

Recent Tragedies Have Prompted Us To Ask 'How Much Can We Bear?'

By THE REV. ANDREW HAMERSLEY

I was talking to friends in the parish about the recent events that have occurred among us in Westfield. So many have been touched by the tragedy at the high school. It was senseless, random, horrific. All of our hearts go out to the Schoenemann family in their anguish. It touched us here at the church, as our parish and Day School had four girls at the scene.

I spent some hours at the high school last week as one of the many clergy called to listen and to try to be of help. Lots of the students and staff have suffered intensely. It is almost unavoidable to link the death of this beautiful ninth grader with other overwhelming tragedies we have experienced, not only in Westfield, but in the wider world. It is natural to begin to list our crises, especially as there seems to be some bizarre synchronicity of dates.

We wonder what is going on. We wonder if things have always been this bad. It is inescapably true that people in our region have experienced profound suffering. The attacks upon our country last year issued a loss of life that was on a scale we will never be able to fathom. This fact came to me as we were observing 9/11 with silent prayer during the two hours which corresponded to the terrorist acts and the falling of the Trade Center towers.

Many saw the television coverage as all the names were read. I witnessed just the last names that begin with "S." It took about 15 minutes. It is hard to feel safe these days. It seems as if our children have become more and more vulnerable.

Although the statistics have not actually risen, as far as I understand,

Discussion to Spotlight 'Faith and Healing'

WESTFIELD — The public is invited to participate in a religion and science discussion of "Faith and Healing" on Wednesday, October 3, at 7:30 p.m. at the First Congregational Church of Westfield.

The Reverend John A. Mills, Pastor of the First Congregational Church of Closter, will facilitate the discussion, to be held in the church's Coe Fellowship Hall. The sanctuary and social hall are wheelchair accessible.

The discussion will review research on the relationship between healing and faith, as reported in Dr. Dale A. Matthews' book, "The Faith Factor."

Participants will have an opportunity to discuss and report on occasions of the healing of body and mind; the overcoming of addictions; improvements in quality of life and surviving the death of loved ones.

The discussion will include issues involved with reconciling traditional Western medicine and spiritual healing and how together they can provide a richer healing paradigm. Participants may raise issues and questions.

This session is a program of the Wisdom's Light ministry. More information on this ministry can be found at <http://wislit.home.att.net>.

Ketubah Posts Date For Walking Tour

COUNTY — The B'nai B'rith Ketubah Married Couples Unit (40+) will meet in New Hope, Pa. for a walking tour on Sunday, October 6, at 2 p.m.

Next, participants will have dinner at the Lambertville Station Restaurant, located at 11 Bridge Street in Lambertville. Non-members are welcome to attend.

Interested individuals are asked to respond by calling Elaine at (908) 232-0062 by Friday, October 4, for directions to the meeting place in New Hope.

we have never been more acutely aware in this country of child abduction, rape and murder. Our culture, through the media, has become captivated by this fear.

If we are not threatened by the deranged, we are threatened by disease. Many are aware that a young woman from our parish — a mother of three beautiful children — was struck down in July by a mysterious and devastating illness. None of this is connected, of course, except in our experience of it.

It is of little comfort to hear that our suffering takes place in a world of hurt that tragedy visits our globe every second of every day. Our denomination just made an appeal to address worldwide hunger in children.

The statistics are outrageous, but global suffering does not mollify our own. Actually, it becomes all of one piece. Right now, in our community, we just wonder how much our hearts can bear?

There are those who take comfort in the pious saying that God only gives us as much as we can handle. I am not so sure. My prayer over the years has led me to see that Jesus experienced more than He could stand and that His sacrifice included a radical dissolution of His body, mind, and spirit.

This past year has reminded me that God allows us to experience the unbearable, too. I do not think it is just a matter of semantics. When we experience senseless violence and death, we fall apart under its weight. We cannot take it. We cannot be reconciled to it. It creates a searing pain in our souls.

Then, after a time, it lets up just a bit and sometimes it feels cruel — but we find ourselves continuing to breathe and we have a choice to make: will we take the next step, and the next? Will we put one foot in front of the other and live?

Tragedy leads us to confront our vulnerability and our illusions of control. Especially in a community like Westfield, where so many of us are heavily invested in providing an ideal community for our children, suffering seems all the more discordant and upsetting. In our fear, not a few of us wonder about new ways to keep our children safe.

Faith is powerful and I think true faith offers a way through fear, but not around it. When Greta died, when Lynne Pomerantz died, when the victims of September 11 died, when little girls are abducted and murdered, when people starve, I believe that God's is the first heart to break. As all our prayer is empowered by God, we must listen carefully to detect a faithful response.

In the face of these heartaches, we must give full voice to our lament. Eventually, when our voices fail us after all that commotion, there may be nothing left for us to do but to grab a hold of our lovers and kin and squeeze them until they push us away to go on with their lives. In the silence which comes from their absence, we must begin again and beginning again will be our prayer.

