

# ...from the Heart

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*Autumn 2015*



## To Everything, there is a Season...

Well, the summer is over, vacations are done, the kids are back in school, and it's back to our normal routines. This is true for the church as well. All of our small groups will be starting up again for men (M.E.N.), women (Women In-Touch), young adults (Karios), and a few new additions. Also, the Men's monthly Breakfast will be resuming on the first Saturday of the month (at 8am). And don't forget, Good News Bowlers will start a new season. They play on the first Saturday of the month, 7pm at Bowl Long Island in Patchogue – See Corinne Franco for more information and to sign up, or the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

On Sundays we will get back to our regular schedule for the children and begin a new addition; Barbara Brennan our Nazarene Mission International (NMI) President is starting a Children's Mission Workshop one Sunday a month.

Once again we will host a Prayer Retreat sponsored by the Springfield Gardens Church of the Nazarene. This year it will be held on November 7. Lastly, we will have our annual Thanksgiving Service November 24 at 7pm.

If you need more information on these, or any of our other ministries, call our church office. You can also go to our web site: [www.patchnaz.net](http://www.patchnaz.net) or find us on Facebook. I will also keep you up to date each day with my daily "Good Morning!" (A.K.A. "God Morning!"). Send me your email address if you would like to receive "GM!"

I am excited about getting going again, hope you are too.

And that's...

F.T.H.

Pastor Jeff



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be one of us. His spirit was humble and all powerful at the same time. Jesus made his intentions clear while speaking to a teacher named Nicodemus.

*“God didn’t go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again. Anyone who trusts in him is acquitted; anyone who refuses to trust him has long since been under the death sentence without knowing it. And why? Because of that person’s failure to believe in the one-of-a-kind Son of God when introduced to him.”* John 3: 17-21 (the Message)

Jesus’ ministry wasn’t about condemning people, it was about redeeming them! He came willingly, ready to give up everything for us - yet he was rejected then and now by millions unwilling to believe His way is the way of truth. Jesus’ coming was the solution but also the crisis for all humanity.

*“This is the crisis we’re in: God-light streamed into the world, but men and women everywhere ran for the darkness. They went for the darkness because they were not really interested in pleasing God. Everyone who makes a practice of doing evil, addicted to denial and illusion, hates God-light and won’t come near it, fearing a painful exposure. But anyone working and living in truth and reality welcomes God-light so the work can be seen ...”* Matt 5: 13 (NLT)

The Bible is as clear on the practice of homosexuality as it is on adultery, greed and gluttony. Jesus made it clear, if we break any one on God’s laws, we’ve broken them all and unfortunately all of us fit into Isaiah’s category of filthy rag righteousness. So what do we do? What does God require of us in this challenging moment of history? Do we stand strong on the principles of the Bible or should we be humble demonstrating God’s love towards others? The answer of course is both. Jesus called us to be salt and light.

*“You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? ... “You are the light of the world ... a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”* Matthew 5: 14 (NLT)

We’re in desperate need of God’s help, wisdom and power to live the kind of lives and provide the kind of leadership needed for our time. This is not the time to pass the salt ... it’s time to be the salt.

Serving Him Together, **John Mercurio**

### *“...From the Heart”*

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**Associate Pastor: Rev. Nick Franco**

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# FOREVER FAMILY UPDATE

## WELCOME TO THE WORLD

*Louis Anthony Marra*

Proud Parents Pasquale and Lori Marra  
Born July 16<sup>th</sup>

*Karai Fasano*

Proud Parents Rich and Kara Fasano  
Born August 17<sup>th</sup>

## NEW LIVES IN CHRIST

What a blessing for Pastors Nick and Jerry to baptize John Ladore, Hellen Martin, and Enos Milliner. Pastor John read their amazing testimonies before they were baptized. The baptism was on June 28 and the following Sunday we shared their testimonies in our morning service and presented each one with their Baptism Certificate.

## MOVING ON

Our love and prayers follow Jesse and Ashley Bonfiglio after their move to North Carolina in August. Love and prayers also follow Mike and Jill Iarocci after their move to Georgia. We will miss these dedicated people, leaders, friends, and brothers & sisters in Christ.

Congratulations to Melanie Ollett, the new Pastor of the Carlton United Methodist Church in upstate Waterport, NY (between Rochester and Buffalo on Lake Ontario).

