

The Church Herald

Stony Brook Community Church (United Methodist), Stony Brook, New York



NYAC VISION STATEMENT

**The New York Annual
Conference, through the
grace of God, embodies a
beloved community of hope,
building up a healthy Body of
Christ, with heartwarmed
United Methodists
in mission for the
transformation of the world.**

STONY BROOK COMMUNITY CHURCH

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**TO VIEW *THE HERALD*
IN FULL COLOR, VISIT
OUR WEB SITE AT:**

stonybrookcommunitychurch.org

The Pastor's Column

We have entered a "Holy Lent" beginning on February 6 with Ash Wednesday. For me, it is a time set aside for rediscovering my relationship with Christ. I try to take more quiet time for prayer, reading and journaling. I hope I have encouraged others to do the same. "The Sanctuary," a Lenten devotional, is available in the church narthex. One of my favorite devotional authors, Ann Weems, has said, "Lent is a time to let the events walk around in us." I love that image because it draws from me an intimate response to really enter into, as fully as I can, the journey that Jesus took to the cross.



What do I make of this journey? I share with you one of my biggest stumbling blocks in this season – the doctrine of atonement. I see Jesus as the divine one who brings us to at-one-ment with God through not only his death but also through his living. This is a departure from traditional atonement doctrines. There are many arguments in Christian tradition about the sacrificial nature of Christ's death. The tradition speaks of Christ as the sacrificial lamb, who died to erase the judgment on us for our sins. I personally have a major faith crisis with this traditional understanding. To go there means that I believe in a God that needs to have human sacrifices in order to be reconciled with us. Is that the God of Love? I do not think so. Instead, I offer an alternative for your contemplation.

I have come to believe that all of God's activity is about "atone-ment" or "at-one-ment." That means that God from the very beginning has sought to draw humanity into a style of life that is in line with love, justice and righteousness made possible by our deep personal knowledge that God made us, loves us and guides us. The supreme act of being at one with us was the entrance of Jesus into this world. As Jesus lived out that style of life in all its fullness and authenticity, we are able to experience what it would look like to be at one with the Creator. Because that authentic life ran counter to cultural interests, the threat was so great that it led to Jesus being

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Going Deeper: Reflecting on the Social Issues of Today

Each month, a different lay person will pen this column. This month's focus is on the plight of the homeless.

"Caren" leaned forward, looked me in the eye and said, "I was just like you." In fact, she was more correct than she knew. We were about the same age. We both had married our high school sweethearts. We both had two children – a boy and a girl. We had lived in communities quite near each other on Long Island. That was before Caren was diagnosed with major depression; it was before the hospitalizations; it was before her husband walked out on her and the children. We came together on this day, not because of what we had in common, but because I was a social worker and she was an applicant for a homeless housing program.

We are all familiar with the stereotypical face of homelessness: a disheveled loner, dirty, impaired, perhaps – someone who may frighten us or make us feel uncomfortable. The reality, though, is that of the thousands of people who are homeless on Long Island, two-thirds are homeless families and 50% of those in Nassau and Suffolk counties are children. Many have made it into our shelter system, but approximately 25% are living on the streets or in our parks, in abandoned cars or vacant buildings. Next time you drive east on the Long Island Expressway or Montauk Highway, take a look in the woods beside the road. You'll see signs of the homeless persons who live there – clotheslines, temporary shelters made from tarps, tents, the remnants of a fire.



What can we do? There are many people in our communities who are trying to improve the plight of the homeless. Check out the website for the Nassau-Suffolk Coalition for the Homeless at www.nsch.org. Many of us are familiar with Our Daily Bread, operated by the St. James R.C. Church, but there are also other soup kitchens and cooperative efforts in nearby communities. In Port Jefferson, local churches take turns offering a hot meal one night a week to persons in need. Out east, Maureen's Haven is a group of churches that offer their church buildings as a place to stay one night per week for persons who are homeless. Food pantries need our donations – especially in between the holidays, when donations slow to a trickle. Christmas Magic, which our church has supported in the past, provides gifts at Christmastime and sponsors special events throughout the year for the children of homeless families. We can support and welcome the many non-profit agencies that are seeking to make a difference for these folks by offering them high-quality permanent affordable housing.

