



# The Clarendon Connection

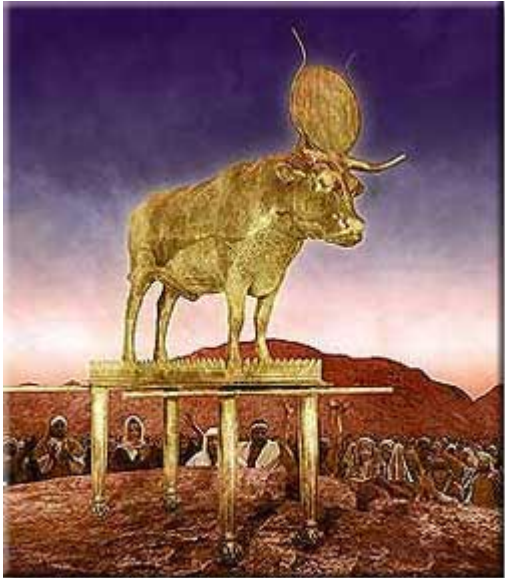
October 2008

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

## The God Who Remains

Lectionary for Oct. 12: Exodus 32:1-14; Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23

by Gusti Linnea Newquist



*"We have sinned just as our ancestors did. We have done wrong; we have done evil." –Psalm 106:6*

"These are scary times," I said to Kristen earlier this week as we prepared for the waitressing gig we had both picked up for the night. I was thinking of the economic bailout debate and the upcoming job loss report and my evaporating retirement plan and the uncertainty of a long-term job search. "These are scary times," Kristen agreed, thinking of her three kids and her pending divorce and the increasing scarcity of work just at the time when food costs and gas costs and the New England winter's energy costs are on the rise. "These are scary times," we hear from every economist on every news-cast from television to radio to newspaper to blog. "We've never been here before," these economists say. "We just have no idea how things will turn out."

"These are scary times," I can't help imagine the ancient Israelites of our Exodus text saying to one another as they linger in the desert morning after morning, waiting for Moses to come back down off that mountain. "We've never been here before," I imagine them saying as they go to bed at night with no plan in sight. "We just have no idea how things will turn out," I imagine them whispering to one another as anxiety builds and panic spreads. "Make us gods who will lead us," I can hear them beg of Aaron, the only leader they have left. "Moses led us out of Egypt, but we don't know what has happened to him." Give us something we can see and touch. Give us something we can trust.

I can't help relating to their need for a tangible image of the god they claim to serve. I can't help but see ourselves in them as they continue to cling for stability to the very thing that can never be stable-- a god of gold.

"Take off the gold earrings that your wives, sons, and daughters are wearing," Aaron responds to the Israelites, "and bring them to me." And Aaron takes all their gold and molds it into a statue of a calf. Then he announces a feast in honor of God.

But God is not honored.

"They have made for themselves a calf covered with gold, and they have worshiped it and offered sacrifices to it," God thunders at Moses, still up on the mountain. "I am so angry with them that I am

*(continued on p. 3)*

# Clarendon Happenings

## Flea Market

**Saturday Oct. 18 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

All proceeds will offset upcoming heating oil costs.

**Donations sought!** Gently used clothes, books, and household items. Sorry, no TVs, computers, large furniture or used children's toys.

Donations can be dropped off Sunday, Oct. 5 or 12, and Friday, Oct. 17 from 6-8 p.m.

Please sign up to help out for a couple of hours. What time slot works for you?

- Make and hang up posters
- Friday, Oct. 17 from 6-8 p.m.
- Saturday during the sale
- Saturday from 1:30-3:30 p.m. for clean up

Contact [kath.gustafson@gmail.com](mailto:kath.gustafson@gmail.com) to sign up.

## Equal Exchange

Katherine will take the Equal Exchange coffee order on Sunday, October 5, for delivery on October 12. Chocolate bars may be ordered as well. Email [kath.gustafson@gmail.com](mailto:kath.gustafson@gmail.com) for more info.



