

The LINK



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF PATCHOGUE

Since 1791

February 2017

Carpe Diem

I can't believe I am already writing an article for the February **LINK**. Where does time go? Why does it fly by so quickly? Just think, we are now less than fifty days to Spring.

Make believe I didn't just say that, because all I am doing is perpetuating the speed up of time. So let's call for a Carpe Diem Movement of making the most of the present rather than looking too far down the road.

I would like a moment of privilege, however, to look back on one moment in time concerning our church. That is, the melt down of our old boiler.

That moment in our illustrious history of over 225 years was on December 16, 2016. Old Betsy gave up the ghost and completely fried leaving us with no heat in our older building—which

included the sanctuary and Cloud Room.

With no excess funds, a burned out boiler, and the manufacturer and installer pointing the finger at us that we were responsible for its demise—did we choke like the Knicks missing a free throw that would win the game? NO! We prayerfully lifted our needs to God, our congregation and the wider community. What resulted was what I call "The Miracle on Church Street."

We not only secured enough donations to pay for our new boiler, which Swezey Fuel installed at cost—we even had funds left over to pay down our debt on the old boiler and monies owed to Swezey for past fuel deliveries. Even as I write this article at my desk in the office—I shout a Carpe Diem "HALLELUJAH!"

God and the people of God never cease to amaze me. That is why when my college philosophy professor asked me to prove there is a God (by the way, he was a proud flag waving atheist) I just laughed. God is consistently revealing to us of His presence if we just look for those revelations.

A man named Richie, an emotionally challenged man, who visits our church every Thursday, just left my office. His caregiver brings him here every week.

Continued on Page 2

WORSHIP IN FEBRUARY

Feb. 5—Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, *Breaking the Power of Worry Over Your Life, Matthew 6:25-34*

Feb. 12—Guest preacher Joan Curtis

Feb. 19—Guest preacher Barbara Becker

Feb. 26—Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, *Failure is Not Final, Philippians 3:12-14*



Circle of Concern

For Guidance and Healing:

Steve Rea, Ron Jones, Bruce Kirschner, Kathy Maier, Adrian Murphy's mother, Theresa Lindsay, Sean Abrams, Joy Kala, Eugene Cirulli, Eileen Austin, George Werner, Mamie White, Frankie Scott Jr., Lee Hollowell, Henry Prince, Patricia Puk, Luke Gonzalez, Eleanor, Deb, Kayla Donovan, Bruce Koffman, Josh Jansson, Edward Collins, Marjorie Bates, Diane Peterson, Luke Sotis, Matthew, Joanne

These Who are Hospitalized:

Frances Breen, Anthony Marmos, Martin, Michele Conrad, Juliana

These who are in Rehab or Nursing Care Facilities:

Geri Sheridan in Brookhaven Health Care Facility, 801 Gazzolla Drive, E. Patchogue, NY.

John Vander Zalm in Brookhaven Health Care Facility, 801 Gazzolla Drive, E. Patchogue, NY.

Alice Zahnd in Gurwin Jewish Nursing Facility, Commack, NY.

Ed Dew in Sunrise Assisted Living, Waverly Avenue, Holbrook, NY.

Pray for our church and her future directions!

Prayer cards are located at the usher's station in the rear of the sanctuary. Your joys and concerns are important to us; let us pray for you! Please put completed prayer cards in the offering plate. Or use the Prayer Request Form on our web page at www.PatchogueUMC.org.

Carpe Diem (From Page 1)

Why?--Because Richie wants to vacuum our sanctuary as a way of giving thanksgiving to God. Carpe Diem. Seize the day. I just had a revelation of God's presence.

So my appeal to one and all is to enter February by throttling down on the acceleration. Let us slow down and join the Carpe Diem Movement realizing that God's revelation is all around us on a daily basis.

