

BREAKING NEWS! CONGRESS PASSES CHARITABLE IRA ROLLOVER

Congress has reinstated the wonderful opportunity to make tax-free rollover gifts from Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) to charitable organizations, and the president signed this into law on December 18. You may donate up to \$100,000 this calendar year from your individual IRA account to the Long Island Council of Churches or other qualified charities. The amount donated counts toward your required minimum IRA withdrawal for 2015 and will be free from federal income tax. There may also be state tax savings. Please consult with your IRA administrator or tax advisor for more detailed information about your personal situation.

To make sure your gift will qualify for the tax-free treatment you must satisfy the following:

- This applies only to individuals ages 70-and-a-half or older.
- The transfer from your IRA must go directly to The Community Synagogue.
- Married couples can each donate \$100,000 from their individual IRA accounts.
- The gift must be completed by December 31, 2015.
- The gift must be an outright gift. Transfers from your IRA to a donor advised fund, supporting organizations, charitable gift annuities, and charitable remainder trusts do not qualify.

If you have not already taken your required minimum distribution this year, a qualifying rollover gift can count toward satisfying this requirement.

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: WHO ARE THESE ADVENTISTS?

We are often so aware of our nation's problems that we forget to celebrate its progress. In this election year, I suspect, you will hear plenty about what is wrong with our country, and, like me, you will probably share a few gripes yourself.

But did you ever imagine that we would elect an African American president within your lifetime? Or that candidates to replace him would include two women, two Latinos, an Indian-American, and a black Adventist Republican? Or that voters would seem to care so little about a candidate's race or denominational affiliation?

Many Christians, only a few years ago, wrongly considered the Seventh-Day Adventists to be a cult. I wrote for half a dozen SDA magazines in my younger days and have visited and spoken in several of their congregations. The denomination does not yet belong to the Council of Churches, but I hope someday it will, and Adventists already have served on LICC committees and on our staff.

Now let me be clear, this column is not an endorsement of Ben Carson's candidacy. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find a reminder to clergy and congregations to avoid entanglement in partisan politics.

Seventh-day Adventists may be odd in some ways—aren't we all?—but they are not heretics. Throughout much of the 19th century, most Adventists rejected the Trinity, a doctrine they did not find in the Bible, but Seventh Day Adventists have long been Trinitarian, as are other Adventists in the Advent Christian Church and the Worldwide

Church of God. SDAs are a conservative evangelical denomination, not a sect. Here are some things I admire about them:

- 1) Adventists take seriously the commandment in Exodus 20:8 to “remember the Sabbath, and keep it holy.” They are probably right that Christians shifted to Sunday worship largely due to growing anti-Semitism within the Roman Empire.
- 2) They emphasize healthy living. SDAs promote a meatless diet--and I took a vegetarian cooking class myself at one of their churches in Hawaii. They offer free tobacco-cessation programs. They discourage alcohol consumption. Most of these do not seem to be a matter of church law but rather of core values and traditions.

Unlike some Christians who go overboard on faith healing, SDAs embrace medical science. They have some great hospitals, such as Loma Linda, which received many of the survivors of the San Bernadino massacre. Ben Carson was himself a gifted surgeon before he went into politics.

- 3) They take a dim view of warfare. Most SDAs are pacifists: they will serve as medics in the armed forces but not as combatants.
- 4) Having suffered discrimination themselves for their Sabbath observance and other quirks, they have developed a profound commitment to religious liberty. The church entered a friend-of-the-court brief, for example, when a Muslim woman lost her job for wearing a head scarf.

Does Dr. Carson perfectly embody these traditions? No. His bellicose statements and Muslim-bashing are far removed from the peaceful, tolerant teaching of his church, just as the atrocities committed by the so-called Islamic State are far removed from what Mohammed proclaimed.

Nor does any other candidate flawlessly represent his or her faith community. Nor does Donald Trump share the views of most of his fellow Presbyterians on many issues--and some of them are trying to excommunicate him. Hillary Clinton is a pretty mainstream United Methodist, but so is Dick Cheney.

As candidates appeal for our votes this year, and they sometimes pander to our prejudices and fears, it is worth remembering that none of them is as good or pious as they wish us to believe. We are all sinners in need of redemption. God is good, all the time. You and I aren't.

