the spirit that first coined them.

Expect the unexpected, come ready to join in the celebration!

Exhibit highlights:

Lauren O'Neal's installation, Nice Socks, combines chairs, lights, socks and coats, to create characters possessing disorderly inner lives and displaying the absurd, the stuttering, and the silly.

Although James Zall's wall reliefs are refined, and aesthetically pleasing they evoke a feeling of fun and games (including his favorite, chess), as well as nonconformity in society and the art world.

Charlotte Kaplan's Mona Lisa Scrabble and Melissa Glick's Opposition and Sister Squares are Reconciled both use pieces from actual board games.

Kelly Kleinschrodt's video Bubbles uses time and motion to create a encapsulated movement that slyly captures the viewer's attention.

Anne Corrsin's "Hoi Polloi" touches on the issue of conformity in society (and the art world). It is also meant to be lighthearted.

Participating artists are Susan Berstler, Anne Corrsin, Claudia Drake, Melissa Glick, Paul Gray, Charlotte Kaplan, Kelly Kleinschrodt, Lauren O'Neal and James Zall.

Please note the March 30th opening reception will be followed by a performance of "Children's Music, Volume II" with Ben Schwendener on piano, Blake Newman on bass and Steve Chaggaris on drums. The concert begins at 8:00 p.m. Tickets are \$10.00.

'The Green Line' at The Nave Gallery, from Friday, April 27th through Sunday, May 27th. The opening reception will be on Friday, April 27th from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

The Green Line T service will be extended past Lechmere Station, through the Brickbottom District, Union Square and out to Tufts. In addition to connecting two ends of the city, it will connect the two non-profit Somerville gallery spaces: Brickbottom Gallery and The Nave Gallery. To celebrate this long awaited project, both spaces are presenting exhibitions related to the T expansion.

Artists are invited to submit work related to the subject, which can be expanded to include urban living, transportation, quality of life, public spaces – what connections do you make? Brickbottom will be planning an exhibition along the same (Green) lines. Artists are encouraged to propose work that would span the two sites in some way or to exhibit work that documents the space between. The two galleries will have different exhibition schedules that will intersect through Somerville Open Studios weekend, May 5th and 6th.

Saturday, April 28th 2007, 8:00 p.m.: The Bill Horvitz Band - Jazz at The Nave Gallery

Original jazz featuring Steve Adams, sax/flute, Harris Eisenstadt, drums, Bill Horvitz, guitar. Exciting and unique music that combines jazz, blues, rock, funk, classical, and more. The band moves with fluid grace between tight compositions and improvised solo and ensemble work, communicating with a telepathic rapport.

To see a schedule of events, which is updated often, please look at the website:
www.artsomerville.org/upcoming.html

The Nave Gallery is a project of ARTSomerville in collaboration with the Clarendon Hill Presbyterian Church. Run and staffed completely by volunteers, the Nave provides an important exhibition space for both local and regional artists.

Maundy Thursday Service

On Thursday, April 5th, please join us for a Maundy Thursday service at 7:00 p.m. at the church. Come to hear again the story of Jesus and the apostles celebrating Passover, and the beginning of the celebration of Communion, as Jesus foretells what will happen to him on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Easter Flowers

This year, we are asking members of our community to bring flowers of their choosing to church on Easter Sunday. We would encourage you to bring hyacinths, daffodils, tulips or other types of flowers as we have someone in the community who is allergic to lilies. In past years, we have had a sheet listing the flowers if they are a memorial or in honor of someone, and we will do that this year also. Please contact Val Donovan (mabel312@aol.com) to let her know what you would like on the memorial sheet. If you are not able to bring flowers, but would like to have flowers at the church, please contact Val also.

Introduction to Yoga

Come join our small, half-hour class during coffee hour (12:00 noon, on Sunday, April 15th and Sunday, March 22nd) to practice mindful breathing and gentle yoga postures. Great for stress release, improved flexibility and strength. If interested, please email Liz at cavatorta1@hotmail.com for more info.

Step It Up Somerville!

What are YOU doing to fight climate change? Join members of Clarendon Hill at the church at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 14th. We will walk together to Davis Square to join the rally beginning at 11:00 a.m.

