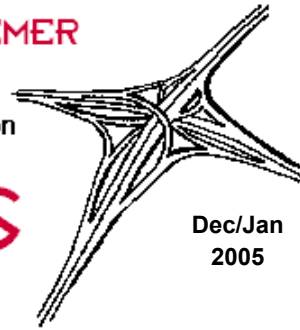




CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

A Christian Liberation Community  
in the Episcopal Tradition

CROSSROADS



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## Reconciliation Season

*by Phillip Wilson, Rector*

In the five Sundays, Jan 15 through Feb. 12, 2006, beginning with Martin Luther King Day and ending with the feast day of Absalom Jones, first African-American to be ordained an Episcopal priest, we are taking a deeper look at that which separates human beings from each other, with one group claiming dominance over another. At that very place we call for Reconciliation. We look for the same hope those slaves sought as they escaped from bondage and took the road to freedom on the Underground Railroad.

Though our emphasis is Racial Reconciliation, we know that all the areas of oppression support each other and work together to keep people separated and afraid of each other. This liturgy seeks to address the need for reconciliation in a broad range of life experience.

Rather than select a single color to represent the season, the vestments include all colors of the rainbow and all human skin tones. The quilt pieces hanging throughout the Church are made from fabrics gathered from all around the world. The patterns follow a traditional code, used as secret signals on the Underground Railroad. The quilt pattern on the altar during this time is the same pattern slaves would recognize in front of a Quaker farm telling them this was a safe place for them to stop and rest.

The metaphors of Exodus, of the Underground Railroad and following the North Star resound throughout the liturgy. God's children are not meant for bondage, and God works through human lives to set us all free.

At the center of this liturgy is a Litany of Reconciliation and Confession in which we name the inequality of power between people and the ways we have abused that power, often unknowingly.

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## Our Episcopal Heritage

*by Phillip Wilson, Rector*

A bishop is one of the three orders of ordained ministers that supports the work of the laity to carry out the mission of the church which is nothing less than to make the Dream of God a reality. In the Anglican Communion, of which the Episcopal Church is the American branch, bishops stand in the tradition of the apostles and oversee the ministry of a designated area called a Diocese.

The sacramental functions of the bishops include ordination of deacons, priests and other bishops and confirmation and receptions of people into the Episcopal Church. The bishop holds a larger vision than any one parish and is a pastor to the pastors.

Bishops are elected by the clergy and lay delegates to a special convention. For a bishop-elect to be eventually consecrated BISHOP, she or he must receive the approval of both a majority of the sitting bishops in the Church and from the individual diocesan Standing Committees, which are equivalent to a Vestry for the Diocese.

Newark is in the process of preparing to elect a new bishop as our present bishop, John Croneberger, is retiring. A Profile Committee will create a statement of what the people of the Diocese are looking for and a Nominating Committee will present a list of candidates for the special "election" convention on September 16, 2006 . If all goes as expected, the new bishop will be consecrated any time after January of 2007.

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## A Special Martin Luther King service

On Sunday, January 15th Redeemer will have a special guest preaching at the 10:30 service in commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr and his vision, The Honorable Byron Rushing, member of the Massachusetts State Assembly.

Mr. Rushing represents someone who has spent his life in pursuit of justice, both economic and civil, for all peoples, both in the United States and around the world. As a historian (degrees from both Harvard and MIT) who has fought for the civil rights and dignity of all people he has led the dual roles of activist and teacher. In his position as teacher he has challenged people in New England, where he resides, to recognize their and their ancestor's roles in both slavery and racism. More recently, he has spoken up for the rights of same sex couples and has opened a discussion within the African American community about civil rights and how the struggles of LGBT people represent a struggle for rights and dignity, that though historically different then the struggle of African Americans it still represents a group of people fighting bigotry and oppression.