Shalom/Salaam/Shanti/Pax/Jai Jinendra,

Tom

DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Sara C. Weiss, Director of Development

Our Website Address: Please visit us at www.liccdonate.org

A very special thanks goes to Janson Shoprite Supermarkets for their donation of a tractor-trailer load of food and other items to our Riverhead Emergency Food Center, valued at \$101,089.67. Special thanks also go to the Long Island Home Builders Care Inc. for donating 2,250 lbs. of non-perishable food and two \$50 gift cards to our

Riverhead Emergency Food Center and to Edgar Goodale, President & C.E.O. of Riverhead Building Supply for coordinating that effort. Special thanks go to Mid-Island Collision of Rockville Centre for donating 200 bags of Thanksgiving food and trimmings to our Freeport Emergency Food Center for guests we serve through that facility.

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	\$800 Freeport Food Center
Bob's Discount Furniture Charitable Foundation, Inc.	\$1,000 Emergency Food
Classis of Nassau-Suffolk-RCA	\$150 Use Where Most Needed
Congregational Church of Manhasset	\$375 Use Where Most Needed
Congregational Church of Patchogue	\$250 Riverhead Food Center
Garden City Community Church	\$3,500 Freeport Food Center & Where Most Needed
Greater Hamptons Interfaith Council	\$100 Use Where Most Needed
Presbyterian Community Church-Massapequa	\$500 Freeport Food Center
St. Paul's Reformed Church-North Babylon	\$318 Use Where Most Needed
Suffolk Association of the New York Conference-UCC	\$1,600 Where Most Needed
Thrivent Financial Foundation	\$500 Matching Gift- Where Most Needed
Union United Methodist Church-East Northport	\$333 Riverhead Food Pantry
United Church of Rockville Centre	\$100 Freeport Food Pantry
United Methodist Women-Massapequa	\$50 Use Where Most Needed
Veritas-Rebekah Lodge-Riverhead	\$100 Riverhead-Thanksgiving
Wantagh Fire Department-Ladies Auxiliary	\$50 Freeport Food Center

We thank the following Share the Harvest attendees who gave to help us Feed A Family of Four: Michael Adams, William Ferris, Rev. Doret Johnson-Agu, Dr. Faroque Khan, Herbert & Irene Lape, Santiago & Miriam Ortiz, Rev. Erik Rasmussen, and Michelle Santantonio.

We thank the following individuals for their gifts to support Long Islanders in need: Anonymous (2), Benno Ansbacher, George & Anne Barbieri, Rev. James Barnum, Phyllis Bello, Mary Bing, Joy Fernandez, Edna Heubish, Robert Howard, Sherry Huber, Janice Kincaid, Rev. Jack King, Ted & Jane Pfenning, Rev. Tom & Patricia Regan, Maxine Smith, Kimberly Scheck Arezzi, Chaplain Larry & Marylou Swensen, Leila Truman, Carol Yannacone, Dorothy Zondag, and one cash donation for which we don't have a name.

Can You Help?

Now that the Christmas holidays are history and the dead of winter is upon us, perhaps you have clothing you don't want or need that is just taking up space in your closets. The LICC would be glad to receive donations of mittens, gloves, sweaters, scarves, winter jackets and other cold weather items at our Freeport, Riverhead, and Hempstead emergency food pantries, where they will help our most vulnerable neighbors to get through the winter. We have a limited amount of space for other clothing at our Freeport

Emergency Food Center—and a St. Vincent de Paul clothing collection box where you can leave items that we cannot accept.

Tons of used clothing end up in landfills every year, clothes that our most vulnerable neighbors urgently need. Would you also consider depositing them in one of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's clothing bins? The LICC also helps the Society find new locations for collection clothing bins, such as the new one a block from our Riverhead Food Center, at the First Congregational Church of Riverhead. Would you be willing to place a bin at your congregation or business? Doing so is good for the earth, helps those of modest income to shop with dignity in a resale store, and generates funds that allow the Society and the LICC to help our neighbors in need. To arrange for a clothing bin, please contact Vincent Strynkowski at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at vstrynkowski@svdpli.org or 516-822-3132. The Society will pick up clothing as often as needed and you may be able to host a bin without sacrificing a single parking space on your property.

Winter weather clothing and accessories you don't need can be a blessing to others. If you itemize the donations, you can get a tax deduction as well, so you'll be yourselves while helping yourself as well as your neighbors in need.

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. 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

How To Stay Out of Trouble in an Election Year

Nearly every religion teaches compassion for the poor, but how can we tell the difference between advocacy on behalf of our neighbors in need, which is always right, and partisan politics, which not-for-profits must avoid? Political campaigns frequently ask congregations and clergy to support them in ways that are illegal, unwise, or a violation of rules governing nonprofit organizations. And sometimes our own members run for office or expect us to endorse their favorite candidate. How can your congregation stay out of trouble in an election year, when candidates and their supporters want you to aid their campaigns?

