

The LINK



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF PATCHOGUE

Since 1791

January 2020

In The Spirit of Auld Lang Syne

One of the most famous and familiar songs we sing on New Years is from an old Scots-language poem written in 1788 by the Scottish writer, Robert Burns. The song, of course, is “Auld Lang Syne.” Just thinking of the melody puts you in a good and happy place. Right? I can almost envision you humming the tune right now.

One of the verses goes this way:

*From auld lang syne
For auld lang syne
We'll take a cup o'
kindness yet
For auld lang syne
We'll take a cup o'
kindness yet.*

The traditional use of the song was to bid farewell to the old year and to welcome in the new year while in the

company of good friends and family.

Now, we all know the “auld lang syne” doesn't make a whole lot of sense in our common language today—yet, we love to sing the song. Many of us without knowing its meaning.

However, it is a simple gesture of the tradition of raising one's glass representing good will, close friendship and kindness toward one another. What a wonderful gesture, don't you think?

Well, Robert Burns didn't write the following quote—rather, it was the Apostle Paul who wrote in Colossians 3:12-14, “Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one

another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

I am visualizing celebrating the Scottish tradition of “auld lang syne” and raising a glass in celebration of the new year while contemplating the words of the Apostle Paul.

Continued on Page 2

WORSHIP IN JANUARY

Jan. 5—The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, Matthew 2:1-12

Jan. 12—The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, Matthew 3: 13-17

Jan. 19—The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, John 1: 29-42

Jan. 26—The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, Matthew 4:12-23



Circle of Concern

For Guidance and Healing:

Bruce Kirschner, Lawrence & family, Tyler Ferrari, Sabrina, Dick Ohlson, Melissa Houston, Millie, Daniel, Brody family, Carol Silva, Sobona's family, Paul Rice, Joanie Yannotti, Elaine Bohlers, Krystan & Nick Holtzham, Helena Fallon, Richard Rubino, Samantha, Joe O'Neil, Lori Gerrardi, Dennis Farrell, Eric Emerson, James, Bill Hurley, Bill, Donna Russo, Gina, JoAnn Snyder, Selma Graham, Thomas Schaaf, Keith, Marge Kirkup, Hayes Family, Wynfer Rose, Justin, Aaron, Amy Azmoun, Laura Clifford, Lucille Taylor, Susan DeGrasso, Aleesa Radonele

These in Rehab or Nursing Care:

Geri Sheridan, Robert Krawzak in Brookhaven Health Care Facility, 801 Gazzola Dr., East Patchogue, NY
Alice Zahnd in Gurwin Jewish Nursing Facility, 68 Hauppauge Rd., Commack, NY

Pray for our church and her future directions!

Prayer cards are located at the usher's station at the rear of the sanctuary.

Make a prayer request at
PatchogueUMC.com

January Birthdays

Jan. 3 Florence Carde
Jan. 9 Joshua Capobianca
Jan. 19 Abagael Weber
Jan. 19 Thomas James Farrell
Jan. 27 Michael Jansson

Auld Lang Syne (From Page 1)

We live in such troubled times, don't we? There are wars and rumors of wars. Unstable and dangerous nations are attempting to cultivate nuclear weapons.

Even our own beloved nation seems to be torn apart and, in many ways, acting like a dysfunctional family.

Wouldn't it be nice if everyone took the words of Robert Burns and the Apostle Paul into the new year? Being mindful to treat others with compassion, kindness—being humble, gentle and patient? What potential? What a difference it would make in 2020.

Wishing each of you a blessed New Year in the spirit of "auld lang syne"—that we will show kindness and love toward one another and to all whom we meet along this year's journey.

In His Grip,

—Pastor Chuck

Hope and Healing Class

Wednesday, January 22, 2020 at 10:30 a.m., Wesley Hall

Are you hurting with emotional brokenness?

God desires for your wounds to be healed and for you to be made complete.

Are you struggling with physical illness?

The same Lord who healed the sick two thousand years ago, is still available today.

Are you battling deep rooted issues in your life that have robbed you of your joy and peace?

God wishes for you to be healed of depression and unrest.

There is good news! Inner healing is where Jesus makes us free to be the kind of person that He called us and intended for us to be.

Even if you do not feel you fit a person with deep-seated wounds—perhaps you know someone who is and you can be a minister of help to that person.

Plan to attend this dynamic group led by Myong Cha.

For more information contact Myong Cha—
myongChaJn316@aol.com or the church office: (631) 475-0381

—Myong Cha Ferrara

Prayer For The New Year

May the Lord make my New Year a happy one...

