

# ...from the Heart

*Published quarterly by the Patchogue Church of the Nazarene Winter 2022/2023*



By the time you receive this, we will have already celebrated Thanksgiving. However, that will not keep me from telling you how grateful I am to the Lord for what He has and continues to do among us.

In October, I held a membership class. I am excited to inform you in January, we will be receiving eighteen new members! Most have been attending for some time. This signals the following. A growing commitment to the church, to what the Lord is doing among us. Also, to their commitment to Christ.

Paul, in his letter to the church in Thessalonica, wrote this: *Give thanks in **all** circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 NIV*

With Christmas, right around the corner and new members for the New Year, it is easy to give thanks. However, Paul wrote, *give thanks in all circumstances*. However, none of us knows what the New Year will bring; joys, I pray, but there may be some unpleasant moments mixed in. To be able to take Paul and the Lord at his word requires us to do one thing; keep our eyes on our creator, the author, and the finisher of our faith, Jesus. In doing so we'll join and stand with a person by the name of JOB. JOB, while going through horrific suffering, wholeheartedly said, *Should we accept only good things from the hand of God and never anything bad? Let us* end one year and begin another by standing on our relationship with Jesus. Nothing more, nothing less

Allow me to take this moment to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, filled with an awareness of our Lord's Presence.

Amen

Pastor Vin



## *Pen It Forward*

The Bible has countless examples of the power of words. God created the universe through His spoken words. Because of Jonah's prayer for the people of Nineveh, God spared the city of total destruction. Jesus used words to calm stormy seas, heal the sick, and bring dead back to life. Words can bring love, hope, comfort, and peace.

Have you ever received a birthday or Christmas card in the mail, and it brought a smile to your face because the person that sent the card took time out of their day to think about you? Many people might not know this, but our church has a ministry dedicated to encouraging people through the power of written words. On the first Friday of every month, several people gather in the Fellowship Hall to write encouraging notes to whoever God puts on their hearts. Many people have been blessed through these handwritten notes. Feel free to join us –while writing cards we are also enjoying each other's company and having fun conversation.

In Christ's love,

Alissa and Frank Donato



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### Ushers Ministry

Who are those people that greet you every Sunday morning, shoving those bulletins into your outstretched hands and welcoming you with a smile and handshake? We refer to them as ushers but consider this ... they're the first and last faces you see as you enter and leave the building. The usher ministry, directed by Jen Mercurio, has recently had Blanca and Jeff Ray step up and join the ranks to service you, God's people.

Consider returning a welcome to them, and other ushers on your way to the sanctuary. And while you're at it pray about stepping up to serve as an usher yourself. A blessing always awaits those who serve God's people. Pray about it and speak to Jen.

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2 Nazarene Way Patchogue, NY**

**Mail: 65 Franklin Street  
Patchogue, NY 11772  
Phone/Fax 631-289-3483**

**Senior Pastor Vincent Linguiti**

**Sunday Service at 10am**

**For our weekly schedule of meetings, check  
out our website at [www.patchnaz.net](http://www.patchnaz.net)**

**Sermons live stream on Facebook. Find us on You Tube.**

**FOOD PANTRY - MON, WED, FRI - 10am - 2pm 65 Franklin St. (Rear Entrance)**

## Jesus, Our Governor

*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be Upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*



At this post-election time, there is, as always, two sides to everything. For all who are disappointed in the results, there are those who are rejoicing in the results. I have never been into politics, and I will never be an activist for a cause. I hang my hat on Scripture and the bigger picture.

PV and I have been discussing how there is always a place to go deeper. We read the Bible and gloss over the familiar passages because we know them by heart – like the above verses from Isaiah. It's a nice passage for a Christmas card or a poster on the walls of the church building. But what if we look a little deeper than the surface? Do we really believe the government is upon His shoulder? If not, why not? I'm OK with it. In fact I am comforted with that statement. No matter what happens in any election, God is still sovereign and has things in control. I may have my viewpoints, but I will not get bent out of shape when things don't go the way I want or even believe they should go.

