



## **The Prelude East**

### **May 2018 - Number 1**

This past Sunday we celebrated Pentecost at Riverhead UMC. Red flowers were on the altar, red balloons decorated the Communion rail, parishioners were wearing their brightest red clothing. We received new members, and Pastor Lebron confirmed a young man into full fellowship in the body of Christ. It was a day of rejoicing, a day of gratitude for beginnings: the birthday of the Church, the receiving of new members, the witnessing of newly-affirmed faith.

But then my grandchildren reminded me to ask the church to pray for our family, and to do that before they left the Service to go into Sunday School. With the Pastor's permission, we asked the congregation to pray for God's help as we dealt with a sudden death, just the day before. Stepping forward to lead the prayer, I was aware of the shift we were asking people to make, from joy to grief, from celebration to sharing troubles, from thanking God for new life to asking the Lord for strength to journey on.

In a way, it seemed wrong to do that, shifting the mood of the Service with no preparation. If nothing else, the timing of this prayer was all wrong, falling as it did right after the reception of new members. But of course, it was also absolutely right. Because we members of faith communities know that we come together in times of joy and trouble. In fact, in some Worship Services – and maybe you've seen this same thing – you can have the folks in one pew glowing with joy from a new baby in the family or news of a wonderful healing, while others in a nearby pew are still grieving the death of a close relative. And so, we are used to the mix of joy and grief, anticipation, and worry, that happens in the faith community.

We here at the LICC are also looking at losses, and new beginnings, joy, and troubles. We of the East End Steering Committee of the LICC wanted to begin this newsletter to share what's happening, to re-instate our regular communications with members and friends, and to give all of us a way to share what's going on.

Please respond to this initial newsletter, so we know you're out there. If you know someone who would like to be included, let me know. If you have news from your congregation, let me know about that, too, and I'll publish it here. Let's

keeping talking with one another, in the good times and bad. To start us off, I've included a few reports from the LICC annual meeting held earlier this month.

May peace be your way in the world, Lorraine De Armitt  
REPORT OF THE BOARD OF MISSION AND MINISTRY Long Island Council of Churches Annual Meeting May 3, 2018

Our Mission: The Long Island Council of Churches unites diverse Christians to work together to improve living conditions on Long Island and to promote interfaith understanding and cooperation.

The past year has been one of the most difficult and challenging in the LICC history. While our fiscal difficulties have been persistent through the years, they reached a crisis point this year which called for a radical restructuring. Much of our time and energy has been spent with this reorganization. Others will detail the background and current fiscal and organizational situation.

The Board of Mission and Ministry is concerned primarily with the work of our six committees, half of which have been affected by the fiscal crisis.

The Dialogue Committee continue to immerse themselves in other religions with field trips and book studies. They truly fulfill our mission of mutual interfaith understanding.

The Multi-Faith Forum Committee takes the rich diversity of Long Island faith communities out into schools and other places. They especially increase tolerance through understanding.

Our Public Issues Committee is always on the cutting edge of matters of social justice and human welfare. Whether on immigration or health care or prisons, etc., this committee studies and responds. At least three issues will come before the Annual Meeting.

The three other committees have all been involved with the cutbacks and downsizing. The Pastoral Care Committee has been a part of the staff readjustments in the chaplaincy programs. In the past, the members of this committee have had a number of hospital chaplains, as well as pastoral counselors, where mutual sharing could be an asset.

The Western Area Steering Committee, while not directly involved, have been witness to the absorption of the Hempstead food pantry and offices into the newer Freeport facility, and the necessary reduction of staff.

The Eastern Area Steering Committee has been intimately involved in the closing of the Riverhead food pantry, with the transfer of material to Freeport and the sale and disposal of property, largely by the Chairperson, Lorraine De Armitt. But, as you will see from her report, the committee has also engaged in other significant activities consistent with our mission.

While financial issues will always be with us, it is our hope that we may now focus our energies on the real mission and ministry of the LICC. The support will surely come when we truly unite our diverse faith communities in efforts to improve

living conditions and promote mutual understanding and cooperation. Yours in God's Service, of the Board of Ministry and Missions of LICC Eastern Area Steering Committee Annual Report.

The EASC continues to be an active group, dedicated to promoting the LICC in Eastern Suffolk and throughout the Island, working to be aware of the needs of congregations and communities on the East End, interested in fostering unity and vitality among faith communities, and supporting the Riverhead office.

On May 13 of last year, we sponsored a convocation "Immigration and the East End: How Can I Help?" to foster a discussion between Riverhead Town Supervisor, town police, those working directly with the immigration population, and church and community members who were interested in learning more about what laws and policies impact the community, and how we can help support all our neighbors. It was fairly well attended, and useful.

We also sponsored a worship service held at First Baptist, Riverhead, on the 50th anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. That also was well attended by a good diversity of persons, and very well received. In this way, the EASC of the LICC continues to be a leader in the larger faith community. Through strife, both internal and external, we have managed to meet together on a monthly basis with good attendance, to practice honest discussion, and to be a loving presence to each other.

The EASC has provided on-going support to the Riverhead office in many ways: our individual congregations collecting and delivering food and other items for the use of the office and our neighbors, doing large food pick-ups through Island Harvest, providing volunteers to help at the office, supporting staff through our annual Christmas staff-appreciation luncheon, helping first Marianita make the transition out of the Council, and then Olga, whose employment was terminated April 1 as the office closed. We provided many volunteers to move food and other supplies [with thanks to Riverhead Building Supply for the use of a truck as well as staff] on Moving Day.

During 2017, the Riverhead office provided 57,879 meals to 6,431 persons in 2,731 households, as well as rent and utilities assistance, help with prescriptions, clothing, toys and books, friendship to the needy and always a friendly face to those who visited our office. I want to thank all our members, and their congregations for the good work of this Committee. I especially want to thank our staff, Marianita Reyes and the incomparably competent Olga Cortez, who was a dedicated worker right up to the closing of the office.

We of the EASC plan to continue our habit of meeting, considering the needs of the East End, providing support and leadership to faith communities, to the end that we might experience enhanced unity and fruitfulness in our journey together.

Respectfully submitted, the Rev. Lorraine De Armitt, Chair of the Eastern Area Steering Committee