

THE OPEN DOOR

The Briarcliff Congregational Church
Briarcliff Manor, New York 10510 P.O. Box 290 914-941-4368

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“Behold I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut.”

Revelation 3:8

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SAVE THESE DATES:

FEBRUARY

- 11 Women’s Society
- 17 Ash Wednesday

MARCH

- 11 Women’s Society
- 15 Church Council Meeting
- 28 Palm Sunday

Dear Good People of The Briarcliff Church,

The United Church of Christ electronically publishes a series of daily meditations, to which I subscribe. Most of them are very good, but none has been so powerful as the prayer circulated on January 15th, shortly after Haiti’s earthquake. It deserves further exposure and to be prayed and prayed and prayed until its truth inspires our action.

Author's note: In Seattle, where I live, a February 28, 2001 earthquake measured 6.8 on the Richter scale. In Seattle there was property damage, but no loss of life. The January 11, 2010 earthquake in Haiti measured 7.0 on the same scale.

Holy One, we your theologians have our categories. We name some things - - earthquakes, twisters, hurricanes -- as "natural evil," beyond our control. Other things -- rape, murder, genocide -- we name, "human evil." We would like things to stay in their boxes, to fit our categories. As we look into the bruised and broken faces of our Haitian brothers and sisters, we know they don't, not really. Two earthquakes of almost the same magnitude have had such different effects. In Seattle, we were shook up and our earthquake-proofed buildings were set swaying. In Haiti everything in sight has fallen down and tens of thousands of human beings have been crushed. Lord, it's not just beyond-our-control, "natural evil" that's happened this week. The brick-hard truth is that the Haitian earthquake has been so devastating because it has been piled on top of years of poverty and corruption, exploitation and indifference. Grant that we may hear, in the cries of the grieving, the lamentations of your prophets. Grant that in their suffering, we might discern your summons to repentance, your call for a more just human order. Strengthen the rescuers, uphold the grieving, sustain the weary, and cause the money and aid now given to speedily reach those in deepest need, in Christ's name. Amen.

- Anthony B. Robinson

From our lips to God’s ears.

Giving thanks for you and for all the blessings we enjoy,

CONTACT US AT:

Pastor@briarcliffchurch.org
church-office@briarcliffchurch.org

The Rev’d Dr. Bonnie Rosborough, Pastor

A BCC "GOOD-BYE"

Just as we at BCC were catching our collective after-Advent/Christmas/Epiphany breath and relaxing into the standard operating procedures of winter, we were surprised! The Rev'd Jim O'Hanlon, who'd been with us as the YMCA since September 2008, announced he was leaving our ministry in order to become Pastor at St. Paul's Lutheran in Rye Brook. This is a wonderful opportunity for Jim; and we celebrate it with him, even though we regret having to say, "Good-bye." Jim's asked that we publish the letter from him below.

Dear BCC,

As you have heard, I was called by the members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Rye Brook to be their Pastor. This is a wonderful congregation that I discovered this summer during a ten week interim. While January 17th was sadly my last Sunday at BCC I will continue to join in with preparations for New Orleans and I have that week off to be a part of the rebuilding. I didn't expect to be at BCC so briefly and I will miss so many things that make BCC the wonderful ministry it is. The year went by quickly but it was very full and blessed. The opportunity to work with another Pastor is something I wish I could continue with as ministry rarely affords that and Bonnie has been a great model to learn from and a good friend. You have an amazing cadre of leaders who do astounding work. The people of St. Paul's are very interested in and supportive of my participating in the trip to NOLA and hope to partner with you next year.

The news from Haiti is so heart-wrenching and there is so much history and culture that is common to that nation and New Orleans. Watching the awful events unfold I am so grateful that the youth of our local churches have not forgotten the people of Louisiana and the healing and rebuilding that is still needed. The outpouring of help for Haiti is wonderful but to me to see people who have not forgotten Katrina is even more wonderful. God has blessed you with a great heart and great capacity for ministry and I will forever be honored by the opportunity to have this time with you. Keep me in your prayers as I will keep all of you and your work.

Jim O'Hanlon



FROM THE MODERATOR

So far, January seems to be a month in which things change!

First of all, as I'm sure you all know, our YMCA, Jim O'Hanlon, has accepted a full time position at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Rye Brook, New York. While we will miss Jim, I think we all recognize that this is a great opportunity for him and we wish him well. In the small world department, Jim's new church is the same church (newer building) in which my husband's parents and paternal grand-parents were married.

