

The LINK



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF PATCHOGUE

Since 1791

December 2021



Journeying Together From Nazareth To Bethlehem

So, by now we have all heard about all the pending shortages of goods due to a slowdown in the supply chain.

Cargo freighters anchored off the coast of California for weeks on end. Truck driver shortages and the list goes on and on.

Well, I was at our local Meat Farms Supermarket just before Thanksgiving—and I can attest that the shelves were sufficiently supplied and customers were grabbing items as if their lives depended on every morsel of food they bagged and tossed into their shopping carts.

Not to mention, once a pallet of toilet paper was dropped by a forklift at Costco, it was like a referee dropping a hockey

puck on the ice—there was a mad scramble to grab the cumbersome package of forty-eight rolls. In a matter of seconds, this mountain of lavatory tissue was whittled down faster than a school of flesh-eating Piranhas feasting on an unsuspecting swimmer in the Amazon River. I just stood there and shook my head in disbelief.

By the time this newsletter is published, we will be on the other side of Thanksgiving. Another sign that there is no food shortage was simply evidenced by the enormous consumption of yams, stuffing, turkey, mashed potatoes smothered in gravy, dinner rolls, corn, cranberry sauce—and if that is not enough—the coup de grace is a huge slice of pumpkin pie alamode. Will we ever make it through Christmas and New Year's Eve?

So, here we are in December—a glorious month during the year. The very month that closes out the long calendar year we just journeyed. I know, it was a long year—at least 2021 was a heck of a lot better than 2020.

For we Christians, December is extra special because it brings us into the wonderful season of Advent and Christmas.

Continued on Page 2

WORSHIP IN DECEMBER

Dec. 5— Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, Luke 3:1-6

Dec. 12—Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, Luke 3:7-18

Dec. 19—Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, Luke 1:39-55

Dec. 24—Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, Luke 2:1-20

Dec, 26—Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, Luke 2:41-52

Worship is still with some Covid restrictions. Masks are required.



For God

so Loved the World,
that he gave
his only son,
that whoever believes
in him should not perish
but have eternal life.

John 3:16

Circle of Concern

Healing

Nancy Tenazzo as she continues aggressive chemotherapy treatments, that she may have complete and total healing. Also her husband Peter as he continues to care for her and help her through.

Carol Janssen who is at home healing from knee replacement surgery. Prayers also for her children Rebecca and Michael who are caring for her and helping her through. (Rebecca Janssen)

Kurt who is being treated for a physical situation.

Concerns

The **McCadden** family as they place their 101 year old father into hospice and prepare for him to be reunited with his wife and with our Lord and Savior. (Kathy Halliwell)

Continued Prayers

Arthur Rice, John Hefferman, Tim Hollowell, Mr. Lee, Louise Russo, Lola Schwartz, Brianna Maglio, Richard Pryor, Niall Morrissey, Jay Murdock, Suzanne Tierney, Diane Dain, Ulla Ziegler Pereira, Maryellen Comacho, Suzanne Dalton, Kimberly Helfst

Compiled by Kathy Halliwell

*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

Birthdays In December

Dec. 8 Gavin Reese Bende

Dec. 10 Janet Alt

Dec. 14 Steven Rice

Dec. 19 Michelle Ryan

Anniversary In December

Dec. 22 Myong & Charles Ferrara

Thanks To Church Workers

After several days of preparation on a Saturday in October, a group of our congregation was able to varnish the two sets of wooden doors facing South Ocean Avenue.

On Saturday, Nov. 13, another group of volunteers was able to varnish the two sets of wooden doors facing Church Street. They also painted the steel exterior doors of Wesley Hall.

For the first time in many years all the church exterior doors are protected.

The volunteers are: Joan Curtis, Peter Halliwell, Wendy & Dave Hollowell, Lenny & Robby Pearson, Robert Prince, and Bob Rogers. Thanks to all of you for a much needed face lift of the doors.

Also, recent magazines and books are needed to be given to the Patchogue Nursing Homes patients. If you would like to donate them, please bring them to the office Tuesday–Friday 9 AM –2 PM. They are much appreciated.

