

The LINK



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF PATCHOGUE

Since 1791

March 2023

A Month For Women

I can't believe it's March of 2023 already. Did you know that it is Women's History month? Every year, March is designated Women's History Month by presidential proclamation. The month is set aside to honor women's contributions in American history.

According to womenshistory.org, Women's History Month began as a local celebration in Santa Rosa, California. The Education Task Force of the Sonoma County (California) Commission on the Status of Women planned and executed a "Women's History Week" celebration in 1978.

The organizers selected the week of March 8 to correspond with International Women's Day. The movement

spread across the country as other communities initiated their own Women's History Week celebrations the following year.

In 1980, a consortium of women's groups and historians—led by the National Women's History Project (now the National Women's History Alliance)—successfully lobbied for national recognition. In February 1980, President Jimmy Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation declaring the Week of March 8th 1980 as National Women's History Week.

Subsequent Presidents continued to proclaim a National Women's History Week in March until 1987 when Congress passed Public Law 100-9, designating March as "Women's History Month." Between 1988 and 1994, Congress passed additional

resolutions requesting and authorizing the President to proclaim March of each year as Women's History Month. Since 1995, each president has issued annual proclamations designating the month of March as "Women's History Month."

The Women's history theme for 2023 is "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories."

Continued on Page 2

WORSHIP IN MARCH

Mar. 5—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 121

Mar. 12—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 95

Mar. 19—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 23

Mar. 26—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 130



Circle of Concern

Bereavement

The family and friends of **Christopher Soundy** who succumbed to brain cancer. (Kathy Halliwell)

The family of **Joan Kemp**, a former member of our church, who died in Charlottesville, Virginia. (Gail Hoag)

The family of **June Miller**, a member of our church, who died at the age of 99 1/2 in Bayport. (Gail Hoag)

The family of **Ken Garvis** who succumbed to his injuries resulting from severe burns.

Healing

Lauren Halliwell who is recovering from surgery to correct her bite. (Peter & Kathy Halliwell)

DeAnna D'Amelio who had stem cell therapy for ALS. Prayers that this treatment is effective. (Kathy Halliwell)

Yvette who is suffering from the effects of ALS. She has lost the use of her hands and arms.

Richard Rubino who is going through treatment for cancer. (Brenda Klingel)

John, a veteran, who is in his 40's and battling Stage 4 lung cancer, and for his wife and children.

Jane Reid who is in the hospital.

Ray Somerlad, recently diagnosed with cancer in two areas.

Joys

Rachel Betts, daughter of former minister Gary Betts and Alcira, is engaged to be married this summer. (Gail Hoag)

Lynn Rice has started her own business making bracelets.

Continued Prayers

Baby Jude Cosimo (Retina Cancer)
Gary Blackmore, Lucy Loris, Cindy Amodeo (Foot surgery), Claudia Mirzaali (Accident Injuries), Jessie (15 y/o Girl Emotional), Rhonda's Father, Richard Rubino (Cancer), Louise Russo (Healing), Mary Morova (Health Issues), Kimberly Helfst (RSD), Eddie Weiss (severe leg injury), Brian McMurray (pancreatic cancer), Mary Prince

(heart), Jill Kiefer Chaskin (Cancer), Allen Barth (stroke), Leslie Gray (diabetes complications), Roberta Young, James McHugh, Elvis Victor, Patricia Walsh, Jim Cornwell, Nolan Horn (child with brain cancer), Brenda Gibbs, Mark Barasch, Danielle (brain tumor), Suzanne Tierney

—Kathy Keating
Keats1002@gmail.com

Women (From Page 1)

This theme will encourage recognition of women, past and present, who have been active in all forms of media and storytelling including print, radio, TV, stage, screen, blogs, podcasts, and more. This theme "honors women in every community who have devoted their lives and talents to producing art, pursuing truth, and reflecting the human condition decade after decade."

Our Lenten journey has begun. As instructed by Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton, "may we let go everything that has discouraged us and held us back and pray that God will guide us as we Re-claim, Re-vive, and Re-new our beloved United Methodist Church. It is time to once again reaffirm our belief that God has not left us alone and will walk with us as we move forward." Be encouraged as you journey on.