Jim's departure and the difficulties we have had in our stewardship campaign, inevitably leave me wondering whether or not it is wise to assume automatically that we will fill the position exactly as it exists. It may be more appropriate for us to examine our current needs and determine how best to meet them in light of our financial problems. Quite frankly, I think we are all reluctant to engage in this discussion because it was so divisive in the past. However, I believe that, like it or not, we have to consider this question. Please let us agree in advance, that we will all keep our cool, and respect each other's views. We have to look forward, not backward, and engage in intelligent, realistic deliberation on the topic. We cannot afford to do otherwise.

We will be discussing this at Church Council on January 25. Unfortunately, The Open Door arrives after the Council meetings but I will try to keep you well informed via E-mail. Remember, Church Council meetings are open meetings; anyone may attend and speak although only members have a vote. Might not this be a good time for you to check that Drea has an E-mail address for you on file? It's so much easier to reach people this way.

Speaking of change ... On Sunday, January 17 church members voted on the proposal printed in last month's Open Door which would permit the serving of beer and wine on church premises under certain circumstances. The vote was 52 yes, 8 no. This changes non-written practice of long standing. The Trustees will be working on specific forms and regulations to implement this policy. If you have any

suggestions, feel free to contact them. The Church Council will evaluate this change and discuss it again within a year. More change...

Finally, the days are getting longer. Now that's change we all like!

Joan Austin, Moderator

STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship Committee has been working to obtain pledges for 2010 from the congregation and friends of the church. At this time, the pledge total is significantly short of budget, and much less than last year at this time. If you have not submitted a pledge yet, please do so now. The Trustees need to have a realistic pledge income figure in order to plan for this year.

If you have submitted a pledge, we thank you, and respectfully ask that you consider whether this amount could be increased to help fund the many important ministries of the church. Remember that we are all "Blessed to Give and Blessed to Grow"

~ Your Stewardship Committee

BCC RESPONSE TO HAITI

All of us have been shaken to our core by the horrific images and news reports coming from Haiti. And many of you have asked "What can we do to help?" The Benevolence Committee has put together several initiatives which we hope will answer that question. We understand that you may feel bombarded by various requests for help; please pick the ones that make the most sense for you and your family. Any assistance is gratefully accepted!

1. Donation envelopes were in the pews through the end of January. We chose *Doctors Without Borders* (www.doctorswithoutborders.org) and the *UCC – Haiti Earthquake Relief* (www.ucc.org/disaster/) as our designated agencies for relief support. Both of them are well-established organizations which have been in Haiti since the initial quake to provide medical assistance and survival necessities. If you missed the envelopes or would like to add to the

BCC donation, contact Drea Pecor in the church office. Benevolence will also be sending a donation from its budget.

2. Starting in February, we are beginning a more personal initiative. The UCC–Church World Service has issued an urgent request for hygiene and baby care kits. We will start collecting the specific items needed throughout the month and assemble and mail them in March. Unfortunately, it appears that the need for these most basic items will continue in Haiti for a very long time.

Here are the items requested for the hygiene kits:

- 1 hand towel, approx. 16" x 28"
(no fingertip or bath towels)
- 1 washcloth
- 1 wide-tooth comb
- 1 nail clipper
- 1 bar of soap (bath size in wrapper)
- 1 toothbrush (in original packaging)
- 6 bandaids

"Please do not add toothpaste. Toothpaste with an extended expiration date will be added just prior to shipment. Seal all items in a 1-gallon plastic bag with a zip closure."

Here are the items requested for the baby care kits:

- 6 cloth diapers
- 2 T-shirts or undershirts (no onesies)
- 2 washcloths
- 2 gowns or sleepers
- 2 diaper pins
- 1 sweater or sweatshirt
- 2 receiving blankets (1 can be a hand-knitted or crocheted baby blanket)

"All items should be new. Wrap items inside one of the receiving blankets and secure with both diaper pins."

Benevolence will provide bins in the entryway of the sanctuary and also in Beebe Hall for donated items. You are welcome to donate some or all of the items needed for an individual kit. Benevolence will purchase any remaining items prior to shipping.

Thank you in advance for helping those who need such urgent assistance. We are again reminded of our multiple blessings living amongst such caring, generous people.

BCCer IN THE LIMELIGHT!

The phone rang at Jerry and Gloria Pinkney's house early on the morning of January 18th, bringing the news that Jerry's most recent book for children, *The Lion & The Mouse*, (Little, Brown and Company Books for Young Readers) had been awarded the most prestigious of awards: the Caldecott Medal!

Congratulations, Jerry!

The Caldecott is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for the younger set. Named in honor of the nineteenth century English illustrator Randolph Caldecott, it is for illustrators what the Newberry Medal is to authors – the Holy Grail! In receiving it, Jerry joins the likes of Robert McCloskey, Maurice Sendak, William Steig, Barbara Cooney, David Macaulay and others whose work has delighted and inspired youngsters as well as the adults who read with them. And how proud are we?

