

# The LINK



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF PATCHOGUE

Since 1791

April 2018

## Surrendering To Victory

This April article is a very interesting one because we ended March with the passion of Christ and then on the very first day of April we begin with the celebration of the resurrection. What a way to start off a brand-new month.

Sometimes we want to rush through the passion part of Jesus, don't we? We have a hard time digesting his betrayal, arrest, torture and, yes, his awful crucifixion. Just like we want to get rid of the horrible snow and cold we have experienced in March—in a way, we also want to get rid of the terrible images of our Lord's suffering.

But we cannot get to Easter without traveling through Holy Week and the passion.

I think it was good that we paused for a while and soundly parked in the season of Lent—a time of introspection, self-searching, taking off some things and putting on others.

Why? It all has to do with preparing for the great Easter Celebration and what it truly represents.

Thank God the story doesn't end on the cross or behind the rolled stone of a borrowed tomb.

Some thought this miracle worker from Galilee had failed his mission and all that he promised was for naught. Even his disciples went back to fishing. But he made it clear just before his triumphant entry into Jerusalem on what we now have come to know as Palm Sunday—that he would be betrayed. And he was. That he would die.

And he did. And he would be buried. And he was.

However, he also said that on the third day he would rise again. I am not quite sure his disciples were paying attention when he said that part—or, they just didn't understand the deeper meaning of this prediction. However, and I might add—HALLELUJAH!—the grave couldn't hold him.

Continued on Page 2

## WORSHIP IN APRIL

**Apr. 1**—The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, Mark 16:1-8

**Apr. 8**—The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, John 20:19-31

**Apr. 15**—The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, 1 John 3:1-7

**Apr. 22**—The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, John 10:11-18

**Apr. 29**—The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, John 15:1-8



## Circle of Concern

### Joys:

Cheryl Werner graduation

### Bereavement:

Charles Kemp

### For Guidance and Healing:

Pastor Chuck, Henry Prince, Len Ricchi, Mary Smith, Steve Shadbolt, David Henson, Marjorie Bates, Montana Queen, Lynn Russo, Joe Wynter, Makeba & Veniece Herb, David Henson, 106th Grabeski, Grace, Carol Moor, Brian, Jennifer Kratz, Bill & Mary Falvy, Ted Dew, Harry Kellers

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#### Facilities:

**Geri Sheridan** in Brookhaven Health Care Facility, 801 Gazzola Dr., East Patchogue

**Alice Zahnd** in Gurwin Jewish Nursing Facility, 68 Hauppauge Rd., Commack, NY

**Ed Dew** in Sunrise Assisted Living, 320 Patchogue Holbrook Rd., Holbrook, NY

**Len Ricchi**, in Medford Multicare, 315 Horseblock Rd., Medford, 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



## Victory (From Page 1)

On that third morning Jesus' prediction indeed came true and he rose from that grave. Now, as people of the resurrection, Easter people, we can see in retrospect that our sins were nailed to that cross on Calvary's hill.

And through his shed blood and resurrection every single person is given an opportunity to ask for forgiveness and to be redeemed and reconciled with God. Sometimes I think people take that most important aspect of the gospel too lightly.

Being a Christian is much more than being a member of a church. Because, you see, the church can't save you. Being a Christian is more than doing good works. Because, again, good works can't save you. Only Jesus' shed blood and His sacrifice on the cross and his resurrection can save an individual.

Therefore, I pray as we begin this new month of April, a new season of Spring—and, more importantly, Easter—we would completely surrender our lives to Christ. It is the only time in history where surrender leads to victory. Surrendering with you and wishing you a blessed Easter, I remain,  
In His Grip

—Pastor Chuck

## BAFFA Concert

Sunday, April 8

4:00 PM

John Rutter's *The Gift of Life*

Reception to follow

## Dinner at Friendly's

Medford

Tuesday, May 8

5:00–8:00 PM

15% of the profit is donated to our church.

## An Easter Prayer

Would we be counted among the doubters hiding in the shadow cast by that cruel cross?

Or, when challenged, like Peter openly deny you?

There are times, Lord when doubts assail and the distance between us seems to increase.

