

RESPONSE BY PHILIP CLARKE

INTRODUCTION

Bless you and thank you all for coming! A full Church! Better than Easter...probably the largest gathering I've seen here in all of my years. Thank you for coming and for honoring me in such a warm and wonderful way....

To sever the ties woven through five decades - the fifties, the sixties, seventies, eighties and nineties - leaves me at a loss for words to adequately express the depths of my feelings and my gratitude. Thank you. Thank you. To all of you....and to the Board of Trustees of this church for organizing and promoting and paying for this gathering. You're the greatest!

DEVELOPMENT

I've loved every minute of my ministry here. The dozen or so members and friends of this church when I arrived here in December of 1956 patiently endured my youthful inexperience and my pastoral inadequacies. I had had only about a year's experience in a church in Scotia, New York...working with Junior High and Senior High youth. I came with about six sermons "in the barrel" which were pretty much used up the first two months and from then on....it was pretty much a fresh sermon each week and some 2,000 of them are filed away in two filing cabinets in my study.

Those who don't think much of my preaching now should have been around back in those early years. I can still picture a few folks falling asleep and actually snoring...while I was up here "doing my thing" the best I could! Remember, Mrs. Tabor, Harold?

It was on October the 8th, 1956 that I sat with the Pastor - Parish Relations Committee and heard about the church...seven of us were there....I remember them well - Paul Russell, Harold Black, Merle Gripman, Winifred Howe, Elmer Bostock and my wife and myself. I also remember hearing that Don Larsen was pitching a perfect game that afternoon at Yankee Stadium. Oh, I wanted to be there....four subway stops from the Church. Some of you will remember that NYC was the baseball capital of the universe - Dodgers, Giants, Yankees. Crossing the Tappan Zee Bridge that early evening I recall seeing a huge sign up in the heavens that said: GO TO NEW YORK. To me, a sign from above. Someone later told me it was the Goodyear Blimp.

The afternoon of that interview, Mrs. Russell and Mrs. McCartney showed me the church. They omitted showing me the basement area...for good reason. And the first time I walked in here my heart sank...poor lighting, soot and grime on walls untouched by paint for 30 years, pew cushions falling apart. But underneath it all you could see touches of beauty....

Those of you who were here in my early years gave me the freedom to speak whatever was on my heart and you have been across the years...

Most generous in your judgements and
infinitely considerate in your kindness!

And for all of this I am profoundly grateful. I came here at the age of 27 with a dream of trying to build a church in this city that would be interracial, international and inter denominational...a church whose doors would be "open"...open to all people...regardless.

FAREWELL RECEPTION

1. Bebe Ahmad
2. Rehanna London
3. Joanne Alban Hanschell
4. Judith Allen
5. Judi Ferland
6. Judi Ferland (Husband ???)
7. Judi Ferland
8. Claudia Jo Allmand Belmont (?)
9. Betty Altoonian
10. Coralie Bailey
11. Bibi Banoo
12. Neil Bardach
13. Andrea Bardach
14. Michelle Barton
15. Monique (Michelle's daughter)
16. Quintasia (Monique's friend)
17. Richmond Bates
18. Lili Bates
19. Charmane Bembury
20. Lee White / Bembury
21. Salehe Bembury
22. Abije Bembury (check spelling of name)
23. Elizabeth Berg
24. Harold Black
25. Deborah Black

ADD:

403: Vaughn Watson
(Organist)

26. Lynn Blair
27. Bob Blumenberg
28. Jim Bobick
29. Valerie Komar (Jim's fiancée)
30. Dan Boone
31. Ken Borgeson
32. Catherine Bose
33. Gail Ann Bradshaw
34. Olga Bromfield
35. Susan Lynn Brown
36. Gordon Bryant
37. Ann Bryant
38. Son, Bryants (Allen)
39. Son, Bryants (Douglas)
40. Lynn Bruhn
41. Katherine Buck
42. Elizabeth Callahan
43. Charles Carpenter
44. Robyn Carpenter
45. Ann Cavallaro
46. Angelo Chaconas
47. Jane Chaney
48. Bert Chernizer
49. Victor Childers
50. Catherine Clarke

