

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF DOUGLSTON
"ANCHOR"



Rev. Dr. Linden DeBie
Senior Minister

Rev. Adrienne Flipse Hausch
Minister of Congregational Care

March

*"Hope is like an anchor for our lives,
an anchor safe and sure" - Heb. 6:19*

2013

Dearly Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ:

The great German philosopher, G.W.F. Hegel once wrote that the Owl of Minerva takes flight at the first blushes of dusk. His illustration suggests how knowledge is a matter of hindsight. The owl takes wing only after the day is done. In other words, we only have knowledge about the past. The future is beyond our grasp and even the present is largely gray to us, as we are caught up in its colliding hues.

This is the final offering in our series on the history of the Church. As previously outlined, it will cover our recent history and make some observations about the present and future. Hegel advised caution here and rightly so. We are much better at talking about the past than about the future, and even the present can be a slippery fish.

In the wake of the Reformation our country was born, and the Protestant Reformation played a major role in its founding. Many of the first colonies were settled by people who were disgusted with the established churches, both Catholic and Anglican. Part of that resentment was over theology and we've talked a bit about that in earlier Anchor articles. Part of it was economic. The old feudal systems of Europe were slow to advance the cause of the middle class, while it would be the middle class that would fuel the economies of the future and bring the unprecedented prosperity that propelled major change in the Western world. Religion and politics were completely intertwined, but many of the settlers in the New World had suffered religious and political oppression. They began to envision separate if complimentary roles for the church and state.

Interestingly, our Dutch Reformed ancestors who settled New Amsterdam which became New York under British rule, were far more focused on business than religious freedom. Holland had already provided a safe haven for religious expression by embracing the Protestant Reformed faith, and in that they became early promoters of religious and political reform. Their short rule in America saw the establishment of our Reformed faith throughout the Hudson Valley. However, they would never compete in number to the swarms of immigrants from England, Scotland and Ireland. The early arrival and numerical superiority of English speakers meant that Dutch influence would remain minor in comparison. In the long run, British ideas would have the greatest impact in shaping American ideals. Of course the British brand would include a religious aspect. To some extent we are products of our Puritan past. Still a whole host of religious traditions competed for a voice in America's future.

Perhaps the loudest and most pervasive voice was that of evangelicals who were more and more becoming infatuated with enthusiastic religion. Part of the negative reaction to the old religious institutions of Europe was their cold stiffness. It was as if people were expected to simply believe what they were told, but now many people wanted to feel their faith deep down. That spark that ignited in all of the denominations of early America—Puritan, Reformed, Anglican, Lutheran and especially the newer arrivals, Baptist and Methodist. Their enthusiasm was such that by and large their growth and influence was the exciting story of the second and third centuries of our country's religious history.

Our current Church life in this country is in many ways the product of the remarkable convergence of traditional European religion and evangelicalism. So when we point to the strengths and weaknesses of today's Church, it must be in terms of the blending of these forms into what today amounts to contemporary American Christianity. The lines are there to see. Our older denominations bear the mark of a European past and often their constitutions are little changed from when they sought establishment as American churches. But their hymns are laced with the great songs of the evangelical movement—including such classics as *Amazing Grace* and *Rock of Ages*. We are fond in our tradition of preaching about covenant faith and community, but in fact the powerful force in our midst is of individual freedom and conscience which were hallmarks of evangelical faith. We teach our children in confirmation that God has known them from the womb—that they were beloved of God from the beginning of time. While many in our churches still would like to see them “converted” or at least “come to a

decision.” The latter of course, became synonymous with evangelical teaching and the mark of revivalist religion.

The list is endless and represents the working-out of the tension between traditional faith and the “passionate faith” promoted by the countless revivals that rocked the early years of our country's history. We know that in both there exist the extremes which cause bitterness among Christian people and division in our ranks. The numerical success of evangelistic methods can lead them to jettison any reliance on the old forms of religion. Likewise, the sometimes strange aberrations that appear out of overly enthusiastic religion lead some of the old guard to dismiss heart-felt religion as cultic. Prudence demands that the truth be in the middle.

