

The LINK



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF PATCHOGUE

Since 1791

August 2020

Peace With Justice, Not Either Or

Ed. Note: This article was originally scheduled for publication in July.

As I write this LINK article, I am absolutely heartbroken over so much that is going on in our country and the world. It may appear I am beginning on a sour note, but hopefully I will end on a high note when I am done.

Starting with the COVID-19 pandemic, then the George Floyd murder and everything that followed—the honest protests, but also the criminal and outrageous rioting, destruction and looting.

In all of the seven decades I have now lived, I never thought I would witness so much death due to a plague that covered the earth. I remember reading about

the Spanish Flu back in 1918 and how my father managed to live through that when he was two years old. Then, cellphone footage of, and I hesitate to give him the dignity of the title police officer—thus I won't—Derek Chauvin squeezing the life out of George Floyd while placing his knee on the victim's neck.

Having worn the badge for two decades, I am appalled at this heinous murderous act by one wearing the uniform of a police officer.

I had to begin a new paragraph several minutes later from the paragraph above because I had to somehow shake that image of Mr. Floyd crying out to his deceased mother, coupled with his plea, "I can't breathe."

That one act sparked legitimate protests not only in Minneapolis and throughout our nation—it

also ignited protests around the world. I was amazed by that.

I will also express what I was troubled by; I was troubled by all the violence, destruction and death perpetrated by individuals who had another agenda—one that had nothing to do with George Floyd.

These are the anarchists like Antifa who preplanned assaults on communities to carry out their own ideology—not justice for African Americans or anyone else.

Continued on Page 4

COVID-19

Until further notice, all worship services and activities in our building by all groups are canceled.

The office is closed but Camille is working from home and calls to the office are directed to her phone.

Please continue your financial support. We have an online offering option on our website. You can also mail a check or arrange through your bank's website to have payment mailed automatically.



Local Churches Show Resilience In Crisis

The first week East Stone Gap United Methodist Church held online-only worship, the pastor shared the good news of Christ but found sobering news when he looked at the offering receipts.

Worshippers gave a total of only \$20.

“I thought that we were ruined,” said the Rev. Brad Stapleton, the pastor of this church in rural southwest Virginia. “I was calculating how many weeks before we would go bankrupt.”

However, in the following three months, the church has seen not only online viewership exceed its usual attendance but also giving exceed its usual collections.

Stapleton joins many United Methodist pastors across the United States in being more hopeful about their church finances and the future than at the beginning of the pandemic that shuttered in-person worship around the globe.

“We have a link to give to the church, and people are doing it,” Stapleton said. “We have people who used to attend our church but moved, and they’re giving. We have people in our community who have given for the first time.”

The congregation has used the added revenue — and cost savings on utilities — to provide \$100 grocery gift cards and other financial assistance to people in the community who have lost their income in the coronavirus-battered economy.

While the East Stone Gap congregation is in the minority of churches that actually saw giving go up during

the time of online-only worship, other United Methodists report that their congregations are holding their own in the crisis and continuing vital ministries.

In a United Methodist Communications survey of 1,016 U.S. churches, about 74% reported the same or higher worship attendance after moving online, and 62% reported about the same or higher giving. The survey, intended to guide agency work, was conducted June 10-14.

The June findings showed a marked improvement over a similar survey taken in March. Significantly, churches that are seeing a drop in giving report a less steep decline than before. Some 56% of churches say money is tight but they are managing, and another 36% say finances are not a concern.

“I think what churches found is that they are much more resilient and capable of adjusting than they expected,” said Charles C. Niedringhaus, United Methodist Communications senior director of marketing, research and evaluation.

The Rev. Daryl L. Williams, senior pastor of St. Paul at Oxon Hill, is among those with hopes that the changes made now will bolster future ministry.

His predominantly African American congregation near Washington had long wanted to start online worship but did not make the jump until the pandemic forced the issue.

“It has been challenging but great,” he said. “It is a real opportunity for the church in a lot of ways.”

In the crisis, the congregation has embraced a range of new online min-

istries that it plans to continue into the future. St. Paul at Oxon Hill streams its services on multiple platforms. It also has introduced weekly online hangouts each Thursday for people to check in.

About five people have joined the church through the digital connections, Williams said.

