

TheLink



The United Methodist Church of Patchogue

February 2014

Sponsored this month by Patti and Joe Dudek, Flo Carde

Edited By George Hoag

Do It Now

Dear Family in Christ,

My beloved, let's say you had twenty-four hours before departing this world whether by death or anything else. Would you live your day a little different? I'm sure you have probably come across this question before.

Truthfully, most people don't even like to talk about things like this. I mean the ultimatum. We sure do spend a lot of our time thinking about the things we have done in the past, and contemplate the things we would have done another way, but we are missing the fact that we overlook our closest opportunity of change. It is the present! It is right in front of us. In front of us? Well, yes. It's staring right at us all the time.

Even now as you meditate on the question, part of your life has past and is gone. The past went right by you smoothly even as you sat! But if you knew you only had a few remaining hours on earth, maybe, just maybe you would consider doing something else with your minutes. When we consider the possibility of life in this way, suddenly we start to think of what is of importance and what is not important and of value. Somehow when we have

Continued on Page 5

Worship In February

Feb. 2—Rev. Ernesto Sanchez, *Being Blessed*, Micah 6:1-8, Matthew 5:1-12.

Feb. 9—Rev. Ernesto Sanchez, *What Are We Choosing To Reveal?* Isaiah 58:7-10, Matthew 5:13-16.

Feb. 16—Rev. Ernesto Sanchez, *Healed and Reconciled*, Deuteronomy 30:15-20, Matthew 5:21-37.

Feb. 23—Rev. Ernesto Sanchez, *Laying A Foundation*, Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18, Matthew 5:38-48.



Circle of Concern

For Joys:

The engagement of David Durett Jr. to Jane Brenner on Christmas Day.

For Bereavement:

For the Family and Friends of Keith Hall.

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, Patti Dudek, Terisa John, Abigail Springhorn, Rocky Miller, Robin, Kevin, Jasmine Arettines, Carolyn, James Penney, Geri Sheridan, Paul Rodrigas, Chris and Bonnie Hoagland, Jim Hayward and family, Corey, Keith Girouard, Laura and Louis Diamond, Chris Jackson, Sylvia and Ellie Gayco.

These Who are Hospitalized:

Keyana White, Andrew Miller, Wayne Williams, Frank Whalen.

These at Home:

Wilfredo Franco, Michael Curtis Sr., Sandy Burrell, Chester Gibson, Grace Cruger, Dave Hollowell, John Puk, Patricia Dudek, Harold, Carolyn Willis, Loretta Harrigan, George Roessler, Richard Vining.

These who are in Rehab or Nursing Care Facilities:

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

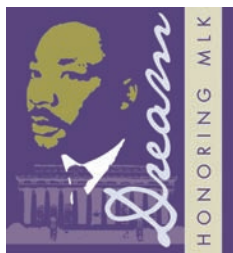
Esther Davies in Brookhaven Health Facility, 801 Gazzolla Drive, E. Patchogue, NY 11772 Room 78D, 631-289-3150.

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



O God our eternal Father, we praise Thee for gifts of mind with which thou hast endowed us. We are able to rise out of the half-realities of the sense world to a world of ideal beauty and eternal truth. Teach us, we pray Thee, how to use this great gift of reason and imagination so that it shall not be a curse but a blessing. Grant us visions that shall lift us from worldiness and sin into the light of thine own holy presence. Through Jesus Chnst we pray. Amen

—**Martin Luther King**

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

New Adult Study

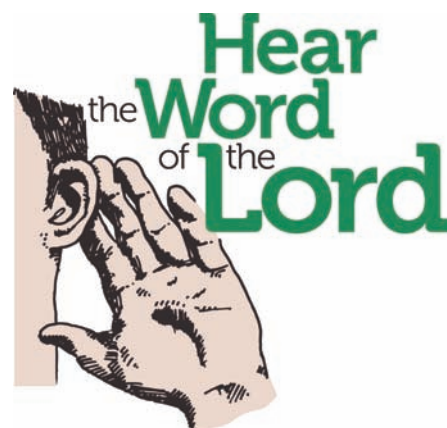


On Wednesday, Feb. 5, we will begin a new adult study called *Animate: Faith*. This course imaginatively explores central topics of

Christianity. In each session, the group will watch a video featuring a leading voice from the Christian faith, spend time on personal reflection and journaling, and share ideas with the group. Each session delves into a faith topic: God, religion, Jesus, salvation, the cross, the Bible, and church.