Both have a great deal to learn from each other and indeed, if they were paying attention, would recognize themselves as siblings—very different brothers and sisters, but brothers and sisters of the same historical parents none the less. Neither a purely traditional religion nor a purely evangelical religion exists in Protestantism. All are to some extent products of both and to defame one or the other is to fail to see to what extent we are offshoots of one another.

This is not to dismiss our differences. Thank God we no longer burn offenders at the stake. Dialogue and patience have proved effective if not conclusive in raising awareness of both our differences and our similarities. But progress in dialogue might require a beginning point of agreement. That point of convergence could be Christ! Our effectiveness at sharing our message is surely tied to this core commitment. Indeed, others who have departed that path (and many have) will require from us a more challenging dialogue. But in a

sense, it will follow along the same path as inter-faith conversation which has shown great promise for a mutually respectful future.

So where is the Church today? In deference to Minerva's owl, I will acknowledge great divisions which hamper our ability to speak Christ's message of peace, justice, righteous and love for all. But cautiously looking forward I suspect the divisions are playing out. The falling away from traditional faith has perhaps led to a Church more suited to realizing that it no longer represents the main-stream of American culture. In the honest recognition of who we are today we might discover the freedom to return to our real calling as wounded healers—the salt and leaven, a priesthood nation, and the light of the world. This was our calling from ancient times. A renewed sense of this calling might bring us to that hopeful place of dialogue. Here we might employ a two-sided agenda of ecumenical conversation and heart-felt radical Christian activism on behalf of the most broken and vulnerable of the world's population. And whether or not this will be the future of the church, it surely must count as a reasonable place to start.

Yours in the dynamic future God has in store for us,

Linden

BOX SUPPER AUCTION

Saturday, April 20 at 6 pm at CCD

A "fun" raising event for every age!
Bring a dinner to be auctioned to the highest bidder!

Bid on someone else's dinner!
Entertainment includes bidding for "real" auctions items!

Details next month

More Than a Church.

We're a Community WHAT WE BELIEVEE

We believe enthusiastically in the centrality of Christ as our Savior and Lord and in the Bible as a solid guide for living in today's world. The Reformed perspective is centered on the overwhelming **Love of God** toward us. We believe that God is three in one--God the Father, God the Son in Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit.

We believe that we are **saved by grace** alone through faith. Our good works don't earn our salvation, but they are a way for us to thank God for that free gift He gave through His Son.

The Reformed Church in America celebrates two Sacraments: **Baptism** and **Holy Communion**, celebrated the first Sunday of each month. They remind us of God's promises to us and help us to claim those promises as our own. We believe that in worship and Sacraments, Christ is truly present with us, guiding us on the way.

Special Worship Opportunities at CCD

Christmas Choral Vespers • Children's Christmas Pageant • Christmas Eve • Christmas • Good Friday Choral Service • Easter Sunrise Service • Easter Family Festival Worship • Galilean Service at the Dock • Healing Services

TUESDAY MORNING MUSIC CLUB

All are welcome to join the Tuesday Morning Music Club for their next concert in CCD's parlor on Tuesday, March 26th at 11 am, followed by lunch. Donations appreciated. Information: 718-229-4707

The Elders' Corner

GPS - God's Version

Not unlike most men, I hate asking others for directions when I'm lost. That frustrates the heck out of you know who. Fortunately, with GPS technology the chances of me getting lost are much less frequent.

Regardless, I still occasionally get off course or miss a turn, and hear my GPS recite those irritating words, "Recalculating. Recalculating." The device not only knows when I am off course, but immediately begins plotting a new path to get me back on track.

Those who follow Christ sometimes need help to get back on track spiritually. We may occasionally veer off track because we foolishly think we know better or drift away incrementally never realizing we're moving further and further away from the walk God wants with us.

