

God Remains as a Light Leading Us Through Our Darkest Hours

By THE REV. ANDREW HAMERSLEY

I am sorry to say that the first thought that came into my mind was, "This is bigger than God!"

I was looking at what has come to be called "Ground Zero" one night last April. A number of parishioners and I were working the overnight shift at St. Paul's Chapel, where firefighters, police and security workers have received food, comfort, and company, along with first aid and make-shift sleeping arrangements, since the terrible attacks on our country last fall.

Part way through our shift, we were encouraged to go up to the viewing platform next door. I went to offer silent prayer and to try to be an unobtrusive support to our parishioners, some of whom had lost family members last September.

Initially, it is the scale that gets to you. It is vast in width and in height (the memorial klieg lights were still on). Looking out over the place where the towers once stood, I felt a surge of lament and outrage rise up. I had no language for the prayer that was coursing through me.

I tried to allow each person their privacy as they dealt with this awesome vision. Clearly, this was a holy place and the results of the events which created it demanded respect and silence.

Before I left, I touched the seven names on the memorial plaque of those from our parish families. One was of a beautiful young woman who was only 23. Surrounding St. Paul's Chapel are fences absolutely filled with every imaginable kind of memorabilia.

There are thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands, of pictures, first advertising the faces of the missing, then, mourning their loss. There were baseball caps, teddy bears, shirts, prayers and posters a couple of city blocks worth.

Grocery store votive candles flickered or were long since burned out. The poetry was pretty bad. It occurred to me, however, that these attempts at a response were not unlike the way we try to pray. No matter the quality of the verse or the taste of the one who was responding, the walls of memorials testified to the need for the human heart to express itself when it is wounded.

I tried to believe that God had called forth this outpouring and that these people would receive blessing and comfort. Inside the Chapel, it was more of the same. We were told that the tens of thousands of posters and banners, pictures and prayers,

were actually the fourth generation of such things.

Apparently, the first three versions were taken down and some were archived for museums. As a traditional churchman, seeing coffee and first aid booths, stern-warmed buffets, message tables and podiatrist stations ringing the sanctuary took some getting used to.

Soon, there were visions which made all the incongruous paraphernalia disappear. The compassion of God became present: a young female rabbi from New Jersey was deep in conversation with a rescue worker in the middle pews. One of our parishioners who lost her brother in the attack was joined by her brother's widow as they dispensed nourishment to firefighters.

A lone, very large man was on his knees, praying in the front pew with his enormous hands folded. On the back of his dark jacket were the words "Morgue Supervisor" printed in bold fluorescent yellow. After his prayer, he simply lay down on the pew and slept for a couple of hours.

It has been a long while since I willingly stayed up all night. There are occasions where parishioners' anguish wakes me up and I have trouble returning to sleep.

The birth of our children provided my wife and me with all-nighters, but this was different. Perhaps because I am in my late forties now, perhaps because I was in the middle of Lower Manhattan in a sanctuary, perhaps because of the solemnity of the occasion, it was a long and heavy passage.

I found myself pacing in the aisles of the church. Maybe it was a feeble and unconscious desire to put in some time doing sentry duty, too late for the first round, but hoping to be spiritually equipped for whatever might be next.

When dawn broke, I was standing outside at the guard booth, freezing. I wondered about earlier generations of my family who lived in the same part of town and who must have seen the same beautiful sky.

Clearly in mourning for the thousands of people who had their lives taken in this place, I yet gave thanks to God for that great city and asked my forbears in the Communion of Saints for the strength and wisdom to live well and with courage in uncertain times.

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

Summer Music Camp on Tap At Calvary Lutheran Church

CRANFORD - Calvary Music Camp, a day camp for children entering first through seventh grade, will again be offered this summer at the Calvary Lutheran Church, located at 108 Eastman Street in Cranford.

The program will run Monday through Friday, July 29 to August 9, in air-conditioned facilities at the church. Sessions will run from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The camp's Christian curriculum will encourage young people to use music as a way to explore their faith and their relationship with God.

The day camp will offer daily workshops in voice, hand bells, music reading, theater arts and staging. Campers also will be introduced to Orff instruments, dance, Bible stories and designing stage sets.

The two-week camp will culminate with the children staging a musical for family and friends on the last evening of the program, followed by an ice cream social.

Professional church musicians and

music educators will staff the camp, with support from adult and teenage volunteers.

A \$5 per child early registration discount is available for those registering by Saturday, June 15. The final registration deadline is Monday, July 1. Space is limited, especially in the first- and second-grade classes, and registration may be closed early.

In addition to the early registration discount, there is a \$15 discount available for each additional child registered from the same family. The registration cost for the two-week program is \$125 per child. This fee includes all music activities and classes, arts and crafts, recreation and movement, snacks, a camp T-shirt and the closing performance.

Time will be provided each day for eating lunches brought from home. For information about the camp or registration, please call Jaye Newbold, associate in ministry, at (908) 276-2418.



LOVING TRIBUTE...The Reverend Monsignor William C. Harms, Pastor of St. Helen's Roman Catholic Church in Westfield, joins Kathy Dulan, Director of Religious Education at the church, as she receives the Andrew K. Ruotolo Jr. Award earlier this month. Mrs. Dulan was presented with the award for her work in the community to counteract hate.

Kathy Dulan Is Recipient Of Andrew Ruotolo Award

WESTFIELD - Kathy Dulan, Director of Religious Education at St. Helen's Roman Catholic Church in Westfield, was recently presented with the Andrew K. Ruotolo Jr. Award for her work in the community in counteracting hate.

