

The Church Herald

Stony Brook Community Church (United Methodist), Stony Brook, New York



**STONY BROOK
COMMUNITY CHURCH**
216 Christian Avenue
Stony Brook, NY 11790

Chuck Van Houten, Pastor

Church Office Tel: (631) 751-0574

Church E-mail:
stonybrookcommunitychurch@gmail.com

Pastor's Study Tel: (631) 751-0659

Church Website:
www.stonybrookcommunitychurch.org

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Please send updates and information to
Newsletter Editor, Bob Retnauer, at
bobretnauer@optimum.net

"Do Your Part: A Memorial Day Reflection"

*"No one has greater love than this,
to lay down one's life for one's friends." John 15:13*



This coming week millions of Americans will celebrate Memorial Day. Yes, we will celebrate with parades, prayers, picnics, BBQs, and the waving of flags. But over the years, as I have marched in parades with fire departments where I have served, as I pondered the words I have prayed at town Memorial Day gatherings, as I've spent time with family, I began to really think about the import of the day. I suppose what really got me thinking was running in the "I Did the Grid" memorial run on the Saturday morning of Memorial Day for the last ten years. The race is a fund raiser to help supply our service men and women with basic needs like clean socks and underwear (yes, those things can be a luxury where they serve). The race is run by the Scherer family and many in the Northport area in memory of Christopher G. Scherer, a member

of the church that I served in Centerport who was killed in Iraq in 2007 when he was barely 21 years of age. For years I had been very close with Chris and his family. It was a loss for our entire community and for a beloved family in our church that changed my experience of Memorial Day. Before each annual "I Did the Grid" race we all line up and listen to the witness and emails written by our service men and women, thanking us for our support of them and remembering Chris and other fallen service men and women. It is a truly moving experience to hear these words read to us all by Chris's family and then to run in honor of four fallen service people assigned to your race number. It brings new meaning to making it to the finish line. Each time I run that race I cannot help but call to mind that morning when we stood together in the living room of the home Chris grew up in with his family and neighbors praying with the marines that had just brought the terrible news of Chris's death. It is a morning (and really a week) that is emblazoned on my heart and frozen in time for me.

Continued on next page...

NYAC VISION STATEMENT

The New York Annual Conference, through the grace of God, embodies a beloved community of hope, building up a healthy Body of Christ, with heartwarmed United Methodists in mission for the transformation of the world.



Consequently, I now choose to remember all the days and memories that so many of our service men and women have given up with their families. That it is because of all those memories that they sacrificed that I have so many days to be with my son and my family without fear of violence. I choose to think — and pray! — about how important it is to be able to live in a free society where we can choose which God we worship (or whether to worship at all), to have the privilege to vote, have the right for peaceful assembly, and of course freedom of speech. The truth is, as we often have heard, none of these

freedoms are actually free. They have come at the greatest expense, the grave cost of so many who were willing to put their lives on the line for so many whom they had never even met. I've been thinking a lot about this in the last few days, and how, as we go through our daily routines and busyness, we often do not give it a second thought.

This year I will be away on Memorial Day weekend, so Jared and I will not get to run in the "I Did the Grid" run as we often do. But we do intend to run a race up in Cape Cod with my nephew Adrian who recently served in Afghanistan. As we enjoy the freedom to run together, I will not forget Chris and all those who have served and sacrificed to give us such a privilege.

This year, as we enter into the lazy, hazy, but still busy days of summer, my prayer is that we will not forget the gift that God has given us in this life, and that we will not ever take for granted the sacrifice that so many have made, so that we can enjoy our families, our homes, our houses of worship, our jobs, and even our vacations in relative freedom and peace.

I cannot help but think of the words of Christ himself as shared in the gospel of John, chapter 15, verse 13: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." May we never take such sacrifice and privilege for granted; may we come to see life as the gift it truly is. May we look to, and strive together for, the day when war will be no more. Until then, however, may we look at our service to God each day, not only as the privilege that it is, but also as a way that we can live our lives so that we will bring honor to God, to remember that we are free to do so because of the sacrifice of so many. Take time this summer and ponder these things. Then figure out what you can do to do your part.

May you find meaning and blessing in your summer travels and living.

God Bless You,
Pastor Chuck

Mission Team News

Another successful Food Drive was held on May 6th. Three SUV's of donations and \$150 in Gift Cards were delivered to the local school pantry. The School Social Worker was most grateful for our help. Debbi Rakowsky, LCSW, Murphy JRHS, wrote, "We greatly appreciate the food drive the Church organized and are inspired by the dedication and generosity of the parishioners at Stony Brook Community Church. The food items will go a long way in helping our community members in need."