Come to the Davis Square Rally on April 14th! Hosted by Somerville's own Jimmy Tingle! (www.jimmytingle.com)

Be there at 12 noon for an aerial group photo to send our message to Congress.

What is Step It Up? Join millions of Americans across the country on Saturday April 14th to ask Congress to 'Step It Up' and reduce U.S. carbon emissions 80% by 2050. Why 80% by 2050?

Our request of Congress is simple: that they put America on a course to cut carbon emissions 80% by the middle of the century.

This sounds like a lot-but in fact, it's less than a two percent reduction a year. It won't be easy: it will take commitment and resources to switch from fossil fuels to new sources of energy. But it needs to be done: the latest science tells us that temperatures are

increasing faster than expected, and the results are showing up in melting ice caps, intensifying storms, and rising sea levels. America's foremost climatologist, NASA scientist James Hansen, has said that we have just a few years to start reducing carbon emissions, and he's endorsed our goal of 80% by 2050. That won't prevent global warming-it's already too late for that-but it may be enough to stave off the most catastrophic effects.

While few experts have said explicitly "we need to reduce carbon emissions 80% by 2050," we're sticking to this message. Here's why: Scientists have resisted in nearly every case prescribing policy because they don't want to enter the political realm. That's why the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and others won't suggest policy, but rather leave it up to legislators to do the dirty work. That said, Jim Hansen, the Stern Report, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), a number of European countries, the State of California and others (including the new USCAP business-environmental partnership) have either suggested or explicitly referred to 80% carbon cuts by 2050 as a solution commensurate to the scale of the problem.

And it's possible. The cost of renewable energy is falling fast. New conservation technologies, like hybrid cars, are becoming more available. Many Americans are starting to switch already, but only leadership from Washington can allow this transformation to happen fast enough. And if we begin to get our house in order, then we can play some role in helping China and India steer away from cataclysm as well.

There are no guarantees we'll succeed. But if we act ambitiously, we have reason to hope.

April 14th events:

- * 11:00 a.m. –1:00 p.m.- family fun and informational tables
- * 11:30 a.m. - live music!
- * 12 noon - rally photo
- * 1:00 p.m. - travel to the Boston Rally: One Earth One Climate

If it rains on the 14th, the Somerville rally will be held at Clarendon Hill Church!

One Earth, One Climate Rally Step It Up - Boston

Boston Common at the Parkman Banstand, from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 14th

Step It Up 2007 is a national convergence of people from all walks of life who are committed to safeguarding our communities by addressing the global climate crisis. Founded by author and environmental activist Bill McKibben, Step It Up seeks to galvanize the American public around the issue of climate change by organizing hundreds of rallies across the nation on Saturday, April 14, 2007.

To highlight the threat posed by the global climate crisis, Step It Up rallies will be held in many of America's most iconic places: on the levees in New Orleans, on top of the melting glaciers on Mt. Rainier, even underwater on the endangered coral reefs off Key West. The goal of these events is to ask Congress to pass legislation reducing greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent by 2050.

As part of Step It Up 2007, residents of Boston and surrounding communities are organizing a variety of local events—from Lexington to Hull—culminating in the One Earth, One Climate Rally on Boston Common.

Step It Up - Boston is organizing the One Earth, One Climate Rally to show that Americans are ready to “step up” to the challenge facing our global climate, to call for urgent action from our community leaders, and to send a message of hope and inspiration to the next generation.

As part of the rally, children and adults will form a human chain across Boston Common to mark what may become Boston's future waterfront, if polar and glacial melting continues unchecked. Artwork by children and adults will create a colorful testament to our values and dedication.

The rally will also feature music by acclaimed singer/songwriter Chad Hollister. As part of the performance, students will join him on stage to sing an original song composed for the occasion, which will be recorded for release on iTunes.

If you have questions, would like additional information or if you are interested in helping to organize the event in Davis Square on the 14th, please contact Kristy Graf (kgraf13@gmail.com).

Please join Clarendon Hill on April 14th!

Book Group

Book Group will meet on Wednesday, April 25th at 7:00 p.m. to discuss "Walking on Water: Reflections on Art and Faith" by Madeleine L'Engle. All are welcome to attend!

