



TheLink



The United Methodist Church of Patchogue

September 2013

Edited By George Hoag

Garden Tending

God's blessings and peace to all, welcome back! After a great summer I have to ask. "How's your garden?" My wife Ivette's favorite pastime is working in the garden. If any of you have noticed the flowerbeds in front of the parsonage, it's obvious that Ivette has put a lot of love and care into them. The results are beautiful flowers, trees and shrubs. I'm pretty sure many of you have also worked hard in your gardens this year.

Many people take great effort to care for and cultivate their garden. But how many of us make an effort to cultivate our spiritual garden? The spiritual life has often been compared to a garden, which requires frequent care and cultivation. One necessary task to cultivate our spiritual life is the daily practice of prayer.

It's amazing how many of us neglect this important practice. Our flower and vegetable gardens wouldn't survive the relentless sun without water. Yet how many of us fail to water our spiritual garden with the essential ingredient of prayer? A spiritual garden will not last long unless it is watered daily with the practice of prayer. Ever wonder why our lives seem so dry and brittle and God seems distant? Could it be because we make little effort to spend time with God in daily prayer? For

Worship In September

Sept. 1—Rev. Ernesto Sanchez, *Even If Jesus Is The Same...*, Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16, Luke 14:1,7-14.

Sept. 8—Rev. Ernesto Sanchez, *Letting Go and Taking On*, Jeremiah 18:1-11, Luke 14:25-33.

Sept. 15—Rev. Ernesto Sanchez, *Of Infinite Value*, Exodus 32:7-14, Luke 15:1-10.

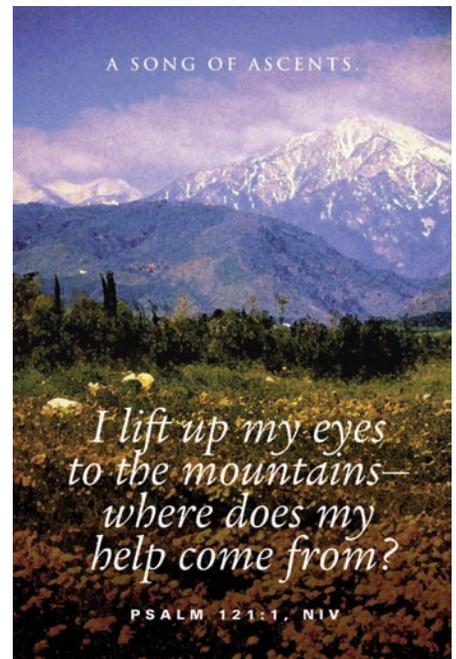
Sept. 22—Rev. Ernesto Sanchez, *Accountable To God*, Jeremiah 8:18-9:1, Luke 16:1-13.

Sept. 29—Rev. Ernesto Sanchez, *Bridging The Chasms*, Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15, Luke 16:19-31.

most of us prayer is an after thought, something we do only when we are in trouble or have some need. How would you feel if the only time your children spoke with you is when they needed money or help? Imagine how God must feel!

The practice of prayer requires discipline. It requires we take time out of our busy schedules and focus our attention upon God. It is difficult, at best, to go this alone. One day we may feel very committed to this task, yet another day we may feel too busy, or tired or preoccupied with something else to make the effort. This is why I think we need some help with this discipline. One such help is to have a prayer partner, someone who depends on you to pray for them and someone you can depend upon to pray for you and keep you on task.

Solomon, the wise king of Israel, once wrote, "It is better to have a partner,



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, Manzolillo, 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 McGill, Laura Diamond, Debbie Watson's mother, Elysse and family, Travis and Alicia Henn, Danny Wall.

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, Ed Dew, William Almond, Kim Hennesey, Bob DeLaVergne.

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 October edition of **TheLink** is September 13. Please e-mail your copy to gbhoag@optonline.net.

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

The Stewardship Moment

“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.

Well, it’s hard to believe: we’re into September, summer has all but passed, and—you guessed it—our annual Stewardship Campaign is less than two months away. In anticipation of that, we sent out a questionnaire (actually, just one question), to some current and past members of your Stewardship Committee: “In the work you are currently doing, or have done in the past, for the Stewardship Campaign at UMC-Patchogue, what have been a couple of the spiritual rewards you have received; conversely, what have been a couple of the struggles you really wrestled with?”

Here are three of the responses:

Diane Adone: *Freely you have received, freely give.* Matthew 10: 8b (NIV)

This passage says so much to me. It reminds me that whatever I have comes from God without my asking for it. I have served on Stewardship at various times at this church. One thing I have learned about myself while serving is that I want to give to “MY” church and to its missions. I also find that I want to get others to do the same. We really do come into this world with nothing and will leave with nothing. Leaving a legacy behind, however small, is really what it is all about. If we can keep the UMC of Patchogue alive even after we have gone, then we have left a legacy. So many people have passed before us and we still remember them and talk about them. What a wonderful thing it is to be able to do this!

