

TheLink



The United Methodist Church of Patchogue

October 2013

Edited By George Hoag

It's About Relationships

God's blessings and peace to all! I came across a wonderful article in the United Methodist Reporter and I immediately thought I should share with all of my beloved church. Enjoy this wonderful contribution by Rev. Ken Sloane.

I worshipped in a church that had signs posted everywhere—doors coming in, doors leaving, entering the fellowship hall, even in the men's and women's rooms. The signs said: "It's all about relationships."

It wasn't the church's mission statement, but it was a core value, and you couldn't be in that church facility for more than a minute without realizing it. It was a reference to their relationship with God, with Jesus Christ, with other persons in the church family, with their neighbors and community, and with the global community. This church lived it out; they were all about relationships.

Stewardship is all about relationships. It's not about what the Finance Committee does in August or September in preparation for the pledge campaign in November, or the little box in the Sunday bulletin that tells us how much less last Sunday's offering was than what we needed to make the budget.

Worship In October

Oct. 6—Rev. Ernesto Sanchez. *Naming Our Idols*, Psalm 137, Matthew 6:19-24.

Oct. 13—Rev. Ernesto Sanchez, *Money, Work and Debt*, Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7, Luke 10:25-28,

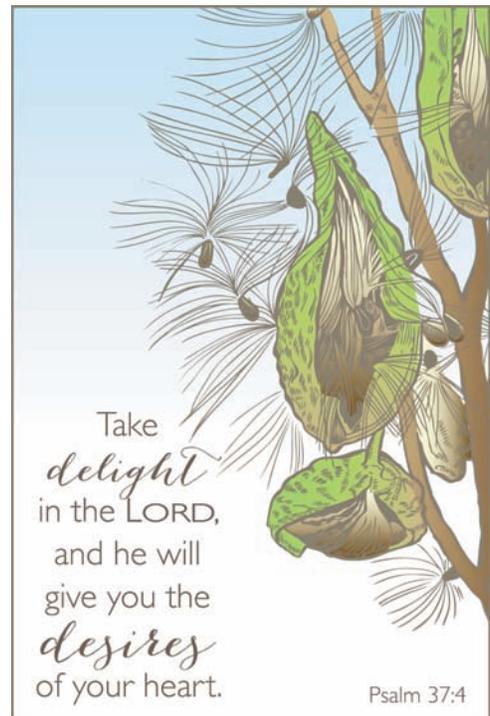
Oct. 20—Rev. Ernesto Sanchez, *Be Faithful, Save, and Give*, Jeremiah 31:27-34, Matthew 7:7-12.

Oct. 27—Rev. Ernesto Sanchez, *Heart Giving*, Joel 2:23-32, 2 Corinthians 9:11-13.

Don't be mistaken: Raising money for the operation of the church is important, and the money your people give or don't give will either empower or cripple ministry that your church must be about and the world desperately needs. Creating revenue for the church is important, but it is not the foundational purpose of stewardship. It's about building relationships.

In many ways the Bible is about relationships as well. A dominant theme in the Hebrew Scriptures is the understanding of the covenant that God established with our Hebrew ancestors: "You will be my people and I will be your God."

More than an agreement or a contract, the covenant defines a relationship. We can't understand or teach stewardship until we understand the blessings and obli-



Continued on Page 4

Circle of Concern

For Guidance:

