

...from the Heart



Published quarterly by the Patchogue Church of the Nazarene Spring 2020

Ah, change. Some of us deal with it better than others, but for the most part, we don't like it! Yes, Star Wars fans it's the equivalent to a "disturbance" in the force. We resist: "Why did that have to happen?" "Remember the good old days?" "We've always done it this way!" And if we believe our thoughts are God's thoughts, watch out!

For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore, you O children of Jacob are not consumed. Malachi 3:6

God doesn't change; His forgiveness, kindness, compassion, generosity, and love are eternal. However, as much as God doesn't change, we need to. In Malachi's case, God's unchanging love protected His people, long enough, for them to discover *another way*.

Another prophet, Isaiah, declared these words from the Lord: ***I am creating something new. There it is! Do you see it? I have put roads in deserts, streams in thirsty lands. Isaiah 43:19***

Behold, another way! A new path to travel.

In 2019 the PNC (Patchogue Nazarene Church) intentionally [explored] new trails: After a week of VBS, instead of inviting parents back for a Friday evening gathering, we invited them to our Sunday service afterglow. We then held our yearly church picnic that same day. And whereas we had fewer children at VBS than in past years, God blessed us with a new beautiful family of five.

Next, we had our Thanksgiving service the Sunday before Thanksgiving Day, not the evening before or the morning of. I then asked six of our members if they'd allow me to interview them. Each one of them told their stories; they shared their journeys. Afterward, we hosted a Thanksgiving feast in our fellowship hall.

Last but not least, we had our first Christmas Eve **afternoon** service at 2 pm, fashioning our service around our newly formed children's choir.

In doing a "new thing" by traveling new roads and finding streams provided by the Lord, we prospered!

Whereas, in 2018 we had a total of thirty-five in attendance, of which two were children; in a traditional 7 pm Christmas Eve service. In 2019 we had a total of seventy-five; sixty-three adults and twelve children. Consequentially, older members who were reluctant to drive at night could attend, while there was [still daylight]. Most importantly, our children led the way by proclaiming the real meaning of Christmas!

Also, by shifting our Thanksgiving service, we went from a mere thirty in attendance, in 2018, to a hundred and thirty-seven in 2019. Granted, you would expect an increase, seeing as it was moved to a Sunday. However, we normally only average ninety-six each week, not a hundred and thirty-seven. Good things are happening at the PNC!

May 2020 be the year the Holy Spirit shows us what new things He would like to **create** while using us! May we joyfully proclaim... There it is! We see it! A new trail to explore. A new stream to drink from!

Joyfully,

Pastor Vincent Linguiti

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Sunday Service at 10am

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Check out our website at www.patchnaz.net
for Sermons, Church activities and other events



IDENTITY CRISIS



In Robert Ludlum's novel, *The Bourne Identity*, Jason Bourne suffers from extreme memory loss and is desperate to discover his true identity. His frantic search leads to the realization that he possesses unique skills yet filled with frustration, unable to remember his own name.

This February, we encouraged the people of our church to help us design a church Logo. Our plan had a twofold purpose; to make our church easily identifiable to neighbors and community and to actively engage our members in reaching people outside the four walls of our church. We have something in common with the Bourne Identity dilemma. It isn't that we don't know our name; it's that we don't know who we are. We know we're a part of the Church of the Nazarene that meets in Patchogue but do we know our, God directed, purpose beyond regular weekly meetings? Do we possess a shared vision, or mission, or to put it another way... what our identity is. Do we have an identity crisis as a church?

Patchogue Nazarene has a new look and a new pastor but have we established an identity? Jesus directed a two part question to his 12 disciples, in [Matthew 16](#). "*Who do people say the Son of Man is?*" The disciples were quick to answer the first part but their failure response to the second part of the question; ... *who do you say I am?* was deafening. How could these twelve men having spent every day and evening with Jesus not know the answer? They ate, traveled and listened to him constantly and yet didn't know who he was. Finally, uninhibited Peter states: *You are the Christ (Messiah) son of the Living God*. Jesus' response is noteworthy, *Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven*. Identity crisis solved.

