

February 2016 newsletter of the Long Island Council of Churches, *The Prelude*

These late-breaking items that do not appear in the printed, snail-mailed edition of this *Prelude*:
New Directory Of Churches & Synagogues on Long Island
Financial Assistant Needed in Northport

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

Yours truly seldom makes New Year's resolutions but this year I was inspired to do so by a worship service I attended with some trepidation: my wife had warned me that there might be a Christmas pageant.

I have seen and taken part in some fine Christmas pageants. I fondly remember one the youth group did in Island Park, retelling the Nativity as if Jesus were born today in gas station down the street, and another one there where young adults reprised the drama of their childhood, angel wings and all. Both managed to combine tradition with something utterly new, which is what the miracle of the Incarnation was, after all.

Many pageants, though, consist mostly of contrived cuteness. After struggling to teach kindergarteners lyrics day after day for seven years at the Riverside Church Weekday School, I doubted that I could take one more stage-struck rendition of "The Little Drummer Boy." I thought seriously about staying home. And my heart sank a bit as I entered the Narthex and found bathrobe-clad cherubs.

What I found in the sanctuary, though, was a simple, creative adaptation of Las Posadas, a Latino tradition (called "La Novena" in Ecuador and "Parranda" in Puerto Rico) that reenacts the Holy Family's search for shelter.

Robyn Hyland, the music director at 1st United Methodist Church in Amityville, adapted the liturgy for a Christmas Eve Las Posadas service from the *United Methodist in the Book of Worship*. She set the words to music, with the children singing "We are tired and we are cold. May we please have shelter," and the congregation replying, "For your reasons we care not, every room is taken." She used the Finnish tune *Tempus Adest Floridum*, which you may know as "Good King Wenceslas," a Bohemian monarch reminds us that "Ye who now will bless the poor/shall yourselves find blessing." The children sang, with words that echoed the plight of refugees and the homeless today, "Will the child be born tonight out on a street corner? Can't you find a place for him? Do you have no pity?" before the congregation relented and welcomed the family seeking shelter. The pageant was something completely unexpected, and a wonderful idea.

Change is seldom easy, and the LICC is going through lots of changes these days: feeding a staggering number of people in Freeport, the creation of a full-fledged pantry at our new location in Hempstead, expanded hours of service at our new locations in Riverhead, a new governance structure, and planning for my retirement next summer. Change is sometimes hard, but here is my resolution for 2016, an appropriate one for those of us who believe in the Incarnation: this year I want to be open to doing something new.

Shalom/Salaam/Shanti/Jai Jinendra/Pax,

Tom

DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Sara C. Weiss, Director of Development

Special thanks go to the Knapp Swezey Foundation for their \$36,000 grant to support our Riverhead staff, to the Nassau County Bar Association for a \$20,000 grant to support our Nassau Emergency Food and Family Support programs, to the Long Island Community Foundation for their grant of \$20,000 for our emergency food program, and to the Slomo and Cindy Silvan Foundation for a \$17,500 grant to support our emergency food program in all three of our locations. We also thank Riverhead Building Supply for two more food deliveries to our Riverhead office for Thanksgiving and Christmas. We are grateful for the gifts the following institutional donors gave since our last issue to help us fulfill our mission to serve Long Islanders in need:

Arrow Exterminating Company	\$400 Freeport Food Center
Bellmore Presbyterian Church	\$297 Use Where Most Needed
Caroline Church-Setauket	\$300 Use Where Most Needed
Church World Service	\$248 CROP Walk
Community Church of Douglaston	\$50 Freeport Food Center
Community Church of East Williston	\$2,202 Freeport Food Center
Community Church of East Williston	\$500 Freeport Food Center
Community Church of East Williston	\$325 Use Where Most Needed
Community Church of East Williston	\$760 Freeport Food Center
Community Church of Syosset	\$400 Use Where Most Needed
Community Presbyterian Church-Merrick	\$851 Freeport Food Center
Congregational Church of Manhasset	\$375 Use Where Most Needed
Douglaston Clergy Group-Little Neck	\$280 Freeport Food Center
Episcopal Church of the Resurrection	\$693 Use Where Most Needed
First Presbyterian Church-East Moriches	\$274 Use Where Most Needed
First UMC Amityville	\$2,000 Freeport Food Center
Flanders United Methodist Women	\$50 Community Thanksgiving Dinner-Riverhead
Flanders United Methodist Women	\$100 Riverhead Food Center-
Garden City Community Church	\$1,625 Emergency Food Program
Garden City Community Church	\$1,875 Use Where Most Needed
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church-Huntington Station	\$100 Use Where Most Needed
Grace Lutheran Church-Uniondale	\$326 Use Where Most Needed
Grace United Methodist Church-Valley Stream	\$1,400 Use Where Most Needed
New Apostolic Church U.S.A.-Chicago	\$1,000 Use Where Most Needed
Parkway Community Church-Hicksville	\$900 Thanksgiving/Where Most Needed
Parkway Community Church-Hicksville	\$500 Use Where Most Needed
Pixie Nursery School	\$168 Freeport Food Center
St. John's Church-Cold Spring Harbor	\$250 Use Where Most Needed
United Church of Rockville Centre	\$600 Use Where Most Needed
United Methodist Church-Floral Park	\$500 Use Where Most Needed
United Methodist Church-Seaford	\$110 Freeport Food Center

United Methodist Women-Sayville	\$100 Use Where Most Needed
United Methodist Women-Merrick	\$50 Use Where Most Needed
United Way of Long Island-2015 Campaign	\$612 Use Where Most Needed
West Hills United Methodist Church	\$100 Use Where Most Needed

And we are grateful for the 1000+ postage stamps donated by the Sisters of Mercy, Memorial Presbyterian Church in Roosevelt, and Community Presbyterian Church in Deer Park, which our chaplains distributed at the Nassau County Correctional Center, along with Christmas cards.

We thank the following individuals for their gifts to support our ministry to Long Islanders in need: Bette J. Adams, Michael J. Adams, Anonymous, Benno Ansbacher, Arpine Aroyan, Richard & Marcella Barnhart, Rev. Mark Bigelow, Carole J.S. Bradford, Carol Brock, Mildred Clinton, MC Connelly, Barbara Dawson, Thomas Dillan, Bob Festa, Emily Figueroa, Kim Fowler-Jackson, Claire Fritz, Edward Hale, William L. Hecker, Alice Hild, Helmut Hild, Carolyn Hanes, Peter & Carol Henck, Marian Hubbard, Sherry Huber, Lynn E. Iredell, Caryle Katz, William Keller, Janice Kincaid, Donald T. Kirby, Diane Kolyer, Hai-dee Lee, Rev. Mark Lukens, Barbara McCaffrey, Don Metzник, John Morris, Edward Myers, Dorothy Nicoll, Raymond Ormand, Carol Jane Perkins, Cynthia Ann Perry, Ann Peterson, Tom Goodhue & Karen Pohlig, Marianne Rehor, Kathy Richards, Norman Roscoe, Joan Servinskis, the Rev. Thomas Schmidt, Norman Stanton, Sheila Sussman, Lawrence & Marylou Swensen, Richard & Linda Tomppert, Joan Toohig, Karen Ungerer, Arvind Vora, Tom & Debbie Wallace, Shirley Warner, Uriel B. Welch, Diane Wood.

Can You Help?

During the winter months we get frequent requests for coats, sweaters, scarves, gloves, shoes, socks, blankets and other cold-weather items for all ages. Guests stream into our offices in the cold weather wearing only summer-weight clothing because they have nothing else to wear. For example, in Nassau, a teenage girl who's an A-student in high school and hoping to attend college, came to us in the dead of winter last year, wearing only a pair of pants, two sweaters and sneakers. She had no coat and no boots. After her parents went through Hurricane Sandy recovery, refinanced their severely damaged home, and paid the mortgage, they could not afford to buy her winter clothes. At our Riverhead office, guests walk in when the outdoor temperature is below freezing, wearing only pants, a short-sleeved shirt and thong sandals.

These requests come throughout the winter from people of all ages. Families with teenagers are particularly in need of all kinds of cold-weather outerwear, shoes and socks. Furthermore, many of these families cannot afford fuel to heat their apartments so they have no escape from the cold.