There are times, Lord when sin has its hold, like a barrier between us that will not move.

Who is there we can turn to when we feel so overwhelmed?

Who can roll away the stone and reveal the empty tomb?

No-one but you, Jesus, no-one but you!

—[faithandworship.com](http://faithandworship.com)

# United Methodist Church of Patchogue

## April 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> 10:00 a.m.— Easter Worship 1:00 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 5:00 p.m.—AME	<b>2</b> <b>Office Closed</b> 7:00 p.m.—AA	<b>3</b> 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10:00 a.m.— Noon—Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—AA	<b>4</b> 7:30 p.m.—AME Service	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 10:00 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—NA	<b>7</b> 7:00 p.m.—BAFFA Rehearsal 7:30 p.m.—AME
<b>8</b> 10:00 a.m.— Communion Worship/Sunday School 11:30 a.m.— Confirmation Class 1:00 p.m.—Pentecostal MF 4:00 p.m.—BAFFA Concert 5:00 p.m.—AME	<b>9</b> <b>Office Closed</b> 7:00 p.m.—AA	<b>10</b> 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10:00 a.m.— Noon—Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—AA	<b>11</b> 7:30 p.m.—AME Service	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 10:00 a.m.—ESL 6:00 p.m.—Youth Meeting 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—NA	<b>14</b> 7:30 p.m.—AME
<b>15</b> 10 a.m.— Worship/Sunday School 11:30 a.m.— Confirmation Class 1:00 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 5:00 p.m.—AME	<b>16</b> <b>Office Closed</b> 7:00 p.m.—AA	<b>17</b> 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10:00 a.m.— Noon—Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—AA	<b>18</b> 7:30 p.m.—AME Service	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 10:00 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—NA	<b>21</b> 7:30 p.m.—AME
<b>22</b> 10 a.m.— Worship/Sunday School 11:30 a.m.— Confirmation Class 1:00 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 5:00 p.m.—AME	<b>23</b> <b>Office Closed</b> 7:00 p.m.—AA	<b>24</b> 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10:00 a.m.— Noon—Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—AA	<b>25</b> 7:30 p.m.—AME Service	<b>26</b> 5:00 p.m.—Wesley Dinner	<b>27</b> 10:00 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—NA	<b>28</b> 7:30 p.m.—AME
<b>29</b> 10 a.m.— Worship/Sunday School 11:30 a.m.— Confirmation Class 11:30 a.m.—Trustees 1:00 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 5:00 p.m.—AME	<b>30</b> <b>Office Closed</b> 7:00 p.m.—AA					

## Final Report Coming on Church Direction

**H**eading into its homestretch, the Commission on a Way Forward met in March to prepare its final report for bishops.

The 32-member commission is helping the bishops try to find a way through The United Methodist Church's decades-long divisions around how the church ministers with LGBTQ people.

That's no easy task in a denomination whose 12.5 million-membership stretches from countries where same-gender marriage is legal to countries where same-gender activity is a crime.

"By listening and through reflections I have learned—in all humility—that unity, which seems so simple in the church, is fragile because each person has their own personality, their own cultural and religious context, their own education, their own life experiences, and their own truth," Hortense Aka, a commission member from Côte d'Ivoire, said in a press release.

As with its previous gatherings over the past 15 months, the commission's second-to-last meeting March 19-22 in Los Angeles was behind closed doors. Its report also is not public.

The denomination's bishops will use the commission's report when they meet April 29-May 4 to determine what proposals to submit to the special 2019 General Conference. The commission will meet again later in May to help provide resources for the

wider church, including General Conference delegates.

General Conference, the denomination's top lawmaking assembly, will have ultimate say on what direction the church takes. Nothing, at this point, is final.

At present, the denomination's Book of Discipline says that while all people are of sacred worth, the practice of homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching." The book bans the ordination of "self-avowed practicing" gay clergy and the blessing of same-gender unions. However, some individual pastors and conferences—regional units of the church—publicly **disregard those policies**.

The commission is focusing on two options that would alter the status quo.