—Dave Hollowell

To Bethlehem (From Page 1)

If there was ever a season filled with great expectation—it is this one.

I can remember as a little boy going to sleep on Christmas Eve filled with expectation and excitement that when I awakened on Christmas morning, Santa would have left a gift or gifts just for me. Maybe a set of Roy Rogers six-shooters with holsters? Maybe a set of Lionel trains or any of a number of presents I requested?

Well, as Children of God—no matter how old we may be—we should be filled with just as much excitement as a little child on Christmas Eve. Filled with the expectation of not only preparing for and celebrating Jesus's first coming as a babe in a manger in Bethlehem—but also preparing for his soon return as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Are you excited? Are you filled with expectation? Are you grateful for what Jesus has done for you and everyone who calls on His Name?

I pray that this season of expectation will rekindle the spirit within each of us in ways that we could never imagine. I look forward to traveling with you on this incredible journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. I remain

In His Grip,

—Pastor Chuck



United Methodist Church of Patchogue December 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5 10:00 a.m.— Worship	6 Office Closed	7 10:00 a.m.— Noon—Food Pantry	8	9	10	11
12 10:00 a.m.— Worship	13 Office Closed	14 10:00 a.m.— Noon—Food Pantry	15	16	17	18
19 10:00 a.m.— Worship	20 Office Closed	21 10:00 a.m.— Noon—Food Pantry	22	23	24 7:00 p.m.— Christmas Eve Worship	25 
26 10:00 a.m.— Worship	27 Office Closed	28 10:00 a.m.— Noon—Food Pantry	29	30	31	

An Instrument of Your Peace

Can it already be Advent/Christmas/Holiday season? Well, yes, indeed. While we continued our halting passage through another year of the pandemic, time has done what it always does—moved steadily and inexorably forward.

As a child this was always one of my favorite times of the year. It wasn't just the gleeful anticipation of presents under the tree, but a sense of peacefulness and hope that framed my mind and spirit.

A sense of community, kindness, being together with family and friends, and a hope that peace and good will among everyone was entirely possible.

For the most part, I still feel that way. In spite of the cruelty, conflict, and just plain meanness we see manifested around us every day. In spite of the anxiety caused by the ongoing pandemic. In spite of the personal trials and tribulations we all face, I still feel hope and joy as the real message of the season: that the Divine Creator of all worlds and universes, the Essence of Truth and goodness, loves and accepts us all and wants us to live together in harmony. Regardless of what religion or belief system we ascribe to.

And for those of us who follow Jesus, it is particularly important that we try every day, not just during this season, but each and every day, to live our lives incorporating Jesus' teachings into our every action, every

behavior. We can recommit ourselves to truly love one another. We need to walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

Before I finish this article with an invitation, I would like to ask us all to stop quibbling about whether we should say Happy Holidays or Merry Christmas.

The word 'holiday' is an elision of two words—"holy" and 'day', and therefore is not disrespectful to Christianity, but is respectful to other religions who share the season. And Merry Christmas is a phrase from the Victorian era and we can be certain

no Christian of the 1st century ever used it. What matters is what is in our heart.

And so, I invite you to read the wonderful prayer of St. Francis of Assisi throughout the season and keep it's meaning in your heart throughout the year.

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. "

"O Divine Master, grant that I not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life."

—Barbara Becker

The Ahmaud Arbery Case Equips Me for Advent

As we prepare our hearts for the birth of Christ this Advent, many of us have also been preparing our hearts for another story: the trial of the men who killed Ahmaud Arbery.

On November 24, a court in Brunswick, Georgia, delivered a verdict convicting them of murder.

"I never thought this day would come," said Wanda Cooper-Jones, Arbery's mother, outside the courthouse. "Thank you for those who marched, those who prayed."

Over the past week, as I prepared to move to a new state, I found myself relying heavily on the power of distraction to avoid being anxious about the outcome of the trial. At times, worrying thoughts would creep into my mind, telling me I should prepare myself to hear a "not guilty" verdict. So when I heard the news of a "guilty" verdict, I breathed a sigh of relief, although the court's decision will not bring Arbery back to life. Even after the good news, I still felt pent up tension and the lament of a life lost.