In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Proverbs 3:6

Be comforted. God has not left us on our own. He gave us the loving Holy Spirit who sounds the alarms when we're going off course. We may ignore the warnings, but we do so to our own detriment.

What comfort to know God is at work in our lives through the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. With God's help and guidance, we can continue on a path that is pleasing to Him.

***Holy Spirit, we would hear
Your inner promptings, soft and clear;
And help us know Your still, small voice
So we may make God's will our choice.***

Leadership Blessings

It is with great excitement and anticipation that CCD welcomes the newest members of our Consistory:

Carolyn Warshaw -
Deacon
Dennis Pidherny - Elder
Maureen Healy - Elder



PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY



The Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet the second Monday of the month from 7:00-8:00 pm in the parlor, beginning on March 11.

Anyone who knits or crochets is invited. Prayer shawls are a tangible way of embracing those who are in need of comfort, and wrapping them in prayer. A prayer shawl is for anyone who is hurting. Please call or see Joan Hoffman (718) 225-9139 for more information. Donations of yarn are appreciated.

LENTEN PROGRAM



For centuries the Church has spoken of Lent as a "journey." This year, our Lenten Program will include an intimate and conversational look

at the journeys of some of our church leaders.

Our elders will share with you some of their experiences "on the road with Christ." Likewise, we will look forward to you sharing with us some of your travel experiences. It follows after church on Sunday, March 17, and then again, for those unable to attend on Sunday or who wish to join us for both, Tuesday, March 19 at 7 PM. Child care will be provided for both events.

ALL CURRENT AND FORMER ELDERS

The denomination needs a delegate to go to the meeting of the General Synod to be held Thursday-Tuesday, June 20-25, 2013, on the campus of Central College in Pella, Iowa. All expenses are paid.

Please inform one of the Pastors or Church office if available and interested.

A LITTLE BIT OF CCD HISTORY

We were reminded, on the death of Van Cliburn last week, of the story of the Steinway that now resides in our sanctuary.

Van Cliburn, world famous pianist, was an eighteen year old 6'4" student at Juilliard in 1952. He sang in the choir at Calvary Baptist Church, which was then directed by a young man named Gordon Paulsen, and also worked occasionally at the Steinway store across the street in Manhattan. There was a young Janet who also sang in that choir because she wanted to stay close to her fiancé. When they married and found a home in Douglaston, Van Cliburn helped Gordon make the choice of the Model A piano that we see today. It filled the Paulsen home with music for many, many years and, on their leaving 6 Arleigh Road, was generously donated to the Community Church of Douglaston.

I'd like to think that our Gordon and Van are jamming in Heaven right now.

Respectfully submitted by Cynthia Strauss

MUSIC OF THE SEASON

The rehearsals for the GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE have been in full swing, and we are all enjoying visiting and being with friends and learning the music. We have a great group!

Among the things we are working on for the Good Friday Service are: *Lacrymosa* from the Mozart Requiem, *Hodie Mecum Eris In Paradisum* from the Seven Last Words of Christ by Dubois, featuring our soloists Wayne Paul and Reuven Aristigueta, *Ave Verum*-Mozart. There are three rehearsals left: Wed 3/13, Thur., 3/21 and Tues., 3/26, so if you are interested please come join us at 7:30 pm.

If you are unable to attend the rehearsals and sing for the GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE, maybe you would be interested in coming in on EASTER Sunday and joining in singing the HALLELUJAH CHORUS from The Messiah at the 10:30 am Easter Communion service. We will have at least one rehearsal.

If you are interested please call the church office (718) 229-2169 and leave your name, email and/or phone number.

Bring family and friends and join your church in rejoicing "Christ Is Risen."

