

# The LINK



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF PATCHOGUE

Since 1791

May 2024

## Spiritual Renewal

**D**id you know that Spring serves as a powerful symbol of spiritual renewal, as it heralds the end of winter's dormancy and the beginning of new life?

Just as the earth awakens from its slumber, bursting forth with vibrant colors and fresh growth, individuals often experience a reawakening of the spirit during this season. The longer days, warmer weather, and blossoming flowers evoke feelings of hope, rejuvenation, and vitality, mirroring the inner transformation and revival that many seek in their spiritual lives.

Spring invites us to shed the heaviness of the past, embrace new beginnings, and embark on a journey of personal and collective renewal, guided by faith, hope, and the promise of growth.

Renewal, seen from a biblical perspective, is a deep transformation journey for Christians to refresh their spiritual core.

It's about intentionally getting closer to God, letting go of old ways, and adopting a new outlook that matches His plan.

Throughout the Bible, God urges believers to join in this sacred renewal journey, assuring them of His powerful guidance and endless compassion.

### Key Passages on Renewal

#### Psalm 51:10 (NRSV):

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.." This sincere appeal by King David shows his longing for spiritual renewal and change.

#### 2 Corinthians 4:16 (NRSV):

"So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by

day." This verse emphasizes that spiritual renewal is a constant process, happening every day through the Holy Spirit's influence.

#### Isaiah 40:31 (NRSV):

"But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles;

**Continued on Page 2**

## WORSHIP IN MAY

**May 5**— Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 98

**May 12**—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 1

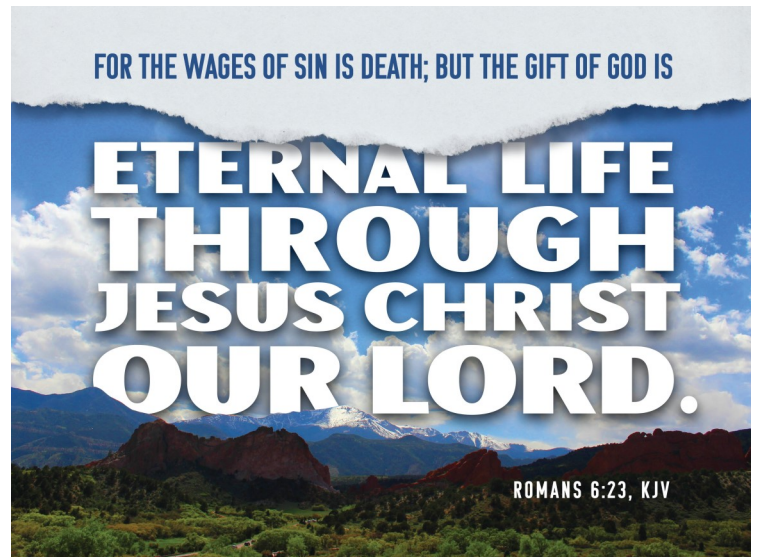
**May 19**—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

**May 26**—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 29

FOR THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH; BUT THE GIFT OF GOD IS

**ETERNAL LIFE  
THROUGH  
JESUS CHRIST  
OUR LORD.**

ROMANS 6:23, KJV



## Circle of Concern

### Bereavement

The family of **John Lemmin IV**, who died unexpectedly, leaving behind his wife and two babies. (Kathy Halliwell)

### Healing

**Kenny Zaleski** a 7 year old boy, received a heart transplant. (Lenny Pierson)

**Angelo Dixon**, a baby awaiting a kidney transplant. (Chantelle)

**Denise Oleksiak** as she recovers from lung cancer surgery. (Kathy Halliwell)

Prayers for **Yvette** who is suffering from ALS has been moved to a nursing care facility. (Barbara Lyons)

