

# The LINK



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF PATCHOGUE

Since 1791

July-August 2017

## Summer Blessings

This morning I was doing my devotional reading in the Old Testament where it stated that kings went off to war in the Spring. And I forgot why that was the case, so I did some research and was reminded that they went off to war in the spring because the fields were ripe with wheat and barley. Therefore, a moving army could live off of the land as it advanced forward in their mission. Ah, just a piece of biblical trivia for you to think about.

Well, it is hard to believe that Summer is here and Spring has left us. So where are we going off to? Some of you are taking cruises, renting cabins in the country and I know there are a few of you who will finally get a chance to enjoy your boats on the Great South

Bay. Summer on Long Island is absolute paradise, right? Unless you are trying to drive out to the east end on a weekend—then it can be more like hell—well, not quite, but close.

Take time to slow down this summer. I am going to do my very best to finally take my own advice. I plan on putting out some crab traps in a couple of secret locations I have. I plan on reading a whole pile of books that were placed on the back burner.

My wife absolutely hates being exposed to the sun—but I think I can get her to take some long walks with me along the seashore (which reminds me, I need to go to CVS and buy a gallon of sun screen lotion—oh, not for me, Italians come with a built in supply of oil).

Some of my fondest memories of growing up in a tenement in

Williamsburgh, Brooklyn were my summers—flipping baseball cards, spinning tops, playing Johnny-on-the-pony (I'll explain that one to the younger folks another time), playing stickball, pitching pennies-- boy am I reminiscing or what? But one of my greatest joys was climbing out on our fire escape with a blanket and reading dozens of comic books and library books. Absolute heaven on earth. Yes, summer is a great season for us here on Long Island after dealing with the cold, snow, freezing rain and just the gloom of shortened daylight hours.

Continued on Page 2

## WORSHIP IN JULY

**July 2**—Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, *Embracing our God-given Freedom*, 2 Chronicles 7:14

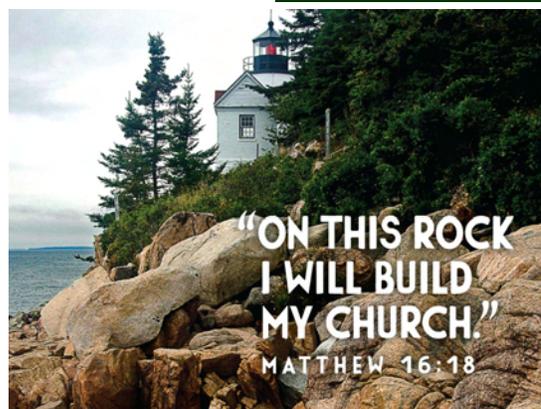
**July 9**—Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, *Prisoner No More: Getting Past our Past*, Philippians 3:12-14

**July 16**—Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, *Unleashing the Power of Encouragement*, Ephesians 4:25-5:2

**July 23**—Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, *Who's Pushing Your Buttons? Dealing with Difficult People*, Ephesians 4:29-32

**July 30**—Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, *Controlling Your Anger Before It Controls You*, Ephesians 4:25-5:2

**Office Hours, July 1-Sept. 4**  
Tues, Thurs, Fri, 9-12



## Circle of Concern

### For Bereavement:

Fabrizio/Fleece family, Pat Theobold family, Rice family, Benjamin family, Rea/Klages family

### For Guidance and Healing:

Elizabeth Queen, Sean, Donna Maas, Frankie Scott Jr., Everett Edwards, Michael Becher, Edward Blum Sr., George Werner, Lee Hollowell, Henry Prince, Josh Jansson, Tim Hollowell, Patricia Puk, John Puk

### These Who are Hospitalized:

Cheryl Williams, Charles Martin, Sherry, Katelyn, Mario

### These at Home:

Jean Miller, Viola Schwartz, Jeanna Moritz

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

**Geri Sheridan** in Brookhaven Health Care Facility, 801 Gazzolla Drive, E. Patchogue, NY

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

**Ed Dew** in Sunrise Assisted Living, Waverly Avenue, Holbrook, 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

## Summer (From Page 1)

Friends, create some great memories this summer. Get outdoors and enjoy this beautiful place we call home. But let me leave you with a few appeals as you make your plans to take advantage of this great season:

(1) Don't forget to worship—church services will be every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.—so don't vacation from church. Even if you are traveling out of town, try to visit a local church where you are. My wife and I while on vacation worshipped in Scotland, Ireland, England, Israel, Korea, Florida—wherever we were. Hopefully you will do the same.

