Help Along the Way

By K Karpen

A few weeks ago, I headed to Shelter Island, on the end of Long Island, for a personal retreat. The train to Greenport, the closest station, leaves too early in the morning, so instead I decided to head for East Hampton and ride the 15 miles to Shelter Island and Camp Quinipet on my bike.

An announcement over Penn Station’s PA system warned me that some trackwork meant that the East Hampton train was going to turn into a bus for the middle part of my trip. Worried about whether my bike would fit on a bus, I asked a woman at the customer service office (I road the Long Island Railroad every day for four years, and it never occurred to me that they even had one of those) and she thoughtfully called out east to the folks driving the bus to make sure they’d take the bike. Glad I asked!

When I got to the East Hampton station, nothing looked familiar. I remembered that Rt. 114 goes from E. Hampton to the Shelter Island Ferry, but how would I find Rt. 114? That’s a question I asked a young woman who was loading a large dog into her car.

“You take the next right—or is it the one after that? And then you take the first left and go for a long time and you’ll end up at a different road, and you take a left, then a right. I think.”

Well, that wasn’t as clear as I could wish, but it was a beautiful day, and I figured I’d ride for a while anyway, and find some more help along the way.

A mile or two down the road, I came upon a couple of construction workers, digging a ditch (or something) at the side of the road. I checked with one of them.

“Rt. 114? I took that on my way here. Now where is it...?” he asked, as though he’d misplaced a favorite scarf or something. He called over his co-worker, a young smiley guy who seemed to have a map in his head.

“You go straight another half mile, then you’ll come to a stop sign. You turn left onto Israel Hands Road and you can see 114 from there.” The only Israel Hands I knew was Blackbeard’s second-in-command, which I didn’t think was a good sign, but, thanking him, I continued on my way.

Before I reached Israel Hands Road (which turned out to be Stephen Hands Road, but no matter) a car pulled up beside me. It was the dog woman from the train station! Worried about her lame directions, she had followed me to make sure I didn’t get lost!

Minutes later I was safely heading north on Rt. 114, on my way to the South Ferry, Shelter Island and Camp Quinipet.

What I take away from all this is that, whatever our journey, if we bother to ask, we’ll find help along the way. I’m trying to remember that lesson as we begin our Every Member Commitment Campaign for 2010. What our congregation discovered during our bumpy financial patch last spring is that, if told the situation and asked, folks are more than willing to pitch in.

I’m trying to remember that lesson in my prayer life as well! There are weeks when my challenges seem unbearable. But there is always help along the way. If I ask.
YOUNG ADULTS:
A Grateful Heart
By Rev. Manny Santiago

In his first letter to the church in Thessalonica, the Apostle Paul gives the following suggestions: “And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit.” (1 Thess. 5.14-21)

Paul encourages the whole church to work for each other, to hold each other accountable for their actions and their work in community. As we continue to reflect on what it means to grow as a church, I find it very important to take some time to reflect on these words. In this letter, the Apostle asks the church to be of one mind and heart. Interestingly, Paul is not referring to one or another group within the church, but to the whole church. The call is for the community to work together and to be one body.

Those of us who are young adults have many gifts, talents, and passions which we can bring to the community. Following Paul’s advice, it is important for us to share them in community; to bring them to God through our participation in one body, the church.

The church is called to be a community where every member gives thanks in all circumstances. As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday, it is fit for us to stop and think of what we are thankful for in our community and how we can contribute to the growing of that community of thanksgiving with our gifts, talents, and passions. Many times we complain that our talents are not used, but more often we forget to share those talents with others! If we are called to be one community, to grow together, to hold each other accountable, then it is our responsibility to share our talents, gifts, and passions with that community. Only then can we give thanks for being in a community where the Spirit of God is not quenched, but welcomed, celebrated, and lived.