Sunday Night Forum

For our second Sunday night forum, we hope to be screening the Oscar winning documentary “An Inconvenient Truth.” After the movie there will be a moderated discussion. Below is information about the film. We hope to see you at the screening!

Humanity is sitting on a ticking time bomb. If the vast majority of the world's scientists are right, we have just ten years to avert a major catastrophe that could send our entire planet into a tail-spin of epic destruction involving extreme weather, floods, droughts, epidemics and killer heat waves beyond anything we have ever experienced.

If that sounds like a recipe for serious gloom and doom -- think again. From director Davis Guggenheim comes the Sundance Film Festival hit, AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH, which offers a passionate and inspirational look at one man's fervent crusade to halt global warming's deadly progress in its tracks by exposing the myths and misconceptions that surround it. That man is former Vice President Al Gore, who, in the wake of defeat in the 2000 election, re-set the course of his life to focus on a last-ditch, all-out effort to help save the planet from irrevocable change. In this eye-opening and poignant portrait of Gore and his "traveling global warming show," Gore also proves himself to be one of the most misunderstood characters in modern American public life. Here he is seen as never before in the media - funny, engaging, open and downright on fire about getting

the surprisingly stirring truth about what he calls our "planetary emergency" out to ordinary citizens before it's too late.

With 2005, the worst storm season ever experienced in America just behind us, it seems we may be reaching a tipping point - and Gore pulls no punches in explaining the dire situation. Interspersed with the bracing facts and future predictions is the story of Gore's personal journey: from an idealistic college student who first saw a massive environmental crisis looming; to a young Senator facing a harrowing family tragedy that altered his perspective, to the man who almost became President but instead returned to the most important cause of his life - convinced that there is still time to make a difference.

With wit, smarts and hope, AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH ultimately brings home Gore's persuasive argument that we can no longer afford to view global warming as a political issue - rather, it is the biggest moral challenges facing our global civilization.

We need updates!

Just a reminder to folks to be in touch with Sarah Donovan for an update if you have a change of address, cellphone number, home or work phone number , or e-mail address as she is compiling a parish list to be available to all who want it.

Christian Education

We are still looking for a volunteer or volunteers (you can sign up with someone else to share the teaching) for June; if you are interested and/or would like more information, please speak with Karl.

Request for Help

On April 1st, Katherine Gustafson will have a sign up sheet, looking for volunteers to help out with the Art Café to be held in the church basement during Somerville Open Studios on May 5th and 6th (Saturday and Sunday) from noon – 5:00 p.m. We will be looking for baked good and dollar donations to purchase supplies for finger rolls, fillings and beverages. There will also be a sign up sheet for helping out. Please consider giving us a couple of hours of your time on either Saturday or Sunday. It really helps to have a number of volunteers so that the work doesn't fall on just a few. This will be fundraiser for our building projects, particularly working toward a handicapped accessible restroom.

Walk for Hunger

The Walk for Hunger will take place on Sunday, May 6th. For the past several years Clarendon Hill has put together a team to walk and raise money . If you are interested in coordinating a team from Clarendon Hill, or if you are interested in walking, we need you! Please contact Ellen for more info (ellends@verizon.net).

The many forms of fundamentalism

This op-ed appeared in [The Boston Globe](#) on Monday, March 19th, and was written by James Carroll.

Nearly a decade and a half ago, this condemnation of fundamentalism was issued: “The fundamentalist approach is dangerous, for it is attractive to people who look to the Bible for ready answers to the problems of life...instead of telling them that the Bible does not necessarily contain an immediate answer to each and every problem. ...Fundamentalism actually invites people to a kind of intellectual suicide. It injects into life a false certitude, for it unwittingly confuses the divine substance of the biblical message with what are in fact its human limitations.” This robust denunciation came for the Vatican, in a 1993 document entitled “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church.”

