

# The LINK



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF PATCHOGUE

Since 1791

January 2015

## New Beginnings

**W**hen I was a child (eons ago), one of my favorite vocabulary words was 'vicissitudes.'

It was a cool way to say 'changes', as in 'the vicissitudes of life.' Life, after all, is full of changes — sometimes welcomed, sometimes not.

As a congregation, we have experienced a number of changes in 2014 - from Pastor Sanchez' three month absence for

military duty, to the departure of our dear Christine Saas for new employment, and finally, the departure of Rev Sanchez to begin a new chapter of his life in Texas.

All these 'vicissitudes' caused some anxiety and some sadness. As a congregation, we were challenged and, happily, with God's guidance, we met those challenges. Our lay speakers, along with guest pastors, graced us with their spiritual gifts and insights, and brought us through the Pastor's deployment.

We were fortunate to hire a new administrative assistant, Meghan Vanderhoof, who has already proven to be an asset to our church.

And, now, we prepare to meet and welcome the Reverend Dawn Yoon, who will join us as pastor as of Jan. 1. Rev. Yoon's first worship service and celebration of communion with us will be Jan. 4. Her sermon title will be "God's Grace is Sufficient."

Rev. Yoon came to the ministry after a career in

the business world, working at some major firms, including American Express Bank and Peat, Marwick and Mitchell Accounting.

She has been a United Methodist since she was a child in Korea, active in many aspects of church life.

After answering God's call to the ministry, she served 6 years at Aldersgate UMC in Dobbs Ferry, NY. Rev. Yoon holds a Master of Divinity degree from Wesley Theological Seminary.

She is committed to providing excellent pastoral care and is very interested in involving our children and youth in all aspects of our church life.

Pastor Yoon looks forward to meeting us on Jan. 4. Let us welcome her warmly.

—**Barbara Becker,**  
**Chair, Staff-Parish**  
**Relations**  
**Committee**

## WORSHIP IN JANUARY

**Jan. 4**—Rev. Dawn Yoon, "God's Grace Is Sufficient", Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14, Matthew 2:1-12.

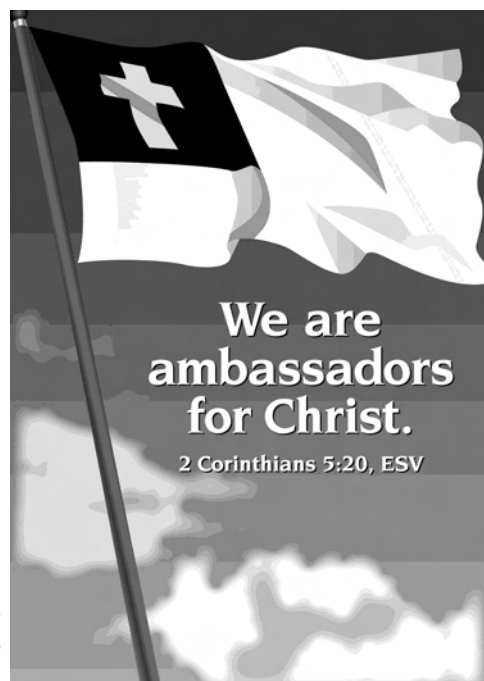
**Jan. 11**—Rev. Dawn Yoon, Psalm 29, Mark 1:4-11

**Jan. 18**—Rev. Dawn Yoon, Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18, John 1:43-51

**Jan. 25**—Rev. Dawn Yoon, Psalm 62:5-12, Mark 1:14-20.



**Rev. Hyo Jung (Dawn ) Yoon comes to us from Faith UMC, Staten Island.**



## Circle of Concern

### For Joys:

The wonderful Sunday School children.

Keisha Pearson—Engagement to Joshua Myer & placing 6th at the World Military Games in the 470 Sailing competition held in Doha, Qatar.

### For Bereavement:

The family and friends of Kathleen Terpening Krygier, Al Eid and Jamie (Brand) Robertson.

