



THE PARISH NEWS

UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH OF HEMPSTEAD

40 Washington Street
Hempstead
New York, 11550
Phone: (516) 485-6363
Web: www.umchempstead.org



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REFLECTIONS: UMC TO RELEASE RULES ON GAYS AND MARRIAGE



New York Times: May 18, 2016
By Laurie Goodstein

After 44 years of debating sexuality issues, the United Methodist Church voted by a narrow margin on Wednesday to allow bishops to appoint a commission to re-evaluate rules on gay, lesbian and transgender clergy and marriage.

The 428-to-405 vote by the delegates to the church's quadrennial conference in Portland, Ore., was seen by many as a last-ditch effort to save the church from schism.

It was celebrated by L.G.B.T. Methodists and their supporters as a way to buy time and avoid church discipline against more than 100 clergy and clergy candidates who came out as gay in advance of the conference.

But it disappointed many conservatives who were exasperated that their church is still arguing over what they see as clear church teachings that prohibit openly gay and transgender clergy, and same-sex marriage.

The church's Book of Discipline, its governing document, says that the "practice of homosexuality" is "incompatible with Christian teaching."

During the debate on the convention floor, Marquice Hobbs, a young delegate from Texas, urged church members to "lay aside all the political jargon, take a stand," and "do not be afraid to break."

But George Howard, the delegate from Ohio who proposed the measure, responded, "I am not afraid." He said, "I believe that our leaders are ready, willing and able to lead this church to discover a new way

forward for us all."

The United Methodist Church is the third-largest religious body in the United States, after the Roman Catholic Church and the Southern Baptist Convention, with about seven million members, including Hillary Clinton and George W. Bush. It has 12 million worldwide. Its membership ranges from theological liberals to conservative evangelicals.

While many mainline Protestant churches, like the Presbyterian Church USA and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, have moved to permit gay clergy and same-sex marriages, the Methodist church has remained opposed. That is mainly because it includes branches in Africa and Asia that are growing rapidly and are theologically conservative while the American branch has had declines.

The church's liberals had hoped that growing acceptance of gay people and gay marriage in the United States would provide momentum. But faced with likely rejection, they embraced a proposal to ask the church's Council of Bishops to find a way forward. The council is made up of all active and retired bishops from the church's 46 areas in the United States and 20 outside.

The bishops' council proposed that the conference defer all votes on sexuality measures; more than 100 such measures were sent to the 10-day meeting. The bishops proposed that they appoint a representative commission to undertake a "complete examination and possible revision of every paragraph in our Book of Discipline regarding human sexuality."



In the Spotlight



Rev. Rafael Garcia

Rev. Rafael Garcia was appointed Pastor of the UMC of Hempstead in July 2013. His tenure here was marked by many positive changes within the church, excellent teamwork, integrity, and a high regard and compassion for all. Below is the story of his journey as a minister, pastor, educator, husband and father:

Pastor Garcia began his career as a minister in 1990 when he was ordained; two years later, he was ordained elder and accepted as a full member of the NY Annual Conference.

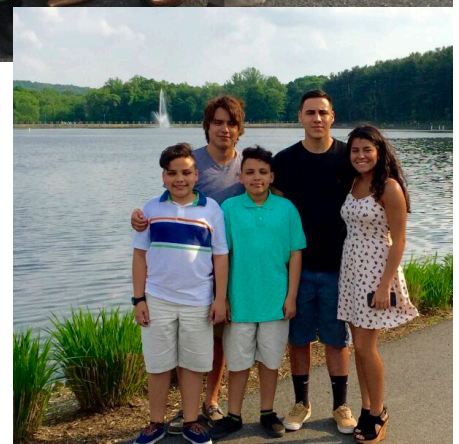
In his first appointment as the Associate Pastor of San Pablo Church, he also served as the executive director of an immigration program. Five years later, he was appointed to the Summerfield Church in Port Chester, Westchester County, where he spent 14 years serving the parish in a bilingual setting. In 2009, he was asked to serve Wesley Church in Franklin Square, and four years later, he was appointed to Hempstead UMC to serve both the English and Spanish-speaking congregations.

In the beginning of his tenure at UMC of Hempstead, the church was facing a crisis of leadership, which created a financial deficit, uncertainty about the direction of the church, and disappointment for how things had been handled at all levels.