**Joan Tate** as she returns home from rehab and continues to recover from a bad fall. (Rebecca Jansen)

**Linda Rice** who will be having surgery for cancer. (Betty Rice)

### Continued Prayers

Tom Tucci, Michelle Parker, Billy Hinton, Brendon Miller, Justin Morrissey, Mary, John Healy, Jr., Emily Baker (3 years old), Anita Helfst, Ken Hollowell, Bianca Brown, Soroya Brown, Cynthia Brown, Baby Kip Eitshusen, Flo Carde, Beverly Shrifin, Michelle Puglia, Diane Helfst, David Hoag, Rhoda Willis, Daisy Hill, Dolores, Suzanne Tierney, Kimberly Helfst

—Kathy Keating  
Keats1002@gmail.com

## Spiritual Renewal (From Page 1)

they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." This passage comforts believers by affirming that placing their trust in the Lord leads to renewed strength.

### Cultivate Renewal

**Prayer:** Embrace heartfelt and genuine prayer, seeking God's presence and guidance as you embark on your path to renewal. Ask for a revitalized heart and spirit.

**Repentance:** Acknowledge and confess your sins. Psalm 32:5 reminds us, "I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,' and you forgave the iniquity of my sin."

**Study Scripture:** Make a habit of diving into God's Word regularly. Romans 12:2 advises, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind." Scripture renewal transforms our thinking.

**Worship:** Take part in both corporate worship and personal praise. Worshiping helps us fix our attention on God's greatness and renews our dedication to Him.

**Fasting:** Think about incorporating occasional fasting as a way to seek God's guidance and renewal. Jesus Himself fasted as a spiritual discipline (Matthew 4:2).

**Seek Accountability:** Stay connected with fellow believers who can support and encourage you in your journey of renewal, holding you accountable along the way.

**Serve Others:** Participate in acts of service and love towards others. These

actions allow us to mirror Christ's character and find personal renewal.

**Forgiveness:** Forgive others as you have been forgiven. Colossians 3:13 encourages us to "bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."

**Practice Thankfulness:** Develop an attitude of gratitude. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 reminds us to "give thanks in all circumstances."

**Rest in God:** Trust in God's sovereignty and rest in His promises. Isaiah 40:31 assures us that those who wait on the Lord will be renewed.

**Seek the Holy Spirit:** Rely on the Holy Spirit's guidance and power for spiritual transformation. Galatians 5:16 reminds us to "walk by the Spirit."

**Reflect and Evaluate:** Regularly evaluate your spiritual journey and identify areas in need of renewal. Psalm 139:23-24 encourages us, "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!"

*See my prayer suggestions for Spiritual Renewal on Page 8.*

Blessings,

—Pastor Debbie



# United Methodist Church of Patchogue

## May 2024

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 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.- Zoom Bible Study
5 Mother's Day 10:00 a.m.- Worship/ Sunday School 6:00 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 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.- Zoom Bible Study
12 10:00 a.m.- Worship/ Sunday School 6:00 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 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.- Zoom Bible Study 10:00 a.m.- UMW
19 10:00 a.m.- Worship/ Sunday School 6:00 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 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.- Zoom Bible Study
26 10:00 a.m.- Worship/ Sunday School 6:00 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	

## United Methodists Vote to Restructure Worldwide Church

The General Conference of the United Methodist Church, meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina, on April 25 passed much of the legislation that aims to give the church's different geographic regions equal standing in decision-making.

In what outgoing Council of Bishops President Thomas J. Bickerton called "a historic day for our church," delegates voted 586 to 164 for an amendment to the denomination's constitution that will now go before annual conference voters for potential ratification.

A constitutional amendment requires at least a two-thirds vote at General Conference; the regionalization amendment received 78% of the vote. To be ratified, the amendment also will need at least a two-thirds total vote of annual conference lay and clergy voters. Annual conferences are church regions consisting of multiple congregations and other ministries.

Regionalization has become United Methodist shorthand for a package of legislation that would restructure the denomination. Under the legislation, the U.S. and each central conference — church regions in Africa, Europe and the Philippines — would become regional conferences with the same authority to adapt the Book of Discipline, the denomination's policy book, for more missional effectiveness.

