

The LINK



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF PATCHOGUE

Since 1791

June 2020

Remaining Confident in Troubled Times

So here we are into our third month of stay at home.

Who would have ever thought that this could ever happen in our lifetime? When I was an elementary school student, we used to have atomic bomb drills in the event that the then Soviet Union attacked us. At the command of our teacher we would all quickly reposition under our desks while covering our heads. Imagine that, under an open-sided desk covering our head while a nuclear plume engulfs us. It is almost laughable now, but back then it was very serious.

So here we are again, struggling against the “x factor”—the unknown. Where and when will we be attacked—not by another nation at odds

with us—but rather an invisible enemy, COVID-19?

I can see the fear and uncomfortableness in the eyes of others peering out over their face masks as we cross one another in a grocery aisle. People are taking their delivered mail and placing it in the garage for three days before opening a single parcel or letter.

This COVID-19 is no doubt real, destructive and in many ways much to be learned about. And, we should take this pandemic very serious and follow the protocols called for by the health authorities and government officials.

Having said this, Paul writes to a young pastor in Ephesus, Timothy, in 2 Timothy 1:7:

“God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

You see, Timothy had a lot to be fearful of. No, not a COVID-19 virus; however, launching the Christian faith in those early days was both challenging and at times dangerous. So, Timothy was encouraged by Paul’s words to not be fearful, but realizing he had the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ’s love and a sound mind.

To me, a sound mind is a mind that is both rational and discerning.

Continued on Page 2

COVID-19

Until further notice, all worship services and activities in our building by all groups are canceled.

The office is closed but Camille is working from home and calls to the office are directed to her phone.

Please continue your financial support. We have an online offering option on our website. You can also mail a check or arrange through your bank’s website to have payment mailed automatically.



Circle of Concern

Joys:

Congratulations to **Montana Queen** who graduated from University of Buffalo.

For all who have recovered from this awful virus.

Healing:

Monico Doctor recently diagnosed with Breast cancer (Pam Queen)

Bruce Kirschner was admitted to the hospital again, and for his wife and caretaker, Carol.

Joanne Ullman has a tooth abscess

Kenneth Krygier, 26, was recently diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma. (Charlene Schultz)

Nicholas Grizopolous, 6, diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor, currently receiving radiation and chemotherapy treatments. (Kathy Halliwell)

Kathryn Rice, mother of Joanne Ullman, fell and injured her knee. (Joanne Ullman)

Joan Pokorny was diagnosed with COVID-19. (Helen Smith)

John, recently diagnosed with COVID-19. (Cyndy Rocco/Kathy Halliwell)

Gayle finally underwent spinal surgery. May she have complete healing. (Cyndy Rocco/Kathy Halliwell)

Friend of Wendy Hollowell from the senior center who lost her 55 year old daughter to the COVID 19 virus. (Wendy Hollowell)

Travis Gentile, 28, suffered a spinal cord injury while participating in the Polar Bear Club fundraiser for Make A Wish Foundation (Kathy Halliwell)

Concerns:

All those scientists and researchers who are working on a vaccination and medication to cure and control this terrible virus.

All of our national, state and local leaders, along with leaders all around the world, may they have faith and encouragement as they continue to help us control this pandemic.

Continued Prayers:

Pastor Chuck, Tyler Ferrari, Anthony Lodato, Lisa Tenzyk, Godfrey Helfst, Prince Family, Yount Family. Hicks Family, Kenny Family, Lola Schwartz, JoAnn Synder, Bill, Gina, Diane, Thomas Schaff, Bill Hurley, Elijah, Michael (Barbara Becker's brother), Jennifer Higbie, Lawrence & Family, Tyler Ferrari Sabrina, Ed Klingel, Laura Clifford, Lucille Taylor, James Loris, Charlie Moreno, Annabelle Dasano, Marion Lyons, Lynn Russo, Robert Schneider, Jr. Eileen Thompson, Maryellen Strieb Camacho, Richard Pomponio, Ronald Lyons, John Horyczum, Don Stewart and Family. Iarocci Family, Danzinger Family, Brian Laubes, Suzanne Tierny

—Compiled by Kathy Halliwell

Please email Kathy—

keats1002@gmail.com with any additions or deletions.

