

The LINK



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF PATCHOGUE

Since 1791

July-August 2024

Keep the Spiritual Growth

This month marks my two-year anniversary as the Pastor of the United Methodist Church of Patchogue.

I am profoundly grateful and deeply honored to have been chosen as the servant leader of this extraordinary church for another year. Your warm embrace of my family and me has touched our hearts.

As I stated last year, a cross-cultural and cross-racial appointment can present challenges, and our diverse perspectives on worship reflect our unique backgrounds. Yet, despite these differences, we continue to come together and made it work beautifully.

It fills me with joy to see how you have grown personally and spiritually

under my leadership. I eagerly look forward to continuing our journey together, trusting in God to guide us toward the wonderful future He has planned for our community of faith.

As summer begins and many of you embark on vacation, I will miss each of you during your time away. However, I remain committed to fostering your spiritual growth.

Last month, I provided steps to help maintain your relationship with God. Now, here are four more essential steps to guide you in deepening your connection with the Lord.

Though straightforward, these steps are critical for strengthening your spiritual journey.

Step 1 – Read your Bible daily.

One of the most crucial aspects of the Christian life is dedicating time each

day to read the Bible. Within its pages, you'll find God's messages of love and hope directed towards you, making it the clearest way for Him to communicate with you.

It's important to choose a Bible reading plan that suits you. Such a plan ensures you don't miss any of God's messages in His Word.

Continued on Page 2

WORSHIP IN JULY-AUGUST

July 7— Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 48

July 14—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 24

July 21—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 89:20-37

July 28—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 14

August 4—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 51:1-12

August 11—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 130

August 18—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 111

August 25—Rev. Dr. Debbie San Pablo, Psalm 84



Circle of Concern

Bereavement

The family of **William Mauck**.
(Linda Werner)

Healing

Elaine, mother of Elyse Klages, that she has a full recovery from A-Fib, and that she stays encouraged in the Lord. (Elyse Klages)

Kristina's Godmother who is beginning hospice, and for **Sonia** who is keeping vigil for their mother as she needs comfort and strength. (Kristina)

Anita Helfst has been recommended for hospice. (Kathy Halliwell)

Lynn Russo is having a hip operation.

Cathy Hollowell's leg cancer has returned.

Concerns

Blessings for **Natasha** who will be moving to New Jersey to begin a new journey. (Dawn Altimari)

Joy

Jack Ryan has graduated from High School and is headed to the Navy.

Continued Prayers

Albert, Ed Klingel, Dennis Kelly, Angelo Dixon (Kidney transplant), Roberta Altimari, Lorraine Cleary, Yvette (ALS), Joan Tate, Linda Rice, Tom Tucci, Michelle Parker, Billy Hinton, Brendon Miller, Anita Helfst, Bianca Brown, Soroya Brown, Cynthia Brown, David Hoag, Rhoda Willis. Daisy Hill, Dolores, Suzanne Tierney, Kimberly Helfst

—Kathy Keating
Keats1002@gmail.com

Spiritual Growth (From Page 1)

Following a plan can also help you read through the Bible once every year. Making Bible reading a priority is the simplest path to spiritual growth and maturity in the faith.

Step 2 – Meet together with other believers regularly.

We gather regularly with other believers, as Hebrews 10:25 emphasizes, for teaching, fellowship, worship, communion, prayer, and to strengthen one another in our faith, as Acts 2:42-47 illustrates. Engaging in the community of Christ's body is foundational to spiritual growth.

Step 3 – Get involved in a ministry group.

While you are away, stay connected through a local ministry. Most churches offer small group meetings and various ministry opportunities. Seek God in prayer to discern where He wants you to serve. Believers who engage with others and find their purpose tend to experience significant growth in their walk with Christ.

Step 4 – Pray daily.

