

# The LINK



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF PATCHOGUE

Since 1791

April 2022

## April Is An Important Month, Indeed

**A**pril is a beautiful month of the year. We begin to see early signs of trees and flowers budding. Even the birds seem happier that they made it through another cold winter.

For myself, I truly look forward to doing more work outside of the house than inside.

However, this April represents something far more important than outside work and birds singing joyfully. You guessed it; we will be celebrating the most important day of the entire church calendar—EASTER! RESSURECTION SUNDAY!

Yes, we made it through LENT—one of my favorite seasons—and now it is time to triumphantly enter Jerusalem to complete the

mission Jesus came into the world to fulfill. To offer forgiveness through His selfless act on the Cross, but as we know, the story doesn't end there.

It culminates in the empty tomb and the resurrection.

Yes, after we enter Jerusalem to witness Jesus triumphant entry—we will have to also journey Holy Week—which, quite frankly, is deep, sad and disturbing.

As post-resurrection Christians we know the end of the story; however, before we get there, we still have to witness the mistreatment of our Savior and his indescribable suffering the evening of Holy Thursday and on Good Friday.

It turns out Easter actually began as a pagan festival celebrating spring. Since pre-historic times people have celebrated the equinoxes and the

solstices as sacred times.

There are all kinds of historical theories out there written by scholars who know a whole lot more than I do that associate this celebration with goddesses and other pagan rituals. But one thing I do know is that the Church took the opportunity to move away from these pagan practices and focus on a far greater celebration of Jesus' resurrection.

**Continued on Page 2**

## WORSHIP IN APRIL

**Apr. 3**—Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, John 12:1-8

**Apr. 10—Palm Sunday**—Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, Luke 19:28-40

**Apr 14**—7:00 PM, Holy Thursday Service

**Apr. 15**—7:00 PM, Good Friday Service

**Apr. 17—Easter**—Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, John 20:1-18

**Apr. 24**—Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, John 20:19-31



## Circle of Concern

### Joy and Best Wishes

Joyful prayers for **Pastor Chuck and Myong Cha** as they enter into the next phase of their journey through life. Along with this we ask for prayers while the SPR Committee works with the District Superintendent to choose a new pastor to lead us through our worship.

### Healing

Miraculous healing for **Sherry Ann** who has incurable cancer (Pastor)

**Harry Higbie**

### Joys

**Noah Lyons** played with the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra. (Barbara Lyons)

**Justin Zimmerman** has been promoted to Chief of the Medford Ambulance Company. (Diane Zimmerman)

Baby **Hudson Reid**, is still in the neonatal unit at Stony Brook, but is now 3 lbs and he is off oxygen and being bottle fed. (Kathy Halliwell)

### Concerns

That baby **Reilly** will be born healthy and strong.

Prayers for our **American soldiers** that have been or may be sent over to protect our freedoms and those freedoms in other nations, especially **Aidan Donovan and Steven Rice**. Prayers also for the Russian soldiers that are being sent in to fight this war.

### CONTINUED PRAYERS

Christine Tortorice, Rob Conforti, Tim Hollowell, Richard Pryor, Ulla Ziegler Pereira, Maryellen Comacho, TJ Ryan, Nancy Schaff, William Schaff, Suzanne Tierny, Ronald Lyons, Kimberly Helfst, Paul Halayko

*Please email Kathy—  
keats1002@gmail.com with any  
additions or deletions.*

### In Nursing Care

**Robert Krawzak** in Brookhaven Health Care Facility, 801 Gazzola Dr., East Patchogue, NY

## Pastor Announces

### Retirement

**P**astor Chuck, at the March 13 church service told the congregation that he and Myong Cha, have been praying for some time on the right time to retire. He said they have finally decided that the time is now right. He called it a difficult decision, saying he and Myong Cha, over the last six years have come to love the church as their family.

The change, with a new pastor, will take place on July 1.

Long Island East District Superintendent Rev. Julia Yeon-Hee Yim explained the transition process in a Zoom meeting with members of our Staff Parish Relations Committee.

The appointment will be made by the Bishop in consultation with his cabinet, taking into consideration the individual needs of our church. It will be a part time appointment. Full time pastors will be assigned first so it is expected to be a month or more before a candidate is presented for our approval.

The new pastor will be using our parsonage. The current tenant will leave by June 1.

## Easter (From Page 1)

In fact, some churches refuse to use the word Easter, but rather refer to that special day as resurrection Sunday. Either way, deep down inside we know that we do not celebrate the equinoxes, solstices or any of the many gods. We celebrate the resurrection of the King of kings and Lord of lords—JESUS THE RISEN CHRIST!

