



MAKING GOOD TROUBLE, FOR GOD'S SAKE!

#METROSTRONG

Metropolitan Association, NY UCC Newsletter

May [2022

Ministering to the
Metropolitan Association
Churches and Ministers.

CREATIVITY, COMPASSION, COMMITMENT &
COMMUNICATION

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Metrouccnyc.org

BOARD PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John 21:6-7 He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So, they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!"

We are some lopsided people. Well actually, we are lopsided thinking people. I call us lopsided thinkers, because the things of this world numbs us to things of God. And

our lopsided thinking is exacerbated by this truth: we have also been born into a left sided world.

What I mean by that is, it is easier for us to believe in the senselessness of the spirit of culture than it is for us to trust in the right spirit of the resurrected Christ. Advertisements entrap us; the pressure of keeping up with the Jones affects us; Television and the Internet enchant us, and because materialism blinds us to the truly abundant life we can live in Christ, we do not know how to choose life over death.

Jesus shows up when seven of the disciples are not having any kind of success catching any fish. They have been hauling their nets into the sea over and over and coming up with nothing. It was just after daybreak, and Jesus stood on the beach; and the bible says, *but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus*. They didn't know it was him. Since rising from the dead, He had shown up in their presence twice while they were locked behind closed doors. He had spoken the word of peace to them. He had breathed His spirit on them. But as he stood on the beach, they didn't have

a clue who this stranger was. They did not recognize him.

All they knew was that all night long they had been casting their fishing nets into the sea and meeting failure each and every time. Jesus asked: Children, you have no fish, have you? They said, no. Jesus instructs them to cast their nets to the right side of the boat and they will find some.

I would think, that if the fish were not biting on one side, it wouldn't matter if I threw the net on the other side. Maybe if I go out further or veer some distance away, perhaps there would be a chance to find fish that are biting. Jesus' instruction is for them to cast their nets on the right side, and they will find some.

I don't know if the disciples mumbled, grumbled, or complained. But I can certainly hear contemporary disciples weighing in on what seems to be Jesus' preposterous suggestion. Because when the church is indifferent to God's voice, when the church is

ignorant of God's vision, when the church is insensitive to God's great love for the world, that's when the church begins to sink in tradition instead of standing on truth; that's when the church finds herself fixated on formality instead of being invigorated by spirituality; mired in our customs rather than moving in our destiny; tied to the way things used to be rather than getting an apocalyptic vision of the way it ought to be.

The disciples could have balked at Jesus' suggestion. Maybe you are not a fisherman, Mr. Stranger because in the world we live in, casting nets on the left side is the way it has always been done. Let's give you a quick lesson, sir Stranger. The normal way to catch fish is by casting the fishing nets over to the left side of the boat. The rationale for that, is that we fisherman can haul in the fish a lot easier as, because we will be using the "culturally" stronger arm—the right arm!

If we cast our nets to the right, on the off chance that we catch anything, we

would have to work that much harder. To change sides, to change perspective, to change the view, to move a different way, to think differently, well that is just too inconvenient for us. To go against what we've always done based on what we have always known means we will have to work counter to our cultural and physical norms in order to pull that catch in.

The bible says nothing about their thoughts. What we do know, is that they did not rely on their experience. They trusted in the instructions of this man whom they did not recognize, and when they dropped the nets to the other side, on the right side, they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. One preacher said, notice, it wasn't the voice of Jesus or the appearance of Jesus or the command of Jesus that gets their attention. It is the full net.

What makes you notice God's activity in your life? How does Jesus reveal himself to you?

These disciples got to the shore and found Jesus, cooking breakfast for them. Oh, wouldn't it be something for us to spend time with the one who wants to nourish us, refresh us, and replenish us on a daily basis with a home cooked meal?

On that day, when they caught all that fish and while they were enjoying communion with Jesus, they had that apocalyptic moment. Their eyes were opened. And they knew it was the Risen Christ.

Apocalyptic moments, for lopsided thinking people living in a left sided world. Jesus did it with Saul on the way to Damascus; He did it with the disciples who were having a home cooked breakfast with Jesus by the sea. That's how the spirit of the living God works: When we cannot see spiritual truths, God must reveal—that's apocalyptic talk, God must unveil—this the apocalypse—God must reveal to us spiritual truths.

I pray that in this Easter season we will all receive new revelation of the new and the next for our ministries, our churches, and our communities. Blessings, Rev. Ruby

MAY 2022 ISSUE 7

METRO EVENTS and NEWS

Congratulations to Rev Dr. Asayo Thomas, who reports that she will begin to serve and lead as a pastor at the Reformed Church of Cortlandtown at Montrose, NY, on June 1.