“Whatever the new normal is, we are going to have a continued digital presence like this,” he said.

The Rev. Martin McCain attests to how online worship has boosted giving at predominantly African American Grace United Methodist Church in Memphis, Tennessee.

“I’ve even had people who don’t go to our church watch the virtual and then come around the corner and drop off a check,” said McCain, the church’s pastor.

The number of churches resuming in-person worship is accelerating. East Stone Gap United Methodist, for example, held its first in-person worship service with social-distancing restrictions on June 14.

“Wearing masks, not singing, and taking communion from pre-packaged packets was different,” Stapleton said, “but did not stand in the way of having a joyful and blessed service.”

However, a number of U.S. churches remain online only in areas that have experienced surging COVID-19 cases. As of June 18, [Johns Hopkins University reported](#) that more than 117,700 people in the U.S. have died of the disease.

La Trinidad United Methodist Church in downtown San Antonio is in a ZIP Code where the virus has infected hundreds of people.

Continued on Page 7

Circle of Concern

Grieving

Ellen Schneider who lost her husband Robert and also her son within the past month. (Gail Hoag)

For the reposing of John Lewis, an American Hero who fought for civil rights. (Barbara Becker)

The family of Bill Nienstedt, who died on July 1. Bill was a former member and treasurer of our church. Please keep his wife Barbara and children Cara, Jessica and Charles in your prayers. (Gail Hoag)

Carol McParland and family on the loss of her mother. (Kathy Halliwell)

Healing

Pastor Chuck who is recovering from a procedure. (Congregation)

Bill Smith, who has had some health issues and has not been feeling well. (Pam Queen)

George Hoag who is resting at home and healing from emergency eye surgery. (Gail Hoag)

John Rocco and his wife Cyndy. John is having health issues. (Kathy Halliwell)

Brenda Klingel is having surgery for a clogged artery.

Dwayne Scott was in a motorcycle accident.

Concerns

All those scientists and researchers who are working on a vaccination and medication to cure and control this terrible virus.

All of our national, state and local leaders, along with leaders all around the world, may they have faith and encouragement as they continue to help us control this pandemic.

For all of our Emergency Services providers (police, firemen, etc.) that

are working to keep our nation safe from all the violence that is erupting.

Joy

Madison Campbell, great granddaughter of Bernice Campbell is home after surgery. (Bernice Campbell)

For all who have recovered from the coronavirus.

For all of our personal joys as our nation begins to reopen.

Continued Prayers

Nicholas Grazopolous, Nienstedt Family, Martello Family, Monico Doctor, James Sullivan, Tyler Ferrari, Anthony Lodato, Lisa Tenzyk, Godfrey, Kimberly Helfst, Carroll Family, Latanzio Family, Clare Family, Baby Isabelle's Family, Lola Schwartz, JoAnn Synder, Bill, Gina, Diane, Thomas Schaff, Bill Hurley, Elijah, Jennifer Higbie, Lawrence & Family, Tyler Ferrari, Sabrina, Ed Klingel, Laura Clifford, Lucille Taylor, James Loris, Charlie Moreno, Annabelle Dasano, Marion Lyons, Lynn Russo, Eileen Thompson, Maryellen Strieb Camacho, Richard Pomponio, Ronald Lyons, John Horyczum, Brian Laubes, Suzanne Tierny, Kathryn Rice, Mike Campanile, Barbara Gober, Michael Becker, Lori Gerardi, Diane Adone, Bruce Kirschner, Stephen McParland, Kenneth Krygier, Travis Gentile, Tavi McGuinness

—Compiled by Kathy Halliwell

Please email Kathy—

keats1002@gmail.com with any additions or deletions.

These in Rehab or Nursing Care:

Geri Sheridan, Robert Krawzak in Brookhaven Health Care Facility, 801 Gazzola Dr., East Patchogue, NY
Alice Zahnd in Gurwin Jewish Nursing Facility, 68 Hauppauge Rd., Commack, NY

Trustees Report

When the Contractor was working on the large circular windows last year we noticed some movement in the window frame.

The Trustees awarded a contract to remedy that situation which includes the installation of 18 stainless steel straps which will pin the window frame to the adjacent brick walls, replace brick pieces surrounding the window and spot point deteriorated mortar joints as necessary.

