

# The LINK



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF PATCHOGUE

Since 1791

January 2018

## Praying Our Way Into the New Year

I know I say this every year, but for the sake of consistency I'll say it again: "Can you believe it is 2018 already?" What happened to 2017?

Well, in the grand scope of things, a lot happened in 2017. For instance, a year ago the United States of America received a new president.

That's a pretty big deal, I'd say. And while Donald Trump was elevated to the role of president, Robert Mugabe was ousted from his presidential seat in Zimbabwe.

Speaking of falling from position, thank God the strangling grip of ISIS on Mosul was removed and they were ousted and now on the run. And even with ISIS on the run, North Korea's dictator, Kim Jung-un, has been thumping his chest and firing off rockets like the Gruccis on the Fourth of July.

Oh, Queen Elizabeth II became the first British monarch to reach 65 years of reign. I'm sure she is collecting social security (oh wait, that's England).

Yes, in the midst of a lot of good things, perhaps 2017 has once again vividly reminded us that we live in a very divided, violent and troubled world.

On another note, some of the notable celebrity deaths in 2017 are: Mary Tyler Moore, Mike Connors aka Mannix, Chuck Berry, Don Rickles, Roger Moore aka James Bond, Adam West aka Batman, Glen Campbell, one of the funniest persons ever, Jerry Lewis, Fats Domino, The Let's Make a Deal Monte Hall, Playboy Hugh Hefner, Touched by an Angel Della Reese, the ever youthful David Cassidy, and old Gomer Pyle himself Jim Nabors, to name a few.

We even lost several of our church family like, Ed

Blum, Pat Theobald, Ed Willis and George Werner.

In sports the Houston Astros came alive and won the world series; while both the Mets and Yankees managers were canned and former Yankees hero of the 2003 ALCS championship, Aaron Boone, was hired to take the helm of the Bronx Bombers and Cleveland Indians pitching coach

Mickey Callaway the Mets in 2018. The ups and downs of life, I'd say?

In 2017 it appeared that nature went a little wild with unprecedented winds, fires, floods and earthquakes in North America.

Hurricane Harvey and Irma played havoc in Texas and Louisiana. Earthquakes shook Mexico to its core. Wildfires have devastated California while a massive hurricane dropped Puerto Rico and the Caribbean to its knees. Most of these islands still do not have power.

Continued on Page 2

## WORSHIP IN JANUARY

**Jan. 7**—The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, Matthew 2:1-12

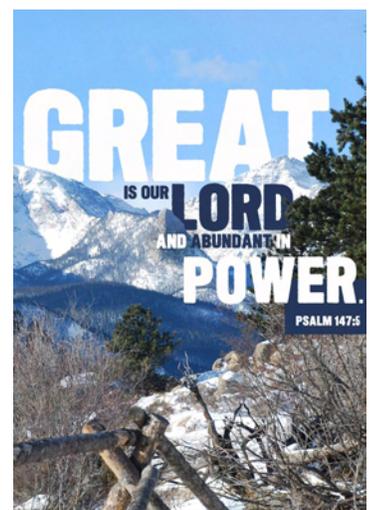
**Jan. 14**—The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, John 1:43-51

**Jan. 21**—The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, Mark 1:14-20

**Jan. 28**—The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, Mark 1:21-28

## New Office Hours

Beginning Jan. 1, the office will be open Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. The office will be closed on Monday.



## Circle of Concern

### Bereavement:

Willis family, George Werner family,  
family of Emma Chang

### For Guidance and Healing:

Henry Prince, Mary Smith,  
Paul Falvey, Frank Carroll, Len Ricchi,  
Tommy Saltalamacchis, John Zimmer-  
man, Lisa, Steve Shadbolt, Alan, David  
Henson, Kiristen Elliot, Fran Knoedel,  
John Puk

### These at Home:

Bruce Kirschner, Cheryl Keeley, Lee  
Hollowell, Viola Schwartz

### These in Rehab or Nursing Care

#### Facilities:

**Geri Sheridan** in Brookhaven Health  
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Patchogue

**Alice Zahnd** in Gurwin Jewish Nursing  
Facility, Commack, NY

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

**Len Ricchi**, in Medford Multicare,  
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](http://PatchogueUMC.com)



## New Year (From Page 1)

Yes, a lot has happened over the past twelve months and I only scratched the surface in this limited article for the LINK. But one thing that keeps popping up in my mind and spirit is that we, as a church, need to pray more. That, to me, is the most important challenge for our congregation in this new year of 2018. We need to pray for our world, our country, our town, our families, our members, the sick, the needy, our leadership, our finances, our ministry, and the list goes on.