Houses of worship (and clergy acting in their official capacity) cannot legally support or oppose any particular party or candidate for office. They should support social justice, but should not:

- endorse candidates from the pulpit or in congregational newsletters, either explicitly or implicitly, not even their own members who are running for office;
- distribute campaign information that favors one party or candidate, even a member of the congregation;
- castigate one party for opposing some of your tradition's teaching while giving members of the other party a free pass for their inconsistencies;
- post signs on their property that favor or oppose any party or candidate;
- organize voter registration or get-out-the-vote efforts for the purpose of electing any given party or candidate;
- raise money for a candidate or party;
- provide membership lists to candidates, even if the candidate is a member of the congregation.
- invite a candidate to speak during an election season without providing a comparable opportunity to his or her opponents;
- rent your building to a campaign.

Doing any of these things puts your tax exemption at risk. Even if it does not get you into hot water with the IRS, it may alienate people who respect the law. Even some things that may be legal--inviting elected officials to preach during their campaign or giving a candidate an award shortly before an election--are still bad ideas.

Houses of worship can and should:

- pray for candidates to campaign honestly and for voters to judge them wisely,
- take positions that reflect their values on public policy, including legislation, through public education, petitions, letter-writing, and meetings with elected officials;
- organize non-partisan voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives;
- encourage members to volunteer as poll watchers on Election Day;

--host candidate forums, at least if all candidates are invited and the format favors no candidate or party. If you cannot invite those who disagree with your faith community's position on an issue, don't hold a forum.

Further information on how to do the right thing and stay on the right side of the law is available from the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (<http://rac.org>) and the Internal Revenue Service (<http://www.irs.gov/uac/Charities,-Churches-and-Politics> or <http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Charitable-Organizations/Charities,-Churches,-and-Educational-Organizations---Political-Campaign-Intervention> ?).

And here's something your congregation might consider doing. Many congregations open their sanctuaries for silent prayer on Election Day and the day before it, but after the last, rancorous presidential election, Mulberry Street United Methodist Church in Macon, Georgia, invited the community to stop "to pray for the nation and also to pray for unity after a divisive election season." The church provided both time for silent prayer, guided prayer. And communion. Go thou and do likewise!

For further information please email Holly Beck at licsafv@optimum.net or hbeck@jbfcs.org or call 631-691-7080, press 1 then 6 and dial ext. 516302.

–Holly Beck and Herb Cohen, Co-Chairs

HOW TO FIND A SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

The LICC annually publishes a roster of pastoral counselors in our directory of Long Island churches and synagogues—we soon will begin mailing the 2016 directory to our members and donors—and someone recently asked if we might also gather information on spiritual directors. Here are the names we have received thus far:

The Rev. Sue Cardone, a retired Presbyterian pastor who serves on our Eastern Area Steering Committee, is a member of Spiritual Directors International, trained through LeMoyne College. She can be reached at 802-345-2876.

The Rev. Will Feinberg, a Unitarian Universalist clergyman and Pastoral Care Counselor with the Hospice Care Network, trained at St. Joseph's Renewal Center in Brentwood. He can be contacted at wfeinberg@snuuc.org or 516-983-2697.

The Rev. Dr. Farrell Graves, Priest Associate at All Souls' Church in Stony Brook and The Caroline Church in Brookhaven, trained at General Theological Seminary as a spiritual director for both clergy and lay people. You can reach him at fdgraves@icloud.com or 917-287-0880.

Lesley Mazzotta is Spiritual Formation Director at Community Reformed and Christ Episcopal churches in Manhasset. You can reach her at lesleymazzotta@gmail.com or 917-623-4554.

The Rev. Dr. Nancy Schaffer, the LICC's Head Chaplain, trained at St. Joseph's Renewal Center in Brentwood. You can reach her at nschaffer1@outlook.com.

The Rev. Tom Taylor, M. Div, LMSW is the pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Lindenhurst and completed a 3-year spiritual direction training program with the Sisters of St. Joseph's in Brentwood. You can reach him at (516)-754-8176.

Diane Zeluff has 12 years of training as a spiritual director and three years training in Gestalt Pastoral Psychology. You can reach her at bzd13@aol.com or 631-574-8994.