A teenager in the church made a profession of faith in Melanie's first morning service. So, already God is beginning a new work there.

Many of you at Patchogue Nazarene have helped prepare her over the years for her answer to the call of ministry. On September 6, Pastor Melanie will be preaching in our morning service, and we will have an opportunity to pray for her. The fellowship afterward will be in her honor as well.

## WOMEN'S MINISTRY

As the lazy, hazy days of summer wind down, we have my favorite season to look forward to. With the dry weather we have had many leaves already falling off the trees, but I still look forward to the beautiful colors of autumn.

On Saturday, October 10<sup>th</sup> we will have a Ladies Brunch in the church fellowship hall. This is always an informal time of fun, food and fellowship. I will hand out flyers as the date gets closer but put it on your calendars now and plan to join us.

During the summer months, our In-Touch Group continued to meet at my home on Tuesday evenings. We were able to pray for the many needs of family, friends and our church family, and were blessed to be able to see many answers to those prayers. We will be starting a new book later in September entitled Grace by Max Lucado. The sub-title reads "More than we deserve; greater than we imagine" and looks to be an interesting study. We meet on Tuesday nights @ 7:00pm for prayer, study and fellowship.

It seems that no matter what stage of life we are in, it is busy. Our days are filled with jobs, school, church, family obligations and all those "things" that take our focus off of what is most important. Yes, the things that we do are important, but if that leaves no room to spend time alone with the Lord on a regular basis, then something has to change. We live in a world that demands more and more of our time, it tells us all that we "need" to be, and all that we "must" have. Let us all get our priorities in the right order; God first and all else after that!

Be blessed and be a blessing

In Christ, *Mary Ann*



## Caught Between the Money and the Mission

By Don Gardner

"It is so frustrating, because we are not able to spend the majority of our time doing missions. We are half-time missionaries, and half-time fund-raisers. We feel trapped. Before we came to Africa, we spent two years raising our support. We thought we had raised sufficient support to last for four years. Our support is already rapidly declining. I think it's "out of sight—out of mind." Just two years into our assignment, we currently spend half our time writing letters and making phone calls (at \$5.00 per minute) to our friends and supporters in order to sustain our support base. We are forced to shift our focus from winning souls and mentoring leaders, to fund-raising just to survive. The stress siphons away all our energy. We have no idea how much longer we can stay on the mission field at this rate." (Quoted from a former missionary with a well-known denomination.)

What do we want our Nazarene missionaries to focus on? The World Evangelism Fund offers funding to our missionaries so they can focus on the tasks we send them to do. Missionaries don't need to spend as much time raising funds for their support. The World Evangelism Fund funds many missionaries' salaries and provides an operational allocation that supports their travel, housing, utilities, and care while on the field. Giving to the World Evangelism Fund results in good stewardship of resources, especially the resources of missionaries' time and energy. The fund doesn't cover the myriad projects that every missionary has underway. Mentoring vulnerable children, providing clean water, training pastors, Jesus Film showings, ministries to conflict-displaced people, and church construction and planting, all require additional funding. However, the World Evangelism Fund ensures that missionaries have a better ability to devote themselves to these projects. The World Evangelism Fund is the foundational means of support for missionaries and the mission effort. Giving faithfully enables the Church of the Nazarene to take the gospel to the ends of the earth—literally. Why does the Church of the Nazarene have a World Evangelism Fund? To enable our missionaries to focus entirely on carrying out the church's mission: To make Christ-like Disciples in the Nations. It's not cliché. It is our purpose and it is our mission. It is who we are as a holiness people. The World Evangelism Fund works!

Don Gardner serves the Church of the Nazarene as the Africa East Field Director

Read more about the Gardner's and their work at [www.africanazarene.org/africa-east](http://www.africanazarene.org/africa-east)

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**Give Generously to The Thanksgiving Offering for World Evangelism.**

(All Faith Promise, Easter and Thanksgiving Offerings go directly to the World Evangelism Fund.)