As a Massachusetts legislator Mr. Rushing has been in the forefront of the same sex marriage issue in that state, first in trying to get the legislature to legalize it and then in the political fight to stop enactment of a constitutional amendment to ban same sex marriages once the courts had spoken. But though this would be commendable by itself, this is just the tip of the iceberg. Mr. Rushing was an outspoken voice in the fight against apartheid and through his actions shepherded anti apartheid legislation in the Massachusetts commonwealth. He has been involved in other such actions, most recently in getting action on a state level against the repressive regime in Burma (Myanmar).

In other social justice causes he has been active as well. Mr. Rushing has been a tireless fighter to abolish the death penalty in the state as not only vicious retribution, but also because it is so often unevenly applied based on the race and background of the accused. He also has recognized injustices practiced against groups of people that may not necessarily make the national news. For example, he was sponsor of legislation to ban discrimination against people based on their size, which is significant because while such practices routinely happen few people acknowledge it as an issue, other then those affected by it.

He also has been active in the fight for economic justice, whether it is in gaining more of a foothold for minority businesses in obtaining state contracts, in economic development zones favoring disadvantaged communities or on the struggle to find a way to ameliorate the trend of globalization that often hurts those most on the margins economically. Most recently he has been actively sponsoring legislation aimed at ending homelessness in the commonwealth.

With even more relevance to Redeemer, Byron Rushing is active in the Episcopal Church, of which he is a long time and active member. He has been the chaplain to the General Convention (something no other lay person has ever been) and is involved in the Church's Program, Budget and Finance Committee. He is also a founding member of the Episcopal Urban Caucus and serves on the boards of the Episcopal Women's Caucus and of the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice. In an area near and dear to our hearts at Redeemer, he has been actively working through these and other ministries to make the Episcopal Church a place that welcomes all. More importantly, he is working towards the church recognizing the special needs and hopes that the diverse people walking through our doors represent and in meeting them.

So, reserve the date of January 15th and plan on attending the 10:30 Martin Luther King remembrance service to hear our guest preacher, The Honorable Byron Rushing of the Massachusetts state assembly to hear his message of truth and reconciliation, in our church, and in the world around us.

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## In Memorium: Herbert Conklin, 1912-2005

### *I remember....*

*The following is the very special personal remembrance of Herbert Conklin, a long time Redeemer member and former vestry person who wrote this shortly before he passed on in December, 2005. He shares with us some stories from his life at Redeemer and in the Morristown of another time. Thank you to Preston Root, Sr. for sharing his friend's account with us.*

**B. Preston Root, known to me as "Pres,"** has sent me a copy of "I Remember Redeemer," a wonderful historical story of his family's connection with the Church of the Redeemer (Episcopal) located at 36 South Street in Morristown, New Jersey. As of this writing my wife Jenny and I are residents of Margate, Florida, and "Pres," now widowed, is in his longtime residence on Humphrey Road, in Morris Township, N.J. So, our contacts are mostly by telephone conversations, and through this medium he has suggested I might want to add to his work and fill in some more church history prior to our meeting in 1943 and beyond. I agreed, so here goes.

First, a bit of biography prior to moving with my family to Morristown. I was born in 1912 in the house built by my grandfather, Eugene Conklin, at 19 Mulford St., Patchogue, N.Y. My grandparents lived around the corner at 65 Cedar Avenue and our backyards were connected by by chicken coops, gardens, out-houses, barns, and workshops.

The family were Congregationalists and I believe I was baptized in Patchogue's Congregational Church. Later in life, and still in my childhood, the family would visit the grandparents. My grandfather would have Sunday services in the parlor of the house and read from a huge Gutenberg Bible on a tall pedestal. He also said grace before meals in a formal dining room. The words in the grace were not clear to me as a child and the ending sounded like bicycle (Jesus Christ)?

At some time prior to the age of five, my family moved to Seacliff, New York, either because of a polio scare in Patchogue, or due to a business transfer by the New York Telephone Company for whom my father was employed. I have no recollection of any church going in Seacliff but my father always said prayers with me at bedtime, I saying the then popular, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep, if I should die before wake", etc. The former Bishop Spong, of the Diocese of Newark, described this prayer as one of the ills of the Christian Church. But it at least kept God in my life.

