

The LINK



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF PATCHOGUE

Since 1791

April 2019

Press Deeper In Your Faith

Let me start off this article by asking a question: Who doesn't like Christmas?

I would surmise that everyone does. A rabbi friend of mine once said to me that he absolutely loves the Christmas season with all of the great songs and festivities that envelope a community—and he's Jewish?

I absolutely love Christmas; however, I love Lent, Holy Week and Easter even more. I know, no exchanging of presents, no Christmas tree, no Bing Crosby or Nat King Cole singing those classic Christmas songs. And yet, the song, Christ the Lord Is Risen Today, sounds even more beautiful to me.

By the time you read this edition of the LINK we will be well into our Lenten Journey together.

And, I must say, I am thoroughly enjoying this glorious trip together.

One of the main reasons I love the Season of Lent that leads up to Holy Week and Easter is, it provides for me a reminder to go deeper in my discipleship. It is like when I played High School Basketball and we had preseason drills leading up to the regular season.

Lent is a way of going through the good spiritual discipline drills so when we walk into our sanctuary on Easter morning and see the transformation from a stark and gloomy Good Friday to a worship space filled with Easter lilies, tulips and hyacinths bursting with a pallet of colors of yellow, white, red, pink and blue—it takes your breath away.

So, the month of April embraces this journey and celebration that should be

a joy to all those who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ.

Try to sit back and close your eyes and visualize Jesus and the disciples walking the dusty roads of Palestine. Think about how he fed the five thousand with two fishes and five loaves of bread. Read the incredible teachings contained in the Parables Jesus used to describe the Kingdom of God.

Continued on Page 2

WORSHIP IN APRIL

Apr. 7—The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara,
John 12:1-8

Apr. 14—The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara,
Palm Sunday, Luke 23:1-49

Apr. 21—The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, Easter,
John 20:1-18

Apr. 28—The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara,
John 20:19-31



ALLELUIA!

CHRIST IS ALIVE!

Circle of Concern

For Bereavement:

Halliwell family on the death of Lauren and Sean's mother, Cathy Nappi

For Guidance and Healing:

Bruce Kirshner, Tony Palermo, Barbara Wider, Eva, Lisa, Ernie & Alice Titus, Peter & Lorriane Brenner, Dorothy Vaon Rhee, Bob & Elenor, Kenny, Ines Morales, Justin, Frank Hayes, Tyler, McMiller family, Patty Parise, Jerry, Lia James, Dana Sikorsky, Roabert Hampton, Benny Vitae

These at Home:

Lee Hollowell, Frank Rice

These in Rehab or Nursing Care:

Geri Sheridan, Robert Krawzak in Brookhaven Health Care Facility, 801 Gazzola Dr., East Patchogue
Alice Zahnd in Gurwin Jewish Nursing Facility, 68 Hauppauge Rd., Commack, NY

Pray for our church and her future directions!

Prayer cards are located at the usher's station at the rear of the sanctuary.

Make a prayer request at
PatchogueUMC.com



April 9 Samantha Rubino
April 10 Zoe Josefina Starling
April 11 Carissa Arena

Deeper Faith (From Page 1)

Imagine how he would not allow the children to be stopped from gathering around him. Then, travel with him into Jerusalem as he makes his triumphant entry on the day we call Palm Sunday.

Track the horrendous plot by the religious leaders to have him arrested and put to death. Then, the kangaroo court, conviction and sentence handed down by Pontius Pilate. And yes, the awful punishment and pain he endured and eventual crucifixion on a rugged cross on Calvary's hill between two criminals, even though he was totally innocent. And with those nails that were driven through his hands and feet—Jesus took our sins upon himself so as to allow us an avenue to be reconciled with God.

But the most important part is saved for last—the grave could only hold him for three days. And on that third day, he rose from the grave and had victory over sin and death and defeated the enemy of God—Satan.

HALLELUJAH!

Oh, what a month April is!

I encourage each of you to continue to press in deeper in your faith and practice during this Lenten Season.

Then, prepare to be blown away on Resurrection Sunday when the organ pipes are blasting, the choir rejoicing and the entire sanctuary electrified with celebration.

Wishing you a blessed Lent, Holy Week and Easter as I

Remain in His Grip,

—Pastor Chuck

Palm Sunday Breakfast

It's a long standing tradition. Church breakfast on Palm Sunday. As always, it starts at 8:00 AM and continues until 9:30, featuring pancakes, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, the works. Be sure to stop in before service.

BAFFA Concert

Also, on Palm Sunday, The Bay Area Friends of The Fine Arts (BAFFA) brings its Bay Area Chorus to our Sanctuary at 4:00 PM with "Music To Hear".

