

# *The POINT*

*Bi-Monthly Newsletter of the Inclusive Community*

JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 2012



## **PASTOR'S MESSAGE**

### **Songs and Shadows**

The liturgical year is either wise or depressing. It does not allow us to get very far from darkness and suffering. It reminds us regularly that this dear, dear world is not our home. Even if we are here transiently, it reminds us that the glory does not last nor, of course, does the sorrow. This may be small comfort to carry us through the journey of our brief life.

Is this wisdom or is it depressing?

Chinese Taoism reminds us that life is a rhythmic pattern in which no one succeeds all the time and no one fails all the time. It draws our attention to the nature of success which has limits built into it and to the nature of failure which is also circumscribed. Taoism merely observes the phenomenon. No one gets through life with gains alone and no one loses everything.

Is this wise or depressing? Or is it, quite simply, the way it is so that there are no remedies for it and no strategies that will change it.

The liturgical year is like an excursion, beyond fantasy, into reality.

In January and February, just weeks after Christmas, we encounter Ash Wednesday. We go from angel songs in the heavens to demonic forces in the desert, from all the joy of a new-born child and the conviction that God is with us in an utterly unique way, to a Lenten season that will end with the most despairing human cry ever heard: My God, why have you abandoned me?

So, in the liturgical year, the joy goes only so far before the shadows cluster. The certitudes are not stable enough to endure before they are undermined by ambiguity and confusion. The journey from crib to cross, the distance from Bethlehem to Calvary is a short one, even geographically, and, clearly, metaphorically.

So, perhaps, there is wisdom in the liturgical year.

Rejoice but prepare the other ways we must also walk. Making a crooked way straight cannot be accomplished without suffering. The suffering is not endless. "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" is the final prayer declared soon after the terror of abandonment.

Success without limits makes us arrogant. In Eden, the Fall occurs because we assumed that success should have no boundary. Suffering without limits makes us hopeless. So the Eden story ends with a promise.

Success gives us only the present. It prompts us to build barricades against failure. We want only the present. Suffering is all in the present. We feel the pain every minute. No past memory or future remedy helps.

The rhythm of success and failure hurls us into the future and into hope. All the joy of Christmas is shallow without the riskiness of growing. A child whose life ends in the crib fills us with unspeakable sorrow for all that might have been. The suffering of a lifetime is the anvil on which commitment and fidelity and forgiveness and faith are hammered into life.

The liturgy reminds us that this is the way it is. The way it is gives us Jesus of Nazareth and the Christ of Easter, our own lives and communities. The way it is gives us the Gospel message and the nearness of God. The way it is has made us conscious and brought us love. Dare we seek to change it? If we did, would love go with it and the human heart?

It is not depressing to live the liturgical year. There is wisdom in it at every turn. It teaches us and it brings us peace.

Anthony Padovano

## NEWSBRIEFS

- *Thanksgiving Food Collection:* Our Thanksgiving food collection of non-perishable food was delivered to Community Food Bank of New Jersey, 31 Evans Terminal, Hillside, NJ 07205, Tel (908) 355-FOOD and the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Essex County Chapter.
- *Advent Virtual Flowers:* we collected \$60 in memory of loved ones.

- *Hoffman Homes:* We prepared and sent our Hoffman Homes Goody Bags for Thanksgiving and Christmas and are planning to send them for Valentine's Day. We also sent Christmas gifts to 16 young people at Hoffman Homes.
- *Christmas Collection for 2011: \$1705.* It is not too late if anyone else wants to send a donation.
- *Second Collection:* We sent a check for \$313 to Hoffman Homes for their water main replacement project from our Oct & Nov second collection. We will be sending \$97 from our December collection. The second offering in January and February will be for the United Church of Christ Disaster Relief Fund.
- We sent a \$200 annual pledge to Central Atlantic Council as we did last year.
- Inspiring, creative homilies by our Clergy Team and Homilists are available on the IC website: <http://www.christianbridges.com/homilies.html>

### Church Calendar

*Worship & Communion Service* – every Sunday at 11:00 AM

*Education Sessions 5:00 PM*  
Jan 7 – The Prophetic Jesus  
Feb 4 – Evil, Suffering, and a God of Love

*Church Council Meeting*  
January 15  
February 12

### Media Events of Interest

*Krista Tippett "On Being" – NPR Radio – Weekly on Sundays 7-8 AM – broadcasts also available at <http://being.publicradio.org>*

"On Being is a spacious conversation — and an evolving media space — about the big questions at the center of human life, from the boldest new science of the human brain to the most ancient traditions of the human spirit...