Prayer can move mountains--and there are a lot of mountains to be moved in 2018. Here is one of the obstacles to prayer--a life that is too busy to pray. Let's face it, life can become a little overwhelming at times. And often times when that happens it can sap our spiritual vitality and prayer becomes yet one more thing to do that we just don't have time for.

It is not just ISIS and terrorism or a dictator in North Korea who is a threat to our lives. There is also a very real enemy that strategizes and schemes against us trying to affect our emotions, our minds and our future—he too is a terrorist but not under some caliphate drafted by a radical imam in Syria—he is a spiritual terrorist by the name of Satan, the true enemy of God and God's people.

But Satan's reign of terror ends when Christians get on their knees in prayer. His power over us crumbles the minute we pray. There is a mystery to prayer that even I with two degrees in theology cannot fully explain. The real question is whether or not we truly

believe that prayer can actually make a difference.

The worse thing we can do is underestimate the power of prayer, thinking it is nice, but does it really work? Satan wants to see us passionless, prayerless, and yes, powerless. As long as we can be kept from praying, the longer we will remain defeated and deflated in our spiritual walk.

God has deliberately chosen this particular vehicle as the one that drives his activity in our lives. It is the vehicle by which we stay connected to a all-powerful, all-knowing and all-present God. Just like our cell phones keep us in personal contact with others--prayer keeps us in personal contact with God. Prayer is the vehicle that brings the power of heaven down to earth.

The Apostle Paul after instructing believers to put on the full armor God, then says in Ephesians 6:18, *"Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere."* In 2018, I encourage everyone to be persistent and consistent in our prayer lives. I know from personal experiences that prayer can move mountains no matter how big they may be. It will be the power of prayer that will help change the world, the nation, our lives--and yes, our church for the better. Take the time each day to pray. Don't make it a burden--find a time and place to make it an absolute joy and watch what happens.

Praying with you into the New Year, I remain, In His Grip,

—Pastor Chuck

# United Methodist Church of Patchogue

## January 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>New Office Hours</b> Tues-Fri 9AM-2PM Closed Monday	<b>1</b> 7:00 p.m.—AA	<b>2</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>3</b> 7:30 p.m.—AME Service	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 9:30 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—NA	<b>6</b> 7:30 p.m.—AME
<b>7</b> 10:00 a.m.— Communion Worship 1:00 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 5:00 p.m.—AME	<b>8</b> 7:00 p.m.—AA	<b>9</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>10</b> 7:30 p.m.—AME Service	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 9:30 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—NA	<b>13</b> 7:30 p.m.—AME
<b>14</b> 10 a.m.—Worship/ Sunday School 11:30 a.m.— Finance 1:00 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 5:00 p.m.—AME	<b>15</b> 7:00 p.m.—AA	<b>16</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>17</b> 7:30 p.m.—AME Service	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 9:30 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—NA	<b>20</b> 7:30 p.m.—AME
<b>21</b> 10 a.m.— Wor- ship/Sunday School 1:00 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 5:00 p.m.—AME	<b>22</b> 7:00 p.m.—AA	<b>23</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>24</b> 7:30 p.m.—AME Service	<b>25</b> 5:00 p.m. Wesley Dinner	<b>26</b> 9:30 a.m.—ESL 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—NA	<b>27</b> 7:30 p.m.—AME
<b>28</b> 10 a.m.— Wor- ship/Sunday School 11:30 a.m.— Trustees 1:00 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 5:00 p.m.—AME	<b>29</b> 7:00 p.m.—AA	<b>30</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>31</b> 7:30 p.m.—AME Service			

## Churches Unite In Support of Migrants

**A**s United Methodist congregations prepared for the coming of the Christ child on the first Sunday of Advent, many also recognized the importance of welcoming the stranger.