The phenomenon of “fundamentalism” has made an extraordinary impact on the world. But what is it? The scholar Gabriel A. Almond defines fundamentalism as “religious militance by which self-styled ‘true-believers’ attempt to arrest the erosion of religious identity, fortify the borders of the religious community, and create viable alternatives to secular institutions and behaviors.” Some fundamentalists pursue openly political agendas (Northern Ireland, Israel, Iran). Some are apolitical (Latin American Pentecostalism). In war zones (Sudan, Afghanistan, Palestine, Sri Lanka), fundamentalism is energizing conflict. Most notably, the warring groups in Iraq have jelled around fundamentalist religion.

These varied manifestations resist being defined with one word, which is why it is better, as Almond suggest, to speak of “fundamentalisms.” But they all have something in common, and as the Vatican critique of biblical fundamentalism suggest, it is dangerous. The impulse may begin with good intentions, the wish to affirm basic values and sources of meaning that seemed threatened. The term was born when conservative Protestants in early-20th-century America committed themselves to defend the five “fundamentals” of their faith – the inerrancy of the Bible, virgin birth and deity of Jesus, doctrine of atonement, bodily resurrection of Jesus and his imminent return. That movement was a rejection, especially, of the historical-critical mode of biblical interpretation, and of Darwinian science. These characteristics still animate Protestant fundamentalism.

But all fundamentalisms, rejecting a secular claim to have replaced the sacred as chief source of meaning, are skeptical of Enlightenment values, even as the Enlightenment project has begun to criticize itself. But now “old time religion” of whatever stripe faces a plethora of new threats: new technologies, globalization, the market economy, rampant individualism, diversity, pluralism, mobility – all that makes for 21st-century life. Fundamentalisms will especially thrive wherever there is violent conflict, and wherever there is stark poverty, simply because these religiously absolute movements promise meaning where there is no meaning. For all these reasons, fundamentalisms are everywhere.

Even in contemporary Roman Catholicism, with whose condemnation of fundamentalism we began. Catholic fundamentalists are more likely to be called “traditionalists,” and today the Vatican is their sponsor. Instead of reading the Bible uncritically, in search of “ready answers to the problems of life,” they read papal statements that way, finding in the encyclicals the “false certitude” that the Vatican warms biblical literalists against. The most recent case in point is Pope Benedict’s “Apostolic Exhortation”, issued last week. What begins as a contemplative appreciation of the

Eucharist ends up as a manifesto designed to keep many Catholics from receiving Communion at Mass. The ticket to Communion is an uncritical acceptance of the what the pope calls, in a striking echo, “fundamental values,” which include defense of human life “from conception to natural death.” The key declaration is that “these values are no negotiable.”

But culture consists precisely in negotiation of values, and change in how values are understood is part of life. Moral reasoning is not mere obedience, but lively interaction among principles, situations, and the “human limitations” referred to in the 1993 Vatican statement. Take “conception.” The great Thomas Aquinas depended on 13th-century notions of biology, and did not believe that human life began at conception. Negotiation followed. Take “natural death.” Disagreements over its meaning (including among Catholic bishops) were made vivid not long ago in the case of Terri Schiavo. Negotiations followed. The pope affirms universal and unchanging “values grounded in human nature,” as if human nature is fixed, instead of evolving. One detects here, too, a suspicion of Darwin, and invitations to “intellectual suicide.”

The various fundamentalisms are all concerned with “fortifying borders,” and that is a purpose of today’s Vatican. The pope’s exhortation concludes by referring to Catholics as the “flock” entrusted to bishops, shepherds minding the fence. But fundamentalisms fail when religious people decline to think of themselves as sheep.

“Faith at the Edge of Chaos”

This sermon was preached by Rev. Gustafson on Sunday, March 18th.

“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” says our text for today.

New creation. The old has gone away. Everything is new. Exclamation point and hallelujah! What wouldn’t I like better than for everything in my life and in the world to all be made brand new and blissfully good. There are days when I desperately wish that I could be a different person, that I wouldn’t do all the things I do that are wrong; that I wouldn’t have to live with chronic depression; that I would be healthier in spirit, mind, and body so that I could really be the person and makes me and everyone around me happier.

There are days and days when I am so pained about wars and oppression and racism and hypocrisy and the ease with which those with no moral integrity can justify their action and be believed; when I am so pained by the disregard for truth, for justice, for simple fair and humane treatment of people; when I see young children violently separated from their mothers and the smug faces of those who justify it by invoking the need to enforce laws: there are so many days when the hurts of the world overwhelm me that I desperately wish it could all be wiped away and life for everyone would be made new and good.