Prayer is just talking to God. You don't need to use elaborate language or choose specific words. Be genuine and yourself. Thank the Lord daily for your salvation, intercede for others, seek guidance, and ask to be filled with His Holy Spirit daily. Prayer has no bounds—you can pray with your eyes closed or open, sitting, standing, kneeling, or lying down, anywhere and anytime. Start today by making prayer a regular part of your daily life.

Once you've established these four essential steps as regular practices in your Christian life, you'll soon be eager to explore deeper aspects of your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Take your time and avoid rushing ahead of yourself or God. Remember, spiritual growth is a lifelong journey.

Have a wonderful summer.
Blessings to you all.

—Pastor Debbie

A Summer Gloria

Glory be to God...
for clear blue skies and sunny days
for fresh green grass and leafy trees
for vivid purple flowers and well-tended gardens
for fluffy white clouds and gentle breezes
for bright red buses and busy streets
Glory be to God...
for people stepping out with sandaled feet
for children playing games with delighted squeals
for picnics and street parties
for street traders and market stalls
for long days and short nights
for open-topped buses and open-necked shirts.
Glory be to God...
for seasons
for summer
for sunshine

—Chick Yuill, guideposts.org

United Methodist Church of Patchogue

July 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Office Closed 7:00 p.m.-AA	2 10:00 a.m.- Noon-Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.-AA	3 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	4 Fourth of July Office Closed 7:00 p.m.-AA	5 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	6
7 10:00 a.m.- Worship 8:00 a.m.- Pentecostal	8 Office Closed 7:00 p.m.-AA	9 10:00 a.m.- Noon-Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.-AA	10 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	11 7:00 p.m.-AA	12 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	13
14 10:00 a.m.- Worship 8:00 a.m.- Pentecostal	15 Office Closed 7:00 p.m.-AA	16 10:00 a.m.- Noon-Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.-AA	17 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	18 7:00 p.m.-AA	19 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	20
21 10:00 a.m.- Worship 8:00 a.m.- Pentecostal	22 Office Closed 7:00 p.m.-AA	23 10:00 a.m.- Noon-Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.-AA	24 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	25 4:30-6:30 p.m.-Wesley Dinner 7:00 p.m.-AA	26 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal	27
28 10:00 a.m.- Worship 8:00 a.m.- Pentecostal	29 Office Closed 7:00 p.m.-AA	30 10:00 a.m.- Noon-Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.-AA	31 7:30 p.m.- Pentecostal		August 21 4:30-6:30 p.m.-Wesley Dinner 24 10:00 a.m. -UMW	

On Toward Christian Perfection After General Conference

While the 2020 General Conference finally happened after a four-year delay, what it lost in time it made up for in substance.

Historic and significant changes happened, including the passage of regionalization legislation that would give different parts of the world the ability to adapt the Book of Discipline for more missional effectiveness. Our core values were freshly articulated in a new Social Principles, and the ministries of LGBTQIA+ people were affirmed through the removal of restrictive language.

Though a lot happened within the walls of the Charlotte Convention Center, the most significant impacts of this General Conference are how these changes affected people outside the walls.

While at General Conference, my glasses broke. I went to a store to get a new set of frames and the person helping me shared that he is a United Methodist. He has a transgender daughter and proudly showed me a tattoo on his forearm with her name on it.

Although he didn't know the General Conference was happening, when I shared with him that legislation passed removing language from the Book of Discipline that restricted LGBTQ people from participating fully in church life, he pumped his fist in the air and shouted, "Yes!"

During General Conference, a photograph of me crying and hugging my

friend Angie Cox was published by The Associated Press and circulated on news sites and in print papers around the world. My phone filled with texts, not only from friends saying they had seen my image, but also how proud they were of The United Methodist Church.

Thomas Fletcher wrote a post on the Community Development for All People Facebook page: "Historic changes are taking place in The UMC, which will allow the denomination to be a place where all people can fully and authentically practice their faith. We are grateful to all those leaders who worked tirelessly for so long to make the church open and inclusive."