### For Guidance and Healing:

Lorinda Lund, Aubrey Miglino, Marge Kassner, Kate Weber's daughter, Elaine Moffitt, Margaret Tappin, Robert Coleman, Esmeralda Coppola, Frank Mondiello, Diane Keller, Ron Bose, Elaine Holcomb.

### These Who Are Hospitalized:

Muriel Palermo

### These at Home:

Pastor Ernesto Sanchez & family.

### These who are in Rehab or Nursing Care Facilities:

Leona Kreamer in Brookhaven Memorial Hospital, Brookhaven, NY.

Alice Zahnd in Affinity Skilled Living, 305 Locust Ave., Oakdale, NY.

Esther Davies in Brookhaven Health Facility, 801 Gazzolla Drive, E. Patchogue, NY.

Ed Dew in Sunrise Assisted Living, Holbrook, NY.

*"People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*

1 Samuel 16:7, NLT

## National Council of Churches Celebrates Moves Toward U.S-Cuba Normalization

**W**ashington, DC: Today the National Council of Churches rejoices in the steps taken by Presidents Obama and Castro to normalize relations between the United States and Cuba. In addition, the NCC celebrates the return of Alan Gross, imprisoned for five years in Cuba, to the United States, and the humanitarian release of three of the "Cuban 5."

"The news that Cuba and the United States are now ending a half-century of hostility is welcome indeed during this season of Advent," said National Council of Churches General Secretary Jim Winkler. "I salute Presidents Obama and Castro, and express thanks to Pope Francis and all those who helped bring this moment to pass. I ask local churches in the United States to follow the example of churches across Cuba and ring their bells in thanks and celebration!"

NCC Chair Roy Medley also stated: "We thank God for this wonderful news of these significant steps toward normalization of relations between our two nations. The NCC has long advocated for this day and we know our partners at the Cuban Council of Churches are as jubilant at this moment as are we."

The National Council of Churches has a deep history of advocacy for normalization of U.S.-Cuba relations on the basis of its long-standing friendship with the Cuban churches. Recent advocacy includes a delegation in December, 2011 in which members visited with Alan Gross just before meeting with Cuban President Raul Castro. Delegates were able to report on Gross's condition and call for his release on humanitarian grounds.

Many NCC member communions have maintained ties to fellow Christians in Cuba through these difficult years. Some have been active in advocacy efforts culminating in this day. "This is a great day for the people and churches of Cuba," said NCC Associate General Secretary Dr. Antonios Kireopoulos. "We have long affirmed that economic engagement is crucial to reform. Engagement, communication, travel, and commerce will transform Cuban society more effectively than will our years of sanctions and boycotts."

The NCC has known of the situation of the churches through the years of the embargo, and the vibrant faith that has flourished despite the communist regime. The seminary in Matanzas has been a force in the region in theological scholarship. Also, the NCC witnessed a thawing of anti-religious rhetoric with the opening of the Greek Orthodox cathedral in 2004, to which a delegation was sent to accompany the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew when he traveled there to celebrate the establishment of the cathedral.

The NCC, along with Church World Service, has constantly worked with the Cuban Council of Churches for the humanitarian and spiritual well-being of the people of Cuba.

The NCC plans to send a delegation to the Assembly of the Cuban Council of Churches this April. The National Council of Churches and the Cuban Council of Churches celebrate this day and asks Congress to move forward with full normalization between our two countries.

### —National Council of Churches

The deadline for the February issue of **The Link** is **Jan. 9** Note the early date. Please email your copy to [gbhoag@optonline.net](mailto:gbhoag@optonline.net).

