

The LINK



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF PATCHOGUE

Since 1791

April 2024

New Beginnings

Spring is here and with the onset of spring, a feeling of rejuvenation and new beginnings fills the air. As the earth shakes off its winter dormancy, we witness the birth of blooming flowers, lush greenery, and the cheerful chirping of birds. Spring symbolizes a period of change and development, both in the natural world and in our own lives. It's a moment to release the past, welcome the future, and invite in new possibilities by clearing out stagnant energies.

Spring offers a chance for a new beginning. It's a moment to break free from old habits or negative behaviors that no longer serve us. Just as nature sheds its old layers to make room for new growth, we too can shed our past selves and aim to evolve into something

greater. Whether you are new to faith or have been on your spiritual journey for a long time, these 10 steps will guide you on renewing yourself spiritually. They offer essential insights to rejuvenate your faith and deepen your connection with God.

Understand The Meaning of Spiritual Renewal

To engage in spiritual renewal, you must let go of old habits and patterns that no longer serve you, and welcome new ways of living that align with your beliefs.

Create Time For A Personal Retreat

A personal retreat is crucial for spiritual growth and rejuvenation. Spend private moments with God. It provides an opportunity to distance yourself from the hectic pace of daily life and make room for hearing God's voice.

Examine Your Heart

Be willing to look honestly at your own heart and motivations.

Study The Word Of God

Studying scriptures enables us to gain deeper insight into God's intentions for us and helps us navigate towards living a life that resonates with His will.

Continued on Page 2

WORSHIP IN APRIL

Apr. 7— Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 133

Apr. 14—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 4

Apr. 21—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 23

Apr. 28—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 22:25-31



Circle of Concern

Bereavement

The family of **Carolyn Hoag**, sister in law of George. (Gail Hoag)

The family of **Leah Dunne Nash**, a 44 year old mother of three daughters, who died in a car accident. (Gail Hoag)

Healing

Kenny Zaleski a 7 year old boy in need of a heart transplant. (Lenny Pierson)

Frank Rice (brother in law of Betty) who had surgery, along with his wife Linda and Linda's mother, both women are battling cancer . (Betty Rice)

A safe and successful surgical procedure for **Dave Hollowell**. (Wendy Hollowell)

Donal Morrissey, Jr. who is recovering from a corneal abrasion. Continued prayers for his brother **Justin** who is recovering from a fracture to his temporal bone. These boys are Linda's grandsons. (Linda Werner)

Yvette who is in the hospital with complications from ALS. (Barbara Lyons)

Joy

Jack Ryan is going to Fort Hamilton for his processing to join the US Navy. Jack just had his 18th birthday. (Michelle Ryan)

Continued Prayers

John Healy, Jr. Emily Baker (3 years old), Anita Helfst, Ken Hollowell, Steven Rice, Young Kenny Zalesky , Bianca Brown,

Soroya Brown, Cynthia Brown , Baby Kip Heitshusen, Flo Carde, Beverly Shrifin, Michelle Puglia, Diane Helfst, Diane Lyons, Rob Lyons. Denise Oleksiak, Helen Smith, Danielle Hertzog, Susan Woods, Kenny Zalesgus, Estelle, Mary, Diane Helfst, David Hoag, Rhoda Willis, Daisy Hill, Brenda Miller, Dolores, Paul Halayko, Suzanne Tierney, Kimberly Helfst

—Kathy Keating
Keats1002@gmail.com

New Beginnings (From Page 1)

Engage In Prayer & Fasting

Prayer and fasting have been impactful spiritual practices that believers have utilized over time to strengthen their connection with God, seek His direction, and rejuvenate their spiritual vitality.

Worship With A Community Of Believers

Prioritizing communal worship is crucial. As Christians, we are encouraged to worship together with other believers.

Take Care of Your Body

We can discover peace and rejuvenation through Jesus by making self-care a daily priority. Taking care of our physical well-being is crucial for spiritual revitalization. By ensuring we get adequate sleep, consume nutritious meals, engage in regular exercise, and set aside time to rest and recharge, we can show reverence to God with our bodies and embrace His boundless love and mercy.

Renew Your Mind

Revitalizing yourself spiritually requires rejuvenating your mindset. Actively

searching for positive and inspiring content that aligns with your beliefs is essential.

Seek Spiritual Direction & Accountability

Seek a reliable spiritual mentor or counselor who can support your spiritual development and help you stay responsible for your choices and behavior.

Stay Open To Spiritual Renewal And Awakening

Spiritual renewal is a continuous process rather than a one-time occurrence. The final step in the spiritual renewal journey involves remaining receptive to spiritual awakening and renewal.