## Sewing Circle

We have been busy making JESUS caps to be given out during this year's mission trip to Haiti. Barbara Brennan, who is going on the mission trip, came to me and told me of the caps that were distributed as an evangelistic tool on the mission trip she had been on in Ecuador. She asked if our ladies would be willing to make some. The ladies of the sewing circle enthusiastically jumped aboard and started pumping out hats. Why is it called a "Jesus Cap"? The colors of the Jesus Caps demonstrate God's Plan of Salvation and can be used as a witnessing tool: Gold Crown—Jesus is our Covering. (John 3:16)/Black—We are dead in Sin. (Romans 3:23)/Red—The blood of Jesus washes away Sin. (Romans 5:8)/White—So that we are white as snow. (Isaiah 1:18)/Green—We have new life in Jesus. (2 Peter 3:18)/Gold—And we will live forever with Jesus in the Kingdom of God (Rev. 21:2).



We pray these hats can bring the truth of Salvation to those who receive them. If you would like to make additional hats in children's sizes we will put them into the Christmas Child shoeboxes.

The Sewing Circle meets at 7pm on the third Thursday of the month at the Youth Center. You are welcome to join us. Just bring a project you are currently working on, we will supply the fun and fellowship!! - **Corinne Franco**

# Put Your Life in His Hands

"Unknown to Us, Known to Him" ...Isn't this the big mystery of our lives? How can we live not knowing what lies ahead? Only by faith and trusting in God can we be reassured of His protection and



infinite love. This summer's Vacation Bible School's objective was precisely to help kids to develop the kind of trust in the Lord that allows us to put our lives in His hands without reservations, like Daniel and his

friends did multiple times. Only God knows whatever is going to happen, and only He has the power to solve any problem.

Our kids started their "Journey Off the Map" getting to know their guide. With Jesus in the front and center of their lives, they can be ready for anything life throws at them. We don't know what will happen, but we know that with Jesus as our guide we can do anything and come out victorious. They went on to study the book of Daniel, where they learned about the many difficult situations in which he and his friends (Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego) found themselves, but by obeying God's rules and trusting in Him, they escaped punishment and even death. Isaiah 30:21, "And whenever you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear this command behind you: This is the way. Walk in it", served as the base for all learning during this week, instructing children to follow God's guidance and direction every step of the way.

This objective was reinforced during the entire week of August 3-7, not only through Bible studies, but also through games, crafts, songs, dances, skits and even snacks. It took a great amount of work,

money and volunteers to be able to offer this important service to the children that participated in it and their families. I would like to take this opportunity to thank every single one of our helpers and every person who contributed monetarily to this endeavor. We had a successful program because of the love each one expressed to our kids through their contribution whether organizing, decorating, cleaning, cooking, acting, monitoring, teaching, singing, dancing, making crafts, promoting, taking pictures, making videos, you name it. You were there and God worked through you. And, if you were not there, you might want to consider becoming part of this great experience next year. In Children's Ministry, we are getting ready to start a new program for Sunday school this fall. FC, from Nazarene Publishing House, offers sound instructional material for children Pre K to 6th grade with the purpose of helping them to develop a personal relationship with God. As with any other program, this one also requires workers willing to help. We need teachers, care givers (for our nursery) and monitors every Sunday. We are preparing our kids to become faithful adults that will trust the Lord throughout their lives. This is the beginning of their Christian journey, and what better way to equip them for it than through the teachings of the Bible. Don't miss this chance to plant the seed of salvation in their tiny hearts. Keep in mind that a child's mind is completely honest and uncorrupted by doubt and fear. This is the time to show them the way remembering what Jesus said: "Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it", Luke 18:17.

**Bendiciones (Blessings), Nereida Gazzo**

## GOOD NEWS BOWLING LEAGUE

September is not only back to school month, but back to bowling month! The Good News Bowling League meets once a month on the first Saturday of each month through June at Bowl LI in Patchogue. However, this year our first night will be September 26th due to the Labor Day holiday. This means we will be bowling two Saturdays in a row, but hopefully more people will be able to make it. It's not too late to sign up. (Teams of 4 are mixed male & female.) If interested in joining, send me an email at [corinnefchurch@verizon.net](mailto:corinnefchurch@verizon.net) You must be 18 or older to join. (This year's fees are yet to be determined but will be approximately \$25 per night per bowler.) **Join us for our 18th year as a Christian League. - Corinne Franco**





## VBS Testimonial

I'm so glad that I was a part of VBS this year. The children were eager to memorize the verse Isaiah 30:21, had a blast playing games, and they retained so many of the stories they learned throughout the week. Their performance was memorable, and two weeks afterward, the same children I taught were able to get up again and recite the verse. I was very proud of them! Awesome! Well, originally, I wanted NO part of VBS. I volunteer to teach Sunday school during the year, and usually take a break for the summer. However, a friend was in need, and I decided to volunteer. This meant I had one week to put lessons together! I panicked as I was gathering material, and overwhelmed by the sheer volume of it. So much time, preparation, sweat, and blood (I stapled my finger) goes into it.

