

The LINK



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF PATCHOGUE

Since 1791

September 2015

A New Start

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ!

James 3:17: "The Wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere."

How was your summer everyone? It is always very interesting to begin every September as a new start even though it seems logical as school starts after the summer. Perhaps it is because I have been raised and educated in two different countries where the school system begins at a different time.

As our Bishop Middleton mentioned in her letter to our conference clergies, we should always "rejoice in the Lord and be glad in it" as we start a day, giving thanks to the Lord. I am of

the opinion with her that we ought to give thanks to the Lord under any circumstances because He is the source of Life.

Have you thought of starting a new ministry as I have preached about during a series on Proverbs? There are many opportunities for us to emulate Jesus as a Christian, not because we have to DO something in order to be saved but because Christians must keep on helping the poor and the needy for us to share and live altogether well to fulfill God's will as we are created in God's image (Imago Dei). There are many opportunities for us to create various ministries such as Prayer Ministry, Midnight Run, Children's Ministry, Bell Choir, visiting the Sick with the pastor and many more you can suggest for the whole community.

I am so grateful that the church is already devoting many hours and endeavors to run the monthly Wesley Dinner as well as an ESL program for those who need to improve their language skill, not to mention Tuesday Food Pantry. Please accept my deepest appreciation once again for those who are volunteering to run this smoothly.

Do you know why African countries are now booming? I do not believe it is because they have more peace loving motivated great leaders but because of those Christians who would like to share the wealth and love, and make a difference in the world.

Starting from the smallest unit of immediate family to church family, and to the larger community, we might be able to

WORSHIP IN SEPTEMBER

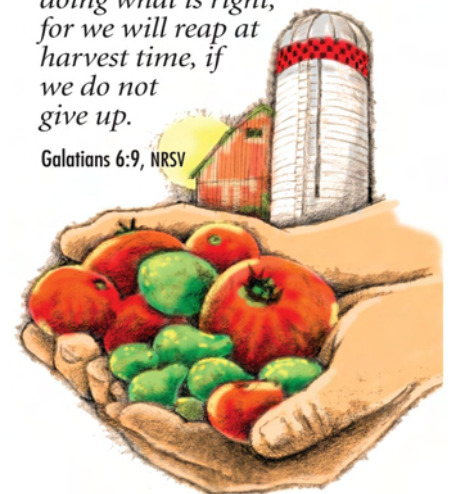
Sept. 6—Rev. Dawn Yoon, Psalm 125, Mark 7:24-37
Sept. 13—Rev. Dawn Yoon, Psalm 19, Mark 8:27-38
Sept. 20—Rev. Dawn Yoon, Psalm 1, Mark 9:30-37
Sept. 27—Rev. Dawn Yoon, Psalm 124, Mark 9:38-50

change this world to a better place. Would you please join me to pray about it, and come forward to commit yourself once again to the Lord? All the glory and praise to our Savior Jesus Christ!

—Rev. Dawn Yoon

So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.

Galatians 6:9, NRSV



Circle of Concern

For Joys:

All of the soloists who performed this Summer! Thank you Peter Halliwell, Carolyn Willis, Bob Prince, Montana Queen, Wendy Hollowell, Cindy Amadio, Jacob Miller, & Steve Rice for gracing us with your God given talent!

For Guidance and Healing:

Stanford Carde; Liza Burell; Daniel Figueroa; Janice De La Vergne; Roy Martin.

These Who are Hospitalized:

Maureen Blair.

These who are in Rehab or Nursing Care Facilities:

Geri Sheridan in Sunrise Sr. Center, 320 Patchogue-Holbrook Rd., Holbrook, NY.

John VanderZalm in Brookhaven Health Care Facility, 801 Gazzolla Drive, E. Patchogue, NY.

Leona Kreamer in Brookhaven Memorial Hospital, 101 Hospital Rd., E. Patchogue, NY.

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

Ed Dew in Sunrise Assisted Living, Waverly Avenue, Holbrook, NY.

Pray for our church and her future directions! Prayer cards are located at the ushers' stations in back of the sanctuary. Your joys & concerns are important to us; let us pray for you! Please put completed prayer cards in the offering plate or the Prayer request Form on our webpage at www.patchogueumc.org.

Day of Hope

On August 19th, twenty five members of our congregation, including the pastor, met in Wesley Hall to begin the first of several meetings aimed at the transformation of our church into a more vibrant, spiritually exuberant faith community. As you know, we have undergone many changes over the last few years: pastors have come and gone; members have come and gone. And, like most main-line churches in the north eastern part of the country, we have struggled with diminishing finances and dwindling membership.