Churches around the world celebrated Global Migration Sunday on Dec. 3 with a day of prayer and a special offering to aid migrants and refugees.

Today, more than 65 million people worldwide have been forcibly displaced from their homes due to conflict, persecution or natural disasters. Over 22 million of those are refugees. “Our church needs to continue (to provide) ways we are the home for strangers and we are the friend for the migrant, and we need to open up the landscape so that the church can be out-facing, engaging with those in such a critical situation today,” said Wisconsin Area Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, president of United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

While it’s too soon to know full participation numbers, Jung estimates that at least half of the churches in his episcopal area, roughly 250, participated on Global Migration Sunday through liturgy sharing, prayers or a special offering.

The Rev. Judith Reedy celebrated Global Migration Sunday with her congregation at Grace United Methodist Church in Dallas. The church has a communion rail offering every week and Reedy rearranged the schedule to include Global Migration Sunday.

The church also invited fellow United Methodist Bill Holston to speak. Holston, a lawyer, runs the Human Rights Initiative of North Texas, a nonprofit that provides legal support to refugees and immigrants seeking asylum in the U.S.

“We collected \$250 for that one Sunday at our communion rail. The congregation responded overwhelmingly in a positive manner. ... Almost every single person came through the receiving line to shake hands with our guest speaker,” Reedy said.

The money raised on Global Migration Sunday goes to the denomination’s Global Migration Advance (#3022144), a fund set up in 2014 for donors to designate gifts specifically to support work that alleviates the suffering of migrants. To date, more than \$1.5 million has been raised, with \$53,000 donated since September. The Global Migration Sunday offerings are still being tallied.

At least 10 percent of the funds raised will support the refugee resettlement work of partner organization Church World Service. The money also will provide advocacy and education materials and grants to help conferences and congregations become better equipped to minister to migrants locally and globally.

Two recent grants will support refugees and migrants in Germany and Mexico. A nearly \$50,000 grant from the Advance migration fund will provide, with language skills and health-care assistance and help them access government funding and find employment.

In Apaxco, México, a \$25,000 grant will provide food bags and hygiene kits to more than 2,200 migrants, mostly from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, who are fleeing violence and poverty in their home countries. The grant also will allow the Methodist Church La Santísima Trinidad to continue its ministry of providing overnight shelter to the migrants as they pass through Apaxco on their journey north toward the border with the United States.

The Rev. Russell Pierce, executive director of mission engagement at Global Ministries, said working with migrants and refugees is a key mission for the United Methodist Committee on Relief, the humanitarian relief and development arm of The United Methodist Church. He said UMCOR and Global Ministries are committed to continuing that work and finding new ways to collaborate with organizations around the world on the issue.

For churches that were unable to celebrate Global Migration Sunday on Dec. 3, Pierce said it’s not too late to take up a special offering and raise awareness about the crisis.

“The resources on UMCmigration.org are resources congregations can use at any point to recognize the current situation for migrants around the world—both when you’re thinking about immigration issues in the U.S. and you’re looking at refugee situations (around the world). It’s a broad set of resources that a church could use at any point,” he said.

The resources are available in several languages and include prayers,

often Protests for Dreamers lead to arresting talks, sermon starters, videos and social media graphics.

Jung said it's crucial that churches continue to support migrants beyond Global Migration Sunday and to celebrate the gifts they have to offer. "It's so critical, because there's a lot of reverse mission happening from this migration community," he said. "They're the ones who are giving real mission here, (they're) not just recipients (of help from the) U.S. toward them, but now they are among us and they are a great witness. That's why the church needs to really think this migration matter is our matter, a common matter."

Pierce agrees. He said it's not only important for United Methodists to understand the issue but also to recognize that churches are being revitalized by engaging with migrants, refugees and immigrants in their own communities. The church needs to continue to lift up those stories, he said.