My mother, Geraldine Conklin, nee Parcels, became ill with tuberculosis and had to move us to New Jersey where her parents, Lewis and Alice, resided on Ridgedale Avenue in Morristown. My mother was sent to a sanitarium in Saranac Lake, New York and I was cared for by my grandparents. Dad secured work with the New Jersey Bell telephone company in Newark. He and two others started up "The Yellow Pages" and had a profitable career selling the advertising for the pages. He commuted to Newark on the D.L. & W. Railroad whose passenger cars were pulled by steam locomotives. My mother was an Episcopalian and became a member of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Morristown.

My grandmother had a nephew, John Stephenson, who was an Episcopal Priest in Ridgefield Park, New Jersey. A sister, Julia Stephenson, was a Deaconess of the Episcopal Church of New York and ran a school for wayward girls in Cohoes. My grandmother Parcels was a staunch Methodist and a member of the Methodist Church in Morristown. She was also a very active member of the "Woman's Christian Temperance Union". My grandfather was a mason by trade and an officer of the Bricklayer, Plasterers, and Hod Carriers Union. He was often a recipient of a bottle of wine from the Italian members of the union which, when brought home, were promptly poured down the drain by his wife.

I was sent to the Methodist Sunday School which was led by a Mr. Yawger. It was well attended and his words were imbedded in my mind. His first name was Carlton and he was a commuter with whom I would sometimes meet on the train to work. His son, Glen, was my dentist in Bernardsville.

While living on Ridgedale Avenue my playmates and I spent much time out-of-doors on the lawns of the modest homes. There was no TV or radio to keep us inside. A widowed member of Redeemer also resided on Ridgedale Avenue. As it turned out, the Rector, T. W. Attridge, had asked the congregation if they knew of any young boys who might be "recruited" for a boy's choir. The widow mentioned a group of "sometimes mischievous" boys who were using the street as their playground. So Father Attridge visited Ridgedale and gathered some prospects for tryouts in the music room. He would play the piano and asked us to sing a well-known hymn. I had never sung solo but to my surprise Reverend Attridge said I qualified. This was the end of my Methodist teaching and the start of lifelong friendships with the choir boys at Redeemer. Looking at a photo of the choir I find that most are deceased, the most recent, George Croy, whose family operated the Morristown radio station, WMTR. This started my connection with Redeemer and brought my parents to the church. My father and I were confirmed together in 1926.

Father Attridge was extremely interested in the welfare of young boys and he was liked by all of us. We called him "Pop". He was a Princeton graduate and a member of one of their "clubs". (There were no fraternities at Princeton then). On many occasions he would load his Packard touring car with some of us and head for Princeton, have lunch at his "Club", and then head for a football game. He also would arrange for trips to Lake Hopatcong via the Morris County Traction Company, which ran a trolley line to the lake.

He championed Boy Scout Troop 5, one of the oldest in the U.S. A Cub Scout Troop was started, and a basketball team which played in the Greater Morris County Athletic League. Morristown's "Doc" Moody was a Vestryman and a vociferous

supporter of Redeemer athletics, as well as being Morristown High School's sports doctor. (Although he was a practicing dentist)!

Many who lived in Morristown and Morris Township, which encircles the town, wondered about the need for two Episcopal Churches. The founders of Redeemer must have had reasons best known to them. In any event, they must have had some desire to separate from St. Peters, the "high" church, and establish a "low" church. It was located on Pine and Morris streets near the D. L. & W. Railroad station. All I know about this is from reading history books and hearing small talk from elder members.

The church building on South Street was built in 1917 and one of the constructors was Sturgis Brothers by whom my grandfather Parcells was employed. There must have been some wealthy persons among the founders, one being W. Parsons Todd, familiarly known as "Mr. Morristown" and written about in Pres Roots essay. In earlier days Morristown had many wealthy families called "The Five Hundred," who built mansions along Madison Avenue. Some were from New York City and came to town to avoid the summer heat. Probably many became members of the "high" church, St. Peters, but there were a sprinkling who preferred Redeemer, among whom was W. Parsons Todd. Another who intrigued me was Charles D. M. Cole who wore a cape and later had a stained-glass window donated in his name. Some rented pews in the front pews. If a family member died the choir boys were sometimes hired to sing at the funeral. We were paid fifty cents.