The Reverend Hamersley is Rector at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, located at 414 East Broad Street in Westfield.



PATRIOTIC TRIBUTE...To commemorate the one-year anniversary of the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the staff and residents of Brighton Gardens of Mountainside planted a tree in memory of the victims. Residents placed flags around the tree and sang patriotic songs to honor the occasion. Pictured, left to right, are: Resident Miriam Rakin; Director of Sales Yolanda Andrews and General Manager Kathleen Hotz, all of Brighton Gardens by Marriott.

Mercy Ride/Walk to be Held From Union Catholic Oct. 19

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Sisters of Mercy of New Jersey will sponsor the fifth annual Mercy Ride/Walk for AIDS on Saturday, October 19. Hosted by Union Catholic High

School in Scotch Plains, the event will benefit the Robert Wood Johnson Pediatric AIDS Program and the Heart of Mercy House for orphaned and abandoned children with HIV/AIDS in Honduras.

The ride/walk will begin and end at Union Catholic, kicking off at 9 a.m. There will be a 25-mile bicycle ride and a three-mile walk. The area will be urban and flat and routes will be fully supported.

A registration fee of \$25 per individual and \$40 per family should be received by Tuesday, October 1. The fee will include a T-shirt, refreshments along the route and at the end. Individuals are asked to raise \$100 and families \$200. The registration fee is \$100, with no pledges, on the day of the ride/walk.

All riders must wear helmets. For further information or a registration form, please call (888) Mercy Ride.

Hiking Club Reveals Weekend Activities

COUNTY — The Union County Hiking Club has scheduled a ramble this Saturday, September 28, at Tourne Park in Boonton. Leader Susan Jacobs may be reached at (973) 402-2555. Participants will meet at 10 a.m. Steady rain will cancel the event.

On Sunday, September 29, Lyn Gale will lead a ramble from Scherman-Hoffman New Jersey Audubon to Cross Estate in Bernardsville. She may be reached at (973) 763-7230.

Individuals will meet at 10 a.m. at the New Jersey Audubon lower parking lot on Hardscrabble Road in Bernardsville. Signs will indicate the Audubon Center's location from the highway. Rain will cancel the event.

Additionally on Sunday, Ed Leibowitz will lead a bicycle ride to the Princeton Jazz Festival. Participants will be able to sample the food court and bicycle the D&R Canal towpath. The outing will comprise 34 mostly flat miles.

The group will meet at 10 a.m. at Colonial Park, Route 514 in East Millstone, in Lot F. Rain will cancel the event and helmets are required. Mr. Leibowitz may be reached at (201) 332-1709 (home) or (973) 724-3980 (work).

For a complimentary Union County Hiking Club schedule, please call (908) 527-4900.

First Baptist Church Invites Community To ALPHA Lectures

WESTFIELD — The First Baptist Church of Westfield, located at 170 Elm Street, will host its ALPHA program from 5 to 7:45 p.m. on Sunday nights through December 1.

The course includes a free supper, a lecture on an aspect of the Christian faith and discussion in smaller groups.

The material explains some of the faith's more radical claims, such as the divinity of Jesus and evidence for the resurrection. Discussion will allow for questions and further exploration.

No fee, no registration and no ongoing commitment is required. Members of the public are welcome any Sunday for the duration of the 10-week course. Regular churchgoers, as well as non-Christians and those who have not been to church for a long time, are invited to attend.

Prayer to St. Jude

Oh Holy St. Jude, apostle and martyr, great in virtue and rich in miracles, near kinsman of Jesus Christ, faithful intercessor of all who invoke your special patronage in time of need, to you I have recourse from the depth of my heart and humbly beg to whom God has given such great power to come to my assistance. Help me in my urgent petition. In return I promise to make your name known and cause you to be invoked. Say three Our Fathers, Hail Mary's and Glorias. Publication must be promised. St. Jude, pray for us all who invoke your aid. Amen. This novena has never been known to fail. This novena must be said for nine consecutive days. G.L.C.

GOOD NEWS

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Romans 8:31, 37

The Gospel

See it all on the Web!
See it all in Color!
www.goleader.com

St. Helen's Parish to Present 'A Closer Walk With God'

WESTFIELD — The Adult Enrichment Committee of St. Helen's Parish in Westfield will begin the 2002-2003 season with a program on personal and communal prayer.

"A Closer Walk with God," on Wednesday, October 2, at 8 p.m., will feature Therese Saulnier, New Jersey coordinator for Contempla-

tive Outreach, Ltd. in a discussion of centering prayer.

Ms. Saulnier will explore the experience of prayer beyond words, concepts and images which fosters intimacy with God. She will provide background information, techniques that foster this style of prayer and other aspects of this centuries-old way of praying.