Barbara McAllister, Ray Clark, Cat Placement and Rescue, Michael Amarati, Philip Demacos, Joanne, Rose Conti, Lisa Prince, Joan, the Neuman family, Wilfredo Franco, Monica, Patrick Keena, Sheila Dreaper, Sofia and her family, Our Troops and Veterans; Dean and family, Carlos Alvarado, Tim, Paul, Christine, Carol Moore, Emma Easley, Tom, Mike, Matt, Brian, Justin, Ray Anderson, Lori, Irene Catalino, Justin and Dean Angell, Pat, Lisa, Ben and baby Anna, Heather Reiss, Linda, Stephen Martin, Purificato Family, Ashley Lauren, Luigi, Maureen, Emma Evelend, Lisa, Barbara Rago, Esmeralda Coppola, Carmen Marrero, Loriann, David, Kathleen Russo, Alicia Evans, Debbie Jemma, Barbara, Katie, Anna, Suzanne, Amanda Garcia, Margaret, Lois, Laurie, Bonnie Smith, Debbie Turpeau, Julio, Paul Walkawitz, Debbie, Tom Kerr, Laura Jacobs, Barbara Jehle, Elise Gavrock, Steve, June Barile, Luke Gonzalez, Raymond and Randy Prince, the Elam Family, Paula Rowe, Jennifer Femister and family, Joann Henn, Steve McCarthy, Bruce Kirschner, Elaine and family, Lillian Aparicio, Marge Prince, Stephen, Rich Azzopardi, Carolyn Seus, Rosemary Swartz, Joe Tucker, Kevin Stieger, Melanie Schnieder, Connie Castogua, Marybeth Losch and family, Michael Emmel, Joseph Emmel, Kim Kluge, Emily Zeh, Bruce Kirschner's mother, Jody, Victor Levine's father, Henry Prince, Caleb Edward, Ryan Cullin, Sanborn Family, Manzollilo, Donna Horoski, Mia Heyliger, Andrew, Caleb, Susan, Ashley and baby, Sharon and Thomas, the Robins Family, Rosie, Lacey, Elba Roblen, MaryEllen, Raquel Miller, Ginny Tatem, Dean Allen, Joe Nesfield, Donna Lesparance, Swan Family, Watson Family, Cheryl, James Haywood, William Higby, Mark, Jennifer, Dean Monaco, Laura MaGill, Laura Diamond, Debbie Watson's mother, Elysse and family, Travis and Alicia Henn, Danny Wall, Mike DeMais.

These Who are Hospitalized:

Josh Boneventure, Frank, Nana Grace, Nancy Marshall, Bertha Smith, Lee Hollowell, Mary Payne, Debbie Fiore, Layden John Clark, Mary Zatorski, Dan, Ernest Boyd, Chris, Phil Ianello, Emily, Mike D., Joseph Hawthorne, Emma Rasley, Angelo, Kelly Seeman, Rebecca Hendersen, Gil Brown, Pat Ward, Pat, Christina Broom, Susanna Davies-Pepper, Mike Welsh, Joyce Ferrante, Kathleen Russo, Ronald Mansell, Linda Carrol, Carmelo Espiritu, Doc McNight, Maureen Grippi, Debbie Turpeau, Rich Kaufold, Andrew Wittman, Jr., Al Monteverdi, Henry Ohlsen, Gladys Messias, Erin Purce, Pasquale Arpaio, Waldon Scott, Trudy Ann Smith, Margaret, Jhara Tumm, Jerry Lamagna, Lance Marques, David Crescent, Liz Key, June Barile's cousin, Patty Alt, William Almond, Kim Hennesey, Bob DeLaVergne, Edward Collins, Josephine Adone, Jack Twing.

These at Home:

Joseph Weinzettle, Natalie Burnett-Lynch, Kathleen Chodorski, Kyra McCarthy, Debi DelRossi, Belle Barile, Tom Furman, Lisa Lopez, Dorotea Sanchez, Mary Jones, John Krulger, Shelly Granger, Marie Lino, Marta, Donna Herrick, Philip Rudolph, Jytte & Nils Sorensen (Geri Sheridan's relatives in

Denmark), Lorraine Greco, Emily Navidad, the Moultrre Family, Kim Farrel's daughter, Ceil Witt, June Barile's parents, Muriel Vilar, Guillermina Alverio, Catherine Interrante, Beth Widera, Marie Cirillo, Bob Ruggiero, Pat Addison, Don Wilson, Pat Q. Bayne, the McCarthy family, Mike Battaglia, Al Montverdi, Janet Monteverdi, Paula Rowe, Thomas, Andrew Brand, Margaret Mauck, Judy Hester, Pat Theobald, Elaine, Dean Monoco, the Crecent Family, Tricia Cashin, Beth Gash, Jerry LaMagna, Karen, Paul Falvey.

These who are in Rehab or Nursing Care Facilities:

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

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

Ted Davies in Brookhaven Health Facility, 801 Gazzolla Drive, E. Patchogue, NY,

Ed Dew in Sunrise Assisted Living.

**Make your Prayer Request
on line at
PatchogueUMC.Org**

Remember
the Church
in Your Will

The deadline for contributions to the November edition of **TheLink** is October 11. Please e-mail your copy to gbhoag@optonline.net.

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

Putting God First in Living and Giving

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace”. Numbers 6:24-26.

