

...from the Heart

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Winter 2015/2016



Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

*Hark the herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled"
Joyful, all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
With the angelic host proclaim:
"Christ is born in Bethlehem"
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"*

*Christ by highest heav'n adored
Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come
Offspring of a Virgin's womb
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see
Hail the incarnate Deity
Pleased as man with man to dwell
Jesus, our Emmanuel
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"*

*Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings
Ris'n with healing in His wings
Mild He lays His glory by
Born that man no more may die
Born to raise the sons of earth
Born to give them second birth
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"*

Christmas 2015 is almost here. One of the traditions of Christmas that I like is singing the Christmas carols.

As I write this I am grieving the loss of my sister, Angela. She passed in November after a long hard battle with cancer. Yet, the above Christmas Carol gives me hope today.

*Hark the herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King! ... God and sinners reconciled"*

(Continued on next to last page)

Baby Dedications

November 15, 2015

Harper Mary Thomas

Proud Parents - Jeremy & Michelle Thomas

Proud Grandparents are Randy and Penny Thomas.



November 22, 2015

Jameson Micah Wisnieski

Proud Parents - Gary & Erin Wisnieski

Proud Grandparents are Pastor John and Jennifer Mercurio.



(Continued from front cover)

Christ the Messiah, Savior, Son of God was born in Bethlehem. Jesus came to give His life for our sin and through His sacrifice God and sinners have been reconciled. "Glory to the newborn King!"

My sister's faith was in Jesus and through all her suffering, pain, and setbacks, she kept her faith in God. She told me how, lying in a hospital bed back in August, she prayed out loud, "God I surrender my life to you and accept whatever your will is."

She knew God was with her and was leading her in this battle with cancer. In the second verse of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" we read these words:

*Pleased as man with man to dwell
Jesus, our Emmanuel*

My sister knew God was with her. Emmanuel means, "God with us." God became human and lived for awhile *among* us. But after the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ He sent His Spirit to live *in* us. Because of this, Jesus is always with us and He will never leave nor abandon us. The last verse of this carol says,

*Born that man no more may die
Born to raise the sons of earth
Born to give them second birth*

(Continued on back cover)

“Born that man no more may die.” Wow, what hope that gives me today. In the last days that I spent with Angela we spoke and I reassured her and confirmed what she already believed, that God had a better place for her. Life would continue in heaven with no more sorrow, pain, sickness or death. She is experiencing Eternal Life right now.

And on the last day Jesus will raise even our mortal bodies, transforming them into immortal bodies reunited with our spirit and we shall forever be with the Lord. What hope we have in Christ. Jesus was born to give us a second birth – a spiritual birth. Jesus was born that we no more may die.

Hark! Can you hear them? If you get quiet enough you just may hear the angels rejoicing over my sister Angela's coming. I think I hear Angela singing with the angels too: Hark! The herald angels and Angela sing "Glory to the newborn King!"

And that's...

F.T.H.
Pastor J.F.



...From the Heart"

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December Events

December 6

Second Sunday of Advent
Holy Communion

December 12

9:30am Ladies Brunch and
Christmas Craft

December 13

Third Sunday of Advent
Child & Baby Dedication:
Julianna & AJ Dumas

December 20

Fourth Sunday of Advent
Baby Dedication:
Evie Jean Carpenter

December 24

5pm Christmas Eve Service



Weekly Events

Monday - 7pm - Every other Monday our M.E.N. (Men's Encouragement Network) group meets in the Fellowship Hall. All men invited to join us.

Tuesday - 7pm - Ladies-in-touch meet every Tues. at Mary Ann Malcolm's home. All ladies are invited to attend.

Wednesday - 7pm - Bible Study with Pastor Nick at 65 Franklin.

Friday - 8pm - First Friday of every month, Prayer meeting in the Sanctuary.

Saturday - 8am - First Saturday of each month, M.E.N.'s Breakfast held in the Fellowship hall.

7pm - First Saturday of each month,
Good News Bowlers at Bowl Long Island, Patchogue.

Thank you for supporting our food pantry. Because of your generous donations, our small church family continues to make a big difference in the lives of those in need. I am deeply touched to see the love and caring for others that so many of you have shown.



I have been assembling bags of groceries since mid-November in preparation for Thanksgiving and Christmas. As I fill these bags, it is my prayer that this food reaches those who would otherwise go without during the holidays. And I pray that each person would feel the loving care of Our Lord Jesus Christ through our church.