51. Leroy Coffman
52. Carl Condra
53. Wendy Cooper
54. David Corvette
55. Gail Corvette
56. Iria Cotton
57. Paula (Iris's daughter)
58. Michael Craig
59. George Crawford
60. Howard daCosta
61. Meg da Costa
62. Ilya Da Costa
63. Norma Dambrosie
64. Jeanne Dambrosie
65. Cary Danford
66. Patricia Daniel
67. Patricia Daniel (friend)
68. Patricia Daniel (friend)
69. John Danley
70. Peggy Daniel
71. Marty Davis
72. Christine Day
73. Thomas DeBow
74. Suzanne De Bow
75. Anna Delson

76. Warren Dennie
77. Ingrid Dennie
78. Mark Else
79. Greta Else
80. Janet Ernst
81. Margaret Fisher
82. Russell Flagg
83. Holley Flagg
84. Ted Flagg
85. Vidya Foley
86. Hillary Ford (and 2 children)
87. Beatrice Frasier
88. Effie French
89. Josefina Garcia (?)
90. Lee Gartrell
91. Joyce Gartrell
92. Ann Pearl Gary
93. Sarah Gill
94. George Gill ???
95. Sally Gill ???
96. Nat Grady
97. Gretchen Grant
98. Jill Gray
99. Herman Greene
100. Mrs. Herman Greene

101. Eddie Gunderson
102. Peggy Gunderson
103. Ramez Habib
104. Linda Guran
105. Linda Guran's daughter, Christine, or husband ???
106. Eric Hains
107. Charlotte Hains
108. Ken Halcott
109. Andrea Halcott
110. Thomas Hallagan
111. Bjorn Hanson
112. Cathy Hanson
113. Sabrina Hanson
114. Jack Harris
115. Lynn Haymes
116. Danielle Haymes
117. John Helmke
118. Deborah Helmke
119. Patricia Henry
120. Rachel Bard Henry
121. Paul Henry
122. Bobbie Heron
123. Stan Solomon
124. Donna Holmes
125. Bob Lipton

126. David Howard
127. Jeff Hughes
128. Betty Sue Hughes
129. Catherine Hummel
130. Linda Hutcherson
131. Bridget Hutcherson
132. Julie Hymen
133. Lucene Thorne Inniss
134. Rev. Fred Jackson
135. Dorothy Jackson
136. Peter Jacobson
137. Janet Jacobson
138. Linnea Jacobson
139. Peter Jacobson
140. Amy James
141. Friend, Amy James
142. Jane James
143. Jennifer Jenkins
144. Edward Ferrars (or Ferraro ???)
145. Sharon Johnson
146. Rita Mauer
147. Charlotte Juchter
148. Beverly Judge
149. Nancy Kaplan
150. Jose Alexander (in place of Jennifer Karim..her brother)

151. Tom Keane
152. Dana Keane
153. Sophie Keane
154. Griffin Keane
155. Josephine Keim
156. Antonio Khe
157. Miriam Khe
158. Mary Ann Kho
159. Michelle Kho
160. Mae Kho
161. Charles Kim
162. Soo Kim
163. Michael Kipniss
164. Pam Kipniss
165. Michael Kirmayer
166. Charlotte Kittilsen
167. Loren Kittilsen
168. Kristina Kittilsen
169. Gary Klein
170. Julie Klein
171. Matthew Klein
172. Christopher Klein
173. Peggy Koepfel
174. Harvey Koepfel
175. Dan Lamprecht