For me the most frustrating thing is to impart this feeling to others. Too many of us get caught up in the day to day world and don’t stop to “smell the roses”. Those roses are the ones who left us their legacy and that legacy is this church!

Debbie Kolacki: In my work with the Stewardship Committee at PUMC, I’ve been uplifted by the energy and spirit shown by chairperson Kathie Wells and other members of the committee. I actually asked to serve on the Stewardship Committee because I was so impressed by the enthusiasm of those on the committee and how they “got” what stewardship is all about. It’s not just about money; it’s about encouraging people to contribute all their gifts (including their time and talents) to take care of the church we’ve been entrusted with. It’s obvious the members of the committee are involved in this ministry because they know that the purpose of our church is to share God’s love with others and the physical building, etc. is there to help us fulfill this purpose. I also love the fact that Tom Bracken has such a wonderful sense of humor about our church finances and thoroughly enjoy his original musical compositions in worship services. There aren’t many Finance Secretaries who can make a plea for money enjoyable.

However, communicating this vision of stewardship is difficult. Many find change difficult. Many don’t realize that the overall spiritual and emotional health of our church directly affects our financial health. We need to focus on our purpose as a church, follow the teachings of Jesus, and prayerfully consider what God wants for our church.

Tom Bracken: Interestingly

enough, I had both parts of that question illustrated this afternoon, when I spent some time over at Ted Davies’ 93rd birthday party in the Brookhaven Health Care Facility. Both Ted and Esther were at the party, along with around 25 or so members of UMC-Patchogue. Listening to Ted (who, at 93 years young, has a sharper mind than mine!) talk about coming to Patchogue in 1924, about becoming a Methodist via his still-beautiful wife Esther and her family, and about wonderful pastors, friends, and church family along the way, I heard fully that this man of God is still in love / at peace with the Lord, life, and his church.

Of course, a number of Ted’s legacies (to borrow from Diane’s theme above) were in that room, men and women who have served the Lord faithfully for many years, who make up a large part of the great heart that pumps lifeblood out through the United Methodist Church of Patchogue. Men and women who give far greater gifts than just money (although they do that faithfully)—they give generously and disproportionately of their time, God-given talents, knowledge, and selves. Every church that I have ever seen has this devoted, hard-working core of people who ask so little and give so much.

And as I mentioned above, today’s gathering also highlighted one of the two major struggles that I have in my spiritual home. That struggle is with attendance, membership, and especially member participation. (I’ll leave the second one, finances, for another forum, and perhaps another column). Ted was, and—based on the celebration of life he exhibited this afternoon, still is—a pillar of the very spirit of

Celebrate your life! Witness for your faith!

our church. Why were there only twenty-odd people there to share in this celebration? I guess I see that as a microcosm of a greater struggle in our church, as far as Stewardship goes: how do we get a larger number of members involved in God's work, shoulder to shoulder with other followers of Jesus Christ? Not only for the good it will do for our community and others, but for the good it will do for us...

Debbie hit the nail squarely on the head: if we allow ourselves to grow spiritually and emotionally, and act as one church in God's purpose, then the financial picture will take care of itself. God knows what we need – we just have to be willing to accept it!

—**Your Stewardship Committee**

Garden Tending (From Page 1)

than go it alone. Share the work, share the wealth. And if one falls down, the other helps. But if he falls down alone, tough! (Ecclesiastes 4:9- 10). Solomon knew that any task is easier when you have someone to help. This is also true for our prayer life. When we have a partner who depends on us, it gives us more incentive to pray. We will also be more faithful if we know that we will be asked by our partner if we have been praying.

Prayer partners work on the same principle. It's easier to cultivate your spiritual garden and maintain a vital, dynamic relationship with God when we have some help to do so. As Solomon said, when you have a partner to work with, you not only share the work, you share the wealth. And what great spiritual wealth we can harvest when we work together to cultivate our

spiritual garden. The fruit that is produced is a life filled with "love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Ephesians 5:22-23), fruits that mature into eternal life.

Many churches are adopting this new spiritual discipline/ministry and I thank my colleague Rev. Darrell for sharing this experience from his church. In the next coming weeks we will have sign up sheets for anyone interested in joining Prayer Partners. I want to encourage everyone to consider signing up for Prayer Partners and pairing up with someone who can provide you with some spiritual support and to whom you have some spiritual accountability. Remember, it's better to have a partner than go it alone. See you in church. Blessings,

—**Pastor Sanchez**

Have Mainline Denominations Lost Their Voice?

