

# TheLink



## The United Methodist Church of Patchogue

April 2014

Sponsored this month by Lorraine Brenner

Edited By George Hoag

### All About Lent

#### What is Lent?

Lent is a season of the Christian Year where Christians focus on simple living, prayer, and fasting in order to grow closer to God.

#### When is Lent?

It's the forty days before Easter. Lent excludes Sundays because every Sunday is like a little Easter. Basically, it's about one-tenth of a year (like a tithe of time). Mardi Gras is the day before Lent, which begins with Ash Wednesday. This year it's from March 5 (Ash Wednesday) to April 20 (Easter), 2014.

#### Mardi Gras? What does that have to do with Jesus?

Mardi Gras means "Fat Tuesday." It refers to the day before Lent starts. Since Lent always starts on a Wednesday, the day before is always a Tuesday. And it's called "Fat" or "Great" because it's associated with great food and parties. In earlier times, people used Lent as a time of fasting and repentance. Since they didn't want to be tempted by sweets, meat and other distractions in the house, they cleaned out their cabinets. They used up all the sugar and yeast in sweet breads before the Lent season started,

**Continued on Page 2**

### Worship In April

**Apr. 6**—Rev. Ernesto Sanchez, *Looking For The Liberator*, Psalm 130, John 11:1-16.

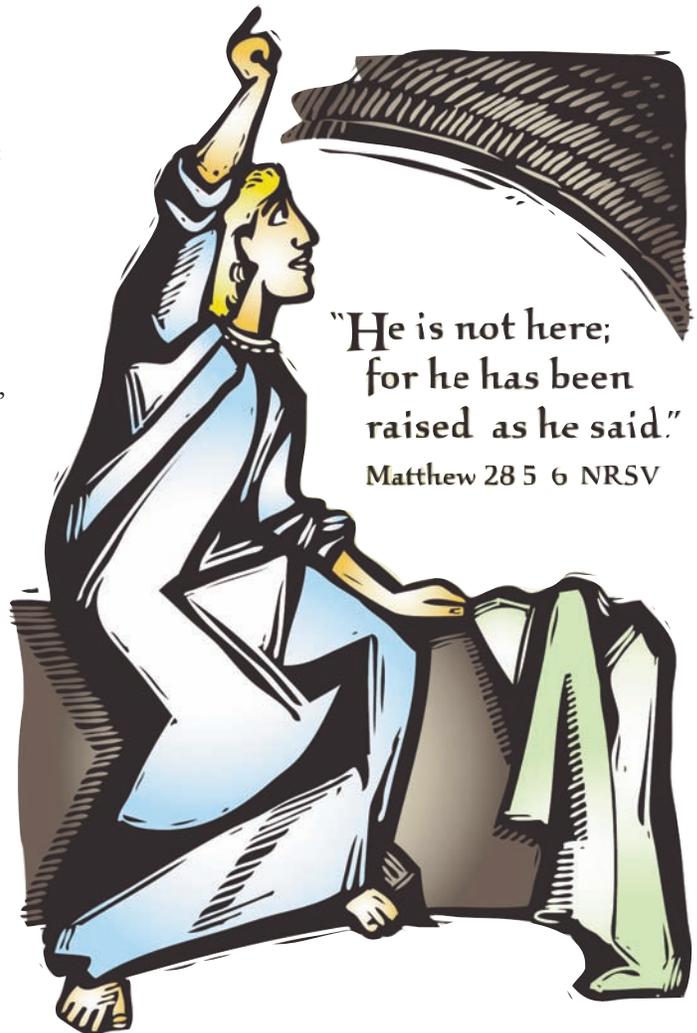
**Apr. 13**—Rev. Ernesto Sanchez. *Who Then Is This?* Isaiah 50:4-9a, Matthew 21:1-11.