Do we worship idols? The answer may surprise you.

During the month of October, our church will hear about God’s generosity and our response as we experience our stewardship program, first: putting GOD first in living and giving, developed by author and pastor Mike Slaughter of Ginghamburg Church. There will be opportunities in worship, in small groups, in youth and children’s classes, and in devotions that can be used at church or at home.

We are made in God’s image and are meant to be creators of life and hope, not the consumers of our culture’s shiny gods. We have the ability to change the world and create a legacy that will live forever in the lives of generations to follow. That legacy starts when each of us takes the hard steps of financial discipline and fulfilling the call to generosity that God has placed in all of us.

The goal of this stewardship program is not to make you feel guilty, nor is it to say that you have to be exactly like this or that person. The goal is for all of us to ask questions of ourselves and be open to the possibility that God will lead us in new directions in our lives.

During the four-week program, we’ll be challenged in a number of different ways. We’ll be asked to look for the idols in our own lives (Hint: Most of them aren’t animals made of gold) and

name the ways these idols enslave us, holding us back from living in the true freedom that God desires for us.

We’ll be challenged to consider the place that money, work, and debt have in our own lives. What are our common understandings of these, and might the witness of Scripture lead us to some different understandings?

We’ll be challenged to ask ourselves what it means for us to be faithful, to save, and to give. How do we balance all the competing interests in our lives? What priorities does God want us to have?

Finally, we’ll be challenged to give with our hearts, not out of obligation or a sense of duty and not just when we think the recipient deserves our gift. Instead, we’ll be challenged to give the way God gives—freely, fully, with no favorites or expectations of repayment.

It is our prayer that, at the end of these four weeks, we will have begun to grow into the individuals and the church that God knows we can be. Please join us in first: putting GOD first in living and giving.

—Your Stewardship Committee



Be dressed
for action
and have your
lamps lit.

LUKE 12:35, NRSV

Celebrate your life! Witness for your faith!

What's Cool In Sunday School

I hope everyone had a wonderful September. Everyone has settled in nicely and our wonderful teachers are doing a great job of teaching about God’s love for all of us.

Dates to keep in mind for our teachers and anyone who is interested in helping our kids:

October 13-Sunday School Teacher Meeting: After church, we will be discussing plans for the upcoming school year. I want to discuss the possibility of having a holiday childcare event where parents can drop their kids off to go Christmas shopping and we can watch a movie, make a craft and have a snack. I remember dropping Sarah off when she was tiny and how wonderful it was.

November 3rd-Sunday School Teacher Meeting: After church, we will start planning for our Christmas pageant. All are welcome to come to this meeting because many hands make light work.

I hope everyone has a wonderful and safe Halloween and I’ll see you in church!

—Blessings, Elizabeth
Biederman, Sunday School
Superintendent

Congratulations

Stephanie Bonfe graduated in June from St. Joseph’s College and has a temporary substitute teacher’s position in the Islip School District.

birthdays
October 2 Edison Chae

Relationships (from Page 1)

gations that undergird this covenantal relationship. Read through the Ten Commandments and you'll realize how they help define how to keep our most important relationships healthy. We often hear it said that in the Gospels Jesus speaks more about money and possessions than any other topic, but really he talks more about how those things interact with the relationships we value.

So how does our teaching about stewardship connect and call people into relationships? Stewardship is about our relationship with God, who in love has sought to enter into covenant with us; our relationship with Jesus Christ, the embodiment of that love, and our relationship to the church, Christ's body in the world, and the mission to which it has been called.

The big shift

Carol Johnston, Associate Professor of Theology and Culture at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, has done extensive research on generosity in a variety of congregational settings and interviewed church members across a wide range of income levels. She observed that, regardless of the economic strata, when asked about money there was a consistent anxiety expressed about whether the interviewee "had enough" to really feel secure.

They were unable to see that money really couldn't guarantee security in this life.

Dr. Johnston's reflections on this were powerful: She writes at length about the connection between this security that people seek and the faith perspective that points them to examine the relationships that can provide

that security. She lists family and community and we could expand that to include relationship systems that develop within congregations—some healthy and some not healthy.

Ultimately, the key relationship that can satisfy that need for security is our relationship with God.

Dr. Johnston makes a powerful observation about one of the key obstacles to unleashing the generosity in our people. "In order for people to change the way they think about and use money, the focus needs to shift from money as the measure of wealth and security to the only true security there is: placing your life in God's hands."