In His Grip,

—Pastor Chuck

Community Helps Us Out

When our sanctuary boiler failed just before Christmas, we launched an appeal for help in funding the nearly \$20,000 replacement cost. The response was overwhelming. We received donations, not only from our own members, but from service organizations and many local businesses and individuals. Our GoFundMe link attracted help from far and wide. To date we have raised nearly \$30,000. Thank you.



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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR HOST

Pastor Chuck & Myong-Cha Ferrara



I invite you to join me on this Journey through the Bible program that will expand our knowledge of the Bible and this sacred land. A journey following in the footsteps of Jesus, Paul, Samuel & David will change the way you read the Bible, and you will learn why scholars refer to the Holy Land as the "Fifth Gospel". Please consider this brochure my personal invitation to be a part of this adventure in faith and join me in experiencing a once in a lifetime journey as we see the Bible come to life!

Save the date and bring a friend

Pastor Chuck & Myong-Cha Ferrara

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United Methodist Church of Patchogue

February 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 7:30 p.m.—AME Service	2	3 9:30 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—NA	4 7:30 p.m.—AME Service
5 10:00 a.m.— Communion Wor- ship 12:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 5:00 p.m.—AME Service	6 7:00 p.m.—AA	7 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—AA	8 7:30 p.m.—AME Service	9	10 9:30 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—NA	11 7:30 p.m.—AME Service
12 10 a.m.—Worship/ Sunday School 11:30 a.m.— Finance 12:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 5:00 p.m.—AME Service	13 7:00 p.m.—AA	14 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—AA	15 7:30 p.m.—AME Service	16	17 9:30 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—NA	18 7:30 p.m.—AME Service
19 10 a.m.— Wor- ship/Sunday School 12:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 5:00 p.m.—AME Service	20 7:00 p.m.—AA	21 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—AA	22 7:30 p.m.—AME Service	23 5:00 p.m.—Wesley Dinner	24 9:30 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—NA	25 7:30 p.m.—AME Service
26 10 a.m.— Worship 11:30 a.m.— Trustees 12:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 5:00 p.m.—AME Service	27 7:00 p.m.—AA	28 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—AA				

The Good Samaritan

One of my favorite stories from the New Testament is that of the Good Samaritan. A recent weekly email from Pastor Chuck that referenced the Samaritan



woman at the well, brought that other story to mind.

Who were the Samaritans anyway?

That they originated from the same ethno-religious grouping as the Israelites or Hebrews seems clear. Traditionally, they were descended from the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, both sons of Joseph. At the time of Jesus, though, they were as far apart as could be, claiming no kinship with each other.

When the split began isn't clear, but possibly came about after the return from the Babylonian captivity. Samaritans continued to worship at altars in the "high places" (e.g. Mount Gerizim), while the southern Hebrews /Judeans saw the Temple at Jerusalem as the only holy place to worship. Samaritans also intermarried with other groups to some extent, while the southern Jews did not. (after the return from Babylon, the Prophet Ezra expelled all the non Jewish women and children, even if

their husbands and fathers were Jewish.)

Jesus told the familiar parable of the good Samaritan in response to the question of "who is my neighbor", posed by a 'lawyer' seeking to test Jesus.

A man was walking the dangerous road from Jerusalem to Jericho and was attacked by bandits, who stripped him of his belongings, and left him battered and bleeding at the side of the road.

A priest, and then a Levite passed him by without stopping to help. It was a Samaritan who actually stopped and, moved with pity, cleaned and bandaged the injured man's wounds and put him on his donkey and took him to an inn. There he paid the innkeeper to care for him until he could return. So the answer to the question of 'who is my neighbor' in this story, was 'the one who showed mercy'.

What of the priest and the Levite? Were they just uncaring and self important? Well, maybe. But also, as officials of the Temple, had they gotten the blood of the injured man on themselves, they would have had to undergo purification rites and been unable to attend to their temple duties.

So to them, following the doctrinal rules was more important than showing compassion and pity.

