



The Church of Gethsemane

Liberation Voices!

Summer 2009



Pastor's Report — Rev. Liz Alexander



Dear Members and Friends,

As we plan for the Celebration of The 20th Anniversary of The Church of Gethsemane in October, we find ourselves reflecting on our mission and history, as we focus on the life and ministry of our church today, and look ahead to the future. We continue to evolve and grow, as we remain focused on the unique mission and the power of the

Holy Spirit that continues to bring us together.

Not only has our Project Connect Program and our Re-Entry Peer Support grown this year, we have also brought people into our church through outreach into our Brooklyn neighborhood. As disciples of Jesus, we break down barriers that separate us and reach out to one another as we seek justice, peace, and new life.

The Annual International Interfaith Peace Day Service at The Church of Gethsemane brings people from five religions together for prayer and reflection. On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, over 200 men, women and children came to Gethsemane to raise awareness about service. Families sang, read stories, created a mural, and made donations to our food pantry.

On Criminal Justice Sunday we shared first hand experiences about prison and re-entry concerns. On Mother's Day we provided a service of healing for Mother's in Prison and Children in Crisis. On May 3rd we had a Blessing of The Bicycles to raise awareness about bicycle safety as we asked God's blessing on all who ride bicycles, skateboards and scooters in our neighborhood. On June 13th the church had a booth at the Brooklyn Pride Street Fair, and distributed newsletters and brochures about Gethsemane.

People learn about our church through word of mouth. Our newsletters, brochures and other publications will be available on our website www.thechurchofgethsemane.org. It is a time of reflection and renewal as we share our joys and struggles, and offer support to one another. As you can see from reading this newsletter, we are a Spirit filled congregation.

Thanks to all our Members, Friends of Gethsemane, and Partner Churches for over 20 years of ministry!

Blessings and Peace,
Rev. Liz Alexander

Minister of Evangelism — Chibueze Okorie



Greetings to our Project Connect Members & Friends,

The Project Connect Re-Entry Peer Support Group is moving forward with the support of formerly incarcerated members, we meet twice a month to discuss issues relating to their lives and re-entry into society. We started with a small group of folks who believed that one must be motivated and willing to accept a new beginning that will lead to a better future. A criminal conviction should not continue to be a barrier to one's future. We realize that without a community support and assistance most formerly incarcerated persons end up back in prison.

Communication has been a vital topic discussed during the group meetings. Communication affects many aspect of everyday life: to understand, articulate, and give respectful responses helps us to deal with issues we face. Housing, treatment and employment are the major problems that face many of our members upon release. Members of the group who were fortunate enough to secure job or housing programs help to get others connected during the meeting.

We are all looking forward to a new direction through our journey to succeed and to a better life after prison. Being motivated has helped our members demonstrate their abilities to succeed right from prison, because of positive things can be achieved while incarcerated. Men and women who are willing to prepare themselves by taking advantage of some programs provided in prison that help them for a better tomorrow will achieve success.

Project Connect members understand that re-entry requires hard work, and that out of every difficulty comes an opportunity. One must accept the fact that every human being makes mistakes. When someone pays for his/her mistake, that individual should be allowed to live a normal life. Society should allow individuals released from prison to seek a better life, and pursue their dreams without any further discrimination. Some formerly incarcerated persons who acquired education or training while in prison cannot get certified or obtain licensing upon their release.

Project Connect members who are incarcerated and the peer support group are continuing to work and encourage one another in finding ways to achieve a better tomorrow. Project Connect and Peer Support Group members thank churches and friends for their enthusiasm and support in making this program a continuing success.

Stay Well,
Chibueze Okorie

SAVE THE DATE! GETHSEMANE 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4TH, 2009 AT 3:00PM