“As I started to meet with leaders and other members of the congregation, and listened to their concerns, we began to realize the need to restructure our Council in order to regain some sense of direction in our ministry,” said Rev. Garcia.

To this end, the administrative and ministry committees needed to meet regularly, not just to set goals and strategies but also to report to the Council about their activities and determine if these were helping to meet ministry objectives. The church office needed to become an important tool for all of this to happen. Two new part-time secretaries were hired, the newsletter began to circulate again, and the congregation began to learn of the activities, and events happening in the life of the church. The Website was improved and the use of social media (Facebook) was enhanced. One of the main goals in this stage was to balance the budget,

resulting in improved income and more control over the expenses. Better use of our facilities would help us to move in this direction. We not only renegotiated better contracts with existing groups, we were also able to bring other non-profits into the building, which increased revenues and helped to serve other populations in the community. “To me, this is another way of doing ministry.





Spotlight on Rev. Rafael Garcia

- continued from page 2

But to be able to have and manage all these groups in our building, we had to improve our facilities and we did just that,” said Rev. Garcia.

Another very important dimension of our ministry which demanded our immediate attention was the healing of relationships. The congregation needed to trust each other again and realize that the Hempstead ministry had to encompass the the work of all of us. In this process, his task was to incorporate for-

giveness, love, compassion, and generosity in a framework of thanksgiving in our interactions. Because no one is perfect, we needed to see each other with the eyes of God and be compassionate to each other.

Only when one is healed, can one start contributing to the project of God. This is how the idea of the Hempstead Fellowship Brunch came to fruition; the Outreach Committee worked hard on this important ministry. In like manner, we re-ignited the Scholarship Committee after the confirmation of eight youth, which led to a very successful fundraising event led by this committee. The Missions Committee also saw the need in our community, and was able to distribute \$13,000 from the Benevolence Fund to several local non-profit organizations. Other committees, such as Education, Evangelism, Worship, Religion and Race, and the UMW, have followed this trend of ministering on behalf of the church in a significant way. For his own part, Pastor was able to support a great number of individuals and families through the Discretionary Fund. Rev. Garcia believes that these ministries are relevant because of the way they have touched the lives of many people.

While all of the above was happening, the English and Spanish speaking congregations had begun to engage in conversations toward merging and becoming one church with a bilingual ministry. This was accomplished, and as of July 2014, the church became the UMC of Hempstead with a bilingual ministry.

While it was not well received by many members of the Hispanic congregation, as many left, the seven who remained asked Rev. Garcia to continue working with them.

With their diligence and hard work, the attendance to the Worship Service in Spanish improved to a present average of 25 people on Sunday.

Rev. Garcia married Madeline four years ago; she has a daughter, Camille, who in March celebrated her 20th birthday. He entered his marriage to Madeline with four children: Keven Noe, who will be 22 in August, Camilo Ernesto, who will be 18 in August, and his beautiful twins, Oscar Amin and Malcolm Javier, who will be 14 years old in July.

Pastor’s educational credits include earning a Bachelor’s degree in electronic engineering technology from the DeVry Institute of Technology in NJ; he graduated in 1986 and continued his education at City College where he finished a Master’s degree in 2004 in International Relations with a concentration on the democratic process of Latin America in the 1980s. He also received a Master’s degree in Education in 2010 from City College (with a specialization in teaching English to those who spoke other languages.)

Rev. Garcia’s education, ordination and 25 years of ministry have been important components in his journey. He has been committed to justice with peace issues his entire

life, and is proud to have participated in demonstrations for peace in war times, better conditions for workers in demonstrations for justice, and a high sense of consciousness for our environment. Also, during these times of struggles in the Methodist denomination for the full inclusion of our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters, Rev. Garcia has been able to show solidarity with them as these brothers and sisters are trying to help transform the denomination into a beloved community. Loving, raising and caring for his children, along with his wife, has been an amazing experience, full of challenges and celebrations. “I would not change it for anything in the world,” said Rev. Garcia.

As for his three-year tenure with the UMC of Hempstead, Rev. Garcia has many wonderful memories and sentiments to carry in his heart. “I will never forget the love and care that many members of the Hempstead congregation have shared with me, my wife, and our children during these three years of ministry. For that, I am indebted for the rest of my life,” said Rev. Garcia. “I have met amazing people who have left a mark in my life as a pastor and as a person.