Easter Plants

Be sure to order your Easter Sunday Altar and Sanctuary plants. The deadline is Palm Sunday. You have a choice of daffodils, tulips, lilies or hyacinths in several colors.

An Easter Prayer

We thank you
that Easter is not about
a people,
but all people,
that your love
and your Salvation
are for all who confess
with voices, hearts and lives
that the tomb is empty
because Jesus is risen,
that we might know
forgiveness,
that lives might be
reborn
and your name
glorified
now and for eternity.

—faithandworship.com

United Methodist Church of Patchogue

April 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Office Closed 7:30 p.m.—AA	2 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10:00 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.—Pentecostal MF 7:00 p.m.—AA	3	4	5 10:00 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	6
7 9:15 a.m.—Choir 10:00 a.m.— Communion Worship 12:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	8 Office Closed 7:30 p.m.—AA	9 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10:00 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.—Pentecostal MF 7:00 p.m.—AA	10	11	12 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	13
14 8:00 a.m.—Pancake Breakfast 9:15 a.m.—Choir 0:00 a.m.— Worship 12:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 4:00 p.m.—BAFFA Concert	15 Office Closed 7:30 p.m.—AA	16 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10:00 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.—Pentecostal MF 7:00 p.m.—AA	17	18	19 10:00 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	20
21 9:15 a.m.—Choir 0:00 a.m.— Easter Worship 12:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	22 Office Closed 7:30 p.m.—AA	23 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10:00 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.—Pentecostal MF 7:00 p.m.—AA	24	25 5:00 p.m.—Wesley Dinner	26 10:00 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF	27 9:30 a.m.—UMW
28 9:15 a.m.—Choir 10 a.m.— Worship 11:00 a.m.—Trustees 12:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 2:00 p.m.—Wine and Cheese Fundraiser	29 Office Closed 7:30 p.m.—AA	30 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10:00 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.—Pentecostal MF 7:00 p.m.—AA				

SOS Campaign Update

Although not part of our SOS campaign, related work will be commencing shortly to replace the basement stairs on the west side of the building which serves our tenant Head Start. The stairs will be replaced by a ramp to comply with federal Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. The cost of the improvements is being borne by Head Start.

They submitted construction drawings to church trustees for review and approval. The trustees had several questions and suggestions for improvements. A building permit will be secured from the Village of Patchogue prior to construction.

Thanks to the efforts of Barbara Becker, we will be receiving a \$20,000 grant from Sacred Sites to be used toward repointing brickwork and stained glass window repairs. The windows will require resealing the shrouds to the bricks, glazing and painting to stop further damage from water intrusion. After broken panes are replaced new Plexiglas exterior covers will be installed to further protect the windows.

The north and east windows were sealed back in the 1990's and it is unknown when the south window was sealed. It is recommended the windows be painted and sealed every ten to fifteen years. Once the windows are sealed, we will have time for additional fundraising to do comprehensive stained glass window restoration.

In addition to restoration of the windows and repointing the bricks,

work remains to be done on Pastor's office damaged by water infiltration.

Please remember your SOS pledges to help keep the campaign going. New pledges are needed and always gratefully welcomed. Thanks to all for their contributions and hard work.

—Jim Graham

The Methodist Mess

A few weeks ago, a special session of General Conference reaffirmed its opposition to gay marriage and gay clergy and strengthened penalties against pastors who do the former and bishops who tolerate the latter.

We are really screwed up.

The UMC's Judicial Council, our Supreme Court, has already ruled that much of the Traditional Plan that GC adopted violated the Book of Discipline and therefore is unconstitutional, null, and void. It has indicated, too, that the exit plan GC approved will meet the same fate. Those who zealously defend tradition often violate traditions they claim to uphold.

Other mainline Protestant denominations have moved slowly but steadily toward accepting gay marriage and gay clergy, but several factors make this more difficult for us:

We have bishops who appoint pastors. There is, at least theoretically, consultation with clergy and congregations, but nothing like a search committee and a congregational vote. Other denominations can ordain gay candidates without forcing anyone to give them a job.

Local churches hold property in trust for the wider church: if a congregation leaves the denomination, its property reverts to the regional body, the Annual Conference. Disaffected Baptist or United Church of Christ congregations can go their own way. Disgruntled Methodists have a strong incentive to stay and fight.

We are a world-wide denomination: GC delegates come from San Francisco and nations where being gay is punishable by death. Most U.S. delegates voted for greater acceptance of LGBTTQ folks; those from elsewhere disagreed overwhelmingly, though some may be more tolerant privately than they dare to be publicly.