We, also, are most appreciative of the generosity of the community and to the following people for their participation: Bill and Sue Tra-
wick, Beth and Peter Lunde, Carolyn Martin, Karin Lynch, Nancy Strum, Valerie Grehan, Donna Smith, Cheryl Davey and Gail Chase.

In addition to the Food Drives at local supermarkets we are collecting donations each Sunday. There is a basket for donations inside the front door of the church. Suggested items for donation: Peanut butter, Jelly, Pasta Sauce, Snacks, Juice Boxes, Toiletries, Cleaning Supplies and Cereal. These donations will also supply our Blessing Box.

Our next Food Drive will be June 3rd from 12 to 3pm at Walmart, Rte. 347 in Setauket. Please sign up to join us in this most important ministry. If you can't volunteer for the entire time please consider coming for a part of the drive.

June Lectionary

June 3, Second Sunday After Pentecost 2018

1 Samuel 3:1-20
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 (UMH 854)
2 Corinthians 4:5-12
Mark 2:23-3:6

June 10, Third Sunday After Pentecost 2018

1 Samuel 8:4-20 (11:14-15)
Psalm 138 (UMH 853)
2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1
Mark 3:20-35

June 17, Fourth Sunday After Pentecost 2018

1 Samuel 15:34-16:13
Psalm 20 or Psalm 72 (UMH 795)
2 Corinthians 5:6-10 (11-13), 14-17
Mark 4:26-34

June 24, Fifth Sunday After Pentecost 2018

1 Samuel 17:(1a, 4-11, 19-23) 32-49
Psalm 9:9-20 (UMH 744)
2 Corinthians 6:1-13
Mark 4:35-41

July 1, Sixth Sunday After Pentecost 2018

2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27
Psalm 130
2 Corinthians 8:7-15
Mark 5:21-43

Sunday School News

We have had a wonderful year in our new Sunday school room. We will be celebrating moving up Sunday on June 17th. Congratulations to all of those moving up this year!

Summer Sunday school will begin on June 24th and will end on July 15th. We hope to see you at church this summer!



June 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour 5:00 MYF	28 7:00 (pm) AA	29	30 1:00 and 7:00: Disciple classes	31 6:00 AA 7:30 Choir	1 11:15 AIAnon	2
3 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour 12:00 Food Drive 5:00 MYF	4 7:00 AA	5 Finance Committee	6 1:00 and 7:00: Disciple classes	7 6:00 AA 7:30 Choir Rehearsal NY Annual Conference	8 11:15 AIAnon NY Annual Conference	9 NY Annual Conference
10 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour 5:00 MYF NY Annual Conference	11 7:00 AA	12	13 Meals on Wheels Board Meeting 1:00 and 7:00: Disciple classes	14 6:00 AA 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	15 11:15 AIAnon	16
17 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour	18 7:00 AA	19 7:30 Church Council	20	21 6:00 AA 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	22 11:15 AIAnon	23
24 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour	25 7:00 AA	26 7:30 Trustees	27	28 6:00 AA 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	29 11:15 AIAnon	30

July 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour	2 7:00 (pm) AA	3 7:30 Finance (to be confirmed)	4 Happy 4 th of July! Office Closed	5 7:00 AA	6 10:00 AIA non	7 European Vintage Car Show
8 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour Car Show (rain date)	9 7:00 (pm) AA	10 7:30 SPRC	11 Meals on Wheels Board Meeting	12 7:00 AA	13 10:00 AIA non	14
15 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour	16 7:00 (pm) AA	17 7:30 (pm) Church Council (to be confirmed)	18	19 7:00 AA	20 10:00 AIA non	21
22 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour	23 7:00 (pm) AA	24 7:30 (pm) Trustees (to be confirmed)	25	26 7:00 AA	27 10:00 AIA non	28
29 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour	30 7:00 (pm) AA	31	1	2 7:00 AA	3 10:00 AIA non	4

APPLE FESTIVAL 2018

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

RAIN DATE: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23



Plans are well underway! We're keeping the old favorites and have some great new ideas in the works.

The committee is wondering if any member of the congregation holds a food manager's certificate—please let us know if you do.

Do you want to help over the summer? Bake early and often and freeze your baked items. We're looking to have our biggest Bake Table ever—pure profit!

Stony Brook Community Church
Presents

Vintage European

14th Annual Sports Car & Motorcycle Display



Saturday July 7, 2018

Noon to 4:00 pm

☞ Rain date: Sunday July 8th ☞

The display will be held on the lawn in front of the Stony Brook Community Church, located at 216 Christian Avenue in Stony Brook, 1/4 mile east of the Three Village Inn. We welcome participation from all European sports cars, racing cars and motorcycles (from any nation) that were produced prior to 1984. We ask that each participating vehicle provide a \$20 donation to the Stony Brook Community Church. The Community is invited to join us for FREE to peruse the field of fantastic machines! Come and have fun! Cars are requested to arrive at 10.30 AM for staging in the display area. Registration will be on site - the day of the event.