Arbery was killed on February 23, which happens to be my birthday. So when news of his murder finally became public knowledge, months after his death, I remember exactly where I was and what I was doing.

The 25-year-old was chased down and murdered while jogging. I've been a runner since middle school—and while I always knew to be vigilant about running alone, I never imagined that "running while Black" would be yet another reason for a Black life to be lost.

Advent reminds us to contemplate the many losses we experience as part of the human condition. The season is defined by the anticipation of Christ's first coming and also his second. As we wait and draw near to Jesus, we repent of the habits and practices that turn us away from a loving God who is reaching out to be reconciled with us.

But in situations when we find ourselves waiting for justice, some people question the faith of those who are anxious about the outcome. They minimize such feelings with responses like, "Just have faith and everything will be fine." Too often, the response of some Christians seems to align more with political partisanship than the way of Jesus and love of others.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to care about what happens in this life. If we do not lament injustices and pursue justice with and for others, we are falling short of fulfilling one of Christ's greatest commandments: to love our neighbor. To embrace this calling means taking the time to listen to others, empathize, and advocate for justice and peace, just as Christ did.

So what does a faithful response as a Christian look like in these times of waiting?

I believe it begins with resting in the assurance that all will be made right when Jesus returns. But I also believe it means caring about, longing for, and actively pursuing justice in the meantime—especially for the marginalized. A faithful response centers on those the sidelines and prophetically calls for justice for them.

In times of uncertainty, we can cry out to God in lament, just as we see in the Book of Lamentations. Our God can handle our doubts, anger, and fear. He can also handle our shortcomings. We need to confess and repent—both individually and communally—of the sins of injustice, oppression, and white supremacy. In *Mary Had a Baby*, an Advent Bible study based on African American spirituals, authors Cheryl Kirk-Duggan and Marilyn E. Thorton describe Advent as a season that "serves as our confession." They go on to say that "even though we did not know who Jesus was when God came wrapped in flesh the first time, we are cultivating a value system that embraces the hope, joy, transformation, and communal healing that will be realized when Christ returns."

The Gospel reading for the fourth Sunday of Advent is Luke 1:39–55. The second half of this reading is what's often referred to as Mary's Song, or the Magnificat. In the passage, the mother of Jesus proclaims: He has shown the strength of his arm,

He has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.

Mary, facing uncertain times while she was pregnant with Jesus, praises God for his greatness. But she also finds hope in knowing that God looks on his lowly servant, scatters the proud, and casts down the mighty.

This is one of my favorite Advent readings, because it reminds us that our God is worthy of praise and that he actively pursues justice for the oppressed. He does not dismiss the pleas of the lowly by telling them, "Just wait" or, "Your faith is weak."

Instead, he pursues justice for them. This tells us that God cares about injustice—just as he cares about the outcome of this case.

As I reflect on Advent and the verdict of this trial, I am reminded that a true Christian response is rooted in and motivated by our faith in Jesus. We trust that he will one day make all things right again, and we trust that he is with us in the here and now as we seek righteous justice.

—Kimberly Deckel,
Christianity Today

Encountering Racism But Extending Love

At age four and a half, I was enrolled in the local elementary school kindergarten. I was picked on, spat upon and called everything but a child of God by my classmates.

However, what hurt me the most was that the teacher NEVER put my work on display as was done for my white classmates. I would go home crying, but I thank my parents for their love and encouragement.

I excelled in every grade. I was the only Black student in my ninth-grade honors class. In junior high, when I shared that I desired to pursue a career in writing, a "teacher counselor" told me there were no such careers for "colored" students.

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"I decided to give everyone on my list a 3-D printer and let them make their own gifts."

Don't Forget Your Pledge

The deadline for the January issue
of **The Link** is December 23.
Please email your copy to gbhoag@optonline.net.

Racism (From Page 5)

The more I was ridiculed or told I couldn't achieve like white students, the more I excelled, regardless of what anyone said or did to me.

There has been a lot of chatter about the problems "colored children" have experienced in the South, but racism was and is a national problem in this country.