The meeting focused on each person's vision of what they would like the church to be, including all the individual ministries of the church. People were encouraged to phrase their ideas in the context of "I dream a church that ..." (Or I dream a children's ministry that .., etc.) Ideas came hot and heavy. People were not restricted by whether their ideas might be hard to implement or seemed too fanciful. This was a night of visioning and everyone's ideas mattered. By the end of the evening, 12 full sized sheets of newsprint had been filled with hopes and dreams and ideas. Though there are too many to list here, some of the most recurring themes were:

The need for more spiritual nourishment; for a deepening of our spiritual awareness enabling us to take the Holy Spirit with us into our daily lives. The involvement of children and youth into all aspects of worship, so that they feel joyful to come to church. They will know they are needed, involved and important in the life of the church.

The need to blend different types of music into worship, (along with beautiful traditional hymns) such as praise songs, contemporary music, as well as liturgical dance and drama. It

was suggested that we preface worship with a half hour of praise music. This will help uplift our spirits and prepare us for joyful worship.

There were many more suggestions. Some will be easy to implement, others much harder. But transformation of our church will take time, effort, and a lot of loving, cooperative hard work. I truly believe, with God's guidance, we can bring this about.

The next step in the transformation process will take place in late September, on a Wednesday evening. You will be notified of the exact date as soon as possible. Will you be part of this exciting process? Everyone is invited to attend and participate.

Remember, "We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us."

—Barbara Becker

Help Wanted

1. Coffee Hour Coordinator

Under the auspices of UMW, ensure the orderly coordination of Sunday coffee hours, by picking up donated bagels, milk and juice supplies. Work with helpers to slice bagels, set out those and other refreshments, ensure coffee and tea urns are set up and functioning. Help with cleanup.

In payment, you will receive appreciation and fellowship, not to mention the profound gratitude of those who really need that cup of coffee.

2. Sunday School Teachers

Requirement: Love of children, patience, and a desire to guide and nurture children in their spiritual journey. Hours are flexible; curriculum is provided. Payment: Can there be any greater reward than to know you shepherded one of Jesus' "little ones" on their spiritual path?

—Barbara Becker

United Methodist Church of Patchogue September 2015

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

UMC Agency Wants Leeway To Fight Teen Suicide

The United Methodist Discipleship Ministries board is proposing legislation that, if approved, would lift restrictions on how church funds can be used related to homosexuality.

The proposal's main rationale is to enable Discipleship Ministries, without fear, to provide resources aimed at preventing teen suicide, particularly among youth who feel marginalized by their sexual identity.

The legislation is one of many petitions related to human sexuality heading to General Conference, the denomination's top lawmaking assembly, when it meets May 10-20, 2016, in Portland, Oregon.

"This is not about advocacy," said the Rev. Tim Bias, the top executive of Discipleship Ministries. "This is about just being Christian disciples, about just caring for what the legislation says.

The United Methodist Church teaches that all people are of sacred worth but that the practice of homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching."

Since 1976, the Book of Discipline—the denomination's law book—has banned church agencies from giving United Methodist funds to any gay caucus or otherwise using such funds to promote the acceptance of homosexuality.

Since 2008, the Discipline also has banned church funds from violating "the expressed commitment of The United Methodist Church 'not to

reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends.'"

The General Council on Finance and Administration, the denomination's finance agency, is responsible for enforcing the prohibitions in the Discipline's Paragraph 806.9.

The legislation going before the 2016 General Conference would eliminate the restrictions, keeping only the provision that says the finance agency "shall not limit the Church's ministry in response to the HIV epidemic."

Finance agency staff declined to comment on the proposed legislation.

Preventing teen suicide

Bias and other Discipleship Ministries staff members said the hope is the change will help the agency carry out another directive from General Conference—Resolution 2121: Teen Sexual Identity and Suicide Risk.

That resolution—part of the Book of Resolutions that contain the denomination's social teachings—calls for a "resource for congregations and families which provides accurate information, recommendations for programs, and pastoral guidance."

Bias said church leaders have not done much to follow up on the resolution since General Conference first adopted it in 2004, but he and other United Methodists hope that soon will change.

"We realize that teenage suicide is a much bigger issue than gender identity," Bias said.

United Methodist Women plans to resubmit the resolution for adoption by the 2016 General Conference, but

the group is still working on the final wording.

Still, research from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and others has found LGBTQ youth are particularly vulnerable to isolation and harassment that can lead to thoughts of suicide. The initials stand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning. More than one in every 10 high school students report having attempted suicide, and more than one in three LGBTQ youth have reported at least one suicide attempt, according to the Youth Suicide Prevention Program.

"What we want to do is to figure out if there's a way through discipleship – through being a disciple of Jesus Christ – that we can respond to the needs of people and the gifts of people who have been marginalized," Bias said.