"We'll raise awareness, we'll continue to work on the migration ministries, but especially raise up that this is a way that churches are being revitalized."

—Julie Dwyer, UMNS

## Protests For Dreamers Lead To Arrests

**U**nited Methodists were among hundreds arrested on the steps of the U.S. Capitol as they demonstrated in support of the DREAM Act.

Some 2,000 young immigrants and their supporters converged on Wash-

ington on Dec. 6 to rally congressional support for legislation that would protect the immigrants—commonly known as “Dreamers”—from deportation. Altogether, some 11,000 participated in marches for the DREAM Act around the country as part of the day of action.

Around 200 DREAM Act supporters — including six United Methodists, a mix of clergy and laity — were arrested for refusing to move from the Capitol steps in an act of civil disobedience. Also joining in the sit-in were U.S. Reps. Luis Gutierrez, D-Illinois, and Judy Chu, D-California. Rally organizers arranged with U.S. Capitol Police ahead of time that those arrested would not go to jail but instead pay a \$50 fee.

Rebecca Cole, the director of organizing for the denomination's Board of Church and Society, was among those arrested.

"I see this as a critical moment to live out my faith," she said. "If I can raise my voice through an act of non-violent resistance like civil disobedience to encourage members of Congress to act on behalf of DACA recipients, I will."

She and others demonstrators say time is running out for young immigrants who are part of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. The program, created under President Obama in 2012, has allowed some 800,000 young immigrants who have grown up in the U.S. to attain temporary legal status. They have been able to attend college, get jobs, obtain driver's licenses and even buy homes.

The Trump administration announced earlier this year that it would end the program in March unless Congress acted. Currently, 690,000 immigrants are enrolled in the program. Cole said the action was one of many United Methodists have taken on behalf of these immigrants — including meeting with and calling their congressional representatives.

The United Methodist Church's Social Principles recognize the right of people to, with nonviolence, “resist or disobey laws that they deem to be unjust or that are discriminately enforced.”

Cole and others point out that obtaining the protected status takes hard work.

To qualify for DACA, recipients had to be under 31 as of June 15, 2012. They also had to come to the U.S. before reaching their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and needed to be a high school graduate or have obtained an equivalent certificate.

DACA recipients have paid \$495 and undergone an extensive criminal background checks to ensure they had a clean record. To remain DACA recipients, they have gone through the same process, including payments, every two years.

Polls show a substantial majority of U.S. voters support allowing these immigrants to stay in the U.S. According to a Politico/Morning Consult Poll, 68 percent of self-identified Trump voters want these immigrants to be able to stay.

United Methodist leaders have called for Congress to pass — and for President Trump to sign — a clean

Continued on Page 7

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The deadline for the February issue of **The Link** is January 12  
 Please email your copy to [gbhoag@optonline.net](mailto:gbhoag@optonline.net).  
**NOTE EARLY DEADLINE**



"I love bowling night at church."

**Don't Forget Your Pledge**

*Neither death nor life ... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from*  
**THE LOVE OF GOD**  
*in Christ Jesus our Lord.*  
 ROMANS 8:38-39, ESV

## Dream Act (From Page 5)

DREAM Act that provides a path to citizenship.

Melissa Bowe, program and advocacy manager for National Justice for Our Neighbors, has joined in those efforts and attended the Dec. 6 rally. She works with the United Methodist ministry that provides legal services for immigrants at clinics around the U.S.

On Dec. 5, she visited with members of Congress to advocate for DACA recipients and other immigrants with temporary protected status. The Trump administration rescinded that status for Haitians and Nicaraguans last month and plans by January to issue a ruling on an additional 200,000 from El Salvador with temporary protected status.

“It’s important to us because we know Dreamers and folks with temporary protected status and refugees are our neighbors,” Bowe said. “They make our communities better. We want to be on the right side of history and fight for an America we believe in, and that is an America that is welcoming, that honors and celebrates the richness immigrants bring to our country.”

—Heather Hahn, UMNS

## No Joke. Comedies About God Can Foster Faith

What would you do, if during your daily routines, you come face to face with God?

