



THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

OLD SOUTH CHURCH
IN BOSTON
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Fifth Sunday of Lent
April 2, 2006

Old South Continues Lenten Journey

Throughout history, Christians have responded to God's call to be the church in the world by both adapting to and witnessing against the world.

Today we will look at how one church has responded to God's call over the course of more than 300 years: Old South Church in Boston. Old South was gathered in 1669.

Our guide for this final leg of our Lenten journey is Dr. Margaret Bendroth, Director and Librarian of the

Congregational Library.

Dr. Bendroth is an avid student of American religious history and an active layperson in the United Church of Christ. She has a Ph.D. in American history from Johns Hopkins University, and is the author of several books and many articles about American Protestantism. Before returning to Boston in 2004, she was Professor of History at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, MI. Her most recent book is



Dr. Margaret Bendroth

Fundamentalists in the City: Conflict and Division in Boston's Churches, 1885-1950. Previous books include *Growing Up Protestant: Parents, Children and Mainline Churches* and *Fundamentalism and Gender, 1875 to the Present.*

TODAY

- Breaking bread
Thank you for your \$3 donation to help defray the cost of the meal.
- Worshipping
- Community building
- Learning
THE CHURCH
IN THE WORLD
*An Open Door:
Old South Church
in Boston*
with Dr. Margaret
Bendroth
- Closing

INQUIRERS

Those who may be interested in joining Old South Church, or who just want to know more about us, are invited to sit at reserved tables hosted by the Board of Deacons and the Membership Committee.

Please indicate to Nancy or Quinn if you are looking for this table.

Gathering Song: Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit

Chorus: G D G A D D7

Ev- 'ry time I feel the Spir- it mov- in' in my heart, I will pray, Ev-'ry

G D G A D Fine

time I feel the Spir - it mov- in' in my heart, I will pray.

Verse: D A D

1. Up-on the moun-tain, when my Lord spoke, out of God's mouth came fire and smoke;
2. Oh, I have sor-rows, and I have woe and I have heart-ache here be- low;

D A D DC

looked all a - round me it looked so fine 'til I asked my Lord, "Is it mine?"
But while God leads me I'll nev-er fear for I am shel-tered by God's care.



ONE CHURCH IN THE WORLD: OLD SOUTH CHURCH IN BOSTON

The history of Old South Church is more than the record of one New England meetinghouse still in existence after three centuries. Deep under the foundations of the three structures that have housed its thousands of worshippers lie whole chapters of American history and the slow emergence of certain ideas and principles upon which this nation is built — liberty, freedom of conscience, human brotherhood.

Ola Elizabeth Winslow from the foreword to Old South Church in Boston, 1669-1969

It is hard to know how to measure a church's life in the world. Some measure churches by the eloquence and prominence of their ministers; others by the beauty of their buildings or the height of their steeples; still others by the quality of their programs or the size of their membership.

Perhaps Old South is best measured by the contributions to church and society of those who gather week in and week out to offer prayer and praise to the living God. Some are clergy, to be sure, but the vast majority are laity whose vocation as Christians is lived out, for the most part, outside the doors of the meetinghouse. Over the course of more than three centuries, men and women who called Old South their church home have made extraordinary contributions to the general good. It is for this reason that Harvard's John Fiske once stated that there is no other church that has been so intimately associated with many of the significant events of this nation's history than Old South.

This all-too brief presentation of Old South Church, therefore, is intended to acquaint you with a sampling of the men and women who have, by faith and imagination, shaped this nation for the good. ■■



OLD SOUTH'S FIRSTS

1640 Two copies of the *Bay Psalm Book*, the **first** book published on this continent (in 1640), are owned by Old South. There are a total of only eleven copies known to be extant. Old South's two copies are both in excellent condition.

With the Bay Psalm Book the Puritans not only attained the ability to print books in this land, more importantly, they asserted their right to their own, free press.