I was reading Frank Schaeffer's most recent article on Huffington Post and was stopped in my tracks by these statements:

"Why aren't the mainline denominations pitching their churches' tolerant and noble humanistic and enlightened views about individual empowerment, community and spiritual rebirth to the spiritually disenfranchised on a larger scale?" "If the mainline churches would work for the next few years in a concerted effort to gather in the spiritual refugees wandering our country they'd be bursting at the seams."

I wanted to shout at my iPad, "Yes, and that is what we are seeing happen in The United Methodist Church when

we intentionally reach out to people in our communities."

Mainline denominations, each for its own reasons, decided to withdraw from the media in the 1980s, at the same time these media were becoming the most influential shapers of attitudes and values in human history. Amid a revolution in thought and conversation, many of the mainline churches left their place in the discussion to others.

This retreat has caused faith communities to lose their voice in the ongoing conversations that are shaping moral and ethical values. The result is disastrous. It is not merely accidental that an image of God is being projected by some religionists that is judgmental, vindictive and the cause of human suffering.

In The United Methodist Church, we are reaching out to young adults through a call to Rethink Church, our invitational media campaign. We are asking young adults to rethink church, not in terms of what it is, but what it could be. Not just a place to go, or a particular politics, but rather something we do. think we're answering Schaeffer's question and a movement is building, but that he is asking the question means we must do more.

—**Larry Holton, UMNS**

Outreach Updates

ESL will begin again in October on Wednesday evening.

There will be a meeting of the Wesley Dinner Steering Committee on Sept. 22, after church.

birthdays

Sept. 15 Daniel Stone

Sept. 25 Haley Abate

United Methodist Church of Patchogue

September 2013

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

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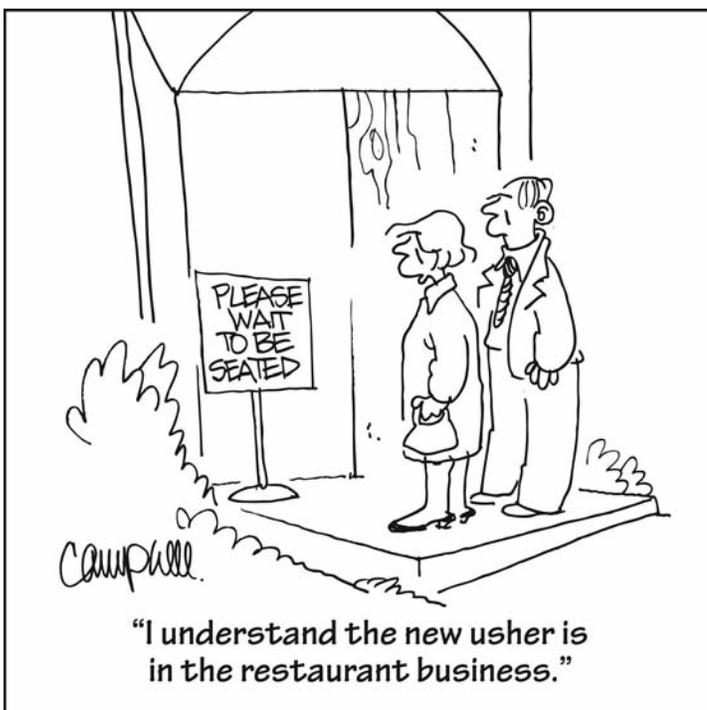
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LESSONS ALONG

the Way

May God's peace be with you!

I was at the altar praying this morning, with just a few hours before the Link's deadline for my as-yet-nonexistent column, and for that reason wondering what lesson to explore this month. And then God gave me the answer. Just like that. And it came right out of today's sermon – can you imagine that?

Barbara Becker celebrated the service this morning, and talked about understanding the word “faith” – considering what it really means, the various contexts in which it is used, and then going on to talk about three living, breathing examples of faith. Okay, Job was alive at one point. To say that faith is a complex concept is a vast understatement, and yet every one of us is capable of living in faith! That is the incredible gift of God's grace—it is given to all of us freely, in love, without hesitation. And, in the acceptance of grace and the exercise of living in faith, we can have peace in our battered hearts.

But the other underlying message that I heard in Barbara's sermon was the need for action, i.e. living in faith. God has done his part, and those who live in (or strive for) a life of faith pick up the ball and run with it. And that is where my life as a PE (Procrastinator Extraordinaire, see first paragraph for the latest example; the actual deadline was Friday) runs my train right off the tracks of life, again and again. What does being a PE have to do with living in faith? In the words of Gilbert & Sullivan, “List and learn...”