The actions taken have already resulted in drawing the circle of God's love and grace wider.

As I walked through the General Conference's exhibit hall for the last time on May 3, two moms stopped me on separate occasions thanking me for my service and my witness as a transgender woman. Both moms have LGBTQIA+ kids and shared how both my example and work served as an example to their kids and that The United Methodist Church now fully included them.

By Sunday, May 5, most delegates and observers had returned home to worship with their churches. My WhatsApp feed was filled with stories and pictures of celebration.

One church celebrated with a pride-colored cake as 30 queer people

joined the worship. Another church formed a large circle where stories of General Conference were shared, while other churches celebrated with potluck lunches and rainbow flags draped across altars. One church voted by an 80% margin to Reconciling Ministries Network in response to the actions of General Conference.

This General Conference was eight years in the making. Eight years of meetings, building relationships and working through difficult conversations. As a result, The United Methodist Church is a more inclusive space where diverse voices are heard. General Conference was shaped by intentionally hearing the voices of women and a movement toward decolonization.

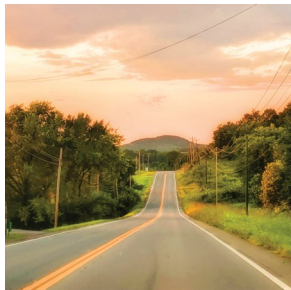
However, the impact of this work is not limited to the words printed in the Book of Discipline or the diversity of people in positions of power. Rather, the actions taken have already resulted in drawing the circle of God's love and grace wider, to include people who thought their voices would not be heard inside the church.

The work is not done. We took giant steps at General Conference 2020, but we have not reached Christian perfection quite yet. However, as we move forward, we do so with a more diverse harmony of voices. Voices that felt unheard because of who they are, now celebrated in The United Methodist Church.

—Commentary by the Rev. Joelle Henneman, UMNS

Seeing God's Presence in Journey to All 50 States

I love to travel! As a child growing up, I could not wait for summer break. I am the son of retired educators who al-



ways made sure we took a summer road trip. These epic adventures were some-

times with extended family, allowing us to journey and see sites across most of the United States. My parents inspired my love for travel and culture at an early age.

As a former United Methodist communicator, I have had the pleasure to serve in ministry and live in Boston; Jackson, Mississippi; Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles; New York City; and Sacramento, California. I grew up in Marshall, Texas.

A few years ago, I counted all of the U.S. states to which I had journeyed and set a goal to visit all 50 states before my 50th birthday. Earlier this year, I celebrated my 48th birthday and soon thereafter boarded a flight to visit the last of the 50 states for me, Idaho — two years ahead of schedule. It is hard to describe how amazing an experience it was to land in Boise and exit the plane knowing that I have now been to all parts of the United States.

On those fun and inspiring childhood road trips, my parents took us to amusement parks, museums, state and national parks and historic sites, and we always visited colleges and

universities along the way. These are still “must-see” items on my list everywhere I journey. We ate local food and delicacies and spent money with local businesses.

I enjoy spending time outside and in nature, and I have seen God's presence. God is present in all of God's creation in the continental United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, the Hawaiian Islands and Alaska. God is present, and one can see God's handiwork in cornfields, on top of mountains, in the concrete and graffiti in urban areas, and on rural roads.

When I travel and meet people, I hear the words of Psalm 24: “The earth is the Lord's and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.”

I have met people from all walks of life. I have met folks from faith communities and traditions different from my own, different theological views, different political values, various cultures, and across the socioeconomic spectrum. As a fifth-generation Methodist and a person of deep faith, I have found that my travels have underscored that we are all created in God's image. We approach life's journey, viewing through different lenses, but we are all created uniquely in God's image.

Across this nation, I have met people of faith who are doing their best to encourage and to make even better the communities where God has placed them.