Yet, I can't tell you how faithful God was. He gave me a wealth of ideas each day. His timing was perfect, and He had everything under control. I had Lillian Akel with me throughout the week, and she was a tremendous help. At one point I said, "Lord I don't know if I can handle another day of teaching and preparing." He told me, "Ask for help then." It's so simple, yet so difficult to do on your own. Lillian took over a day for me. Working together, and being able to bounce ideas off each other, ensured that each day was a success. A parent from my

job, who brought her daughters to VBS, told me they want to continue coming to our church for Sunday school. Their excitement and open hearts left me overjoyed.

I can't tell you how much fun it was to watch the kids laugh and shriek as we put them through each ridiculous, but fun game. I was blown away by the older girls as they gave me many examples of Jesus' ministry on Earth, and some of the children with tough exteriors melted a bit by week's end! Finally, many of the workers who encouraged me along the way gave me confirmation that I was where God wanted me to be.

The children were not the only ones who learned many wonderful things that week. I learned the importance of delegation, prayer, trust, flexibility, and peace that the Lord accomplished everything He wanted to. It was exhausting, but it did not compare to the joy I received. Each night ended in praising and glorifying the Lord. Jesus was able to use me in spite of my initial unwillingness. I would have missed out on this huge blessing if I kept with my original plan. We were all blessed, and so was the Lord. "We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps." Proverbs 16:9.

Following His Steps, **Liz Duffy**



**VBS WAS A HIT!**

## Nursery News

*"Let the children come to me and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these" Matthew 19:14*



This is the scripture Pastors Jerry and Nick project during every Dedication ceremony. Such blessed events that are cherished by all who attend. Our church loves children; we love to see them learn and grow, but when it's time for a service, we all want to focus on the awesome messages we hear every week. Our kids can definitely distract us, and others, with their presence. Those little ones

need a place to go where they can also experience the love of God in a safe, fun, and friendly environment. Thanks to the years of service from Vickie Ortiz, and many donations from our Forever Family, we have exactly that! What better way to let the children come to Jesus than by offering to lend a hand in our Nursery? Our population of toddlers is always growing, and as such, so is the need for some willing volunteers. If you would like more information, or would be willing to volunteer, please come see me, or send me an email at [jandsh817@optonline.net](mailto:jandsh817@optonline.net) 9

**In His Service, Sue Herrmann**

## Men's Network

Mark your calendars! The Men's group will kick off the fall season with a morning breakfast, Saturday October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Bi-weekly, Monday Evening meetings will begin October 5<sup>th</sup> with our topic of study on Nehemiah and the building of the city walls. These meetings are intended for all men regardless of age. So guys, come and be a part of what God calling us to build. - John Mercurio

# *Hospitality*

I wasn't scheduled to be in the kitchen that Sunday, but there I was, having been asked if I could cover the Fellowship hour after service. Around 9am the phone rang. I let it ring twice, then figuring no one was upstairs, I answered. A lady asked for directions and our service times. I gave her the information, and suggested when she arrived to mention she had spoken to me. As we were talking, Vickie picked up the upstairs phone. "Hello! Church of the Nazarene!" she said cheerfully. We three had a good laugh before Vickie hung up. The lady said she hoped to join us later.

As I sat for the start of service, a lady behind me said, "Hello Sue!" It was the lady I spoke with on the phone. We talked for a few minutes, then Pastor John began the opening hymn. Her beautiful voice sang strongly behind me. When the hymn ended, I offered her the seat next to me and she accepted. She chatted easily with me about her family and some of the circumstances which led her back to Long Island after a lengthy absence. She seemed very comfortable with our worship songs. She took notes during the sermon. After the service ended, I encouraged her to join us for fellowship downstairs, but asked if I could first introduce her to some of our Patchnaz family. She conversed easily with everyone as they did with her. Once downstairs, there were more introductions, more conversations.