1677 Old South's first minister, Thomas Thacher, wrote and published the **first medical tract** in North America. Written to assist an under-doctored populace facing an epidemic of small pox and measles, it was among the most popular and useful publications of its day. With this tract, Thacher introduced a new medical genre: the patient information brochure.

1704 Old South member Bartholomew Green printed the **first** continuously published newspaper in North America, the *Boston News-Letter*. The first issue included a report on the preaching of an "excellent" sermon by Rev. Mr. Ebenezer Pemberton of Boston's Old South Church. The sermon, based on 1 Thessalonians 4.11, was entitled "And do your own business."



1743 *The Christian History*, was the **first** religious journal printed in America. Established by Old South minister, Thomas Prince, its purpose was to report on the revivals sweeping America and Europe. Prince hoped that his journal would "encourage enthusiasm for the things of Christ."

"Firsts" continued on next page.



1770 Old South member, Samuel Sewell, wrote and published the *first* anti-slavery tract in America, *The Selling of Joseph*.

1773 **Phillis Wheatley**, baptized and confirmed at Old South, became the *first* published African American author. Wheatley was a poet. The Women's Memorial on Commonwealth Avenue includes a life-size statue of this famous member of our church.



*The Women's Memorial, Commonwealth Avenue, Boston
(L. to R.) Lucy Stone, Abigail Adams, Phillis Wheatley*

1773 Old South members, including Samuel Adams, gathered with the Sons of Liberty and thousands of Colonists to ignite the **Boston Tea Party** at a meeting held in the Old South Meeting House. They gathered there because it was the largest building in Colonial New England. Together, from our meetinghouse, they initiated our nation's *first* act of civil disobedience.



*Library of Congress
The Boston Tea Party*

1816 Old South members founded Boston's **City Mission Society**, the *first* multi-service agency in New England.

1851 The *first* **YMCA** in America was founded at Old South Church in Boston. Its purpose was "to give seamen in port an alternative to the bars and brothels that tempted them at every turn."

1995 Old South minister, Jim Crawford, chaired the **New Century Hymnal** Committee. It was the *first*, and remains the only, Christian hymnal to use fully inclusive language for God.

2004 Old South clergy were among the *first* Christian clergy in the Commonwealth to support **equal marriage** by officiating at weddings of same-gender couples. ■

WHY SO MANY FIRSTS?

First, because Old South is old. At its founding in 1669 it was a vital player among a small population in what was to them a new world. Somebody had to be the first to do these things and we happened to be here. *Second*, those who founded Old South were curious, well-read, inventive people. They believed passionately in freedom of speech and of the press. Many of the firsts listed on this page can be directly attributed to those twin convictions. *Finally*, the members of Old South, from 1669 to today, feel called by God to participate in the public good. While Christian faith has its personal and inward dimension, we believe it cannot be understood apart from a call into public service for the good of the whole.



**OLD SOUTH CHURCH
IN BOSTON
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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We're on the Web!
www.oldsouth.org

ENGRAVED IN STONE

These words are carved into the
portico
of the Old South Church:

Behold
I have set before
thee
an open door
(Revelation 3:8)

and

Qui transtulit

Don't give something up for Lent, take something on.

OLD SOUTH CHURCH COVENANT

I do now in the presence of God
and before this assembly
give myself to the One whom Jesus called "Abba, Father"
as the God in whose love I am grounded
and whose realm I serve;
to Jesus Christ, God incarnate,
to whom I surrender and who rules my life;
to God the Holy Spirit as the One who sustains,
recreates, and guides me.

I will share God's everlasting covenant
by loving and living responsibly
in communion with this one God.
And I do furthermore engage
to walk with my brothers and sisters
in the wider Church and the Old South Church
secure in God's grace,
prepared in gratitude to live by the promise
and serve in the hope of the Gospel.

So long as Boston shall Boston be

And her Bay tides rise and fall

Shall freedom stand in the Old South Church

And plead for the rights of all.

John Greenleaf Whittier