I went to school in New York City. I completed all my degrees, including a Master of Divinity with honors at Union Theological Seminary. I say that not pompously, but with all praise and honor to The Lord and my parents. The counselor did discourage me from writing in terms of "career" at that time, but recently – many years later – I completed my second book.

Education is just part of the racism iceberg in this country. I served in the nursing profession more than 30 years, and I have seen and experienced the medical abuse of people of color.

Even now, Black seniors are often placed into facilities with insufficient staff, equipment and supplies to care for their needs. I terminated my employment in a facility that had very few Black patients, after I was instructed to document untruths about a particular Black female — the admins wanted her private room for a rich white female who was being admitted. I was informed by the director that I would be fired if I didn't fulfill their directive. I smiled and said, "I quit, but you will give account to God."

A large cultural explosion by Black people, including marches, occurred

as far back as 1917 in New York City. Nevertheless, we continued to be treated as less than human. In the '60s, while the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was preaching and encouraging the human rights of black people, the Ku Klux Klan was still tormenting us.

I witnessed an older brother being beaten with bats and chains by a white gang in 1961. My parents had labored hard for years and purchased their first house in a then-all-white neighborhood. We were not accepted by all our neighbors. One night, one of my older brothers was walking to the store just a block away. He was stopped and beaten without making it there.

The horror of looking at some of his brains on the ground was a vivid picture in my mind for many years. My brother nearly died that night, and he was never the same thereafter.

Since we were witnesses, my mother and I were taken to the police station. Some of the perpetrators were captured. However, after I identified two of them, I was told by a white detective that my report was inadmissible because "it was too dark outside."

I have encountered racism in many different forms throughout my life and career, including in my ministry. My first appointment as pastor of a United Methodist congregation in Philadelphia was a major undertaking, but I didn't know that at first. The area was in transition, with a decline in the number of Caucasians and an influx of Latina/os and Black persons

of Caribbean, Haitian and Afro-American heritage.

The leadership board of the church was a mix of white male and females, most of whom did not live in the neighborhood. Board meetings were extremely difficult. Often, board members would make disparaging comments when I recommended changes in church ministries. Several meetings were focused on conflict resolution, and then "white flight" from the church began.

I focused on extending love to the community and being more inclusive. I started a prayer ministry, walking and singing and praying in the neighborhood. A few nonwhite persons joined me and, eventually, we became a "two by two" evangelism ministry. I give God thanks and praise for the remaining remnant; we banded together. We offered inclusive Bible studies with meals, health education, an organic vegetable garden, a library, mental health groups and groups for the neighborhood children. The Lord raised up a multiethnic, multicultural congregation.

Years later, in retirement, I was invited to speak at my youngest granddaughter's mostly white high school. After I had shared my story, a white male teen gave me a hug and started to cry. He told me, "I thought stuff like that only happened in books."

As a result, I have started MMP Productions to share my personal story, which I have documented in my first book, a poetic autobiography titled, "POETree," as well as

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 Previous services available.



Racism (From Page 7)

“The Art of Loving Me.” The second book reaches out to persons struggling through grief, which I believe includes the personal traumatic effect of negative “isms.” Through a one-woman dinner theater production, I am also telling my story in poetry and song as a way to encourage other people of color to find healing by sharing their stories.

In addition, I have launched Holistic Practical Ministry, recognizing that many preachers and church members do not practice good mind-body-spirit health. 1 Corinthians 3:16 states that we are God’s temples, and I believe that true Christian life and worship should promote healthy lifestyles for all. HPM is a “church without walls,”

which I am pastoring on social media as well as through a free conference call pilot program.

I give honor to God in Jesus Christ. Multitudinous numbers of us (people of color) have similar testimonies, yet we live and believe we have and will make a difference in this country and in this world. According to Galatians 3:28, “We are all one in Christ.”

—Rev. Margret M. Powell, UMNS



Our Christmas altar will be beautified again this year with red poinsettias. If you would like to participate, please order your plant by Sunday, Dec. 12. The plants can be designated in honor or memory of someone. The cost is \$12.50 each. Make your check payable to The United Methodist Church of Patchogue. Send to 10 Church St, Patchogue, NY 11772. You can also call Gail at 631-654-0038.