Spots on the Display Field are limited to the first 60 cars
Registration will close, promptly at 12 Noon for placement on the display field.

This event is open to the public. Come and enjoy the live music and refreshments, which will be available for purchase. The Best Car and Cycle Awards will be presented along with a commemorative photo for each vehicle. It will be a fun event, all in support of the community activities of the Church.

Music by the Barking Men! For information, call: 631-751-1097. See you then!

Many thanks to our Corporate Sponsors



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VILLAGE

Stony Brook Eagle Scout creates opportunities for blessings

BY RITA J. EGAN
RITA@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

Blessings have been popping up more and more at churches in the Three Village area thanks to a Stony Brook Eagle Scout.

Matthew Seyfert recently achieved the rank right before his 18th birthday. The Ward Melville senior completed a project where he and other Scouts assembled seven wood structures like the Little Free Libraries found all over Long Island. Called a blessing box, Seyfert said the cabinets will provide spots at seven local churches where congregants can add an item that may be needed by others. The member of Setauket Troop 70 said he completed his project just in time, since boys have until they turn 18 to reach the pinnacle of the program.

"It felt really good, because even though I was a little pressed for time when I started my project, I tried to pick a project that I really didn't do as a requirement just for completion," he said. "[It's] something that would have a larger impact on my community. It

meant a lot to me."

The Eagle Scout said he was watching the news when he heard about a blessing box in Texas, and thought it was a good idea to create a cabinet for his own place of worship, Stony Brook Community Church, among others. The Scout said church members typically fill the cabinet with items like school supplies at the beginning of the academic year, and socks and gloves or nonperishables in the winter.

When he approached the Rev. Chuck Van Houten, Seyfert said the pastor of Stony Brook Community Church was enthusiastic about the project, and reached out to other church leaders through the Three Village Interfaith Clergy group to see who else would be interested in one.

Van Houten said he was impressed with Seyfert's endeavor, but added he wasn't surprised, noting how involved the high school senior has been in the church, and the leadership qualities he possesses.

"I thought it was a great idea, especially since one of the main missions or ministries of our church right now is feeding people in the local school district," the pastor said.

Once a month church members purchase food for a local food pantry, according to Van Houten, who said the Stony Brook Community Church box will mainly be used to house nonperishables. He said the best part is that people can drop off or pick up items every day, all day, unlike a pantry where dates and times can be limited. In the next few weeks, the Seyferts will join Van Houten in finding a place in front of the church for the blessing box, and he hopes that all community members will use it in the future.

Seyfert said while a few church councils were concerned maintaining a blessing Box may be a big responsibility, he explained it would be on a stand and easy to move, adding it's up to the congregation what they want to fill them with and how often.

The Scout's father, Dave, said he was proud of his son for coming up with the



Matthew Seyfert, above right, approached his pastor Chuck Van Houten about his Eagle Scout project, constructing blessing boxes, for local churches. Van Houten reached out to other pastors like the Rev. Gregory Leonard, left, of Bethel AME to see if other houses of worship would be interested in receiving one.

idea, especially because financial situations can change dramatically with sickness or job loss, and said the need is greater than many would think in the Three Village area. The pair put together a prototype back in November before moving forward.

"I thought it was a well thought out project and well executed," David Seyfert said.

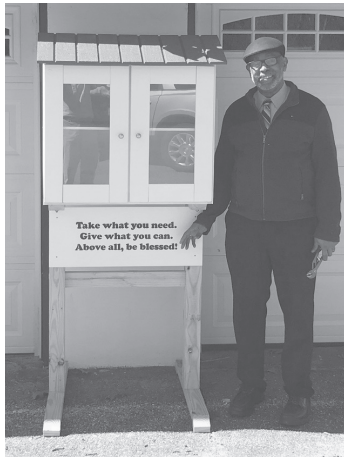
Matthew Seyfert said future Eagle Scouts need to supervise the projects more than build them, so he got together some fellow Scouts and gave each boy a job based on age. While some did prep-work, others painted and others drilled. His father said local businesses Ace Hardware in Setauket, Riverhead Building Supply, Home Depot, Lowe's and Omega Moulding Company donated supplies. Seyfert decided they would have roofs in colors that matched each church, after Setauket Presbyterian Church asked what color the boxes would be.

They've been placed at six locations so far, including Stony Brook Community Church, Setauket Presbyterian, Bethel AME Church, Caroline Church of Brookhaven, All Souls Episcopal Church and Setauket United Methodist Church. The Scout said he hopes to find a home for the seventh one in the near future. He said he has mixed feelings about the project being over.

"It was a relief, but it was also kind of sad because we were working on it for so long, that it was weird to not be focused on it," Seyfert said. "But it felt really good to now finally implement them."