SPSA activities in November:
Sunday, Nov. 1st: Monthly YAs brunch, at 1 p.m. in the church’s parlor.
Tuesday, Nov. 3rd: Radical Hospitality from 6 a.m. -- 9 p.m. Join in the joy of welcoming voters to our church! You can bake goods, bring something to drink or usher those who come to our building.
Friday Nov. 6th-Sunday Nov. 8th: Church retreat, Quinipet
Thursday Nov. 12: Prophet of the Month
Friday, Nov. 20th: Pre-Thanksgiving Potluck at 6 p.m. at the Parsonage.
Tuesday, Nov. 24th: Pie making for Goddard Riverside from 4 p.m. on.
Tuesday, Nov. 24th: Young Adults Committee meeting at 7 p.m., all YAs are invited!
Wednesday, Nov. 25th: Community Thanksgiving at 7 pm.

A Holiday Gift Swap!

That wonderful time of the year is fast approaching. Even in late October signs of Christmas are appearing in the stores! Looking for a different way to 'gift' this year? We are going to have a re-gift exchange table at coffee hour each Sunday starting November 1 through December 19th. What's a re-gift? Anything that you have that would make a great gift for someone, that great book you loved, the sparkly glassware that you have one too many pieces of, a pair of earrings that you have enjoyed and are ready to share.

This is not a rummage table but things in very good condition that you would enjoy being given yourself. Bring them all, leave on the table and pick up something that you find there that would make a great gift for someone in your life. This Christmas and Hanukah let's give from our abundance, remembering that 'new' is in the recipient's eyes. What is 'old' to you can be new and just the thing for someone else! We will have a little card that can be placed with the gift explaining that this gift came from the SPSA 'regift' passed on with love. ‘Tis more blessed to regift than to receive!
Another new member has joined our Unit of United Methodist Women! She is Felinda Austria, a former member of Lexington United Methodist Church and their unit of United Methodist Women. That church was closed earlier this year & Felinda began worshiping at SPSA. Welcome Felinda!

At the October meeting, the Pledge service was the program. We heard Mission Giving stories in the United States from three (3) National Mission Institutions:

Carolyn Williams Center in Oklahoma City, Okla.: This is a transitional living program for homeless young men who have aged out of foster care. More than 20,000 young Americans will age out of foster care this year. United Methodist Women Pledge to Mission enables this center to continue.

The Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker (MIHOW): This program is located at Henderson Settlement in Frakes, Ky., and is there to help women in southern Kentucky. Low-income mothers in 17 sites across four states--West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi--are served by this program. United Methodist Women Pledge to Mission makes this program possible.

Neighborhood Center in Utica, New York: An important component in the Center programs and services is the Group Work Department. Group Work is the overarching term for a collection of programs including a Transitional Life Skills Project AIM, Career Development, Outreach and Prevention, Adult Services and the Somali Bantu Refugee Program. These programs served more than 3,500 individuals in 2008. With our Pledge to Mission we enable the center to continue its work.

We also heard Mission Giving stories from three International Mission institutions around the world:

Latin American Center for Popular Communication, Bogota, Colombia: Today, the center works with poor communities in Bogota and other parts of Colombia through an ecumenical women’s group, the production of media programs, outreach among youth and children, and the creation of educational materials focused on human rights. United Methodist Women Pledge to Mission supports the work at this mission institution.

Sindyanna: Hope for Women in PALESTINE/ISRAEL: In Galilee, in the north of Palestine/Israel, Arab and Jewish women are cooperating to improve the lives of Arab women and developing ways for them to improve their economic status. Sindyanna is a warehouse founded by these women in 1996. They are from Christian, Muslim and Jewish backgrounds. United Methodist Women Pledge to Mission makes mission possible at this warehouse.

Keeping Hope Alive in the CONGO: In spite of its incredible wealth both above and below the ground, the Congo has a history of its resources benefiting everyone but the Congolese people. The Congo is still plagued by wars fueled by the nation’s mineral wealth. United Methodist Women Pledge to Mission is helping impoverished families, women, children and youth in the Congo keep hope alive. Together with our Congolese sisters and brothers, we are helping Congolese families fight hunger and build the foundation for a better future.

We responded to the needs and concerns of women, children and youth by approving our Pledge to Mission in the amount of $7,350 for 2010 and by approving a total budget in the amount of $12,985. This is our commitment to the PURPOSE and to empowering and improving the lives of women, children and youth in the United States and around the world.

The next meeting will be Sunday, Nov. 8 following coffee hour, at 1 p.m. The World Thank Offering will be the program. Shirley Struchen will lead the program. New members are welcomed; visitors are invited. And, in local mission, come bake pies on Tuesday, November 24 for Goddard-Riverside’s annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner!