So I feel myself lifted to heights of joy and hope when I hear our verse for the day, and others like it in the scriptures. If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away, everything had become new! How incredibly wonderful that is. A huge rush of good feeling comes over me when I hear that verse and I am swept up in happiness.

But then it stops, this rush of happiness, and questions take its place. Questions like "What does this new creation look like?" "What is it really?" "What was so wrong with the old one, the one God made in the first place, that it needs to be thrown away and replaced with a new model?" "Why can't it just be repaired?" which seems to be much easier to accomplish. And the question I want to take a shot at today: "How does this new creation happen How can we change so radically that I can become a new and better person, and the world can become a new and better place for everyone?"

Is it really just a matter of saying that I believe that Jesus is my Lord and Savior and then believe that with Jesus in my heart I will be happy, healthy, wise in all things? That I am no longer the person I was five minutes before I came to faith? Many believe that is true. But as much as I wish it could be true, I can not believe that it is so simple. God is too subtle and insightful for that. You and I, and the whole created universe, are too complex for that as well. It's not in the nature of God or the world to allow for such simplistic and wishful thinking.

The way of change, the way of creativity, the way to live into becoming a new creation, is as possible as it is promised, but it is a way fraught with risk and frequently uncontrollable and unpredictable outcomes. It requires profound faith: faith in the creative power of God, faith in the creative energies God has placed in the world, and faith in ourselves.

To become a new creation requires profound faith, not simplistic faith. It requires that we really believe that God is the creator and the source of all creativity, and really believe that we and the world are co-creators with God, and not just passive entities in either a mechanistic or magical order where God intervenes magically at our request, or has ordered things that it runs by a set plan so preordained and predictable that God can be absent most of the time.

Wondering about the new creation proclaimed in scripture leads us to wonder about the nature of change and creativity. As I was wondering about all of this in preparation for my sermonizing this morning, I came across an intriguing phrase from the world of science, a theory called "chaos theory" or "complexity theory", or "non-linear" process. And I apologize to those of you in the sciences for my vast ignorance of the workings of this theory. But here's the phrase that caught my theological eye: **"life at the edge of chaos"**. This summarizes the general theory that everything exists on the border between order and chaos. The theory says that everything is in constant change, that the world is much more a process than a static object. It says that there is great creativity happening at the border between whatever the existing order is at the moment and the chaos of what is always in the process of becoming; the border is always crumbling. In addition, this theory says that whatever new creation arises out of this interface is almost impossible to predict or explain because much of what happens is influenced more by randomness and spontaneity than predictable "laws of nature".

This theory has shaken many in the sciences because much in science has been about looking for the underlying rules that make things happen, rules that can be explained, and used to make reliable predictions about the way things will always work. Chaos theory seems to say that that approach can only take us to the edge of what is orderly, but can't go

beyond that to help us understand what the deeper processes are that drive change, evolution, creativity and surprise or even explain something as seemingly simple as the shape of clouds.

What this stimulates in me is a notion that the life of faith is about living on that border between order and chaos, that the new creation we get so excited about can only begin to be possible if we live on that frightening but fascination edge of chaos. So much of our received belief systems and our understanding of faith has been about finding and then maintaining stability, security, predictability, orderliness for our lives, and believing that God is the one who wants that for us and will guarantee that it happens if we just believe. **That whole kind of faith is meant to keep chaos away, and so is antithetical to any real desire for a new creation, or any real willingness to participate in a process of creativity or change.** If we want faith that protects us from chaos then we will never get near anything as radical as a new creation. We'll continue to talk about it and even wish for it, but we'll never get anywhere close to it in reality. **New Creation will always be only a dream and wishful thinking until such a time as we leave the comfort of knowing God only as protector and defender of orderliness and come to know God as the Creator who call us out of our security to live on the border between order and chaos where new creation is happening all the time.**

New creation of any kind will never happen unless we want it enough to risk the edge of chaos. New creation can never happen without upheaval or struggle and we'll never really want to reach for it until our life is brought to the brink of such pain that we'll literally "try anything". Those who have experienced some kind of being made new know that they had little idea about what their new life was going to be beforehand, and they also know that they had to go through a long time of radical unsettledness, turbulence, before they came to their new being. Anyone who has ever had a major illness knows what that's all about, and the same is true for anyone who has been through psychotherapy, or any kind of chosen or unchosen situation where they have seen the edge of chaos and didn't run away from it. Major change in society, in culture, in politics almost always come after a time of great conflict, something we see everyday in our own historical moment.