This work was completed by Henry Restoration last fall. We awarded a contract to Henry Restoration for pointing cleaning and clear coating the masonry walls of the original building.

This work was scheduled to start mid March this year. With the COVID-19 pandemic, Henry Restoration was not considered an essential service so we had to wait until July to start the work.

Because of the delay Sandstorm construction was unable to perform their Gutter work at the Northwest stair so we awarded this additional work to Henry Restoration. Currently they have installed the new gutters while they are proceeding with the pointing of the masonry walls.

We are in the process of getting quotes for repair of the water damage to the rear wall in the main sanctuary and separately getting quotes from four roofing contractors to replace the roof on Wesley Hall.

This roof is at least 56 years old and has served us well. But it is time to be replaced.

—Edward Klingel, Pres. Of Trustees

Peace And Justice

(From Page 1)

They cowardly hide behind their black outfits, face coverings and backpacks. They stir up the crowd and entice the young to take advantage of broken store windows and other forms of destruction. They wish to rewrite history by not only tearing down statues of Confederate generals, but also monuments of great leaders who helped establish and shape our nation. This now includes attacks on Christianity where one radical leader is espousing the destruction of symbols of “White Jesus” and his “European mother.” Is anyone outraged by such incendiary rhetoric? Or do we just lump all this together and call it acceptable?

If there was ever a time the Church needed to step up with an outcry and demand for social justice, it is now—but the Church also must speak out against lawlessness and the victimization of the innocent.

There is no room for racism in our land, and we are to condemn it from the spires of our churches. In the same breath, there is no room for provoking mayhem, assaults on law enforcement and others and the wanton destruction of innocent businesses—many of which are owned by minorities.

I for one will not hide behind my pulpit and close a blind eye to either of these injustices. One fellow clergy member said to me that he was afraid to speak out against the later because he did not want to be accused as being a racist. To which I emphatically say, NONSENSE! We must speak out

injustices wherever they may be found.

People who really know me know that I am not using this LINK forum as a bully pulpit to go on some political rant. Absolutely not!

I am using my space in this article to call on the church to speak out in whatever form is necessary to bring order and justice to our land.

Why are we not holding our political leaders accountable? Some of our leaders are incendiary in their speech—some placate and enable, while others are deafening with their silence.

One thing I know for sure, Jesus never held his peace when it came to injustice of any kind. He stood in the gap for the underprivileged and those who experienced prejudices—just look how he treated the leper or even the blind who were thought to be inflicted by their sin or the sins of their parents.

But he also boldly said that those who live by the sword will die by the sword. If Jesus were here in the flesh today, he would be on the front lines of the protests,

(1) walking with the protesters crying out for justice, and

(2) condemning the violence and destruction. I don't know about you, but rather than standing with some politician, I choose to stand with Jesus.

Praying for Peace AND Justice, I remain

In His Grip,

—Pastor Chuck

Reimagining America

Ed. Note: This article was originally scheduled for publication in July.

About a thousand years ago (or so it seems), I took a class at the New School for Social Research in Manhattan. The time frame was the tumultuous 60's, and the subject was, unsurprisingly, social change.

While I don't remember a lot of the course content, one thing has stayed in my mind all these years: that real change can happen when the fabric of society is frayed and torn, when the culture is in upheaval.

Then, we were in societal uproar with the civil rights movement, anti war protests, and the feminist/ womens' rights movement.

Now, in 2020, we are once again in social turmoil.

To begin with, the world-wide pandemic has fractured the daily routines of all our lives. The focal points of social habit—work, school, church—suddenly came to a crashing halt.

Even how we interact with family and friends has changed. We are ever conscious of certain safety protocols when we go out—wearing masks, hand sanitizing, social distancing—all things that would have seemed strange, if not bizarre, 7 months ago. So, the stage has been set for change.

Change did, in fact, come about as the result of the social upheavals of the 1960's - 70's. Voting rights, Brown vs. Board of Education, desegregation, the election to public offices of African Americans, the election of the first African American President. And women of all backgrounds began to take their place in the mainstream of

cultural life, no longer limited by the 1950's Donna Reed/Ozzie and Harriet definitions of the 'good wife'.

