



MAY NEWSLETTER

THE CORNERSTONE

Ridgebury Congregational Church
605 Ridgebury Road
Ridgefield, CT 06877

From the Pastor

Ave Ridgeburians!

So there I was last night, at the Rose Theater at Lincoln Center watching five of the giants of contemporary Jazz: Chic Corea, John McLaughlin, Christian McBride, Kenny Garrett and Brian Blade. Now, if you've never heard of these gentlemen, then the only person who is the poorer for that is you, but that's not my main point.

My main point is this: Near the end of the show (and it was a three hour show,) Chic Corea took the microphone and he told the audience that of all the music they'd heard (and the music was GREAT, by the way,) that only about 5 or 6 minutes of it was actually written—the rest of it was all improvisation. Now, that was something of an exaggeration, but think about it for a second: a three hour concert, and the vast majority of it was spontaneous, created right there on the spot!

Now you can draw a couple of conclusions about that: The first is a purely musical one, and that is that these five guys can really play! That they have the God-given musical gifts, and the years of musical experience, that allow them to improvise like that.

But the other conclusion is a spiritual one, because I think there is something about our relationship with God that you can understand by experiencing a concert like that. You see, a question I get from people all the time is the old question about "God having a plan for our lives." What does that mean, exactly? Does it mean that God has planned out everything that is going to happen to us at every step in our lives, that we're all just robots, going through motions that God has already planned out for us ages in advance?

I don't think so, rather, I think God's plans for our lives unfolds something like a great jazz concert. Every piece those five guys played last night started with music that was written down, but everything that developed after that was the result of those five musicians listening to, and reacting to, what the other musicians were playing. When each musician got his chance for a solo, he didn't just make something up off the top of his head. Rather, he listened to what the guy before him had played, and followed that person's lead—while adding something of his own to the mix. Then the following musician picked up where the guy before him had left off before doing his own thing. Playing like that not only requires mountains of talent, and loads of experience—it also requires a lot of listening, a lot of listening to what the other musicians are playing, so that when your chance comes you can add something to the music that fits, that blends in and makes up a part of something that's bigger than just your part.

And I think that's something of the way we work out God's plan for our lives. I think God's plan for our lives is something like a great jazz concert, where God leads off the piece, but gives us a chance to play our own music as well. And if we play something that's out of key, or where the tempo is a little off, God doesn't stop and yell at us for getting it wrong; rather, He adjusts what He's playing so that He's tune with us, and so that when His next solo comes around He can lead us in a new direction, but a in a direction that makes sense for us. It's a case not of us simply taking direction from God, but rather working together with God to play our own music.

Cheers,

John



I want to begin by thanking everyone who participated in any or all of the Lenten and Easter services - the Lenten book discussion group, Maundy Thursday service, and the two Easter services. The participation was great and I hope it has made us all feel closer to God.

All the April activities will not be outdone by what is being planned for May. As you have all come to know, Ridgebury Church is a busy place for activities.

The Saturday Vesper Services will continue every Saturday evening at 5 PM until the last Saturday in May (May 30th) and then we will take a break until fall.

The Confirmation class is meeting regularly and getting ready to become members in June. Each confirmand is designing a personal religious banner. Look for them to be hanging in Shields Hall.

As Memorial Day approaches (May 24th) we will again have our own special service at 4 PM. This will be the time to honor all the veterans who have served our country so proudly. Names of the deceased will be read aloud and we will walk to the cemetery for additional honors. Refreshments will follow in Shields Hall.

Speaking of all the men and women who are serving our country, the Deacon's along with the Confirmation class are asking for your help. We will be collecting Charm Blow Pops and Tootsie Roll Pops to send to a Chaplain based in Iraq. He distributes these "God Pops" to the soldiers before they go out on missions.

In his words - "Suddenly it is no longer just another long night, their chaplain and your "God Pops" made the difference. 'It's gonna be a long night, guys - grab some extra to keep yourselves awake.' They line the lollipop stick in the loops of the IOTV (bullet proof vests), looking a lot like a Christmas tree. I pray for their safety and they roll out the wire, alert, smiling and ready to face whatever may come. And suddenly it is not just a matter of lifting a Soldier's spirits, it is keeping a Soldier awake, alert, and alive; it is no longer a matter of bringing a smile to a child's face, it is helping to bring a child's daddy back home."

