
Bill Malcomson

Bill Malcomson spent twenty months, from the spring of 1992 until the end of 1993, as interim pastor at Judson Memorial Church. This was the period after Howard Moody's retirement and before the arrival of Peter Laarman in January 1994.

When Laurie and I arrived in New York, many people told us how fortunate we were to live in a large apartment at Judson House. We had not lived in apartments since college days, so we did not consider it that good a deal. However, we were grateful that we had a place to live so close to everything. I enjoyed being next door to the Meeting Room and just inside from the garden. Laurie was close to where she found work, at Saint Joseph's, over on Sixth Avenue. We also loved Washington Square Park, where something was always going on.

What we did not like was the noise. Living on the first floor, we were often painfully aware of what was going on just outside our front door. On weekends, folks from New Jersey came over and used the front stoop as a place to gather, drink, use dope, and be loud. Cars with rap music booming from huge speakers seemed to be coming down Thompson Street nonstop. It sometimes felt as if we were living in the middle of the street. Our bedroom was on the floor below the living room, and fortunately the sounds were more muffled there. Incidentally, we enjoyed sleeping under an old tin ceiling.

On weekends, a young man would park his bike in front of our building and entertain his friends. Laurie got to know him well, but it soon became obvious that he was a drug supplier. He was nice to us because he did not want us to turn him in.

One time we noticed that a pigeon was spending a lot of time outside the window of the first floor bathroom. We realized she was sitting on eggs. Every time we used the bathroom we checked to see how things were progressing. Finally an egg hatched. Arlene Carmen thought we were a little nuts getting excited over a baby pigeon, but we enjoyed observing nature up close in the midst of city dirt and grime.

It was fun to realize that our apartment had witnessed a lot of makeovers and a lot of history. We could tell where major renovations had been done in the past, not excluding Al Carmines's installation of a "stage" on which to perform. We used it as a dining area.

All in all, Judson House turned out to be a great place to live in spite of the noise, dirt, and drugs. We lived in the middle of a great city and in an incredible village inside that city. We were participants in history. We continue to look back on that time in our lives with real fondness and warm feelings.

BILL AND LAURIE MALCOMSON

live in Seattle.