For this opportunity, I am deeply thankful.”





SCHOLARSHIP DINNER: APRIL 30, 2016

The 2016 Scholarship Dinner on April 30th brought together many people from the church and community in support of the Scholarship Fund Committee, and scholarship recipient(s). The Committee raised \$2,890.00 for graduating students.

This event was organized by Chairperson, Michelle McCullers and her dedicated committee. The event featured a delicious assortment of dishes, prepared by members of the congregation - everyone had an enjoyable time.

Photos, courtesy of Linda Gomes





A CELEBRATION OF MOTHERS ON MAY 8



The UMC of Hempstead congregation honored moms on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 8, 2016 at a special Worship Service. The Sunday School children presented hand-made cards and gifts to the delight of all.

Pictured above, left: Shari Bailey, and the Sunday School children. Pictured above, right ,(L-R): Juliet Martin and Karen Benjamin. Pictured, center: Pauline Lewis. Pictured, middle, far right: Meda Hill and Janice Wellington. Pictured, bottom, left: Julia Ross, Chairperson of the Altar Flowers Committee. Pictured, bottom, right: Janice Wellington.



Photos, courtesy of Grace Brammer.



HONORING MOMS ON MOTHERS DAY



On May 22, the congregation shared in the celebration of baptism with new parents, Nadine Brown and Joshua Stumpf, as they christened their baby, Leo Joshua Stumpf, pictured above. Congratulations and many blessings for the future!





PAJAMA JAM!

Friday, June 17, 2016

7:30—11 p.m.

Food, Fun, Fellowship

Admission: Bring can donations for local food pantry or \$2.00



UMC Hempstead Youth Ministry
40 Washington Street, Hempstead, NY 11550
516-485-6363



After the UMW meeting in May, the ladies met for lunch and to celebrate Mary Johnson's birthday. Happy Birthday, Mary! Pictured (L-R): Bea Draudt, Jean Bearak, Garydiane Morrison, Julia Ross, Jackie Morgan, Miriam Richards, Sheila Smith, and Mary Johnson.



Pictured above: Candance and Cathy Bahr at the Spring Rummage Sale on May 7, 2016.



Vacation Bible School

United Methodist Church of Hempstead
August 15 - 19, 2016 ~ 9 am - 3 pm
1st Grade and Up
For information call the church office at 516-485-6363



A BLESSING RECOGNIZED
{In Honor of Kevin Gray}

Into our lives and hearts you came
Just like a blessing from above
Filling our souls with songs of praise
As we worship a merciful God of love

We feel blessed to have you among us
As Organist and Choir-Master too
You teach us to blend our voices right
To let our melodious sounds come through
You work the Chancel Choir long and hard
Yet we often have great fun
You ease the burden in your talented way
At times recording tapes for us to learn from

You've encouraged our youths, they've grown in number
You're as proud of them as they are of you
You're tolerant, challenging, prayerful, kind
A Christian! Respected, Loved and Appreciated for all you do

We face you on Sundays at the organ
Confident that we can sing it your way
As we render our song, the congregation responds
We recognize our blessing by name --"KEVIN GRAY"

"HAPPY BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS!"

J. Wellington June 2016



happy
birthday
you are
special.



Welcome to Our New Members!
On May 22nd, 2016, Michael Allen, Carol Hicks-Allen, and Vahhon McCullers joined the congregation as new members. They are pictured with Rev. Garcia, cutting their cake which everyone shared after Worship Service.

Pictured (L-R): Michael Allen, Carol Hicks-Allen, Vahhon McCullers, and Mary Johnson, Membership Secretary.

Photo, courtesy of Grace Brammer.