Spiritual Directors International has a director-locator at www.sdiworld.org/find-a-spiritual-director

The Rev. Vicky Eastland has been trained through the Reformed Church in America to do Spiritual Coaching. This is slightly different from the approach of some spiritual directors in that a coach does not lead or guide or give advice, but rather asks questions to help bring out the answers that are already within the client—though many spiritual directors favor this approach themselves. You can reach her at rev.vicky@verizon.net

Here is how she describes what she does:

Spiritual Coaching is a self-directed or content neutral process whereby a trained coach will ask powerful questions to help the client hear the Spirit's leading and become "unstuck" in the issue(s) she/he are facing. It is self-directed or content neutral in the sense that the person being coached is the one who brings the topics and issues they want to discuss to the coach, not the other way around. A good Spiritual Coach is not a problem-solver, teacher, advisor, instructor, or expert. Instead a Spiritual Coach is a listener, sounding board, and awareness-raiser. A good Spiritual Coach helps the client explore and discover their own truth; helping the client take steps to fulfill her or his God-given calling. A Spiritual Coach recognizes that the answers are already within the client and their task is to guide the client to a discovery of those answers. A Spiritual Coach can also help the client set action goals to prompt the client to move forward in reaching their full potential.

Each session with a Spiritual Coach has three elements:

Expectations: Clarifying the objectives and hoped-for outcomes of each individual session.

Awareness: A key objective in every session is to increase self-awareness as well as the client's awareness of other people. Awareness is raised as the coach asks questions that generate answers and prompt deeper reflection.

Responsibility: The responsibility for change and action lies with the person being coached. For a Spiritual Coaching relationship, asking, rather than telling, raises awareness and responsibility for the client.

DID YOU KNOW?

*Mary Dewar & Fr. Bill Brisotti to be honored at MLK Breakfast

LICC Board member Mary Dewar and our friend Fr. Bill Brisotti, pastor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church in Wyandanch will be honored at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Breakfast on Monday, Jan. 18, at the Hyatt Regency Wind Watch in Hauppauge. Tickets are \$50 and must be purchased by Jan. 12. Checks made out to "MLK, Jr. Breakfast" can be mailed to

MLK Breakfast Committee

1st Baptist Church of Riverhead

1018 Northville Turnpike

Riverhead, NY 11901

For more information, please call 631-727-3446.

*Catholics & Lutherans Reach Theological Consensus

Declaration on the Way: Church, Ministry and Eucharist is a unique ecumenical text that draws on 50 years of Lutheran-Catholic dialogue in preparation for the 500th Reformation anniversary coming in 2017. At its heart, this is a declaration of the consensus achieved by Lutherans and Catholics on the topics of church, ministry and Eucharist as the result of ecumenical dialogue between the two communions since 1965. It is a consensus "on the way", because dialogue has not yet resolved all the church-dividing differences on these topics. Click here to [Learn more and download a copy of this document](#) or visit <http://www.elca.org/Declaration-on-the-Way>

NEEDED

*Fruitcake!

Do you have fruitcake in your cupboard that were received in recent weeks or placed there by the Ghost of Christmas Past? There is actually considerable nutrition in these desserts, and food donations are slow after the holidays, leaving community pantries scrambling to feed the hungry in each winter. Do you have anything else that needs to be cleaned out of your cupboard? Fancy jellies and jams you received as gifts but probably will eat? Flavored coffee that is not your cup of tea? "Most of us have food in our homes we will never eat--food that our neighbors need," Goodhue adds. "This is a great time to go through your canned goods and give away anything that you are not going to use that is not dented, rusted, or otherwise inedible."

*Winter Clothes

Many of the LICC's guests need winter coats, hats, gloves, and scarves. We would be glad to receive these at any of our locations. Please don't bring warm weather clothes to the LICC right now—but the Society of St. Vincent de Paul would be glad to take these items. We have a new SVDP collection bin outside our Freeport emergency center at 450 N. Main Street, where you can drop off items anytime 24/7/365.

Do you have room for a clothing collection bins at your congregation? Recycling clothes is good for planet, good for people who need inexpensive clothing, and generates much-needed revenue for the Society and the Council. For more information about the SVDP/LICC's collection box placement, call Vincent Strykowski at 516-822-3132, ext. 111. Here's the new bin at our Freeport pantry:

TIME TO RENEW YOUR LICC MEMBERSHIP

Christian congregations (parishes) are invited to join the LICC as full members. We ask them to agree to the Requirements below and pay membership dues of at least \$50 a year.