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE BLANKET SUNDAY

On November 15th we will--all of us--have the opportunity to "Blanket the World with Love!"

When you donate just $5 you will purchase a blanket, a magic blanket. Magic because it can be used almost anywhere in the world: Pakistan, Laos, Kenya, Iowa, Louisiana. Places where people are faced with disaster or simply struggling to put food on the table.

Give a blanket as a gift (gift cards available) or simply to help. Let's join with congregations all over this country to "Blanket the World with Love" on Sunday November 15th!

Questions? See June Quarfordt, or write jquarfordt@gmail.com.
Christmas trees!‖ said: ―We can’t participate in the massacre of all of the holiday season was coming up and I thought maybe he said that he thought we should become Jewish. The where we both learned more about religion than I religion has played in the world, both good and bad. One topic of religion of rules – no meat on Friday, fasting from midnight Saturday before Sunday mass. Sin was a major topic – mortal and venial sins; sins that God could forgive and those that could not be forgiven. It was a frightening religion for me: The possibility of going to hell was never far away.

Eventually, I left the Catholic Church – and felt a tremendous sense of relief. I decided that I could pray and do good work in the world without being part of any organized religion, and despite an occasional longing for something spiritual, it worked for me.

When my son was born, we lived outside the world of religion. We chose what to believe in – what would help us get through the challenges of life. We believed in guardian angels, we loved St. Nicholas, and we believed in the power of people to change the world.

I explained to my son why I was no longer a Catholic and we had long discussions about the role that religion has played in the world, both good and bad. One of our favorite books was “Religions of the World,” where we both learned more about religion than I learned in 10 years of Catholic school.

Then one day, Kenneth, my son, came home and said that he thought we should become Jewish. The holiday season was coming up and I thought maybe he had weighed Chanukah vs. Christmas and decided that Chanukah was better. But he had a different reason; he said: “We can’t participate in the massacre of all of the Christmas trees!”

I should have seen this coming. An environmentalist was born. Our neighbor next door was planning to cut down a perfectly lovely tree and Kenneth was threatening to chain himself to it. Luckily that neighbor was transferred to Texas before he had a chance to cut down the tree! So for the next few years, we brought a living tree into our home each Christmas (roots and all – very heavy, muddy and messy) and planted it in our garden after the holiday. So we did not become Jewish but continued our search for a spiritual home – but clearly one that included social action.

And then one day, about nine months ago, I was speaking with a colleague and new friend at Baruch College and mentioned that I had been looking for a church. He happened to be an active member of SPSA and said, “I have a Church.” And it was right in my neighborhood. I came the following Sunday.

I expected music, prayers, and a place to volunteer. But I found much more. This Church is a magnet in my life; I am drawn here with a force that I can’t explain.

It has become a place to share joys (like my new job which I love) and sorrows (the unexpected death of my brother in law in July). It is a place to share my worries: Will my unconventional son go to college or take another path? And how do I help him find himself and his way? I know when I come here and sit under the four angels that watch over all of us in this sanctuary, that my son and I will be all right. That we will be guided to make good choices.

I leave here each Sunday ready to face the challenges of the week – having shared lovely music that stays in my head all week, having listened to thought-provoking words and having had coffee with friends new and old. Some weeks, I even get to eat green Jell-o.

And since it is commitment month, there is one last thing that SPSA has given me: A place to focus my giving. In the past, I would give whatever money I had to whatever charity tugged at my heart – they were all deserving: Autism, Habitat for Humanity, whichever group mailed a letter to me at a time that I felt that I had a little extra to give. Since coming to SPSA, I have found a place to focus my giving, a place where we feed hungry people, give shelter to homeless women, help kids with their homework, just to name a few of the many things that happen here. And it is right downstairs.

SPSA provides a spiritual home but is also a place of doing. No matter how much money or how much time you have to give, every bit helps. And you can see the results right here.