In a recent church board meeting, serious discussion was heard on the issue of a church vision and identity. This wasn't a casual conversation, it's a matter we believed had to be thought about and dedicated to prayer, and not just church leaders but every congregant of Patchogue Nazarene. Stymie, an original *Little Rascal* stated, *We don't know where we're going but we're on our way!* This cannot be the case for our church! Jesus gave us a heads up by his reply to Peter. God sends blessing and understanding when we seek His direction. We know God has saved us by our faith in His Son, faith that God, not we, initiated by the way, but what about our corporate identity as a church, what about our purpose and mission? I believe the Holy Spirit wants to initiate this as well. We're at a crossroads moment, an opportunity to do more, to be more than we presently are for God. We want to do more than identify ourselves to the un-churched by a logo design. We want to know we're accomplishing the work that God has planned for us, something that, as with Peter, only He can reveal.

As Easter and the Lenten season approaches, we encourage you - no implore you, to **pray, fast and petition** with us for spiritual insight regarding this church. We want to move forward, in faith knowing our direction isn't random but directed by God.

Serving Him Together,
Pastor John

A Virtuous Church

Assistant football coach Keanon Lowe made a split second decision on May 17 of last year. The decision had nothing to do with football and everything to do with protecting students' safety. A troubled teenager had a shotgun and was intending to use it – on himself – as he entered the classroom where Lowe was. “My instincts kicked in,” Lowe explained, as he grabbed the gun out of the student's hands. But the incredible part of the story wasn't simply the disarming and protection of the student body. After Lowe removed the firearm, he embraced the student and held him close. “In that time, I felt compassion for him,” Lowe later explained to the press.

The actions of this assistant coach makes me think of the cultivation of virtue. As polarized as this current moment is, I think it is essential that virtue is not forgotten, or worse yet, ridiculed. The concept of virtue is basically a crash course in character development. In his wonderfully readable book After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters, biblical scholar N.T. Wright describes virtue as “what happens when wise and courageous choices have become ‘second nature.’” I believe Keanon Lowe was able to not only disarm, but also display radical compassion to that student precisely because he had cultivated virtue over a period of time; he had developed character and in that split second his cultivated character became a means to de-escalate a potentially violent situation. “I feel like I was put in that room for a reason . . . I thank God that no one got hurt and I thank God I was in that room,” he said later to reporters.

Now, I don't mean to suggest that the cultivation of virtue is enough to justify us in and of itself. As Christians, we believe that “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). We are justified by Faith and not by Works, and I completely agree, and am eternally grateful, for that truth. But at the same time, I also believe that God is in the business of character development. “Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day” (2 Cor. 4:16). This is called Sanctification, the process by which God makes us holy through the in-working of His Spirit. Day by Day, if we allow it, we are made virtuous, in the image of God.

My prayer is that our church would be a virtuous church. I pray that the Patchogue Church of the Nazarene would be an example of prudence, courage, temperance, and justice to the community. I pray that the people who walk in the doors would not only see, but also experience, our faith, our hope, and, most especially, our love. During Lent this is what I'll be reflecting on and praying over. Maybe there's a vision of the church that you have. I'd encourage you to reflect on it, and fast and pray about it during these next few weeks. And please, don't be afraid to share it. We're all in this body of Christ together.

Χάρις,
Jon O.





EASTER OFFERING FOR WORLD EVANGELISM FUND

How does the World Evangelism Fund work?

When you give, the money goes to the General Treasurer's Office where the funds are distributed to various regions, missionaries, and ministries around the globe. The World Evangelism Fund not only provides ministries on the ground with the monies they need, but the money is used to ensure that legal, federal, and support needs are met so that ministries are as safe as possible and can be sustained for years to come.

As a church we are to give 5.5% of our annual income to the WEF. The

District sends a portion of our allocation (4%) to the General Treasurer on

our behalf. The remaining 1.5% is to be raised and sent from the Easter & Thanksgiving offerings and through Faith Promise. Based on this year's budget our goal this year is \$2820.

Support the work of the Church of the Nazarene through the World Evangelism Fund. Your personal gifts reach around the world to change lives and transform hearts in Jesus' name ... making Christ-like disciples in the nations.