176. Jennifer Lamprecht
177. Charles Langalis
178. Tammy Langalis
179. Frank Leackfeldt
180. Francine Leackfeldt
181. George Leopold
182. Regina Poddskis
183. Edward Levay
184. Patricia Mintz Levay
185. Robert Lewis
186. ~~Annetta Lewis~~
187. Daniel Lewis
188. Will Lewis
189. ~~Andres Liberato~~
190. Purita Liberato
191. Jeans, Lleyd
192. John Lombardo
193. Alix Lombardo
194. Marisa Lombardo
195. Florence Long
196. David Low
197. Nancy Low
198. Pauline Marsden
199. Jeff Marshall
200. Rachel Marston

201. Cynthia McCollum
202. T. A. McKinney
203. Perri McKinney
204. Frances ~~Macas~~
205. Cynthia Mele
206. Dr. Nelson Mendell
207. Martha Mendell
208. Roberto Meriles
209. Roberto Meriles / family member
210. Roberto Meriles / family member
211. Earle Milbery
212. Carol Milbery
213. Jeffrey Miles
214. Natividad Miranda
215. Natividad Miranda / friend
216. Larry Morales
217. Doreen Morales
218. Carol Hawkins Mulcrone
219. Keith Mulcrone
220. Diane Murray
221. Diane Murray / friend ? Stafford Reynolds
222. Deborah Cox-Riches
223. Karl Newlin
224. Shannon Newlin
225. Susan Nicholas

226. Spike Neuberger
227. Duffy Neuberger
228. Alpo Niskanen
229. Alpo Niskanen's wife
230. David Odell
231. David Odell / friend
232. Sharon Channesian
233. Karen Oldham
234. Karen Oldham / friend ???
235. Roberta Olson
236. Allegra Olson
237. Mr. Olson / Roberta's husband...Alex Johnson.
238. Agnes Olsson
239. Olivia Olsson
240. Cecelia Oltmann
241. Louise O'Neill
242. Jacque Paige
243. Ed Paige
244. Jim Perkins
245. Bridget Perkins
246. Traey Piatt
247. Kenny Piatt
248. Ron Piatt
249. Edith Piper
250. Eric Preston

- 251. Marjorie Preston
- 252. Jane Radnay
- 253. Mark Raker
- 254. Kristin Raker
- 255. Rajkoemer Rankissoon
- 256. Vanessa Rankissoon
- 257. Christine Rankissoon
- 258. George Redington
- 259. Dorothy Redington
- 260. Mary Lou Risley
- 261. Lillie Rodgers
- 262. Dunia Rodgers
- 263. Earl Roosa
- 264. Nicque Roosa
- 265. Alexis Roosa
- 266. Nicholas Roosa
- 267. Helen Russell
- 268. Thad Russell
- 269. Barbara Russell
- 270. Sam Russell
- 271. Paul Russell
- 272. Suzanne Sales
- 273. Anne Sappington
- 274. Alan Samuels
- 275. Tina Sayers

276. Jay Sayers
277. Charles Scardino
278. Dorothy Scardino
279. Michael Schafffield
280. Dee Schafffield
281. Dianne Keller Schindo
282. Edward Schindo
283. Jack Schmidt
284. Liz Otto Schmidt
285. Joseph Schneider
286. Joan Schneider
287. Phyllis Leopold
288. Anne Schumann
289. Gary Scruggs
290. Kathryn Scruggs
291. Tyler Scruggs
292. Colby Scruggs
293. Carter Philip Scruggs
294. Der Scutt
295. Lean Scutt
296. Edward Segal
297. Richard Sharp
298. Mickey Clarke Sharp
299. Robert Sharp
300. Nancy Sharp

301. David (Bob Sharp's son)
302. Matthew (Bob Sharp's son)
303. Frances Shelton
304. Jane Scatarro
305. Barbara Sieg
306. Ashley Sieg
307. Kendall Sieg
308. Tracey Simmons
309. Edward Kofi Simpson
310. Dorcas Simpson
311. Mr. Simpson (name unknown to PC)
312. ~~Kweku~~ Simpson
313. Tina Hopermann Slocumb
314. Travis Slocumb
315. Roxanne Snover
316. Leticia Soriano
317. Friend of Leticia Simpson
318. Walter Spencer
319. Friend / Walter Spencer
320. Jeffrey Sprouse
321. Rebecca Lehmann Sprouse
322. Stacey Staaterman
323. Brian Feeney
324. Edward Stack
325. Dorothy Staine