Easter encapsulates the whole purpose of why Jesus came to earth. It tells us that He took on the sins of the world, yours and mine, and by doing so we have an avenue to be reconciled with God and have our sins forgiven. The wonderful end result and ultimate gift is eternal life. His temporary residence in that borrowed tomb had some wondering if Jesus was who he claimed to be—the Son of God. However, on that third day, all doubt was erased. I've been to that alleged tomb in Jerusalem many times—and I can emphatically tell you that it is still empty.

So, this Easter or Resurrection Sunday, let us proclaim and reaffirm that (1) Christ came to earth (Christmas), (2) died for the sins of humanity (Good Friday), and, (3) defeated the powers of sin and death through His resurrection (Easter). It is the ultimate celebration of the miracle of HOPE for believers who surrender their life in Christ (John 3:16) which includes the forgiveness of their sins and the promise of eternal life. If that is not worth celebrating—I don't know what is.

Journeying with you to the Cross and beyond, I remain In Christ and His Grip,

—**Pastor Chuck**

# United Methodist Church of Patchogue

## April 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 10:00 a.m.- ESL 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	2
3 10:00 a.m.— Worship 1:00 p.m.- Pentecostal	4 Office Closed 7:00 p.m.-AA	5 10:00 a.m.- Noon—Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.-AA	6	7 7:00 p.m.-AA	8 10:00 a.m.- ESL 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	9
10 10:00 a.m.— Palm Sunday Worship 1:00 p.m.- Pentecostal	11 Office Closed 7:00 p.m.-AA	12 10:00 a.m.- Noon—Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.-AA	13	14 7:00 p.m.- Holy Thurs- day Service 7:00 p.m.-AA	15 10:00 a.m.-ESL 7:00 p.m.-Good Friday Service 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	16
17 10:00 a.m.— Easter Worship 1:00 p.m.- Pentecostal	18 Office Closed 7:00 p.m.-AA	19 10:00 a.m.- Noon—Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.-AA	20	21 7:00 p.m.-AA	22 10:00 a.m.- ESL 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	23
24 10:00 a.m.— Worship 1:00 p.m.- Pentecostal	25 Office Closed 7:00 p.m.-AA	26 10:00 a.m.- Noon—Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.-AA	27	28 7:00 p.m.-AA	29 10:00 a.m.- ESL 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	30

## Blessed Be Their Ukrainian Ties

**F**or United Methodists with close ties to Ukraine, the Russian invasion of that country is an ever-present, wrenching concern, keeping them tethered to news reports and social media, and costing them sleep.

It's also an occasion to try to help, however far they may be from the war itself.

The Rev. Lydia Istomina led her church, Francis Street First United Methodist in St. Joseph, Missouri, to host a March 13 "Stand Tall with Ukraine" community rally.

"I believe prayers are wonderful and very important, but it's not enough," Istomina said. "God gave us our brains and our hearts, so we have to act."

Istomina grew up in Russia and was a pioneering female United Methodist pastor there before coming to the U.S. in 1995. But her first husband's father was Ukrainian. Thus, the two children Istomina had with her first husband are of Ukrainian ancestry, and they were baptized in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Distraught over the invasion, Istomina worked with church members to organize the community event on behalf of Ukraine. The St. Joseph mayor came, as did clergy and congregants from other local churches. The small sanctuary was packed, with more than a few people wearing yellow and blue, the Ukrainian colors.

Francis Street First already had committed \$5,000 from its endowment for United Methodist relief

work related to the invasion. The event raised another \$2,385.

"People responded because it's really important," Istomina said. "You can't just watch the news."

The Rev. Fred Vanderwerf feels the same. He's a Minnesota Conference district superintendent, but from 2000 to 2008, he and his wife, Stacy, served as United Methodist missionaries in Lviv, Ukraine.

Their son Levi was a toddler there, and in his struggle with pronouns sometimes called the country "Mykraine" — a coinage Fred Vanderwerf has himself used lately in describing his love for the place of his missionary service.

He's still coming to terms with the invasion.

"I've really been glued to the news and I feel like that's not helping me," he said by phone last week. "I'm only getting more emotionally exhausted."

But soon after the invasion began, Vanderwerf found a constructive way to respond, drawing on his contacts and background to conduct extensive video interviews with Eurasian Area Bishop Eduard Khegay in Moscow and the Rev. Volodymyr Prokip, a United Methodist pastor in Lviv.

The interviews provide context and reflection from both clergymen (including the Russian Khegay's brave opposition to the invasion) and they've been an internet hit.

"I can't get a sermon to get more than 200 views. This has got like 8,000," said Vanderwerf, who added that he's had to have help from the Minnesota Conference staff to answer all the emails the videos have generated.

Since the invasion, the Rev. Michael Zdorow, pastor of The Gathering Place, a United Methodist Church in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, has not needed an alarm clock.

"I wake up every day at 2:30 a.m.," he said. "That started right when this was happening."