**Apr. 17**—Maundy Thursday Communion Service, Exodus 21: 1-14, Matthew 26: 36-46.

**Apr. 18**—Good Friday Service, Isaiah 52: 13-53:12, Psalm 22: 1-18, Hebrews 10: 16-25, John 18: 1-19:42

**Apr. 20**—Easter Sunday, Rev. Ernesto Sanchez, *Garden Party*, Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24, John 20:19-31.

**Apr. 27**—Rev. Ernesto Sanchez, *Get Rid of That Monkey*, Psalm 16, John 20: 19-31.



# Circle of Concern

## *For Bereavement:*

For the Family and Friends of Ann Sutton. For the Family and Friends of Michael Curtis Sr. (Joan Curtis' former husband.)

## *For Guidance:*

Janice, Louis D'Amico and family, Colleen Smith, Tim and Jen Mansfield, Kathy, Bruce Clamser, Robin, Bridget and Jesse Fitzgerald, Gloria and Louis D'Amico, Charleen and family, Sheila Dreaper, Renie Meadowcroft, Charleen, Terisa John, Rocky Miller, Robin, Kevin, Jasmine Arettines, Carolyn, James Penney, Paul Rodrigas, Chris and Bonnie Hoagland, Corey, Keith Girouard, Laura and Louis Diamond, Chris Jackson, Ellie Goyco, Esperanza Candelario, Dot Fassel, Ben Capua, Kathy Mellor, Elaine Moffitt Short, Keith Girouard, Bruce Kirschner's mother, Dianna Peterra and family, Chris Jackson, Babette Bishop, Patricia Puk, Roberta Pilsen, Rich, Leah, Joann Egan, Quigley Family, Laura Magill Diamond, Elysse Klayes step-father.

## *These Who are Hospitalized:*

Keyana White, Andrew Miller, Wayne Williams, Bob Venator, Ida Davis, Jane Belzak, Alice Zahnd, Ron, Carol Wehner.

## *These at Home:*

Wilfredo Franco, Michael Curtis Sr., Sandy Burrell, Chester Gibson, Grace Cruger, John Puk, Harold, Carolyn Willis, Loretta Harrigan, George Roessler, Richard Vining, Frank Whalen, Justin Miller, Laurie Gaber, Sylvai, Ellie Gayco, Geri Sheridan, Dave Holcomb.

## *These who are in Rehab or Nursing Care Facilities:*

Alice Zahnd in Patchogue Nursing Center, 25 Schoenfeld Blvd., Patchogue, NY.

Esther Davies in Brookhaven Health Facility, 801 Gazzolla Drive, E. Patchogue, NY 11772 Room 78D, 631-289-3150.

Ted Davies in Brookhaven Health Facility, 801 Gazzolla Drive, E. Patchogue, NY.

Ed Dew in Sunrise Assisted Living.

*Pray for our church and its future direction.*

**Make your Prayer Request on line at [PatchogueUMC.Org](http://PatchogueUMC.Org)**

Remember  
the Church  
in Your Will

The deadline for contributions to the May edition of **TheLink** is April 11. Please e-mail your copy to [gbhoag@optonline.net](mailto:gbhoag@optonline.net).

## **Lent (From Page 1)**

and fixed meals with all the meat available. It was a great feast! Through the years Mardi Gras has evolved (in some places) into a pretty wild party with little to do with preparing for the Lenten season of repentance and simplicity. Oh well. But Christians still know it's origin, and hang onto the true Spirit of the season.

### **So the real beginning of Lent is Ash Wednesday?**

Yes. Ash Wednesday, the day after Mardi Gras, usually begins with a service where we recognize our mortality, repent of our sins, and return to our loving God. We recognize life as a precious gift from God, and re-turn our lives towards Jesus Christ. We may make resolutions and commit to change our lives over the next forty days so that we might be more like Christ. In an Ash Wednesday service, usually a minister or priest marks the sign of the cross on a person's forehead with ashes.

### **Why ashes?**

In Jewish and Christian history, ashes are a sign of mortality and repentance. Mortality, because when we die, our bodies eventually decompose and we become dust/ dirt/ash/whatever. Repentance, because long ago, when people felt remorse for something they did, they would put ashes on their head and wear "sackcloth" (scratchy clothing) to remind them that sin is pretty uncomfortable and leads to a sort of death of the spirit. This was their way of confessing their sins and asking for forgiveness.