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

June Birthdays

June 3 Mickey Arena

June 9 Nicholas Lyons

June 15 Lynne Rice

June 25 Mia May Connors

Remaining Confident

(From Page 1)

Now, transfer that to our present circumstances. Let us not live in fear, but rather practice good and safe health behaviors by using the sound minds God has given us.

I was recently asked by someone, "When do you think our church will reopen for worship?"

Frankly, I don't have the answer to that question and neither does our district superintendent or our bishop—BUT GOD DOES. We will know when it is the right time—and when that time comes, what a celebration and rejoicing we will have.

Until then, we are still the church, even though we are connected remotely—we are still connected because WE ARE THE CHURCH—not a building. Although, it will be so nice when we once again return to our beautiful church building.

Until then, keep the faith, pray for others and stay connected.

Walking this unusual journey together in Christ,

—Pastor Chuck

O God, the King of glory,
you have exalted your only
Son Jesus Christ
with great triumph to your kingdom in
heaven:
Do not leave us comfortless,
but send us your Holy Spirit to
strengthen us,
and exalt us to that place where our
Savior Christ has gone before;
who lives and reigns with you and the
Holy Spirit,
one God,
in glory everlasting.
Amen

—Christianity Today

Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death?

In past weeks, as anxiety and tensions brought on by the Pandemic continued to rise, a number of public demonstrations took place in various places around the country.

While, in part, they may have been motivated by genuine economic fears, and in part by cynical political manipulation, they do raise some interesting questions. What is Liberty? What is Freedom?

The common theme seemed to be that the various public health measures instituted by the states and, in smaller measure, by the federal government, were an infringement on the rights and personal liberties of the demonstrators.

The wearing of face masks, sterile gloves, staying six feet apart, not congregating in groups, were portrayed as government attempts to restrict our American freedoms.

A recent news clip showed an employee of a big box store politely telling a customer that he would have to put on a mask in order to shop there. (The employee was masked.)

The customer indignantly refused, saying "I woke up this morning in a free country." Which brings us back to the question of how we define freedom and liberty.

John Quincy Adams, 6th president and son of the second president, defined liberty as, "A power to do as we would be done by." It sounds very like the golden rule of 'Do unto others as you would have them do onto you.'



It suggests a reciprocity, a linkage, a responsibility from one to another.

The dictionary defines liberty as, 'freedom from bondage, from captivity.' and defines freedom as 'not enslaved, having personal liberty.'

So, it is hard to understand how adherence to temporary public health measures puts people in bondage, or captivity or slavery, or takes away personal liberties. Perhaps some are confusing personal freedoms with a reckless and selfish disregard for the wellbeing of others.

Living in a democratic society, a free society, comes with fundamental responsibility to all others living in that society. It is not a free for all, where everyone does just as they like, without regard to the impact on others. That's closer to anarchy, than democracy. And in the midst of a global pandemic that has killed over 300,000 human beings, it is even more critical that citizens work together cooperatively in ways that will enhance and improve the general welfare of all.

While I understand that some people are concerned with the potential for government to become overly powerful and restrictive—anyone who has read George Orwell's "1984"—could understandably fall into that category, the way to counter that is through having a well informed citizenry that thinks critically and truly believes in liberty and justice for all.

Waving an American flag does not in itself make you a patriot. Nor, by the way, does waving weapons around in public, and behaving in a thuggish intimidating manner.

What does is having a fundamental respect for the rights of others and a commitment to helping our nation to someday realize the promise of the principles on which it was founded.