Spiritual renewal is a continuous journey that demands purpose, commitment, and prayer. It involves a daily decision we consciously make. By adhering to the 10 steps provided above, you can nurture a flourishing spiritual existence. Implementing these subtle adjustments can kick start a path towards spiritual rejuvenation, leaving you with increased vitality, concentration, and contentment.

I want to encourage you to join our Saturday morning bible study 9:00am – 10:00am via Zoom. Here is the zoom information: Meeting ID: 837 2969 8665; Passcode: 956903. Hope to see you there.

—Blessings, Pastor Debbie



United Methodist Church of Patchogue

April 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 10:00 a.m.- Noon-Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.-AA	3 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	4 7:00 p.m.-AA	5 10:00 a.m.- ESL 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	6 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.- Zoom Bible Study
7 10:00 a.m.- Worship/ Sunday School 6:00 p.m.- Pentecostal	8 Office Closed 7:00 p.m.-AA	9 10:00 a.m.- Noon-Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.-AA	10 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	11 7:00 p.m.-AA	12 10:00 a.m.- ESL 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	13 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.- Zoom Bible Study
14 10:00 a.m.- Worship/ Sunday School 6:00 p.m.- Pentecostal	15 Office Closed 7:00 p.m.-AA	16 10:00 a.m.- Noon-Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.-AA	17 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	7:00 p.m.-AA	19 10:00 a.m.- ESL 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	20 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.- Zoom Bible Study
21 10:00 a.m.- Worship/ Sunday School 6:00 p.m.- Pentecostal	22 Office Closed 7:00 p.m.-AA	23 10:00 a.m.- Noon-Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.-AA	24 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	25 4:30-6:30 p.m.-Wesley Dinner 7:00 p.m.-AA	26 10:00 a.m.- ESL 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	27 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.- Zoom Bible Study 10:00 a.m.- UMW
28 10:00 a.m.- Worship/ Sunday School 6:00 p.m.- Pentecostal	29 Office Closed 7:00 p.m.-AA	30 10:00 a.m.- Noon-Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.-AA				

Easter Calendar Confusion

One of the disputes that split the early church was over Christ's resurrection — not whether it happened but when to celebrate it.

Some of the faithful in Jerusalem and Asia Minor insisted on observing Christianity's holiest day on 14 Nisan, the day of Passover preparations on the Jewish lunar calendar.

These Christians — called Quartodecimans (from the Latin for 14) — commemorated both the crucifixion and resurrection on 14 Nisan regardless of what day of the week it fell. Meanwhile, a growing number of gentile Christians celebrated the empty tomb on the Sunday after 14 Nisan, while using the preceding Friday to remember Christ's crucifixion.

The conflict came to a head in A.D. 197 when Pope Victor I excommunicated the Quartodecimans — aiming to distance Christianity from Judaism and make Christian practices consistent. But Christianity's calendar debate continued.

"Many of us have this assumption that there was this standard practice of Jesus and the apostles ... and any kind of differences we see in the early church were divergences from that original pure practice. But it didn't work that way at all," said the Rev. L. Edward Phillips. He is an ordained United Methodist elder and associate professor of historical theology and Christian worship at Emory University's Candler School of Theology in Atlanta.

"The way it worked was that as Christianity spread, it always interacted with local practices. And it just

gradually occurred to Christians to start doing certain kinds of things, but it was more local than it was original practice."

When and how Christians mark the passion and resurrection of Jesus still varies around the globe. Christians in the Western church — namely Catholics and Protestants — use a different calendar than their Eastern Orthodox Christian siblings. They also have different names for their Resurrection festivities.

So while English-speaking Catholics and Protestants celebrate Easter on March 31 this year, Eastern Orthodox look forward to honoring Pascha (from the Greek word for Passover) on May 5. Depending on where they live, even United Methodists can differ on the date when they sing out Charles Wesley's beloved hymn, "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today."

None of these variations alter Christians' shared faith that "Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again." But the disparate traditions offer insight into the tensions that have shaped Christianity since the beginning and the way Christians have managed to share ministry together despite those tensions.

"Rather than thinking of the history of the church as a river flowing into a delta with all these divergent streams," Phillips said, "it was more like a tree in which you have all these roots that gradually become consolidated into a trunk."

Now, that tree of Christianity has grown branches — including The United Methodist Church — that have spread the faith around the globe.

What the Bible says

On the question of when Christians should celebrate Easter, the Bible itself offers limited guidance.

Paul provides the New Testament's earliest account of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, writing simply "that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures and that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures."

The four Gospels, written later, all say the crucifixion and resurrection took place around the Jewish festival of Passover but differ slightly in the exact timing. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke (called synoptic because they look similar) place the crucifixion on the day after the Passover meal. However, the Gospel of John sets Christ's death on the day the paschal lambs were sacrificed for Passover, 14 Nisan.