# United Methodist Church of Patchogue

## January 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 HAPPY NEW YEAR  Church Office Closed	2 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—N/A Church Office Closed	3
4 10 a.m.— Communion Wor- ship/Kids/ Breakfast Club 11:30 a.m.—SPRC 2:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	5 7 p.m.—Prayer Ministry 7:00 p.m.—AA	6 9 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—AA	7	8 7:30 p.m.—Choir	9 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—N/A	10
11 10 a.m.—Worship/ Kids/Breakfast Club 11:30 a.m.— Finance 2:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	12 7 p.m.—Prayer Ministry 7:00 p.m.—AA	13 9 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—AA	14	15 7:30 p.m.—Choir	16 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—N/A	17
18 10 a.m.—Worship/ Kids/Breakfast Club 11:30 a.m.— Church Council 2:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	19 7 p.m.—Prayer Ministry 7:00 p.m.—AA	20 9 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—AA	21	22 5:00 p.m.—Wesley Dinner 7:30 p.m.—Choir	23 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—N/A	24
25 10 a.m.—Worship/ Kids/Breakfast Club 11:30 a.m.— Trustees 2:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	26 7 p.m.—Prayer Ministry 7:00 p.m.—AA	27 9 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—AA	28	29 7:30 p.m.—Choir	30 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—N/A	31

# the Way

May God's peace be with you!

One of the more challenging aspects of writing a column, at least for me (I have never done this prior to the Link), is the time lag between writing it and the appearance of the newsletter. Many things can happen in the space of ten days or two weeks, especially when that space contains not one but two momentous events: Christmas, and the changing of our pastoral guard. Combine that with the period of reflection and introspection that comes to many of us at this time of year, and the variables mount up.

I guess that's one of the many great things about having a loving God to carry me: I don't need to flash prognostication skills that I don't have, nor speak sagely about events that may or not may happen through the balance of 2014. All I have to do is be honest. Honest with you, and honest with me. And the easiest way to do that is to talk about the subject that's heavy on my mind, emotions and heart at this moment: the Itinerant Minister of the Methodist Church. Well, one itinerant minister, anyway.

Interestingly enough, the concept itself makes a lot of sense to me, for two variations of the same reason. First, it's very easy, especially at this place in television- and internet-driven history, to fall into a cult of personality. When I open my internet browser, I'm often greeted by the face of someone who is listed as a "Celebrity". I don't seem to remember that job description when I was looking at the help-wanted ads, do you? And yet many people seem to worship celebrities, perhaps in the

way that the Israelites worshipped golden calves in the book of Exodus. Cool: idol worship vs. American Idol worship. I like it!

The second variation is much more subtle, because it involves not mindless worship, but love. There are people in my life that I love deeply, and by "love" I mean agape, that wonderful, God-given love that engulfs us with a quiet joy. These are the ones who show me the path—by walking it—that Jesus would have us take. I wish I had the capacity to love all people that way, but I don't seem to be very close to that particular level of enlightenment. Among those special few, Pastor Ernesto Sanchez stands tall, and I will always love him both for the passion he brought to the pulpit (as well as those around him), and for being the shepherd who was there in my formative years to guide me towards a deeper relationship with God.

And that's where it gets tricky. We all know the phrase "don't behead the messenger". But the obverse of that might be "don't make the messenger into the message". The first few times I heard Pastor Sanchez preach I was taken aback, and very unsure. I actually leaned over to my lady at one point early on, and whispered that he must really be a \_\_\_ (pick a fundamentalist denomination). Of course, five years ago I was a spiritual infant, vs. the spiritual toddler phase I currently enjoy. But one of the many things I've learned over the last few years is that "fundamentalist" is not a bad word – indeed, is not God fundamental to every aspect of our lives? How often has Reverend Ernesto himself pleaded with us to keep Jesus Christ first, every waking moment, and to give all the glory to God, and ONLY to God?

I spent some shoulder-to-shoulder time with Pastor a year ago, when we

rebuilt part of the stockade fence at the parsonage. The things we discussed, while often more mundane than spiritual, did absolutely nothing to reverse my certainty that he is a God-loving, God-fearing Christian, no more and no less. I will always treasure the years of growth and friendship I found under his pastoral care, and more importantly I will continue to thank God for placing such examples of true Christianity in my life each day, to hold me up when my soul's knees grow weak.