I don’t mean seeing God in everyone around us, which in itself is a wonderful outlook on life. No, I mean

really seeing God in person. Just as you can talk directly to your coworkers, family members, or friends, if you could have a conversation with the Almighty, what would you say to him? Through the years, Hollywood has taken this simple idea and developed blockbuster films that capitalize on the absurd situations (and resulting laughs) that happen when God interacts with the human race.

What is most interesting in each of the following films, however, are the different ways the films’ main characters respond to the presence of God. Do you see yourself in one of these characters? There are lessons to be learned amid the hijinks.

In *Oh, God!* (1977), Jerry Landers is an assistant manager at Food World. He’s a hard worker, in line for a promotion, and happily married. One day he gets a note that reads, “God grants you an interview,” but it takes a while for Jerry to believe God is present and actually talking to him.

It’s only after God shows up in his bathroom, and later makes it rain inside his car, that Jerry agrees to be God’s spokesman. “I want you to spread the word that I am, I exist,” says God.

The film culminates in a courtroom where God appears and speaks to everyone (without his words being recorded). Near the end, God tells the courtroom “If you find it hard to believe in me, maybe it would help you to know I believe in you.”

God credits Jerry for risking it all to spread His message. Jerry’s work, says God, is like a handful of apple seeds: eventually they will take root and grow.

In the sequel *Oh, God! Book II* (1980), God doesn’t like the bad press he is getting on Earth. “Every time I look down there it gets worse. They don’t believe in me as much as they should these days.”

Through a fortune cookie, God invites Tracy, a clever 11-year-old, to create an advertising slogan for him. With the help of her classmates, she creates the advertising slogan “Think God” that they put on posters, bumper stickers, etc. Eventually, and predictably, everyone around the world is posting “Think God,” way before social media!

When her parents question why she is falling behind in her homework, she tries to explain to her parents that she has seen and talked to God many times. “I just saw God. He was upstairs helping me with my math homework.”

It takes her parents a long time, however, to believe their daughter. “Sometimes you just have to believe in things you can’t see,” says Tracy. In the end, Tracy’s innocence and endearing faith in her mission inspires her parents, her classmates and others.

In *Oh, God! You Devil* (1984), the final film of the series, Bobby Shelton is a struggling songwriter who wants to support his young wife and start a family. After a series of setbacks, he reaches a deep level of despair and states “I’d sell my soul to the devil to make it in this business.”

Continued on Page 8

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## God Comedies (From Page 7)

The devil just happens to listening, and approaches Bobby with a contract. In exchange for his everlasting soul, the devil will make Bobby a star. Bobby accepts, but eventually realizes that the price of fame and fortune is too high. Even though he is rich and famous, he is no longer himself or married to his wife. He sinks further into despair and threatens suicide.

God shows up to bargain with the devil for Bobby's life. They decide to settle the issue with a hand of poker. Bobby's life is saved and he realizes the value of his real life. He reunites with his wife and they start their family, complete with regular prayers to God.

This concept of "The grass is greener on the other side of the fence" is

also evident in *Bruce Almighty* (2003), but the main character's response is very different.

Bruce Nolan is a TV reporter who yearns to be a news anchor, but bad luck follows him through his field reporting. He gets so mad at his situation that he blames God for his problems and shouts that he could do a better job as God.

He gets his wish when God appears and tells Bruce that he has given him the same powers. Bruce can do anything, except restrict someone's free will or reveal that he has these powers.

Filled with greed and self-importance, Bruce uses his new powers to create miraculous events that enhance his own fortunes and career. He becomes overwhelmed with pray-

er requests, but decides to take the easy route and approves them all. This throws his city into chaos, and Bruce begins to understand the value of helping others individually. He humbly asks God to take away the powers, which leads Bruce to truly appreciate the talents he has to empower and help others.

These films, while heavy with comedic moments, do offer examples of how one can respond to God's word with confidence, innocence, understanding, humility, and faith. It will be well worth your time to find these films on TV or available online for purchase or streaming.

Meanwhile, ask yourself: What would I do if I met God, face to face?

—**Christopher Fenoglio, UMNS**