And, finally, for those who feel the need to wave or display the confederate flag: The so called, "Lost Cause" was a myth. The economy of the south before the Civil War was based on the enslavement and debasement of other human beings. There is nothing gracious or noble about that.

—Barbara Becker

Bishop Bickerton's May 22 Update

Today in his morning press conference, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that another 105 New Yorkers died yesterday from the COVID-19 virus. Governor Ned Lamont announced yesterday that another 53 Connecticut residents died as well. In the last seven days alone, nearly 1,500 people who live within close proximity of our churches have died from this deadly virus. These facts alone reveal that we live in a region that cannot be compared with any other place in the country or world. What others are attempting to do in other regions would only result in increased infection, hardship and death if we were to try to do the same.

Two days ago, a team of leaders in our Annual Conference completed work and issued a twenty-six page document giving specific direction and instructions on how to prepare our church facilities and our people for the potential re-opening of our churches based on the metrics and guidelines provided by the State of New York and Connecticut, thorough and carefully crafted steps provided several weeks ago by the Centers for Disease Control, and additional measures set forth by my office.

In contrast to the above statements, today, the President of the United States announced that all churches would be declared "essential services" and gave them permission to open this weekend. This directive was given with no guidance for safety precautions, sani-

tation guidelines, or sensitivity to vulnerable age-groups, those with pre-existing conditions, or those who have been disproportionately affected due to poverty, systemic racism, or economic hardship.

I am writing to each of you, the clergy and lay leadership of the New York Annual Conference to clarify this situation with some clear guidance and direction from my office:

We will continue to live out of our theological understandings of the Christian faith as well as the principles of "doing no harm" to others, and our mission to provide safe places for all people to gather when the time is right.

Our United Methodist churches will not be permitted to open this weekend. Our churches have officially been closed until June 15th at the earliest and will open on a regional basis when advance preparation is done, certification is granted, and final permission is given by the District Superintendent's office in consultation with my office.

Each church within the New York Annual Conference is still under specific direction from my office to begin work on completing the necessary steps for re-opening as provided in the document, "New York Annual Conference Covid-19 Guidelines for Church Re-opening." The detailed steps and guidance provided in this document will provide a safe and clear pathway for our churches to prepare for re-opening when the appropriate time comes.

This is not the time to find loopholes or detours for the guidance we have clearly provided. If you have

any questions or concerns, I would be more than happy to address them with you through your District Superintendent. Please contact your Superintendent who will contact me with your concerns.

There are numerous examples across the country of houses of worship that rebelled against the advice of experts, decided to open their churches for worship, choir practice, or some other activity, and ended up infecting dozens of their parishioners as a result. We must act smartly, safely, and in cooperation with one another as we seek the right answers for how to re-open our churches. In the meantime, we ARE providing essential services that care for the well-being of our people through livestream, internet, and zoom technology in worship, study, reflection and counseling. Those essential services must be maintained as we respond to the needs of our people.

Finally, these are not days to be swayed by decisions that are made for political purposes. As Governor Cuomo has been fond of saying, this is not a time for red or blue politics. It is time for red, white, and blue collaboration. And, for us, this is not a time for independent Methodists to act unilaterally. It IS a time for UNITED Methodists in New York and Connecticut to pull together and send a clear message to each of our communities that we will exercise our "essential" services by first and foremost taking care of our people *in mind, spirit, soul AND body*.

I look forward to worshipping with many of you this weekend during your online worship experiences.