Not by shielding me from sorrow and pain, but by strengthening me to bear it if it comes.

Not by making my path easy, but by making me sturdy enough to tread any path.

Not by taking hardship from me, but by taking all cowardice and fear from my heart as I meet hardships.

Not by granting me unbroken sunshine, but by keeping my face bright even in the shadows.

Not by making my life always pleasant, but by showing me where men and His cause need me most and by making me zealous to be there and to help ...

God, make my year a happy one.

—Guideposts magazine (January 1973)

United Methodist Church of Patchogue January 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Office Closed Happy New Year	2	3 10:00 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	4
5 9:15 a.m.—Choir 10:00 a.m.— Communion Worship 11:00 a.m.—Finance Committee 12:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	6 Office Closed 7:30 p.m.—AA	7 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10:00 a.m.— Noon—Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:00 p.m.—AA	8	9	10 10:00 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	11
12 9:15 a.m.—Choir 10:00 a.m.— Worship/Sunday School 12:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	13 Office Closed 7:30 p.m.—AA	14 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10:00 a.m.— Noon—Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:00 p.m.—AA	15	16	17 10:00 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	18 9:30 a.m.—UMW
19 9:15 a.m.—Choir 10 a.m.— Worship/Sunday School 12:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	20 Office Closed 7:30 p.m.—AA	21 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10:00 a.m.— Noon—Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:00 p.m.—AA	22	23 5:00 p.m.— Wesley Dinner	24 10:00 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	25
26 9:15 a.m.—Choir 10 a.m.— Worship/Sunday School 11:00 a.m.— Trustees 12:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	27 Office Closed 7:30 p.m.—AA	28 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10:00 a.m.— Noon—Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:00 p.m.—AA	29	30	31 10:00 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	

Speaking the Truth in Love

You probably remember hearing the old rhyme "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me".

There is also an alternate version that appeared in 1862, in a publication of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, that said "names will never hurt me."

The intent in either version was to strengthen the resolve of the targets of the ugly words or names to not respond to them, to not give them power.

But, sadly, words can hurt.

They can inflict pain, the scars of which can last a lifetime, long after the scars from a physical wound from a stick or stone will have faded.

As children, we are sometimes called names like, "Slowpoke, dumb-bell, fatty, skinny, four-eyes". Or a parent or teacher may say, "what's the matter with you, can't you do anything right?"

Now, sometimes, that can be said in exasperation, and immediately regretted, but said often enough, it becomes part of how the child sees themselves and is carried through to adulthood.

Even as adults, when we are disparaged or discouraged through the words of family, friends, co-workers, or even church family, feelings and self perception can be affected.

And, often, how do we react? We strike back aggressively, with words that are meant to hurt, to belittle the other person, and thus to make us feel better. We insult, lay blame, use sarcasm, as verbal weapons.

By the way, did you know that the word "insult" comes from a Latin word that means "to leap upon"? That the word, "blame" comes from Old French meaning "to speak evil of", and that "sarcasm" has its roots in Greek, meaning "flesh tearing".

So, clearly, we mean violence when we use those words.

And what do we achieve? Do we enlighten the other person, do we share new information or insights, do we open up a dialogue on what caused the problem in the first place? Highly unlikely. And, yet, over and over again, we respond to negative situations in the same old unproductive ways.

In his book, *Speaking the Truth in Love*, Rev. Kenneth Haugk, founder of Stephen Ministries, speaks of the three most frequent patterns of verbal behavior we use in conflict situations:

1. Aggressive confrontation—lashing out in anger, using words to put down, patronize, demean. Which can sometimes lead to physical aggression.

2. Passive behavior—we say nothing. Tell ourselves, "I don't want to make a fuss, upset the apple-cart." So, the other person(s) never know how we feel; never receive feedback on their words or actions.

3. Passive aggressive behavior, which is really just a more subtle form of aggression. We manipulate the situation, by doing things like, forgetting, being late, sulking, or using the silent treatment, often not talking to the other person for ex-

tended periods of time. So we have effectively denied the other's existence.

Well, sisters and brothers, there is a better way to deal with conflict and hurt. A way that aligns itself with trying to be a good Christian, a faithful follower of Jesus, who taught us over and over the importance of loving and caring for one another.

And that is to be an assertive Christian. An assertive Christian believes that God values and loves each person. Therefore, we are to love and respect others, even as we ask respect from them. We understand that no human, including ourselves, is perfect.