St. Helen's Parish, located at 1600 Rahway Avenue, sponsors a weekly Centering Prayer Group for those who practice this form of prayer individually and in a group.

For further information concerning this and future programs, please call (908) 233-8757.

Holy Trinity to Hold RAINBOWS Groups

WESTFIELD — The Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church in Westfield has revealed that its fall session of the RAINBOWS program will begin next month.

An international, not-for-profit organization, RAINBOWS was created in three Chicago area school in 1983 to provide children, adolescents and adults with an opportunity for healing after a painful loss, such as death or a divorce or separation.

Support groups are scheduled to begin at Holy Trinity on Thursday, October 3, and will run on October 10, 17, 24 and November 14 and 21, with a culminating activity on Saturday, November 23.

These meetings will be held from 6:45 to 7:45 p.m. at the Holy Trinity Interparochial School. For more information, please call Mary Ann Foster at (908) 518-0517.

Service League Lists Annual Coat Sale

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Service League has announced that its Annual Coat Sale will begin on Tuesday, October 8, at its Thrift and Consignment Shop, located at 114 Elmer Street in Westfield.

The coat sale will feature gently-used outerwear for all ages and sizes. Fall clothing and accessories will be available as well. All proceeds from the shop are donated to local charities.

The store is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For further information, please call the Thrift Shop at (908) 233-2530.

Scotch Plains Seniors Plan Trip to See Holiday Revue

SCOTCH PLAINS — After a successful trip to Lake Hopatcong's Jefferson House this past summer, the Scotch Plains Senior Citizen Advisory Committee is completing plans for a trip to the Hunterdon Hills Playhouse for its original Holiday Revue on Tuesday, December 17.

The revue will feature a song-and-dance fest and skits, backed by an orchestra. The bus will leave at 9:45 a.m. from the Scotch Plains Municipal Building, 430 Park Avenue.

Registration for Scotch Plains residents will commence on Monday, Sep-

tember 30, and for non-residents the following Monday, October 7. The cost is \$41 for residents and \$43 for non-residents.

All registrations must be made in Room 113 of the Municipal Building. Individuals will also be asked to select their choice of entrée from Fried Shrimp and Scallops, Yankee Pot Roast, Breast of Chicken, Roast Pork with Orange Sauce or fish.

For more information, please call (908) 322-6700, extension no. 222, or (908) 889-2084.

Cannonball House To Be Open Sunday

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Osborn Cannonball House Museum, located at 1840 Front Street in Scotch Plains, will be open to visitors on Sunday, October 6, from 2 to 4 p.m. Costumed docents will be available for tours.

The circa 1760 salt box farmhouse will again be open during the annual "Four Centuries In A Weekend" tour on October 19 and 20. A display of Mourning Attire from the 19th and 20th centuries will be featured.



OWEN BRAND

Your Home Town MORTGAGE BANKER



IVY MORTGAGE

**Residential - Construction
Commercial - Bridge Loans**

Local (908) 789-2730
Toll Free (888) 489-9680
Pager (908) 535-8244
obrand@ivymortgage.com

Licensed Mortgage Bankers - NJ Dept. of Banking
Equal Housing Lender

At Meadow Lakes, You Don't Retire, You Blossom.



Meadow Lakes is a full-service retirement community on 103 acres of natural beauty with three sparkling lakes.

Visit today to experience the beauty of Meadow Lakes and *learn more about our Cottage Homes, now under construction - limited number available!*

Call 1-800-564-5705 today to learn more!

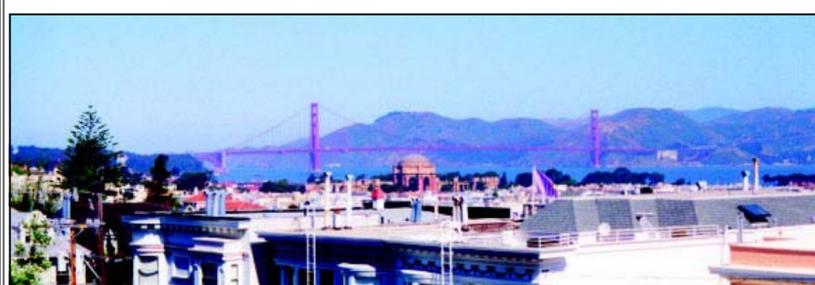
Meadow Lakes

A FULL-SERVICE RETIREMENT COMMUNITY
300 Meadow Lakes • Hightstown, NJ 08520 • www.phsnet.org

Affiliated with Presbyterian Homes & Services, Inc., a not-for-profit, non-sectarian corporation.

Turn of Last Century Estate For Sale by Executor

Simply Elegant, City of San Francisco




\$7MM

Inquiries: sf@goleader.com • Portfolio: goleader.com/sf