—**Thomas Bickerton,**
Resident Bishop

How We Reopen

Not Until New York's 4th Phase

Below are Conference requirements that churches must prepare for in order to resume in-person worship after receiving permission:

1. Churches should continue to maintain an online worship service presence and connection through livestreaming, ZOOM meetings, video services, etc.
2. Persons in the vulnerable category of 65 and older or those who live with persons who fit into that category, should be encouraged to remain home and take advantage of online worship experiences.
3. Persons who have significant pre-existing conditions should also be encouraged to remain at home.
4. Cloth masks will be worn by all participants while in church. The face coverings need not be surgical masks or N-95 respirators; these critical supplies must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under the age of two, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is unable to remove the mask without assistance (these persons should remain home at this time).
5. Holy Communion through intinction or with the use of individual cups/bread will not be administered in person until the threat of transmission is minimized. Proximity to those administering and those receiving communion pose an increased risk. Pre-made, self-service communion cups (with bread inside the flap) may be used if made available upon entry. This, however, will cause an increased

burden on the cleaning of the sanctuary and may not be possible if multiple services are being conducted requiring thorough cleaning in-between services. Online Communion will still be permitted until such time as we determine when we can re-assemble with no restrictions.

6. Baptisms should be delayed until the restrictions are lifted to ensure safety of the families and the person being baptized.

7. Use "no-touch" alternatives with:

- Passing the Peace;
 - Collection of the offerings;
 - Use of Ushers/Greeters (these positions should not be used at this-time) and;
 - Use of printed materials
- In addition, all Bibles and hymnbooks should be removed from the sanctuary. Congregants will be allowed to bring their own Bibles. Bulletins should not be passed out, but made available upon entry. Bulletins should not be re-used. And Coffee/Fellowship hours should be suspended until further notice.

8. Choirs and the use of praise bands should be suspended until further notice. The use of soloists is allowed, but only with proper social distancing.

9. Congregational singing should not be conducted until further notice.

10. Seating should be restricted to every other pew. Alternate pews should be roped off to ensure social distancing.

11. Families who live in the same household should sit together; this includes youth and children.

12. Children's moments may still be a part of worship. However, children should remain with their families while the children's message is being

delivered. No handouts will be permitted.

13. Microphones should not be passed or shared during the service for any reason, for the sharing of joys and concerns, announcements, etc.

14. Elimination of a receiving line to greet persons exiting the sanctuary.

15. Great care, planning, and intentionality should be exercised for the creation of shorter services with no liturgical music and spoken hymns while remaining masked.

16. Altar calls and the "laying on of hands" are not allowed as they present a challenge to proper social distancing. Alternatives for providing pastoral care "in the moment" will need to be carefully discerned.

17. Drive-in and outdoor worship experiences are permitted as long as proper social distancing is established and maintained at all times. No one should leave their vehicles for any reason before, during, or after drive-in worship services.

18. If your sanctuary cannot accommodate the gathered congregation using these strict guidelines, consideration will need to be made for multiple, staggered worship services to be conducted. Plans will need to be made for sanitation of the sanctuary between services, and a mechanism will need to be created for who should attend a given service at the appointed time.

Requirements for Small Groups, Sunday School, Bible Study, etc

1. Continue to offer and encourage participation in online groups to maintain ministry to the most vulnerable population and provide ongoing

Continued on Page 7

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Please mail your check, arrange for your bank to mail one, or make an online donation from the link on our website: www.patchogueumc.org

The deadline for the July-August issue of **The Link** is June 26.
Please email your copy to gbhoag@optonline.net.

Looking Ahead

(From Page 5)

opportunity for those who still feel uncomfortable with in-person gatherings.

2. Establish and maintain the same principles as stated above for every small group gathering.

3. In-person meetings should be restricted to a five-person limit.

Requirements for Youth/Children's Ministries

1. There should be no organized sports, camps, or other activities that do not honor social distancing guidelines.

2. Youth should remain with their families before, during, and after worship services.

3. Playgrounds and other outside spaces should be closed to children and youth during this limited reopening.

4. Youth ministry coordinators/leaders should use technology as much as possible to encourage online gatherings.

5. Any in-person activities should take great care to not violate social distancing guidelines. In addition, a thorough cleaning of the space must occur once the activity has ended.

6. Additional areas which should be considered:

- Care for the mental health/anxiety of our youth should be considered in planning for opportunities for youth to interact within social distanced parameters.