How shocking this story must have been to Jesus' listeners. A Samaritan the hero of the tale!

To me, this parable encompasses so much of Jesus' message—that

God, unlike too often we humans, is not bound by religious restrictions, by differences in faith, geography, life styles, or ideology. God's love is all encompassing and inclusive.

The Samaritan behaved in a God pleasing way. And I believe that is how we are to behave. Ignoring the barriers that humans create to separate us, we are to love one another without stipulation, and to act with compassion and kindness to all.

As Jesus ended the parable, he told the 'lawyer' who had correctly identified the good neighbor as the 'one who showed mercy', "now go and do likewise." Amen.

—Barbara Becker

A Valentine Prayer

**I said a Valentine prayer for you
and asked the Lord above
to fill your heart and bless your soul
With the precious gift of love.**

**I asked Him for sincere love
The kind that's meant to stay
Just like the generous love
You give to those you touch each
day.**

**I prayed for love from family
And from every cherished friend
Then I asked the Lord to give you
His love that knows no end.**

—Author unknown

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Praying For The President

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior....” — *Apostle Paul, 1 Timothy 2:1-3*

On Jan. 20, Donald Trump became the 45th President of the United States. God’s word directs Jesus followers to pray for all of our leaders—and certainly that includes President Trump—his health, his heart, his family and a peaceful transition into the presidency.

Yet after such a contentious election cycle and amidst continuing, bitter divides, many may be struggling with where and how to begin their prayers—especially those who may have voted differently or consider themselves in opposition to Mr. Trump’s platform, nominees or campaign promises.

God’s word declares in Isaiah 55:11, “My word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire.” So, I am praying the scriptures....

Like the psalmist in Psalm 72 praying urgently for God’s endowment of justice on the king, I pray that through his presidency Mr. Trump brings justice for the poor (vs. 12a), health for the afflicted (vs. 12b) and rescue for all from oppression and violence (vs. 14).

I pray that Mr. Trump’s presidency will demonstrate love for the refu-

gees among us, knowing that Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Ruth, Daniel, Nehemiah and Jesus knew intimately what it meant to be a stranger in a strange land. “When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 19:33-34).

Like King David, may President Trump shepherd the country with “skillful hands” and “integrity of heart” (Psalm 78:72). May he remember as he serves in the most visible position on the planet, that “the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.” “A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart” (Luke 6:45).

May all of us who identify ourselves as persons of faith join with President Trump over the next four years in carefully heeding James 4:10—“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”

Let it be so.

—Mike Slaughter, UMNS

A Student View of the Inauguration

To say the experience was interesting is an understatement about the week I spent in Washington. When we entered the city on Jan. 16, I was fascinated by the diversity I saw. Officers of all races, both male and female—including many officers wearing religious head-

wear representing Judaism, Hinduism and Islamic faiths — lined the streets. City residents passed on foot and whizzed by on bikes, dressed in different fashions, skins of different tones, languages from different origins. I had the “melting pot” feeling, as if I was in a place where diversity came together as one.

The week continued the same: During the group’s time touring landmarks such as the Capitol, the Pentagon, or the United States Holocaust Museum, the people who surrounded us in the city represented what seemed to be a million cultures. We met people from vastly different states, such as California and New York (we came from Tennessee), to places around the world such as Australia and the United Kingdom. Whether we were domestic or international visitors, we all seemed to share the same fascination at the event taking place. We saw how magical the peaceful transition of power was, how the world was watching this historic and grand event, and we got to be on the front row of the international stadium.

It was the day of the inauguration, however, where the division of diversity come forefront. As I stood with my fellow peers and the massive crowd gathered at the National Mall for the inauguration, hostility became present. Just outside of the gates, we were hearing of riots breaking out, cars and businesses being set on fire and destroyed by protestors. During the swearing-in ceremony, crowds of people chanted messages of hate, hurled violent slurs and tore down partisanship.