WHAT WE ASK OF OUR MEMBERS:

Take up a yearly offering for the Long Island Council of Churches. We will promote this through our newsletter and we will provide the offering envelopes if you tell us the number of envelopes you need and when you need them. Or put us in your annual budget or your Missions budget.

Pray for our work in worship at least once a year.

Announce Long Island Council of Churches events in your bulletin and newsletter.

Urge your members to participate in our mission to bring together diverse Christians on behalf of our neighbors in need and to build understanding among the diverse faith communities on Long Island.

Collect a food offering once a month for the Long Island Council of Churches' emergency food pantries or for another pantry or soup kitchen in your area.

Other faith-based institutions (such as synagogues and Unitarian Universalist fellowships), social service agencies, for-profits whose products/services are compatible with our mission and programs, and individuals who wish to support our mission and programs are encouraged to join the "Friends of the Long Island Council of Churches." We do not expect the Friends of the LICC to do all of the things listed above, but we do ask them to donate at least \$100 a year.

BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS & FRIENDS OF THE LICC INCLUDE:

- Free copy of LICC Directory, published annually, and electronic updates
- Some free advertisements in our newsletter, *The Prelude*, which is mailed to 2700 religious leaders and emailed to another 2800, at the discretion of the executive director, and discount rates for additional advertising
- "Building Bridges" educational presentations by our Multi-Faith Forum
- Free financial education workshops held in your community
 - Assistance for your parishioners who need emergency food, housing, utilities, fuel, medical, and/or transportation assistance

Please return to LICC, 40 Washington Street, Hempstead, NY 11550
Or email to tomgoodhue@optonline.net or fax to 516-565-0291

CHURCH NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TEL # _____

FAX # _____

PASTOR: _____

PASTOR E-MAIL: _____

OTHER CONTACT PERSON: _____

CONTACT PERSON DAY TIME TEL. # _____

E-MAIL: _____

WOULD YOU LIKE OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR THE LICC? _____

WOULD YOU LIKE LITERATURE ABOUT WHAT WE DO? _____

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SCHEDULE A FINANCE WORKSHO? _____

WOULD YOU LIKE A MULTI-FAITH EDUCATION PROGRAM? _____

THE FRIENDS OF THE LICC

Faith-based institutions (such as synagogues and Unitarian Universalist fellowships), social service agencies, for-profits whose products/services are compatible with our mission, and individuals who wish to support our mission and programs are invited to join the "Friends of the Long Island Council of Churches." We ask them to donate at least \$100 a year.

Please return to LICC, 40 Washington Street, Hempstead, NY 11550

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TEL # _____

FAX # _____

CONTACT PERSON: _____

CONTACT PERSON DAY TIME TEL. # _____

E-MAIL: _____

ADVERTISING IN *THE PRELUDE*

Each month we mail about 2600 copies of our newsletter *The Prelude* to the clergy leaders and lay leaders of 1450 faith organizations and email it to about 2700 religious leaders. Filled with timely articles, news briefs, updates and notices affecting Long Island's communities and churches and the wider world, *The Prelude* is a must read for all who would "work together to improve Long Island and promote interfaith understanding and cooperation." The LICC accepts paid sponsorship ads, display ads and simple listings (classifieds). Advertising in *The Prelude* is a great way to reach clergy, lay leaders, and volunteers in Long Island's congregations. To receive a "media kit" with advertising rates, copy requirements, and copy deadlines, please call 516-565-0290 or

email tomgoodhue@optonline.net. Congregations that join the LICC and groups that join the Friends of the LICC receive a free classified ad in thanks for paying their annual dues.

ADS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

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

MORE OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE IN GARDEN CITY

A non-profit organization on Old Country Road in Garden City has office space to share long-term with another non-profit. Available are two individual offices (230+ sq ft each). Ample free parking and a short walk from the Nassau County Seat, Winthrop University Hospital and the Mineola LIRR train station. Also on site and available for occasional use are a conference room for meetings of up to 50 people and a large auditorium for larger events. For additional information, please visit www.ehsli.org or call [516-741-7304](tel:516-741-7304).

CHURCH FOR SALE IN AMITYVILLE

The New Apostolic Church has merged its Amityville and Westbury congregations to create a larger, more diverse church that eventually will soon move into a new location in Bethpage. The Amityville location, 890 County Line Road, right off the Southern State Parkway, is already 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.

Please pass this newsletter along to anyone you think might like to see it.