At present, only central conferences have that authority under the denomination's constitution to adapt

the Discipline as missional needs and different legal contexts require.

The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters — a permanent General Conference committee with a majority of its membership from central conferences — submitted the eight petitions of the Worldwide Regionalization proposal. The standing committee, which met April 21-22, gave its final approval to the legislation before the start of General Conference on April 23.

That teed up the proposals for action by the full General Conference plenary in its first week — a big change from previous sessions when General Conference typically does not take up major proposals until its second week.

Earlier in the morning plenary, delegates approved four of the eight Worldwide Regionalization proposals on the consent calendar. The consent calendar includes legislation passed overwhelmingly in General Conference committees that only requires a majority and does not have financial implications.

"I stand before you this morning full of hope and also excited," said Christine Schneider in introducing the constitutional amendment.

She is a reserve delegate from the Switzerland-France-North Africa Conference and member of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters that submitted the Worldwide Regionalization proposal.

She acknowledged that the legislation before the General Conference delegates was the work of multiple United Methodists around the globe. That includes the standing com-

mittee, the Connectional Table (which coordinates denomination-wide ministries) and members of the Christmas Covenant, a grassroots group of United Methodists in the central conferences who saw regionalization as the best way to promote unity.

This is a result of excellent collaboration of people from all walks of life, of all parts of our connection," Schneider said.

Judi Kenaston, the Connectional Table's chief connectional ministries officer and a delegate from the West Virginia Conference, has shepherded the regionalization effort since 2017.

The Rev. Emmanuel Sinzohagera of the Burundi Conference said the vote was a joyful moment that gave the church "a new kind of energy."

"This is a good start. A new, fresh start. Legislation is dynamic; it is a process," Sinzohagera said. "This is the beginning of the process. There are many issues to deal with. Let's keep going."

The Rev. Jonathan Ulanday, a delegate from the Philippines who was part of the original team that crafted the Christmas Covenant, said this was "a Kairos moment" for the church.

"What we are trying to do is to place our Lord Jesus Christ at the center of the table and all of us will exist in equity sharing the gifts so The United Methodist Church will grow and flourish in different contexts in different parts of the world," he said.

Under the amendment that passed General Conference, each regional conference would have the authority to:

Establish and publish a regional Discipline with legislation and provision



pertaining to church structures within its boundaries, including qualifications and educational requirements of clergy and specialized lay ministries.

Set standards of character and other qualifications for the admission of lay members.

Establish and publish a regional hymnal and ritual of church, including for marriage and burial. The rites approved would need to be in line with core doctrines of The United Methodist Church and in accordance with local laws.

Allow the annual conferences to adopt structures adequate to their mission while upholding General Conference-mandated structures.

The amendment also requires regional conferences to recognize annual conferences as the basic bodies of the church, especially on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy members.

The amendment requires regional conferences to be in line with national laws and not to stray from the Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith that contain the denomination's core belief in Christ's resurrection, the Trinity and the sacraments of baptism and communion.

The earliest central conferences date to the 1880s, and efforts at regionalization date back to the 1920s. But they have always come up short. At the last regular session of General Conference in 2016, a proposal to create a U.S. central conference didn't even make it out of legislative committee.

In recent years, efforts of regionalization have gotten caught up in the denomination's debate over the place of LGBTQ people in the life of the

church. Opponents of regionalization have long seen it as a method of liberalizing the church's stance on homosexuality — at least in the United States.

It should be noted that nowhere does the regionalization legislation mention homosexuality. It also does not end the denomination's bans on same-sex weddings and "self-avowed practicing" gay clergy.

But if ratified, the amendment would provide each regional conference the freedom to set not only its clergy qualifications but also chargeable offenses under church law.

As part of the morning's consent calendar, delegates also approved a measure titled "Regionalization and Contextualization of Marriage," submitted by Michigan Conference Bishop David Bard for the Council of Bishops. The new additions to the Book of Discipline allow central conferences to set their standards for marriage rites and clergy ordination.