HEMPSTEAD FELLOWSHIP BRUNCH WELCOMES ALL ON MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND





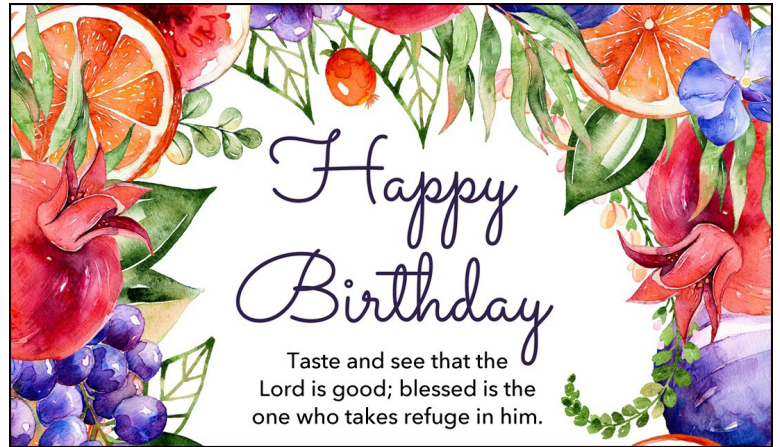
Sunshine Column



JUNE BIRTHDAY LIST - HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Joshua Valeris	June 2nd	Robert Dwyer	June 28th
Nicole Foo/McKenzie	June 5th	Doreen Redman	June 29th
Kevin Gray	June 5th	Elizabeth Johnson	June 19th
Brenda Fleming	June 10th	Lt. Cdr. Robert Millington	June 20th
Jane Ducreay	June 11th	Kevin Brown	June 23rd
Judy Collymore	June 14th	Fiona Cambry	June 23rd
Clive Daley	June 14th	Delores Hancock	June 25th
Ian Wellington	June 15th		
Denise Harris Proctor	June 16th		
Joseph Angus	June 18th		

If your name is not on the list, please contact Mary Johnson, Karen Bonnet, or Lavern Thompson in the Church office.



PARISH NEWS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please submit all information (articles, announcements, photos) about events, committee/ministries news, and other information that you can share with our church family to: hempsteadumc@gmail.com, or drop them off in the church office by September 14th.

The next *Parish News* will be distributed by the last week of September. Have a happy, relaxing summer!

If you are new to the church and wish to become a member, please see Pastor.

CHURCH SCHEDULE

Sunday: 8:30 AM Bible Study
 9:00 AM Choir Rehearsal
 10:00 AM Morning Worship
 (Social Hour to Follow)
 After service, Sounds of Praise Choir Rehearsal
 (5-11 years old)

Sunday: Service in Spanish, 12:30 PM
 Thursday: 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal
 Friday: 8:00 PM Youth Fellowship
 (Alternate Fridays)



June Calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WED.	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5 Bible Study 8:30 am	6	7	8 NYAC Annual Conference	9 NYAC Annual Conference	10 NYAC Annual Conference	11 NYAC Annual Conference
12 Bible Study 8:30 am	13	14 UMW Annual Spring Luncheon 12 Noon, Davenport Press Restaurant	15	16	17	18
19 UMM Meeting, 8:30 am HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!	20	21	22	23	24	25 Hempstead Fellowship Brunch, 9-11 am
26 Bible Study 8:30 am Sunday School Moving Up Day	27	28	29	30		

The United Methodist Women's Annual lunch will be held on Tues., June 14, 2016, 12-3 pm at the Davenport Press Restaurant in Mineola. The price is \$25.00. Starting now through June 12, there will be a sign-up sheet in the gym. All are welcome, including family and friends. Please join us.
- *UMW*

Congratulations to our newly formed Scholarship Committee, and Michele McCullers, chair, for running a very successful Scholarship Dinner on April 30th. Not only was the food plentiful and delicious, \$2,890.00 was raised for our youth continuing their education after high school. After an application is received and reviewed, our scholars receive a \$500.00 scholarship from their church.

We are consumed with plastic and metal, most of which can be recycled. In the event you use these items at church and do not wish to take them home for your recycling bin, there are two bins in the gym kitchen. So when you are attending any event at the church (or anywhere, for that matter), be conscious of how you dispose of plastic bottles, soda cans, etc. Also, as you know, many cans and bottles have a .05 deposit. When they are redeemed, it's amazing how those nickels add up. This money could be used to fund any mission you might support or it could be used to fill a Gratitude Box. Not a bad idea!

Peace with Justice Sunday: The collection on May 22nd brought in \$305.00 towards this important ministry. Thank you.

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The United Methodist Church of Hempstead,
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Telephone: 516-485-6363 Fax: 516-485-4803

June 2016 / Editor and Art Director: Karen Bonnet

UMC OF HEMPSTEAD SPRING RUMMAGE SALE



Rummage
Sale
May 7,
2016