### **Where do the ashes come from?**

On what we now call Palm Sunday, Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem

***Continued on Page 5***

*Lift up your church with your prayers, presence, gifts and service.*

## LESSONS ALONG

# the Way

May God's peace be with you!

March 10, 2014 – Dateline

Patchogue. So, I got rear-ended this morning. The left-turn arrow onto Ryder turned green, the car in front of me didn't move, I tapped the horn after counting to 3, it moved, and the young lady behind me decided to accelerate before I could move my foot from the brake to the gas pedal. Thunk. Coffee flying. Head snapping back. Instant—and by “instant” I mean nano-seconds—towering, uncontrolled rage.

Why rage? As with so many (all?) negative emotions, rage is fueled by fear. You see, this is the fifth time I've been rear-ended in the last 30 years. When it happened in 2004 (the fourth time), and the doctor looked at my MRI and saw what the discs around C3 through C5 looked like, he asked me how much pain I was in. I told him I had stiffness, but no pain to speak of. He laughed (he was a pretty cool guy, he wasn't being mean), and said, “don't worry, you will...”

And so, when I felt the thunk and my head flew back, I figured this was the one that was going to do it – paralysis, quadriplegia, you know how quickly we jump right to the disaster scenario. At least, I do. So after we pulled over and she got out, I bolted out of the car, looked at my minimally-damaged bumper, and proceeded to use very loud, very bad language. Words, and combinations thereof, that I learned from working with truckers in my teens, but that a Christian man

has no business using, or even thinking. And by the way, the more astute of you have already noted that, if I bolted from my car, there was a pretty good chance that I wasn't paralyzed...

We exchanged information—of course, my rage had prevented me from doing the prudent thing, calling the police. I had the minimal presence of mind to apologize for my language, but I truly meant it. As she drove off, she was crying. I made all the calls, and she had done the right thing—by the time I got through to her insurance agency, she had already notified them. And if I'm ever given the chance, I will thank her for being an upright human being.

Here's what I know about righteous anger, or self-righteousness of any kind: as Max Lucado says in “In the Grip of Grace”, I don't know enough, and I'm not good enough, to get all righteous on anyone else. One Man in history, and one Man only, was righteous—and I ain't Him. This was an accident: whether she was late for work, or her mother was dying, or she was simply having a bad morning, it was just another page of life being turned, and in this one I ended up with the thorny end of the rose stem.

Am I in pain tonight as I write this, 10 hours later? You bet. Do I fear another round of chiropractors, lawyers, and cash deductibles that I don't have? Absolutely. Am I still angry? No. Not at all. I'm actually smiling as I type this (yeah, the fingers seem to work just fine, just like my legs did this morning). Because God's perfect irony is so delicious with this one, that even though it's extremely humiliating I'm going to share it with you:

Almost exactly one year ago, on St. Patrick's Day, I was on my way to the certified lay speaker class in Ronkonkoma, or some such place. And I had a senior moment, and tapped the bumper of the car ahead of me. It was a middle aged couple, and they didn't bolt out of the car in a towering rage—can you believe that? There were no injuries, but they had just gotten their mini-van, and I had scarred the plastic. Everyone was civil, my insurance company didn't drop me, we all lived happily ever after.

Where's the delicious irony? The information I exchanged with this nice couple took up one half of the envelope in which I keep my registration and insurance card. Care to guess what I used the other half of that very same envelope for this morning? That's a lot funnier than anything I've ever come up with!

I've mentioned several times since I started writing this column that its purpose is not to beat myself up publicly, but rather to help others avoid the snares and landmines that I seem to have a true gift for finding. Oddly enough, when I really turn my life over to God's care and direction there seem to be a lot fewer “accidents”.

Or maybe, if I'm trusting in Jesus, the bad stuff just doesn't seem so bad...