MaryAnn Mavridis
Food Pantry Director

"...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me..." MATTHEW 25: 35 (ESV)

FOREVER FAMILY UPDATE

WELCOME TO THE WORLD

Jameson Micah Wisnieski

Proud Parents Gary & Erin Wisnieski
(Pastor John & Jennifer's Daughter & Son-in-law.)
August 27th weighing 7lbs. 9oz.

Josiah Christopher Bier

Proud Parents Bethany & Chris Bier
(Bob & Felicia's Son & Daughter-in-law.)
August 30th weighing 8lbs. 4oz.



Jesse James Arnzen

Proud Parents JJ & Nicole Arnzen
(Barbara Brennan's Son & Daughter-in-law.)
September 8th weighing 7lbs. 5oz.

Makaylah Faith Boutsikos

Proud Parents Matt & Desiree Boutsikos
October 26th weighing 6lbs. 11oz.

OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHIES

Our beloved Virginia Castagna went to be with Our Lord on September 1. Virginia (and Joe) have been a part of our church for over 15 years. She was a loving, compassionate, generous and fun lady. We will miss her so much.

Pastor Nick's dad, James passed away in September. Pastor Nick wrote the following:

Dear Church Family,

Corinne and I would like to thank you all for the prayers and the gestures of sympathy you expressed to us for the passing of my father, James Franco. We were overwhelmed by the cards, emails, and the church's expressions to our family. We also wish to thank you for praying for our safe travel as we drove 9.5 hours home in non-stop rain.... It is so comforting to know we have a church family who cares and is there for us.

God bless you all – Love and Peace,

Pastor Nick and Corinne.

George Phillips' Aunt Lorraine passed away in October.

Nereida Gazzo's Mom, Nereida Segui passed away in October.

Pastor Jerry's Sister, Angela Lemmo passed away in November.

Frank Donato's Mom, Marie passed away in November.

MISSION TRIP TO HAITI

Barbara Brennan, Frank Donato and Tom Stone went on a Mission trip to Haiti, along with others from the Bay Shore Church of the Nazarene. A church there was destroyed five years ago in an earthquake. The people have been praying for their church to be rebuilt. A second group is going on January 15th. Perhaps you would like to be a part of this team. Please let me know. - Pastor Jerry

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

My, how the time flies! It seems like I just finished putting away the Christmas decorations and now it is time to take them out again. It is such a special time of year as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior...the One who is the reason for our faith and hope.

For many years now, we have been creating a craft for Christmas. We've done angels and snowman ornaments of all types with lots of laughs as we "create". This year Corinne (who comes up with such great ideas) has found something a little different for us to make. We are going to combine our craft with a ladies breakfast on Saturday, Dec. 12th at 9:30 am in the church Fellowship Hall. Please be sure to let me know if you will be attending so we have enough food and materials.

We have started reading the Grace book by Max Lucado in our Tuesday night In-touch group. He is a wonderful writer and the chapters are thought-provoking and encouraging. Our prayer times have been pretty intense due to the many needs among our families and friends. We meet at my home and all ladies are welcome to attend. Throughout the year we put money into a kitty so that we are able to buy gifts for those in need through Samaritan's Purse. We will be looking through the catalog and making our choices this month.

We had a packing party for Operation Christmas Child on November 21 and were able to fill many shoeboxes for children in need around the world. This was our 18th year of participation with this wonderful ministry and over the years millions of shoeboxes have traveled to girls and boys with the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

With all the festivities of the holiday season over, the winter months can seem a bit ho-hum. It would be nice to have a night of fellowship for the ladies to gather and play games, chat or "whatever". If you have any suggestions, please let me know so we can plan such an event.

It seems like the holidays have a tendency to leave us exhausted because of all the shopping and preparations. As we prepare to celebrate the greatest Gift we have ever received, I pray that you will simplify the busyness of the season and enjoy time with those special people in your life.

Have a blessed Christmas and New Year in Christ,
Mary Ann



Ladies Sewing Circle

The Ladies meet every month on the Third Thursday, 7pm, at the Youth Center. Bring whatever projects you are currently working on. We will provide coffee and refreshments. If you need a project to work on consider making a hat or sweater for "World Vision Knit for Kids." AC Moore is currently working in cooperation with World Vision in collecting donated items. Check their websites for patterns for hats, sweaters. (acmoore.com or knitforkids.org). - **Corinne Franco**



Identity Protection

As I drove to church recently one Sunday morning my cell phone rang. The automated message from my identity protection provider warned me of a possible security breach and recommended I log into my account to review the information. Once parked outside the church I did as suggested. Confirming the activity had been initiated by myself and not someone else, I signed off and breathing easier, was able to enjoy my time in church.