Tragically, four homeless people died on Long Island streets in the week preceding this writing. We can be grateful, though, that this is not the whole picture. I saw Caren a few days ago. She is remarried and working full time. Her daughter is a junior in college (which she attends on a scholarship) and her son is soon to graduate high school. Caren seems bright with hope for her family's future.

– Elizabeth Lunde

Beth is a social worker and the associate director of Concern for Independent Living, Inc.

Holy Week services scheduled

As we move toward the celebration of Jesus' triumphant victory over death, the church community will be coming together for special services during Holy Week leading up to Easter Sunday on March 23. Earlier in the month, the final two evenings of the Lenten Café series will take place on Wednesday, March 5 and 12. Participants gather for a simple soup and bread supper at 6:15 p.m., followed by a video and conversation at 7 p.m. These evenings end with Taizé worship at 8 p.m. – a quiet, candlelight service with meditative music, readings from Scripture and prayer. (Taizé returns to its regular Wednesday 7 p.m. time slot beginning March 19.)

Holy Week begins March 16 with Palm Sunday worship service at 10 a.m., including the Liturgy of the Palms and the Liturgy of the Passion. A Maundy Thursday service with the Sacrament of the Last Supper will be held on March 20 at 8 p.m. The next day, Good Friday, SBCC will participate in an ecumenical service at Setauket United Methodist Church, which takes place from noon until 3 p.m. On Easter Sunday, SBCC will join other neighboring churches for the traditional Sunrise Service at the Village Green in Setauket (opposite the Emma Clark Library) beginning at 7 a.m. Easter worship is at 10 a.m. in the SBCC Sanctuary, followed by a special fellowship hour.

A blessed Easter to all!



Word and Worship for March

Sunday, March 2

Fourth Sunday in Lent

1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23; Ephesians 5:8-14;
John 9:1-41

Sunday, March 9

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11;
John 11:1-45

Sunday, March 16

Passion/Palm Sunday

Liturgy of the Palms: Matthew 21:1-11; Psalm
118:1-2, 19-29
Liturgy of the Passion: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Philippians 2:5-11;
Matthew 27:11-54

Friday, March 21

Good Friday

Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 22; Hebrews 10:16-25; John 18:1-19

Sunday, March 23

Easter Sunday

Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Colossians 3:1-4; John 20:1-18
or Matthew 28:1-10

Sunday, March 30

Second Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:14a, 22-32; Psalm 16; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31



Lively discussions at church planning retreat

On February 1-2, about 20 people gathered for our annual church planning retreat. This year we met in the Community Room with Pastor Liz leading. Using a resource entitled, *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* by Bishop Robert Schnase, we explored the opportunities we have to be a vibrant, growing church. The five faithful practices are: *Radical Hospitality*, *Passionate Worship*, *Intentional Faith Development*, *Risk-taking Mission and Service* and *Extrava-*



Attendees broke into small groups to further explore the five practices described in Bishop Schnase's book. Here, Marisa Borek makes a point while (from left) her husband Mark, Michele Dexter, Donna Smith and Sherrill Jones listen.

gant Generosity. The italicized adjectives remind us that we are trying to expand our understandings and activities to go beyond "business as usual." Some of the questions we explored in each category included:

- **Radical Hospitality:** What do people need to feel genuinely welcomed into the congregation? Are we doing all we can to get the word out that SBCC is ready to welcome you with open arms and a quality program? Are we looking for growth for church survival or because we genuinely welcome new persons and their need for a community?
- **Passionate Worship:** Are we offering excellence (adequate preparation, cared-for space, creativity)? How are we at welcoming families with children into worship? Are we involving the laity in a meaningful way? What do you (each member) bring to worship to make it a quality experience for all?
- **Intentional Faith Development:** What are you most interested in learning about? Are we committed to quality education experiences for all ages (children, youth, adults)? What small group experiences do we have, and are we providing adequately for persons to continue to grow in faith?
- **Risk-taking Mission and Service:** Which outreach ministries push people out of their comfort zones to make a real difference in the lives of people? How has a mission initiative changed the church? How do you suppose your congregation is perceived by those in the community who have the least power – the poor, the unemployed, the stranger, the hungry, the homeless, the abused, the victim of violence, etc.?
- **Extravagant Generosity:** Have you ever experienced satisfaction giving money? What impact did your gift make on another's life or on the world-at-large? How do you feel about the church's teachings about giving and how faithful the church is with its money?