Is the legislation necessary?

Regardless of their theological perspective, United Methodists overwhelmingly want to prevent teen harassment and suicide. Earlier this summer, United Methodists from across the theological spectrum came together in the North Alabama Annual Conference to pass a resolution aimed at "Harm Reduction for LGBTQ Teens."

The Young People's Ministries Division of United Methodist Discipleship Ministries recently published, without challenge, a resource on teen suicide and sexual identity as part of its "SEX: A Christian Perspective on Our Bodies, Decisions and Relationships" series.

"In my opinion, what we are and should be doing does not run afoul of

the paragraph (806.9),” said the Rev. Michael Ratliff, executive of Young People’s Ministries. “In helping young people (and those around them) to understand, accept, and live into their identity as part of God’s good creation, we are loving them as Jesus taught—actually commanded—us to do.”

The Judicial Council, the denomination’s equivalent of the U.S. Supreme Court, twice has taken up challenges under the funding restrictions to proposed United Methodist studies on homosexuality. Each time, in 1980 and in 1988, the top church court allowed those studies to proceed.

Still, Ratliff said removing the restrictions could remove confusion and barriers to ministry.

“The ‘ban’ paragraph has been used in the past to block the creation of needed resources and the use of language that is inclusive of all in resources throughout the church,” he said.

Reactions from advocacy groups

Unofficial United Methodist advocacy groups, not surprisingly, differ on whether the proposed legislation is needed. Discipleship Ministries published its most recent resource in its “SEX” series after conversations with

members of Love Prevails, who asked what resources addressed LGBTQ concerns. The group aims to change the church’s stance on homosexuality and end what it sees as discrimination against LGBTQ individuals.

The funding ban has “absolutely paralyzed our board and agencies,” said the Rev. Amy DeLong of Love Prevails. “It doesn’t matter what the Judicial Council has said. As long as these words are in the Book of Discipline, that threat hangs over agencies.”

The Rev. Steve Clunn—coalition coordinator of the Love Your Neighbor Coalition, an alliance of ethnic caucuses and advocacy groups—points to another area where he would like to see church agencies take more action. He wants agencies to help international asylum seekers driven from their homes by anti-gay discrimination and violence. He sees the legislation as an incremental step “in the right direction.”

However, Good News—which defends the denomination’s current teachings on human sexuality—sees amending the funding restrictions as completely unnecessary.

“Bullying is a much broader problem than just when it is aimed at LGBTQ

teens. The church ought to be a voice for loving treatment of one another, particularly those who are perceived as ‘different’ for any reason,” said the Rev. Thomas Lambrecht, vice president and general manager of Good News.

He said church entities would be acting well within the funding parameters if they develop programs that help parents and help teens stop hurtful behavior. “The church can also advocate for strong involvement by school and law enforcement authorities to respond to persistent bullying, as well as engaging in bullying prevention education,” he said.

The Rev. John Grenfell, a Good News board member, was a General Conference delegate in 1976. He recalls that a study by Discipleship Ministries was part of what prompted the funding restrictions. That study, he said, described homosexuality as “an alternative Christian lifestyle.”

“At this point, I don’t trust the leadership (of the church) in their commitment to exercise the polity of the church,” he said.

Debate about the church’s position on homosexuality has surfaced at each General Conference over the past 40 years.

General Conference, which meets every four years, has consistently voted to keep that language and over the years has expanded on restrictions against gay clergy and same-gender unions.

—Heather Hahn, UMNS

September Birthdays

- Sept. 1** Sandra Lindquist
- Sept. 1** Thomas Bender
- Sept. 5** Peter Brenner
- Sept. 10** Brenda Lanzetta
- Sept. 10** Keith Branderstein, Jr.
- Sept. 11** Marie Magill
- Sept. 16** Marissa Schultz
- Sept. 25** Haley Abate
- Sept. 28** Carla Gibson
- Sept. 30** Christopher Feldman

**Hear Our Sermons
and
Watch Our
Services Online.**

**Click on the Links at
www.PatchogueUMC.org**

The deadline for the October issue of **The Link** is **September 18**. Please email your copy to gbhoag@optonline.net.

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**"I hope you don't think I'm presumptuous.
I died at a costume party."**



A Note About Restoring Hope

Our Restoring Hope capital campaign was completed several years ago but funds may continue to be contributed. All Restoring Hope contributions go to the Trustees who have continuing building expenses but no other current source of revenue.

Christians Under Threat In Syria, Iraq

The Syrian refugee crisis continues to be an international concern and active threats remain against Christians and other minority religious groups in Syria and Iraq.

