

## Passing the Old Church

I cannot count the times we rallied here  
against one war or another,  
    the death penalty,  
        police brutality,  
for human liberation of all kinds: Washington  
Square Methodist Church, on Fourth Street,  
just west of the park—sacred  
in its own special way to a movement  
that was embraced so completely  
by this congregation.

It needed a paint job for as long as I can remember.  
Still, I am caught by surprise today when I see  
a dumpster sitting at the curb, workers  
loaded down with debris.

"Extraordinary Condominium Residences"  
the banner declares.

I decide they will probably keep the big  
stained-glass window. That would be  
an elegant touch. It is, after all, prime  
real-estate. And renewal, from time  
to time, keeps any city alive.

My next birthday marks six decades of renewal,  
and therefore remaining alive. So many years,  
I tell myself, and still some people are needed  
to congregate against war and injustice,  
mourn the passing of a city's sacred places.

Steve Bloom  
May 2006