On Being has both responded and contributed to a growing acknowledgement that there are basic questions of meaning that pertain to the entire human experience....

What we cover as "conversation about religion, meaning, ethics, and ideas" drives towards ancient, animating questions at the heart of the great traditions and beyond them: What does it mean to be human? What matters in a life? What matters in a death? How to love? How to be of service to each other and to the world?" Source: <http://being.publicradio.org/about/>  
Krista Tippett is the Host & Producer of "On Being".

## IN CELEBRATION OF VALENTINE'S DAY

### A Quintale Valentine

Two years ago I was telling stories at a Woman's Club in a small town in mid-Jersey. It was February and the stories featured a collection of my love stories which I have gathered mostly by personal interviews of couples. The club president had invited the husbands for the evening. When I arrived, I was introduced to a couple who wanted to tell me their love story. It has become one of my favorites.

The wife told me their story while the husband just held her hand and smiled throughout the telling. "We were born in houses that were so close that they were almost touching. We grew up knowing each other since infancy, knew each other during kindergarten, grammar school and high school. When we graduated we were the best of friends. We soon knew that we loved one another and three years after graduation we got married."

"We are still living in the same town where we were born. We are in our late seventies, and still are very much in love, and in our home, over the fireplace, we have an enlarged photograph of each of us standing in the same play-pen hugging each other." It was obvious that they are still hugging each other after all these years. – Rev. Fred Quinn



*Corinthians 13:4-6 "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy, love does not brag, is not proud, does not behave itself inappropriately, does not seek its own way, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth, love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things."*



**INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY & WORLDS AID DAY - 1996**

The Inclusive Community had made six panels as part of the quilt project in 1996. Our liturgy on this December 4th included the following poem in remembrance of World Aids Day:

**A FAMILY REUNION**

For Mark & Guy

***Thoughts and feelings of those members of the Inclusive Community who attended the AIDS Quilt Display in Washington DC October 1996***

"Look with love - Live with hope"  
So many names  
people who once lived and hoped for a cure  
so many tears for lovers  
friends  
husbands  
dads  
moms  
children  
lost to this dreaded disease;  
Miles of materials, poems, lace  
buttons, and thread represents  
the memorial prepared with love,



At the display there was lots of love around.  
On the candlelight walk there was love and hate.  
People on the side that didn't agree with the quilt,  
they showed hate, The people who walked  
with candles showed great love  
that can overcome peoples' hate

The candles-  
you could see them for a mile-  
it was so beautiful.  
I got to see my Uncle Mark's quilt  
and my Dad's quilt &  
we put flowers down

stood there to remembered them.  
The quilt is a very amazing, thing,  
it shows a lot of love for people  
who have died of the disease AIDS.  
so many who died from AIDS.  
so many panels  
so Many living with AIDS  
so many loved ones of those who died.  
so much love  
so much creativity  
so much sorrow  
so much joy  
so much death  
so much life  
It was awesome--  
What most inspired me and touched me  
were the people in the last stages of AIDS,  
some in wheel chairs marching in the parade.  
They know what it's like to live in hope.

There were many candles  
They were really cool and nice to look at,  
I was sad to know so many people had died.  
All the quilts were pretty and  
all of the people there thought so too.  
There were probably one million people there.

I saw people who wanted to say the names  
of their lost ones.  
I saw my friend's father's panel  
and his uncle's panel  
I loved all of the panels there and  
hope I can go again.

As I walked  
and saw each panel that we lovingly created  
it was like re-visiting with family and friends-  
It reminded me of a family reunion

Amen

**PRAYERS AND CONCERNS**

Please remember in your prayers those recovering from illness, grieving the loss of a loved one and those who have challenges before them.