What will become of my beloved, benighted denomination? Perhaps entire Annual Conferences will leave and take their property with them. Perhaps individual clergy and laity will find other denominations that suit them better. It also is possible that very little will change, and we will keep fighting over this issue until the current combatants are replaced by younger leaders who see things differently.

It would help if we were a bit more honest about our own ambivalence on this issue. Many conservative Christians I know would like their gay child/sibling/cousin to be in a committed, long-term relationship even if they would not perform the wedding themselves. Many progressives theoretically support of gay clergy but fear what will happen to a congregation they love if a bishop

appoints a bisexual or transgender parson there. Many of us don't understand why some people are wired they way they are. Even if we want to be compassionate, we find some sexualities weird—or at least really confusing.

Some evangelical UMs I know have fought to preserve the denomination's current position on homosexuality but also stress that God loves everyone as they are, no exceptions, regardless of their sexual orientation.

A pentecostal friend told me fifteen years ago, that he personally opposed gay marriage but "If we come across as bigots, we will lose an entire generation." I am not sure how many people will feel welcome in a church that considers them deviant, but being more compassionate than judgmental is a good start.

I like what one conservative denomination says on their web site: "The New Apostolic Church has lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgendered members who seek salvation through Jesus Christ." It notes that those who are struggling with their sexual orientation may benefit from some competent counseling and suggests a reputable counseling service.

And it would do UMs good to remember that our founders's love life was a mess. He pursued an inappropriate relationship with a parishioner in Georgia and excommunicated her when she rebuffed him, got engaged to a woman who jilted him when she became convinced he did not really want her, and had a troubled marriage with another woman whose funeral he refused to attend.

Who knows? Maybe he was a latent homosexual, as someone suggested when I was in seminary, and did not understand his urges, even if he resisted them: a century after Wesley, those who had homosexual encounters often did not think of them as sexual relationships. Perhaps he simply was unable to handle intimacy of any sort.

It is surely a sign of God's grace that John Wesley supported female preachers, more than 250 years ago, long before nearly any other religious leaders—at least male ones—even though his own intimate relationships with women were disastrous. If there is hope for us, it is because as Martin Luther said, "God can ride the lame horse and carve the rotten wood."

—Thomas W. Goodhue

The Rev. Goodhue is a retired Methodist minister and the former Executive Director of the Long Island Council of Churches.

Conferences React

The New York and Greater New Jersey conferences each had a special called meeting March 16 to reflect on and respond to the 2019 General Conference in St. Louis, which voted to reinforce The United Methodist Church's bans on same-sex weddings and LGBTQ clergy.

In New York—which has pushed back against the denomination's bans on performing same-sex weddings and the ordination of gay clergy—Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton noted that legislation does not convert the heart. "Just because the vote went a certain way, we cannot expect con-

formity to follow." He said he had "lost faith" in the church's ability to deal with differences through legislation.

"It has broken my heart to see and experience the church I love create such hurt among people," Bickerton said during the sermon that opened the session at Purchase College, State University of New York, in Harrison. Some 900 conference members attended.

Bishop John Schol of the Greater New Jersey Conference addressed the post-General Conference tensions, but also called for a focus on mission, including fighting discrimination in all forms.

"What we have found is that votes may retain or change policies, but votes do not change hearts. ... Our concern and conversation about the LGBTQ community should not lessen our commitment to change hearts and minds so that we end prejudice, oppression, sexism, racism and privilege," he said.

The two annual conferences, regional bodies of the denomination, are the first to have called sessions after the special General Conference, but many conferences and bishops are holding information sessions.

The United Methodist Church has faced division for decades about how accepting to be of homosexuality. Amid talk of schism, the 2016 General Conference asked bishops to try to lead the church through its impasse.

The Council of Bishops created a Commission on a Way Forward to review church law regarding human sexuality, and to consider alternatives for

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Campbell

"Bless this spinach, albeit the work of the devil."

Don't Forget Your Pledge

The deadline for the May issue of **The Link** is April 22
 Please email your copy to gbhoag@optonline.net.

For security purposes, the Church St. entrance is now locked as soon as Sunday services begin. If you are running late, be sure to use the Sanctuary entrances.

Conferences (From Page 5)

holding the denomination together. The bishops called the special General Conference to consider legislation described in the commission's final report.

A majority of bishops supported the One Church Plan, which would have removed from the Book of Discipline the statement that homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching" and left questions of same-sex marriage up to individual churches and clergy, and ordination of LGBTQ clergy up to conferences.

But by a 438-384 vote, delegates approved the Traditional Plan, which retained those restrictions and strengthened enforcement. The conference included heated rhetoric and demonstrations and drew nationwide media coverage.