So when it is time to begin the stewardship conversation in your church, let's not start with what the church needs to pay the bills. Talk about relationships, and in which relationships people put their trust, and in which relationships people find their security. See if that doesn't lead us into a place of more generous living.

The Rev. Ken Sloane is director of stewardship for the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship in Nashville, Tenn.

—**Blessings, Pastor Sanchez**

Live Auction/International Tasting Menu

On Saturday Nov. 16 at 6:00 PM, our Church will present a slightly different type of fundraiser—instead of a Chinese Auction or a Silent Auction, we will hold a Live Auction, with an auctioneer, to encourage and coordinate bids from the audience. That will be our own Joan Curtis. If you've ever attended this type of event, you know how lively and how much fun it can be.

It differs from a Chinese Auction in that there's no element of chance – you decide if you want to bid on an item and how much you're willing to spend. There are no tickets to buy.

In addition, we will provide a variety of international foods for guest to sample and enjoy. (In restaurant jargon, small plates.)

Of course, to make this event both enjoyable and a source of much needed income for our church, we will need a lot of help and support. I think our congregation is pretty awesome in its willingness to work together for a common cause.

So, we will need a number of donated items, such as gift baskets and gift certificates; also we would like to auction some services. For example – If you're a good cook, you could auction off a lunch or dinner to be prepared by you for the highest bidder. There are lots of possibilities. There are lots of talents and abilities in this congregation. Think creatively!

We will also need foods that reflect our varied heritages—Italian, German, African, Korean, Hispanic, Irish, etc. etc.

For more information, please contact me.

—**Barbara Becker**

Bible Study

Beginning on Wed., Oct. 9 through Oct. 30 at 11:00 AM, we will begin a new study: "Mary Magdalene- Who Was She?"

No book is required. We will look at Biblical references, non-canonical gospels, scholarly sources, as well as popular traditions and myths.

—**Barbara Becker**

October 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<i>1</i> 9 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.—AA	<i>2</i> 7:30 p.m.—Adult Bible Study	<i>3</i> 7:30 p.m.—Choir Rehearsal	<i>4</i> 7:30 p.m.—N/A Ouinipet Women's Weekend	<i>5</i> Ouinipet Women's Weekend
<i>6</i> 9:00 a.m.—Bible Study 10 a.m.— Communion Worship/Sunday School 4:30–8:30 p.m.— Salvation Army Class & Service Ouinipet Women's Weekend	<i>7</i> 7 p.m.—Prayer Ministry 7 p.m.—AA	<i>8</i> 9 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.—AA	<i>9</i> 7:30 p.m.—Adult Bible Study	<i>10</i> 7:30 p.m.—Choir Rehearsal	<i>11</i> 7:30 p.m.—N/A	<i>12</i>
<i>13</i> 9:00 a.m.—Bible Study 10 a.m.—Worship/ Sunday School 11:30 a.m.—Finance 2:00–6:00 p.m.— Chrysalis Team 4:30–8:30 p.m.— Salvation Army Class & Service	<i>14</i> 7 p.m.—Prayer Ministry 7 p.m.—AA	<i>15</i> 9 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.—AA	<i>16</i> 7:30 p.m.—Adult Bible Study	<i>17</i> 7:30 p.m.—Choir Rehearsal	<i>18</i> 7:30 p.m.—N/A	<i>19</i> 9:30 a.m.—UMW Meeting
<i>20</i> 9:00 a.m.—Bible Study 10 a.m.—Worship/ Sunday School 11:30 a.m.—Charge Conference 4:30–8:30 p.m.— Salvation Army Class & Service 7 p.m.—Healing Service	<i>21</i> 7 p.m.—Prayer Ministry 7 p.m.—AA	<i>22</i> 9 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.—AA	<i>23</i> 7:30 p.m.—Adult Bible Study	<i>24</i> 5 p.m.—Wesley Dinner 7:30 p.m.—Choir Rehearsal	<i>25</i> 7:30 p.m.—N/A	<i>26</i>
<i>27</i> 9:00 a.m.—Bible Study 10 a.m.—Worship/ Sunday School 11:30 a.m.— Trustees	<i>28</i> 7 p.m.—Prayer Ministry 7 p.m.—AA	<i>29</i> 9 a.m.—Al Anon 10 a.m.—Noon— Food Pantry 7:00 p.m.—AA	<i>30</i> 7:30 p.m.—Adult Bible Study	<i>31</i> 7:30 p.m.—Choir Rehearsal		

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LESSONS ALONG

the Way

May God's peace be with you!

