



# The Clarendon Connection

February 2009

[www.clarendonhillchurch.org](http://www.clarendonhillchurch.org)

## Lent: Reflection and Renewal

The season of Lent is approaching, a liturgical season which can be a fruitful time of reflection for our personal spiritual journeys as well as for our life as a community. Beginning with Ash Wednesday (Feb. 25) and spanning the forty days until Easter, Lent is a season of preparation. Traditionally, Lent was a period of fasting that prepared new members for their baptism on Easter morning. For us, it can function as a time of reflection and renewal, a type of spiritual fast that prepares us for the feast that arrives on Easter.

Many people give something up in observation of Lent (such a sweets, coffee or eating out), an act which offers a constant reminder of one's spiritual state and can be a great way to build up to the joy and abundance of Easter. It is also possible, however, to add a practice instead of taking something away. One could commit to a daily prayer time or a daily reading of a psalm either alone or with one's family.

Clarendon Hill will be adding its own spiritual activities for Lent in order to help us observe this special season together. Each Wednesday throughout Lent, the church will host a short evening prayer service that will include Taize music, prayer, scripture and silence. The service will last between 30 and 45 minutes. All are encouraged to make these weekday services a part of their Lenten routine.

Additionally, on Sunday mornings after fellowship time, Pastor Karl, along with seminarians Liz Leavitt and Kelsey Rice Bogdan, will lead a class on "The Way of Discernment" geared toward guiding individuals and our community through a period of discernment about the future of our church. Those interested can gather in the parlor around 12:30 p.m.

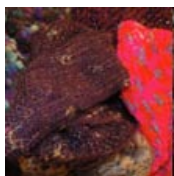
Together we can make these forty days a meaningful and productive time together, in preparation of the Easter feast that awaits us!



### Reminder for your calendar:

Wednesdays, February 25-April 1, 7-7:45 p.m., Taize Evening Prayer Service

Sundays, March 1-April 5, 12:30-1:30 p.m., "Way of Discernment" Adult Education Class



### 'Wrap Around!' at The Nave A Benefit for the Somerville Homeless Coalition February 7, 2009, 1 - 5 p.m.

We are seeking donations of hand knit items--scarves, gloves, caps, etc.--for a sale to benefit the Somerville Homeless Coalition. All items will be priced at \$10 or less. As we all struggle through this very cold and wet winter, donate a warm handmade scarf or hat to help others stay warm. Wrap your arms around your community!

Donations may be dropped off at the following locations:

- Nave Gallery, Clarendon Hill Presbyterian Church, 155 Powderhouse Blvd., Somerville, MA during Gallery hours: (FRI 6-8; SAT 1-5; SUN 1-5)
- MAGPIE, 416 Highland Ave., Somerville MA 02144 during store hours: (TUES 11-6; WED 11-6; THURS 11-6; FRI 11-6; SUN 11-5)

# Clarendon Happenings

## Annual Meeting and Potluck

On February 1, we will hold a (rescheduled) Annual Meeting and potluck after church. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend the meeting as we discuss the life of Clarendon Hill Presbyterian.

## Equal Exchange

Coffee orders will be taken on February 1 for delivery on February 8. There are still Equal Exchange mini-chocolates available as well. If you will not be in church on Feb. 1, be sure to email your order to Katherine by Sunday evening (kath.gustafson@gmail.com).

## Introduction to Yoga

Come join our small class after coffee hour to practice mindful breathing and gentle yoga postures. We will meet on February 8, 15 and 22. Great for stress release, improved flexibility and strength. Contact Liz at cavatorta1@hotmail.com for more information.

## Resident Acupuncturist

Ching Ling is a CHPC member and an acupuncturist who has an office in the church building. She is looking for new clients, so if you or someone you know would like to try acupuncture, contact chingling1943@yahoo.com.

## Writing Group

Everyone is welcome to join the writing group. We begin with a group check-in, move through 1-2 writing exercises, and finish with a group check-out. We will tailor each session to the interests of those who attend. Contact Rachel, reichiru@gmail.com, for meeting dates and more details.

## Women's Horizons Bible Study

The Horizons Bible Study will meet at Salam Lebbos's house in Arlington on Friday, February 27. We gather at 3:30 p.m. and Bible study runs from 4 to 5 p.m. All are welcome. Contact Katherine Gustafson if you need a ride: kath.gustafson@gmail.com.

## Dates at a Glance

Feb. 1	Annual Meeting and Potluck Coffee Orders
Feb. 8	Coffee Delivery; Yoga
Feb. 15	Yoga
Feb. 22	Yoga
Feb. 25	Ash Wednesday Service
Feb. 27	Women's Bible Study
March 1	Adult Education Class



## Request from the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is in consultation with our partners in Gaza to make aid available to those most in need. When Jesus walked these very lands, by his words and his ministries he told all who would listen to care for the children, the old, the poor, the sick, the most vulnerable. In this moment of crisis, while leaders strive to find a path to lasting peace, our priority must be caring for those left vulnerable by the violence.

