



The Church Herald

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



STONY BROOK COMMUNITY CHURCH

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Please send updates and information to
Newsletter Editor, Bob Retnauer, at
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The Blessing of Stewardship

I'd like to begin this message by saying thank you to all of you for the wonderful surprise last Sunday of the pastor appreciation celebration and the very blue Mets-themed cake we all enjoyed. It was truly humbling and I thank you all very much. I am also grateful that after coming home with much of that cake my waistline has not increased to the point of needing to buy new clothes. God is good!

Over the last few weeks I have been thinking a lot about giving and stewardship, and what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Part of that is because we are coming up on our annual commitment Sunday, and part of it is because the season of both gratitude and giving will be upon us in just a few weeks.

Lately I have spent time in prayer looking within to consider why God has brought us together for such a time as this? Why God is calling us to be God's faithful people in this time and place? Why God is calling us to move forward together for God in this season of giving and gratitude? And in the midst of that questioning, in the midst of that prayer, I have come to see that it is for the purpose of praising God by witnessing to and sharing the many blessings God has showered upon us as a congregation over the decades and in recent years.



Consequently, I've been thinking about how all that we have, especially our talents and relationships, are of ultimate importance. Yet we need to remember that all of this comes from God. Ultimately, God has given us full and free use of this world including the sacred gift of our time, talents, and our relationships. We just need to remember that it all belongs to God, not us. That's stewardship.

Psalm 50:10-12 states, for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. 12 ... for the world is mine, and all that is in it.

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.



Yet how often do we stop long enough to reflect upon and remember that all we have belongs to God? We allow ourselves to become so busy running around gaining, consuming, and planning that we tend to forget that our creator God is the one who fashioned this universe and all that is in it. And so, I suppose, the question is do we treat the world and one another that way – as God’s creation and God’s gift? Do we see our time, our money, our relationships as just a means to personal end? Or do we see them all as gifts with which to praise our creator God?

That is the challenge that I am renewing for myself this Thanksgiving and holiday season. That is the commitment that I will make to God: to see all that I have available to me – my time, gifts, talents and relationships – as a gift from God, not to be squandered but to be nurtured and invested in for God. While this is something I’ve known for a long time, it is so easy to lose sight of it in the busyness of our “success” driven consumer culture. Maybe we simply need to remember to put God first so that our idea of success becomes loving and nurturing each other and the gifts we have in order to love and serve the world for Christ. This is no great revelation, but simply a decided daily focus amidst the busyness of our lives which will more than likely become even more hectic in the months ahead.



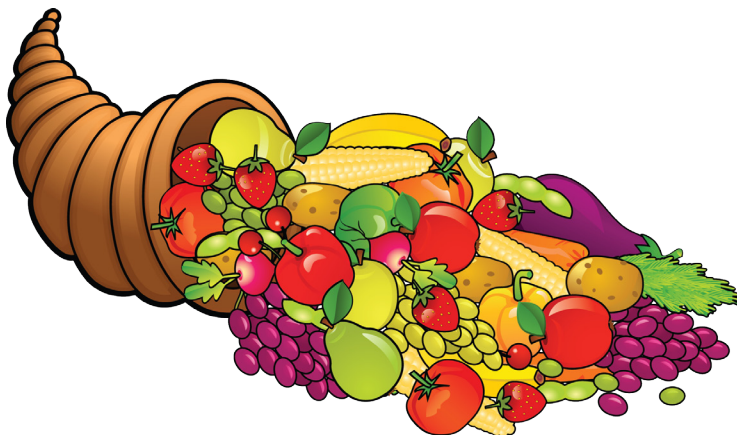
This Thanksgiving season I invite us all to remember just how blessed we really are, as children of God, as family and community members, and as church family members. May we come to be truly grateful for all that God has already given us, for when we come to realize how blessed we are it changes our viewpoint from one of lack to one of blessing. When we begin to see all of life as a blessing, a gift from God, we begin to live our life from a place of gratitude and giving in a way that fulfills and opens us to see even more blessing. Funny how that works.

That is my hope and prayer for us all and for the world. May we all become abundantly aware of the blessings we already have to be thankful for this Thanksgiving season. And yes, let us even become thankful for our God given ability to give. May we see it all, our living, our service, our loving, and our giving, as the privilege it truly is. That is the blessing of stewardship. Let it fill you and those you love this season.

May God continue to bless you richly in every way.

Yours in God’s love, joy, and blessing,

Pastor Chuck





Lectionary for November 2015

November 1: All Saints Day/Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 25:6-9
Psalm 24 or 146
Revelation 21:1-6a
John 11:32-44
Ruth 1:1-18
Hebrews 9:11-14
Mark 12:28-34

November 8: Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost (Year B)

Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17
Psalm 127 or 42
Hebrews 9:24-28
Mark 12:38-44

November 15: Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

1 Samuel 1:4-20
1 Samuel 2:1-10 or
Psalm 113
Hebrews 10:11-14 (15-18) 19-25
Mark 13:1-8

November 22: Christ the King/Reign of Christ

2 Samuel 23:1-7
Psalm 132:1-12 (13-18)
Revelation 1:4b-8
John 18:33-37

November 29: First Sunday of Advent

Jeremiah 33:14-16
Psalm 25:1-10
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13
Luke 21:25-36



Three generations of Van Houtens gather to celebrate Pastor Appreciation Month.