People are complex and can exhibit a wide range of both positive and negative behaviors over time. So, labeling, stereotyping, over generalizing, can only lead to escalation and continuation of conflict.

Are we never to be angry? Anger is a very human emotion. Squashing it or denying it doesn't address the issue. Nor does using it to strike out in retaliation. But, if we own that emotion, understand that no one controls our emotions but ourselves, then we can express that feeling in a non threatening way.

For example, instead of saying, "You make me so mad! Who do you think you are, anyway?", you can say, "I feel hurt and upset by what you've just said to me." The latter opens up the possibility of mutually respectful interaction; the former effectively closes it off.

We can acknowledge our anger without using it as a club to bludgeon

someone with. Also, we need to be honest with ourselves and understand why what was said made us angry. Did it strike at our self image? Did it open old wounds? Make us doubt ourselves?

Being assertive means we don't need to lay blame or point fingers or hurl insults. We communicate our feelings, trusting in the Divine, following Jesus' teachings, and respecting one another. We develop self-control, part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit dwelling and acting within us.

A very critical part of being assertive is to develop listening skills. Really listening to another, not just hearing their words, is an expression of recognition and respect. It is a gift of love.

Richard Foster said that the greatest gift we can give someone is to recognize them, to make that human connection.

Really listening can be hard. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote that Christians have trouble listening. That we are so busy trying to come up with answers or solutions, we are rarely paying attention to the person.

And beware becoming the person who says, "I always tell the truth, even if it hurts!" That can be translated as, "I use truth as a weapon of my inner aggression."

James, the brother of Jesus, said, in the first chapter of his letter, "So, then, my beloved brethren, let us be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."

And, in the third chapter of his letter, "How great a forest is set

ablaze by a small fire, and the tongue is that fire."

So, as we enter into the year 2020, let us try our very best to be loving, listening, assertive Christians.

—Barbara Becker

How Long Is The Sermon? Study Ranks Christian Churches

How long should a sermon be?

The major branches of Christianity in the U.S. have sharply different traditions, with sermons at historically black Protestant churches lasting — on average - nearly four times as long as Roman Catholic sermons.

That's among the findings of an analysis by the Pew Research Center — billed as the first of its kind — of 49,719 sermons delivered in April and May that were shared online by 6,431 churches. Pew described its research as "the most exhaustive attempt to date to catalogue and analyze American religious sermons."

According to Pew, the median length of the sermons was 37 minutes. Catholic sermons were the shortest, at a median of just 14 minutes, compared with 25 minutes for sermons in mainline Protestant congregations and 39 minutes in evangelical Protestant congregations. Historically black Protestant churches had by far the longest sermons, at a median of 54 minutes.

Pew said sermons at the black churches lasted longer than mainline Protestant sermons even though, on average, they had roughly the same

number of words. A possible explanation, Pew said, is that the preachers at black churches allow more time during their sermons for musical interludes, responses from worshippers in the pews and dramatic pauses in their oratory.

Numerous prominent pastors have pondered the question of a sermon's length.

"I've asked and been asked that question a hundred times," the Rev. Hershael York, a professor of Christian preaching at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote in 2016. "Today, after 35 years in ministry, I have a definitive answer: You can preach as long as you hold their attention."

The question came up in a 2018 episode of "Ask Pastor John," a Q-and-A forum hosted by the Rev. John Piper, chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary in Minneapolis. He said he generally needs at least 40 minutes, sometimes more than 50, to deeply explore his themes.

"If I look around the nation, there are many hundreds, maybe thousands, of growing churches where pastors preach rich, Christ-exalting, God-centered, Bible-saturated, textually rooted, intellectually challenging, emotionally moving, life-altering sermons for 50 or more minutes, and very few people get frustrated that they are too long," Piper said.

Missouri-based researcher/writer Chris Colvin, who helps pastors with sermon preparation, notes that Jesus' Sermon on the Mount — containing some of the most powerful passages in the Scriptures — can be read aloud in less than 15 minutes.

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POST OFFICE

THE END IS NEAR

Schwad

"Are Forever Stamps OK?"

Don't Forget Your Pledge

The deadline for the February issue of **The Link** is January 24.
 Please email your copy to gbhoag@optonline.net.

For security purposes, the Church St. entrance is now locked as soon as Sunday services begin. If you are running late, be sure to use the Sanctuary entrances.