PREMIER CARE

Walk-In Urgent Care

Cliff Crocoll and Cindy Strauss would like to highly recommend Premier Care, the new urgent care facility at 415 Northern Blvd. in Great Neck. We've been there several times and have been royally and professionally treated each time. They are a very welcomed addition to the community. No appointment needed, open 7 days a week. Phone 855-NICE-DOC (855-642-3362) www.premiercaredoc.com

NEW MEMBERS OF THE CONSISTORY

NEW DEACON - CAROLINE WARSHAW



My name is Caroline Warshaw. My husband, Ed and I have called Douglaston our home for more than twenty years. I started coming to the Community Church of Douglaston 14 years ago, when I was asked by a neighbor who was also a member, to design an advertisement for the Sunday School program for a local newspaper. I am a graphic designer and over the years, I have helped design various brochures and flyers for CCD. Most recently, I served on the Pastoral Search committee. All my three children have been baptized at CCD. I have had many memorable moments at Community Church of Douglaston and as I look to the future, I pray that the Holy Spirit will guide me and help me grow spiritually in this new role of Deacon.

NEW ELDER - MAUREEN HEALY



After growing up Roman Catholic in mid-Queens, I moved to a handy-man special of a home in Douglaston in 1978 with my husband, Douglas MacKay. Doug set out to find us a church that was close by. He found CCD, Rev. and Mrs. Meyer and the new youth ministers, the Restivos.

We formally joined after the birth of our first daughter, Devon. Doug was active in

civics and politics and I was at home, working part-time and on political campaigns while having two more children, Morgan and Cameron. After volunteering at the nursery school, I was drafted to run the Sunday school, then administrate the nursery school, be stewardship chair, and redo the by-laws.

I had returned to full time work giving up my CCD activities shortly before Doug passed in 1992 during his term as chair of the then Church Council. In the early 90's I became a deacon and then elder under Pastor John and then Interim Minister Gorsuch. After a time of turmoil, I needed a break.

In the ensuing time CCD has faced its challenges and sustained its members. I hope to be a helpful participant in the process as we move forward (and upward????).

NEW ELDER-DENNIS PIDHERNY



Dennis Pidherny has actively participated in the Community Church of Douglaston's ministry since becoming a member nearly 20 years ago with his wife, long-time talented CCD soprano soloist, Kimberly Iannuzzi-Pidherny. Originally drawn to CCD by its rich tradition of sacred music, Dennis has since served in a variety of capacities within the Church including Sunday School Teacher, Choir Member, Pastoral Search Committee Member, Christmas Pageant Director and Treasurer. Dennis and Kimberly's children, Kyria and Alexander, both of whom were baptized at CCD, are also active participants in the Sunday School and Children's Choir.

The calling to serve CCD as an Elder is both very exciting and terrifying for Dennis. The opportunity to help shape and define CCD's evolving ministry is a wonderfully exciting proposition, while the very notion that any of us have a definite idea as to what God is calling our church to be is terrifying. Above all, Dennis hopes that more active discussion and reflection with the congregation, and more extensive outreach will illuminate the path that God desires us all to walk.

By day, Dennis is a Managing Director of Fitch Ratings, a major global credit rating agency, where he is responsible for overseeing a portion of the firm's business activities with the Public Finance sector. Dennis is a graduate of the University of Rochester and the University's William E. Simon School of Business Administration.

Dennis, Kimberly, Kyria and Alexander live in Manhasset.

LIBRARY LINES

Did you ever want to know what it would have been like to live in the past? Ian Mortimer has written, **The Time Traveler's Guide to Medieval England**. This meticulously researched tome will really transport you there.

Then you can read **The Betrayal** by Kathleen O'Neal Gear and W. Michael Gear as well as Ariana Franklin's series; **Mistress of the Art of Death**, **The Serpent's Tale**, **Grave Goods** and **The Murderous Procession**. You are in for a treat.

When I compare some of the things my inner city high school sophomores wrote, to these books, I'd say those kids whet my appetite for those books. Here is an excerpt:

"Well I got into the time machine and went to medieval times. By mistake I landed on King Arthur's round table. He had me thrown into the dungeon. I told him that I could help him in war, so they trained me all day from dawn until sundown. After two months I became one of the best knights, Sir Kid. I lived in the castle. They gave me a horse, a white one, with armor all over except in the eyes. They gave me a shield with a frog on it and Charlemagne's sword that I could use. It was long and plated with gold, just like my shield."