—Pastor Debbie



Pastor Debbie was formally installed at the January 15 service.

United Methodist Church of Patchogue

March 2023

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

UMCOR Response to Earthquakes in Turkey and Syria

A 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck southern Turkey at 4:17 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 6, 2023, the most powerful earthquake recorded since 1939. In the hours that followed, at least 78 aftershocks were reported, followed by a second earthquake of 7.5 magnitude.

The earthquake and aftershocks also impacted northwest Syria, where 4.1 million people depend on humanitarian assistance. Syrian communities, many of them women and children, are simultaneously facing an ongoing cholera outbreak and extreme winter weather, including heavy rain and snow.

Thousands have been killed in both countries, and deaths continue to rise as rescue crews seek survivors in collapsed buildings. The humanitarian response is struggling to ramp up to meet the need among the devastation and winter weather.

UMCOR's longstanding humanitarian partner, International Blue Crescent (IBC), has multiple offices and project sites in Turkey. In IBC offices, people fill the halls as they seek shelter, warmth, and a hot meal. With the devastating damage to roads, transport and infrastructure, IBC has received hundreds of families in its Kilis Community Center for shelter, warm items, and hot meals since the first hours Monday morning. Kilis is serving as a major hub for coordination and relief efforts, including for cross-border response into Syria.

UMCOR has released initial solidarity grants to IBC and Forum for Development Culture and Dialogue (working in Syria) to help provide tents, heaters, blankets, warm clothes, ready to eat meals and first aid kits to those who have been displaced. UMCOR staff members are also in touch with other partners in the region. Additional updates will be provided as more information becomes available.

Please join UMCOR in prayer for the many people affected by these devastating earthquakes, including the rescue crews seeking survivors and those caring for the injured and displaced.

—Susan Clark, **UMNS**

Amid Budget Woes, Church Sees Slight Rise in Giving

United Methodists' generosity in 2022 brought a ray of sunshine to the denomination's cloudy budget outlook.

However, the denomination's financial leaders still worry about storms ahead.

At an online meeting Feb. 17, the board of The United Methodist Church's finance agency — the General Council on Finance and Administration — reviewed a report on 2022 giving.

Overall, the finance agency collected about \$113.9 million in 2022 apportionments — requested shares of church giving that support denomination-wide ministries. That's up from about \$113.7 million in 2021.

While only a slight increase, the 2022 receipts halt a three-year downward trend in apportionment collections and indicate a stabilization in giving.

The small boost also comes as the denomination is grappling with a mounting number of church disaffiliations after decades of intensifying internal division over LGBTQ inclusion, and the launch of a theologically conservative breakaway denomination last year.

"God is making a way through the people of The United Methodist Church who continue to give graciously and abundantly," the Rev. Moses Kumar, the finance agency's top executive, told the board.

Ministry is made possible, he added, "through giving by our members who believe in our ability to transform the world because of Jesus Christ." However, total apportionment collections are still notably lower than 10 years ago when people were still recovering from a global recession.

Apportionments are what sustain United Methodist ministry beyond the work of individual congregations. Denomination-wide ministries receive apportionments from annual conferences, regional church bodies that in turn receive apportionments from local churches. About 90% of the offering remains in the local church.

U.S. conferences distribute their apportionments among seven general-church funds. Each fund supports a different category of ministry: the World Service Fund that supports the work of most general agencies, bishops, ministerial education, general administration, the Black College Fund,

Africa University and ecumenical work.

Central conferences — church regions in Africa, Europe and the Philippines — also pay apportionments but only to the Episcopal and General Administration funds.

The pandemic has played a significant role in diminished apportionment receipts in recent years, not least in postponing General Conference, the denomination's top law-making assembly, from 2020 to now 2024.

While the denomination is still officially operating under the budget General Conference passed in 2016, a number of annual conferences are already paying apportionments based on the significantly reduced budget the finance agency's board has long planned to submit to the coming General Conference.

Rising church disaffiliations also are a contributing factor both in current giving patterns and the plans for a record-low general church budget. So far, annual conferences have ratified the withdrawal of about 2,000 congregations under a disaffiliation provision that took effect in 2019. Annual conferences expect to administer more such disaffiliations in the coming months before the provision expires at the end of the year.