In the summer of 2021, I traveled to Montana. In Billings, I went on a horseback trail ride on a family-owned working cattle ranch. I remem-

ber riding along this majestic trail and the enjoyable conversation I had with the couple who were our guides, and whose family owned the ranch. We could not have been more different. We were on opposite ends of the political spectrum. (Yes, I am one of those people who talks about politics and religion.)

What I remember most about our conversation was my revelation that although we are different, we are alike in areas that matter most on life's journey. We all have dynamic family legacies that we are trying to honor in the ways in which we live, and show up in the world. We also love our families and want the best for them, and we want our communities to thrive.

Life's journey has taken me to 31 countries and six of the seven continents. My next goal is to step foot on my final continent, Antarctica, two years from now as I celebrate my 50th birthday.

One of my favorite quotes about travel comes from the late celebrity chef, author and travel documentarian Anthony Bourdain (“Parts Unknown” was my favorite television show). Bourdain said, “Travel changes you. As you move through this life and this world, you change things slightly; you leave marks behind, however small. And in return, life — and travel — leaves marks on you.”

I encourage you to travel, explore diverse cultures, eat new-to-you food, visit local sites, support local businesses and meet someone who is different from you. Let travel change you on your faith journey.

—Dr. Larry R. Hygh Jr, UMNS

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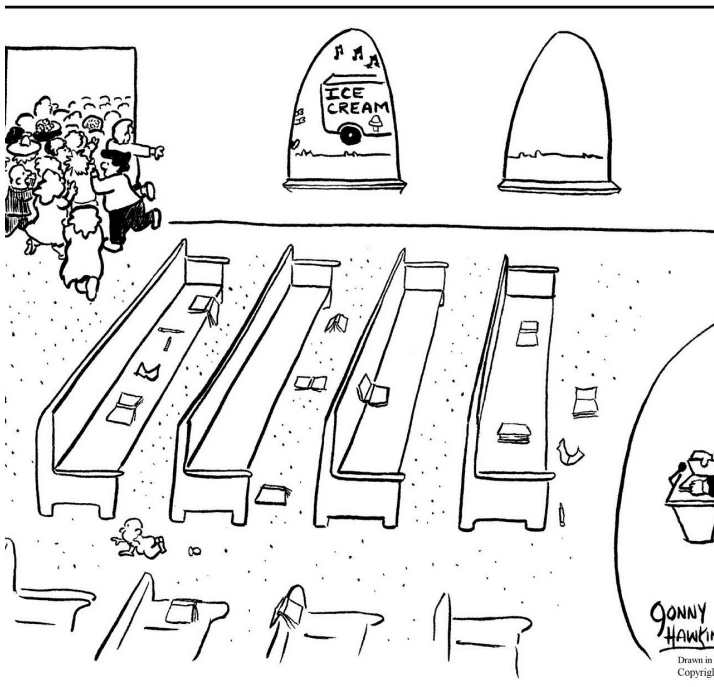
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Save Your Old Magazines

Dave Hollowell would very much appreciate your saving the magazines you have read and passing them on to him. He takes them for the enjoyment of adult and nursing home residents and shut ins. They can be dropped off in the church office.

The deadline for the September issue of **The Link** is August 23.
Please email your copy to gbhoag@optonline.net.

It Will Do You Good To Be a Doubting Thomas

Perhaps Christians might get along better with one another and better understand non-Christians if they were honest about their doubts as well as their beliefs.

At Union Theological Seminary in New York, Walter Wink taught us to ask lots of questions when we lead Bible study. In one parish I served on Long Island, a young woman expressed frustration



Doubting Thomas

that she was sometimes more confused at the end of the session than at the beginning. The other 20-something mothers agreed.

Rather than take this as criticism, I asked, “Do you think it is possible that Jesus wants us to be confused?”

This was a new and disturbing idea. “Why would Jesus want us to be confused?” they protested.

“I don’t know,” I replied. “Let’s think about that for a moment. What is good about being confused?”