Zdorow was born and brought up in the U.S., but his late father was Ukrainian, and the pastor himself has connected with the Ukrainian community wherever he's lived. His wife, Zenie, was raised in Crimea, and her mother remains in that previously Ukrainian, now Russian-annexed peninsula.

From 2015 to 2019, Zdorow worked for the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries in Russia, but he had earlier stints doing mission work and studying in the region, and he has traveled throughout Ukraine.

"All these places you're seeing getting bombed and destroyed, I have friends and memories there," he said. With Florida Conference Bishop Ken Carter, Zdorow has done a webinar addressing the geopolitical complexities of the conflict and sharing his family's history. Also, as Ukrainians began en masse to flee Russian shelling, he was in contact with some of his friends, helping them find a way out.

"My first week (of the invasion) was actually networking evacuation routes," he said.

The Revs. Bill Lovelace and Helen Byholt Lovelace are a married United Methodist couple in Evenskjer, Norway, where he works for Global Ministries and she is pastor for three area churches. But for nearly 10 years, they served as missionaries in Ukraine.

Bill Lovelace also was a pastor in Russia and has kept in close touch with Russian and Ukrainian friends caught up in the conflict.

“Most Ukrainians up until the day of the invasion, they would say, ‘Bill, your media is just hyping this. Putin won’t attack. We’ve had this low-level war for eight years; we’re used to it,’” said Lovelace. “Everybody was pretty much in shock when he actually did attack.”

The Lovelaces have donated to United Methodist relief efforts and they’re preparing to help with the resettling of some 35,000 Ukrainian refugees expected in Norway.

“For Norway to take in 35,000 is pretty amazing, and the Norwegian (United Methodist) Church will be involved in that,” Bill Lovelace said.

The Rev. John Calhoun served as a Global Ministries missionary in Kyiv from 2011 to 2015, and again from 2017 to 2022, in partnership with the United Methodist Church of Ukraine. He’s currently the pastor of the English-speaking United Methodist Church of Vienna, Austria.

Calhoun said he’s particularly concerned for African students who until recently had been part of the United Methodist ministry in Kyiv. Most came to Ukraine a decade ago to study medicine in Luhansk, in eastern Ukraine. But when Russia-backed separatists launched their offensive in the Donbas region in 2014, the students were driven out of the community and sought refuge in Kyiv.

“It has been heartbreaking to see these young friends displaced a second time due to the aggression of the

Russian state, and now forced to flee the country,” Calhoun said by email. Calhoun’s congregation has raised funds for a United Methodist church in Slovakia that has taken in refugees, and some of his congregation members have begun to take in refugees reaching Vienna.

“The church is preparing to open our sanctuary if more capacity is required,” he said.

A church that feels a special kinship with Ukraine is Blacksburg United Methodist, in Blacksburg, Virginia. For nearly 20 years, the church has had an In Mission Together partnership with Spring of Life United Methodist Church in Kyiv, and with the Kyiv United Methodist Church Center.

That has meant hosting visiting Ukrainians, as well as sending multiple mission teams to Ukraine.

Dick Arnold, a longtime member of Blacksburg United Methodist and former consultant to Global Ministries, has made seven trips to Ukraine, and has recently joined other church members in using social media to follow the fates of friends there.

“We’re constantly trying to find out about their safety and well-being, and we’re constantly praying for them,” he said.

Blacksburg United Methodist has designated funds for Ukrainian relief and is planning to create a website to share information about Ukraine with the Virginia Conference and others. If Ukrainian refugees arrive in Virginia, the church stands ready to help them resettle.

That’s not all Blacksburg United Methodist has in the works, Arnold said.

“We’re getting a Ukrainian flag.”

—Sam Hodges, UMNS

## A Prayer For Ukraine

Gracious and Merciful God,  
We pray today for the Ukrainian people and ask for Your intervention in this senseless war levied against them by Russia. We pray, O God, for protection and that there would be peace. We pray for restoration and renewed hope. We pray for the families, especially, the children living through the horrors of war and all the upheaval and tribulation it brings. We also pray for those protesting in Russia against these violent acts by their government. We ask that You would protect, cover and keep these protesters as they put their bodies on the line in the name of what is just and righteous. We pray for the entire world community, including the leaders in our own country. Give them wisdom and ingenuity to respond in ways that ends this war and moves us all to a world where Your peace abides. Hear the cries of Your people, O God. Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Amen.

—National Council of Churches



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## Save Your Old Magazines

**D**ave Hollowell would very much appreciate your saving the magazines you have read and passing them on to him. He takes them for the enjoyment of adult and nursing home residents and shut ins. They can be dropped off in the church office.

The deadline for the May issue  
of **The Link** is April 22.