Maybe John Wesley's hierarchical offspring have the right idea with this whole itinerancy thing. Maybe God circulates living pastors to carry new, fresh Living Water to all of us. And so, this is not a requiem for the departure of Pastor Tito, rather it is a heart-felt thank you. If I were Hawaiian, I would say "Aloha". If I were a Roman, I would quote Catullus and say "Ave atque vale". Or perhaps I would slip into something a little more Hindu and say "Namaste". But I think I'll be a Methodist today, and just say "go with God".

Yeah, that works.

Yours in Christ,

—Tom Bracken

## January Birthdays

**Jan. 3** Colby Schwartz

**Jan. 11** Abdiel Sanchez

**Jan. 16** Alana Nicholson

**Jan. 20** Thomas Mansfield, Jr.

**Jan. 22** Walter Butler, Jr.

**Jan. 27** Michael Jansson

**Jan. 30** Abby Leddin



## After Grand Jury Rulings, What is the Church's Witness?

**E**lyse Ambrose Minson said she wants to have faith in the U.S. justice system — even when an unarmed African American dies at the hands of law enforcement.

"I want to believe something is going to happen that proves people of color have value to the United States and to its governing bodies," said the member of Church of the Village, a multiethnic United Methodist congregation in New York City.

Lately, she said, that has been hard.

A New York grand jury decided not to bring charges in the death of Eric Garner, who died after a Staten Island police officer put him in a chokehold and officers compressed his chest. Police accused Garner of selling loose cigarettes in violation of local tax laws. A video captured the fatal encounter — as well as his final words, "I can't breathe."

The decision came a little more than a week after a grand jury ruled there was no criminal case in the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri.

Ambrose Minson cried after the ruling in the Garner case, then decided to take action. On Dec. 4, she joined fellow church members and thousands of others at a largely peaceful demonstration that extended from lower Manhattan across the Brooklyn Bridge.

She is among the United Methodists across the United States who seek ways to bear witness that all lives matter.

Since last week's ruling, church members have held prayer gatherings and joined in protests. Church leaders, including those at the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, also have made plans to advocate for long-term reforms aimed at serving both

the police and the people they are called to protect.

Ambrose Minson, a Ph.D. student at Drew University Theological School, the United Methodist seminary in Madison, N.J., said the church needs to respond. While her faith in U.S. institutions is shaken, her faith remains strong in God and the church's capacity to do God's will.

"We are always in the process of working toward bringing God's kingdom to the people of the earth — and that is confronting injustice in all its forms," she said.

### Need for change

The recent grand jury rulings are just the latest events to grab headlines in a country where laws actively discriminated against African Americans within living memory and where black and whites still can have different experiences with law enforcement.

In November, a Cleveland police officer fatally shot 12-year-old Tamir Rice who was playing with a toy gun. That case is still being investigated, but the boy's mother said she is seeking criminal charges. On Dec. 4, the U.S. Justice Department released a searing review of the Cleveland police department's exercise of force and called for sweeping reforms.

In September, another grand jury decided not to indict police officers in the shooting death of John Crawford III, who was holding an air rifle in a Beavercreek, Ohio, Walmart.

Still, there is no question police work is important but dangerous. According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 67 law enforcement officers were killed in the line of duty during the first half of 2014.

"I understand why police departments would be fearful," Henry-Crowe said. "They don't know when someone may be carrying a gun or not, so I have a lot of sympathy for police depart-

ments and their charge and their responsibility."

No reliable national data exists on deaths that result from law enforcement, but law enforcement agencies voluntarily report to the FBI about 400 justifiable homicides a year.

### Need to reach out to law enforcement

The Rev. William Koch, a retired district superintendent who for years was a chaplain to the Missouri State Patrol, has counseled officers anguished by the loss of life on their watch even when they could not have prevented it.

He worries about "the high degree of animosity toward law enforcement in general" and said most are simply trying to do the job of protecting the public. "It's just a tough situation," he said. "They don't make the law, but they are charged with the responsibility to enforce the law."