I also met this girl. I asked her to come with me and get married, but she said, "I cannot go to your time. I'll get homesick. But I beg of you don't forget me." I won't forget you. I love you. We kissed and well, I'm back.
Blas Arteles

On another note....

It always surprised me that the Puritans, who had suffered discrimination in England which caused them to depart and come to the New England wilderness, then proceeded to mete out the same discrimination to others, e.g. Ann Hutchinson.

Never have truer words been spoken, first by George Santayana later by Winston Churchill, and paraphrased by many others as well, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" i.e. "If you do not learn from the mistakes of history, you are doomed to repeat them."

Consider reading:

The Buddha in the Attic and **When the Emperor was Divine** by Julie Otsuka as well as **Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet** by Jamie Ford.

You know, there really are all sorts of good things in this library of ours.

Joan Hoffman, Librarian

HOLY WEEK: A TIME OF PREPARATION

MAUNDY THURSDAY - March 28th

Make your reservation with Maureen Healy (718-229-5941) and indicate what dish you will bring for the 6:30 pm dinner and special Seder celebrated at CCD.

GOOD FRIDAY - March 29th

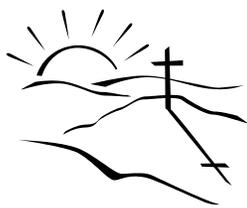


Join us at 8:00 pm on Good Friday as the Community Choir will be joined by guest singers from throughout the region, all led by organist and choir director Elizabeth Frank. This beautiful and solemn service of worship is the perfect way to remember the sacrifice that gave us eternal life.

On Friday the Church will be open from 12 noon to 3 pm, the time our Lord spent on the cross, for prayer and meditation.

EASTER SUNDAY- March 31st

There is no better way to usher in Easter morn than sunrise service at CCD!



Join Pastor Adrienne as she leads 6:30 am worship in the Sanctuary.

Join Pastor Linden during our Family Service of Worship at 10:30 am featuring the Children's Choir and the first appearance of the Alleluia's since they went into seclusion at the beginning of Lent. The Senior Choir will treat us with their lovely voices and we will all raise our joyous celebrations of resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.



CONCERT: SAVE THE DATE

On Sunday, May 19, 2013, Stereophile Recordings artists *Attention Screen* will be performing and recording their next CD at a special concert in the sanctuary.

Attention Screen is a well known improvising jazz quartet comprised of Douglaston native and the group founder Bob Reina on piano, Liam Sillery on trumpet, Chris Jones on double bass and Mark Flynn, percussion. For this performance only, Bob will be trading in his piano for a turn at the Greenlaw Memorial Organ as the group performs original music written by the four members specifically to highlight the organ.

Proceeds from the concert will go to benefit the programs of the Community Church of Douglaston and the Douglaston Junior Yacht Squadron. To reserve tickets or for additional information, call the Church Office at (718) 229-2169.

PRAYER LIST

IMMEDIATE PRAYERS

ALY DADRAS, ROY WEBER AND FAMILY, ROLF STANG, WALTER GRILL, SALLY AND FAMILY OF TOM LLOYD ON HIS PASSING, EILEEN FIECHTER, JOYCE MOYAL, DICK HALL.



CONTINUED PRAYERS

ROD O'CONNELL, PHIL BUNTON, SUSAN ROSE TRUSSUX, MAIA O'DONNELL, DEAN BROWNORTH, BILL ROSE, JAMES ROACH, SALLY.

MAUNDY THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2013



Join us for the traditional Seder celebration and recreation of the institution of The Lord's Supper. Be a part of the Festival Meal by bringing a main course, vegetable, or side dish to share with others. Then join in Holy Communion as we celebrate as our Lord and his disciples communed together in celebration of their ministry and the coming of the Savior promised by God. This is a particularly special time for families as we all share together-as parents, as child, as friend – as if we were there that night.