Continued on Page 8

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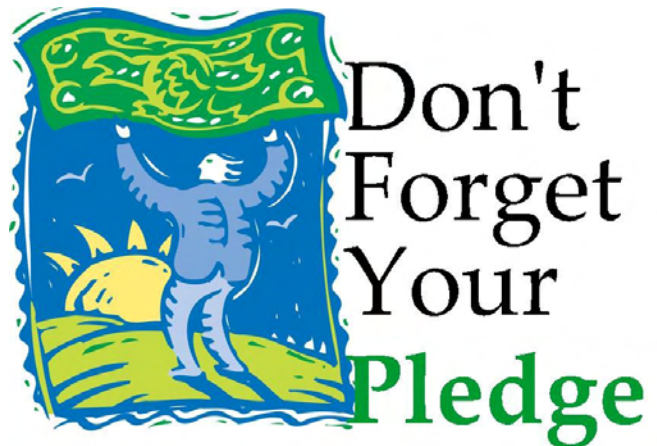
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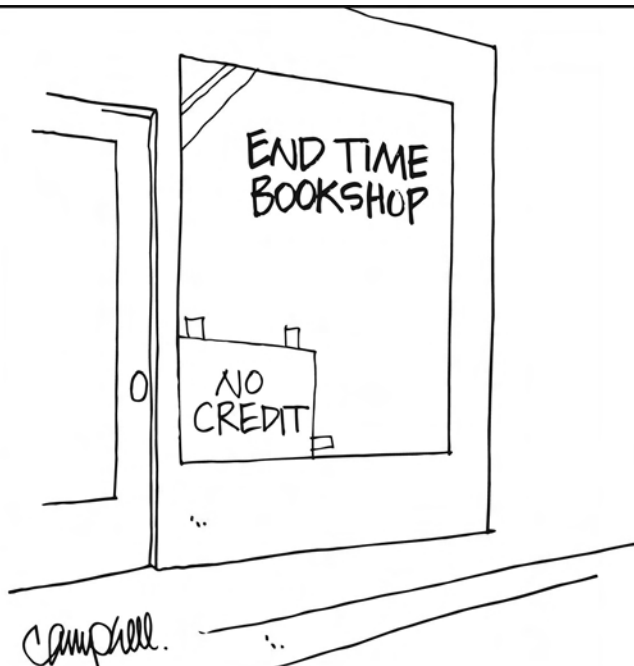
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The deadline for the March issue
of **The Link** is **February 17**.
Please email your copy to gbhoag@optonline.net.



A Note About Restoring Hope

Our Restoring Hope capital campaign was completed several years ago but funds may continue to be contributed. All Restoring Hope contributions go to the Trustees who have continuing building expenses but no other revenue source. \$500 a month in Trustee funds go to pay off our boiler loan. Contributions can be made to either "Restoring Hope" or "Trustees".



Be Grateful, Even When You're Not

T rue confessions: I'm a recovering worrier. I can worry at the drop of a hat. I do some of my best work in the middle of the night. When a problem gets resolved, my mind naturally searches for the next thing that could possibly go wrong so that I can get a head start. Worry beads would be wasted on me. I need boulders.

As bad as that may sound, I'm not as bad as I used to be. I've made progress. I've got more peace of mind, more calm and equanimity, a more positive outlook on life. What's made the difference? Gratitude.

As a Christian, I used to be very suspicious of gratitude. It seemed a frivolous luxury when there were still people in need, still problems to be solved, and messes still to be cleaned up. Gratitude seemed better left for carefree atheists or Unitarians or some such people. For me, a Jewish-Christian, worry equaled caring.

Gratitude has changed that for me. Even so, I can still lapse into guilt at the holidays, what with its focus on thanksgiving and joy. Is it really okay to feel grateful...even with people going to bed hungry, even with the globe warming, even with Trump in the Oval Office? If you're like me, you may wonder: What's a worrier to do? I thought this would be a good time to reveal the 3 secret reasons to be grateful. Even if you're not. *Especially* if you're not.