Sermons (From Page 5)

In addition to sermon length, the new Pew analysis delved into an examination of words and phrases most commonly used by preachers from the different Christian traditions. It found that the word “hallelujah” appeared in sermons from about 22% of the historically black Protestant churches, and those congregations were eight times more likely than others to hear that word.

Sermons from evangelical churches were three times more likely than those from other traditions to include the phrase “eternal hell.”

Pew said the sermons it examined came from 2,156 evangelical congregations, 1,367 mainline Protestant congregations, 422 Catholic parishes and 278 historically black Protestant congregations, while other congregations could not be reliably classified. The research did not analyze sermons delivered in synagogues, mosques or other non-Christian congregations.

—David Crary, Associated Press

Christians Should Defend Journalists

Many of you know that I am a would-be journalist. I discovered what I call my “journalistic juice” 70 years ago, as a student at Central High School in Galveston, Texas.

Journalism was an empowering force in the life of a young African American growing up in a segregated society.

All of my fellow students as well as my teachers were black. Central was one of the three high schools in Texas

that I attended. The other two were Booker T. Washington in Dallas, across the street from St. Paul United Methodist Church, where my father was pastor, and Anderson High School in Austin. I was in Galveston because my father was pastor of Wesley Tabernacle Church. Wesley was in the old racially segregated U.S. Central Jurisdiction, as were St. Paul and other churches my father pastored in North Carolina.

It was in a Central High civics class — a class that focused on citizenship, the role of citizens and their responsibilities — that I first heard of newspaper editorials and op-eds. At the same time, the biblical “journalists” of the epistles were attracting my attention.

While my call to ordained ministry was growing louder, I began to realize writing was becoming for me an avocation. I went on to serve in ministry in Boston; Harlem; Chester, Pennsylvania; Washington; Denver; Atlantic City; and New Haven, Connecticut. Newspapers in those cities published my letters to the editor and my op-eds.

My letters and op-eds in some ways are shaped by my response to the Bible. They make visible my “segregation survivor” status. Black lives and voices matter.

When the conservative Washington Times published its first issue, I responded with a long letter to the editors, asking how they, as leaders of a conservative paper based in the predominantly black city of Washington, would write about race. The Times responded to my letter with a lengthy editorial addressing the

newspaper’s racial coverage and editorial policy.

Journalism has been a major part of my life and ministry beyond the pulpit. It has provided a means for raising awareness of issues that we might otherwise be inclined to ignore. This is as important for the church as it is for secular society, and we ignore this reality at our own peril.

People of faith must be well-informed. Theologian Karl Barth was quoted in Time magazine in 1966 as saying, “Take your Bible and take your newspaper, and read both. But interpret newspapers with your Bible.”

Today, the attacks on journalists and journalism in this country and around the world are a cause of concern. I am not sure that we who love the Bible are active enough in challenging the hatred directed toward journalistic truth, and journalists, in these moments.

First, journalists around the world are experiencing verbal and often physical violence. The killings of a Washington Post journalist and other journalists around the world compel me to empathize with and pray for those in this profession. My prayers cover not only secular journalists but also our United Methodist journalists in the United States, Africa, Europe and Asia.

Second, the cries of “fake news” emanating from the White House, regardless of our political perspectives, are unsettling. The demonization of the secular press harms the religious press as well, and it erodes confidence in an institution that is vital for any healthy and just society.

Continued on Page 8

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 Fellowship Coffee Hour—11 AM
 Hearing assistance provided



Defending Journalists (From Page 7)

The hatred being directed at journalists today, particularly from our political institutions, is troubling.

Third, have we understood, or been sensitive to, how our current Book of Discipline legislation that is dividing us could impact the work of our church journalists? Could there be pressure not to lift up certain voices or views that oppose our legislative stance on practices that are “incompatible with Christian teaching”? That is another reason why we as The United Methodist Church must break free from the legislative restrictions the 1972 General Conference actions imposed on the mission/ministry of the denomination.

I remember the sayings, some original and some not, of my South Carolina-born and bred grandmother, “Mama Irene.” In this time of United Methodists criticizing one another, her words ring true: “Each time you point a finger of criticism and blame at someone, remember, you are pointing three fingers at yourself.”

Being well-informed is vital for a society and for our United Methodist Church. Rather than push back on journalists, we should ask ourselves where we would be if we weren’t well-informed. If a news

article makes us uncomfortable, should we condemn the messenger, or should we instead seek to understand the source of our discomfort?

As people of the Bible, we stand for truth. Let us also stand for those who have the challenging mission of reporting the truth.

—Rev. Gilbert H. Caldwell, UMNS