The discussions were lively! Many ideas were generated; you may have seen some of these written on posters hanging in the Community Room. Next month's *Herald* will contain a summary of the priorities determined by the Church Council. Stay tuned! I invite you to join the discussion. Meanwhile, there are five copies of the book available for circulation. It's a good read!

– Pastor Liz

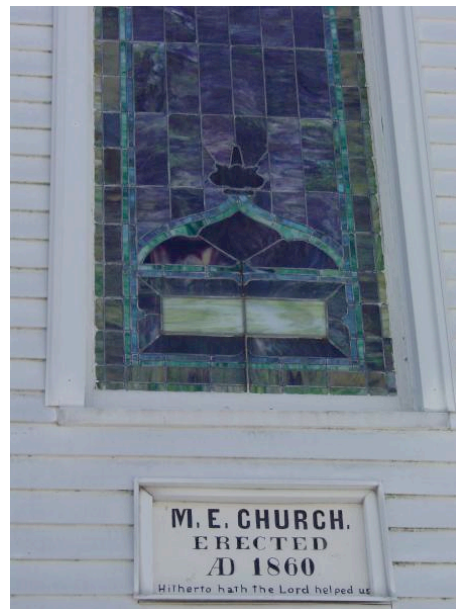
United Methodist 101: *A New Series by Pastor Elizabeth Braddon*

Stony Brook Community Church has been a congregation of Methodism for nearly two hundred years. We anticipate a 200th anniversary in 2009. Our church's beginning is a story of the richness of Methodist tradition. It didn't begin with a formal decision to become a church. Rather, it took the actions of one lay woman, "Sister" Deborah Davis, who in 1809 began inviting available Methodist preachers to stay in her home and then one by one welcoming people to meet with them. Soon, Stony Brook was a station added to a "circuit rider."

That is the beauty of Methodist tradition. There are two aspects of that early story that epitomize the United Methodist Church. First, there has always been an intentional encouragement of lay leadership and participation. Second, there was a connectional web of Methodist circuit riders who went from community to community. So in the early years, fledgling congregations did not need to wait to have the resources to hire a pastor of their own. This is the history of the "appointment process." Local churches were not to be independent or isolated congregations, but rather resources and personnel were to be deployed in the most effective ways.

Over the next decade, the community grew and built a small meeting house in 1817. In 1859, the congregation incorporated as the Methodist Episcopal Church of Stony Brook and the current church was built. In 1951, after several decades as a struggling small congregation with part-time ministers, it reorganized as the Stony Brook Community Church and requested a full-time minister.

Next installment: Looking at how the United Methodist Church is organized today.



A Methodist Glossary

Wesleyan – John and Charles Wesley were the early founders of the Methodist tradition in England.

Methodist Episcopal Church – One of the early churches in the Wesleyan tradition of circuit riders – early trained ordained clergy who rode from town to town. Francis Asbury was said to have ridden over 10,000 miles.

Appointment Process – The process by which clergy are assigned to local congregations by the Bishop and District Superintendents in consultation with the congregations and clergy.

For more information on the United Methodist Church, visit www.umc.org and click on "About the United Methodist Church" (right side).

News and notes. . .

The Three Village Clergy is sponsoring “**God’s Open Houses**,” an interfaith look at fasting, prayer and repentance and social justice. Temple Isaiah hosts the session on fasting March 2; Setauket Presbyterian Church the session on repentance and prayer on March 9; and the Caroline Church the session on social justice on March 16. The Sunday afternoon series takes place 3:30 p.m. - 5 p.m. All are welcome.

The **UMW** invites all women of the church and community to come hear **Lonnie Mathis** of the Her-story Writers Workshop on March 11, 7:30 p.m., at SBCC. Lonnie will speak about her work guiding incarcerated women as they write their life stories. Hers is a message of hope, unity and understanding.