FOOD PANTRY

OPEN: MON, WED, FRI

10AM - 2PM

65 Franklin St. (HPYC Building)

Rear Entrance

*"...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)*

*Our Deepest Sympathy & Prayers to
Sue Cerruto & family on the passing
of her sister-in-law Ginny Korte.*



WOMENS MINISTRY

It was 17 degrees when I left the house this morning, so I'm having a little difficulty "thinking spring" for this article. But with the daylight lasting longer, the warm weather will surely be here before we know it!

Our two ladies Bible study/prayer groups are back on track after some time off during the holiday season. On Tuesday night we are continuing to have prayer time, share a devotion each week and have fellowship. Our Thursday group has started reading "Glory Days" by Max Lucado and are really enjoying it. We always start our time together with prayer and have some good discussions on

the chapter we have read for that week. With the welcome addition of a TV and DVD player at HPYC, we now have the ability to view a video series. I already have one ready to watch after we finish the book we are working on now.

I am hoping to have a Saturday brunch in the months of April and June. These are times set aside so the ladies can gather and enjoy fellowship with one another. We always have plenty of food, laughter and lively conversation. Hopefully, more ladies will be able to join us the next time we gather.

Spring is a season of new life; birds singing, flowers blooming and lots of new leaves on the trees. It is also a special time for Christians as we celebrate the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we truly take time during Lent to reflect on Who Jesus is, we come to understand all that He has done for us by giving His perfect life in exchange for our imperfect lives. As an old song goes, "Because He lives, I can face tomorrow" and I don't want to face another day without Jesus being #1 in my life. My prayer is for all of us to take the time to meditate on His Words of love, forgiveness and grace that we find in the Bible. May we all be renewed as we celebrate our Risen Savior on Easter and all year long!

Serving together,
Mary Ann

We recently honored Liz Duffy as she stepped down as Director of Children's Ministries. Liz graciously planted her full support behind Desiree Boutsikos, as she took over. Desiree's passion and love of children, along with her business experience, will allow us to build upon the foundation that Liz helped strengthen and maintain.

We also have new leaders of the Teen Ministry; Mary Kate and Mark LaSpisa. Watch your bulletin for Teen Meetings and Events. They will start off with a Teen Bowling Night on Friday March 6th and a Teen Meeting at HPYC on Friday March 27th.

Weekly Schedule

Subject to Change

Sunday

10am - Service - Nursery available
10:45am - Children's Sunday School - Fellowship Hall
10:45am - Teen Bible Study - HPYC Building
First Sunday of Month - Holy Communion

Tuesday

7pm - Every Tuesday - Ladies-In-Touch at Mary Ann Malcolm's Home
7pm - 1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month - **September through May** - M.E.N.
(Men's Encouragement Network) - Fellowship Hall

Wednesday

7pm - Bible Study - Fellowship Hall (Check your bulletin)

Thursday

10am - Every Thursday - Ladies Prayer & Bible Study Group - HPYC Building
7pm - 3rd Thursday of the month - **Sept-Nov; March-June** - Ladies Sewing Circle

Friday

6:30pm - Worship Team practice in the Sanctuary
7pm - 1st Friday of the month - Pen It Forward - HPYC Building

Saturday

8am - 1st Saturday of the month - **September-June** - Men's Breakfast - Fellowship Hall
For other Spring meetings, events, & activities, consult your Sunday Bulletin.



Small Groups Announcement!

An exciting new study is coming in April. In Dallas Jenkins, *The Chosen*, Jesus and Bible personalities come to life in 8 amazing episodes. Come and explore the gospels in a way you have never experienced. Mark your calendars for the week of April 19th. Plan on attending and invite a friend or neighbor.

Coming Up...

March

March 6 - Teen Bowling Night.
March 8 - Daylight Savings Time begins
March 17 - St. Patrick's Day.
March 20 - First Day of Spring
March 24 - Family Movie Night

April

April 5 - Palm Sunday
April 12 - Easter Sunday
April 22 - Family Night

May

May 3 - Family Sunday
May 10 - Mother's Day
May 25 - Memorial Day
May 28 - Family Night

Ladies Sewing Circle

Well I thought it would never happen but **Spring** is almost here! We will be resuming our regular schedule of meeting the third Thursday of the month for Sewing Circle 7pm at the Youth Center.

This quarter's dates will be March 19, April 16, May 21.

Everyone is invited to bring a craft project, of any type, that you are working on for an evening of crafting, sewing and fellowship.

