

# THE SPIRE

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As the passage in Exodus indicates, Moses encountered God in a burning bush. God tells him to take off his sandals. Wherever God's presence abounds—perhaps in such a terrifying way—God's followers stand on holy ground. Moses was 80 at the time of God's numinous visitation. I think this indicates that a burning bush experience can occur among the elderly as well as any stage of our lives. In other words old age is no barrier to life changing, turn-around events orchestrated by God. Holy ground is also discovered among the very young. Parishioners have told me how they have experienced God on top of a mountain or by the sea at very early ages. And mid-lifers are not immune to burning bush extravaganzas denoting the radical presence of God. Throughout my ministry parishioners have had burning bush experiences in hospitals where, although anesthetized, they could nevertheless hear medical personnel discussing their dire circumstances. Many related how they experienced a white light which drew them upward, so that their disembodied presences, observed placidly the panicked procedures of doctors and nurses who were trying to save them. Then a white light guided them

toward deceased relatives, and onward toward the presence of God. Such recipients of the supernatural related how the world had less of hold on their spirits once they returned to this life. I used to be skeptical of such stories. No longer. The survivors of near death experiences note the absence of fear when it comes to their mortality, and a greater attunement to the subtle presence of God in their daily living. A few have mentioned a pilgrimage to the surgical area or their post-operation hospital room because, as they put it, such is holy ground for them.

Where is holy ground for you? Where have you encountered the living God? Before discussing location, let me preface the singular nature which attaches to the God infused places we honor. This is not to deny the plural nature of some holy ground experiences. Certainly Peter, James, and John must have felt that the ground they stood upon near the summit of Mt. Tabor was holy because of Jesus' transfiguration where he spoke to both Moses and Elijah. My favorite story of a corporate transfigurative event occurred several decades ago when a beloved professor at Union Theological Seminary retired. Before his last class of an illustrious 45 career of

teaching his students took off their shoes before they entered the classroom signifying that the professor's words were the foun-

*Where is holy ground for you? Where have you encountered the living God?*

dation for holy ground and that indeed his godly wisdom was as fiery as the burning bush to Moses. What an honor to receive from his faithful students. Nevertheless my focus is on the individual experience. Moses' experienced God in the singular. He was alone in the wilderness, tending sheep. There were no others when he encountered the flame. Although the phrase, holy ground, is not found again relative to Moses, I believe the great liberator of the Israelites from Egyptian captivity had several more burning bush experiences when he separated himself from the Israelites. He was alone both when he received the Ten commandments on Mount Sinai, and when God spoke to him "face to face as a man speaks with his friend" in the tent of meeting (Exodus 33:11). Moses also asked God to reveal the full extent of God's being to

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him. The Almighty denied the request partly, commanding his follower to stand in the cleft of a rock, so that Moses, "will see God's back" only as the fullness of God's being swept by. Did Moses scrawl in that cleft "Kilroy was Here" because God's being seemed so tangible? Had the simple rock, as well as the tent of meeting, become holy ground for him, places of wonder, terror, and joy?

Like Moses, the 8th Century prophet, Elijah, also experienced God's presence on Mount Sinai. Unlike his predecessor, however, the mountain provided refuge for God's spokesman who had devastated the pagan fertility god Baal recently, destroying its priests literally with a sword, and metaphorically when their sacrifices to the foreign god were not consumed by flames from heaven (1st Kings 18). Queen Jezebel, who brought the Baal cult from the East, had a bounty on Elijah's head. The prophet escaped South to Sinai, nearly undone by depression and fear. In fact Elijah longed for death. God wouldn't let him, or leave him. Alone on Sinai, in light of God's manifestation, he returned to faith and vocation (1 Kings 19). Thus Sinai became holy ground for more than Moses. Then there's Jacob. His history precedes both the great law giver,

and mighty prophet. Holy ground for Jacob occurred when he wrestled alone with God's messenger throughout the night. His hip was wrenched out of joint, leaving him limping permanently. But Jacob received what he wanted in the struggle - God's blessing. Jacob named the place of grappling, Peniel, because, "It is here I saw God face to face" (Genesis 32:30).