Gratitude grows faith. In Philippians 4:4-7, the Apostle Paul famously addressed the worriers at Philip-

pi. "Rejoice!" he insists. "Again I say rejoice!" Why the command to rejoice? When we lace our prayers with gratitude, we create a protective shield against the corrosive power of fear. Fear is the basis of worry. While worry paralyzes, gratitude grows faith.

Is everything going right in the world? Or in your church? Sure doesn't seem like it! But worry and fear do nothing to change that. Instead, maintaining a connection with the limitless flow of divine love protects us and empowers us.

Gratitude shifts perspective. Worry and fear generate more worry and fear. Gratitude opens up the door to new ways of thinking. Sometimes I play the game of thanking God for things that I think are unjust, unfair, or just plain unwanted. Like my dear neighbor getting cancer. Or my insomnia, even when I go to bed at a decent hour. Or the election of a president I voted against.

Fair warning: It's not easy expressing gratitude for things you don't want. I feel fake and self-conscious doing it. But I do it anyway and my synapses get re-arranged. Worry moves aside. A new opening appears as I ask: Could anything good come from this situation?

The answer is yes. It's always yes. Now the yesses were there before I thanked God, but expressing gratitude for situations I didn't want allows me to see them. For instance, in the case of my neighbor with cancer, my prayer prompted me to have a different kind of conversation with

her. In the process, I discovered that she had reconciled with her brother, and adopted a stray cat. Who knew? I wouldn't have known that. Likewise, sleepless nights prompt me to pray and mediate; things I don't do enough of during the day. Even Trump's election has prompted all sorts of people to better make their voices be heard. Here's what it comes down to: Pre-gratitude, all I can see is the bad. Post-gratitude, I can see the good that is also transpiring. It changes my perspective and expands my awareness.

Gratitude empowers. Finally, gratitude jolts me out of resignation. When I give thanks for the things I'm not thankful for, not only are my heart and mind protected from corrosive fear; not only can I see potential good in every situation; I am empowered to act in a way that brings even more goodness into the world.

At a recent church meeting, a group of leaders stopped to pray in the middle of a worrisome situation. As a result, new ideas came to mind. One of the women who had been very quiet, and very worried, began to smile tentatively, then more broadly. "I know!" she said. "Here's what I think we could do." She surfaced an idea that got good support, and the group moved into action. As a result, \$12,000 was raised to support a family in need.

The world isn't a perfect place. But gratitude opens the way to faith, goodness, and action.

—Rev. Rebekah Simon-Peter, United Methodist Reporter

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Inauguration (From Page 5)

This was not a red-or-blue issue or group; this was simply the American people overall.

As a follower of Christ and someone on the path to ordination, these practices I witnessed were perplexing. Just shortly before this, the crowd prayed together and all was at peace. Now, mere moments later, those prayers for peace and unity seemed to have never happened. My peers and I from Tennessee Wesleyan University constantly would look at each other, asking, “Is this real? Is this how this is all actually happening?”

We all wonder now, not just us as students but all of us in the world, where do we go from here? How do

we move forward? As a follower of Christ, my main question going into this new season of presidency is simple: “How do I share the message of communion found in Christ alone to a world of division?”

This answer, I do not have. I left the inauguration with mixed feelings: fascination at the diversity of the city and the coming together of so many government, military and civilian factions to put on this glorious display, and feelings of worry for how we move forward as people. As I process my time in Washington, the words of Wesley continuously come back to mind: “The best of all is, God is with us.”

As we move forward, we are still chasing after the God who always

has, still is, and will always reign. Although the president has changed, our message has not. So long as we continue living into the mission given to us by Christ, I see no division in the country being too great to overcome.

—Todd Cox, UMNS