All the Gospels agree that Mary Magdalene and other women disciples discovered the empty tomb on the first day of the week: Sunday. That is why Christians began the tradition of worshipping on Sundays, rather than the Sabbath, which is on the seventh day of the week, Saturday. It should be noted that in the Jewish calendar, all days begin at nightfall — which is why the Jewish people honor the Sabbath from sundown Friday through the sundown Saturday. In the same vein, some early Christians — and many Catholics to this day — hold worship on Saturday evenings.

In any case, each Sunday came to be viewed as a little Easter in itself, which is why the season of Lent does not include them in its 40-day count. Instead, Sundays became the day that marked both the first day of creation in

Genesis and the day of the new creation in Christ.

Setting the Easter formula

Still, disputes persisted over when to celebrate the Resurrection feast day itself. From the get-go, a source of tension among early Christians was just how closely they should follow Jewish law and tradition. In the case of Easter, the disagreement was over whether the Christian observance should be in line with the Jewish calendar's timing of Passover.

In the fourth century, Roman Emperor Constantine got involved. After legalizing Christianity, the emperor wanted the leaders of this growing and influential religion to resolve their fiercest quarrels. So it was that the head of the imperial power that had crucified Christ ended up shaping the Christian faith.

In A.D. 325, Constantine summoned bishops and deacons from across the Roman Empire to the first Council of Nicaea in what is today Iznik, Turkey. During the world's first ecumenical council, the Christian leaders sought to address the biggest controversy of their day: the divinity of Christ. The council ultimately affirmed the Christian faith in the Triune God and approved a statement that Jesus was "of one being with the Father," a phrase that eventually became part of the Nicene Creed.

The council also decided that Christ's resurrection should be celebrated independent of the Jewish calendar and on a uniform date.

Already a general consensus was developing that Easter should occur on the Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox. The fourth-century Christians decided they

would use their own astronomical computations to determine when that date fell.

But at a time when pastors couldn't just check their daily planners for that year's holidays, it was up to bishops to send a letter each year to notify their flocks when to celebrate Christianity's most prominent movable feast.

One of those letters proved to be historically significant. While still a deacon, Athanasius had been one of the outspoken defenders of Christ's divinity at Nicaea. Later in a festal letter sent in A.D. 367, Athanasius — then bishop of Alexandria — included the first recorded list of all 27 books that now comprise the New Testament.

"In these alone the teaching of godliness is proclaimed," he wrote. "No one may add to them, and nothing may be taken away from them." For that reason, Athanasius is sometimes credited with establishing the canon. But scholars tend to think that's overstating the case.

"The anthology of writings that we call the New Testament was not pulled out of thin air," said J. Warren Smith, professor of historical theology at Duke Divinity School in Durham, North Carolina. "They were ones that had already been a part of Christian practice. ... So, I think he's largely repeating stuff that already had been part of practice, whether in Alexandria or elsewhere."

Nevertheless, what Athanasius does provide is a window into Christian practice when traditions start to become much more uniform.

Calendar drift

Even with a set formula for fixing the date of Easter, discrepancies eventually would appear.

One of the challenges faced by all three Abrahamic faiths — Judaism, Christianity and Islam — is that they all, to some extent, rely on a lunar calendar. But the revolutions of the moon around the Earth do not line up well with the Earth's trip around the sun.

Because their faith began in the Roman Empire, Christians used the Julian calendar established by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C. The Julian calendar calculated that the earth takes 365¼ days to circle the sun and added a leap year every four years that added a day to the calendar to make up the difference.

But the solar year is not exactly 365¼ days — it's about 11 minutes less. By the 16th century, astronomers realized what the Julian calendar identified as the vernal equinox was about 10 days off from the actual vernal equinox — the date when day and night are of equal length. Pope Gregory XIII commissioned a new calendar to adjust for this equinox drift because it was so fundamental to the calculation of Easter. He established this new Gregorian calendar in 1582, and so people — at least those who paid attention to papal bulls — went to bed on Oct. 4 and awoke on Oct. 15 that year.

Only trouble was that by the 16th century, a significant portion of Christianity was not paying attention to the pope.

Continued on Page 7

Ruland

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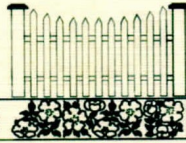


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Save Your Old Magazines

Dave 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 May issue
of **The Link** is April 19

Please email your copy to gbhoag@optonline.net.

Easter Date (From Page 5)

In the year 1054, the Eastern Christians (led by the patriarch in Constantinople) and Western Christians (led by the pope) mutually excommunicated each other. Those excommunications remained on the books until 1965.