### WHAT WE CAN DO:

GIVE to help the PC(USA) and our partners meet the physical needs of those in all the areas where violence leaves them vulnerable, and the emotional and spiritual needs of the many more who have been traumatized by that violence. Mail your gift to:

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Church, Remittance Processing, P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA. Write "DR000081-E1" on the check to ensure your gift is designated to meet these urgent needs. You can also give online at [www.pcusa.org/pda](http://www.pcusa.org/pda).

PRAY for all those whose lives have been and continue to be affected.  
STAY INFORMED with regular updates on the situation.

In keeping with the long history of CHPC's support of the people of Palestine, this offers a way to bring direct aid to Gaza and we ask that folks think prayerfully about making a contribution.

## Thoughts from the Back Office

by Pastor Karl Gustafson

Window of opportunity. Fork in the road. Serendipity. Synchronicity. Convergence. Astral alignment. And a Greek word, 'kairos', much in use in our scriptures meaning the perfectly right moment when God breaks into life and offers an opportunity for change, growth, fulfillment.



Moments of major new possibility are described in a variety of ways. They happen to us as individuals and as communities. We usually can't seek them out or make them happen. All we can do is recognize them when they appear and summon enough faith and hope to respond. They invite us to imagine new things and make courageous choices. Outcomes aren't obvious and sometimes the risks are high. But when we are able to recognize a moment of 'kairos' and decide to respond our pulse speeds up, our minds sharpen, our spirits soar. Moments of this kind of seriousness don't happen all that often, and when they do, they can be exciting and fearful all at the same time.

We have the great good fortune to find ourselves at the beginning of one of those moments. Clarendon Hill Church has come to a fork in the road. We're being offered a window of opportunity. The habits of our past are converging with the needs of the present, and our future will be shaped by how we respond. We are at one of those times of kairos when God breaks into our life and confronts us with the need to be transformed, challenging us to claim who we are, envision who we want to be and what we want to do, and set a course to make our new life bloom. Scary for sure. Exciting too.

That's where we are, as I see it. CHPC is at a moment of creative necessity and opportunity. Now's the time. We can't wait anymore. We have a new way of life to plant and nurture. We have been given a time of kairos. Let's go for it.

And.....

The inauguration of Barack Obama as president offers a lot of things, not least of which is an opportunity for centrist and progressive Christians to claim their rightful place in the public arena. President Obama has spoken often and unapologetically about the role his faith plays in his understanding of government and public service. He has referred more than once to a grand old name from the not too distant past as having been highly significant in this understanding. Reinhold Niebuhr is the name. Niebuhr was a preacher, a teacher, an activist in many of the most difficult issues our country faced during the twentieth century. Beginning as a Christian Socialist and pacifist, he grew into becoming the central figure in a highly influential group known as Christian Realists. He was argumentative, thoughtful, a political insider who was also a prophetic voice with influence. If anyone spoke truth to power it was Reinhold Niebuhr. I'm happy to see that his name is being spoken again.

If anyone is interested in taking a look at one of his early but formative books, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, let me know. It's short, clear, sharp. It would be fun to read him together.

One more thing.....

A small group has just begun to meet periodically in the late afternoon to explore ways to deepen our spiritual life. We have chosen an ancient teacher of the Christian spiritual life to be our guide for a while, Gregory of Nyssa. We are reading and reflecting on a collection of his writings about the Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes. If you would like more information contact me: [pastork@clarendonhillchurch.org](mailto:pastork@clarendonhillchurch.org).

## NEPCI Continues to Learn About New England’s Campuses

The New England Presbyterian Campus Initiative (NEPCI), a special project of the Presbyteries of Boston, Northern New England, and Southern New England, continues its work in partnership with Clarendon Hill Presbyterian Church. As part of the project, Clarendon Hill has hosted two meetings of the project’s advisory committee, generously shared Pastor Karl’s staff time, supervised and supported the work of seminary intern Kelsey Rice Bogdan, and provided space in the Sunday School room for the ongoing work of the project.



NEPCI has learned much about students on New England campuses and the ministries serving them. The picture emerging is of a generation of students seeking transformational relationships, in which their faith can grow and impact the world. Our limited data suggests that few of these students claim a specific Protestant denominational identity, while a significant minority has no religious preference at all. Though Presbyterians support 23 life-changing campus ministries in New England, our work encompasses less than 10% of all colleges in the region.

What’s next for NEPCI? In the coming months, Kelsey will review nearly 40 individual interviews and several student focus groups to draw out key themes about the current state of campus ministry and the needs on-the-ground. The project advisory committee then hopes to share emerging results of the research with Presbyterians in all three presbyteries, culminating in a region-wide event sometime in the late spring. We hope that members of Clarendon Hill will participate in these events!

NEPCI has been blessed by its relationship with Clarendon Hill—thank you for all your support! Kelsey would be happy to answer any questions you might have about the project. You can contact her at [NEPCI.Coordinator@gmail.com](mailto:NEPCI.Coordinator@gmail.com).

### FYI

Massachusetts, along with several other New England states, was recently named one of the “least religious states” based on a 2008 Gallup Poll. Gallup interpreted the results by suggesting that, in part, there may be differing “state cultures” that are themselves associated with life approaches that give varying degrees of credence to religion as a guiding force.