We meet at 7:30 PM on Wednesday nights in the choir room and all are welcome. The cost for a book is \$15. Please contact Debbie Kolacki at 363-6499 or debbiek88@yahoo.com if you'd like to join or would like more information.

We also have an ongoing Bible study based on that day's lectionary readings on Sunday mornings at 9:00 AM, Cloud Room. Just show up or contact Debbie Kolacki for more information.



The deadline for contributions to the March edition of **TheLink** is February 14. Please e-mail your copy to gbhoag@optonline.net.

LESSONS ALONG

the Way

May God's peace be with you!

I did not submit a column to the Link for December and January. It wasn't because I was busy buying Christmas presents or watching too much football, either – it was because I was in the throes of a spiritual lethargy approaching despair. As is all-too-typical for me, I “limited my distribution on a need to know basis” of that fact, rather than turn to those in my church family whom I knew could help me out of my malaise, such as my Pastor, brothers and sisters in Emmaus, or any number of others. Consequently, any column I might have written would have been words without heart, and I value all of you too highly to do that. Not for the first time, God has helped me find my heart again.

There is an extraordinary woodcut created by M.C. Escher (you know, the guy who does the interlocking-salamanders and -birds), created in 1946 and honoring the Dutch underground movement. Symbolically, it seems to represent all of Europe climbing out of the darkness that was the Third Reich, and into the light. It is one of the most powerful visual images I have ever seen. If you have internet access, simply do a search for “Escher – The Well”. If you can, do it now...

Why this seeming non-sequitur? Because for many, many years I have relied on the strength of my hands or my mind or my will to climb out of wells I have dug for myself. And because I am human, I continue to try the exact same thing, while expecting

an entirely different set of results. What I now know (and sometimes still blatantly deny, based on my actions) is that God, through Jesus Christ, will give me all the strength and support I need to do His work. God is pretty good about dealing with my continual need for re-education and re-direction – okay, let's face it, God is pretty good about everything! – so, for the last three weekends running, He has sent me help. Angels, if you will.

Two weekends ago, it was Barbara Becker's beautiful sermon about the journey—the whole journey— of the three wise men to see the Christ child, wherein she spoke of them being “uplifted with joy”, “transformed by their experience”, and “uplifted by the presence of Emmanuel, God With Us”. Last weekend, Kathie and I met with a very spiritual Emmaus couple in our church family: through some painful admissions of the spirit on my part, and through three people who love me with Christ-like love, the gap between the Lord and me seemed to melt away. I know, I know: “if you and God have grown apart, who moved?” And today, a total stranger came into Kathie's and my life, with God's perfect sense of timing; I'll never know which of the three of us needed this new Christian bond the most. Who knows what wondrous situation will come next weekend, or 5 minutes from now?

If you've visited the website above, you saw the strong hands poised to reach for the top rung, and to climb out into the sunlight (the Sunlight of the Spirit, if you will). You saw the vibrant tree, the still-standing house, and the birds in flight. But it's a picture, not a movie, and those hands, no

matter how strong, will never reach the top rung. Hard to believe that I never caught on to that until now – and I first saw the original woodcut about 30 years ago. I can be poised to do great things, or little things, or joyful things, but without relying on the infinite love of God, the compassion and mercy of Jesus, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I am two-dimensional, lifeless, and very much alone.

I have a frog on my desk at work. A green rubber frog, that squeaks if you squeeze it. It was given to me several years ago by an extremely spiritual woman of God, who explained to me that “FROG” stands for “Faithfully Relying On God”. I have yet to be disappointed when I do just that.

I didn't have to dig this latest spiritual well, but I did. I tried to climb out by myself, and I failed. I asked God for help, and He gave it to me.

Case closed.

Yours in Christ,

—Tom Bracken

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birthdays

Feb. 2 Julianna Wright

Celebrate your life! Witness for your faith!

Do It Now (from Page 1)

the impression that time is 'forever' we just waste our time with so much so easily.