The entire consent calendar that included the regionalization legislation and the Council of Bishops measure passed by a vote of 646 to 73.

"At the end of this General Conference, if anyone comes up to you and says, 'We didn't do anything at General Conference,' (tell them) we just did," Susan Brumbaugh, General Conference's coordinator of the calendar, said after that first consent calendar vote.

The easy passage of the amendment and consent calendar indicate a significant change in delegations since the tumultuous 2019 General Conference and the disaffiliation of a quarter of U.S. churches over LGBTQ inclusion.

However, the support for regionalization was hardly unanimous.

One continued sticking point was the fact that the regionalization legislation does not eliminate jurisdictions in the U.S. The five U.S. jurisdictions, like the current seven central conferences, elect bishops but don't have the same authority to adapt the Discipline.

The Rev. Robert Zilhaber, a delegate from the Western Pennsylvania Conference said he opposed the regionalization proposal.

Without dismantling the five jurisdictions, he said, regionalization will just add another layer of church structure.

Incoming Council of Bishops President Tracy Smith Malone presided during the session that took up the regionalization amendment. She also worked with representatives from the standing committee, Christmas Covenant and Connectional Table as they worked on the legislation that evidently went before General Conference voters.

"We are a beautiful, diverse, international worldwide church and the regionalization plan is a reflection of what that looks like," she said at a press conference after the vote.

"Yes, it decenters the U.S., but it also dismantles colonialism giving a sense of agency, a sense of autonomy, while still keeping us connected missionally, still keeping us as one body — people called United Methodist."

She added that after the vote, she had to contain herself.

"I said to myself: 'Look at God and look at God's people.'"

# Ruland

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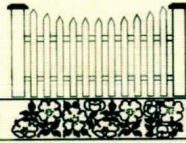


88 Waverly Ave.  
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Rick@Bayharbourgroup.com

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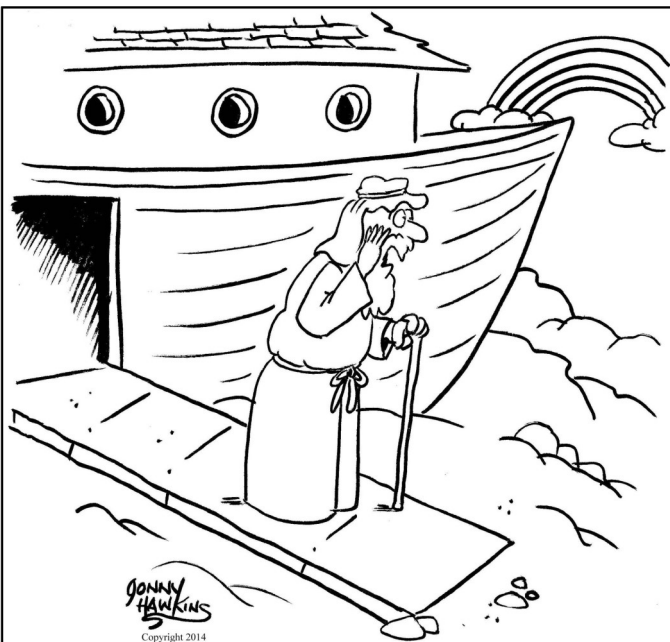


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"Hey, could we have some volunteers  
to stay and help clean up?"

## Save Your Old Magazines

**D**ave 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 June issue  
of **The Link** is May 24.

Please email your copy to [gbhoag@optonline.net](mailto:gbhoag@optonline.net).

## Church Broadens Defense of Human Rights

**T**he United Methodist Church now proclaims its support “for the equal rights, liberties, and protections of all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.”

On April 27, General Conference delegates approved that statement as part of the first batch of Revised Social Principles to come before the body.

The United Methodist Church and its predecessors have long taken public stands on issues of the world going back to the 1908 Social Creed, which called for “equal rights and complete justice for all men in all stations of life.”

But this marks the first time that the denomination is calling for human rights no matter a person’s gender identity. By that, the Social Principle means people should be treated with basic human dignity regardless of whether they are male, female, intersexual, transgender or nonbinary.