Thanks for listening. I look forward to many more Sundays together.
Children & Families:
GIVING AND GRATITUDE
By Rev. Julia Kristeller

As we studied about Moses in Sunday School in October, we explored some themes that come from the stories of Moses and the challenges faces, Themes like Un-conditional Love, Giving Things up to God, Responsability, Generosity, and The Power of Faith. Our children unlocked the deeper meaning of these words and ideas, and their understandings are remarkable!

We also talked about what we could give up to God by giving to others. We shared a wonderful story and project brought to us by Pat Schlegel and Tim Bosco called A Thousand Tracings, about the tracings of feet made to donate shoes and other goods to families in post-WWII Germany.

In November we will continue the great story of Moses with the Exodus of the Hebrew people from Egypt. We will talk about scarcity, abundance, and gratitude for our homes, our families and our church. We will continue our theme of giving to others by supporting the CWS Blanket Drive on Nov. 15th, and by making Thanksgiving pies for on Nov. 24.

As Thanksgiving approaches, try to find time as a family to explore the meaning of Thanks-Giving together. How can your family Thanksgiving this year be one of celebrating gratitude and giving, with an awareness of both the scarcity and abundance that surround us? How can we show our gratitude to God and each other for all we have, and give things up to God and one another when we can? How can we ask for help when it feels like we are in more scarcity than abundance to meet the needs of our own hearts or homes? Can we remember that we are gifts for each other when we give and receive from each other?

Watch for our Family Gratitude and Giving Journals, available Thanksgiving week, to help us along this path and prepare for the Advent season. And please bring your children and invite others to join in our wonderful Christmas Pageant—a great way to help grow our church family!

November Curriculum:
Weekly Psalms Readings; Bible Stories: Exodus: 1-14 The Stories of Moses

November Dates to Remember:
Nov. 1: Christmas Pageant Casting, 12:30-1:30, Chapel
Nov. 6-8: All-Church Fall Retreat
Nov. 15: New Parents Breakfast 10 a.m.
Church World Service Blanket Drive Pageant Rehearsal 12:30-2:30 p.m.
Nov. 22: Pageant Rehearsal 12:30-2:30
Nov. 24: Pie Making in Social Hall

2009 Christmas Pageant on December 13
This year, our script has been recreated by our youth members, Anna Bosco and AJ Tiedeman, who will be Co-Directors. Please contribute to their efforts as our youth continue to take on more leadership and collaboration with other age groups at SP&SA.

Pageant Rehearsals:
Sundays, Nov. 15 & 22, Dec. 6, 12:30-2:30 pm.
Saturdays, Dec. 5 & 12 from 2-6 p.m.

Needed: Help with supervising rehearsals, promotion, costumes, props: Julia 212-362-3179.
Snacks for rehearsals: Charlene 212-724-5548.

Mary Grace Bookhardt celebrates her 80th at SP&SA.
Below, with Laura Joy Tiedeman and Tim Bosco

November Birthdays

November 4
Mildred L. Geiger

November 6
Andre Davids

November 7
Lucy Gist
Melanie Stites

November 9
Fran Sherwood

November 10
Ken Barr

November 12
Nick Chomowicz
Cheryl Melchiorre

November 13
Jacob Rosenberg

November 14
Sara Goold

November 18
Michele Browne
Jacob Kerr

November 20
Bruce Bergquist
Barbara Rhodes

November 23
Jo Goodson Tiedeman

November 30
Elizabeth Kinzey
Nancy Meyers
Youth

A Grateful Heart

By Rev. Manny Santiago

This is the month of giving thanks. We give thanks to God for all the things God has done for us. We give thanks to our families for being with us and for giving us love. We give thanks to our friends for helping us along the way.

However, giving thanks to God for what we have should not be a one-time thing. We should always give thanks for all we have. Every day, when you wake up in the morning, give thanks to God for having a place to call “home.” Give thanks to God for giving you family and friends, church and youth group. Give thanks to God for sports and games, for vacation time and for school. Give thanks to God for letting you be YOU!

I give thanks to God for letting me serve as your minister. I have seen the group grow from a few teenagers to a healthy, strong ministry made up of people interested in learning more about faith and about service. Many of you have invited friends to join us on Sunday afternoons or for Wednesday “Open Youth Room.” For all these things, I am grateful to God, to you, to our mentors Ron and Latoya, and to your parents and guardians who have worked with us in praying, providing lunch, and encouraging you to participate. What are you grateful for?