(2) Please remember to continue your financial support through the summer. Bills still need to be paid in July and August--and many times that is when we experience a dip in our giving. You can mail in your offering, but if that doesn't happen--we would most appreciate you making up the missed weeks so we can stay out of the red.

(3) While you are away, please remember to pray for our ministry--prayers are so important.

(4) Lastly, if you are away and near a computer—you can tune into our worship service each Sunday at 10:00 a.m. by going to our web site @ [www.patchogueumc.org](http://www.patchogueumc.org).

Well, kings may have gone off to war in the Spring--but it's time for us to go off to the beach. Amen?

Have a great, safe and blessed Summer.

In His Grip,

—Pastor Chuck

## Did You Know?

One of the standing committees mandated by the United Methodist Book of Discipline is the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee (SPRC). This committee is the one where staff and congregational interests come together to focus on the mission of the church. They work with staff, including the appointed pastor, and form a bridge with the congregation to strengthen the faith community and help clarify directions and goals in furtherance of God's missions.

The current members are: Wendy Hollowell, Lola Schwartz, Katie Weber, Ed Klingel, Trudy Mansfield, Charles Magill, George Hoag, Pastor Ferrara, and Barbara Becker, chairperson.

If you have ideas or concerns, please feel free to discuss them with any of the members. You should know that confidentiality is always observed.

To further communication, and provide an opportunity to brainstorm on our goals and direction as a faith community, there will be a gathering on Wednesday, August 23, 2017, at 7:00 PM in Wesley Hall. Please put this on your calendar. Everyone's input is important.

—Barbara Becker

# United Methodist Church of Patchogue

## July 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 7:30 p.m.—AME Service
2 10:00 a.m.— Communion Worship 11:30 a.m.— Pentecostal MF 5:00 p.m.—AME	3 Office Closed 7:00 p.m.—AA	4 Office Closed 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—AA	5 7:30 p.m.—AME Service	6	7 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—NA	8 7:30 p.m.—AME Service
9 10 a.m.—Worship 11:30 a.m.— Finance 12:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 5:00 p.m.—AME	10 Office Closed 7:00 p.m.—AA	11 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—AA	12 7:30 p.m.—AME Service	13	14 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—NA	15 7:30 p.m.—AME Service
16 10 a.m.—Worship 12:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 5:00 p.m.—AME	17 Office Closed 7:00 p.m.—AA	18 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—AA	19 7:30 p.m.—AME Service	20	21 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—NA	22 7:30 p.m.—AME Service
23 10 a.m.—Worship 11:30 a.m.— Trustees 12:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 5:00 p.m.—AME	24 Office Closed 7:00 p.m.—AA	25 9:30 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—AA	26 7:30 p.m.—AME Service	27 5:00 p.m.—Wesley Dinner	28 7-9 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 7:30 p.m.—NA	29 7:30 p.m.—AME Service
30 10 a.m.—Worship 12:30 p.m.— Pentecostal MF 5:00 p.m.—AME	31 Office Closed 7:00 p.m.—AA	<b>August</b> <b>Aug. 24—</b> 5:00 p.m.—Wesley Dinner				

## Reclaim Church Planting

**M**ethodists' zeal for planting churches across the U.S. became so well known that, by the late 1800s, their exploits had inspired a folk hymn. "We're building two a day, dear Bob, we're building two a day!" rang the chorus at camp meetings and Sunday services. "All hail the power of Jesus name. We're building two a day."