Moses, Elijah, and Jacob illustrate the connection between holy ground and solitude. My prayer is that the summer will allow you more time to do absolutely nothing but wait for a sign of God's presence in your life. In America we fear being by ourselves. Many people believe that leaving the perpetual social motion machine will cast them into despair. Busyness in our day and age becomes an anesthetic so that we fail to see signs of God's presence around us. It must be said that burning bush experiences are difficult to discover even when we are solitary. We can be alone in body, but busy in mind. Buddhism calls it 'Monkey Mind' when even in solitude, a variety of thoughts stream through our consciousness, robbing us of the ability focus and stay put. Then there's the technological paraphernalia which robs the want-to-be monk of the burning bush and holy ground. As a single person I spend more time by myself than couples or those who have families or friends under the

same roof. Nevertheless it is easy for me to turn on both televisions and the radio simultaneously in order to experience visual and auditory 'company'. The work for people like me is to be solitary in the truest sense of the word. Even when we are alone, sensory overload can tune out subtler burning bush experiences.

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Sometimes we must tell friends and family that we need space unadulterated by company or noise because we are in search of the burning presence of God, and the holy ground beneath which sustains faith. In April I returned to Gettysburg with my earliest seminary buddy, Steve, and his wife Jan. Once again we rode bikes around the battlefield, and tried to grasp the enormity of the carnage which occurred from July 1-3, 1863. On our second day there, we stopped at the Wheatfield where hand-to-hand combat marked the killing field. The tide swung six times as confederates and union soldiers slashed, bayoneted and shot at one another.

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# BIRTHDAYS

## June

Joseph Orlando	5, '07
Makenzie Rell	8, '11
Bobby Ryan	15, '99
Kyla Burns	18, '01
Allan Dumas, IV	19, '00
Luke Helm	19, '11
Brandt Kurtz	21, '03
Shawn Hinsdale	24, '03
Cailin Ryan	24, '95
Elizabeth Salzmman	25, '96
Ella Rowdycz	27, '11
Gregory Merrill	27, '95
Dakota Butler	27, '96
Gordon Kent	1
Su Wonderly	2
Larry Herzog	7
Rebecca Masters	8
Bobbi Checksfield	8
David Giles	8
Steven Coddington	8
Dennis Croswell	9
Mimi Croswell	11
Bob Alden	13
Sarah Longto	14
Annemarie Kurtz	15
Emily Horvers	20
Marilyn Lowe	21
Patti Gilpatric	23
William Mergl	23
Aaron Ulrich	24
Bev Chrisey	24
Aileen Helsley	25
Charles Woodard	26

Steven Kurtz	26
Dolores Wolven	27
James Gregory	28

## July

Teagan Helsley	6, '08
Claire Orlando	10, '10
Alyssa Kurtz	14, '01
Brayden Horvers	24, '98
Daniel Nekos	25, '04
Caitlin Cox	28, '91
Bonnie Dumas	3
Bill Beesmer	4
Nancy Salzmman	5
Kenneth Odell	5
Kacey Gardner	6
Debbie Tucker	6
Mark Woodard	9
Roger Vogt	14
Bryan Hill	15
Barbara Mayfield	16



Lori Decker	16
Sandra Emrich	19
Win Morrison	20
Dan Stott	24
Pat Manley	24

Katherine Emrich	25
Midge Stott	27
Ronald Burns	28
Matthew Horvers	28
Spencer Herzog	28

## August

Reid Jordan	3, '99
Aubrey Horvers	16, '96
Charles Emrich	23, '94
Mia Sullivan	24, '11
Roberta Falatyn	1
Kevin Hill	1
Jim Pirro	2
Donna Harder	10
Frank Pinckney	12
Rev. Charles Stickley	13
Kathleen Jansen	15
Gregg Moon	16
Roslie Gilpatric	19
Audrey Frost	20
David Emrich	20
Jim Macarille	22
Alison Cline	22
Jennifer Checksfield	22
Bill Schiff	24
Pam Milne	25
Jennifer Macarille	27
Barbara Kindt	28
Gary Longto	28
Helen Richter	30
Dick Baker	31