Tarek A. Sater, office director and program coordinator, Middle East Council of Churches, told United Methodist News Service the council and Secretary General Father Michel Jalakh are “in constant communication” with churches in both countries. “Christians in Syria, unlike their brothers in Iraq who have suffered from internal threats for over a decade, are used to living comfortably in Syrian society,” Sater said in an email message. “The war in Syria has shaken the foundations of the Christians in Syria and caused many to flee, while others refused to leave their homes and have remained stalwart only to suffer from abductions and violence.”

Many faith-based and nongovernmental organizations are aiding Syrian and Iraqi refugees of all religions. The United Methodist Committee on Relief has committed more than \$2 million in response to the crisis in Syria and Iraq since late 2013.

The Rev. Jack Amick, UMCOR’s top executive for international disaster response, compared the conflict in Syria, Iraq and neighboring countries to “a slow burning fire that flares up from time to time and periodically catches the attention of the popular press” even as the pain and suffering “persists on a daily basis.”

Continuing signs of trouble

Among the flare ups this month: Reuters reported Aug. 11 that the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL, has released 22 of the Assyrian Christians it abducted from villages in northeastern Syria earlier this year but more than 150 remained as captives. Syrian church sources and activists said contact with hundreds of people, many of them Christians, was lost after the Islamic State attacked the isolated oasis town of Qariyatain in Homs Province in early August.

Two church leaders kidnapped in Syria’s northern Aleppo province on April 22, 2013 — Archbishop Gregorius Yohanna Ibrahim of the Syriac Orthodox Church and Bishop Boulos Yazigi of the Greek Orthodox Church — still are missing without a trace.

Tens of thousands of Iraqi Christians marked a year in exile in Jordan, the Associated Press reported, after fleeing communities overtaken by the Islamic State.

“The world has forgotten us,” Vian Dakhil, a Yazidi member of the Iraqi Parliament, told the London Telegraph on the one-year anniversary of the killings and kidnappings of thousands of Yazidi Christians around their historic homeland of Mount Sinjar.

Religious diversity and freedom in Syria has fallen victim to the civil war there, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom noted earlier this year in a March 15 press release marking the fourth anniversary of protests that led to Syrian conflict. “By the systematic targeting and massacre of primarily Sunni Muslims, the al-Assad regime created the environ-

ment in which ISIL could rise and spread, threatening the entire region and all religious communities that reject its violent religious ideology, with the smallest religious minority communities facing an existential threat,” the commission said.

The World Council of Churches has repeatedly expressed concerns about the threat against minority communities in Syria and Iraq. The council sent a delegation to the Kurdistan region of Iraq last summer, meeting with church leaders and displaced people from Christian, Yazidi and Kaka’i (Sufi Muslim) communities.

Afterward, the WCC presented a statement at the U.N. Human Rights Council Special Session on the Human Rights Situation in Iraq on Sept. 1, 2014, at the U.N. offices in Geneva, Switzerland.

Relief work

As it has since its founding 75 years ago, UMCOR provides humanitarian assistance to all, Amick noted.

“The stories we hear about Christian communities being persecuted breaks our hearts,” he told United Methodist News Service. “But, as Jesus’ story of the Good Samaritan reminds us, all human suffering *should* break our hearts such that we take action regardless of human divisions and labels of race, creed, religion.”

Working with various aid partners, UMCOR has helped supply basic needs to displaced Syrian and Iraqi families over the past two years.

—Continued on Page 8

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Rev. Hyo Jung (Dawn) Yoon, Pastoral Minister

Camille Flynn, Administrative Assistant

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Worship Video Live Streaming at PatchogueUMC.Org

Sunday Worship—10 AM | Sunday School—10 AM

Fellowship Coffee Hour—11 AM

Hearing assistance provided

SEPTEMBER

Christians in Syria, Iraq (from page 7)

Francesco Paganini, the agency's manager for international disaster response, said the agency currently has two open grants: the provision of food aid via vouchers for 850 families in Syria and the provision of 985 hygiene kits and 99 newborn health kits to internally displaced persons in northern Iraq.

Donor fatigue is always an issue with long-running humanitarian crises, but both UMCOR officials stressed that forgetting these refugees is not an option.

When Paganini visited the UMCOR-supported child-friendly space for Syrian refugees in Turkey, he thought of his own grandfather, who was once a

refugee. Both his grandfather and the children he met in the tent that day served as a reminder "that we still live in a broken world" and need to take action, he wrote in a commentary in *Interpreter Magazine*.

For some children caught up in the Syria-Iraq crisis, violence has become part of the narrative of their lives, Amick pointed out. "Somehow the cycle of violence must be broken," he said. "Pray for the healing of the children, for they are our only hope for peace in the future."

He urged church members not to forget about Syria and Iraq and to pray weekly for peace and an end to violent conflict around the world.

—Linda Bloom, UMNS