We are entering the Advent season. To some, this is a time to scramble and fret over gifts we need to get and meals we may need to prepare. It is a hectic time for many. We think of Advent, on the surface, as this time of preparing for the celebration of birth of Jesus – and we should. But isn't there more to this whole Advent time as a time of preparation and recognition that we should look a little deeper into?

I do prepare and think about the birth of Christ and the whole Christmas story, but for me there is a little more – something a little deeper. I also think about and meditate on Jesus' second coming – His return as equally promised in the Bible as was His birth. This is a reality to come, not just the reality that did come at His birth.

Jesus/God is and will always be sovereign; He is in control of everything. When He returns, He will put all things right. He is far above elections and politics. He is God Almighty. That's what I celebrate on Dec. 25 every year. It's a reminder to me that although the world is going crazy and elections bring differing emotions, I will trust in Him alone, by faith, and rejoice in that. This is what I try to accomplish every week as we sing and worship Jesus for what He's done and for what He is about to do "soon."

Merry Christmas - God Bless us everyone and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Peace and Blessings,  
Pastor Nick & Corinne

# Who's Packing your Parachute?

Did you know that Paul the Apostle wrote thirteen of the New Testament letters? Some were written to individuals like Timothy, others to churches like Ephesus. All of them contained life changing power, and all are still impacting life and society twenty centuries later, what a legacy. I've wondered if Paul ever questioned God as to why it was necessary for him to spend so many years in prison, under house arrest. He had given up everything to serve Jesus, wasn't this a funny kind of a way to reward him? But if Paul's movements hadn't been restricted by jail, would those letters have ever been written? Think, for example, about the impact the epistles (letters) we call Romans and Ephesians have had on your life.



Pilot Charles Plumb successfully flew 74 combat missions in Vietnam. On his final mission, he was shot down and forced to parachute into enemy hands where he spent the next six years in a Vietnamese prison. Years after his release he met a man he didn't recognize but who knew him. "I packed your parachute!" the man explained. As they shook hands, he added, "I guess it worked!" Since his release, Charles Plumb has been an inspirational speaker, sharing his story with hundreds of people and often asking the question, "Who's packing your parachute?"

Let me throw out a couple of questions. First, who is the person or persons in your life that have encouraged, strengthened, and maybe even rescued you? Second, whose parachute have you been packing? This is the call that every believer has on his or her life. In Matthew 25, Jesus' parable of the talents has little to do with money investment, and everything to do with the Kingdom of God; the key commodity being souls not coins. Ministry it turns out, isn't just for clergy. A minister is one who *ministers* or leads a person to the place where they can be directly touched by God. We're called to influence lives; and not just the people who haven't yet given their heart over to Jesus. Salvation is the beginning of the journey not the end. Our words and deeds may very well prove to be the packed parachute that forever changes a life. Your personal involvement (ministry) may start with words, but graduates into personal interaction that casts aside the safe distance we keep between ourselves and others. If you're feeling powerless as a believer, ask God to remind you of the people you have encouraged in the past and also those whose chutes are still needing to be packed. The fact that you're reading this right now is evidence in itself that God is reaching out to you step up for others, those who have either lost their spiritual compass or have yet to find Him. Get ready to pack that parachute.

Serving Him Together,  
Pastor John Mercurio

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## Hurricane Ian Relief Fund

Hurricane Ian's category five winds had devastated parts of Florida, and Puerto Rico leaving thousands homeless. In a recent morning service you were asked you seek God for the amount He would have you give. Many of you did just that. Your "Helping Hands" offering of \$3,500.00 was sent to Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, and quickly directed to Ian's victims. May the Lord bless you for giving in a, *fishes and loves*, sacrificial manner.

<sup>16</sup> *And don't forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.*

Hebrews 13:6 (NLT)

## It's Not What You Eat, Or Is It?

Recently, on three separate Sundays, we celebrated Pastor Appreciation, the Mercurio's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and a complete Thanksgiving meal. All these celebrations, and the ones with our own families and friends, make me thankful that Jesus tells us in Matthew 15:11 "...it's not what enters the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of it that does." Of course, all that 'entering' can be an 'over-doing' and that's something else to consider, but Jesus says what comes out of our mouths reflects what's in our hearts. A defiled heart will eventually give evidence of its condition in our words.