## Gusti Is Now Blogging!!

The Massachusetts Bible Society has hired Gusti Newquist to provide weekly commentary on the Sunday lectionary (see article on p. 1). Her "mini-sermons" may be viewed on-line each week at [www.massbible.org/blog](http://www.massbible.org/blog). Comments encouraged!

## Honk Fest

CHPC will host a Honk Fest Concert on Nov 2. Save the date. We will need many volunteers to help out with this fun event.

### 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

## Horizons Women's Group

The Horizons Bible Study will meet at Salam's in Arlington on Fridays, Oct. 10 and 24. Our starting times will be 3:30 for tea and 4:00 for discussion. All are welcome. For directions to Salam's, contact [salamlebbos@hotmail.com](mailto:salamlebbos@hotmail.com) or [Mabel312@aol.com](mailto:Mabel312@aol.com). If you need a copy of the study guide, contact Katherine Gustafson, [kath.gustafson@gmail.com](mailto:kath.gustafson@gmail.com).

## Introduction to Yoga

Come join our small, half-hour class after coffee hour to practice mindful breathing and gentle yoga postures. We will meet on October 12 and 26. Great for stress release, improved flexibility and strength. Contact Liz at [cavatorta1@hotmail.com](mailto:cavatorta1@hotmail.com) for more information.

## Writing Group

The writing group will meet on Monday, October 13th at 7 p.m. in the Green Room. We will begin with a group check-in, move through 1-2 writing exercises, and finish with a group check-out. We are open to everyone, regardless of previous writing experience, and will tailor each session to the interests of those who attend. Contact Rachel, [reichiru@gmail.com](mailto:reichiru@gmail.com), for more details.

## Young Adult Group

The Young Adults are preparing to reorganize for the fall (this group includes anyone between 20 and 40 who want to get together.) No events are scheduled yet, but e-mail Liz Leavitt if interested: [leavitt.liz@gmail.com](mailto:leavitt.liz@gmail.com).

## Dates at a Glance

Oct. 5	Peacemaking Offering & Peace Study/Coffee Orders
Oct. 10	Horizons Women's Group
Oct. 12	Coffee Delivery/Yoga
Oct. 13	Writing Group
Oct. 15	Session and Deacons Mtg.
Oct. 18	Flea Market
Oct. 24	Horizons Women's Group
Oct. 26	Yoga
Nov. 2	Honk Fest Concert

## **The God Who Remains** *(continued from p. 1)*

going to destroy them. Then I will make you and your descendants a great nation.”

Gulp.

“Hold on a minute, God,” I want to say in defense of the Israelites, in defense of myself, in defense of every one of us who begs for some visible sign of security and stability. “How long do you expect us to languish in this leadership vacuum with no clear path forward and forecasts of gloom and doom everywhere we turn? We just wanted to see you. Aaron’s the one who made us worship the god of gold. Wall Street did it; not me!”

And it’s true, of course. Aaron did decide to mold the gold into a calf. Corporate lenders did decide to entice borrowers to make mortgages they could never afford. Government regulators did fall down on the job. Partisan bickering did contribute to the crisis, rather than solve it. Why should people like Kristen and me and the average Joe on the street bear the brunt of God’s anger, bear the burden of the bailout, bear any responsibility for where we are now and how we move forward?

But of course . . . if we’re really honest . . . if we’re really, really honest . . . most of us did dance—at least just a little bit—in that party for the golden calf we’ve been having for a while. Most of us, if we’re really honest, at some point have asked for that visible image—for that god of gold—to keep us safe, to keep us secure, to give us a reason to party when we’re scared. Most of us, if we’re really honest, want our leaders to make it easy for us, so we don’t have to do the difficult spiritual work of trusting in a God we can’t see and a future we can’t know. Most of us, if we’re really honest, deserve at least just a little bit of divine anger in response to our sin. We’re in this one together, and it hurts all the way through.