# ANNIVERSARIES

## JUNE

Barbara & Dick Baker	7
Drew & Su Wonderly	12
Eric & Jo Sullivan	12
Wally & Linda Cook	14
Tom & Judy Horvers	16
Barbara & Bob Kindt	17
Bobbi & Don Checksfield	21
Frieda & Doug Constant	23
Terry & John Gaffken	26
Steve & Phyllis Bliss	27
Christie & Jim Prentice	28

Steve & Valerie Nekos	29
Todd & Katrina Rubino	30

## JULY

Joyce & Frank Pinckney	6
Roger & Mary Lou Vogt	11
Gerard & Dolores Wyncoop	22
Rebecca & Allan Masters	27

## AUGUST

Bryan & Leigh Hill	1
Barry & Marcy Rell	2
Sheila & Terry Read	6
David & Gretchen Giles	6
Hal & Kathy Hauck	6

Annemarie & Fred Kurtz	15
Kathy & Ted Musialkiewicz	16
Leanne & Frank Warren	16
Jim & Roslie Gilpatric	19
Melinda & Larry Herzog	22
Jeffrey & Alyson Rafferty	24
David & Sandra Emrich	29
Cindy & Dino Sumerano	30
John & Elsie Kemble	30



## Missions



*“What you have done for the least of these you have done for me.” Matthew 25:40*

In June you will have the opportunity to support the Children’s Home of Kingston by using your monthly mission envelope. The Children’s Home, located in the Ponckhockie area of Kingston, is a residential treatment center for boys ages 8-12 who need specialized placement in a structured setting. The Home offers a variety of programs and services designed to build a hopeful future for children and families in the Hudson Valley. Your donation will help facilitate positive changes in these young boys lives.

Thank you,  
Linda Dux, Mission Committee Chair

## BIG BREAKFAST - Big ThankYou!

A very special thanks to all those who helped make this year's Big Breakfast a success (in no special order): Doris Alden, Gretchen & David Giles, Debbie Decker, Christa Conlin, Frank Pinckney, Russ Lewis, Russ Glass, Glenn Decker, Hal Hauck, Justin Irwin, Beverly Roosa, Kristine Lemus, Frieda Constant, Jim Mayfield and to Diana Cline and Michael Paul for the donation of eggs. To all those who came out and supported this fundraiser . . . A Big THANK YOU!

Doug Constant, Chairman

## Upcoming Activities:

June 10 - Children’s Sunday, Church School Attendance Awards

June 15 - Gram Gourmet Dinner for Lucky Winners

June 17 - Father’s Day, Recognition of Graduates, Senior Choir finishes for the summer

July 1 - Celebration of the Lord’s Supper

July 14 - Stone House Day

Aug. 18 - Corn Festival

Consistory will not meet during July or August.

There will be no Spire in July or August.

## Women's Guild

On May 20 we sponsored a pot luck luncheon right after church. Thank you to all who attended. A great time was had by all and the food was delicious. Thank you to Ellen Richards for chairing this event.

Stone House Day is days away and we could use a little help. We are collecting jewelry—more specifically, jewelry that you have you

haven't worn in a while. Please give your gems to Shirley Ruth for our sale Jewelry Table at the Country Fair. Also, if you are able to bake something for our bake sale please see Alyson Rafferty or Joyce Pinckney to let them know that you can help out. And, last but not least... our annual quilt raffle – a Tumbler Quilt to celebrate the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hurley and commemorate the Civil War 150 years ago. If you didn't get your tickets in the mail you can still purchase them after church or on

Stone House Day. Thank you for your support in so many areas!

Hope you have a wonderful summer!

Sandy Emrich-President

Upcoming Activities:  
6/10 Guild Meeting  
7/14 Stone House Day

## Kudos

Wally Cook, Grand Marshall of the Town of Hurley Memorial Day Parade  
William Gaffken and mom, Terry Gaffken , 1st place in their age groups in the Kingston Classic

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Combined with the contiguous battles of the Peach Orchard, and Little Round Top nearly 15,000 casualties occurred in less than three hours. In order to comprehend what had gone on there nearly 150 years ago I asked my friends to ride on without me so I could just stand there and sense holy ground is always present when much blood has been shed. The same feeling hit me a day later when we explored the Antietam battlefield. The battle of Antietam was fought on September 17, 1862. It brought the war to those who were removed from the battlefields because the dead were first photographed after this battle. Although Gettysburg was the costliest battle in terms of casualties (51,000) Antietam represents the single bloodiest day of the Civil War. At Antietam casualties amounted to nearly 23,000. This number was only surpassed by the multi-day battles at Chickamuga ,