**The one-church model:** Under this plan, each conference would be able to decide whether to ordain LGBTQ individuals as clergy. Each pastor would be able to decide whether to perform same-sex weddings or unions. Each local church would be able to decide whether to allow same-sex weddings in its sanctuary or receive an openly gay pastor. Those who could not in good conscience participate in same-sex weddings or ordination of LGBTQ clergy would not be required to do so. Central conferences—church regions in Africa, Europe and the Philippines—could maintain their own standards on ordination and marriage. The model would essentially make legal what is already happening in some parts of the connection.

**The multi-branch model:** Under this plan, United Methodists would share doctrine, services and one Council of Bishops, while also creating different branches. The five U.S. jurisdictions would be replaced by three connectional conferences, each covering the whole country, based on theology and perspective on LGBTQ ministry—progressive, contextual and traditional branches. In this case, contextual means allowing churches flexibility in ministry with LGBTQ people as best fits their mission field. Annual conferences would decide with which connectional conference to affiliate. Central conferences would remain as they are or could choose to affiliate with one of the three connectional conferences. This model likely would require amendments to the denomination's constitution.

"We are seeking to focus more closely on the values that are important to United Methodists—traditional, contextual and progressive," Florida Area Bishop Kenneth H. Carter Jr., one of three bishops serving as commission moderators, told United Methodist News Service. "We did work on the proposals but tried to go more deeply into what is important about them to our mission." The commission, as a body, has not formed a consensus behind either plan.

Matt Berryman, one of three openly gay commission members, told UMNS that to him either plan falls short of equality for LGBTQ members.

"We are experiencing attempts to change the church such that LGBT people are going to have a greater sense of inclusion, but it is by no means anywhere close to what justice would look like," he said. "Is it better than what we have? Yes. Does it model the kingdom of God? No."

Still, he said, of the two possibilities, he prefers the one-church model.

The Rev. Thomas Lambrecht, another commission member, said the commission meeting was notable for "a very good spirit and brutal honesty in terms of where people are at." "The same divisions and impasse that are apparent in the broader church are apparent in the commission," he added.

Lambrecht is the vice president of Good News, which advocates for maintaining the church's teachings against the practice of homosexuality. He said he might be able to live with the multi-branch plan, but that would not be his preference. Instead he would prefer a plan that includes great enforcement of current strictures that "graciously allows people who cannot live with that find another venue."

Good News and other unofficial advocacy groups within the denomination already are staking their positions.

Uniting Methodists earlier in March announced support for the one-church model—arguing it is grounded in Scripture, church doctrine and Wesleyan tradition. In a world torn by polarization, the group said in a statement, the one-church model "provides a countercul-

tural witness of unity in Christ and sets in place a process by which the church will continue to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

The Wesleyan Covenant Association, meanwhile, has called consistently for greater enforcement of current rules and, barring that, preparations for a church split.

"The WCA is committed to upholding our sexual ethics, definitions of marriage and ordination standards for the simple reason that they are grounded in Scripture and the historic teachings of the faith," wrote the Rev. Keith Boyette in the first of a series of blog posts on the models.

"Regardless of the recommendation of the COB (Council of Bishops), we will contend for this position through legislation submitted to the special called 2019 General Conference."

Leaders of both the Uniting Methodists and Wesleyan Covenant Association serve on the commission.

Bishops and commission members have been meeting with various groups of church leaders around the connection to get their thoughts and update them on the Way Forward work.

"I am hearing a deep commitment to our mission in the world — and this is true for our global partnerships and to the essential local acts of service that are a part of the church's presence in every community," said Carter, the incoming Council of Bishops president.

"The connection is for the sake of this mission, and many who engage in conversation want this to continue."

He said he also has heard anxiety and fear from people caught up in the church's internal divisions.

"Yet this is not where most of our people live," he said. "This is confirmed for me again and again as I speak and listen with stakeholders."

—Heather Hahn, UMCNS



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# Don't Forget Your Pledge

The deadline for the May issue  
of **The Link** is April 20  
Please email your copy to [gbhoag@optonline.net](mailto:gbhoag@optonline.net).

## April Birthday

Apr. 2 Samantha Rubino



"Just a minute. I'm flipping a coin  
to see if I should tithe this or not."