When we accept Jesus as Saviour He gifts to us His Holy Spirit to keep watch over our Christian identity! Twenty-four-seven He monitors the activity in our hearts and minds, always on the lookout for those things that might compromise our identity as Christians. Our adversary, the devil, is persistently looking for ways to weaken our faith, our walk, our determination to remain committed to God which, in turn, compromises our Christian identity.

Day by day we go about our business. We plan time for work, play, meeting with family and friends. We gather at clubs and social events, Sunday church and weekly bible study. How often though do we make time, plan time, set aside time to review and evaluate ourselves as Christians? When was the last time we felt the Holy Spirit's warning of an impending breach? When was the last time we actually *asked* Him to point out the cracks and leaks? Allow your Lord God to expose them by whatever means He decides, whether He keeps it between you and Him, or asks another person to deliver the message.

What do the threats look like? Some are obvious and easy to identify: "It's online, so it isn't hurting anyone. It's not like I'm doing it in real life." "Just one more. Then I'll quit." "No one will know." "If I do it God will forgive me. He knows I'm weak." "I did what He asked but it didn't change anything and that bothers me." Matt 17:20.

Some are understandable but insidious nonetheless: "I've been hurt too many times. I'm safer alone. Just me and Jesus." "I don't feel comfortable with others. I'll watch church on TV. It's almost the same as being there." "If God really loves me He'll understand. After all, He made me this way." 2 Tim 3:5, Heb 10:25. And some are respectable, worthy, even scriptural: Ongoing responsibilities and concerns relating to things such as finances, relationships, careers, church, family or health, while certainly important for us to be involved in and concerned about can also be used by Satan as a means to distract, derail and detain our walk with the Lord. This will put us at high risk for a security breach, leaving us exposed to potential 'Identity theft'. Luke 10:38-42.

How do we make the most of the protection provided to us by God through His Holy Spirit?

First, ask! Psalm 139:23-24

Then respond:

1. Strive for self-discipline. 1 Cor 9:25-27.

2. Read the Word daily. Ps 119:103, Heb 4:12-13.

3. Pray without ceasing. 1 Thes 5:17.

4. Think on right things. Phil 4:6,8.

5. Change; be transformed. Rom 12:1-2.

6. Know your enemy. 1 Pet 5:8.

7. Prepare; put on the armor of God. Eph 6:10-18.

8. Fight, stand and resist. Eph 6:12, 1 Pet 5:9.

9. Mature; be innocent, *and* wise. Matt 10: 16.

10. Learn; get wisdom. Prov 4:5-9.

11. Seek Christian fellowship. Acts 2:42-47.

12. Worship God. Heb 12:28.

For if you do these things you will never fall away! 2 Pet 1:4-10. Jesus is interceding on your behalf. Heb 4: 14-16.

Remember who you are! <https://youtu.be/eKYy8zfjBMQ> (Jason Gray "Who I Am")

-- **Suzanne Cerruto**--

Men's Retreat 2015 – Unlikely Hero

Ps. 133:1 – Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell together in unity.

This year's men's retreat took place Nov. 13-15 at the Inn at Pocono Manor, Pa. Nineteen men attended under the Patchogue church name, although several are not attendees of our church but friends. Many of us attend a retreat not knowing what to expect, myself included. I think when we attend without expectations, God can touch us unexpectedly. I saw this happen over the weekend with several of our men. Everyone came away blessed and challenged to serve God in holiness and surrender.

For some reason this year, there was not one speaker, but four. Each session's talk was delivered by a different pastor, and all talks were inspired, anointed, powerful, meaningful, challenging, and great. All four chose a different Bible character to exemplify the weekend theme, Unlikely Hero. What would that mean to us? Rev. Paul Moore told us about Nehemiah; Rev. Sam Vassel told us about Joseph; Rev. Michael Hoddy talked about Samson; Rev. Dan Quagliata spoke about King David. As each character was introduced, not known to us ahead of time, I thought, "He sounds like a pretty likely hero to me." Why would the speaker choose this person as an unlikely hero; this happened in every talk. The men were all taken by surprise as each very likely hero in our eyes was dissected by the speaker to reveal the character's weaknesses and failure before their holy God. Yet God used each one mightily for His glory and for the Kingdom of God. Let me try to summarize these four characters and their blessing in spite of their weaknesses...