But, as vividly evidenced in recent weeks, we have not come nearly far enough in our struggle for a just, equitable society. The ugly, corrosive stream of racism that lay just under the surface erupted in yet another unjustified killing of an African American by police. But this time, the protests, the opposition to this evidence of the devaluing of human life, did not dissipate. Again, the stage is set for real change.

But, first, I think we need to ask ourselves, what kind of country do we want to live in?

There are some who would like a return to a nostalgic, homogeneous, mythological society, where everyone looks alike, thinks alike, worships alike. And where those who are different in any way are seen as the Other, and are excluded.

This simply can't and shouldn't happen if we are to be a healthy, viable society. If we are to fulfill the promise of those extraordinary values laid out in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. If we are to even continue to exist as a nation, and not crumble and disappear like ancient Rome, not so much from outside attacks, but from rot and corruption within.

We have an extraordinary opportunity to reimagine ourselves as a society that can bring us closer to those ideal norms we profess to honor, but all too often do not.

Some of the questions we need to ask ourselves:

How do we change the collective unconsciousness that has allowed the stereotypical, derogatory images of African Americans to shape our attitudes and therefore behaviors?

How do we ensure equal justice under the law?

How do we enable equal opportunity to all?

What should the role of the police be?

How do we ensure that everyone has equal access to good health care, housing, education?

How do we become a society that, regardless of different opinions, belief systems, backgrounds, maintains a foundational respect for all humans, for all life?

I truly love this country. I want us to live up to our ideals. I want us to be the good guys, who stand up for right, for the decent, kind behavior. Who, as the prophet Amos said, "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

—Barbara Becker

August Birthdays

Aug. 3 Penelope Weber

Aug. 8 Kevin Rice

Aug. 12 Connor Kingsbury

Aug. 17 Natalie Morgan Palm

Aug. 22 Sasha Kratz

Aug. 23 Bob Prince

Aug. 24 Myong Cha Ferrara

Aug. 24 Lynn Russo

Aug. 26 Lenny Pearson

Aug. 30 Maria Ferrara

Aug. 31 Eleanor Prince

Patchogue Native Does Good

Rachel Betts was born two months before her father, the Rev. Gary Betts, took the pulpit at the United Methodist Church of Patchogue in July 1992. She was educated in Patchogue schools until her father retired in 2003 and he and his wife Alcira moved the family to Versailles, Kentucky.

The following was prepared by Gary for their local newspaper.

Notes and news of Woodford neighbors

Rachel Betts, co-salutatorian of the Class of 2010 Woodford High School, ran on the Woodford County middle and high school cross country teams for six years while a student here. Ms. Betts graduated from Centre College (B.S. in biology) in 2014 and has taught at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Geneseo, NY and the Eastman School of Music (U. of R.) in Rochester, NY.

She lives in Rochester, New York after obtaining her MA from the University of Rochester in 2016.

On July 18, 2020 she ran a Mountain Marathon in Ithaca, New York, in 90 degree heat and 99% humidity at an average elevation of 5600 feet, of 31.43 miles.

She completed the course in nine grueling hours, up and down through the gorges of Ithaca around Cornell Univ. and Ithaca University around Cayuga Lake. Many participants had to drop out.

Ms. Betts' parents continue to live in Versailles.

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The deadline for the September issue of **The Link** is August 21.
Please email your copy to gbhoag@optonline.net.

Churches Adapt (From Page 3)

The Rev. John Feagins, co-pastor with his wife Raquel of this largely Hispanic church, said staying online is the safe thing for now. And like many churches, La Trinidad has seen increased engagement even with limited in-person contact.

The church tracks that growth not through online views but in how many receive the sacrament on communion Sunday. People pick up the already-consecrated elements at the church curbside on the Saturday before, or the pastors deliver the elements to those who aren't able to make the trip. Worshippers then synchronously celebrate Eucharist the next day during the livestreamed service.

Since the crisis began, the church's communicants have increased from about 150 to about 220.

"I actually believe once the pandemic ends — and it will end — a lot of these gains are going to continue because of the relational steps that have been taken," Feagins said.

The monthly kits also include copies of the Upper Room devotional booklets, a gift such as roses for Mother's Day and a remittance envelope for offering. Giving has held steady and expenses are down, he said, and La Trinidad has seen no need to seek additional financial assistance.