The Community Room was transformed into an Italian bistro for **Valentino Nite** on Feb. 10. Thanks to all of who supported the MYF's efforts. Proceeds went toward the **30-Hour Famine** project through World Vision on Feb. 22-23. Prior to the fast, the MYFers served dinner at the Pax Christi Men's Shelter in PJ. The MYF also helped lead the Feb. 24 worship service with a focus on world hunger.

Many thanks to **Virginia Sassano**, **William and Susan Trawick**, **Donna Smith** and **Sharon Cuff** for hosting coffee hours during the month of January. We are in need of coffee hour hosts for March. To sign up or for further information, please see Maureen Tangen or call 246-5512.

Carolyn Graham has graciously devoted her time making DVD copies of the **Children’s Christmas Pageant**. One is on its way to Ghana as part of the exchange program that our Sunday School children will be participating in. If you would like a copy of the DVD, please speak to Carolyn.

Treasurer’s Report

January 2008

Income: \$17,040.50

Expenses: \$22,711

Shortfall: -\$5,680.50



Congregational contributions totaled **\$5,290** for the month. An average of **\$7,824** is required each month to meet income goals.

– Submitted by **Kim and Jeff Harshmann**

Continued from page 1

crucified. However, that was not the end of the story, and in the resurrected Christ, we continue to have a living presence who is drawing us toward that same authentic life. Through grace we have been drawn into a relationship of at-one-ment with God through Christ, reconciled and forgiven, and by the power of the Spirit are offered the way of Jesus as a continued path toward peace.

These are complex thoughts for your contemplation this Lent. If the scandal of the cross has been a stumbling block for you, perhaps they will give you a new way to relate to the events of the Easter season.

Moving ahead in love,

Pastor Liz

March 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
						UMW Book Sale 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Worship, Eucharist & Sun. School, 10 a.m. MYE, 6 p.m. God's Open Houses, Temple Isaiah, 3:30 p.m.	Bible Study, 10:15 a.m. 7 p.m., AA Book Club, 7:30 p.m.		Lenten Café, 6:15 p.m. Taizé Worship 8 p.m.	6 p.m., AA Chancel Choir Reh., 7:30 p.m. Finance Committee, 7:30 p.m.	10 a.m., Al-Anon	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Worship & Sunday School, 10 a.m. God's Open Houses, Setauket Presby., 3:30 p.m.	Bible Study, 10:15 a.m., AA 7 p.m., AA Bd. Of Trustees, 7:30 p.m.	UMW, with speaker on women's writing prison project, 7:30 p.m.	Lenten Café, 6:15 p.m. Taizé Worship, 8 p.m.	6 p.m., AA Chancel Choir Reh., 7:30 p.m.	10 a.m., Al-Anon	Herald Deadline
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Palm Sunday Worship & Sunday School, 10 a.m. God's Open Houses, Caroline Church, 3:30 p.m.	Bible Study, 10:15 a.m. 7 p.m., AA		Taizé Worship, 7 p.m.	Maundy Thursday Service with Sacrament of the Last Supper, 8 p.m.	Good Friday 10 a.m., Al-Anon Ecumenical Service at Setauket UMC, 12- 3 p.m.	Children's Easter Party, 10 a.m.
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Easter Sunday Sunrise Service at Village Green, 7 a.m. Worship, 10 a.m.	7 p.m., AA	Church Council, 7:30 p.m.	Taizé Worship, 7 p.m.	6 p.m., AA Chancel Choir Reh., 7:30 p.m.	10 a.m., Al-Anon	
30	31					
Worship & Sunday School, 10 a.m.	Food for Life, 6:30 p.m. 7 p.m., AA		Taizé Worship, 7 p.m.	6 p.m., AA Chancel Choir Reh., 7:30 p.m.	10 a.m., Al-Anon	

Mark Your Calendar!!

“FOOD FOR LIFE” kicks off a new 8-week series at SBCC on Monday, March 31, 6:30 p.m., in the Community Room. This cancer prevention diet program is free and open to the public. Dr. Lawrence Jacobs is the presenter.



SBCC’S NEW PERFORMING ARTS SUMMER CAMP

for children ages seven to 15 will be offered in two, three-week sessions from June 30 through August 8. For information, call 751-6740 or e-mail: sherrilljones@mac.com.

Watch for more details on the above programs in the Sunday bulletin, on the SBCC website and in the April issue of the *Church Herald*.