Nevertheless, U.S. apportionment collections — which fund the bulk of denomination-wide ministries — were up overall in 2022.

The World Service Fund — the biggest of the apportioned funds — saw a collection rate of 73.2% in 2022 compared to 72.5% the previous year (when the fund saw its lowest collec-

tions since 2005). That represents an increase of \$600,000.

Similarly, the General Administration Fund collection rate in the U.S. went up to 75.7% in 2022, compared to 75.5% in 2021. That represents an increase of about \$25,000.

The Episcopal Fund, which supports the work of bishops, continues to have the highest collection rate at 92.9%, but that rate was down slightly from 2021, when it was 93.8%.

The Episcopal Fund revenue in 2022 was still \$1.98 million better than the budget. That's in large part due to reduced expenses because bishops held their meetings online and especially because a number of bishops took on expanded workloads to cover for retiring colleagues.

Nevertheless, the Episcopal Fund remains a particular source of concern for the finance agency's board. In 2019, the Episcopal Fund was in danger of running out of money in a few years. The pandemic actually has helped the bishops build up their reserves by reducing travel and ultimately the number of bishops in active service.

Late last year, United Methodists held bishop elections to name successors to some of the retiring bishops. The delegates elected 13 new bishops in the U.S., three in the Philippines and one in Central and Southern Europe. That still represents seven fewer than in the current budget.

Rick King, the finance agency's chief operations officer, said even without the full cohort of allotted bishops "we're still running at a deficit — a significant deficit."

If the coming General Conference approves returning to a full allotment of 66 bishops, he added, "You'll start to deplete the reserves at a very high rate."

General Conference also has received legislation to add five more bishops in Africa — a plan that has long been in the works.

Bill Brownson, a GCFA board member and the West Ohio Conference's treasurer, suggested the agency look at different scenarios for reducing the number of bishops. He also suggested that the agency look for ways to decouple the discussion of the Episcopal Fund from the rest of the denominational budget.

"I don't propose it's easy, and it's not, of course, how we've done it before," he said.

As things stand, Brownson said, the rest of the denomination's budget is "a derivative of the Episcopal Fund budget."

The Rev. Steve Wood, who chairs the board committee that deals with the general church budget, said Brownson raised an interesting idea.

"You're absolutely right," Wood told Brownson. "We're in a domain where if we continue to do things the way we have historically done things, it's not likely to solve the long-term sustainability issue."

—Heather Hahn, UMNS

Birthdays In March

Mar. 6 Jace Rogers

Mar. 14 Jack Ryan

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**Remember
Your Pledge**

Campbell.

"I'm playing a crowd member in the Passion Play. I was going to play Pilate 'til I found out I'd have to wash my hands."

Save Your Old Magazines

Dave Hollowell would very much appreciate your saving the magazines you have read and passing them on to him. He takes them for the enjoyment of adult and nursing home residents and shut ins. They can be dropped off in the church office.

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

Disobedience Didn't Start With Sexuality Debate

During denominational debates on homosexuality, some have repeatedly complained that General Conference legislation is ignored or violated by many. Some who are disaffiliating say they are tired of "increasing disobedience."

History shows us that ignoring General Conference legislation did not begin with the issue of homosexuality. Such resistance has a long history. This article highlights historical examples from United Methodism and its predecessor bodies when clergy, laity, bishops and conferences rejected, through their actions, legislation passed by the General Conference.

Historical Examples

Slavery: The Christmas Conference in 1784 condemned slavery as an "abomination" and required all members holding slaves to set them free or withdraw from the Society. There was immediate and massive disobedience. **Women Lay Representation:** Women were not allowed as General Conference delegates in 1888 when the Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, Pittsburgh and Rock River Conferences of The Methodist Episcopal Church elected women delegates despite the prohibition of their action. The group of five, including Frances Willard, the most prominent Methodist woman of the time, were denied seating.

Women Clergy Rights (United Brethren): The 1857 United Brethren General Conference prohibited women from being licensed to preach. Union Biblical Seminary was founded as the denominational seminary "under

the control of the General Conference" in 1869. When classes began, women were admitted on the same basis as men with all seminary offerings available to them. Despite prohibitions against licensing women to preach, the Pleasant Valley quarterly conference issued a license to Maggie Thompson in 1874. In 1876, her name was submitted to the committee on applicants of the Indiana Conference, along with the names of nine men. She was approved.

