



The Church Herald

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



STONY BROOK COMMUNITY CHURCH

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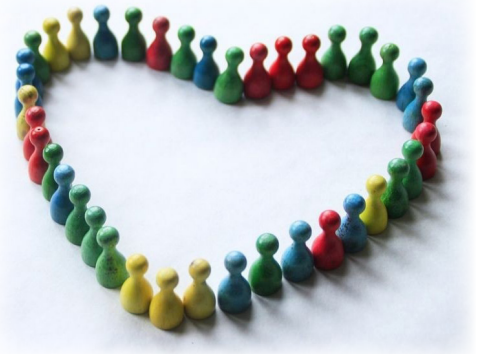
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Please send updates and information to
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Political Rancor, Elections, and Thanksgiving: The True November Surprise.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. – Romans 15:5-6 (NIV)

What a month this will be. In the span of just twelve days we will experience All Saints Sunday, Youth Sunday, Stewardship Sunday, our Church's annual Charge Conference, and our nation's mid-term election. In all instances there is a sense of uneasiness or anticipation. For many, the day after an election is a day of mourning, a day of wondering what went wrong? A day of wondering where do we go from here? For others it is a day of celebration, joy, relief, and yet, still a day to wonder where will we go from here? Yet, the question on



my mind is how do we begin to heal the wounds of a nation that seems so divided? Can our political parties, once so united in the common cause of freedom and security in the aftermath of 911, ever work together again? Or are they destined to be at political odds indefinitely? While these questions may sound cynical – especially with Thanksgiving and Advent fast approaching – I believe they point the way to an even more important question. What is our role in all of this as the Body of Christ in this place?

My friends, regardless of your political leanings, regardless of your feelings about the unfortunate political rancor we have been living through, we are called to be the people of God, empowered by our creator to bring hope to one another and the world. We are not the religious right or the religious left as some would like to label all people of faith. But we are forward thinking, spirit-led children of God seeking to navigate a course in this changing world that will enable us to live our lives in such a way that those very lives speak of the things of God and what God wants for the world in our particular place and time. We are a group of God's people who are working to discern who God wants us to be as the body of Christ in this place we call the Stony Brook Community Church, to dare to offer hope to one another in the Spirit of God's truth, for it is our clear and present mandate from God to offer God's love to the world in the lives that we live by the power of the Holy Spirit and in the unity of Christ Jesus.

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.



And that is something that no political institution or party can ever offer. So I invite you to join me on our Thanksgiving and Advent journeys as we celebrate all that we have to be thankful for, all that we have to offer, as we celebrate the birth of hope among us once again in the presence, innocence, and power of the holy child.

But before we even begin to talk about Advent, let us focus our hearts and minds on a time of honest thanksgiving. So let me share with you some of the things that I am thankful for today: I am thankful for the fact that, while we have been enduring one of the most politically contentious seasons in recent history, you and I and 2.2 billion other Christians can live into the hope and compassion offered to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We, as Christ's body, the church, must move on with the understanding that we are in need of unity; the kind of unity that only is possible with God's help. And I am thankful that I believe we live in a country where that is possible even when we disagree.



I'm thankful that, even though times may prove to be difficult financially for some, we are becoming a more generous and faithful community of faith through our worship, our studies, and our missionary outreach. I'm thankful for the presence and ministry of our new Student Assistant Pastor, Anthony Sellers, and for the message he shared with us last week on humility. I pray you will (if you have not done so already), greet him in love as our new Student Assistant Pastor and keep him and his family in your prayers as he explores ministry in the United Methodist Church. I am thankful for the fact that we all are growing in faith together and working to serve our community in new ways. I'm thankful for my family and the challenge and the joy they bring to my life. And I am eternally grateful

for all of you. For the support, challenge, and joy that the ministries of this church have to offer to each of us and to the world in such difficult times. And it is your response in the ministries we offer to our community and your response with a resounding "yes we will move forward together" in your commitments that we will all make on Stewardship/Thanksgiving Sunday that gives me hope for the world – for God's world.

It is with that gratitude, with that hope, that I can honestly say to you that this is a day, a time, of new beginning. Time to remember and move on joyously as our great hymn proclaims. Not because of any vote that you will cast, not because of anyone that you have chosen, or that our nation has chosen, but instead because God has chosen you. God has chosen to work in you, and through you – to bring you together with all God's children. To put aside our petty personal or partisan agendas and become what God originally created us to be: God's gracious, creative, and loving children, a force to be reckoned with. Not out of might but out of a power that is like no other: a power that comes from compassion, love, faith, and humility: a humility that is not weak, but instead speaks of dignity, offering hope for the world. That is who we are because that is who we are called to be. And that is why I believe we can all truly be grateful to God as we move into this season of Thanksgiving.