“For a long time in The United Methodist Church and in our Social Principles, we’ve had a statement and consensus for many years, that all people are of sacred worth and that their civil and basic human rights should be respected and protected. This just clarifies and adds gender identity to that,” said Randall Miller.

He chaired the Social Principles Task Force that led the development of the revisions and served on the Social Principles writing team.

“All around the world, we’re seeing people who are trans or nonbinary or

who have a diversity in terms of their gender identity be persecuted, be discriminated against both legally and in practical terms,” Miller added.

“This is a really crucial statement about the sacred worth of all people, and the honoring of basic civil and human rights for all people, including those of various gender identities.”

General Conference passed Revised Social Principles dealing with “Church and Governments” and “Basic Rights and Freedoms” — alongside nine other pieces of legislation — on the consent calendar. The vote tally was 671 to 57, passing with 92%.

This is only the beginning. More Revised Social Principles — including ones dealing with the church’s teachings on creation care, human sexuality and marriage — will be coming before General Conference delegates for a vote before the conference closes on May 3..

That includes a proposal that, if approved, would remove the denomination’s 52-year-old statement that “the practice of homosexuality... is incompatible with Christian teaching.”

In addition to affirming the basic human rights of all people, the Revised Social Principles passed on April 27:

Reject governmental use of threats, extortion, unlawful detentions, extrajudicial killings and other forms of coercion to silence political opponents.

Speak out against slavery, torture, genocide and war crimes.

Reaffirm the longtime opposition to the death penalty proclaimed by The United Methodist Church and its predecessors.

Commit to fair and proportional sentencing and to the humane treatment of those who are imprisoned, while insisting on accountability.

Support civil disobedience in protest of “unjust or immoral laws.”

Deplore war and all other forms of violent conflict and support people who follow the nonviolent example of Jesus.

Also support people who choose military service as a result of personal conviction and urge “that they perform their duties in harmony with the tenets of the Christian faith and in accordance with the laws of the Geneva Conventions.”

Affirm health care as a basic human right.

Call on church and society to support and advocate for the well-being of all children and young people.

Support the rights of Indigenous, native and aboriginal communities.

Affirm the dignity, worth and rights of migrants, immigrants and refugees, including displaced and stateless people.

“We oppose all laws and policies that attempt to criminalize, dehumanize, or punish displaced individuals and families based on their status as migrants, immigrants, or refugees,” the revised Social Principle says.

—Heather Hahn, UMNS



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.-2:00 p.m.  
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 Previous services available.



## Praying For Spiritual Renewal

**H**ere are ten prayer points for Christians seeking spiritual renewal, each accompanied by a relevant Bible verse.

**Pray for a Renewed Heart:** "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." - Psalm 51:10

**Pray for Repentance and Forgiveness:** "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." - 1 John 1:9

**Pray for Wisdom and Discernment:** "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." - James 1:5

**Pray for a Hunger for God's Word:** "Blessed are those who hunger and

thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." - Matthew 5:6

**Pray for a Spirit of Worship:** "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." - John 4:24

**Pray for Self-Denial and Surrender:** "And he said to all, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.'" - Luke 9:23

**Pray for the Filling of the Holy Spirit:** "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit." - Ephesians 5:18

**Pray for Spiritual Fruitfulness:** "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." - Galatians 5:22-23

**Pray for a Heart of Gratitude:** "Give thanks in all circumstances; for

this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." - 1 Thessalonians 5:18

**Pray for Spiritual Strength and Endurance:** "But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." - Isaiah 40:31

Christians can use these prayers to seek God's guidance, forgiveness, wisdom, and transformation. They can also seek a deeper hunger for His Word, a spirit of worship, self-denial, the filling of the Holy Spirit, spiritual fruitfulness, a heart of gratitude, and the strength to endure in their pursuit of spiritual renewal. These prayers reflect biblical principles and lay a foundation for a refreshed and vibrant spiritual life.

—Pastor Debbie