Yours in Christ,

—Tom Bracken

birthdays

Apr. 25 Sarah Biederman

*Celebrate your life! Witness for your faith!*

## Lent (from Page 2)

while people waved palms and cheered him on. Less than a week later, Jesus was killed. The palms that were waved in joy became ashes of sorrow. We get ashes for Ash Wednesday by saving the palms from Palm Sunday, burning them, and mixing them with a little oil. It's symbolic.

### What do Christians do with ashes?

At an Ash Wednesday service, folks are invited to come forward to receive the ashes. The minister will make a small cross on your forehead by smudging the ashes. While the ashes remind us of our mortality and sin, the cross reminds us of Jesus' resurrection (life after death) and forgiveness. It's a powerful, non-verbal way that we can experience God's forgiveness and renewal as we return to Jesus.

### So what is Lent?

At Jesus' baptism the sky split open, the Spirit of God, which looked like a dove, descended and landed on Jesus, and a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, My Beloved, with whom I am pleased." Afterward, as told in Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus was sent into the wilderness by the Spirit where he fasted and prayed for 40 days. During his time there he was tempted by Satan and found clarity and strength to resist temptation. Afterwards, he was ready to begin his ministry. Maybe Jesus needed some time with God to sort through the major changes happening in his life. Maybe needed to get away from family, friends and the familiar routine in order to see God (and himself) more clearly. Perhaps he wanted some intentional time with God as he searched for direction and answers like you. Like Jesus, we may need to take some serious time

to pray and listen for God.

### Why "Do" Lent? How do I start?

Are you searching for something more? Tired of running in circles, but not really living life with direction, purpose or passion? It's pretty easy to get caught up in the drama of classes, relationships, family, and work. Our lives are filled with distractions that take us away from living a life with Christ. We try to fill the emptiness inside us with mindless TV, meaningless chatter, stimulants, alcohol, too many activities or other irrelevant stuff. We run away from life and from God. Lent is a great time to "repent"—to return to God and re-focus our lives to be more in line with Jesus. It's a 40-day trial run in changing your lifestyle and letting God change your heart. You might try one of these practices for Lent:

**FASTING:** Some people have been known to go without food for days. But that's not the only way to fast. You can fast by cutting out some of the things in your life that distract you from God. Some Christians use the whole 40 days to fast from candy, TV, soft drinks, cigarettes or meat as a way to purify their bodies and lives. You might skip one meal a day and use that time to pray instead. Or you can give up some activity like worry or reality TV to spend time outside enjoying God's creation. What do you need to let go of or "fast" from in order to focus on God? What clutters your calendar and life? How can you simplify your life in terms of what you eat, wear or do?

**SERVICE:** Some Christians take something on for Christ. You can collect food for the needy, volunteer once a week to tutor children, or work for reform and justice in your community.

You can commit to help a different stranger, co-worker or friend everyday of Lent. Serving others is one way we serve God.

**PRAYER:** Christians also use Lent as a time of intentional prayer. You can pray while you walk, create music or art as a prayer to God, or savor a time of quiet listening. All can be ways of becoming more in tune with God.

Christians from many different traditions continue celebrate Lent and journey thru this important and very spiritual season. So lets continue our journey!

—Pastor Sanchez

## What's Cool In Sunday School



This year the 7th-12th grade Sunday school class was renamed The Breakfast Club. We start each class with bagels, orange juice, and fellowship. Our focus this year is on the Gospel of Mark. At the beginning of the year each student was given a copy of the Book of Mark from the new Common English Bible translation. Each week we watch a chapter of Mark from the DVD Mark's Gospel on Stage with Max McLean.