Let me close with the words of the great apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans: "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15:5-6).

May we all seek to glorify our God through our living and our giving. May we truly be thankful for the gifts that God has given us, not taking those gifts for granted. And may we see the greatest gift of all as simply the ability to love and serve one another and to work together for the good of God's world in unity with Christ Jesus every day. That is my prayer for us. That is my hope. May it be so. Amen.

In God's Love, Gratitude and Hope,
Pastor Chuck





November Lectionary

November 1: ALL SAINTS DAY 2018

Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-9

Psalms 24

Revelation 21:1-6a

John 11:32-44

November 4: ALL SAINTS SUNDAY

God dwells here and desires to be close to us, and we can dwell in the hope that Christ is coming to abolish death and mourning and pain. As you go through this month, keep your eye on the coming season: Advent. What does it mean to dwell in hope as you move toward Advent?

Ruth 1:1-18

Psalms 146

Hebrews 9:11-14

November 11: Twenty-Fifth Sunday After Pentecost 2018

In a period of deep division and brokenness in our country, what difference does and could Jesus make? Where does the good news speak into the places that seem hopeless and lost? Do we live as if the weight and power of sin has already been taken away and that Jesus' sacrifice and love is available and intended for all people?

Ruth 3:1-5, 4:13-17

Psalms 127 or Psalms 42

Hebrews 9:24-28

Mark 12:38-44

November 18: Twenty-Sixth Sunday After Pentecost 2018

Jesus came to free us from the chains of shame and created the church as a place for us to be vulnerable and challenge one another in love. Regularly, we all still sin and fall short of who God desires us to be; but through vulnerability and accountability, we can hold the things we've done up to who we want to be without letting those things define or paralyze us.

1 Samuel 1:4-20

1 Samuel 2:1-10 or Psalms 113

Hebrews 10:11-14 (15-18) 19-25

Mark 13:1-8

November 25: CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY

On this final Sunday of the church year, Christ the King Sunday, take the time to remind your congregation of what it means to have a crucified King who isn't merely seeking allegiance with our lips, but desires a fundamentally different way of us being in relationship with God and with one another. Sometimes, terrible things just happen. Yet, Christ our King is right there with us and has committed to be in solidarity with and in our suffering.

2 Samuel 23:1-7

Psalms 132:1-12

Revelation 1:4b-8

John 18:33-37



2018 Annual Community Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

The Three Village Interfaith Clergy Association will be offering its annual Community Interfaith Thanksgiving service on Tuesday, November 20 at 7:00 p.m. at North Shore Jewish Center (385 Old Town Road, Port Jefferson Station).

Pack up your Thanksgiving visitors and family and come join us to celebrate the gifts of our religious diversity. We hope you will be able to stay for a while after the service to enjoy refreshments and conversation.



November 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship	29 7:00 (pm) AA	30	31 1:00 and 7:30: Pray Like Jesus classes	1 7:00 AA 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	2 11:15 AIAnon 7:00 p.m. MYF	3
4 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship All Saints Sunday Daylight Savings Ends	5 7:00 (pm) AA	6 Election Day: <i>Please vote your conscience</i> 7:30 Finance Committee	7 1:00 and 7:30: Pray Like Jesus classes	8 7:00 AA 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	9 11:15 AIAnon 7:00 p.m. MYF	10
11 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship	12 7:00 (pm) AA	13 7:30 Church Council	14 1:00 and 7:30: Pray Like Jesus classes	15 7:00 AA 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	16 11:15 AIAnon Start of MYF Friendsgiving and Lock-in	17 MYF Friendgv and Lock-in 3:00 Charge Conference at Port Jefferson Station UMC
18 10:00 Worship Stewardship Sunday 11:00 Fellowship	19 <i>Presidents Day Holiday Office closed</i> 7:00 (pm) AA	20 7:00 Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, N Shore Jewish Center, Port Jeff. Station	21	22 <i>Happy Thanksgiving!</i>	23 <i>Office closed</i> 11:15 AIAnon 7:00 p.m. MYF	24
25 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship	26 7:00 (pm) AA	27 7:30 (pm) Trustees	28 1:00 and 7:30: Pray Like Jesus classes	29 7:00 AA 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	30 11:15 AIAnon 7:00 p.m. MYF	1



THESE BONES WILL DANCE!