She was honored during the Eighth Annual Standing Together Against Hate forum, organized by the Union County Committee Against Hate, that was held at the church on May 2.

Mrs. Dulan has been Director of Religious Education at the elementary level since 1980, directing the Religious Education Program and sacramental programs. Under her leadership, the program has grown from 250 to 1,200 children and from 40 volunteer teachers to approximately 240.

Active in the Westfield/Mountainside Ministerium for 20 years, she has held the office of President twice and has served on the Nominating Committee. She was also active on the Kosovo Committee, helping to place families in comfortable situations.

Mrs. Dulan additionally is a member of the Martin Luther King Committee and helped coordinate the town-wide interfaith Thanksgiving service last November.

A participant in Sister Pat's Cancer Camp in Esopus, N.Y. for the past six years, she spends a week each summer working with children at the camp who have cancer. The camp is sponsored by St. Helen's Church.

She was active in the Parent Teacher Organization in Westfield at all levels and has taught high school

in New York and at Mother Seton Regional High School in Clark.

Married to the late Jim Dulan for 24 years, she has two sons, Jim and Dave, and a daughter-in-law, Lily.

"I am so pleased to be the recipient of the Andrew K. Ruotolo Award," she remarked, in accepting the honor. "I have known the Ruotolo family for many years and remember when Drew Ruotolo fought his courageous battle with cancer."

"This knowledge and experience makes receiving this award so much more meaningful. I am humbled and honored to receive this award in memory of a great man, Andrew K. Ruotolo," she said.

"I would like to thank Terri Warmbrand and the Union County Committee Against Hate for this honor," Mrs. Dulan added.

Presbyterian Church's 'Round Up' Picnic Slated For Sunday

WESTFIELD - "Round 'em Up" will be the theme of a picnic to be held on the front lawn of The Presbyterian Church in Westfield for its members after the 10:30 a.m. service this Sunday, June 2.

In keeping with the cowboy-western theme of the event, there will be "rodeo" food, western music, square dancing and a "moonwalk" and other games for children.

If it rains, the picnic will be held in Westminster Hall. Arrangements are being made by the church's Board of Deacons.

Willow Grove to Pay Tribute To Scotch Plains Firefighters

SCOTCH PLAINS - This Sunday, June 2, the Willow Grove Presbyterian Church will honor the volunteer firefighters of Scotch Plains for their dedication to preserving lives and property in the community. Willow Grove is located at 1961 Raritan Road in Scotch Plains.

The firefighters will be commended during the 10:30 a.m. worship service in the church sanctuary. A luncheon reception will follow in the downstairs social hall.

"We hope that a sizeable contin-

gent of the Scotch Plains firefighters and their families will respond to our invitation to be publicly thanked and blessed for all they do, and are willing to do every day, to make our lives safer," remarked the Reverend Kenneth G. Hetzel, Pastor of Willow Grove Church.

All are invited to attend. Individuals interested in attending the luncheon reception are asked to sign up by calling (908) 232-5678. The deadline to register is noon tomorrow, Friday, May 31. Willow Grove's facilities are fully handicapped accessible and auditory amplification is available for those with hearing difficulties.

Scotch Plains Baptist Slates Block Party

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Scotch Plains Baptist Church will host its Second Annual Community Block Party on Saturday, June 15, from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m., on Grand Street between Park Avenue and Forest Road in Scotch Plains.

The party will feature free food and beverages, games for children and adults and live entertainment. Participants may also bring food and soft drinks to share. Para-church organizations will also set up displays to introduce their ministries to the community. All are invited to attend.

In the event of rain, the festivities will be held inside the church, located at 333 Park Avenue. For more information, please call (908) 322-5487 or visit www.scotchplainsbaptistchurch.org.

All Saints' Announces Time-Talent Auction

SCOTCH PLAINS - The All Saints' Episcopal Church, located at 559 Park Avenue in Scotch Plains, will host a Time and Talent Auction this Saturday, June 1.

Hors d'oeuvres and other refreshments will be served at 7 p.m. The auction will begin at 8 p.m. Admission is \$4.

Participants will have an opportunity to bid on goods and services such as computer troubleshooting, babysitting, yard work, Ukrainian Easter Egg decorating classes, a Star Lab presentation, various kinds of exotic cuisine, golf lessons, sports tickets and other offerings from local vendors.

For further information, please call (908) 322-8047.

Dialogue to be Presented On Holographic Universe

WESTFIELD - The public is invited to participate in a discussion of how the holographic universe can explain spiritual experiences at the First Congregational Church in Westfield on Thursday, June 6, at 7:30 p.m.

Participants will examine the cosmological theory of David Bohm that describes the physical universe as a hologram built on a subquantum implicate order.

Individuals will have an opportunity to learn how this theory explains certain spiritual experiences and to discuss the implications of it for the Divine, for death, for the genesis of life and for free will.

There also will be a discussion of how the holographic theory fits with the late mathematician and philosopher Alfred North Whitehead's pro-

cess theory and how these theories challenge many traditional religious ideas and beliefs.

The discussion will be led by the Reverend John A. Mills, Director of Wisdom's Light, a ministry promoting positive dialogue between religion and science. The dialogue will be held in the Coe Room in the basement of the church, located at 125 Elmer Street.

For directions, please call (908) 233-2494. More information about the Wisdom's Light ministry is available on the Internet at <http://wislit.home.att.net>.

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

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I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons. I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

Psalm 16:7,8 *The Gospel*

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