However, there is one meal that, if we eat of it unworthily, we will be "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord". In first Corinthians 11, Paul reminds us of the correct way to take communion: the Lord's Supper.

First, let's back up to chapter 6. Paul reminds the church of the depraved and sinful lives from which they had already been cleansed. They were believers, but they were facing some internal divisions, strife, and controversies which Paul had to address because they weren't dealing with it on their own. Moreover, he severely chastised them for their very serious moral failures and the fact that they were bringing all their backslidden sinfulness to the most important meal believers share. Moving back to chapter 11, he reminds us that the taking of Holy Communion was, and still is, so serious that, if we dishonor God by eating and drinking with unrepentant hearts, unconfessed sins, and inappropriate attitudes and actions, we bring judgment upon ourselves.

This holiday season, as we take care to make special meals, dress ourselves appropriately for receiving guests or being one, and pay careful attention to our table manners, let's give the best of what we do to the Lord Jesus when we gather for communion. After all, we're practicing for the most exciting meal awaiting the church; the wedding supper of the Lamb!

Happy Thanksgiving, a Blessed and Holy Christmas, and a Happy New Year to all!

Sue Cerruto

*Scripture references: Matt. 15, Mark 7, James 3, 1 Cor. 6, 1 Cor 11.*

*"For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed took bread, and after he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, he also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, every time you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For every time you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

*For this reason, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself first, and in this way let him eat the bread and drink of the cup. For the one who eats and drinks without careful regard for the body eats and drinks judgment against himself. That is why many of you are weak and sick, and quite a few are dead. But if we examined ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned with the world." 1 Corinthians 11:23-32. NET*

## WOMENS MINISTRY

After a very mild start to November, the cooler, more seasonable weather is upon us.  
That sure helps to get in the mood for the upcoming holiday season  
which seems to get here faster every year.

We had our first lady's brunch in October which was well attended. It was so nice to be able to gather for a time of fellowship as we share around the table the things going on in our lives. This gives us an opportunity to chat and get to know each other better in a small group setting.

We have been collecting Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes for a couple of weeks now and already have over 100. This ministry will be a blessing to so many children who live around the world not only by the little gifts we pack but through the literature that is placed in each box. It shares the love of Jesus in their native language and has led many children and family members to a relationship with our Savior.

The Thursday morning ladies group continues to be such a blessing to all who attend. This year we have welcomed a few new ladies who do not attend our church but who love the Lord and like having a place to pray and fellowship with other women.

We continue to joyfully sing hymns each week after our time of prayer and study.

Each week we give a dollar or so into our little collection. This money is used to buy gifts through Samaritan's Purse. These can range from filters for clean water to livestock to help support nourishment for the families. This year through the generosity of the ladies, we have almost \$400 to help families in need.

As always, all ladies are welcome to join us at 10:00 A.M. Thursday mornings in the church sanctuary.

As we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, let us not get caught up in all the commercialism of the season. If Jesus had not come as that little Baby in Bethlehem, what would our lives be like. We would not have a Savior who shed His blood so that we can have a personal relationship with Him. We would not have hope in this fallen world around us and who knows what our lives would look like. BUT, we can rejoice in the presence of the One who loves us and rest assured of an eternity with Him in glory.

May you sense the presence and love of Jesus in this Christmas season and in the new year ahead.

Serving My Savior  
Mary Ann

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD  
SHOEBOX TOTAL 166  
THANK YOU ALL WHO  
DONATED





# Christmas At Home

“There’s no place like home.” Dorothy’s iconic line from the Wizard of Oz conjures up a feeling of wistfulness in all of us about the meaning and comfort of home. It is something that I have been thinking about recently. My brother bought a condominium in Chicago and my sister bought a house in Connecticut this past year. Of course, a house does not constitute a home; there is a sense of belonging that goes along with home that is not necessarily wrapped up in a house or even a location. But even still, I have been thinking about and pondering what it means to be home, in both a physical and a metaphysical sense.