Denominational leaders insist that today's United Methodists can rekindle that passion for reaching new people wherever they live. New Church Starts (Path 1), the part of Discipleship Ministries that works with United Methodist conferences to plant churches, has set a goal of starting a new faith community a day in the U.S.

The Rev. Bener Baysa Agtarap, the head of Path 1, said the rise of the religiously unaffiliated creates fertile ground for United Methodists "to reclaim their legacy as innovators and pathfinders for Christ."

However, even as United Methodists reinvigorate that pioneering spirit of yore, Path 1 leaders acknowledge that the new churches of today look different from their forebears on the American frontier.

Instead of meeting under the brush arbor, budding faith communities these days often gather in a coffeehouse or at a person's home. Instead of hymn sings and preaching, their central activities are often small-group study and engagement in mission. The new congregations also reflect the United States' growing ethnic diversity.

Take the example of Embrace Church, which began as a small group initiated by Oakland Korean United Methodist Church in northern California's Bay Area.

The Oakland mother church determined that simply adding an English-language service was not enough, so it asked the Rev. Samuel S. Yun to start the East Bay Small Group.

Yun said the group had two goals: To reach next-generation Korean-Americans and other young adults unlikely to attend a traditional Asian-American church, and to develop the lay leadership necessary for the group to become self-sustaining.

"The invitation for people to join this group was simple," Yun said. "We asked potential members — mostly those who were unchurched or de-churched — if they could resonate with the 'hunch' that 'life with God is better than life without God.'"

One of the group's early events was a gathering at a bar that drew some 60 people. The group studied Scripture, engaged in various service projects and began having monthly worship services.

After much prayer and conversation, Yun and other East Bay group members officially launched Embrace Church in July 2015. The church's name is a reference to Habakkuk, which means "embrace" in Hebrew. Yun, the new church's lead pastor, took particular inspiration from Habakkuk 2:2: "Write a vision, and make it plain upon a tablet so that a runner can read it."

Emily Fan, who had not grown up in any church, began attending the

East Bay Small Group after learning it met in her apartment building. She wants Embrace to be known for the same kind of welcome she experienced.

Fan and other Embrace leaders said they never imagined starting a new church.

"We look at each other and realize five years ago, none of us was going to church regularly. We aspired to it, but we hadn't found a church home," said Fan, the chair of the church's leadership council. "Now we are serving, and we couldn't imagine our lives without it."

Today, the now multiethnic Embrace Church is reaching about 90 people and is still growing, especially with young families. It has a partnership with Covenant House California, which works to rescue homeless and trafficked teens, and holds weekly worship at Twin Towers United Methodist Church in Alameda, California.

Yun, whom members call P. Sam, projects the new congregation will become self-sustaining in its fourth year, and he already has plans to start working toward a second location in 2020. The East Bay Small Group still meets every other Thursday.

B.J. Kang, like Fan, did not regularly attend church while growing up. Now, he sees his discipleship maturing at Embrace.

"Embrace Church feels like a community that first loves God and loves each other," said Kang, the church's special projects chair. "It supports what I feel I was put on earth to ful-

fill — which is spreading God’s love to the world. I do this imperfectly every day, but I strive to keep on doing it with God’s presence within me.”

Farther up the West Coast, Connexion Tacoma in Washington is another United Methodist community that is just getting started.

The Rev. Abigail Vizcarra Perez, the first Latina elder in the Pacific Northwest Conference, started Connexion in October as a growing network of small groups.

Her idea for reaching new disciples is to combine a rather old concept, John Wesley’s band meetings, with a relatively new one, the women’s book group. The church’s name uses Wesley’s spelling of connection with an accent mark to indicate its multiethnic nature.

Vizcarra Perez uses as her text “Women Who Run with the Wolves” by Clarissa Pinkola-Estés, a book that invites women to reclaim their stories. Ultimately, she said the groups’ conversations all come back to the Bible and how its stories relate to the women’s lives.