- Many youth have missed milestone events—proms, graduations, and end of the year awards ceremonies. The

church's recognition of these milestone events is important.

Other Activities

- Vacation Bible Schools should be suspended for the summer.

- Mission trips which involve travel should also be cancelled. Working locally with essential ministry missions, food pantries, homeless shelters, and other ministries that need volunteers is encouraged with proper sanitation and social distancing.

- Any fund-raising or social activities that involves food preparation and distribution should be cancelled. This would especially include fund-raising dinners, covered-dish dinners, or food distribution through buffets. We have documented illustrations that volunteerism in these activities has created breeding grounds for the transmission of the virus.

Requirements for Church Office Usage

1. Regular office hours can be resumed with the following considerations:

- Churches with a small staff can reassemble using social distancing and safety measures, such masks and regular handwashing.

- Churches with larger teams of staff should consider staggered work hours to limit the number of people in the building at one time. Also, office space should be sanitized and thoroughly cleaned daily. Shared office spaces must be thoroughly cleaned between shifts.

2. Meetings held should be restricted to a five-person limit.

Requirements for those Renting and/or Utilizing our Facilities

1. Renters and others using our facilities would be permitted to resume their activities so long as they comply with the same restrictions, guidelines, and cleaning/sanitation measures outlined in this document.

2. Negligence or non-compliance with these measures opens the door for the potential spread of the virus and to potential liability issues with insurance carriers. Non-compliance should be immediately addressed and rectified.

The process to reopen our churches for ministry begins when the government leadership of your region gives permission to begin reopening. For churches in New York: when your region enters Phase Four.

To have permission to reopen, your church must do the following:

- Complete the "Worksheet for Protocol Planning and Reopening Teams."
- Ensure your Protocol Planning and Reopening Team meets the reopening requirements.
- Submit the worksheet with the documented plans to your District Superintendent.
- Submit the signed church certification to your District Superintendent. After reviewing and approving your church's reopening plans, your District Superintendent can give permission to reopen and issue a reopening badge to be displayed in your outward-facing windows, entry-way doors and website homepage.

—NY Annual Conference

10 Church St., Patchogue, NY 11772

The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, Pastoral Minister

Camille Flynn, Administrative Assistant

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Email: PatchogueUMC@Yahoo.com

Office temporarily closed

Worship Video Live Streaming at PatchogueUMC.Org

Previous services available.

All services and church activities canceled until further notice.



For The Isolated

God,

I have never felt so alone. I could never have imagined facing something like this on my own and I'm afraid. Please remind me that you are with me. Allow me to feel your presence. Remind me that, as your child, you have not given me a spirit of fear. Remind me that I can trust you with whatever may come. Lord, this isolation is overwhelming. I know I could pick up the phone and call someone, but I don't want to be a burden. Please help me to have concern for others above myself. I know I'm not the only one feeling lonely, give me the courage to reach out and offer encouragement to others.

For The Frustrated

Lord,

I am so frustrated. I want to make sure I have what my family needs during this time. I see people not taking this pandemic seriously, and I see other people hoarding supplies so that others can't get what they need. Help me with my attitude towards these people. Help me to hold my tongue on social media, to be a light and an encourager, not a sharp-tongued slanderer. Remind me that we all want to keep our families safe, and we all react differently to fear. Help me to be an example by following the guidelines set forth by our authorities, and also by putting the needs of others before my own by offering to help my neighbors if they are in need.

For Those Asking

“God, Are You There?”

God,

I've never really talked to you before. Are you really there? Can you really hear me? I know people who claim to know you and they don't seem as afraid as I do. I don't want to be so afraid. If I knew that you were real, I would want to trust in you. Would you help me to believe? If you're real, would you open my eyes and heart to you? Would you give me faith to believe in you and trust you? While I'm stuck at home, would you please guide me to online sources where I can learn more about you. I want to know you're real and I want to know the comfort that you give to your people.

—crosswalk.com