New creation happens on the edge of order and chaos, not unlike, perhaps what the front edge of a glacier looks like as it breaks up and falls into the ocean. New creation brings risk, danger, and it requires effort, courage, and most all, a profound faith in God and the processes of creativity and change into which the Spirit of God breathes constant vitality.

To be Christian, to be "in Christ", means that we choose to live on the border between order and chaos. It means that we look with great expectation and hope into the turbulence we know is ahead of us. It means that we are willing to let go of our ordered security, because that order has become stagnant and lifeless. It means that we know that God is with us in the chaos, shaping, experimenting, constantly creating something new so that the world might come alive again and again.

"In Christ there is a new creation" mean to me that I want to be faithfully caught up in God's creativity. God needs my participation in the process of change. God asks me to

trust the Spirit enough so that I will take the risks and not turn away in fear or hopelessness. God knows how desperately I wish to be a more complete and joyful “me”. God knows how I despair over the world and wish for it to be transformed into goodness and beauty for everyone. But rather than just telling me to believe that God is the master mechanic or asking me to say a few magic words, God invites me to live at the farthest edges of my ordered life and reach into the chaos that I am too afraid to look at.

God says to me: “If you want to be a new creation, you have to have faith enough to live at the edge of chaos.”

Easter for the Outcasts

From SoJo mail, March 26, 2007 and written by Becky Garrison

As expected, I get a lot of Christian press releases around Christmas and Easter. Most of the material gets circular filed under “been there, done that;” “would love to attend, but I have too many other Christian commitments;” or “Christ died and rose for THIS?” But this year, I got a press release titled “Church, Artists and Sex Workers plan an Experiential Easter Service,” that piqued my curiosity.

Transmission, an underground Manhattan church, is working with sex workers and artists to celebrate Mary Magdalene's role in the gospel resurrection story, her personal relationship with Jesus, her witness on behalf of the risen Christ, and contemporary sex worker issues. They chose Mary Magdalene because Christ appeared to her before anyone else and entrusted her with the news of his resurrection although the other apostles didn't believe her (Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-11, Luke 24:1-10; and John 20:1-18).

While some Christians call Mary Magdalene a prostitute, or say she was the woman caught in the act of adultery (John 8:3-11), a careful reading will reveal these are later interpretations of the text as the institutionalized church marginalized her and concocted stories of her being a prostitute. Rather than give this story a gnostic update, Transmission appears to be going back to the Bible basics to explore, on Easter Sunday, the significant role this allegedly fallen woman played in helping to spread the gospel.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus surrounded himself with those society had rejected as outcasts and undesirables. “In my experience,” says Transmission co-founder Bowie Snodgrass, “listening to sex workers tell their stories can blow the lids off morally-loaded religious debates about sex and economics, revealing deep human truths, lives, complexities, and questions.” What does it mean to have a service that welcomes all but makes an effort to target those whom society has shunned as unclean and undesirable?

Jesus welcomed all into his kingdom, teaching us that we are all equal in God's eyes, and as such we are equally worthy of being loved. According to Transmission's Web site, “All are welcome regardless of age, gender, profession, or the number of times they've been born.”