At the same time, he noted that there are some police officers who may not have received necessary training and may be too quick to assume people are criminals based on their race or economic class.

He encourages church leaders to reach out to the law enforcement in their congregations and in their broader communities.

Ohio East Area Bishop John L. Hopkins, whose area encompasses Cleveland, said churches are responding to law-enforcement concerns with prayer. They also are striving for better relations between police and the communities they serve, but that remains a challenge.

### Proposed reforms

Beyond conversation, the Board of Church and Society—which advocates for the denomination's social teachings—is calling for broader policy changes nationwide.

**Continued on Page 8**

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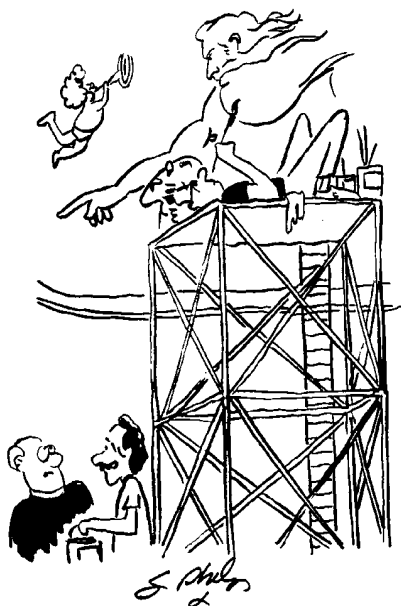
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"Look, I appreciate the youth group's offer to paint the church, but I was thinking more along the lines of basic off-white."

## What's In A Name?

"Here we are in a month named after the Roman god Janus, an appropriate personification of the start of the new year. This particular Roman god had two faces so that he could look ahead toward the future and back at the past at the same time. As we get rid of an old year and look forward to a new one, we all try to be a little like Janus. We know through experience what we did wrong and what we did right, and hope to do better this year. Some people make ambitious new year's resolutions; others just take a deep breath and hope for the best...."

—Complete Speakers Almanac

## Christian Education News

**A**fter focusing on the birth of Jesus and participating in our Christmas pageant last month, the children of our Kids Club (formerly Sunday school) will be learning about people touched by Jesus, such as the woman at the well and the ten lepers; they will also hear about Jesus' miracles. Breakfast Club will continue with their study of the Bible and the Book of Genesis.

The clubs are planning a Souper Bowl Sunday mission project to benefit our own food pantry. We'll be asking the kids and the congregation to bring in cans of soup on Super Bowl Sunday, which is Feb. 1, and also on the Sunday before, Jan. 25.

Our youth group remains active, meeting several times a month. They were successful in raising funds by participating in our annual holiday fair.

Our next Sunday morning 9:00 AM adult study will take place during the season of Lent and will begin in mid-February. Details will be printed in the bulletin and sent out by email.

—Debbie Kolacki

## UMW

**D**uring the year, the United Methodist Women engage in a number of fund raising efforts, most of which are, quite frankly, a lot of fun. The annual Christmas Fair, the auction during our retreat weekend, wine and cheese gatherings, and, of course, the infamous No Lunch Mother's Day Luncheon not only provide us with the opportunity to raise money, but also to deepen the bonds of friendship between us and to extend warmth and hospitality to all those who partake in the events.

Of course, the motivation for these efforts is to enable us to fulfill the purpose of the UMW, which is to be in mission to women, children and youth

around the corner and throughout the world.

Sometimes the money raised enables us to carry out a hands on project as we did last June, when we assembled 100 bag lunches, then delivered and distributed them at the Far Rockaway Mission in Queens. Each year we donate funds to the District/ conference level UMW; from there our money can travel around the world, supporting education programs, or health initiatives, or employment training, among many others.

For several years, we have given assistance to local women who have faced a crisis in their lives. Since its inception, we have been a consistent financial supporter of the Wesley Dinners.