At Protestant Campus Ministry at SUNY Stony Brook

The LORD set Ezekiel down in a valley full of bones. There were very many bones, and they were very dry.

He said to Ezekiel, "Mortal, can these bones live?"

He answered, "O Lord God, you alone know." Ezekiel 37

We believe that God's message to Ezekiel is also a message to our ministry:

"I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and cause flesh to come upon you and cover you; I will put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

But these bones cannot become fully functional without financial support. The revitalization of dry bones costs money, in the form of compensation for our campus pastor, supplies and equipment for the office, fees to the University, and seed money for startup programs. Won't you take a moment now to write a check to Protestant Campus Ministry, and mail it to:

Ms. Peggy Kurz, Treasurer, PCM
c/o Lutheran Church of Our Savior
231 Jayne Avenue
Patchogue, NY 11772

For further information about PCM contact

Brenda Ford, Campus Pastor, at rev.brenda.denise.ford@gmail.com



UMW NEWS – NOVEMBER

November is almost upon us! It is time to begin bringing donations for the Thanksgiving Boxes which will be distributed to families in the Three Village School District. We are planning to organize ten boxes. All donations must be delivered to the Community room by Sunday, Nov. 18, when the boxes will be assembled. We will distribute the boxes to the schools on Monday, November 19. Please look for the Thanksgiving Boxes Sign-Up Sheet in the Community Room. Thank you for your support of this important ministry.

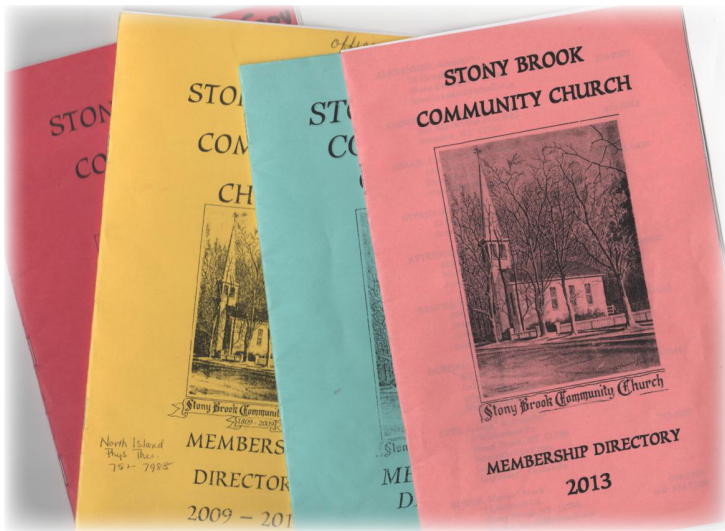
SAVE THE DATE

The Mission Team has announced that a Food Drive to benefit the School District Food Pantries will be held on December 16 at King Kullen in St. James. Look for more information in the up coming weeks.

PASTOR APPRECIATION SUNDAY

Pastor Appreciation Sunday was celebrated by the Congregation on Sunday, October 14. During the worship service, Pastor Chuck was honored with a special congregational hymn. A surprise “Learning with the Young” which quizzed the children on “What does the Pastor do?” was entertaining to all. The celebration continued during coffee hour with a cake in Pastor’s honor.





New Church Directory Coming!

The 2018 Church Directory will be ready for Consecration Sunday, November 18th. If you would like any changes to your listing (add an email address or a cell phone number?), please contact the church office not later than November 11th.

Mystery Box of Slides

North Shore Montessori was cleaning out some cupboards and found several boxes of church items, including a box of slides. They are dated in the 1960s and many are labeled as being from trips ("Stirling Forest August 1968;" "Strauss Village, Orient Point 1962;" "Garden Tour Mr. Melville's home, etc June 1960"). If anyone knows (or can figure out) anything about them, please contact the office.

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Youth Group News

The SBCC Youth Group (formerly known as MYF) was off to a great start in October, with Dr. Karen Van Houten joining Shantel Sellers as co-directors. Activities included a Mystery Trip to Laserland in Commack, Activity Planning Meeting/Wii Bowling Tournament at the Parsonage and a Halloween Bash at the Sellers home. November looks to be equally jam-packed with Youth Sunday, a "Friendsgiving" Lock-In and Advent Workshop. Open to all SBCC youth (grades 6 – 12) and friends! Feel free to contact Dr. Karen Van Houten (631) 561-9522 or Shantel Sellers (231) 871-1466 with any questions.