“The strategies that I employ here are to build relationships first,” she said. “I ask them to bring their stories and bring them into conversation with Scripture. So women who tell me they are agnostic are asking me questions like, ‘Is there a Scripture on weaning babies?’”

Vizcarra Perez said she knows she is helping to nurture discipleship when one of the participants, tells her, “I feel both accountable and accepted in a way I never have before.”

So far, she has started seven groups of about five each. Each group meets at least monthly in homes, restaurants or even the offices of nonprofits. The groups also regularly combine for shared events including picnics and service projects. Vizcarra Perez also meets with each member between meetings, which she sees as part of accountability.

Vizcarra Perez doesn’t expect to start regular worship until 2018. However, just as Wesley connected his early Methodist groups with the already well-established Church of England, Vizcarra Perez connects her group’s participants with Fircrest United Methodist Church.

Liz Hirschl has been involved with Connexion since January and has attended Fircrest with her family for nearly as long. Before becoming part of the budding community, she said she was always uneasy inviting others to church.

“But with the Wolves groups, I’ve found that I am having such an amazing experience and it’s so life-giving that I want everyone I know to be part of it,” she said.

Agtarap believes with new faith communities that empower laity, the denomination can blaze a new trail among the unchurched.

“God is leading us to a place where we will rediscover the power that is within us,” he said. “I believe that the power that prompted John Wesley and his leaders to share the gospel of Jesus Christ is still very much in us.”

—Heather Hahn, UMNS

## God Surprises Us

I’ve heard people describe miracles like a lightning bolt, instant, dramatic, so stunning you blink not sure what you saw, but that has not been my experience. In the hours after our son was born, he suffered a massive stroke that paralyzed his entire right side. It was five days before he was even stable enough for the doctors to run all the necessary tests to determine what had happened, and once they knew, the prognosis was dire.

Standing in a hospital alcove, the doctor shared that our little Lukas would likely never walk or talk and that he would be significantly impaired. We chose not to believe that and instead prayed that God could somehow heal him. I admit that the healing I prayed for in those first horrible days is not what we have seen. I wanted that instant, lightning bolt kind of change. But what we have received over these past twelve years is more like a gentle rain, steady, restorative and sometimes messy.

Against all odds, Lukas continued to improve—well behind the expected timelines for childhood development and not without countless therapies and intervention, but he made progress. It was then that we had another setback: the damage caused by the stroke had created a seizure disorder that continued to escalate and couldn’t be controlled by medicines. We were faced with the choice of a radical brain surgery in an attempt to control the seizures or watching the seizures slowly drain his life over the next several years.

Continued on Page 8

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The deadline for the September issue  
of **The Link** is **August 25**.

Please email your copy to [gbhoag@optonline.net](mailto:gbhoag@optonline.net).



## A Note About Restoring Hope

Our Restoring Hope capital campaign was completed several years ago but funds may continue to be contributed. All Restoring Hope contributions go to the Trustees who have continuing building expenses but no other revenue source. \$500 a month in Trustee funds go to pay off our boiler loan. Contributions can be made to either "Restoring Hope" or "Trustees".

## Looking Ahead to Greatness

I love this country, this America, this USA. I love the physical beauty of it—the contrast between coastal sea shore and forested mountains; between dry deserts and foggy, damp Pacific Northwest; between rural countryside and noisy, vital cities. I even love the names of places—the Shenandoah River, the Delaware Water Gap, the Painted Desert, and so on.

But even more, I love the promise of this country—the ideal that lies at the spiritual and moral heart of it: "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." What an incredible vision, one so powerful that people still give their lives for it, and still 'feel their hearts sing' as Langston Hughes wrote, when they hear of Liberty and Freedom and Equality.

And yet, how often throughout our history, have we failed to live up to this promise, to pay lip service to it only. The founding fathers, in fact, including great intellectual minds like Thomas Jefferson, did not apply this vision to all—they did not include women, children, free persons of color, slaves, native Americans, or men who did not own property. Their vision was constricted by self interest, and the remnants of a world view that valued men based on wealth, birth, and status. And how long has it taken for those excluded from the great vision to finally be included? A long time.