And so it helps to see God negotiate with Moses, who is pleading our case forthrightly, who is appealing to God’s reasonableness, to God’s reputation, to God’s promise already given. And it helps to see that God can “repent” of anger, that God can “turn away” from the evil consequences of our actions, that God can give us the opportunity to do the same. For this is exactly what God chooses to do in this Exodus text. God will not abandon us to the consequences of our actions. The evil we have done is not the final answer.

It is not an easy reconciliation. It is not an immediate fix. Moses returns to the people and imposes a day of reckoning. The relationship between the people and God remains tenuous. But it remains!

And that, in the end, is the one thing we can depend on. Whether we have worshiped the god of gold or whether we got dragged to the party without participating in it. Whether we begged Aaron to make us a god we could see or whether we helped to fashion it ourselves. God is still with us, repenting of anger, turning us away from the evil we create. We can have another chance. We can make a new way together.

“Let anyone who wants to follow the LORD come to me,” Moses says to the people upon his return. Let anyone who wants to follow God join together, we can say to one another now that the truth of our economic crisis is upon us. It is time to repent. It is time to turn around. We can make a new way, with our God as our guide. May this be our commitment in the days and weeks to come. May we seek out those who will help live anew. In the midst of a crisis comes a new opportunity. We can begin again. May it be so. Amen.

*Reprinted from the Massachusetts Bible Society blog at [www.massbible.org/blog](http://www.massbible.org/blog).*

## Lectionary Readings

### October 2008

#### October 5

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20  
 Psalm 19:1-14  
 Philippians 3:4b-14  
 Matthew 21:33-46

#### October 12

Exodus 32:1-14  
 Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23  
 Philippians 4:1-9  
 Matthew 22:1-14

#### October 19

Exodus 33:12-23  
 Psalm 99:1-99  
 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10  
 Matthew 22:15-22

#### October 26

Deuteronomy 34:1-12  
 Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17  
 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8  
 Matthew 22:34-46

### November 2008

#### November 2

Joshua 3:7-17  
 Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37  
 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13  
 Matthew 23:1-12

#### November 9

Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25  
 Psalm 78:1-7  
 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18  
 Matthew 25:1-13

#### November 16

Judges 4:1-7  
 Psalm 123:1-4  
 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11  
 Matthew 25:14-30

#### November 23

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24  
 Psalm 100:1-5  
 Ephesians 1:15-23  
 Matthew 25:31-46

#### November 30

Isaiah 64:1-9  
 Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19  
 1 Corinthians 1:3-9  
 Mark 13:24-37



### Clarendon Hill Presbyterian Welcomes Liz Leavitt

Liz Leavitt is a third-year student at Harvard Divinity School and will serve this year as one of the resident seminarians

at CHPC. Before coming to the Boston area for school, Liz lived in Portland, Oregon, with husband Jason, where she worked as the Children's and Youth Director at a local Presbyterian church. Liz plans to be ordained and pursue ministry in a parish, so she is excited to learn from CHPC and from life together as a church community. She looks forward to meeting all of you and is excited about the year. Contact Liz at [leavitt.liz@gmail.com](mailto:leavitt.liz@gmail.com).

## Church Assignments

	scripture	focus on mission	coffee hour	nursery
October 5	E. Schemerhorn	C. Milanesi	Newquist/Glass	N. Jirmanus
October 12	M. Jirmanus	E. Schemerhorn	Chapman-Adisho	K. Gustafson
October 19	S. Donovan	P. Auger	Gustafson/Cavano	V. Donovan
October 26	R. Winchester	H. Rantisi	Donovan	E. Schemerhorn
Nov. 2	E. Sweeny	A. Kwaa	Schemerhorn	N. Jirmanus
Nov. 9	C. Milanesi	S. Donovan	Siggers	K. Gustafson
Nov. 16	M. Reynolds	R. Winchester	Jirmanus	V. Donovan
Nov. 23	P. Beran	K. Graf	Augers	E. Schemerhorn
Nov. 30	J. Auger	T. Siggers	Milanesi/Kumpa	N. Jirmanus

If you would like to be added to the rotation for any of these opportunities, please contact Ann Crews Melton, [anncrews@gmail.com](mailto:anncrews@gmail.com) or 617.646.9690.