At our December meeting, we decided to contribute to the following: \$1500 mission pledge to LIE District UMW; \$1000 to our own Patchogue UMC; \$700 to Wesley Dinners; \$300 to the Food Pantry; \$250 to purchase supermarket food cards for 4 families for Christmas; \$200 to purchase new blinds for the parsonage; and over \$200 to purchase a new table and chairs for Wesley Hall.

Each month, we meet on the 3rd Saturday, at 9:30 am in Wesley Hall. Come and join us. You will be welcome.

—Barbara Becker

## A Higher Law

**O**n March 11, 1850, U.S. Senator William Henry Seward of New York dared to utter the unthinkable in the halls of Congress. While arguing against slavery, he intoned, "But there is a higher law than the Constitution, which regulates our authority over the domain, and devotes it to the same noble purposes."

Seward reaped the wrath of many for saying such a thing, and the so-called "compromise" of 1850 even strengthened "fugitive slave" provi-

sions across the land. This, in effect, made a criminal of anyone unwilling to capture those fleeing slavery.

The nation erupted in a war of ideas, and one Wesleyan writer, William Hosmer, released perhaps the most detailed defense of Seward and higher-law thinking. Hosmer insisted that government is accountable to an eternal, moral law.

## Not a new conviction

This was not a new conviction. Various notions of a divine law had been invoked since before the Revolution. Additionally, they would be deployed with sparkling clarity by Martin Luther King Jr. during the Civil Rights Movement of the 20th century.

Section V, The Political Community, of our United Methodist Social Principles examines various issues that relate to government and its appropriate authority.

One especially pithy paragraph is given the title "Civil Obedience & Civil Disobedience." Among other statements, this text reminds us: "Governments and laws should be servants of God and human beings."

People are not granted rights by government. Their God-given rights are recognized and protected by governments. This is essentially a form of "higher-law" tradition.

The higher-law tradition will always be something beyond the grasp of political fad and seasonal abusers of human rights. Thank God for that. I mean it. Thank *God* for that.

This thread of political thinking is not held hostage to either reactionary right or trendy left. It is a line of reflection and conviction that has insisted upon respect and dignity, and it has done so with a profound and persistent authority.

—Rev. Chris Momany, UMNS



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### Grand Juries (from Page 5)

A statement titled “Repent — Reconcile—Restore,” encourages United Methodists to advocate for evaluation of law enforcement practices, the demilitarization of police forces and the establishment of independent citizen-review boards. The statement calls for establishing economic and social systems that ensure the welfare of all, as well as strong nonviolent direct action against injustice and institutional racism.

United Methodist Women, in a statement, also calls for embracing the church's tradition that challenges “the status quo when the norms of society do not honor all human beings as children of God.”

Much of the problem boils down to trust, Bishop Ernest S. Lyght, interim leader of the New York Area, said in a

statement. He urges police to get out of their cars and walk around the people they serve.

“Trust is a matter of mutuality — citizens must trust the police and at the same time, the police must trust the community for which they have policing responsibility,” he said.

#### Immediate response

In the immediate aftermath of the grand jury decisions, Daquel Harris found comfort in the presence of her church family at Church of the Village. She was leading a Bible study when the grand jury's decision in the Garner case was made public.

“I can't think of any place I'd rather be when I get news like that,” she said.

Her church has been trying to find ways to witness to justice. On Sunday, Nov. 30, congregants after worship

took a photo to show solidarity with nonviolent protesters in Ferguson. Church members showed the “Hands up, don't shoot” gesture.

Retired Bishop Alfred Johnson, the church's pastor, said he understands his congregation's desire to act. He noted that as an African-American male, he was stopped and frisked by police more times than he could count when he lived in Philadelphia.

“We want to give people a way to respond, not just to hold it in but to find a way to do something positive. As the Scripture says, be angry but don't sin,” he said, referencing Ephesians 4:26.

“As the cross was transformed from a symbol of shame to a symbol of power, that's the way we want to try to make this thing happen.”

—Heather Hahn, UMNS