There will also be the traditional hunt for the afikoman with prizes for all the children. Pastor Adrienne will recount the story of the Passover and Pastor Linden will lead our after dinner worship.

We will begin promptly at 6:30 pm and will conclude at about 8 pm. **Bring friends, family and neighbors but advance reservations are a must.**

Maureen Healy is once again volunteering to chair this special family event. If you could also help with setting up and cleaning up afterwards, Maureen would appreciate it. Please make your reservation and indicate what you will bring by signing up on the sheet on the small table inside the parlor door, by the piano. Maureen may be reached at 718-229-5941.



TOM LLOYD'S MEMORIAL SERVICE

Saturday, March 23, 2013
4:00 pm at CCD

HELP ADORN THE SANCTUARY WITH EASTER FLOWERS

The Flower Committee has the pleasant task of preparing for the celebration of Easter by adorning the sanctuary with flowering plants, symbolic of the miracle of the resurrection.



This will be made possible only through your generosity. If you would like to donate to the Easter Flower Fund please fill out the form below and either drop it off or mail it to the church office (39-50 Douglaston Parkway, Douglaston, NY 11363 Attn: Easter Flowers). If you do not wish to put a message, your name will be listed as a donor.

Donations should be sent on or before Monday, March 25, 2013.

We again thank everyone for their generosity.

Name:

Message:

Donation must be received before names and messages can be listed.

REMEMBRANCES by Adrienne Hausch and Edward LaGrassa

On February 21 the CCD family lost one of its own when Deacon Tom Lloyd died following a long battle with liver disease. As advisor to the deacon board and a member of the Property Committee, I had almost daily contact with Tom by telephone, in person and even that dreaded form of quasi communication, e mail.

Somehow, someway Tom became chair of both deacons and property. I remember deacons: he was voted chair one evening when he missed the meeting but never even blinked when I told him; he just assumed the duties of the office. Property was more subtle. A single "I will check on that and get back to you" turned into a steady stream of "Tom could you look into this?" Never did he say no—even when he was in the hospital as he so often found himself these past few years. Every request was honored; every task completed.

I first met Tom when we sat together at a box supper auction. My husband and I laughed all evening at his wit and marveled at his charm as Sally smiled and shook her head. It was love at first sight. Project followed project and program followed program. He added his annoying persistence to every aspect of this church. But whether it be a stunningly active board of deacons or a beautifully cared for sanctuary, whatever Tom touched shone. He will be sorely missed.

Adrienne

Tom Lloyd was a man of love and spent his life in love: he was in love with that life; he was in love with Sally; he was in love with his faith; and he was in love with his church. Tom's love of life is reflected in his work as a deacon and in the way he lived his own life. As Adrienne said, he worked from

home and hospital on projects that were basic to human life.

Tom's love for Sally was palpable. I loved watching them in church on Sunday mornings. As we rose for the hymn Tom would gently wrap his arm around Sally's waist. As they shared a hymnal and sang, he would hold her closer. When the hymn ended, he sat down slowly wishing, I am sure, that the hymn would continue. Tom and Sally had known each other many years before they married. Separated for years, when they met again Tom acknowledged that he was afraid that Sally might not feel about him the way he was feeling about her. It was a joy to watch their love grow and mature into a deep, abiding and even sacred love.

Tom was a man of tremendous faith. Yet he never lost his love of learning and exploring. In his years at CCD he never hesitated to express his views. Yet he was open to hearing what others would say and always respected the views of others. As property chair he was a dynamo. His vision and persistence helped revitalize our aging plant and his last projects, including renovation of the ramp to the sanctuary, were voted on just days before his death. The very day before his death he contacted me to ask when a project he and Sally had funded was to start.