Please help us keep our guests from freezing. Donations of clean, gently used winter clothing, cash donations and gift cards for clothing will enable us to help our guests get through the winter. Thank you for caring and keeping our guests warm when it's bitterly cold outside.

LICCDonate.org

We invite you to visit our website at www.LICCDonate.org to make convenient cash contributions so we can buy food for our guests with dietary restrictions and Feed a Family of Four. If you donate through this website, we will do all the work for you, and the ever-increasing number of our guests with special dietary needs will be able to eat.

Memorial/Tribute Gifts

A great way to remember a loved one, whether living or deceased, is to give a memorial or tribute gift in his/her name. In your letter accompanying such a gift, please tell us who the gift is in memory or tribute to, and who is giving the gift. We will send a thank you letter to the contributor and to the family of the loved one in accordance with your instructions. Please send your contribution to the LICC, attention Sara Weiss. If you have any questions, call Sara for further information at 516-565-0290, ext. 207. Naming and Tribute opportunities are also available for our programs. Please call Sara for a list. We also have planned giving opportunities that will sustain these programs in perpetuity.

Does your company do matching gifts? If so, please call your company's matching gift coordinator to set up a matching gift for the LICC.

ARE YOU PLAYING IN THE SOUPER BOWL?

On Super Bowl Sunday many youth groups, confirmation classes, and Sunday Schools will ask each worshiper for \$1 to feed the hungry. Last year they raised more than \$3 million dollars last year for soup kitchens and emergency food pantries, plus substantial donations of canned goods. In doing this, they also encouraged people to remember our neighbors in need after the Christmas-Hanukkah-New Year's Eve season has passed. If you haven't already picked a local hunger ministry, please consider collecting food and money for the LICC's pantries. Information on the Souper Bowl of Caring is available at 1-800-358-SOUP or www.souperbowl.org

**CHARITABLE IRA ROLLOVER DEDUCTIONS
ON DECEMBER 18, 2015, CONGRESS PASSED LEGISLATION THAT
REINSTATES THE CHARITABLE IRA ROLLOVER AND MAKES THE IRA
ROLLOVER PERMANENT AND RETROACTIVE TO DECEMBER 31, 2014.**

INDIVIDUALS MAY BEGIN TAKING DISTRIBUTIONS FROM THEIR INDIVIDUAL RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS (IRAS) AS EARLY AS AGE 59½, BUT ARE REQUIRED TO BEGIN TAKING THEM AT AGE 70½. NORMALLY, THESE DISTRIBUTIONS ARE SUBJECT TO INCOME TAXES. THE IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER PROVISION, ESTABLISHED UNDER THE PENSION PROTECTION ACT, ALLOWS INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE REACHED AGE 70½ TO DONATE UP TO \$100,000 TO CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS DIRECTLY FROM THEIR IRA, WITHOUT TREATING THE DISTRIBUTION AS TAXABLE INCOME. IN ORDER TO QUALIFY, CONTRIBUTIONS MUST GO DIRECTLY TO A PUBLIC CHARITY AND BE MADE FROM TRADITIONAL IRAS OR ROTH IRAS. DONORS MAY RECEIVE NO GOODS OR SERVICES IN RETURN FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS, AND MUST OBTAIN WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION OF THEIR CONTRIBUTION FROM EACH RECIPIENT CHARITY.

IF YOU ARE 70 1/2 OR OLDER, YOU MAY REQUEST DIRECT TRANSFERS FROM YOUR IRA IN ANY AMOUNT, UP TO \$100,000 TO THE LICC OR ANOTHER QUALIFIED CHARITY, WITHOUT REPORTING IT AS TAXABLE INCOME. THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF YOUR CONTRIBUTION WILL COUNT TOWARDS YOUR REQUIRED MINIMUM DISTRIBUTION (RMD), AND YOU MAY EXCLUDE UP TO \$100,000 OF THE GIFT FROM YOUR FEDERAL GROSS INCOME-RESULTING IN A LOWER TAXABLE INCOME AND POSSIBLE TAX SAVINGS. THIS PROVISION IS NOW PERMANENT.