Nehemiah – Rebuilt the walls around Jerusalem - a great leader, yet he faced attacks of Criticism, Futility, and Discouragement by his enemies. If our priorities are formed by a Godly mandate, if we are working for a cause greater than our own, and if we have a holy purpose, we will be victorious against these attacks.

Joseph – a man of God in a world culture different that he knew – he succeeded in God to be raised to a powerful position in order to save his people and preserve a remnant of the Hebrew nation. He suffered many disappointment along the way – ups and downs in the "process." Our speaker said, *"God allows things to happen to you so that He can cause things to happen in you and do something through you."*

Samson – a mighty man of God – a Nazarite – blessed with strength and set apart for God from birth. He stayed at the border of the Philistine country and spied out their women instead of keeping himself faithful to God with his own people. The speaker said, "You can have faith in God without being faithful to God." He gave us three keys to remedy this: 1 – Being faithful to God requires getting off the border and leaving all our Timnahs behind (*Timnah was the town on the border where Samson hung out looking at the Philistines*). 2 – Being faithful to God is handing over the keys to all our appetites. 3 – Being faithful to God is getting up off the ground and going again, even if we feel like we're at the end.

King David – A man after God’s own heart – the king of Israel and Judah, BUT – he wasn’t where he was supposed to be. He was out of the will of God by staying back from battle and hanging out on his roof. He was alone, isolated, independent and autonomous. The speaker gave us these points: 1 – Isolation, independence, and autonomy make up the setting for drifting away from God. 2 – Isolation and autonomy are unhealthy and dangerous tools of evil that lead to regret. Autonomy is a myth and a trap. We are created for life in community. We are to support each other through the failings not condemn.

There were break-out sessions and impromptu gatherings that were equally powerful. We gathered together in unity and love and God showed up and blessed us beyond expectation. Every man there was challenged, and met the Lord of Glory in the worship, the messages and in the fellowship with one another. I strongly encourage you to attend a men’s or lady’s retreat next year. It will change your spiritual life, if you let it. God always wants to speak with us, but we don’t always give him the time or focus to do so. A retreat is designed as time away to focus completely on God and hear Him speak.



Eph. 3:20-21 – “Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” (ESV)

Pastor Nick

Stay Connected to Your Forever Family!

Pastor Jerry sends out a daily email which includes updates and announcements regarding church activities, prayer requests, a devotional, jokes (of course) quotes, trivia,

news, and so much more! To begin receiving “Good Morning”, send your email address to: pastor.jerry@verizon.net and you will be added to the distribution list.

Check out our website at www.patchnaz.net
Sermons, Bible studies, and Church Activities.

The Homecoming

A Christmas Story

First published in 2003

He was on his way home after another long day at the office. Then again Josh's very existence seemed like a never ending parade of colorless, tasteless, meaningless days. There was a time when he anxiously anticipated the weekends. They were laced with the giggles of his five year old, the smell of freshly baked muffins, and the voice of his wife Emma playfully threatening him to stop the wrestling and come to breakfast. Christmas had been the most special time of the year for Josh and his family. They not only decked the halls with, lights and packages, they visited family and friends, volunteered in soup kitchens, and delivered food and clothing to the poor. They went caroling with their church, announcing the glad tidings of the Savior's birth. Life seemed perfect but that was all before the accident.

Falling snow softened the sounds of his tires on the highway. Glancing over his shoulder he spied home after home adorned with Christmas lights. His freeway commute offered a panoramic view of a community in the distance. Josh thought back to a time when he loved to make this drive, but now it only brought him pain and emptiness. His foot eased off the accelerator, causing the car to slow down. "What's the rush?" he said aloud, "nothing to go home to anyway." Slowing even more, he began to visualize his own house. There were no decorations, no welcoming smell of dinner and no squeals of "Daddy's home!" No hugs or kisses from Emma. The only thing waiting for him is an empty home and another long solitary evening. A wave of loneliness swept over him as he coasted to a complete stop along the side of the road.

Once again, Josh relived the horrible moment of blaring lights, screeching tires and the sound of buckling steel. Without warning his wonderful life was over. The intoxicated driver in the other vehicle walked away, but his wife and child did not. The terrible expression on the face of the doctor haunted him as he saw himself laying helpless in the hospital's intensive care unit. "I'm sorry," was all he would say, referring to the condition of his wife and little girl.