Please email your copy to [gbhoag@optonline.net](mailto:gbhoag@optonline.net).

## Delegates Urge Hope For Denomination's Future

Since the postponement of General Conference to 2024, much of the news has been about church disaffiliations and denominational divisions.

No question the rhetorical punches are flying on social media and in newsletters. However, many United Methodists see no reason to throw in the towel on the church they love.

More than 275 General Conference delegates and other church leaders released an open letter March 18 that shares their hopes for the denomination's future and their commitment to stay United Methodist.

"Ministry is happening now!" said the Letter to the Connection upon the Postponement of General Conference. "With each of you, we will do the work of Christ that will lead our church into Easter resurrection."

Most of the signers come from across the United States. Other United Methodists are invited to sign. The Rev. Eric Swanson, a delegate from the Illinois Great Rivers Conference, said he and the letter's other writers wanted to present a positive vision while acknowledging there is still work to do.

"We care deeply about the future of The United Methodist Church," said Swanson, lead pastor of Grace United Methodist Church in Pekin, Illinois. "We care that it continues to grow and is prospering, and that it's strengthening effective witness in ministry."

In the letter, signers commit to healing the wounds caused by division.

The letter also says signers will: "Hold in our hearts our LGBTQIA siblings and commit to the celebration and welcome of all God's children, now.

"Commit to prayerfully and steadfastly dismantling the sins of racism, tribalism and colonialism.

"Envision and will work toward a church that is regional in structure, where United Methodists in Africa, Europe, the Philippines and North America can do ministry based on their own cultural context.

"Commit to practicing Wesley's advice — 'Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike?' Recognizing the theological and cultural diversity in our church, we commit to moving forward with a focus on the ministry that unites us."

The letter signers also join with the United Methodist bishops' "Narrative for the Continuing United Methodist Church" in committing to be "... one people, rooted in Scripture, centered in Christ, serving in love and united in the essentials."

The letter points out that it arrives during Lent, a somber season of repentance and remembering Christ's sacrifice on the cross. The letter also comes at a time of anxiety for many United Methodists.

After decades of intensifying debate over LGBTQ inclusion, many expected the coming General Conference to adopt a formal plan for the denomination to separate along theological lines. The most endorsed proposal would have allowed congregations and annual conferences that support the denomination's current

proposal would have allowed congregations and annual conferences that support the denomination's current bans on same-sex weddings and noncelibate gay clergy to leave with property and \$25 million in United Methodist funds to start a new denomination.

Now that legislation is in doubt. Earlier this month, General Conference organizers announced that because of long visa waits, the lawmaking assembly — already postponed twice by the pandemic — would not be able to convene this August as scheduled. Instead, organizers are planning for the assembly, which draws delegates from four continents, to meet in 2024.

With the postponement, organizers of the new theologically conservative denomination — the Global Methodist Church — have moved up the launch date to May 1. The United Methodist Council of Bishops has made plans for how it hopes to handle congregational disaffiliations. The bishops also have asked the Judicial Council, the denomination's top court, whether annual conferences — church regional bodies — can leave the denomination under current United Methodist law.

Many of those planning the Global Methodist Church have responded to General Conference's third delay with anger at United Methodist leaders and frustration with the uncertainty.

The March 18 letter strikes a different tone, speaking of excitement for the continuing United Methodist Church.

**Continued on Page 8**

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## Methodist Future (From Page 7)

Fred Brewington, one of the letter writers and a delegate from the New York Conference, said his prayer is that United Methodists not try to get back to business as usual.

“Instead, we should take this opportunity to see the new thing that God is doing and that through our collective and shared vision, we live into a bright and exciting time of mission and ministry,” he said.

“The focus on faith, inclusivity and what God’s mosaic can do to reshape a very broken world is the aim.”

The Rev. Kennetha Bigham-Tsai, a delegate from the Michigan Conference, said she hopes the letter will help people think about what they can do without legislation. She is the

chief connectional ministries officer for the Connectional Table, a leadership body that backs legislation to create new regional structures in the denomination. But even as that legislation awaits consideration, she said United Methodists have work to do.

“We can continue to build relationships. We can repair trust. We can claim and ground ourselves in identity,” she said.

The Rev. Dalton Rushing, a delegate from the North Georgia Conference, said it was a no-brainer to join in signing the letter.

“I hope fellow United Methodists will take heart. If anything, the pandemic has helped me see the resilience and flexibility of God’s people,” said Rushing, the senior pastor of Decatur First United Methodist Church.

“Even as I acknowledge the ‘feelings of powerlessness, abandonment, and anxiety’ described in the letter, I particularly resonate with the line, ‘leadership cannot be relegated to legislative processes at a quadrennial meeting.’ We are called to be God’s hands and feet in the world, now!”

—Heather Hahn, UMNS



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