Father Attridge cultivated the hired help of the rich class: maids, chauffeurs, gardeners, estate managers. He established an evening service to accommodate some of these workers who could not attend morning services due to chores from their employers. This meant extra work for the choir boys.

Communion service was once a month in the early days. No crucifer. No candles, etc. The choir master was a Mr. Curdy, a wonderful professional, who became a noted organist in Philadelphia, as well as in other musical endeavors. George Papps became Redeemer's long term organist and Choir master. His son Ollie was a great member and noted soloist. Elinor Root was also a great soloist. As long as I could sit next to Ollie I could handle the bass part.

Father Attridge arranged the make-up of his vestry, with the same ones elected every year at the annual meeting. These meetings were dull and poorly attended. One member was a Mr. Peck, the headmaster of a private school bearing his name. A bell in the tower was donated in memory of his wife. The young members of the church felt a lack of representation and "ganged-up" by attending an annual meeting and electing my father as their choice. Pop Attridge solved this surprise by increasing the number of vestry members to avoid the embarrassment of losing one of his supporters. Of course my mother and father remained good friends of Reverend and Mrs. Attridge.

I married Frances Elizabeth "Betty" Thompson in 1936. The wedding ceremony was at Redeemer and conducted jointly by Reverend Attridge and my mother's cousin, Reverend John Stephenson, whose parish was in Ridgefield Park, N.J. Our three children, Peter, Elizabeth "Betsy", and Herbert (better know as H. Terry Conklin IV) were all baptized at Redeemer.

Following Pop Attridge as Rector was Henry Brevort Cannon, a Yale graduate; a strong, well-built man and athlete who rowed on the crew team. He was a teacher and historian. Later he became a coach of the Princeton rowing team and a lecturer at Divinity school. He also ran a private school in upper N.Y. state. While he had a powerful voice, many in the congregation had trouble with his diction. Amplifiers were installed but did not help much. During his tenure an organization was formed called "The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit." Its format, goals and guidelines were in a pamphlet obtained from a church in Boston. Briefly, it was a prayer group pointed toward ill and troubled people uncovered by "Brev's" contacts with the people in the Parish, hospitals, jails, or off of the streets. It was certainly one of the best church groups I experienced in my lifetime.

Another event new to the Parish was performing The Passion Play over two years. These were events involving most members of the Parish, one way or another. We were able to secure costumes from The House of Prayer, an Episcopal Church in Newark. It was a tremendous effort and rewarding to all.

A year of my time at Redeemer was interrupted when I contracted tuberculosis and was confined to a sanitarium near Williamsport. The disease was uncovered in my lung by a Dr. Thompson, who I had visited as a newcomer to town and had recruited, him and his wife, as members at Redeemer.

The following Rector, who was recruited from Puerto Rico, was "Sandy" Cutler. While I was on the vestry I was elected as a delegate to the diocesan convention, at which a new Bishop was to be chosen. Sandy was pushing for the election of Reverend John Shelby Spong and my vote was for him and the convention elected him. He was installed at a service in St. Patrick's Cathedral in Newark at which I and Doc Moody were ushers. The next day was a Sunday and the new Bishop showed up at Redeemer's 8:00 AM Eucharist. A Mrs. Brown, who was a member of the Altar Guild, peeked out of the sacristy door to get a rough estimate of communicants. She turned to Sandy and said a young priest was coming down the aisle. Sandy took a look and said, "that young priest is your new Bishop!" Serving as a chalice bearer that day, I was probably the first one to serve the Bishop in his new community of Morristown where he had decided to locate his family.

To say the least, Bishop Spong was one of our more controversial leaders and received a great deal of media coverage.