Sept. 18-20, 1863 (34,624); the Wil-

*Seeking God's presence  
only elicits good.*

derness, May 5-7, 1864 (29,800); Chancellorsville, May 1-4, 1863 (24,000), Shiloh, April 6-7, 1862 (23,746); Stones River, Dec. 31, 1862-Jan 1, 1863 (23,515). I was mesmerized when we arrived at the Bloody Lane, a cow road, where confederate troops took cover and mowed down wave upon wave of union infantry until, they were finally overrun by the soldiers in blue. Once again, I had to separate myself from my friend in order to consider the sad magnitude of human loss. In a far more mundane sense we may need to explain to our loved ones why time alone in sacred places is crucial for our faith.

For Moses the burning bush experience called him in a new direc-

tion. He no longer would tend sheep, but rather be the shepherd who would liberate slaves from Egypt. Elijah's burning bush experience rescued him from despair and fear. Once again God renewed him spiritually so that he could continue to make a difference as one of the greatest of all prophets. Peniel, Jacob's sacred wrestling arena, became holy because Jacob realized he had the strength and character to overcome all odds. Seeking God's presence only elicits good. We are challenged to do more than we ever thought we could do, and to be more than our wildest expectations could have ever imagined. May you seek quiet and solitary time so that you might encounter our God more fully, and understand our life in Christ more clearly.

In Christ's service,

Doc Bob

## Graduates

Cameron Benz, Coleman High School, Son of Sue and Jon Benz  
 Alison Cline, Kingston High School, Daughter of Diana Cline  
 Megan Donahue, Saugerties High School and Cassidy Cunningham, Agawam High School, Agawam MA, Granddaughters of Helen Sgroi  
 Charles Emrich, Rondout High School, Son of Sandy & David Emrich  
 Kellen Hauck, Kingston High School, Daughter of Hal and Kathy Hauck  
 Bradley Horvers, Kingston High School, Son of Dennis and Donna Horvers  
 Calvin Lemus and Kristine Lemus, Kingston High School, Grandchildren of Doug and Frieda Constant  
 Ricki Maggiore, Kingston High School, Daughter of Kelly and Steve Maggiore  
 Vincent Pirro, Georgia State University, Bachelor of Arts, Grandson of Jim & Betty Pirro  
 Cody Robinson, Saugerties High School, son of Ellie Robinson Korolenko  
 Lukas Sweers, Vander Cook College of Music, Chicago, IL, Bachelor of Music Education, Summa Cum Laude, Grandson of Lorraine Denis  
 Shannon Tucker, College of St. Rose, Master of Science in Education and Certificate of Advanced Study in School Psychology, Daughter of Debbie & John Tucker  
 Douglas Woodard, Ulster County Community College will attend Canton University, and Lindsay Woodard, Saugerties High School, will attend SUNY Plattsburgh, Grandchildren of Natalie Woodard



We congratulate you and wish you well as you continue on your life's journey!

## Stone House Day

is coming upon us quickly - July 14th - only a month away. This is the main fundraiser of the HRC and a wonderful opportunity to involve the entire church community. Eight stone house will open. We will need hosts and hostesses for each home. Hours are 10am - 1pm or 1pm - 4pm. Of course, if you would like to work the full day, we're happy to have you do that too.

Children's activities were incorporated into the days events a few years ago. There will be tinsmithing, candle making, cross stitch embroidery, and corn husk dolls, as well as children's games. If you enjoy working with children and

families this would be perfect for you.

Spinners, weavers and a blacksmith will demonstrate their skills on the parsonage grounds. A militia encampment with men and women in colonial outfits will show some of the things they needed to bring with them when called out to fight.

Granny's Garret and jewelry will occupy the lower level of Schade-wald Hall, along with the Women's Guild Bake Sale. The Tumbler Quilt will be raffled at 4:pm - be sure to get your tickets.

The kitchen will be busy preparing lots of food and snacks for lunch and those "in between" moments. Waiters and waitresses will keep

the dining room ready for the next diner.