- 326. William Staubach
- 327. Margaret Staubach
- 328. Helen Tait
- 329. John Tait
- 330. Evelyn Thayer
- 331. Duane Thompson
- 332. Brenda Thompson
- 333. Shirley Carr Thompson
- 334. David Thempson
- 335. Nancy Trespasz
- 336. Lynn Weddington Tucker
- 337. Nichola Tucker / or Andrew Tucker ??
- 338. Nancy Ullom
- 339. Jim Ullom
- 340. Astor Val Hackett
- 341. Nica Val Hackett
- 342. Alana Val Hackett
- 343. Noni Val Hackett
- 344. Sandra Van Cleve
- 345. Philip Vasan
- 346. Tina Vasan
- 347. Christina Veneracion (Reyno)
- 348. Nancy Ward
- 349. Gene Washington
- 350. Gene Washington / Friend

351. Bonnie Lane Weber
352. Glenn Weeks
353. Barbara Weeks
354. Daughter / Barbara and Glenn Weeks
355. Erich Werner Jatzke
356. Pat Werner Jatzke
357. Ashley Werner Jatzke
358. Hans Werner Jatzke
359. Chelsea Werner Jatzke
360. Phyllis Westermann
361. Joan (Althea) White
362. William White
363. Vonne Whittleton
364. Wayne Wiebe
365. Carol Foster Wiebe
366. Megan Wiebe / or friend
367. Sykes Wilford
368. Jane Wilford
369. Sykes Wilford, Jr.
370. Paul Wilford
371. Sarah Wilford
372. Joyce Williams
373. Ginger Haselden Weyhenmeyer
374. Jim Weyhenmeyer
375. Molly Weyhenmeyer

- 376. Len Williams
- 377. Bert Williams
- 378. Renee Williams
- 379. Sam Wilson
- 380. Billie Wilson
- 381. Lyndon Woodside
- 382. Jane Woodside
- 383. Lisa Zimmerman
- 384. Jay Zimmerman
- 385. Tim O'Connor
- 386. Walter Gerbereux
- 387. Sandy Kours
- 388. Mrs. Sandyy Kours
- 389. Harold Abromwitz
- 390. Mrs. Harold Abromwitz
- 391. Seymour ???
- 392. Rea Getzels
- 393. Kathryn Carroll
- 394. Tina Hammond
- 395. Janice Harayda
- 396. Noi ???
- 397. Rabbi David Lincoln / ???
- 398. Edward Duda / Campbells
- 399. Dr. Marsha Long
- 400. Lynn Thomson
- 401. Judy Wilska Whelan
- 402. Ken Whelan

CLARKE / SOME RESUME NOTES AND "BIO" INFORMATION

Some of the things done apart from the pastoring and preaching at the Park Avenue United Methodist Church...

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

President of the East Midtown Ministers' Association (1959 - 1961); Trustee, The Chapin School (1966 - 1972); Chaplain, Inwood Home For Unwed Mothers (1968 to 1972); Member, Tri-Faith Housing Corporation (1966 to 1968); Member, Yorkville Counselling Center Board, (1964 to 1968); Trustee, Eastside Hospital Chaplaincy Program (1968 to 1974);

UNITED METHODIST CONFERENCE (New York Annual Conference)

Chairman, Deaconess Association of the NY Annual Conference (1958 to 1962); Chairperson of the NY Annual Conference Board of Ecumenical Relations (1968 to 1974); Member of the NY Annual Conference Review Committee (1974 to 1977); Program Chairperson for the Monday Club and Treasurer, too (1972 - 1976); Member of the District Committee on the District Superintendency (1985 to 1999)

Delegate to the World Methodist Conference in London, 1967.