PLEASE CHECK WITH YOUR FINANCIAL ADVISOR ABOUT THE BEST WAY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY. SOME RESTRICTIONS APPLY:

***YOU MUST BE 70-1/2 OR OLDER AND REQUIRED TO MAKE AN ANNUAL DISTRIBUTION FROM YOUR IRA.**

***YOUR TOTAL COMBINED CHARITABLE IRA ROLLOVER CONTRIBUTION CANNOT EXCEED \$100,000 IN ANY ONE YEAR.**

***CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM AN IRA MUST GO DIRECTLY TO THE LICC OR ANOTHER 501C3 CHARITY.**

***DISTRIBUTIONS CAN ONLY BE MADE FROM TRADITIONAL INDIVIDUAL RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS OR ROTH IRAS.**

***YOU MAY NOT RECEIVE ANY GOODS OR SERVICES IN RETURN FOR YOUR CHARITABLE IRA ROLLOVER CONTRIBUTION IN ORDER TO QUALIFY FOR TAX-FREE TREATMENT—BUT YOU WILL RECEIVE OUR GRATITUDE AND THE SATISFACTION OF HELPING YOUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED.**

NEW DIRECTORY OF CHURCHES & SYNAGOGUES OF LONG ISLAND

Our new directory of 1500 churches, Unitarian Universalist fellowships, and synagogues on Long Island is hot off the presses. It lists local congregations/parishes, denominational executives, local ecumenical and interfaith organizations, chaplains, pastoral counselors, information on worship services in many languages (from American Sign Language to Vietnamese), and information about worship services for those with special needs.

We mail this directory free of charge to our member congregations, the Friends of the LICC, and our major donors, and hand it out at our Board and committee meetings. If you do not receive your copy soon, this may be a sign that you need to do the paperwork to officially join!

We sell the directory for \$50 to not-for-profit organizations and for \$100 to businesses that have a legitimate need to find local clergy, such as funeral homes and hospitals. We also can email you the directory as a Word file if this would be helpful. You can snail-mail a check made out to the LICC to 40 Washington Street, Hempstead NY 11550 Attention: Sara Weiss or you can charge it to your MasterCard or Visa by calling 516-565-0290 with the relevant information. If you have any questions, please contact Sara Weiss at 516-565-0290, ext. 207 or

saraweiss@optonline.net

WORTH QUOTING

Why Congregations Need To Be Diverse

“Churches are dying at an alarming rate; they have become insular and irrelevant because they have been failing to acknowledge or address the fact that we have become a global society. Here on Long Island we are neighbors to one of the most diverse areas in not only the country but the entire world. Did you know that more languages are spoken in Queens than anywhere else on the globe?”

--The Rev. Vicky Eastland, *The Brookville Church News* January 2016

Valentine’s Day Advice

The Rev. Dr. Ronald Lehenbauer, LMFT, a Pastoral Counselor at the Lutheran Counseling Center, recently offered in the LCC newsletter some proverbs to keep love alive, including these words of wisdom:

“When it comes to marriage, the more you focus on the bad stuff, the more you focus on the bad stuff.”

“Disagreement is inevitable; hostility is optional.”

“Holding resentment is like drinking poison and hoping it will kill your enemy.”

“Three little words that can save a marriage: Maybe you’re right.”

Muslims & Terrorism

After each deadly strike, a common refrain seems to ricochet through American mass media: that Muslims don’t condemn terror. Yet Muslims insist they do condemn these terrible atrocities but the coverage is woefully inadequate. At last Friday’s rally in Huntington, there were no TV cameras in sight to broadcast the emphatic, heartfelt, broad-based rebuke of terror, rampant Islamophobia, violence and bigotry. . . . Since media coverage was virtually non-existent, here’s what Long Islanders didn’t get a chance to see in the comfort of their own homes: Muslim Americans proudly displaying their affection for a country that many of them were not born into but said they cherish once they came here. The image of flag-waving Muslim Americans proudly professing their devotion to the United States directly contradicts the mainstream perception of Muslims."