Tom fought hard for life. Tom fought back so often from the edge of death; we all thought he would do it again this time. It was not to be. He lost this fight and now belongs to our Lord. I suspect that Tom has become Heaven's one man property committee and is now debating with St. Peter as to how best to renovate the Pearly Gates. Our loss is heaven's gain. But Tom's work and wisdom will live on beyond us all. I hope I can meet his expectations.

Ed LaGrassa

Memorial Service – Sat., March 23, 4 pm



QUEENSBOROUGH 
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Now enrolling for Spring 2013!

Wednesday, April 3 – Friday, June 28

NEW First Time Community Church of Douglaston
Enrollees Receive 5% off Tuition Cost

This spring, our children will put on a production of *Peter Pan*, build a garden, practice sports, travel the solar system, and explore classic fairy tales.

Each weekday we offer a different theme based on the STE@M model (science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics) of education.

Our elementary school aged after school programming begins at 2:30PM and ends at 6:00PM.

Call (718) 279-0279 or email Cailyn De Bie at cdebie@gcc.cuny.edu for pricing and details.

Continues from PASTOR ADRIENNE’S BACK PAGE

My life is not what I planned. Yet, it is a wonderful life. There have been sad times; gut wrenching losses; awful failures; second and third thoughts about so many choices. But as I look around today at my friends and family, I cannot help but realize how blessed I have been.

Spring is called a time of renewal and as the days get longer and the air warmer, just living seems easier. But time continues to pass. We are faced each day with another and another and another challenge. Our choices are as mundane as raisin bran or Cheerios or as weighty as surgery or chemo. And even worse, we are often in a position that we must make these choices not for ourselves but for others.

When I was in seminary one of my classmates wrote a paper entitled “Methodists Pray for Good Parking Places.” Some of the more studious types thought that was flippant. But I knew what he meant and I had to smile—the best source of help and comfort that we have is God himself. Our prayers are our communication with Him and He is always available for a chat. He is never too tired or too grumpy. And just like my friend who was advised “a good parking place is the one far away so you get some exercise,” after those chats, we are often surprised that what WE planned might not be such a good idea.

Get up tomorrow and do something different: plan for the perfect day and then love the one you get instead.

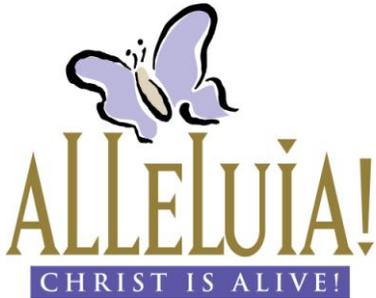
--Pastor Adrienne

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF DOUGLASTON

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PASTOR ADRIENNE'S BACK PAGE

I have a friend who when things went terribly wrong would say “it’s just how I planned it.” Needless to say, whatever was happening bore no relationship whatsoever to what he had planned. And for all of us, no matter what we do or how hard we try, much of what we do looks nothing at all like we planned it. Often our attempts to be in control of the situation are utterly thwarted. And one of the most important lessons we can learn is that, free will to the contrary notwithstanding, we are not in control—not really.

There are so many forces at work in the world that whether we want our steak medium rare or our hair trimmed “just a bit around the ears” or a report filed with the boss or world peace, most of the time, it does not happen the way we expect it to happen—much less wish it to be so.

Still, we have a lot of influence on the way of the world and so much of what we do—or don’t do—has direct and measurable consequences. Some war some time started with “the shot heard ‘round the world.” What we do needn’t have such dramatic results. But as we learned in that wonderful film *It’s a Wonderful Life*, our actions have both foreseen and unforeseen consequences that impact not only on our future but on the future of so many. In that film, George Bailey plans on seeing the world and setting it on fire. Instead, everything he wants to do turns out differently and when in despair he determines that he is a total failure and that his life insurance makes him worth more to his family dead than alive, he decides to take his own life. His *plans* are thwarted by his guardian angel who shows him what the world would have been like had George never been born. George realizes that the world is, indeed, a richer and better place because he was born into it.

Continues on Prior Page