## Thoughts, Prayers and Advocacy

**O**n Feb. 14, 17 people were killed at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Many learned of the news as they were preparing to attend Ash Wednesday services, which mark the beginning of the season of Lent. This was also Valentine's Day, and others were planning celebrations.

The murders penetrated the consciousness of our nation, as we began to learn of the deaths of students, teachers and staff. Not so long ago we had similarly learned of shootings at a Baptist church in Texas, a country music concert in Las Vegas and earlier at a nightclub in Orlando and an elementary school in Connecticut.

We were again in the tragic cycle of grieving and mourning, questioning and reflecting. United Methodists attend and teach at this high school and our churches are adjacent to it. How could we respond?

The repetitive cycle of mass shootings in public places had recently elicited responses that our "thoughts and prayers" were with the victims. And yet the repetitive nature of the trauma had begun to render this assurance, even if well-intentioned, as hollow.

In that moment I thought of one of my favorite chapters in the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 13, and a verse in that letter: "I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal..."

Some of you will recognize these words from scripture and the continuing refrain, "but do not have

love..." It occurs to me that the critique of the language of "thoughts and prayers" is precisely the insight of the Apostle Paul. Thinking is one of God's great gifts to humanity. To think about someone is to allow them to enter one's mind. Prayer is one of God's great gifts to a Christian. To pray is to open our lives to the indwelling holiness of God.

The critique of "thoughts and prayers" is the perception that thinking and praying can be an avoidance of the response God is actually calling us to make. We were called to something more. Again, it was there in the scripture: "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." How, I wondered, could we love the students of Parkland, and the one who murdered them, and the survivors around them? My thoughts and prayers, in the present moment, were compromised if they could not be integrated with a love that hoped and endured. In other words, what did it mean to love our neighbors? The horrors of Parkland convinced me that we needed to move beyond thoughts and prayers. So we asked the people of the Florida Conference to supplement thoughts and prayers with two specific acts.

First, we read the names of the deceased in the Sunday morning worship services following Ash Wednesday, and lighted candles were set upon altars in memory of these lives and symbolic of the coming of Jesus Christ into our darkness.

Second, we wrote 5,000 letters to our political representatives, at every level, appealing to them to act in such

a way that our children and grandchildren would know a safer future. We wrote as United Methodists, in the name of Jesus, and not as members of political parties. We wrote because we had heard the voices of Parkland and Orlando, Las Vegas and Sutherland and Newtown. We knew that God loved this world. We loved the world that God created. And we wanted our love to be more than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. We linked this appeal to the United Methodist Church's resolution on Gun Violence and documented them on the 5000Letters.com website.

We were seeking to build a non-partisan movement that would change our laws. Not one that repealed our constitutional amendments, but a law that would abolish assault weapons, a law that would protect our children and grandchildren, and a law that would make it as difficult to purchase a gun as it is to buy an automobile or a medication, or to rent an apartment.

My original concept of 5,000 letters had come in consultation with a few trusted leaders, but more deeply its origins were in the feeding of the 5,000. Amidst a large gathering of hungry people — and the rational response to the impossibility of feeding them all —

Jesus had said, to his disciples, "You give them something to eat!" And if Jesus cared about the hunger of his children, he surely cares also about their safety!

**Continued on Page 8**

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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



## Thoughts, Prayers (From Page 7)

One month later, approximately 5,300 letters have been documented and mailed to political leaders. In this time, we have witnessed the moral clarity and courage of the students of Parkland High School. And laws in Florida related to gun safety have begun to change.

As I worshipped on Ash Wednesday, the evening of the murders in Parkland, I reflected on Jesus' call to repent and believe the gospel. As his followers, we are being called to repent from our participation in a culture of death, to acknowledge the harm we do to others, and to claim the power of the cross that breaks the cycle of violence and retaliation.

In Lent, we have grieved. In Lent, we have taken steps toward our own healing, and the healing of others. And in these 40 days we have joined our thoughts and prayers with

an advocacy grounded in a love that is more than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

—Bishop Kenneth H. Carter, Jr.,  
 Florida Area, United Methodist