*The Clarendon Connection* is edited by Ann Crews Melton. Articles for the November issue are requested by Oct. 24. Email Ann at [anncrews@gmail.com](mailto:anncrews@gmail.com) with news, photos, tidbits, corrections or suggestions.

**Imaginational Anthem Fall Tour '08  
with Cian Nugent, Ben Reynolds, George Stavis  
8 October 2008, 7:30 p.m., \$7**



**Cian Nugent:** 19 years old, from Ireland. His debut EP is a CDR (ltd. ed. of 100) with six tracks recorded on a 70's reel-to-reel machine, and the crude nature of it harks back to those early recordings of Davey Graham at Hull University. It even includes a re-working of Buell Kazee's "Wagoner's Lad," famously covered by Bert Jansch. His debut for Tompkins Square is set for the first half of '09.

**Ben Reynolds:** From Scotland. "Here Toucheth Blues," a highlight of 'Imaginational Anthem vol 3', is lilting and elegiac, a bit surprising as his fans are likely more familiar with his angular, raga-charged works. Ben is building a fantastic catalogue of solo recordings (and a multitude of side projects and collaborations), most recently the Solo Guitar/Inner Hills cassette featuring one side acoustic, the other, electric. His Tompkins Square debut surfaces in early '09.

**George Stavis:** A shadowy figure from decades past, seemingly undiminished by time and ripe for re- discovery, is the mysterious banjo picker, George Stavis. He recorded one album for Vanguard in 1969, Labyrinths, sub-titled Occult Improvisational Compositions for 5-string banjo and percussion. This LP is the oddest and best banjo album of the period, only rivaled perhaps by fellow 5-stringer Billy Faier's 1973 Takoma album - good luck finding an LP copy of either, however Labyrinths is available on CD. Stavis is pictured on the cover wearing a medieval robe and holding a glowing crystal ball. The record is a wonderful devil's brew of ethnic, old-timey and psychedelics. He returns to the stage for the first time in decades.



**Vocal recital with Rachel Rynick and Eleuthera Sa**

**11 October 2008, 4 p.m., \$5, \$10, or \$20 suggested donation**

Mark Loria, accompanist. Works by Purcell, Schubert, Mozart, Dvorak, and Rodrigo.

**No Such Animal**

**19 October 2008, 8 p.m., \$5**

Four years ago, avant guardian Tim Mungenast arranged the first-ever collaboration between members of Cul de Sac and Birdsongs of the Mesozoic to create the Innova Recordings release "No Such Animal." See the long-overdue reunion of Ken Field (saxophone, flute), Jon Proudman (drums), Michael Bloom (bass), and Tim (guitar, sitar, bells, pedals) as they open a sonic portal into another world.



**Space Party**

**29 October 2008, 7 - 10 p.m.**

Costumes optional but encouraged.

RSVP to [mum@artsomerville.org](mailto:mum@artsomerville.org).

See p. 6 for more. To volunteer to help with an event, contact Randy at [rwinchester@artsomerville.org](mailto:rwinchester@artsomerville.org).



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



## Upcoming Exhibit: 'Kitchen Stories' at The Nave Gallery

**17 October through 15 November 2008**  
**Curated by James Zall**

The American kitchen has evolved from a dark, private room at the back of the house to a bright, gleaming showplace that's often the social focus of a home. In Kitchen Stories, fourteen artists explore the highlights, low spots and dark corners of this complicated space. They tell stories about the social, economic and political aspects of the kitchen and, in doing so, they tell us stories about ourselves.

Reception: 17 October, 6:00-8:00 p.m.  
Artists' talk: 26 October, 2:00 p.m.

*"Reddi-Wip" by Joanne Kaliontzis*