November 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 5:00 MYF <u>Daylight Savings</u> <u>Ends</u>	2 7:00 (pm) AA	3 7:00 (pm) Finance Election Day: Please vote your conscience.	4	5 6:00 AA 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	6 11:15 AlAnon	7
8 9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 5:00 MYF	9 7:00 (pm) AA	10	11	12 6:00 AA 10:00 AlAnon	13 11:15 AlAnon	14
15 9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 5:00 MYF	16 7:00 (pm) AA	17 7:30 (pm) Church Council	18	19 6:00 AA Charge Conference at Setauket UMC	20 11:15 AlAnon	21
22 9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 5:00 MYF	23 7:00 (pm) AA	24 7:30 (pm) Trustees	25	26 <u>Thanksgiving!</u> (office closed)	27 (office closed) 11:15 AlAnon	28
29 9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 5:00 MYF  1st Sunday in Advent	30 7:00 (pm) AA	1	2	3 6:00 AA 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	4 11:15 AlAnon	5



Church Council News

At church council's meeting October 20th, events were reviewed and planned for the upcoming busy season.

For the children, a Halloween party was held on Saturday, October 31st from 10:00 – 11:30. The MYF was there to help run the activities. MYF is also painting the upstairs rooms at the Sullivan House. The goal is to have those rooms available for Sunday school and MYF gatherings.

On October 25th, worship service was held at 11AM due to the Walk for Beauty run/walk. A special coffee hour honored Pastor Chuck with a beautiful (and tasty) blue and orange cake to celebrate Pastor Appreciation month!

Looking ahead to Thanksgiving, the UMW is collecting food for 8 families in need from the Mount Elementary school. A sign-up sheet is posted in the community room. Won't you help with this mission? Another outreach organized by the UMW, is the Angel Tree. Christmas gifts will be collected for children in the area. Look for more details posted in the community room bulletin board in late November.

November 19th is our church's annual charge conference. It will be held with Setauket Methodist at their church. All are invited to attend.

As always, we extend the invitation to our church congregants to join us at our council meetings. Our next scheduled meeting is November 17th. Hope to see you there!



"For I was hungry, and you gave me food"

Again this year the UMW will be collecting donations of food and money so that the church can give eight Mount Elementary School families a Thanksgiving dinner. Please sign up in the Community Room to tell us what food item you will be donating and/or place a check in the offering clearly marked "Thanksgiving food drive." We'll assemble the boxes after church on November 15.





SBCC youth Floating Into Fall!!!



We had a fantastic Man Hunt at the last MYF meeting! In the end, there was only one left that was not 'infected'. Go Jared!!!



Saturday, October 31st
10-11:30 AM
Community Room

Bring your friends! Come dressed in a costume. Paint a pumpkin that you brought to the party. Enjoy games, music, and prizes!



KidZone

A huge thanks to the MYF for their enthusiasm in the Kidzone. Many children took bounding leaps in our inflatable, struck the large bowling pins, and fished for prizes.

MYF meetings are Sundays at 5:00pm

Going Forward

We are looking for volunteers to teach Sunday School 1 - 2 times per month with our Spark curriculum. (plans, materials, set-up, etc.)





WESLEYAN WITNESS: THREE FRAMING QUESTIONS

By Dave Barnhart

United Methodists added the word “witness” to the membership vows in 2008. Members who join are asked to pledge to support the church with their “prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.”

Christians often think of “witness” as telling other people about Jesus. Yet the word “witness” (as well as “evangelism”) carries more connotations than faith-sharing. Witness means to observe as well as tell. One can “witness” a car accident, and then be called as a witness at a trial, and then share their testimony or witness from the witness stand. A witness shares their witness about what they witnessed.

It is the observational part of witness that we Christians often leave out. Sharing our faith is more than telling — it is also observing and naming, learning to view the world through the lens of Christ. Often, we ask people to share or tell their faith when they have not adequately “seen” their faith, or told their own story to themselves! It takes critical reflection, looking back on one’s experiences and asking questions, to develop a series of seemingly random life events into a coherent story. It isn’t necessary for someone to write a full autobiography, but it helps to have some questions with which people can frame their experience.

I sometimes ask people to reflect on their own experience using Wesley’s three kinds of grace.

1) “How have you experienced prevenient grace?” is one such question. Who taught you about God when you were young? How did your family model, or not model, God’s love? Where was God when you were in foster care? How was Jesus at work during your addiction? Who gave you hope when your friend died? These are the kinds of questions that help create a framework for us to name grace.