Beloved, what thoughts and energies have you been spending during the last few days? Have you been thinking of your inner fears, anguishes, plans, and unpleasant moments? Have you been using up your allotted time with thoughts of God, or of a troubled way of thinking? When we have only hours to live we rapidly want to tell our children that we love them, or we set our house in order, or we quickly finish our life's most ambitious projects. So why wait until it is time to depart this life? The steps of a RIGHTEOUS man and woman are ORDERED of the Lord. Renew your mind today! In the flash of an eye your past will be all you have.

In Christ,

—**Pastor Ernesto Sanchez**

Counters Needed

A very important thing that we must do each week after service is count and record the offering. The United Methodist Church Book of Discipline requires that this function be done by two people who are not husband and wife.

We are in need of people who would be willing to do this once a month. Please see Tom Bracken if you are willing to volunteer.

Remember
the Church
in Your Will

Defrocked Pastor Still Preaching



The Rev. Frank Schaefer, a United Methodist

pastor asked to surrender his ministerial credentials, is still in the pulpit. On Dec. 22 he preached at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington. Schaefer had his ministerial credentials taken from him by the United Methodist Eastern Pennsylvania Annual (regional) Conference Dec. 19. He immediately filed for an appeal.

Foundry is one of several churches that have asked him to speak at worship services, and Schaefer is receiving requests to lecture at universities and be on panels to talk about equality for LGBT people.

The Rev. Dean Snyder, pastor of Foundry, has led national efforts to change the language in the Book of Discipline. He supported Schaefer throughout the trial, sentencing and stripping of Schaefer's ministerial credentials.

Schaefer was found guilty during a church trial Nov. 18-19 of violating church law when he officiated at his son's wedding to another man in 2007. He was appointed to Zion United Methodist Church of Iona, Pa., at the time.

The conference's board of ordained ministry made the decision to follow through with a church trial's penalty to ask Schaefer to surrender his credentials if he cannot uphold the denomination's lawbook "in its entirety."

Schaefer refuses to surrender his

credentials. Schaefer and his legal counsel announced the plans for an appeal in a news conference Thursday afternoon.

"I really don't think they have the power to take them because the trial court said it was up to me to give them up," he said.

The next step will be for the appeal to go to the Northeastern Jurisdictional Committee on Appeals.

According to the General Council on Finance and Administration "the committee on appeals' examination is limited to determining whether or not the weight of the evidence sustains the conviction and whether or not errors were committed that effectively vitiate the conviction. The decision made here is essentially final, aside from a narrow right to appeal to the Judicial Council on the basis of procedural errors."

Schaefer's fate was announced on the same day New Mexico became the 17th state to legalize same-sex marriage. With the changing laws have come more challenges to The United Methodist Church's stance on homosexuality.

The Rev. Stephen Heiss, a pastor in the Upper New York Annual (regional) Conference, will likely face a church trial for officiating at the same-sex ceremony of his daughter in 2002 and more such unions since New York legalized same-sex marriage in 2011.

Two other United Methodist clergy have had formal complaints filed against them and could face trials in 2014.

The Rev. Thomas Ogletree, a retired seminary dean and elder in the New

Continued on Page 7

United Methodist Church of Patchogue

February 2014

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

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Get **IN**volved

Defrocked Pastor (From Page 5)

York Conference, is facing a formal complaint after officiating at the same-sex wedding of his son in 2012. Some clergy filed the complaint against Ogletree after his son's wedding announcement appeared in The New York Times.

The Rev. Sara Thompson Tweedy, also in the New York Conference, is facing a formal complaint that she is a "self-avowed practicing" lesbian, a chargeable offense under church law.

Past history

In Dec. 2004, Irene Elizabeth "Beth" Stroud lost her ministerial credentials in a church trial in the same conference as Schaefer. At that time she also expressed hope for The United Methodist Church.

The former Philadelphia clergywoman, whose sexual orientation led to a Dec. 2, 2004, guilty verdict by a church trial court, had publicly acknowledged that she was living in a committed relationship with another woman. She was found to have violated the church's law book, which forbids the participation of "self-avowed practicing homosexuals" in the ordained ministry.