Contact me ahead of time if you would like to learn the art of crochet for a materials list. I am currently doing a new “crochet along” if you would like to participate, you can go to

<https://theunraveledmitten.com/> for a list of materials and instructions. You can move along at your own pace. Any questions email me at corinnefchurch@verizon.net

Hope to see you there!

Keeping you in stitches,

Corinne



Pen It Forward is a new writing ministry at Patchogue Church of the Nazarene. Its purpose is to spread encouragement through the written word, specifically in the form of a note, card or letter.

On the first Friday of the month, we gather for a time of fellowship and letter writing at the His Place Youth Center (HPYC) located at 65 Franklin St. just east of the North Patchogue Fire Dept.

If someone has been on your mind but you have not yet had the opportunity to send them a heartfelt note, joining us is a perfect opportunity to finally get those cards in the mail. I think we all know how much receiving a note can lift spirits and deliver hope, so I encourage you to write to whomever you wish, and if you aren't able to join us, to please write from home!

We had our very first meeting in February and received a great turnout – we went through two pots of coffee and collectively wrote ten notes! Please feel welcome to invite your children, friends, family, anyone you think would enjoy. We look forward to seeing you on Friday, March 6 at 7pm – mark your calendars!

Alissa Donato

Freed From Our Cage

Ps. 18:19 - (God) brought me out into a spacious place.

A devotion from Our Daily Bread on Thursday, Feb. 13...



Summary: A writer noticed a man walking four Kerry Blue Terriers. Three were wandering about in the field, but one stayed close to the man and kept running in tight circles. He inquired to find the dog was a rescue animal who spent most of its life in a cage and could only go in circles in that cage. Even though now free, the dog still behaved as though still in that cage. While there was a world of freedom out there, he could only conceive of running in tight circles.

The Bible tells us that only God can free us from what has us trapped and hopeless. We think of this in terms of unbelievers, or at least I did. Then I began to think of what occupies my mind most of every day. Church business was always a part of my daily thought process and even my actions, but since I retired from BNL, church stuff is on my mind constantly.

Of course, we all have our time with God and studying the Word, but then comes all the other things that need attention or thought. There's staff meetings, music preparation and rehearsals, there's all that goes on in the sound room, the platform and electrical/technical stuff, those sick or hospitalized, our services, and even family issues and obligations and baby sitting, etc. I can't even think of all that occupies my mind daily, every day.

I read this article during my first week on vacation in Florida. As I thought about it, I realized I am just like that dog running in circles out of habit or learned behavior. My mind is still on church stuff so many miles away. I'm looking at the cameras online, checking emails and texts, etc. Round and round I go on my mental merry-go-round. As a believer I can still get caught up in the momentum of life beyond what God wants or expects. He is still the only way to be free from that which traps and captivates my mind. I think I am finally starting to let go of some things and relax. Thank God we still have a couple of weeks here to really unwind.

I pray that when we return, there are some things that I don't want to take up again. After being set free, why would I want to take on burdens that are unnecessary? There are some things that I need to take care of, and that's OK, but I want to put limits on myself. Can you relate to any of this?

I offer this as a word of encouragement to all. Assess your thoughts and your burdens. What is needed and what remains from what you're used to doing? Heed the Word. God brought you out into a spacious place. Don't stay living as though you are still in that cage. He loves us too much for that.

Blessings from sunny, warm, Florida.
Pastor Nick



Family Game Night

We had our first Family Night with the Children's Ministry on February 17. We chose Family Game Night for the first theme. It was amazing! It is what I imagine a church family to be. Families meeting outside of the normal Sunday Morning routine to build strong Christian family relationships.

The families first enjoyed fellowship followed by a quick message and prayer. Then we went on to

Minute to Win It Competitions. It was filled with lots of laughter with competitions such as blindfolded bowling, apple stacking, dice stacking while holding the stick in your mouth to balance, human streamer mummies... and of course seeing our Pastor Vinnie and Tom Ehrlinger head to head trying to get a cookie in their mouths from their forehead using only their facial muscles (no hands).

Our second family night will be held March 24 and we will be doing a Family Movie Night.

We invite all the children and their families to please join in and bring a friend. I look forward to all the strong relationships that will be formed.

Desiree Boutsikos