2) Justifying grace is what we generally understand as a conversion experience, although how we experience the timeline, the catharsis, the epiphany, or however we want to describe it varies from person to person. “How did you come to rely upon Jesus for salvation?” or “What made you decide to follow Jesus?” are, I think, pretty good all-encompassing questions.

3) “How have you continued to experience God teaching and transforming you?” is the question I use to help people understand sanctifying grace. “What is God teaching you about love and justice now?” brings it into the present moment, and makes it about more than my own personal holiness. Rather than just talking about salvation as a one-time event, this question invites the listener to acknowledge God’s saving action as an ongoing process.

In this sense, witness stands at the center of what we do as a community of faith. At our church, we talk about discipleship in the familiar Wesleyan way of “Works of Piety” and “Works of Mercy,” dividing them into their public and private dimensions. Public piety is worship; private piety is devotion; public mercy is justice; private mercy is compassion. But instead of calling “witness” a private act of devotion, something that happens between one person and another, we situate it in the middle of the means of grace. It unites what we do as a worshipping community, publicly giving praise to God; as devoted individuals privately sharing our faith; as compassionate individuals doing good for others; as a justice-oriented community proclaiming the kingdom of God. All of these involve seeing and naming grace active in our lives and in the world. It involves both observation and telling.

Witness is situated between the private and the public. We take what is known to us in private, our observations of how God has been active in our lives, and giving our public testimony. We likewise take the Bible story we share in public and use it to view our individual life stories.

It is also situated between love of God and love of neighbor. I share my love of God with my neighbor because I love my neighbor and want the same for them. I also recognize that in loving my neighbor and sharing my story I am also loving God.

This is why we situate witness in the center of our discipleship model. One could, of course, make arguments about other areas of discipleship. They are all interconnected and all reinforce each other. For example, we could ask, “Where does worship end and justice or compassion begin?” Our private piety is also worship. But witness, in its fullest sense, is a recognition that our story and God’s story are intertwined. We observe and we share, we see and we tell, we unite what we say and what we do because Jesus is active in our lives and in the world around us.



Dave Barnhart is the pastor of Saint Junia UMC in Birmingham, Ala.



ANNUAL 5K HOLIDAY FUN RUN

Our 17th (can you believe it?) 5K Holiday Fun Run is scheduled for Saturday, 12/12. This year we have decided to “team” with Adam’s Hope House – a suicide prevention foundation for which our own Michele Dexter is a board member.

We welcome any support you can give – hand out flyers, help get sponsors, help on the day of the race – please contact Sue Murphy at 631-871-2368 or smurphy52@optonline.net.





STONY BROOK COMMUNITY CHURCH
5-K HOLIDAY FUN RUN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2015

(Proceeds to benefit Adam's Hope House and other Church outreach programs)

Packet Pick-Up and Day of Race

Registration begins at 7:30 a.m.

in the Education Bldg (behind the Church)

Race Starts at 9:00 a.m.

Race Course

The challenging 5-K course will be in old Stony Brook, beginning and ending at the church. Visit the Church website (listed below) for course map.

Race Awards

Overall top finisher in Male/Female Category

Top 3 finishers Male/Female in the following age groups:

12 & under; 13-19; 20-29; 30-39; 40-49; 50-59; 60-69; 70 +

Entry Fees

Pre-registered (by 12/5/15) -\$20(\$15 for students)

(T-shirt guaranteed if pre-registered)

\$25 after 12/05/15 or on day of race

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND DIRECTIONS, CALL 751-0574 OR

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: <http://www.stonybrookcommunitychurch.org> (under the "INFO CENTER" tab)

Or SEND US AN E-MAIL: sbcc5k@verizon.net

ON-LINE REGISTRATION NOW AVAILABLE AT:

<http://www.active.com/stony-brook-ny/running/races/5k-holiday-fun-run2014?int=>

STONY BROOK COMMUNITY CHURCH IS AN "EVENT MEMBER" OF

THE ROAD RUNNERS CLUB OF AMERICA

OFFICIAL COURSE TIMING BY

SCHWAB'S 2ND WIND

2015 "5K HOLIDAY FUN RUN" ENTRY FORM

Mail form and check to: Stony Brook Community Church 5-K Run, 216 Christian Ave., Stony Brook, NY 11790

Last name _____ First name _____

Address _____ City _____ State & Zip _____

Phone(____) _____ Gender: Male _____ Female _____ Age _____ Eligible Student: _____

Email address (for award notification, future info) _____ T-Shirt Size: S M L XL

In consideration of your acceptance of this entry, I, the above signed, intending to be legally bound, hereby, for myself, my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, waive and release any and all claims, demands and causes of action I might otherwise have for damages or otherwise against Stony Brook Community Church (United Methodist) and the agents, employees, representatives, successors and assigns of all the aforementioned organization, for any and all injuries and/or property.

Signature _____ Date _____

(If under 18 years of age, signature of parent or guardian is required)

Signature _____ Date _____

(Parent/Guardian)