In 1517, the Protestant Reformation began, further splintering the church. In fact, European countries that were dominated by Protestants only slowly began to adopt the Gregorian calendar in the 18th century. Britain and its American colonies began using the Gregorian calendar in September 1752. By then, the adjustment required 11 days to move to the actual equinox. The shift also meant the birthday of Methodism's founder John Wesley moved from June 17 to June 28 just before he turned 50.

Greece became the last European country to adopt the Gregorian calendar for commercial purposes in 1923.

Impact on United Methodists

But even now, Greek Orthodox and other Orthodox Christians continue to use the Julian calendar in setting their dates for Lent and Pascha, the Orthodox Easter celebration.

Among other things, it means that Pascha will always come either after or at the end of Passover in the Jewish calendar. Christians who use the Gregorian calendar don't have that synchronicity. This year, Passover begins at sundown April 23 and ends at sundown April 30.

Incidentally, the Russian Orthodox Church uses the Julian calendar year-round, which is why the church's

Christmas celebrations on their liturgical calendar's Dec. 25 correspond with Jan. 7 on the Gregorian calendar. All of this has bearing on how United Methodists worship. In countries where Eastern Orthodox Christianity is predominant, United Methodists often will wait to celebrate Christ's resurrection alongside their Orthodox neighbors.

Romanian United Methodists, for example, typically celebrate on Pascha, said Sarah Putnam, a United Methodist missionary working in the country.

"For Eastern Europeans, we generally all follow the Orthodox calendar with the exception of some Hungarians and Slovak-speaking churches from Serbia, who celebrate on both days," she said.

Getting on the same page

The World Council of Churches, founded in 1948 in the wake of World War II, brings together Orthodox Christians and Protestants to bear witness to their common faith in Christ. What is now The United Methodist Church was among the ecumenical fellowship's founding members. WCC leaders spend much of their time in the work of peacemaking and justice to address crises around the world. However, the fellowship also seeks to foster renewal in unity and worship — including working to get Christians on the same calendar.

"Calendar divergence affects very practical aspects of the living relations between the churches," said Andrej Jeftić, director of the WCC's Faith and Order Commission and an Eastern Orthodox theologian.

"For instance, organizing work schedules and coordinating meetings are affected by this divergence. Additionally, it raises a set of theological questions about our unity and witness in the world."

In 1997, the World Council of Churches proposed a calendar reform that gained no traction. But next year offers a unique opportunity, Jeftić said, for "aligning our ecclesial biorhythms."

An important anniversary

Next year will mark the 1,700th anniversary of that First Council of Nicaea when Christians first formalized the goal of a uniform date for celebrating the resurrection. As it happens, 2025 also will see the Julian and Gregorian calendars line up so that both Easter and Pascha will both be on April 20. Passover will also conclude at sundown that same day. The WCC is planning a yearlong series of events to commemorate Nicaea, including the sixth World Conference on Faith and Order in October 2025.

"Given that the common celebration of Easter was a major focus of the Council of Nicaea 325 A.D., this commemoration presents an opportunity to reexamine the issue at the Faith and Order World Conference and assess the progress made in discussions surrounding it," Jeftić said.

"The symbolic convergence of Easter celebrations across churches in 2025, alongside the Nicaea commemoration, provides a unique momentum to highlight the significance of this matter and revisit theological discussions concerning it."

—Heather Hahn, UMNS

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 Worship Video Livestreaming at PatchogueUMC.Org
 Previous services available.



Financial Secretary Resignation

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

It's very hard for me to say this, I am stepping down from the position of Financial Secretary as of June 1, 2024. I have been in this position for seven years and there are many other work-related opportunities in the church that I would like to explore. I feel that I can't give my full attention to more than one position at a time.

While in the position of Financial Secretary I've become closer to many in our church family. It's helped me to become more comfortable with many of the people I've been worshipping with for years. It's a nice feeling.

The position isn't difficult and I will sit with whoever takes over until they feel confident that they can do it alone. I promise there will be no pressure.

I'm looking forward with working with the new Financial Secretary!

Your sister in Christ,

Helen Smith


A Prayer For Spring

How many are Your works, Lord! In wisdom You made them all; You make springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains. They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. The birds of the sky nest by the waters; they sing among the branches. You water the mountains from Your upper chambers; the land is satisfied by the fruit of Your work. You make grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens human hearts, oil to make their faces shine, and bread that sustains their hearts. The trees of the Lord are well watered, the cedars of Lebanon that You planted. There the birds make their nests; the stork has its home in the junipers. How many are Your works, Lord! In wisdom You made them all. —**Bob Hostetler (based on Psalm 104), Guideposts.com**

??? Bible Quiz **???**

What two rivers that we still know today are named in the Creation account in Genesis 2?

- A. Nile
- B. Yangtze
- C. Jordan
- D. Tigris
- E. Ganges
- F. Euphrates



Answer: D & F (See Genesis 2:10-14)