"God Pops" will be collected for the entire month of May. There will be a basket in Shield's Hall. These "God Pops" will be dedicated at our Memorial Day Service and mailed to Camp Kalsu, a U.S. Military installation in Iskandariya, Iraq, 20 miles south of Baghdad.

I ask that each of you take the time to purchase some "God Pops" Thank you.

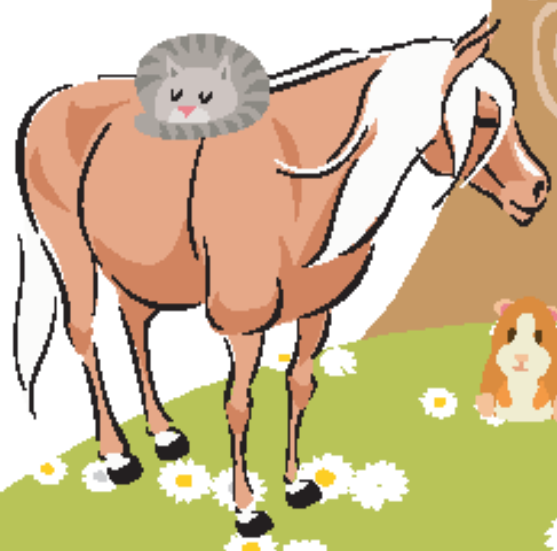
Respectfully Submitted,,

Sharon Straiton
Chairman of Deacons

The Blessing of the Animals



All Pets with their Families
are invited to attend the
6th Annual
Blessing of the Animals
on
Sunday, May 31, 2009
at 4 pm
Outdoors
Ridgebury Congregational Church
Ridgebury Road
at Geo Washington Highway
Ridgefield, CT
PETS SHOULD BE ON A LEASH,
IN CARE OR IN A CARRIER.





The WHITE ELEPHANT SALE will be held on Saturday, May 2nd on the Church grounds.

If you or a friend are looking to sell those things taking up room in your attic or basement, there is space still available.

The cost is \$30.00 per space and you keep the profits!!

Contact Sue Bankes, Linda Hayward or Linda Cochrane to reserve your space.

There will be a church table that will be accepting donations of goods after April 19th.

Church Clean-Up Day

Saturday, May 9th

Many hands make light work.

Lunch will be provided

MAY Birthdays



- 5 Corrine LoValvo
- 8 Taylor Wray
- 9 Barbara Kapp
- 10 Joshua Hibbard
- 10 Lori-Ann Stroili
- 11 Joshua Heyel
- 12 Michael Prange
- 12 Susan Hibbard
- 15 Virginia Drews
- 19 Lindsay Steidl
- 19 Michaela Trolle
- 21 Jordan Marker
- 23 David Wray
- 30 Wynd Harris
- 31 Chris Phelps

May 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 11a Missions	27 7p Council Meeting	28 1:30p Adult Discussion Group	29 7:30p Choir Practice	30 7:15p AA Meets	1	2 10a White Elephant Sale 5p Vespers Service
3 Family Sunday	4	5 1:30p Adult Discussion Group	6 7:30p Choir Practice	7 7p Deacons Meet 7:15p AA Meets	8	9 9a Church Clean Up Day 5p Vespers Service
10 Mother's Day [USA]	11 7p Trustees	12 1:30p Adult Discussion Group	13 7:30p Choir Practice	14 7:15p AA Meets	15	16 5p Vespers Service
17	18	19 1:30p Adult Discussion Group	20 7:30p Choir Practice	21 7:15p AA Meets Ascension Day [Christian]	22	23 5p Vespers Service
24 11a Missions 4p Memorial Day Service	25 7p Council Meeting Memorial Day [USA]	26 1:30p Adult Discussion Group	27 7:30p Choir Practice	28 7:15p AA Meets	29	30 5p Vespers Service
31 4p Blessing of the Animals Whitsunday [Christian]	1 7p Deacons Meet Whitmonday [Christian]	2 1:30p Adult Discussion Group	3 7:30p Choir Practice	4 7:15p AA Meets	5	6