After an animated discussion, they concluded that when we are confused, we are more willing to listen to others and more open to learning something new.

I think these women were onto something important about our spiritual lives.

Doubt is also often good for our souls. Wesley Ariarajah, a Christian theologian who is a leading voice in interfaith relations, notes that Westerners often rush to give answers:

“In Asian traditions, a question can be answered in four ways: “yes”; “no”; “I don’t know” and silence. “I don’t know” (or “maybe”) means that the issue is complex and that one needs to nuance the answer from a variety of perspectives. It also indicates that one needs to explore the subject rather than be rushed into giving a yes or no answer.”

The founder of my branch of Protestant Christianity, John Wesley, like many other reformers, doubted the received wisdom of his time:

- * He doubted God cared much about fine points of doctrine.

- * He doubted Catholics and Protestants would or should remain estranged from each other.

- * He doubted the American colonists needed to take up arms against England to gain their rights. (They did anyway, but Canadians achieved independence and liberty without warfare.)

- * He doubted that renewal of the Church required the creation of another denomination. (His followers created one anyway, but a great deal of reform happened in the Anglican church without a new one.)

As a Methodist, I belong to a doubt-based organization.

Perhaps Christians might get along better with one another and better understand non-Christians if they were honest about their doubts as well as their beliefs. Most saints pass through the “via negativa” (the way

of negation) and a “dark night of the soul” on their way to sanctity: the way to enlightenment: A Yes often begins with a No. Wesley was profoundly shaken by his failures as a missionary priest in Georgia and by his fear of marriage, and this ultimately made him available to God to serve in new ways, such as “field preaching” outside the sanctuaries of the state-sponsored Church of England, female preachers, free medical clinics for the poor, and daycare for the children of working parents.

When we are confused, we are more willing to listen to others and more open to learning something new. Doubt is also often good for our souls.

Like nearly half of the population, I suffer from a condition sometimes called testosterone poisoning: Ask me nearly any question, and my first impulse is to give you an answer, whether I know anything about the topic. But mature faith is built on questioning the beliefs we inherit from our families and our culture and considering other points of view. For me at least, spiritual growth has required doubt as well as faith. As Chief Inspector Armand Gamache often says in Louise Penny’s mysteries, one of the keys to wisdom is learning to say, “I don’t know.”

—Tom Goodhue, originally published by alotusinthemud.com. Used by permission. Tom is the former executive director of The Long Island Council of Churches.

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 Worship Video Livestreaming at PatchogueUMC.Org
 Previous services available.



Martha Campanile

Fifteen years ago, Gerri Sheridan asked Martha Campanile, who had served the Congregational Church, to do her a big favor.



Gerri wanted Martha to play the organ for two Sundays a month.

Well, it turned out to be a lot more than that and she has

served us well as Music Director, picking all of our service music and directing the choir as well as playing the organ. Even when the organ needed major repairs, she still made it sound beautiful.

Martha is retiring to spend more time with her husband Michael and

her daughter Christine and Christine's family. Her last service is June 30. We are eternally grateful for her time with us and wish her well.

We also have other transitions:

- * Stanita Garber is our new Finance Committee Chairman.
- * Helen Smith has retired as Finance Secretary and Gail Hoag now has the job.
- * Rev. Julia YeonHee Yim has completed her term as our District Superintendent. Rev. Richard Hanse is now our DS.

July-August Birthdays

- July 16** Isabelle Christine Wenke
- July 22** Charlie Magill
- August 3** Penelope Weber

- August 8** Kevin Rice
- August 12** Connor Kingsbury
- August 17** Natalie Morgan Palm
- August 22** Sasha Kratz
- August 23** Lynn Russo
- August 26** Lenny Pearson

July-August Anniversaries

- July 5** Pam and Conrad Queen
- July 11** Gail and George Hoag
- July 12** Carol and Bruce Kirshner