Sandy was a supporter of the much-debated subject of allowing women to be ordained as Priests of the Episcopal Church. I believe nine were ordained in Philadelphia and Reverend Cutler invited them to visit Redeemer and celebrate the

Eucharist. He notified the vestry that he was going to do this but was not seeking the vestry's approval. I, as Clerk of the Vestry so recorded this and attended the service at which nothing untoward occurred.

Redeemer as a member of Morris County's Council of Churches was in the Jail Chaplaincy program. With Sandy and others, we conducted services at the jail. Also, another group visited with prisoners, and if requested, would also visit their families. This sort of work, however, I believe should be left to professionals. Another jail activity was working with a member of St. Peters in providing reading material from Morris County's Free Library.

As a sequel to this essay, our life in New Jersey ended in 1974 when we went to Cutchogue, New York, which is at the eastern end of the north fork of Long Island. The church we attended was in Mattatuck and was named Redeemer! There we met a retiree from Brooklyn, Bill Brock, and his wife Ann. Bill had had a similar experience in his Episcopal Church in Brooklyn, choir boy and on up, etc. Redeemer at Mattatuck had fallen on bad times and was in danger of falling to mission status. The congregation was Reverend Baker, his wife, an elderly organist, the Brocks and the Conklins! We worked hard to build up a congregation and operated a thrift shop to get funds to pay the rector and upkeep. The church was located on a corner and faced a one-way street. The city had a sign posted at the entrance near the curb reading, "DO NOT ENTER". Maybe this was our nemesis?

During a recent vacation in Brookside, N.J. at daughter Betsy's home, her husband Jim drove us to Long Island. This included a stop in Mattatuck to see the Church of the Redeemer there. I had a phone conversation with the church secretary and Bill Brock and was happy to learn that Redeemer there has a growing congregation.

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## Youth Education: Advent, Christmas and Epiphany

*By Robin Dexter-Meyer, Director of Youth Education*

### **Godly Play**

Our Advent lessons are bringing us closer to Bethlehem each Sunday. The children are meeting Jesus as Christ Child, King, and Light. The Advent and Christmas story cycle concludes with the assurance that the light of the prophets, the Holy Family, the shepherds, and the Magi, and the Light of Christ, "can be with us in many ways and many places all through the year. So we can keep Christmas all year around." (Young Children and Worship by Sonja Stewart and Jerome Berryman, page 146.)

### **Give Your Talent**

Storytelling materials are an integral part of Godly Play lessons. In Advent and Christmas, teachers use wooden figures, candles, and fabric underlays to tell the story. Students can choose to work with these materials later, to retell the story themselves.

We recently purchased new materials for four presentations: Creation, Exodus, the Advent cycle, and the Parable of the Sower. These materials are of very good quality and worth the price, about \$300. However, we are wondering if there are folks at Redeemer who enjoy sewing and woodworking, who would like to support our program by making Godly Play materials for us? Please see me if you are interested.

### **Kids in Church**

How can we help children feel comfortable and welcome in church? One way is to have materials in church that kids know are specifically for them.

Near the church entrance, there is a table where you can find several good books we recently purchased for the children. These include *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* by Barbara Robinson; *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis; *The Night of Las Posadas* by Tomie DePaola; *The Story of Chanukah* (a board book); and *Kids' Seasonal Mandalas* (an activity book). These books draw children into the liturgy and the cycle of the church year, rather than distracting them from it.

We also bought two washable cloth books for the Nursery: *The Story of Creation* and *The First Christmas*. It is never too soon to share the stories of God with little ones!

### **Looking Ahead**

The New Year moves us from the Christmas season into the season of Epiphany. The Youth Education Committee will meet on Sunday, January 8, at about noon; anyone interested in Youth Education is welcome to join us. One item on our agenda is a Chinese New Year Family Night, tentatively scheduled for the first Friday in February.

Sunday School teachers will meet in January to discuss the book *The Miter Fits Just Fine!* by Mark Francisco Bozzuti-Jones, and to plan lessons focusing on Bishop Barbara Harris for Reconciliation season, which begins on Sunday, January 15.