GOD SPEED OUR PEOPLE TO NEW ORLEANS AND BACK

On Sunday, February 14th, twenty-nine people (seventeen teenagers and twelve adults) will fly to New Orleans for a week of volunteer service as the work of hurricane recovery there continues. Seventeen people from our parish are being joined by members of the Scarborough and Peekskill Presbyterian Churches as well as others for what will be the third, now annual, mission trip. This year, the group is working with the United Methodist Commission for Overseas Relief which has been at constant work in New Orleans post-Katrina. They'll be staying in a Methodist facility and being deployed to work/building sites that UMCOR identifies. Our hopes and prayers and pride go with these committed individuals as they work to serve our neighbors and through these neighbors for God's realm of righteousness and peace. We'll be hearing about the trip on March 14th, when the group will report during coffee hour.

WOMEN'S SOCIETY NEWS

It's All About Books This Time!



Sandwich Luncheon and Book Discussion: On Thursday, February 11th at 11:30 a.m., we will meet in the Eastman room for a

shared luncheon and book discussion. Please bring a sandwich cut into four pieces to be shared and think of a favorite book you'd like to tell the group about. The book could be current or it could be a favorite childhood book. Surprise us! Beverages and desserts will be provided.

Children's Book Drive: Have you noticed the boxes at the back of the sanctuary and in the Eastman room? We are collecting new and/or gently used children's and pre-teen books for distribution to the Ossining Children's Center and New Beginnings in Ossining. Specific suggestions include:

For younger kids: anything with dinosaurs, sharks, super heroes, or general picture books.

For young readers: The Ossining Children's Center wants to start reading groups and would love 2-4 copies of any book other than very young picture books, including Berenstain Bears, Judy Blume books (Blubber, SuperFudge, Fudge-a-Mania, Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing, Sheila the Great), and the series Nate the Great, Junie B. Jones, and Horrible Harry.

New Beginnings would appreciate any early reader books (with reading level on back).

Please do not feel constrained by these suggestions since any preschool or young reader books would be appreciated. When families are struggling to put food on the table or to pay the rent, there is little left to buy books. If anyone is worried about too many duplicates of some of these books being received or have questions, call Helen Buerger at 914-552-3975 or email at Coopbuerger@aol.com.

Many thanks from the Women's Society

We are deeply saddened to report the passing of longtime BCC member **Alice Marxreiter**, who died on January 17th. A memorial service was held here on January 21st and Alice was buried with her husband Max in Copake, NY. Donations in Alice's memory will be gratefully received by BCC.

CE OFFERS PROGRAMS FOR LENT:

"BE NOT ANXIOUS!"

Inspired by Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, "...I tell you, do not worry about your life..." (Matt. 6:25), the Christian Education Committee is sponsoring a series through Lent intended to help participants relax and let worry go. It will convene on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 and feature a variety of presentations on practices of prayer, yoga, meditation, tai chi – all proven to reduce stress and promote peace.

So, mark your calendars now and reserve this time through this season to renew your spirit by attending to the body in which it abides! Details below:

Feb 24: Praying through Crisis: Londa Wilson, whose husband, Bruce, was seriously ill last year, will share her story of how prayer and meditation helped her through that experience. Rosie Matsuoka will teach some simple yoga techniques for meditation following Londa's reflections.



March 3 : Bruce Wilson, a psychotherapist in private practice for whom centering prayer, chanting, guided meditation and other spiritual practices are a means of general well being, will present; and again, Rosie will follow by leading us in yoga poses.

March 10: Penny Wolf, who studies Tai Chi, will lead us in the exercise of this "soft" Chinese martial art which is practiced for health reasons and to achieve the mental calm and spiritual clarity of meditation.

March 17: Rosie Matsuoka will be leading us, again, in yoga; this time discussing theory as well as helping us with the practice.

March 24: Bonnie Rosborough will lead in an exercise of "Praying in Color," an active, meditative, playful form of prayer which draws on the right side of our brains more than it does our left. (Our deacons prayed in color at their October retreat and found it a winning approach.)

These occasions will be held on Wednesday evenings in Beebe Hall, beginning at 7:30 and lasting one hour.


Worship for Ash Wednesday
Including
The Imposition of Ashes (optional)
Wednesday, 17 February
7:30 pm
in the Sanctuary


BENEVOLENCE COMMITTEE NEWS

The Benevolence Committee is extremely grateful for the outpouring of support for this year's Giving Tree. The Sunshine Home (formerly St. Mary's Rehab), Hope's Door (formerly Northern Westchester Shelter for Women), Sing Sing Prison Ministry, Westchester Community Day in Katonah and the Ossining Children's Center were extremely appreciative of our gifts and support. Thank you to all who took the time and made the effort to select and purchase items so that others in our community could have a more joyful Christmas.