On April 29, 2005 the Northeast Jurisdiction Committee on Appeals set aside the trial court's verdict and penalty because of legal errors and reinstated Stroud to clergy standing. However in October 2005, the church's Judicial Council upheld the removal of her credentials.

The trial of the Rev. Amy DeLong, a lesbian clergywoman in Wisconsin, was held June 21-23, 2011. DeLong, a clergy member of the Wisconsin

Annual (regional) Conference initiated the case in 2009 when she agreed to officiate at the union of a lesbian couple. That same year, she registered with her partner of nearly 16 years under Wisconsin's Domestic Partnership Law. She reported both actions to the annual conference.

DeLong was charged with violating The United Methodist Church's ban on non-celibate, gay clergy and the prohibition against clergy officiating at same-sex unions.

The trial court acquitted her of being a "self-avowed practicing homosexual" by a vote of 12-1. The same panel unanimously found her guilty of violating the prohibition against conducting ceremonies celebrating same-gender unions. The jury voted 9-4 to suspend DeLong from her ministerial functions for 20 days beginning July 1, 2011.

Schaefer trial

Schaefer was found guilty by a trial court of fellow ordained clergy on Nov. 19 of violating the church's law against clergy by performing the same-sex wedding ceremony for his son and another man. The trial court penalty was to suspend him for 30 days to discern and decide if he could uphold the United Methodist Book of Discipline in its entirety.

"Rev. Schaefer met with the board of ordained ministry today and declared that he is not willing or able to uphold the laws of the Book of Discipline in its entirety in the future as required by the trial court's verdict," Bishop Peggy Johnson, episcopal leader of the conference, said Thursday.

Johnson said when asked to surren-

der his credentials, Schaefer refused to do so. The board then deemed his credentials surrendered, she said.

At a news conference at Arch Street United Methodist Church Dec. 16, Schaefer said, "I cannot uphold the United Methodist Book of Discipline in its entirety. In fact I don't believe anyone can."

Schaefer said he would not voluntarily surrender his ordination credentials because he feels called to represent, minister and advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

In an interview with United Methodist News Service after Schaefer's news conference Dec. 16, Johnson said, "My overall feeling is that this is very sad. I can't believe we have been on this journey for nothing; somewhere God is going to use all the hearts and efforts for some good purpose down the line. This is the God we serve. It is Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We got the Good Friday, so come on Easter. I know it is Christmas but we are Easter people."

'Discriminatory' statements

Schaefer and 44 Philadelphia United Methodist pastors signed a letter they sent to Johnson asking her to "lead us boldly" as an advocate for all LGBT members. The clergy members asked her to acknowledge that "some statements in our Book of Discipline are discriminatory and that we need a time to engage in a process of discernment, prayer and change."

Johnson replied to that letter by saying "a good many statements in our Book of Discipline are positive and nondiscriminatory." She also said, however, that several statements are dis-

Continued on Page 8

Rev. Ernesto Sanchez, Pastoral Minister
Christine Saas, Office Assistant
Office Phone: 631-475-0381 | Fax: 631-475-3132

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Defrocked Pastor (From Page 7)

criminator.

In a statement Dec. 19, she said, “As one church of Jesus Christ, we must commit ourselves to engage in ongoing prayer and reflection, sensitive, peaceful dialogue and diligent study, so that we can better understand the needs and concerns of LGBT members and their broader community and so that we can more effectively and lovingly minister to all people in the name of Christ.”

Schaefer stated it was his hope he would be allowed to keep his credentials so he could be a voice for the LGBT community in The United Methodist Church.

“As long as there is a hope for an appeal, a reversal, I will stay with The United Methodist Church,” Schaefer

said. “I will actually have to join a local church now because I am currently finding myself without a spiritual home. As a minister your membership comes through the conference and if they take your credentials then you are really not a member of The United Methodist Church.”

In an interview with United Methodist News Service, Dec. 15, Brigitte Schaefer and their daughter, Debbie, talked about one more hopeful thing for the family.

“If his credentials are taken away it will be the first time in 20 years we can all be together for Christmas Eve. Dad won’t have to work,” Debbie said.

The Schaefers have four children, Tim, 30, Debbie, 28, Kevin, 23 and Pascal, 19.

—Kathy L. Gilbert, UMNS