The Rt. Rev. John Croneberger, Bishop of Newark, is scheduled to visit Redeemer on Sunday, January 29. Please bring your children to church at 10:30 that morning so Bishop Croneberger can say a few words to them at the beginning of the service. We will then leave for Sunday School, and return to church later for Communion.

### **Thank You**

I want to extend a heartfelt "Thank you!" to teachers, assistants, substitute teachers, Youth Education Committee members, parents, kids, and many others who have shared your gifts of ministry through Youth Education programs at Redeemer this year. May the peace of Christ be with you this holiday season and always!

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## **Zen Meditation: The Practice of Awakening**

*By Ray Cicetti*

One Tuesday evening at our Empty Bowl Zendo before the bell rang to begin our first period of meditation, I heard a man and woman walking down the hall past our door. They must have noticed the row of shoes resting neatly against the wall. The man asked, "What do you think they are doing in there?" The woman responded, "I think they are praying."

Zen meditation can be viewed as wordless, imageless prayer which opens us to realize for ourselves the mystery that we call God, or in Buddhist terms our True or Essential nature. This nature is beyond any dogma, idea, belief or thought. It is who we are.

Zen, which comes out of the Buddhist tradition, is interested in teaching us a path of how we can put an end to our suffering. The Buddha was not a God but a person who saw there was incredible suffering in the world and wanted to learn how to end it. He discovered that one of the main reasons why we suffer is because we are pulled around by our attachment to desires, greed and ignorance.

Zen meditation is the study of the self and a practice of how to awaken and appreciate our life. It is an active way of remembering our wholeness. The goals of Zen teachings are about dropping the idea of a separate and substantive self, and seeing, knowing that we all belong to something much greater. It offers through its various practices how to live fully in the world rather than holding to only the thoughts and ideas that describe it. One of the great Japanese Zen teachers of old wrote: "To study Zen is to study the self, and to study the self is to forget the self. When we forget the self we are awakened by all things."

So Zen training is about how we intuitively recognize through daily practice that we are part of this great mystery of life. Through practice, we wake up to the fundamental unity of all things. We know for ourselves without having to be told that we are One Body. We find the way to actually know this for ourselves through the practice of sitting meditation, called zazen. When we realize this fact, we see each other as ourselves and seeing that, the way we interact, and treat each other significantly shifts. If I hurt you, I hurt myself.

We find this insight not only in Zen but in Christianity as well. In the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas, Jesus says, "I am the all" and, "Split the stick and you will find me there." Although our natural state of being is peaceful and whole, we often become so conditioned by societal and cultural messages, beliefs and ego attachments that we lose our connection to this state. We lose our connection to how special our life is, believing that if we just possess one more thing we'll be fulfilled. It does not work. We feel alone and empty inside. We look but we don't see. We listen but we don't hear as we jump from one activity to another trying to find the peace and happiness that is right in front of us.

Zen is a practice of stillness. Most of us are preoccupied. We are carrying on a constant internal dialogue, always talking to ourselves. If we continue doing that we miss the moment to moment awareness of our life. One Zen teacher put it this way: "The practice of zazen brings us back to the moment. It helps us recapture our lost ability to quiet the endlessly chattering mind that is always thinking either in the past or future." If we never get in touch with the stillness we cannot really experience our life in a full way.

In our meditation, we pay attention to our breathing and let go of our thoughts and internal dialogue, continually returning to this moment. As our thoughts quiet down our awareness opens in a receptive way to what is actually occurring in our daily life. If we miss the moment, we miss our life.

The Empty Bowl Zendo is an interfaith Zen community housed at Redeemer. Meditation is every Tuesday night, Thursday and Friday morning. If you are curious, wish to learn about Zen training or would like beginner instruction, please contact: Ray Cicetti, sensei at: 973-984-6343 or visit our website at [www.emptybowlzendo.org](http://www.emptybowlzendo.org).

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