However, other congregations have. A United Methodist Communications survey in late April found that 44% of churches that completed the study had applied for financial help under the U.S. CARES Act.

Among those churches is First United Methodist Church in Flushing, New York, which received about a \$100,000 loan through the act's Paycheck Protection Program.

The predominantly Korean immigrant congregation — which in non-pandemic times averages about 2,000 in weekly attendance — is in New York City, the epicenter of the U.S. pandemic this spring.

"The church doors were closed, but the church members have been very active," said the Rev. Chongho James Kim, the congregation's senior pastor. "They have been making masks and organized a food pantry for the daily workers in the street."

The congregation, for the first time, also has started using online giving. "We broke the cultural barrier because of this," he said. Because of the congregants' faithful stewardship and the loan, the church has remained financially sound and has found new ways to reach out to its neighbors.

Stapleton of the largely white East Stone Gap United Methodist speaks for many pastors when he talks with relief about how his congregation has responded to God's call in this time of uncertainty.

"I think our church has done what we can do," he said. "But the blessings that we've received in this time are not due to process. I think it's due to people who love Jesus and are faithful to the church."

—Heather Hahn, UMNS

Bishop Announces Conference Plans

Based on all of the research and conversations we have undertaken, we have decided to cancel the in-person session of the New York Annual Conference, scheduled for September 11-12, 2020.

We do not believe that we will have permission to engage in a face-to-face meeting that will honor state restrictions and maintain proper social distancing.

Once we made this decision, we began to explore with the State of New York around the possibility of engaging in a hybrid virtual form of an Annual Conference utilizing six to eight regional sites all connected technologically.

New York state law does not permit this type of virtual meeting. As a result, we are now planning on three separate virtual gatherings of our Annual Conference in order to conduct the minimum amount of work necessary in order for us to continue functioning.

**Virtual Reading of the Appointments & Recognition of Retirees
Friday, July 31, 11:00 a.m.**

We will gather online to hear the reading and fixing of the appointments for 2020-2021 and to acknowledge and thank our retirees. There will be no votes taken at this session of any kind. This will only be a gathering to authenticate the appointments that will be taking effect the next day, August 1, 2020.

—Continued on Page 8

10 Church St., Patchogue, NY 11772

The Rev. Dr. Charles Ferrara, Pastoral Minister

Camille Flynn, Administrative Assistant

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Email: PatchogueUMC@Yahoo.com

Office temporarily closed

Worship Video Live Streaming at PatchogueUMC.Org

Previous services available.

All services and church activities canceled until further notice.



Conference (From Page 7)

Clergy Virtual Session Saturday, October 24, 9:00 a.m.

We will gather online as eligible clergy to consider the “Business of the Annual Conference” report from the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. Work is being done to abbreviate this report so that our meeting will be confined to a two-hour block. Formal votes on retirements, status changes, and approval of those recommended for commissioning and ordination will take place at this session.

Virtual Annual Conference Session Saturday, October 24, 1:00 p.m.

All delegates to the 2020 New York Annual Conference session will be invited to this gathering. This too will be a greatly abbreviated session to

only deal with essential business, including remembering those who have died since our last session, limited elections that will be required due to vacancies, reports that must be given (according to the Book of Discipline), and approval of our budget for the next year. Since we are limited by our own rules, the Book of Discipline, and the reality of limited connectivity/stability in some regions, there will be no legislative sections that can be organized and conducted for this meeting. Business will be limited to the three items listed above.

The method by which we will Commission and Ordain persons approved is still being considered. This service may take place while we are online or will be conducted at later times in regional settings.

The reality of having to conduct virtual business meetings means that we must be sensitive to those who have limited bandwidth that may limit their participation, work to limit votes to essential items in order to maintain voting integrity, and monitor debate given the struggles of having over 800 people sign on to a virtual meeting simultaneously.

This will require patience and flexibility as we live into this “new normal” for at least this season.

I look forward to sharing with you in these venues and ask that you continue to keep our entire Annual Conference: laity, clergy, leaders, extension ministries, and others in your prayers as we walk through these challenging and uncertain times.

—Thomas Bickerton,