Hello, friends. It's October – my favorite time of the year: crisp air, beautiful blue skies, football, shorts-and-a-sweatshirt weather. Good stuff! What do you say we kick off autumn with a little bit of Genesis? The first book of the Bible, not the rock group. Let's see, how about Genesis 2:2-6. Join me!

"2. On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. 3. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

"4. And then God said, "What do you say we have a church service on Sundays? Figure an hour max, maybe a bit longer for Communion Sundays and baptisms. 5. And let's cram as many meetings into Sundays after the service as we can, even though none of My children can be in two or three places at one time. 6. Call it two hours, two and a half hours tops 'time-in-church', then home to the lawn, or kid's soccer, and the other six days are freed up from that pesky worship and meeting stuff."

Wait, something's not right there. The first two verses sounded okay, but...

Before you think I've gone to my happy place—or over to the dark side—hear me out. I am most assuredly NOT making fun of the Bible, or of Genesis – you know me better than that. But I have the blessing / challenge of being very new in my relation-

ship with God through Jesus Christ (it began in earnest just over three years ago with the heart-failure thing). I also have no discernible working filter between my brain and my mouth (or my computer)—you know this about me as well. And this is just the kind of Lesson that causes me to be in communion—through a lot of prayer—with our Savior. This one hurts, badly. No more questionable humor—for the rest of this column, anyhow. Because what I'm about to talk about isn't funny, even to me. I want to talk about visitors, and lost opportunities.

A few weeks ago Kathie and I were visited by two of our friends (a husband and wife) for Sunday worship here. I was running around trying to organize the count, talk with Finance, deal with a mini-crisis – you know, standard "fellowship" fare. So much so that I had no time to "fellowship" with our friends. Kathie told me afterwards that he asked if we had a men's retreat. No, we don't – that's not a judgment, we just don't have one. Our UM Men get together for ad hoc fundraisers, and to my knowledge, that's about it. Again: not an indictment, it's just what we do here.

But we haven't seen our friends at church since. And I was too busy to spend time with them.

The United Methodist Church of Patchogue does some pretty special mission things: UM Women with the mission – no, in many ways, the miracle – of Wesley Dinners; the Food Pantry; and I love the PB&J Gang! We have great Bible Studies, and wonderful programs too numerous to mention. But the worship of our Lord, and meetings that are critical to the well-being and continuity of this church, all

get jammed into the 10:00AM to 12:00PM Sunday time slot. Even—*gasp*—past noon sometimes, at least until cooler heads can prevail. Two hours out of 168 in a week—God gets one, leadership gets the other. Good thing God gives us His blessings and grace for more than 1.19% of our week, huh?

Meanwhile, the visitor sits in Wesley Hall, and maybe wonders if a vibrant service and a great sermon are enough, when the aftermath of the service is so many people frantic to get to the next meeting that the visitor doesn't get the warm fuzzies needed to decide "yes, I want to come back." To my shame, I'm as guilty of that as anyone. And for me, that changes as of right now. To those of you who take the time to make the visitor welcome, I say: may God bless you. To the rest of us, including me, I say: we ALL need to be in Wesley Hall after the service, not in meetings or bolting out the front door.

Macy's Department Stores used to have a three-part motto for successful customer relationships. Maybe they still do. "Be Everywhere. Do Everything. Astound the Customer". In reality, only God can do the first two; it's up to us to do the third. We can move meetings to weeknights, or even a Saturday; we can have lunch at 1:30 instead of 12:30 on Sunday; but we might only have that one chance to make a first impression with a visitor, and the stakes are a lot higher than a lost sale or a lost customer.

It might be a lost soul.

—Yours in Christ, Tom Bracken



Celebrate your life! Witness for your faith!

Rev. Ernesto Sanchez, Pastoral Minister
Christine Saas, Office Assistant
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Robert Queen inspects our newly renovated nursery on opening day. The work was a Girl Scout Gold Award Project by Chrissy Widera of Troop 1657.



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IN DOING WHAT
IS RIGHT.**

2 Thessalonians 3:13, NRSV