The DVD is a recording of a word-for-word theatrical performance of the Gospel of Mark by well-known storyteller Max McLean. McLean's interpretation brings unexpected humor and new insights to familiar Bible stories. Viewing the DVD is followed by discussion and activities. One week we watched McLean's rendition of chapter five, which includes the story of Jesus casting a legion of demons out of a possessed man. The demons enter a herd of about

**Continued on Page 8**

# United Methodist Church of Patchogue

## April 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<i>1</i> 9 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.—AA	<i>2</i> 6:30 p.m.—ESL	<i>3</i> 7:30 p.m.—Choir Rehearsal	<i>4</i> 7:30 p.m.—N/A	<i>5</i>
<i>6</i> 9:00 a.m.—Bible Study 10 a.m.— Communion Worship/Sunday School 12:30 p.m.— Salvation Army Class & Service	<i>7</i> 7 p.m.—Prayer Ministry 7:00 p.m.—AA	<i>8</i> 9 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.—AA	<i>9</i> 6:30 p.m.—ESL	<i>10</i> 7:30 p.m.—Choir Rehearsal	<i>11</i> 7:30 p.m.—N/A	<i>12</i>
<i>13</i> 9:00 a.m.—Bible Study 10 a.m.—Worship/ Sunday School 11:30 a.m.— Finance 12:30 p.m.— Salvation Army Class & Service	<i>14</i> 7 p.m.—Prayer Ministry 7:00 p.m.—AA	<i>15</i> 9 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.—AA	<i>16</i> 6:30 p.m.—ESL	<i>17</i> 7 p.m.—Holy Thursday Service	<i>18</i> 7 p.m.—Good Fri- day Service 7:30 p.m.—N/A	<i>19</i>
<i>20</i> 10 a.m.—Easter Worship/Sunday School 12:30 p.m.— Salvation Army Class & Service	<i>21</i> 7 p.m.—Prayer Ministry 7:00 p.m.—AA	<i>22</i> 9 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.—AA	<i>23</i> 6:30 p.m.—ESL	<i>24</i> 5 p.m.—Wesley Dinner 7:30 p.m.—Choir Rehearsal	<i>25</i> 7:30 p.m.—N/A	<i>26</i> 8:30 a.m.— Defensive Driving Class
<i>27</i> 9:00 a.m.—Bible Study 10 a.m.—Worship/ Sunday School 11:30 a.m.— Trustees 12:30 p.m.— Salvation Army Class & Service	<i>28</i> 7 p.m.—Prayer Ministry 7:00 p.m.—AA	<i>29</i> 9 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.—AA	<i>30</i> 6:30 p.m.—ESL			

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## No Gay Trial In New York Conference

New York Area Bishop Martin McLee has called for “the cessation of church trials” against United Methodist pastors who perform same-sex wedding ceremonies as a complaint against a retired United Methodist seminary dean was dropped.

"Church trials produce no winners...trials are not the way forward," said McLee, speaking at a March 10 news conference.

The completion of the complaint process against the Rev. Thomas Ogletree, 80, was made without conditions. Ogletree presided over the wedding of his son, Thomas Rimbey Ogletree, to Nicholas Haddad on Oct. 20, 2012.

The announcement from the official court handling the complaint for the New York Annual (regional) Conference came during a news conference March 10.

Ogletree's trial was first scheduled for the same day at First United Methodist Church in Stamford, Conn. Retired Bishop S. Clifton Ives, the presiding officer or the equivalent of a judge, postponed the trial date Feb. 10.

Besides McLee, those participating in the news conference were Ives; the counsel for the church, the Rev. Timothy Riss; counsel for Ogletree, the Rev. W. Scott Campbell; New York Area Bishop Martin McLee; and the Rev. William S. Shillady, secretary of the trial court.

"This has been a challenging and inspiring experience for me," Ogletree said.

He said he also was grateful to McLee's commitment "to a cessation of church trials for conducting ceremonies

which celebrate homosexual unions or performing same-gender wedding ceremonies and instead offer a process of theological, spiritual and ecclesiastical conversation" and plan for a forum to discuss the issues for the New York Conference this spring.

"I do believe he is now providing a new model for our bishops on how they can play a transforming role (on this issue)," Ogletree said.

The Book of Discipline, the denomination's law book, since 1972 has stated that all people are of sacred worth but "the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching."