Women Clergy Rights (Methodist Protestant): The Methodist Protestant General Conference in 1870 disapproved the ordination of women. In 1875, the Kansas Conference ordained Pauline Martindale as elder. Anna Howard Shaw, the second woman to graduate from Boston University School of Theology, was ordained by the New York Conference of The Methodist Protestant Church in 1880. In 1884, the General Conference rescinded her ordination as "out of order." The annual conference ignored the action, and Shaw continued to serve and be recognized by that conference. In 1889, Eugenia St. John was ordained elder by the Kansas Conference.

Clergy Performing Marriages for Divorced People: From as early as 1884, most United Methodist predecessor groups forbade clergy from performing marriages for divorced individuals who had a living former spouse, except for the innocent party in the case of adultery. Calls for increased enforcement and increased penalties indicate that pastoral situations led clergy to violate this restriction. In 1928, the Methodist Epis-

copal Church retained the language about divorce but gave the final decision about performing weddings to the pastor. However, the more restrictive language for clergy performing wedding ceremonies continued in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church until the formation of The Methodist Church in 1939 when the Methodist Episcopal language from 1928 was adopted.

Racial Equality: In the 1960s, many white Methodist churches still refused admittance of Black people to worship, a practice forbidden since 1884. One prominent confrontation came on Easter Sunday 1964 when a biracial group including two Methodist bishops, James K. Mathews and Charles Golden, was denied admission to Galloway Memorial Methodist Church in Mississippi. It was common in those days for churches to pass racial exclusion policies with total disregard for official denominational policies and beliefs.

Clergy Smoking: Beginning in 1880 by action of General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (and continued in The Methodist Church), those approved as clergy had to promise to "abstain from the use of tobacco." In 1960, the abstinence was continued but moved from a question to be answered to a statement of the requirement, before ending in 1968. In some cases, the bishops who asked the questions were smokers themselves.

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10 Church St., Patchogue, NY 11772

The Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Pastoral Minister
 Camille Flynn, Administrative Assistant
 Office Phone: 631-475-0381 | Fax: 631-475-3132
 Email: PatchogueUMC@Yahoo.com
 Office Hours: Tues-Friday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m
 Worship Video Livestreaming at PatchogueUMC.Org
 Previous services available.



Disobedience (From Page 7) Contemporary Examples

Rebaptism: It is interesting that the “no pastor shall re-baptize” prohibition is literally next to the prohibition on conducting same-sex ceremonies in the Book of Discipline. Conversations with bishops and district superintendents indicate that the frequency of reports coming to them regarding baptism practices at odds with the Discipline (rebaptism as well as refusing to baptize an infant) are far more common than reports regarding pastors performing same sex ceremonies.

Open Itinerary: Today there are still congregations who refuse the appointment of a woman as pastor and who refuse the appointment of clergy of a different race from that of the congregation in explicit violation of church law.

What Does This Mean?

The purpose of this article is neither to justify nor condemn these violations. It is to document disobedience on a range of issues to show that universal compliance with General Conference decisions has regularly been violated throughout our history. Such actions occurred well before legislation related to homosexuality appeared and has taken place across a wide range of subjects.

The point of these illustrations is not that General Conference actions are meaningless and that violations do not matter. Both are important. In some cases, the violations are inconsequential and are properly ignored. At other times, General Conference actions strike at the heart of who we are and are rightfully enforced. But, as history shows us, there are those times when the violations are exam-

ples of tendencies to overreach and control beyond the moral consensus of large segments of the church.

However, when one claims that some of those mandatory actions are truly necessary because of the doctrinal, theological and moral consequences of disobedience, it is hard to justify selecting only one, homosexuality, for such intricate and detailed enforcement mechanisms. Legislation must rest on a broadly shared consensus that it is necessary, right and consistent with John Wesley’s passion that all come to know the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. For many, the actions of General Conference on homosexuality do not meet these minimum criteria of being necessary, right and grace-filled.

—**Commentary by the Rev. Dr. Lovett H. Weems Jr. , UMMS**