When she was getting ready to leave, she told me she felt right at home and she filled out the visitor's card from the welcome packet. I hope we see her again!

As I watched the interaction between our guest and our church family, I was filled with love for and pride (the good kind) in my brothers and sisters who made her feel so welcome, as is our custom. I've seen it time and time again.

We have been blessed with a God-given desire to warmly receive anyone who comes to us. I've heard it repeatedly from visitors how accepted they felt the first time they came. We are truly a family! We care for and love each other deeply. It's this sense of family, community, love for God and love for each other which permeates our gatherings, and I believe it's what is so irresistible to those seeking a place to call "home" when they look for a church-body. We offer that love to everyone who walks through our doors. Of course, we're not perfect, and for some, we're not the perfect fit. Some find a permanent home here and some do not. However, we *are* the place, the people, God has led a particular person to at that moment, on that day, for those specific worship songs, for that particular message, to meet those particular people in attendance. His plan and His timing *for us and for them* is evident and inevitable. Hospitality isn't a single person, and it's not a ministry leader's title. It's not Sue Cerruto-Head of Hospitality. It's all of us extending the love of God to all who come. As you did. As you always do. How I thank God for you all!

*<sup>19</sup> Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. <sup>21</sup> In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.* Ephesians 2:19-22 (NIV)

His Servant,

*Sue Cerruto*



# Please Pass the Salt



What a difference a little seasoning makes. This summer, friends from upstate New York drove down for a weekend visit at our house. On the second evening we had a BBQ featuring one of my specialties, marinated ribeye steaks. I was surprised when my friend asked me to keep his cut of meat separate from the rest, "All I want is a little salt and pepper," he insisted. When the meal was served he couldn't stop raving over how delicious the steak was. Our two wives offered a serenade of appreciation for the marinated version pleading in vain with Stephen to, "Just try it!"

It's intriguing to realize how different people are in their likes and dislikes. All Stephen wanted was a little salt. Our weekend guests are not believers; in fact, they're avowed atheists, who surprisingly cherish our friendship, which we find fascinating. Our fears and prejudices often cause us to ask the wrong questions to situations life throws at us. The right answer isn't always the current politically correct one, nor is it necessarily the popular or favorable one. We live in challenging times in which government, civil rights, education and religious beliefs have come into direct conflict. Christians are being forced to go against their personal beliefs and convictions or suffer the consequences.

This August, Kentucky county clerk, Kim Davis refused to issue a marriage license to a gay couple, opting out because of her religious beliefs. She was ordered by a U.S. District Judge to issue the license or be held in contempt of court. Ms. Davis has been threatened with the loss of her \$80,000 a year job, heavy fines, possible jail time, and personal law suits that could cost her to lose her home. This is not an isolated case and the *culture wars over marriage*, as some are calling them, may have only just begun. This and other related issues, dressed up as matters of civil rights, have already impacted many of us in different ways. How can we know what the right thing to do is? What do we do when what we know to be morally right, conflicts with court decisions and new legislation?

"Walking down the street, Jesus saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked, "Rabbi, who sinned: this man or his parents, causing him to be born blind?" Jesus said, "You're asking the wrong question. You're looking for someone to blame. There is no such cause-effect here. Look instead for what God can do. We need to be energetically at work for the One who sent me here, working while the sun shines." John 9: 1-5 (the Message)

Jesus' disciples were asking the wrong question; they were looking for some place to put the blame. Because of the religious teaching of their day, they wrongly assumed this man was born blind because he or his parents had grievously sinned. If we focus more on the problem than the solution, we're asking the wrong question! Jesus was intent on turning the blind man's situation into an opportunity to heal him, while at the same time, revealing the intense love of God for His people.

None of the four gospels depict Jesus making reference to homosexuality. What then should we conclude from this exclusion? Are Christians right in taking high moral ground, claiming that homosexual and gay marriage is against God's moral laws according to the Bible? Maybe we're asking the wrong question. Maybe instead of looking for specific rights and wrongs, we need to study the entire life of Messiah Jesus as laid out in the New Testament. It's not hard to see that Jesus was not like the established religious leaders of His day. He was approachable; he went to dinner with tax collectors, talked to Samaritans, lovingly touched the rotting flesh of a leper and performed healings on the Sabbath ... all things considered taboo. Jesus called himself the Son of Man not the Son of God, because it was His intention to

*Continued on back cover*