The venue for this service is Club Avalon, formerly known as the notorious New York nightclub Limelight. Originally, this gothic revival structure was built as Holy Communion Episcopal Church by William Augustus Muhlenberg, who later instituted a radical ministry to help brothel workers and abandoned mistresses start new lives. He

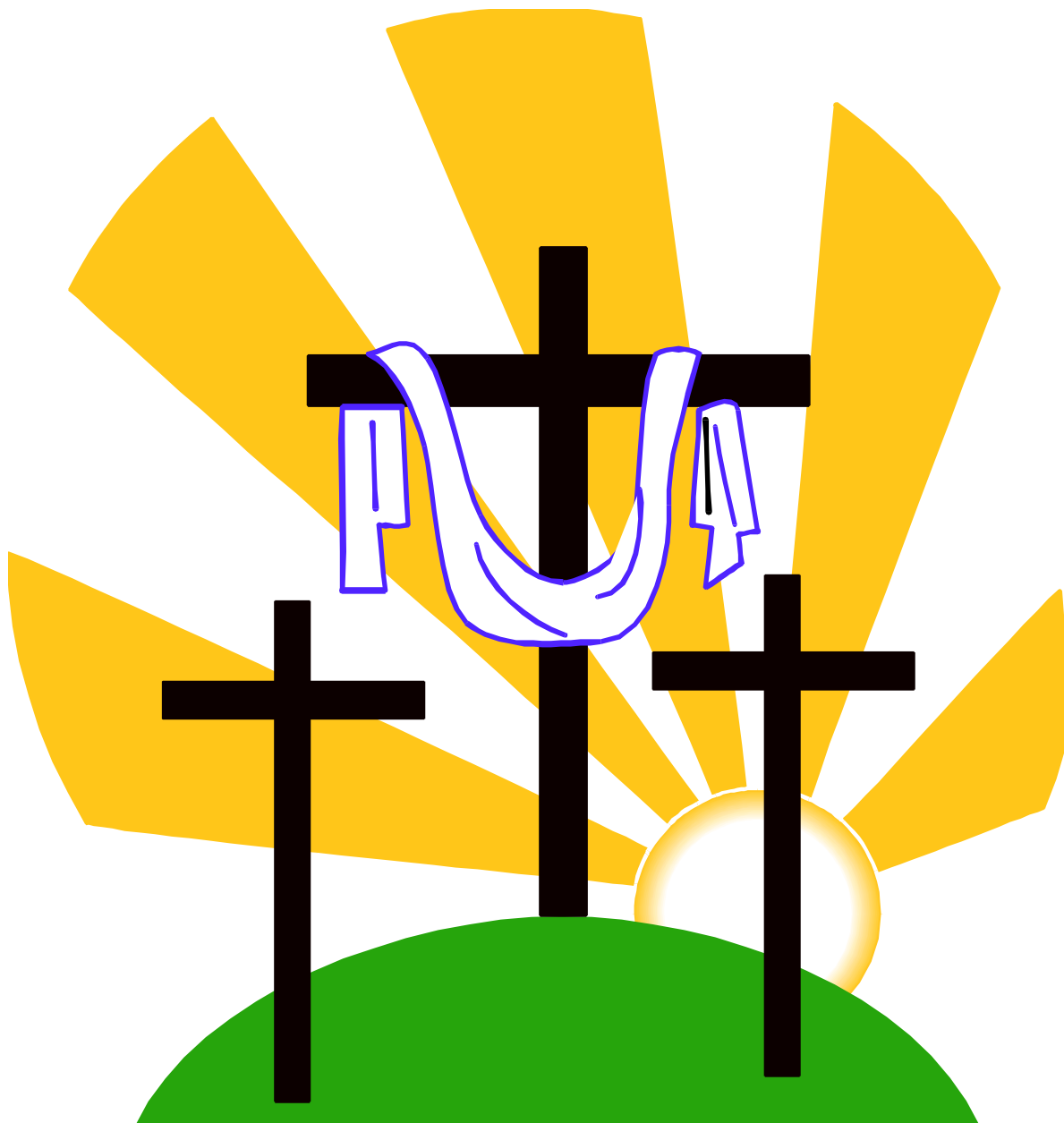
earned a place on the Episcopal calendar of feasts and fasts, the Anglican equivalent of being made a saint. Coincidentally, Easter Sunday happens to fall on his Feast Day. Coincidence? You decide.