Church law says that marriage is to be between a man and a woman and bans United Methodist clergy from performing and churches from hosting "ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions."

The Rev. Randall C. Paige, pastor of Christ Church in Port Jefferson Station, N.Y., and the Rev. Roy E. Jacobsen, a retired pastor, were the New York Conference clergy who filed a complaint against Ogletree after his son's wedding announcement appeared Oct. 21, 2012, in *The New York Times*.

Paige is the president of the Wesley Fellowship, an unofficial evangelical renewal group in the New York Conference. Jacobsen is a board member of the group.

Methodists in New Directions, an unofficial New York Conference group that advocates for greater inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals in the life of the church, has championed Ogletree's case and first announced the trial date.

—Linda Bloom, UMNS

## Hillary Clinton To Address UM Women

Hillary Clinton will deliver the Saturday, April 26, morning keynote address for the 2014 United Methodist Women Assembly April 25-27 in Louisville, Ky.

United Methodist Women, the official women's organization of The United Methodist Church, and the former U.S. Secretary of State share a common concern for women, children and youth.

"Secretary Clinton is a lifelong United Methodist and a longtime advocate for women, children and youth," said Harriett Jane Olson, chief executive of United Methodist Women. "It was almost 20 years ago when she electrified the participants at the 4th United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing by her declaration that women's rights are human rights.

"Her work reflects commitments United Methodist Women and our predecessor organizations have worked toward for 145 years. We look forward to hearing what she has learned in her work with women around the world."

Clinton's 1996 best-selling book, "It Takes a Village: And Other Lessons Children Teach Us," focused on how family and community partnerships can assist children. Last year, Clinton launched "Too Small to Fail," an early childhood initiative, through the foundation created by her husband, former President Bill Clinton.

The nearly 800,000-member United Methodist Women is the denomination's official women's mission organization. Members raise more than \$16 million annually for mission with women, children and youth.

—Linda Bloom, UMNS

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Rev. Ernesto Sanchez, Pastoral Minister  
Christine Saas, Office Assistant  
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## Sunday School (From Page 4)

2,000 pigs that jump over a cliff and drown. This led to a discussion about contemporary movies that deal with demon possession as well as an activity where the class put together a Bible times newspaper to report on the incident.

The newspaper included quotes from eyewitnesses along with an obituary which listed the names of several of the 2,000 pigs that died.

Vacation Bible School is coming! Panda-mania is our theme! Children from Pre-K to 6th grade are welcome to attend. It will be right here at church, Aug. 4 to Aug. 8, 10 a.m. to noon.

Registration forms will be available the first week of May. Please see Cynthia Wright to get your registration form at that time. Volunteers are needed to help

with planning, decorating, teaching and preparing snack. If you have a special talent, like playing the guitar or any other instrument please let me know. All are welcome and we encourage the youth group to lend a helping hand too! I would appreciate any help, even if it is only for a few hours. Please contact Cynthia Wright at [julesjules@optonline.net](mailto:julesjules@optonline.net) if you have any questions, need a registration form and/or would like to volunteer. VBS here we come!

### The Rule Of Ten

We appreciate any craft donations that you would like to make to our Sunday School. A new guideline I'm putting into place is, if you have ten of a certain item (like paper towel tubes), please donate them. If you have less than that, please don't bring them in because it makes the Sunday School office very cluttered. Thank you so

much.

I'm considering starting a monthly date night for parents starting in September. What that means is, once a month you could drop your kids off for four hours for pizza, movie, and a craft. There would be a small fee involved to cover expenses. Parents could then go out to dinner and a movie or whatever they want to do for those four hours knowing their kids are having fun and are well taken care of. I am still hammering out the details of what day of the week this would happen and I could use some help planning it. If you want to get involved in any way, either with planning it, supervising kids when it gets started, or donate crafts or money, please see me. I remember dropping Sarah off at our church when she was tiny to go Christmas shopping and she LOVED it.

—Elizabeth Biederman