I have to tell you that I only figured

this out recently, so I may have trouble explaining it. But here goes: since I was a small child, a number of situations have come my way which were unpleasant and / or challenging. You are correct, there is absolutely nothing at all unique about this—in fact, it would be highly unusual if one's life were otherwise. However, due to various events in my childhood, my reaction was to avoid dealing with anything today that I could put off until tomorrow. As you can see, I have wrestled with this little defect for a lot of decades. But there is a more insidious side to this: I have not had many severe consequences from my PE-ism, although the severe consequences I have brought down on myself have been staggering or life-altering. Here's the new formula I have finally realized:

Procrastination + Few Consequences = Entitlement.

Because I got away with so much procrastination in every part of my life, I came to believe I was entitled to procrastinate, and I learned to live my entire life that way. And I got away with it (mostly) until it all caught up with me in 2005-2006. I lost everything. No, that's not right, I gave up and threw everything away, including a lot of money, the chance to start my own business, a lot of friends (and family), and whatever pitiful relationship I allowed God to have with me. I may never recover from the first two parts, but that's okay, because I ask God to be with me every moment, and I have friends (and a wonderful church family) that let me be at peace.

But where am I going with this? Why give you all this Tom-tattle? Simple: because, as a PE, I recognize procrastination in whatever form it exists. And it is alive and well right here in my church

family, in our venerable, wonderful United Methodist Church of Patchogue. I say this to you in love, please believe me, and please hear me out. And this is my opinion alone, based on personal, extensive, brutal experience; please don't get upset with the finance committee, the trustees, or management. Or with the Management.

Friends, we need to stop procrastinating; we cannot keep waiting for a financial white knight to come in to rescue us, we need to show the community around us that we are a House of God, and not just a pretty building. When visitors come in—even in August—they need to see not just the spiritually enthusiastic few, but rather the many who pack our pews in the love of Jesus Christ, either with large voices or in quiet adoration. But most of all, we need to do things out in the community, visible actions that show God's love in action. And the time to do all these things is now. Right this minute.

We've cut just about all the expenses we can cut. And when you can't decrease expenses, you need to increase revenue. We all—and that definitely includes me—need to step up, bring friends to service, reach out to the community, and give people reasons why they want to be part of our church. Our prayer ministry prays for a miracle. That miracle will occur when we act as a united church, doing our best to do God's purpose here on earth. We are not a social club—we are Christ's soldiers.

“Faith without works is dead.” Faith in Jesus Christ combined with action is unstoppable.

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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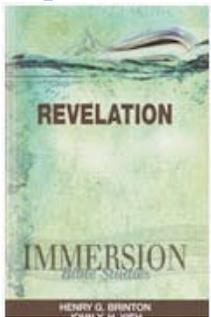
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Adult Study Starting In September



Our adult Bible studies will be starting up again in September. All are welcome to join these groups, whether you are a Bible scholar or a

Bible beginner. To sign up or for more information, please contact Debbie Kolacki at debbiek88@yahoo.com or 363-6499 or call the Church Office at 475-0381.

On Wednesday, Sept.18, we will begin an eight week study on the Book of Revelation. Our main study book will be from the Immersion Bible Studies series, which “stands firmly on Scripture and helps readers explore the

emotional, spiritual, and intellectual needs of their personal faith.” The class will meet from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. in the Choir Room. The cost for a book is \$9.00. Please contact Debbie Kolacki by Sept. 12 to register and if you would like her to order you a copy of the book. You may also purchase a copy yourself from Amazon, Cokesbury, CBD, and other online sellers.

Our Sunday morning study will start again on Sept. 15 from 9:00 to 9:45 a.m. in the Conference Room off the Cloud Room. We will be discussing the lectionary reading for the day using a free online curriculum. There are no materials to purchase for this study. Please contact Debbie Kolacki or the Church office if you'd like to attend, or just show up on Sunday morning.

—Debbie Kolacki

Live Auction Fundraiser

In past years, the church has held Chinese auctions and silent auctions to help raise funds. This year, we are considering holding a Live Auction sometime in late fall. Items to be auctioned would include some of the things you would expect to see—gift baskets, gift certificates, etc, but would also feature services. That is, someone who is a good cook could auction off a lunch or dinner to be prepared at or delivered to the winner's home. If you're really good at painting walls, you could offer the painting of one room in someone's home. Or a few people could combine and auction off a yard cleanup. Lots of possibilities. And we'll be using a live auctioneer (perhaps one of our members) adding to the fun and excitement. Details will be forthcoming. Please let me know if you want to participate in any way.

—Barbara Becker