--Rashed Mian, "Long Island Muslims Condemn Terror, While Islamophobia Intensifies,"
Long Island Press Dec. 26, 2015

ARE YOU FINANCIALLY LITERATE?

Standard & Poors recently conducted a survey of what people around the world know about five basic questions in handling personal finances. They found that Americans are significantly less “financially literate” than Canadians and the British. Americans are particularly unlikely to understand interest, with only 40% of us correctly answering simple questions. This is troubling, given that the United States has some of the highest credit card debt and student loan debt found anywhere on the planet. You can read more about their study--and take the test yourself--at finlit.mhfi.com

The LICC offers free workshops on how to manage your money well--and not get ripped off on loans. Each workshop usually runs an hour to 90 minutes, and we tailor it to the needs of your audience. We can do shorter programs, for example, for a college class, or for a youth group and their parents. They could be a great addition to your congregation’s stewardship campaign, helping people to think faithfully about how they use their resources. We also do presentations for religious leaders on how to manage a congregation’s money, reduce expenses, pay for energy conservation measures, etc.—or how clergy can find a home they can afford.

The LICC will provide speakers and educational materials—all you need to provide is coffee and noshes. Thanks to generous funding for this effort this year from Astoria Bank and Ridgewood Savings Bank, there is no charge for this program. For more information or to request a program, please e-mail tomgoodhue@optonline.net or call 516-565-0290, ext. 206.

GET YOUR MONEY BACK

Taxpayers with incomes under \$62,000 are eligible to prepare and e-file their returns using New York State Tax Department equipment and user-friendly software. The software helps to ensure that taxpayers receive all of the tax credits for which they’re eligible, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Care Credit. In 2016, the Tax Department will host more than 90 Free Tax Assistance sites, up from 80 last year and 14 in 2013. “New Yorkers who are eligible for the EITC have free tax preparation and e-filing opportunities available to them,” says NYS Tax Commissioner Jerry Boone. “It’s not necessary to purchase software or to pay someone to do your taxes. To

maximize your refund, visit our website in January to learn about our Free Tax Assistance sites or access free online e-filing options.”

Taxpayers who are eligible for the EITC are also automatically qualified to prepare and electronically file their income taxes on the Tax Department’s website at no cost. The user-friendly software walks the taxpayer through the process simply and quickly.

Taxpayers are cautioned to only access the free e-file software from www.tax.ny.gov to ensure they are not unexpectedly charged for their New York State return after filing their federal return.

Are you eligible?

The EITC benefits in New York State are among the most generous in the nation. The income limit varies based on number of children, with the maximum for the 2015 tax year being \$53,267 for an individual or family with three children.

To qualify for the credit, in addition to meeting the income qualifications, taxpayers must:

- earn wages from employment or self-employment,
- have a valid Social Security number,
- have a qualifying child living with them for more than half the year, or, if they do not have a qualifying child, be at least 25 years of age and under age 65, and
- have investment income of less than \$3,350.

How much is the credit worth?

EITCs are offered by the federal government, New York State and New York City. The amounts of the credits vary based on factors including family income and number of children. Because the maximum credits are increased annually, the maximum of the combined federal, state and New York City credits for tax year 2015 is \$8,427 (for a family with three children) – a \$134 increase over tax year 2014.

Taxpayers who were eligible in previous years but did not claim the credit are still able to submit an amended income tax return for up to three years.

Noncustodial Parent Earned Income Tax Credit

New York was the first state in the nation to enact a Noncustodial Parent EITC in 2006. The refundable credit adds to the many ways that New York encourages low-income noncustodial parents to work and stay current with their child support payments.

So far in 2015, almost 8,000 taxpayers claimed the Noncustodial Parent EITC for a total of almost \$4 million.

For more information

- [Federal Earned Income Tax Credit](#)
- [New York State Earned Income Tax Credit](#)
- [Record keeping suggestions for self-employed](#) persons
- Contact a NYS Tax Department representative at (518) 457-5181

NEEDED/OFFERED

Offered:

***Free Suicide Prevention Workshops**

It can be frightening and intimidating when someone reveals or shows signs of suicidal thoughts. However, despite some misconceptions, *talking about suicide does not lead to suicide*. In fact, it is a conversation that could save their life. Lutheran Counseling Center is offering free suicide

prevention training. This training will provide helpful outreach tools for anyone, but is especially designed for those working in church outreach ministry.