Nov 2 – Youth Group (7 – 9 pm) (Youth Sunday planning/Video Training/Basketball)

Nov 4 – Youth Sunday (10 am)

Nov 9 – Youth Group (7 – 9 pm) (Fusion Friday – welcoming youth from all area churches)

Nov 16/17 – Youth Group (7 – 9 pm) ("Friendsgiving" and Lock-In)

Nov 30 – Youth Group (7 – 9 pm) (Advent Workshop)



REIMAGINING GENEROSITY: RESHAPING THE CONVERSATION ON STEWARDSHIP, GIVING & GENEROSITY

By Jack Alexander

How many people, when asked for impressions of Bible-believing Christians, would choose words like “generous” and “compassionate” and “sacrificial”? According to studies, the answer is: almost none. We can’t blame it all on bad press. It’s time to look in the mirror.

Yes, it is true that American Christians give more than American non-Christians. But it’s hardly time to pat ourselves on the back. Christians only give 2.43 percent per capita. They gave one third more of their wealth during the Great Depression. In fact, data shows unambiguously that in the past forty years, as American Christians have grown wealthier and wealthier, their debt has grown larger and larger, and their giving smaller and smaller. As one observer writes, “For Christians in the richest nation in history to be giving only 2.43 percent of their income to their churches is not just stinginess, it is biblical disobedience.”

In a culture where constant consumerism and extravagant excess are celebrated and advertised, even promoted as a patriotic duty, the profound need arose for ministries that could provide solid biblical counsel on how wealthy Christians could steward their wealth and not-so-wealthy Christians could escape debt. These are worthy goals and worthwhile ministries. Some have done exceptional work.

Still, some piece of the puzzle is missing. Church giving has not risen, “stewardship” campaigns are like pulling teeth, and the “Generosity Movement” has been limited and largely confined to the wealthy.

When the battle is being lost—and it is—we question the strategy. And, we should. After all, generosity and stewardship is not about money in the first place. It’s about something deeper than that. It’s about our image of what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

Sure, you may be less stingy than your neighbor. But we’re not called to live a little better than the Scrooge down the street. We’re not called merely to live debt-free. We’re not even called to live like no one else. We’re called to live like Jesus.

The questions are not: Are you a satisfactory steward? Or can you be guilt-tripped into giving more? The questions are: Are you generous like Jesus? Are you yearning to live a Christ-like life of abundant self-giving?

When we have more, and give less, than ever before, something is amiss in our hearts, and in the vision of gospel living that animates our churches. We view tithing as a dusty old rule, a two-thousand-year-long guilt trip to nowhere. We view generosity as a luxury of the rich, like sailing and wearing plaid shorts at the country club. And we view stewardship as primarily a matter of financial management.

What if generosity is something much more than that? What if generosity is at the heart of God?



The truth is this. We were created in the image of a self-giving God. God didn't need us, but our very creation—the creation of all things—was an act of overflowing generosity. We don't deserve anything. The fact that we have a single moment of life, the fact that we have breath, and food, and families, is because God is generous. And God is so extravagantly generous that he not only gives us being and sustains us in being, not only gives us lives and homes and families and jobs, but even gave us himself in Jesus Christ, and gave us salvation on the cross and new life in the empty tomb.

God's generosity is unlimited because his love is unending and his storehouse of blessings is abundant—and so our generosity should be unlimited because his love is unending and his storehouse of blessings is abundant.

In other words, generosity is not something we can choose, or choose not, to do. It is who we are, who we are created to be. God gave us to ourselves so that we could give ourselves to one another. God gave himself to us in Christ, so that we could give Christ in us to others. Generosity, in other words, is at the heart of our creation, our salvation, and our purpose. That's why, two years ago, we set out to ReImagine Generosity. What would it look like, we wondered, to resource pastors and churches with materials that help talk about generosity from a holistic perspective – not a topic with a silo around finance? What would it look like to walk people on a path from transactional to relational to sacrificial generosity – the kind of generosity we see modeled in the life of Christ?

The results we began to see were extraordinary. We barely talked about money—we talked about the heart—but churches started giving multiples more than they had ever given before. Stories poured in of people showing extravagant generosity with their possessions. But not only money. Volunteerism soared. People gave of themselves in ways that were at times intuitive and at other times entirely surprising. Church cultures started to change.

So now, we are trying to get the word out: Generosity is the new apologetic. It's the antidote to the devouring poison of materialism. It's the tangible expression of God's love in the world. Generosity is at the heart of the Christian life. Generosity like Jesus is not a criterion to make us feel bad about ourselves. It's an invitation to be ourselves, to become who we are, to live the life that is truly life.