As we look forward towards the present and the future of Youth Ministry, let us keep the energies high. Remember that, like the prophets we have been studying, we are called by God to do amazing things in our church, our schools, neighborhood, and world.

Youth Ministry Activities for November:

- Sunday, Nov. 1: Youth Group at 1 pm.
- Wednesdays: from 3 -- 6 pm, Open Youth Rm.
- Tuesday, Nov. 3: Radical Hospitality for Election Day from 6 a.m. -- 9 p.m. Bake something, or come and help welcome our guests as they vote.
- Friday to Sunday, Nov. 6th to 8th: Fall Getaway.
- Sunday, Nov. 8: NO YOUTH GROUP
- Friday and Saturday, Nov. 13 and 14: Conference Confirmation Retreat
- Sunday, Nov. 15: Youth Group at 1 pm.
- Friday, Nov. 20: Pre-Thanksgiving Potluck at Jessie’s home.
- Sunday, Nov. 22: Youth Group at 1 pm.
- Tuesday, Nov. 24: Pie making for Goddard Riverside at 4 p.m. We’ll make pies to sell for our summer mission trip!
- Wednesday, Nov. 25: Thanksgiving Service at 7 pm.
- Sunday, Nov. 29th: NO YOUTH GROUP

Homework Help @ SPSA

LEFT: Mark the Magician entertains at the Homework Help fundraiser Book Party for The Hanging Hill. Nearly $1500 was raised. ABOVE: Marilyn Fletcher works with Mariama as Homework Help swings into gear, with more students than ever. Can you help?! Call Charlene, 212-724-5548.
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<td>2 3 Staff Meeting</td>
<td>3 Election Day 4 Open Youth Rm 5 6:30 Pilates 6:30 Piano 7:30 Space of Sharing</td>
<td>4 5 6:30 Pilates 7:30 Yoga</td>
<td>5 6 FALL RETREAT 7 FALL RETREAT 4 Choir</td>
<td>8 FALL RETREAT 10 Choir 11 Worship; 11 United Methodist Women</td>
<td>9 3 Staff Meeting 7 The Gathering 10 WSCAH 30th Anniversary Celebration 11 3 Open Youth Rm 6 Homework Help 7:30 Yoga</td>
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<td>17 6:30 Pilates 7:15 Trustees 7:30 Space of Sharing</td>
<td>18 3 Open Youth Rm 6 Homework Help 7:15 Church Council 7:30 Yoga</td>
<td>19 7 The Rivals at our West End Theatre 20 1 The Rivals 6 Pre-Thanksgiving Potluck</td>
<td>21 3 The Rivals 4 Choir 22 10 Choir 10 Adult Class 11 Worship K preaching 12:30 Pageant Rehearsal 1 Youth Group</td>
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SPSA-BJ Shelter for Homeless Women, Sundays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 7. Volunteers needed!

FallFeast
A gathering of Christians, Jews and Muslims
Around a common table, around a common theme.
November 1, 5pm to 7:30 pm, Social Hall
RSVP: Julia@spsa@aol.com or jfkspsa@aol.com

ELECTION DAY AT SPSA
Help us show radical hospitality to our friends and neighbors who vote at our church.
Come anytime, 6 am to 9 pm

New Members
Elijah, Shawn and Jeremy Bakker will join the SPSA community November 1.
From Dallas Texas, Shawn runs the Advance for the General Board of Global Ministries; Jeremy is a PhD candidate at Yale University. And Eli spends most of his time looking cute.

Pie Baking!
Tuesday, November 24
4:00 to 9:30 pm in the SPSA Social Hall
Come help us make 100 pies and dozens of cookies for the annual Thanksgiving Dinner at Goddard-Riverside.
NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!!!
Please bring: yourself, your friends, knives and a rolling pin, if you have one.
For information call Charlene, 212-724-5548

Prophet of the Month!
Thursday, November 12
7:00 pm in the Parlor

Fall Retreat
At Quinipet
Shelter Island
November 6-8
charlenefloyd@aol.com
Happy Birthday to WSCAH!
We’ll celebrate 30 years on November 10.

A busy Wednesday at the WSCAH Food Pantry