#### *Top 10 Most Religious States*

Is religion an important part of your daily life?

State	% Yes
Mississippi	85
Alabama	82
South Carolina	80
Tennessee	79
Louisiana	78
Arkansas	78
Georgia	76
North Carolina	76
Oklahoma	75
Kentucky (tie)	74
Texas (tie)	74

Gallup Poll Daily tracking

#### *Top 10 Least Religious States*

Is religion an important part of your daily life?

State	% Yes
Vermont	42
New Hampshire	46
Maine	48
Massachusetts	48
Alaska	51
Washington	52
Oregon	53
Rhode Island	53
Nevada	54
Connecticut	55

Gallup Poll Daily tracking

## Lectionary Readings

### February 2009

#### February 1

Jeremiah 1:4-10  
 Psalm 71:1-6  
 1 Corinthians 13:1-13  
 Luke 4:21-30

#### February 8

Isaiah 40:21-31  
 Psalm 147:1-11, 20c  
 1 Corinthians 9:16-23  
 Mark 1:29-39

#### February 15

2 Kings 5:1-14  
 Psalm 30:1-12  
 1 Corinthians 9:24-27  
 Mark 1:40-45

#### February 22

2 Kings 2:1-12  
 Psalm 50:1-6 2  
 Corinthians 4:3-6  
 Mark 9:2-9

#### February 25 (Ash Wednesday)

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12  
 Psalm 51:1-17  
 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10  
 Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

### March 2009

#### March 1 (1st Sunday in Lent)

Genesis 9:8-17  
 Psalm 25:1-10  
 1 Peter 3:18-22  
 Mark 1:9-15

#### March 8 (2nd Sunday in Lent)

Gen. 17:1-7, 15-16  
 Psalm 22:23-31  
 Romans 4:13-25  
 Mark 8:31-38

#### March 15 (3rd Sunday in Lent)

Exodus 20:1-17  
 Psalm 19:1-14  
 1 Corinthians 1:18-25  
 John 2:13-22

#### March 22 (4th Sunday in Lent)

Numbers 21:4-9  
 Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22  
 Eph. 2:1-10  
 John 3:14-21

#### March 29 (5th Sunday in Lent)

Jeremiah 31:31-34  
 Psalm 51:1-12 or Psalm 119:9-16  
 Hebrews 5:5-10  
 John 12:20-33

### Sunday Worship at Clarendon Hill

9:45 a.m.      Choir rehearsal  
 10:30 a.m.      **Worship**  
 10:45 a.m.      Children's education  
 11:30 a.m.      Refreshments and fellowship

Communion will be celebrated on Feb. 1.

## Church Assignments

	scripture	focus on mission	coffee hour	nursery
Feb. 1	M. Jirmanus	E. Schemerhorn	POTLUCK	K. Gustafson
Feb. 8	S. Donovan	C. Milanesi	Jirmanus	V. Donovan
Feb. 15	R. Winchester	H. Rantisi	Augers	E. Schemerhorn
Feb. 22	E. Sweeny	P. Auger	Milanesi/Kumpa	N. Jirmanus
March 1	C. Milanesi	S. Donovan	Camelio/Braga	K. Gustafson
March 8	J. Auger	R. Winchester	Reynolds/Graf	V. Donovan
March 15	P. Beran	S. Lebbos	Newquist/Glass	E. Schemerhorn
March 22	M. Reynolds	A. Kwaa	Chapman-Adisho	N. Jirmanus
March 29	J. Bray	K. Graf	Donovan	K. Gustafson

If you would like to be added to the rotation for any of these ministry opportunities, please contact Ann Crews Melton, editor@clarendonhillchurch.org or 617.646.9690.

*The Clarendon Connection* is edited by Ann Crews Melton. Articles for the March issue are requested by Feb. 22. Email editor@clarendonhillchurch.org with news, photos, tidbits, corrections or suggestions.



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



[www.artsomerville.org](http://www.artsomerville.org)

**the nave gallery**



**Current Exhibit: "Shout Out!"  
Jan. 16 to Feb. 7, 2009**



Featuring the work of over 30 young artists from Belmont, Boston, Cambridge, Middleborough, Newton and Somerville. "Shout out!" showcases the creativity of local young artists expressing their thoughts on some very adult subjects. Additionally, three group projects with younger artists are included.

**ARTISTS**

Isaac Bell, Simona Clausnitzer, Courtney Coulombe, Rufus Dixon, Andrew Evich, Cameron Fetter, Chris Gortmaker, Eriko Hishiya, Joey Janeiro, Ryan Keeth, Jill Liberatore, Chun Lok Lo, Marina Massida, JT Minor, Jonathan Moreria, Neil Quigley, Katrina Rizzuto, Anna Shuster, Brianne Sullivan, Matthew Thompson, Sierra Tseng, Jennie Vallesio, Daniel Wong

To volunteer to help with an event, contact Randy at [rwinchester@artsomerville.org](mailto:rwinchester@artsomerville.org).