<i>ANNE HESS</i>	<i>FRANCESCHI FAMILY</i>	<i>MESSINEO FAMILY</i>
<i>ANNE WAYNE &amp; FAMILY</i>	<i>GARTLEY FAMILY</i>	<i>RICHARD SCAINE</i>
<i>BETTE BECK</i>	<i>GRAHAM FAMILY</i>	<i>RUTH FISCHER &amp; FAMILY</i>
<i>CATHERINE OLIVERI</i>	<i>JOE GUARDUCCI &amp; FAMILY</i>	<i>THE D'ANGELO FAMILY</i>
<i>CINDY &amp; DEBBIE DONNELLY</i>	<i>KATHY BAILEY &amp; FAMILY</i>	<i>THE WALDRON FAMILY</i>
<i>CODY LEUSINK</i>	<i>KAY RIEGER &amp; FAMILY</i>	<i>WEINHAGEN FAMILY</i>
<i>DILK FAMILY</i>	<i>LINDA MEDNICK</i>	<i>WELKY FAMILY</i>

**BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES\***



**Happy Birthday to:**

- Linda Sieh..... January 10
- Terry Quinn..... January 15
- Rebecca Ortelli..... January 26
- Kathy Guarducci..... February 2
- Richard Weinhagen ..... February 6
- Amy Ortelli..... February 10
- Sheila Washington..... February 24

**We are not aware of any anniversaries in January or February. Please let us know if you have any corrections or additions to our birthday and anniversary list.**

**WORSHIP SCHEDULE – JANUARY 2012**



**WORSHIP SCHEDULE**



Month - January, 2012

Sunday	Reader	Eucharist Minister	Celebrant
January 1, 2012 Theme: Journey	Jeanette Fries Isaiah 60: 1 - 6 Psalm: 72: 1 - 7, 10 -14 Matthew 2: 1 - 12	Terry Quinn Communion Prayer: Hope	Rev. Dr. George McDonald
January 8, 2012 Theme: Baptism	Betsy Guarducci Isaiah 42: 1 - 9 Psalm: 29 Mark 1: 4 - 11	Jeanette Fries Communion Prayer: Water	Rev. Fred Quinn
January 15, 2012 Theme: Discipleship	Anne Wayne I Samuel 3: 1 - 10 Psalm: 40: 1 - 11 John 43: 43 - 51	Betsy Guarducci Communion Prayer: Faithfulness	Rev. Dr. Anthony T. Padovano
January 22, 2012 Theme: Nearness of God	Tony Bocchino Jonah 3: 1 - 5, 10 Psalm: 62: 5 - 12 Mark 1: 14 - 20	Linda Bocchino Communion Prayer Healing	Rev. Dr. Richard Scaine
January 29, 2012 Theme: Healing	Rebecca Ortelli Deuteronomy 18: 15 - 29 Psalm: 111 Mark 1: 221 - 28	Wayne Ortelli Communion Prayer: Healing	Rev. Dr. Anthony T. Padovano

Second Offering: United Church of Christ Disaster Relief Fund

**WORSHIP SCHEDULE – FEBRUARY 2012**



**WORSHIP SCHEDULE**



Month- February, 2012

Sunday	Reader	Eucharist Minister	Celebrant
February 5, 2012 Theme: Faithfulness	Betsy Guarducci I Corinthians 9: 6 - 23 Psalm: 147: 1 - 11 Mark 1: 29 - 39	Anne Wayne Communion Prayer: Faithfulness	Rev. Dr. George McDonald
February 12, 2012 Theme: Renewal	Anne Wayne I Corinthians 9: 24 - 27 Psalm: 30 Mark 1: 40 - 45	Tony Bocchino Communion Prayer: God's Presence	Rev. Dr. Anthony T. Padovano
February 19, 2012 Theme: Transfiguration	Terry Quinn 2 Kings 2: 1 - 12 Psalm: 50: 1 - 6 Mark 9: 2 - 9	Betsy Guarducci Communion Prayer: God's Presence	Rev. Fred Quinn
February 22, 2012 Ash Wednesday 7:00 pm	Linda Bochino Joel 2: 12 - 18 Psalm: 51 Matthew 6: 1 - 6, 16 - 21	Terry Quinn Communion Prayer Mercy	Rev. Dr. Anthony T. Padovano
February 26, 2012 Theme: Temptation and Triumph	Wayne Ortelli Genesis 9: 8 - 17 Psalm: 25: 1 - 10 Mark 1: 9 - 15	Rebecca Ortelli Communion Prayer Covenant	Rev. Dr. Anthony T. Padovano

Second Offering: United Church of Christ Disaster Relief Fund

We wish you, your families and loved ones a New Year filled with health, peace and blessings!

*For last year's words belong to last year's language  
And next year's words await another voice.  
And to make an end is to make a beginning. – T.S. Elliot*