Saturday, March 5, from 10 am to 12:30 pm

@ St. Paul's Lutheran Church

147 Park Ave, Amityville, NY 11701

The intent of this program is to provide awareness, knowledge and basic skills that will help participants identify a potential person at risk. You will learn active listening skills, ways to address the situation, and how to intervene in getting the person from a place of imminent danger to current safety.

This course has a two-pronged approach:

- how to determine whether a person is at risk
- how to intervene with a person identified as potentially suicidal

Workshops are presented at no cost to participants, thanks to a generous grant from the St. Peter's Fund for Special Missions, Huntington Station. **But registrations are required.**

Registration deadline: one week before the workshop. To register or get further info, please call LCC at 1-800-317-1173 or e-mail the office at Center@LCCNY.org.

***Spiritual Care Companion Training**

Are you interested in sharing your talents and spirit with others who are hospitalized, living in a nursing home, or within your own community? Consider becoming a Spiritual Care Companion. We offer an 18 hour training over 6 weeks, teaching skills such as how to be a comforting and listening presence to others in need. Our training is free; there is a \$20 materials fee, which covers a training workbook, and six Catholic Update Newsletters.

Info Session: Saturday, February 20th 1:00 to 3:00 pm

Week 1: Saturday March 5th, from 9:00 to 3:30

Week 2: Saturday March 12th, from 9:00 to 3:30

Week 3-Saturday, March 19th, from 9:00 to 3:30

Please register by calling or emailing:

Carol Cella at 631-465-6307 or caroline.cella@chsli.org

Jo-Andrew D'Alessandro-Accary at 631-465-6308

Christine Torns at 631-465-6306 or christine.torns@chsli.org

ADS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

GODNET

JOB OPENINGS:

Looking for a challenge?

Join us in turning the tide from surviving to thriving in 2016 and beyond. The historic Community Church of E. Williston is a mainline protestant church serving the needs of all persons from all backgrounds. We have a faithful hardworking congregational core and seek a Senior Minister who, through Christian love and action, will help us turn those with occasional attendance into persons with faithful commitment. The position requires an experienced ordained Protestant minister with youthful enthusiasm to reestablish CCEW as the "Light in the Community". The ideal candidate will love preaching with the same intensity as ministry to the suffering and managerial challenges. We offer a competitive salary and a beautiful manse in a great school district. Please e-mail a cover letter and resume to: CCEW@optonline.net

or mail a hard copy to:
CCEW, Minister Search
45 East Williston Avenue
East Williston NY 11596

Financial Assistant needed for First Presbyterian Church of Northport and its Weekday Nursery School. Twenty (20) hours per week. Flexible work schedule. This position requires accounting background with Excel and Quickbooks skills. E-mail resumes (with three references) or questions to Carole Gandy, Personnel Chair, at csam744@aol.com

OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE IN GARDEN CITY

Garden City Community Church has an office space to share. The monthly maintenance cost of \$500 includes heat and electricity use. For more information call Liz Cavolo at 516-746-1700 or email ecavolo@thegccc.org

CHURCH FOR SALE IN ROCKY POINT

2,000 sq. ft. church located at 89 Hallock Landing Road in Rocky Point, on .92 acres, with two small auxiliary buildings and frontage on three streets. There is a small parking lot, with room to expand. \$475,000. Contact John F. Hoblin, Jr. at Hunt Corporate Services, 516- 937-1000 or jhoblin@huntcorp.com or visit www.huntcorp.com

CHURCH BUILDING FOR SALE IN AMITYVILLE

The New Apostolic Church has merged its Amityville and Westbury congregations to create a larger, more diverse church that will soon move into a new location in Bethpage. The Amityville building at 890 County Line Road, off the Southern State Parkway, is for sale. The one-story building is about 3300 sq. ft., with a sanctuary that seats about 75, and there is an adjacent parking lot. For more information, please contact Stephen Preuss or Denise Prevete at Cushman Wakefield, 718-512-2118/2605.