Delegate to the World Methodist Conference, Singapore, 1992.

OTHER

Summer preacher, Caroga Lake Chapel, Caroga (in the Adirondacks), 2 Sundays each summer, 1986 - 1998.

Invited to give the Induction Day Invocation, Cooperstown Hall of Fame for Baseball, 1990 and again in 1994.

Summer preacher, Methodist Church, Ogunquit, Maine 1968 and 1969 and 1970.

Member / Men's Health Club, 1970 to 1999 / 92nd Street YMHA

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Yet there are many individual mainline Protestant churches that are thriving. There's no sure-fire recipe for success—each congregation is different—but the story of how one failing church managed to

Houses of Worship

By Melanie Kirkpatrick

transform itself into a bustling house of worship and a force for good in its community can perhaps offer some insights for other struggling churches.

The church is Park Avenue United Methodist Church, located on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. The force behind its transformation is its minister, Philip A.C. Clarke, who will retire from the pulpit Sunday after 43 years of service. Mr. Clarke's approach includes a traditional worship service, programs to help the needy and an attitude of welcome that embraces people of all races, backgrounds and political beliefs. In short, the Park Avenue name, with its intimations of exclusivity, does not define the mission of the church.

What about the evangelical churches that are drawing worshippers away from mainline Protestantism? Like the evangelicals, Mr. Clarke says, "I believe in a personal experience of God in your life. But a church needs to fly on two wings: not just the personal experience but also social outreach."

When Mr. Clarke arrived at Park Avenue in 1956, he found a church on the brink of closing. There were 25 or so members, a building in disrepair and no money. The Sunday he preached his first sermon, he remembers thinking: "The church is dead but somehow they don't know it." Today the church has 600 members, a splendidly restored facility and, thanks to the management of a member who knew his way around Wall Street, a healthy financial statement, including a trust of \$9 million dedicated to supporting needy churches in New York and helping the poor.

Park Avenue Methodist first opened its doors in 1837 in Yorkville, a village in upper Manhattan then connected by stagecoach to the "city" several miles south. It was a mission outpost of John Street Methodist Church, founded in 1768, which claims to

be the oldest Methodist meetinghouse in the New World.

Over the next 100 years, the church flourished in a neighborhood that by the late 19th century had become a fashionable residential district. Its membership hit 700 in the 1870s and was up to more than 1,000 in 1927, when it moved into its current address. Large, aging buildings are a burden to many urban churches today. But Mr. Clarke sees Park Avenue's building as a boon; its Romanesque sanctuary draws people in and is "one of our most compelling evangelists."

Mr. Clarke says he hasn't tinkered much with styles of worship over the years. His service is "formal" and usually includes three hymns, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer and a sermon that never lasts more than 20 minutes and never discusses his personal political views. "Part of our appeal is that people walk in and say it's like my church back home," he says. Roughly 60% of the current members come from Methodist backgrounds; the other 40% come from other denominations and even other faiths.

Park Avenue Methodist's membership is now as diverse as the city it serves, but that diversity didn't come easily. Mr. Clarke remembers a white member who, in the early 1960s, refused to let a photograph of herself in church appear in a magazine because she didn't want to be pictured standing with a black member and a Korean-American member. One of his favorite stories about how the church changed for the better concerns the Sunday a U.S. Senator worshipped at Park Avenue Methodist, only to be rebuked by a steam fitter in the Brooklyn dockyards for leaving the communion rail too early.

Tell a Methodist that you know a minister who's been at the same church for 43 years and he is likely to say a prayer for the liar before him. Mr. Clarke's length of service at Park Avenue is unheard of in the United Methodist Church, whose clergy typically spend a maximum of five to eight years at a single church. It's a system that grew out of the "circuit riding" tradition of the 19th century, when Methodist ministers on horseback followed their flocks to the frontier.

How did Mr. Clarke manage to stick around so long? He cites two factors. One, his mobile congregation changed constantly, so it was like getting a new church every five years. And two, "I learned to keep a low profile around bishops."