Since St. Louis, many U.S. churches and pastors have protested the outcome in varying ways, and the Commission on General Conference has organized a task force to investigate allegations of voting irregularities. The Judicial Council, the denomination's top court, will meet next month to consider the constitutionality of much of the Traditional Plan.

The hurt and mistrust that have occurred during and after GC2019 were evident when the members of the New York delegation presented a spoken narrative about their efforts "to give a powerful expression of the inclusive values of the New York Annual Conference on the floor of General Conference."

The lack of LGBTQ voices on Feb. 23, the conference's opening day and a "Day of Prayer," led to a demand to

remedy that situation, a public witness calling attention to those voices and a loss of hope for real conversation, the delegation said.

"This first day set a tone, not for holy conferencing but for the raising of competing agendas and the question of which one would win the day," said Dorothee Benz, a lay delegate from New York City.

Delegation members also called on the governing committees of General Conference to disregard the legislative assembly's actions because of the taint from voting irregularity allegations.

A group of New York clergy and lay members also announced that a statement "affirming the lives, ministries, and families of our LGBTQIA+ siblings" and supporting social justice values would be available for signatures.

Bickerton said that while he doesn't consider talk about winners and losers acceptable in this situation, "There is a side claiming victory. And there is a side that feels very clearly that they have lost. The body is fractured and divided."

The bishop acknowledged such division extends to the New York Conference. "Strong cultural drivers come into play as many here embrace a traditional value," he said. Another part of the conference offers a strong "voice of advocacy and inclusion."

Recent positions by the New York Conference and its board of ordained ministry "have stated our clear position on who we see ourselves to be as an inclusive body of Christ," Bickerton said. "If nothing else happened in St. Louis, the decision of the General

Conference has only reinforced those deep convictions with renewed strength."

Bickerton said his hope for the defeated One Church Plan was based upon "the reality" that the New York Conference had been operating that way — allowing for traditional viewpoints "in the midst of progressive viewpoints and expressions" — for years.

The actions in St. Louis largely shut out the LGBTQ community, the bishop said. Bickerton pledged to "provide an unwavering, undying support for the LGBTQIA community here in New York."

In the Greater New Jersey Conference, more than 1,000 people, including observers, attended the special session at Brookdale Community College in Lincroft.

Schol, in addressing the crowd, acknowledged division in the conference and broader church over homosexuality, but emphasized that Methodists have endured major conflicts before over slavery, segregation, alcohol and women's ordination.

"In the midst of present disagreement, I am proud and glad to serve in a theologically and ethnically diverse conference," he said.

Later, in an interview, Schol assessed the conference's reaction to passage of the Traditional Plan.

"Most people are disappointed," he said. "When we do not all think alike, we do not want to hurt people. People feel the Traditional Plan will hurt people and ultimately our mission."

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 Camille Flynn, Administrative Assistant
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Worship Video Live Streaming at PatchogueUMC.Org

Sunday Worship and Sunday School—10 AM
 Fellowship Coffee Hour—11 AM
 Hearing assistance provided



Conferences (From Page 7)

Greater New Jersey's special conference approved creating a diverse, 16-person "Way Forward Team," to help guide the conference. The team is to report back by Greater New Jersey's 2020 annual conference.

"What the annual conference said on Saturday was we would like them to come forth with ideas for how we, Greater New Jersey, could recognize different contexts, different theological perspectives, and allow for contextual ministries in those different contexts," Schol said. "The possibilities are wide open."

Schol has been describing Greater New Jersey as a "one church conference." He said that means the conference "provides room for differences

while remaining faithful to biblical scholarship and reason, tradition and experience. In Greater New Jersey we welcome people as they are, including the LGBTQ community."

But the Rev. Beth Caulfield, conference president of the unofficial advocacy group Wesleyan Covenant Association, was unsatisfied with Schol's explanation of the term and its implications for Book of Discipline enforcement. The WCA supported the Traditional Plan.

"We're still wondering what that means," she said.

Caulfield added that traditionalists at the called meeting were not feeling comfortable, and despite Schol's urging were reluctant to participate in a period of storytelling around human

sexuality issues.

"If we want to do some story-sharing it would be great if we focused on stories anchored in Scripture, which would be more the Wesleyan way in keeping with the orthodox and universal approach to unity," she said.

The Rev. Jessica Brendler Naulty, one of three conference leaders for the full-inclusion advocacy group Reconciling Ministries Network, called the special gathering "tense."

"It was almost like people were trying to assess whose side everyone was on," she said. "In the midst of the tension, Bishop Schol tried to lead us forward in unity rather than discord. He tried to pull us together."

—Linda Bloom and Sam Hedges,
 UMMS