Congratulations to Dr. Coleen Birchette who will be ordained on May 22, 2022 at the Riverside Church. She has a received a call as the Minister for Curriculum Development.

The Community Church of the Pelhams is in discussions with developers to reimagine their property and space. The Church Council has discussed a community center, senior citizen housing, child day care facilities, small offices and other possible similar-type inclusions in such a project. The Church hopes to receive a fully renovated sanctuary with office space and use of other space for Church purposes. The Church would receive a form of condominium type ownership, free and clear. Issues of zoning must be resolved for the project to proceed. Please keep the church in your prayers.

THE METRO ASSOCIATION PARTNERS WITH HOLLIS AVENUE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND ITS FOOD PANTRY TO FEED THOUSANDS!



If you, a family member or congregant need help with food please contact Hollis Avenue Congregational Church, Rev. Jerry Greene, Senior Pastor 211-04 Hollis Avenue, Queens Village 11429.

Hours of operation: 8am-11am: The Food Pantry is open every Tuesday. If you have special needs or an immediate need contact James Thomas at 516-528-2422. If your church wants food from the pantry contact ED Rev. Kris Watson at Eadmin@metrouccnyc.org

STEWARDSHIP CORNER

Special thanks to all who make donations to the Association! We appreciate your financial support and pledge to use your gifts to the building of the beloved community!

Divine Love, flowing through us blesses and increases all that we give, all that we have and all that we receive.



SOW A SEED INTO THE METROPOLITAN ASSOCIATION TODAY.

YOUR DONATION IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE. MAKE DONATIONS HERE:

[Donation \(eservicepayments.com\)](https://www.eservicepayments.com)

#METROSTRONG: Our Association is following Christ, empowering our churches to change the world.

We are committed to be communities of justice and extravagant hospitality that are transformed by God's love.

PLEASE NOTE:

Metro 2022 Dues statements have been sent to all churches electronically.. Due to increased costs of EVERYTHING, the Association is compelled to raise our per capita dues this year. **The dues have been increased by \$2.00 and are now \$14.00 per**

MAY 2022 ISSUE 7

person to be paid by the church

The Metro Association is no longer collecting the \$2.00 per capita dues for the New York conference assessment. Statements sent to churches later this year will reflect only the dues payable to the Metropolitan Association. Please send your per capita assessment directly to the New York Conference going forward.

HAPPENING IN OUR CHURCHES:

Safe Haven UCC Learning Lab presents: Passport to Truth



"Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble."



Join Us as we learn about African American history

MONTHLY GATHERINGS:
FEBRUARY 10
MARCH 10, APRIL 14,
MAY 12
AT 7PM
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81164460526>

What You Will Learn:

- Introduction to massacres in African American Communities
- Cultural Contributions of African Americans
- Hot Button issues and current events
- Tools for engagement

Join us virtually at 9:30 AM (ET)!

THE YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT DEPARTMENT OF RIVERS

SUNDAY MORNING IMPACT!

FOR YOUTH UP TO 12TH GRADE

REGISTER TODAY @ <https://bit.ly/IMPACTYOUTH>

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT PASTOR GUY HIGLEY AT 828.714.9300

PLEASE VISIT AND LIKE OUR FACEBOOK PAGE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT HAPPENINGS IN THE METROPOLITAN ASSOCIATION!

Spread the news of all that Metro Association is offering to its members, churches, and ministers!

Share this newsletter with your congregation!

Reach out to us to see how you can get involved and volunteer your time talent and treasure!

Do you have a bright idea or project for us to engage in? Develop the idea and share it by emailing our Executive Director at eadmin@metronyucc.org

Does your church need pulpit supply? We have a diversity of ministers willing and able to help. Please reach out to eadmin@metronyucc.org or call Rev. Kris Watson on her cell at 646-523-1936.

The Origin of Others
TONI MORRISON
FOREWORD BY TA-NEEHAN OLSON

Safe Haven UCC
Learning Lab
MAY 5, 19, JUNE 2, 16
@ 7PM
HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J
81164460526

BROADWAY
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Liberating
WORD

Equipping progressive people of faith
to be champions for peace & justice

Subscribe to "Liberating Word," a daily dose of nourishment for progressive people of faith written by our senior pastor.