With the goal of beginning a monthly support effort for Gerrit Dykstra, we will be organizing a "Cards for Gerrit's Group" table on Valentine's Day Sunday during coffee hour. We invite the congregation to write a few words of support to Gerrit Dykstra and his unit, which is scheduled to have been deployed to Afghanistan by then. We will provide note cards, valentines and various materials for personalizing cards to be sent to Gerrit's unit. Additionally, if members of the congregation have any extra note

cards, art supplies or scrap booking supplies at home that they would like to donate to this effort, we would welcome those additions! When we determine what kinds of items would make life better or easier for Gerrit in Afghanistan, we will communicate this information and plan our monthly efforts accordingly. In the meantime, please remember to be there on February 14th during coffee hour for the kick-off event to support Gerrit in Afghanistan!

COMMUNITY GARDENS NOW INCLUDES ENTERTAINMENT

As anyone reading this will know, Community Markets sponsors a weekly Farmers' Market in our Beebe Hall Saturdays. What you might not know, however, is an "eclectic array of entertainment that represents the collective spirit of the community" is also being offered, along with the wonderful produce! Every market day from January to May, shoppers will enjoy live music, workshops, cooking demos and even cooking contests! It truly is a smorgasbord of wonderfulness and the place to be for good people, good food, good vibes and a good time!

FROM THE CARING COMMITTEE..... IMPORTANT MEDICAL INFORMATION

Who are the top doctors in the New York Metro area? What to do when you or someone you love receives a devastating diagnosis? Comfort for those who grieve the loss of a loved one. These are some of the questions dealt with in the collection the Caring Committee has placed in the church library located in the Eastman Room – specifically in the second section from the right.

In addition, there is a wealth of information about various forms of cancer, about Alzheimer's and related memory problems, and about help for caregivers. Pamphlets are arranged in labeled folders indicating the source of the material – American Cancer Society, National Institute of Health, etc. Many of these pamphlets include helpful reading lists and website addresses for additional information.

A complete alphabetical listing of books and pamphlets is available from the Church office or on the Church website – www.briarcliffchurch.org (follow link to Caring Committee page). We hope you will find this collection useful. Let us know if there are other topics you would like us to add.

The Caring Committee
Joan Beicke, Barbara Brewster, Helen Buerger,
Lowen Bush, Janet Moulton, Karen Neel,
Drea Pecor, Kim Ruffing

GARDEN HOUSE SCHOOL

Happy New Year from all of us at the Garden House School of Briarcliff. January was a very busy month. The children welcomed new friends to our school, created "Matisse inspired" collages and enjoyed a visit from the dentist, Dr. Weiss, in preparation for Dental Awareness Month. The Garden House School of Briarcliff is growing "by leaps and bounds". We now have 11 students and the applications are trickling in (which is better than not at all). For more information, contact Sandy Rooney at 914-941-0404.



CELEBRATIONS

Do you want peace? Forgiveness offers it.
Do you want happiness, a quiet mind,
a certainty of purpose,
and a sense of worth and beauty
that transcends the world?
Do you want a quietness that cannot be
disturbed,
a gentleness that can never be hurt,
a deep abiding comfort,
and a rest so perfect it can never be upset?
All this forgiveness offers you.

A Course in Miracles

Happy February birthdays to our friends:
Nancy Joyce February 3
Barbara Brewster February 27

BRIARCLIFF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2010

Tel 914.941.4368 Fax 914.941.1513 Email church-office@briarcliffchurch.org

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>Childcare available during worship. Sunday School meets simultaneously.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6 Career Closet 9:30~11am Farmers Market 9am ~1pm
7 WORSHIP 10AM Pick up Superbowl food	8	9 Benevolence Committee meeting, 7:30pm	10	11 Women's Society Book Discussion & Luncheon, 9:30am Senior Choir rehearsal, 8pm	12	13 Career Closet 9:30~11am Farmers Market 9am ~1pm
14 WORSHIP 10AM No Church School <u>YOUTH</u>	15 PRESIDENT'S DAY Caring Committee meeting, 7:30pm <u>GROUPS'</u>	16 Trustees' meeting, 7:30pm <u>MISSION</u>	17 ASH WEDNESDAY Worship, 7:30pm including the imposition of ashes <u>TRIP</u>	18 Senior Choir rehearsal, 8pm <u>TO</u>	19 <u>NEW</u>	20 Career Closet 9:30~11am Farmers Market 9am ~1pm <u>ORLEANS</u>
21 WORSHIP 10AM	22	23	24 Lenten Program, 7:30pm "Be Not Anxious"	25 Senior Choir rehearsal, 8pm	26	27 Career Closet 9:30~11am Farmers Market 9am ~1pm
28 WORSHIP 10AM Confirmation Class, 11:30am						