The intense storm was rapidly covering his car in a blanket of white. In a state of despondency he spies a glowing sign, barely visible though the heavy snow with the message, *Joy to the World*. "Yeah right," he growls. "I hate Christmas ... I hate my life ... and I hate you!" Exploding with anger he looks at the ceiling of his car, as if God might somehow be there. "Why did you do it?" he argues. "How could you allow it? If you had to take them, why didn't you take me with them? Why would you leave me here alone like this?"

The words are barely out of his lips when Josh hears a muffled sound he can't quite make out. Listening intently he wonders if his imagination has gotten the best of him.

(Continued from previous page)

But then he hears it again, the faint sound of a woman's voice crying for help. Rolling down his window he squints through the falling flakes that coat his eye lashes. He can't see anything. Getting out of his car, he dodges the falling snow trying to listen for the voice.

The muffled cry comes again, "Help ... someone ... please help me!" Turning in the direction of the sound he sees a car wrapped around a tree at the bottom of the embankment. It must have slid off the slick highway down into the trench and out of sight. Moving too quickly he loses his footing and slides down the length of the hillside on his back, stopping in front of the wrecked vehicle.

"I'm trapped," she shouts through a broken window. "Please help me!"

Looking inside, he sees her body wedged inside the crumpled frame. She's bloody and panic stricken. "I'm pregnant and going into labor!" Reaching through the window he holds her hand. Quickly dialing 911 on his cell, he relays the location and the urgency of the situation.

"What's your name?" he asks, trying to calm her.

"Rebecca," she sobs, "I'm carrying our first child, a girl." Josh assures her that help is on the way and she'll soon be out of there and in good hands. Hot tears run *down her cheeks as she clutches Josh's hand. "Please don't leave me till they get here!"*

"Don't worry, I'm not going anywhere until both you and the baby are safe," he assures her, holding her hand tightly. Within minutes, emergency assistance arrives on the scene and Rebecca and her unborn child are rushed away to the hospital.

"You're a hero mister," the fireman says, smiling at Josh. "But I can't understand how you managed to find her down in that ravine in the middle of this blizzard." If you hadn't found her when you did, the results would not have been so fortunate."

The firefighter's words echo in Josh's ears as he scales the slippery slope to re-enter his car. It took him a moment to admit it but he knew the answer to the fireman's question. It was God who had caused him to pull off the highway at exactly the right spot. God who directed him to Rebecca's car, and God who saved not only the lives of a mother and child that night but his own life as well. Sitting in his car, he no longer felt alone and as he continued his ride home, he found himself humming the tune, *Silent Night*.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

John 3:16 (NKJ)

Merry Christmas to all,
Pastor John Mercurio



Church Buildings and Grounds

1. The church has appealed to the Town Hwy Dept for a public safety grant and or assistance for putting sidewalks on Franklin Street.
2. Aspen Tree Company was hired to trim cut down and cart away several trees on church and parsonage land.
3. Fellowship Floors were stripped and refinished.
4. Stairlift railing was replaced with fold up foot model for greater access/egress and safety.
(Note) – Congregants and visitors using Stairlift – Please use safety belt before riding up or down the stairs.
5. Electrical work done in Church Sanctuary and offices replacing receptacles, switches and installing recessed lighting.
6. Damaged HPYC basement ceiling torn down, replaced with new gypsum board – taped, spackled and primed.
7. HPYC kitchen ceiling and walls and cabinets were painted.
8. New floating floors installed in main meeting room and kitchen of HPYC.
9. New 14,000 BTU AC wall unit purchased and installed. (close out)
10. Buildings cleaned up - took place in October. HPYC basement & kitchen – Church kitchen, Sound room and Storage sheds cleaned and debris put in dumpster.
11. Repair of main storage shed.

On Tap for near future: Refurbish Men’s room –Paint Church kitchen and fellowship hall – Paint HPYC basement, install floor and turn into activity center. We could use your help!

“Humbug to Humble” **an Advent Preaching Series**

While the true story of the Birth of Christ is the best Christmas story, perhaps the next best is “A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens. In our Advent Preaching Series, “Humbug to Humble” we are using this story as a parable: Scrooge (theme: selfishness); Marley and the Ghost of Christmas Past (theme: regret); Ghost of Christmas Present (theme: repentance); Ghost of Christmas Future (theme Salvation). Join us and receive a special edition of “A Christmas Carol” which includes notes revealing how much Dickens was influenced by the teachings of Jesus Christ. Dickens himself wrote: “I have always striven in my writings to express the veneration for the life and lessons of our Savior.” So join Scrooge, Bob Cratchit, Tiny Tim and all the other Dicken’s characters,
“And ...God Bless Us, Every One!”