ZUMBA
WITH **Talin**
Thursdays
7:30 PM
\$10 PER CLASS | 1st CLASS FREE!
Walk-ins Welcome
Talin Avakian - Zumba.com
Armenian Evangelical Church - 152 E 34th St - Between Lex & 3rd

AREMENIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH 152 EAST 34TH ST. NYC

Other events of interest:

New York State Sexual Harassment Prevention Training Webinars
You can take this training any time during the year

charlaine@prcli.org

[Wednesday, May 11, 2022](#)

10:00 - 11:30 AM Eastern

[Wednesday, June 15, 2022](#)

10:00 - 11:30 AM Eastern

A Workshop for Congregations Facing Clergy Transitions

led by Rev. Dr. Noel
Vanek

*At the Parish Resource Center of
Long Island West Inc.*

*919 Elmont Road, Valley
Stream, NY 11580*



*Wilderness Journey: A Retreat
for Congregational Leaders*

During a Time of Transition

*May 14, 2022 from 10am to
2:30pm*

What happens to clergy when they think about leaving our long-tenured clergy position to enter into the next stage (whatever that might be)? Relief? Doubt? Regret? Enthusiasm? New energy? Confusion... and maybe some of all of the above. How do they manage their emotions, plot their course, and enter into the “new” steadily and with faith, and also so they don’t take others along on a roller coaster ride with them?!

And what occurs in a parish when its pastor departs? Yes, you guessed it: Relief! Doubt! Regret! New found enthusiasm and energy, coupled with confusion. How do the congregation’s leaders guide with a sure hand steadily into the future when the “leadership vacuum” hits home? How do leaders respond when members complain about uncertainty, or want a quick fix” for everything they think is wrong with their church? Or when differing visions of the church’s mission emerge and proponents demand a hearing?

Transition time is like entering into the wilderness, where we don’t quite know what will happen. This half day workshop/mini retreat invites participants to travel along in their imagination with the ancient Israelites as they entered the wilderness after being liberated from slavery in Egypt. But what would this

new life of liberation look like? We’ll try to learn from their experience and take away some sure guideposts for our journeys.

Cost for the retreat includes materials, morning refreshments and lunch:

Subscribers \$20/person or \$50/group of 3 or more. Limit of 4 per congregation.

Non-subscribers \$35/person or \$75/group of 3 or more. Limit of 4 per congregation.



Our retreat leader: Rev. Dr. Noel D. Vanek serves as pastor of The Community Church of the Pelhams United Church of Christ, and before that served for 21.5 years as senior Pastor of the Church in the Gardens in Forest Hills. He is a trained interim minister from the Interim Ministry Network. Rev. Vanek has experience in the areas of district wide search and call for the United Church of Christ, leadership training for laity, and has led many spiritual retreats.

**To Register contact the Parish
Resource Center by email at
Consultant@cpr4church.org or
by phone at 516-285-0919**

SACRED ALLY QUILT MINISTRY
NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFERENCE, UCC PRESENTS:

Commemoration of the 2nd Anniversary of the murder of George Floyd

AN EXHIBIT OF
SACRED QUILTS
AND THE FILM
DOCUMENTING THE
PROJECT AT PE109
14 E. 109TH ST
NYC

Opening
May 22, 2022: 5:30-7pm
Exhibiting until June 11,
2022



A panel discussion with the visionaries leaders of the project and the filmmaker documented this sacred effort. Sacred Ally Quilt Ministry is a of a minister quilters who wanted to contribute their time and talent to the movement for justice. Reception to follow. For more information contact Rev. Mark Koyan pastorucj@gmail.com

Join the Metro Association as it commemorates the 2nd Anniversary of the murder of George Floyd with a viewing of an exhibit by the Sacred Ally quilt Ministry of the New Hampshire Conference.

A group of quilters joined together to make amazing quilts documenting the last words of Mr. Floyd. A filmmaker/minister documented this project in an amazing documentary, and the film and quilts will be aired and displayed on May 22, 2022 at 5:30-7pm at the PE109 Gallery at 14 East 109th Street in East Harlem. A panel discussion and reception will ensue.

All are welcome. Let us be inspired by this work and inspired to continue to strive for Justice in this World.

MAY 2022 ISSUE 7

Thank You:

A special thanks to the team at Broadway UCC who led our worship for our Spring Meeting on April 30, 2022. This was our first HYBRID event, and we are grateful for the technology to stay safe and continue to worship and join together for the business of the Association.

Thank you to Rev. Dr. Michael Piazza who inspired us with a fresh word from God! We must be prepared for the new and the next as we move forward together in community.

Thank you to our behind-the-scenes people, Aja Harris and MID Jared Gilbert who executed the meeting so well.

Congratulations to our Administrative consultant Aja Harris who has been tapped to help the NY Conference in its Annual Meeting and Conference Ministerial Transition Season. METRO has the BEST of the BEST, and we are happy to share our time talents and treasures with others!

Thank you METRO BOARD members. You all work so hard as volunteers to keep this Association running smoothly and with integrity! Your service is amazing!

#METROSTRONG MEMBERS who attended and participated in the worship and business meeting and who donated to our Association efforts.

You are all deeply appreciated!

*Rev. Kris Watson,
Executive Director.*