The Eagle Scout project has left him with some advice for other boys looking to achieve the feat.

"Choose something you're interested in so it's not as much work," Seyfert said. "Also, start early. It's a lot of planning. You really can't start without planning."



Blessing boxes during assembly. Each Scout had a different job during the project including painting and drilling.

Photo from Dave Seyfert



CAN THE WHOLE CHURCH SAY 'AMEN'?

By Matthew Sigler



“On behalf of the United Methodist Church, Lord, we confess...” The bidding litany was left open for those gathered at the 2016 General Conference to finish in the silence of their own hearts. Any visitor or delegate remembers the tension which pervaded that gathering.

It is not hard to imagine what many were uttering before God: “We confess

that we have marginalized children of God by refusing to acknowledge their humanity. We have been all too hesitant to stand up for justice in proclaiming that all love comes from God and all — lesbian, gay, transgender or bisexual — are welcomed at the Table of the Lord.”

In the same moment, another prayed: “We confess that we have blessed what you have not blessed; we have named holy, what Scripture does not call holy. We confess we have been all too accommodating to the turbulent winds of culture by our hesitancy to enforce our own discipline on sexual ethics.”

At the end of the silence, the gathered were led to say together, “Amen.”

Suspend, for a minute, whatever qualms you might have with the other “side” of the sexuality debate in the UMC, and consider how problematic it is that the same community of faith can confess as sin the same matter, but from polar opposite convictions. This moment encapsulates for me the current division in my denomination.

Several weeks ago, the Council of Bishops signaled that their proposed way forward is to maintain a “united” Methodist Church while allowing for local congregations and, perhaps, entire conferences to determine their own position on same gender marriage and ordination. This “local option” has been presented as a path to maintaining unity while acknowledging the deep division present in our denomination. Bishops, after all, are tasked with preserving the unity of the church.

I too care deeply about the unity of the church — if we take seriously Jesus’s prayer in John 17, we all must. My students will confirm that nothing brings me more quickly to tears than talking about the scandal of disunity and how it must grieve the Lord. Because of this, I pray for our bishops and applaud the godly aim of keeping the unity of the church.

An essential component in preserving the unity of the church is in ordering worship so that the whole church can say “amen.” We sometimes take for granted this word included at the end of our



corporate prayers and occasionally uttered spontaneously in a service of worship. “Amen” is loosely translated “so be it,” and indicates that the entire gathered community is in agreement with the prayer or other act of worship. To say “amen” at the close of public prayer is a powerful affirmation that the work of worship is a communal act. It is a public declaration that the gathered body is united in their worship of the Triune God through what has been offered. St. Jerome recalls that the sound of the people saying “amen” in his fourth-century church reverberated within the building walls “like a thunderclap.” To say “amen” at the end of the prayer is not simply a perfunctory ritual, but a vital sign of unity.

The ordering of worship is a central responsibility of our bishops: “Those who superintend carry primary responsibility for ordering the life of the Church. It is their task to enable the gathered Church to worship and to evangelize faithfully” (Book of Discipline — 2016, ¶ 401). If bishops care about the unity of the church, they must do everything in their power to, at a minimum, enable the entire church to say “amen” at the close of prayer.

After the most recent signaling by the Council of Bishops, my mind returned immediately to that moment of confession at the 2016 General Conference. How can we move forward in unity when we confess in blatantly contradictory ways? For certain, the United Methodist Church has not/does not confess uniformly on a number of other topics. The diversity of our denomination means that there are likely numerous confessions made each Sunday which are vastly different from person to person, or parish to parish. That said, it is one thing to confess differently; it is quite another thing to confess contradictorily. When the latter is the case, the church can never truthfully say together “amen.” Any attempt at a “contextual” and “united” expression of Methodism that does not take this seriously is inescapably incoherent.

Sadly, rather than acknowledging their task to order worship so that the whole church can say “amen,” the latest indication from the Council of Bishops seems to celebrate the cacophony of contradictory prayer that will follow from the “One Church Model.” I fear that in their eagerness to pursue a way forward that keeps a semblance of unity they have neglected this most essential expression of agreement: saying a truthful “amen.”

The time of silent confession on behalf of our denomination at General Conference ended with an “amen.” Yet, I am left with the chilling fear that what was offered in that “amen” was not a thunderclap of unity, but the discordant litany of a denomination that is anything but united.



Matthew Sigler is Assistant Professor of Wesleyan Studies at Seattle Pacific University. He holds a PhD in liturgical studies from Boston University, where his work focused on Methodist identity and liturgical praxis.

Prior to becoming a professor, Dr. Sigler served for 12 years as a music minister in the church and has written on contemporary worship as well as lyrical theology. He is particularly interested in how the faith practices of communities of the past can serve as resources for renewal in the church