Instead of having a clergyperson lead and direct the entire thing, every member of Transmission will play a part in guiding the worship experience. The service will include performance poetry, modern dance, graffiti art, a live band playing Madonna covers, and much, much more. "Rather than directing ritual activity," says Isaac Everett, "we're creating an interactive environment which will allow people to connect with the Easter story on their own terms and at their own pace. It's important to us that everyone who comes has an access point, regardless of who they are." Collaborators on this venture include members of PONY (Prostitutes Organization of New York), artists from Storahtelling (a Jewish ritual theater company), and local seminarians.

I've worshipped with Isaac Everett on and off for several years now and I can attest to the power of his music. This is no free-for-all, anything-goes kind of service, but a service that will be grounded by Isaac's love of liturgy and the Word, as well as his skill as a music worship leader. I just found out that his work will be distributed by Jonny Baker's Proost label. I've worked with Jonny enough to know that it's well worth checking out his new resources that fuel faith.

Even though my Easter Sunday tends to be booked solid, something tells me I should carve out a bit of space and check out this service. For those who are in the New York City area, come join me on Sunday, April 8, starting at 6 p.m. in Club Avalon, 47 West 20th Street (at Sixth Avenue). No cover charge, just come as you are. I have no idea what to expect - but then again, neither did Mary Magdalene when she first went to the tomb.

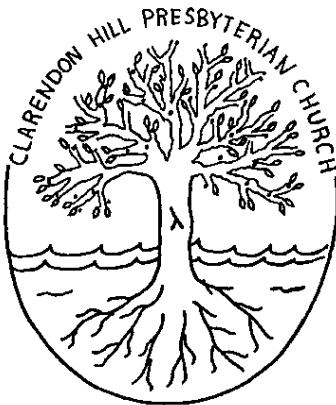
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The Rev. Karl Gustafson, Minister.....John Adams, Music Director
 Augustus Kwaa, Parish Associate/Evangelist..... Arnie James, Sexton
 Gusti Newquist, Seminarian

LECTIONARY TEXTS

Apr. 1: Luke 19: 28-40' Ps. 118: 1-2, 19-29; Isa. 50: 4-9a; Ps. 31: 9-16; Phil. 2: 5-11; Luke 22: 14 – 23: 56 OR Luke 23: 1-49
Apr. 8: Acts 10: 34-43 OR Isa. 65: 17-25; Ps. 118: 1-2, 14-24; 1 Cor. 15: 19-26 OR Acts 10: 34-43; John 20: 1-18 OR Luke 24: 1-12
Apr. 15: Acts 5: 27-32; Ps. 118: 14-29 OR Ps. 150; Rev. 1: 4-8; John 20: 19-31
Apr. 22: Acts 9: 1-6 (7-20); Ps. 30; Rev. 5: 11-14; John 21: 1-19
Apr. 29: Acts. 9: 36-43; Ps. 23; Rev. 7: 9-17; John 10: 22-30
May 6: Acts 11: 1-18; Ps. 148; Rev. 21: 1-6; John 13: 31-35
May 13: Acts 16: 9-15; Ps. 67; Rev. 21: 10, 21: 22-22: 5, John 14: 23-29 or John 5: 1-9
May 20: Acts 16: 16-34; Ps. 97; Rev. 22: 12-14, 16017, 20-21; John 17: 20-26
May 27: Acts 2: 1-21 or Gen. 11: 1-9; Ps. 104: 24-34, 35b; Rom. 8: 14-17 OR Acts 2: 1-21; John 14: 8-17 (25-27)

Church Assignments

Scripture	Focus on Mission	Coffee hour	Nursery backup
Apr. 1 S. Donovan	M. Nickey	Donovans	K. Gustafson
Apr. 8 R. Winchester	M. Reynolds	Camelio/Braga	C. Milanesi
Apr. 15 A. Camelio	J. Bray	Schemerhorn	N. Jirmanus
Apr. 22 A. Kwaa	K. Graf	POTLUCK	V. Donovan
Apr. 29 J. Auger	T. Siggers	Jirmanus	E. Schemerhorn
May 6 P. Auger	L. Cavano	Augers	K. Gustafson
May 13 G. Newquist	P. Beran	Milanesi/Kumpa	C. Milanesi
May 20 M. Jirmanus	H. Rantisi	Siggers	N. Jirmanus
May 27 N. Jirmanus	C. Milanesi	Gustafson/Cavano	V. Donovan