Women were not granted the right to vote until the 1920's. Though Lincoln freed the slaves with the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, African Americans did not begin to be treated as equal citizens until the civil rights movement of the 1960's. They continued to be treated as they had been defined during slavery—as 3/5ths of a human being. The recent movie, *Hidden Figures*, exemplifies the societal attitude towards African Americans. A number of African American women, who worked in the space program at NASA, during the early 1960's, including several who were brilliant mathematicians, were treated with disdain, if not downright rudeness. They were forced to walk to a distant building to use the "colored" restroom. Their intelligence and abilities were doubted. Yet, they persevered and made valuable contributions to this nation. Ultimately, they were recognized for their work. Still, how many people even knew about them until this movie was made?

Even today, 241 years after the Declaration of Independence, there still remains a miasma of ignorance, fear, and bigotry in this country against minorities, against the poor, against women, against immigrants, against anyone who is seen as the "Other".

There has been a lot of rhetoric about making this country great again. What does that mean? What makes a country great? I like John Wesley's definition: "Wealth is not necessary to the greatness of any nation; but virtue, justice, mercy, generosity, public spirit, love of coun-

try. These are the real glory of a nation; but abundance of wealth is not."

If we accept Wesley's definition, and I do, then we have not yet reached a level of greatness. But we must strive toward it; we must discard mean spirited self interest; move away from greed and mindless accumulation of wealth. We must view each other as fellow human beings, accepted and valued by the Creator and worthy of respect and relationship.

—Barbara Becker

## A Prayer For The United States of America

Almighty GOD; we make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in Thy holy protection, that thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government; and entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow citizens of the United States of America at large. And finally that Thou wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of The Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation. Grant our supplication, we beseech thee, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen

—George Washington

## Birthdays

**July 30** Stephanie Wehner

**August 12** Connor Kingsbury

**August 22** Sasha Kratz

**August 25** Jacob Miller

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 Camille Flynn, Administrative Assistant  
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## God Surprises (From Page 5)

We continued to pray, and entrusted him to the neurosurgeon for what was the hardest decision we ever had to make as parents. That was ten years ago today. We were weeks in the hospital, but were released to take him home days before Easter.

He started to talk, eventually he began to scoot around. When he was almost four years old, he finally pulled himself to standing on Christmas morning and we were ecstatic. As he slowly gained skills, language and mobility, he also grew a remarkable spirit. He has an astounding capacity to love and to empathize.

When he was four and just barely walking independently, he got away from me at a friend's wedding. It took me a few minutes to weave my way through the people to reach him and

when I did, I found him leaning against a woman we didn't know, his one good arm wrapped around hers and his head resting on her. She had tears streaming down her face.

I didn't know what to say and through her tears she said, "I was just sitting here feeling completely alone in this crowded room when this child came out of nowhere and took my hand and hugged me." God surprises us. He sent her someone to remind her of His love. I looked at her tears and I knew it, because He had done the same for us. Through every step of our journey, friends (and sometimes strangers) were there, making His love tangible.

Lukas is now in the 5th grade. He walks with a limp, has limited use of his right arm, and lives with chronic pain, but he is also holding his own in

school, has lots of friends and is endlessly funny and creative.

Recently, Lukas got to be part of a project where we interviewed children and asked them about their faith and what they believed. When we asked Lukas what a miracle is, he responded, "God surprises us." He is so right. I will never understand why he has had to suffer through all the challenges that have filled his short life, or why others haven't experienced the healing that he has. I have more questions than answers, but I have seen God's love shine through him. I see his joy, and I have come to learn that the miracle is not in the moment, it is in the relationship. Raising Lukas has shown me that miracles are everywhere, constantly reminding of God's unending love.

—Jennifer Rodia, UMNS