This subject corresponds nicely with the advent season that is upon us once again. At Christmas, we celebrate Christ being born as a human baby, the infinite God coming to earth in finite flesh. There is a verse that brought the Christmas message “home” to me. It is a verse from the first chapter of the Gospel of John, and I have read it many times over; but as I was reading Leon Morris’s commentary The Gospel According to John (in the New International Commentary on the New Testament) a new way of looking at the verse was explained to me. “He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him” (John 1:11, NIV). Leon Morris explained that in the Greek, the phrase “that which was his own” is better translated as “to his own home.” Suddenly a lightbulb when off in my head. It was as if Jesus came to unlock his house, but his own family dead bolted the door from the inside.



I love Christmastime, but I was reminded how there is an air of tragedy that goes along with it too. Yes, Jesus came to earth, but he was met immediately with resistance; his home was set against him from the beginning, and it is true even now. There is a sickness of commercialism and materialism that goes hand in hand with Christmas that is diametrically opposed to Jesus and the Gospel. I heard on the radio an advertisement from Amazon; it was a song sung that celebrated all the “stuff” we need to buy for ourselves and for others. It is no wonder that we do not feel that sense of belonging that goes along with home; as a society there is a deep-seated restlessness that we seek to ignore with material, politics, careers, family obligations, even spirituality. But that restlessness can only be alleviated when we unlock the door and let Jesus in to what was rightfully his in the first place. When we accept and celebrate Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of our lives, the rightful God who came in flesh to rescue his own, then we will know that true sense of belonging.

Our restless hearts will have finally found our home.

Merry Christmas!

Jon Ollett

Condolences to the Dapelo Family on the recent passing of Bob’s Mother, Eva.

## Your Giving Matters

Hard to believe that we are approaching the end of 2022. It was a roller coaster of a year in many aspects of life. CoVid, Wars, Hurricanes and Inflation! We never know what tomorrow holds but we know who holds tomorrow (words to a new song out there and so true).

The Lord has been good to us throughout the year keeping our church finances steady. And the generosity of our congregation has enabled us to reach far beyond our own doors. Just recently we have been able to send a generous offering of \$3500 towards relief for victims of Hurricane Ian.

Our offerings at Easter, Thanksgiving and through Faith Promise help raise our apportionment of 5.5% giving for the World Evangelism Fund. Your gifts create and sustain ministries and make it possible to bring Christ's transformational message of hope and salvation to the world through the Church of the Nazarene. This money is sent to the General Treasurer's Office, where the funds are distributed to six world 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.

We have sent offerings for Alabaster which goes towards building on the mission field. Alabaster funds are to be used for new churches to purchase a property or church building, purchase or build a church parsonage, building a church or converting of a property into a church gathering space and the building of missionary homes and build or repurpose buildings on Bible college campuses. It's amazing what your coins can do!

We've filled shoeboxes for Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child that reaches children and families around the globe. We also sponsor a child through Compassionate Ministries – Adan in Pakistan.

Closer to home we held a VBS program and picnic to reach out to our neighborhood. The VBS offering this year was collected for Lighthouse Mission in Bellport serving an even larger portion of the surrounding area. We have provided food on a weekly basis through our own Food Panty to those in need and provided Thanksgiving meals to numerous families.

I say all this to encourage you and let you know that your giving is more than putting money in a basket! It is Spreading the Good News of the Gospel through compassion and making Jesus REAL to many. We are a giving and compassionate church.

Of course we do need money to run our 3 church buildings, run programs and pay salaries. The Church Board will be meeting soon to compose a budget for the New Year. The budget is only a "guesstimate" of the funds needed to cover our costs and also our outreach and vision moving forward. Pray for us as we do our best to be good stewards with your investment in our church. Blessings to you and yours this Christmas and in the New Year, Corinne Franco, Church Treasurer



You will be enriched  
in every way to be  
*generous in every way,*  
which through us will  
*produce thanksgiving*  
to God.

2 Corinthians 9:11