Sojourner Truth will present her famous speech in the Sanctuary. Organ recitals will feature period pieces.

Please do sign up to volunteer for an hour, or for the full day, to help with the activities mentioned above. Much occurs before the first ticket is sold: distributing publicity, prepping food, putting out signage, setting up and of course, breaking down at the close of the day. Sign up sheets are available every Sunday after worship in Schadewald Hall. If you can't make it to church, you can contact Karin Lamb, Ellen Richards, or Christa Conlin or call the church office, 331-4121. You'll be glad you did!

*Congratulations 2012 Class Participants!*  
*The Significant Woman*



*Back: Sarah Orlando, Marianne Breithaupt, Roberta Falatyn, Betsy Rama, Jackie Persons, Carla Paton  
 Front: Sandy Emrich, Martha Brittel, Kathy Carroll-Walsh*

The Significant Woman life-coaching program wrapped up with a Celebration potluck dinner on May 21st. This year's participants, including co-facilitators Carla Paton and Betsy Rama, began meeting in February to complete a twelve week study, based on six biblical life-principles called PEARLS. Together we shared, listened and encouraged one another, as we explored our uniqueness, activated our personal mission and discovered ways to live more fully as the person God created us to be. This group has been enriching experience for each of us. Below are some reflections shared by the women in our group.

*"Through this course God has shown me I am valuable, and it's not too late to do something meaningful that I enjoy. Looking at my uniqueness, core value, passions and abilities has helped me to reshape who I want to be, in line with God's will."*

*"The Significant Woman helped me to clarify goals, identify barriers, and plan a manageable course of action. I was able to compose a mission statement; a lens through which I can navigate through the demands and opportunities that present themselves in my life."*

*"Before taking this course I had felt I lost my true self...The PEARLS principles have helped me find my path again. I have learned to recognize barriers, ridding myself of those I have control over and praying about those I do not."*

*"God has touched me through the PEARLS... I've opened my heart/ears/head more so I can feel/hear and know that He is always there for me. When I have a choice to make I can review my mission statement to make sure it is the right fit for my life."*

*"I am grateful for the opportunity to spend time with such intelligent, caring and supportive women. I have learned to focus on the basics, establishing goals that are attainable, and acknowledging the small victories along the way."*

***Congratulations ladies, and thank you for being the beautiful women that you are!***

**"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Eph 2:10)**

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Pastor

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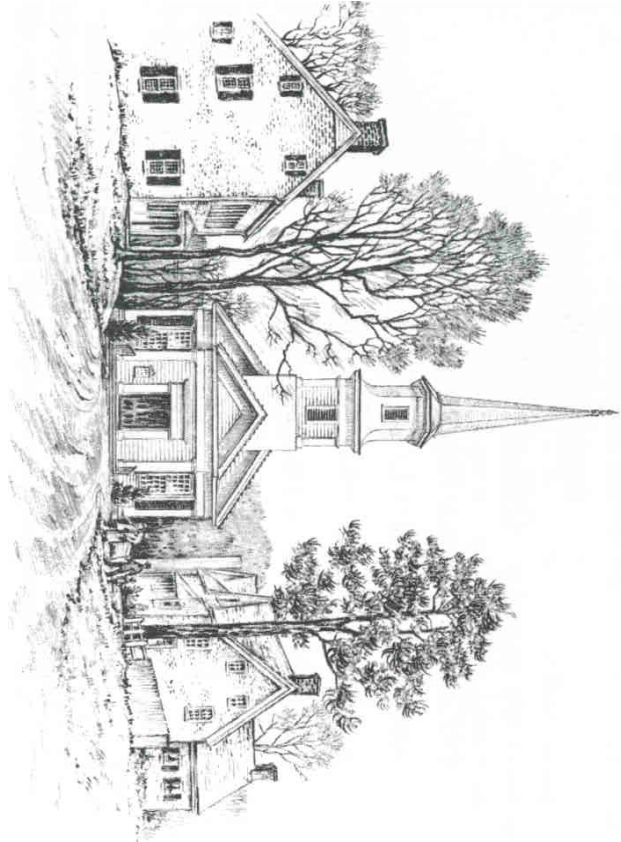
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