Ms. Kirkpatrick, a member of Park Avenue Methodist Church, is the assistant editor of the Journal's editorial page.

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Yet there are many individual mainline Protestant churches that are thriving. There's no sure-fire recipe for success—each congregation is different—but the story of how one failing church managed to

Houses of Worship

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The church is Park Avenue United Methodist Church, located on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. The force behind its transformation is its minister, Philip A.C. Clarke, who will retire from the pulpit Sunday after 43 years of service. Mr. Clarke's approach includes a traditional worship service, programs to help the needy and an attitude of welcome that embraces people of all races, backgrounds and political beliefs. In short, the Park Avenue name, with its intimations of exclusivity, does not define the mission of the church.

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Over the next 100 years, the church flourished in a neighborhood that by the late 19th century had become a fashionable residential district. Its membership hit 700 in the 1870s and was up to more than 1,000 in 1927, when it moved into its current address. Large, aging buildings are a burden to many urban churches today. But Mr. Clarke sees Park Avenue's building as a boon; its Romanesque sanctuary draws people in and is "one of our most compelling evangelists."

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Over the next 100 years, the church flourished in a neighborhood that by the late 19th century had become a fashionable residential district. Its membership hit 700 in the 1870s and was up to more than 1,000 in 1927, when it moved into its current address. Large, aging buildings are a burden to many urban churches today. But Mr. Clarke sees Park Avenue's building as a boon; its Romanesque sanctuary draws people in and is "one of our most compelling evangelists."

Mr. Clarke says he hasn't tinkered much with styles of worship over the years. His service is "formal" and usually includes three hymns, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer and a sermon that never lasts more than 20 minutes and never discusses his personal political views. "Part of our appeal is that people walk in and say it's like my church back home," he says. Roughly 60% of the current members come from Methodist backgrounds; the other 40% come from other denominations and even other faiths.

Park Avenue Methodist's membership is now as diverse as the city it serves, but that diversity didn't come easily. Mr. Clarke remembers a white member who, in the early 1960s, refused to let a photograph of herself in church appear in a magazine because she didn't want to be pictured standing with a black member and a Korean-American member. One of his favorite stories about how the church changed for the better concerns the Sunday a U.S. Senator worshipped at Park Avenue Methodist, only to be rebuked by a steam fitter in the Brooklyn dockyards for leaving the communion rail too early.

Tell a Methodist that you know a minister who's been at the same church for 43 years and he is likely to say a prayer for the liar before him. Mr. Clarke's length of service at Park Avenue is unheard of in the United Methodist Church, whose clergy typically spend a maximum of five to eight years at a single church. It's a system that grew out of the "circuit riding" tradition of the 19th century, when Methodist ministers on horseback followed their flocks to the frontier.

How did Mr. Clarke manage to stick around so long? He cites two factors. One, his mobile congregation changed constantly, so it was like getting a new church every five years. And two, "I learned to keep a low profile around bishops."

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Stepping Down, Looking Back

Mainline Protestant churches get a bad rap. Yes, overall church membership is declining and yes, there's a lot of truth to the charge that the focus on liberal political causes has driven away worshippers more interested in prayer than politics on Sunday mornings.

Yet there are many individual mainline Protestant churches that are thriving. There's no sure-fire recipe for success—each congregation is different—but the story of how one failing church managed to

Houses of Worship

By Melanie Kirkpatrick

transform itself into a bustling house of worship and a force for good in its community can perhaps offer some insights for other struggling churches.

The church is Park Avenue United Methodist Church, located on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. The force behind its transformation is its minister, Philip A.C. Clarke, who will retire from the pulpit Sunday after 43 years of service. Mr. Clarke's approach includes a traditional worship service, programs to help the needy and an attitude of welcome that embraces people of all races, backgrounds and political beliefs. In short, the Park Avenue name, with its intimations of exclusivity, does not define the mission of the church.

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